Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Task Force on Children and Youth
An Overview of Existing Services for Children and Youth
Relevant to Intergenerational Poverty

Purpose

As requested by Members at the first meeting of the Task Force held on 26 May, this paper provides an overview of the existing services and programmes for children and youth, highlighting the risk factors relevant to intergenerational poverty, the screening mechanisms in place and the specific measures/interventions in tackling the high risk factors. Members' views are also sought on the focus of the Task Force's work in the light of the overview.

Overview of Existing Work

2. Existing services on health, school education, welfare and related services for children aged 0-5 years and children aged 6-14 years, as well as training and employment opportunities for youth aged 15-24, particularly NEY have been detailed in CoP Papers ref. 12/2005, 15/2005 and 17/2005. An overview, from a life cycle perspective, of these need assessments and intervention measures to reduce the risks of intergenerational poverty, are set out in Annexes A – C.

(i)   Annex A - Children aged 0-5

3. Early identification of the varied needs for future development is the goal for screening and intervention measures for this age group. For a wide catchment, the Administration will use Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) (which at present provide services to over 90% of newborn babies) as the platform for implementing the Comprehensive Child Development Service (0-5 Years) (CCDS). Nevertheless, this does not mean that Government is oblivious to non-physical risk factors that may detract children from sound development. Experience indicates that physical checks often serve as the entry points for early identification of potential risk factors such as abusive families or other social needs. CCDS would therefore facilitate integration and alignment of early identification and intervention services provided by various departments and NGOs thus improving the interface among health, social and education services at the community level.

4. At its earlier meetings, the CoP has agreed that, to maximise its impact, it should complement rather than duplicate ongoing work. It would therefore be appropriate for the CoP Task Force to focus on other areas while maintaining a close interest in the progress of CCDS. The CoP Task Force Secretariat will also closely liaise with HWFB to keep Members posted of salient developments.

(ii)   *Annex B - Children and Youth aged 6-14*

5. The Understanding the Adolescent Project (UAP) and the Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programme (P.A.T.H.S.) provide screening and intervention services for children studying at primary and secondary schools with special developmental needs. As shown in Annex B, in addition to universal services for all primary 4 to 6 students on resilience, there is an Intensive Programme targeting at primary 4 students identified with greater needs of guidance. Similarly, P.A.T.H.S also targets at junior secondary students to enhance their psycho-social development and provides intensive follow up measures for students identified to be in greater need. The CoP Task Force Secretariat will, through its dialogue with relevant bureaux, keep Members posted of salient evolution of these two programmes.

(iii)   *Annex C - Youth aged 15-24*

6. To cater for the different needs, aptitudes and interests of different senior secondary school students and enable them to better plan for their future studies and career development, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) has introduced the pilot Career Oriented Curriculum (CoC) since the 2003/04 school year for Secondary 4-5 students. Besides, the proposed "3+3+4" academic structure, by extending secondary education and through curriculum diversification, would also help reduce the risk of non-engaged youth (NEY) through providing in the school curriculum studies that are of greater interest and personal relevance to the less academically inclined.

7. Youth who would like to pursue vocational education and training may enrol in the various training programmes provided by the Vocational Training Council, Construction Industry Training Authority and Clothing Industry Training Authority. Furthermore, they can also benefit from the Continuing Education Fund and Skills Upgrading Scheme. Please see Annex C for details of these programmes/schemes.

8. To address the needs of NEY, a wide range of policies and initiatives concerning school and continuing education, vocational training and youth

employment are offered by a number of policy bureaux, including EMB, Economic Development and Labour Bureau (EDLB)/Labour Department (LD) and Social Welfare Department to meet their diverse needs as shown in Annex C. The Task Force on Continuing Development and Employment-related Training for Youth (NEY Task Force) was also established in 2004 to monitor, co-ordinate and evaluate the implementation of various personal development and employment-related training programmes for NEY. The Task Force also administers the Youth Sustainable Development and Employment Fund which finances pilot projects on employment-related training programmes for NEY. The NEY Task Force has commissioned a study to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the pilot projects and other existing programmes in Hong Kong with a view to making recommendations on future policies and initiatives to address the problems of NEY. Another study which is currently being considered by the NEY Task Force is addressing the problems encountered by NEY who are suffering from learning difficulties and psychological problems.

