

## Community Service & Mission

### The Hong Kong Church Network for the Poor (Hong Kong)

#### A Synopsis

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The Hong Kong Church Network for the Poor (HKCNP) is a cross-denominational Christian organization that strives to serve the poor and to voice out their need. Its mission is to transform the society through engaging different stakeholders in campaigns against poverty, a process in which both the lives of the underprivileged and those involved would be changed. The poor receive what they need and the Christians grow in active discipleship. HKCNP also builds up cross-cultural partnership with different sectors like government departments, churches, enterprises, education institutions, etc. Cooperation between different groups promotes not only synergy for higher efficacy, the unity demonstrated among churches and para-church organizations also bears a powerful witness for Christ.

This report concentrates on two of HKCNP's projects, namely "Love in Action" and "Mentorship Programme". "Love in Action" comprises a number of services which channel food and resources (such as gift packs and vouchers) provided by business and other sectors to partner churches, who then pass them to the needing hands. Material aid opens up doors for church members to build long-term relationship with the needy, caring for them and sharing with them the gospel. As for "Mentorship Programme", it was initiated by HKCNP; later on, it has been adopted by the Hong Kong government. It mobilizes Christians to be mentors to youth from poor families for three years, aiming to assist them holistically and break the chain of inter-generational poverty. Mentees are encouraged to develop saving habit and set their own goals. Moreover, they are nurtured with positive values and attributes in the love of their mentors and Christ. This developed model among church community is now a city-wide youth mobility program since the Hong Kong government has adopted the idea and launched "Child Development Fund" that works closely with HKCNP.

HKCNP's poverty reduction programs are built upon networking, including sharing vision with church leaders, organizing regional forums, contacting different sectors and linking them to potential churches. Since participating units are of different cultures and backgrounds, this cooperation per se is already a cross-cultural challenge: traversing the gap between rich and poor; between English-speaking churches and

local churches; between old immigrants and the new; between local Chinese and the ethnic minority; between non-Christian organizations and the Christian Body. It takes a village to solve and prevent complicated social problems and thus networking – gathering various human and material resources – is vital to creating momentum to voice out for the rights of the poor.

The participation of Christians fuels the engine of HKCNP since none of the projects can do without frontline workers. Moreover, while serving the underprivileged, Christians get to experience God's love for the poor. Witnessing the poor's living condition, they realize their own abundance and become more thankful. Practicing biblical hospitality and obeying what Jesus commanded us to do is no doubt a great way to nurture one's spirituality. So, serving the poor is a platform to make disciples.

While networking is an effective strategy, it is never easy to get the ball keep on rolling. It is especially difficult for stakeholders to let go of its own agenda and to co-work with other partners humbly. When HKCNP shares the vision with church leaders, it is also not uncommon to encounter lukewarm responses. However, if the whole Christian body embraces God's heart for the needy, the resources of churches immediately become part of HKCNP's network. May the ministry of HKCNP stimulate your thoughts on the role of the Christian body in serving the poor.