

The CIIF Evaluation Consortium

Report

on

**An Evaluation Study on the Effectiveness of Implementation
of Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF)**

**Prepared for
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
HKSAR Government**

Prepared by

**Quality Evaluation Centre
City University of Hong Kong**

and

**Department of Applied Social Studies
City University of Hong Kong**

Summary

Findings of this evaluation study¹ revealed that the CIIF-funded projects have promoted the development of social capital in Hong Kong. Different strategies, including the building up of the capacity of marginalized individuals and groups, changing the mindset from passive acceptance of welfare to the delivery of social service, building up network between different groups with diverse backgrounds, and enhancing joint efforts among government, business and the third sector, were launched and implemented over the past few years. In general, CIIF project workers² shared the above strategies in developing social capital. However, there were many shades of understanding of social capital in their minds and that of the Secretariat. Quite a number of them did not recognize clearly the importance of changing the mindset from passive acceptance of welfare to the delivery of social service, and enhancing joint efforts between government, business and the third sector in developing social capital. Comparatively speaking, bonding and bridging social capitals were built up steadily, while linking social capital was relatively weak. Besides, mutual care and trust have been established in the community. The project participants also engaged in the community more actively after capacity building. This study further observed that structural social capital, cognitive social capital and collective action were positively inter-correlated. The findings were consistent with the conceptual framework of this study, and in line with the arguments on the development of social capital put forth by the World Bank.

To sum up, critical success factors in facilitating the development of social capitals included:

- a. recruitment of dedicated project participants for the projects;
- b. enthusiasm of CIIF project workers;
- c. involvement of collaborating parties in project operation;
- d. popularity of project organizers; and
- e. expansion of existing networks.

The identified limitations comprised of:

- a. inadequacy of capacity building;
- b. failure in recruiting dedicated participants; and
- c. lack of a physical base for nurturing solidarity among participants.

Based on the identified success factors and limitations, the forthcoming CIIF-funded projects can make use of the best practices to implement and promote the development of social capital. More dialogue among the government, the business sector, and the third sector would be helpful in strengthening the tripartite partnerships. Research findings documenting the success and failure factors should be put to greater and more effective use to enhance the quality of on-going as well as future CIIF-funded projects. Last but not least, most of the CIIF projects faced the difficulties of lacking personnel and resources in their implementation and operation. It is recommended to review the funding approach from time to time.

¹ All the CIIF-funded projects involved in this study commenced less than 1 year at the time of project selection for evaluation.

² CIIF project workers are those NGO service providers running CIIF projects. They can be of various ranks.

8. Identifying Critical Success/Failure Factors³

8.1 Identification and Participation of Dedicated Project Participants

The success in recruiting dedicated project participants was crucial to the success of the CIIF projects. The core members played a key role in building up bonding social capital among the members. They took the initiative to work for the project organizations, and took up responsibilities. They were committed to the project organizations, and willing to give help and support themselves and others.

We have a group of dedicated participants and volunteers, who help us in facilitating the operation of the Centre, and organizing different activities. They used to be our volunteers before we run in self-financing mode. Despite of enjoying the activities provided, they are experienced in organizing the activities and offering training courses to other participants (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:1).

The positive outcomes are the achievements of the participants, not the staff. I selected dedicated participants to be the core members and worked out the tasks together (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005: 4).

Core members play the key role in establishing close ties and sense of belongings among the project participants. The core members are selected by election. They make calls in reminding other participants to attend the activities. Each of them calls 10 participants, and begins to establish close relationship with one another (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005: 12).

8.2 Great Enthusiasm of the CIIF Project Workers

High devotion of CIIF project workers was also significant to the success of the CIIF project.

Our project coordinator visits different organizations, and introduces the services which can be provided. Great efforts are devoted. Eventually, 2 to 3 organizations are further referred, which include schools and NGOs (CIIF project worker, 15/04/2005:4).

We follow up with the development of project participants closely (CIIF project worker, 15/04/2005:9).

It takes a lot of time in enhancing the close relationship among the participants. We used to make reports in our general meetings.

³ A project can be successful in a particular aspect of social capital, while failure in another aspect. Thus, a single project can comprise of both factors of success and failure.

Nowadays, I play games with them, talk and share with them. I care for them and they know they are being cared. If they do not show up in the activities, I shall call them. To be honest, no service centre will give such care to the participants. The time and care devoted are enormous (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:11).

We really spend a lot of time to get familiar with project participants. Through informal meetings and chats with the clients, we get and exchange the latest information between the CIIF project workers and project participants (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:25).

8.3 High Involvement of Collaborating Parties

The involvement of members of collaborating parties in the working and/or steering committees of the project facilitated the implementation of CIIF projects.

A technician of a website developer plays the role of committee consultant. He helps design our website, and participate actively in our project (CIIF project worker, 06/04/2005:7).

