



The secrets of success

In life, there is no substitute for experience – which is why The Women's Foundation's workshops give students insightful perspectives and teach practical skills

WHAT are effective ways of marketing one's self during a job interview? What are good manners and why are they important? How can one make good financial decisions? What are some ways to stay positive during tough times? What are the key attributes of a successful leader? What are some effective strategies for overcoming one's life struggles? More than 2,000 students have had a chance to discover the answers to these questions and more through The Women's Foundation's (TWF) Life Skills Programme's ground-breaking extra-curricular activities.

Getting life advice from Hong Kong's Former Chief Secretary for Administration Anson Chan, civic leaders, rehabilitated youth or even participating in a job interview role play with Hudson's **headhunters** are not common after-school activities. But that is exactly what the student participants of the workshops have been doing.

Experience is the best teacher

THE best life coaches are not the ones seen on TV. Instead we learn best from our own first-hand experiences as well as from people all around us who have accumulated rich life experiences. This is why the three learning focuses of the programme – healthy relationships and well-being, life and career planning and financial **literacy** – are not simply taught through interactive games in a classroom, but also conveyed through a series of extra-curricular activities.

TWF arranged for Former Chief Secretary for Administration, Anson Chan, to give inspiring talks to students. Using examples from her own life, she talked about the traits of a leader which she learned through her own career experiences. Chan also highlighted the importance of maintaining a balanced life, good health and a regular exercise **regime**.

In addition to life advice, the workshops try to **empower** students to take responsibility for their own financial futures, which is a key resource that will help them achieve their dreams and aspirations. To provide further support, the programme has introduced an **innovative** financial planning board game, *Praxis*. Volunteers from JP Morgan also delivered a financial budgeting workshop, which covered the traps of using credit cards, cost of living and more.

Honest, heart-felt talks

IT is not just students who benefit from these exchanges. Levina Poon, Director and Head of Financial Services at Hudson remembered the role-plays fondly. "The students really challenged our creativity and ability to think on our feet," Poon said. "While we enjoyed the chance to share our experiences, we also learned a lot from the kids; it was a heart-warming experience," Poon added.

Similarly, Karen Seymour, Community Engagement Manager at Li & Fung Trading, a leading global supply chain logistics and sourcing company, was touched by the students' message: "A lot of students mentioned that the most important lesson was 'to stay true to ourselves, breakdown pre-conceived notions, and follow our hearts'. They met with a panel of senior women in our company, and they mentioned that it was great meeting women who are independent and confident."

Follow your dreams

AMONG some of the inspiring women they met were TRINITY Brand Managing Director and Senior Vice President of OSG-IT. The students had the opportunity to chat with each woman in small groups and ask for life and career advice. Over light refreshments, the students enjoyed hearing inspiring stories from these women who had overcome external pressures and their own doubts to climb up the corporate ladder and find **fulfilment** by following their hearts.

Seymour sees these activities as an important component in a student's education. "Youths today are missing out on working experiences. They face too many demands on academics.

Everybody needs to get their hands dirty and learn entrepreneurial skills." Seymour explained that work experiences teach students how to exercise initiative and extend knowledge and skills beyond the textbook and into their future employment as well as problem-solving in their lives. ●