9.   Subject to Members' view, we propose that the CoP Task Force Secretariat will liaise with the NEY Task Force Secretariat with a view to keeping Members informed of the key outcomes of the researches being conducted; Members' views, if any, on areas which require enhanced inter-agency coordination will also be channelled to the NEY Task Force.

Possible Areas of Focus

(i) Poverty Alleviation Measures

10.   The Government recognises that early detection would not be meaningful without intervention and follow up.   Some of these follow up could be costly. Hence, there is a need to ensure that a child/youth's access to appropriate follow up services is not frustrated by the lack of means.   Currently, financial assistance schemes are in place to help CSSA households and other low-income families to access to the universally available services, which serve as a broad basic assurance of the general welfare of the younger generation.   The Government has also introduced specific policies and measures as outlined in Annexes A and B to cater for those children with special needs.   Since access to services is a horizontal issue, the CoP Task Force may wish to ascertain if current measures and policies are adequate to ensure that children and youth from the less well off groups are not deprived of access to preventive and remedial services no worse than other social groups solely due to the lack of financial means.

(ii) Sharing of Information

11.   While the screening mechanisms and intervention measures for respective age groups are in place, it is noteworthy that services to different age groups may be the remit of different policies.   Though this division of labour is only natural to enable service specialisation, this also enhances the need to ensure proper interface to ensure effectiveness and sustainability of intervention.   For example,

➢   would intervention targeted at physical and non-physical risk factors identified by CCDS be all completed by the time the child reaches five? What if this doesn't?   Prima facie, is there merit for the information to be shared with the relevant bureau/agency responsible for intervention/follow up (e.g. EMB or even the schools)?   What are the risks of such sharing and is there a way to reduce such risks?

➢   there is currently no structured and systematic interface between UAP and PATHS.   Unless the primary and secondary schools in question have formed a throughtrain, there is little to ensure that the two dialogue over their students' development needs.   Noting the psychological needs of early adolescence, is there a prima facie need to ensure better coordination and better provision and continuation of services on an informed basis?

(iii) Hidden High-risk Youth

12.   Hidden high-risk youth remains a serious concern. Unlike school students or "night drifters" who are under the care/attention of school teachers or social workers, the hidden groups have isolated themselves from the society.   It is therefore extremely difficult, if not impossible for the Government to ascertain their needs and provide them with appropriate training and assistance.   With the sponsorship of the Youth Sustainable Development and Employment Fund, Hong Kong Christian Service has been running a pilot project called "LET'S WALK (Life Engagement Training Scheme) since 2004 to reach out to the hidden high-risk youth from 14 to 21. The project includes providing personalised counselling and training, as well as other tailor-made intervention measures to these young people with a view to assisting them in re-entering the mainstream education or finding jobs.   The NEY Task Force is monitoring the progress of this pilot project. The CoP Task Force Secretariat will liaise closely with the NEY Task Force, keep Members informed of salient development and consult Members should the pilot reveal areas that the CoP should be involved in.

Way Forward

13. Members are invited to -

(a) note the existing programmes for children and youth in Annexes A to C, the liaison that the CoP Task Force Secretariat will undertake with a view to keeping Members posted of salient developments (paragraphs 4, 5 and 9) and channel Members' views, if any, to the appropriate bodies for follow up;

(b) consider the proposal that the CoP Task Force should focus on inter-policy and inter-bureau coordination, especially in terms of filling the gap and improving the interface between services;

(c) consider focussing future work of the CoP Task Force on the areas flagged in paragraphs 10-12 above;

14. In taking forward the above, the CoP Task Force would engage relevant advisory and non-governmental bodies, and draw experience and researches both locally as well as from overseas.

