City-Youth Empowerment Project

Community Empowerment through

Integration of Service, Learning, and Research
Project Overview:
A non-credit bearing service-learning project open to all students at the City University of Hong Kong

- established in 2005
- To mobilize students to serve the underprivileged
- To learn civic and global social commitment
- To integrate community practice-oriented knowledge to the academic field

“Serve, Learn, and Change”
Over 30 community organization partnerships

- underprivileged children and youth
  - affected by poverty, new arrivals status, ethnic minority status, minor crime, and disabilities
- hidden elderly
- mental health consumers
- the homeless
- actively involved in environmental protection and disability rights
Participatory Action Research

“Serve, Learn, and Change”

As part of the transformative pedagogical experience, students’ active participation in the research process is highly valued, which represents a rich “transaction” of social and academic exchanges.
Research goals are the convergent & cyclical outcomes of the students, communities, and academic institution – *Community Focused*

with a focus on bringing academic learning to the community, and community-based research into the academic institutions.
Research Areas

1. Definition of volunteerism
2. Motives Behind Volunteering
3. Group Matching – Young Adults working with children
1. Who is a Volunteer and Why does it Matter?
A Cultural and Temporal Exploration on the Definition of Volunteerism
Definition of volunteerism may seem self-evident, the literature on volunteerism does not offer a consensus on a single definition.

Contemporary volunteerism harbors a wide range of social agendas:
e.g.
- participants who take part in fundraising marathons
- corporate social responsibility schemes
- community service orders for minor crimes and first offenders
- academic service learning programs
Most research has focused on two main areas of volunteerism....

1) the causes (motives) that lead people to volunteer (Carlo, Okun, Knight, & de Guzman, 2005; Clary et al., 1998; Finklestein, Penner, & Brannick, 2005; Mannino, Snyder, & Omoto, 2011)

2) the impact of volunteering (Chim, 2006; Degli Antoni, 2009; Fraser et al., 2009; Hong & Morrow-Howell, 2010)
Past research on volunteerism is predominantly conducted with western samples.

East-West divergence: the individual-collectivism dimension (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002; Cheung, Tang, & Yan, 2006)

Chinese culture’s focus on family centers around in-group collectivism.

Much of volunteerism consists of out-group helping.
The gamut of definitional attempts....

- voluntary giving of time and skills to deliver services or tasks with no financial reward expected
- activities in which time is given freely to benefit another person or group
- a choice to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary profit
- a helping act that is deemed valuable yet is not aimed at material gain or mandated by others
Cnaan et al. (1996) synthesized an exhaustive range of definitions, most definitions are based on four key dimensions:

1. voluntary nature
2. nature of reward
3. Organizational nature
4. identity of (proximity to) the beneficiaries

(Cnaan et al., 1996; Handy et al., 2000)
The voluntary nature

Broad type

- Obligation to Volunteer

Pure type

- Action out of complete free will

The nature of the reward

- Remuneration
  - Non-monetary reward (certificates, ceremonial recognition)
- Action out of complete free will

The structure under which the activity is performed

- Neighbors / Friends
  - Ad hoc / informal help offered to the community
- Organized service under formal structure

The identity of the beneficiaries

- Personal relationships and ties
- Groups with similar background (e.g. self-help groups)
- Unfamiliar population
Cnaan’s 1996 study vs. Local Study 2012 (21 items ranking, 16 years apart)

- 514 respondents from two east coast cities in the US

- In the public eye the net cost (relative costs minus benefits) is the determinant of who is a volunteer

