


[Go to CS Voice Index](#)


Issue 017
2017 January

Advocacy

Say no to self-handicapping and labelling! I can do it!

The Election Committee Subsector Elections of the 2016 Chief Executive was held on 11 December 2016. This once every five years' election is always considered a "small circle election" as only 0.2 million people out of seven million citizens are eligible to vote in their respective subsectors. All people of Hong Kong are represented by these 1,200 election committee members to decide our CE! Twenty thousand registered social workers were eligible to be nominated, to run for election and vote to elect 60 Election Committee members because of their "professional" status. Social work training enables each social worker to respect the value and dignity of each individual as much as possible, to honour social justice and human rights, to pursue positive development of individual and society and opportunities of participation, and uphold the belief that that every citizen deserves equal participation. A social worker should try his best to breakthrough a gap of the existing systems so that we could see hope.

Based on these beliefs, two social workers who worked or is working in our elderly service together with three other social workers formed 'Superpower' with six seniors who have been actively monitoring social policies and service planning. The formation of Superpower is to breakthrough the stereotype, to embody the civil rights they deserve, to breakthrough "small circle election" so as to voice their opinions in this CE Election, to monitor the government together. This breakthrough of Superpower attracted much attention from electors of other subsectors and they followed suit. This was the first time that just/only in social welfare subsector, there were three election teams who also had participation from service users! This was exciting and the result was also promising as indeed a light has come from the gap – service users became election committee members. This indirectly opened the door for universal suffrage and we believed there would be more nominations from different subsectors in future.

The path of participation of Superpower in this election was thorny. Firstly they had to go through a process to proof they have close connection to social welfare field by contacting the organisation they participated in the past when they were members of the Elderly Council, in order to be qualified by the Election Office. Seniors worked together with social workers for two months to draft and edit promotional materials, communicate via Facebook, attend forums, visit social service organisations to promote and explain their intent. However, they were confronted by impolite responses or even curses. Some even questioned their abilities (eg, how could they represent us when they were about to go into graves?), their motives, they might have been granted favours, they were nobody, lack of professional backgrounds, their votes would deprive of others' resources, and they were being used, etc.

Those queries and criticisms only revealed the negative labels on seniors all along that they were old and fragile, lacking in knowledge, incapable, just a group of people awaiting assistance. This, however, is de facto prejudice, how such an image was formed? Let's ask ourselves if we are also one of them to dwarf, marginalise them? Our six seniors of Superpower did not wince in front of all these negative criticisms, they were bold to stand up unflinchingly, they inherited from their predecessors who had contributed to the society, to speak for those who were not eligible to vote, to safeguard the core value and systems that were built by us. They hoped the next generation could have a sustainable development under a fair and just social environment, and looked forward to a society that recognise, value and appreciate seniors, eliminate prejudice and negative image on them.

These six seniors lose with high vote. It did not undermine their nerve to advocate, they deserved our respect and applause!


[Back to Top](#)