

**For information
on 31 May 2007**

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

A Study to Evaluate the New Dawn Project for Single Parents/Child Carers under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

PURPOSE

This paper seeks to brief members on the findings of the evaluation study of the New Dawn (ND) Project for single parents and child carers on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) (the Study).

BACKGROUND

2. The ND Project was launched in April 2006. Before that, the Administration had launched the Ending Exclusion Project (EEP) from March 2002 to March 2006 to assist CSSA single parent recipients with children aged below 15 to maximize their chances of participating in social and economic activities. The EEP was a voluntary programme comprising an employment assistance programme, as well as childcare and enhanced support services. In view of the low participation in the EEP, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) specifically designed the ND Project as an employment assistance programme for single parents and child carers on CSSA whose youngest children are aged 12 to 14. It aims to assist the participants to enhance their capacity for self-help, integrate into the community and move towards self-reliance through engagement in work.

3. Under the existing arrangements, single parents and child carers on CSSA with their youngest child aged below 12 are not required to work. However, for those recipients whose youngest children are aged 12 to 14, they are required to join the ND Project to actively seek paid employment with working hours of not less than 32 per month. When their youngest child reaches the age of

15, such CSSA recipients will then need to enroll in the Support for Self-reliance (SFS) Scheme to find full-time jobs entailing not less than 120 working hours and earning not less than \$1,450 per month. The ND Project has, therefore, served as a buffer for the single parents and child carers before they are required to join the SFS Scheme.

4. Under the ND Project, personalised employment assistance (EA) is provided by SWD staff to help participants overcome work barriers and secure paid employment as early as possible. SWD has also commissioned non-government organisations to operate ND Intensive Employment Assistance Projects (ND IEAPs) to provide tailor made employment assistance services including basic skills and skills upgrading training to equip those participants with no or limited work experience.

5. As at end March 2007, a total of 7 886 participants had participated in the ND Project. Of these, a total of 2 215 participants secured paid jobs, with 836 taking up full-time paid employment and 1 379 part-time paid employment. The success rate was about 28%. The number of participants who eventually left the CSSA net after successfully securing employment was 158. The participants who successfully secured employment mainly worked as cleaners, services workers, shop sales, domestic helpers and in other elementary occupations. The average monthly wage was \$4,400 for full-time employment and \$1,600 for part-time employment.

6. Under the disregarded earnings (DE) arrangements, 57 participants with a monthly wage of \$600 or below had their earnings fully disregarded, 1 758 participants with a monthly wage ranging from \$601 to \$4,399 had their earnings partially disregarded, and 400 participants with a monthly wage of \$4,400 or above had their monthly earnings disregarded up to the maximum of \$2,500. The increase in income helps improve the living standard of the 2 215 single parents and child carers on CSSA participating in the ND Project who have secured paid jobs. For example, a four-member single parent family on CSSA with a monthly wage of \$4,400 will have an additional disposable income of \$2,500 per month which is about 25% more than the disposable income of a corresponding family without work.

EVALUATION STUDY

The purpose of the Study

7. The Study, undertaken by the Department of Social Work and Social Administration of The University of Hong Kong, examines the characteristics of the targeted participants, their job-seeking behaviour, barriers to and factors in promoting employment, outcome of employment and the impact on themselves and their children. The Executive Summary of the Study is at Annex.

Methodology

8. The study design includes survey, pre- and post- comparison, in-depth and focus group interviews and, international comparison. The survey was conducted from November 2006 to March 2007 with 1 685 targeted participants interviewed. Amongst them, 63.6% were single parents and 36.4% were child carers. The respondents belonged to three groups: (a) those who joined the ND Project, (b) those who were already in employment and (c) those who refused to join the ND Project.

9. In-depth interviews were conducted to understand the effectiveness of the EA programmes and ND IEAPs and the changes in psychological profile and child behaviour. Six focus group sessions were also convened to gather views from SWD and NGO staff on the operation of the EA and ND IEAP Programmes, as well as views from employers on recruiting ND participants. Both the in-depth interviews and focus groups sessions were conducted in March and April 2007.

Key findings of the Study

10. The Study has showed that nearly half of those participating in the ND Project found at least a job within half a year. Over 85% of these successful job-seekers took up the offer and most of them (91.8%) were still working at the time of interview. Details of the findings are as follows:

(a) Participants' working behaviour

Among the ND participants, being a single parent (instead of a carer), a female, younger than 45, having more family members, having stronger support from their youngest child, being more active in seeking jobs, receiving smaller amount of CSSA were all favourable

factors which made a participant more likely to be employed than the others.

(b) EA/ND IEAP Programmes

For those who have lower skill level and less experience in employment, ND IEAPs were found to be useful in understanding their needs, barriers, family conditions through individual counseling sessions, providing soft-skills (interview, job-seeking, interpersonal skills), vocational skills training, sharing sessions of the successful job seekers, job matching services and post employment support.

(c) Impact on Children

Employment of single parents and child carers is widely supported by their children. Employment improved the self-esteem for single parents/child carers as well as their children. In fact, among those who were working at the time of interview, most of their children reported that their relationship with their parents/child carers were good. The study shows that it is reasonable to lower the age limit to 6, when the youngest child starts studying in full-time primary school. In fact, most countries require single parents to start seeking job when their youngest child aged below 6. The body of literature also indicates that the earlier a social assistant recipient starts working, the better the chance for him/her to stay in employment. Nevertheless, most of the ND IEAP operating agencies and participants did not favour lowering the age limit.

(d) Working hour requirement with reference to the age of children

For parents with children engaged in full-time school (which is in most cases), working part-time of 60 hours a month can easily be achieved. If traveling time is not too long, a requirement of working 80-100 hours per month should not interfere with child caring work especially for children aged 12 or above. The Study suggests that one option is to increase the working requirement to 80-100 hours per month or beyond for targeted participants whose youngest child aged 12 or above. The requirement could be set at a lower level, for example 60 hours per month or less, for those whose youngest child is aged between six (assuming studying in a primary school) and 11 to

allow more flexibility in fulfilling the demands from both work and child caring.

(e) Responses of Employers

The employers who employed the ND IEAP participants appreciated the efforts of the ND IEAP operating agencies. They found the post-placement support services offered to the participants particularly useful. Most of the employers indicated that they would continue to recruit ND Project participants referred by SWD/ND IEAP operating agencies. In general, they found the employees referred from the ND Project cooperative, friendly, industrious and enthusiastic, and were ready to provide more opportunities and accord priorities in recruiting ND Project participants.

(f) Staff administrating the EA/ND IEAP Programme

All frontline staff administrating the EA/ND IEAP Programme agreed that the ND Project can help many to make the initial attempt to seek employment and benefit both the participants and their children. The ND IEAPs which offered more tailor-made, integrated employment services are considered to be effective in achieving the ND Project goals.

On the sanction, most thought that the sanction rate could be adjusted to take into account of the amount of CSSA payment received or the number of family members receiving CSSA.

(g) International comparison

Most countries have gradually adopted compulsory work requirement for single parents and the age of the youngest child when such requirement is imposed are usually below 6. Work is generally found to benefit both the individuals and their children. International experience suggests that sufficient incentives, early and clear requirements and sanctions, a well-conceived, implemented and monitored process are important for the success of the project. Cases suffered from repeated failure in terms of getting job and often subjected to sanctions have to be carefully studied for reference and project improvement.

THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

11. The recommendations set out by the research team are summarised as follows –

- (a) The ND Project (i.e. the EA/ND IEAP programmes) should be continued.
- (b) More sharing of experiences and good practices among staff working in the ND Project will be helpful.
- (c) The level of sanction can be increased by doubling the amount every half a year until it reaches the limit of \$800 per month. The amount of sanction can also be administered as a percentage of total CSSA payment received if administratively feasible.
- (d) Apart from the requirement to seek employment actively, participants can be required to participate in job attachment or training to increase their employability.
- (e) The working hour requirement for those with youngest child aged between 12 and 14 can be gradually increased to 80-100 hours per month.
- (f) For those with youngest child studying in primary school and aged between six and eleven, they should start joining the ND Project. However, the working hour requirement can be less than 60 hours per month.
- (g) Special considerations should be made for the targeted participants living in Tin Shui Wai where the employment rate of the participants has been low.

WAY FORWARD

12. Having regard to the favourable response of the ND Project and positive findings and recommendations made in the evaluation study, we will continue the project in its existing mode of operation for the time being.

13. In parallel, we will proceed to consider the various measures under the ND Project in light of the findings of the Study with a view to improving the arrangements of the scheme and providing more appropriate services for employable single parents and child carers.

