

**STUDY ON COMMUNITY WORKERS' ROLE IN
WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH
EMPLOYMENT DIFFICULTIES**
社區工作員協助就業困難人士所扮演的角色研究



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and

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FOREWORD

Unemployment has become a hot issue since last year and is likely to continue being so in the near future. As a concerned organisation on the living conditions of factory workers, Hong Kong Council of Social Service started a series of programmes such as researches and seminars to address the problem. The study on “Role of Community Development workers in Working with people with employment difficulties” is one of such programmes conducted by the Co-ordinating Committee on Industrial Social Work, Community Development Division in conjunction with the Research Department, Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

Community workers have started to provide services to factory workers since 70's. For sometime, non-government organisations have developed social welfare programmes for workers, and provided social service at factories and other workplace settings. However, community workers are restricted by themselves and other parties to serve unemployed people. Social workers relied on labour service organisations like unions, Employee Retraining Board, Labour Department and other labour organisations to serve people with employment problems. Prior to deriving strategies for workers to work with people with employment difficulties, questions like “How do community workers perceive the unemployment problems?”, “What roles should community workers play so as to act in congruence and complementary with the labour organisations?” should be answered.

The study conducted is exploratory in nature and is the first of its kind. I hope the findings could serve as a base for further researches and alert the awareness of agencies as well as workers in labour service.

Last but not the least, I would like to express my deep appreciation to members of Co-ordinating Committee on Industrial Social Work especially the “Task Group on Study on Community Workers' Role in Working with People with Employment Difficulties” for their unfailing effort. Special thanks is extended to Mr. Paul Lau, Convenor of the Task Group. Above all, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all participants of the study without whose help the study would not have been successful.

Y.F. Hui
Director

PREFACE

While social problem resolution demands co-operative efforts, Service Role Clarification (SRC) among service providers is a continuous process of communication and negotiation to make co-operative efforts possible and more effective.

SRC between front-line practitioners and administrators of an agency or a service setting facilitates, on the one hand that administrators clarify agency mission to front-line workers which assures a more accurate implementation of planned objectives; on the other hand that front-line workers communicate service provision feedback to administrators which enhances mission reflection and renovation in response to emerging service needs.

SRC among various service settings and institutions can reduce service gaps and service overlaps, as well as enabling policy makers to make a more appropriate distribution of service resources among different service provisions.

Concerning local Employment Service, do Community Workers have a clear picture about their roles in serving people with employment difficulties? Do they have enough SRC to facilitate their communication and negotiation? The present study aims to react to these questions and has gained some progress. However, as employment problem resolution becoming more and more important in future Hong Kong economic and social development, our progress is little, hence our effort should be considered a starting point.

Finally, I would like to show my appreciation to whom much contribution have been made through their participation in our study. Hoping that our efforts will catch further attention of people who concern people with employment difficulties.

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Community Workers' Roles in
Working with Employment
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SUMMARY

The unemployment rate in Hong Kong has recently risen to 3.3% and thousands of workers have been lay off and displaced. Community workers cannot, and never will, ignore their responsibility of the unemployed. The expectation level on involvement of one's role in providing labour service among various parties including trade unions, customers and community workers are often different and sometimes, contradictory. If community workers attempt to continue their service for the unemployed, they have to identify their unique role and act in congruence and complementary with each other. This study was to address these questions regarding the roles and perception of community workers in serving people with employment difficulties. The three objectives of the study are:

- To identify how community workers perceive and analyse the problems of unemployment in Hong Kong.
- To understand how community workers perceive their role in providing services for people with employment difficulties.
- To understand what roles of community workers and social service organisations are expected by other concerned parties in the provision of services to the unemployed.

Three different research methods were used to address the objectives. These methods were: focus group interview, individual interviews and questionnaire survey. Owing to limited manpower and time, the study hence confined to a small sample with qualitative interview rather than a large scale quantitative interview.

The results revealed that community workers would perceive the current unemployment problem in Hong Kong as an economic and a government policy related problem, and not a personal problem. Three levels of solutions can be classified; these include: a) at social workers level, b) policy level and c) human resource level. At individual social workers' level, the reorientation of workers to get prepared and adapted to new job environment and job demand were suggested. At government policy level, policies to encourage companies to employ local labour, the enactment of anti-discrimination policies in labour market, the abandonment of importation of labour; long-term economic policies to enhance and stimulate economic growth; and policies to prohibit illegal labour were proposed. At human resource level, an effective employment-linked retraining programmes to the workforce, an efficient job-matching scheme to facilitate the job seeking and recruitment process, incentive for high-technology research and development, assistance to labourers by providing unemployment benefit were raised. In general, community workers tend to emphasize the attributing factors include policies on long-term industrial development, importation of labour, long-term manpower and training, economic restructuring and so on. It appeared that by and large, the government is thought to be responsible for the current unemployment situation. Both causes and solutions are policy re-formulation and/or formulation.

From both community workers' or social service organisations' perspectives, community workers were recommended to provide services for industrial workers.

However, as revealed from the questionnaire survey, there are few workers actually involved in providing such services. This may be due to limited resources, organisation environment, unclear role, insufficient knowledge of employment related policies etc.. There were different weighting on roles to be played by community workers in labour service among social workers and social organisations. Social workers were expected to be employment counsellors by social organizations whereas they would expect themselves to be organizers. Actually community workers who were involving in employment service practiced various roles in their daily work .

