

# THE YOUNG REP•RTER magazine

January 2016

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Limiting the working hours has  
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Free tuition services offered to  
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## Letter from the Editor

'Harmony' has been a buzzword in local and Chinese politics in the past few years as used and seen everywhere from official statements, liberal studies textbooks to mockery internet comments. 'River crab' (pronounced He Xie in Mandarin) became a pun in China referring to the internet censorship where online contents are monitored and often deleted in the name of making the online community more harmonious. This unfortunately put a negative connotation to a supposedly favourable word.

In this issue, we go back to the true meaning of harmony - stories of people attempting to improve the lives of others in the society. From young people offering children free tutorial classes to how dogs and

puppy further assure us that they are human's bestfriends.

Yet we also look at the not so harmonious side of Hong Kong where hosts more than 320,000 foreign domestic helpers. They in 2013 make up 4.5 per cent of Hong Kong population. The population might have grown yet their rights are still neglected and forgotten.

This is the last issue published by the class of 2016 editorial board. Time has been tough but the experience is priceless. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the editorial board for their effort in putting together each and every issue and as outgoing editor I wish the next board a successful year of publishing. Thank you for your support.

**Crystal Tse**  
Editor

# THE YOUNG REPORTER magazine

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Previous issue explores how the closure of book stores due to high rents will mark an end to local reading culture.





SOCIETY

## School sites forgotten

*While cross-border pupils scramble for school places in the north, some classrooms there have been empty for decades*

學 校 重 地  
閒 人 免 進

Every day before 6 am, more than 25,000 primary school kids start their day by marching through the still-asleep Shenzhen city to its border with Hong Kong, where they take school buses heading towards different parts of the city, from North District to Lan Tau in the south.

No one wants to take a two-hour journey twice a day, yet they have to. Only 2,600 so-called cross-border students can go to school in the nearby North District due to the limited places there.

Some students could have got more sleep. Three vacant school premises in North District have a combined capacity of thousands of pupils, but the classrooms and blackboards have been left idle, for more than a decade.

A total of 234 school sites in Hong Kong were not being utilised, the longest one for 35 years, according to a recent report released by the Audit Commission. The revelation has irritated the community, with residents demanding better urban planning in the land-scarce city.









“I doubt if the government has ever taken the vacant schools seriously,” said Lam Cheuk-ting, a newly elected district councilor in the North District.

Mr Lam said he suggested reopening the schools two years ago, but the Education Bureau rejected the request. He said the government was concerned that the schools have to be shut down again if the student number decreases.

According to the audit report, 108 primary schools were closed in 2003 and 2004 as they were regarded “under-utilised”, each having fewer than 23 first grades enrolled and a unit cost that was 1.5 times the average.

In 2003, the Legislative Council Panel on Education estimated the population aged between 6 and 11 would see a 17 per cent drop from 2002 to 2010. As the unit cost of maintaining some schools was as high as \$353,225 per year, the panel recommended the surplus ones be shut down.

But they failed to foresee an overwhelming volume of students from Shenzhen, whose number soared from 620 in 2001 to more than 35,000 in 2011. Most of them were born in Hong Kong to mainland parents, who believe their children can receive better education in the Special Administrative Region.

Although the restriction on cross-border study

has been tightened since 2013, more than 20,000 students now come in and out of the city every day.

Tony Tse Wai-chuen, legislator representing the urban-planning constituency, said the loose cooperation between different government departments have caused the land-waste problem.

“Many responsible departments are working in their own ways with little knowledge of what others are doing,” Mr Tse said in a phone interview. “The Education Bureau did not take up the leading role in the whole process of dealing with the vacant school premises.”

According to the audit report, the Infrastructure and Regional Support Division of the Education Bureau is in charge of exercising assessment, conducting renovation and bidding funds for the vacant schools, while the Planning Department serves as central clearing house to consider suitable alternative uses of the sites.

The Audit Commission noted that the Education Bureau fails to monitor the sites adequately, and locals have been complaining about the poor hygienic conditions and unauthorised entries into the school sites.

“The Education Bureau is reviewing the mechanism and will liaise with the Lands Department to enhance the property management of Vacant School Premises,” said Ng Kar-chai, Information Officer





of the Education Bureau, in an email to the Young Reporter.

Ms Ng said in the email that there is room for improvement regarding the identification, allocation and management of the unused schools.

Chan Siu-hung, former principal of the Wai Chow Public School in Sheung Shui, said the vacancy is a result of the government's failure in planning and acting early.

"For those vacant schools built decades ago, the buildings have already collapsed due to lack of maintenance," said Mr Chan, who was a teacher for 40 years before retirement. "How can we reuse them now?"

Many other districts are having the same trouble: there are too many students, but the abandoned schools cannot be put into use due to the poor condition of the buildings and confusion over the land ownership.

"If they had saved for the rainy day, being well-prepared for the cross-border students in terms of education, housing, medical care and social benefit, there would not be such problem in allocating the resources," Mr Chan said.

Mr Chan said students who have to travel from north to south for school are suffering most from the inefficient land use.

"For those who have got a seat in their ideal school, they of course can stay silent," Mr Chan said. "The problem is no one speaks for the cross-border students who have to bear the two-hour journey. They are also Hong Kong residents."

