

# THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

## FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICE

### Background Information

#### Family Structure

- According to 2001 Population Census results, the total number of Hong Kong resident population was 6,708,389, while the number of domestic households was 2,133,000. Average household size in 1991 was 3.4 persons, which had dropped to 3.2 in 2002. The birth rate had dropped from 11.9% in 1994 to 7.1% in 2002<sup>1</sup>.
- From 1981 to 2002, the crude marriage rates of male and female had been dropping. In 1991, the number of marriages per 1,000 males was 13.6, and that of females was 14.1. In 2002, the crude marriage rates of male and female had dropped to 9.7 and 9.1 respectively<sup>2</sup>.
- The number of divorce or separation had been increasing. The proportion of divorce or separation for males in 1991 was 1.1%, which was increased to 2.1% in 2001. The proportion of that for females in 1991 was 1.4%, which was increased to 3.3% in 2001. It also reflected that the number of single parent family has been increasing.

#### Family Solidarity and Resilience

- According to the Social Development Index released by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, the sub-index of family solidarity in 2000 was already -72, which was further dropped to -124<sup>3</sup> in 2001.
- The increase of family violence cases: In 2003, the number of new child abuse cases was 481<sup>4</sup>, which was decreased by 10% when compared with the figure in 2001. The number of battered spouse cases in 2003 was 3,298<sup>5</sup>, which was increased by 36% when compared with 2423 cases in 2001.
- The number of suicide cases in 1990s was around 600 to 700 on average per annum. The number in 1998 was 868, which was increased by 45% when compared to the 597 cases in 1997<sup>6</sup>. Whilst, in 2001 Hong Kong had around 1000 people committing suicide, the suicide rate has increased by more than 25% for the past three years with the rate of 16 per 100,000<sup>7</sup>. It reflects that the resilience of individual and family is low and their support network is weak.

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<sup>1</sup> 2001 Population Census, Census and Statistics Department of HKSAR, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Women and Men in Hong Kong Key Statistics, 2003 Edition, Census and Statistics Department of HKSAR, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Social Development Index 2002, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Child Protection Registry, Social Welfare Department of HKSAR, 2003

<sup>5</sup> Battered Spouse Registry, Social Welfare Department of HKSAR, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Report of Coroner's Court, Judiciary 1996-1998, HKSAR.

<sup>7</sup> The HK JC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention. (<http://www.hku.hk/csrrp/>)

## Poverty

- In Hong Kong, the Gini coefficient has been increasing in the past twenty years. The figure in 1981, 1991 and 2001 were 0.451, 0.476 and 0.525<sup>8</sup> respectively. In addition, the increase from 1991 to 2001 was even more rapid than in the years from 1981 to 1991. It reflects that poverty issue in Hong Kong is getting more serious in the past ten years.
- The unemployment rate in Hong Kong has been increasing since 1997. In the most recent quarter of May to July 2003, it hits the historic record of 8.7%<sup>9</sup>. The number of low-income families also increases accordingly.
- The number of homeless people has been decreasing in recent years. The number of homeless people in December 2001 was 1320. It decreased to 529 in December 2003, which was decreased by 60%. Among the newly registered cases, 52.7% were over aged 49, and 18% had not received formal education<sup>10</sup>.

## New Arrivals

At present, there are 55,000 persons on average each year coming from the Mainland to stay in Hong Kong. According to the statistics released by the Home Affairs Department and Immigration Department<sup>11</sup>, there were 317,370 new arrivals had come to stay in Hong Kong in the years from 1997 to 2002. The statistics in 2002 reflected that 52.7% of the new arrivals aged 25 to 44, and 66.3% had received secondary and even higher education. In addition, a study conducted by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service in 2001<sup>12</sup> and 2003<sup>13</sup> respectively, revealed that adults in Hong Kong were having lower acceptance than children towards new arrivals. Owing to cultural difference, the effort on enhancing mutual understanding and acceptance among local people and the new arrivals has to be strengthened.

## Community Health

- The number of people infected with HIV/AIDS had increased from 776 to 2,116 from the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1996 to June 2003. It had increased by 2.7 times<sup>14</sup>.
- As for substance abuse, the number of newly reported substance abusers in 2002 was 5,182, which was increased by 65.3% by comparing to the figures in 1999, i.e. 3,135. The number of substance abusers aged below 21 had also increased by 8.7%, from 1,969 in 1999 to 2,140<sup>15</sup> in 2002. Thus, the prevention of the youth from misusing drugs has the urgent need.

