

HONG KONG ARTS ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATION

SUBMISSION TO LEGCO ON CULTURAL SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

15 OCTOBER 2008

The development of arts management expertise is an integral part of the growth of Hong Kong's creative industries, in which WKCD will be an important landmark.

The Arts Administrators' Association welcomes and endorses the Home Affairs Bureau's proposal to undertake a manpower mapping exercise, and the Association stands ready to play an active role in carrying out the study, given the necessary financial assistance to do so. The manpower review is a necessary first step to ascertain the extent of the challenges ahead in preparing for WKCD, not least arising from the brain-drain of management and technical talent to the new casino-based performing venues in Macau which, in the fullness of time, will exceed the combined seating capacity of the entire WKCD development.

Fortunately, there are a number of options available through which Government can facilitate the development of new management talent in the short and medium term:

- a. By funding and facilitating management trainee internships, both locally and internationally;
- b. By providing, through the Arts Development Council, support for smaller arts companies to employ administrative staff, for example in cases where the artistic personnel also cover management matters due to financial constraints;
- c. By providing our flagship arts organisations with additional resources to take on and train junior and middle managers, as well as encouraging them to accept interns;
- d. By encouraging the establishment of training programmes to attract experienced managers from other professions who are passionate about the arts, to become arts managers; and
- e. By Venue Partnership Scheme exposure to venue management matters for the partnering arts companies.

Major companies should be financially encouraged to prepare management talent for the future, including WKCD by drawing up succession plans, training senior management and capable middle managers through study tours, attending short

courses both locally and overseas, arranging short overseas attachments and so on. Schemes should be set up to enable such managers to learn about arts administration in Mainland China through short attachments and /or exchange schemes.

In a broader sense, there is much more to do in developing our cultural software. Preparation for growth of our creative industries must include a revision of education, particularly in the inclusion of arts content in the core primary and secondary school curricula. Exposing children to the arts throughout their school years inspires creativity and the capacity for original thought in all students, whatever their chosen future profession. It inspires career choices among the next generation of arts and creative industries practitioners. Gaining an appreciation for the arts at school also serves an important audience development function. As well as providing time and space in the schools for arts activities, performing groups should be encouraged through funding control mechanisms to undertake greater outreach activities in schools.

Time is of the essence in undertaking all of these preparations if we want WKCD and our other creative industries to be a success – experienced arts managers are not created overnight.