

RGC Ref. No.: <u>UGC/FDS11/H03/15</u> (please insert ref. above)
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**RESEARCH GRANTS COUNCIL
COMPETITIVE RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES FOR
THE LOCAL SELF-FINANCING DEGREE SECTOR**

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (FDS)

Completion Report

(for completed projects only)

<p><u>Submission Deadlines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Auditor's report with unspent balance, if any: within <u>six</u> months of the approved project completion date. 2. Completion report: within <u>12</u> months of the approved project completion date.
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Part A: The Project and Investigator(s)

1. Project Title

For Whom and for What? Examining the Impact of Self-financing Sub-degree Education on
Social Mobility of Hong Kong Youth

2. Investigator(s) and Academic Department(s) / Unit(s) Involved

Research Team	Name / Post	Unit / Department / Institution
Principal Investigator	Ms. Lo Villy Suk-ling / Senior Lecturer	Felizberta Lo Padilla Tong School of Social Sciences, Caritas Institute of Higher Education
Co-Investigator(s)	Dr. CHAN Kam-wah / Research Professor	Felizberta Lo Padilla Tong School of Social Sciences, Caritas Institute of Higher Education
	Dr. LEUNG Chi-yuen / Teaching Fellow	Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
	Dr. CHAN Wai-yin / Assistant Professor	Felizberta Lo Padilla Tong School of Social Sciences, Caritas Institute of Higher Education

3. Project Duration

	Original	Revised	Date of RGC / Institution Approval (must be quoted)
Project Start Date	01/01/2016		
Project Completion Date	31/12/2017	31/12/2018	RGC Approval granted on 30/05/2018
Duration (<i>in month</i>)	24	36	RGC Approval granted on 30/05/2018
Deadline for Submission of Completion Report	31/12/2018	31/12/2019	

Part B: The Final Report**5. Project Objectives**

5.1 Objectives as per original application

1. To study the basic profile and the development path of students and graduates of self-financing sub-degree education programs in Hong Kong;
2. To access the mobility effect of self-financing sub-degree education;
3. To identify the mediating factors affecting the mobility effects of sub-degree education with their relationship and impacts; and
4. To evaluate policies and measures relating to postsecondary education and social mobility of young people

5.2 Revised objectives

Date of approval from the RGC: N/A

Reasons for the change: N/A

- 1.
- 2.
3.

5.3 Realisation of the objectives

(Maximum 1 page; please state how and to what extent the project objectives have been achieved; give reasons for under-achievements and outline attempts to overcome problems, if any)

1. *To study the basic profile and the development path of students and graduates of self-financing sub-degree education programs in Hong Kong*

We have conducted a questionnaire survey targeting current students and graduates of Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) and Caritas Bianchi College of Careers (CBCC). A total of 1,199 questionnaire surveys of sub-degree students and 139 questionnaire surveys of graduate were completed. The basic profile of sub-degree students and graduates (with their family data) in Hong Kong has been collected with the input of the 2016 Population By-census. It helps us to trace the path of social mobility of our target population.

2. *To access the mobility effect of self-financing sub-degree education*

The objective has been achieved. Apart from collecting data on our samples' demographic backgrounds and class status, we also measured subjective social ranking (how they rank current self, themselves after graduation, and their family in the social ladder) and expected mobility index (the students' expected ranking after graduation compare with the present ranking of their own family) in the quantitative survey. Apart from statistical analysis of quantitative data, a total of five focus groups in six sessions with a total of 23 participants from CIHE and CBCC were interviewed in the focus groups were completed:

	Current students	Graduates
Sub-degree program with professional accreditation	One group	One group
Sub-degree program without professional accreditation	One group	Two groups

3. *To identify the mediating factors affecting the mobility effects of sub-degree education with their relationship and impacts*

Statistical analysis of quantitative data and qualitative interviews were conducted to understand the mediating factors affecting the mobility effects of sub-degree education.

4. *To evaluate policies and measures relating to postsecondary education and social mobility of young people*

The objective has been achieved. Through the objective 1, 2 and 3, the policies and measures relating to postsecondary education and social mobility of young people can be evaluated. The opinion of CIHE and CBCC graduates on existing policies were collected through the in-depth focus group interviews.

