



Department of Applied Social Studies Serves the Society



"Lord, please give us strength", are you always have this prayer? Have you ever blamed God, not really give you strength? I'm always curious how God "pass me strength". It is an interesting question. At least, I think, is there any button to switch on then there are strengths to me? Thanks! My friend, your always has a happy face while you are suffering pain. You use more energy to walk. And you are brave and not dare to fall down. Why you could do it?! I'm so naive... God, thank you for this beautiful friendship to us. And strengths are coming through it.



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(from the cover page)

Reflections from a **Social Work Graduate** Volunteering in **Ghana**

In 2012 August, I joined the project named “Endowment for Youth Global Development” (EYGD) from the Breakthrough Ltd. Two of the elements are transformational growth and cultural and social understanding. These are really attractive to me after being a social worker in ethnic minority family service field for four years following my graduation from CityU. Following my work experience after graduation, I was eager to have more growth and improvement to do my work well.

During my work in the ethnic minorities services, it cultivated me have more interests about how to serve with diversity cultural background people. I found my knowledge is very limited. However, I was so grateful that my previous service users were always willing to share and teach me about their own cultures. This built a good base for my cultural sensitivity in the services and daily life. In my work, I have seen many different unjust discrimination towards ethnic minorities. Therefore, many struggles happened and triggered my desire to learn more about different cultures so as to equip myself to be able to serve globally.

In my first trip to Ghana, my teammates are from different professions in Hong Kong, like doctor, accountant, researcher, engineering, social worker, and lawyer. I benefit a lot from this team. So I can widen my thoughts with different perspectives. Especially, my team inspired me a lot about

the macro perspective in the global development. Apart from the social development symposium, we also provided the fun day with local Ghanaian primary students. It is so much fun to play with them. Now, I still could remember all their pure smiling faces. This also let me know, being happy can just be so simple.

However, what impressed me the most was when I went to visit a rural village. There was a group of children sat under a big tree, and there was only a small blackboard. This is their classroom. The responsible people told us, they will find the support and save the money. So the first year, they can get a blackboard and simple chairs; second year, they can build the wall; third year, they can build the roof... From their eyes, I could see that they are not going to give up easily as they truly want to provide education for their next generation, even if it is very limited or the quality may not be so good.

When I returned to Hong Kong from Ghana, I reflected a lot about my first trip. Life can be very simple. Without some so-called necessary goods I can still survive. The African children, so pure and energetic, put happiness rooted deep in my heart. But the core question is... even though they do not have so much, they have very strong power to love each other. So, how about me?



I resigned from my social work post and decided to serve in Ghana again as volunteer for half a year. I am very blessed to have a second chance to come to Ghana again. Now I am working with a Hong Kong Christian Missionaries Couple. They have been in Ghana for 26 years, devoting their lives to Ghanaians, building schools and churches for the poor. I work for their school now, just like a school social worker. My work is to help identify children with learning difficulties, or behaviour problems caused by family crises. Usually, I work with the local teacher to pay home visits. Through the partnership, we teach the teachers the basic ideas of children with special learning difficulties, how to do the home visits and learn some basic counselling skills. Recently, we have three Belgian students who are studying in social care work who came to our school for an exchange, so I have a new role, act as their placement mentor; to share and be their ally here.

Here, everyday there are new stories for me. When I work with the local families here, I am truly thankful to all CityU teachers: Dr TY Lee, Dr PK Kam, Mak Sir, Dr. Kathy Leung, Mr Joannes Lee, and Dr Elaine Au. You all really nurtured my good base and values of being a social worker. Though, the more I work here, the more I want to learn. I work very hard now, keep reading information about

cultures, SEN (special educational needs) etc., I feel as if I just know so little, and I also regret not working harder while at university!! Haha...

You know, I am very happy here. I do like to be a social worker. Seems that my dreams come true to be a global social worker here; in other words, work without boundaries. In my previous work with ethnic minority families in Hong Kong, this experience was like a seed building and growing in my heart. I truly like to work with people with different colours: it nurtured my passion to learn more about how cultural differences affect human services.

