

2021-22

7.2.1 Describe two best practices successfully implemented by the Institution as per NAAC format provided in the Manual

Best Practice I

a. Title of the Practice

Mental Health Awareness: Action Plan for Campus and Community during COVID-19 pandemic

b. The Context

Partners: Department of Psychology, BLISS¹, NSS, NCC, Disaster Preparedness Club.

Features: Mental Health first-aid training

The pandemic triggered new health disorders such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Social isolation, fear of infection, grief, and the overall stress associated with the pandemic have contributed to these mental health issues.

This affected the academic, social, health, career planning, family and digital and technological domains of the students.

Two surveys were conducted in the months of September and October 2021.

1. Campus survey was conducted to ascertain the level of mental health among the students through a questionnaire by the PG and UG students of Psychology.
2. Community Survey: A survey was conducted in the local community particularly to ascertain the impact on women and school children, Survey found adolescents with increasing exposure to technology and digital devices had disorders such as Attention deficit hyper activity, depression, social isolation, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder.

It is quite natural that students tend to experience significant distress during the period when they are confined to their homes, unable to interact with peer members or teachers. The survey found that stress was due to online system of learning, Lack of confidence to take exams led to cases of cheating and following guilt, loss of self-esteem and a general apathy towards learning.

The Department of Psychology and the Counselling Centre of the College launched quick action and launched first-aid support services for students and the community.

c. Objectives of the Practice

Mental health app data was analyzed and an action plan was formulated with two objectives.

1. To extend counselling services to students in the schools in Kerala
2. To enhance experiential learning and practice for the students of Psychology

d. The Practice

¹ Basic Life Skills Support

The sudden shift to online mode was effectively replaced with hybrid mode in the campus. For select days in each semester the college opened and tutorial classes were provided to all students.

Service learning, peace education and value education classes were held online. Practical classes and theory classes were held in hybrid mode.

Based on student feedback in the Mental Health App (Mind Map/ Ming Gap), the Staff Council initiated a report from class teachers regarding the methods to increase effectiveness of online classes offered by the Institution. (We had impressive results in university examinations during the pandemic, attachment)

The timings of classes were rescheduled. Each class followed the 20:20:20 principle.² This significantly reduced the physical problems such as body pain and fatigue. A training was provided to all class teachers to identify symptoms of anxiety, anger, worry, loneliness, sadness, and lack of interest in studies. All the students who expressed their need for counseling were given online/telephonic counselling by the Department of Psychology.

Mental Health App (Tranquil Minds) a joint venture of the departments of Psychology and Computer Science effectively quantified the counselling needs and ensured privacy. The App was modified and continues to be in use.

Free tele-counseling was offered to the general public by the teachers of the Department of Psychology in the Panchayats of Karumaloor, Kadungallur etc. The local channels and newspaper supported this unique initiative.

e. Evidence of success

The psychological support services offered were well utilized by 78% of the students of the institution. 15-20% follow-ups for the sessions conducted in which students reported significant alleviation of distressful symptoms in 2021-22. There were more enquiries from the part of the students seeking help for their psychological and academic-related problems for family members that involved cases of drug abuse, alcoholism, and mother's mental health. Similarly, the free tele-counselling services offered by Post graduate students of Psychology were utilized by more than hundred people in the district of Ernakulam including parents.

f. Problems encountered and resources required.

Owing to easing COVID restrictions, counselling sessions were conducted in the offline mode. Tele-counselling was the most practical option to deal with the demands of the situation and hence issues related to privacy and confidentiality as well as sharing of accurate information from the part of clients could not be completely ensured.

Teachers also participated in the statewide Corona challenge by uploading video content for other colleges.

(For details: <https://uccollege.edu.in/news/indiafightscorona/>)

² 2 minutes break after 20 minutes of online viewing, 20 minutes of reading or watching video and 20 minutes of live class. Live classes were restricted to three hours daily in lieu of five hours.

PDF file (certificates of students as proof)

Best Practice 2

Title of the Practice: **Sustainable Development for Global Goals**

The Context

The Covid pandemic woke us up to the reality of global goals. Sustainable development is crucial for the future of the earth. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a common international framework for concrete action. United Nations sustainable development agenda is aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity by 2030. Union Christian College is committed to working towards these goals in our own small ways in order to make a big change in the minds of our students and support the community in this transition.

Partners: Ranthal Club, NSS, Works Department, Staff Association, South India Bank, MBA, MCA, Computer Science, Canteen, Students Union, Mahatma Gandhi University, Haritha Keralam Mission, Govt. of Kerala

Objectives of the Practice

To encourage students and staff to recycle paper, plastic, glass, and other materials.

To promote energy-saving practices by encouraging the use of energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and HVAC systems, and regularly conducts energy audits to identify areas for improvement.

To incorporate sustainable design principles into new construction projects and renovations, utilizing energy-efficient materials, solar panels, and optimizing natural lighting.

To establish a campus garden where students and staff can grow their own food, providing an educational space for learning about sustainable agriculture practices.

To implement water-saving measures such as installing low-flow showerheads and faucets, promoting responsible water usage through awareness campaigns, and maintaining efficient irrigation systems.

