SOCIAL, RECREATIONAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

16.1 Recreation is essential to a balanced life and is of particular importance to people with disabilities. Leisure and recreational activities facilitate the learning and acquisition of social skills and competence, and are essential components for an effective programme of social integration. The broad policy objectives are as follows -

To provide services and facilities for social, recreational and sporting programmes and through these means to enable people with disabilities to make meaningful use of their leisure time, to develop their potential and positive personal values, to enhance family and other personal relationships and to encourage their active participation in community life.

16.2 In pursuing these objectives and taking into account the nature of the various disabilities, services are provided in accordance with the following broad principles -

(a) ordinary community facilities and services encourage and facilitate the participation of people with disabilities;

(b) where people with disabilities require special facilities to meet their social, recreational and sporting needs, such facilities are provided to complement or substitute for ordinary community facilities and services; and

(c) socialisation programmes and activities encourage people with disabilities to develop inter-personal relationships, while recreational and sports facilities encourage them to develop hobbies and interests which facilitate their integration into the community.

16.3 Social and recreational centres (S&RCs) aim to provide services and facilities for social, developmental, recreational and sporting programmes by which people with disabilities can make meaningful use of their leisure time, develop their potential and positive personal values, enhance family and other personal relationships, and participate actively in their community life. A service brief with details on the objective, programme, staffing level, referral channel and admission criteria is at Appendix 4.27.

16.4 As at December 1998, there were 18 S&RCs, including composite clubs, as follows -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of S&amp;RCs</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;RC for Visually Impaired Persons</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;RC for Hearing Impaired Persons</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;RC for Physically Handicapped Persons</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S&amp;RC for Mentally Handicapped Persons</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Club for All Disability Groups</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1997-98, the operating cost for the S&RC operated by the Social Welfare Department was $101,398 per month and the average amount of subvention per centre for the other 17 S&RCs operated by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) was $93,579 per month. In addition, social and recreational facilities for ex-mentally ill patients were offered in four social clubs, which are attached to activity centres for discharged mental patients and operated by subvented NGOs. Details on these activity centres are provided in the chapter on services for mentally ill persons.

16.5 Services provided by S&RCs include interest and social service groups, committee training and mass/special activities. They cater for the needs of people of various disability groups and promote community acceptance through public education. They also mobilise volunteers, offer social skills training and counselling, and provide resources and support services for people with disabilities to participate in social, recreational and community activities.

16.6 S&RCs are putting more effort into enhancing community awareness and participation in their activities through offering centre membership to able-bodied persons, involving a wider network of volunteers and promoting integration and interaction of people with and without disabilities. With greater input from the community, it is envisaged that more people with disabilities will be attracted to participate in the programmes, and more people will understand and accept the abilities and needs of people with disabilities.

16.7 Most of the existing S&RCs are located in the urban area and there are discrepancies in levels of subvention to individual S&RCs. In view of this, the Social Welfare Department will conduct a comprehensive review on social and recreational services for people with disabilities under its purview with a view to improving the services and meeting their needs in this respect.

16.8 The two Provisional Municipal Councils provide various sports and recreational activities for the public including people with disabilities. In 1997-98, the Provisional Regional Council organised 158 programmes with a total expenditure of $318,000 while the Provision Urban Council organised 353 projects with a total expenditure of $2.24 million for people with disabilities.

16.9 Apart from being organisers, the two Provisional Municipal Councils also subvent/sponsor NGOs in organising various sports and recreational activities for people with disabilities. In 1997-98, the Provisional Regional Council subvented/sponsored 243 programmes with a total expenditure of $2.12 million while the Provision Urban Council subvented/sponsored 132 projects with a total expenditure of $2.11 million.

16.10 Working closely with the two Provisional Municipal Councils, the Hong Kong Sports Development Board is a statutory body responsible for the promotion and development of sport and physical recreation in Hong Kong. It has been providing support to sports associations for people with disabilities in Hong Kong since April 1990 in respect of staffing expenses and programme expenses which include staff training programmes, and subvention for hosting of international events in Hong Kong, national squad training and official training programmes as well as sending athletes to overseas competitions. It also administers the Sports Aid for the Disabled Fund which provides annual grant to elite disabled athletes to assist them in preparing for competitions. Apart from the above, it supported the Disabled Campaign which aimed to generate public attention to the importance of sport for people with physical and mental handicaps. This Campaign, comprising the
16.11 The Hong Kong Sports Association for the Physically Disabled and the Hong Kong Sports Association for the Mentally Handicapped undertake to promote and organise sports training and competition for physically and mentally handicapped persons. They have made tremendous efforts in the development of sports for people with disabilities so as to cater for their rehabilitation needs. These two sports associations also play the role of “National Sports Association” in respect of selecting disabled athletes to participate in international competitions on behalf of Hong Kong.

16.12 The promotion of integration of the physically handicapped and able-bodied is implemented through an internationally recognised movement known as “PHAB Movement”. To encourage physically handicapped persons to participate in community activities as other members of society, membership of the S&RCs for physically handicapped persons operated by an NGO comprises people with and without disabilities. In addition, physically handicapped and able-bodied members of the centres are encouraged to form autonomous self-programming clubs/groups. Leadership training, professional guidance, and required resources are provided through staff of the centres. These clubs/groups have served as an added driving force behind the PHAB Movement. In recent years, attempts have been made to further promote the PHAB concept in ordinary community services, particularly in elderly centres in which members are usually suffering from different forms and degrees of physical handicap.

