

Review of
the Roles of Social Work Training Providers
on the Training and Development for Social Workers
in an Era of Change

Task Group on
Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change

Advisory Committee on
Social Work Training and Manpower Planning

October 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The rapidly changing socio-economic environment of the past decade has resulted in increasing complexity of social problems. This is paralleled by the vigorous reforms of the welfare sector in response to the changing needs. These have placed new demands on social workers and aroused concern on training competent social workers for meeting the challenges of this era.

2. Against the above background, the Advisory Committee on Social Work Training and Manpower Planning (ACSWTMP) deliberated the challenges and competency requirements of social workers in an era of change at its meeting on 26 April 2002. To take the matter forward, the Task Group on Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change (the Task Group) was set up on 18 November 2002. With members from the key stakeholders namely the training institutions (TIs), employer agencies, Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), and professional associations, the Task Group is commissioned to review on the roles of pre-qualification and in-service training providers and suggest measures for strengthening the roles of and interface between stakeholders concerned so as to enhance the quality of training and development of social workers.

3. The deliberations on the challenges and competency requirements of social workers during the ACSWTMP's 164th meeting laid the basis for the review. The Task Group had thorough discussions on the challenges (namely *embracing change; striving for continuous improvement; adopting a flexible, prompt, innovative, outcome-focused and result-oriented approach; promoting customer-centred service integration; strengthening multidisciplinary or cross-sectoral collaboration and adopting a more entrepreneurial spirit*) and the essential competencies (namely *professional knowledge, language ability, IT competency, planning and management, collaborative skills, research and evaluative skills, continuous learning and professional values and ethics*) to address the challenges. The competency-based direction, in line with local and overseas experiences, has been adopted as a basis for the Task Group's deliberations on the qualities required of social workers in an era of change. The review covered an overview of the current training provision, at both the pre-qualification and in-service levels, and was substantiated with data and views collected from different training providers and major stakeholders through a questionnaire survey.

4. The views collected from different training providers confirm that the essential competencies have been covered, each at varying degrees, by the existing programmes provided by the TIs and other training providers. The review on the roles and tasks of pre-qualification and in-service training providers reflects that all training providers have adopted competency-based and other innovative approaches to keep abreast with the changing service needs. Yet, there is room for strengthening the interface among the stakeholders.
5. The Task Group has thoroughly discussed the adequacy of the competency-based approach. With its components covering various essential aspects including professional knowledge, collaborative skills, values and ethics, etc., the competency-based approach was considered appropriate to serve as a useful platform for the current review. The approach has taken into account the demands in the work context and the references from overseas experiences, while recognizing that competency must be accompanied by compassion and commitment as social work is not a merely skill-based profession. As such, not only knowledge and skills, but also ‘professional values and ethics’ and ‘attributes’ such as ‘critical thinking’ and ‘creativity’ are essential components that should receive adequate emphasis in the training. Along this direction and as a reference for development of social work training and education in a wider context, a framework with due weight given to the three components namely *professional values and ethics*, *attributes* and *generic skill set* was proposed.
6. To address the challenges of the time, the current training providers, at both pre-qualification and in-service levels, have been adopting various innovative training approaches. Yet, for the building of synergy to benefit the training and development of social workers in this era of change, there is room for strengthening the interface among the training providers as well as between them and the stakeholders. The Task Group has recommended strengthening measures along the following direction:
 - (a) making pre-qualification, post-qualification and in-service social work training / education more competency-based to meet service needs;
 - (b) facilitating training and development of social workers by a clearer delineation of responsibilities of employer agencies, social workers and other stakeholders;

- (c) meeting needs arising from new service models / initiatives through greater collaboration between TIs and service providers on issues or researches on the training and development of social workers;
- (d) facilitating training providers to conduct tailor-made / advanced training activities through better collaboration between TIs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Social Welfare Department (SWD); and
- (e) enhancing collaboration between NGOs and HKCSS on joint training for NGOs.

7. Successful implementation of the strengthening measures hinges on the readiness of the parties concerned to take up ownership of their respective roles and tasks and to join hands in coordination work. As such, the tasks for strengthening the roles of and the interface between the stakeholders are set out individually in Chapter Six for easy reference. In sum, the key implementation measures are:

- (a) **a regular forum** to be **coordinated by HKCSS** for sharing among the training providers, employer agencies and professional associations;
- (b) **regular meetings** amongst **TIs, and between TIs and service sector** to make **pre-qualification and in-service training more competency-based**;
- (c) strengthening **sharing** between the **service sector** and the **TIs on new service development**;
- (d) the **training providers and employer agencies' supporting measures** to facilitate training and development of social workers and **social workers' ownership** to pursue continuous learning;
- (e) more **collaboration between stakeholders** in running **tailor-made / advanced training** to meet service needs; and
- (f) the enhanced collaboration **between NGOs and HKCSS on joint training** to encourage cross-fertilization of learning and to maximize use of training resources.

8. To help strengthening the interface among the stakeholders, the ACSWTMP would share the recommendations of the Report with the TIs, the employer agencies, the professional associations and appeal to their support in implementing the above measures.

9. The recommendations in the Report are only an initial attempt to address the requirements of training competent social workers in the context of changing service needs of the time. With the recommended measures to strengthen the interface, it is hoped that social workers can replace sporadic attempts with concerted ones, and harness the opportunities to grow in the midst of the challenges to remain an unique profession, committed to care-giving, and ready to rise up to change and continuous development.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 The recent decade was marked with rapid and significant changes in the social, economic and political arenas. China's resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, the increasing globalization of all trades and China's entry into the World Trade Organization have posed not only new opportunities but also challenges to Hong Kong in terms of threatened job security and fierce competition in various aspects. In the meantime, the social issues in Hong Kong have become more diverse and complicated, and social workers are faced with ever-increasing demands on their professional knowledge and performance. The increasing number of individuals and families in financial hardship, together with the rise in domestic violence cases, including elder abuse and neglect, suicides, and intensified problems of juvenile delinquency and substance abuse, have already aroused much public concern. The economy, still running in a downward course, has aggravated the problems in the society which is already witnessing weakened solidarity and emerging divisiveness. During such time of great stress and uncertainties, the social work profession has a critical role to play in helping vulnerable individuals and promoting the well-being and cohesiveness of the community.
- 1.1.2 Such unprecedented social changes have been echoed by the vigorous reforms in the social welfare sector in the past few years, to meet the demands for enhanced efficiency and quality of services. Various subject areas (the youth, the family services and the elderly) have undergone major service review. Workflow and strategies have been reengineered under the new operating environment of the Service Performance and Monitoring System (SPMS), the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention mode and the quality-based competitive bidding. In the midst of all these changes, social workers nowadays are urged to reposition themselves and to acquire the necessary competencies with stamina for professional practice.

- 1.1.3 It is within such context that the issue on ‘Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change’ was brought up for discussion at the 164th meeting of the Advisory Committee on Social Work Training and Manpower Planning (ACSWTMP) held on 26 April 2002. In response to the identified challenges for social workers in an era of change and the competencies required for meeting these challenges, members of the ACSWTMP shared their common concern about the professional standards of social workers and exchanged views on the foci of training and the roles of training providers in preparing competent social workers for the sector. The discussion pointed to the need to review the roles of training providers in preparing and promoting continuous professional development for the social workers in an era of change. To take the matter forward, members of the ACSWTMP agreed at the meeting on 18 November 2002 to set up a task group to review the roles of the respective training providers in the provision of pre-service vis-à-vis in-service training and development for social workers, and to suggest measures to strengthen the roles of and the interface between the training providers for enhancing the quality of training for the professional competence of social workers in meeting the challenges facing Hong Kong nowadays.
- 1.1.4 In the context of this report, ‘training providers’ refer to all pre-qualification and in-service training providers involved in the training of social workers in Hong Kong. ‘Pre-qualification training providers’ refer to those training institutions (TIs), namely, the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), City University of Hong Kong (CityUHK), Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPolyU), University of Hong Kong (HKU) and Hong Kong Shue Yan College (HKSyc), providing qualifying programmes leading to registration as Registered Social Workers at the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). ‘In-service training providers’, including the Social Welfare Department (SWD), Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional associations (PAs), are institutions involved in providing on-the-job training to registered social workers to strengthen their skills to meet the work demands. As for ‘other stakeholders’ referred to in this report, they include but not limit to individual social workers, institutions and committees such as the SWRB, the ACSWTMP, and funding bodies such as the Social Work Training Fund (SWTF).

1.2 CURRENT REVIEW: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP

1.2.1 The Task Group on Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change (the Task Group), formed under the auspices of the ACSWTMP, was tasked to review the roles of training providers in the training and development of social workers as well as to explore ways to strengthen interface among parties concerned including, among others, the focus of pre-service and in-service training for social workers and the coordination among various stakeholders. The terms of reference of the Task Group are set out as follows:

- (a) to discuss the roles of pre-qualification and in-service training providers in the training and development of social workers in an era of change;
- (b) to identify areas for strengthening the interface among pre-qualification, in-service training providers and other stakeholders concerned in the training and development of social workers; and
- (c) to suggest measures for strengthening the roles of and interface between stakeholders concerned in the training and development of social workers.

1.2.2 Members of the Task Group were invited from ACSWTMP to join in their individual capacity. Membership of the Task Group is as follows:

Convenor : Ms KAO Ching-chi, Sophia

Members : Prof. MAK Ping-see, Diana

[Hong Kong Polytechnic University]

Prof. Iris CHI, JP

[The University of Hong Kong]

Prof. MA Lai-chong, Joyce (until 31 July 2003)

Prof. TANG Kwong-leung (from 1 August 2003)

[The Chinese University of Hong Kong]

Mr YAU How-boa, Stephen, JP

[International Social Service (Hong Kong Branch)]

Miss CHEUNG Kam-hung, Rainbow

[Hong Kong Social Workers Association]

Mr WONG Kam-man, Joseph
[Hong Kong Council of Social Service]
Miss LEUNG Wai-ming, Ada
[Social Welfare Department]
Secretary : Mr TONG Woon-cheong, Arthur
[Social Welfare Department]

- 1.2.3 The Task Group had five meetings between December 2002 and June 2003 to deliberate on the various issues under its terms of reference. It is commissioned to submit a report to ACSWTMP after its deliberations.

1.3 OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

- 1.3.1 In this Report, we will first introduce the review methodology in Chapter Two. An overview of the challenges for social workers in an era of change, the essential competencies in the training and development of social workers, and the current provision of social work training which form the basis for the review will be discussed in Chapter Three. Findings of the questionnaire survey, i.e. coverage of essential competencies by existing training programmes, and the roles and tasks of training providers in an era of change, will be covered in Chapter Four. We will then recapitulate the Task Group's deliberations on the framework on training and development of social workers in an era of change and the areas for strengthening the interface among various stakeholders in Chapter Five. Basing on these findings and deliberations, the concluding chapter, Chapter Six, will point to the future direction and highlight the ownership of individual stakeholders concerned in implementing the recommended measures detailed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.1.1 The background and tasks of the Task Group have been introduced in Chapter One. In this Chapter, we shall explain the approach of the review and the methodology employed in the collection of data.

2.2 APPROACH OF THE REVIEW

2.2.1 Providers of social work training are committed to provide quality training so as to equip their trainees fully for their role as competent social workers. In an environment where changes are inevitable, training providers should always be on the alert to review the appropriateness of their training programmes, taking into consideration the goals and objectives of its own organization, and develop new training strategies and initiatives. The purpose of this review is not intended to examine in detail programmes provided by individual training providers or to work out a particular model on how social work training should be delivered. However, we would work out a framework on the training and development of social workers in an era of change, basing on the challenges facing social workers and the current competency-based approach in training. With this framework in mind, we would look into the areas requiring strengthening and how various stakeholders can work together for enhancing the quality of social work education and training and better preparing the social workers to face the ongoing changes and challenges.

2.3 THE REVIEW METHODOLOGY

2.3.1 Basis of the Review

2.3.1.1 The challenges facing social workers in this era of change, the provision of social work training, and the competency approach as the basis of training

required to meet the challenges of the ever-changing working environment have already been presented in ACSWTMP Paper 2/2002 and deliberated at the 164th meeting of the ACSWTMP. The discussion of the ACSWTMP meeting will therefore be recapitulated in this Report. Though members of the Task Group had diverse views about the working definitions of ‘competencies’ and the adequacies of the ‘essential competencies’ to address the qualities required of social workers, it was generally agreed that the competency-based approach could provide a common platform for the discussion, especially in the context of training competent practitioners to meet the challenges of the time. References have also been drawn to consolidate the basis of the review.

2.3.2 Questionnaire Survey

2.3.2.1 To point the way ahead on areas requiring strengthening, the Task Group collected information and views from training providers and major stakeholders covering the following areas:

- (a) the coverage of the essential competencies by existing social work training programmes (including undergraduate and postgraduate training, and in-service training);
- (b) the roles and tasks of training providers and major stakeholders in training and development of social workers in an era of change; and
- (c) the areas for strengthening the roles of and the interface among training providers and major stakeholders.

2.3.2.2 For (a), CUHK, CityUHK, HKBU, HKPolyU, HKU, HKSYC, HKCSS, Hong Kong Social Workers Association (HKSWA) and SWD were received. For (b) and (c), views were gathered from members of the Task Group representing the major stakeholders in the social welfare sector.

2.3.3 Deliberations of the Task Group

2.3.3.1 With reference to the basis of the review and findings of the questionnaire survey, the Task Group deliberated on the framework for training of social workers in an era of change and the suggested measures for strengthening the interface among various stakeholders.

2.4 The basis of the review, the findings of the questionnaire survey and the Task Group's deliberations and recommendations will be elaborated in Chapters Three to Five.

CHAPTER THREE

BASIS OF THE REVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 This Chapter presents the deliberations of the ACSWTMP on the ‘Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change’ at its 164th meeting held on 26 April 2002 which form the basis of the Review. The areas covered include:

- (a) challenges for social workers in an era of change;
- (b) essential competencies in the training and development of social workers; and
- (c) provision of current social work training.

3.1.2 In response to the demand for professionals fully equipped to meet the rapid changing societal needs, tertiary educators locally and overseas have taken an active role in reviewing the qualities required of their graduates and the approaches and measures in enhancing development of their competencies. To shed light on the future direction of the competency-based training approach, reference is drawn to the following experiences on their adoption of the competency-based training:

- (a) Reform of Social Work Education and Training in the United Kingdom; and
- (b) Tertiary Education Reforms in New Zealand.

3.2 CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL WORKERS IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

3.2.1 *“Social work is not just an assortment of intervention technologies. It is an unique profession that is committed to care-giving, but also to change; to remedy and rehabilitation, but also to reform; to service, but also to development.” (Shanti K. Khinduka)^{Note 1}*

^{Note 1} “Challenges of the Social Work Profession in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective”, *Hong Kong Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 35, No. 1 & 2 (Summer & Winter 2000) p.10, Hong Kong Social Workers Association Limited

In Professor Khinduka's talk on "Challenges of the Social Work Profession in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective" in a conference in Hong Kong in 1999, he pointed out that the challenges to social work practitioners were already a worldwide phenomenon, and appealed to social workers to make continuous change, reform and development for meeting the challenges in this new era.

3.2.2 In the context of Hong Kong, the challenges for social workers of this era are complicated by the economic depression, the complexity of social problems, and the rapid reforms in the social welfare sector in response to the changing needs of the community. The soaring unemployment rate (8.7% as at July 2003), the significant increase in the number of reported child abuse, suicide and battered spouse cases in 2002 (i.e. 27%, 18% and 3 times respectively higher than that of in 1998)^{Note 2} are clear indicators of the magnitude of social problems confronting the social workers. Service reviews in different programme areas including the youth services, family services and services for elders are attempts to re-engineer the service delivery process through provision of more holistic and integrated services and maximization of existing resources. At the organizational level, the SWD and the HKCSS have undergone restructuring to reposition themselves to face the new challenges in the planning, development and delivery of social welfare services, with the aim of providing more efficient and effective services geared towards the changing needs of the community. In the meantime, such service development and organizational restructuring are supported by the rapid development in the use of the information technology and the introduction of a new operating environment under the Service Performance and Monitoring System (SPMS), the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention mode and the quality-based competitive bidding. The flexibility in deployment of resources and emergence of positive competition unleash the forces of innovation, initiative and value-addedness in the delivery of services whereas the changes in service development demand more customer-focused, output-driven and cost-effective services. All these challenges have to be seen in the background of the tremendous changes in political climate of this time. The handover of Hong Kong to the sovereignty of China in 1997 and the increasing global integration through trade and communication have impacted on Hong Kong's hitherto privileged position as the middleman between China and the West. Hong Kong workforce, social workers being no exception, have to capitalize on their cosmopolitan outlook and bilingual ability in order to maintain their competitiveness.

^{Note 2} Briefing on the Services of Family and Child Protective Services Units: Recent Development of the Measures to Combat Spouse Battering and Child Abuse dated 27.2.2003

3.2.3 Facing all these evolving and pressing social issues and demands in an era of change, social workers are faced with the following challenges and new demands in terms of mentality, knowledge and skills:

(a) *Embracing change*

In the light of the rapidly changing social environment, especially that arising from the increasing contacts between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and the trend of globalization, readiness to embrace change would be the most crucial attribute for social workers. They need to have a good understanding of the changing environment and the social context where they start the helping process with their customers. They should take pride in their role as change agent and possess an embracing change mindset which would enhance their alertness to the emergence of social problems, responsiveness to the changing service needs, and acceptance of new roles and approaches in service delivery.

(b) *Striving for continuous improvement*

As socioeconomic conditions keep changing and new social issues evolved, social workers must react promptly and improve the services continuously with new approaches and skills. They should take ownership for continuous professional development to enrich their intervention and competitiveness. The SWRB's plan to introduce continuous professional education on a voluntary basis supports this direction.

(c) *Adopting a flexible, prompt, innovative, outcome-focused and result-oriented approach*

For a caring profession, assistance to the needy has to be prompt and should meet customers' needs with flexibility and innovation. Moving away from input, rule-based and compliance mentality to an output, evidence-based, outcome-focused and result-oriented approach is what social workers should adopt. In practice, service providers who hitherto have operated within an established and pre-determined mode have to devise new modalities and approaches to secure the services, and to deliver them in novel ways.

(d) *Promoting customer-centred service integration*

Driven by the customer-centred focus, welfare services are moving towards greater integration and an one-stop approach. Services for youths, families and elders have been heading towards this end, and in the new town of Tung Chung, integrated services with a family-focused holistic approach are now rendered. Social workers need to be knowledgeable in community resources and a wide spectrum of services, rather than a fragment of it, and refer the customers to other workers or agencies for appropriate services.

(e) *Strengthening multidisciplinary or cross-sectoral collaboration*

The growing complexity and widespread concern of social problems demand a multidisciplinary or cross-sectoral approach so that the effort and contribution from various professions / organizations could be maximized and well coordinated. The prevention and management of child abuse has demonstrated the effectiveness of such approach. Looking ahead, more and closer collaboration between the welfare sector and others, such as health, education, legal and district communities, is yet to be further promoted.

(f) *Adopting a more entrepreneurial spirit*

With the fiscal deficit now facing the Hong Kong SAR Government, a drive to do more with less will become an integral part of any public service provider, and social workers in the public sector (SWD and NGOs included) are no exception. Entrepreneurship means using new ways to maximize productivity and effectiveness. It demands social workers to have better appreciation of the costing of services, the measurement of outputs and outcomes and the confidence to shift resources around to do the most good for the community. For social work educators, the challenges will be how to educate the next generation of social workers so that they begin to be aware and alert to learn how to balance the concern for output and outcome with costing on the one hand and to serve the need guided by social work values and knowledge on the other.

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORKERS

3.3.1 The above challenges have placed new and different demands on our social work professionals. Acquiring only professional knowledge and skills in specific subject areas would no longer be adequate for the social workers to handle the challenges. Competent social workers need to think outside the box of disciplinary boundaries, and to be multi-skilled, while complemented by specialization in specific service areas. In view of the challenges in the welfare sector, training and development for social workers should be geared towards the needed competencies to ensure that social workers possess the new mindset, approaches and skills to enhance their professionalism and competency in their work and keep themselves abreast of the changing demands and new developments in the profession. The competencies which are considered essential for the social work profession include:

(a) *Professional knowledge*

Problems of domestic violence, suicide, drug abuse, youth gangs and mental health are areas becoming more prominent and requiring more intensive professional input. Their etiology involves complicated dynamics including a person's handling of emotions, relationships and crisis; and the intervention demands complicated skills and sensitivity. Advanced and specialized skills are required for social workers to work with customers facing these problems effectively as well as to manage other changing social issues.

(b) *Language ability*

Language ability is an important competency for social workers in Hong Kong. Effective written communication skill, which reflects sound conceptual thinking, facilitates the work of social workers with customers and collaboration with others. Other concerns, especially compliance with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance especially in the context of the development of the Clientele Information System (CIS), and the importance of putting things in context, should be addressed to when writing case recordings, reports and related correspondence. With the new service allocation mechanism, the ability to write quality proposals for bidding of new services is certainly an edge and the first step to start off a service business. More importantly, multi-lingualism in a cosmopolitan city like Hong

Kong is indispensable as social workers here have to work daily with a significant number of new arrivals from the Mainland and other countries. There is, however, a general concern of the students' competence in English (and also Putonghua) as mentioned in the Report by the University Grants Committee (1996) – Higher Education in Hong Kong. The situation has alarmed the employers according to a survey 'Business Confidence 2002' sponsored by the Better Hong Kong Foundation ^{Note 3}. About 59% of the 1,241 respondents of the survey (comprising international chambers of commerce and business association) perceived their employees' standard of English language to be unsatisfactory. For social work graduates, the Survey of Employers' Feedback on Practice among Local Social Work Graduates by the ACSWTMP and HKCSS (1998) revealed local social work graduates' weakness in written communication. Conscious efforts are therefore necessary to strengthen the social workers' language ability for enhancement of the service quality as well as maintaining their employability, both in Hong Kong and the Mainland since people from both sides are now allowed to work across the border.

(c) *IT competency*

In this era of knowledge explosion, IT has played an important role in storage and management of the massive volume of data, high-speed communication and exchange of information through electronic means, and the new learning opportunities through e-Learning. IT literacy therefore has become a basic skill for professionals in the modern world. As IT continuously advances, our IT literacy should catch up with the times. For better use of IT to achieve higher productivity and efficiency, more system application of IT has to be developed and IT training should be pointing to that direction.

(d) *Planning and Management*

Planning and management skill is as important as professional skill. Apart from general organizational management, skills in resources planning, project management, performance monitoring, service evaluation as well as planning and co-ordination are all required for

^{Note 3} Cited in a press release entitled "The International Business Optimistic on Hong Kong's Economic Future" dated 7.1.2003, at www.betterhongkong.org/archives/html

present and future service delivery.

(e) Collaborative skills

Collaborative skills refer to the competency in working with others to achieve a win-win situation. Within an organization, teamwork has become a common work approach, especially in managing complicated tasks. Outside an organization, the competency include the ability and readiness in networking with other individuals, groups or organizations for best use of community resources, forming strategic alliances for timely delivery of well-coordinated services, and promoting multidisciplinary or cross-sectoral collaboration for optimal district services planning.

(f) Research and evaluative skills

Research can establish an empirical base for identifying service needs and designing appropriate service models geared towards the community or neighbourhood characteristics. Evaluative skills, such as skills in programme evaluation, are needed for gauging the effectiveness of intervention and identifying areas for improvement and directions for more focused and effective service planning. Competency on research and evaluation is crucial in demonstrating service output, establishing rationale for evidence-based intervention, and laying foundation for sound territorial or district service planning.

(g) Continuous learning

To put continuous professional improvement and learning into practice, social workers must first learn how to learn. This competency includes ability in setting clear and achievable objective, motivating oneself to learn, acquiring effective learning and data collection / analysis skills, and time management for learning, etc.

(h) Professional values and ethics

Values and ethics, which underpin the social work profession, are so fundamental that social workers should constantly re-examine and practice them to ensure that they met current expectations and standards. The rapid pace of changes in all facets of life has baffled

the social workers with voluminous issues such that they need to be more consciously and critically reflect and debate on the values and ethics in order to reposition themselves and to keep the profession responsive for the advancement of the society.

- 3.3.3 The competencies listed above are meant to address the challenges for social workers in an era of change. There is no intention to place these eight essential competencies in their order of importance. It is not practical to do so either as some competencies do address the challenges directly such as ‘professional knowledge’ and ‘planning and management’ whereas others are in a more indirect and subtle nature, namely language ability and IT competency. Also, the components of ‘continuous learning’ and ‘professional values and ethics’ do underlie and have an intricate relationship with the other competencies.

3.4 PROVISION OF CURRENT SOCIAL WORK TRAINING

- 3.4.1 For over four decades, with the efforts of all concerned parties, training and development for social workers have been solidly grounded and well developed in the local context to supply adequate manpower for the community. Apart from the social work training institutions (TIs) which offer both pre-qualification and in-service training programmes, SWD, HKCSS, individual NGOs, and other professional associations such as the Hong Kong Social Workers Association (HKSWA) share the mission of providing just-in-time and advanced in-service training for social workers. The current provision of social work training in Hong Kong, categorized under pre-qualification training and in-service training, will be examined at para. 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 respectively.

3.4.2 Pre-qualification Training

- 3.4.2.1 Pre-qualification social work training is provided by local TIs, which offer qualifying social work programmes from sub-degree to master degree levels, namely:
- (a) sub-degree level training awarded with *Higher Diploma in Social Work / Associate of Social Science in Social Work* for Form 5 / matriculated graduates;
 - (b) baccalaureate level training awarded with *Bachelor of Social Work*,

Bachelor of Social Science – major in Social Work, or Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Work for matriculated students; and

- (c) post-graduate level training awarded with *Master of Social Work / Master of Social Science (Social Work)* for graduates with non-social work first degree.

3.4.2.2 As a first-level training, the above programmes adopt a generalist approach, i.e. equipping social workers to perform a wide range of tasks including direct service delivery, service planning, management, research, policy analysis, etc. in a variety of settings serving different target groups to ensure that, among other things, the graduates have the competence to take up social work posts in various settings at the entry level. To enable graduates of these programmes to fulfill the statutory requirements for registration as social workers, the programmes are accredited by the SWRB, with curricula encompassing at least the following core subject areas:

- (a) human behaviour and social environment;
- (b) social welfare systems and social policies;
- (c) social work practices and theories;
- (d) social sciences / liberal arts knowledge; and
- (e) field practicum (minimum 800 hours for degree programmes and 700 hours for diploma programmes).

3.4.2.3 In addition, as tertiary level curricula, these programmes are also broad-based, covering generic skills on language, information technology (IT), personal effectiveness and knowledge on general education. Although the training is generic in nature, the contents are constantly updated in the context of current social welfare issues, such as social problems and welfare reform measures to equip graduates with the needed background and competencies for practice.

3.4.2.4 The majority of these training are full-time programmes, whereas part-time programmes offered are designed mainly for those who are already serving in the social welfare field, e.g. welfare workers pursuing sub-degree social work programme, or social work assistants attending social work degree programme for a higher academic qualification for career advancement.

3.4.2.5 In an overview of these qualifying training programmes through the TIs' websites, it is observed that TIs, despite their different scholastic orientation, are addressing the current challenges and developing the needed competencies in their students as reflected in their training approach or focus. For example,

the University of Hong Kong adopts the ‘problem-based learning approach’ as an integrative learning process, the Chinese University of Hong Kong places emphasis on experiential learning and organizes adventure-based training and placement, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University aims at educating competent, humanistic and reflective social workers for Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Baptist University emphasizes developing social workers in a flexible, realistic, creative and professional yet caring manner, and the City University of Hong Kong prepares students to function competently and effectively as professional workers in a range of social work and human service appointments in various agencies in Hong Kong whereas Hong Kong Shue Yan College adopts a generalist model to prepare their graduates to have a wide perspective and to serve a range of future careers.

3.4.3 In-Service Training

Post-qualification Social Work Programmes

3.4.3.1 The post-graduate training provided by TIs is the second level of training focusing more on advanced study of social work theories, management, research and evaluative skills, and critique of policies and service delivery systems and addressing more deeply contemporary welfare issues and social work practices. Specialization in particular areas, such as family work, mental health or social service administration, is common on these programmes, which are usually part-time taught programmes of master level attended by serving social workers or academics pursuing further studies.

In-service Training Activities

3.4.3.2 The SWD, HKCSS, and individual NGOs are the major planners / providers of short-term in-service training and development for social workers. In addition, TIs, their executive arms for continuing education and professional centres, and professional associations (e.g. HKSWA) also supplement training on a need basis. The training resources primarily come from the Government, funding bodies under the management of the SWD (e.g. Lotteries Fund, Social Work Training Fund), NGOs and social workers’ own contribution.

3.4.3.3 The in-service training activities, which are usually short-term, are

largely related to the following areas:

- (a) knowledge and skills necessary to meet basic job requirements, e.g. induction courses for various services;
- (b) training on more advanced knowledge and skills to improve service quality or handle difficult tasks, e.g. elder abuse, clinical supervision; and
- (c) activities promoting personal development, effectiveness and raising quality of job-related performance, e.g. programmes on stress management and thinking methods.

3.4.3.4 Training programmes offered by the employer agencies are usually brief, job-specific and competency-based whereas those offered by TIs or their executive arms on continuing education, especially those award-bearing or so designed for leading to academic awards, are of longer duration, more in-depth and comprehensive.

3.4.3.5 Predominantly in the form of courses / seminars / workshops, in-service training is also delivered in a peer learning mode such as HKSWA's Salon (社工沙龍) to nurture the atmosphere for mutual learning, and in electronic means such as SWD's e-Learning Centre which offers flexibility for self-learning anytime, anywhere.

3.5 REFERENCES ON COMPETENCY TRAINING

3.5.1 In Australia, competency-based training is generally defined as a “flexible form of education / training which aims to produce a workforce with the skills and knowledge which an industry requires. It focuses on achievement of competencies and what a student can do as a result of education / training”^{Note 4}. The concept is widely adopted in Australia for various professionals and industries where competency is defined as a combination of skills and knowledge which can be performed and applied appropriately, to the standard required, in a range of situations in the workforce^{Note 5}. The Australian Association of Social Work furthers this understanding of competency as ‘skills and knowledge’ by adding the concept of ‘transferability’, i.e. “the ability to transfer the knowledge and skills to new and differing context” (AASW 1994). In other parts of the world, such as the United Kingdom and

Note 4 Tropical North Queensland TAFE (Technical and Further Education)– www.tnqit.tafe.net

Note 5 Tropical North Queensland TAFE (Technical and Further Education) – www.tnqit.tafe.net

the United States, similar concepts have been adopted though in different terminologies. The British National Skills Task Force (NSTF) defines this as generic skills, which are the ‘transferable’ skills ‘generic to most work’^{Note 6} whereas the United States National Skills Standards Board (NSSB) considers such skills as employability skills^{Note 7}. On the other hand, concerns have been expressed in North America that the development and the acceptance of the competency-based approach will result in the deskilling of the profession and create a pressure for homogenization of curriculum in the schools of social work, resulting in their dwindling capacities in terms of critical thought, innovation, debate and difference^{Note 8}.

3.5.2 In the current review, however, a broader scope of competency encompassing not just knowledge and skills, but also such attributes as critical thinking and innovative disposition is favoured [see para. 3.3.2(h) and P. 3 of App. IV]. In line with this, Stark and his colleagues^{Note 9} have come up with a composite of six types of competence which are considered indispensable for ethical and accountable professional practice: (1) conceptual competence (understanding of the theoretical foundations of the profession); (2) technical competence (ability to master fundamental skills required of the profession); (3) integrative competence (ability to meld theory and practice); (4) contextual competence (understanding of the broad social, economic and cultural environment in which the profession is practiced); (5) adaptive competence (ability to anticipate and prepare for changes important to the profession); and (6) interpersonal communications competence (ability to use written and oral communication effectively).

3.5.3 In Hong Kong, the competency or generic skills approach has been widely adopted, especially for in-service training where graduates are subject to outcome measures in terms of acquisition of multi-skills for meeting the

Note 6 NSTF (National Skills Task Force) 2000b, *Skill for all: Research report*, Department for Education and Employment, Sheffield., cited in P. Kearns, “Review of Research: Generic Skills for the New Economy”, *Australian National Training Authority, 2001*

Note 7 NSSB (National Skills Standards Board) 2000, *Summary of the NSSB Guidelines for a Voluntary National Skill Standards System, Washington*, cited in P. Kearns, “Review of Research: Generic Skills for the New Economy”, *Australian National Training Authority, 2001*

Note 8 On this issue, the Joint Committee of the International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Workers made the following observation: “There might be merits to the competencies-based approach on national/regional levels. However, this is seen to be far too specific to be applied to the global level.” (page 4, Discussion Document on Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training, 2002)

Note 9 Stark, J.S., Lowther, M.A. & Hagerty, B.M.K. (1986). *Responsive Professional Education: Balancing Outcomes and Opportunities*. (ASHE.ERIC Higher Education Report No. 3), cited in Shanti K. Khinduka “Challenges of the Social Work Profession in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective”, *Hong Kong Journal of Social Work, Vol. 35, No.1 & 2 (Summer & Winter 2000) page 10, Hong Kong Social Workers Association Limited*

challenges of the changing work environment and employers are key-players to provide feedback on whether the skills demanded in the employment sector is well matched by education and training. Having studied the provision of pre-service and in-service training by the local training providers for the development of the generic skills / essential competencies and the attributes in the social work students and practitioners in Section 3.4, we now turn to two overseas examples to provide further references on competency / generic skills training. These examples serves to provide some information on what the overseas counterparts are working at and are by no means exhaustive.

3.5.4 Reform of Social Work Education and Training in the United Kingdom (extracted from www.doh.gov.uk/swqualification)

3.5.4.1 In the United Kingdom, a reform of social work education and training has just been proposed with the vision that the new social work degree programme, to be introduced in England in September 2003, will produce social workers who are competent practitioners, able to respond to the complex and changing needs of service users and carers. The new qualification will rigorously assess social workers in the following areas:

- (a) practical application of skills, knowledge, research and analytical abilities to deliver a service which creates opportunities for users;
- (b) ability to reflect social work values in their practice;
- (c) ability to manage change and deliver required outcomes;
- (d) ability to communicate with users and carers of all ages and from all sections of the community;
- (e) knowledge of social work theory and how it can be applied in practice; and
- (f) ability to function effectively and confidently in multi-disciplinary teams.

3.5.5 Tertiary Education Reforms in New Zealand (extracted from www.minedu.govt.nz)

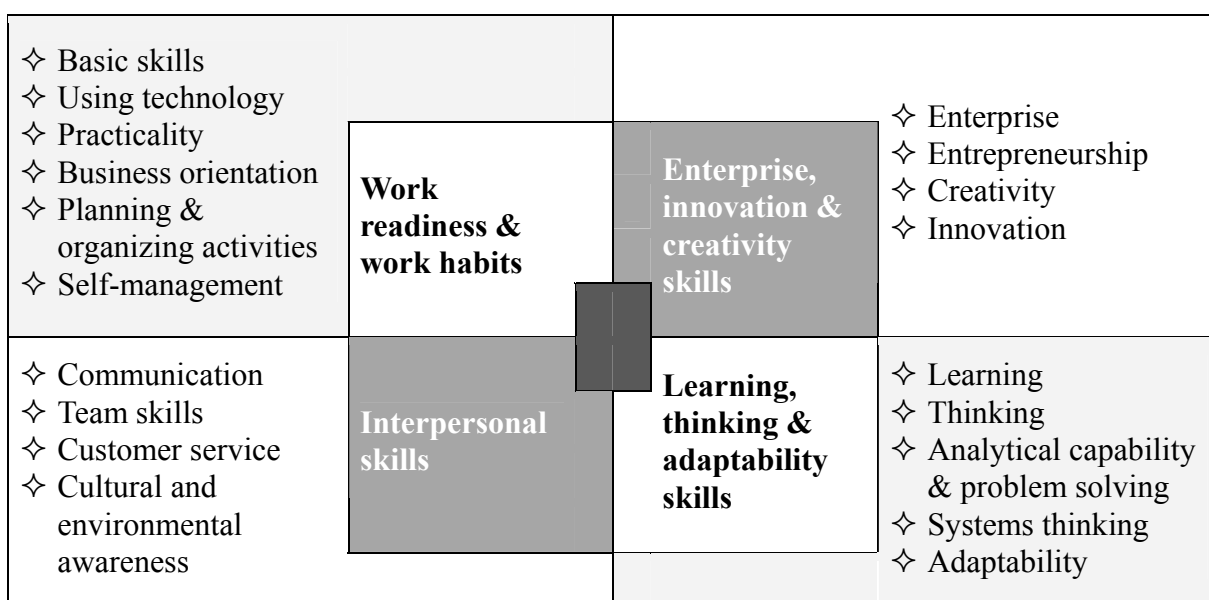
3.5.5.1 The New Zealand Government has developed a “Tertiary Education Strategy for 2002-07” to set the new direction and policy framework for the tertiary education system. Though it is not specifically on social work training, its direction of high-level generic skills development would enjoy wide applicability to all disciplines of tertiary education. In the strategy “Develop the skills New Zealanders need for our knowledge society”, training providers

by 2007, will be responding to high-level generic skills development imperatives in a variety of additional and more innovative ways. These include:

- (a) providing for a generic skills component more explicitly in programmes at both degree and sub-degree level;
- (b) identifying base-line generic skill levels of all students at entry;
- (c) providing individualized learning support programmes, with a stress on generic skills development; and/or
- (d) providing on-line or traditionally-delivered specialist programmes in areas of particular generic skills need.

It is anticipated that by 2007, there will be a common understanding of what constitutes generic skills. As quoted in this strategy, there is much international consistency around the skills that are considered ‘generic’ in relation to work lives.

3.5.5.2 The interlocking relationship of these generic skills in clusters, diagrammatically presented in a recent Australian research (P. Kearns, “Review of Research: Generic Skills for the New Economy”, Australian National Training Authority, 2001, p.52), is shown as follows:



3.5.6 The need for generic skills development has also been brought up for discussion by local academics. When talking about the opportunities for improvement, Professor K YOUNG of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, in the paper ‘General Education in the 21st Century’^{Note 10} argues that besides

^{Note 10} A paper delivered at the Symposium celebrating the Centenary of Shanxi University, Taiyuan, Shanxi, 8

imparting the habit of doubt / uncertainty and the ability to reflect / debate various issues, the TIs also need to pay attention to generic skills development for the sake of external accountability. The point being made is that “we now hear from employers that graduates are weakest not in subject-specific knowledge, but in general maturity, language competence, common sense, even suavity and urbanity. In times of generally rising unemployment, students are very sensitive to the preferences of potential employers, and we do see enhanced interest on campus for courses that contribute to general skills.” (p.4 of the report)

- 3.6 To prepare social work practitioners to meet the challenges of the times, the competency training / the generic skills approach, for its broad coverage, is a popular and practicable approach and will serve as a reference point for deliberating the roles of and the interface between training providers in the current review. With this basis, the Task Group has conducted questionnaire survey along this line and deliberated on the framework on training and development of social workers and the measures to strengthen the interface among the stakeholders. The survey findings and the Task Group's deliberations will be further elaborated in Chapter Four and Chapter Five respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Information on whether the current training provision is going in the direction of the competency-based training and the roles and tasks of the training providers are required to facilitate further discussion on the framework of the training for social workers and the interface issue among stakeholders. Questionnaire survey involving the major stakeholders, including the training providers, professional association and employer agencies was conducted on the following two areas (para. 2.3.2.1 and 2.3.2.2 refers):

- (a) the coverage of the essential competencies by existing social work training programmes; and
- (b) the roles and tasks of training providers and major stakeholders in training and development of social workers in an era of change.

Findings of the survey is presented in this Chapter.

4.2 COVERAGE OF ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES BY EXISTING SOCIAL WORK TRAINING PROGRAMMES

4.2.1 Having examined the current provision of social work training, the Task group collected information through the questionnaire survey which covered all stakeholders on whether the various pre-qualification and in-service training programmes have addressed the essential competencies, given in para. 3.3.1, for social workers to meet the challenges in this era of change. According to the feedback (*Appendix I*), the Task Group noted that all the essential competencies are being addressed at varying degrees by different training programmes, in addition to the following observations:

- (a) all the listed competencies, except language ability, IT competency and research and evaluative skills, are addressed by all the training programmes at all levels with different extent of coverage;

- (b) professional knowledge and professional values and ethics are the main foci of all the programmes;
- (c) the two generic skills of language ability and IT competency are of relatively lower concerns with the rise of the academic level of the programmes whereas research and evaluative skills have become more significant as the training goes to more advanced level;
- (d) in sub-degree programmes, language ability and continuous learning are also the main foci but research and evaluative skills and IT competency are apparently less emphasized;
- (e) for degree programmes, planning and management is another emphasis apart from professional knowledge and values and ethics. Degree programmes also focus more on, other than those just mentioned, the collaborative skills; and
- (f) for in-service training, all the listed competencies, except for the basic skills of language ability and IT competency, are the main foci of training.

4.3 ROLES AND TASKS OF TRAINING PROVIDERS IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

4.3.1 To lay the basis for further discussion on the interface concerns, the Task Group has collected information, through the questionnaire survey involving the major stakeholders, the roles and tasks of pre-qualification and in-service training providers. The roles of the training providers are summarized in *Appendix II* for easy reference and the findings are summarized in para. 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 below.

4.3.2 Pre-qualification Training

4.3.2.1 At the pre-qualification level, TIs are the key training providers of pre-qualification training. Professional associations such as HKSWA play a supportive role to the social workers-to-be whereas the other stakeholders, i.e. SWD, HKCSS and NGOs, are key players from the perspective of employer agencies. The major roles and tasks of various stakeholders are listed as follows:

- (a) *Training Institutions* are key providers to offer pre-qualification education / training through classroom teaching, fieldwork teaching, etc. for preparing students to meet the more dynamic service demands upon graduation and offer of scholarship and other learning support to student. They are also *evaluators* to evaluate the pre-qualification education / training in order to maximize students' learning and meet the changing needs of the sector, as well as *coordinators of fieldwork placement* to facilitate students' learning during fieldwork placement.
- (b) *Social Welfare Department* is a key player in advising on quality, relevancy and direction of training to meet social needs, a provider and evaluator of short-term courses that enhance competencies of non-social-work-trained staff in performing specific tasks, a provider of fieldwork placement, a facilitator of structured and award-bearing education / training programmes, a supporter of field staff's pursuit of social work qualification for career development, and a facilitator to provide feedback to TIs regarding new recruits.
- (c) *Hong Kong Council of Social Service* is a coordinator of feedback from NGOs on training needs and requirements to TIs for curriculum development, a facilitator in the discussion of training requirements and competencies of social work staff in work situations, a key player in advising on quality, relevancy and direction of training to meet social needs, and an organizer; a facilitator, an advisor and an evaluator of short-term courses that enhance competencies of non-social-work-trained staff in performing specific tasks.
- (d) *Non-Governmental Organizations* is a key player in providing feedback on training needs and requirements, as well as quality of training, to TIs for curriculum development, a provider and an evaluator of short-term courses for non-social-work-trained staff, a provider of fieldwork placement, an enabler for staff to pursue social work qualification / training with support for career and service development, and a key player in advising on quality, relevancy of training, and changing work requirements.
- (e) *Professional Associations* are training providers to help enhance the quality and competency of the social workers-to-be, consultants to

social work students to prepare them for the challenges and demands of future jobs through mentoring programmes and other training activities, *agents* to help in identifying the gap, if any, between pre-qualification training and the needs of the service sector through organizing sharing sessions with social workers-to-be and employers, and *facilitators* to provide feedback to TIs regarding training needs of social workers-to-be, new recruits' emerging learning needs and the competency requirement of the service sector.

4.3.3 Post-qualification and In-service Training

4.3.3.1 At the post-qualification level, TIs focus more on providing higher-level programmes and short-term advanced courses for the sector. Professional associations such as HKSWA offer timely training activities in response to prominent professional needs and social issues. Employer agencies such as SWD and NGOs are providing training courses mainly to their staff. These in-service training programmes are usually competency-based. HKCSS also takes up the role of facilitator in identifying the training needs and organizing brief training courses for the NGO sector. Their respective roles and tasks are given as follows:

- (a) *Training Institutions* are *key providers* of both short-term and long-term education / training with or without credit bearing features; *curriculum developers* to initiate new higher level programmes especially on advanced generalist or specialist focus underpinned by research and evaluative endeavours to meet service needs; and *evaluators* on the quality and relevancy of the curriculum of the post-qualification training.
- (b) *Social Welfare Department* is a *training organizer and a provider* for bridging the competency gap arising from new service initiatives or service development; a *key player* in providing feedback and advice on new training needs and training effectiveness; *an organizer of short-term training for its staff* in specific areas to meet changing service demands; a *key player* in identification of competency requirements and training needs; and a *proponent* to encourage social workers to pursue life-long continuing professional education for career development and provision of quality service.

- (c) *Hong Kong Council of Social Service* is an *enabler / coordinator* in identification of training needs and requirements of NGOs for planning of education / training activities by concerned training providers; a *facilitator* in the discussion of core competencies of social work staff and the related training needs and requirements in NGO sector; a *provider, an advisor, a facilitator of short-term training* in specific areas in NGO sector; a *key player* in providing feedback and advice on new training needs and training effectiveness.

- (d) *Non-Governmental Organizations* are *providers* of in-service training on a short-term / ad hoc basis to meet service needs; *enablers of staff* learning by giving support and opportunities to staff for post-qualification education / training; *key players* in identification of competency requirements and training needs; and *key participants* in the assessment of training by proposing new training areas and providing feedback to HKCSS / TIs in this regard.

- (e) *Professional Associations* are *agents* to identify the emerging needs of social workers in an era of change by organizing sharing sessions; *training providers* to enhance professional advancement among social workers; *enablers* to enhance the adaptability of social workers to the changing needs of social work profession by provision of timely and specialist training activities; a *key player* in identification of competency requirements and training needs, *proponents* to encourage social workers to pursue life-long continuing professional education through support groups and various professional activities; and *advocates* to promote standard of social work practice and sustain public recognition of social workers' professional standard through organizing award schemes and public education programmes.

4.3.4 In the review of the current training provision, it is revealed that all the identified essential competencies are being addressed in varying degrees by the various pre-qualification, in-service and post-qualification training programmes, and that the TIs are in an on-going process to fine-tune their training to keep abreast of the changing service environment. The employer agencies are also focusing their attention on competency-based training whereas the professional associations are helping to identify the gaps between

the social workers / social workers-to-be, and the employer agencies on the evolving and ever-changing training needs. With an overview of the roles of these training providers spelt out above, we will proceed to examine, in the following chapter, the competency approach as a basis of training for social workers in an era of change, and to deliberate the areas for strengthening the interface among the stakeholders so that the robust effort of different training providers can be maximized through more and closer coordination.

CHAPTER FIVE

DELIBERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Basing on the deliberations and findings in Chapters Three and Four, the Task Group had thorough deliberations on:

- (a) the framework for the training and development of social workers in an era of change; and
- (b) the areas for strengthening the interface among various stakeholders.

This Chapter will set out the Task Group's deliberations and recommendations.

5.2 FRAMEWORK ON TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN AN ERA OF CHANGE

5.2.1 The social work profession is yet to face a larger challenge – the challenge of preparing competent practitioners. At the ACSWTMP's 164th meeting held on 26 April 2002, in the context of discussing the paper on "Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change", one member expressed the concern that serving social workers were "weak in customer-centred service integration, multidisciplinary, cross-sectoral collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit" whereas another "hoped that TIs would train social work students to perceive issues from a global perspective and consider multiculturalism, equal opportunity and similar themes in their curricula". Also, a member raised the concern about "the role of social workers in the society in handling value dilemmas" and another was concerned about social workers' ethical competence, i.e. the ability to contemplate and deliberate in moral dilemmas, to persevere when it is necessary to defend for interests of clients, to reflect and articulate on how social work values impact on judgment and decision making. All these have pointed to the need for social work training to be more broad-based, competency-directed and with emphasis on professional ethics.

5.2.2 Having adopted the ‘competency-based’ approach as the basis for discussion, the Task Group examined the adequacies of the essential competencies for current training and discussed the desired kind of social work education / training to prepare our social workers in this era of change. Members generally shared that, apart from those generic skills such as 'language ability' and ‘planning and management’, professional values and ethics, mindset for change, possession of a world-view as well as other attributes such as creativity and dynamic disposition are also essential components that should be emphasized in the training and development of social workers. In other words, social work education and training should aim to develop the social workers' knowledge and skills (both substantive knowledge and knowledge of how to use them in an unpredictable and conflictual situations and transfer them across contexts) as well as the ability to integrate theories and practice, and to reconceptualize contextual and situational interpretations of a value position in order to be a responsible change agent and to demonstrate continuous professional growth with a reflective stance.

5.2.3 In view of the foregoing and after thorough discussions, the Task Group considered that the framework that encompasses the basis to address education and training of social workers in an era of change should consist of the following essential components:

(a) Professional values and ethics

In an open, pluralistic and rapidly changing society where existing values and ideologies are constantly subject to challenges, social workers should more readily, consciously and critically reflect on their professional values and missions which remain the fundamentals guiding social work practice. It represents standards of ethical behaviour of a social worker in professional relationships with clients, colleagues, agency, profession and society as a whole. These basic values and beliefs, which are adopted in the Code of Practice for registered social workers for the protection of clients and other members of the society under Section 10 of the Social Workers Registration Ordinance (extracted at *Appendix III*), should receive adequate emphasis in social work education and training in an era of change.

(b) Attributes

In these days when changes are tremendous and practices are highly volatile and uncertain, social workers need to develop the attributes and various soft skills underpinning a competent and versatile professional practice. These include, among others, possession of a world-view and a dynamic disposition for a vision to harness opportunities out of adversities and to address problems creatively, the ability to transfer learning (transferability) and across context (contextuality) including to frame problems in context and flexibly apply the learning with practice wisdom and tacit knowledge in practice, the appreciation and ability to work with diversities and differences, and a mindset for change and continual and lifelong learning so that new knowledge may be generated out of novel experiences, etc. As competent professional practices in this era of change highly hinges on these attributes and soft skills, they deserve to be more properly addressed by nowadays social work trainers and educators. This emphasis on attributes and soft skills is also in line with one of the standards mentioned in the “Discussion Document on Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training” drafted by the Joint Committee of the International Association of Schools of Social Work and International Federation of Social Workers. The standard says that schools should consistently aspire towards “ensuring that the curricula helps student social workers to develop skills of critical thinking and scholarly attitudes of reasoning, openness to new experiences and paradigms, and commitment to life-long learning” (point 3.4 of the document on the Global Standards)

Note 11

(c) Generic skill set

Generic skill set is generally covered by essential competencies such as professional knowledge, language ability, IT competency, planning and management, collaborative skills and research and evaluative skills. These are more job-specific and measurable skills, with which social workers can demonstrate their professionalism, effectiveness and accountability. To give an idea of how the generic skill set addresses the challenges in an era of change given at para. 3.2, a brief

Note 11 Taken from the IFSW General Meeting 2002 – Global Qualifying Standards for Social Work Education and Training

illustration, for indicative purpose only and by no means exhaustive, is tabulated at *Appendix IV*.

5.2.4 The proposed framework with the three components of ethics-attributes-generic skills provides a useful tool for the development of social work education and training in the wider context. While there are different expectations between social work educators and employing agencies in perceiving the competencies / qualities required of social workers in an era of change, there is a common understanding that competency must be accompanied by compassion and commitment and that the social work professional performance is not merely skills-based. The Task Group intended to adopt the competency approach as a baseline or a benchmark for the outcome measures in terms of acquisition of multi-skills for social work students and practitioners to meet the challenges of the changing work environment and for employers to provide feedback on whether the skills demanded in the employment sector is well matched by education and training. It is in this sense that the competency approach, considered necessary for the sake of measurable results and accountable practice, is used here as a basis for the current review.

5.3 AREAS FOR STRENGTHENING THE INTERFACE AMONG VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

5.3.1 During the review, it is observed that the current training providers have already been moving towards the competency-based direction. They have responded to the changing service needs and the new demands on social workers by fine-tuning their approaches or missions in the provision of pre-qualification and in-service training. Examples include adoption of problem-based learning approach (PBL) in the award-bearing programmes to encourage active participation of students in the integrative learning process of scrutinizing values, analyzing problems and planning treatment, student-centred learning and other kinds of experiential learning. There is also a trend to train social work students in inter-relating theory and practice, developing indigenous knowledge of society and practice, constantly reexamining the nature of the human service professions and their philosophical underpinnings, and contextualizing practice. In this respect, TIs have already identified new fieldwork practicum opportunities in a wide

range of settings including the Mainland and overseas. While some post-qualification programmes continue to provide specialized and advanced training in a variety of new topics to meet the demands of the changing welfare scene such as, postgraduate courses on family therapy and gerontology, the emphasis has also been placed on more flexibility in combination of elective courses to expand the students' horizon.

- 5.3.2 In parallel with the TIs' independent attempts to continuously fine-tune their training activities and programmes for the social workers-to-be, the service sector is also responding to the challenges of the welfare scene along the same direction. The HKCSS is conducting annual training needs analysis on future training direction and has also adopted competency requirement as the basis in the process and dynamics of needs identification. The concern therefore remains on whether there are sufficient channels for communication among the training providers themselves, as well as between the training providers and other stakeholders, namely the employer agencies and individual social workers, so that we can see the beauty of synergy to benefit the training and development of social workers in this era of change.
- 5.3.3 The Task Group has looked into the areas where strengthening of interface among the various stakeholders would benefit the sector. At the pre-qualification level, there is room for better communication between the TIs for sharing among themselves the changes of competency requirements in the service sector and the associated implications for curriculum development in social work education. Likewise, the service providers should develop and review the competency requirements for social work practitioners and reflect these requirements to TIs through various means. Presently, there are no formal structure and / or regular channel for the sharing.
- 5.3.4 At the in-service level, it is hoped that training offered by various providers should be competency-based to meet service needs. Employer agencies, as good employers, are responsible for providing timely and necessary training for effective service delivery and for facilitating the professional development of their social workers, while social workers should take ownership in training for their professional development. Currently, TIs and service providers do not have regular sharing on new service models and initiatives. More and closer collaboration among the stakeholders concerned are needed for delivering tailor-made and joint training activities.

5.3.5 The major areas for strengthening interface among various stakeholders, which are by no means exhaustive, have thereby been identified and recommended as follows:

(a) *Strengthening channels for making pre-qualification and post-qualification social work training / education more competency-based to meet service needs:*

- channels between TIs, and between TIs and NGOs to be strengthened for mutual sharing on how the curricula address changes of competency requirement in the field;
- academic staff of TIs to supervise fieldwork practice / provide direct practice to keep themselves abreast of the changing welfare scene;
- service planners to share with training providers new service development through various channels and TIs to be proactive to identify new training needs arising from such service development;
- TIs to explore possibility of sharing curriculum design and joint evaluation of training efforts;
- a formal structure and / or a regular channel to be established to facilitate sharing among training providers and concerned stakeholders; and
- training providers to disseminate training and development information through electronic means and hyperlink with relevant websites.

(b) *Making in-service training more competency-based to meet service needs:*

- employer agencies to develop and update their own competency-based job requirements;
- training providers to organize short courses to timely address competencies not sufficiently covered by formal training programmes; and
- training providers to evaluate the training impact more comprehensively by including employers' feedback.

(c) *Clearer delineation of responsibilities of employer agencies, social workers and other stakeholders in facilitating training and development of social workers:*

- employer agencies to facilitate staff to pursue further training for continuous professional development;
- training providers to offer courses covering various competency requirements, and to consider diversified training modes and flexible schedules;
- social workers to accept responsibilities for upgrading their own professional knowledge and skills and to take part in mutual sharing; and
- professional associations to promote continuous training and development of social workers through various training and development activities.

(d) *Greater collaboration between TIs and service providers on issues or researches on the training and development needs arising from new service models / initiatives:*

- TIs to make use of sharing sessions offered by other stakeholders on new service models to keep in pace with the developments in the service sector;
- TIs to make use of findings from evaluative studies for identifying training needs of the service sector; and
- TIs to expand their international networks to introduce new training models and expert trainers to in-service training providers.

(e) *Better collaboration between TIs, NGOs and SWD for training providers to conduct tailor-made / advanced training activities:*

- training providers and employer agencies to strengthen collaboration on organizing tailor-made / advanced training;
- TIs and employer agencies to solicit experienced practitioners from the field/ outside training providers to tap on their experience and expertise in training, and employer agencies to solicit outside training providers to provide more stimulation in training;
- employer agencies procuring training services to give longer lead time to potential training providers in preparing for the courses;

- employer agencies to develop their training service to expand the pool of training providers in various specialties; and
- training providers to share information of famous overseas experts / trainers.

