

The big picture

In the Life Skills Programme, teenagers gain a deeper understanding about themselves and acquire skills to deal with making key life decisions on personal relationships, careers, money management and more



Rita Ching, Associate Director of the Women's Foundation.

A DOLESCENCE can be a rocky stage in life. It is the time when our personality begins to take shape. Friendships are built that could last for a lifetime. We also have to choose the right college, and the appropriate career path to take. In adolescence, we stand at the crossroads of life. It can be confusing, if not extremely frightening, to make choices that will change our lives forever. Without guidance and support from others, teens may feel lost and have difficulty making the right choices.

Foundation launched its Life Skills Programme. Now on its second-year run, the programme equips youngsters with practical life planning skills. Most of the participants are from ten schools in districts where many socially vulnerable groups live, such as Shum Shui Po and Mongkok. Through various workshops and activities, it touches on the core elements of life planning such as healthy well-being, relationships, career planning and financial responsibility.

Think positive

THERE are plenty of programmes on these life factors but few have tackled all of them, says Rita Ching, Associate Director of the Women's Foundation. She believes that these elements are closely related to each other. She raised **compensated dating** as an example:

"Many teenagers who do compensated dating do not enjoy good family relationships. They may have a difficult time maintaining friendships too. With such unhealthy relationships, they may turn to quick money (by compensated

dating), hoping that material comforts could give them confidence and glory. Now they take compensated dating as their job, and they have done little career or life planning. They do not realise a wrong choice today could affect their future."

Such cases could be prevented if the young have positive and **righteous** values. And they are exactly what the programme aims to provide them with.



Students having fun in role-play activities.



Workshops are led by experienced tutors.



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Vocabulary

compensated dating (n phr) 援交

righteous (adj) 正確的

stereotype (n) 典型

budget (n) 預算

Relationships

Preparing for life

THESE values and skills may seem abstract, but that does not mean they are difficult or boring to understand. The programme is packed with fun, interactive activities. Students take six workshops, each focusing on a different 'life aspect'. Courses typically start by breaking down **stereotypes** and building positive thinking. In the third and fourth workshops that follow, participants observe their own strengths and motivations to set and achieve their goals. The last two workshops focus on finance and family **budgeting**. For instance, how would you spend money if your first job earns you \$12,000 a month? If you were a parent, how would you plan the family budget? These are the sort of questions that teenagers discuss.

Apart from workshops, students also enjoy extra-curricular activities including inspiring talks from experienced executives and leadership training. They have a golden opportunity to step into the world of grown-ups. Have you ever imagined what an international corporate office is like? This is just one of the places students will visit in the programme.

They also learn valuable lessons from representatives of **headhunting firms**. From writing an impressive **curriculum vitae** to having **mock interviews**, youngsters are given everything they need to be prepared for job hunting in the future.

Peer

Out of the comfort zone

THE programme receives support from many public organisations and large-scale companies. For example, staff from JP Morgan, the programme's lead sponsor and strategic partner, hold budgeting workshops as well as **mentorship programmes**. The international finance firm has sponsored many life education programmes in other parts of the world, with the Life Skills Programme being the first of its kind in Hong Kong. Michael Fung, JP Morgan's Chairman and Managing Director, noticed a gap between education and real life among Hong Kong students.

"In Hong Kong, parents tend to be more protective over their children. They plan everything for youngsters, so the kids need not make many choices", Fung explains. Children enjoy much love from parents, and stay in a comfort zone, but in exchange they may be less comfortable when facing changes."

This is where the Life Skills Programme could help, as it introduces students to a world outside of classrooms and encourages them to step up to reach their goals. "It prepares them for real-life situations," Fung says.

Fung believes in the importance of a balance between 'IQ' (a 'measure' of intelligence) and 'EQ' (emotional intelligence). He points out that local schools focus on delivering knowledge, but there is little



When it comes to making life choices, Fung encourages youths to understand themselves and be confident in making their own choices. Have courage. Fear not to take risks and make mistakes. Most importantly, get out of the typical comfort zone and you will not be far from success, he said. ●

Michael Fung, JP Morgan's Chairman, stresses good English opens doors.

Learn more

Standard will be reporting on many of the appealing working activities in the Life Skills Programme. Stay social feature next Thursday!
Interested in knowing more about the addition, check out their website at www.eddationhk.org. You can also visit the programme's page at www.facebook.com/lifeskillsprogramme.



Students' folders have messages telling them to stay positive.



Participants from last year say they became more open-minded.

headhunting firm (n phr) 獵頭公司

curriculum vitae (n phr) 履歷

mock (adj) 模擬的

mentorship programme (n phr) 師友計劃