

Regarding to the provision of mediation services in Hong Kong, **Project Concord* from the Methodist Centre would like to rise up some suggestions and would fully cooperate with the panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services, Department of Justice and related working groups. Here are the recommendations:

1 HKSAR

1.1 With the purpose of fulfilling different public's needs, we are wishing the government **can show more encouragement to all types of Mediation Services, including the Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM) in the society.**

1.2 We have accumulated lots of valuable local experiences as the Victim-Offender Mediation Service is offered by us continuously during the last few years. However, lacking of resources is leading us to face different challenges, one of which was low public awareness. Therefore, we hope that the **HKSAR government can rouse the development of Victim-Offender Mediation (VOM) by putting in resources and funds,** in order to allow some experiential Victim-Offender Mediation organizations, like us, to develop the service positively. For testifying the effectiveness of the Victim-Offender Mediation Service, we have jointly conducted a research, named "Victim-Offender Mediation Impacts on Police Superintendent Discretionary Scheme's Youngsters" with the Centre for Criminology, University of Hong Kong. **All participated young persons, victims and supporters commented positively on VOM and felt Hong Kong Needs VOM Service.**

2 Juvenile Justice

2.1 By referencing from the Youth Justice Conferencing of Queensland, Australia, we are suggesting that the **Hong Kong Juvenile Justice can bring in the Victim-Offender Mediation** (See attachment for details). In different stages, a Victim-Offender Mediation order is recommended by the Police or the Court to the juvenile. While, the victim, and also the parents/supporters from both parties can join in voluntary basis. The juvenile is required to look for VOM with the victim so as to offer a chance for the juvenile to take the responsibility for his/her actions and reduce the recidivism rate. Throughout the process, the victim is involved as it can be a way to repair the harm and the relationship, besides, the juvenile must agree all content within the agreement during the mediation.



2.2 Moreover, the **Victim-Offender Mediation can strengthen the Family Conference system.** Before the re-offended juvenile is given a second discretion, the juvenile is required to obey a conditional discretion which includes a Victim-Offender Mediation conference. Or, it can be a third option that comprised when the Superintendent considers offering discretion or the case is submitted to the court.

3 Victim-Offender Mediator Training and Accreditation

3.1 Since the Victim-Offender Mediation is different from other mediation services, and our service has acquired the permission of the Queensland Government to use their comprehensive VOM training packages. In the past five years, we have trained up more than 100 mediators. **We are hoping to remain our service's training and assessment independent and exclusive, however, it is our pleasure to seek for the acknowledgement of the HKMAAL of our services and the qualification of our trained mediators.**

4. The Public

4.1 As the Mediation Information Office is set up, we are **hoping that our service's information, which included the Victim-Offender Mediation Service, can be listed on the public assessable information database.** In addition, publish our service's contacts in order to enable the public to contact us if there is any inquiry.

4.2 We are willing to provide service introduction to the Mediation Information Office, for explaining the Victim-Offender Mediation Service, and we are open for discussion.

Remarks:

* **“Project Concord”** is a service organized by the Methodist Centre since 2007 and it is supported by the Queensland Government, Australia and the Centre for Criminology, University of Hong Kong. “Concord” means *Agreement* and *Understanding*. Our service focuses on providing mediation services for the victims, young offenders and both parties' family members/supporters, and we also provide Professional Mediator Training.

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Propose HK can take a reference of Queensland Youth Justice Conferencing Referral System and implement Victim-Offender Mediation as following:

