PILLARS OF LIFE

FROM CLASSROOM TO THE COMMUNITY

This session focuses on how the Service Learning model and concept can guide students in leaving a positive impact on their immediate community.

> When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost
>
> - Billy Graham

What's So Unique about Service Learning?

She key to service learning is the link between community service and classroom learning and how it is designed to meet certain curriculum objectives such as inculcating civic responsibility. Students not only get to apply what they learn in the real world, but are given structured 7me to reflect on their experiences and to ensure that they understand the extent to which they can impact positive change in their communities.

What does Service Learning provide ME with?

1. **AN ENHANCED EDUCATION:** Enriches student learning of course and classroom materials and brings learning to a higher level of depth and involvement. At the same time, it also increases student's awareness of pertinent societal issues and the human condition.

2. **BUILDS CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:** Helps students to develop civic responsibility through active community involvement, and other soD skills such as empathy and social conscience along the way.

3. **BUILDS AN ALL-ROUND ACHIEVER:** Service learning improves interpersonal skills that are increasingly viewed as important skills in achieving success in the professional and personal spheres. It broadens our perspectives on a diverse range of issues, and enhances our critical thinking skills.

Service Learning model
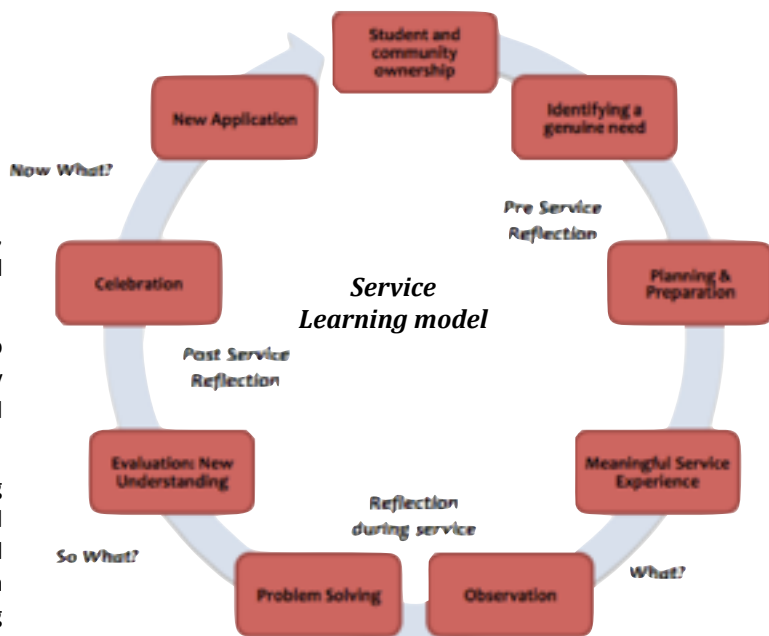
Planning a Service Learning Project

Coming up with a service learning project may not be an easy task given the multitude of factors to consider. Here are some possible challenges you may encounter in the preparation phase and some points to note:

1.**Time Constraints:** Time must be carefully evaluated when determining what you plan to accomplish. Starting off with small but realistic goals will help you manage your time better during the project.

2.**Proposing Solutions:** Formulate solutions that are within your reach and the resources that you have i.e. allocated budget, manpower and 7me. Ambitious solutions, however great, may not be effective in helping your target beneficiary if they are not feasible.

3. **Meeting the Needs of Your Beneficiary:** Prioritise your audience members and manage your expectations on those priorities. In that way, both you and the beneficiary gets to take away and accomplish something of value at the end of the day.

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10 Steps to a Successful Fundraising Event

Fundraising events are a popular form of fundraising. While they can be great money makers for an organization, they can also be time consuming and expensive. The success of events depends on careful planning. (Yes, you should have a written event plan for every event you hold!)

