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International Scientific Seminar
Life designing interventions for decent work and sustainable development

Community-based career guidance and counseling: expanding the notion of work for youth transitions to decent work in community settings

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Decent work

The notion of decent work questions more generally **the means to achieve social integration and social justice.**

The personal, organizational and societal levels should be consolidated not only with the prospect of **strengthening the employability of people or their adaptability to cope with uncertainty and precariousness,** but also to co-create an **enabling environment** where everyone can pursue their own objectives while participating in communities for **making contributions to others** and for the development of a more just, sustainable and equitable world

Meaning of work

The challenge of decent work is to **give meaning to one's existence** more generally.

To **redefine work in an expanded manner** is to give more meaning to work beyond paid work, and to serve for the practical purpose of reorientation in delivering career support services to marginalized people in particular.

A defining 'objective' given by ILO Decent Work should therefore include the 'subjective' to make a holistic account of the construction of the "**meaning of life through labor**" as asserted by the perspective of Life Design (Blustein, 2013; Guichard, 2003; Savickas et al, 2010).

Psychosocial definition of decent work is suggested, which facilitates the consolidation of personal and social identity, while developing professional activity to make development support **sustainable** (Pouyaud, 2016) .

Decent work refers in its objective dimension to an income allowing stability and securing protection, and in its subjective dimension to autonomy, recognition, the meaning of life, and the construction of identity in a concern for self and others (Angella, 2016; Kira and Balkin, 2014; Lopes, Lagoa, & Calapez, 2014; Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999).

To acknowledge under-recognized work experience

Marginalized young people such as those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET youth) are **deprived of social recognition** following their **lack of a legitimate social status**, which leads to the deprivation of their self-recognition as well.

Career practitioners find it difficult to connect a young mother's parent work, housework and handicraft work as **a talking point** to map out her career journey in the long run.

It requires a linguistic framework to **de-label the stigmatizing effects** of status-zero for those who are not in education, employment, or training.

When working with young people in NEET situation, showing recognition is not a matter of being polite and courteous to them, but **a matter of showing recognition of equal dignity of young people and their right to be treated with respect** (Gavrielides, Nemutlu, & Şerban, 2018).

There is **a need to revalue a whole set of activities which are currently 'excluded' from work**, such as domestic work, volunteering, serious leisure, etc. Along this line of thinking, we have to avoid from labeling them as unproductive, but rather consider them as complementary.

Redefine the notion of work for decent work

- It is considered **strategic** to expand the notion of work in terms of addressing both **paid and unpaid work activities** if the agenda of decent work is to be pursued. It is deemed important considering career counseling as a way to help people construct themselves in a holistic way (Life Design perspectives, Savickas et al, 2010).
- Redefine decent work as a psychosocial concept to be more inclusive: the objective dimension refers to **an income allowing stability and securing protection in particular, and the subjective dimension to autonomy, recognition, the meaning of life, and the construction of identity in a concern for self and others** (Angella, 2016; Kira and Balkin, 2014; Lopes, Lagoa, & Calapez, 2014; Pouyaud, 2016; Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999).

Expanded Notion of Work (ENOW) in the late-modern world

Nature	← Paid Work →		← Unpaid Work →			
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Forms of Work	Paid employment & Enterprise	Trial work & Trial-run business	VET and Work Exposure programmes	Voluntary Work in organizational settings	Domestic/ Neighborhood provisioning	Serious Leisure
Examples	Full-time work, Part-time work, Self-employment, Social enterprise	Work trial schemes, Trial-run business	VET, Modern apprenticeship, Job tasting, Job shadowing, Agency visits	Volunteering, Mentoring, Service learning, Community service	DIY Work, Housework, Self-provisioning, Household provisioning, Neighbourhood provisioning, Casual volunteering	Life arts, Handicrafts, Sports, Theatre performances, Youth cultures, Heritage protection, Environmental protection, Human rights, Animal rights

Source: Adapted from Wong, 2015

ENOW experience: A stepping stone to explore new horizons for inclusive decent work



1. Do not deny the paramount importance of decent paid work, but to add other activities that could be paid (in the sense that they produce a gain for society as informal work) but are not. These are simply “ different forms ” of work which do not provide the same resources but which allow the development of oneself and one’s skill set during the career and life development journey.
2. **Serious leisure** is not understood as a distraction from work but being transformed into a kind of ‘work experience’, which can help the participants to discover and develop their under-recognized if not unrecognized or even misrecognized interests and aspirations.
3. All of these paid and unpaid work activities must be designed, mixed or blended with a individually-defined purpose/commitment pursued over one’s life course.

