

## Chapter 10

# Social Welfare

*The Government helps the needy to deal with their difficulties through the provision of preventive, supportive and remedial welfare services. Equally important, it provides them with a social security safety net to help them progress 'from welfare to self-reliance'.*

The Labour and Welfare Bureau is responsible for formulating social welfare policies and overseeing their implementation by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The Social Welfare Advisory Committee, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the Elderly Commission and the Women's Commission advise the Government on welfare policy.

In 2008, the total recurrent expenditure of the SWD was \$37.6 billion, of which \$26.9 billion (71.6 per cent) was for financial assistance payments, \$7.8 billion (20.7 per cent) for recurrent subventions to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the remaining \$2.9 billion (7.7 per cent) for departmental expenditure, including \$0.6 billion for hire of services.

### Major Achievements

#### *Strengthened Support for Families in Need*

In 2008, the SWD secured additional resources and implemented measures to strengthen its services and support for victims of domestic violence. These included reinforcing the manpower provision for the Family and Child Protective Services Units, stepping up public education and training for frontline professionals and enhancing district liaison work.

Support services rendered by the four Refuge Centres for Women were also enhanced and the number of places for people seeking residence in these centres was increased to 195. Since May, the Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre (CEASE Crisis Centre) has provided short-term accommodation services for victims of sexual violence and individuals or families facing domestic violence or in crisis and temporarily not ready to return home.

The two-year pilot Batterer Intervention Programme (BIP) launched by the SWD and an NGO was completed in March. Specialised treatment was provided to a total of 267 batterers in 33 groups. The BIP has proved effective in helping abusers change their behaviour. The SWD will further develop suitable treatment models to cater for different types of abusers, their spouses or partners and their children.

Separately, following the enactment of the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Ordinance 2008, the SWD has launched a new Anti-Violence Programme (AVP) as provided for under the Ordinance which seeks to change the abusers' attitude and behaviour. The AVP is psycho-educational in nature and suitable for different types of abusers. NGOs have been engaged in delivering the programme.

A two-year Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review was launched in February to examine all cases of children who died of non-natural causes, including domestic violence, in order to identify patterns and trends and formulate prevention strategies. This project will also promote multi-disciplinary and inter-agency co-operation in the prevention of child death. An evaluation will be conducted at the end of the two-year pilot period to determine how the review mechanism might be improved.

To enhance timely intervention for families in crisis, in October the SWD commissioned an NGO team to run the SWD Departmental Hotline and arrange immediate intervention for needy individuals or families outside the operating hours of the SWD's departmental hotline service unit.

In order to strengthen support services for people with emotional and family problems arising from personal financial crisis amid the global financial turmoil, the SWD has injected additional funding of \$2.16 million into the CEASE Crisis Centre and Family Crisis Support Centre to set up a 24-hour Financial Crisis Emotional Support Hotline manned by registered social workers and provide counselling service, support groups and referral service, also with effect from October.

With an allocation of \$100 million, the SWD worked with NGOs to provide short-term food assistance for individuals and families in need by launching five service projects covering the whole territory. The target service users are individuals and families having proven difficulties in coping with daily food expenditure. These include the unemployed, low-income earners, new arrivals and street sleepers, as well as those encountering sudden changes and facing immediate financial hardship. The services are also intended to assist those who did not benefit from any of the relief measures announced by the Government earlier in the year.

The SWD launched a pilot 'Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project' (NSCCP) in October. Operated by local charitable organisations, the NSCCP serves children under six and comprises a centre-based care group and a home-based child care service. The operating hours of the NSCCP are more flexible, covering evenings, some weekends and some public holidays. The project will run until March 2011.

### *Sharing of the Fruits of Economic Prosperity and Relief of Inflationary Pressure*

To share the fruits of economic prosperity with social security recipients, in June the Government provided one additional month of the standard rate payments of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) for CSSA recipients, one additional month's allowance for recipients of the Disability Allowance (DA) and a one-off grant of \$3000 for Old Age Allowance (OAA) recipients.

