

SERVICE 

The World Will  
Never be the Same!



SERVING  
OUR WAY  
FORWARD

HKU MEMBERS' EFFORT FOR A BETTER WORLD!



香港大學  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG



cedars

Centre of Development and Resources for Students  
學生發展及資源中心



## Preface

In honour of The University of Hong Kong's tradition of giving back to the community, one of the main themes of the Centenary Celebrations is service. The SERVICE 100 programme, which runs through 2011 and 2012, reaffirms HKU's commitment to building a better world, and mobilising students, staff, alumni and friends to take part in hundreds of community service projects across the globe.

Not only does the SERVICE 100 AMBASSADOR Scheme embody a promise to serve, it also captures the enthusiasm that underlies the HKU family. The scheme aims to promote and extend the legacy of SERVICE 100, in order that participants will become active service individuals while continuing to spread the service spirit to family, friends and colleagues. By doing so, the spirit can be incorporated into one's life and, over time, become a lifelong commitment. Regardless of the nature of the service work, whether it is a visit to an elderly centre over the weekend with family members or volunteering with humanitarian relief missions with friends and colleagues, the legacy of this spirit is alive. The betterment of humanity will be the core of every mission. We shall never back down from adversity and never look down upon simple service with condescension. We shall contribute thoughtfully with humble hearts, cultivate humanistic virtues and attain personal growth with our service partners. Together, we will build and share a more beautiful future.



For a century, HKU members have engaged in a wide range of community and service activities. This book documents 20 such service stories from students, staff and alumni. Although these stories are only a minuscule portion of all that is worth revering, they clearly exemplify the spirit of a lifelong commitment to serve. In this book, there are students like Helen Kwok who planned and implemented “Less-Meat Monday” for environmental causes. There are surgeons like Dr Poon Tak-lun and Dr Fan Ning who contribute their skills and knowledge to humanitarian missions in Sichuan and other areas of the world. There are staff like Dr Sean Yuen who continues his passionate overseas service from student days to his current career life. There are also corporate leaders like Mr Kwan Chuk-fai who encourages his colleagues to give care and support to deprived schools and students in rural China.

These inspiring stories capture the essence of serving and demonstrate how it is possible to contribute positively to society irrespective of one’s profession or life stage. Let us echo their efforts and join the SERVICE 100 AMBASSADOR Scheme today!

## 前言

「服務」是香港大學的核心信念，回饋社會亦是港大的傳統。作為百周年校慶的主題之一，「服務 100」繼續實踐港大的使命，建設更美好的社會。港大學生、教職員、校友及友好將投入本港以至世界各地數以百計的社會服務計劃，帶動全球港大人貢獻社群。

「服務 100 大使」計劃除了是一份服務承諾，更是港大人展現的一種積極態度，計劃目標是肯定港大人的貢獻及鼓勵更多人參與。大使們將從自身積極參與為開始，以帶動家人、好友、同事一起服務為目標。讓服務精神貫穿工作及生活，成為一份終身使命。從此不論是與家中老幼到社區探訪，還是與同輩友儕執行分秒必爭的義務救援都能全力以赴，樂在其中。堅決把服務對象的利益放首位，不以艱辛而退縮，更不因工作簡單而嗤鼻卻步，以最謙卑的心貢獻所長，與服務伙伴一起成長，一起分享共創的美好明天。



這本小冊子收錄了二十個學生、教職員及校友的服務故事。雖然只是千百個服務故事中的一小部份，它們卻充份描繪出「服務 100 大使」計劃所強調的終身服務精神。書中有同學獨力策劃及推動「週一•少肉」活動為環保出力，有專科醫生如潘德鄰及范寧於四川及世界各地的人道救援工作故事，有教職員如袁乘風堅持將學生時代的服務工作帶進畢業後的專業生涯裡，亦有企業領袖如關則輝先生帶領公司同事支援國內山區教育。

這些港大人展示了在不同領域和人生階段所能作的貢獻，今天就讓我們一同加入他們的行列，一齊成為「服務 100 大使」！

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## SERVICE 100 AMBASSADOR Scheme

The SERVICE 100 AMBASSADOR Scheme aims to honour HKU members' service efforts and to inspire others to make lifelong contributions to the betterment of humanity.

### Eligibilities

All students, staff, alumni and friends of HKU are welcome to join as individuals or with their family members.

### 3 Simple Steps to Register

1. Register and create an account to record your service hours at the SERVICE 100 AMBASSADOR Scheme website
2. Signup and share at least one service story at HKU Service Network (<http://cedars.hku.hk/servicenetwork>)
3. Inspire two friends, students or colleagues to join (families are exempted)

### Award Criteria

Gold, Silver and Bronze Service Award lapel pins and a Certificate of Achievement will be conferred to official ambassadors and their families based on the number of service hours accumulated within the period from 10 November 2011 to mid-November 2012. An awards ceremony will be held in December 2012.

### Application Details

For details and registration, please visit:  
<http://cedars.hku.hk/SERVICE100AMBASSADORS>

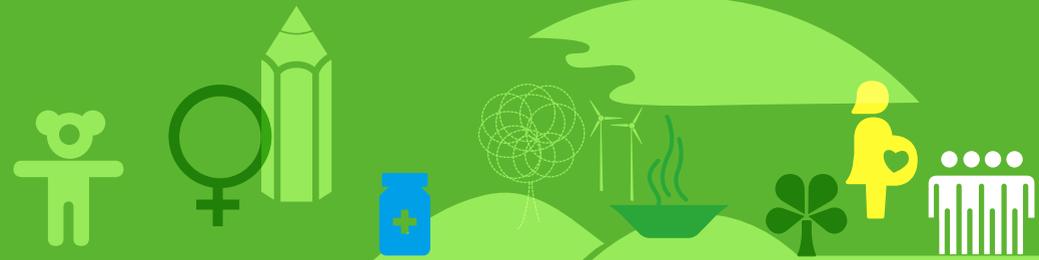


## SERVICE 100 Fund

The SERVICE 100 Fund aims to promote the service spirit of the HKU community and encourage students and staff to act for the betterment of mankind. The fund is open for application every semester to support local and overseas service projects. Each service project can apply up to \$50,000 to be spent within one calendar year. The amount of support granted is subject to project merit. Projects that exhibit high social impact, innovation, and high sustainability would yield distinct advantages.

For more details, please visit the SERVICE 100 Fund website <http://cedars.hku.hk/SERVICE100Fund>. You are also welcome to make an appointment with our student advisors to discuss your project.

# A First Taste of Service, A Lasting Impression



Social Service Group, HKUSU, was established in 1950 and organises a variety of projects each year that focus on helping local people at risk, whether they are underprivileged elderly, new immigrants or the people with mental illness. One of the group's projects this year was a two-day event that aims to facilitate HKU students to understand more about elderly people in need and to bring care to them. To achieve this goal, HKU students and elderly volunteers met with each other and discussed the issues they face. The team also visited the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Lady MacLehose Center and made dumplings with the residents.