Commission Secretariat
July 2005

Children: 0-5 years
(Pre-school)

(I) Profile: Total number of children: *As at end of 2004, there are approximately 270, 000 children of 0-5 years.*
Number of children going to Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs): *Over 90% of all newborn babies go to MCHCs.*
Number of children receiving pre-school education: *About 70% of the total number of children.*
Number of children in CSSA households: *26,170*
Number of children in non-CSSA households with average monthly income comparable to CSSA payment of the corresponding household size[1] *85, 000 (as at Q3 of 2004)*

(II) Factors increasing the risks of intergenerational poverty ("High Risk Factors"):

   (a) *Physical*, *developmental* and *behavioural* problems (e.g. children with developmental delays and learning difficulties etc.);

   (b) *Socio-economic* factors which may affect the well-being of children (e.g. disadvantaged family backgrounds including CSSA households, single-parent and new arrival families; ethnic minorities with low family income) including *lack of means* to access universal services;

   (c) *Parenting* difficulties (e.g. parenting stress, lack of parenting support, child abuse, domestic violence, postnatal depression and other family problems);

   (d) Lack of *pre-school education* and insufficient child *care.*

(III) Screening Mechanism and Intervention Measures

The following table sets out the screening mechanisms in place to identify the high risk factors above, and the universal as well as specific measures to address such risks.

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[1] Estimate from General Household Survey.

Screening mechanisms used to identify the high risk factors	Universal services available	Specific follow-up measures/ referrals in tackling the high risk factors
For Factors (a) – (c) ● Proposed *Comprehensive Child Development Service (Head Start Programme)*; ➢ Referrlals by *MCHCs*; ➢ Referrals by kindergartens (*KGs*) and child care centres (*CCCs*); ● Referrals by *NGOs* or *SWD* ● Referrals by *the Police*	● *Integrated Child Health and Development Programmes* which cover parenting guidance, disease prevention and health and development surveillance for children aged 5 or below; ● Integrated family support and services provided by Integrated Family and Service Centres (*IFSCs*)	*For Factor (a)* ● Significant *health* and *developmental* problems → HA hospitals/ Child Assessment Services of Department of Health (DH); ● *Developmental or behavioural problems*: KGs & CCCs → MCHCs or IFSCs. *For Factor (b)* ● Significant *family or social problems* → IFSCs; ● *Special needs/ family problems* identified by IFSCs→ Specific follow up actions. • For *lack of means* to access to universal service → Kindergarten Fee Remission Scheme; financial assistance to CSSA families. *For Factor (c)* ● *Parenting difficulties* → Intensive Positive Parenting Programme which provides a structured group training for parenting skills; ● *Postnatal depression* → psychiatric nurse, clinical psychologists or psychiatrists; ● *At-risk pregnant women* → DH, HA hospitals and IFSCs; ● *Family violence* like child abuse, spouse battering → Family and Child Protective Services Unit.
For Factor (d) ● K.i.v. referral system established under Comprehensive Child Development Service	● Kindergartens and day nurseries ● Child Care Services	*For Factor (d)* ● *Families cannot provide care to them due to employment or other social needs* → Full day edu-care programmes & extension of operation hours of the child care centres*;* ● *Children under 18 who cannot be adequately cared for by their families* due to family or other problems →Residential services*;* ● *Pre-school children with disabilities*→ Day training services and residential services.

Compiled by CoP Secretariat,
with input from Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and Social Welfare Department

July 2005

Children and Youth: 6-14
(Primary 1 to Secondary 3)

(I) Profile: Total number of children and youth: *716, 400 (as at mid 2004)*[2]

Number of children and youth going to school: *700, 756*[3]

Number of children in CSSA households: *108,282*

Number of children in non-CSSA households with average monthly income comparable to average CSSA payment of the corresponding household size[4] : *281, 000 (as at Q3 of 2004)*

Number of students receiving financial assistance either under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (TA) or Student Travel Subsidy Scheme (STS) or both in 2004/05: *261,183 (as at 31.5.2005)*

(II) Factors increasing the risks of intergenerational poverty ("High Risk Factors"):

(a) *Academic failure* which may affect children's future earnings mobility

(b) *Lack of development opportunities* due to the disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. insufficient opportunities in non-academic training and inadequate IT resources support outside school hours)

(c) *Psychosocial and parenting problems*, which may affect the well-being of students (e.g. depression, parenting stress, low income family etc.)