ADVICE SOUGHT

14. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Social Welfare Department
May 2007**

Executive Summary

on

A Study to Evaluate the New Dawn (ND) Project of Single Parents/Child Carers under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme SWD/Q025/2006

by

Co-Principle Investigators

Dr. WONG Yu-cheung

Mr. YIP Hak-kwong

Co-Investigators

Dr. LEUNG Cho-bun, Joe

Dr. CHUI Wing-tak, Ernest

Mr. LEE Kar-mut, Carmel

Department of Social Work & Social Administration,
Policy21 Limited

The University of Hong Kong

29 May 2007

Executive Summary

The current New Dawn (ND, 欣曉計劃) Project is developed upon the positive experience of the Ending Exclusion Project (EEP, 欣葵計劃) started in March 2002 targeting single parents receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) whose youngest child aged below 15. Under the ND Project, single parents (SP) and child carers (CC) on CSSA with the youngest child aged 12-14 are encouraged to seek employment with no less than 32 hours per month. Employment Assistance (EA) and New Dawn Intensive Employment Assistance Programs (ND IEAPs) are implemented with extensive employment-related assistance, such as job searching skills training, job matching, post-employment support as well as other supportive services supplemented to those recipients. The ND project started in April 2006 and will continue until September 2007. The ultimate goal is to encourage, motivate and help the CSSA single parent or child carer to secure gainful employment, assist them to remove work barriers, enhance their employability and get back to work through ND IEAP, and help them integrate with community through engagement in work and build up self-help and self-reliance capacity to be independent eventually.

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) commissioned the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong to conduct an evaluation study of the New Dawn Project. The research team commenced its work in August, 2006.

Purposes of the study

This evaluation studies the characteristics of the targeted participants, their job-seeking behaviour, barriers to and factors in promoting employment, outcome of employment and the impact on themselves and their children.

Study design

The study design includes survey (Main Survey), pre and post comparison (Baseline Survey), in-depth and focus group interviews and international comparison. To capture the changes in various attributes of the targeted participants (such as self-esteem, attitude towards work, amount of time spent with children), those newly invited or admitted into the ND Project for less than 1.5 month (i.e. from September 1 to October 7, 2006) were interviewed in the pre-test of the comparison study. All of the respondents of the pre-test were asked the similar set of questionnaire again after a 6-month period. In total, 348 respondents completed the pre-test survey, and among them, 84 completed the post-test survey by the end of April (the rest have also completed in early May). In the Main Survey, those who enrolled between March 17 and October 7, 2006, were sampled and interviewed at the 6 months after the invitation or admission into the ND programme. As a whole, 1,685 cases were successfully enumerated in the Main Survey. 63.6% were single parents and 36.4% were child carers. The respondents belonged to three groups: those who joined the ND Project, those who were already in employment, and those refused to join the ND Project.

In-depth interviews on ND participants were conducted to enrich the understanding of the effectiveness of EA programmes and ND IEAPs, and focus groups sessions were convened to gather views from SWD and NGO staff on the operation of the EA and ND IEAP Programmes, as well as views from employers recruiting ND participants.

Summary of the findings of the Main Survey

Under the ND Project, personalized EA services and ND IEAP activities are provided by SWD staff and NGOs respectively, to help target participants overcome work barriers and secure paid employment. By the time of interview, 26.2% of those in the ND group had enrolled in one of the EA/ND IEAP activities (Table 7). With reference to Tables 14 and 15, provision of job seeking plan was being evaluated as the most popular services in EA while occupational/technical training was the prominent item provided in ND IEAPs. In general, more appreciation was found in groups of carer respondents who had enrolled in ND IEAP services than their counterparts, with at least two times attendance record noted in each of the ND IEAP services.

Around half of those having joined ND IEAP/EA activities reported getting improvement in their job-seeking intentions (Table 16). Wanting to improve family income and being self-reliance were the major reasons for such changes (Table 17).

During the survey period, around half of the ND respondents had found jobs, and 78% of these persons were still working at the time of interview. (Table 19). That is around 39% of all the ND respondents were working by then (Table 19). The major reasons given by them to account for their success in finding jobs were their own effort and having previous working experience (Table 10). Having better income and being self-reliance were the major reasons to motivate them taking up employment (Table 20).

Regarding their views towards their parents' working (Table 21), most of the children interviewed supported their parents going out to work with reasons of improving family income and having more pocket money. Most of the children considered their relationship with their parent/carer and the family atmosphere good (Table 22). The majority of the children in the Refusal and ND groups reported that there were little changes in the amount of time their parent/carer spent with them as well as their relationship with them and their general family atmosphere. Over forty percent of the children in the Employed group reported that their parent/carer spent less time with them but their relationship and family atmosphere remained unchanged (Table 27).

Around 30% of child respondents reported that their family was in poor financial situation, but around 67% said they were fair (Table 23). Usually, the poorer they think they were; the more negative impact to their social network and learning attitude was reported. (Table 24)

Most of those in the Refusal group explained that they did not intend to work because they have to take care of their family and having health problem (Table 28). When asked if the sanction was to be increased for refusal to join ND Project, more than half of them said they would remain stay put and let their CSSA payment being deducted and another one-third said they would try to enroll in the ND Project (Table 29).

Summary of the findings of further analysis

Further analysis and comparison between the employed and unemployed, being a female, a single parent rather than a child carer, younger than 45, having larger family size, having previous working experience, receiving less amount of CSSA, living in Central & Western district of Kwun Tong, and not living in Tin Shui Wai, having a child supportive to them in working would increase the likelihood of being employed (Table 37).

On the other hand, amongst those in the ND group, being a female, a single parent rather than a child carer, younger than 45, having more family members, receiving less CSSA payment, not living in Tin Shui Wai or Sai Kung, having a child supportive to them in employment and, having tried various means to find jobs would increase the likelihood of a ND Project participant to be employed (Table 39).

Regarding the family and individual characteristics, the employed (those in the ND – Employed group or the Employed group) had less time spending with their children than the other groups. However, they had more positive attitude towards family relationship; were higher in self-esteem; were more tired but had more positive attitude towards working (wanting to be independent, feeling depressed and idle while not working). The children of the employed had higher perceived level of performance in some areas but they also reported a lower level of self-efficacy than the others. Those who joined the ND Project but were not employed at the time of interview, apart from having more time to spend with their children, appeared to fare worse in other family and individual aspects (Tables 40 and 41).

Summary of the impacts of the ND Project

The comparison of those who were targeted to join the ND Project before and after a period of six months indicated that they actually spent greater amount of time with their children during weekdays. Both the participants and their children had higher self-esteem scores. However, their attitude towards work became less positive (Table 44). The children of the respondents reported having more pocket money to spend and considered their family financial conditions improved (Table 45). Both the parents/carers and their children reported that there were very little changes in terms of family relationship and family atmosphere.

Summary of the findings in the individual interviews

Forty cases were selected for in-depth interview and 28 of them were successfully enumerated. Generally speaking, the ND Project is effective in encouraging some targeted participants to take up employment. The experience of the interviewees confirms that employment, by and large are beneficial to the individuals and their families. Nevertheless, most parents we interviewed considered child caring as their primary responsibility and avoided interfering it with working despite the support of their children. Being industrious, courageous, persistent, open minded and, having cheerful attitude and personality were important personal attributes for taking up employment. Most of the interviewed (23 out of 28) felt that they were well integrated into society and satisfied with their existing personal, family and, work life after taking part in the ND Project.

To help more long-term welfare recipients and low-income families going to work and supporting their families on their own, public education of “work is the best route to self-reliance” and widespread promotion of Disregarded Earnings (DE) would be a good way to initiate them moving into workforce. More than half (15 out of 28) of the

interviewees did not consider increasing the amount of sanction as an effective way to inspire people to join the ND Project. For the sanction rate, nearly half of the interviewees (13 out of 28) suggested that the amount should be proportionate to the number of eligible working people within one household if it was to be changed at all.

Concerning the minimum working hour requirement, both working and non-working interviewees thought that it was realistic to increase the number of working hours to less than 60 hours per month. A quarter of them (7 out of 28), nevertheless, suggested that keeping at the current level could encourage the new comers to try and take up employment.

In response to the suggestion of lowering the age limit of the youngest child, most of them (19 out of 28) opposed the idea. When asked for reasons, they mentioned about the dependency of the children, immature mental development and the needs for substantial care and attention for younger children below 12.

Summary of findings in the focus group

Encouragement rather than coercion to take up employment was seen as the spirit of the ND Project. All (12 NGO staff & 19 SWD staff) agreed that the Project could help many to take the first step to seek employment and could bring positive outcome to the participants and their children. The outcome, however, varied and depended on participants' motivation, employment opportunities, and other personal factors. ND IEAPs in general, offered more tailor-made design to provide advice, training, employment network to the ND participants and were considered rather effective in achieving the ND Project goals.

There are altogether 20 New ND IEAPs operated by 18 NGOs in Hong Kong. Eight case workers from five centres mentioned that they would conduct assessment (regarding their family situation, work intention, emotional condition, etc.) and provide various kinds of training regarding job-seeking, vocational skills to the participants. Some would provide job-matching services and invite participants who have sustained employment to share their experience with the new members. Both individual and group work approach would also be provided. They considered building up trust and keeping the whole family in mind as crucial elements for success.