As an organiser of this project, first-year engineering student Raymond Chan said the group targeted the elderly because they feel that older people are often regarded as a disadvantaged group. "Many people think that the elderly should be helped by other people, which is not true. So we want students to know more about their situation," Raymond said. By interacting with the elderly, the students received a better understanding of their problems, such as lack of care from their families, poverty and loneliness.

Raymond also found great satisfaction from bringing joy to



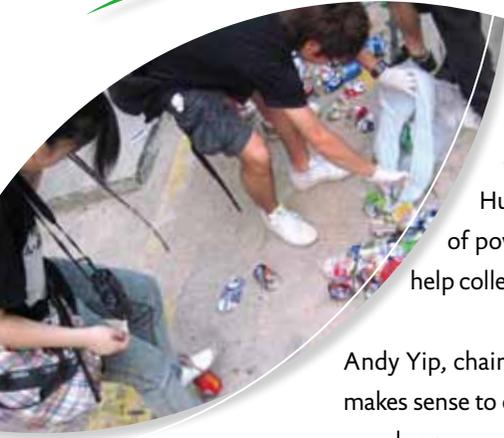
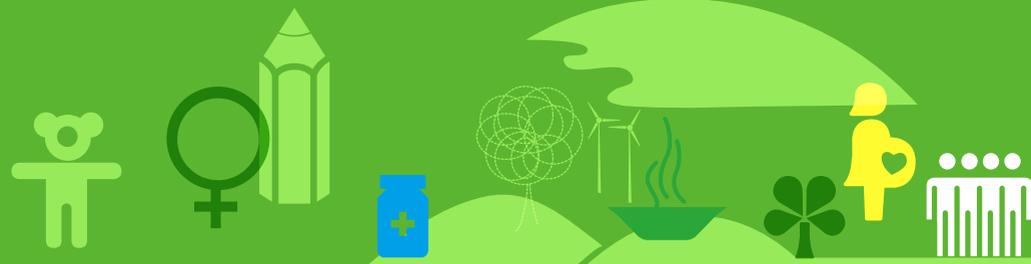
The newly arrived youth prepares for their presentation of a fashion design project.

the elderly participants, even if just for a couple of days. He said during the team's visit to the centre, the happiness and warmth they received from the residents made a lasting impression on him and have become a motivation. Even though this was his first taste of community service, the experience has encouraged him to continue with such work throughout his life.



A game on posing gestures with the elderly volunteers.

# Bare Necessities: The Equalizing Force of FOOD



Simon K.Y. Lee Hall, a residential hall at HKU, has a strong tradition of organising service projects as a way for residents to have a greater understanding of the society. One of their service projects this year, GO! Strike Hunger, aims to build awareness about the issues of poverty and hunger. The project team will also help collect food for some of society's destitute poor.

Andy Yip, chairman of the hall's student association, said it makes sense to choose to combat hunger when so many poor people are essentially forced to give up food. "When it comes to giving up necessities, people choose to sacrifice food first, because other costs such as rent and transportation are usually not an option".

For the first part of the project, a number of restaurants will provide free meals to poor families — six families will get to enjoy these meals, and students will be able to meet them there to share their thoughts. The goal is to create a channel for the disadvantaged to voice their feelings; the families will discuss with students the challenges that the impoverished face and give an up-close look at what it's like to not be able to eat.

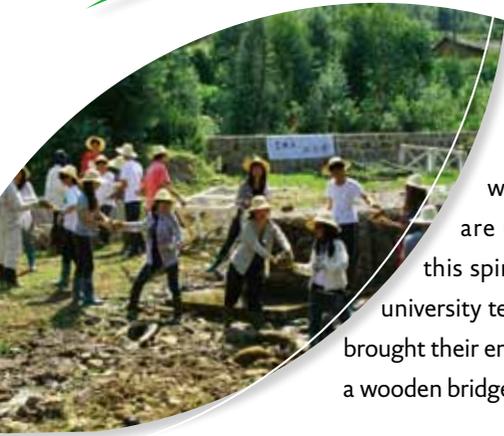
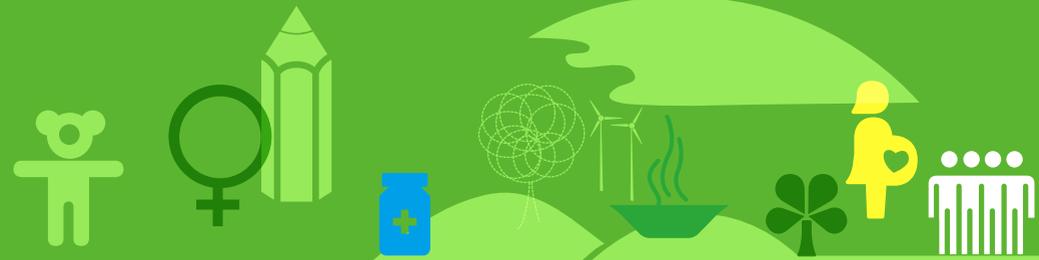
Another part of the project is setting up food drives at housing estates to collect redundant food from households and redistribute them to needy families. The food drives create an opportunity for the larger community to reallocate resources to balance people's needs.

Although this is Andy's first volunteering experience, he is motivated by a conviction that all humans are equal, and by the belief those who have more can single-handedly improve the balance in society. "That everyone can live with one's dignity is a simple dream, which, on the other hand, is hard to achieve in reality. I believe these steps can make big dreams possible," Andy said.



An upcoming fundraising activity of Simon K.Y. Lee Hall for a new project on intergenerational poverty.

# Bridging Lives Across China



A bridge is more than a passageway. Its utility is undeniable, providing safety and convenience; but more important, it allows people to come together. Wu Zhi Qiao (Bridge To China) Charitable Foundation, whose mission is to build bridges where they are urgently needed, symbolically honoured this spirit when it combined the joint effort of two university teams from HKU and Tsinghua University, and brought their enthusiasm to a remote area in China to replace a wooden bridge with a stone bridge over a river.

The team's destination was Xianyuan Village, a rural village near Lijiang, Yunnan, where villagers had to wade daily across a river to get from their homes to their farmland and school. Rainy season was particularly perilous, when water levels rose and the river rushed on. "One old lady living there said a little kid fell into the river a few years ago and drowned," said Hilary Hau, a second year student from government and law.

During this trip, Hilary gained a newfound passion to serve. "I was curious why there are people spending their lifetimes serving others, and I was doubtful about whether what I was doing was useful and worthy. But I got a very clear answer after this valuable project," she said.

Seeing what we were doing for them, the villagers also joined us.



