

**Three Early Moments of  
the Department of Applied Social Sciences of  
Hong Kong Polytechnic University from 1973 - 2000:  
Some Collective Memories of Six Forebears**

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## PREFACE

This report is part of a larger study<sup>1</sup> on the history of social work education in Hong Kong. The purpose of the study is to trace and document the history and development of social work education in Hong Kong from its inauguration to the year 2000. The study has been led by Dr. LAM Ching Man of Chinese University of Hong Kong. The research team includes six members who graduated from different social work programmes in Hong Kong (University of Hong Kong, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Baptist University, City University, Shue Yan University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University). Each member focused on the history of his/her own alma mater.

There are many ways to study the history of social work education in Hong Kong, and many people were involved in its development. Given the limit of our resources, we started this project with a very modest intention –capturing the memories of some key forebears of social work education. As some of them are now in their golden years, we hoped to collect their stories before it is too late. We have interviewed over 20 former heads, directors and senior faculty members of the six social work programmes. This project is a work in progress. We hope our efforts will lead to a more systematic and comprehensive study to fully capture the history of social work development from different sources and different perspectives.

This report mainly deals with the history of the Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS) of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University from its inception to around the year 2000. As the author, I would like to identify my personal link with APSS. I earned my diploma in social work in 1983 from the then-School of Social Work and my bachelor's degree in social work in 1987 from the Department of Applied Social Studies of Hong Kong Polytechnic. While I was in the Diploma programme, I was elected the President of the Students' Association of the School in 1981/82 and led the campaign against Report No. 8 in which the Hong Kong government recommended lowering the entry salary point for diploma holders from point 17 to point 14. Before migrating to Canada, I have worked in the Hong Kong social welfare field for more than eight years.

I personally interviewed five of the six forebears (Mr. MacQuarrie being the lone exception) whose stories are included in this report. To fulfill our original intention, I decided to adopt a descriptive approach in this report. I have first compiled the story of each of these six forebears; then, by synthesizing their stories, I have retold the history of APSS in a chronological way. My interpretive intervention of their stories is inevitable but I have attempted to keep it as minimal as possible. My own observations can be found mostly in the Epilogue.

Finally, I am grateful to have the support of APSS, particularly its Head of Department, Professor James Lee, to publish this report as a monograph. As the author, I assume all the responsibilities of the quotations, interpretations and opinions expressed and reported in this report. Requests for permission to use this report can be made to me at [miu.yan@ubc.ca](mailto:miu.yan@ubc.ca).

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<sup>1</sup>The study was funded by Mr. Percy Wong, who is also a graduate of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University Diploma in Social Work programme.

## INTRODUCTION

Established in 1973, the Institute for Social Work Training (ISWT) under the Social Welfare Department (SWD) was the predecessor of Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS) of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU). Today, APSS has grown from a teaching unit of SWD, offering a single certificate in social work, to a full-fledged university academic department, offering 20 education programmes to train social work personnel not only for Hong Kong but also for mainland China.

The history of APSS is a complex mix-and-match of lived experiences of many people: teachers, staff, students, NGO partners, government officials and more. To fully and systematically capture the complete history of APSS is a massive, demanding and expensive project. However, it is also an urgent undertaking. Some of the key actors who have shaped the development of APSS are in their golden years, and their departure will be a great loss to the collective memory of APSS. Hoping to preserve at least parts of the valuable history of APSS, this study is a modest initiative to capture some collective memories of its past development. We have interviewed six key forebears whose contributions have been critical to the founding and evolution of APSS.

This is a synopsis of these memories about APSS. It is a work in progress, and we hope that it will serve to elicit more interest and research endeavors to fully capture the rich history of APSS.

### **A Synthesis of Six Personal Journeys**

This piece of work is a synthesis of the memories of Mr. Lachlan Mac Quarrie (the founding director of ISWT and head of APSS), Mr. Foo Tak Nam (the founding associate director of ISWT, associate head and head of APSS), Ms. Mak (the head of APSS), Dr. Lee Ming Kwan (the first sociologist of APSS and former Associate Head), and Dr. Tsang Nai Ming (former Associate Head and the longest serving member of APSS). Sadly both Mr. Mac Quarrie and Mr. Foo both passed away in 2008 not long after our interview.

Also included is the story of Ms. Betty Wong, who has not had any direct relationship with APSS. However, as one of the first-generation officers of SWD's In-Service Training Section, the cradle of APSS, Ms. Wong's story provides important additional insights into the origins of APSS.

Here is a brief introduction of their journeys:

**Ms. Betty Wong**, who has now retired to Vancouver, was one of the pioneers in the in-service training unit of SWD. Due to the Japanese invasion, Betty quit her studies at the University of Hong Kong, and during the war, she worked as a helper in the temporary medical facilities. Her connection with the key people of the medical school then led to her medical social work position in Queen Mary Hospital after the war. In 1949, she was one of the six people sent by the then-Social Welfare Office to England to receive formal training in social work; she went to London School of Economics and Political Sciences to read social studies. Like many people trained in England at that time, her training made her an almoner, which is equivalent to what we would today call a medical social worker. She kept working in the hospital until the late 1950s.

Then she decided to improve her qualifications and went to McGill University in Canada to complete her MSW degree. Upon her return, she was charged with starting in-service training programmes for both nursery teachers and social welfare workers in the government and other social service agencies. Starting from scratch, she worked with her colleagues and senior staff from different government departments and NGOs to co-develop in-service programmes and teaching materials. Later in the mid-1960s, with the financial support of Sir Tang Shiu-kin (鄧肇堅), the in-service training programmes were consolidated into the Lady Trench Training Centre in Wanchai. Out of this grew the Institute for Social Work Training, the predecessor of the Department of Applied Social Studies at the HK Polytechnic University. After witnessing and participating in the early phase of social work training in Hong Kong, Betty moved to Canada in late 1960s.

**Mr. Lachlan B. MacQuarrie** (麥嘉理) (1925-2009) was the founding director of the Institute for Social Work Training and the School of Social Work at the Hong Kong Polytechnic (HKP) which was renamed the Department of Applied Social Studies and later the Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS). Mr. MacQuarrie was also known by many of us as Ah Yeh (阿爺), the kind and respectful chief of the department. Because of the language barrier, many students may have found it difficult to get close to him, but his kindness to students was well known to us. Many may remember the colourful Hawaiian shirt he wore to the orientation programme. A WWII veteran, Lieutenant Colonel MacQuarrie had served in the Canadian Armed Force for over 20 years. He had a great passion for social welfare and policy. His wife worked at the School of Social Work at the University of Toronto (later renamed the Faculty of Social Work), and he was inspired by the dedicated faculty members, so much so that he later obtained an MSW degree from the School. His encounter with Hong Kong was full of coincidence. While visiting the Faculty of Social Work at the U of T, he happened to meet Ms. Lee He Man (李希旻), a pioneer of social work education in Hong Kong and a long-term serving member of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration of the University of Hong Kong, who was studying there. This connection eventually led him to quit his job as the Director of CAF Social Development Services, and he moved to Hong Kong to replace his fellow Canadian, Murdoch Keith, as the Director of Hong Kong Council of Social Services. He decided to return to Canada after serving at HKCSS for three years, but he was invited by the Social Welfare Department to establish the Institute for Social Work Training. Then he orchestrated the integration of ISWT with Hong Kong Polytechnic and founded the School of Social Work. It was during his period as head that a number of new initiatives were experimented, e.g. the new 2+2+2 degree programme, the introduction of part-time mode of studies and the development of social work curricula integrating the British, Canadian and American models. We were fortunate to interview him not long before he passed away.

