

Part C Project Details	
Project Title: An integration enhancement program for students with social communication deficits: direct training and beyond	Project Number 2009/0074 (Revised)

Goals and objectives

Short term goals

1. To extend the established ILAUGH training program to more secondary schools in Hong Kong so that the social cognitive skills of students with high functioning Autism and Asperger syndrome would improve.
2. To train front line users including teachers and social workers at schools for implementing the Social Thinking training program.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the train-the-trainer program in implementing Social Thinking sessions.

Long term goals

1. To further promote the Social Thinking training model to schools and professionals in Hong Kong.
2. To equip related school personnel with techniques in dealing with students with social communicative deficits including those with high functioning Autism or Asperger Syndrome.
3. To promote effective social interaction among students with and without social thinking deficits which in turn helps to prevent bullying.
4. To prepare principals, teachers and school professionals to set up resource schools in different school districts.

Needs Assessment and Applicant's Capability

Background

With the support of the Quality Education Fund in the years 2007 to 2009, the implementation of the Social Thinking "ILAUGH" training model to improve social communication functioning of mainstream secondary school students with autism/Asperger syndrome has been very well received. "ILAUGH" is an acronym representing 1) Initiation, 2) Listening, 3) Abstracting information, 4) Understanding perspectives, 5) Getting the whole picture and, 6) Humor appreciation.

The ILAUGH training is proven to be effective according to our study results. Using a 70-item rating scale to measure the social behaviors of the students before and after training, improvement is shown in all the six aspects of ILAUGH. The total average score rose from 2.81 to 3.17, representing a 12.8% gain. The increase in score reaches a statistically significant level with p-value <0.001. On the other hand, the significant others of the students including their teachers, social workers and parents are highly satisfied with the training results. They expressed that students have tremendous improvements in interpersonal relationships, caring for the family members and even academic performance.

As stated by the January 2009 record from the Education Bureau, 390 students diagnosed through psychiatric services with Autism or Asperger syndrome are integrated in 460 ordinary secondary schools in Hong Kong. The figures may have been underestimated due to a large number of undiagnosed or late diagnosed students. According to our recent survey in April 2009 on 255 normal secondary schools, school personnel reported a much higher figure. A total of 548 and 481 students with confirmed and suspected diagnosis with Autism or Asperger syndrome were reported respectively.

In view of the large number of students with Autism or Asperger syndrome, the number of students that had received social thinking training is relatively small. With the gained experience and the sets of readily made materials, we plan to extend the training to more schools in Hong Kong so that more students, parents and school personnel could be benefited.

Mainstreaming students with various learning needs is a world trend nowadays. School personnel are expected to be skillful in handling and providing immediate support to students with Autism or Asperger Syndrome. Nevertheless, teachers and school personnel reviewed serious concerns in taking up the role. From our recent survey on April 6th, 2009, results show that they 1) feel incompetent in handling the students' emotional needs (12.5%); 2) found it hard to communicate with these students (10.7%); 3) have no effective method to control the students' behavioral issue in classrooms (10.4%); and 4) found that schools have very limited resources to help them to handle these students (9.2%).

In our last project progress meeting with the QEF Steering Committee on 23 October 2008, committee members have pointed out that a very important extension of the project is to provide training to the teachers. In fact, not only teachers, but also school social workers and counselors are the front line crucial figures in handling difficulties encountered by the students. We share the view with the committee members that if they are provided with sufficient training, they would be empowered to manage the students more effectively. This also signifies an enormous step towards sustainability of the project as well as generalization of the training effect to classrooms.

The affirmation on the provision of Social Thinking training by Education Bureau in the Legislative Council in March 2009 states the need for further extension of the project. This project is the first attempt in Hong Kong to tailor-made a social thinking training model for the school professional including teachers, social workers and

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counselors to equip them with a systematic and effective method to handle students with social communication deficits.

Applicant's Capability

The Institute of Human Communicative Research (IHCR), CUHK was officially established in March, 2004. We possess ample experience in conducting researches as well as clinical and educational services. A summary of services, seminars, public education and research is listed below. Detailed record of activities of the IHCR could be found in the website <www.ihcr.cuhk.edu.hk>.

1) Services

- A medical mission was held in Wuhan Union Hospital and Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University. Academic programmes on otology, audiology, rehabilitation for deaf children, nursing were also lined up for medical and paramedical personnel in Hubei. (Nov 2008)
- Over 200 children aged from 3 to 12 received speech assessment by speech therapists in the event "Childhood Speech Screening Day – a Program to Promote Public Awareness on Childhood Speech Disorder" (2005-2008)
- 327 secondary students received free ear and hearing assessments in the project of determining the prevalence of hearing loss in secondary schoolers (Sept 2006)
- A Chongqing Mission was held in Chongqing's Southwest Hospital, provided free medical treatments and operations to 100 poor patients with different ear disorders. (Dec 2005)
- Over 500 children aged from 3 to 8 received free language and hearing assessments in the project of construction of the Cantonese Basic Speech Perception Test (1999 – 2001).