To ease the impact of inflation, following the annual adjustment in February the Government made another adjustment to the standard payment rates of the CSSA in August in accordance with the existing mechanism, ahead of the normal annual adjustment cycle. Furthermore, one additional month of the CSSA standard rate payments and DA payments, and two additional months of OAA payments were also made in September to ease inflationary pressure on social security recipients.

### *Provision of Employment Assistance for Single Parents and Child Carers*

The SWD commissioned NGOs to operate a 30-month Enhanced New Dawn Project from October 2007. This was designed to help single parents and child carers on the CSSA Scheme and with their youngest child aged between 12 and 14 to move towards self-reliance by engagement in paid employment. The NGOs provide employment assistance services to project participants to enhance their employability. At year-end, 5 777 people had participated in the project.

### *Employment Assistance for Able-bodied Unemployed Youth*

To help long-term CSSA able-bodied unemployed youth aged between 15 and 29 return to the workforce, the SWD commissioned NGOs to operate a two-year Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) from October 2007. Participants are provided with counselling and structured motivational or disciplinary training to enhance their self-image, self-confidence and sense of responsibility. Participants aged between 15 and 24 are also provided with opportunities to participate in the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme administered by the Labour Department, enabling them to gain work experience through job attachment. At year-end, 588 unemployed youth had participated in the My STEP project.

### *Employment Assistance for Able-bodied Unemployed People*

The SWD commissioned NGOs to operate a three-year Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme (IEAS) from October to help able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients aged between 15 and 59 secure full-time paid employment and become self-reliant. The Scheme provides ordinary and intensive employment assistance services. At year-end, 20 983 unemployed people had participated in the IEAS.

### *Transport Supplement for Persons with Severe Disability*

With effect from July 1, a monthly transport supplement of \$200 has been provided to CSSA and DA recipients aged between 12 and 64 with severe disability to encourage their participation in activities away from home and facilitate their integration into society.

### *Enhanced Support for the Elderly and their Carers*

The SWD has enhanced the resources of the District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and the Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) to reach out to single and hidden elderly people. Additional recurrent funding has been allocated to DECCs to recruit more staff to strengthen their counselling and referral services, and to process applications for long-term care services.

In 2007, the Government launched a district-based trial scheme on carer training in three SWD administrative districts, Eastern and Wan Chai, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung, and Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong. This will provide seed money for DECCs to collaborate with community organisations in running elderly-care training courses and to develop carer services. More than 765 carers were trained and 6 100 elderly persons were served in the first year of this scheme. In view of the encouraging response, the SWD has extended this scheme to cover all districts. It is expected that an additional 1 500 individuals will be trained in 2009.

### *Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly*

A Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly was launched in June. It aims to improve the home conditions of elderly people lacking family support and financial means, thus facilitating 'ageing in the community'. Under this scheme, eligible elderly households can benefit from home improvement works and/or fittings up to a maximum subsidy of \$5,000 per household. The Government has earmarked \$200 million for implementation of this scheme over five years. A total of 40 000 elderly households are expected to benefit from this initiative.

### *Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients*

In collaboration with the Hospital Authority, the Government launched the Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients in March. This enhances support for discharged elderly hospital patients and their carers, in order to enhance their quality of life and enable them to remain within the community. The first two pilots under this programme were launched in March and August in Kwun Tong and Kwai Tsing. The third will be launched in Tuen Mun in July 2009. It is estimated that a total of about 20 000 elderly patients and 7 000 carers will benefit from the programme.

### *Transitional Care and Support for Tetraplegic Patients*

To strengthen the transitional training and care needs of discharged patients suffering from spinal cord injury, neuro-muscular disease or severe spastic resulting in tetraplegia, and to support their families or carers, a Transitional Care and Support Centre for Tetraplegic Patients was set up in 2008.

Funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, the centre provides a time-defined and goal-oriented, community-based rehabilitation programme to patients to improve their physical, cognitive, communicative, behavioural, psychological and social functioning in a non-medical setting. It also aims to strengthen training and support for the families or carers of tetraplegic patients.

