

Chapter 3

Cultural Policy and the Development of Local Cultures in Hong Kong

Samuel Leong

3.1 Hong Kong's Cultural Context

Hong Kong is an evolving metropolitan city of seven million people where Western and Chinese cultures meet. Over 90 % of Hong Kong's inhabitants ("Hongkongers") are of Chinese descent and Han majority, mainly originating from the Guangzhou and Taishan regions. As a Special Administrative Region (SAR) under the "One Country, Two Systems" of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the former British colony is a cosmopolitan society with a dynamic and entrepreneurial economy noted for its effectiveness and efficiency, supported by a ultra-efficient transportation infrastructure. Identified by its materialistic culture and high levels of consumerism, Hong Kong has been ranked the world's freest economy for the 18th consecutive year by the 2012 Index of Economic Freedom (*The Heritage Foundation* and *The Wall Street Journal* 2012) and maintained its overall first ranking of 60 of the world's largest economies in the Globalization Index 2011 (Ernst and Young 2012). Since the handover to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, it has remained a global financial centre, shopping and eating paradise, and its arts and cultural vibrancy has contributed to its global city status today. Today's Hong Kong boasts a bold juxtaposition of "contradictions" in a highly compact area: skyscraper jungles and forested mountain slopes, noisy jam-packed streets and tranquil bays and islands, wet markets and designer shopping malls, bamboo scaffoldings and glass-and-steel monoliths, Chinese traditions and contemporary cultural expressions, Chinese heritage and a Western colonial history.

The future of post-colonial Hong Kong is situated in a rapidly growing Pearl River Delta (PRD) region comprising Hong Kong, Macau and Guangdong. Home to more than 120 million people, the region has been identified as the world's first

S. Leong (✉)
Department of Cultural and Creative Arts,
The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong, China
e-mail: sleong@ied.edu.hk

and largest “mega-region” in a United Nations’ State of World Cities Report (Vidal 2010). The central government has outlined a long-term development blueprint for economic co-operation and interaction in the PRD region (Huang 2009). Under the plan, the PRD would become ‘globally competitive’ and the ‘most vigorous area in the Asia-Pacific region’ by 2020, and funding of US\$640 million has been earmarked for building a bridge linking Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai. The plan builds on the 2004 Pan Pearl River Delta (PPRD) Regional Co-operation Framework Agreement that aimed to bring prosperity through partnership among nine Chinese Mainland provinces and China’s two special administrative regions (Chen and Wu 2012).

Although Hong Kong is often called a “cultural desert”, greater attention has been given to the development of the city’s arts and unique cultural heritage in recent years. There is recognition that the city needs to expand beyond its economic dependency on the traditional “four pillar industries” of trading and logistics, financial services, producer and professional services, and tourism. The cultural and creative industries (CCI) has been identified as an important growth area in the government’s future-focused report, ‘Hong Kong 2030’ (Hong Kong Development Bureau and the Planning Department 2007), and cited as one of six industries crucial to the future development of Hong Kong’s economy in the 2009 Chief Executive’s policy address. As one of the most dynamic sectors employing over three million workers contributing to 5.4 % of Hong Kong’s GDP, it also contributes to nurturing cultural diversity and innovation in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department 2013, p. FC8).

The Government allocates over US\$350 million annually for the arts and culture, with an additional US\$62 million over five financial years (from 2010/2011) earmarked for enhancing support to arts and culture development, including supporting local arts groups, training arts administrators, and promoting public art. The government also supports cultural institutions such as the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong Museum of Arts, Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. The arts and cultural scene has thrived because of the increased governmental support for the arts and culture as well the city’s unique characteristics: its proximity to a rapidly growing Asia, especially mainland China, its respect for freedom of speech and artistic expression, the fusion of Western and Chinese influences, and business-friendly policies such as a very low income tax and profits tax rate with no import taxes, sales taxes or capital-gains taxes. Many international cultural and sports events are held in Hong Kong, including the annual Hong Kong Arts Festival and Art Hong Kong, one of the world’s leading contemporary art fairs. A growing number of international art galleries have been set up in Hong Kong to complement existing local galleries, antique shops and the thriving art auctions in the city.