2) Seminars / workshops / talks for health promotion

- Delivered free public talks on various areas including reading and writing, speech and language development, stuttering, voice and swallowing. (2008 to 2009)
- Delivered seminars entitled *Introduction to ILAUGH Social Thinking Training* attended by over 300 teachers, social worker and parents (Apr 2009)
- Organized workshops on *Using the DIR/Floortime Model to Treat Children with Developmental Challenges*. Over 300 participants including speech therapists, parents, teacher and social worker. (Feb 2009)
- Delivered *Social Thinking* public talk attended by about 170 parents, principal and teachers. (Dec 2008)
- Delivered seminars entitled *Speech Development in Children* attended by over 300 parents and teachers (October 2005, October 2006, January 2007, May 2008)
- Organized training course on *Overcoming Communication Barriers for Children with Special Needs in China*. About 15 participants from key centres in various provinces and autonomous regions in China. (April 2007)
- Organized workshops on *Oral Sensory-Motor Tools and Techniques (IOSM-T'n'T)*. Over 170 participants including speech therapists, occupational therapists, teachers, parents and social workers. (June 2007)
- Organized workshops on *Teaching Social Thinking and Social Skills to Individuals with Social Cognitive Deficits*. Over 200 participants including speech therapists, occupational therapists, teachers, medical doctors, parents and social workers attended. (July 2006, July 2005)

3) Public education

- Production of *Social Thinking Training Handbook* 社交思考六面睇 – ILAUGH實用手冊 for professionals. (Apr 2009)
- Production of *Introductory ILAUGH Booklet* 社交思考課程小冊子 for professionals. (October 2007)
- Participated in the writing of a resource *manual targeting the training techniques for autistic children* 屋簷下的陽光 – 自閉症兒童家居溝通訓練冊. (March 2007)
- Organized and participated in a series of radio program entitled 睇真D耳鼻喉 on ear protection and speech problems on Radio 5, RTHK (March to September 2005)
- Production of educational leaflets on ear problems
- Production of over 10,000 educational pamphlets on childhood speech disorder
- Construction of website as an information platform for public (www.ihcr.cuhk.edu.hk/www.ent.cuhk.edu.hk)

4) Research

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- *Enhancing the social communication skills of students with high functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome.* Funded by Quality of Education Fund 2007-2009 (Amount Approved: HK\$719,300)
- *The construction and validation of the Cantonese Spoken Word Recognition Test (SWORT) to measure the word perception ability of Cantonese-speaking children.* Funded by the Research Grants Council General Research Fund 2009-2010. (Amount Approved: HK\$ 658,071)
- *The construction and validation of the Cantonese Perceptual Evaluation of Voice (CanPEV) to measure the voice quality of Cantonese-speaking population.* Funded by the Research Grants Council General Research Fund 2008-2011. (Amount Approved: HK\$ 907,206)
- *The construction and validation of the Cantonese Tone Identification Test (CanTIT) to measure the tone perception ability of Cantonese-speaking children.* Funded by the Competitive Earmarked Research Grant 2008-2009. (Amount Approved: HK\$758,550)
- *Evaluation of audiological rehabilitation in occupational deafness compensation claimants.* Funded by Occupational Deafness Compensation Board 2007-2008.(Amount Approved: HK\$121,471)

The capabilities of the collaborative centre – the Caritas Rehabilitation Service

Caritas – Hong Kong was founded in July 1953 and was constituted as the official social service agency of the Roman Catholic Church in Hong Kong in December 1957. Caritas always pledges to serve the most needy and underprivileged in the community.

Caritas Comprehensive Intervention Programme for Autistic Children is one of the service units under the auspice of Caritas Rehabilitation Service. In the absence of government policies on specialized rehabilitation services for children with autism about two decades ago, the Programme has already started pioneering projects since 1984 to serve the autistic children and their families. For the past twenty years, the Programme has served more than 2,000 autistic children and rendered support to their parents and teachers. It provides specialized individual training programs to children with autistic features and therefore enhancing their school adjustment process. It also renders professional supports to parents helping them to develop proper attitudes towards their disabled offspring.

The advocacy of inclusive education allows more children with Asperger Syndrome and autistic children with high intellectual functioning be mainstreamed in ordinary school settings. To help those students to truly integrate into mainstream schools, the Caritas Comprehensive Intervention Program for Autistic Children takes a significant role in meeting the service gap by providing school based support to regular schools. In addition to individual and group training for autistic students to learn classroom routines, rules and regulations; Caritas also provides workshops for teachers of mainstream schools to equip them with effective strategies in teaching students with autism. A high reputation among the general public and professionals in the field of rehabilitation service has been established.