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“For those who have got a seat in their ideal school, they of course can stay silent,” Mr Chan said. “The problem is no one speaks for the cross-border students who have to bear the two-hour journey. They are also Hong Kong residents.”

The chain has opened up its second store in the city. The shop in Tsim Sha Tsui offers other services besides book selling, including light meals, shoes and accessories.

“It’s just a trend. Bookstore chains with a diverse business model always find it easier to survive,” said Mr Wong.

“Many successful small bookstores in Taiwan do well in creating a reading ambience,” Mr Wong said. “They sometimes focus more on selling other products, such as coffee and boutique items.”

Li Zhuohui, who frequently visits Eslite Bookstore, said she preferred reading in this kind of all-in-one shop. The setting, she said, gives her incentive to purchase.

“Eslite is able to incorporate the café and within the bookstore, therefore it offers a good reading environment. The setting doesn’t seem to be very commercial oriented,” she said.

Daniel Lee Tak-ling, one of the three owners of the Hong Kong Reader Bookstore, said that Eslite’s business model, shared by many Taiwanese independent bookstores, makes it possible to develop the bookstore business and a reading culture.

His bookstore emphasises on academic reading materials in Hong Kong studies and targets educated readers.

“Snacks and coffee just offer comfort in reading but should not make up the bulk of the profit,” he said. “Every bookstore just needs to have its own style.”

“Most people nowadays only visit bookstore chains to buy best-sellers but they don’t realise the fun in finding some books that are no longer published or found only in public libraries.”

Mr Lee formed a partnership with two university schoolmates in 2007 with a mission to redeem the eroding academic prosperity and culture in the city, coined by its citizens as “culture dessert”.

He said cultural promotion was closely related to economic and political issues. But he felt that the Taiwanese bookstore business model is unsuitable for Hong Kong.

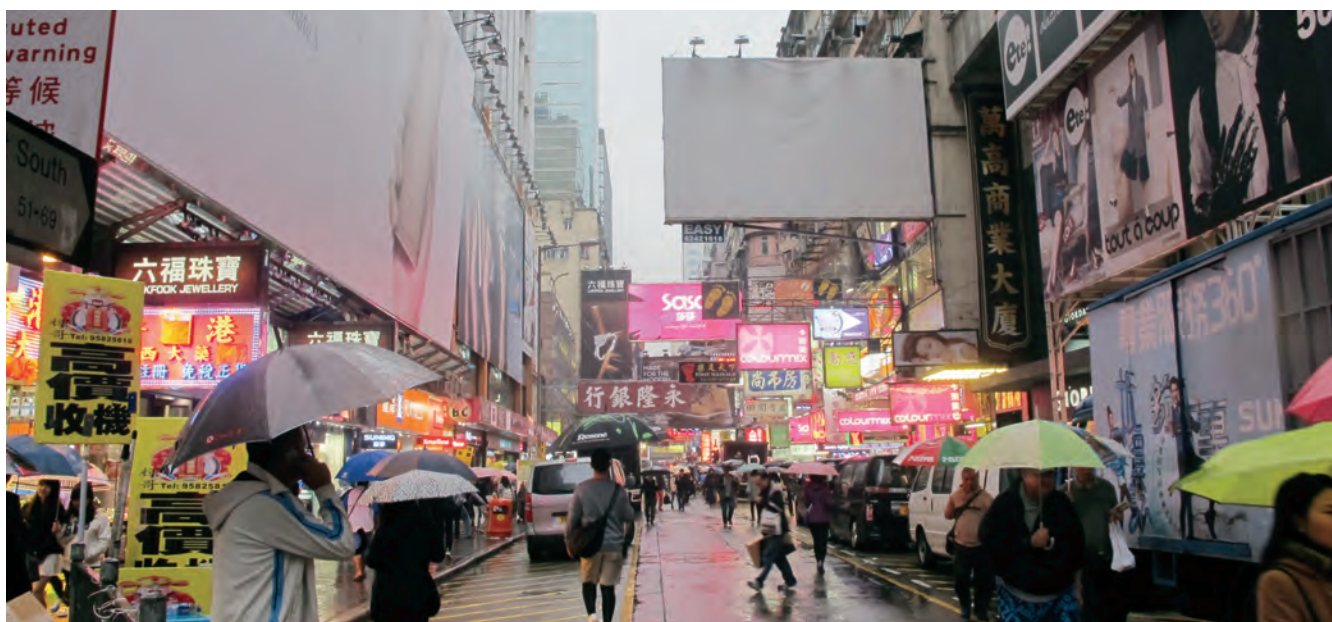
“After all, Taiwan is a democratic society, which welcomes thoughts and culture.”

“The perception in Taiwan is different. They value cultural development and believe that it can also improve the economy.”

## POLITICS

# *“Bless Hong Kong” is not a blessing*

A campaign to promote cohesiveness is a PR show, not a solution to social conflicts, government critics say



Last year a local church leader, Law Pei-kun, took dozens of elderly people and families out for lunch to a nice Chinese restaurant. They also had an outing in an open-topped bus called “Bless HK.” Everyone enjoyed the outings and the government paid for everything.

