

Study on the Funding Needs of Women Non-Government Organizations In Hong Kong

Executive Summary

By The Preparatory Committee of Hong Kong Women's Fund 2003

Background of the Preparatory Committee of Hong Kong Women's Fund

In December, 2001, a group of women met to discuss the set up of a Hong Kong Women's Fund to support the development of women's work in Hong Kong. A Preparatory Committee was set up and applied start up fund from overseas funders. In November, 2002. The committee received funds from Mama cash in the Netherlands and a donation from Hong Kong Women's Coalition on Equal Opportunities for carrying out its preparatory work. In March, 2003, the Committee received another grant from the Global Fund for Women in the United States.

In the course of preparing for the set up of the Hong Kong Women's Fund, the Preparatory Committee launched two projects on Funding Models and Funding Needs of Women NGOs in Hong Kong. The two projects started in October, 2002 and the initial findings of the studies were completed in June, 2003.

In July, 2003 the Preparatory Committee held an open Consultation Meeting with women NGOs to discuss the studies' findings and collected opinions from the participants. Over 30 participants attended the meeting.

Background of the Study

At present, Hong Kong does not have any specific fund for independent women's NGOs. The funding sources are either subvention from the government, mainly on welfare service provisions or from Trust Funds (locally and overseas), for women's work, projects, or capital expenditure. The Preparatory Committee realized the lack of funding support to women's work, which affects the future development of women and women's rights, hence to conduct a study on the funding needs of women's NGO in Hong Kong, aiming to gather information for the future setting up of the Hong Kong Women's Fund and give reference to designing future funding strategies.

Objectives of the Study

1. To understand the funding needs and problems of women's work in Hong Kong.
2. To give recommendations on the funding needs and problems.
3. To provide information on the funding situation of women's work as a reference for the setting up of Hong Kong Women's Fund.

Methodology

Both questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used to gather information from organizations carrying out women's work in Hong Kong. The questionnaire aims to identify the general situation of the nature of work on women, issues that they are tackling, sources of funding, allocation of funds and problems they are facing. The in-depth interviews aim to look into more detail and more specific the funding problems they encountered in carrying out women's work especially the different difficulties that they face from different sources of funding.

Work Schedule

1. Compiling a database of women NGOS and formulation of scope of study	Nov, 2002
2. End out a simple questionnaire and a letter (to introduce ourselves and our aim of the study) to seek information from the above groups/organizations about their: - nature of work - serving targets - funding needs	Jan, 2003
3. Inviting the above groups / organizations to participate in this study	Jan. 2002
4. Gather data and process data	Feb. – April 2003
5. Carry out In-depth Interviews	
6. Data analysis, drafting of report	April - May, 2003
7. Internal Discussion by the preparatory committee of HKWF	June, 2003
8. Consultation Meeting with the NGOs and seek for their recommendations	July, 2003
9. Revised the study and finalize the report	Sept, 2003

Findings of the Study: Findings of the Questionnaires

Data Collected

Total number of responding questionnaires : 24

Total number of organizations responding : 23

Total number of service units /organizations : 28

Number of questionnaires from women's organizations ; 10

Number of questionnaires from social service organizations : 9

Number of questionnaires from Others(including trade unions, health center, etc) : 5

Although the responding number of questionnaires completed only covers a low percentage amongst the organizations working with women, the representation of the organizations according to their

background and nature is significant. As from the responding organizations, it covers an equal weighting of social service organizations working on women's work and that of women's organizations with different perspectives on women's work. Also, other nature of organizations including trade union, religious institute, women health center also was included. Therefore, the data can serve as a reference information to provide a representative picture of the overall funding situation of women's work.

Overview from the responding data:

Women's Work

1. Large diversity on the issues concerned in women's work.
2. The distribution of activities are with main concentration on employment, health, family roles and social network. Activities on issues related to the minority groups are very little.
3. Activities conducted by social service sector are mainly on employment, health education, parental roles, and social network. For women's organizations, activities are more diverse and most of the activities related to campaign and advocacy work as well as minority issues and sensitive issues such as sex work, sexuality are carried out by these organizations.

Funding situation

1. Main source of funding to support women's work is from local NGOs funders, such as Community Chest, Jockey Club, Oxfam, or private foundations.
2. In the social service sector, and mainly on employment, social network and family role, there are work supported by the govt. or govt. supported funding source. Those activities are mainly for the goals on direct service, and individual growth and development.
3. Comparatively, social service sector have more activities with regular funding source while women's organizations sector have most of their activities on project basis.
4. Only the women's organizations sector have received funding support from overseas and none from social service sector. The overseas funding are for the support of advocacy and campaign work and also supporting the minority issues such as sex orientation, sex work, and those in the "others" category, which includes trade union and on sexuality.
5. Most of the responding organizations, no matter the activities are on regular or project basis face financial difficulty. The specific difficulties will be elaborated in the list out findings.

