

Chapter 10

Social Welfare

The Government is committed to assisting the needy through the provision of preventive, supportive and remedial welfare services. As well as 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 Elderly Commission, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, and the Women's Commission advise the Government on welfare policies.

In 2011, the total recurrent expenditure of the SWD was \$39.3 billion, of which \$26.8 billion (68.2 per cent) was for financial assistance payments, \$9.2 billion (23.4 per cent) for recurrent subventions to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), \$0.9 billion (2.3 per cent) for hire of services, and the remaining \$2.4 billion (6.1 per cent) for departmental expenditure.

Major Achievements

Strengthened Support for Families in Need

In 2011, the Government implemented a series of measures to strengthen its services and support for families in need, including victims of domestic violence.

The SWD launched a three-year pilot programme, called Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP) in October 2008 with a view to providing more flexible forms of day care services for children aged under six to meet the needs of parents at the neighbourhood level. A total of 11 projects, one in each SWD administrative district, were launched. Subsidy is also available for families with social needs and financial difficulties. In view of the positive feedback from service users, the SWD has regularised the NSCCP and extended its service coverage to all 18 administrative districts since October 2011.

To further strengthen the support for individuals and families in need, the SWD set up a new Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) in Sham Shui Po in December 2011, thereby bringing the number of IFSCs over the territory to 62.

A pilot project on child fatality review was launched in February 2008 aiming to identify good practices and areas for improvement in the system and service provision as well as 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 avoidable child death. The review panel of the pilot project completed the review of child death cases that occurred in 2006 and 2007 and released its final report in January 2011. In view of the successful experience and positive feedback received, the SWD accepted the recommendation of the review panel and in June 2011 set up a standing Child Fatality Review Panel to continue to review child death cases.

In 2011, the SWD continued to strengthen public education on combating domestic violence. A new set of advertisements in the form of TV and radio announcements and posters with the main theme of 'Embrace your hopes, cherish your love' was produced to promote the message of 'Love Children, Love Yourself and Love Life'.

The SWD also further developed the Batterer Intervention Programme (BIP). BIP groups specifically for female batterers were provided on a trial basis in 2011.

Relief Measures

To ease the pressure of inflation and rising consumer prices on people's livelihood, the SWD provided in July 2011 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 Old Age Allowance (OAA) and Disability Allowance (DA).

Relaxing permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme

Since February 2011, to allow SSA recipients greater flexibility in travelling out of Hong Kong for various reasons, the permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong in each payment year under the SSA Scheme has been substantially relaxed from 240 days to 305 days, with the minimum residence period in Hong Kong for entitlement to the above absence limit correspondingly reduced from 90 days to 60 days a year. An SSA recipient who has resided in Hong Kong for no less than 60 days in a year will receive a full-year allowance.

Increasing standard rates for non able-bodied adult CSSA recipients

With effect from August 2011, the standard rates under the CSSA Scheme for adult recipients under the age of 60 with disabilities or in ill-health have been increased to the same level as those for elderly recipients in similar health conditions. The new arrangement aims to help adult recipients meet their special needs arising from disabilities or poor health condition.

Measures to improve the community living supplement under the CSSA Scheme

With effect from October 2011, the monthly rate of community living supplement under the CSSA Scheme was increased from \$120 to \$250; and extended to CSSA recipients with disabilities at non-severe levels, in ill-health, or elderly persons who are not living in institutions to better support their staying in the community.

Pilot Scheme on Home Care Services for Frail Elders

In March 2011, the SWD, with funding support from the Lotteries Fund, implemented a three-year pilot scheme on home care services for frail elders to support elderly persons who are severely impaired and on the waiting list for subsidised nursing home places to continue staying at home through the provision of a new package of intensive and tailor-made home care services. Three pilot teams were set up in six districts in Kowloon including Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Sai Kung, Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong and Sham Shui Po.

Pilot Scheme on Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities

The SWD launched a three-year pilot scheme on home care service for persons with severe disabilities in March 2011 to provide persons with severe disabilities who are living in the community and on the waiting list for residential care services, with a package of home-based services to meet their care, nursing and rehabilitation training needs. The scheme was launched in Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun.

The Licensing Scheme for Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities (RCHDs)

The Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Ordinance commenced operation on November 18, 2011 (except Part 2 on sanctions for operating a residential care home without a licence or certificate of exemption), providing for the control of residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) through a licensing scheme administered by the Director of Social Welfare. An 18-month grace period is provided to allow time for RCHDs to put in place improvement measures in compliance with the legislative requirements and in applying for a licence or certificate of exemption.

