

CHAPTER 9

THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

*Lisa Hopkinson***I. Definitions, methodology and background***Definition*

- 1 According to the John Hopkins University international classification of non-profit organizations, the environment sector (herein referred to as the EN sector) covers both environmental¹ and animal protection² organizations. The international sub-classification was not adopted because it was too restrictive.³ Thus for the purposes of this study the EN sector was sub-classified according to the nature of the organization rather than its activities.⁴
- 2 A number of environmental charitable organizations that did not meet the Johns Hopkins University criteria of independence and autonomy were excluded.⁵ Temporary environmental programmes or environmental committees of other non-environmental organizations were also excluded for the purpose of this study.
- 3 The following is a summary of the estimated type and number of organizations in the EN Sector.⁶ The first four sub-sectors are collectively referred to as “environmental organizations” for the purposes of this report.

Sub-sector	Estimated No. of organizations	% of total
International environmental NGO	7	10
Local environmental NGO	37	51
Business/professional/industry environment groups*	11	15
Academic/scientific environment groups*	6	8
Animal welfare	11	15
TOTAL	72	99**

* according to the survey results some of these organizations may classify themselves in the professional & business or research & education rather than environmental sector.

** may not add up to 100% due to rounding up

- 4 While the above summary is not considered exhaustive, it is estimated to include over 90% of the main permanent environmental organizations registered or operating in Hong Kong and is believed to provide a reasonable summary of the relative size of each organizational category within the EN Sector.

Methodology

- 5 Due to the small size of this sector 100% of identified organizations were sent a questionnaire by email or post. A total of 11 organizations, from a range of sub-sectors, were interviewed.

Background

- 6 With a couple of exceptions⁷ the EN sector in Hong Kong generally postdates the birth of the modern environmental movement in the 1960s. According to the survey, less than a third of organizations were formed before 1986. Hong Kong's first environmental pressure group, the Conservancy Association, was founded in 1968.⁸ It was most effective in the mid-70s when it stopped the construction of an oil refinery on Lamma and facilitated the removal of tanneries in Sheung Shui.⁹
- 7 The 1980s was a period of mass community mobilization. In 1982, following the Chernobyl nuclear accident, a joint coalition of organizations collected one million signatures against the building of the Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant across the border, the largest single-issue non-violent movement to take place in Hong Kong prior to Tiananmen.¹⁰ In 1984 a group of social workers founded the Tsing Yi Concern Group to promote grassroots participation. Over seven years they mobilized thousands of residents to campaign against the siting of oil depots in Tsing Yi, and evolved into a political force, successfully fielding candidates for District Board elections.¹¹
- 8 It was said that prior to 1988 the colonial Government thought that environmental groups such as the Conservancy Association were potentially subversive.¹² However, a number of pressure groups developed an educational role and gradually built up working relationships with the Government and the private sector.¹³ By the end of the 1980s the influence of environmental NGOs was well accepted in the policy-making process, and the business sector had also started to become involved. The Private Sector Committee on the Environment (PSCE) was formed in 1989 by 20 of the big "hongs" in Hong Kong.
- 9 A legal precedent was set in 1992 when Friends of the Earth (Hong Kong) became the first green group to challenge the Government successfully by overturning the Country and Marine Parks Board approval for a golf course in country park land at Sha Lo Tung. By the end of that year there were ten identified environmental groups, reflecting a rising interest in the issue among the public, but their total membership was still less than 20,000, or 0.4% of the population.¹⁴
- 10 In 1994 the Government appointed green group representatives to sit on the Advisory Council on the Environment and established a \$50 million fund, the Environment & Conservation Fund, to promote community environmental research and education projects.
- 11 Following the opening up of mainland China in the late 1970s, some of the local groups established contacts there.¹⁵ Around the time of the handover a number of large international organizations established offices in Hong Kong as launchpads for work in China and/or fund-raising, and several local groups launched programmes on the mainland.

- 12 It was argued by some that environmental issues took a policy backseat prior to the handover. Immediately after 1997, the combination of environmental food hygiene scares, worsening regional air pollution and a downturn in tourist numbers led to increased public concern over environmental issues. In response to these problems and their impact on business, the Business Coalition on the Environment (BCE), representing the majority of business chambers and associations, was formed in 1998.¹⁶
- 13 In 1999-2000, environmental groups led a landmark campaign to stop a railway being built through ecologically valuable wetlands at Long Valley that became a local and international *cause celebre*. Since the handover the EN sector has mushroomed, a reflection of the increasing public interest in and concern with environmental issues.

II. Current picture from the study

Description of the landscape of the environmental sector

Activities

- 14 The activities of the EN sector cover the spectrum of education, research, advocacy, philanthropy and service provision. For the majority of the environmental groups their primary activity is education, with advocacy and research also important. For the animal welfare organizations, service provision (mainly in the form of animal shelters) is generally the primary activity with advocacy and education secondary.

Governance

- 15 The larger organizations in the EN sector tend to be limited companies with charitable status, paid staff and offices, while the smaller organizations tend to be registered societies under the Societies Ordinance run by volunteers or by small administrative staff. According to the survey, 49% of organizations in the sector are societies, 39% are limited companies, and 52% of the organizations have charitable status. All have voluntary boards of directors or executive committees. A couple of organizations also had a three-layer governance structure with a board of trustees responsible for financial matters. Generally the groups did not see any major problems with their legal status.

Public Outreach and image

- 16 While 79% of the organizations in the EN sector have members according to the survey, of these 30% have fewer than 50 members, and a cumulative 70% of organizations have fewer than 500 members. However a small number (15%) of organizations have over 10,000 members. Yet in terms of their services, only 9% provide services exclusively for members. The EN sector tends to be outward focussed with 46% providing services for the public at large, and 39% for members or other members of the public. According to the survey a third of

organizations in this sector provide services for over 20,000 people a year, an impressive outreach.

- 17 In the past the EN sector has been described as functioning more like interest groups than community-based organizations and the outreach of the sector as a whole is still limited.^{17,18} This has been attributed by scholars to the overriding attention on political reforms prior to the handover; the small number of active leaders in societal affairs; NGO's perceptions that the public does not like confrontation; and fears of being exploited by campaigns to push up property prices.¹⁹ However despite the fact that mass community mobilization is beyond the resources of most groups, there have been notable successes and many groups in the EN sector are now actively engaging with the community.²⁰
- 18 However, in terms of strategic influence at a territorial level the environmental movement has been enormously successful.

