

NEWSLETTER



My thesis in 300 words: Anita Venanzi

Volunteering for International Understanding (V4U) vs. Volunteering for Development (V4D) and Chinese Societies' Perspectives

The world of International Voluntary Service (IVS) has been split in two by academics and expert practitioners. One branch is aimed at development through professionally-driven technical advancement, and the other one is aimed at international understanding¹. While the professional type received its due attention, the latter had been barely mentioned since. Moreover, the contemporary reality of international volunteering is being increasingly assembled and analyzed under the big umbrella provided by a new framework: a trending non-professional version of development volunteering known, promoted and then criticized as “international volunteering for development”, or “international V4D”². V4D critics blame it for constructing a depoliticized and commodified narrative of volunteering, fostering neo-imperialistic and othering practices among volunteers while neglecting hosting communities, and privileging North-South perspectives. On the contrary, Volunteering for International Understanding – here shortened as V4U – has been promisingly described as aiming at fostering cross-cultural understanding by the creation of cross-cultural skills, civic engagement and activism, commitment to voluntarism and global awareness for all the participants, including and with specific attention for the host community. Therefore, we ask: How does V4U differ from V4D? What are the possibilities and limitation for V4U embody a less problematic alternative to V4D addressing its critics' concerns in discourse and practice? And, what is its role in global civil society? This research project proposes an extended case study of one of the longest-standing and most geographically present V4U international networks: Service Civil International (SCI). The extended case study describes the shape and functioning of the network at both the global and local level through participant observation and in-depth interviews with 60 staff and volunteers. The two local case studies are based in Hong Kong and Taiwan, focusing on established SCI member organizations, and their role in the recent contacts of the network with Mainland China.

CONFERENCES

Francisco Olivos - The IV Forum of the International Sociological Association, Porto Alegre, Brazil, July 14-18, 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- Liu, Minhui and Francisco Olivos. 2019. “Co-ethnic exploitation among Chinese within an ethnic economy.” *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. ([see the article](#))

¹ Sherraden, M.S., Stringham, J., Sow, S.C., and Amanda Moore McBride. 2006. “The forms and structure of international voluntary service.” *Voluntas*. 17:2, 156-173.

² Devereux, Peter. 2008. “International volunteering for development and sustainability: outdated paternalism or a radical response to globalisation?” *Development in Practice*. 18:3, 357-370.

Our Classmates Abroad: Gigi in the University of Sussex

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO GO TO THE UK AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THAT UNIVERSITY?

I am doing migration studies and there is the famous Sussex Centre for Migration Research at University of Sussex. That's why I applied to go to the University of Sussex to get in touch with the group of scholars.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES WITH THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT AT CUHK?

Postgraduates students and teachers in University of Sussex are friendly. Postgraduates students in the School of Global Studies organized a lot of mutual-support and learning activities proactively, such as weekly chapter chat for students to present their chapters, book reading group, writing group, Friday drink, etc. Besides academic activities, teachers also shared or organized activities related to social justice e.g. strike over pensions.

WHAT DO YOU BASICALLY DO OVER THERE?

I did interviews, audited classes, attended migration studies' seminars and conferences, a thesis writing workshop, met and talked with other PhD students about my and their projects. Of course, I work hard transcribing, coding and writing.

BASED ON YOUR NEW EXPERIENCES, WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND TO YOUR CLASSMATES?

I highly suggest that if you cannot rent an on-campus accommodation, live with a host family. The landlord could provide you a lot of support, including what bus pass to buy, where to buy the things you need, teach you the culture of the country and help you to adapt to the life there. Also, don't hesitate to talk about your research project to anyone you meet. It's a good practice to present your ideas and learn from the feedbacks of your audience.



HOW DOES YOUR THESIS SUPERVISION WORK WHEN YOU ARE ABROAD?

I constantly email my supervisor about my progress and discuss the difficulties and the possible solutions.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FOR YOUR THESIS?

I got a lot of chances to talk to the postgraduate students and teachers at the University of Sussex about my research project. Through the casual talks, the formal presentations, and the feedbacks, I learned how to present my work better to the international audience.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO DO FIELDWORK THERE?

I brought a BritRail pass which allowed me to travel freely in 15 days within two months in the UK (The price for the pass is 457 Euro). Then I contacted the interviewees who were introduced by people I know in Hong Kong and then I started arranging the dates, and travel to them by train.

DEFINE IN ONE WORD YOUR EXPERIENCE

I feel like a fish in the water.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✓ Ruby Yuen Shan Lai was awarded the HKSA Best Thesis Award.
- ✓ David M. Edmonds was awarded the Kam Ngan Stock Exchange Scholarship 2019/20.
- ✓ Conference submission deadline:
 - The 17th Annual Conference of the East Asian Social Policy Research Network & The 27th Annual Conference of the Foundation for International Studies on Social Security - "Beyond Inequality? Social Security and Social Welfare Between East and West" - Lingnan University, Hong Kong, June 26-28th, 2020 - deadline: March 6th 2020. ([see more informations](#))
- ✓ Job ads:
 - Part-Time Faculty Positions in Humanities and Social Sciences - BNU-HKBU United International College, Zhuhai, Guangdong - Application deadline: January 18th, 2020. ([see the ad](#))