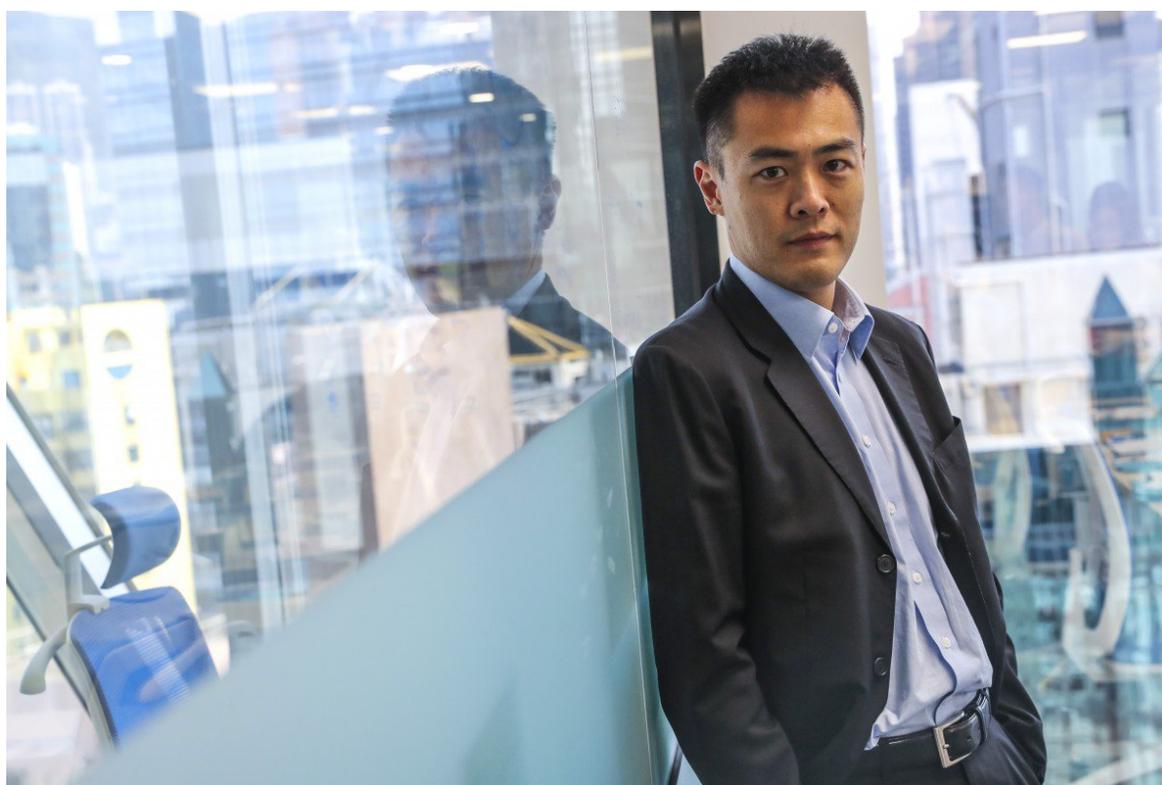


## Bottom-up approach may be best way to solve social unrest in Hong Kong, says government youth adviser

- Vice-chairman of Youth Development Commission Lau Ming-wai says involving more participants is best option
- Looking to government or Education Bureau for answers may not be most effective method



Lau Ming-wai, vice-chairman of the Youth Development Commission, has advocated a bottom-up approach to solving Hong Kong's social unrest. Photo: Sam Tsang

The director of a youth-focused think tank in Hong Kong believes a bottom-up approach would be better than a top-down one when it comes to solving the social unrest in the city.

Lau Ming-wai, who heads an independent think tank MWYO, and is vice-chairman of the government's Youth Development Commission, made his remarks as anti-government protests stretched into a 15th week.

Speaking to the media before a forum organised by the think tank on Monday, Lau said Hong Kong society was still looking for answers when it came to tackling the crisis, but said he felt a bottom-up approach would be a better option.

“The advantage of a bottom-up approach is the process could involve participation of a wide range of people,” Lau said. “For any top-down approach, its number of participants and recognition might not be that high.”



Lau Ming-wai discusses the development of secondary students at Sino Plaza in Wan Chai. Photo: Sam Tsang

He did not elaborate on his recommendations for what should be done, but said his experience in youth work in recent years suggested a top-down approach may not be the most effective one.

“When we are looking at youth or education issues, we often expect the government or the Education Bureau to make some changes,” Lau said. “[But] a top-down approach might not be the fastest, the best or the most effective method.”

Earlier this month, the city’s leader, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, pledged to reach out to members of the community, part of a multipronged strategy to find solutions to the political impasse.

Jeff Sze Chun-fai, political assistant to the education minister, also touched on the recent social turmoil in Hong Kong when giving his speech in the Monday forum, which was about holistic development for youngsters.

“In recent few months, Hong Kong society has been facing a really big challenge. The SAR government was also facing the biggest challenge in governance,” said Sze, adding that the city’s education and youth works could continue to make progress if people did their part.

Meanwhile, MWYO has kick-started an incubator scheme this month to support secondary schools in offering activities for holistic development. The scheme offers help such as seed funding and network support for interested schools.

So far four organisations have partnered with the think tank to offer activities, such as visiting the homeless and learning to sail, in 14 schools.

Jason Yip Wai-cheong, director in community engagement of the think tank, said the scheme welcomed schools approaching them for support in other kinds of activities which could benefit development.