To promote sustainable food choices by sourcing local, organic, and seasonal produce for campus cafeterias, reducing food waste through composting programs, and encouraging the use of reusable containers for takeout meals.

To integrate sustainability into the curriculum by offering courses and workshops on environmental topics, organizing seminars and guest lectures to raise awareness about sustainability issues and promote eco-friendly behaviors.

The Practice

Recycling programmes

The college has a club called Ranthal, initiated by dept. of English, where the students recycle many products into artforms that are creative. By transforming discarded materials, they create unique and visually striking pieces while promoting environmental consciousness. Utilizing items like plastic bottles, cardboard, old newspapers, and scrap metal, artists can sculpt, paint, and assemble these materials into sculptures, collages, installations, and more. These initiatives aim to reduce waste, increase recycling rates, and create a sustainable environment. The college conducts waste segregation classes to educate students about the importance of separating different types of waste for recycling and proper disposal. These classes promote environmental awareness and responsible waste management habits. Separate bins for different types of waste, such as paper, plastic, and organic waste, have been introduced across campus. This initiative makes it easier for students and staff to properly segregate waste and encourages recycling. The college has renewed its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Plan@earth, an environmental organization. This partnership aims to continue collaborating on sustainability initiatives, promoting eco-friendly practices, and raising awareness about environmental conservation.

Energy Conservation

The college has initiated an LED drive on campus, replacing traditional lighting fixtures with energy-efficient LED lights. This initiative aims to reduce energy consumption, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and create a more sustainable and well-lit environment for students, staff, and visitors.

Carpooling by Faculty: The College encourages faculty members to carpool to work, reducing individual vehicle usage and promoting sustainable transportation options. By sharing rides, faculty members can minimize carbon emissions, alleviate parking congestion, and contribute to a greener campus community while fostering camaraderie among colleagues.

Green Building Initiatives

Solar Panel Installation: The College has undertaken a solar panel installation sponsored by South Indian Bank under their CSR project on campus to harness renewable energy from the sun. By installing solar panels on rooftops or other suitable areas, the college can generate clean electricity, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and lowering carbon emissions. This initiative contributes to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly energy source for the campus.

Natural Lighting in Buildings: The Regular inventory checks are conducted on chemical stocks, and purchase dates are clearly labeled to prioritize the utilization of older chemicals. College promotes the use of natural lighting in buildings to reduce the need for artificial lighting during daylight hours. Through architectural design choices such as large window, natural light is maximized, creating well-lit and energy-efficient spaces. This approach not only decreases electricity consumption but also enhances the overall indoor environment, providing a connection to the outdoors and improving the well-being of students.

Green Campus

The college has established a campus garden as well as individual student gardens set up by various student organizations and departments such as the NCC, NSS, Department of Computer Science, MBA, and MCA. These gardens serve as spaces for students to engage in hands-on gardening, learn about sustainable agriculture practices, and cultivate their own crops. The campus garden and student

gardens promote environmental awareness, provide opportunities for outdoor learning, and foster a sense of community and connection with nature among the students. Additionally, the produce grown in these gardens can be utilized for educational purposes, community sharing, or even contributing to sustainable food practices on campus.

Water conservation

To promote water conservation, the college has taken measures such as replacing old pipes and drainage systems with efficient ones to minimize water wastage. This step ensures that water resources are utilized efficiently throughout the campus. Additionally, the college has implemented rainwater harvesting facilities, allowing rainwater to be collected and stored for various purposes. These initiatives help reduce the strain on freshwater sources and promote sustainable water management practices within the college campus.

Sustainable food practices

The college embraces sustainable food practices by prioritizing the use of local and organic produce on campus. This approach reduces the carbon footprint associated with food transportation and supports local farmers. To minimize food waste, the college implements strategies such as careful meal planning and portion control. Additionally, food waste is composted, contributing to the production of nutrient-rich soil for campus gardens. The college also introduces biowaste bins with color-coded labels aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), facilitating proper waste segregation. To reduce single-use plastic waste, reusable containers are introduced for takeout meals from the college canteen, promoting sustainable packaging alternatives. These initiatives reflect the college's commitment to sustainable food practices and environmental responsibility.

Environment Education

MOOC course on organic farming 100% UG student participation: This online course is to encourage youngsters to understand and conceive an organic way of life with a strong message “Back to Nature”. This will ensure to achieve a global perception of sustainable agriculture and will be in consonance with the objectives of state government’s noble mission “Haritha Keralam”.

Evidence of Success

Increased recycling, reduced waste, cost savings, reduced water wastage, reduced food waste, student participation in environmental awareness campaigns, workshops, and events and also changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to environmental sustainability.

Supporting Documents

Energy Conservation

Reports on environment and energy audits submitted by the auditing agency

<https://iqac.uccollege.edu.in/criterion7/>

<https://iqac.uccollege.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/sites/207/2022/02/Green-Audit-Report-final.pdf>

Psychological services



Waste Management



Waste recycling by English department – Ranthal Club



E waste recycling



Green Building Initiatives



Green Campus



Pathways



Water conservation



Sustainable food practices

