

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Language Fund –
Implementation of Initiatives**

Purpose

This paper reports on the implementation of initiatives funded by the Language Fund.

Background

2. The Language Fund was set up in 1994 with a view to enhancing the Chinese and English language proficiency of our population. In 2014, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the injection of \$5 billion into the Language Fund in the form of seed capital to provide a stable stream of funding to facilitate the longer term strategic planning and development of language education.

3. Established in 1996 to advise the Government on language education issues in general, the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) has, through the use of the Language Fund, complemented the efforts of the Government, other advisory bodies and stakeholders by implementing research and development projects on language learning and language education issues, enhancing professional development of Chinese Language and English Language teachers, providing school-based support on language education, and creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for our students as well as the community.

Progress Update

4. With a vision for further enhancing the Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language proficiency of our students and the workforce for better learning and better life, SCOLAR and its respective working groups have been planning and implementing various initiatives under the following six strategic areas –

- (a) facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings;
- (b) strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years;
- (c) enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers;
- (d) catering for learner diversity, including the needs of non-native Chinese speaking (NCS) students;
- (e) creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school setting through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular, the community; and
- (f) raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape.

5. A summary of the latest progress of the initiatives under the six strategic areas are appended in the ensuing paragraphs whilst further details are set out at the Enclosure.

- (a) ***Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings***

6. Since December 2015, over twenty bottom-up research and development projects on priority themes initiated by different scholars and researchers of local tertiary institutions and professional bodies have been launched to further facilitate effective language education policy

formulation and implementation. Upon the completion of the first batch of the projects in mid-2018, SCOLAR organised the Research and Development Project Dissemination Conference themed “Advancing Excellence in Language Education: From Research and Development to Innovation Practice” in mid-2019 to share the findings and deliverables of the bottom-up research and development projects with academics and researchers of tertiary institutions, professional organisations, as well as principals and teachers of local kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Invitation of proposals on a wider scope of priority themes for bottom-up research and development projects was conducted in March 2017. A total of seventeen bottom-up research and development projects have commenced, anticipated to be completed in 2020.

7. In 2012 and 2015, SCOLAR had respectively investigated through Thematic Household Survey the language use of the people of Hong Kong. To further track the changes of the language landscape of Hong Kong, SCOLAR has commissioned the Census and Statistic Department to investigate the language use of the people of Hong Kong again in the Thematic Household Survey 2018. The survey was completed and the findings were published in June this year. Meanwhile, taking into account the continuing importance of English in the workplace of Hong Kong, SCOLAR completed a study focusing on examining the English language competency of employees. In the coming years, in view of the changing social, demographic and education contexts, research studies on areas such as (i) early language and literacy development in Chinese and English language; (ii) study of Chinese language learning of NCS students; and (iii) further studies on language proficiency of working adults will be conducted.

(b) Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years

(c) Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers

8. Since the commencement of the 2015/16 school year, SCOLAR has implemented the “Scheme on Early Language and Literacy Development in Chinese and English Language of Young Children” to strengthen the support to young children on Chinese and English

language learning. The Scheme will be continued till the 2021/22 school year to serve more kindergartens and teachers. Moreover, SCOLAR launched the “Chinese and English Language Enhancement Programme for Kindergarten Teachers” in the 2017/18 school year aiming at enhancing kindergarten teachers’ competence in language and teaching of specific subjects, with a view to implementing the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017) smoothly. Post-secondary and/or tertiary institutions offering pre-/in-service early childhood education (teacher training) programmes have been invited to organise short courses for kindergarten teachers.

9. SCOLAR will continue to engage the Language Learning Support Section to provide customised on-site or networked professional support services meeting the needs of individual schools to enhance effective Chinese and English Language learning and teaching, as well as whole-school language curriculum planning. Such support for schools will be continued in the coming two school years.