ENOW experience is linked to the ENOW-VASK Framework in order to work for this inclusive project

Values, attitudes, skills and knowledge (VASK) are considered **transferable**, and as **common factors** across different domains of work and life experiences (Wong & Su, 2019)

Examples: hiking, coffee-brewing, dancing, singing, marathon running, blogging, observing, listening, walking, and many others

Domain-specific knowledge and skills

Transferable knowledge and skills

Transferable values and attitudes

Towards personal & collective transcendence



The challenge of decent work is to **give meaning to one's existence** more generally.

Career Counseling

= help people explore their *life-career space* in terms of activities, engagement, meaning, values, and **review and translate** this exploration into a systemic and dynamic identity allowing new engagements.

This process requires :

- a dialogical situation to engage into a reflexivity process about oneself
- a context (familial – institutional – economical – cultural) that can sustain in an inclusive manner by this reflexivity and changes (sustainable community)

Sustainable Community

The project of CLAP for youth @JC for the NEET youth

CLAP for youth @ JC, aimed at researching and serving the NEET young people aged between 15-21.

As of 12 December 2019, CLAP has already engaged a total of **9,767 NEETs** as users (exceeding 3.9% of the pledged target so far) of which those aged **15-21 amounted to 9,395 (96.2%)**. It accounts for **10%** of the estimated number of NEET population in Hong Kong.

Marginalized NEET youth are characterized by diversity and different levels of vulnerability to marginalization and scarring effects. Examples include longer-term NEETs (5 months or above), school dropouts, ethnic minority youth, young mothers, youth with a protracted period of social withdrawal.

But all these groups share one common characteristic: **the lack of a legitimate social status , and thus the deprivation of social recognition from others followed by the lack of self-recognition as well.**

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ENOW-informed workplace learning (ENOW-WPL) as an illustration of a community-based approach to facilitating NEET youth to have life-career crafting in an enabling environment

ENOW-WPL model highlights the enhancement of psychosocial resources of disadvantaged young people by providing them exposure to paid work experience in **real workplace or simulated workplace settings** and giving them the space to review and develop their transferable **values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge (VASK)** identified from their paid and unpaid work experience as a base for life-career crafting, which involves both **structural support and individual agency** (Su & Wong, 2020).

Enabling environment for youth in ENOW-WPL

The provision of an enabling environment is understood in the sense of mobilizing resources, opportunities and networks (RON) from multiple stakeholders such as **mentors, volunteers, parents and employers**.

The coaching scheme/mentorship program of companies is incorporated into ENOW WPL. Mentors who were frontline staff were assigned by human resources manager to supervise young people in their job placement. They showed the young people how to operate job tasks on site, familiarized them with the workplace environment, and trained them up about the workplace norms. Mentors are very important for workplace learning as they are **trainers, supervisors, and role models** for young people.

A CASE to illustrate how ENOW-WPL works



A young female client Angela had been **secluded at home for seven years**. Her academic qualification is only up to **primary 6 level**. Angela is **interested in cleaning and tidying up her home**, and she saw it helpful to her mum for reducing her workload both within and outside home.

Through joining CLAP, Angela's talent in cleaning and tidying up was recognized and her values and attitudes to help and make things tidy and systematic were acknowledged. Through joining a workplace learning program offered by a home-furniture and homeware company engaged in partnership with a DST, Angela became more **responsive, articulate and interactive with peers, frontline corporate mentors and managers, and even strangers such as customers**.

Because of her impressive workplace learning performance, she was offered **a part-time job** by the company and invited to do sharing at a CLAP conference held at HKBU. The audience was amazed to see that how come a young girl like Angela could become **a smiling, friendly and articulate story teller and overcome her long traumatic secluded-life experience**. After a year, Angela was changed to work as a **fulltime employee**, and she has also started **resuming part-time study and hoped to have at least a junior secondary school qualification**.

