

**For discussion on
28 May 2024**

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports

**Promotion of Pro-family Culture and
Empowerment of Women in Hong Kong**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the work of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) in promoting a pro-family culture and the empowerment of women in Hong Kong.

Background

2. Caring and harmonious families are the cornerstones of social harmony. The current-term Government is committed to promoting a pro-family culture and enhancing family harmony for building a harmonious society. To this end, the HYAB has been supporting the work of the Family Council on promoting a culture of loving families in the community through organising various programmes and collaborating with different stakeholders.

3. Meanwhile, women account for 54% of the total population in Hong Kong and play a vital role in advancing social and economic development and nurturing the future generation. The Government proactively enhances the empowerment of women by taking forward an array of projects and measures, as well as working in synergy with the Women's Commission (WoC) and other sectors in the society.

4. To further boost the healthy development of families in Hong Kong and foster women's development, the Chief Executive has put forward a number of initiatives related to family and women's development in his 2023 Policy Address. The HYAB is pressing ahead with these initiatives.

Promotion of Pro-family Culture

5. Established in 2007, the Family Council has been serving as a cross-sector and cross-bureau platform for advising the Government on family-related policies and promoting a culture of loving families in the community. The Family Council identified three sets of family core values known as “Love and Care”, “Respect and Responsibility” and “Communication and Harmony” as the fundamental elements for healthy and happy family life. Based on the aforesaid core values, a variety of programmes and activities have been organised.

Publicity Campaign

6. To promote a culture of loving families and family education in the community in a more focused manner, each year the Family Council will set different themes for the publicity campaign. The themes adopted in the last three years (from 2021-22 to 2023-24) were “Family: A Hub to Cheer You Up”¹, “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity”² and “Marital Happiness and Harmony”³. The Family Council conveyed relevant messages to the general public through different forms of programmes and activities, including producing family education videos, organising story creation-cum-story telling competition, publishing storybooks, launching roving interactive drama series in secondary schools, etc. based on the annual themes adopted. A list of major programmes and activities organised and co-organised by the Family Council in the past few years is at **Annex**.

7. Our country places emphasis on family building. This year, the HYAB also has its efforts focused on the theme “Family Harmony Brings Prosperity for All”, and strives to enhance work in relation to family building, family education and family values. To tie in with such efforts, the Family Council adopted “Family Values: Our Cherished Legacy” as the theme of its 2024-25 publicity campaign with the aim of promoting traditional family values and virtues among families (including those of younger generations). The relevant promotional programmes and activities include a short video competition targeting at secondary and primary school students, incorporating promotional messages into a TV programme, launching a children’s radio drama, radio programmes,

¹ The publicity campaign “Family: A Hub to Cheer You Up” promotes the importance of strong family bonding in building family resilience to face the challenges of life and coping with adversity positively.

² The publicity campaign “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity” illustrates how a loving and supportive family can help individuals overcome difficulties, thereby reinforcing the message of a loving culture in the community begins at home.

³ The publicity campaign “Marital Happiness and Harmony” promotes the importance of sustaining a healthy marriage and building a harmonious family.

promotional trailers / radio segments, a brand new family education video, etc.

Sponsorship for Other Stakeholders to Organise Activities

8. The Family Council launched a “Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives” in 2016 to provide one-off sponsorship to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to implement projects on designated themes. Having regard to the positive feedback of the pilot scheme, two rounds of “Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives” (Sponsorship Scheme) were launched in June 2020 and October 2022 respectively. The themes for the Sponsorship Scheme launched in October 2022 are “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity”, “Preventing and Resolving Family Conflicts / Disputes”, “Divorce Education” and “Step and Split Families”. The implementation period for the four approved projects in such round of Sponsorship Scheme is between April 2023 and June 2024, covering counselling services, support hotlines, parents mutual support groups, workshops and online resource platforms, etc. The total amount of funding support involved is about \$3.5 million with an estimated number of attendance of 117 000.

9. In addition, the Family Council’s annual “Happy Family Campaign” funding scheme provides funding support to youth uniformed groups for organising family-related activities such as carnivals, parent-child sports day, adventure training camps and handicrafts classes, etc.. The funding scheme aims to promote family core values among group members and their family members, and to strengthen their family relationships through participation in the activities. In 2024-25, a total of nine uniformed groups have received funding support for organising 84 activities, with an estimated number of attendance exceeding 36 800.

