

Definition of NPOs for Social Services Sector

We have adapted the definition and classification scheme of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project (CNSP) to our study. NPOs are defined as entities that are *organized, private, non-profit-distributing, self-governing and voluntary*¹; and are classified in accordance with the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO) scheme and adapted to the local context. In this research exercise, we define Social Service Organizations (SSOs) in Hong Kong as organizations:

- that are non-profit making, non-governmental, self-governing and voluntary; and
- whose primary purpose is related to social services including services for children, youths, the elderly, family, the disabled, the disadvantaged, support services for community and personal development, or social services / policy advocacy²; and
- that are formal organizations; accordingly ad hoc alliances or networks that are formed primarily to tackle single social issues in single instances are excluded.

We identified the organizations of the social service sector from the *Directory of Social Service Organizations in Hong Kong* (courtesy of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS)) and found a total of 381 SSOs that matched our definition.³ Organizations in the *Directory* whose primary purpose was not related to social services (for example, green groups that sometimes provide educational programmes on environmental protection) were excluded in our survey population. A mailed-in questionnaire survey was conducted from 23 July to 19 October 2009. The questionnaire was sent to the head of each SSO. Therefore, the respondents mainly

¹ Salamon, L.M. and Anheier H.K. (1997) *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-national Analysis*. Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, p. 33.

² The primary purpose in our definition encompasses the broadest range of services as adopted by international Civil Society Index research, the *Study on the Third Sector Landscape in Hong Kong* conducted by the Central Policy Unit of Hong Kong SAR Government, as well as the international classification adopted by Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project.

³ We express our sincere thanks to the Hong Kong Council of Social Service for sharing their most up-to-date listing. Of the 415 NPOs listed by the Council, we have selected 381 SSOs according to our definition. We took out those NPOs whose primary objectives are not in the social service area, e.g. green groups, social welfare departments in universities and secondary schools.

represented the views of SSO management. The response rate was 64 percent of the 381 SSOs.⁴ We also utilized other data sources for our analysis, such as the SSO websites and publications, government websites, media reports, as well as the HKCSS' *Directory of Social Service Organizations in Hong Kong 2009*.

⁴ In this research exercise, the base number of all survey statistics (e.g. the frequency distribution presented in percentages) of has been adjusted to 381, unless stated otherwise in the corresponding footnote.