# A Methodology for Implementation of Service Learning in Higher Education Institution: A case study from Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, UNIMAS

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*Abstract*—**Service learning is a teaching and learning approach that includes an aspect of community service within an academic course with instruction and reflection, with the objective to enrich students' learning experience. This is in line with the aspiration of the Malaysian government to produce well-rounded and holistic graduates and included in Shift 1 of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). There are various challenges in the implementation of a service learning program, with the involvement of many stakeholders and local culture and nature of the specific community. Therefore, this paper proposed a methodology for the implementation of a service learning program, within an academic course, taking into consideration of various stakeholders and the needs of the community. This paper also presented the case study based on the application of the methodology at the faculty. Having a sound methodology has minimised the issues during the implementation, and could be applied by other interested parties.**

*Index Terms*—**Service Learning; HIEPs; Experiential Education; Malaysia Education Blueprint;**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Service learning has become an important component in higher learning institutions. In the United States, service learning has been explored and practised in both schools and higher learning institutions, not only locally but with active global participation from other countries as collaborators [1].

In Malaysia, service learning is still in its infancy stage [2] within institutions of higher learning. Service learning has been identified as one of the key strategies in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 by Malaysia Education Ministry [3]. The Ministry of Higher Education has developed a more holistic and integrated curricular through the application of experiential learning and service learning. Service learning is one of the component in the High Impact Educational Practices (HIEPs) in the Malaysia Education Blueprint requirements, which is stated under Shift 1 as follows:

*"Shift Number One: holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates where every graduate will have the relevant disciplinary knowledge, skills, morality as well as appropriate behaviours, mindsets, cultural and civilisation literacy to advance them to a high level of personal well-being"* [3].

To date, there are many existing service learning frameworks and models developed by higher institutions, colleges, schools and government agencies for the implementation of service learning in their institutions. However, each institution has their mission and vision for achieving their student learning and adhering requirements by national education policy.

An objective of this paper is to propose a methodology of a service learning program implementation by addressing the issues in Sarawak and Malaysia context. Thus, a research question has been formulated to guide a direction of the research, *"What is the best methodology to implement a service learning in Higher Education Institution?"*

Section II surveys the works related to the current service learning frameworks at local and international levels. Our proposed methodology for implementing a service learning program and its three main phases are presented in section III. Section IV describes a case study of the service learning implementation based on the proposed methodology. Four main projects under the case study also been discussed in this section. Lastly, section V concludes the work that has been done so far.

## II. BACKGROUND

### A. Service Learning Definitions

There are various definitions of service learning term; Service learning is a form of experiential education in higher institutions. Service learning is different from other experiential education like internships, community service, field education, volunteer or clinical work. The service learning provides a mutually beneficial experience for both the student and organisation and service learning focuses equally on both the service contributed by the students and the service learning that is fostered back in the classroom[4]. As defined by Purdue University, service learning is a teaching and learning process of engaging students with communities in service oriented activities with the aim of enriching the students' learning experience individually and academically. Students are expected to participate in organising service activity that meets identified community needs, use knowledge and skills directly related to a course discipline and reflect on the service activity [5].

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