



Asia's First Regional Food Bank Forum

Food Banking as one Response to Hunger

## **Food Assistance in Hong Kong**

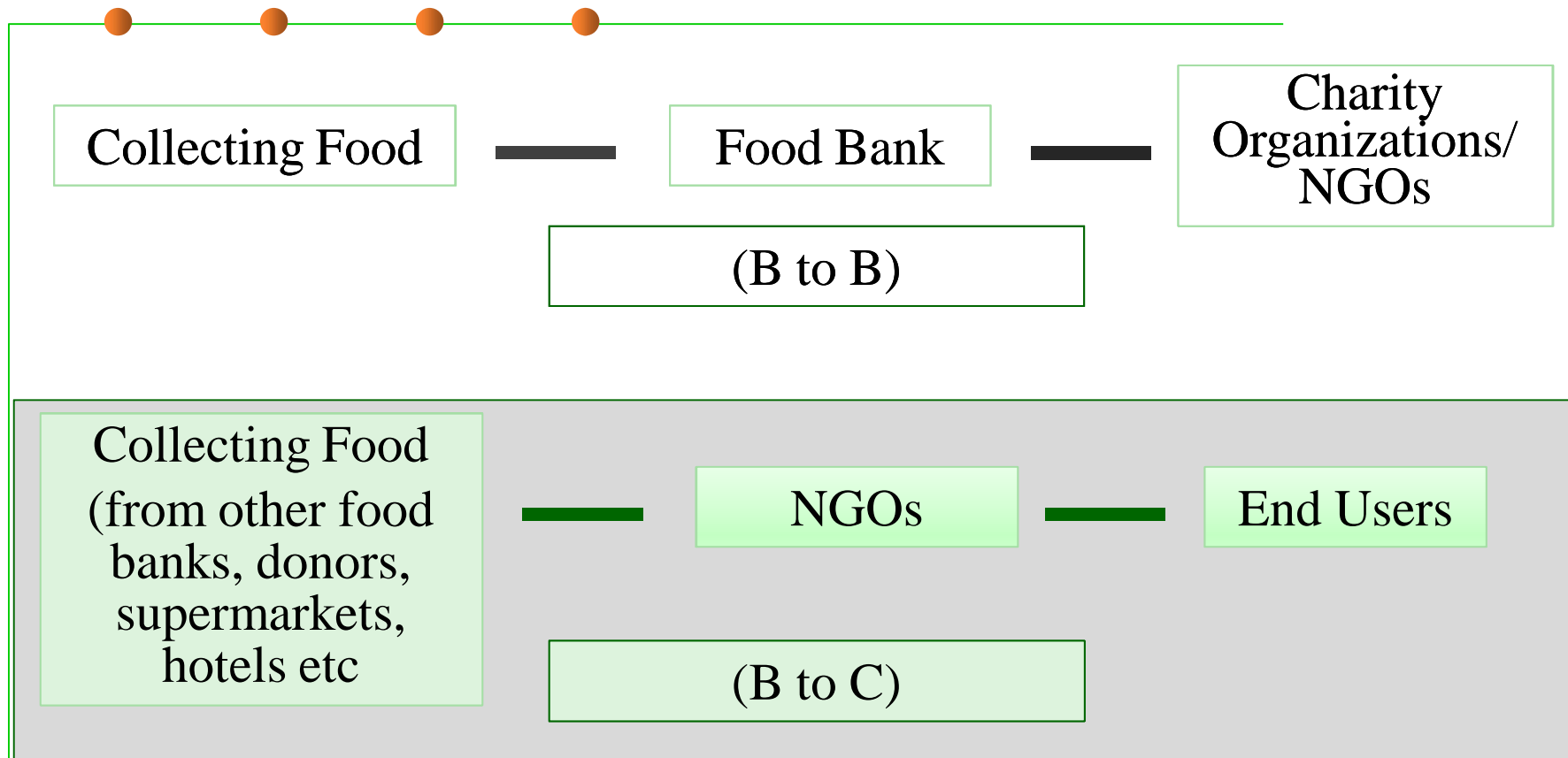
### **- current situation, challenges and issues of concern**

