

* *Teacher's version P.10-14*

(Activity 3: Mini-role play: Consequences of income inequality)

Pair A- Read the following article and discuss the questions.

Article 1

Case of Macau

The largest demonstration, in seven years since the handover, broke out in Macau yesterday on the 1 May Labour Day, despite the ongoing upturn of the economy. The police made several warning shots skywards, but that only caused a greater chaos.

The large scale confrontation between the demonstrators and the police points to conflicts at deeper levels. The economy in Macau has been blooming in the past seven years and revenue for the last year from the casino business surpassed that of the Las Vegas, becoming the world's number one. The GDP per capita increased to US\$28,436, higher than Hong Kong's US\$27,641. Yet, behind the prosperity in Macau, the problem of the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots gets worse and worse.

According to some statistics, a considerable number of families in the more densely populated districts are living on monthly income below the median figure of MOP**7,300. At present, some 20% of the Macau population is living in leased properties and the pressure of rocketing rent on them is compounded. All such issues, plus news of corruption cases by senior civil servants from time to time, are adding fuel to the fire of grumble among the crowd of the lower class. And so, Macau is now facing 'three losses' – loss of balance of social development, leading to loss of orderliness of social mobility and finally leading to loss of control over law and order. The administration must be mindful of all these developments.

It is not good enough to rely on the popularity of the Chief Executive and the buoyant economy in the HK and Macau SAR where capitalistic system is implemented. If the Governments of the two places do not come up with a proper solution for the deep-down problems, they would face an explosive situation at any time.

** MOP is the unit of currency in Macau

Source: Adopted from 2 May 2007, Ming Pao

Discussion Question:

Article 1: for Pair A

Q.1 What are the consequences of income inequality on society and Government?
Why?

Article 2

Survey: 10,000 poverty children poor in body and mind (Hong Kong)

The Boy's & Girl's Club Association (BGCA) of Hong Kong recently interviewed over 400 children of poverty. They found that 75% of them could not attend extra-curricular activities for financial reasons, 40% lacking self-confidence and 15% were underweight. In addition, over a half of the parents of these poor children said that they were 'not able to help their children with their homework and study'. Hence, these children were not doing as well as others. 43% of the parents admitted that they did not have parenting skills and had given physical punishment or heavy scolding to their children.

The survey also discovered that 10% of the children interviewed are living in deficiency in terms of financial support, study support, parent-children bonding, and social and emotional development. Wong Kwai Yau, chief supervisor of the BGCA, expressed that as there were currently 110,000 children receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, some 10,000 children in Hong Kong fell under 'multiple-deficiency' (i.e. not having enough support in many ways).

Source: Adopted from 17 October 2007, Ming Pao

Discussion Question:

Article 2: for Pair B

Q.1 What are the consequences of income inequality on the poor and the families of the poor? Why?
