



To News Editors  
For Immediate Release

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## CUHK Releases Hong Kong Quality of Life Index 2019 Quality of Life Declines

The Centre for Quality of Life of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) released the “CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index” 2019 (the Index) today (23 September). According to this latest Index, the overall score in 2019 was 101.39, a decrease of 3.38 points from the score in 2018 (104.76). The result indicates that the quality of life in Hong Kong declined in the past year (Appendix 1). The Economic sub-index has decreased to its lowest on record; the Environmental sub-index has increased; other sub-indices including the Health sub-index, the Social sub-index and the Culture and Leisure sub-index have decreased.

The Index consists of 23 indicators that are grouped into five sub-indices: Health, Social, Culture and Leisure, Economic, and Environmental (Appendix 2). The indicators are selected according to their coverage, representativeness, measurability, and importance to the quality of life of Hong Kong people. **The higher the indicator scores, the better it performs.**

Compared with 2018, the Health, the Social, the Culture and Leisure, and the Economic sub-indices have dropped in 2019, while the Environmental sub-index improved (Appendix 3). In particular, the Economic sub-index decreased by 14.69% (1.75 points) to 10.15, it was the lowest on record. The Health sub-index decreased by 3.52% (0.87 points) to 23.75. The Social sub-index decreased by 3.07% (0.89 points) to 28.18. The Culture & Leisure sub-index decreased by 1.34% (0.24 points) to 17.78. The Environmental sub-index increased by 1.76% (0.37 points) to 21.53.

10 out of the 23 indicators improved in 2019 (Appendix 4). Noticeable increases in the index of public expenditure on education as a proportion (in %) of the GDP, the real rental index and the index of public expenditure on health as a proportion (in %) of the GDP were observed, with 23.88%, 10.15% and 9.02% increases between 2018 and 2019, respectively. The enrolment rate of the relevant age group of 17-20 for first-year-first degree places of UGC-funded programmes, the press criticism index, recycle rate municipal solid waste index and the recreation and sport activities participation index also improved by 7.64%, 5.06%, 3.14% and 2.73% accordingly. The increases in the remaining indicators were relatively mild, ranging from 0.97% to 1.49%. Among the 10 improved indicators, 3 of them have increased to the highest on record (Appendix 1). The overseas travel index has improved for the sixteenth consecutive year, and the index of the enrolment rate of the relevant age groups for first-year-first degree places of UGC-funded programmes has increased for the tenth consecutive year.

Compared with 2018, 8 out of the 23 indicators worsened in 2019 (Appendix 5). The government performance index, the index of current economic condition and the stress

index showed noticeable decrease, with 33.68%, 14.35% and 14.00% decrease to record lows between 2018 and 2019. The freedom of speech index and the housing affordability ratio decreased substantially and again hitting record low, with 11.16% and 10.41% decreases between 2018 and 2019. The general life satisfaction index also decreased with 8.30% between 2018 and 2019. The overall crime rate and the unemployment rate decreases in the remaining indicators were relatively mild, ranging from 2.00% to 3.88%. Among the 8 worsened indicators, 3 of them have decreased to the lowest on record in 2019 (Appendix 1). The freedom of speech index has decreased for the tenth consecutive year.

The “CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index” was designed by the Faculty of Social Science in 2003. This composite index is intended to measure and keep track of the quality of life in Hong Kong in the 21st century, and to provide policy makers and the community with a useful reference tool. It also aims at raising the awareness of the need to improve the quality of life of Hong Kong people. To continue this mission, in 2006, the Centre for Quality of Life was set up by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, CUHK to conduct on-going quality of life research and release the latest Index annually. Since 2012, the Centre for Quality of Life of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies has also compiled the “MTR-CUHK Youth Quality of Life Index”. The results of these two indices can be used for comparison and cross-reference.

2002 was the base year of the “CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index”, and the value of the Index for that year was set at 100. If the value of the Index of a subsequent year is above 100, it means that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is better than that of 2002. If the value of the Index is below 100, it reveals that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is worse than that of 2002. If the value of the Index is 100, it indicates that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is the same as that of 2002.

In order to measure and monitor more aspects of the quality of life in Hong Kong, based on the stage of social development, the research team at the Centre for Quality of Life of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies refines the composition and calculation methodology of the Index from time to time. From 2014 onwards, the number of sub-indices of the ‘CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index’ has been increased from three to five, namely, **Health, Social, Culture and Leisure, Economic** and **Environmental** sub-indices. The number of indicators included in the Index has been increased from 21 to 23.

The telephone survey of the “CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index” 2019 was sponsored by Department of Government and Public Administration, Department of Social Work, Department of Psychology, Lau Chor Tak Institute of Global Economics and Finance, and School of Journalism & Communication.

For more information on the “CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index”, please visit the website of the Centre for Quality of Life, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, CUHK: [www.cuhk.edu.hk/hkiaps/qol](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/hkiaps/qol).

