Community service in university: Personal and social skills, career knowledge and career development

Veríssimo L., Carvalho M. C., Negrão M., Gonçalves D. C., & Trigo, L. R.

IAEVG International Conference - International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, Pádua, Itália, 2007

Faculty of Education and Psychology
The Catholic University of Portugal

Index

CATÓLICA
UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA | PORTO
Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia

Conceptual framework

- **Volunteerism** can be defined as "(…) long-term, planned, prosocial behaviors that benefit strangers and occur within an organizational setting" (Penner, 2002, p. 448).

- **Community service** has been considered an integral component to universities' mission (Hellman, Hoppes, & Ellison, 2006).

Conceptual framework

- Recent literature has examined the importance of **volunteerism in different areas of human development** (e.g., Eliasoph, 1998; Koliba, 2000; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005; Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001).

Conceptual framework

Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Miene (1998) recognized **six motivational functions** served by volunteerism:

1) Values
2) Understanding
3) Self-enhancement
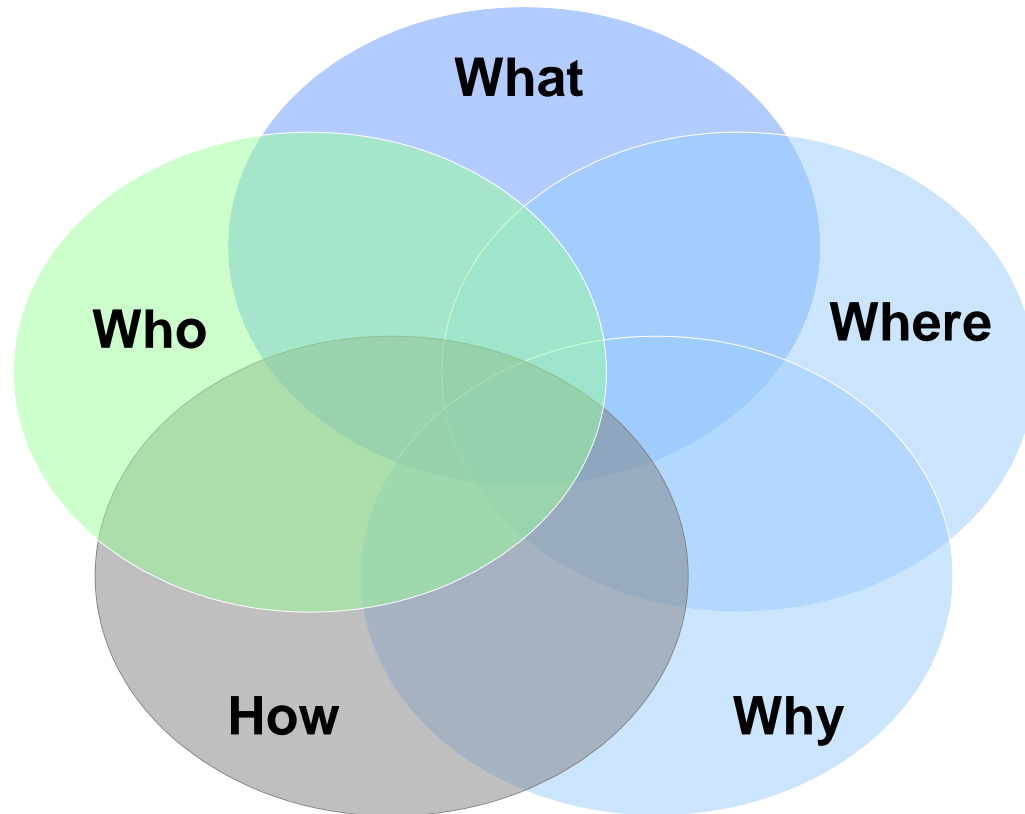4) Social
5) Protective functions
6) Career:

Conceptual framework

- Nevertheless, various aspects need more research, namely the relation between **volunteerism experience** and other relevant variables in psychological domain, such as **personal, social and career development**.

