



# Mahatma Education Society's Pillai College of Education & Research

Plot-1, Sector-8, Khanda Colony, New Panvel (W)-410206

## **Best Practice: 1**

### **Title of the practice: Community Interface**

#### **The context that required initiation of the practice:**

Community work is a selfless service towards the under privileged group of people residing in and around the vicinity. Our institutional distinctiveness is service oriented unconditional leadership (SOUL). Our Vision and Mission statements to bring out a socially responsible teacher to play different roles in the society are also aligned with this practice. Our institution realized that the best way to create selfless leaders is through community initiative. We strongly believe in community living and the importance of giving back to the community. Engaging in community service allows us to connect with and support our community. It teaches us the value of helping those in need, especially those who are less fortunate than ourselves. The essence of community service lies in the fact that it not only improves the community but also fosters a better place for all of us to live in, forging a stronger bond among its members. Hence community engagement/ Interface was considered

#### **Objectives of the practice:**

- To develop sensitivity towards societal issues and concerns.
- To develop leadership competencies to plan, organize and conduct educational activities.
- To inculcate virtues like Gentleness, Modesty, Courtesy, Empathy and Compassion among the student teachers towards the less fortunate.
- To enhance civic responsibility among student teachers.

#### **The Practice:**

At Pillai College of Education and Research in New Panvel, we firmly believe in the maxim that serving humanity is equivalent to serving God. A range of outreach programs and activities are arranged throughout the year. We begin the community interface by first creating awareness among the student teachers regarding the objectives, need and significance of being part of the community engagement. The action plan is executed by the student teachers in the required interface activities under the guidance and supervision of able personnel from nearby NGO's. Through the active involvement of student teachers in community service initiatives they learn to address literacy issues, undertake advocacy in areas of literacy, extend helping hand in the NGO projects. The college has linked with NGOs like the Navjeevan Centre, Jeevan Jyoti Trust, the Nirmal Jeevan Trust, Manav Vikas for Mentally Challenged and undertakes advocacy campaign at different centers in Navi Mumbai managed by these NGOs. We cater to the educational needs of the school going children by clearing concepts, revision work, taking English class and

covering topics for their scholarship exams. While for the others who did not go to school, alphabets, numbers, coloring, body parts, days of the week, action songs and making simple origami articles from old newspapers occupied most of their activities. These children from nearby slum areas are also taught reading, writing, drawing, reciting poems, and creating craft items. This is an ongoing and continuous project.

Additionally, we actively participate in the Annual Jumble Sale during the Joy of Giving week in October, contributing to the cause. Furthermore, we actively participate in activities such as packing Diwali sweets for army personnel stationed at the borders, as part of the initiative led by Bharat Vikas Parishad. Students, teachers & Alumni also visit the old age home at Shantivan with Rangoli, Diyas & sweets to celebrate Diwali with the senior inmates.

Every year Mahatma Education Society celebrates Community Day with the members of the NGO we work with. On this day, the members are provided with an opportunity to come together and have a day filled with games and activities. Lunch, games, and music become the main agenda of the day. The whole day activity is organized by student volunteers; preplanning of games and prizes are done. They realize how little it takes to keep a group of children from weaker section of the society happy.

**Obstacles faced, if any, and strategies adopted to overcome them:**

Community engagement activities faced significant disruptions during the pandemic; however, they were reinstated as we gradually returned to normalcy. Throughout the pandemic, we focused on activities that could be conducted while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Teachers and students actively participated in donation drives to assist individuals who were confined to their homes due to the lockdown.

**Impact of the practice:**

After the completion of the activity, there is a sharing session. We have realized that engaging in community service provides students with a profound reality check as they witness firsthand, the disparities within the community. This experience fosters a sense of gratitude for their own circumstances and cultivates empathy towards the marginalized groups in society. The activity humbles them and promotes a more compassionate outlook. During reflection sessions, they openly share their experiences and emotions with their peers in the classroom. Such activities enable them to establish a deeper connection with the community and instill a sense of responsibility towards others. Some of our students continue to connect with the given organization or find similar organization to share quality time with them. Our students as future teachers also become instrumental in imbibing these values and commitments to their students.

**Resources required:**

The college offers essential human and material resources to facilitate the seamless implementation of community service activities. We uphold the belief that materialistic incentives should not be used to motivate slum children to attend educational programs. Instead, the engaging and enjoyable activities organized by our students encourage maximum participation.

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