10. SCOLAR has put in place the “Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools” since the 2017/18 school year, with a view to further promoting effective English language learning and teaching in primary schools. SCOLAR will also continue to encourage eligible Chinese Language and English Language teachers to participate in the “Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” by subsidising them to pursue recognised study programmes, with a view to enhancing their subject knowledge and teaching capabilities.

(d) Catering for learner diversity, including the needs of non-native Chinese speaking (NCS) students

11. SCOLAR has been collaborating with non-government organisations (NGOs) in organising district-based programmes for NCS children (aged 3 to 9) to motivate them to learn Chinese language through fun activities. Hands-on and quality Chinese language learning and teaching resources, such as mobile applications and corpora, have been developed for non-Chinese speakers since the first half of 2017. Efforts will continue to be made, through partnership with NGOs and other

stakeholders, to encourage, motivate and support NCS students to learn Chinese language especially during their pre-primary and early schooling period. Through the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Language Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)”, we will continue to encourage Chinese Language teachers to pursue structured part-time programmes to enhance their pedagogical knowledge and skills in teaching Chinese Language to NCS students.

(e) Creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school settings through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular, the community

12. SCOLAR has organised various creative and interesting Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language activities and programmes in schools/communities throughout the year and will continue to do so in the coming year. The annual territory-wide World Book Day Fest, co-organised by SCOLAR and the Education Bureau, was held in April this year. Themed on “Towards a Reading City: Folktaleoscope”, the Fest engaged more than 2 500 students, teachers, principals and members of the public in a series of activities to share the joy of reading.

(f) Raising language proficiency of Hong Kong’s workforce in response to the changing language landscape.

13. Vocational Chinese language courses recognised under the Qualifications Framework for NCS school leavers have been launched by SCOLAR since 2016 through tertiary institutions. More courses sponsored by SCOLAR will continue to be developed by tertiary institutions/training centres in the coming school years to meet the needs of NCS school leavers. Furthermore, under the Workplace English Campaign launched by SCOLAR, publicity and public education programmes will be planned to raise public awareness of the importance of English in the workplace.

14. Members of SCOLAR, comprising renowned language/language education academics, experienced principals and teachers, private sector personalities and parents, will from time to time look into the changing

needs of our students and the workforce, closely monitor the implementation of various initiatives to provide constructive feedback, review the impacts of the initiatives and plan and implement new initiatives to meet the current needs of the society at timely manner. SCOLAR will also regularly review new circumstances and findings that warrant further consideration of strategic directions.

15. As at end June 2019, the available balance of the Language Fund (excluding the \$5 billion seed capital) was around \$0.833 billion.

Advice Sought

16. Members are invited to note the progress of the initiatives funded by the Language Fund.

Education Bureau
September 2019

Enclosure

Strategic Area (a): Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Bottom-up research and development projects	To encourage and fund more research and development projects, including literature review and comparative studies, from tertiary institutions and professional bodies on Chinese and English language learning/development, diversified pedagogy and assessment that cater for learner diversity of achieving particular language goals	Students and adults	The first round of 23 projects on three priority themes were completed in late 2018. A conference on dissemination of findings and deliverables of the projects was organised in May 2019. The second round of 17 projects are expected to be completed in 2020.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40 bottom-up research and development projects have been carried out since December 2015 - To generate new knowledge or fill the gaps of pedagogical applications in local context to support the implementation of various initiatives on language education - Research and Development Project Dissemination Conference was held in May 2019 to disseminate the findings and deliverables of the projects to academics and researchers of tertiary institutions, professional organisations, and principals and teachers of local kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. Possible

Strategic Area (a): Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
				ways of enhancing language education were also explored
(2) Language Landscape Studies – Thematic Household Survey 2018	To continue to study the use of Chinese language (including Putonghua) and English language, and the needs and practice of bilingualism of people of Hong Kong in different contexts	General public, especially students and adults	Findings of the Study conducted by the Census & Statistics Department were published in mid-2019. SCOLAR will study the findings in detail.	To track changes of the language landscape of Hong Kong and identify the trends, patterns or gaps in language competencies of different age groups to better inform SCOLAR in formulating measures for enhancing the Chinese and English language proficiency of people of Hong Kong

