BUILDING COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS:

The Report of the Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Social Welfare Department's Enhanced District Social Welfare Office Functions

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Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

AC	Area Committee
AD	Assistant Director
ADSWO	Assistant District Social Welfare Officer
ASWO	Assistant Social Work Officer
CC	Community Center/Community Complex
COVS	Central Office for Volunteer Service
CSD	Census and Statistics Department
CSSA	Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme
CSWO	Chief Social Work Officer
DC	District Council
DCC	District Coordinating Committee
DCSRC	District Council Social Service related Committee
DECC	District Elderly Community Center
DH	Department of Health
DMC	District Management Committee
DN	Day Nursery
DO	District Officer (of the Home Affairs Department)
DS	District Secretary
DSW	Director of Social Welfare
DSWO	District Social Welfare Officer
ECC	Estate Community Center
EETC	Early Education and Training Center
EMB	Education and Manpower Bureau
FCPSU	Family and Child Protective Services Unit

FSA	Funding and Service Agreement
FSC	Family Services Center
FSNT	Family Support Networking Team
FSRC	Family Support and Resource Center
GWU	Group Work Unit
HA	Hospital Authority
HAD	Home Affairs Department
HD	Housing Department
HKPF	Hong Kong Police Force
ICYSC	Integrated Children & Youth Services Center
ID	Immigration Department
IFSC	Integrated Family Service Center
IHHS	Integrated Home Help Service Team
LCSD	Leisure and Cultural Services Department
LCSYP	Local Committee on Services for Young People
LD	Labor Department
LegCo	Legislative Council
LSP	Locality Strategic Partnership
MAC	Mutual Aid Committee
NEC	Neighborhood Elderly Center
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NLCDP	Neighborhood Level Community Development Project
OI	Owners' Incorporation
PCT	Planning and Coordinating Team
PRT	Parent Resource Center
PSWO	Principal Social Work Officer

PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RC	Rural Committee
REO	Rehabilitation and Elderly Officer
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SSSO	Senior Social Security Officer
SSWO	Senior Social Work Officer
SWA	Social Work Assistant
SWAC	Social Welfare Advisory Committee
SWD	Social Welfare Department
SWO	Social Work Officer
WW	Welfare Worker
YO	Youth Officer

Executive Summary

1.   In February 2003, the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong was commissioned by the Social Welfare Department to evaluate the effectiveness of the enhanced functions of the District Social Welfare Offices between April 2002 and March 2003. The enhanced functions included in this study are:

 a) planning welfare services on a district basis to meet local community needs;
 b) collaborating with District Council, related government departments and district organizations to facilitate the implementation of social welfare policies in the district;
 c) coordinating with non-governmental organizations in the district in respect of delivery of services in meeting the welfare needs of the local community; and
 d) establishing a more proactive social outreaching network in the district to help the needy and the disadvantaged.

2.   The objectives of this Study are to evaluate the effectiveness of these functions with a view to identifying room for further improvement and better serving the community, and to set benchmarks for the aspects where enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices have created the greatest impact, in terms of customer satisfaction, cost-effectiveness and feedback from stakeholders. As a formative evaluation, this Study aims to seek informed continuous learning through feedback from key community stakeholders, to provide future strategic directions and enhance institutional capacity and effectiveness on district planning, service coordination, community partnerships and outreaching services targeting people in need.

3.   Based on a pluralistic approach, mixing qualitative and quantitative methodologies, this Study collected information from a variety of sources, including documentary review of relevant reports, analysis of the structure, operations and self-assessment reports of all the District Social Welfare Offices, a self-administered questionnaire survey and focus groups on the views of the key community stakeholders. Although the consultants would very much hope that this Report can offer a comprehensive study aimed at improving the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices, we are fully aware that the re-organized District Social Welfare Offices have only been implemented for over one year. Such a thorough evaluation would require more in-depth considerations and further investigations. Indeed, most District Social Welfare Offices are still in the process of consolidating and reassessing their working plans and operations. Most community stakeholders are only beginning to clarify their expectations and understanding on what are and what are not the duties of District Social Welfare Offices in practice, as well as the division of responsibilities between the district and the headquarters; and how they can strategically relate to the district planning mechanism. As the re-organization represented efforts to strengthen some of the former functions of the District Social Welfare Offices, rather than a radical transformation of the direction and operations, many of the improvements and changes have been gradual, emerging and subtle, rather than dramatic. Having said all these, the consultants believe that this Report can stimulate further reflections and discussion that can contribute to the future development of District Social Welfare Offices.

4.   After the re-organization, the role of District Social Welfare Offices in policy and service planning has been recognized. Now SWD headquarters is expected to consult District Social Welfare Offices for their views and opinions on district needs and local sentiments in policy and project planning. District Social Welfare Offices are central in re-engineering welfare services, re-directing the service priority of the headquarters, introducing "unwelcome" services to the neighborhoods, seeking local consultations on welfare policies, identifying community needs and formulating community strategy, coordinating services to bridge service gaps and avoid service overlaps, and providing outreaching services to identify and connect vulnerable populations. From the formation of pilot integrative family services centers and youth services to the re-engineering of community-based elderly services, the role and contribution of DSWOs have been increasingly reckoned and regarded as exemplars of success. In the coming re-engineering of the family services centers, the role of DSWO will be more prominent.

5.   The consultants are impressed with the commitment and support of the District Social Welfare Office staff toward the re-organization. Under the leadership of the DSWOs and the "cohesive, dynamic and proactive" team culture of the staff, the District Social Welfare Offices demonstrated pride and ownership to their achievements, capacity to handle complicated job challenges, and willingness to innovate. They recognized their achievements in areas such as establishing and sustaining good relationship with district stakeholders and outward-looking and proactive approach to tackle community issues. District Social Welfare Offices varied significantly on their approach and strategy to execute the enhanced functions. Yet they all have built up a strong network of community partnerships for promoting the quality of community life.

6.   Overall feedback from key stakeholders both through the questionnaire survey and focus groups on the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office has been very positive. Community stakeholders were relatively more satisfied with the functions of introduction and explanation of the government's welfare policies, and the provision of updated information on welfare services, the promotion of district liaison and collaborations, and the coordination and promotion of welfare services. Relatively speaking, community network and outreaching work had been accorded with a lower recognition. In comparing with other community stakeholders, NGO stakeholders were less satisfied on these enhanced functions. They seemed to have higher expectations on the District Social Welfare Offices to provide assistance to them in program planning, re-engineering of services, reflecting their views to the headquarters, and resolving some of the difficulties involved.

7.   District Social Welfare Offices would perform community need assessment and consultations through a variety of means, including community forums, surveys, focus groups and community meetings. There were plenty of examples whereby the District Social Welfare Offices had demonstrated their effectiveness in identifying and responding to district needs. Community stakeholders had been particularly impressed by the role of the District Social Welfare Offices in pooling them together to provide assistance to residents under the Comprehensive Redevelopment of Public Housing Estates, ethnic minorities, elderly people living in remote villages and young night drifters.

8.   Community stakeholders were impressed by the high-profile and friendly approach of DSWOs. District Social Welfare Offices had been rated by many district organizations as the most helpful government department in the districts. In fact, the policy emphasis of SWD should be a learning example for other government departments. District Social Welfare Offices were recognized as a "match-maker", connecting organizations together to form partners for district programs and service providers to funding support; "resource-provider" providing vital district information and funds; "advocator" representing the interests of the districts to the headquarters; "trouble-shooter" for all sort of welfare-related problems; and "service provider" following-up enquiries, making case referrals and providing direct services.

9.   Now the District Social Welfare Office system has become a focal point for district organizations and personalities to interact and exchange resources, and to explore collaborations. Evidence suggests that the re-organization has widened the community network and partnership of SWD beyond NGOs receiving SWD subvention to DCs and district organizations. District organizations include residents' organizations, faith organizations, interest groups, service users, and business organizations. District Social Welfare Offices have effectively energized and motivated the interests, as well as improved the understanding and knowledge of more DC members and district organizations on welfare issues. This cross-service, cross-sector, cross-departmental, and cross-professional participative system centered on the District Social Welfare Office is vital for informed service planning and effective service implementation.

10.   More importantly, the widened participation strategy has brought in additional community resources, such as funding and volunteers to support welfare programs. The new partnerships with district organizations and business sector have demonstrated that there are untapped resources in the community which can be mobilized for community improvement projects. With widened representation, these cross-sector and cross-service networks are paramount to provide policy feedback, mobilize local resources for concerted and joint actions, and support new welfare initiatives. At issue is how these established networks can be sustained and their institutional capacity empowered.

11.   Coupled with the more open and diversified community participation, the function of District Social Welfare Offices has been extended from service coordination to the mobilization of local resources to address locally identified social issues. Since social welfare services are intricately interwoven with issues related to health, leisure, housing, employment, education, public security, community building and elderly care, it is evident that the DSWOs have become a key player in community issues involving cross-sector and cross-departmental collaborations.

12.   Moving from short-term service coordination and adjustments to developing long-term community partnerships, there is a need for the DSWOs to strengthen their leadership which can inspire common vision, enthusiasm and commitment, empower the institutional capacity, and command the trust from other community partners.

Recommendations

a) The enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office should be further clarified and explained to key community stakeholders through various means and channels. There should be publications, such as leaflets introducing its structure and functions, including its enhanced functions, in plain language.

b) There is a need to establish and consolidate the district planning framework and mechanism – need assessment, formulating a common vision, objectives and community strategy, and establishing a monitoring and evaluating mechanism. Without a more standardized approach to assess community needs and district planning, there is no way SWD headquarters can have an objective basis for resource allocation and assess performance. Key stakeholders should be actively involved to increase their sense of ownership. The planning mechanism should be supported with relevant training on planning. In view of the fact that district planning is an emerging operational process, there should be a mechanism for the key staff of District Social Welfare Offices to share their experiences, challenges and learnings on a regular basis.

c) To acknowledge the importance of district inputs, the influence and role of district comments and district needs in policy-making should be further strengthened and demonstrated.

d) There is a need to review the DCC mechanism in terms of its role and functions, structure and composition. The setting up of a district-level welfare council may be considered through the setting up of some pilot projects. The district welfare council will have a wider community representation and a cross-service, cross-departmental and cross-sector focus. It can act as a local forum on welfare policy and a platform for promoting joint actions. But the notion of a district welfare council may overlap with the work of DCSRC. Under the council, there may be service or issue related working groups or sub-committees. In addition, local welfare committee at the level of a sub-district or area can be promoted. As an interim measure, cross-service or DCCs collaborations should be encouraged to be in line with the government's policy to promote policy and service integration and to avoid service fragmentation.

e) Even though District Social Welfare Offices have successfully connected more DC members to district planning, the role of DSWO in DMC, DC and DCSRC can be further strengthened. It is important that district planning has to be connected effectively to the District Administration system.

f) To support district planning, there is a need for an effective and affordable district information management system – databank, program activities and resources. The system would cater to the needs of government departments and district organizations, service providers, DCs, service users and residents. There should be a clear analysis on the information needs of different community stakeholders and how to provide the information appropriately.

g) Facing a more diversified, competing, and politicized participation structure, there is a need for DSWOs to maintain a transparent, open, impartial, balanced, and fair approach to all the community stakeholders. With a more heterogeneous participatory structure, it would inevitably induce tensions and competition among stakeholders. To do so, DSWOs have to be equipped with the political skills in managing competing expectations and interests, lobbying support and mediating conflicts. In welcoming the entry of other community

stakeholders into the district planning system, District Social Welfare Offices should reaffirm NGOs as their core partners.

h) Increased responsibility should be matched with supporting resources. The continuous extension of community networks is both labor and resource intensive. The demands from community stakeholders will be staggering. This Study can encourage District Social Welfare Offices to reflect on and refocus its efforts and resources to the core business of SWD and to select strategic partners into the community networks. At the same time, there may be considerations on how to redeploy more manpower support to the work of PCTs in district planning and coordination.

1.   Introduction

Background

1.   The Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong was commissioned by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to evaluate the effectiveness of the enhanced functions of the District Social Welfare Offices[1] in February 2003 (See Appendix I for the membership of the consultant team). This is the Report of Part One of the Study, which contains the major findings and recommendations addressing the objectives of the Study.

2.   The Social Welfare Department began regionalization in 1979 to form the three-tiered headquarters, regional and district structure. Thereafter, there had been re-adjustments to integrate district planning with service development functions. To cope with the operational requirements and challenges arising from rapidly changing community welfare needs, the previous structure of SWD was re-organized to enhance its responsiveness, service integration, agency coordination, service accessibility network, and community partnership. After extensive consultations with SWD staff, the 18 District Councils (DCs), the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) and the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Welfare Services, and with the endorsement of the LegCo Finance Committee, re-organization of SWD took place from September 2001, and the whole process was completed in end March 2002.[2]

3.   The re-organization affected both SWD headquarters as well as its district operations. Under the reorganization, the five former Regional Offices were disbanded with effect from September 2001. At the same time, the 13 District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) were upgraded from Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) to Principal Social Work Officer (PSWO) to oversee the five enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices as follows:
   a) planning welfare services on a district basis to meet local community needs;
   b) collaborating with District Council, related government departments and district organizations to facilitate the implementation of social welfare policies in the district;
   c) coordinating with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the district in respect of delivery of services in meeting the welfare needs of the local community;

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[1]   In operation, SWD is organized into 13 districts, viz. Central, Western and Islands, Eastern and Wan Chai, Southern, Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung, Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Tai Po and North, Sha Tin, Yuen Long, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing, and Tuen Mun, each covering one to two District Council District(s).

[2]   For reference, please see LegCo Panel on Welfare Services papers on *Positioning Social Welfare Department for Greater Challenges* [CB(2)1462/00-01(03)] (14 May 2001) and *Enhanced Functions of District Social Welfare Officers* [CB(2)1491/01-02(05)] (8 April 2002) available in the LegCo website: www.legco.gov.hk

d) establishing a more proactive social outreaching network in the district to help the needy and the disadvantaged; and

e) administrating and managing centralized operational units.

4.   To underpin the District Social Welfare Offices in planning and coordinating welfare services and to strengthen proactive outreaching services to vulnerable groups, Planning and Coordinating Teams (PCTs) and Family Support Networking Teams (FSNTs) were formed in the districts, by pooling resources from the former Youth Offices, Rehabilitation and Elderly Offices and Group Work Units (GWUs) in community centers. All these staff changes were in place by March 2002.

5.   According to the traditional mode of welfare planning, provisions were based mainly on the population size. In effect, there was a standardized package of welfare services for each district, with little consideration to the variations of welfare needs in different districts. The re-organization of SWD through the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office is aimed at enhancing service responsiveness, collaboration and partnership, taking into consideration of the unique characteristics, demographic profiles, needs and resources of each district. In specific, the leadership and enabling role of the DSWOs are pivotal in the promotion of concerted and collaborative efforts to address identified social welfare needs in the districts. With the gradual introduction of more community-based integrative welfare programs for older people, young people and family services, the role of DSWO in coordinating and implementing service re-engineering has become more critical. In response to the government initiatives, many NGOs have also re-organized to have a more decentralized district-based management and operational structure.

6.   Initial assessment of the enhanced role of District Social Welfare Offices was reported to members of the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services Meeting held on 8 April 2002. Despite its generally positive outcome, members suggested that a more structured and systematic study should be conducted to benchmark the effectiveness of the enhanced District Social Welfare Office functions.

Objectives of the Study

7.   The objectives of this Study are:

a) To evaluate the effectiveness of the four out of five enhanced District Social Welfare Office functions,[3] i.e. (a) to (d) listed in para. 3 above with a view to identifying room for further improvement and better serving the community;

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[3]   The scope of this Study only covers the first four aspects listed in para. 3 in this chapter. The fifth aspect is excluded because administration and management of centralized operational units involve only internal redistribution of duties in SWD and the extent of DSWOs' involvement varies from one district to another. From SWD. *Study Brief   on A Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of SWD's Enhanced District Social Welfare Office Functions* (December 2002).

b) To set benchmarks for the aspects where enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices have created the greatest impact, in terms of customer satisfaction, cost-effectiveness and feedback from stakeholders etc.; and

c) To compile best practices on specific areas/ services during the course of study in (a) and (b) above with a view to providing DSWOs with useful references for continuous improvement.

8.   The entire Study is divided into two parts. Part One of the Study is chiefly aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, i.e. objectives (a) and (b), whilst Part Two of the Study is focused on compiling best practices, i.e. objective (c) mentioned above. This is the Report on Part One of the Study which contains the methodology, major findings and recommendations of the Evaluative Study. Although the consultants would very much hope that this Report can offer a comprehensive study aimed at improving the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, we are fully aware that the reorganized District Social Welfare Offices have only been implemented for over one year. Such a comprehensive evaluation would require more in-depth considerations and further investigation. Having said all these, the consultants believe that this Report can stimulate further reflections and discussion that can contribute to the future development of the District Social Welfare Offices.

Local Strategic Partnerships

9.   "Decentralization" is now a mainstream concept in public service reforms.[4] Community-based planning has been advocated as the solution to the problems of service fragmentation and duplication. As social issues become more complex, wider participation and support from all sectors to address social needs becomes essential. Through coordinated and integrated service planning at the community level, often cutting across departmental, program and agencies boundaries, welfare services can become more responsive to community needs.

10.   More governments are committed to the use of community strategy to promote community cohesion. In Singapore, the establishment of the Community Development Council in 1997, represents the government attempt to decentralize the initiating, planning and managing of community programs to the community level in order to promote community bonding and social cohesion. Community Development Councils are delegated with the responsibility of managing job assistance, social assistance, skills upgrading and health care assistance, and volunteers at the local level. Through the Councils, local residents, organizations and leaders can get involved in their community and work toward making life better for themselves and their fellowmen.[5] As the Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong claimed:

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[4] Fenwick, J. and Baily, M. "Decentralization and Reorganization in Local Government," *Public Policy and Administration*, 13 (1998), pp. 26-39; McLaughlin, K., Osborne, S. and Ferlie, E. (eds.). *New Public Management: Current Trends and Future Prospects* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[5] Community Development Council, Singapore. www.cdc.org.sg.

The establishment of Community Development Council is part of the process to build a tightly-knit, compassionate and self-reliant community.

11. In Australia, The Minister for Family and Community Services outlined the key strategy for welfare reform toward community-oriented welfare services:[6]
Strong family and community networks nurture children, care for those in need, and help people take up opportunities and find work. It's about neighbors and families helping each other in times of crisis. It also involves the commitment of local volunteers who provide much-needed community services and who work on community projects. It's about community leaders pulling their communities together in times of change.

12. Promoting partnerships between organizations, departments, programs, and community stakeholders is a powerful tool to achieve program cost-effectiveness and the efficient use of scarce resources. Partnerships, as a cornerstone of social and public services, can enhance the sharing of resources, including expertise, manpower, information, facilities and finance to support joint action. As the U.K. Government Report on *Good Practice Guidance on Partnership Working* explained that partnerships have been developed:
…. in the context of increasing emphasis by government of the need for a more joined-up, holistic approach to addressing social issues, leading to the developing of a wide range of planning and operational partnerships, involving not only the core public services, but often including the voluntary and private sectors, and wider communities.[7]

13. Under the direction of the "Third Way", the New Labor Government in U.K. has advocated a collaborative discourse under a variety of terms, such as partnership, inter-agency working, integrated service delivery, joined-up government, coordination and seamless service. In particular, the U.K. government has moved from a "contract culture" to a "partnership" culture. Accordingly the dominant mode of government has shifted from hierarchies to markets, and most recently, to networks. The central coordinating mechanism in network is trust, in contrast to the commands and price competition that articulate hierarchies and markets respectively.[8]

14. Along this line of development, partnership has become a cornerstone of social and public services reforms. Partnership is described by the Audit Commission as a joint working arrangements where the partners:[9]

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[6] Newman, J. *Stronger Families and Communities Strategy* (Department of Family and Community Services, Canberra, 2000).
[7] Department of Health, U.K. Government. *Good Practice Guidance on Partnership Working* (7 November 2002).
[8] Glendinning, C., Powell, M. and Rummery, K. (eds.). *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare* (The Policy Press, 2002).
[9] Audit Commission, U.K. Government. *A Fruitful Partnership: Effective Partnership Working* (11 November 1998); Department of Health, U.K. Government. *Key to Partnership: Working Together to Make a Difference in People's Lives* (November 2002).
www.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities/partnership.htm

- are otherwise independent bodies;
- agree to cooperate to achieve a common goal;
- create a new organizational structure or process to achieve this goal;
- plan and implement a joint program; and
- share relevant information, risks and rewards.

As such, partnership is marked by a degree of autonomy on the part of relatively equal partners to determine and implement a plan or program. The emphasis is on shared objectives, interests and common mission. Partnerships can involve cross-sector relationships – public-public, public-voluntary, public-community and public-private. The defining feature of partnerships is to promote horizontal coordination and joined-up solutions. Through comparative advantages, the aim of partnerships is to achieve synergy or added value by combining the expertise and assets of the partnered organizations.

15.   Increasingly, it has been acknowledged that community problems can be best understood by gathering the local views from residents and those working in the locality. Local-level data and consultation with residents and local service providers are required. Policy and solutions need to be tailored to the particular nature of a neighborhood, to ensure that solutions are sufficiently fine-tuned to be effective. In essence, policy will not work in the long term without the commitment, participation and leadership from the local community. Best-designed policies and services can fail if arrangements are not in place at point of delivery to ensure they are properly implemented, run to time and meet local needs.[10] Meanwhile, there is a growing emphasis to develop a variety of ways of working with and consulting local stakeholders. The development of "local-strategic partnerships" to prepare community strategy forms the key to modernize the government.[11]

16.   At the level of the local government, "local strategic partnership" (LSP) has been advocated as a new strategy to achieve urban renewal and community planning. LSPs is a single body that:[12]

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[10]   Social Exclusion Unit, Cabinet Office, U.K. Government. *National Strategy for Neighourhood Renewal* (2000). www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk/publications/pat/pat4/01.htm.
[11]   The Stationery Office, U.K. Government. *Modernising Social Services – Promoting Independence, Improving Protection, Raising Standards* (November 1998). www.official-documents.co.uk/document.cm41/4169/4169.htm.
[12]   Local Government Association. *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan and Local Strategic Partnerships – Frequently Asked Questions* (July 2001).
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. *Local Strategic Partnerships –Government Guidance* (March 2001). www.detr.gov.uk.
Strategic Partnering Taskforce, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.   *Structure for Partnerships – Technical Notes* (September 2002). www.odpm.gov.uk
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. *Preparing Community Strategies Government Guidance to Local Authorities* (8 December 2000). www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/pcs/guidance/index.htm.
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. *Local Strategic Partnerships – Government Guidance* (March 2001). www.local-regions.dtlr.gov.uk/lsp/guidance/index.htm.
Local Government Association. *Effective Local Strategic Partnerships – LGA Advice Note for working with the Community and Voluntary Sectors* (May 2001). www.lga.gov.uk

- brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together;
- is a non-statutory, non-executive organization;
- operates at a level which enables strategic decisions to be taken and is close enough to individual neighborhoods to allow actions to be determined at community level; and
- should be aligned with local authority boundaries.

17.   LSPs are expected to bring together public, private, voluntary and community sectors to provide a single overarching local coordination framework. The roles of LSP are to:
- prepare and implement a community strategy for the area;
- bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives;
- work with local authorities that are developing a local public service agreement; and
- develop and deliver a local neighborhood renewal strategy to secure more jobs, better education, improved health, reduced crime and better housing.

LSPs are not statutory requirement. But LSPs are essential to implement the community strategies. The role of the government is to facilitate and support the development of LSPs, mediate and resolve difficulties which may arise.

18.   LSPs need to:
- develop a variety of means to work with and consult local people, including faith, minority communities;
- develop and publicize common aims and priorities;
- value the contribution of all partners, avoiding domination by particular members or organizations;
- share local information and good practice;
- identify, encourage and support effective local initiatives;
- develop a common performance management system; and
- provide a forum for debate, discussion and common decision-making.

19.   Finally, as the U.K. Local Government Association commented on the requirement of a cultural change to support LSP:[13]
But this new intensive partnership mode of working will mean a change in culture in many of the organizations which will be involved. It will mean honing negotiation

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Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. *Supporting Strategic Service Delivery Partnerships in Local Government: A Research and Development Programme* (April 2001).
www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/ssdp/research/03.htm.

Social Exclusion Unit, Cabinet Office, U.K. Government. *A New Commitment to Neighourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan* (January 2001).

[13]   Local Government Association. *Effective Local Strategic Partnerships – LGA Advice Note for working with the Community and Voluntary Sectors* (May 2001). www.lga.gov.uk

skills; in reaching decisions through consensus and collaborations; in acknowledging in many other demands being placed on representatives of other organizations by their duties, structure or funding; a new culture of learning and capacity building for all sectors; and being open-minded and innovative.

Outline of the Report

20.   In this Report, Chapter One provides the background leading to the study and describes the conceptual framework of local strategic partnership used in this study. Chapter Two gives an account of the methodology adopted for this study. Chapter Three, Four and Five present the findings of the study. Chapter Three maps out the roles and functions of District Social Welfare Office followed by a detailed account of how the District Social Welfare Offices deliberate the enhanced functions after the re-organization over the first year of operation. This chapter sets the backdrop for understanding and analyzing the feedback of key community stakeholders in the following chapters. Chapter Four reports the rating of two groups of key community stakeholders in the survey. Chapter Five examines the key views from three groups of key community stakeholders on the performance of District Social Welfare Office enhanced functions. The concluding chapter, Chapter Six, summarizes and synthesizes the empirical findings as well as the key themes identified in this study. It puts forward the recommendations for changes to improve the roles and functions of the District Social Welfare Offices.

2. Methodology

Research Design

1.　　Since the re-organization of SWD and the District Social Welfare Offices had only been implemented for a year when the Study commenced, it is definitely not ready for an overall summative and conclusive evaluation of its long-term impact and effectiveness. Henceforth, this Study is an evidence-based and formative evaluation study on the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office between 1 April 2002 and end March 2003, with the focus on identifying how District Social Welfare Offices deliberate their enhanced functions viz. district planning, liaison and collaboration with District Council and district organizations, service coordination and community networking and outreaching work; to examine the rationales and strategies adopted; and to compile good practices in the process. In other words, the Study aims to find out what the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office can do and how, and what has been achieved, rather than to provide a conclusive assessment on its overall effectiveness. Neither is this Study intended to draw comparison among the District Social Welfare Offices' performance and effectiveness.[14] With the emphasis on a strength-approach, this Study would highlight the achievements of District Social Welfare Offices in their enhanced functions. Based on the identification of "good practices" or "best practices" in each district, a wide array of performance aspects was compiled. More importantly, this study emphasizes on obtaining feedback from a variety of key community stakeholders for informed continuous learning, so as to provide future strategic directions and enhance institutional capacity and effectiveness on district planning, service coordination and community partnerships. In other words, the consultant team, apart from learning about how the stakeholders evaluate the effectiveness of District Social Welfare Office functions, also wants to hear their views about what changes they would like to see to happen to the operation. The Study therefore is not simply an information exercise but a real opportunity for local people to have input into the government's social welfare policy-making and strategy formation processes.

2.　　In this formative evaluation study, a problem-solving and continuous learning approach is adopted in which the consultants facilitate interpretative dialogue among program's key stakeholders, attain consensus among the stakeholders about the program's values and outcomes, and incorporate into their roles the concepts of program evaluation and formative feedback.[15] The evaluation strategy places emphasis on methodological pluralism which draws on both qualitative and quantitative evidence from a multiple of sources, including participatory action research, empowerment evaluation and customer-focused research.

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[14] In the review of performance of local governments in social care in U.K., the approach of the Joint Review Team is to undertake inspections to social services with regard to their performance according to the outcome indicators. Performance is assessed using evidence from four key areas: individuals' (users') needs; prospects for the future; effective performance management; and best value from the management of resources. Local governments then received a rating for their performance in social services. These ratings would form the basis for comparing performance and benchmarking future improvements. Social Services Inspectorate, Department of Health, U.K. Government. *Modern Social Services – A Commitment to Reform* (July 2002).

[15] Schalock, R. *Outcome-based Evaluation* (New York: Kluwer Academic, 2001), p.15.

Key Research Questions and Parameters for Evaluation

3.   In this Study, the key questions on the four enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices addressed were:
   (a) How well did the District Social Welfare Offices deliberate the four enhanced functions, i.e. planning district welfare services, collaborating with district stakeholders, coordinating with NGOs, and establishing a proactive and outreaching network for vulnerable target(s)?
   (b) What were the approaches and strategies adopted, and why?
   (c) What were the outcomes and achievements? Any supportive evidence?
   (d) What were the areas for future improvements? How could they be introduced?
   (e) What were the roles (leadership) of DSWO?
   (f) What were the examples of good practices?

4.   Based on the seven parameters[16] worked out by SWD headquarters to guide District Social Welfare Office to achieve its enhanced functions, the following criteria are derived to evaluate the effectiveness of its enhanced functions:
   a) Responsiveness toward district welfare needs:
      – sensitivity, responsiveness and prompt action to address identified local welfare needs in district planning and service delivery; and
      – efforts to reduce service duplications and meet emergent service gaps.

   b) Evidence-based needs assessment:
      – collect and critically examine the identified needs through various sources (e.g. departmental databank, district databank, social indicators and key community stakeholders) and through various mechanisms (surveys, focus groups, community forums, seminars); and
      – realistically assess and prioritize needs rationally in deployment of resources in the district.

   c) Full understanding of and adherence to prevalent policy objectives and key result areas:
      – clear interpretation of the government's welfare policies and programs ;
      – adherence to the policy directions in planning services, and implementing programs/activities at the district levels; and
      – clear understanding of the service objectives, strategic direction and priority.

   d) Appropriate resources allocation and pursuance of value-for-money:
      – efforts to allocate/redeploy resources to the most needy areas; and
      – efforts to enhance efficient and cost-effective delivery of service by reducing duplications and wastage and meeting new emergent needs innovatively.

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16   See LegCo Panel on Welfare Services paper on *Enhanced Functions of District Social Welfare Officers* [CB(2)1491/01-02(05)] mentioned under footnote 2 in chapter 1.

e) Effective and efficient delivery of holistic services through moving from fragmentation to integration:
  – efforts to promote service integration (formation of integrative family service centers & integrative children and youth centers) and service re-engineering (e.g. re-engineering of community support services for elders) to achieve holistic services for customers; and
  – evidence of successful outcome.

f) Maximization of cross-sector collaboration:
  – efforts toward breaking compartmentalization and maximizing cross-sector collaboration and multi-disciplinary co-operation; and
  – evidence of quality and sustainable cross-sector collaborative working structure.

g) Facilitation of the development of social capital and community partnership:
  – efforts to foster strategic community partnerships;
  – evidence of developed social capital, e.g. volunteers input, financial donations; and
  – evidence of quality and sustainable community partnerships and collaborative working structure.

5.   In sum, the essential questions addressed were:
  a) Did the District Social Welfare Offices provide a clear and coherent direction for welfare services in the districts? What was the evidence that the leadership was driving the plans successfully? (Clear corporate leadership)
  b) What was the capacity of the District Social Welfare Offices to plan proactively for the future and change accordingly? (Creating a long-term agenda)
  c) How well did the District Social Welfare Offices integrate their policies, services, resources through active coordination, involvement of stakeholders, feedback systems and resourced service planning in order to facilitate service improvement and change? (Business planning approach)
  d) To what extent did the District Social Welfare Offices encourage service innovations of NGOs within a supportive framework that has clear boundaries of operation? (Innovative and entrepreneurial culture)

6.   As abovementioned, the methodology design of the Study is basically a mix of qualitative and quantitative study served to collect views from policy-makers, administrators, staff members of the District Social Welfare Offices and key stakeholders from DCs/District Council Social Service related Committees (DCSRCs), District Coordinating Committees (DCCs),[17] NGOs, related district organizations, and other government departments.

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[17] District Coordinating Committees are the coordinating mechanisms for welfare services covering 5 different services in the 13 SWD districts. They were last restructured on 1 April 1999. For this Study, they will denote the DCC on Family & Child Welfare Services, Local Committee on Services for Young People (LCSYP), DCC on Elderly Services, DCC on Rehabilitation Services and DCC on Volunteer Movement (later renamed as DCC on Promotion of Volunteer Service w.e.f. 1 October 2002). For LCSYP, there should be at least one in each DC District, and DSWO can exercise discretion to form more than one LCSYP in each DC District.

Data Sources, Approaches and Procedures

7.   Specifically, information was collected from the following sources and approaches:
   a) documentary review of overseas and local documents and reports on district planning, consultation and community partnership;
   b) case study of the structure, district characteristics and profile, plans, operation and service statistics of District Social Welfare Offices;
   c) survey on DC/DCSRC members and DCC members to collect their views on the performance of the District Social Welfare Office's enhanced functions;
   d) focus groups with key stakeholders to learn about their expectations and views, as well as suggestions for improvement; and
   e) consultation with policy makers and administrators through the Steering Committee (See Appendix II for the membership list), sharing sessions, and electronic communication.

Review of Literature

8.   Review of overseas literature on district planning, consultation and developing partnership have provided useful information showing the trends, approaches and achievements abroad.[18] In particularly, there are a number of policy papers published by the U.K. government on the development of local partnerships.[19] In addition, review of local documents including SWD papers and minutes on district planning, service statistics of District Social Welfare Offices, including output statistics of Family Support and Resource Centre (FSRC) and FSNT), minutes of the DC/DCSRC and DCC Meetings (for all the five services), as well as comments on district planning from NGOs and others have provided valuable information for critically appraising the enhanced functions and operations of District Social Welfare Offices.

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[18] See White, V. and Harris, J. *Developing Good Practice in Community Care* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2001); Means, R. et al. *Making Partnerships Work in Community Care* (The Policy Press, 1998); Skinner, S. *Building Community Strengths – A Resource Book on Capacity Building* (Community Development Foundations, 1998); Hornby, S. and Atkins, J. *Collaborative Care - Interprofessional, Interagency and Interpersonal* (Oxford: Blackwell Science Ltd., 2000), Balloch, S. and Taylor, M. *Partnership Working: Policy and Practice* (The Policy Press, 2001); Glendinning, C., Powell, M. and Rummery, K. (eds.). *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare* (Bristol: The Policy Press, 2002).
[19] See Department of Health, U.K. Government. *Partnership in Action: New Opportunities for Joint Working between Health and Social Services* (September 1998); Department of Health, U.K. Government. *Guidance on Partnerships Provisions* (September 1999); Department of Health, U.K. Government. *Good Practice Guidance on Partnership Working Draft* (10 January 2001).

Preparatory Focus Groups

9.   Three initial focus group meetings were held from 13 to 15 March 2003 for DC members, DCC members from different services, and other stakeholders nominated and invited by DSWOs. The main purpose of these focus group meetings was to collect the views from key stakeholders on the four enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office to help the consultant team prepare and design the survey questionnaires and draft the discussion guidelines for the focus groups meetings to follow. Altogether 36 people from different districts participated in the focus group meetings (Appendix IIIa) and the discussions were very fruitful.

Familiarization Visits

10.   All the consultants had made visits to one or more District Social Welfare Offices either individually or in groups between 19 March and mid-April 2003 to familiarize with the basic operations of the District Social Welfare Offices, meet the key staff and preview the available documents for this Study before conducting the formal meetings with the staff and other key stakeholders (See Appendix IV for the visit schedule).

Self-assessment Reports and Focus Groups with District Social Welfare Office Staff

11.   Through the detailed accounts of District Social Welfare Offices provided in the self-assessment reports/documents and attendant meetings with the staff, the consultants were able to understand the structure and operational dynamics of district offices, and identify some of their good practices. This information could also provide a context for the consultants to interpret the feedback of stakeholders in focus group meetings. In accordance to a guideline prepared by the consultant team, each District Social Welfare Office had to compile and submit a self-assessment report (See Appendix V for the guideline of the report) together with related documents to the consultants. The report included background information of the District Social Welfare Office (particularly its organizational structure and roles, and relationships with key community stakeholders and its headquarters), community needs and profile, annual/business plans of the District Social Welfare Office (e.g. its aims, objectives, analysis of internal and external environments, strategic initiatives and developments), outcomes (i.e. achievements, impacts and challenges) and suggestions for future development or improvement. After going through the self-assessment report and documents submitted by District Social Welfare Offices, the consultants had arranged focused group meetings with key staff of the District Social Welfare Offices, i.e. DSWO, Assistant District Social Welfare Officer (ADSWO), PCT, FSNT, etc. to discuss how they deliberate the selected four enhanced functions after the re-organization of SWD. The meetings were held between 16 April to 15 May 2003, and a total of 115 SWD staff attended the meetings (Appendix IIIb). The minutes were subsequently checked by the respective District Social Welfare Office for accuracy and modified as required.

Survey

12.   Based on the outcome of the initial focus groups meetings, the consultant team designed two comparable sets of questionnaires for DC/DCSRC members and DCC members respectively. The main purpose of the survey study was to collect feedback from the key community stakeholders on the performance and effectiveness of District Social Welfare Office in the four selected enhanced functions during the studied period before and after the re-organization of SWD. After conducting pilot tests on the draft questionnaires, the consultant team revised the questionnaires and sent them to Policy 21 Limited of the University of Hong Kong,[20] which was subsequently responsible for touching up the final questionnaires, fieldwork, data analysis and writing up of the survey report. Data of the survey were collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires (See Appendices VIa to VId for the survey questionnaires). With the assistance of the District Social Welfare Offices, a mailing list including all the prospective respondents who had served as members in the DCs/DCSRCs and DCCs between 1 April 2002 and end March 2003, were compiled and sent to Policy 21 Limited via the consultant team. The questionnaires with return envelopes were sent to the prospective respondents for completion between 16 April 2003 and 13 June 2003.

13.   At the end, out of 1,769 targeted population covered in the survey, 1,301 had returned the completed questionnaires, representing an overall response rate of 74% (i.e , 58% for DC/DCSRC members and 83% for DCC members) which is considered satisfactory for mailed questionnaires to these two groups of respondents. Out of the total respondents, 376 were members of DCs/DCSRCs and 925 were members of DCCs. With an overall returned rate of 74% and appropriate measures to safeguard privacy and confidentiality (See Appendix VIe for the technical details of the survey), the assessment from the respondents should be valid and reliable. Even though the response rate from DC/DCSRC members was only 58%, it is assumed that those who did not return the questionnaires would have little interest in social welfare issues or much less collaborations with the District Social Welfare Offices.

Focus Groups with Key Community Stakeholders

14.   As a qualitative research methodology, focus group cannot provide hard quantitative data that can be subjected to statistical or numerical analysis. The main strength of focus groups is to have a more in-depth understanding of the topic being explored. They are useful particularly in learning the attitudes and opinions of the participants on the selected topic based on their own experiences and perspectives – what they see as important and interesting. The hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights.[21] Noteworthy is the fact that it is an exploratory tool for generating insights and hypotheses, and findings are not for generalizations.[22] Complementary to the survey approach, focus groups with key

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[20] The consultant team contracted out the survey in this Study to Policy 21 Limited , The University of Hong Kong, which is an independent research company specializing in conducting large scale surveys.
[21] Morgan, D. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, 1988); Langford, J. and McDonagh, D. *Focus Groups – Supporting Effective Productive Development* (Taylor and Francis, 2003); Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M. and Robson, K. *Focus Group in Social Research* (Sage Publications, 2001).
[22] Morgan, D. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, 1988).

community stakeholders can provide further confirmation, understanding, and explanation on the survey findings.

15.   In this study, the main purpose of the focus groups in each district was to collect the views on the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices from three main groups of key community stakeholders, namely DC/DCSRC members, DCC members, and other stakeholders without membership in DCCs. Based on the initial focus group meetings, the consultant team developed broad discussion guidelines for guiding the discussion in the different focus groups (See Appendix IIId for the discussion guidelines). Between 24 April and 3 June 2003, the consultants attended a total of 40 focus groups, meeting a total of 316 individuals from key stakeholders nominated and invited by the District Social Welfare Offices (Appendix IIIc). The selection criteria were mainly based on the track record on the understanding and involvement in the work of the District Social Welfare Offices.

16.   On the whole, the focus groups were well attended by key community stakeholders, particularly in those groups for DCC members and other stakeholders. The 14 focus groups for DC/DCSRC members included 84 participants, and each group had about 7-8 participants. Evidently, the attendance in three of the focus groups for DC members was disappointing, with only 2-3 participants. As for DCC focus groups, there were 129 selected representatives from all the five services, which comprised of representatives from NGO representatives (88%), the education sector, district organizations, other government departments, and a business organization (Appendix IIIe). There were on average 10 participants in each group. For other stakeholders, the focus groups included a total of 103 participants, comprised of 62 NGO representatives (60%), 14 representatives from the education sector (e.g. principals/principals' association, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and school liaison committee), 15 district organization representatives (e.g. women's organization, Kaifong association, area committees (ACs), and faith organizations), 3 representatives from other government departments and a few local personalities (e.g. doctors, a DC Co-opted member), 2 service users and a resident (Appendix IIIf). In these latter groups, there were around 8-9 participants in each group.

17.   The participants were coming from a wide range of backgrounds, and the discussion in all the focus groups were conducted smoothly. These participants were enthusiastic to share their views and describe their experiences with the District Social Work Offices after re-organization. The general impression of the consultants was that there was no strong disagreement or major conflicting views among the participants within the same focus groups. During the discussion, the participants tended to echo or support the views of others. Contested arguments between the participants had not been reported. Nevertheless, there were evidently some differences in interests, expectations and views between the participants of different groups, notably between representatives from NGOs and those from district organizations on the role and functions of District Social Welfare Offices.

Input from Social Welfare Department

18.   Throughout the Study, the consultant team received continuous feedback and comments from the Steering Committee. To enhance communication with the policy

makers, administrators and key staffs of District Social Welfare Offices, two sharing sessions were held. The first sharing session was held on 3 March 2003 to understand the general policy framework of district planning and the roles and functions of District Social Welfare Offices. The participants included about 40 SWD representatives from the headquarters and all the district offices, and the Steering Committee. Another session was held on 4 August 2003 as part of DSW's Round-up Meeting to present the preliminary findings and implications of the Study, and to solicit feedback from SWD headquarters directorates, senior administrators and all the DSWOs who are closely involved in central and district planning. Over 60 SWD staff attended the session, and all the participants, in particular the DSWOs, were invited to collect and forward feedback to the consultant team.

19.   In summary, by relying on multiple methods and a number of information sources, the consultant team had collected and compiled essential data, and arrived at a systematic and objective appraisal of the performance of District Social Welfare Office enhanced functions. Whilst the survey can provide comprehensive and objective information on the views of the key stakeholders, information gathered in the focus groups can further assist the consultant team to interpret the survey findings and guard against imposing any preconceptions and biases into the survey findings as abovementioned. In addition, the focus groups can help to generate rich information particularly to compile good practices and suggestions for improving the functions of District Social Welfare Office that is not possible to achieve with quantitative methods.

3. Mapping the District Social Welfare Office Functions and Roles

Introduction

1.   The assessment on the enhanced functions and roles of District Social Welfare Office in this chapter is based on focus groups with key District Social Welfare Office staff, self-assessment reports and relevant supporting documents (meeting minutes, publicity material and reports).

The Administrative and Operational Structure

2.   The 13 district offices of SWD cover all the 18 DC Districts. The administrative structure of a typical District Social Welfare Office is comprised of the following:

   a) Each district is headed by a DSWO. They are responsible for and accountable to the Director of Social Welfare through an Assistant Director (AD) (See Appendix VIIa for the organization chart of SWD). As a result, DSWOs have direct access to the headquarters directorates through regular meetings and improved electronic communication, and are involved actively in the planning and coordination of welfare services at the district level.
   b) Each DSWO is responsible for overseeing various departmental social work service units.[23]   He/she is supported by one to three ADSWO(s) overseeing various departmental social work service units, as well as one Senior Social Security Officer (SSSO) who supervises Social Security Field Units in two districts (See Appendix VIIb for the organization chart of a typical District Social Welfare Office and Appendix VIIc for the job specification of its key staff).
   c) DSWO has to oversee the centralized service units which are mainly of operational in nature (including those decentralized from the headquarters) headed by a Senior Social Work Officer (SSWO) such as the regional specialized professional team of Family and Child Protective Services Unit (FCPSU), Central Office for Volunteer Service (COVS) and the regional Standardized Care Need Assessment Management Office (Elderly Services).[24]
   d) After the re-organization of SWD, each DSWO also has to oversee the enhanced functions of the District Social Welfare Office in district welfare planning, liaison, service coordination and outreach networking. He/she is

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[23]   These SWD social work service units include family services centers/integrated family service centers, medical social services units and probation offices, social security field units, etc.
[24]   Other SWD centralized service units include adoption unit, central foster care unit, central para-medical support service unit, community services orders office, community support service centers, departmental hotline service unit, family life education resource centre, opportunities for the elderly project office, post-release supervision of prisoners scheme, senior citizen card office, etc.

assisted by one or more ADSWO(s) who is responsible to supervise a PCT as well as the FSRC(s) and/or FSNT(s).[25]

e) The main roles of PCT are to assist in assessing welfare need and planning, coordination of welfare services in the district, as well as district-wide liaison, networking and collaborating duties. Members of the PCT are designated as the "think-tank" to provide professional support to DSWO/ADSWO(s).[26] It has to conduct district need assessment and service planning to meet local needs, and maintain regular liaison with and consult DCs, NGOs and district organizations on welfare initiatives and district welfare issues. Coordination of local social welfare services includes those provided by SWD, NGOs and other district organizations. More specifically, it involves the outreaching and networking work of FSNT and FSRC. PCT has also played a key role in the re-engineering of youth, elderly, and family services to form integrative services.

f) FSRC are set up to provide community development services to the vulnerable groups and families in need in the district, such as new arrivals, singleton elderly, Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme (CSSA) recipients or low income families, single parent families, families with problems of child care or history of child abuse, and street sleepers.[27] They are primarily linked to the Family Services Centers (FSCs)/Integrated Family Service Centers (IFSCs) in the district, and work closely with FSNT and/or different government departments and sectors in the district to provide a continuum of supportive and developmental services to support the well-being of at risk families, including brief case counseling, outreaching and networking services, various types of group and programs as well as tangible services (See the service document in Appendix VIId).

g) FSNT is an executive arm of the PCT. [28]The team is usually attached to FSRC, but for those districts without FSRC, it may be placed under the PCT or attached to other SWD service units. Its main role is to carry out the 2000 Policy Address initiative on reaching out to those hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups or families in need for early identification of problems, providing timely assistance via making prompt and appropriate referrals to related

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[25] Some District Social Welfare Offices have adopted a "matrix" organization structure, wherein ADSWO(s) is in charge of a number of service areas. In addition, he/she is also responsible for overseeing the community issues within a defined geographical sub-district or locality.

[26] As mentioned previously under para. 3 in chapter 1, PCTs were pooled from the previous SWOs and ASWOs in the Youth Office and Rehabilitation and Elderly Office within the District Social Welfare Office. Their previous role of monitoring the subvention and performance of NGO of the REO and YO as "visiting officers" had been transferred to the Service Performance Section at the SWD headquarters.

[27] The former 19 Group Work Units (GWUs) were re-structured to form 19 FSRCs during the reorganization exercise of the SWD in September 2001. In view of the rapid growing population and service demands in Yuen Long district, particularly in Tin Shui Wai area, the original GWU/Tin Yiu ECC was re-structured to form 2 FSRCs in the district, i.e. Yuen Long Town FSRC & Tin Yiu FSRC, through resource redeployment, hence making up a total of 20 FSRCs eventually.

[28] A total of 14 FSNTs were formed and manned by pooling the Social Work Assistants (SWAs) of Youth Office and Rehabilitation Office in each of the 13 District Social Welfare Offices. Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung District Social Welfare Office has two FSNTs. NGOs also operate FSNTs in Sham Shui Po, Mongkok and Kowloon City. In these districts, there is a need for District Social Welfare Offices to have clear division of responsibilities with NGOs. For example, the FSNTs of SWD would be responsible for reaching out to the more specific vulnerable groups such as discharged patients from public hospitals, CSSA recipients and new arrivals who have come to Hong Kong for less than a year, while FSNTs of NGO would target at those new arrivals who are non-CSSA recipients or have come to Hong Kong for over one year.

services, as well as to strengthen the networking and outreaching services. In a way, they are responsible to identify the service gaps and make attempts to address the needs accordingly. In practice, FSNTs would mobilize and network target families to become volunteers to reach out to other vulnerable families. Through a strong and effective outreaching network, it hopes to promote neighborhood support and community solidarity, leading to a more harmonious society. Most of the FSRCs and FSNTs are located within the District Community Center/Community Complex (CC) or Estate Community Center (ECC) of SWD (See the service document in Appendix VIId).

h) Each District Social Welfare Office is supported by a District Secretary (DS) under the supervision of ADSWO. The DS is responsible for executive duties and providing secretarial support to various district committees. All supporting staff will be pooled and flexibly deployed under the new structure.

3.　　　On average, each DSWO has to supervise around 340 staff members. In practice, the staff establishment varies among districts, ranging from about 240 to 401 staff, as commensurate with their operational requirements, such as population size and distribution, geographical characteristics, nature and severity of social issues, number of SWD and NGOs service units in the district, number of SWD regional specialized professional teams and centralized operational units, number of DC(s) covered in a district.29 Most DSWOs and ADSWOs claimed that the supervision of departmental service units would occupy a significant proportion of their workload, ranging from 50-80% of their working time. Most of them acknowledged the contribution of the DS in sharing some of their routine yet time-consuming administrative duties.

4.　　　Overall, with the streamlining from the three-tier to a two-tier management system, District Social Welfare Offices now have a closer, direct and more efficient two-way communication with the headquarters. All the DSWOs have direct access to the headquarters directorates through the regular DSW's Round-up meetings held normally once every three weeks. The meetings can provide a useful forum for DSWOs to acquire firsthand information on central policy directives and initiatives. Meanwhile, they can also reflect any significant issues and concerns in the districts to the headquarters. DSWOs are also invited to attend Service Meetings and Like Service Meetings to examine the interface between the headquarters service branches and the districts, as well as to discuss important policy and service issues. Improved communication with the headquarters has also been facilitated by electronic communication via the government-wide Lotus Notes system. Through the Lotus Notes, information on policy initiatives and presentation materials prepared by the headquarters can be adapted for use by District Social Welfare Offices to facilitate planning and coordinating services at the district level.

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[29] Re-demarcation of the district boundaries and a reshuffling of resources to achieve an even span of control and workload, or re-alignment of the SWD district boundaries to follow those of district administration will be reviewed by the SWD headquarters by taking into account new developments in population growth and development in future. For details, please refer to the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services paper [CB92]145/00-01(03)] under footnote 2 in chapter 1.

District Planning

Central-district Relationship

5.　　In the past, District Social Welfare Offices were not heavily involved in policy making and service planning at the district level; they were sometimes invited to provide comments on various policies for incorporation by the service branch(es) involved. Their primary role was to facilitate the implementation of plans formulated at the headquarters, and to explain new government policies and service initiatives to key district stakeholders. As such, their primary task was to minimize resistance in the implementation process.

6.　　After the re-organization of SWD, District Social Welfare Offices have continued to play the important role of explaining the government's welfare policies and service initiatives to key stakeholders in the districts regularly through various channels, such as DCs, DCCs, working groups, district briefing meetings, sharing sessions, forums and individual contacts. However, the targets of consultation have extended beyond DCs and NGOs to include other district organizations and committees at grassroots, such as mutual aid committees (MACs), area committees (ACs), owners' incorporations (OIs), Kaifong associations, women's organizations, and rural committees (RCs). Views of community stakeholders will be channeled back to the headquarters. As such one of the primary responsibilities of the District Social Welfare Offices is to ensure that district interests and views are thoroughly considered in the policy planning processes at the headquarters.

7.　　One of the central tasks assigned to District Social Welfare Office after the re-organization of SWD is district planning. Even though the headquarters still maintains overall policy and service planning responsibilities, especially in premises-tied projects, District Social Welfare Offices have been given greater power and discretion to execute district planning especially related to district programs/ activities within the central policy directives 30 and in deploying resources at the district level. As a current general practice, the headquarters would consult DSWOs for their views and opinions on district needs and local sentiments in policy and project planning. This is evident particularly in service re-engineering exercises wherein the close collaboration between District Social Welfare Offices and the headquarters has shown to be paramount to ensure the smooth transformation process and successful outcome. In particular, District Social Welfare Offices are expected to negotiate with individual NGOs on specific service developments and coordination.

8.　　In the past, the planning of new projects, premises-tied or otherwise, were SWD headquarters-led, with little involvement and input from DSWOs until the late stage of local consultation. For reprovisioning of service units, DSWOs were involved earlier to provide support and various types of assistance for NGOs such as suitability of the new premises or conducting local consultation. Since re-organization, District Social Welfare Offices have been better informed, consulted and involved in the early

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[30] According to a proposal on welfare planning considered by the then Health and Welfare Bureau in 2001, there should be three levels of planning, namely the long-term strategic planning on policy objectives and development; a 3-year cycle for the review of strategic directions and corporate plan; and an annual exercise for SWD to review its annual plan with DSWOs developing and reviewing their district plans accordingly. Strategic Planning Section, SWD. *District Planning* (January 2002).

stage. They are invited to make bid for and give comments to the provision of welfare premise at different types of development. Accordingly, information on district situation, needs, views and sentiments, service provision and utilization, and so on, will be reflected to the headquarters by District Social Welfare Offices to inform further planning. In this way, policy learning can be achieved through more efficient use of resources and responsiveness to local needs. Not only district views are better represented in the welfare planning now, DSWOs, being more active involved in project planning, are better informed of the overall welfare policy and developments. This can be illustrated by the following two examples of good practice:

a) A DSWO had actively assisted a non-subvented agency to solicit support from the service branches of the headquarters and secured a set of welfare premises in a public housing estate for running a self-financing multi-services center to cater for the increasing service needs and demands of new arrivals in the district.

b) Another District Social Welfare Office had assisted to change the use of a set of welfare premises originally reserved for a Care and Attention Home for the Elderly for the reprovision of Integrated Children & Youth Services Center (ICYSC) to meet the rising service needs of nuclear families for children and youth service, and Integrated Services for Pre-School Children, which included a Day Nursery (DN) with Integrated Programme. Early Education & Training Center and Parent Resource Center (PRC). The latter could provide integrated service for pre-school children so that both parent and children could be served in a holistic manner.

However, it would usually take more time to resolve the possible difference in views between DSWOs and the headquarters service branches over service priorities.

9.   In the case of introducing "unwelcome" and sensitive services, such as services for the mentally handicapped, young people involving drug abuse and ex-prisoners, the District Social Welfare Offices would have to be actively involved to conduct local consultations – lobbying for support and softening resistance. Targets include government departments, leaders of residents' associations, DC and AC members, and local residents. Indeed, lobbying work is extremely time-consuming and requires great patience, sincerity and the use of personal appeal. There were a number of successful examples given by the District Social Welfare Offices in defusing the local oppositions to the introduction and operation of these "unwelcome services". Nevertheless, in some cases, when the oppositions were too strong, the District Social Welfare Offices would advise the abandonment of the project proposals. Take for example an "unwelcome" service involving the re-location of a social therapeutic center for ex-offenders. Since the target group was perceived by the local residents as not "friendly" and probably "dangerous", the District Social Welfare Office had to approach the Housing Department (HD), DC member and a school principal for support. The DSWO also organized briefing sessions to provide direct explanation to local residents. In response to the new service in the district, a local residents' group conducted a survey to collect the views from residents, which were mainly against the establishment of the centre. Finally, because of the strong local sentiments expressed, the DSWO recommended that the Department had to look for another location for the premise.

10.   From the perspective of the DSWOs, they felt encouraged in cases when local views had impacts on the policy outcomes. Indeed, there were a number of

examples given that reflected local views were respected in the policy-making processes. However, DSWOs realized that the headquarters has the final say on policy decisions. They expressed difficulties in explaining the rationales of the decisions to local stakeholders. There are times when NGO involved would be better informed on the policy decisions than the DSWOs. Within limitations, local stakeholders should be demonstrated from time to time that their views carry weight in the whole policy planning processes.

District Planning Process and Methods

11.   District planning is central to the enhanced District Social Welfare Office roles and functions. Key staff members involved in district planning include the DSWO, ADSWO(s) and PCT(s). One of the major tasks of district planning is to assess welfare needs, define district priorities, and formulate action plans and strategy to address identified needs. The expectation is that District Social Welfare Office should have clear short-term and long-term objectives and strategies. Its approach should be proactive, integrated and comprehensive rather than incremental and piecemeal.

12.   The Strategic Planning Section of SWD recommended the following parameters on district planning:31
    –   responsiveness toward district welfare needs
    –   evidence-based needs assessment
    –   prevalent policy objectives and key result areas
    –   pursuance of value-for-money
    –   from fragmentation to integration
    –   from compartmentalization to cross-sector collaboration
    –   community partnership

13.   In the past, less effort was devoted to conduct systematic and evidence-based need identification and assessment. DSWO would approach district key stakeholders formally and informally for their views and opinions on district needs. After the re-organization of SWD, District Social Welfare Office is expected to employ evidence-based and multiple methods to identify local needs and inform planning. First and foremost, the district planning process, particularly in need assessment, requires the active participation from community stakeholders. To facilitate need assessment at the district level, a guideline on district need assessment has been issued by the Strategic Planning Section to all the District Social Welfare Offices for reference in 2002.32 It recognized that in the process of performing the enhanced role of district planning, it is necessary for DSWOs to conduct evidence-based welfare needs assessment with a view to achieving the following objectives:
    –   to identify and prioritize the district welfare needs;
    –   to assess the satisfaction levels of the community on the existing welfare service provisions;

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31 Strategic Planning Section, SWD. *District Planning* (January 2002).
32 Strategic Planning Section, SWD. *District Needs Assessment* (18 February 2002).

- to address the genuine welfare needs of the community, especially those of the at-risk targets and vulnerable groups; and

- to fill service gaps and improve existing services through rationalization with a view to ensuring optimal use of available resources.

14.   The Guideline suggested the use of "SWOT" and "PEST" analysis,33 the need to map out district need profile including the demographic and socio-economic data, trends, and community characteristics, and construct district service provision profile including existing service provision and planned projects as well as the service development capacity. Sources of information can be obtained from committees, district forums, workshops, focus groups with users, service providers, and SWD/NGO staff interviews and visits to NGOs/ local personalities, and surveys. Overall, the development of the departmental databank and district databank is essential to provide a comprehensive review of district needs and service gaps in all the districts. Finally, need assessment should be a continuous process, held on a yearly basis.

15.   Currently, the most common approach adopted by District Social Welfare Offices in need assessment is to compile district profiles, including demographic and socio-economic data from the Census, survey reports, local research studies, service statistics from SWD and NGOs units, action plans of other government departments, and made reference to the ten social indicators34 compiled by SWD headquarters Family and Child Welfare Branch and the consultants of the Family Service Review (See Appendix VIIIa for a version of the social indicators). One District Social Welfare Office has made reference to the social deprivation indices developed in the U.K.35 Some DSWOs have established a databank which comprised the most updated district information. For example, a District Social Welfare Office has set up a district databank and a district library. The databank is made accessible to stakeholders, including NGOs.   Another District Social Welfare Office has produced a CD-ROM on district profile and characteristics, which covers a broad range of statistical data and welfare related resource materials. The CD-ROM was distributed to all the service units of SWD, NGOs and DCC members. Such district information has been considered crucial to support the planning of new services by District Social Welfare Offices and community stakeholders alike.

16.   To collect views and conduct consultation on district needs from community stakeholders, DSWOs would conduct and attend various types of district meetings.

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[33] SWOT analysis refers to the assessment of the organizational strengths and weaknesses, as well as the environmental opportunities and threats. PEST analysis refers to the assessment of political, economic, social and technological environment of the organization. The tools had been introduced to PCT members during the Change Management Workshop conducted by SWD in January 2002.
[34] The 10 major social indicators include population size, active cases in FSCs, child abuse cases, battered spouse cases, no. of new arrivals, no. of youth crime, no. of single parent family, no. of low income family, unemployment cases and no. of poorly educated.
[35]   Developed in the U.K., the Indices of Deprivation (ID2000) is used to describe the deprivation between different districts in the country. It is comprised of 6 separate domain indices at district level, i.e. Income; Employment; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education Skills and Training; Housing; and Geographical Access to Services, and 33 indicators derived to measure the various domains. The Indices of Deprivation has been adapted by a District Social Welfare Office to describe the social, political and economic environment in the district. http://www.detr.gov.uk

These meetings include briefing/ sharing sessions, district forums, workshops, focus groups and welfare seminars, attended by members from DC and DCCs, community leaders, NGO staff, and even service users. In particular, large-scale district forums are welcome by community stakeholders as a useful platform to facilitate exchange and promote participation, collaboration and commitment in developing the district welfare plan. Several District Social Welfare Offices have collaborated with tertiary institutions to carry out need surveys on specific target groups, such as families, elders and young people, or community issues, like social integration and volunteerism. Some of the examples of good practice are:

a) A District Social Welfare Office had organized a one-day workshop for 150 participants to collect and consolidate their information and opinions on district needs. The information was subsequently used to formulate the district plan. Meanwhile, it has also set up a Customer Liaison Group, which holds regular meetings with service users to identify their needs and invite suggestions for service improvements.

b) Another District Social Welfare Office had organized a district planning forum with an attendance of 252 participants from different sectors in the district, including DC members, NGOs, local leaders, school principals, representatives from faith organizations and SWD service units' staff. The main objectives of this forum were two-fold, namely: (i) to exchange information and views on district characteristics as well as service needs and provision with community stakeholders (aided by a video which was later transformed into a VCD and distributed to stakeholders); and (ii) to collect and consolidate views and opinions for district planning strategies Most of the suggestions and ideas collected were incorporated into the business plan of the District Social Welfare Office.

c) A District Social Welfare Office had conducted various types of meetings, such as sharing sessions, forums of various size, locality meetings and DCC meetings to collect the view from frontline social workers on district needs, and to share the district profile with them. Special efforts were made by the PCTs to understand the needs and problems of people living on outlying islands. Locality meetings were held in seven densely populated areas with local organizations and leaders to exchange views on the government's welfare policies and to collect their views on district needs. Altogether 22 meetings were held. These meetings also served the purpose of promoting communications and sharing of practice experiences among frontline social workers.

17. Based on need assessment, accompanied often by "SWOT" and "PEST" analysis for environmental scanning, District Social Welfare Offices would formulate their action plans with more specific objectives and service priorities in line with SWD's vision and policy objectives.36 For districts with more urgent social issues, the focus of the plan would be more on the provision of remedial services to the target groups, such as singleton elderly, low income families, CSSA recipients, the unemployed persons, single parents and street sleepers. In other better-off districts, such as Southern and Central, Western & Islands, the District Social Welfare Offices

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36 For reference, please see the SWD. *Annual Report 2001* (October 2002) and   the *Vision, Mission and Value   Statement* on the SWD website:
www.info.gov.hk/swd/html_eng/cor_info/vis_mis_val/indexhtml

would provide more preventive and developmental services, such as parent education, health promotion for the elderly, and promoting the social integration of ethnic minority groups.

18.   All along, District Social Welfare Offices would try to encourage involvement from key community stakeholders at various planning phases, from need identification, setting objectives and priorities, formulating business/action plans and strategies, implementing the plans, to reviewing and evaluating the outcomes. Usually, DSWOs would share the action plans with stakeholders to exchange views and encourage collaborations.

19.   Some District Social Welfare Offices have attempted to make the planning process more transparent, participative, and open to stakeholders by incorporating their diverse expressed views into their business/action plans, or devising yardsticks and indicators for measuring outcome towards the end of the financial year. In a District Social Welfare Office, a district strategic group has been formed to provide a welfare forum for relevant District Social Welfare Office staff members to exchange views and collect opinion on district welfare issues. Based on the assessment on district needs, the District Social Welfare Office conducted/ attended a series of meetings, such as sharing sessions, district meetings, DC meetings, DCC meetings, cross-sector joint meetings with key stakeholders in the district to define service objective, priorities and strategy. The process has facilitated the stakeholders and the District Social Welfare Office to arrive at a consensus on joint action. Accordingly, elderly living alone, CSSA recipients and new arrivals have been identified as the main service targets in the district. A few DSWOs have extended invitation to selected NGOs' heads as members of their think-tank to help formulate their business/action plans.

20.   Finally, most DSWOs claimed that their basic district planning and coordination duties would be "disrupted" from time to time by new centrally assigned duties and urgent community issues. Facing hectic work schedules, effective time and crisis management is essential to cope with urgent and sudden workload demands.

District Coordinating Committees

21.   Traditionally, district-based coordinating committees on various services have been set up to achieve three-fold objectives, namely: (a) sharing information, views and experiences among service providers, local leaders and professionals of various disciplines; (b) coordinating service providers within the district; and (c) implementing joint programs/activities on various themes such as prevention of child abuse, family life education, equal opportunities for the disabled, volunteer movement, etc. As a result of a review on the organization, roles and functions of the district coordinating committees, the headquarters restructured the original twelve committees in each districts and put in place the existing service coordinating committees since 1 April 1999 to promote service coordination and responsiveness in the districts. One strategic feature is to expand and extend the membership of each DCCs to include strategic partners of the respective services (See Appendix VIIe for the terms of reference and composition of the DCCs).

22.   The common objectives and functions of the five DCCs are enumerated as follows:

(a) to develop and formulate strategies in planning and coordinating welfare services to meet particular needs of the district and rising public expectation;

(b) to enhance coordination and interfacing among service providers, disciplines of different professions, government departments and local organizations;

(c) to promote, plan and organize district joint programs to arouse public concern on specific issues; and

(d) to identify and coordinate resources, including funding and manpower.

23.   In other words, the main role and function of the restructured DCCs is to serve as the local mechanisms for the planning and coordination of welfare service at the district level. Under each DCC, working groups/task groups or sub-committees may be formed on specific service/project. For example, there are working groups on family life education and new arrivals under the DCC on Family and Child Welfare Services. For a smaller sub-district, there are locality meetings which will bring different stakeholders together to address local issues at the neighborhood level.

24.   At present, DSWO is the chairperson of all the DCCs, whilst the PCT will sit in the DCCs and sub-committees or working groups under the DCCs as standing members. Secretariat support is provided by SWD staff. This is contrary to past arrangement, when it was possible for NGO representatives to be the chairpersons or vice-chairpersons in some DCCs, and with the District Social Welfare Offices providing the secretarial support. According to the comments from DSWOs, most government representatives in DCC meetings are rather passive. Although some NGOs have regionalized their management structure and some NGO administrators have been involved in the DCC meetings, yet some DSWOs claimed that NGO representatives are still passive in the DCCs.

25.   According to the terms of reference and composition of the DCCs, the membership number should be kept to the minimum, to be consistent with the objective of the committee and to avoid being too large. In any case, the upper limit should not be greater than 20. There are specific guidelines on the membership composition of each DCCs and some DCCs would include service users. Members are nominated based on their background, experience, expertise on relevant subject/service areas. In other words, the appointment should ensure an effective balance of representation, interests and expertise.

26.   As mentioned above, there has been a strategic move in recent years to widen the representation and extend the membership to include other stakeholders in the DCCs, such as representatives from government departments and public organization (e.g. Education and Manpower Bureau [EMB], Hong Kong Police Force [HKPF], Housing Department [HD], Home Affairs Department [HAD], Hospital Authority [HA], Labor Department [LD], Leisure and Cultural Service Department [LCSD]), schools (including principals), community leaders (e.g. DC members), district organizations (e.g. women's groups, rural committees), and the latest addition include faith groups, business organizations or commercial corporations, service users or representatives from user groups.

27.   DC members can be either appointed by DSWOs on individual basis or nominated by DCSRCs. Other related government departments have also sent representatives as members of the DCCs. Presumably, through the DCCs, District Social Welfare Offices could achieve cross-departmental collaborations. Based on requests from District Social Welfare Office staffs, these representatives would provide more information on district issues to other DCC members. More often, it was remarked by a District Social Welfare Office staff that District Social Welfare Office could act as the "front-desk" for district people to approach other government departments. Indeed, it should not be the role of the District Social Welfare Offices as the "access point" to other government departments.

28.   NGO representatives may be appointed based on their professional expertise or as representatives of their service or organization. As a general principle, many DSWOs would prefer to have only one representative for each NGO in all the DCCs in a district, except for those large and multi-service NGOs. For the latter, they may have more than one representative in the DCCs, and some would also be members of DCCs in other districts. In response to the re-organization of SWD, some large territory-wide NGOs have begun to re-organize their administrative and operational structure by setting up district or regional offices. The arrangements would facilitate more prompt decisions on collaborations at the district level.

29.   With growing interest and demand for participation in DCCs, DSWOs have invited representatives from selected organizations and local personalities to sit-in meetings as observers. Including those staff members from the District Social Welfare Office, the size of the DCCs has been expanded considerably, with implications on its operation.

30.   On the whole, District Social Welfare Office staff welcomed the strategic move to extend the basis of DCC membership. With wider representation, their functions as a welfare forum or platform to collect views, solicit support and identify partners can be facilitated. DCCs have also played an important role notably in promoting integrated family service centers and revamping of community-based support services for the elderly. One DSWO made the following remark on the functioning of DCCs:

> They are useful forums for tapping the expertise and opinions of community stakeholders in district welfare planning, service coordination, implementing work plan and evaluating outcomes. Besides, DCCs is instrumental for explaining social welfare policies and proposals, as well as lobbying support for new initiatives and service projects in the district.

31.   Nonetheless, it is worthy to note the demerits of the existing structure, roles and functions of DCCs. Its service-based structure has failed to promote the headquarters policy of promoting integrated and comprehensive approach to service planning and coordination. As a result, some District Social Welfare Offices have initiated remedial action to have joint committee meetings to improve inter-service collaboration. With a more heterogeneous membership, the need for DSWOs to maintain balanced participation and arrive at consensus is paramount. More time and efforts will be needed for clarification of issues and exchange of views particularly among those members who have little knowledge of social welfare. In-depth discussions of welfare issues would not be possible in DCC meetings and may have to

be taken up in working group or sub-committee meetings. Since May 2001, there has been proposal to restructure the existing DCCs into one to tie in with the headquarters policy of integrated planning, coordination and service delivery mode.37 Probably, it is timely to review the structure, roles and functions of DCCs after the re-organization of SWD has been in operation for over a year.

Strengthening District Relationships

District Council

32.   The main function of DC is to advise the government on matters affecting the well-being of the people living and working in the districts as well as the provision and use of public facilities and services within the district.38 Therefore, DC and DC members have an important role to play in the district planning and coordination tasks. As expected, the re-organized District Social Welfare Offices have put high priority on connecting DC members to their work. As political representatives, DC members can make the vital links between their constituencies and social welfare services and service operators. They can also represent the legitimate views, concerns and voices of the local people. Key welfare issues may be discussed in DC and District Management Committee (DMC) meetings. According to a review of the DMC meeting minutes, welfare issues have been a rare agenda item. At present, only a few DSWOs are regular members of DCs. More often, they (or their representatives) are invited to attend these meetings on need basis. All DCs have DCSRCs in which interested DC members and other co-opted members would participate. Co-opted members may include NGO representatives and prominent community leaders. Under the DCSRCs, there may be working groups on elderly, rehabilitation and health services. Comparatively speaking, representatives from District Social Welfare Offices are more active in these DCSRCs or working groups.

33.   DC members can approach or be approached by the District Social Welfare Offices directly through telephones, visits and informal meetings for welfare-related information and clarifications, as well as to express their views on welfare issues. Some DC members are also members of the various DCCs. At the same time, DC members are also invited to attend the briefing sessions on welfare issues. DC members have the duties to represent the views of their constituencies on welfare issues, and would expect the District Social Welfare Offices to reflect their views to the headquarters.

34.   Traditionally, not all DC members are interested in welfare issues, as compared with other more popular and vote-winning issues, such as environment, transportation and housing. Others may have little understanding on welfare policies and operations. After the re-organization of SWD, more DC members have been involved formally and informally with the District Social Welfare Office's activities. Indeed, most District Social Welfare Office staff have devoted tremendous efforts to

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[37] Need for refocusing/re-structuring the DCCs had been discussed in various internal meetings of the SWD headquarters since 24 August 2001. The general consensus is to review the roles, functions and compositions of the DCCs after the completion of this Evaluative Study.

[38] Home Affairs Bureau. *Policy Responsibilities, District Administration.* www.gov.info.hk/hab/district.htm.

stimulate their interests and invite their participation in district welfare issues. Many DSWOs acknowledged that as the district election for DC is approaching, more existing DC members would become more active and seek collaboration from the District Social Welfare Offices.

35.   As key targets of District Social Welfare Office, DC members have been invited to participate in all sorts of committees, programs and activities sponsored by the District Social Welfare Offices. Through active involvement with DC members, more resources from DCs can be directed for welfare purposes. For example, a business company was introduced by a DC member to donate 52 free burial paces in Shenzhen to SWD service units for people in need. Overall, the proactive, helpful and friendly attitudes of District Social Welfare Office staff have fostered closer liaison and collaboration with DC members. Some District Social Welfare Offices claimed that a sense of mutual trust has been established between DC members and District Social Welfare Offices.

36.   As DC members are often divided according to political parties and interests, District Social Welfare Offices have demonstrated the need to maintain political neutrality and impartiality in district relations. Sensitivity to district politics and dynamics is a foremost requirement for DSWOs. They are expected to maintain a balanced position in all activities, especially during election period, and refrain from involving in political conflicts at all costs.

Other Government Departments

37.   In general, District Social Welfare Offices have maintained good collaborative relationships with other government departments. They have provided needed information and assistance to other government departments, and vice versa. Very often, HAD, as the secretariat of DC, would provide information and assistance to District Social Welfare Offices in application of funding support for district activities. Whereas HD would render assistance in identifying families in needs living in public housing estates and welfare premises for new and relocated service units of SWD and NGOs. As for the HKPF, they would collaborate with District Social Welfare Office in preventing and combating youth crimes.

38.   For specific examples, a District Social Welfare Office has cooperated with the rural committee, Police, DC members, NGOs and local organizations to establish a neighborhood mutual aid working group in a "popular" area (holiday resort) for combating suicidal incidents. The group had successfully prevented several suicidal attempts through taking proactive preventive measures, including the distribution of leaflets, organizing suicide assessment training workshops, and setting up of a roster system of emergency duty for social workers. In another district, the Police Public Relation Officer has accompanied the District Social Welfare Office staff to make visits to those popular spots frequented by young people, such as cyber cafés and game centers. The purpose of the visits was to promote youth services to at risk young people and operators of these centers.

39.   However, it is apparent that some other government departments may not accord a high priority on district work as SWD, and therefore collaboration may sometimes be difficult. A DSWO noted:

The EMB has shifted their focus of work away from district relations and many of their district-based staff have been re-deployed to other areas. There is now a vacuum in this area. The EMB has not sent a representative to the DCC. ……. Since there is no LD office in this district, close collaboration with LD on employment service is difficult, with the exception of several projects, such as the domestic helpers project and specialized training courses. The Employees Training Board focuses mainly on general social security issues, rather than district level projects. However, the District Social Welfare Office has been supporting a number of initiatives tackling unemployment which have received top priority from local NGOs.

40.   As the HD has begun to contract out the management responsibility of public housing estates to private companies, a DSWO claimed that she has to re-negotiate with management companies for collaboration. Different from the HD, these private management companies may have different considerations and interests, and appeals for collaboration may require more explanation.

41.   Overall, there is no clear central policy guideline on inter-departmental collaboration at the district level. District collaboration oftentimes really depends on the inter-departmental relationships and attitudes of the local government officials involved.

Non-governmental Organizations

42.   Most District Social Welfare Offices claimed that the removal of the "monitoring" or "supervisory" role on NGOs has facilitated the development of collaboration and partnerships with NGOs. In principle, their relationship can become more open, understanding and inter-dependent. There are more incentives for organizing joint action and district activities together, such as roving exhibitions and school expo, working together on district planning, hosting sharing sessions among front-line staff, and cross-sector and cross-service collaborations. As a DSWO described the changing relationships:

In the past, the role of District Social Welfare Offices was focused on monitoring and assessing the performance of NGOs. The outcomes of the assessment would affect their subvention. After the re-organization, the role of performance monitoring has been assigned to the Service Performance Section at the headquarters. District Social Welfare Offices now primarily focus on district liaison work. Without the monitoring role, NGO can be more "open" and collaborative to work with District Social Welfare Offices. There is little concern that their subvention would be affected. Some NGO staff have been more willing to reveal their grievances and problems on services to DSWOs. District Social Welfare Offices and NGOs are now partners. NGO operators also know that the headquarters would consult the views of DSWOs on NGO's performance and district situation, NGO operators would therefore acknowledge the importance of DSWOs' comments on their performance. They would proactively approach District Social Welfare Offices for mutual understanding and exploring district needs.

43.   In service coordination and improvements, District Social Welfare Offices have the foremost responsibilities to coordinate services to enhance service quality

and meet service gaps. To achieve better service coordination, close communication with NGOs in joint planning is essential. Representatives from District Social Welfare Offices would sit in the Management Board/Committee or the Advisory Committee of subvented NGOs. District Social Welfare Offices are also expected to be a "trouble-shooter" to resolve difficulties confronting NGOs in service delivery, such as conflicts between NGOs and confusion over service boundaries.

44.   Good practice examples of service coordination include:
   a) Through the mediation of the District Social Welfare Office, a day care center for the elderly came to understand the welfare need of the elders in a district, and agreed to share its waiting list with two new service operators. A district-based allocation and waiting list system was set up in the district. As a result, the waiting period for elderly users for day care centers have been shortened and the utilization of the three service operators has been enhanced.
   b) In a district with the largest number of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) in the territory (i.e. 98 RCHEs including privately operated and government subsidized homes), the District Social Welfare Office has promoted and coordinated volunteer services of nearly all the homes (96%). Volunteers from schools, NGOs, local faith organizations and resident organizations have been arranged to pay regular visits to the frail elderly in those homes not being connected to any volunteer services.
   c) A District Social Welfare Office has coordinated with NGOs and schools in the district to implement a "one school one agency" agreement. The collaborations involved the development of a service guideline to support the arrangements. As a result, all the NGOs and schools involved would clearly know their partners. If any school were not satisfied with the service standards of the serving NGO, the District Social Welfare Office would make arrangement to provide the choice of another NGO.
   d) In coordinating the medical social services provided by SWD and HA, several District Social Welfare Offices have implemented a new out-patient Medical Social Service-Community-based Service Delivery Mode with local hospitals. The Mode can provide a more caring and responsive services to patients and their families. Stopgap service is also provided to discharged patients and their families to fill the service gap during the transition from hospital service to community support services. Some District Social Welfare Offices have also connected private hospitals and clinics to provide care for the elders. Though this initiative was headquarters-led, it could not have been implemented smoothly without the coordinating efforts of the District Social Welfare Offices.
   e) Employment projects have received high priorities among most District Social Welfare Offices. A specialized working group has been set up by a District Social Welfare Office for tackling unemployment and re-training needs. Sharing forums have been organized to promote employment opportunities, motivating the CSSA recipients to seek for jobs, and prioritize cases for support. The working group would coordinate the process of identification of the job-seekers in need, provision of re-training courses, and referrals for local job opportunities. Some District Social Welfare Offices have focused their efforts on single parents, young people, and short-term unemployed. District Social Welfare Offices have located funding support to create short-term jobs, such as the "cleaning ambassadors", "anti-SARS ambassadors," "travel

ambassadors", and "peer counselors". District Social Welfare Offices have recruited job development officers to promote job creation at the district level

District Organizations

45.   As mentioned before, a strategic move of the District Social Welfare Office after re-organization is to connect and develop district organizations receiving no direct subsidies from SWD. They include PTAs, women's organizations, residents' associations (MACs, Kaifong associations, rural committees and clansmen association), faith organization, business and commercial organizations, volunteer groups, user groups, and estate management companies. The primary purpose is to identify and develop community resources and responsibilities for welfare purposes, in particular for non-core services, e.g. setting up parent education institute(s), or addressing newly emergent local needs. To convey their friendliness and desire for collaboration, DSWOs have to show their presence in many of the district activities organized by these organizations, ranging from mass activities, celebrations, and committee meetings. On the one hand, through interactions, district organizations would be encouraged to develop interests and commitment to welfare issues. On the other hand, assistance would be provided to these organizations to serve the needy and vulnerable groups through locating and making recommendation for funding support (e.g. charitable trust funds and CIIF39) and welfare premises, and providing related information on district needs. For those devoted organizational representatives, they would be invited to become members of the DCCs.

46.   Some of the good practice examples are as follows:
   a) In a District Social Welfare Office, one of the primary strategic moves is to develop the "third sector" and the private sector. The key targets are on faith organizations and business/commercial companies. In the district, there are about 120 different faith organizations and a variety of business groups, such as construction companies, public light bus companies, and retail shops. The role of District Social Welfare Office is to link them to the welfare services of SWD and NGOs. As a result, the faith organizations and the private sector have provided many valuable resources and services, such as donation of fund for programs and second-hand furniture for CSSA recipients, free funeral service consultation, the establishment of an employment network for able-bodied CSSA recipients, and putting up of free promotional material on welfare programs and issues in retail shops and public light buses, and donation of equipments and materials for fighting SARS.
   b) In another District Social Welfare Office, district organizations are encouraged and supported to become self-financed welfare service operators. In addition to faith organizations and volunteer groups, the District Social Welfare Office has successfully involved large business groups, such as the CLP Power HK Ltd., Kowloon Motor Bus Company and CITIBANK, in welfare services.

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[39]   The CIIF refers to the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund which was set up by the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau mainly to provide the resources and a vehicle to promote community participation in supporting the vulnerable groups in our society. It also aims at building up a sense of community spirit and enhancing social cohesion.
http://www.hwfb.gov.hk/hw/english/archive/index.htm.

47.   Overall, the capacity of District Social Welfare Offices to foster inter-departmental and cross-sector collaboration was demonstrated in the SARS crisis. During the crisis, both the District Officers (DOs) of HAD and DSWOs of SWD had played complementary roles in coordinating different joined actions, campaigns and crisis intervention. In particular, District Social Welfare Offices became the leading centers in coordinating district initiatives targeting vulnerable groups and SARS victims. These actions included involving home helpers of NGOs to provide meal support for quarantined residents, mobilizing resources to proffer house cleaning services to the elderly identified by HAD and HD.

Service Re-engineering

48.   At the time when the welfare services have been undergoing a number of service re-engineering exercises to enhance service cost-effectiveness, the role of the District Social Welfare Offices has become more and more prominent. The formation of integrative services modes in elderly, youth and family services requires relocating, reshuffling, closing down and merging of existing services. First and foremost, welfare planning has abandoned the previous standardized and rigid approach of welfare service provision based primarily on population size. In this context, local views and needs have received a much higher priority in the provision of the new service modes. On the whole, the service re-engineering processes have received full support from community stakeholders, including DCs and district organizations.

49.   In the process of forming ICYSCs, district outreaching teams for at-risk youth, and district night outreaching teams for young night drifters, the District Social Welfare Offices had to resolve thorny and sensitive issues, such as the closure of under-utilized children and youth centers, the drawing up of service boundaries, and opposition from local organizations and political parties. To be sure, the process required active, open and formal dialogue with all the key stakeholders to achieve a consensus. Under the mission and the appeal to maximize the benefits to the service users and the welfare of the community, the District Social Welfare Offices had been trying to promote a "win-win" decision acceptable to most stakeholders. As such the political skills of negotiation, mediation and consensus building of the DSWOs are paramount. On the whole, the formation exercise of ICYSCs has been regarded as a success.

50.   Following the recommendations from the Report on the Review of Family Services in Hong Kong, published in 2001, District Social Welfare Offices were expected to play an active role in the formation and nomination of pilot projects on IFSCs. Based on the different possible formation modes, notably "merging", "self-transformation" and "strategic alliance", District Social Welfare Offices had to identify appropriate and capable service providers in the districts and the encouragement of the formation of service partners. In the formation of strategic alliances, partnerships could be formed between two NGOs service units, or between a NGO and a SWD service unit. The formation processes required a thorough understanding of the IFSC principles and the strengths and weaknesses of different service providers. In particularly, the "match-making" process in the formation of strategic alliances required careful selection of appropriate partners, and active mediation between the two service operators to resolve some of the barriers involved.

51.　　Since the exercise also involved SWD service units, it was imperative that the nomination process had to be perceived as objective, transparent and fair. During the process, District Social Welfare Offices had to organize a number of briefing sessions for explaining the IFSC model and principles.

52.　　During the implementation of the pilot projects, District Social Welfare Offices have been　expected to keep close liaison with these project operators to understand their progress and provide assistance when necessary. For example, there is a requirement to redraw service boundaries and re-negotiate service responsibility to avoid service duplications. In particular, the need for better service coordination has become more evident because most newly introduced integrated services have the requirement to reach out to vulnerable targets.

53.　　Besides the initiation, nomination and implementation of IFSC pilot projects, District Social Welfare Offices have to encourage other FSCs, particularly those of SWD units to make adjustments according to the IFSC principles. For examples, FSCs are encouraged to provide more outreaching services, seek more partnerships with the newly-formed FSRCs and adopt more flexible opening hours.

54.　　In the re-engineering of elderly services, District Social Welfare Offices again had to conduct briefing sessions with NGO service operators of social centers for the elderly, multi-service centers for the elderly, and home help teams on the policy directives and requirements. Because the exercises usually involved a variety NGOs with different background, size, and scope of services, there was no standardized or one-size-fit-all solution. DSWOs had to work closely with each NGO and the headquarters to work out an individually-tailored arrangement for the service transformation. As such DSWOs, had to have a clear understanding of the concern and difficulties of each service operator, and tried to seek an appropriate and acceptable solution. Oftentimes DSWOs had to reflect the special circumstances of the service operators and make special proposals to the headquarters for special consideration. In addition, the re-engineering process required the re-drawing of service boundaries and the mediation of possible conflicts involved. Again the whole re-engineering process required patience and sincerity in making dialogue with NGO service operators. On the whole, DSWOs found the whole re-engineering process was smooth, and most elderly services had been able to make the transformation to form Neighborhood Elderly Centers (NECs), District Elderly Community Centers (DECCs), and Integrated Home Help Service teams (IHHS). For those social centers for the elderly which were not able to make the change, they had been encouraged to become self-financed service units.

55.　　A DSWO commended on the outcomes of the whole re-engineering process:
It has greatly enhanced the functions of elderly service centers, especially in providing services, such as carers' support, mini-canteen, volunteering training, as well as the development of cluster system so that each DECC can provide backup support to its satellite NECs, social centers for the elderly, and integrated home care service teams, day care centers for the elderly and other elderly services.

56.　　District Social Welfare Offices have been assigned the tasks to maximize the use of welfare premises in response to changing community needs. The

redevelopment of some of the worn-out social service buildings is one of the examples. After examining the proposed renovation plan from a NGO, a DSWO recommended a drastic revision to redevelop the whole building so as to provide a broader range of community services to meet the mounting community needs. A number of examples could be found that illustrated some DSWOs had successfully located new suitable premises for new services and shifted the purposes of welfare premises according to local needs.

Outreaching Networks for Vulnerable Groups

57.   Under the central guiding principle of early identification, FSRCs and FSNTs have been proactively making enormous outreaching efforts to identify at-risk and disadvantaged groups for prompt intervention (See Appendix VIIIb for the service output statistics of FSRC and FSNT). A broad range of outreaching methods have been employed to connect the target groups, including road shows, operating street stalls, mobile exhibitions, use of a mobile van with on-site enquiry service, distributing promotional material, such as newsletters, leaflets and souvenirs, telephone hotlines, and door-to-door home visits.

58.   Widening the contacts with district organizations, such as the MACs, ACs and OIs, faith organizations and schools are key to establishing and strengthening the referral networks for families and individuals in need. Examples of good practices include:
   a) The FSNT of a District Social Welfare Office had set up 56 welfare service consultation sessions through reaching out to 6,500 people. The public consultations have enhanced more public understanding of welfare services particularly in the old urban areas. To strengthen its service referral network, it has linked together over 100 units, including retail shops, estate management companies, government and private clinics, ethnic minority groups and residents' associations.
   b) A District Social Welfare Office had identified many single parents living within the district. Attempts were made to reach out to this target group through newsletters, street stalls, telephone contacts and distributing souvenirs. In addition, it had also collaborated with an NGO to conduct intensively home visits in some public housing estates. In effect, over 450 single families had been connected.
   c) To foster the service to elderly residents living in remote rural villages, the FSNT of a District Social Welfare Office pooled together SWD FSCs, some elderly service units, NLCDP teams, and a mobile traditional Chinese medicine team to provide free traditional Chinese medical consultation services to remote villages in the two DC districts.
   d) In echoing SWD policy of promoting self-reliance for service users, some District Social Welfare Offices have made commendable efforts to transform former service users into volunteers providing service to other people in needs. A District Social Welfare Office had provided life skill training for the handicapped people. Meanwhile, it had also commissioned an NGO to help the handicapped people to develop their potentials to provide volunteering service to the community. In a volunteer training scheme, another District Social Welfare Office had recruited former service users and trained them to

become volunteers to pay concerned visits to other people in needs in the district.

e) Through soliciting support from other government departments, such as HD, LD, HAD, and Immigration Department (ID), as well as NGOs and district organizations, District Social Welfare Offices could reach out to vulnerable groups, notably the single elderly, new arrivals, the unemployed, at risk young people and street sleepers more efficiently and effectively. Take for example, the number of street sleepers have been decreasing in several priority districts. Between January 2002 and January 2003, the number of street sleepers had dropped from 393 to 288 (i.e. 105 street sleepers) in the district with the largest population of street sleepers.

f) For residents settling down in new settlements, some District Social Welfare Offices had pioneered to establish mutual care social networks to help the residents in making adjustments to the new environments. The setting up of the social networks involved mobilizing inter-governmental, cross-service, and cross-sector collaborations.

g) In an intensive outreaching campaign undertaken by a District Social Welfare Office, the FSNT, through a series of seven programs, had been able to make contacts with 1,500 at risk families. As a result of these contacts, 150 referrals were made, and 550 families were recruited as members of the FSRC. The FSNT also set up mobile publicity teams in public housing estates. With the use of a van, a mobile counseling service was provided. Within three months, the service had successfully contacted 3,000 residents and received a total of 300 enquires. In addition, mutual help support groups for the unemployed, low income families and single parents on CSSA had been set up.

Key Observations

59.   The consultants are impressed with the commitment and support of the District Social Welfare Office staff toward the re-organization. Under the leadership of the DSWOs and the "cohesive, dynamic and proactive" team culture of the staff, District Social Welfare Offices demonstrated pride and ownership to their achievements, capacity to handle complicated job challenges, and willingness to innovate. They recognized their achievements in areas such as establishing and sustaining good relationship with district stakeholders and outward-looking and proactive approach to tackle community issues. District Social Welfare Offices vary significantly on their approach and strategy to execute the enhanced functions. Yet they all have built up a strong network of community partnerships for promoting the quality of community life. Noteworthy is the fact that the resource requirement for creating and maintaining community partnerships will be staggering. Evidently the existing workload of the District Social Welfare Offices has been over-stretched already.

60.   To recap, the achievements of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office during the studied period have been positive and impressive:
    a) In district planning, each District Social Welfare Office has been searching for its district planning approach, mechanism and strategies in responding to district needs and resources. No centralized and standardized approach in district planning could be discerned by the consultant team. Similarly, PCTs

have been trying out various need assessment methods with different level of sophistication depending on their research skills and available technical support. Many PCTs have invested tremendous time and efforts in mapping out the district needs with little support from the headquarters. Given the current thin staff provision in PCT, the capacity of District Social Welfare Office to maintain the momentum to develop a systemic and comprehensive data based for needs assessment will be limited.

b) DCC has remained as the key mechanism for district planning and coordination. The strategic move to expand the membership to include other government departments, local leaders, selected NGOs, grassroots organizations and new third sectors, such as faith organizations and business sectors has facilitated inter-departmental and cross-sector collaborations. However, there is still much room to further involve the new third sectors in district welfare services. Notably, there is also a growing demand and higher expectations among community stakeholders to be consulted in central and district welfare policies and affairs.

c) The existing DCCs structure is not without its demerits. With a more heterogeneous and pluralistic groups coming from diverse background, it has been increasingly difficult to move beyond informing to discussing district welfare issues in greater depth, not to mention the inevitable conflict of interests among the members. How to sustain the balanced participation and quality discussion from different sectors is a formidable challenge to DSWOs. Given the delimited place for NGOs, fewer NGOs can participate in the DCCs and their relationships with District Social Welfare Offices have been diluting. Over time, NGOs seem to be losing their sense of ownership and control in the DCCs as compared to the past.

d) In service coordination, District Social Welfare Offices have played an important role in identifying service gaps and deploying and/or mobilizing local resources to address those needs. They have also played an active and important role in the service integration and/or re-engineering exercise with successful outcomes in close liaison and collaboration with the respective service branches of the headquarters.

e) Immense efforts and initiatives have been spent in reaching out and networking hard-to-reach vulnerable groups and at risk families in all the districts by FSRCs and FSNTs in collaboration with other NGOs and district organizations. However, many services in the district are also providing similar outreaching and networking services. There is a need for better coordination and streamlining the existing outreaching and networking service for disadvantaged target groups in the district, to avoid duplication of services.

4. Key Stakeholders' Survey

Introduction

1.   This chapter reports the rating from key community stakeholders, i.e. DC or DCSRC members and DCC members on the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in the survey. As mentioned previously in chapter 2, the total number of respondents was 1,301, including 376 DC/DCSRC members and 925 DCC members.

Profile of Respondents

District Council or District Council Social Service related Committee Members

2.   As shown in Chart 4.1, out of the total of 376 DC/DCSRC members who had participated in the survey, slightly over half (51.3%) were elected DC members, and a further 15.2% were appointed members. Nearly 26.6% were non-DC members but members of DCSRCs. Some 4.0% were Ex officio members of DCs in the New Territories. Eleven or some 2.9% DC members did not reveal which type of membership they belonged to.

Chart 4.1: Percentage distribution of respondents by type of membership
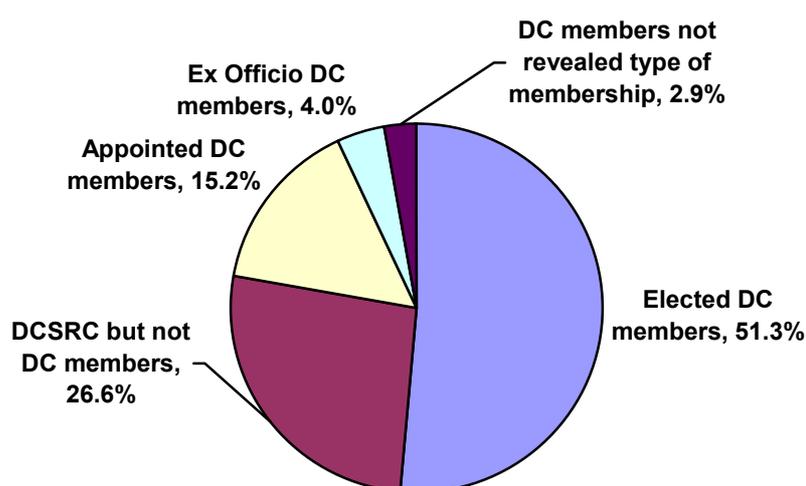
3.   For those who were DC members, about 47.7% indicated that they belonged to a political party. In addition, some 36.4% of them had served in DC for just one term, a further 23.1% have served for two terms and the remaining 40.5% had served for three terms. For these DC members, about 82% were also members of DCSRCs.

4.   For those who were DCSRC members, over half (52.4%) had been serving in the DCSRCs for over 4 years, a further 36.0% for 2 to 4 years and the remaining 11.6% for less than 2 years.

District Coordinating Committees Members

5.   Chart 4.2 shows that out of the total of 925 DCC members who had participated in the survey, over half (56.1%) were from welfare agencies receiving subvention from SWD, 5.7% from welfare agencies not receiving subvention from SWD, 18.8% from other government departments, and a further 2.9% were service recipients. [40] Among the 16.6% of respondents who chose "others", most had specified their characteristics, including DC members, education organizations, special and rehabilitation schools, political parties, youth representatives, volunteer organizations, community affairs groups and private organizations.

Chart 4.2: Percentage distribution of respondents by type of member/organization

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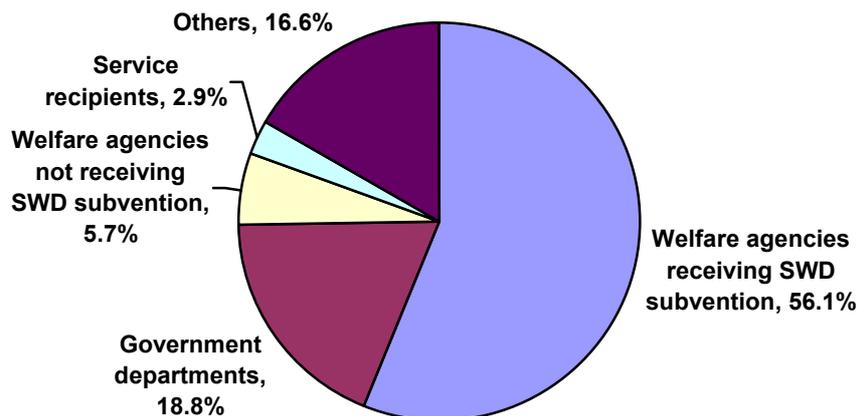
[40]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the charts may not add up to 100%.

6.	About one third of the respondents were serving in DCC on youth, about 23.2% on elderly, 19.9% on rehabilitation, 19.1% on family and child welfare and 12.8% on promotion of volunteer services (Chart 4.3). [41]

Chart 4.3: Percentage distribution of respondents by types of DCC
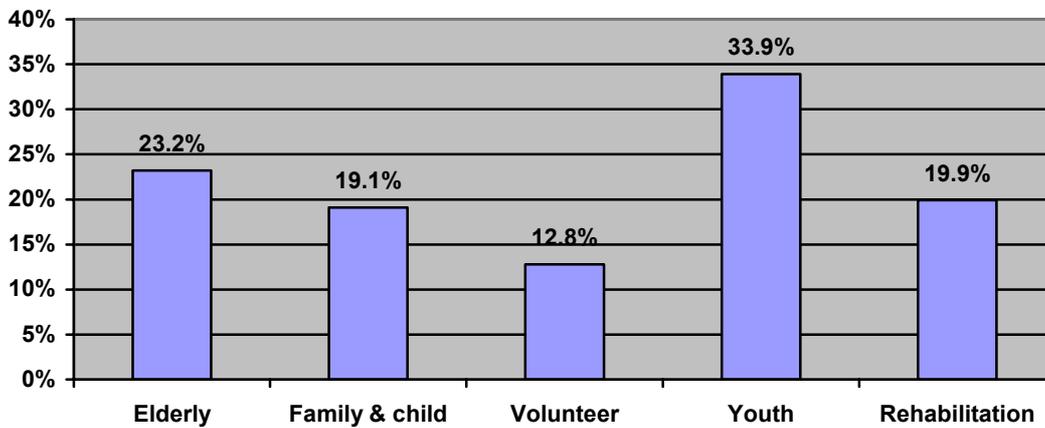
7.	About 38.4% of the respondents had served in the DCC for less than 2 years, another 36.5% for 2 to 4 years, and the remaining 25.1% for over 4 years.

Assessment of the Enhanced Functions of District Social Welfare Office

District Council and District Council Social Service related Committee Members

8.	In the following paragraphs, the views of DC and DCSRC members on the four major aspects of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, including planning of district welfare services, liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations, coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level and community networking and outreaching work, are presented.

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[41]	The percentages add up to more than 100% because some respondents may serve in more than one type of service.

Planning of District Welfare Services

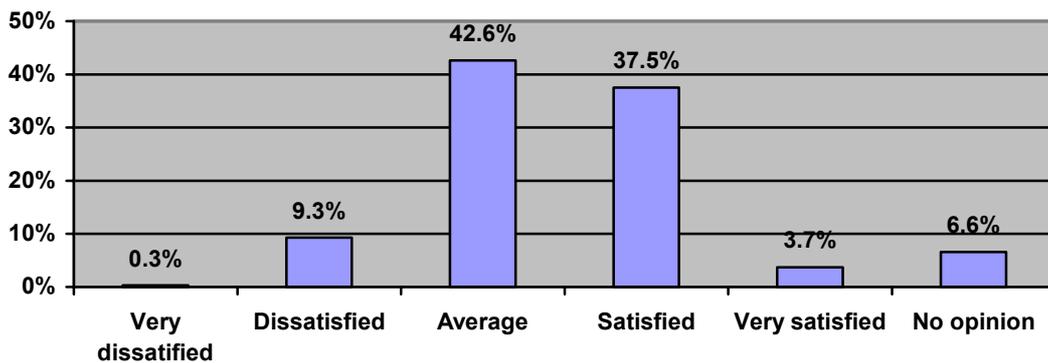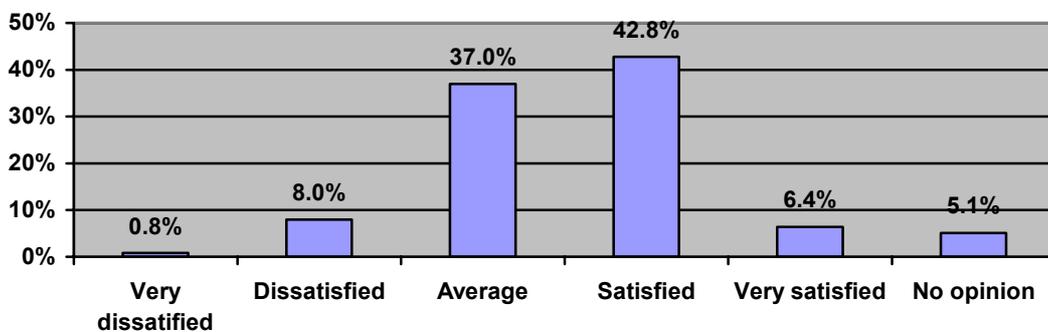9.   About 63.8% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in introducing and explaining the government's welfare policy to the DC, and another 9.6% were very satisfied. Only about 2.9% were not satisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.4 below.

Chart 4.4: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in introducing and explaining the government's welfare policy to the DC
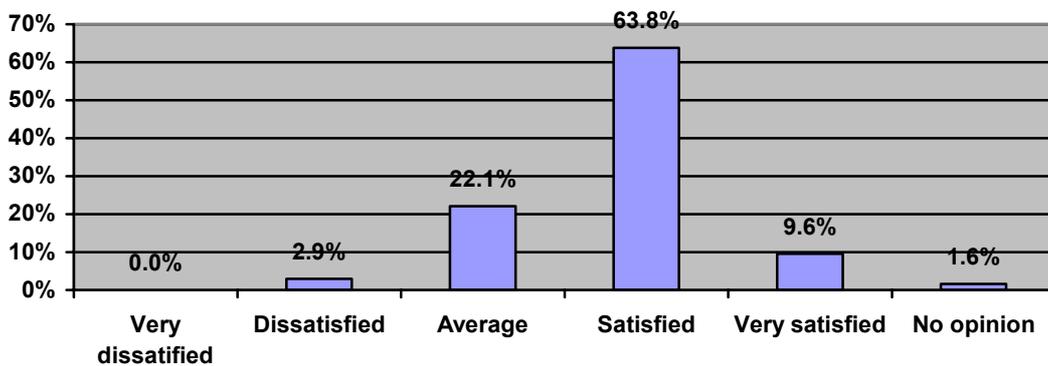
10.   About 58.0% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in explaining the core business of SWD, and another 6.6% were very satisfied. Only about 2.7% were not satisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.5 below.[42]

Chart 4.5: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in explaining the core business of SWD

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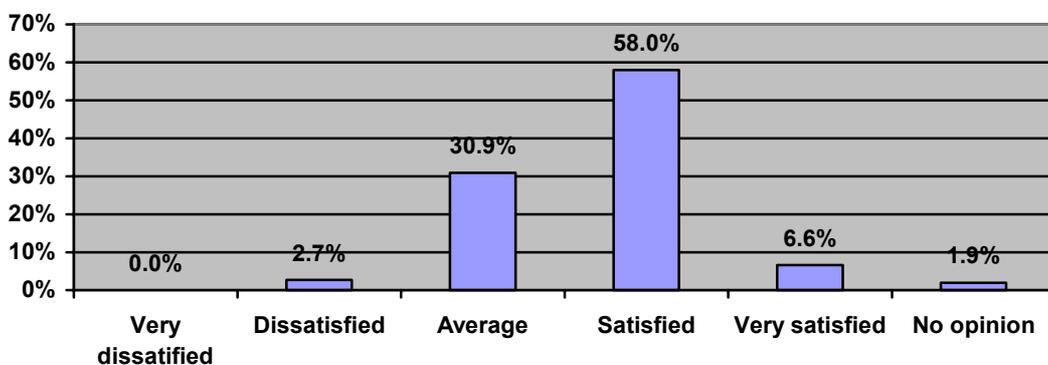
[42]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

11.   About 57.7% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in providing updated information on welfare service, and another 8.8% were very satisfied. Only about 4% were not satisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.6 below.

Chart 4.6: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in providing updated information on welfare service
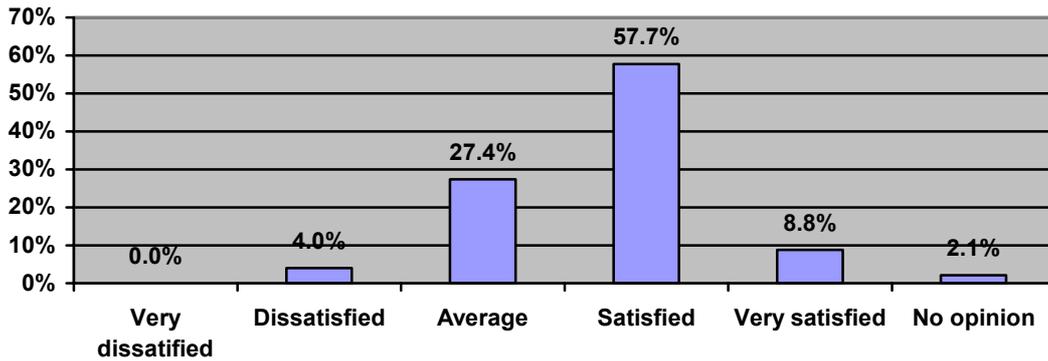
12.   About 46.5% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in consulting and collecting views from the DC in the planning of welfare services in the district, and another 8% were very satisfied. Only about 10.9% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.7 below.
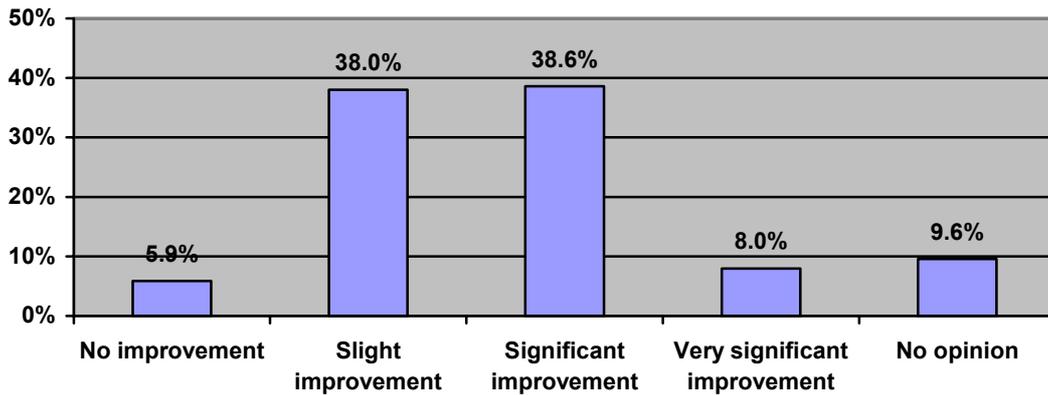
Chart 4.7: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in consulting and collecting views from the DC in planning district welfare services
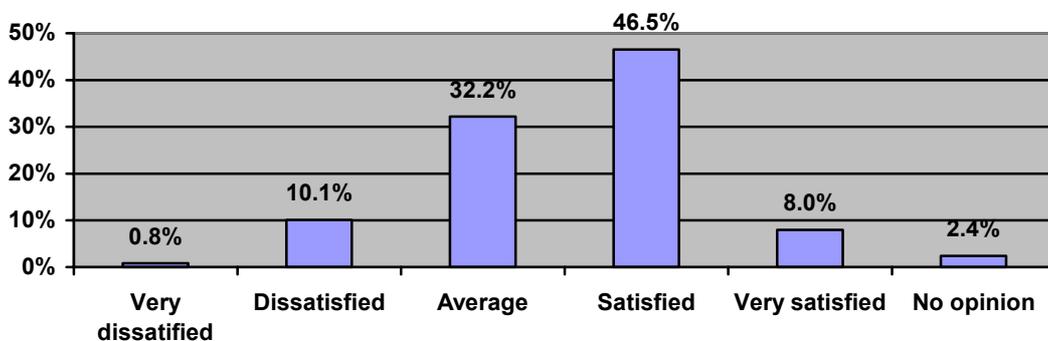
13.   About 37.5% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in assessing district welfare needs based on objective evidence, such as data from Census and Statistics Department (CSD), and another 3.7% were very satisfied. Only about 9.6% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.8 below.

Chart 4.8: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in assessing district welfare needs based on objective evidence

14.   About 42.8% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in formulating district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans, and another 6.4% were very satisfied. Only about 8.8% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.9 below.[43]

Chart 4.9: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in formulating district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans

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[43]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

15.   About 38.8% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in reflecting the special needs and views of the district to SWD headquarters, and another 3.7% were very satisfied. Only about 10.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.10 below.[44]

Chart 4.10: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in reflecting the special needs and views of the district to the SWD headquarters

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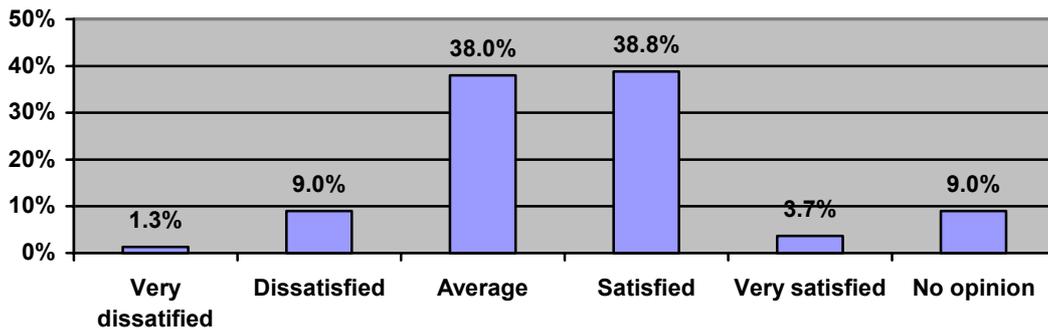
[44]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

16.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in planning district welfare services. About 38.6% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 8% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 5.9% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.11 below.[45]

Chart 4.11: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in planning of district welfare services

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[45]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations

17.   About 56.9% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in maintaining close liaison, collaboration and partnership with DC and district organizations through participation in DC meetings and promotion of district activities, and another 17.0% were very satisfied. Only about 3.5% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.12 below.

Chart 4.12: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in maintaining close liaison, collaboration and partnership with DC and district organizations
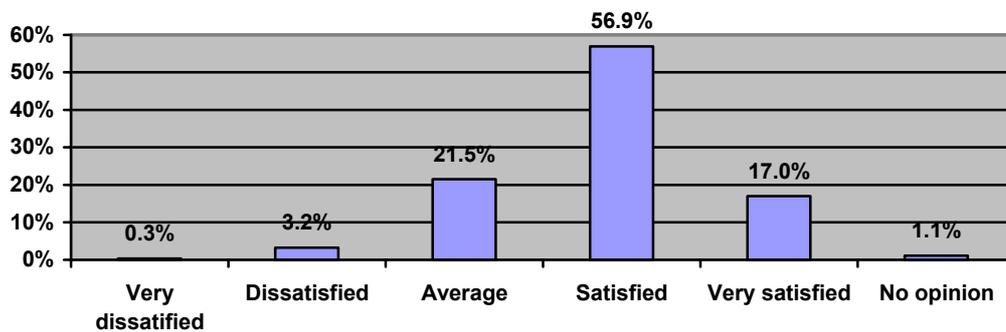
18.   About 49.5% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership between the welfare sector and other government departments, district organizations, and personalities from other sectors, and another 11.4% were very satisfied. Only about 4.8% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.13 below.

Chart 4.13: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership
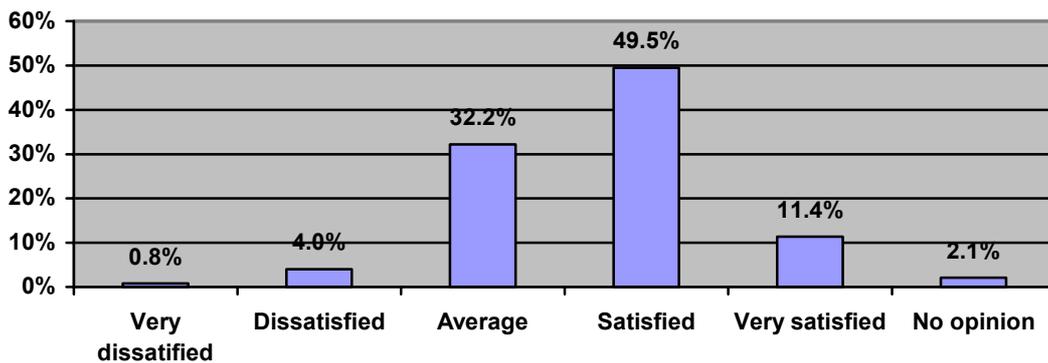
19.   About 54.8% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in actively following up enquiries and referrals from DC members on district welfare issues, and another 19.9% were very satisfied. Only about 2.7% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.14 below.

Chart 4.14: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in actively following up enquiries and referrals
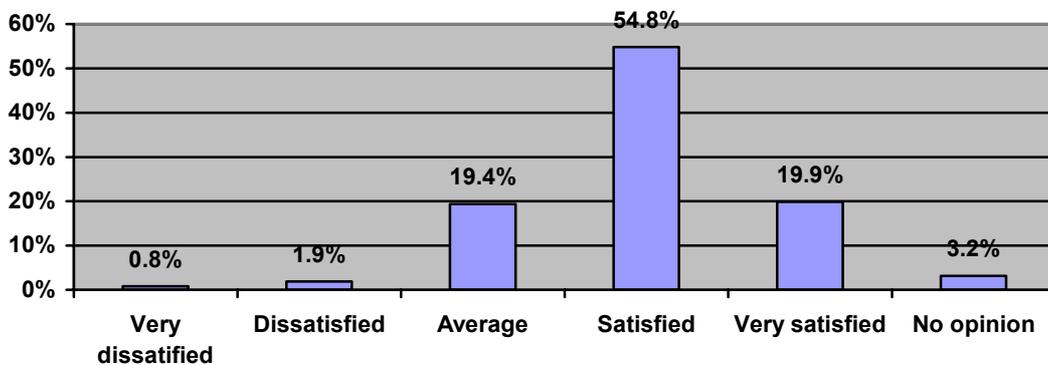
20.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations. About 42.6% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 14.9% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 6.1% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.15 below.

Chart 4.15: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in liaison and collaboration with DC and District Organizations
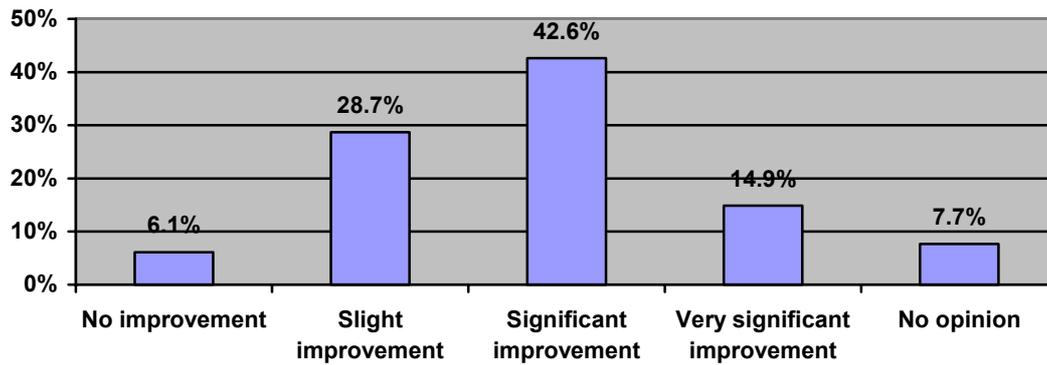
21.　　　About 59.6% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in implementing integrated social welfare service model, e.g. in family services, youth services, and elderly services, and another 6.9% were very satisfied. Only about 4.8% were not satisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.16 below.[46]
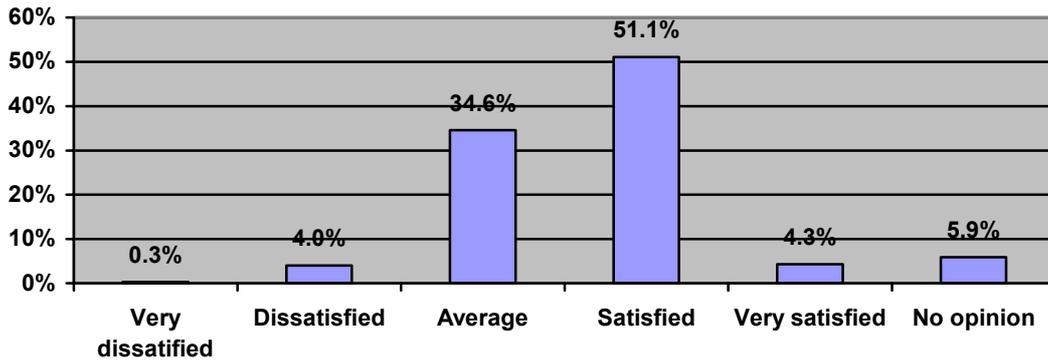
Chart 4.16: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in implementing integrated social welfare model

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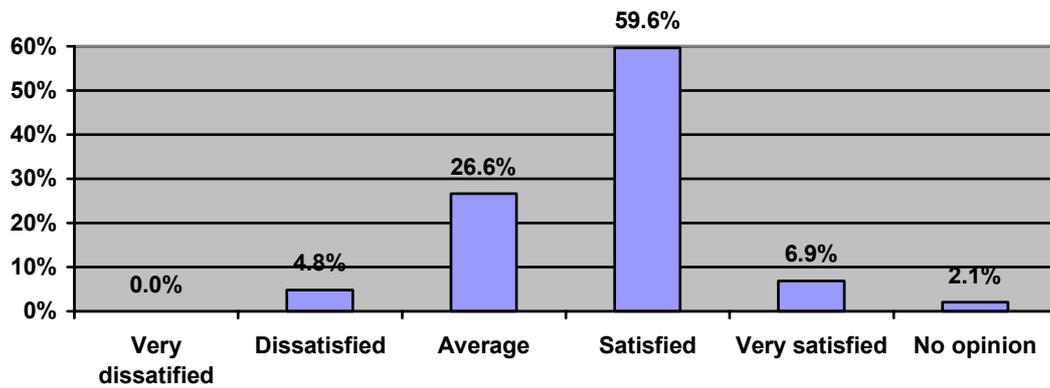
[46] It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

22.   About 51.1% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in coordinating services provided by SWD and NGOs, and another 4.3% were very satisfied. Only about 4.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.17 below.[47]

Chart 4.17: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in coordinating services provided by SWD and NGOs

23.   About 45.7% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in mobilizing district resources and encouraging district organizations or NGOs to develop service projects in response to district needs and problems, and another 8.2% were very satisfied. Only about 7.1% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.18 below.[48]

Chart 4.18: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in mobilizing district resources and encouraging district organizations to develop service projects


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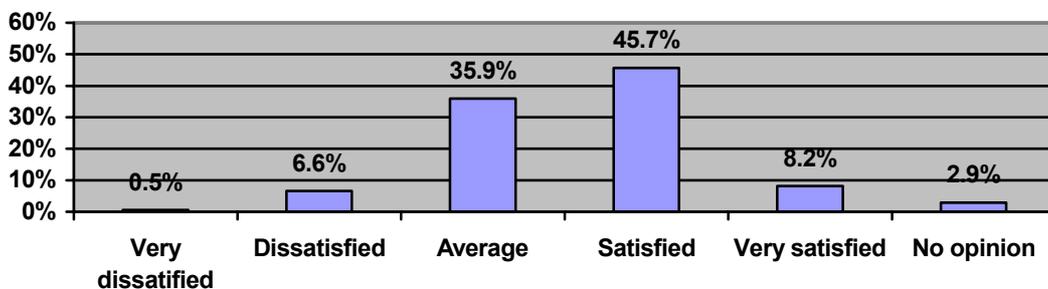
[47]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.
[48]   Ibid.

24.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level. About 41.5% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 9.8% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 5.6% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.19 below.

Chart 4.19: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in coordination and promotion of welfare services at district level
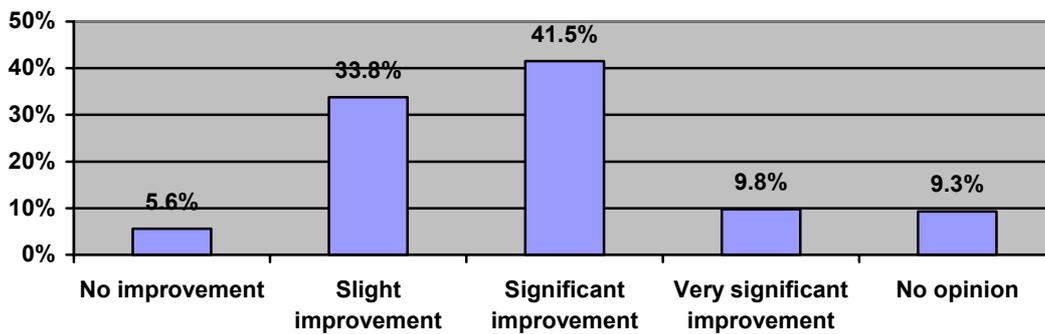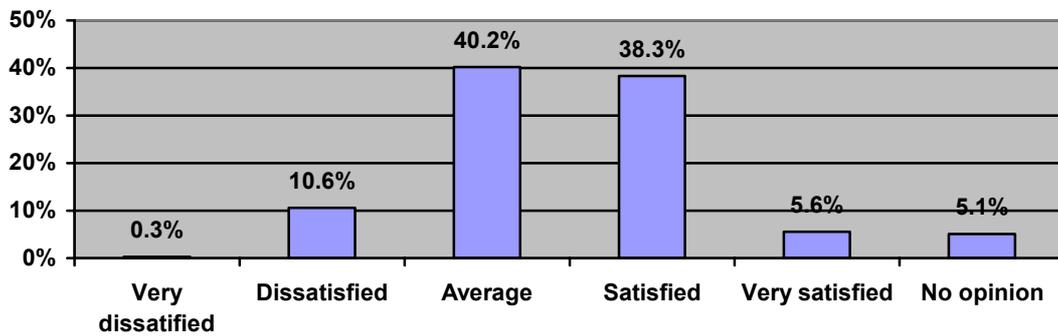
25.　　　About 38.0% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in understanding the needs and problems of the vulnerable groups in the district, such as low income families, unemployed persons, new arrivals, victims of family violence, single parent families, and proactively initiating contacts with them, and another 4.5% were very satisfied. Only about 10.1% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.20 below.

Chart 4.20: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in understanding the needs and problems of the vulnerable groups and initiating contacts with them
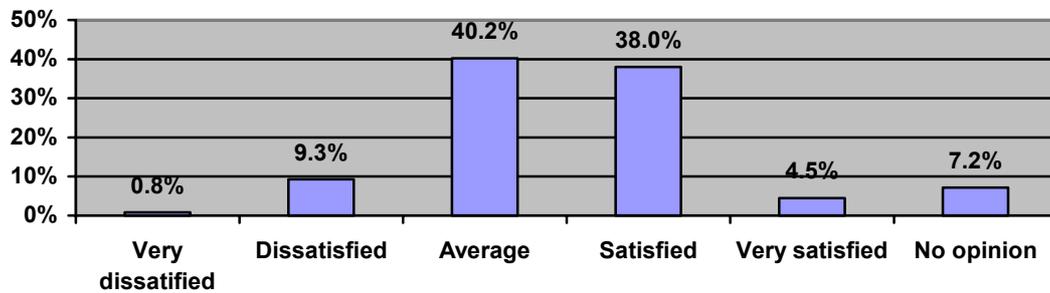
26.   About 38.3% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district, and another 5.6% were very satisfied. Only about 10.9% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.21 below.[49]

Chart 4.21: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs & problems of vulnerable groups

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[49]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

27.   About 39.9% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting outreaching and networking in the district to provide appropriate services to these vulnerable groups, and another 4.3% were very satisfied. Only about 8.5% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.22 below.[50]

Chart 4.22: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting outreaching and networking in the district to provide services to vulnerable groups

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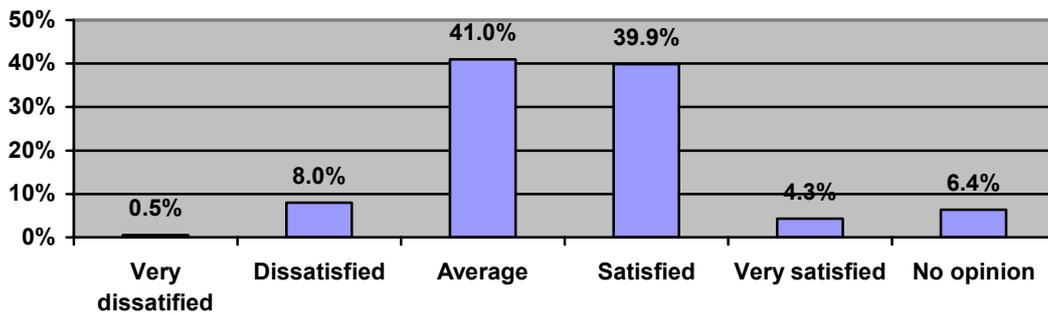
[50]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

28.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in community networking and outreaching work. About 36.2% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 9.3% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 6.4% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.23 below.

Chart 4.23: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in community networking and outreaching work
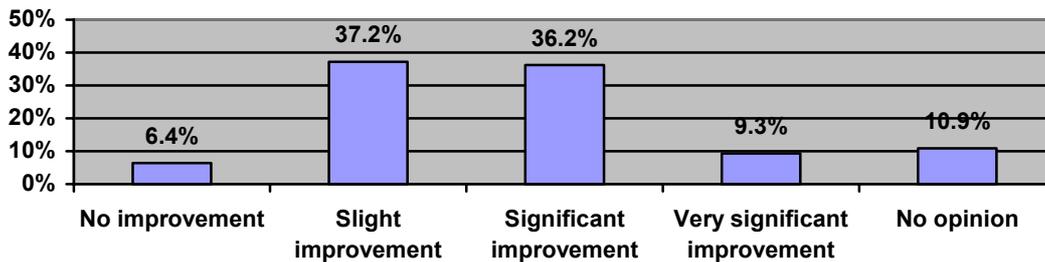

Summary of Respondents' Degree of Satisfaction

29.   To summarize, using a 5-point scale with 1 being "very dissatisfied" and 5 being "very satisfied" and excluding those expressing "no opinion", the average satisfaction scores for different aspects of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office functions are shown in Chart 4.24 below. It may be noted that the scores for the various attributes are all above 3, indicating that the respondents were on the whole satisfied with various aspects of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office. And the respondents were most satisfied with the District Social Welfare Office's enhanced function in liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations and least satisfied with community networking and outreaching.

Chart 4.24: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office
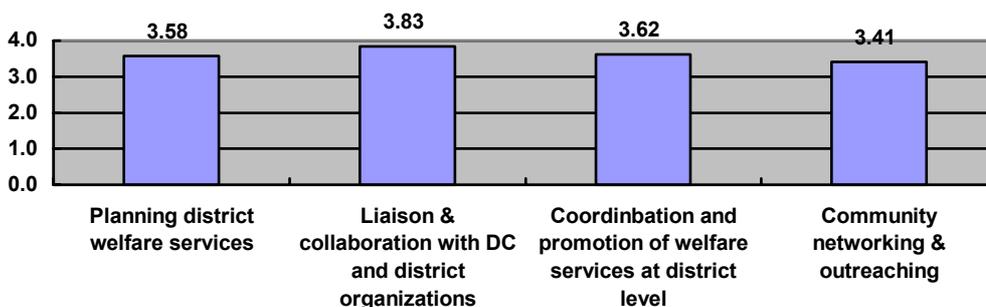
30.   Comparing the degree of satisfaction between DC members and those who were not, it may be noted from the chart below that there is not much difference between the two groups of respondents in respect of planning district welfare services and liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations. For coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level and community networking and outreaching, the non-DC members were slightly more satisfied.

Chart 4.25: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, for DC and non-DC members
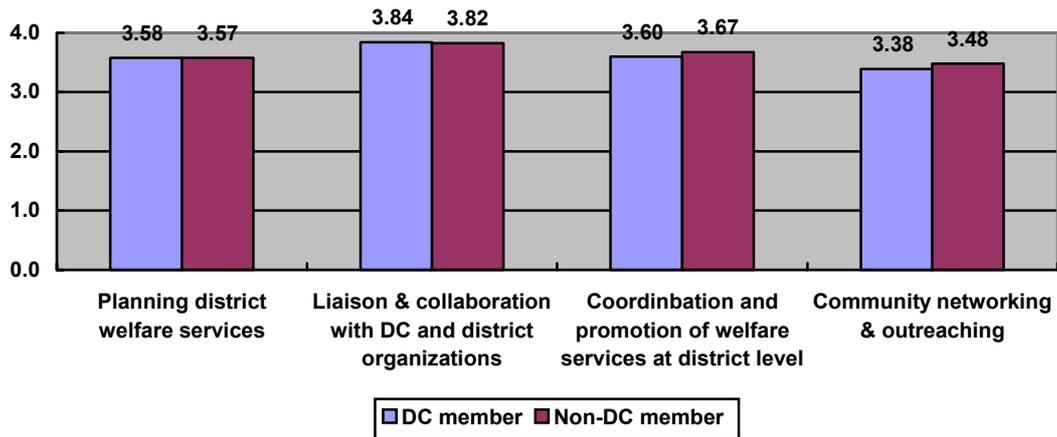
31.   Among the respondents who were DC members, it may be noted from the chart below that appointed DC members were on the whole more satisfied with different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office.

Chart 4.26: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, for appointed, elected and ex officio DC members
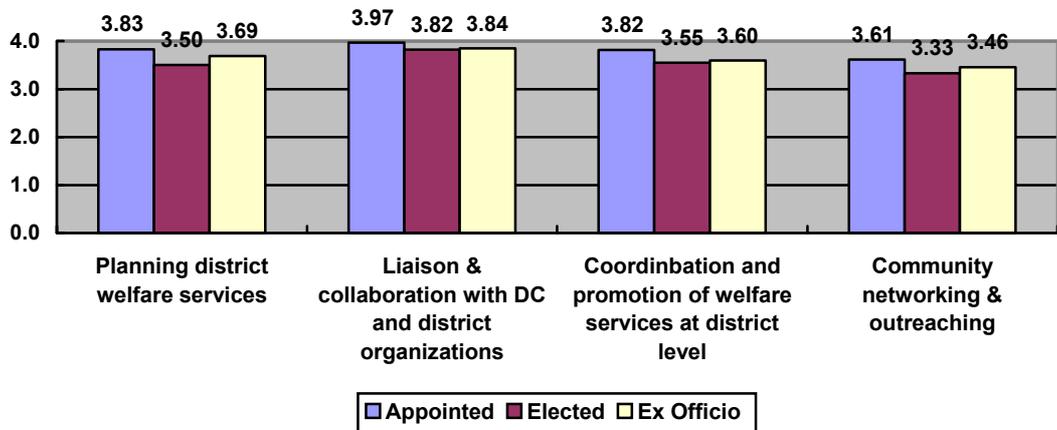
District Coordinating Committee Members

32.   In the following paragraphs, the views of DCC members on the four major aspects of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, including planning of district welfare services, liaison and collaboration with DCC and district organizations, coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level and community networking and outreaching work, are presented.
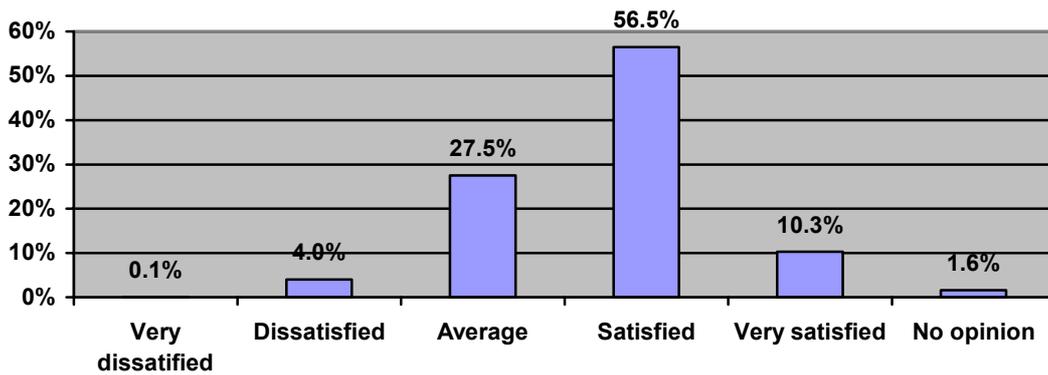
Planning of District Welfare Services

33.   About 54.5% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in introducing and explaining the government's welfare policy through the DCC meetings or workshops, and another 9.1% were very satisfied. Only about 3.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.27 below.

Chart 4.27: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in introducing and explaining the govt's welfare policy through the DCC meetings or workshops
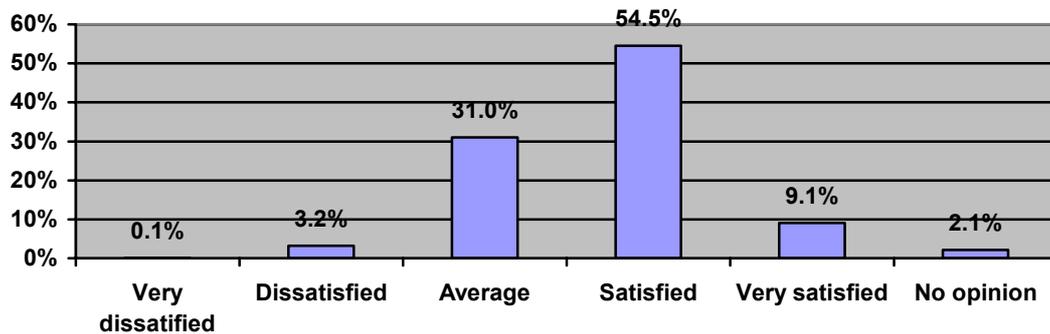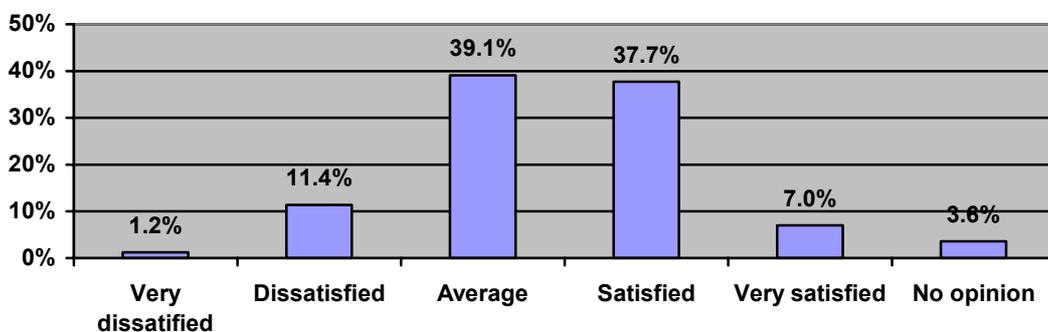
34.   About 56.5% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in providing updated information on welfare service, and another 10.3% were very satisfied. Only about 4.1% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.28 below.

Chart 4.28: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in providing updated information on welfare service

35.   About 37.7% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in consulting and collecting views from the DCC in the planning of welfare services in the district, and another 7% were very satisfied. Only about 12.6% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.29 below.

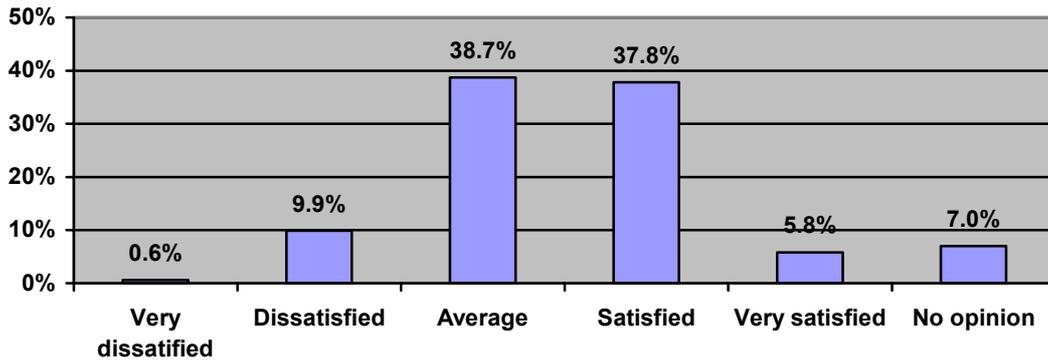**Chart 4.29: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in consulting and collecting views from the DCC in planning district welfare services**
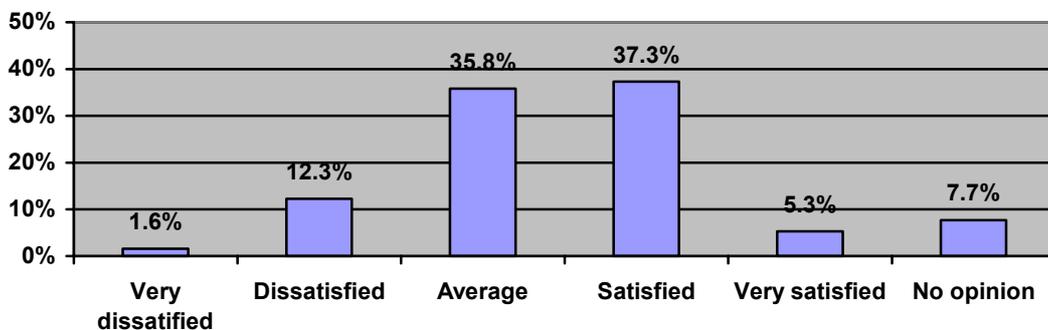
36.   About 37.8% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in assessing district welfare needs based on objective evidence, such as data from CSD, and another 5.8% were very satisfied. Only about 10.5% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.30 below.[51]

Chart 4.30: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in assessing district welfare needs based on objective evidence

37.   About 37.3% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in formulating district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans, and another 5.3% were very satisfied. Only about 13.9% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.31 below.

Chart 4.31: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in formulating district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans

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[51]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the charts may not add up to 100%.

38.	About 32.2% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in reflecting the special needs and views of the district to SWD headquarters, and another 4.8% were very satisfied. Only about 9.6% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.32 below.[52]
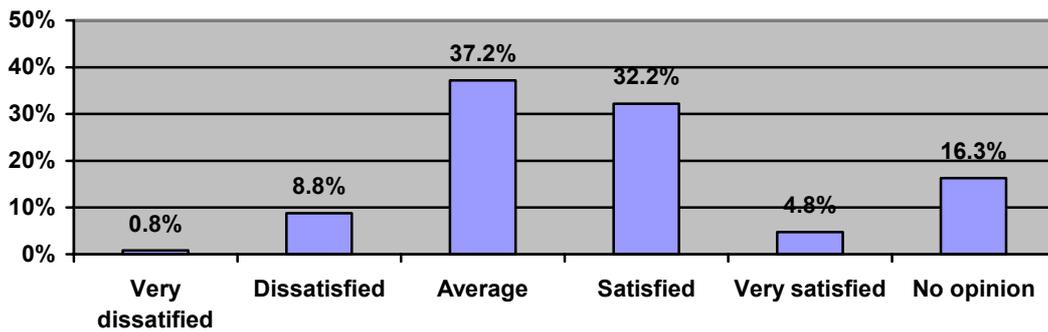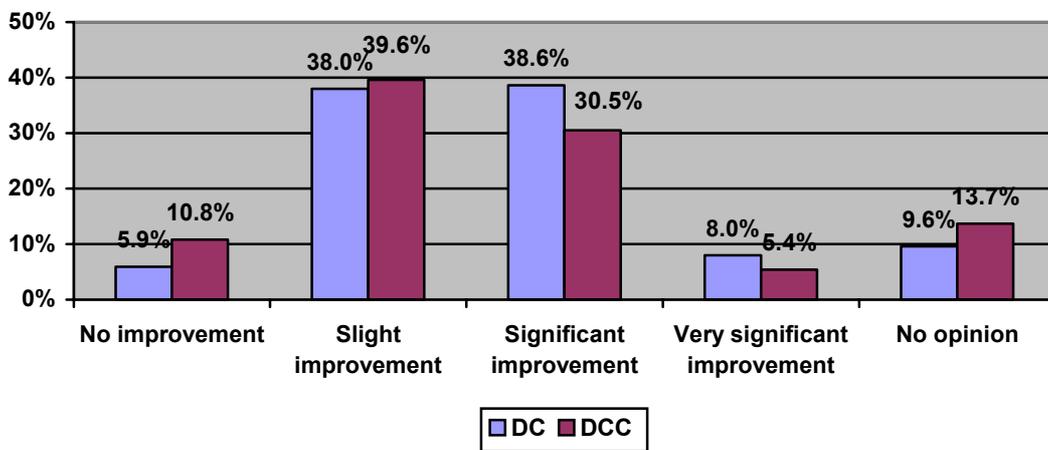
Chart 4.32: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in reflecting the special needs and views of the district to the SWD headquarters

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[52] It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the charts may not add up to 100%.

39.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in planning district welfare services. About 30.5% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 5.4% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 10.8% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.33 below, showing comparative figures for DC members. It may be noted that DCC members were less satisfied with the extent of improvement, as compared with DC members.[53]

Chart 4.33: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in planning of district welfare services, for DC and DCC members

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[53]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

40.   About 50.6% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in providing updated social welfare related reference materials and statistics in the district to district organizations, and another 9.4% were very satisfied. Only about 5.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.34 below.

Chart 4.34: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in providing updated social welfare related reference materials & statistics in the district to district organizations
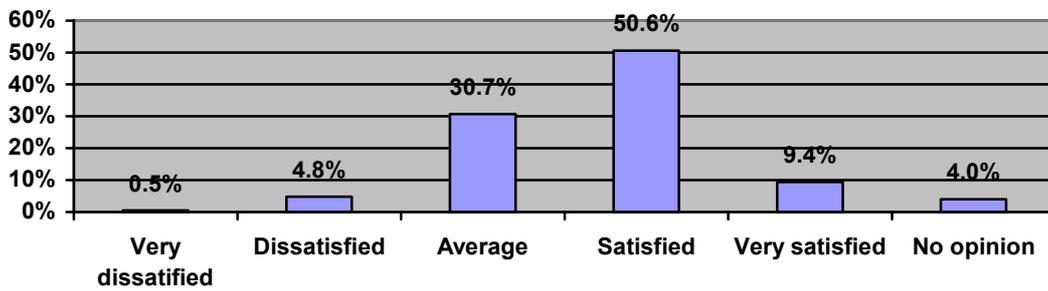
41.   About 52.8% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership between the welfare sector and DC, other government departments, district organizations, and personalities from other sectors, and another 15.5% were very satisfied. Only about 4.4% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.35 below.[54]

Chart 4.35: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership
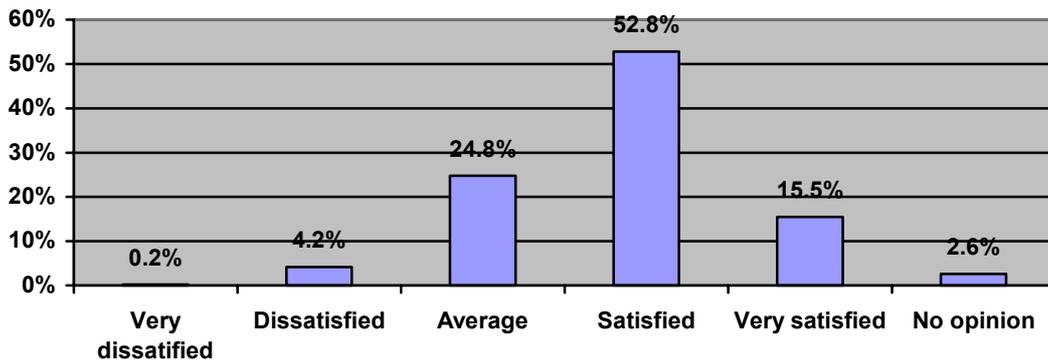
42.   About 51.2% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting collaboration and partnership among welfare agencies and district organizations through coordinating and organizing district activities, and another 18.5% were very satisfied. Only about 4.1% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.36 below.

Chart 4.36: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting collaboration and partnership among welfare agencies and district organizations

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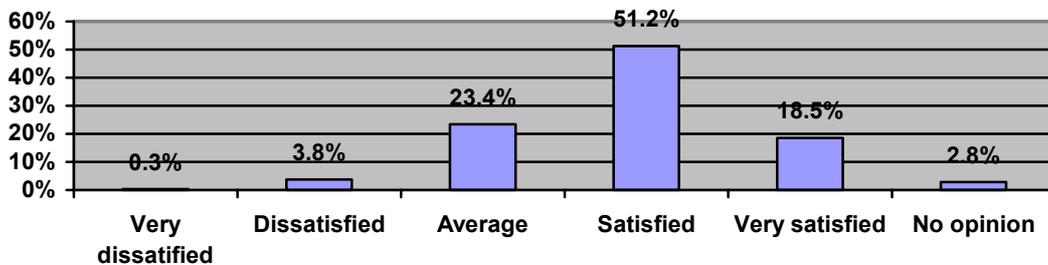
[54] It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

43.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations. About 34.5% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 8.8% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 6.2% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.37 below, showing comparative figures for DC members. It may be noted that DCC members were relatively less satisfied with the extent of improvement.

Chart 4.37: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations, for DC and DCC members

44.   About 48.0% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in implementing integrated social welfare service model, e.g. in family services, youth services, and elderly services, and another 6.4% were very satisfied. Only about 6.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.38 below.[55]

Chart 4.38: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in implementing integrated social welfare service model

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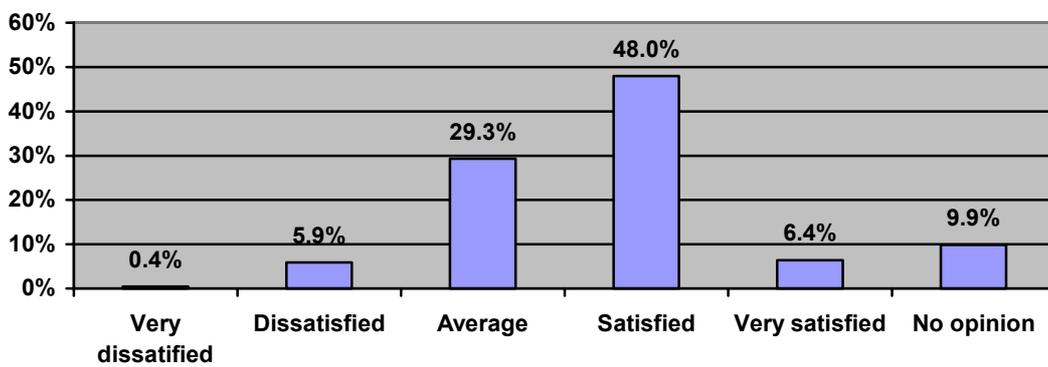
[55] It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

45. About 33% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in mediating the problems and difficulties between organizations in the process of service integration, and another 3.8% were very satisfied. Only about 9.4% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.39 below.
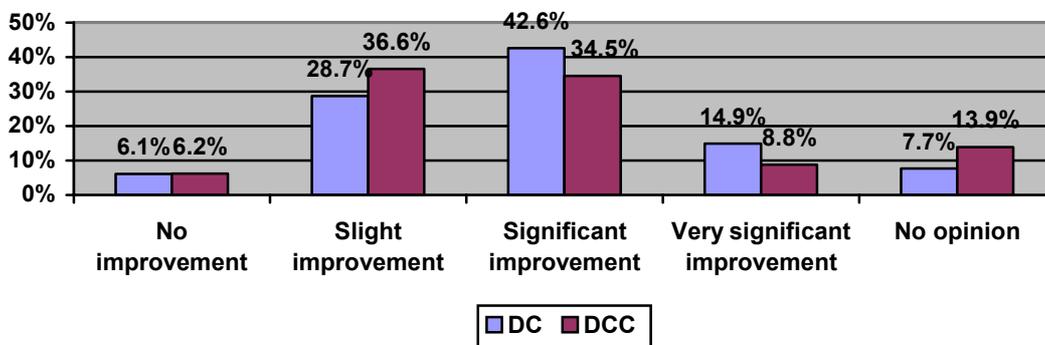
Chart 4.39: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in mediating the problems and difficulties between organizations

46. About 31.1% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in assisting organizations to solve problems and difficulties, and another 3.9% were very satisfied. Only about 10.4% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.40 below.

Chart 4.40: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in assisting organizations to solve problems and difficulties
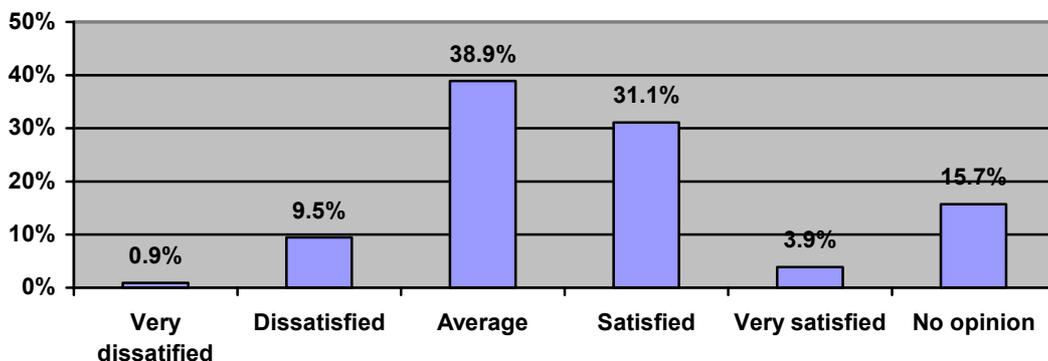
47. About 44.3% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in coordinating services provided by SWD and NGOs,

and another 5.4% were very satisfied. Only about 6.8% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.41 below.

Chart 4.41: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in coordinating services provided by SWD and NGOs

Very dissatified: 0.6%
Dissatisfied: 6.2%
Average: 34.1%
Satisfied: 44.3%
Very satisfied: 5.4%
No opinion: 9.4%
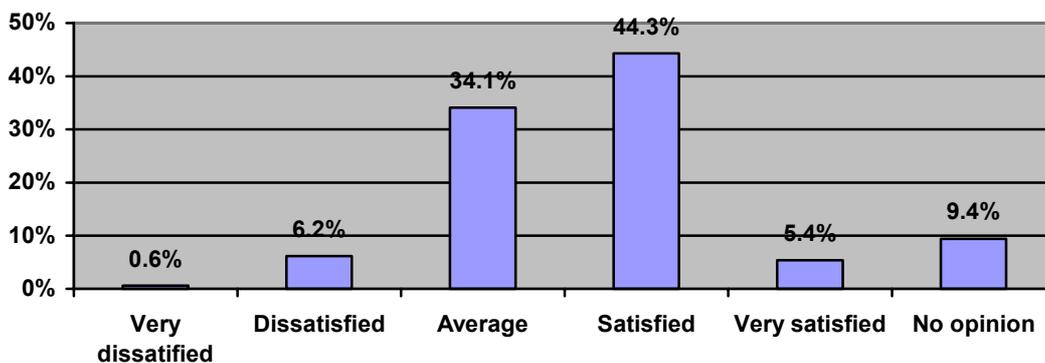
48.   About 48.3% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in mobilizing district resources and encouraging district organizations or NGOs to develop service projects in response to district needs and problems, and another 8.9% were very satisfied. Only about 5.4% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.42 below.
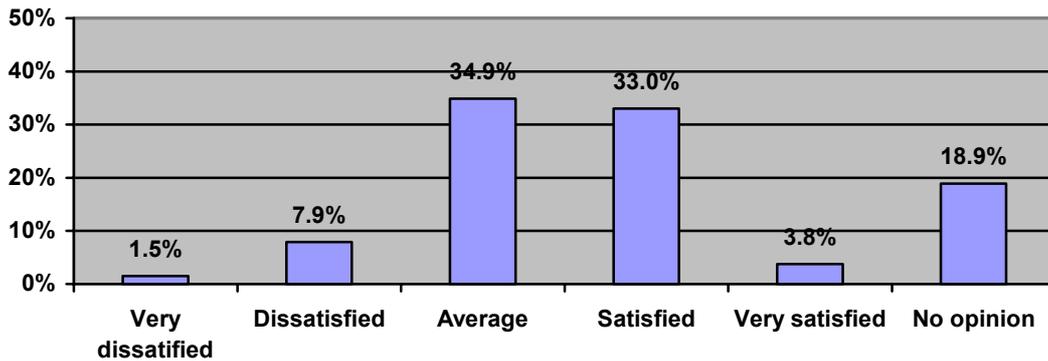
Chart 4.42: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in mobilizing district resources and encouraging district organizations to develop service projects

Very dissatified: 0.3%
Dissatisfied: 5.1%
Average: 30.9%
Satisfied: 48.3%
Very satisfied: 8.9%
No opinion: 6.5%
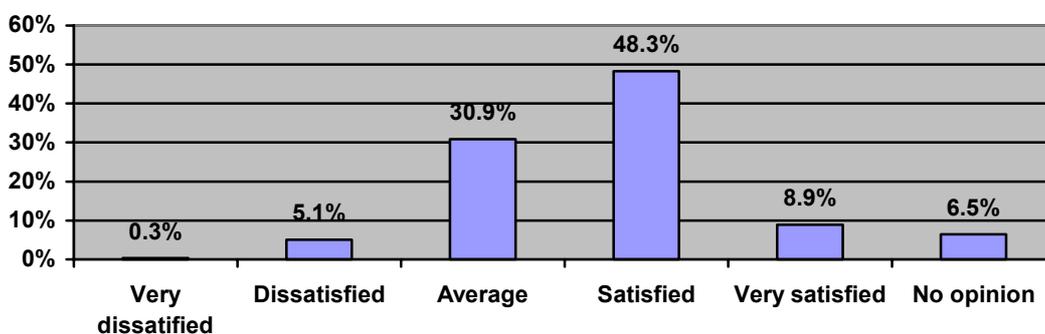
49.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level. About 36.2% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 8.3% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 10.1% considered that there was no improvement. The

percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.43 below, showing comparative figures for DC members. It may be noted that DCC members were relatively less satisfied with the extent of improvement.

Chart 4.43: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level, for DC and DCC members

50.　　About 35.1% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in understanding the needs and problems of the vulnerable groups in the district, such as low income families, unemployed persons, new arrivals, victims of family violence, single parent families, and proactively initiating contacts with them, and another 4.0% were very satisfied. Only about 9.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.44 below.[56]

Chart 4.44: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in understanding the needs and problems of the vulnerable groups and initiating contacts with them

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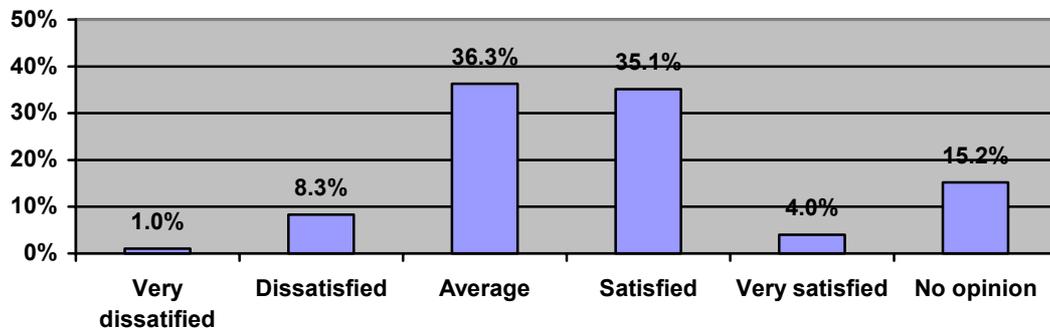
[56]　It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

51.   About 37.6% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district, and another 4.5% were very satisfied. Only about 9.3% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.45 below.[57]
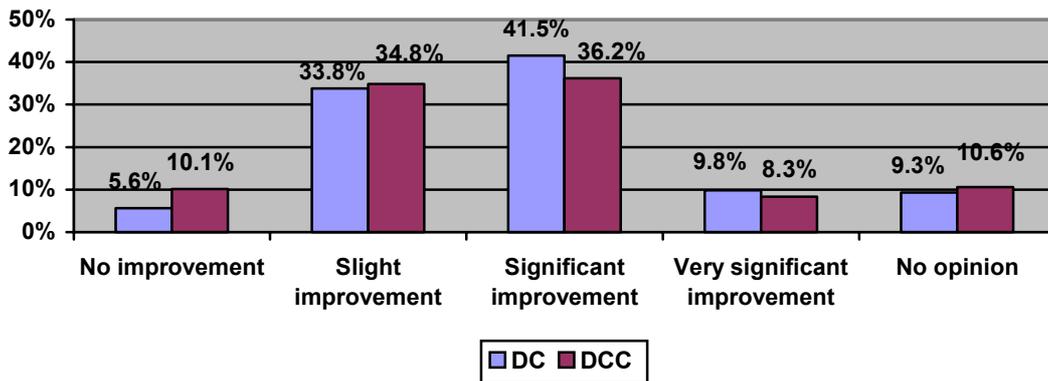
Chart 4.45: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting the understanding of district organizations & personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups
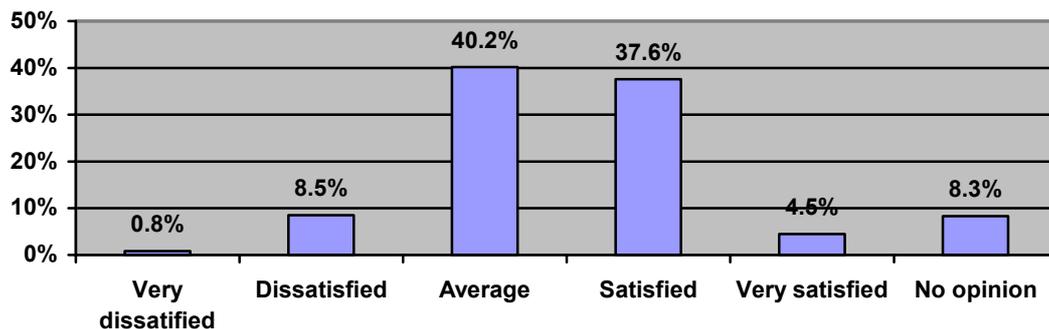
52.   About 38.3% of respondents were satisfied with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting outreaching and networking in the district to provide appropriate services to these vulnerable groups, and another 4.9% were very satisfied. Only about 7.6% were not satisfied or very dissatisfied. The percentage distribution of respondents by the degree of satisfaction is shown in Chart 4.46 below.

Chart 4.46: Percentage distribution of respondents by degree of satisfaction with enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in promoting outreaching and networking in the district to provide services to vulnerable groups

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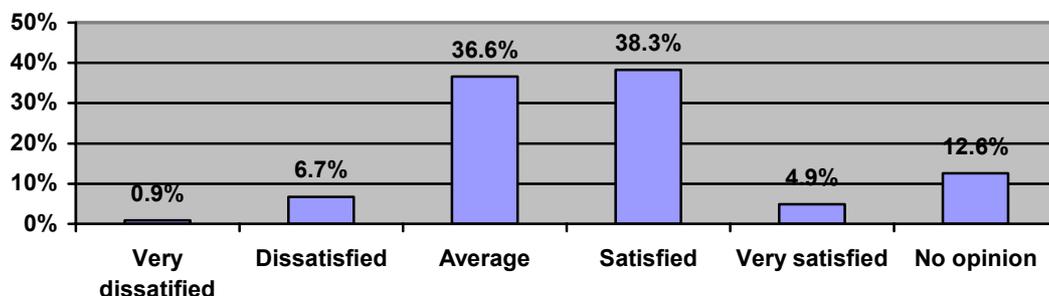
[57]   It should be noted that because of rounding, the percentages shown in the chart does not add up to 100%.

53.   The respondents were asked to give their overall assessment of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office in community networking and outreaching work. About 31.8% of respondents considered that there was significant improvement, and a further 6.2% considered that there was very significant improvement. Only about 8.6% considered that there was no improvement. The percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment of the extent of improvement is shown in Chart 4.47 below, showing comparative figures for DC members. It may be noted that DCC members were relatively less satisfied with the extent of improvement.

Chart 4.47: Percentage distribution of respondents by their assessment on the extent of improvement in community networking and outreaching work, for DC and DCC members
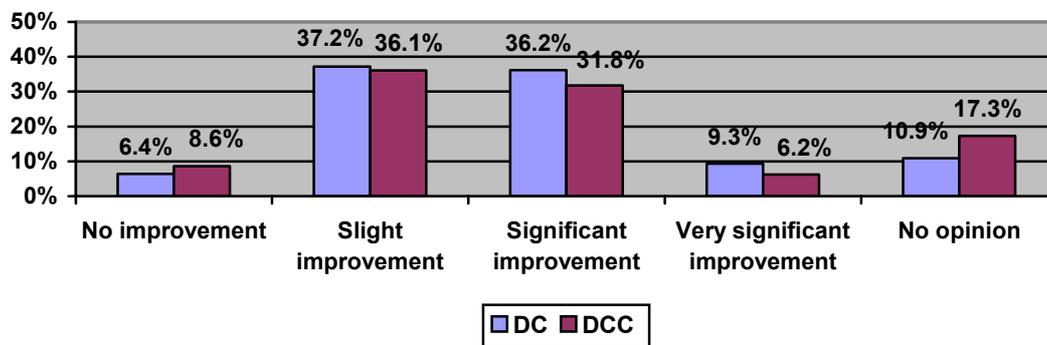
Summary of Respondents' Degree of Satisfaction

54.   To summarize, using a 5-point scale with 1 being "very dissatisfied" and 5 being "very satisfied" and excluding those expressing "no opinion", the average satisfaction scores for different aspects of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office are shown in the chart below. It may be noted that the scores for the various attributes are all above 3, indicating that the respondents were on the whole satisfied with various aspects of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office. And the respondents were most satisfied with District Social Welfare Office in the liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations and least satisfied with community networking and outreaching. It may also be noted from Chart 4.48 below that DCC members were comparatively less satisfied with the various aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, with the exception of community networking and outreaching.

Chart 4.48: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, for DC and DCC members
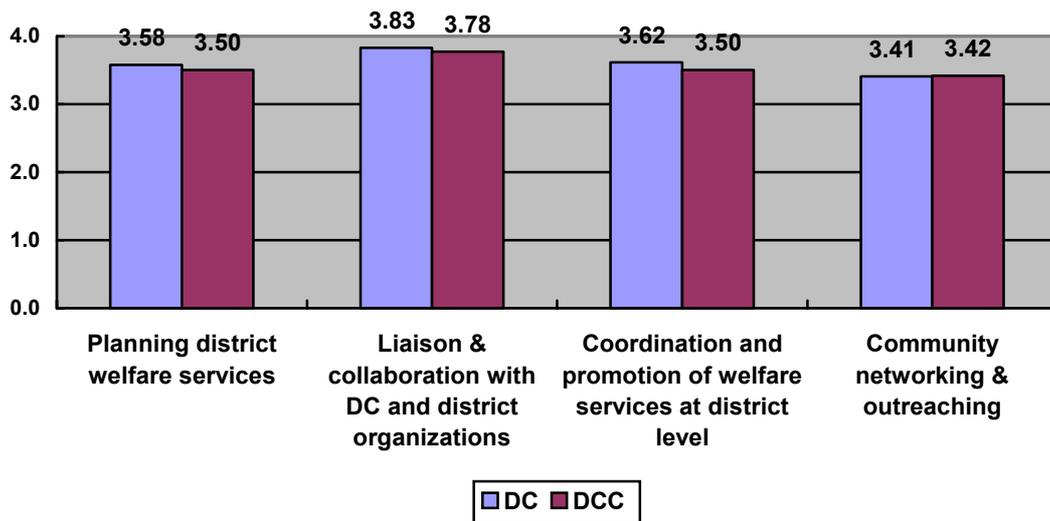
55.   Comparing the degree of satisfaction between members of different DCCs, it may be noted from Chart 4.49 below that DCC members on family and child and promotion of volunteer services were comparatively more satisfied, while DCC members on elderly and rehabilitation services were comparative less satisfied.

Chart 4.49: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, for different categories of DCC
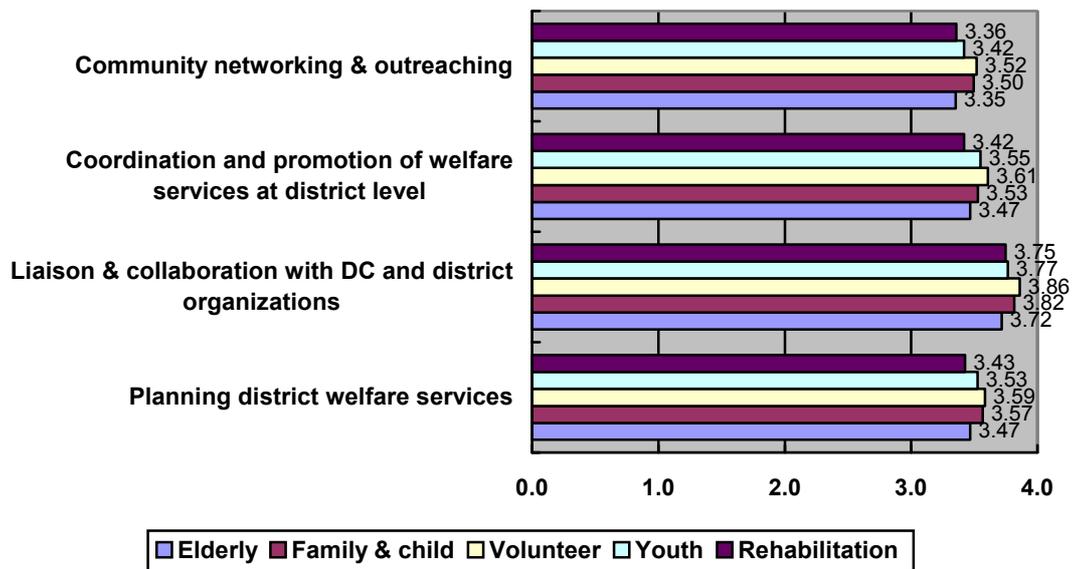
56.   When response is analyzed by the type of member/organization of the DCC members, it may be noted from Chart 4.50 below that DCC members from welfare agencies receiving SWD subvention were relatively less satisfied.

Chart 4.50: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, for different type of member/organizations of DCC members

Community networking & outreaching
- 3.56
- 3.44
- 3.49
- 3.28
- 3.67

Coordination and promotion of welfare services at district level
- 3.74
- 3.56
- 3.48
- 3.35
- 3.74

Liaison & collaboration with DC and district organizations
- 3.99
- 3.81
- 3.78
- 3.63
- 3.98

Planning district welfare services
- 3.70
- 3.69
- 3.53
- 3.33
- 3.80

0.0   1.0   2.0   3.0   4.0

☐ Govt dept   ■ Welfare agency receiving SWD subventions
☐ Welfare agency not receiving SWD subventions ☐ Service recipients
■ Others

57.   When analyzed by number of years serving in the DCC, Chart 4.51 shows that those who had served for over 4 years were relatively less satisfied than those who had served in the DCC for shorter period of time.

Chart 4.51: Average satisfaction score on different aspects of enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, analyzed by years serving in the DCC
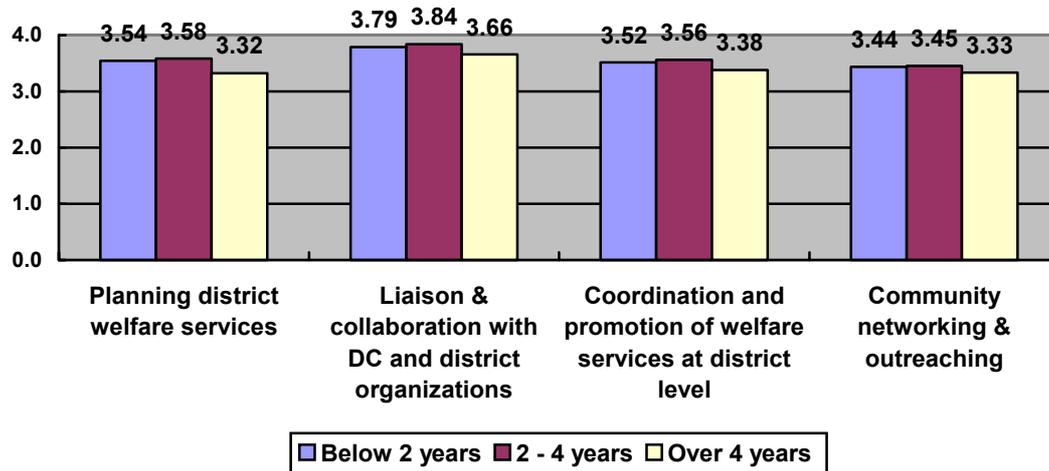
Discussion

58.   This survey is intended to provide an opportunity for key community stakeholders connected with the District Social Welfare Offices to rate the performance on the enhanced functions of the District Social Welfare Offices after the re-organization. The profile of respondents from DCs or DCSRCs showed that they represented a balance of experiences in DCs, political membership, and types of DC/DCSRC memberships. The profile of respondents from DCCs indicated that a slight majority of them were coming from SWD subvented NGOs, with the others from government departments, district organizations, education sector, service users, and DC members.

59.   For most DC/DCSRC respondents, they were satisfied with the four enhanced functions of the District Social Welfare Offices in all the items, and the proportion of dissatisfaction was small. Relatively speaking, we can divide the ratings into three levels according to the degree of satisfaction:
   a) Higher level (60-80% of the respondents expressed very satisfied and satisfied):
      – Actively following up enquiries and referrals from DC members on district welfare issues. (74.7%)
      – Maintaining close liaison, collaboration and partnership with DC and district organizations. (73.9)
      – Introducing and explaining the government's welfare policy to DC. (73.4%)
      – Providing updated information on welfare services. (66.5%)

- Implementing integrated social welfare service model. (66.5%)
- Explaining the core business of SWD. (64.6%)
- Promoting familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership between the welfare sector and other government departments, district organizations, and personalities from other sectors. (60.9)

b) Average level (50-<60% of the respondents expressed very satisfied and satisfied):
- Coordinating services provided by SWD and NGOs. (55.4%)
- Consulting and collecting views from the DC in the planning of welfare services in the district. (54.5%)
- Mobilizing district resources and encouraging district organizations or NGOs to develop service projects. (53.9%)

c) Lower level (35-<50% of the respondents expressed very satisfied and satisfied):
- Formulating district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans. (49.2%)
- Promoting outreaching and networking in the district to provide appropriate services to vulnerable groups. (44.2%)
- Promoting the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district. (43.9%)
- Reflecting the special needs and views of the district to SWD headquarters. (42.5%)
- Understanding the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district and proactively initiating contacts with them. (42.5%)
- Assessing district welfare needs based on objective evidence. (41.2%)

Overall, the DC/DCSRC respondents were impressed by the work of District Social Welfare Offices in explaining the government's welfare policy, following-up enquiries and referrals, maintaining close relationships, and implementing integrative services. In short, district liaison and collaboration followed by policy promotion were ranked higher and community networking and outreaching relatively lower in terms of satisfaction.

60.   Similarly DCC members also indicated an overall high level of satisfaction with the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices. Again, the extent of satisfaction on these items can be divided into three levels:
a) Higher level (60-80% of the respondents expressed very satisfied and satisfied):
- Promoting collaboration and partnership among welfare agencies and district organizations through coordinating and organizing district activities. (69.7%)
- Promoting familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership among the welfare sector and DC, other government departments, district organizations, and personalities from other sectors. (68.3%)
- Providing updated information on welfare services. (66.8%)
- Introducing and explaining the government's welfare policy to DCC. (63.6%)
- Providing updated social welfare related reference materials and

statistics in the district to district organizations. (60.0%)

b) Average level (50-<60% of the respondents expressed very satisfied and satisfied):
   – Mobilizing district resources and encouraging district organizations or NGOs to develop service projects. (57.2%)
   – Implementing integrated social welfare service model. (54.4%)

c) Lower level (35-<50% of the respondents expressed very satisfied and satisfied):
   – Coordinating services provided by SWD and NGOs. (49.7%)
   – Consulting and collecting views from DCC in the planning of district welfare services in the district. (44.7%)
   – Assessing district welfare needs based on objective evidence. (43.6%)
   – Promoting outreaching and networking in the district to provide services to vulnerable groups. (43.2%)
   – Formulating district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans. (42.6%)
   – Promoting the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district. (42.1%)
   – Understanding the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district and proactively initiating contacts with them. (39.1%)
   – Reflecting the special needs and views of the district to the headquarters. (37.0%)
   – Mediating the problems and difficulties between organizations in the process of service integration. (36.8%)
   – Assisting organizations to solve problems and difficulties. (35.0%)

61.   Comparing the average satisfaction scores between the two groups, DC/DCSRC respondents on average showed higher satisfaction than DCC respondents on the enhanced functions. In a similar rein, they both rated higher satisfaction with the functions of liaison and collaboration, followed by coordination and promotion of welfare services at the district level and planning district welfare services. Relatively, they accorded lower satisfaction with community networking and outreaching. As a relatively new function of the District Social Welfare Offices, DC/DCSRC members have yet to understand more about the needs and problems confronting the vulnerable groups in the districts, as well as the approaches and strategies adopted by District Social Welfare Offices in outreaching and networking efforts. They were impressed by the proactive approach of District Social Welfare Offices and welcomed the opportunities for more collaboration and partnership in helping vulnerable groups in the districts.

62.   Despite the fact that most stakeholders were generally satisfied with the enhanced functions of the District Social Welfare Offices, the representatives of SWD subvented NGOs in DCC accorded relatively lower score on most of these functions should be reckoned. Evidence showed that dissatisfaction was associated with the number of years serving in the DCCs. In particular, they were most dissatisfied with the District Social Welfare Office function of reflecting the special needs and views of the district to SWD headquarters, mediating potential problems and difficulties between organizations in the process of service integration, and assisting

organizations to solve problems and difficulties. These operational issues are closely related to the practical interests and benefits of NGOs. In short, under the current rapidly changing environment, NGOs are looking more to District Social Welfare Offices for assistance and support. Yet so far, they are not too satisfied with the assistance provided. Are they having unrealistic expectations or are these responsibilities underplayed by DSWOs?

5. Views from Key Community Stakeholders

Introduction

1.   The following descriptions represent the summary and initial analysis of the key findings based on focused groups with three groups of key community stakeholders. They included participants from DC and DCSRC members, DCC members, and other stakeholders.[58]

District Social Welfare Officer Role

2.   Most stakeholders shared more or less unanimous perception that the DSWOs after re-organization had become more enthusiastic, hard-working, conspicuous in district activities, responsive to requests, resourceful, and active in relating to district organizations. In some situations, they had no need to seek approval from SWD headquarters for decisions. The participants noted that the DSWOs, as higher ranking officers, could now have more authority to work with other government departments. Concomitantly, the latter had shown more respect to the DSWOs. Moreover, they had demonstrated better knowledge and understanding of the government's welfare policy and could provide better explanation to stakeholders. A DC member commended on the positive changes of the re-organized District Social Welfare Office:

> I have been in this district for some years, witnessing the upgrading of DSWOs from CSWO to PSWO. As compared with the past, I have found real differences. Under the leadership of a higher ranking officer, the District Social Welfare Office has become more outward-looking. The re-organization has changed the "close-door" image of SWD to become more open now. By treating those CSSA recipients as customers, it has really become more progressive……. At present, the DSWO has been very active in community networking. She participates in many district activities and events. She listens to the views of the district leaders and local residents, and can often reflect to them the needs of the district.

Similar observations were made by another DC member:

> In the welfare forum on community networking organized by the DSWO last year, the participants were divided into small groups to discuss how service provision could be flexibly arranged under the existing policy framework and how NGO services could be re-engineered. This is exactly the difference between the current DSWO and the one in the past.

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[58] Please note that findings in this chapter reflected the views and opinions of the focus groups participants only. They have not been testified with evidence, and the staff of the District Social Welfare Offices were not present at the focus groups to provide clarification with supplementary information or an alternative view from their angle. Since some community stakeholders may also have interest in certain welfare issues (e.g. having been one of the parties competing for allocation of a new service unit), hence their views on these issues must be weighed with prudence. The purposes and limitation of the use of focus group as a research tool in this Study are elaborated in paras. 14 – 17 in chapter 2.

3.   Most participants perceived and acknowledged the key DSWO role as a resource person, providing them with opportunities to meet other local people in the district, and supplying them with information and the necessary resource support (finance, expertise and networks) for programs. The PCTs would assist in making all the logistic arrangements and support for joint programs. Under the current environment of financial scarcity, several participants also recognized that more NGOs and district organizations would be looking to District Social Welfare Office for connecting them to district resources.

4.   On representing the interest of the district, most participants expected the DSWOs to reflect and advocate the district needs to SWD headquarters and to secure more central resource allocations. In addition, DSWOs were also expected to represent their interests to negotiate with other government departments for joined up actions and resource provisions. As compared with other community stakeholders, most NGO representatives claimed that DSWOs had fallen short of their expectations in this aspect.

5.   More importantly, DSWO was recognized as a "match-maker" by the DC members, DCC members, NGOs and district organizations. The DSWOs would connect them to community partners and district resources. Some District Social Welfare Offices had deliberately used the meeting venues of different NGOs and district organizations to facilitate familiarization, exchange and partnership, which were welcomed by most stakeholders. When applying for trust funds and government funds, such as charitable trust funds and CIIF, NGOs and district organizations had to rely on DSWOs for recommendations. Some district organizations claimed that they had to rely on District Social Welfare Office staff to help them complete the application forms for funding. DSWO could also assist NGOs and district organizations in locating and renting premises in public housing estates as office or service center, and applying for subsidized tickets to the Ocean Park.

6.   For NGOs, DSWO was perceived as the key service coordinator and could refer their service users to self-help groups and supportive services in the districts. DSWO was also expected to be a "trouble-shooter" for any organization having difficulties and conflicts. A non-subvented NGO representative recalled his experience with a DSWO in the process of reprovisioning its DN:

> We had encountered numerous problems in the process of reprovisioning our DN, such as the need to install special toilet facilities for handicapped children, funding application for renovation…….Thanks to the DSWO who had been very patient and helpful in sorting out all the problems for us, as well as advocating for our needs. This involved negotiation and coordinating with HAD.

Other examples of these "troubles" included the conflict between a school social worker and a school principal, building an elderly residential home on an outlying island with the problem of dangerous slopes, and the complaint lodged by service users on the quality of subvented welfare services. Apparently, some community stakeholders, especially those DC members and local personalities have not been fully aware that District Social Welfare Offices are no longer responsible for monitoring the service quality and performance of subvented welfare services run by NGOs.

7.   The NGO representatives stated that there were obvious service gaps which required intervention from DSWO. An example quoted by a NGO representative was

that the disabled children leaving special school hostels had to be accepted by shelter workshops. As a service coordinator, DSWO could play a vital role to make the necessary urgent arrangements through the relevant waitlisting system in the headquarters.[59]

8.   Several NGO representatives had expressed the probable role conflict of District Social Welfare Offices both as a service coordinator and a service provider. Since DSWOs were responsible for the supervision and monitoring of SWD service units, they might have a tendency to delegate tasks to their own service units rather than those of NGOs. In addition, some DC members might have confusion over the role of DSWO in managing SWD centralized service units. A DC member expressed his concern:

> Two years ago, the DSWO came to the DC to introduce her work in the district. She had presented a wide array of her duties and responsibilities. One thing which seemed unacceptable to me was her duty in administering a centralized service unit located in another district. Like the DO of the HAD, a DSWO should primarily be responsible for district affairs.

9.   The common consensus was that DSWOs were taking a strong leadership role, directing welfare service development and arrangements in the districts. Several NGO representatives even commented that facing such strong leadership, NGOs had become more passive and reliant on DSWO directives for joint actions.

District Planning

10.   There was a clear consensus among the community stakeholders that district planning was paramount to address district needs, avoid service duplications and enhance service effectiveness. The re-organization had brought together a wider network of professional expertise and community representation. Their views and support could better inform service planning and implementation.

11.   However, most stakeholders seemed to have a vague understanding on the operation of district planning and district plans. Several focus group participants referred to the plans introduced to DCSRCs and DCCs annually by DSWOs as district plans and the process of preparing these plans as district planning. Others would think that the business plan of DSWO as the district plan, and the work of PCT as district planning. In short, there was no commonly accepted district plans – with clearly defined objectives, strategy, implementation schedule, time frame, and monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Their impression was that their participation in the formulation of these plans was limited and the transparency of the planning process was not sufficient. Particularly, NGO representatives would find the planning process dominated and led primarily by DSWO.

12.   To the understanding of most stakeholders, there was no standardized, systematic, evidence-based, participative and acceptable mechanism in each district to

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[59] The Steering Committer clarified that this might have involved a special case in which urgent special arrangements were made between the DSWO and the headquarters, otherwise the standard procedure is to go through the relevant central waiting list in the headquarters.

assess district needs. Even though there might be a plan, it would be short-term, usually on an annual basis. Several stakeholders would expect a more long-term planning process, seeking more basic solutions to community problems.

13.   In the provision of district information, the most common approach of District Social Welfare Offices was to present the district census data, such as income level, population structures and crime figures. From these indicators, district needs would be inferred and service direction explored. Without an established and evidence-based approach, need assessment has been loosely-structured in many districts, and stakeholders did not seem to have a clear picture on district goals, priorities and strategy. More importantly, several NGO representatives expressed the concern that there seemed to have little follow-up action on planning. A DCC member stated his expectations in the following statement:

> Even though the presentation of district information by DSWO is "top-down", I have been impressed by its clarity and comprehensiveness. It really helps me to understand and analyze the district situation and needs. But I would expect more discussion and exchange on this information. More importantly, there should be more concerted decisions to act on this information.

14.   Most NGO representatives acknowledged that they had received more service information supporting their service planning, often through forums and meetings organized by District Social Welfare Offices. Yet according to their understanding, they had not been really involved in the formulation of district plans, and these plans on the whole lacked details and thorough discussion. Several participants had never heard of the existence of an accessible district databank, or had the experiences of using such data before. For some NGO representatives, they would demand not only more information but analysis as well.

15.   With regards to the information needs of different stakeholders, most DC members and other stakeholders would look for more general information on district needs and service situation. As compared with other government departments, they were impressed by the data provided by DSWOs. They would expect more detailed information on new pilot projects, numbers of school drop-outs and SWOT analysis. Even though the notion of a "district databank" was only in the process of formation, the community stakeholders had high expectations on the need for a comprehensive and accessible databank on district information.

16.   As compared with other stakeholders, the NGO representatives expected a more systematic and comprehensive planning mechanism. District plans, including the formulation of objectives and priorities, implementation and evaluation required more widespread and genuine consultation. According to the perception of many NGO participants, there was more emphasis of DSWO on service publicity rather than on district planning. DCC meetings were too infrequent to have thorough discussion. Others found that DCC meetings had been SWD headquarters-led, with emphasis on presenting slightly modified centrally-prepared information to explain new policy and programs. There was insufficient discussion on taking joined action.

17.   For most focus group participants, the unanimous view was that welfare plans and initiatives were more centrally formulated at the headquarters before making presentation to districts for consultation. Local views would be difficult to be incorporated into these plans. DC members would expect more consultations on the

re-organization of welfare services, such as the closing down of service centers and the formation of integrative services. For several DC members, they would expect local consultation of District Social Welfare Office to be extended to other district organizations, such as ACs, MACs and OIs. On the whole, the community stakeholders expected that district views should have more influence over the service planning processes both at the central and the district levels, and their views should be respected and listened to.

18.   According to the impression of several stakeholders, DSWOs had showed more enthusiasm to explain the government's welfare policy and seek support, rather than to listen to their views. Common examples quoted were the reduction of CSSA benefits and the disbandment of GWUs. A DCC member remarked sarcastically on the consultation process in DCC meetings:

> We just come and listen to reports. *That's consultation!* I am not sure whether the views raised during the meetings are really taken seriously. For example, some DCC members had once raised concerns over the reduction of CSSA benefits. But I doubt whether these views had been systematically recorded and reflected upwards to the policy-makers.

For those DC members, more understanding of the new initiatives was important for them to introduce these initiatives to their constituencies. They need time to understand and seek feedback from their constituencies before constructive comments could be made. Not surprisingly, their common impression was that they were being "informed" rather than being "consulted" on welfare policies. Some were puzzled by the situation in which the DSWO supported a local initiative, but was turned down by SWD headquarters. Oftentimes, according to a DC member, the common answer to his enquiries by the DSWO was "waiting for central directives".

19.   For most NGO representatives, one of their primary concerns was the relationship between the headquarters and DSWO. Until now, most NGO representatives expressed concern that they were still unclear about the division of responsibility between the headquarters and DSWO. Examples of confusion included the role of DSWO in staffing arrangements of new services, application for funding support for center renovations, allocation of new services based on competitive bidding, and policy formulation. The general impression was that the degree of decentralization was limited, and the headquarters was still in command over all the major policy decisions. After the re-organization, most policy decisions had been made with little consideration of district needs. At best, the DSWOs could only make minor or marginal adjustments to execute the centrally formulated plans in the districts. In short, most community stakeholders expressed that the DSWOs had been much more effective in transmitting communication downwards from the headquarters than relaying district views upward. Essentially, the DSWOs were seen as promoter and implementer of central policy of the headquarters.

20.   For NGO representatives, they expressed concern over inconsistencies of policies between/among districts and between districts and the headquarters, particularly over the allocation of resources. They expected more transparency over the headquarters-district relationship and their division of labor. According to their understanding, many decisions over the closure of centers were centrally made. Due to rapid changes in welfare policies, a participant expressed that the DSWO had not been kept abreast with updated changes and could easily become "out of touch".

Oftentimes, the frustration of some NGOs in the re-provision of services is understandable. A NGO representative remarked grudgingly:

> It is quite frustrating to learn that a new service unit has already been reserved for re-provision of another NGO. This is unfair and not transparent! District planning for new service units should be more open and responsive to district needs.

21.   Generally, all the participants were familiar with the participative and consultative structure of DC and working groups, DCC and working groups, locality meetings and informal meetings. Particularly for people who were not members of these structures, they welcomed some of the regular briefing sessions and seminars on district and policy issues. In short, these structures have built up a strong community network comprising some critical community stakeholders. They are the "critical masses" which have strong linkages with the community.

22.   Many of the stakeholders, particularly those from district organizations welcomed district forums where a much wider sector of the community had been represented. They could learn more information on district welfare developments, annual plans of DSWO and district social needs. Through these forums, they had the opportunity to meet more people and develop their community partners. Some participants found these forums too general and without focus. Supplementary to these large forums, many stakeholders would expect more seminars, focusing on specific district issues, such as family violence, suicide and youth delinquency.

23.   On the one hand, there were successful stories on how the District Social Welfare Offices had demonstrated their effectiveness in identifying and responding to district needs. Examples included housing re-development, opening of sports complex for young night drifters, and services for ethnic minorities and elderly people in remote villages. On the other hand, there were also stories where participants claimed that the District Social Welfare Offices had failed to act on. Examples included gambling behaviors among elderly persons and youth gangs.

24.   Most community stakeholders would expect to be more informed on district information, involved in joined actions, and consulted on welfare policies. More importantly, they would expect to have more influence in the formulation of district plans; and centrally-made welfare plans should take the district needs into considerations.

