

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

**The Centre for Quality of Life**

**Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies**

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Centre for Quality of Life of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is the first centre specializing in quality of life research in Hong Kong and in different Chinese communities. One of our goals is to monitor and promote quality of life in Hong Kong through cross-disciplinary research, academic exchange activities, and cross-institutional collaboration.
- 1.2 Hong Kong undergoes drastic changes in political, economic, cultural and environmental aspects in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the quality of life of citizens 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 The **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** was designed 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 Centre to use this composite index to:

- measure and keep track of Hong Kong's quality of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 for the promotion of 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 sub-indices, viz. **social**, **economic** and **environmental** (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 Centre, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the University. 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 (Appendix 1).
- 3.3 2002 was the base year of the study, and the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** for that year was set at 100 (Appendix 3). If 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 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 Index is 100, it indicates that the Hong Kong quality of life in that year is the same as that of 2002.

## 4 Major Findings of the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index 2010

- 4.1 According to the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index of 2010**, the overall score in 2010 was 104.18, went up by 2.66 points from 2009 (101.52), and was lower than those between 2003 and 2008, indicating that the quality of life in Hong Kong recovered to its 2008 level, while there was an overall downward trend in the last three years (Appendix 3).
- 4.2 Compared with the 2009 scores, the social and environmental sub-indices slightly improved in 2010, while the economic-sub-index sank to its record low since 2002 (the base year) (Appendix 3). Though the overall score of the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index increased in 2010, the economic conditions of the people in Hong Kong deteriorated significantly.
- 4.3 As compared with the 2009 figures, 8 out of the 21 indicators worsened in 2010 (Appendix 5). They are:
- i) Public expenditure on health as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product;
  - ii) Press freedom index;
  - iii) Government performance index;
  - iv) Housing affordability ratio;
  - v) Real rental index;
  - vi) Real wage index;
  - vii) Public expenditure on education as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product; and
  - viii) Air index.

The most notable drop being the housing affordability ratio (from 1.18 to -0.87), which indicates that housing became significantly less affordable in 2010.

- 4.4 Compared with the previous year, 10 indicators improved in 2010 (see Appendix 6):
- i) Life expectancy at birth;
  - ii) Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases;
  - iii) Stress index;
  - iv) Press criticism index;
  - v) Overall crime rate;
  - vi) Unemployment rate;
  - vii) Index of current economic conditions;
  - viii) Water index;
  - ix) Noise index; and
  - x) Recycle rate of municipal solid waste.

The most notable being the notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (meaning that there were less number of notified infectious diseases in 2010). The marked rise was due to the sharp drop of the number of Swine Influenza cases in 2010. In addition, Swire Influenza has been

removed from the list of statutory notifiable infectious diseases since October 2010. Three indicators under the environmental sub-index went up, indicating that water quality, noise pollution and the recycle rate of solid waste had improved. Besides, standardized mortality rate, general life satisfaction index and the age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities remained unchanged (Appendix 3).

- 4.5 For more information on the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**, please visit The Centre for Quality of Life website: [www2.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol](http://www2.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol)

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## **Appendix 1: Composition of and Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

### **SOCIAL SUB-INDEX**

1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)<sup>(1)</sup> 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. Real rental index refers to the real 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<sup>(2)</sup> 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:**

<sup>(1)</sup> Standardized mortality rate is compiled based on the world standard population published in the 1997-1999 *World Health Statistics Annual*.

