



**CLAYSS**  
centro latinoamericano de aprendizaje y servicio solidario  
SEDE URUGUAY

# Solidarity Service-Learning Results and Outreach in Uruguay



## Solidarity Service-Learning Results and Outreach in Uruguay

The results and outreach of the **Solidarity Service-Learning (SSL)** approach in Uruguay over the past 24 years have established it as a key resource for **educational innovation** and the community engagement of thousands of Uruguayan students.

CLAYSS, the Latina American Center for Solidarity Service-Learning, in **partnership with civil society and state-run education bodies**, has successfully established this pedagogy as a central and essential tool for the transformation of education in Uruguay.



### Brief History

In this overview, we aim to provide an account of the history involving thousands of educators, civil servants, students, civil society organizations, and the local communities of the educational institutions we have supported.

Solidarity Service-Learning (SSL) is understood as a **pedagogy that intentionally combines learning content with solidarity-based activities designed to address the real needs of a community while actively involving students**. In light of the recent frameworks proposed by UNESCO for analysing the current state of education worldwide, this pedagogy has taken on renewed significance. For instance, in the report *Reimagining our Futures Together* (2022), UNESCO proposes a **new social contract for education** based on equity and sustainability, noting that learning must be deeply connected to community engagement.

In turn, the document *La solidaridad como futuro de la educación [Solidarity as the Future of Education]* (2024), published jointly by CLAYSS and UNESCO, explores **SSL in Ibero-America as a transformative practice** where solidarity ceases to be mere curriculum content and becomes the very core of the educational process.



## Historical Milestones

SSL in Uruguay has evolved in four main stages, reflecting a remarkable capacity for institutional adaptation:

### Initial Stage and Partnerships (2002–2007)

SSL in Uruguay **emerged from civil society through the Uruguayan Volunteer Center (CVU)** with the "Aprendiendo Juntos [Learning Together]" project. A distinctive feature was its inception in primary education, unlike other countries which began at secondary level. In 2007, the first National Solidarity in Education Award was established with the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP).

### Sustainability in Educational Institutions (2008–2013)

Following the conclusion of the CVU projects, the flame of solidarity service-learning was kept burning thanks to the resilience of local educational institutions, CLAYSS training initiatives, and the work of civil society organizations such as "El Chajá".

### Promotion and Public Policy (2014–2023)

In 2014, joint initiatives were launched involving CLAYSS, ANEP and MEC. In 2015, the **CLAYSS Uruguay headquarters was formally established**, enabling exponential growth in teacher training and direct technical guidance to institutions nationwide: from pre-primary to higher education, including specific training for educational professionals working in prison environments with adults deprived of their liberty, through the National Institute of Rehabilitation (INR), and with young people conflicted with the law, in collaboration with the National Institute for the Social Inclusion of Adolescents (INISA).

### Strategic Partnerships and Public Policy Advocacy (2024–present)

Uruguay has successfully implemented a strategy to promote SSL, whereby the organizations involved first managed to obtain endorsements from the highest authorities at ANEP, CODICEN (the central board Council of ANEP) and MEC (the Ministry of Education and Culture of Uruguay), before moving on to educational institutions. This political validation has been crucial in **addressing the fragmented nature of the system and ensuring that the pedagogy is considered a resource that enhances the curriculum** rather than an additional burden for educators.

Today, the real impact on public policy looks promising. Authorities in the education sphere **regard the SSL as a proven answer to critical challenges such as curriculum reform and teacher training, and improvement of student motivation**. The approach has been included in the public agenda as a pathway towards project-based and skills-based learning, fostering social skills, empathy and a scientific culture. Currently, SSL is valued for its power to transcend government administrations, emerging as a genuine state policy.

During this period, CLAYSS played a notable role in supporting and advising the Technological University of Uruguay (UTEC) on integrating solidarity service-learning pedagogy into its curriculum. This work is currently in the development and implementation stage.

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# Solidarity Service-Learning

## Results and Outreach in Uruguay

**2002-2007**

**2008-2013**

**2014-2023**

**2024 present**

Initial Stage and Partnerships

Sustainability in Educational Institutions

Promotion and Public Policy

Strategic Partnerships and Public Policy Advocacy





## Results in Figures Consolidated statistics on the nationwide presence of the programme

Number of institutions supported	<b>272</b>
Number of Higher Education Institutions	<b>11</b>
Number of Civil Society Organizations (CSO)	<b>30</b>
Total experiences submitted to the Solidarity in Education Contest (12 editions)	<b>550</b>
Total number of educators involved in community-based educational initiatives, linked to projects	<b>+1.500</b>
Number of students participating in initiatives	<b>+20.000</b>
Total number of people benefiting from community-based educational projects	<b>+700.000</b>
Participants in training activities (webinars, courses, workshops)	<b>+120.000</b> <small>teachers and educators</small>



The SSL development in Uruguay means we can look to the future with hope. Its ability to 'break down the classroom walls' and bridge the gap between knowledge and social reality is fundamental to renewing an education system that seeks greater purpose and equity.

In an uncertain world, fostering solidarity through education is not merely a pedagogical choice, but an absolute necessity for social transformation.

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