

Project Title: Alternative Policy Instruments for Enhancing Citizenship Education

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to determine the suitability and desirability of, capacity for, and potential obstacles to implementing an independent, compulsory course of citizenship education at the junior secondary level of Hong Kong's education system. Despite adjustments to Hong Kong's citizenship education since the transition period to Chinese sovereignty, survey research and the demands of sectors of the public suggest that citizenship education as currently practiced in Hong Kong shows considerable continuity with the pre-1997 period and is not achieving intended results in areas such as the development of national identity. This project aims to seek explanations for such ineffectiveness of citizenship education and to determine whether there are more effective policy instruments which could improve the provision of citizenship education. Based on a survey of international citizenship education practices and interviews with Hong Kong's educational policymakers, principals, and teachers, this project asks whether a change in the policy instrument, for example, to a mandated compulsory junior secondary course in citizenship education, is necessary, desirable, and possible. The research will inform policymakers of the advantages and drawbacks of currently practiced and alternative policy approaches in terms of resources required for, support for, and resistance to implementation.