

## FOCUS

### Bringing a Young Talent on Board Interview with Ms Jenny Kong, Board Member of YWCA

Ms Jenny Kong has started her journey with the Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) since she was a tertiary student. Joining YWCA's activities at the very beginning, she then devoted herself to various frontline engagements as a volunteer and was invited to join as a committee member in a few years ago to support service planning. Jenny now plays the role of a board member and participates in formulating policies and development direction of the agency. Throughout the experience, her memory is filled with happy moments.

Despite the busy schedule as an associate director of an investment bank, Jenny always tries to attend YWCA board meetings and various events. With better understanding of the agency and contact with frontline staff, she believes she could help make appropriate decisions for the agency. She recalled the first time she entered the board room after being elected as Board Member four years ago, she was a bit anxious. She revealed, "I lacked confidence and experience at that time, which drove me to keep on learning. Corporate governance is really important. Every vote and every decision by the Board will have great impact on the agency and service users. I am pleased when knowing that the policies I took part in making are well received by the staff."

There are 83 service units in YWCA providing diversified social services to different sectors of the society, from children to the elderly. To equip new board members with the knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, the Board has produced its "Handbook of Corporate Governance", arranged mentorship and organized regular Christian fellowship gatherings. Moreover, there are different kinds of activities that board members may join from time to time so that they can have a more comprehensive understanding of the agency's service operation.

Jenny joined the first "Women's Voice: Young Women Leadership Training Programme" which was tailored for tertiary students. From this programme, she developed a boarder view on social issues and shared the spirit of YWCA Movement. While Jenny seems to be a seed sowed by YWCA earlier, the focus of the agency's five-year strategic plan is 'Inter-generation Leadership' that aims at cultivating young ladies to join the Board and succeed the agency's mission and culture. Jenny is passionate about advocating the YWCA Movement and motivating more young women to join the governance bodies of NGOs to contribute to the society.

*Jenny took part in various activities of YWCA:*



*As officiating guest at a YWCA event*



*Joined the field trip to mainland China*



*Supported the YWCA Flag Day*



*Jenny (right) made a performance in unity with other board members, committee members and the management in the YWCA 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner.*

# DIRECTORS' INSIGHTS



**Dr Patrick Cheung**  
*Chairperson of Executive Committee,  
 Against Child Abuse*

“ The members of our Executive Committee come from different professions and this facilitates us to operate under the principles of transparency, accountability and compliance. The Committee bears great responsibility in making decisions. When we planned the expansion of our service centers, we had made thorough discussion on issues including financial condition, needs of service users and organizational development to fulfill our commitment to the society. ”

“ There are discrepancies among board members of social welfare organizations in the understanding of their roles and responsibilities. In view of this, organizations could benefit from guidance on governance and opportunities of exchange provided by the Council. In particular, some organizations face difficulties in recruiting new board members. We suggest that the Council network with various professional bodies, to construct a talent pool of people who are interested in joining the boards of social welfare organizations, assisting organizations to look for suitable directors. ”



**Mr Peter Wan**  
*Vice-Chairman of Executive Committee,  
 Heep Hong Society*

“ The Executive Committee has been tasked with greater responsibilities in governance since the launch of Lump Sum Grant Subvention System. Our new challenges include the setting of organization-wide strategic directions as well as sustainable financial planning. We are lucky to have long serving committee members who know well the Association operations. The Executive Committee has a steep learning curve on good governance hence to be accountable to the public expectations on our Association. Furthermore, we have engaged external professional consultants and have invited senior management team to join our Annual Board Retreat over the past years, striving our best to formulate and to implement strategies on organizational development. ”



**Dr T. L. Lo**  
*Chairman of Executive Committee,  
 The Mental Health Association of  
 Hong Kong*

“ There are very few public reports on governance in the social welfare sector which cover accountability risks, loopholes and failures. I look forward to a more open attitude in transparency in the governance and accountability. Cases should be documented for lessons learnt. It can be a driving force for improvement both within and outside of the organization. There is a cost to maintaining governance and accountability systems and practices. For example, as the governing Board of our organization, we receive positive comments as well as complaints from our members. Substantial resources are incurred in handling complaints. I hope that the Government and professional bodies can provide more resources, expertise and support for the sector in improving governance and accountability. ”



**Mr Chong Chan Yau**  
*President,  
 Hong Kong Blind Union*



**Mr. Christopher Law**  
*Chairman,  
 Hong Kong Family Welfare Society*

“ I believe the role of the third sector will be more and more important in the society and the sector should even enhance its governance capacity. The trust-based social welfare sector, with a different culture from the commercial sector, could hardly fully adopt the governance mode prevailing in commercial organizations. To us, governance does not mean to control our staff, it is the strategic way to support staff for quality service delivery through job allocation, operation and structure, to accomplish the agency's mission. ”

# DIRECTORS' INSIGHTS



**Mrs Gillian Lo**  
 Chairperson,  
 The Hong Kong Joint  
 Council of Parents of the  
 Mentally Handicapped

“ This is the 30th anniversary of the Joint Council. We started as a self-help organization solely run by a volunteer group of parents of people with intellectual disability and now we have grown to have six full time staff. As a governance body, we value the importance of setting directions, financial governance and the change and succession of board members. We believe effective governance could enhance our support to people with intellectual disability and their families. Hence, we are pleased to learn humbly and equip ourselves to meet greater challenges ahead. ”

“ The Society has been established for over 55 years. To optimize board composition, the Executive Committee endeavors to absorb talents from all walks of life, providing channels for different people including service users to join our Committees, and eventually the Executive Committee. This aims for delivering apt governance responding to changing needs over time, so that the Society can realize its potential and capacity to the fullness with limited resource, providing appropriate services for people with disabilities. ”



**Prof Cecilia Chan**  
 Chairperson,  
 The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation



**Dr Gary Ng**  
 Chairperson,  
 Hong Kong Federation  
 of Handicapped Youth

“ Being a self-help organization, the Federation’s Board must only comprise of handicapped people, the limitation of which makes recruitment a persisting challenge. With regard to this, the Federation has been organizing different programs which enable us to recruit members into our committees who share the mission of mutual help. Starting from volunteer work, they have the chance to become organizers of our activities and later become part of the governing team, devoted to encouraging disabled persons to fully integrate into, participate in and contribute to the society. ”

“ NGOs’ operation is heavily affected by local laws. The new Companies Ordinance, for instance, has introduced changes in companies’ financial reporting, annual general meeting and appointment of proxy, etc. NGO boards have to ensure that their organizations are in compliance with these regulatory requirements. Our Agency has recently amended the Memorandum and Articles of Association. We were asked by the Companies Registry to incorporate additional clauses pertinent to the new Companies Ordinance, making the amendment process more complicated. ”



**Mr Wilfred Lee**  
 Honorary Secretary,  
 Agency for Volunteer  
 Service



# UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

## Seminar on Building and Sustaining an Effective Board

NGO Board members contribute their time, knowledge and experience voluntarily to the development of social welfare and to the agencies. The composition of the Board has immense impact on the agency's development and governance. The Council is organizing a seminar on Building and Sustaining an Effective Board. At the seminar, findings of a survey on NGO board recruitment and retention jointly conducted by HKCSS and HKU-ExCEL3 will be announced. Considerations for NGO board composition will be discussed, and two NGO board representatives will comment on the presentation, also sharing their experience in NGO governance.

Date:	21 October 2016 (Friday)
Time:	6:10 – 8:15pm (registration begins at 6:00pm)
Venue:	Room 202, 2/F, Duke of Windsor Social Service Building, 15 Hennessy Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Target Participants:	NGO board members, committee members, agency heads and senior management
Language:	Cantonese
Presenters:	Ms Lois Lam, Head, HKCSS Institute Prof Christine Fang, Professor of Practice, Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of Hong Kong
Commentators:	Mr Allen Fung, President, Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children Dr Gary Ng, Chairperson, Hong Kong Federation of Handicapped Youth

Interested parties, please [register online](#) by 18 October 2016 (Tuesday). For enquiries, please contact Ms Irene Hou, the responsible project manager at 2864 2950, or email to [irene.hou@hkcss.org.hk](mailto:irene.hou@hkcss.org.hk).

# SNAPSHOTS



## Inauguration Ceremony of NGO Governance Platform Project

NGO Governance Platform Project aims at building a network on governance with more exchange, sharing and learning occasions for NGO board members from diversified professions. The inauguration ceremony was held on 10 May 2016. Government officials, partner organizations, guests and representatives of the Council attended the event and witnessed the kick off. The Project's main activities include building an online knowledge portal, research, agency visitation, networking, professional exchange, and training so as to promote good governance culture across the sector.

## Briefing Session for Accountant Ambassadors

A briefing session for Accountant Ambassadors on "How CPAs can Help NGOs" was held by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA) "CPAs for NGOs" social responsibility programme on 2 September 2016. Ms Stella Ho, Project Director of NGOs Governance Platform Project, introduced the social welfare development in Hong Kong, and highlighted the different kinds of support NGOs may need for enhancing governance. In addition, Mr Richard Tse, HKICPA's council member and core team convenor of "CPAs for NGOs" programme, hosted a panel discussion with three core team members, to share their past experience in giving professional advice to NGOs, and to encourage Accountant Ambassadors to join this meaningful initiative and contribute to good governance of the social service sector.