5.4 Summary of objectives addressed to date

Objectives <i>(as per 5.1/5.2 above)</i>	Addressed <i>(please tick)</i>	Percentage Achieved <i>(please estimate)</i>
1. To study the basic profile and the development path of students and graduates of self-financing sub-degree education programs in Hong Kong	✓	100%
2. To access the mobility effect of self-financing sub-degree education	✓	100%
3. To identify the mediating factors affecting the mobility effects of sub-degree education with their relationship and impacts	✓	100%
4. To evaluate policies and measures relating to postsecondary education and social mobility of young people	✓	100%

6. Research Outcome

6.1 Major findings and research outcome

(Maximum 1 page; please make reference to Part C where necessary)

The research is completed both quantitatively and qualitatively as planned. The quantitative data has indicated clearly that the overall socio-economic status of the self-financed sub-degree students is in a less advantaged social position than the general population profile in Hong Kong. Current students and graduates of self-financed sub-degree programs lacked confidence in achieving higher social ranking than their parents even with a higher educational attainment. We find that the housing class has higher relevancy to subjective social ranking and expected mobility index. Respondents from families owned property and fathers working as professional and managers had lower subjective social ranking. Expected mobility index was higher among students who were from less advantaged families and studying programs with professional accreditation. It shows that self-financed sub-degree students, particularly those enrolled in programs without professional accreditation remain fragile in moving upward. We also found that professional credential has limited upward mobility effect in terms of income on our graduate samples. A limitation of this finding that is our graduate samples were mainly social worker and their income was constrained by Lump-sum grant scheme. Only few of our non-professional graduate samples received income of HK\$40,000 or above after they had pursued professional status through further studies, while most of them had HK\$20,000-\$25,000 after 10 years of graduation, no matter they had pursued further studies or not.

Qualitative data echoed the statistical findings and showed an uneasy study paths of the participants. They were generally disappointed with the hidden social oppression in the educational system, under-recognition of self-financed programs and institutes among their family members and society. They had high expectation on education, less education resources and lower self-efficacy in achieving social mobility. Compared to graduates of programs without professional accreditation, graduates of programs of professional accreditation were from less advantaged families and more supportive to formal education system. They believed that their “success” was a result of individual efforts and equal educational system, although they believed it as oppressed in the past. After focus group sessions, many respondents agreed to voice out unjust treatment and motivated to make policy change.

Both quantitative and qualitative data pointed to the malfunctioning of the present education system. While the expansion of self-financed higher education sector provide more education opportunities, it does not necessarily lead to higher social mobility and better employment opportunities as expected. The majority of sub-degree students were from lower social position who need to pay higher tuition fees comparing to UGC-funded programs. They are inferior when compared with degree students of public-funded universities especially in a time of credential inflation. The decreasing education mobility in return contribute to the slowing social mobility which has created the increasing class distinction which are witnessed in the advantage of owning housing property from their respective parents.

Based on our research findings, future policy changes should focus on:

- 1) To increase the resources and support of the self-financed sub-degree students in non-subvented post-secondary institutions such as the subsidization of the tuition fee and the provision of financial support during the study period;
- 2) To provide educational opportunities in terms of subsidies and seats to the degree programs in subsidized universities in Hong Kong after the graduation of the self-financed sub-degree students in non-subvented post-secondary institutions;
- 3) To investigate the hidden and subtle oppressive measures and mechanism in secondary schools especially for lower class youth who are rely more on education as ladder for social mobility.

6.2 Potential for further development of the research and the proposed course of action (*Maximum half a page*)

Further research development - This study has identified that the education mobility of the self-financed sub-degree students in one of the self-financed teaching institutes in Hong Kong, the Caritas Institute of Higher Education, is fragile in terms of sense of self-efficacy, educational resources and class distinction. From the integrated observation from our quantitative and qualitative data found, the structured inequality and limited mobility would hamper the possible upward educational mobility of this disadvantaged group as compared with the general population profile in Hong Kong. In turn, these mobility obstacles will constraint the social mobility of this group of respondents beyond class effect. In order to understand the overall mobility situation of the self-financed sub-degree students in Hong Kong in general, we should extend the research scope in including all the self-financed post-secondary institutes and compared those with the publicly-funded universities in Hong Kong. The possible offerings of specific and leveling help to this needy group of students can be further explored. The outcomes deserved cultivating relevant policy changes in view of the current social turmoil related to the youth in our society.

Further dissemination of research findings - Research findings can be further disseminated in teaching and learning in Caritas Institute of Higher Education. The research findings found in the focus group can be further disseminated to other teaching institutions including universities and secondary schools in the form of consciousness-raising groups for awareness training and self-advocacy. Moreover, they can be further shared with the public in the form of newspaper columns, video documentary, oral history stories or online commentary.

