

# “Soothe the spirits with a loving heart” psychological assistance project for orphans and disabled children in orphanages

*Qiuwei Jiang*, and *Qiangwe Yan*\*

Wuhan Textile University, 430200 Wuhan, China

**Abstract.** In this paper, the research results of characteristic project of practical education in colleges and universities in Hubei Province, “Soothe the spirits with a loving heart ” psychological assistance project (Project No. 2017SJJD2002), has been reported. The project is a public benefit activity in which the undergraduate psychological service team of Wuhan Textile University goes to the orphanages to offer psychological assistance. Many psychological assistances were offered by students for the orphans and disabled children in orphanages through various forms such as companionship, lectures, group counseling and quality development, which not only promoted the formation of a good mentality for orphans and disabled children in orphanages, but also strengthened the mental quality and improved interpersonal communication skills of college students. What’s more, it created a practical platform for college students relying on social benefit services to develop a sense of responsibility and promote their personal self-realization.

## 1 Project themes and thread

“Soothe the spirits with a loving heart” psychological assistance project for orphans and disabled children in orphanages is a public benefit activity in which the undergraduate psychological service team of Wuhan Textile University goes to the orphanages to offer psychological assistance. Students spend their winter and summer vacations and part of spare time on orphanages. Many psychological assistances were offered by students for orphans and disabled children in orphanages through various forms such as companionship, lectures, group counseling and quality development, which not only promoted the formation of a good mentality for orphans and disabled children in orphanages, but also strengthened the mental quality and improved interpersonal communication skills of college students. What’s more, it created a practical platform for college students relying on social benefit services to develop a sense of responsibility and promote their personal self-realization.

Under the leadership of the government and the participation of various social forces, a large amount of capital investment and the establishment and improvement of the social welfare system have provided a guarantee for the survival, protection and development of orphans and disabled children in welfare institutions. However, there are still great

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\*Corresponding author: [yan.wuse@aliyun.com](mailto:yan.wuse@aliyun.com)

limitations and deficiencies for the ideological and psychological education of those children. "Soothe the spirits with a loving heart" psychological assistance project for orphans and disabled children in orphanages is based on the point to make efforts and explorations. The college students are indispensable elements in the national human resources system, possessing knowledge and professional skills, and it's the embodiment of their social practice ability to make a contribution for children's welfare; they are kindhearted, warm and thoughtful, and what the orphans and disabled children in the welfare institutions need is also passions and love; they are as young as the orphans and disabled children so that they have common topics and are easier to chat with children. Spiritual counseling education will be carried out more easily.

## **2 Project implementation**

### **2.1 Relying on research to expand activity channels**

The team visited a number of welfare institutions to understand their current needs and determine the groups who needed to be helped. In addition, social resources were actively used, for example, educational public welfare organizations jointly carried out activities and expanded activity channels.

### **2.2 Professional guidance to improve service skills**

The team regularly organized mental health education and group counselling training, and imparted skills of service and companion. Professional teachers also guided students to design suitable group counselling programs for orphans and disabled children in orphanages, and promptly help students address with difficulties in activities and answer questions.

### **2.3 Self-management and love inheritance**

The team develop students' awareness and ability of team management. Team cohesion and sense of belonging was increased. Students were led to do organizational inheritance and make the love and service awareness of Wuhan Textile University's psychological service team be inherited.

### **2.4 Actively carry out cooperation and exchanges to enhance development space**

With the concept of "going out and bringing in", the team actively explored cooperation opportunities with other universities and social welfare organizations and built brand teams, and learned excellent experience. What's more, the power of new media was used to gain publicity and recruit more students to participate in the social welfare practice to expand the effect of the activity.

