

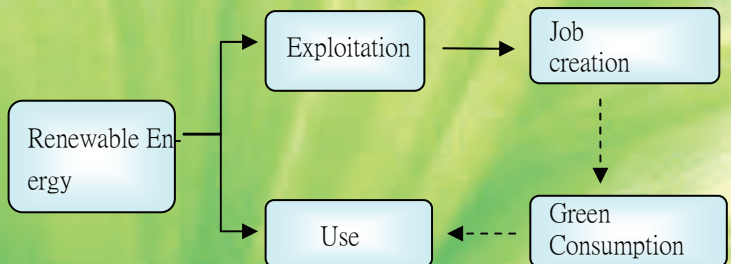
## Green Generation

Earth Day Network has launched "Green Generation" campaign in 2009 and it will be culminating on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day in 2010. There are 3 principles of the campaign which advocate a new way of living:

- Develop reusable energy and reduce our dependence on fossil fuel.
- Build a green economy and develop green spending habit
- Create more green jobs and help the people in need

In the past, the issue of environmental protection was a luxury. It requires effort of different sectors such as social, commercial and the individual. But now, the situation has improved. Please try to think of the 3 principles mentioned above and see if there is any causality within. (Please refer to diagram 1)

Nowadays Hong Kong is an international financial centre; still it can hardly meet the requirement of "Green Generation", catching up with the trend of environmental protection. Let see how Hong Kong carry out its environmental protection work. Could you come up with some of them?



**Diagram 1** : Indicating the relationship between three principles mentioned before

### Every Day "No Plastic Bag Day"

Starting on March 3, 2009, every day will be 'No Plastic Bag Day' at about 2,000 stores of 18 major retailers to encourage further reduction in plastic bag usage. This programme will help to reduce plastic bag distribution by more than 400 million at the participating retailers. The launch of 'Every Day No Plastic Bag' will further reduce usage of plastic bags significantly. It can help protect Hong Kong's environment.

### Earth Hour

Earth Hour, initiated by WWF in 2007, had 2.2 million people and 2,100 businesses in Sydney, Australia turn off their lights for one hour. It caught the world's attention when its icons like the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House turned their lights off. At 8:30pm on March 28 2009, people around the world turned off their lights for one hour - Earth Hour. This campaign is aiming to reach one billion people, more than 1000 cities, all joining together in a global effort to show that it's possible to take action on climate change and play a part in ensuring a sustainable future. It is a time for people to think about how we can change our lifestyles to reduce our impact on the environment.

### Switch off Idling Vehicles

Local vehicle emission is one of the causes of the seriousness of Hong Kong air pollution problem. Some drivers do not switch off the engines of their vehicles while waiting in order to run the air-conditioning systems for comfort. Banning idling engines will help reduce vehicle emissions at the roadside and it will improve the air quality. Environmental Protection Department has proposed that violation should not be based on how long an idling vehicle has kept its engine running and such proposal is still waiting for approval.

### Action Blue Sky

Hong Kong Government has launched the 'Blue Sky Action' campaign on July 25. The Action Blue Sky Campaign, with the slogan "Clean Air for a Cool Hong Kong!" is organised by the Environmental Protection Department, reinforcing the Government's determination to improve Hong Kong's air quality. Chief Executive Mr Donald Tsang said that the Government needed the whole community's participation to combat air pollution. Members of the public can help save energy by setting their air-conditioners to 25.5 degrees Celsius. This would save about one billion units of electricity each year. Mr Tsang also urged the private sector to dress down in summer. After a year, the slogan was changed to "I love Hong Kong! I love green!" and it was launched to arouse public awareness of the environmental problems and encourage early action.

The Legislative Council had recently issued the *Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme*; this is a milestone for the bigger plan of protecting the local environment. Although the result of this scheme in other countries was not as ideal as we hoped, there is still a belief that we can improve the problem of wasting plastic bags to a certain extent through periodic review. Adjustments according to the actual situation and studies of plastic material for packaging use can be made. Also, the scheme pioneers user-pay principle in a sense.

After reading the introduction above, can you think of any characteristics of recent environmental protection work in Hong Kong? According to the 3 principles of "Green Generation", Hong Kong primarily focuses on green consumption. In reality, Hong Kong is still in the developing stages for creating renewable energy and job opportunities in the environmental protection area. Even some popular and large-scale activities like "Action Blue Sky", "Earth Hour", etc concentrated on green consumption, encouraging people to use less air-conditioner, plastic bags and energy. There is still a lot for Hong Kong to do before being part of the Green Generation.

Reference:

- (1) Singtao Newspaper – Green Generation(2009.4.21)
- (2) Ming Pao – The Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme will be implemented on July 7
- (3) Hong Kong Retail Management Association press release(2009.4.20)

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## No Air-conditioner Day (fully support by Greenwoods, HKUSU)

Footprint will organize 'No Air-conditioner Day' on the first week of June. The detail of the campaign and the application form can be found in the website of footprint ([www.footprint.org.hk](http://www.footprint.org.hk)) or you can dial 81175034 for further enquires.



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