

**‘CUHK’
Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

**Faculty of Social Science
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

August 2005

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Faculty of Social Science of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is committed to contributing knowledge to the world and Hong Kong through teaching, research and community services. One of our goals is to promote and advocate the well being of individuals, their families and communities.
- 1.2 Hong Kong undergoes drastic changes in political, economic, cultural and environmental aspects in the 21st century, and the quality of life in Hong Kong is being affected. It is timely to compile a composite index to monitor the quality of life in Hong Kong.
- 1.3 We compiled the **‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** in 2003 to serve as an objective and analytic tool to examine the quality of life in Hong Kong. The Index is released annually.

2 Objectives

It is the intention of the Faculty to use this composite index to:

- measure and keep track of Hong Kong’s quality of life in the 21st century;
- engage relevant parties in promoting and advocating quality of life in Hong Kong;
- provide policy makers and the community with a useful reference tool; and
- advocate the quality of life in Hong Kong and draw public attention to the issue of quality of life.

3 Composition of ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

- 3.1 The **‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** is a composite index. It consists of 21 indicators that are grouped into three subgroups (See Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The indicators are selected according to the coverage, measurability, representativeness, and importance to the quality of life in Hong Kong. Among the 21 indicators, six are compiled by the Faculty of Social Science of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. These indicators are stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions.
- 3.3 Taking the year of 2002 as the base year of the study, the **‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** of 2002 is 100. If the Index of a year is above 100, it means that the quality of life

in Hong Kong in that year is better than that in 2002. If it is below 100, it reveals that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is worse than that in 2002. If the Index is 100, it indicates that the Hong Kong quality of life in that year is the same as that in 2002.

4 Major Findings of the ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index 2004

4.1 According to the ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index released this year, the preliminary score of the Index of 2004 is 107.53. It is higher than the scores of 2003 (104.31) and 2002 (100), indicating that the quality of life in Hong Kong has improved consistently.

4.2 The socio-cultural and economic sub-indices increased continuously from 2002 to 2004, while the environmental sub-index declined slightly in 2004.

4.3 As compared with 2003, 12 of the 21 indicators improved in 2004 (see Appendixes 2-3). They are:

- i) Life expectancy at birth;
- ii) Stress index;
- iii) General life satisfaction index;
- iv) Press criticism index;
- v) Government performance index;
- vi) Overall crime rate;
- vii) Unemployment rate;
- viii) Index of current economic conditions;
- ix) Public expenditure on education as a proportion of the GDP;
- x) Air index;
- xi) Water index; and
- xii) Recycle rate of municipal solid waste.

4.4 Seven indicators turned worse in 2004 (see Appendixes 2-3):

- i) Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases;
- ii) Press freedom index;
- iii) House affordability ratio;
- iv) Rental index;
- v) Real wage index;
- vi) Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities; and
- vii) Noise index.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 In sum, as compared with 2003, 12 indicators were better and seven were worse in 2004, while the standardized mortality rate and the public expenditure on health as a proportion of the GDP remained unchanged.

Working Group of the 'CUHK' Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

Prof. Paul S.N. Lee
Dean of Social Science, CUHK
Tel: 2609-6234
Email: plee@cuhk.edu.hk

Prof. Andy C.C. Kwan
Associate Professor
Department of Economics, CUHK
Tel: 2609-8196
Email: kwan1882@cuhk.edu.hk

Prof. Chan Ying Keung
Professor
Department of Sociology, CUHK
Tel: 2609-6619
Email: yingkchan@cuhk.edu.hk

Prof. Ng Sai Leung
Associate Professor
Department of Geography and Resource
Management, CUHK
Tel: 2609-6527
Email: slng@cuhk.edu.hk

Prof. Catherine S.K. Tang
Professor
Department of Psychology, CUHK
Tel: 2609-6503
Email: ctang@cuhk.edu.hk

Appendix 1: Composition of ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

SOCIO-CULTURAL SUB-INDEX

1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)⁽¹⁾ refers to the number of deaths per 1000 standard population.
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years) refers to the life expectancy at birth for males and females.
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population) refers to the number of notified infectious diseases per 1000 population.
5. Stress index refers to the stress that the Hong Kong people are facing (base rate = 100).
6. General life satisfaction index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with their current lives (base rate = 100).
7. Press freedom index refers to the degree of press freedom in Hong Kong (base rate = 100).
8. Press criticism index refers to the frequency of criticisms by the press of the Hong Kong Corporation, the Hong Kong SAR Government, and the People’s Republic of China Government (base rate = 100).
9. Government performance index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with the performance of Hong Kong SAR Government (base rate = 100).
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population) refers to the total number of violent and non-violent crimes reported per 1000 population.