In order to provide a more comprehensive service scope, not only for young children, but also to teenagers and adolescents, the Comprehensive Intervention Programme for Autistic Children and the Parents Resource Centre was integrated in 2003 under a single administration. The pooling of resources and professional staff from the two teams enables the provision of one-stop services for the autistic children at their different stages of development. Activities organized for the autistic teenagers include for instance, a diversity of training and integrative programs on sex education, money management, pre-vocational skills and voluntary services. The programs, which the members were also trained to plan and organize by themselves, were conducted during weekends to enhance their social and independent living skills so that they could be integrated fully into the community. Parents reported that the programs could really meet the needs of their children in the areas of social skills development, motivation to work and self-confidence.

As for the parents of the teenagers and adolescents, the parent group meetings help them to understand the performance and the perspectives of their children. They also enjoy the chance to socialize and to share the fun with each others. These positive impacts are all well recognized by teenagers with autism and their parents.

A list of related activities organized by the Caritas Rehabilitation Service over the years is included in Appendix 1.

Favorable resources for implementing the project

The team composition for this project is as follows:

1. Principal project director: Professor Michael C.F. Tong
2. Project leader: Professor Kathy Y.S. Lee
3. Speech Therapy Consultant: Ms Aster L.Y. Lui

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4. Social Work Consultant.

The favorable resources provided by our organization and the collaborating centre are:

1. The Institute of Human Communicative Research, CUHK
 - To provide experts on communicative science to give advice on the overall project design
 - To provide support for the webpage design and management
 - To liaise with media to promote the project
 - To provide venues with appropriate facilities for conducting group sessions and seminars
2. Division of Speech Therapy, Department of Otorhinolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, CUHK
 - To provide experienced speech therapists
 - To provide detailed speech and language assessment tools
 - To provide extensive updated reference books on Social Thinking
3. Caritas Rehabilitative Service
 - To provide a pool of professionals including social workers and occupational therapists
 - To provide a pool of parent and student members with Asperger Syndrome and high functioning Autism
 - To provide low cost printing and publication facilities from the Caritas Vocational Training Centre
 - To provide venues with appropriate facilities for conducting group sessions and seminars

Targets and expected number of beneficiaries

The target group would be the secondary students with cognitive communication difficulties including those with high functioning Autism or Asperger Syndrome. Their significant others, namely the school teachers, social workers and the parents, will also be involved.

The expected numbers of beneficiaries through implementing the training sessions and organizing the seminar in the project are:

- 800-1,200 persons from the general public who attend the experience sharing seminars
- 20 secondary schools and their related school personnel
- 60 to 80 secondary school students with social communication problems, together with their parents
- 10 teachers and school social workers who participate in the train-the-trainer program
- all secondary schools over the territory to which we will send our project summary to

The estimated reach of people in the press release and website are

- No of visitors of our website = 3,000 per year
- Number of audience/readers reached through media report = 100,000

Extent of teachers and principals' involvement in the project

Principals

- Contact points with the Institute of Human Communicative Research
- Mobilize the school personnel including teachers and social workers to participate the project
- Promote acceptance of integration in school

Teachers/school social workers

- To identify students with social communication difficulties to join the project
- To observe the whole process of the social thinking training
- To contact appropriate personnel to fill out questionnaires regarding the performance of the students prior to and after the training
- To participate in Individual Educational Program (IEP) meetings to promote generalization
- For those who join the train-the-trainer program, their involvement also include:
 1. To attend training workshops and observational sessions provide by our working group
 2. To design and deliver social thinking training sessions for their students under guidance
 3. To participate in IEP meetings to promote generalization

Parents

- Attend the assessment and training sessions with the students
- Fill out questionnaires regarding the performance of the students prior to and after the training
- Act as a bridge between clinicians and teachers/school social workers for implementation of practices at school

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- Carry out home practice
- Attend IEP meetings held for their adolescents

Implementation plan with time-line

1. Re-formulation of the expert panel

An expert panel on Social Thinking has been set up since the last QEF project (project number 2006/0019) in 2007. The composition include an academia, a speech therapist and a research assistant from the Chinese University of Hong Kong; social workers and a occupational therapist from the Caritas Rehabilitation Service; inspectors from the Special Education Support and Placement Unit of the Education Bureau and a speech therapist from the Speech Therapy Think Tank Inc. While members from the Special Education Support and Placement Unit will not join further regular meetings, Educational Psychologists from the Education Bureau have joined the panel to provide professional support. Ms Michelle Garcia Winner and Dr Pamela Crooke, two internationally renowned members in social thinking, have promised to act as the consultants on the project should the application is funded.

2. Recruitment of schools

Training sessions would be carried out on school basis. Target schools would be normal secondary schools in which students with social communication deficits could be identified. Results from our last project revealed that not only students with high functioning Autism or Asperger syndrome could benefit from the training, other non ASD students who exhibit social communication difficulty also showed significant improvement after training. They will thus also be the target students in this project. Interested schools will be recruited through an introduction seminar on Social Thinking program.