Role in Economy

- 19 A few key organizations in the environmental sector play a major role in the economy and provide a supporting role to government. For example the SPCA employs 150 people and has a \$50 million operating budget for animal welfare services, more than the Government's expenditure on this issue. Thus it plays a major role in service provision.
- 20 However, due to the small size of the EN sector overall, the direct contribution to paid employment and the economy is generally relatively insignificant. According to the survey, a substantial number (46%) have no full- or part-time employees. In terms of recurrent expenditure 30% spend less than \$100,000/year while a further 18% spend between \$100,000-250,000/year. While 24% organizations have an operating budget of over \$1 million/year, due to the small number of these organizations, the direct multiplier effect on the economy overall is still small.
- 21 However, it should be noted that the policies advocated by this sector may be extremely beneficial to some specific sectors of the economy including tourism, recycling, waste management, consultants and intermediate technologies (renewable energy, pollution control).
- 22 Some of the larger NGOs have played an advocacy and training role in setting up environmental industries. For example, the Conservancy Association's Green Working Force programme had a 20% success rate in training and helping the unemployed get jobs in the waste recycling industry.
- 23 The environmental movement has also played a large part in focussing the business sector on environmental issues. The Chair of the-then Private Sector Committee on the Environment commented "*Environmental groups help to create a climate of opinion which has promoted a clear change in public attitudes in recent years*".²¹ Some of the environmental organizations work directly with the private sector, providing advice, training and services in environmental management. This helps businesses to be more efficient and cost effective, helps

them comply with the law and improves their corporate image. Arguably, pressure from green groups on business has encouraged many of them to adopt better environmental practices. One group interviewed cited cases of businesses they have assisted which have saved millions of dollars through better environmental management, in particular building-energy efficiency.

Role in Society

24 Environmental organizations have an enormous societal role to play in promoting public awareness and behavioural and policy change on environmental issues and monitoring government and industries' environmental performance. Their role in society can be classified thus:

- **Educators:** Providing educational activities, information and programmes for the community, and specifically providing teaching materials for schools. Examples are Green Power's book "Be a Green Citizen," which provides information to the public on how to monitor environmental problems; WWFHK, which conducts educational visits of Mai Po Nature Reserve; and Tai Po Environmental Action Group, which organizes competitions for local schoolchildren.
- **Critics and watchdogs: Putting** pressure on both government and industry to improve environmental performance.
- **Advocacy: Helping** to bring specific issues of social concern to the public spotlight and changing social norms. For example, Animals Asia Foundation highlighted the problems of bear bile farming and persuaded the Chinese authorities to sign an agreement to rescue 500 endangered Moon Bears from farms in Sichuan Province and the Society for the Protection of the Harbour facilitated a new law preventing reclamation of the harbour.
- **Intellectual/visionary:** Defining development paradigms and objectives and designing and promoting policy agendas. For example, the Conservancy Association developed an Agenda 21 for Hong Kong and published a report for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development while; Friends of the Earth (Hong Kong) published Agenda 2047, a report envisioning a more sustainable future for Hong Kong.
- **Problem solving:** Providing technical support and working with governments and businesses to develop solutions: The BEC have conducted technical and economic feasibility studies into recycling construction and demolition timber; TRAFFIC East Asia works with the Traditional Chinese Medicine industry to develop herbal medicine alternatives to endangered plant and animals, and the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden helped develop Hong Kong's first constructed wetland for sewage treatment.
- **Service Providers:** The non-profit sector often implements policies and programmes, supported, if not designed and promoted, by the Government. In the last financial year, for example, the SPCA treated over 32,000 animals in its clinics, collected over 6,400 abandoned animals and found homes for

nearly 1,800 animals. WWFHK manages the internationally important wetland at Mai Po on behalf of the Government.

- 25 Environmental NGOs have also spearheaded the improvement of the consultation and planning process. The Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance, which provides a major framework for consultation and public input on major development projects, was passed largely in response to environmental NGOs' criticisms of the pre-ordinance process. Environmental NGOs have also been active in international forums on the environment, giving Hong Kong a presence in such international arenas.²²

Interaction with the Government, the private sector and other organizations

- 26 Possibly because of Hong Kong's small geographical size and the local nature of many of the issues dealt with by environmental organizations, there is a significant amount of interaction and activity between the Government, business and the Third Sector.

Government

- 27 Environmental organizations have many interface points with the Government. For obvious reasons, relations tend to be better with those departments working on related issues such as EPD (for pollution related issues) and Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (for conservation and animal welfare issues). However, some organizations commented that these departments tend to use the environmental groups to promote their policies.
- 28 Problems emerge with some of the other departments, particularly those involved in works and infrastructure development, where there is a conflict of values, and which tend to regard the environmental groups as trouble-makers. The environmental groups have been described as building alliances with the relatively pro-environment faction within the Government against those officials less sympathetic to their causes.²³ The business or professional environmental organizations tend to have better access or communication with the Government, although even these comment that more communication is desirable.
- 29 The specific ways in which environmental organizations interact with the Government includes the following:

Meetings

- 30 Apart from a regular Environmental Protection Department (EPD)-green group liaison committee (with the larger environmental organizations) meetings with other government departments tends to be on an *ad hoc* basis. Officials representing the environmental arms of government tend to be very accessible and willing to cooperate, although groups noted that they would prefer more regular platforms for discussion with AFCD and greater transparency in their policies and plans. One of the advantages of Hong Kong's relatively flat government structure is that environmental organizations can have access to top-level decision makers, including occasional meetings with the Chief Executive.

- 31 Access to other departments is harder. Some requests are denied, some groups have had to go through LegCo members to arrange meetings and government meeting minutes sometimes do not accurately reflect the discussions.

Watchdog activities

- 32 As part of their role as government and industry watchdogs, environmental organizations will write letters, conduct site visits and organize meetings with different departments to follow up on specific problems or issues. For example, the Green Lantau Association writes on average three letters a week to different government departments to clarify or complain about various environmental irregularities in government projects or programmes on Lantau.

Consultancies/services

- 33 Some of the organizations carry out services on behalf of the Government, or work on government consultancies or projects. Often the services are provided by volunteers with professional skills at little cost to the Government.

Presentations to LegCo

- 34 The larger environmental groups are also active in meeting with and lobbying Legislative Council members. For example, in the 2000-02 Legislative Council session, environmental groups made representations at nine meetings of the Environmental Affairs Panel on subjects ranging from clinical waste management to the protection of wetlands in Long Valley.²⁴

Consultation

- 35 Many departments will consult with environmental groups on their proposed projects and policies. This ranges from passive consultation in the form of documents posted on government websites to more active engagement such as the advisory bodies for the Planning Department's Hong Kong 2030 study.

