

**The CIIF Evaluation Consortium**

**Final Report for**

**Evaluating the Outcomes and Impact of**

**The Community Investment and Inclusion Fund  
(CIIF)**

**For**

**Health, Welfare and Food Bureau**

**By**

**Wai-fong TING**

**Hong Kong Polytechnic University**

**6th March 2006**

## Executive Summary

Project Title:

***A study to document the process and mechanism of social capital development and to measure the impact of social capital on the lives of project participants who belong to the socially and economically disadvantaged groups.***

The objectives of the study are:

1. To document the process and mechanism whereby social capital is built among the disadvantaged groups;
2. To measure objectively the impact of social capital on the overall well-being or quality of life of people from the disadvantaged groups;
3. To understand the subjective perception of the impact of social capital on the lives of these groups of people.

Two categories of CIIF projects are being included in the present study. Among them, four projects focus on building social capital of the communities of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and seven projects focus on enhancing the social capital among the socially and economically disadvantaged young people in Hong Kong. The followings are the summary of findings and recommendations.

1. Findings:

a. Mechanism for Social Capital Building

- Methods used to group participants:
  - Pairing up of individual participants with another individual
  - Connecting one group of participants with another group
  - Connecting groups of participants with the wider community
- The Utilization of Groups to connect people/communities
  - Volunteer groups
  - Skills learning groups
- Involvement of Different Community Sectors
  - Professional volunteer groups
  - Business vendors
  - Non-government Organizations/other CIIF projects
  - Government Organizations

b. Social Capital Outcomes at the Community and Group Level

- Relationships are built amongst the project participants/communities but its intensity varies according to the duration and mechanism through which these relationships are built.
- Collaboration across organizations in the community is common and in the form of ‘one-off’ and the more ‘inter-woven’ types. Projects do

- engage in both types of collaborations.
  - Mutual help occurs at different levels and among different groups within and beyond the boundary of the CIIF projects. Content of mutual aid include information exchange, tangible support, intangible support on a reciprocal basis. The longer the project is in operation, the more the variety and the higher the intensity of mutual help among groups of project participants.
  - Among all the projects, ‘institutional arrangements’ have been well planned and implemented for the development of mutual aid. Among these arrangements, purposively formed groups are found to be very conducive for the development of positive interpersonal relationship and mutual help.
- c. Social Capital Outcomes at the Individual and Group Level
- Norm of trust, both the generalized and the particularized types are found to be at quite high level in both groups of participants. While there is no obvious post-participation increase in the level of trust, there are still some positive developments.
  - Norm of reciprocity again exists among the two groups of participants. It is notable that other groups of participants rated themselves lowly on their ability to help but tendency to offer help is very high. While the Ethnic Minority (EM) group has low expectation on their help to be reciprocated; the young people have a stronger belief in reciprocity. Again there is no obvious post-participation increase in the level of reciprocity; there are still some positive developments.
  - The social networks of Ethnic Minority people are composed mainly of immediate family members whereas young people (YP) tend to have a wider network which includes school/workmates, professionals, etc. While domestic responsibility and language barrier is a major obstacle for Ethnic Minority people to expand their social network, participation in CIIF projects enables them to increase their social networks. For both groups of respondents, primary social networks provide most financial support whereas the tertiary (including the CIIF project operators) social network provides the most emotional support. There is a decreasing trend in support seeking/providing in both groups after their participation in the projects. This shows a tendency to change from other-reliant mode to being self-reliant in the various aspects of their lives.
  - The EM participants tend to be rather concerned about what is happening around them in the society where they live while the young people demonstrate a medium-low level of civic activeness. Although participation in the projects seems to have raised the civic participation of Ethnic Minority people, language barrier remain a hurdle to further development. There are still some young people who demonstrate concern for the different aspects of life in the city where they live.
  - The EM respondents score consistently high in all the measurements of life satisfaction including Quality of Life Profile (SQLP), Subjective Happiness Scale, Life Orientation, indicating they are a group of happy go lucky people who are satisfied with their life. Young people score consistently lower than that of the EM but are still above the mid-point,

indicating that at this stage of their life, there are a lot of anxieties and uncertainties which they need to worry about. Both groups' scores remain unchanged after their participation in the CIIF projects, suggesting maybe the interval between two measurements is too short for detecting changes in fundamental life orientation/values.