Conceptual framework

Adapted from Bussell & Forbes (2001)

What

Who

Where

How

Why

CATÓLICA
UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA | PORTO
Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia

The Community Service Program (CSP)

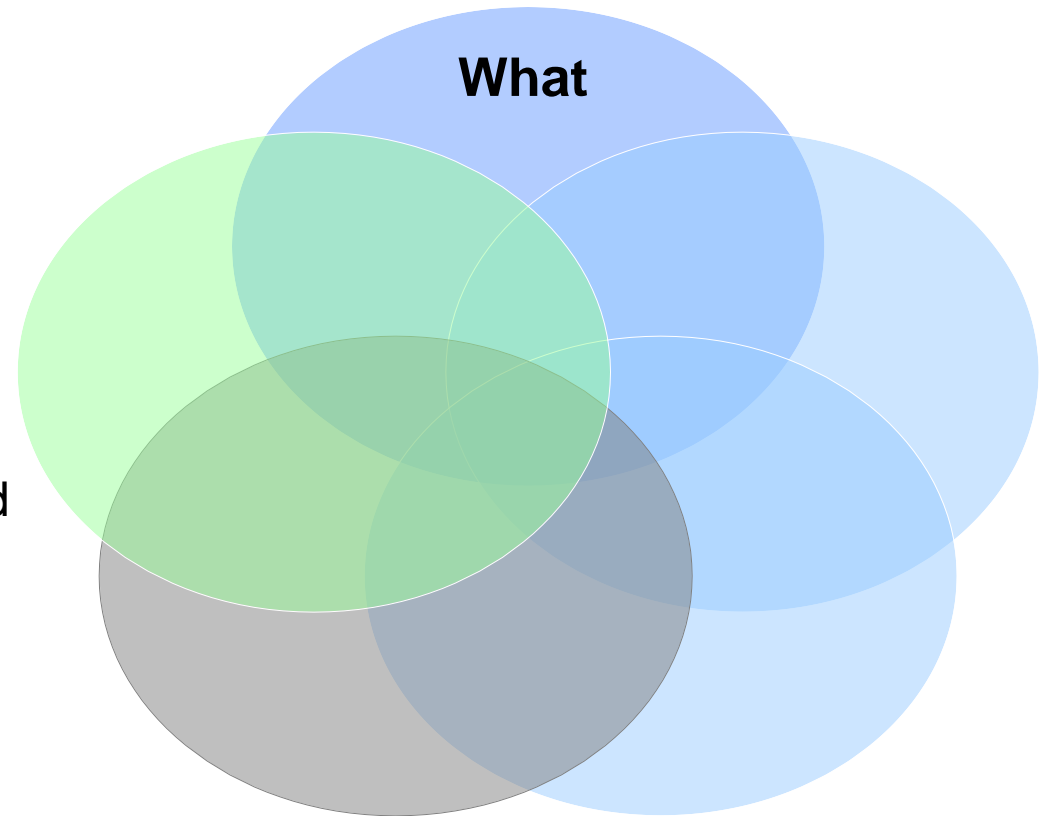**Personal and Social Development Program**