Mariana Chan  
Chief Officer

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

16-10-2012

## The Focus - on B to C





# Outline

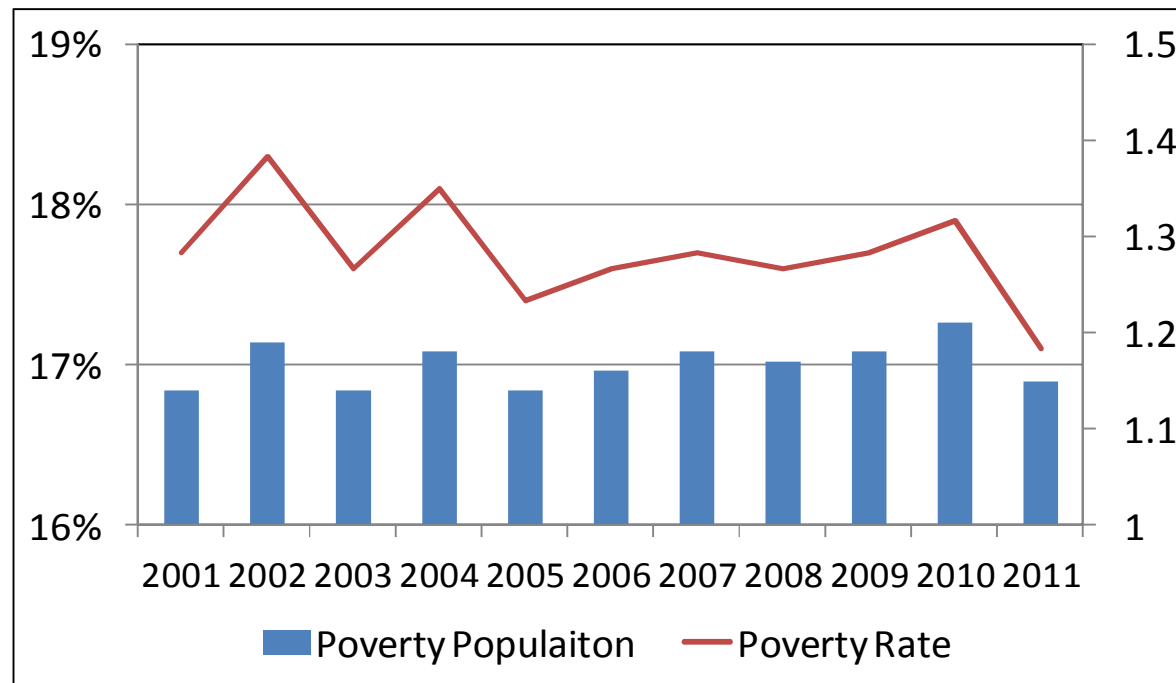


- 1) The Need for Food Assistance in HK
  - the Poverty Situation and the Food Burden
- 2) The Provision of food assistance
  - Dry food
  - Hot meal
  - Other support to Low Income Households on Food
    - Discounted Market / Bulk Purchase
- 3) Challenges and Issues of Concern

# The Need for Food Assistance ó the Poverty Situation (1)

Poverty rate

Poverty population (million)



2011

Poverty population

1.15 m

Poverty rate

17.1%

• Definition of Low Income Households

- households living under a monthly income less than or equal to half of the median income of all other households of equal size, for 1-person - \$3500, 2-person - \$7500, 3 person - \$10570, or 4-person or over - \$13250.

