



Project Co-Leads



Citi Foundation



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## **Youth Co:Lab Hong Kong Dialogue Highlights the Urgent Need for Youth Mental Health Solutions and Support**

*Citi Foundation and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) remain steadfast advocates for innovative and collaborative solutions to empower youth*

Hong Kong – Over 400 youth workers, academic professionals, policy makers and mental health practitioners convened at the **Youth Co:Lab Hong Kong Dialogue** (HK Dialogue) on May 21 to advance solutions addressing mental health needs of young people.

Co-led by Citi Foundation and UNDP, and organized in partnership with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), the HK Dialogue was held in conjunction with the S+ Summit & Expo that attracted over 13,000 attendees over two days. The dialogue explored key challenges faced by young people with mental issues, examined related policy implications, and highlighted holistic support strategies and best practices. The event also featured an interactive exhibition, providing participants with valuable resources and information on youth mental health.

“Citi and the Citi Foundation have long invested in empowering young people and young social entrepreneurs in the communities we serve. Through impactful programs such as Youth Co:Lab, we strive to create an enabling environment that incubates innovative solutions developed by young people for some of the most pressing social issues,” said **Vicky Kong, Chief Executive, Citibank (Hong Kong) Limited**. “With the significant rise in young people facing mental health challenges in recent years, there is an urgent need to take action. We aim to achieve exactly that through the ecosystem that Youth Co:Lab has built over the years.”

**Beniam Gebrezghi, Programme Specialist, Civil Society and Youth, UNDP Asia-Pacific** said, “Through Youth Co:Lab initiatives, we have seen young people across the Asia-Pacific region drive innovative solutions to address mental health challenges and create meaningful change for the communities they serve. This reinforces our commitment to advancing mental health advocacy, not just in Hong Kong, but throughout the region. Prioritizing the mental well-being of youth is a collective responsibility. By empowering young people with the tools and support they need, we are not only helping them thrive but also fostering a generation that will lead us toward a more resilient, compassionate, and sustainable future. The well-being of our youth is the foundation upon which we build tomorrow’s leaders.”

**Grace Chan, Chief Executive, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service** said, “It is commendable that the Citi Foundation and the UNDP have co-created the platform of “Youth Co:Lab - Hong Kong Dialogue”, which brings together youth and adults from various sectors to collaborate in advancing service development. This year's theme focuses on youth mental health. Given the significant needs in this area, we aim to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue and encourage youth participation to create innovative, youth-friendly support systems. We hope for close collaboration and communication to create a more friendly social environment for our young people.”

**Dr. Lam Ching Choi, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Mental Health**, said, “Genuine relationships between people are the foundation of mental health. Our society needs to reflect on our cultures and expectations, considering whether adults are providing space for youth to be autonomous, enabling them to explore their own paths. Human-centered policies and services are also crucial, as they allow young people to feel understood, accepted, and supported.”

Youth Co:Lab, co-created in 2017 by Citi Foundation and the UNDP, is the largest youth movement for empowerment, social entrepreneurship, equality, and social inclusion in the Asia-Pacific region and has supported young people in 28 countries and territories. Since its inception, activities supported by Youth Co:Lab such as the Hong Kong Dialogue have reached 300,000 participants across the region.

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Community partners and young people gathered at the Youth Co:Lab Hong Kong Dialogue to explore solutions to address the pressing youth mental health needs in the city.

Officiating at the opening ceremony were (from left to right):

- Dr. Lam Ching Choi, Chairman, Advisory Committee on Mental Health
- Beniam Gebrezghi, Programme Specialist, Civil Society and Youth, United Nations Development Programme Asia-Pacific
- Vicky Kong, Chief Executive, Citibank (Hong Kong) Limited
- Natalie Fok, Youth Speaker
- Chara Yau, Youth Speaker
- Grace Chan, Chief Executive, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service



Vicky Kong, Chief Executive of Citibank (Hong Kong) Limited, addressed the audience at the Youth Co:Lab Hong Kong Dialogue opening ceremony.



Dr. Lam Ching Choi, Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Mental Health, shared his insights on mental health policy at the Youth Co:Lab Hong Kong Dialogue.



Youth Co:Lab Hong Kong Dialogue featured an interactive exhibition – “One in Six Wellness Sanctuary”, to enhance public understanding of youth mental health challenges.

## About Citi

Citi is a pre-eminent banking partner for institutions with cross-border needs, a global leader in wealth management and a valued personal bank in its home market of the United States. Citi does business in more than 180 countries and jurisdictions, providing corporations, governments, investors, institutions and individuals with a broad range of financial products and services.

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## About Citi Foundation

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant communities. The Citi Foundation's “More than Philanthropy” approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and

drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit [www.citifoundation.com](http://www.citifoundation.com).

### **About UNDP**

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet. Learn more at [undp.org](http://undp.org) or follow at [@UNDP](https://twitter.com/UNDP).

### **About HKCSS**

The HKCSS is a statutory body established in 1947. Together with our Agency Members, we uphold social justice and equality in our mission to advance the well-being of the Hong Kong community. The HKCSS is committed to building an impact-oriented, collaborative and innovative social service sector, and co-creating a better society with stakeholders across different sectors. The HKCSS has over 520 Agency Members, with service units throughout Hong Kong, providing high-quality social services to those in need.

For more information, visit [www.hkcss.org.hk](http://www.hkcss.org.hk) | Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HKCSS1947](https://www.facebook.com/HKCSS1947)