

Learning Report

25th IAVE World & Youth Volunteer Conference

In October 2018, I had the honour of attending the 25th International Association for Volunteer Effort World & Youth Volunteer Conference as a delegate from Hong Kong. This is an occasion where representatives can celebrate each other's work and learn from each other on living a life to serve. The conference theme - *Our Responsibility for the Global Future* - highlighted the collaboration that we believe will bring solutions to the global challenges we face. It was a highly motivational experience as I saw how volunteering could be a unifying force to bring about positive change in our communities.

Volunteering has been a core part of my life since I was little. I believe we should not see volunteering as something we go out of our way for - this act of giving should be organically incorporated into how we live, which is why I have always been active in community service. I also co-founded Pay It Forward, a platform improving mobility by having everyone in the community to do one small act of kindness. I have faith in the power of humanity and altruism in transforming energy and building a better world, and I hope to play my part in catalysing this positive chain reaction.



The trip started with attending the Youth Volunteer Conference. It was an exciting opportunity to meet passionate youth around the world who devoted their lives to volunteering at a young age. In addition to learning about their volunteering initiatives, I had the opportunity to work on the Youth Deputation on Volunteering with another representative from Columbia. It was an enriching experience to understand more about the International



Association for Volunteer Effort as well as how youth can play a bigger role in volunteering at a higher level. The Youth Conference was also an excellent opportunity for the Hong Kong delegation to bond – we got to learn about each other a lot better and with the common passion for community service, we became great friends and enjoyed thoughtful discussions on topics addressed in the conference in the evenings.



On the last day of the Youth Conference, we had the opportunity to visit local volunteering efforts in Augsburg. We visited the Teen Court, where teenagers volunteered to counsel young people aged between 14 and 17 who were charged in a case of light or middle delinquency. The volunteers, who are of the same age as the accused form a committee and discuss the offence with the accused and try to find a proper measure or sanction for him or her. As soon as the service has been rendered

the public prosecutor arrests judgment. Not only did we talk to the volunteers there, we had a mock counselling session which was very interesting. As an advocate for human rights and youth empowerment, it was undoubtedly an inspiring sight to see. It also prompted us to ponder on whether our society should put more trust in the youth.

During the World Conference, I represented youth in the volunteering community to make a Youth Deputation on Volunteering. With another representative from Columbia, we made a pledge on how the youth can be more involved in volunteering and ask for more representation on the IAVE Board. It was a special moment and I felt very honoured to be the first



representative from Hong Kong and Greater China to make this declaration. It was also quite unique of a public speaking experience as I got to make the speech at three beautiful halls in Augsburg.

The sessions during the World Conference were very insightful. I learned about the Red Cross' organisational challenges in their volunteering

programmes, HKU's altruistic scale study and many facets of the influences of and on volunteering that I never considered. Nonetheless, if I were to only take one message back, it would be that as youth, we are having so much more power than we ever imagined - but that also comes with a lot more responsibilities that we were prepared of. Being young is no excuse for being excused for subpar effort, or worse, indolence. The moment we ask for more opportunities, we pledge for more responsibilities. Having the zeal to serve does not suffice, we need to prepare ourselves with the experience, skills and grit to aim for a substantial impact with our volunteering work.

