

Public Libraries Advisory Committee
Summary of Discussion of the 49th Meeting Held on 4 March 2024

Business Plan of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (2024-25) (PLAC 1/2024)

1. Members noted the report and made the following suggestions:
 - (a) To analyse the reasons for the drop in e-book usage in 2023 as compared with 2022.
 - (b) To explore the trends and change in library visits and the possible attributing factors by comparing relevant data before the pandemic in 2018 and 2019.
 - (c) To lend example from libraries in Japan and the Mainland where libraries were turned into tourist spots without impacting on library services while cultivating an atmosphere of a reading city. For example, setting up photo-taking spots in newly-built libraries.
 - (d) To draw reference from overseas experience and turn libraries into learning and reading space for the public. To appeal to members of the public who were keen on pursuing knowledge to visit libraries and utilise library resources for conducting in-depth research and thematic studies, as brief and quick information could be easily accessible on the Internet today.
 - (e) To give priority to physical books when developing children's collection as parents of kindergarten students would have reservation on children reading e-books owing to eye health consideration. To formulate improvement measures to address the issue of long waiting time of about five years for popular e-books as revealed by news reports.
 - (f) To enhance the storytelling elements and relevance to daily life in library activities of different themes in order to attract readers, for example, inviting speakers to share their first-hand experience and stories when organising activities on Chinese culture.

- (g) To collaborate with relevant sectors or organisations in activities on specific themes to create synergy.
- (h) To make use of big data to analyse the borrowing habits and interested topics among readers of different age groups so as to formulate and plan for future reading activities.
- (i) To vibe with the first-ever “Hong Kong Reading Week” by organising large scale publicity campaign. To enhance promotion of literary exhibitions and library events to attract visitors from the Greater Bay Area.
- (j) To hold fringe activities in line with the themes of library events to make them more appealing and interesting. For example, organising traditional Chinese costumes or tea ceremonies activities to promote Chinese culture; introducing elements such as robots and pets like cats and rabbits into the delivery of library services to attract readers.
- (k) To organise pop-up library events at night or hold night-time library reading activities to encourage public participation after working hours. To allow participants to bring their pets during these library activities could deepen interest in reading and create closer bonding to the library.
- (l) To install self-service kiosks at railway stations in the future to facilitate the use of library services by the public.
- (m) To reduce the space for bookshelves to provide more library space for reading, exhibition and public participation purposes so as to meet readers’ needs.
- (n) To organise activities connecting participants of library creative writing competitions past and present so that they could build a network with children and teenagers, thereby help upkeeping their good mental health. To hold events with new organisations to bring about a refreshing experience with new elements. For example, convenience stores could be invited to co-host creative writing activities.

Updates on the e-Resources of the Hong Kong Public Libraries (PLAC 2/2024)

2. Members noted the report and made the following suggestions:

- (a) To explore ways to enhance readers' interest in English reading and encourage them to make good use of information in English. To organise themed promotion of English books by, for example, inviting prominent figures to introduce and promote in international schools the reading of e-books.
- (b) To promote English e-resources of libraries at schools so that students could make good use of the existing rich resources when engaging in interdisciplinary learning or writing book reports.
- (c) To promote popular e-book genres, such as comic books, with a view to increasing the appeal of children's e-books and building a wider readership.
- (d) The demand for e-book reading among senior secondary students and the general public was expected to increase amidst the coming of the AI era. Public libraries could make use of technology to promote lifelong learning and assist citizens and young people in obtaining proper information. Expanding the e-collections could reduce the demand for physical collections, thereby freeing up library space for the provision of reading and activity area for readers.
- (e) To enhance the accuracy of the keyword search function of the library database and improve its interface design. To enrich the e-book collections, and enhance its search function.
- (f) ChatGPT has brought profound changes to search engines. Public libraries could consider providing information source of search results by drawing reference to BING, the search engine launched by the Microsoft Corporation. To make use of AI technology in future in book recommendation that based on the needs of readers and provide real-time book search service so as to foster a culture of lifelong learning.