Family-friendly Employment Practices (FFEPs)

10. The Family Council has been committed to promoting and encouraging employers to adopt more diversified and flexible FFEPs. In this connection, the Family Council rolled out a new publicity campaign in 2023-24. This included launching a series of promotional videos with four episodes entitled “Family-friendly Workplace” featuring the various FFEPs adopted by local companies / organisations with sharings by employers and employees. As for radio programmes, the Family Council released a new series of ten short radio dramas entitled “Family-friendly Workplace” to introduce various types of FFEPs for broadcast in Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). The short dramas have also been uploaded onto the website jointly launched by the Family Council and RTHK for free replay. The Family Council will continue producing relevant promotional videos and launch radio interviews with employers implementing

various FFEPs for broadcast in RTHK in 2024-25.

11. In addition, the “Family-Friendly Employment Practices” webpage was set up on the Family Council’s website “Happy Family Info Hub”. The webpage contains relevant promotional videos produced by the Family Council and resources on the promotion of FFEPs from other government departments / advisory bodies for public access.

Utilisation of Various Publicity Platforms

12. To maximise the publicity impact and the reach to the public, the Family Council has been using various channels to promote the culture of loving families. This includes advocating family core values in the community and promoting the International Day of Families through radio broadcast and advertisements (including advertising in children programme blocks, on public transport and on outdoor billboards), etc. As regards the online platforms, the Family Council regularly updates its “Happy Family Info Hub” website with family-related information for the public, such as highlighted family activities, resources relating to family education and support from government departments / organisations.

Family Perspectives in Policy Formulation

13. With effect from 1 April 2013, a mandatory assessment of family implications has been applied to all government policies. Government bureaux / departments are required to take the three sets of family core values identified by the Family Council and the impacts on family structure and functions as basis when assessing the impacts on families arising from relevant policies. Since then, the family impact assessment (FIA) has become an integral part of the policy-making process within the Government. FIA has been conducted for over 1 090 policy initiatives and programmes so far.

Promoting Women’s Development

14. The current-term Government attaches great importance to women’s contribution to the society and the work of supporting women. Since the extension of the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to Hong Kong in 1996, Hong Kong has always abided by the convention. Through the provisions of Basic Law and local laws, complemented and supplemented by administrative measures, we have fully protected the rights of Hong Kong’s women in multiple aspects such as education, politics, employment and labour, etc. Following the re-organisation of the Government Secretariat in July 2022, the HYAB has taken up the work of

promoting women’s development. In particular, the HYAB collaborates with the Women’s Commission (WoC) and other sectors in the community to actively facilitate the realisation of women’s due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life through a three-pronged strategy, namely the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women and public education, as well as by implementing various measures.

Creating an Enabling Environment

15. The HYAB and the WoC are also committed to promoting “Gender Mainstreaming”⁴, with a view to creating an enabling environment to promote women’s interests and gender equality. Since 2015, all bureaux and departments have been required to conduct a “Gender Implications Assessment” when formulating major Government policies and initiatives. As of now, the Government has assessed around 1 600 major policy papers.

16. To promote women’s development and provide a platform which is conducive for women in Hong Kong to unleash their potential, the Chief Executive announced in his 2022 Policy Address to set up a Women Empowerment Fund (WEF). Subsequently, the Financial Secretary announced in the 2023-24 Budget to set aside \$100 million to strengthen support for women’s development. Starting from 2023-24, the Government has used this additional provision to increase the annual funding for the WEF from \$10 million to \$20 million to subsidise women’s groups and related NGOs for launching appropriate projects to support women’s development.

17. Established in June 2023, the WEF aims to empower women, regardless of their age, occupation, background, etc., to realise their full potential in their respective arenas, ultimately achieving the goal of promoting women’s development in Hong Kong. Projects under the WEF are categorised into general projects and thematic projects. The themes of general projects include: (i) assisting women in accomplishing transformations in the job market; (ii) enhancing women’s physical and mental health; (iii) helping women to cope with different roles in family and society; (iv) motivating women to enhance their personal attributes, achieve full potential and reach out to help others in society; and (v) facilitating the use of new information and communication technology. In 2023-24, the thematic projects under WEF referred to the “Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Exchange Programmes” (Exchange Programmes), which aimed to promote women’s development by broadening their horizons, deepening their understanding of our country’s development, and

⁴ Gender Mainstreaming refers to the integration of gender perspectives in the design of all legislation, policies and programmes, so as to ensure that both genders have equitable access to society’s resources and opportunities.

enabling them to have exchanges with local people.

18. The WEF has launched two rounds of applications since its establishment and a total of 145 projects were approved. The funded projects are being rolled out gradually. In view of the positive feedback in the first two rounds of applications, we will regularise the Exchange Programmes this year. We will also introduce a new dedicated scheme to encourage women to participate in community services.

Women's Empowerment

19. The Government accepted the recommendation of the WoC in 2004 and has since implemented the "Capacity Building Mileage Programme" (CBMP). The CBMP aims to encourage women of different backgrounds and educational levels to pursue lifelong learning, thereby building their capacity. Since the launch of the CBMP, the accumulated number of enrolment has exceeded 130 000.

20. Run by the Hong Kong Metropolitan University, the CBMP has five learning domains, namely "Personal Development Skills", "Arts and Culture", "Wisdom of Life", "Applied Science and Technology" and "Health and Care". Under these five domains, the CBMP courses are taught through face-to-face instruction, e-Learning and radio broadcasts. These courses cover various areas such as Chinese medicine, personal brand building on social media platforms, household repairs and parent education etc., which cater for the needs of women from different backgrounds.

Public Education and Promotion

21. The HYAB and the WoC continue to enhance, through public education, the awareness and interest of all sectors of our society on gender-related issues. For instance, the HYAB and the WoC collaborated with the Family Council in July 2022 to produce a video featuring working mothers on the difficulties they face and ways to strike work-family balance, thereby raising public awareness on women's affairs. Besides, we actively promote gender awareness in schools. The WoC regularly organises school talks on the CEDAW for kindergarten and primary school students, as well as distributes pamphlets and activity books on the CEDAW to students to enhance their understanding of gender-related issues and reduce gender stereotype at a young age. Since September 2022, the WoC has organised a total of 49 school talks on the CEDAW.

22. In addition, we attend various women-related international conferences on a regular basis. The Government, as part of the Chinese delegation, has been

attending meetings of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women since 2004⁵. In May 2023, our delegation also went to Geneva, Switzerland as part of the Chinese delegation for a meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the Committee). At the meeting, we reported to the Committee the implementation of the CEDAW in Hong Kong, and shared with the world the good stories of women Hong Kong.

New Measures under the 2023 Policy Address

23. To further support family and women's development in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive announced several relevant measures in his 2023 Policy Address. Content of the relevant measures and their latest progress are set out below:

- (a) **Setting up the Women Affairs Team and designating the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs:** The HYAB set up the Women Affairs Team and designated a Principal Assistant Secretary ranked at D2 level as the Commissioner for Women Affairs (the Commissioner) on 1 April this year. The Commissioner will lead the Women Affairs Team to focus on promoting women's development. Moreover, the Commissioner will work closely with the Family Council, the WoC and relevant stakeholders to take forward related activities and initiatives;
- (b) **Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education:** The HYAB and the Family Council will launch a new five-year Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education (new Scheme) in the second half of 2024 to subsidise non-profit-making community projects in promoting family education. The Family Council will consolidate the existing Sponsorship Scheme, with the amount of funding increasing from about \$4 million in each round previously to \$8 million per year. The new Scheme will expand its scope of funding to cover various family-related topics, such as education for new parents, parent-child education, maintenance of family relationship and other marriage-related subjects to meet the needs of different families etc. The new Scheme will also strive to promote family virtues and focus on enhancement of family building, family education and family values, with a view to enhancing family well-being and social harmony. The preliminary idea is that during the project period of about one year, the funded organisations may provide various types

⁵ The Government did not send delegation to attend relevant meetings between 2020 and 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

of activities and support services, such as workshops, mutual support groups, counselling services, talks, online information platforms, production of educational videos, support and consultation hotlines as well as publications etc. It is expected that about eight to ten projects will be funded under the new Scheme each year. Details of the Scheme will be announced upon consultation with the Family Council;