(III) Screening Mechanism and Intervention Measures

The following table sets out the screening mechanisms in place to identify the high risk factors above, and the universal as well as specific measures to address such risks.

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[1] When talking about usual recipients of educational services, we normally make reference to the figures on usual residents.

[2] This is the total number of students studying P1 to S3 in all ordinary schools as at mid-September 2004/05 school year

[3] Estimate from General Household Survey.

Screening mechanisms used to identify the high risk factors	*Universal services available*	*Special measures in the existing services in tackling the high risk factors*
For Factor (a) ● **School** teachers and social workers;	*For Factor (a)* ➤ 9-year free school education *(P.1-S.3)*	● Proposed *small class teaching* in primary schools with a high concentration of students with weak family support and receiving CSSA or full grant of the School Textbook Assistance Scheme ● *Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP)* and *Integrated Education (IE) Programme* for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream primary schools, namely those who are significantly backward in two or more of the three basic subjects, as well as those with physical and intellectual disabilities. ● *New Funding Model (NFM)* scheme to allow primary schools to adopt a whole-school approach in providing school based remedial services for students with SEN
For Factors (b) and (c) ● Screening programme of the Understanding Adolescent Project (**UAP**) which aims at identifying primary 4 students with greater needs for guidance; ● Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programme (**P.A.T.H.S.**) to Adulthood: *A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme for junior secondary students*	For Factor (b): Development opportunit ➤ **School-based After School Learning and Support Programmes** *(P.1 – S.7);* ➤ **IT Assistance** to schools and students*;* ➤ **Jockey Club Life Wide Learning Fund** *(P.3- S.4);* ➤ **Uniformed Groups (UGs);**	● **Full subsidies** for CSSA and full grant SFA students to participate in School-based After School Learning and Support Programmes. ● The *loan of notebook computers* from schools/ *free recycled computers* for needy students and *free IT training* for their parents. ● Additional resources are provided to schools for extending opening hours of IT facilities in schools for use by students. ● **Sponsorship** to be provided for leadership training for students with financial difficulties. ● Subject to funds available, EMB will consider providing additional subsidies to UGs that will set up new leagues with free uniforms for needy participants. Sponsorship will also be provided for those with financial difficulties to receive leadership training.
	For Factor (c): Psychosocial support guidance ➤ **The UAP** *targeting at P 4 students;*	● **Intensified UAP** including small group, adventure-based and parent

		child activities for students with greater needs for guidance.
	➢ **P.A.T.H.S.**	● ***Intensified programme*** for students with greater needs.
	➢ ***Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSC);***	● Special needs/ family problems identified in ICYSC → Specific follow up actions.
	➢ *Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSC);*	● Special needs/ family problems identified in IFSC → Specific follow up actions.
	➢ After-school Care Programmes	● ***Full /half fee waiving*** for low-income families/CSSA recipients; Extension of operation hours of child care centres for families cannot provide care to them due to employment or other social needs.

Compiled by CoP Secretariat,
with input from Education and Manpower Bureau, Health, Welfare and Food
Bureau and Social Welfare Department

July 2005

Youth: 15-24

(Secondary 4 to Tertiary)

(I) Profile: Total number of youth: 900, 200 (end 2004)

Number of non-engaged youth (NEY): 58, 300 (Feb – Apr 2005)

(Total number of youth who were inactive for reasons other than "students", "home makers" and "health problems": 21, 200 (Feb-Apr 2005)

Total number of youth unemployed: 37,100 (Feb – Apr 2005))

Total number of CSSA unemployed recipients: 3, 750 (2004)

(II) High Risk Group:

● NEY (unemployed and not pursuing further studies)

(III) Screening Mechanism

The following mechanisms aim at identifying young people with academic problems, not pursing further studies or unemployed.

