

# THE CHANGES

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蛻變 PROJECT  
計劃 CHANGE

## Please Give Them A Second Chance

As a retired civil servant (administrative officer), it may seem odd for me to participate in Project Change to voluntarily assist in the social reintegration of young people who were arrested in the 2019 social movements.

Let me share with you my inner journey in three points.

First, the social movement of 2019 was a historic shock to Hong Kong. No Hongkongers can be spared of its impact. Many of my friends and even close family member have chosen to emigrate. Just like when facing the 1997 issue, I chose to stay. After all, this is the place where I was born and raised. It is a bit like that scene from the movie Titanic: even as the ship sinks, the musicians continue to play until the final notes. More importantly, our ship has not sunk yet, has it?

Secondly, what can I do by staying? Coincidentally, in 2022, the media reported on the establishment of Project Change, which aims to help young people affected by the 2019 social movements reclaim their futures and reignite hope! I felt that this perfectly matched the needs of Hong Kong. If I stayed, I certainly wanted to contribute to making Hong Kong a better place. If our young people turn hopeless, how can we talk about building a future? So, I volunteered to participate in Project Change. To be frank, some friends cautioned me against it, telling me not to step into turbulent waters as a retiree. With God's blessings, I am sound and safe throughout the experience.

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**Letter to Supporters**

Philip Chan: Please Give  
Them A Second Chance

**Where there is  
companionship,  
there is hope.**

"Come Together, Igniting  
Hope" Symposium

**Project Change has  
been established  
for five years.**

Thirdly, I have been mentoring five young participants in Project Change, many wanted to improve their English and pursue further education. If you ask me about my impressions of them, I won't embellish or criticise; I will simply say that they are just like any other young people in Hong Kong. Given the right opportunities, they too can shine!

Of course, there is one obvious difference between them and adults: their daily schedules. I once scheduled a video tutoring session with one of the students at 11 AM (since we were then still under social distancing policies during the pandemic), but I ended up waiting for an hour because he had not woken up yet!

Honestly, not every case is successful, but there are also encouraging experiences. For example, I spent a month tutoring one student in Chinese for the DSE in Economics (while I learned Economics in English, I had never seen a DSE exam papers before this). In the end, he scored a level 4 and was accepted into university!

I hope this short article would serve to urge everyone to give these young people a second chance, allowing them to become members of the next generation that builds Hong Kong!



**Philip Chan**  
**Board Member, Director (Corporate Relationships**  
**and Communication)**

## Where there is companionship, there is hope.

Thank you to the more than 200 friends who joined us on March 22 for our event “Come Together, Igniting Hope”. It was a moving occasion where seven young people supported by Project Change shared their personal journeys of overcoming adversity, and three parents spoke from the heart about their unwavering love for their children.



▲ With heartfelt thanks to the 200+ friends and volunteers. Your presence and support brought it to life.

As the young people reflected on their experiences - from the day of their arrest through prosecution – many recalled the anger, confusion and anxiety they once felt. Yet through those struggles, they gained strength, perspective and resilience. With the support and acceptance of society, they have found the paths to rise again, returning to their studies or using their professional skills to give back to the community.

The three parents also spoke with heartfelt honesty. Though they may not fully agree with their children's views, they have witnessed firsthand the heavy price their children have paid. They hope the society can extend a second chance to these young people, allowing them to contribute just like anyone else.

We were honoured to have distinguished guests, including a university president, professors, and business leaders in the sharing session, who all expressed their beliefs in the importance of a second chance.



▲ Guest of Honour Dr. Lam Ching-choi, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Mental Health.

As our guest of honour Dr. Lam Ching-choi, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Mental Health, remarked: "Each of us has stumbled at some point in life." He acknowledged that breaking the law carries consequences, but a single mistake should not define a person's entire life. He called on all of us to view these young people through a broader lens, and to help foster a more inclusive society. "I hope everyone here will continue supporting our young people, whether they are still in prison or has returned to the community. Let's make our support visible and come together as a force for good. Let hope and love flourish."

The guests who joined the event came from various sectors, including education, culture, the arts, business, social services, counselling, professional organisations, licensing bodies, public institutions, and government departments. Together, they witnessed the growth and transformation of the young people we serve.

At the end of the gathering, they wrote encouraging messages and placed them on a board, creating a piece of collective artwork.