3. Implementation of the training program

The published handbook, 社交思考六面睇 - I LAUGH 實用手冊, would be used as the main guide in designing the training program. The main content of the training sessions will pinpoint the weaknesses of the students in the six areas as proposed in the "I LAUGH" model. The six areas are briefly described as follows:

- 1) Initiation: the ability to initiate communication or action appropriately,
- 2) Listening: the ability to listen actively with eyes and brain,
- 3) Abstracting: the ability to infer meaning from social cues or work out meanings from words,
- 4) Understanding perspectives: the ability to incorporate other person's perspectives into how to regulate social relationships,
- 5) Getting the whole picture: the ability to obtain the holistic picture in the communication process and,
- 6) Humor: the ability to appreciate and use of humor when relating to others.

30 to 40 secondary school students, dividing into 10 groups, with social cognitive deficits will receive a total of 14 training sessions. Before the commencement of the training session, baseline measurements on each student will be obtained through parent and teacher questionnaires and the social thinking rating scale developed by the expert panels. The training sessions will run once a week, with each session last for 2 hours including 30-minute post session discussion and feedback.

To promote generalization of the training effects, the participating schools will be encouraged to arrange at least 2 Individualized Educational Program (IEP) meetings. Our working group members will participate in the IEP meetings with school teachers and related personnel to come up with concrete plans for students to generalize learnt behaviors across various settings and people.

Assessments and all the training sessions to all the targeted students will be delivered by our expert panel members at this stage. The potential trainees will be invited to join and observe the whole process in order to obtain a preliminary idea about the social thinking training program.

4. Recruitment of trainees

Target number of trainees is set at 10 in view of the intensive supervision needed. School teachers/social workers, who have participated either in the phase 1 of this project or in our previous social thinking student training program, will be the first targets for trainee recruitment. The next source for recruiting trainees would be from schools which had shown interests but were unselected in our previous project. There are about 30 of such schools in our record. The above mentioned school personnel will be given priority for the training opportunity. We believe they represent the batch of people who are motivated, who have the most direct contact with the students and who are with excellent support from school administrators.

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If we are not able to recruit the target number of 10 trainees in the above two sources, training opportunity will be opened to therapists and social workers from NGOs and private sectors. They represent professionals who also provide direct training on individual and school basis. Although the effect may not be as great as training the school personnel, including them in the trainer program will also help to promote social thinking training for students in need in the community.

5. Training program

The train-the-trainer program will be consisted of three parts – 1) workshop, 2) attachment and, 3) practicum.

Workshop

A 3-day workshop will be designed aiming at teaching the trainees on the core concepts of social thinking, the meaning of all the core critical vocabularies, the skills to plan, implement and evaluate social thinking groups activities for their own students. They will try out the process of creating activities for their group with some chosen critical vocabularies in the workshop. Also, assessment tools will be discussed to enable a better understanding of the identification of students' needs in social thinking abilities.

Clinical attachment

Five attachment sessions to observe the social thinking groups at the CUHK or the Caritas center will be arranged. Conducted by experienced members, trainees will begin to appreciate the actual implementation of the social thinking concepts to local secondary school students. Trainees are also encouraged to take part in leading the group activities gradually with prior thorough discussion with the trainers. After each attachment session, trainers will set goals and discuss the next learning objectives with trainees to consolidate their learning.

Practicum

Trainees will set up the social thinking group at their own respective schools and plan 12 social thinking sessions. Support and supervision will be provided during the training course. A half-hour post-session discussion will be provided to trainees to review the implementation as well as their plan for the coming session.

A new batch of 30 - 40 students, dividing into 10 groups, with social thinking deficits will be included in a group treatment of 12 sessions. Ten teachers/ school social workers will be recruited as trainees where each of them will run a social thinking training group in their school with intensive supervision from our working group. Before the commencement of the training session, trainees will take baseline measurements on each student through parent and teacher questionnaires and the social thinking rating scale developed by the expert panels. The training sessions will run once a week, with each session last for 2 hours including 30-minute post session discussion, feedback and planning.

Each trainee will be encouraged to participate in their school's IEP meetings at least twice within the training period. Trainers will supervise trainees and participate in the IEP meetings to plan for their students in transferring the gains from the social thinking groups to other settings and with other related significant.

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Sharing session

At the end of the training program, a sharing session will be arranged. Trainees will be encouraged to share difficulties, solutions and innovative ideas they experienced in leading the social thinking groups. Trainers will help consolidate trainees learning and promote inter-school sharing meetings in the future. The research team will help to explore the possibility to set up resource schools among different districts.

