

Measured Approach: TEGV Assesses its Performance & Impact on Educational Enrichment Programs

Introduction

In Turkey's small, growing civil society, the 20-year-old Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV) stood out for the scope of its operation, the prominence of its benefactors, and the reformist ambitions of its educational enrichment programs.¹ A respected leader and role model among Turkish foundations, TEGV was, to insiders, also known for its unusually extensive and varied use of evaluation and assessment tools to monitor its own performance and impact.²

For many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the world, performance measurement tools had been adopted reluctantly, as a necessary but onerous condition of receiving grant funds, especially from institutional sources such as foundations and corporations. But at TEGV, performance assessment had been embraced on its own merits.³

By 2010, TEGV's commitment to self-appraisal was a well-established part of its operation. That year, in a staff reorganization, TEGV created a new department that merged program design and performance-related research in order to more tightly bind and coordinate the two. Thus, performance assessments could be tailored to better match program goals, and program designers could act quickly on the findings to make improvements in program structure. In 2011, TEGV hired Suat Kardaş, an education specialist who had worked both in Turkey's National Ministry of Education and in education-focused NGOs, to be the department's first manager. In concert with other

¹ The term "civil society" referred to all organizations outside the realms of government, business, and family. Under Turkish law, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) fell into two broad categories. Foundations, including TEGV, were enterprises with a social or charitable mission. All others—religious organizations, political parties, social and sporting groups, etc.—were called "associations," and were governed by a different agency and different rules and regulations. As of 2012, there were 4,634 foundations in Turkey, and 93,760 associations. ("2013 State of Civil Society Report," Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TUSEV), 2013, <http://socs.civicus.org/?p=3552>, retrieved April 13, 2014.)

² Research psychologist Sami Gülgöz, dean of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities at Turkey's prestigious Koç University and a member of the TEGV Board of Directors, says he was aware of only one other Turkish foundation that approached TEGV in the ambition of its evaluation and assessment efforts—the Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV), a pre-school enrichment and parent support organization. Both organizations, he noted, had strong ties to academic researchers.

³ Until 2004, Turkish law required a foundation to obtain special permission before it could accept foreign funds. This law was relaxed in 2004, though foundations were still required to notify the government when using foreign funds. TEGV's first internationally-sponsored program, Dreams Workshop, was created in 2003.

This case was written by Pamela Varley, senior case writer, for Nathalie Laidler-Kylander, lecturer in public policy, for use at the Harvard Kennedy School. Settar Dinler, president of the Corporate Social Responsibility Association of Turkey, facilitated the development of this case. HKS cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion. Cases are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management.

top managers and directors at TEGV, Kardaş would have to decide the organization's future direction and priorities. But to look forward, Kardaş would first have to look back—to take stock of the steps TEGV had already taken in the realm of performance evaluation and assessment in its first 15 years.

TEGV

TEGV was founded in 1995 by a group of leading Turkish industrialists, civic leaders, and academics headed by Suna Kiraç, the youngest daughter of Vehbi Koç, founder of Koç Holdings, Turkey's wealthiest industrial conglomerate and one of the largest firms in Europe. The Foundation was born of its founders' deeply-held belief that the single most important factor in ensuring Turkey's well-being and economic rise was the improvement of its education system.

Since its inception, TEGV's footprint had been large. A progressive, volunteer-based foundation, created at a time when Turkey's civil society was still in its infancy, TEGV would soon become, and remain, the country's largest non-governmental organization (NGO) in the education sector. Early on, TEGV's efforts were varied—from scholarships to school repair—but in its first year, the Foundation also created a few after school enrichment programs for low income primary school children, and these would soon become TEGV's organizational focus. [See Exhibit 1 for a profile of TEGV children.] In its first six years, TEGV grew from 2 to 52 activity sites, and served a total of 200,000 children. In 2000, the fast-growing Foundation set its sights on reaching one million children—a goal it met eight years later. By 2012, it operated 19 education programs in various combinations at 88 different activity sites nationwide, and had served a total of 1.43 million children since its inception.

TEGV's ambition was substantial—to introduce a new element in the approach to educating children in Turkey. To complement Turkey's traditional, content-focused public schools, TEGV created a set of enrichment activities aimed at helping children to develop contemporary skills, like computer literacy and consumer education, and "soft skills," including the ability to communicate with ease and collaborate effectively, capacities deemed increasingly crucial in a fast-evolving and globally-integrating world.

The program offerings included art, sports, computers, drama, career planning, citizenship, health and personal development. Some were playful in design—for example, a special joint project in building a robot out of Legos, designed to spur student interest in science and technology and to foster teamwork. In the words of TEGV's mission statement, "The objective of Educational Volunteers is to create and implement educational programs and extracurricular activities for children aged 7-16, so that they can acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes supporting their development as rational, responsible, self-confident, peace-loving, inquisitive, cognizant, creative individuals, who are against any kind of discrimination, respect diversity and are committed to the basic principles of the Turkish Republic." [See Exhibit 2 for more detail about TEGV.]

If TEGV's primary aim was to benefit the children enrolled in its programs, its secondary aim was to benefit its young adult volunteer trainers. TEGV gradually built partnerships with 42 universities to encourage students to volunteer in its programs. By 2012, some 9,000 people volunteered in TEGV programs—73 percent of them, university students and 91 percent, between the ages of 18 and 35. A point of particular pride to TEGV—as of 2012,

512 “alums” of TEGV programs had returned to the organization a few years later to work as volunteers. Most volunteers donated two hours a week at TEGV, though a small group put in far more time.

TEGV also began to promote volunteerism, more generally, in Turkey. A high level of volunteerism was widely viewed as an indicator of a vibrant civil sector. At the time TEGV was created in the mid-1990s, Turkey ranked last out of 53 countries in a comparative study of volunteerism worldwide.⁴ As TEGV settled on a business plan and developed its own volunteer program, therefore, it also took steps to encourage other NGOs to enlist volunteers. Beginning in 2006, TEGV held a conference each year on volunteerism for the country’s NGO community. In 2012, TEGV ran a national advertising campaign called “Raise Your Hand to be a Volunteer,” with ads placed in magazines, newspapers, on the radio, and in social media. The Foundation also recruited prominent local officials, including governors, mayors, and judges, to promote volunteerism by publicly volunteering their own time at TEGV for a day.

In the public eye, therefore, TEGV was known for promoting new approaches in education and for championing the cause of volunteerism. Behind the scenes, TEGV’s use of performance assessment tools began to evolve a few years after its founding, once TEGV settled on a strategy of offering afterschool enrichment programs to children, largely delivered by volunteers.

Early Experiments in Performance Assessment at TEGV

TEGV’s first foray in the use of performance assessment began in 1998, with the development of a program called Thinking Children, intended to improve the cognitive skills of children, by a psychologist at prestigious Koç University, Sami Gülgöz, who later would become a TEGV board member and dean of Koç’s College of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Gülgöz integrated assessment work, on a small scale, in his methodical development of the program itself, creating 130 modules of 20 minutes each by preparing an initial design, trying it out in classes, training volunteers in its use, getting feedback, and adjusting the design in real-time. The modules covered such skills as counting, classifying, cultivating basic memory skills, relating objects and events, asking and answering questions. Each educational tool was created to activate one or more cognitive skill, to show that there might be more than one correct answer, and to support the children’s creativity. Once all modules were established, Gülgöz tested their effectiveness on a small group of children. He then created a set of materials to support the new program—one book that laid out the general philosophy, three books for direct use by the children, and three parallel handbooks for the volunteers. These early assessments, used to test and refine the program design, were not aimed at an external audience, he says. “The evaluation we started doing was something we thought we should do because we were coming from an academic background, and that’s the way we think.”⁵

⁴ “National Context, Religiosity, and Volunteering: Results from 53 Countries,” by Stijn Ruiter & Nan Dirk de Graaf, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 71, April 2006, pp. 191-210, <http://ics.uda.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/Articles/2006/RuiterS-National/75-RuiterS-National-2006.pdf>, retrieved May 1, 2014.

⁵ All quotations in this case from Sami Gülgöz were drawn from a telephone interview on March 31, 2014.

Though not his original purpose, this work did prove influential in a way he had not anticipated, Gülgöz adds. He recalls presenting his findings at an educational conference attended by Turkey's Minister of National Education: "Interestingly, they started a program on thinking skills immediately, the year following that conference, and the program resembled the content of mine very much."

Gülgöz' project stood out from the other TEGV programs offered at the time for its highly-structured nature. The Foundation offered other programs with roughly the same objectives, Gülgöz says, and volunteers working in these programs were given "general principles and outlines" to that effect. "But the volunteer could do whatever he or she wanted to do with the children." Gülgöz was convinced that his more rigorous approach was more effective, but—with the creation of tailor-made books and teaching guides—it was also considerably more expensive than TEGV's other projects. The Board of Directors was hesitant to fund the development of such programs because of the high cost. "We were trying to convince the Board of Directors at TEGV at the time that the structured programs were a necessary component of TEGV instruction, and therefore they should put more money into it," Gülgöz recalls. Thus, in 2001-2002, Gülgöz arranged for an outside testing specialist, Erkan Kalemci, to direct a performance assessment of the effectiveness of his program compared to a control group of children attending less structured TEGV programs, using a newly-minted method of testing intelligence developed by US Psychologist Robert Sternberg.⁶ Children in both groups were given "pre-tests" and "post-tests," administered by TEGV field staff and volunteers working in the programs, showing changes in the children's performance after attending the programs. "We were able to show that the structured program that we developed was working much better than the unstructured programs," Gülgöz says.

The Dreams Workshop Model

The next big effort at performance assessment came during the first phase (2003-2006) of an art training program called Dreams Workshop, offered by TEGV in collaboration with the International Youth Foundation, based in the United States, and Nokia, based in Finland. Nokia required that TEGV incorporate performance assessment into the program, but left it up to TEGV to design the assessment. TEGV, in turn, took this opportunity to develop an approach to assessment that would in many ways become the prototype for much of the program-based assessment work that would gradually be undertaken organization-wide. This effort, explains Suat Kardaş, marked a "major turning point" in TEGV's efforts to institutionalization performance assessment, creating a culture in which assessment became a part of the organizational DNA, integrated into the budget of nearly every new program and gradually added, retroactively, to existing programs.⁷ Over the course of its first four years, Dreams Workshop was offered to a total of 25,000 children in 15 locations. The program encouraged children to make a variety of paintings, sculptures, and other visual arts using different kinds of materials. It also introduced them to local artists. But, while art and expression were the heart of the day-to-day program, its deeper goal was to improve children's

⁶ The "Sternberg Triarchic Abilities Test" posed an alternative to traditional IQ tests, reflecting Sternberg's theory that intelligence comprised three main parts: the analytical, problem-solving tasks featured on traditional intelligence tests; the creative, in which a person interpreted something new by drawing on existing skills and knowledge; and the practical, in which a person adapted to issues in everyday life by drawing on existing skills and knowledge.

⁷ All quotations in this case from Suat Kardaş were drawn from a telephone interview on March 13, 2014, or an email communication of March 28, 2014.

life skills in six areas: communication, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, responsibility, and self-esteem. The assessment of the program's "Phase 1" took place in the 2006-2007 school year. In that year, 14,061 children attended the program. A sample of 211 children was selected for monitoring, across all sites. Volunteers monitored the behavior of these children with respect to the six life skills. In addition, children were asked their own assessment of which of these skills had been most improved by the program and why. (Self-confidence topped this list, and when children were asked what about the program had improved their self-confidence, the majority identified "working together to produce something" and "communication with volunteers.") [See Exhibit 3, for more details on the Dreams Workshop approach to assessment.]

As a smaller, second part of the assessment, 32 volunteers were asked to complete a survey at the beginning and end of the 2006-2007 school year. According to their own self-reports, they made significant improvements in all areas tested that year—responsibility, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.

A Foundation-wide Prototype in Project Assessment

After development of the Dreams Workshop performance assessment, TEGV expanded its use of program-based assessments. At base, TEGV's motivation was a practical one. After its first five years of operation, TEGV had begun to grow at a much quicker pace, serving more children and opening more programs. For example, between 1995 and 2001, TEGV had served 200,000 children all told. By 2005, TEGV was serving 145,000 children in just a single year—and continuing to grow. To maintain program quality and safeguard the Foundation's reputation in such a fast-expanding operation, TEGV's leaders knew they needed to monitor the success of their programs, overall, and location-by-location. Substandard programs would have to be fixed or eliminated so that TEGV's resources could be spent on more effective programming.

Though TEGV took the Dreams Workshop assessment as a model, not all its performance assessments focused, as Dreams Workshop had, on improvements in children's behavioral skills; some addressed their mastery of specific areas of knowledge. For example, the assessment of a consumer education program focused on learning the degree to which a sample of the enrolled children understood key pieces of the curriculum. These students were asked a series of questions about their assumptions about advertisements, for example. But regardless of the specific content, the assessments followed a basic set of principles and protocols:⁸

- For new programs, the performance assessment was integrated into the program design and budget from the start.
- The program assessment was developed, in consultation with the program designer, at TEGV headquarters. It included guidelines on the sample of children to be tested.
- For any given program, the same assessment was used at all project sites. Results were entered into a centralized database at TEGV headquarters, allowing analysts to calculate the nationwide results for the program, and also to identify variations in success from one location to another.

⁸ TEGV's model was to conduct its assessments in-house. In the Starting My Career Journey program, however, the international sponsor, VISA Europe, also commissioned its own outside evaluation of program impact.

- The assessments were carried out on a regular basis (usually at the end of each semester, though in pilot programs, progress was monitored as often as once a week), so that it was possible to track the program's performance over time, as well as by location.
- A variety of tools was used; primary among them, pre- and post-tests, volunteer observations, surveys and interviews. [See Exhibit 4 for examples of these.]
- The assessments were designed to be simple enough for volunteers to administer them with minimal training. Training in basic assessment techniques was added to the training all volunteers received at the start of their work with TEGV. For some programs—for example, the Dreams Workshop program, which relied heavily on the volunteers to make regular observations of the children's behavior and score it in standardized fashion—volunteers received additional training. (In the case of Dreams Workshop, each volunteer received two days of program-specific training at the beginning of each school year, which included a module about program assessment.)
- Some assessments included a component to measure the impact on a sample of the volunteers, as well as on a sample of the children enrolled in the program.

Internal Assessments

Beginning in 2004, TEGV also began to solicit feedback about some of its internal activities. For example, in 2006, TEGV had begun to hold an annual conference for NGOs on volunteerism in Turkey on December 5, International Volunteer Day. This day-long event included keynote speeches, plenary sessions, break-out panels, discussions, and so forth. TEGV solicited feedback from every participant by sending an electronic survey after the event. TEGV also began to solicit feedback about other internal events, including orientation sessions, regional motivation-raising events, and information-sharing meetings. The effectiveness of volunteer training received special attention, at both national and field locations.⁹

Taking a Deeper Look at the Volunteers

In 2007-2008, TEGV's general manager, Nurdan Şahin, became focused on issues pertaining to TEGV's volunteers. The very low rate of volunteerism in Turkey relative to other countries was agreed by many to be a symptom of larger problems in Turkish society. Social science surveys of Turkish citizens had reported high levels of anomie (generally understood as a sense of aimlessness stemming from living without compelling standards, values, or ideals). One 2006 study showed that 19 percent of Turks surveyed expressed strong feelings of anomie, and another study, in 2008, reported strong feelings of anomie among 37 percent of young adults.¹⁰ Studies also showed

⁹ In 2012, TEGV would undertake an unusual participant-observer approach, sending its two Research & Development experts to participate in one volunteer training regimen, alongside the volunteers themselves. Their observations yielded "important clues about the necessity of reforming the volunteer training model," Kardaş says. These conclusions were also integrated into the organization's 2014-2018 Educational Strategy Plan.

¹⁰ As quoted in "TEGV Impact Analysis Research," prepared by the Infakto Research Workshop for TEGV, 2010, p. 51, <http://www.tegv.org/i/Assets/pdf/Arastirmalar/TEGVImpactAnalysisResearch.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2014. The 2006 study,

that, relative to other countries, Turkish survey respondents reported low levels of “generalized trust” (the extent to which individuals trusted people they did not know): in a number of studies, Infakto reported, the level hovered around 6-7 percent among the general population; a 2008 study surveying the attitudes of young people between the ages of 15 and 27 showed a level only slightly higher—10 percent.¹¹

Proponents of volunteerism—like TEGV—hypothesized that, through increasing a sense of agency, common purpose, and empathy in young people, volunteer work could help to reverse these distressing social trends. At least anecdotally, TEGV’s volunteers appeared to be very positively affected by their experience at TEGV—sometimes even transformed by it. Most of the children served by TEGV were from low income families, explains Emre Erdoğan, a founding partner of Infakto RW and TEGV consultant. By contrast, most of the volunteers were from middle to lower-middle class white collar families, and had previously had little exposure to low income children. When they volunteered for TEGV, “they observe what kind of change they create in these kids,” Erdoğan says. “They’re being treated as role models. If you are 18 years old, it’s something huge. They are becoming much more confident, and they are becoming more tolerant.”¹²

But TEGV had frustrations with its volunteer program as well. The organization devoted considerable resources to recruit, train, and support each new volunteer. Yet—just when TEGV was in a position to reap the benefits of this investment—most of these volunteers left the program. In fact, few stayed beyond one or two semesters. Thus, Şahin wanted to commission research that would, ultimately, allow the Foundation to improve its retention rate.

Şahin engaged Infakto RW to carry out two major studies in 2008 and 2009, under the direction of Erdoğan. As a first step, Şahin believed, it was important to understand how TEGV volunteers were thinking about their experience, and how their views compared to other young adults. Infakto RW conducted a survey with 724 TEGV volunteers, aged 18 to 35, using an online survey tool, and in-person interviews with a control group of 750 Turkish young adults, aged 18 to 27, who were not TEGV volunteers, though 5 percent did volunteer for another organization. They looked for—and found—differences between the TEGV and non-TEGV groups in their understanding of what was involved in doing volunteer work, the qualifications necessary, and the potential personal rewards to the volunteer. Many non-volunteers, they learned, harbored mistaken notions about volunteer work, as well as a vague distrust of NGOs. There were also striking differences between the two groups in their self-reported sense of self-worth, with the TEGV volunteers reporting a markedly more positive self-perception.¹³

“Social Preferences in Turkey,” was conducted by Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycioğlu. The 2008 study, “Political Attitudes of Turkish Youth,” was sponsored by the ARI Movement.