16.13 The Gateway Movement was introduced in Hong Kong in 1980 to encourage mentally handicapped persons to participate in community activities through direct interaction between mentally handicapped and ordinary members of gateway clubs. It provides opportunities for leisure and recreational activities for mentally handicapped persons by making use of premises of rehabilitation service units, special schools and other community facilities. Through these activities, mentally handicapped persons are encouraged to exercise their personal choice, independence and full participation. Currently, there are over 20 gateway clubs run by NGOs. The Social Welfare Department will continue to pursue NGOs’ proposal of setting up co-ordinating offices on a regional basis, subject to the availability of resources. In the meantime, NGOs are encouraged to operate gateway clubs within their service units with non-governmental resources so as to meet the identified demand.

ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

16.14 People with disabilities also have access to arts and cultural activities so that they may develop their creative, artistic and intellectual potential to the full. The policy objectives regarding cultural activities for people with disabilities are as follows -

To assist people with disabilities to benefit from arts and cultural activities and facilities, to develop their talents and to integrate them into the community by the provision of suitable amenities, training and programmes.
16.15 In pursuance of the above objectives, the principles set out below will be followed -

(a) providing arts and cultural activities in an integrated setting so that people with disabilities can have equal opportunities for participation and better understanding of and from their able-bodied counterparts;

(b) encouraging the development of arts and cultural services to facilitate the participation and integration of people with disabilities in the community, and to develop their interests and talents;

(c) providing special facilities and services to complement or substitute for ordinary facilities and services so as to meet the needs of people with disabilities;

(d) making popular the creative means and art forms developed by people with disabilities and encouraging active participation of people with disabilities; and

(e) encouraging existing art groups to work with and for people with disabilities.

16.16 The two Provisional Municipal Councils organise cultural activities for people with disabilities with a view to developing their talents and integrating them into the community. Activities organised include presentation by disabled artists, demonstration of creative work by disabled artists, arrangement of shows for the enjoyment of people with disabilities, and presentation of activities that involve the participation of both able-bodied and disabled persons.

16.17 In order to encourage people with disabilities to attend cultural performances, the Provisional Urban Council and the Provisional Regional Council have introduced concessionary schemes for people with disabilities since May 1995 and January 1997 respectively. People with disabilities joining the schemes will be entitled to enjoy various activities presented and organised by them at half-price. Currently, more than 11 000 and 1 900 people with disabilities have registered with the Provisional Urban Council and the Provisional Regional Council respectively under the schemes.

16.18 In addition, there are three performing arts groups funded and managed by the Provisional Urban Council. Between 1994-95 and 1997-98, two of them organised seven outreach performances at special schools, rehabilitation centres and hospitals. In 1998-99, six outreach performances for people with disabilities were arranged. These two performing arts groups will continue to liaise with rehabilitation organisations and special schools for similar activities on suitable occasions. Regarding the remaining performing arts group, it staged a drama with a hearing impaired lady as the female protagonist in 1996. Apart from a free performance arranged for hearing impaired persons, the other six public performances of the drama were provided with sign language interpretation service. Similar arrangement will be made for appropriate disability groups when there are plays with related themes. However, it is difficult for this performing arts group to arrange outreach performance like the other two due to stage and lighting requirements as well as other technical restrictions.

16.19 The Provisional Regional Council has offered participatory programmes such as workshops under the drama and dance animateur schemes to special schools since 1996-97 so as to enable participation by disabled children. In 1997-98, 33 disabled children in two special schools joined the animateur schemes.
Furthermore, the Music Office, jointly managed by the two Provisional Municipal Councils with effect from August 1995, runs full-scale instrumental music training programmes, promotes interest in music especially among the young, and encourages and assists in the organisation of music activities for both able-bodied and disabled persons. It also organises seminars on music therapy to introduce the concept of helping the rehabilitation of disabled children through music activities. As part of its outreach music promotional programme, it arranges care and concern concerts performed by music ensembles for under-privileged audiences at rehabilitation service units, elderly homes, hospitals, etc. Between 1994-95 and 1997-98, the Music Office organised 122 care and concern concerts for 11,370 people with disabilities. According to its 1998-99 Programme Plan, 39 care and concern concerts have been scheduled at sheltered workshops, hospitals, elderly homes and convalescent centres.

The Hong Kong Arts Development Council was formally established as a statutory body in June 1995 to plan, promote and support the broad development of the arts so as to improve the community’s quality of life. It adopts a fair and open funding policy that respects equal opportunities for all. The grants awarded by this Council to support cultural activities for people with disabilities amounted $541,405 in 1997-98 and increased by some 48% to over $800,000 in 1998-99.

The Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong is a major organiser and co-ordinator in arts with people with disabilities in Hong Kong. With the aims of promoting opportunities in arts for people with disabilities and integrating them into the community through such activities, it has served as an initiator of many innovative activities and plays an important role in service provision and advocacy for the mission of arts for everyone. It helps promote artistic activities in rehabilitation service units and special schools. It also works towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream arts and cultural sectors. In recent years, people with disabilities have established a number of arts groups, some with encouraging achievements.

ISSUES OF CONCERN

The Review Committee noted that the two Provisional Municipal Councils had made significant improvements in providing social, recreational, sports and cultural activities as well as related facilities for people with disabilities in recent years. For examples, the provision of increasing number of sports, recreational and cultural programmes for people with disabilities and the introduction of concessionary schemes. The Review Committee is of the view that such progressive measures should be maintained, and that the existing service arrangements and planned future service improvements should not be affected by the restructuring of district organisations.