

Family Council
Minutes of 25th Meeting held on 26 May 2015

Date: 26 May 2015 (Tuesday)

Time: 2:30 – 4:20 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Official Members

Mrs Betty FUNG, Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Home Affairs*)

Ms Doris CHEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Labour and (Welfare)1 (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare*)

Mrs HONG CHAN Tsui-wah, Deputy Secretary for Education (4) (Acting)
(*attended on behalf of Secretary for Education*)

Prof WONG Chack-kie, Member (2)/Central Policy Unit (CPU)
(*attended on behalf of Head/CPU*)

Ex-officio Members

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Chairman of the Commission on Youth

Mrs LAU KUN Lai-kuen, Stella, Chairperson of the Women's Commission

Non-official Members

Mrs CHU YEUNG Pak-yu, Patricia

Prof LAM Tai-hing
Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian
Mr LEE Luen-fai
Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese
Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe
Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon
Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella
Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily
Mr YIU Tze-leung, Ivan

Secretary

Ms Aubrey FUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Civic Affairs) 2

In attendance

Mr Laurie LO, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)
Ms Jessica CHENG, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council)
Dr Florence FONG, Senior Researcher (5), CPU

(For agenda item 3 only)

Mr LEE Yiu-sum, Sam, Youth Work Officer of the Hong Kong
Federation of Youth Groups

Absent with apologies

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, Chairman of the Elderly
Commission
Prof LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin
Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy
Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy
Ms YAU Oi-yuen, Irene

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 25th meeting of the Family Council (the Council), in particular the following two new members who joined the Council for the new term commencing on 1 April 2015 –

- (a) Mr LAU Ming-wai (ex-officio member in his capacity as Chairman of the Commission on Youth); and
- (b) Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily.

In addition, Prof. LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin had also been appointed as a new member of the Council. Owing to a prior commitment, Prof. Leung was unable to attend the meeting.

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 24th meeting of the Family Council

- 2. The minutes of the 24th meeting were confirmed without amendments.

Item 2 – Matters Arising from the previous meeting

- 3. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Council Secretariat had circulated a progress report to Members for information and consideration. As Members had no further comments, the progress report was endorsed.

Item 3 – Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-Being Project (3A Project) (Paper FC 7/2015)

- 4. The 3A Project was a biennial Award organised by the

Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) since 2010 with the objective of encouraging innovative ideas to enhance the well-being of families in the Asian Region. In 2014, CIFA organised the 3A Project for the third time. After presentation by the shortlisted finalists at the 4th CIFA Regional Symposium held in Shanghai on 14 November 2014, the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG)'s uTouch Cyber Youth Outreach Project (uTouch Project) was awarded with the Gold Award.

5. Upon invitation of the Chairman, Mrs CHU YEUNG Pak-yu, Patricia (Chairperson of CIFA) and Mr LEE Yiu-sum, Sam (Youth Work Officer of HKFYG) took Members through the powerpoint presentations to give an overview of the 3A Project as well as the main features of the uTouch Project. The salient points were covered in the paper FC 7/2015.

6. Following the presentations, deliberations of the meeting were summarised as follows –

- (a) Members commended the efforts of the uTouch Project (funded by the Lotteries Fund) in taking a proactive approach in connecting with the at-risk youths as well as offering tailor-made online counselling services. Apart from the uTouch Project, the Lotteries Fund had also funded two pilot cyber youth outreaching projects being run by the Caritas Hong Kong and the Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong. Noting that the funding support provided by the Lotteries Fund to these pilot projects would end in July 2015, Members suggested the Government consider continuing the funding support, be it through Lotteries Fund or other sources, in view of the imminent need to develop online platforms for connecting with socially hidden youths (隱蔽青年). In response, Deputy Secretary for Labour and (Welfare)¹ said that the Government would endeavour to support worthy experimental projects. The Social Welfare Department

was in fact reviewing the effectiveness of the projects and the way forward;

- (b) there was concern on the gap between the total number of at-risk youths identified online (16 958) and the total number of at-risk youths that could be engaged through online outreaching approach (4 439) under the uTouch Project. In accounting for the gap, Mr Lee explained that not all the at-risk youths were motivated to respond and receive counselling services;
- (c) Mr Lee informed Members that survey was conducted to measure the effectiveness of the online counselling services. Results of the survey indicated that 90.9% of service users showed positive changes after receiving online/web-based counselling services;
- (d) Members would like to know whether the social workers would disclose their identities after successfully engaging the at-risk youths through online platform. Mr Lee responded that the identities of the social workers would be disclosed when the at-risk youths started revealing their problems to the social workers. Members further suggested that in the process of internet search (網撈), it was worthwhile to use Facebook as a point of intervention;
- (e) Members suggested that consideration could be given to extending the scope of services to parents of the at-risk youths because the anxieties of parents of the at-risk youths were no less than their children;
- (f) Members also suggested enhancing the professional training and supervision of the volunteers in view of the large number of volunteers involved in the uTouch Project;
- (g) to keep up with the changing needs of the community, it was important for the service agents to explore not only the

service delivery model, but also the scope of services to be provided to the at-risk youths; and

- (h) with growing family issues, 3A Project provided an excellent platform to gather wisdom and innovative ideas from professionals and practitioners in advancing the well-being of families. To sustain the momentum, CIFA should consider and explore more collaboration opportunities in creating synergy. Cross-sector transformation of knowledge and experience was an area worth continuous efforts.

7. Mrs Chu took the opportunity to inform Members that the Council and CIFA would co-organise a two-day Exchange Programme on the 3A Project on 11 and 12 June 2015 for sharing and exchange of knowledge with relevant stakeholders. Apart from the eight finalists of the 3A Project 2014, the winning teams of the 3A Project 2012 would also be invited to share the progress of their projects.