<sup>(2)</sup> 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	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Social sub-index</b>									
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40	3.40#
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years)	F : 84.5	F : 84.3	F : 84.7	F: 84.6	F: 85.5	F: 85.5	F: 85.5	F: 85.9	F:85.9#
	M : 78.6	M : 78.5	M : 79	M: 78.8	M: 79.4	M: 79.4	M:79.3	M: 79.7	M:80.0#
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.30	2.10	2.20	2.00	2.30	2.20
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	3.73	2.33	2.89	2.91	3.27	3.65	2.38	6.85	3.02
5. Stress index	100.00	88.75	79.51	72.95	74.42	72.91	80.36	80.00	75.53
6. General life satisfaction index	100.00	100.68	105.62	109.94	112.47	110.22	107.57	111.66	111.46
7. Press freedom index	100.00	101.22	100.26	101.43	101.55	103.92	103.64	103.54	102.30
8. Press criticism index	100.00	103.75	91.02	78.82	77.25	81.86	83.65	79.15	83.10
9. Government performance index	100.00	103.23	132.23	169.79	176.29	183.48	130.48	145.10	138.62
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	11.18	12.99	11.81	11.37	11.83	11.67	11.25	11.08	10.76
<b>Economic sub-index</b>									
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.68	4.49	5.31	6.22	5.88	6.82	7.67	8.20	10.22
12. Real rental index	87.97	79.67	84.55	93.11	96.68	105.27	114.54	98.99	115.38
13. Unemployment rate	7.34	7.93	6.76	5.55	4.69	3.92	3.68	5.17	4.20
14. Index of current economic conditions	76.55	81.32	99.95	109.75	109.48	116.70	81.55	83.40	96.22
15. Real wage index	117.53	117.70	116.35	115.78	115.48	116.08	116.68	116.30	115.45
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.10	4.40	4.40	4.00	3.80	3.50	3.40	4.50	3.30
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	17.04	17.70	17.50	17.60	18.50	18.70	18.50	18.50	18.50
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>									
18. Air index	46.90	49.93	49.32	45.10	45.68	45.77	44.83	42.26	42.78
19. Water index	74.40	75.60	78.30	80.80	80.80	80.70	81.70	81.40	86.33*
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	1.84	1.43	1.63	1.24	1.28	1.15	1.07	1.02	0.97
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	36.30	40.82	40.35	43.09	45.59	44.96	47.58	49.30	51.81*

\* Forecasted figure

# Provisional figure

Revised figure

## Appendix 3: CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index<sup>Note1</sup>

	2002 (Base year)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2010 compared with 2009
<b>Social sub-index</b>										
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	4.76	4.63	4.63	4.76	5.02	5.02	5.02	5.15	5.15#	Same