Overhead Cost

1. Social service sector have funding supported by govt. (over 70%) but the range is very great (from 5% to 100%) and within the responding women's organizations only 30% is able to received funding support by govt.
2. 40% of the women's organizations received support from overseas and cover a great percentage of their overhead cost.
3. Both social service sector and women's organizations rely significantly their overhead cost on local NGOs funders.

4. Self fundraising for overhead expenses in social service sector is more prominent (40% raise more than 10% of their overhead cost) and in women's organization, only 10% is able to fundraise over 10% of their overhead cost.

Findings of In-depth Interviews – A Summary Based on the Funding Source and the Difficulties encountered

Summary of the Findings of In-depth Interviews

Funding Source	Problems face by NGOs and women's organizations	Impact on women's work and women's movement	Recommendations
1. Government subvention – e.g. community centre	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only limit to their scope related to the existing service provision structure 2. Will be replaced by Integrative Service Mode 3. No category on women service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rely on the agency's supervisors' support or the agency's directors' support to the work 2. Survive on a breakeven basis – some programs and classes have to gain money for running gender awareness programs/classes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Need for support on administrative cost and staff cost 4. Support Pilot projects or work that fill in the service gap 5. Support funding on advocacy and campaigning work 6. Support to small and marginalized sector 7. Co-organizing projects with universities, e.g. on research 8. Need for fundraising skills
2. Special Scheme by supported by SWD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project basis 2. Need to meet their definition of successful target 3. Restrictions and constrains – not allow to say things against the government 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of continuity 2. Uncertain 3. Disguise agency's identity on advocacy and campaigning work 4. Activities were being banned 5. Extra inputs on meeting the targets and providing figures and statistics 	

<p>3. Employees Retraining Board</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limit to skills training programs 2. Need to meet their definition of successful target 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survive on a breakeven basis 2. Sacrifice those classes on gender awareness and women's rights activities for those cannot balance off the expenses 	
<p>4. Big Private Foundations such as Community Chest, Jockey Club</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cutting funds drastically 2. Less flexible to meet the needs of women as they have to meet the funders' expectations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shrinking administrative support 2. Reduce staff and regular expenses 3. Not to start pilot projects due to lack of administrative support 	
<p>5. Other Foundations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Small amount 2. Project basis – lack of continuity and cannot be in-depth work 3. Mostly do not include administrative cost / staff cost/ facilities 4. Mostly on charity basis, even need to disclose the recipients' identity 5. Need Government's recommendations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Great competition 2. Uncertain and short term 3. Loss of human dignity 4. Cannot afford to maintain due to lack of support on administrative cost and staff cost 5. Either work along with the government or pressurize them to give support 	
<p>6. Overseas Funding</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stop funding because Hong Kong regarded as developed country 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Marginal/sensitive issues and feminist orientation work lack of funding to continue their projects 	

<p>7. Self Fundraising</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Established agencies will not allocate donations to women service which is regarded as secondary comparing to mainstream service 2. Women service is regarded as part of family service 3. Public do not identify with the vision of gender equality and feminist orientation 4. Lack of staff to work on fundraising 5. Lack of sources 6. Lack of expertise 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very little activities on self fundraising for women's work with women orientated approach/ feminist approach 	
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Analysis and Recommendations of the Study

I. An Overview of the Women's Work in Hong Kong

The Setting and Nature of Work : Social Service NGOs and Women's Organizations

In this study, there are two different settings in carrying out women's work. One is carried out by independent women's organizations and the other setting is by social service organizations that carry out work through women's team/unit or service projects. In terms of nature of work that carried out for women or with women, there is a variety of ways to tackle issues related to women ranging from direct provision of service and resources, running mutual support groups, delivering training courses, to gender awareness raising and advocacy and campaigning work. The work ranges from individual enhancement to policy change.

Issues Concerned : More Diverse in Women's Organizations

There is a great diversity on the issues concerning women's work. The distribution of activities is with main concentration on employment issue, health education, parental roles and social network building. Most of the above issues are taken up by social service organizations running service for women. For women's organizations, activities are more diverse and most of the activities related to campaign and advocacy work as well as minority issues and gender sensitive issues such as sex work, sexuality issues are carried out by these organizations.

The Vision : Family oriented / Individual Enhancement / Feminist oriented

From the in-depth interviews, it shows the nature of women's work that carried out is greatly related to the organization's vision towards women's work. The organization with a family oriented perspective in perceiving the role of women defines their work to further women's needs to fulfill their parental roles and their roles within the family. Therefore, women services include vocational training, courses on parenting skills and even family life education activities. For organization with the vision of individual enhancement to women, women are perceived as an individual and their work is to enhance their independence and personal growth. Work related to vocational skills training, self employed project, and classes to build up their individual capacity, etc. As for organizations with the vision of striving for gender equality and with a feminist perspective, their work can vary from gender awareness raising courses to policy advocacy and campaign work. With this perspective, sensitive issues concerning women's sexuality and sex issue are also their focus of work.

