

12 June 2009

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs
Youth Development through Volunteer Service**

Purpose

This paper serves to inform Members on proposed initiatives to promote youth development through young people's greater participation in volunteer service. These initiatives would be implemented in collaboration with the Commission on Youth (COY), the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC).

Background

2. Youth development is an important policy responsibility of HAB. Our objectives on youth development are, among other things, to promote positive values among young people, to encourage their participation in voluntary and community work, to broaden their international perspective and to promote leadership training among young people. We work closely with the COY and other collaborators in implementing programmes and activities to achieve the above objectives.

3. Speaking at a press conference on 26 May 2009, the Financial Secretary announced that the Government would implement a new package of measures to relieve hardship, stimulate economic activities and assist those in need to tide over the current difficult economic period. As one of the measures in the package, the Financial Secretary indicated that he would like to facilitate youth development through allocating an additional \$10 million to HAB with a view to helping young people to

broaden their horizon and contribute to the community through their participation in volunteer service.

New Initiatives

4. Participation in volunteer service plays a major role in enhancing youth development. For youth volunteers, such participation can help achieve self enrichment, realization of potentials and helping others. To help young people to combat undue influence that cause them to become addicted to drugs or gambling activities, we propose to enhance the engagement of our youths in volunteer service. This is in response to the community's concern that Government should attach greater attention to engaging young people in activities conducive to developing self discipline and responsibility. In particular, such engagement can help our youths to -

- (a) develop their interpersonal/social and communication skills, such as learning to respect and understand people of different backgrounds, to be more willing to listen to others, motivating others and dealing with difficult situations;
- (b) develop leadership through a process of empowerment;
- (c) foster a positive self-image and build up their identity through volunteer experience;
- (d) broaden their perspective and improve their competitiveness in the job market; and
- (e) nurture civic awareness and positive values and motivate their sense of responsibility to become caring and responsible individuals.

5. In collaboration with our partner organizations, a wide variety of programmes dedicated to pro-actively enhancing participation in volunteer work by youths will be initiated. These programmes aim to meet changing community needs and in particular the needs of the service recipients. These programmes include -

- (a) Self enrichment programmes to enhance leadership and other competence among the participating youth volunteers, and to nurture their healthy personality and good citizenship, e.g. training programmes for leaders of volunteer service teams;
- (b) Community inclusion programmes to foster community care and neighbourhood support, as well as to nurture the youths' sense of helping others, e.g. visits to elderly homes and district clean-up programmes;
- (c) Programmes to nurture artistic talents through engaging young volunteers in the organizing of arts related activities, in order to heighten their interest in volunteer work and in the arts, e.g. cultural outreaching activities;
- (d) Programmes to enable youths to gain international exposure, e.g. participation in conferences overseas to gain an international perspective of volunteerism, and experience sharing with overseas volunteer organizations; and
- (e) Programmes to allow our young people to reach out beyond the local community and make contributions to the Motherland, e.g. volunteer work in Sichuan or other areas in the Mainland to bring warmth and support to the local youths, elderly and the disabled.

Collaboration with COY

6. The proposal of promoting youth development through volunteer service was discussed by COY at its meeting on 3 June 2009. Members of COY agreed in principle to initiate programmes to promote youth development through engaging youngsters in volunteer work. In particular, COY plans to partner with the youth uniformed groups, the Agency for Volunteer Service (AVS) and the Hong Kong Volunteers Association in launching volunteer programmes and activities.

7. The youth uniformed groups¹ are committed to promoting youth development and their contributions are widely recognized by the community. With their extensive network and membership, it is considered that a spectrum of multi-faceted volunteer programmes and activities will be brought about for the benefits of both young people and the less-privileged groups in need of such services. The COY will invite the uniformed groups to deliberate and work out youth volunteer programmes and activities.

8. COY also plans to partner with AVS which is dedicated to the promotion and development of volunteer service for those in need and for the well-being of society by encouraging, mobilizing, training and facilitating individuals and groups to contribute value added volunteer services. With its extensive experience on promoting volunteer service, AVS will enable participants to acquire relevant experience and widen their exposure which can in turn better equip them and enhance their competitiveness.

9. In 2008, over 7 000 applications were received in Hong Kong for voluntary work for the 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games. With the assistance of members from COY and the Committee on Promotion of Civic Education as well as prominent youth groups, some 200 plus volunteers who are proficient in both Chinese and English, with good experience as a volunteer were selected to provide voluntary service for the Games during the period from July to September 2008. As these volunteers have formed a Hong Kong Volunteers Association to promote volunteerism in Hong Kong and have hands-on experience in delivering voluntary work, the COY also plans to approach the Association with a view to collaborating with the Association on volunteer programmes and activities targeted at young people.

Collaboration with HKAPA and HKADC

10. We also have plans to partner with the HKAPA and the HKADC to engage young people in volunteering in arts and cultural activities.

¹ They comprise the Scout Association of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Girl Guides Association, Hong Kong Red Cross, Hong Kong St John Ambulance, Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps, Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps, Hong Kong Adventure Corps, Boys' Brigade Hong Kong, Girls' Brigade Hong Kong, Hong Kong Road Safety Association and Civil Aid Service Cadet Corps.

The two organizations will initiate programmes that reach out to the young people and involve them in the organizing of arts related activities. Through such activities, we hope to heighten their interest in arts and culture and nurture their artistic talents. We also believe that by bringing arts to the young people, we are cultivating a future generation of audience to sustain a vibrant arts scene in Hong Kong.

Way Forward

11. The proposed measures will be launched as soon as details of individual projects are mapped out with the various partner organizations.

Home Affairs Bureau
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