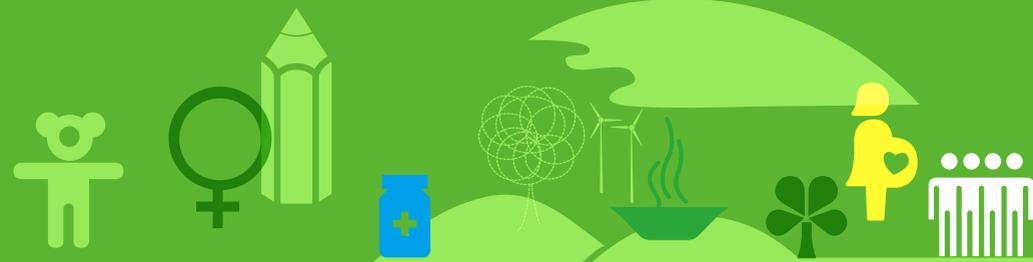
More than a physical bridge, it is a bridge of friendship with students from Tsinghua University.



The bridge we built helps these children go to school safely.

Her life goal now is to use her knowledge of public administration to fight for human rights in third-world countries or to go back to China to alleviate the problems of poverty. If she gets the chance, she will try to apply her future career to help more disadvantaged people get rid of the poverty or other hardships they face. "To serve is the best way to live. We are just so lucky that we are able to serve others, and we can gain even more after that," she said.

# Compassion for All Creatures



Advocates for vegetarianism say that eating less meat is a healthier way of life that also helps the environment, ameliorates world hunger and lessens animal suffering. The Meatless Monday movement, which has gained steam in the US and the UK, encourages participants to go vegetarian just one day a week — Mondays — as a way to cut down the harmful effects of eating meat.

Being an animal lover, Helen Kwok, a final year student majoring in linguistics, decided to start a similar initiative at HKU called Less-Meat Monday. She is motivated by the sad fact that farmed animals are bred only to be confined and then killed, and they are helpless to escape from human exploitation. “Gandhi once said that a nation’s greatness and moral progress is indicated by the ways in which its animals are treated,” Helen explained, “I feel that, as a member of this so-called civilised world and of the supposedly superior species, I need to treat other animals with respect.”

With Helen’s effort, campus caterers agreed to offer a larger range of vegetarian dishes on Mondays, and to place a “Green Grin” sticker on these items. Being able to see a change in attitudes offers the greatest gratification. She said, one

Monday when she was outside a café promoting vegetarianism, a man told her he did not agree with the concept, but she patiently refuted his notions. “Two weeks later, I saw him again and he told me I had a point and that he has asked his friends to go for Green Grin on Mondays too,” she said.



These positive results motivate her to work for NGOs on animal rights upon graduation — and one of her goals is to spread the message of Less-Meat Mondays to everyone in Hong Kong.



Organisers believe that eating less meat is good for one’s health and the environment.



Helen and her project team are spreading the “less-meat” message around campus.

# Medicine for Those Who Need It Most



Established in 1972, the Health Committee of the Medical Society, HKUSU, has been promoting primary health care to the people of Hong Kong for decades, raising their awareness about personal health and providing free checkups. The committee also organises medical students to serve the community by improving individuals' health physically, mentally and socially, especially for disadvantaged people, such as the homeless or refugees.

Jacky Lau, an MBBS student and chairman of this year's Health Committee, said 25 activities have been scheduled for 2011. These include talks at community centres, health-check booths at housing estates and visits to the homeless. He said he now has a much better understanding of those who are underprivileged and he is more determined than ever to pursue his dream of treating those patients after graduation. "The homeless, new immigrants, the elderly, they are a neglected group. After meeting them, your heart really wants to help them," he said.

He always remembers that one time, an elderly patient told him not to become greedy when he enters the medical profession, as some doctors focus only on earning a large



Blood pressure measurement for the elderly.



An energetic and devoted service group of medical students.



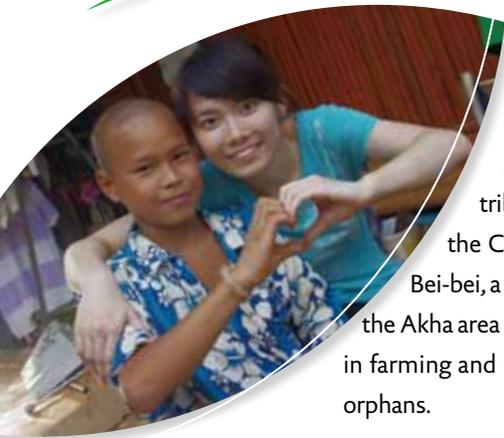
Outreach service to visit the elderly.

salary. Some patients have given him words of encouragement during his arduous studies, which he finds inspiring. He feels so passionately about serving the underprivileged in his career that he has decided to be a doctor in the public hospitals, so that he will have more opportunities to treat the poor.

Jacky hopes that through community work, his medical school classmates' passion and enthusiasm for serving others will be ignited too. On a broader scale, he urges all compassionate students to volunteer without hesitation. "Never look down on the power of one; you can make a difference in others' lives with your own efforts," he said.

No Pain. No Gain:

# Building a Children's Home



In the lush mountains of Thailand near the Burmese border is a community of Akha tribal people that subsides on farming and lives in bamboo huts that sit upon wooden stilts. Despite the seemingly idyllic setting, the tribe lives in impoverished conditions. As part of the Chiang Rai Home Improvement Project, Guan Bei-bei, a PhD student in the Faculty of Arts, travelled to the Akha area to help rebuild a demolished orphanage, assist in farming and organise educational activities for the tribe's orphans.

Most of the manual labour was extremely strenuous like moving bricks, rocks, sand and bamboo, but she was proud of the work. Her shoes were worn out, she had bruises everywhere and was in pain all over. Yet, there was much joy in the teamwork and it was all worth it for the children.

She said that the children in the orphanage had close to nothing — no books, toys, good clothes or hot water — but their happiness shone through. "They took every chance to learn, and all of them had a very pure and unselfish heart. I was so touched, and I believe they showed me that there is sunshine everywhere in life," she said. This experience has inspired her to never give up in the face of adversities.



We got our hands dirty in the paddy field in Chang Rai.

Bei-bei also thinks that the SERVICE 100 programme is able to raise service awareness, and she hopes that more people will have this remarkable life experience of volunteering. Volunteers in the community, she said, should share more of their unforgettable stories to attract more members.



Building the orphanage.



An important part of the trip was organising activities and learning programmes for the kids.

# Spreading a Passion, One Belt At a Time



Sports has long been recognised as an effective and fun way of helping children build confidence while gaining physical and mental strength. Karate Class for South Asian Students in Hong Kong, organised by the Karate Club, HKUSU, aims to do just that. It is also able to teach youngsters of South Asian heritage about an activity outside their culture, and help broaden their horizons.

For one volunteer, Jessica Huang, a third-year student from the Faculty of Science, karate is a true passion. She says that through her own training, she learned firsthand the ways karate can change a person: it taught her to persevere through intensive training, and has given her confidence and calmness when hitting roadblocks in life. For one school year, she participated in this project, helping to organise classes and teaching the children their moves for a major public performance.

