

# Introduction

In its preliminary report, the Research Topic Team of the Macao Youth Indicators Profile Project clearly stated that the Youth Indicators Profile will be a set of tools and methods for studying youth problems (TJ Cheng, 2002 report, p.8).

The intention is by using this set of tools and methods, together with increased availability of more exhaustive data; to perform the following five functions of the indicators:

- (1) providing a description of the various aspects of lives of Macao's young people;
- (2) providing an explanation of the factors contributing to these aspects;
- (3) assessing the comparative advantages and disadvantages of these various aspects;
- (4) monitoring the development of these aspects;
- (5) projecting the development trend of these aspects.

The data compilation of the Youth Indicators for Macao is still in its infancy. The focus of this current phase has been laid down in the indicators project framework first put forth in the research report "Macao Youth Indicators Profile Project" and subsequently approved by members of the task group. Data collection on 80 indicators is to be carried out in 3 phases spanning the period from 2004 to 2006, each phase lasting for one year.

During this three-year period, the Data Collection Programme for the Macao Youth Indicators Profile Project, together with a set of indexes and supplementary materials on indicators related to Macao's social development (TJ Cheng, 2002 report, p.8) will not only provide a basis for research, but also help to build up a baseline database to support a more comprehensive description of various aspects of young people in Macao in the early years of the new millennium.

The current phase marks the beginning of a series of future plans. From the simple utilization of indicator data to the establishment of "a systematic, interdependent, integrated profile", which will then be re-applied to explain, assess, monitor and project various issues currently facing and will be facing youths in Macao, all this obviously requires long-term future planning. The current work will serve to draw up a blueprint of a more planning nature, which will shape the direction and service focus of youth work in Macao. Suffice to say, the objective of setting up youth indicators is to:

"enhance the overall quality of young people in Macao, which requires systematic and continuous survey on young people's lives and youth policies in Macao, to ensure timely review and reform." (TJ Cheng, 2002 report, p.13).

As rightly pointed out in the 2004 policy address of the Macao Special Administrative Region, "(grown-ups) cannot simply make judgment on their own as to what young people needs, and even more, we must not substitute young people's needs with our own needs." (Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2004, p.28).

The Data Collection Programme for the Youth Indicators Profile project, launched in 2004 will help our community to better understand the needs of young people, and ultimately promote evidence-based service for the younger generation and youth work as a whole.