Core programmes include a transitional residential service, an ambulatory day training programme and supportive service programmes.

### *District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities*

In 2008, the SWD was preparing for the setting up of 16 District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities (DSCs/PWD) by re-designing home-based training and support services. The aim of these centres is to provide one-stop community support services for persons with disabilities for their better integration into the community. They also aim to provide training and support to the families or carers of persons with disabilities, strengthening their caring capacities and relieving their stress. The 16 district support centres will commence service by January 2009.

### *Child Development Fund*

The Government established a \$300 million Child Development Fund (CDF) in 2008 to underpin resources from families, the private sector, the community and the Government in the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background. The SWD has been entrusted with operational responsibility for the fund.

NGOs were selected to implement the first batch of pioneer projects in seven regions or districts: Hong Kong Island, Kowloon East, Kowloon West, New Territories East, New Territories West, Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung. The Government will conduct an evaluation of these projects to decide how the CDF can be further developed into a longer-term model.

### *Independent Review on the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System*

The Lump Sum Grant Subvention System (LSGSS) was introduced in January 2001 in a major revamp of the public funding and management of NGOs in the social welfare sector. In early 2008, while acknowledging that the system had its merits, the Government also agreed that there was scope for improvement. It therefore appointed a Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee (IRC) in January to assess the overall effectiveness of the system and identify areas for improvement.

After analysing the views collected from 133 written submissions and meetings with 112 stakeholder groups, the IRC completed its review in December and submitted a report to the Government with 36 recommendations on ways to improve the system. The IRC considered that the principles of the system were sound, the system was worth retaining and that every effort should be made to improve it. The Government will study the report in detail and provide a full response in February 2009.

## **Social Welfare Programmes**

### ***Family and Child Welfare***

A range of family and child welfare services is provided by the SWD and NGOs.

### *Family Services*

The SWD adopts a three-pronged approach to providing services to families in need.

At the primary level, attempts are made through early detection, public education, publicity and empowerment to prevent family problems from occurring. The SWD continued with its territory-wide publicity campaign entitled 'Strengthening Families and Combating Violence' during the year, and continued to operate a departmental hotline to provide service information, counselling and other forms of assistance.

At the secondary level, a range of support services, from developmental programmes to intensive counselling, is provided by 61 Integrated Family Service Centres across Hong Kong and two Integrated Services Centres located in Tung Chung.

At the tertiary level, specialised services, including crisis intervention, are provided in cases of domestic violence, family crisis or custody dispute.

### *Services for Children*

The SWD provides a wide range of welfare services to children and young people who need care or protection due to serious family problems or behavioural or emotional problems. There were 3 504 residential places in 2008 for these children, of which 950 were in foster homes, 887 in small group homes, 207 in child care centres and 1 460 in boys' and girls' homes and hostels.

The SWD also arranges adoptions for children abandoned by their parents or whose parents are unable to support them. Three welfare NGOs are 'accredited bodies' in accordance with the Adoption Ordinance for making arrangements for inter-country adoption of Hong Kong children by suitable overseas parents. The SWD started to invite applications from NGOs to be registered as 'accredited bodies' in local adoption arrangements in August.

There were 12 aided stand-alone child care centres capable of accommodating up to 682 children in 2008. Child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres continued to provide full day care services and additional support for families through the provision of 497 occasional child care places and 1 244 extended-hour places. In 2008, the SWD increased day foster care places to 50 and continued to provide 15 day small group home places.

### *Social Security*

The CSSA Scheme and the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme form the mainstay of Hong Kong's social security system. They are supplemented by three accident compensation schemes, the Criminal and Law Enforcement Injuries Compensation (CLEIC) Scheme, the Traffic Accident Victims Assistance (TAVA) Scheme, and Emergency Relief. There are 37 Social Security Field Units and two centralised offices administering these schemes across Hong Kong.

