Introduction
The American University in Cairo Academic Engagement (ACE) Program operates under The Academy of Liberal Arts.

Vision: The CBL Program envisions an engaged academic curriculum – one that acknowledges the value of and integrates community knowledge to strengthen student learning, while employing student competencies to address community-defined needs.

Mission: The CBL Program empowers AUC students, faculty and partners to create community-engaging learning environments across the disciplines - environments which facilitate student academic excellence, personal growth and civic engagement, and help build sustainable community capital.

Goals: The CBL Program aims to
- **promote** the values, theories, principles and methodologies of community-based learning to faculty, students and community partners
- **evaluate** the student experience and civic outcomes, and to use the results to enhance the program, the curriculum, and the community-campus partnerships
- **reward** faculty, students and community partners through a variety of grants, assistantships and awards
- **document** course experiences to build a knowledge base and identify model partnerships
- **develop** the program, on an ongoing basis, building on the advisory council of students, faculty and community partners

Values: The CBL program values learning environments that promote
- proactive citizenship
- reciprocity of learning and service
- respect for diversity and participatory practices
- integrity in learning, research and civic engagement
- critical reflection and ongoing self-development

• innovation and creative problem-solving
• knowledge-sharing and life-long learning

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This toolkit is largely a compilation of relevant materials, culled from the wealth of experiences published by different institutions. We acknowledge and appreciate the various programs that are committed to knowledge sharing.
IS MY COURSE CBL?

1. **Alignment with course goals:**
   Is the framing of the project clear enough to begin the learning? Does the service purposefully advance the learning?

2. **Participatory approach:**
   Is the community partner and/or those impacted by the activity involved in the activity planning and decision-making?

3. **Reciprocity:**
   Is there reciprocal gain? Is the community an equal partner? Is there empowerment and mutual respect?

4. **Reflection:**
   Do the students link their community experience to course content? Do they gain greater awareness and insight?

5. **Celebration:**
   Do the students and community celebrate their achievements, bringing the project to completion?

6. **Sustainability:**
   Will the outcomes of the activity continue to be utilized and built upon in the future?

7. **Dissemination:**
   Is the work presented to the public to facilitate replication?
A. Definitions
Community-Based Learning is a teaching methodology that advances course-learning goals through service to a partner community.

-- The American University in Cairo

CBL is a process through which students are involved in community work that contributes to Positive change in individuals, organizations, neighborhoods and/or larger systems in a community. Students’ academic understanding, civic development, personal growth, and/or understanding of larger social issues.

-- Campus Compact, USA

CBL is an academic type of experiential learning, which combines community service with explicit academic learning objectives, preparation for community work, and deliberate reflection. Students participating in CBL provide direct and indirect community service as part of their academic coursework, learn about and reflect on the community context in which service is provided, and develop an understanding of the connection between the service and their academic work. These learning experiences are designed through a collaboration of the community and the academic institution, relying on partnerships meant to be of mutual benefit. CBL enhances academic curricula and fosters civic engagement.

-- Adapted from Assessing Service-Learning and Civic Engagement

We define CBL as the broad set of teaching/learning strategies that enable youth and adults to learn what they want to learn from any segment of the community. Our definition provides for learners of all ages to identify what they wish to learn and opens up an unlimited set of resources to support them. By community, we are including the schools, formal and informal institutions in one’s neighborhood, and the entire world through such resources as the Internet.

-- Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

CBL refers to learning in higher education, which takes place outside of the institution, and draws on student experiences and encounters with members of the surrounding community.

-- Higher Education Academy, UK

B. Key elements

Alignment with course goals: Is the framing of the project clear enough to begin the learning? Does the service purposefully advance the learning?

Community empowerment: Does the service address a need identified by community? Has the community been empowered to sustain it?

Reciprocity: Is there reciprocal gain? Is the community an equal partner? Is there empowerment and mutual respect?

Reflection: How can the students link their community experience to course content?

Civic responsibility: Do the students demonstrate commitment? How can the students and community best bring the work to completion? How can the students exit ethically?

Dissemination: Is the knowledge shared publicly to facilitate replication?

C. Models of Community-Based Learning

The following is excerpted from Heffernan, Kerrissa. Fundamentals of Service-Learning Course Construction. RI: Campus Compact, 2001, pp. 2-7, 9.

1. "Pure" Service-Learning
These are courses that send students out into the community to serve. These courses have as their intellectual core the idea of service to communities by students, volunteers, or engaged citizens. They are not typically lodged in any one discipline.

2. Discipline-Based Service-Learning
In this model, students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis throughout the semester using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding.
3. Problem-Based Service-Learning (PBSL)
According to this model, students (or teams of students) relate to the community much as “consultants” working for a “client.” Students work with community members to understand a particular community problem or need. This model presumes that the students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make recommendations to the community or develop a solution to the problem: architecture students might design a park; business students might develop a website; or botany students might identify non-native plants and suggest eradication methods.