The events were part of the Bless Hong Kong campaign initiated by the government in 2014 to “make Hong Kong a more cohesive society.” Although the large-scale free activities attract large numbers of individuals and social groups annually, there are those who question the roles of Bless Hong Kong in solving social problems and political disputes.

“The campaign does, to certain extent, make the neighbourhood more connected,” says Ms Law, the person in charge of the Login Club for New Arrivals at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong. “But as the events are one-off, their effects are really short-term.”

The government’s efforts to create harmony through such campaigns did not stop after last year’s Umbrella Movement protests. In November, Chief Secretary Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngo announced the kickoff of the Appreciate Hong Kong Campaign.

This year the government is offering free visits to local museums, a public open day at a disciplinary force’s training school and a free Hong Kong Disneyland visit for selected students sponsored by the amusement park.

Ms Law says the low cost encourages many organisations to take members to the events.

“The elderly and the underprivileged families were happy to be invited for a free, tasty lunch. We paid nothing. All we needed to do was to fill in the application forms.”



**“This campaign is very much like to the Hong Kong Festival held in late 60s, through which the Hong Kong-British government tried to restore Hongkongers’ confidence after the left wing riots in the 1967. ”**

**Dr. Benson Wong Wai-Kwok**  
**Assistant Professor of Government and International Studies, Hong Kong Baptist University**



The campaigns held in 2013 and 2014 -- Hong Kong Our Home, and Bless Hong Kong -- cost the taxpayers a total of six million dollars.

Benson Wong-Wai-kwok, assistant professor of Government and International Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University, says the government’s trying to restore order in society through the Appreciate Hong Kong campaign.

“This campaign is very similar to the Hong Kong Festival held in late Sixties, through which the British-Hong Kong government tried to restore Hongkongers’ confidence in the government after the left-wing riots in 1967,” Dr Wong says.

But he says it’s a waste to spend taxpayers’ money on campaigns like Appreciate Hong Kong.

Dr Wong says that with Hong Kong people facing extreme pressures in their daily lives, government should take concrete measures -- like tax rebates -- to give them some relief.

But pro-government politicians argue that these benefit the community, especially the underprivileged.

Legislator Priscilla Leung Mei-fun says the events spread a sense of caring and happiness among the neighborhoods, although the quality of the events could be improved. She took part in the Bless Hong Kong campaign in 2014 and says people should appreciate the city’s good qualities.

“The low-tax policy and the public health system are among the good qualities of Hong Kong that people of our generation very much appreciate,” she says.



By **Kary Hsu**  
 Edited by **Joanne Lee**

*The Login Club for New Arrivals of Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong (ELCHK) joins the open-top bus ride in last year’s Bless Hong Kong campaign. Photo: ELCHK*

## BUSINESS

# Going Organic

Locally grown organic vegetables for health-conscious city shoppers

Organic fruit and vegetables are supposed to be pesticide free and have higher nutritional values. However, consuming these products is not popular in Hong Kong. According to the report of Hong Kong Organic Research Centre, licensed organic food only makes up five per cent of all vegetables in local wet markets in 2014. Some local farmers are now setting up shop in urban Hong Kong, making it easier for health conscious shoppers to get their hands on fresh and safe produce.

At the farmers' market at Star Ferry Central Pier Seven every Sunday, local farmers offer all kinds of organic certified fruit and vegetables. The market is organized by Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. They signed an agreement with Star Ferry Company to use the venue. The farmers benefit from the low cost rent and can, therefore sell their products at affordable prices.

"The farmers pay \$200 per month for a booth," said Queenie Shum, spokeswoman for Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden. Kadoorie provides shelter, tables and chairs and the farmers share the cost of transport.

"The farmers would club together to rent a van to bring their vegetables from the New Territories," Ms Shum said.

The organisers check that the produce is organic certified when the farmers apply to join the market. They have been doing so since 2007 as a way of promoting local farms.

"We support locally grown crop and provide a platform for the public to get in touch with local farmers," said Ms Shum.

Wong Kim-so started working on his farm in Yuen Long after retirement. He said the advantage of the farmers market in

Central Pier is that lots of shoppers walk through the area. That helps to promote and introduce local organic produce to city dwellers.

"Also, the farmers' market here in Central would not be affected by the weather, unlike some unsheltered markets," said Mr Wong.

Mr. Wong often gets together with three or four farmers to book a van to come to Central from Yuen Long. Although it costs him \$300 every trip, he still thinks that joining the Central farmers' market is a good choice for local organic farmers.

"We cannot manage online orders," said Mr Wong. "We cannot deliver to every single customer."

Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden can afford to run the market, he said, because they are backed by the Kadoorie



Vendors display organic certification at the farmers' market.





*Most frequent customers come in the morning.*

Foundation. Without support, Mr Wong believed it would be difficult to get the farmers together.

Ms Chee, the representative of Happy Green Farm from Ping Che said that the farm has been renting for a booth at the market for more than 10 years. She said that the main problem with organic farming in Hong Kong is that there is no where to sell their produce.

“The Vegetable Marketing Organization would only offer low prices for our organic crop,” said Ms Chee.

