

27 February 2009

The Honorable Ip Kwok-him
Chairman of the Joint Subcommittee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Ip

Re: Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development – Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the West Kowloon Cultural District Project

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the development of WKCD. Much has been said already about the need to develop human software to ensure the self-sustainability of WKCD. In this association's view, the WKCD Authority should accept some responsibility for staff development in advance of its opening. In a few years time WKCDA will be seeking experienced arts administrators in large numbers and across a wide variety of disciplines to ensure that its arts venues operate at the high standards of presentation and operational effectiveness one expects to find in a world class cultural district.

The Authority should not just sit back and expect the labour market to provide the required number of people with the required skill sets in each arts / events management discipline as and when they are needed. There are simply not enough arts administrators in Hong Kong to fill the demand.

Training arts managers in such numbers takes time, and fortunately there is still time if the Authority starts now. It should be providing funds for staff development across the range of disciplines that it hopes to recruit, and while it may not initially have the internal infrastructure to manage such programmes, in the short term it can partner with other agencies such as the HK Arts Development Council to facilitate internships at Hong Kong's existing professional arts organisations and to fund manager-level staff exchange between those organizations and other major performance centres around the world.

The Arts Development Council is to be commended for its initiative in offering Fellowships that provide half-yearly attachments to UK arts organizations, arranged via the Clore Leadership Foundation. These serve as a timely example of the types of programmes that the WKCDA should be supporting financially, starting within the next twelve months.

The Hong Kong Arts Administrators' Association stands ready and willing to provide advice on a range of staff development programmes that the Authority should support.

Yours Sincerely

Tisa Ho

Chairman