

## Follow-up to Sham Shui Po District Visit

### Purpose

This paper follows up on the visit to Sham Shui Po (SSP) by the Commission on 5 May, and outlines the key challenges faced by the community and the measures to be adopted to deal with them.

### Background

2. To further study the needs of the local community, the Commission visited SSP on 5 May after visiting Tin Shui Wai and Kwun Tong in March and April respectively. Members met with service recipients including children from low-income families, CSSA recipients and elders. Members also exchanged views with about 40 district personalities including representatives from the District Council, Area Committees, district committees, district organizations, religious bodies, schools and NGOs.

### Key Challenges

3. CoP Paper 14/2005 provides an overview of the community profile of SSP, the services provided and some of the challenges faced by the community. The two key challenges faced by SSP community as set out in the above paper were further explored at the visit -

- Development Opportunities for Children and Youth from Low-income Families. In 2004, there were 60,600 children and youth below 18 in SSP, many of whom come from low-income families. In the 2004/05 school year, there were about 11,200 children and youth in CSSA households in SSP; 6,060 SSP students received full grants from Students Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA). They should be given additional care and development opportunities.
- A High Concentration of the Elderly. In 2004, 16.3% of the total population of SSP was aged 65 or above. This was higher than the territorial average of 11.7%. There are about 14,080 old age CSSA cases, and about 5,030 normal old age (5.6% of territorial caseload) and 27,180 higher old age (7.4% of territorial caseload) Social Security Allowance cases in SSP. About 16,500 persons aged over 64 either live alone or live only with their spouses in SSP.

## Tackling the Challenges

4. An inter-departmental working group meeting has been convened after the visit to see how best to respond to these challenges. The meeting has mapped out the following strategies, objectives and key actions.

### **Strategy 1: To provide development opportunities for children and youth from underprivileged families**

#### **Objective (1)**

- To provide a supportive learning environment for children and youth coming from underprivileged families.

#### **Key actions:**

- To proactively liaise with schools to participate in the \$75M School-based After School Learning and Support Programmes. The target schools will be those with a high concentration of CSSA and full grant SFAA students.
- To encourage schools to extend the opening hours of their computer rooms to provide computer access for students after school. Additional grants are being provided to schools for the purpose.
- To facilitate the participation of needy students in extra-curricular activities. Financial support is provided under the Jockey Club Life-wide Learning Fund to needy students of Primary 4 to Secondary 3 for such purpose.
- To invite schools to apply for the Quality Education Fund for projects which enhance the learning environment of students (e.g. multi-media learning classrooms) and student support (e.g. purchase of orchestral instruments).
- To encourage schools to organize remedial teaching programmes for academically low achievers and extend the opening hours of the school premises for their students.
- To provide recreation and sports activities free of charge or at low costs to needy children and youth.

#### **Objective (2)**

- To increase exposure of children and youth of underprivileged families and instill a sense of self-reliance in them.

#### **Key actions:**

- To encourage schools with a high concentration of poor students to set up mentorship schemes with the objective of providing role models.

- To engage community organizations in organizing mentorship schemes for children and youth from low-income families.
- To encourage the provision of holistic developmental programmes, leadership training and experiential learning opportunities for underprivileged youth with a view to better preparing them to meet life's challenges.

### **Objective (3)**

- To provide support and parenting guidance to parents in underprivileged families.

### **Key actions:**

- To facilitate successful implementation of the pilot Head Start Programme in SSP in 2005-06 in order to enable families in need to obtain appropriate services through better alignment of health, education and social services delivery.
- To facilitate the provision of parental support and parenting skill training for parents of students. Funding is provided by EMB for the SSP Parent Teacher Association Federation to provide training to members of PTAs in SSP.
- To facilitate exchange among schools in the district to learn the 'best practice' in relation to parental support and parenting guidance. School heads/teachers who have initiated successful measures will be invited to share their valuable experience with their counterparts in the district.
- To organize tailor-made parent education programmes for disadvantaged groups (e.g. low-income, NACs, single parents and ethnic minorities) on supporting the development of their children.
- To closely monitor the demand for fee-waiving places of the After School Care Programme (ASCP) with a view to providing adequate child care services to underprivileged families. To publicize the ASCP to needy parents.

## **Strategy 2: To meet the needs of elders, especially those who are poor, frail and living alone or with spouse only**

### **Objective (1)**

- To facilitate healthy and active ageing, with particular attention paid to the single and frail ones.

### **Key actions:**

- To line up elderly service units, medical professionals and allied health personnel to provide fall prevention and other health related programmes for

the elderly, in particular the single and frail ones. To provide one-stop service including referrals to elders who have suffered from falls.

- To encourage NGOs to organize programmes under the “Opportunities for the Elderly Project” aiming at helping the elderly to acquire new knowledge, realize their potential, expand their social life and maintain physical and psychological well-being.
- To provide sports and recreation activities free of charge to the needy elderly to encourage them to engage in exercise and recreation.
- To promote elderly health through talks, medical checks, and outreach services.

### **Objective (2)**

- To enhance the community support for the elderly.

### **Key actions:**

- To encourage participation of the elderly in volunteer service through the Support Teams for the Elderly and other elderly service units with the key aims being to keep them connected with the community and to help nurture among them a sense of purpose and self-worth.
- To encourage the formation of volunteer teams to serve the needy elderly.
- To organize regular visits by volunteers to single or frail elderly people with a view to providing them with knowledge on basic health care and home safety knowledge as well as household cleansing services. Efforts would be made to strengthen the social network of the elderly through social and recreational activities outside their homes.
- To reach out to elderly people and enhance their awareness of services available to them by home visits and the establishment of information points in places frequented by them.

### **Cross-sector collaboration**

5. Poverty alleviation requires not only Government actions but also cross-sector collaboration; indeed many of the initiatives set out in the preceding passage have built in this element. Community organizations will be encouraged to refocus their activities in helping the needy in the community; and briefings will be organized to invite local community organizations to apply for the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund to implement projects that enhance social capital.

## **District Coordination**

6. The Working Group on Poverty Problem under the SSP District Council comprises representatives from over 20 district NGOs and serves as a platform for NGOs to explore collaboration opportunities. A research commissioned to the Chinese University of HK is underway to study the poverty situation in SSP.
7. SWD has been promoting cross-sector collaboration through District Coordinating Committees (DCCs) on different services in SSP, in particular the DCC on Family and Child Welfare Service, Local Committee on Service for Young People, DCC on Elderly Service and DCC on Promotion of Volunteer Service. They serve as useful forums to examine the current needs of local communities and recommend as well as implement effective measures to address the needs identified.
8. To further galvanize efforts, the SSPDO has established a working group on poverty to enhance coordination, and monitoring of the progress, of poverty alleviation measures.

Sham Shui Po District Office

*(with inputs from District Social Welfare Office (Sham Shui Po), Education and Manpower Bureau, Housing Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Department of Health )*

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