Talent-job matching in terms of VASK can **foster the engagement of young employees & inclusion of disadvantaged people**. The company **won a very prestigious award for promoting equal opportunities**

Employer side: A new framework for recruitment

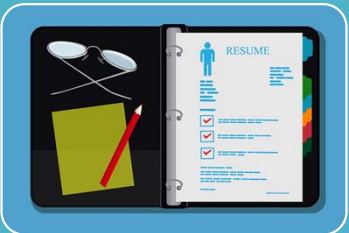
- “The program provided me a new perspective and angle to understand the talents of young people, which will inspire our future recruitment. We are also planning to recruit more disadvantaged young people, such as ethnic minority youth.” (C4_Senior manager)
- *“Without this ENOW-VASK framework, without the CV360 used in the interview session of the one-stop ENOW WPL program, the young person who has excluded himself at home for a long period would not have had the courage to present himself in front of us. I am glad that I recruited him. He is such a great fit for the job at our warehouse. He is not that social, but he is very talented at packing stuff, and he is very collaborative” (C4_Senior manager).*
- *“I think the boy is a potential candidate for a manager position, although he is still an assistant at my company. I am willing to coach him. I have told him to be more confident. If not for this program, how can I recruit someone like him?” (C3_Senior manager)*

Community-based process = CAR in ENOW-WPL : A dual process of empowerment (Su & Wong, 2020)



Conversation

- Supporting the service users to construct a coherent narrative of their prior work experiences
- The conversation intervention with employers is implemented with an emphasis on the effectiveness of their prior experiences in relation to human resources selection and management and some factors conducive to their success and learnings



Archive

- An intervention to archive relevant paid and unpaid work experiences and their embedded VASK so as to document and visualize the absent but implicit experiences and capacity of individuals or employers.
- CV360[®]: A new CV template for resume counseling & talent-job matching



