

**CUHK**  
**Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

**The Centre for Quality of Life**

**Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies**

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

**September 2009**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Centre for Quality of Life of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is the first centre specializing in quality of life research in Hong Kong and in different Chinese communities. One of our goals is to monitor and promote quality of life in Hong Kong through cross-disciplinary research, academic exchange activities, and cross-institutional collaboration.
- 1.2 Hong Kong undergoes drastic changes in political, economic, cultural and environmental aspects in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the quality of life of citizens in Hong Kong is being affected. It is timely to compile a composite index to monitor the quality of life in Hong Kong.
- 1.3 The **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** was designed in 2003 to serve as an objective and analytic tool to examine the quality of life in Hong Kong. The Index is released annually.

## 2 Objectives

It is the intention of the Centre is to use this composite index to:

- measure and keep track of Hong Kong's quality of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- engage relevant parties in promoting and advocating quality of life in Hong Kong;
- provide policy makers and the community with a useful reference tool; and
- advocate for the promotion of quality of life in Hong Kong and draw public attention to the issue of quality of life.

## 3 Composition of CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

- 3.1 The **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** is a composite index. It consists of 21 indicators that are grouped into three sub-indices, viz. **social**, **economic** and **environmental** (Appendices 1 & 2).
- 3.2 The indicators are selected according to the coverage, measurability, representativeness, and importance to the quality of life in Hong Kong. Among the 21 indicators, six are compiled by the Centre, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the University. These indicators are stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions (Appendix 1).
- 3.3 2002 was the base year of the study, and the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** for that year was set at 100 (Appendix 3). If the Index of a subsequent year is above 100, it means that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is better than that of 2002. If the index is below 100, it reveals that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is worse than that of 2002. If the Index is 100, it indicates that the Hong Kong quality of life in that year is the same as that of 2002.

#### **4 Major Findings of the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index 2008**

- 4.1 According to the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index of 2008**, the overall score in 2008 is 104.93, though slightly higher than that of 2003 (104.20), was lower than those of 2007 (108.78), 2006 (108.93), 2005 (108.34), and 2004 (105.78), indicating that the quality of life in Hong Kong has dropped to the lowest since 2003 (Appendix 3).
- 4.2 Both the social and economic sub-indices recorded drop, the most notable being the economic sub-index, which sank to its record low. The environmental sub-index was the only one among the three sub-indices to have shown improvement (Appendix 3).
- 4.3 As compared with the 2007 figures, 10 out of the 21 indicators worsened in 2008 (see Appendix 4). They are:
- i) Public expenditure on health as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product;
  - ii) Stress index;
  - iii) General life satisfaction index;
  - iv) Press freedom index;
  - v) Government performance index;
  - vi) Housing affordability ratio;
  - vii) Real rental index;
  - viii) Index of current economic conditions;
  - ix) Public expenditure on education as a proportion of the Gross Domestic Product; and
  - x) Age participation rate for first degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities.

Under the social sub-index, the most notable indicator is the government performance index, which showed a 29 percentage-point decrease from that of 2007. Under the economic sub-index, the most noticeable drop is found in the housing affordability ratio and the index of current economic conditions (i.e. public attitude towards the economic conditions in Hong Kong), which decreased by 33 and 30 percentage-point respectively comparing with those of 2007.

4.4 Compared with the previous year, 9 indicators improved in 2008 (see Appendix 5):

- i) Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases;
- ii) Press criticism index;
- iii) Overall crime rate;
- iv) Unemployment rate;
- v) Real wage index;
- vi) Air index;
- vii) Water index;
- viii) Noise index; and
- ix) Recycle rate of municipal solid waste.

The notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases has leaped by 33 percentage-point from that of 2007. All four indicators under the environmental sub-index went up, indicating that the air quality, water quality, noise pollution and the recycle rate of solid waste had improved. Besides, the standardized mortality rate and life expectancy at birth remained unchanged (Appendix 3).

