

Hong Kong Society – Rich or Poor

Explanatory Notes for Teachers

Level: S2

Topic: Hong Kong Society – Rich or Poor

Supporting Teaching Materials: Students' worksheet

Students' Prior Knowledge

Before this ELA unit, students, studying through the medium of Chinese, should have learnt about poverty and the lives of members of disadvantaged groups, as well as having gained some understanding of local policies for supporting disadvantaged groups in Hong Kong. They should also have learnt other terms relating to this unit through the medium of Chinese.

Aims and Objectives

I. Content Objectives

After completing the ELA activities, students should be able to use English to:

1. describe the life of the social groups living in poverty in Hong Kong's social context;
2. understand the assistance being offered to help the poor; and
3. show their concern and sympathy for disadvantaged groups in society

II. Language Objectives

After completing the ELA activities, students should be able to

1. understand and use the English terms related to this topic (e.g., *rich, poor, poverty, hunger, lack of shelter, sick, access to school, illness, powerlessness, lack of freedom, representation, single parent, living expenses, Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, the reference line of poverty, the Gini-coefficient, a statistical scale, perfect equality, absolute inequality, the Social Welfare Department,*
2. understand and use the English expressions for discussing the lives of social groups living in poverty in Hong Kong, e.g.,
Being a single parent/an elderly/disabled person/jobless person, she is unable to meet the cost of living expenses / she still finds difficulty in meeting the long-term medical care and household expenses / they have no extra money for recreation and clothes.
3. understand the English expressions for defining poverty, e.g.,
 - *In Hong Kong the common understanding of the reference line of poverty is one whose income is less than half of the median monthly household income.*
 - *To estimate poverty at the global level, a standard reference line is used. A general and commonly understood reference to describe extreme economic poverty is defined as living on US\$1 dollar a day.*
 - *The Gini-coefficient is a statistical scale which shows the income distribution of a society. It ranges from zero, which indicates perfect equality, to one, which indicates absolute inequality.*
 - *The Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) is commonly used as an*

- indicator of “poverty line” in Hong Kong.*
- *The scheme is provided by the Social Welfare Department and aims at providing a safety net for those who cannot support themselves financially.*
 - *It is designed to bring their income up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs.*
4. locate information from the Internet for answering questions related to the poverty problems in Hong Kong, e.g.,
- *What is the trend in the demand for CSSA over the past 10 years?*
 - *Which social group has shown greater needs in CSSA?*
 - *How can CSSA help people living in poverty?*
 - *Why does the living standard of some groups of people never improve?*
 - *Which income groups will probably live in poverty if the situation is not improved?*

Procedure:

1. Activity 1 **Rich or Poor** - In this activity, students engage in a brainstorming activity and discuss the concepts of rich and poor from various perspectives.
2. Activity 2 **Are they living in poverty** - In this activity, students read the given cases on the lives of the people with difficulties. They evaluate the living conditions described in the cases and identify the hardships of various groups in society. Students carry out an inquiry activity to access data related to poverty in Hong Kong.
3. Activity 3 **How to fight poverty** - In this activity, students access information from the Social Welfare Department and the Commission on Poverty and collect relevant information about available support and services designed to improve the living conditions of various social groups.
4. Activity 4 **Follow-up task** - In this activity, students design a poster to promote a plan or a service to help the poor. Students engage in an activity that requires creativity as well as knowledge of the topic.

Activity 1

(This is a warm-up activity)

Read the poem below, what are the difficulties of living in poverty?

Rich and Poor

Poverty is hunger.

Poverty is lack of shelter.

Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor.

Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read.

Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time.

Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water.

Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

from www.worldbank.org/poverty

Complete the table below with difficulties that people who live in poverty have to face.

Difficulty 1	Difficulty 2	Difficulty 3
Difficulty 4	People who live in poverty, face....	Difficulty 5
Difficulty 6	Difficulty 7	Difficulty 8



How about Hong Kong? What are the possible difficulties a poor family in Hong Kong may face?



