

strategies – found ready endorsement amongst participants and project workers. E.g. cross generational mentorship was found to be effective in providing more than hands-on skills training, with life experience, care and support of the mentors making profound impact on motivating and facilitating young people to regain a clearer direction in life.

- Partnership strategies – many partnerships were formed, enhancement in bridging social capital was witnessed; but still more in the form of one-way giving of resources by the “donor” parties, with limited evidence of joint ownership or shared partnerships.

### Evaluating the aggregated impact of the CIIF funded projects on the groups and communities involved

Practically all the studies reported (through quantitative and qualitative indicators) that there were measurable and observable impact on the participant groups resulting from their involvement in the CIIF funded projects, even though the durations for measuring change were necessarily limited to the data collection period of around four to six months that limited the magnitude of “before and after” impact.

- Bonding social capital was evidently developed within groups with shared objectives and similar backgrounds.
- Bridging social capital was being actively pursued in a number of projects (such as cross generational projects, mentorship projects that link adults and youth; cross strata projects that involve ‘disadvantaged’ participants with other middle class or professional groups; or collaboration across NGOs, or between NGOs and other professional or business partners).
- Linking social capital (i.e. tripartite partnerships linking vertical institutions) was found to be still weak.
- The CIIF experience in promoting inter-generational connection, especially those outside of the immediate family, was found to be conducive in strengthening intergenerational solidarity, a positive outcome and an essential

facilitator for further development of social capital.

- CIIF projects were found to have been successful in creating platforms for interaction and cooperation across generations, groups and sectors, which would in turn encourage mutual learning and support.

### Identifying the critical success (and failure) factors common to the CIIF-funded projects

Whilst there were some differences in how the seven studies operationalised their social capital concepts and in their study foci, there was also considerable convergence in the range of critical success factors being identified to date. These include:

- Critical success factors
  - a) Project workers who have some understanding of and enthusiasm in social capital concepts; highly devoted project workers;
  - b) Dedicated participants – projects that were able to identify, recruit and engage the active participation of the target groups;
  - c) Maximize Brand-name effect – project organizations and project personnel with good track record and networking base;
  - d) Involvement of collaborating parties – project workers with skills and strategies to build on their existing networks for further expansion involving groups from diverse and heterogeneous backgrounds;
  - e) Programme strategies – to include factors instrumental in building trust: shared altruistic values and norms; being non-calculative; frequent contacts; having purposeful social gathering with meaningful experiences; facilitating open discussion to enable reflection and learning from experience;
  - f) Adopting complementary approach - to address community needs with greater social inclusion;
  - g) Developmental assistance from the CIIF Members and Secretariat – with project workers who valued the help and advice offered by the CIIF

Secretariat. “I have positive feedback on CIIF Secretariat. We have submitted reports to the Secretariat regularly. The Secretariat reads our reports and shares experience with us. Regardless of the effectiveness of the suggestions and advice, they show sincerity in our project and follow our work closely (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:17)”; and

h) Knowledge transfer: forums, sharing sessions and workshops organized by the CIIF were considered helpful in sharing experience, building and transferring knowledge.

- Barriers and failure factors
  - a) Insufficient capacity building of both workers and participants;
  - b) Failure in recruiting dedicated participants (e.g. lack of committed mentors);
  - c) Lacking a local base (local connections, networks) to provide a hub for project participants to gather and hold functions;
  - d) Insufficient encouragement, support or clear guidance from the CIIF; and
  - e) Imposition of advice and strategies.

### Advice on good practices at project level, policy implications, future social capital development strategies and enhancement of the CIIF operation

#### 1) Further promotion of good practices - at project level

- More efforts to preserve the neighbourhood support networks, making them stronger and more cohesive;
- Greater involvement of children and youth in CIIF projects (as trust raising would be more effective starting from a younger age);
- Taking the empowerment and role transformation strategies further by giving participants more appropriate support such as training and opportunities to take up more responsible roles;
- Further development and consolidation of the project networks through involving strategic partnerships with different stakeholders in the

community – involving the collaborating parties earlier in planning, and in working groups and steering committee of the project is helpful to promote ownership, participation and sustainability;

- Programmers involving ethnic minorities should address their primary language barriers (learning through doing approach) as a priority;
- Programmers for marginalised youth should aim at identifying their “alternative and multiple talents”, motivate through recognition, and involvement of family members and significant others;
- Stronger promotion of projects with inter-generational (cross age and cross strata) elements; and
- Training to project workers on good practices in: partnering strategy, building community connections, fund raising techniques, skills on resource mobilization, marketing strategy and business operation, etc.