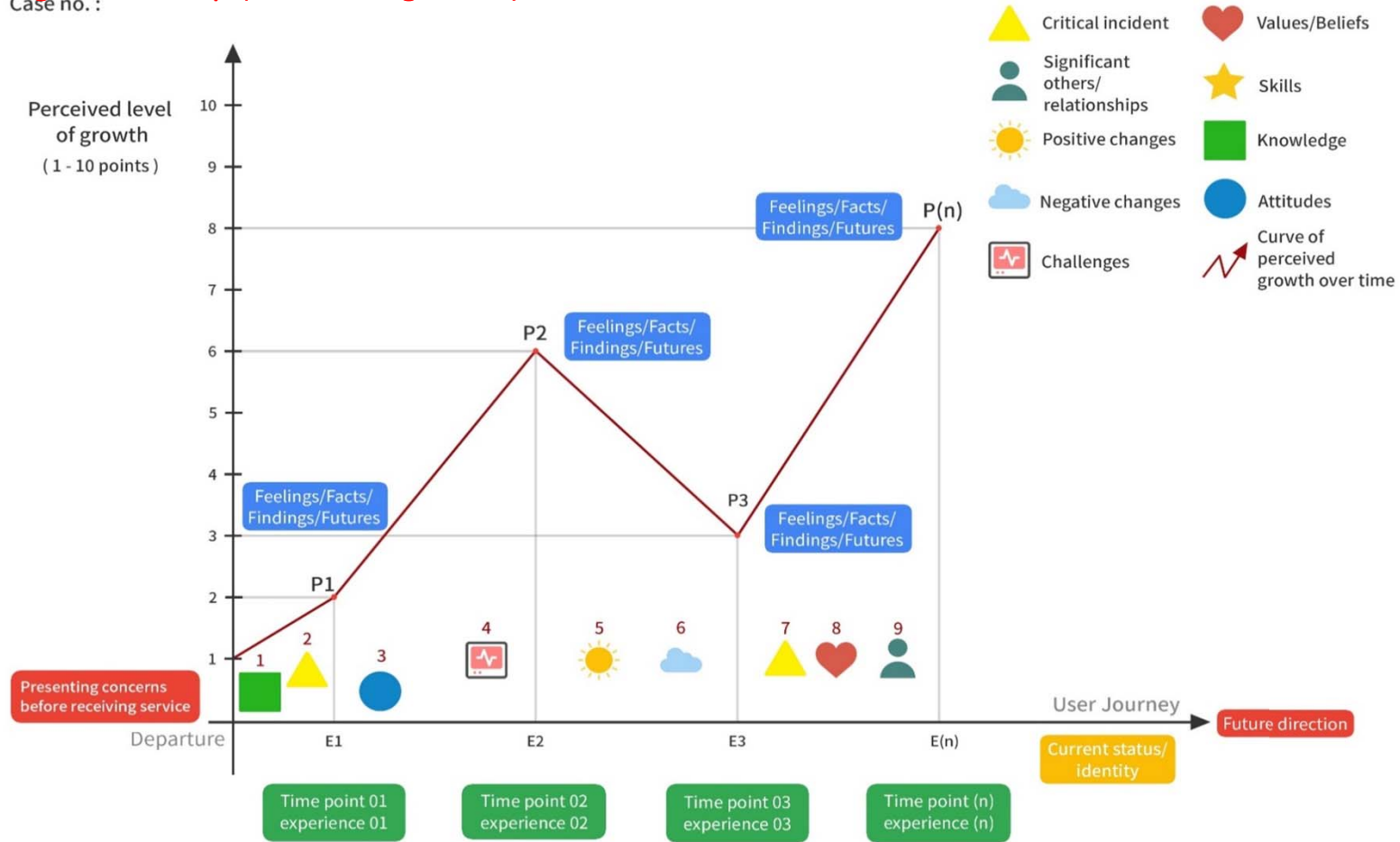
Review

- An intervention focuses on reviewing the new experiences and capacities of individuals or organizations after joining the ENOW-WPL.
- MSPG: A tool to review user journey & explore effective mechanisms leading to growth

Personal dialogical process with career counselor/researcher

Map of self-perceived growth: A tool for career counseling, guidance and research & an archive for self-reflexivity beyond helping relationship (Su & Wong, 2019)

Case no. :



Date:

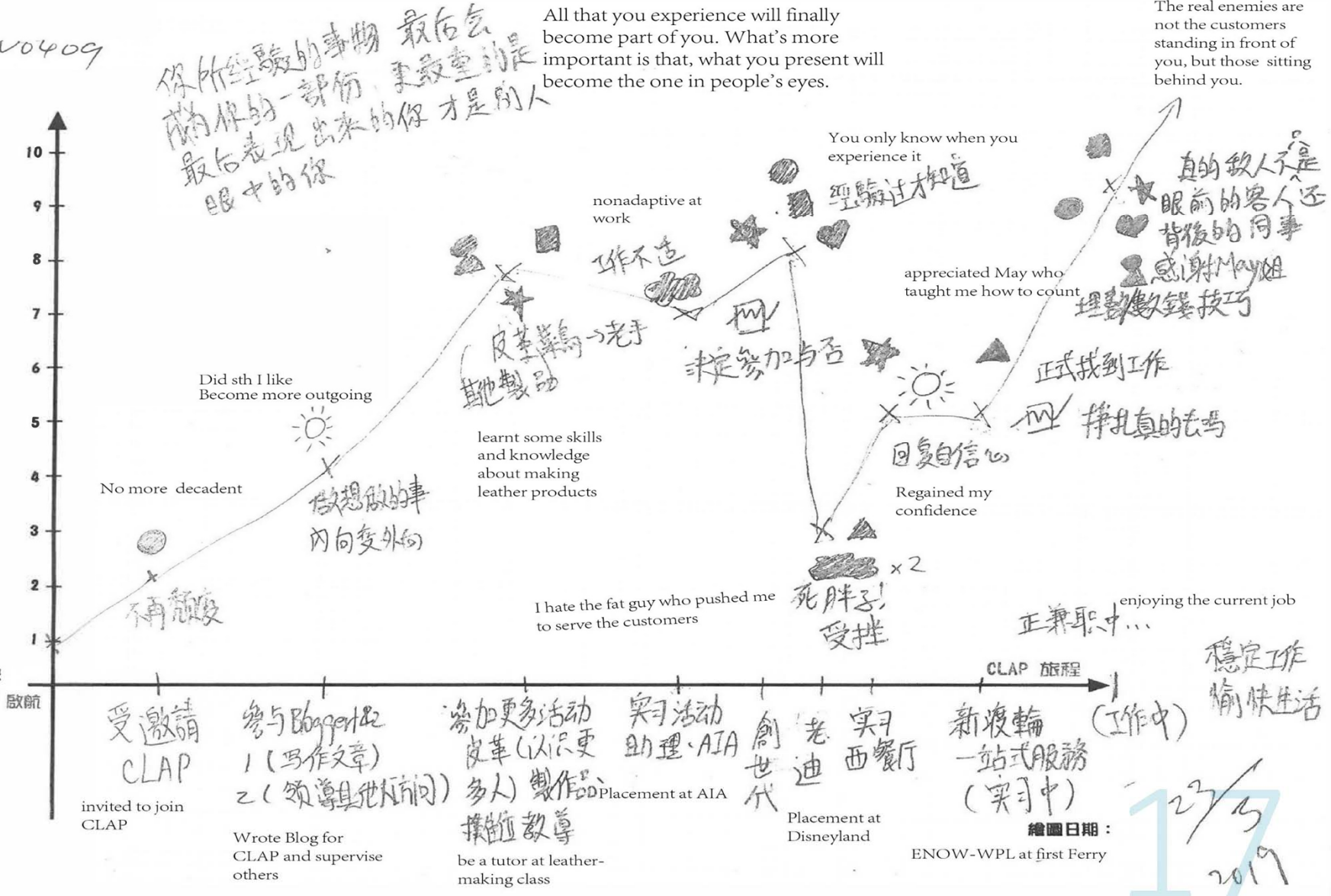
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青年眼中的自我成長