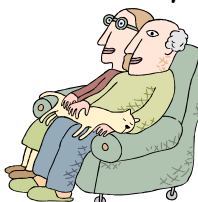


	<p>People who live in poverty in Hong Kong, face....</p>	

What do you think about the life of a poor person in Hong Kong?



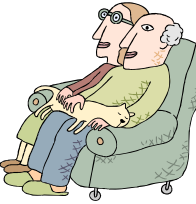


What do they need?

Activity 2

Stories from our city – Are they living in poverty?

<p>A Single Parent</p> 	<p>Ah Yee was divorced 2 years ago and takes care of her 15-year-old son and 5 year-old daughter. She had to give up her job to take care of the children when an accident happened to her son in her brother's home.</p> <p>She is now receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and she finds difficulty in meeting the cost of extra school expenses for her children.</p>
<p>A disabled person</p> 	<p>Ming was an engineer in an elevator company. He fell 3 metres down an elevator shaft while on maintenance duty 5 years ago. He hurt his spine and finally suffered from paraplegia (半身不遂).</p> <p>He received compensation from an insurance company but still finds difficulty in meeting long-term medical care and household expenses.</p>
<p>The Elderly</p> 	<p>Chan Por Por, aged 82, lives with her 85-year-old husband in an 80 sq.ft room at HK\$2000.00 per month rent. They spend their social security assistance on rent, meals and household goods. They have no extra money for recreation and clothes.</p> <p>Due to unbalanced diet and poor nutrition, the failing health of Chan Pak has frustrated Chan Por Por and more medical expenses are expected in future.</p>
<p>A chronically ill person</p> 	<p>Ah Choi, aged 42, has suffered from a chronic illness for 2 years. He has to attend hospital regularly and needs regular medication. He manages to do part-time computer programming at home but his unstable income and inability to take care of himself make his life difficult.</p> <p>He wants to engage in the job market but low income and poor health frustrate him.</p>
<p>Jobless</p> 	<p>Mr Lam, was the sole wage-earner of his family of 5. He lost his job as a chef recently. He has to apply for CSSA but really wants to get a job instead of doing nothing at home. Sometimes, he visits the labour department to look for jobs. He has attended interviews but has not had a job offer for over a year.</p> <p>Being a chef for more than 30 years, he doesn't know if another job type would suit him. He feels depressed and blames himself for failing to support his family.</p>

Questions for discussion:

<p>A Single Parent</p> 	<p>What are the difficulties Ah Yee faces? What are the causes of the difficulties – <i>Personal or Social factors</i>? If you were Ah Yee, which kind of social support would be most suitable to improve your situation – childcare service or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance?</p>
<p>A disabled person</p> 	<p>What are the difficulties Ming faces? What are the causes of the difficulties – <i>Personal or Social factors</i>? If you were Ming, which social support would be more suitable to improve your situation – a job retraining programme for the disabled or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for disabled adults?</p>
<p>The Elderly</p> 	<p>What are the difficulties Chan Por Por and Chan Pak face? What are the causes of their difficulties - <i>Personal or Social factors</i>? If you were Chan Por Por and Chan Pak, which social support would be more suitable to improve your situation – free or reduced medical charges or extra subsidies for the elderly on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance?</p>
<p>A chronically ill person</p> 	<p>What are the difficulties Ah Choi faces? What are the causes of the difficulties – <i>Personal or Social factors</i>? If you were Ah Choi, which social support would be more suitable to improve your situation – the fee waiver scheme for non CSSA recipients or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance?</p>
 <p>Jobless</p>	<p>What are the difficulties Mr Lam faces? What are the causes of the difficulties – <i>Personal or Social factors</i>? If you were Mr Lam, which social support would be more suitable to improve your situation – on-the-job training or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance?</p>

Tracking poverty and inequality in income distribution in Hong Kong



There is no official poverty line in Hong Kong and the members of the Commission on Poverty (CoP) have reached a general consensus that no rigid definition / fixed figure should be adopted as the “poverty line”.

