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Challenging the Traditional Role of Education by Breaking Boundaries and Building Bridges

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Marking 25 years of fostering transformational teaching, LPCUWC gathered leading change-makers to explore the power of education

HONG KONG, CHINA - The role of education is not just about gaining academic knowledge. Now, more than ever, education has an important role in shaping young people's attitudes and values. With the onset of the Belt and Road Initiative, and the new opportunities and challenges that Hong Kong youth face in navigating an increasingly globalised world, education has the power of "Breaking Boundaries" and "Building Bridges". As a continuation of Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong's (LPCUWC) 25th anniversary celebrations, the school jointly organised with Asia Society Hong Kong Center (ASHK) an **Education Symposium: "Breaking Boundaries, Building Bridges: The Role of Education"** to move the education conversation forward.



From left to right: Mr Arnett Edwards, Principal, Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong; Mr Ken Yeung, CEO and Executive Director of TOM Group; Mr Arnold Chan, Founder and CEO of Teach4HK; Mr Nick Cotton, Executive Director of Outward Bound Hong Kong; Mr Anthony Tong, Chairman of Board, Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong; The Hon. Mrs Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, Chief Executive of HKSAR; Ms S. Alice Mong, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center; Ms Shirley Man, Executive Director at Summerbridge Hong Kong; and Mr Vic Lee, Founder and Managing Partner of Virtus Inspire.

The Symposium invited a panel of distinguished leaders to explore how they and their organisations are aiming to positively engage and encourage Hong Kong's younger generation in developing open-mindedness, confidence, and the skills needed to become change-makers and influencers in their own communities and in the wider world. In other words, *how* they are "breaking boundaries and building bridges". The College's Patron, The Honourable Mrs Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, officially opened the Symposium by underlining her support and appreciation for LPCUWC's new strategic direction and its mission to bolster the culture and knowledge exchange dimension of the Belt and Road. She also highlighted how the government is actively building bridges for the initiative and young people through policy and financial commitments on education. "I'm pleased to note that the college is determined to be part of our multilateral future, and is creating its own connection to the nations, cultures and the peoples of the Belt and Road."

The college is working to establish a scholarship programme to welcome more students from these countries. "That is what I call planning for the future," said Mrs Lam during her speech. "There is no investment more meaningful than education."

The Symposium emphasised the importance of creating opportunities for young people of *all backgrounds* to break out of their own boundaries, and strive for a better future. Anthony Tong, LPCUWC's Chairman of the Board, explained that the College is working to "raise resources to bring students from all the 65 Belt and Road countries to study in Hong Kong. We also have plans to establish a Belt and Road Resources Centre to run thematic short courses, so thousands of other local students would be able to learn alongside Li Po Chun [UWC] students from the Belt and Road."

Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong's Principal, Arnett Edwards, who was the moderator of the Symposium, echoed Mr Tong's comments, saying "The College is at the crossroads of its development and is excited about the development of its strategic plan under the theme of 'Breaking Boundaries, Building Bridges'. Besides the Belt and Road initiative, it is envisioned that the College will develop opportunities for more young people particularly from humble backgrounds, to gain access to a UWC education.

"Asia Society Hong Kong Center believes that education and global competence are keys to empower our future generations and to enable them to thrive in the dynamic and ever-changing global environment. We are dedicated to providing educational platforms that present balanced perspectives and promote critical understanding of topics that are relevant to Hong Kong, Asia and the region's role in the world. We are really happy with the opportunity to co-organise this meaningful event with Li Po Chun World College of Hong Kong which explores how education can help to shape the attitudes and

values of Hong Kong youths, especially vis-à-vis the enormous opportunities brought by the important Belt and Road Initiative," said Ms. S. Alice Mong, Executive Director of Asia Society Hong Kong Center.

Other key areas discussed during the Symposium included technology, social innovation, language exchanges, and outdoor education. The speakers explored the importance of access to quality education for all, regardless of a students' background, financial capability, or academic prowess; addressed the factors that make people successful and happy, amidst a rapidly changing world; looked at programmes set in place to encourage interaction through mind, soul and action between peers from local and international schools; and deliberated on the role of outdoors education in building leadership, decision-making and communication skills beyond the everyday classroom settings.

The Education Symposium was convened with the aim to create a platform for honest dialogue on the future of education in our globalised community. Education lays the foundation to harness opportunities with the onset of the Belt and Road Initiative, and plays a crucial role in promoting peace and sustainability across these countries.

Mr Edwards concluded, "The insights from authentic encounters will allow local students to develop a global perspective that would not be possible purely from a traditional education. Ultimately, the human capital network built up will create the connectivity that will one day be useful in the students' future pursuits in education or adult careers working with Belt and Road projects".

The event synopsis, and panel speakers' biographies are available here: <https://asiasociety.org/hong-kong/events/breaking-boundaries-building-bridges-role-education>

Download photos from the symposium here: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/ggpSOTarNziCqEok1>

About Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong

Li Po Chun United World College of Hong Kong (LPCUWC) is one of 17 colleges that share the value and philosophy of the United World Colleges (UWC) movement and the mission of UWC. The college opened to its first students in September 1992, and was formally opened by HRH the Prince of Wales on 6 November 1992. LPCUWC is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year as one of the first IB schools in Hong Kong, and the first international boarding school in the city. Over the past 25 years, there have been students from 147 different countries living together on campus, sharing experiences and creating an exceptional college community.

The aim of the UWC is to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. Central to the UWC ethos is the belief that education can bring together young people from all backgrounds on the basis of their shared humanity, to engage with the possibility of social change through courageous action, personal example and selfless leadership.

The birth of the college, however, can be traced back to 1978 when Dr Lee Quo-Wei GBM JP (Sir Q W Lee), then Chairman of the Hong Kong Selection Committee, was recruiting Hong Kong students to study in the overseas colleges of UWC. Impressed by the high calibre of UWC graduates, Sir Q W Lee initiated the idea of establishing a UWC college in Hong Kong together with Mr Li Shiu Tsang MBE JP, whose family had set up the Li Po Chun Charitable Trust. The concept was strongly supported by Sir David Wilson, then Governor of Hong Kong, and Mr David Sutcliffe, then Principal of Atlantic College in Wales. Not long after, the present site of LPCUWC in Ma On Shan was gifted to the college by the Government of Hong Kong. For more information, please visit www.lpcuwc.edu.hk