

## 7.2 - Best Practices

### Best Practice #1

#### *Innovation Ecosystem*

##### **Objective of the Practice**

The primary objective of the Innovation Ecosystem is to create a holistic and conducive environment for fostering innovation, making it an intrinsic part of each student's journey. This initiative channels the potential of young minds to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset.

##### **Perspective**

To enhance students' creativity and problem-solving skills as integral aspects of the curriculum, this program aims to provide a platform that delivers solutions for societal needs. By integrating innovation deeply within the learning process, Sairam seeks to prepare students not only to solve real-world problems but also to make meaningful contributions to society.

##### **The Tradition**

At Sairam, innovation in education is embedded in the institution's approach to learning. The curriculum emphasizes competition-based learning through the *Sairam Innovation Ecosystem* model, with the tagline "One Student - One Startup." This program progresses through four key stages over the students' academic journey:

- **Stage 1: Ideathon**

In this stage, all students form teams (maximum of four members) and participate in the *Sairam SDG Immersion Program* to brainstorm and develop innovative ideas. After three to four months of preparation, ideas are presented to an evaluation panel, with the best ones receiving awards.

- **Stage 2: Solveathon**

Continuing with their existing teams or forming new ones, students implement solutions for the ideas proposed during Ideathon. Solutions are evaluated by a panel, and top solutions receive awards, promoting practical execution skills.

- **Stage 3: Innovathon**

In the third year, students focus on innovatively executing their solutions under the guidance of project heads. This stage emphasizes designing and implementing solutions that contribute to a sustainable future economically, socially, and environmentally.

- **Stage 4: Inspirathon**

In this final stage, students develop a market-ready product, disseminate their ideas through paper publications, secure patents, and establish startups to bring their concepts to life.

### **Problems Encountered**

- **Initial Awareness and Engagement:** Many students initially lacked awareness of innovation-driven activities, necessitating awareness campaigns and workshops to boost engagement.
- **Resource Constraints:** Access to specialized tools, software, and infrastructure for prototyping sometimes posed challenges.
- **Skill Gaps:** Bridging technical and entrepreneurial skill gaps required additional training.
- **Time Management:** Balancing innovation projects with academic commitments proved challenging for students.
- **Mentorship Availability:** Finding sufficient mentors to guide multidisciplinary projects was occasionally difficult.
- **Financial Support:** Funding innovation projects and prototypes posed a challenge, requiring efforts to secure grants and financial resources.

### **Vital Resources**

- **Infrastructure:** Expansion of innovation labs, access to tools, and state-of-the-art facilities.
- **Workshops and Training:** Skills training on entrepreneurship, design thinking,

and more.

- **Mentorship Network:** Involving faculty, industry experts, and external mentors.
- **Financial Support:** Institutional funds, grants, and partnerships with industries.
- **Time Allocation:** Dedicated time slots for innovation activities.

The *Sairam Innovation Ecosystem* equips students with essential skills and perspectives for academic, personal, and professional success while fostering an entrepreneurial spirit. This comprehensive approach ensures that students can turn their innovative ideas into impactful solutions, ultimately preparing them to become future leaders and changemakers.

## Best Practices # 2

### *Supporting Student Projects for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

#### **Objectives of the Practice**

The main goal is to help students build a brighter and more successful future by enhancing the quality of education and hands-on projects. This involves improving how subjects are taught and learned, encouraging students to produce high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate work, and supporting their efforts to publish research in reputable journals and conferences. Additionally, we aim to build long-term connections with industry and academia through collaborative projects, secure patents for innovative ideas, and attract funding for meaningful research initiatives.

#### **Perspective**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created by the United Nations in 2015 as a global initiative to end poverty, protect our planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for everyone by 2030. These 17 goals address critical global challenges such as poverty, climate change, inequality, and more. Educational institutions play a key role in raising awareness about these issues and empowering students to develop innovative solutions.

#### **The Tradition**

At Sairam Institutions, students are encouraged to undertake projects that align with SDGs, helping to create a more sustainable world. The institution makes a strong effort to educate and guide students in developing meaningful projects that address key global challenges. Each project is identified with a unique ID based on the SDG it aligns with. Key focus areas include health and immunization, clean water and sanitation, cognitive development, and renewable energy solutions.

#### **To promote SDG-based projects:**

- Real-world projects that have a positive impact on society are recognized and supported.
- Financial assistance is given for patent applications.
- Students are provided incentives like covering publication fees and travel costs for conferences.

- Advanced computing resources and high-speed internet facilities are offered to support project development.

### **Evidence of Success**

Thanks to the dedicated work of students and faculty, the initiative has led to several key achievements:

- Greater awareness among students about the importance of SDGs.
- All student projects are aligned with SDGs.
- There has been a rise in student publications and patents, as well as a notable improvement in project quality for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

### **Problems Encountered**

- Encouraging students to consistently develop meaningful projects requires regular awareness programs and engagement activities.
- There is a need for more experts from different fields to provide students with broader exposure to research and innovation opportunities.

### **Vital Resources**

- Continued efforts to bring in external experts for workshops and training on SDG-related projects.
- Financial and infrastructure support, including access to labs, high-tech resources, and collaborative spaces.
- Ongoing mentorship and guidance from faculty and industry experts to help students align their projects with SDGs and create meaningful impact.