**Mr. Foo Tak Nan**(傅德柵) (1937-2008) was known to many people as a gentle, kind and hardworking person, both as a teacher and as a schoolmate. As a student of St. Paul Boys' Secondary School, he was inspired by the charity work of Sheng Kung Hui (the Hong Kong Anglican Church), and his choice of pursuing a Certificate of Social Studies at the University of Hong Kong in 1959 led to his lifelong vocation of social work. Mr. Foo had a strong passion for mental health and rehabilitation services, which inspired many of his students. This passion was

nurtured by his dedicated service at SWD's Aberdeen Rehabilitation Centre for a long period of time and by a 14-month training course in psychiatric social work at the University of Manchester. In 1969, Mr. Foo joined the Training Section and, three years later, was assigned to be the assistant principal of the Institute for Social Work Training at the Lady Trench Training Centre. In 1976-77, he completed McGill University's two-year MSW programme in just one year and returned to Hong Kong to help with the integration of ISWT and the Hong Kong Polytechnic. Mr. Foo always kept a low profile. But students knew if they needed any help, he was the one to find. Mr. Foo was the natural successor as director when Mr. MacQuarrie retired in 1987.

In his long service in Hong Kong social work education, Mr. Foo was instrumental not only in establishing the ISWT with one single certificate programme but also in expanding it into a full-fledged multi-discipline academic department with all levels of programmes. Throughout this expansion, Mr. Foo insisted that practicality was the unique trait of the social work programmes of the Department of Applied Social Sciences. In 1990, Mr. Foo migrated to Canada with his family. However, he never gave up his passion for social work, as he soon joined SUCCESS, a local Chinese social service agency in Vancouver. His service at SUCCESS (中橋互助會) was temporarily interrupted by his passion of mental health services; from 2001 to 2005, he returned to Hong Kong to help the Mental Health Association set up its Centre of Education. Mr. Foo retired from SUCCESS in 2008 but, sadly, passed away a few months after his retirement.

**Ms. Mak Ping Sze Diana** (麥萍施) was the third department head of APSS. She is known as a very serious and efficient person. However, not many people know that she is a very curious and adventurous person. After completing two master degrees from the University of Wales and the University of Michigan, she returned to Hong Kong and worked as a factory worker in Kwun Tong, painting toys for three months in order to understand Hong Kong's working class. She also co-conducted a self-funded study on underemployed workers (the first of its kind in Hong Kong). After joining APSS, Ms. Mak was assigned leadership positions to establish new programmes – the Part-time Day Release Diploma and the “Bachelor of Social Work programmes,” which actually included the 2+2+2 programme – in a very short period of time. Ms. Mak, in search of the nature of social work, has constantly questioned the dominant philosophical approach that has affected the shaping of dominant social work practice in the western, English speaking developed countries. Learning from her own experience and inspired by her early training in political science and history, she believes that social work is a relational and contextual practice. As the head of the department from 1989 to mid-2004, she introduced and facilitated the development of the hermeneutic approach in social work with emphasis on the integration of theory and practice. Meanwhile, under her leadership, APSS experienced a rapid expansion and became one of the largest academic units of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

**Dr. Lee Ming Kwan** (李明堃) (aka MK) is well known to many of his students as a gentle scholar whose mind seems to work much faster than his mouth. Very often in the middle of his lectures, when an interesting idea came to mind, MK would stop and smile before telling us what he had just been thinking. As the first sociologist of APSS and later the Associate Head, MK was instrumental in developing the social science curricula for different programmes of the



department. As MK reflected in the interview, his favourite course was “Hong Kong Society” which was a required course for all students in the Diploma of Social Work programme. He particularly enjoyed this course because through it, his social work students who had no sociological training developed critical analytical skills and began to understand local social issues. Indeed, as a former student, I remember that we also learned many basic sociological concepts such as roles, status, position and function. Although MK is not a social work scholar, he has always had a close intellectual relationship with the profession. As a partial insider equipped with a strong sociological analytical lens, MK observes the gaps between Western social work theories and local practice, something that different generations of the APSS faculty have tried hard to bridge.

**Dr. Tsang Nai Ming**(曾乃明) is the longest serving member of APSS. He was also the Associate Head of the Department in 1992-5. Graduating with a degree in physics and mathematics, he enrolled in the 15-month Diploma of Social Work program of the University of Hong Kong, which squeezed four placements into that short time frame. His journey in social work education commenced with his appointment to the SWD Social Work Training Section in 1975, and he joined APSS in 1978. Today, as a Visiting Fellow, he is still an active member of the department, diligently working with students on social work integration and publishing his ideas on social work education in scholarly journals. Dr. Tsang’s social work education journey took a major detour in 1996 when he decided to quit his full-time appointment and pursue a doctoral degree in theology. This detour allowed him both a richer intellectual space to better understand the meaning and importance of the idea of integration in social work, and also a larger institutional space to test and apply these ideas in his teaching. His recent publications on knowledge/professional/practice integration, the idea of surprise, reflection as dialogue, and the idea of dialectics are all important articulations of his experiences on this detoured journey.

## THE STORY

### SWD In-Service Training and Lady Trench Centre: The Cradle of APSS

To tell the story of APSS, we need to start with the in-service training programme of SWD, which was first introduced in 1959, an era during which the population of Hong Kong was rapidly growing and social problems and poverty were worsening. One of the urgent social issues, as Betty Wong remembers, was helping refugees from China who were jammed into squatters' areas:

*The bursting population was one thing. It combined with the crowdedness, i.e., like a family with a few members all squeezed in a small room, although it was better than living in a squatter up on the hill. So we helped them...*

As Liu (呂大樂, 2010) documents, during this period not only did the Hong Kong government (HKGov) increase its output of social services, there was also an observable growth in civil society, at least in terms of the number of voluntary organizations, to meet the increasing needs. These were largely operated by a group of committed but untrained personnel. In order to provide more effective services to meet growing demands, the HKGov started in-service programmes to upgrade the skills and knowledge of these workers.

With a MSW degree from McGill University, Betty Wong was one of the handful of trained social workers in Hong Kong. She and her colleague, Ruby Wong, were assigned to start the in-service training programme at the former asylum on High Street. The programme was a six-month "sandwich" course during which trainees from SWD and voluntary organizations would be released to attend classes for two days during the work week. Betty and her colleague literally hand-wrote all the training materials and taught most of the courses.

The SWD Training Unit was *officially* established in 1962 (Wong, 1990), largely due to the Younghusband report. In 1960, Dame Eileen L. Younghusband, a renowned social work educator from the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, published *Training for Social Work in Hong Kong: A Report Prepared for the Government of Hong Kong*, which officially formalized the in-service training programmes of SWD. In Appendix B of her report, Younghusband detailed the pedagogical philosophy and curricula of the in-service programme:

1. As has been said, the in-service training course should be directly *related to the job to be done*, the trainees' daily work, and their own knowledge and experience. It must also succeed in bringing about the desired attitude change...
2. The trainees should be concurrently learning the necessary administrative procedures in the organizational structure where they are working. Helping them to understand human needs and how to meet them will take longer and is likely to involve modifying stereotyped views about certain types of people and their behaviour. Discussion of recorded cases is effective in this as well as in forcing trainees to *think realistically* rather than making generations of no *practical* values. (Younghusband, 1960, pp. 41, *author added*)

As emphasized, the general spirit of the in-service training programme was relevance and practicality to the actual service context.

Younghusband suggested that rather than providing a generic in-service training programme, two separate programmes should be offered to child care staff and institutional workers helping the handicapped. As Betty Wong remembered, in the early 1960s, just a few of these in-service training programmes were offered in different locations.

