

# SLLO NEWSLETTER

July, 2021

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## International Symposium and Expo on Service-Learning and Socially Responsible Global Citizenship

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) successfully organised the "International Symposium and Expo on Service-Learning and Socially Responsible Global Citizenship" online on 9 - 10 July 2021. The Symposium and Expo connected teachers, students, and the community, facilitating them to share their Service-Learning (SL) experiences and showcase their projects without the physical limitations of geographical boundaries, the cost and carbon footprint of travel, and the hassles of time zones. The virtual Expo showcased several of PolyU's flagship SL projects, and also attracted exhibits of over 50 SL projects from 16 regions or countries. Over 800 participants of diverse backgrounds converged on the virtual space facilitated by the Gather platform, which was tailor-made to supported the event, with over 200 interactable exhibits, e-poster and video presentations, and live conversation with other participants that mimicked a physical conference setting. The participants also had the chance to attend over ten invited talks and interactive workshops via Zoom.

The two-day event was packed with inspirational sharing. Professor Jin-Guang Teng, President of PolyU, officiated at the opening. He congratulated all SL practitioners on their achievements, particularly their accomplishments in overcoming challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also encouraged fellow teachers, students, and community members with a quote from the two-time Nobel Prize awardee, Marie Curie, to "work for their own improvement and share a general responsibility for all humanity."



Participants of the Keynote Speech posted smiles together with the speaker during the online Symposium



A screenshot showing attendees of the Symposium and Expo "gathered" at the customized virtual town

Three world-class academics and a renowned educator from Hong Kong shared their insights on service-oriented education and SL as a pedagogy to drive personal, social, and global changes. Leading off was a keynote delivered by Professor Harry Lewis from Harvard University entitled “Learning as Service”. The speech accentuated the importance of integrating a service perspective into modern education, which is often characterised by intense competition and individual ambition. Following, a talk by Professor Andrew Furco from University of Minnesota, “The Transformational Power of Service-learning: A Global Perspective” made another highlight of the day by discussing the essential elements that moves an SL experience from the simply rewarding to the transformational, illustrated with concrete examples from various case studies.

The second day started with the talk by Dr Luke Terra, Director of Community Engaged Learning and Research, Hass Center for Public Service from Stanford University. He walked audience through the tips to adopt SL as a high impact practice to enhance academic learning in K-12 classrooms. It was followed by the talk from Mr Dion Chan, Principal of YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College. His sharing on “What a Teenager Could Do” used the model from his school to illustrate how community engagement can be cultivated for students in a secondary school setting.



*A photo collage of the themed interactive workshops*

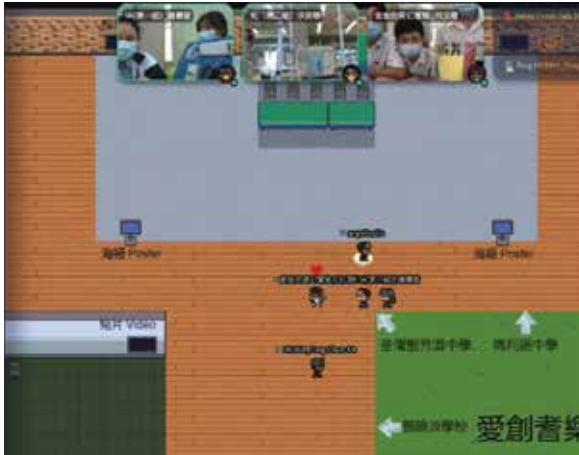
There were also nine interactive workshops delivered online, face-to-face, or in hybrid mode. facilitated by experienced SL practitioners from all walks of life. The themes broadly covered the hands-on implementation of a SL subject, art creation and co-creation, diversity and inclusion, design thinking with empathy, fostering international SL partnership, cross-generational e-sports, as well as the teaching and learning of A.I. in secondary school classrooms.