Action
Volunteerism in an institution

Reflection
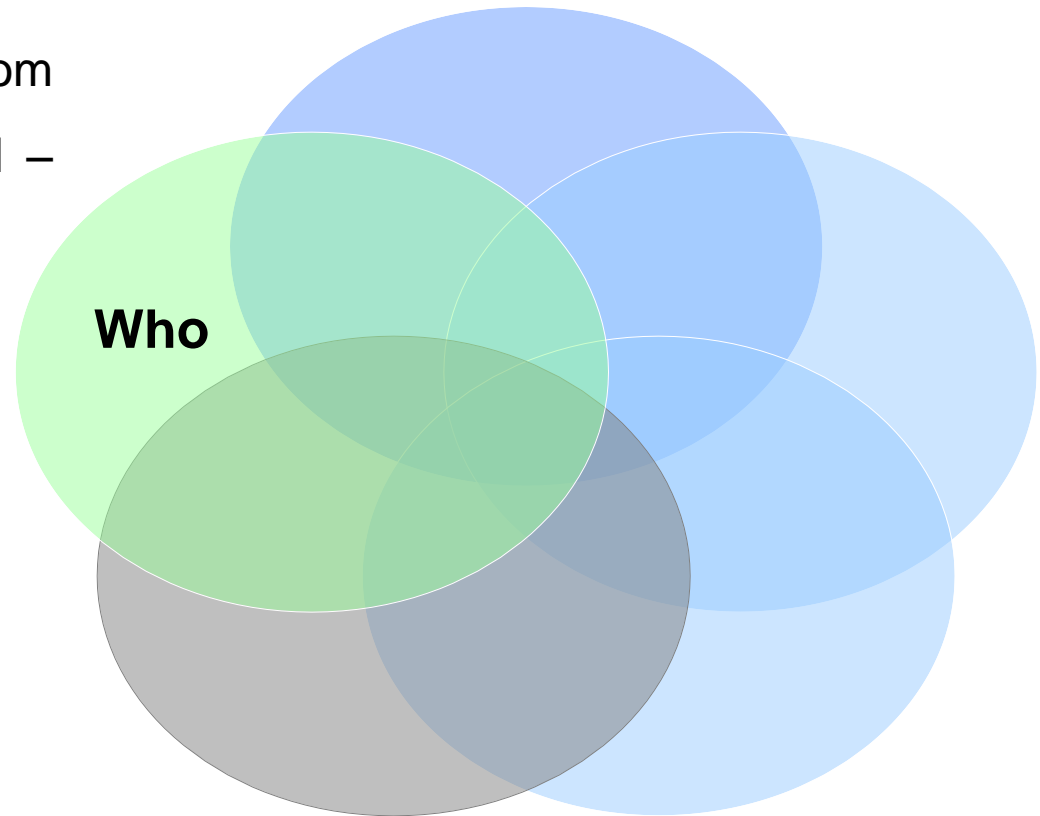Training, Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation

Commitment

**What**

The Community Service Program (CSP)

Psychology Students (1st cycle) from the Catholic University of Portugal – Oporto Regional Centre

Who

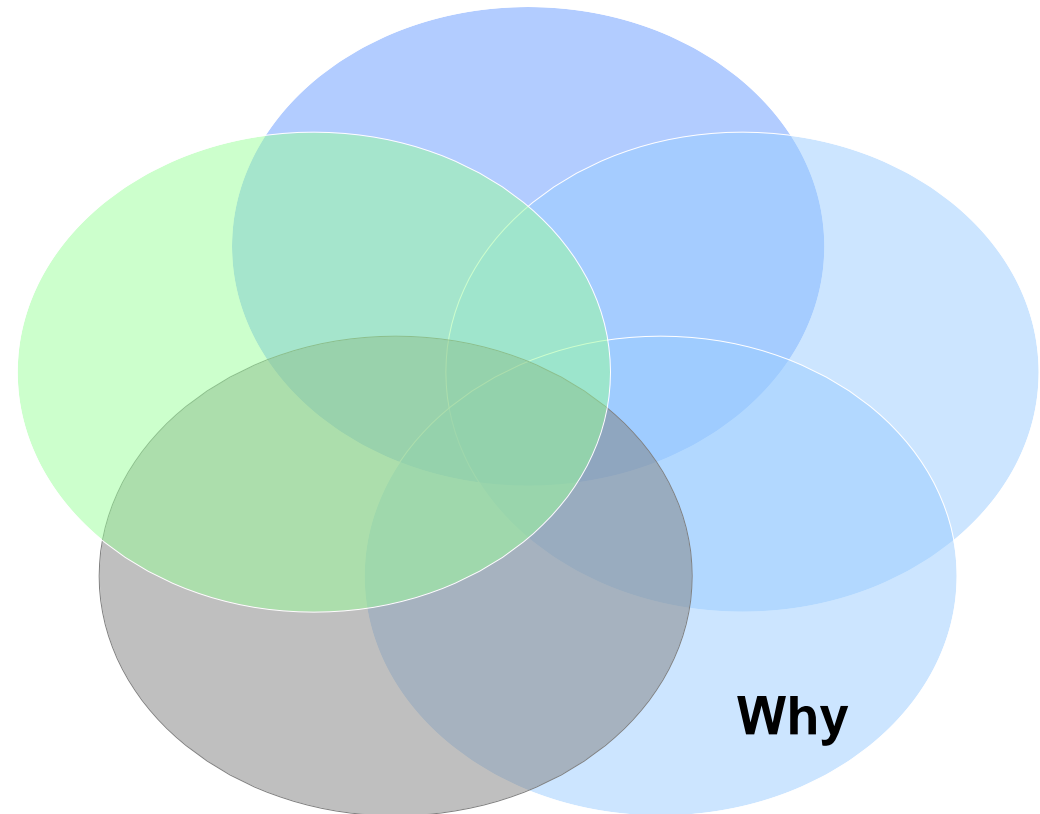# The Community Service Program (CSP)

