



Social Services

Graduates aspiring to contribute their time and effort to society usually look for jobs in the social services. Non-profit organisations are companies or associations that do not aim to make profits for themselves, but use what they earn to serve the interests of the public or a particular sector of society.

Generally speaking, there are three kinds of non-profit organisations, namely, voluntary agencies, non-government organisations, and government-subsented or statutory bodies serving the different constituencies of society. These types of organisations offer satisfying and rewarding careers for graduates who want to serve the community.

Non-profit organisations cover a large variety of pursuits from social work to international trade, education to engineering, and within this broad category, there are diverse opportunities.



VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

In Hong Kong, there are more than 200 voluntary agencies providing a wide variety of social services, such as community development, family and child care, rehabilitation, services for the elderly, services for children and youth, and services for offenders/ex-offenders, drug abusers/ex-addicts and the homeless. Two well-known examples are Caritas Hong Kong and YMCA, both well-established voluntary agencies that aim to serve individuals, families, groups and the community.

Positions

The most common job opportunity in voluntary agencies is in social work and the entry level position is usually as assistant social work officer. These officers handle case work, conduct social skills training, group work and therapeutic treatment programmes, supervise community centres and more. Other positions include teaching, for which a teaching qualification is necessary, and administrative positions.

Education & Requirements

A social science degree majoring in social work is preferred. Other degree holders are accepted, however, a one-year post-graduate course in social work is recommended. The ability to speak fluent Cantonese is also essential.

The work of a social worker is challenging. Working hours are irregular, ranging from early in the morning to late in the evening. Working on Sundays or emergency/on-call duties are sometimes required. But the intangible rewards of helping others are satisfying. The desire to serve the community, to assist those who are less fortunate, and having a lot of patience are other features in those involved in non-profit work.



NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

Volunteer agencies involve the provision of a range of social welfare services to the local public. Non-government organisations offer a wider scope of assistance, i.e. not only to the local people, but also to those overseas. Non-government organisations aim to relieve poverty, advance education, finance and organise community projects for the community.

In Hong Kong, there are a number of well-established non-government organisations including the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, Oxfam Hong Kong and Friends of the Earth (Hong Kong). There are also a number of organisations with a Christian mission which aims at providing social services with a Christian approach, such as Christian Action and World Vision Hong Kong.

Positions

Non-government organisations recruit graduates for a variety of positions including teaching, social welfare, administration, publicity, fundraising, finance and fieldwork.

Education & Requirements

Although a degree in a relevant discipline is not always required, those with relevant experience and the necessary interpersonal skills have an advantage. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service Institute promotes lifelong learning in the sector through trainings, seminars, symposiums, scholarships and recognition scheme with an aim to foster the growth and development of its practitioners.

GOVERNMENT-SUBVENTED BODIES

Government-subvented or statutory bodies provide services to different kinds of constituencies in society, such as the manufacturing industries, trading firms, tourists or consumers. The Hong Kong Productivity Council is a typical government-subvented organisation. It aims to promote productivity excellence among the various industries in Hong Kong.

Positions

There are also a variety of positions within government-subvented bodies including, but not limited to, positions in administration, computer services, information services, training, publicity and finance.

Education & Requirements

A relevant degree relating to the position sought is usually required.

SALARY & BENEFITS

Social workers may earn around \$8,000-\$15,000 depending on the size of the organisation. Mostly, the rewards of working in the social services field, particularly in charity organisations, are intangible such as job satisfaction, and a contribution to society.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service not only promote the social welfare service development in Hong Kong, but also strive for building a welfare sector that is highly accountable, efficient, effective and responsive to social needs so as to uphold the long-term sustainable development of society and the wellbeing of its citizen. The association can be contacted at:

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