“Besides valuable leadership and communication skills, I have developed close bonds with the kids through this martial art, it let me keep my mind open to different cultures and possess a positive attitude towards life,” Jessica said. But more important, the project was an outlet for her to share her

passion. “The greatest joy in this project is to spread the spirit of karate to the younger generation, and especially to the ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong,”

Jessica appreciates that the SERVICE 100 programme provides valuable funding and support for student groups, enabling an overall service movement that is diverse and gives volunteers much to gain.



After a year of training, the children finally graduated with a certificate.

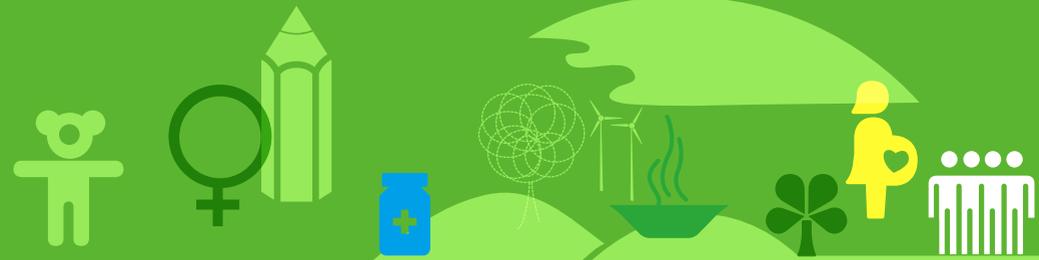


Their performance at the HKU 100 Kick-off Ceremony.



The children were part of a performance organised by the Lifeline Express in June 2011 at Queen Elizabeth Stadium with over 1,000 people in the audience.

# Take the Long view: Teaching Self Reliance in Africa



Since 2009, project Go2Africa, an extension of student group Beyond the Pivot, has sent seven teams to take part in various community projects in Ghana, such as organising mosquito-net donations and teaching locals about hygiene. Jessy Chen, a second-year law student, decided to join the project because she was curious about Africa. “The media rarely shows ordinary lives in Africa. I wanted to find out their living conditions, their needs and how to help them,” she said.

During her 27-day trip to Ghana, Jessy was moved by the difficult living conditions that the locals faced. The community of 500 had only two public latrines, and they were unsanitary and somewhat far from the rest of the town, making residents reluctant to use them. Therefore, the group began a new programme in Hain last year to construct latrines for residents.

While on one hand, the first latrine built there by volunteers has helped the community greatly, Jessy also saw that the locals were not actively trying to learn how to build the latrines themselves, but hoping the volunteers would finish all the construction work for them. “The more I talked to them, the more I understood their needs, and the more I realised the

significance and weaknesses of our volunteer work,” she said. To discourage this reliance, the team tried to engage residents to help, so that they could gradually learn how to build such an important device on their own.

Jessy said that through this trip, she learned that although no volunteer work is 100 per cent perfect, as long as volunteers are persistent and projects are well-suited for the local communities, only good can come out of them over time.

She hopes people considering service work will carefully think about the types of projects they want to get involved. “Volunteer groups should not pressure others to join,” she said, “instead, encourage them to find their interests and chase their dreams.”



Go2Africa volunteers go underground as they cement the latrine.

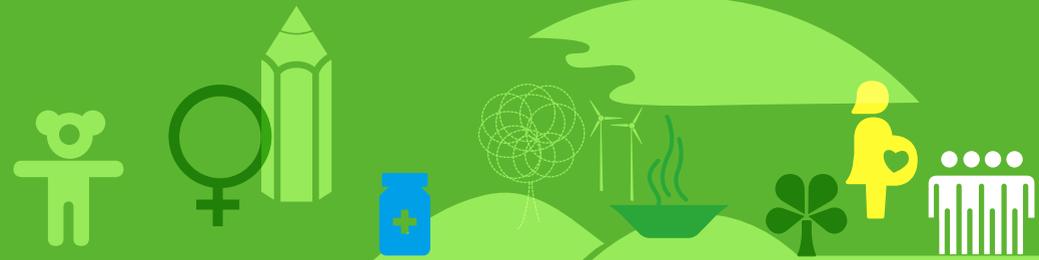


Hands of friendship!



The children are excited to join the games!

# The Gift of a Winter Sanctuary



Stephanie Ip, a fourth-year student in the Faculty of Law, has experienced miraculous feats of construction this summer. In just 10 days, she and nine other HKU volunteers, along with 100 Chilean students, built 11 wooden houses for 11 local families that have no other refuge during the harsh winter season of southern Chile.

The project was made possible by an exchange student from Chile; he connected SERVICE 100 with students from the engineering department at Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, which had been building such homes for many winters. Each day, Stephanie and other volunteers piled into a pickup truck that would take them to a different site to start building. But at these locales, they were caught off guard by the extreme poverty they encountered. The people they were helping did not, until now, even have access to electricity and running water.

The project brought a precious cross-cultural experience for Stephanie.



Looks good so far!

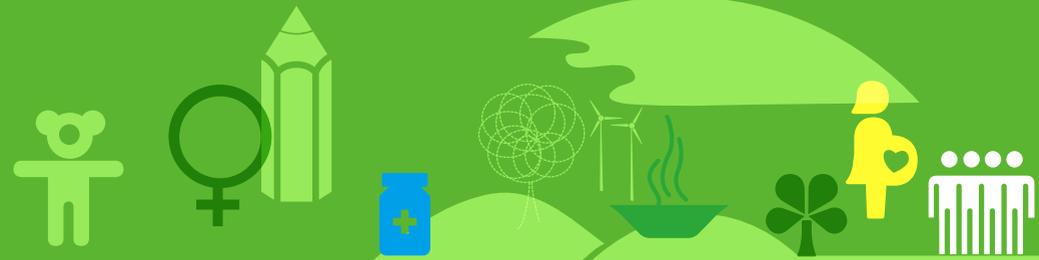


Cutting the wood for the houses.

“It was distressing to see how hard these people lived, and how circumstances prevented them from living in better conditions,” Stephanie said. Being able to meet their need through this project let her see the true value and urgency of volunteer work. “My knowing that there are so many underprivileged people out there in need for help motivates me to contribute, whether it is my spare time, my spare money or whatever labour and skills I can offer.”

Coming back to her normal life with an understanding about the true face of poverty, Stephanie said even her behavior has changed in small ways, from a greater willingness to give money to the needy around street corners, to a steadfast curiosity about the different kinds of charitable activities happening around Hong Kong.

# The Rewards of Reaching Out



China Education Association (CEA), HKUSU, has been working to improve education in deprived areas around China since 1996. Each year, the group organises a series of workshops and talks to raise awareness about issues surrounding rural education. The organisation also subsidises children to go to school and pays regular visits to rural areas to conduct volunteer teaching and show support to the subsidised students.

