

## **LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

### **Evaluation Report on the Ending Exclusion Project for Single Parents on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance**

#### **PURPOSE**

To brief members on the findings of the evaluation report of the Ending Exclusion Project (EEP) for single parents on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA).

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. To assist CSSA single parent families whose youngest child is under 15 to become more self-reliant and reduce their risk of social exclusion, the EEP has been implemented since March 2002. Some 2 000 CSSA single parent recipients were invited to join the Project at the start. The Project comprised a voluntary employment assistance programme, improved work initiatives, help with child care and enhanced supportive services.

3. The voluntary employment assistance programme is a proactive service drawing experience from our Active Employment Assistance programme for able-bodied unemployed to help single parents to find jobs. Project participants are assisted to access up-to-date market information and employment training opportunities and develop personalized action plans to find work. Where appropriate, they are also referred to other employment assistance projects run by NGOs, especially those targeting single parents. Those attending training/retraining programmes, participating in paid employment or activities under the employment assistance projects or actively seeking work, may be assisted with coupons for free After School Care Programme (ASCP) places for

their children in over 130 centres over the territory running the Programme. Those single parents who had problems and stress arising from single parenthood were referred to suitable welfare services to help them restore resilience and build up a social network of support and mutual help. To provide a greater incentive to work, the maximum level of disregarded earnings for single parents with young children who are CSSA recipients has been revised from \$1,805 to \$2,500 per month under the CSSA Scheme since March 2002.

4. At the meeting on 14 April 2003, we reported to Members that after one-year's operation, the initial results of the Project suggested that the Project had achieved its objective in helping single parents build better lives for themselves and their children and reduce their risk of social exclusion. Members were also informed that to evaluate the effectiveness of the Project, a Longitudinal Study of the EEP had been commissioned by the Social Welfare Department to a joint research team from the City University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

## **EVALUATION REPORT**

### **Objective**

5. The aim of the Study is to gauge the psychological, attitudinal and behavioural changes of the single parents and their children over time and assess the effectiveness of the Project in terms of the following areas of outcome:

- Improved awareness of the need for 'social participation';
- Improvement in psychological well-being (e.g. self-esteem);
- Improved awareness of the need to establish self-reliance;
- Understanding the importance of employment; and
- Success in gaining employment.

### **Methodology**

6. The study adopted a longitudinal or repeated-measures designs with an experimental group and a control group through a set of questionnaires. Under this design, respondents in the experimental and the control groups were interviewed four or three times respectively in a one-year evaluation period with a four-month and six-month interval, starting from April 2002. One of the

advantages of this design is that the changes gauged are more reliable because the same group of people are involved in each measurement. More importantly, it is possible to compare participants with similar backgrounds who differ only from the point of view of participation in the programme. This design can thereby control for the natural changes among all the participants in the evaluation over time.

7. 1 722 EEP participants and 295 non-participants formed the experimental and the control group respectively in the first wave (W1) of data collection. The number of respondent dropped to 1 186 (experimental) and 216 (control) in W2, 967 (experimental) in W3 (no data was collected for the control group in this wave), and 790 (experimental) and 155 (control) in W4. Attrition was mainly caused by the participants' unwillingness to continue to respond.

8. Interviewers were staff of SWD or welfare agencies who were responsible for following up the cases of the respondents and therefore met the respondents regularly.

### **Key findings**

9. Results from the analyses were used to evaluate to what extent the five objectives of EEP mentioned above have been achieved. It was concluded that EEP was effective in four out of the five key outcome measures identified by the SWD. EEP participants exhibited more job-seeking behaviour and subsequently secured more part-time employment. They also became less isolated and improved in work involvement. There was only one key outcome measure, psychological well-being, in which no positive programme effect was identified. However, given that the EEP participants showed a reasonably positive psychological profile prior to their participation in the programme, it is not surprising that EEP was not able to further improve this profile.

10. Specifically, the achievements of EEP in terms of the five key outcome measures are discussed as follows:

- Awareness of the need for 'social participation'  
A positive programme effect in reducing social isolation was found, with a decrease in social isolation for the EEP group

(decrease in social isolation for the EEP and control group: 0.07 vs. 0.03<sup>1</sup>).

- Improvement in psychological well-being  
The EEP group did not outperform the control group in the core markers selected. It should be noted, however, that the psychological profile of the EEP participants was satisfactory before joining the programme.
- Awareness of the need to establish self-reliance  
A positive programme effect in work involvement was found, with higher work involvement of the EEP group (decrease in work involvement for the EEP and control group: 0.02 vs. 0.19).

