

Outreach work in Europe seen from the other side: Comparisons of the development in Europe and in Hong Kong



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Outreach work in Europe & in Hong Kong

	Europe	Hong Kong
Coordination in the Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Strong coordination among different countries with the platform under European Commission. ✓ Organize joint conference regularly & prepare practice manual as reference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In Asia, outreach work is not so well-developed. ✓ Singapore begins to learn the experience from HK ✓ Taiwan is the earliest city with outreach work in Asia, however, its development is stagnant nowadays. ✓ Youth & drug problems become more serious in China, however, social work just begins to develop in China.
Funding & Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The service is mainly provided by NGOs with funding from the state & local municipalities in Europe / the HKSAR Gov't in Hong Kong. ✓ It is recognized as a professional service. Qualified social workers are employed in the service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Schools do not like to cooperate with outreach work. ✓ Outreach workers feel inadequate to handle family.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Peers, volunteers, families, schools & related parties surrounding young people are highly involved in the service. 	

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	Europe	Hong Kong
Multi-disciplinary Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ministries of Health, Welfare & Education are usually involved to define the needs, demands of the service & concerted efforts required. ✓ Close cooperation particularly with health & medical professionals in handling drug & mental health related problems. ✓ Some outreach teams build in Nurse in its manpower. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Social Welfare Department is the only Gov't office which oversee the needs, demands, policy & effectiveness of the service. ✓ Cooperation with different professionals, e.g. legal, health, medical, is important but quite passive in Hong Kong. ✓ It is highly dependent on each team's independent strategy.
Definition of Outreach Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is a community-based service which does proactively outside offices & office-hours to contact & relate with individuals and groups from particular target populations, who are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. unattached to formal institutions, e.g. family, school or work 2. easily prone to negative influences / crimes, but 3. are not effectively contacted or reached by conventional & existing services in society. 	

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Main Problems & Needs of Young People Concerned Nowadays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Drug abuse ✓ Homelessness, hanging out in streets, school drop out, street gangs, unemployment ✓ Street prostitution, teenage pregnancy ✓ Conflict with family ✓ Mental health ✓ Increasing role of girls in street ✓ Crimes hidden online., etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Psychotropic substance abuse ✓ Hanging out & drifting in street ✓ School drop out ✓ Unemployment ✓ Compensated dating ✓ Street gangs ✓ Internet addiction / socially withdrawn behaviour ✓ Increasing involvement of girls in street.
Target Populations served	<p>Clients who are outside formal institutions and do not use conventional social services & who are in need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mobile populations, migrants with different ethnicities having poor integration into society ✓ Youth at risk of marginalization 	<p>Youth aged between 6 & 24 who are unattached, easily associate with negative influences & unwilling / unmotivated to seek help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Substance abusers ✓ Youth gangs, party goers & party managers ✓ Night drifters, youth with delinquent behaviour

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Main Tasks of Outreach Work	<p>Processes of Intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contact making – reach out to places where outreach workers may not be able to control or predict to relate with the hard-to-reach with flexible & personal engagement strategies. ✓ Working with contingency in open & unpredictable settings. ✓ Initiate social change processes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. linkage or referral to other services 2. engage individuals or groups in treatment work. ✓ Provide social support to keep the change process going: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. motivational work 2. immediate support, e.g. temporary shelters. 3. network with different 	<p>Stages of Intervention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Field observation – to spot out youth & community profiles of the district. ✓ Rapport building – casual contacts with different means or one-shot activities relating to the hard-to-reach. ✓ Maintain positive social relationship with tailor-made & organized groups, programmes and activities. ✓ Establish working / helping relationship with indepth & professional counselling to tailor-make treatment plan for each client. ✓ Service termination – consolidation & evaluation with referral & follow-up arrangement.

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Working Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Most working approaches are similar. ✓ Observations, casual contacts, flexible & personal engagement are used in the early stage of contacts with the target population. ✓ When initial trust can gradually be established, different programmes, activities or groups are rendered to deepen the relationship. ✓ Tailor-made treatment plan & activities are worked out together with each client in the later stage of intervention. ✓ Different approaches are used depending on the needs and problems of the target population, e.g. harm reduction, motivational interviewing, music therapy, art therapy, etc. 	
Peer Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involvement of peers with past/similar experience in giving peer support & education & linking with those hard-to-reach is quite common in Europe. ✓ A means of social inclusion & recognition for their changes. ✓ Systematic training is provided before taking up the role. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Some NGOs have experimented similar practice in their services. ✓ However, it is not common in Hong Kong. ✓ Main reservation is the possible negative mutual influences between two parties.

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Working with Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treat engagement with parents & families as important & successful factor in outreach work to provide long term support for young people. ✓ Different means are employed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. activities in different festivals 2. visit & reach out to young people's homes 3. strength perspective 4. family group conference to work on a help plan for their child, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agree the importance of working with parents & families nowadays in outreach work. ✓ Treat themselves as 'youth workers' to work with youth and their peers, feel reservation to intervene into families. ✓ On the other hand, they feel inadequate to do so. ✓ Eventually, five styles can be found among outreach work in working with family: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. avoid handling as far as possible 2. handle by tasks or in crisis only 3. have heart but feel inadequate 4. take necessary steps to handle as far as possible.

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The Term – Outreach Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Outreach work is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘detached work’ & ‘street work’.✓ Sometimes, these terms are specifying different kinds of service.✓ From the positive side, the definition of each service which use ‘reaching out’ as a working method can be more specific.✓ From an outsider’s view, the terms are rather confusing and the image of outreach work may not be so clear in society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Outreach work is the only term used in Hong Kong.✓ It is a broader term covering:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. street work2. reach out to public places, e.g. disco parties, mini-bars, internet cafes, shopping malls3. reach out to school, family & other organizations.✓ Public image of outreach work is very clear. Its works are highly respect, appreciated & recognized in society.

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Challenges of the Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Informality vs Professionalization of the service ✓ On the one hand, because of the hard-to-reach nature of target populations, outreach workers emphasize to think proactively & to intervene flexibly with casual & personal engagement. ✓ On the other hand, to demonstrate the professional value of the service, professional knowledge informing their work & professional skills to show their competence are repeatedly requested. ✓ Improvement of employment conditions & their professional identity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Better coordination & enhance the synergy with similar kinds of service in social welfare. ✓ Strengthen multi-disciplinary cooperation in the service. ✓ Enhance outreach workers' competence in working with family. ✓ Research on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the needs & problems of young people nowadays, the last research was in 1995. 2. the effectiveness of outreach work in Hong Kong. The last research was in 1985.



The End
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