

**For discussion on
13 July 2009**

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Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services Progress Report on the Child Development Fund

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress in the implementation of the Child Development Fund (CDF).

Background

2. To reduce inter-generational poverty, the Government has accepted the recommendation of the former Commission on Poverty to establish a CDF with a view to trying out a new model for promoting the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background. This Panel was briefed on the proposal of setting up the \$300-million CDF on 14 January and 14 February 2008. The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the funding for CDF on 25 April 2008.

Implementation of the First Batch of Pioneer Projects of CDF

3. The first batch of seven pioneer projects was rolled out in December 2008 by six operating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) throughout the territory¹. Each pioneer project benefits at least 100 children. The names of the operating NGOs, their serving regions/districts and number of participating children are set out at Annex.

¹ There is one project in each of the following seven regions/districts – (i) Hong Kong Island, (ii) Kowloon East, (iii) Kowloon West, (iv) New Territories East, (v) New Territories West, (vi) Tin Sui Wai, and (vii) Tung Chung.

Recruitment of Participating Children

4. Children aged 10-16 who are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or full grants from student finance schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency or whose household incomes are less than 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income are eligible to participate in the CDF pioneer projects. Priority is given to children aged between 14 and 16 (i.e. not less than 70% of the participants in each pioneer project) as some of them may be about to leave school and therefore have a more imminent need to plan for their future.

5. The recruitment of participating children for the first batch of seven pioneer projects was completed by all the six operating NGOs by end-March 2009. A total of 750 participating children were recruited, with two projects having 120 children and one project having 110 children. Of the 750 participating children, 71% are aged between 14 and 16 while 29% are aged between 10 and 13.

Recruitment of Mentors

6. Each participating child of the pioneer CDF projects has been assigned to a personal mentor, who is a volunteer, to provide the child with guidance in drawing up and implementing his or her personal development plans with specific development targets. Mentors are encouraged to share with the participating children their life experience and help the children broaden their exposure and social network, develop a positive attitude and proper mindset and build up personal resilience and capacity.

7. All the operating NGOs have been able to recruit an adequate number of mentors for their CDF pioneer projects. Altogether, more than 600 mentors² have been recruited by the six operating NGOs. These mentors come from all walks of life including businessmen, professionals, managerial or executive post holders, salespersons, tertiary students, retired persons, etc. More than half of the mentors have attained a bachelor's degree or above and about 20% have completed non-degree tertiary education.

² For some pioneer projects, a mentor will be assigned with more than one participating child.

8. To facilitate mentors to perform their roles and functions, on-going training programmes which seek to enhance their knowledge and skills in child development, family problems, problem identification/solving, communication, team building, etc, are provided by the respective operating NGOs.

Personal Development

9. The CDF aims to assist children from a disadvantaged background to overcome their less favourable circumstances through personal development plans with specific targets (both short-term and long-term ones). To this end, the operating NGOs and mentors provide on-going guidance to the children in developing and implementing their personal development plans. Training programmes, such as self-awareness, financial management, personal development plan, vocational planning, social network and communication skills, are also provided by the operating NGOs to help participating children to develop a more forward-planning perspective and build up non-financial assets which are essential to the long-term development of children.

10. The Government has set aside \$15,000 for each participating child under the CDF pioneer projects for the provision of relevant training programmes. From April to July 2009, a total of 157 training programmes in different areas have been/will be organised by the operating NGOs. More training programmes will be provided within the first two years of the projects.

Targetted Savings

11. The participating children have started their two-year savings programme since April 2009. To address the special needs or circumstances of individual participating children and their families, the operating NGOs can set a lower savings target (i.e. below \$200) for those special cases (i.e. a total of eight cases). The operating NGOs, with the assistance of the mentors, will monitor the savings situation of the participating children. In general, the target savings programme runs smoothly and the participating children have been able to meet the preset savings target as agreed between the NGOs and the children and their families.

12. Separately, the operating NGOs are required to seek partnership from the business sector as well as individual donors for providing matching contribution (at least 1:1 matching contribution) for the targetted savings accumulated by the participating children. All the operating NGOs have successfully secured sufficient funding for the matching contribution. The Government will also provide a special financial incentive of \$3,000 for each participating child upon completion of the two-year savings programme.

Community Participation

13. The CDF aims to tap resources of the private sector and the community in promoting the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background. To this end, the Government together with the operating NGOs has conducted more than 100 promotional events for publicising the CDF to different sectors of the community, including business corporations, religious groups, secondary and primary schools, local residents'/welfare/service organisations. Apart from the production and distribution of publicity materials, the Government and the operating NGOs have organised a number of briefings/presentations and visits with a view to recruiting mentors and soliciting matching contributions and other community support. In addition, a dedicated CDF website (www.cdf.gov.hk) was launched in July 2008.

14. For the first batch of CDF pioneer projects, we have secured enthusiastic support from various parties in the private sector and the community, including three CDF strategic partners (viz. the Centum Charitas Foundation (CCF), the Lions Clubs International District 303 – Hong Kong and Macau, China (Lions Clubs) and the Child Development Matching Fund) and two supporting organisations (viz. Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited and Treasury Markets Association). Moreover, the operating NGOs have also successfully secured support from a number of companies/organisations which provide funding for the matching contribution and/or mobilise their members/staff to serve as mentors for participating children of individual pioneer projects. Some of the supporting companies and organisations have also volunteered to provide programmes to widen the horizon of the CDF participating children. For example, the CCF and the Lions Clubs are lining up more than 40 enterprise visits, which cover different fields and trades such as bank, hotel, media, public utility, catering, manufacturing, estate management, etc, to all participating children this summer to help enrich their exposure. Some of the visits will cover Hong Kong owned manufacturing

establishments in the Pearl River Delta on the Mainland to enable CDF participating children to see at first hand business operations across the boundary.

Monitoring and Evaluation

15. A Steering Committee on Child Development Fund (SCCDF) has been set up to steer the design and to oversee and monitor the implementation of the CDF. The SCCDF is chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare and comprises non-official members from different sectors of the community including social welfare, medical, education, business, professional and youth. The operating NGOs are required to present progress reports to the SCCDF regularly.

16. The Government has also commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (the Consultant) to conduct a consultancy study on the CDF. The primary objective of the study is to evaluate the first batch of the CDF pioneer projects with a view to making recommendations to the Government on how to further develop the CDF into a longer-term model to promote child development in Hong Kong. Commenced in December 2008, the study, which includes a longitudinal study on the participating children, will last for 3½ years and is expected to be completed by 2012. Currently, the Consultant is working on the first interim report of the study covering the rollout and initial implementation of the seven pioneer projects as well as progress of the longitudinal study and this is expected by the last quarter of 2009. .

Way Forward

17. The Government will closely monitor the implementation of the pioneer projects. Taking into account the evaluation results and practical experience in implementing the first batch of pioneer projects, we will consider the timing for rolling out the second batch of CDF projects as well as how to further develop the CDF into the longer-term model to promote child development in Hong Kong.

Advice Sought

18. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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**Operating Non-governmental Organisations
of the First Batch of Child Development Fund Pioneer Projects**

Region/ District	Operating NGO	No. of Participating Children
Hong Kong Island	Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service	100
Kowloon East	Christian Action	100
Kowloon West	Industrial Evangelistic Fellowship	120
New Territories East	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals	110
New Territories West	Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups	120
Tin Shui Wai	Tung Wah Group of Hospitals	100
Tung Chung	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council	100
Total		750