The Government implemented the four-year pilot Bought Place Scheme (BPS) in 2010 and the Financial Assistance Scheme in 2011 for private RCHDs as complementary measures to the introduction of the legislative scheme to help operators meet the licensing requirements and help the market develop quality residential care services for persons with disabilities.

Lump Sum Grant Subvention System

The Government, in concert with the welfare sector, has implemented or taken forward all the recommendations made by the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) Independent Review Committee. The Government will continue to work closely with the reconstituted LSG Steering Committee to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the recommendations.

Pilot Cyber Youth Outreaching Projects

In August 2011, SWD launched three three-year pilot cyber youth outreaching projects with funding support from the Lotteries Fund to address the changing needs of young people, in particular at-risk and hidden youths, and tackle internet-related youth problems. A research consultant was also commissioned to conduct an evaluative study to evaluate systematically the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of these pilot projects and recommend the way forward for cyber youth work.

Enhancement of School Social Work Service

In September 2011, the SWD allocated additional resources to 34 NGOs to enhance social work services in secondary schools by providing a total of 96 additional school social worker posts, representing a 20 per cent increase in manpower, to help prevent and tackle student drug abuse and other related problems.

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 department 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 62 IFSCs across all 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 or sexual 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 owing to serious family, behavioural or emotional problems. There were 3 585 residential places in 2011 for these children, of which 1 020 were in foster homes, 864 in small group homes, 207 in residential child care centres and 1 494 in boys' and girls' homes and hostels, etc.

The SWD also arranges adoption for children abandoned by their parents or whose parents are unable to support them. Three NGOs have been accredited as 'accredited bodies' in accordance with the Adoption Ordinance for making arrangements for local adoption and inter-country adoption of Hong Kong children.

The SWD also provides day child care services to support parents who cannot take care of their children temporarily because of work and other reasons. In 2011, the SWD and the Education Bureau continued to subsidise some standalone child care centres and some kindergarten-cum-child care centres to provide regular and full-day child care services. The department also subvented some of these centres to provide a total of 383 occasional child care service places and 1 230 extended hours service places. In recent years, the SWD has introduced various new child care services such as the NSCCP which provides more flexible and home-based child care services to families in need.

Social Security

CSSA and SSA Schemes 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 38 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 requirement. At year-end, there were 276 710 CSSA cases involving 443 322 beneficiaries. The scheme's total expenditure in 2011 amounted to \$17.97 billion, representing an increase of 3.2 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 or Fujian Province if they choose to retire there.

Employment Assistance Programmes

SWD provides personalised employment assistance through various programmes to help able-bodied unemployed recipients, single parents and child carers on CSSA move towards employment and become self-reliant. These programmes include:

Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme (IEAS) — to help able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients aged between 15 and 59 secure full-time employment and become self-reliant. The IEAS provides ordinary and intensive employment assistance services. At year-end, 104 895 CSSA recipients had participated in the IEAS.

Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) — to help long-term CSSA able-bodied unemployed youth aged between 15 and 29 return to the workforce. Participants are provided with counselling and structured motivational and disciplinary training to enhance their self-image, self-confidence and sense of responsibility. At year-end, 1 944 CSSA recipients had participated in My STEP.

New Dawn Project — to help single parents and child carers on CSSA, whose youngest child is aged between 12 and 14, move towards self-reliance by engagement in employment. NGOs provide employment assistance services to project participants to enhance their employability. At year-end, 24 473 people had participated in the project.

The SWD commissioned NGOs to operate a 15-month extension of the IEAS, My STEP and the New Dawn Project from October 2011.

The SSA Scheme

The non-contributory SSA Scheme provides cash allowances to meet the special needs of elders and persons with severe disabilities. It comprises Normal Old Age Allowance, Higher Old Age Allowance, Normal Disability Allowance and Higher Disability Allowance. At year-end, 643 364 people were receiving SSA. The scheme's total expenditure in the year was \$8.82 billion, an increase of 6.4 per cent over the previous year.

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 2011, \$5.63 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, \$171.2 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 'in case of death' to their dependants. Emergency relief was given to 638 victims of 12 disasters during the year.

Social Security Appeal Board

The Social Security Appeal Board considers appeals against the SWD's decisions on CSSA, SSA and TAVA issues. The board ruled on 415 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, 194 abusers had been jailed, bound over, ordered to perform community service, fined, or given warnings.

Services for the Elderly

The Government encourages and assists elderly people 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, 277 programmes were subsidised by government grants amounting to \$3 million.

Over the years, more than 1.3 million Senior Citizen Cards have been issued by the SWD to elderly persons in Hong Kong. With the cards, 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 126 service teams (including integrated home care services teams, enhanced home and community care services teams, support teams for the elderly and a home help team) and 61 day care centres or units for the elderly to provide support services to elders who age at home. The Government has also launched new programmes in recent years to further support them and their carers, including the Integrated Discharge Support Programme for Elderly Patients, the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly and a pilot scheme on home care services for frail elders as mentioned in 'Major Achievements' above.

The Government announced in the 2011-12 Policy Address that it would implement a four-year pilot scheme on community care service (CCS) voucher for the elderly starting from 2013-14 to further the policy objective of 'ageing in place' and promote the development of CCS. Under the scheme, Government subsidy would be provided directly to elderly people who have been assessed to be eligible for subsidised long-term care service, so that they could choose the suitable CCS.

In addition, the Government also supports 210 elderly centres (including district elderly community centres, neighbourhood elderly centres and social centres for the elderly) and a holiday centre for the elderly.

Residential Care Services

At year-end, there was a total of 26 126 subsidised residential care places in Hong Kong, including 1 882 self-care hostel places and home-for-the-aged places, 21 576 care-and-attention places (of which 7 278 were purchased from private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs)), and 2 668 nursing home places (of which 139 were purchased from self-financing nursing homes).

The Government is committed to enhancing the quality of RCHEs. The Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance and its subsidiary legislation empower the Director of Social Welfare to 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 Government launched a three-year pilot scheme in June 2010 to provide RCHEs with visiting pharmacist services. The objectives are to further strengthen the knowledge and capability of RCHEs and their staff in drug management, thereby enhancing their quality of care for elders. It is estimated that about 70 to 80 RCHEs will benefit from the scheme. In addition, the SWD jointly organised a series of talks with the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority in 2011 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 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 kindergarten-cum-child care centres, 1 682 places in special child care centres (including 110 residential places), and 2 481 places in early education and training centres for children with disabilities. In addition, 64 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 5 133 places were provided. There were also a total of 453 places in integrated vocational training centres and 4 023 places in integrated vocational rehabilitation services centres.

To improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, a funding of about \$46 million was allocated to 23 NGOs to enable them to set up 70 small businesses providing over 550 job opportunities for persons with disabilities under a project called 'Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities Through Small Enterprise'. In tandem, the Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) assisted vocational rehabilitation services units in developing their marketing and business strategies and employment-aided services.

Day activity centres provided 4 637 places where persons with intellectual disabilities were trained to live independently.

There were 7 685 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. A total of 60 residential places were also provided under the pilot BPS for private RCHDs. Elderly blind persons were provided with 825 places in care homes. For discharged mental patients, 1 509 places were provided in halfway houses and 1 507 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 and their families/carers including those ex-mentally ill patients, living in the community. These included district support centres for persons with disabilities, community rehabilitation day centres, 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 child care service for pre-schoolers with disabilities and six resource centres for parents/relatives are also available. In addition, there are 16 social and recreational centres for persons with disabilities to encourage them to participate in community leisure activities.

Financial Assistance for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Patients

The trust fund for SARS patients or families affected by this disease was set up in 2003, with an amount of \$150 million. The Government further injected \$50 million each into the trust fund in 2007 and 2011, increasing the commitment up to \$250 million. A total of 890 applications were approved for eligible individuals and/or their families, making the cumulative payments amount to about \$195 million by the end of the year.

Medical Social Services

Medical social workers are stationed in public hospitals and some specialist clinics to provide assistance and services to patients and/or their families with welfare needs, thus helping them recover and reintegrate into society. The SWD has strengthened the manpower of psychiatric medical social workers to dovetail with the new service initiative of the Hospital Authority. Medical social workers dealt with about 170 600 cases in 2011.

Services for Offenders

The SWD performs a number of 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 5 720 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, the Pilot Project on Enhanced Probation Service has been introduced at the two probation offices serving Kowloon City and Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts since October 2009 to provide more focused, structured and intensive treatment programmes for convicted young drug offenders aged below 21.

During 2011, a total of 2 854 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 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 SWD and CSD, assisted 816 discharged prisoners during their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community in 2011. 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 are provided by NGOs to achieve this goal.

Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres

At year-end, there were 137 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 package funded by the Lotteries Fund, a total of 74 youth service units and community centres were provided with funding to upgrade their premises and facilities.

Outreaching Services

A total of 16 district youth outreaching social work teams provide services to high-risk youths and deal with juvenile gang issues. A total of 18 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. Six CSSS teams, one operated by the SWD and five by NGOs, provide services to these young people.

The Family Conference Scheme, run jointly 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 parents of these young people work together to decide what treatment is best for them.

Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services

At year-end, the SWD was subventing 14 residential drug treatment and rehabilitation centres and halfway houses, 11 counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers and two centres for drug counselling. Under the Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (Licensing) Ordinance, 20 licences and 20 certificates of exemption for drug treatment and rehabilitation centres were issued or renewed in 2011.

School Social Work Service

At year-end, 478 secondary schools were each provided with a stationing school social worker to help students with academic, social and emotional problems and to maximise their educational opportunities. Since September 2011, the SWD has allocated additional resources to enhance the school social work service by a 20 per cent increase in manpower to help prevent and tackle student drug abuse and other related problems.

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

In the 2011-12 school year, a total of 237 secondary schools joined the Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes (PATHS) to Adulthood project. This time-limited 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 system.

Support Service to Youth Employment

In 2011, subvented welfare NGOs continued to make use of the 3 000 time-limited temporary job opportunities allocated to them to assist young people in joining the labour market for open employment.

Child Development Fund

In 2008, 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. So far, three batches of 40 projects have been rolled out, benefiting more than 4 400 children aged between 10 and 16.

The Government has commissioned a consultant to evaluate the pioneer projects and make recommendations on how to develop the CDF further into a longer-term model to promote child development in Hong Kong.

Clinical Psychological Services

Within the SWD and NGOs, a total of 73 clinical psychologists provide a range of services to welfare units handling family casework, rehabilitation and correctional matters. The services include psychological assessment and treatment for adults and children with psychological or psychiatric disorders and mental disabilities, consultation for allied professionals, staff training and public education. During the year, 3 782 clients were treated, and 3 061 psychological assessments and 18 087 treatment sessions were conducted.

Voluntary Work

The Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service has adopted the theme, 'Volunteering — New Attitude to Life' to promote Level 3 Volunteering in full swing, and encourages volunteers to integrate the core values and spirit of voluntary work into their daily living. Apart from a series of promotional activities, a brand new TV announcement in public interest (API) on the new theme was also launched. By year-end, more than 2 230 organisations and 980 000 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 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, through regular self-assessment reports submitted by NGOs and review/surprise visits conducted by the SWD.

A Help Desk set up for small NGOs on a time-limited basis aims at rendering advice on subvention matters and helping them enhance their competence in corporate governance and achieve sustainability in the LSG subvention environment.

The LSG Independent Complaints Handling Committee handles complaints related to the use of subventions and the service quality that cannot be satisfactorily addressed at the NGO level.

Social Welfare Development Fund

A \$1 billion Social Welfare Development Fund was launched in January 2010 for implementation in three three-year phases from 2010-11 to 2018-19 to support all subvented NGOs in carrying out training and professional development programmes, business system upgrading projects and service delivery enhancement studies. By year-end, about \$263 million was approved for 150 NGO applications.

Information Technology

The SWD has commissioned a consultant to conduct a review of the Departmental Information Technology Plan (DITP) to recommend the strategic direction of IT applications for supporting the department's service objectives and to propose a DITP for the coming five financial years.

The department has also commissioned a consultant to review the current Information Technology Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector to map out the direction for the development of information technology in the sector for meeting their management, operation and service needs.

By year-end, about \$80 million under the Social Welfare Development Fund set up by the Lotteries Fund had been approved for 113 subvented NGOs to implement 233 information technology projects.

Promotion of Tripartite Partnership: 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 among the welfare sector, the business community and the Government in helping the disadvantaged. In view of the positive response from the business sector and NGOs, additional funding of \$200 million was injected into the fund in May 2010 to encourage further cross-sector collaboration to help 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, 125 NGOs had obtained matching grants totalling over \$184 million to implement 442 welfare projects, benefiting over 800 000 disadvantaged persons. Many of the business partners also participated in service planning and served as volunteers.