Advisory bodies

- 36 There is regular participation in formal and informal consultation on environment related bodies. The larger environmental groups tend to be well represented on a number of government advisory boards.²⁵ However it should be noted that many, if not all, of the appointments are on an individual basis. This contrasts with the situation 14 years ago when access to the consultative and decision-making bodies was identified as one of the key problems experienced by environmental "promotional groups".²⁶
- 37 It has been suggested that this situation puts environmental groups at risk of being co-opted and absorbed by the establishment.²⁷ While access to information improved, it was suggested, the work in various consultative committees had absorbed the energy of the active members and to a certain extent kept them quiet.²⁸

- 38 However, despite the shortcomings of the government consultative bodies, most of the green groups would prefer to be inside rather than outside the decision-making process. Access to information enables them to act earlier on issues, as well as making suggestions and taking small steps towards policy change. Opening up the advisory bodies to the public would help facilitate access to information. Whether “*noises become internalised*”²⁹ or not, the key point is whether the issue is dealt with satisfactorily. Many environmental groups will raise their concerns through the various consultative bodies in the first instance but failing any satisfactory outcome take appropriate action externally – including protests, demonstrations and public campaigns.
- 39 In all the bodies, except perhaps the Environmental Campaign Committee, environmental organizations are in a minority, with industry and business representatives dominating the membership. This cross-membership is not reciprocated on business and industry advisory bodies where there are few or no environmental representatives.

Lobbying and protests

- 40 In some cases confrontation is the only option as it may be difficult for pressure groups to secure access to the relevant officials or capture media interest, or when quiet lobbying efforts are ignored. Clearly there is still great room for improvement in communication between the Government and the EN sector but in general relations are much more open and constructive than at any other time in Hong Kong’s history.

Industry/private sector

- 41 Interaction with the private sector presents both risks and benefits for many organizations in the EN sector. While a major source of funding and volunteers for some groups, they are also a target of criticism and lobbying, sometimes from the same organizations. However, many private sector companies are actively engaging with environmental organizations and vice versa. However, it was commented that except for a few companies, most are still only interested in public relations rather than in greening their operations or improving the environmental awareness of their staff.
- 42 Specific ways in which environmental organizations interact with the private sector include the following:

Funding/sponsorship of projects

- 43 According to a survey of companies in Hong Kong, conducted on behalf of the CPU, some 39% of respondents are willing to give to causes linked to the environment.³⁰ Compared to the US and Canada, companies in Hong Kong are much more likely to donate money to environmental causes.³¹
- 44 Unfortunately, this level of corporate philanthropy does not extend to animal causes, which is almost at the bottom of the corporate target list for donations.³² These groups typically receive little direct corporate funding, apart from where

there are obvious business benefits (eg dog food sponsorship). Animal welfare groups therefore have to work much harder than other environmental organizations to find more business-oriented models for sponsorship rather than relying on corporate altruism.

- 45 Some corporations also have or had their own green funds – Shell, Caltex (no longer operational), Woo Wheelock – which disburse funds to the community, generally for educational projects. It has been suggested that the emergence of corporate environmental sponsorship in the 1990s allowed NGOs to organize educational programmes with greater frequency and intensity, which in turn led to a surge in membership and activities.³³

Lobbying/campaigns

- 46 Environmental NGOs try to change the behaviour of companies by either negotiating directly with management, or indirectly, with campaigns targeting consumers or the media. Whatever method they use, the aim is often to convince the company (or its customers) that the change will benefit the bottom line, either through cost savings, corporate image, customer satisfaction, or technological advantage.

Participation in NGO environmental programmes

- 47 Many of the corporate funding programmes involve participation by the corporate employees. Large-scale tree planting programmes, beach or litter cleanups, or nature activities (bird watching, hiking) funded by corporates will often involve their employees.

The Media

- 48 The media is one specific private sector industry where there is a high level of interaction and interdependence with the Third Sector. This is discussed further in the section on public awareness. However, the importance of a free press in terms of helping the organizations perform their watchdog role was cited by many groups.
- 49 The establishment of many business related or focussed environmental NGOs has also helped improve communication between the sectors. The Business Coalition for the Environment and the Business Environment Council in particular, have many activities and programmes that involve both businesses and environmental NGOs.

Other NGOs

- 50 The environmental sector is relatively well networked compared to other sectors, possibly because of the small size of Hong Kong, the limited number of environmental organizations, the overlap in issues they work on and the interconnectedness of many of the issues. Specific ways in which they work together or interact include the following:

Campaigns on strategic issues

- 51 On strategic issues the larger green groups often work together on campaigns. For example, cooperation was forged among five green groups in the campaign against China Light & Power's plans to build a power plant in Fan Lau, southern Lantau, in 1989. Such cooperation led to later joint campaigns against the Sha Lo Tung golf course in 1991-92, the launch of a Hong Kong Environmental Charter for a Sustainable Future in early 1992, a signature petition to get RAMSAR status for Mai Po and surrounding wetlands in 1995, a conservation strategy for Lantau in 1998 and the Long Valley campaign in 1999-2000.
- 52 Typically, the larger organizations often play a coordinating role for the smaller ones. For example, the SPCA tries to coordinate other animal welfare organizations providing animal shelters to move the "no kill" policy forward.

Environmental education

- 53 Groups often collaborate on environmental education. As well as the Environmental Campaign Committee, which organizes a number of joint education projects for the general community, the Hong Kong Environmental Education Group, a loose organization including six green groups and four government departments, meets regularly, shares resources and organizes joint projects for teachers.

Joint meetings with government/LegCo

- 54 Groups will often initiate joint meetings with the Government and/or make presentations on issues of concern to LegCo.

Joint Projects

- 55 As well as working together on issues and environmental education, environmental groups occasionally collaborate on projects. For example, the Conservancy Association, Friends of the Earth and Green Power have recently started work on a joint project.

Internet

- 56 The environmental NGOs tend to be well connected through the internet and email with the majority of the groups having websites or email contact addresses. For some small organizations the website is the group's main focus of activity. Websites are used for education, lobbying and as a media resource. The groups tend to alert or solicit help from other groups through email group lists. The internet is also used as a way to promote events or campaigns such as online signature campaigns. For example, the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society website and pro forma objection letters to the Government were a major part of the Long Valley campaign.

Links with China NGOs

- 57 Environmental organizations are not only well networked within Hong Kong but many of the larger groups, the international groups especially, have forged strong links with China. Initially, the contacts were with official government agencies but over time Hong Kong organizations linked with a number of mainland non-governmental bodies.³⁴ Activities are varied, though mainly educational, and range from joint activities (such as tree planting), study tours, scientific studies, philanthropy and training. For example, Friends of the Earth (Hong Kong) has organized visits and training to Hong Kong for mainland women leaders, students, journalists, officials, educators and researchers to learn about NGOs, environmental development and community mobilization. Some organizations have established offices in mainland China or environmental centres, Green Power, for example, was a founding member of an environmental education centre in Guangdong.