District Relationships

25.   Most stakeholders, especially those from the "other stakeholders" category, found the District Social Welfare Offices staff after re-organization more friendly, open, and sincere. The re-organized DSWO structure has allowed more flexibility and direct communication with SWD headquarters. For most DC members, they now became more clear about what to look for from the District Social Welfare Offices. Their relationship with District Social Welfare Offices had improved and strengthened with more exchange of information and collaborations. District Social Welfare Offices had been more responsive to their enquiries and case referrals. Now new initiatives could come from DSWOs, rather than from DC as in the past. For examples, DC members had been invited by DSWOs to make visits to NGO services

centers, such as care and attention homes and children and youth centers. On the whole, DC members had a stronger intention to collaborate with District Social Welfare Offices. They would expect to receive more information, be consulted on welfare issues and collaborate on joined action. Many of them would even expect an after-office contact telephone number to contact DSWO for immediate advice and case referrals.

26.   A DC member commended on the work of the DSWO:
The District Social Welfare Office has been very cooperative in promoting communication between SWD and DC. The District Social Welfare Office has provided full documentation on the social policy to be introduced to the DC. Presentations include detailed information and pictures. Her introduction has been very clear…….Our DC would organize a series of activities each year on the International Rehabilitation Day. The program was financed by the DH. But the support from the District Social Welfare Office was considered crucial in facilitating the collaboration with schools and district organizations to make the event a success.

27.   Another DC member opined that in the past, the DSWO would mainly act as the "executive arm" of DC, i.e. as a direct service provider.[60] Now, the DSWO would often act as a mediator, and delegate the executive responsibility to NGOs. A stakeholder claimed that NGOs, because of their heavy workloads, were not reliable partners. Overall, many DC members perceived the role of DSWO in DC meetings and DMC meetings as passive. Welfare policies and issues had not been popular on the meetings' agenda.

28.   For other stakeholders, relationship with District Social Welfare Office was largely remote in the past. After the re-organization, they had been approached more actively by District Social Welfare Offices, and hence became more connected and engaged with the District Social Welfare Office system. District Social Welfare Offices staff would pay more visits to their organizations, and invited them to attend DCC meetings as observers. Meanwhile, District Social Welfare Offices could provide assistance to them in terms of service information, service promotion and resource provisions. District Social Welfare Offices could also assist them in the delivery of gift packs, mooncakes, and winter clothes to vulnerable populations in the districts. In other words, they could become more accessible to vulnerable populations through the District Social Welfare Offices community network. Some would also expect District Social Welfare Offices to supply them with volunteers for program activities and flag days.

29.   Most focus group participants were aware of the strategic shift of DCC to widen community participation through extending the membership to other non-NGO sectors. Most of them supported the need to widen community participation in the DCCs. However, there were different views on the re-focusing of DCC. Some community stakeholders found that the DCCs were mainly focused on introducing and discussing new services and policy, and there was insufficient planning for joined action. Others would expect more consultation on welfare policy and planning rather than on joint activities, such as campaigns and carnivals. On the other hand, several

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[60] This statement appears to be the personal opinion of the participant only. The Steering Committee clarified that DSWO has never been an executive arm of DC.

DC members claimed that they had difficulties in understanding some of the technical details of service re-engineering discussed in the meetings.

30.   Both district organization representatives and DC members appreciated the opening up of the DCCs' membership. Through these meetings, they could gain more understanding of welfare issues. A PTA chairman commented:

> In the past, DCC meetings were brief. They could be over in less than an hour, with little thorough discussions. It gave us the feeling that it was meeting for the sake of meeting. Now we can have updated service information in every meeting and the discussions could be more focused. I feel that that work of District Social Welfare Office has become more transparent!

In contrast, a NGO representative expressed a somewhat discouraging view:

> Now, the DCC meetings are more like a briefing session. The policy decisions have been finalized. The DSWO simply tells us what they are going to do and expects us to do this and that. I feel strongly that our relationship with the District Social Welfare Office has become more distant. In the past, the DCC had initiated a lot collaborative projects and our relationship was more close. If we had any needs, we could contact the REO directly. Now I really don't know who to contact.

31.   For DC members and other district organization representatives, they would expect the DCCs to include more of them as members. A district organization representative commented grudgingly:

> How can you exclude our district organization with 30,000 grassroots members from the DCC membership? In spite of several requests made to the District Social Welfare Office, we have not even been invited to attend DCC meetings as observers!

Other stakeholders like principals and representatives from PTAs were also strategic community partners of District Social Welfare Office relaying district information to their constituencies. They also perceived that the DCCs had limited resources for program allocations, and more resources were coming from the DCs. Even with closer relationship, they still thought that District Social Welfare Office's primary partnership was with NGOs. They quoted an example that the welfare service directory published by District Social Welfare Offices usually included only services provided by SWD and NGOs, and rarely covered services offered by district organizations. A district organization representative remarked:

> Our information and many other social service agencies are not included in the current service directory published by the District Social Welfare Office. I think that the inclusion of district organizations and non-subvented NGOs into the directory can help promote exchange and collaborations. In particular, many district organizations have rich manpower resources and local networks.

Many district organizations had the impression that NGOs had "monopolized" the District Social Welfare Office resources, which should be more open to other district organizations.

32.   As compared with the past, the NGO representatives in the DCCs recognized that there were more meetings and the meetings were more lengthy. In general, they supported the changes of DCC, yet many changes required consolidation

and institutionalization. With wider membership, the community representation of DCCs had been enhanced. This could broaden members' perspectives and enable better decisions. A DCC representative remarked:

> After the re-organization, we have more community contacts and liaison with local personalities, in particular, we have more collaborations with DC members. There are DC members in all the DCCs in our district. Apparently, district relationships between the stakeholders have widened and improved, and there are much more collaborations.

Another DCC member echoed similar comments:

> I feel that there has been more district liaison and exchanges. With DC members in the DCC, they come to understand our services better, which can facilitate service development and pave the way for future collaboration.

33.   However, since most DCC members were from large NGOs and district organizations, there was a concern that small NGOs and district organizations would be excluded from DCC structures. A NGO commended on the added value of involving district organizations:

> By connecting other district organizations into the District Social Welfare Office system, welfare services can be enriched by the spiritual and emotional support provided by these organizations. I am impressed by the DSWO who had identified a number of privately-operated homes for the aged which required volunteer visits. The arrangements for volunteers from district organizations to visit residents in these homes have injected energy into the district.

34.   With widened representation, the DCC membership was inevitably expanded to over 20 people, i.e. beyond the original upper limit of 20. Oftentimes, there would be over 30 people attending DCC meetings, including those in attendance and District Social Welfare Office staff. Most participants of the focus groups agreed that DCC meetings had been too pre-occupied with presentation of information, and little time had been devoted for in-depth discussion and analysis. Several NGO participants sensed that the meeting dynamics had insidiously changed from the focus on service coordination to the introduction of welfare policies. As a NGO representative explained:

> With an average of only four meetings each year, some of the issues discussed might be easily outdated. By including other non-NGO members, the discussions have become more general and "superficial".

Many NGO representatives claimed that they needed other channels, such as more working groups to focus on professional issues of need assessment, service coordination and development. For some NGO participants, they expressed some frustrations that their views had not been registered and followed up by District Social Welfare Offices, and little feedback was provided later.

35.   Again, the impression of the DCC members, particularly for those NGO representatives, was that welfare policies were too centrally determined, and local consultations had been tokenistic. In other words, they perceived that there would be very little room or extremely difficult for policy modifications to accommodate the district views. For those non-DCC members, most of them would expect to be informed about the discussion and decisions in DCC meetings. They would expect to have accessibility to DCC meeting minutes via district websites (which do not exist

currently). As many community issues would cut across the boundaries of different DCCs, many NGO representatives began to recognize and endorse the need to strengthen cross-DCC collaborations, particularly between family and youth services.

36.   Most DC members did not perceive the functions between DCCs and DCSRC as overlapping. Some even regarded their functions as complementary to each other. According to their understanding, DCSRC usually had a wider focus and a wider representation. In short, no one from these focus groups regarded the functions of these committees as duplication, and they were perceived to have different but related functions and foci.

37.   Besides DCCs, key community stakeholders could be involved in locality meetings which were based in a smaller geographical district (such as AC) where local NGOs representatives and key stakeholders could be involved. These committees therefore would cut across different service functions. Oftentimes, the District Social Welfare Offices would enhance their communication with key community stakeholders through luncheon meetings, visits and community events.

38.   District Social Welfare Offices were expected to develop and cultivate new relationship with district organizations, but the emphasis might vary from district to district. Whilst some showed marked connection with PTAs and schools, others were to faith organizations or women's organizations. A PTA representative was most impressed with the initiative of the District Social Welfare Office staff:

> In our district, parent education programs are badly needed, so we set up our PTA. SWD was the first government department to contact us. The staff of the District Social Welfare Office has been very enthusiastic participating in our activities, even on Sundays. We can plan programs together to tailor for the needs of parents and teachers, and they help us to contact the PTA of every school in the district and then organize joint activities, such as seminars and workshops. We feel more close to the District Social Welfare Office now. We know that we can approach them for any sort of advice and assistance we may need.

39.   On the whole, the District Social Welfare Offices had greater difficulty in developing steady collaborative relationships with business organizations. Business representatives were hard to find in DCCs. Understandably, the business sector is paramount to contribute invaluable resources and opportunities in the districts, such as the promotion of employment opportunities to vulnerable populations. Members of district organizations had become the key targets for preventive family life education and parenting education. In return, they could also serve as a resource for volunteering and program funds, as well as a source for referring individuals or families with difficulties to welfare services. As targets of consultation, the representatives from district organizations perceived that the District Social Welfare Offices had become more transparent and open. They had gained more understanding on their functions and roles. Through the District Social Welfare Offices, they could seek help and establish collaboration with other district organizations and NGOs.

40.   In general, District Social Welfare Offices could now seek more information from other government departments on related district issues. According to the community stakeholders, other government departments had been quite passive in responding to the re-organized District Social Welfare Office. Some DCC members

perceived that the contribution from representatives of other government departments was limited, and usually confined to the provision of information. This can be accounted for by the different policy foci and considerations of the various government departments. Unfortunately, some of the DSWO initiatives had been impeded by the lack of support from other government departments. Examples given by the NGO representatives were the resettlement of street sleepers and the setting up of health centers for drug addicts.

Service Coordination

41.	With a more proactive approach, the District Social Welfare Offices were perceived by most stakeholders to be able to coordinate district organizations and NGOs effectively for concerted action, without the need to seek approval from the headquarters. On the whole, the participants perceived that many welfare policies were formulated at the headquarters. Oftentimes, these policy and programs had very standardized provisions which allowed little flexibility to address special local needs. Some of the service gaps and inadequacy were more the outcomes of the central policy of SWD headquarters where the District Social Welfare Offices could do very little. These issues might include the insufficiency of residential places for elderly people and the mentally handicapped. A NGO representative shared his keen observation that while the District Social Welfare Office had showed more cross-sector and cross-service collaborations, SWD headquarters was still divided according to services in policy planning.

42.	For NGOs, the participants lamented over the more diluted relationship with District Social Welfare Offices after re-organization. Some stated that in the past, the REO and YO would pay regular visits to their centers as part of their duties. Now with the establishment of the PCT, their relationships and interaction did not seem to be clearly defined and institutionalized. Making visits to their centers was not perceived as a mandated duty of PCT. This could be clearly reflected in a remark made by a NGO representative:

> The PCT staff members are really hard working and they often take up key coordination and implementation roles in joint activities with a variety of district organizations. Oftentimes, their energy has been tied down by these booming district activities. ……I really miss the good old days when the REO would come and visit us regularly to discuss service development and any difficulties we might encounter in our daily operations. Our relationship was much closer then.

43.	Some NGO claimed that the competency of the PCT was too generalized and they lack the expertise to guide the development of specific services, particularly those operated by NGOs only. As a NGO representative declared in a meeting: "Our agency has been running various kinds of elderly services in the district for nearly thirty years. We are fully aware of the service needs of the elderly and how best to deliver them. How could you expect the PCT that has no direct experiences in elderly services to steer our service development?" For other stakeholders, they were not too familiar with the operation of PCT, and did not know clearly who within the PCT they should contact in case of need.

44.   The perception of NGOs on the role performance of DSWO varied according to their past experiences. For those NGOs that had secured effective assistance from the DSWO in the re-engineering process, their evaluation was naturally positive. Accordingly, the DSWO was perceived as helpful and understanding. In contrast, those who had suffered losses in the re-engineering process, such as forced to close down their centers, their experiences was bitter and would inevitably claim that the DSWO was not helpful at all.

45.   Views from DC members and other stakeholders suggested that they might have a perception on welfare services different from the welfare sector. Their general impression was that there were serious service duplications and fragmentations, particularly in elderly and youth services. For examples, an elderly user could receive similar or different services from several different NGOs in the same district. Similarly, a youth could be approached by different NGOs providing youth services. These examples underscored the inefficient use of limited resources. According to their perceptions, the rapid service re-organization had also created some confusion over service boundary and operators. In effect, they could not make appropriate referrals for services. In some cases, they could not understand why some referrals were rejected by some NGOs, and oftentimes, even the DSWOs could not provide them with a convincing explanation.

46.   In addition, they felt that the focus of welfare services was more on the vulnerable populations, such as single parents and new arrivals, while the needs of the general population were neglected. A local resident remarked:

> Now social welfare services have a clear direction and are focused on serving the vulnerable groups, and those people like us who are not regarded as "vulnerable" have received less attention and services than before. We can only be included as volunteers to serve the vulnerable groups.

Similar comment was echoed by another DC member:

> I have raised the need to serve the middle class in our DCC meetings, but my suggestion was not even recorded in the minutes of that meeting. Middle class people are facing tremendous stresses these days, such as negative equity, parenting difficulties and mental health problems. They deserve more attention from the government.

47.   Several community stakeholders experienced confusion because of the differences in policy responsibility between SWD and other government departments. For example, the change of policy responsibility on uniform groups from the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau to the Home Affairs Bureau had led to the termination of some uniform groups previously attached to NGO service centers.

48.   Oftentimes, District Social Welfare Offices had to fill the service gaps themselves, rather than delegating the tasks to NGOs. For example, the PCT in a district approached several hotels to collect surplus food and delivered them to elderly service centers.

49.   The capacity of District Social Welfare Offices to react to district issues and crises varied from district to district. Take for example in the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis, some stakeholders praised the prompt responses from the District Social Welfare Offices in their districts in mobilizing the community

resources to tackle the crisis situation. Their ability to mobilize volunteers for house cleaning and provide essential materials such as face masks and thermometers was highly praised. Whereas in other districts, the NGO participants were critical of the District Social Welfare Offices' slow and ineffective responses. Not only was the supply of essential materials much belated, the long-awaited operational guidelines from the District Social Welfare Offices were not available. Another example quoted by the participants was the poor coordination of children and youth service in a district to cope with the rising demands for services after school closure. In another example, the coordination between SWD service units and those of NGOs in paying home visits to vulnerable targets in the district was apparently poor. Some families had been visited again and again. In addition, the NGOs also expected the DSWO to assist them to negotiate with the headquarters over the issue of declining attendance of service users as a result of SARS. They were extremely worried that they might not be able to attain the service output standards prescribed in the Funding and Service Agreement (FSA) Requirements. In addition, they also perceived that the coordination between different government departments during the SARS crisis was difficult.

Service Outreaching

50.   For many non-NGO stakeholders, they could hardly differentiate the work between FSNT and PCT. Not all the stakeholders were aware that District Social Welfare Office, mainly through the FSNT, was involved in outreaching work. For those who knew the operation, they in general praised the proactive approach of FSNT to reach out to those hard-to-reach vulnerable groups, such as elderly people living alone and new arrivals. They also recognized the more widespread publicity work of FSNT to publicize family and youth services through street stalls. However, their overall impression was that the service network was still not broad enough to reach some people in need. It was commonly believed that some people were over-served by welfare services, while others in real need were still unconnected. They provided some examples wherein some elderly people in the community had been frequently visited by different welfare services. It was discovered that some of them had received several gift packs provided by different service operators.

51.   The service foci of social welfare were more on CSSA recipients, new arrivals, single parents, single elderly and the existing users of NGOs. Put alternatively, non-CSSA participants and non-participants of NGO programs were not included. With the thriving needs of programs and services to reach out for users, service providers inevitably would feel the pressure to meet the FSA requirements. A NGO representative passed criticisms on the current outreaching service model:

> Everyone now is "scanning" the district to identify their service recipients. We have to look for elderly caregivers which are difficult to locate. Hence, we have difficulties in fulfilling the FSA requirements. At present, many different service providers, including NGOs are conducting home visits and making community outreach efforts. It seems that no one actually has a clear picture on the situation of the vulnerable groups and how to locate them. You have to work really hard, and try every means to identify them. There should be a review on this outreaching service model.

Discussion

52.   To most focus group participants, it was too early for them to detect discernable changes, shift and impacts of the work of District Social Welfare Offices after the re-organization. The impression was that many District Social Welfare Offices were still in the process of consolidating their working plans and operations. Changes had been more subtle, and the performance of District Social Welfare Office enhanced functions was yet to show results. Not surprisingly, a few stakeholders claimed that they could find no clear differences in the approach and functions of District Social Welfare Offices after the re-organization. Such a confusion over the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office was captured by the following remark made by a NGO representative:

> Yes, I reckon that the District Social Welfare Office has carried out a lot of district liaison and resource planning work. But are these the enhanced functions or what the District Social Welfare Office should be doing just as before?

53.   Evidently District Social Welfare Offices have enhanced their roles and functions or community profile. But it is a misconception that they have been transformed or re-invented radically. Many of the changes have been gradual, continual, incremental and subtle. Many stakeholders are still in the process of re-defining their role in the district planning process and their relationship with District Social Welfare Offices.

54.   On the whole, most community stakeholders appreciated the more proactive approach of District Social Welfare Offices to make community contacts, establish cross-sector and cross-service working groups on community projects, and facilitate communication and the exchange of views. The key community stakeholders found that District Social Welfare Offices, as compared with other government departments, were more active in making community contacts, widening community participation, introducing new initiatives, disseminating essential information, explaining and seeking consultation on welfare policies, and providing practical support. District Social Welfare Offices had become more responsive to their requests and referrals. According to some comments, the re-organization of District Social Welfare Office should be a learning example for other government departments.

55.   At this stage, the mechanism for district planning is only emerging. Most community stakeholders were expecting a more standardized approach whereby they could participate actively all through the district planning processes, i.e. formulation, implementation and evaluation. At the same time, they also expected greater transparency which could be promoted through more publications and sharing on the criteria for committee membership, allocation of funding and planning processes. Indeed, the structure and format of these participatory structure including DCCs, working groups, locality meetings and community forums have to be improved and standardized. Without a more standardized approach, it would be difficult to compare district needs and performance, and to allocate resources rationally.

56.   From the list of focus group participants, the community network of the District Social Welfare Offices are very representative, involving a wide sector of the community, representing different professional expertise, social and welfare services, government departments and public organization, district organizations, and interest

groups. In other words, District Social Welfare Offices have established a vital community network and mechanism whereby community resources could be pooled together for joined up action and a platform for two-way communication on welfare policies and programs vertically between the districts and SWD headquarters, and horizontally between the community stakeholders within the same district. The community network of the District Social Welfare Offices has been extended. Yet there are still rooms for further improvement through strengthening collaborations with community stakeholders. Many of them are looking for more opportunities to strengthen their community relationships and partnerships with others. Evidently, the District Social Welfare Offices can promote more opportunities to facilitate the horizontal development of relationship and mutual trust among district organizations, government departments and NGOs. Many district organizations would find the District Social Welfare Office platform accessible and friendly. In return, they could be expected to be more involved in district activities, ceremonies, celebrations and events. The crux of the question is whether District Social Welfare Office is supported with the necessary resources to carry out this function.

57.   The communication network is vital to promoting partnerships. The community stakeholders expected that the communication network of the district can be strengthened through formal and informal meetings, mutual visits, newsletter, and district website. Within such a website, the local residents can learn about news on community events and where and whom to look for assistance. For community stakeholders, they can identify key community partners for joint projects or referrals, learn about new welfare initiatives, personnel changes, and the activities of the committees (e.g. via minutes of the DCC meetings).

58.   With more open membership in the DCCs and the diversification of the District Social Welfare Office work focus to include district organizations, the implicit tension between NGOs and district organizations is inevitable. There is an emerging sense of competition particularly between NGOs and district organizations for resources and DCC membership. Many NGOs would naturally have the feelings that District Social Welfare Offices now are paying less attention to their needs, while district organizations would have the perception that District Social Welfare Offices are still representing the interests of NGOs. With a wider representation, District Social Welfare Offices might experience difficulties in balancing different or even conflicting interests and perspectives. A balanced representation in the DCCs and how to involve a wider cross-sector representation in the District Social Welfare Office mechanism is a formidable challenge. In view of the need to facilitate more understanding on welfare issues by community stakeholders, an institutionalized and strengthened mechanism for providing information and explanation on welfare policies and initiatives, as well as seeking feedback is paramount.

59.   On the whole, all the community stakeholders would expect more information, more resources, more publicity, more opportunities for participation, and more influence on decisions. They showed strong desire to play a more active part in the district planning and consultation process. District Social Welfare Office has become a key communication platform between SWD headquarters and community stakeholders. Many district organizations and NGOs have to rely on District Social Welfare Offices for updated information on community needs and welfare policy development, as well as resources for programs. There is a need to clarify the division of responsibilities between SWD headquarters and District Social Welfare Office, and

to ensure effective, accurate and fast communication between District Social Welfare Office and the headquarters.

60.   All the key community stakeholders understand that the workload of the District Social Welfare Offices is extremely heavy. According to their understanding, the re-organization of District Social Welfare Office means that 'the boss (i.e. DSWO) was upgraded without real additional of manpower resources. Facing mounting work pressure and ever-expanding working boundaries, there is an urgent need to clarify, redefine and delimit the roles and functions of District Social Welfare Office. What are the reasonable requests from community stakeholders? What should be the core businesses of SWD in the districts? These important questions require some clear answers.

6. Conclusions: Building Community Partnerships

Key Findings

1.   Overall feedback from key stakeholders both through the questionnaire survey and focus groups on the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office has been very positive. In the survey, the key stakeholders were largely satisfied with the performance of the District Social Welfare Offices, and the proportion of dissatisfaction was very small. Focus group participants also indicated a general support of the re-organization of SWD. Simply put, the re-organization has been welcomed by the community stakeholders, and the re-organized District Social Welfare Offices have been perceived as more effective and responsive than the former SWD district operational structures. Stakeholders were impressed by the hardworking, pro-active, consultative and helpful approach of the District Social Welfare Office staff. According to them, DSWOs are better informed and knowledgeable about the government's welfare policy, responsive to their requests, and resourceful in providing assistance, as well as in a better position to negotiate with other government departments for collaborations.

2.   The consultants are impressed with the commitment and support of the District Social Welfare Office staff toward the re-organization. Under the leadership of the DSWOs and the "cohesive, dynamic and proactive" team culture of the staff, District Social Welfare Offices demonstrated pride and ownership to their achievements, capacity to handle complicated job challenges, and willingness to innovate. They recognized their achievements in areas such as establishing and sustaining good relationship with district stakeholders and outward-looking and proactive approach to tackle community issues. District Social Welfare Offices vary significantly on their approach and strategy to execute the enhanced functions. Yet they all have built up a strong network of community partnerships for promoting the quality of community life.

Planning of District Welfare Services

3.   In the planning of district welfare services, the survey indicated that stakeholders were relatively more satisfied with the functions of introduction and explanation of the government's welfare policies, and the provision of updated information on welfare services. Relatively lower ratings were found in the functions of reflecting the special needs and views of the district to SWD headquarters. On the whole, DC members and DCSRC members were more satisfied and perceived more significant improvement in the performance of the District Social Welfare Offices than DCC members, particularly in the areas of explaining the government's welfare policies, DC/DCC consultations, and formulations of welfare strategies. Both groups of stakeholders expected more support on assessing community needs.

4.   After the re-organization, District Social Welfare Offices have been given greater authority, responsibility and influence in welfare service planning. DSWOs are expected to provide detailed district information and reflect local sentiments to inform the headquarters on policy and service planning. There are a number of outstanding examples where proposals from DSWOs have been incorporated to

modify the original plans of the headquarters. In seeking community consultation, District Social Welfare Offices have been able to use a variety of methods to connect a wide range of district stakeholders and to solicit their inputs.

5.   DCC is the main mechanism for district planning. As reflected from the membership, DCCs have been able to draw in a more diversified and representative community participation beyond NGOs. More recent community partners include DC members, representatives from NGOs not receiving SWD subventions, district organizations, other government departments, and service users. The wider circulation of meeting minutes and the sit-in attendance of non-core members have further opened up the DCC mechanism. Nevertheless, representatives from the business sector are still limited.

6.   In general, DCCs should follow the planning cycle of "need assessment – formulation of objectives and strategy – monitoring and evaluation". Noteworthy is the fact that DCC, being focused on a specific type of service or target group, does not represent the overall district plan. The overall district plan would be formulated by synthesizing the DCC plans together by District Social Welfare Offices. Most DSWOs would present the overall plan to DCSRCs and to key stakeholders in community forums. Some DSWOs would involve stakeholders in undergoing district strategic planning and SWOT analysis.

7.   One of the key duties of DSWO is to perform district need assessment. Community stakeholders on the whole welcomed the information, such as Census data, crime figures, service statistics and user profiles provided by the DSWOs. Noteworthy is the fact that different stakeholders would have different information needs. To many NGO operators, they would expect more comprehensive information and analysis on welfare provisions to support their organizational planning. To other community stakeholders, they were largely satisfied with some general information on the district situation, which seemingly no other government departments would prefer to provide this service. In addition, most District Social Welfare Offices would perform community need assessment and consultation through community forums, focus groups, surveys and committee meetings. To encourage local flexibility in carrying out need assessment, there is no standardized protocol shared by all District Social Welfare Offices on need assessment.

8.   There are a variety of examples whereby District Social Welfare Offices had demonstrated their effectiveness in identifying and responding to district needs. Community stakeholders were particularly impressed by the role of District Social Welfare Offices in pooling them together to provide assistance to residents under the comprehensive redevelopment program of public housing estates, ethnic minorities, elderly people living in remote villages, and young night drifters.

9.   All effective planning should consist of some basic ingredients. Planning should be vision-guided, with clearly defined objectives, strategy, business plan, implementation schedule, time frame, and monitoring and evaluation mechanism. To many stakeholders, district planning is loosely-structured, and has not been vigorously pursued. Particularly, there is a need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation on outcomes of the plans. In line with the growing public demand for accountability, stakeholders would expect feedback on the performance of the district plans.

10.   Admittedly, district planning is only an emerging concept. To a lot of stakeholders, district planning remains illusive and largely DSWO-led or DSWO-centered. On the whole, the participation of stakeholders in the formulation of district plans has been limited. To increase the ownership of these plans, there is a need to strengthen their participation all through the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.

11.   For community stakeholders, they would invariably expect the DSWOs to act as an advocator, communicating with SWD headquarters to reflect district concerns and to negotiate for more resources. However, when the headquarters turn down their district proposals, they would express disappointment over the functions of DSWO. Community stakeholders, particularly NGO operators have to comprehend that the authority of DSWO is more in operational matters, rather than in policy-making decisions. The role of DSWO in the policy-making and policy implementation processes has to be clarified, particularly on the division of work between district and the headquarters. In essence, close interfacing between district and the headquarters is central to facilitate the effectiveness of District Social Welfare Office's enhanced functions. To provide incentives to community stakeholders, the headquarters has to demonstrate that district views carry weight in the policy formulation processes, and be ready to handle different district views and preferences in an open and accountable manner.

12.   Indeed, consultation has become an integral part of District Social Welfare Office functions and is a prerequisite for program learning. There is a general expectation among all stakeholders that there should be more local and open consultations on welfare service planning. Community consultations should be extended to include more district organizations and personalities. However the existing practice of consultations may easily give an impression that the policy undergoing consultation has already been finalized, and the role of DSWO is to "inform", "sell" and "market" the policy. Consultations should avoid being perceived as adopting a "decide-announce-defend" approach. To be sure, consultations would raise the expectations of stakeholders. We have to be prepared to make some changes, otherwise one should not ask for their views.[61]

Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations

13.   In the survey, both groups of stakeholders were largely satisfied with the liaison and collaborations of District Social Welfare Offices with DC and district organizations. But DC members and DCSRC members had rated higher improvements in this area than DCC members. Overall speaking, stakeholders endorsed the strategic shift to widen and strengthen community partnerships at the district level. To this end, the re-organization of the District Social Welfare Offices has been regarded as successful.

14.   Through sincere invitation and active collaborations, more DC members and personalities of district organizations have been connected and included into the district planning mechanism. Their interests in social welfare have been stimulated through joint planning and projects, as well as visits to local service centers. Still,

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[61] Audit Commission, U. K Government. *Listen Up! Effective Community Consultation* (17 November 1999). www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

social welfare issues have not been accorded with a higher priority on the agenda of DC and DMC meetings. The roles and functions of DSWO in District Administration should be more articulated and recognized. In specific, SWD should be a core department in District Administration.

15.　　Now the District Social Welfare Office system has become a focal point for district organizations and personalities to interact and exchange resources, and to explore collaborations. They can participate through a variety of channels, such as DCCs, locality meetings, and working groups. On specific community issues, such as family violence, suicide and youth delinquency, they would be invited to participate in information sharing seminars. In addition to the provision of interaction opportunities, DSWOs would provide assistance in terms of vital district information, referrals for funding and resource support, professional expertise, connections to relevant services, access to vulnerable groups, and arrangements for joint programs.

16.　　According to the stakeholders, DSWOs have also been recognized as a "match-maker". DSWOs can connect organizations together to form partners for district programs and service providers to funding support. Support from DSWOs is recognized as vital to secure funding support from trust funds and funding bodies, such as the Hong Kong Jockey Club and CIIF. More district organizations are looking for DSWOs to facilitate their applications for funding support on program expenses. In this way, it is expected that more district organizations and personalities would approach or be connected to the District Social Welfare Office networks for partnerships. Meanwhile, as the district representative of SWD, DSWOs have to act as a "trouble-shooter" for all sort of welfare-related problems. District organization representatives and personalities would approach DSWOs to make complaints on service quality or to resolve inter-organizational conflicts. To many community stakeholders, they may not know that District Social Welfare Offices are no longer responsible for monitoring service performance and quality of subvented services run by NGOs. The confusion may also arise because District Social Welfare Offices are still responsible to monitor the performance of SWD service units and those community projects subsidized not through the current subvention allocations. Often, being close to the operations, the Subventions and Performance Monitoring or other branches/section of the headquarters would invariably seek comments from DSWOs on the performance and track record of NGOs or their services units when they apply for other funds (e.g. CIIF) or premises. Taken together, the monitoring role of District Social Welfare Offices has to be clarified.

17.　　The re-organization has established a wider community network of professional expertise and interest representation. This enhanced function was rated as the most successful of all. This cross-service, cross-sector, cross-departmental, and cross-professional participative system centered on the District Social Welfare Offices is vital for informed service planning and effective service implementation.

Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services

18.　　In the coordination and promotion of welfare services, the survey findings indicated that DC members and DCSRC members had again perceived higher improvements than DCC members. They were particularly impressed by the implementation of integrated services. DCC members showed less satisfaction in the areas of reconciling the problems and difficulties between organizations in the process

of service integration and assisting organizations to solve problems and difficulties. Perhaps the limitations of DSWO in dealing with individual organizational problems have to be appreciated by NGOs.

19.   With widened, enlarged and diversified participation, the focus of DCCs has already moved away from the coordination of welfare services. Stakeholders perceived the main function of DCCs more as a welfare forum for receiving information on welfare development. With about four meetings a year, it would be difficult for DCCs to have thorough discussion on welfare development and initiate joint programs. Furthermore, the title of these committees does not fully reflect their new focus and functions.

20.   From the formation of integrative family services centers and youth services to the re-engineering of community-based elderly services, the role and contribution of DSWOs have been increasingly reckoned and regarded as exemplars of success. In the coming re-engineering of family services centers, the role of DSWO will be more prominent. In addition, the role of District Social Welfare Office in initiating key community projects addressing urgent social needs has been acknowledged by community stakeholders.

21.   In relating to the re-organized District Social Welfare Offices, NGOs have to learn how to re-structure and maintain their new relationships. Some had expressed the uncertainties of not having a specific subject officer, such as the YO or REO in the past, in liaison with their service. Some admitted that they were still in the process of finding out how to work with PCTs. Others also expressed that the PCTs did not have the relevant professional experiences to lead and coordinate the service development for some services or target groups. To be sure, most NGOs are still struggling in the process of how to reposition themselves and build up their strategic relationships with District Social Welfare Offices in specific and with other community stakeholders in general.

22.   For most non-NGO stakeholders, their conceptions on welfare services and their mode of delivery would be different from that of professional social workers. They may expect social welfare services to serve a larger target population beyond single parents, single elderly, the disabled, CSSA recipients, and families at risks. They may also have different interpretations on how services should be organized, such as the drawing of service boundaries, allocation of new service centers, and interfacing between different services. With a more diversified participation, DSWOs would expect more challenges and differences in views on social welfare policies and services.

Community Networking and Outreaching Work

23.   In comparing with other functions, community networking and outreaching work had been regarded as less satisfactory by both groups of stakeholders. DC members and DCSRC members had rated relatively higher than DCC members in recognizing the improvements. Perhaps, the majority of the stakeholders may not have enough knowledge on the work of FSNT. Many could not even differentiate the work between PCT, FSRC and FSNT. Nevertheless, community stakeholders acknowledged that there were more service promotional activities through street stalls

and home visits. But they were not certain about the effectiveness of these outreaching efforts.

24.   In the coordination of service delivery to meet district welfare needs, one of the common initiatives of the DSWOs is to re-deploy the local SWD service units. In responses to identified service gaps, community issues and crisis, as well as individual tragedies, PCT and FSNT have been central in re-deploying resources to reach out to the target groups and address their needs. However, in the light of rapid development of other community-based outreaching services, such as those in family, youth, and elderly services, the role of FSNT, administered under District Social Welfare Office, should be reviewed.

An Appraisal

25.   The re-organization of the District Social Welfare Offices has only been implemented for over a year. Admittedly, it is not expected to have a thorough evaluation on the effectiveness and impact of the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Offices. While most District Social Welfare Offices have only started to consolidate their working plans and operations, discernable and conspicuous changes would be difficult to detect. Noteworthy is the fact the re-organization represented only a strengthening of some of the former functions, rather than a radical transformation of the direction and operations of District Social Welfare Offices. In many of the districts, the "new" DSWOs have been the same persons before the re-organization. A few are totally new to the districts. As such, many of the improvements are gradual, subtle and impressionistic, rather than dramatic.

26.   In the first year of implementation, the District Social Welfare Offices had been experimenting with a wide array of initiatives to strengthen their community partnerships and capacity to address community issues. Indeed, many District Social Welfare Offices are still in the process of re-evaluating their first-year experiences and making adjustments to re-assess their objectives, strategy and outcomes for the second year. For many community stakeholders, they are also in a process of redefining their role and reconsidering their commitments in the district planning process and their relationships with District Social Welfare Offices. Some NGOs have been undergoing decentralization or regionalization to enhance their responsiveness to district planning. Therefore, this evaluation exercise can provide a timely and objective feedback and learning for the institutionalization of the District Social Welfare Office functions. In addition, the present Study has served the educational purpose of raising the awareness of the community stakeholders to the re-organization and functions of District Social Welfare Office.

27.   Even though the re-organization proposal of SWD had been introduced to all the DCs, LegCo Welfare Panel, DCCs in a number of centrally and locally-organized briefing sessions, the understanding of community stakeholders on the functions of District Social Welfare Offices in operation remains vague and is only emerging. Many community stakeholders are still in the process of clarifying their expectations realistically on what is district planning; what are and what are not the duties of District Social Welfare Office in practice; how can they strategically relate to the district planning mechanism; and the division of responsibility between district and the headquarters in policy formulation and resources allocation. In the process of learning about the operations of District Social Welfare Office in practice, it is

inevitable that misunderstandings will exist. The focus group participants, from time to time, had shown unrealistic expectations towards the functions and roles of District Social Welfare Office and DSWO.

28.   In terms of the outcomes, evidence suggests that the re-organization has widened the community network and partnership of SWD beyond NGOs receiving SWD subvention to DCs and district organizations. The DSWOs have effectively energized and motivated the interests of more DC members and district organizations in welfare issues. More importantly, the re-organization has successfully connected more DC members and district organizations to the district planning processes. In fact, the new partnerships do not only stimulate more interests in social welfare issues, they have improved their understanding on social welfare policy and services, as well as the image of SWD. They would no longer see SWD as a department mainly associated with relief work. Instead, SWD is now perceived as a progressive department taking up more preventive, outreaching and proactive functions. To the understanding of the consultants, SWD seemingly is the only government department that would actively and systematically seek consultations on their policies at the district level. The interests, inputs and support of community stakeholders will enhance the local attention and commitments on welfare issues. Other government departments have been friendly in providing the necessary support, such as information and resources. Yet there are rooms to explore more joint and cross-departmental collaborations and coordination.

29.   Coupled with the more open and diversified community participation, the function of District Social Welfare Offices has also been extended from service coordination to the mobilization of local resources to address locally identified social issues. Since social welfare services are intricately interwoven with issues related to health, leisure, housing, employment, education, public security, community building and elderly care, it is evident that the DSWOs have become a key player in community issues involving cross-sector, cross-service, and cross-departmental collaborations. More importantly, the widened participation strategy has brought in new additional community resources, such as funding and volunteering to support welfare programs. The new partnerships with district organizations and business sector have demonstrated that there are untapped resources in the community which can be mobilized for community improvement projects.

30.   Community stakeholders were impressed by the high-profile and friendly approach of DSWOs. District Social Welfare Offices were rated by many district organizations as the most helpful government department in the districts. In fact the policy emphasis of SWD on community partnerships should be a learning example for other government departments. They perform the roles as "match-maker" (between NGO and district organizations), "resource-provider" (information and funds), "advocator" and "mediating bridge" (between district and the headquarters), and "service provider" (follow-up enquiries, case referrals and direct services).

31.   While NGOs have shown overall support to the re-organization, they seem to have higher expectations on how the re-organization would affect their operations and district relationships. With the inclusion of more diversified interests in the District Social Welfare Office operations, NGO representatives felt that they are no longer the sole partner in district planning and coordination. In fact, many of them found their relationships with District Social Welfare Offices have been "diluted". As

compared with other community stakeholders, NGOs would require more support from District Social Welfare Offices. The message that NGOs are still the core strategic partners of SWD has to be re-confirmed and re-assured.

32.   In summary, the formation of an initial community welfare network, centered on the District Social Welfare Office, comprising NGOs, DC members, residents' organizations, faith organizations, interest groups, service users or user groups, and other government departments has taken shape. These stakeholders would expect to be better informed, consulted, and supported. They are ready for more cross-sector collaborative involvement in district social welfare activities, and would look for more influence on the policy-making processes. Different from the governance of a hierarchically organized organization, DSWOs are facing a formidable challenge to "manage" and "lead" these networks or clusters of organizations and personalities. Members of the network are linked together by a variety of exchange relationships (exchanging resources, information, influence and support), which are voluntary, and not mandated by laws, regulations and contracts. In short, the effective operation of this community network will largely depend on the trustful relationships between DSWOs and community stakeholders.

33.   With widened representation, these cross-sector and cross-service community forums can facilitate the exchange of views and mobilization of local resources to address community issues. The District Social Welfare Offices have provided the enabling and championing role to create these networks. This "critical mass" is paramount to provide policy feedback, mobilize local resources for concerted and joint actions, and support new welfare initiatives. At issue is how these established networks can be sustained and their institutional capacity empowered. Finally, District Social Welfare Offices will be a vital planning mechanism of SWD in facilitating the vertical interfacing between district and the headquarters and the partnerships horizontally among community stakeholders.

34.   For the effectiveness of district planning and the well-functioning of District Social Welfare Offices, there is a need for DSWOs to provide the leadership that can inspire vision, enthusiasm and commitment and command the trust from other community partners. The culture of collaboration has to be built whereby mutual trust can be nurtured. In view of the growing complexity of community dynamics, the ability of DSWOs to create trustful partnerships and sustain vision-guided joint actions is a formidable challenge. Even though such a culture is difficult to define precisely, it is vital to the success of the enhanced District Social Welfare Office functions. It has been found that the essential ingredient to successful partnerships and engagement with community stakeholders has less to do with process and more to do with "attitudes". The organizational culture is influenced by the senior management and most important of all, the DSWO who provides the leadership.

35.   Overall, the community stakeholders are supporting the direction that District Social Welfare Offices should aim at promoting community partnerships. DSWOs should therefore provide the leadership at the district level to engage key stakeholders as partners in developing and achieving the shared vision, and providing the supportive environment for cross-sector and cross-departmental collaborations.

36.   Finally, there is a need to re-examine the primary objective of district planning, which would have important implications on the focus and position of the

re-organized District Social Welfare Office mechanism. Is district planning aimed at improving service coordination or building community partnership? If it is targeted at improving service coordination, we would expect a clear division of responsibility about job management or governance, passive participation, short-term adjustment of efforts and limited interaction with stakeholders. In contrast, if it is targeted at building community partnership, there should be common vision and objectives, mutual trust, long-term collaboration, active relationship with stakeholders, as well as the building of new resources to address local identified needs.

Recommendations

a) The enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office should be further clarified and explained to key community stakeholders through various means and channels. There should be publications, such as leaflets introducing its structure and functions, including its enhanced functions, in plain language.

b) There is a need to establish and consolidate the district planning framework and mechanism – need assessment, formulating a common vision, objectives and community strategy, and establishing a monitoring and evaluating mechanism. Without a more standardized approach to assess community needs and district planning, there is no way SWD headquarters can have an objective basis for resource allocation and assess performance. Key stakeholders should be actively involved to increase their sense of ownership. The planning mechanism should be supported with relevant training on planning.[62] In view of the fact that district planning is an emerging operational process, there should be a mechanism for the key staff of District Social Welfare Offices to share their experiences, challenges and learnings on a regular basis.

c) To acknowledge the importance of district inputs, the influence and role of district comments and district needs in policy-making should be further strengthened and demonstrated.

d) There is a need to review the DCC mechanism in terms of its role and functions, structure and composition. The setting up of a district-level welfare council may be considered through the setting up of some pilot projects. The district welfare council will have a wider community representation and a cross-service, cross-departmental and cross-sector focus. It can act as a local forum on welfare policy and a platform for promoting joint actions. But the notion of a district welfare council may overlap with the work of DCSRC. Under the council, there may be service or issue related working groups or sub-committees. In addition, local welfare committee at the level of a sub-district or area can be promoted. As an interim measure, cross-service or DCCs collaborations should be encouraged to be in line with the government's policy to promote policy and service integration and to avoid service fragmentation.

e) Even though District Social Welfare Offices have successfully connected more DC members to district planning, the role of DSWO in DMC, DC and DCSRC can be further strengthened. It is important that district planning has to be connected effectively to the District Administration system.

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[62] The concern that the staff of District Social Welfare Offices "should be equipped with relevant training on the planning mechanism with a view to developing a common understanding on the subject" was recorded in one of the internal meetings of the SWD held on 28 January 2002.

f) To support district planning, there is a need for an effective and affordable district information management system – databank, program activities and resources. The system would cater to the needs of government departments and district organizations, service providers, DCs, service users and residents. There should be a clear analysis on the information needs of different community stakeholders and how to provide the information appropriately.

g) Facing a more diversified, competing, and politicized participation structure, there is a need for DSWOs to maintain a transparent, open, impartial, balanced, and fair approach to all the community stakeholders. With a more heterogeneous participatory structure, it would inevitably induce tensions and competition among stakeholders. To do so, DSWOs have to be equipped with the political skills in managing competing expectations and interests, lobbying support and mediating conflicts. In welcoming the entry of other community stakeholders into the district planning system, District Social Welfare Offices should reaffirm NGOs as their core partners.

h) Increased responsibility should be matched with supporting resources. The continuous extension of community networks is both labor and resource intensive. The demands from community stakeholders will be staggering. This Study can encourage District Social Welfare Offices to reflect on and refocus its efforts and resources to the core business of SWD and to select strategic partners into the community networks. At the same time, there may be considerations on how to redeploy more manpower support to the work of PCTs in district planning and coordination.

Appendices

I.   Members of the Consultant Team

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Miss CHAN Lai-chu   Social Work Officer (Strategic Planning)
(Secretary)   Social Welfare Department
                      (from 18 August 2003)

III. Focus Groups held by the Consultant Team

IIIa.   List of Initial Focus Groups with Community Stakeholders

<u>Focus Group</u>	**Date**	**No. of Participants**
DC Members	March 13, 2003	9
DCC Members	March 14, 2003	14
Other Stakeholders	March 15, 2003	13
Total no. of participants		36

IIIb. List of Focus Groups with District Social Welfare Office Staff

<u>SWD District</u>	***Date of Visit***	***No. of Participants***
Central, Western and Islands	April 25, 2003	10
Eastern and Wan Chai	May 2, 2003	13
Southern	May 12, 2003	10
Kwun Tong	May 15, 2003	12
Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung	May 6, 2003	7
Kowloon City	May 3, 2003	8
Sham Shui Po	April 30, 2003	8
Yau Tsim Mong	April 22, 2003	9
Sha Tin	April 16, 2003	9
Tai Po and North	April 17, 2003	7
Yuen Long	May 7, 2003	7
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	April 22, 2003	7
Tuen Mun	April 22, 2003	8
Total no. of participants		115

IIIc. List of Focus Groups with Community Stakeholders

SWD District	No. of Participants		
	DC Members	**DCC Members**	**Other Stakeholders**
Central, Western and Islands	6	11	9
Eastern and Wan Chai[63]	11	6	9
Southern	7	9	8
Kwun Tong	9	10	8
Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung	3	11	5
Kowloon City	7	8	10
Sham Shui Po	8	12	9
Yau Tsim Mong	7	9	5
Sha Tin	5	13	6
Tai Po and North	7	12	6
Yuen Long	9	10	7
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	2	9	9
Tuen Mun	3	9	12
Total no. of participants	84	129	103

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[63] Focus group meetings were held for Eastern DC members and Wan Chai DC members separately, and the total number of participants were 6 and 5 members respectively.

IIId.   Discussion Guidelines for Focus Groups with Stakeholders

A.   *For DC/DCSRC members*

1. Planning of District Welfare Services
    *   Are you adequately informed of the welfare development in your district, e.g. welfare needs, priorities, resources and development strategy, district welfare plan /business plan?
    *   How is welfare planning conducted in your district?
    *   How does the District Social Welfare Office identify, assess community needs, and set priorities?
    *   Who are the people/various parties involved in the process of district welfare planning?
    *   Have you been consulted on views related to the government's social welfare policy and/or district welfare issues? How was the consultation conducted?
    *   How well is the existing district welfare plan meeting the welfare needs of various groups in the district?
    *   What are your suggestions to improve district welfare planning?

2. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations
    *   What do you observed is the present relationship between the District Social Welfare Office, District Council and other district organizations?
    *   Comment on the leadership role of the District Social Welfare Office, inclusive of the roles and functions discharged by the DSWO, ADSWO(s), PCT, FSNT, etc.
    *   How does the District Social Welfare Office facilitate and promote cross-sector networking, collaboration and partnership? Comment on the roles and functions played by DSWO, ADSWO(s), the PCT and FSNT, etc.
    *   What improvements would you like to see in the future?

3. Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level
    *   What are your views towards integrated services/projects in your district? Comment on their responsiveness to district needs.
    *   How does the District Social Welfare Office co-ordinate services provided/operated by the Social Welfare Department and those by non-governmental organizations?
    *   Are there any service gaps and/or duplication? What can be done to overcome such problems?

- How does the District Social Welfare Office identify/mobilize district resources in responding to district needs and problems? Comment on its flexibility and/or appropriateness in re-deployment of resources in the district.

4. Community Networking and Outreaching Work
   - What are the observed needs and problems of vulnerable groups in your district?
   - Comment on the impact of the approach and work of the District Social Welfare Office to help these vulnerable groups?

5. Overall Comments
   - What are your expectations towards the District Social Welfare Office?
   - What do you perceived are the respective roles and functions of the Home Affairs Department and the District Social Welfare Office in your district? Are they complementary?
   - (If some participants are DCC members as well) What do you think about the roles and functions of the DC welfare related committee and those of the DCCs? Are they complementary or overlapping?
   - Do you have any other views on the enhanced District Social Welfare Office functions after the re-organization?

B. **For DCC members**

1. Planning of District Welfare Services
   - Are you adequately informed of the welfare development in your district, e.g. welfare needs, priorities, resources and development strategy, district welfare plan/business plan?
   - How is welfare planning conducted in your district, e.g. planning cycles?
   - How does the District Social Welfare Office identify, assess community needs, and set priorities?
   - Who are the people/various parties involved in the planning process?
   - Have you been consulted on views related to the government's social welfare policy and/or district welfare issues? How was the consultation conducted?
   - How well is the existing district welfare plan meeting the welfare needs of various groups in the district?
   - What are your suggestions to improve district welfare planning?

2. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations
   - What are your views towards the roles, functions and composition of the DCC after the re-organization of the Social Welfare Department? Comment on its strengths and limitations.
   - How does the District Social Welfare Office facilitate and promote cross-sector networking, collaboration and partnership? Comment on the roles and functions played by DSWO, ADSWO(s), the PCT and FSNT, etc.
   - What improvements would you like to see in the future?

3. Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level
   - What are your views on the decision making process of the implementation of integrated services/projects in your district?
   - What are the issues involved in the re-engineering processes, e.g. fairness in deciding whether service units of SWD or NGOs would take up those services/projects, responsiveness of integrated services/projects to district needs, etc.?
   - How does the District Social Welfare Office coordinate services provided/operated by the Social Welfare Department and those by non-governmental organizations?
   - Are there any service gaps and/or duplications? What can be done to overcome such problems?

- How does the District Social Welfare Office identify/mobilize district resources in respond to district needs and problems? Comment on its flexibility and/or appropriateness in re-deployment of resources in the district.

4. Community Networking and Outreaching Work
   - What are the observed needs and problems of vulnerable groups in your district?
   - Comment on the impact of the approach and work of the District Social Welfare Office to help these vulnerable groups?

5. Overall Comments
   - What are your expectations towards the District Social Welfare Office?
   - What is the impact of the Social Welfare Department's re-organization on your Committee/agency? Do you encounter any problems or difficulties at the district level?
   - (If some participants are DC members/DCSRC members as well) What do you think about the roles and functions of the DCSRC and those of the DCCs? Are they complementary or overlapping?
   - Do you have any other views on the enhanced District Social Welfare Office functions after the re-organization?

C. For Other Stakeholders

1. Planning of District Welfare Services
    *   Are you adequately informed of the welfare development in your district, e.g. welfare needs, priorities, resources and development strategy, district welfare plan/business plan?
    *   How is welfare planning conducted in your district?
    *   How does the District Social Welfare Office identify, assess community needs, and set priorities?
    *   Who are the people/various parties involved in the planning process?
    *   Have you been consulted on views related to the government's social welfare policy and/or district welfare issues? How was the consultation conducted?
    *   How well is the existing district welfare plan meeting the welfare needs of various groups in the district?
    *   What are your suggestions to improve district welfare planning?

2. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations
    *   What is your relationship with the District Social Welfare Office and other district organizations?
    *   Have you been involved in any joint projects or activities with the District Social Welfare Office?   Any major observations or comments.
    *   How does the District Social Welfare Office facilitate and promote cross-sector networking, collaboration and partnership? Comment on the roles and functions played by DSWO, ADSWO(s), the PCT and FSNT, etc.
    *   What improvements would you like to see in the future?

3. Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level
    *   What are your views towards integrated services/projects in your district? What are the issues involved in the re-engineering processes, e.g. fairness in deciding whether service units of SWD or NGOs would take up those services/projects, responsiveness of integrated services/projects to district needs, etc.
    *   How does the District Social Welfare Office coordinate services provided/operated by the Social Welfare Department and those by non-governmental organizations?
    *   Are there any service gaps and/or duplications? What can be done to overcome such problems?

- How does the District Social Welfare Office identify/mobilize district resources in respond to district needs and problems? Comment on its flexibility and/or appropriateness in re-deployment of resources in the district.

4. Community Networking and Outreaching Work
   - What are the observed needs and problems of vulnerable groups in your district?
   - Comment on the impact of the approach and work of the District Social Welfare Office to help these vulnerable groups?

5. Overall Comments
   - What are your expectations towards the District Social Welfare Office?
   - What do you observed are the major improvements and limitations resulting from the re-organization of the Social Welfare Department in the district?
   - Do you have any other views?

IIIe. Profile of Participants in the Focus Groups for DCC Members

SWD District	NGO	Education Sector[64]	District Organization[65]	Government Departments / Public Organization[66]	Business Organization	Others	Total
Central, Western and Islands	11						11
Eastern and Wan Chai	5		1				6
Southern	6	1		1		1	9
Kwun Tong	10						10
Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung	11						11
Kowloon City	8						8
Sham Shui Po	11					1	12
Yau Tsim Mong	8			1			9
Sha Tin	11	1		1			13
Tai Po and North	9	3					12
Yuen Long	8	1			1		10
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	8	1					9
Tuen Mun	7	2					9
Total no. of participants	113	9	1	3	1	2	129

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[64]   The education sector included school principals, representatives of parents-teachers associations and a student affair officer.
[65]   The district organization was a women association.
[66]   They included representatives from HD, HKPF and HA.

IIIf. Profile of Participants in the Focus Groups for Other Stakeholders

SWD District	NGO	Education Sector[67]	District Organizations[68]	Government Departments[69]	Local Personalities	Service User / Resident	Others	Total
Central, Western and Islands	2	5	2					9
Eastern and Wan Chai	8			1				9
Southern	3	2	1		1	1		8
Kwun Tong	5	1	1		1			8
Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung	4		1					5
Kowloon City	5		2	1			2	10
Sham Shui Po	5	1	2	1				9
Yau Tsim Mong	1	1	3					5
Sha Tin	6							6
Tai Po and North	1	3	1		1			6
Yuen Long	5		2					7
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	9							9
Tuen Mun	8	1			1	2		12
Total no. of participants	62	14	15	3	4	3	2	103

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[67] The education sector included school principals, representatives of parents-teachers association, school liaison committee, and a student service centre.
[68] District Organizations included women associations, faith organizations, Kaifong associations and a resident association.
[69] They included representatives from HD, HAD and the Junior Police Call (HKPF).

IV. Schedule of Familiarization Visits

SWD District	Date of Visit	Consultant Team
Central, Western and Islands	March 19, 2003	Ms. Grace LEUNG Dr. Ernest CHUI Dr. Caroline YEUNG
Kowloon City	April 12, 2003	Dr. Joe LEUNG
Kwun Tong	April 10, 2003	Dr. Joe LEUNG
Sham Shui Po	April 10, 2003	Ms. Grace LEUNG
Southern	April 8, 2003	Prof. Iris CHI Miss Hilda LAM
Tai Po and North	April 8, 2003	Dr. Joe LEUNG
Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	March 20, 2003	Dr. Joe LEUNG Ms. Donna WONG
Tuen Mun	April 3, 2003	Ms. Donna WONG
Yau Tsim Mong	March 27, 2003	Dr. YEUNG Ka Ching, Mr. WONG Yu Cheung
Yuen Long	April 15, 2003	Dr. YEUNG Ka Ching, Mr. WONG Yu Cheung

V. Guidelines of Self-Assessment Report

1   Brief Background of District Social Welfare Office
   1.1   History
   1.2   Organizational structure
   1.3   Changing roles and functions in the district(s)
   1.4   Relationship with Headquarter
   1.5   Community relations
   - Membership of district-based committees/platforms, e.g. DC/related social welfare committees of DC, DFCC, AC, etc.
   - DCCs
   - Other government departments
   - Others stakeholders: subvented/non-subvented NGOs, community organizations, community leaders, users, etc.

2   Community Needs
   2.1   Background information of the district(s)
   - Boundaries, population, demographic characteristics
   - Economy, housing, health, mobility, etc.
   2.2   Needs and problems in the district(s)
   - Social needs assessment based on surveys, social indicators, key informants, user's feedback, etc.
   - Nature and scale of problems and needs identified

3.   Business Plan
   3.1   Strategic planning 2002-03
   - Vision, foci and priorities
   - Strategies
   3.2   Aims and objectives
   3.3   Strategic initiatives & new developments
   3.4   SWOT analysis on the district(s)
   3.5   Additional resource input

4.   Achievement and Impacts of the Effectiveness of District Social Welfare Office's Four Enhanced Responsibilities and Functions covering District Welfare Planning, Liaison and Collaboration with DC and District Organizations, Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services, and Community Networking and Outreaching Work.
   4.1   Outcomes

4.2   Indicators/yardsticks of performance

4.3   Evidence, e.g. feedback of partners and service users

4.4   Difficulties, barriers and coping strategies adopted

4.5   Comparison of past and present performance before and after re-organization, what are the differences? What are the strengths and challenges?

5   Good Practice Examples (THREE Examples)

5.1   Specific areas

5.2   Services

6   Suggestions for Future Development/Improvements:

6.1   District welfare planning

6.2   Liaison and Collaboration (with DCs/DCCs and other stakeholders)

6.3   Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services

6.4   Community Networking and Outreaching Work

6.5   Relationship with Headquarter

List of Documents required by the Consultant Team

a)   Business plan

b)   District profile

c)   Need assessment

d)   Organization chart

e)   Meeting minutes

  •   District Social Welfare Office (staff meetings)

  •   DC/welfare related DC meetings

  •   DCC meetings

f)   Enquires statistics and action taken

g)   Other relevant reports/documents

Remarks: If the required information for this report can be found in the documents submitted, please specify. You may wish to give further elaboration as deemed appropriate for the purpose of this study.

社會福利署地區辦事處擴大職能後的效能評估研究問卷調查

(區議會議員或區議會轄下與社會服務相關的委員會委員)

參考編號：＿＿＿＿＿＿

甲部：對社署地區福利辦事處擴大職能後的評估

請問你對社署地區福利辦事處在<u>過去一年內</u> (即二零零二年四月一日至二零零三年三月三十一日)在以下四項的主要擴大職能的表現是否滿意？

一. 規劃地區的福利服務	1 極為 不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為 滿意	6 沒有 意見
1. 向區議會介紹和闡釋政府的福利政策。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 闡釋社署的核心工作。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 提供最新的福利服務資訊。	□	□	□	□	□	□
4. 在進行地區福利服務規劃時，諮詢和蒐集區議會的意見。	□	□	□	□	□	□
5. 根據客觀的數據，例如統計處的資料、研究或調查報告等，評估地區的福利需要。	□	□	□	□	□	□
6. 訂立地區福利策略、方向、優次排序及工作計劃。	□	□	□	□	□	□
7. 向總部反映地區的特別需要和意見。	□	□	□	□	□	□

二. 與區議會和地區團體的聯繫和合作	1 極為 不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為 滿意	6 沒有 意見
1. 透過參與區議會會議和推廣地區活動等，與區議會和地區團體保持緊密的聯繫和合作的伙伴關係。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 促進福利界與地區上其他政府部門、地區團體和跨界別人士的互相認識、交流、聯繫和合作。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 積極跟進區議員對地區福利事務的查詢和轉介。	□	□	□	□	□	□

三. 協調和推展地區層面的服務	1 極為 不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為 滿意	6 沒有 意見
1. 推行綜合福利服務模式，例如家庭服務、青少年服務、安老服務等。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 協調社署和各非政府福利機構的服務推行。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 動員地區資源，鼓勵地區團體或非政府福利機構發展地區服務計劃，回應地區需要和問題。	□	□	□	□	□	□

	1 極為 不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為 滿意	6 沒有 意見
四. 地區網絡和外展工作						
1. 主動接觸和了解地區內弱勢社群的需要和問題，例如貧困家庭、失業人士、新來港人士、家庭暴力受害人、單親家庭等。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 促進地區組織和人士明白區內弱勢社群的需要和問題。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 推動外展和網絡工作，向區內弱勢社群提供適切的服務。	□	□	□	□	□	□

	1 沒有 改善	2 些少 改善	3 頗多 改善	4 極大 改善	5 沒有 意見
五. 就擴大職能的整體評估 整體來說，你認為在社署重組後，地區福利辦事處在以下四項擴大職能的成效如何？					
1. 規劃地區的福利服務	□	□	□	□	□
2. 與區議會和地區團體的聯繫和合作	□	□	□	□	□
3. 協調和推展地區層面的服務	□	□	□	□	□
4. 地區網絡和外展工作	□	□	□	□	□

乙部： 個人資料

1. 請問你是否區議員？
   - (1) □ 是
   - (2) □ 否　(跳答 5)

2. 請問你是那一類別的議員？
   - (1) □ 委任
   - (2) □ 民選
   - (3) □ 當然議員 (新界區議會適用)

3. 請問你是：
   - (1) □ 政黨成員
   - (2) □ 獨立議員

4. 請問你在區議會服務了多少屆？
   - (1) □ 一屆
   - (2) □ 兩屆
   - (3) □ 三屆或以上

5. 請問你是否區議會轄下與社會服務相關之委員會成員？
   - (1) □ 是
   - (2) □ 否 (作答完)

6. 請問你在這些委員會服務了多少年？
   - (1) □ 2 年以下
   - (2) □ 2 - 4 年
   - (3) □ 超過 4 年

～ 問卷完 ～

A Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Social Welfare Department's

Enhanced District Social Welfare Office Functions

(District Council Member or District Council Social Service related Committee Member)

Reference No: _____

A) Assessment on the Enhanced Functions of District Social Welfare Office:

Are you satisfied with the performance of the District Social Welfare Office in the following four major enhanced functions <u>over the past year</u> (i.e. between 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003)?

1. Planning of District Welfare Services	**1** Very dissatisfied	**2** Dissatisfied	**3** Average	**4** Satisfied	**5** Very satisfied	**6** No opinion
i. Introduce and explain the Government's welfare policy to the District Council.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Explain the core business of the Social Welfare Department.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii. Provide updated information on welfare services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv. Consult and collect views from the District Council in the planning of welfare services in the district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v. Assess district welfare needs based on objective evidence, such as data from the Census and Statistics Department, studies and surveys reports.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vi. Formulate district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
vii. Reflect the special needs and views of the district to the Headquarters.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations	**1** Very dissatisfied	**2** Dissatisfied	**3** Average	**4** Satisfied	**5** Very satisfied	**6** No opinion
i. Maintain close liaison, collaboration and partnership with District Council and district organizations through participation in District Council meetings and promotion of district activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Promote familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership between the welfare sector and other government departments, district organizations, and personalities from other sectors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii. Actively follow-up enquiries and referrals from District Council members on district welfare issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. **Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level**	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Average	4 Satisfied	5 very satisfied	6 No opinion
i. Implement integrated social welfare service model, e.g. in family services, youth services, and elderly services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Coordinate services provided by the Social Welfare Department and non-governmental organizations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii. Mobilize district resources and encourage district organizations or non-governmental organizations to develop service projects in response to district needs and problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. **Community Networking and Outreaching Work**	1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Average	4 Satisfied	5 very satisfied	6 No opinion
i. Understand the needs and problems of the vulnerable groups in the district, such as low income families, unemployed persons, new arrivals, victims of family violence, single parent families, and proactively initiate contacts with them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Promote the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii. Promote outreaching and networking in the district to provide appropriate services to these vulnerable groups.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. **Overall Assessment on the Enhanced Functions** Overall speaking, how do you assess the effectiveness of the District Social Welfare Office in the following enhanced functions after the re-organization?	1 No improvement	2 Slight improvement	3 Significant improvement	4 Very significant improvement	5 No opinion
i. Planning of District Welfare Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv. Community Networking and Outreaching Work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B) Personal Information

1. Are you a District Council member?
    (1)   □   Yes
    (2)   □   No   (Go to Q.5)

2. Which type of member?
    (1)   □   Appointed member
    (2)   □   Elected member
    (3)   □   Ex officio member (applicable to District Councils in the New Territories)

3. Are you a political party member or an independent councilor?
    (1)   □   a political party member
    (2)   □   an independent councilor

4. How many terms of office have you been serving as a District Council member?
    (1)   □   One term
    (2)   □   Two terms
    (3)   □   Three or more terms

5. Are you a member of the social service related committee of the District Council?
    (1)   □   Yes
    (2)   □   No (End of responding)

6. How many years have you been serving on this committee?
    (1)   □   Below 2 years
    (2)   □   2-4 years
    (3)   □   Over 4 years

∼ The End ∼

社會福利署地區辦事處擴大職能後的效能評估研究問卷調查

(地區協調委員會委員)

甲部：對社署地區福利辦事處擴大職能後的評估

請問你對社署地區福利辦事處在<u>過去一年內</u> (即二零零二年四月一日至二零零三年三月三十一日)在以下四項的主要擴大職能的表現是否滿意？

一. 規劃地區的福利服務

	1 極為不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為滿意	6 沒有意見
1. 透過地區協調委員會會議或工作坊等，闡釋政府的福利政策。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 提供最新的福利服務資訊。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 在進行地區福利服務規劃時，諮詢地區協調委員會的意見。	□	□	□	□	□	□
4. 根據客觀的數據，例如統計處的資料、研究或調查報告等，評估地區的福利需要。	□	□	□	□	□	□
5. 訂立地區福利策略、方向、優次排序及工作計劃。	□	□	□	□	□	□
6. 向總部反映地區的特別需要和意見。	□	□	□	□	□	□

二. 與區議會和地區團體的聯繫和合作

	1 極為不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為滿意	6 沒有意見
1. 為地區團體提供地區上與社會福利有關的最新參考資料或數據。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 透過地區協調委員會會議，促進福利界與區議會、其他政府部門、地區團體和跨界別人士的互相認識、交流、聯繫和合作。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 透過統籌和舉辦地區活動，促進福利機構與地區團體的合作伙伴關係。	□	□	□	□	□	□

三. 協調和推展地區層面的服務

	1 極為不滿意	2 不滿意	3 一般	4 滿意	5 極為滿意	6 沒有意見
1. 推行綜合福利服務模式，例如家庭服務、青少年服務、安老服務等。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 在服務整合時，調解機構間所出現的問題或困難。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 協助機構解決所面對的問題或困難。	□	□	□	□	□	□
4. 協調社署和區內非政府福利機構的服務推行。	□	□	□	□	□	□
5. 動員地區資源，鼓勵地區團體或非政府福利機構發展地區服務計劃，回應地區需要和問題。	□	□	□	□	□	□

	1 極為 不滿意	**2** 不滿意	**3** 一般	**4** 滿意	**5** 極為 滿意	**6** 沒有 意見
四. 地區網絡和外展工作						
1. 主動接觸和了解地區內弱勢社群的需要和問題，例如貧困家庭、失業人士、新來港人士、家庭暴力受害人、單親家庭等。	□	□	□	□	□	□
2. 促進地區組織和人士明白區內弱勢社群的需要和問題。	□	□	□	□	□	□
3. 推動外展和網絡工作，向區內弱勢社群提供適切的服務。	□	□	□	□	□	□

	1 沒有 改善	**2** 些少 改善	**3** 頗多 改善	**4** 極大 改善	**5** 沒有 意見
五. 就擴大職能的整體評估 整體來說，你認為在社署重組後，地區福利辦事處在以下四項擴大職能的成效如何？					
1. 規劃地區的福利服務	□	□	□	□	□
2. 與區議會和地區團體的聯繫和合作	□	□	□	□	□
3. 協調和推展地區層面的服務	□	□	□	□	□
4. 地區網絡和外展工作	□	□	□	□	□

乙部： 個人資料

1. 請問你是屬於那一個地區協調委員會的成員？ (可選多項)
   - (1)　□　安老服務
   - (2)　□　家庭及兒童福利服務
   - (3)　□　推廣義工服務
   - (4)　□　青少年服務
   - (5)　□　康復服務

2. 請問你是屬於甚麼團體的人士？
   - (1)　□　其他政府部門
   - (2)　□　接受社署資助的的福利機構
   - (3)　□　沒有接受社署資助的福利機構
   - (4)　□　服務使用者
   - (5)　□　其他地區組織或人士 (請註明)_____

3. 請問你是否區議員？
   - (1)　□　是
   - (2)　□　否

4. 請問你在地區協調委員會服務了多少年？
   - (1)　□　2 年以下
   - (2)　□　2 - 4 年
   - (3)　□　超過 4 年

～ 問卷完 ～

(For reference only)

A Study to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Social Welfare Department's
Enhanced District Social Welfare Office Functions
(*District Coordinating Committee*)

Reference No: _____

A) Assessment on the Enhanced Functions of District Social Welfare Office:

Are you satisfied with the performance of the District Social Welfare Office in the following four major enhanced functions <u>over the past year</u> (i.e. between 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003)?

1. Planning of District Welfare Services	**1** Very dissatisfied	**2** Dissatisfied	**3** Average	**4** Satisfied	**5** Very satisfied	**6** No opinion
i. Introduce and explain the Government's welfare policy through the District Coordinating Committee meetings or workshops.	□	□	□	□	□	□
ii. Provide updated information on welfare services.	□	□	□	□	□	□
iii. Consult and collect views from the District Coordinating Committee in the planning of welfare services in the district.	□	□	□	□	□	□
iv. Assess district welfare needs based on objective evidence, such as data from the Census and Statistics Department, studies and surveys reports.	□	□	□	□	□	□
v. Formulate district welfare strategies, directions, priorities and work plans.	□	□	□	□	□	□
vi. Reflect the special needs and views of the district to the Headquarters.	□	□	□	□	□	□

2. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations	**1** Very dissatisfied	**2** Dissatisfied	**3** Average	**4** Satisfied	**5** Very satisfied	**6** No opinion
i. Provide updated social welfare related reference materials and statistics in the district to district organizations.	□	□	□	□	□	□
ii. Promote familiarization, exchange, collaboration and partnership between the welfare sector and District Council, other government departments, district organizations, and personalities from other sectors.	□	□	□	□	□	□
iii. Promote collaboration and partnership among welfare agencies and district organizations through coordinating and organizing district activities.	□	□	□	□	□	□

3. **Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level**	**1** Very dissatisfied	**2** Dissatisfied	**3** Average	**4** Satisfied	**5** very satisfied	**6** No opinion
i. Implement integrated social welfare service delivery model, e.g. in family services, youth services, and elderly services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Mediate the problems and difficulties between organizations in the process of service integration.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii. Assist organizations to solve problems and difficulties they encountered.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv. Coordinate the implementation of services provided by the Social Welfare Department and non-governmental organizations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v. Mobilize district resources and encourage district organizations or non-governmental organizations to develop service projects in response to district needs and problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. **Community Networking and Outreaching Work**	**1** Very dissatisfied	**2** Dissatisfied	**3** Average	**4** Satisfied	**5** very satisfied	**6** No opinion
i. Understand the needs and problems of the vulnerable groups in the district, such as low income families, unemployed persons, new arrivals, victims of family violence, single parent families, and proactively initiate contacts with them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Promote the understanding of district organizations and personalities on the needs and problems of vulnerable groups in the district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii. Promote outreaching and networking in the district to provide appropriate services to these vulnerable groups.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. **Overall Assessment on the Enhanced Functions** Overall speaking, how do you assess the effectiveness of the District Social Welfare Office in the following enhanced functions after the re-organization?	**1** No improvement	**2** Slight improvement	**3** Significant improvement	**4** Very significant improvement	**5** No opinion
i. Planning of District Welfare Services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Liaison and Collaboration with District Council and District Organizations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iii Coordination and Promotion of Welfare Services at District Level	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
iv. Community Networking and Outreaching Work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

B) Personal Information

1.　Which type of committee do you belong to?
  (1)　□　　Elderly services
  (2)　□　　Family and children welfare services
  (3)　□　　Volunteer promotion services
  (4)　□　　Youth services
  (5)　□　　Rehabilitation services

1.　　Which type of member/organization do you belong to?
  (1)　□　　Other government department
  (2)　□　　Welfare agency receiving SWD subventions
  (3)　□　　Welfare agency not receiving SWD subventions
  (4)　□　　Services recipients
  (5)　□　　Others

2.　　Are you a District Council member?
  (1)　□　　Yes
  (2)　□　　No

3.　　How many years have you been serving on this committee?
  (1)　□　　Below 2 years
  (2)　□　　2-4 years
  (3)　□　　Over 4 years

∼ The End ∼

VIe.   Technical Aspects of the Survey

Survey Coverage

1.   The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback from two groups of key community stakeholders on the performance of SWD's District Social Welfare Office's enhanced functions after the re-organization, namely all the DC/DCSRC members and DCC members.

2.   With well kept records, the membership list of DCs/DCSRCs and DCCs, including their names, addresses and contact telephone numbers could be identified and made available to the consultant team by the District Social Welfare Offices for drawing up the sampling frame of the survey.

3.   To ensure that the views and opinions of all the respondents were covered in the survey, a 100% enumeration was adopted in this survey.

Survey Questionnaires

4.   To assess the enhanced functions of District Social Welfare Office, two questionnaires were designed to collect feedback and views from the two groups of target respondents who were slightly different in their background characteristics.

5.   The first questionnaire (in both English and Chinese) was aimed at collecting feedback from DC/DCSRC members.[70] The questionnaire is comprised of two parts. The first part focuses on the assessment of the effectiveness of District Social Welfare Office in the four enhanced functions viz. district planning, liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations, service coordination and community networking and outreaching work; after the re-organization. The assessment of each enhanced functions forms the first four sections, while the overall assessment forms the fifth section

6.   The first section includes seven items for assessing the performance of District Social Welfare Office in planning district welfare services. The second section contains three items for assessing the performance of District Social Welfare Office in liaison and collaboration with DC and district organizations. The third

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[70]   The Chinese version of the questionnaire was used to collect feedback from nearly all the DC/DCSRC members, whilst the English version of the questionnaire was sent to 3 English-speaking DC members for completion.

section contains three items for assessing the performance of District Social Welfare Office in coordination and promotion of welfare services at district level. The fourth section contains three items for assessing the performance of District Social Welfare Office in community networking and outreaching work. A five-point Likert scale is used in the abovementioned sections, with "1" indicating "very dissatisfied", "2" indicating "dissatisfied", "3" indicating "average", "4" indicating "satisfied" and "5" indicating "very satisfied".

7.   The last section asks the respondents to give an overall assessment on the effectiveness of District Social Welfare Office in performing the above four enhanced functions after the re-organization. A four-point scale is used, with "1" indicating "no improvement", "2" indicating "slight improvement", "3" indicating "significant improvement" and "4" indicating "very significant improvement".

8.   An option of "no opinion" is included in the questionnaire. Although we would expect that most DC/DCSRC members (and DCC members too) are familiar with the subject, it is considered necessary and as a matter of courtesy to allow the respondents to indicate "no opinion", if he/she does not wish to give any views on the subject matter. It is reckoned that even if an option of "no opinion" has not been included, the respondents could still choose not to express any opinion, by not answering any question(s).

9.   The second part of the questionnaire aims at collecting some personal information of the respondents. Six items are included, asking: 1) whether the respondent is a DC member; 2) if yes, what type of membership? 3) political party affiliation; 4) number of terms of office served as a DC members: 5) whether the respondent is a member of DCSRC; and 6) if yes, number of years served on the committee.

10.   The second questionnaire was aimed at collecting feedback from DCC members.[71] This questionnaire follows the same structure of the first questionnaire. Most of the contents of the second questionnaire are similar to the first questionnaire except for the addition of salient items in sections 2 and 3 in part one to collect more specific feedback from the respondents, and some items in the second part to collect information on the organizational background of the respondents. The scaling used in the second questionnaire is also similar to that of the first one.

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[71]   The Chinese version of the questionnaire was used for data collection. The English version is included here for reference only.