#### **2) Strengthen impact at community level**

- The CIIF was considered to have set a good example for district officials to make use of cross-sectoral collaboration in fostering solidarity and civic engagement. Some research teams considered it more desirable for a “well established and high power stakeholder” such as DSWO, DO or DC to assume leadership roles to secure local ownership for sustainable outcome.
- Most teams suggested that the government should take up a more proactive role in promoting corporate citizenship by encouraging the commercial sector for greater participation. Policy incentives should be in place with DSWO, DO or DC as active players.
- Teams suggested that priority should be given to gain collaboration with established enterprises, to be followed by SMEs who have little ideas on corporate social responsibility.

#### **3) Mainstreaming influence at policy level**

- The purposeful and matched mentorship strategy was valued and recommended for further experimentation on a broader and more intensive level.

- Three types of intergenerational programmers are encouraged – empowering older people; empowering younger people and promoting cross-/intergenerational relationships.
- The experience of CIIF projects were considered worthwhile and should be generalized on a wider scale especially in remote and marginalized communities such as Tung Chung, Po Tin and Tin Shui Wai.
- Those CIIF strategies found to be successful should be expanded into mainstream services, others sectors and policy arenas.

#### **4) Strengthening the CIIF operation**

- To document the success and failure factors from the evaluation studies for wider discussion and dissemination. Such a document would facilitate the preparation of future proposals for CIIF funding.
- Vetting procedure alone is no guarantee for the eventual success of the project. There should be on-going involvement of the CIIF throughout implementation to share the cumulative and collective wisdom that has been accrued from previous experience.
- A supportive and mentoring system should be in place so as to encourage applicants to trial bold, innovative, and experimental implementation models.
- Promote mutual trust and equalitarian partnerships with the project teams.
- Keep up the good practice for non-rigid reporting, acceptance of qualitative data, and openness to modify strategies through experience.
- Strike a good balance between “conveying / sharing with operators on critical success / failure factors” and “imposing on them on what works (i.e. some project teams resents any suggestions of “copy and paste” from successful projects).
- Open up communication channels (with the CIIF and amongst the project teams that are not “task-oriented”).
- Strengthen support to the project teams - address the queries / worries raised by the project workers; show more appreciation for the positive

developments achieved by the project teams; acknowledge the fact that each project is unique and lend understanding to unique situations and difficulties.

- Facilitate / provide training to project workers on the concept and practice of social capital.
- Be considerate in funding by taking into account the difficult financial/personnel situations faced by some organizations.
- Review and address the needs for manpower and resource throughout project implementation.

#### **5) For academics**

- Some research teams could play the roles as consultants throughout project implementation (i.e. knowledge transfer from the researchers to the project teams).
- Instill the CIIF experience into the teaching curriculum, find/provide space in teaching the theory and practice of social capital.
- Provide on job training to staff – e.g. on how to work with new partners: funders, business partners, mentors, ethnic minorities; and facilitate the ethnic workers to obtain professional training.
- Facilitate / arrange student placement in the CIIF projects.
- Encourage further research on social capital – e.g. encourage research teams (particularly for teams working on similar groups of projects) to conduct comparison, triangulation and cross-examination of findings and conclusions.
- Conduct further research either individually or collaboratively on the topic of social capital

Initiatives being put into practice by QEC, City University research team  
- SC and Sustainable Development will become a new course to be taught as part of the Applied Sociology Course at CityU.  
- QEC is actively considering the development of a SC Scale/ indicators to be validated through a longitudinal study.