Working in Africa really widens my horizons and was a shock to my value system as well. But I have to thank God, he brings me back to Ghana, through everyday life, every single story, every encounter with different cultures, truly strengthens me. I learn humbly here every moment.

The organization Breakthrough Ltd is organizing a second trip to Ghana. This year they are targeting the university students. Please see the link: <http://www.breakthrough.org.hk/uploaded/263>

ALL the Best! Good Day!

Vanessa TSANG, Wing Han
Graduate of BSocSc Social Work



City-Youth Empowerment Project

From Social Inclusion to Social Inclusion: A Compass for CYEP's Service-Learning Model



Social inclusion has become an increasingly critical agenda in the public arena, including the international policy realms. Embracing diversity has become a social buzzword, yet much effort merely rests on promoting social harmony without getting to the core of how structural and systemic obstacles and socially-exclusive values are obstructing social inclusion. Social inclusion cannot only be oriented in service, it also needs to be rooted in change-oriented volunteer participation. Our guiding principle is to “serve, learn, and change” - is to implement holistic service-learning experiences that are geared toward the learning and change-inducing aspects of building a more inclusive society for marginalized individuals and groups. Through our long-term partnerships with community-based organizations, a network has formed for students to engage in social causes that promote changes in relation to social inclusion. Throughout the past year, CYEP has planned and designed our service learning program to foster an integration between the university platform and marginalized groups in our community -

Active Participation for Hidden Elderly

A population that warrants urgent social attention is the elderly. Through the partnership with Neighborhood Advice-Action Council, CYEP works with a group of “hidden” elderly who live alone and have difficulties in integrating into the community. The service is a social participation that crisscrosses the youth and the elderly, past and present, and allows the elderly to take on an active role of the “well of wisdom”, passing on life experiences, personal narratives,

and hopes for younger generations – instead of the passive role only to be served and helped. Overtime, the elderly will find ways to express their gratitude and to participate more proactively. The participatory role provides the elderly a continuity of social role to foster competence and recognition. Volunteers can also learn about their history through the elderly’s narrative of their past, which is a valuable form of oral history. The volunteers gain the opportunity to witness and assess living situations of the elderly, to learn about how social policy, community responses and individual factors combined can affect elderly’s access to necessary resources and quality of life.

The Circle of Disability Rights

CYEP understands the importance of advocacy in promoting social inclusion for people with disabilities – apart from participating in a mentoring service at a residential school with disabled youth (Hong Kong Red Cross Princess Alexandra School, Lam Tin), CYEP is also involved in the advocacy of the Alliance of Public Transport Concessionary Fare for the Disabled, in which volunteers performed interviews with all key persons who have been instrumental in the 10-year “fight” for the public transport concessionary fare, to help transfer the history and experiences into writing for the alliance’s publication. Volunteers were able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the history of disability rights advocacy – and to connect the dots, volunteers who interviewed the key lobbying figures gave a presentation of their interviewing findings to the youth at the residential school. CYEP acted as the liaison to invite the Chairman of the alliance, who is also a person who lives with disability himself, to meet with the youth at the residential school. It was very observable that the youth felt empowered to be



able to connect with a social activist who also lives with the same struggles. The connection amongst the disabled youth, volunteers, the alliance - has formed a circle of activism on the issue of disability rights.

Social Integration for Ethnic Minority Youth

The challenges and barriers ethnic minority youth face in social integration are not news to us. The common activities that are geared toward celebrating cultural diversity, although well-meaning, are not enough to truly transform this “social



dreadlock” that ethnic-minorities are facing – especially in the academic and employment areas where the Chinese language has become a major barrier in open examinations, further education, and the job market. Through volunteers’ participation, CYEP offers regular and ongoing Chinese tutoring workshops for ethnic minority children and youth, to aid both their school and everyday usage. For youth who are nearing their high school graduation, CYEP provides future planning workshop that tackles basic career planning and job search skills such as resume and cover letter writing, interview skills, and completing job applications, etc. CYEP’s “Let’s Talk About Our Future Workshop” invites CityU alumni to work alongside volunteers to provide career planning and basic job search skills. The relationships formed among the ethnic minority youth, CityU volunteers, and alumni provide these youth a larger social platform for the kind of integration that will structurally shift them into a different social plain for new possibilities.