▲ Professor Sung Yun-wing, co-founder of Project Change, thanked everyone for coming together to ignite hope for young people.

Your presence has shown the young people that although life's path can be difficult, they are not walking alone. Your support has ignited their hope. Thank you.

## Messages from our guests:

Give thanks in good times, look up in loss, lean on faith in pain, cry out in sorrow, and sing in joy! This is life's promise. Stay strong! Blessings to you!

Helping one person may not change the world, but it can certainly change their world.

A boundless ocean and sky emerge after the stormy waves have passed.



**Where there is companionship,  
there is hope.**

We love you and have not given up on you. We believe you deeply love Hong Kong and understand that you need our acceptance, support, and encouragement. Let us stand together and ignite hope for everyone.

"If there's a road, we'll sing along the way; if there isn't, we'll wade through streams and climb over hills." – "The Road" by Hsieh Ming-Yu

Thank you to everyone in various roles who supports and cares for our youth.

2019 does not define your life. Stay strong!

When you see that light can shine even through the deepest corners of darkness, know that 'light' has never abandoned anyone.

We see hope in our young people during these challenging times. In the midst of rainy and stormy days, please hold them close with us.

A second chance means for a brand new beginning. Stay strong and positive. Together we can move forward for a new start.

There will be light at the end of the tunnel. Never give up. May God gives you strength and hope!

Life is a journey of learning and growth, inevitably filled with adversity, trials, and challenges. Through these experiences, we learn how to face them, becoming wiser and stronger.

Thanks for the opportunity to be part of the volunteer work today ... filled the love around

As long as you feel remorse and are willing to make efforts, the engineering profession supports you! You're welcome here! Keep going!

Really thankful for the invitation to be able in joining today's Project Change volunteering event. I am more than grateful to participate this little impactful contribution. Much appreciated to everyone.

All the sharing and speeches today deeply moved me, and I'm truly grateful to be part of such a meaningful event and to be able to help.

## Project Change has been established for five years.

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### 2020 ~

**Project Change** was born in early 2020, found by a group of educators, professionals and academics moved by a shared concern during a New Year gathering. In the wake of the anti-extradition protests, many young people were arrested, and the group felt compelled to act. As teachers and intellectuals, they sought to provide timely, meaningful support to these youths as they faced arrest, prosecution, and court trials.

From the very beginning, our foremost priority was to offer counselling and emotional support. We recognised the profound distress these young people were experiencing, and committed ourselves to walking with them through the long legal journey. Where needed, Project Change prepared written reports for the court's reference. We also extended our care to their families and loved ones, understanding that when one person is arrested, the entire family carries the burden. Conversely, without the support of family or loved ones, it becomes even more challenging for young people to endure and overcome such traumatic period.

### 2021 ~

Out of the 10,000 individuals arrested in 2019, approximately 6,000 were under the age of 25. Many were university graduates or qualified professionals. Without a path to rebuild their lives, their futures risk being lost – affecting not only their personal well-being and their families, but also resulting in the loss of valuable talent and social investment.

In response, Project Change launched the **Reintegration Programme** in the latter half of 2021. The initiative supports young people upon release, helping them return to education, re-enter the workforce, and reintegrate into the society.

### 2022 ~

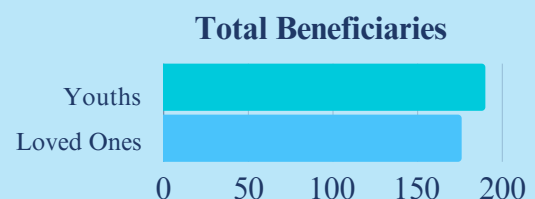
Through the "Reintegration Preparation Programme", Project Change begins delivering services to young people in correctional facilities.

### 2024 ~

Thanks to the unwavering support and compassion of the society, Project Change celebrated meaningful breakthroughs. Two of our clients—a young engineer and a finance professional—were able to retain their professional qualifications and continue serve the society through their expertise.

### 2025 ~

To date, Project Change has provided services to 366 individuals, many of these young people have also benefited from our "Reintegration Programme" services after returning to society.



**We remain grounded in a simple but powerful belief: With support, young people can overcome adversity. And with a second chance, they can thrive and shine just like any other, with hope and a bright future ahead.**

**Please click the link below to see the video about Project Change.**

**<https://www.youtube.com/@projectchange1472/featured>**