Organizational Settings:

• Foster care

• Schools

• Hospitals

• Elderly residential care

• Community interventions

on harm reduction

• Prisons

• Adolescent mothers

residential care

• Deficient residential care

Where
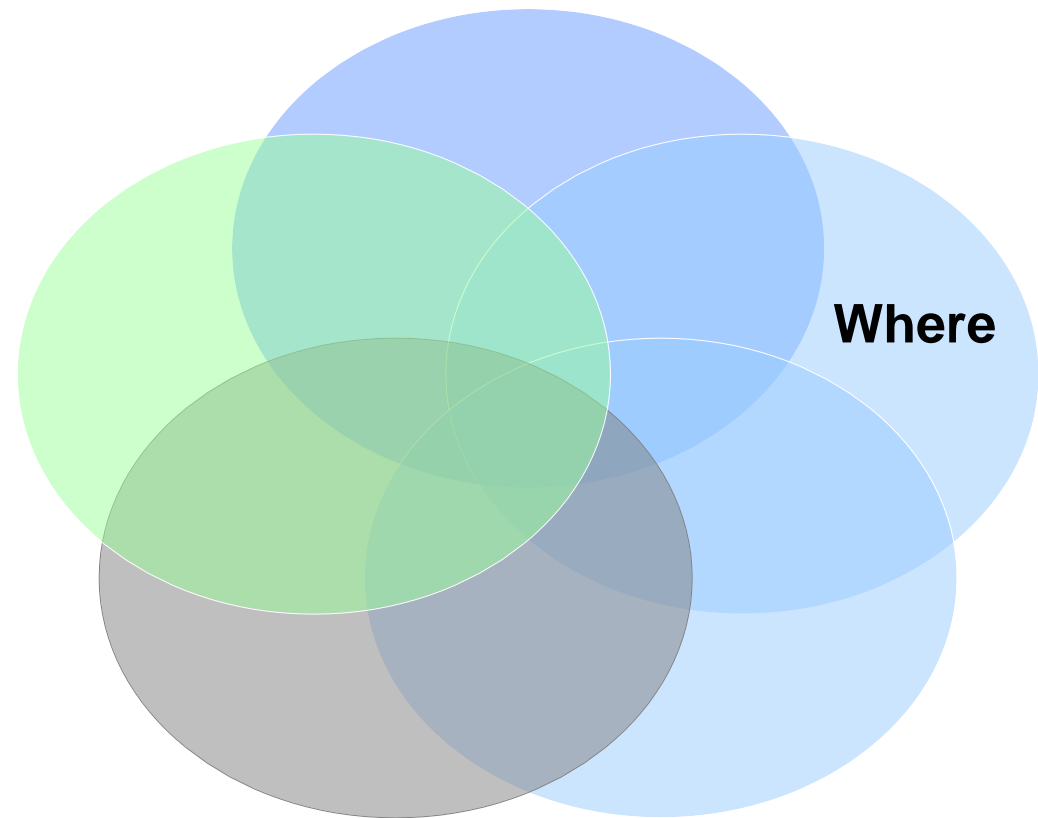
The Community Service Program (CSP)

