

**Minutes of the meeting of  
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC)  
held on 27 November 2007 at 9:30 am  
at Room 1007, Citibank Tower  
3 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong**

**Attendance**

**Present**

Dr Joseph KWOK (Chairman)

Mr Raymond LEE (Vice-Chairman)

Prof Chetwyn CHAN

Mr CHEUNG Tak-hai

Mr Herman HUI

Dr James LAM

Mr Lawrence LEE

Dr Ernest LEE

Mr Hansen LEE

Mrs Olivia LEUNG

Mrs Jackie MA

Mr Kim MOK

Mrs Connie LO

Ms Ann SO

Mr David TSE

Ms Jane TSUEI

Mr Anthony YEUNG

Dr Daisy DAI

Chief Manager  
(Primary & Community Services)  
Hospital Authority

Mrs Agnes LI	Chief Social Work Officer (Rehabilitation & Medical Social Services) 1 Social Welfare Department
Mrs Fanny LAM	Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration & Support) Education Bureau
Mrs YU LAW Siu Man	Principal Education Officer (School Administration and Support) Education Bureau
Dr Catherine LAM	Consultant Pediatrician (Child Assessment Service) Department of Health
Miss Eliza LEE	Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare) 1
Mrs Mary MA	Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Ms Elia WONG (Secretary)	Assistant Secretary for Labour & Welfare

In attendance

Mr Patrick CHOW	Senior Labour Officer (Selective Placement Division) Labour Department
Ms Ada HIN	Executive Officer (Rehabilitation) 1 Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with apologies

Prof TANG Siu-wa  
Dr Margaret CHUNG  
Mr IP Kwok-chung

**I. Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting held on 11 September 2007**

Members had no further comment on the revised minutes of the last meeting, which were then taken as confirmed.

**II. Matters arising**

2. **The Administration** updated Members that while the Administration would continue to persuade public transport operators to discharge their corporate social responsibilities in offering concessionary fares to persons with disabilities for social integration, the Chief Executive also agreed to consider subsidizing the concession with public money and would come up with a decision in two months' time.

3. The **Secretary** reported that the new *Design Manual – Barrier Free Access* had just been finalised, and would be sent to the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services as requested. The Buildings Department was preparing the draft drafting instructions to bring the requirements set out in the Design Manual into legal effect.

**III. Policy initiatives relating to the rehabilitation services announced in the 2007-08 Policy Address [RAC Paper 8/2007]**

4. The **Secretary** briefly introduced the new and on-going rehabilitation-related initiatives announced in the Policy Address. She added that these initiatives were part of the Administration's measures to implement the recommendations of the *2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan* (RPP).

5. In reply to two members' enquires on the initiative to re-engineer the community support services for persons with disabilities and their carers, **the representative of SWD** said that the initial plan was to consolidate all existing community support services to provide one-stop service under one roof. Members would be informed of details once they were worked out.

6. **A member** suggested including arts and cultural programmes for persons with disabilities as a part of the services of the future community support services centres. The **Chairman** supported the idea, and further suggested that artistic elements be incorporated into the planning and renovation/fitting-out stage.

7. In response to a member, **the representative of SWD** said that the transitional care and support centre (TCSC) was a new pilot project yet to be commenced. The objective of the TCSC was to provide rehabilitation training to those patients who were ready for community living and therefore not all tetraplegic patients would receive service there. **the representative of HA** added that only those patients who were assessed, by the medical teams of hospitals, to be suitable to return to community living after transitional residential care at the centre would be referred to the TCSC.

8. **A member** enquired about the project of the community rehabilitation day centres (CRDCs), including its development strategy and division of labour with the Hospital Authority, etc. **The Administrator** said that the project adopted a neighbourhood concept aiming to enable targeted discharged patients to continue to receive rehabilitation care and support in the community, for enabling their early hospital discharge, and deferring the need for return to hospitals or seeking residential

rehabilitation services. **The representative of SWD** said that targeted patients would receive the necessary medical treatment in hospitals, and on their return to community living, they would be referred to one of the CRDCs for rehabilitation services.

9. **A member** was of the view that more CRDCs should be set up to achieve the effect of proximity. He also said that the current sequence of arranging patients to receive rehabilitation training after the completion of their medical treatment was not a must. He considered that, instead of such edge-to-edge practice, patients could return to the community from hospitals even before completing all medical treatment, and this could facilitate their earlier re-integration into the community.

10. In reply to a member's enquiry, **the Administration** explained that the Rehabus programme provided three kinds of services:

- (a) point-to-point scheduled services (for taking persons with disabilities who could not use public transport services to and from work or school);
- (b) feeder route services (running between hospitals and certain pick-up points); and
- (c) dial-a-ride service (for taking passengers to social and other activities with advance booking).

