Reopened border is the perfect ending
An exceptional challenge: the examination service for cross-boundary students during the COVID-19 outbreak

開關帶來的完美句號
非常戰疫：為跨境學童而設的異地考試服務

Cross-boundary and Inter-country Social Service
Social worker Ming Chiu and Service Coordinator Torres Lee
「十問十答」— 跨境及國際社會服務社工趙業銘及項目主任李智鴻

Q1. What is the examination service? Where did the idea come from?

所謂異地考試服務是甚麼一回事？意念何來？

Ming: The border between Shenzhen and Hong Kong was closed after the COVID-19 outbreak, and cross-border students who lived in Shenzhen but went to school in Hong Kong were unable to set foot on campus for more than three years. "As a social worker, what can you bring to service users?" asked our programme director during a supervision session. The first thing we thought of was the internal assessments (IA) for Secondary School Places Allocation.

趙：新冠肺炎疫情令深港兩地關口關閉，居住在深圳原本一直在香港上學的跨境學童未能踏足校園三年有多。在督導時，服務總監問了一句：「作為社工，你可以為服務使用者帶來甚麼？」我第一件想到的事就是呈分試，因為我們知道它直接影響學童升中，是頭等大事。

Torres: Right after the border closure in February 2020, some schools contacted us to discuss the feasibility of letting their cross-boundary students take their exams in Shenzhen. As a result, the first off-site exam in Shenzhen for Hong Kong primary schools was held in September 2020. At that time, 18 Primary 5 and 6 students took the exam in our Nanshan Centre. This was the first time for it to take place in Shenzhen, and it was a great honour for us that it was pioneered by our Agency.
李：中港兩地在2020年2月封關時，已有個別學校聯絡我們研究異地考試的可行性。結果，第一場為香港小學於深圳舉行的異地考試在2020年9月就舉行了。當時有18位小五、小六的學生在我們的南山中心考試，那次異地考試可說是全港全深圳首創，也很榮幸是由我們國際社率先提供這個服務。

Q2. What were the specific preparations for this service? 這項服務具體的準備工作是怎樣的？

Torres: The examination services can be roughly divided into three parts: the pre-exam preparation, the exam itself, and post-exam follow-up. For pre-exam preparation, we discussed the timetable with the individual schools and worked with them on ensuring the confidentiality of the exam papers while having them safely delivered to our centres in Shenzhen.

Regarding the exam itself, we had to work out the roles and responsibilities with the schools, such as how to deal with questions about the exam papers raised by candidates during the exam. The post-exam follow-up was to make sure the completed exam papers were delivered properly to the teachers.

李：異地考試服務大致可以分為試前準備、考試現場及試後跟進三大部份。試前準備是與個別學校商討項目時間表，以及如何將試卷保密並安全送抵我們深圳的中心。

關於考試現場部份，則是要決定如何與學校分工，如考試期間考生對試卷有問題該如何處理等。後期服務，就是準確地把完成的試卷傳遞到老師手上。

Q3. How was this service different from your previous work? 這項服務比起你之前一直在做的服務有何不同？

Ming: What I found rather interesting was that the examination service was very different in nature from the social service we have been providing. When we plan and conduct activities, the atmosphere is mostly relaxed and cheerful; but when conducting an exam, we must be completely serious, we have to ensure fairness and order, and no mistakes are allowed as these would affect the students' grades.

趙：我覺得一個比較有趣的情況是，這次提供的考試服務在本質上與我們一向做的社會工作有很大的不同。我們策劃及主持活動，氣氛多是輕鬆和歡樂的；但在主持考試的時候，則要用嚴肅的態度，因為我們這刻重視的是公平和秩序，而且不容許有任何差錯，因為是關乎同學的考試成績。

Q4. Your team was split between Hong Kong and Shenzhen due to the border closure. What were the obstacles you faced and how were they overcome? 你們香港和深圳的同事因為封關必須分隔兩地，對於你們推出這項新服務有帶來阻礙嗎？怎樣克服？

Torres: We could only work separately. Hong Kong colleagues such as Ah Ming, Ling, Jiaqi and Walkman were
Q5. When was the toughest time in the last three years of examination service?

Ming: The peak demand for this examination service was in March, June and November, with am and pm exam sessions lined up for the whole of those months. The team still had regular duties on hand at that time, so they were overwhelmed. At the end of the pandemic, we provided over 630 exam sessions for more than 40 schools with more than 4,000 candidates.

