

Chapter 10

Social Welfare

The Government is committed to assisting the needy through the provision of preventive, supportive and remedial welfare services. Alongside providing a social security safety net, it also helps the needy 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 2009, the total recurrent expenditure of the SWD was \$39 billion, of which \$27.7 billion (71.1 per cent) was for financial assistance payments, \$8.3 billion (21.2 per cent) for recurrent subventions to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the remaining \$3.0 billion (7.7 per cent) for departmental expenditure, including \$0.7 billion for hire of services.

Major Achievements

Strengthened Support for Families in Need

In 2009, the Government implemented a series of measures to strengthen its services and support for victims of domestic violence. These included:

- introducing the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2009 to extend the scope of the 'Domestic Violence Ordinance' to cover same-sex cohabitants and to amend its short title to 'Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance' (the Ordinance);
- increasing the manpower of the Family and Child Protective Services Units and the Clinical Psychological Units in SWD;
- further developing the Batterer Intervention Programme (BIP);
- enhancing the support provided by refuge and crisis centres; and

- continuing to strengthen public education on combating domestic violence.

Apart from strengthening the support services provided by the four refuge centres for women, the SWD commissioned the fifth refuge centre in December 2009, thus increasing the number of places for people seeking residence in these centres to 260.

The SWD launched a BIP pilot project in 2006. This aimed to develop specialised local group treatment for abusers. The pilot project showed that the programme was effective in reducing the use of violence by abusers and in improving their marital satisfaction. In 2009, a follow-up study on the pilot project showed that the programme effects were sustainable after a one-year period. Accordingly, the SWD has incorporated BIP as one of the regular interventions for batterers. The SWD will continue to develop further suitable treatment models to cater for different types of abusers, their spouses or partners and their children.

In addition, the SWD, in collaboration with NGOs, will continue to operate the Anti-Violence Programme. This programme is applicable to all perpetrators of domestic violence referred by the court under the ordinance irrespective of their gender, age or sexual orientation, for the purpose of changing their attitudes and behaviour.

The Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review, launched in February 2008, will publish its first report in January 2010. The project aims to identify patterns and trends of child deaths, with a view to formulating prevention strategies and promoting multi-disciplinary and inter-agency co-operation in the prevention of child death. An evaluation will be conducted after the pilot period.

The SWD injected further funding into the CEASE Crisis Centre and Family Crisis Support Centre to enable continued operation of the 24-hour Financial Crisis Emotional Support Hotline manned by registered social workers. This provides a counselling service, support groups and a referral service to people with emotional and family problems arising from personal financial crisis amid the global financial turmoil. In light of the outbreak of Human Swine Influenza, the SWD provided the two centres with additional funding to set up and run a 24-hour emotional support hotline providing easily accessible and readily available support and assistance to people with emotional and family problems as a result of Human Swine Influenza for a period of six months from May to November 2009.

The SWD launched a three-year pilot 'Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project' (NSCCP) starting from October 2008. Operated by local non-governmental 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 flexible, covering evenings, some weekends and some public holidays.

Relief of Impact of the Financial Crisis

To ease the pressure on social security recipients during the difficulties arising from the financial crisis, the SWD provided one additional month of the standard rate of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) payment for CSSA recipients

and one additional month of allowance for recipients of Disability Allowance and Old Age Allowance in August; and a one-off grant of \$1,000 each for students in kindergarten to secondary education who were eligible in the 2009-10 school year for the flat-rate grant for school-related expenses under the CSSA Scheme in September.

With an allocation of \$100 million, the SWD launched five district-based service projects covering the whole territory in February 2009 to provide short-term food assistance for those individuals and families who had difficulty coping with daily food expenditures. By year-end, these projects had served 24 373 people and are expected to benefit at least 50 000 people eventually.

Enhanced Support for the Elderly and their Carers

In 2007, the Government launched the District-based Scheme on Carer Training to enhance support for needy elders and carers. District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) were invited to collaborate with community organisations in running elderly-care training courses and to develop carer services. A total of 33 DECCs have joined the scheme. In 2010, the scheme will be extended to cover all Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) in the territory. Each participating centre will be provided with seed money of \$50,000 to run carer training courses and engage those who have completed training to offer carer services in the neighbourhood.

Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly

The SWD implemented a Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly in 2008 to improve the home conditions of elderly people lacking family support and financial means. Eligible elderly households can benefit from home improvement works and/or fittings up to \$5,000 per household. The SWD has earmarked \$200 million to implement this scheme over five years. A total of 40 000 elderly households are expected to benefit.

Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients

In collaboration with the Hospital Authority, the Government earmarked \$96 million in the 2007-08 Budget for running the Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients for three years. This provides support to discharged elderly hospital patients and their carers, thereby raising their quality of life and enabling them to stay in the community. The three pilots under this programme were launched in March and August 2008, and July 2009 in Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun. Each pilot will serve about 3 000 elders and 1 000 carers per year. The entire programme is capable of serving about 20 000 elders and 7 000 carers.

District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities

In January, the SWD set up 16 District Support Centres for Persons with Disabilities by re-engineering home-based training and support service and community support services. The aim is to provide one-stop community support services to persons with disabilities for their better integration into the community. They also provide training and support to the families or carers of persons with

disabilities, with a view to strengthening their caring capacities and relieving their stress.

Modernisation Package for Youth Service Units and Community Centres

The SWD secured \$325 million from the Lotteries Fund in July for modernising 74 youth service units and community centres to upgrade their environment and facilities. The initiative will benefit users of the service and the community at large, at the same time creating jobs for construction, repair and maintenance workers.

Strengthening Cleansing Service at Welfare Service units to Fight Against Human Swine Influenza

To fight against human swine influenza, the SWD secured \$95 million to provide additional resources for some 1 800 welfare service units to increase further their capability in prevention of infections among service users and staff in 2009-10. The funding was allocated to the welfare service units in September to enable them to hire cleansing services or employ part-time or temporary help to strengthen general cleansing service and enhance environmental hygiene as needed.

District Caring and Support Trial Scheme

The SWD launched a District Caring and Support Trial Scheme in 2009-10 to support district-based initiatives aimed at enhancing support for disadvantaged groups in individual districts, as well as strengthening the resilience and capacities of individual districts in the face of the financial tsunami. By year-end, some 50 projects were being implemented throughout the 18 districts.

Independent Review on the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System

Having examined the report submitted by the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) Independent Review Committee in December 2008, the Government in February accepted in principle all its 36 recommendations on enhancing the LSG Subvention System. The Government also undertook to take the recommendations forward in concert with the welfare sector and seek funding approval as necessary. Most of the recommendations have been implemented or introduced by the end of 2009.

Social Welfare Programmes

Family and Child Welfare

A variety 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 its territory-wide publicity campaign 'Strengthening Families and Combating Violence' and its operation of a departmental hotline to provide service information, counselling and other forms of assistance.

At the secondary level, support services, ranging from developmental programmes to intensive counselling, are provided by 61 Integrated Family Service Centres across various districts in 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, behavioural or emotional problems. There were 3 532 residential places in 2009 for these children, of which 970 were in foster homes, 864 in small group homes, 207 in residential child care centres and 1 491 in boys' and girls' homes and hostels.

The SWD also arranges adoption 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. Starting from January 1, 2010, the three accredited welfare NGOs will also provide services in relation to cases of general consent in local adoption arrangements.

There were 12 aided stand-alone child care centres providing 690 places in the year. In addition, 494 occasional child care service places and 1 230 extended-hour service places in child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres provide additional support for families. In 2009, the SWD continued to provide 50 day foster care places and 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. These schemes are administered by 37 Social Security Field Units and two centralised offices.

The CSSA Scheme

The CSSA Scheme is non-contributory but means-tested. It 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 289 139 CSSA cases providing assistance to 482 001 people. The scheme's total expenditure in 2009 amounted to \$18.94 billion, representing an increase of 2 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 Province or Fujian Province if they choose to retire there.

Employment Assistance Programmes

The SWD provides personalised employment assistance through various programmes to help able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients and single parents move towards paid employment and become self-reliant.

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, whose youngest child was aged between 12 and 14, 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, 9 567 people had participated in the project.