ND IEAP staff (8 frontline staff & 4 supervisory staff) mentioned that most of the single parents were pre-occupied with their parenting duties. Some explained that single parents usually had a sense of guilt feeling towards their children because of their marital situation and would do everything to compensate for their children's loss. Besides, older participants faced more difficulties to find job if they had little working experience.

Regarding the parameters of the Projects, most (10 out of 12) of the ND IEAP staff did not favor lowering the age limit of the youngest children, increasing the hours of work requirements and the amount of sanction. However, more than half (8 out of 12) thought that sanction rate could be adjusted to take into account of the amount of CSSA payment received or, the number of family members.

Summary of findings in the employers' interviews

Six employers nominated by four ND IEAP operating agencies were selected and interviewed. The employers considered that the IEPA operating agencies enjoyed good image and reputation and appreciated the post-placement support services offered to the

participants. Most of the employers indicated that they would recruit employees referred by SWD/NGOs. In general, they found the ND employees cooperative, friendly, industrious and enthusiastic and they are ready to provide more opportunities and give priorities in recruiting ND participants.

Summary of international experience

Most countries have gradually adopted compulsory work requirement for lone parents and imposed such requirements when the age of the youngest child was below 6. It is also found that early engagement in employment increases the likelihood of lone parents to stay in employment and become self-reliance. Work is generally found to have benefits for the individuals as well as their children. Sufficient incentives, clear requirements and sanctions, a well conceived, implemented and, monitored process are important. The successful experience of participants in securing employment and moving towards self-reliance is encouraging for others. Nevertheless, cases suffered from repeated failure in finding jobs and cases frequently subjected to sanctions warranted carefully investigation to avoid unnecessarily hardship.

Discussion and Recommendations

Among those who were targeted and agreed to join the New Dawn Project, nearly half of them (49.8%) had found at least a job within half a year. Among these successful job seekers, over 85 percent of them took up the offer and most of them (91.8%) were still working at time we interviewed them (around half a year after they joined the ND Project) (Table 19).

For those who have lower skill level and less experience in employment, ND IEAP was found to be useful in understanding their needs, barriers, family conditions through individual counseling sessions, providing soft-skills (interview, job-seeking, interpersonal skills), vocational skills training, sharing sessions of the successful job seekers, providing job matching services and post employment support. More than half of those who have taken part in the EA and ND IEAP activities reported that their job-seeking intentions have been enhanced.

Among the ND participants, being a single parent (instead of a carer), a female, younger than 45, having more family members, having stronger support from their youngest child, being more active in seeking jobs, receiving smaller amount of CSSA and, not living in Tin Shui Wai, was more likely to be employed than the others. It is necessary to look into the barriers for those who might have a less chance in getting employment. For example, frontline ND IEAP workers suggested that male participants are more reluctant to seek help and feel more intimidated by being asked to seek employment. They might also feel uneasy in joining programme with predominantly female participants.

Family plays an important role in the job-seeking intention and behaviors of the targeted participants. So far, having a child supportive to their parents' employment has a unique impact to their parents' employment outcome. We could also expect that other family members, if any, also play an important role as well. Understanding the needs and perception of the family members are useful in working out effective plans to encourage targeted participants to take up employment.

The findings also suggest that once participants take up a job, almost all of them continue to work (For example among the Employed group, 95% of them was still in

employment more than six months after they were being contacted by SWD). The income from employment, on average was around \$3,000 (Table 12) with working hours on average of over 100 hours per month (Table 9). With the disregard income arrangement, the participants, with this level of income, can keep on average, up to \$2,000 a month, representing an overall improvement of financial conditions (in comparison with the CSSA amount of \$5,600) by more than 35% (Table 12).

Employment of their parents and carers is widely supported by children. Employment also results in improved self-esteem for single parents/carers and their children as well. In fact, among those who were working at the time of interview, most of their children reported that their relationship with their parent/carer have been good and remained unchanged. Nevertheless, work is not fun; it is demanding, hard and needs discipline and persistence to keep on working. Like many working parents in Hong Kong, this requires adjustment and at times, might result in less time spending with their children, feeling tired when confronted with demands from both work and family care. This occurs both for single parents and child carers in this study. Nevertheless, still nearly half of them indicated that they would prefer to extend their work hours in order to earn more.

Recommendation

1. The ND Project should be continued. Specially, the ND IEAP programmes, which offer comprehensive and individualized services as well as training arrangement, job-matching services and post-employment support for those with lower skills level and less employment experience, should be strengthened. TFA (Temporary Financial Aid) under the ND IEAPs, which is flexible and serves as an incentive for job seeking, should also be continued.
2. More sharing among staff working in the ND Projects is recommended. For example, sharing of good practices, clarification of policy/procedures such as the availability of meal subsidies for school children could be very helping in improving the morale, knowledge and skills of the workers. International experience, for example, “The incremental ladder to economic independence” can be further examined to see if it is applicable to Hong Kong.
3. Apart from the requirement to seek employment actively, participants can be required to participate in job attachment or training to increase their employability.

Incentive and sanction for non-compliance are important mechanism in encouraging targeted participants to take up employment. Currently, the sanction is administered at a flat rate (\$200) disregard of the amount of CSSA payment received by the individuals or their family as a whole. The findings of this study indicate that individuals whose family receives a higher level of CSSA payment are less likely to take up employment. 40% of those refused to take up employment or participate in the ND Project said they would try to enroll in the Project if the sanction amount was to be increased. Besides, the amount of sanction for these individuals is smaller in comparison to the amount of CSSA payment received and thus the effect reduces. It would be reasonable to associate sanction (for example as a percentage) with the amount of CSSA payment received (for example as a percentage, instead of a flat rate) if it was administrative-wise feasible. Besides, the sanction amount can be increased for those who persistently refuse to comply without acceptable reason.

Recommendation

4. Most recently, The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau has proposed to increase the “non-deduction” limit from \$600 to \$800 under the DE requirement. We

recommend that the level of sanction could also be increased by doubling the amount every half a year until it reaches the limit of \$800 per month for an individual refusing to join or failing to comply with the requirements of the ND Project without acceptable reasons. The amount of sanction could also be administered as a percentage of total CSSA payment received if administratively feasible.

For parents with children studying in full-time school, which is the case in most schools, working part-time with 60 hours a month, which is on average 15 hours per week or 3 hours per day (assume a 5-day week) can easily be achieved. In fact, the employed respondents worked on average, 100 hours per month. Besides, over forty percent of the employed respondents in the ND Project indicated that they intended to seek full-time job (Table 11). If traveling time is not too long (say within 1 hour, which is the case for most local jobs), working 4-5 hours per day (assuming a 5-day week); i.e. 80-100 hours per month should not interfere with child caring work too much especially for children aged 12 or above.

Recommendation

5. Work hour requirement for single parents/carers with youngest child aged between 12 and 14 could be gradually increased to 80-100 hours per month (equivalent to an average of 4-5 hours per day for a 5-day week).

Based on the data we collected through our Main Survey, employment brings in more benefits financially and psychologically to the participants and there is little adverse effect, and it is easier for participants to find jobs at a younger age. Thus, the logical conclusion is that it is reasonable to lower the age limit to 6, when the youngest child starts studying in full-time primary school. In fact, most developed countries require single parents to start seeking job when their youngest child aged below 6 (for example Luxembourg, Canada, USA, Netherlands, France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, see Appendix 9 and p. 24 as attached. The body of literature also indicates that the earlier a social assistant recipient starts employment; the better the chance for the person to stay in employment and to become self-reliance.

However, most of the operators and participants did not favor lowering the age limit of the youngest child for the targeted ND participants. This might reflect that taking care of younger children is still considered as primary role for mothers. In this study, we did not cover the public's views towards the ND Project. The fact that only 69.2% of women aged between 35 and 44 took part in the labour force as compared to 81.8% of those aged between 25 and 34 in 2006 might reflect this tendency¹. This is an option for those who can afford to leave the labor market and take up full-time child caring role, but whether the society should provide financial support for those who want this option is contentious.

During school holidays and summer, to meet the demands of work and family care requires better planning and arrangement (for example contacting NGOs, SWD or friends and relatives for looking after their children after school hours) particularly if the work requirement is set at a high level.

One possible option is that while work hour requirement can be increased to 80-100

¹ 2006 by-census figures, the percentage was deduced from table 2 and 18.

hours per month or beyond (i.e. 4-5 hours per day in a 5-day week) for targeted participants whose youngest child aged 12 or above, it could be set at a lower level, for example 60 hours per month (i.e. 3 hours per day in a 5-day week) for those whose children aged between six (assuming studying in a primary school) and 12 to allow more flexibility and preparation in fulfilling the demands both from work and child caring.

Recommendation

6. For single parents/carers with youngest child studying in primary school and aged between six and eleven, they should start joining the ND Project. However the work requirement could be less than 60 hours per month (equivalent to an average of 3 hours per day for a 5-day week). Better information and support in arranging after-school child care should be provided.

