

UGC/IDS(R)11/23

Title of Project:

(English) Children and Youth Research Centre

(Chinese) 兒童及青年研究中心

Abstract of the Proposed Project

Children and youth are a sizable group in Hong Kong, The Home Affairs Bureau has recently announced the Youth Development Blueprint with the vision to “nurture a new generation of young people with an affection for our country and Hong Kong and equipped with global perspective, an aspiring mind-set and positive thinking” (<https://www.youthblueprint.gov.hk/en/index.html>). The development journey will focus on exploration, hope, empowerment, and contribution. In view of this policy development, it is timely to provide research support to the government and society of Hong Kong.

Children and youth do not exist in isolation, thus the research team views their development and issues from a systems perspective. Their lives are in constant interaction with the various human and institutional systems that make up their world, such as family, friends, neighbours, communities, education, welfare agencies, schools, churches, housing, and medical services, which all exert significant influences on their quality of life. They are influenced by what has happened in the physical, social, and virtual world, which shapes their thoughts and behaviour. The advancement of technology and widespread use of social media makes their lives challenging. Due to the mutually reinforcing and interdependent nature of the systems and the depth and breadth of the factors involved, we should not and cannot analyse them in isolation through one single research project, but require a wide range of projects to address the multifaceted and complex issues under the coordination of a research centre.

Against this backdrop, the project will adopt a systems perspective and integral approach to address the problem at the individual, relational, meso- and macro-levels. We propose the establishment of the Children and Youth Research Centre (CYRC) at the Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) to achieve the following goals: (1) identify the root causes, impacts, and risk and protective factors concerning personal and social problems related to children and youth development and tackle them through self-development, positive education, career development, responsive law enforcement, correctional services, volunteerism, and community involvement, as well as counselling and family support; (2) support children and youth in exercising greater control over their lives, handling the challenges they face and advocating for their personal interests in a responsible way; (3) strengthen their resilience against radical ideologies and develop their rational thinking to address the potential harm done to themselves and society, and (4) evaluate and improve current children and youth work practices and strategies, enhance their service impacts, and if necessary, revamp the current service models to address the critical issues related to children and youth development.

The CYRC will serve as a focal point for dialogue, consultation, training, education, research and international cooperation among academics, social workers, teachers, parents, legislative counsellors, NGOs, and government departments. The CYRC will (1) conduct research to investigate issues and problems related to children and youth; (2) develop

intervention programmes or service models to enhance children and youth development that can be used by schools, corporations, children and youth centres and correctional institutions; (3) supply educational materials to support student activities in schools, universities, and community centres; and (4) organize seminars, workshops and conferences for mutual exchange and knowledge transfer with mainland and overseas institutions and local stakeholders. In the long run, the project will benefit children and youth, service providers, practitioners, and professionals, and assist the government and NGOs in making informed policy and practice decisions in relation to children and youth development.