ECONOMIC SUB-INDEX

11. Housing affordability ratio refers to the annual average of affordable property price (i.e. average property price times 39.9 sq. feet, divided by monthly medium income times 12).
12. Rental index refers to the rental index for the Hong Kong property market.
13. Unemployment rate refers to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (in percent).
14. Index of current economic conditions refers to the public attitude towards economic conditions in Hong Kong.
15. Real wage index⁽²⁾ refers to the real wages for employees up to supervisory level (excluding managerial and professional employees) in all selected industry sectors.
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-INDEX

18. Air index refers to the daily air pollution index.
19. Water index refers to the percentage of rivers in Hong Kong categorized as ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ by the monitoring station.

20. Noise index (per 1000 population) refers to the number of noise complaints received by the Environmental Protection Department and the Police per 1000 population.
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste refers to the recycle rate (in percent) of solid waste from households and from commercial and industrial sources.

Notes:

- ⁽¹⁾ Standardized mortality rate is compiled based on the world standard population published in the 1997-1999 *World Health Statistics Annual*.
- ⁽²⁾ As from 2001, the real wage index is derived by deflating the nominal wage indices by the 1999/2000-based CPI(A).

Sources:

Stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions are compiled by the Faculty of Social Science of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions.

Appendix 2: Data for Compiling the ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	2002	2003	2004
Socio-cultural sub-index			
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	3.70	3.80#	3.80*
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years)	F : 84.5 M : 78.6	F : 84.3 M : 78.5	F : 84.6# M : 78.6#
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	2.70	2.70	2.70
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	3.73	2.33	2.91
5. Stress index	100.00	88.75	79.51
6. General life satisfaction index	100.00	100.68	105.62
7. Press freedom index	100.00	101.22	100.26
8. Press criticism index	100.00	103.75	116.89
9. Government performance index	100.00	103.23	132.23
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	11.18	12.99	11.81
Economic sub-index			
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.68	4.49	5.31
12. Rental index	83.41	73.58	77.74
13. Unemployment rate	7.34	7.93	6.76
14. Index of current economic conditions	76.55	81.32	99.95
15. Real wage index	117.53	117.70	116.35
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.20	4.40	4.70
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	17.04	17.70	17.50
Environmental sub-index			
18. Air index	46.90	49.93	49.32
19. Water index	74.40	75.60	78.30*
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	1.84	1.43	1.63*
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	36.30	40.82	41.01*

* Forecasted figure

Provisional figure

Appendix 3: 'CUHK' Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

'CUHK' Hong Kong Quality of Life Index				
	Quality of Life Index*			2004 (Preliminary) compared with 2003
	2002 (Base year)	2003	2004 (Preliminary)	
Socio-cultural sub-index				
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	4.76	4.63	4.63	Unchanged
2. Life expectancy at birth (in year)	4.76	4.75	4.76	Better
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.76	4.76	Unchanged
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	4.76	6.55	5.81	Worse
5. Stress index	4.76	5.30	5.74	Better
6. General life satisfaction index	4.76	4.79	5.03	Better
7. Press freedom index	4.76	4.82	4.77	Worse
8. Press criticism index	4.76	4.94	5.56	Better
9. Government performance index	4.76	4.91	6.29	Better
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	4.76	3.99	4.49	Better
Socio-cultural sub-index	47.62	49.44	51.84	Better
Economic sub-index				
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.76	4.95	4.12	Worse
12. Rental index	4.76	5.32	5.08	Worse
13. Unemployment rate	4.76	4.38	5.14	Better
14. Index of current economic conditions	4.76	5.06	6.22	Better
15. Real wage index	4.76	4.77	4.71	Worse
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.99	5.33	Better
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	4.76	4.94	4.89	Worse
Economic sub-index	33.33	34.41	35.49	Better
Environmental sub-index				
18. Air index	4.76	4.45	4.51	Better
19. Water index	4.76	4.84	5.01	Better
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	4.76	5.82	5.30	Worse
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	4.76	5.35	5.38	Better
Environmental sub-index	19.05	20.46	20.20	Worse
Quality of Life index	100.00	104.31	107.53	Better

* The higher the score, the better is the performance of the indicator.