¹¹ As quoted in “TEGV Impact Analysis Research,” prepared by the Infakto Research Workshop for TEGV, 2010, p. 52, <http://www.tegv.org/i/Assets/pdf/Arastirmalar/TEGVImpactAnalysisResearch.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2014.

¹² All quotations in this case from Emre Erdoğan were drawn from a telephone interview on March 26, 2014.

¹³ Infakto RW presented eight statements to the two groups and asked them whether they mostly agreed or disagreed with each: “I am generally satisfied with myself,” “I believe that I have good capabilities,” “I think I am as valuable as any other person,” “I have a positive self-image,” “I occasionally find myself useless,” “I think I do not have many capabilities to boast about,” “It makes me think that I am unsuccessful in life,” “Sometimes I think that I am not a good person.”

Infakto RW also asked the TEGV volunteers questions aimed at discovering how many lived with a strong sense of anomie, and found the percentage to be much lower (13 percent) than in the general population of young adults in Turkey (37 percent). A larger proportion of TEGV volunteers also reported a sense of generalized trust than did their peers (20 percent compared to 10 percent).

In 2009, Infakto RW conducted a follow-up study, more specifically pointed at helping TEGV improve its volunteer retention rate. This time, Infakto RW sent an online survey to all its TEGV volunteers (about 9,000). Of these, 1,209 participated by answering a detailed set of questions pertaining to their psychological states, motives for volunteering, communications with TEGV and fellow-volunteers, effectiveness of their volunteer work, impact of their volunteer work on their own lives, and general satisfaction with the experience. Thus, for example, volunteers were asked to note which, in a list of potential outcomes for volunteering, was most prominent in their own experience. ("Being loved by children" topped the list, followed by "feeling useful.")

The responses were generally positive, and reassured TEGV that the organization was on the right track. But Infakto RW also sought to discover which variables led volunteers to feel greatest satisfaction. The researchers found a few keys. Volunteers who believed they had made a particularly major personal transformation—say, in feelings of self-confidence or well-being—tended to be very satisfied. More important, as a general rule, were positive changes in the volunteer's external relationships, however—improvements in professional life, being respected and consulted by others, observing changes in family relationships. Most striking of all, however, was the importance of plentiful communication and friendship with other volunteers. [See Exhibit 5 for more details from the volunteer study.]

These were important discoveries, as they provided TEGV with potentially actionable information. If the Foundation could come up with strategies to cultivate these kinds outcomes for its volunteers, the researchers surmised, the volunteers would likely stay longer—with greater rewards all around.

Capturing the Hard-to-Measure Impacts

By 2010, the first two volunteer studies were complete and TEGV had put in place a performance assessment process for most of its education programs. TEGV managers took these assessments seriously, according to Şahin. "After seeing that some of these programs are relatively more and less effective than others, we made the necessary revisions or cancelled the insufficient ones and [created] programs that are more effectual," she wrote in 2010. But Şahin and her closest advisers were frustrated at the limitations of their own program-by-program assessments in conveying what they believed to be TEGV's true impact on children.

In fact, there were many challenges to conducting the program-based assessments. For one thing, children often signed up for two or three programs at once, and also engaged in recreation at TEGV's activity sites outside the hours of their program (playing basketball, for example) and informally interacting with the volunteers. Thus, they received a cumulative effect beyond the boundaries of any one program—but such effects were not well-captured by the program-based assessments. The average TEGV program offered a two hour program each week and lasted a total of ten weeks. Thus, at most, a student would spend just 20 hours in any given program—and often far less. Attendance was voluntary, and absence was common. Some of the volunteer trainers were better than others,

and program quality varied from one site to another. Some assessments were also better-designed than others, and some were better administered than others by the volunteer trainers. In sum, when an assessment yielded disappointing results, it was often hard to tease apart problems of program design from problems of program implementation from problems in the design and administration of the assessment, itself.

What's more, outsiders tended to have unrealistic expectations for the kinds of results the assessments would show. "What happens is this," explains TEGV Board member Sami Gülgöz. "The people who are running institutions and donating funds are not very knowledgeable about the impact of programs. They expect huge change when they look at a program evaluation. We knew by years of experience and academic literature that this is not possible." Even a respected program like Head Start in the United States showed "conflicting and debatable outcomes," he noted. But donors often expected to see something dramatic—a 20 percent improvement, for example. "Even if you see impact, the measurement is not going to show a whopping change," Gülgöz notes. "Sometimes I say [to corporate donors], 'Tell me any advertisement that will give you a 20 percent increase in your sales!'" Still, he adds, "It can be quite frustrating. It is difficult to convince people."

At the same time, TEGV staff could see that children were being positively affected by participating in TEGV—growing more assertive, more confident, and better at working with one another. "We had a firsthand experience of what kind of difference being a "TEGV child" could create; we felt it in our hearts," Şahin wrote. "However, we knew that this was not enough, that we had to measure the impact TEGV had on children in a concrete manner." This sort of measurement was "what every non-governmental organization dreamed of," she added, "and a very difficult task to realize."

Once again, Şahin enlisted Infakto RW to work with TEGV to design a different kind of assessment that would show TEGV's broad impact, beyond any one program. The central research question before them, according to Şahin, was this one: "[W]ere TEGV children different from their counterparts who shared the same socioeconomic characteristics and yet who did not participate in TEGV's programs? And if that were the case, what was the nature of the difference?" The challenge was to find behaviors and attitudes that cut across all TEGV programs—that were, in a sense, not the primary focus of any one program, but the side effect of all. Would TEGV children be better at teamwork, for example? Would they be more confident? To some extent, "you're throwing darts in the air, hoping it will hit something," acknowledges Gülgöz. "You have some hunches, but you're not sure what you're going to be able to get at."

TEGV and Infakto RW eventually agreed on a comparative survey, to be carried out in May 2010. Infakto RW would conduct face-to-face interviews with 256 children who had participated in TEGV activities for at least two semesters and again with their parents. The researchers would also interview 183 children from the same socioeconomic background and neighborhoods who were not enrolled in TEGV, and their parents (the control group). In addition, the research firm would interview 100 TEGV graduates, for a longer-term perspective. These interviews were to take place at 10 TEGV locations and in the neighborhoods surrounding them.

The hard part, however, was deciding what qualities (domains) to test for, and what questions (indicators) to use in each part of the assessment. In fact, the exercise plunged TEGV into months of institutional soul-searching, involving more than 20 high-level managers. It came to light that many people within the organization had pri-

vately-held hopes and beliefs about the impact of TEGV programs on children, but had never discussed them out loud with one another. “We facilitated this discussion, but they [arrived with] ideas about it,” says Emre Erdoğan, who served as Infakto RW’s project manager for the TEGV studies. They were asking themselves “what kind of change TEGV was trying to create—what kind of child they were trying to create,” he recalls. “Most civil society organizations don’t grow in a strategic way. They make something, they try to make something else, they are growing, but they are not acting strategically. They never question, *what am I trying to do?*”

Within TEGV, there were some who favored a focus on hard numbers (e.g., better grades in school), those who wanted to focus on specific behavioral differences (e.g., better cooperation skills) and those who wanted to capture a change in more abstract values (e.g., discipline, responsibility, tolerance, confidence). With respect to the latter group, Erdoğan explains, “We were imagining an ideal citizen of Turkey—self-confident, tolerant, empathic, etc.” All recognized, however, that they could not ask too many questions or the children would lose focus; that required the group to make some hard choices. “We spent more than a year to develop the questionnaire,” recalls Erdoğan.

In the end, TEGV emphasized 12 domains: happiness, confidence, tolerance/empathy, learning skills, creativity, team plan, freedom, self-regulation, responsibility, critical thinking, level of anger, and level of anxiety. The next step was to come up with indicators and design questions that accurately reflected each indicator. TEGV and Infakto RW researchers knew it would not be easy to get a handle on something as ephemeral as “happiness” in a handful of questions. “We knew that happiness is a multidimensional emotion and every person expresses his/her own sense of happiness using different words,” the researchers wrote. But TEGV nevertheless believed that, at base, cultivating happiness in a child was a key organizational goal: “Knowing that happy children can become good parents and citizens in the future, TEGV expends a great deal of effort to make sure that children are happy.” To get a sense of the happiness of the TEGV children relative to the control group, all were asked whether they mostly agreed or disagreed with four statements (“I am generally cheerful,” “I am generally happy,” “I generally feel lonely,” and “Generally speaking, I am satisfied with my situation.”)

Children in both groups overwhelmingly answered the three questions reflecting happiness in the affirmative; more than 90 percent indicated they were cheerful, happy, and satisfied. But on all three questions, 4 to 6 percent more of the TEGV children agreed with the statements than did the children in the control group. The biggest difference, however, came in the response to the question about feeling lonely. In the control group, 44.3 percent agreed with this statement compared with 31.3 percent in the TEGV group, a difference of 13 points. “[I]t would not be wrong to draw a conclusion from these figures that loneliness is common among children and that TEGV alleviates children’s sense of loneliness,” the researchers stated. [See Exhibit 6 for more details on the study.]