*An exhibition area showing a PolyU SL project related to fashion design*

Alongside the Symposium, the virtual Expo displayed the fruitful outcomes of a variety of PolyU’s SL projects – from empowering SEN students with fashion design experience, developing digital stories for NGOs, innovating prototypes for elderly or people with disabilities to improve their quality of life to enhancing energy efficiency for remote villages in Rwanda.





An exhibition area showing a PolyU SL project related to product innovations for elderly



A screenshot capturing the poster and video session

Apart from the PolyU projects, the Expo also put together over 50 e-posters and videos documenting community engagement initiatives, SL projects from Hong Kong, Mainland China, Asia, North America, Africa, and Europe. The exhibits sparked robust interactions between the presenters and the attendees in the form of live video chat during the poster and video session held in the afternoon of Day 1. The People’s Choice Awards were presented to honour the top three video/e-poster teams receiving the highest number of votes from the participants on the Secondary School Track and Higher Education Student Track respectively.

The winners were, in no particular order, “Saving Lives Together: A Cross-Cultural Effort to Build An Animal Shelter” by Little Animals Protection Society and Hefei Thomas School; “Multi X Multi 2.0” by St. Clare’s Girls’ School; “From Lasallians with Love” by La Salle College; “#AghamUnite” by University of Santo Tomas; “Beach Clean Up” by Methodist College Kuala Lumpur; “BMED Academy (An Instagram Account)” by The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The virtual event was well-received. In particular, the participants appreciated it as a thoughtfully created space that facilitated borderless networking, global dialogues, and lively celebration. The virtual Expo would remain open for free access for six more months. Members of the public are welcome to visit via <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/sllo/expo/>.



A screenshot capturing a video exhibit related to a PolyU SL project delivered in Rwanda



A screenshot showing attendees interacting through live video chat during the poster session

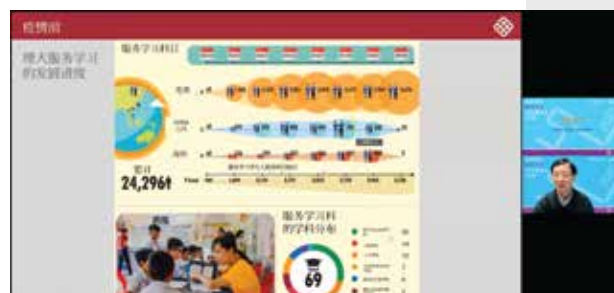
# Online Symposium on Academic Service-Learning in Higher Education

There has been a growing interest of Service-Learning (SL) in Mainland China in the last decade. Some tertiary institutions like Shantou University, and Fudan University have also developed their own SL courses with encouraging outcomes. To facilitate knowledge exchange on SL education between PolyU and universities over the Mainland, the Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) organised an online symposium on 9 July 2021 for teachers and researchers nationwide.



Event Poster

The Symposium was conducted in Mandarin and structured into two parts. First, speakers from PolyU, Fudan University, and Shantou University were invited to talk about the development of SL at their own institutions. Professor Daniel Shek, Interim Vice President (Research and Innovation), Associate Vice President (Undergraduate Programme) of PolyU, gave a presentation on the SL development in "Teaching and Learning" and "Research" in PolyU, especially under the pandemic. Upon showing some studies on mandatory SL, students' learning outcomes and longitudinal impact, Prof Shek demonstrated the potentials of SL to nurture university students as civically engaged and socially responsible individuals. And by sharing the experience of switching SL online during the strike of COVID-19, Prof Shek concluded how PolyU were forced to learn and adapt in time of adversity, and eventually turned a threat into an opportunity in exploring SL innovations, collaborations and partnerships that transcend physical, intellectual, and social boundaries.



Professor Daniel Shek talking through the development of PolyU's SL.



Dr Xu showing the conceptual framework of incorporating SL into medical studies.

The second speaker, Dr Xu Longshui, Associate Chief Physician, Charitable Healthcare Project Office of Shantou University Medical College, shared his work on leading more than 100 medical students from different universities in China to provide medical services to the poor in rural villages. His sharing not only covered the theoretical foundation of integrating SL into medical training, but also the rationale of developing medical students as professionals who can address complex medical issues in

the 21st Century with empathy and interdisciplinary knowledges. Dr Xu also talked about the assessment framework, which comprised of practicum, service performance, written reflections, as well as evaluations from teachers, peers, and service recipients to enhance the comprehensiveness of the training.



As the third speaker, Mr Bao Chunlei, Associate Professor from the Art Centre of Fudan University, used his own course as a case study to underline the value of practicing SL with an art subject. In his course "Art and Creativity (Ceramics)", students from diverse disciplines were engaged to first learn about the concepts and techniques of ceramic production then transfer them to socially disadvantaged communities for efficacy building. Through taking part in direct services, guided group reflections, and even organisation of exhibitions for their project deliverables, the students found enjoyment from their candid interactions with the service targets, the sense of integration among their groupmates, and the growing capacity to understand themselves better.



The audience actively posted their questions online while listening to the presentations. Collectively, they showed a genuine interest in distinguishing SL from other forms of learning such as leadership training, field study, volunteering, and internship, etc.

The Q&A session was followed by five breakout sessions of moderated group discussions. The session facilitators were each invited to deliver a short presentation related to their expertise then open the floor for discussion. The five sessions were respectively, "How to Design a Service-Learning Subject" by Dr Stephen Chan from PolyU, "Reflection in Service-Learning" by Dr Hung Liu from Fudan University, "Assessing Students' SL Outcomes" by Dr Xu Hui Xuan from The Education University of Hong Kong, "Teaching and Educational Research on Service-Learning" by Dr Zoe Xiao from Hong Kong Baptist University, and "International Service-Learning Development" by Ms Cindy Lam from PolyU.

The online Symposium attracted over 100 teachers, SL practitioners, researchers, and postgraduate students across post-secondary institutions in China. Many appreciated the chance to learn about the design of SL curricula and research methodologies from their counterparts. While it was gratifying to see that the overall experience was positively rated at 4.6 out of 5, we definitely look forward to a face-to-face Symposium that would bring such valuable exchange on inspirations and experience to the next level in the near future.



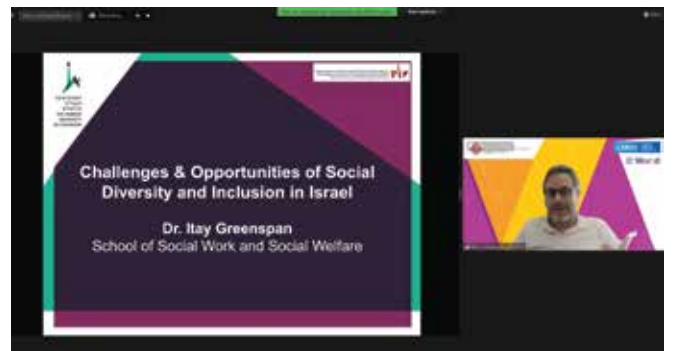
A group photo gathering the invited speakers, facilitators, and participants.

# One World Our World

One World Our World (OWOW) is a Hong Kong-based programme organised by the Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) under the Leadership Academy for Responsible Global Citizenship (LARGC) which seeks to promote global citizenship and leadership development of our students. This platform augments PolyU's well-structured SL and leadership programmes with cross-cultural and boundary-crossing components. Themed "Social Diversity and Inclusion" for the 2021 inaugural year, the first run of this programme was successfully completed on 9 July 2021.



OWOW connected 63 students from different countries, including Hong Kong, Mainland China, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, South Korea, Turkey, US and Vietnam. Participants enrolled in one of two SL subjects: ITC2S02 Community Engagement through Expressive Textile Arts and Fashion or COMP2S01S Technology Beyond Borders: Service Learning across Cultural, Ethnic and Community Lines.



Open Lecture by Dr. Itay Greenspan to introduce the diversity situations in Israel



Students taking photos with the service recipient with their final product

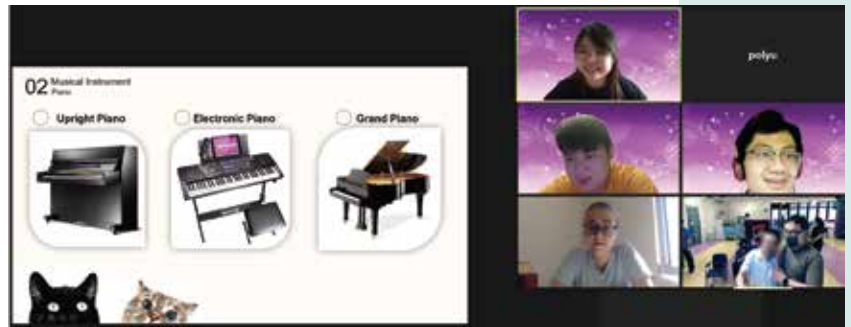


Students from ITC2S02 working with the service recipient to tailor-make fashion item



Students enrolled in ITC2S02 teamed up with service recipients who are youths with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from Heep Hong Society to discuss and co-design expressive textile artwork. They created tailor-made fashion styles for the service recipients based on their preference. The textile artworks can encourage service recipients to rebuild their self-confidence and express their personal thoughts.

For COMP2S01S, students worked in groups to apply their AI and programming knowledge to design and develop digital learning packages for moderately and severely mentally handicapped children. Students from different countries transferred knowledge to the children via Zoom. The service recipients and parents experienced the new technology from the service projects and learned these new knowledge to enrich their everyday life. Meanwhile, the students also kept communicating with the teachers from special schools to adjust the teaching packages based on the needs of the children.



Students from different countries introducing musical instruments to mentally disabled children through online platform



Students from COMP2S01S developed teaching package for the service recipients



A virtual tour to visit Chungking Mansions to understand the African community in Hong Kong

The outcomes of ITC2S02 and COMP2S01S have been showcased in the Service-Learning Expo.



Supplementing the service project, SLLO organized a series of learning activities to develop students' knowledge and competences. They included team building activity to enhance their team bonding, open lectures on Social Diversity and Inclusion by Dr. Itay Greenspan from Hebrew University and Dr. Karita Kan from our University, intercultural competence workshop to develop students' ability to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds, diversity workshop on connecting people with diverse backgrounds, themed community visits on homeless and poverty, ethnic minorities and African in Hong Kong; and overall reflection on their experience in service and team collaboration with teammates.





## Learning to Teach SL: Teacher Development Course 2021

To teachers who have heard of Service-Learning (SL), it is an appealing pedagogy that promotes the meaningful integration of academic training, community service, and self-reflection. To those who have actually been involved in the design and delivery of SL, they might have experienced the challenges in actually putting theory into practice: making this integration seamless, effective for students' learning, and simultaneously beneficial to the service recipients. To this end, the Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) organised the Teacher Development Course in June-July 2021 to give teachers who are interested in developing their own SL courses a boost of confidence.

The SLLO has organised this Course annually since 2014 to connect like-minded teachers for professional development. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Course used to offer the participants a chance to "learn in situ" through observing multiple PolyU teams' services in Cambodia. Although the pandemic has rendered overseas immersive learning impossible in 2021, we turned this disadvantage into an opportunity to expand the scope and audience of the training by employing a mixed-mode pedagogy.



Course Poster



Participants posted in the two-day online workshop

This year, the course was strategically structured into three progressive components. It begins with self-directed online learning. In the first week, participants were asked to complete the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), "Service-Learning Pedagogy and Practice", developed by SLLO, to get familiar with the basic concepts at their own pace. Upon obtaining the big picture of what SL is, how it could be done, and the potential impacts it may bring to students and the community, they were then invited to join a two-day online workshop.

The workshop was co-facilitated by, Dr Grace Ngai, Head of SLLO & Associate Professor of the Department of Computing and Dr Stephen Chan, Consultant of SLLO who jointly won the UGC Teaching Award in 2016. The instructors consolidated learning of the participants by facilitating topical group discussions coupled with artifacts collected from various SL subjects such as assessment rubrics and students' written reflections.

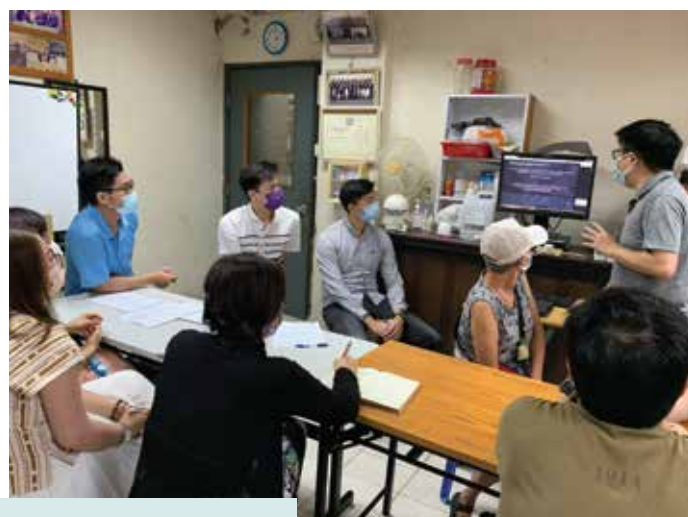




*A photo collage capturing the community visit to Shan Shui Po. The tour guide who lived without a shelter once in his life was introducing the everyday experience of a homeless person to the Course participants. (Left) The participants were sourcing a sub-divided flat for a low-income resident; (Middle) The group walk across the park populated with homeless people some time ago; (Right) The group gathered for a post-tour debriefing at the NGO.*

The course finished with hands-on practice. In this four-day face-to-face training, the participants were prompted to further integrate their learning into their own SL initiatives through a range of immersive experience. These included community visits themed on homelessness and poverty, onsite observation of PolyU’s SL subjects, mock grading exercises, and role-played debriefing, etc.

In addition, PolyU teachers, students, and community partners of diverse backgrounds and even physical locations were also invited to share tips on making SL projects more effective, impactful, and socially beneficial either via Zoom or in-person. A total of 31 participants coming from institutions and NGOs from Hong Kong, Macau, Mainland China, The Philippines and Vietnam enrolled in the online components. Among them, 17 teachers signed up for all three components to have the “deep-dive” experience. They made an interesting mix of expertise that broadly encompassed training in languages, music, science, social science, and nursing.



*A picture collage capturing a community visit to an NGO in Wong Tai Sin that focuses on food donation*





*Class observation to a SL subject offered by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at Hotel ICON.*

In addition to those teaching in local tertiary institutions, joining us there were also ten representatives from LaSalle College and one from Island Christian Academy. The good mix of discipline and institutions sparked many dynamics and insights in discussions and group activities.

The Course was positively reviewed by the participants. 80% of them rated it "useful" to their practices. The community visits, sharing from PolyU's teachers and students, and poster presentation of the participants' SL initiatives were mentioned as the three most useful parts in the written feedback.

Keep an eye on our next training cohort if you happen to be scratching your head on any of the following questions: how to develop a service idea into a winning SL proposal? how to secure a collaboration that benefits both learners and service targets? how to prepare student physically and mentally for services? how to ensure fairness in SL assessment? See you in class!



*Graduates of the 2021 cohort (Teachers from La Salle College)*



*Graduates of the 2021 cohort (Teachers from higher education)*

## Service-Learning Scholarship Scheme – (Capstone / Final Year Project)



The Service-Learning Scholarship Scheme was set up in 2013 to recognise meritorious students with outstanding performance in SL subjects and encourage them to continue their involvement in community service. They often return to help out as student leaders in SL subjects or initiate service projects of their own. In this academic year, we piloted a new idea to encourage final year students to channel their passion for service by integrating their academic knowledge through SL Capstone Projects. Two students, Cher Chun Ho (Max) and Li Chak Yiu (Harry), from the Department of Computing were selected to receive the scholarships.

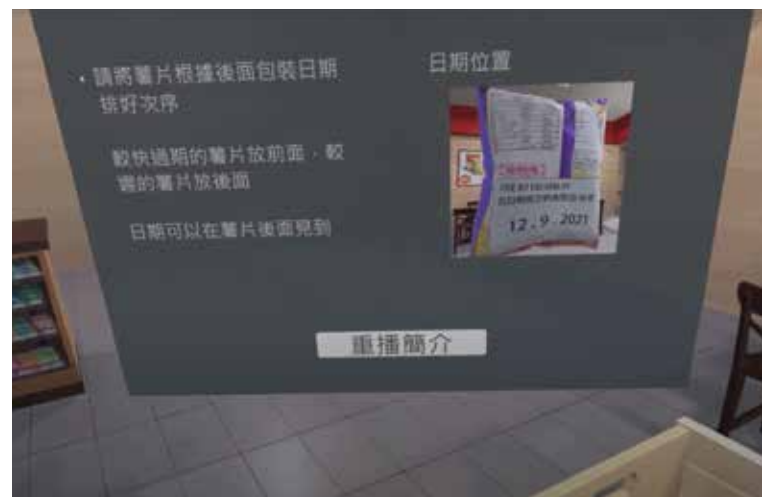


Max's capstone project, titled "VR Vocational Training System for People with Mental Disorder", seeks to support the recovery of people challenged by mental illnesses with virtual reality (VR) technology. He worked with the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences to create a rehabilitation training tool for the patients. He applied the techniques of VR, motion capture and AI ChatBot in his training tool. He also invited some clients from New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association to test the prototype with very positive feedback. Max's project also won the COMP Best Project Award Competition 2021 and received the InfoTech Job Market Driven Scholarship.

(View details of the final product in Service-Learning Expo or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JDnviUO3oUQ>)



*Users sorting out the broken products*



*Different challenges designed for the service recipients*



Users acting as a reception a virtual 7-11 store to do different tasks

(View details of the final product here:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNprEiR51iA>)

Harry's project, named "Reconstruction of Chatbot and Human-computer interaction technology in Virtual Reality 7-11 Project for Cognitive Rehabilitation", also applied VR, motion capture and AI ChatBot to rebuild a virtual shop as a rehabilitation training tool. The project was designed for training students with cognitive disabilities to handle different tasks in a convenience store as a cashier. Just like Max, Harry invited some clients from New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association to test the prototype.



Client from the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association trying the rehabilitation tools to provide feedback on the final products

In AY2021/22, the scheme will continue to provide funding and scholarships to final year students to develop innovative and impactful research projects with SL components. Through designing prototypes or conducting in-depth studies that addresses real-life problems faced by disadvantaged communities, it is hoped that students can leverage their knowledge to drive positive changes in our society in a fruitful and fulfilling manner.

Details



<http://gofile.me/3caCM/5oOiyFG53>

Application



<https://polyu.hk/BEMIs>

**Application  
 Deadline**  
**30 SEPT**

**ENQUIRY**

[sl.scholarship@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:sl.scholarship@polyu.edu.hk)  
 2766 4376



# International SL Exchange: What Students Learned, What We Learned

International Service-Learning (SL) has been coming under the spotlight in higher education. This pedagogy combines organised service activities, study abroad, and international education. The Service-Learning and Leadership Office (SLLO) dedicated a research seminar on 31 May 2021 to sharing their recent experience in organising the Global Leadership and Civic Engagement (GLCE) programme – a SL exchange between PolyU and three partner universities in the U.S.

Facilitated by SLLO Head Dr Grace Ngai, the seminar speakers were Dr Rina Camus, Postdoctoral Fellow, and Ms Cindy Lam, Senior Service-Learning Officer. They first gave the audience an idea of the GLCE programme’s basic structure: 12 outstanding students were awarded for an advanced SL experience in one of the three world-class institutions, namely, Brown University (Brown), University of Maryland at College Park (UMD), and University of Southern California (USC).



The speakers highlighting specialties of the GLCE programme



A slide on the definitions of dissonance and civic learning

The partner universities offered different types of SL programmes to the PolyU students. Two students joined Brown’s 10-week fellowship programme as interns in an NGO for Haitian immigrants. Four students attended UMD’s customised community immersion programme to volunteer in an NGO serving low-income families and explore social issues like poverty, gentrification, and racism. Six students joined USC’s 4-week programme which focused on “homelessness”, together with three USC students. Upon completing the exchange, the PolyU participants were required to initiate service projects in Hong Kong.

The research data included students’ reflective assignments and three rounds of pre/post-programme interviews. These artifacts were analysed qualitatively to measure the learning outcomes. Findings showed that the exchange did contribute to student understanding of social issues as intended. Interestingly, students related these social issues to home realities through comparisons between the U. S. cities they visited and Hong Kong. The speakers explained this as a promising pattern indicating that civic learning during the exchange was transferrable to home setting. Students gained ideas for community work inspired by persons and organizations they encountered during the exchange. On the other hand, there were evidence from reflective artifacts that students experienced powerful dissonances which were unresolved or stereotypical in some cases. Dr Camus thus remarked that staff facilitation is necessary in such programmes, to help students process striking experiences rationally and maximise their learning gains.

In addition, Ms Cindy Lam explained that the Social Change Model was used to evaluate participants' leadership development after the programme. The data suggested that all participants demonstrated leadership values at the individual level, which included being aware of their own assumptions, congruence with and commitment to serve the community. However, leadership development at group level –which encompasses valuing collaboration, working with others towards a common purpose, and handling controversy with civility – was not as visibly manifested. Ms Lam observed from this that culture orientation should be considered when applying the Model as an instrument. For instance, Asian students tend to avoid controversy and be more reserved and rather than openly air their views.

### Social Change Model of Leadership Development



### Social Change Leadership Model – Group level

✓ **67% (8/12) of students demonstrated development at this level.**

- Collaboration
- Common purpose
- Controversy with civility

- recognized the importance of and their willingness to collaborate with others and work towards a common purpose
- "form a provocative and engaging vision and then persuade others to adopt this vision as their own" (Astin & Astin, 1996)
- respecting others' viewpoints, air openly and handle controversy with civility



*The speakers walking participants through their findings in students' leadership development .*

As programme coordinator, Ms Lam also shared suggestions to enhance student learning in international SL exchanges like the GLCE programme. To highlight some tips:

- Before the exchange: do intended team-building activities and strategic grouping to promote peer learning, and assign the host university based on participants' developmental needs.
- During the exchange: do not hand over students' learning completely to the host universities, and invite students to relate their experiences overseas to their home setting.
- After the exchange: present frameworks for students' self-initiated projects without limiting their creativity.

The presentation was followed by an open discussion. Participants shared their appreciation for the programme's novelty in leveraging SL resources from a developed country like the U. S. They also brought forward their genuine concerns over sustaining international service initiatives under the pandemic.

Overall, the seminar was positively reviewed with 100% of the participants rating it 4 or above (rating scale: 5 = excellent; 1 = poor). The video recording and slides can be viewed at <https://polyu.hk/eUrdA>.



*The facilitators Dr Rina Camus (left), Ms Cindy Lam (middle), and Dr Grace Ngai (right), Head of SLLO were interacting with audience in the Q&A session.*