To help you ensure that your fundraising event is a winner, here are ten major components that you must incorporate into your event plan:

1. Purpose:

Before doing anything else, you must decide what the purpose of your event is. Is this truly a fundraising event? Or does it have other goals? Perhaps your organization may be hoping to raise money at the event, but the main function of the event is to gain publicity, or reach out to a new network. Many charitable events have more than one goal. Figuring out the details for your event will depend on knowing what goals you are trying to achieve.

2. Fundraising Goal:

In conjunction with the event host committee, organization staff, and key fundraisers, you must decide what amount of money you plan to raise at the event. If this is truly a fundraising event, then everything in the event plan will be geared to raising this specific amount of money. The amount you choose should be what you hope to net, that is, the amount you plan to raise after expenses are deducted.

3. Budget:

Every fundraising event plan should contain a complete budget listing all of the expenses that will be required to hold the event. Your budget should include staff, invitations, space rental, catering, entertainment, transportation, security, utilities, and anything else that will be required to make the event a success. Your budget should take into account your fundraising goal, ensuring that you raise that amount above and beyond all expenses. Be sure to leave a little extra room in your budget for unforeseen costs.

"You have to be burning with an idea, or a problem, or a wrong that you want to right. If you're not passionate enough from the start, you'll never stick it out." - Steve Jobs

TAKE ACTION!

4. Leadership:

As part of your fundraising efforts, your event will most likely have a "host committee" and one or more "host committee chairpersons." These people are responsible for contributing substantial amounts to the event and encouraging others to do the same. The host committee is generally composed of wealthy donors, business leaders, or local celebrities. The host committee and chairpersons are not responsible for actually running the event, but are integral to ensuring that you reach your fundraising goals.

Source: http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/fundraising-basics/fundraising-event/

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> "The future depends on what you do today."
>
> — Mahatma Gandhi

5. Target Audience:

Who is the target audience for your event? Is this a general fundraiser where everyone will be invited? Or is this event geared towards a specific group like business people, parents, or young professionals? In short, you must decide whom you will invite to your event.

6. Set – Up:

Your event staff should plan the event set-up well in advance. The set-up includes all of the particulars of the actual event: Where will it be? Will food be served? Will there be entertainment? What kind of dress will be required? What is the itinerary for the event?

7. Marketing:

Just like a new product, your event needs to be aggressively marketed to your target audience. You need to convince your supporters that your organization and event are worthy of their time and money. Draw up an entire marketing plan for the event. Possible methods of "getting the word out" include: using your non-profit's fundraising network, mailed invitations, direct mail, phone banks, word of mouth and the event host committee.

8. Sales:

Once you market your event, there must be a procedure in place for making the actual ticket sales, or accepting donations for the event. You must decide whether there will be different contribution levels for the event (such as a flat ticket charge, an extra charge to be invited to a V.I.P. reception in addition to the event, etc.). You must decide who will sell the tickets, how they will be shipped or delivered, and who will be responsible for organizing the incoming information.

9. Practice:

While you probably won't need a full run-through of your event, it is essential that everyone who is working the event know, ahead of time, what their responsibilities are, where they should be during the event, and how the event is going to "flow." If you are having a large or unusual event, the key event staff may want to have a practice run to make sure that your operation is running smoothly.

10. Thank – You:

One of the most oft heard complaints from contributors to charitable fundraising events is, "They never even said 'thank-you.'" Ditto for your event volunteers. Make sure that the organization takes the time to send thank-you notes to everyone who is involved in your event, including contributors, volunteers, staff and vendors. Keep your donors happy… you're probably going to be asking them for another donation sometime down the road.

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"Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action. "

— William James

Setting Up Your Own Volunteering Project

Are you thinking of setting up your own volunteering project? Below is a 10 step guide to the process of setting up your own volunteering project.

Step 1: What do I need to think about before I set up a volunteer project?

• What do you want your project to do?

• To set up your project can you work in partnership with an existing charitable organisation or social enterprise?

• How much time are you able to devote to your project?

• Does the project make the most of your skills (as an individual/group)?

