

Project Reference: RES-000-22-4400

Project Title: Poverty and Social Exclusion in Hong Kong

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The primary purpose of this research is to advance the ‘state of the art’ of the theory and practice of poverty and social exclusion measurement in Hong Kong. In order to improve current measurement methodologies, this research is sought to develop and repeat The Survey of Living Standards in Hong Kong (the LSHK Survey). The LSHK survey in 2000, translated the 1999 ‘Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain’ and adapted the questionnaire to an urban Chinese context. It represented the first attempt in China to develop consensual measures of minimum necessary living standards and direct measures of material and social deprivation. Most previous studies in Hong Kong had mainly relied on one-dimensional proxy income data to measure poverty. The LSHK also built on the pioneering poverty research of Chow's 1982 study, Poverty in an Affluent City: A Report of a Survey on Low Income Families in Hong Kong, which adapted the relative deprivation measures developed by Peter Townsend in the ‘Poverty in the United Kingdom Survey’ in 1968/69. The LSHK specifically developed direct indicators of social exclusion as well as material deprivation for use in Hong Kong. This research will build on these previous methodological innovations in the light of current policy concerns as well as subsequent theoretical developments in the measurement of poverty and social exclusion. These include the Bristol Social Exclusion Matrix, the Survey of Living Standards in Taiwan methodology and questionnaire, the on-going development work of the 2010-2013 ESRC funded Large Grant on ‘Poverty and Social Exclusion in the United Kingdom’ and the recent Eurostat funded methodological work on material deprivation measures in the Survey of Income and Living Standards, which have been incorporated into the new Europe 2020 poverty reduction target of ‘reducing poverty by 20 million people by 2020’. This new research will use a two stage methodology: a questionnaire development and pilot phase which will include focus group interviews, using the consensual approach, to facilitate the updating of the poverty and social exclusion measures. This will be followed by a survey phase which will obtain data from a representative population sample of Hong Kong. There is a long tradition of fruitful bilateral collaborative research on poverty measurement methodology between UK and Hong Kong academics which has contributed to both advancing scientific knowledge and

anti-poverty policy. This research will produce information of immediate and direct interest to policy makers, academics and the general public. It will provide evidence for policy makers and NGO practitioners to help allocate resources to people in greatest need. The research outputs will provide the basis for further developing an indicators system for measuring poverty and social exclusion in other Chinese societies (such as Taipei and cities in urban China), using similar instruments and a common framework of analysis.