Main aims:

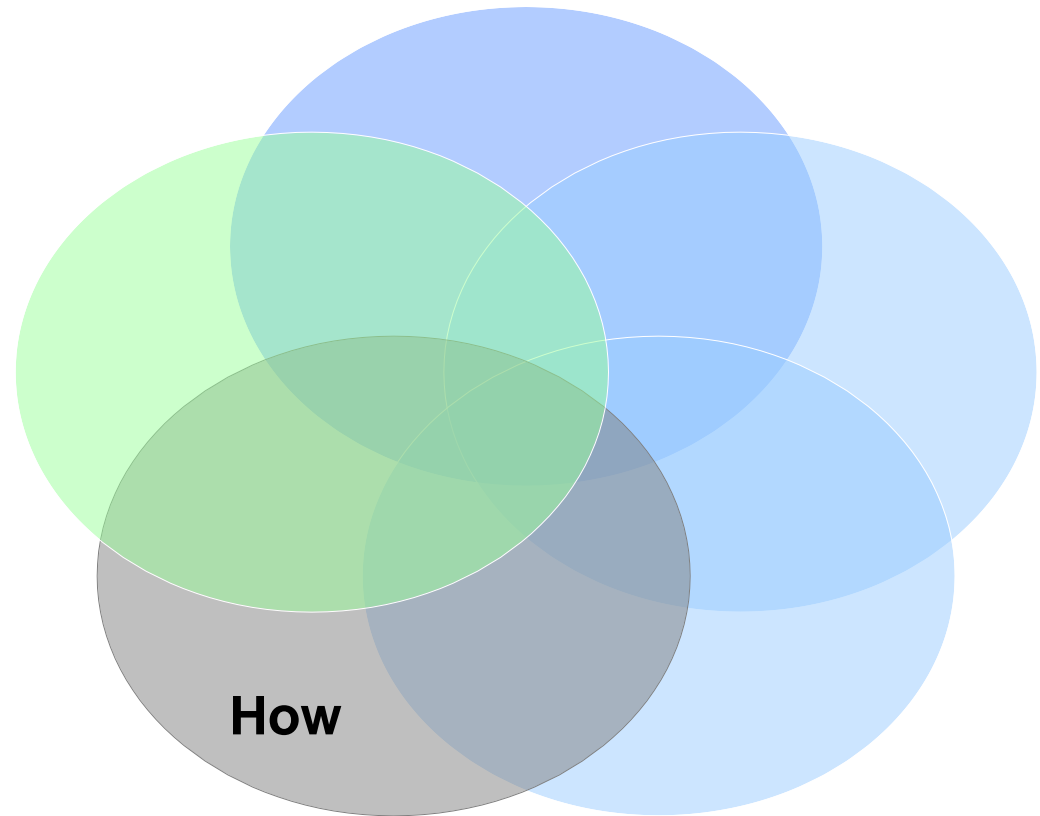• To promote personal and social student's development;

• To strengthen values;

• To allow a first contact of students with professional world;

• To contribute to the satisfaction of real needs felt by local institutions.

Why

The Community Service Program (CSP)

The Process

• Minimum required of 48h hours

• Weekly basis / Intensive mode

• Monthly training and regular supervision

• Evaluation

How

Goals

- Explore students' perceptions about:

  i.   personal and social skills development

  ii.   career knowledge

  iii. career development

  once enrolled in Community Service Program.

