

## **COMMUNITY SPORTS COMMITTEE**

### **Findings of Public Opinion Survey on Physical Exercise Participation in Hong Kong**

#### **PURPOSE**

This paper reports to Members on the findings and recommendations of the Public Opinion Survey on Physical Exercise Participation in Hong Kong (the survey).

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. In order to understand the physical exercise habits of Hong Kong people and their favourable sports activities, the Central Policy Unit of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, at the request of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct a Public Opinion Survey on Physical Exercise Participation in Hong Kong in September 2006. The survey collected information on the physical exercise habits and preferences of Hong Kong people aged 12 or above.

#### **SCOPE OF THE SURVEY**

3. The survey was designed and conducted by the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic Technology & Consultancy Co. Limited of Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The scope of the survey included the following:

- (a) whether the respondents do physical exercise and the reasons for doing so;
- (b) the exercising patterns of the respondents;
- (c) the physical exercise they preferred most and hope to learn most;
- (d) the factors in choosing the preferred physical exercise;
- (e) whether they prefer to do exercise alone or with partners;
- (f) whether they have participated in recreational and sports activities organised by different organisations; and
- (g) their opinions on the LCSD's recreational and sports activities and facilities.

## METHODOLOGY

4. The survey was carried out in the period from 12 to 14 September 2006. In total, 1011 persons aged 12 or above were successfully interviewed through telephone.

## SURVEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. To facilitate Members to understand the findings of the survey, the gist of the findings of the survey (please refer to the Executive Summary in the *Annex* for details) is extracted as follow:

- (a) About 79% of the respondents did physical exercise in the past three months. The percentage was higher than that (47%) of the study conducted by Hong Kong Sports Development Board in 2003, indicating that there was increased participation of Hong Kong people in doing physical exercise.
- (b) 64.7% of the respondents (71% of them were elderly) indicated that their primary reason for doing exercise was to enhance health, but only 4 % of them would regard it as a habit.
- (c) Although about 79% of the respondents did physical exercise, when measuring against the standard of doing physical exercise three times or above per week with an average of 30 minutes or above in each occasion, clearly the frequency and amount of physical exercise of the young and the adults were not adequate. Only 24.6% of the young, 21.6% of the adults and 53.1% of the elderly could attain the standard.
- (d) Twenty percent (20.3%) of the respondents indicated that they had not done any physical exercise in the past three months. Over 60% (62.4%) of these respondents who were mainly skilled and manual workers with lower educational attainment and low income indicated that they had no intention to do physical exercise in the coming three months.
- (e) The main reason for not doing physical exercise was “lack of time due to working/studying/domestic work” (54.5%) and the secondary reason was being “lazy” (25.8%).
- (f) There were significant differences in the usual time period for doing physical exercise among different age groups. The elderly (84.1%) preferred doing physical exercise in the morning, while the young preferred after school and the adults either in the morning or in the evening.
- (g) Overall speaking, the most popular top three physical exercises were “running” (25.6%), “swimming” (22.7%) and “fitness exercise” (18.1%).
- (h) For the adults and the elderly, the sports they preferred were mainly health-oriented. The physical exercises that the elderly did most frequently were “fitness exercise”, “walking” and “Tai Chi”. For the adults, the physical exercises they did most frequently were “running”, “swimming” and “walking”. The young preferred sports that were skill-oriented and of high intensity, such as “basketball”, “running” and “football” etc.

- (i) For the most hope-to-learn physical exercise, both the elderly and adults chose “swimming” and “Tai Chi”, while the young chose “swimming”, “tennis” and “badminton”.
- (j) “Swimming” was the most hope-to-learn physical exercise for all age groups (12.1%).
- (k) Regarding the criteria for choosing physical exercise, the most important factors, in descending order, were the effects of the physical exercise (30.3%), personal preference (29.7%) and physical fitness of oneself (17.8%). Only 5 % of the respondents would regard low charges as the most important factor in choosing their physical exercise.
- (l) The percentage of the elderly who chose to do physical exercise alone was relatively high (53.0%). Quite a number of physical exercises such as “fitness exercise”, “walking” and “Tai Chi” were done on an individual basis. On the other hand, the young enjoyed doing physical exercise with friends (56.5%). Therefore, they tended to choose physical exercise with participation of partners, such as “basketball”, “football” and “badminton”.
- (m) The venues chosen by the respondents for doing physical exercise were mostly leisure facilities of the LCSD / other government departments (54.1%) and private housing facility (23.1%). 19.1% chose to do physical exercise at home.
- (n) The survey indicated that only 10% of the respondents had participated in organised recreational sports activities in the past three months. As for the organisations referred, 36.1% of them were managed by the LCSD or other government organisations.
- (o) Regarding the charges for the LCSD’s recreational sports activities, 45% of the respondents indicated that the charges were reasonable or cheap, and only 7.6% thought that they were expensive. 47.4% of the respondents indicated they had no comment / no idea.
- (p) As for the charges for the LCSD’s recreation and sports facilities, except 40.2% of the respondents indicated they had no idea / no comment as answers, 44.5% of the respondents indicated that the charges were reasonable or cheap. Only 15.3% indicated that the charges were expensive.
- (q) 32.4% of the respondents indicated that the quality of the LCSD’s recreation and sports facilities was high and very good. Only 3.9% remarked that the quality of the recreation and sports facilities was poor.

6. Based on the above survey findings, the survey report has made the following recommendations:

- (a) The frequency and intensity of physical exercise undertaken by the young and the adults were obviously not adequate. It is proposed that publicity on the importance of doing regular exercise to this type of people should be strengthened.

- (b) Convenience is the deciding factor for choosing the venue for doing physical exercise. It is proposed that more promotional and publicity activities should be organised at the public sports facilities in commercial areas, so as to encourage the working class to do physical exercise before working hours or during lunch hours.
- (c) The young relatively like to exercise together with friends and the activities they like are basketball, football, badminton, etc. It is proposed that the existing community and school resources be utilized for organising more sports activities of these types with district organisations.
- (d) In order to encourage low income people to do physical exercise more frequently, it is proposed that certain recreation and sports activities that could be done at home or in nearby open areas be designed for them.
- (e) It is proposed that the Government should conduct large-scale public opinion surveys periodically to collect information on the physical exercise habits of Hong Kong citizens. By comparing the relevant data of the surveys, the Government could follow up on the trend and the variations in the physical exercise habits of people with different demographic characteristics so as to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of sports for all by the Government.

## **PRESENTATION**

7. Members are invited to note the findings and recommendations of the survey. The relevant report will be submitted to the working group set up for the formulation of indicators to measure the effectiveness of strategies for promoting community sports as reference, and used as the basis for public opinion surveys to be conducted in the future. The relevant report will also be distributed to the LCSD District Leisure Services Offices, and used as reference for planning community sports activities.

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Leisure and Cultural Services Department  
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