• Who is likely to support my idea and why?

• Who may oppose the idea and why?

Step 2: Does my project meet a need?

• Does your project meet a need in the local community? (eg social / environmental / economic)

• Once you have identified a 'need' you will need to think about how to gain access to the group of people your project is focused on serving.

• Why is your project different to what is already available? Research if anyone else is doing anything similar. Can you pool resources or add something extra to what they are already provisioning?

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> "A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal."
> — Steve Maraboli, Life, the Truth, and Being Free

Step 3: Why should I think about partnering with an existing charity?

Success

- Your project is likely to be able to launch more swiftly, as well as potentially be more successful if you can partner with an existing charity.

Benefits

- Support network: An already established charitable organisation or social enterprise gives you access to a fully formed support network for your project.

- Resources: whether people, equipment or training – charities can often provide these services for you to capitalise on free of charge.

Two beneficiaries

- Make sure that if you do enter into a partnership, your partner understands, and potentially works with you on your project's aims to ensure the successes benefit both you and them.

Step 4: What should I do to get the project started?

- You need to be passionate about your project idea, yes, but above all you need to be committed to devoting your time to the project (especially in the early stages) so it doesn't get pushed down your to-do list. It is likely to take at least a month to successfully plan, promote and get your project up and running.

- In order to get your idea off the ground the concept needs to be well-thought out and easily explainable – practise describing it in 60 seconds to someone who knows nothing about it.

- You can think big for your project but it's always better to start small. It's always an option to scale up once you have accomplished your aims on a manageable scale.

Step 5: How can I get my project funded or part-funded?

Your project may require little or no funding, however, if you do want to set something up which requires an initial injection of cash, doing some research into funds/organisations might be a good place to start.

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> When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don't adjust the goals, adjust the action steps.
>
> - Confucius

Step 6: How do I go about recruiting student volunteers?

- Explain to potential volunteers exactly what the project involves and how they personally will be using their skills to meet the need you have identified and the aims of the project.

- Once the volunteers are enthusiastic about the project it is much more likely to succeed – sell your idea and aims!

- Tap into the motivations of the people you are aiming to recruit

- Giving your team of volunteers specific areas of responsibility (for example: marketing, budgeting, secretarial duties) may be a good way to split the workload as everyone can play to their strengths and it fosters a sense of ownership/an affiliation to the project.

- Let your team of volunteers know how many hours per week they are likely to need to put aside to work on your student-led project – this will ensure you recruit the people who are committed to giving up their time.

- If your project will be working with children or vulnerable adults you need to look into getting checks for your volunteers.

Step 7: How do I measure the impact of the project?

- What are you hoping to achieve and by when?

- How can you measure how much progress has been made towards your original aims?

- Evaluate as your project progresses – be adaptable - make changes to things which are less successful as you go along

Suggested ways to evaluate:

- **Survey your team:** Create a short survey on a free surveying site like SurveyMonkey and email it to those who volunteered for your project. This is a good way of collating constructive criticism which will hopefully enable the project to grow and improve. Aim to make the survey anonymous to ensure a good response rate and more honest feedback.

- **Survey the people your project was set up to serve:** Send an anonymous survey request out to the community, ask them what they enjoyed, what they thought worked and where there are areas for improvement. Do the participants believe the project helped to bring about positive change? Any responses in the affirmative will serve as good testimonies to use for future funding applications and partnerships.

- **Informal in-person feedback sessions:** Where a group of volunteers come together to discuss their experiences and the community comes together for a different session to discuss their experiences.

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> In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision.
>
> - Dalai Lama

Step 8: How can I ensure a smooth handover to new project leaders?

- To make certain your project continues to run successfully you will want to think about the succession period a month before. Holding elections is a democratic way to elect new leaders for the project (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Media Coordinator etc.).

- Put together a project plan for the new project leaders, with details about volunteer recruitment, successful events and anything that didn't work out as you had hoped.

Step 9: What transferable skills might I gain as a founder and leader of a volunteering project?