Table 1. *Sample characterization (N = 56; M= 22,8 years old)*

Sample

Characteristic	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	3	94,6%
	Female	53	5,4%
College Rank	Freshman	13	23.2%
	Sophomore	17	30.4%
	Junior	26	46.4%
N.º of years of CSP	1	24	45.3%
	2	21	39.6%
	3	8	15.1 %
Other Type of Volunteerism	Yes	24	43.6%
	No	31	56.4%
Periodicity	Weekly basis	40	83.3%
	Other	8	17,3%

- *Volunteerism Experience in University Evaluation Questionnaire* (Trigo, Lisboa & Fonseca, 2007)

Instrument Domains:

- Demographic Characteristics

- Volunteerism Experience Characteristics

- Personal and Social Skills Development,

- Career Knowledge and Career development

CATÓLICA
UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA | PORTO
Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia

Results

	Higher scores (M > 3.5)	Lower scores (M < 3)
Personal and Social Skills	• Responsibility (M = 3.53) • Feeling useful (M = 3.57) • Sensibility (M= 3.60) • Solidarity (M = 3.68)	• Negotiation (M = 2.72) • Leadership (M = 2.75) • Deal with changes (M = 2.96) • Propose new ideas (M = 2.92)

Table 2. Students' perceptions about **development** of **personal and social skills** through CSP (%)
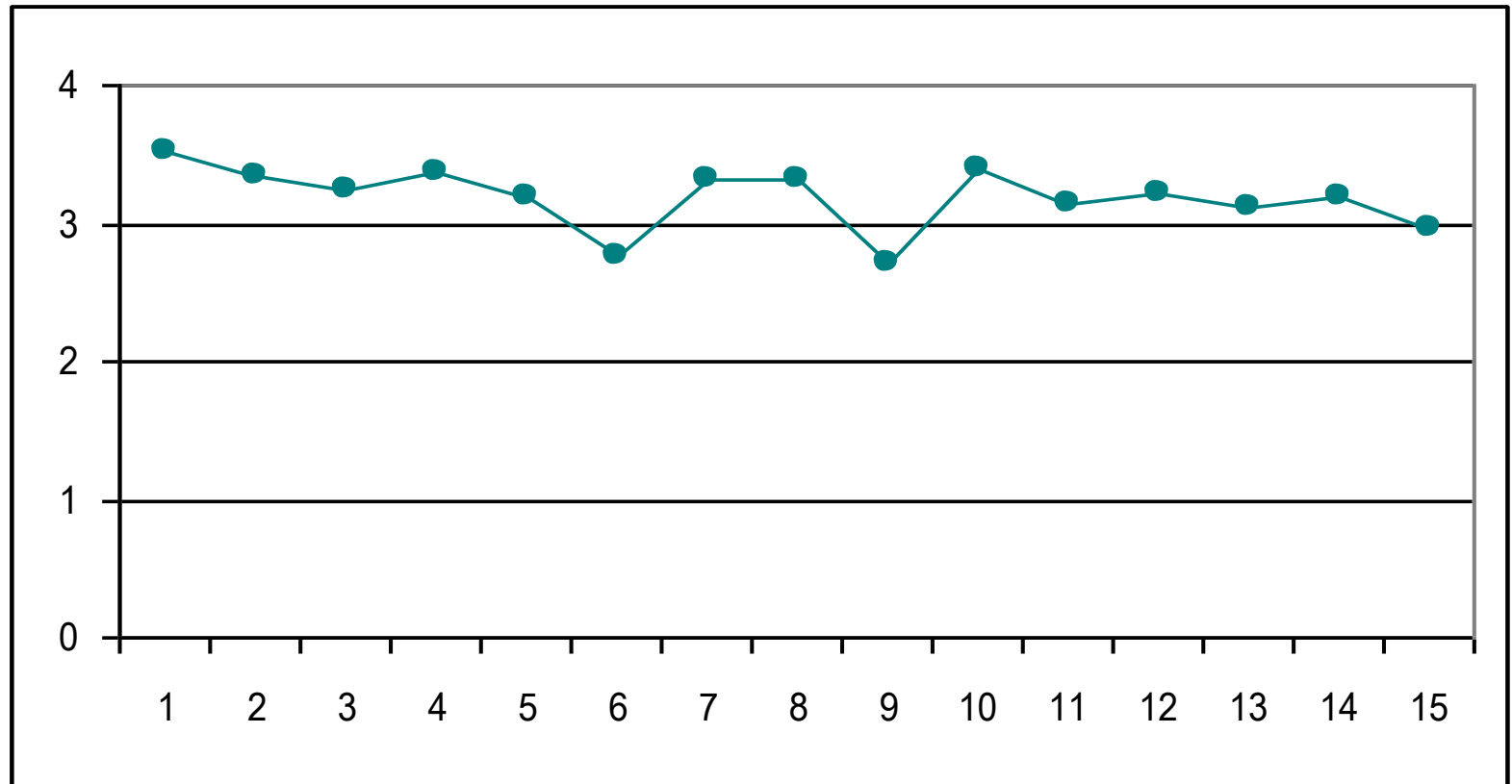
Results

