

Service-learning in Duta Wacana Christian University: past, present, and future States

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Abstract

Background: The concept of linking academic study with the practical experience of community service has been considered since the first university in Indonesia had been founded in 1949 but has been realized since 1951. This program evolved to be a community service and was called Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN) or Student Study-Service. Since 1973, KKN has been integrated into the higher education curriculum for Indonesian universities, and it became one of higher education's threefold responsibilities besides teaching and conducting researches. This study described how KKN and all of its variations are implemented in Duta Wacana Christian University.

Aims: Firstly, to explain that KKN and Service-learning have commonalities in their concept and implementation. Secondly, to claim that KKN is an Indonesian version of Service-learning. Thirdly, to share the implementation of KKN & Service-learning at Duta Wacana Christian University from past, present and in future. Fourthly, to describe how Service-learning became a variant of KKN.

Arguments/ comments / suggestions: The claim that KKN has commonalities with Service-learning can be proved by their concepts such as, the concept of reflection activities, live-in into the community for some periods of time, participatorily planning and implementing programs, and working in a mono- and interdisciplinary areas of study. Because of the political unrest, the need of modifying the implementation of KKN has emerged. In present, there are at least two forms of KKN done by UKDW: the regular KKN and aperiodic KKN. The Service-learning falls under the category of aperiodic KKN that is done in response to specific demands or urgent needs. In future, Service-learning is projected to be a long-term project that is collaborated with other institutions.

Conclusion: The Service-learning activities in future such as realizing IT village (Kampoeng IT) depend on the cooperation and networking with the local government, and other institutions.

Keywords: Service-learning, Kuliah Kerja Nyata, Student Study-Service.

服務學習在度它華卡那基督教大學： 過去、現在及未來

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摘要

*背景：*自1949年第一所印度尼西亞大學成立時已考慮將學術研究與實際的社區服務經驗連接起來，但一直至1951年才實踐出來。這項計劃演變為Kuliah Kerja Nyata (KKN)或學生學習服務的社區服務。自1973年以來，KKN已被納入印度尼西亞大學高等教育課程，並成為除了教學及研究工作以外的第三重責任。這項研究描述了KKN及其所有變化如何在Duta Wacana Christian University實踐。

*目的：*首先，闡釋KKN與服務學習是有共同的實踐概念。第二，主張KKN是印尼版本的服務學習。第三，分享在Duta Wacana Christian University過去、現在及未來如何實踐服務學習。第四，描述服務學習如何成為KKN的變種。

*論據/評論/建議：*KKN與服務學習的共通處，可以從他們的概念而證實，例如，反思活動概念、融入社區一段時間、參與規劃和實施計劃及於單一和各學科間的領域作研究。由於政治不穩，有需要對KKN作出修改。現時，最少有兩項KKN是由UKDW所做的：定期的KKN及不定期的KKN。服務學習是屬於不定期的KKN，工作是因應個別及緊急情況而定的。今後，預計服務學習會是一項與其他機構合作的長期項目。

*總結：*未來的服務學習活動，例如科技村的落實(Kampoeng IT)，需要依靠與當地政府和其他機構的合作。

關鍵詞：服務學習，Kuliah Kerja Nyata，學生學習服務

1. Introduction

The word 'Service-learning' (SL) is quite a new term for most universities in Indonesia, yet its concept and philosophy have been recognized since 1950s. It has been implemented for more than four decades under different name, i.e. '*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*' which means Student Study-service ("Ensiklopedi Tokoh", 2007). *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (KKN) is comparable with Service-learning in terms of its definition, goals and standards. The National Youth Leadership Council (2008) defines Service-learning as a philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards. This implies that Service-learning is linked to curriculum and implemented as a medium for students to offer services to the community by applying what they have been learnt. Further, the National Youth Leadership Council has established the standards of Service-learning. Some of these includes, services should be personally relevant to participants; reflection activities should be included before, during and after the Service-learning processes; Service-learning activities should address community needs; students should learn to plan, implement and evaluate Service-learning activities together with the community; and SL should encourage its participants to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.