In the past, many volunteers have brought back bittersweet stories of the poverty and hope that lives within these students. One 18-year-old, when asked what his favourite food is, was startled by the question — to him, food is simply sustenance. He looked at the food on the table and said, “only when you all visit do I have so much meat to eat.” These stories help students realise the impoverished living conditions of teenagers of their age in other parts of the world and the difference that can be felt with simple aid.

This year, CEA is subsidising students in Guizhou province, with the belief that education will help lift these children out of poverty. However, Leo Lin, a second-year student in the LKS Faculty of Medicine and chairman of the association, expressed that funding is always a problem. Some NGOs for education in China have garnered bad reputations for the misuse of funds,



Fundraising in the streets

and have made him believe strongly in strict monitoring of fund allocation.

While volunteers bring care and educational subsidy to the rural students, they learn from the children as well. “Their determination and endurance also create positive influence on us,” Leo said, “They help us refine ourselves.”



A talk on china rural education in a secondary school.

Visiting the local families during the service trip.

# A Doctor's Addiction: Healing Wounds of War



Ten years ago, Dr Fan Ning attended a talk by the Red Cross about injuries in war zones and disaster management, and how doctors can do a lot to help those affected.

He realised that as a surgeon, his skills were especially valuable in these types of situations, and he vowed to himself that he would try to help.

Today, he is the president of Médecins Sans Frontières in Hong Kong (MSF-HK), or Doctors Without Borders.

Dr Fan, who graduated from the LKS Faculty of Medicine in 1994, acknowledges that it's difficult to go overseas to serve when you are faced with financial responsibilities and a family that expects you to be around. Going to a war zone mission even for three weeks takes meticulous planning. "One of the greatest hurdles is that you have to convince your boss to let you go," he said. A general surgeon in Yan Chai Hospital, Dr Fan felt blessed that his boss was supportive of him. After his first mission, there was no turning back. "Once you decide to

step out, it's like a drug. When you do these things, you are addicted," he said. So far, Dr Fan has been on MSF missions in Sri Lanka in 2007, the Gaza Strip in 2009, Haiti in 2010 and Libya in 2011.

In these war zones, he has seen many serious injuries, oftentimes men who have lost a hand or a leg. In such situations, the doctors can help with amputations, but they are powerless to restore their limbs. It is in this context that Dr Fan recognises an even more tragic reality for these men: because most of the jobs in developing countries involve manual labour, the injured ones will no longer be able to work or provide for their families. "This is really not a good situation. The war destroys not only their lives but the future of a generation of the society."

He said that while volunteers often can save lives but not restore societies, they can make a difference by bearing witness to these sights and telling the world what is happening. "We can try to spread a message of peace to the world and hope that those who try to ignore the developing world will change their minds."

Team work is important to all MSF humanitarian missions. The patient thanked Dr Fan for his work in Gaza.



Mission in Libya.

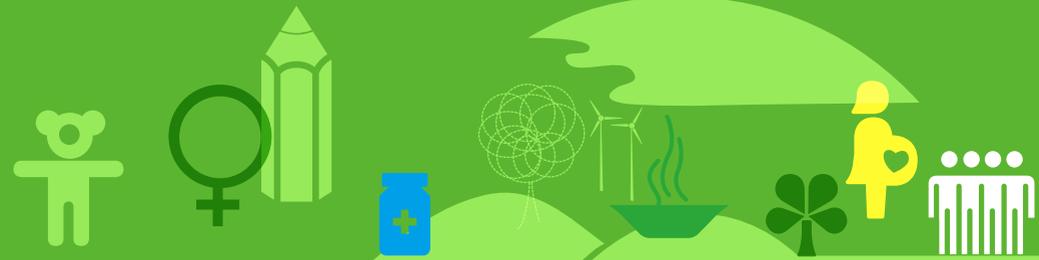


The professional team in Haiti.



Photo credit to Médecins Sans Frontières.

# A Voice for the Elderly



Edmond Wong knew at the start of his time at HKU that he wanted to serve others, receiving his degree in social work at HKU and later dedicating his career to serving the community. His earliest experience with service work was while living in St. John's College, a HKU residential hall. Through activities organised by the hall, he had the opportunity to work with the Social Welfare Department. "I started my volunteering before my social work career. As university undergraduates organising projects, we learned to be leaders and to work with other people," he said.

Having worked for charity group, Caritas, for 16 years, Edmond has interacted with all kinds of special-needs groups. Right now, his work focuses on serving the elderly population in Kennedy Town. He organises workshops for elderly people, giving them an outlet to voice their concerns or ideas about how to improve the community to make it more suitable for them.

Through the workshops Edmond organised, he learned that one area that can be improved to enhance the daily lives of

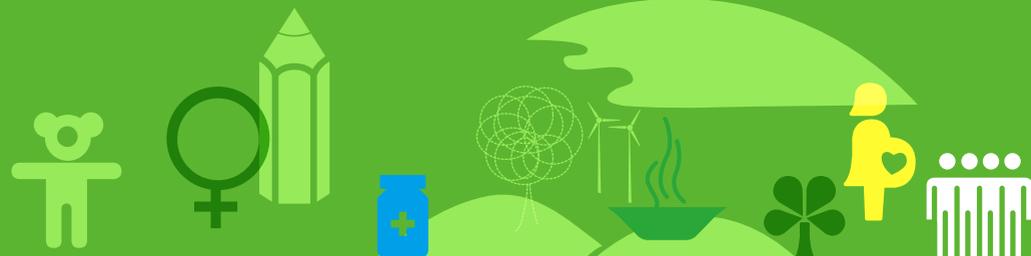


Parents are encouraged to engage in service activities with their children.

elderly people is the design of public transportation. After presenting several ideas to the bus companies and the Legislative Council, he is delighted to see that some of his design suggestions have indeed been implemented, such as priority seating that stands out in a bright colour. "The elderly felt their voices were heard by the communities, and we really find that they can work out their ideas and let people try to improve their lives," Edmond said.

He thinks HKU has a responsibility to its community, but just as significantly, service work can give students a more diverse experience outside of their majors. "From these experiences, I think they can learn how to work with other people, how to cooperate with other people; I think that experience is valuable for the individual, not only for the community."

# Conviction Leads to the Right Path



Heidi Hung, a graduate from the Faculty of Social Sciences, now working as manager of the directorate at Oxfam Hong Kong, professed that the way she came to discover service work was rather mundane: it was her studies of NGOs and civil society in political science classes in secondary school and at HKU that showed her the importance of serving others.

During her time at HKU, she went to Tanzania for a month to volunteer on a school construction project. Though she had always planned to start her career in NGOs, after graduating from HKU in 2003 and then studying law at Oxford, Heidi went on to work for the Hong Kong government instead. It was due to the financial pressures at home that she entered a government job and stayed for six years before she decided to leave her high position and switch to her dream organization, Oxfam.

