

**Summary of Discussion of the Meeting of
Steering Committee on the Child Development Fund
held on 15 December 2023 (Friday)
in Conference Room 3, G/F,
Central Government Offices, Tamar**

Attendance

Ms LAU Yim, Alice Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Chairperson)

Ms Kathy CHUNG

Professor Angela CUI

Mr Andy KWOK

Ms Joyce LEE

Mr Victor PANG

Dr Angela SIU

Miss Koby WONG

Mr YAU Siu-hung

Ms Judith YU

Miss Joe CHAN Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth and
Corrections)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr David LEUNG Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Ms Shirley HO Chief Executive Officer (Welfare) 2

Ms Janice WONG Senior Executive Officer (Welfare) 2A

Social Welfare Department

Miss Mina CHOW Chief Social Work Officer (Youth)

Mrs Fanny CHEUNG Senior Social Work Officer (Youth) 2

Members absent with Apologies

Ms Yvonne CHAK

Ms Clara CHAN

Dr Tony LAU

Mr TSE Tsz-fung

Ms Veronica WONG Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 2

Agenda Item (1): Review of the Child Development Fund Programme

Members were briefed on the background, findings and recommendations of the review of the Child Development Fund (CDF) Programme, and supported the proposed enhancements to various aspects of CDF which were based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected from stakeholders, as well as comments and suggestions of the Steering Committee. The key enhancements were summarised as follows:

Target Participants

- (a) Position the target participants to Primary 3 to Primary 6 students.

Three Key Components

Target Savings

- (b) Maintain the current requirement of target savings for mentees of \$200 per month and up to \$4,800 for two years.

- (c) Impose additional requirements on participants as a pre-requisite for release of the Government's matching fund (such as formulation of the preliminary Personal Development Plans (PDPs) and completion of certain training programmes).

PDP

- (d) Advance the disbursement of the mentees' target savings (including monthly savings, matching contribution and Government financial incentive) of the first year to the 13th month of the project at the earliest, so that mentees could implement their PDPs progressively under the supervision of mentors and the operators with a longer timeframe.

Mentorship

- (e) Strengthen mentor support and training through enhancing train-the-trainer programmes for CDF operators to address the needs of mentors.
- (f) Advance the training timetable for mentors and parents/guardians to complete three out of five core training programmes in the first year of the project period.

“One-plus-one-approach” and Target Number of Participants of each Project

- (g) The operators of both NGO-led and school-based projects could apply for either a single three-year project or two consecutive three-year projects.
- (h) Relax the threshold of the target participants for both the NGO-led and school-based projects. The minimum number of participants is 25 while the maximum is 100 (with a flexibility of maximum 15% upward adjustment).

Project Duration

- (i) Maintain the project duration of three years.

2. Members noted that the CDF review was conducted on their advice with an aim to enhance its uniqueness and competitiveness vis-à-vis other publicly funded schemes that targeted children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including the Strive & Rise Programme (S&R Programme). The recommendation on positioning the target participants of CDF to Primary 3 to Primary 6 students would enable the two programmes to complement each other and make better use of resources to provide effective support to underprivileged children. Together, they would cater for the different developmental needs at different stages of life for a broader spectrum of students from Primary 3 to Primary 6 (CDF) and from Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 (S&R Programme) through programmes with different emphases.

3. As regards the key components, Members considered targeted savings a distinctive feature of CDF, from which mentees would be able to acquire the concept of money and be equipped with a positive attitude towards savings at an early stage. The target savings set at \$200 per month was also considered appropriate. Hence, the current requirement of target savings of up to \$4,800 for two years should be maintained. To strengthen mentees' ownership and commitment to the CDF programme, Members considered that mentees should, under the guidance of the mentor, work out a preliminary PDP and present satisfactory attendance records in respect of the core programmes and activities organised by operators, as a pre-requisite for release of the matching fund. In respect of PDP, the savings accumulated by mentees together with matching fund by donors and the Government should be disbursed on the 13th month to give more flexibility for participants in the planning and execution of the PDPs, especially for PDPs that would take a longer time to attain progress and achievement. The train-the-trainer programmes would be standardised to help mentors equip with adequate knowledge and skills, and encourage recruitment and retention of mentors. To help parents and mentors to understand better and fulfil their roles at the early stage of the programme, parents and mentors would be encouraged to complete the majority, i.e. three out of five, core training programmes in the first year of the three-year project period.

4. Members noted that the “one-plus-one-approach”¹ could assist CDF operators in making resource allocation plans and building up and retaining a pool of experienced mentors. Hence, Members agreed that a dual track mode should be offered to operators of both NGO-led and school-based projects, i.e. allowing them to apply for either a single three-year project or two consecutive three-year projects under the “one-plus-one-approach” in each application. Members further agreed that the recruitment threshold should be relaxed to a range of 25 (being the minimum required number) to 100 participants (being the ceiling number, with a flexibility of 15% upward adjustment in accordance with the existing practice) for both the school-based and NGO-led projects to allow greater flexibility for operators of different capacity. Members further considered that CDF with a three-year project period was suitable as it took time to coach young children in character building and cultivation of good habits, including savings habit.

5. Members noted that the Government planned to announce the operational framework of the enhanced CDF Programme and launch the next round of CDF projects under the new mode in the first quarter of 2024.

Agenda Item (2): Progress Update of the Child Development Fund

6. Members were briefed on the performance of the 6th batch of School-based Projects that was completed in February 2023, followed by the latest progress of the ongoing CDF projects.

7. Members noted that the Government would continue to monitor the performance of ongoing CDF projects, and would keep in view the performance of the 7th batch of School-based projects which were less impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Labour and Welfare Bureau January 2024

¹ Each CDF operator would be awarded two three-year projects in one go, whilst the confirmation of the “Second Project” would be subject to satisfactory performance of the “First Project”.