International Studies in Educational Administration

CCEAM

Commonwealth

Members of CCEAM receive the journal as part of their membership. Other subscribers in Commonwealth countries receive a discount, and pay the Commonwealth rates as stated below. Payment should be made to the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM).

The rest of the world

Subscribers in the rest of the world should send their orders and payment to the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM).

Account details for all payments are as follows

Account name: Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration c/o Dr Patricia Briscoe

Bank: Royal Bank of Canada, 2855 Pembina Hwy – Unit 26, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2H5

Institution number: 003

Transit number: 08067

Account number: 1009232

Swift code: ROYCCAT2

Subscription rates for 2021

Institutions, Commonwealth	£150
Institutions, rest of world	£170
Individuals, Commonwealth	£30
Individuals, rest of world	£35

International Studies in Educational Administration
Volume 49, No. 3, 2021

Contents

Middle Teacher Leadership Practice for Social Justice: Young People's Career Development in Senior Secondary Education

Elson Szeto, Kuen-fung Sin and Paulo Volante

Abstract: *This study aims at exploring middle teacher leadership practices for social justice in career and life planning (CLP) education as part of the research collaboration developed in the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) in the past decade. We have identified that young people face challenges to their career development in different types of public secondary schools led by various school leaders. Teacher leaders of the education, as informal or formal middle leaders, are responsible for the whole-school programme development, while senior secondary students are participants to be inspired about potential career pathways before graduation. However, allocation of students to different schools according to their academic achievement is a long-standing social justice issue. A framework of inclusivity was adopted for exploration of the teacher leaders' experiences of the issue in leading the education, and diverse young people's experiences of development in different secondary school types in Hong Kong. A qualitative approach was used for capturing the views of three teachers and three groups of students in three school types in answer to the research questions: What challenges facing the whole-school CLP education for different young people are derived from the social justice issue in secondary schooling? How do middle teacher leaders cope with challenges through their leadership practices in socially just CLP education for students in different types of school? What equal development opportunities for younger people's career pathways can be contextualised from the leadership practices in the schools? Although the students' self-understanding and competencies can generally be awakened, different interests and various abilities beyond academic performance are the common key factors of tailor-made CLP education for every student's development by the school types. A long-term commitment to social justice for youth's future pathways is also discussed. So, the challenges in Hong Kong can resonate with other schools in different education systems as further research in the second decade of ISLDN's international collaboration.*

Keywords: Career and lifelong planning, inclusivity, middle teacher leadership, secondary students, social justice

Introduction

Youth development of career pathways at the secondary education stage can direct personal growth towards the prosperity of a society. Thus, a policy of lifelong career guidance and planning is regarded as an international public development and local education policy implemented in different societies to facilitate growth and prosperity (OECD 2014; United Nations 2013). Research on policy effects on youth development has evidenced positive personal growth in different places with various social and cultural contexts (Castellano, Sundell & Richardson 2017; Lazarides, Rohowski, Ohlemann & Ittel 2016). This has also been part of our research collaboration on social justice leadership in education and related injustice issues in high needs schools across different education systems through the International School Leadership Development Network (ISLDN: https://isldn.weebly.com/) over the past decade. Attention is paid to any challenge facing middle teacher leaders' design development of career and life planning (CLP) education. The attention also focuses on high school or senior secondary students who can have more opportunities for exploring their career interests with a broader sense of equality and equity of career choice (Irving 2010; Szeto & Sin 2019). Particularly, a long-standing social justice issue of stratification by academic achievements is rooted in the school placement allocation mechanism of students to different schools in a society. Stakeholders' perceptions of the allocation results classify the schools according to different levels of achievement. This further reflects unequal official recognition of the teachers' middle leadership role of CLP education for career development of diverse student populations in different school types due to the inequitable stratification. In fact, the social justice issue significantly affects young people's opportunities for equally and wisely informed career development for social mobility at the secondary education stage.

The CLP education programmes vary in different places due to youth characteristics and different socio-cultural contexts. From the counselling perspective, Feller, Honaker and Zagzebski (2001) found that career development was influenced by Holland's (1959, 1997) realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional occupational themes, Niles and Harris-Bowlsbey's (2013) developmental perspective, and Krumboltz and Thoresen's (1976) social learning theory. Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) proposed a social cognitive career theory of individuals' self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and personal goals. Gysbers and Henderson (2012) insisted on career professionals' comprehensive and developmental approaches to providing different levels of school-based career guidance and development services for the personal growth and social mobility of young people in the future. These theoretical perspectives point out that young people must be informed, inspired, and prepared to explore and manage potential career pathways as early as possible in their secondary education years in a specific socio-cultural context.

As a local education policy for young people's development, on the other hand, we identify Hong Kong, a changing Asian Chinese society. This is a case of exploring challenges of the social justice issue to developing CLP education in the different types of public secondary schools as perceived by parents, who are key stakeholders. The passive support of further study and careers for senior secondary students has been revitalised with whole-school CLP education for every student in the 6-year secondary schooling since 2014 (The Policy Address 2014). CLP education is a multi-level intervention in students' development in connection with career knowledge, exploration, and wise decision making. This policy practice echoes Gysbers and Henderson's (2012) approach to making Hong Kong youth 'better prepared to make informed and responsible choices and thus be able to make the best of the opportunities ahead' (Education Bureau [EDB] 2014: 3). Schools can enhance the capacity of their teaching teams to equip their students with the necessary career skills and experiences.