● For young people studying at school→ *School teachers/Social worker*s;

● For school leavers → Referrals by *outreaching social workers, NGOs* or *SWD.*

(IV) Intervention Measures

To address the problem of NEY, it is important to ensure sufficient opportunities on education, vocational/pre-employment training or employment are provided to them. The existing programmes and services available for NEY are as follows-.

School/Continuing Education	Vocational/ Pre-employment Training*	Employment*	Counselling/other support
By EMB **Existing students** • *Career Oriented Curriculum* **introducing vocational training programmes in school;** School leavers • **Project Yi Jin*;** • **Associate Degree Programme** • **Continuing Education Fund** • **Skills Upgrading Scheme**	By EMB • *VTC* full-time and part-time courses; • **Construction Industry Training Authority and Clothing Industry Training Authority** full-time and part-time courses. [+] By LD • **Youth Pre-employment Training Programme** (展翅計劃); By SWD • **Community Work Programme;** • **Community Work Experience and Training Programme**	By LD • **Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme** (青少年見習就業計劃); • **Youth Self-Employment Support Scheme;** By SWD • **Intensive Employment Assistance Projects;**	By SWD • **Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres;** • 18 **District Out-reaching Social Work Teams**; • Other ancillary services and facilities such as immediate crisis residential and crisis intervention services, 24-hour all-night-drop-in centres etc.

*Please refer to the **Explanatory Note** for details of the above programmes and their deliverables.

[+]CITA and CLITA are statutory bodies funded by industry levies.

Compiled by CoP Secretariat,

with input from Education and Manpower Bureau, Home Affairs Bureau, Labour Department and Social Welfare Department

July 2005

Explanatory Note

I) For School Leavers

Programmes	Details	Deliverables
Project Yi Jin (EMB)	For Secondary 5 school leavers and adults aged 21 and above to continue further education. A pilot school-based Yi Jin/Secondary School Collaboration Project was launched in 2004/05 with the participation of 55 students. The scheme will be extended to 22 secondary schools with a total of 33 classes in the 2005/06.	Since 2000, over 20 000 students have benefited from the project. Of these, over 16 000 (80%) are aged below 21.
Continuing Education Fund (EMB)	For eligible Hong Kong residents aged between 18 and 60.　To reimburse participants 80% of the fees they have paid for recognised continuing education courses upon successful completion of them by the participants.	Since the establishment of the Fund in 2002, nearly 190,000 applicants have been approved for reimbursements from the Fund.　Among the applicants, about 40 % is within the age group of 18 to 30.
Skills Upgrading Scheme (EMB)	The Scheme was launched to help upgrade the skills of in-service workers with low education attainment to adapt to the changing working environment. The Scheme is now covering 22 industries	Since 2001, over 120 000 in-service workers have benefited from the Scheme. At present, 4% of the SUS trainees are aged below 19, and about 16% of them are aged from 20 to 25.

II) Vocational/ Pre-employment Training

Programmes	Details	Deliverables
VTC full-time and part-time courses (EMB)	➢　The *Institute of Vocation Education* provides full-time and part-time courses leading to the award of qualifications	➢　Total number of places is more than 52,000 in the academic year 2004/05 (about 28000 full-time places and about 24000 part-time places)
	➢　The *18 Training and Development Centres* provides full-time and part-time	➢　More than 6200 pre-employment training

	industry specific training programmes for Secondary 3 school leavers to working adults at graduate level;	places receiving Government subvention and 38200 skills upgrading training places in 2004/05.
	➤ The *Apprenticeship Unit* provides free apprentice placement service to employers and young people seeking training opportunities in industry under the statutory Apprenticeship Scheme;	➤ Currently, there are about 3900 apprentices under the Scheme.
	➤ The *Vocational Development Programme (VDP)* provides short term taster courses at entry-level for NEY aged 15 to 24 of Secondary 3 level or below to arouse their interest and motivation to pursue education and training for employment of future studies;	➤ 2000 places of VDP are provided 2004/05.
	➤ VTC *Youth College* at So UK Estate provides a 'home base' for the vocational education and training programmes for NEYs	➤ 1000 places in 2004/05.

