“Laborers of Education” is an ongoing project with a group of volunteer female college students at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey. The Student Council of Bilkent University and Ankara Chapter of Soroptimists Organization sponsor the project. The advisor is a female faculty at American Culture and Literature Department of the University.

The project started in September 2001 with five volunteers, and it has been designed to bring the idea of “think globally and act locally” to life. In the second year of the project the volunteer group has grown into 25 female university students who meet with a group of secondary students of an underprivileged neighbourhood over the weekends at a Public Education Center.

The mission of the project is three-folded: firstly, to create a bridge between the community and the university where female college students play an active role as leaders; secondly, to create female role models of higher education before those secondary education students who come from underprivileged districts of the Capital where the school drop-out rates are high; and finally, empower those students with better academic performance by offering them tutorial help in the subjects they struggle.

The long term goal of the project is to create a sustainable activity for female college students where the role of university women and the function of NGOs are emphasized in community development. This paper will analyze how the empowerment process works mutually for the parties involved in the project including the families of the younger students. I will look at the time management, communication, conflict resolution, and coping skills of the volunteers in the leadership position, and the performance level of the students who meet with the volunteers regularly. A series of interviews from both groups and a qualitative interpretation of the data will form the basis of the presentation.