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BULETIN APB

EDISI 16

Jun 2026

AKADEMI PENGAJIAN BAHASA
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA
CAWANGAN NEGERI SEMBILAN
KAMPUS SEREMBAN

Aligning Student USR Initiatives with Sustainable Development Goals: Evidence of *Kayuhan Kayak Persisiran Pantai Port Dickson*

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University Social Responsibility (USR) and service-learning are now more deeply integrated into higher education as methods for developing socially responsible graduates and encouraging community involvement. Universities are now expected to expand their roles beyond knowledge transmission to actively contribute to societal development by fostering structured student involvement in USR and community-based initiatives. A study by Asrar-ul-Haq, Raza, and Akhtar (2025) indicates that university social responsibility initiatives significantly enhance student engagement, social behaviour, and value formation, highlighting their importance in shaping responsible citizenship. Student participation in service-learning and community engagement activities contributes positively to the development of social skills, civic responsibility, and critical awareness of societal issues (Azmina & Nasreen, 2020). Previous literature reviews further confirm that such initiatives facilitate the development of transferable skills, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving, while simultaneously strengthening university-community partnerships (Margarita et al., 2024).

A group of students from the Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR), UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Seremban, participated in the *Kayuhan Kayak Persisiran Pantai Port Dickson* in 2025. By applying academic knowledge in real-world settings, students help enhance community awareness, skills, and problem-solving capabilities. This program provides significant benefits to communities through knowledge transfer, capacity building, and social intervention initiatives.

Benefits of Student USR Initiatives

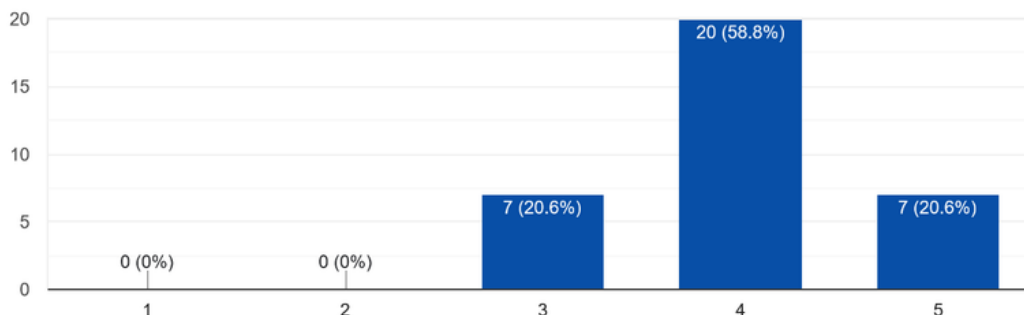
1. Problem-solving.

Problem-solving is a critical competency in implementing USR programmes involving university students, as it enables the identification and resolution of complex, real-world community issues. *Kayuhan Kayak Persisiran Pantai Port Dickson* has benefited the group of students, participants, and the local community by raising awareness and a sense of responsibility for environmental cleanliness, which is the main attraction for tourism to Pantai Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan. It provides participants with exposure to the real situation along the coastline, which is littered with garbage due to the irresponsible actions of a few individuals. Indirectly, this programme helps restore the scenery and supports the sustainability of local tourism. This programme is a small initiative to promote domestic tourism and support Visit Malaysia Year (TMM) 2026. Consequently, problem-solving not only strengthens the impact of USR programmes but also promotes sustainable community development and empowerment.

Regarding problem identification and analysis, the majority of students rated it as "good" (score of 4), accounting for 58.8% ($n = 20$) of the sample. The remaining responses showed a symmetrical distribution, with 20.6% ($n = 7$) of participants selecting a score of 3 ("satisfactory") and 20.6% ($n = 7$) selecting a score of 5 ("excellent"). This shows that the programme helps students improve their abilities in critical situations.

Saya berkebolehan mengenal pasti dan menganalisis masalah dalam situasi kompleks dan kabur, serta membuat penilaian yang berjustifikasi

34 responses



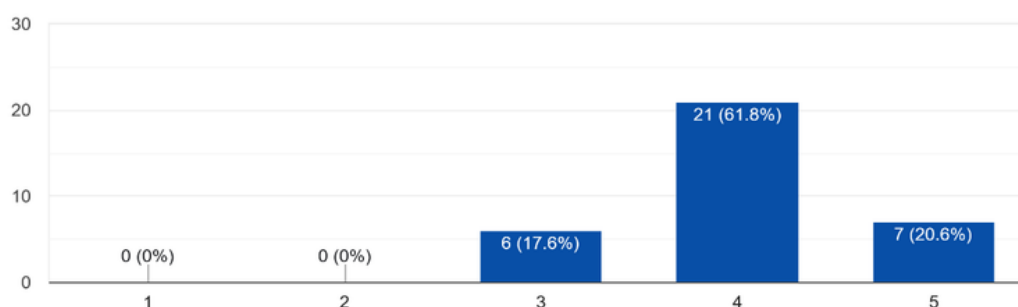
2. Thinking skills.