Whereas sanction serves as a push factor, employment opportunities and improvement in family finance through employment are the pull factors. Apparently Central & Western, Hong Kong South, Kwun Tong and other districts with more supply of jobs that require lower skills level fits the ND Project target participants better. Tin Shui Wai, however, is on the other extreme in terms of employment opportunities. The situation in Tin Shui Wai warrants special attention. Otherwise, targeted participants, seeing little prospect in finding jobs, would be frustrated by their repeated failure in seeking employment and might consider the ND Project as merely an excuse to cut their benefits.

Recommendation

7. Special considerations should be made for the targeted participants living in Tin Shui Wai. The data, in-depth interviews as well as focus group interviews with the ND IEAP operators also indicated that local jobs are not readily available as compared to other districts. In fact, a higher proportion of targeted participants declined to join the ND Project. Many ND participants have to look for jobs in Yuen Long and other districts. The time and cost for travelling discourages many to take up employment in districts outside Tin Shui Wai. The recently approved Transport Support Scheme (TSS) is useful to encourage more to take up employment outside Yuen Long/Tin Shui Wai. Nevertheless, other options can also be explored to create more local jobs, for example to support social enterprises that can create local jobs with flexible working hours and requires skills level that can be fulfilled by the ND participants.

Appendices

Table 7 Status of enrollment in EA and ND IEAP activities (Q25, 26)

	SP		Carers		Total	
Having joined any one ND IEAP/EA activity	181	26.3%	104	26.0%	285	26.2%
Enrolled in one of the EA activities	99	14.4%	46	11.5%	145	13.3%
Enrolled in one of the ND IEAP activities	125	18.2%	76	19.0%	201	18.5%
Enrolled in both EA/ND IEAP activities	43	6.3%	18	4.5%	61	5.6%
Nil entries	506	73.7%	296	74.0%	802	73.8%
All respondents	687	100.0%	400	100.0%	1087	100.0%

Table 9 Work Situations

	Employed		Refusal		ND	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
Total no. of working hours in a month	134.78hrs	139.43hrs	143.8hrs	184.0hrs	107.59hrs	135.59hrs

Table 10 Perceived factors in successful engaging in gainful employment

Perceived factors	Employed (Q.34) ²		Refusal (Q.31) ³		ND (Q.28) ⁴	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
Relying on my own effort	21(46.7%)	10(47.6%)	2(18.2%)	2(66.7%)	185(26.9%)	108(27.0%)
Having work experience	5(11.1%)	3(14.3%)	2(18.2%)	0(0.0%)	135(19.7%)	89(22.3%)
Assistance or encouragement from SWD staff	5(11.1%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	78(11.4%)	50(12.5%)
Job matching service according aptitude	2(4.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	61(8.9%)	40(10.0%)
Job matching service by Labor Department	5(11.1%)	0(0.0%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	52(7.6%)	44(11.0%)
Children having self-care ability	3(6.7%)	2(9.5%)	1(9.1%)	1(33.3%)	66(9.6%)	19(4.8%)
Having adequate educational qualification	2(4.4%)	3(14.3%)	2(18.2%)	0(0.0%)	37(6.2%)	24(7.0%)
Luck	6(10.3%)	3(14.3%)	4(36.4)	1(33.3%)	44(6.4%)	17(4.3%)
Having relevant job technique	1(2.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	37(5.4%)	22(5.5%)
Assistance or encouragement by NGOs' social worker	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	31(4.5%)	19(4.8%)
Having childcare arrangement	1(2.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(33.3%)	33(4.8%)	9(2.3%)
Job matching service according to living area	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	21(3.1%)	16(4.0%)
Job matching service according to family needs	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	20(2.9%)	11(2.8%)
Having a variety of vocational training classes	1(2.2%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	13(1.9%)	9(2.3%)
ND IEAP/EA seminars/courses enhancing my job searching skills	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	9(1.3%)	7(1.8%)
All respondents	45	21	11	3	687	400

² Parents in the Employed group who had looked for jobs (Q31-1) in the previous 6 months and were employed at the time of interview (Q32 – 1) were asked to answer this question. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

³ Parents in the Refusal group who were employed at the time of interview (Q13) were asked to answer this question. Respondents could give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses. In addition, the number of respondents reported perceived factors that were useful for them to get a job in the Refusal group was very few. The figures thus calculated were unstable.

⁴ All parents in the ND group were asked to answer this question. Respondents could give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

Table 11 Intention to work longer hours⁵ (Q42c)

Intention to seek full-time job	SP		Carers		Total	
Totally agree	26	8.8%	10	7.9%	36	8.5%
Agree	132	44.4%	50	39.4%	182	42.9%
Disagree	130	43.8%	62	48.8%	192	45.3%
Totally disagree	3	1.0%	1	.8%	4	.9%
Nil entries	6	2.0%	4	3.1%	10	2.4%
All respondents	297	100.0%	127	100.0%	424	100.0%

Table 12 Financial situations

Financial situation	Employed		Refusal		ND	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
<i>Income from CSSA (Employed: Q39, Refusal: Q34, ND: Q44)</i>						
Less than 3000	46(27.7%)	22(36.1%)	16(6.3%)	30(14.8%)	88(12.8%)	69(17.3%)
3001 to 6000	82(49.4%)	22(36.1%)	140(55.6%)	76(37.4%)	359(52.3%)	144(36.0%)
More than 6001	36(21.7%)	14(23.0%)	91(36.1%)	90(44.3%)	231(33.6%)	179(44.8%)
Average	\$4297.5	\$4029.3	\$5697.8	\$5951.2	\$5283.7	\$5760.2
All respondents	166	61	252	203	687	400
Nil entries	2(1.2%)	3(4.9%)	5(2.0%)	7(3.4%)	9(1.3%)	8(2.0%)
<i>Income from other sources (Employed: Q40, Refusal: Q35, ND: Q45)</i>						
Less than 3000	145(87.3%)	32(52.5%)	231(91.7%)	128(63.1%)	609(88.6%)	237(62.2%)
3001 to 6000	9(5.4%)	8(13.1%)	12(4.8%)	41(20.2%)	30(4.4%)	101(26.5%)
More than 6001	6(3.6%)	13(21.3%)	3(1.2%)	19(9.4%)	23(3.3%)	43(11.3%)
Average	\$900.3	\$2917.8	\$407.7	\$2145.5	\$683.3	\$2510.0
All respondents	166	61	252	203	687	400
Nil entries	6(3.6%)	8(13.1%)	6(2.4%)	15(7.4%)	25(3.6%)	19(4.8%)
<i>Income from work (Employed: Q27a, Refusal: Q30a, ND: Q42b)</i>						
Less than 3000	77(48.7%)	23(41.8%)	5(45.5%)	1(33.3%)	203(68.4%)	77(60.6%)
3001 to 6000	63(39.9%)	22(40.0%)	3(27.3%)	1(33.3%)	63(21.2%)	40(31.5%)
More than 6001	14(8.9%)	7(12.7%)	2(18.2%)	1(33.3%)	20(6.7%)	5(3.9%)
Average	\$3593.3	\$3813.7	\$3779.0	\$5166.7	\$2641.5	\$2990.1
All respondents	158	55	11	3	297	127
Nil entries	4(2.5%)	3(5.5%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	11(3.7%)	5(3.9%)
<i>Income from job, CSSA and other sources</i>						
Less than 3000	1(.6%)	3(4.9%)	7(2.8%)	3(1.5%)	20(2.9%)	10(2.5%)
3001 to 6000	24(14.5%)	9(14.8%)	128(50.8%)	41(20.2%)	284(41.3%)	66(16.5%)
More than 6001	140(84.3%)	48(78.7%)	112(44.4%)	149(73.4%)	381(55.5%)	321(80.3%)
Average	\$8498.1	\$9777.5	\$6274.7	\$8213.9	\$6985.1	\$9015.3
All respondents	166	61	252	203	687	400
Nil entries	1(.6%)	1(1.6%)	5(2.0%)	10(4.9%)	2(.3%)	3(.8%)

⁵ Parents who were employed at the time of interview (Q36) were asked this question.