A middle teacher leader of CLP education is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating a whole-school approach to designing the programme with related activities for every student in a Hong Kong public school. The teacher leader also enhances the teaching team to help students make wise career decisions regarding their developmental pathways (Szeto & Sin 2019). However, the CLP policy guideline does not specify an official senior teaching post for the related responsibility different from the official recognition of other specific posts, for example the SEN coordinator, in the school hierarchy (EDB 2014). This reflects the unequal recognition of the CLP teacher leader as an official senior teacher. Nguyen, Harris and Ng's (2019) review of teacher leadership also showed that a teacher leader may or may not be a formal senior teacher or middle leader in different education contexts. The teacher leaders' and students' experiences of the CLP programme in secondary education, and concerns about challenges to the social justice issue in the perceived school types are yet to be fully explored. It is not clear whether every student can fully develop their strengths for their preferred career choice with equal development opportunities for future employment. Furthermore, the stratification by academic achievements and individual characteristics, differences, and difficulties in different school types intensifies the challenges (Szeto & Cheng 2018a). In this explorative study, we asked three specific questions:

> RQ 1. What challenges facing the whole-school CLP education for different young people are derived from the social justice issue in secondary schooling?

> RQ 2. How do middle teacher leaders cope with the challenges through their leadership practices in socially just CLP education for students in different types of school?

> RQ3. What equal development opportunity for younger people's career pathways can be contextualised from the leadership practices in schools?

The study intended to capture the experiences of the middle teacher leaders' practices in support of every student's career development in school. Concomitantly, the students'

experiences of participating in the CLP activities were also captured in answer to the research questions.

## Theoretical Framework of Inclusivity

The local CLP education policy was implemented for students' sustainable development at the secondary education stage in Hong Kong in 2014, followed by additional revisions (The Policy Address 2015, 2016). Student populations in individual schools are becoming increasingly diverse due to the immigration policy, decline in the local birth rate, and immigrant families from other Asian societies and mainland cities in the past two decades (Szeto, Cheng & Sin 2019). According to census figures, over 700,000 people with a variety of ethnicities have immigrated from South Asian societies or were born in Hong Kong, accounting for 9 per cent of the total population of 7.4 million, while over 1 million people (over 10%) immigrated to Hong Kong from different parts of mainland China (Census and Statistics Department 2017). Young people from immigrant families have high demands for education. Concomitantly, the number of students with special educational needs in public secondary schools has increased since the full implementation of integrated education in 1999 (Szeto, Cheng & Sin 2020). Thus, the CPE programme is expected to contribute to preparing all students for career development in secondary education.

As mentioned, the CLP teacher may play an official or unofficial middle teacher leader's role in leading the whole-school CLP educational programmes for every student in the six years of secondary schooling. In the capacity of a middle teacher leader, they are expected to enhance the career teaching team for the whole-school participation in the CLP education across subject and class levels in each grade. In practice, the teacher plays the role of leading, coordinating, and developing the CLP education between the principal and the frontline teachers (Szeto & Cheng 2018b; Fitzgerald & Gunter 2006; Koh, Gurr, Drysdale & Ang 2011; Tam 2010). They are inclined to align with the principal's direction of facilitating and supporting the students' career exploration through the related activities. We realise that the teacher leaders face unequal recognition of their leadership roles and the social justice issue of inclusivity of differences and difficulties in CLP education in each school type (Szeto et al. 2020). Their team members need to enact the social justice practice for all students' development with alternative potential.

The CLP teacher leaders' interpretations of the whole-school approach vary due to the issues in individual schools. The interpretation may or may not emphasise the promotion of inclusivity to accommodate disparities in individuals' differences or learning abilities. Adapting from Cribb and Gewirtz's (2003) notions of dimensions of justice, we further extend the framework of educational leadership for inclusion (Szeto et al. 2019) through which the

teacher leader is perceived to play a role of facilitating and supporting diverse young people's exploration and planning by participating in a whole-school CLP education programme (Sultana 2014; Szeto & Sin 2019). Inclusivity for the young people's differences and difficulties should be enacted with equal development opportunities in different school types (Nag 2014). This conceptual framework can inspire the teacher leaders' capability and capacity for addressing the social justice issue of inclusivity in the career development of a diverse student population by the school types (e.g. Irving 2010; Moote & Archer 2018). Figure 1 shows the framework of inclusivity for diverse young people's development via the CLP education.

Figure 1: The Framework of Inclusivity
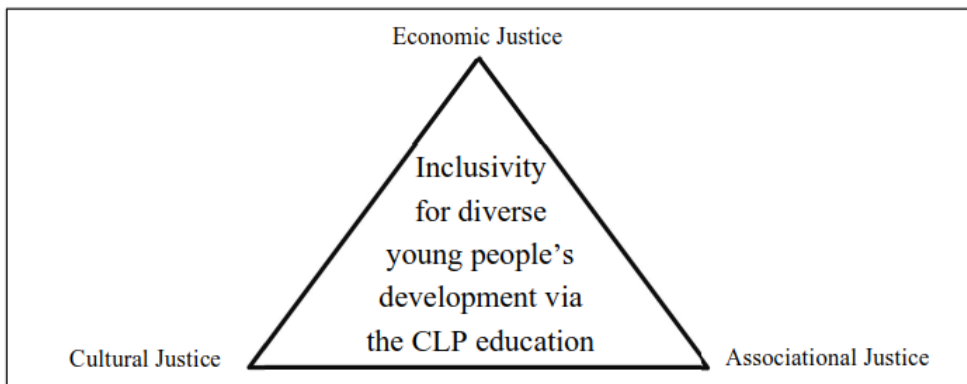
We have adapted the framework in other ISLDN studies of social justice leadership in high needs schools (e.g. Szeto et al. 2019). The framework inspires the middle teacher leaders who can perceive a broader sense of inclusivity in diverse young people's career exploration at the stage of secondary education. They are cautious of any challenge to the people with differences and difficulties derived from economic, associational, and cultural injustices to the related development (Moote & Archer 2018; Stipanovic, Stringfield & Witherell 2017). Young people should have equal development opportunities for career planning of a preferred life pathway. As a theoretical lens, we align the values of social justice through which the teacher leaders' practices and students' experiences in the CLP education by the school types can be captured. Whether or not the social justice issue of inclusivity in CLP education affects the specific student's development is explored in the study. In the figure, we adapt Cribb and Gewirtz's (2003) three dimensions of justice as the challenges and place the middle teacher leadership in the centre as the enactment of inclusivity for diverse young people's development via whole-school CLP education. Economic challenge refers to different levels of socio-economic status or unequal distribution of public resources and opportunities to everyone in a society. The associational or ability challenge focuses on inclusion versus exclusion in various social settings, while cultural challenge is regarded as the fair treatment of people from different demographic backgrounds in terms of ethnicity,

religious beliefs, language, or cultural practices. We use this theoretical framework to contextualise the teacher leaders' unequal recognition as official senior teachers and secondary students' perceptions, experiences and concerns about career exploration and development towards various pathways at the stage of secondary education.

Hong Kong Secondary Schools, School Place Allocation, and the Social Justice Issue

In Hong Kong, public schools are funded in different forms from different sources. The government schools are fully funded and operated by the Government of HKSAR, while aided schools are operated by charitable, religious, or non-profitmaking sponsoring bodies with financial aid from the government (EDB 2015). Those branching out from the mainstream with full recurrent subsidies allocated by the government with a high degree of autonomy are under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) (Education Department 2001). The DSS schools can also charge parents an annual fee as a way of gaining extra financial resources. Thus, parents of higher social economic status have more choices for their children than those of a lower status. Furthermore, public schools are tightly monitored by the central bureaucratic administration, conform to government education policies, and are still highly stratified by student academic abilities and achievements in the Secondary School Place Allocation System (SSPAS). With these characteristics in mind, the social justice issue seems to be rooted in the stratification, economic, and socio-cultural injustice as reflected in the framework (see Figure 1).

Public schools are in Hong Kong Island (HKI), Kowloon (KLN), and the New Territories (NT/I), the three major school districts in Hong Kong. The perception of parents' school choices in different school districts is still rooted in students' abilities and academic achievements coherent with the stratification of SSPAS (Szeto & Cheng 2017). The perceived levels of student achievement are referred to as the top one-third, the middle one-third, and the lowest one-third of students, or Band 1, Band 2, and Band 3, respectively (Szeto & Cheng 2018a**).** This perception also segregates the schools and intensifies the inequality of development opportunities for students in the school place allocation mechanism. Ironically, integrated education for all students with equal education opportunities has been implemented over the past 20 years (Szeto et al. 2019). Facing the social justice issue, the middle teacher leaders reflected the challenges of developing CLP education programmes. The senior secondary students also had different experiences of the effects of CLP activities on their career development by the school types. In this study, we use the terminology of fine, average, and upward performing to describe students and school types to avoid the negative meanings of the banding.

Methodology

We adopted the framework (see Figure 1) to conduct a cross-case study of the CLP education practices in three public secondary schools, Schools A, B, and C, located in the three major school districts, respectively (Yin 2014). For the cross-case comparison, each case represents one of the three school types, and the young people start developing their careers and life pathways through the CLP education in the specific school context. The interview method was used to build the three cases by capturing the middle teacher leaders' and students' experiences of the whole-school education. '[It can use] . . . multi-sensory channels[,] . . . whilst still giving space for spontaneity, and the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but for responses about complex and deep issues' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2018: 506). After receiving the participants' acceptance of the invitation with signed informant consent forms, we conducted an individual interview with the teacher leader, and three focus-group interviews with the three student groups from Forms 4, 5, and 6, respectively, in each school. We developed a semi-structured interview protocol for the individual and focus-group interviews with the three CLP teachers ($n = 3$) and the total of 42 students ($n = 42$). Among the teachers, the teacher at School C is an official senior teacher, while the other two in School A and School B are experienced frontline teachers. The interview data could be used for contextualising the cross-case study with the middle teacher leaders' experiences of the enactment of social justice in leading CLP education, and the senior secondary students' experiences of CLP development in the schools.

The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder for anonymous transcription. The teacher leaders and senior secondary students from each school are referred to using codes. The transcripts reflecting the teachers' and students' perceptions of the CLP education in each case were the main source of data as the evidence of in-depth understandings of real-life experiences by the school types (Cohen et al. 2018). In fact, the student populations are diverse with differences and learning difficulties, and their initial development of the pathways is segregated and affected by SSPAS. We used NVivo for managing and analysing the data in the study. The teachers' responses to the questions in the interview were triangulated with the responses of the student group of each grade and the discussions in the interviews (Cohen et al. 2018). Furthermore, the research team also discussed the coherent results of the data coding separately analysed by two researchers. Thus, the data triangulation and researchers' discussion of the data analysis enhanced the internal validation of the school cases.

Findings

The findings of this study are derived from the cross-case study of the three schools with a standardised structure of the whole-school CLP education programme across the six years of secondary schooling. The structure is a generic organisation provided by the EDB's guidelines on the implementation of the CLP education policy in schools (EDB 2014). However, the differences in practice are subject to the students' characteristics and needs according to the

school types. More importantly, the CLP teacher leader is excluded from official recognition of their leadership role as a senior teacher in the hierarchy of public secondary schools. Concomitantly, their students have been stratified and segregated by SSPAS and the parents' and related stakeholders' perceptions of students' academic achievements. Both the middle teacher leaders' and senior secondary students' experiences of the CLP education in each school unveiled an overall challenge to the teacher leadership and equal development opportunities for young people's career pathways. The challenge relates to the social justice issue and is rooted in the economic, associational, and cultural in-/justice as argued in the previous section (see Figure 1).

