

Project Title:

The Future Development of Caregiving Policy and Practice in Hong Kong: International Perspectives and Local Initiatives

The proposed project aims at advancing policy formulation, research, teaching and learning, as well as service development, to support informal caregivers for frail elders and persons with disabilities in Hong Kong. Informal caregivers are usually family members, relatives or friends, who provide some form of ongoing and unpaid care to another person who requires assistance in daily tasks due to their frailty, cognitive and/or physical impairments. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) has commissioned a consulting study to explore the needs and services required of these informal carers, and the government has indicated its readiness to implement the recommendations. Hong Kong does not have a caregiver policy per se, thus leading to a lack of systematic planning, as well as the review and allocation of relevant resources in caregiver support. At the same time, additional analyses are needed to identify the needs of carers from various backgrounds (e.g., those in different age groups or varying stages of life span development, or who serve people with different impairments, etc.) and to assess the effectiveness of various initiatives. At present, there are quite a number of initiatives regarding caregiver support financed by charity foundations and carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, they are usually on a small scale and focus on a particular district or caregiver group.

This project will thus organize an international conference on caregiving policy and practice from international perspectives, two experience-sharing workshops (including one on the theme of at-risk caregivers and the other on mobilizing family and community support) and a seminar on sharing research projects in addition to research idea incubation for staff of the Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) and Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSYU), as well as consultation sessions to be provided by invited experts via Zoom after their departure from Hong Kong.

Presentations by overseas experts on exemplar caregiver policies and practices in their countries or in the global context as well as experts in economics and health sector will provide important insights for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government in reviewing the need for policy formulation, as well as for academics, researchers and other stakeholders contributing to caregiver support through research and education. At the same time, this project will also invite the sharing of innovative initiatives in other economies and those financed by charity trusts and carried out by NGOs in Hong Kong, so as to provide inspiration to the welfare sector and human service professionals (such as social workers and nurses) to consider upscaling and enhancing these initiatives. Scholarly exchanges with international and local experts will encourage academics to consider how caregiving issues can be incorporated into the training of human service professionals such as social

workers, nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists.

All these activities will contribute to promoting caregiving support through policy formulation, research studies, education and training, as well as service provision. At the same time, researchers, educators and students in higher education in Hong Kong in general, and those at CIHE and HKSYU in particular, will be inspired to incorporate the theme of caregiving support into their various scholarly activities.