

Budding Skills, Blooming Friendships: An Inclusive Service Learning Programme Involving Students With and Without Disabilities

Joanora Ng Swee Lan

Nova Agustin Dimarucot

Abstract

This paper describes the design, development and implementation of a service learning programme involving students with and without disabilities in Singapore. Five students from the Horticulture course at the Association for Persons with Special Needs Delta Senior School (APSN DSS), a vocational special education school for persons with mild intellectual disability aged 17 to 21 and a group of their non-disabled counterparts from mainstream schools identified by REACH Youth, a community agency that serves young people at risk, came together over a period of eight weeks to learn floriculture skills under the guidance of expert mentors. This collaboration, which culminated in two community projects, saw both groups of students acquiring new skills and building friendships. This paper draws on the perspectives of the youths and adults involved in the programme to underscore its benefits and identify the challenges experienced in the course of its implementation, concluding with an outline of future plans for the programme.