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Public Libraries Advisory Committee
Summary of Discussion of the 34th Meeting Held on 12 February 2019

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Work Plan of Hong Kong Public Libraries (2019-20) (PLAC 1/2019)

1.   Members noted the Work Plan of Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) (2019-20) and made the following comments:

   (a)   For promotion of reading culture among children –

   (i)   To consider extending the thematic block loan service from kindergartens to junior grades in primary schools;

   (ii) To deploy more innovative ways to promote reading among small children so as to build up the element of "Enjoy" in the branding of HKPL; and

   (iii) To enrich library collection and organize different types of activities so as to help parents utilise library resources to strengthen their children's capabilities apart from reading through parent-child reading.

   (b)   For promotion of reading culture among the elderly-

   (i)   To consider extending the thematic block loan service to the elderly;

   (ii) To build library collection and organise activities targeting specific areas of interest of different age groups of the elderly;

   (iii) To recruit the elderly as storytelling ambassadors, and to consider enhancing collaboration with non-government organizations in promoting reading among the elderly; and

   (iv) To engage customer service ambassadors to provide assistance to the elderly in using new e-services and other library resources.

(c) For extension activities, members made the following suggestions:

    (i) To organise more diversified activities targeting the young generations so as to cultivate their sense of belonging to HKPL with reference to the literary competitions;

    (ii) To engage the public in the design of mobile libraries to boost publicity;

    (iii) To organise activities related to the popular hobbies of the teenagers so as to increase the appeal of writing and reading;

    (iv) To broadcast live streams in libraries featuring parents and their children sharing the books they read and their reading experience as a means to promote parent-child reading and create talk of the town; and

    (v) To establish connections among book lovers through arranging regular book club meetings.

(d) For the enhancement of publicity and the release of information on library services and plans –

    (i) To disseminate information on thematic block loan service for kindergartens to stakeholders through email or mobile phone text message apart from posts on the HKPL website;

    (ii) To collaborate with District Councils in promoting library services and plans with an aim to publicising the rich library collection and resources in respective districts more extensively;

    (iii) To better utilise the platforms on the internet and other social media; and

    (iv) To collaborate with other government departments in promoting thematic library collection corresponding to the subject of their activities to achieve synergy.

(e)   For the long-term development of HKPL, members suggested, in line with the Government's "Smart City" development, increasing new technology facilities, investing resources in the development of digital humanity, and consolidating different forms of library resources so as to facilitate readers in obtaining information in a more comprehensive manner.

Review of Pilot Scheme on Extension of Library Opening Hours (PLAC 2/2019)

2.   Members welcomed the pilot scheme on extension of library opening hours with the introduction of "staff-less library" mode of operation, and made the following comments:

(a)   To enhance the promotion of the pilot scheme so that more members of the public are aware of the relevant arrangements;

(b)   To reconsider extending the opening hours during Sundays and public holidays as the relatively low usage during the extended hours might be attributed to the fact that the public were not aware of the scheme;

(c)   To select pilot libraries carefully taking into account different needs of different districts. The scheme may start with one pilot library before extending to other libraries after review of effectiveness and gauging views from the public;

(d)   To consider limiting zones for access during the extended opening hours, and to explore the feasibility of outsourcing venue management to enhance cost effectiveness;

(e)   To carefully consider the duration, service areas and facilities for use in the extended opening hours as with reference to the experience of libraries in other countries, it was shown that 24-hour library service was not effective; and

(f)   To consider making the reading area more comfortable so as to

attract readers to use library services at the night time.

Smart Library System (PLAC 3/2019)

3.	Members noted the progress in implementation of the Smart Library System, and made the following comments:

(a)	To create positive first-time user experience and encourage readers to use self-service facilities, service ambassadors could be engaged to assist the public in the use of facilities and promotion of the facilities could be enhanced;

(b)	To attract readers to participate in reading programme and write book reviews through creative ways so as to generate publicity out of readers' communication; and

(c)	To explore the feasibility in applying Radio Frequency Identification technology in mobile libraries apart from the pilot project of "Joyful Reading at Your Neighbourhood: Library-on-Wheels".

Secretariat of Public Libraries Advisory Committee
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