

***Leap!* - A platform for children to explore their own body movements**

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Image 1: Leap! Class Scenario. © The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation

As a developer and supporter of arts education, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation advocates its Creative Arts Education programmes in Hong Kong. The guiding principles are as follows:

- Believe in the all-round development of young people;
- Develop a curriculum based on the everyday lives of young people;
- Emphasize the learning process;
- Do not train future artists;
- Reach out to communities;
- Offer professional training for teachers;
- Have small class sizes.

*Leap!* is one of the creative arts education programmes organized by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation. *Leap!* is structured around the Taipei-based Cloud Gate Dance School's (CGDS) *LifePulse* course, which was developed 12 years ago by an experienced team of artists and professionals in dance education and childhood development. Sharing the same mission of integrating dance and art into everyday lives, the Foundation decided to introduce the program in Hong Kong. *Leap!* does not seek to train dance talent; rather, it uses dance as a teaching medium and inspires students via imaginary scenarios and metaphors, leading them to create their own body movements and find unique body rhythms. The scenarios are based on experiences that children encounter in their everyday lives.

We identified NGO school networks as partners, the majority of whose students come from deprived families. In 2012, *Leap!* reached 1000 children aged 4-6 in 20 nursery schools in remote or underprivileged communities. The workshops are free of charge and held every week,

sustained by a two-year curriculum. To further promote body education in the community, *Leap!* presents outreach programmes during school breaks and the holiday season.



Image 2: Seminar for the public. © The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation

We have adapted *Leap!* to suit the local needs in the Hong Kong area in the following four aspects:

1. **Schools:** We adjust the verbal languages used in *Leap!* classes and written languages in handbooks distributed to schools. We adapt the *Leap!* classes to fit schools' environments and schedules. We also hold regular seminars and workshops for school teachers for better communication and cooperation.
2. **Dance Teachers:** *Leap!* offers full-time teaching posts to local dance teachers and professionals in early-childhood education. Tutors are provided with a systematic and inspiring training program, particularly in areas such as pedagogy, children's growth and development, as well as practicum experiences. We introduce the concept of teachers as facilitators, and suggest that there should be no standard solutions to creative problems. We allow time for teachers to grow while the teaching supervisors stay to the side.
3. **Community:** We understand that the fast-paced life of Hong Kong has socially conditioned people to expect instant results and that people in Hong Kong are eager to achieve a target within a short time frame, and to arrive at a solution quickly. In order to let the community know that cultivating creativity is a cumulative process that takes time, *Leap!* promotes body education by means of organizing workshops and seminars for the general public.
4. **Publicity:** We proactively provide media with articles and games to promote body education. We interview school personnel, parents, and *Leap!* tutors to share the learning experiences of children.



Image 3: Parent-child class. © The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation

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