However, a negative programme effect on the support from significant others (such as children, family members, relatives, friends and children's teachers) of the participant for job-seeking was found, with lower job-seeking support for the EEP group (a decrease of 0.02 for the EEP group vs. an increase of 0.17 for the control group).

- Understanding the importance of employment  
A positive programme effect in job-seeking behaviour was found, with more frequent job-seeking behaviour for the EEP group (increase in job-seeking behaviour for the EEP and the control group: 0.53 vs. 0.44).
- Success in gaining employment  
A positive programme effect in gaining a part-time job was found, with more success in gaining part-time employment for the EEP group (Increase in gaining part-time employment for the EEP and control group: 9.4% vs. 1.6%).

11. Apart from measuring the achievement of the EEP, the Study has also incorporated some survey items to gauge the perception of EEP participants.

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<sup>1</sup> To provide a clear presentation of the results, transformed scores are presented to illustrate the programme effects. To obtain the transformed scores for a participant, the means of the W1 scores of the group to which this participant belongs are subtracted from his/her corresponding W2, W3 and W4 scores. With this transformation, the mean for all scales for the two groups are set at zero in W1, and any significant change in the scores across the four waves suggests a programme effect. In other words, EEP is effective only if it has produced a positive change as compared to the control group between W2 to W4 in relation to W1. Unless stated otherwise, results of the Study presented in this paper are transformed scores for W4.

The following present some major findings:

- Overall speaking, respondents reacted favourably to EEP and its various components. For instance, over 70% of them supported EEP whereas fewer than 7% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with EEP. They also responded positively to various components of EEP.
- Respondents of the EEP group held less positive attitudes towards some aspects of the programme as time went by. This may be due to a higher familiarity with EEP and hence a higher sensitivity towards its limitations. As time elapsed, more respondents regarded:
  - EEP as troublesome (14.7% fewer respondents disagreed).
  - EEP as complicated and hard to understand (12.7% fewer respondents disagreed).
  - EEP as forcing them to learn new job-related skills (10.9% fewer respondents disagreed).

12. Other noticeable findings of the Study are obtained in the programme effect which is defined as the existence of differential changes between the EEP and control groups. In this regard, EEP was able to improve the following areas over time (i.e. the EEP group compared favourably to the control group over time):

- More part-time employment (9.4% increase of the EEP group vs. 1.6% increase for the control group).
- More job-seeking behaviour (an increase of 0.53 for the EEP group vs. an increase of 0.44 for the control group).
- Maintained work involvement (a decrease of 0.02 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.19 for the control group).
- Less social isolation (a decrease of 0.07 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.03 for the control group).
- More rational coping (an increase of 0.05 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.11 for the control group).
- More positive perception of parent-child relationship by children (an increase of 0.03 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.15 for the control group).

13. Notwithstanding the above positive changes, the EEP group showed

less favourable change over time in one area i.e. they received less job-seeking support (a decrease of 0.02 for the EEP group vs. an increase of 0.17 for the control group).

14. More detailed findings are at Appendix I.

## **ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS**

15. SWD has been monitoring the progress of the Project by keeping relevant administrative records since its implementation. Key findings and observations on the records covering the period between March 2002 and August 2003 are summarized below:

- (a) Of the 2 709 participants, 592 (21.9%) were single parent recipients who were not from the priority groups but had taken the initiative to approach our Employment Assistance (EA) Teams to express their readiness to take up employment and requested enrolment.
- (b) Of the 2 709 single parents whom we served, 705 (26.0%) were single fathers and 2 004 (74.0%) were single mothers.
- (c) More than half of the single parents who participated, (1 564 or 57.7%), were motivated to find employment, though the majority of them might still prefer part-time jobs. These results were consistent with the views gathered in the Longitudinal Study.
- (d) The rate of using ASCP service was on the low side. There had been only 326 ASCP full-fee waiving coupons issued to 74 single parent families (4.7% of the cumulative job-ready participants) to release them for working, training or employment seeking.
- (e) Out of the 385 (14.2%) participants who secured employment, 278 (72.2%) had a monthly income of \$1,430 or more, of which, 106 (27.5%) had earned \$4,400 per month enabling them to enjoy the maximum disregarded earnings of \$2,500 per month. There were 107 (27.8%) participants who had taken up part-time work and thereby secured an income even though the monthly earnings were just below \$1,430.