To meet the rising demand for the Rehabus service, the Administration would continue to identify new resources to increase the fleet size.

11. Separately, **the Administration** told Members that a new pilot

project – Accessible Hire Car – sponsored by the Jockey Club Charities Trust would be launched in early 2008 with 20 accessible hire cars solely for the service of persons with disabilities. In parallel, the Administration welcomed taxi operators to bring in accessible taxis for use by the public.

#### **IV. Overall plan for launching and implementing the 2007 Rehabilitation Programme Plan [RAC Paper 9/2007]**

12. The **Secretary** briefly introduced the paper.

13. The **Vice-chairman** said that the Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation would follow the strategy set out by the RAC when deciding on the annual theme for its public education programme. For next year, its theme would be on promoting the RPP and tripartite partnership to facilitate social integration of persons with disabilities, with a focus on encouraging employment and self-reliance of persons with disabilities.

14. **A member** added that, the Sub-committee, comprised of members from the media, public relations and other relevant sectors, could spearhead the formulation of an overall publicity strategy and the launching of a promotional campaign for the RPP. He said that he had discussed with a number of organisations, including the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), for coordinated efforts in promoting the RPP.

15. **A member** said that large corporations usually had an in-house team attending to its corporate social responsibility issues and recruitment matters. The Sub-committee on Employment would focus its efforts on soliciting the support of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), as they usually had less means to acquire such information. He suggested

matching the concepts of volunteerism and rehabilitation. The Sub-committee on Employment would work with the SWD and its Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Services to provide a platform for volunteer teams to match with rehabilitation self-help groups. In parallel, he would also work closely with the **Vice-chairman** in support of the overall publicity campaign.

16. **The representative of SWD** said that SWD had organised a recognition scheme for volunteer partners of rehabilitation self-help groups. SWD could consider promoting the self-help groups to the SMEs through the Steering Committee on Promotion of Volunteer Service. **A member** supported targeting volunteers, as she noted that many volunteer teams had difficulty identifying service projects and beneficiaries. She also said that it would be most effective to start with appealing to human resources personnels.

17. **A member** said that the HKCSS and its Caring Company programme would strongly support the RAC in the promotion of the RPP, and looked forward to closely collaborating with the RAC Members and different organisations to achieve synergy. She added that, from her past experience, a successful campaign required good branding, continuous follow-up efforts, as well as a comprehensive, coherent, systemic and well-organised series of publicity events. There were a lot of charitable organizations willing to collaborate in organising activities. However, such programmes were usually one-off and their impact could not be sustained. Therefore, it would be desirable to work towards establishing long-term partnerships.

18. **A member** said that since the theme of the campaign would have a focus on employment related issues, the Caring Company could be an

ideal platform, with which the Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation could co-organise a large-scale publicity event. **A member** said that both direct and indirect employment (i.e. goods and services of persons with disabilities) should be promoted. **The representative of SWD** said that the Marketing Consultancy Office under the SWD had planned to kick off a “SEPD” (Support the Employment of People with Disabilities) branding campaign next year to promote the products and services of persons with disabilities. To achieve synergy, relevant programmes could also tie in with the Vice-Chairman’s above-mentioned overall publicity campaign for promoting self-reliance of persons with disabilities.

19. **An attendee** introduced the services provided by the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department (LD) in supporting persons with disabilities in open employment and promoting the employment of persons with disabilities among employers. He highlighted LD’s annual flagship programme in recognising enlightened employers. He also introduced a series of printed and electronic publicity and information materials produced by the LD to encourage and support employers to recruit persons with disabilities. He said that based on his experience, SMEs were usually more receptive to these messages, whereas the recruitment rates of persons with disabilities in large corporations could be low. Therefore, efforts should also be made targeting these large-scale companies.

20. **This attendee** noted that many other parties, such as the HKCSS, SWD, Vocational Training Council, Employee Retraining Board and rehabilitation NGOs, were also providing similar services and organising various award schemes for promoting employment of persons with disabilities in parallel. In response to the **A member**’s enquiry, **this**



**attendee** said that the scale of the employment service of the LD to persons with disabilities remained the largest in Hong Kong, with a total of 10,000 job vacancies posted, and a total of 3800 to 4000 job seekers with disabilities registered with the Selective Placement Division of the LD each year. As at end-October, about 2400 of these registered job seekers with disabilities had been placed in employment this year and the successful placement rate was as high as 72%.

21. **This attendee** considered that while consolidating the promotional efforts of different parties could create a much bigger publicity impact in the community, there were also advantages for each party to continue with its work making use of its own employer network. Also, with more award programmes, more companies of different scales could be acknowledged in the various recognition schemes. Consolidating all the award schemes into a big one would be very difficult as each scheme had its own objective and criteria. Nevertheless, consideration might be given to coordinating a timetable for the different programmes to create a sustained publicity impact.

