

**For discussion on
14 May 2010**

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**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Progress of the Child Development Fund**

Purpose

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

Background

2. As recommended by the former Commission on Poverty, the Government set up the \$300 million-CDF in April 2008 to promote the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background, with a view to reducing inter-generational poverty. The first batch of seven pioneer projects supported by the CDF was rolled out in December 2008 by six operating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in seven regions/districts (see **Annex I** for details). This Panel was last briefed on the CDF on 13 July 2009. The latest progress is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Progress of the First Batch of Pioneer Projects

Participating Children

3. A total of 750 children have been recruited to the seven pioneer projects, with 71% aged between 14 and 16 and the remaining 29% aged between 10 and 13, more or less as planned. At the end of March 2010, five of them had dropped out, mainly because they had taken up employment or had family problems.

Mentors

4. More than 690 volunteers from all walks of life have been recruited by the operating NGOs and assigned to the participating children as their personal mentors. They guide the children in drawing up and implementing personal development plans. They are also encouraged to share with the children their life experience, help them broaden their perspective, form social networks, develop a positive attitude and proper mindset, and build up personal resilience and capacity.

5. The operating NGOs have provided more than 140 training programmes for the mentors to enhance their knowledge in child development and family problems, as well as their skills in problem identification/solving and communication, etc. (see **Annex II** for details). More training programmes will be arranged for them in the second year of the pioneer projects. In addition, the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) has prepared a guidebook for mentors which contains general guidelines on mentorship and information on training and education opportunities for young people.

6. At the end of March 2010, 40 mentors had dropped out of the pioneer projects, mainly owing to work or study commitments and other personal or health reasons. As their vacancies can be filled by new recruits and the operating NGOs will make the necessary arrangements to ensure a smooth transition, the mentorship programme is not adversely affected. To increase the retention of mentors, more sharing sessions and support group will be organised by the operating NGOs.

Personal Development Plan

7. Throughout the three-year project period, the operating NGOs and mentors are required to provide on-going guidance to the children in developing and implementing their personal development plans. Training in self-awareness, financial management, personal and vocational development, social network building and communication skills are provided by the operating NGOs to help the children learn how to plan ahead and build up non-financial assets which are essential for their long-term development. Parents are also involved.

8. Up to 31 March 2010, about 280 training programmes had been organised by the operating NGOs for the participating children and their parents (see **Annex II** for details), and more will come on stream to help the children develop their own personal development plans by the end of the second year.

Targeted Savings

9. The two-year savings programme started in April 2009. All the children except 13 set their savings target at \$200 per month and the majority of them have been able to meet the target. The operating NGOs have set up emergency funds to assist those who have difficulty meeting their savings target owing to temporary financial hardship.

10. So far, only four children withdrew from the savings programme owing to long term financial hardship of their families, despite receiving assistance from the emergency funds for more than six months. Nevertheless, they continue to participate in the mentorship programme, attend training programmes provided by the operating NGO and formulate their own personal development plans under the guidance of the operating NGO and their mentors.

Monitoring and Evaluation

11. A Steering Committee on Child Development Fund (SCCDF) is set up by LWB to oversee the implementation of the CDF. It comprises members from different sectors of the community. The operating NGOs present progress reports to the SCCDF regularly. SCCDF members also visited Taiwan to learn more about similar asset-based programmes for children there.

12. In addition, we have commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (the Consultant) to evaluate the pioneer projects and make recommendations to the Government on how to further develop the CDF. The study is expected to be completed by mid-2012.

13. So far, the pioneer projects have been running smoothly. The Consultant's initial observation is that the projects are bringing about positive changes to the participants. In particular,

- the children's communication with other family members has improved and they have become more active and happy; and
- the targeted savings programme has helped the participants build up a savings habit. They also appreciate that it is their own responsibility to achieve the savings target.

Second Batch Projects

14. In the light of practical experience gained in the pioneer projects and feedback from the stakeholders, we plan to roll out the second batch of CDF projects in June 2010.

General framework

15. The second batch projects will be similar to those in the first batch in terms of eligibility criteria¹ and project content. The three key components of the CDF projects, viz. personal development plan, mentorship programme and targeted savings, will be maintained. Priority will continue to be given to children aged between 14 and 16 as some of them may be about to leave school and therefore have a more imminent need to plan for their future. They will constitute not less than 70% of the participants for each project.

16. For this batch of projects we aim at recruiting about **1 500** children in total, having regard to the operating NGOs' capacity, the availability of suitable mentors and the need to ensure effective management of the projects. In order to facilitate children's participation in training programmes and activities, we will reduce the geographical coverage of each project by rolling out 15 projects in 13 districts. Each project will benefit not less than 100 children (see **Annex III** for details). The operating NGOs will be encouraged to take on a greater number of participants if their capacity allows.

¹ CDF projects are for children aged 10 to 16:

- (i) whose family is receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or full grant under the student finance schemes administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency; or
 - (ii) whose household income is less than 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income.
- To ensure that more children can benefit from the CDF, children who have participated in CDF projects before will not be eligible for subsequent projects.

Invitation of Proposals

17. In January 2010, the Social Welfare Department invited all eligible NGOs to submit proposals for operating the second batch CDF projects. By the close of application, a total of 34 applications had been received. The selection process has reached the final stage and the assessment results will be announced shortly. It is expected that the recruitment of mentors and participating children by the selected NGOs will commence in June 2010. There will be territory-wide publicity as well as special briefings for target groups such as schools, business associations, professional bodies, etc. to appeal for their support.

Advice Sought

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

Labour and Welfare Bureau
May 2010

**Operating Non-governmental Organisations
for 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

**Training Programmes Provided by the Operating Non-Governmental Organisations
for the First Batch of Child Development Fund Pioneer Projects
(up to 31 March 2010)**

Topics of Training Programmes	Target Participants					
	Participating Children	Children and Parents	Children and Mentors	Parents	Mentors	Total
(1) Basic/induction/general	4	25	-	-	33	62
(2) Self-awareness	43	-	-	-	-	43
(3) Self-confidence	14	-	-	-	-	14
(4) Personal development	6	-	5	-	3	14
(5) Career planning/development	7	-	13	4	-	24
(6) Education preparation	5	-	-	2	1	8
(7) Team building	29	-	9	-	-	38
(8) Communications skills	22	-	-	2	9	33
(9) Interpersonal/social relationship	5	-	46	-	2	53
(10) Understanding the youth	-	-	-	9	9	18
(11) Intergenerational poverty	-	-	-	-	3	3
(12) Intergenerational relationship	-	-	-	-	1	1
(13) Emotional support skills	2	-	-	-	3	5
(14) Family relation	-	-	-	2	4	6
(15) Financial management and planning	11	8	-	6	-	25
<i>Total</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>347</i>

**Geographical Distribution of the
Second Batch of Child Development Fund Projects**

Districts/Areas ^{Note}	Number of Projects	Number of Participants
1. Hong Kong Island	1	100
2. Tung Chung	1	100
3. Kwun Tong	2	200
4. Wong Tai Sin (including San Po Kong, and Tsz Wan Shan)	1	100
5. Sai Kung (including Tseung Kwan O)	1	100
6. Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong	1	100
7. Sham Shui Po	1	100
8. Sha Tin	1	100
9. Tai Po and North District	1	100
10. Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing	2	200
11. Tuen Mun	1	100
12. Yuen Long	1	100
13. Tin Shui Wai	1	100
Total	15	1 500

^{Note} The districts/areas roughly correspond to the 11 administrative districts of the Social Welfare Department, plus two special districts, viz. Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung.