

Notes of meeting
Launch of Evaluation Consortium
26 November 2004
4-6pm, LT8 City University

Present

1. 96 representatives of Grantees - All except:
 - ◆ 0040-04 Tai Po Baptist Church
 - ◆ 0024-03 Society of Boy's Centres, 0005-04 Islands Youth Association & 0022-04 United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service (finalizing proposals)

2. Representatives of the seven Consortium research teams
 - ◆ Prof Mok Bong-ho, Convenor and Prof Steven Ngai (CUHK)
 - ◆ Dr Donna Wong, Dr Law Chi Kwong and Dr Ernest Chiu (HKU)
 - ◆ Prof Ng Sik Hung, Dr KK Leung and Dr Alice Chong (CityU, Apologies Dr Raymond Chan)
 - ◆ Dr Ting Wai Fong and Dr KT Chan (PolyU)
 - ◆ Ms Florence Fong (for Lingnan U; apologies from Prof Alfred Chan)

3. Representatives of the HWFB & CIIF –
 - ◆ Ms Linda Lai [DS(F&W)]
 - ◆ Dr Joseph Kwok
 - ◆ Ms Sophia Kao
 - ◆ CIIF Secretariat

Overview Session(4:00 - 4:45pm)

- ◆ Ms Linda Lai [DS/FW] announced the launch of the CIIF Evaluation and congratulated the Consortium on their commitment to this remarkable collaborative exercise.
- ◆ Dr Joseph Kwok [Chairman of the CIIF Evaluation and Development of Social Capital] introduced the purpose of the CIIF Evaluation Exercise and the background to the formation of the Consortium.
- ◆ Professor Mok Bong-ho, convenor of the CIIF Evaluation Consortium gave an overview of the Consortium Evaluative Exercise.
- ◆ Each of the 7 research teams provided a brief introduction of their research team, their focus and approach.

Dialogue Session(4:45 – 5:20pm)

Questions raised by the participants

1. How would the seven individual pieces of research be linked together to form a coherent and meaningful whole? Would there be risk of the results reflecting the unique perspectives only of the researchers?
2. Would the research results be already predetermined in support of the position of the Government?
3. We are basically supportive of the objectives of this evaluation exercise, but rather concerned about the resource implications involved, e.g. with our small project team staff to deal with surveys and questionnaires etc.
4. Who actually determined the allocation of each CIIF project to the research teams?
5. From our experience of providing progress reports, there seemed to be an emphasis on reporting successes rather than failures. So we are rather pleased with the high degree of independence to be exercised with this evaluation. This would relieve much of the Grantee agencies' concerns.
6. Concerns over whether the sample collected would provide adequate material for analysis.

Responses from the academics, the Bureau and CIIF representatives

1. One of the **biggest assets of the Consortium approach is the potential to broaden the range of perspectives and increase the depth of investigation.** The Consortium is equally concerned about how to integrate the various strands of research together. In the process, they will exercise the fine balance of co-ordination and synthesis without compromising the diverse, rich and unique contributions of each part of the exercise and to ensure coherence of the end product.
2. Assurance was given that the **Bureau did not have any preconceived answers for the evaluation.** The role of the CIIF is to provide support and information where necessary, and will not be intervening in the investigation itself to ensure the academic independence of the exercise. It was further re-iterated that **the purpose of this evaluation** is not focused on the success or failure of individual projects. The focus is on a

meso-level analysis of the process and experience of implementation and to see what types, if any, of the social capital outcomes were being achieved. The aim was to identify the critical factors that might influence the impact of these projects. The purpose was to learn from these experiences and to achieve the objectives of knowledge transfer.

3. The Grantee agencies could be assured that the interests of the Consortium and the Bureau certainly extend much further than just finding out the success of each project. We learn from knowing what contributes to our success. But we improve even more from learning about the areas we did not do well in, the barriers to be overcome and the solutions to these problems. Hence **we would like to know both: what contributes to success and how to overcome of the problems encountered.**
4. The **7 research teams selected the CIIF projects** according to their defined research focus and selection criteria. This would result in some projects being chosen by more than one team with a small number not being selected. The Consortium teams had reached agreement amongst themselves to minimize and manage the degree of overlap. There are very few projects that would be missed.
5. The Consortium teams were fully appreciative of the **need to minimize the level of demands** made on the CIIF project teams and their participants. Mutually beneficial outcomes could be more assured with the full co-operation of the CIIF project teams.

Issues arising from the 7 small discussion groups(5:20 – 6:30pm)

FAQ:

1/ For those projects that are going to be evaluated by more than one research team, participants are concerned about how these would be co-ordinated. They would like the host to be the single contact point as far as practicable.

- ◆ *That is the understanding amongst the Consortium teams, that is why there is a “host” team which will co-ordinate the requirements of the “guest” team.*

2/ Some participants were concerned about when the research teams would start their evaluation for those projects not yet started.

- ◆ *The research teams are aware of the different start dates for various projects, and will liaise with the project concerned about logistics.*

3/ Some of the participants expressed their wish to get back the data / analysis / evaluation results regarding their specific project.

- ◆ *This is an issue to be considered by the Consortium Team. However, it should be noted that the focus of the evaluation is get a meso-level overview of the critical factors across all the projects instead of focusing on individual projects; hence it is unlikely that the data will be analyzed at an individual project level.*
- ◆ *All selected CIIF project were invited to participate in this exercise as the experience and knowledge so generated should be of benefit to all.*

[The following questions cover 2 persistent issues that were similar to those concerns being raised at the first session at the lecture theatre:]

4/ Some of the applicant organizations did not fully understand the purpose of the CIIF Evaluation Exercise. *[See comments in point 2 in the responses above.]*

5/ Some of the participants were worried that their workload would be increased, for example, they would have to prepare the database (such as names, contact number, etc) of the participating volunteers, collaborating partners and business. *[See comments in point 5 in the responses above.]*