• Source : Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR government

Analysis : HKCSS

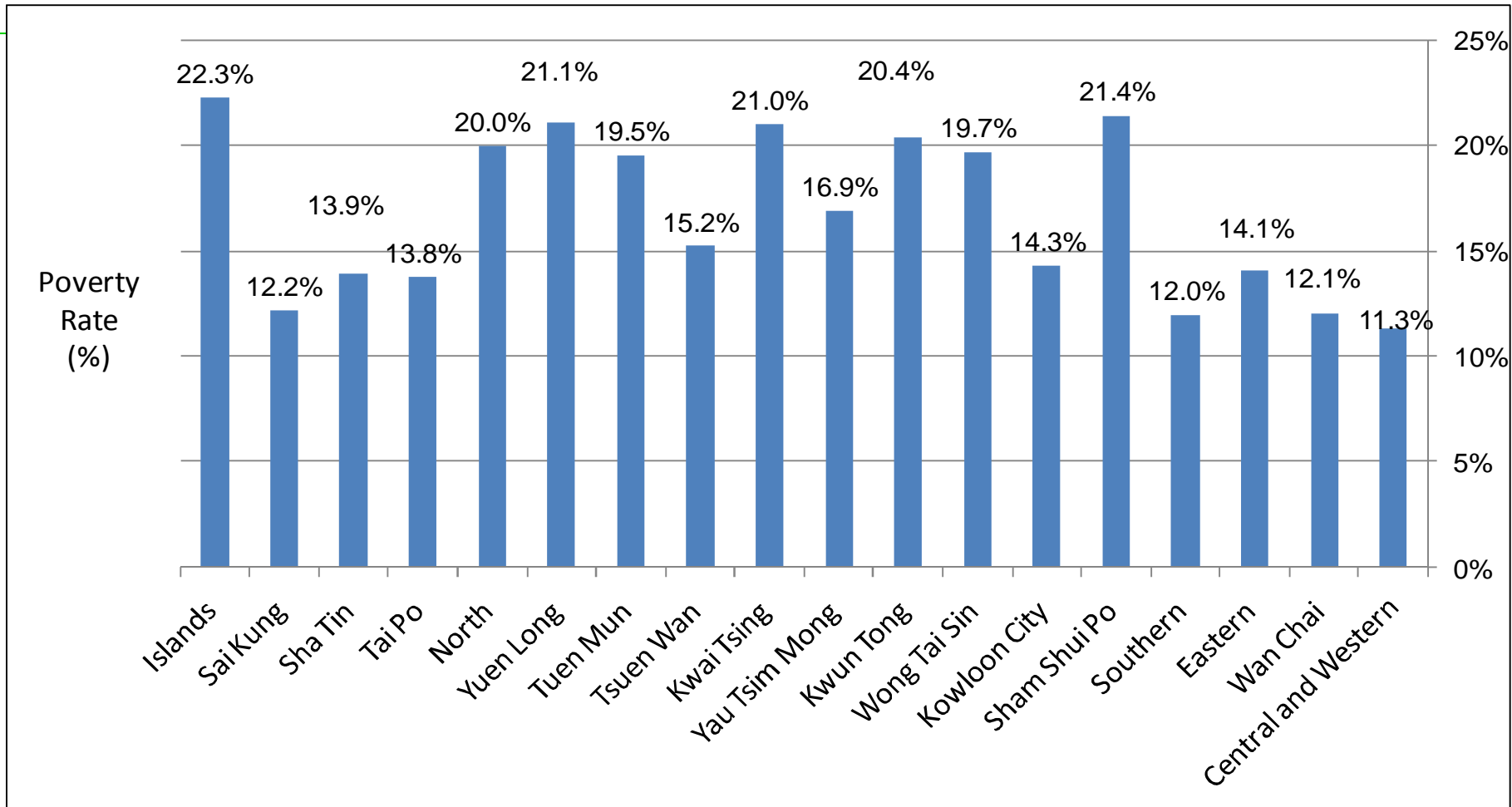
## The Need for Food Assistance ó the Poverty Situation (2)

**Number of people in poverty and the poverty rate by age (2010,2011)**

Age Group	2010	2011
	Poverty population(,000) (Poverty Rate)	Poverty population(,000) (Poverty Rate)
Children(0-14)	196 (22.9%)	183 (22.3%)
Youth(15-24)	168 (19.3%)	150 (17.5%)
Adult(25-44)	226 (11.1%)	217 (10.4%)
Middle age adult (45-64)	340 (16.0%)	322 (14.8%)
Elders (65+)	277 (32.5% )	288 (32.7%)