22. **A member** said that the LD had been providing good services and support, which should be further promoted so that more employers could learn about them. There was a need to synergise the publicity efforts of all partners working in this area to generate a greater impact.

23. **A member** opined that previous discussions had focused too much on appealing for philanthropy as if employing persons with disabilities were a charity, which should actually be considered as an issue of human resources and stigmatization. The RAC should also be concerned about the vocational training and employment services for persons with disabilities in preparing them for employment. **The**

**Administration** said that there was already in place a comprehensive programme for the employment of persons with disabilities, starting from specialised vocational training, counselling, provision of different levels of work opportunities, to referrals and post-placement service, etc. At present, the major area requiring more attention was to get the employers to understand the work ability of persons with disabilities and to accept them as their employees.

24. **A member** added that the views of the Sub-committee on Employment was that persons with disabilities were not asking for privileges, but equal opportunities for them to demonstrate their abilities. In the course of promoting this concept, the issue of corporate social responsibilities would inevitably be brought up.

25. **A member** shared with Members, what he gathered from his contacts, a number of unsuccessful experience of companies that employed persons with disabilities. Basically, there were two main difficulties faced by employers of persons with disabilities:

- (a) more and more jobs were required to travel to the Mainland, and employees with disabilities could not meet such requirement; and
- (b) peers and colleagues were not supportive to working with employees with disabilities.

He considered that the publicity campaign should target both employers and peer groups.

26. **The Administration** said that the key messages of the promotion

campaign should always be “equal opportunities”, “inclusiveness” and “recognition of good practices”, while other supporting messages could be adopted subject to the focus of different programmes.

27. As regards young people, **the representative of EDB** said that under the current “Integrated Education” policy, students were taught along the concepts of inclusiveness and equal opportunities. In the long run, upon their graduation, they would embrace the concept of inclusiveness and equal opportunity principles when interacting with persons with different abilities. Whereas for the time being, it could be useful to target the management of over 1,000 schools, which could make a substantial impact on creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Education Bureau (EDB) could arrange for the RAC to appeal to the major consultative bodies, school councils, and other relevant parties, for support in employing persons with disabilities. In addition, when EDB organised seminars and experience sharing sessions for school principals and teachers, they would also bring out the concepts of the RPP.

28. **A member** said that children should be given opportunities to be in contact with peers with different abilities, as direct contact could be conclusive to developing accurate perception. Therefore, it was very useful for special schools to establish partnership with mainstream schools.

29. As regards the employment of students with special needs upon graduation, **a member** said that her special school offered work attachment programmes for its graduates. She had also been encouraging other schools to offer placements for these graduates to take up assistant roles. **This member** added that it was also very important for students to acquire the concept of work and be used to making efforts at a young age. **This member** said that she hoped that more companies could provide internship

opportunities to students with special educational needs, and sought RAC Members' support in promoting such initiative.

30. The **Chairman** concluded that the RAC would work on a large-scale launching event with concrete action plan for sustained publicity impacts to promote the RPP. He appealed to all RAC Members to mobilise their contacts of different sectors to support the campaign and to actively participate in the promotional programmes.

## V. **Report by the Sub-committee on Employment and the Sub-committee on Arts and Culture**

### *Sub-committee on Employment*

31. **A member** reported that the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services suggested to cut the subvention of NGOs that did not set up an employment indicator for persons with disabilities, and failed to achieve a 2% ratio for employing persons with disabilities. The Sub-committee on Employment had discussed the issue and Members were not in support of the suggestion. Their considerations were –

- (a) deduction in subvention would only lead to a reduction in service quantity and quality. The ultimate sufferers would be the service recipients;
- (b) punishment was not an effective measure, as it would only lead to stigmatizing persons with disabilities being a burden, rather than recognizing them as an asset. The objective should be promoting the abilities of persons with

disabilities and recognizing the good practices of employers.

32. The Sub-committee also discussed the issue of minimum wages, and considered that such measure would inevitably impose negative impacts on the employment opportunity of persons with disabilities. The Sub-committee had explored various proposals on instituting an assessment mechanism to exempt persons with disabilities from the minimum-wage requirement if the latter had to be made mandatory, but none appeared to be applicable in Hong Kong.

33. **The Administration** supplemented that the setting of an employment indicator was entirely on a voluntary basis. As requested by the LegCo, the then Secretary for Health and Welfare in 2003 wrote to encourage all organisations subvented by the Government to –

- (a) adopt measures for employing persons with disabilities, with reference to the practice of the Civil Service Bureau;
- (b) set an indicator of the percentage of persons with disabilities employed by each of these organizations; and
- (c) disclose the numbers of employees with disabilities in their annual reports.