- Both groups of participants demonstrate changes at the attitudinal and behavioural aspects. These changes reported by participants, project workers and partners such as mentors or instructors, indicate participation in the project is conducive to the positive changes in their lives.
- There are a number of factors found to be conducive to the positive social capital outcomes. In particular, positive attributes of project workers and participants and organizational factors. Other factors found to be non-conducive to positive outcomes include the lack of understanding of social capital, inadequate training of EM worker, the cultural and gender beliefs of EM people, lack of experience on the part of both workers and organization to work with CIIF and new partners as well as insufficient resources.
- Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:
  - To practitioners/Organization Management/Project Managers
    - Effective strategies for building up social capital include –
      - ❖ Group of all kinds, as long as its ultimate objective is outward looking, that cultivate trust, mutual help, civic awareness and participation;
      - ❖ Programmes that engage partners from different sectors, preferably with a long standing kind of relationship;
      - ❖ Programmes for the EMs have to address the primary language barrier to be more effective;
      - ❖ Strategies for EMs should be more sensitive to their cultural, religious as well as current life contexts;
      - ❖ Programmes for the EMs have to demonstrate respect for each other's culture rather than cultural imposition;
      - ❖ Programmes for YPs should be able to identify their 'alternative and multiple talents';
      - ❖ Programmes for YPs should be able to solicit the support and recognition of family members and significant others as ways to sustain YPs' motivation;
      - ❖ When and wherever possible, involving the family of participants should be encouraged as it is their main source of social support.
    - Staff quality matters – recruit the right one;
    - Engage the project staff as early as possible - in the planning stage;
    - Facilitate/provide training to staff on the theory and practice of social capital;
    - Facilitate/provide training to staff on how to work with new partners: funding partners, business partners, mentors, and EMs;

- Facilitate/provide training to staff in new strategies: marketing, performing arts, business operation, etc.;
- Solicit additional fundings/resources from third parties, e.g. corporates;
- Build up connections and collaborative relationships with other sectors in the community for joint venture in the CIIF projects.

➤ To CIIF

- Cultivate equalitarian partnerships;
- Promote mutual trust and support;
- Keep up the good spirit: culture/practice of non-rigid reporting and accept qualitative data;
- Strike a good balance between “conveying/sharing with operators on what works and does not work?” and “imposing on them what works (the copy and paste approach)”;
- Open up / communication channels that are not ‘task-oriented’;
- Address the queries/worries/anxieties raised by the project workers;
- Appreciate the positive developments occurring in the projects;
- Lend understanding to the unique situations and difficulties that different projects might have;
- Facilitate/provide training to project workers on the concept and practice of social capital;
- Be more considerate in funding, taking care of the difficult financial/personnel situations many organizations are facing.

➤ To Academics

- Find/provide space in teaching the theory and practice of social capital;
- Provide on the job training to staff on how to work with new partners: funding partners, business partners, mentors, EMs;
- Facilitate/arrange student placement in the CIIF projects;
- Conduct further research either individually or collaboratively on the topic of social capital;
- Facilitate the EM workers to obtain professional training

## VIII. Conclusion and Recommendation

### 8.1 Summary of Findings

Having presented the voluminous research findings, it is now timely to draw up conclusion and make recommendation for the reference of the relevant parties.

Social capital is being examined along three dimensions, namely cognitive (norm of trust, norm of reciprocity), structural (social networks) and civic participation in the present study. Our research team has attempted to find out, in the chosen 11 CIIF projects, if social capital is indeed being built; with what mechanism and how; if social capital exists, does it impact on the life, and in what ways, of the project participants. To capture these data, the research team has adopted several approaches including participant observation, questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews. A summary of the major findings is presented here.