Despite being influenced by a range of western and external cultural influences over the years, local cultures are valued and many Chinese traditions have continued to be developed and retained in their own distinctive forms, representing Hong Kong’s unique intangible cultural heritage. Some of the traditional culture in Hong Kong includes religious rituals and cultural festivals such as Tin Hau Festival, Ching Ming Festival, Tuen Ng Festival or Dragon Boat Festival, Festival

of the Hungry Ghosts, Moon Cake–Lantern Festival, Chung Yeung Festival. Four of these traditional festivals – Cheung Chau Bun Festival, Tai O dragon boat water parade, Tai Hang fire dragon dance and the Chiu Chow Yu Lan Ghost festival – were successfully inscribed onto the third national list of intangible cultural heritage in 2011 (Cheung 2011). The Cheung Chau Bun Festival which features a “bun scrambling” race was revived in 2005, after a 26-year suspension. “Cantonese Opera” has been accorded a special place in local cultures, being recognized by UNESCO as Hong Kong's first intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2009. The art which involves music, singing, martial arts, acrobatics and acting, carries a national identity that goes as far back as the first wave of immigrants to arrive from Shanghai in the 1950s.

Hong Kong is also a recognised “entertainment hub” that has produced popular martial arts films featuring notable stars such as Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Chow Yun-fat, Michelle Yeoh, Maggie Cheung and Jet Li. It is also the home of *Cantopop*, a home-grown musical genre with a multinational fan base that draws its influence from both Chinese music and Western genres. Besides the usual menu of dance, drama, music and theatre offerings, Hong Kong is home to the first full-time comedy club in Asia, The TakeOut Comedy Club Hong Kong.

One of the most affordable forms of local entertainment is *manhua* (漫畫), Hong Kong-based comic books that are regularly available at news stands in most street corners. Characters such as Old Master Q and Chinese Hero have showcased Chinese artwork and stories, and provided an avenue of expression long before the arrival of television. Japanese *manga* is now translated and fused into local manhua libraries. A popular social activity is *mahjong*, which is played by family and friends for hours at festivals and weddings, and on public holidays in homes and mahjong parlours. Chinese chess is a common pastime often played by the elderly in public parks, and watched by surrounding crowds. Martial arts is also an accepted form of entertainment or exercise – Tai chi being one of the most popular, especially among the elderly; and groups of people can be seen practising the movements in parks at dawn. Other forms of martial arts are also practised, passed down from different generations of Chinese ancestry. Gambling is also popular in the local Chinese culture but it is legal only at three licensed institutions approved and supervised by the government: horse racing, Mark Six lottery, and football betting.

3.2 Cultural Policy and Government Support

Matters related to arts and culture in Hong Kong come under the purview of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), which oversees the Leisure and Cultural Service Department (LCSD) and the Arts Development Council (ADC). The HAB's network of 20 advisory committees provide advice covering areas such as Cantonese Opera, Arts Development, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Public Libraries and Art Museum. It also coordinates the development of the WKCD, which is managed by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA). The ADC is a statutory

body established in 1995 to plan, promote and support the broad development of the arts including literary arts, performing arts, visual arts as well as film and media arts in Hong Kong. Its major roles include grant allocation, policy and planning, advocacy, promotion and development, and programme planning. It also works to foster a thriving arts environment and enhancing the quality of life of the public, facilitate community-wide participation in the arts and arts education, encourage arts criticism and raise the standard of arts administration. The LCSD organizes artistic and cultural activities and manages a number of cultural facilities including 14 performance venues and 16 museums throughout Hong Kong. It also functions as the main cultural programme presenter in Hong Kong, supporting smaller groups mainly through venue rental subsidies and providing them with performance opportunities.

