



# Adding perspective by volunteering

By Regina Yu Wing-tung  
Department of Applied Social Sciences  
文：余穎彤  
應用社會科學系

**I am a Year 4 student majoring in social work. During my studies, I have learned a lot of theories in the classroom. However, there is a major difference between theory and practice. This is clearly seen in the kind of areas social workers work in. Organising activities and providing services require an understanding of the target groups, and the adoption of an appropriate manner and prompt reactions on the spot. These skills can be acquired only through actual practice.**

## **Gains from voluntary work**

I joined the City-Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP) in my first year at CityU. The voluntary activities that I have taken part in have included serving as a volunteer for Food Angel (a food rescue and food assistance programme in Hong Kong), regularly visiting senior citizens, and tutoring newly arrived students from mainland China, ethnic minority groups and disabled students. I have gained a great deal from these activities.

For instance, the best way to help senior citizens who tend to be more withdrawn is to encourage them to join in the activities, according to theories. But I hadn't considered the factors that accounted for why they were reluctant to join in. After doing voluntary work, I understood that I should respect the unique characteristics of each individual client.

Through CYEP, I have the chance to take part in voluntary services overseas. One of them was the "Barrier-free Exploration Journey" to Taipei.



Regina (third from right) joined the Cambodia service-learning trip in 2015.

穎彤(右三)2015年參加柬埔寨服務助學團。



This trip inspired my personal development, helped me learn more and broadened my vision.

### Barrier-free facilities in Taipei

“Barrier-free Exploration Journey” is a regular event held by CYEP. In 2014, CYEP volunteers went to Macau, and in the summer of 2016, 12 volunteers and eight disabled students from Hong Kong Red Cross Princess Alexandra School (PAS) travelled to Taipei for five days. The aim of both trips was to understand the needs of local disabled persons and to meet local related organisations, and thus discover more about barrier-free facilities in Taiwan. The findings from the trip would be used to support disabled persons in Hong Kong.

Before our departure, CYEP’s project manager and volunteers learned about the needs of the eight PAS students. Based on the information we received, we contacted relevant organisations in Taipei to make the necessary arrangements. These organisations included universities, driver training schools and social enterprises. Also, we went to meet some people with disabilities in Taiwan to find out about related career, housing and schooling issues.

### Self-reflection inspired by the trip

The trip made me reflect on myself and community issues. Although I was aware of the news and information related to barrier-free environment, and I studied this topic for my course assignments, I was rather passive in taking action. However, after listening to PAS students’ views on Hong Kong’s barrier-free environment, I acquired a better understanding and had a clearer idea of how to take action to improve the situation.

Although I worried about the various constraints on PAS students, I saw how they displayed their spirit of “a capable mind in a disabled body” by turning the “impossible” tasks one by one into the “possible” while we were on the trip. They hoped to attract the attention of different stakeholders in the community through this trip. I admired the way they set about their mission.

During my trip to Taipei, I learned a lot about how hard local citizens worked to create a barrier-free environment. For instance, they would take the initiative to offer space in public areas for wheelchair users in order to help them access public facilities. In schools, the needs

### City-Youth Empowerment Project (CYEP)

Launched in 2005 by CityU, CYEP is a non-credit bearing service learning project. The aim is to enhance students’ awareness of social issues and encourage them to actively participate in community services by helping the underprivileged and those in need.

of the disabled on campus were regularly reviewed and taken care of by designated groups. Also, social welfare organisations provided personalised services for the disabled and set up appropriate jobs and support.

### Volunteering insight

The trip gave me a new perspective about social work. As a social work student, I used to view social services as an opportunity to practice my knowledge. Now I understand that social work requires not only professional knowledge and skills, it also demands a heart willing to care for the target groups.