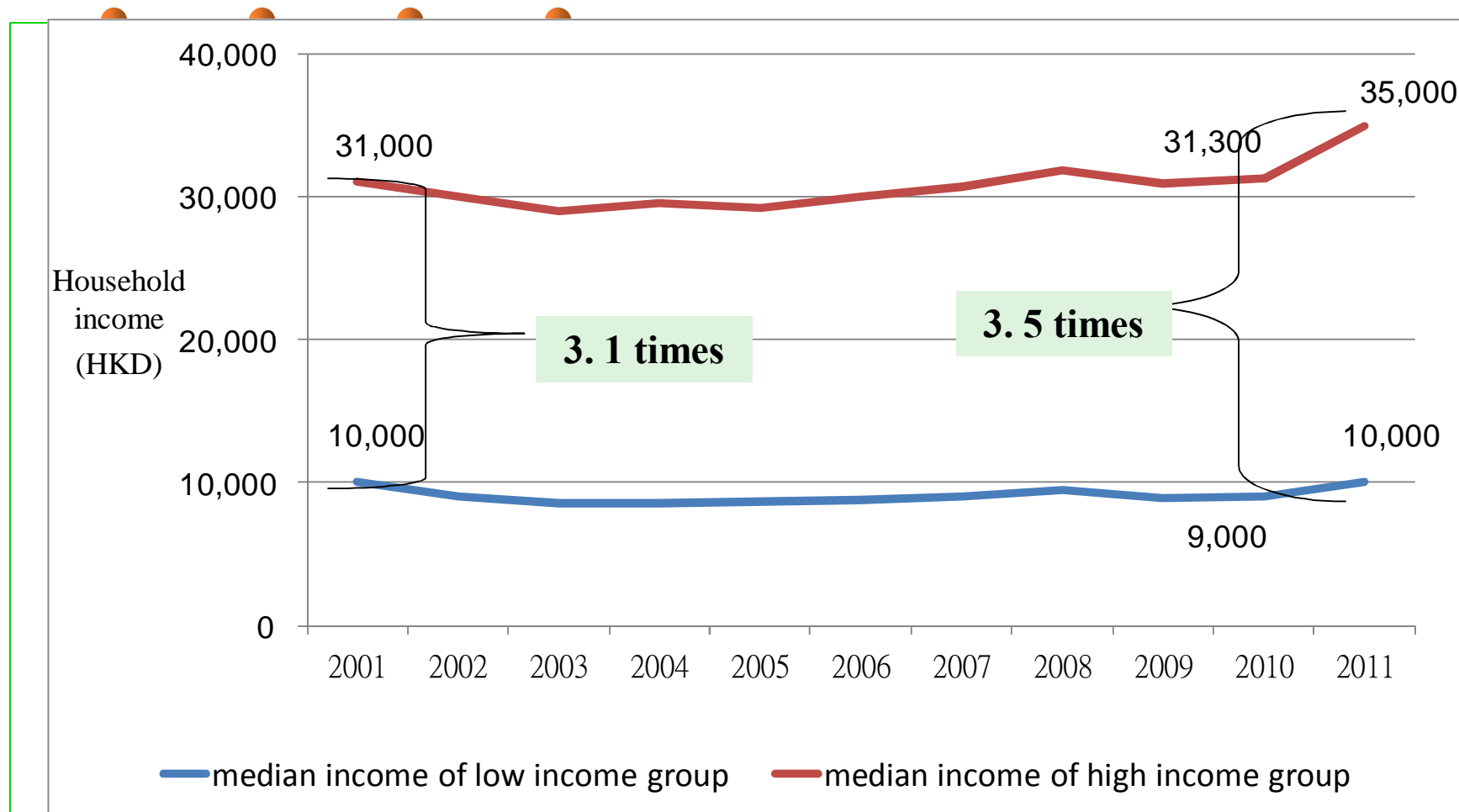
# The Need for Food Assistance ó the Poverty Situation (3)

## District Poverty Rate (2011)



## The Need for Food Assistance ó the Poverty Situation (4)

**The income gap between the high income and low income household has widened**



# The Need for Food Assistance ó the Food Burden (1)

Low expenditure groups had to spend high portion of their expenditure on food.

**Monthly Food expenditure in 1-person – 4-person household, 2009/10**

<u>Household size</u>	Lowest 10% Expenditure Group		All Expenditure Groups	
	2009/10 (HKD)	(% in total monthly expenditure)	2009/10 (HKD)	(% in total monthly expenditure)
1-person	1,185	46.8%	2,967	22.4%
2-person	2,043	49.9%	4,828	26.2%
3-person	3,145	50.6%	5,920	29.1%
4-person or above	3,777	47.4%	7,025	28.6%