Skill	Mean	Skill	Mean
Assuming responsibilities	3.53	Negotiation	2.72
Time management	3.34	Planning	3.40
Problem solving	3.25	Engaging in a project	3.13
Interpersonal relationship	3.36	Conflict management	3.23
Team work	3.19	Dealing with change	3.11
Leadership	2.75	Being flexible	3.19
Assiduity	3.32	Relating with other educational, social, and ethnic backgrounds people	2.96
Punctuality	3.32		

Table 3. Students' perceptions about **development** of **career related skills** through CSP (*M*)

CATÓLICA
UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA | PORTO
Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia

Results

Graphic 1. Students' perceptions about **development** of **career related skills** through CSP (*M*)

Results

Item	Nothing	A few	Moderately	A lot
Psychological intervention	3.6	12.5	48.2	30.4
Others technicians' intervention	0	7.1	57.1	32.1
Institution functioning	0	7.1	41.1	48.2
World of work	0	14.3	57.1	25

Table 4. Students' perceptions about **career knowledge** acquisition through CSP(%)

Results

Item	Nothing	A few	Moderately	A lot
Worry about career development	0	0	12.5	83.9
Community service contributes to the preparation and development of career	0	5.4	42.9	48.2
Academic course enrichment through community service	1.8	3.6	25	66
Community service helps to better decide what to do professionally in the future	1.8	7.1	44.6	42.9

Table 5. Students' perceptions about **career development** through CSP (%)

Discussion

- Overall data suggest that students establish a connection between engaging in community service and personal, social and career development.

- Relevance of the integration of community service in the university mission as a way to develop students' skills.

- Importance of university students contacting with practical working life they will enter in the future.

Future Directions

- Further investigation is needed about the potential consequences of community service in university for the students (Penner, Dovidio, Pilliavin, & Schoeder, 2005).

- Qualitative or longitudinal studies are suggested.

References

- Bussell, H. & Forbes, D. (2001). Understanding the volunteer market: what, where, who and why of volunteering. *International Journal of Non Profit and Voluntary Sector Marketiung, 7*(3), 244-257.

- Eliasoph, N. (1998). *Avoiding politics: How Americans produce apathy in everyday life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Koliba, C. J. (2000). Moral language and networks of engagement. Service learning and civic education. *American Behavioral Scientist, 43*(5) 825-838.

- Hellman, C. M., Hoppes, S., & Ellison, G. C. (2006). Factors associated with college student intent to engage in community service. *The Journal of Psychology, 140*(1), 29-39.

- Penner, L. A. (2002). Dispositional and organizational influences in sustained volunteerism: An interactionist perspective. *Journal of Social Issues, 58*(3), 447-467.

- Penner, L. A., Dovidio, J., F., Piliavin, J.A., & Schroeder, D.A. (2005). Prosocial behaviour: Multilevel perspectives. *Annual Review of Psychology, 56,* 365-392.

- Torney-Purta, J., Lehmann, R., Oswald, H., & Schulz, W. (2001). *Citizenship and education in twenty-eight countries. Civic knowledge and engagement at age fourteen*. IEA.

- Trigo, L. R., Lisboa, L. V., & Fonseca, A. M. (2005). *Questionário de avaliação da experiência de voluntariado no ensino superior*. Versão para investigação. Porto: Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

CATÓLICA
UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA | PORTO
Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia

- Thanks for your attention

  llisboa@porto.ucp.pt