The Culture and Heritage Commission (CHC) was set up in April 2000 to advise on cultural policy and funding priorities. Following a wide-ranging review of Hong Kong's cultural policy by the CHC in 2003, the government endorsed the report's recommendations. Significantly, the Government endorsed the report's central message regarding the need to promote long-term cultural development, which should be 'people oriented', 'pluralist', 'holistic', 'community driven', and based on 'partnerships' with an emphasis on 'freedom of expression and the protection of intellectual property'. This position signals a shift away from earlier elitist models of cultural policy implementation towards more democratized and people-centered approaches. Recognizing that significant investment in cultural infrastructure ('cultural hardware') had been made between 1975 and 2000, the Commission noted that investment in 'cultural software' (e.g., audience development) had not matched that of hardware.¹ This point was accepted by the government, which expressed full agreement with the need to develop a stronger role for audience building in culture and the arts in Hong Kong.

Building on the CHC's recommendation that Hong Kong's cultural position should embrace pluralism and "diversity with identity" (CHC 2003, p. 11), the existing policy for the arts and culture is very broad; but it is certainly not a cultural policy that sets a long-term view for Hong Kong. Its vision of Hong Kong becoming "an international cultural metropolis with a distinct identity grounded in Chinese traditions and enriched by different cultures, where life is celebrated through cultural pursuit; and creativity is a constant driver of progress in the community" is supported by five broad principles: people-oriented, diversity, freedom of expression, holistic approach, and partnership (see [HAB](#) website). This is to be achieved through providing opportunities for wide participation in culture and the arts, opportunities for those with potential to develop their artistic talents, creating an environment conducive to the diversified and balanced development of culture and the arts, supporting the preservation and promotion of our traditional cultures while

¹The 1980s saw the establishment of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (in 1984) and the building of several major cultural facilities such as the Ko Shan Theatre (1983), Tuen Mun Town Hall (1987) and the Hong Kong Cultural Centre (1989).

encouraging artistic creation and innovation, and developing Hong Kong into a prominent hub of cultural exchanges. A major way to realize these has been through recurrent government funding, traditionally given to support nine major performing arts groups,² also known as the ‘Big 9’ (US\$40 million in 2012–2013). In response to the need to strengthen the city’s cultural software, a “contestable” (competitive) pilot scheme of US\$1.8 million was launched in June 2012 to encourage the Big 9 to develop new initiatives that would help promote their sustainable development financially and artistically, as well as to benefit the long-term development of culture and the arts in Hong Kong. These initiatives should involve nurturing local arts talents and collaborating with other local artists and arts organizations on creation of new works, conducting researches on and analyses of as well as promoting good practices in audience building, and collaboration with the local arts community (Legislative Council 2011).

Support is also given to small and medium arts groups and budding artists, for they play a significant role in ensuring a healthy and vibrant arts scene in Hong Kong. The government has injected US\$2.7 billion into the arts portion of the Arts and Sports Development Fund as seed money, which is expected to generate annual returns of around US\$7.7 million, to be used in subsidizing the long-term development of culture and the arts. Under the newly established Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme (ACDFS), about US\$3.8 million is disbursed annually to subsidize initiatives that can enhance capacity development of promising arts groups and arts practitioners. Small and medium arts groups and budding artists are also supported by grants through the ADC. In 2011–2012, the ADC subsidized the creative pursuits of 330 arts groups or arts practitioners with about US\$3.25 million; beneficiaries also included 39 small and medium arts groups of the ADC’s One-Year/Two-Year Grant Scheme. Additionally, the LCSD provides support and performing opportunities for small and medium arts groups through various channels such as year-round cultural presentations and district arts and cultural activities, with a view to facilitate their artistic creation and outreach activities. Funding allocated for about 4,300 performances and activities in 2012–2013 is around US\$13 million. A Venue Partnership Scheme has also been launched by the LCSD at its performance venues, fostering a partnership between venues and arts groups with the objectives of building up the artistic image and character of the venue and its partner, as well as enlarging the audience base.