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## Appendix 1: CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index <sup>Note 1</sup>

	2002 Base year	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 compared with 2018
<b>Health sub-index</b>													
1. Life expectancy at birth (years)	4.35	4.42	4.43	4.45	4.46	4.48	4.48	4.50	4.50	4.52	4.53	4.55 @#	Similar #
2. Public expenditure on health	4.35	3.65	3.57	3.40	3.67	4.60	4.94	3.96	4.67	4.11	4.13	4.51@	Better
3. Average patient days	4.35	5.23	5.32	5.28	5.34	5.15	5.26	5.23	5.17	5.07	4.98	4.97	Similar
4. Stress index ^	4.35	5.54	5.86	5.67	5.79	5.78	5.75	5.89	5.80	5.95	5.91	5.08	Worse
5. General life satisfaction index ^	4.35	4.85	4.85	4.74	4.79	4.85	4.79	4.84	5.07	5.12	5.06	4.64	Worse
<b>Health sub-index</b>	<b>21.74</b>	<b>23.69</b>	<b>24.02</b>	<b>23.55</b>	<b>24.05</b>	<b>24.85</b>	<b>25.22</b>	<b>24.41</b>	<b>25.19</b>	<b>24.77</b>	<b>24.62</b>	<b>23.75</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Social sub-index</b>													
6. Freedom of speech index ^	4.35	4.50	4.45	4.44	4.38	4.29	4.11	4.04	4.01	3.99	3.90	3.47	Worse &
7. Press criticism index	4.35	3.44	3.61	3.75	3.86	4.16	4.00	4.09	3.98	3.71	3.71	3.90@	Better
8. Government performance index ^	4.35	6.28	6.01	5.11	5.62	5.20	5.01	4.68	4.87	5.62	5.20	3.45	Worse &
9. Overall crime rate	4.35	4.39	4.52	4.55	4.59	4.77	5.07	5.18	5.50	5.77	5.88	5.65@	Worse
10. Public expenditure on education	4.35	4.84	3.51	3.36	3.57	3.84	3.62	3.29	3.40	3.32	3.34	4.13 @	Better
11. Enrolment rate of the relevant age groups (age 17-20) for first-year-first degree places of UGC-funded programmes	4.35	4.76	4.79	4.96	5.17	5.27	5.45	5.63	5.89	6.45	7.04	7.57#	Better #
<b>Social sub-index</b>	<b>26.09</b>	<b>28.22</b>	<b>26.88</b>	<b>26.18</b>	<b>27.19</b>	<b>27.53</b>	<b>27.26</b>	<b>26.91</b>	<b>27.64</b>	<b>28.85</b>	<b>29.07</b>	<b>28.18</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure sub-index</b>													
12. Cultural programmes attendance index	4.35	2.46	2.55	2.42	2.49	2.43	2.32	2.24	2.15	2.50	2.19	1.64 @	-
13. Recreation and sport activities participation index	4.35	6.05	5.60	6.31	5.71	6.50	5.65	6.31	5.66	6.72	5.79	5.95 @	Better
14. Overseas travel index	4.35	5.35	5.73	5.95	6.44	7.06	7.53	8.45	9.07	9.68	10.04	10.19#	Better #
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure sub-index</b>	<b>13.04</b>	<b>13.86</b>	<b>13.88</b>	<b>14.68</b>	<b>14.64</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>15.49</b>	<b>17.00</b>	<b>16.89</b>	<b>18.90</b>	<b>18.03</b>	<b>17.78</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Economic sub-index</b>													
15. Housing affordability ratio	4.35	0.94	-0.90	-2.03	-3.34	-4.54	-5.17	-6.13	-5.06	-6.62	-7.79	-8.60	Worse &
16. Real rental index	4.35	4.16	3.42	2.45	2.31	2.06	2.14	1.80	2.14	1.68	1.46	1.61	Better
17. Unemployment rate	4.35	5.64	6.21	6.69	6.74	6.74	6.78	6.76	6.70	6.88	7.03	6.89	Worse #
18. Index of current economic conditions ^	4.35	4.74	5.46	5.03	5.10	5.44	5.79	5.75	5.89	6.16	6.61	5.66	Worse
19. Real wage index	4.35	4.30	4.27	4.39	4.46	4.47	4.36	4.38	4.44	4.54	4.59	4.60	Similar #
<b>Economic sub-index</b>	<b>21.74</b>	<b>19.78</b>	<b>18.46</b>	<b>16.52</b>	<b>15.27</b>	<b>14.17</b>	<b>13.90</b>	<b>12.55</b>	<b>14.11</b>	<b>12.65</b>	<b>11.90</b>	<b>10.15</b>	<b>Worse &amp;</b>
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>													
20. Air index	4.35	4.37	4.45	4.00	4.71	4.26	4.64	4.99	5.38	5.47	5.69	5.77#	Better #
21. Water index	4.35	4.91	4.92	4.78	4.99	5.06	4.99	4.77	4.91	5.08	4.85	4.97 @*	-
22. Noise index	4.35	6.28	6.41	6.56	6.44	6.58	7.08	6.97	7.18	7.05	7.03	7.10	Better
23. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	4.35	5.91	6.22	5.74	4.65	4.39	4.37	4.24	4.01	3.81	3.58	3.70 @*	Better
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>	<b>17.39</b>	<b>21.47</b>	<b>22.01</b>	<b>21.08</b>	<b>20.80</b>	<b>20.29</b>	<b>21.08</b>	<b>20.98</b>	<b>21.48</b>	<b>21.40</b>	<b>21.25</b>	<b>21.53</b>	<b>Better</b>
<b>CUHK Quality of Life Index</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>107.02</b>	<b>105.24</b>	<b>102.00</b>	<b>101.94</b>	<b>102.84</b>	<b>102.95</b>	<b>101.84</b>	<b>105.30</b>	<b>106.57</b>	<b>104.76</b>	<b>101.39</b>	<b>Worse</b>

Note 1 The higher the indicator scores, the better it performs.

^ subjective index (data from telephone survey)

@ provisional figures

\* forecasted figures

■ revised figures

# Highest on record

& Lowest on record

## **Appendix 2: Composition of and Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

### **HEALTH SUB-INDEX**

1. Life expectancy at birth (in years) refers to the expectancy of life at birth for males and females.
2. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
3. Average patient days (per person) refers to the number of days in hospitals for treatment per person.
4. Stress index refers to the stress that the Hong Kong people are facing (base rate = 100).
5. General life satisfaction index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with their current lives (base rate = 100).