4.5 For more information on the **CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**, please visit The Centre for Quality of Life website: [www2.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol](http://www2.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol)

## Working Group of the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

Prof. Ng Sai Leung  
Director, Centre for Quality of Life  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Geography and Resource  
Management, CUHK  
Tel: 2609-6527  
Email: [slng@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:slng@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Ting Kwok Fai  
Professor,  
Department of Sociology, CUHK  
Tel: 2609-6626  
Email: [kfting@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:kfting@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Ma Ngok  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Government and Public  
Administration, CUHK  
Tel: 2609-7483  
Email: [mangok@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:mangok@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Tsou Jin Yeu  
Professor,  
Department of Architecture, CUHK  
Tel: 2609-6558  
Email: [jinyeutsou@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:jinyeutsou@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Sunny K.S. Kwong  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Economics, CUHK  
Tel.: 2609-8198  
Email: [kaisunkwong@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:kaisunkwong@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Winnie W.S. Mak  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Psychology, CUHK  
Tel: 2609-6577  
Email: [wwsmak@psy.cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:wwsmak@psy.cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Ng Kai Hon  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Government and Public  
Administration, CUHK  
Tel.: 2609-7486  
Email: [kaihongg@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:kaihongg@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Paul S.N. Lee  
Dean, Faculty of Social Science  
Director, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies  
Professor, School of Journalism and Communication,  
CUHK  
Tel: 2609-6234  
Email: [plee@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:plee@cuhk.edu.hk)

## **Appendix 1: Composition of and Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

### **SOCIAL SUB-INDEX**

1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)<sup>(1)</sup> refers to the number of deaths per 1000 standard population.
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years) refers to the life expectancy at birth for males and females.
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population) refers to the number of notified infectious diseases per 1000 population.
5. Stress index refers to the stress that the Hong Kong people are facing (base rate = 100).
6. General life satisfaction index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with their current lives (base rate = 100).
7. Press freedom index refers to the degree of press freedom in Hong Kong (base rate = 100).
8. Press criticism index refers to the frequency of criticisms by the press of the Hong Kong Corporation, the Hong Kong SAR Government, and the People's Republic of China Government (base rate = 100).
9. Government performance index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with the performance of Hong Kong SAR Government (base rate = 100).
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population) refers to the total number of violent and non-violent crimes reported per 1000 population.

### **ECONOMIC SUB-INDEX**

11. Housing affordability ratio refers to the annual average of affordable property price (i.e. average property price times 39.9 sq. feet, divided by monthly medium income times 12).
12. Real rental index refers to the real rental index for the Hong Kong property market.
13. Unemployment rate refers to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (in percent).
14. Index of current economic conditions refers to the public attitude towards economic conditions in Hong Kong.
15. Real wage index<sup>(2)</sup> refers to the real wages for employees up to supervisory level (excluding managerial and professional employees) in all selected industry sectors.
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-INDEX**

18. Air index refers to the daily air pollution index.
19. Water index refers to the percentage of rivers in Hong Kong categorized as 'good' and 'excellent' by the monitoring station.
20. Noise index (per 1000 population) refers to the number of noise complaints received by the Environmental Protection Department and the Police per 1000 population.
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste refers to the recycle rate (in percent) of solid waste from households and from commercial and industrial sources.

#### **Notes:**

<sup>(1)</sup> Standardized mortality rate is compiled based on the world standard population published in the 1997-1999 *World Health Statistics Annual*.

<sup>(2)</sup> As from 2001, the real wage index is derived by deflating the nominal wage indices by the 1999/2000-based CPI(A).

#### **Sources:**

Stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions are compiled by the Faculty of Social Science of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions.

