



香港中華基督教青年會

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

機構傳訊及市場拓展科  
Corporate Communications & Marketing Section

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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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**Over Half of Hong Kong's Youth Want to Volunteer but Lack the Time**  
*Chinese YMCA announces results of a cross-strait, four-region study of volunteering,*  
*which also reveals that one-off volunteering is the new trend*

Today, 5 December, is International Volunteer Day, initiated by the UN General Assembly and observed around the world since 1985. Recently, Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong collaborated with the Youth Services Organisation of Guangzhou, Taiwan and Macau to conduct a survey of the current state of volunteering in these four regions. Aiming to better understand how young people view volunteering and to help formulate future strategies, the survey found increases in the number of young people participating in volunteer services, but also discovered that the average period of service tended to be short. Some respondents also claimed that their enthusiasm for volunteering did not last long. These findings reflect a general feeling of ambivalence among young people towards volunteering as well as a trend towards one-off volunteering or short-term volunteer engagements.

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, the Guangzhou Research Institute on Youth in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau, the Young Men's Christian Association of Macau and the Teacher's Chang Foundation jointly conducted this survey in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan between March and September 2016. The survey exclusively engaged young people, with the age group of the respondents being 15 to 30 years old. A total of 2,807 people responded to the survey, and the findings highlighted the respondents' preferences for volunteering and the various reasons for their withdrawal from volunteering.

The most frequently mentioned types of work undertaken by young volunteers in Hong Kong, Macau and Guangzhou were home visits, fundraising and event planning; while for young people in Taiwan, the most frequently mentioned types of work were environmental conservation and tutoring. The preferences of respondents in terms of volunteering services varied widely by region. The most preferred types of services in Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan respectively were environmental conservation (43.9%), event planning (35.2%), home visits (47.2%) and tutoring (37.8%).

The main reason cited by young people for volunteering was 'helping others', and helped them discover their personal strengths. In the survey, most of the respondents revealing that volunteering offered them life-changing experiences, broadened their perspectives on problems or dilemmas in their lives. These findings indicate that the engagement of volunteers across the four regions is purely voluntary and driven by a desire to help others



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and themselves, it also indicate that young people have expectations of the various volunteer services they perform.

According to research conducted by the Charities Aid Foundation, there has been a growing worldwide trend towards volunteer registration. However, according to our survey, approximately 40 per cent of respondents had been volunteering for less than one year – only less than 10 per cent had been volunteering for over seven years. The findings also reflected that the biggest challenges to volunteering were identified as a ‘lack of free time’ (53.4%-67.0%) and a need for ‘long-term engagement’ (37.6%-51.1%). Some respondents also claimed that volunteering was only possible when ‘they were available’ and it appeared that many lacked the perseverance and enthusiasm to devote time to regular volunteering.

Factors that influenced consistency and continuity in volunteering included ‘insufficient respect for volunteers and a lack of understanding from society’ (27.8%-39.1%), ‘insufficient support from the host organization’ (27.3%-48.3%) and a ‘lack of information about volunteer programmes’ (30.1%-47.5%).

Overall, the survey found that young people these days agree with the importance of volunteer work, and believe that volunteering experience is rewarding in terms of their future careers. However, the majority of respondents tended to expect a shorter service period, such as one-off volunteering or short-term engagements. The respondents suggested that organisations offering volunteering opportunities with shorter service terms would cater to the general trend and avoid resistance to volunteering. Increasing opportunities for young people to allow them to better plan their volunteering activities, encouraging continuous participation and enhancing publicity efforts were other measures that were recommended.

At the press conference, Wallace, a fresh graduate who is new to the workforce, recalled his experiences with volunteering after a friend invited him to take part. He spoke about his volunteer experiences, analysed the mentality of young people towards volunteering and their reasons for resistance, and finally explained how volunteering changed his perspective, managing to create many professional benefits for him.

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong has been running our Volunteer Award Scheme since the 1990s. The scheme features a scoring system which encourages members of the community to get involved in volunteering through awards and recognition, ultimately helping to boost young people’s sense of belonging to the community. In 2015-2016, the registration of volunteer was over fifteen thousand. The scheme will soon be renamed ‘YM Volunteer’ and adapted to cater to the current volunteer participation trends, and will be specifically designed to help



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motivate newcomers and those who are unable to commit to regular volunteer activities. 'YM Volunteer' will also feature new awards like the 'Novice Volunteer Service Award' and the 'Outstanding Volunteer Group Award'. The Association will begin coordinating our volunteer services in the hopes of attracting more young people into voluntary services to promote their holistic development.

Images will be uploaded at 6pm on 5 December 2016. Members of the media are welcome to download these images for publication here: <http://bit.ly/2fe8vrQ>

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### **About Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong**

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong is a Christian service organisation based in Hong Kong and part of the global YMCA movement. The Association is committed to building a civil and compassionate Hong Kong through uniting people with the same spirit to extend the Kingdom of God; fostering youth leadership to help them shoulder social responsibility with keen concern for the motherland and the world; and promoting multiple service programmes based on holistic personal growth, commitment to the underprivileged and reconciliation extending from self to society. ([www.ymca.org.hk](http://www.ymca.org.hk))

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