Source : Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR government

Analysis : HKCSS

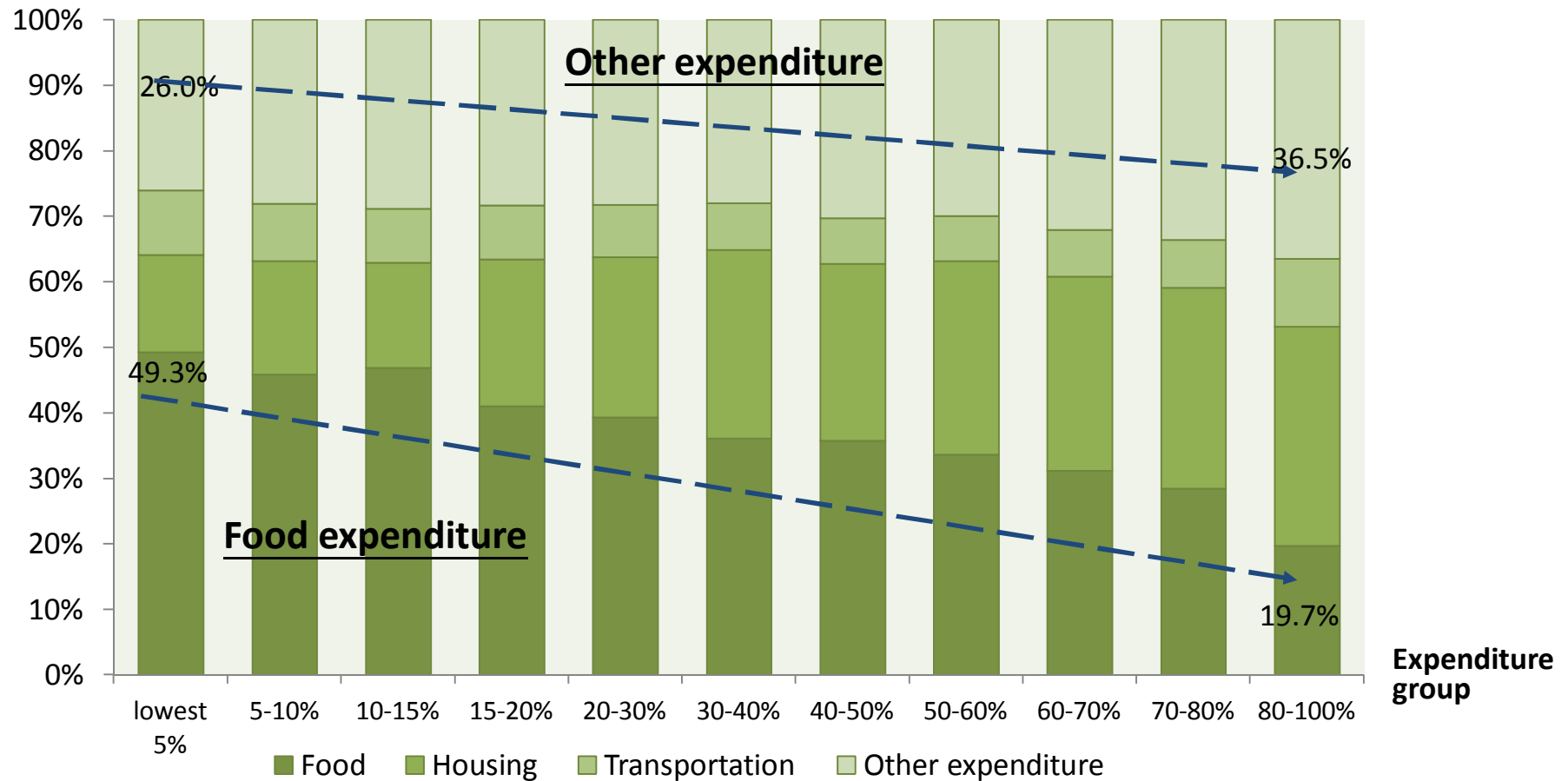


# The Need for Food Assistance ó the Food Burden (2)

Low expenditure groups had to spend greater portion of their total expenditure on food, when compare to other expenditure groups.

