

**Commission on Poverty
Task Force on Children and Youth**

Commission on Youth - Youth Development Work

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the youth development work undertaken by the Commission on Youth (COY).

Background

2. COY, established in February 1990, is an advisory body on youth matters under the purview of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB). HAB policy objectives on youth development are –

- to promote positive values among young people;
- to enhance their understanding of Chinese culture and heritage;
- to encourage their participation in voluntary and community work;
- to broaden their international perspective; and
- to promote leadership training.

HAB works closely with the COY in implementing programmes to achieve the above objectives.

Commission on Youth

3. COY members come from a wide spectrum of the community, including the education, social welfare, recreation and sports, and business sector, professionals and youths. Other official members include representatives from relevant government bureaux, such as HAB, Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, Security Bureau and Education and Manpower Bureau. Its terms of reference are –

- to advise the Chief Executive on matters pertaining to youth;

- to exchange ideas and information with other government advisory bodies on youth matters with a view to ensuring the interests of young people are taken into account in the design of relevant service programmes;
- to encourage better cooperation between government departments, voluntary agencies, district organizations and private organizations involved in provision of youth services;
- to gather information and initiate research on matters pertaining to youth;
- to act as a focal liaison point with other international youth organizations and to promote opportunities for young people of Hong Kong to acquire international experience and exposure;
- to enhance the civic awareness of young people and their participation in community affairs; and
- to promote leadership training for young people.

Current Major Areas of Work of COY

A. Youth Summit

4. The Youth Summit is an annual conference jointly organized by HAB and COY. It provides a platform for young people and youth-related non-governmental organizations to have direct and interactive exchanges and dialogues with senior government officials on selected topics of concern to them.

5. The themes over the last three years are as follows –

2003 - “Social Participation: Local, Mainland and Overseas”

- Discussed youth participation in 7 different areas: families, schools, communities, economic, political systems, environmental conservation and culture
- Invited young people and youth workers from Shanghai, Singapore, South Korea and Cambodia to share their experience

2004 - “Voices and Power of the New Generation”

- Encourage active social participation by young people, through setting up platforms for exchange of views and turning voices into constructive actions

2005 - “Continuing Development and Commitment of the New Generation”

- Broadened youth development and channels for social participation
- Focused discussion on (a) social policy and youth participation; (b) culture, sports and arts (non-formal education); and (c) youth and poverty
- Invited youth delegates from Guangzhou and Macau to share their experience

The theme of this year’s Youth Summit is “When China moves into the World – The Development and Commitment of youths in Hong Kong”. The discussion topics will focus on education, employment and culture. The Youth Summit this year will be held on 11 November at the Hongkong International Trade and Exhibition Centre.

B. Major Youth-related Research and Studies

6. The following youth-related research and studies have been/are being undertaken by the COY –

- (i) Youth in Hong Kong – A Statistical Profile 2006
 - Data on youth are grouped into six topical youth issues, namely cultural capital, social capital, human capital, employment and unemployment, substance abuse and crime, and poverty
 - The research is now in progress
- (ii) Benchmark Survey on Civic Engagement and Social Networks of Youth in Hong Kong (published in December 2005)
 - To systematically and comprehensively tract the accumulation and development of social capital of youth in Hong Kong

- The first ever benchmarking survey on youth’s civic engagement and social networks conducted in Hong Kong
- A follow-up tracking study on civic engagement and social networks of youth in Hong Kong would be conducted

C. Funding Schemes

7. At present, there are two funding schemes administered by the COY. They are –

- (i) Community Participating Scheme for Organizing Study Tours to the Mainland
 - To enhance young people’s understanding of Chinese culture and heritage, as well as the latest social, economic and technological developments of the Mainland
 - Some 200 programmes and 7 000 youths are subsidized under the scheme annually
- (ii) Youth Development Funding Scheme
 - To provide funding subsidy for non-governmental organizations to implement projects on specific youth development themes

D. International Youth Exchange Programme

8. The objective of the programme is to broaden the perspective of young people, facilitate exchanges amongst youths in Hong Kong and overseas, enrich their life experience and promote independent thinking. Participating countries include the United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan and Singapore.

E. Promotion of National Education for youth

9. A joint working group (with the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education) was set up in mid-2004 to formulate relevant strategies and measures in promoting national education outside schools.