趙：這個考試服務的需求高峰期在3月、6月及11月。基本上每天的上午及下午都有考試。這段期間同事們有時在忙碌中，真是忙得不可開交。三年疫情下來，我們為超過40間學校提供630節的考試，考生人數超過4,000人。
Q6. How did the Agency support you guys?
機構怎樣支持你們？

Torres: As their supervisor across the border, I could only ask the Agency for more resources as support. In terms of manpower, we hired several full-time employees and a large number of part-timers; for venues, we urgently sought management’s approval to rent larger service centres so as to meet the demand. We were grateful that the management facilitated the relocation of our Nanshan Centre and Futian Centre in March and November 2021, respectively. This enabled our team to provide services more easily to more children and schools in need.

李：作為主管的我不能過於幫忙，只能向機構爭取更多資源去支持同事去打這場硬仗。
在人手方面，我們聘用了數個全職員工及大量的兼職員工；在場地方面，我們緊急向機構管層爭取資源，很感謝管理層在短時間內促成了我們南山中心及福田中心分別於2021年3月及11月搬迁往大一點的辦公室。這

Q7. Did you encounter difficulties when negotiating with schools?
這服務必須與學校協商，當中遇到困難嗎？

Torres: Most of the schools had a great deal of trust in us, but the devil was really in the details. We had to have a thorough plan when conducting exams involving special subjects. For example, the special drawing paper required for the art exam could not be acquired anywhere in Shenzhen, so the teacher had to mail the paper to the Centre in advance.

But even with good planning, there were still many unexpected on-the-spot issues. For example, we normally used Zoom for oral exams, but on one occasion when the network was unstable our colleague had to make long-distance calls to enable the teacher to talk to the candidates.

李：其實學校大多很信任我們，只是很多時真的是魔鬼在細節，我們必須揹著石頭過河，
Q8. Were there any specific incidents that left an impression?

Ruling: 雖然這兩件事情令人印象深刻。

Ming: A social worker colleague noticed that a student looked depressed during the exam. After talking with the student’s parents, she learned that the family needed help with their parent-child relationship and emotional support, so this was provided to them in a timely manner.

Q: 深圳社工同事在考試時留意到學童的神情低落，與家長談後，了解到該家庭有親子關係和情緒困擾。社工為該家庭提供輔導服務，協助他們處理自身家庭的需要。

Torres: Since we launched the service, many schools cold-called us, saying that other principals strongly recommended our examination service and almost begged us to help them out. This was huge recognition for our team.

Q: 自我們推出服務以後，很多本來不認識機構的學校來電，說其他校長大力推薦我們的服務，請求我們幫忙，那真的是對我們團隊的最大認可。

Q9. What did you gain out of this new service?
Anything unexpected?

Ming: This service can only be implemented by a strong team. Both the staff in Shenzhen and Hong Kong worked tirelessly and selflessly, leading to better trust and closer ties in the CBIC (Cross-Boundary and International Social Service) team.

Q: 這服務需要一個強大的團隊支援，無論在深圳還是在港的同工，都十分努力及無私

協助整個項目推行。同事之間多了一份信任，整個CBIC（跨境及國際社會服務）團隊氛圍亦變得更融和。

Torres: I think the entire team has grown a lot. I always believed in our colleagues’ capabilities, and all they lacked was a little confidence. The quality of work and efficiency of every team member have greatly improved with this programme, and I am very pleased that all my team members excel in their roles and complement each other.

Q: 我覺得整個團隊都成長了很多，我一直深信同事們很有能力，就是欠缺了一點信心。經此一役，大家的工作質量及效率都大大提升，人人皆有其優勢，更能互相補位，實在令我非常欣慰。

Q10. This programme contributed to the team’s winning of “The Annual Thematic Award: Social Service during the Pandemic” presented by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS). Is there anyone you would like to thank for such a much-praised project?

項目的成功獲得多方認可，有沒有甚麼人你想多謝的?

Ming: It is impossible for us to provide the services on our own. Our Programme Director Iris Liu and Torres always encouraged and assisted me in the smooth implementation of the services, which made me feel trusted and at ease.
In addition, I am very grateful to Iris and our CE Mr. Stephen Yau for their full support. They had 100% trust in us, and always gave us the green light and mobilised resources for our proposals in the fastest possible way. They were our strongest back-up as we fought on.