Labour education is the most common method for community workers to help the unemployed. On the other hand, the results revealed that there is a consensus that community workers should collaborate and co-operate with other organisations in serving people with employment difficulties. This was further confirmed by interviewees' experience that they have co-operated with others in serving the unemployed. The results of individual interviews uncovered that the workers have experienced some mild or severe conflicts with their own organisations on how to serve the unemployed. At the same, the workers have confronted role conflicts when cooperating with other organisations in serving the unemployed.

There are four roles that community workers were expected by labour-related organisations to play in serving people with employment difficulties. The descriptions of these role were deliberated in the focus group interview. The first two roles, as *information provider* and *service mediator* were undisputed. But whether community workers should act as *educator* and *organiser* were inconclusive. It is not hard to imagine that labour union is perceived as an organisation responsible for organising and educating labourers to fight for their rights, community workers are not supposed to duplicate these functions. However, there are different interpretation on organizing and educating and, these roles are considered a traditional part of practice among community workers. The different expectation on the community worker's role may pose the difficulties in co-operation with other parties in serving the unemployed and there lack support from others.

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THE QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE SELF-ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY

THE QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

THE QUESTION AND INSTRUCTIONS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past prosperous years in Hong Kong, “unemployment” seems far from people’s daily life. Unfortunately the situation has in fact changed substantially. The unemployment rate has risen constantly from the lowest 1.1% in 1989 to 3.3% in April 1996 (Census and Statistics Department). Thousand of workers have been lay off and displaced from the labour market probably due to the impact of economic restructuring in Hong Kong. Job opportunities in manufacturing sector, for instance, dropped almost half in figures from 1989 to 1994. This is even worse for female worker who has once been displaced and is difficult to find a full time job.

Labourers being lay off or displaced would encounter difficulties in income security and personal identity. They have to acquire new skills for a new job, and to adjust self and family to new working environment and life pattern. All these cause the unemployed and their family a feeling of frustration, loss and so on. Obviously, they desperately need help from friends, relatives and their society.

There are many organisations providing the unemployed with various services catering for their needs. For instance, Labour Department of Hong Kong Government in collaboration with the Employees Retraining Board(ERB) has job matching programme. The ERB provide training courses for those who have to acquire new skills to change to a new working field. The labour unions help organise the unemployed to raise public concern and fight for more support from the Government. Each organisation has its own role, in accordance with its nature and characteristics on serving the unemployed.

Likewise, community workers cannot, and never will, ignore their responsibility of serving the unemployed. Actually, they have its origin in labour development services since 70s’. For long, social service organisations have developed social welfare programmes for labourers, and provided social services in the factories and other workplace settings.

However, the participation of community workers in serving the unemployed is being ignored and denied recently both by community workers themselves and other parties. It may due to the fact that unemployment is seemingly an economic problem rather than a social one. Scarce resources are provided by the government to community workers’ services for the unemployment. Serving the unemployment seems to be the sole responsibility of organisations like union, Labour Department, and ERB. The expectation of the extent of involvement and the role play in labour service among concerned parties, customers and community workers may be contradicted. Without clear identification on the role, community workers may probably experience role confusion.

If community workers attempt to continue their service for the unemployed, they have to identify their role and act accordingly, or they may continue to serve the unemployed in a low profile without others’ notice.

The study was to address these questions regarding the roles and perception of community workers in serving people with employment difficulties. The main target

of the study was community workers only because they are supposed to be more involved in employment services due to their working nature and previous heavy involvement than any other social workers.

The study can be viewed as an exploratory study on this issue, rather than a conclusive one. Through the exploration, some issues required further study may then be conducted and social workers' awareness may be raised.

1.1. OBJECTIVES

The three objectives of the study are:

1. To identify how community workers perceive and analyse the problems of unemployment in Hong Kong.
2. To understand how community workers perceive their role in providing services for people with employment difficulties.
3. To understand what roles of community workers and social service organisations are expected by other concerned parties in the provision of services to the unemployed.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study were divided into three parts. They were: focus group interview, individual interviews and questionnaire survey. Each address one of the objectives mentioned previously.

2.1. FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW (STUDY I)

The focus group interview was designed to examine the perceptions of other organisations, which were involved in serving people with employment difficulties, on the role of community workers. Through discussion among various organisations and an individual community worker, consensus on and conflicts over the role of community workers was expected to be found.

2.1.1.Subjects

Six representatives from labour-related organisations and one community worker joined the focused group interview. Generally speaking the participating organisations were classified into four types, namely

- union,
- re-training organisation,
- labour organisation, and
- government.

By using a judgement sampling method, three inclusion criteria of selection were:

- the organisation or individual must have a clear mission and vivid modes of service delivery in labour services,
- their modes of service delivery were different from each other, and
- they could represent their types of organisation.

2.1.2.Instrument

A set of questionnaire comprised of open-ended questions and guidelines (see Appendix). It was concerned with how organisations and interested parties, e.g., union and governments, perceive the role of community workers.

In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaires, the inter-rate reliability method was used. The content of each interview was extracted from the tapes and recorders' written reports. After this process, the content was listed in statement format and three independent raters were employed to rate the statements of each interview on the seven point scale by listening to the tape. The statements with 6 to 7 average rate were remained for further analysis and the less agreed statements were either rephrased for rating second time or discarded according to the degree of disagreement.

2.1.3.Procedure

In the focus group interview, there were one mediator, two recorders (by written and taping) and seven participants representing participating organisations. There were three parts in the two hours interview.

In the first part, participants were asked to choose two from six participating organisations to express their expectations towards them in alleviating the unemployment situation in Hong Kong; in the second part, participants were asked to discuss the roles of participating organisations in reacting to the unemployment situation in Hong Kong, especially the role of community workers and their organisations; and the last part required participants to consider the possibilities of co-operation and collaboration. At the end of the interview, all participants were informed of the purposes of the study.

