

## **Appendix II**

### **Youth Indicators in Hong Kong: A Suggestive Schema**

#### **Introduction**

In many ways, the Youth Statistical Profiles published thus far have contained substantive and useful social and demographic indicators on the various dimensions of the youth population in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, to make the future efforts better organized and more systematic, the researcher has included some discussions on the topic and a suggestive schema here for the readers' further reference.

#### **About social indicators**

Social indicators are constructs, based on observations and usually quantitative, which tell us something about an aspect of social life in which we are interested, or about changes that are taking place in it (United Nations, 1975). The information may be objective as in mortality rates, or subjective as in people's view towards a certain social issue. Moreover, there is no reason to suppose that objective and subjective indicators of the same phenomenon may move together in the same direction (e.g. the crime rate may actually be going down but people may still feel that the problem is getting worse).

Social indicators are widely used in many places to help people understand and keep track of the development of a certain social phenomenon. The United States, for example, has published four editions of Youth Indicators since 1988 which contain statistical information on family structure, jobs, education, and other elements that comprise the world of the country's young people. The Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies also published several editions of Indicators of Social Development to keep track of the social development in the territory.

Many methods may be used to construct social indicators, including factor analysis, index-numbers, utility and optimization, life expectancies, and public opinion surveys (United Nations, 1975). The key, therefore, is not in the data form, but in whether one knows how to construct the indicator, and whether the data needed for its construction exist.

Although revealing in themselves, social indicators are often more meaningful when viewed in a comparative context. The comparison may be cross-sectional (e.g. a certain age group with another, male to female, youths in one place to youths in other places) or longitudinal (e.g. life expectancy at birth in the 70's, 80's, and 90's).

While not stated explicitly, the information contained in the Youth Statistical Profiles thus far published may be viewed in many ways as social indicators of the various aspects of the youth population in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1997) also published a suggestive schema on the same topic. It is based on these efforts and the sort of information that is more readily available that the following youth indicators are proposed.

## **Suggested youth indicators**

1. Demographic characteristics
  - 1.1 Number of young people
  - 1.2 Age distribution
  - 1.3 Sex distribution
  - 1.4 Population growth rate
  - 1.5 Population projections\*
  - 1.6 Place of birth
  - 1.7 Nationality
  - 1.8 Usual language/dialect
  - 1.9 Duration of residence in Hong Kong\*
  - 1.10 Geographic distribution
  - 1.11 Marital status
  - 1.12 Housing types
  - 1.13 Type of living quarters
  - 1.14 Degree of sharing\*
  
2. Household characteristics
  - 2.1 Household size
  - 2.2 Household composition
  - 2.3 Number of siblings\*
  - 2.4 Number of working members in household\*
  - 2.5 Household income\*
  - 2.6 Household rent\*
  - 2.7 Headship of household\*
  - 2.8 Parents' employment\*
  - 2.9 Children of families on CSSA\*
  
3. Family relationship
  - 3.1 Youth's perception of family life
  - 3.2 Relationship with parents
  - 3.3 Youth's perception of parenting style/parental control
  - 3.4 Relationship with siblings
  - 3.5 Children of single parents\*
  - 3.6 Child abuse\*
  
4. Physical health
  - 4.1 Life expectancy
  - 4.2 Mortality rates
  - 4.3 Fertility rates
  - 4.4 Height and weight

- 4.5 Physical fitness
  - 4.6 Physical disabilities
  - 4.7 Nutrition and diet
  - 4.8 Road traffic accidents
  - 4.9 Smoking pattern
  - 4.10 Drinking pattern
  - 4.11 Youth's perception of physical appearance
  - 4.12 Youth's perception about AIDS
5. Youth sexuality
- 5.1 Sexual development
  - 5.2 Knowledge about sexual development
  - 5.3 Gender roles and characteristics
  - 5.4 Attitudes and behaviours towards dating and love
  - 5.5 Attitudes and behaviours towards marriage and family
6. Mental health
- 6.1 General mental health conditions
  - 6.2 Drug abuse
  - 6.3 Stress and depression
  - 6.4 Mental disabilities
  - 6.5 Suicide
  - 6.6 Knowledge about mental health
  - 6.7 Help seeking patterns
  - 6.8 Attitudes towards the mentally disabled
7. Education
- 7.1 School attendance rates
  - 7.2 Educational attainment
  - 7.3 School enrolment
  - 7.4 Teacher/student ratios and expenditures per student\*
  - 7.5 Computer use by students\*
  - 7.6 Language proficiency\*
  - 7.7 College costs and support\*
  - 7.8 Field of education
  - 7.9 Degree conferred\*
  - 7.10 International achievement comparison\*
  - 7.11 Students studying outside Hong Kong
  - 7.12 Number of school dropouts
  - 7.13 Life pattern of school dropouts
  - 7.14 Youth's view on education

8. Economic characteristics
  - 8.1 Economic status of youth population
  - 8.2 Labour force and labour force participation rates
  - 8.3 Structure of youth labour force
  - 8.4 Activity status of working youth population
  - 8.5 Occupational status of working youth population
  - 8.6 Choice of industry of working youth population
  - 8.7 Monthly income of working youth population
  - 8.8 Job satisfaction\*
  - 8.9 Job training and mobility\*
  - 8.10 Unemployment rate of youth population
  - 8.11 Number of economically inactive youth population
  - 8.12 Activity status of economically inactive youth population
  - 8.13 Spending and saving pattern
  - 8.14 Occupational aspirations
  
9. Youth culture
  - 9.1 Values and beliefs
  - 9.2 Life aspirations
  - 9.3 Patterns of mass media exposure
  - 9.4 Leisure activities
  - 9.5 Participation in youth organizations
  - 9.6 Voluntary service
  - 9.7 Knowledge about community affairs
  - 9.8 Knowledge about the world
  - 9.9 Use of computers and new technology
  - 9.10 Religious involvements\*
  
10. Civic and political involvements
  - 10.1 Views about community affairs and issues
  - 10.2 Views about the government
  - 10.3 Voting behaviour
  - 10.4 National identity
  - 10.5 Participation in community affairs
  - 10.6 Confidence about the future of Hong Kong
  
11. Crime and delinquency
  - 11.1 Offender rates
  - 11.2 Type of offence
  - 11.3 Reception of convicted persons
  - 11.4 Probation order
  - 11.5 Patterns of delinquent behaviour
  - 11.6 Triad influence

12. Marriage and divorce

12.1 Marriage and divorce rates\*

12.2 Family planning\*

12.3 Pregnancy, abortion, and births\*

\* indicators not present in this statistical profile

## References

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (1997). Tuning in to youth: The setting up of Hong Kong youth indicators. Hong Kong: Author.

United Nations (1975). Towards a system of social and demographic statistics. New York: Author.