李：我很想多謝我整個團隊。幸運我們兩地的同事全都用心服務，這份心真的能跨越地域界限，文化差異和各種阻礙。縱使我們那時面對的挑戰非常大，大家都是全著「舍我其誰」的心，去開一個又一個的難關。

同事面對排山倒海的工作量難免有怨氣，我也經常被他們罵個半死，但他們罵完了以後，明天早上又會準時上班，繼續在各自的崗位上見招拆招，我真的很感動。我希望逐一感謝在疫情下一直留守在深圳各中心，提供不同服務的他們，包括：Ivy, Queenie, Grace, Libra, Chilly, Tina, Ivan, Peter, Kent, Jingjing, Olivia, Joanne, May, Maggie, Sherry 和 Jacky。

另外，我很感激Iris和行政總裁邱浩波先生對我們的支持。他們對我們是100%的信任，總是迅速為我們的建議開綠燈和調配資源，一直為我們作最強大的後盾。
We are delighted that Mrs Janet Lee, wife of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China, accepted our invitation to be our Patron, starting in July 2022. Mrs Lee paid her orientation visit to our Shamshuipo (South) Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC) and the Small Group Home at Wong Tai Sin on 25 October 2022 to learn about our services and to meet staff members and service users.

Mrs Lee was greeted by ISS-HK Chairman Mr Kenneth Kwok, Advisory Committee members and ISS-HK Chief Executive Mr Stephen Yau at the Shamshuipo (South) IFSC, and was given an overview of the diversified services of ISS-HK. She was then given a tour of the IFSC, meeting and chatting with staff and service users who were there for classes and other sessions. Mrs Lee then travelled to Wong Tai Sin to visit one of our Small Group Homes, finding out about the routines of our Homes and catching up with the children there.

We thank Mrs Lee for her patronage and look forward to welcoming her at our other service centres and Agency events.

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Opening Ceremony of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integrated Family Service Centre
「深港家庭綜合服務中心」啓動禮

Since 2006, ISS-HK has cooperated with the Shenzhen Luohu District Women's Federation in providing services to cross-border families and students in Shenzhen. To serve these users better, also to further foster ties between Shenzhen and Hong Kong and to ride on the bandwagon of the Greater Bay Area’s rapid development, our service centre at Luohu has been restructured and renamed the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integrated Family Service Centre.

The opening ceremony for the Centre was held on 15 November 2022 simultaneously in Hong Kong and Shenzhen in hybrid mode. Mr. Tam Yiu Chung, former member of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, and Ms. Chan Yuen Han, Chairman of the Women's Commission, were present in the Hong Kong part of the event. Representatives of the Shenzhen Luohu People’s Government, the Shenzhen Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the Shenzhen Women's Federation and numerous other organisations were present at the Shenzhen venue. Our Patron Mrs. Janet Lee gave a video speech to congratulate us on reaching this new milestone. Representatives of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong SAR, the Social Welfare Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government, and secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong, took part in the event via Zoom.

International Cooperation from 2006 and beyond in Shekou Women’s Joint Council, offering different types of support and services, has seen the Shenzhen-Macao development, strengthening Shenzhen-Guangdong exchange and cooperation. The Shenzhen Women’s Federation is pleased to welcome more families to the centre and to develop cross-border family relations and coexistence.

The ‘Deep and Hong Kong Family Service Centre’ was launched on 15 November 2022 in Shenzhen and Hong Kong. Senator Tam Yiu Chung, former member of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, and Ms. Chan Yuen Han, General Secretary of the Women’s Commission, were present in the Hong Kong part of the event. Representatives of the Shenzhen Luohu People’s Government, the Shenzhen Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, the Shenzhen Women’s Federation and numerous other organisations were present at the Shenzhen venue. Our Patron Mrs. Janet Lee gave a video speech to congratulate us on reaching this new milestone. Representatives of the Liaison Office of the Central People’s Government in the Hong Kong SAR, the Social Welfare Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government, and secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong, took part in the event via Zoom.

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Press Conference on Survey of cross border families on border reopening

ISS-HK conducted a survey among cross border families at the end of December 2022 to find out their concerns prior to the reopening of the Hong Kong and Mainland China border, and over 1,000 questionnaire responses were received. A press conference was held on 6 January 2023 to announce the results of the survey, during which two service users gave first-hand accounts of their stories and plans to reporters. Numerous media outlets showed up at the conference and dozens of news stories were published in newspapers and online.

Malaysian Sweetheart Lin Min Chen Visits HOPE Centre

「大馬女神」林明禎小姐到訪HOPE少數族裔人士支援服務中心

The HOPE Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities had the privilege of welcoming Malaysian sweetheart Lin Min Chen as one of its classmates at an Urdu calligraphy class on 2 February 2023.

