

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF): Progress Report

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the progress made by the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) in promoting social capital in Hong Kong and outlines the Fund's strategies in furthering this objective as social needs change over time.

Progress update

2. The \$300 million CIIF was set up in 2002 as a seed fund to promote social capital development through encouraging mutual support in the neighbourhood, community participation and cross-sectoral partnerships.

3. We last briefed Members on the progress of the CIIF at the meeting on 10 December 2007 (*ref : LC Paper No. CB(2) 495/07-08(03)*). At that meeting, Members noted the good practice models developed, and the social benefits generated by various CIIF-funded projects. Members also encouraged the Administration to scale up the impact of social capital development through the CIIF and mainstream good practice models in relevant public services.

4. The CIIF first opened for applications in August 2002 and has since invited applications by two or three batches per year. As of March 2009, a total of fourteen batches of applications have been processed, achieving:

- (a) *a critical mass of projects* - with funding of nearly \$200 million allocated in support of 209 projects¹ spanning all 18 districts;
- (b) *broader project scopes and greater efforts in "bridging"* a wide range of participants – when fully implemented, the projects can support over 14 000 families, involving over 530 000 participants

¹ Funding for 92 projects has expired, and 117 projects are at different stages of implementation, including 20 in the latest batch of approved projects which are ready to commence in the next few months.

from different age groups, social strata and cultural/ethnic backgrounds in a variety of capacity building, networks and community building initiatives; and

- (c) *a culture of collaboration* – the CIIF emphasizes cross-sectoral collaboration. Over 4 700 partners, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), schools, businesses, professional groups, resident associations, hospitals, district councils and government departments, are jointly implementing CIIF-funded projects.

The ensuing paragraphs elaborate on some of these achievements with reference to specific initiatives.

Neighbourhood building in Tin Shui Wai (TSW)

5. Mindful of the special needs of families in TSW, the CIIF, together with the District Social Welfare Office concerned and various partners, encouraged the adoption of social capital strategies in strengthening the local mutual support networks. This became one of the themes of the 12th batch of applications. There are currently 20 CIIF-funded projects of various types in TSW, including those seeking to build mutual-help networks in the neighbourhood and extend home-school-community partnerships in the provision of after-school care. There are also mentoring programmes for young people and projects to help residents set up co-operatives or local service teams. They involve over 100 collaborators (including welfare NGOs, local schools, hospitals, women's groups and residents associations) and cover over 80% of all the public housing estates in the district. When fully implemented, these initiatives are expected to help over 500 people to build capacity and enhance skills to secure paid work and strengthen the community networks in support of some 5 000 families. Local stakeholders such as the District Council are very supportive.

Strategic partnership with the Labour Department (LD)

6. In August 2008, the CIIF Committee launched a joint initiative with LD, encouraging applicants for the CIIF to apply social capital strategies for the purpose of supporting the personal development of young people and enhancing their employability. This joint initiative, known as 新紮創奇「職」, was a key theme of the 14th batch of applications. Six new projects have been approved with funding of over \$6 million from the CIIF

and over \$3.7 million from LD. These projects also brought in new partnerships (including that between a business chamber and a labour union) and innovative developmental strategies, and helped pool existing resources to achieve a greater impact. They are expected to create about 650 internships, jobs or further study opportunities, benefiting more than 1 000 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The SC.Net

7. The SC.Net (SC being the acronym for social capital) was established on 28 November 2008 as a platform to accumulate and transfer knowledge on social capital development; consolidate local experiences in this regard and facilitate cross-sector collaboration. It consists of a pool of committed and visionary founding members and supporters, including CIIF Committee Members, project leaders, collaborators, academics and influencers. They are the CIIF's valuable asset in promoting social capital development in Hong Kong.

Flagship projects for wider implementation

8. In recent years, a number of successful project models / strategies have emerged. We see great potentials in these flagship projects and have been encouraging other project teams to adapt them for wider implementation across the territory. Examples include the "floor mentor" model (i.e. residents volunteering to reach out to neighbours and build a community network of mutual care and assistance) which was developed through a number of Caring Estate projects in the Southern District, and the "partnership" approach which helped to build social relationships and a sense of belonging for residents who moved from Wong Chuk Hang Estate and other districts to their new homes in Shek Pai Wan. These models have since been adapted for a number of community building and re-housing projects.

Relevance of social capital to changing times

9. The establishment of the CIIF was first announced in the 2001 Policy Address. Over the years, Hong Kong has undergone a number of significant social and economic challenges including the Asian Financial crisis, SARS, and the current financial tsunami. Such challenges put considerable stress on the social fabrics of our communities; but it is also during such times that the need for social capital development is most evident and relevant.

10. The uncertainties associated with the current economic situation are exerting pressure on Hong Kong people, affecting their career prospects and livelihood. The impact on non-engaged youth and the middle-class is strongly felt. The middle-class and/or professionals may not need financial or material assistance, but they will benefit from initiatives which can help restore their confidence and develop community networks that will support them in times of adversity. A few approved projects in the 14th batch, including the 凝聚社區新力量 in Southern District, 「愛家·有情」互聯網 in West Kowloon and 龍情有您 in and around the Homantin and Kowloon City areas, are timely responses to these needs.

11. We believe that in developing social capital, we can build resilient communities that are more able to face up to the current challenges and ready to seize the opportunities when the economy recovers. The CIIF Committee has therefore adopted “Power of resilience at times of adversity” as the theme of the 15th batch of applications, with a closing date of 31 May 2009. Prospective applicants are encouraged to form new partnerships and encourage positive values changes, enhance community engagement across social strata and build unique mutual help networks amongst families and communities most affected by the recent financial tsunami.

Furthering the CIIF’s objectives in social capital development

12. As mentioned above, the CIIF has achieved some initial success during its first seven years of operation. Nonetheless, there is still a lot of scope for further development to effect the necessary paradigm shifts, cultural changes and practice transformation. We remain fully committed to furthering the CIIF’s objectives.

13. To promote the benefits of social capital building and good practice models, we are organising the 6th CIIF Forum in November 2009. We shall also commission a second evaluation study to identify the critical success factors that are to guide the future development of social capital in Hong Kong.

Advice sought

14. Members are invited to note this progress report. We also welcome suggestions on how to further the objectives of the CIIF.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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