### **2.5 Supervision and feedback to promote individual growth of students**

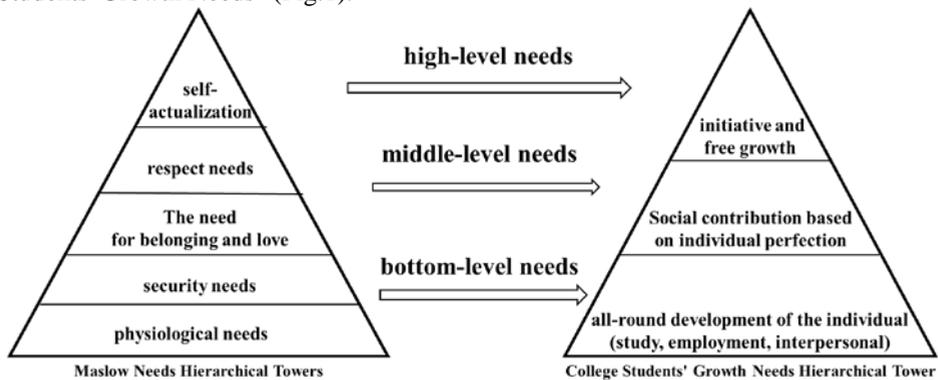
The psychological service team kept a record of each activity. Students communicated with the instructors after returning to school and discussed the highlights and shortcomings of the activity in time. The instructors gave feedback and guidance and led the students to a period of introspection in each activity. While serving others and the society, the students could also obtain moral satisfaction and self-awareness to be evolved and improved and achieve self.

## 2.6 Organize promotion and expand student participation

Gradually an organization scale led by our school's psychological service team and actively participated by all secondary colleges was formed. The professional skills and practical experience learned in the training were inherited by the school's psychological service team. All secondary colleges were radiated, and the psychological workstations of each secondary college also organized the psychological team of the college to participate in school-level activities or independently organize the team of the college to independently contact the service target institutions to develop activities. The two-pronged approach could attract students in a wider range to participate in the public benefit activities.

## 3 Project effectiveness and experience

The project is based on Thomas Lowe's hierarchy of needs theory. Compared with the hierarchy of needs theory, we can divide the growth needs of college students during college into three levels: the bottom-level needs are the all-round development of the individual, which is closely related to the real materials of college students' study, employment, and interpersonal relationships; the middle-level needs are the social contribution based on individual improvement, which is closely related to the spiritual needs of the high-quality group of college students to seek a sense of morality; the high-level needs are the initiative and free growth of individuals, which is the inevitable trend of evolution and improvement of human self-consciousness. The three levels constitute the "Hierarchical Tower of College Students' Growth Needs" (Fig.1).



**Fig. 1.** Hierarchical tower of college students' growth needs.

“Soothe the spirits with a loving heart” psychological assistance project for orphans and disabled children in orphanages greatly satisfied the needs of college students. During the period of serving others and the society, college students got moral satisfaction. Their self-consciousness was evolved and improved, and their high-level needs for self-realization were realized. Through the project the students' sense of social responsibility and ownership had been developed, and the pro-social value orientation of college students had been led. In the process of serving in welfare institutions, students had also improved their interpersonal skills and communication skills. Their strong will and perseverance were stimulated. In addition, after learning professional skills, the students' own professional knowledge and mental quality had been improved, and they had further realized the importance of mental health in the process of individual growth. In the process of studying Maslow's needs level of college students, the high-level needs of college students were met. Meanwhile, the self-realization of college students was promoted.

In terms of organization, the early implementers of the project were mainly school-level psychological service teams, and only some colleges had carried out related activities. Gradually, it has formed an organization scale led by the psychological service team of Wuhan Textile University and all secondary colleges participated in it actively, which could attract students in a wider range to participate in the public benefit activities.

## 4 Project reflection and improvement

“Soothe the spirits with a loving heart” psychological assistance project for orphans and disabled children in orphanages has developed from the early simple companionship to various forms such as companionship, lectures, group counselling and quality development. And the project team will make plans for the content of the activities in the later stage. Various activities reasonably will be offered, and assistance will be more targeted, professional and systematic. The instructors will be organized to further improve the training content and exchanges. Thus, a more systematic and complete professional training will be formed. Guiding group counselling and quality development activity designed by students more usefully makes them more targeted, interesting and effective. The activity channels for the psychological assistance action for orphans and disabled children are still few, mostly in Wuhan and its surrounding areas, and other welfare institutions in the other cities are taken into account. In the future, the project team will organize students to spend the winter and summer vacations expanding the activity channels and spread the love further.

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