Other NGOs

- 58 Because of the strong emphasis on education, many of the environmental organizations work closely with schools and teachers. Green groups often visit schools to give talks and organize activities. Students are the main targets of green group programmes. Many have established teacher networks, and student membership and activity programmes.
- 59 As the environmental debate has broadened into one of sustainability, there is increasing interaction with organizations from the social welfare, community, and international development sectors. For example, the Green Collar Coalition working to create a strong community-based waste reduction network includes Greenpeace, Oxfam, labour, women and community-based organizations. Just as environmental groups have started to integrate social and economic issues into their work, social groups are integrating environmental issues into their agenda. This is highlighted by the fact that many of the recipients of government funding for environmental community action projects are social services organizations. While the interaction between environment and religious organizations is still limited, groups such as the Catholic Messengers of Green Consciousness are working to integrate green consciousness into the Catholic Church, and work with other faiths.
- 60 Despite the cooperation, some groups have commented that the EN sector is still very fragmented, and because organizations are driven by specific issues and approaches that favour small organizations, there is no concerted voice. The overwhelming number of issues for a comparatively small number of organizations to deal with also results in a lack of time to meet to work on common strategies or programmes. There is no single body providing a networking role.³⁵ There is concern that this lack of coordination limits the potential impact of the EN sector. It has been suggested that one way to improve collaboration would be to establish a “conservation salon”, an informal gathering where groups could get together to talk about issues.

- 61 61 It was also noted that funders tend not to be supportive of activities or programmes that help build networks between groups such as newsletters, as these are too amorphous in their objectives.

IV. Major issues facing the environmental sector

- 62 The main issue identified by the groups interviewed for this study is funding, and related issues such as lack of manpower, staff turnover and professionalism. This was confirmed by the survey results in which 52% of organizations cited funding, 12% cited staffing/management and 12% public awareness of the organization as the primary issues facing the groups.
- 63 The overwhelming number of issues for a small green movement to deal with is also a problem. The scale and intensity of infrastructure works in Hong Kong, the population density, pollution problems and pressure for development place enormous pressures on an overstretched band of people. The relative lack of specialization between the groups means that they often work on similar issues.

Funding

- 64 Funding is a perennial problem for most NGOs worldwide and the problems in Hong Kong are exacerbated by high labour and rental costs. For all but two of the 11 organizations interviewed for this study, funding was a key issue. This seems to be a general problem across the EN sector, particularly those with paid staff and offices. Hong Kong is a high cost centre for operations and even a small office with one or two staff members represents hefty overheads for many organizations.
- 65 While funding appears to be less critical for advocacy work, which is often done by experienced volunteers in many organizations, it is very important for promoting environmental education. Publication of educational materials such as books and CD Roms is labour intensive and requires funding. For animal welfare organizations that provide costly shelters or veterinary services, funding is vital.
- 66 For some groups funding is not a constraint on effectiveness. Some of the smaller organizations without paid staff function adequately with little or no funding and just tailor their work to the funds and volunteers available. For small pressure groups funding is also not a prerequisite for operation and many groups manage to have strategic influence and/or a high public profile with little or no funding. In some cases funding (particularly from private sector sources) is not even desired to ensure the group maintains its impartiality. For the very large organizations with professional fund-raising staff, established fund-raising mechanisms and a proven track record, funding is also less of an issue.
- 67 While there is keen competition for funding within the sector, it was noted that as the NGO movement in mainland China becomes more mature this will attract more international and Hong Kong donors, which may directly compete with local NGOs.

- 68 Funding sources for the majority of funded organizations fall into the following main categories:
- (a) Private sponsorship
 - (b) Membership and sales of products and services
 - (c) Fund-raising events
 - (d) Government consultancies/projects
 - (e) Government and quasi-government funds
- 69 According to the survey results primary funding sources are private donations or sponsorship (30%), membership fees (27%) or sales of products/services (12%).

Private sponsorship

- 70 Most of the organizations with paid staff accept corporate funding to a greater or lesser extent. Some of the pressure groups prefer not to accept any corporate funding to retain their independence. However, all groups receiving corporate funding commented that the market was getting harder in the current economic climate.
- 71 One factor constraining funding is the shortage of overall funds, and competition for those funds. However, the other factor is the lack of capacity in terms of fund-raising. Some groups commented that they thought the problem was not the lack of funds in the community, but the lack of expertise in fund-raising and writing proposals.

Membership and sales of products and services

- 72 Many environmental organizations are membership organizations and some 27% of organizations cited membership fees as their primary source of income.
- 73 For certain organizations service fees are a major part of their income, while others subsist wholly on donations. This is particularly important for animal welfare organizations where there may be difficulties in attracting government funding or corporate sponsorship. Some organizations target individual large donors, while others rely heavily on small donations.
- 74 Very few of the local organizations cited international funds or foundations as a significant source of funding. It was commented that this was due to a lack of time and expertise to know which foundations to apply to. However, with the drop in the stock market many foundations' funds are in decline.

Fund-raising events

- 75 Public fund-raising events, such as sponsored tree planting, hiking and bird watching, are increasingly preferred ways of raising funds as they are predictable annual events, and the funds are able to be used to cover general recurrent expenditure, unlike many project funds. While flag days can be an important source of revenue, the groups need to queue for a slot, muster large numbers of volunteers and demonstrate an ability to raise a minimum sum. While essential

social welfare organizations are given priority for flag days, green groups which “provide educational services to promote the general wellbeing of the people of Hong Kong” are eligible and are selected from a quota on a lottery basis. It was suggested that the application procedure for flag days could be simplified to reduce the administrative burden for groups.

Government consultancies/projects

- 76 None of the groups in the EN sector receive any direct government subvention with the exception of the SPCA (and this is an increasingly minor part of their overall funding needs). The Community Chest specifically excludes animal welfare groups from applying even if they are providing services for people. However, a number of groups receive a significant part of their funding from government agencies for providing direct services or consultancies. For example, Green Power receives funding for managing the Tsuen Wan Environmental Resources Centre and Hong Kong Bird Watching Society receives funding for its annual RAMSAR waterfowl count.

Government and quasi-government funds

- 77 There are a number of quasi government funds which are used by the EN sector most notably the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF), established in 1994, and the Woo Wheelock Green Fund (WWGF), a matching fund set up at the same time as the ECF but funded by a private corporation. These are discussed in more detail below.
- 78 Other quasi-government funds used by the EN sector include the Quality Education Fund (since 2001 the fund no longer disburses money to NGOs), the Elderly Commission, the Innovation and Technology Fund, and the District Council Environmental Improvement Scheme.