Meanwhile, Director-general of Higher Education in Indonesia defines KKN as a community empowerment program done by students as a means of applying their knowledge systematically in the form of community development Programs (Prastowo & Suyono, 2007). The goals of KKN are to train students in planning, implementing and evaluating programs needed by the community, to give students opportunity of increasing their interpersonal skills, to encourage students to solve community problems together with community stake

holders in both mono-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, and to link the university with community. As for the standards, students should spend a period of some weeks or months to perform KKN; lecturers and community stake holders monitor and assess the ongoing process of KKN; both for students and community being served the process is collaborative and mutually beneficial; Reflection is imperative and is done before and after the program's implementation. How KKN – the Indonesian version of Service-learning -- evolved and has been implemented in many Indonesian universities will be described on the next section.

A Brief History of KKN

The concept of linking academic study with the practical experience of community service has been considered since the first university in Indonesia had been founded in 1949 but it was only implemented in 1951 in a program called 'Student Power Mobilization'. Pioneered by a young student, Koesnadi Harjosoemantri who turned to be a professor and then rector of Gadjah Mada University (GMU), this program sent students to teach subjects related to their study at school. The objectives were to provide and improve education in remote areas, and to provide qualified social workers. Until 1962, 1487 students have been involved in this program. To this time, Student Power Mobilization had taken place in 161 schools that was distributed in 98 regions outside Java ("Ensiklopedi Tokoh", 2007). In 1962, the need of doing community service reemerged and this program transformed itself to become 'Student Community Service'. Since that time, the Student Community Service program spread to 4 other universities and institutes in Indonesia (Shiddieqy, 2005).

In 1971, the general director for Department of Higher Education evaluated the Student Community Service Program. He suggested that all students should

do this program and live in villages for three months (“Ensiklopedi Tokoh”, 2007). The argument is that by living three months in the service site, students would be able to address real community needs and to learn more through their active involvement in communities. This newly adapted form of student community service program was named *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (Study Service Program).



Figure 1. the Evolution of Kuliah Kerja Nyata in Indonesian Universities

In 1973, the general director for Department of Higher Education issued a decree which integrated *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* into the higher education curriculum in Indonesia. Since then, most universities in Indonesia have been conducting KKN as one of higher education’s threefold responsibilities namely teaching, conducting research, and doing Community Service. Figure 1 describes the evolution of KKN.

2. Service-learning at Duta Wacana Christian University

2.1. Past State

The implementation of Service-learning at Duta Wacana Christian University (DWCU) can be traced back from its founding history. DWCU which was founded in 1985 originally stems from Duta Wacana Theological Seminary founded in 1965. Duta Wacana Theological Seminary had conducted Service Learning in a form of program called *Stase*. Through this program, a group of theological students performed religious services in churches, gave counseling to church members, and also tried to solve the community problems around the church, such as poor sanitation and illiteracy, but the main target of the program is church member.

As a University, DWCU had to apply the decree issued by the Department of Higher education concerning the implementation of KKN and its integration to the curriculum. *Stase* was transformed to be KKN as the Seminary was transformed to be Theological Department. In fact, DWCU conducted *Kuliah kerja nyata* for the first time in 1989, when its first students were at the last year of study. The service was carried out in urban and rural areas with the objectives of improving community standard of living in the areas of finance, health, education and social life. Because of Duta Wacana’s resource constraints, since 1994 DWCU has concentrated its Student Study Service on rural communities.

During 1994-1998, the services were done in 3-4 regencies and the programs were set up to be long-term programs that were done successively by different students in the same regions. In those days, students, lecturers and staffs from Center for Community Development Service cooperated and built partnership with local, national and international NGOs to realize these long-term projects. One example of such a project is programs in villages around Sermo Dam. Sermo had been an agricultural area where most of its inhabitants were farmers. But the New-Order Government (Soeharto Era) forced four villages off their land, transforming their villages into a dam. Therefore, many farmers were displaced and lost their rice fields without any proper reimbursement. The services provided to these ex-farmers included assistance to become fish-farmers by providing training in fish-farming, entrepreneurship, marketing, packing and simple accounting. Trainings on carpentry were provided for the young males. For women, trainings offered included sewing, cooking and how to serve fish-dishes. The assistance for various income-generating activities were provided for both men and women.

The financial and political crisis in 1998 greatly influenced the succession of Study Service Programs (KKN). Because of financial shortages and the safety

reasons, the Study Service Programs were transformed into a 'Social Service-learning' where students did not need to stay in villages or rural areas for a period of time. Students did their services by becoming volunteers in various NGOs or did assistance to groups of small entrepreneurs and vendors for management, accounting and raising capital. In 2002, DWCU restored KKN to both rural and urban areas for the reason that the political situation had stabilized (G. Adinirekso, interview, May 2nd 2007).

2.2 Present State

As for the present, DWCU has developed a practice of *Kuliah Kerja Nyata* (Student Study-Service) which conducts various forms of services. Though various, all sorts of these services are under the name of KKN, since it is an official name of a course in the curriculum (N.A. Haryono, interview, May 2nd 2007). The various forms of KKN can be seen in figure 2 below.

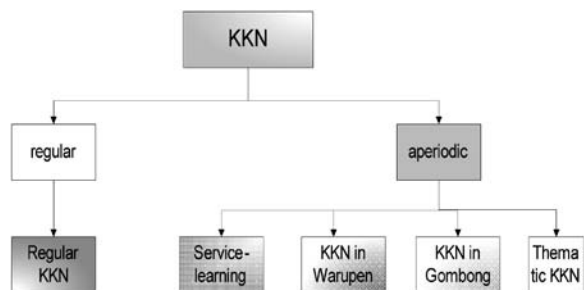


Figure 2. KKN scheme in Duta Wacana Christian University

As illustrated by the figure above, KKN are implemented regularly and aperiodically. The aperiodic KKN is KKN which is conducted in response to some phenomena such as natural disasters, existent community needs, or the needs of university partners. One form of non-regular KKN is Service-learning. The term 'Service-

learning' here is used to refer to services done by students in mono-disciplinary approaches.

The activities in both regular and aperiodic KKN are divided into three phases, i.e orientation, implementation, and reporting. In orientation phase, students are given additional practical courses on participatory approach, action research and cross-cultural communication. Shortly after these courses, they need to conduct surveys and observations on their service sites. Under the supervision of a field-lecturer, a group of 7-8 students interview some community stake holders and hold open discussions with the target community. The goals are to discover communities' potentials as well as their problems, and to work out solutions. Over two weeks, students make observations and findings that are brought to campus to be discussed with the field-lecturers. Then, they are required to set out some programs, writing proposal and action plans for their implementation. The proposals are presented both to field-supervisors and the community on different occasions. The community has rights to object to the proposed programs if the programs do not meet their needs. During orientation phase, students go back and forth from Campus to service site. Students take two days for doing reflection, thinking about how to take effective steps to meet the identified needs of the local community, before they do their services and put their programs into practice.

The second phase is the live-in and implementation. For a month, Students live among the community they serve in order to put the approved programs into practice. By living together with the community they serve, the student's civic and social awareness is heightened. In addition, they will learn to use direct experience in taking initiative, assuming responsibility, applying what they have learn to solve problems at hand, as well as learning to work as a team. The programs in regular KKN can be classified into 4 major categories. First, teaching: the student gives tutorials and courses in the evening for elementary and junior high

schools students. Second, health care, the student provides healthy and nutritious food for babies and children under five years old. Third, community development, just to name an example, the student empowers the host community to care for their environment by not throwing garbage carelessly, providing trash bins that are made of available local resources such as used car tires or facilitating training on making organic fertilizer. Last, improving the local infrastructure, the student may help in drawing the village map, renovating village streets or making street signs. The host community members participate in realizing these activities.

