

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Standing Committee on Policy Research and Advocacy (2022-23)

Minutes of the 2nd meeting held on May 12, 2023 (Friday), 2:30pm in Room 203.

Present:

Ms. Chak Tung Ching, Yvonne (Chairperson)	- Hong Kong Christian Service
Mr. Fung Kai Man, David (Vice-Chairperson)	- St. James' Settlement
Mr. Chuk Wing Hung, Keswick	- Evangelical Lutheran Church Social Service - Hong Kong
Ms. Keung Choi Yin	- Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council Limited
Ms. Poon Fung Oi, Scarlet	- Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service
Mr. Sin Chiu Hang, Benjamin	- Caritas – Hong Kong
Dr. Ko Suk Lan, Flora	- School of Professional Education and Executive Development, Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Ms. Pang Shuk Ling, Sally	- Christian Family Service Centre
Ms. Liu Pui Shan, Sisi	- Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres

Apologies

Mr. Ng Yuk Ming, Benson	- Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Lady MacLehose Centre
Ms. Pun Siu Fung, Cindy	- Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Social Service
Dr. Tam Kin Yuen, Raymond	- Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Department of Applied Social Sciences

In-attendance

Mr. Wong Kin Wai, Anthony	- HKCSS
Ms. Yiu Kit Ling, Karen	- HKCSS
Mr. Peace Wong	- HKCSS
Ms. Esther Wong	- HKCSS
Ms. Edith Yim	- HKCSS
Ms. Chan Tsz Ching, Cora	- HKCSS

1. The agenda was adopted.
2. To endorse the minutes of last meeting
Ms. Yvonne Chak (the chairman) suggested to revise point 6.1.3 (the sentence is incomplete, it should be shortened) and 7.1 (synchronize the use of the term “light public housing”).

3. To deliberate policy measures related to labour force of women at the grassroots level

Mr. Anthony Wong and Mr. Peace Wong introduced the background of the research on the Labour Force Participation of Grassroots Women. Ms. Esther Wong introduced the findings of the research and identified 3 major obstacles preventing mothers of children aged 6-14 years old from re-entering workforce, and the corresponding policy recommendations:

- They need to provide care for their children: it is suggested to increase the number of service places of the After School Care Programme and to develop the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project.
- The current schedule of most training programmes in the market could not cater their schedule: it is suggested to review the Modular Certificates Accumulation Scheme, increase the variety of courses, and allow some classes to be conducted remotely, to respond to mother's need for flexible training arrangements.
- Mothers of young children tends to prefer part-time jobs which align with their children's school hours, they also faced barriers in looking for jobs after leaving the job market for a prolonged period: it is suggested to develop employment support services targeting grassroots mothers, covering employment counselling, further education consultation, organizing job fairs, employment matching, and so forth.

Members shared some of their experiences and provided the following feedbacks and comments in response to the three obstacles:

A. The need to provide care

- Members were of the view that it would be important to off load grassroots mothers from their care tasks in order to release their workforce.
- Some members suggested to review the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project: increase incentives for the public to join the project.
- Collaborate with primary schools to offer after school care services. Members shared that it was actually discussed in a recent meeting in Commission on Poverty. More information would be shared after meeting.

B. Obstacles in participating in job training programmes

- Members suggested to solicit support from education institutions, such as ERB. We should also advocate for a more flexible format to conduct training programmes, such as organizing classes outside working hours, organizing online courses etc.

- We should make more effort to advocate for recognizing informal caring experience and embed it into the current qualifications framework. Take reference from the Construction Industry Council in developing skill tests, for example, Level 1 under the qualifications framework could be granted by passing the skill test.
- The government could consider subsidizing grassroots mothers participating in job training programmes; placement or internships opportunities would also be helpful in bringing them back to the workforce.

C. Obstacles in looking for jobs

- More efforts should be made to facilitate the sharing of information within the neighbourhood, for example, developing an online platform and share job openings; facilitate the sharing of working experiences to ease the concerns of grassroots mothers.
- CV360: recognize competence and experience in other aspects, such as volunteering experience; and lobby big corporations to adopt the idea and serve as a role model in employing grassroots mothers.
- We should facilitate the collaboration between the government and the employers: for example, by employing grassroots mothers, the government might consider subsidizing the employers in providing training resources and other supports.

4. To introduce research agenda for the coming year

Mr. Peace Wong introduced researches in the coming year:

1. Collaborating with Caritas Institute of Higher Education and Prof. Yau Yung to explore the relations between geographical factors of SDU and the health condition of residents, such as distance from social welfare services.
2. Collaborating with CUHK to study the health conditions of carers and the persons they are caring for, by studying their HA Go data. It was estimated to start off at around 100-200 interviewers as a trial first.
3. Conducting a consultancy study or opinion poll on Hongkongers' view on living at GBA after retirement.
4. Conducting an analysis on secondary data related to poverty.
5. Follow up on the research on Labour Force Participation of Grassroots Women and scale up the advocacy.

Mr. Anthony Wong also introduced HKCSS's new structure and reassured that the team would continue to follow up on the current agendas and at the same time align

with the new structure. Members noted and stated they would continue to follow up on the agendas in different positions in the new structure.

5. To hear work progress of Task Forces under the Committee

Mr. Peace Wong and Ms. Cora Chan updated the progress of the task force on aging population and society. The analysis of the study on the old age lives of singleton and doubleton elderly was completed and was planned to be published in May 2023. Members echoed that personalized exercise plan should be developed for the elderly, and more resources should be provided to DECC and NEC to enhance their role in improving elderly's health condition. It was also suggested to collaborate with DHC.

Members also shared the experience of engaging women with exercises. One of the major obstacles would be the difficulty to reserve public venue. It was suggested to include in the recommendation to relax the restriction of usage of sport fields under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

Mr. Peace Wong updated the progress of the task force on Health and Housing of the Grassroots: the team was working on the formulation of position paper in response to government's blueprint on primary health care. More effort would be put in engaging the sector to shape the role of social sector in primary health care. On the other hand, a research on the wellbeing of SDU residents was published in March 2023, one of the major suggestions being the development of community living room. Another research would be published in the upcoming Sunday (Mother's Day, 14 May 2023) about the needs of grassroot mothers of children aged 0-6 years old. Primary health programme was considered to be one of the interventions to mitigate health disparity and improve the health condition of grassroots moms and their children.

Mr. Peace Wong updated the progress of the task force on Poverty and Basic Income Protection. One major update was the research on Labour Force Participation of Grassroots Women, which had been covered previously. Peace also shared that they would be also working on redefining poverty line in the task force.

6. AOB

Mr. Anthony Wong updated on the progress of transitional social housing. One of the projects, Nam Cheong 220 had already accomplished its historical mission, and

the modular units would be reused in another site operated by Lok Sin Tong. It would be the first transitional housing project in the world that was disassembled and reassembled. Yip Shing Street project was already fully occupied. The second phase of Yen Chow Street project was in progress. There would be a function room which was planned to serve as a community living room for the residents. All construction works of all modular housing projects under HKCSS had already been completed and there wouldn't be any more in the foreseeable future. Related advocacy work would be continued.

7. Date of Next Meeting: To be arranged. (It was subsequently scheduled for 1 Nov 2023)

8. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.

Adopted by: _____

Ms. Yvonne Chak
Chairperson

Date: _____