The Administration conducted a follow-up survey every two years since then to assess the progress of each organisation in implementing the above recommended measures. Out of the 295 subvented bodies in total (176 of which were welfare NGOs), only 9% of them had disclosed the numbers of employees with disabilities in their annual reports. Among the 20 welfare

NGOs receiving the largest amount of subvention, only four of them had set an indicator, and six of them did not respond to the survey. The Legislative Council was dissatisfied with the survey result, and requested a clear timetable and route map for forcing all the subvented bodies to reach the 2% target for employing persons with disabilities.

34. In response to a member's question on why the NGOs were not able to set up and reach such an employment indicator, **a member** explained that –

- (a) some employees with disabilities did not want to be labelled as disabled, as they considered their job-related capabilities on a par with their peers;
- (b) it was difficult for employers to make all employees declare their disabilities unless relevant employees required special accommodation at work;
- (c) when employers attempt to take stock of their employees with disabilities, it might be easier for them to notice visible physical disabilities, but it would be very difficult to identify those with invisible disabilities, such as mental disorders; and
- (d) it was hard to define “disability”.

35. The **Chairman** said that NGOs should take up a more active role and be our partner in promoting to the business sector good practices in the employment of persons with disabilities. **A member** opined that subvented organisations should provide the figures requested, whereas the

figures could have different interpretations. **A member** said that it would be hard to enforce the reporting practice, if there were no consequence to it. **Another member** said that instead of punishment, organisations that did not meet the requirements could be identified for discussion of their problems at appropriate forums to encourage them to take positive actions.

36. **A member** said that the HKCSS supported the setting of a clear employment indicator, while it also recognised the need to strike a balance with regard to the issue of privacy. She said that there could be many ways to generate the requested figures, and the figures reported did not need to be exhaustive. She said that based on her experience, it would require a lot of follow up actions in order to obtain figures and information from NGOs. She further suggested to include the reporting of relevant information as a requirement in the Lotteries Fund and other funding applications.

37. The **Chairman** said that direct employment was not the only way to support the employment of persons with disabilities. It would also be useful to encourage the subvented organisations to procure goods and services from rehabilitation NGOs and social enterprises.

#### Sub-committee on Arts and Culture

38. **A member** reported that in response to the public consultation on the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), the Sub-committee on Arts and Culture discussed and generated a number of suggestions, for further consideration by the RAC. The views of the Sub-committee were –

- (a) the WKCD would be a landmark of the era in Hong Kong, and therefore, when designing it, one should bear in mind

the vision of inclusiveness. Both its software and hardware should be capable of providing a platform for persons with different abilities to participate in arts together. Due to longevity of our population, the demand for barrier-free facilities also increased. If the WKCD could realize the vision of inclusiveness and encourage full integration of persons with different abilities, the project could help to elevate the international reputation of Hong Kong, and enhance Hong Kong's image as the Asia's World City;

- (b) at the early stage of planning the project (including drafting the design briefs), relevant steering committee, working group and consultative mechanism should include in their memberships persons with disabilities or persons who were familiar with the arts of the latter. This would help to ensure that the facilities of the WKCD, including transportation, access and venues, etc. could accommodate the needs of all persons, and that the development of arts programme and other support at the WKCD, including manpower training, could take into account the views of persons with disabilities; and
- (c) to encourage persons with disabilities to take part in arts and cultural activities, the future management of the WKCD was recommended to adopt the current practices of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in providing half-priced concessionary fares to each person with disabilities and one companion attending WKCD's performing arts programmes and other fee-charging



activities, as well as concessionary rates for persons with disabilities renting WKCD's venues and facilities.

39. **Members** endorsed the views and the **Chairman** agreed to forward the above views on behalf of the RAC to the Home Affairs Bureau for consideration.

#### **VI. Any Other Business**

40. **A member** appealed to Members' participation and support for the Presentation Ceremony of the Caring Environment Recognition Scheme cum Opening Ceremony of the International Day of Disabled Persons (IDDP) 2007 to be held on 9 December 2007 (Sunday).

41. **A member** introduced an orientation and mobility training manual recently published by the Hong Kong Society for the Blind. The manual set out the standards and guidelines for orientation and mobility trainers of persons with visual impairment and persons designing barrier-free facilities. **This member** also invited Members to the first Music Inclusion Concert to be held on 27 December 2007 organized by the Hong Kong Society for the Blind.

42. The **Chairman** said that the Secretary would be on maternity leave soon. During her leave, Members could contact Ms Ada HIN for matters related to the RAC.

Secretariat  
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee  
December 2007