### *The CSSA Scheme*

The CSSA Scheme is non-contributory but means-tested. The scheme provides cash assistance to people suffering from financial hardship to enable them to meet basic needs. Applicants must satisfy the stipulated residence requirements. At year-end, there were 284 569 CSSA cases providing assistance to 475 625 people. The scheme's total expenditure in 2008 amounted to \$18.57 billion, representing an increase of 2.5 per cent over the previous year.

Elderly people who have received CSSA continuously for at least one year are allowed under the Portable CSSA Scheme to continue receiving assistance in Guangdong or Fujian if they choose to retire there.

### *Intensified Support for Self-reliance Measures*

The SWD continues to provide personalised employment assistance under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme to help able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients move towards full-time paid employment and become self-reliant.

### *The SSA Scheme*

The non-contributory SSA Scheme provides cash allowance to meet the special needs of severely disabled or elderly people. It comprises Normal Disability Allowance, Higher Disability Allowance, Normal Old Age Allowance and Higher Old Age Allowance. At year-end, 608 964 people were receiving SSA. The scheme's total expenditure during the year was \$8.28 billion, an increase of 37.5 per cent over the previous year. The Chief Executive also announced in October that the monthly rates for Normal OAA and Higher OAA would be raised across-the-board to \$1,000 with effect from January 2009.

### *Accident Compensation Schemes*

The CLEIC Scheme offers financial assistance on a non-means-tested basis to people (or to their dependants in case of death) who are injured as a result of a crime of violence, or by a law enforcement officer using a weapon in the execution of his duty. In 2008, \$4.68 million was paid out under the scheme. The TAVA Scheme provides financial assistance to people injured (or to their dependants in case of death) in road traffic accidents on a non-means-tested basis regardless of who is responsible for the accident. During the year, \$171.8 million was paid out under the scheme.

### *Emergency Relief*

Emergency relief in the form of meals or cash-in-lieu of meals and other necessities is given to victims of natural or other disasters. Grants from the Emergency Relief Fund are paid to eligible victims or to their dependants in case of death. Emergency relief was given to 650 victims of 32 disasters during the year.

### *Social Security Appeal Board*

The Social Security Appeal Board considers appeals against SWD's decisions on CSSA, SSA and TAVA issues. The board ruled on 308 appeals during the year.

### *Prevention of Fraud and Abuse*

To preserve the integrity of the social security system and ensure the proper use of public funds, the Special Investigation Section continues to prevent and combat fraud and abuse of social security assistance. A special hotline is in place to facilitate the public to make reports. In addition, to promote community education and the law-abiding spirit, anti-fraud information panels displaying fraud-related prosecution figures and court news have been installed in the frontline offices. At year-end, 161 abusers had been jailed, bound over, ordered to perform community service, fined, or given warnings.

### *Services for the Elderly*

The Government encourages and assists the elderly to lead active and healthy lives. It provides various community care and support services for them to continue living in their homes or familiar surroundings. For elderly persons who have long-term care needs but cannot be adequately taken care of at home, the Government provides subsidised residential care services.

The SWD continues to subsidise the Opportunities for the Elderly Project run by community organisations to make life more meaningful for elderly people. During the year, 274 programmes were subsidised by government grants amounting to \$3 million.

Over the years, more than 1.1 million Senior Citizen Cards had been issued to elderly persons in Hong Kong with which they can obtain concessions, discounts and priority service at various companies, organisations and government departments.

### *Community Care and Support Services*

At year-end, there were 213 elderly centres (including DECCs, NECs and social centres for the elderly), 126 service teams (including integrated home care service teams, enhanced home and community care service teams, support teams for the elderly and a home help team), 54 day care centres or units and a holiday centre for elderly persons. Support is also provided for their carers.

### *Residential Care Services*

At year-end, 25 494 subsidised residential care places were available for needy elderly people, including 3 613 self-care hostel places and home-for-the-aged places, 19 870 care-and-attention (C&A) places of which 6 629 were purchased from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), and 2 011 nursing home places. The overall supply of subsidised residential care places has increased by 60 per cent in about ten years.