- (f) 56 participants (14.5% of those who had secured employment), became totally independent and left the CSSA net and 222 (57.7% of those who had secured employment) reduced their dependence on CSSA after taking up a job although they remain in the 'single parent family' category and did not shift to the 'low earnings' category.
- (g) Of the 1 145 (42.3%) participants who considered that they were not yet ready for employment, 1 083 (94.6%) were referred for supportive services. Of these 1 083 single parents, 308 (28.4%) of them reported restored resilience later on and consequently felt ready to take up employment. Of these, 64 (5.9%) successfully found a job eventually.
- (h) A simple cost benefit analysis showed that the EEP is cost effective in monetary terms. By netting off the savings in CSSA expenditure due to EEP participants having secured employment with the additional administrative costs, it is estimated that about \$1.4 million of Government expenditure could be saved in an 18-month evaluation period (or \$0.9 million per annum).

16. A summary of relevant statistics from the administration records of CSSA single parents joining EEP is at Appendix II.

### **The trends and profiles of CSSA single-parent families**

17. Over the past several years, the number of CSSA single-parent cases has been increasing significantly. As at August 2003, the number of CSSA single parent family cases stood at 36 482 (13% of the total of CSSA caseload). This category of cases has been increasing constantly from 5 350 in July 1993 (6% of the CSSA caseload) to 25 299 in July 2000 (11% of the CSSA caseload) and 31 191 in July 2002 (12% of the CSSA caseload). The 36 482 cases in August 2003 represent an increase of 582%, as compared with July 1993 when the CSSA Scheme was introduced. Over the same period, by contrast, the total CSSA caseload increased by 234%.

18. The profiles of CSSA single parent families as at the end of August 2003 are as follows:

- Gender and age of Single Parents  
81% of the single parents were women. Majority of the single

parents were in their thirties (36%) and forties (44%).

- Causes of Single Parenthood

The main causes of single parenthood were divorce (35%), separation (26%), and death of spouse (18%). Unmarried mothers constituted less than 3% of the total single-parent families.

- Whereabouts of Spouse of Married Single Parents

64% of the married single parents had spouses in the Mainland. 53% of the married single parents were male.

- Educational Attainment of Single Parents

63% had received primary education or below and 24% had received junior secondary education.

- Age of Children in a Household

The single-parent families contained about 56 000 children, representing 36% of all children on CSSA. 56% of these children were under the age of 12, 23% were between age 12 and 14, and the remaining 21% were of age 15 and over.

68% of the youngest child (or the only child) in the single parent families receiving CSSA were below age 12, 20% were between age 12 and 14, and the remaining 11% were 15 years of age and over.

- Number of Children in a Family

Majority of the cases were small families: 45% of the single parents have one child whereas 40% have two children.

- Household Income Other than CSSA Payments

82% of the cases relied entirely on CSSA. About 3 500 families (i.e. 10% of total CSSA single parent cases with payment) have employment earnings while some 1 200 families (or 4%) receive maintenance payments of non-nominal amounts.

- Age of the Youngest Child and Whether Single Parents were with Employment Earnings

Single parents with employment earnings usually have youngest child of an older age. 62% of single parents with employment had a youngest child of age 12 or over. The percentages for those with the youngest child of age between 10-11 and below 10 were 13% and 25% respectively.



- Duration of Continuously Receiving CSSA

In terms of the periods of continuous dependence on CSSA, 64% had been receiving CSSA for two or more years, including 29% between five and ten years, and 4% for ten or more years. The median length on CSSA is 3.2 years.

## **WAY FORWARD**

19. The EEP has been well received by participants generally and is endorsed by relevant parties. With the aim of assisting more single parent recipients to improve the family life of themselves and their children, we have decided to continue with the programme.

20. In addition, in view of the rise in the single parent caseload over the recent past (mentioned in paragraph 17 above) and concerns expressed by the Ombudsman, we will be reviewing the entire issue of single parents on CSSA in order to understand the present situation better and to make recommendations for any suitable improvement measures to help single parents achieve self-reliance.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

21. Members are invited to comment on the findings of the Report.

**Social Welfare Department**  
**February 2004**

### **Summary Results of the Longitudinal Study of the Ending Exclusion Project (EEP)**

#### **Introduction**

The Social Welfare Department commissioned a joint research team from the City University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ending Exclusion Project (EEP). Specifically, the Study is to gauge the psychological, attitudinal and behavioural changes of the participants over time and assess the effectiveness of the Ending Exclusion Project in terms of the following areas of outcome:

- Improved awareness of the need for ‘social participation’;
- Improvement in psychological well-being (e.g. self-esteem);
- Improved awareness of the need to establish self-reliance;
- Understanding the importance of employment; and
- Success in gaining employment.