Oxfam supports the building of water facilities in Yunnan, China.

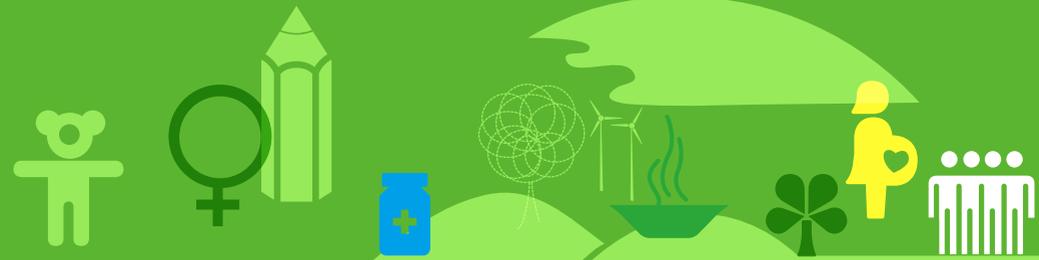


A villager in Cambodia is taking part in a chicken-raising project.

Heidi stresses that her work at Oxfam is not action-packed. “Don’t ever expect that everyday will be exciting,” she said. “A lot of the reports, decisions and analysis, which are essential to missions, are done in the back end.” But she knows her work is making a difference and creating concrete results. For example, Oxfam’s expansion of domestic violence intervention in China will help empower more women by educating them to know their rights and improve available support measures, while also making changes to China’s national legislation on the issue.

By sharing her own path, Heidi wants students to know that making a contribution to society and affecting change is always an option in life, even when it seems that there are obstacles to choosing this path. “As long as you have determination, planning and make some sacrifices, the world is full of choices,” she said.

# Empowering Women Through Learning



Sean Yuen graduated from the LKS School of Medicine in 2009 as a doctor of Chinese medicine. He soon established Impact for Peace, an NGO that aims to turn “slumdogs into millionaires” — a hopeful slogan that conveys the overall goal of lifting individuals who live in India’s slums out of their poverty.

It all started in 2007, while Sean was still studying at HKU. He joined Project SEE (Students for Equality and Equity) organised by the General Education Unit of HKU, which inspired him to reflect on the issue of poverty and act to build a more equal society. He was sent to Kolkata, India, for an education improvement project. He taught a few classes, provided some books and stationery, and bought classroom furniture for the students (the children previously had to sit on the floor). But Sean knew it was not enough.

Sean kept in contact with the people he worked with in India and set up Impact for Peace with a core mission to sponsor children to go to school. During a visit to Kolkata, he saw that two of the girls whom Impact for Peace was sponsoring were

living under a tent on the pavement just next to the main street, with about five other family members. “It makes me really think about why they can’t move into a regular house and have to sleep on the street. That situation makes me feel that we can do something to help them,” he said.

So in the summer of 2011, Impact for Peace recruited 10 HKU students to go to Kolkata to provide vocational training classes on computer literacy, English language and leather craft skills to women to increase their employability. With a means of earning an income, the women will then be able to provide for their children’s education. “We have to do more to educate — it is the only way to end the cycle of poverty in the long run,” Sean said.

This child is happy to have the chance to study and learn with the support of the sponsorship programme.

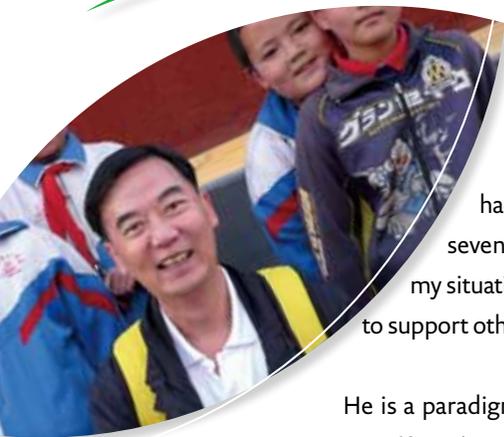
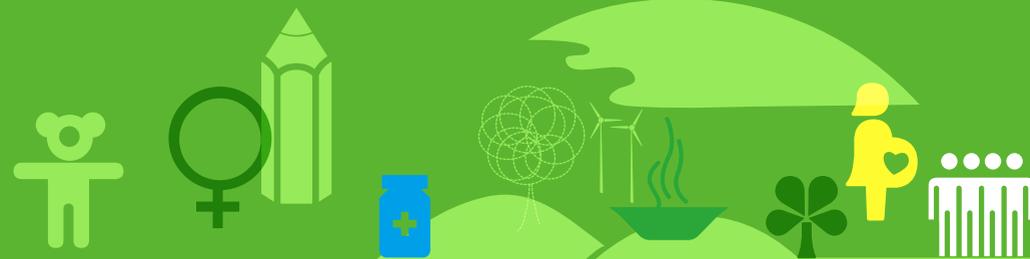


The kids concentrate on their studies.



A women’s centre that offers basic English and Mathematics lessons and handicraft skills training to the women.

# Living the Philosophy of Service



During his days at HKU three decades ago, Kwan Chuk-fai was active in the Social Service Group, HKUSU. In those days, he witnessed the “shocking” environment that boat people and those living in cage homes had to endure. “At the time, though I was one of seven people living in a 200-sq-ft home, I realized my situation wasn’t so bad — and I still had the capacity to support others,” he said.

He is a paradigm of how education can change a life. Right now, Kwan is sponsoring seven youngsters in remote areas of mainland China to attend senior secondary school through the China Care Fund. He recently visited one of them in Qinghai. The boy has been raised by a single parent, his mother, since his father died; the family subsists on a small plot of farmland. The room-and-board sponsorship the student is receiving from Kwan is thus crucial, because it would otherwise take five hours to get to school, mostly on foot.

Living conditions in rural China are basic and simple.



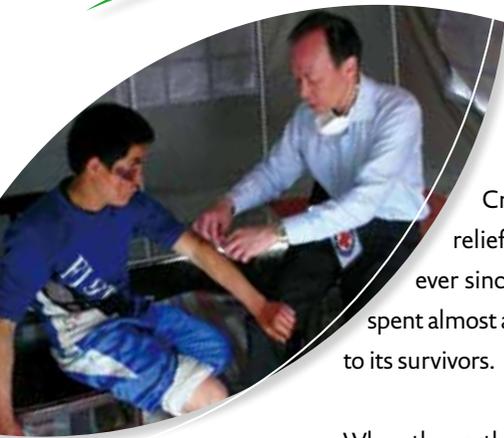
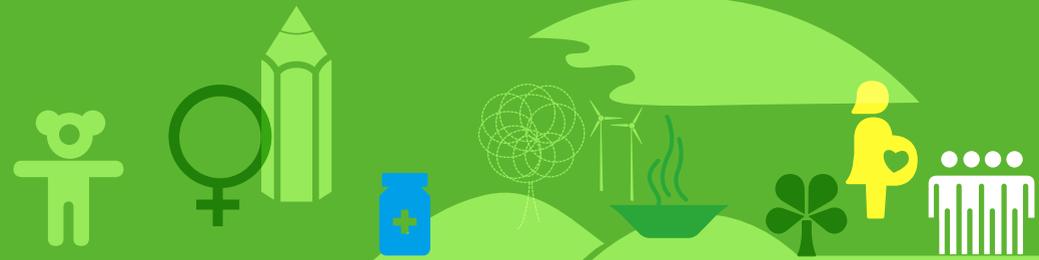
There is big wealth gap in northwest China; education may bring hope to younger generations.



