

## Workshop Presentation

**Topic: Mobilization and Management of Volunteers**

### **A Cross-Sector Platform for Promotion of Volunteering – Hong Kong Council of Volunteering**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper is intended to present a new initiative of Agency for Volunteer Service (AVS) (Note 1) in Hong Kong – the establishment of the Hong Kong Council of Volunteering (the Council) – as a platform for different sectors to network, discuss and exchange thoughts and experience on volunteering, and to facilitate development of partnership in promoting volunteerism. The values and concepts will be shared and then its functions and plans on the development of volunteering will also be highlighted. As a starting point, it is anticipated greater synergy among different sectors and organizations will be achieved with the Council as a platform in building a stronger civil society and a caring community in the future.

#### **Values and Concepts**

Volunteering in whatever forms, is a building block of civil society. The love and care in action among people are virtually important social capital contributing to the sustainable development of a cohesive society. It promotes mutual help and trustful relationship among citizens, and building of a caring and harmonious community. In the past, non-profit and non-government organizations or volunteer organizations took the predominant part to cultivate and develop volunteer service. With a growing awareness of volunteerism, it is believed that every sector of the community has a role to play in mobilizing and facilitating the development of volunteer service in order to address the challenges nowadays. The International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001 has particularly built such momentum for strengthened volunteer networks in lifting volunteerism locally and globally. Somewhat as a follow up to the IYV Steering Committee, and in recognition of the need for concerted efforts, initiated by Agency for Volunteer Service, the Hong Kong Council of Volunteering was formed with 13 organizations (note 2) from various professions, business, religious bodies and social service in Hong Kong, joining together to focus on the agenda of volunteerism locally and internationally.

#### **Mission and Objectives of the Council**

Hong Kong is long and well known as an international trade and financial centre in Asia. In terms of volunteerism, there has witnessed an increasing recognition of its

value and strengthened citizen involvement in volunteering. As demonstrated in the case of combating the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and supporting the tsunami stricken neighbouring countries in South Asia at Christmas last year, volunteers in Hong Kong are most willing and eager to offer their help in times of need. They come from all walks of life and with different talents and skills.

To tap volunteer resources more effectively and to further reinforce the development of volunteerism in Hong Kong, it is important to consider strategically measures to involve and to partner with organizations from different sectors to facilitate broader and greater participation of volunteers, as well as the better and fuller use of their talents and expertise in services to meet the changing needs of the community.

The Council is hence established to stage a joint-associations platform at which ideas can be exchanged, policies be deliberated, projects be conceived and action can be planned and followed through by the Council as a whole or by joint venture of individual member organizations. AVS provides the administrative and secretariat support and, as part of its mission, partners with other Council members to mobilize or facilitate volunteer actions on various causes.

The objectives of the Council are deliberately as follows:

1. To advise on the promotion and development in Hong Kong
2. To consider measures conducive to a favourable environment of volunteering
3. To review the international development of volunteering and Hong Kong's participation in such development

### **Functions in pursuit of Volunteerism**

The Council establishes as a network for exchange and mutual support on matters with regard to volunteering, to facilitate promotion of volunteering within member organizations and sectors, and/or partnership with other member organizations. This framework is certainly beneficial to developing volunteerism in a systematic way and with the broadest perspective.

It is worth to mention that in AVS various volunteer recruitment drives and service campaigns, member organizations of the Council were instrumental to support and generate greater coverage and volunteer participation. The International Volunteer Day (IVD) Service Day last year and the past fund-raising events of AVS including Flag Day were successful examples of the partnership and collaboration of Council members.

The Council has already taken immediate steps to advance its cause after its inauguration in February 2005. It serves as the patron to support the two most significant volunteer events in Hong Kong in the year - the Hong Kong Volunteer Award and this regional Conference. The former launched for the first time in Hong Kong is aimed to enhance public recognition of the achievement of volunteerism, to raise the volunteer profile with a view to further encourage and honour volunteering in the community. As for this regional Conference hosted by AVS, the Council not merely serves as patron, but its members also take part in the planning and

organization.

The Council, with AVS's operation backup, has also worked with individual professional bodies to set up a Professional Volunteer Service Accreditation and Recognition Programme (Note 3). The Programme will recognize the volunteer services of the professionals for his own profession and to the community so as to encourage their further participation of the profession and involvement in community affairs. The Hong Kong Dental Association, a founding member of this Programme, has taken the lead to implement the Programme. Its details will be presented by Dr Tony Fok in the workshop under the theme of Volunteering of Professionals (Workshop II- 4).

### **Conclusion**

It is envisaged that the Council will be of greater prominence to push forward volunteerism in all sectors of the community. "Volunteering makes a difference", we look forward to having such valuable component of social capital continue to grow and glow and eventually become the way of life in our vibrant and robust Society.

### **END**

#### Note 1

Agency for Volunteer Service (AVS), established in 1970 in Hong Kong, is a non profit organization dedicated to playing a proactive and pivotal role in building a civil society and caring community through the promotion and development of sustainable volunteerism. It develops partnership with all sectors of the community to mobilize and facilitate individuals, groups and organizations to provide value added and quality volunteers. It is the HKSAR Representative of International Association for Volunteer Effort and a cooperating organization of United Nations Volunteers.

#### Note 2

Members of Hong Kong Council of Volunteering:

Agency for Volunteer Service

Association of Hong Kong Nursing Staff

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong

Committee on Home-School Cooperation

The Hong Kong Dental Association

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

The Hong Kong Medical Association

Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants

International Chamber of Commerce – Hong Kong, China

The Law Society of Hong Kong

Professor Kuan Hsin-Chi

### Note 3

The Professional Volunteers Accreditation and Recognition provides a framework involving the Council of Hong Kong of Volunteering (HKCOV), Agency for Volunteer Service (AVS) and the professional body adopting the programme with the objectives:

- 1) To underline and promote the value of volunteering in the professional field and in the community
- 2) To facilitate professional bodies to develop volunteering among their respective membership, and
- 3) To recognize professional volunteers for contributing professional knowledge and skills for the community

Role of professional Body – to set up a scheme by which details of volunteering of individual member volunteers are recorded, verified and endorsed

Role of HKCOV – to accept those volunteers and issue certificate of accreditation co-signed by HKCOV, AVS and the professional body

Role of AVS – to provide secretariat support to HKCOV and consultancy to professional body in setting up and running the scheme

Appropriate certificate of accreditation will be given to accepted volunteers in respect of their level of service required for the community and for its own profession