Social Capital – Building trust and social networks for an inclusive community – Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

The \$300-million Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) was established in 2002 as seed money to implement diversified social capital development projects in the community, promote trust and reciprocity between the public and different sectors, and build a cross-sectoral collaborative platform and mutual help network. By year-end 2011, CIIF has processed 18 batches of applications, with funding allocation of around \$240 million to the 238 approved projects, involving over 6 000 collaboration partners and around 700 000 people in Hong Kong.

To promulgate the social capital concept to the general public, CIIF has launched the first API for television and radio with a series of promotional/educational programmes and activities organised at school, district and community levels, including the election of successful networking stories and social capital drama performance.

An evaluation study on the effectiveness of CIIF was launched at the end of 2010 which aims to identify critical success factors to guide the future development of social capital in Hong Kong. The study will be completed in 2012 and interim findings indicated that CIIF has achieved a positive outcome in developing social capital.

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 EC and the Government has increased to 113, of which 106 are operating in primary and secondary schools and the rest in tertiary education institutions. The Elder Academy Development Foundation was formed in 2009 to ensure the sustainable development of the scheme.

At the community level, the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project makes use of neighbourhood support networks to reach out to hidden elders and promote the message of care and love for elderly persons. A total of 75 district projects have been carried out across the territory since the inception of the Project in 2008, engaging about 200 000 elderly people 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. WoC advises the Government on policies related to women so as to ensure that women's perspectives are taken into account in the formulation of government policies.

WoC comprises 24 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, that is, provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women, and 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 in 2002 and updated in 2009 to help officers take a systematic approach in assessing the needs and perspectives of both men and women when formulating government policies. In addition, gender-related training has been provided to over 5 300 civil servants of different grades and ranks since 2001. All bureaux and departments now have their own Gender Focal Points through which matters concerning gender mainstreaming can be channelled.

With regard to the empowerment of women, the WoC strives to implement various initiatives to help women realise their potential. In March 2004, a learning programme designed for meeting women's needs, the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP), was introduced to enhance women's self-confidence and learning abilities.

This programme seeks to empower women and enhance their life skills. It is carried out in collaboration with the Open University of Hong Kong, a radio station and nearly 70 women's groups and NGOs. By the end of 2011, the cumulative number of enrolments exceeded 53 000, not to mention the large audience reached through relevant 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 provided funds for the programme. 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. In October 2011, the Government announced that CBMP would become a recurrent project.

Continuous efforts were made to raise public awareness of women-related issues and reduce gender stereotyping. In 2011, the WoC jointly produced with the Radio Television Hong Kong two TV series — 'Lady KING' and 'Woman with Dreams 4'. The former was a 10-episode five-minute programme featuring various issues related to women while the latter was a 10-episode television drama series that portrayed the contemporary experiences of Hong Kong women across different age groups in order to enhance public understanding of the multiple facets and situations of women in Hong Kong.

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 2011, 46 public education programmes were organised by various government and NGOs 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.

Since 2008, the RAC has 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 to solicit support for tripartite partnerships. These efforts received positive responses from the welfare organisations, the District Councils and the business sector.

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.

Community Care Fund

The Community Care Fund (CCF) provides assistance to people facing economic difficulties, especially those who fall outside the social safety net or who are within the safety net but have special circumstances that are not covered. The CCF would take forward measures on a pilot basis to help the Government identify programmes that could be considered for incorporation into the Government's regular assistance and service.

The Chief Executive has appointed a Steering Committee to oversee and co-ordinate the CCF's work. An Executive Committee and four subcommittees (Education, Home Affairs, Medical and Welfare) have also been set up under the

Steering Committee to support the operation of the CCF. The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved an injection of \$5 billion into the CCF in May.

Since the establishment of the CCF in 2011, the Steering Committee has launched 12 assistance programmes covering the education, home affairs, medical and welfare areas for target beneficiary groups including children, the elderly, the disabled, patients, new arrivals and ethnic minorities. These programmes are expected to benefit more than 300 000 people/households at an estimated full-year expenditure of around \$760 million. As at end-December, 10 of them have been rolled out. Moreover, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved in July an additional injection of \$1.5 billion into the CCF for implementing the programme to provide a one-off allowance of \$6,000 to new arrivals from low-income families who have entered Hong Kong for settlement to facilitate their integration and adaptation into the community.

Taking into account actual experience gained and views collected from the public and stakeholders, the Steering Committee will continue to consider other programme proposals to provide assistance to the underprivileged and low-income families.

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

Child Development Fund: www.cdf.gov.hk

Community Care Fund: www.communitycarefund.hk