To help long-term CSSA able-bodied unemployed youth aged between 15 and 29 return to the workforce, the SWD commissioned NGOs to operate the third phase of the Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) from October 2009 to September 2011. 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 Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWET) administered by the Labour Department, enabling them to gain work experience through job attachment. At year-end, 328 unemployed youth had participated in the third phase of the My STEP project.

The SWD commissioned NGOs to operate a three-year Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme (IEAS) from October 2008 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, 61 912 unemployed people had participated in the IEAS.

The SSA Scheme

The non-contributory SSA Scheme provides a cash allowance to meet the special needs of elderly people and persons with severe disabilities. It comprises Normal Disability Allowance, Higher Disability Allowance, Normal Old Age Allowance (NOAA) and Higher Old Age Allowance (HOAA). At year-end, 624 495 people were receiving SSA. The scheme's total expenditure during the year was \$8.72 billion, an increase of 5.3 per cent over the previous year. In January, the monthly rates for NOAA and HOAA were raised across-the-board to \$1,000.

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 2009, \$6.49 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, \$186 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 243 victims of nine 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 440 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 SWD's Special Investigation Section continues to prevent and combat fraud and abuse of social security assistance. A special hotline is in place for 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 SWD's frontline offices. At year-end, 219 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, 272 programmes were subsidised by government grants amounting to \$3 million.

Over the years, more than 1.2 million Senior Citizen Cards have been issued to elderly persons in Hong Kong with which they may enjoy concessions, discounts and priority service provided by various companies, organisations and government departments.

Community Care and Support Services

At year-end, the Government was supporting 211 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), 58 day care centres or units for the elderly and a holiday centre for elderly persons. Support is also provided for their carers.

Residential Care Services

At year-end, 25 188 subsidised residential care places were available to needy elderly people, including 2 905 self-care hostel places and home-for-the-aged places, 20 191 care-and-attention (C&A) places (of which 6 609 were purchased from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs)), and 2 092 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 with no long-term-care element into C&A places, providing a continuum of care. At year-end, a total of 4 277 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 SWD jointly organised a series of talks with the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority in 2009 to enhance the drug management skills and knowledge of staff in the homes, in addition to forming a Working Group on Drug Safety in RCHEs involving all relevant stakeholders.

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

To develop the potential of persons with disabilities, 1 645 supported employment places were made available for them to work in open settings with support and assistance. In addition, 432 places for persons with disabilities created under the 'On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities' and 311 places for young persons with disabilities or early signs of mental illness under the 'Sunnyway - On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities' were made available to assist them in securing jobs. Those not yet ready to compete for

work in the open market were accommodated in sheltered workshops where 5 113 places were provided. There was also a total of 453 places in integrated vocational training centres and 3 685 places in integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres.

To improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, funding was allocated to 23 NGOs to enable them to set up 57 small businesses providing jobs for 476 such persons. In tandem, 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 4 485 places where persons with intellectual disability were trained on independent living skills. A total of 230 places were also provided in training and activity centres to help former mentally ill patients adjust to normal daily life.

There were 7 191 places in hostels and care homes providing residential care services 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.

Services for Persons with Mental Health Problems

The first Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (ICCMW) in Tin Shui Wai started operation in March 2009 to provide one-stop, accessible and integrated community mental health support services to discharged mental patients, persons with suspected mental health problems, their families and carers and residents living in the district. The Government will expand this integrated service model across the territory by revamping the existing community mental health support services through the setting up of ICCMW in all 18 districts in the coming year.

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 and their families and carers including former mentally ill patients, living in the community. These included district support centres for persons with disabilities, community mental health links, community mental health care services, community rehabilitation day services, after-care services for people discharged from halfway houses, community mental health intervention projects, integrated community centres for mental wellness, 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 and 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)

In preparation for a licensing scheme to regulate the operation of residential care homes for RCHDs, the Government will formulate suitable complementary measures, such as a pilot Bought Place Scheme for private RCHDs to encourage them to upgrade their service standards, to increase the supply of subsidised residential care places, thereby shortening the waiting time for subsidised residential service; and to help the market develop more service options for persons with disabilities.