The student hopes to become a doctor, since he had to watch his father succumb to disease. Kwan would like to also see him realise the importance of giving to others in the future. More significant than donations and sponsorship, Kwan spends a good amount of time writing letters to the students. “We have to do it with our hearts, not just with money. The encouragement we give to the students is very important,” he said.

Kwan’s wealth of service experiences makes his life fulfilling. As an alumnus, he tries to instill the philosophy of service in the next generations of HKU students, so that the spirit of service can be passed on. “All students pursue academic excellence. But I encourage them to open their eyes to the world outside their own and make an effort to help those who are in need,” he said.

# The Principles of Humanitarian Work



When Dr Poon Tak-lun was a student at HKU, he already did occasional work for the Hong Kong Red Cross. He then went on to become an orthopaedic surgeon, and that is when he officially became a registered Red Cross volunteer. Over 25 years, he has offered relief for numerous disasters small and large. But ever since the 2008 Sichuan earthquake, Dr Poon has spent almost all of his volunteer time providing medical care to its survivors.

When the earthquake first hit, he made it to the disaster area within three days with a team of medical personnel from Hong Kong. As the army and fire service dug people out of the rubble, Dr Poon's team performed first aid on the wounded. He now returns there every two weeks to perform surgeries, oversee patients' recovery from fractures, wounds and amputations, and advise on the construction of a new hospital.

One challenge that Dr Poon has faced in disaster situations is to have the emotional discipline to keep out of danger. He recounts hearing the calls for help under some rubble

in Sichuan when no rescue personnel were available, but he knew it would be too dangerous for the medical team to try to dig them out — it was a tough but necessary decision to make. So while he hopes students will engage in volunteer work, he reminds them to receive adequate training and, most of all, protect their own safety. “You have to know what you can do and what is out of your capabilities,” he said.

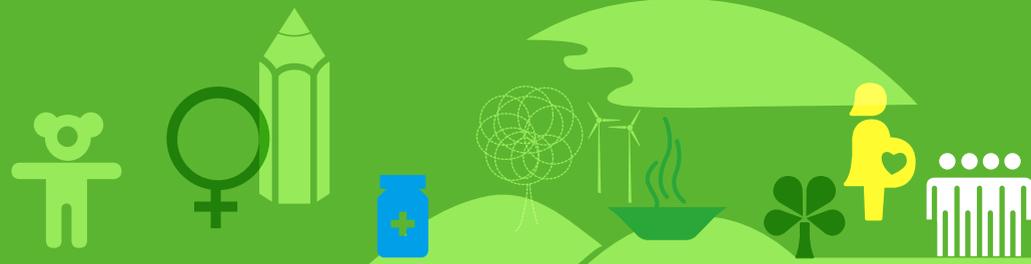
Despite the risks involved, he has an unwavering dedication to the Red Cross because of the unique role that the organisation plays in its global relief efforts. An international movement with no bias against race, politics, religion or any other factor, the Red Cross is frequently the only group allowed to enter both sides of armed conflicts. “It is pure humanitarian work,” he said. “That is a very important principle that we have to uphold: to have no discrimination whatsoever.”

Medical diagnosis of an earthquake survivor



Sichuan earthquake victims visiting a clinic

# Tragedy strikes: To Be Shaken, Not Shattered



In 2010, China's Gansu province suffered an incredible landslide that killed 1,500. Jason Yip happened to be there at that moment, about 30 minutes away, having a meeting with local government officials about redevelopment plans related to the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. He had just started his new job with Hong Kong Red Cross. "It was really my first time being so close to death or a natural disaster," said Jason, a 2004 graduate of the Faculty of Business and Administration.

As an international relief service officer based in China, Jason's work spans two fronts. The first is general emergency relief for disasters, which involves assessing the needs in the affected area and arranging logistics to transport relief materials. The second aspect is aimed solely on reconstruction in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

Jason was motivated to do humanitarian work after participating in service projects while attending HKU. During his studies, he went to Kenya with student group AIESEC to participate in a microcredit project. It was the first time he

Victims of flooding finally receive their relief materials.



Temporary tents for victims in the disaster area.



The destruction caused by the flooding in a Sichuan village.

came across social problems such as HIV/AIDS, poverty and natural disasters. "I thought, Hong Kong is too good, so good that I almost forgot we have almost half of people in the world suffering," he said. He then gained a grant to go to Guam, where he stayed with the endangered indigenous people, which also touched him deeply, to realize that their culture was rapidly dying. "These experiences told me that one day I have to do something for those in need. So I fulfilled my family's expectations to work in a bank for some years, but then I followed my heart to do social development."

Now realising his dream, he reminds university students that while it is very easy to live our lives for ourselves, it would be more meaningful to do more than that. "We have to go on with our own lives but also make an impact on other people."

# Creating Opportunities to Serve



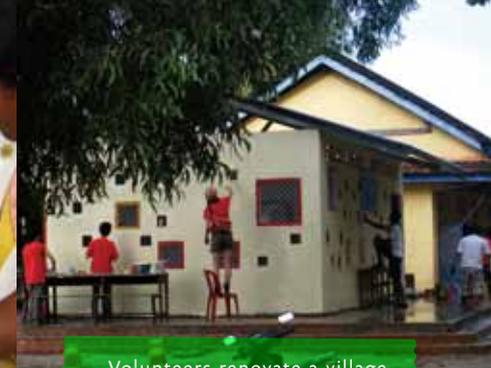
When he was attending the LKS Faculty of Medicine, Calvin Cheng was already heavily involved in volunteer work in the youth NGO, Humanity in Focus. The organisation launched various projects in Cambodia on relieving poverty and inequality, including building schools or public facilities, donating bicycles to increase school attendance and teacher training. And it was in Cambodia that Calvin got his real taste of poverty: people who could not afford to buy enough food, resulting in protein deficiencies, and people who collected rainwater to drink untreated.

Having these experiences led Calvin, now a research assistant in School of Public Health, to set up a disease monitoring system in the rural parts of the country to observe the outbreak of illnesses such as influenza and malaria by keeping track of the number of preschool students that are absent from school. The aim is to increase the overall health awareness in rural Cambodia and to give early warnings of

The pavement doubles as a dining table and a place to sleep for street children in India.



Education is a privilege for a lot of children in the world.



