



Poverty in Hong Kong

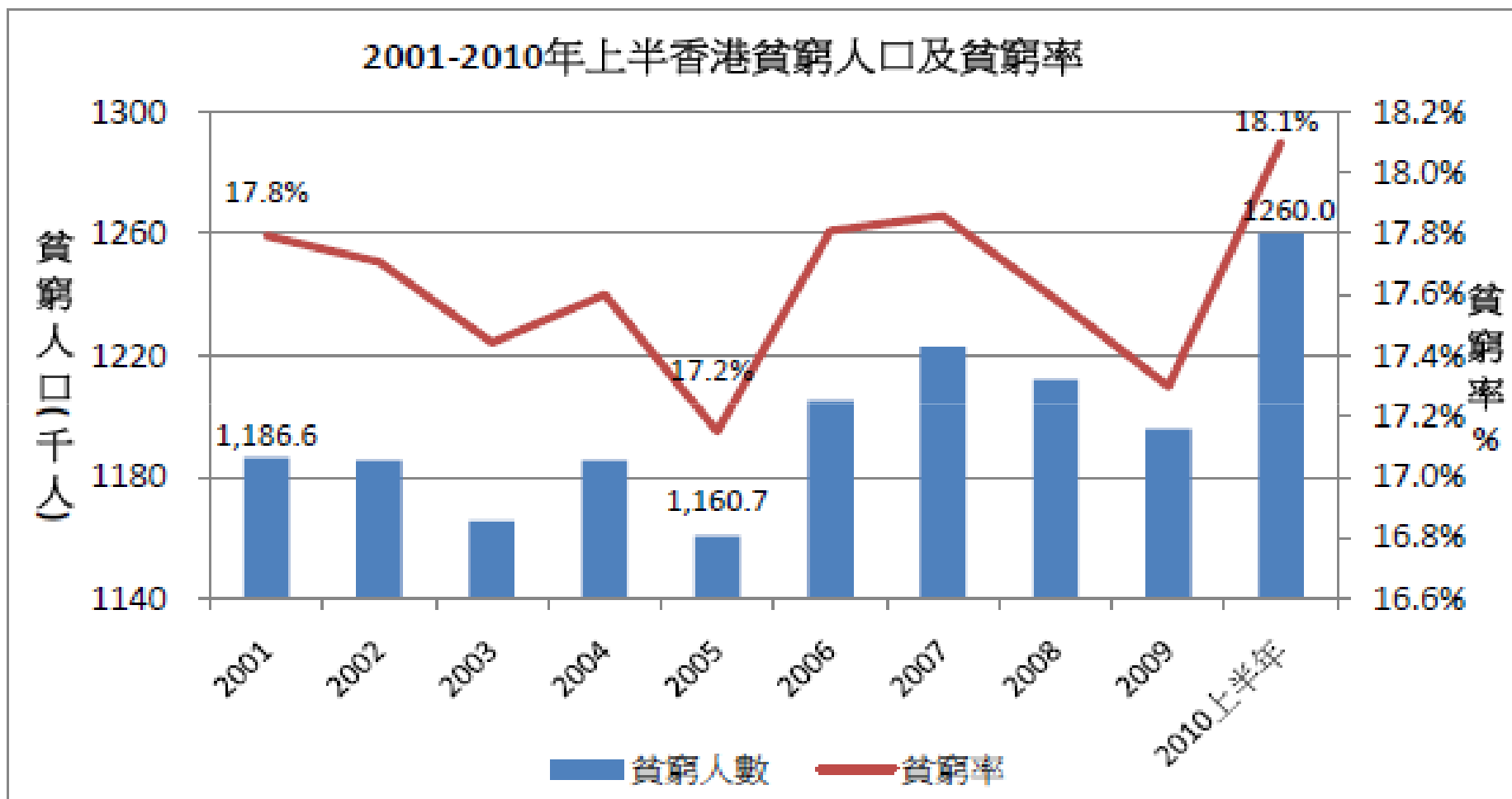
Poverty Situation in Hong Kong
Situations of the Poor
Trend and Future Challenges

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Poverty Situation in Hong Kong

1. Population of the Poor and Poverty Rate in Hong Kong - a Rising Trend



Source: HKCSS



Population of the Poor is Increasing

1. Poor population increases from 1.19 m in 2001 to 1.26 m in mid 2010 , which is 8.4% increase.
2. Total number of households increases from 415,400 in 2001 to 470,800 in mid 2010, which is 13.3% increase.
3. Poverty rate is 18.1% in mid 2010 (17.8% in 2001).

Population of the Poor by Age Group



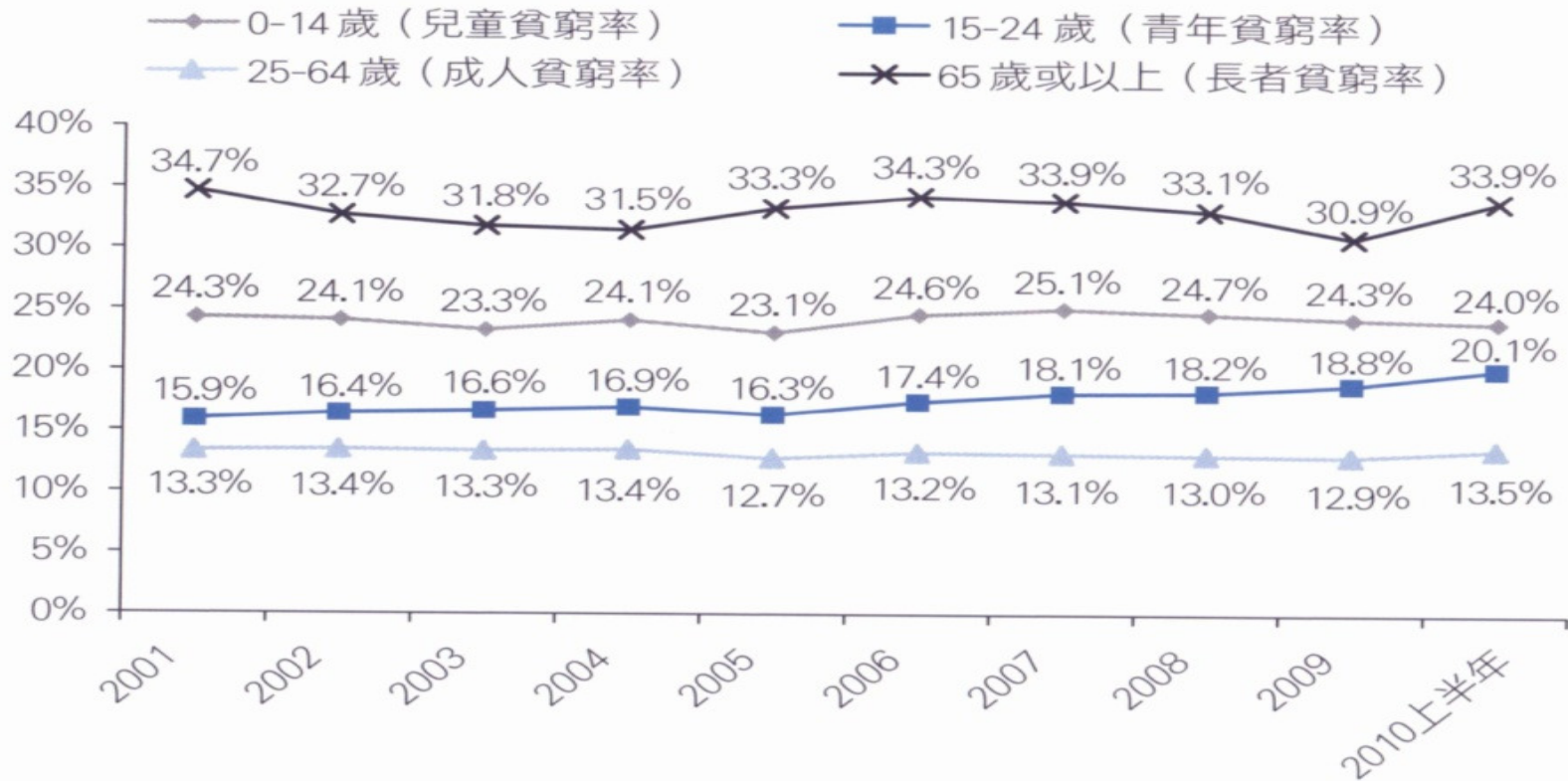
		2001	Mid of 2010	+/-
Children (aged 0-14)	Population ('000)	266.3	205.6	-22.8%
	Poverty Rate	24.3%	24.0%	
Youth (aged 15-24)	Population ('000)	144.0	176.2	+22.4%
	Poverty Rate	15.9%	20.1%	
Adult (aged 25-44)	Population ('000)	270.1	235.1	-13.0%
	Poverty Rate	11.1%	10.5%	
Middle Aged (aged 45-64)	Population ('000)	252.3	355.2	+40.8%
	Poverty Rate	17.5%	16.6%	
Elderly (aged 65 and >)	Population ('000)	253.9	290.0	+14.2%
	Poverty Rate	34.7%	33.9%	

Source: HKCSS

Poverty Rate by Age Group



圖2.3.10：2001-2010（上半年）年按年齡組別劃分的貧窮率*



資料來源：香港社會服務聯會扶貧資訊網，網址 <http://www.poverty.org.hk/>，2011年2月10日下載。

* 本圖的貧窮線，計算方法為將全港住戶按住戶成員數目劃分為1人、2人、3人、及4人或以上共4組。收入少於或等於同組住戶入息中位數一半的住戶，便會被定為貧窮戶。

Source: HKFYG



Population of the Poor by Age Group

1. The largest group of people living in poverty is the middle aged (aged 45-64).
2. The number of poor people at the age of 45-64 has increased significantly, which is 40.8% when compared with the figure in 2001.



Population of the Poor by Age Group

3. The poverty rate of young people aged 15-24 has increased significantly, from 15.9% in 2001 to 20.1% in mid 2010.
4. 30.3% (381,800 people) of the poor population are below the age of 25.
5. 33.9% (290,000 people) of our elderly population live in poverty.



2. Economic Inequality and Income Disparity

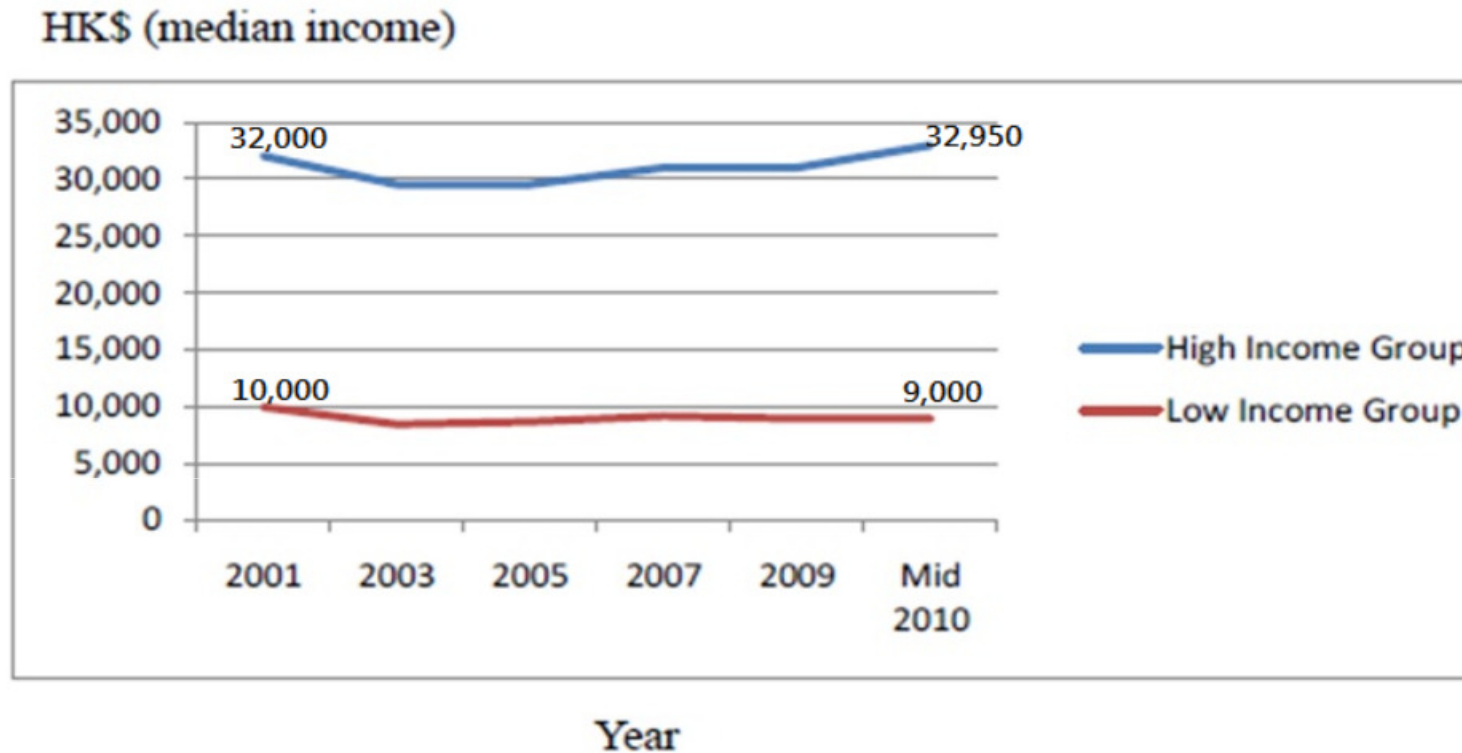
The Gini Co-efficient

1996	2001	2001
0.518	0.525	0.533
After taking into account the impact of taxation.		
0.427	0.421	0.427

Source: Report on Long-term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong (July 2011)



Income Disparity is Widening



Source: HKCSS

Income disparity between the high-income and the low income jobs is widening. Despite economic growth, a group of people cannot share the benefits.



3. The Working Poor

1. Among the 470,800 poor households, 22.5% (106,000 households) are elderly (non-working).
2. According to the statistics of HKCSS, about 211,000 households are working poor.
3. It is hoped with the implementation of the Minimum Wage Ordinance, the situation can be improved.



Median Monthly Income of the Lowest Income Group

Median Monthly Income	1996	2006
Of the Highest Income Group	\$25,000	\$30,000
Of the Lowest Income Group	\$4,000	\$3,500

Source : C & SD's Gross Domestic Product (2010)



4. Children Living in Poverty

1. 2006 Population by Census:

247,800 children aged 0-14 living in households with income below average CSSA payment, which is 26.5% of the population of the same age group.

2. In mid 2010, the population of poor children aged 0-14 has decreased to 205,600, which is 24.0% of the population of the same age group.



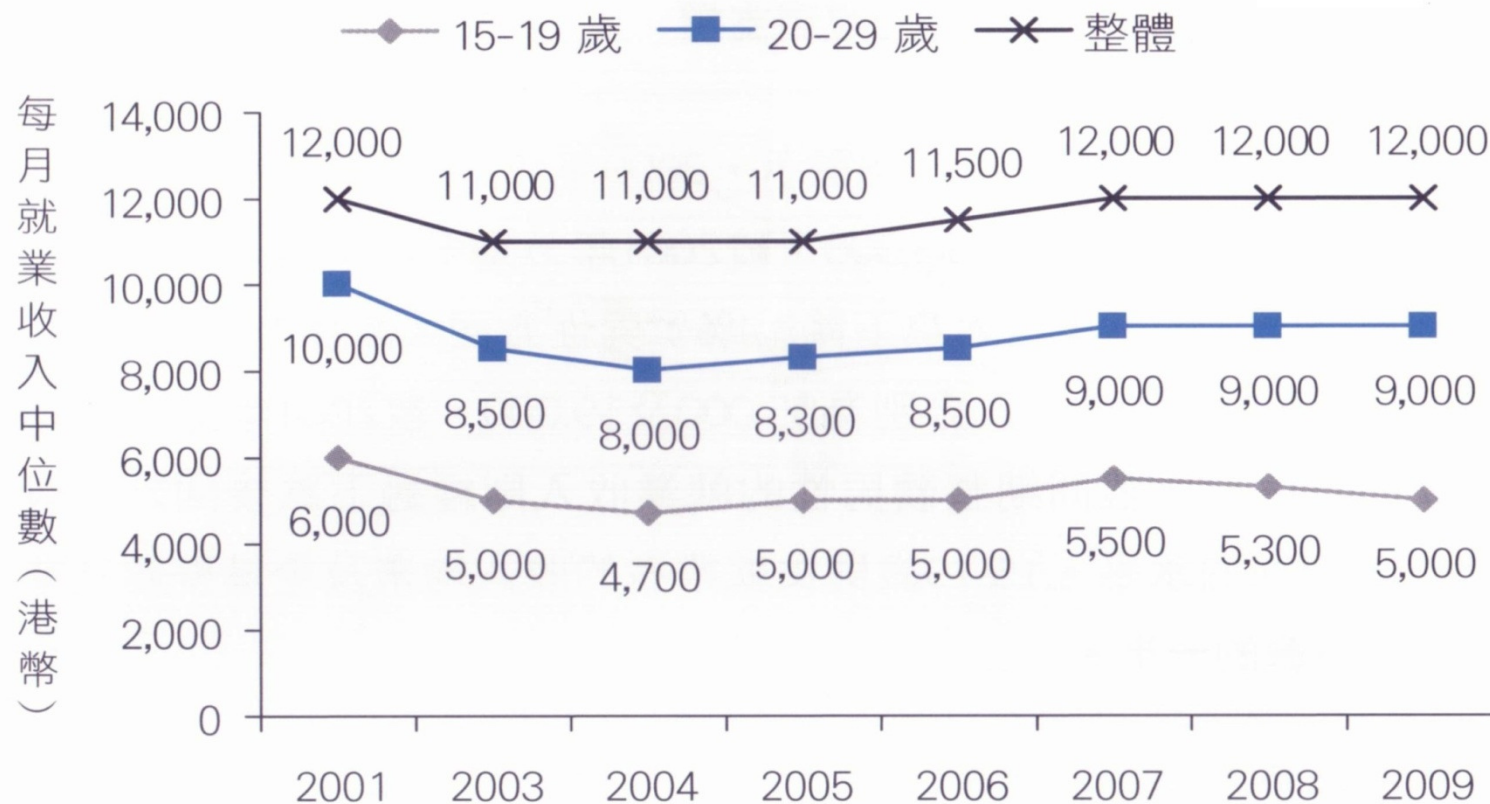
5. Youth Living in Poverty

1. The median monthly income of young people aged 15-19 and 20-29 is \$5,000 and \$9,000 respectively (in 2009). It shows that our young people still need to depend on their families.
2. In 2010, 55,377 young people aged 15-24 depend on CSSA, which is 6.3% of the total population of the same age group. Most of these young people live in Yuen Long, Kwun Tong and Kwai Tsing.
3. Young people with low educational attainment and limited work skill warrant our attention.

Comparison of Median Monthly Income of Men of Different Age Groups



圖2.3.9：2001-2009年15-29歲男性就業人士每月就業收入中位數



資料來源：政府統計處（2010）：《香港的女性及男性主要統計數字二零一零年版》；
（2006b）：《香港的女性及男性主要統計數字二零零六年版》。

Source: HKFYG



Youth Living in Poverty

- The unemployment rate for young people aged 15-19 is 22.1% at the 4th quarter of 2010 (the highest among all age groups). For age group of 20-24, the rate is 9.7%

The duration of being unemployed:

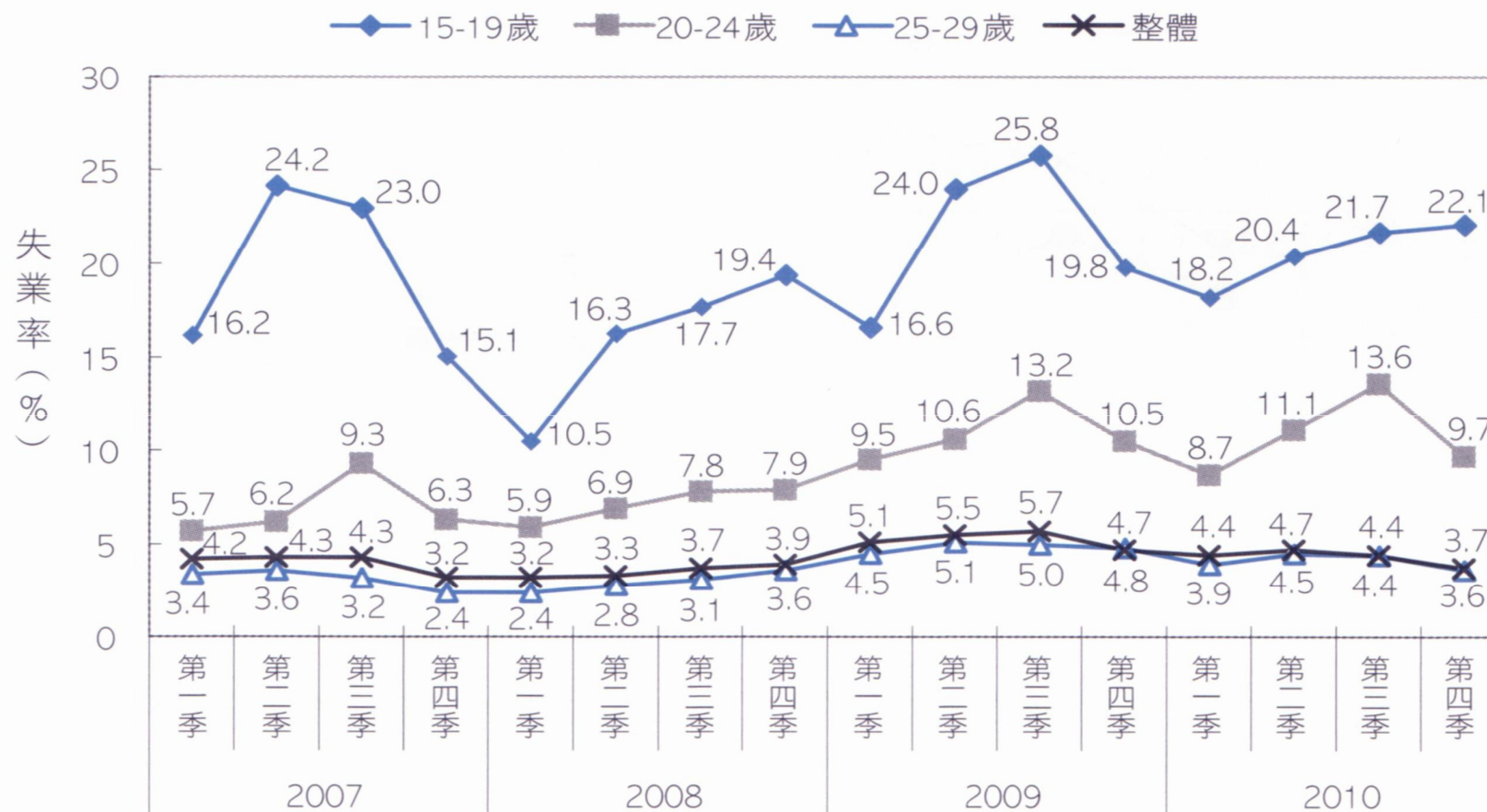
	Female		Male	
	2008	2009	2008	2009
Aged 15-19	53 days	68 days	56 days	60 days
Aged 20-29	56 days	78 days	55 days	80 days

Source: HKFYG

Unemployment Rate for Youth



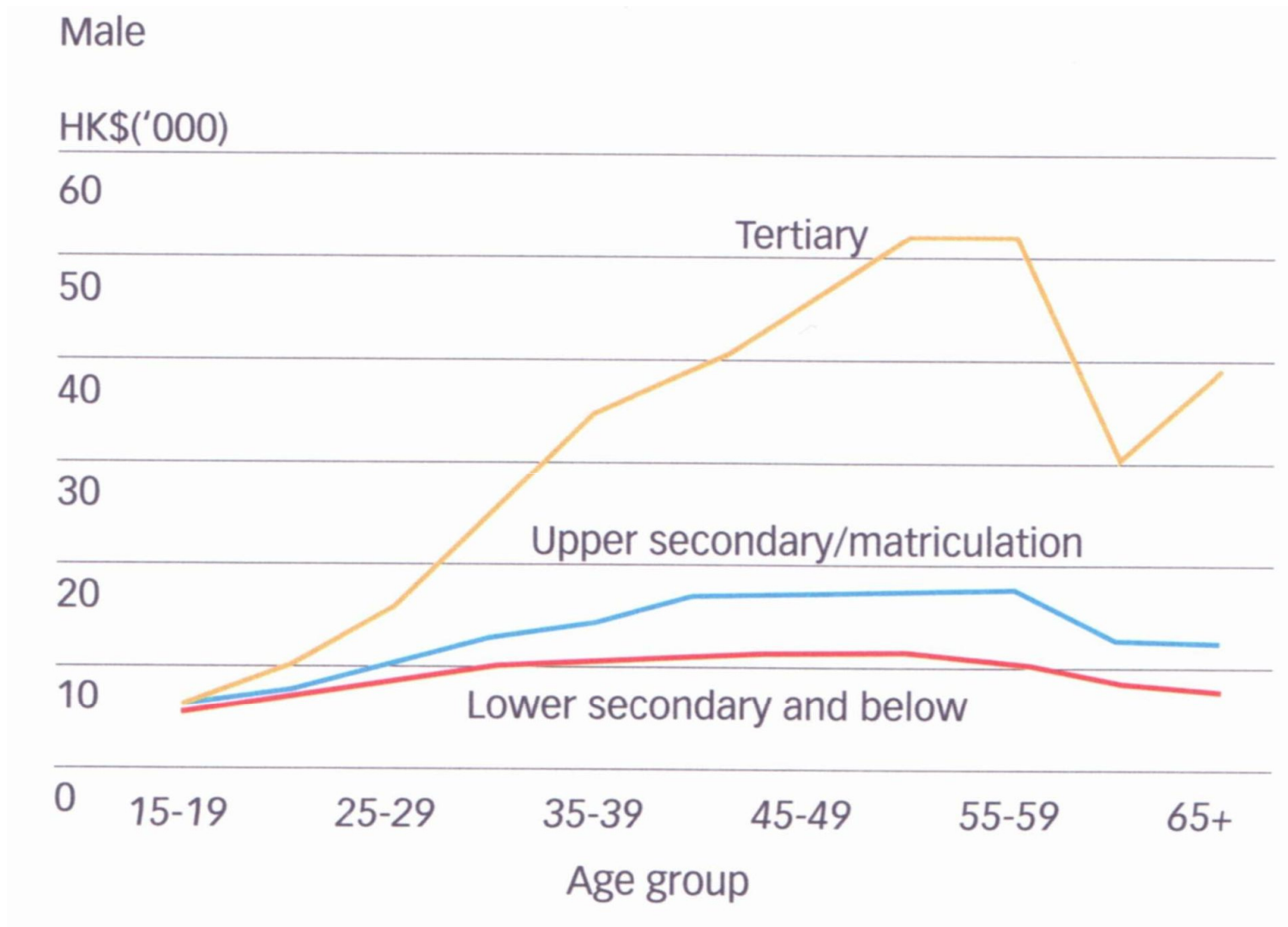
圖2.3.4：按季劃分的青年失業率（%）



資料來源：政府統計處

Source: HKFYG

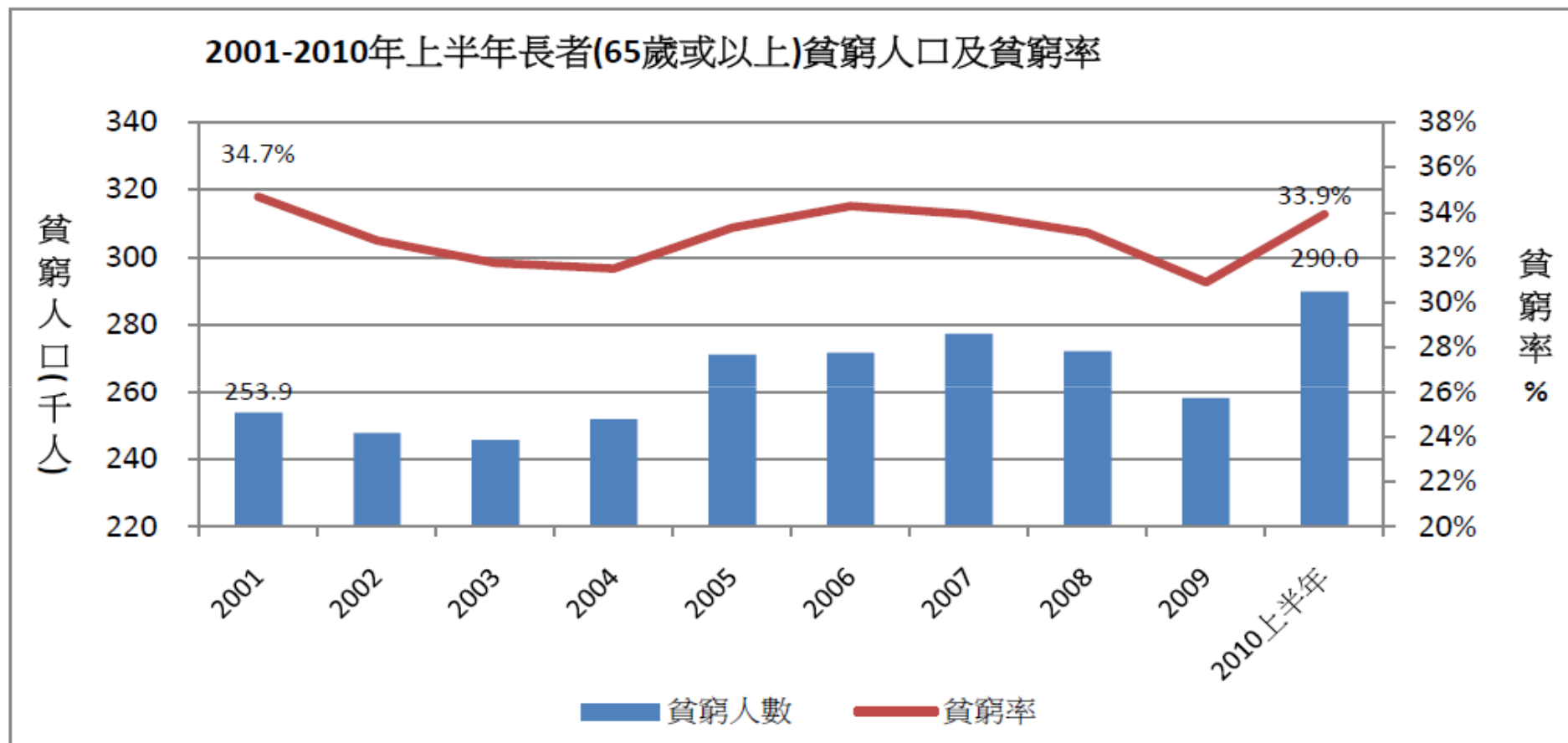
Average Monthly Earnings of Full-time Employees, 2006



Source: Report of the Commission on Poverty



6. Elderly Living in Poverty



Source: HKCSS



Elderly Living in Poverty

Year	2005	2006	2007	2007	2009	Mid 2010
Number of the Poor Elderly	271,300	271,900	277,500	272,300	258,100	290,000
Poverty Rate	33.3%	34.3%	33.9%	33.1%	30.9%	33.9%

Source : HKCSS

According to the statistics of SWD in July 2011, 187,224 elderly people aged 60 and above are supported by CSSA, which is 40.8% of all the CSSA recipients. (54.7% of the total caseloads.)



