

Commission on Poverty visits Sham Shui Po Community Living Room (with photos/video)

The fifth-term Commission on Poverty visited the first project under the Pilot Programme on Community Living Room, the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room, this afternoon (January 4). Members were pleased to learn that the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room only took half a year from conception to implementation, and it had fully incorporated members' views, thereby achieving the aim of improving the quality of life of sub-divided unit households.

The Sham Shui Po Community Living Room has commenced operation since December 2023. It will operate for a period of three years and is expected to serve at least 500 sub-divided unit households, with about 80 000 attendances a year. The Sham Shui Po Community Living Room is led and promoted by the Government with operating costs funded by the Community Care Fund. An experienced social welfare organisation is engaged to operate it, and the venue is provided by the Sino Group/Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation free of rental and management fees. This fully reflects the characteristics and advantages of the tripartite collaboration among the Government, the business sector and the community under the current-term Government's targeted poverty alleviation strategy.

During the visit, members were pleased to note that the Sham Shui Po Community Living Room provides additional living space for sub-divided unit households, and is equipped with daily living facilities including the self-service laundry, the shower cubicles, the children's corner and the sports facilities. It also provides information and talks on diet and nutrition, healthy exercises as well as household safety, and makes referrals to suitable community services based on their needs. In addition, members took the opportunity to chat with beneficiary households and learnt that they were very satisfied with the diversified facilities and heartwarming services provided by the Community Living Room.

Households residing in sub-divided units are one of the target groups for targeted poverty alleviation identified by the Government and the Commission on Poverty. The Pilot Programme on Community Living Room is steered by the Government as a targeted poverty alleviation project launched in response to the needs of sub-divided unit households, and is supported by the Commission on Poverty. The Government will continue to give full play to the synergies of the Government, the business sector and the community, and identify other appropriate venues to develop Community Living Rooms for the benefit of more grass-roots families under the targeted poverty alleviation strategy.

In addition, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, updated members on the progress of other targeted poverty alleviation projects:

(1) Enhanced Strive and Rise Programme: The graduation ceremony of the first round of the Programme and inauguration of the Alumni Club were held in November 2023. Mentees who completed the Programme have been awarded a scholarship of \$5,000 to apply the financial planning concepts, followed by alumni activities. The enhanced second round of the Programme was launched in October 2023, with the number of mentees increased to 4 000 and coverage expanded to include Secondary Four students;

(2) School-based After School Care Service Scheme: As of mid-December 2023, over 50 primary schools in Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long districts had participated in the Scheme. The Scheme allows students to stay after school to receive care and homework guidance, thereby alleviating the pressure on parents to look after them. Social development activities after the homework guidance can also help relieve students' stress; and

(3) Supporting singleton or doubleton elderly households: Starting from the first quarter of 2024, the Government will engage the Care Teams in Tsuen Wan and Southern districts as pilots to arrange visits and contacts for elderly (including singleton, doubleton and three-person-and-above elderly) households. The Care Teams will refer cases with welfare needs to relevant social welfare units for follow-up.

Members took note of the progress of the projects and discussed how best to enhance the implementation details to better suit the needs of the target groups for targeted poverty alleviation.