The Environment Conservation Fund/Woo Wheelock Green Fund

- 79 The Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) and the Woo Wheelock Green Fund (WWGF) are centrally administered by the ECF Secretariat under the Environment, Transport and Works Bureau.³⁶
- 80 A major problem highlighted by many of the groups is that ECF will only pay for one quarter of the salary of staff working on environmental education and community action projects. However staff salaries for research projects are fully reimbursed despite the fact that some community projects are as labour intensive as scientific research projects.
- 81 For research projects, environmental groups have received a relatively small proportion of the overall funding disbursed since 1995, with universities taking the lion’s share.³⁷ For environmental education and community action (EE/CA) projects the proportion is higher.³⁸ Overall, environmental organizations received \$2.3 million, or 10% of the total research and education funds granted by ECF and WWGF in 2000-2001.³⁹

- 82 The institutional limitation of ECF funding means that many of the projects are still one-off in nature with no long term continuity. An analysis of environmental education projects carried out up to 1999 found that 70% of the projects had a budget of less than \$50,000 with 50% less than \$10,000.⁴⁰ Further, many of the projects lasted only one day and about 45% of the projects involved fewer than 500 participants, and 40% fewer than 50 participants, thus involving a limited segment of the community. The author noted that it was “*difficult to anticipate that these environmental education and community action projects could be effective in enhancing capacity building*”.⁴¹
- 83 Overall, there was a feeling that government funds in general were too restrictive, did not allow the funding of existing staff (usually the main recurrent expense for NGOs), officials were quite bureaucratic and nit-picky and slow in responding while the funding received often did not justify the administrative work required. In one case an organization had worked on an application for 12 months, almost longer than the duration of the project. As one environmental leader commented “*Everyone thinks that NGOs work for free.*”
- 84 Generally speaking, it appears that even though there are more pots of government funds than before, they are getting more restrictive and the amount of funds given for individual projects is getting lower. One group providing already heavily subsidized services (due to the use of professionally skilled volunteers) to the Government was asked if they could cut benefits to the staff employed on the project.
- 85 In terms of improving the effectiveness and usefulness of the Environmental and Conservation Fund/Woo Wheelock Green Fund and other government funds, suggestions made by environmental organizations include:
- Existing staff should be allowed to be funded in full.
 - Government should be more flexible in the budgeting when they vet projects – if they want to control the spending better they could require a more comprehensive financial report.
 - Vetting time for projects should be speeded up.
 - Funders should provide clearer guidelines to the applicants in terms of priorities for funding. This would also help the vetting committees, many of whom are green group representatives.
 - Application forms should be tailored rather than having “one size fits all”
 - The many environmental-related funds (Green Hong Kong, Healthy Lifestyle Campaign, District Improvement funds etc) should be consolidated into one sustainable development fund.
- 86 Many groups also expressed support for government funding for core operations or subvention for environmental education programmes to allow better continuity. Some suggested that the Environmental Campaign Committee could allocate annual funding for NGOs to cover core costs. They also would like to see the Government contract out more services to green groups such as management of ecological areas.

Staffing/management

- 87 A common theme that emerged from the interviews with groups from the EN sector was the problem of high turnover of staff, an issue closely related to funding. Other common problems included quality and professionalism of staff. Almost all stressed the importance of volunteers.

Staff turnover

- 88 All of the organizations interviewed pay below market rates for their staff, and this is probably true of organizations throughout the EN sector. They thus tend to employ younger, cheaper staff, typically fresh graduates with little or no work experience. After a few years of training it is common for many of these to leave for better paying jobs in the professional/private/government sector, thus reducing the intellectual capital of the organization and affecting morale. It was suggested that for the environmental movement to be effective there is a need to limit turnover, since the most effective individuals are also the most experienced.

Professionalism

- 89 The growth in expertise in the EN sector over the last ten years means that there is greater availability of qualified, capable and Cantonese-speaking or bilingual staff. The development of undergraduate and graduate environmental courses at most of the tertiary institutes in the last 15 years means that there is a larger pool of potential qualified local employees.
- 90 However, one organization noted that even environmental graduates from Hong Kong universities need two to three years of training before they can handle knowledge-oriented projects independently. Problems cited include a lack of common sense and critical thinking, poor English/Chinese language skills, lack of creativity and inability to take a broader holistic view of the environment. These shortcomings were attributed to problems with the overall Hong Kong education process, rather than tertiary education specifically. While Hong Kong university graduates understood technical environmental issues well, many did not have a good broad understanding of the issues and how they affect society.
- 91 The need for more professionalism within the sector was cited by several organizations. A more professional approach would help organizations be more effective as well as to retain employees by providing them a career. One large charity introduced a pyramid structure into the organization to improve management and provide more of a career path for employees.
- 92 Many organizations lack experience in project management and human resources management, both critical skills in terms of improving professionalism but both requiring time and funding. Introducing project management skills and techniques on a more systematic basis such as three-year work programmes, annual work plans, and systems for review and appraisal would help groups better focus on the important issues and maintain consistency.

- 93 More staff training is something many groups would like to provide. Groups with international partners or affiliates tend to get support from their international partners and can tap into a professional or well organized network. However, implementation is still up to the local office.
- 94 For the local organizations, training is more hit and miss. While groups would like to provide more staff training, because of funding constraints they are usually too busy for training, and this is often done on-the-job. Some groups are even too busy to attend seminars and conferences.

Volunteers

- 95 For most groups in the sector, volunteers, if not critical, are certainly important. According to the survey some 85% of organizations use volunteers to some extent. Cumulatively, two-thirds of organizations use fewer than 100 volunteers in a given year though a small proportion (14%) use over 500. Some of the large charities are well organized in terms of volunteers and have databases of several hundred volunteers and permanent membership coordinators. However, without a full-time coordinator, even large groups have difficulties managing and utilizing volunteers. Organizations end up turning people away as they cannot use volunteers on an *ad hoc* basis. Developing a more structured volunteer programme with quarterly work plans can help to allocate volunteers better, but takes time to organize.
- 96 It was noted that Hong Kong does not have a culture of voluntarism and people who work tend to have little free time. This means most volunteers are only available at weekends, or in the case of students, during the summer. Getting staff to work weekends to manage the volunteers is also a constraint. There is also the problem of people looking for work who may leave when they get a job.
- 97 Getting volunteers of the right ability is sometimes a problem. “*Volunteers come and go and their capability and dependability vary*”.⁴² One group commented that the non-profit sector tends to attract a lot of well meaning people but who lack the background to be effective. Sometimes having an environmental or ecological background may be less useful than other disciplines such as business or finance, especially for working on campaigns or programmes that target business
- 98 To overcome the problem of quality, groups such as the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society or the Business Environment Council make use of volunteers with professional expertise, in effect getting a professional job done on a *pro bono* basis. For research, some of the environmental organizations used high-calibre interns from overseas universities.
- 99 While many organizations had a core of dedicated volunteers, they tend to use students or temporary volunteers for *ad hoc* and short-term projects. Without exception, all groups could improve their performance if they had more committed volunteers.

Office infrastructure

- 100 By and large most organizations rent their office space though a few of the larger organizations own their properties. In general office space and equipment was not a key issue for most groups in terms of day to day activities though all could benefit from more space and better equipment. Space was an issue for groups who use a lot of volunteers or who have regular large meetings and need to hire outside space.
- 101 Several groups commented that one way government could better support them would be to rent unused government buildings to charities for a peppercorn rent, or to provide a large meeting room for use by charities.
- 102 Finding funding to cover general overheads is an issue, though the declining property market has been a boon to most groups, enabling them to either cut rents or rent more space.