But at the Central market, farmers can afford the rent and make a decent profit by selling directly to customers, bypassing cumbersome government procedures.

“We can directly talk to our customers and offer them our best prices and we can control the prices ourselves,” she said.

The organic farms are also offering online orders and market days at local universities. But the farmers’ market is where they make much of their profit. Unlike most other markets, farmers there try to introduce new crops to their customers. Shoppers say the farmers’ market has brought the countryside to the urban areas.

“People in the city have very tense lives and this has brought local farms closer to the city,” said Mr Ngai, who bought some organic ginger from one of the booths.

“Hong Kong people know the advantages of consuming organic food,” Ms Shum said, “and we believe the farmers’ market will become more and more popular.”



*Regular working hours make shopping easier.*



## SOCIETY

# No Standard Working Hours for Maids

Limiting the working hours of domestic helpers has its pros and cons, say employers and a live-in maid

At the crack of dawn, domestic helper Jennifer Hinalan gets up to vacuum the house when most people are still tucked in their beds. Ms Hinalan, who works up to 15 hours a day, wakes up at 6 a.m. and goes to bed at 9 p.m.. Such a schedule is common among foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

The proposed Standard Working Hours Scheme (SWHS) though, is unlikely to offer any relief. The scheme, set to be introduced next year, will regulate working hours and overtime pay. But domestic helpers will not be covered.

According to the scheme, once a worker has completed the standard number of hours, he or she should stop working. It also introduces overtime pay that

compensates employees at a premium rate. However, the Standard Working Hours Committee has yet to include domestic helpers in its discussion or surveys, according to the committee's website.

"The Standard Working Hours Committee is further exploring the directions of a working hours policy applicable to Hong Kong," said Cathy Lui, spokeswoman for the Standard Working Hours Committee, in response to covering live-in domestic workers.

In a statement, the Hong Kong Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions, has demanded the committee to include live-in domestic helpers in its deliberation for SWHS.

"The consultation document says that certain countries exclude domestic workers in their SWH regulations," the statement says. "The lack of regulation on working hours of live-in domestic workers would send the wrong message to employers that they can order their helpers to work 24-hours a day." "The selective information by the committee suggests that domestic workers' cannot have SWH protection," statement says.

Canada includes live-in maids in their labour laws and has set the standard hours of work at eight hours per day and 40 hours per week.

If Hong Kong is to follow suit, Ms Hinalan, who works more than 10 hours a



Domestic workers often spend their day off with their friends in public areas.





day, would receive overtime pay. But she doesn't want to see that happen because she is worried about losing her job.

"(My employer) may have to pay me a lot more, so she might not want me anymore," she said. "No job, no money."

According to Immigration Department figures, there were 320,988 live-in maids working in Hong Kong in 2013. That's 4.5 per cent of Hong Kong's population then.

Sue Zhao Yaqin, who employs two maids at her home, said overtime pay should not be applied to domestic workers as they do not have to pay rent and other living expenses.

"Live-in expenses paid by employers are sufficient to compensate for (domestic workers') relatively low salary," Ms Zhao

said. The current minimum monthly salary for a live-in maid is \$4,210.

Ms Zhao said she will stop hiring domestic helpers if they are included in the SWHS.

Some employers though, want the scheme to cover their live-in maids, but wonder how the hours should be calculated.

"It is hard to keep track of when my maid is actually working," said employer Carol Tang Wai-fun. She said she will keep her maid even if the scheme covers domestic helpers.

Ms Tang said although her maid works for more than 12 hours per day, she takes breaks in between and it would be impossible to calculate her working

hours accurately.

"Maids and their employers would have disagreement on the number of hours worked, so disputes may arise," Ms Tang said.

The Standard Working Hours Committee will submit its report to the government in the first quarter of next year.

By **Jonathan Chan**  
Edited by **Jackson Ho**

## PEOPLE

## Spreading Love with Free Tutorial Classes

Believing that everyone should have equal opportunities to education, Mr Leung offers free tuition services to underprivileged children

**“Knowledge is the key for underprivileged children to break the cycle of generational poverty,”**

**Leung Kai-yip, founder of “On Fire”**

Leung Ka-yip



Valuing academic achievements, attending after-school tutorial classes have become a common and popular phenomenon among students in Hong Kong.

According to a research conducted in 2012 by Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, more than 70 per cent of primary school students and 61 per cent of secondary school students had private tuition.

But not all households can afford tuition fees.

Leung Kai-yip, 34, is the founder of “On Fire”, a volunteer tutors group. Having grown up in a low-income family, Mr Leung could not pay for tuition classes even when he had poor school results.

Inspired by his unfortunate childhood and a movie titled “Pay it Forward”, Mr. Leung wanted to spread his love and influence others. He decided to start a project to help deprived students learn better.

“I believe knowledge is the key for underprivileged children to break the cycle of generational poverty and they deserve better,” he said.

But starting the voluntary tuition group was tough.

At the beginning, Mr Leung had difficulties finding voluntary tutors and a place for classes. He also had trouble reaching out to students in need through the group’s Facebook page.

He eventually came up with a new idea to approach parents near wet markets in different districts. At the same time, he found people willing to spare time for underprivileged students. Some were even professionals.

