

## Media Release

### UBS and HKU Join Forces for the Third Time to Empower Non-Profit Leaders

Hong Kong, 14 April 2025 – UBS announces the launch of the third "University of Hong Kong - UBS Group Sustainable and Social Innovation Leadership Programme" (HKU-UBS SSILP), a pioneering initiative jointly led by UBS and the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU to empower leaders of the non-profit sector through multidisciplinary training and mentoring. Interest from participants has been steadily increasing, both in quality and quantity. In 2025, a total of 30 leaders from nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in HK and Greater Bay Area join HKU-UBS SSILP.

Recognizing the critical role of government funding for many NPOs, this year's program introduces a new focus on government relations. With Matthew Cheung Kin-chung GBM GBS JP, former Chief Secretary for Administration, joining as a honorary speaker will benefit from his vast expertise in collaborating with government departments, navigating processes, and securing funding.

The number of tax-exempt charities in Hong Kong nearly doubled from 4,435 in 2006 to 8,923 in 2016<sup>1</sup> and has further surged to 17,341<sup>2</sup> by February 2025. This growing landscape urges nonprofit managers to distinguish their organizations amidst an expanding field of welfare providers.

**Professor Cheryl H.K. Chui, Co-director, HKU-UBS SSILP; Associate Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU, stated, "With the non-profit sector becoming increasingly competitive and the number of NPOs rising rapidly, the need for effective leadership has never been more critical. Together with UBS, we strive to enhance NPO leaders' competence and capacity through a structured curriculum. Our ultimate goal is to nurture innovative and sustainable social projects and collaborations."**

The HKU-UBS SSILP addresses the increasing demand in the nonprofit sector by equipping leaders with essential skills to foster resilience, adaptability, and growth. The program's impact is evident: over the past two years, it has successfully trained 62 participants from Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area, with applications for this year increasing by an impressive 42.5% compared to 2024.

**Rob Stewart, Chief Communications Officer for UBS Asia Pacific, remarked, "The HKU-UBS SSILP was initiated out of a passion for making a positive impact in the non-profit sector and giving back to the community. This mentorship program not only enriches non-profits but also allows our staff to give back meaningfully, while fostering**

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<sup>1</sup> Hong Kong Audit Commission, Government's Support and Monitoring of Charities: Report No 68, 2017

<sup>2</sup> Hong Kong Inland Revenue Department, Tax-Exempt Charities Registry, accessed March 2025, [https://www.ird.gov.hk/eng/tax/ach\\_index.htm](https://www.ird.gov.hk/eng/tax/ach_index.htm)

**stronger ties with our community. We've recorded the highest number of applicants this year, up by 42.5% compared to 2024 and 19.6% compared to 2023."**

A cornerstone of the program is its unique cross-functional approach, connecting NPO leaders with experienced professionals from UBS, academia, and other sectors. Through this mentorship scheme, participants gain guidance in areas such as strategy-making, resource management, cross-sector collaboration, evidence-based decision-making, and pitching skills. This initiative has proven transformative in cultivating future-ready NPO leaders.

The HKU-UBS SSILP strategically combines mentorship with funding opportunities. Two winners, following a day of pitching, will each receive HK\$400,000 in incubation funding to develop and implement their projects.

Media enquiries:

Angel Yeung, +886 2 8722 7265 / +852 9725 0297 : [angel.yeung@ubs.com](mailto:angel.yeung@ubs.com)

CF Ng, +852 2101 6038 / +852 9330 6976 / [cf.ng@ubs.com](mailto:cf.ng@ubs.com)

[www.ubs.com/media](http://www.ubs.com/media)



Professor Cheryl H.K. Chui, Co-director, HKU-UBS SSILP; Associate Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, HKU explained 3 new features of this program, there are many more other than the championship of the final pitch



**Rob Stewart, Chief Communications Officer for UBS Asia Pacific** has been a mentor to this program for 10 years.



The first class at HKU-UBS SSILP on Leadership Mindset Training was conducted by Communications Expert, Ms Zamira Monteiro, Champion of 2020 cohort



Ms Tracy Li from St James Settlement shared her experience as alum from cohort 2024



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