Deepening the Commitment to Research and Evaluation

In 2010, TEGV underwent a staff reorganization. In the past, responsibility for performance assessments had been dispersed throughout the organization while the Department of Education and Volunteers had overseen the larger impact studies. Under the new organization, TEGV created a Department of Learning Design & Research/Development. By combining research, program design, and assessment functions in a single department, TEGV hoped to knit the functions together more closely, so that programs were designed carefully to promote

selected goals, and assessments were designed with equal care to test their success at doing so. “In a nutshell, the program development process and the measurement-evaluation process are mutually reinforcing each other,” says Suat Kardaş, who was named manager of the new department in 2011. With a master’s degree in social anthropology, Kardaş had previously worked as a strategic analyst in the Turkish Ministry of National Education and as an educational research expert in education-oriented NGOs. He oversaw a professional staff of four at TEGV, all with masters-level training in either child psychology or education.

TEGV had already done a great deal—perhaps more than any other NGO in Turkey—to infuse its organization with continual self-questioning and self-appraisal, in the form of relatively contained program assessments, assessments of in-house trainings and other activities, and broader studies of its impact on children, their families, and the young adult volunteers who delivered their programs to children. The volunteer study, in particular, reached beyond TEGV’s own organizational interests to provide useful information to NGOs all across Turkey. TEGV’s Board would shortly embark on writing its next five-year strategic plan, to cover the years 2014-2018. Effective evaluation and assessment was to be one of four central objectives of that plan.

But it would be up to Kardaş—working together with the TEGV leadership team—to interpret what that commitment meant for TEGV in practice. The greatest challenge with respect to program assessment, he says, was to sustain and improve on the quality of TEGV’s existing assessments, given that each project was different from the next, with its own uniquely-designed assessment strategy; that the TEGV activity sites were dispersed widely across the country; and that the assessments were administered by volunteers, with limited training and varied levels of understanding and capability. Adding to the challenge, Kardaş says, was the fact that he had a staff in TEGV headquarters of just four professionals, whose duties included program design as well as assessment. In this context, Kardaş would have to consider in what ways TEGV should stay the course, and in what ways, change? What types of assessments to develop for new programs at TEGV—and why?

In a world of limited resources, Kardaş also had to decide whether it made sense to undertake new large impact studies. In fact, over the next two years, two new studies would be proposed at TEGV—one, a study of TEGV alumni, now young adults, looking back at the impact TEGV had had on their lives. A second possibility was to join forces with Education Reform Initiative (ERG), a special research project initiated by the Istanbul Policy Center at Sabanci University, to study the impact of a controversial set of educational reforms, enacted by the Turkish government in 2012. ERG knew its researchers would not be able to gather data in the schools themselves. By basing their studies in TEGV’s extensive network of education centers, however, ERG would be able to reach a diverse sample of primary school students at locations all across the country. By joining forces with ERG, TEGV would be moving into a new area—no longer evaluating its own operations alone, but evaluating those of the National Education Ministry as well. Kardaş and the TEGV leadership team would have to decide whether either or both of these studies made sense for the organization, going forward. After all, such evaluations were both difficult and costly, absorbing a great deal of time and money. Were they worth the cost? Were they, for example, worth more than spending those funds on additional direct services to children?

Exhibit 1: Profile of TEGV Children¹⁴

- 24% do not have their own beds
- 20% do not have a separate bookcase
- 57% do not have an internet connection at home
- Nearly 60% of the children come from families with a monthly household income below 1200 Turkish Lira (US \$564, on April 22, 2014).
- Nearly 50 percent of the children come from families where the parents have attained an elementary school education or less.
- On average, children come from homes in which an average of 4-5 people reside.
- 40% of children come from homes that include at least 2 children.

¹⁴ "TEGV Impact Analysis Research," prepared by the Infakto Research Workshop for TEGV, 2010, <http://www.tegv.org/i/Assets/pdf/Arastirmalar/TEGVImpactAnalysisResearch.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2014.

Exhibit 2: TEGV's History, Mission, Values & Standard Education Programs¹⁵

Our History

Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV) was founded in January 23, 1995 with the aim of "supporting the primary education provided by the government" by a group of industrialists, managers, and academics lead by Suna Kiraç, who believed with their whole hearts that education comes before everything else. TEGV was founded by a board of 55 trustees who believed that lack of education lies on the basis of most of the problems our country is facing today and that it is not possible to reach the contemporary level of civilization without solving this issue and who has the will and determination to take part in this solution. In its first years TEGV had provided scholarships, repaired schools, had activities in youth centers and then decided to focus on providing "after school educational support" for primary school children. Throughout the years, TEGV became the most widespread NGO in Turkey in the area of education.

Basis of Existence

"The prerequisite for seeing brighter faces in the future of Turkey, is to provide children with the best educational opportunities today."

The state, which has an undisputed responsibility in the provision of national education, often faces impediments in achieving this mission due to the lack of resources and administrative challenge. Volunteer organizations, the private sector and citizens are thus obliged to support the state in this provision for productivity, by creating precedents to address insufficiencies and share responsibility in this vital area. The underlying principle is a contribution to the formal state education.

Our Mission

The objective of Educational Volunteers is to create and implement educational programs and extracurricular activities for children aged 7-16, so that they can acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes supporting their development as rational, responsible, self-confident, peace-loving, inquisitive, cognizant, creative individuals, who are against any kind of discrimination, respect diversity and are committed to the basic principles of the Turkish Republic. TEGV implements unique educational programs, with the support of its volunteers, in the Education Parks, Learning Units, Firefly Mobile Units, City Representative Offices and in primary schools through the "Support for Social Activities Protocol".

Our Values

1. **Independence:** Our Foundation is independent of any company or person.
2. **Mission Oriented:** We use our resources only for our fundamental requirements, which are stated, in our Foundation Statute.

¹⁵ Material from English language version of TEGV's website, http://www.tegv.org/about_tegv, retrieved April 22, 2014.

3. **Justice, Equality, Tolerance and Respect:** We approach all our personnel, volunteers, children, donors and other partners in line with justice and equality principles. TEGV cannot be involved in any discrimination against any religious beliefs, language, ethnicity or gender. We have respect for different thoughts and beliefs. Mutual respect is important between the partners both inside and outside the Foundation.
4. **Reliability:** We comply with transparency and accountability principles at all levels of our activities. We do not to share the information provided by our stakeholders with third party individuals and institutions.
5. **Cooperation and Solidarity:** We see all NGO's as our stake holders and we pay careful attention to be in cooperation, solidarity and communication
6. **Rights and Responsibilities:** In all of our work, we observe the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The board of trustees, managers, volunteers and personnel of our Foundation fulfill the necessities of active and responsible citizenship. It is important for us to use today's resources effectively in order not to waste the resources of our children and we reflect this sensitivity to all our work.
7. **Innovation:** In line with the continuous development principle, our Foundation takes on an innovative perspective, creates unique models and implements them.

Educational Programming/Standard Activities

The standard activities are unique programs which are prepared according to children's grade level by academic advisors, the Content and Research and Development Department and the Education and Volunteer Department. Standard Activities are implemented 2 hours a week (45minx2) for a semester and are unique activities that are intended to be implemented in all activity locations. The Standard Activities are categorized under 3 main learning areas:

Art - Language - Communication

The activities categorized under this heading aim to provide opportunities for children to communicate with their environment using audio-visual and physical communication methods. These activities also aim at helping children to create relationships between various art forms and other disciplines, get to know audio-visual artistic material, techniques and processes and to understand the basic structures and functions of art.

- I Read I Play
- Drama Workshop
- Dreams Workshop
- Little Artists

Personal Development – Social Values Area

The aim of the activities categorized under this heading is to raise awareness in children about the ways to improve the quality of life and to improve themselves cognitively, physically and psychologically. In addition, the child is expected to become aware of the social, economic and political aspects of his/her the environment and help the child to become a productive and responsible member of the society.

- Journey to Myself
- Health Development
- Financial Education Project
- Starting My Career Journey
- Citizenship Education
- Sports For Fun
- Basketball Volunteers
- Young Shirts

Cognitive - Intellectual Area

The aim of the activities categorized under this heading is to support children to become individuals who are curious about the nature, earth and the universe, who are creative, critical, science and technology literate.

- Math, Science and I
- Thinking Children
- Technology and Computer Literacy Program
- Lego Robot

Exhibit 3: Dreams Workshop Assessment Study with Children, 2010-2011¹⁶

(Though the Dreams Workshop performance assessment was one of the first conducted at TEGV, only summary data were available from the 2006-2007 study. The data in this exhibit date from 2010-2011; the assessment approach was similar.)

How the study was conducted

In the 2010-2011 school year, 6,952 children attended the Dreams Workshop programs, countrywide. TEGV identified a sample of 67 children, ranging from second through fifth grades. Some were assessed in the fall semester, some in the spring. A representative number was sampled at each of the 13 activity locations. Volunteers observed changes in children's behavior over the 16-week period of the Dreams Workshop program.

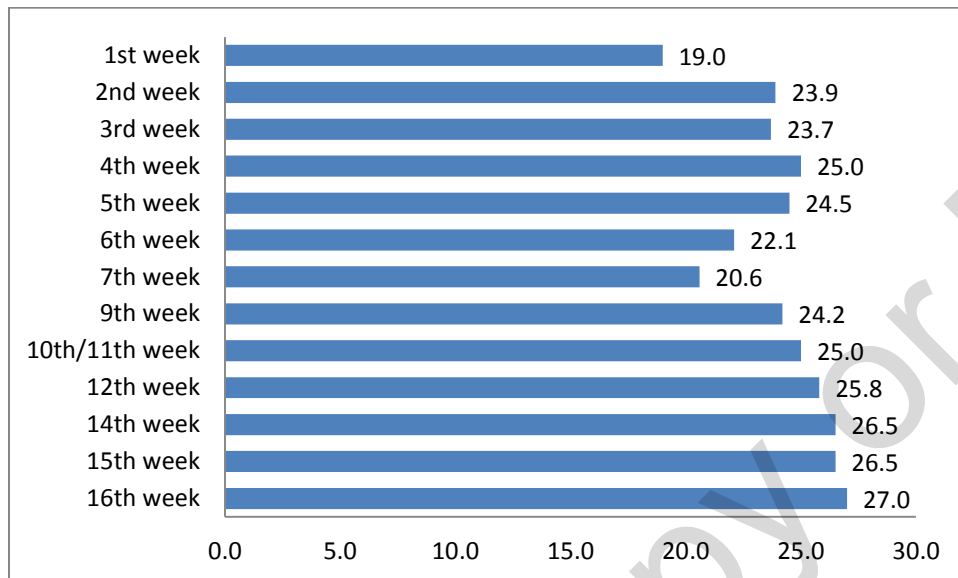
Volunteers observed and scored each child in the sample weekly (or almost weekly) during the 16 week program. They gave each child a score between 1 and 3 each week on each of nine different life skills. Thus, each week, each child could earn a total score between 9 and 27. In addition, during the weeks that featured group work, the volunteers were asked to give each child a score between 1 and 3 on four skills specific to teamwork. For the teamwork skills, the minimum score per week was 4 and the maximum, 12. In order to "standardize the observation process," the volunteers were given a special module in assessment during a general two-day Dreams Workshop training session at the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

Data from all the volunteers was transferred to a web-based survey management system in order to compute the system-wide mean scores. To make it easier to compare the progress of the children on general skills and teamwork skills, the analysts converted the teamwork skills to a 27-point scale. (Thus, a score of 10.4 on the 12-point scale would convert to a score of 23.3 on a 27-point scale.)

¹⁶ "Dreams Workshop Project, Measurement and Evaluation Report, 2010-2011," courtesy, Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey.

Mean Scores for Children's General Skills by Week

Though the children in the sample did not make steady progress from the beginning to the end of the program (in particular, note slippage in weeks 5-9), they did make overall progress from the beginning of the program to the end, achieving a perfect score by program's end.



Mean Scores per Child in Week's 1 & 16 for Seven General Skills

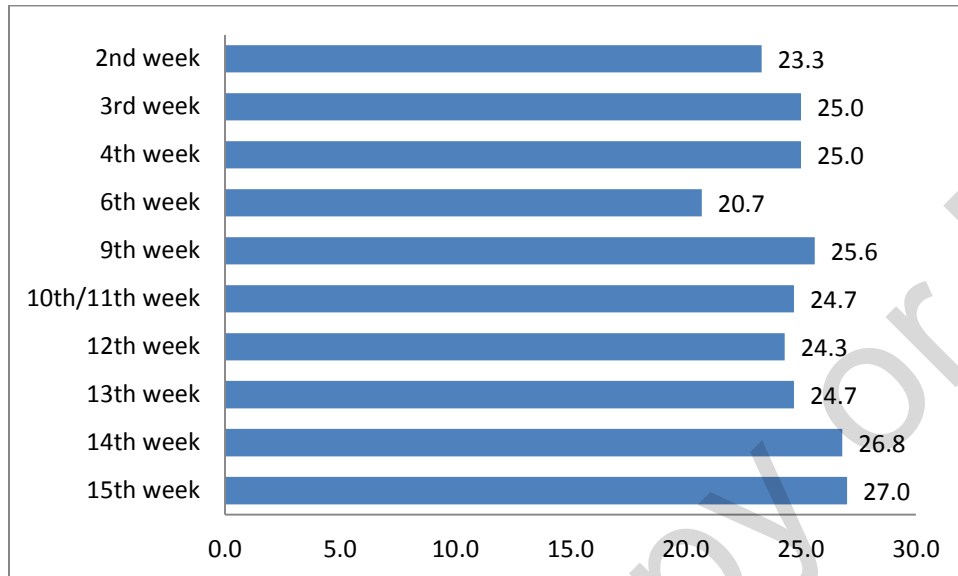
The assessment report also included scores for seven of the nine general skills at the beginning and end of the program. Minimum possible score was 1, and maximum score, 3.

General Skills (sample)	Mean for 1 st week	Mean for 16 th week
Showing respect to other members of the activity group.	2.36	3.00
Using the time as directed; started & stopped on time.	2.09	3.00
Following the instructions and working in harmony with others.	2.18	3.00
Using the workshop regularly and keeping it clean.	2.60	3.00
Using materials appropriately and safely.	2.73	3.00
Taking an active part in tidying up the workshop.	1.75	3.00
Producing a product by oneself.	2.64	3.00

Mean Scores for Children's Teamwork Skills by Week

(Converted from a 12-point scale to a 27-point scale, for comparison's sake.)

As in the previous example, students in the sample did not make perfect linear progress from one week to the next, but did show improvement from the beginning of the program to the end.



Mean Scores per Child in Weeks 2, 6, & 16 for all Four Teamwork Skills

The assessment report included scores for all four teamwork skills, in weeks 2, 6, and 15 of the program. Minimum possible score was 1, and maximum score, 3.

Teamwork Skill	Mean for 2 nd Week	Mean for 6 th Week	Mean for 15 th Week
Taking an active role in deciding the nature & distribution of work within the team.	2.63	2.33	3.0
Showing leadership within the group.	2.25	2.00	3.0
Expressing own ideas during team work.	2.50	2.33	3.0
Taking an active role in realizing team goals.	2.88	2.33	3.0

Exhibit 4: Examples of Assessment Tools

Pre- and Post-Tests

TEGV widely used tests at the beginning and end of a program to assess changes in knowledge or behavior. For example, in the Dreams Workshop assessment shown in Exhibit 3, volunteers observed the behavior of children in the testing sample with respect to 13 skills, and gave each one a numeric value. These assessments were made every week or two, but assessors focused most on the change from the first week of the program to the final week of the program.

Observations

In the example above, behavioral changes were the outcome measured. Thus, the program volunteers were given additional training in how to make disciplined, standardized observations of children, and give each a score based on those observations.

Surveys

In the example shown in Exhibit 5, volunteers were given an online questionnaire asking them to answer a list of questions. In this case, they were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to a series of questions about what kinds of effects volunteer work had had on their lives.

Interviews

In the example shown in Exhibit 6, children—too young to take a written survey—in target and control groups were interviewed by a professional polling and survey company to ascertain their views on a number of subtle questions. For example, in one case, the children were asked whether they mostly agreed or disagreed with a series of statements that were designed to reflect the level of their confidence.

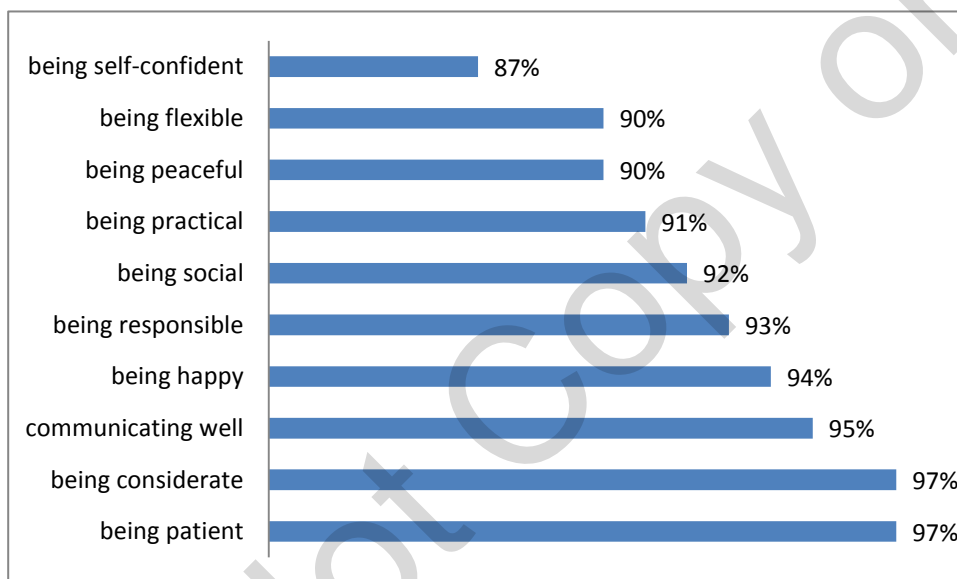
Exhibit 5: Sample Results from TEGV's "Volunteering and Outcomes" Study¹⁷

How the study was conducted.

On the basis of 24 in-depth interviews, Infakto RW developed an internet survey to identify volunteers' own sense of why they chose to volunteer and how they gained from the experience. This survey was sent to all 9,000 TEGV volunteers, and was open from November 17 to December 1, 2009. Some 1,209 volunteers participated in the survey.

In the first question, volunteers were asked whether they thought their volunteer work at TEGV had increased 10 selected personal qualities. The group overwhelmingly responded in the affirmative to all ten, but more saw improvements in some than others, as seen below.

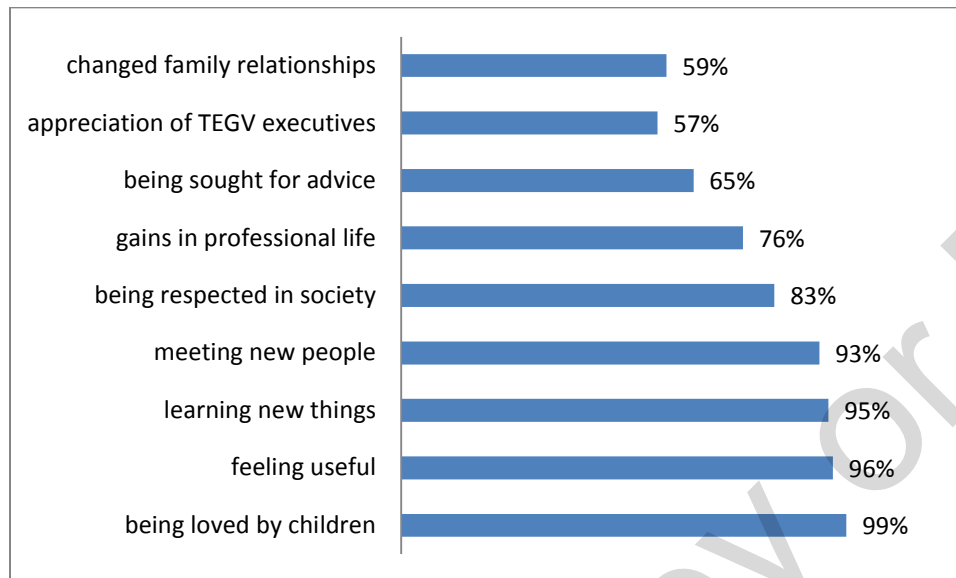
Percentage of Volunteers That Reported Increases in Personal Qualities as a Result of TEGV Volunteer Work



¹⁷ "TEGV Impact Analysis Research," prepared by the Infakto Research Workshop for TEGV, 2010, <http://www.tegv.org/i/Assets/pdf/Arastirmalar/TEGVImpactAnalysisResearch.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2014. Provided courtesy, TEGV.

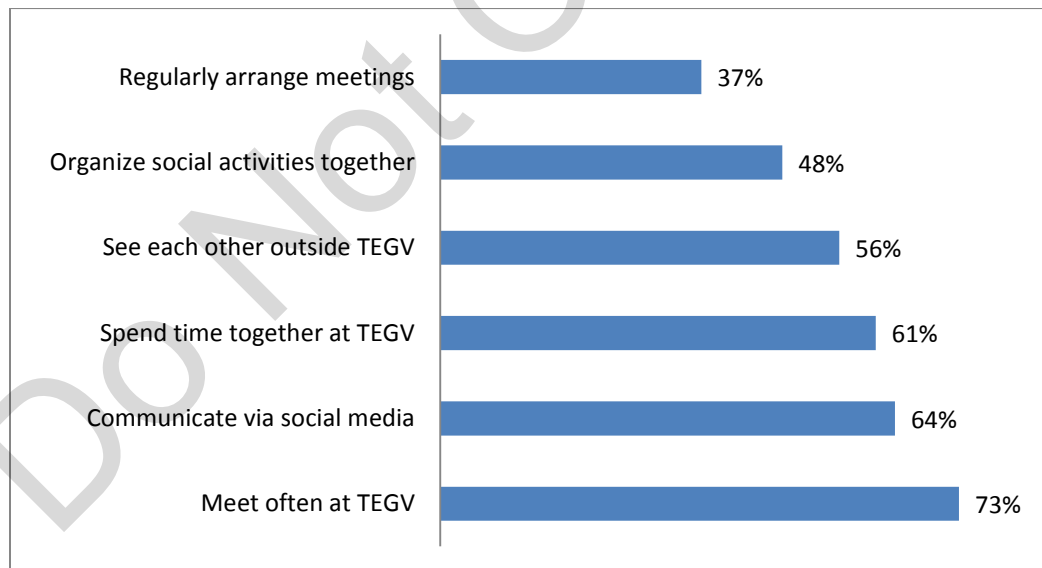
The volunteers were given a list of nine commonly noted “outcomes” of volunteering, and asked which they had experienced.

Percentage of Volunteers That Attributed Each of the Following Outcomes to TEGV Volunteer Work



On the theory that communication and friendship among volunteers might factor heavily in volunteers’ sense of satisfaction, Infakto RW asked the volunteers to answer questions about their communication with one another.

Percentage of Volunteers That Reported Different Types of Interaction with Fellow Volunteers



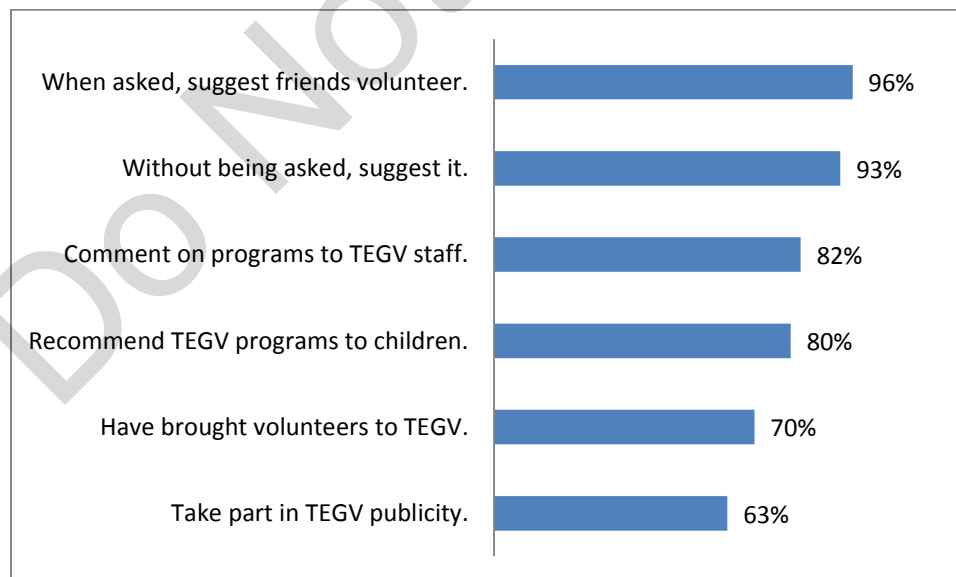
TEGV volunteers were asked to gauge their own satisfaction with volunteering at TEGV by ranking their level of agreement with eight statements on a seven-point scale, with 1 representing no agreement and 7 representing full agreement.

Volunteers' Reported Level of Satisfaction with their TEGV Volunteer Experience (7 = Full Agreement)



Infakto RW wanted to figure out whether the volunteers were satisfied enough with their TEGV experience to assume the role of being a representative or “ambassador” for the organization in other social contexts—for example, by encouraging their friends to volunteer for TEGV. Thus, volunteers were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to a list of six questions pertaining to ambassadorship.

Percentage of Volunteers That Reported Engaging in Each of the Following Activities to Promote TEGV



Infakto RW researchers took the research they had done and “utilized a series of advanced statistical techniques and reached the causal relationships” among the features and outcomes of a volunteer’s experience and her/his level of satisfaction and ambassadorship. Among their conclusions:

- Not surprisingly, high levels of satisfaction with TEGV volunteering correlated most strongly with a volunteer’s willingness to become a TEGV ambassador.
- Transformative personal change—such as feeling that one had become happier or more self-confident—was strongly correlated with overall satisfaction.
- The outcomes volunteers most commonly observed—being loved by children, feeling useful, for e.g.—were not as well-correlated with overall satisfaction as somewhat less common outcomes that extended into the outside world, such as being sought-out for advice by others, seeing a change in family relationships, being respected in society, and seeing a positive impact on professional life.
- Volunteers who reported the most contact and communication with fellow-volunteers also reported the highest levels of transformative personal change and the other outcomes most associated with satisfaction. “In other words, spending time with other volunteers, forming new friendships, and communicating with one another in the environment provided by TEGV and in the social media have a multiplier effect on the outcomes of volunteering and the consequent changes in volunteer,” Infakto RW concluded. Therefore, “the more opportunities you create for communication (among volunteers), the more you increase satisfaction with volunteering activities and [cultivate] corporate ambassadorship.”
- “Volunteers who are satisfied with their volunteering activities at TEGV have a higher sense of empathy and social responsibility and a lesser feeling of anomie,” Infakto RW added. “Consequently, they are also happier.”