#### **Methodology**

2. The study adopted a longitudinal or repeated-measures survey design with an experimental group and a control group. Under this design, respondents in the experimental and the control groups were interviewed four times with a four-month interval and three times with a six-month interval in a one-year evaluation period, respectively. One of the advantages of this design is that the changes gauged are more reliable because the same group of people are involved for each measurement. More importantly, it is possible to compare participants with similar backgrounds who differ only in their programme participation status. This design can control for natural changes among all the participants in the evaluation over time.

3. Starting in April 2002, the study involved four waves of data collection in a period of one year and examined (1) the effectiveness of EEP with respect to positive changes in job-seeking attitudes, psychological adjustment, social network and social life, and parent-child relationship among EEP participants and non-participants who

were also single parents on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and;  
(2) the perception of the Ending Exclusion Project (EEP) by both groups.

### **Evaluation of EEP in meeting its objectives**

4. 1 722 EEP participants and 295 CSSA single parents who did not participate in EEP formed the EEP group and the control group respectively in the first wave (W1) of data collection. Both groups had similar demographic profiles. The number of respondents dropped to 1 186 (EEP) and 216 (Control) in W2, 967 (EEP) in W3 (No data was collected for the control group in this wave), and 790 (EEP) and 155 (Control) in W4. Attrition was mainly due to the unwillingness to respond by the participants.

5. Results from the analyses yield information on the extent to which EEP has met its five objectives for single parents. A number of survey items were identified as the core markers of these five objectives. Program effect is defined as the existence of differential changes between the EEP and control groups. A positive program effect is reflected by either improvement found in the EEP group but not in the control group, or a stable pattern in the EEP group but deterioration in the control group.

6. Overall speaking, EEP is effective in a number of aspects as compared to the control group:

- Awareness of the need for ‘social participation’

A positive program effect in reducing social isolation was found, with a decrease in social isolation for the EEP group (decrease in social isolation for the EEP and control group: 0.07 vs. 0.03<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> To provide a clearer presentation of the results, transformed scores are presented to illustrate the programme effects. To obtain the transformed scores for a participant, the means of the W1 scores of the group to which this participant belongs are subtracted from his/her corresponding W2, W3, and W4 scores. Under this transformation, the means for all scales for the two groups are set at zero in W1, and any significant change in the scores across the four waves suggests a programme effect. In other words, EEP is effective only if it has produced a positive change as compared to the control group between W2 to W4 in relation to W1. Unless stated otherwise, figures presented in this summary are transformed scores

- Improvement in psychological well-being

The EEP group did not outperform the control group among the core markers selected. It should be noted that the psychological profile of the EEP participants was satisfactory before joining the program.

- Awareness of the need to establish self-reliance

A positive program effect in work involvement was found, with higher work involvement for the EEP group (decrease in work involvement for the EEP and control group: 0.02 vs. 0.19).

However, a negative programme effect on the support from significant others (such as children, family members, relatives, friends and children's teachers) of the participant for job-seeking was found, with lower job-seeking support for the EEP group (a decrease of 0.02 for the EEP group vs. an increase of 0.17 for the control group).

- Understanding the importance of employment

A positive program effect in job-seeking behavior was found, with more frequent job-seeking behavior for the EEP group (increase in job-seeking behavior for the EEP and control group: 0.53 vs. 0.44).

- Success in gaining employment

A positive program effect in gaining a part-time job was found, with more success in gaining part-time employment for the EEP group (Increase in gaining part-time employment for the EEP and control groups: 9.4% vs. 1.6%).

7. In summary, EEP was effective in meeting four out of its five objectives. With regard to the less significant improvement in psychological well-being, given that the EEP participants showed a reasonably positive psychological profile prior to the program, it is not surprising that EEP was not able to improve it.

## Perception of EEP

8. Apart from measuring the achievements of EEP, the Study also incorporated some items to gauge the perception of EEP by EEP participants. Some major findings are presented in the following:

- Overall speaking, respondents reacted favourably to EEP and its various components. For instance, over 70% of respondents supported EEP whereas less than 7% of them expressed dissatisfaction with EEP. They also responded positively to various components of EEP. However, the usage of ASCP<sup>2</sup> was low, although ASCP users were generally more favourable towards its services than non-users.
- Respondents of the EEP group held less positive attitudes towards some aspects of the program as time went by. This may be due to a higher familiarity with EEP and hence a higher sensitivity towards its limitations. As time elapsed, more respondents regarded:
  - EEP as troublesome (14.7% fewer respondents disagreed).
  - EEP as complicated and hard to understand (12.7% fewer respondents disagreed).
  - EEP as forcing them to learn new job-related skills (10.9% fewer respondents disagreed)
  - AEA<sup>3</sup> as putting a lot of pressure on them (10.1% fewer respondents disagreed)
  - ASCP coupons as inconvenient to use (24% more respondents agreed)
  - ASCP as not allowing them to choose a service centre at their wish (11.4% more respondents agreed)
  - The free ASCP coupon as not allowing service available at desired time periods (11.3% more respondents agreed)
- One area showed a bipolar change for the EEP group. Fewer respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘Total disregard of

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<sup>2</sup> Refers to After School Care Program for EEP participants with children aged 6 - 12. Free service coupons were provided to the participants. With this coupon, they could choose any service centre (which accepts such coupons) upon their wish.

<sup>3</sup> Refers to Active Employment Assistance programme, which provides employment assistance to EEP participants

first month's income is unattractive.' and more respondents shifted to the 'neutral' category over time (an increase of 11.7% for this category).

## **Detailed findings of the study**

### *Program Effects*

9. As stated in paragraph 5, program effect is defined as the existence of differential changes between the EEP and control groups. EEP was able to improve the following areas (i.e., the EEP group compared favourably to the control group over time):

- More part-time employment (9.4% increase for the EEP group vs. 1.6% increase for the control group).
- More job-seeking behavior (an increase of 0.53 for the EEP group vs. an increase of 0.44 for the control group).
- Maintained work involvement (a decrease of 0.02 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.19 for the control group).
- Less social isolation (a decrease of 0.07 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.03 for the control group).
- More rational coping (an increase of 0.05 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.11 for the control group).
- More positive perception of parent-child relationship by children (an increase of 0.03 for the EEP group vs. a decrease of 0.15 for the control group).

10. Notwithstanding the above positive changes, the EEP group showed less favourable change over time in one area (i.e., the control group compared favourably to the EEP group over time):

- A negative programme effect on the support from significant others (such as children, family members, relatives, friends and children's teachers) of the participant for job-seeking was found, with lower job-seeking support for the EEP group (a decrease of 0.02 for the EEP group vs. an increase of 0.17 for the control group).

## *Time Effects*

11. Time effect is defined as showing changes over time among EEP and control group respondents. Regardless of participation in EEP, respondents showed the following improvements with the passage of time:

### Making job-seeking efforts

- Making more job applications (an increase of 1.06).
- Having stronger intention to find a part-time job (an increase of 0.63).
- Having stronger intention to find a full-time job (an increase of 0.66).
- Deciding to find more jobs in the coming two weeks (an increase of 0.34).
- Feeling more efficacious in searching for jobs (an increase of 0.17).
- More likely to dismiss ‘take care of children’ as a reason for not getting a job (a decrease of 0.26).
- More likely to find themselves ‘too choosy’ in looking for jobs (being aware of one’s weakness is regarded as a positive change) (an increase of 0.20).
- More likely to find incompetent Cantonese as a reason for unemployment (being aware of one’s weakness is regarded as a positive change) (an increase of 0.21).
- Lowering job requirements (a decrease of 0.07).
- More time spent on working (an increase 0.65 hour/day).
- Completing more training courses (an increase of 0.22 course completed).

### Psychological well-being

- Feeling more confident (an increase 0.01).
- Trusting others more (an increase of 0.07).
- Using less emotional means in coping (a decrease of 0.08).
- Seeking more social help in coping (an increase of 0.13).
- Feeling less work-family conflict (a decrease of 0.10).

### Child caring

- Parents perceiving better academic performance of children (an increase of 0.04).
- Children feeling more confident (an increase of 0.17).

12. On the other hand, two unfavourable changes were observed:
- More likely to regard ‘bad luck’ as a reason of unemployment (an increase of 0.12).
  - Spending less time on child care and related activities (a decrease of 0.75).
13. Gradual adaptation to the life of single parenthood seems a plausible explanation for the positive changes over time described in paragraph 11.