Table 14 Engagement in EA services⁶

EA programmes	SP	Carer
a Establish personal job seeking plan		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	56(8.2%)	22(5.5%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	3.3	3.9
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	17(30.9%)	6(28.6%)
Not helpful	38(69.1%)	15(71.4%)
Completely not helpful	--	--
b Provide job market information/employment counseling		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	41(6.0%)	23(5.8%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	5.0	3.1
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	1(2.5%)	0(0.0%)
Helpful	12(30.0%)	9(39.1%)
Not helpful	25(62.5%)	14(60.9%)
Completely not helpful	2(5.0%)	0(0.0%)
c Provide job vacancy information/ instruct steps to use job-searching engine		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	30(4.4%)	10(2.5%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.8	4.0
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	10(34.5%)	1(11.1%)
Not helpful	18(62.1%)	8(88.9%)
Completely not helpful	1(3.4%)	0(0.0%)
d Job matching service		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	24(3.5%)	12(3.0%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.5	2.5
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	10(43.5%)	4(33.3%)
Not helpful	12(52.2%)	8(66.7%)
Completely not helpful	1(4.3%)	0(0.0%)
e Ongoing job support service		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	8(1.2%)	2(.5%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	1.2	2.0
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	5(62.5%)	1(50.0%)
Not helpful	3(37.5%)	1(50.0%)
Completely not helpful	--	--
f After-school supportive programme for young child(ren)		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	5(.7%)	3(.8%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	3.0	2.3
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	2(40.0%)	0(0.0%)
Not helpful	3(60.0%)	1(100.0%)
Completely not helpful	--	--

⁶ Parents who had participated in EA services (Q25) were asked to answer this question.

Table 15 Engagement in ND IEAP services⁷

ND IEAP services	SP	Carer
a Job seeking technique		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	35(5.3%)	25(6.6%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	NA	NA
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	0(0.0%)	1(4.2%)
Helpful	22(66.7%)	12(50.0%)
Not helpful	11(33.3%)	10(41.7%)
Completely not helpful	--	1(4.2%)
b Showing job posting channel/providing job vacancy information		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	32(4.9%)	18(4.7%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.6	3.1
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	11(39.3%)	11(61.1%)
Not helpful	16(57.1%)	6(33.3%)
Completely not helpful	1(3.6%)	1(5.6%)
c Providing occupational technical training		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	78(11.9%)	37(9.7%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.4	2.4
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	3(4.0%)	2(5.4%)
Helpful	41(54.7%)	20(54.1%)
Not helpful	31(41.3%)	12(32.4%)
Completely not helpful	0(0.0%)	3(8.1%)
d Individual employment counseling		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	8(1.2%)	6(1.6%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.8	2.5
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	3(37.5%)	4(66.7%)
Not helpful	4(50.0%)	1(16.7%)
Completely not helpful	1(12.5%)	1(16.70%)
e Job sharing session/seminar		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	30(4.6%)	27(7.1%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.6	2.5
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	14(50.0%)	14(53.8%)
Not helpful	11(39.3%)	11(42.3%)
Completely not helpful	3(10.7%)	1(3.8%)
f Job matching service		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	14(2.1%)	5(1.3%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.7	2.0
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	5(35.7%)	5(100.0%)
Not helpful	8(57.1%)	0(0.0%)
Completely not helpful	1(7.1%)	0(0.0%)
g Ongoing job support service		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	1(.2%)	1(.3%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	3.0	3.0
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		

⁷ Parents who had participated in ND IEAP services (Q26) were asked to answer this question.

ND IEAP services	SP	Carer
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	--	--
Not helpful	1(100.0%)	1(100.0%)
Completely not helpful	--	--
h Parent-child activities		
<i>Total no of people attended</i>	10(1.5%)	2(.5%)
<i>Average no. of attendance</i>	2.5	2.5
<i>Effectiveness of this service</i>		
Completely helpful	--	--
Helpful	5(50.0%)	1(50.0%)
Not helpful	5(50.0%)	1(50.0%)
Completely not helpful	--	--

Table 16 Changes in job seeking intention after engaging in EA and ND IEAP services (Q27 – only for those who reported having joined EA and ND IEAP services)

	SP		Carers	
No. of people having improvement in job seeking intention after joining the EA	50	50.5%	18	39.1%
All respondents	99	100.0%	46	100.0%
No. of people having improvement in job seeking intention after joining the ND IEAP	64	51.2%	40	52.6%
All respondents	125	100.0%	76	100.0%
No. of people having improvement in job seeking intention after joining the EA/ND IEAP	90	49.7%	48	46.2%
All respondents	181	100.0%	104	100.0%

Table 17 Reasons for having changes in job seeking intention after the participation in EA/ND IEAP services⁸

Q27_1a. Reasons of change	SP	Carer
Want to increase family income	31(34.4%)	16(33.3%)
Want to become self-reliance	26(28.9%)	17(35.4%)
Find a suitable job	16(17.8%)	7(14.60%)
The services/activities of EA/ND IEAP are useful	12(13.3%)	5(10.4%)
Have better self-confidence	11(12.2%)	4(8.3%)
Want to widen social network	11(12.2%)	3(6.3%)
Want to better integrate into the society	11(12.2%)	2(4.2%)
All respondents	90	48

⁸ Respondents who had participated in EA/ND IEAP services (Q25, Q26) were asked to answer this question. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

Table 19 Employment situations of the respondents in the ND group

	SP		Carers		All respondents	
Q32 Able to find jobs through various channels	371	54.0%	170	42.5%	541	49.8%
Cannot find job through any channel	315	45.9%	230	57.5%	545	50.1%
Nil entries	1	.1%	0	0.0%	1	.1%
All respondents	687	100.0%	400	100.0%	1087	100.0%
Q33 Have taken up the job ⁹	323	87.1%	139	81.8%	462	85.4%
Have not taken up the job	48	12.9%	31	18.2%	79	14.6%
All respondents	371	100.0%	170	100.0%	541	100.0%
Q36 Still working now ¹⁰	297	92.0%	127	92.4%	424	91.8%
Not working now	26	8.0%	12	8.6%	38	8.2%
All respondents	323	100.0%	139	100.0%	462	100.0%

Table 20 Advantages in successful job placement

Advantages in successful job placement	Employed (Q.38) ¹¹		Refusal (Q.32) ¹²		ND (Q43) ¹³	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
Increase in family income	13(27.7%)	7(33.3%)	3(27.3%)	1(33.3%)	84(28.3%)	32(26.0%)
Becoming self reliance	10(21.3%)	3(14.3%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	50(16.8%)	24(18.9%)
Expanding social network	7(14.9%)	1(4.8%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	51(17.2%)	17(13.4%)
Leaving CSSA	6(12.8%)	2(9.5%)	3(27.3%)	1(33.3%)	38(12.8%)	17(13.4%)
Having stronger motivation in working	2(4.3%)	4(19.0%)	--	--	21(7.1%)	15(11.8%)
Improving family's standard of living	9(19.1%)	5(23.8%)	4(36.4%)	0(0.0%)	23(7.7%)	10(7.9%)
Better integration into society	3(6.4%)	0(0.0%)	--	--	24(8.1%)	9(7.1%)
Increase in self confidence	6(12.8%)	2(9.5%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	25(8.4%)	6(4.7%)
Improving mental health	6(12.8%)	2(9.5%)	--	--	23(7.7%)	7(5.5%)
Securing job	5(10.6%)	3(14.3%)	--	--	18(6.1%)	8(6.3%)
Increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy	3(6.4%)	1(4.8%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	15(5.1%)	4(3.1%)
Lessening discrimination by others	0(0.0%)	1(4.8%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	9(3.0%)	6(4.7%)
Supported or affirmed by family members	5(10.6%)	1(4.8%)	1(9.1%)	0(0.0%)	7(2.4%)	6(4.7%)
Using rational attitude to cope with problem	1(2.1%)	0(0.0%)	--	--	5(1.7%)	2(1.6%)
No obvious help	1(2.1%)	2(9.5%)	--	--	5(1.7%)	0(0.0%)
All respondents	47	21	11	3	297	127

⁹ Respondents who had found jobs (Q32) through various channels indicated in Q29 a-k were asked this question.

¹⁰ Respondents who had taken up the job (Q33) and had found jobs (Q32) through various channels indicated in Q29 a-k were asked this question.

¹¹ Parents in the Employed group who had looked for jobs (Q31) in the previous 6 months and were employed at the time of interview (Q32 – 1 & 3) were asked to answer this question. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

¹² Parents in the Refusal group who were employed at the time of interview (Q13) were asked to answer this question. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses. In addition, the number of respondents in the Refusal group answering this question was very few. The figures thus calculated are not stable.

¹³ Parents who were employed at the time of interview (Q36) were asked to answer this question. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

Table 21 Children's view of the employment of his/her parent/child carer (SQ18 and SQ28)¹⁴

	Employed		Refusal		ND	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
Views of parent/child carer's working by children						
Supportive	154(92.8%)	54(88.5%)	166(65.9%)	141(69.0%)	557(81.1%)	302(75.5%)
Not supportive	12(7.2%)	7(11.5%)	85(33.7%)	62(30.5%)	127(18.5%)	92(23.0%)
Support father, but not mother	--	--	0(0.0%)	1(.4%)	0(0.0%)	2(.5%)
Nil entries	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(.4%)	0(0.0%)	3(.4%)	4(1.0%)
All respondents	166	61	252	203	687(100.0%)	400(100.0%)
Reasons for being supportive to their parent/child carer's working¹⁵						
Increase in family income	84(54.5%)	22(44.4%)	86(51.8%)	63(44.7%)	300(53.9%)	178(58.7%)
Having more pocket money	39(25.3%)	18(35.2%)	39(23.5%)	49(34.8%)	127(22.8%)	81(26.6%)
Improvement in standard of living	9(5.8%)	7(13.0%)	36(21.7%)	29(20.6%)	103(18.5%)	66(21.7%)
Leaving CSSA	13(8.4%)	4(7.4%)	26(15.7%)	11(7.8%)	69(12.4%)	32(10.5%)
Becoming happier	27(17.6%)	7(13.0%)	21(12.7%)	12(8.5%)	70(12.6%)	27(8.9%)
Expanding social network	11(7.1%)	3(5.6%)	14(8.4%)	14(9.9%)	50(9.0%)	29(9.5%)
Better integration into society	8(5.2%)	5(9.3%)	9(5.4%)	7(5.0%)	42(7.5%)	24(7.9%)
Work can be handled easily	9(5.8%)	2(3.7%)	11(6.6%)	14(9.9%)	29(5.2%)	22(7.2%)
Improvement in mental health	4(2.6%)	0(0.0%)	3(1.8%)	2(1.4%)	21(3.8%)	6(2.0%)
Enhancing self-confidence	1(.6%)	3(5.6%)	2(1.2%)	3(2.1%)	18(3.2%)	4(1.3%)
All respondents	154(100.0%)	54(100.0%)	166(100.0%)	141(100.0%)	557(100.0%)	304(100.0%)
Reasons for not supporting their parent/child carer's working¹⁶						
Worsening of their health	2(16.7%)	3(42.9%)	26(30.6%)	27(43.5%)	42(33.1%)	36(38.3%)
Less time meeting them	6(50.0%)	3(42.9%)	33(38.8%)	20(32.3%)	50(39.4%)	23(24.5%)
Less time talking with them	5(41.7%)	2(28.6%)	17(20.0%)	6(9.7%)	32(25.2%)	15(16.0%)
Work being too heavy for them	3(25.0%)	1(14.3%)	18(21.2%)	12(19.4%)	29(22.8%)	17(18.1%)
Parent-child relationship becoming detached	--	--	10(11.8%)	7(11.3%)	15(11.8%)	6(6.4%)
Worsening of their mental health	1(8.3%)	0(0.0%)	5(5.9%)	4(6.5%)	9(7.1%)	4(4.3%)
Unreasonably low wages	--	--	1(1.2%)	1(1.6%)	9(7.1%)	3(3.2%)
Easily wounded in work	--	--	0(0.0%)	3(4.8%)	0(0.0%)	3(3.2%)
No change in pocket money	--	--	--	--	0(0.0%)	2(2.1%)
No change in family income	--	--	1(1.2%)	--	0(0.0%)	2(2.1%)
No improvement in quality of life	1(8.3%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.2%)	1(1.6%)	2(1.6%)	0(0.0%)
All respondents	12(100.0%)	7(100.0%)	85(100.0%)	62(100.0%)	127(100.0%)	94(100.0%)

¹⁴ Items with the prefix "SQ" represent the corresponding questionnaire items for children while prefix "Q" represent those for parents/carers.

¹⁵ Children who reported "support parents working" (SQ18 & SQ28) were asked to answer this session. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

¹⁶ Children who reported "not support parents working" (SQ18 & SQ28) were asked to answer this session. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

Table 22 Children's views regarding impacts to themselves as a result of their parent/carer's changes in employment status

	Employed				Refusal				ND			
	SP		Carers		SP		Carers		SP		Carers	
SQ13/SQ23. Children's views on parent-child relationship as a result of their parent/carer's changes in employment status/ the elapse of one year/ the participation in the ND Project												
Very poor	0(0.0%)		1(1.6%)		2(.8%)		0(0.0%)		2(.3%)		0(0.0%)	
Poor	8(4.8%)		4(6.6%)		12(4.8%)		8(3.9%)		30(4.4%)		7(1.8%)	
Good	154(92.8%)		55(90.2%)		220(87.3%)		179(88.2%)		611(88.9%)		364(91.0%)	
Very good	3(1.8%)		1(1.6%)		13(5.2%)		14(6.9%)		17(2.5%)		14(3.5%)	
Nil entries	1(.6%)		0(0.0%)		5(2.0%)		2(1.0%)		27(3.9%)		15(3.8%)	
All respondents	166(100.0%)		61(100.0%)		252(100.0%)		203(100.0%)		687(100.0%)		400(100.0%)	
SQ14/SQ24. Children's views on their family lives as a result of their parent/carer's changes in employment status/ the elapse of one year/ the participation in the ND Project												
Very poor	0(0.0%)		1(1.6%)		1(.4%)		0(0.0%)		2(.3%)		0(0.0%)	
Poor	8(4.8%)		2(3.3%)		9(3.6%)		9(4.4%)		27(3.9%)		11(2.8%)	
Good	154(92.8%)		55(90.2%)		226(89.7%)		180(88.7%)		617(89.8%)		362(90.5%)	
Very good	3(1.8%)		3(4.9%)		11(4.4%)		12(5.9%)		14(2.0%)		11(2.8%)	
Nil entries	1(.6%)		0(0.0%)		5(2.0%)		2(1.0%)		27(3.9%)		16(4.0%)	
All respondents	166(100.0%)		61(100.0%)		252(100.0%)		203(100.0%)		687(100.0%)		400(100.0%)	

Table 23 Children's perceived financial conditions of their family (SQ7)

	Employed				Refusal				ND			
	SP		Carers		SP		Carers		SP		Carers	
Poor	66	39.8%	22	36.1%	76	30.2%	35	17.2%	162	23.6%	94	23.5%
Fair	80	48.2%	35	57.4%	157	62.3%	153	75.4%	477	69.4%	282	70.5%
Adequate	13	7.8%	4	6.6%	14	5.6%	12	5.9%	32	4.7%	20	5.0%
Nil entries	7	4.2%	0	0.0%	5	2.0%	3	1.5%	16	2.3%	4	1.0%
All respondents	166	100.0%	61	100.0%	252	100.0%	203	100.0%	687	100.0%	400	100.0%

Table 24 Children's views regarding impacts to them as a result of their family's financial situation

	Employed		Refusal		ND	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
SQ9 & SQ7 Impact on children's social network in relation to family's financial situation						
<i>Poor financial status</i>						
Entirely affected	1(1.5%)	0(0.0%)	2(2.6%)	0(0.0%)	10(6.2%)	5(5.3%)
Affected	49(74.2%)	14(63.6%)	44(57.9%)	16(45.7%)	67(41.4%)	43(45.7%)
General/ordinary	8(12.1%)	5(22.7%)	5(6.6%)	4(11.4%)	24(14.8%)	10(10.6%)
Not affected	8(12.1%)	3(13.6%)	25(32.9%)	15(42.9%)	50(30.9%)	27(28.7%)
Entirely unaffected	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	11(6.8%)	8(8.5%)
Nil entries	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.1%)
All respondents	66(100.0%)	22(100.0%)	76(100.0%)	35(100.0%)	162(100.0%)	94(100.0%)
SQ10 & SQ7 Impact on children's learning attitude in relation to family's financial situation						
<i>Poor financial status</i>						
Entirely affected	2(3.0%)	0(0.0%)	5(6.6%)	1(2.9%)	10(6.2%)	6(6.4%)
Affected	45(68.2%)	15(68.3%)	39(51.3%)	14(40.0%)	74(45.7%)	43(45.7%)
General/ordinary	11(16.7%)	3(13.6%)	7(9.2%)	5(14.3%)	20(12.3%)	10(10.6%)
Not affected	8(12.1%)	3(13.6%)	25(32.9%)	15(42.9%)	45(27.8%)	25(26.6%)
Entirely unaffected	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	13(8.0%)	8(8.5%)
Nil entries	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	2(2.1%)
All respondents	66(100.0%)	22(100.0%)	76(100.0%)	35(100.0%)	162(100.0%)	94(100.0%)

Table 27 Family relationship

	Employed		Refusal		ND	
	SP	Carers	SP	Carers	SP	Carers
SQ19/29. Changes in the amount of time in getting along with father/male carer, mother/female carer before and after the employment/elapse one year/participation in the ND Project						
More time	3(1.8%)	0(0.0%)	28(11.1%)	20(9.9%)	62(9.0%)	38(9.5%)
Less time	77(46.4%)	25(41.0%)	19(7.5%)	15(7.4%)	94(13.7%)	36(9.0%)
Unchanged	85(51.2%)	35(57.4%)	203(80.6%)	166(81.8%)	507(73.8%)	310(77.5%)
Nil entries	1(.6%)	1(1.6%)	2(.8%)	2(1.0%)	24(3.5%)	16(4.0%)
All respondents	166(100.0%)	61(100.0%)	252(100.0%)	203(100.0%)	687(100.0%)	400(100.0%)
SQ20/30. Changes in relationship with father/male carer, mother/female carer before and after the employment/elapse one year/participation in the ND Project						
Better	9(5.4%)	1(1.6%)	18(7.1%)	14(6.9%)	49(7.1%)	24(6.0%)
Worsen	11(6.6%)	1(1.6%)	9(3.6%)	6(3.0%)	24(3.5%)	19(4.8%)
Unchanged	145(87.3%)	58(95.1%)	223(88.5%)	181(89.2%)	590(85.9%)	341(85.3%)
Nil entries	1(.6%)	1(1.6%)	2(.8%)	2(1.0%)	24(3.5%)	16(4.0%)
All respondents	166(100.0%)	61(100.0%)	252(100.0%)	203(100.0%)	687(100.0%)	400(100.0%)
SQ21/31. Changes in family atmosphere before and after the employment/elapse one year/participation in the ND Project						
Happier	5(3.0%)	1(1.6%)	13(5.2%)	12(5.9%)	46(6.7%)	23(5.8%)
Less happier	8(4.8%)	1(1.6%)	9(3.6%)	7(3.4%)	28(4.1%)	16(4.0%)
Unchanged	152(91.6%)	58(95.1%)	228(90.5%)	182(89.7%)	585(85.2%)	344(86.0%)
Nil entries	1(.6%)	1(1.6%)	2(.8%)	2(1.0%)	28(4.1%)	17(4.3%)
All respondents	166(100.0%)	61(100.0%)	252(100.0%)	203(100.0%)	687(100.0%)	400(100.0%)

Table 28 Reasons of not joining the ND Project given by the Refusal group (Q36)

Status	SP	Carer
Not being required to join	12(4.8%)	10(4.9%)
Unwilling to join	238(94.4%)	189(93.1%)
Nil entries	2(.8%)	4(2.0%)
	All respondents 252(100.0%)	203(100.0%)
Reasons of their unwillingness to join ¹⁷		
Having to take care of family members	165(69.3%)	116(61.4%)
Having health problem	54(22.7%)	52(27.5%)
Avoiding children develop deviant behaviors	51(21.4%)	23(12.2%)
Not having enough time	24(10.1%)	18(9.5%)
Avoiding the restrictions of the ND requirements	10(4.2%)	19(10.1%)
Not being interested	8(3.4%)	7(3.7%)
Not being sure about one's ability to handle the work	6(2.5%)	8(4.2%)
Troublesome	7(2.9%)	5(2.6%)
Not having sufficient confidence	3(1.3%)	6(3.2%)
Not wanting to join	6(2.5%)	3(1.6%)
Having language barrier	1(.4%)	7(3.7%)
Having secured job already	6(2.5%)	2(1.1%)
	All respondents 238(100.0%)	189(100.0%)

Table 29 Responses to an increased amount of sanction if participants are not joining the ND Project (Q37)

	SP	Carer
Leaving CSSA	9(3.6%)	5(2.5%)
Allowing the government to reduce the CSSA amount	129(51.2%)	120(59.1%)
Trying to enroll in the ND Project	113(44.8%)	73(36.0%)
Nil entries	1(.4%)	5(2.5%)
	All respondents 252(100.0%)	203(100.0%)

Table 37 Variables in the model for predicting the employment status of the respondents

	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 8 Single parent/Child carer (SP=1, CC=0)	0.825	0.000	2.282
Family size	0.264	0.000	1.302
Sex (Female=1 Male=0)	1.451	0.000	4.266
Aged over 44 (Yes=1 No=0)	-0.248	0.035	0.780
Previous working Experience (Yes=1, No=0)	0.778	0.000	0.459
Amount of CSSA received	-0.300	0.000	0.741
District			
• District(3) (CW/HKS/KT/WTS=1, Others =0)	0.425	0.010	1.530
• District(4) (TSW/SK=1, Others=0)	-0.510	0.013	0.600
Children's support (Low=1... High=4)	0.812	0.000	2.251
Constant	-4.199	.000	0.015

- CSSA was recoded by dividing the value by 1000 to increase the B value for easy reference; such changes had no impact to the overall significance of the model
- District and education were categorical variables and were thus entered as dummy variables. The districts were regrouped according to Table 35 into six groups. Subsequently, they were entered into the model as five dummy variables. For example for district(1): YTM, Island=1, Others=0; district(4): TSW, SK=1, Others=0 and so forth
- The negative value of B denotes that an increase in the value of the independent variable will result in a decrease in the outcome (employment in this case)
- Exp (B) is the exponential of B. It is a positive value and denotes the increase in total odd ratio of prediction by

¹⁷ Parents who reported "unwilling to join" the ND Project (Q36) were asked to answer this session. Respondents were allowed to give multiple responses. The figures of all respondents are not the sum of each of the responses.

change in a unit of the independent variable

Table 39 Variables in the prediction model for the employment status of the ND Project participants

	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 8 Single parent/Child carer (SP=1, CC=0)	0.840	0.000	2.315
Family size	0.337	0.000	1.401
Aged over 44 (Yes=1 No=0)	-0.297	0.044	0.743
Sex (Female=1 Male=0)	1.261	0.000	3.529
Amount of CSSA received	-0.291	0.000	0.747
District			
• District(4) (TSW/SK=1, Others=0)	-0.855	0.003	0.425
Children's support (Low=1...High=4)	0.531	0.000	0.588
No. of means taken to find jobs	0.236	0.000	1.267
Constant	-3.167	0.000	0.042

- CSSA was recoded by dividing the value by 1000 to increase the B value for easy reference; such changes had no impact to the overall significance of the model
- District and education were categorical variables and were thus entered as dummy variables. The districts were regrouped according to Table 35 into six groups. Subsequently, they were entered into the model as five dummy variables. For example for district(1): YTM, Island=1, Others=0; district(4): TSW, SK=1, Others=0 and so forth
- The negative value of B denotes that an increase in the value of the independent variable will result in a decrease in the outcome (employment in this case)
- Exp (B) is the exponential of B. It is a positive value and denotes the increase in total odd ratio of prediction by change in a unit of the independent variable

Table 40 Comparison of family and individual characteristics (continuous variables)

	Groups of respondents			
	Employed (227)*	Refusal (455)	ND – employed (462)	ND - Not employed (625)
	Mean			
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekdays (View of children)	6.16	8.16	7.78	8.51
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekend (View of children)	8.28	10.12	10.11	10.71
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekdays (View of parents)	6.25	8.45	7.87	8.83
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekend (View of parents)	8.09	10.40	10.14	10.93
Attitudes towards family relationship	23.35	21.52	21.41	21.47
Rosenberg self-esteem scores (parents)	28.14	27.73	27.99	27.53
Rosenberg self-esteem scores (children)	28.54	28.56	28.81	28.56
Work attitude - Feeling of Tiredness	10.04		10.04	9.55
Work attitude – Want to be independent	6.35		6.04	5.93
Work attitude - Feeling depressed and idle for not working	9.88		9.83	9.55
Children self-efficacy	85.05	89.34	87.95	88.06
Children perceived level of performance	28.14	27.43	27.21	27.22

*Figures in the bracket are the highest number of cases in that category

Table 41 Comparison of family and individual characteristics (categorical variables)

	Groups of respondents							
	Employed		Refusal		ND - employed		ND - Not employed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Amount of pocket money (youngest child) $\chi^2=24.0^*$								
None	53	23.3	132	29.3	97	21.3	170	27.2
Under \$200	147	64.8	249	55.3	270	59.3	351	56.3
\$200-499	21	9.3	44	9.8	64	14.1	79	12.7
\$500-999	5	2.2	25	5.6	22	4.8	24	3.8
Over \$1000	1	0.4			2	0.4		
Children perception about their family financial condition $\chi^2=60.5^{***}$								
Very bad/poor			6	1.3	6	1.3	21	3.4
Bad/poor	88	40.0	105	23.5	83	18.5	146	23.6
Average/fair	115	52.3	310	69.4	329	73.3	430	69.6
Good/Adequate	17	7.7	26	5.8	31	6.9	21	3.4
Changes in time spent with children (View of children) $\chi^2=236.0^{***}$								
Better	3	1.3	48	10.6	37	8.1	61	10.3
Less	102	45.3	34	7.5	97	21.3	34	5.7
No Change	120	53.3	369	81.8	321	70.5	497	84.0
Changes in relationship with parents (View of children)								
Better	10	4.4	32	7.1	34	7.5	36	6.1
Less	12	5.3	15	3.3	16	3.5	27	4.6
No Change	203	90.2	404	89.6	405	89.0	529	89.4
Changes in family atmosphere (View of children)								
Better	6	2.7	25	5.5	32	7.1	38	6.4
Less	9	4.0	16	3.5	22	4.9	20	3.4
No Change	210	93.3	410	90.9	398	88.1	532	90.2
Previous relationship with children (View of parents)								
Very good	12	5.3	33	7.3	42	9.1	48	7.7
Good	199	88.1	397	87.3	395	85.9	531	85.6
Poor	15	6.6	24	5.3	22	4.8	39	6.3
Very poor			1	0.2	1	0.2	2	0.3
Current relationship with children (View of parents)								
Better	40	17.6	71	15.6	51	11.1	51	8.2
Worse	9	4.0	25	5.5	22	4.8	27	4.4
No change	178	78.4	359	78.9	387	84.1	541	87.4
Previous family atmosphere (View of parents)								
Very happy	15	6.7	36	7.9	21	4.6	30	4.9
Happy	184	82.1	357	78.8	356	78.4	480	79.1
Unhappy	24	10.7	57	12.6	75	16.5	95	15.7
Very unhappy	1	0.4	3	0.7	2	0.4	2	0.3
Current family atmosphere (View of parents) $\chi^2=24.6^{***}$								
Happier	14	6.2	41	9.1	26	5.7	27	4.4
Not so happy	7	3.1	47	10.4	29	6.4	41	6.7
No change	204	90.7	363	80.5	399	87.9	542	88.9