4. Capstone Courses
These courses are generally designed for majors and minors in a given discipline and are offered almost exclusively to students in their final year. Capstone courses ask students to draw upon the knowledge they have obtained throughout their coursework and combine it with relevant service work in the community. The goal of capstone courses is usually either to explore a new topic or to synthesize students' understanding of their discipline. These courses offer an excellent way to help students make the transition from the world of theory to the world of practice by helping them establish professional contacts and gather personal experience.

5. Service Internships
Like traditional internships, these experiences are more intense than typical service learning courses, with students working as many as 10 to 20 hours a week in a community setting. As in traditional internships, students are generally charged with producing a body of work that is of value to the community or site. However, unlike traditional internships, service internships have regular and on-going reflective opportunities that help students analyze their new experiences using discipline-based theories. These reflective opportunities can be done with small groups of peers, with one-on-one meetings with faculty advisors, or even electronically with a faculty member providing feedback. Service internships are further distinguished from traditional internships by their focus on reciprocity: the idea that the community and the student benefit equally from the experience.

6. Undergraduate Community-Based Action Research
A relatively new approach that is gaining popularity, community-based action research is similar to an independent study option for the rare student who is highly experienced in community work. Community-based action research can also be effective with small classes or groups of students. In this model, students work closely with faculty members to learn research methodology while serving as advocates for communities.

D. Outcomes of Community-Based Learning for Students
Corporation for National and Community Service.

- Service-learning participation will have an impact on such academic outcomes as demonstrated complexity of understanding, problem analysis, critical thinking, and cognitive development (creative thinking, integrative learning, learning transfer and writing).

Personal Outcomes of Service Learning
- Will have a positive effect on student personal development such as sense of self efficacy, personal identity, spiritual growth, and moral development.
- Will have a positive effect on interpersonal development and the ability to work well with others, leadership and communication skills.

Social Outcomes of Service Learning
- Will have a positive effect on reducing stereotypes and facilitating cultural & racial understanding.
- Will have a positive effect on sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills.
- Will have a positive effect on commitment to service.
- Will have a positive effect on commitment to activism.
E. Career Development of Service Learning
• Will improve student-faculty ties.
• Will improve student satisfaction with college.
• Will improve career skills, such as goal setting and professional presentation.
• Will increase likelihood of choosing a service-related career.
• Will increase likelihood of participation in service after college.

F. Benefits for Students
From: Kevin Kecskes, Engaging Departments: Moving Faculty Culture from Private to Public, Individual to Collective Focus for the Common Good, Anker Publishing, 2006.

Research has shown that as a result of CBL, there has been an overall increase in the ability of students to do the following:

• Integrate theory and research
• Apply concepts learned in class to real life
• Formulate hypotheses
• Examine socially important issues
• Make reasoned arguments
• Apply data to test hypotheses
• Analyze quantitative data
• Analyze qualitative data
• Interpret data
• Understand multiculturalism and diversity
• Understand cultural influences
  • Develop a sense of justice
  • Make use of critical thinking skills
  • Believe in their ability to make a difference

G. Benefits for Faculty
• Provides opportunities for data collection and inspiration for future research
• Improves student-satisfaction ratings
• Provides new areas for research and publication
• Provides an opportunity to build strong partnerships with NGOs and government bodies involved in social development

H. Procedures
To prepare a community-based service learning course, follow the steps below:

1. Define your course learning outcomes. Decide how the outcomes might be facilitated through a community-based learning methodology.
2. Narrow down the disciplinary content to an area/concept/theme/skills you would like to focus on for the service experience.
3. Consult the community-based learning program on how to align course outcomes with a service component.
4. Decide together on a community (communities) to place students.
5. Describe the service activity explicitly on course syllabus, complete with objectives, procedures, number of service hours, reflection tasks, assessment tools, deadlines, behavioral expectations.
6. Provide an orientation/preparation stage for the students before visiting the community. Introduce the pedagogy, the rationale for it, the community, the activity and the correspondent course goals, ethics of community behavior (you may contact the CBL director for a class visit to provide the orientation).
7. Book transport through your ACE, and decide with your students on meeting points, times, days, duration of visit.
8. Send a list of student names and a brief description of trip (purpose, day, time) to the Security Office: (gatepass@aucegypt.edu). This is a standard procedure for every AUC trip. Please indicate if you have international students in class.
9. If you students who are less than 18 years old, please acquire parental consent.
10. Collect a list of student contact information and share with all students.
11. Perhaps, administer a reflection activity prior to the first visit. Consult the ACE program for assistance with preparing the activity.

I. Course Design
The CBL program director will provide guidance on course design. CBL courses will:
• Include service as an expressed goal.
• Clearly describe how the service experience will be measured and what will be measured.
• Describe the nature of the service placement and/or project.
• Specify the roles and responsibilities of students in the placement and/or service project, (e.g., transportation, time requirements, community contacts, etc).
• Define the need(s) the service placement meets.
• Specify how students will be expected to demonstrate what they have learned in the placement/project (journal, papers, presentations).
• Present course assignments that link the service placement and the course content.
• Include a description of the reflective process.
• Include a description of the expectations for the public dissemination of students' work.
The community involvement must be clearly defined, capable of being accomplished within the time frame of the course, and must enhance learning in relation to specific course objectives.

• Adequate community exposure: The level of student commitment is quantified in order to make community involvement an integral part of the course for every student. A minimum of 15 hours of community exposure over the semester is suggested.

• Community voice: Course design should reflect the involvement of the community organization as a partner in the planning and evaluation of student engagement. Partner organizations suggest meaningful activities that students can realistically accomplish, as well as provide feedback on student participation and on the overall relationship between AUC and the community.

• Articulated student reflection: Reflection activities – presentations, essays, blogs, journals, etc. – are integrated into the course and require students to synthesize what they are learning in the field with what they learn in the classroom and library, and set targets for learning transfer.

• Evaluation: Students are assessed for achieving the learning outcomes of the course, as reflected in the course written and oral assignments and reflections. The community-evaluated student service may constitute part of the grade. Faculty members are assisted in developing assessment tools by the Center for Learning and Teaching in collaboration with ACE.

J. Risk Management
From: National Service Learning Clearinghouse
Risk includes the potential for physical or psychological harm. To avoid health and legal liability, risk management procedures need to be considered before starting any service-learning experience. If all participants are adequately informed and oriented, the risk management process will only serve to strengthen community-campus partnerships by furthering mutual trust and understanding.

Conduct a thorough review of potential risks before embarking upon the service learning experience. Discuss your questions and concerns with your community agency partners and campus colleagues.

This assessment might include such questions as:
• What are the potential risks to service-learners of having contact with agency clients?
• What are the potential risks to service-learners of traveling to and from their homes, the campus and the agency?
• What are the potential risks to agency staff and clients of having student service-learners on-site, and how might they be minimized?
• How is confidentiality of students, agency staff, and clients assured?

The Components of a Risk Management Program
Site Visits: Visit with your community partner and talk through the questions posed above. Meet with your community partners after the service-learning experience has ended, to “debrief” about the experience from the risk management and liability standpoints - what would you do differently next time?

Supervision: Having adequate supervision on-site and in the community - whether an agency staff member, volunteer, campus faculty or campus staff - will help to create a safe environment for service-learning.

Orientation: Risk management and liability issues should be covered in your project’s orientation for participating students. When orienting students, provide a summary handout with checklists, appropriate forms, and emergency contact information.

Communication: Open, frequent and clear lines of communication are key to reducing risks in service-learning. Frequent communication with your community partners should help to identify any issues or concerns and to address them early in the process.
• Entrance into community: It is important for those working with the community to have knowledge of that community. This preparation will decrease the possibility of inappropriate behavior while working with the community. Establishing trust at the beginning with the agency and the community will lead to a more enriching experience.
• Exit of community: Community exit should bring a sense of successful completion. The community should be prepared for the exit, with no unfinished or messy work left behind. The service delivered should be sustainable, with the community empowered to continue the work, or continue to make use of the service.
• Involvement of community in planning and decision-making: Community based learning can be described as a two way street — where the students serve the community, but at the same time learn from the community. Members of the community are aware of the issues that should be addressed and therefore, play an important role in planning and decision-making.
• Responsibility: Commitment to service, integrity, punctuality, respect.
• Appropriate dress and behavior: those working in the community should dress modestly. The agency or community partner may clarify particular dress expectations that are culture-sensitive. In addition, students should wear appropriate dress when working on improvement or beautification projects.
• Empowering community for sustainability: This is achieved by involving the community in planning and decision-making.
• Flexibility: constant communication with community and flexibility in providing service.

2. COMMUNITY PARTNERS
A. Index
All community partner’s contact names and information are listed on the CBL website at

B. Placement criteria

From Principles of Service-Learning Practice in PRAXIS I: A Faculty Casebook on Community Service-Learning by Jeffery Howard.

The range of service placements should to be circumscribed by the content of the course. Furthermore, the duration of the service must be sufficient to enable the fulfillment of learning goals. Three guidelines regarding the setting of placement criteria:

1.) First, responsibility for insuring that placement criteria are established that will enable the best student learning rests with the faculty, with the assistance of the CBL program.

2.) The learning goals established for the course will be helpful in informing the placement criteria.

3.) Faculty who utilize the CBL Office on campus to assist with identifying criteria satisfying community agencies will reduce their start-up labor costs.

3. COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING ASSESSMENT
A. Institutional Outcomes
CBL courses enhance AUC’s institutional learning outcomes:
Communication skills (audience sensitivity, multimodality, knowledge creation, interdisciplinary synthesis)
• Higher cognitive skills  
  o (creative problem-solving, critical evaluation)
• Life-long learning  
  o (career preparation, interpersonal, group work)
• Global perspective  
  o (personal/social development, authentic cultural context)
• Virtues  
  o (service and work values, ethical development)
• Leadership skills  
  o (team work)

B. Student Learning and Experience
Student learning may be assessed directly or indirectly:

K. Community-Based Learning Ethics

Direct assessment
Quizzes, research papers, presentations, reflection tasks, classroom assessment techniques, portfolios.

Indirect assessment
Pre, mid and post-surveys of student perceptions and attitudes. Small group instructional diagnosis. The Center for Learning and Teaching will assist in the design of assessment tools, administration and analysis of surveys, conducting of small group instructional diagnosis sessions, as well as the creation of online reflection blogs. * Sample assessment surveys are appended.

C. Student Service
Student service is often evaluated by members of the community, by peers, or through reflection. A sample survey for community evaluation of student work is appended, and reflection exercises are outlined in the section below.

D. The Role of Reflection
From: David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle:

1. Class Discussions (Structured): This is a technique where faculty create questions to guide group discussion in the classroom. Use structured reflection sessions during regular class time and throughout the course, if all students are involved in service, or modify class discussions if some students are not in service. Students can learn about the diversity of services and populations, see connections between different populations and agencies, collectively share successes and problem-solve challenges at their sites, and learn about societal patterns.

2. Photo Essay: This is an alternative approach to reflection, which allows students to use their figurative and literal “lenses” to view their service experience and how it relates to the classroom. This is a good final project/presentation technique. Students use photographs to reflect on their service experience and can weave a main theme or concept learned in class to actual photo documents. These projects are also excellent ones to share with the campus community, the service sites, for year-end celebrations, or college and other local publications.

3. Group Exercises: Faculty can use group exercises throughout their courses, and can create their own variations in order to draw out from students the cognitive and emotional reactions to course content and the service experience. Below is just one example.

Values Continuum - Faculty can use this exercise to assist students in clarifying their values and exploring the knowledge base for student opinions. This exercise can be used anytime during the course.

Community-Based Learning Capstones Courses
At the 300 and 400-level, CBL courses count towards capstone. Capstone courses are a culmination of learning, demonstrating thorough knowledge of disciplinary content, as well as the higher thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, application and evaluation. CBL Capstones need Gerhart Center approval to acquire a designation in the course catalog and student transcripts, marked
Name each corner of the classroom as follows: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Name the middle of the room as Neutral. Instruct students to go to the place in the room for which they most identify after you read certain statements. Faculty can create questions based on classroom content and/or the service experience. For example, faculty may say, “I believe that individual rights are more important than the rights of the larger community,” or “I believe that service to a community is the responsibility of all citizens,” or “I believe our government has the responsibility to solve world problems.” Once students have gone to their respective places, allow time for students to discuss with other group members their reasons for standing where they are. Have each group report back their reasons for why they believe what they do, and then allow others to “switch” to a different group if they have changed their minds. Continue discussion, and then repeat the process for as long as time allows.

4. Email Discussion Groups: Through e-mail, students can create a dialogue with the instructor and peers involved in service projects. This dialogue can be ongoing (weekly) or directed at certain times throughout the course. Students write summaries and identify critical incidents that occurred at the service site. Students can rotate as a moderator of the discussion every two weeks.

Instructors can post questions for consideration and topics for directed writings. A log can be printed to provide data about group learning that occurred from the service experience. Students are able to connect with other students about issues at their sites, help each other solve problems, identify patterns in their service learning, and have open discussions about societal issues. Faculty may not want to grade content from these discussion groups, but provide incentives for all students to participate.

5. Experiential Research Paper: An experiential research paper, based on Kolb’s experiential learning cycle, is a formal paper that asks students to identify a particular experience at the service site and analyzes that experience within the broader context in order to make recommendations for change. Mid-semester, faculty ask students to identify an underlying social issue they have encountered at the service site. Students then research the social issue and read three to five articles on the topic. Based on their experience and library research, students make recommendations for future action. This reflection activity is useful in interdisciplinary courses and provides students flexibility within their disciplinary interests and expertise to pursue issues experienced at the service site. Class presentations of the experiential research paper can culminate semester work.