#### *Part-time Employment Effects*

14. Three employment groups were formed: i. unemployed (U) - those who remained unemployed throughout the data collection period, ii. previous part-time employment (PE) - those who got a part-time job in W2 or W3 but became unemployed again in W4, and iii. current part-time employment (CE) - those who reported having a part-time job in W4. Employment status showed differential effects among EEP participants in a number of areas. The currently part-time employed group generally showed more improvements than the previously part-time employed group:

- Less likely to attribute unemployment to bad luck (an increase of 0.04 for CE vs. an increase of 0.50 for PE).
- Better general health (an increase of 0.29 for CE vs. a decrease of 0.20 for PE).
- Higher optimism (an increase of 0.22 for CE vs. a decrease of 0.10 for PE).
- Better interpersonal relationship (an increase of 0.15 for CE vs. a decrease of 0.06 for PE).
- Higher general trust (an increase of 0.24 for CE vs. a decrease of 0.19 for PE).
- Less social isolation (a decrease of 0.27 for CE vs. an increase of 0.10 for PE).
- Weaker traditional gender role perception (men work and women stay at home) (a decrease of 0.2 point for CE vs. an increase of 0.61 for PE).
- More time spent on work (an increase of 3.3 hours for CE vs. an increase of 0.9 hour for PE).



15. There are two exceptions to this pattern in which the previously employed group showed more improvements than the current employed group:

- Higher attribution of unemployment to low educational level and lack of job-relevant skills (being aware of one's weakness is regarded as a positive change) (an increase of 0.26 for PE vs. a decrease of 0.09 for CE).
- Lower cynicism (a decrease of 0.25 for PE vs. a decrease of 0.16 for CE).

In one case both current and previously employed groups showed deterioration as compared with the unemployed group:

- Less time spent on self-development (a decrease of 0.21 hour/week for CE and 0.49 hour/week for PE vs. an increase of 0.90 hour/week for U).

16. These results suggest that having a part-time job has positive effects in a number of ways, but losing this employment status may be quite damaging. This analysis was not conducted for the control group because of the small sample size.

#### *Differences among Employment Groups in W1*

17. Analysis has been done on the differences among the three employment groups in W1 when all respondents were unemployed to avoid the confounding influence of EEP and employment status. Generally speaking, the two groups with employment held more positive attitudes towards EEP and were more eager to seek employment. Two exceptions include higher cynicism and lower academic performance perceived by children reported by the two groups with employment.

18. Compared with the currently part-time employed group, the previously part-time employed group was more optimistic (0.29 point higher), more cynical (0.27 point higher), experienced less negative emotions in coping (0.41 point lower), and showed lower endorsement of traditional gender role (0.55 point lower) in W1. It is possible that this assortment of apparently conflicting psychological characteristics was related to the subsequent termination of their part-time employment.

#### *Gender Effects*

19. A number of trend differences between the two genders are noted. For the EEP group, single fathers showed a more marked increase in seeking social help in

coping (an increase of 0.35 for single fathers vs. an increase of 0.08 for single mothers); their children showed an improvement in self-esteem (an increase of 0.35 for single fathers vs. an increase of 0.15 for single mothers) and interpersonal relationship (an increase of 0.30 for single fathers vs. an increase of 0.04 for single mothers). For the control group, the intention to find a full-time job increased more for single fathers than for single mothers (an increase of 1.36 for single fathers vs. an increase of 0.36 for single mothers). Single fathers also showed a stronger declining trend to attribute their unemployment to the need to take care of children (a decrease of 0.58 for single fathers vs. a decrease of 0.14 for single mothers).

### *Pre-programme Gender Differences*

20. A number of gender differences that are independent of EEP effects (differences in W1 before the commencement of EEP) are noted. Generally speaking, single mothers reacted more positively to EEP. However, single fathers showed a more positive profile with regard to job-seeking issues, although single mothers in the EEP group spent more time on self-development (0.46 hour more per week) and completed more courses on job-related skills (0.14 course more).

21. The following are some interesting observations.

- It appears that single fathers were keen to look for employment, but they had not invested in learning to make job-seeking easier.
- Single mothers in the EEP group perceived the reliance on CSSA as more bearable.
- Single mothers in both groups had more attributions/reasons for their unemployment compared to single fathers.
- Single mothers in the EEP group scored slightly more positively in several adjustment variables including less social isolation (0.06 point lower), higher life satisfaction (0.88 point higher), feeling less economic hardship (0.16 point lower), and more willingness to seek help (0.16 point higher), but single fathers were more adaptable in terms of the use of more rational coping (0.09 point higher) and less emotional coping (0.14 point lower), having higher self-esteem (0.07 point higher), and having better general health (0.10 point higher).
- On balance, the two genders were comparable in their adjustment to single parenthood and unemployment. As expected, single mothers showed more positive attitudes with regard to parent-child issues.

- Interaction effects between gender and traditional role perception (men work and women stay at home) were found on a number of job-seeking variables and job attitudes. Single fathers with stronger traditional gender role perception were more eager to find a job, while single mothers with stronger traditional gender role were less eager to do so.

