

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Progress Report on the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

Purpose

We last briefed Members on the implementation of the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (PFD) at the Panel meeting on 11 December 2006 (vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 554/06-07(03)) upon the completion of the first two rounds of applications. This paper updates Members on the progress of the PFD, in particular the position on the Third and Fourth Rounds of application and the outcome of an evaluative study conducted recently.

Background

2. The \$200 million PFD was launched in March 2005 following the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (Paper No. FCR (2004-05)34) in December 2004. It aims to promote tripartite partnership of the Government, business sector and welfare non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in working for the benefit of the disadvantaged groups. Under the PFD, the Government provides matching grants to donations in cash or in kind made by business organisations to support NGOs in implementing social welfare initiatives.

Updated Progress

Overview

3. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) invited applications for the Third Round from July 2006 to July 2007. To encourage applications, SWD introduced such facilitating measures as raising the maximum amount of the grant for each project from \$500,000 to \$1 million and allowing each NGO to submit up to three applications. A total of 54 projects were approved for 41 NGOs which had secured contributions from 108 business partners. About \$16 million was granted in total. The amount of grants

for each project ranged from about \$40,000 to \$900,000, and the projects lasted from three months to three years.

4. The Fourth Round of applications was launched in January 2008 and will remain open until 30 June 2008. Further facilitating measures, including raising the maximum amount of the PFD grant for each project from \$1 million to \$2 million and allowing each NGO to submit a maximum of 10 applications, were introduced for the Fourth Round. These measures aim to provide NGOs with greater incentive to secure larger sponsorships so that more disadvantaged people can benefit. NGOs can also implement more projects to cater for different users.

5. Since the launch of the PFD in 2005 and up to 30 May 2008, the Advisory Committee of the PFD has approved a total of 110 projects for 69 NGOs, involving grants of over \$34 million. These projects attracted over 210 business partners, benefiting about 410 000 disadvantaged persons.

Analysis of the Approved Projects

6. Assisting disadvantaged persons from a wide variety of background is a major objective of the PFD projects. Beneficiaries of the approved projects include victims of domestic violence, ex-offenders and their families, children and elders in residential care, new arrivals with little vocational skills or social support, youth delinquents, drug abusers, poor elders living alone, unemployed and low-skilled youths, people with disabilities, families in poverty and pregnant teenagers, etc.

7. We also encourage the business partners to play an active role in the projects. Apart from giving donations in cash or in kind, most business partners have their staff at different levels taking part as volunteers in the projects. Some of them are closely involved in the planning and implementation of the projects, paying regular visits to the deprived families and serving as mentors for needy children or instructors for training programmes on job skills.

8. The facilitating measures introduced in the Third and Fourth Rounds have been effective in promoting the formation of new partnerships and the sustainability of previous ones. For instance, 15 NGOs from the first two rounds proposed new projects in the Third and Fourth Rounds by forming new partnerships or working out new initiatives with the old partners. Over 100 new business partners were linked to the Fund in the Third and Fourth Rounds. A summary of all the successful applications to date is at Annex.

Publicity

9. We attach great importance to publicising of the PFD, not only to encourage the submission of more worthy proposals which benefit the disadvantaged, but more importantly to promote tripartite partnership and its positive outcomes, for the benefit of welfare development in the long term. To this end, SWD has publicised the PFD through various channels such as posters, leaflets, booklets, newsletters, experience-sharing sessions with NGOs, business corporations and other interested parties, recognition forums, exhibitions, press briefings, visits and the SWD Homepage. Commencement of the Fourth Round of applications was announced during a project visit and was widely reported by the media. Members of the Advisory Committee of the PFD also participated in various publicity activities, while at the working level the PFD Secretariat promoted the Fund through presentations and sharing with district organizations, business chambers and NGOs in over 30 events, and arranged small NGOs to meet with business corporations which showed interest in their project proposals.

Evaluative Study in Promoting and Sustaining Partnership between NGOs and Business Corporations

10. To ensure that the Fund meets its objectives, the Secretariat of the PFD has been collecting feedback and assessing the projects through progress and evaluation reports submitted by the participating NGOs, site visits to the projects, and meetings with the project staff of the NGOs, business partners and service users.

11. SWD has also commissioned the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct an “Evaluative Study on Promoting and Sustaining Partnership between NGOs and Business Corporations”. The study was completed recently and its findings were presented to the Advisory Committee of the PFD at its meeting held in May 2008.