By mid-1960s, due to a generous donation from Sir Tang Shiu-kin (鄧肇堅), all training programmes were relocated to the newly established Lady Trench Centre, which is still located at Oi Kwan Road, Wanchai. Why was it given this name? As Betty Wong recalled, it was Sir Tang's wish:

*He [Tang Shiu Kin] always gave money to Mr. Baron [then-Director of Social Welfare]. Occasionally when Mr. Baron went to meetings, he would bring some workers with him. When he needed money, he would ask Sir Tang, who then would give him some. Very straightforward, really quick. Then later, when David Trench was the Governor, Sir Tang really appreciated him. He told Mr. Baron, he wanted to donate one million dollars. Back then, one million dollars....He said I want you to do something with that, and I don't care what you do for social workers, but whatever it is, it must be [named after] Lady Trench.*

The establishment of the Lady Trench Centre was an important signal of HKGov's commitment to social work professionalization. For a long time, both the Lady Trench Centre, and the Training Section housed in the Centre, nurtured many professional social workers in Hong Kong. As recalled by Dr. Tsang Nai Ming, whose first and only appointment at SWD was in the Training Section in 1975, working in the Section was always seen as a prestigious position in SWD. Indeed, the Lady Trench Centre was also the cradle of APSS and thus part of the legacy of Younghusband's influential report.

#### I. Institute for Social Work Training: Genesis of APSS

As Chow (周永新, 1980) suggests, the 1970s were the golden era of Hong Kong social welfare service. The publication of the first Five Year Plan for Social Service Development in Hong Kong 1973-78 (Five Year Plan) laid out a massive blueprint for social welfare service development. In seven years (1973/74-1980/81), the budget for social welfare increased almost six-fold, from \$136.9 million to \$750.5 million (Ho, 1980). To a large extent, this can be attributed to Sir Murray MacLehose who was appointed Governor of Hong Kong in 1972. As Mr. MacQuarrie remembered, Sir MacLehose was a very approachable person who was willing to go outside the Governor's House to meet with different community members and listen to their suggestions. As Mr. MacQuarrie recalled,

*MacLehose wanted to come to the council's office to see us, to see our staff and to have me brief him on our work and our mission...He did the same thing at the ISWT – just shortly after we were established, he invited himself over to see us and to be briefed, and he said "Please invite me to your first graduation."*

Although the motives behind MacLehose's commitment to the rapid expansion of social services in Hong Kong are doubtful (呂大樂, 2003), this expansion did lead to a growing demand for professional workers in social welfare services, and in many other areas such as education and health. To meet this growing demand in a very short period of time, the Five-Year Plan recommended the setup of the Institute for Social Work Training:

*To ensure that the expanded social welfare services continue to operate at satisfactory standard, it is essential that there should be an adequate supply of trained staff. The Social Work Department of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong consider that they will continue to be able to meet the need for professionally trained staff at the graduate level. Facilities below that level, however, are not adequate at present and to meet the need for such "mid-level" workers, an Institute for Social Work Training is to be set up. Together with university training, and the in-service training and staff development work already provided by the Social Welfare Department and individual agencies, the establishment of the Institute should help considerably to ensure that there is an adequate and balanced variety of training facilities in the social welfare field. (Hong Kong Government, 1973, p. 62)*

Indeed, when deciding to provide a two-year social work programme, the question was where this programme should be housed. In her report, *Some Comments on Proposal for a Two-Year Social Work Course*, Eileen Younghusband (1972) suggested two available choices: an existing post-graduate institute (Baptist College was the only choice) or a new institute particularly created for this. Her preference was the latter, and she proposed that it be named the Institute for Social Work Training, under SWD and housed in the Lady Trench Centre. She even suggested that this new institute should not be launched before September 1973.

Again, Mr. MacQuarrie credited this achievement to the support of Sir MacLehose:

*One of the strongest proponents at the time was Sir Murray MacLehose, the Governor. We would never, I'm convinced, have gotten started as expeditiously as we did [without him].*

The setup of ISWT was undoubtedly expeditious. According to MacQuarrie:

*This was approved in by LegCo [Legislative Council] in May of 1973 and we took our first students in September of the same year. So you can imagine, what is that...four months? It's unbelievable and would not have happened had the governor not been so strongly supportive.*

Two years later, Sir MacLehose did fulfill his promise and attended the first graduation ceremony of ISWT.

According to Mr. MacQuarrie and Mr. Foo, the setup of a training institute within the SWD was largely out of convenience, due to the urgency of the situation:

*Seeing the only way of getting started as fast as they wanted was for it to become part of the social welfare department, part of the government side. They could have waited a little while longer, and or maybe joined the Baptist College, or we could have waited a little longer and become independent like the College of Education, Northcote, Graham and so on. That was another possibility, but that would have taken time. So the solution was that we would become part of the Social Welfare Department. They would give us quarters, facilities in the Lady Trench Training Center. (MacQuarrie)*

*In the end, it [the HKGov] wanted to set it up as soon as possible, because you know that in '71 the government published the report. Then they wanted to start it in 72. So, as the fastest and most convenient way, SWD made use of the then training section located at the Lady Trench Training Centre. (Foo)*

As the base of the SWD's training arm, Lady Trench Centre was the natural choice to house the ISWT. For instance, the SWD Training Section provided a ready supply of lecturers for this new institute. Not surprisingly six of the seven founding lecturers of ISWT were seconded from the Training Section: Mr. Foo, Mr. Leung Chung Ming, Mr. Bernard Tong, Miss Irene Chu, Miss Kitty Tsang Yin Ping and Mr. Au Chi Wah. However, instead of choosing an SWD staff member to be the principal, Mr. Thomas Lee, the then-Director of SWD, invited Mr. MacQuarrie, who had already announced his plans to leave HKCSS and return to Canada, to head up the new institute.

The set-up process was also very rushed. According to Mr. Foo, the teaching team was organized in May/June 1973, and classes were supposed to start in October. Meanwhile they needed to select 25 students from 1500 external applicants, and 25 from over 100 applicants who were working in and sponsored by the government or voluntary agencies. They needed to conduct a massive three-step recruitment process: submission of an application form; a written admission examination for all suitable candidates; and an interview for all final applicants. Meanwhile the teaching team was working diligently to develop courses and compile course materials. In order to make sure that the materials were suitable to the local context, a special section was set up and a Training Materials Coordinator was appointed (MacQuarrie, 1976). According to Mr. Foo, Professor Nelson Chow was the first person responsible for coordinating this section:

*Nelson was our colleague at the Institute. So, he was assigned to organize something by inviting some teachers from different institutions. Each person wrote one paper, i.e., one case. In other words, we were trying to use a genuinely indigenous curriculum.*

As Mr. Foo remembered, it was a really tense period, but the teaching team was a group of seasoned social workers who worked hard to prepare their materials while teaching the classes.

*Frankly speaking, some of our colleagues were teaching while reading the materials. We only needed to read ahead of the students, because we all came from SWD and every one of us had had direct practice.*

Regarding the curriculum of ISWT, we must not forget another proponent of ISWT's establishment – Dame I. Younghusband. Indeed, in her 1960 report, she had already proposed a

two-year social work training programme. This proposal was shelved for 13 years until the idea of the Institute for Social Work Training (ISWT) emerged in 1973. In 1970, Younghusband visited Hong Kong again, and Mr. Foo was assigned to accompany her. The next year, she produced a report: *A Report on Employment and Training for Social Workers in Hong Kong*. In 1972, she also published a document entitled *Some Comments on Proposals for a 2-year Social Work Course*. (See <http://web.hku.hk/~hrnwlc/introsocwork/swhisthk.htm>).