To meet the growing care needs of the elderly, the SWD launched a phased conversion programme in 2005 to convert subsidised places without long-term-care element into C&A places, providing a continuum of care. At year-end, a total of 3 549 C&A places with continuum of care were created through the conversion programme.



The Government is committed to enhancing the quality of RCHEs. The Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation regulate these homes through a licensing system. The SWD also helps RCHEs to improve their capability, ensuring that elderly residents will receive proper care. In a continuing effort to improve drug management in residential homes, the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority and the SWD jointly organised a series of talks in 2008 to enhance the drug management skills and knowledge of staff in the homes.

### ***Rehabilitation Services***

With the aim of integrating persons with disabilities into society and helping them to develop their capabilities fully, government departments and NGOs provide a variety of rehabilitation services to meet their different needs. These services are co-ordinated by the Commissioner for Rehabilitation on the advice of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee.

#### *Services for Children with Disabilities*

At year-end, there were 1 860 integrated programme places in ordinary kindergarten-cum-child care centres, 1 544 special child care centre places (including 110 residential places), and 2 186 early education and training centre places for children with disabilities. In addition, 56 places in small group homes were provided for mildly mentally handicapped children who could not be adequately cared for by their families.

#### *Services for Adults with Disabilities*

Persons with disabilities were provided with 1 655 supported employment places to work in open settings with support and assistance. In addition, 432 places created under the 'On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities' and 311 places for young persons with disabilities or showing early signs of mental illness created under the 'Sunnyway - On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities' were made available to persons with disabilities looking for jobs. Those not yet ready to compete for work in the open market were accommodated in sheltered workshops where 5 113 places were provided.

A total of 453 places in integrated vocational training centres and 3 419 places in integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres were created. Funding was approved enabling 23 NGOs to set up small businesses that could employ persons with disabilities. Fifty businesses were created, providing jobs for about 440 persons with disabilities. The Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) assisted vocational rehabilitation services units to develop their marketing and business strategies and employment-aided services.

Day activity centres provided 4 370 places where persons with intellectual disability were taught how to live more independently. A total of 230 places were set up in training and activity centres to help ex-mentally ill patients adjust to normal daily life.

There were 6 840 places in hostels and care homes for persons with disabilities who were unable to live independently in the community, or whose families could

not care for them adequately. Elderly blind persons were provided with 825 places in care homes. For discharged mental patients, 1 509 places were provided in halfway houses and 1 407 in long-stay care homes.

### *Professional Back-up and Support Services*

Support services provided by clinical psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists are available to persons with disabilities in rehabilitation day centres and hostels. A speech therapy service is also available to children attending pre-school rehabilitation centres.

A range of community support services is available for persons with disabilities living in the community, including home-based training, community rehabilitation day services, after-care services, community mental health intervention, and rehabilitation services for persons with visceral disability or chronic illnesses.

Residential respite services for persons with disabilities, occasional childcare service for pre-schoolers with disabilities and six resource centres for parents or relatives are also available. In addition, there were five social clubs for ex-mentally ill persons and 16 social and recreational centres for persons with other disabilities to encourage them to participate in community leisure activities.

### *Preparation Work for New Legislation to Regulate Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (RCHDs)*

To prepare for new legislation to regulate the service quality of all residential care homes for persons with disabilities, a draft Code of Practice for these was devised for consultation with related government departments or bureaux and the stakeholders.

### *Financial Assistance for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) patients*

The SWD administers the trust fund for SARS patients or families affected by this disease. By year-end, 1 120 applications had been received. Of these, 890 applications were approved, the cumulative payments for which amounted to \$163.77 million.

### *Medical Social Services*

Medical social workers are stationed in public hospitals and some specialist clinics to help patients with psychosocial problems and their families. Such patients are given counselling, financial and other tangible assistance, as well as referrals to rehabilitation and support services to help them recover and reintegrate into society. During the year, medical social workers dealt with around 171 000 cases.

### *Services for Offenders*

Under related ordinances, the SWD discharges statutory functions and provides community-based and residential services to help people who have committed crimes reintegrate into the community and become law-abiding citizens.