Strategic Area (a): Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(3) Studies on early language and literacy development in Chinese and English language	Through longitudinal studies, to track the Chinese and English language and literacy development of young children at different stages	Pre-primary to junior primary students (aged 3 – 9)	Three bottom-up research and development projects under the priority theme of “Chinese language learning or English language exposure of learners in early years” were approved in 2018. Further study/studies will be explored.	Ongoing
(4) Study of Chinese language learning of NCS students	To continue to research on how NCS students learn Chinese language in the classrooms and what they learn	Pre-primary to junior primary students (aged 3 – 9)	Five bottom-up research and development projects under the priority theme of “Learning of Chinese language of non-Chinese speaking learners” were approved in 2018. Further study/studies will be explored.	Ongoing

Strategic Area (a): Facilitating effective language education policy formulation and implementation through initiating research studies, including longitudinal research and comparative studies in local and international settings

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(5) Studies on language proficiency of working adults	To examine the language proficiency (including spoken and written Chinese and English language) of the workforce of Hong Kong	Working adults of different age and profession	A study on English language competency of employees aged 20-29 was completed in 2018. Findings revealed that employers of the five targeted industry sectors were generally satisfied with the English competency of employees, whilst different training needs of employees were identified with different industry sectors. SCOLAR will explore measures and initiatives to meet the language needs of employees.	To identify the gaps between self-perceived English language competency of employees aged 20-29 and the actual workplace requirements, as well as the related language training needs

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and
(c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Support scheme on early language and literacy development in Chinese and English language of young children	To provide professional support services to kindergartens and focused training and tailor-made learning/teaching resources (e.g. storybooks) to kindergarten teachers on Chinese and English language education in early years	Pre-primary students (aged 3–6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launched since 2015/16 school year - To be continued till 2021/22 school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To build a professional teaching force and knowledge community in the Kindergarten sector for smooth implementation of the Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide 2017 - To develop more effective language learning/teaching strategies to meet children’s diverse needs, abilities and interest - To develop quality resources on Chinese/English language learning/teaching

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and
(c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(2) Task Force on school-based language support service	To continue to provide kindergartens, primary and secondary schools with on-site or networked professional support services customised to meet the needs of individual schools to enhance effective Chinese and English language learning and teaching, whole-school language curriculum planning, smooth interface between different stages of schooling (especially Kindergarten/Primary One) as well as learning of Chinese for NCS students	Kindergartens, primary and secondary schools	Provided throughout the years	In 2018/19, 284 schools benefitted from intensive on-site support, and another 84 received networked/consultancy services. Evaluation results consistently affirm that the participating schools were satisfied with the support services and considered them effective in enhancing holistic curriculum planning, learning and teaching effectiveness and assessment literacy.

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and
(c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(3) Tailor-made training for Chinese and English Language teachers	To offer quality professional development programme(s) for Chinese and English Language teachers in primary and secondary schools	Primary and secondary school teachers	“Professional Development Incentive Grant Scheme for Language Teachers” is open for application by eligible teachers (subsidy revised upward to a maximum of \$62,500 from September 2017) to pursue recognised programmes.	To continue to encourage eligible teachers to pursue programmes to enhance their subject knowledge and pedagogy
(4) Enhancing the teaching of Chinese Language Subject	To continue to consolidate experience, disseminate good practices and formulate initiatives conducive to the teaching of Chinese (including Putonghua)	Primary and secondary students	Ongoing	To further enhance the Chinese (including Putonghua) language proficiency of students

