

LegCo Panel on Welfare Services

Development of arts with people with disabilities

Purpose

We briefed Members in February 2006 on the International Festival of Inclusive Arts (IFIA) co-organized by the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) and the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong (ADAHK). This paper reports to the Panel on the impact of IFIA, and sets out our direction and related initiatives on further developing arts with people with disabilities.

Background

2. Art opens doorways to barrier-free communication. Apart from enriching one's quality of life, art also provides a platform on which people with different physical and mental abilities can collaborate on equal grounds. Through participation in the arts, we can feel what other people feel, and can appreciate and care about each other. Art is therefore an ideal means, through which an inclusive culture can be nurtured, and in which every person can fully develop his/her talents in a spirit of cooperation and mutual encouragement.

3. Over the years, considerable efforts have been made by the Government and non-government organisations, with the support of charity funds, corporations and community organisations in developing arts with people with disabilities.

4. We have introduced different art forms and media through a wide range of training courses, workshops and activities to people with disabilities. In parallel, we nurture trainers to create an amplifying impact. Open performance opportunities are also provided to showcase the artistic talents of people with disabilities, to enhance their confidence and stage experience and to motivate them to strike for excellence. Efforts have also been made to facilitate people with disabilities who have demonstrated promising artistic talents to further develop and realize their potentials. The fruits borne through all these efforts are witnessed

at IFIA.

International Festival of Inclusive Arts

5. Co-organized by HWFB and the ADAHK, the IFIA aims to promote a harmonious and inclusive society through arts. To achieve this aim, IFIA adopts a cross-sector collaboration approach. In addition to HWFB and ADAHK, IFIA has gained the full support of the 18 District Councils, with sponsorship from and participation of various charitable organizations, business corporations and enterprises, non-governmental organizations, voluntary groups, art groups and tertiary institutions.

6. The Festival will feature a series of inclusive arts programmes and activities from 2 to 10 December 2006 at various venues throughout the territory. These programmes include: a mass drumming performance across the Victoria Harbour to kick off the Festival, five performing arts events showcasing artistic talents of local and overseas artists with and without disabilities, three inclusive arts exhibitions, a symposium, three multi-media workshops and an extensive outdoor carnival that entertains all.

7. To mobilize support and sponsorship from the community, corporations and other sectors to create synergy, we have visited the 18 District Councils, met with business corporations and organizations and liaised with media partners to appeal directly to them on the importance of inclusiveness. In the course of planning for the event, we have shared with our collaborators our deepened understanding of inclusiveness and this has helped pave the way for further cooperation. We are pleased to note that some corporations and community organisations have taken the initiative to organize inclusive arts programmes to synchronise with IFIA programmes.

8. IFIA features cooperation between artists with and without disabilities. Apart from showcasing local talents, IFIA also brings to Hong Kong eye-opening performances and artworks by overseas artists with disabilities. The exchange of experiences among local and overseas artists with different abilities and challenges not only brings about inspirations for each other, but also establishes long-term relationship between local and overseas artists with disabilities.

9. The most significant of all, IFIA reaches out to the general public, not only impressing them with the good work of people with

disabilities, but also drawing the attention and participation of the community at large. We are pleased to report that:

- (a) over 11,000 citizens, with and without disabilities, have joined hands in breaking the Guinness Record through their participation in the mass drumming across the Harbour event;
- (b) overall, 40,000 citizens will have participated in the Festival in person, including thousands of school students, while tens of thousands more will conceive the message of IFIA through an extensive package of publicity activities of IFIA, i.e. television and radio programmes, APIs, media reports, video trailer, promotional booklets and posters;
- (c) 23 corporations and professional bodies, 19 non-government and community organizations, and 5 tertiary education institutions, not to mention the 18 District Councils, have made substantial contributions to the Festival through sponsorship and actual involvement; and
- (d) more than 20 arts groups and 350 artists with or without disabilities from local and overseas countries are taking part in the stage performances and exhibitions of IFIA.

10. Through their spectacular performances and their excellent artworks, IFIA will enable the general public to appreciate the abilities and talents of people with disabilities.

Other On-going initiatives

11. We have since 2004 been implementing a five-year pilot scheme – Jockey Club Arts for the Disabled Scheme (JCADS). The JCADS was initiated by the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC), with the sponsorship of HK\$27.71 million by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The objective of the JCADS is to promote the development of people with disabilities in the arts and cultural fields.

12. The programme includes training courses, workshops and activities on visual and performing arts, school-based arts project, open performance opportunities and train-the-trainer programmes. All

programmes as well as required training materials and musical instruments, except the train-the-trainers workshops, are provided to participants free of charge. It is estimated that around 40, 000 people with different disabilities and their trainers will benefit from the scheme.

13. In parallel, we promote inclusive culture and arts with people with disabilities through our on-going public education efforts. An annual funding of over HK\$2 million under the RAC Sub-Committee on Public Education has been supporting and encouraging community organizations to pursue projects in this regard.

Future development

14. We will continue to take a two-prong approach on the way forward. On the one hand, we will continue to enhance the support for promoting the appreciation and learning of arts among people with disabilities through our various on-going initiatives. On the other hand, we will ride on the momentum of the achievement of IFIA to sustain the inclusive experience and further promote a caring and harmonious society. To take this step forward, we will focus on –

- (a) providing more opportunities in the community for people with and without disabilities to share arts experiences and to deepen their understanding of inclusiveness;
- (b) strengthening the bonds among local and overseas artists with and without disabilities by means of collaboration on new projects, mentorship, experience sharing and training programmes; and
- (c) exploring new cooperation opportunities among different organisations/institutions of various sectors to create further synergy in promoting an inclusive culture.

15. In sum, we will continue to take a multi-sector collaboration approach, as adopted in IFIA, to further promote arts with people with disabilities both in breadth and in depth for enhancing a caring and inclusive society. The RAC Sub-committee on Arts and Culture will formulate concrete plans in this regard, after assessing the impact of IFIA in further detail.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note the future development of arts with people with disabilities.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
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