6. Outcome evaluations

According to Donald Kirkpatrick (<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/k4levels/index.htm>), training effectiveness can be evaluated in four levels. The four levels include 1) reactions of program participants; 2) the resulting increase in knowledge of the participants; 3) the extent of implementation by the participants; and 4) the impact made by such implementation. Each level serves as a base for the next level and evaluation should always begin with level one. All the four levels of evaluation will be included in the proposed project.

a) Level 1 evaluation: Reactions of participants

Pre and post questionnaires will be designed to evaluate participants' reactions including their expectation, feeling and interest in further learning towards the program. Post program interviews will also be conducted to collect qualitative feedbacks from participants. These will help the project team, for instance, to find out direction for improvement of the program.

b) Level 2 evaluation: Knowledge increase of the participants

Formal and informal assessment will be employed. Formal evaluation is obtained through pre and post-test on participants' knowledge of the social thinking theory and critical vocabularies. Informal assessment would be accomplished by interviews with participants to explore the non-observable gains and needs expressed by them.

c) Level 3 evaluation: Extent of implementation

This level evaluates if the participants can use the newly learnt skills and knowledge in everyday environment. It as well seeks if any attitude change occurred within the participants. Through observation on participants' performance, trainers can provide objective evaluation on participants' behavior change. Checklists of applying social thinking theory and/or critical vocabularies of the trainees in daily environment can help to evaluate the program effect.

d) Level 4 evaluation: Impact of implementation

The effectiveness of implementing social thinking program on students by the participants constitutes the fourth level of evaluation. It will be evaluated by post-training assessment, parent questionnaire and teacher questionnaire. Paired samples t-test will be employed to examine if there are any significant differences between the pre-training and post-training scores. The significance level will be set at 0.05 level.

7. Experience sharing seminars to schools, professionals and the general public

Seminars will be organized to therapists, teachers, social workers, parents and the general public with the objective of promoting understanding the needs of students with social thinking deficits. Content of the seminar will cover 1) definition of social cognitive/thinking skills, 2) students that are likely to have social cognitive deficits, 3) characteristics of students with Autism and Asperger Syndrome and, 4) report of the proposed training program and its effectiveness.

8. Creating an online platform for sharing experience

A dynamic website with membership system will be set up to promote social thinking in Hong Kong. Updated news and sharing on social thinking training development will be launched online to facilitate experience sharing and discussion of different professionals. Training materials can be distributed to trainees through online system to accelerate information delivery and minimize postal cost. Different related links about news, development and information of social thinking and Autism or Asperger syndrome will be added to broaden the scope of discussion and to enrich public's knowledge on the diagnosis.

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Timetable and program

Task	Yr	2010					2011					2012					2013										
		Mon	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	
General Tasks:																											
Expert panel meeting		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Set up website		X	X	X	X	X																					
Launching website						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Phase 1 Tasks (Direct Group Training):																											
Staff Training		X	X	X	X																						
Training material preparation		X	X	X	X	X																					
School recruitment		X	X	X	X																						
Teacher training workshop					X	X	X																				
Group training & IEP meetings							X	X	X	X	X	X	X														
Assessment of group training effect														X	X	X	X	X									
Data Analysis																X	X	X									

Task	Yr	2010					2011					2012					2013									
		Mon	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6
Phase 2 Tasks (Train-the-trainer Program):																										
Staff Training										X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X						
Preparation of training materials								X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X										
Recruitment of trainees										X	X	X	X													
Train-the-trainer workshop												X	X	X												
Clinical attachment - Trainees to observe sessions by trainers														X	X	X	X									
Trainees to plan and implement training sessions																X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Trainees sharing sessions																				X	X	X				
Assessment of group training effect																					X	X	X			
Data analyses																						X	X	X	X	X
Report writing and experience sharing seminar																							X	X	X	X

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Expected deliverables and outcomes

The immediate perceivable outcomes of the project include:

1. To help teachers and social workers identify the need for students with social communication deficits.
2. To provide training for students with social communication deficits. This helps to mitigate the adverse consequences on the social, psychological and academic development.
3. To equip school personnel with a more effective handling method with students with social communication deficits.
4. To promote generalization of training gains of students to different settings and with different people.
5. To assist parents and teachers to tackle the problem by providing training.
6. To encourage and facilitate parents, teachers and related professionals to communicate and coordinate through IEP meetings.

In the long run, the implementation of the project would achieve the following outcomes:

1. Teachers and parents will better understand the needs and deficits of students with social communication disorders.
2. Teachers and parents will have a more systematic method to handle students with social communication disorders, hence bringing students a smoother integration at schools.
3. Arouse public awareness on students with social communication disorders and to establish a healthy attitude towards handling of the students.
4. Enable the formulation of a practical teaching guide to teachers and parents to promote the social communication skills of students with social cognitive deficits.
5. Encourage teachers to set-up inter-school support groups to share resources and experience in handling students with social cognition deficits.