Setting up and running your own project can be time intensive and challenging but also very rewarding and you can gain excellent skills for future jobs, including:

- Project management

- Project planning

- People management

- Experience of recruiting volunteers

- Leadership

- Budgeting

- Creative thinking

- Problem solving

Step 10: Where can I go for support and advice during the process of setting up my project?

Remember to consult with teachers, seniors, and other figures with experience in planning whenever you need help!

Good project timeline to consult: http://www8.hp.com/us/en/pdf/1_Volunteer_Project_Timeline_tcm_245_1014773.pdf

Source: http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/CareersAndVacancies/volunteerCentre/findinganopportunity/Settingupownproject.aspx

A Character Development Module

PILLARS OF LIFE

Session 7:
Finding Common
Ground
SDL #5

FINDING COMMON GROUND

This session will allow us to explore how to be better at finding common ground with others.

> Music has a power of forming the character, and therefore should be introduced into the education of the young.
>
> - Aristotle

Making connections with people is a very important part of our lives. The relationships we create with others enrich our lives and make them better. Connecting with people, and having them understand us is a basic human need, and is vital to who we are and who we want to become. It is inevitable that all individuals are different by nature and by nurture, and despite how we sometimes choose to think that it is so difficult to harmonise these differences and divides, we can in fact close this gap by seeking to find a common ground. With common ground comes common understanding and mutual respect. This goes a long way in helping you avoid needless conflicts with the people in your life, and significantly helps you build more solid connections and relationships. Find a common ground with those around you today, and make the most out of those 'differences'. Here's how.

Common Interests

Strengthen bonds by sharing interests and passions. Break the ice by talking about something close to you, and get others to share theirs too. When you have the same passions and interests as another, it becomes a joy to spend time with that person. To connect on a deeper level, you could exchange knowledge and ideas on the subject/topic as well.

Common Experiences

Bond with someone else over a common experience, because that makes the both of you a comrade of sorts. It always helps to know you have someone you can talk to, and understand where you are coming from. People who go through the same experience will be aware of the opportunities and pitfalls involved. You could reflect on past glories or bond over the struggles you have both similarly faced. If need be, lend a helping hand, offer advices and discuss solutions to problems together in times of need. This strengthens your bonds on an emotional level.

Common Beliefs and Views

With like minds, you can convey much more in fewer words to that special someone. If you meet such a person who shares similar views as you, there is a great potential to connect on a deeper level. After all, these are the people you are likely to hit it off well, become good friends, and become the people you would want to keep in your life for a long time to come.

Taking Action

When it comes to finding common ground, the little things matter. You should not expect instant success even if there is already a common ground forged. A solid foundation needs time and effort to build. Once that foundation is in place, it can support great loads. Similarly, it takes time and effort to form a lasting connection even if there is a common ground to build upon. Just the latter alone is not enough to sustain a relationship. It requires constant effort at nurturing and continued strengthening.

Source: http://hanofharmony.com/finding-common-ground-to-connect-with-people/

What attributes do you identify with?

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> "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you." - Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People

Connection and Happiness

One of the clearest findings to emerge from research into happiness is that we are social creatures.

All of us need other people in order to be well and thrive. We feel better just being around other people. And we need close relationships in order to be happy.

Why are close, loving relationships so crucial to our well-being and happiness? Relationships create psychological space and safety so that we can explore and learn. When we feel safe and supported, we don't have to narrow in on survival tasks like responding to danger or finding our next meal. We are able to explore our world, which builds resources for times of stress and adversity.

Characteristics of close relationships:

- The ability to love and be loved

- Mutual understanding

- Caring

- A source of direct help in times of trouble

- Celebration of good times

- Validation of self-worth

- Security

- A diversity of ideas and influences to help us grow and learn

- Fun

Belonging to a group or community gives us a sense of identity. It helps us understand who we are and feel part of something larger than ourselves. Researchers also find that people with strong social connections have less stress-related health problems, lower risk of mental illness, and faster recovery from trauma or illness. Friends and family can also encourage and support us in healthy lifestyle habits, such as exercise and moderation.