(f) Enhancing collaboration between NGOs and HKCSS on joint training for NGOs:

- NGOs to promote cross-learning through opening up training opportunities to other agencies;
- HKCSS to assist small agencies to leverage training resources;
- HKCSS to assist in sharing of good practices, mapping out competency requirements and share with TIs results of their surveys / consultancies on these competencies requirements, providing training support to NGOs, etc.;
- HKCSS and NGOs to collaborate in including employers' feedback in evaluating impact of training programmes; and
- funders to request training provider applicants to reserve training places for staff of other NGOs.

5.3.6 A table showing the recommended measures for strengthening the roles of and interface between stakeholders is at *Appendix V*.

CHAPTER SIX

WAY FORWARD

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 In the preceding chapters, we have reported on the background of the review, methodology, findings of the review and the Task Group's deliberations. Based on the findings, a framework for the training and development of social workers in an era of change and the areas for strengthening the interface among various stakeholders have been identified. In this chapter, we will sum up the future direction and the various stakeholders' roles in the recommended implementation measures for strengthening the co-ordination for social work training.

6.2 FUTURE DIRECTION

6.2.1 The Task Group, through the survey and deliberations, reaffirms that the current training providers are making conscious attempts to review and refine their training to prepare social workers for the new challenges of this era. Apparently, there is still room for improvement in the coordination of social work training in the sector, both among the training providers and between the training providers and the other stakeholders, mainly the employer agencies. In the current environment where resources are not without limit and the resource utilization needs to be maximized, it has been commonly shared that interface among the stakeholders should be strengthened so that the effectiveness of training could be enhanced and duplication of training resources could be avoided.

6.2.2 To sum up, the future direction for strengthening interface among various stakeholders namely, TIs, HKCSS, employer agencies and professional associations, would be along the lines of:

- (a) promoting pre-qualification and post-qualification social work training / education addressing contemporary social changes and meeting the competency requirements in delivering the services;

- (b) developing core competencies to meet the demands for quality service development and facilitate attribute and competency-based in-service training;
- (c) promoting ownership and facilitating training and development of social workers;
- (d) collaborating on issues or researches on the training and development needs arising from new service models / initiatives;
- (e) conducting tailor-made training and evaluating the effectiveness of the training provided; and
- (f) facilitating joint training for NGOs.

6.3 IMPLEMENTATION AND OWNERSHIP

6.3.1 For the successful implementation of the strengthening measures detailed in para. 5.3.5 of Chapter 5, it is important that the parties concerned are aware of their respective roles and responsibilities in strengthening the co-ordination with each other. The Task Group has worked out an implementation plan highlighting the major roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders as follows:

Parties Concerned	Major Roles and Responsibilities
<i>For TIs as major training providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To strengthen the regular meetings among TIs to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) discuss how their curricula address the changes of competency requirement in the service sector (ii) identify new training needs arising from new service development so as to strengthen pre-qualification curricula and to offer support to in-service training programmes (iii) explore possibility of sharing of curriculum designs and joint evaluation of training efforts

Parties Concerned	Major Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="528 293 1418 517">(b) To be involved in field practice to keep them abreast of the changing welfare scene through establishing or strengthening practice clinics and encouraging their academic staff to supervise fieldwork placement in addition to their teaching and research duties <li data-bbox="528 562 1418 931">(c) To encourage staff to attend sharing sessions offered by service planners and different stakeholders so as to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="603 658 1418 741">(i) keep themselves in pace with the development in the service sector <li data-bbox="603 752 1418 931">(ii) make use of the information gathered from evaluative studies, etc. to organize training programmes geared towards identified training needs of the service sector <li data-bbox="528 976 1418 1200">(d) To collaborate with employer agencies to organize short courses and tailor-made / advanced training to address competencies that are not sufficiently covered by formal training programmes and pressing social issues in the changing service environment <li data-bbox="528 1245 1418 1659">(e) To take the lead in tapping overseas resources and experience to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="603 1341 1418 1424">(i) share with various stakeholders the overseas / new service initiatives and trends <li data-bbox="603 1435 1418 1518">(ii) expand their international networks to introduce famous overseas trainers and experts <li data-bbox="603 1529 1418 1659">(iii) advance their course announcement with overseas experts / trainers so that other training providers can also make use of the opportunity <li data-bbox="528 1704 1418 1794">(f) To invite service providers / experienced practitioners as guest trainers to tap on their experience and expertise

Parties Concerned	Major Roles and Responsibilities
	<p>(g) To consider diversified training modes (such as on-line learning) and flexible schedules (in evenings and weekends) to facilitate social workers' pursuit of continuous learning, and to disseminate training and development information through electronic means and hyperlink with other websites</p>
<p><i>For HKCSS as main coordinator among the various stakeholders</i></p>	<p>(a) To facilitate a regular forum between TIs, NGOs and professional associations so as to promote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) mutual sharing and exchange of views to make pre-qualification and post-qualification training / education more competency-based to meet service needs (ii) mutual sharing on tailor-made / advanced training to meet the changing needs of the sector <p>(b) To develop and update competency requirement and skill sets for NGOs and to involve TIs in the early stage of the identification of NGOs' training needs through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) assisting in sharing of good practices, mapping out competency requirement and skill set, identifying training needs and resources, and providing training support to NGOs to facilitate their effective service delivery (ii) helping small NGOs with relatively limited resources in staff training and development (iii) facilitating employer agencies to tap experience and expertise of outside training providers <p>(c) To extend collaboration with NGOs to include the employers' feedback in evaluating impact of training programmes</p>

Parties Concerned	Major Roles and Responsibilities
<i>For SWD and NGOs, as main employer agencies / service providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="528 293 1418 472">(a) To share with training providers through various channels new service development so that new training needs can be identified to strengthen the curricula of pre-qualification and in-service training programmes <li data-bbox="528 517 1418 741">(b) To develop their competency-based job requirements, and to organize short courses and tailor-made training to address competencies not sufficiently covered by formal training programmes and the pressing social issues in the changing service environment <li data-bbox="528 786 1418 875">(c) To facilitate staff to pursue further training through staff development measures <li data-bbox="528 920 1418 1099">(d) To promote cross-fertilization of learning experiences through opening up training opportunities to staff of other agencies so as to avoid duplication and waste of limited resources <li data-bbox="528 1144 1418 1368">(e) To consider diversified training modes (e.g. e-learning programmes), flexible schedules (such as evenings and weekends) in providing training and to disseminate training and development information through electronic means and hyperlink with other relevant websites <li data-bbox="528 1413 1418 1592">(f) To be involved in the evaluation of training impact as employers, and to consider using measures such as pre-course and post-course rating by supervisors for courses organized for their staff <li data-bbox="528 1637 1418 1749">(g) To attend sharing sessions with TIs so as to facilitate mutual sharing for strengthening curricula design meeting the service needs of the field

Parties Concerned	Major Roles and Responsibilities
<i>For professional associations such as HKSWA</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="528 293 1418 427">(a) To attend sharing sessions with TIs and employer agencies so as to contribute from the perspective of professional development <li data-bbox="528 465 1418 645">(b) To continue to provide its support to social workers-to-be so as to help them face the challenges and demand of future jobs through various means such as sharing forums and giving advice <li data-bbox="528 683 1418 772">(c) To collaborate with stakeholders in the service sector to promote awareness of continuous professional education <li data-bbox="528 810 1418 1093">(d) To organize training / educational activities, e.g. ad-hoc training courses and forums on pressing social issues and to meet the needs of rapid welfare development and to address, in a more timely and proactive manner, competencies that are not sufficiently covered by formal training programmes <li data-bbox="528 1131 1418 1355">(e) To consider and promote diversified training modes and flexible schedules (e.g. evenings and weekends) in providing training; and to disseminate training and development information through electronic means and hyperlink with other relevant websites

Parties Concerned	Major Roles and Responsibilities
<p><i>For ACSWTMP as advisory committee on social work training and manpower planning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To share the Task Group’s recommendations with TIs so as to encourage TIs to strengthen the regular meetings among themselves and with other stakeholders to facilitate mutual sharing (b) To share the Task Group’s recommendations with employer agencies, so as to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) encourage them to develop their competency-based job requirement and redesign their training courses to enable trainees to acquire the competencies (ii) encourage their social workers to take ownership for their own learning (iii) encourage their mutual sharing with TIs on curriculum design (iv) encourage the employer agencies to open up their training places for maximizing use of resources (c) To liaise with other funding bodies to request training provider applicants to reserve training places for staff of other NGOs

6.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.4.1 To conclude, the past decade was marked with sweeping changes in terms of the increasing complexity of social issues and the unprecedented reforms in the social service sector. These changes have posed new demands, such as the mindset for change and continuous improvement, an outcome-focused and customer-centred approach, as well as the stress on cross-sectoral collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit, which have been deliberated as challenges in this era of change in the ACSWTMP meeting on 26 April 2002. To address such challenges, the competency-based approach, comprising essential components including professional values and ethics, attributes and generic skill set, has been proposed for social work training and development of this time. The approach has taken into account the demands in the work context and the references from overseas experience, while recognizing that the profession is not merely skill-based and professional values and ethics and attributes such as creativity and dynamic disposition are essential components

that should receive adequate emphasis in the training. In the review, it is found that the current social work training providers, at both the pre-qualification and in-service levels, have already been starting to adopt the competency-based or other innovative training approach to address the challenges of the time. Yet, there is still room for strengthening the interface among the training providers as well as between them and other stakeholders, namely the employer agencies and the professional associations. Various implementation measures for enhancing the communication between the parties concerned are suggested. In the years to come, we expect to see more sharing and concerted effort by the stakeholders to drive the sector in the direction of an accountable, competent and dynamic profession and a dedicated workforce ready to meet the fast-growing changes and challenges of the day and to turn each challenge into new opportunity for enhancing professional competence.

- 6.4.2 Having presented the above findings, deliberations and recommendations, and for a more balanced view, the Task Group would like to point out the limitations of the current review. Firstly, the Task Group acknowledges a general concern, from the training institutions particularly, that the competency-based approach would fragment social work skills and roles into constituent parts. Secondly, there is no in-depth coverage of all the diversified modes of approach and missions of the training institutions in the review. In fact, the Task Group has the general understanding that competency training could serve only as a measurable standard that employers expect social work graduates and practitioners to attain in terms of attitude, knowledge and skills for competent practice. More importantly, it can serve as the common platform for deliberating the roles of and the interface between training providers in the training and development of social workers in an era of change in line with the Task Group's terms of reference. In other words, the review does not aim at a comprehensive overview of the social work education, while the competency approach, despite some academics' expressed concern, only sets the minimum standard for starting the discussion. With the completion of the current review as an initial attempt to discuss the issue by representatives from different parties, we expect to see ongoing collaboration among the training institutions and other training providers to share their diversified training approaches, missions as well as professional matters to benefit the overall development of social work training in the sector.

