



[Go to CS Voice Index](#) 


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Advocacy

Give me back my summer vacation!

In October 2015, the Department of Education, Taipei City Government announced to abolish the 40 year-old winter homework and replaced by a new model of assignment in which students and their parents to design activity-based homework. The Government did not rule out the possibility of cancelling summer homework if the new model works well. Mayor of Taipei Mr. Ke Wen Je said we have to let our children believe that they have their own say, it is time to revolutionise the whole learning culture.

Ever since this policy was launched, there were debates from both sides of the argument: those who are in favour, said children have the autonomy in learning while those who are against it would say reward lies ahead of diligence.

Anyhow, homework reform has aroused concern from different countries: there is no homework day on Wednesdays in Singapore, there is class strike in Norway appealing to cancel homework, the President of France advocates to abolish homework and students can finish their assignments at school, even Shanghai is suggesting to have a homework-free day during the week.


However, Hong Kong is still lagging behind, it seems that the more homework the better the achievement. There are still long queues for tutorial schools and some even link academic achievement with wealth.

Our Shamshuipo East Happy Teens Club and North Point Happy Teens Club drew references of other countries, collaborated with schools in the districts to have "No Homework Day" and "Oasis Day". It was hoped that children could put aside their assignments for a while and play whole heartedly to revive their autonomy in learning.

Our Integrated Centre for Youth Service has always advocated for a balanced development for children. This coming summer, our Happy Teens Clubs in Kwun Tong, Shamshuipo and North Point will organise a variety of summer activities as before, we will also invite parents to ponder on:

- ◆ Who has the greatest courage to advocate for a homework free summer vacation?
- ◆ What is a real summer vacation?

We believe every parent would like their children to spend their summer vacation in a meaningful way and have taking into account a balanced development, including times for study, play, rest and extra curricular activities. Therefore, we invite parents to co-sign for our campaign for a "Give me back my summer vacation" charter to arrange well balanced activities for children. Details can be referred to our responsible social workers.

 [Back to Top](#)