

**Community Care Fund - Assistance Programme  
Subsidy for Non-School-Attending Ethnic Minorities  
and New Arrivals from the Mainland  
Participating in Language Courses  
Evaluation Report**

## **Background**

The Community Care Fund (CCF) has been established since early 2011 to provide assistance to people facing economic difficulties, in particular those who fall outside the social safety net or those within the safety net but have special circumstances that are not covered. In addition, the CCF may take forward measures on a pilot basis to help the Government identify those that can be considered for incorporation into the Government's regular assistance and service programmes.

2. The former Steering Committee on CCF endorsed at its meeting on 17 October 2011 the launch of the programme in 2011-12 on a pilot basis to provide subsidy for non-school-attending ethnic minorities (EMs) and new arrivals from the Mainland (NAs) from low income families participating in dedicated language courses of the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) to encourage them to engage in life-long learning and to improve personal abilities.

3. The pilot programme was administered by the Home Affairs Department (HAD). It commenced on 1 March 2012 with no specified end date as at present. Applicants for subsidy must be non-school-attending EMs and NAs from low income families<sup>1</sup> taking dedicated language courses of the ERB with 80% attendance or above for each course. The amount of subsidy per application varies with the number of course hours, ranging from \$350 to \$700. The original estimated expenditure for the programme was \$30 million (i.e. a subsidy of \$28,575,000 and an administrative fee of \$1,425,000). It was expected that the programme would benefit around 60 000 people.

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<sup>1</sup> Low income families refer to those whose monthly household incomes not exceeding 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income applicable to their household size, or those who have passed the means tests of specified assistance schemes.

## **Implementation of the Assistance Programme**

4. HAD has commissioned two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through open quotation as the service providers of the programme to handle matters concerning the promotion of the programme, application and disbursement of subsidy to the successful applicants, etc for EMs and NAs respectively.

5. HAD and the service providers conducted a briefing in early March 2012. Representatives from government departments concerned, training bodies, Support Service Centres for EMs, as well as other relevant NGOs and local organisations attended the briefing. HAD and the service providers introduced to them the programme in detail, and appealed to them to promote and publicise the programme to the target groups through their respective networks.

6. HAD and the service providers promoted the programme to EMs and NAs through various channels, including posters, leaflets, websites, radio, newspapers and the Ambassador Scheme, etc. Furthermore, HAD and the service providers promoted the programme through Support Service Centres for EMs, the Immigration Department (ImmD), social enterprises (SEs) and training bodies. They also held promotions and accepted applications in training centres on course days.

7. Having regard to the application to the programme, the estimated expenditure was revised to \$500,000 (i.e. an amount of subsidy of \$418,000 and an administrative fee of \$82,000) in February 2013. It was expected that the programme would benefit around 800 people.

## **Review**

8. HAD conducted a review of the programme according to the advice of the consultant in late February 2013. The effectiveness of the programme was mainly assessed by analysing the application data and applicant profile as well as the questionnaire survey on the beneficiaries and the service providers. The review was completed in early June 2013.

## **Applicant Profile and Survey Results**

### **I. Application Data and Applicant Profile (Details are at Appendix (i))**

9. As at late May 2013, a total of 212 applications have been received. 117 of them have been vetted and 95 were being processed<sup>2</sup>. Among the 117 vetted cases, 89 were successful with the subsidy disbursed amounting to around \$30,000, and 28 were ineligible.

10. Among the 212 applications received, 18 (8.5%) were from EMs and the remaining 194 (91.5%) were from NAs. The majority of applicants belonged to the age groups of 31 to 40 and 41 to 50, accounting for 32.1% and 34% respectively.

11. Among the 212 applications received, the course the majority took was Module Certificate in Elementary Cantonese I for New Arrivals (141 cases, accounting for 66.5%), followed by Module Certificate in Elementary Cantonese II for New Arrivals (33 cases, accounting for 15.6%).

12. Among the 28 ineligible applications, the chief reason for rejection was incomplete information. Information required, such as proof of attendance, was not provided after repeated contact and the applications were withdrawn by the applicants (23 applications, accounting for 82.1%).

### **II. Feedback from the Beneficiaries (Details are at Appendix (ii))**

13. Participation of the beneficiaries in the questionnaire survey was voluntary. As at late May 2013, among the total of 65 questionnaires received by the service providers, 2 were from EMs, and 63 from NAs. Among the responding beneficiaries, the majority belonged to the group having resided in Hong Kong for less than one year, accounting for 53.9%. In terms of age, the majority belonged to the age group of 31 to 40, accounting for 41.5%. In terms of education level, the majority were of junior secondary level, accounting for 43.1%.