Financial Assistance for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Patients

The SWD administers the trust fund for SARS patients or families affected by this disease. The trust fund for SARS stopped accepting new applications on January 1, 2006. A total of 890 applications were approved, the cumulative payments for which had amounted to over \$173 million by the end of the year.

Medical Social Services

Medical social workers are stationed in public hospitals and some specialist clinics to help patients and their families with welfare needs. 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, additional medical social workers were provided to enhance services for persons with mental health problems and chronic patients, and medical social workers dealt with around 177 800 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 6 378 offenders during the year. Probation officers assess and report to the courts on an offender's 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 for early release.

Based on the recommendation of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse, a two-year Pilot Project on Enhanced Probation Service was introduced at Kowloon City and Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts in October to provide more focused, structured and intensive treatment programmes for convicted young drug offenders aged below 21.

During 2009, 3 314 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, run jointly by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) and the SWD, provides the courts with professional views on sentencing options for offenders aged 14 to below 25. The Post-Release Supervision of Prisoners Scheme, another joint service of the SWD and the CSD, assisted 380 discharged prisoners during their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community in 2009. The SWD provides funding to an NGO to offer hostel and supportive services to ex-offenders.

Services for Young People

The objective of welfare services for young people is to help those aged between 6 and 24 become mature, responsible and contributing members of society. A range of preventive, supportive and remedial services is provided by NGOs to achieve this goal.

Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres

At year-end, there were 136 Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs). These centres provide 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 more appropriate to the needs of young people.

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 which treatment is best for them.

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, 23 certificates of exemption and 17 licences for Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres were issued or renewed in 2009.

School Social Work Service

At year-end, 484 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 2009-10 school year, a total of 231 secondary schools joined the Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes (PATHS) to Adulthood project. This time-defined 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

Since the 2005-06 financial year, the SWD has received a recurrent annual provision of \$15 million to provide direct cash assistance and implement projects under the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development. The Scheme was launched to address the developmental needs of disadvantaged children and young people, which cannot be met by their families or the mainstream education systems.

Support Service to Youth Employment

In 2009, subvented welfare NGOs continued to make use of the 3 000 time-limited programme worker posts allocated to them to employ needy young people to assist social workers in delivering service-related programmes in order to gain working experience.

Child Development Fund

The Government set up the \$300 million Child Development Fund (CDF) to provide children from a disadvantaged background with more personal development opportunities, so as to reduce inter-generational poverty. CDF projects help participants draw up and implement their own development plans as well as develop an asset-building habit, thus preparing them for long-term development.

The first batch of 3-year CDF pioneer projects was rolled out by NGOs in December 2008 in seven regions or districts, benefiting a total of 750 children. The second batch of projects will be rolled out in early 2010. The Government has commissioned a consultant to evaluate the pioneer projects and make

recommendations on how to further develop the CDF into a longer-term model to promote child development in Hong Kong.

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, 3 914 clients were treated, and 3 150 psychological assessments and 18 414 treatment sessions were conducted.

Voluntary Work

The Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service ran a series of promotional and publicity programmes during the year under the theme 'One Family One Heart' to encourage cross-sector collaboration and family participation in voluntary work. By year-end, more than 1 970 organisations and 880 000 individuals had registered for voluntary service.

Subventions and Service Monitoring

Recurrent subventions and capital grants were given to 171 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 (SPMS) keeps track of the output, outcome and service quality of subvented units according to 16 well-defined service quality standards and of specific funding and service agreements for the service units concerned.

The SPMS has been strengthened by introducing surprise visits to the service units in addition to the scheduled and regular review visits and collecting feedback from service users on the service delivery in a more systematic way.

A Help Desk has been set up to provide advice and support for small NGOs on a time limited basis. It aims at rendering advice to small NGOs on subvention matters, helping them enhance their corporate governance competence and achieve sustainability in the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) environment.

An LSG Independent Complaints Handling Committee has also been set up to handle complaints related to the use of subventions and service quality that cannot be satisfactorily addressed at the NGO level.

Information Technology

In 2009, the SWD continued to develop a workflow-based client information system to facilitate case management and service planning. This is expected to be completed in 2010-11.

