



AGENCY FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

## A Brief Report to IAVE for the years 2004-2006

### Our Mission

Agency for Volunteer Service (AVS), as the Hong Kong Representative of IAVE is the leading non-government organization promoting volunteer service in Hong Kong. It is dedicated to playing a proactive and pivotal role in building a civil society and caring community through the promotion and development of sustainable volunteerism. With over 36 years of history and experience in Hong Kong, it develops partnership with all sectors of the community to provide quality and value-added volunteer service.

### New Initiatives and Notable Achievements

#### 10<sup>th</sup> IAVE Asia-Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference

AVS was privileged to co-organize the Conference with IAVE in Hong Kong from November 7 to 9, 2005. With the theme on “Volunteerism – A Driving Force for Community Building”, the Conference attracted around 500 delegates from 17 countries and territories to share and exchange ideas and practices on volunteering. Inspired by the volunteer leaders worldwide, keynote and plenary speakers, workshop presentations and project visits, delegates and participants were active to learn and built a closer and stronger network among each other. Worth to note, China Mainland for the first time took part in the IAVE Conference with a delegation bigger than ever. Highly commended by the participants, the Conference was regarded as one of the best conference, in terms of its quality, organization, and profile of speakers. The active involvement of around 120 volunteers in organizing the conference was also impressive. In conclusion, the notion that volunteerism being a driving force for community building was fully recognized and a Hong Kong Declaration on Volunteering which lays the future direction and strategy for volunteer development was adopted.

### **Hong Kong Volunteer Award**

On the occasion of the Conference being hosted in Hong Kong for the first time, the Agency established the first territory-wide Hong Kong Volunteer Award with a view to recognize volunteers' contributions and achievements, to raise volunteer profile and social recognition on volunteerism, and to showcase and provide exemplary volunteering models to the society. Five outstanding volunteers, from different background with distinguished contributions to the community were selected by a strong and creditable Judging Panel. Mrs Selina Tsang, Wife of the Chief Executive of HKSAR officiated at the Presentation Ceremony. All the delegates of the 10th IAVE Asia Pacific Regional Conference were invited to join the occasion where the volunteering stories of the awardees were shared.

### **Hong Kong Council of Volunteering**

As a step to further promote the spirit of volunteering and to cultivate boarder participation, AVS joining by leading community organizations which represent a cross section of the community, formed the Hong Kong Council of Volunteering in February 2004. They include religious and educational bodies, professional and business associations, apart from AVS itself. With its inauguration in February 2005, the Council turned a new leaf in volunteerism and provided a platform for exchange and partnership, for policy deliberation and promotion in developing volunteerism in breadth and depth. The Council patronized the IAVE Regional Conference in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Volunteer Award with tremendous support from its member organizations in 2005.

### **We Share to Care Volunteering Campaign**

In celebration of the International Volunteer Day, AVS partnering with business corporations, launched a territory-wide "We Share to Care Volunteering Campaign" to promote citizen volunteering, through gift donation and home visit to the needy and the disadvantaged. Three famous artists were appointed as Honourable Volunteer Ambassadors to publicize the Campaign to stimulate public interest. In the past two years, over 15,000 volunteers and about 410 organizations were directly involved in the Campaign to serve more than 24,000 families in need. As a new model, the Campaign has been effective in mobilizing volunteer participation, in creating opportunities for individuals, families and organizations to serve the needy, and in cultivating a caring spirit all over the community.

### **Tsunami Disaster Relief**

At Christmas 2004, many South Asian countries were devastated by tsunami. AVS apart from mobilizing volunteer effort in support to the numerous fund-raising projects of the relief organizations, lined up with the United Nations Volunteers Programme to recruit qualified professionals to assist in community rebuilding in the affected areas.

### **Hopeful School Volunteer Project**

The Hopeful School Volunteer Project started by the AVS in 1997, provided much needed assistance for the education of the poor and needy children in the Mainland. Financed mainly by corporate and private donations, the Project was supported by a strong team of 320 volunteers who actively participated in the service for over 10,000 students of 25 schools. In the past two years, a Children Education Fund was also set up to provide subsidy to 900 poorer students who otherwise might drop out from schooling.

### **Professional Training Workshops**

Training on various topics for volunteers and volunteer administrators were provided by AVS Training and Development Centre. AVS has been actively engaged in the exchange of volunteering experience and provided consultation and technical support on volunteer management to local volunteer groups, as well as organizations in China Mainland. In 2006, two overseas experts, Ms Judith Miralles, Directors of Judith Miralles and Associates Pty Ltd and Ms Linda Graff, President of Linda Graff and Associates Inc., were invited to conduct a three-day professional training workshops on “Effective Volunteer Management towards Sustainable Volunteering” which were well received by organizations from various sectors.

### **Networking with China Mainland and Overseas**

Exchange with counterparts in greater China and overseas were constant. AVS sent delegates selectively to regional and international volunteer conferences and made presentations. In 2004 -2006, some major events were :

- Voluntary Service Forum hosted by the Research Centre for Welfare and volunteering, Peking University, Beijing, China Mainland -- AVS shared the

- volunteering development in Hong Kong, practice and experience on volunteer service management
- Youth Volunteer Exchange of Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau in Macau SAR -- AVS co-organized the programme to provide a platform for young volunteers from 3 different places to exchange and learn.
  - China Social Work Forum cum Social Welfare Development Conference in Guangzhou in China Mainland -- AVS talked in the workshop on volunteerism.
  - China Community Volunteer Service High Level Forum, in Beijing, China Mainland -- AVS participated as a panel presenter.
  - China Charity Conference in November 2005, in Beijing, China Mainland -- AVS spoke on volunteerism and charity.
  - UNDP Capacity Building Project for NGOs in China Mainland in Beijing -- AVS conducted a five-day volunteer management training programme to China NGOs' representatives which followed by a two-day study trip to Hong Kong.
  - The 18<sup>th</sup> IAVE World Volunteer Conference in Barcelona, Spain -- AVS presented in a mini-plenary and hosted a workshop on AVS contributions in China's volunteerism and its Hopeful School Volunteer Project, respectively.
  - The 10<sup>th</sup> IAVE Asia-Pacific Regional Volunteer Conference hosted in Hong Kong SAR, China Mainland -- AVS co-organized the conference with IAVE.

### Acknowledgement

The above is a brief account of AVS's achievement in the past two years. Despite the challenge of resources and the local-based funding priorities, AVS still managed to take on new initiatives and embark on developing significant global and regional networks. The 10<sup>th</sup> IAVE Asia Pacific Regional Conference was by all means a most important milestone in the history of AVS as well as in the volunteerism of Hong Kong. AVS owed a big thanks to Ms Liz Burns, the IAVE World President and Mrs Tan Chee Koon, IAVE Asia Pacific Chair for their support and guidance, without which the Conference in Hong Kong might not have so successful. It is indeed a great honour and pride of AVS as part of the IAVE family and to serve as IAVE

Representative of Hong Kong.

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