

Underprivileged teens to receive empowerment programme at HUB Hong Kong to be funded by Operation Santa Claus



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- Initiative for teens to be funded by annual fundraising campaign run by the Post and public broadcaster RTHK
- Project aims to help teens build self-confidence by recognising their talents and potential – funds to be used for new facilities and equipment



Josephine Leung, executive director of the Hub Hong Kong in Sham Shui Po on October 9. Photo: Jonathan Wong

An empowerment programme for Hong Kong's underprivileged teenagers is set to be launched by a local youth centre.

The initiative, known as Project T, which stands for teenagers and transformation, will be funded by Operation Santa Claus, the annual fundraising campaign run by the *South China Morning Post* and public broadcaster RTHK.

Project T will take place at the HUB Hong Kong, a 4,500 sq ft youth centre in Sham Shui Po that provides space for children and teens to play sports, study and interact in productive ways, including arts workshops and cooking classes. The HUB Hong Kong, founded in 2012, cares for a community of more than 1,200 members each year. It serves young Hongkongers between six and 18 years old and their parents

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“Hong Kong lacks space and we hope we can create some space for our teenagers.” Leung said her team of 11 was especially keen to create development opportunities for what they described as “invisible” students.

Leung explained: “They are neither top students nor underachievers. These pupils, whose academic performance was middling, are easily ignored in the

school system, and they tend to plod along half-heartedly. They might think they could never achieve anything in their lives.”

She said her team wanted to change that mindset by showing these young people that they would succeed if given an opportunity.

The HUB Hong Kong plans to provide support for 60 secondary students between 13 and 15 years old, and who had grown up in an underprivileged environment.

This is the first time the HUB Hong Kong will receive benefits from Operation Santa Claus, the year-end fundraiser, and it will use the proceeds to set up new facilities at its centre and buy equipment for Project T participants. “There will be a practice room for bands,” Leung said. “Participants may also learn digital photography and video editing here.” She said the project aimed to help its members build self-confidence by recognising their talents and potential.

All participants are required to attend courses in volunteering, sports, art or music. They will also join academic tutoring classes and career development sessions.

Top achievers will then have an opportunity to visit the HUB Myanmar, one of several HUB facilities in Asia. Leung said the charity attached importance to youngsters’ all-around development. The organisation also provides parental guidance and family counselling services to help strengthen family bonds.

“We want to build trust in our relationship with young members, allowing them to develop their talents in a carefree way here,” she said.

“I hope some of our members will see us as their family and come back to help us and teach younger children when they grow older.”