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<sup>8</sup> Ming Pao (2001) ([www.mingpaonews.com/20011027/27gbk.gif](http://www.mingpaonews.com/20011027/27gbk.gif))

<sup>9</sup> Government Information Services (2003) ([http://www.info.gov.hk/censtatd/chinese/press/labour1/lb1\\_latest\\_index.html](http://www.info.gov.hk/censtatd/chinese/press/labour1/lb1_latest_index.html))

<sup>10</sup> Project on Helping Street Sleepers - Paper of LegCo Welfare Panel (2004)

<sup>11</sup> Home Affairs Department and Immigration Department (2003). Statistics on New Arrivals from the Mainland (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2003).

<sup>12</sup> HKCSS (2001). A Study on Cross-Cultural Impression and Acceptance between Local People and New Arrivals in Hong Kong. HK:HKCSS.

<sup>13</sup> HKCSS (2003). A Study on Cross-Cultural Impression and Acceptance between Local People and New Arrivals in Hong Kong. HK:HKCSS.

<sup>14</sup> Surveillance Reports of Department of Health ([www.info.gov.hk/aids/chinese/surveillance/index.htm](http://www.info.gov.hk/aids/chinese/surveillance/index.htm))

<sup>15</sup> Report no 51 of Central Registry of Drug Abuse 1992-2001, Narcotics Division2003

## Future Trends and Challenges

### ▪ **Family Problems due to Low Family Solidarity**

Under the economic downturn, Hong Kong families face enormous pressures. Besides, owing to family disintegration, family solidarity and capability of solving problems are decreasing and hence bring forth a series of family problems, e.g. juvenile delinquency, divorce, family violence...etc. To rebuild family solidarity, the Government and NGOs both stress on family education. Both parties aim at assisting needy family in developing their problem solving ability through public education and outreaching effort so as to enhance family solidarity.

### ▪ **Enhance Social Integration and Develop Social Capital**

In view of the formation of nuclear families, urbanization and acute unemployment, the adverse impact on the disadvantaged groups, such as new arrivals, low income groups, persons with low qualification and skills, middle aged persons, women and minority race groups are much worse. It is necessary to strengthen the support network at neighbourhood, individual, family as well as community levels so as to raise the residents' sense of belonging to the community and their ability in facing adversity, and promote mutual trust and their never yielding spirit. This would enhance social integration and empower individual, family and community to become valuable social capital.

### ▪ **Service Integration and Service Diversification**

Due to the trend of service integration and diversification, continuous improvement are required in aspects of programme design, work approach and skills of workers so as to provide more flexible and effective one-stop service for users. In addition to the provision of developmental/educational group activities, mutual help group, therapy group and casework services, service providers will also have close contact with the residents proactively so as to bring services to the needy individuals and families. Besides, the existing services stress on community needs with an aim to cater for the needs of different target groups of the community and promote self-help and mutual help among themselves. The ultimate objective of the above effort is to build up solidarity in the community.

61(SWD:40 NGO:21) Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSC) with well-defined geographic boundaries would be formed from June 2004 to March 2005. There are 1 supervisor, 12 RSWs and also some supportive staff in each NGO IFSC to serve 100,000-150,000 population. SWD IFSCs have more manpower to handle statutory cases. Each IFSC has the components of Family Counselling Unit, Family Support Unit and Family Resource Unit. They will operate on the principles of accessibility, early identification, integration and partnership. The Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) in the 13 Districts will be implemented by 4 phases as follows:

Phases	District
June, 2004	Southern ( Phase I ) , Yau Tsim Mong , Kowloon City
October, 2004	Kwun Tong , Tuen Mun, Yuen Long
January, 2005	Eastern /WanChai, Southern ( full implementation ) , Wong Tai Sin/Sai Kung, Sham Shui Po , Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing, Shatin
March, 2005	Central and Western /Islands , Tai Po

Manpower of each NGO operated IFSC includes a supervisor, 12 RSWs and some supportive staff. SWD operated IFSCs will have more manpower to handle statutory cases. The SWD, NGOs and the Council will meet regularly in the Task Group on Implementation of Integrated Family Service Centres, to discuss and work out a common Funding and Service Agreement, service policies and common practice guidelines. As a guiding principle, the welfare/interests of clients should be upheld.