8. The Chairman thanked Mrs Chu and Mr Lee for their presentations and Members for their comments. Taking the experience of the uTouch Project into account, the Chairman concluded that it was important for the Government and the welfare sector alike to embrace changes with new mindset in planning services for the at-risk youths. With the advance in technology and the popularity of mobile communication devices, the development of online services should be further explored and strengthened.

Item 4 – 2015/16 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme (Paper FC 8/2015)

9. The Secretary briefed Members on the work plan of the 2015/16 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme (the Award Scheme), in particular the composition of the Organising Committee (OC), assessment framework, outreaching and publicity strategies,

timeframe as well as the estimated cost. Members expressed the following views –

- (a) the Award Scheme was able to achieve the objective of raising awareness of the importance of family-friendly practices amongst employers, and nearly 2 000 companies /organisations enrolled for the 2013/14 Award Scheme. Apart from boosting the number of entries, it was equally important for the Council to leverage the Award Scheme as a platform to inculcate family-friendly values in the community in a sustainable manner;
- (b) as the present unemployment rate in Hong Kong was at a low level, business sector was more willing to adopt family-friendly employment policies and practices (FFEPs) with a view to retaining talents. However, possible economic downturn might have adverse impact on the promotion of FFEPs. To sustain the momentum, a more proactive and balanced publicity strategies in engaging the employers should be adopted;
- (c) though the implementation of FFEPs would bring benefits to the community, its cost implications to companies/organisations should not be overlooked as it would affect the competitive edge of Hong Kong;
- (d) the Council Secretariat might consider using more innovative approaches to inculcate family-friendly values in the community through the Award Scheme. The use of video interviews to showcase the best practices of winning companies/organisations might further promote FFEPs;
- (e) the inclusion of theme-based awards (such as the “Award for Breastfeeding Support”) was a good attempt to align the focus of the public. The Council Secretariat might

consider giving more theme-based awards in planning the future Award Scheme;

(f) noting that there were rooms for improvement in terms of enrollment for the category of non-governmental organisation (NGOs), particularly those in the education sector, Members were pleased to note that the proposed OC would include more members from the relevant sectors. In deliberating on the promotion of FFEPs in NGOs and the education sector, their special and unique work environment should be taken into consideration. FFEPs implemented in the business sector might not be applicable in NGOs and the education sector. On a related issue, the Government should consider establishing work-based child care centres to foster a family-friendly work environment, in addition to the promotion of FFEPs in the community; and

(g) with a view to measuring the effectiveness of the Award Scheme and sustaining the momentum of supporting a pro-family environment, it was essential to devise an evaluation plan in a host of aspects after the conclusion of the Award Scheme to facilitate the mapping out of way forward in the future.

10. The Chairman thanked Members for their valuable views. Though the implementation of FFEPs might have cost implications for the employers, the experience of past Award Scheme indicated that quite a number of business companies, irrespective of size, had proactively implemented innovative FFEPs which had brought positive impact to the companies in terms of productivity and improved staff morale. On extending the scope of the Award Scheme to Government bureaux/departments (B/Ds), the Chairman considered that, as a first step, it was worthwhile to invite B/Ds to participate in specific awards.

11. Looking from a broader perspective, the Council's positioning was not just for promoting the Award Scheme but also

using this major event as a platform to inculcate family and family-friendly values in the society. To maximise the synergistic impact, the Council Secretariat might invite the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) to take part in the post-award sharing of good family-friendly practices with employers from different sectors in due course.

12. To facilitate exchange of views, the Chairman also asked the Council Secretariat to invite CSB to brief the Council on the implementation of FFEPs in the civil service at a future meeting.

(Action: the Council Secretariat)

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 9/2015).

13. The Chairman invited the Convenors of the Family Support Sub-committee (the Support Sub-committee) and the Sub-committee on Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (the Promotion Sub-committee) to report work progress.

14. On the work of the Support Sub-committee, Mrs Chu reported that the Support Sub-committee had endorsed the questionnaire design, format of focus group discussions as well as time schedule of the “Family Survey 2015”. Besides, it had deliberated on the initiatives regarding the Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS). Noting that the enhanced services helped early identification and timely intervention for needy children and families under CCDS, the Support Sub-committee praised the efforts of relevant B/Ds to bring improvements and considered that it was necessary to incorporate evidence-based outcome measurement. Mrs Chu also informed Members that the upcoming meeting of the Support Sub-committee would discuss the follow-up work on the “Study of Divorce in Hong Kong” by relevant B/Ds.

15. As far as the work progress on the promotion of family core values and family education was concerned, Mrs Loo reported that the

Promotion Sub-committee had endorsed the research framework of the study on “Parenting Practices in Hong Kong” to be conducted by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Besides, Mrs Loo also reported that the family education package with newborn babies had already been uploaded onto the “Happy Family Info Hub” and a series of 18 workshops would be organised starting from June 2015 onwards. On a related note, baby journals would be distributed to mothers-to-be registered at the Maternal and Child Health Centres for ante-natal service from mid-June 2015 to mid-June 2016. Separately, preparatory work of the publicity campaign on the promotion of family core values jointly organised by the Council, the Commission on Youth, the Elderly Commission and the Women’s Commission was in the pipeline.

16. The meeting noted the progress reports made by the Convenors of the two Sub-committees.

Item 6 – Any Other Business

17. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.. The next meeting would be held on 13 August 2015 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. in Conference Room 5, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.

Family Council Secretariat
August 2015