研究及調查工作　2002年度委員會的工作重點包括研究及調查工作。在2002年11月1日，香港大學與香港大學聯合在香港試點，進行了一項研究，調查若干精神病患者的社會期望，以及他們對於政策和社會服務的期望。研究報告指出，精神病患者在社會上仍然受到不公正的待遇，他們需要更多的社會支持和援助。
The survey found that employers and employees have a good understanding of the liability under the equal opportunity law, but employers had seriously underestimated their vicarious liabilities for the actions of their employees. Under anti-discrimination legislation, employers are liable for unlawful acts committed by their employees in the course of employment, with or without their knowledge. However, only 30% of SME employers and 34% of MLE employers were aware that they were vicariously liable for any act of discrimination or sexual harassment that takes place in their workplace. Comparatively, more SME and MLE employees were aware of this, amounting to 52% and 45% respectively. After being informed of their liabilities, the majority of SMEs (93%) and MLEs (99%) expressed concern.

About 5% of SME and MLE employees claim that they have personally experienced discrimination or sexual harassment. When talking about other people’s experiences, 9% of SME employees and 15% of MLE employees reported having observed discrimination or sexual harassment cases involving co-workers.

Key findings in the survey revealed that MLE and SME employers and employees have a high awareness of the EOC. The majority of respondents highly value the EOC as an important mechanism in receiving and resolving complaints, changing people’s attitudes, encouraging good workplace practices, taking legal action, setting up guidelines, and promoting and educating the general public about equal opportunities. Most respondents believe the EOC to be impartial in handling complaints.

The respondents also believe that compliance with equal opportunity principles will result in better working relationships, higher efficiency, employee stability and confidence in the company. They shared views on the negative impact of non-compliance, the most common being low employee morale, tense relationships among colleagues and running the company’s reputation.

Interestingly, a majority of employers and employees in both sectors believed that discrimination on the grounds of race, age and sexual orientation were illegal, even though these were not covered by existing anti-discrimination laws in Hong Kong.
The findings show that there is a need for the government to articulate its programme for women clearly.

Study on SARS Related Difficulties

Since March 2003, SARS has aroused massive anxiety in Hong Kong causing difficulties in people's work and social life. As a result, the Commission received 800 complaints and 444 enquiries (as at 29.12.03). In order to accurately assess the impact of SARS, the EOC and the Hong Kong Mood Disorders Centre of the Faculty of Medicine, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, decided to conduct a telephone study in July 2003.

Baseline survey on students' attitudes towards gender stereotypes, family roles and persons with a disability

This study was established to look into students' levels of acceptance of persons with a disability, gender stereotypes and family roles. The study, which was conducted by the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, the University of Hong Kong, gathered data from 8,379 students in primary and secondary schools.

Gender

The research results released in April 2002 show that gender has a profound influence on the way students think. Both male and female students still expect the man to be the major breadwinner in the family whilst the woman is regarded as more suitable for the care of young children.

In both sectors, only about 10% of the employees who had personal experience of discrimination or sexual harassment reported their cases to employers and those with relevant authority. The respondents quoted lack of confidence about the outcome of lodging a complaint, and fear of losing their jobs as the main reasons for not complaining.

The companies surveyed expressed a willingness to receive training and information from the EOC, which would facilitate their compliance with existing legislation and minimize their liability.

Following the findings of the survey, the EOC has introduced a series of initiatives including EO training workshops and a SME Kit to support the business community in providing the information they need to promote good management practices.

Survey on Women's Knowledge of CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty which provides a universal definition of discrimination against women and contains provisions to protect women's rights. The CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1979, and entered into force in September 1981. The CEDAW was extended to Hong Kong in October 1996.

A telephone survey by the EOC conducted in December 2002 and released in March 2003 revealed that 37.1% of the 1,528 respondents did not know the government had policies to protect women's rights. The CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1979, and entered into force in September 1981. The CEDAW was extended to Hong Kong in October 1996.

The purpose of the survey was to establish the level of women's awareness of the CEDAW, and to gauge respondents' main concerns as women. The top three concerns as women expressed by the respondents were career (50%), family (48%) and children (28%).

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The findings show that there is a need for the government to articulate its programme for women clearly.
Students tended to pay attention only to the constraints and limitations of PWDs. Half of all respondents viewed people with a disability as pitiful. The disabling implications of an accident-prone and appropriate for repetitive work and people with mental illness were assumed to be deviant and violent.

Students were still largely under the negative influences of many prevailing behavioral misconceptions about people with a disability. They held the assumption that PWDs would be more comfortable and better educated in special instead of integrated schools. Students were hesitant towards personal commitments and cautious about the social consequences, in particular, the sense of threat and unpredictability, in relation to people with a disability.

