

Steering Committee on Child Development Fund

Brief Notes of the Meeting held on 5 October 2012 (Friday) in Conference Room No. 3, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tamar

Attendance

Miss Annie TAM		(Chairman)
Miss Jasmine CHAN		
Dr Timothy CHAN		
Dr Philemon CHOI		
Mr Frederick LAI		
Ms LAM Pik-chu		
Ms Evelyn LAM		
Dr LAW Chi-kwong		
Dr LEUNG Nai-kong		
Mr Francis MAK		
Dr Grace POON		
Ms Sandy WONG		
Mr Michael WONG		
Mr FUNG Man-lok	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Youth and Corrections)	
Ms Jane LEE	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty)	(Secretary)

In Attendance

Ms Irene YOUNG	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Mrs Luvisa TANG	Project Manager (Poverty)
Mr LOH Shing-wai	Senior Executive Officer (Poverty)

For Item 1 only

Dr Charles CHAN	Associate Professor Department of Applied Social Sciences The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Dr Simon LAI	Research Associate Department of Applied Social Sciences The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Dr Eddie NG	Research Associate Department of Applied Social Sciences The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Ms Wendy LAU	Research Assistant Department of Applied Social Sciences The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Absent with Apologies

Mr Ivan TING

Item (1) : Final Report of the Consultancy Study on Child Development Fund (CDF) First Batch Pioneer Projects

The Consulting Team briefed members on the final report of the consultancy study. Members noted that:

- (a) of the 332 participating children covered by the study, 16.3% used up all targeted savings to implement their Personal Development Plans (PDP), while 7.8% did not use any of their savings at all;
- (b) the lower quality of mentoring relationship in the third year of the projects was related to a decrease in communication between mentors and mentees;
- (c) good mentoring relationship had a positive impact on the psychology, personal development and family relationship of the participating children;
- (d) overall speaking, in the third year of CDF projects, more parents made savings for their children. This showed that the targeted saving programme had a positive impact on the family's saving habit.

2. Members noted that the Consulting Team (CT) had studied the targeted saving and mentorship programmes implemented in Singapore, Taiwan and the United States (US). Details were in Part 2 of the Report.

3. Members also noted that the major points of CT's key recommendations for improving CDF projects included:

Capacities of Operating NGOs

- (a) the operating NGOs should provide more support and training to the project staff;
- (b) training for mentors and parents should be provided throughout the three-year project period. Self-study materials should be made available to those who were absent from the training classes;
- (c) more sharing sessions should be organised for the operating NGOs to share their experiences and practices in implementing CDF projects;
- (d) the operating NGOs should further develop their community networks in recruiting mentors and soliciting matching contributions;

Service Level

- (e) the number of projects in each batch should be reviewed every year with reference to the practical experience of previous batches, NGOs' capacities and the demand in different districts;
- (f) the number of children for each project (i.e. 100 to 120) was considered optimal;

Targeted Savings

- (g) in the future, the Government should review the monthly saving target, matching ratio and special financial incentive, as appropriate, with reference to the financial capabilities of the children's families, inflation and other relevant factors;

Mentorship Programme

- (h) promotion could be enhanced to recruit mentors from government departments, university students/alumni and retirees.

Continuity of CDF Projects and Mentorship

4. Members in general considered that the NGOs, without knowing whether they could operate more projects after the current ones, would hesitate to devote more resources to the projects and to cultivate and extend the mentorship network necessary for a successful project. A member said that it was rather manpower intensive and resource demanding to operate a CDF project and hence, more resources should be given to the operating NGOs.

5. Some members considered that there should be room for adjusting the mentor-mentee ratio from 1:1 to 1:2 or 1:3, which could help NGOs overcome the difficulty in recruiting mentors and also encourage experience sharing and discussion among the mentees. The Consulting Team commented that children participating in CDF projects were from a disadvantaged background and hence they might not have the social skills needed for active participation in group activities.

Enhancing the Role of Schools

6. Some members suggested that to encourage community participation in CDF projects, the role of schools should be enhanced. The target beneficiaries of CDF projects were already at schools and hence recruitment would not be a problem if the projects were “school-based”. Parents, alumni and university students could serve as mentors. A number of members supplemented that the resources and social network available at schools should be further made use of in operating CDF projects.

Other Comments

7. Members discussed what messages should be conveyed to the community with regard to the objectives and outcome of CDF projects. Some members commented that the community should be made aware of the merit of CDF in helping children from a disadvantaged background overcome inter-generational poverty, the role of mentors and the need for community support in assisting the younger generations.

Follow up Study

8. Some members commented that a follow-up study would be useful to track the personal development of children who had participated in CDF projects.

9. Members concurred that a further meeting should be held in the next month or so to discuss possible enhancement measures for the subsequent batches of CDF projects.

Item (2): Progress Report on CDF Projects

10. Members were briefed of the latest progress of the three batches of CDF projects.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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