2.2. INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS (STUDY II)

Nine individual interviews were conducted with emphasis on how the community workers perceived their role in reacting to unemployment from three perspectives, namely as a social worker, as a social service organisation and from real life experience. Generally the concerns were the role of community workers and their organisations in responding to the current unemployment situation in Hong Kong, their methods, whether they co-operate with other organisations, and whether there were any conflicts among organisations, and between social worker and their employers.

2.2.1. Subjects

There were nine subjects (7 female and 2 male) being chosen by a judgement sampling method against three inclusion criteria as the following:

- must be social work trained,
- must be a community worker (self-reported) and
- must engaged in labour services recently.

2.2.2. Instrument

A set of questionnaire including open-ended questions and interview guideline (see Appendix) was designed to measure the role of community workers. It had face and content validity. Its reliability was controlled by inter-rater reliability method as mentioned in item 2.1.2.

2.2.3. Procedure

Interviewees were asked about their viewpoints on each question in the questionnaire for about one and half hours. The full detail of the study was presented to interviewees at the end of the interview.

2.3. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY (STUDY III)

A self-administrative questionnaire survey method was used to tap the community workers' views on the nature of the current unemployment situation, reasons for the causes, and the solutions to solve it.

2.3.1. Subjects

The total population of community workers including community workers in Community Centres and Neighbourhood Level Community Development Project (NLCDP) were the subjects.

The total population of community workers was estimated to be 204 (14 community centres + 54 NLCDP teams). They were identified via their organisations. All workers were asked to fill in a questionnaire.

Among the respondents, 97 claimed themselves as community workers and four were not, who were excluded from the study. They were aged from 22 to 43 with mean 29.94. Half of them were male and half were female. There were 33 workers involved in provision of labour services.

2.3.2.Instrument

The questionnaire was closed-end questions (see Appendix) with reasonable reliability ($\alpha = .8261$) and had face and content validity. It measured the perception of community workers toward the current unemployment situation in Hong Kong, regardless whether they were in the labour service.

2.3.3.Procedure

For the survey, a self-administrative questionnaire were distributed through agencies which had community work teams to each community worker. The questionnaires could be returned by fax or mail. The respondent rate was 50%.

2.4. LIMITATION

The limitation of the study is time constraint and limited manpower. The scale of the study had to confine to a small sample with qualitative interview rather than a large scale quantitative interview. The study period lasted from December 1995 to March 1996.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN HONG KONG (STUDY III QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY)

3.1.1. The perception of the unemployment situation in Hong Kong

The results revealed that community workers would perceive the current unemployment in Hong Kong as an economic problem and a government policy related problem, but not an individual problem (see figure 1). For community workers who are currently involved in serving the unemployed, the current unemployment was also a labour demand-supply problem (see figure 2). Among the three problems, the policy related problem had the highest mean.

Correspondingly, among the community workers, the most agreed causes of the unemployment in Hong Kong were policy and economic related (see table 1 also), namely (the higher the mean, the stronger the statement is agreed):

- lack of long-term industrial policies to encourage manufacturing industries to provide job opportunities (mean = 4.20),
- due to government policy of importation of labour (mean = 4.19),
- lack of long term manpower and training policies to train labourers in new occupational skills (mean = 4.08), and
- due to economic restructuring (mean = 4.00).

(Note: 1 is strongly disagreed and 5 is strongly agreed)

Figure 1

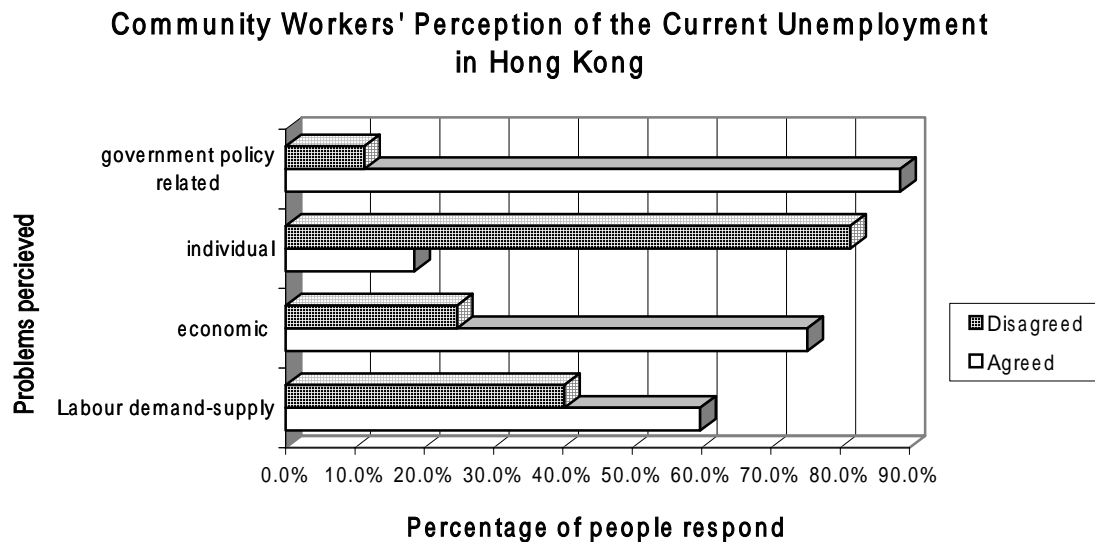
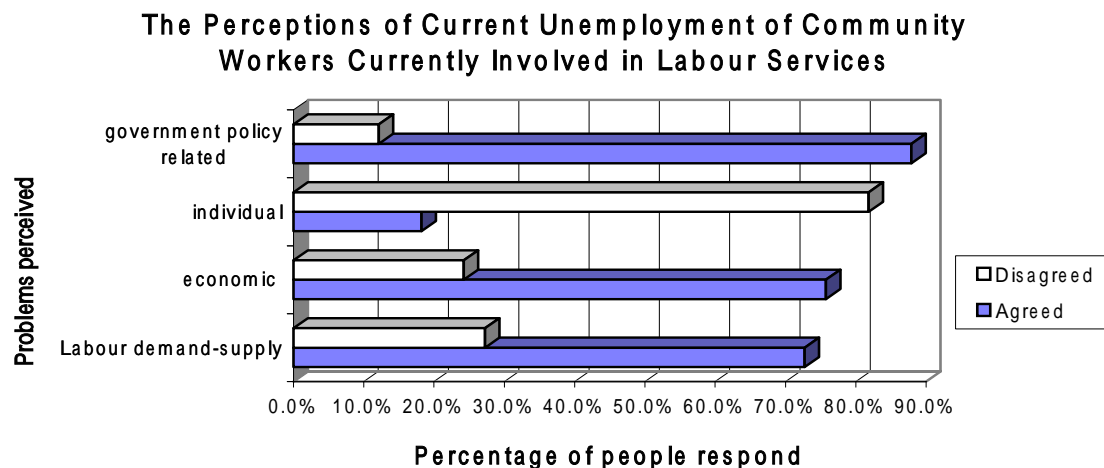


Figure 2



The other three causes having high mean are:

- lack of anti-discrimination policies in labour market to protect disadvantaged workers (mean = 3.96),
- labourers lack new skills required to change to other work fields (mean = 3.93),
- Hong Kong secondary industry moving away due to increasing production costs (mean = 3.74).

As can be seen, most of the above causes are policy and economic related. Similar results were found among workers who involved in employment services, except that lack of policies to prohibit illegal labour employment also had a high mean.

Table 1: Means of ratings on possible causes of the unemployment situation

Possible causes	Means	
	All	Exp.
Lack of policies to prohibit illegal labour employment	3.56	3.79
Labourers lack new skills required to change to other work fields	3.93	4.00
Increasing number of returnees from overseas which increase labour supply	2.44	2.36
Lack of anti-discrimination policies in labour market to protect disadvantaged workers	3.96	4.09
Lack of long-term industrial policies to encourage manufacturing industries to provide job opportunities	4.20	4.33
Due to economic restructuring	4.08	4.03
Labourers lack confidence in doing jobs in new work fields	2.67	2.76
Increasing number of new immigrants which increase labour supply	3.6	3.39
Due to the loss of competitiveness of Hong Kong secondary and tertiary industries in the regional economy	2.58	2.55
Recession in the inevitable cyclical phenomenon in free-market economy	2.95	2.79
Hong Kong secondary industry moving away due to increasing production costs	3.74	3.64
Labourers lack skills required for job seeking	3.04	3.12
Lack of long term manpower and training policies to train labourers in new occupational skills	4.19	4.27
Due to government policy of importation of labour	4.00	3.97

Note: 1 is strongly disagreed and 5 is strongly agreed. All - all surveyed community workers, Exp. - community workers involved in employment services.

3.1.2. Perceived solutions to the unemployment situation

All solutions provided in the study were generally agreed by the workers as means to tackle the unemployment problem, regardless of whether they are in employment services or not. The solutions with highest means were (see table 2 also):

- to formulate policies to encourage companies to employ local labour (mean = 4.27, 4.48),
- to formulate long-term economic policies to enhance and stimulate economic growth (mean = 4.28, 4.39), and
- to formulate policies to prohibit illegal labour (mean = 4.32, 4.52).

In general, community workers tend to emphasise the policies on long-term industrial development, importation of labour, long-term manpower and training, economic restructuring and so on. The results appeared that by and large, government is thought to be responsible for the current unemployment. Both causes and solutions are policy re-formulation and/or formulation. This may prompt the workers to participate in policy arena and to focus on possible policy changes if they want to help the unemployed labourers ultimately out of unemployment.

Table 2: Means of ratings on possible solutions to the unemployment situation

Possible solutions	Means	
	All	Exp.
The reorientation of workers to get prepared and adapted to new job environment and job demand	4.02	4.03
An effective employment-linked retraining programmes to the workforce	4.11	4.18
Formulate policies to encourage companies to employ local labour	4.27	4.48
An efficient job-matching scheme to facilitate the job seeking and recruitment process	4.08	4.21
The enactment of anti-discrimination policies in labour market	3.99	4.15
The abandonment of important of labour	3.94	4.03
To formulate long-term economic policies of enhance and stimulate economic growth	4.28	4.39
To encourage high-technology research and development	4.01	4.00
To formulate policies to prohibit illegal labour	4.32	4.52
To assist labourers by providing unemployment benefit	3.93	4.09

Note: 1 is strongly disagreed and 5 is strongly agreed. All - all surveyed community workers, Exp. - community workers involved in employment services.

3.2. COMMUNITY WORKERS' PERCEPTION ON THEIR ROLES IN PROVIDING SERVICES TO THE UNEMPLOYED (STUDY II INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS)

3.2.1. Expected involvement of community workers in employment services

From both community workers' or social service organisations' perspectives, community workers were recommended to take part in the labour services.

3.2.2. Roles of involvement

There were many roles mentioned in the individual interviews. Roles with similar nature were grouped together and categorised into the seven roles as follows:

1. *Advocate*: community workers directly participate in advocating the improvement and advancement of labour rights and related policies.

