

Family Council

Latest Progress of the Family and Women-Related Policy Initiatives of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau Announced in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the latest progress of the major family and women-related policy initiatives of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) as announced in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address.

INTRODUCTION

2. Caring and harmonious families are the cornerstones of social harmony. The HYAB has been supporting the work of the Family Council on promoting a pro-family culture and enhancing family harmony for building a harmonious society. Meanwhile, women in Hong Kong 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 society.

3. 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 and the latest progress is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

LATEST PROGRESS OF THE NEW INITIATIVES

Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education

4. The HYAB and the Family Council will launch a new five-year Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education (new Scheme) in the fourth quarter of this year to subsidise non-profit-making community projects in promoting family education. The Family Council will consolidate the existing Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives, with the amount of funding to be increased 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.

5. At the meeting of the Sub-committee on Family Support under the Family Council held on 5 June 2024, we consulted Members on the framework of the new Scheme, including the funding caps for subsidised projects (i.e. not exceeding \$800,000 for each 12-month project and not exceeding \$1.2 million for each 18-month project); the scope of funding; types of activities; application eligibility; assessment criteria; implementation timetable, and publicity work. A summary of the framework concerned is at **Annex**. The HYAB will consider the views expressed by Members at the meeting to finalise the implementation details.

Organising the first Family and Women Development Summit

6. 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. The Summit is scheduled for 9 October 2024 with the theme of “Women’s Strengths in Action, Family Values Across Generations”. Guest speakers will be invited to deliver keynote speeches at the Summit, and successful women from different sectors will also be invited to share their experiences. There will be an interactive question-and-answer exchange sessions with participants to better collect different views from various sectors on family and women’s development in Hong Kong.

7. 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. Besides local stakeholders, we will also explore the possibility of inviting women's organisations in the Mainland and overseas speakers to join the Summit to exchange development experiences gained in different places.

Launching a one-stop family and women information portal

8. 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. The information portal will 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. Users of the information portal may search and browse information on the above major areas by age group or specific feature (e.g. married or being a single parent). Users may also share the information with others through social media platforms. In addition, we plan to feature in-depth discussions on individual topics on the information portal in the form of a quarterly online newsletter, allowing interested parties to access relevant information through subscription.

9. In April this year, we briefed the WoC and the Family Council on the content and format of the information portal. The HYAB is proactively preparing for the development of the information portal, namely commissioning contractors to set up the website and advise on the title and domain name of the information portal; drawing up content of the information portal, the work of which includes consulting relevant government departments on the content, filming short videos and drafting feature articles; and considering relevant publicity strategies. We will also set up in the WoC and the Family Council an editorial group for the

information portal to provide editorial advices on thematic content related to women's affairs and family education respectively. The information portal is expected to be launched in the fourth quarter of this year.

Introduction of Maintenance Mediation Pilot Scheme

10. The Government is committed to improving the effectiveness of the system for collecting maintenance payments and enforcing maintenance orders. We will continue to review relevant mechanism with a view to assisting people in need to recover maintenance payments. 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.

11. 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.

12. Parties involved in maintenance payment disputes are eligible to apply for the Pilot Scheme free of charge provided that one of the parties (applicant) is a Hong Kong resident and meets the following criteria –

- (1) The applicant is a recipient of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme; or
- (2) The applicant is a full-rate allowance recipient of the Working Family Allowance Scheme; or
- (3) The applicant is a full-level assistance recipient of student financial assistance schemes (including the School Textbook Assistance Scheme/the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme/the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges); or

- (4) Applicant not meeting criteria (1) to (3) above but himself/herself and the household members residing with him/her earn a monthly household income of no more than the specified income limit applicable to the corresponding household size (the calculation for the defaulting maintenance paying party and the maintenance receiving party will be made as per their respective household size).

13. The three-year Pilot Scheme is expected to process a total of 1 200 cases, benefitting 2 400 separating or divorcing persons. The 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

14. Members are invited to note and comment on the progress of the new family and women-related initiatives set out above.

Home and Youth Affairs Bureau
July 2024

Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education

(to be launched in Q4 of 2024)

Summary of Framework

A. GENERAL FEATURES

1. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau will set aside \$8 million per year and launch a five-year Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education (the Scheme) to subsidise community projects in promoting family education.
2. The Scheme will provide funding for 12-month projects and 18-month projects. The successful applicant organisations must commence and complete the respective projects within 12 months or 18 months respectively from the effective date set out in the approval letter of funding allocation issued by the Family Council (the Council).
3. The funding cap for each 12-month project is HK\$800,000 while that for each 18-month project is HK\$1,200,000. The amount of funding approved for individual projects is determined on a case-by-case basis. The final funding amount shall be as deemed reasonable by the Council, regardless of the amount sought. It is expected that eight to ten projects will be approved per year.
4. A dedicated website for the Scheme will be set up, onto which details and application information will be uploaded.

B. THEMES

1. The Scheme will cover various family-related themes, including but not limited to –

- (a) education for new parents;
- (b) parent-child education;
- (c) maintenance of family relationship;
- (d) strengthening family cohesion and solidarity;
- (e) inheritance of good family values and traditional virtues;
- (f) marriage-related subjects, etc.

with a view to meeting the needs of different families. Apart from the above-mentioned themes, applicant organisations may propose other family-related themes for their projects as appropriate. Besides, the proposed project may cover more than one relevant theme at the same time.

2. Applicant organisations are encouraged to include the elements of love and sense of attachment to the country in their projects as appropriate.
3. The applicant organisation may organise different programmes or activities according to the theme(s) of the project. The programmes or activities concerned should be diversified, interactive, interesting and innovative, for example, talks, workshops, mutual support groups, counselling services, support and consultation hotlines, online information platform, production of educational videos, publications, etc.

C. INDICATIVE TIMETABLE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHEME

An indicative timetable for the implementation of the first round of the Scheme is set out below –

Time	Action
October to November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the Scheme • Invitation of proposals for the Scheme • Arrange briefing session for NGOs

Time	Action
December 2024 to February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vetting and making recommendations on the proposals
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorsement of the Support Sub-committee and Council on the recommended projects
April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of results to successful applicant organisations • Submission of inception report by successful applicant organisations
For 12-month projects	
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of approved projects
November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of mid-term progress reports
April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the approved projects
June 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of financial report, auditor's report and project report on the approved projects
For 18-month projects	
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of approved projects
February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of mid-term progress reports
October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the approved projects
December 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of financial report, auditor's report and project report on the approved projects

Family Council Secretariat
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