

**08th Asia-Pacific International Conference on Quality of Life,
Dokez Eylul University, Izmir, Turkiye, 22-24 May 2024**

**Exploring the Nexus of Service Learning Initiatives and Quadruple Helix
Stakeholders in Malaysia**

Sharipah Ruzaina Syed Aris¹, Rafeah Wahid^{2,3}, Ani Mazlina Dewi Mohamed^{1*}, Zulinda Ayu Zulkipli¹, Rosna Awang Hashim⁴, Rene Il Mediana Babiera⁵

**Corresponding Author*

¹ Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Selangor Branch, Bandar Puncak Alam, Malaysia

² Faculty of Resource Science and Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Malaysia,

³ Qadim Hub, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Kota Samarahan, Malaysia,

⁴ School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Sintok, Malaysia

⁵ College of Teacher Education, University of the Immaculate Conception, Davao City, Philippines

sruzaina@uitm.edu.my; wrafeah@unimas.my; anima107@uitm.edu.my; zulinda@uitm.edu.my; rosna@uum.edu.my; rbabiera@uic.edu.ph
Tel: +60332584958

Abstract

This paper explores the dynamics of Service Learning Malaysia (SULAM) initiatives and their impact on quadruple helix stakeholders. A qualitative approach involved interviews with 11 lecturers and 16 community participants and thematic analysis to understand how SULAM initiatives impact the stakeholders within the SULAM ecosystem. Findings indicated that the nexus of service-learning initiatives and the stakeholders includes five main themes: University-Industry Collaboration, Government-Academia Partnership, Community Engagement and Empowerment, Skill Development and Human Capital, and Socio-economic Impact. The findings also highlighted the importance of equal partnership among stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of SULAM initiatives.

Keywords: Service learning; quadruple helix; community impact; community environment

eISSN: 2398-4287 © 2024. The Authors. Published for AMER and cE-Bs by e-International Publishing House, Ltd., UK. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behaviour Researchers) and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment-Behaviour Studies), College of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v9i29.6018>

1.0 Introduction

As a pedagogical approach, service learning enhances students' academic learning by integrating experiential learning with community service, which addresses specific community needs and includes deep reflective practices (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). This approach improves attitudes towards learning, cultivates civic-mindedness and career-related skills (Celio et al., 2011; Prentice & Garcia, 2000; Eyster, 2002), and increases academic performance in addition to promoting social and personal development through improved social-emotional processes (Simons & Cleary, 2006). Beyond just students, faculty, community partners, and universities also gain from this approach, which also improves organizational capacity and academic curriculum and offers possibilities for professional development (Mohd Naufal et al., 2024; Nikolova & Andersen, 2017; Cronley et al., 2015; Yontz & McCook, 2003).

eISSN: 2398-4287 © 2024. The Authors. Published for AMER and cE-Bs by e-International Publishing House, Ltd., UK. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). Peer-review under responsibility of AMER (Association of Malaysian Environment-Behaviour Researchers), and cE-Bs (Centre for Environment-Behaviour Studies), College of Built Environment, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21834/e-bpj.v9i29.6018>

In Malaysia, service-learning has been embedded into higher education curricula through high-impact education practices (HIEPS) initiatives since 2015. The service-learning implementation in Malaysia underwent branding as Service Learning Malaysia: University for Society (SULAM) in 2019, encouraging collaboration among quadrupole helix stakeholders (Fig. 1): academic institutions, local governments, industries, and communities to benefit all parties. Quadrupole helix stakeholders' collaboration in service-learning implementation is expected to promote social innovation through the interaction of these four sectors and ensure the educational impact is socially relevant and applicable to real-world situations.

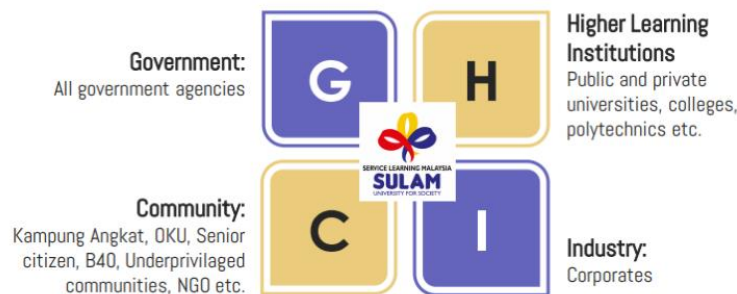


Fig. 1: SULAM quadrupole helix stakeholders in Malaysia

Although service-learning has been proven successful in enhancing student learning experience and achievement (Salam et al., 2019), more is needed to know how it affects other quadrupole helix stakeholders. Thus, this study investigated the nexus of service-learning initiatives and quadrupole helix stakeholders in Malaysia. Specifically, this paper aims to study the impacts of SULAM initiatives and their perceived benefits for the university, communities, agencies, and industries.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Service-Learning

Service learning is a pedagogical approach that aims to improve student's learning of an accredited course in their academic program by integrating structured experiential learning opportunities through service activity that meets identified community needs and deep reflection of their service experience (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112). Service learning enriches students' academic learning and promotes personal and social development through social-emotional processes (Simons & Cleary, 2006). Participation in service-learning programs also significantly improves students' academic performance, personal and interpersonal skills, attitudes toward learning, and civic-mindedness (Celio et al., 2011). Additionally, service learning offers students valuable opportunities for career discovery (Prentice & Garcia, 2000) and the acquisition of complex problem-solving and social skills through continuous reflection on their service experience (Eyler, 2002).

Apart from students, the benefits of service learning to other stakeholders, explicitly involving community partners, faculty, and the university, are widely acknowledged (Nikolova & Andersen, 2017). Service-learning programs generally enable community partners to expand their organizational capacity, contribute to society capacity building through mentoring students, and acquire new knowledge (Cronley et al. 2015). For example, service-learning initiatives by nursing students benefit community partners in terms of enhanced knowledge of social determinants of health, better appreciation of the role of community nursing, and increased access to health care (Schneider et al., 2018). Service learning also benefits the faculty and university, especially regarding access to new teaching tools (Prentice & Garcia, 2000), enhanced curriculum, professional development for academia, and collaboration opportunities (Yontz & McCook, 2003).

The implementation of service learning in higher education has been formalized in Malaysia at the national level since 2015 as a part of high-impact educational practices in the curriculum. An ideal Service Learning Malaysia: University for Society (SULAM) model involves quadrupole collaboration among university, community, government bodies, and industry. Many studies have focused on the impact of service learning on the achievement of students' learning outcomes and soft skills development (Salam et al., 2019). At the same time, minimal in-depth studies were published regarding the simultaneous impact of service-learning initiatives on various stakeholders involved within the quadruple helix collaboration, including universities (students, lecturers, and faculty), community partners, agencies, and industries, especially in the Asian context. Understanding the nexus between service learning and Quadruple Helix stakeholders is essential to facilitate the development of practical framework and policy for impactful and sustainable SULAM initiatives.

2.2 Quadruple Helix Collaboration in Service Learning

The Quadruple Helix model highlights the value of interactions between universities, industries, government, and communities in promoting innovation and working together to overcome complex societal issues. By including these four necessary parties, this model broadens the breadth of educational impact in the service-learning context and guarantees that learning experiences are intellectually stimulating, socially relevant, and directly applicable to real-world situations (Nordberg et al., 2020). Integrating this model into service-