The probation service helped 6 185 offenders during the year. Probation officers assess and report to the courts on the offenders' suitability for probation orders, and render supervision to those under the orders. The officers also prepare reports on long-term prisoners and petitioners for consideration of early release.

During the year, 3 307 people aged 14 or above who were convicted of offences punishable by imprisonment were placed on Community Service Orders. They were required to perform unpaid community work arranged and supervised by SWD officers. The Tuen Mun Children and Juvenile Home, with 388 places, provides educational, pre-vocational and character training to juvenile offenders as well as children and young people with behavioural and/or family problems.

The Young Offender Assessment Panel, jointly run by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) and the SWD, provides the courts with professional views on sentencing options for offenders aged 14 to 25. The Post-Release Supervision of Prisoners Scheme, another joint service of the SWD and the CSD, assisted 444 discharged prisoners during their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community in 2008. The Government provides funding to an NGO to offer hostel and supportive services to ex-offenders.

### *Services for Young People*

The aim of welfare services for young people is to help those aged between six and 24 become mature, responsible and contributing members of society. A range of preventive, supportive and remedial services is provided by NGOs to achieve the goal.

#### *Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres*

At year-end, there were 135 Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs) providing centre-based services, outreach social work services and school social work services to address the developmental needs of young people in an integrated and holistic manner. Under a modernisation programme jointly funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and the Lotteries Fund, a total of 82 ICYSCs were provided with funding to modernise their premises and acquire modern furniture and equipment that better cater to the needs of today's young people. At year-end, 78 ICYSCs completed their modernisation.

#### *Outreaching Services*

Sixteen District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams provide services to high-risk youths and deal with juvenile gang issues. Eighteen designated ICYSCs also provide overnight outreaching service to help young night drifters get back on the right track.

#### *Services for Juvenile Delinquents*

The Community Support Service Scheme (CSSS) assists young people who have broken the law or are under the Police Superintendent's Discretion Scheme to avoid breaking the law again. Six CSSS teams, one operated by the SWD and five by NGOs, provide services to these young people.

The Family Conference Scheme, jointly run by the SWD and the Hong Kong Police Force, assists juveniles cautioned under the Police Superintendent's Discretion Scheme for the second time or who are in need of the services of three or more parties. Social workers, police officers, teachers and the parents of these young people work together to decide on which treatment is best for them.

### *Additional Resources for Services for Youth-at-risk to Tackle Youth Drug Abuse Problems*

To tackle the youth drug abuse problem, an additional recurrent provision of \$12.25 million was allocated in 2008-09 to enhance the SWD-subsentved and NGO-run services for at-risk youth, including the 16 District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams, 18 Young Night Drifter Teams and five CSSS Teams.

These services were strengthened with additional social workers and other resources to facilitate early identification of youths prone to drug abuse and their timely referral for appropriate drug treatment and rehabilitation services.

### *Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services*

The SWD adopts different approaches to provide drug treatment and rehabilitation services for drug abusers. At year-end, the department was subventing 14 voluntary Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres and Halfway Houses, seven Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers and two Social Clubs for Ex-drug Abusers. Under the Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (Licensing) Ordinance, 26 certificates of exemption and 13 licences for Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres were issued or renewed in 2008.

### *School Social Work Service*

At year-end, 486 secondary schools were each provided with a school social worker to help students with academic, social and emotional problems and to maximise their educational opportunities.

### *P.A.T.H.S. to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme*

In the 2008-09 school year, a total of 216 secondary schools joined the Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes (PATHS) to Adulthood. This four-year project funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust was launched in the 2005-06 school year. It aims to promote the holistic development of junior secondary students into responsible young adults.

### *District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development*

The Government allocates \$15 million annually to the SWD to provide direct cash assistance and implement projects under the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development. This is to meet the developmental needs of children and young people in deprived circumstances, which cannot be met by their families or the mainstream education systems.