Researchers have found that people are happier when they are with other people than when they are alone—and the "boost" is the same for introverts and extroverts. They also are finding that happy people are more pleasant, helpful, and sociable. So being around people makes us feel happier, and when we are happier we are more fun to be around, creating an "upward spiral" of happiness.

Happiness may be surprisingly contagious. Psychologist James H. Fowler studied the data of 5,000 people over 20 years and found that happiness benefits other people through three degrees of connection, and that the effects last for a year. He says: "We found a statistical relationship not just between your happiness and your friends' happiness, but between your happiness and your friends' friends' friends' happiness."

Source: http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/connecting/connection-happiness

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The positive effects from connecting with others are lasting. Scientists have observed what they call "hedonic adaption": our tendency to quickly adapt to our changing circumstances. This is why people who win the lottery, for instance, usually find themselves at the same level of happiness they had before they won. Close relationships, however, may be an exception. In contrast to material goods, we are more likely to continue to want our close relationships, even after we attain them, and to continue to derive positive emotions from them.

Common misconceptions

The most mature people are self-reliant.

The ideal of "rugged individualism" is a myth. Humans are social creatures; we need social networks to survive and thrive. Even independent, self-reliant people need to connect with others. The happiest people are those with strong relationships with family and friends.

Extroverts benefit from friendships more than introverts do.

Friends and family are important to everyone, whether they are quiet or outgoing. Researchers have found that introverts get just as much of a "boost" from being with other people as extroverts do. People who have a smaller number of close relationships can be just as happy as outgoing people with large numbers of acquaintances. The important thing is to cultivate a network of people you are close to—not how large that network is.

Some people are naturally more outgoing and popular.

Some people do have more outgoing temperaments, but introverts form just as many close connections as extroverts do and are just as capable of developing their social skills. Social skills are learned, and they can be learned and improved at any time in our lives.

Source: http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/connecting/connection-happiness

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> '**You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.**' ~Jim Rohn

Getting connected

People can improve their social skills and social networks. Even if your temperament is to be more introverted, you can take steps to increase your connections with others. Once you do, you're likely to feel happier, which in turn makes it easier to make more friends, and then you're experiencing the "upward spiral" of positive emotions and increased happiness. Whether you've moved to a new town, or have just gone through a major life transition, or are simply quiet and shy, these suggestions can help you increase your circle of friends:

Connect every day. Find a way to connect with someone else every day. Make it a priority to have a relaxed phone conversation, take a short walk together, share a meal, or exchange letters or emails with someone you enjoy.

Act "as if." Even if you're not a very outgoing person, act as if you are when you are around other people. Researchers find that if you push yourself to be more outgoing when you are with other people, you'll feel more positive emotions from the social interaction.

Cultivate compassion. People who cultivate loving concern and kindness for others enjoy their interactions with people more and feel more positive emotions. You can do this through a contemplative practice such as meditation or prayer.

Communicate. It seems obvious that friends communicate; but some people find self-disclosure difficult. Choose a few friends you trust; go slowly; be a good listener when friends share about themselves; and reciprocate with a similar level of self-disclosure.

Practical things you can do to increase your social network:

• Work out; join a class through a local gym or community center; or start a lunchtime group walk at work

• Walk your dog; people who have a dog and walk it have an easy way to interact with others, especially other dog owners

• Go outside; walk the neighborhood, sit out front, or stop to greet people who go by as you do yard work

• Do lunch; invite someone out for lunch or coffee

• Volunteer; volunteering gives you an instant connection with other people who share an interest in the same cause

• Take a class; if you've always wanted to start or finish a degree, one benefit is that you're almost sure to find friends at school; or take a community college, extension, or parks and recreation course in a subject or hobby that interests you

• Join a faith community; researchers believe that people who are religious are happier in part because they have a strong social connection in their faith community

Source: http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/connecting/getting-connected

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> Everybody laughs the same in every language because laughter is a universal connection.
>
> - Yakov Smirnoff

Staying Connected

You may already have a large circle of friends, acquaintances, and coworkers; you may be married, have children, and have a large family.