7. Special Needs Group Living in Poverty

Population of Ethnic Minority

Ethnic Group	Population in 2001	Population in 2006
Indians	18,543	20,444
Nepalese	12,564	15,950
Pakistani	11,017	11,111
Others South Asians	12,835	12,663
Total	54,959	60,168

Source: C & SD



Income of the Ethnic Minorities

Income Received	Pakistani		Nepalese	
	Number	%	Number	%
No income	78	45.9	56	31.8
Less than \$5,000	6	3.5	8	4.5
\$5,000 to \$9,900	55	32.4	49	27.8
\$10,000 to \$14,999	24	14.1	53	30.1
\$15,000 and above	7	4.1	10	5.7
Total	170	100	176	100

Source: A survey conducted in 2010 and quoted by Caritas



Poverty Situation in Hong Kong (summary)

1. Population of the poor is increasing. (470,000 households with 1.26 m)
2. About 211,000 households belong to working poor.
3. Among the poor, the age group of 45-64 (355,200) is the largest group. An increase of 41% when comparing the figure in 2001.
4. About 381,000 are children and youth live in poverty



Poverty Situation in Hong Kong (summary)

5. Poverty rate of youth aged 15-24 has a steady increase since 2001, from 15.9% to 20.1% in mid 2010. Median monthly income of the group has dropped from \$6,000 (2001) to \$5,000 (2009). In 2010, 55,377 young people depend on CSSA (Yuen Long, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing)
6. 290,000 elderly (poverty rate is 33.9%) live in poverty. 187,224 elderly depend on CSSA.
7. Ethnic people are found to have low income (ranging from \$5,000 to \$14,900).
8. Income disparity is widening.



Situation of the Poor

Case Study



To understand the needs of the poor, three surveys had been conducted by Caritas:

1. In 1997, 69 families had been interviewed.
2. In 2007, 25 working poor families with an average monthly income of 6,500 had been interviewed.
3. In 2010, 9 working poor families had been interviewed.

The 103 families include low income families, new arrivals, single parents, family with members having mental illness, families facing unemployment, ethnic minorities and elderly.



Observations from the Case study:

1. Employment

- Long working hours, low pay, on shift, no job security.
- Some changed to low pay jobs due to economic restructuring.

2. Financial situation

- Most of the income were spent on rental and food.
- No extra money for children's activities.

3. Family relationship

- Little time for family members to stay together/communicate.
- Lack of parenting skills.



4. Education for children

- Parents had expectations on children but lack of resources, time and skill to provide assistance and to guide them.
- Performance of children at school was average to poor.
- New arrival children had adjustment problems but some teachers were not helpful or empathetic.
- Could not afford the program fees to enable children to join activities.
- Some were not familiar with the community resources available to alleviate their hardship while some did not wish to apply.
- The ethnic groups did not have resources to send their children to nursery schools.



5. Support networks

Lack of support from relatives and poor in-laws relationship.
(usually among the new arrival families)

6. Living condition

Most of them lived in urban slums. The housing condition was poor and the environment was not safe. Some families had to wait for 7 years before they could submit an application for a public housing unit and then needed to wait for another 4 to 7 years for the allocation of an unit.

7. Health and medical care

Facing stress and did not wish to become sick.



8. Social life and community participation

- Lack of social life.
- Usually stayed at home as the transportation fees were expensive.
- Would go to open park or shopping mall (free).
- Encountered different forms of discrimination.
- A strong feeling of insecurity, uncertainty and isolation.



Future Trend and Challenges



Future Trends

Major concerns:

1. Inter-generational poverty and social mobility
2. Different age groups in poverty
 - youth with low educational attainment and without work skill
 - the middle aged group
 - the elderly
3. Special needs group in poverty
 - the ethnic groups
 - poor families with special needs
 - e.g. families with members having disabilities (physically handicapped, mentally handicapped and mentally ill)



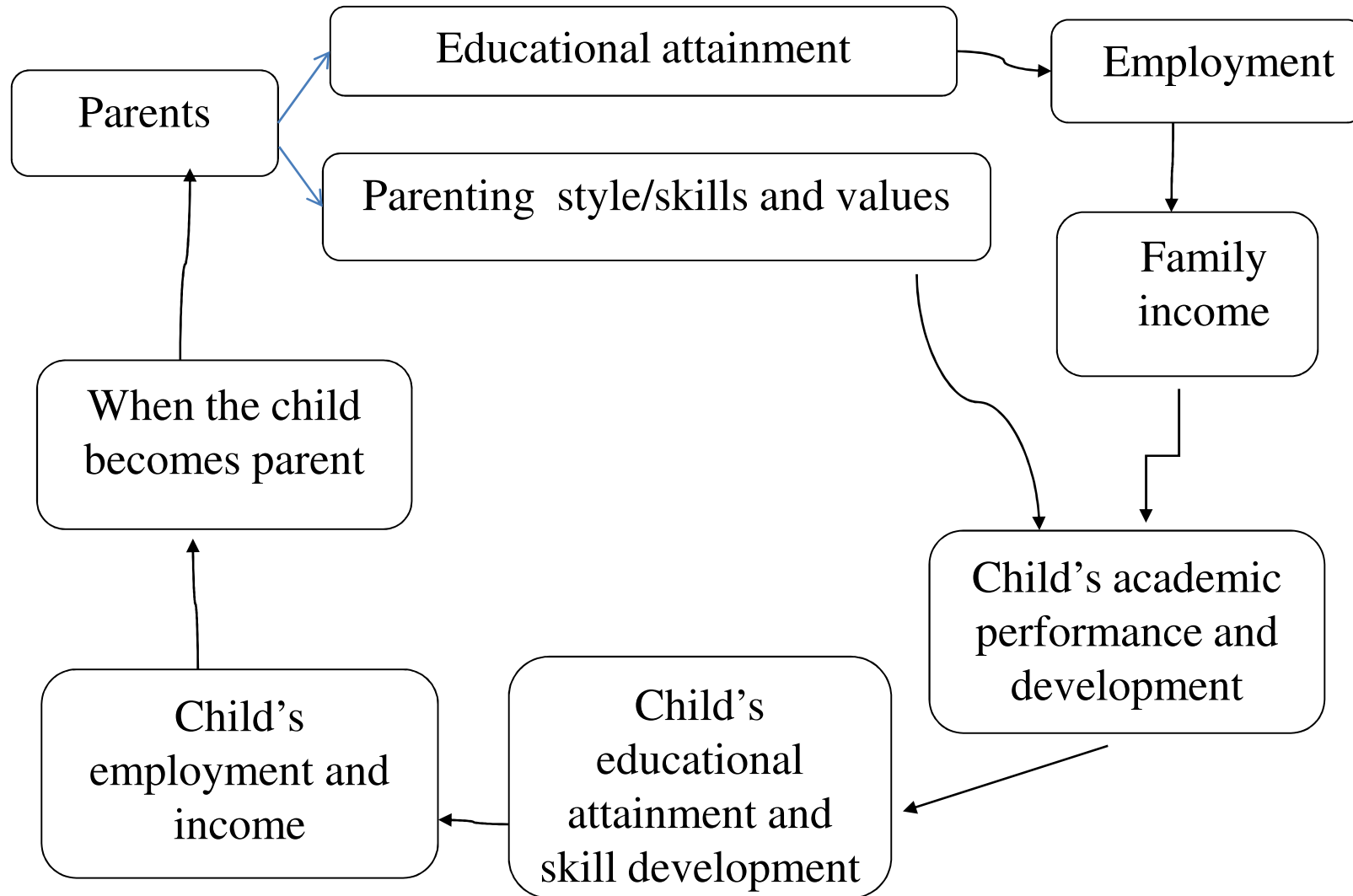
Future Challenges to Alleviate Poverty

1. How to tackle the issue of poverty?
i.e., to support those who are poor and to improve their standard of living.
2. How to tackle the issue of Inter-generational Poverty?
i.e., to help the poor to break away from the cycle/culture of poverty.

In Hong Kong, the government has launched various measures to help the deprived, yet these programs are fragmented and short term.



The Cycle of Poverty





We need Policy Support:

1. Policy to foster economic development (for job opportunities)
2. A set of coordinated and comprehensive social policies to improve quality of life and to create equal opportunity for upward mobility:
 - Education and training
 - Employment and labor protection (MWO)
 - Housing
 - Welfare service
 - Social protection
(safety net and a universal retirement protection scheme for all)
 - Medical service and long term care
 - Town Planning
 - Population policy



We need Welfare Services Support

Support services are needed to meet the following needs of the poor:

1. To tackle tangible needs
2. To enhance their understanding on community resources
3. To build capacity
4. To set up support networks
5. To promote social inclusion
6. To enable the poor to advocate for their needs and policy change in collective actions

We need a proactive strategy for Early Intervention and Prevention:



A strategy to break the cycle as the culture of poverty can be passed from one generation into the next.

To break the cycle of poverty, we need to ;

1. Adopt a proactive strategy to prevent the culture from passing on
2. Provide early intervention and support for parents and children to build capacity
3. Design policy and measures tailored for the specific situations/needs of the deprived, e.g. ethnic families



“Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility”

In April 2011, a report had been forwarded to the British Government

1. It is to launch a new strategy aiming to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to fulfill their potentials, regardless of the circumstances of their birth.
2. It is to focus on inter-generational social mobility ensuring that everyone has a fair chance get a better job than their parents.



The Report

3. A life cycle framework has been suggested to formulate policy and measures to provide early and appropriate intervention.
4. The goal is to make life chances more equal at the critical points for social mobility.
5. Intervention will be made on:
 - Foundation year
 - School years
 - Transition



Insights

1. Child's development is influenced by:
 - Parents' educational attainment and family resources
 - Parenting style and values of mother and father

2. To build child capacity, it is equal important to strengthen parents' capacity.

3. Capacity building for parents:
 - Strengthening parenting skills through parent education
 - Parent education should start as early as possible
 - Parent education tailor-designed for targeted parents

Insights



4. Capacity building for children and youth

Make use of school as a platform to enhance development

For children aged below 5:

- provide free nursery education for the deprived children of age group of 2-3
- provide stationing school social work service for nursery schools/kindergarten to support the deprived families

For children aged 6 to 11:

- provide support for students to catch up with the school work
- provide free meals and subsidies for schooling expenses
- strengthen school social work service to support students with special educational needs

Insights



For youth aged below 12 to 17:

- provide support for the low academic achievers
- strengthen career guidance for students who enter into labor market after S6
- to analyze the situation of youth receiving CSSA as to design appropriate intervention program in the 3 districts
- to provide opportunity for the school drop-outs to receive schooling

Insights



For working youth with low educational attainment:

- provide support and opportunity for youth to attend employment training
 - provide information on job market for youth and collaborate with corporations/NGOs to provide pre-employment training
5. Policy to alleviate the hardship of specific groups living in poverty
- Policy and measures are required to meet the specific needs of the ethnic families and of other poor families
 - The model of capacity building should be adopted to provide support for the poor



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2. Report on the Commission on Poverty, the Government of the HKSAR
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5. Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility, HM Government (April 2011)
6. The Different Faces of Poverty in Hong Kong , Caritas Youth and Community Service (1997)
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8. 與基層同行 - 基層家庭與社會排斥訪問計劃,明愛青少年及社區服務及香港天主教正義和平委員會 (2010)