Government Policies

- 103 Many of the groups need government support for many areas they are trying to progress in their mission. There is therefore a strong incentive for open dialogue and transparency. Some groups felt government could be more proactive in supporting them, and giving credibility to the groups and the issues they are promoting. Specific areas of government policy noted by the organizations interviewed are as follows:

Access to information

- 104 Access to information is an area that is critical for many groups in terms of their watchdog role as well as for education. The situation has greatly improved over the last decade, in large part due to a changing culture in certain sections of the civil service and the introduction of an access to information code of practice. Appointment of environmental group members to various advisory bodies, and the establishment of a public register under the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance on submissions and decisions made under the Ordinance have also helped groups gain access to key information concerning the environment. However, one group noted the difficulties in accessing EIAs: individuals need to go to EPD's office in Wanchai to review documents since the online EIAs are often difficult to download and maps and figures are unclear.
- 105 In terms of transparency the HKSAR Government is certainly well ahead of its mainland counterparts. However it was noted that while the larger groups can generally get hold of information that they know about, the problem is knowing what information the Government holds, or getting the information in a timely manner. Some of the smaller groups, which were less well plugged into government policy and consultative committees, told of difficulties in getting information.

- 106 The groups would also like to see more transparency in government plans, particularly from AFCD. Overall, the greater the level of transparency the better as far as environmental groups are concerned.

*“Simply increasing the flow of information to the community and enhancing the awareness of environmental problems will embed a stronger environmental ethic in society. This will then manifest itself in terms of greater participation and correspondingly higher environmental concerns”*⁴³

Unclear responsibilities

- 107 There is also a problem that policy for many environmental issues falls into the cracks between different bureaux. This proves frustrating as departments are unwilling to take responsibility for certain issues, and groups are passed around. A clearer delineation of responsibilities within the Government would help.

Need to develop conservation policy

- 108 The need for development of a government conservation policy was cited by a number of groups, as this affects so many areas of NGO work.

Ability to speak freely

- 109 Reassuringly, none of the groups interviewed felt that they were constrained in their ability to operate or speak out freely. Many of the groups lobby the Government on a regular basis or give commentaries to the media. However, some groups felt that there was a need for more regular contact/platforms with the Government. It was felt that the Government could be more proactive in seeking advice or help from environmental NGOs. As one group commented, *“The Third Sector needs an avenue to entry, rather than having to scale the walls.”* However, the issue of Article 23 was raised as something which may have an as yet unknown impact on their research or advocacy work.

Duplication and competition with NGOs

- 110 There were a number of specific areas noted by the groups where government policy was actually acting against NGOs’ interests, by duplicating their efforts. For example, the Government has commissioned a \$4.3 million study to develop a building certification system, despite the fact that the Business Environment Council spent \$2 million developing its own scheme, Hong Kong Building Environmental Assessment Method (HKBEAM). This forms a large part of BEC’s projects and funding and employs three staff members, but if the Government scheme goes ahead HKBEAM will likely become redundant. Similarly, AFCD is developing ecotourism activities/programmes against which groups organizing their own ecotourism activities cannot compete.

Lack of support

- 111 Groups are also frustrated by the lack of government support in many areas, even where the groups are helping government fulfil its own policy objectives or

strengthen law enforcement. In one case a group had requested the Marine Department to enforce the ban on illegal collection of mudskippers within the RAMSAR site by people from across the border and had taken the issue all the way to the Security Bureau without success. In another case, the Customs and Excise Department resisted an NGO programme for the use of dogs for sniffing out endangered animal parts, despite their success in other parts of Asia.

112 Some groups expressed the view that the HKSAR Government could assist by giving political support to the work that groups are doing on the mainland.

113 Specific suggestions for how the Government could better assist NGOs include the following:

- Government can provide low cost billboards and print ads for charities
- Government can engage earlier with NGOs when conducting public consultation on issues.
- Government can set up a system to allow the public to purchase copies of EIAs.
- Government can help NGOs secure unused government property and land.
- Government can set up a centre for NGOs to provide a variety of assistance and services, similar to the Department of Trade and Industry's centre for small and medium-sized enterprises. This could help provide training as well as provide information on funds available and how to apply for them, liaise with government departments, etc.
- Home Affairs Department can invite more green groups to participate in District Council meetings on relevant subjects
- Environmental Campaign Committee can promote more green (conservation) rather than "brown" issues (pollution) in their interactions with the general public.

Public awareness

114 Most environmental organizations agree that public awareness of environmental issues, while not at an acceptable level, is certainly rising. This is borne out by a number of public opinion surveys.⁴⁴ Awareness on local pollution issues tends to be higher than issues such as habitat protection or global environmental problems. Public awareness was cited as a key issue for a number of groups, particularly regarding animal welfare. It was commented that much of the awareness in Hong Kong is still focussed on the problem rather than action to solve the problem. The need for more action-oriented programmes was cited.

115 In terms of public awareness of environmental organizations and their activities, longitudinal surveys conducted by ECC in 1993, 1995 and 1998 showed that awareness of the major associations has increased.⁴⁵

116 While a relatively small percentage of the population are members of environmental organizations, a significant percentage, equivalent to approximately 350,000 people, have attended meetings or activities of environmental groups.⁴⁶ This is an impressive outreach for a relatively small number of organizations, and similar to the numbers reached by trade unions,

kaifongs and mutual aid committees. Even higher participation rates were found in a 2001 survey.⁴⁷

- 117 While environmental organizations are not the main source of public information on environmental issues, they are an important one. Thirty-seven percent of respondents in one survey sometimes or frequently used green groups to obtain information on environmental issues, which was higher than government departments or reports, the internet or schools and universities.⁴⁸ Only the media showed a higher level.
- 118 Environmental organizations also enjoy a high degree of trust from the public.⁴⁹ In general the public are satisfied with environmental organizations' performance,⁵⁰ and almost a third of the public think that the Government should listen to green groups and other pressure groups if there is an environmental problem in Hong Kong.⁵¹
- 119 Public perception of the organizations themselves was an issue for some of the groups interviewed for this study. Some groups with high-profile activities but low-profile names found that they sometimes lost out in terms of public donations to more aggressive and better known groups as the public was confused as to who was doing what. Business-related groups were also concerned that they might be viewed as a business or consultancy rather than as independent non-profit organizations.
- 120 While most groups were reasonably satisfied with the amount of media coverage they received, there were comments that the Chinese press tended to report more sensationally. This caused a few problems for some groups who had to deal with adverse publicity due to what they felt was misrepresentation. It also caused problems for some groups working on the mainland who have to be sensitive to the authorities there. One group had employed a mainland PR agency specifically to resolve this.
- 121 There was also difficulty in getting the media to focus on what are sometimes complex technical issues. It was noted by NGOs that the role and importance of journalists in the environmental movement was much greater in China and Taiwan than in Hong Kong.⁵²
- 122 The importance of professional PR skills was evident in terms of how much media coverage a group received. Larger organizations tend to have professional PR staff; however, even smaller and less well funded organizations use professional PR volunteers to help get their message across.