2. Life expectancy at birth (in year)	4.76	4.75	4.78	4.77	4.81	4.81	4.81	4.83	4.84#	Better
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.76	4.76	4.05	3.70	3.88	3.53	4.05	3.88	Worse
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	4.76	6.55	5.83	5.81	5.35	4.86	6.48	0.78 Note2	5.67 Note3	Better
5. Stress index	4.76	5.30	5.74	6.05	5.98	6.05	5.69	5.71	5.92	Better
6. General life satisfaction index	4.76	4.79	5.03	5.23	5.35	5.25	5.12	5.31	5.31	Same
7. Press freedom index	4.76	4.82	4.77	4.83	4.83	4.95	4.93	4.93	4.87	Worse
8. Press criticism index	4.76	4.94	4.33	3.75	3.68	3.90	3.98	3.77	3.96	Better
9. Government performance index	4.76	4.91	6.29	8.08	8.39	8.73	6.21	6.91	6.60	Worse
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	4.76	3.99	4.49	4.68	4.48	4.55	4.73	4.80	4.94	Better
<b>Social sub-index</b>	<b>47.62</b>	<b>49.44</b>	<b>50.65</b>	<b>52.01</b>	<b>51.59</b>	<b>52.00</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>46.24</b>	<b>51.14</b>	<b>Better</b>
<b>Economic sub-index</b>										
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.76	4.95	4.12	3.19	3.54	2.58	1.72	1.18	-0.87	Worse
12. Real rental index	4.76	5.21	4.95	4.20	4.00	3.51	2.98	3.87	2.94	Worse
13. Unemployment rate	4.76	4.38	5.14	5.92	6.48	6.98	7.13	6.17	6.80	Better
14. Index of current economic conditions	4.76	5.06	6.22	6.82	6.81	7.26	5.07	5.19	5.98	Better
15. Real wage index	4.76	4.77	4.71	4.69	4.68	4.70	4.73	4.71	4.68	Worse
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.99	4.99	4.53	4.41	4.06	3.95	5.22	3.83	Worse
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	4.76	4.94	4.89	4.92	5.17	5.22	5.17	5.17	5.17	Same
<b>Economic sub-index</b>	<b>33.32</b>	<b>34.30</b>	<b>35.02</b>	<b>34.27</b>	<b>35.09</b>	<b>34.31</b>	<b>30.75</b>	<b>31.51</b>	<b>28.53</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>										
18. Air index	4.76	4.45	4.51	4.94	4.88	4.87	4.97	5.23	5.18	Worse
19. Water index	4.76	4.84	5.01	5.16	5.17	5.16	5.23	5.21	5.52*	Better
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	4.76	5.82	5.30	6.31	6.22	6.54	6.74	6.87	7.02	Better
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	4.76	5.35	5.29	5.65	5.98	5.90	6.24	6.46	6.79*	Better
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>	<b>19.04</b>	<b>20.46</b>	<b>20.11</b>	<b>22.06</b>	<b>22.25</b>	<b>22.47</b>	<b>23.18</b>	<b>23.77</b>	<b>24.51</b>	<b>Better</b>
<b>Quality of Life index</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>104.20</b>	<b>105.78</b>	<b>108.34</b>	<b>108.93</b>	<b>108.78</b>	<b>104.43</b>	<b>101.52</b>	<b>104.18</b>	<b>Better</b>