ISS-HK is honoured to partner with The Asian Film Awards Academy (AFAA) in organizing the event. Ms Lin, the 16th Asian Film Awards Youth Ambassador, attended the Urdu class with over 10 ethnic minority children. She learned from four tutors of the HOPE Centre how to write Chinese New Year greetings such as “Dreams Come True”, “Stay Healthy”, and “Happy New Year” in Urdu.

After the class, Ms Lin presented AFAA X Vivian Ho stationery sets to the children as souvenirs. The children and teens then wrote down their new year wishes and resolutions and invited Ms Lin to sign them. Ms Lin wrote “Dreams Comes True” in Urdu and other heartfelt messages in their notebooks.

HOPE少數族裔人士支援服務中心在2023年2月2日的烏爾都語書法課迎接了一位特別學員—「大馬女神」林明禎小姐。

香港國際社會服務社很高興與亞洲電影大獎學院興攜手合作，促成是次別具意義的交流活動。來自第16屆亞洲電影大獎青年大使的林明禎小姐與超過10位亞裔小朋友及青少年，一同在四位導師的指導下用烏爾都語書法寫出「夢想成真」、「身體健康」、「新年快樂」等祝賀語，交換農曆新年祝福。

在活動尾聲，林明禎小姐向小朋友親送「亞洲電影大獎學院X何博欣 (Vivian Ho)」聯手限定企畫紀念品文具套裝，讓小朋友用筆和記事簿寫下新年願望。小朋友們邀請她簽名和合照留念，而林明禎小姐也在小朋友的記事簿上用烏爾都語寫下「夢想成真」，為他們送上祝福。
Students organise joint-school local “In-depth Tours”

In response to the annual service theme of “Be Happy - Walking Together” which encourages students to open themselves up, connect with others and savour the happiness that life has to offer, school social workers of the School Social Work and School Support Services planned a series of joint-school outdoor activities named “In-depth Tours”. Designated groups of students were recruited to design and guide students from other schools to join the community tours. It is expected that participants can gain a better understanding of the community’s features, deepen their peer relationships and enjoy a pleasant day out.

The first event was held in December 2022, when students from Cheung Chau Government Secondary School hosted a visit to their island for 20 students from other secondary schools. The students visited scenic spots in Cheung Chau and also stopped by to look at some iconic shops on the island. The students were excited by the trip and enjoyed interacting with each other. Our school’s social workers will arrange another “In-depth Tour”, this time to Aberdeen, in Phase II.

To respond to this year’s service theme “開心同行”，學校社會工作服務處將舉辦一系列聯合學校“深度遊”戶外活動。活動由學生設計及帶領來自不同學校的學生訪訪社區，期望讓學生了解社區的特色，增進彼此的互動和享受愉快的旅程。

首次活動於2022年12月舉行，由長洲官立中學的同學接待20位來自其他中學的學生到長洲遊玩。一眾同學不僅參觀長洲的景點，還探訪了一些特色小店。同學們亦興致勃勃，在旅途中互相交流，歡聲笑語不絕。學校司工會亦會再安排另一次參觀香港仔社區的“深度遊”戶外活動。

“Running for Life” members continue to conquer races

The Tin Shui Wai “Running for Life” Running Team was formed in 2012 for participants to build up a healthy lifestyle and enhance their mental health. Eleven years on, the team has 22 members who are users of casework service of the Tin Shui Wai (North) Integrated Family Service Centre. They attend training sessions conducted every Tuesday by an experienced coach, and have joined over 20 races over the years. These included “Run for Survival 2022” which was organized by the Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Hong Kong last November. Runners also took part in a hike in February.

「足」動人生支援小組組員繼續參加賽事

「足」動人生跑步小組於2012年成立，目標是幫助天水圍居民建立健康的生活習慣，及改善身心靈質素。小組現有22名組員，均為天水圍居民及社區服務中的個案。組員會出席逢星期二由專業導師帶領的訓練，小組成立至今已參與超過20個跑步賽事，包括由香港海洋公園保育基金於去年11月舉辦的「生態保育賽」。組員亦於2月舉行了一次行山樂活動。
Lottery Ticket Sale at Domain in Yau Tong
油塘大本型慈善籌款活動

ISS-HK conducted a lottery ticket sale at the Domain Shopping Mall in Yau Tong on 4-5 March 2023. With the venue kindly sponsored by Domain, ISS-HK staff and volunteers gave away rabbit balloons, handmade pineapple pastries and stuffed toys, while henna artists from the HOPE Support Centre for Ethnic Minorities gave Yau Tong residents a taste of their hand art. We would like to thank staff, volunteers, their families and all donors for making the event such a success!