Ethics

- 123 The issue of ethics was not raised as an issue by any of the groups interviewed. The main area in which ethics may be an issue is in relation to corporate sponsorship and whether companies are "buying" green groups' silence. As one commentator pointed out "*Some major sponsors of environmental activities not only vet the type of activities in application proposals, they also steer the direction of activities.*"⁵³

124 However there is little evidence that Hong Kong environmental groups are less critical of corporations because of their funding, and cases where green groups are silenced because of funding are rare. While groups tend to adopt a more consensual approach when dealing with corporations, this is largely because this is seen as a more effective relationship. However, even fairly mild groups are not averse to criticism of corporations when the need arises.

V. Conclusions

125 There has been an enormous growth in the number and diversity of organizations in the EN sector over the last decade. The majority of these new organizations are small or voluntary, which lack the capacity of the more established, larger groups. The contribution of the sector to society is considerable, particularly in terms of lobbying government and business, education in schools, and provision of animal welfare services. The groups have been less successful in terms of mass mobilization and community outreach, though some organizations are developing more grassroots-programmes.

126 The main constraints on the ability of organizations to achieve their mission are largely funding and staff turnover/development. Given that environmental protection is a priority policy area for the Government, and there are a number of dedicated funds for this purpose, attention should be paid to how to better facilitate longer term environmental education programmes, and provide more funding for recurrent as well as capital costs, to ensure better quality programmes. The Government should also consider the possibility of funding some of the groups' core operations.

127 On staffing, there is a need for more staff training at all levels and development of a career path to retain experienced personnel. While it is likely (and desirable) that NGOs will always use volunteers, the organizations themselves need to provide more structured volunteer programmes. The Government can also assist by promoting voluntarism in the community. Volunteer agencies can also work together with NGOs to identify committed volunteers. The Government should also consider setting up a centre for NGOs to provide various assistance and services.

128 While relations with the environmental/animal welfare arms of the Government are generally constructive, the overall failure of the Government to integrate environmental/animal welfare concerns into other areas of government policies frustrates environmental groups. Earlier engagement when conducting consultation, and greater transparency, would help to ameliorate confrontation at a later stage.

VI. Acknowledgements

129 The author would like to extend grateful thanks to the following for their assistance with this report:

CHAN Susanna, Objection to Route 10 Action Group

Fr CHANG Anthony, Catholic Messengers of Green Consciousness
Dr CHENG Luk-ki, Green Power
HANSELMAN Chris, SPCA
KILBURN Mike, Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
Dr KIRKPATRICK Craig, TRAFFIC East Asia
LEE Jenny, Objection to Route 10 Action Group
LEE Sam, World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong
Dr NG Gordon, Conservancy Association
NG Mei, Friends of the Earth Hong Kong
ROBINSON Jill, Animals Asia Foundation
THOMSON Andrew, Business Environment Council
Dr YAU W K, Tai Po Environmental Action Group

-
- ¹ Pollution abatement and control; natural resources conservation and protection; and environmental beautification and open spaces.
- ² Animal protection and welfare; wildlife preservation and protection; and veterinary services.
- ³ For example pollution abatement, resource conservation and wildlife preservation are often dealt with by the same organization.
- ⁴ International, local, business/industry/professional and academic/scientific.
- ⁵ These include organizations affiliated to, funded or staffed by the Government such as the Environment Campaign Committee, Environmental Resource Centre and Environment and Conservation Fund.
- ⁶ Sources of data include (a) Hong Kong Tourism Board (2001) *Association & Societies in Hong Kong*; (b) Hong Kong SAR Government Gazette No. 30 of 26 July 2002, *List of Approved Charitable Institutions and Trusts of A Public Character*; (c) http://timway.com/hk/Society/Environmental_Protection/Organizations/ (viewed September 2002); (d) internet search and (e) author's own contacts.
- ⁷ SPCA founded in 1921 and Hong Kong Bird Watching Society founded in 1957.
- ⁸ Chan, W. K. (1991), "Environment and Social Development – The Case of Hong Kong", in *Environmental Protection and Social Development Role of Non-Governmental Organizations*. International Council on Social Welfare 1991 Asia and Pacific Regional Conference, Organized by Hong Kong Council of Social Service.
- ⁹ *ibid*
- ¹⁰ Ming, K. T. (1987), *Pressure groups and the Daya Bay controversy*, M Soc Sc thesis, University of Hong Kong.
- ¹¹ Ng, H. S. (1992), *Participation of grassroots organizations in environmental protection policy*, M S W thesis, University of Hong Kong.
- ¹² Chiu, W. K., Hung, H. F. and Lai, O. K. (1999) "Environmental Movements in Hong Kong." In: Lee, Y. S and So, A. Y. (eds) *Asia's Environmental Movements*, East Gate, Armonk, New York.
- ¹³ Hung, W. T. (2002) "Advocacy of Non Government Organizations." In: The Conservancy Association, *On the Path To Sustainable Development: Hong Kong*.
- ¹⁴ Ng, C. N. and Ng, T. L. (1992), "Environment," in Cheng, Joseph, Y., S. and Kwong, Paul, C., K., (eds), *The Other Hong Kong Report*, The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong.
- ¹⁵ The Conservancy Association's youth arm met with the Environmental Bureau chief in Beijing in 1979. Chan, W. K. (1997), "Thinking Globally: Hong Kong's Participation in International Environmental Forums", *Asian Journal of Environmental Management*, Vol 5, No 1, May 1997,
- ¹⁶ Chiu, A. C. and Cook, B. (2002) "Case Study: The Hong Kong Business Coalition on the Environment. Engaging the Community on the Path Towards Sustainability." In: The Conservancy Association, *On the Path to Sustainable Development: Hong Kong*.