- (c) **Organising the first Family and Women Development Summit:** Through the Family and Women Development Summit (the Summit), the HYAB will collect views from different sectors of the community for formulating more focused measures. Tentatively themed on “Women’s Strengths in Action, Family Values Across Generations”, the Summit is expected to bring together some 500 representatives from local women’s organisations, the business sector and service organisations. At the Summit, we hope to exchange views with those who are concerned about the family and women’s development in Hong Kong, establish close partnerships with them and publicise the continuous progress made for the family and women’s development in Hong Kong. The Summit is expected to be held in the fourth quarter of this year;
- (d) **Launching a one-stop family and women information portal:** The one-stop family and women information portal (the information portal) will pool together information on family education and women to help local women and the general public keep abreast of the relevant information. Having consulted the WoC and the Family Council, the information portal will tentatively cover six major areas and relevant legal information, namely (i) women’s interests and relevant statutory rights, (ii) women’s health, (iii) women’s employment and entrepreneurship, (iv) family education and family services, (v) information on marriage and (vi) activities related to women’s development and family education. The information portal will be launched in the second half of this year; and
- (e) **Introduction of Maintenance Mediation Pilot Scheme:** The Government is committed to improving the effectiveness of the system for collecting maintenance payments and enforcing maintenance orders. We will continue to assist people in need to recover maintenance payments by keeping the system under review. In this regard, the HYAB will launch, in the second half of this year, a Maintenance Mediation Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme) through the Community Care Fund (CCF) to subsidise a NGO in providing mediation services on maintenance to people in need who are eligible

for the Pilot Scheme (including maintenance payers and payees), so as to assist the parties concerned to resolve disputes on the related matters through mediation.

The Pilot Scheme will run for three years. The Commission on Poverty has endorsed the recommendation to allocate around \$36 million from CCF to implement the Pilot Scheme. In light of the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society (HKFWS)'s extensive experience and well-established network in relation to the relevant mediation service and publicity work, the Government will appoint the HKFWS as the service operator of the Pilot Scheme. We are working on the details of the Pilot Scheme with the HKFWS. The three-year Pilot Scheme is expected to process a total of 1 200 cases, benefiting 2 400 separating or divorcing persons. HYAB will keep in view the implementation progress of the Pilot Scheme so as to better consider the future work direction and the operation mode of the Pilot Scheme.

Advice Sought

24. Members are invited to note and offer views on the content of this paper.

Home and Youth Affairs Bureau
May 2024

**Major Programmes and Activities
Organised or Co-organised by the Family Council
from 2021-22 to 2023-24**

Year	Programmes/Activities
Theme of 2021-22: “Family: A Hub to Cheer You Up”	(a) Organising the Story Creation-cum-Story Telling Competition of “Secret to Perfection of The But’s Family” to promote to junior primary schools students the importance of mutual support, respect and trust amongst family members
	(b) Publishing the storybook entitled “Secret of The But’s Family to Forget Worries” to convey the messages that family is the most powerful backing in times of adversity and the need for more communication with our family members
	(c) Launching the family education videos “Family: A Hub to Cheer You Up” to share real stories of how different families face life challenges and cope with adversity, and provide expert advices
	(d) Launching three episodes of the television programme “不得了 Family” to promote the importance of family cohesion
Theme of 2022-23: “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity”	(a) Launching the roving interactive drama series “愛畢氏家庭” to promote the loving-family culture and the importance of strong family bonding
	(b) Launching the family education videos “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity” to share real stories of how different families face life challenges and cope with adversity, and provide expert advices
	(c) Launching the short video “Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity - Working Mothers” to advocate that a caring and supportive family can help us overcome difficulties and encourage the public to value family cohesion

Year	Programmes/Activities
Theme of 2023-24: “Marital Happiness and Harmony”	(a) “5.14 Free Tram Ride Day for the International Day of Families” was held to convey the message of protecting and loving families to the public
	(b) Organising the family letter writing competition to encourage members of the public to express their feelings to their partners and family members
	(c) Organising the publicity event on “Marital Happiness and Harmony” to promote to the public the importance of sustaining a healthy and strong marriage and building a harmonious and happy family
	(e) Launching the family education videos “Ingredients of Marriage” to promote the importance of sustaining a healthy and strong marriage and building a harmonious and happy family