## Appendix 2: Data for Compiling the CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Social sub-index</b>							
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.5#
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years)	F : 84.5 M : 78.6	F : 84.3 M : 78.5	F : 84.7 M : 79	F: 84.6 M: 78.8	F: 85.5 M: 79.4	F: 85.5 M: 79.4	F: 85.5# M:79.4#
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.30	2.10	2.20	2.00
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	3.73	2.33	2.89	2.91	3.27	3.65	2.39
5. Stress index	100.00	88.75	79.51	72.95	74.42	72.91	80.36
6. General life satisfaction index	100.00	100.68	105.62	109.94	112.47	110.22	107.57
7. Press freedom index	100.00	101.22	100.26	101.43	101.55	103.92	103.64
8. Press criticism index	100.00	103.75	91.02	78.82	77.25	81.86	83.65
9. Government performance index	100.00	103.23	132.23	169.79	176.29	183.48	130.48
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	11.18	12.99	11.81	11.37	11.83	11.67	11.23
<b>Economic sub-index</b>							
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.68	4.49	5.31	6.22	5.88	6.82	7.67
12. Real rental index	87.97	79.67	84.55	93.11	96.68	105.27	107.67
13. Unemployment rate	7.34	7.93	6.76	5.55	4.69	3.92	3.68
14. Index of current economic conditions	76.55	81.32	99.95	109.75	109.48	116.70	81.55
15. Real wage index	117.53	117.70	116.35	115.78	115.48	116.08	116.68
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.10	4.40	4.40	4.00	3.80	3.50	3.40
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	17.04	17.70	17.50	17.60	18.50	18.70	18.50
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>							
18. Air index	46.90	49.93	49.32	45.10	45.68	45.77	44.83
19. Water index	74.40	75.60	78.30	80.80	80.80	80.70	82.82*
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	1.84	1.43	1.63	1.24	1.28	1.15	1.07
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	36.30	40.82	40.35	43.09	45.59	44.96	47.82*

\* Forecasted figure

# Provisional figure

Revised figure

### Appendix 3: CUHK Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	Quality of Life Index [remark]							2008 compared w/ 2007
	2002 (Base year)	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
<b>Social sub-index</b>								
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	4.76	4.63	4.63	4.76	5.02	5.02	5.02#	Same
2. Life expectancy at birth (in year)	4.76	4.75	4.78	4.77	4.81	4.81	4.81#	Same
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.76	4.76	4.05	3.70	3.88	3.53	<b>Worse</b>
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	4.76	6.55	5.83	5.81	5.35	4.86	6.47	Better
5. Stress index	4.76	5.30	5.74	6.05	5.98	6.05	5.69	<b>Worse</b>
6. General life satisfaction index	4.76	4.79	5.03	5.23	5.35	5.25	5.12	<b>Worse</b>
7. Press freedom index	4.76	4.82	4.77	4.83	4.83	4.95	4.93	<b>Worse</b>
8. Press criticism index	4.76	4.94	4.33	3.75	3.68	3.90	3.98	Better
9. Government performance index	4.76	4.91	6.29	8.08	8.39	8.73	6.21	<b>Worse</b>
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	4.76	3.99	4.49	4.68	4.48	4.55	4.74	Better
<b>Social sub-index</b>	<b>47.62</b>	<b>49.44</b>	<b>50.65</b>	<b>52.01</b>	<b>51.59</b>	<b>52.00</b>	<b>50.50</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Economic sub-index</b>								
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.76	4.95	4.12	3.19	3.54	2.58	1.72	<b>Worse</b>
12. Real rental index	4.76	5.21	4.95	4.20	4.00	3.51	3.38	<b>Worse</b>
13. Unemployment rate	4.76	4.38	5.14	5.92	6.48	6.98	7.13	Better
14. Index of current economic conditions	4.76	5.06	6.22	6.82	6.81	7.26	5.07	<b>Worse</b>
15. Real wage index	4.76	4.77	4.71	4.69	4.68	4.70	4.73	Better
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.99	4.99	4.53	4.41	4.06	3.95	<b>Worse</b>
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	4.76	4.94	4.89	4.92	5.17	5.22	5.17	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Economic sub-index</b>	<b>33.32</b>	<b>34.30</b>	<b>35.02</b>	<b>34.27</b>	<b>35.09</b>	<b>34.31</b>	<b>31.15</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>								
18. Air index	4.76	4.45	4.51	4.94	4.88	4.87	4.97	Better
19. Water index	4.76	4.84	5.01	5.16	5.17	5.16	5.30*	Better
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	4.76	5.82	5.30	6.31	6.22	6.54	6.74	Better
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	4.76	5.35	5.29	5.65	5.98	5.90	6.27*	Better
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>	<b>19.04</b>	<b>20.46</b>	<b>20.11</b>	<b>22.06</b>	<b>22.25</b>	<b>22.47</b>	<b>23.28</b>	<b>Better</b>
<b>Quality of Life index</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>104.20</b>	<b>105.78</b>	<b>108.34</b>	<b>108.93</b>	<b>108.78</b>	<b>104.93</b>	<b>Worse</b>

[remarks] The higher the score, the better the performance of the indicator.