In general, the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) is commonly used as an indicator of “poverty line” in Hong Kong. The scheme is provided by the Social Welfare Department and aims at providing a safety net for those who cannot support themselves financially. It is designed to bring their income up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs.

The World Bank uses reference lines based on incomes and consumption levels. At country level, a person is considered poor if his or her consumption or income level falls below some minimum level necessary to meet basic needs. Take Hong Kong as an example, the common understanding on the reference line of poverty is one whose income is less than half of the median monthly household income. In 2005, the median monthly household income was HK\$15800. A family with an income less than 50% of HK\$15800 (i.e. HK\$7900) was regarded as living below the poverty line.

To estimate poverty at the global level, a standard reference line is used. A general and commonly understood reference to describe extreme economic poverty is defined as living on US\$1 dollar a day.

The Gini-coefficient is a statistical scale which shows the income distribution of a society. It ranges from zero, which indicates perfect equality, to one, which indicates absolute inequality.

Student's own research

Understanding Poverty in Hong Kong

Work in groups and try to find out about poverty in Hong Kong from the internet.

Discussion topic: Poverty in Hong Kong	Q1. What is the trend in the demand for CSSA over the past 10 years?	Q2. Which social group has shown greater needs in CSSA?	Q3. How can CSSA help people living in poverty?	Q4. Why does the living standard of some groups of people never improve?	Q5. Which income groups will probably live in poverty if the situation is not improved?	Other questions:
What you know:						
Source / evidence:						
Other interesting facts / New questions:						

Activity 3 - How to fight poverty in Hong Kong

How does society respond to the needs of different groups?

Visit the official websites of the Social Welfare Department and the Commission on Poverty and find out the possible assistance the following groups can get.

	Social Welfare Department www.swd.gov.hk	Commission on Poverty www.cop.gov.hk
Single Parents 		
The disabled 		
The elderly 		
The chronically ill 		
 The unemployed		

Activity 4 - Follow-up Task

Many non-government social agencies are providing various types of assistance in helping social groups in poverty to improve their living standards.

Go to <http://www.poverty.org.hk/>

and search for a particular action plan or service to fight poverty. Design a leaflet or a poster to present the information you find and be ready to introduce the plan or service to your group.

(Heading)

Activity 1

(This is a warm-up activity)

Read the poem below, what are the difficulties of living in poverty?

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Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.

from www.worldbank.org/poverty

Complete the table below with difficulties that people who live in poverty have to face.

Difficulty 1 <u>hunger</u>	Difficulty 2 <u>lack of shelter</u> <u>/ being homeless</u>	Difficulty 3 <u>sickness</u>
Difficulty 4 <u>lack of access to</u> <u>school</u>	People who live in poverty, face....	Difficulty 5 <u>unemployment /</u> <u>feeling hopeless</u>
Difficulty 6 <u>losing children</u> <u>due to hygiene</u> <u>problem</u>	Difficulty 7 <u>powerlessness</u>	Difficulty 8 <u>lack of</u> <u>representation and</u> <u>freedom</u>



How about Hong Kong? What are the possible difficulties a poor family in Hong Kong may face?

<u>homeless/ crowded living environment</u>	<u>powerlessness</u>	<u>unemployment/ less working opportunities</u>
<u>poor living standards</u>	People who live in poverty in Hong Kong, face....	<u>less schooling support</u>
<u>pressure of life/ work</u>	<u>discrimination (while receiving government financial support)</u>	<u>comparatively more family problems</u>

What do you think about the life of a poor person in Hong Kong?



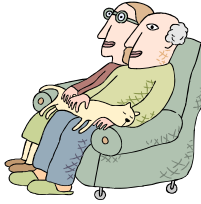


Life is difficult for poor people living in Hong Kong because most of them usually have low wages but some of them may be unable or unwilling to received government financial support. Most elderly people need to earn money by picking up some recyclable materials; some homeless people may sleep in the subway.

What do they need?

Since the citizens are facing economic inflation in Hong Kong, the poor can receive household expenditure support from the government or they can receive food from some food banks.

