

Best Practice II: Social Outreach

1. Objectives of the Practice

A team of student volunteers and faculty have been operationalizing a hugely successful program, which involves creating a more sustainable and equitable world through the positive power of social entrepreneurship. A variety of activities are undertaken on issues like education, environment, water and the like, while taking care of students' holistic growth. It involves empowering various marginalized communities and focusing on the promotion of women in businesses. An implicit outcome is an all-round development of volunteering students, who get to interact with major stakeholders and work cohesively in a pragmatic set up.

2. The Context

The intent is to engage the students in solving the socio-economic problems of the marginalized, where they develop insights into the challenges at the grass-root level, and develop their own thinking, collaboration and leadership abilities to make a lasting impact on the society. Primary focus remains on the starting sustainable entrepreneurial ventures. The progress review mechanisms are put in place as an active feedback mechanism for course-corrections and driving results. College participates in steering the projects and their progress.

3. The Practice

Hansraj's initiative of promoting a sustainable and inclusive world for all, is a one of its kind and serves multiple purposes. Apart from its aim of assisting and enabling the underprivileged groups, it provides a platform to the students to be change-makers in their graduation years. This program extends the education system and skilling through on-the-ground experiential learning. It engages the students in different spheres, including non-profit community development, business and entrepreneurship.

A brief description of the key projects under the program follows.

Vridhhi aims to curb stubble burning, a practice that causes large scale air pollution, by exploiting various economic alternatives. It provides an opportunity for students to know more about the agricultural space, work with farmers and women entrepreneurs, as well as interact with government bodies working actively on this issue.

Ahsaas works to help the differently-abled community, deprived of job opportunities, while also catering to the massive need of digital education of the underprivileged students. The students realize the grave problems of the not much talked about issue and come up with solutions, while also developing and enhancing computer curriculums to transform the education system, leveraging technology that's all set to take over the space in the years to come.

Project Armaan is a relatively newer venture, which attempts to break the stigma of drug abuse, and attempts to financially and socially uplift the community and further the cause of de-addiction and rehabilitation. Here too, the students spread awareness on the issue, and indulge in entrepreneurial action while working with international agencies, ensuring growth.

Therefore, the program provides opportunities to students to experience the real problems of the needy communities, and serve them, while enhancing the students' own perspective, problem-solving and organizational capabilities.

4. Evidence of Success

The efforts of the program have been widely recognized, including at the international forums.

The students of Hansraj College participated in the Enactus National Symposium in July 2020, and emerged as the National Champions, amongst 80+ participating teams. The team, then represented India at the Enactus World Cup organized by KPMG and Unilever. Team India was one of the Top 4 Teams at the World Cup.

The efforts have been recognized through mentions in over 17 vernacular newspapers like the Indian Express and media mentions, with a combined reach of 15.9 Million Impressions. Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International, recently recognized the efforts in the sanitation domain through our project of constructing washrooms from stubble.

5. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The outreach programs often have monetary requirements. At times, some permissions are needed from concerned government authorities, as was for penetration in far-off communities and stimulation of change in the fields of education and environment. College administration has always supported the students in the process and address any temporary hinderances.

The most valuable resource is the commitment from student members in terms of time and efforts. No matter what difficulties arise, the college team has always come together to tide over any challenges.