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<sup>2</sup> Upon completion of the course, applicants must submit to the service provider proof of attendance of over 80% so that their applications can be further processed. As a result, quite a number of applications were being processed.

14. The responding beneficiaries who agreed or strongly agreed that the promotion efforts of the programme were adequate accounted for 86.2%; that the programme had achieved the objective of encouraging further study accounted for 93.9%; and that the subsidy under the programme was helpful to the beneficiaries accounted for 89.2%. The feedback of the responding beneficiaries on the service providers was positive. With regard to the enquiry service, handling of applications, disbursement arrangement and staff service attitude of the service providers, over 95% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied.

### III. Feedback from the Service Providers

15. HAD also conducted a questionnaire survey on the two service providers. On the whole, the service providers considered that the arrangement and preparation of the programme were appropriate and the programme could encourage continuous learning among EMs and NAs, especially attractive to the beneficiaries who were seeking employment. The service providers expressed willingness to continue providing assistance to similar programmes.

### IV. Public Enquiries (Details are at Appendix (iii))

16. The service providers set up a hotline to provide necessary support and information for the public. During the implementation of the programme from March 2012 to late May 2013, the service providers received a total of 77 calls involving 85 enquiries. The majority were about the eligibility criteria, application procedures, the progress of application, etc.

## **Evaluation Results**

17. The results of HAD's analysis are as follows:

- (a) The programme can encourage and help some non-school-attending EMs and NAs to take courses for improving language abilities
  - Faced with the pressure of life and work after leaving school, EMs and NAs have limited motivation to participate in language courses.

- In spite of the above, the feedback of the beneficiaries of the programme was highly positive. They expressed that the subsidy under the programme was very helpful to them and the programme could encourage them to take language courses for improving personal abilities. Organisations providing services for EMs and NAs were also generally supportive of the programme.
- HAD considers that a multi-pronged approach should be adopted to help EMs and NAs improve their language abilities. While schooling is generally regarded as most important for improving language abilities, it is also necessary to consider providing them with other forms of support in addition to attending school.
- HAD considers that the programme should be incorporated into its regular support service so that those EMs and NAs aspiring for self-enhancement to increase their competitiveness will have the opportunity to continue to receive subsidy in future for taking language courses. HAD will meet the expenditure required through deployment of internal resources.

(b) The mode of operation of the programme was smooth

- According to the survey results, all respondents, be they EMs or NAs, the beneficiaries or the service providers, were satisfied with the current operational arrangement. Only a minority considered that improvement was needed with most of them opined that promotion should be strengthened.

(c) The promotion of the programme was generally adequate

- HAD and the service providers had tried to promote the programme to EMs and NAs as far as possible through various channels, including posters, leaflets, websites, radio, newspapers and the Ambassador Scheme, etc. Moreover, the programme was also promoted through Support Service Centres for EMs,

ImmD, SEs and training bodies. Promotions were also held and applications accepted in training centres on course days.

- If the programme is incorporated as a regular service, HAD will intensify promotion at the district level with a view to creating an atmosphere of self-enhancement and encouraging non-school-attending EMs and NAs to pursue continuous study for improving their personal abilities through the programme.

## **Conclusion**

18. HAD considers that the programme can indeed encourage and help some non-school-attending and low income EMs and NAs to take language courses for improving their personal abilities. It should therefore be incorporated into the regular support service of HAD so that those EMs and NAs aspiring for self-enhancement to increase their competitiveness can continue to receive subsidy in future for participating in language courses. HAD will explore the feasibility of streamlining the application procedures and strengthen promotion at the district level to further fine-tune the programme.

Home Affairs Department  
July 2013

**Applicant Profile****(a) Age of Applicants**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>No. of Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Aged under 18	3	1.4%
Aged 18-30	55	25.9%
Aged 31-40	68	32.1%
Aged 41-50	72	34.0%
Aged 51 or above	14	6.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**(b) Reasons for Ineligible Application**

<b>Reason for rejection</b>	<b>No. of cases</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Information incomplete. Information required, such as proof of attendance, was not provided after repeated contacts and the application were withdrawn by the applicants.	23	82.1%
Household income exceeding the specified limit	2	7.1%
Non EMs/NAs	1	3.6%
Courses not taken within the specified period	1	3.6%
Taking non-specified courses	1	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

