



# REIMAGINING HIGH-QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG

## Why Now?

**High-quality development (HQD)** was reaffirmed as China's top priority in the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 20th National Congress by President Xi as the country transitions from a period of rapid growth. Its approach to HQD is characterised by quality improvements across all fronts, including green economic development, more open trade and investment, industry optimisations, enterprise branding, and quality management system modernisation.

HQD has also become a key measure for the Hong Kong Government. Its efforts are aimed primarily at strengthening the digital economy through Web3-related technologies, green technology and finance, and attracting high-quality talents within diverse professions. While the Government's development plans are encouraging, its approach overlooks the underlying purpose of HQD: **to ensure all segments of society have access to a better life.**

Given the city's persistent inequality, there is an urgent need in Hong Kong to **redefine HQD with a focus on 'quality'** beyond conventional measurements of economic success and to ensure that economic growth in the city is also accompanied by people-centred, societal development.

Through **cross-sector stakeholder** and **community engagement** led by the future leaders of the city, the **Hong Kong Young Leaders Programme** will develop a set of **policy recommendations** for **4 high-potential areas** to support the Government's efforts on HQD, and **drive shared prosperity, social equity and well-being, and quality of life** in Hong Kong.

# 4 Focus Areas

## 1 Promoting Quality Youth Development and Education

Current education policies in Hong Kong are inadequate in cultivating Hong Kong youth to maximise their potential and to pursue meaningful economic activities. Only a third of youth believe there is room for their development in the city, and even less are confident in their economic prospects. While Home and Youth Affairs Bureau's Youth Development Blueprint is a promising start, a multiprong strategy is needed to fully equip young people with valuable skills and instil confidence in their future. This will include improving the quality of teaching and teacher training, creating opportunities for less privileged students, increasing participation in civic, regional and global affairs, and preparing young people with vocational skills in emerging industries.



## 2 Strengthening the Arts, Cultural, and Sports Industries

While Hong Kong is well-established as one of the most important financial centres in the world, its arts, cultural, and sports industries are underdeveloped in comparison. Valued at \$63.6 billion or about 2.3% of the city's GDP, the creative industries can be a much more prominent economic driver for Hong Kong. Its free flow of information and people also make it ideal for the promotion of cultural exchange. Creating viable jobs in the arts, cultural and sports industries will provide meaningful economic activities and positive life prospects for young people interested in non-traditional industries as well as position Hong Kong as a strong international cultural hub.



## 3 Integrating Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies

The detrimental impact of human activities on the climate and the urgent need to shift to a low-carbon economy are irrefutable. As Hong Kong prepares for the reality of global climate change, it is vital to integrate climate mitigation and adaptation strategies across the city's current and future development. In 2021 the Government has committed to reduce the city's carbon emissions by 50% before 2035 through the Climate Action Plan 2050. However, there are significant opportunities to design and implement climate mitigation and adaptation strategies across all sectors that are people-centered, attractive for investment, and cost-effective. Through measures such as strengthening the urban structures, food security measures, and drainage and flood management, Hong Kong can become a global climate action leader and ensure safe-and-secure environments for its citizens.



## 4 Enhancing Social & Mental Well-Being

Improving social well-being is a key to repairing the social fabric of Hong Kong, which has been severely tested in the past few years. This has manifested in societal traumas in the city, including social alienation, community fragmentation, and mental health issues. However, the Government's efforts to improve the city's primary healthcare system do not adequately address mental health problems; 74% of Hong Kong people suffering from mental health issues do not seek any form of professional help. Taking a comprehensive look at enhancing social and mental well-being will foster greater community building, enhance the quality of life for its citizens, and improve the external image of Hong Kong.