In offering free tutorial classes, Mr Leung stated certain criteria in the selection of students. For example, those who received School Textbook Assistance, attended project briefing sessions and accepted home visits. On top of these, he

emphasized the importance of students being enthusiastic in learning.

At this moment, “On Fire” relies on more than 100 volunteers and offers weekly tutorial classes at 25 locations across the city. Some classes take place in legislative or district councilors’ regional offices and church premises on a rent-free basis.

Melody Chan, a 20-year-old student from Chinese University of Hong Kong, is one of the Math tutors. She joined the tuition group in 2013 after learning about the project on a poster.

Supported by a financially able family, she was encouraged to become a voluntary tutor and help students in need.

“Some students may find it difficult to catch up with the pace of learning at school and they need tutorial classes,” she



said. "I want to use my spare time to be a volunteer, and I believe this project helps children from underprivileged families learn better."

She wished to help her students get into university, in order to enhance their competitiveness.

Ms Chan said poverty was a serious problem in Hong Kong and many students cannot afford expensive tutorial classes, but they should enjoy equal opportunities in developing their interests in learning.

Mr Leung said short-term material aide might not be the best form of help for low-income families. What they need,

he believed, is long-term commitment.

"I prefer volunteers with long-term commitment because they can build trust and relationship with the students. More importantly, the students can feel that we care about them and they will be more willing to learn," he said.

"When students graduate from primary school, the group would still hold monthly gatherings and activities even if they no longer receive tuition lessons," he said.

Mr Leung planned to spend more time on logistical work. He also wished to launch a Summer internship project

for secondary six students, in order to equip them with leadership skills so they can run the project in future.

By **Jonathan Chan**  
Edited by **Jane Cheung**

*Young volunteers show their support for the project.*







## PEOPLE

## The Mother-and-Son Relationship

Seeing-eye dog is no ordinary pet

“Sit, Yahoo!”

Yahoo, a young dog, immediately obeys.

Without doubt, there's mutual trust between Yahoo and (his/her) owner, Edith Lee Yuen-yan.

Ms Lee is a cadet trainer and puppy walker at the Hong Kong Seeing Eye Dog Service (HKSEDS), as well as a mother of two daughters.

She volunteered to be a “Puppy Walker”. “I would say my two daughters influenced me to make this decision,” she says.

Yahoo, a 2-year-old male Labrador, was adopted by Lee in 2013. “I spend most of my time taking care

of Yahoo. It is my responsibility to do so,” Lee says. The cadet trainer takes the role of a mother and has to shoulder heavy responsibilities and sometimes sacrifice.

As a cadet trainer, Ms Lee provides Yahoo with daily socialization-training. “Yahoo should be able to acquire the skills to overcome obstacles, in order to be qualified as a seeing-eye dog,” she says.

Although she understood that Yahoo would not stay with her for good, an air of melancholy surrounds Ms Lee when she's asked about Yahoo's future placement. But she says visually impaired people need Yahoo's presence more than anyone else would.

Upon the completion of training, seeing-eye dogs are paired with visually impaired users. “The ‘eyes of the blind’ were born to serve the community. It's their mission. They are not house pets,” she says.

Seeing-eye dogs will only become someone's house pet when matching fails. If that happens, says Ms Lee, the puppy walker will then keep them as a pet.

Failure in matching seldom happens. David Wong was successfully matched with Hong Kong's first locally trained seeing-eye dog. He experiences a sense of security when his dog navigates him. “I hope the

seeing-eye dog service will become more popular, and bring benefits to more visually impaired users,” he says.

But without sufficient capital and human resources, seeing-eye dog training will develop at a glacial pace.

“We are hunting for families who are willing to commit and to walk seeing-eye dogs as daily training routines,” Ms Lee says. So the selection of a puppy walker is strict, in order to prevent abandonment of the animal.

“The seeing-eye dog service is gradually being recognized in Hong Kong,” she says, “and there are more public places allowing entry.

“I think it is crucial for people to respect the dogs and not take photos of them, as it distracts them from training,” She says. “It is impolite when people take pictures without asking permission.”

Yahoo is clearly a source of happiness for her walker. Ms Lee's beaming, maternal expression when discussing her seeing-eye dog reveals the intimacy and mutual recognition that has developed between them.



*Miss Lee Yuen-yan and the guide dog, Yahoo have a mother and son relationship.*

By **Phoebe Chau**  
Edited by **Kumiko Lau**



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***editor@tyr.hk***

*The Young Reporter  
run by HKBU journalism students since 1969*



## HEALTH &amp; BEAUTY

# Keep an eye on the risks of lash extensions

## The latest beauty trend may do more harm than good

The consumer watchdog is warning buyers of eyelash extensions to think twice about the possible risks before trying the increasingly popular beauty enhancements.

The Consumer Council says the eyelash-extension services offered by some beauty salons are not professional and are largely unregulated.

The council says it received 10 complaints last year of unsatisfactory quality, including some customers who suffered eye infections.

It cites the case of one woman who

experienced pain and blurry vision after four weeks of treatment. An examination revealed that a piece of adhesive had entered her eye and inflamed it.