The last phase is the reporting. After finishing their service, students come back to Campus, where they have a week for reflecting on what they have done during their time in the village or in urban areas. Then they write a report and present it to their field-supervisors. In this presentation, they write an evaluation and recommendations on programs that need to be done for the next KKN.

The difference between regular and aperiodic KKN lies in its events and number of participants. Regular KKN is done once a year and it involves a huge number of students. The aperiodic KKN is implemented whenever there are urgent needs or demands from the local government or community. For example, the thematic KKN in Gombong was done due to local government's demand and cooperation between DWCU and Nam Seoul University. Service-learning was conducted due to the need of recovery services for the earthquake victims. The next section describes the implementation of SL as a recovery effort of 2006 earthquake in Yogyakarta.

Service Learning in Time of the 2006 Earthquake

As it is explained before, the concept of Service-learning (SL) has been deep rooted in the academic life

of DWCU, but the term is quite new. The work bearing the name 'Service-learning' was done for the first time by DWCU students in 2006 in response to the natural disaster that destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes and killed around 6.000 people in Yogyakarta that year. As a university located direct in the area of earthquake, DWCU conducted relief efforts for the first 15 days after the earthquake struck. Observing that the earthquake victims and refugees had needed assistance and experts for their recovery, DWCU decided to conduct SL in an area that was badly affected by the earthquake -- Pundong, Bantul. There were 44 students who volunteered for recovery services. Students involved in SL had to perform their activities in three phases as explained in section 2.2. They had to live also in the area of service for four weeks. The objectives were that students would be able to develop their social awareness, address theories that have been studied regarding community needs and therefore they would be able to apply those theories, increase the educative competence through various academic activities, and develop empathy by making a contribution to the recovery of earthquake victims.

Through observation and interviews, students discovered that earthquake victims had difficulties in obtaining clean and fresh drinking water. This was caused by the sliding of the layers of the earth. Other findings included, the downfall of industry sectors caused unemployment; victims lacked resources to rebuild their residences; and services provided by public Health Care centers tended to decline. Those problems were classified into four areas of services. Each area of services was under the supervision of a lecturer whose interest correlated with it. These four areas of service were financial recovery and unemployment, the Information system for public facilities, building construction, and sanitation.

In its implementation, students were grouped into 4 working teams consisting of students from different

subjects. The working team on the financial sector tried to solve the unemployment problem and rebuild the home industry sector. They gave assistance to small snack home industries by offering them production tools, seeking information for the possibilities of having credit from banks or local government, and helping to market their snack productions. The team dealing with public facilities created some software in the form of an Information System for the local public Health Care Center (*Puskesmas*) and schools, giving training on how to operate the information system program and giving some computers to local schools and Health Care centers. These were aimed to increase the service quality of the public services in post-earthquake period.

The construction team was led by architecture students and sought to solve housing problems. As it is well known, the lost of a home affects mental and physical health. The anxiety and restlessness from staying outside without proper shelters caused victims to become sick and suffer mental fatigue. This team attempted to solve such problems by providing shelters, providing training on how to construct housing that is resistance to earthquakes, providing clean and healthy drinking water by constructing wells, public toilets, and giving carpentry tools to the host community especially those whose jobs are bricklayers and technicians so that they were able to work on their residences. The social and psychological problems were unsolved because we lacked experts in psychology and social matters.

The team working on sanitation that was guided by students from environmental Biology provided training and assistance on constructing a hygienic environmental sanitation, testing the water hygiene in the lab, constructing clean water distribution system and creating waste controller tanks for holding fluid waste from home industries before it can be recycled. The problem of a clean water supply was tackled by two groups because it played

such an important role in supporting the daily activities of earthquake victims such as cooking, washing and bathing. It also influenced victims' health and the activities of the home industries. But these two groups approached this problem differently. In implementing the programs, the host community members were actively involved, not only as targets in trainings, but they helped students in organizing trainings, and construction programs.

After implementing those programs, students reflected on what they had done and wrote reports. Upon evaluation, most students wrote that one month period of service for the recovery of earthquake victims was very inadequate. This fact was demonstrated in that most students extended their service at least a week more, though they have been officially withdrawn to the Campus. The extended service was done without living in the service location.