(c) **Courses taken by the Applicants (as at 31 May 2013)**

<b>Course Code</b>	<b>Name of Course</b>	<b>No. of Applications</b>
<b>Courses for EMs</b>		
E01	Module Certificate in Basic English II	0
E02	Module Certificate in Elementary Cantonese I for Non-Chinese Speakers	16
E03	Module Certificate in Elementary Cantonese II for Non-Chinese Speakers	0
E04	Module Certificate in Elementary Workplace Chinese (Reading and Writing) I for Non-Chinese Speakers	1
E05	Module Certificate in Elementary Workplace Chinese (Reading and Writing) II for Non-Chinese Speakers	0
E06	Module Certificate in Employment Set Sail for Non-Chinese Speakers	0
The course taken was not specified, and the applicant was providing further information to facilitate vetting and approval.		1
<b>Courses for NAs</b>		
N01	Module Certificate in Elementary Cantonese I for New Arrivals	141
N02	Module Certificate in Elementary Cantonese II for New Arrivals	33
N03	Module Certificate in Employment Set Sail (Cantonese)	0
N04	Module Certificate in Employment Set Sail (English)	19
Non-specified Courses		1
<b>Total</b>		<b>212</b>



**Appendix (ii)****Survey on the Beneficiaries<sup>3</sup>****(a) Length of Residence**

<b>Length of Residence</b>	<b>No. of Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 1 year	35	53.9%
1 to 3 years	16	24.6%
3 to 5 years	6	9.2%
5 to 7 years	5	7.7%
More than 7 years	0	-
No response	3	4.6%
Total	65	100.0%

**(b) Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Below 18	1	1.5%
18 to 30	19	29.3%
31 to 40	27	41.5%
41 to 50	15	23.1%
51 or above	1	1.5%
No response	2	3.1%
Total	65	100.0%

**(c) Education Level**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>No. of Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Primary or below	2	3.1%
Junior secondary	28	43.1%
Senior secondary	25	38.4%
Post-secondary/undergraduate	8	12.3%
Postgraduate	0	-
No response	2	3.1%
Total	65	100.0%

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<sup>3</sup> Participation in the survey was voluntary and the service providers received a total of 65 questionnaires.

**(d) Feedback on the Programme**

<b>Statement and Comment</b>	<b>No. of Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. The promotion efforts of the programme are adequate		
- Strongly agree	24	36.9%
- Agree	32	49.3%
- Neither agree nor disagree	6	9.3%
- Disagree	1	1.5%
- Strongly disagree	1	1.5%
- No comment	1	1.5%
Total	65	100.0%
2. The programme can achieve the objective of encouraging further study		
- Strongly agree	35	53.9%
- Agree	26	40.0%
- Neither agree nor disagree	3	4.6%
- Disagree	1	1.5%
- Strongly disagree	0	-
- No comment	0	-
Total	65	100.0%
3. The subsidy under the programme is helpful to you		
- Strongly agree	33	50.8%
- Agree	25	38.4%
- Neither agree nor disagree	7	10.8%
- Disagree	0	-
- Strongly disagree	0	-
- No comment	0	-
Total	65	100.0%

(e) **Feedback on the Service Providers**

<b>Statement and Comment</b>	<b>No.of Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Enquiry service provided by the service providers for the programme		
- Very satisfied	44	67.7%
- Satisfied	19	29.3%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	1	1.5%
- Dissatisfied	1	1.5%
- Very dissatisfied	0	-
- No comment	0	-
Total	65	100.0%
2. Handling of applications by the service providers		
- Very satisfied	44	67.7%
- Satisfied	21	32.3%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	-
- Dissatisfied	0	-
- Very dissatisfied	0	-
- No comment	0	-
Total	65	100.0%
3. Disbursement arrangements		
- Very satisfied	41	63.1%
- Satisfied	22	33.8%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	3.1%
- Dissatisfied	0	-
- Very dissatisfied	0	-
- No comment	0	-
Total	65	100.0%
4. Staff service attitude		
- Very satisfied	49	75.4%
- Satisfied	15	23.1%
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	0	-
- Dissatisfied	0	-
- Very dissatisfied	0	-
- No comment	1	1.5%
Total	65	100.0%

**Public enquiries**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>No. of Cases</b>
Eligibility criteria	42
Application procedures	17
Progress of processing applications	9
Disbursement of subsidy	3
Others	14
- Scheme \$6,000 under the Community Care Fund (2)	
- Whether subsidy would be provided for a particular course (2)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>