### **Suggestions for Interventions**

22. EEP was generally well received, and showed positive results in four out of five objectives. However, three major issues need attention:

- Respondents' perception of EEP became less positive over time.
- Part-time employment is beneficial, and it is important to help participants to maintain their employment status.
- Single fathers need more help to upgrade their skills for re-employment, whereas single mothers need more help to strengthen their intention to seek employment.

23. A number of factors have been identified in the analyses to serve as predictors in explaining respondents' ability to get a part-time job. These include:

- A more positive view on Total Disregard of First Month's Income as well as Monthly Disregarded Earning.
- Higher involvement in EEP.
- Higher job-seeking support.
- Higher self-efficacy in job-seeking.
- Higher work involvement.
- Higher optimism.
- Less emotional coping.
- Lower traditional gender role perception.
- Lower work-family conflict.

24. Since the above factors are predictive of part-time employment, EEP can focus on helping participants to improve in these areas so as to be more successful in securing part-time employment. In turn, part-time employment will help them maintain a good psychological profile.

**A Summary of CSSA Single Parent Recipients Joining EEP  
(Position as at August 2003 )**

		Active Case (%)	Cumulative (%)
<b>1</b>	<b>Total no. of EEP participants remain joining the Programme</b>	<b>1963</b>	<b>2709</b>
	(a) No. of participants from the priority list	1467 ( 74.7% )	2117 ( 78.1% )
	(b) No. of participants NOT from the priority list	496 ( 25.3% )	592 ( 21.9% )
<b>2</b>	<b>No. of cases closed due to leaving CSSA net (% of total participants)</b>		77 ( 2.8% )
<b>3</b>	<b>Breakdown of the number of participants by sex</b>		
	(a) No. of single father	447 ( 22.8% )	705 ( 26.0% )
	(b) No. of single mother	1516 ( 77.2% )	2004 ( 74.0% )
<b>4</b>	<b>Breakdown of the number of participants by age group</b>		
	(a) No. of participants aged below 20	10 ( 0.5% )	12 ( 0.4% )
	(b) No. of participants aged 20 to below 30	89 ( 4.5% )	117 ( 4.3% )
	(c) No. of participants aged 30 to below 40	848 ( 43.2% )	1137 ( 42.0% )
	(d) No. of participants aged 40 or over	1016 ( 51.8% )	1443 ( 53.3% )
<b>5</b>	<b>Breakdown of the number of participants by age of the youngest dependent child</b>		
	(a) No. of participants with the youngest child aged below 5	182 ( 9.3% )	252 ( 9.3% )
	(b) No. of participants with the youngest child aged 5 to below 10	592 ( 30.2% )	782 ( 28.9% )
	(c) No. of participants with the youngest child aged 10 to below 15	1189 ( 60.5% )	1675 ( 61.8% )
<b>6</b>	<b>Breakdown of the number of participants by number of children in the family</b>		
	(a) one child in the family	718 ( 36.6% )	1009 ( 37.2% )
	(b) two children in the family	872 ( 44.3% )	1217 ( 44.9% )
	(c) three children in the family	319 ( 16.3% )	408 ( 15.1% )
	(d) more than three children in the family	54 ( 2.8% )	75 ( 2.8% )
<b>7</b>	<b>Breakdown of the number of participants by length of continuously receiving CSSA</b>		
	(a) length of continuously receiving CSSA < 1 year	332 ( 16.9% )	420 ( 15.5% )
	(b) length of continuously receiving CSSA 1 - < 3 years	511 ( 26.0% )	728 ( 26.9% )
	(c) length of continuously receiving CSSA 3 - < 5 years	555 ( 28.3% )	769 ( 28.4% )
	(d) length of continuously receiving CSSA > = 5 years	565 ( 28.8% )	792 ( 29.2% )
<b>8</b>	<b>Breakdown of the number of participants by job-readiness</b>		
	(a) No. of participants ready for job [% of total participants]	<b>1068</b> ( 54.4% )	<b>1564</b> ( 57.7% )
	- out of (a), the no. of single fathers	219 ( 20.5% )	362 ( 23.1% )
	- out of (a), the no. of single mothers	849 ( 79.5% )	1202 ( 76.9% )
	- out of (a), the age of the job-ready participants		
	1. No. of participants aged below 20	3 ( 0.3% )	4 ( 0.3% )
	2. No. of participants aged 20 to below 30	48 ( 4.5% )	67 ( 4.3% )
	3. No. of participants aged 30 to below 40	490 ( 45.9% )	685 ( 43.8% )
	4. No. of participants aged 40 or over	527 ( 49.3% )	808 ( 51.6% )
	- out of (a), the no. of job ready participants with child aged 6 - <12	601 ( 56.3% )	802 ( 51.3% )
	- out of (a), the no. of participants showing interest in SJAP	144 ( 13.5% )	215 ( 13.7% )
	- out of (a), the no. of participants showing interest in IEAF projects	229 ( 21.4% )	317 ( 20.3% )

