

Child Development into a Whole Person: Economic Approach (but multidisciplinary perspective)

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April 12 2012

**Professional Forum of
The Hong Kong Paediatric Society 50th Anniversary Celebration**
Queen Elizabeth Hospital

What is a Whole Person?

- Physical/material: If he/she is able bodied, he/she should *try his best* to make his own living, and procure his **material needs** & that of his family. (*this implies equipping himself with skills and actively looking for work and dutifully working*)
- Mental: Strong mental health, so he can procure his “**mental good**” needs: self esteem, sense of autonomy, confidence, independence of judgment, self actualization
- Spiritual: Strong spiritual capital. Compassion or Love for others. Holistic view of life(seeing life in its entirety)

Whole Person Development Requirements

- “**Mental capital**”, consisting of the values, habits, skills, and emotional maturity, that will help procure (a) a reasonable material well being and livelihood (**job skills**)(b) the mental goods of self esteem, autonomy and independence, self actualization, self-confidence, sense of being respected by others, etc. (**life skills**, LIFE, self efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience)
- **Physical health**

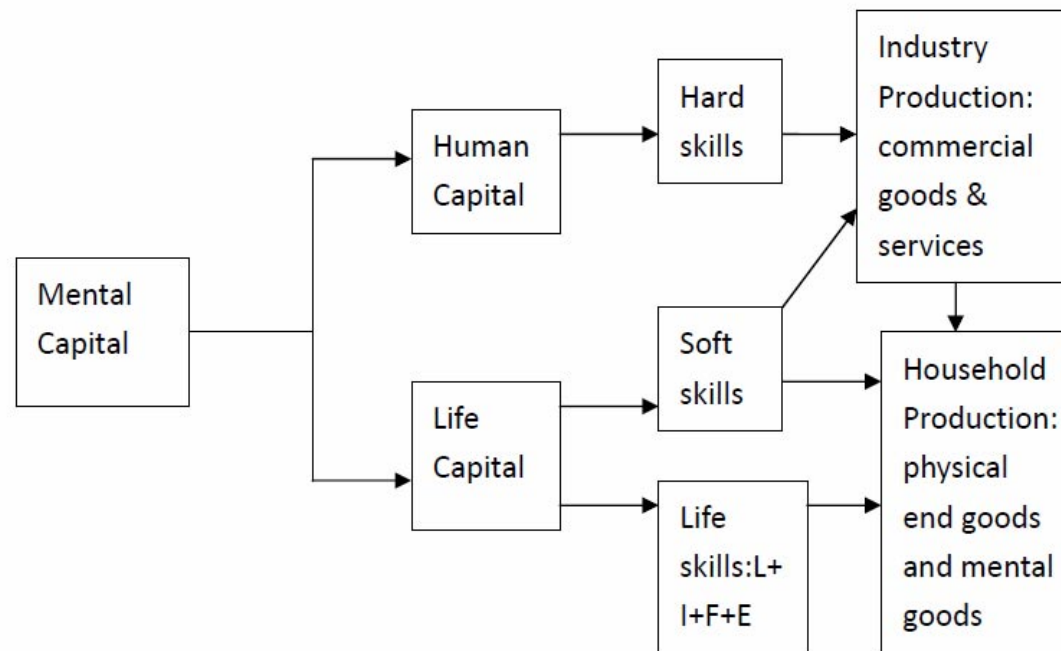


Figure 4.1 Mental Capital

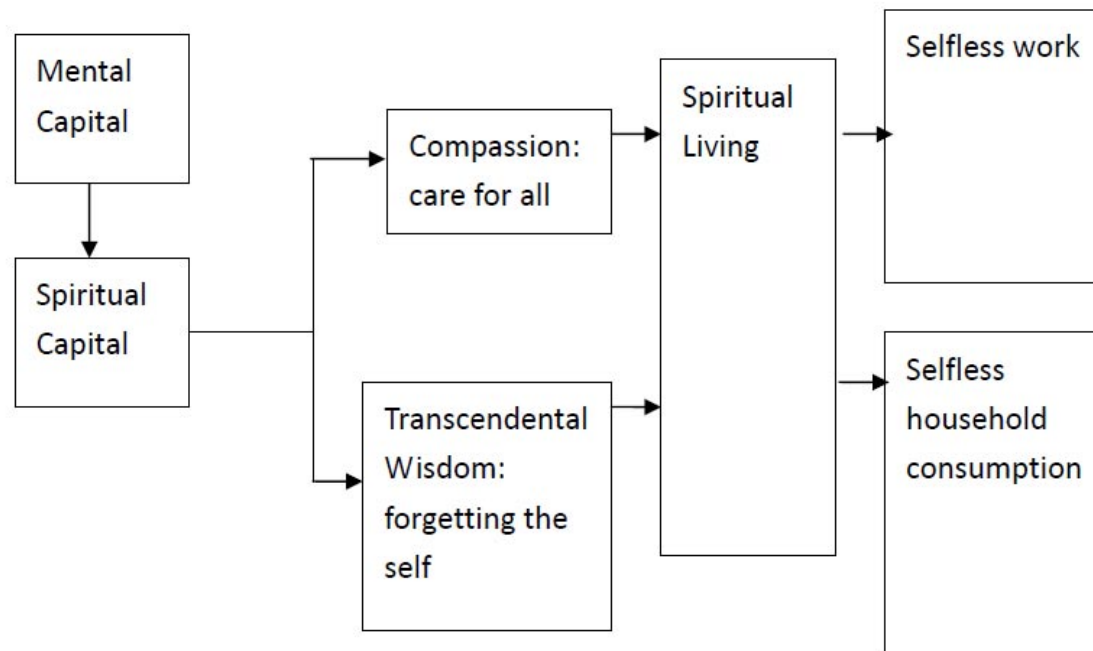


Figure 4.2 Spiritual Capital

From the Commission on Poverty:

1. DAILY LIVING NEEDS

- Health care
- Food and nutrition
- Safe environment
- Child care

2. STABLE AND NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

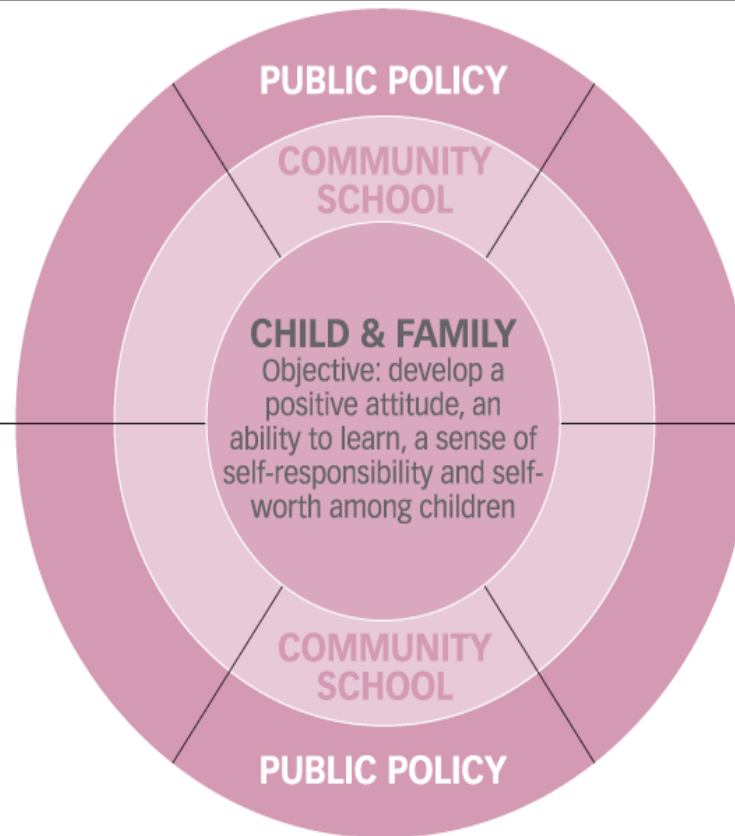
- At least one caring adult in a child's life
- Parenting support
- Peer relationships
- Mentorship and positive role models

3. CARING ENVIRONMENT

- Family-friendly workplaces
- Places to play and interact
- Community support for vulnerable families
- Social capital in school and community

4. DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Opportunity to enhance capacity and resilience
- Learning and developmental opportunities in school
- Youth activities in the community
- Recreation, arts and culture



How may excessive poverty affect children?