Representatives of some collaborating organizations have become our committee members. They provide suggestions and guidelines in running different activities. Support is entirely provided as they understand our needs and agree to back up our activities (CIIF project worker, 07/04/2005:6).

8.4 Popularity of Project Organizers

Well-known organizations gained advantages in building up social networks. People tended to trust the services offered by well-known organizations, enabling the project participants, who were formerly marginalized, got involved in the community.

Our brand name helps the implementation of the project. People are confident in our trained post-natal mentors, though they have not received the services offered by the mentors. Some of the pre- and post-natal parents used to be its service recipients. They are also more likely to try the post-natal mentoring service (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:1).

Our organization is famous and well-known to the general public. I am sure that community members are confident on us, our participants and the services being provided (CIIF project worker, 15/04/2005:1).

8.5 Expansion of Existing Networks

Using existing networks facilitated the expansion of different social networks with different groups with diverse and heterogeneous backgrounds.

We have connections with this publisher before the application of CIIF project. After the launch of the project, I invite project participants to report on the publication. They can share their experience of taking care of children with the parents. At the same time, the service offered by our organization is made known to the potential service recipients. Enquiries are received to find out what kinds of services can be provided (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:7).

The most effective way to develop social networks is to make use of existing connections with different groups and organizations (CIIF project worker, 15/04/2005:5).

We find difficulties in recruiting women as volunteers at the beginning. Once we recruit a woman, she helps us recruiting a large number of volunteers though she does not actively participate in our projects (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:11).

Some of our business partners are friends of our staff (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:17).

Before the implementation of this CIIF-funded project, we organized an activity for parents and their children with a view to increasing the children's reading interests. When the project commenced, we try to recruit the parents and encourage them to contribute their talents for self and mutual help. Some parents serve as tutors of interests groups. For example, the new arrivals are good at sports, and they can teach the children. It is expected that they will develop mutual help network (CIIF project worker, 29/06/2005:3).

Adopting a complementary approach to address the needs of the community enhanced the social inclusion. Through the service delivery, the participants and community members developed closer connections with each others.

To build up social capital, it is crucial to identify community needs. Once the needs are identified, we can re-allocate the resources within this community (CIIF project worker, 06/04/2005:2).

Our community is facing a 'seven, four, one' issue, i.e., a 70 years old father, a 40 years old mother, and a young child. The father and the child are Hong Kong residents, however, the mother can only visit Hong Kong from time to time. The incapability of the old father in taking care of the young child is conducive to family problems. In responding to the social needs, we have launched 'soup delivery' service at a low price. In delivering the soup to the elder father, our volunteer also has greetings with him. They chat and share the daily life experience. They are getting closer to each other with a sense of belonging to the community (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:10).

In terms of product sponsorship, business operators were more likely to be linked up if their potential customers are the same as those of the project organization.

Our existing networks with hospitals attract cooperation with business operators, as they are able to get direct contacts with their potential customers easily. After the launch of CIIF projects, we offer different talks and activities to parents with their children. Such direct contacts with the parents are viewed as golden opportunities to their promotion (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:6).

8.6 Reasons for Failure

The inadequacy of capacity building reduced the opportunity for the participants to be engaged in the community.

The post-natal mentors have not worked in the working population for a long time. They do not have solid experience. Even jobs are offered to them, they are not confident in taking up the job. Undoubtedly, they are not the core members (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:11).

Failure in recruiting dedicated participants to the project affected adversely the effectiveness of the CIIF projects. It did not only reduce the number of participants being involved in the projects, it also handicapped the development of bonding social capital.

CIIF project workers should not be involved too much in the project at the later stage. The participants should take the initiative to organize and coordinate themselves. Commitment of the participants is crucial to the success of sustaining social networks. However, the participants have to rely on project workers heavily in coordination and arrangement (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:12).

I found difficulties in selecting suitable participants. In the interview, they said they have enthusiasm, and are committed to work as mentors. In fact they are not (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:14).

We are worried about the small number of core members. Most of the participants are unwilling to contribute to the Centre, and take up responsibility. They don't want to devote time in helping the organization for coordination and networking (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:15).

Lacking a base to provide a hub for project participants to gather and hold functions hindered seriously civic engagement of the community. Both the scope and extent of involvement of community members were limited. Activities, which aimed at facilitating collective actions and mutual supports, failed to function properly, and resulted in weak bonding social capital.

We don't have a base in the community. Our participants cannot walk in a Centre, and gather together. We can only solely rely on our existing networks with churches and schools, etc. We used to set up mobile booth to make known to the community members. ... However, it is ineffective. The community members have no idea about our organization. They do not believe us as we are not perceived to be a part of their community (CIIF project worker, 07/04/2005:3, 10).

The number of family participated is below our expectations. Thus, the number of family (used to receive services and now changing its role to service givers) is also limited. It is only about 2 to 3 families (CIIF project worker, 07/04/2005:3, 12).