The government has invested in a massive 40-ha integrated arts and cultural district with an upfront endowment of US\$2.8 billion. The vision for the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) is to provide a vibrant cultural quarter for the city; a vital platform for the local arts scene to interact, develop and collaborate; and major facilities to host and produce world-class exhibitions, performances and arts and cultural events. The District will house 16 core arts and cultural venues with

²These are: Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Dance Company, Hong Kong Ballet, City Contemporary Dance Company, Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Chung Ying Theatre Company and Zuni Icosahedron.

30,000 m² of space for arts education. As a low-density development designed for close connection with its neighbourhood, there will be 23 ha of open space and a green avenue embracing two kilometres of a vibrant harbour-front promenade. WKCD's flagship museum (M+) is Hong Kong's first contemporary arts museum focusing on twentieth to twenty-first century visual culture, and houses an exhibition centre mainly for arts exhibitions and trade shows. Other facilities include a concert hall, a Great Theatre, an opera house dedicated to traditional Chinese opera called Xiqu Centre, four black box theatres, a chamber music hall, four medium-sized theatres of 800 seats, a mega performance venue (18,000 seats) and ancillary education and entertainment facilities. When completed, these will bring a 50 % increase to the 28 performing arts venues Hong Kong currently has, enabling Hong Kong to stage more long-running shows and grand productions such as Broadway or West End musicals, or operas from Milan or the Metropolitan Opera of New York, and helping the city achieve its vision to be a thriving "international cultural hub".

The government is committed to support the transmission and development of Cantonese opera: the Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee has been set up to advise on matters relating to the development of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong, the Cantonese Opera Development Fund (CODF) was established to provide funding support to projects and activities relating to the study, promotion and sustainable development of Cantonese opera. It has also developed venues of different scales to cater for the development needs of Cantonese opera, including the conversion of Yau Ma Tei Theatre and Red Brick Building into a Xiqu Activity Centre, the construction of the Ko Shan Theatre Annex with a medium-sized theatre and a planned Xiqu Centre in the West Kowloon Cultural District. Nearly US\$9 million has been injected into the CODF (in 2010–2011), which together with LCSD and ADC, organize or subsidize thematic and large-scale arts education, community promotion and audience development projects, such as the Research and Pilot Scheme on the Teaching of Cantonese Opera, District Cantonese Opera Parade, the Pilot Scheme for Senior Secondary School Students and the Cantonese Opera Promotion Scheme for the Youth and Community.

Another important aspect of Hong Kong's cultural policy is heritage conservation. The government has demonstrated its commitment through new expenditure for several heritage protection and revitalization projects. Two arts-related development projects due for completion in 2014 are the Central Police Station Compound and Former Police Married Quarters in Central. The former will be a centre of heritage, arts and leisure facilities with space for galleries, exhibitions, performances and arts organizations, and the latter will be a creative industries landmark with designer studios, start-up establishments, retail space for arts and crafts, and rooms for artists-in-residence.

The United Nations Educational and Scientific Cooperation Organization (UNESCO) recently ratified the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education* (2010) and established an UNESCO Arts in Education Observatory in Hong Kong for research in local cultures and creativity in education. These reinforce the importance of developing local cultures in Hong Kong and the region.