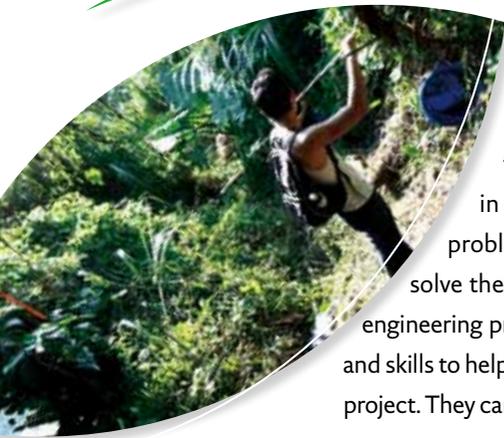
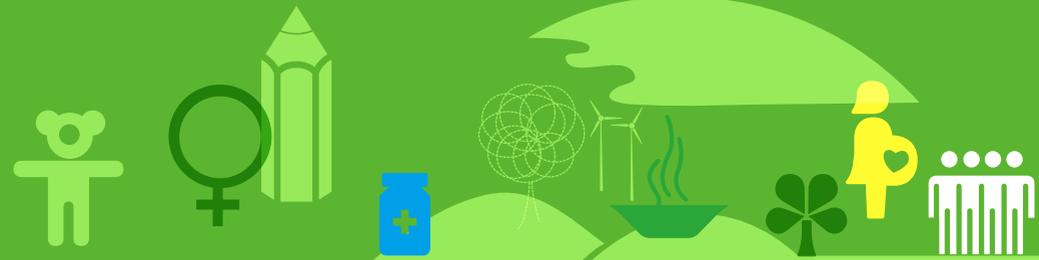
Volunteers renovate a village school in Cambodia.

disease outbreaks. That way, once alerted, the local government can intervene appropriately and lessen outbreak's severity and its impact on the community.

Using this system, Calvin and the team of volunteers can also monitor the other reasons children might skip school if they were not sick that day. This data collection is the first step in understanding the problems locals face, so that future programmes can be more effective in supporting the area's development.

Being able to offer assistance to the less fortunate is an enormous motivation for Calvin, but he also feels passionate about running programmes so others who want to help have a means of participating. "I think there are many people who would like to do this kind of humanitarian work but have no channel or chance to do it," Calvin said, "I believe my work helps more youth to fulfill their dreams of working for the world and for the poor."

# From the Classroom to the Field



Dean of Engineering, Professor George Tham was impressed with his students' enthusiasm when they knocked on his door one day. A group of them had just finished taking a core course on Technology in Developing Countries, which discussed the problems some of these nations face and how to solve them. The students were inspired to talk to the engineering professors about ways to offer their knowledge and skills to help those in need. "This is really the beauty of the project. They came up with the idea themselves," he said.

Their idea was to use hydraulic power to generate electricity in a remote area where electricity is still scarce or very expensive, but where water is available. With the help of the Centre of Development and Resource for Students (CEDARS), the students devised a plan of installing a low-cost watermill in a remote village in northern Thailand. If the idea works, it could be replicated in other parts of the country, and the small turbines will improve living conditions by providing electric power.

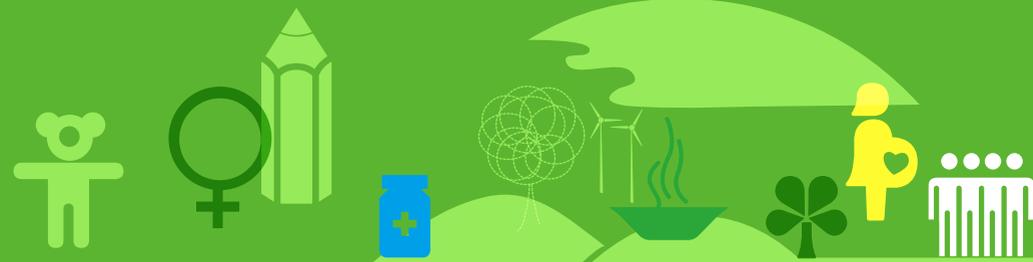
The Faculty of Engineering, which has long been involved with such community service work, is also providing some funding, equipment and assistance in finding grants. Prof Tham is especially delighted by the students' self-motivation. "We fully support them and always think it's a good idea for students to try out their dreams," he said.

One ongoing project of the Faculty is to build a school in Guangxi, and some alumni continue to travel to China to help with the construction after they are no longer students. Even though it might take years to build a large school building, the long-term results are just as rewarding for those who were part of it. Prof Tham said students who get involved in the faculty's service-learning projects often stay dedicated to the cause for years, even after graduating.



Prototyping of mini-hydropower technologies is being carried out at the Kadoorie Institute of HKU.

# Seeing Through the Eyes of the Elderly



Since her days in secondary school, Dr Angela Leung, Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing, has been involved with projects that serve the disadvantaged. “As a teacher now I think that building up a platform for students to contribute in society is very important,” she said.

Right now, she runs two projects related to the elderly. One is Vitamin D Supplement Among Older Adults for which she arranged student volunteers to bring the elderly outdoors to enjoy sunshine three times a week, to prevent vitamin D deficiency and Osteoporosis. The other project is Generation as Partners in Education (GAPIE). By pairing up a medical or nursing student with an older adult, students can experience the real world of gerontology and learn how to communicate

The elderly are out for sunshine with the student volunteers.



Dr Leung invites an elderly man to share his aging journey and health concerns to medical students.



An outing with the elderly brings them an enjoyable day.

with older people. The elderly in turn receive some much-needed companionship too.

Dr Leung was deeply touched when one of her rather reserved male nursing students started a blog to share his experiences with the older man he was paired with. This kind of sharing convinced her that the programme really allows both parties to impact on each other, not only verbally but also emotionally.

By providing a platform, Dr Leung hopes that medical and nursing students who have never participated in service learning projects will open themselves up to these opportunities. “Many students entering the medical profession will encounter different disadvantaged groups after graduation; it is beneficial for them to develop a wholehearted understanding of these groups during their study years to better prepare for their profession.”

# Upcoming Events

Event	Detail	Date
Oxfam Campaign Development & Management Workshop	An experienced campaign manager from Oxfam will share his invaluable experience at the workshop. All are welcome.	17 Nov, 2012 13:00-14:00
Ning Xia Student Exchange Project	A sponsored 9-day exchange tour to Ning Xia for students to understand the latest developments of this fascinating province in China.	3-11 Mar 2012 9 Days
SERVICE 100 Fund Briefing Session	An event designed to help project leaders to understand funding criteria and improve their project proposals.	11 Jan, 2012
SERVICE 100 AMBASSADOR Scheme Awards Ceremony	Awards and certificates will be presented to individual and family ambassadors who accumulated the required annual service hours.	Dec 2012

Please visit CEDARS' website at <http://www.cedars.hku.hk> for the latest information.