

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) –
Strategic Development and Action Priorities

Purpose

This paper outlines the CIIF's strategic development focus and action priorities for 2005 as considered by the CIIF Committee recently.

Latest Position of the CIIF

2. As of 20 December 2004, 72 projects, mostly for 3 years, have been selected with funding around \$60 Million allocated. 45 projects have commenced to date. When fully implemented, these 72 projects will result in:

- ◆ 17,380 service recipients being empowered to become contributive volunteers;
- ◆ 210 mutual help networks;
- ◆ 17 co-operatives;
- ◆ 880 jobs;
- ◆ 3,500 job matchings; and
- ◆ over 300,000 people benefiting from participation.

3. Now practically each district would have at least one CIIF project approved, and some districts (such as Shamshuipo, Yuen Long/Tin Shui Wai and Tai Po) are building up a critical mass. Please refer to the first issue of the CIIF newsletter tabled.

Extension of the CIIF operation for another three years

4. As noted in the CIIF progress report to the LegCo Welfare Services Panel on 10 January 2005, the CIIF operation will be extended for another three years so as to maximize its impact, to inculcate the social capital concepts more firmly in the community, and to give effect to some of the Policy Address priorities.

Reference to the CIIF in the Policy Addresses

5. The initial impact of the CIIF has received some recognition¹, including the references made by the Chief Executive in his two recent Policy Addresses.

6. To recap, in his 2004 Policy Address, the Chief Executive asked the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food to “*engage relevant parties in developing our strategies to enhance ‘social capital.’ In addition, we established the CIIF in 2002. These have sown the seeds for a tripartite partnership between government, the business community and the third sector (not-for-profit sectors). I have asked the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food to examine, in consultation with the Social Welfare Advisory Committee and the CIIF Committee, ways to develop this tri-partite partnership, and to consolidate and promote the successful experience of the CIIF. We seek to inculcate this concept in the community to help it take root.*” [2004 Policy Address, para. 55]

7. In connection with the policy objectives to reduce inter-generational poverty, the 2005 Policy Address [para. 39] further stated that “*We will encourage non-government organizations in the local communities to enlist more caring people from various sectors to serve as mentors to encourage young people to learn and advance. We will also draw on the successful experience of the CIIF to continue to promote community involvement in assisting young people from poor families.*”

CIIF’s strategic development objectives to address inter-generational poverty

8. A key expectation for the CIIF is to consolidate its successful experience, extend and further develop those models found to be effective, especially those relevant to breaking the cycles of inter-generational deprivation, with development programmes for children and youth from deprived families and needy districts identified as priorities.

¹ Including positive external endorsement, such as those from the Asian Development Bank.

Applying effective strategies

9. While **the CIIF was not set up with an explicit objective to address poverty per se, its strategies are developmental with longer-term impact on poverty.** Over the last decades, international development agencies such as the World Bank, the United Nations and the Asian Development Bank have generally placed much greater emphasis on social capital development (which involves making attitudinal, relationship, structural/institutional changes to build capacity and partnerships) as longer-term strategies, rather than relying entirely on aid and relief, to break the cycles of inter-generational disadvantages.

10. The CIIF has placed much emphasis on developing mutual help networks especially at neighbourhood levels, because an enriched social fabric was vital in connecting people to provide support and resources, and assisting people whose relationships, jobs, abilities and sense of security were under threat during times of major economic transformation. Because a basic safety net is already firmly in place in Hong Kong to protect the population from abject poverty, the CIIF developmental focus has generally emphasized the psycho-social rather than material aspects, building up the strengths, resilience and networks involving individuals, families and communities, creating jobs and turning adversities into opportunities.

11. The CIIF has consistently encouraged such social capital development strategies in the projects selected: to bring about positive value changes, building mutual help relationships across groups, and establishing collaborative institutional platforms to create opportunities for social mobility.

Critical success factors

12. The CIIF projects that have been found to be effective are those that succeeded in changing negative mind-sets about vulnerable, marginalized or disadvantaged groups; taking a strengths-based rather than deficit focus; with cross-sector support as well as achieving enhanced social and economic inclusion outcomes and creating social mobility, i.e. breaking the cycles of disadvantage. The enthusiasm and vision of the project coordinators, the commitment of the agencies and strength of their local networks are also other contributive factors. The critical success factors of these projects will be systematically identified through the CIIF Evaluation Consortium research and

will provide further insight to enhance the CIIF development strategies.

