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IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK
STUDENT COMMUNITY SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERING CENTRE

UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA, SRI LANKA

Integrating Talent Development into Innovation Ecosystems in Higher Education

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INNOTAL

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The framework outlines the design of the operations of the Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre created at the University in the frame of the INNOTAL project. It clarifies its place in the University structure, its activities and management, as well as applicable rules and regulations.

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ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE

The Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre at University of Ruhuna will provide a platform to link students, staff, and external stakeholders specifically for the purpose of exploiting the learning and skills building potential of voluntary activities. The major activities of the centre will be as follows:

- Establishing an online registration system
- Registering students and external stakeholders (non-profit and community groups)
- Advertising projects and ideas
- Creating links between students, staff and external stakeholders
- Carrying out publicity for the outcomes of the projects

POSITION OF THE CENTRE WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

The Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre will be linked to the Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of the University. The CGU is headed by a Director and supported by Career Advisors. There is permanent staff attached to the CGU. In addition to that, there are faculty coordinators who are academics and coordinate CGU activities within the Faculties. The CGU is a well-established unit of the university tasked with conducting various skill development programmes. The Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre will be a sub-structure of the CGU and can thus rely on its dedicated and trained staff.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE

The Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of the University is managed under a Director who chairs regular meetings. Each Faculty has a Career Guidance Coordinator who is a member of the CGU. This person will coordinate community service and volunteering activities within the respective Faculty. At present most of the volunteering and community engagements of students are managed by the Carrier Guidance Unit of the University and Academic Circles of Faculties. There is no single place where such activities are reported, and where they can be monitored. There is no centrally managed database. Under the new arrangements, Faculty Coordinators of the Career Guidance Unit will record such activities in the Open Research Platform created by the Project.

An annual activity plan of the Centre will be developed by the Career Guidance Unit and students will be invited to take part in those activities.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR INVOLVEMENT OF FACULTY AND STAFF IN THE CENTRE

The contribution of Faculty Coordinators and relevant academic circles to the organization of student volunteering activities will be on voluntarily basis. Such activities will be coordinated and reported by the CGU. All staff members and Coordinators of the CGU will be involved on voluntary basis. Such involvement is highly appreciated as a professional contribution and is regarded as contribution to student's career development and promotion. This is enough to motivate the CGU staff.

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ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE WORK IN THE CENTRE – STAFF, RESPONSIBILITIES, FINANCING

The CGU has been operating for many years within the existing structure of the university. The Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre will have the same status within the system and its activities will be coordinated by the Faculty Representatives of the CGU. Existing staff of the CGU will cover completely the activities of the Center.

If an activity is limited to a Faculty, then the Faculty will take full responsibility for operating the activity with the support of its students and academic staff. If the activity is a university-wide one, then the CGU Director will take responsibility for its implementation. Implementation will always be based on obtaining as much support from students as possible.

CHANNELS AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION WITH EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The CGU will use its established mechanisms to maintain links with external stakeholders. Further mechanisms can be used to reach out to external stakeholders, as listed below:

- INNOTAL online platform (OpenResearch)
- Use of social media
- University newsletter
- Newspaper articles

The results of Centre activities will be published regularly. Students and external stakeholders will get a chance to advertise opportunities for cooperation. Any project idea will be scrutinised by the members of the Management Committee of the CGU to ensure that the activities are relevant to the students and the community.

PROMOTIONAL AND AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES AND INCENTIVES FOR ENCOURAGING STUDENT VOLUNTEERING

The offers of the Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre will be published on the university website, under the section dedicated to CGU, in student notice boards within the University, etc.

In the Faculties where student volunteering activities are already a part of the curriculum, Center activities can carry credits.

After successful completion of an activity, students can be awarded a certificate of appreciation which will be an advantage for them when they are looking for employment in the future

Outcomes of completed projects will be published on the website university, newsletters and social media.

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RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE SELECTION AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

At present community service and volunteering activities are organized by individual Faculties and various study circles based on the relevance of those activities to higher education studies. For example, the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology organise beach cleaning programme together with the Marine Pollution Prevention Authority of Sri Lanka. The faculty of Medicine conducts Community Medicine Health camps. Most of those activities are relevant to their respective fields of study.

At the moment there are no selection criteria on the basis of which students are included in any such activities. University of Ruhuna would like to leave the participation as open as possible in the future, too. Almost all the students are getting scholarship, which is why there is no perceived need for special approaches to disadvantaged groups. Once the Student Community Service and Volunteering Centre has been established under the CGU, all the activities will be monitored by the Management Committee, including for any undue restrictions on student participation and access to the Centre.

RULES FOR LINKING VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITIES TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The CGU conducts frequent sessions on how to write CVs and how to get involved in volunteering activities, etc. The sessions are targeted at students who have participated in voluntary activities and they are conducted with the help of the CGU advisors.

The Centre will develop feedback forms to collect information about the projects and about student involvement in them. The students will be asked to identify the skills they developed during the project work. Relevant information will be collected also from the beneficiaries.

RULES FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY OF STUDENTS ENGAGED IN VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY THE CENTRE

Before engaging students in volunteering activities, instructions are given, including instructions regarding safety. However, safety risk assessments are not being done currently.

The Centre will focus on building capacity for carrying out risk assessments and will seek to improve the mechanism for conduct safety training as a part of volunteering projects. Any volunteering activity will be scrutinised by the relevant faculty coordinator of CGU and will be approved by the Management Committee of CGU before implementation. Students will be given guidelines, including safety measures before commencing any activity.

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF THE STUDENT VOLUNTEERING CENTRE

Many Faculties have their iconic volunteering activity. For example, the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology organise a beach cleaning programme together with the Marine Pollution Prevention Authority of Sri Lanka. The Faculty of Medicine conducts Community Medicine Health surveys. The Faculty of Science conducts a hospital cleaning programme. The plan is to gradually turn those activities into University-wide activities.

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QUALITY ASSURANCE PLANS

The following preliminary Quality Assurance plan has been made:

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Type of assessment	Who will be in charge?	How will assessment activities be organized?	Who will collect the results from the monitoring activities?	Who will analyse the result from the monitoring activities?	What indicators will be used? What elements of the work of the Centre will be monitored?	How will results be reflected in planning?
Monitoring: ongoing, focused on implementation	Faculty Coordinator of the CGU and relevant staff members (if any)	Assessment will be done on the basis of feedback received regarding activities	Faculty Coordinator of the CGU and relevant staff members (if any)	Faculty Coordinator and relevant staff member (if any)	Number of students involved in volunteering activities Number of non-profit and community partners Feedback from students and from stakeholders Number of students from disadvantaged groups involved in volunteering projects Number of faculty members involved, etc.	There are no quality assurance measures in the practice to translate the monitoring results into planning. The CGU will strive to formulate such plans in the future.
Evaluation: **Periodic: once a semester**	Management Committee	Participatory evaluation	Dean Offices	Committee set up by the Dean's Office of the respective faculty	Skills and competencies developed by the students during services and volunteering activities	Results will inform the planning for the next year

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