### **SOCIAL SUB-INDEX**

6. Freedom of speech index refers to the public attitude towards freedom of speech in Hong Kong (base rate = 100).
7. Press criticism index refers to the frequency of criticisms of Hong Kong corporations, the Hong Kong SAR Government, and the People's Republic of China Government by the press (base rate = 100).
8. Government performance index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with the performance of Hong Kong SAR Government (base rate = 100).
9. Overall crime rate (per 1,000 population) refers to the total number of violent and non-violent crimes reported per 1,000 population.
10. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
11. Enrolment rate of the relevant age groups (age 17-20) for first-year-first degree (FYFD) places of UGC-funded programmes (in percent).

### **CULTURE & LEISURE SUB-INDEX**

12. Cultural programmes attendance index (per 1,000 population) refers to the number of attendances at indoor cultural programmes organised at the venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department per 1,000 population.
13. Recreation and sport activities participation index (per 1,000 population) refers to the number of participants in recreation and sport activities organised or subvented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department per 1000 population.
14. Oversea travel index (per person) refers to the number of departures from the airport per person.

### **ECONOMIC SUB-INDEX**

15. Housing affordability ratio refers to the annual average of affordable property price (i.e. average property price times 39.9 sq. meter, divided by monthly medium income times 12).
16. Real rental index refers to the real rental index of the Hong Kong property market.
17. Unemployment rate refers to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (in percent).
18. Index of current economic conditions refers to the public attitude towards the economic conditions in Hong Kong.
19. Real wage index<sup>(1)</sup> refers to the real wages for employees up to supervisory level (excluding managerial and professional employees) in all selected industry sectors.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-INDEX**

20. Air quality index refers to the annual air quality of all general stations.
21. Water index refers to the percentage of the inland waters of Hong Kong graded as 'good' and 'excellent' by the monitoring stations.
22. Noise index (per 1,000 population) refers to the number of noise complaints received by the Environmental Protection Department and the Police Force per 1,000 population.
23. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste refers to the recycle rate of solid domestic waste, and commercial and industrial waste (in percent).

#### **Notes:**

- <sup>(1)</sup> The real wage index is derived by deflating the nominal wage indices by the CPI(A).

#### **Sources:**

Stress index, general life satisfaction index, freedom of speech index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions are compiled based on the results of telephone surveys.

Press criticism index is compiled based on the content analysis of six major local newspapers.

Data for all other indices are obtained from the government or related institutions.

## Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	2002	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>Health sub-index</b>												
1. Life expectancy at birth (years)	F: 84.5 M: 78.5	F: 85.9 M: 79.8	F: 86.0 M: 80.1	F: 86.7 M: 80.3	F: 86.4 M: 80.7	F: 86.7 M: 81.1	F: 86.9 M: 81.2	F: 87.3 M: 81.4	F: 87.3 M: 81.3	F: 87.6 M: 81.9	F: 87.6 M: 82.2	F: 88.1 @ M: 82.3 @
2. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	2.63	2.21	2.16	2.06	2.22	2.79	2.99	2.40	2.83	2.50	2.50	2.73 @
3. Average patient days @	1.40	1.12	1.09	1.10	1.08	1.14	1.11	1.12	1.14	1.17	1.20	1.20
4. Stress index ^	100.00	72.67	65.24	69.49	66.82	67.07	67.66	64.62	66.68	63.16	64.11	83.14
5. General life satisfaction index^	100.00	111.62	111.44	108.98	110.08	111.52	110.25	111.24	116.53	117.75	116.48	106.82
<b>Social sub-index</b>												
6. Freedom of speech index ^	100.00	103.54	102.24	102.08	100.73	98.64	94.53	93.01	92.30	91.76	89.81	79.79
7. Press criticism index	100.00	79.15	83.10	86.29	88.77	95.62	92.03	93.96	91.51	85.38	85.00	91.6 @
8. Government performance index ^	100.00	144.49	138.20	117.58	129.25	119.66	115.20	107.62	111.91	129.16	119.58	79.31
9. Overall crime rate (per 1,000 population)	11.25	11.13	10.81	10.74	10.62	10.16	9.37	9.11	8.27	7.58	7.28	7.87
10. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.06	4.52	3.28	3.14	3.33	3.58	3.38	3.07	3.17	3.10	3.11	3.86 @
11. Enrolment rate of the relevant age groups (age 17-20) for first-year-first degree places of UGC-funded programmes	17.00	18.60	18.70	19.40	20.20	20.60	21.30	22.00	23.00	25.2	27.5	29.6
<b>Culture &amp; Leisure sub-index</b>												
12. Cultural programmes attendance (per 1,000 population)	253.28	143.03	148.40	140.74	144.88	141.45	134.97	130.44	125.31	145.42	127.76	95.71*
13. Recreation and sport activities participation (per 1,000 population)	303.13	421.92	390.25	440.10	398.21	453.20	393.60	438.85	394.65	468.58	403.89	414.93*
14. Oversea travel times	0.74	0.91	0.97	1.01	1.09	1.20	1.28	1.43	1.54	1.64	1.70	1.73
<b>Economic sub-index</b>												
15. Housing affordability ratio	4.60	8.20	10.16	11.35	12.73	14.00	14.67	15.68	14.56	16.21	17.46	18.31
16. Real rental index	108.29	112.86	131.39	155.60	159.08	165.23	163.38	171.86	163.31	174.72	180.25	176.26
17. Unemployment rate	7.34	5.17	4.20	3.39	3.31	3.30	3.24	3.28	3.38	3.06	2.81	3.05
18. Index of current economic conditions ^	76.55	83.40	96.22	88.50	89.72	95.74	102.01	101.24	103.77	108.45	116.29	99.61
19. Real wage index	117.53	116.25	115.45	118.65	120.58	120.83	117.88	118.33	120.03	122.78	124.08	124.28
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>												
20. Air quality index	2.24	2.23	2.18	2.42	2.05	2.28	2.09	1.91	1.71	1.66	1.55	1.51
21. Water index	74.40	84.10	84.20	81.80	85.40	86.60	85.40	81.70	84.00	87.00	83.00	85.00*
22. Noise index (per 1000 population)	1.85	1.03	0.97	0.91	0.96	0.90	0.69	0.73	0.65	0.70	0.71	0.68
23. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	36.30	49.30	51.95	47.94	38.85	36.61	36.48	35.37	33.51	31.82	29.92	30.85*