2.3. Future State

Examining the practice of regular KKN and SL, we realized that each has its own advantages and disadvantages. One of regular KKN's advantages compared to SL is set on the host community's participation. The community where regular KKN is performed is involved from the beginning of KKN process, i.e. since the observation phase. The community is also involved in approving programs that will be implemented, and in putting them into practice. In SL, the host community is involved only in the process of program implementation. This can turn to be SL's weaknesses, since if it is not carefully managed, the host community's involvement becomes merely a superficial and lip-service participation.

As a new term, SL is able to stimulate student's curiosity and encourage them to do the service better. This is one of SL's advantages. Having been done for years as a compulsory subject, regular KKN has lost its meaning. This

leads to KKN's weaknesses. Another problem for KKN is that many students lack field experiences and problem-solving skills. This condition is normally ignored and unseen by the society. They consider students doing regular KKN as "saviors" of their communal problems. This high expectancy from the target community can make students frustrated. Not surprisingly, some students have negative view of regular KKN, since they have to live in villages, change their life styles, spend their money, and work hard for the implementation of their programs. Students having such view of regular KKN usually will fail but students who can grasp the meaning and the concepts of regular KKN will benefit from it.

Learning from both strengths and weaknesses of regular KKN and the implementation of SL, DWCU is formulating a new form of service that combines the concepts of SL and regular KKN. The exact form has not yet found its final shape but some criteria which shape it are as follows:

- students keep working as a team in an interdisciplinary group
- students learn to use an interdisciplinary approach to solve multidimensional problems.
- Students work individually as well as in a team
- In their individual work, they need to solve, at least, one problem that is approached through their single discipline.
- The service avoids making the community merely as an object of service, but maintains community participation a central value to the concepts of KKN.

The current collaboration between DWCU, *Mertidusun* Foundation which is run by Gusti Pembayun, the daughter of Yogyakarta Sultan, and Danamon Bank triggered a thought on shaping new form of SL implementation in the future. This collaboration has worked

to realize a "village corner" – a place where villagers can learn computer applications. Such collaboration should be continued and enhanced by having the participation of local government and creating contracts that the new form of services would be applied in a specific region for some periods of time. Based on this occasion, we plan to realize a concept of an IT village that will be implemented in a long term. There students from Informatics department would apply researches on providing low cost internet connection, economics students could assist farmers in managing their farms and developing their entrepreneurship, students from Multimedia and Information system might give assistance in designing web sites for local farmers, students from environmental biology might give assistance on how farmers can increase their crops productivity without destroying the environment, and students from architecture department could help in designing the needed infrastructure. An IT village is one of our dreams in applying Student Study Services (KKN as a whole).

Another discussion that is taking place is the SL plan to assist small and medium enterprises in increasing their local business competitiveness through "technopreneurship". Because of the global financial crisis, many small and medium enterprises in garment, furniture, handy craft industries suffered severe financial loss and went bankrupt. As a university having IT department, DWCU has a duty to stem the losses by doing its threefold responsibilities, especially, community service. This idea has begun by organizing an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Business Solution Fair taking the form of Seminar, workshop and exhibition. The ICT Business Solution Fair was held on May 2009. To follow up, students will be sent to assist small and medium enterprises which have not applied Information Technology for their businesses. What students do will be considered as doing SL. In this SL, the students will use their knowledge of software design to help small and medium

entrepreneurs. Also, they will transfer their knowledge in constructing a website, blog, and how to do marketing on the Internet. This transfer of knowledge enables small and medium entrepreneurs to reduce their product expenses. For example, a furniture firm used to send a sample of its chair design by making its prototype. They need to spend time and money for shaping and crafting a chair as a prototype. But by using a design software, what they send is a softcopy of their chair design. This softcopy of chair design can also be marketed also on the Internet. It is hoped that “technopreneurship” will be a new form of SL at Duta Wacana Christian University, Jogjakarta.

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