

Project Title : To Serve, To Share, To Teach, To Learn: A Collaborative Forum on Service-Learning

Leading University : The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Education University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, The University of Hong Kong

Project Leader(s) : Dr Stephen C. F. Chan, Office of Service Learning, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

### **Layman Summary of Proposal**

We propose to establish a collaborative forum on the theme of service-learning (SL). Our proposed forum will consist of activities such as an international conference on SL targeted at the post-secondary sector in Hong Kong, as well as thematic seminars, workshops and short courses. We envision that these activities will bring together teachers and practitioners from Hong Kong and abroad to share on a wide range of topics, including underlying theories, ground-breaking research, sharing of practices, analysis of student and beneficiary impacts, reports of achievements, failures and lessons learned. Our objectives are: (1) to identify and promote good practices and sharing of experiences in the planning, delivering and assessment on the theme of SL; (2) to stimulate and encourage a scholarly/evidence-based teaching pedagogy in SL; and (3) to improve the self-adequacy and preparedness of staff in designing, running and assessing SL courses.

### **Layman Summary of Final Report**

SL is gaining momentum as an accepted academic practice in Hong Kong and Asia, but it is still very new to most people. Many faculty members who are currently involved in planning, delivering and assessing SL subjects or projects face challenges which have previously been encountered and addressed by other colleagues. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), collaborated with other seven higher institutions, proposed the Collaborative Forum on Service-Learning with the

objectives of: (1) identification and promotion of good practices and sharing of experiences in the planning, delivering and assessment on the theme of SL; (2) stimulation and encouragement of a scholarly/evidence-based teaching pedagogy in SL; and (3) improvement of the self-adequacy and preparedness of staff in designing, running and assessing SL courses.

The Collaborative Forum on Service-Learning has successfully organised a series of programmes including a two-day international conference, an open lecture and five thematic workshops from April 2014 to May 2015. In total, 494 people from 62 institutions and organisations all over the world attended the series of programmes and very positive feedback was received from the attendees. The two-day Conference attracted 180 attendees from 20 countries and regions, other than Hong Kong: Australia, Cambodia, China, Israel, Japan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Korea, Macau, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Rwanda, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, United Kingdom, United States of America and Vietnam. The total attendance of the conference was 925 person-sessions, in which 272 participated in the two keynote speech sessions, 209 attended the two panel discussion sessions, and 444 joined the nine oral paper presentation sessions. 89% of the respondents (n=72) indicated excellent or very satisfactory on the overall gain from the Conference (mean score=4.19) and 81% stated (n=68) that the Conference was relevant to their interest/practice (mean score=4.12).

An open lecture and workshop series were held in March 2015 by Dr. Andrew Furco, who is the Associate Vice President for Public Engagement at the University of Minnesota. The theme of this series was research and assessment in SL. This series attracted 170 academic staff and practitioners from local and Macau universities. Over 90% of the respondents stated that this series of open lecture and workshops was a very good learning experience and very useful to their practice. Another workshop series were held in May 2015 by Dr. Barbara Jacoby who facilitated initiatives involving academic partnerships, SL and civic engagement and launched community SL at the University of Maryland since 1992. About 144 academic staff, practitioners and non-government organisation partners from local, Vietnam and Myanmar attended the workshops. Over 80% of respondents rated agreed or strongly agreed on the learning experience and usefulness of the workshops.

The Collaborative Forum provided a very good platform for the higher education sector in Hong Kong for exchange of experiences with local and international institutions on a wide range of topics of SL. 95 local faculty members and

practitioners from local institutions attended the conference in November 2014. 32 papers submitted by authors from local institutions and 28 of them were accepted. For the workshop series, 95.5% attendees were from local institutions. To sustain the interest and effort of the project, an online platform has been set up for communication and experience exchanging. All the proceedings, papers and the materials from the conference and workshop series have also been archived onto the online platform for easy dissemination and future reference. All the project members of this Forum showed their willingness to continually promote and encourage good practices and sharing of experiences, locally and internationally, in designing, delivering and assessment on SL. As the lead institution, PolyU plans to continually organise the international conference bi-annually and actively involves in the local SL network as well as organises workshops/seminars on the theme of SL.