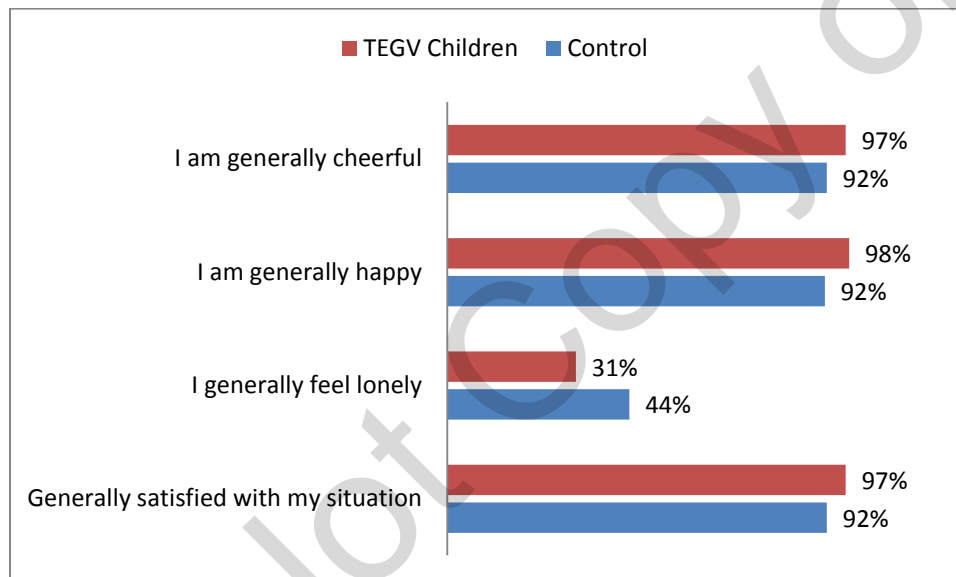
Exhibit 6: Sample Results from TEGV's 2010 Analysis of Impact on Children¹⁸

How the study was conducted.

Infakto RW conducted face-to-face interviews with 256 children who had participated in TEGV activities for at least two semesters. As a point of comparison, the researchers also interviewed 183 children from the same neighborhoods and socioeconomic backgrounds who were not enrolled in TEGV. In addition, they interviewed 100 TEGV graduates, for a longer-term perspective. These interviews took place at 10 TEGV locations and in the neighborhoods surrounding them.

Infakto RW worked with TEGV's administrative team to come up with 12 "domains" to study, and the questions to reveal each domain. Thus, one domain was "happiness," and to get a sense of how happy the children were, the two groups were each asked to agree or disagree with the four statements below.

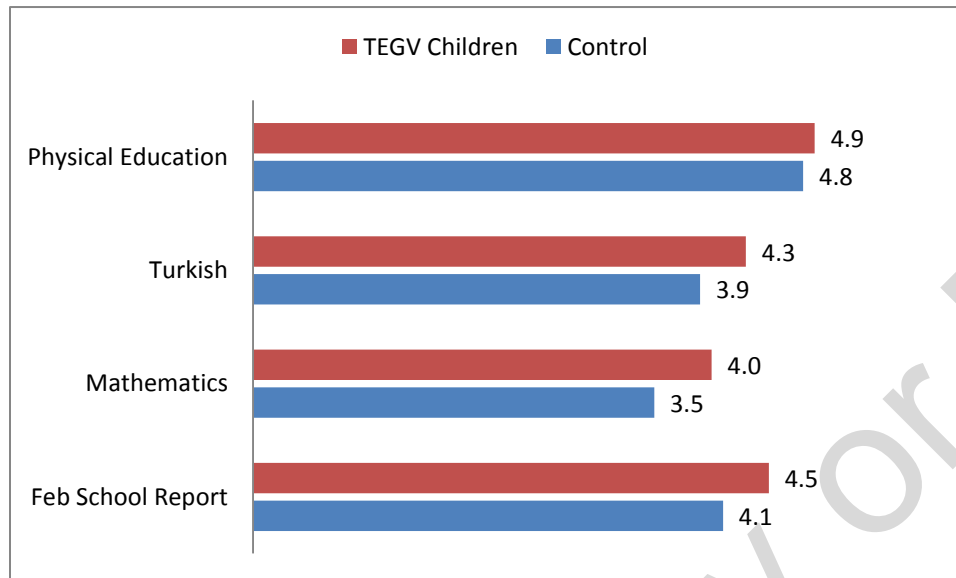
Percentage of Children That Agreed with Statements about Their Happiness



¹⁸ "TEGV Impact Analysis Research," prepared by the Infakto Research Workshop for TEGV, 2010, <http://www.tegv.org/i/Assets/pdf/Arastirmalar/TEGVImpactAnalysisResearch.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2014. Provided courtesy, TEGV.

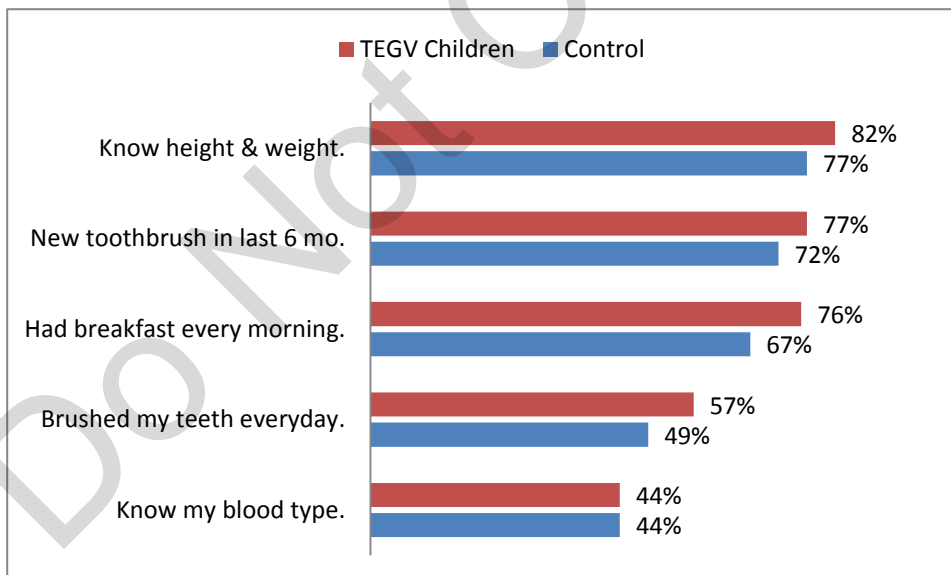
Children in both groups were asked their first semester grades, on a 5-point scale.

Children's Self-report of First Semester Grades (5 Point Scale)



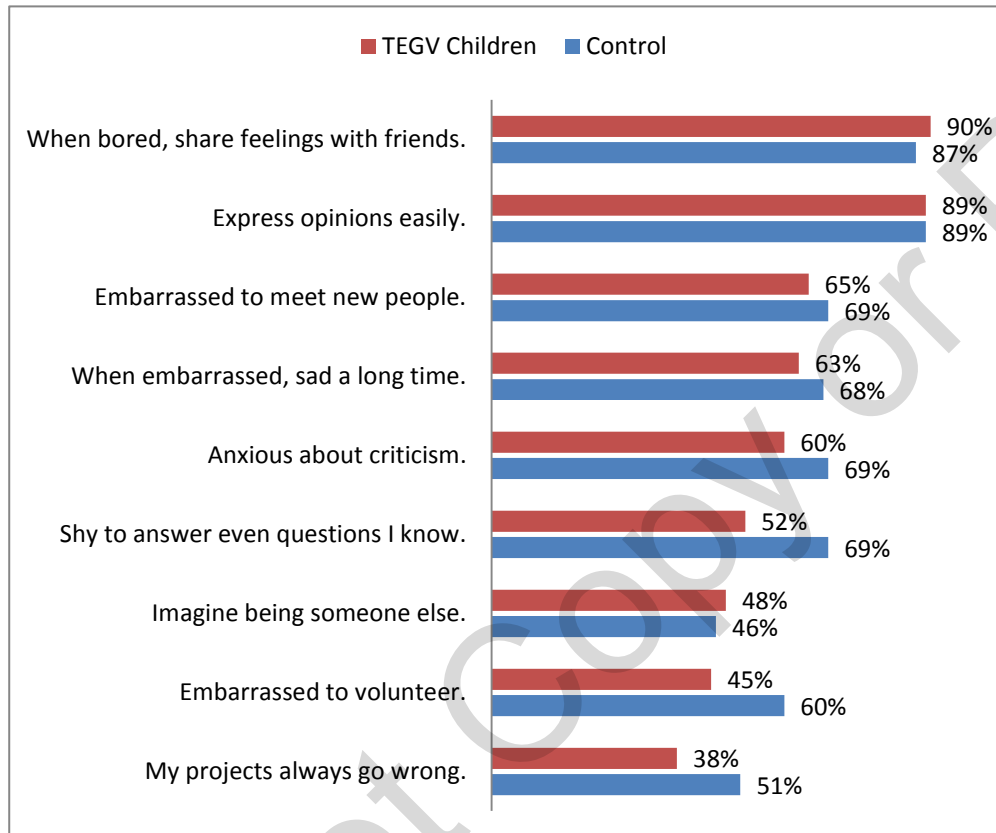
Children in both groups were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to this set of five questions about self care.