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Budget

Category	Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Staffing Cost	Speech Therapist (\$24,120 + \$1,000 MPF) x 36 mths	301,440.00	301,440.00	301,440.00	904,320.00
	Research Assistant (\$16,000 + 5% MPF) x 36 mths	201,600.00	201,600.00	201,600.00	604,800.00
	Subtotal				1,509,120.00
Equipment	Reference Books	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	3,000.00
	Laptop Computer x 2 (\$8,500 x 2)	17,000.00	0.00	0.00	17,000.00
	Video Camera x 1	4,500.00	0.00	0.00	4,500.00
	Computer Software for website development	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
	Subtotal				26,500.00
Services	Public Relationship & Administrative Consultative Support	18,000.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	54,000.00
	Audit & Accounting Service Support	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	60,000.00
	Statistical Consultative Support	25,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00	75,000.00
	Consultative Services Support on Intellectual Assessment	24,000.00	24,000.00	24,000.00	72,000.00
	Information Communication Technology Service Support	30,000.00	29,000.00	29,000.00	88,000.00
	Cost for Relieve Teachers (\$1,213 x 3days x 10 ppl)	0.00	36,390.00	0.00	36,390.00
	Staff Training (Mentorship training, Internship training, IEP training, trainings related to ASD)	22,600.00	22,600.00	22,600.00	67,800.00
	Professional Consultation	\$58,032	\$205,572	114,000.00	377,604.00
	Website Design & Maintenance	60,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00	84,000.00
Subtotal				914,794.00	
General Expenses	Miscellaneous (printing, photocopying, stationery, postage, consumables, therapeutic materials...etc.)	4,216.00	5,200.00	5,200.00	14,616.00
	Travelling	4,480.00	4,480.00	4,480.00	13,440.00
	Administrative Services Support	15,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	45,000.00
	Subtotal				73,056.00
Subtotal		809,368.00	921,782.00	792,320.00	2,523,470.00
	Contingency				30,430.00
	Grand Total				2,553,900.00

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Justification of requirements

1. Staff

a) Speech Therapist

To run the training sessions for the 10 groups of students, a team of professionals who possess the knowledge of communication theories and the experience of clinical encountering with students of communication disorders are required. It is difficult to hire speech therapists, especially experienced ones, in the market. The recruitment experience in our last project in 2007 revealed that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to recruit suitable speech therapists. Yet to minimize the cost, we will further explore the current market potential and hopefully, a speech therapist with adequate experience could be recruited according to the funding guidelines.

b) Research Assistant

A full-time research assistant with knowledge and experience in Social Thinking Training is preferred to oversee the progress at various stages. Tasks to be performed include:

- ◇ to contact students, parents, teachers and school social workers
- ◇ to prepare logistics of group sessions
- ◇ to arrange assessment and treatment appointments for students
- ◇ to arrange train-the-trainer sessions
- ◇ to prepare training materials
- ◇ to collect and input data
- ◇ to perform statistical analysis upon data collection
- ◇ to arrange logistics for seminars and conferences
- ◇ to monitor and update website information

To maintain consistency and continuity in running the project over the period of 3 years, deploying the same personnel would be the most optimal condition. However, we also observe the QEF funding guideline that staff should be employed at the lowest starting point of the MPS payscale. We will uphold the principle and exhaust the existing market in order to hire personnel with suitable qualification and experience to ensure success of the project.

2. Equipment

a) Reference Books:

Updated reference books are needed to keep expert panel updated on the development of the Social Thinking models and to equip the panel with the most effective train-the-trainer models.

b) Laptop Computers:

Laptop computers are needed to present teaching materials in the two centers to facilitate learning of the trainees. Also, trainees need to use them for presentation of their session plans and designs of their teaching materials. The two centers will seek for other technical support such as projector and screen to minimize the cost of technical support from the project. Upon completion of the project, the laptops will be served as resource for all the trainees.

c) Video Camera with Accessories:

Video recording students' behaviors for evaluation is essential to the whole project. One major deficit of our target students is poor perspective understanding. To help them better understand others' perspectives, we have been using video recording to review their behaviors. The impact is tremendous as video reviewing make it possible for them to visualize and understand their own behaviors from a third person perspective. In our last project, however, such exercises could not be implemented at schools where video cameras were not available. As a result, student performance was directly affected. In this project, we proposed all training sessions be video recorded. Upon completion of the project, the video camera will be served as resource for all the trainees.

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3. Services

a) Cost of relieve teachers:

Trainees are required to attend a 3-day workshop in order to acquire effective social thinking theory training. To lessen the burden of school manpower arrangement and trainees (who are mostly school teachers), qualified relieve teachers will be needed to release school teachers to participate in the train-the-trainer program.

b) Staff training:

To build up staff competence and to maintain professional standard in providing trainings to local fellows, continual and in-depth staff training is necessary. Some of the proposed training programs include:

- (i) IEP training by Educational Psychologist
 - ❖ To train staff to lead IEP meetings and to write detailed execution plans for target students
- (ii) Overseas mentorship program
 - ❖ It is the entry level for professionals to understand the Social Thinking Training Model. Training program includes small group meetings and discussions, observation sessions on assessment and training
- (iii) Overseas internship program
 - ❖ It is the advanced level of Social Thinking training in which one will be supervised by professionals to assess clients, develop goals and deliver group therapy to a variety of students with ASD and Asperger Syndrome
- (iv) Other advanced training program related to improving the communication skills of students with ASD or Asperger Syndrome.