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and
(c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(5) Chinese and English Language Enhancement Programme for Kindergarten Teachers	To enhance kindergarten teachers' language competencies and subject/pedagogical knowledge and skills for implementing the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide 2017	Kindergarten teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post-secondary or tertiary institutions which currently offer early childhood education programmes have organised short courses for kindergarten teachers and principals. - In the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years, 40 short courses were organised for about 870 kindergarten teachers and principals. Short courses will be offered to kindergarten 	To strengthen kindergarten teachers' language proficiency and to enhance their pedagogical effectiveness

Strategic Area (b): Strengthening support of language learning in Chinese and English language in very early years; and
(c): Enhancing professional preparation and continuing development of language teachers

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
			teachers and principals in the 2019/20 school year.	
(6) Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools	Providing a grant for primary schools to develop their school-based curriculum initiatives to further strengthen the learning and teaching of English Language and to achieve sustainable effects after completion of the Scheme	Primary schools	The first and second round of approved schools have commenced their school-based curriculum initiatives in the 2017/18 (second term) and 2018/19 school years respectively. The third round of approved schools will take forward their plans from the 2019/20 school year.	Some 500 primary schools are expected to enhance the effectiveness of English language learning and teaching, with sustainable effects.

Strategic Area (d): Catering for learner diversity, including the needs of NCS students				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Development of supporting learning and teaching materials for NCS students learning Chinese	To develop tailor-made learning aids (e.g. multi-media/web-based materials, e-packages) and Chinese readers	Students	Three projects were completed.	Learning and teaching materials developed in the three completed projects were disseminated.
(2) Development of community projects for NCS children in early years	To continue to organise fun and educational programmes in the community to motivate and support NCS children to learn Chinese language in their early years	Pre-primary students (aged 3–9)	Projects have been launched since August 2017.	In the 2018/19 school year, two district-based programmes were organised for about 400 NCS children to provide the children with more exposure to Chinese language.

Strategic Area (e): Creating and nurturing a facilitating language learning environment for students in and beyond school settings through partnership with relevant stakeholders, in particular, the community

Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
Promotion of Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To continue to implement Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language school-based or community projects/programmes - To encourage/sponsor bottom-up initiatives promoting the importance of reading, language learning and language use in Chinese and English language, with a view to fostering an environment conducive to language learning 	Students and general public	Activities/ programmes have been organised in schools/communities throughout the year.	In the 2018/19 school year, 26 Chinese (including Putonghua) and English language projects/programmes were organised.

Strategic Area (f): Raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(1) Development of vocational Chinese language programmes for NCS school leavers	To provide vocational Chinese language courses (pegged to Qualification Framework Level 1 or 2) to NCS school leavers to enhance their Chinese language proficiency and employability	NCS school leavers	Programmes of Qualifications Framework (QF) Level 1/2 were launched in September 2017.	In the 2017/18 and 2018/19 school years, over some 300 NCS school leavers have enrolled in the programmes.
(2) Workplace Language Campaign: Workplace English Campaign	To continue to promote vocational English to the workforce to raise their awareness on the importance of English language at workplace	Working adults	Publicity and public education programmes, including the development and launching of an enhanced/ upgraded version of an existing mobile application on workplace English, have been organised.	Over 24 300 downloads of a mobile application on workplace English on Android and iOS platforms were recorded in the last two years.

Strategic Area (f): Raising language proficiency of Hong Kong's workforce in response to the changing language landscape				
Initiatives	Objective(s)	Target Group(s)	Progress	Impact
(3) Customised support to schools for effective language learning and teaching	To provide funding for schools to enrol students on a locally accredited vocational English course to develop their English proficiency, enhance their confidence and interest in learning English and prepare them for vocational education and work	Secondary schools	36 schools have been provided with funding of \$200,000 for students pursuing vocational English courses offered by three post-secondary institutions and recognised under the Qualifications Framework.	About 720 students who are prepared to pursue vocational and professional education and training or to work right after leaving secondary school will benefit from the programme.