Percentage of Children That Reported Engaging in Types of Self Care



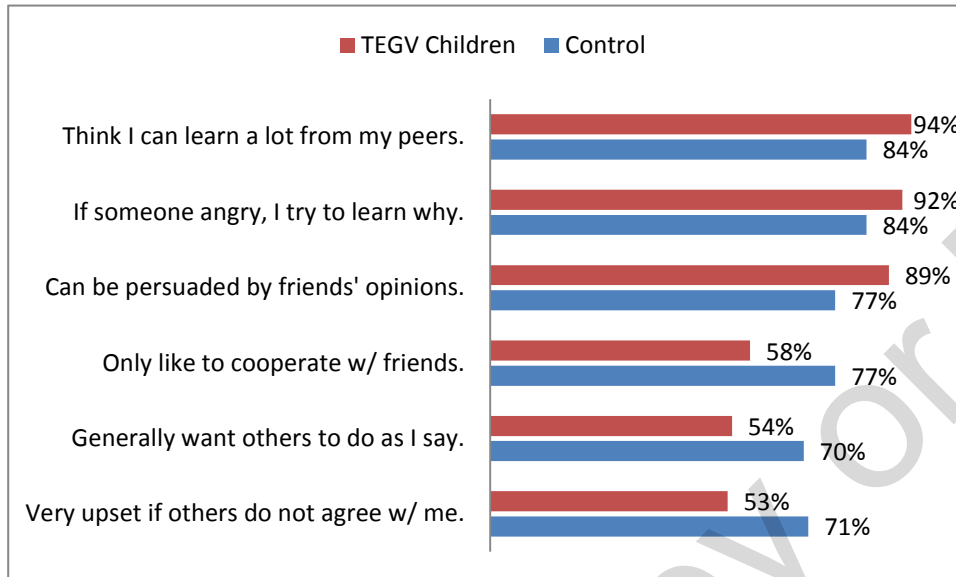
Children from both groups were asked to agree or disagree with nine statements, pertaining to their ease and confidence in social situations.

Percentage of Children That Agreed with Statements about Their Confidence in Different Situations



Children from both groups were asked to agree or disagree with six statements, pertaining to their level of tolerance for others with different views.

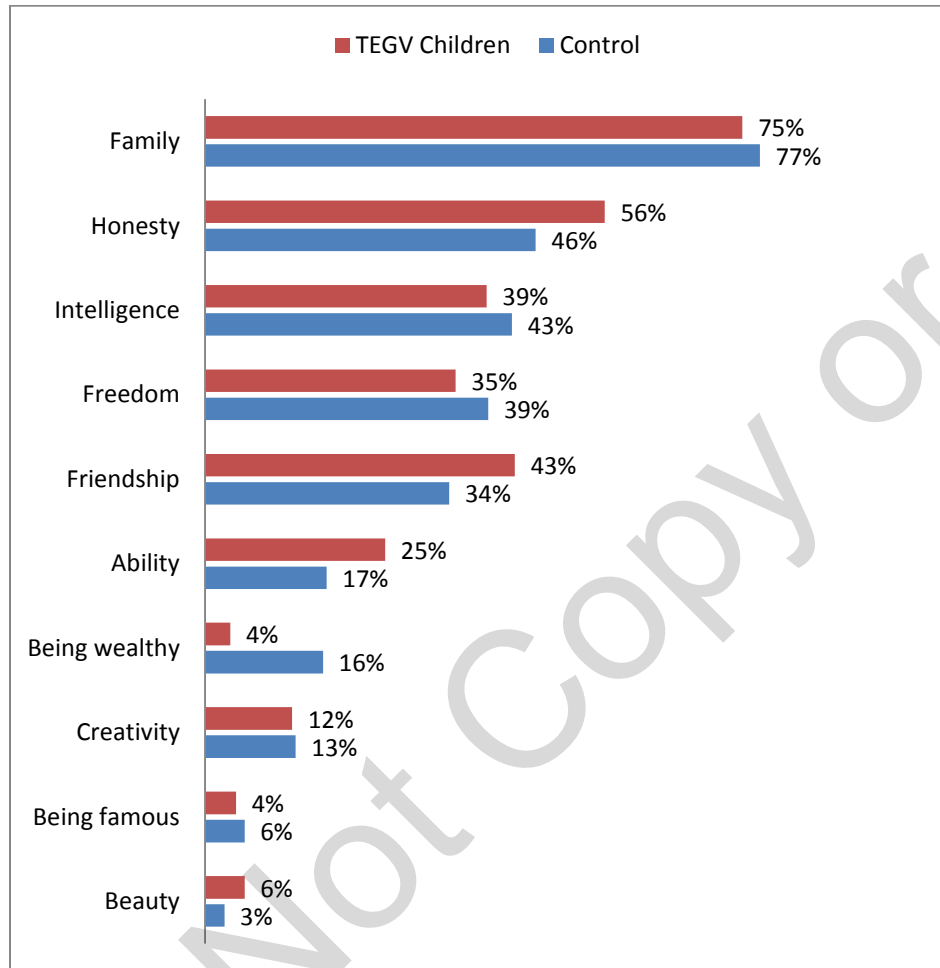
Percentage of Children That Agreed with Each Statement about Tolerance for Others with Different Views



Children from both groups were asked to list the three values they regarded as most important, out of a list of 10 values.

Percentage of Children That Selected Each Value as Important

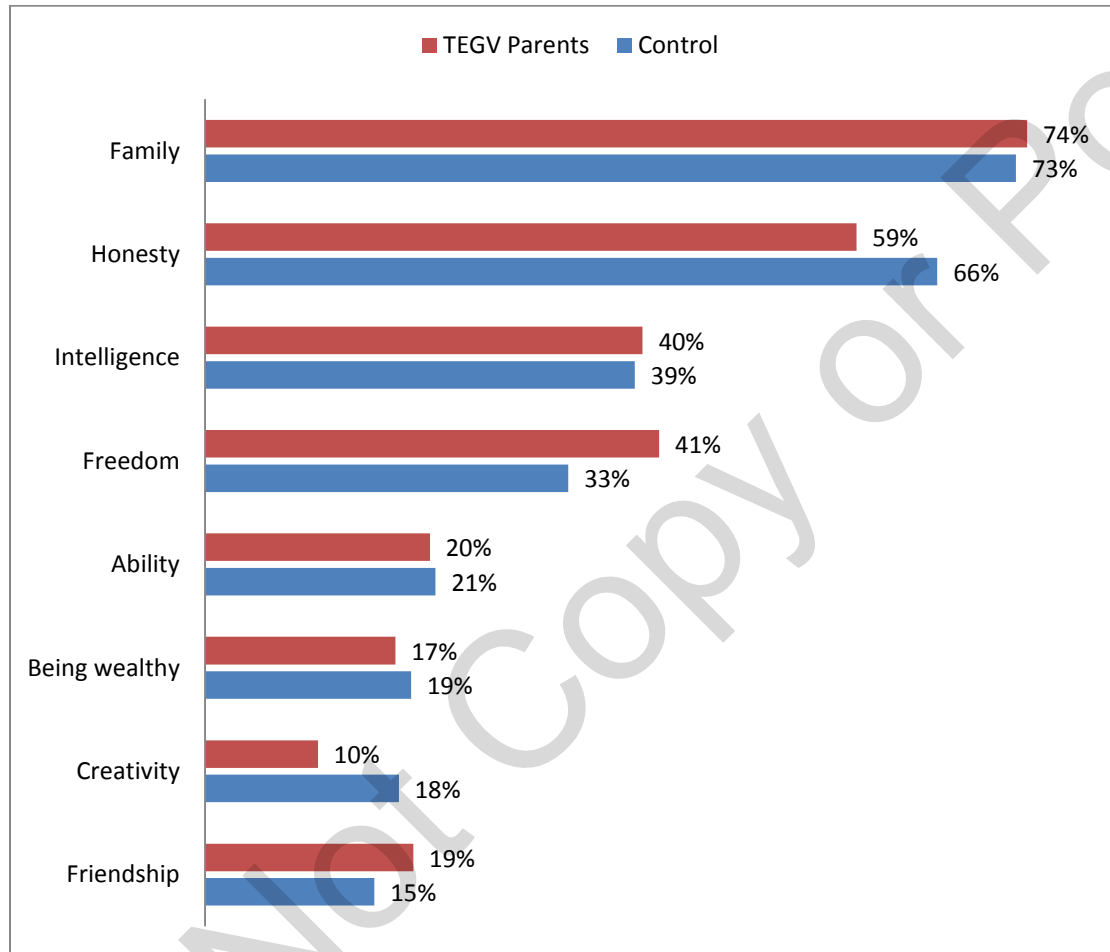
(Respondents were limited to selecting 3 from a list of 10.)



TEGV parents and parents of the control group children were also asked to list the three values they regarded as most important out of a slightly shorter list of eight values.

Percentage of Parents That Selected Each Value as Important

(Respondents were limited to selecting 3 from a group of 10.)



Ultimately, Infakto RW concluded that the TEGV children were consistently different from their control group counterparts in a number of respects, while their parents were not notably different from the control group parents. On the one hand, TEGV and Infakto RW viewed this as disappointing; they had hoped the TEGV-difference in children might spill over to their parents. On the other hand, they viewed it as reinforcing the validity of the control group for the children. That is, it showed that both groups of children came from very similar homes, and were thus presumably different from one another *only* in their TEGV attendance. Infakto RW concluded that by comparison with the control group, the TEGV children showed the following characteristics vis-à-vis their counterparts in the control group—all in line with TEGV's goals:

- Happier
- Getting better grades
- More conscious about self-care
- More self-confident
- More tolerant and more open to team play
- Had better learning skills and higher levels of responsibility
- Attached more importance to friendship and less to wealth