沒交流
沒目的
沒工作
全日玩電腦

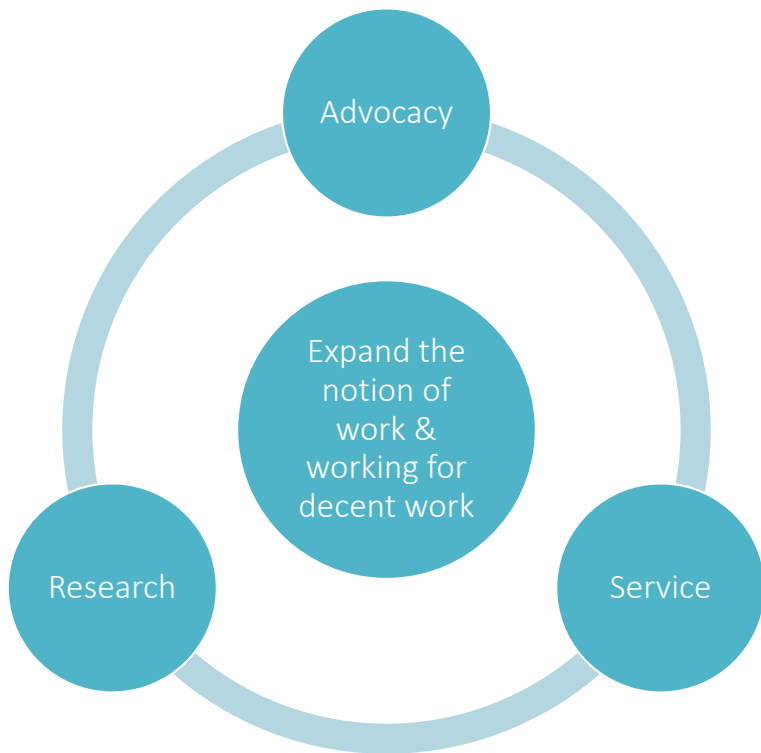
No communication
No purposes
No jobs
All computer games

接受CLAP服務前的情況



12/15
2019

Conclusion: Implications for future work on ENOW for decent work



To **advocate** an *expanded notion of work and working for decent work* at political, community and organizational levels by acknowledging the meaning and contribution of different forms of work and work experience so as to provide our users an enabling environment for crafting their life-career development with an *expanded and inclusive understanding of work, talent and success* across different sectors of society

To **conduct research** on factors influencing the roles of different stakeholders in acknowledging and practicing the expanded notion of work/working for promoting *decent work as a psychosocial construct* so as to achieve social justice, equal dignity and personal agency at different levels

To **implement service projects** with *career practitioners as the bridging agents* between stakeholders/employers and youth for facilitating marginalized people in particular to have exposures to different forms of work including workplace learning, to review and archive their ENOW experience, and to develop *transferable VASK across temporal-spatial dimensions of life*

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To connect

CLAP for youth @ JC project: <https://www.clapforyouth.org.hk/>

CV360® website: <https://cv360.org/>

To seek permission of using the map of self-perceived growth (MSPG), please contact Dr. Su Xuebing (Sabrina) via email: sabrinasu@hkbu.edu.hk

Thank you!