**A Summary of CSSA Single Parent Recipients Joining EEP  
(Position as at August 2003 )**

	<b>Active Case (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative (%)</b>
(b) No. of participants having secured employment (% of job-ready) and [% of total participants]	<b>192</b> ( 18.0% ) [ 9.8% ]	<b>385</b> ( 24.6% ) [ 14.2% ]
1. No. of participants who have received SPC service before employment (% of secured employment)	3 ( 1.6% )	5 ( 1.3% )
2. Salaries of the job secured :		
1.1 under \$1430.-	76 ( 39.6% )	107 ( 27.8% )
1.2 from \$1430 - \$3,999	76 ( 39.6% )	145 ( 37.7% )
1.3 from \$4,000 - \$7,999	37 ( 19.3% )	114 ( 29.6% )
1.4 \$8,000 or above	3 ( 1.6% )	19 ( 4.9% )
3. No. of participants who have left CSSA net after securing employment (% of job-ready), [% of total participants] and { % of secured employment }		( 3.6% ) <b>56</b> [ 2.1% ] { 14.5% }
4. No. of participants who have left CSSA net after having received SPC service and secured employment (% of secured employment)		0 ( 0.0% )
5. Age range of participants having secured employment		
Male :	<b>22</b>	<b>65</b>
2.1 aged below 20	0	0
2.2 aged 20 to below 30	1	1
2.3 aged 30 to below 40	8	23
2.4 aged 40 or over	13	41
Female :	<b>170</b>	<b>320</b>
2.5 aged below 20	0	1
2.6 aged 20 to below 30	5	10
2.7 aged 30 to below 40	68	133
2.8 aged 40 or over	97	176
6. No. of participants having joined SJAP/IEAF and also secured employment		
3.1 SJAP	39 ( 20.3% )	73 ( 19.0% )
3.2 IEAF	54 ( 28.1% )	93 ( 24.2% )
(c) No. of participants not ready for job (% of total participants)	<b>895</b> ( 45.6% )	<b>1145</b> ( 42.3% )
- out of (c), the no. of single fathers	228	343
- out of (c), the no. of single mothers	667	802
- out of (c), the no. of single parents referred to SPCs for services (% of non-job-ready)/[% of total participants]	<b>733</b> ( 81.9% ) [ 37.3% ]	<b>837</b> ( 73.1% ) [ 30.9% ]
- out of (c), the no. of single parents still considering the available options (% of non-job-ready) and [% of total participants]	<b>162</b> ( 18.1% ) [ 8.3% ]	<b>308</b> ( 26.9% ) [ 11.4% ]
(d) Total no. of participants referred to SPCs (including those non-job-ready) [% of total participants]		1083 [ 40.0% ]
<b>9</b> No. of referrals made to FSNT (% of total participants)		376 ( 13.9% )

**A Summary of CSSA Single Parent Recipients Joining EEP  
(Position as at August 2003 )**

		<b>Active Case (%)</b>	<b>Cumulative (%)</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>No. of EEP participants using ASCP services (% of total active/cumulative EEP participants) and [% of total active and cumulative job-ready EEP participants]</b>	<b>17</b> ( 0.9% ) [ 1.6% ]	<b>74</b> ( 2.7% ) [ 4.7% ]
<b>11</b>	<b>Reasons for participants using ASCP coupons</b>		
	(a) No. of participants using ASCP coupons for reason of taking up employment	7	24
	(b) No. of participants using ASCP coupons for reason of attending employment re-training course	1	11
	(c) No. of participants using ASCP coupons for reason of engaging in activities run by NGO under the SJAP/IEAF	4	32
	(d) No. of participants using ASCP coupons for reason of seeking job actively	1	13
	(e) Others	2	2
<b>12</b>	<b>(a) No. of child beneficiaries having received ASCP services</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>97</b>
	(b) Age of child beneficiaries at the time of receiving ASCP services		
	1. Age 6	3	12
	2. Age 7	10	23
	3. Age 8	4	18
	4. Age 9	5	15
	5. Age 10	4	14
	6. Age 11	2	10
	7. Age 12	0	5
<b>13</b>	<b>No. of monthly coupons issued</b>		326
<b>14</b>	<b>No. of monthly coupons confirmed having been used</b>		239