The findings have elaborated the social justice issue facing the teacher leaders and senior secondary students in the CLP education programmes of the three schools. Thus, the research questions can be answered through the framework of inclusivity. Table 1 shows the generic structure of the CLP education programme with students' characteristics of culture, socio-economic statuses, and different abilities in the three schools. As the schools are different and context-specific, the middle teacher leaders need to adapt the CLP education structure for the specific students' needs in the individual school contexts. It is worth noting that we can adopt the framework to identify the social justice issue of equal development opportunities for students' specific needs through the cross-case comparison.

Table 1: The Standardised Structure of the Whole-School CLP Education in the School

Coverage of the CLP education	School A	School B	School C
Location	NT/I	HKI	KLN
School type & Student progress	fine performing	average performing	upward performing
Student characteristics	- Local students - Small number of students with SEN - Good support from the families	- Immigrant students from various South Asian societies - A small number of local students - Small number of students with SEN - Least support from the families	- Local students - Immigrant students from mainland cities and other Asian cities - Large number of students with SEN - Average support from the families

Provision of CLP education activities	Related CLP activities brought from NGOs monitored by the CLP team.	Career counselling and other related activities provided by NGOs in cooperation with the CLP team	Training for all teachers on implementing CLP activities organised by an NGO.
Annual schedule of CLP education	2 sessions per grade	2 to 3 sessions per grade	4 to 5 sessions per grade
Grade level (Forms 1 to 6)	Collective and group activities on different themes by grade		
Class level	Regular master/mistress class sessions		
Subject level	Core and selective subjects		

Note: HKI = Hong Kong Island; KLN = Kowloon; NGO = non-government organisations; NT/I = New Territories and outlining islands; SEN = special educational needs

Inclusivity of Differences and Difficulties in CLP Education of Each School

We have identified the common and individual challenges in the cross-case comparison. The common challenge is regarded as economic injustice of the CLP policy development. This relates to unsustainable and inflexible funding resources for and neglect of individual schools' specific needs in the CLP education. Concomitantly, the individual challenges of each school reflect the associational and cultural injustice. Implementation of the policy requires re-distributing additional resources in support of individual schools due to the diversity of student population with various learning difficulties and differences. We have identified the challenges of the social justice issue of inclusivity. This answers RQ 1. Table 2 summarises the common and individual challenges by the individual schools.

Table 2: The Summary of the Common and Individual Challenges

School A	School B	School C
The common challenge across the schools: unsustainable and inflexible funding		
The individual challenges in the schools		
- The funding resources were not a regular block grant provided for each school. Thus, the activities were not sustainable. - The extra funding source for CLP education was	- Different social and cultural backgrounds affect the students' perception of CLP education. - Extra resources are needed to help the students think about	- The CLP education and related activities are impossible to plan at an individual level due to the students' learning differences and difficulties. - Additional resources are required to support students with SEN and different

converted into a regular teaching post.	their future pathways of career and life planning	learning habits due to the diversity of the student population in the school.
- Internship for everyone in a real-world workplace is impossible to arrange.	- Language difference is their barrier to job application, while the students have better use of English than Chinese language.	- The effects on students' career development vary and are limited due to individual students' weaknesses in self-confidence and self-efficacy of career choices.
- Extra time is needed for CLP education so both the teacher and students feel pressure.	- CLP activities cannot be arranged after class as students live in different districts.	- The students are still not sure of their career interests after joining the CLP activities.
- Spending time on DSE university entrance examinations is the key focus instead of CLP education.	- Due to their culture, female students stay home after graduation. Their parents will arrange a marriage for them.	- Limited class time can be utilised for CLP activities as the students need after-class tutorials to catch up with their learning in core subjects.
	- Some students may go back to their homeland for further development.	

Notes: DSE = Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary School Examination; SEN = special educational needs

Economic Injustice of the Common Challenge Facing the CLP Policy Development

Table 2 shows the common challenge of unsustainable and inflexible distribution of funding resources for the individual schools' specific development of CLP education for students. This is further intensified when converting the lump sum of funding into a regular teaching post in schools as announced in The Policy Address (2016). Whether or not the new teacher is deployed for the support of CLP education programmes is subject to the school's discretion and manpower demands. The policy change is inflexible and limits the schools' flexibility to develop a programme that suits specific students' needs. The change also stops the financial resources for the practice of CLP education. The middle teacher leaders shared the same view on the economic injustice that 'the money was used to buy the CLP service from external agencies, but it is non-extendable and unsustainable now due to the discontinuity of the funding'. They are disappointed to lead the CLP team to work on multi-level infusion of CLP programmes in class and subject levels (see Table 1). Furthermore, they knew that 'the change

releases the teaching load of the core subjects instead of the CLP team members in other schools'.

Associational Injustice of the Individual Challenges to the CLP Education

In Table 2, we further pin down the individual challenges to be possibly addressed if additional funding resources can be redistributed for the specific needs of each school. The SSPAS has stratified the students in different schools according to students' academic achievements. The stratification is a segregation of different groups of students by the school types on the grounds of academic achievement. The associational injustice by exclusion versus inclusion is reflected in the comparison of School A and School C. Having said that, the CLP teacher leaders from School A and School B are also excluded from the school hierarchy as official senior teachers. The teacher from School B emphasised, 'The CLP leadership is just the unofficial role of acting as a senior teacher for the education'. For School A, the teacher leader and students only focus on preparing for the DSE, as the funding is used for buying services from external CLP agencies. The CLP education starts from Form 4 instead of Form 1 in the other school types due to the focus on academic development. One student recalled their goal that, 'We want to have more time to prepare for the DSE examination instead of joining the activities I am not interested in'. Having said that, the teacher leaders' role merely monitors the agency's CLP service quality of providing students with a quick exploration of their career interests and pathways. The teacher focuses on helping the students obtain an entry ticket into their preferred universities through DSE.