Only about one-third (36.2%) of the students indicated that they were acquainted with or had had personal contact with persons with a disability. Many people with a disability... This leads to a vicious cycle of further misunderstanding and hesitance to treat them equally as members of society.

Follow-up

The EOC is concerned about the findings because the perceptions students hold influence their interest and career choices, affecting their economic status, achievement and public participation as well as the overall cohesiveness of a community. It is important that girls and boys are equipped to make the best possible choices in a changing society. The EOC's vision is to challenge stereotypes so that young people of both sexes will discover new horizons and possibilities.

School subjects were seen as more or less suitable for male or female students. Girls thought that physical education, mathematics and computers were suitable for both sexes whereas the boys considered them male subjects. Art and music were seen as girls' subjects whereas science and IT were seen as boys' subjects. Extra-curricular activities followed a similar pattern. Football, martial arts and volleyball were for the boys while drawing, dancing and music were for the girls.

Occupational stereotyping was extremely prevalent among both male and female students. When they were asked to imagine being the opposite sex when choosing a suitable career, there were marked changes in their personal choice of careers. Although they agreed that most occupations were suitable for either gender, stereotypical thinking still dominated career preferences. Very few of them targeted themselves beyond stereotypical boundaries in career options. Employment in the arts and humanities, early childhood education, nursing, fine arts and dancing were thought to be appropriate for girls. Careers in science, IT, engineering, sports and technical work were considered appropriate for boys.

Results indicated that the young respondents found the reconstructed family (amalgamation of two families into a new one) least acceptable, followed by male-headed single parent family, female-headed single parent family, family with the mother in mainland China and age-discrepant parents.

All respondents said that their impression of persons with a disability (PWDs) came largely from the mass media. There was... and those who had experienced mental illness at the bottom – very much in line with the international literature.

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Only about one-third (36.2%) of the students indicated that they were acquainted with or had had personal contact with persons with a disability. Many people with a disability are still largely excluded socially from the mainstream, and students viewed this exclusion as normative. This leads to a vicious cycle of further misunderstanding and hesitance to treat them equally as members of society.

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The findings also made it obvious that social integration of persons with a disability in the different facets of community life must be promoted. More PWDs should be educated in the mainstream, engage in open employment, live in communal residential settings, and participate in as well as contribute to community life.

Research on Content Analysis of Textbooks and Teaching Materials in Respect of Stereotypes

This research was conducted by the Centre for English Language Education and Communication Research, City University of Hong Kong. The focus of the research project was to examine the nature and extent of stereotyping in printed educational materials. The areas of stereotyping surveyed were gender, age, disability, single-parenthood and ethnicity. The research team reviewed 289 textbooks, examination papers and 69,957 entries with human characters, and interviewed students, teachers and publishers.

Gender

The research results released in April 2002 showed that in the entries where gender of the characters could be identified, female characters appeared less often than male characters. Male characters were more likely to co-occur with male than with female. Males were more likely to co-occur with male than female. In terms of behaviour, women were said to cry, behave strangely and unable to stop eating. Men were associated with courage, older persons, women and children were associated with being weak. Teachers interviewed by the researchers felt that history materials could make more references to the achievement of women.

Disability

Disability was rarely referred to in the sampled materials, only 73 occurrences out of 69,957 entries, representing 0.1% of the sampled materials. Under-representation of PWDs in textbooks was apparent.

Primary school materials featured only persons with a physical disability, while secondary school materials included other types of disability. PWDs were not shown as more passive than other social actors and were seen to need support and help from others.

Publishers interviewed by the researchers acknowledged the need to heighten the positive presence of PWDs but expressed difficulties in securing materials such as pictures of PWDs.

Family

In the textbook entries, there was only one instance of single parenthood and one related instance of children in a single parent family situation, representing 0.003% of the sample. Students interviewed perceived divorced women as ill tempered, sometimes miserable and having psychological problems, and children of single parents were viewed as objects of ridicule. Teachers interviewed recognized imbalances in family role distribution, and that women contribute to the economy as well as to the family.

Follow up

Education plays a significant role in removing stereotypical perceptions and schools, teachers and textbooks act as catalysts to this change. The educational setting should reflect diversity, different cultural values, customs, lifestyles and the social realities of a changing community. Stereotyping limits life choices for young people, restricting young people from realizing their aspirations to reach their full potential. The EOC’s vision is to ensure that doors stay open for every individual.

In view of the results of these studies, an advisory committee has been formed with the Education and Manpower Bureau to develop equal opportunities educational materials for schools. We are also working with teacher training institutions to raise awareness of stereotyping and to develop teaching skills in handling these issues, as well as holding seminars for professionals.

Details of these EOC surveys can be viewed at: http://www.eoc.org.hk/CE/press/index.htm