2. *Educator*: to teach people necessary adaptive skills by providing relevant information, offering advice and suggestions, identifying alternatives and their probable consequences, modelling behaviours, teaching problem-solving techniques and clarifying perceptions and to raise labourers' awareness of their own rights and motivate them to consider their problems.
3. *Organiser*: a co-ordinated effort to achieve institutional change to meet a need, solve a social problem, correct an injustice, or enhance the quality of human life. This effort occurs through the efforts of the people in the community who are directly affected by the problem or change.
4. *Employment counsellor*: to assist job seeking, to provide psychological counselling on either individual or group basis, and to provide information about employment services.
5. *Re-trainer*: to provide labourers with training courses for re-adapting to the current occupational requirement.
6. *Mutual help network organiser*: to organise people who share a common problem or predicament together for mutual support and constructive action to solve their shared problems by any means they choose.
7. *Researcher*: to study unemployment to help front-line workers for service planning.

The results revealed that there were different weighting on roles to be played by community workers in labour service among social workers and organisations. Actually community workers who are involved in employment service played various roles in their daily practice. Indeed there is discrepancy between community workers' working experience and their expectation in serving the unemployed. The reason of this will be dealt with in a general discussion section. The following table summarised the findings of roles involvement from the 3 perspectives.

Table 3: Roles recommended by three perspectives

Perspectives	Roles	Prominent role	2nd or 3rd roles
Social worker' perspective		organiser	educator and employment counsellor
Organisation viewpoint		employment counsellors	re-trainer
Interviewees' working experience (they are practising labour services now)		(no prominent role found)	

3.2.3. Ways of helping the unemployed

When facing thousands of the unemployed, interviewees suggested from three different perspectives a number of ways to help. These ways of helping were categorised and were presented in table 4. The roles marked with asterisk were the most commonly mentioned in that perspective. Some of them were self-explanatory and some had already defined in 3.2.2.

Table 4: Ways of help recommend from three perspectives

Perspectives Ways of help	Social worker perspective	Organisation perspective	Interviewees' real life experience
Re-training	√	√	√
Mutual-help service	√	√	
Policy advocating	√		√
Organising	*√	√	√
Labour education	*√	*√	*√
Research	√		√
Counselling	√	√	√
Providing information	√	√	√
Referral	√		√
Inquiry of labour law		√	

(* refers to the most commonly mentioned role.)

As can be seen, *labour education* is the most common method for community workers to help the unemployed.

3.2.4. Collaboration and Co-operation with other organisations

Unanimously, the results revealed that there is a consensus that community workers should collaborate and co-operate with other organisations in employment services. This was further confirmed by interviewees' experience that they have co-operated with others in serving the unemployed. The reasons were to increase available resources by pooling different organisations' resources, to enhance the organisations' power of policy advocacy, to effectively and efficiently utilise available resources, and to create opportunities and environment for labourers to learn and experience. However, it was suggested that the level, mode and direction of collaboration and co-operation should be considered, if there are any chances of co-operation. Unfortunately, there are no concrete methods of collaboration and co-operation mentioned by interviewees.

3.2.5. Conflicts in and out organisations

The results of individual interviews uncovered that the workers have experienced some mild or severe conflicts with their own organisations. Such conflicts, for instance, were ideology on the methods of serving the unemployed, stance on the importation of labour, and roles of the workers in the employment services. The solutions to these conflicts provided by the interviewees were feedback to the supervisor, communication, discussion and negotiation with the agencies.

Similarly, the workers have confronted some conflicts when working with other organisations in serving the unemployed. The common conflicts were different expectations on the role of the workers, different ideology, directions, strategies, value, stance on the importation of labour and so on. The common solutions were negotiation, cease co-operation, compromising, only work on the consent issue communications via meetings and so on. These conflicts might impose constraints on the co-operation and collaboration between community workers and other organisations.

3.3. THE PERCEPTION OF CONCERNED PARTIES ON THE ROLES OF COMMUNITY WORKERS IN PROVISION OF SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH EMPLOYMENT DIFFICULTIES (STUDY I FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW)

3.3.1.Expected roles by concerned parties

There are four roles community workers expected to play in serving people with employment difficulties and their descriptions identified in the focus group interview. They are as follows:

1. *Information provider*: with their professional training, community workers should inform the unemployed about available services and resources, e.g., re-training courses and social welfare services, via their well established community network.
2. *Referral*: community workers should serve as a bridge between the unemployed and the organisations which provide employment services and should refer those to appropriate services.
3. *Educator*: educating labourers individual civic right and duties, teaching them to fight for the right and empowering them.
4. *Organiser*: assisting labourers in establishing their own organisation or union where community workers are only organiser but should not speak for the labourers.

3.3.2.As information provider and referral

It was undisputed that the first two, *information provider* and *referral*, were expected to be played by community workers in employment related services.

The expectations on community workers to be *information provider* and *referral* may be due to the assumption that community workers have a comprehensive community network. They have a pool of service recipients from the community and have frequent contact with them. With such network, community workers can distribute information down to the community easier than others. Their frequent contact with service recipients lead them to understand the needs of the recipients and make them easily refer the recipients to appropriate employment services to suit their needs. In this light, community workers may be the best to fill this service gap.

3.3.3.As educator and organiser

There were disputes raised in the interview about the roles of community workers to be *educator* and *organiser*. The arguments against the *organiser* role was that community workers, except academic qualification, have no experience in organising union and labour movement. Community workers were also considered to be emotional and have too many presumptions in serving labourers. Moreover, community workers are deterred to be *educator* because they would not force service recipients to adopt their belief and teach only one value system to the recipients. Actually, community workers would introduce a variety of problem solving methods to the service recipients and they should rely on themselves to choose the appropriate problem solving strategies. Therefore community workers should not be an *organiser* which should rather be the role of unions and *educator*, instead they should be an objective professional *referral*.