“Concerns over eyelash extensions include infections, allergies, ocular surface irritation, and lash loss,” says Dr Vishal Jhanji, director of the Refractive Surgery Service at the Chinese University of Hong Kong’s Eye Centre.

And Dr Marcus M. Marcet, clinical assistant professor at the University of Hong Kong’s Department of Ophthalmology, warns that “adhesives used in these products can cause an

allergic reaction, which can damage the eyelid skin. Also, bacteria can potentially grow in the fake lashes, leading to infections.”

Eyelash-extension services have grown in popularity because they help users achieve the look of longer, natural lashes, while reducing the time spent on daily makeup routines.

“I can be lazy at times, when I don’t want to put on any makeup. With eyelash extensions, I can look pretty without any makeup,” says Ms Chloe Shen, a regular user of extensions.

*It takes around 60-120 minutes for a specialist to adhere faux lashes on a customer’s natural ones lash by lash with adhesive.*  
*Photo courtesy of Blanc Beaute Limited*







It takes between an hour to two hours for a specialist to adhere false lashes one-by-one to a customer's natural lashes using adhesive.

Anywhere from 40 to 80 false lashes are glued to each eyelid, with prices ranging from about \$300 to more than \$1,500 for both eyes.

Zoe Wong, area manager of Blanc Beauté Ltd, says the extensions usually last around three to four weeks, depending on care and an individual's lash-growth cycle.

Dr Jhanji says "customers should check the ingredients, especially in the adhesives used for the extensions, before receiving the service."

But the Consumer Council says only a few salons clearly specify the major ingredients in the adhesives used.

One of the reasons, says Noel Chan, the marketing director of Suavis Lash Bar. Is that "at the moment, there is no formal paperwork in Hong Kong to make sure the glues (used by different salons) are up to standard."

She says their salons "have different glues for people with different levels

of sensitivity. The glues can have some ingredients removed to avoid the allergenic effect, but then the durability might decrease.

"There is not enough control in the market, which is why we can see that there are some salons using not-so-quality products that might cause damage to the customers."

Dr Marcet warns that anyone with a pre-existing inflammation of the eyelid, such as blepharitis, should not have eyelash extensions applied. Blepharitis is a common eye condition characterized by chronic inflammation, usually along the eyelashes. He says eyelash regrowth can also be a concern in cases of prolonged use.

People who have undergone eye surgery or have an ongoing eye infection are also not suitable for extensions, says Dr Catherine Chan, a specialist in ophthalmology at the Hong Kong Professional Eye Surgery and Laser Center.

Dr Chan says that at the center, "we look at the thickness and the health of the lash of the individual customer, and choose (false) lashes that the customer's natural lashes can afford.

The false lashes themselves can be an issue. Dr Pauline Po Chun-chan, a specialist in ophthalmology.

"Increased weight on the eyelash, and infection, can damage the lash's follicle, causing regrowth of thinner lashes or loss of lashes.

"Some salons only look at the effect of the treatment and (they) use a really long and thick lash, but then your real lash cannot afford it because it is too heavy."

Dr Marcet says that customers should ascertain that the premises are clean and that the provider is a trained professional. And he says referrals by family members or friends who have had a good experience are useful.

An alternative to having false eyelashes is to apply bimatoprost, a registered drug in Hong Kong. It was developed for treating glaucoma. One of its side effects is promoting lash growth, which has led to its use in cosmetics. Anyone considering this treatment should seek medical advice and inform themselves of the possible risks.



## ART &amp; CULTURE

# Community art revitalises connectedness

Hong Kong needs an overall plan for community art

On the night of November 22, after winding up a 10-day exhibition, a group of people gathered in a studio in old Shanghai Street. They include artists, volunteers and neighbours who were reminiscing about Woofers Ten, the workshop that would no longer be theirs.

Wong Yin-mong, a neighbour working next to Woofers Ten, said she was astounded when she was told of their coming removal. "The products they make are very interesting. Some show the original image of the community, which is unknown to most young people today."

Community art is a revival and representation of a community's culture and history. It embodies communal lifestyles and beliefs, and helps to distinguish among different communities, says Mr Lui Yat-nan, a key member of Woofers Ten.

Unlike other art forms, community art should be deeply rooted in the community, says Dr Leung Mee-ping, an associate professor of visual arts at Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and an expert in community art.

"Artists' group should establish long-term relationships with community residents, and that's what Woofers Ten tried doing", Dr Leung says.

Starting in 2009, Woofers Ten twice bid for and was awarded the running of the community art project at 404 Shanghai Street.

But the Hong Kong Arts Development Council decided to cut the funding

and in July 2013 instead accepted the bid from the Centre for Community Cultural Development.

Dr Leung says community art studios need to enact communal identity and connectedness if they want to thrive in the neighborhood.

"No artists' group wants to rely on government sponsorship for the long run, but it's quite impossible for them to self-sponsor given Hong Kong's soaring rents," he says.

Mr Lui, of Woofers Ten, says the hegemony of developers is hindering the development of community art in Hong Kong. Businesses would rather let art groups do exhibitions in their stores than sponsor low-rent areas for community art projects.

