

"Hong Kong Youth Development Indicators" Study

**I. Background**

The Commission on Youth (COY) attaches great importance to youth development. By conducting researches on youth matters, COY aims at providing the latest information on youth to the Government and relevant organisations as reference. Researches and studies on various aspects of the youth in Hong Kong were conducted by COY in the past, but most of them were thematic in nature. COY wished to conduct a study covering various aspects of the youth in Hong Kong, in order to systematically display the current state of development of the local youth.

**II. Scope of Study**

Drawing reference from the fifteen youth development indicators suggested by United Nations and the situation in Hong Kong, nine perspectives were selected for the study, namely "Youth Population", "Education", "Employment", "Physical and Psychological Health", "Deviant and Delinquent Behavior", "Leisure and Cultural Activities; Consumption and Expenditure", "Civic Engagement and Participation in Social Service Activities", "Value" and "Competitiveness".

**III. Tender Procedure**

With the assistance of Home Affairs Bureau, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, through open quotation process, Lingnan University (the "research team") was commissioned to conduct the study.

#### **IV. Methodology of Study**

The study was conducted in three phases: Re-analysis of Existing Data; Focus Group Discussion and Pilot Study; and Questionnaire Survey.

##### **Phase 1: Re-analysis of Existing Data**

In order to understand the existing data on youth, the study re-analysed existing data published by the Government and other organisations in the first instance. This also served as a reference for designing the questionnaire in order to avoid duplication of collection of information.

##### **Phase 2: Focus Group Discussion and Pilot Study**

In order to ensure that the wording in the questionnaire was easily understood by the interviewees, the research team held two focus groups with 11 young people aged between 16 and 24, who were secondary school students and employed youths, in September 2010. In addition, the research team invited 90 young people aged between 15 and 24, who were students of secondary schools, post-secondary education institutions and universities, and full-time employed and unemployed youths, to conduct a pilot study to test the face validity, content validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

##### **Phase 3: Questionnaire Survey (Self-administrated Questionnaire Survey with a Quota Sample and Telephone Survey with a Random Sample)**

The Self-administered Questionnaire Survey was conducted between October and December 2010 using a quota sampling method. Questionnaires were distributed to secondary schools and youth organisations. A total of 4,746 completed valid cases were obtained, with a valid return rate of 93.1%.

In order to reaffirm the representativeness of the quota samples, Public Governance Programme (PGP) of Lingnan University was

commissioned to conduct the telephone survey with a random sample of 449 Hong Kong interviewees aged 15 to 24, including full-time students, full-time employed youths, part-time employed youths, unemployed and non-engaged youths, during the period from 4 to 10 October 2010. The response rate was 34.3% and the results were similar to that of the questionnaire survey.

## V. Findings of Study

The major findings of the study are as follows:

### Youth Population

From 2005 to 2009, the percentage of youths aged 15 to 24 to the overall population of Hong Kong drops from 13.3% in 2005 to 12.8% in 2009.

### Education

The overall education level of young people in Hong Kong continues to rise, with slightly more females in higher education than males. In the sample of the study, more than half of the youths who are unemployed and non-students, are at Form 5 or below, while about 20% are degree holders or above. The situation is worth our attention.

### Employment

The employment rate of the youth in Hong Kong is declining whereas the unemployment rate is on the rise. In general, the employed interviewees in the study are satisfied with their jobs. Education attainment is still the crucial factor in affecting employment and income of the youth. Those with lower education level are facing employment problem more commonly than those with higher education level.

### Physical and Psychological Health

The lifestyle of the interviewees is quite healthy. They sleep an average of 6.8 hours a day. While the proportion of the interviewees who drink and smoke was relatively low, drinking is more common than smoking among them. 31.9% and 51.7% of the interviewees often and sometimes feel happy. 40% of them feel satisfied or very satisfied with life but some of them feel the pressure from study, family and economy. Interviewees generally cope with pressure by taking rest (41.7%), sharing with others (36.9%) and engage in hobbies and leisure activities (36%).

### Deviant and Delinquent Behaviour

In the 6-month period prior to the completion of the questionnaire, 835 interviewees reported involvement in the deviant and delinquent behavior (in this study, deviant and delinquent behaviour includes indulgence in internet bars/game centres, cyber-bullying, threatening others, etc), which accounts for 17.6% of the total number of interviewees. The most common deviant and delinquent behavior includes 'fighting' (8.6%) and 'blackmailing' (6.1%).

### Leisure and Cultural Activities; Consumption and Expenditure

The three main leisure activities the interviewees engage themselves in are using the internet, watching TV, and shopping. 50.97% and 22.97% of the interviewees spend 1 to 3 hours a day and 3 to 5 hours a day respectively visiting leisure or social networking websites, reflecting the importance of internet usage in their lives. The three major areas of spending of the interviewees are food, transportation and leisure activities. 5.3% of the interviewees have significant symptoms of compulsive

buying.

### Civic Engagement and Participation in Social Service Activities

With regard to identity, "Hong Kong people" is still the most acceptable identity among the interviewees (42.9%), followed by "Hong Kong people in China" (30.7%). Only 13% regarded themselves as "Chinese". More than half of the interviewees seldom or did not participate in any charitable (60.3%) or social (85.2%) activities.

### Value

More than half of the interviewees report that they have clear goals of living (56.4%) and know their meaning of life (52.7%). Most interviewees consider that "values" (such as family relationships, friendship, health, etc.) are important. 44.3% of the interviewees expressed that the purpose of receiving education is to obtain the necessary qualifications in order to get an ideal job. This is closely followed by 40% who said that education is to allow for personal growth. When choosing a job, most interviewees (44.9%) find that "personal interest" is the most important consideration. Environmental awareness of young people surveyed was generally high, with 63.2% expressing their willingness to reduce consumption in order to protect the ecology and the environment. 43.1% of interviewees indicate that the media is not trustworthy while 48.6% consider the credibility of media as fair. 42.4% of interviewees agree or strongly agree that sexual relations should be confined within the marital relationship, whereas 26.4% disagree. About 41.2% of interviewees agree or strongly agree that homosexuality is acceptable whereas 28.6% disagree.

### Competitiveness

The interviewees assess their basic skills of competitiveness as fair. Among their assessment of these skills, the English language proficiency is the lowest. For social ability, which is indicated by the ability to gain other people's trust and to resolve conflicts, the interviewees rate their social ability generally good. The interviewees evaluate their resilience towards adversity at a medium level.