

## FOCUS

### Delivering the Best Services and Governance Amidst Change of Times Interview with Mr David Yau, a veteran governor in the social welfare sector

Mr David Yau has over three decades of experience with public and non-profit organizations. Since his retirement in 2001, he has devoted himself to serving the social welfare sector. With a big heart, he brings into the sector his precious experience, knowledge and network.

Formerly an Executive Director of The Hong Kong Jockey Club, responsible for the Club's charities allocations, corporate and public affairs, international and China affairs, its audit and legal departments, and more, Yau has vast experience in corporate management. Through working with many social service organizations, he has gained a good grasp of the sector's needs and challenges.

The Lump Sum Grant Subvention System (LSGSS) introduced in 2000

has profound impact on the sector. "Under LSGSS, directors have to ensure that their organizations stay financially sound and resources are effectively used. Since there are a lot of experienced directors in most organizations, this can be achieved fairly easily with proper planning and control. But in recent years there is a greater public demand for organizations' accountability, fairness and transparency. Therefore, directors must invest even more effort to exercise their due diligence responsibilities and guide management in setting systems in financial management, corporate compliance and risk oversight." said Yau.

Governors should keep themselves abreast of the latest social development in order to make sure that their organizations not only address social needs but also comply with current laws and regulations. The amended Companies Ordinance that took effect in 2014 demands enhanced accountability of directors, in addition to a higher level of disclosure in company operation and finances. "Improved transparency is propitious to an organization's image and reputation building, giving the public and donors more confidence in the operation and services of the organization. It is just a small step away from compliance – why wouldn't organizations go further to achieve greater success?" Yau stressed.

Yau is convinced that proper governance is constructive to sustainable development. Coming from different professions, members in different governing capacities of the organization can offer timely and insightful advices to the board. The board will then work together with management to formulate strategies, systems and plans, and provide suitable support for staff to understand and appreciate the importance of the new measures, and to implement these enhanced procedures for the good of the organization.



Visiting a BGCA youth centre with other directors to better understand the services. Yau (last row, fifth left) stepped in and served as the agency's full time Honorary Interim Executive Director for over 7 months. An example of board's role in crisis intervention.



Yau (front row, third right) joined a Society for Rehabilitation Board and senior management retreat to plan the organization's future strategies and service directions.

Today, Yau is still actively serving in many NGOs voluntarily, which include The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, SAHK, The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong (BGCA), Hong Kong Playground Association, The Hong Kong Society for the Aged, The Hong Kong Arthritis and Rheumatism Foundation, MacLehose Medical Rehabilitation Centre, and The Community Chest. As governance takes on an unprecedented significance and directors' responsibilities become ever more demanding, Yau sees a growing need for NGO boards to identify suitable and aspiring candidates with different expertise, bring them in and groom them for succession, so that they can contribute to the continued better management of organizations.