As we do not have a base, the stored value bankbook in encouraging voluntary works does not function well. For example, we cannot give the recognition immediately after their completion of voluntary work. They can only record themselves for our verification when we meet (CIIF project worker, 07/04/2005:3, 13).

The relationship among project participants is weak (CIIF project worker, 07/04/2005:3, 14).

9. Other Observations

CIIF project workers appraised 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 advices, they show sincerity in our project and follow our work closely (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:17).

The CIIF Secretariat had organized a series of forums, sharing sessions and workshops for the sharing of experience and the exchange of information. These facilitated the CIIF project workers in the implementation of CIIF projects.

Sharing in the annual forum and workshop is perceived to be useful to CIIF workers. Though the depth of sharing can be improved, experience sharing is very important to us (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:17).

Most of the CIIF projects faced difficulties of lacking manpower and resources in implementation and operation.

Insufficient resources and manpower are provided for this project (CIIF project worker, 05/04/2005:18).

My observation is the project organization has limited resources to organize more activities in terms of scale and number (Business, 10/07/2005: 7).

If more manpower and resources could be provided, the extent of achievement would be expected to be much more significant (CIIF project worker, 28/04/2005:26).

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the CIIF-funded projects have promoted the development of social capital in Hong Kong. Different strategies, including the building up of the capacity of marginalized individuals and groups, changing the mindset from passive acceptance of welfare to the delivery of social service, building up networks between different groups with diverse backgrounds, and enhancing joint efforts among the government, business and the third sector, were launched and implemented over the past few years. It is found that bonding social capital has developed within groups with shared objectives and similar backgrounds. Collaboration across different organizations (bridging social capital) has also been actively pursued. However, the collaboration between the business sector and the third sector (linking social capital) was still weak. During the interviews with business operators, two collaborating business partners mentioned that they had never heard of CIIF. Considering the importance of business involvement, more dialogues with the business sector would ensure wider dissemination of information concerning the roles and works of CIIF. Invitation of collaborating parties in the working and/or steering committee of the project will also be helpful in facilitating the collaboration of different sectors.

It is observed that mutual care and trust were being established in the community. Both qualitative and quantitative findings reveal that cognitive social capital has built up among project participants/members and volunteers. Undoubtedly, the concept of mutual assistance and reciprocity has not been disseminated well to all project participants. Qualitative findings further reveal that some of them were not prepared to give help in return for receiving help.

The mean score in the level of willingness in participation in community-based activities was higher than 0 for project participants, volunteers and service recipients, indicating an increase in the willingness in participation in community-based activities than that in the past. Through the engagement in different activities, they were better empowered, and have formed a strong sense of satisfaction. Social inclusion has been improved by taking away the labels of the marginalized groups in the community. However, it is important to note that there is room for the enhancement of social inclusion. Quantitative figures indicate that the differences in education attainment, wealth possessions, social status, gender, age, religious beliefs and ethnic background tended to divide people in the community to a certain extent.

Consistent with the conceptual framework of the present study and that of the World Bank, positive correlations were found between structural and cognitive social capitals, and – importantly – between these two forms of social capital and collective action. Although the positive correlations between social capitals and collective action do not mean that collective action results from social capitals in the causal sense, they lend support to theoretical arguments that posit the flow of impact from social capitals to collective action. Of the two kinds of social capital, cognitive

social capital in particular was highly correlated with collective action, suggesting its primary importance.

Based on critical success and failure factors that have been identified, on-going and future CIIF-funded projects can make use of the best practices to implement and promote the development of social capital. For this purpose, it would be valuable to document the success and failure factors from the present study as well others for wider discussion and dissemination. Such a document would also facilitate the preparation of proposals for CIIF funding. By raising the quality of these proposals, it would help to raise the success rate of proposals while maintaining the standards of the vetting procedure. This triangulation of research-applicant-CIIF collaboration would be beneficial to the responsible and effective use of public money for promoting social capital and social inclusion. In the longer run, both applicants and the people whom they propose to serve would benefit from the higher quality of the proposals. The success and failure factors also suggest that the vetting procedure alone is no guarantee for the eventual success of a project. Hence, the importance of on-going involvement of CIIF in particular projects to share the cumulative and collective wisdom that has accrued from the experiences of past years. The converse side of this argument is that provided a supportive and mentoring system is in place, applicants should be encouraged to make bold, innovative, experimental proposals for funding and be vetted accordingly.

Since most of the CIIF projects faced the difficulties of lacking manpower and resources in implementation and operation, it is recommended to review the funding formula from time to time.

More dialogues among the government, the business sector, and the third sector were helpful in strengthening the tripartite partnership. It is recommended to focus on the gaining collaboration with big enterprises, and followed by small and medium sized enterprises as most of the small and medium sized enterprises have no idea on the corporate social responsibility. More promotion on this idea seems to be required.