3.3 Challenges to Hong Kong's Cultural Development

Beneath the veneer of Hong Kong's successes as a global city and its apparent achievements in the arts and culture sector lie a host of civil dissatisfaction with the government. If unresolved, many of these issues threaten the mid- and long-term development of Hong Kong's local cultures. These include the widening wealth gap, rising costs of living, housing prices getting out of control (Cheung 2010), a lack of social cohesion, incomplete economic restructuring, severe social inequality, intensifying cronyism and deficiencies within the political system itself (Sing 2012). Research by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong indicate that Hong Kong's quality of life has been decreasing – down from a score of 108.78 in 2007 to 102.56 in 2011. And the score on “performance of government” has declined markedly from 8.73 in 2007 to 5.62 in 2011 (Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies 2012). A large protest on the 14th anniversary of its return to China (1 July 2011) exposed the public's frustration with the government's leadership approach, especially in the handling of a controversial plan to scrap by-elections. On the city's 15th anniversary (1 July 2012), more than 100,000 Hong Kong citizens gathered at an annual mass, sending a defiant message to the visiting Chinese President that the city cherishes its freedom in the face of perceived Beijing meddling in its domestic affairs, and calling for unfettered democracy in 2017 (Tan 2012). Two months later, huge public protests and hunger strikes forced the newly elected Chief Executive to back down on what was perceived as a top-mandated introduction of National Education for Hong Kong schools.

Given the inherent institutional constraints of a government lacking political legitimacy (in a system where the government is not democratically elected by the people), the government needs to prove itself capable of being better connected with different segments of society as well portraying a sense of mission, direction and identity for the Hong Kong people. The government needs to abandon any top-down approach that does not engage with “the wider artistic, cultural community, or take sufficient account of urban social and economic context within which local and regional artistic and cultural activity exists” (Evans 2001, p. 108). Its core challenge is how to reinvent itself in a fast-morphing civil environment where “[p]olitics, political communication, public administration, consumerism, entertainment and popular culture are blended together” (Law et al. 2010, p. 1). For Hong Kong's cultural development to be sustainable, the government has been urged to take stronger leadership in addressing a range of complex issues that impact upon local cultures, including Hong Kong's evolving identity and the creation of an appropriate cultural policy.

3.3.1 Leadership

Large-scale developments such as the multi-billion dollar WKCD project promise invigorated cultural activity for both local residents and the tourism market. But critics continue to lament Hong Kong's lack of a cultural policy, which must uphold

Hong Kong's core values (Ho 2012). And the visionary WKCD project has attracted repeated calls for the government to prioritize 'cultural software' development. After more than a decade of delays, the government recently announced that the controversial project would be delayed for two years, and the progress of this arts hub will depend on "financing options" (Ng and Chow 2011). This has further damaged the government's leadership standing.

However, Chan and Shu (2006) noted that the government's policy agenda has moved in a positive direction; although it lacks sufficient strategic action to enable full implementation. Action is required urgently, as arts and cultural participation has been declining across the board in Hong Kong, with either flattening or declining rates of attendance at such flagship institutions as the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Hong Kong City Hall, and at public libraries between 2010 and 2013 (Leisure and Cultural Services Department 2013). Very recent studies have indicated an interest in studying Hong Kong's cultural context and its young generation that could inform cultural policy making – 'A review study on cultural audit: The landscape of Hong Kong's cultural infrastructure' (Hong Kong Development and Strategy Research Centre 2011) and 'A study on understanding our young generation' (Yip et al. 2011). The recent paper on 'Policy Initiatives of Home Affairs Bureau' to the Legislative Council's Panel on Home Affairs reflects governmental support for developing the "cultural industries" by implementing "the relevant work, actively provid[ing] an environment upholding freedom of expression, broaden[ing] the cultural resources of Hong Kong, and develop[ing] a local and international cultural market"; but these initiatives do not refer to children and young people (Hong Kong LegCo Panel on Home Affairs 2011).

