

The Project Journey

Having participated in the opening session in Hong Kong and the Cultural Intelligence Online Course, the 100 undergraduate students from HKU will travel to Manila for a 4-week face-to-face immersion programme. The first two weeks will be facilitated by Common Purpose and for the following two weeks the students will be working on their projects in Manila.

The students, working in groups of ten, will work closely with a range of organizations, helping them to tackle specific challenges. Bringing with them their fresh thinking and ideas, they will add value to these organizations, and to Manila, innovating and addressing the challenges from new perspectives. These challenges will allow them to develop their leadership skills and Cultural Intelligence, whilst practicing bold innovation, and helping to tackle some of the problems facing Manila today.

The first two weeks of the immersion will be spent exploring Manila and its hinterland, meeting a range of leaders from across sectors and organizations, and immersing themselves in the city's opportunities, challenges, strengths and weaknesses. These interactions will be framed around the various areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), looking at issues of poverty, food security, health and wellbeing, education, energy, climate change, environment, crime and inequality. The SDG's will help the students explore Manila and the country and see its multi-faceted, complex and interconnected nature.

In the second week, they will then pair up with one of ten host organizations, and in weeks three and four, will work closely with their hosts to address a specific organizational challenge they face. During the immersion, students will also take part in a number of sessions that will help with the specific skills development required to make these projects a success: project management, stakeholder management and partnership working.

By the end of week four the students will have developed either a new project in response to the challenge that was presented to them, or will help refine, innovate and progress an existing project.

Common Purpose will work closely with our contacts in Manila to identify ten organizations focusing on a range of different issues and areas, where they have a challenge that requires fresh eyes and innovative new thinking. To ensure success and sustainability, the host organization must be able to offer expertise, access, support and resources. They will not necessarily host the ten students in their offices for the duration of the immersion, but they will offer regular meetings to hear progress and feedback on the emerging projects, and share their leads, contacts and expertise with the students.

The organizations will be selected from across sectors to give students a broad range of challenges to choose from. We will work closely with the organizations in the run-up to the immersion to ensure that they are able to work effectively with their new student partners. They help and encourage the students to present viable solutions that will continue to deliver results and add value to their host organizations and to Manila, when the students depart.

Potential challenges might be:

1. Helping a business diversify its client base and income streams.
2. Helping a public transport provider in providing a safe travelling environment.
3. Working with a grass-roots campaigning organization to help them incorporate social media into their campaign strategies to reach out to young people.
4. Exploring how the Philippines can lessen the impact of 'brain drain' on its public services and ensure greater retention of talent.
5. Supporting teachers and schools to collaborate more effectively to lessen dropout rates in primary and secondary education.
6. Securing new sources of funding for arts and social projects enabling long term sustainability.
7. Supporting the move to renewable energy away from coal and natural gas.
8. As the Philippines economy grows how can it at the same time lessen inequality in society?