For the arguments on the two roles, *educator* and *organiser*, revealed that community workers are not playing the same role as the unions or labourer organisations. The

main job that community workers should do is to assist labourers to form their own organisations. It comes to an old faith of community workers that they should work with their service recipients, but not work for them. Moreover, although community workers have their own value, they would never force any service recipients to compile to it. The social work professional practice is to teach, inform and help those in need to think and to react in the way the recipients preferred. The recipients have the absolute right to choose whatever they think is appropriate and suitable for them.

4. GENERAL DISCUSSION

4.1. ROLES OF COMMUNITY WORKERS IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND CAUSED DIFFICULTIES

By and large, the roles of community workers in the employment service expected by other organisations are unanimously *information provider* and *referral*. These expectations apparently contradict with the own perception of community workers who would consider *organiser* and *educator* as their prominent roles. Their views were quite consistent across three studies. The questionnaire survey indicated that community workers perceived government policies are the main causes and solutions to unemployment. In this light, organising labourers to advocate policy becomes inevitable job of community workers. From social service organisations' viewpoint, interviewees showed that *organiser*, in addition to *employment counsellor* and *re-trainer*, is the main role. This is also consistent with the philosophy of the community development services as mentioned above.

Whether community worker should be an *organiser* and/or *educator* is inconclusive. It is not hard to imagine that labour union is perceived as an organisation responsible for organising and educating labourers to fight for their rights, community workers are not supposed to duplicate these functions. However, these roles are traditional practice among community workers. The argument of resources duplication might rest on the different interpretation of the words "organiser" and "educator" by community workers and labour organisations. Actually, community workers would not organise themselves or force service recipient to compile to their own value. What community workers would do is to assist labourers to organise themselves. In the Community Development Position Paper (HKCSS 1986), it describes clearly that the aims of community worker are "to enable the people in communities to solve their problems, to develop indigenous leadership, to promote civic rights and obligations among members of the community, to encourage citizen participation in decision making process". One of the ways of achieving these aims inevitably is being *educator* and *organiser*.

Community workers may encounter some difficulties in serving the unemployed caused by the role contradiction between them and other concerned parties. Firstly, the obvious and immediate difficulty would be the co-operation among different parties. If co-operation is possible, there must be some consensus on who is responsible for what. Community workers cannot act as an *organiser* as long as this is not expected by others to do so. If they do, their involvement may not be welcome. Secondly, if the contradiction is not solved and community workers persuade their own tasks without considering others, they may not be able to fully utilise their resources nor in a concerted effort with other concerned organisations in helping the unemployed.

As community workers in general expect to co-operate with concerned parties the difficulty in co-operation will be more dramatic. In their working experience, there is no doubt that they have experienced difficulties while co-operating with outside organisations. The role conflict is one of the causes if it is not the only one. A question of how to handle this conflict is immediately raised. Should the workers

change their roles to suit the expectation of outside organisations? Should they persuade others to accept their roles as organiser and educator? Should they give up co-operation with others? Should their roles be determined by service recipients, not themselves or others? Prior to providing employment services, the workers need to be aware of the potential role conflict and to prepare any feasible solutions.

4.2. DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNITY WORKERS' IN PROVIDING FOR PEOPLE WITH EMPLOYMENT DIFFICULTY SERVICES

In individual interviews, workers' involvement in employment services was commonly agreed. However, it was also discovered from the questionnaire survey that there are few workers actually involved in such practice. In other words, it seems that they understand the need of their participation in serving the unemployed but had not do so. Several explanations are considered.

Firstly, the available resources and organisations' environment limit the workers' commitment. The labour services provided by community workers are not subvented by the Government. Realistically the workers cannot serve people without resources and organisational support, even though they desperately want to do so.

Secondly, the unclear role in serving people with employment difficulties may hinder their involvement. Wondering what they can do and where they can start from due to the unclear role could hold back community workers from providing the services.

Thirdly, their training and insufficient knowledge of employment related policies may be the obstacles for community workers to provide labour-related services. In formal social work training, the workers are rarely taught about serving the unemployed, labourers and the related policies. The workers, therefore, may not dare to involve themselves in such services.

4.3. EXPECTATIONS DIFFERENT FROM EXPERIENCE

In addition to the limited services provided by community workers, very often they could not play the roles, such as organiser, they expect. The reasons behind that may be due to limited funding resources. As mentioned previously, employment service is not one of the subvented items in the current subvention system. Perhaps, they are restricted by their organisations. The results showed that they had conflict with their own organisations on how to serve the unemployed. This leads them to avoid confrontation with their organisation by not playing the roles they prefer. Other reason may be because they had conflict with other organisations when they try to empower themselves and labourers by co-operating with those organisations. The conflicts are indeed obstacle to community workers to play their preferred roles.

4.4. ROLES OF OTHER SOCIAL WORKERS AND CO-OPERATION WITH OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

In addition to the role of community workers, what roles other social workers can play regarding labour services require further discussion. Should other social

workers be involved in providing labour services? Would there be some roles other social workers can take up? Answers to these questions wait for being figured out.

While the roles await confirmation, the immediate concern is how to co-operate with other organisations when there is the role conflict. Unless co-operation and collaboration are not considered, solutions to these concern are needed. Providing solutions is out of the scope of the study, but these are highly recommended to be an immediate concern among community workers.