By year-end, about \$260 million in Lotteries Fund grants had been approved for 44 information technology development projects in the welfare sector.

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, 93 NGOs had obtained matching grants totalling over \$100 million to implement 276 welfare projects. Many of the business partners also participated in service planning and served as volunteers.

Social Capital: Creating Hope, Trust and Resilience – Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

The \$300 million Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) was set up in 2002 as a seed fund to promote social capital development by cultivating mutual support in the neighbourhood, community participation and cross-sectoral partnerships.

By year-end, the CIIF had processed 15 batches of applications, and allocated about \$200 million in support of over 200 social capital development initiatives in all 18 districts. The projects were implemented with support from over 4 700 partners, including non-governmental organisations, schools, businesses, professional groups, residents' associations, hospitals, district councils and government departments with over 530 000 people participating in these initiatives.

The financial tsunami that triggered a global economic crisis hit Hong Kong in late 2008. Some projects approved in recent two batches were encouraged to form new partnerships and enhance community engagement across different social strata and build unique mutual help networks to help families and communities most affected by the crisis.

To further promote the benefits of social capital building and good practice models, a 6th CIIF Forum cum Project Expo was organised in November 2009. The Government will commission a second evaluation study to identify critical success factors to guide the future development of social capital in Hong Kong.

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 enhance further long-term care services for the elderly.

The total number of elder academies under the Elder Academy Scheme jointly launched by the EC and the Government has increased to more than 100, 98 of which are operating in primary and secondary schools and the rest in tertiary education institutions. Elder academies are characterised by cross-sectoral collaboration and inter-generational harmony, with young students participating in

them as volunteers. An Elder Academy Development Foundation has also been set up to ensure the sustainable development of the scheme.

At the community level, in addition to the Pilot Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (PNAAP) and PNAAP – Caring for Elders, the PNAAP – Prevention of Elderly Suicide was launched in 2009 to disseminate the message of cherishing life among elders through neighbourhood support networks. A total of 75 district PNAAP projects are being carried out across the territory, engaging 200 000 elders and their family members.

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 23 members including the chairperson who is a non-official member. Its mission 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: provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women and public education.

On the advice of the WoC, since 2002 the Government had gradually introduced gender mainstreaming in different policy areas. A Gender Mainstreaming Checklist was drawn up in 2002 and then updated in 2009 to help officers take a systematic approach to assessing women's needs and perspectives when formulating government policies. In addition, gender-related training has been provided to over 4 200 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 35 000, 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. In February 2009, the Financial Secretary announced that a total of \$20 million would be allocated in the next three years to expand the programme and provide fee remissions to women with financial difficulties.

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 2009, the WoC organised a short video filming competition on gender awareness for secondary students to enhance contestants' gender awareness and sense of gender equality, as well as to arouse the community's concern over these topics and inflection on how gender prejudice and gender stereotyping impact society nowadays.

In August 2009, the WoC held a conference entitled 'Beyond Limits – Women in the 21st Century'. The conference was the third of its kind hosted by the WoC since its inception in 2001. It aimed to review Hong Kong's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and provide a platform for participants to discuss issues related to the development and well-being of women as well as to exchange views on future directions and strategies to further promote gender equality and the status of women in Hong Kong. The conference attracted some 500 participants.

Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

The Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) was set up in 1977. It serves 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 2009, 34 public education programmes were organised by various government and non-governmental organisations under the theme 'All-round promotion of the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and cross sectoral collaboration towards building an equal and inclusive society'. Territory-wide publicity activities were also launched to support World Mental Health Day and the International Day of Disabled Persons.

In 2009, the RAC also reached out to different sectors, including the 18 District Councils, the business and the welfare sectors to promote the working capabilities of persons with disabilities and the employment support services provided by Government departments and rehabilitation organisations for persons with disabilities as well as solicit support for tripartite partnerships. These efforts received positive responses from the welfare organisations, the District Councils and the business sector.

With the application to Hong Kong since August 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 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

Social Welfare Department: www.swd.gov.hk

Community Investment and Inclusion Fund: www.ciif.gov.hk

Elderly Commission: www.elderlycommission.gov.hk

Women's Commission: www.women.gov.hk