#### 8.1.1 Mechanisms for Social Capital Building

##### a. Methods used to collectivize participants/other people:

- Paring up of individual participant with another individual, e.g. mentorship scheme
- Connecting one group of participants with another group, e.g. mixing the new arrivals groups with ethnic minority groups
- Connecting groups of participants with the wider community, e.g. youth dance/band groups are connected to perform in community events

##### b. The utilization of groups as means of connecting people:

- Volunteer groups
- Skills learning groups

##### c. Involvement of different community sectors:

- Professional
- volunteer groups
- Business vendors
- Non-government organizations/CIIF projects
- Government organizations

### 8.1.2 Social Capital Outcomes at the Community and Group Level

#### a. Relationship amongst the project participants/communities

The nature and intensity of the relationship amongst project participants/community vary, depending on the duration of the relationships and the mechanisms through which these relationships are built. For relationships that are built for over three months and the contact among them is regular or frequent, the intensity is stronger and more vigorous than those in which contact is infrequent or ad hoc. All the projects have developed groups and the relationship built among the group members are strong and serve as a fertile group for the development of trust and reciprocity among group members.

#### b. Collaboration across Organizations

The nature of collaboration ranges from ‘one-off’ to the more ‘inter-woven’ types. There seems to be a correlation between the types of organizations (whether they are more or less formal) and the nature of the collaboration. It seems that the less formal the organization, the deeper and longer the collaboration between them and the projects (and their participants) while the more formal the organization, the collaboration tends more to be more superficial and less lasting.

#### c. The Emergence of Mutual Help:

Mutual help occurs at different levels and among different groups within and beyond the boundary of the CIIF projects. The nature of mutual help occurs along a continuum of activities range from simple information exchange, tangible support to longer term and intangible support on a reciprocal basis. The longer the project is in operation, the more the variety and the higher the intensity of mutual help among groups of project participants.

#### d. Institutional Arrangements for Mutual Help

Among all the projects, ‘institutional arrangements’ have been well planned and implemented for the development of mutual help and these include the paring up of individuals, matching of individual with groups and matching one group with another. Among these arrangements, purposive formed groups are found to be very conducive for the development of positive interpersonal relationship and mutual help.

#### e. The Improvements on the Capabilities of and Opportunities for the Participants

Both groups of projects (for ethnic minorities and young people) employ extensively the learning/teaching of different kinds of skills (for interest, for employment or both) as means to equip the participants' work-related skills and to widen their social circle and increase their participation in new social networks. Both measures are found to be advantageous in improving the capabilities and opportunities for the participants.

### 8.1.3 Social Capital Outcomes at the Individual Level

Although the present study has designed a questionnaire which intends to be a systematic pre/post study that enables one to capture the changes in both the cognitive and structural social capital among the CIIF project participants. With careful analysis and inference, these data can shed light on the CIIF projects' respective effectiveness in achieving positive (or negative) social capital outcomes. However, due to several circumstantial factors, the resultant quantitative findings can only serve as a reference point instead of definitive conclusions. Nonetheless, together with the qualitative data we have generated in the participant observation and in-depth interviews, we can still confidently draw up the following conclusions:

#### a. Cognitive Social Capital:

- Norm of Trust:
  - Both the quantitative and qualitative data point to the rather high level of trust particular trust among the project participants. However the level of generalized trust seem to be moderate only (the EM participants are higher than the YPs);
  - The participation in the projects may have contributed to the increase in some aspects of trust though the increase is statistically not significant;
  - However, qualitative data does show us that participants, especially the EM people, benefit from participation and one aspect of these is the increase in trust towards both acquaintances and strangers, or particularized and generalized trust.
  