Data Collection Method

11.   Data were collected through the use of a self-administered questionnaire. As DC/DCSRC members and DCC members are familiar with district welfare services and the functions and responsibilities of District Social Welfare Office, it is believed that the respondents are able to answer the questionnaires without the need for an interview. Furthermore, on the understanding that DC/DCSRC members and DCC members are very busy, the use of self-administered questionnaire would help minimize the respondents' burden, as they could complete the questionnaires at a time and place most convenient to them.

12.   In order to boost the response rate, follow-up calls were made by the staff of Policy 21 Limited and/or the District Social Welfare Offices in May 2003 reminding the prospective respondents to complete and return the questionnaires. Additional copies of the questionnaires were also facsimiled to some respondents when necessary.

Enumeration Experience

13.   Out of 1,769 respondents covered in the survey, 1,301 had returned the completed questionnaires, representing an overall response rate of 74% (i.e. 58% for DC/DCSRC members and 83% for DCC members).

Non-response Items

14.   Respondents in both groups completed all the items in part one of the questionnaires asking them to assess the performance of District Social Welfare Office. Some respondents did not respond to some items on personal information. Therefore, cautions must be taken to interpret the findings analyzed by personal information.

15.   Among the DC/ DCSRC members, the following incidents of item non-response were found: 1) type of member (11 cases); 2) political party affiliation (14 cases); 3) terms of office as DC member (12 cases); 4) whether the respondent is a DCSRC member (7 cases); and 5) number of years served on DCSRC (84 cases).

16.   Among the DCC members, the following incidents of item non-response were found: 1) type of member or organization (14 cases); 2) whether the respondent is a DC member (3cases); and 3) number of years served on DCC (5 cases).

VIIa Organization Chart of Social Welfare Department

Director of Social Welfare

[AOSGA (D6)]

Family and Child Welfare Branch	Elderly Branch	Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch	Youth and Corrections Branch	Subventions and Performance Monitoring Branch	Information Systems and Technology Branch	Social Security Branch	Finance Branch	Human Resource Management Branch	Administration Branch	Clinical Psychological Service Branch	Corporate Affairs Office
AD(FCW) [ADSW(D2)]	**AD(E)** [ADSW(D2)]	**AD(RM)** [ADSW(D2)]	**AD(YC)** [ADSW(D2)]	**AD(SPM)** [ADSW(D2)]	**AD(IST)*** [ADSW(D2)]	**AD(SS)*** [AOSGC(D2)]	**AD(F)** [ADAS(D2)]	**PEO(HRM)** [PEO(D1)]	**Secy** [PEO(D1)]	**CCP** [CCP(D1)]	

District Social Welfare Offices:

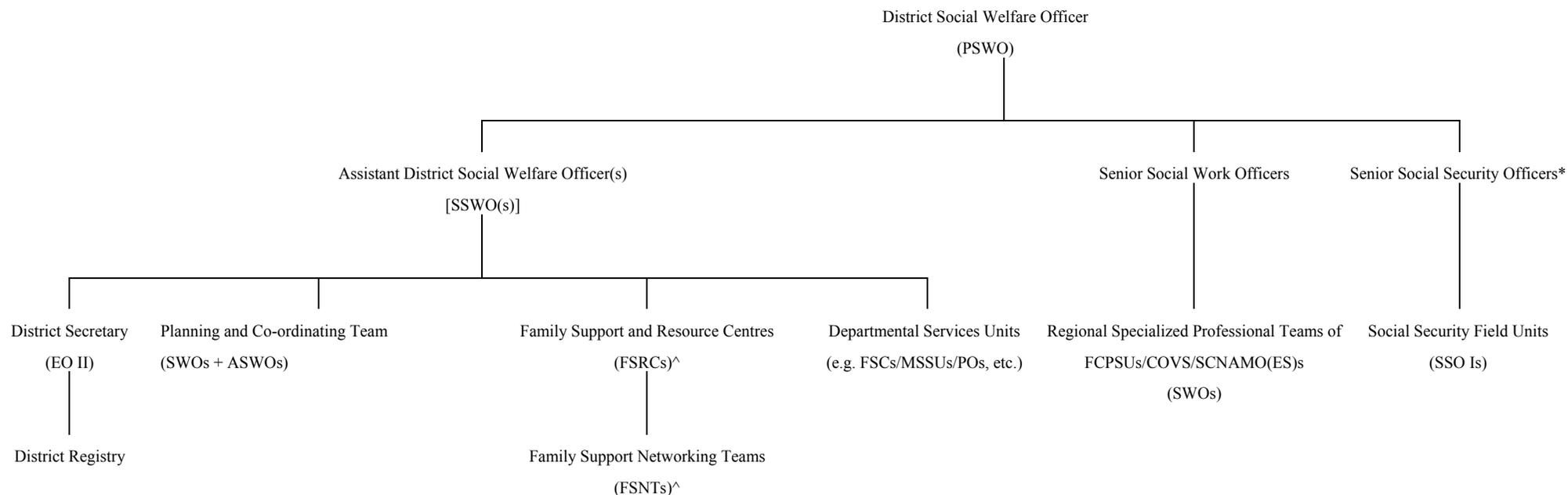| District Social Welfare Office (Tai Po and North)	District Social Welfare Office (Yuen Long)	District Social Welfare Office (Sha Tin)	District Social Welfare Office (Sham Shui Po)	District Social Welfare Office (Eastern and Wan Chai)	District Social Welfare Office (Central, Western and Islands)	District Social Welfare Office (Southern)	District Social Welfare Office (Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing)	District Social Welfare Office (Tuen Mun)	District Social Welfare Office (Kwun Tong)	District Social Welfare Office (Kowloon City)	District Social Welfare Office (Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung)	District Social Welfare Office (Yau Tsim Mong)
DSWO(TP/N) [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(YL)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(ST)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(SSP)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(E/W)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(CW&I)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(S)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(TW/KwT)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(TM)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(KT)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(KC)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(WTS/SK)** [PSWO(D1)]	**DSWO(YTM)** [PSWO(D1)]

[   ] : indicating the rank of the post

* Posts created on a supernumerary basis, holding against the two vacant DDSW posts.

Source: SWD.

VIIb Representative Structure of a Typical District Social Welfare Office

District Social Welfare Officer

(PSWO)

Assistant District Social Welfare Officer(s)

[SSWO(s)]

Senior Social Work Officers

Senior Social Security Officers*

District Secretary

(EO II)

Planning and Co-ordinating Team

(SWOs + ASWOs)

Family Support and Resource Centres

(FSRCs)^

Departmental Services Units

(e.g. FSCs/MSSUs/POs, etc.)

Regional Specialized Professional Teams of
FCPSUs/COVS/SCNAMO(ES)s

(SWOs)

Social Security Field Units

(SSO Is)

District Registry

Family Support Networking Teams

(FSNTs)^

^ A total of 20 FSRCs in 11 DSWOs (with 11 FSNTs each attached to one of the FSRCs in the DSWO concerned)

  - except Southern and Kowloon City DSWOs, and Sai Kung district within Wong Tai Sin/Sai Kung DSWO which only have FSNT setting

* A total of 7 Senior Social Security Officers to oversee Social Security Field Units in 13 DSWOs

Legend

COVS	=	Central Office for Volunteer Service
FCPSUs	=	Family and Child Protective Services Units
FSCs	=	Family Services Centres
MSSUs	=	Medical Social Services Units
POs	=	Probation Offices
SCNAMO(ES)s	=	Standardized Care Need Assessment Management Offices (Elderly Services)

Source: SWD

VIIc. Job Specification of the Key Staff of a District Social Welfare Office

Post	Rank	Responsible to	Roles / Responsibilities
District Social Welfare Officer	Principal Social Work Officer (PSWO)	DSW / AD	Role & Responsibilities: • as district welfare planner and service co-ordinator working with increased district input from District Council members, NGO service providers, users and local personalities, to develop and formulate strategies in the planning and co-ordinating the delivery of welfare services in the district, to identify and assess social welfare needs of the district and to respond timely to rising public expectation • to review and make recommendations on how departmental objectives, policies and operational procedures might be developed and improved at the district level • to facilitate inter-sectoral collaboration and undertake co-ordination of welfare programmes aimed at building a caring community in the district with the NGOs, schools and community leaders • to represent the Department on District Council, District Management Committee, inter-departmental committees, working groups, etc., to explain and promote welfare policies in the district • to provide information and views to Service Branches on district needs, specific features, complexities and local political dynamics on planned projects to facilitate service planning • to administer and co-ordinate the operation of all the departmental service units in the district, to oversee the mode of service delivery and programmes design, and to recommend measures to improve efficiency in management and operation to meet departmental objectives • to promote volunteer movement in the district by launching promotional and publicity campaigns to recruit, train and mobilise local volunteers, advocating the building of a caring community and encouraging participation of local people to help those in need • to provide assistance to vulnerable groups such as new arrivals, single parent families, elders living alone and street sleepers to ensure they have access to community support services through networking and outreaching services and provide assistance to those able-bodied unemployed towards self-reliance and re-integrated into the workforce and community • without duplicating or conflicting the role of the Human Resource Management Branch in the headquarters, to assume the role of Human Resource Manager in the district, ensuring that Human Resource policies and procedures are practised down to frontline level staff; to supervise, develop and manage staff under his/her charge, and to maximize the utilization of available resources • to perform any other duties as assigned by the senior directorate
Assistant District Social Welfare Officer	Senior Social Work Officer (SSWO)	DSWO	Roles: • to be responsible for the efficient operation of all service units under his/her charge; and to assist the District Social Welfare Officer in the planning, review, coordination and monitoring of the services in the district Responsibilities: • To supervise and monitor the operation of the departmental service units under his/her charge with reference to the performance standards set for the service by the respective Services Branches and District Social Welfare Offices • to assist DSWO in developing and formulating strategies in the planning and co-ordinating the delivery of

			welfare services in the district, identifying and assessing social welfare needs of the districts • to give recommendations to DSWO on how department's objectives, policies and plans might be developed and improved in relation to his/her field of services and how resources to be mobilized to meet district welfare needs • to supervise, develop and appraise staff under his/her control • to assist DSWO in providing information and views to Services Branches on district needs, specific features, complexities and local political dynamics on planned projects to facilitate service planning • to assist DSWO in planning and overseeing the outreaching and networking services • to represent the department on interdepartmental committees, working groups as required • to represent the department in functions to promote good relationship with other government departments, non-governmental organizations, District Council members and community leaders, as required • to assist DSWO in implementing Human Resource Management policies and procedures in the district • to deputize DSWO during his/her absence • to approve charitable trust funds and to screen recommendation on applications for compassionate rehousing • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Social Work Officer (Planning / Coordination)	Social Work Officer (SWO)	ADSWO	Roles: • to assist DSWO and ADSWO(s) in assessing district welfare needs, planning, review and coordination of various welfare services in the district Responsibilities: • to assist DSWO and ADSWOs in developing and formulating strategies in the planning and co-ordinating the delivery of welfare services in the district, identifying and assessing local welfare needs of the district • to develop and maintain a data base on district profile, service statistics, customer feedback, service demands and to propose surveys on district basis to support service and resource planning • to liaise with and assist in lobbying District Council members, local personalities, other government departments, service providers of non-governmental organizations and users for support regarding integrated service projects, new service projects/programmes and new policy initiatives • to provide information and views to Services Branches on district needs, specific features, complexities and local political dynamics on planned projects to facilitate service planning • to collaborate with the district's Family Support and Resource Centres and Family Support Networking Team in outreaching to vulnerable groups and building supportive network around them • to assist in the vetting of the proposals for new integrated services submitted by service providers of non-governmental organizations • to assist in mapping out annual district plan, strategies, alliances and action plans to respond effectively to identified needs of the district • to assist in the preparation of papers for District Council meetings, replies to letters and queries from the public on district welfare matters, with the advice from Principal Information Officer, where appropriate • to sit in the District Coordinating Committees as standing members and to represent the department in sub-committees or working groups under the District Councils • to represent the department in functions to promote good relationship with other government departments, non-governmental organizations, District Council members and community leaders, as required

			• to supervise, develop and appraise staff under his/her control • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Assistant Social Work Officer (Planning / Coordination)	Assistant Social Work Officer (ASWO)	SWO (P/C)	Role: • to assist the SWO(P/C) in assessing district welfare needs, review and coordination of various welfare services in the district Responsibilities: • to provide support in data collection for assessing district needs and maintenance of a district data base on district profile, service statistics and customer feedback, etc. • to provide secretarial support in committee meetings, such as District Coordinating Committees and Vetting Committee on allocation of new services • to assist SWO (P/C) in liaison and coordination with other government departments, service providers of non-governmental organizations and users for support regarding integrated service projects, new service projects and programs and new policy initiatives • to assist in providing information, including local resources, to services providers in the district • to sit in sub-committees or working groups under the District Councils and the District Coordinating Committees • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Supervisor (FSRC)	SWO	ADSWO	Roles: • to take charge of the overall operation and development of the centre with an aim to provide group and casework services and welfare-oriented services for families and individuals, in particular the disadvantaged, within the serving area, aiming at meeting of welfare needs, preventing and solving family/personal problems, development of personal growth and leadership potential, improving interpersonal relationships and for meeting individual social needs Responsibilities: • to be responsible for general administration, operation, staff supervision and deployment, and management of the Unit • to collaborate with Planning and Coordinating Team in assessing the service needs of the local community, prioritize and set working goals together with Planning and Coordinating Team and centre staff, and oversee the planning and implementation of services programmes in accordance with the assessed needs and set goals • to promote and develop the Unit's dual-roles as a Family Resource Unit and Family Support Unit in the community • to deploy staff to oversee the operation and management of the Unit as a Family Resource Unit and Family Support Unit, and to supervise and develop staff of the unit • for FSRC with Family Support Networking Team (FSNT), to develop outreaching service and monitor the service of FSNT • to coordinate or liaise with other governmental departments, non-governmental organizations, local organizations and indigenous leaders for promoting and putting forward the outreach service and developing other group work programmes of the Unit

			• to serve as members of relevant meetings such as Community Centre Management Committee meeting, District Coordinating Committees and take appropriate follow up actions • to liaise with non-governmental organizations engaged in group and community work service within the operational area served and make recommendation on subvention and various fund applications • to coordinate in planning, organising and implementing district wide or departmental programmes as required • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Deputy Supervisor (FSRC)	ASWO	Supervisor (SWO) (FSRC)	Role: • to take charge of the overall operation and development of the Centre with an aim to provide group and casework services and welfare-oriented activities for families and individuals within the serving area, aiming at meeting of welfare needs, preventing and solving family/personal problems, development of personal growth and leadership potential, improving interpersonal relationships and for the meeting of individual social needs. For FSRC with FSNT, he/she has the role to plan, develop and monitor service of FSNT Responsibilities: • to be responsible for general administration, operation, staff supervision and deployment, and management of the Unit • to collaborate with Planning and Coordinating Team in assessing the service needs of the local community, prioritize and set working goals together with Planning and Coordinating Team and centre staff, and oversee the planning and implementation of group work programmes in accordance with the assessed needs and set goals • to promote and develop the centre's dual-roles as a Family Resource Unit and Family Support Unit in the community • to deploy staff to oversee the operation and management of the Family Resource Unit and Family Support Unit, and to supervise and develop staff of the unit • for FSRC with FSNT, to develop outreaching service and monitor the service of FSNT • to coordinate or liaise with other government departments, non-government organizations, local organizations and indigenous leaders for promoting and putting forward the outreach service and developing other group work programmes of the centre • to serve as members of relevant meetings such as Centre Management Committee and House Committee, represent the Department to attend relevant local meetings/functions and take appropriate follow up actions • to make recommendations on various applications for funds • to assist in planning, organising and implementing district wide or departmental programmes as required • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Assistant Supervisor (FSRC)	Senior Social Work Assistant (SSWA)	Deputy Supervisor (ASWO) (FSRC)	Roles: • to plan and implement group and casework programmes requiring intensive social work skills with a view to enhancing problem-solving ability and social development, development of potential abilities, leadership qualities and sense of civic responsibilities of customers

			Responsibilities: • to plan group and casework programmes in accordance with the goals as set with the Supervisor and be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of these programmes • to provide supportive group work service for vulnerable groups and people with special or particular needs • to give counselling to individuals/families who have special needs and problems, and to refer those in need for other appropriate social services • to develop and run the Group Members' Council and act as its advisor • to prepare and maintain records of group work programmes and/or volunteer information system • to liaise with other governmental departments, non-governmental organisations, local organizations and indigenous leaders for interfacing and promotion of service • to supervise and develop staff under his/her charge • to assist the Supervisor in organising and implementing district-wide or departmental programmes • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Social Work Assistant (FSRC)	Social Work Assistant (SWA)	Deputy Supervisor (ASWO) (FSRC)	Roles: • to assist in planning and implementing group and casework programs which require social work impacts and skills, and in organizing and developing volunteers groups. For members of the FSNT, he/she has the additional role to perform outreaching service to the vulnerable groups in the local community Responsibilities: • to plan group and casework programmes geared to the needs of community, in particular, the vulnerable groups and in accordance with the goals as agreed with the Supervisor/Deputy Supervisor • to provide supportive group work service for the vulnerable groups and people with special or particular needs • to give counselling to individuals/families who have special needs and problems, and to refer them to other service units for welfare services as appropriate • for members of the FSNT, to pay concern visits and provide group work services to the vulnerable individuals/families, and help them build up mutual support • to prepare and maintain records of group and casework programmes, outreach service and/or volunteer information system • to liaise with other governmental departments, non-governmental organisations, local organizations and indigenous leaders for interfacing and promotion of service • to supervise volunteers assisting in the programmes of the Centre and conduct volunteers group to train and develop volunteers • to assist the Supervisor/Deputy Supervisor in organising and implementing district wide or departmental programmes • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Supervisor (FSNT)	ASWO	ADSWO	Roles: • to take charge of the overall operation and development of the Team with an aim to plan and develop outreaching and networking service for the families in need. In addition, he/she has the role to plan and develop group and casework services and welfare-oriented activities for families and individuals within the serving area, aiming at

			meeting of welfare needs, preventing and solving family/personal problems, development of personal growth and leadership potential, improving interpersonal relationships and for the meeting of individual social needs Responsibilities: • to be responsible for general administration, operation, staff supervision and deployment, and management of the Team • to collaborate with Planning and Co-ordinating Team in assessing the service needs of the local community, prioritize and set working goals together with Planning and Co-ordinating Team and own Team staff, and oversee the planning and implementation of casework/group work programmes in accordance with the assessed needs and set goals • to develop and monitor outreaching and networking service for families in need • to deploy staff to oversee the operation and management of the Family Resource Unit and Family Support Unit, and to supervise and develop staff of the Team • to co-ordinate or liaise with other governmental departments, non-governmental organizations, local organizations and indigenous leaders for promoting and putting forward the outreach service and developing other group work programmes of the Unit • to serve as members of relevant meetings such as Centre Management Committee and House Committee, represent the Department to attend relevant local meetings/functions and take appropriate follow up actions • to make recommendations on various applications for funds • to assist in planning, organizing and implementing district wide or departmental programmes as required • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors
Social Work Assistant (FSNT)	Social Work Assistant (SWA)	ASWO (FSNT)	Roles: • to assist in planning and implementation group and casework programs which require social work skills, and in organizing and developing volunteers groups. For member of the FSNT, he/she has the role to perform outreach service to the vulnerable groups in the local community Responsibilities: • to plan group and casework programmes geared to the needs of community, in particular, the vulnerable groups and in accordance with the goals as set with the ASWO/FSNT • to provide supportive group work service for the vulnerable groups and people with special or particular needs • to give counselling to individuals/families who have special needs and problems, and to refer members in need for other appropriate social services • to pay concern visits and provide group work services to the vulnerable individuals/families, and help them build up mutual support • to prepare and maintain records of group and casework programmes, outreach service and/or volunteer information system • to liaise with other governmental departments, non-governmental organizations, local organizations and indigenous leaders for interfacing and promotion of service • to supervise volunteers assisting in the programmes of the Team and conduct volunteers group to train and develop volunteers

			• to assist the ASWO/FSNT in general administration, planning of outreach service and staff supervision of the centre as required • to assist the ASWO/FSNT in organizing and implementing district wide or departmental programmes • to perform any other duties as assigned by the seniors

Sources: Extracted from SWD. *Job Descriptions of PSWO(DSWO), SSWO(ADSWO), SWO & ASWO(P/C), SWO, ASWO, SSWA & SWA (FSRC) and ASWO & SWA (FSNT)*.

VII d.   Service Document
Family Support and Resource Centre (FSRC)
and/or Family Support Networking Team (FSNT)

I.   Service Definition

Introduction

Family Support and Resource Centre (FSRC) is one type of community development services provided by the Social Welfare Department.   It has an objective to provide welfare services to meet the needs of the public, in particular, of different vulnerable groups in the district. It discharges role as in between *Family Support Unit (FSU)* and *Family Resource Unit (FRU)* under the *Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC)* model and collaborates with different sectors and departments in the locality to provide a continuum of services to support the well-being and network of families.

To reach out to families in need for early identification of problems and early intervention, a Family Support Networking Team (FSNT) is formed in each district, usually attaching to the FSRC.   For districts without FSRC, it may be attached to other units of the department as deemed appropriate by the DSWO.   The FSNT will maintain strong link with local bodies, non-government organizations and other government departments in the district to enhance service interfacing and efficient referral of vulnerable to appropriate services.

Purpose and objectives

FSRC provides a wide range of groups and programmes which aim:

- to identify and to meet individual/family welfare needs in the community in collaboration with other service agents
- for FSRC with FSNT, to outreach and network vulnerable households in the locality and refer them to appropriate parties for intervention
- to develop individual personal growth and interpersonal relationships
- to enhance the problem-solving skills of individuals and families
- to promote better communications among families and to strengthen family relationship and functioning
- to promote mutual care and cultivate a sense of community responsibility

Nature of the service

The services include:

a) Brief case counselling

b) For FSRC with FSNT, render outreach to the vulnerable in terms or concern

visits, street counters or other outreaching means

c) Groups and programmes of different types, e.g. social support/mutual support, psycho-educational/developmental, counseling/treatment, volunteer training/service and skill training, for support and development of the vulnerables

d) Tangible services to support and strengthen family relationship and functioning, e.g. Family Activity and Resource Centres (FARCs), after school care/child minding, study and reading room, service referrals, etc.

Target Groups

FSRC are set up to provide services to the families in need, in particular the vulnerable groups, according to district assessment. Examples of vulnerables include the following:

- New arrivals
- Singleton elderly
- CSSA clients or low income families
- Single parent families
- Families with problems of child care or history of child abuse

II. Performance Measurement

The service operator will meet the following performance standards :

(a) *Outcome Measurement (by district)*   *(for all districts)*

Outcome Standard	Outcome Indicator	Agreed Level
1	Percentage of the vulnerable individuals participated in casework or group work service who are reported to have problems improved or solved	75%
2	Percentage of the vulnerable individuals participated in casework or group work service who are reported to have increased knowledge of the community and welfare resources	75%
3	Percentage of the vulnerable individuals participated in casework or group work service who are reported to have improved network with the community	75%
4	Percentage of the unemployed able-bodied new arrivals successfully contacted who take up part-time or full-time employment within 6 months after receiving job-related service	20%

(b) **_Output Measurement (by unit)_**
*(for **Service Team** of FSRCs in all districts and FSNTs in three districts without FSRCs)*

Output Standard	Output Indicator	Agreed Level
1	Number of cases having received brief counseling service	25/worker in a year (SWA or above*), among which at least 5 are new arrival cases
2	Number of vulnerable individuals newly participated in groups	80/worker in a year (WW or above*), among which at least 15 are new arrivals
3	Number of vulnerable individuals newly participated in programmes	40/worker in a year (WW or above*), among which at least 10 are new arrivals
4	Number of vulnerable individuals newly participated in volunteer work	6/worker in a year (WW or above*)

* *Supervisors of FSRC/DCC, FSRC/ECC and FSNT, who are responsible for the overall administration and management of the unit, such as ASWO/FSNT in S, KC and SK/TKO, are to be excluded from the calculation of output.*

(c) Output Measurement (by unit)
*(for **Networking Team** of FSNT in all districts, with or without FSRCs)*

Output Standard	Output Indicator	Agreed Level
5	No. of vulnerable households newly and successfully contacted through concern visits or other outreaching attempts (e.g. face-to-face, over phone or reply in writing)	80/worker in a year (WW or above*), among which at least 15 are new arrival households
6	No. of vulnerable households newly and successfully referred to FSRC or other welfare or mainstream services, e.g. housing medical and educational services.	20/worker in a year (WW or above*), among which at least 4 are new arrival households
7	No. of unemployed able-bodied new arrivals successfully contacted who are offered or referred to attend retraining programme/job attachment/job-related counselling	2/worker in a year (WW or above*)

* *ASWOs of FSNTs, who are responsible for the overall administration and management of the unit, such as ASWO/FSNT in S, KC and SK/TKO, are to be excluded from the calculation of output*

Essential service requirements *(assessed on unit basis)*

- Staff requirement includes registered social worker

- Each Family Support and Resource Centre in District Community Centre/Community Complex should normally open for at least 15 sessions per week and each Family Support and Resource Centre in Estate Community Centre should normally open for at least 12 sessions per week

Quality

Service operators will meet the requirements of the 16 Service Quality Standards (SQSs).

Source: SWD. *Service Document (*rev.23.1.02)

VIIe. Terms of Reference and Membership of District Co-ordinating Committees (DCCs)

A.   District Co-ordinating Committee on Family and Child Welfare Services

Terms of Reference

(a) To review the provision of family and child welfare services in the district, and identify particular needs and deficiencies and to make recommendations to augment and improve existing provision;
(b) To enhance liaison and coordination of resources among different disciplines and organizations providing services related to the family and child welfare in the district, e.g. child protection, child care, family life education, etc.;
(c) To advise, promote or jointly organize programmes on family and child welfare services in response to district needs and central publicity campaign; and
(d) To promote professional knowledge and better understanding among members of family and child welfare issues, exchange views and experience on operational matters in the provision of related social welfare services in the district.

Membership

Chairman
District Social Welfare Officer

Members

The number should be kept to the minimum, consistent with the objective of the Committee to avoid its being too large and unwieldy.   In any case, the number should not be greater than 20.   Members should comprise:-

(a) Representatives from SWD services units (e.g. Family Services Centre/Integrated Family Service Centre, Planning and Coordinating Team, Family and Child Protective Services Unit, Family Life Education Unit, Clinical Psychology Unit, Institutions, Medical Social Services Unit, etc.);
(b) Representatives from NGO services units (e.g. Family Services Centre/Integrated Family Service Centre, Family Life Education Unit, Children's Institutions, Medical Social Services Unit, Child Care Centre, etc.);
(c) Representatives from other government departments and public organizations (e.g. Hong Kong Police Force, Education and Manpower Bureau [including Student Guidance Officer], Department of Health, Housing Department, Hospital Authority, etc.);
(d) School personnel from kindergarten, primary and secondary schools;
(e) Local leaders; and
(f) Parents.

Frequency of Meeting

To be decided by Committee, preferably on a quarterly basis.

B. *Local Committee (s) on Services for Young People (LCSYP)*

There should be at least 1 in each District Council District.   District Social Welfare Officer can exercise discretion to form more than 1 Local Committee in each District Council District.

Terms of Reference

(a) To assess the needs and challenges of young people and agree on programme emphasis in the district / local community, specific and set priorities of needs, mobilize appropriate resources, define roles of different parties involved and review progress of work;
(b) To develop a coordinated strategy in providing services for young people so that their needs are addressed in a more holistic manner;
(c) To build up a closer network with different systems in the community to achieve better interfacing and strengthen support services for young people; and
(d) To organize district-wide/locality based joint projects/programmes to respond to community needs and challenges.

Membership

Chairman
District Social Welfare Officer or his/her representative at Assistant District Social Welfare Officer Level.

Members
The number should be kept to the minimum, consistent with the objective of the Committee to avoid its being large and unwieldy.   In any case, the number should not be greater than 20.   Members should comprise:-

(a) Representative(s) of SWD service units;
(b) Representatives of Non-governmental organizations providing young people and community development services in the locality;
(c) Representatives of related government department, e.g. the Hong Kong Police Force, Education and Manpower Bureau, Home Affairs Department;
(d) School personnel, e.g. primary and secondary school principals;
(e) Youths, e.g. representatives from District Youth Council, Students Unions; and
(f) Parents, e.g. representatives from Parent-Teacher Associations.

Frequency of Meeting

To be decided by Committee, preferably on a quarterly basis.

C. *District Co-ordinating Committee on Elderly Services*

Terms of Reference

(a) To develop district strategies in promoting well-being of elderly people, having regard to the population profile as well as social and welfare needs of the elderly, policy directions promulgated in the relevant policy documents and Elderly Commission;

(b) To provide a forum for service providers, local leaders and government officials to exchange views, raise issues of common concern and solve problems at the district level and to provide a channel for escalating matters which have wider implications;

(c) To enhance interfacing among service providers and government departments and co-ordinate resources in developing total care for elderly people in the district; and

(d) To plan, implement and evaluate joint projects, programmes and activities at the district level.

Membership

Chairman
District Social Welfare Officer

Members
The number should be kept to the minimum, consistent with the objective of the Committee to avoid its being too large and unwieldy. In any case, the number should not be greater than 20. Members should comprise:-

(a) Representatives from SWD service units (e.g. Planning and Coordinating Team, Family Services Centre/Integrated Family Service Centre, Medical Social Services Unit, Family Support and Resource Centre/Family Support Networking Team, etc.) on regular/need basis;

(b) Representatives from service providers (e.g. District Elderly Community Centre/Neighbourhood Elderly Centre, Day Care Centre for the Elderly, home help/integrated home care services, residential care homes, including nursing homes, carers' support centre, etc.);

(c) Representatives from the Hospital Authority (e.g. member of Community Geriatric Assessment Team, Psychogeriatric Assessment Team, Geriatric Unit, Psychogeriatric Unit, etc.);

(d) Representatives from Department of Health (e.g. elderly health centre, visiting health team, etc.);

(e) Representatives from other government departments (e.g. Housing Department, Home Affairs Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, etc.); and

(f) Local leaders.

Frequency of Meeting

To be decided by the Committee, preferably on a quarterly basis.

D.   *District Co-ordinating Committee on Rehabilitation Services*

Terms of Reference

(a) To provide a forum for service providers and government officials to assess the needs encountered by people with disability, exchange views, raise issues of common concern and solve problems at the district level;

(b) To enhance the interfacing between different service delivery systems in the district to ensure a continuum of care and training for people with disabilities;

(c) To explore and review effective strategies in achieving integration of people with disabilities in the district and promoting their well-being; and

(d) To promote public education and to plan joint projects in the district pertaining to the objectives of rehabilitation.

Membership

Chairman
District Social Welfare Officer

Members
The number should be kept to the minimum, consistent with the objective of the Committee to avoid its being too large and unwieldy.   In any case, the number should not be greater than 20.   Members should comprise:-

(a) Representatives from SWD and NGO rehabilitation service centres *;

(b) A representative from special schools *;

(c) A representative from parents associations of persons with disabilities;

(d) A representative from patients groups/persons with disabilities;

(e) A representative from Hospital Authority;

(f) A representative from Department of Health;

(g) A representative from Housing Department;

(h) A representative from relevant SWD service units (e.g. Planning and Coordinating Team, Medical Social Services Unit, Central Para-medical Support Service Unit, Clinical Psychology Unit); and

(i) Local Leaders.

*   As the no. of units varies from district to district, each district has to decide on its own size of representation.   This may be based on nature of service such as residential, day training, sheltered work, pre-school care; or based on clientele, such as mentally handicapped, physical handicapped, mentally ill and sensory impaired.

Frequency of Meeting

To be decided by Committee, preferably on a quarterly basis.

E.   ***District Co-ordinating Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service***

Terms of Reference

(a) To coordinate resources to enhance the development of volunteer service;
(b) To formulate promotional strategies in identifying and enhancing volunteer service opportunities in the locality;
(c) To coordinate efforts in mobilizing volunteers to meet the diversified needs of the community; and
(d) To organize district-wide joint publicity and promotional programmes on volunteer service, volunteer training and recognition to volunteers.

Membership

Chairman
District Social Welfare Officer

Vice-chairman
Non-official member

Members
The number should be kept to the minimum, consistent with the objective of the Committee to avoid its being too large and unwieldy. In any case, the number should not be greater than 20. Members should comprise:-

(a) Representative(s) from SWD District Office/service units;
(b) Representatives from NGOs (both subvented and non-subvented) providing family & child welfare services, elderly service, rehabilitation service, youth service and volunteer service;
(c) Representatives from other government departments and public organizations, e.g. Home Affairs Department, Housing Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Environmental Protection Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Hospital Authority, etc.;
(d) Local leaders and representatives from organizations and Groups such as schools, corporates and churches; and
(e) Volunteer(s).

Frequency of Meeting

To be decided by Committee, preferably on a quarterly basis.

Source: SWD. *Terms of Reference and Membership of DCC* (March 1999 version updated in August 2003 for this Study)

VIIIa.   Profile of 13 Districts Consisting of 10 Major Social Indicators   **June 2002**

Social Indicators / District	Weighting in allocation	CW/I	E/W	S	KT	WTS/SK	KC	SSP	YTM	ST	TP/N	YL	TW/KwT	TM	Overall
Population *1	10	371,500	776,400	278,400	598,100	838,400	368,000	351,700	296,700	637,800	599,200	518,900	827,300	542,400	7,004,800
% against total		5%	11%	4%	9%	12%	5%	5%	4%	9%	9%	7%	12%	8%	100%
Marks gained		0.5	1.1	0.4	0.9	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.8	10
Active Cases *2	10	1,331	2,976	602	3,258	2,240	1,588	1,873	1,329	2,172	1,798	1,656	3,153	2,762	26,738
% against total		5%	11%	2%	12%	8%	6%	7%	5%	8%	7%	6%	12%	10%	100%
Marks gained		0.5	1.1	0.2	1.2	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.2	1.0	10
Child Abuse *3	10	14	23	27	53	53	29	31	28	47	63	55	36	75	534
% against total		3%	4%	5%	10%	10%	5%	6%	5%	9%	12%	10%	7%	14%	100%
Marks gained		0.3	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.7	1.4	10
Battered Spouse *4	10	103	235	78	128	261	165	119	113	169	253	253	263	293	2,433
% against total		4%	10%	3%	5%	11%	7%	5%	5%	7%	10%	10%	11%	12%	100%
Marks gained		0.4	1.0	0.3	0.5	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.2	10
New Arrivals *5	10	1,272	2,961	901	3,330	3,283	1,770	3,453	2,504	1,799	2,531	1,729	3,238	1,678	30,449
% against total		4%	10%	3%	11%	11%	6%	11%	8%	6%	8%	6%	11%	6%	100%
Marks gained		0.4	1.0	0.3	1.1	1.1	0.6	1.1	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.1	0.6	10
Youth Crime *6	10	604	1,088	0	937	501	572	593	1,477	1,241	1,264	1,028	1,524	1,014	11,843
% against total		5%	9%	0%	8%	4%	5%	5%	12%	10%	11%	9%	13%	9%	100%
Marks gained		0.5	0.9	0.0	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.3	0.9	10
Single Parent Family *7	10	688	1,673	714	2,729	3,157	1,727	2,374	1,575	2,110	3,378	3,464	2,986	2,919	29,494
% against total		2%	6%	2%	9%	11%	6%	8%	5%	7%	11%	12%	10%	10%	100%
Marks gained		0.2	0.6	0.2	0.9	1.1	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.0	10
Low Earning *8	10	347	578	255	916	1,251	463	721	338	613	780	864	1,324	660	9,110
% against total		4%	6%	3%	10%	14%	5%	8%	4%	7%	9%	9%	15%	7%	100%
Marks gained		0.4	0.6	0.3	1.0	1.4	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.9	1.5	0.7	10
Unemployment *9	10	891	1,708	452	3,034	3,750	1,949	3,622	3,527	1,661	2,405	2,834	3,146	2,544	31,523
% against total		3%	5%	1%	10%	12%	6%	11%	11%	5%	8%	9%	10%	8%	100%
Marks gained		0.3	0.5	0.1	1.0	1.2	0.6	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.8	10
Poorly Educated *10	10	119,800	243,700	110,700	237,800	318,100	128,400	146,700	104,400	224,100	241,100	182,500	295,200	196,400	2,548,900
% against total		5%	10%	4%	9%	12%	5%	6%	4%	9%	9%	7%	12%	8%	100%
Marks gained		0.5	1.0	0.4	0.9	1.2	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.8	10
Total Marks Gained	100	4.0	8.2	2.8	9.3	10.5	5.6	7.2	6.4	7.7	9.4	8.6	11.1	9.1	100.0

*1   Population in 2002, Provisonal Projections of Population Distribution 1999-2008 by District Board District WGPD Paper No. 5/99

*2   Active FSC cases of SWD and NGOs involving emotional problem, marital and parent-child relationship problems as at 31.3.2002

*3   New cases from January to December 2001

*4   Reported cases from January to December 2001

*5   No. of New Arrivals (NAs) completed the questionnaire for survey on NAs from Mainland from January to December 2001, Home Affairs Department Survey
on New Arrivals from the Mainland

*6   No. of juvenile and young person offenders in 2001 Crime and Enforcement Report Calendar Year 2001 (The Police classification in district is different from
SWD such as there is no Southern district and TKO classified as   KT District).   The district is referred to where the incidents/crimes happened instead of the offenders' residence address.

*7   No. of single parent family CSSA cases as at 31.3.2002

*8   No. of low earning CSSA cases as at 31.3.2002

*9   No. of unemployment CSSA cases as at 31.3.2002

*10 Population with no schooling or with education attainment at primary school or below in 2001 (population and Household Statistics Analysed by DCD,
2001, C&SD)

Source: SWD.

Note 2:
Types of receivers of referrals
FSRC of SWD
Other units of SWD
Service units of NGO
Other government departments
Others