The trainings are essentials to ensure the quality of the social thinking training providers. To minimize cost, we will be preparing training materials with in-house printing facilities, offering the minimum rate of speaker honorarium and restricting the number of staff receiving overseas trainings. Knowledge dissemination will be achieved by training attendees to hold sharing presentations.

c) Consultation

Ms Michelle Garcia Winner and Dr Pamela Crooke, two international renowned members in social thinking training, have been travelling internationally to provide consultations and trainings to different social thinking providers. Their experiences in implementing social thinking in different settings will benefit the expert panel to better tailor-made a localized training scheme.

A number of experienced social thinking providers are needed in the project. The manpower in our existing team would be insufficient for the effective implementation of the project. To minimize staff cost while maintaining professional standard at the same time, we plan to hire part-time professionals on project consultancy basis. Services from trained Social Thinking practitioners with background such as psychologists and speech therapists will be solicited. These practitioners will be responsible for sharing the load of 1) providing social thinking trainings at school in the first phase; 2) providing supervision and guidance at schools for trainees; 3) preparing the training manual and; 4) participating IEP meetings and give professional advices.

d) Social Thinking-Hong Kong Website

One of the feedbacks we obtained from previous public seminar participants is that there are very limited resources available on social thinking. A dynamic website is needed to promote public discussion and understanding of social thinking model in Hong Kong. With the website as a media, related news, services, training materials and publications could be made available. Professional service for website design will be sought to create the website. In the long run, technical staff from CUHK will take over the maintenance task.

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Asset Usage Plan

Category (in alphabetical order)	Item / Description	No. of Units	Total Cost	Proposed Plan for Deployment (Note)
audio and video equipment	Video camera	1	\$4,500	Upon completion of the project, the video camera will serve as a resource for all the trainees and Social Thinking providers of our research team. A loan system will be set up so that trainers can borrow the video camera to facilitate the learning of students in Social Thinking Training sessions.
book & VCD	Reference materials	10	\$3,000	A Social Thinking resources library will be set up. All the reference books and VCDs will be made available for trainers and professionals of the research team who will implement Social Thinking Training at schools.
computer hardware	Laptop computer	2	\$17,000	One laptop computer will mainly be used to support the Social Thinking website set up through the project. Another laptop computer will be made available for trainers and professionals of the research team to use in Social Thinking Training sessions at schools.
computer software	Computer softwares for website development	2	\$2,000	The computer softwares are consumable items which can be used only for set up and maintenance of the website. No replication usage will be allowed.

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Report Submission Schedule
遞交報告時間表

My organization commit(s) to submit proper reports in strict accordance with the following schedule :

本機構承諾準時按以下日期遞交合規格的報告：

Project Management 計劃管理		Financial Management 財政管理	
Type of Report and covering period 報告類別及涵蓋時間	Report due day 報告到期日	Type of Report and covering period 報告類別及涵蓋時間	Report due day 報告到期日
Progress Report 計劃進度報告 1/7/2010 - 31/12/2010	31/01/2011	Interim Financial Report 中期財政報告 1/7/2010 - 31/12/2010	31/01/2011
Progress Report 計劃進度報告 1/1/2011 - 30/6/2011	31/7/2011	Interim Financial Report 中期財政報告 1/1/2011 - 30/6/2011	31/7/2011
Progress Report 計劃進度報告 1/7/2011 - 31/12/2011	31/01/2012	Interim Financial Report 中期財政報告 1/7/2011 - 31/12/2011	31/01/2012
Progress Report 計劃進度報告 1/1/2012 - 30/06/2012	31/7/2012	Interim Financial Report 中期財政報告 1/1/2012 - 30/06/2012	31/7/2012
Progress Report 計劃進度報告 1/7/2012 - 31/12/2012	31/01/2013	Interim Financial Report 中期財政報告 1/7/2012 - 31/12/2012	31/01/2013
Final Report 計劃總結報告 1/7/2010 - 30/6/2013	30/09/2013	Final Financial Report 終期財政報告 1/7/2010 - 30/6/2013	30/09/2013

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Project Impact***Evaluation parameters and method***

The success of the project will be evaluated by:

1. The number of students, parents, teachers and school social workers who have attended the training program and the public seminars
2. The feedbacks from parents, teachers and school social workers obtained through questionnaires
3. The progress of the students as revealed by 1) pre- and post-treatment assessment scores
4. The number of teachers/social workers who have attended the train-the-trainer program
5. Feedbacks given by trainees regarding the training program
6. The performance of trainees before and after the training program
7. The progress of the students with training led by the trainees

How the project would benefit the education sector as a whole

In line with the contemporary educational system, students with special needs in Hong Kong are encouraged to be placed into regular classrooms. The related social communication difficulties of the students with high functioning Autism and with Asperger Syndrome, nevertheless, often prevent them from interacting effectively with the peers. Completion of the present project helps to promote the success of mainstream education as a whole by 1) providing training to students, parents, school social workers and teachers and, 2) organizing public seminars to facilitate understanding and acceptance of students with social cognitive deficits.