Whatever the composition of your social network, it's easy to find that life is busy and you aren't really connecting with the people you care about. High-quality, close connections are the ones that make us truly happy, and those connections need to be cultivated.

Tips for building higher-quality connections

Build higher-quality connections with the people in your life with these suggestions:

- **Make time.** Research has shown that happy couples spend at least five hours a week together talking.

- **Engage with people.** Be present, attentive, and affirming.

- **Be supportive.** Find out what the other person's goals and challenges are. Be encouraging, and do what you can to help him succeed.

- **Share your admiration and gratitude.** Remember what you first liked so much about a friend or partner? It's easy to start taking that for granted. Make a point to give compliments.

- **Trust.** Put your faith in others, and let it show that you believe they will not let you down.

- **Celebrate.** Research has shown that a difference between good and poor relationships is how partners respond to each other's good news. People who are close respond with enthusiasm and joy, rather than indifference, envy, or anxiety.

- **Play.** Make time for fun, laughter, and goofing off, with nothing else on the agenda.

- **Express gratitude.** Gratitude neutralizes many negative emotions—envy, anxiety, hostility, worry, anger—and taps into many positive emotions, such as wonder, appreciation, contentment, savoring, love, joy. And researchers have found that the positive effects from expressing gratitude can last for months. In one study, people who had completed gratitude exercises were happier and less depressed six months later.

Source: http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/topic/connecting/staying-connected

WORLD SERVICE LEADERSHIP

This session focuses on equipping students with the ability and capacity to be confident servant leaders by being sensitive to both people and situations.

> If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.
>
> - John Quincy Adams

Code Red

1. **What is the Problem?**

2. **Project Goals:-**

3. **Brainstorming:**

Identify components and priorities. View from all sides. Generate Ideas

   a) What is the current reality?

   b) Who are the stakeholders?

   c) What do I know?

   d) What do I not know?

   e) What should I consider?

   f) What haven't I considered?

   g) Obstacles?

   h) Milestones?

   i) Time frame?

4. **Organising your thoughts: Create outlines, lists and charts needed for action.**

5. **Next Actions:-**

   a) What should be done next?

   b) Who should do it?

- Purpose
- Vision
- Brainstorm
- Organise
- Next Actions
- Follow Up

VALUES: A MORAL COMPASS

This session will explore how positive values help shape a positive character for individual achievement, success, and a better life.

> Talents are best nurtured in solitude. Character is best formed in the stormy billows of the world.
>
> - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

A value is a belief, a mission, or a philosophy that is meaningful. Whether we are consciously aware of them or not, every individual has a core set of personal values. Values can range from the commonplace, such as the belief in hard work and punctuality, to the more psychological ones, such as self-reliance, concern for others, and harmony of purpose. We all have values that determine our decisions and guide our lives. Those who value their individuality take responsibility, are self-reliant and act with self- respect. Those who value family or friendship sacrifice their personal interests for the good of others. We express values in our relations with other people when we are loyal, reliable, trusting and feel a sense of responsibility for those around us. Having a solid foundation in the right values means equipping yourself with a moral compass to guide you along in life's toughest times.

Universal Values We Share

Something is of universal value if it has the same value or worth for all, or almost all, people. Experts believe that there is a universal set of values which all people, no matter their gender, race or culture use worldwide.

☑**Achievement:** We want to have proven accomplishments and general success.

☑**Benevolence:** Goodwill, kindness, charity, honesty, truth and friendship. Benevolence is also about having a sense of ownership of one's act for others or on the behalf of others. This is oDen promoted in many religious beliefs. We serve others to find self-actualisation.

☑**Enjoyment:** Simply put, we all want to feel good and have a great time!