For School C, the individual challenge is that most students with diverse academic abilities are from local and immigrant families, including many students with SEN. The students are 'excluded' from the school type, such as School A, due to their academic abilities. Although facing the associational injustice of the education system, the teacher leader shared the principal's view that, 'We need to prepare students for different pathways or tracks by CLP intervention as early as possible'. She continued, 'Some students may move to other tracks such as IVE [The Institute of Vocational Education] or Youth College during F.3 or even in F.6'. The CLP outcomes are diverse and unpredictable as the students need small-group or individual counselling from the early to senior forms. One student responded, 'We are very puzzled about our future as the requirements for some of the jobs of interest are so high'. The students can only be 'included' in the CLP education in this school type.

Cultural Injustice of the Individual Challenges to the CLP Education

Like School C, the students in School B are from immigrant families from South-Asian societies (see Table 2). Although their learning abilities are less diverse, the middle teacher leader also needs additional funding to search for external experts' support due to students' different socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. The students are helped to adapt to the local culture and way of living in the city to minimise any potential issue due to the diverse backgrounds, although it is very challenging. 'This diversity of their socio-cultural and

religious backgrounds needs a lot of resources in terms of both expenses and manpower', the teacher leader pointed out. At present, we use the limited funding to recruit a teaching assistant for the administrative work and publishing: 'A booklet is distributed to every student to trace their career goals and personal interests with their diverse backgrounds over the years', she continued. However, one student said, 'Due to our culture, my parents will arrange my pathway after graduation from school'. In fact, School B faces the challenge of cultural injustice in terms of limited time and shortage of resources for tailor-made CLP activities for students with different themes and targets for different grades in relation to their diverse socio-cultural and religious backgrounds over the year.

Coping Strategies for the Inclusivity of Different Students by the School Types

Given the challenges elaborated in relation to the social justice issue of inclusivity in Table 2, the economic injustice closely relates to the associational and cultural injustice. If the change in funding resources could be reversed as sustainable and flexible support with redistribution of additional resources for individual schools' specific needs, the related issue of injustice would be addressed by the middle teacher leaders of CLP education. Instead of the resources from the central administration, the teacher leaders explored a coping strategy of minimising the common challenges due to the economic injustice. This answers RQ 2. The teacher leaders identified external resources and support from some non-government organisations (NGOs) or non-profit social service agencies. In fact, some charitable trusts provide the funding for voluntary CLP project collaboration of the NGOs or agencies in school communities. For example, CLAP for Youth @ JC, funded by a charitable trust, is a large-scale and popular CLP support project operating as an external support for students' career development in the past five years (https://clap.hk/home-about-clapjc-team/#). Project WeCan, a business-in-community initiative funded by a local business group, has provided school support and collaboration for students' career exploration and life planning since 2011. The career support services for schools are free of charge, which temporarily resolves the social justice issue of economic injustice in terms of the unsustainable and inflexible use of the public funding resources.

The teacher leaders have made use of these external career services as a common coping strategy for enhancing the overall development of all students in the three types of school. This can reduce the gap of changing the form of funding resources subject to the individual schools' needs. For the individual challenges in each school, the teacher leaders utilise collaboration with external professional CLP support for addressing students' differences and difficulties in the development of CLP pathways. The coping strategy is different due to the students' learning needs by the school types. Ironically, these external supports are subject to the availability of social resources in a society that is unsustainable. Table 3 shows the

coping strategy of enhancing the CLP education for the students' career development needs in the schools. In the table, the coping strategies of School A can reduce the teacher's workload, while the students can have selected job tasting in real-world workplaces. The valuable collaborations with the external CLP project funding provide professional CLP support for the teacher leaders' development of CLP education, and create more opportunities for equal development of the students' career pathways with first-person experience of jobs of interest. The teacher's professional learning of different job types is also enhanced. One student (F.5, School A) responded, 'My parents pushed me to make the decision when studying in F.4. So, participating in the related activities and job shadowing offered by CLAP for Youth is very appropriate in this year'. This can sharpen their focus on DSE in School A. This answers RQ 3.

In School C, the teacher leader also observed the stimulation of individual students' career interests. However, the students face confusion and uncertainty about their career choices and life pathways due to their lack of self-confidence and self-efficacy. The external collaborations can offer alternative self-exploration of characters and potential through group and individual adventurous activities to the students with and without SEN in addition to a series of interventions and counselling sessions. 'At least I came up with short-term planning for my career development after participating in the exchange activities in a small engineering firm', shared one student (F.6, School C). With the external career services and supports, the immigrant students at School B can experience the multiple pathways of CLP development through different interventions and counselling sessions. They may consider both further study and work after graduation in the city or their original homeland, depending on their family's decision and preferences. The teacher leaders realise the change in students' mindset to multiple pathways when planning their career direction. One student (F.5, School B) recalled, 'This [the CLP activity] was like a real jail that locks us to experience in the school hall, but we are not in the jail after going out for job tasting in companies'. Language is still the immediate challenge to living in the city. Despite this, the teacher leaders (School B and School C) agreed that 'the coping strategies have reduced some negative effects of the stratification and segregation on the students' self-esteem and self-confidence in interesting or potential pathways'.

