BEST PRACTICES | AQAR 2022 – 2023

BEST PRACTICE 1

Title of the Practice: **PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY**

Objectives of the Practice

- To foster a culture of environmental, social, and economic responsibility
- To amplify the tremendous energy and capabilities of the student community in generating broader buy-in for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Context

- Promoting sustainable development in higher education institutions is essential for fostering responsible and informed individuals, contributing to global solutions, and ensuring the long-term viability and positive impact of these institutions and its stakeholders on society and the planet.
- It reflects a commitment to environmental stewardship, social responsibility and economic viability.

The Practice

- On 12 August 2022, Stella Maris College collaborated with the United Nations SDG Students Program to host the International Youth Day Programme – a state level event organised to enlighten students on pressing global concerns and to ignite change makers across the state of Tamil Nadu.
- The SMSD Students' Hub was inaugurated on 13 September 2022 by Dr. Sulthan Khalifa Haroon Al Rashid, Regional Officer (Asia Pacific) for UN SDSN Youth Sustainable Development Goals Students Program.
- The hub is a student driven program modelled on the United Nations SDG Students Program with three operating wings in the areas of Education, Solutions and Community.

Evidence of Success

- The SMSD Students' Hub has successfully seen through the completion of four initiatives.
  1. Project C involved the collection of well-maintained clothes from the student community to set up a 'Just for a Day Boutique' at Semmenchery. Mental Health Week was celebrated with competitions and talks by specialists.
  2. Know Your SDGs series drummed up a lot of enthusiasm among the students as the hub coordinators used several innovative methods to create awareness on the 17 SDGs.

3. The TN SDG Girls Championship 2022, a state-wide initiative organised in collaboration with the UN SDG Students Program, StartupTN and eight partnering colleges across the state had around 3800 participants. The Finals of the competition was conducted at Stella Maris College on 7 March 2023.

4. Under the Climate Change Outreach Programme the hub is in the process of providing training to a group of 45 'Climate Change Warriors' who will conduct workshops orienting school children on the causes and consequences of Climate Change.

- With the conclusion of its first year the hub has successfully facilitated the creation of student-inspired innovative solutions and has aided in connecting local action with global advocacy.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- The major challenges encountered so far in practising and promoting sustainability is mainly with regard to logistics and maintenance of the sustainable alternatives.

- Implementing sustainable technologies and alternatives, such as renewable energy systems or reusable equipment, involve high initial costs.

- This also poses financial challenges, particularly in the maintenance and upgrade of existing infrastructure.

- Monetary resources for maintaining green initiatives, effective water purification, and spreading awareness on sustainable development within the College campus is one of the major requirements.

BEST PRACTICE 2

Title of the Practice: INNOVATION, NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

Objectives of the Practice

- To enhance communication, resource sharing and collaborative learning within and across educational institutions
- To bridge the gap between academic curriculum and the industry requirements, ensuring a holistic and innovative educational experience.

The Context

- The college considers it vital to communicate with other institutions and industries in order to stay relevant, thus enhancing career opportunities for the student community.
- This initiative is carried out with the help of collaborative conferences, MoU's and so on.

The Practice

- The Stella Maris International Centre for Multidisciplinary Research (SMICMR) has successfully organised multiple seminars and conferences in collaboration with International institutions with the aim of extending research frontiers of the students and the faculty.
  - One such webinar series titled **"Going Forward in an Age of Conflict: The Need for Innovation Education and the Media"** was conducted along with Trinity Western University on October 1, 2023.
- The Stella Maris Sustainable Development (SMSD) Students Hub successfully conducted the state-wide initiative, The TN SDG Girls' Championship, in collaboration with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) Students Program, United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth (UN SDSN), StartupTN and eight colleges across the state.
  - It aimed to accelerate solutions for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals modelled by the United Nations.
  - It provided a platform for young women with a passion to meet the world's need for synergetic endeavours and envision a better tomorrow.
- The Department of English hosted Dr. Rebecca Whittington, Fulbright Nehru Scholar, as a Scholar-in- Residence, in collaboration with Fulbright India and USIEF, on 5 and 6

January 2023. Dr. Whittington conducted a Workshop on Translation and Linguistic Diversity.

- The following are the active MoUs for 2022-2023
- Total Number of Active MoUs: 67
  - MoUs with Industries: 24
  - MoUs with Skill-based Institutions (National + International): 43
- Among the 67 active MoUs,
  - MoUs with International Skill-based Institutions / Universities: 12
  - International and National Research-based MoUs: 14

Evidence of Success

- The various departments, clubs and centres of the college has successfully collaborated with various industries, governmental and non-governmental organisations to provide students with an holistic learning experience.
- The Department of Mathematics has collaborated with the Journal of Advanced Computational Intelligence and Intelligent Informatics, and has published few of the papers presented at the International Conference ICRSMS-2022 conducted by the Department.
- The Department of Physics collaborated with the Tamil Nadu Astronomy and Science Society (TASS) and Vigyan Prasar, DST, Government of India, and Chennai Astro Club to organise a seminar and discussion on astronomy on 21 December 2022.
- The Department of Social Work has collaborated with multiple agencies like the UNICEF, Institute of Mental Health, Tamil Nadu Department of Social Work, etc. to conduct awareness programmes that helped students understand the pressing issues of the society.
- The Department of Tamil, in collaboration with Tamil Virtual University, conducted a government programme 'The Grand Tamil Dream' on 17 February 2023 inviting 500 students from various colleges in Chennai.
- The Department of Zoology in collaboration with Care Earth Trust, a well-known NGO, conducted a workshop on GIS Mapping for Conservation, for faculty and research scholars of local city colleges on 20 January 2022.
- An International Conference on 'Leading Together' was held in collaboration with the University of Melbourne, Australia, and the Centre for Women's Studies.

- These regional, national and international level collaborations have helped the students and faculty of not just our college, but has also benefited students from other colleges who have been a part of these programmes to gain knowledge and exposure on the relevant and contemporary fields.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

- Though networking has become an inevitable initiative for a comprehensive education, the lack of a common forum where representatives of various educational institutions and industry experts can connect with each other, therefore bringing to light the gaps that exist between the industry requirements and the college curriculum is a huge obstacle.

- Formation of this forum will also help in the sharing of subject expects among educational institutions that could benefit students.

- Logistics-related issues such as scheduling to accommodate everyone's needs also proves to be obstacle for networking and collaboration.