Social Integration for the Homeless

Since 2005, the Dawn soccer team of Hong Kong (organized by Society for Community Organization) has been participating in the yearly Homeless World Cup. Made up of formerly and currently homeless individuals, members of the Dawn soccer team all acknowledged the sense of empowerment sports can generate. The homeless population is one of the most desolate, stigmatized, and neglected social phenomena in Hong Kong. CYEP volunteers have formed a City-Younited soccer team to host regular games with Dawn soccer team, forming a community-to-community relationship through soccer, and to integrate the homeless community group into the platform of CityU. Volunteers who are usually in the roles of mentors, are in turned ‘mentored’ by the homeless adults, on this social issue – together with their life experiences, struggles, and resilience. To expand the scope beyond sports, volunteers will also assist in conducting a city-wide homeless count



and survey in the summer, under the guidance of three non-governmental organizations that currently provide the homeless supportive services and advocacy work on issues related to homelessness. Through this, students will learn about the history and background of the emergence of homelessness in Hong Kong, to gain further understanding of the issue’s structural roots that require systemic changes, rather than understanding it on just the individual level – to view it as an issue of social injustice rather than mere predicaments caused by individual failings.

Soulcial Inclusion

To celebrate the year’s work with our volunteers and community partners, our annual Happy Carnival was themed “Soulcial Inclusion,” an acknowledgement to our goal and work on social inclusion. The carnival was dedicated to – our hope on building a just and inclusive society, where all marginalized and underprivileged groups feel included, and their needs and wishes



respected. Specific attention was drawn to the “connection of our soul and a just and inclusive society”. Activities at the carnival were all designed along this theme – including Soul Music Jam (an African drum circle), Soul Jam (art jamming), Soul Train (dance), and a collective painting activity for all attendees to express their ideas of social inclusion through visual media. The underlying message of this event was to use the media of music, art, and dance – to break down communication and interaction barriers, so participants from different cultural backgrounds, of different abilities – can join in and feel included.

To access our project’s video on Soulcial Inclusion please visit the following link: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/hskne3983mzs39s/carnival%2013%20video.wmv>

By Ms Constance Ching, Project Officer

Project X: Learning Excellence (Project X)

Exhibitions and Mini-workshops on Community Awareness Projects

By Ms Stephanie Lai, Project Officer, Project X



To provide a platform for students to consolidate and share what they have learnt from Community Awareness Projects, Project X has organized an exhibition and mini-workshops on 18-22 March, 2013 at CityU AC2 Atrium (G/F).

As one of the core teaching and learning activities of Project X, Community Awareness Project is designed to bridge academic learning with real life issues in the community, which ultimately promoting a sense of responsibility and citizenship among the students. By discovering different community issues of their interests, designing and organizing the projects creatively and innovatively, students will acquire better understanding of the local issues, establish their connections to the community, and improve their interpersonal and communication skills.

Under the guidance and support of Project X staff, around 60 year one to three students from the Department of Applied Social Studies initiated three Community Awareness Projects this year. During the exhibition, students shared

their learning experience from various community projects, such as “My Family Stories – Community Art Project”, “Fair Trade Ambassadors (FTA) Programme” and “Mainland and Hong Kong Families”. They also demonstrated the skills they have learnt in the mini-workshops, of which the workshops on Coffee Ground and Fotomo were well attended by students and staff from other departments.

