

Eastern District Council

Building an Inclusive Society with Social Cohesion – Support Full Integration of Persons with Disabilities into Society

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP) and the strategic directions of the future development of rehabilitation services. It also solicits the District Council's support of the relevant strategies and collaboration to promote an inclusive culture.

Background

2. The new RPP was completed in 2007. The review and compilation spanned two years, during which views and comments were collected from the whole rehabilitation sector. Recommendations set out in the RPP will form the basis for various sectors of the community, including the District Councils and community organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), the business sector and the Government, to forge collaboration with persons with disabilities (PWDs) and to facilitate their integration into the community.

3. Despite facing certain limitations and challenges in some aspects

of life, PWDs* do have special skills and talents in different areas. Given suitable opportunities, just like everybody else, they can also contribute to the society. Through a comprehensive range of effective measures, we strive to develop the potential of PWDs and create a barrier-free environment, with a view to ensuring that they can enjoy equal opportunities and facilitating their full participation and integration into society.

Strategic directions

4. It requires the collaboration of all sectors to build an inclusive society for all. The new RPP sets out two strategic directions to promote full integration of PWDs into society:

- (1) to promote cross-sectoral collaboration in providing a barrier-free environment and diversified services for PWDs so as to facilitate their integration into society; and
- (2) to empower PWDs and their families to become valuable social capital.

To facilitate integration of PWDs into society

5. It requires the collaboration of all sectors to facilitate integration of PWDs into society. Efforts can be made in the following ways:

- (a) full support of the District Councils is required in identifying suitable sites for provision of various rehabilitation services in the community to enhance people-oriented service and provide one-stop support to PWDs in the community, with a view to facilitating their

* PWDs include Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, physical disability, mental illness, Specific Learning Difficulties, speech impairment, visceral disability and visual impairment.

living in the community with their families and friends;

- (b) to provide a barrier-free environment for PWDs to facilitate their free access and participation in community activities;
- (c) to promote employment of PWDs to encourage their self-reliance; and
- (d) to take into account the needs of PWDs and the idea of inclusiveness in organising various community activities so as to encourage participation of PWDs.

Barrier-free environment

6. A barrier-free physical environment to permit the free access of PWDs to all buildings and use of public transport is important in facilitating their full integration into society. We recommend the District Councils to adopt the following measures:

- (a) to make collective efforts in improving community facilities, including public places, shops and restaurants, etc, so as to enhance the accessibility of PWDs; and
- (b) to step up publicity and education to enable people in the community to have a better understanding of barrier-free access.

To promote employment of PWDs

7. It requires the collaboration of all sectors to promote the employment of PWDs. The success of this policy will not only

encourage the self-reliance of PWDs, but will also boost the corporate image of the employers, enlarge the pool of talents for recruitment, enhance staff development and team building and acquire more business opportunities, thereby facilitating the building of an inclusive and harmonious society. To achieve this, we sincerely look forward to the full support of the District Councils in encouraging the enterprises and organizations in the community:

- (a) to adopt an open attitude in employing PWDs and provide PWDs with on-the-job training opportunities. The Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department stands ready to provide free recruitment services for employers;

Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department

Hotline: 2852 4801(Hong Kong) / 2755 4835(Kowloon) /
2417 6190 (New Territories)

Website: <http://www.jobs.gov.hk/isps>

- (b) to procure goods and services from rehabilitation social enterprises, the Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) of the Social Welfare Department is ready to provide one-stop support service in sourcing quality goods and services provided by PWDs:

Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) of Social Welfare Department

Hotline: 2835 1933

Website: <http://www.mcor.org.hk/>

To encourage PWDs to participate in community activities

8. We also appeal to the District Councils and other organizations in the community for taking into account the needs of PWDs in organising various community activities and encouraging them to actively participate in mainstream activities. In addition, we would like to seek the District Councils' continued support in organizing activities with the theme of "inclusiveness" to drive home the message of "a society for all". Examples such as the "Caring Environment Recognition Scheme" held last year and the annual event of the "International Day of Disabled Persons", both have gained vigorous support of the district councils.

Way forward

9. We look forward to a close and continuous partnership with the Eastern District Council to enhance the idea of inclusiveness in the community and to work together towards the building of a harmonious, inclusive and caring society.

Rehabilitation Advisory Committee
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