USR programmes serve as experiential learning platforms that significantly contribute to the development of students' thinking skills. Through direct engagement with real-world community issues, students are required to apply critical and analytical thinking to assess needs, interpret data, and identify underlying problems. Designing and implementing USR initiatives further develops students' creativity and problem-solving skills by requiring them to create practical, context-specific solutions.

This is supported by findings indicating a high level of skill acquisition in the sample: 61.8% (n=21) of students scored 4 (good), followed by 20.6% (n=7) who scored 5 (very good). The lowest level of successful acquisition was reported by 17.6% (n=6) of respondents, who rated it 3 (satisfactory). This suggests that the majority of students can develop and improve their thinking skills through the academic programmes delivered.

Saya berkebolehan mengembangkan dan memperbaiki kemahiran berfikir seperti menjelaskan, menganalisis dan menilai perbincangan

34 responses

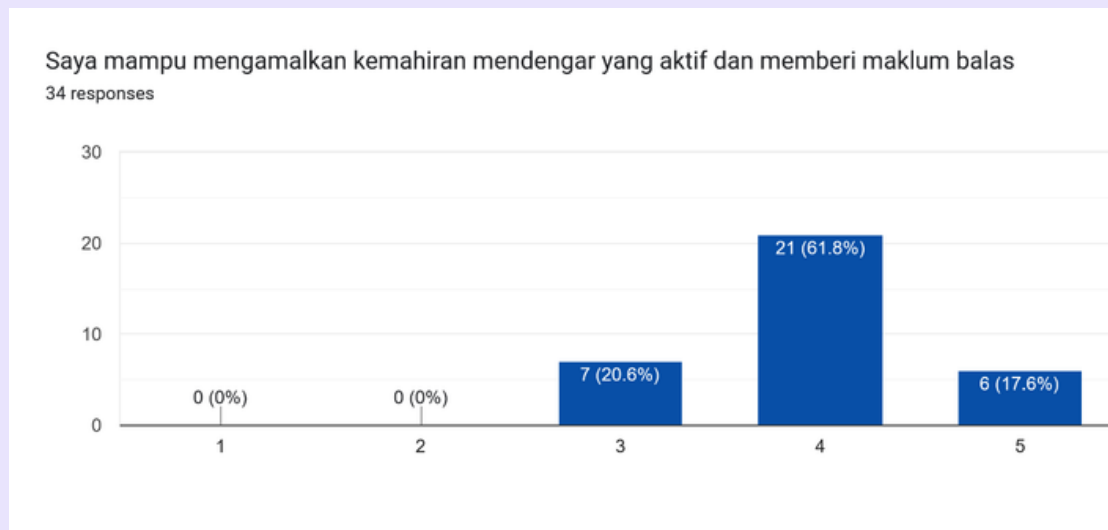


3. Active listening and immediate feedback.

Active listening and immediate feedback are essential communication competencies for implementing USR programmes involving university students. Active listening enables students to accurately understand community needs, build trust, and ensure culturally sensitive engagement, thereby reducing the risk of misaligned interventions. It also facilitates collaborative problem-solving, enabling communities to actively co-create sustainable solutions. Meanwhile, immediate feedback plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of USR initiatives by enabling real-time evaluation and timely

adjustments to program implementation. This dynamic interaction not only improves project outcomes but also strengthens community engagement and student learning. Collectively, these communication practices ensure that USR programmes are responsive, inclusive, and impactful in addressing real-world challenges.

The table below indicates that the USR programme helps students improve their active listening skills and provides immediate feedback. This is evidenced by the data layout, in which the largest proportion of participants (61.8%, $n = 21$) rated component 4 (good). This was supplemented by 20.6% ($n = 7$) who assigned a score of 3 (satisfactory) and 17.6% ($n = 6$) who assigned a score of 5 (excellent).



In conclusion, USR programmes have significant potential to enhance student development and community well-being. To realise this, universities should prioritise needs-based, community-driven initiatives, underpinned by active listening and continuous feedback, to ensure relevance and inclusivity. Integrating USR into academic curricula through service-learning can further strengthen students' critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills while generating meaningful real-world outcomes. Finally, implementing structured monitoring and evaluation frameworks is essential for measuring impact, improving programme effectiveness, and ensuring that USR initiatives remain responsive, evidence-based, and beneficial to both students and society.

References

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