Sustainability of the outcomes of the project

1. Worksheets as home practices will be provided to parents to consolidate the new skills learnt in the training sessions
2. Teachers will be equipped with knowledge for future identification of children with similar problems
3. The trainees will be independent and responsible for further training of students at their individual schools
4. The established website will serve as a source of information for interested parties
5. Formation of inter-school support groups to share resources and experience

Dissemination / publicity methods

1. Knowledge and management approaches on students with social communication deficits will be disseminated through seminars.
2. Media will be linked up to publicize the importance of early identification and remediation of the problem.
3. Press conference will be organized to disseminate results of the project.
4. Updates of the project will also be released through and the websites of the Institute of Human Communicative Research and the Social Thinking-Hong Kong
5. Updates of the project will be launched on the Social Thinking-Hong Kong website

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Appendix 1. List of related activities organized by the Caritas Rehabilitation Service

June 2008 to January 2009

With the support of Quality Education Fund, PRC has launched a public education project named “關懷校園：打開心窗” in the local primary and secondary schools promoting inclusive education in the community. Since its commencement in June, we have been invited to perform 48 workshops in 17 primary schools and secondary schools with 1561 students to participate. An interactive approach “drama in education” (戲劇融入教育) was used in these workshops. The facilitators adopted a suitable role in order to excite interest, invite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices, develop the narrative and create possibilities for the group to interact in role. Students were encouraged to understand their classmates with autism from different perspectives and to establish a positive attitude towards them. The feedback of students was positive. We also received many positive feedback and compliments from the principals and teachers. They expressed that students’ understanding on the characteristics of classmates with autism and the concept of ‘Integration’ were both strengthened. A booklet using comic and reflective approach was also published to help students of mainstream schools in understanding, accepting and interacting with their classmates with autistic disorder. These booklets were distributed free of charge to primary and secondary schools implementing activities on integration for their students.

1. November 2005 to March 2008
Creative workshop 創意激發工作坊、綜合藝術工作坊、齊齊來拍照 is open-ended in the choice of programme means. The ultimate goal is to liberate the autistic youth’s ability of self-expression. Participants can derive enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment through creative artwork.
2. July 2005 to December 2007
Social group for adolescents with Asperger’s Syndrome 青年心聲分享聊天室 has been conducted in Friday evenings to enhance social interaction and communications. By participating in the groups, the members have become more self-confident and marked progress on interpersonal relations has been made.
3. January 2005 to June 2005
Training course on sex education 青春旅程系列 was organized to help adolescents with autism to understand the importance of, and respect for, the body and to beware of unacceptable behaviors. They also learned appropriate behavior and social skills as relating to opposite sex.
4. September 2004 to Now
Self-help group for autistic youths 自「閉」組 is set up with an aim to realize self-advocacy. In the beginning stage, regular meetings served to create social bonding and forge solidarity among members while sharing their views and experience with each other. Now, the members are planning to launch community educational activities to promote the understanding of the general public on autism.
5. September 2004 to April 2005
Training Packages on Vocational Rehabilitation 求職新丁 was organized to better equip youths with autism to set for their career goals and strive for their best in the future when they enter the work force. The content included understanding individual potential, the importance of work, work ethics, the concept of money and how to manage it, visitation activities and sharing session on the employment status of youths with autism. Volunteers from business sector were invited to participate in simulation of job interview. In the last phrase, a simulated snack-bar was set up for them to learn work skills and to communicate and interact with others through offering delivery service which imitated a transaction scene.
6. July 2004 to Jan 2005
『關懷校園 齊創共融新天地－學校支援計劃』: workshops at primary schools to promote integration of students with special needs. Funded by the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and the Civil Education Committee.
7. November 2003 to June 2004 and May 2005 to December 2005
Structured developmental groups 成長初體驗系列 for autistic adolescence with high functioning to strengthen their independent living skills and social skills. Training approaches such as Social Stories, Mind Reading and role play were used in teaching them social skills through improved social understanding. Overnight camps were specially designed to enhance their self-care ability, domestic skills and social skills for daily living. At the same time, parent group was conducted to help parents understand the performance and the perspective of their child.
8. Nov 2003 to June 2004
Volunteer training course 關懷行動 jointly participated by young people with and without autism was organized to promote understanding and acceptance of autistic youths in their counterparts. It also promoted