

## FOCUS

## Stepping on Board to Speak up for the Youth

### Interview with Mr Keith Tsoi, Council Member of The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong

“I need to speak up for the youth,” is not only a mantra that kept coming up during the interview with Mr Keith Tsoi, but also the vision that he strives for all these years. Keith joined The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (FPAHK) in 2013 as a youth volunteer of the e-Counselling Team. He later got nominated and elected to become a youth member of its Council.

Looking back at the time he first joined FPAHK’s Council four years ago, Keith said, “I was in college at that time, and did not have much grasp of the agency’s governance. Though the staff had given me an induction, I was nervous when seeing many experienced Council Members at the initial meetings. There were a lot of meeting documents that I rarely came across, especially those on finance. To be honest, I was quite clueless and frightened. Fortunately, the Council Members and staff had great patience in answering my queries and allowed me to ask questions boldly. These helped me settled in eventually.”

Keith was a FPAHK Council Member in 2014 and 2015. After that, he participated in various youth services of different NGOs. With great admiration for FPAHK’s commitment to youth engagement, Keith decided to join its Council again in 2017, serving until the end of this year. He felt much more prepared joining the Council for the second time. “It was perhaps the influence of the senior members. Seeing them take their time off busy schedules for Council meetings, I felt obligated to do my part well. I would read through all papers beforehand and not waste any time in meetings. I would also seize opportunities to speak up for the youth. After all, it is easier for youth Council Members to reach young people. As I have also worked with teenagers and secondary school students through other NGOs, I wish to let people of different ages understand more of the youngsters’ thoughts and views,” Keith shared.

FPAHK is one of the founding members of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), which advocates youth under 25 year-old to participate in policy-making at governance level. There are currently four youth Council Members in FPAHK. Keith was also a regional youth Council Member of the IPPF in 2014-17 and attended the IPPF Youth Forum representing FPAHK to exchange views on youth policies with representatives from other regions. “Through the overseas meetings, I have broadened my horizons. People may share different views in the discussions, but we did not oppose each other. Rather, it facilitated our understandings and helped us look for solutions together,” he said.

From volunteer to governor, Keith felt a huge difference in his roles and responsibilities. He said, “When I was in volunteer service, the targets were the service users and the role was more straight-forward. As a youth Council Member, I bear much more responsibilities to assist in setting up organizational policies and face even more stakeholders, especially young people. We hope to listen to them more and take their views into account in policy-making; so that the organization can provide better services and support for them. I sincerely hope that more young people could take part in NGO governance. With active engagement, readiness and commitment, we would be able to speak up through these platforms. With our participation, we can make a difference.”



Keith (second right) encouraged youth Council Members to participate in more trainings to understand the roles and responsibilities of governors. This is a group photo of Keith with other young board member participants at the Induction Workshops for NGO Directors.



Photo of Keith (back row, first right) with other Council Members of FPAHK. He thanked the organization for inviting youth Council Members and accepting the opinions of young people.