

For Discussion
on 12 February 2007

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Family Education Initiatives**

Purpose

This paper reports to Members the Government's initiatives to strengthen and extend family education.

Ongoing Initiatives

2. Family harmony is the foundation of a harmonious society. Families in Hong Kong have in recent years been challenged by demands arising from economic and social changes. Family education is becoming more important in reinforcing family harmony and solidarity at such times of change.

3. The Government attaches much importance to family education. At present, different Government bureaux and departments, together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector, provide a wide range of family education programmes through different channels. They are set out in the following paragraphs.

Social Welfare Department

4. Family life education programmes on parenting, marital relationship, interpersonal and family relationship, etc. are provided by the some 190 Integrated Family Service Centres and the Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres across the territory, as well as through the school social work services. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) also operates a Family Life Education Resource Centre, producing a wide variety of multi-media resource materials on loan to the Government departments, NGOs, religious organisations, social workers, teachers, clinical

psychologists, etc. that are involved in delivering family life education programmes.

Education and Manpower Bureau

5. At schools, family education is entrenched in both the primary and secondary school curricula, such as through “General Studies” at the primary level; the key learning areas on “Personal, Social and Humanities Education”, “Science Education” and “Technology Education” at the secondary level; and the key learning areas on “Chinese Language Education” and “English Language Education” at both the primary and secondary levels. Important family values and attitudes, such as filial piety and mutual respect, etc., are incorporated into these curricula alongside with moral and civic education. Schools may also organize activities that support students in handling family issues. Schools are also vehicles for parent education, and the federations of parent-teacher associations and parent-teacher associations have been supporting the schools in this regard.

Home Affairs Bureau

6. Under the regular “Community Participation Scheme” (CPS), the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) sponsor various civic education projects organized by NGOs at district level involving parents’ groups. Other relevant publicity and promotional programmes that target, amongst others, families include the production of interactive drama, family-based publications and educational materials. CPCE also collaborates with the Government departments in organizing territory-wide parent-child activities to promote family education and positive values among youths.

Department of Health

7. To support parents in developing parenting knowledge and know-how, there is a wide range of parenting education programmes in the health, education and social service sectors. For example, in the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs), a parenting programme is designed for all expectant parents and parents of children aged 0 to 5. With anticipatory guidance on parenting issues appropriate to the ages of their children, parents

are equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote all aspects of their children's health and development. Further, the Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P), an intensive parenting programme, is available to support parents of children with early signs of behavioural problems or those who have encountered difficulties with parenting.

Other Territory-wide Initiatives

8. From time to time, territory-wide publicity campaigns are also launched to address specific social concerns and to promote family values. For example, SWD has embarked on the Publicity Campaign on Strengthening Families and Combating Violence since 2002 to formulate and implement publicity programmes on specific themes and issues, including domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, suicide and sexual abuse. Though the focus is on prevention of domestic violence, relevant themes on family education such as caring for children, respect the elders, etc. are also advocated during the process.

Activities of NGOs and the Third Sector

9. Government-funded programmes only constitute part of the overall efforts in promoting family education in Hong Kong. Many other organizations, notably the Government advisory committees, religious bodies and NGOs, also organize on their own initiative educational activities to enhance family life and strengthen family ties.

10. Among them, for instance, the Women's Commission has taken nurturing and caring families with emphasis on quality parenting as one of its work objectives and key tasks in the past two years. The Commission has conducted a study on the core life values for parenting education to be instilled in the younger generation. It is now collaborating with the Kwun Tong District Council to conduct a pilot project to promote quality parenting education. The Elderly Commission has also taken continuous effort in promoting active aging and intergenerational harmony.

11. Recently, a territory-wide publicity drive on family values (entitled "Hong Kong Harmonious Family Drive") has been launched under the umbrella of the Hong Kong Federation of Women. HAB, the Health

Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB), CPCE and other Government departments and community organizations are supporting organizations.

12. In addition, there are various community initiatives and media programmes promoting and disseminating good parenting practices. They also use family as a theme for business promotion and programme productions. These multifarious activities play a very important part in articulating, vocalizing and orchestrating the community's concern for the family.

New Initiatives

13. In his 2005 Policy Address, the Chief Executive (CE) pledged to allocate new resources to strengthen and extend family education to promote the values, ethics and individual responsibility needed for family harmony through various channels such as media publicity and district activities. The CE also undertook in the 2006 Policy Address to continue to devote resources to promote family education.

Family at Heart Campaign

14. To take the initiative forward, HWFB set up an Interdepartmental Task Force on Family Education ("the TF") in 2006, comprising representatives from the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), Commission on Poverty (CoP), HAB, SWD, Department of Health (DH), Home Affairs Department (HAD), Information Services Department (ISD) and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), to map out a comprehensive strategy on family education for 2006/07. The TF has formulated a publicity plan entitled the "Family at Heart Campaign"¹ ("the Campaign"). Different bureaux and departments have made use of the additional resources to organize a range of publicity and community involvement initiatives to promote family values and family harmony under the Campaign in 2006/07. The Campaign comprises the following major components.

¹ The name of the "Family at Heart Campaign" bears the meaning that "we (the family members) are a family at heart despite ups and downs".

Announcement in the Public Interest

15. To kick start the campaign, HWFB launched a series of four Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs) on television and radio since May 2006 to promote the family values of “modelling”, “harmony”, “love and care” and “commitment”. Apart from reminding the community on the importance of family values, the APIs aim to stimulate public reflection on how they may live up to those values in their daily lives.

16. Moreover, the four themes on family values have been embedded in some of the other Campaign initiatives, such as television programmes and district activities. An advertising campaign was also launched from November 2006 to January 2007 to reinforce the messages. We are preparing the second series of APIs and the advertising campaign to sustain the momentum.

Radio and Television Programmes

17. To promote family education to the general public, HWFB and RTHK have co-produced radio programmes, including radio one-minuters on the above four family values, and conveyed the message of family harmony in existing radio programmes. A drama series called “We are a Family” has been produced to demonstrate the multifaceted relationship issues in Hong Kong’s families and the underlying values. DH and RTHK also co-produced a documentary series on tips and skills of positive parenting. The two series of television programmes have been put on air from November 2006 to January 2007.

Community Involvement Activities

18. To promote public understanding of effective parenting practices, DH organized a roving exhibition on child development and parenting skills in 18 districts from July to October 2006. The Department also took that opportunity to promote its parenting support service to families with young children. The theme of family harmony (in the context of social harmony) was incorporated into over 80 activities under the Summer Youth Programme organized by HAD and the 18 District Offices in

2006, including parent-child activities, family camps, etc. By encouraging joint participation of parents and their younger generation, these activities seek to enhance mutual understanding and foster harmony within the family. To further engage the local community, more district events have been/will be organized from June 2006 to March 2007 to sustain the impact.

19. In collaboration with NGOs, the 12 District Social Welfare Offices across the territory have also organized, and are planning to launch over 90 district activities, including volunteer programmes, parent-child activities, seminars, family camps and mass activities, to promote family harmony throughout 2006/07.

Way Forward

20. Promoting family education is an integral part of the policy of the Government and relevant bureaux and departments will continue to promote family values and family education.

Advice Sought

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

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Education and Manpower Bureau
Home Affairs Bureau
Department of Health
Home Affairs Department
Social Welfare Department
February 2007