Note1 The higher the score, the better the performance of the indicator.

Note2 The decrease was largely due to the Swine Influenza has been listed as notifiable disease since 27 April 2009.

Note3 Swine Influenza has been removed from the list of Statutory notifiable infectious diseases since 8 October 2010.

\* Forecasted figure

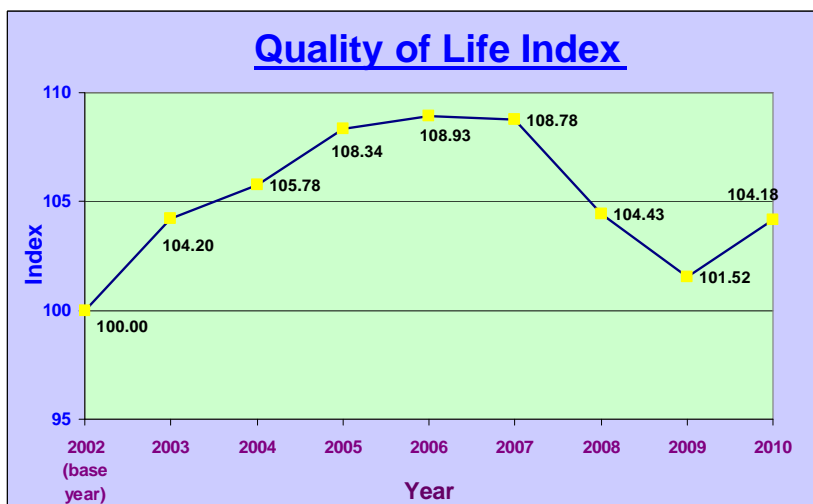
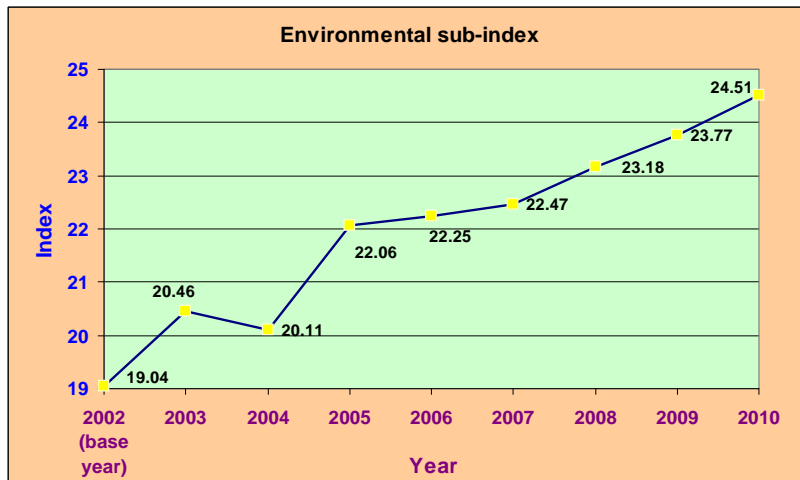
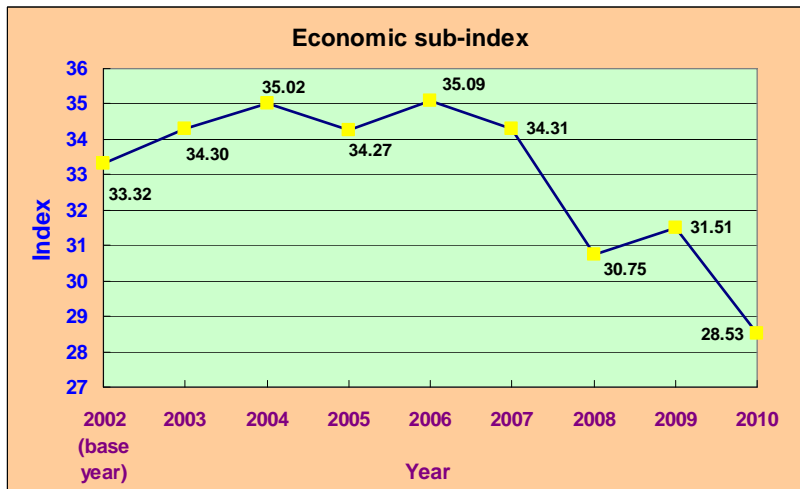
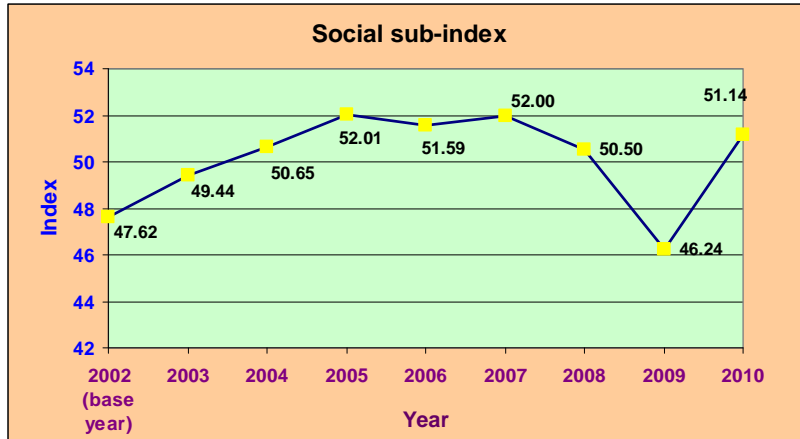
# Provisional figure