- Norm of Reciprocity:
  - Both the EM and YP participants believe there is a mutual care/attention between them and the people in this city;



- Their tendency and motivation to offer help to others is very high (again the EMs are higher than YPs);
- While they see the value and derive satisfaction from helping others, the EMs do not expect these help to be reciprocated, whereas the some of the YPs do have this expectation;
- When others offer them help, both groups of participants tend to reciprocate;
- Given the rather disadvantaged socio-economic positions of these two groups of participants and the other (e.g. familial) obligations they have, there is a very high tendency among them to offer their time and money for endeavors that bring benefits to the wider community;
- Both groups of participants, despite their motivation to help, are not confident that they have the ability. After participation in the projects, the YPs' self-perceived ability increases quite a lot.

b. Structural Social Capital – Social Network:

- EMs' social network is composed mainly of people coming from the immediate family, such as father, husband, brother-in-law. This is mainly due to:
  - Most of the participants/respondents are married females; as a cultural practice, most EM married women do not work outside of home;
  - As a result of language barrier, most of the EM females are not able to build up relationship with other people who do not speak their language (mostly Pakistanis and Nepalese);
- After participation in the projects, EMs are able to expand the nexus of their social network which includes new members of CIIF projects, project workers and other participants;
- YPs' social network is composed mainly of family members, friends (from school, work and from the CIIF projects) and social workers. After participation in the projects, other project participants and mentors/instructors also enter into their social networks as members;

- For both groups of respondents, primary social networks provide most financial support whereas the tertiary (including the CIIF project operators) social network provides the most emotional support;
- There is a decline in support seeking/providing in both groups after their participation in the projects. This indicates the possibility of changing them from other-reliant to self-reliant in the various aspects of their lives.

c. Civic Participation:

- The EM participants tend to be rather concern about what is happening around the society where they live. They score 4.72 (out of 10) in the Civic Participation Index. Their scores rise quite a bit to 5.45 after participation in the projects;
- The YPs demonstrate a medium-low level of civic activeness (3.44) which indicates in general this group of young people do not care much about what is happening around them. Unlike the EM participants, their Civic Participation Index remains more or less the same after participating in CIIF projects;
- The EM, mostly women, use most TV news and newspaper as their channels of getting to know the world whereas the YPs rely more on the internet to get news;
- The language barrier is the major hurdle that prevents the EMs to become more active civilian.
- There are indeed some YP respondents who do care about this society.

d. Impact on the Life Experience of CIIF Projects Participants:

- Life Satisfaction:
  - The EM respondents score consistently high in all the measurements: Quality of Life Profile (SQLP), Subjective Happiness Scale, Life Orientation, which includes the Pessimistic Life Orientation Index and Optimistic Index, indicating they are a group of happy go lucky people who are quite satisfied with their lives;

- The YPs score consistently lower than that of the EMs, but are still above the mid-point, indicating that at this stage of their life, there are a lot of anxieties and uncertainties which they need to resolve.
  - Both groups' scores remain unchanged after their participation in the CIIF projects, suggesting maybe the interval between two measurements is too short for the detection of shifts in such fundamental life orientation/values.
- Observable Changes at the Attitudinal and Behavioral aspects:
    - The EM participants are observed to be:
      - More outward oriented and less home-bound;
      - More cheerful;
      - More confident;
      - More interested to know about the local cultural;
      - Being more on time;
      - Expanded social networks;
      - More resourceful;
      - Overcome some language barrier;
      - More willing and ready to participate in volunteering;
      - More open and willing to mix and cooperate with local people.
    - The YPs are observed to be:
      - More confident and active;
      - More discipline and stable life pattern;
      - More willing to learn;
      - Have a clear purpose in life;
      - Improved temperament, more polite and patient;
      - More responsible and mature;
      - Improved family relationships;
      - Equipped with work skills and talents
      - Have good relationship with mentors
      - More willing to listen to others' opinion.