Being a volunteer instead of a social worker during the trip, I found the PAS students more open to share their thoughts and needs with me. Through voluntary services, I have acquired genuinely useful insight. In summary, voluntary services can complement and facilitate one’s major programme of studies. ◆

# 義務工作的啟示

我是主修社會工作的四年級生。在課堂裏主要學習理論，然而理論和實踐大有分別。實際組織一項服務及參與服務都講求對服務對象的了解、採取適當的態度，以及臨場的應對。以上三項，均要親身經歷才能學到箇中技巧。



“Barrier-free Exploration Journey” aimed to understand the needs of disabled persons in Taipei.  
「無障礙探索之旅」旨在考察台北傷健人士的情況和需要。

## 從義務工作中學習

我自大學一年級起參與城青優權計劃（城青），曾參加的義工活動包括：擔任「惜食堂」（本港一個食物回收及援助計劃）義工，定期探訪長者，替內地新來港學童、少數族裔和肢體傷殘學生補習等，從中獲益良多。

記得最初探訪長者時，我本着從理論所學「連結服務使用者到社區資源」的精神，以為幫助隱蔽長者的最好方法，是鼓勵他們到長者中心參與活動，卻沒有關心他們不出門的各種考慮，後來我從探訪中學到要尊重每個服務對象的獨特性。

我參與的城青活動還包括海外義工服務，「無障礙探索之旅」是其中之一。這項活動在個人發展方面給了我不少啟發，使我增長了知識和擴闊了視野。

## 赴台了解無障礙設施

「無障礙探索之旅」是定期舉辦的活動。2014年，城青義工夥同傷健人士到澳門考察；2016年夏天，我們一行12名義工，與香港紅十字會雅麗珊郡主學校的八名寄宿學生（主要是肢體傷殘人士，下稱「宿生」）赴台北市五天。「無障礙探索之旅」的目的是通過了解台灣傷健人士的情況和需要，並與台灣相關機構交流，了解當地的無障礙設施，回港後利用調查結果改善香港對傷健人士的支援。



出發前，城青的項目主任和我們一班義工先與宿生詳談，了解他們的需要，再根據所得資訊，聯絡台北相關機構，以安排探訪。我們接觸的機構包括大學、駕駛訓練學校、社會企業等，也探訪了台灣的傷健人士，探討範疇則包括傷健人士的就業、住宿、升學等。

## 親身經歷引發反思

「無障礙探索之旅」引發我對個人和社會作出反思。出發前，我雖然會留意與無障礙環境相關的新聞和資訊，大學課業也以此為考察題材，但在行動上仍較為被動。聆聽宿生講述對香港無障礙環境的看法後，我加深了對本地情況的了解和關注，也更懂得如何通過行動去改善現狀。

另一方面，以前我只看到宿生的多種限制，為他們擔憂，但活動期間，卻目睹他們將一個又一個的「不可能」變成「可能」，充分發揮「身障心不障」的精神。看到宿生透過考察之旅去喚起社會不同持分者的關注，我更加欣賞他們身體力行去發聲和爭取權益的勇氣。

在台北考察期間，我親身感受到當地人為達致無障礙環境的努力。舉例說，市民在公眾地方會主動讓路給輪椅使用者，使他們能暢通無阻地使用公共設施；學校有專責小組照顧傷健人士在校的需要，並定期檢討，確保他們獲得平等學習機會；福利機構會為傷健人士提供個人化服務，協助安排合適的就業和支援。台北的旅程雖短，我們卻得到很多啟迪。

## 義務工作的啟迪

「無障礙探索之旅」令我對社會工作有了新看法。作為社工學生，從前我會視服務為實踐所學的機會；但現在發現除了專業知識和技巧，最重要的是要有一顆願意和服務對象建立關係的心。

此外，由於活動期間我並不是以社工身份與宿生接觸，往往更能聽到他們真實的心聲，亦有機會反思未來如何做好社工工作。總括來說，義務工作和我修讀的專業相輔相成，大有幫助。◆

## 城青優權計劃

於2005年成立，是城大一項非學分制服務學習計劃，旨在透過服務社區的弱勢社群及有需要人士，加強學生對社會問題的了解和公民參與的主動性。