Objectives

12. Based on the review of 43 approved projects in the First and Second Rounds, the study aims at identifying (i) the critical success factors and hurdles for NGOs in forming and sustaining partnerships with business corporations; (ii) how far the approved projects have achieved the objectives of promoting social partnership formation and helping the disadvantaged;

and (iii) best practices of NGOs in forming sustainable partnerships.

Findings

13. The findings of the study are summarised as follows :

- (a) Most NGOs, business partners and service users were pleased with the outcomes of the projects. The NGOs had access to more financial resources, had a better understanding of the business sector and the opportunity to develop social capital. The business corporations were likewise pleased to be able to contribute to the development of social capital and have a better understanding of the needs of the disadvantaged groups. The service recipients were satisfied with the improvements to their quality of life and the enhancement of their employability / job skills. They felt empowered through serving as volunteers and could better integrate into the community.
- (b) The NGOs and business corporations responded positively to the possibility of continued collaboration after the completion of their projects. Strategic partnerships were formed in more than 60% of the 43 PFD projects under study, and staff at various levels from both NGOs and businesses have become more actively involved in the projects. These partnerships are more likely to sustain.
- (c) Some good practices which are conducive to forming and sustaining the partnerships were identified, as follows :
 - (i) NGOs and business corporations having similar missions in serving the community are more likely to become successful partners;
 - (ii) NGOs which change their mindset to accommodate the culture and working style of their business partners are more likely to form successful partnerships;
 - (iii) NGOs which clearly set out their project plans are more likely to gain the confidence and support of their business partners;
 - (iv) Projects are more likely to be successful if staff at various levels of the business partners are mobilised to take part in them;
 - (v) Effective communication and relationship building between NGOs and business partners would enhance mutual trust and respect;

- (vi) Other stakeholders would have greater confidence in the NGOs if they were able to demonstrate good financial management and accountability; and
- (vii) The projects would more likely be successful if the business partners take the initiative to plan and implement the projects.

Recommendations

14. The study made recommendations on how to facilitate the formation and maintenance of tripartite partnerships in helping the disadvantaged –

- (a) To facilitate the formation of partnerships, NGOs may adopt appropriate marketing and networking strategies and strengthen their relationships with business corporations. The business partners may also have a clear corporate policy to serve the disadvantaged and let NGOs know more about their vision in this regard. The Government can also assist the small NGOs in identifying suitable partners if necessary;
- (b) To create a win-win situation for the NGOs and their business partners, both parties should capitalise on their respective strengths in the promotion of corporate image. While the NGOs would have greater support from their business partners in terms of financial and manpower resources, the business corporations would also have a better understanding of the community and the needs of their customers. The Government should give recognition to the participating corporations and NGOs and encourage them to sustain their partnerships;
- (c) To sustain the partnership, the involvement of staff of NGOs and business partners at various levels should be encouraged. NGOs should pay more attention to the good practices as set out in paragraph 13(c) above. The Government can provide more training and sharing opportunities for them in this regard; and
- (d) To continuously engage their partners in helping the disadvantaged, NGOs may publicise their work and success stories, so that the business partners could be attracted to support their services after the completion of the PFD projects. The Government can encourage those NGOs with good performance to keep up the momentum.

Way Forward

15. We will continue to improve the operation of the PFD for the promotion of tripartite partnerships in serving the disadvantaged.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note the progress of the PFD.

Social Welfare Department
June 2008

The Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged Summary of Successful Application

	Round 1 (Mar 05 – May 05)	Round 2 (Oct 05 – Dec 05)	Round 3 (July 06 – July 07)	Round 4 ^{Note 1} (Jan 08 – June 08)	Total
Total No. of Approved Projects	29	14	54	13	110
Total No. of NGOs	29	14	41	7	91 ^{Note 2}
Total No. of New NGOs	29	14	26	0	69 ^{Note 3}
Total No. of NGOs re-applied with old or new partners for new projects	-	-	15	7	22 ^{Note 3}
Total No. of Business Partners	80	29	108	9	226 ^{Note 4}
Total No. of New Business Partners	80	29	93	9	211 ^{Note 5}
Total Amount of Grant Allocated	HK \$ 8.9M	HK\$ 4.5M	HK\$ 16M	HK\$ 4.7M	HK\$ 34.1M

Note 1 - The Fourth Round application is still in progress and opens till 30 June 2008

Note 2 - Some NGOs have made applications in more than 1 round and this is the cumulative figure

Note 3 - Out of 69 NGOs, 22 have secured PFD for 2 to 6 projects with different business partners

Note 4 - Some business partners have sponsored more than 1 round and this is the cumulative figure

Note 5 - 23 business partners sponsored more than 1 projects