Table 3: The Coping Strategies for the Challenges by School Type

School A	School B	School C
A common coping strategy of collaborating with external NGOs and professionals* funded by charitable trusts		
Improvement of CLP education to meet students' needs		
- For senior students, DSE is their ultimate focus that affects their choice of university programmes for further study related to their career interests. - Both parents and students have mutually agreed upon the goal. - Thus, with the extra services, the CLP teacher has time to customise the materials and arrange career exploration in the workplaces for the students who have better understanding of their career choices. - The external CLP activities can inform the students' career and life pathways because of the real-world tasting of interesting job types related to the major offered by preferred universities.	- Multiple pathways of CLP development is emphasised in the school, while the immigrant students experience career knowledge and needed skills through the CLP activities. - Thus, their mindset is changed so they know that further study in a university is merely one of many choices in their pathway. - The students are aware of various choices of career and life development. - However, the students need to learn Cantonese as their second language in the local community, while English is the instructional medium in the school, and their first language is used for communication in their ethnic community.	- With the external professional support, the teacher tries to individualise the students' CLP education in the school. - She emphasises the students' self-discovery and self-exploration of various careers, although with limited resources. - Thus, the CLP education can be a series of interventions and counselling sessions for those who are left behind. - The CLP team starts to intervene in students' career exploration by groups and then identifies those who may need individual career guidance. - The external CLP support can stimulate students with and without SEN who are confused and uncertain about their career interest and potential pathways.

Note: NGO = non-government organisations including charitable trusts, social enterprises, or social service agencies.

* Professional support includes education psychologists, speech, physical and occupational therapists, counsellors, or social workers.

Discussion and Conclusion

We have explored the social justice issue of equal development opportunities for every secondary student through the framework of inclusivity (see Figure 1). This issue is rooted in the long-lasting stratification according to the students' academic achievements as reflected in SSPAS when transiting from primary to secondary education in the multicultural contexts of Hong Kong (Szeto et al. 2019). Furthermore, stakeholders, particularly parents, have tended to perceive secondary schools as belonging to three bands based on the stratification. In this study, the middle teacher leaders who led, coordinated, and supported the CLP education programme adapted from the EDB's guideline of the generic structure had experienced common and individual challenges to the issue of the students' exploration of preferred career pathways. Their unofficial leadership roles reflect the inequality of recognition of their senior teacher positions in the school hierarchy. The students centrally placed in the three types of school reflect the diverse needs for career development, except those studying in School A. School B and School C have diverse individual needs, as shown in Table 2. The centralised resources lack the redistribution of additional funding resources for individual schools' specific needs.

It is worth noting that the impacts of the social justice issue may not be a unique scenario in Hong Kong. Similar injustice scenarios have been identified in different education systems and high needs schools as reflected in the ISLDN's research findings (e.g. Angelle 2017; Barnett & Woods 2021; Bryant, Cheng & Notman 2014). The issue of inclusivity of students' differences and difficulties in learning has intensified due to the change of funding resources to the recruitment of a regular teacher subject to the decision of a school management committee. In other words, the change has stopped the original practice of sustainable and flexible deployment of the CLP funding resources. The central administration argues that a school can utilise its regular funding resource in support of students' specific needs for CLP development. 'The average and upward-performing schools always face limited resources due to the students' individual learning needs in the regular subject curricula', the teacher leader (School C) responded. Sustainability, flexibility, and redistribution of limited funding resources still cannot help the school improve the economic injustice, even though the central administration accepts the counter suggestion to the CLP policy development. Indeed, the social justice issue is comprised of economic injustice interwoven with associational and cultural injustices. The middle teacher leaders' coping strategies in their individual CLP education plans (see Table 3) and the senior secondary students' experiences in and responses to the differentiated CLP activities reflect the injustices.

Sustainable, Flexible, and Re-Distributable Funding Resources

To address the social justice issue, the major funding source still relies on the central policymaking and administration of the government. The SSPAS also needs a serious review for diminishing the stratification for a positive change to the stakeholders' perceptions of the school types. The former is the focus of this section, but the latter needs further study. The

amount of funding may vary and be re-distributed according to individual schools' specific needs for the students' characteristics of learning, exploring, and developing potential pathways. The criteria may temporarily address the issue of diverse students' differences and those with SEN in different schools. It takes longer to negotiate in the current practice of centralised distribution of funding resources for the CLP education as reflected in the historical development of career guidance policy in the European Union's member countries (Watts, Sultana & McCarthy 2010). Thus, the middle teacher leaders need to seek additional resources first and then address the individual challenges of each school for improvement of the CLP education, as listed in Table 2. We have indicated that the schools have joined other CLP projects initiated and funded by universities, NGOs, and business corporations as a common coping strategy as the contribution of voluntary social funding resources. This is an alternative and temporary way of addressing the social justice issue for the socially just practice, not only in CLP education but also in other school development (Irving 2010; Szeto & Cheng 2018a). However, the free professional CLP activities and services from the external projects are unsustainable when nearing the end of the project timeline.

Despite the time limitation, schools can access the voluntary social resources as a member, collaborator, or partner of external CLP projects. Related CLP programmes, materials and professional expertise are provided for teacher professional development in schools and character and career tests for students' job-tasting, job shadowing or internships in the member/partner companies of the projects. Thus, the scope of the original CLP activities for the students' career exploration and life planning structured with the EDB's guideline is extended beyond schools by the partnership or collaboration in secondary schools. Both the middle teacher leaders and students have benefited from the contribution of the resources for a long period of time. In fact, the external charitable resources are not taken for granted in comparison with other places (Moote & Archer 2018; OECD 2014). With the external professional CLP services, the extended CLP education can be value-added on the differentiated support of students' specific needs, as shown in Table 3. However, the sustainable, flexible, and re-distributable individual funding from the central administration for individual needs of schools is a long-term public commitment in the youth's career exploration and life planning for their potential pathways at this educational stage.