Activity 2

Stories from our city – Are they living in poverty?

<p>A Single Parent</p> 	<p>Ah Yee was divorced 2 years ago and takes care of her 15-year-old son and 5 year-old daughter. She had to give up her job to take care of the children when an accident happened to her son in her brother's home.</p> <p>She is now receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and she finds difficulty in meeting the cost of extra school expenses for her children.</p>
<p>A disabled person</p> 	<p>Ming was an engineer in an elevator company. He fell 3 metres down an elevator shaft while on maintenance duty 5 years ago. He hurt his spine and finally suffered from paraplegia (半身不遂).</p> <p>He received compensation from an insurance company but still finds difficulty in meeting long-term medical care and household expenses.</p>
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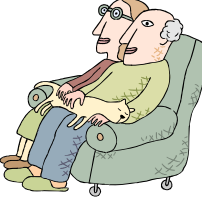
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Activity 3 - How to fight poverty in Hong Kong

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Visit the official websites of the Social Welfare Department and the Commission on Poverty and find out the possible assistance the following groups can get.

	Social Welfare Department www.swd.gov.hk	Commission on Poverty www.cop.gov.hk
Single Parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental Hotline Service • Family Aide Service • Child Care Services • Family Life Education • Foster Care • Integrated Family Services 	
The disabled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-school Rehabilitation Services • Services for School Age Disabled Children • Services for Physically Handicapped Persons • Services for Mentally Handicapped Persons • Services for Ex-Mentally Ill Persons • Services for Visually Impaired Persons • Services for Hearing Impaired Persons • Vocational Rehabilitation Services • Employment/ Business Opportunities and Social Enterprise • Day Training Services • Residential Care Services • Community Support Services / Self-help Organisations of People with Disabilities / Chronic Illness 	
The elderly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • elderly centre services • community care services • other community support services • hostel for the elderly • homes for the aged • care and attention homes for the elderly • nursing homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Age Allowance (OAA) • Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (PCSSA) Scheme • Subsidised community support services for elders • Subsidised home care services for elders • Subsidised residential care services for elders
The chronically ill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide counseling services for patients and their family members • formulate discharge plan and conduct psychosocial assessment for patients, and make referral for rehabilitation services and community resources. • offer financial/material assistance 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>To collaborate with other medical and allied health professionals to identify persons who are in need of treatment or rehabilitation services.</u> • <u>organize seminars for patients or their families.</u> 	
 <p>The unemployed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Support for Self-reliance (SFS) Scheme</u> • <u>Training Courses</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Working Poverty</u> • <u>Strengthening Employment Assistance</u> • <u>Work Incentives</u> • <u>Social Enterprise</u> • <u>Training, Retraining and Continuing Education</u>

Activity 4 - Follow-up Task

Many non-government social agencies are providing various types of assistance in helping social groups in poverty to improve their living standards.

Go to <http://www.poverty.org.hk/>

and search for a particular action plan or service to fight poverty. Design a leaflet or a poster to present the information you find and be ready to introduce the plan or service to your group.

(Heading)

Useful information from Internet:

<http://www.cop.gov.hk/>

<http://www.poverty.org.hk/>

<http://www.cyberschool.oxfam.org.hk/articles.php?id=22>

<http://www.cyberschool.oxfam.org.hk/articles.php?id=91&page=4>

<http://www.oxfam.org.hk/en/whatwedo.aspx>

<http://www.budget.gov.hk/2007/chi/budget15.htm>

http://hkpoverty.oxfam.org.hk/index_a.htm

<http://www.oxfam.org.hk/en/iecworkshop.aspx>

<http://www.cyberschool.oxfam.org.hk/index.php?lang=eng>

<http://ihouse.hkedcity.net/~hm1203/development/rich-poor.htm>

http://www.oxfam.org.hk/filemgr/52/DEG_guideline_full.pdf

<http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Poverty.asp>

http://www.swd.gov.hk/tc/index/site_pubsvc/

<http://www.hkjp.org/>

<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty>