

Police kick off fourth cohort of Leadership Institute on Narcotics (with photos)

The Hong Kong Police Force today (March 8) launched the fourth cohort of the Leadership Institute on Narcotics (L.I.O.N.), a dedicated programme to nurture young anti-drug leaders.

Speaking at the kick-off ceremony, the Commissioner of Police, Mr Siu Chak-ye, said that L.I.O.N. has continued to be innovative in introducing new elements in the programme since its establishment in 2021. This year, the module focusing on “space oil drug” has been further enhanced, enabling mentees to learn and promote those anti-drug messages that are closely connected to current trends.

He pointed out that since the first half of 2024, “space oil drug” has become the third most abused substance among youths, with a significant increase in related arrests – surging by 35 times year-on-year from eight to 278, including 61 individuals aged under the 21, with the youngest at 12. In view of this, the content about the clinical symptoms following the abuse of “space oil drug” and its drug rehabilitation treatment will be incorporated into this year’s programme. He hoped that the mentees will apply what they have learnt to spread anti-drug messages, joining hands with all sectors to build a society embracing a “Drugs? Never, Ever!” culture.

Mr Siu mentioned that this year’s programme has seen a record-high number of student enrollments, and that the 300 anti-drug leaders graduated from the first three cohorts have conveyed anti-drug messages to over 110 000 people. He also noted a 70 per cent cumulative decrease in youth arrests related to serious drug cases, from 430 in 2021 to 129 in 2024, which was a record low in recent years. Among these, the number of arrested students has decreased by nearly 80 per cent, reflecting L.I.O.N.’s substantial achievements in anti-drug education that realised the goal of “more anti-drug publicity result in fewer drug-involved youths”.

Mr Siu added that a performance evaluation conducted on the third cohort of L.I.O.N. showed that the programme had effectively enhanced the knowledge, leadership capabilities and activity planning skills of the mentees, while strengthening public awareness of drugs. He expressed gratitude to L.I.O.N.’s sponsors, executive committee members, professional trainers and mentors, as well as the principals, teachers and students of the 20 participating secondary schools for their support, which has paved the way for the sustainability of the programme.

During the ceremony, mentees from the third cohort shared their valuable insights gained from an exchange tour to Australia last month. They said that the trip not only provided opportunities for them to tell the good stories of Hong Kong’s anti-drug efforts, but also broadened their horizons by learning

the similarities and differences in anti-drug policies between the two places. In addition, an outstanding mentee from the second cohort also shared his training journey and his commitment to becoming an anti-drug leader after graduation.

Established by the Police Narcotics Bureau in 2021, L.I.O.N. brings together various community sectors and annually recruits 80 secondary school students and 20 undergraduates as mentees. Through drug knowledge workshops, leadership training camps, visits, as well as Mainland and overseas exchange programmes, mentees acquire anti-drug knowledge and leadership skills to spread messages against drugs within the community.