Revised figure



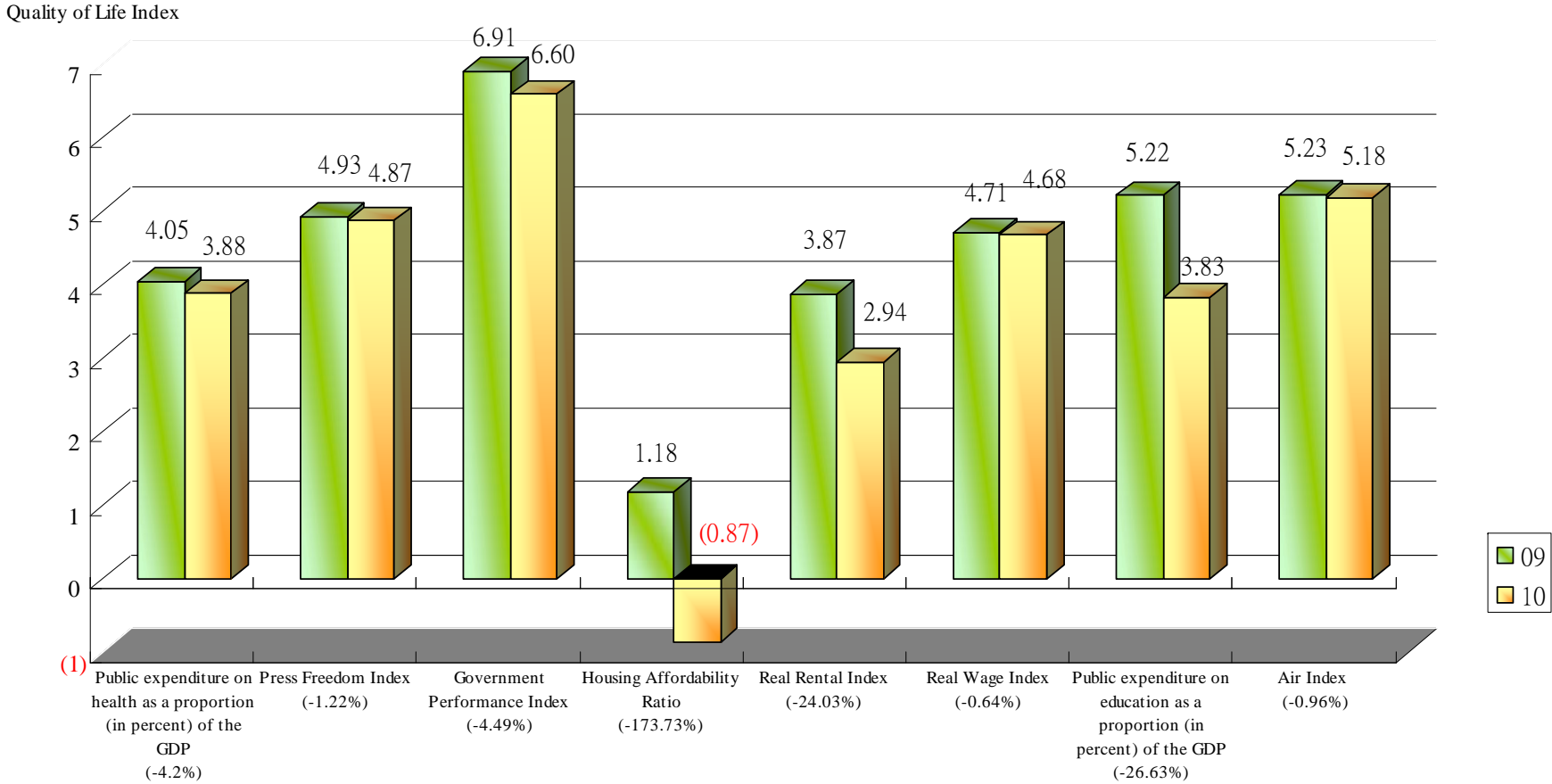
# Appendix 4: Line Charts of CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index and Sub-indices <sup>Note 1</sup>

