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ChiEAC Research Assistant Reflection

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Mr. Drury

SOC 103-002 Social Problems

1. What did serving migrant and refugee families teach you about trust, advocacy, and the barriers that families face when trying to access basic educational resources in Chicago? Reflect on specific moments of challenge or growth and consider how this experience shaped your understanding of educational equity.

As an immigrant, it feels incredible to now be on the other side of this experience. There was a time when I was the one receiving donated clothes, and I truly appreciated every item. I had never given much thought to the individuals who donated those clothes, but I realize now that each piece carried with it the good intentions of those generous people. Now, when I donate clothes to migrants and children, I am filled with happiness knowing that my goodwill can reach them, even if I can't be there in person.

2. How did your role in collecting and distributing clothing, raising funds, and organizing community support shift the way you understand mutual aid and grassroots organizing? What emotions or insights came up for you as you took on responsibility for meeting urgent needs in real time?

I enjoyed collecting and donating clothes. It brought me a great sense of happiness to do something good in my day and week. I believe it's important to do something kind every day, as it can change the entire essence of how you feel. After all, if you're not willing to give to others, why would people give back to you? When I heard about the opportunity to donate, I immediately started looking for clothes I could give away.

3. Of the three research studies you contributed to, which one resonated most with your personal story or the stories of people you know? How did participating in this research project impact the way you view the role of data in shaping public understanding and policy?

4. How did this experience challenge or confirm what you believed about the power of community organizations in addressing complex issues like job searching, educational access, and technology in daily life? What do you now see as the strengths and limitations of this kind of work?

Discussing social issues in a classroom where everyone actively shared their ideas was a life-changing experience for me, and I hope to relive it someday. It was the first time I had a class that openly and respectfully expressed their opinions on topics that are often sensitive and taboo in our world. I now understand the importance of such discussions and the potential outcomes they can produce. Together, we can develop solutions and ideas that one person alone might not be able to achieve. However, when left to our thoughts, we can miss out on others' perspectives, which may challenge our views and lead us off track.

5. Looking back at your time with ChiEAC, how do you think this experience shaped your personal goals, sense of purpose, or vision for the future? What skills or perspectives do you hope to carry forward—and how do you hope to keep supporting others?

I learned a lot of new things in class that I had never encountered before. Many interesting topics captured my attention. I was surprised to discover how many sociological issues go unnoticed in America and around the world. I hope to support others by sharing what I've learned and helping to create a positive change. Additionally, donating clothes to a cause gave me a feeling of fulfillment that I don't often experience. Now that I have felt the joy that comes from giving, I will actively seek out opportunities to do so in the future. I will take what I've learned and apply it in my life moving forward.