

## BEST PRACTICES I

### Title of the Practice

#### **Cultivating Citizenship: Education and Community Service Initiatives**

### Objectives of the Practice

The primary objective of this practice is to empower students to become active and responsible citizens through holistic education and community service. This involves fostering awareness and addressing social issues, promoting environmental stewardship, and enhancing the overall well-being of the local communities. The underlying principles include inclusivity, sustainability, and civic responsibility, aiming to create well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to society.

### The Context

Ganesar College of Arts and Science is situated in a drought-prone area, which presents unique challenges such as limited resources, high dropout rates, and socio-economic disparities. These contextual features necessitated the design of a practice that addresses not only academic excellence but also social and environmental issues. The aim was to bridge the gap between the college and the local communities, ensuring that education extends beyond the classroom to have a tangible impact on the lives of the villagers. This required innovative approaches to community engagement, health awareness, and environmental sustainability.

### The Practice

Ganesar College of Arts and Science engages in a range of community service initiatives aimed at holistic development.

#### ***Village Adoption and Cleanliness Drives***

Students adopt nearby villages and conduct cleanliness drives to promote hygiene and proper waste disposal. This includes cleaning 8 kg of waste at the Sivan temple and encouraging temple cleanliness among devotees. The NSS team adopts a nearby village every year, engages in clearing campaigns, creates awareness about cleanliness, and collects literacy data.

#### ***Health Awareness Campaigns***

The college organizes health campaigns on AIDS prevention, dengue awareness, and COVID-19 precautions. During the pandemic, students educated the community about preventive measures and distributed masks. They also supported breast cancer awareness among women above 30 years in collaboration with Pudukkottai General Hospital. The RRC conducts annual AIDS awareness programs and essay competitions to educate village people.

#### ***Educational Outreach***

Students visit local schools to advocate for higher education, conduct yoga sessions, and organised child safety awareness programs. This

outreach aims to reduce dropout rates and encourage academic excellence. Emphasis is placed on reaching schools in villages like Pranmalai, Nerkuppai, Melasivapuri, Alavayal, and Thekkur.

### ***Academic and Practical Exposure***

Through rallies and awareness campaigns, students share knowledge and assistance with banking processes, supported by collaborations with banks like the Indian Overseas Bank for financial literacy training.

### ***Education and Government Policies***

To ensure education should reach every doorstep and reduce early marriages, students explain government policies to villagers and support the central government's "Illam Thorum Kalvi" scheme.

Additionally, the Social Work Department conducts rural and tribal camps every year, engaging various welfare activities. Nearly 1000 units of blood have been donated by students in blood camps at the college and in government hospitals over the past five years.

### **Evidence of Success**

The success of these initiatives is evident through various metrics:

- + Significant improvement in community cleanliness and hygiene.
- + Enhanced health awareness and preventive measures during health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- + Increased environmental consciousness, evidenced by numerous tree planting and pond cleaning activities.
- + Higher engagement in educational activities and reduced school dropout rates.
- + Successful financial literacy programs and better understanding of government policies among villagers.
- + The certification of Ganesar College as a district green campus by the Government of India's Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education in 2021, recognizing its contributions to environmental sustainability.

### **Problems Encountered and Resources Required**

Challenges include limited resources, logistical issues, and community resistance. To overcome these, it needs increased funding, better logistics, and continuous engagement programs. Integrating education with community service fosters a socially conscious student body, contributing to regional development and sustainability.