Coverage of Essential Competencies by Existing Social Work Training Programmes

Associate / Higher or Honours Diploma Programmes

Name of TI / Programme(s)	Essential Competencies ^(Note)								
	Professional knowledge	Language ability	IT competency	Planning and management	Collaborative skills	Research and evaluative skills	Continuous learning	Professional values and ethics	Others (please specify)
<i>PolyU</i> Higher Diploma in Social Work	3	3	1	3	3	0	3	3	
<i>CityU</i> Associate of Social Science in Social Work	3	3	2	2 (by elective courses only)			3	3	
<i>HKSYC</i> Honours Diploma in Social Work (until 2004/05)	3	3	1	2	3	2	3	3	3 (Social science & Humanities)
Summary of data:	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1):2	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0
i) by frequency of occurrence	(2):0	(2):0	(2):1	(2):2	(2):1	(2):2	(2):0	(2):0	(2):0
	(3):3	(3):3	(3):0	(3):1	(3):2	(3):0	(3):3	(3):3	(3):1
ii) by mean	3	3	1.3	2.3	2.7	1.3	3	3	-

Coverage of Essential Competencies by Existing Social Work Training Programmes

Bachelor Degree Programmes

Name of TI	Essential Competencies ^(Note)								
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>	<i>Continuous learning</i>	<i>Professional values and ethics</i>	<i>Others (please specify)</i>
<i>HKU</i> BSW	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	
<i>CUHK</i> BSocSc (SW)	3	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	
<i>PolyU</i> BA (SW)	3	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	
<i>CityU</i> BSocSc (SW)	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3 (cross-cultural sensitivity)
BA (SW)	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	
<i>HKBU</i> BSW	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3 (Practice Skills)
<i>HKSYC</i> BSW (Starting 2002/03)	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3 (Social science & Humanities)
Summary of data:	(1): 0	(1): 1	(1):2	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 1	(1): 0	(1): 0
i) by frequency of occurrence	(2):0 (3):7	(2):4 (3):2	(2):3 (3):2	(2):2 (3):5	(2):2 (3):5	(2):4 (3):3	(2):2 (3):4	(2):1 (3):6	(2):0 (3):3
ii) by mean	3	2.1	2	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.4	2.9	-

Coverage of Essential Competencies by Existing Social Work Training Programmes

Post-Graduate Programmes

Name of TI	Essential Competencies ^(Note)								
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>	<i>Continuous learning</i>	<i>Professional values and ethics</i>	<i>Others (please specify)</i>
<i>HKU</i>									
MSW (the non-trained)	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	
MSocSc (general)	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	
MSocSc (SS Management)	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	
<i>CUHK</i>									
MSW	3	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	
MSocSc (the non-trained)	3	1	1	3	2	2	1	3	
<i>PolyU</i>									
MA(SW)	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	Students select their own stream of specialism.
<i>HKBU</i>									
MSW	3	3	1	3	2	3	3	3	
Summary of data:	(1): 0	(1): 5	(1):6	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 2	(1): 0	
i) by frequency of occurrence	(2):1	(2):0	(2):1	(2):2	(2):5	(2):4	(2):3	(2):3	
	(3):6	(3):2	(3):0	(3):5	(3):2	(3):3	(3):2	(3):4	
ii) by mean	2.9	1.6	1.1	2.7	2.3	2.4	2	2.6	-

Coverage of Essential Competencies by Existing Social Work Training Programmes

Programmes delivered by In-service Training Providers

Name of Training provider	Essential Competencies ^(Note)								
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>	<i>Continuous learning</i>	<i>Professional values and ethics</i>	<i>Others (please specify)</i>
HKSWA	3	0	0	3	2	2	3	3	-
HKCSS	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	-
SWD	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	-
Summary of data:	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1):0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	(1): 0	-
i) by frequency of occurrence	(2):0 (3):3	(2):2 (3):0	(2):1 (3):1	(2):0 (3):3	(2):1 (3):2	(2):2 (3):1	(2):0 (3):3	(2):2 (3):1	-
ii) by mean	3	1.3	1.6	3	2.7	2.3	3	2.3	-

Notes:

The grading given are according to the following 4-point ordinal scale to indicate the extent of its coverage on each of the essential competencies:

0 -- not covered at all,

1 -- slightly covered as part of a general requirement such as general education by the university,

2-- covered for a certain extent but as not a main focus,

3 -- very much covered as a main focus,

**Roles on Training and Development of Social Workers in an Era of Change
Among Various Social Work Training Providers***

1. Pre-qualification Training

Roles	TIs	SWD	HKCSS	NGOs	PA
1. Key provider of pre-qualification education / training	√				
2. Coordinator of fieldwork placement	√				
3. Evaluator of the pre-qualification education / training	√				
4. Facilitator of structured and award-bearing education / training programmes		√		√	√
5. Facilitator to provide feedback to TIs regarding new recruits		√		√	√
6. Key player in advising on quality, relevancy and direction of training to meet social needs		√	√	√	√
7. Provider of short-term courses for non-social work-trained staff		√	√	√	
8. Evaluator of short-term courses for non-social work-trained staff		√	√	√	
9. Facilitator in discussion of training requirements and competencies of social work staff of NGOs			√		
10. Coordinator of feedback from NGOs to TIs on training needs and requirements			√		
11. Provider of fieldwork placement		√		√	
12. Supporter of field staff's pursuit of social work qualification		√		√	
13. Helper in identifying the emerging training needs of social workers-to-be					√
14. Training provider (other than award-bearing programmes) to help the social workers-to-be					√
15. Consultant to social work students to help them face the challenges and demands of future jobs					√

2. Post-Qualification and In-service Training

Roles	TIs	SWD	HKCSS	NGOs	PA
1. Key provider of both short-term and long-term education / training	√				
2. Curriculum developer to initiate new higher level programmes	√				
3. Evaluator on quality and relevancy of the curriculum of post-qualification training	√				
4. Training organizer / provider for bridging the competency gap arising from new service initiatives or service development		√	√		
5. Organizer / provider of short-term training for its staff in specific areas to meet changing service demands		√		√	
6. Key player in providing feedback and advice on new training needs and training effectiveness		√	√		√
7. Key player in identification of competency requirements and training needs		√	√	√	√
8. Proponent to encourage social workers to pursue life-long continuing professional education		√			√
9. Facilitator in discussion of core competencies of social work staff of NGOs			√		
10. Enabler / coordinator in identification of training needs and requirements of NGOs			√		
11. Provider, advisor, facilitator of short-term training in specific areas in NGO sector			√		
12. Advocate to promote standard of social work practice and sustain public recognition of social workers' professional standard					√
13. Enabler to enhance the adaptability of social workers to the changing needs of social work profession.					√

* *The illustration is by no means comprehensive and exhaustive.*

Basic Values and Beliefs

< Extract from the Code of Practice (3 October 1998),

Social Workers Registration Board >

1. The social worker's primary mission is to help people in need and to strive to address social problems.
2. The social worker respects the unique value and dignity of every human being irrespective of one's family origin, ethnicity, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, age, family status, beliefs, political affiliation, mental and physical abilities, social and economic status or contribution to society.
3. The social worker believes that individuals have the potential to develop and, thus accepts a responsibility to encourage and facilitate the self-realization of individuals with due regard to the interest of others.
4. The social worker accepts responsibility to advance social justice and to safeguard the cause of human rights.
5. The social worker believes that each society, regardless of its form, should provide maximum benefits to its members.
6. The social worker accepts responsibility to devote professional knowledge and skills to the betterment of individuals and society, with the aim to empower people to act on their own behalves as far as possible.
7. The social worker recognizes the central importance of human relationships and seeks to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, maintain and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations and communities for the prevention and relief of hardship and suffering.

Illustration on How the Generic Skill Set for Social Workers Address the Challenges in an Era of Change

Preamble: The generic skill set and the challenges facing social workers listed below are given respectively at para. 5.2.3(c) and 3.2.2 of the Report. It should be noted that **professional values and ethics** and **attributes** such as **the mind-set for change and strive for continuous learning** underpin the following generic skills in addressing challenges in an era of change.

Challenges	<i>Generic Skill Set required for Social Workers in an Era of Change</i> ^(Note)					
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>
<p>a. Embracing change</p> <p>e.g. maintain high alertness to new community problems, responsiveness to changing service needs and acceptance of new roles and approaches in service delivery</p>	<p>**</p> <p>A good grasp and continuing advancement of professional knowledge enables social workers to meet the high demand for professional input in quality service.</p>	#	#	<p>**</p> <p>The challenge entails the development of the competency in planning and management, e.g. change management concept, planning of resources, etc., which facilitates workers to adapt to a fast changing environment.</p>	#	#

Challenges	<i>Generic Skill Set required for Social Workers in an Era of Change^(Note)</i>					
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>
<p><i>b. Striving for continuous improvement</i></p> <p>e.g. improve services continuously with new approaches and skills; take ownership for continuous professional development.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Enhancement of knowledge through continuing professional development is one of the essential requisites for continuous improvement of service effectiveness.</p>	#	<p>*</p> <p>The rapid development of IT provides greater support to service improvement such as systems support and accessibility to customers.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Constant upgrading and sharpening of the competency in planning and management helps review of services for improvement and meeting customers' changing expectation.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Collaboration with others provides opportunities for cross learning and enhances synergy for improvement and innovative initiatives.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Research and evaluative skills help differentiate what works and what fails and thus make way for improvement.</p>

Challenges	<i>Generic Skill Set required for Social Workers in an Era of Change^(Note)</i>					
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>
<p><i>c. Adopting a flexible, prompt, innovative, outcome-focused and result-oriented approach</i></p> <p>e.g. towards an output, evidence-based, outcome-focused and result-oriented approach, think and devise new modalities and approaches to secure the services</p>	<p>**</p> <p>A body of sound, empirically tested and constantly updated professional knowledge provides a solid base for heading towards this end.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Writing good proposal with innovative and result-oriented element helps secure service contract and implement new services.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Effective use of IT can improve the speed and management of information and efficiency in service delivery.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>The competency in having a complete and thorough planning cycle and other management skills, such as service monitoring, helps meet the challenge for more responsive, innovative and result-oriented services.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Collaborative and networking skills in forming strategic alliances with other parties expand options for providing more flexible, prompt and innovative services.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Good mastery of research and evaluative skills contributes to the development of outcome-focused and result-oriented approach.</p>

Challenges	<i>Generic Skill Set required for Social Workers in an Era of Change^(Note)</i>					
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>
<p><i>d. Promoting customer-centred service integration</i></p> <p>e.g. greater service integration and a one-stop approach in delivery</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Continuing updating of service development, both in variety and application procedures, helps rendering better integrated and / or one-stop services geared towards the customers' needs.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Effective language skills help communicating with customers and marketing services in a more customer-friendly way.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The use of IT systems application tools and web technology can facilitate both systems integration and service accessibility to customers.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Greater service integration demands a thorough planning process and other management skills, such as HRM and resource deployment.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Service integration demands formation of strategic alliances, collaboration with many other parties for best use of community resources and timely delivery of well-coordinated services to achieve customer-centred service integration.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>This competency can contribute towards more accurate understanding of customers' needs and satisfaction, forming a basis for designing more integrated and customer-oriented service delivery.</p>

Challenges	<i>Generic Skill Set required for Social Workers in an Era of Change^(Note)</i>					
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>
<p><i>e. Strengthening multi-disciplinary or cross-sectoral collaboration</i></p> <p>e.g. expertise and contribution from various professions and organizations are maximized and coordinated to tackle complicated social problems</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The challenge propels the advancement and specialization of social work knowledge and skills and also facilitates the broadening of knowledge base of the profession through exchange and collaboration.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>Clear articulation of ideas and persuasive arguments helps conveying message to other disciplines more effectively and contributes to cross-sectoral collaboration.</p>	<p>#</p>	<p>*</p> <p>The challenge demands more robust planning and management skills such as strategic planning, resource management, HRM, divisions of responsibility and complementariness of respective parties.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>The collaborative competency, especially on networking with other disciplines or sectors and conscious manoeuver of different professions is necessary for strengthening multi-disciplinary or cross-sectoral collaboration.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>The research and evaluative skills can provide a more solid empirical base for selecting partners and convincing them for more fruitful collaboration.</p>

Challenges	<i>Generic Skill Set required for Social Workers in an Era of Change^(Note)</i>					
	<i>Professional knowledge</i>	<i>Language ability</i>	<i>IT competency</i>	<i>Planning and management</i>	<i>Collaborative skills</i>	<i>Research and evaluative skills</i>
<p><i>f. Adopting a more entrepreneurial spirit</i></p> <p>e.g. doing more with less, using new ways to maximize productivity and effectiveness</p>	<p>**</p> <p>With a firm base and a good grasp of professional knowledge, one will be able to master and capitalize on entrepreneurial spirit and make use of the spirit to further the mission of the profession.</p>	#	<p>*</p> <p>Good IT knowledge and appropriate use of it can increase efficiency and support development of management information to improve service and enhance productivity and effectiveness.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>This challenge demands a good mastery of resource management, better appreciation of the costing and outcome, confidence and ability in shifting resources around to do the most good for the community.</p>	<p>**</p> <p>Collaborative skills in working with others in a win-win situation, forming strategic alliances / networking with others for best use of resources, and timely delivery of services all heading towards the target of getting more output and better outcome with less input.</p>	<p>*</p> <p>A better understanding of output and outcome of the service provides a rational basis to move resources around for greater cost-effectiveness and doing more with less.</p>

Note:

- ** The generic skill set directly and closely addressing the challenge.
- * The generic skill set helps addressing the challenge.
- # Though the generic skill set may not directly address the challenge, the generic skill set may be a generic one such as language and IT which is so basic and essential for a profession to meet demands and changes in the contemporary era.