Distribution of Monthly Household Expenditure by Expenditure Group by Household Size, 2009/2010 (4-p household)

Monthly Household Expenditure



Source : Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR government      Analysis : HKCSS

## The Provision of Food Assistance (1)

(Please browse [http://www.poverty.org.hk/food\\_assistance\\_121011](http://www.poverty.org.hk/food_assistance_121011) for the full list of organizations providing the food assistance services and the content of the services provided)

The situation (by July 2012) is:

### Dry Food

<b>Kind of Food distributed</b>	<b>No. of Organizations (serve end users)</b>	<b>Target Groups (Duration) (Charge or Not)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>●Rice, canned food, dry noodle and</li><li>●milk powder</li></ul> <p>Apart from food, some organizations also distribute to needy clients other daily necessities, small electrical device (e.g. rice cooker) and food coupons.</p>	16 (more than 170 service points / partner organizations)	Low income individuals / families, unemployed, new arrivals; low income elderly; chronically ill; families facing crisis and others e.g. asylum seekers.  (mainly short period e.g. 6-week period)  (free of charge)

## The Provision on Food Assistance (2)

### Hot Meal

<b>Means and features</b>	<b>No. of Organizations (serve end users)</b>	<b>Target Groups</b>
Meal boxes OR eat in canteens  Some use food surplus from community and some run the service by social enterprise	13	Low income individuals / families, unemployed, new arrivals; low income elderly; chronically ill; families facing crisis and others e.g. asylum seekers  Some free of charge, some (especially those in canteens) will charge low price (e.g. \$10/meal)

## The Provision of Food Assistance (3)

Other support to Low Income Households on Food and Basic Necessities

### **The Discounted Market / Bulk Purchase**

No. of Organizations	6 Organizations are trying out the service
Concepts involved	Empowerment , community involvement, support organic products, help lead a respectful life etc.
Operation Modes	Different modes are trying out e.g. - Regular "market" day (e.g. biweekly), selling the product at discounted price to clients; - Bulk purchase by members; - Community economic development; time coupons.
Type of Product	Rice, oil, salt, noodle, cleansing product etc.
Target	Low income individuals / families (by membership)
Price level	Discounted price level (via bulk purchase, donation (in-cash or in-kind))

## The Provision of Food Assistance (4)

### A summary on development (a)

A fast growing service especially in the past 5 years. Growth is seen in:

- É Variety of services tried out / provided
  - dry food
  - + hot meals (coupons of fast food restaurants, social enterprise, meal boxes)
  - + fresh food coupons etc (in private wet markets, in supermarkets)
  - Discounted market / Bulk purchase
  - other services add in e.g. counselling, employment assistance
- É Quantity (many more distribution points)
- É Parties involved : the donors, community parties with food surplus, commercial / business sector, green groups and the volunteers

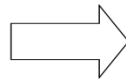
## The Provision of Food Assistance (5)

### A summary on development (b)

#### Seeing from User' Status



From Charity relief work recipient To Becoming Consumer of food product and basic necessities



From Charity relief work recipient To Self-reliance, To Helping Each Other

## Challenges faced by Individual Services (1)

Service Type	Challenges
Dry Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Duration too short</li><li>● Nutrition in-sufficiency</li><li>● How to cater for wider range of dietary needs e.g. that of the ethnic minorities</li><li>● Improvement in logistics needed</li><li>● Insufficient storage space</li><li>● Stigma</li></ul>

## Challenges faced by Individual Services (2)

Service Type	Challenges
<u>Hot Meal</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Can other service modes be tried out in order to serve more people e.g. frozen food packs; mobilize district based restaurants to deliver the meal; mobilize housewives nearby to cook for the needy ones?</li><li>● The issues related to using of community food surplus (food safety and legal issues)</li><li>● Premises</li></ul>
<u>Discounted Markets / Bulk Purchase</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Searching for direction of development: who should be the targets, what community needs are to be served etc.</li><li>● Competition with corporate</li></ul>




## Challenges faced by Individual Services (3)

Service Type	Challenges
Overall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="658 624 1861 724">● Food assistance, an end or a means? As the entry point for providing services to the needy ones?</li><li data-bbox="658 735 1977 895">● More research needed to find out the characteristics, needs of the service target, effectiveness of the service and good service models etc.</li></ul>