Method
218 students of Chinese descent enrolled in CYEP
28.7% male, 71.3% female
Table 1: Respondents’ perception of “Who is a volunteer?” sorted by ascending value of the means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cnna et al.’s study</th>
<th>Present sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N=514)</td>
<td>(N=218)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An adult who offers his or her time to be a Big Brother or Big Sister.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The home owner who helps create a crime watch group to safeguard his or her own neighborhood.</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teenager who presents a program about youth leadership to an audience of peers at a religious youth conference.</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of Alcoholic Anonymous who leads an AA meeting every week.</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who is ill with cystic fibrosis and who participates in a pharmaceutical study to determine the effectiveness of a new drug in treating the disease.</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hourly wage worker who, by his or her own choice works overtime without pay.</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent who becomes a scout leader because of his or her child’s desire to be a scout. No one else will lead the troop, and so the parent agrees, but only as long as the child is involved.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A child who assists in setting up booths at the volunteer fair because one of his parents is a volunteer administrator and asks him or her to help.</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A teenager who offers to program the computer at a nonprofit agency, without pay, to establish “resume experience.” After 3 months, the teenager plans to quit and apply for a paying job.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student who is doing a community service project as part of a high school graduation requirement.</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A college student enrolled in the National and Community Service program who gives his time to Big Brother or Big Sister and receives a stipend and partial forgiveness of tuition.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainer who does a free workshop for an organization as a marketing device.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A college student doing community service who is enrolled in the National and Community Service program and receives a stipend and partial forgiveness of tuition.</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An IBM executive who is granted a year of social service leave with pay to become a temporary staff person with a nonprofit organization.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assistant to the chief executive officer of a local corporation who is volunteer chairperson of the United Way campaign and who does the job for his or her boss.</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The paid staff person who serves on the board of a nonprofit group in a slot that is reserved for his or her agency.</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person who takes care of a spouse’s children from a previous marriage (stepparenting).</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The medical doctor who delivers a research paper at a conference held by the American Medical Association.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The chief executive officer of a local corporation who is volunteer chairperson of the United Way campaign and who delegates all the work to his assistant.</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 6-month-old baby who accompanies his or her parents to visit seniors at a nursing home.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An accountant charged with embezzling who accepts a sentence of 250 hours of community service in lieu of prison.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

- Both samples show the same first and last items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cnaan et al.’s study (N=514)</th>
<th>Present sample (N=218)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An adult who offers his or her time to be a Big Brother or Big Sister.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An accountant charged with embezzling who accepts a sentence of 250 hours of community service in lieu of prosecution.</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top five items of the Western sample (Cnaan et al., 1996) appeared in the top six items of the local sample.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cnaan et al.’s study (N=514)</th>
<th>Present sample (N=218)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An adult who offers his or her time to be a Big Brother or Big Sister.</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The home owner who helps create a crime watch group to safeguard his or her own neighborhood.</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teenager who presents a program about youth leadership to an audience of peers at a religious youth conference.</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A member of Alcoholic Anonymous who leads an AA meeting every week.</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who is ill with cystic fibrosis and who participates in a pharmaceutical study to determine the effectiveness of a new drug in treating the disease.</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But which is the most salient dimension?

Further analysis
(Schatzman’s dimensional analysis)
to identify the salient dimension(s) only by their purist form

‘VRSB’ Dimension Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Pure Forms</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary nature of the act</td>
<td>Voluntary, free will</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of reward</td>
<td>No monetary or material reward</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of structure</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity of the beneficiaries</td>
<td>Unfamiliar population, no personal ties/interests</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Top six ranked items (local study) with salient dimensions identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>V dimensional purity (Voluntary/Free will)</th>
<th>R dimensional purity (No Reward)</th>
<th>S dimensional purity (Organized)</th>
<th>B dimensional purity (Unfamiliar Population, no personal ties)</th>
<th>Salient Dimensions Identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>An adult who offers his or her time to be a Big Brother or Big Sister.</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>V, R, S, B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The homeowner who helps create a crime watch group to safeguard his or her own neighborhood.</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>V, R, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The teenager who presents a program about youth leadership to an audience of peers at a religious youth conference.</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>V, R, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A member of Alcoholic Anonymous who leads an AA meeting every week.</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>V, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The person who is ill with cystic fibrosis and who participates in a pharmaceutical study to determine the effectiveness of a new drug in treating the disease.</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>V, S, B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A child who assists in setting up booths at the volunteer fair because one of his parents is a volunteer administrator and asks him or her to help.</td>
<td>Relevant/Marginal</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>Salient</td>
<td>R, S, B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hierarchy of dimensional importance to defining volunteerism

- (S) Organized Structure
- (V) Voluntary Nature
- (R) Non-remunerative
- (B) Strangers as Beneficiaries (no personal ties)
“it is not enough just to understand why a person decides to volunteer; one must consider the characteristics of the organization in which the volunteering takes place, the exchanges between the individual volunteers and the organization, and the changes in these relationships over time” – Penner, 2004

- **Internal: Organizational support**
  - The “person-in-environment” / interactionist view differentiated itself from the motivational/functionalist
  - the interactions between organizational influence and individual variables have much influence on sustaining volunteers’ level of satisfaction and resultant volunteer persistence (Penner 2002)
  - helps design organizational structures that motivate volunteers and sustain their commitment
External: Community Connections

- all effective volunteer work relies on reaching the right target groups or serving the intended functions in social causes through community-based organizations

- many grass-roots advocacy or community organization work starts off as voluntary community efforts to answer to changes called for by the community

- organized structure of volunteer projects often have various levels of embedded relations with constituencies ranging from community-based organizations, state-funded non-profit agencies, to government agencies - or even international humanitarian institutions – holds accountability in check
Practice Implications

- Pure form as guiding principle
- Defining volunteerism is not an either/or dichotomy – but depends on degree and context
- Deviations from the purist form can be used purposefully. Examples:

1. **Voluntary nature:** the broadened forms provide some kind of externally-motivated or quasi-obligated commitment in the initial stage of the volunteer process. *Volunteers may become more internally-motivated over the course.* E.g. community re-engagement programs for mentally-ill/formerly-incarcerated

2. **Reward nature:** transport/meal subsidy for students; intangible reward such as emotional satisfaction, acknowledgement; research has suggested impact of symbolic incentive / recognition on volunteer performance and commitment

3. **Organized nature:** informal structure is inevitable sometimes - bureaucratic barriers, political reasons, and limitations on non-governmental infrastructure; limitations of organizations’ service coverage leading to ad hoc volunteer work initiated by a small group that eventually gained awareness. E.g. the first national representative survey of volunteering in Mexico defined volunteering as any unpaid help offered to people who are not family members

4. **Identity of Beneficiaries:** Shared community concerns & cultural experiences, e.g. grassroots community actions, volunteer work with ethnic minorities, domestic violence support group, etc.
Differentiating volunteerism from paid employment and unwaged work:

1. Establishing principles of volunteers management
2. Prevention of exploitation
Part II
Motives behind volunteerism: a study of HK university students & influence of gender

- Understanding of volunteers’ motivations can help manage and sustain volunteers

- 3-Stage Process Model (Omoto & Snyder): antecedent (why), experience (satisfaction), and consequence (sustained volunteerism/persistence)

- Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI): Clary and his colleagues proposed a functional approach (a self-report measure) to understanding why people volunteer (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen & Miene, 1998)
Six functions served by volunteerism (30-item scale)

- **Values**: generous concerns toward others
- **Understanding**: acquisition of knowledge
- **Enhancement**: better feelings toward oneself
- **Career**: career-related experience
- **Social**: strengthening one’s social relationship
- **Protective**: reducing one’s negative feeling

-VFI has proved to be a psychometrically-sound measurement: high internal consistency, temporal stability, replicable 6-factor structure, high predictive validity
-Translated into other languages: Chinese, Dutch
- Western studies focused on gender differences have yielded inconsistent results
  - Males demonstrate more altruistic (others-focused) behaviors compared to females (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998)
  - Females are more altruistically oriented than males (Cheung, 2006; Fletcher & Major, 2004)

**Need for Cross Cultural Study**

- What is the relative importance of motivations that depicts a Chinese young adult sample?
- Do gender differences exist for some specific functions served by volunteer?

CYEP’s female enrollment has also highly exceeded male enrollment

- 2012-13: 1291
  Female (869) : Male (422) = 2:1
- All 238 participants were Chinese, 39% (92) male and 61% (146) female
- Chinese version of VFI was administered

Relative importance of the 6 functions served by volunteerism  N=238

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>(Method)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>others-focused</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>self-focused</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>self-focused</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Career</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Protective</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 3 ranked motivational functions:

1. Values
2. Understanding
3. Enhancement
Gender influence on motives of volunteerism: Within-Group Perspective

- Mixed effect ANOVA (VFI subscales as within-subject factor, gender as between-subject factor)
- Within-group perspective: both genders reported a highly similar rank order profile

Relative importance of the 6 functions served by volunteerism BY GENDER  N=238

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Male n=92</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female n=146</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>5.52 (0.86)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.76 (0.91)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>5.28 (1.04)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.71 (0.89)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>4.77 (1.03)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.92 (1.10)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>4.22 (1.19)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.02 (1.36)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.39 (1.52)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01 (1.51)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>3.28 (1.14)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.06 (1.060)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plot of VFI subscale means by gender N=238
Attempt at Possible Gender Differences: Between-Group Perspective

- A series of t tests conducted
- Dependent variables = each of the six VFI subscales, Independent variable = gender

Findings
- Females: greater importance than males on the first three top ranked functions (values, understanding, and enhancement)
- The reverse, males: greater importance than females on the remaining three functions (career, social, protective)
- Only “understanding” is statistically significant (i.e. the differences are not statistically significant)
- Not adequate to inform us on between group differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>-1.95</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>-3.36</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement</td>
<td>-1.01</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrate it as a tool to work with volunteers –

1. help individual volunteers to understand their own volunteer motivations and process

2. Create motivational-related tasks as part of organizational support
To facilitate “sustained volunteerism” through volunteers management and recruitment

- More pervasive messages derived from the within group study:
  1) values
  2) understanding
  3) enhancement

- Helping values
- Social justice

- New Skills and Knowledge

- Self-development
Volunteers enrolled in 2005: 192
Volunteers enrolled in 2006: 217
Volunteers enrolled in 2007: 390
Volunteers enrolled in 2008: 500
Volunteers enrolled in 2009: 600
Volunteers enrolled in 2010: 753
Volunteers enrolled in 2011: 957
Volunteers enrolled in 2012: 1291
Most researches on motivations and matching in volunteerism have only addressed matching in terms of individual motivation (Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen & Miene, 1998).

Does not really give hints to project organizers how to match when they design work for a group of homogenous volunteers with similar background (e.g. a group of youth volunteers from similar institutions or elderly volunteers who have retired).
Theoretical Frameworks: Reframing Relationship between Childhood and Adulthood

- **Psycho-historical perspective:** modes of childrearing throughout human history have evolved from infanticidal, abandoning, ambivalent, intrusive, socializing, and helping (child becoming more of a complete individual) (DeMause, 1982; Cattanach, 2003)
  - The traditional view of a child being a “limited” or “incomplete” human until the shedding or abandoning of the child self to the “becoming” of the adult self: a path that dictates child development characterized by the hierarchy and domination of adult over child (Kennedy, 2002)

- **Postmodern alternative:** to see the development of childhood to adulthood as an integrative process involving the co-existence of different “selves” integrating into one; instead of infanticidal (splitting off) of the child self to become an adult which parallels an ego fragmentation

- **Psychodynamic perspective:** anxiety as a result of conflict between instinct (child) and repression (adults) (Goldstein, 2001)

- **Attachment theory:** links the childhood and adulthood as a continual rather than separate entities; and through focusing on the “attachment: to heal the childhood wounds of adults (Schore & Schore, 2008)
The two main questions driving this enquiry were:

1. What are the volunteers’ actual experiences working with these children?

2. What are the impacts of the experiences of working with children on volunteers in self-development, life goals, life philosophy, etc.?
Study Design

- From 2009 to 2011, 10 focus groups were ran
- N=120 (75 female and 45 male)
- Contents were analyzed around the two broad themes driving the study
Findings

1. The volunteers’ experiences of working with children

• Gaining an understanding about the nature of children
  - questioned their pre-conceptions, became aware of their bias
  - were able to see more depth about the complex nature of children

“I lack experience and did not know how to get along with children. After this tutoring experience, children are not as hard to communicate with as what I thought.”