These developments reveal the need to revamp existing bureaucratic structures, which have the arts and culture come under the jurisdiction of the Home Affairs Bureau while the creative industries are under the purview of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Education Bureau is responsible for arts education. Such inefficient and ineffective arrangements create artificial demarcation that hinders the synergizing potential of efforts to develop the arts and culture. Hence a proposal was made for establishing a new Cultural Bureau. A Bureau with centralized administrative powers and functions would better facilitate the local cultural ecology, which comprises visions and beliefs, supply of talents, contents and activities, cultural intermediaries such as curators, consultants and managers as well as social and economic demands for the arts and cultural consumption. The new Bureau would be responsible for drafting a comprehensive cultural policy that drive Hong Kong's development in arts, culture and the creative industries, co-ordinate with other bureaus and departments to generate an environment friendly to artistic creativity, and review existing arts funding mechanisms and distribution of resources. But it created another controversy for the government and the plan did not eventuate.³

To date, the government has yet to resolve the key challenge of cultural policy and to effectively engage with a range of local advocacy groups and advisory groups

³Read the debate at <http://www.scmp.com/article/1000325/scmp-debate>

which tend to over-emphasize specific bits and pieces of the whole culture scene. Such a policy would need to clarify the cultural identity of a society that is established by the collective efforts of people who come from different social, economic and religious backgrounds.

3.3.2 Identity

Hong Kong's old identity was formed in a market-driven environment where expatriates and elites rule, and where multiple cultures lived in close proximity but seldom mingled. With money as their common denominator of success, they had taipans and tycoons as models and imported arts as preferred culture. Fifteen years after the handover, a generation of Hong Kongers who never knew colonial rule has grown, and they face a very different world with a new relationship with their Chinese motherland. "Indigenous culture" has now become a hot topic, and Hong Kongers have begun to be more concerned about cultural conservation and the value of intangible cultural heritage (Ho 2010). There are also concerns that as the city rushed towards modernization and globalization, government policies have neglected to address threats to local cultures such like *dai pai dong* food stalls and street markets being slowly forced into extinction. The recent controversy over National Education and the Diaoyu islands saga have rekindled the debate about Hong Kong's real identity. The government's seeking national recognition of four local festivals reflects a recent shift in thinking that values the preservation and promotion of local cultures integral to Hong Kong's identity. But in the face of China's augmented economic and political influences, Hong Kong now faces an identity crisis centred on the sustainability of its core cultural values, particularly its outlook on freedom and the rule of law. There is a growing fear of political interference and "colonization" by the mainland (England 2012), as demonstrated in a historic protest that called for preserving the indigenous Cantonese dialect over the official Mandarin language (Putonghua) on August 1, 2010 (Neo 2010). There is also growing resentment against Mainland Chinese (Chiu 2012) – caused in part by the perception that mainland mothers-to-be are competing with locals for limited hospital resources, rich investors driving up housing prices beyond the reach of local citizens, controversy over the public behaviour of Mainlanders, and anger at Mainland shoppers and parallel traders for creating a shortage of daily necessities and driving up prices.⁴

A recent identity issue poll by the University of Hong Kong revealed the lowest level of Hong Kongers who identified themselves first and foremost as Chinese citizens (16.6 %) since the 1997 handover (Simpson 2012). For the first time, a majority (63 %) identified themselves as "Hong Konger" (i.e., "Hong Kong

⁴For details on why Hong Kongers and Mainland Chinese are not getting along, see <http://world.time.com/2012/01/24/trouble-down-south-why-hong-kong-and-mainland-chinese-arent-getting-along/>

citizens” or “Chinese Hong Kong citizens”) rather than Chinese. It also found that trust in the Chinese government has fallen sharply over the past three years, linked to China’s crack down on civil rights activists and their imprisonment (Magistad 2012). A debate regarding the “de-sinofication” of Hong Kong has re-emerged, with some calling for Hong Kong to be a “city-state” and questioned whether Hongkongers are really “Chinese nationals” (Lau 2012). The identity issue has also been raised in recent debates about the integration of South Asian ethnic groups and the lack of a multicultural policy that addresses cultural diversity, respect and integration (see Law and Lee 2012). Although cultural diversity may pose difficulties during the process of policymaking and community building, it offers huge opportunities that can expand the scope and enhance the wealth of Hong Kong’s cultural ecology.