^ subjective index (data from telephone survey)

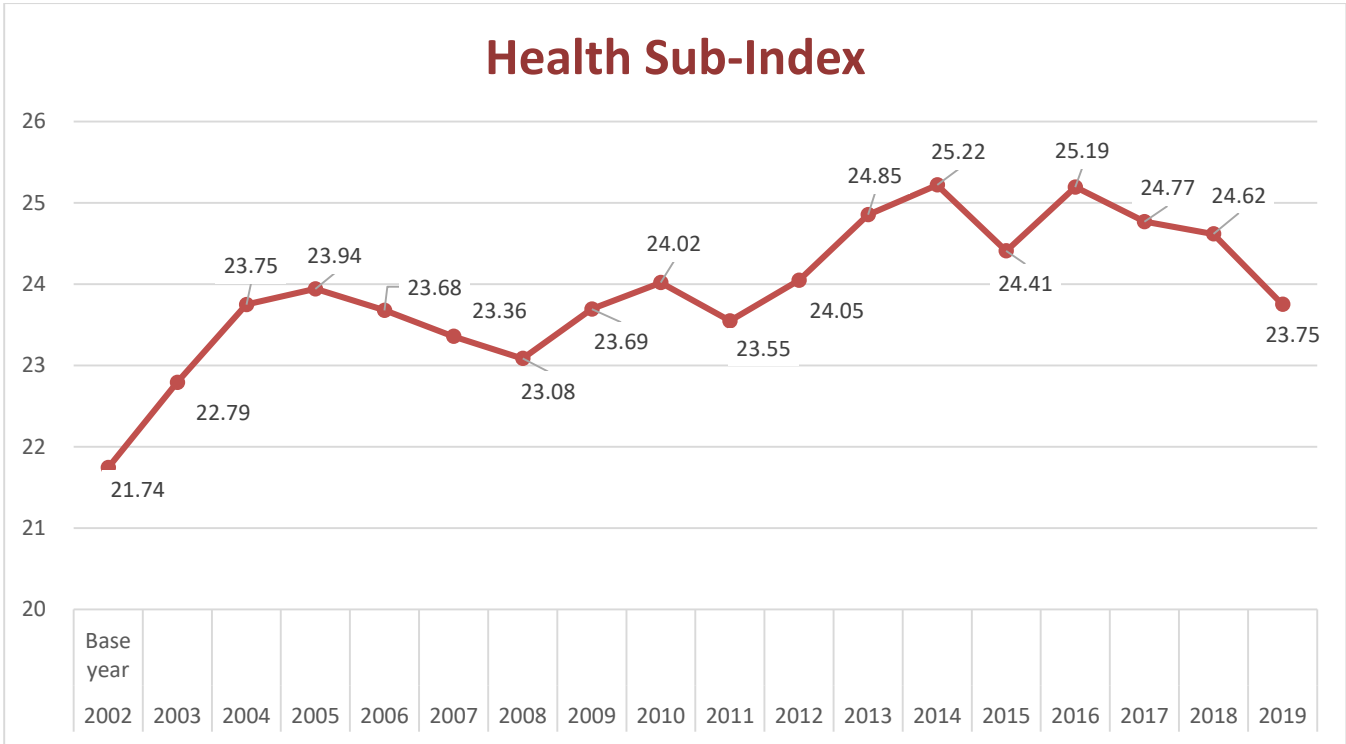
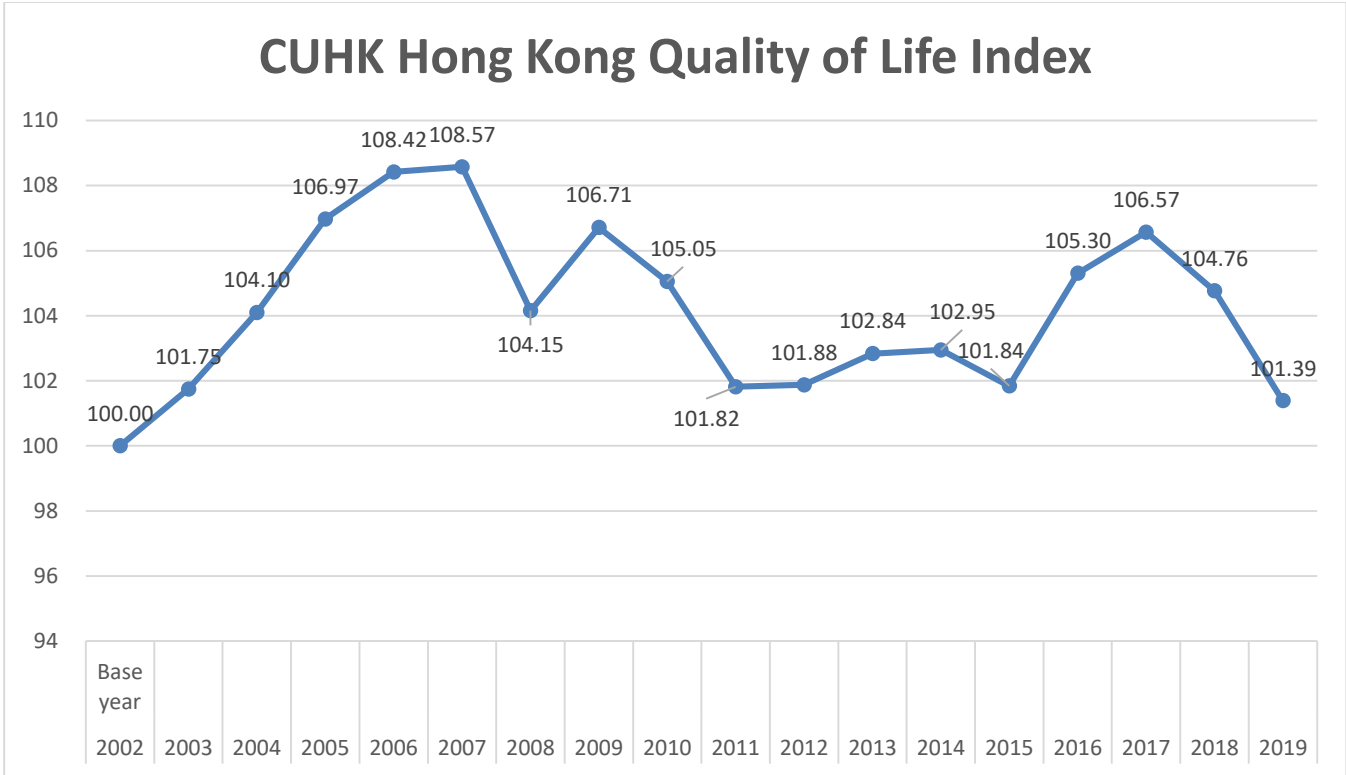
@ provisional figures