Recommended Measures for Strengthening the Roles of and Interface between Stakeholders

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
<i>(a) Strengthening channels for making pre-qualification and post-qualification social work training / education more competency-based to meet service needs</i>			
(i) - Strengthening channels between TIs and NGOs for mutual sharing (such as through student placements in NGOs, sitting in NGOs' management boards or TIs' advisory boards), and - between TIs (e.g. social work heads meeting), on how pre-qualification and post-qualification curricula address changes of competency requirement in the field	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKCSS or HKSWA to consider taking up the role to facilitate meetings between TIs and NGOs for mutual sharing • TIs to consider strengthening the practice of having regular meetings among the social work departments' heads to discuss how their curricula address the changes of competency requirement in the field

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
(ii) Academic staff of TIs to supervise fieldwork practice/provide direct practice to keep themselves abreast of the changing welfare scene	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIs to establish or strengthen practice clinics and to encourage their academic staff to supervise fieldwork placement in addition to their teaching and research duties • ACSWTMP to consider sending a letter to UGC conveying the TG's support for TIs' academic staff to supervise fieldwork placement in addition to their teaching and research duties
(iii) - For new service development, service planners (e.g. SWD for public-funded service development, HKCSS / NGOs for pilot services funded by other sources) to share with training providers through various channels such as briefing sessions, sharing sessions, enlisting TIs in consultancy / service reviews, and ACSWTMP, whereas	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWD and other service planners to continue to enlist TIs' assistance through ACSWTMP meeting, consultancy/service review and other channels for sharing new service development

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
- TIs to be proactive to identify new training needs arising from such service development		√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIs, through the quarterly forum suggested in (i), to be more proactive to identify new training needs arising from new service development so as to strengthen the pre-qualification curricula and to offer support to in-service training programmes
(iv) TIs to explore possibility of sharing of curriculum designs and joint evaluations of training efforts among themselves		√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as (i), TIs to consider having regular quarterly meetings to share curriculum design and consider joint effort on evaluation of training effectiveness
(v) Training providers and concerned stakeholders to explore opportunities for a formal structure and / or a regular channel for sharing information and exchange of views among each other on social work education / training		√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as (i), HKCSS or HKSWA to consider taking up the role to facilitate a sharing forum for TIs, NGOs and professional associations

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
(vi) Training providers to disseminate training and development information through electronic means and hyperlink with other relevant websites	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWD already uploads the shortlisted local short-term courses under Social Work Training Fund (SWTF) as well as SWD's training programmes for NGOs/other Departments onto SWD homepage. • SWD to consider to open up eLC to NGO users(300 corporate A/Cs for 30,000+ employees) in 03-04 • Many training providers already disseminate training information through electronic means and to consider on-line learning and hyperlink for opening up training courses to users from outside bodies
<i>(b) Making in-service training more competency-based to meet service needs</i>			
(i) Employer agencies to develop their competency-based job requirements, and redesign their training courses to enable trainees to acquire the competencies		√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report for employer agencies' reference • HKCSS to facilitate and advise employer agencies on developing competency-based training

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
(ii) Training providers to organize short courses to address, in a more timely and proactive manner, competencies that are not sufficiently covered by formal training programmes	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report for professional associations, which are already organizing such courses, to strengthen their training in aspects such as training on integrated service and multi-disciplinary cooperation
(iii) Training providers to evaluate the training impact more comprehensively by including employers' feedback (e.g. SWD has used American Society of Training and Development's benchmarking practice to include the supervisor's feedback)		√	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For courses of longer duration, HKCSS to consider measures such as pre-course and post-course rating by employer agencies • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report with, and to appeal to employer agencies (NGOs) direct for their support in evaluating the training impact

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
<i>(c) Clearer delineation of responsibilities of employer agencies, social workers and other stakeholders in facilitating training and development of social workers</i>			
(i) Employer agencies to facilitate staff to pursue further training through staff development measures such as designating staff to oversee staff training and development, supporting staff's pursuit of continuous professional development etc	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While some NGOs have their own staff development section / officer, HKCSS to support those NGOs without sufficient resources for staff development
(ii) Training providers to offer courses covering various competency requirements, and to consider diversified training modes and flexible schedules to facilitate social workers' pursuit of continuous learning within / outside office hours in view of the staff release problem	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWD's eLC was launched in Mar 03 to facilitate staff's learning anywhere and anytime Other training providers to consider developing on-line learning systems, scheduling some of their training programmes in evenings and weekends to facilitate workers to attend
(iii) Social workers to accept responsibilities for upgrading their professional knowledge and skills through attending professional development activities and other continuous learning mechanisms	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACSWTMP to share the TG's report with, and to appeal to employer agencies (NGOs)' support to encourage social workers to take ownership of their own learning through both sponsored programmes and self studies

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
(iv) Social workers to facilitate their counterparts in pursuing training and development opportunities through, for example, sharing information, rendering advice and forming self-learning study or sharing groups	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKSWA to continue using its forum 社工沙龍, etc. to facilitate the sharing and offer advice • Mentorship, and other work-based learning initiatives, such as mutual learning teams, to be pursued on staff's initiation and with management support
(v) Professional associations to collaborate with stakeholders in the service sector to promote the training and development of social workers through various training / educational activities, e.g. ad-hoc training courses on social issues or forums on enhancing awareness of continuous professional education to meet the needs of rapid welfare development	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKSWA, already organizing regular discussion forum, to make use of various promotional strategies such as dissemination of information through SWRB • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report with, and to appeal to the support of other stakeholders, like TIs and employer agencies, to be more supportive in nominating staff to attend so as to facilitate the professional exchanges

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
<i>(d) Greater collaboration between TIs and the service sector on issues or researches on the training and development needs arising from new service models / initiatives</i>			
(i) TIs to be more proactive in making use of the sharing sessions offered by service planners or professional associations on new service models to keep themselves in pace with the development in the service sector	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIs to encourage more of their academic staff to attend such sharing sessions whereas service planners be more proactive to disseminate relevant information to the TIs
(ii) TIs to make use of information gathered from evaluative studies, etc. to organize training programmes geared towards identified training needs of the service sector	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through quarterly meeting mentioned in (a)(i), TIs to develop and run such training programmes, or render training support to other in-service training programmes
(iii) TIs to expand their international networks to introduce new training and development models and expert trainers to the in-service training providers	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TIs to advance their course announcements with overseas experts/trainers, say 3 months in advance as far as possible, so that other training providers can make use of the opportunities as well TIs, with an international perspective, to share the overseas/new service initiatives and trends with various stakeholders

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
<i>(e) Better collaboration between TIs, NGOs and SWD for training providers to conduct tailor-made / advanced training activities</i>			
(i) Training providers and employer agencies to strengthen collaboration on organizing tailor-made / advanced training to address pressing social issues in the changing service environment	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSWTMP to encourage training providers and employer agencies to have closer collaboration on organizing the tailor-made/advanced training programmes such as by pre-course sharing and discussion on curriculum design • HKCSS, through regular meetings mentioned in (a)(i), to consider taking up the role to facilitate meetings between TIs and NGOs for mutual sharing on tailor-made/advanced training
(ii) TIs to solicit active participation of service providers / experienced practitioners from the field as guest trainers to provide tailor-made training ; and employer agencies to solicit outside training providers to provide more stimulation in training	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIs to be more proactive to invite service providers / experienced practitioners as guest trainers whereas employer agencies to be more ready to release staff for this purpose • HKCSS to facilitate employer agencies to tap experience or expertise of outside training providers

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
(iii) Employer agencies procuring training services to give longer lead time to potential training providers in preparing for the courses	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKCSS to encourage employer agencies to give sufficient advance invitation for contract-out courses as far as possible • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report with, and to appeal to employer agencies' support to give sufficient advance course announcement notice
(iv) Employer agencies to develop their training service to benefit themselves and other agencies and to expand the pool of training providers in various specialties	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSWTMP to encourage NGOs with experience or expertise in conducting training courses to share their training resources and offer support to other employer agencies
(v) Training providers to share information of famous overseas experts / experts coming to Hong Kong with other training providers	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKCSS or HKSWA to encourage training providers, through advanced course announcement and regular meetings as mentioned in (a)(i), to share information of famous overseas trainers / experts with other stakeholders • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report with, and to appeal to training providers' support

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
<i>(f) Enhancing collaboration between NGOs and HKCSS on joint training for NGOs</i>			
(i) NGOs to promote cross-fertilization of learning experiences through opening training opportunities to staff of other agencies	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACSWTMP and HKCSS to encourage NGOs to reserve a certain % of quota, say 20%, for staff of other agencies to attend training programmes
(ii) HKCSS to assist small employer agencies to leverage resources for greater training benefits	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKCSS to assist by identifying and coordinating training resources of the smaller employer agencies
(iii) HKCSS to assist in sharing of good practices, mapping out competency requirements and skill sets, identifying training needs and resources, and providing training support to NGOs to facilitate their effective service delivery	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKCSS, through consultancy study, focus group meetings with NGO heads, to advise NGOs on the sharing of good practices and to provide training support • HKCSS to consider meeting with stakeholders (TIs and NGOs) annually to update competency requirements and skill sets • HKCSS to consider involving TIs in early stage of the identification of NGOs' training needs

Recommended Measures	Covered by		Suggested Implementation Measures
	Existing Mechanism	New Mechanism to be set up	
(iv) HKCSS and NGOs to extend their collaboration to include employers' feedback in evaluating impact of training programmes	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKCSS to propose measures for including employer feedback in evaluating impact of training programmes for NGOs • ACSWTMP to share the TG's report with, and to appeal to employer agencies' support
(v) Funders, such as SWTF and HKJC, to request training provider applicants to reserve training places for staff of other NGOs	√		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWTF already encourages this • ACSWTMP to consider to write to other funding bodies to share this suggestion and to consider giving priority to applications for grants for programmes with the objectives of promoting training that addressed training needs in this era of change