

LCQ 13: Promoting development of youth uniformed groups

Following is a question by the Hon Andrew Lam and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, in the Legislative Council today (April 27):

Question:

There are comments pointing out that promoting youth uniformed groups' exchanges with the Mainland will help the youth establish a positive outlook on life, nurture their values on patriotism, law-abidingness and discipline, as well as develop a team spirit. It will also enable such groups to have a good development. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information in each of the past four years in respect of each of the youth uniformed groups subvented by the Government: the number of members, the amount of subvention received, and other subsidies received (set out in a table);

(2) whether the Education Bureau will consider requesting schools to require that all students must join at least one youth uniformed group, with a view to cultivating in them good characters and correct values; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether the Government assisted students of youth uniformed groups in having exchanges with their Mainland counterparts in the past four years; if so, of the details, and whether it will provide further assistance to such groups (e.g. providing subsidies and carrying out relevant co-ordination work), so that such groups may deepen their exchanges with their Mainland counterparts; if it did not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Youth uniformed groups (UGs) are major partners of the Special Administrative Region Government in promoting youth development. The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) provides recurrent subvention to 11 youth UGs in the community to support the provision of informal education and training to young people which serves to help them foster positive values, strengthen leadership skills and attain whole-person development.

My reply to the Hon Andrew Lam's question is as follows:

(1) The funding provisions from the HAB for the relevant youth UGs in the past four years were as follows:

Youth UGs		Amount of recurrent subvention (\$) (Note 1)			
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21 (Note 2)	2021-22
1	Scout Association of Hong Kong	19,524,000	19,324,280	19,570,280	19,324,280
2	The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association	21,830,000	24,023,940	24,269,940	24,023,940
3	Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps	2,650,000	2,889,150	3,135,150	2,889,150
4	Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps	2,990,000	3,264,502	3,510,502	3,264,502
5	Hong Kong Adventure Corps	2,520,000	2,740,434	2,986,434	2,740,434
6	Hong Kong Red Cross Youth	16,150,000	17,753,344	17,999,344	17,753,344
7	Hong Kong St. John Ambulance Brigade Youth Command	3,260,000	3,557,378	3,803,378	3,557,378
8	The Boys' Brigade, Hong Kong	4,790,000	5,530,868	5,776,868	5,530,868
9	The Girls' Brigade Hong Kong	2,420,000	2,930,036	3,176,036	2,930,036
10	Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol	2,480,000	2,675,479	2,921,479	2,675,479
11	Association of Hong Kong Flag-guards	1,800,000	2,235,172	2,481,172	2,235,172

The youth membership of the relevant youth UGs was set out as follows:

Youth UGs		Youth membership (Note 3)			
		Dec 31, 2018	Dec 31, 2019	Dec 31, 2020	Dec 31, 2021
1	Scout Association of Hong Kong	43 593	41 541	41 588	38 652
2	The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association	21 074	21 450	21 213	18 761
3	Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps	4 981	3 949	2 536	3 099
4	Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps	2 645	2 251	2 251	1 664
5	Hong Kong Adventure Corps	6 329	5 574	4 882	3 833
6	Hong Kong Red Cross Youth	16 587	17 204	17 718	17 368
7	Hong Kong St. John Ambulance Brigade Youth Command	4 129	4 044	3 933	3 888
8	The Boys' Brigade, Hong Kong	10 179	7 594	7 525	7 351
9	The Girls' Brigade Hong Kong	1 232	1 373	1 799	1 997
10	Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol	7 075	6 460	5 216	4 841
11	Association of Hong Kong Flag-guards	7 923	8 567	9 010	9 009

(2) According to the information provided by the Education Bureau (EDB), secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong have all along arranged a wide range of extra-curricular activities, covering academic learning, sports, arts, interests and services, according to their school mission, school context and students' needs, so as to cater for students' different interests, unleash their potential, and promote whole-person development. Youth UGs are one of the extra-curricular activities. All kinds of extra-

curricular activities help cultivate students' good character and proper values. Schools generally allow students to choose their favourite extra-curricular activities; some schools require students to participate in at least a certain type of extra-curricular activity, such as "One Life, One Sport and One Art" or a youth UG. Both arrangements are considered school-based extra-curricular activities that can achieve the goal of cultivating positive character and attitude. The EDB provides schools with various resources, such as the Life-wide Learning Grant, to support schools in organising more experiential learning activities outside the classroom (including youth UG activities) to enrich students' learning experiences.

(3) The current-term Government has strived to promote youth development by addressing young people's concerns about education, career pursuit and home ownership, and encouraging their participation in politics as well as public policy discussion and debate. Our vision is to instil in our young people a positive outlook on life, commitment to society, a sense of national identity, love for Hong Kong and an international perspective. In collaboration with non-governmental organisations, we support diverse development of young people, providing them with opportunities to participate in community affairs and serve the community, and encouraging them to broaden their horizons and enhance their understanding of national and world affairs.

In the past four years, a total of about 80 exchange programmes on the Mainland were organised by youth UGs subvented by the HAB for their members, including 12 activities on exchanges with Mainland groups held online in view of the pandemic, with participants exceeding 2 800. Some of these activities were subsidised under the Funding Scheme for Youth Exchange in the Mainland of the Youth Development Commission. These exchange programmes provided young people with opportunities to engage in exchanges on the Mainland which helped enhance their understanding of "one country, two systems", the Basic Law and national affairs, acquainted them with the prevailing economic, social and cultural landscapes of our country, as well as promoted their inclusiveness of different cultures through exchanges with young people from the Mainland.

Looking ahead, we will work closely with the youth UGs to support their ongoing youth work in our collaborative efforts to help young people adopt a positive attitude towards life and foster a new generation with strong commitment to society, a sense of national identity, love for Hong Kong and an international perspective.

Note 1: The above figures include the baseline subvention and the provisions for the Assistance Scheme for Needy Student Members provided by the HAB.

Note 2: In order to support youth UGs in coping with financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and procuring necessary anti-epidemic supplies so as to maintain basic operation, the HAB disbursed an additional one-off subsidy of about \$240,000 to each youth UG in 2020-21, totalling about \$3 million.

Note 3: The youth membership includes young people aged between 8 and 26.