Student Sharing, Hui Lee Yan, Leanne (BSSPSY, Year 1)



It has been a year that I graduated from high school. Studying in a university is a completely different story from studying in a high school, which highly requires maturity and commitment. To me, I found it easy to settle down in CityU, not only because I am a cheerful and easy going person, I think it is mainly because I have participated in various kinds of Project X activities, especially the Community Awareness Projects. They helped me not only enhance my academic performance, but also to develop my potential and expertise



in other areas. The Project X staff gave me a helping hand whenever I needed them, which has helped me to adapt to the university life effortlessly.

On the other hand, I also appreciate the effort given by the people from the Community Awareness Project “My Family Stories – Community Art Project”. I have learnt so much about the people in rural areas of Hong Kong. Their community is permeated with friendliness, the simple

lifestyle and satisfying mindsets which the local people have is not comparable with the urban citizen’s rush and tiring lifestyle. I had a chance to have a chat with an elderly lady about her daily life and I found out that she is very optimistic and cares a little of the unfairness. From that, I have learnt to be grateful for what we are given, that less arguing can always bring us more happiness.

Student Sharing, Leung Lok Man, Iris (BSSPSY, Year 3)

Through joining the Community Awareness Project “My Family Stories – Community Art Project”, I have gained better understanding of different characteristics of the local communities in Hong Kong, especially those in the northern district, which is often ignored. I could truly experience how their communities unite a group of residents as a whole family with closed bond to cope with different problems. The living style there is much warmer than those in the cities that I appreciated and would like to learn from. However, it is a pity that they will be replaced by other new urban development. Though urban renewal can cope with the population problems, the unique community style will be vanished.

Apart from the site visits to the north district of Hong Kong, I have also learnt more about different communities where my teammates and I live through the reflection of previous things about our neighborhoods and making fotomos for the residents living in the north district during the workshops. Last but not least, I have got the experience of organizing an exhibition and workshop in this CAP. I found it very useful to my career development and personal growth as I could enhance my skills in communication and programme planning.

Words from the Head

It is with great honour that I accepted the appointment as Head of Department, with effect from w.e.f. May 1, 2013. From now till mid-2016, I will be working alongside my colleagues, Associate Head: Professor Samuel Ho, and two Assistant Heads: Dr. T.Y. Lee and Dr. Elaine Au to serve the department. Dr. T.Y. Lee is in charge of academic programme administration and development, and Dr Elaine Au is in charge of student life and learning, and community outreach.

I am delighted to announce the launch of the Nam Shan Service Complex, with the name "SS Laboratories," which is located at the Nam Shan Estate Car Park and houses an impressive variety of psychology and social work laboratories. Psychology laboratories include Health and Clinical Psychology Lab, Cognitive Psychology Lab, and Biological Psychology Lab among others, and we take pride over the state-of-the-art research instruments (e.g. EEG, eye tracker, virtual reality machines etc.) within our labs. Social Work laboratories provide an abundance of space for social outreach and supervised practice for our students. Students will have copious opportunities to practice their newly acquired individual and group counselling and community work skills under close supervision.

In order to facilitate Social Work graduates to register as a social worker, we have changed the teaching mode of our Master of Social Work program and strengthened its professional training by providing a supervised fieldwork practicum to students. The School of Graduate Studies has approved such major changes and it is expected that the first cohort of students will be recruited in the coming September 2013.

The CityU Social Work Alumni Association was formed last year. It has recently organized two activities enthusiastically attended by current and past students. The seminar on Action Therapy conducted by Professor Wing Lo in May 2013 was delivered as a kind of special

counselling variety show, while our social work graduate, Keswick Chuk, organized a workshop on outreach social work in June 2013.

The Psychology programme recently celebrated its tenth anniversary with an alumni dinner gathering. A few retired faculty members, including Professor Ng Sik Hung and Dr. David Lok, and our External Academic Advisor, Professor Peter K. Smith, from Goldsmith College, University of London, also attended the gathering. We were delighted to see many familiar faces, who have recently formed an Alumni Association to connect psychology graduates of various cohorts.

The department under new leadership is going into a new era. We would like you to join us to continue our mission of providing quality professional education, innovative research and knowledge transfer activities.



Prof. Wing Lo
Head, SS Dept