#### 8.1.4 Success Factors

- Positive attributes of project workers:
  - Concern for the underprivileged;

- Open-mindedness and take up new challenge in new context of practice, e.g. multi-culture, business partners, etc.;
- Creativity in developing new strategies to overcome constraint
- Hard-working and stamina in tackling difficulty;
- Good skills – communication, team work, promotion, marketing
- Resourceful;
- Positive attributes of project participants:
  - Eager to participate and explore new experiences if the chances are right (EM);
  - High life satisfaction and do not ask for much (EM);
  - Willing to offer oneself to help others (EM).
- Organization:
  - Have good connection in the community;
  - Good fame/name;
  - Able to obtain the participation of the business sector.

#### 8.1.5 Difficulties/Constraints

- Worker's attributes:
  - Conceptual/practice gap
  - Unstable manpower, insufficient supply of EM workers with appropriate qualification
  - Lack training for project staff of EM origin
  - Language barrier, time and resources consuming (for EM projects)
- Participant's characteristics:
  - Cultural practices not facilitate participation, volunteering, etc. (EM)
  - Language barrier (EM)
  - Rigid gender role specification (EM)
  - Heavy familial obligation (EM women)
  - Low socio-economic status - e.g. struggle for a stable job, no money to participate in activities
  - Inter-group competition
  - Local people do not have time and motivation to mix with EMs
  - Young people too unstable and still in drift, not knowing what they want

- Organization:
  - Geographical location – too far away from target population
  - No experience in running the CIIF kinds of programmes
  - irreconcilable differences between project operators and business partners
  - Insurmountable difficulty in working with new partner, e.g. business partners
  - No experience in working with funder like CIIF
- Resource factors:
  - Staffing under-provided
  - Lack of space to accommodate staff and hold programmes/activities
  - Duration of funding for some project is too short to accomplish the objective

### 8.1.6 Recommendations to:

#### **a. Practitioners/Organization Management/Project Manager**

- Strategies that are found effective and desirable in building up social capital:
  - Group of all kinds, as long as its ultimate objective is outward looking, cultivate trust, mutual help, civic awareness and participation;
  - Programmes that engage partners of different sectors, preferably with a long standing kind of relationship;
  - Programmes for the EMs have to address the primary language barrier;
  - Strategies for EMs should be more sensitive to their cultural, religious as well as current life context;
  - Programmes for the EMs have to address the principle of respect for each other's culture rather than cultural imposition;
  - Programmes for YPs should be able to identify their 'alternative and multiple talents';
  - Programmes for YPs should be able to solicit multi-support and recognition as ways to sustain YPs' motivation;
  - When and wherever possible, involving the family of participants as it is the main source of social support.
- Staff quality is all that matters – recruit the right one;
- Engage the project staff as early as possible - in the planning stage;
- Facilitate/provide training to staff on the theory and practice of social capital;
- Facilitate/provide training to staff on how to work with new partners: funders, business partners, mentors, and EMs;
- Facilitate/provide training to staff on new strategies: marketing, performing arts, business operation, etc.;
- Solicit other fundings/resources from third parties, e.g. corporates;
- Build up connection and collaborative relationship with other sectors in the community for joint venture in the CIIF projects.

#### **b. CIIF**

- Cultivate equalitarian partnership;
- Promote mutual trust and support;

- Keep up the good spirit: culture/practice of non-rigid reporting and accepts qualitative data;
- Strike a good balance between “conveying/sharing with operators on what works” and “imposing on them what works (the copy and paste approach)”;
- Open up / communication channels that are not ‘task-oriented’;
- Address the queries/worries/anxiety raised by the project workers;
- Appreciate the positive developments of the projects;
- Lend understanding to the unique situations and difficulties that different projects might have;
- Facilitate/provide training of project workers on the concept and practice of social capital;
- Be more considerate in funding, taking care of the difficult financial/manpower situations many organization are facing.

**c. Academics**

- Find/provide space in teaching the theory and practice of social capital;
- Provide on the job training to staff on how to work with new partners: funders, business partners, mentors, EMs;
- Facilitate/arrange student placement in the CIIF projects;
- Conduct further research either individually or collaboratively on the topic of social capital;
- Facilitate the EM workers to obtain professional training.