Note 1 The higher the rate, the better performance for the indicator



**Appendix 5**

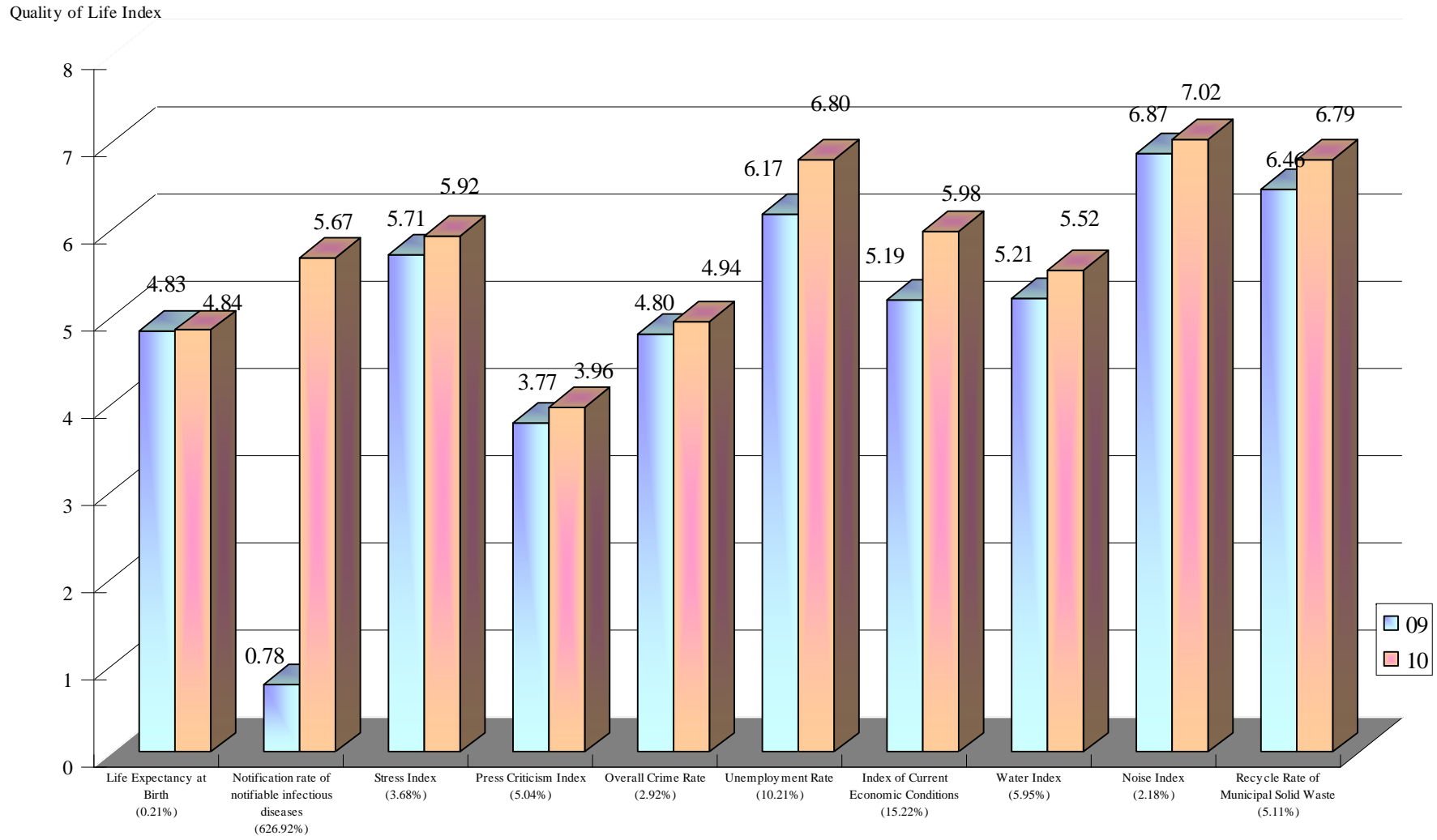
**2009-2010 Quality of Life Indices**  
**Worse Indices**



( ) % decrease between 09 and 10

**Appendix 6**

**2009-2010 Quality of Life Indices**  
**Better Indices**



( ) % increase between 09 and 10