- They may not get what they need materially.
- They may not get what they need mentally:
 - Quarrels among their parents over financial matters
 - Lack of security leads to worries and anxiety
 - Parents' time with children
 - Sense of inferiority, jealousy, and envy through comparing with peers who are better off
 - Loss of educational opportunities
- Greater incidence of family violence and social ills down the road
 - **Parents have to alleviate the effects through nurturing stronger mental capital in children and for themselves**
 - **Public policy has to help eliminate or at least alleviate excessive poverty or the effects of excessive poverty**

How may Excessive Wealth Affect Children?

- Too dependent on others, as everything is well procured for them;
- Too easy a life may lead to a loss of any impetus to achieve financial independence on their own;
- Taking things for granted, gratitude may not be in their vocabulary;
 - **The wealthy have to guard against this**
 - **Public Policy has to help guard against this**

Census Data:

2011 年按住戶人數、家庭住戶每月收入及房屋類型劃分的家庭住戶數目 (E111)

住戶人數／家庭 住戶每月收入 (港元)	房屋類型					總計	subtotal
	公營租住房屋	資助自置居所房屋	私人永久性房屋	非住宅用房屋	臨時房屋 ⁽¹⁾		
2,000 - 3,999	78 371	11 336	37 258	156	2 211	129 332	1 041 575
4,000 - 5,999	55 932	8 982	28 343	186	1 451	94 894	
6,000 - 7,999	74 403	10 789	33 996	439	1 546	121 173	
8,000 - 9,999	72 065	14 571	44 272	354	1 860	133 122	
10,000 - 14,999	137 371	42 855	113 504	548	3 552	297 830	
15,000 - 19,999	107 302	48 100	107 302	405	2 115	265 224	
20,000 - 24,999	72 517	50 642	110 392	611	1 533	235 695	954 244
25,000 - 29,999	46 376	41 568	92 090	481	798	181 313	
30,000 - 39,999	46 767	59 924	161 047	827	718	269 283	
40,000 - 59,999	19 684	49 692	196 571	1 265	741	267 953	
60,000 - 79,999	2 443	12 729	101 177	730	181	117 260	
80,000 - 99,999	702	3 681	53 601	879	32	58 895	
≥ 100,000	473	2 925	106 581	1 271	178	111 428	287 583
總計	720 892	377 615	1 242 982	8 396	18 911	2 368 796	
Percent	30.4	15.9	52.5	0.4	0.8	100.0	

Close to half a million households or just over 1/5 in considerable financial hardship

Monthly Income HK\$	私人永久 性房屋 Private Permanent Homes	非住宅用房屋 Non-residential Housing	臨時房屋 Temporary Housing	
2,000 - 3,999	37 258	156	2 211	
4,000 - 5,999	28 343	186	1 451	
6,000 - 7,999	33 996	439	1 546	
8,000 - 9,999	44 272	354	1 860	
10,000 - 14,999	113 504	548	3 552	
15,000 - 19,999	107 302	405	2 115	
20,000 - 24,999	110 392	611	1 533	
Number	475 067	2 699	14 268	492 034
Per cent of HK households:				20.77148

My estimate is about 160,000 to 200,000 children under age of 15 in dire difficulties & at risk: estimated as roughly $\frac{1}{5}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of 823560

2011 年按住戶結構、住戶人數及住戶內十五歲以下兒童數目劃分的家庭住戶數目 (D105)

住戶結構/ 住戶人數 Household size	住戶內十五歲以下兒童數目 Number of Children below 15 (up to and incl.14)				Total
	0	1	2	3+	
總計					
1	403 550	538	-	-	404 088
2	564 807	32 762	128	-	597 697
3	403 236	161 903	10 177	-	575 316
4	287 213	135 756	77 719	1 157	501 845
5	88 527	55 442	59 154	9 404	212 527
6+	20 444	21 298	24 943	10 638	77 323
總計	1 767 777	407 699	172 121	21 199	2 368 796

children number	407 699	344242	63597
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number of households with children	601 019
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number of children below 15 (from actual census) 823560

25.37234105 per cent of all HK households

823560

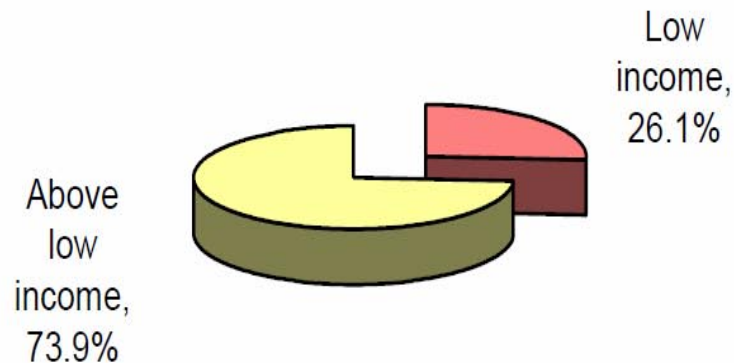
HKCSS estimate 2005

(we have fewer children now)

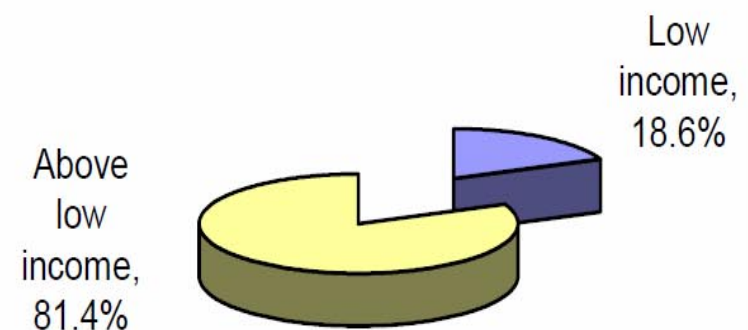
Q: How many children in Hong Kong live in Poverty?

- In 2005, there were 1.02 millions of children (aged 0-14) in Hong Kong, amongst them: 252,600 (i.e. 25%) live in low-income families.
- In 2005, there were 0.90 million of youth (aged 15-24) in Hong Kong, amongst them: 163,800 (i.e. 18%) live in low-income families.

Percentage of children (aged 0-14)
by family income, 2005 Q1



Percentage of youth (aged 15-24)
by family income, 2005 Q1



Policy Priorities: 1 the preschool

- Pre-school: full funding to ensure availability of pre-primary school programs for children that meet benchmark requirements of quality
- Private preschools: most are for profit; children attending non-fully funded schools will get half the cost of full funds (education coupons) to attend preschools of the choice of their parents.
- Guiding principles of preschools: nurturing of good habits & social skills; foreign language & putonghua exposure; learn to respect one another

Policy Priorities: 2

Life Education in & outside Schools

- Life education should cover and replace sex education, as well as parenting skills, respect for life, and the nurturing of reflection and other good habits, how to face adversities, how to deal with unreasonable people, sense of proportion and priority, etc.;
- Should be included in the school curriculum
- Should be available for adults in community centres as well: to build a pro-LIFE culture
- Love, Insight, Fortitude, Engagement: the proven happiness formula to be nurtured

Priority 3: Poverty alleviation

- Family assistance as a graduated financial support for families based on *disposable income after rent and after maintenance of the breadwinners*.
- Transportation pricing restructuring to minimize segregation effects of long distance transportation cost
- Public housing

NBER Working Paper No. 11729 (2005)

The cost of the EITC is offset in part by a reduction in the number of single mothers receiving welfare. Moreover, the EITC now lifts more children out of poverty than any other government program. In 2002, it removed 4.9 million people, including 2.7 million children from poverty. Advocates see it as promoting the values of both family and work. Traditional welfare programs, according to their critics, do the opposite.

Conclusions

- HK has about 160,000 to 200,000 children below the age of 15 now in dire difficulties because of poverty
- Both excessive poverty and excessive wealth may undermine whole person development
- Whole person development requires financial input + proper guidance and opportunities
- Life education as well as anti-poverty (redistributive measures), of which some form of family assistance based on post-rent disposable income will be appropriate, in addition to government funding and quality assurance of basic pre-primary school education.