Her idea of practice-oriented training for social work practitioners was echoed by Dr. Irving A. Spergel, who was invited to Hong Kong as a United Nations Advisor to develop a one-year training programme for youth workers. As MacQuarrie suggested, Dr. Spergel was also influential in the establishment of ISWT:

*One of the international experts that came over was a chap by the name of Dr. Irving Spergel from the University of Chicago. And Irving had recommended that they start this youth work course, but he was another one who had recommended that eventually this youth work course should become a fully qualified professional course, which was of course another support for the starting of this ISWT.*

According to Mr. Foo, Younghusband's two-year model was largely a British model which emphasized low cost and practicality:

*In early post-war Britain, people even called some of them Younghusband courses because they were promoted by her. Its ultimate rationale suggested that social work, officially speaking, could be divided into two levels: one level was social work officers, professionals. The other group, though some people didn't like the name, was para-professionals. In other words, it meant that some of our work did not necessarily require a full-fledged social worker, but these people still needed training. Then at that time in Britain... However, many educators felt that it was because of money problems. It means now instead of training a full-time university social worker, you trained a more practical person.*

Originally the two-year programme articulated in the 1960 Report was targeted to the then-diploma and certificate programmes provided by the University of Hong Kong. It was not clear how influential it would be to the University of Hong Kong's programmes. However, later it did become the major reference for the ISWT Certificate of Social Work programme. In Younghusband's recollection, it was a generic programme, of which Dr. Spergel approved. As stated in the first Calendar of ISWT,

*It aims to provide a basic, generic, and practical training in social work which lays a good foundation for a wide range of posts in the social services for example, income maintenance programmes, youth work, community work, day care, residential work, recreation and rehabilitation (Institute for Social Work Training, 1973, p. 1).*

Younghusband proposed that the two-year programme should have three components:

1. Background subjects – the study of man, the study of society, and social welfare provision;
2. Method subjects; and
3. Practice (Younghusband, 1960, p. 35).

These three components were reflected in the courses offered by ISWT in its first year of operation: Social Work Practice, Human Growth and Behaviour, Hong Kong Society, Social Policy and Services in Hong Kong, Social Services Concentration (electives), Field Work, Field Work Seminar, Integrative Seminar and Laboratory, and Tutorial (Institute for Social Work Training, 1973).

According to Mr. Foo, the “practical” mentality of Younghusband’s model was influential in the Certificate Programme.

*Our Institute put a heavy emphasis on the practical side, so in our two-year programme, fieldwork hours were up to one thousand. Later in the USA and Britain, even the recommendation of the U.S. Council of Social Work Education was only 700-some hours. However, it was gradually changed and now the hours have been cut down. This reflects our strong emphasis on students... Other than fieldwork hours, we had many practical elements; that meant many demonstrations. I am not telling how we wanted to drill a person. It was still a kind of education, a kind of training, but you could tell it was practical.*

Intriguingly, when ISTW was merged with Hong Kong Polytechnic in 1977, the long placement hours led to a debate about whether the Certificate Programme should be reclassified as a higher diploma programme.

## **II. Joining Hong Kong Polytechnic: The Birth of a School of Social Work**

Establishing ISWT as a unit of SWD was a temporary measure to address the urgent human-resource shortage. But even on its first day of operation, the question of ISWT’s future was already being raised. As MacQuarrie said,

*I realized particularly this was not a permanent solution to have the social welfare department operating a programme of this kind. Not that they didn’t do everything we needed, but it wasn’t just a good idea for a professional programme to operate under government auspices in this way, so we had to decide just which way to go.*

Indeed, despite the fact that, Lady Trench Centre might have had the best social work library at that time, both Mr. MacQuarrie and Mr. Foo felt strongly that keeping the status quo was not the best option for the students of ISWT.

*We would have missed the possibility of being serviced by other departments in language and in sociology and so on. We would have missed the students being able to participate in student activities in a big educational institution. We would have missed the idea of the students learning by association with people in other disciplines...If we had stayed where we were, we wouldn't have access to people to teach economics or sociology or psychology. We would have had to do them ourselves, which involved staffing problems. (MacQuarrie)*

As civil servants, the staff were also restricted in expressing their opinions in class. Mr. MacQuarrie remembered one incident, when as Director of HKCSS, he was called on the carpet by then-Governor David Trench after the HKCSS invited Saul Alinsky, who has been known as the key proponent of a radical social organizing approach, to give a presentation. Thus the academic freedom of ISWT was also a concern.

To decide ISWT's future, Youngusband was again consulted, and a few options were proposed:

1. joining one of the universities
2. joining Baptist College
3. becoming an independent institute
4. staying in SWD but operating as institute of education under the Education Department
5. joining Hong Kong Polytechnic (MacQuarrie, 2008, p. 221).

Eventually, it was decided that ISWT should join Hong Kong Polytechnic (HKP) which, at that time, was planning to start an institute for medical and health studies. Dr. Keith Legg, the then-Director of HKP, was enthusiastic to have ISWT join – he saw it as a good mix with the other programmes. However, as Mr. MacQuarrie remembered, it was a tricky decision because of the possible impact on the employment status of his staff, who were still civil servants. A committee chaired by Anson Chan was set up to oversee this transition, and according to Mr. MacQuarrie felt, it was handled in a fair and gentle way.

In October 1977, the 200 students of ISWT started their new academic year at Hong Kong Polytechnic. Most but not all of the instructors moved to the new School of Social Work. As Mr. Foo remembered, in the first year at HKP, the School had 18 faculty members, some of whom had been hired through open recruitment. Two programmes were offered in this new School: a diploma in social work and a certificate of child care.

### **The Higher Diploma Controversy**

However, converting the Certificate programme into a Diploma programme was not without controversy and regret. In terms of coursework and hours of learning, the Certificate programme was very close to the requirements of a higher diploma. Actually, according to Mr. Foo, during the transition period, a team had drafted a proposal:

*We, a couple senior staff, did a lot of work. We re-wrote the syllabus. It was passed in our division board. That means after going through the internal assessment, we also felt*



*that the syllabus to be worth a higher diploma. But later we dropped this idea and did not talk about it again.*

When Mr. MacQuarrie thought back, the financial implications of a higher diploma course deterred the government from supporting this change.

*Well, by this time, the government was kind of cracking down on expenses and so on. And they thought that they were going to have to pay these people [social work graduates from the diploma programme] more...and they blocked it through the UPGC, the University and Polytechnics Grants Committee.*

Certainly to the government, resources were always the priority. Upgrading the Certificate programme to a Higher Diploma might also have upset the standard entry-level qualification and salary scale of graduates from social work diploma programmes, which had just been adopted in 1970. Meanwhile, Dr. Tsang felt that the two-year diploma programme also served a particular function to meet the social needs of the period:

*[Because of] the welfare development in Hong Kong, we needed to train some specialized people to a certain extent. It needed to be quick, not too long, so two years was very realistic, very practical. We could, in a short period of time, provide practical social workers for developing welfare in Hong Kong. This was the first reason. Regarding the second reason, it was quite clear that some people were already working in the social welfare field. If you asked them to return to school, they were for sure unable to do it, because of academic or financial factors. So, a college like this, which provided such a programme, could help this group of people.*

Unfortunately, in 1982, the HKGov published the *No. 8 Report of the Hong Kong Standing Commission on Civil Services Salaries and Conditions of Services*. Based on the argument that the social work programme at HKP was at the diploma level, the salary entry point for graduates from this programme was lowered from 17 to 14 (roughly with a net difference of HK\$700 in month salary), despite the fact that the learning hours nearly equaled those of a higher diploma.