- 17 Hung, W. T. (1997). "The Politics of the Environment in Hong Kong." In: Hills, P. and Chan, C. (eds). *Community Mobilisation and the Environment in Hong Kong*, The University of Hong Kong.
- 18 Chan, C. and Hills, P. (1997) "Community and the Environment in Hong Kong." In: Hills, P. and Chan, C. (eds). *Community Mobilisation and the Environment in Hong Kong*, The University of Hong Kong.
- 19 Chiu, W. K., Hung, H. F. and Lai, O. K. (1999) "Environmental Movements in Hong Kong." In: Lee, Y. S and So, A. Y. (eds) *Asia's Environmental Movements*, East Gate, Armonk, New York.
- 20 The Tsing Yi Concern Group, Greenpeace in their campaign against the siting of incineration facilities near Tuen Mun, and local pressure group Objection to Route 10 Action Group in their campaign against a proposed highway through their neighbourhood.
- 21 Green Productivity (1990). "The Private Sector Committee on the Environment: A Private Sector Approach to Environmental Issues." *Green Productivity*, 4. pp10-12.
- 22 A representative of the Conservancy Association participated in the Stockholm Forum in 1972, the first summit meeting of 140 countries on the environment, and then at the Earth Summit in 1992.
- 23 Chan, W. K. (1997), "Thinking Globally: Hong Kong's Participation in International Environmental Forums," *Asian Journal of Environmental Management*, Vol 5, No 1, May 1997,
- 24 Chiu, W. K., Hung, H. F. and Lai, O. K. (1999) "Environmental Movements in Hong Kong." In: Lee, Y. S and So, A. Y. (eds) *Asia's Environmental Movements*, East Gate, Armonk, New York.
- 25 Legislative Council website. Agendas of the meeting of the Environmental Affairs Panel. www.legco.gov.hk (Viewed November 2002.)
- 26 Including: Advisory Council on the Environment and the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Committee; Country and Marine Parks Board; Animal Welfare Advisory Group; Endangered Species Liaison Group; Marine Mammal Conservation Working Group; Advisory Committee on the Quality of Water Supplies; Hong Kong 2030 Advisory Group; Wetland Advisory Committee; Waste Reduction Committee. Some green group board members have also been appointed to the Town Planning Board and sit on the Energy Advisory Committee.
- 27 Yung, A. (1988), *Interest groups and the policy process: a study of environmental protection policies in Hong Kong*, M Soc Sc thesis, University of Hong Kong.
- 28 Man, S. W. (1995) Chinese University Centre of Environmental Studies newsletter, Vol 5, no 2.
- 29 Hung, W. T. (1995), "The Environment", in Cheung, Stephen, Y., L., and Sze, Stephen, M., H., (eds), *The Other Hong Kong Report*, Chinese University Press, Hong Kong.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Golin/Harris Forrest (2001), *The Role of Companies in the Development of a Vibrant Third Sector in Hong Kong*, Report for the Central Policy Unit, HKSAR Government. www.info.gov.hk/cpu
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Chiu, W. K., Hung, H. F. and Lai, O. K. (1999) "Environmental Movements in Hong Kong." In: Lee, Y. S and So, A. Y. (eds) *Asia's Environmental Movements*, East Gate, Armonk, New York.
- 35 Chan, W. K. (1997), "Thinking Globally: Hong Kong's Participation in International Environmental Forums", *Asian Journal of Environmental Management*, Vol 5, No 1, May 1997,
- 36 While originally the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) was supposed to provide a coordinating role for environmental organizations it has actually become a government quasi-green group. While the ECC's monthly magazine ECCO provides a calendar for major green group events, it does not play any active networking role. However, with its government-backed mandate, some groups have commented that it would probably not be desirable for ECC to play that role.
- 37 The purpose is to provide funding support to local non-profit-making organizations on educational, research, Demonstration Scheme (DEMOS) and other projects and activities in relation to environmental and conservation matters. ECF funds fall into three categories – research, environmental education/community action, and community waste recovery projects. The latter is administered by an Environmental Education and Community Action Projects Vetting Committee Under the Environmental Campaign Committee. The maximum grant for environmental education and community action projects is \$150,000, although there is no limit on research grants.
- 38 Out of a total of \$38.2 million granted for research projects between 1995 and 2002 (\$30.6 million by ECF and \$7.6 million by WWGF) \$34.6 million went to non-environmental organizations and \$3.6 million to environmental organizations. Environment, Transport & Works Bureau website <http://www.info.gov.hk/etwb-e/board/index03.htm> (viewed in October 2002)

- 38 In the financial year 2000-01, environmental organizations received 64% of the funding for 30%
of the EE/CA projects.
- 39 Much of ECF/WWGF funding goes directly to the ECC. Additional small amounts of ECC's
funding are channelled directly to green groups for large scale projects such as World
40 Environment Day and Environmental Protection Festivals.
- Hills, P. (2000). *Environmental Education for a sustainable future*. Report to the Environmental
Campaign Committee.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Ng, M. (1996). Review of the Environment and Conservation Fund, the Woo Wheelock Green
Fund and the Environmental Campaign Committee. Friends of the Earth Hong Kong.
- 43 Hills, P. (2001) in Mottershead, T., (ed), *Administrative Rationalism, sustainable development and
the politics of environmental discourse in Hong Kong*.
- 44 A high proportion of Hong Kong residents now report themselves to be very worried about
overpopulation (35% respondents), air and water pollution (28% respondents). The Hong Kong
Transition Project (2002), *The First Five Years. Floundering Government, Foundering
Democracy?* May 2002. www.hkbu.edu.hk/~hkt Tables 84, 85
- 45 HKU Social Science Research Centre (1998). *Survey on Community Attitudes to the Environment,
1997-98*. Commissioned by ECC, May 1998. Of the eight associations listed, Friends of the
Earth Hong Kong, Greenpeace China, Green Power, World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong,
Conservancy Association, Marine Conservation Society, Environmental Campaign Committee
and the Green Lantau Association, five of them had over 50% awareness, only 6% of respondents
had not heard of any of them and 94% had heard of at least one environmental association
- 46 A territory-wide survey conducted in 2000 found that 5% of respondents had attended meetings or
activities of environmental groups. This percentage had remained fairly stable over the last 5 years
of similar surveys. The Hong Kong Transition Project (2002), *The First Five Years. Floundering
Government, Foundering Democracy?* May 2002. www.hkbu.edu.hk/~hkt
- 47 A survey of 964 Hong Kong residents found that 55% of respondents had participated in a waste
recycling project, 19% had visited a nature reserve, 12% had visited an organic farm and 11% had
participated in a clean-up activity within the last two years. Civic Exchange and The Hong Kong
Transition Project (2001), *Taking Charge and Cleaning Up. The search for a greener environment
in the Hong Kong SAR*. www.civic-exchange.org
- 48 ibid, table 73
- 49 Some 70% of respondents trust environmental information from environmental organizations
some or a great deal compared to 52% from government departments. Ibid, table 74
- 50 69% of respondents in one survey said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the efforts of
green groups to improve the environment, compared with the media at 47% or government
departments at 36%. Ibid, table 79
- 51 ibid, Table 80
- 52 Journalism & Media Studies Centre, University of Hong Kong (2000). *Green NGO and
Environmental Journalists Team Up in Hong Kong*. <http://wwics.si.edu/NEWS/chinango.htm>
(viewed November 2002).
- 53 Hung, W. T. (1997). "The Politics of the Environment in Hong Kong." In: Hills, P. and Chan, C.
(eds). *Community Mobilisation and the Environment in Hong Kong*, The University of Hong
Kong.