### *Support Service to Youth Employment*

Pursuant to the 2007-08 Policy Address, the Government has allocated additional three-year resources for the SWD to create 3 000 time-limited programme

worker (PW) posts from 2008-09 to 2010-11 in order to help needy young people aged between 15 and 29 gain working experience and become better-equipped for open employment in the labour market. These PW posts were allocated to subvented welfare NGOs in April to assist social workers in delivering service-related programmes.

### ***Clinical Psychological Services***

Working under the SWD and NGOs, 71 clinical psychologists provide a range of services to welfare units handling family casework, rehabilitation and correctional matters. The services include psychological assessment, treatment, consultation, staff training and public education. During the year, 4 155 clients were treated, and 3 005 psychological assessments and 17 242 treatment sessions were conducted. In August, an additional clinical psychology unit under the SWD was set up in Tin Shui Wai to provide more accessible services to clients residing in the Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long and Tuen Mun districts.

### ***Voluntary Work***

The Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service ran a series of promotional and publicity programmes during the year to encourage cross-sector collaboration and family participation in voluntary work. By year-end, more than 1 800 organisations and 800 000 individuals had registered for voluntary service.

### ***Subventions and Service Monitoring***

Recurrent subventions and capital grants were given to 172 NGOs to provide social welfare services in accordance with government policies. Capital grants from the Lotteries Fund were allocated to NGOs on the advice of the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee. The Service Performance Monitoring System keeps track of the output, outcome and service quality of subvented units according to 16 well-defined service quality standards and specific funding and service agreements for the service units concerned.

### ***Information Technology***

In 2008, the SWD continued to develop a workflow-based client information system to facilitate case management and service planning. The system is expected to be completed in 2009-10.

By year-end, about \$207 million in Lotteries Fund grants had been approved for 42 information technology development projects in the welfare sector.

### ***Elderly Commission***

The Elderly Commission (EC) was set up in 1997 to advise the Government on policy and services for the elderly. Recently, emphasis has been placed on promoting 'active ageing' and advising on the means to further enhance long-term care services for the elderly.

The EC has expanded its Elder Academy (EA) Scheme to cover a total of 78 primary and secondary schools which offer more than 10 000 places to elders, plus seven tertiary institutions offering 1 000 places to elders in the 2008-09 academic year. EAs are characterised by cross-sectoral collaboration and inter-generational harmony, with young students participating in them as volunteers.

At the community level, in addition to a Pilot Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (PNAAP), a two-year PNAAP — Caring for Elders was launched in September to promote care for the elderly and prevent abuse of them through establishing neighbourhood support networks. Under these two projects, a total of 37 district projects were being carried out across the territory, covering about 114 000 elderly persons and their family members.

### **Furthering Social Capital Development: Community Investment and Inclusion Fund**

The Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) was established in 2002 with \$300 million. This is intended to promote social capital development in Hong Kong by applying social investment strategies to the building of mutual help networks and by encouraging cross-sectoral partnerships to mobilize community resources.

By year-end, the CIIF had processed 13 batches of applications, and allocated over \$181 million in support of 189 social capital development initiatives in all 18 districts. In 2008, the CIIF and the Labour Department launched a joint initiative to encourage the application of social capital strategies for enhancing the employability and resilience of disadvantaged youth.

Initial social capital outcomes, such as enhanced personal capacity and increased social and economic participation are being achieved, and good practice models such as neighbourhood support networks, and cross-sectoral mentorship schemes are also emerging.

To further the CIIF objectives, a networks of supporters known as SC.Net (social capital) was formed in November to engage existing collaborators in experience sharing and to develop new partnerships.

### **Tripartite Co-operation: The Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged**

A \$200 million SWD-administered Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged was set up in 2005 to promote tripartite partnership of the Government, the business sector and NGOs in helping the disadvantaged. Donations in money and in kind from the business sector are matched dollar-for-dollar by the Government to enable NGOs to carry out social welfare projects.

By year-end, over 80 NGOs had obtained matching grants totalling over \$67 million to implement 177 welfare projects. Many of the business partners also participated in service planning and served as volunteers.