### **Programme Structure**

In terms of course structure, the Diploma in Social Work programme was still very much influenced by Youngusband's model. As a member of the 79-81 cohort, I took courses very similar to those listed on the First Calendar of ISWT. The "practical" mentality still dominated the programme design which, as Mr. Foo felt, won a wide recognition in the field:

*Because even after we joined Polytechnic, we still wanted our diploma to be more practical. Therefore, in many years, in our surveys regarding our students' practicality, very surprisingly, many agencies really welcomed students from Polytechnic. We did a few studies on this. There were two reasons: on one hand, they could pay them less, but most of them liked the practicality. Our training was actually quite strong.*

Other than the emphasis on practice, there were two other characteristics of the HKP Diploma in Social Work programme. The first one, as Mr. Foo emphasized, was the personal tutorial group component.

*Right from the very beginning, when we were at ISWT, we set up a tutorial system. At first, even the two Universities did not have it. When we were providing the diploma [programme], some people teased us for “handholding.” It seemed like we didn’t trust our students, so we needed teachers to follow them. But as someone who had participated in designing ISWT, we felt that...our students’ diversity was greater than that of the university.*

In Mr. Foo’s opinion, to help a very diverse group of student to learn, a more personalized approach, i.e., tutorial, was needed. To know how diverse the student body was, here is some information from Mr. MacQuarrie on the first three cohorts of ISWT students:

- Age range: 19-43
- Average age: 23.7
- Gender: slightly more than 50% male
- Secondary school graduates: 63%
- Some post-secondary or in-service courses: 37%
- Working experience: 80%
- Experience in human-services fields: 60%

The idea of the personal tutorial was to provide a more student-centred learning process. The way this tutorial worked was that each faculty member was assigned eight students. There was no formal syllabus. Instead, it was up to the instructor to establish a rapport with these students and then, through this working relationship, provide guidance to help each student reflect on his/her own learning. As the major proponent, Mr. Foo articulated the philosophy behind this system:

*Of course, some of the teachers were not so used to it. This is because basically it required them to set up a relationship. You trust me and I trust you. No matter how I perceive you, I am for your best interest. In other words, I will not tell you that because I know you well I grade you higher. No matter your strengths or weaknesses, it was my responsibility to be like a mirror to reflect back to you. I felt it was up to the individual whether he/she was actually studying for knowledge. The teacher, as a facilitator, or in tutorial, the tutor as a mirror, reflects back to you. If you trust [our reflection], that’s good. If not ... I told the tutees, a year later after you leave, if you run into me on the street and call out my name, I will love to chat with you. If you do not greet me, I will not feel offended. This is your personality, your personal preference. I am like a mirror reflecting back to you.*

As a student who experienced this tutorial system, I enjoyed the group meetings, which were mostly held in the staff canteen.

The other characteristic of the Diploma programme, which, to a large extent, has become the unique institutional feature of APSS, was the in-house social science courses. One reason why ISWT was moved out of SWD was because it lacked the academic resources to enrich students' non-social work training components. However, integrating with HKP only partially solved this problem. As a technology-focused institution, HKP did not have much teaching depth in the social science disciplines. Therefore, the School of Social Work hired its own social scientists: first a sociologist and a psychologist, and later an anthropologist and a philosopher. Dr. Lee Ming Kwan was one of the first sociologists who were hired to provide social science training, not only to social work students but also to students of other department. However, as MK recalls, under the original design based on Younghusband's recommendations, the social science elements of the Diploma in Social Work programmes were very limited:

*Actually the diploma programme only gave students a limited exposure to and training in social science. What we actually talked about was one or half a course. For example, in social science, there was a course named Hong Kong Society. In psychology, there was a course called Human Growth and Development. Perhaps we could add one more course, Community Field Studies, which introduced some sociological and anthropological methods, such as the survey method... So at the level of diploma ... the proportion of social science subjects was very limited.*

## **Expansion**

After joining HKP, the School of Social Work was also expanded in order to meet the increasing social demand for trained social work personnel. The delivery of childcare training was the first effort of the School. Later, to meet the needs of those untrained social service workers who had been working in the field for a few years, a Part-time Day Release (PTDR) Mode on the Diploma in Social Work was developed. Ms. Mak remembers it was not a simple task:

*How could we convert a full-time programme into a part-time one, in a way that the part-time students could properly use the released time to complete the programme and receive a diploma award, recognized to be of equivalent standard of full-time one? This was one of the big challenges facing the programme team.*

Other challenges were, how to meet the needs of a group of students who already had extensive frontline experience; and thirdly, how to ensure that the agencies would invest resources by sponsoring their staff members to enroll in this programme. While diligently restructuring the curriculum, Ms. Mak and her colleagues also visited all the sponsoring agencies several times throughout the training period. The purposes were to ensure that the sponsoring agencies would release staff member to study as well as to prepare them on how to optimize the professionally trained staff members to improve on their services to their clients upon graduation. The PTDR became a great success, and it later led to the part-time evening programme, the third alternative tailored for people who were not qualified for PTDR but were interested in pursuing a social work career.

All the six interviewees agreed that the major turning point of the School of Social Work was the inauguration of the Bachelor of Social Work programme in 1983. As MK said,

*From first a Diploma programme, [we] progressed to running a Bachelor [programme]. This was indeed an obvious change.*

As Mr. Foo explained, there were two major factors that led to the Bachelor of Social Work programme (BSW):

*So the whole HKP was talking about following polytechnics in England. Back then in England, many polytechnics had been converted to universities or polytechnic universities. Of course, they still had two kinds of university; some were the traditional ones... So, HKP was influenced by this. Then our department was asked to consider it. Meanwhile, we felt that other than diploma [graduates], at that moment, Hong Kong needed ASWO workers. The supplies from the two universities were insufficient. You know, at that time, Baptist College and Shue Yan College were not recognized as universities. Their graduates were equivalent to a HKP graduate and could not be ASWO. So the demand was great.*

As a British colony, developments in the United Kingdom were influential. However, the shortage of qualified degree holders for Assistant Social Work Officer (ASWO) positions was even more alarming. The publication of “*Social Welfare into the 1980’s*” implied a rising demand for professionally trained personnel. The *Report on the Social Welfare Manpower Survey*, published by the SWD and HKCSS Joint Working Group in 1979, indicated a critical shortfall of social work graduates. Therefore, when HKP was planning to start a bachelor’s degree programme in early 1980, as Ms. Mak recalled, Mr. MacQuarrie was very eager that social work would be one of the first five degrees to be produced by the then Hong Kong Polytechnic.

To actualize Mr. MacQuarrie’s vision was not easy. The School invited Ms. Janie Thomas from the London School of Economics and Political Science to decide and develop the programme. Unfortunately due to her father’s passing away, Ms. Thomas had to return to England and, Ms. Mak, then pregnant and working on her master’s thesis in education, was once again placed in charge to complete the task. The programme team found that the design of the programme was not without debate: one of them being its relationship to the diploma programme of the department. Ms. Mak recalled,

*The staff of the department had a debate: Mr. MacQuarrie always said the Diploma was close to a full professional training course but some of the staff members thought the diploma training did not provide the educational experience and standard of a degree award. Then I told him that CNAAC was coming soon. ... .. If we claim the diploma was sufficient, or even close to a full professional degree level training, why do we need to design a degree programme for accreditation then?*

Finally, the programme committee submitted a 2-year BSW programme which stated that the minimum entrance requirement of the said programme was at the diploma in social work (2

years' diploma training) plus 2 years' minimum post diploma graduate working experience in a recognized social work post; hence constituting a 2+2+2 design bachelor's degree programme in social work. The proposal was adopted and successfully validated by the UK's Council of National Academic Award (CNAA).

In the beginning, some social service agencies were skeptical about this new programme.

*In fact, in the beginning, when we placed our students [for placement], some agencies explicitly said that they didn't think our students could do it. They didn't feel that our students could do the work. They did not have faith in the new programme. Then it was sad. Sometimes we were downhearted...*

The tireless efforts of the lecturers and fieldwork instructors as well as the performance of the students finally proved that this was a successful programme. Later, in 1989, the 2+2+2 programme became a programme with honours. Another crucial concern about offering a bachelor's degree programme was how to help students better integrate theory with practice. Integration became a critical issue under Ms. Mak's directorship.

### **III. From School of Social Work to Department of Applied Social Studies: Stories of Expansion and Integration**

The first cohort of the 2+2+2 bachelor programme graduated in 1985. The next year, the School was renamed the Department of Applied Social Studies. In 1994, the Hong Kong Polytechnic officially obtained university status and was renamed the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The new institutional status also led to some structural changes. In 1998, the Diploma in Social Work programme was replaced by a Higher Diploma programme, as a response to the welfare reform and in line with wider developments in the University (Department of Applied Social Sciences, 2003, p. 1).

During the 1990s, the Department was also experiencing rapid expansion. As documented in its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary brochure, the Department offered multi-level programmes, from non-degree to PhD level. The expansion was largely a response to society's changing demands. For instance, in 1988, *Report No. 1 of the Social Welfare Manpower Planning System* projected a critical shortfall in social work personnel due to outward emigration and the lifting of the zero growth policy. The government funded two "blister programmes," the first from 1989/90 - 1991/92 and the second from 1995/96 – 1997/98 (six intakes in total). These programmes led to further expansion of the Department in the early 2000s. The qualifications of the full-time staff were also upgraded through hiring new members and upgrading existing faculty members. As Mr. Foo recalled, Dr. Tsang Nai Ming was the first staff member sponsored by the Department to complete a doctoral degree at Middlesex University.

## **Experimenting with an Alternative Approach for Integration**

While experiencing this rapid expansion, the Department initiated a new experiment to help student better integrate theory (particularly in social science) and social work practice. Indeed, the concern for theory-practice integration was key to the early history of ISWT and later the School of Social Work. According to Mr. Foo, the tutorial system was intended more or less to serve this purpose.

In the two-year bachelor's degree programme, which sought to upgrade the social science background of the diploma graduates, there were many social science components: sociology, psychology, philosophy, economics, and law. As Dr. Tsang said, these courses compensated for the social science training that the diploma graduates lacked. These components are the foundation of social work practice, as Ms. Mak explained:

*Social work is related to a number of social science disciplines; various philosophical orientations underpin these social theories, impacting on social work practice, thus leading to different approaches interpreting social phenomena that social workers encounter. We believed that if we make an attempt to understand the nature of social work, we would need to return to the philosophical orientations, the assumptions and values of these espoused theories used by social workers.*

The idea of upgrading “technicians” to “professionals” was also shared by Dr. Lee:

*Later, in the two-year Bachelor programme, we deliberately compensated for its shortcomings. It was hoped that through our training of practitioners, our social work students could have a better understanding of social science theories, analytical perspectives, and the changing social environment. We especially hoped that they could have the abilities of independent analysis and assessment, so we needed to provide them with a social science tool for thinking and analysis.*

Finding a better way to help students, particularly those at the degree level, was a challenging process. In the beginning of the 2+2+2 programme, a Colloquium on Social Problems and Social Issues was adopted to help students to think in an integrative way. However, to a large extent, the integration process, from Dr. Lee's perspective, was still largely a personal process:

*Our students... those who enrolled in the degree programmes, actually what were they smart at? Not in theory. Instead, they were smart at having many years of practical experience when they enrolled in the programme. They had tasted the harshness out there, they knew the reality of society. Perhaps because of this, they would know better what to choose when they were learning theories in their degree programme. Therefore, in terms of integration, it was not what the department gave them. Instead, it was because they were smart, they had solid foundation; had experienced many errors; knew what social work was all about. So, they also knew which theories taught in class might be relevant to their work.*

In early 1990s, APSS experimented with a new perspective, adopting the hermeneutic approach to help student better integrate theories and practice. According to Dr. Tsang, this experimental period could also be seen as the “golden era,” during which a core group of interdisciplinary faculty members worked together to test the hermeneutic approach.

*In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, for about 10 years, there was an understanding between some of our social work colleagues and a group of social science colleagues... at least among a core group of colleagues... You would notice that this department especially put more weight on a certain social theory, something like hermeneutics.*

One of the reasons why this approach was adopted was due to the new emphasis on reflective practice. As Dr. Tsang remembers,

*In that particular era, there was growing attention on reflective practice in social work. Therefore, we introduced it. You needed to reflect. It should not just be about practice.*

Ms. Mak was well known as a strong proponent of this new reflective model. As she recalled, the issue had always lingered in her mind since the early day of her social work journey.

Institutionally, APSS was also in a good position to experiment with this new model, which required strong collaboration between the social work instructors and the instructors of other social science disciplines. In the HKPU setting, APSS has also traditionally been a department housing a large number of social scientists. This system may not be good for individual non-social work faculty members who need a critical mass of colleagues with similar disciplinary backgrounds, as Dr. Lee, the sociology team leader, reflects. However, this system made it easier for like-minded instructors across disciplines to work together in a complementary way.

*We were under one roof, so we could debate and talk. Just like this, we could debate and talk, talk about the content. There was an advantage because we were close, we had a relationship. It was also because our supervisor always wanted [the programme] to be “applied.” Although I don’t like to use that word, apply, we were still under this direction; it also gave us the opportunity to talk about how these could link together, how they could be complementing one another, not supplementing, but complementing, because it was impossible to do social work without social science, and early childhood without social science.*

Helping students to apply social theories was a challenge for the social science instructors, many of whom had no social-work training. Meanwhile, the co-housed model also brought its own tension. As Dr. Tsang said,

*From the perspective of social scientist, they felt that the social work training was weak in social science. This was not debatable. Meanwhile, the social work colleagues would contend: you [social scientists] can talk in a fascinating way but you’ve never been to the field and met a real client. This tension... I think, it was hard ... hard to totally avoid.*

For a very long time, this tension was properly contained. To a certain extent, the APSS model, as both Drs. Lee and Tsang felt, allowed prolonged engagement, which fostered the social science instructors' understanding of their role and the needs of their social work students.

*Bringing in social science teachers to focus on helping social work students has always been a tradition of the department. Still today, we have a good group of [social science] colleagues. Also, this group of colleagues, they have their own assets ... which I felt, other institutions don't have... because they have been teaching social work students for over ten years. So, even though they don't practice social work directly, actually learning from their students, they have heard many typical social work scenarios. They've become very familiar. Even if they don't do it themselves, they are able to help students to focus their attention at appropriate points so they can gain insight in the reflection.*

Yet, the further expansion of the Department did pose a threat to this long-term complementary practice. Dr. Lee expresses his concern:

*In the early 1980s, from the 1980s and even to the 1990s, the teachers of these two disciplines delightfully worked together. What happened, later, I guess, the department has become bigger and bigger. The communication among colleagues has decreased.*

Meanwhile, as Dr. Tsang reflected the hermeneutic experiment not only required a strong commitment from individual members; it was also very time consuming. By the end of the 1990s, the Hong Kong academic context had become very competitive. A new "publish or perish" rule was gradually imposed on faculty members, requiring them to maintain a high scholarly output.

*After the rules of the game were changed ... it directly and indirectly [affected] the perspective of individual teachers on the place of teaching and research in their academic profile.*

The institutional and intellectual space for this kind of innovative teaching gradually narrowed in the late 2000s. However, Dr. Tsang is still very confident that even under this pressure, people in the field still can see the commitment of members of APSS in teaching their students.