☑**Power:** This is the capability to be in command. We seek validation and recognition from others. Power can also take the form of social influence or even wealth.

☑**Security:** This we seek in the home with interpersonal relationships as well as with physical safety of ourselves and our loved ones. We all want to know that we can grow in a physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy way.

☑**Self-Direction:** We seek freedom of choice and we all want to live our life to the fullest in each of our own desired ways. We also want to know that we are empowered to make our own decisions, and choose the paths that we want to focus our lives upon.

☑**Stimulation:** In this increasingly fast-paced world, there is a universal want to be involved in creative, intellectual and physical challenges as we strive for both self- improvement and progress in our work and commitments.

☑**Unity:** A holistic outlook which promotes oneness with others. Justice and equality are often stressed, and peace and trust are valued.

Source: http://www.roch.edu/people/lhalverson/universal_values.htm

CHARACTERS, RELATIONSHIPS, VALUES: A ROUND UP

This concluding session consolidates all that we've learnt about character, values and relationships.

Character

> A man's character always take its hue, more or less, from the form and color of things about him
>
> - Frederick Douglass

Ghandi once said: "If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. If character is lost, everything is lost."

Unfortunately, most people value others according to how much is in their bank account and what they have. However we think a person's worth is not measured by their money but by their values, beliefs, honour, integrity, the respect they give others, and all the other things that make them up. There are plenty of millionaires that aren't worth a thing.

We have within us the same creative power that created the universe. It is our privilege and responsibility to choose how to access that power according to our ideals. It is the choices we make, far more than any circumstances we come across, that shapes the life we live and how it has an impact upon others.
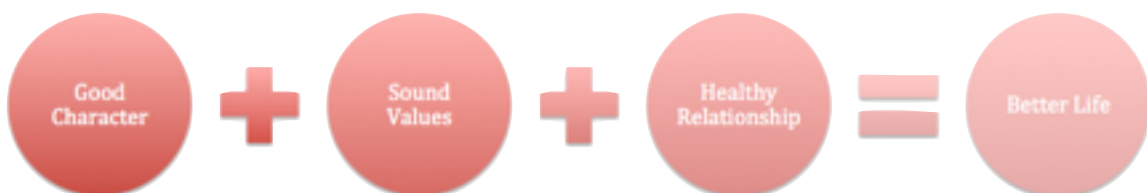
Character is a pattern of behaviour, thoughts and feelings based on sound principles, moral strength, and integrity; plus the guts to live by those principles every day. Character comprises of your life's virtues and the "line you never cross". Character is the most valuable thing you have, and nobody but you can take it away.
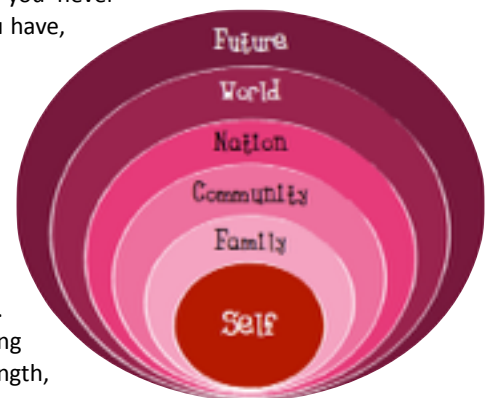
Conclusion

Character takes a lifetime to build but can be lost in an instant. Once lost, it is difficult to regain. Often, people decide to act based on short term gain or an easy fix to a problem. Failure to recognise the long term consequences of these acts can be disastrous. By studying and focusing on the importance of character, you will be guided by principles, moral strength, and integrity to do the right thing -- which is more important for your success in life.

Character and relationships will ultimately cultivate a confident individual, a self-directed learner, concerned citizen and an active contributor to their family, community, nation, world and to the future.

Good Character + Sound Values + Healthy Relationship = Better Life

Source: http://www.citrs.org/character.html & http://www.theexperienceproject.org