\* forecasted figures

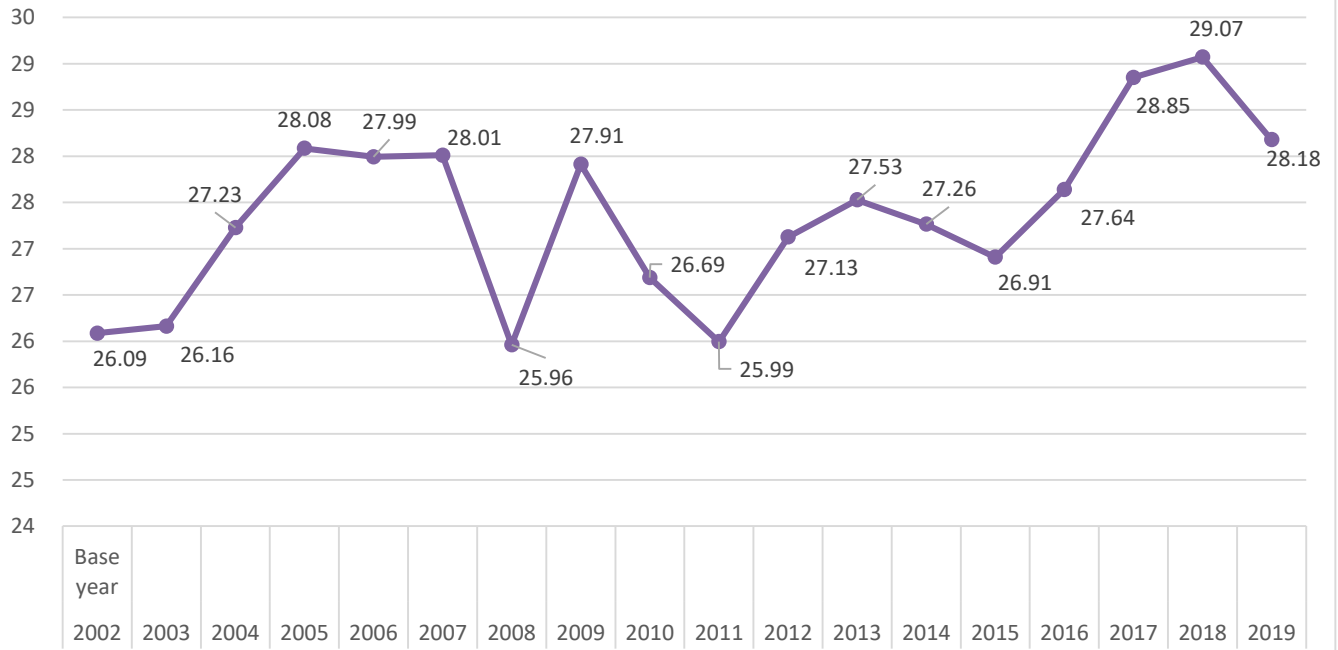
■ revised figures

**Appendix 3: Line Charts of CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index and Sub-indices**

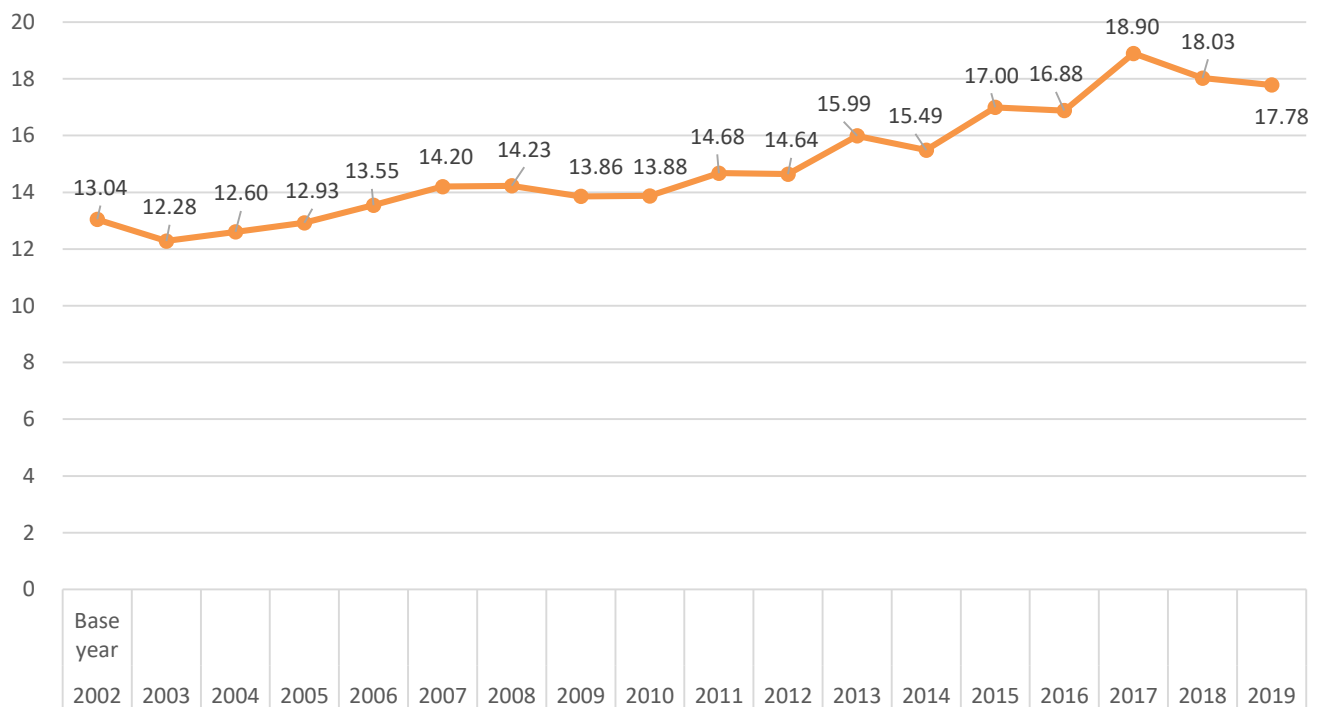
The higher the indicator scores, the better it performs.



