

/ Action group slams elitist system

And Tuen Mun police are criticised for failing to clamp down on rogue chemists, reports Yuen Chan

Elitist education policies in some Hong Kong schools are driving young people to despair, according to a new Tuen Mun-based child concern group.

The Save Our Children Campaign was launched yesterday - International Children's Day - with the aim of eliminating "four evils" plagu-

ing the new town's young people.

According to the campaign spokesman, a Tuen Mun District Board member Yim Tinsang, children who did not achieve top results in the classroom were often cast aside by the school system.

Yim said social workers and community organisations in

the locality were receiving an increasing number of complaints from parents who said their children were depressed about not receiving any support at school.

"Schools and teachers give up on them and this is a severe blow to their confidence," he said.

"Children can have a 'death

sentence' put on them from as early as primary five or six."

Yim said newer schools in Tuen Mun were keen to weed out weaker students in order to make room for those who achieved higher marks - to boost the school's performance rating.

He claimed such tactics were responsible for many youth problems in the area, particularly truancy - which usually led to other problems.

The campaign will be holding discussions with parents, schools and the Education Department to explore ways of improving the situation.

Other "evils" the campaign is intended to confront are Tuen Mun's youth drug prob-

lem, triad infiltration of schools and the proliferation of pornographic material.

Yim said drug abuse among children was particularly serious in Tuen Mun.

Although police could not provide him with precise figures, he said Tuen Mun was second on Hong Kong's list of drug users, adding that over 40 per cent of the territory's addicts were under 19.

Campaign members visited chemist shops in the area yesterday to persuade owners not to sell cough medicines and other prescription-only drugs to children.

Support from parents and the community will be enlisted to gather information

about which chemists continue to sell to youngsters. The group will then hand over the names to the police.

Yim criticised the police for not cracking down on pharmacists who broke the law, and slammed the local force's "unco-operative attitude".

"I can't even get accurate figures about such things as juvenile drug abuse or crime from them, as a district board member.

On the problem of triad infiltration, Yim said Tuen Mun police would do well to follow the example of their Sha Tin colleagues, who invited Organised Crime and Triad Bureau officers to conduct investigations in schools

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