Dr Chew Ming-tek, associate professor of sociology at HKBU says Hong Kong people "are so short-sighted" that capitalists businesses and the government were not willing to pay for something that is seemingly not financially sustainable or for profit.

Many Hong Kong people, especially youth, are still unaware of the role that community art plays in the prosperity of the entire local culture and perceiving it as a low-brow art form.

"The community is where citizens live and interact. Without community, there would be no Hong Kong," says Dr Victor Lai Ming-hoi, also an associate professor of visual arts at HKBU and previously a successful bidder for 404 Shanghai Street.

Dr Lai says that given the speed of urbanization, community art is significant in revitalizing both communal culture and collective memory. All citizens, he says, can be "both creators and participants."

One community art project is trying to engage local residents to try it both ways.

House of To Kwa Wan Stories, a community-art studio sponsored by St. James's Settlement in To Kwa Wan since 2014, is running a community production-line to encourage residents to participate in the creation of art.

To Kwa Wan was formerly a principal light-industry area but, due to the industrial transfer to the mainland, many traditional crafts have been eclipsed. Urban modernization is also marginalizing many existing industries, including hardware and textiles, breaking apart the original community spirit and networks.

Wong Wing-tong, the artist who initiated the studio, arranged an exhibit over the local workshops to show their typical characteristics. "We don't want the traditional crafts to disappear in the face of mass production," he says. "They embody the living attitude and customs of the community."

Under Mr Wong's guidance, local residents have engaged in the production of art works helped by four groups of artists. They collect raw materials from the waste of the area's light industries and use them to produce containers, textiles and notebooks.





*Woofertan's artists are displeased to see the closure of the workshop.*

“Local residents should be the best actors to restore the ecology of the community,” Mr Wong says. “The community nowadays is different from 1970, and without the memory of local relations among the current citizens, the community was only a skeleton that produced loneliness, with no spiritual connection.”

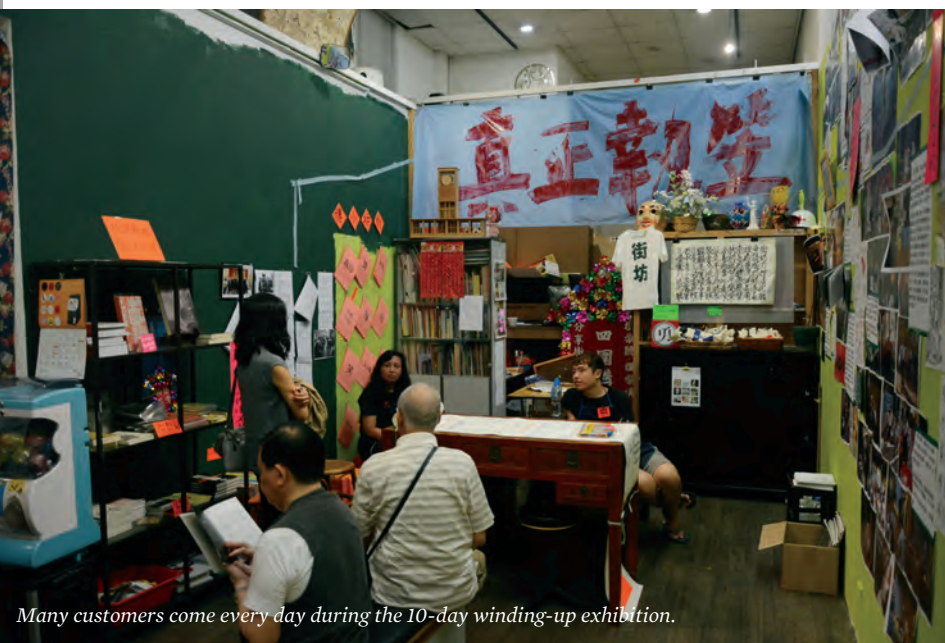
Through such communal production

residents not only enhance their relationships, building up local identity, but also reflect upon their present lifestyle and social norms. In the times of modernity, Mr Wong says residents can also regain some autonomy under the in an era of mass production and consumption.

Dr Lai says it was normal for HKADC to transfer Woofertan's workshop to

another project to make a change. But he says some cultural institutions should be established to organize and integrate creative and cultural industries, in order to deepen the sense of local identity.

He says Hong Kong is not lacking in not passionate and avant-garde artists, but there is a need for overall planning to consolidate the achievements for long-term sustainability. Dr Lai says Hong Kong's layout of community art is diverse, but the overall development is actually narrow and fragmented. “I cannot see any continuity,” he says.



*Many customers come every day during the 10-day winding-up exhibition.*

By **Terrance Zheng**  
Edited by **Thomas Chan**



## INTERNATIONAL

# Food that makes you high

**W**alking down the streets of Amsterdam, you may often run into coffee shops, some with exaggerated graffiti on the outside walls. They are not regular cafés, but an authorized place to sell cannabis, also known as marijuana.

In the worldwide battle against drugs, the Netherlands is an exception — a toleration policy regarding soft drugs and coffee shops, where cannabis is allowed to be sold no more than five grams per day per person.