4.5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. to develop or explore resources and information to facilitate community workers to serve people with employment difficulties.
2. to discuss and clarify, among community workers and the public, the roles of community workers in employment services.
3. to provide staff development programmes on the subject of serving the unemployed for current workers and to encourage training institutes to include this subject in their social work training curriculum.
4. to conduct further studies to find out the role(s) that is/are most essential for community workers.
5. to explore the feasibility and ways of co-operation with other labour-related organisations.
6. This study only examines the community workers and outside organisations on the role that community workers should play in serving the people with employment difficulties. A study to obtain service recipients' views is essential. The complete picture of the role of community workers cannot be obtained without knowing service recipients' perception.

5. 報告撮要

現時本港的失業率已高達百分之三點三，數以千計的人士被裁減或因工業轉型而失業。社區工作員不能，亦永不會對此情況視若無睹。各團體包括工會、顧客、社區工作員在為失業工人提供服務時，對於自己應參與到什麼程度所持的意見都各不相同，有時甚至互有衝突。因此，社區工作員在為這些失業人士提供服務以前，必先釐清自己獨特的角色，與其他人士行動一致，彼此協調，方才有效。這項研究旨在探討社區工作員在為有就業困難人士提供服務時所扮演的角色以及他們對是項問題的理解。

本研究有三個目標：

- 探討社區工作員如何理解及分析本港的失業問題。
- 瞭解社區工作員如何理解自己在為有就業困難人士提供服務時所扮演的角色。
- 研究其他團體如何期望社區工作員及社會服務機構為這些失業人士提供服務。

本研究採用了以下三種不同的研究方法：小組會談、個人面談及問卷調查。由於人手及時間有限，本研究捨棄大型的問卷調查，寧取精要而深入的質量研究。

研究結果顯示社區工作員認為本港的失業問題與經濟及政府的政策有關，並非個人問題。解決方法可分三個層次，包括：（一）社工層面，（二）政策層面，以及（三）人力資源層面。在社工層面方面，建議應使勞工重新裝備自己以及適應新工作環境及工作要求。在政府政策層面方面，建議應制訂政策以鼓勵僱主僱用本地勞工、在勞動市場實施反歧視政策、禁止輸入外地勞工；制訂長遠經濟政策，以提高及刺激本港的經濟增長；以及制訂政策以杜絕非法勞工。至於在人力資源層面方面，建議應為勞動力提供與職業有關而又有效的再培訓計劃、提供有效的就業選配計劃、幫助僱傭雙方尋找工作以及招聘人手、鼓勵高科技的研究及發展、為勞工提供失業援助等。社區工作員普遍認為失業問題乃歸咎於本港缺乏長遠的工業政策、容許輸入外勞政策、缺乏長遠的人力及訓練政策以及經濟轉型等因素。由是觀之，政府似乎要對現時的失業情況負上最大責任。問題既然出自政策制訂方面，要解決問題，亦得從政策制訂方面入手。

社區工作員以及社會服務機構皆認為社區工作員應為工人提供服務。然而，從問卷調查結果顯示，只有少數社區工作員實際從事這方面的服務。這可能由於資源所限、機構或許持不同意向、工作員尚未掌握到自己的角色，又或是他們對於與就業有關的政策瞭解不足等。社會工作者與社會服務機構對於社會工作員為失業工人提供服務時所扮演的角色亦持不同見解。社會服務機構認為社工應扮演「就業輔導者」的角色，而社工自己則認為較宜扮演「組織者」的位置。事實上，從事就業服務的社區工作人員在其日常的工作中，亦同時扮演著不同的角色。

勞工教育是社區工作人員幫助失業人士最常用的手法之一。調查結果亦顯示社區工作人員皆同意在為就業有困難人士提供服務時，機構之間應通力合作，而被訪者亦往往有與其他機構合作的經驗。個別訪問結果亦揭示了社區工作人員在服務失業人士時，曾與自己所屬機構發生輕微或嚴重的磨擦。同時，他們在和其他機構合作時，亦曾經歷過角色衝突的情況。

與勞工有關的團體期望社區工作人員在為有就業困難人士提供服務時能扮演四種角色，這些角色在小組會談中經詳細論述。對於社區工作人員作為「資料提供者」以及「服務調停者」，眾人皆無異義，但對於「教育工作者」以及「組織者」這兩個角色，則莫衷一是。這也不難明白，因為工會往往被視為應負責組織及教育勞工爭取自己的權利，而社區工作人員理應不該重覆這些功能。不過，對於「組織」和「教育」可有不同的演譯方法，而這兩種角色又往往被認定是社區工作人員所慣常採用的。不同團體對社區工作人員在為失業人士提供服務時有不同的期望，因此在合作時，往往遇到困難，缺乏彼此的支持。

6. REFERENCE

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (1986) Community Development Position Paper 1986, unpublished manual script.

7. APPENDIX

THE QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE SELF-ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEY

THE QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

THE QUESTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

To : Ramony Chan (Research Officer)
Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Fax: 2864 2999

From :

Date :

對本港失業情況的意見調查

1. 本港現時的失業情況是.....