Can the Social Justice Issue Be Continuously Improved in the CLP Policy Development?

The coping strategies and continuing search for external CLP project resources of the middle teacher leaders can effectively improve all students' career exploration towards making decisions regarding their preferred pathways. We have identified the CLP practices of coping with the common and individual challenges of the social justice issue to the school types,

including the time limitation of preparing DSE in School A, the barrier of language, social and cultural differences of immigrant students' career pathways in School B, and the weakness of self-confidence and self-efficacy of the students with and without SEN in School C. This situation of difference and difficulty has existed in this Chinese educational context for the past two decades, but it may continue (Szeto et al. 2019). The external CLP service and professional support can help the teacher leaders fully understand the students' characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses in the schools regardless of the time limit. They can further improve the CLP education by extending the internal CLP activities to job-tasting and shadowing in real-world workplaces with additional career seminars provided by the external experts.

For example, with the voluntary social resources, the schools can recruit additional social workers/counsellors as professional support for individual CLP exploration due to the diverse students' career interests. The teacher leader accepts internship placement for student social workers from local universities. She stated, 'This is a new way of recruiting social worker students as professional support for CLP counselling'. This not only reduces teachers' loading with a focus on teaching, but also improves the scale of CLP counselling. Moreover, the recruitment provides a training ground for student social workers. Despite this, 'diversity matters [and] so do the students' career choice and development', as the teacher responded in School B. This notion of diversity may cater to every student's career development which requires a personal career plan. 'We need to provide more counselling services for senior secondary students due to the DSE for interested majors offered by the preferred universities', the teacher said in School A. The schools have deployed more manpower for counselling for students with or without SEN, although School A focuses more on DSE with a small number of students with SEN. With this improvement in mind, we query: Is it possible to further individualise CLP education by individual schools' specific focus on every secondary student instead of implementing standardised funding and practice for all? This needs further research with a fundamental uncertainty: Whether the social justice issue can be continuously improved in the CLP policy development.

The implementation of whole-school CLP education in the individual schools highlight the social justice issue of inclusivity. The middle teacher leaders of CLP education have adopted various coping strategies in the practice in the schools. The long-standing issue may be temporarily tackled. Although the students' self-understandings, self-confidence, and self-efficacy, as well as their character strengths seem to be awakened, the effects on individual students still vary over the 6-year secondary schooling. It is timely for policy makers and school educators to critically review the stratification by the school place allocation system and the stakeholders' perception of the effect of student academic achievements. This should be the policy makers' and central administrators' long-term public commitment to individual young people's future pathways in a social justice context of the city. The review should extend to institutionalise the CLP teacher leader as the official senior teacher position in the

school hierarchy due to the leadership function of planning, implementing, and developing an appropriate whole-school CLP programme for every student's needs in a school.

With the central policymaking for the young people's growth in mind, a new political agenda is possibly evolving in the social justice issues. It relates to the teacher leadership for every student's development in the whole-school CLP education. In fact, the evolving agenda of CLP education is an emerging research area for ISLDN researchers in the social justice strand. Whether or not the issue be continuously improved in the CLP policy development is yet to be fully studied in different education systems. Despite this, it is expected that diverse young people's self-understandings, self-confidence, and self-efficacy can be sharpened for their career development in the process of long-term public policy commitment. Further international research collaborations of ISLDN can contribute to crystalising and comparing effects of the commitment and leadership of the teacher on youth's career growth in different education systems in the next decade.

To conclude, differentiated support of the youth's specific different needs and difficulties is yet to be provided for all due to the change of funding resources from the central administration. External CLP services and supports as a form of voluntary social commitment are unsustainable due to the project-based funding by charitable trusts or business social-support budgets, although the example we have used for the illustration has lasted for 10 years. The sustainability, flexibility, and redistribution of public resources for individual schools' needs should be institutionalised as regular financial resources. More importantly, the interweaving relation of the economic, associational, and cultural injustices embedded in the social justice issue strongly impacts on career exploration, development, and life planning of senior secondary students. If the above agenda for the social justice issue is not missing, the practice of whole-school CLP education will benefit the youth's whole-person development and career planning at the stage of secondary education. Further career development and support of youth in higher education or in the workplace and the leadership development of CLP teachers in the changing school context are important for continuing study due to individual differences, difficulties, and long-standing injustices.

References

Angelle, P. S. (Ed.). (2017). *A Global Perspective of Social Justice Leadership for School Principals*. Charlotte, NC: IAP.

Barnett, B., & Woods, P. (Eds.). (2021). *Educational Leadership for Social Justice and Improving High-Needs Schools: Findings from 10 years of international collaboration*. Charlotte, NC: IAP.

Bryant, M., Cheng, A., & Notman, R. (2014). Editors' summary: Exploring high need and social justice leadership in schools around the globe. *Management in Education, 28*(3), 78-79.

Castellano, M., Sundell, K. E., & Richardson, G. B. (2017). Achievement outcomes among high school graduates in college and career readiness programs of study. *Peabody Journal of Education, 92*(2), 254-274.

Census and Statistics Department. (2017). Hong Kong Population Estimates (retrieved from https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/so150.jsp).

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research Methods in Education* (8th ed.). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Cribb, A., & Gewirtz, S. (2003). Towards a Sociology of Just Practices: An analysis of plural conceptions of justice. In C. Vincent (Ed.), *Social Justice Education and Identity* (pp. 15-29). London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Education Bureau [EDB]. (2014). *Guide on Life Planning Education and Career Guidance for Secondary Schools.* Hong Kong SAR, China: Education Bureau.