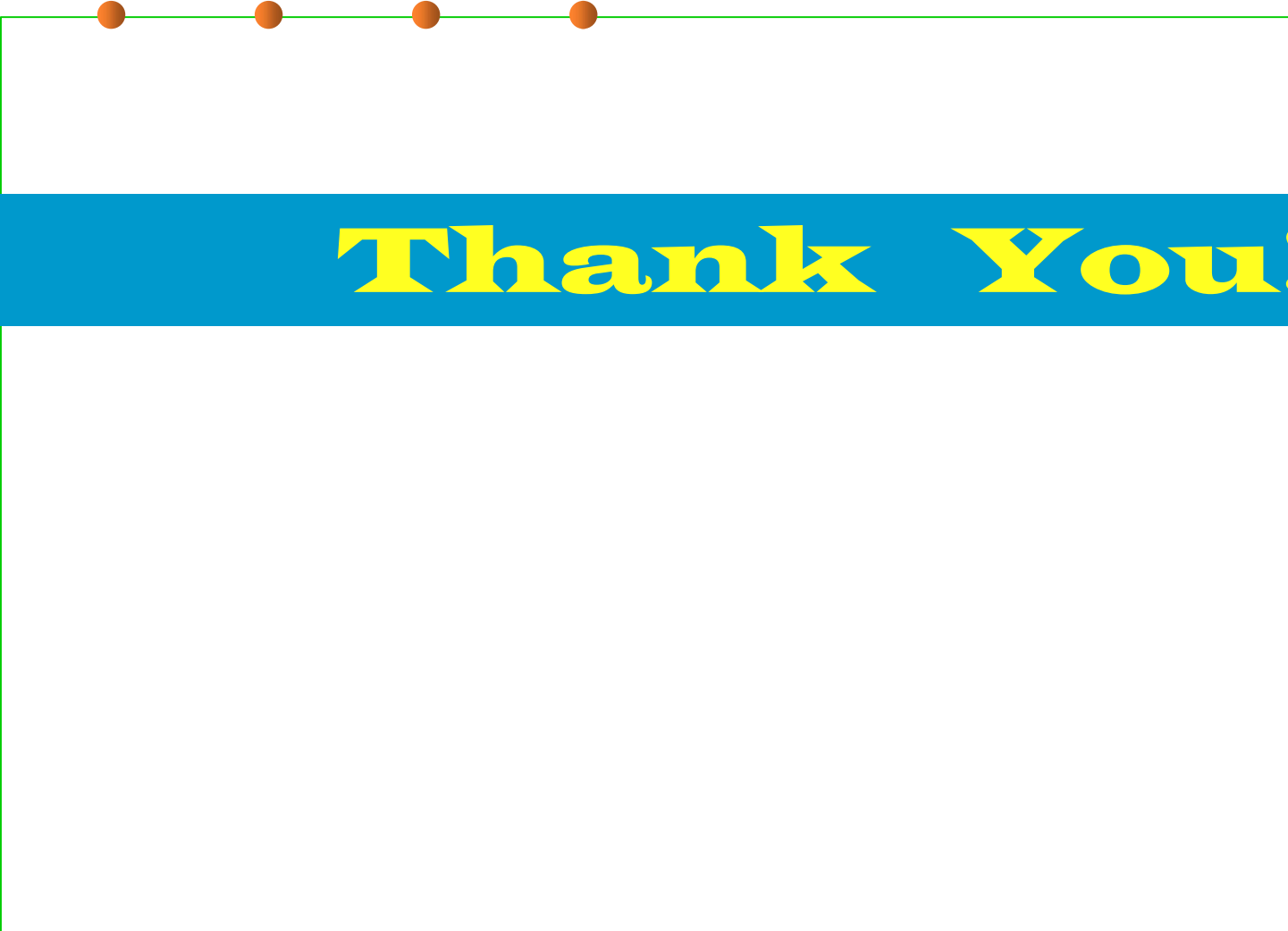


## Food for thought



The food assistance service reveals great demand from community and also reveals the existing gaps in policy and services, some questions for thought are:

- É How safe is our safety net now?
- É Why not cash but food? And who to receive cash and who to receive food?
- É Which group of clients should be served by food assistance and which others served by the subvented meal service?
- É What should be the role of government and that of the community / NGOs / non-profit sector in the provision and development of food assistance?
- É Do the hungry ones need just food? Shouldn't we find out the root of the problem to combat hunger in a more effective / fundamental way?



**Thank You!**