### **Women's Commission**

The Women's Commission (WoC) was set up in January 2001 to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. It identifies women's needs and addresses their concerns in a holistic and systematic manner. It advises the Government on policies concerning women and seeks to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account in the formulation of government policies.

The WoC comprises 21 members including the chairperson who is a non-official member. Its quest is 'to enable women in Hong Kong to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life'. In line with this goal, the WoC has adopted a three-pronged strategy: providing an enabling environment, empowering women and promoting public education.

On the advice of the WoC, since 2002 the Government has gradually introduced gender mainstreaming in different policy areas to provide an enabling environment. A Gender Mainstreaming Checklist was drawn up to help officers take a systematic approach to assessing women's needs and perspectives when formulating government policy. In addition, gender-related training has been provided to over 3 600 civil servants of different grades since 2001. All bureaux and departments now have their own Gender Focal Points through which matters concerning women's interest and status can be channelled.

With regard to the empowerment of women, the WoC strives to promote development of new service models and good empowerment practices. The introduction in March 2004 of an innovative and flexible learning mode, called the Capacity Building Mileage Programme, was a major step towards helping women develop their full potential.

This programme seeks to enhance women's all-round abilities and promote life skills. It is carried out in collaboration with the Open University of Hong Kong, a radio station and nearly 80 women's groups and NGOs. By year-end, the cumulative number of enrolments exceeded 28 300, a figure that does not include the large audience reached through radio programmes. The programme was first introduced on a trial basis for three years with funding from the Lotteries Fund. Since March 2007 the Government has been providing funds for the programme to continue.

Continuous efforts were made to raise public awareness of women-related issues and reduce gender stereotyping. The WoC attaches great importance to the promotion of gender awareness in school education to reduce gender stereotyping of students in their early stages of life and to make a sustainable impact. In 2008, the WoC organised a debate competition on gender issues for secondary and tertiary students to generate interest, awareness and a more thorough understanding of gender issues among the students.

### **Rehabilitation Advisory Committee**

The Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) was set up in 1977 to serve as the principal advisory body to the Government on matters pertaining to the well-being of persons with disabilities and the development and implementation of

rehabilitation policies and services in Hong Kong. Sub-committees were set up to look into specific areas of concern, such as access, employment and public education.

The RAC and its sub-committees are chaired by non-officials, and all their members are appointed in their personal capacities by the Chief Executive. To ensure that the interests of persons with disabilities are represented, the membership of the RAC includes persons with different disabilities, parents of persons with disabilities, representatives of self-help organisations for persons with disabilities and NGOs providing rehabilitation services, as well as academics, community and business leaders, professionals and other persons who have a keen interest in the well-being of persons with disabilities. Representatives of relevant government bureaux and departments also serve as ex-officio members to provide the necessary support to the RAC and follow up on issues it raises.

Through its sub-committee on public education, the RAC co-ordinates the implementation of various public education programmes on rehabilitation. In 2008, 45 public education programmes were organised by various government and non-governmental organisations under the theme 'working towards an inclusive and barrier-free society for persons with disabilities'. Territory-wide publicity activities were also launched to support World Mental Health Day and the International Day of Disabled Persons.

In 2008, the RAC also reached out to different sectors including the 18 District Councils, the business sector, and the welfare sector to promote the Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP), particularly on the employment of persons with disabilities, and to solicit support for tripartite partnership in taking forward the recommendations set out in the RPP.

With the application of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to Hong Kong since August 31, 2008, the RAC has also taken on the new role of assisting the Government in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the convention in Hong Kong.

### *Websites*

Labour and Welfare Bureau: [www.lwb.gov.hk](http://www.lwb.gov.hk)

Social Welfare Department: [www.swd.gov.hk](http://www.swd.gov.hk)

Community Investment and Inclusion Fund: [www.ciif.gov.hk](http://www.ciif.gov.hk)

Elderly Commission: [www.elderlycommission.gov.hk](http://www.elderlycommission.gov.hk)

Women's Commission: [www.women.gov.hk](http://www.women.gov.hk)