

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Progress Report (April 2005)

1. Formulation of Social Welfare Blueprint

In 2004, the Council had conducted a series of forums with the sector on the formulation of social welfare blueprint. Over 700 colleagues from the Government, the NGO sector and the social work training institutes had joined our meetings and participated in enthusiastic deliberation. We have consolidated the views collected and published a paper which can also be downloaded at Council's website <http://www.hkcss.org.hk/cb2/blueprint/>.

In the recent policy address, the Government has pledged to further consolidate the partnership with the sector, and the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food also plans to work with the sector on an annual welfare agenda setting exercise as well as the Rehabilitation Programme Plan. We would work closely with the Government on the development of the strategic directions for social welfare as well as a welfare planning mechanism in partnership with the NGO sector.

2. Conversion of Elderly Hostels and Homes for the Aged (HFAs)

The basic principles of the conversion mode and implementation details had been discussed and confirmed between NGOs & the SWD. Other arrangements, including Agency Quota, FSA and manpower allocation were also discussed. SWD will invite proposal and announce the details in the briefing session scheduled at the end of April. In addition, SWD has adopted Council's proposal on training needs of front-line staff and tailor-made courses will be held on 2006.

3. Good Practice Sharing & Staff Development Programmes

3.1 Training Workshop (2) on 'Understanding Law Enforcement and Judiciary Intervention: Handling Spousal Abuse Cases'

The second training workshop on understanding law enforcement and judiciary intervention was held on March 22, 2005. 80 participants attended the workshop and 90% of them found the workshop fruitful for handling spousal abuse cases. Trainers included a lawyer and experienced social work supervisors from both FCPSU of SWD and NGO.

3.2 Sharing of Experience of Employment Service for Substance Abusers

The sharing session was held on 30 March 2005 with 67 participants from substance abuse, family, children and youth and employment services. The very majority of them (96%) were satisfied with the session, and it helped to build up a connection between the social service sector and business sector.

3.3 Good Practice Sharing Series

- 'Partnership Practice on Enhancing Family & Community Solidarity' and 'Social Inclusion Practice on Fostering Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities' were held on March 18, 2005. 130 participants attended with 95% of them satisfied with the sharing and found the practice approaches were useful in their services. Two resource books of the good practices were to be published in April 2005.
- The good practice sharing on youth employment was held on April 6. 14 projects had been shared with nearly 100 participants. A resource book would be published in April, 2005.

4. Open Assessment for Sign Language Interpreters

In order to heighten the service standard of sign language interpretation, the Council collaborates with 4 concerned rehabilitation organizations to launch an open assessment for sign language interpreters which will take place in June 2005. A press meeting and a briefing session were held on March 29 and April 9 respectively to introduce the details of the assessment. Candidates earning a 'distinction' (80 marks in all parts of the assessment) will be recommended to the Court for further training and those with good performance will be registered as a sign language court interpreter.

5. Supporting Low Income Families to Use Extension Hour Service

The child care service sector expressed that some low income families cannot afford to use extension hours service when needed. The Council proposed and SWD agreed to provide 108 child care centres an annual amount of \$18,720 to subvent these families to use the service. A minimal amount (under \$100 per month) would be charged. The new scheme would be launched in September 2005.

6. Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme

NGOs concerned about the implementation of the captioned scheme and meetings were held with the research team. Representatives viewed that more information should be given to NGOs and school sectors to prepare for their participation. Moreover, it was essential to draw reference to the UAP experience in delivering the programme and a pilot phase should be included as well. As school commitment was one of the most critical success factors, NGOs expected the research team to convey this message to the schools. Taking into consideration of the sectors, pilot would be launched in 2006-07. The Council would also organize focus groups to deliberate the Tier 1 programme in early May.