Education Bureau [EDB]. (2015). *Education Opportunities in Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Education Bureau, HKSAR.

Education Department. (2001). *Direct Subsidy Scheme – Circular Memorandum No. 210/2001.* Hong Kong: The Government of HKSAR.

Feller, R. W., Honaker, S. L., & Zagzebski, L. M. (2001). Theoretical voices directing the career development journey: Holland, Harris-Bowlsbey, and Krumboltz. *The Career Quarterly*, *49*, 212-224.

Fitzgerald, T., & Gunter, H. (2006). Leading learning: Middle leadership in schools in England and New Zealand. *Management in Education, 20*(3), 6-8.

Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2012). *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance and Counselling Programme* (5th ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Holland, J. L. (1959). A theory of vocational choice. *Journal of Counselling Psychology, 6*, 35-45.

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making Vocational Choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Irving, B. A. (2010). (Re)constructing career education as a socially just practice: An antipodean reflection. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance, 10*(1), 49-63.

Koh, H. H., Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Ang, L. L. (2011). How school leaders perceive the leadership role of middle leaders in Singapore primary schools? *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *12*(4), 609-620.

Krumboltz, J. D., & Thoresen, C. E. (1976). *Counselling Methods.* New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Lazarides, L., Rohowski, S., Ohlemann, S., & Ittel, A. (2016). The role of classroom characteristics for students' motivation and career exploration. *Educational Psychology, 36*(5), 992-1008.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Towards a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*(1), 79-122.

Moote, J., & Archer, L. (2018). Failing to deliver? Exploring the current status of career education provision in England. *Research Papers in Education*, *33*(2), 187-215.

Nag, S. (2014). Special Educational Needs, Social Cognitive Environments, and Preparing for the World of Work. In G. Arulmani, A. J. Bakshi, F. T. L. Leong & A. G. Watts (Eds.), *Handbook of Career Development: International perspectives* (pp. 497-511). New York, NY: Springer.

Nguyen, D., Harris, A., & Ng, D. (2019). A review of the empirical research on teacher leadership (2003–2017): Evidence, patterns and implications. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *58*(1), 60-80.

Niles, S. G., & Harris-Bowlsbey, J. (2013). *Career Development Interventions in the 21st Century*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

OECD. (2014). *Skills Beyond School: Synthesis report*. Paris, France: OECD.

Stipanovic, N., Stringfield, S., & Witherell, E. (2017). The influence of a career pathways model and career counseling on students' career and academic self-efficacy. *Peabody Journal of Education, 92*(2), 209-221.

Sultana, R. G. (2014). Career Guidance for Social Justice in Neoliberal Times. In G. Arulmani, A. J. Bakshi, F. T. L. Leong & A. G. Watts (Eds.), *Handbook of Career Development: International perspectives* (pp. 317-334). New York, NY: Springer.

Szeto, E., & Cheng, A. Y. N. (2017). Voices of School Leaders for Social Justice in Education Across the World: A Hong Kong case report. In P. Angelle (Ed.), *A Global Perspective of Social Justice Leadership for School Principals* (pp. 209-230). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Szeto, E., & Cheng, A. Y. N. (2018a). How do principals practise leadership for social justice in diverse school settings? A Hong Kong case study. *Journal of Educational Administration, 56*(1), 50-68.

Szeto, E., & Cheng, A. Y. N. (2018b). Principal-teacher interactions and teacher leadership development: Beginning teachers' perspectives. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 21*(3), 363-379.

Szeto, E., Cheng, A. Y. N., & Sin, K. K. F. (2019). Challenges of difference and difficulty: How do principals enact different leadership for diverse student population in a changing Chinese school context? *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 22(5), 519-535.

Szeto, E., Cheng, A. Y. N., & Sin, K. K. F. (2020). Still not inclusive? A critical analysis of changing the SENCO policy in a Chinese school community. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(8), 828-848.

Szeto, E., & Sin, K. K. F. (2019). Career and life planning education policy: What are teachers' experiences of supporting student career development in the diverse school setting? *Hong Kong Journal of Special Education, 20*, 36-52.

Tam, A. C. F. (2010). Understanding the leadership qualities of a head of department coping with curriculum changes in a Hong Kong secondary school. *School Leadership and Management, 30,* 367-386.

The Policy Address. (2014). *The 2014 Policy Address: Support the needy, let youth flourish, unleash Hong Kong's potential*. Hong Kong SAR, China: The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Policy Address. (2015). *The 2015 Policy Address: Uphold the rule of law, seize the opportunities, make the right choices, pursue democracy, boost the economy, improve people's livelihood*. Hong Kong SAR, China: The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Policy Address. (2016). *The 2016 Policy Address: Innovate for the economy, improve livelihood, foster harmony, share prosperity*. Hong Kong SAR, China: The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

United Nations. (2013). *World Youth Report: Youth employment: Youth perspectives on the pursuit of decent work in changing times*. New York, NY: UN.

Watts, A. G., Sultana, R. G., & McCarthy, J. (2010). The involvement of the European Union in career guidance policy: A brief history. *International Journal of Vocational Guidance, 10*, 89-107.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Author Details

Dr. Elson Szeto
Consultant
Centre for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education
The Education University of Hong Kong
Email: eszeto@eduhk.hk

Professor Kuen-fung Sin
Director
Centre for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education
Department of Special Education and Counselling
Faculty of Education and Human Development
The Education University of Hong Kong
Email: kfsin@eduhk.hk

Dr. Paulo Volante
Associate Professor
Facultad de Educación
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Email: pvolante@uc.cl