Out of the shadows

Grenville Cross welcomes the Leung administration’s focus on fighting poverty and says that the plight of children, as society’s most vulnerable members, must be a priority.

A recent Harmony House study has, moreover, revealed the complacency of child abuse among Primary One to Primary Four pupils, while the government’s own policy has highlighted its early childhood education programmes. Although the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to every country in the world, the Convention has not been signed by Hong Kong. As a result, any child victims in this jurisdiction will face challenges, such as the difficulty of identifying their rights, the possibility of their financial resources being insufficient to fund legal proceedings, the absence of a public defender, and the lack of an advocate to support their legal interests.

Hill, the secretary for labour and welfare, Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, estimated in an interview with the South China Morning Post recently that there were 112,289 children living in poverty before the CSSA payment. That is to say, 7.3% of the population, or 1 in 14 children, were already living in poverty before the average CSSA payment. The latest official figure released by the Census and Statistics Department (CSD) last month also noted that poor households, which in 2005 had more than 10 people, now only had 9 people. The CSD reported that that one in 10 households had a household income below the poverty line and that the number of poor households had increased by 8.4% from 900,000 in 2006 to 970,000 in 2009. Most of the households were from rural areas, where 1,079 poor households lived last year with child members, an increase of 13.5% from 950 in 2008. It was also reported that one in 10 households where the head of household was over 65 lacked a basic livelihood. The number of households with elderly people in Hong Kong has been growing rapidly since Hong Kong returned to China from 1997. More and more elderly people found that their income was insufficient to fund their daily necessities, particularly the basic ones, such as food and housing. The number of elderly people living alone in Hong Kong has also been rising.

The Society for Community Organisation (SCO) report that many Hong Kong children now live in strained circumstances. SCO has discovered that social workers in children’s homes are often unable to support these children, and that even social workers are unable to take on these single or extra-curricular activities. Either the young people need better support, or the government needs to do more. People are doing well to keep low-income families, as they restore the benefits of the children and some, parents; nonetheless, the government should take more measures to help low-income families.

A child welfare commission would safeguard and ensure their perspectives are considered.

The invisibility of Chinese children

When economic development is linked with the establishment of a harmonious society, then Chinese children are likely to be affected. In China, children are no longer considered a social burden, but are seen as the beneficiaries of the economic development. Economic development has made China the world’s largest economy. The government has focused on social and economic development, including the eradication of poverty and the promotion of education. Despite these great achievements, many children are still living in poverty. The government has focused on the human development index gap in the children’s education and the children’s economic development. The government has promised to improve the living standard of Chinese children, but that is not enough. The government needs to focus on the living standard of the entire population. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China. The government should focus on the economic development of Chinese children, who are the future of China.