It has been argued that democratic limitations in post-colonial Hong Kong may have led more people to seek expression or confirmation of their identities through the arts and culture (Clarke 2002). And there is evidence of increased awareness of the value of the arts and culture, which have taken on increasing prominence in Hong Kong’s search for an identity since China resumed sovereignty over the territory. Such awareness of and interest in the value of arts and culture deserve collective co-operation and commitment to co-create a sustainable cultural future.

3.3.3 *Sustainability*

A sustainable and vibrant cultural ecology requires much more than building impressive facilities and sophisticated programming. It requires building audiences, educating audiences and practitioners, nurturing a quality cultural workforce, designing effective governance models, establishing suitable venue policies, conducting in-depth research studies among other things. Such an ecology is characterised by community engagement through cultural activities that help people make sense of their environment, express their aspirations and celebrate their uniqueness. Local cultures are developed, valued, and sustained through the process of place making – the co-creation of distinctive and liveable environments.

But all too often sustainability is equated with audience building, which is reduced to “bums on seats” and “arts marketing”, lacking careful consideration to matters such as accessibility, affordability, equity, social and cultural inclusion, cultural rights, cultural identities and citizenship. Often too, arts education is reduced to “outreach” – failing to raise the cultural literacy of the wider community, jumping onto bandwagons, adopting popular values uncritically, missing opportunities that explore the creative integration of popular and high culture with indigenous cultures, and neglecting lifelong learning, acceptance of differences, appreciation of traditions, and respect for diversity.

In May 2010, a historic UNESCO document called the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the Development of Arts Education* (UNESCO 2010) formulated three goals for arts in education. The Agenda has particular relevance to the development of

local cultures in being concerned about threats to peace, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding. It recognizes the significant contribution of the arts in resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today's world, and articulates that the success of arts education in meeting these challenges lies in achieving high standards in the conception and delivery of arts programmes. The "learning in the arts/culture" approach stresses the value of cultural perspectives, multi and intercultural, and culturally-sensitive languages through learning processes. This kind of approach contributes to engender understanding of the importance of cultural diversity and reinforce behaviour patterns underlying social cohesion.

Arts education is a powerful key to ensuring the sustainable development of local cultures. The Hong Kong school system has established the Arts as one of eight Key Learning Areas (KLA). The curriculum reform (in 2001) document for the Arts KLA states its aims as focusing on students' whole-person development, including their "creativity, imagination, flexibility, aesthetic sensitivity and critical responses to the world" (CDC 2003, p. 12). Elements of local cultures (Chinese music, Cantonese Opera, and Cantopop) have been added to the new curriculum. A new senior secondary school (NSS) curriculum has been launched to provide more hours of arts learning experiences (minimum of 135 h) for senior high school students. The government also funds the Hong Kong Institute of Education to provide teacher education programmes that cater for local schools, and the Academy for Performing Arts is funded to provide professional training from post-secondary diploma to master's degree level.

3.4 Conclusion and Future Development

Local cultures cannot be developed and sustained over the long term without strong leadership, clarity of cultural identities, and community partnerships and cooperation. This is especially true if policies, plans and strategies are to be appropriately designed, well accepted and effectively implemented. Without a comprehensive cultural policy, Hong Kong's approach to cultural planning has been long on hardware and short on software; but this is being realized and redressed.

A major problem in Hong Kong's cultural development has been the segregation and fragmentation of its policy objectives and responsibilities. Without a Cultural Bureau, the relevant government bureaus and departments would need to pay greater attention to cultural development and incorporate such an agenda into their policymaking process. This will require a high level of governmental co-ordination.

Expanding participation in cultural activities and fostering community well-being is fundamental to Hong Kong's future growth and prosperity. If local cultures were to have a sustainable future, more attention should be paid to school and community arts education as well as the promotion of the arts at every level. This will ensure that every Hong Kong citizen can have the opportunity to participate in the arts and local cultures from a young age and maintain it as a lifelong enjoyment.

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