\* Forecasted figure

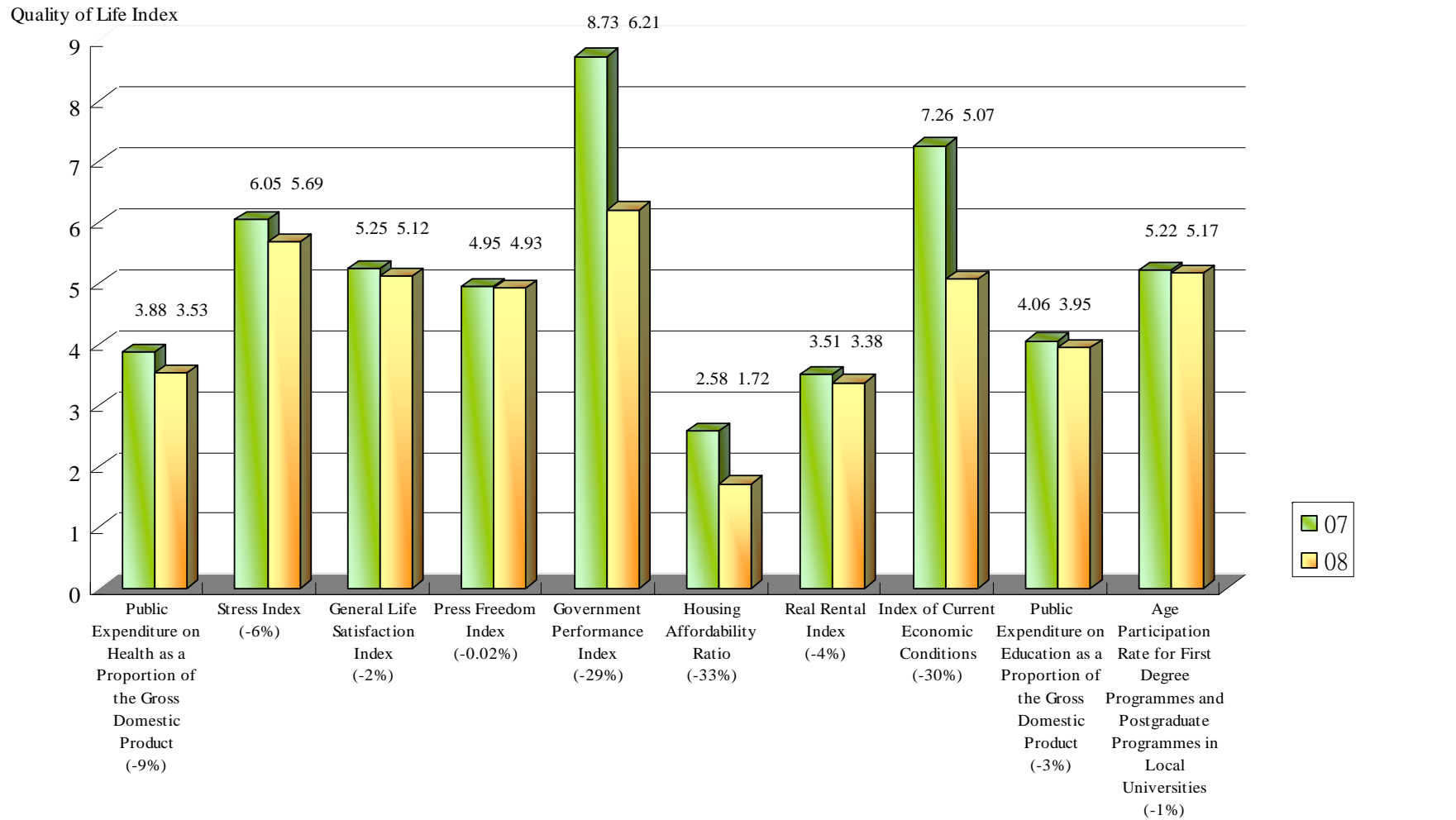
# Provisional figure

Revised figure



**Appendix 4**

**2007-2008 Quality of Life Indices**  
**Worse Indices**



( ) % decrease between 07 and 08

**Appendix 5**

**2007-2008 Quality of Life Indices**  
**Better Indices**