Another factor that might have contributed to the success of the integration experiment, as both Drs. Lee and Tsang suggested, was the students. Even since the days of the Certificate of Social Work programme, APSS has always had a very diverse group of students, many of whom were mature students with practice experience. This was particularly true for students of the 2+2+2 BSW programme. As Dr. Lee mentioned earlier, with their experience in the field, when these students were further exposed to social science theories in the BSW programme, they naturally found their own ways to digest and integrate theory and practice.

Dr. Tsang described these students as a key factor in the success of the experiment: the students had to have a certain level of experience and be willing to apply what they were learning in social science subjects to their own reflection on previous practice. The same approach, as Dr. Tsang observed, did not work as well with students of the new 3-year programme who entered the programme directly from A-Levels and lacked practical experience:



*They needed a certain amount of experience. Actually, in the 1990s ... we started accepting A-Level [students]. Then you could notice clearly that the A-Level group, [when] they were asked to do similar type of assignment, they scratched their head.*

This and many other new challenges would be part of the story of the Department of Applied Social Sciences, a new name that the Department received in September 2000.

## **A Summary**

The history of APSS is unique: evolving from a temporary institution under SWD to a full-fledged (or even mega-) academic department of a university; from a single certificate programme to train “middle level” social workers to multiple programmes for a full range of social work personnel. As stated in the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure, “The Department is no stranger to change, with all the challenges and opportunities that it brings.” (Department of Applied Social Sciences, 2003) To overcome these challenges and to take advantages of the opportunities, the Department has gone through many validations and revalidations during the last few decades which, as Dr. Lee said, have made the programmes of APSS more solid:

*For so many years, it has always been... evolving, been developing. I think the most important stages of evolution have been the ... revalidations, and even the validation of new programmes. During that period of time, these exercises were very important, because they help you reorganize the content of the curriculum, to reexamine their philosophy...*

## **EPILOGUE: THE UNFINISHED STORY OF APSS**

To fully capture the history of APSS is beyond what we can do here. But by synthesizing the stories of these six forebears this report hopes to capture, albeit partially, the collective memory of these challenges and opportunities. Five of these six forebears are no stranger to many graduates from ISWT, the School of Social Work and the Department of Applied Social Sciences. We cannot emphasize enough that their contributions to the Department have not been fully explored in our interviews or fully reflected in this report. We also understand that in addition to these six people, every individual who has taught and studied at this institute has his or her own story to tell.

A paradox of writing history is that we rarely remember the past until the past is gone. We are particularly grateful that we had the opportunity to interview Mr. MacQuarrie and Mr. Foo before they left us for good. We hope that a larger project will soon be in place to capture more stories of APSS before it is too late.

Another paradox is when the present can be classified as the past. We have arbitrarily ended our story somewhere around the year 2000, partly because the department’s change of name happened then. It is also partly because we want to keep a historical distance from the present so that people can tell their story in a less cautious manner.

As mentioned, minimal interpretative intervention was made while compiling this report. We hope to have presented a “factual” or “descriptive” account of what these six forebears told us. Learning from their stories, we can make at least five observations which may shed some light on the history not only of HKP APSS but also of Hong Kong social work education in general. In each observation, we pose some questions hoping that they can help us better understand our past. These observations are:

First, the establishment and development of the APSS has largely been an institutional response to the socio-economic ebbs and flows of Hong Kong society. In a nutshell, colonial Hong Kong underwent two major expansions of social welfare. In the first expansion, the colonial government decided to create ISWT to generate a group of social welfare technicians in a relatively short period of time. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the economic development of Hong Kong, and possibly the political tug-of-war between Britain and China, led to another round of expansion. During the second expansion, Hong Kong society had the resources to afford an expansion of higher education, and in addition to technicians, society was also demanding highly trained professionals. The APSS was successful in surfing the wave of the booming economy and the expansion of social welfare, particularly with HKP’s eagerness to be upgraded to university status. Therefore, the history of the APSS is also part of the history of human capital development in Hong Kong social welfare from the mid-1970’s onward. A small set of literature has tried to capture government policies and/or the roles of NGOs in Hong Kong’s social welfare development. Yet, little has been done to capture the human capital development and professionalization of social work in Hong Kong. Based on the history of APSS, we should examine the question of what the key social and political factors were that shaped social work education in Hong Kong, and how they shaped it. What roles did social work education play in meeting Hong Kong’s increasing social welfare needs?

Second, the establishment of ISWT within the Social Welfare Department was a handy arrangement which inevitably limited its development. Therefore, moving to Hong Kong Polytechnic was a careful decision based on many considerations, and HKP certainly provided more organizational space and support for growth. The upgrade of HKP to university status likewise benefited APSS, which became the department that produced HKP’s first cohort of bachelor’s degree holders. However, the upgrade also led to a set of new rules and a new emphasis on scholarly productivity, which inevitably imposed limitations on the requirements for professional training. Meanwhile, the technological focus of HKP led to an under-development of its social sciences and humanities programmes. As a result, perhaps unexpectedly, the School of Social Work benefited from this institutional uniqueness and was turned into one of the largest social work training institution in the world, housing not only social work educators but also scholars from many social science disciplines. This co-housed model has allowed APSS to develop a relatively structured programme to equip social work students with basic social science training. During the golden period, it also provided the resources for the department to experiment with different approaches such as the hermeneutic reflective model. However, being a mega-sized department poses many challenges to the administration, communication and cohesion of the faculty members. The experience of APSS also raises some questions. What are the differences, if any, between APSS and other social work programmes housed in a regular university in terms of programme structure, resource and impact on students’ learning? What are

the advantages and disadvantages of the APSS's co-housed model in helping social work students integrate social work practice with social science theories?

Third, since Hong Kong was then a British Colony, perhaps it is not surprising that Youngusband was so influential in the early day of APSS's development. However, if we take a closer look, the North American influence on APSS cannot be underestimated. The name, School of Social Work, is itself a very North American convention. Meanwhile, most of the six forebears (and many of their colleagues) were trained at least partly in North America. They brought this background to the programme design and their teaching. In other words, the social work programmes and teaching materials of APSS were indeed an international hybrid. So, how did different components from different countries mix and match in the programme development of APSS throughout the years? How were these international components manifested in the curricula and teaching?

Fourth, the internationalized components of APSS lead to another question, which is how these different foreign components have been imported into and contextualized in Hong Kong. Or using a recent trendy concept, how have they been indigenized into the curriculum? In our conversations with these forebears, we got mixed messages: some felt that efforts towards indigenization had been made, while some doubted. However, as most of them recalled, APSS made efforts in indigenizing social work within the Hong Kong Chinese context. However, a collective and systematic exploration of the idea of indigenization has yet to be actualized in the wider Hong Kong social work community. Some acknowledged that the idea was discussed, but that it was mostly lip service. This is particularly peculiar, since the Hong Kong social work education community was actively providing support to social work education development in China, and this support always came with suggestions of how to indigenize social work in China. So, we need a systematic exploration of how indigenization of social work was discussed and/or done in Hong Kong. This will be an important dimension in recording and understanding the history of APSS and of social work education in Hong Kong.

Fifth and finally, the Department of Applied Social Sciences has now grown into perhaps one of the largest social work department in the world. It offers more than 20 programmes (or modules) and has 1,500 students and over 230 staff. This expansion has been rapid and massive. While many new promising practices have been developed, some old traditions have gradually been lost. The nature of the student body requires a new approach so that the faculty can continue to equip students to be competent and reflective social workers. Learning from the past may also better position and prepare the Department to face future challenges. Therefore, it is important to examine what, structurally and pedagogically, has been done to adjust to the continuous changes. What were the promising practices that should have been better articulated? What inadequacies need to be dealt with? To answer these questions, as Dr. Tsang suggested, we also need to examine how some environmental factors, such as the new publish-or-perish requirement, have impacted the programmes, teaching practice and pedagogical philosophy of the Department?

In sum, answers to these questions are imperative to fully understand the history of APSS and, indirectly, the development of social work education in Hong Kong. We hope this report can

serve the purpose of eliciting more studies and efforts to examine and preserve this history of this unique institute and of social work education in Hong Kong.

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### A Brief Chronological History of APSS

Year	Socio-economic-political Context	Social Work Events	APSS Related Events
1958		Establishment of the Social Welfare Department	
1959			SWD inaugurated the first in-service training course on the basic principle of social work
1960		<p>Younghusband Report, proposing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SWD in-service training</li> <li>2. A new 2-yr certificate course which included more courses for the social study students</li> <li>3. Lengthen the diploma course (HKU) to two years</li> <li>4. Setting up of the Advisory Committee on Social Work training</li> <li>5. Government recognition of social work qualification</li> </ol>	
1961		Social Work Training Fund was set up	
1962		<p>Established Advisory Committee on Social Work Training</p> <p>3 consultants arrived:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prof. Alan F. Klien (U Pittsburg) – taught group work at HKU and Chung Chi College</li> <li>2. Mrs. Josephine D. Chaisson (practitioner from Toronto) – curriculum planning</li> <li>3. Miss Martha E. Moscrop (UN) – in-service training</li> </ol>	SWD set up a Training Unit
1965		<p>A. White Paper on Aims and Policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Illustrated and explained the limited role and philosophy of HK Government in social</li> </ol>	

		<p>welfare</p> <p>2. Listed the roles and functions of HKG and voluntary organizations in social welfare</p> <p>HKG invited Dr. Gertrude Williams from UK to study the feasibility of social welfare service in HK.</p> <p>First Survey of the Need for Trained Social Workers in HK by Miss. Lee Hei Man – defined “trained social worker” as someone with social work training</p> <p>SWD and HKCSS joint committee on a five-year plan and goals</p>	
1966	Kowloon Disturbance	<p>Dr. Williams’ report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contradicted to the HKGov assumption of strong familial support and systems among Chinese</li> <li>2. Recommended the development of social insurance system</li> </ol> <p>A cross-departmental working group set up to explore social insurance system</p>	Lady Trench Centre established
1967	<p>Kowloon Disturbance</p> <p>1966: Report of Commission of Inquiry – impetus for the rapid growth of children and youth recreational, social development activities</p> <p>1967 Riots</p>	<p>Cross-departmental working group report: Recommended a contributory social insurance system but was rejected by the Chief Secretary</p>	
1968	Establishment of City District Officer Scheme		
1969		<p>HKGov invited a consultant from UK to study the expansion of social assistance</p>	
1970		<p>SWD decided to adopt the standard entry level</p>	<p>Younghusband re-visited HK to evaluate SW in-service</p>

		qualification and salary scale for different social work positions	training, recommending: 1. a 2-yr diploma programme 2. consolidating skill training Dr. Irving A. Spergel ran a 12-month youth work course and a 13-month part-time field teachers course and suggested a 2-year full-time social work training programme
1971	6-year free education Social actions in 1971 and 1972 1. Blind people factory-closing incident 2. Forced relocation of Yaumatei Boat-residents 3. Da Wan Shan residents against dust incident 4. Kowloon Jai squatter residents relocation incident 5. Tung Tau Estate toilet renovation incident	Cash-based Social Assistance programme inaugurated upon the recommendation of the UK consultant's report	
1972	Yan Yee Tsuen bridge issue – a community worker was arrested	HKGov hired McKenzie Consulting Firm to study its administrative system – Programme Plan was adopted SWD decided to hire undergraduate social work students as ASWO	
1973	Ten Year Plan on Public Housing Building	A. Second Social Welfare White Paper – laying out the first Five-Year Plan 1. Raised the concept of Partnership with VAs. 2. Set up Old-age and disability allowance 3. Established Community and	Establishment of the Institute for Social Work Training under the Social Welfare Department and housed in Lady Trench Centre



		<p>Youth Officer positions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Community facilities – CH, ECC, CC</li> <li>5. Lower ratio for C and Y services</li> <li>6. Preventive family work</li> <li>7. Establishment of ISWT</li> </ol> <p>Study on VAs financial condition – proofing dependence on government and Community Chest funding</p>	
1974		SWD had its first professional director, Thomas Lee	
1975	Economic Depression	Establishment of the Association of SWD ASWOs – strike and protest to raise salary	
1976	MacLehose announced the Community Building plan	Adoption of Child Care Centres Ordinance and Regulations	
1977		Green Papers on Services for the Elderly, Services for the Disabilities, Personal Social Work for Children and Youth, and Social Assistance	School of Social Work in HKP established to replace ISWT
1978	<p>A. 9-year compulsory education introduced.</p> <p>B. Influx of boat people from Vietnam</p>	<p>Richard Nann Report:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Division of labour among different training institutions</li> <li>2. Universities should develop graduate programmes</li> <li>3. Establishment of HK Social Work Education and Training Council</li> </ol> <p>First Report on the Social Work Manpower Survey by HKCSS/SWD Working Group – critical shortage of social workers</p>	
1979		<p>A. Third Social Welfare White Paper</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Focusing on services for elderly, children and youth and social assistance</li> <li>2. Community care for elderly</li> </ol>	Part-time Day Release programme

		<p>3. School social work                  4. Family life education                  5. Revising the social assistance system</p> <p>Second joint manpower survey – critical shortfall in both levels of social work graduates</p> <p>Welfare Class Review – separating social work and social security streams</p>	
1980		<p>Establishment of HK Social Workers' General Union.                  ASWO entry point raised from 34 to 37 – leveled with entry points of other government positions which required university graduate qualification.</p> <p>Third Manpower survey                  HKSWA proposed to set up a register of social workers</p>	<p>Offered a 2-yr BSW programme accredited by the British CNCC</p>
1982		<p>A. Report No. 8 of the HK Standing Commission on Civil Services Salaries and Conditions of Services – Lower the entry point in the Master Scale of diploma holders</p> <p>Fourth Manpower survey</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruitment of non-social work trained university graduate as ASWO with a part time release formal training</li> <li>2. Abolition of Cadet Scheme (Bridging courses for Shu Yan and Baptist College graduates)</li> </ol> <p>Wastage Study on Trained Social Workers – showed that in “salary package” and “career prospects,” social work fared far worse than the business sector and other civil service jobs</p>	
1983			<p>Offered a 2-yr BSW</p>

			programme accredited by the British CNCC Part-time Evening Diploma in Social Work programme
1984	Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong Green Paper on Representative Political System		
1985	First indirect election of Legislative Council	Fifth Joint Manpower Survey Report – Zero-growth policy	
1986			Renamed as the Department of Applied Social Studies
1987		HKGov presented a critical shortfall in social work personnel in Social Welfare Advisory Committee	Mr. MacQuarrie retired. Mr. Foo became the Head of APSS
1988		Report No. 1 of the Social Welfare Manpower Planning System projected critical shortfall due to outward emigration and the lifting of the zero-growth policy	
1989		Joint Working Group on Social Work Personnel Registration by HKSWA, HKCESS, HKSWGU issued its report	First Blister Programme: Expansion of BSW programmes BSW programme became an honours programme
1990		Social Work Registration inaugurated	Mr. Foo retired and Ms. Mak became the Head of APSS.
1991		White Paper – Stressing developing supportive and developmental services; was criticized as regressive and conservative	
			Hong Kong Polytechnic was officially upgraded to Hong

			Kong Polytechnic University
1995			Second Blister Programme
1997	Hong Kong returned to China		
1998			Diploma in Social Work programme was replaced by Higher Diploma in Social Work programme
2000			Renamed the Department of Applied Social Sciences