請 答案

- a. 勞工供求問題
- b. 經濟問題
- c. 個人問題
- d. 與政府政策有關的問題

2. 以下是一些可能成因，導致本港現時出現失業情況。請於每項中圈上你的同意程度。

- 第二級行業是：製造業、水電、煤氣供應和建造業。
- 第三級服務行業是：批發及零沽業、酒樓及酒店業、運輸、儲存及通訊、財務、保險、物業及商業服務、社區、社會及個人服務、其他未能充分界定的行業。

- 1. 極不同意
- 2. 不同意
- 3. 無意見
- 4. 同意
- 5. 極同意

請圈上答案

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. 缺乏政策禁制非法勞工就業 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. 勞工缺乏新技術以轉業到其他工作崗位 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. 大量人士從海外回流，因而增加勞動力的供應 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. 在勞動市場缺乏反歧視政策以保護處於弱勢的工人 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. 缺乏長遠的工業政策以鼓勵製造業提供就業機會 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. 因經濟轉型 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. 勞工缺乏信心在新的工作領域就業 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. 新移民數目日增，影響到勞工供應亦相應增加 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. 本港第二級行業及第三級服務行業在亞洲區內失去競爭力 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. 不景氣情況是自由市場經濟無可避免的循環現象 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k. 本港第二級行業因製造成本增加而轉離本港經營 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

如何協助就業困難人士訪問

簡介訪問的結構：

此次訪問共分三部份，第一部份，以社會工作者身份回答問題，需時約十五分鐘、第二部份，以被訪者身處機構立場回答問題，需時約十五分鐘、第三部份，以被訪者的真實處景及經驗回答問題，需時約三十分鐘。訪問完畢後，你將可了解這次研究的目的。

個人及所屬機構資料

姓名

年齡

性別

學歷

機構名稱

為失業/就業困難者所提供的服務

請你以社會工作者身份回答以下問題：

1. 在失業問題上，社會工作者應否參與？以何種角色參與？為何？
2. 若要回應失業問題，社工應用何種方式？為何？
3. 社工應否與其他團體合作回應失業問題？為何？

其他意見：

請你以身處機構立場回答以下問題：

1. 在失業問題上，你的機構應否參與？以何種角色參與？為何？
2. 若要回應失業問題，你的機構應用何種方式？為何？
3. 你的機構應否與其他團體合作來回應失業問題？為何？

其他意見：

請以你的真實處景及經驗回答以下問題：

1. 在失業問題上，你是否有明確的角色？甚麼角色？為何？
2. 現時你以何種方式回應失業問題？
3. 你曾否和其他團體合作回應此問題？成效如何？
4. 在處理此問題上，你曾否和你的機構產生衝突？何種？如何處理？
5. 在失業問題上，你的機構和其他團體曾否遇上衝突？何種？如何處理？

其他意見：例如其他困難。

簡介研究的目的：探討社區工作人員在處理失業問題上處境及困難，並了解社區工作人員在就業困難服務上之角色？

多謝接受訪問。

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| l. 勞工缺乏找尋工作的技巧 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| m. 缺乏長遠的人力及訓練政策以訓練勞工獲得新的職業技能 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| n. 因政府輸入外勞政策 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. 以下是一些解決現時本港失業情況的辦法。請於每項中圈上你的同意程度。

1. 極不同意
2. 不同意
3. 無意見
4. 同意
5. 極同意

請圈上答案

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. 使勞工重新裝備自己以及適應新的工作環境和工作要求 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. 為勞動力提供與職業有關而又有效的再培訓計劃 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. 制訂政策以鼓勵僱主僱用本地勞工 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. 提供有效的就業選配計劃，幫助僱、傭雙方尋找工作以及招聘人手 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. 在勞動市場實施反歧視政策 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. 禁止輸入外勞 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. 制訂長遠的經濟政策，提高及刺激本港的經濟增長 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. 鼓勵高科技的研究及發展 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. 制訂政策以杜絕非法勞工 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. 為勞工提供失業援助 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. 你有否為失業人士提供服務？

- | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|-----|---|---|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 很多時有 | | | 有時有 | | | 完全沒有 |

5. 你為失業人士提供服務有多久？

_____ 月 _____ 年

6. 你是否社區工作員？

1. 是
2. 否

7. 你的性別是 1. 男 0. 女

8. 你的年齡是 _____ 歲

多謝閣下撥冗填寫問卷，謹此致謝。

探討在就業困難上不同團體所扮演的角色

現時各種社會團體對就業困難問題作了各種回應。在尋找回應上述問題的適當角式時，社區工作員發現團體間的混淆，故此，以為各團體必須直接溝通，才能澄清彼此的位置和角式。本研討會正為此目的而設。

討論指引

各機構提供他們對失業者的服務的宗旨，服務形式及立場。

1. 小組成員包括六類單位

- 1) 工會
- 2) 勞工團體
- 3) 再培訓機構
- 4) 政府有關部門
- 5) 社工個人
- 6) 社會服務機構

(有關之成員名單詳見附頁)

2. 討論指引及時間安排如下：

時間	討論範圍	調查員帶領討論指引
		不要加入個人意見，不可幫助任何團體或個人。
5 分鐘	1. 訪問員介紹各人及簡介各團體的服務	
60 分鐘	2. 你期望其他團體及社工面對失業問題時應扮演什麼角色？	此部份為重點的討論，以期了解各團體彼此間的期望及矛盾。 調查員須對不同的團體有較深入的認識（如團體的立場、服務內容及工作手法等），藉以引領討論。 調查員要掌握的資料： <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 團體間的互動力● 角色● 工作方式/參與方法● 參與層面● 參與的性質● 參與的重要性

		<p>重點在於各團體對社工及社會服務機構的回應。</p> <p>調查員需特別留意團體之間出現強烈爭論的問題（性質、重要性、源頭）。</p>
20 分鐘	3.現時各團體都採用不同的方式回應此問題，你認為成效如何？	留意對其他團體的評語，尤其對社工的評語。
20 分鐘	4.你期望團體之間應如何配合回應此問題？	<p>討論具體的合作方式。</p> <p>討論合作的期望。</p> <p>討論合作的可行性及重要性。</p>