Free Chinese Medical Consultation cum Health Day at Shamshuipo
中醫義診暨健康推廣日

Since 2019, the Shamshuipo (South) Integrated Family Service Centre has partnered with the volunteer group "Hong Kong Health Association" to organise the "Free Chinese Medical Consultation cum Health Day". This provides free Chinese medicine consultations in grassroots neighborhoods in Sham Shui Po. The services include pulse diagnosis, medicine prescriptions, acupuncture and moxibustion, diagnosis and treatment of pain, treatment on meridians and acupoints, and nursing guidance.

Although the activities were temporarily suspended during the peak of the COVID-19 outbreak, free Chinese medicine video consultations and delivery of medicines to grassroots residents were arranged so that those diagnosed with COVID-19 could receive timely diagnosis and treatment. A total of 24 free medical consultations have been held as of February 2023 for more than 1,200 beneficiaries, who have highly appreciated them.

自2019年10月起，深水埗（南）綜合家庭服務中心一直與義工團體「香港健康協會」合辦「中醫義診暨健康推廣日」活動，每月為深水埗基層街坊提供中醫義診服務，包括脈診、針灸、傷科病症診療及經穴通絡療法、護理指導等。

新冠肺炎疫情高峰時活動曾一度暫停，但期間亦曾為基層街坊提供中醫視診義診及門診服務，讓求診無門的新冠肺炎確診者得到即時的診治。直至2023年2月，計劃共舉行了24次義診活動，受惠人數超過1,200人，受惠者對服務給予高度讚賞。
Programme for Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (Fujian)
協助「綜援長者廣東及福建省養老計劃」福建省個案

What do we do?
From April 2000, ISS-HK has been commissioned by the Hong Kong Social Welfare Department to provide services for the elderly who have joined the Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (PCSSA) Scheme. ISSHK started to serve only recipients from the Fujian Province since 2021.

Who do we serve?
The Scheme allows elderly PCSSA recipients who choose to take up residence in Fujian Province to continue to receive their PCSSA payment.

How do we operate?
- We conduct individual briefing session for each recipient prior to his/her departure for Fujian Province. During the briefing sessions, we introduce our services to the recipients and give information about the necessary preparation for their settlement in Mainland China.
- Each case will receive an annual review for its eligibility to continue receiving PCSSA payment. A minimum of 20% of the cases will be reviewed by spot checks, while the remaining will receive postal reviews.
- We give recommendations for appropriate appointee for mentally unfit recipients.
- We conduct investigations of eligibility on special cases.
- We handle enquiries and changes reported by recipients or interested parties.
- We arrange escort/transport service for needy recipients living in Fujian Province.
- We handle of applications for burial grant from recipients' relatives who are Chinese residents.

Words from Programme Director
服務總監的話
As the exchange rate for HK dollar to Renminbi was strong at that time when the scheme was introduced in 1997, the demand for PCSSA was quite high. Other social security allowance - Old Age Allowance and Old Age Living Allowance - were gradually made portable since 2013 for Hong Kong elders who have settled in Guangdong and Fujian provinces. With more options to choose from, the number of recipients for PCSSA is on the decline trend.

Our service aims is
本社自2000年4月開始獲香港社會福利署委任為代理機構，為參加「綜援長者廣東及福建省養老計劃」的長者提供服務。2021年起專注服務居住於福建省的長者。

我們的服務對象是
符合計劃申請資格，並選擇到福建省養老的綜援長者。

我們的運作模式
- 在參加計劃的長者前往福建省養老前，本社邀請他們出席以個別面談方式進行的簡介會，以向他們介紹本社的內容，及講解有關回國內地居住需要注意的事宜。
- 每年透過家訪或郵遞方式，為每位參加計劃的長者及其負擔其領取綜援金的資格。每年至少一百廿名的個案會接受本社的家訪調查，其餘個案則以郵遞方式進行覆核調查。
- 對於精神狀況欠佳以致未能表達意願的長者，本社會替其揹負其後的受委人。
- 本社會特別的個案進行特別調查。
- 本社需要處理長者及/或其親友的查詢，並更新長者的個人資料。
- 對於居住福建省有急切需要的長者，本社經評估後會按情況提供護送或協助安排交通等服務。
- 長者去世後，本社會協助其內地親友辦理殯葬津貼申請。

Contact Information
聯繫資料
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Service Hours
服務時間：
Mon 星期一 9am - 1pm / 2pm - 6pm
Tue - Fri 星期二至五 9am - 1pm / 2pm - 5:45pm