

## **Format for Presentation of Best Practices #1**

### **1. Title of the Practice : Classroom to Community (C2C) - a Service-Learning initiative for whole person education**

### **2. Objectives of the Practice**

- To translate subject specific knowledge to meaningful contributions to the society
- To incorporate the elements of service-learning and re-design the existing curriculum.
- To impart training in service-learning concepts and its key elements to faculty.
- To enable teachers to integrate discipline specific knowledge into meaningful service to the society.

### **3. The Context**

Bishop Heber College focuses on supporting academic learning, civic learning and personal growth of the students through Service Learning programmes offered by the college. The Service Learning programme addresses Social Consciousness through Whole Person Education to transform young learners to be competent and social conscious through holistic education ensuring inclusivity and equity. Service Learning is as an integrated academic learning with community engagements through systematic educational approach where a student learns theoretical concepts in the classroom and identifies the needs of the community and apply the subject specific knowledge to resolve the issues. In this context Bishop Heber College has taken steps to enhance the expertise and ability of faculty members in Service Learning curriculum.

### **4. The Practice**

1. Seventy-five teachers gained knowledge about Service Learning—its concepts, key elements, and importance in fostering educational and social responsibilities. Participants learned the distinctions between Service Learning and community fieldwork and the significance of the triangular relationship between the community, students, and faculty.

They recognized that Service Learning nurtures critical thinking, curiosity, and creativity.

2. In the Arts discipline, 32 participants explored integrating Service Learning into curricula, emphasizing the role of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They were encouraged to adopt real-life, problem-based learning approaches and identify community partners to address implementation challenges. Similarly, discussions for Science disciplines inspired 43 participants with success stories and highlighted the need to align SDGs with domain-specific topics. Teachers' roles in classroom and community engagement were also elaborated.
3. Field visits to Christ University, Bangalore, and Lady Doak College, Madurai, allowed participants to identify community needs and observe best practices. Interactions with local communities and academic departments offered insights into methodologies and technicalities of Service Learning. These experiences motivated participants to connect discipline-specific knowledge with community requirements and design community-based activities.
4. Participants reflected on field experiences, focusing on Service Learning's significance, SDGs, and students' social responsibilities. Presentations of success stories inspired curriculum development, deepening the understanding of roles and responsibilities among students, faculty, and administrators.
5. Teachers also gained insights into self-assessment rubrics, emphasizing the institutionalization of Service Learning. Newly framed policies supported its effective implementation. All 75 participants contributed to developing curricula specific to their disciplines, aligning them with SDGs and mapping Program Outcomes (PO), Program Specific Outcomes (PSO), Course Outcomes (CO), and Learning Outcomes (LO). This resulted in 27 Service Learning modules.

6. Introduced during the 2022-2023 Academic Year, these two credit courses benefited over 3,000 students across 27 undergraduate programs. The modules, validated by experts, were published with an ISBN.
7. The establishment of the Heber Service-Learning Nodal Center ensures ongoing monitoring and sustainability of these initiatives.

## **5. Evidences of Success**

Through the Service Learning Programme, 124 projects were undertaken by various departments. These projects aimed to address critical societal, environmental, and economic challenges through innovative and community-oriented approaches.

The **Commerce Department** led the initiative with 51 projects focusing on Insurance awareness, financial literacy, and Self-help group empowerment. These projects targeted diverse groups, including farmers, vendors, women, and young adults, emphasizing economic security and financial planning.

The **Aviation Department** contributed with studies on customer satisfaction in airline ticketing and Visa assistance at Tiruchirappalli International Airport, improving service efficiency and public understanding.

The **Biotechnology Department** conducted impactful projects on soil and water assessment, bio-waste management, and organic farming. Highlights include Vermicomposting, Natural Mosquito repellents, and biochar production, promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Creation of awareness among students about rare south Indian ethnic rice varieties.

The **Bioinformatics Department** integrated technology into agriculture, developing IoT-based systems for smart irrigation, pest control, and animal detection. These innovations enhance efficiency and sustainability in farming.

The **Botany Department** conducted extensive surveys on medicinal plants, created herbal gardens, and promoted biofertilizer use. Projects also addressed solid waste management and environmental sustainability in rural communities.

Overall, these multidisciplinary projects demonstrate a commitment to sustainable development, community welfare, and environmental conservation, showcasing the Institution's dedication to practical & impactful education.

#### **6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:**

- Developing new Service Learning Course Modules across 30 disciplines was a challenging and time-consuming task that requires significant manpower to design the curriculum.
- This involves obtaining permission to engage with the community to assess its needs and fostering community involvement. It also requires coordinating with relevant agencies to address these needs.
- There were limited resources for guidance of Service Learning projects. Teacher exposure to community engagement programmes were limited
- Despite these challenges, the Institution successfully overcame the obstacles with the support of other network institution who were pioneers in Service Learning, and the various units in the Institution including the Deanery of Academics, the Examination Controller's Office, the deanery of Extension Activities, and Service-Learning experts. This was achieved through regular meetings and discussions.
- Training all faculty members to handle Service - Learning Courses and Community Engagement within a short span of time was a challenge.
- Relationship Building with certain communities took much more time than expected and completing such projects on time became a challenge.

#### **Resources Required:**

Offering courses with community involvement needs an Extension Centre that works as liaison agency between academic units and the community. A full-time coordinator with a Centre for Service Learning is being created to enable rigorous planning and networking in the Service Learning programme.