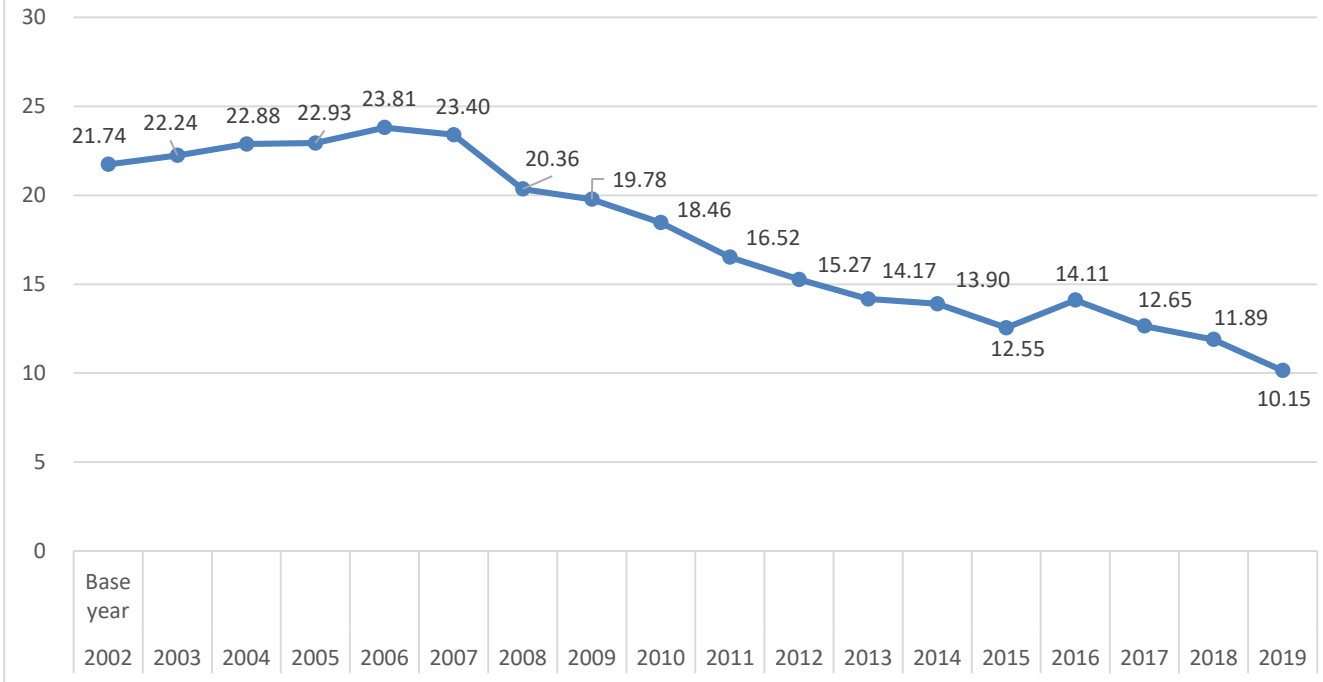
## Social Sub-Index



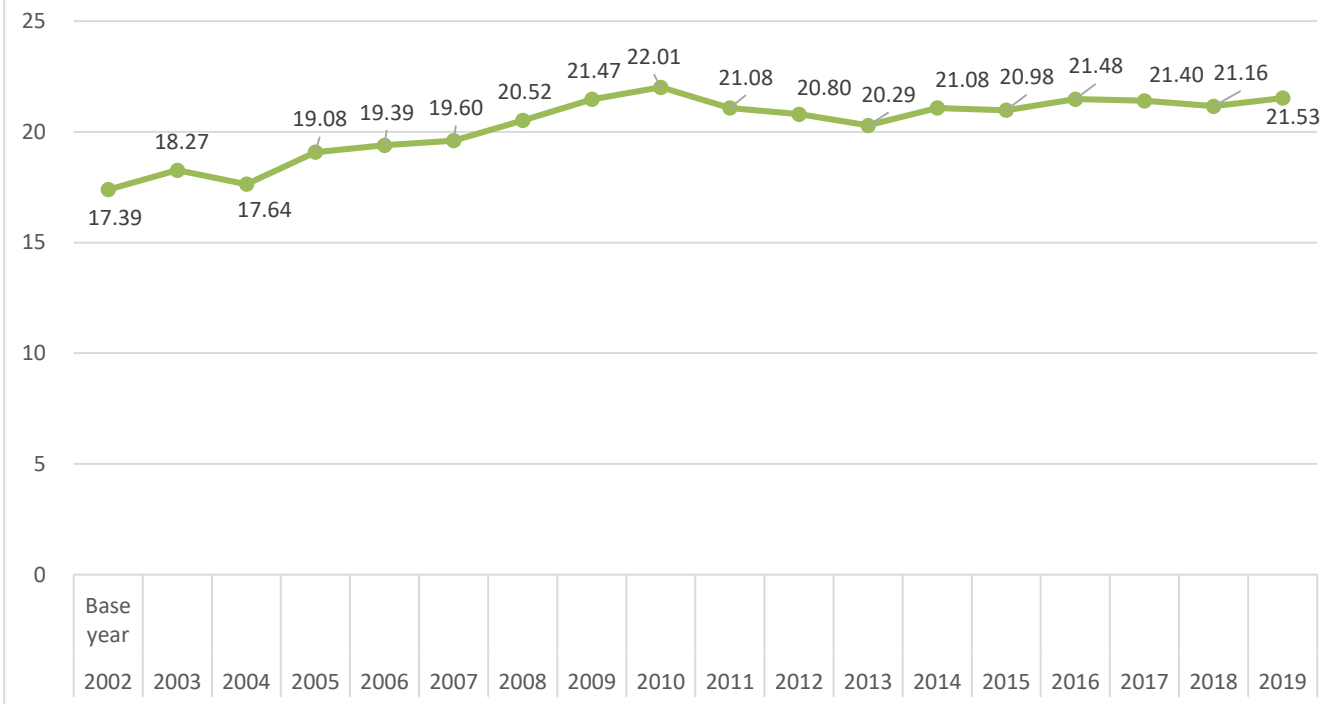
## Culture & Leisure Sub-Index



## Economic Sub-Index



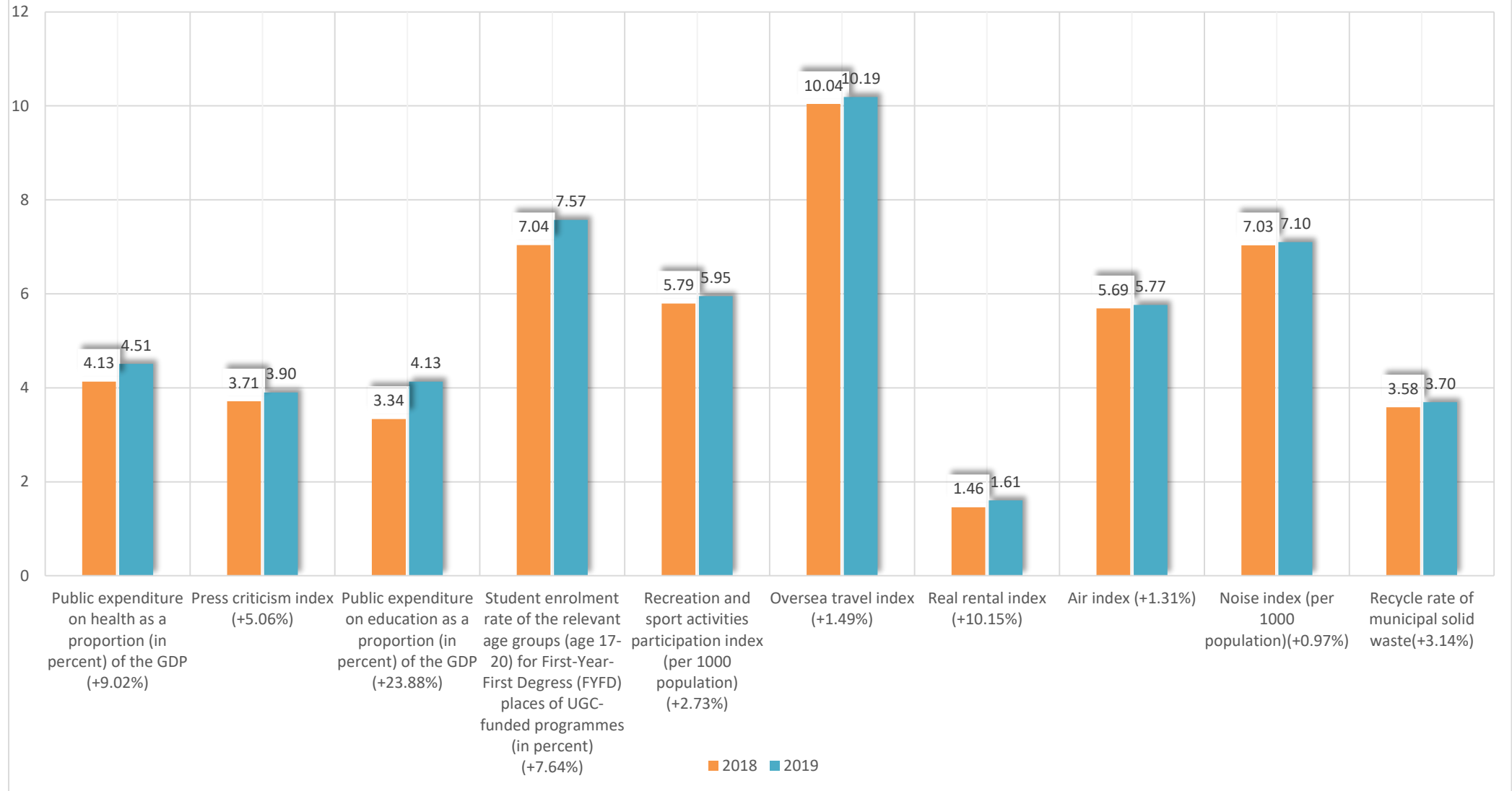