II. Funding Situation of Women's Work

Political control through Allocation of Funding Resources : Rely mainly on private charities, government support selectively

From the study, the *main source of funding to support women's work is from established charitable funders such as Community Chest, Jockey Club or even Oxfam Hong Kong. Very little support from the government_*(only 30% of the responding social service organizations get support) Some also get funding from small private funders but mostly on project basis. In the social service sector, and mainly working on issues related to employment, social network and related to women's family roles with the aim of providing direct service, for individual growth and development, those work are supported by the government or government related funding source. Comparatively to the women's organizations, *social service organizations have more activities with regular funding source while women's organizations have most of their activities on project basis.*

Mainly Project basis support and gender issues being marginalized

Women's organizations also receive funding support from local private funders but mostly on project basis, only a few with family perspective or for women's individual growth and development can obtain financial support from government related funding such as Employees Retraining Board. *Women's organizations working on gender equality and gender sensitive issues especially with a strong feminist orientation are difficult to get funding support locally, therefore, they have to rely on overseas funding support,* whereas within social service organizations, none receives funding from overseas.

Most of the organizations, no matter the activities are on regular basis or project basis face funding difficulties. The specific difficulties are illustrated in the chart in Appendix I. To summarize the current situation, since most of the women's work depends on the support of established private funders such as Community Chest and Jockey Club, they are facing tremendous funding cut. A lot of women's work or service as they are not being considered by the organizations as their priority of mainstream service, will not be subsidized by their self fundraising donations. Women's organizations with the vision on promoting gender equality and fighting for women's rights also are facing great difficulties because overseas funders regard Hong Kong as a developed country and funding has been cut completely, including overhead cost. They are being marginalized to survive on local project basis funding which may include some running cost such as staff salary and small donations from private foundations. Self fundraising is not easy because of the charity culture and there are lack of fundraising skills and extra staff resources to carry out fundraising work.

Women's Space Restricted to Traditional Roles Through Resource Allocation

As to conclude, most organizations running women's work are facing difficulties in getting funding resources as women are being seen as secondary within the charity world except when women are being seen as within the family and performing the family roles. Funding situation is greatly related to one's vision towards women's work, and for those with the vision on promoting

gender equality and feminist orientation to strive for women's rights, (with different strategies that range from educational to advocacy and campaigning work)they are the worse in obtaining funds to further their work.

Apart from the ideological difference that affect one's funding situation within the local context, it is also worth mentioning that one's political bargaining power is important as some established funding resources allocation is under the discretion of the government influence. An example of this is when the government employment policy emphasis on retraining programs, women organizations who are willing to carry out those activities are more likely to get funding support. Another example is when the government is being pressurized by women activists for not responding to women's needs, they can find private funding to support project runs by feminist organization.

III. Funding Needs and Recommendations from the Respondents:

Support to Maintain the Survival

From the respondents, no matter they are from social service organizations or women's organizations, they are all facing difficulties in raising fund for overhead running cost including staff cost. The situation is more serious within organizations with a feminist vision as they are facing overseas funding are cut completely and they have no other sources to support these expenses. As for others, they still can survive on some support from established local private funders although they still face funding cut. Second, is the need for financial support on pilot project especially those related to small and marginalize sector, Also project working to fill in the existing service gap needs support. Other recommendations are seeking support in learning fundraising skills and finding new sources of funding. Lastly is recommending the funding relationship between funders and grantees shall be on partnership basis and one of the respondents recommended a lum sum grant to project so that they can have more flexibility.

IV. Special Role of the Women's Fund in Hong Kong and Our Vision

Our Vision in Response to the Study Findings

1. Creating New Space for Women

To raise to the general awareness of the role and status of women among people in Hong Kong society, through educational activities as well as through funding and advocacy activities, which will lead to a greater appreciation of the specific needs and contributions of women to the society, and promote the human rights of women. ***To identify and engage sources of support***, including funding, within and outside of Hong Kong, for women's organisations in HK, and to channel those resources to women's organisations in HK

2. Supporting the Voices of Women especially those being marginalized - *To identify the different resource needs, including funding, of various women's organisations in Hong Kong*, paying particular attention to those groups and issues, which are neglected and less, funded.
3. Creating a New Culture of Philanthropy - *To advocate for a new culture of philanthropy in HK*, which will be based on commitment to supporting women's efforts to achieve their set objectives, as well as respect for the diversity of programmes and strategies among women's organisations.