Construction Industry Training Authority full-time and part-time courses (EMB)	➢ The one-year or two-year full-time Basic Craft Courses provide basic construction skills and knowledge training to the Secondary 3 school leavers; ➢ The one-year or two-year Construction Supervisor/Technician Programme provide higher level technical and supervisory training to the Secondary 5 school leavers; ➢ Full-time Adult Short Courses provide specific construction skills training in a short period to those adults who wish to join the industry; and ➢ Part-time Training Courses provide retraining and skills upgrading, and supervisory/technical knowledge training to the in-service construction workers.	➢ In 2004/05 academic year, the total number of trainees enrolling the Basic Craft Courses and the Construction Supervisor/Technician Programmes were 750 and 205 respectively. ➢ In 2004/05, there were 1 206 trainees taking the full-time adult short courses and 67 586 trainees enrolling the part-time courses.
Clothing Industry Training Authority full-time and part-time courses (EMB)	➢ The Authority provides different stream of technician course and craftsman course for Secondary 5 and Secondary 3 school leavers. Trainees can acquire fundamental techniques through training in different workshops. ➢ Part-time Training Courses offer practical knowledge and trade skills to the in-service personnel for job related skills enhancement and vocational training within a short period of time.	➢ In 2004/05 academic year, there were 414 and 2 786 trainees enrolling the full-time and part-time training courses respectively.
Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (展翅計劃) (LD)	Comprehensive pre-employment training in both inter-personal and vocational skills for school leavers aged 15-19.	During the past five years, more than 57,000 young pe received training under the Programme. Upon completio training, the average placement rate for the trainees was clos 70%.
Community Work Programme (SWD)	Building up the self-esteem of unemployed CSSA recipients including NEY through participation in unpaid community work	

Community Work Experience and Training Programme (SWD)	A combination of community work performance and targeted job skills training for unemployed CSSA recipients including NEY. A tailor made programme for NEY may be implemented within 2005	

III) Employment

Programmes	Details	Deliverables
Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (青少年見習就業計劃) (LD)	Employment opportunities for non-degree holders aged 15-24 through on-job training. The Action S4 Programme was implemented to promote the employability of the disadvantaged youth	As at end of June 2005, more than 22 000 trainees were successfully placed in training vacancies under the Scheme. In addition, about 12 000 trainees were placed in other jobs in the open employment market with the advice and assistance of their case managers.
Youth Self-Employment Support Scheme (LD)	A one-year pilot project starting in May 2004, aims to assist young people aged 18 to 24 with education attainment below degree level and assessed to have motivation to become self-employed in areas with business prospects.	A total of 36 projects providing 1500 training places. Review of the effectiveness of the Scheme will be available by end 2005.
Intensive Employment Assistance Projects (SWD)	Assistance to employable CSSA recipients and 'near-CSSA' recipients to remove work barriers, enhance their employability and get back to work	Since October 2003, a total of 2127 NEY aged 15-24 have joined the Programme. As at the end of March 2005, 771 NEY have successfully secured full-time jobs through the Programme. 99 of the CSSA NEY participants who secured full-time employment left the CSSA net altogether while 483 have changed to "CSSA Low-earners".

Others:

- *The Task Force on Continuing Development and Employment-related Training for Youth* **has been set up to monitor, coordinate and evaluate the implementation of various personal development and employment-related training programmes for NEY.**

- A $50 million *Youth Sustainable Development and Employment Fund* has been established to finance pilot projects on employment-related training programmes for NEY.   13 pilot projects are already in the pipeline, with more than 4000 training places.   About ten more projects are being considered for funding.   The Fund also finances studies on the problems and needs of non-engaged youth and other relevant topics.

Compiled by CoP Secretariat,

with input from Education and Manpower Bureau, Home Affairs Bureau, Labour Department and Social Welfare Department

July 2005