*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001

Table 44 Comparison of ND Participants before and after joining the ND Project

Items	All ND Participants		ND – employed at post-test	
	Paired -t	df	Paired -t	df
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekdays (View of children)	-5.787***	48	-3.536**	22
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekend (View of children)	-1.861	48	-0.310	22
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekdays (View of parents)	-4.978***	51	-3.096**	23
Amount of time spent (hrs) with children in weekend (View of parents)	-1.427	52	-1.365	23
Attitudes towards family relationship	1.514	51	0.941	23
Rosenberg self-esteem scores (parents)	-3.312**	52	-3.428**	23
Rosenberg self-esteem scores (children)	-4.603***	52	-3.633***	23
Work attitude - Feeling of tiredness	-2.327*	52	-2.145*	23
Work attitude - Want to be independent	5.742***	52	2.744*	23
Work attitude - Feeling depressed and idle for not working	4.714***	52	1.484	23
Children self-efficacy	-1.730	51	-0.886	23
Children perceived level of performance	0.166	51	1.355	23

*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001

Table 45 Comparison of ND Participants before and after joining the ND Project (Cont'd)

	ND Group Members			
	Pre-test		Post-test	
	N	%	N	%
Amount of pocket money (youngest child) $\chi^2=10.25^*$				
None	25	47.2	14	26.9
Under \$200	24	45.3	38	73.1
\$200-499	2	3.8		
\$500-999	2	3.8		
Children perception about their family financial condition $\chi^2=8.37^*$				
Very bad/poor	3	5.9	1	1.9
Bad/poor	10	19.6	5	9.4
Average/fair	28	54.9	43	81.1
Good/Adequate	10	19.6	4	7.5
Changes in time spent with children (View of children) $\chi^2=13.05^{***}$				
Better	5	10.0		
Less	6	12.0		
No Change	39	78.0	53	100.0
Changes in relationship with parents (View of children) $\chi^2=9.19^{**}$				
Better	3	6.0		
Less	5	10.0		
No Change	42	84.0	53	100.0
Changes in family atmosphere (View of children) $\chi^2=9.19^{**}$				
Better	4	8.0		
Less	4	8.0		
No Change	42	84.0	53	100.0
Previous relationship with children (View of parents)				
Very good	8	15.1	8	15.1
Good	39	73.6	39	73.6
Poor	6	11.3	6	11.3
Current relationship with children (View of parents)				
Better	11	20.8	6	11.3
Worse	8	15.1	4	7.5
No change	34	64.2	43	81.1
Previous family atmosphere (View of parents)				
Very happy	3	5.8	6	11.3
Happy	28	53.8	28	52.8
Unhappy	21	40.4	19	35.8
Current family atmosphere (View of parents) $\chi^2=7.19^*$				
Happier	6	11.3	2	3.8
Not so happy	10	18.9	3	5.7
No change	37	69.8	48	90.6

*p ≤ 0.05, **p ≤ 0.01, ***p ≤ 0.001

Appendix 9 – A preliminary information of social assistance for single/lone parents schemes in other countries

	UK	Norway	Netherland	New Zealand	USA	Australia	Hong Kong
1. Name of major Scheme	New Deal for Lone Parents	Brukermedvirkningsordningen (BMO)	General Social Assistance Act	New programmes implemented in 2006	TANF Max 60 months	Parenting Payment Single	New Dawn
2. Age of youngest child	Under 16	3 years or above	5 years or above	Over 6	2 years or above in some States	7	12-14
3. Compulsory	No	Yes, but no work obligation	Yes, but no work obligation	Yes	Yes (30hrs /week)	Yes PT (15 hrs/week) Job Network	Yes (32 hrs/month)
4. Sanction	No penalties	No penalties	No penalties (Labor market participation is voluntary, the work obligation for lone parents is on political agenda)	Yes	Reduction of state allowance – 5% for the 1st year and 2% for each consecutive year, maximum penalty is 21%	No penalties (From 1 July 2006, participation is voluntary until 1 July 2007 and all remaining Parenting Payment breach penalties was ceased to apply from 1 July 2006.)	HK200 (very small percentage)
5. Child care	National Childcare Strategy (for children aged 0 to 14)	Child-care benefits (for children under the age of 18, covered 70% of the childcare expenses)	- Childcare and After School Care for Lone Parents on Welfare (KOA) (for children under 13)	Available within standard working hours on fee-paying basis	Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) US 200 (under age of 2) US 175 (over age of 2)	Child Care Benefit (20-24 hours per child per week)	Yes
6. Other support provided	Transitional income support, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, National Minimum Wage, National Insurance Contributions,	Transitional allowance (limited to 3 years with an extension of 2 more years if the recipient took up education. Support was restricted to families where the youngest child is under 8 years of age),	Jobseekers Employment Act (I/D-jobs)	Personal Development and Employment Planning Plan	Earned Income Tax Credit,	Job Network Services, Newstart Allowance, Childcare Tax Rebate, Pharmaceutical Allowance, Education Entry Payment, Employment Entry	ND IEAP

	UK	Norway	Netherland	New Zealand	USA	Australia	Hong Kong
	Jobcentre Plus with Personal Adviser	Educational allowance, reduction in taxation				Payment, Pensioner Education Supplement, Jobs, Education and Training Programme (JET)	
7. Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lone parents with younger children and with larger numbers of children had lower outcomes - Rural area was associated with lower participation in work outcomes - Job quality and sustainability of jobs gained from NDLP were generally better than those for non-participants - Significant improvement of lone parent employment rate from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work-participation rate for lone mothers has increased - number of persons receiving transitional allowance is decreased - Create an opportunity to build social contacts with other lone parents - Some lone parents felt they are difficult to get paid work, get enough work, achieve stable income, and/or managing full-time work. They also face the problem of meeting their children's needs in this situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 20% of lone parents ended Social Assistance dependency - 6% of lone parents ended Social Assistance dependency and being employed - 70% of lone parents entered a job and still partly dependent on Social Assistance - Lone parents' problems in getting out of poverty result from their reliance on part-time work and from the low educational level - Studies showed lone parents who have at maximum a lower vocational education will have to work at least 32 hours per week to earn an income that will 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work-test regime found that the proportion moving into part-time work increased slightly - Full-time work-test increased the participants' job search behavior - Work-test regime found income gains from working were very slightly - Some clients reported increased stress and concern about the behavior of older children left alone, and for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drop in welfare caseloads - Employment rate of lone parents with children grew from 57% in 94 to 70% in 2000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the employment participation - Those with youngest child in school work in part-time - At-work PPS recipients are somewhat financially worse off by going on to lower payments than those commenced receipts which is controversial and inequity 	On-going

	UK	Norway	Netherland	New Zealand	USA	Australia	Hong Kong
	<p>45.6% in 97 to 56.6% in 05</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employer offer much greater flexibility and support for workers with caring responsibilities 		<p>make them independent of Social Assistance while lone parents with a higher professional or academic level can do 21 hours per week to leave from Social Assistance.</p>	<p>younger children left in the care of older siblings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case managers reported problems in finding work opportunities to fit clients' childcare commitments - Majority of lone parents who found work were required to work outside of standard hours and/or in non-permanent positions - The childcare infrastructure was insufficient to support. 			

Note: Major source of information - Department of Work and Pensions (2003) Lone parents and employment: international comparisons of what works, supplemented by more recent web sources

Table 9 Work tests for lone parents, selected countries, in around 2006⁶²

No work Test	Work Test	
	Independent of child age	Dependent on age of youngest child (age limit in years)
Portugal Spain	Belgium (Discretion) Denmark (subject to childcare) Finland Japan (Discretion) Sweden	Ireland (18 or 22 if child in full-time education) New Zealand (18) United Kingdom (16) New Zealand (18) Australia (16/7) Luxembourg (6) Canada (0.5-6) Netherlands (5) Czech Republic (4) Austria (About 3) France (3) Germany (3) Norway (3) Switzerland (3) United States (usually 0.25-1, with some exceptions)

(Source: Carcillo & Grubb, 2006)