## Environmental Sub-Index



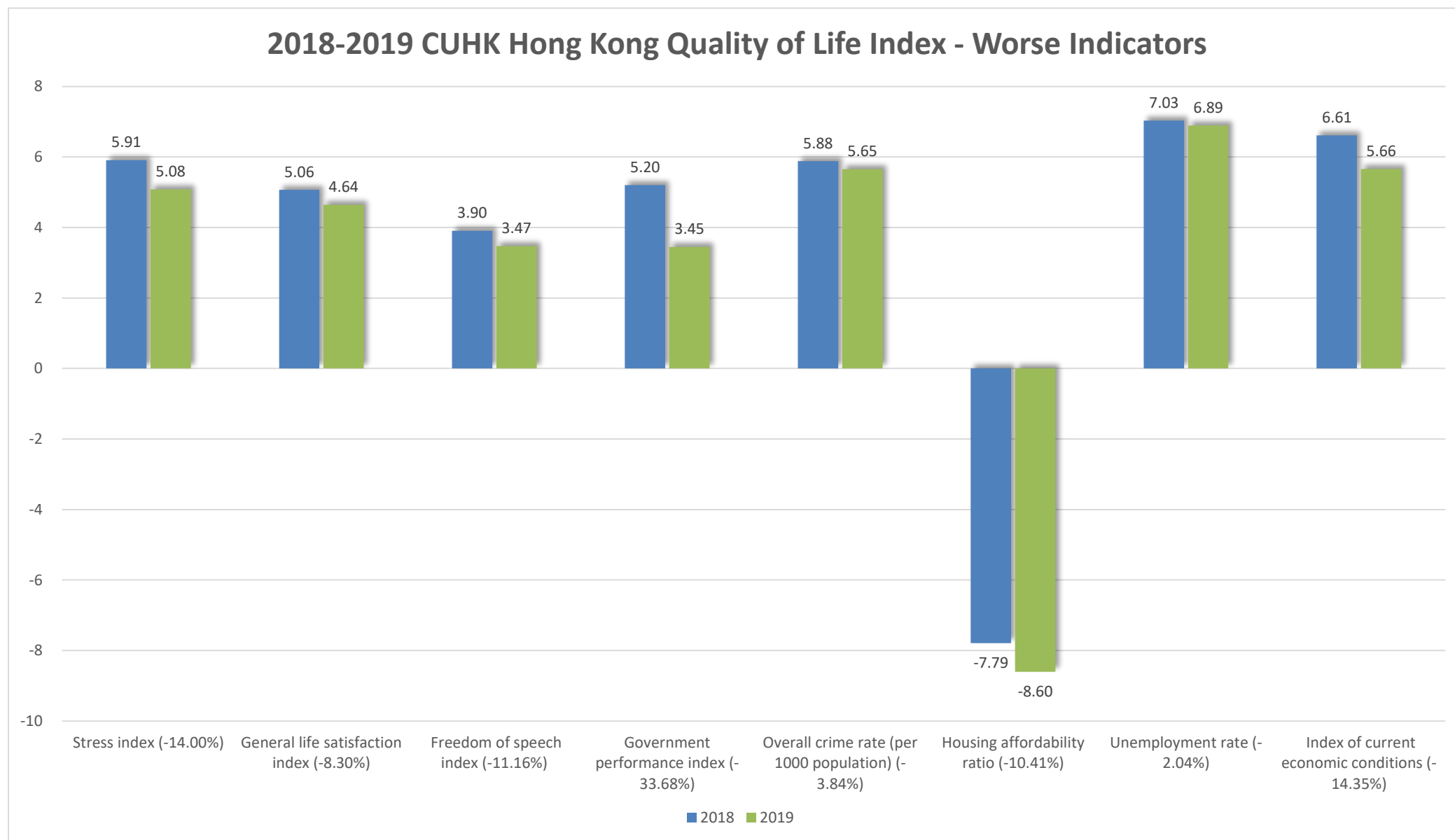


**Appendix 4**

**2018-2019 CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index - Better Indicators**



**Appendix 5**



## **Working Group of the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

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