Achieving social and economic inclusion outcomes

13. While most of the CIIF projects were not focused on conventional employment or training programmes, yet most participants in these CIIF funded projects have transformed, and become more capable and confident to participate in society and work, including:

- homeless people gaining employment;
- middle-aged unemployed becoming financially independent;
- disengaged youth finding work and more returning to training;
- new arrivals and elders forming service teams and work-co-operatives;
- people with disabilities, and people from ethnic minorities becoming more participative and contributive in their communities; and
- jobs are being created and jobs resources are being matched.

Proposed Action Priorities

14. Pamphlets on the types of successful models to be promulgated are being prepared. Other strategies involve extending some of the successful models at district level, and developing further “fostering relationships”, building networks between those with needs and those able to offer assistance with the aim of facilitating development and creating opportunities:

- ◆ For infants and children from deprived families and at risk of neglect or abuse and developmental delays – actively promote the quality carer project and parenting programme being piloted in a fifth batch of project;
- ◆ For children at primary school age but deprived of family care and at risk of educational failures, behavioural problems and social dysfunctions – through extension of the collaborative community-owned and parent-operated after-school care models and with the aim of extending these programmes into other districts over the next year. Extension of the after-school programme will involve substantive collaboration between schools and various community organizations;

- ◆ For disengaged youth – through extension of the one-to-one and in-depth mentorship approach, matching individuals and families with mentors or another supportive family. Such programmes will rely on strong education and welfare interfaces with participation from the business and service sectors; and
- ◆ Building Communities - developing stronger neighbourhood support networks for both new or older communities in need of community building – e.g. based on models such as the Caring Estate for older communities, the Sunny Community (Tung Chung), Community Angels (Tin Shui Wai), and Tseung Kwan O is My Home projects for the new and fast growing communities.

Barriers to Expediting the CIIF Impact

15. Building social capital requires long-term investment of time and efforts as it involves mind-set, cultural and practice changes at professional, organizational, and community levels.

16. Breaking down organizational barriers also takes time. Considering the immensity of the task, the CIIF development has been successful to some extent; and having over 800 groups involved in implementing 72 CIIF projects is in itself an achievement in building collaborative relationships. However, there is still a long way to go to ensure the social capital development concept will be widely adopted especially through the mainstream services and practices.

17. Inculcating the social capital concepts would not be easily achieved by simply extending the CIIF operation in its current form or distributing the balance of the \$300 Million at a faster rate, as might have been suggested. Substantial revision in operational strategies is required and a much broader range of stakeholders must be engaged in mobilizing the necessary changes if greater CIIF impact is to be achieved.

Engagement and Promotion Strategies

18. Our ongoing engagement and promotion work has always been constrained by the lack of additional funding designated for the administration or promotional cost involved. All the media publicity achieved to date was

due entirely to the voluntary participation of the media concerned. Most of the publicity materials (such as the publicity booklets, good practice pamphlets, video and newsletters) were primarily home-produced and at the least cost. The following proposed strategies also generally involve minimal extra expenditures:

- a) Secure involvement of District Officers of HAD and increase joint action with District Social Welfare Officers in a number of targeted districts: to expedite formation of local initiatives, extend successful models, build up synergy and strengthen local impact. The approach experimented in Tai Po and Shamshuipo will be considered for extension in other priority districts;
- b) Targeted engagement of key stakeholders - a small number of short, sharp and strategic briefings to be hosted to engage Board Members and Chief Executives of targeted agencies; to test out a “matching” and mentorship commissioning approach involving NGOs with welfare and education interface potentials;
- c) Engaging specific partners such as specific trade associations and professional bodies to consider and develop specific initiatives with employment outcomes;
- d) Maximizing the CIIF project impact through the media;
- e) Recognition of the successful CIIF projects;
- f) Updating and extending the CIIF partnership scheme – although only a relatively small number of partners on the list had been extensively used by the smaller agencies, the scheme has significant potentials to build up the support base for the CIIF and will be reviewed and extended; and
- g) Issue of regular newsletter and good practice pamphlets.

Advice Sought

19. Members' views are sought on the CIIF strategic development focus, and suggestions on possible collaboration between the Women's Commission and the CIIF to maximize impact of shared interest.

CIIF Secretariat

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