7. Layman's Summary

(*Describe in layman's language the nature, significance and value of the research project, in no more than 200 words*)

As we can observe in the research findings, the self-financed sub-degree students are found to be located in the lesser advantaged position when compared with the subsidized universities students in Hong Kong in terms of their family background and grown up in the present education system. They have got lesser expectation on education, more relevant education information and weaker class position. We should develop more egalitarian educational policy so as to remove the barriers for their educational mobility which in turn would help to increase their social mobility which is vital for the creation of hope for this younger generation of our society.

Part C: Research Output**8. Peer-Reviewed Journal Publication(s) Arising Directly From This Research Project**

(Please attach a copy of the publication and/or the letter of acceptance if not yet submitted in the previous progress report(s). All listed publications must acknowledge RGC's funding support by quoting the specific grant reference.)

The Latest Status of Publications				Author(s) (denote the correspond-ing author with an asterisk*)	Title and Journal / Book (with the volume, pages and other necessary publishing details specified)	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
Year of Publication	Year of Acceptance (For paper accepted but not yet published)	Under Review	Under Preparation (optional)						
			By Invitation and under preparation. Finished 60% of manuscript	Ms. Lo Villy Suk-ling Dr. CHAN Kam-wah Dr. LEUNG Chi-yuen Dr. CHAN Wai-yin	Journal Title: Chinese Education and Society Manuscript Title: Education for whom and for what? A report of the focus group interviews regarding the social mobility of lower class youth in Hong Kong.		No	Yes	No

9. Recognized International Conference(s) In Which Paper(s) Related To This Research Project Was / Were Delivered

(Please attach a copy of each conference abstract)

Month / Year / Place	Title	Conference Name	Submitted to RGC (indicate the year ending of the relevant progress report)	Attached to this Report (Yes or No)	Acknowledged the Support of RGC (Yes or No)	Accessible from the Institutional Repository (Yes or No)
June/ 2016/ Hong Kong	A quantitative study of current sub-degree students on the impact of self-financing sub-degree education on social mobility	2016 Conference on Youth Divide and Youth Inclusion: Agenda and Alternatives. Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong.		Yes (Attachment 1)	Yes	No

July/ 2017/ Japan	'Massification' of higher education and social inequalities - A study of the expansion of self-financing sub-degree education in Hong Kong	14th East Asian Social Policy Research Network Annual Conference: East Asian Social Policy in a Changing Environment: Comparisons, Visions and Futures, Nagoya University, Japan.		Yes (Attachment 2)	Yes	No
June/ 2018/ Ireland	Education for What? The Social Mobility of Lower Class Youth in Hong Kong: A proposal of a conscientization group	World Community Development Conference 2018, Participation, Power and Progress: Community Development Maynooth University, Kildare, Ireland		Yes (Attachment 3)	Yes	No
July/ 2018/ Ireland	Education for whom and for what? Lessons learnt from the critical consciousness raising groups	Joint World Conference of Social Work, Education and Social Development 2018, Environmental and Community Sustainability: Human Solutions in an Evolving society. Dublin, Ireland.		Yes (Attachment 4)	Yes	No

10. Whether Research Experience And New Knowledge Has Been Transferred / Has Contributed To Teaching And Learning

(Please elaborate)

Research knowledge has been transferred in different forms of teaching and learning.

- 1) 23 current students or graduates as participants become very reflective to the topics of education and social mobility after attending in 4-6 sessions of focus group.
- 2) Integrate the research data into the theme of education in HK in few social sciences courses of our Institute, that included Introduction to Sociology (Higher Diploma in Social Work in Full time and Part time mode), Education and Society (Bachelor of Social Sciences) and Sociology of Health (Higher Diploma in Nursing)
- 3) 4 training sessions for focus group facilitators, those all were our Institute's graduates carried out. A total of 12 facilitators were trained to conduct focus group interviews.

11. Student(s) Trained*(Please attach a copy of the title page of the thesis)*

Name	Degree Registered for	Date of Registration	Date of Thesis Submission / Graduation
NIL			

12. Other Impact*(e.g. award of patents or prizes, collaboration with other research institutions, technology transfer, teaching enhancement, etc.)*

NIL

13. Statistics on Research Outputs

No. of outputs arising directly from this research project	Peer-reviewed Journal Publications	Conference Papers	Scholarly Books, Monographs and Chapters	Patents Awarded	Other Research Outputs (please specify)	
					Type	No.
		4				

14. Public Access Of Completion Report

(Please specify the information, if any, that cannot be provided for public access and give the reasons.)

Information that Cannot Be Provided for Public Access	Reasons
NIL	