

Project Title : Enhancing University Students' Well-being and Positive Learning Experiences – Application of Positive Education

Leading University : City University of Hong Kong

Participating UGC-funded University(ies) : Hong Kong Baptist University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Education University of Hong Kong, The University of Hong Kong

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Summary of Proposal

The proposed project aims to increase the knowledge and understanding of Positive Education; enhance the positive emotions, positive relationships, positive purpose, positive accomplishment, positive engagement, and positive health of tertiary students; build an atmosphere with a focus on the well-being and positive development of students in the tertiary setting; and spread the message of Positive Education in the local community. The project will be guided by a six-level pedagogy described as “learn it,” “live it,” “reflect it,” “conceptualize it,” “apply it,” and “embed it.” Tertiary students will “learn” Positive Education and “live” it out in their daily lives. They will be assisted to “reflect” and further “conceptualize” their learning experiences and “apply” their knowledge in designing and conducting Positive Education programs. A Positive Education atmosphere will also be “embedded” in the tertiary setting through concerned activities. Five Hong Kong universities (CityU, HKU, CUHK, HKBU and EdUHK) will work collaboratively to achieve the project goals. The project will be organized in three phases, with each phase lasting for a year. Training camps, reflection and consolidation camps, campus promotion, inter-institutional Positive Education Day, Positive Education projects, and International Positive Education Conference will be organized to facilitate the experiential learning, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation of students. A Positive Education website will also be produced to disseminate the message. The project has the potential to achieve a paradigm shift in tertiary education to focus on the positive strengths and whole-person development of

students. The innovative idea of the project is its six-level pedagogy, which guides students through a systematic and contextual learning cycle, thereby enhancing their understanding, assimilation, and application of Positive Education. The project will benefit 660 university students by promoting their positive well-being and growth, 120 academic staff by facilitating their integration of Positive Education in teaching, and 5 500 people at campuses or in the community by increasing their knowledge and understanding of Positive Education. Project teaching activities and student projects can be compiled and incorporated as teaching materials in our General Education courses and, hopefully, be developed into a General Education course in different universities.

Summary of Final Report

The project aimed to enhance university students' wellbeing and positive learning experiences by applying positive education. The project proposed three main objectives: (1) To nurture and enhance the development of tertiary students in the six domains of Positive Education, i.e. positive emotions, positive relationships, positive purpose, positive accomplishment, positive engagement, 2) To increase the life satisfaction of tertiary students and strengthen their resilience in the face of life difficulties; and 3) To enhance the understanding and support teaching of Positive Education for academic staff at the tertiary level. To achieve these objectives, a series of activities were held including 1) workshop and experiential learning camp for students; 2) professional training for teachers and staff; 3) mental wellness festival for students; 4) community project for students; 5) study tour for students; 6) international conference for academics, students, teachers, social workers, and helping professionals. The five universities (CityU, CUHK, HKU, BUHK, and EdUHK) collaborated in planning, designing, and implementing all the activities, as well as organizing the international conference. The seminars, workshops, and experiential learning camps were held throughout the project period. Two professional trainings were delivered to the staff and counsellors in the universities. University students were supervised by the project officers to design and implement activities and projects to their peers and community members via mental wellness festival and community projects. A thought-provoking study tour in Taiwan was arranged. Finally, an international conference invited renowned local and overseas scholars and teachers to present various topics related to positive education. Overall, the project benefited about 4 000 university students and staff, as well as 1 000 academics, teachers, social workers, in the international conference, and 1 500 participants in the community projects. Through the above-stated activities, the three objectives of the project have been achieved to a large extent.

Specifically, most participants have identified their character strengths and applied them in their study and daily life, so that they gained more confidence and intrinsic motivation in learning and daily activities. The project led to further collaboration among the faculty members of the five universities and more possibilities on the future development of positive education in Hong Kong were explored. The project facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences as well as the professional network-building among local and overseas scholars. With the network being built, further discussion and exchange on positive education amongst educational institutions in Hong Kong and worldwide is expected.