Cannabis might be considered as villainy. In some countries, but in the Netherlands, cannabis is a common party drug, with 25.7 per cent of people from age 15 to 64 ever used it, slightly higher than the average of Europe.

Apart from being smoked in joints, cannabis has also been used in cooking hundreds of dishes, including cannabis pizza, salad, cake, and soup.

The Stoner's Cookbook is one of the many websites that have detailed instruction and advice on how to effectively use cannabis into making dishes. It has more than 200 recipes of cooking with cannabis.

Matt Gray, the CEO of the Stoner's Cookbook, said eating cannabis has much different effects compared with smoking it. "With edibles, the stoned feeling lasts much longer and takes about 45 minutes to kick in, and the effects can last up to 4 hours".

Matt has been in the edible weed industry for two and a half years. He sees edible weeds as medicine that could help people with needs. "I believe edibles is an opportunity to bring happiness to patients around the world," he said.

He said some carcinogens presented in smoking weed can be avoided by choosing cannabis food instead. "Whether you are

looking for medical benefits or for a tasty meal, cannabis recipes can be enjoyable and beneficial," he said. But he suggests beginners should keep a dose of around 10mg per serving. "You can always have more cannabis, you can't have less. Therefore, it is important to take your time and be patient," he said.

Elise, a 22-year-old local student who tried both smoking joints and eating cannabis brownies, said she preferred edibles. "The feeling was similar but not as intense. I felt sleepy, stoned, and relaxed after an hour," she said.

Elise does not enjoy consume cannabis joints because she has never been a smoker. While trying cannabis edibles wasn't her idea as well, yet, she turned out liking it. "I was not willing to try cannabis food at first, but my boyfriend from England where cannabis is illegal wanted to try cannabis brownie. We made one together and the flavor and feelings turned out to be nice," she said.

Some people like Elise who don't smoke generally choose cannabis dishes, while others may prefer smoking the joints, a quicker and easier way.

Bart is a 42-year-old Dutchman who has been smoking cannabis for almost 30 years. "I am not fond of edibles as the feeling comes slow and it is troublesome to make cannabis dishes. I smoke eight to ten joints every day with 0.3 gram each," he said.

Dr Dirk Jan Moes, a clinical researcher at Leiden University Medical Center, said the main difference between joints and edibles is the time you reach the high. "When you smoke the joints, it immediately goes through your nose and lung, and you will easily reach the highest peak; if consuming edibles, it is much slower but lasts longer," he said.

Despite the relaxed feelings people get from cannabis joints and edibles, both of them have drawbacks on health.

Dr Walter Boiten, a researcher at Leiden Academic Center for Drug Research, said smoking cannabis might cause lung cancer but at the same time, it is easier to control the amount one intakes.

"Consuming cannabis food may cause overdosing, as it takes a long time before you have feelings. It won't happen with smoking cannabis because you can stop immediately when you feel enough," he said.

However, in the Netherlands as elsewhere, drugs can cause nuisance and crime. The government is responding by introducing a new toleration rule on coffee shops in 2013. The policy is aimed at making Dutch coffee shops less attractive to drug users from abroad by forbidding non-residents of the Netherlands to visit coffee shops.

Coffee shops have become smaller and focused on the local market. According to a report in 2011, the total number of coffee shops in the Netherlands has gradually reduced from around 850 in 1999 to 651 at the end of 2011.

Elise has tried smoking and eating cannabis twice so far. She said she would like to try it again.

"It was an interesting experience. I would love to make cannabis brownie again but certainly not too often, as it is not good for health after all," she said.

By **Lindsay Long**  
Edited by **Yanis Chan**





*Frizzled bacon cooked with cannabis oil*



*Curry white bean dip with cannabis*



*Three kinds of cannabis butter*



*Bread with garlic and cannabis sauce*



# The Haunted House

*Developers have their eyes on spooky building for business*



Lights were dimmed, the walls were dilapidated. Big signs were found on the walls threatening residents to destroy their copper pipes. This is the site known in Hong Kong for multiple murders and suicides, the Hoi Hing Building.

Hoi Hing Building is one of the redevelopment projects of Henderson Land Development in Tai Kwok Tsui, there has been an ongoing buy-out of this building since 2008.

“They (the remaining residents) struggle to live every day because of the unbearable living environment the developer created,” said one of the committee members of owners’ corporation in the Hoi Hing Building, Lee, who lived there for 34 years.

After the gruesome murder case of Henry Chau Hoi-leung, who chopped his parents’ head off and later froze the remains in the fridge in 2013, most of the residents have sought for another shelter for their lives. The building was left to rot with less than ten occupancies out of 270 flats.

“Among the ten households that still live in this building, three has yet given up their ownership,” said Lee. “The developer has been destroying the building, for example, cutting the electricity, to force the remaining residents to give up on their ownerships.”

There are five gates to the building from different directions. Lee said one of the locks was deliberately destroyed after the buy-out have taken place. Without locks and guards, the security of this building was further enfeebled. Crimes like rape, arson and robbery were rampant, fear of the Hoi Hing Building blanketed the neighbourhood and lingers.

“It’s not likely the remaining flats can make it through under this living condition. The developers always have their ways to get what they want, be it good ways or bad,” Lee said.







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