“A child asked me if the existence of god was real. I answered if you believe it exists, it then exists and if not, it does not exist. The child said he believes that it exists but why he could not see it. I did not know how to answer him but I realize that a child could be very active in asking questions and to search for answers.”
Questioning and uncovering some pre-conceived concepts about children
- volunteers realized some underlying issues of problem children
- helped them to eliminate some labels they held about children who needed help

“After serving some emotional children, I realized the meaning of tolerance and importance of endurance. I could not ask an emotional child to change within one day but have to be patient.”

“I work with two brothers from a single-parent family and both of them are very unhappy. I always worry about them. One day, I saw that they were playing happily outside. I realized that they might not be very good in studying, but they still have their own world and strengths. I learn to see deeper than just superficial things.”
Gaining new skills to relate better to children

- volunteer work as “an action of helping”
- the process of gaining new skills has opened them up to better communications with the children, and a more rewarding experience

“I was helping a boy who will never sit still until one day I told him that he has to compete with me to finish something, he then sat down and try to win me. I realize that I should think of many ways to understand a child, not just instructing them.”

“Previously I strongly focused on their school work. Often, they became less focused. I asked a kid why and he said I was pushing him too hard or I taught him something beyond his ability. Later on, I talked with him more and learn that developing a good relationship is also vital.”
Skeptical about helping children

- Can be seen as an inquisitive learning process, rather than negative experiences
- Critical thinking and questioning process

“I am very skeptical of the usefulness of tutoring children with their homework. Their goal of coming to the group is to get the homework done and I am questioning whether it is really useful to them. I start to wonder how I should care about a child, or what to do us good or bad?”

“My mentee never asks any questions and I do not really believe that he wants to come on his own will. If he comes only because he is asked to, what should I do?”
2. What are the impacts of the experiences of working with children on volunteers’ own life goal and philosophy?

- Reflecting on one’s own relationships
  - Most “therapeutic”, as they reflect...
  - they are inspired to work on changing those relationships at present or in future

“My mother passed away when we were younger and we were taken care of by a distant auntie who is a friend of my mother. We were indebted to her. Without her, we may get astray. However, I had been receiving this auntie’s help in a very passive way and do not know how to show my gratitude. Now, I know I have to be more active and self-directed. I will tell her I am very thankful and I will show to her that I will take care of my sister too. She is very happy to see it.”
Reflecting on and understanding one's own development

- develop deeper self-knowledge (impatience, lack of initiative, capacity for empathy)
- Realization that they act and feel differently when they feel needed

“I was a very impatient person and would give up easily if things did not go my way. I worked with a team of volunteers serving a group of children. I started to realize that if we do not cooperate well, we will be a very bad role-model to the children, thus will not be able to help our children make changes in their lives. I also realized that my impatience stems from the little time that my parents spared to listen to me, as they were always very busy.’

“I have learnt to take more initiatives after having worked with children. I will call my friends and suggest having dinner with them. I used to rely on my friends on this before. Our friendship has strengthened a lot. My mother also sees the changes in me. I am more active in expressing my thankfulness to her. My mom thinks I have grown up.”
Developing one’s life philosophy through volunteering experiences

- A wide range of insights deriving from:
  - acknowledging and accepting the reality of life (acceptance)
  - balance between independence and seeking help (which is commonly a difficult life task)
  - Interdependence

“I helped a child who has experienced domestic violence before. He was very naughty and a trouble-maker. After knowing him personally, he could be very lovely though he is always rebellious. I started to understand him more. However, the social worker then instructed me not to spoil him and to set some expectations on him. I learnt to not only act from my feelings for the child, but also to implement methods that are useful to the boy. Before, life to me was very straight forward and linear. Now, it is more complex. I learnt to be very dynamic and knowledgeable. That also became my life philosophy.”

“I was brought up to live and work independently and our family relationships are very loose. After serving the children, I realized that independence is not at the expense of good relationships with people. When facing difficulties before, I thought independence meant to handle everything all by myself. Now, I realize I can seek help and to offer help - while still being independent.”
Conclusions

- The process can help both children and young adults negotiate transitions successfully, as transition periods can be seen as turning points for positive changes.

- A correctional experience on their own childhood trauma or negative experience, thus allowing a reconstruction of their own narrative.

- The group matching concept should also be extended to other volunteer groups or service recipients to explore their specific linkages.