

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Standing Committee on Service Development & Liaison
Progress Report (May – June 2008)

Service Planning & Development

1. 2009-10 Welfare Agenda Setting Exercise

We adopted a new approach in the formulation of the 2009-10 welfare priorities and agenda this year. With the understanding of Secretary for Labour & Welfare, the Council fostered a closer partnership between the Government and NGOs in the exercise. Besides gathering initial views on the welfare priorities and agenda for 2009-10 from our Standing Committee on Service Development and Liaison, related Specialized Committees and Networks of different service groups, an extended consultation forum was organized on Jun 3 for our member agencies. One hundred seventeen supervisors, frontlines and service users of 44 member agencies had participated in the forum. One-fourth of them were non-subsidized NGOs that had not engaged in our regular work platform. A work meeting with SWD was arranged on Jun 13 to identify and exchange views on the new services needs and service improvements for the 2009-10 exercise. Director of Social Welfare led twenty-five staff, including Deputy Director (Service) all Assistance Directors (except Social Security) and their chief officers attending the meeting. They joined the one hundred and twenty-one participants from fifty-four NGOs to form four discussion groups to look into the possible agenda to be list in this year Resource Allocation Exercise. Our proposed welfare agenda is expected to be finalized by the end of the month. It will be circulated to all executive and standing committee members for endorsement and shared with SLW in the coming month. The finalized agenda will be formed as part of the content in our annual submissions to CE and FS of HKSAR for their consideration in the policy address and budget speech.

2. Hong Kong Plan of Action on Ageing (Discussion Paper)

The captioned discussion paper has been published and dispatched to government, stakeholders and member agencies. The discussion and sharing were kicked start in 11th June. A series of activities, including forums and sharing sessions, will be carried out in between June to Nov to promote the plan and engage sectors and users groups to support the actions.

3. Racial Discrimination Bill

The Council in collaboration with Hong Kong Unison organized an Open Forum on Racial Discrimination Bill (RDB) on June 9, 2008. Over a hundred persons attended the event. LegCo members, representatives of human rights organizations, ethnic minorities and NGOs highlighted the importance of amending the bill and introducing a “Race Equality Plan” in order to safeguard better protection of the legislation on EMs. Besides, the Council and the other 13 NGOs, 30 EMs groups and 10 members of the CMAB’s Committee on Promotion of Racial Harmony have co-signed a Joint Statement requesting the Government to amend Clause 3 and Clause 58 of the RDB.

4. Following up the new Neighborhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP)
After the initiation of a new flexible child care model last year in October, SWD finally adopted the idea and started a new pilot project of Neighborhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP). SWD is now inviting NGOs with experience in providing services relating to caring of children to offer a more flexible form of day care service for children. The new NSCCP aims to meet the needs of parents who are either working long, unstable and/or unconventional hours, in emergency needs, and/or for various reasons require child care assistance, but lacking support network and having financial hardship in securing alternative child care support.
5. Concerning the operation of the First Batch of the Child Development Fund (CDF) Pioneer Projects
After the initiation of discussion of CDF with Bureau and NGOs in November, 2007, operation details for the Fund are announced and most of concerns are addressed. SWD is now inviting NGOs to operate the first batch of the Child Development Fund pioneer projects. There will be a total of 7 pioneer projects each in the following regions/districts - Hong Kong Island, Kowloon East, Kowloon West, New Territories East, New Territories West, Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. A briefing session for caring companies and NGOs will be conducted in July 3, 2008 and Secretary for Labour and Welfare Bureau, Matthew Cheung is invited to be our officiating guest and address in the session.
6. Survey on Youth Sex-related Issue
Concerning youth sexual behavior and their attitude on sex, Council's network on Youth Outreaching Teams had conducted a survey on these issues from September 2007 to February 2008. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected in this survey. The result indicated that over 80% of the respondents accepted pre-marital sex and 63.4% had the experience on pre-marital sex. Also about one quarter (26.8%) of the female respondents had more than one unprepared pregnancy.
7. Comparative study on youth mental health system in US, Australia and Hong Kong
Literature reviewing based comparative study on youth mental health system is finished in late May, 2008 and summary of the study will be included in the coming publication of the handbook of youth mental health in the late November, 2008. Some of the recent changes on mental health system in Australia and US are included in the study and hope this study can give more insights for the development for the youth mental health system in Hong Kong.
8. Forum on Promoting Employment of People with Disabilities cum Exposure Visit and Launching Ceremony on “商健廣蔭情” Magazine Supplement
The Council, in collaboration of Rotary Club of Hong Kong Northwest, issued a magazine supplement of “商健廣蔭情” to promote the employment opportunities of people with disabilities. The magazine was distributed complimentary with Hong Kong Economic Times on May 5 with a wide circulation of 90,000 copies. In order to highlight its release and arouse the concerns of private sector over the issue, the captioned event was held on May 3 with a good attendance of 80 people from business, government and rehabilitation sector and positive feedbacks were received.

Topical Discussion & Mutual Learning

9. Training Workshop on Specific Learning Difficulties Services
A Training Workshop for school social workers will be held on 26th June 2008. Training speakers include 2 education psychologists from EDB, 1 secondary school social worker from Hong Kong Children and Youth Services, 2 special education curriculum design teachers from Buddhist Tai Kwong Middle School, and 1 parent representative from Hong Kong Association for Specific Learning Disabilities.
10. Mutual Learning Activities for Residential Service Settings
In order to enhance the effectiveness on the operation of residential services, a visitation program of different residential service settings were launched during May to June 2008. 5 different residential service settings were visited. The practice wisdom on the operation of different setting was shared.
11. Seminar on Community Development
The captioned seminar was held on May 20, 2008 with over hundred participants enrolled in the programme. Representatives of various NGOs shared their working experience on consolidating and empowering the community. Further discussion would be scheduled to identify the future development of CD service.
12. Enhance Family Functions: Conference on Challenges of Cross Border Families
A Conference on Enhancing Family Functions: Challenges of Cross Border Families was held on May 15, 2008 (The International Day of Families, UN). The event received very positive feedback, which had 249 participants at 91% satisfaction rate. The discussion had raised positive discussion from multi-disciplinary perspectives, medical, social, educational, labor and academia. The qualitative results of the Council's study on Cross Border Families (Phase I) were shared and the quantitative part of the study would be completed and released by August 2008.

Presentation at Legco Panel

13. Licensing of Residential Care Homes for People with Disabilities
The Council was invited to make a presentation at the meeting of Legco's Panel on Welfare on May 8 to deliberate the concerns of rehabilitation sector over the captioned issue. In view of the current transitional stage before legislation, Government was urged to strengthen the monitoring measures to ensure the service quality of private hostels and to enhance the provisions of day and community support services for those PWDs living in private hostels.
14. Batterer Intervention Programme (BIP) and Child Fatality Review
The Council submitted and presented views at the LegCo on June 12, 2008 over the captioned agenda items. Comment and suggestion over results of the two pilot BIPs and future direction of policy and service development were raised for the LegCo's and the Government's further consideration and follow up. Regarding Child Fatality Review, the Council reiterated the importance of legal support for the Review exercise and expanding the scope of review to domestic violence.