The Council has convened two focus group meetings in May 2004, for NGO IFSC operators to discuss interfacing issues with other family related community-based services or specialized services. All participants agreed to collaborate and contribute their strengths and specialties in order to uphold the welfare/interests of clients.

## Service Profile

The family and community services aim at strengthening the supportive and caring functions of family; promoting the spirit of self-help, mutual help and community participation as well as enhancing the quality of family and community through intervention at individual, family and community levels. The ultimate goal is to achieve social integration.

<b>Service Types</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>No. Of Service Unit</b>
<b>Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC)</b>	IFSC provides educational, developmental and remedial groups and casework counselling to families. Besides, IFSC also provides outreaching service to reach the needy families.	61(SWD:40 NGO:21) will be set up from June 2004 to March 2005)
<b>Family Service Centre</b>	Family casework service is provided. They will all be transformed into integrated family service centres.	66 Family Service Centres/Integrated Family Service Centres
<b>Family Life Education</b>	Family Life Education Officer is responsible for providing education programme to adolescents, couple-to-be, parents, parents-to-be and married couples to promote the importance of family life. Each officer is responsible for providing service for 1,200 target service users. Most FLE will be pooled into IFSC after its formation.	51.5 Family Life Education Officers (2002-2003)  Most FLE resources will be pooled into IFSC (2004-2005)
<b>Family and Child Protection Service Unit</b>	To address the problems of family violence and child abuse, the Government has set up these special units to handle related cases.	5 regional specialized units (FCPSUs)
<b>Post-Migration Centre</b>	Since there are 150 new arrivals coming to Hong Kong from the Mainland everyday, NGOs have operated 4 Post-migration Centres in new arrivals densely populated districts to provide one-stop service to assist new arrivals to integrate into the local community.	4 Post-migration Centres. They will be pooled into IFSCs after formation.

<b>Services for Victims of Family Violence and Sexual Assault</b>	Four refuge centres provide temporary accommodation to females and their children in face of family violence. The Family Crisis Support Centre provides crises intervention with overnight accommodation, temporary retreat and other support services. For victims of sexual assault, there is an agency providing one-stop crisis intervention service.	4 shelters for women; 1 Family Crisis Centre; 1 one-stop crisis centre for victims of sexual assault
<b>Community Centre</b>	Community Centres serve people of all ages to gather, to meet and to interact with the one another in the community. The community centers promote social integration, enhance social responsibility, cultivate mutual help and self help spirits, enhance one's problem solving ability in facing community problem, and improve the quality of life in the community	13 Community Centres
<b>Neighbourhood Level Community Development Project (NLCDP)</b>	NLCDPs were introduced to provide community development service to the deprived and transient communities where the provision of welfare services and facilities was inadequate or non-existent.	22 NLCDPs (2004-2005)
<b>Urban Renewal Social Service Team</b>	To provide residents who are affected by urban renewal projects with individual and family counselling services and facilitate the disadvantaged groups to rebuild their support network so as to strengthen self-help and mutual help among themselves.	4 service teams since 2002 & 2003
<b>Buildings Department Social Service Team</b>	To handle the emotional and financial problems of individuals and families who are affected by maintenance and demolishing work of the Buildings Department.	3 service teams
<b>Integrated Service for the Street Sleepers</b>	To solve the housing and other problems of the homeless and facilitate their re-integration into society. Integrated Service Teams for Street Sleepers have been set up and NGOs are subvented to provide day relief service, short-term accommodation and night outreaching service to the homeless.	4 Day Relief Centres; 7 Temporary Centres; 10 Hostel for Single Person; 3 Integrated Service Teams for Street Sleepers

<p><b>Services for people infected with HIV/AIDS</b></p>	<p>To promote community education on the prevention of AIDS, provide HIV antibody test, as well as counselling and support services for people with AIDS/HIV and their family members.</p>	<p>10 NGOs / Government Departments providing preventive, supportive and counseling services on people infected with AIDS/HIV and their family members.</p>
<p><b>Services for the Substance Abusers</b></p>	<p>To promote community education on prevention of substance abuse and to provide counselling, treatment, rehabilitation and employment services for substance abusers so as to facilitate their re-integration into society.</p>	<p>25 NGOs / Government Departments providing preventive, supportive and counseling services on substance abuse.</p>

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