

Message from the Chairman of the Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee

Dear Friends,

The Ping Wo Fund (“the Fund”) was established in September 2003 with a view to financing preventive and remedial measures to address gambling-related problems. Over the years, the work of the Fund has received unfailing support from you/your organizations. The Fund will enter its 10th year in 2013. As Chairman of the Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee (“the Committee”), I take this opportunity to share with you the achievements of the Fund over the past few years.

Research and studies on gambling-related problems

One of the major objectives of the Fund is to finance research and studies into problems and issues relating to gambling. In 2011, the Fund financed a Study on Hong Kong people’s participation in gambling activities and the findings were released in early 2012. The drop in prevalence rates of possible problem gamblers and possible pathological gamblers was encouraging. We attributed this to the dedicated efforts of the counselling and treatment centres for gamblers and the generally heightened public awareness towards gambling-related problems.

Public education and publicity programmes

The findings of the Study also confirmed the importance of publicity and public education efforts, especially those targeting young people. This brings me to introduce the Fund’s publicity efforts in the community.

2010 was a year of significance to the Fund, as we embarked on a major publicity drive to promote responsible gambling before and during the 2010 World Cup period. Starting from 2009, a territory-wide public education campaign called “Do Not Gamble” (做個不賭快樂人) was rolled out. The campaign comprised a series of activities, e.g. mascot design competition and inter-school football matches which appealed to the interest of the youngsters. The matches attracted over 1 000 students from around 100 schools.



(Do Not Gamble Kick Off Ceremony)



(mascot design competition)



(Do Not Gamble Fun Fair)

The finale programme “Do Not Gamble Fun Fair” that took place on 12 June 2010 did not put an end to our efforts. We also broadcast a new Announcement-of-Public-Interest (API) targeting football betting on television, buses, trains and in shopping centres; we launched short TV promo-episodes on a free television channel; and we posted advertisement banners on popular websites.



(Advertisement banner)

In 2011, we continued our publicity efforts targeting the youth. A 1.5-minute “magazine-type” programme on the negative impact of excessive gambling, in particular online betting and casino betting, was produced and broadcast through the RoadShow platform during the summer vacation period.

Acknowledging the impact of TV publicity, we launched a new TV drama series called “A House of Gamblers”(賭海迷徒) from March to April 2012 on a free TV channel. As you may know, the programme is a classical production which has adapted real life examples. We feel proud to see that the new series has ranked second at the 2012 TV Programme Appreciation Index Survey (1st stage) amongst 80 TV programmes.



(A House of Gamblers Press Conference)



(A House of Gamblers captured)

We are also glad to note that the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) has been working with the Committee hand in hand. In 2012, the Bureau not only produced a new set of APIs named “Gambling Addiction can make you lose everything” (沉迷賭博賠上一切) for broadcast on TV and radio, the TV API was also arranged for broadcast at vessels travelling between Hong Kong and Macau and the ferry terminals concerned.



(API - Gambling Addiction can make you lose everything)

Ping Wo Fund Sponsorship Scheme and Ping Wo Fund School Project Grants

To prevent problem or pathological gambling behaviour, we must attach importance to education programmes for the younger generation. Since 2009/10, we have launched the annual Ping Wo Fund Sponsorship Scheme to provide funding for sponsoring non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations to conduct public education programmes and activities which aim at preventing and alleviating gambling-related problems. Priority is given to programmes that target at youth. Programmes supported under the sponsorship scheme include wargame competition, roving drama shows, workshops, exhibitions and production of teaching kits etc. The Sponsorship Scheme has provided around \$8.1 million of funding support to 40 projects since its implementation.



(Ping Wo Fund Sponsorship Scheme Activities)

Since 2010/11, we have launched another annual sponsorship programme known as the Ping Wo Fund School Project Grants which aims to provide fixed-grant sponsorship to schools to organize educational projects/activities on prevention or alleviation of gambling-related problems among students. The School Project Grants has provided around \$0.26 million to support 103 projects.

Counselling and treatment and remedial services for problem and pathological gamblers

The Fund has been financing counselling and treatment centres for problem and pathological gamblers since its inception in 2003. The four centres currently financed by the Ping Wo Fund and operated by Caritas – Hong Kong, the Tung Wah Group

of Hospitals, Zion Social Service Limited and Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service respectively have provided effective remedial support to problem and pathological gamblers as well as their family members in need. Annual funding support for the four treatment centres has been increased from \$9.6 million in 2009 to \$11 million in 2010 to 2012. We are glad that in light of their excellent performance, Lutheran and Zion has each been awarded new service contracts to continue to operate their centres starting 2013.



(The Four Treatment Centres)

Conference

Hong Kong is definitely not alone in addressing gambling-related problems. In September 2010, the Fund sponsored the 3rd Asian Pacific Problem Gambling and Addictions Conference organized by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals. Held in June 2011, the Conference attracted some 300 local and international practitioners in the area of problem gambling and addiction treatment. It served as a platform for knowledge exchange and networking for Hong Kong and international practitioners in combating problem gambling.



Future Plans

While the Fund has been receiving the major sum of donations from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Football Betting Limited and a number of generous donors, it has also benefited from donations from the general public. The above-mentioned efforts entailing an annual expenditure at around \$15 million could not have been possible without these general support.

We have already started to plan for our work for 2013 and beyond. Amongst other things, we plan to put more focus on high-risk groups such as practitioners in industries which require split-shift working hours.

We will continue to cooperate with relevant government departments, including the Education Bureau, the Police and the Social Welfare Department and the NGOs, particularly the youth and community organizations, in launching further education campaigns to remind the young people not to engage in excessive or illegal gambling.

Looking further ahead, we will plan for a major publicity campaign in the run up to the World Cup 2014.

Once again, thank you for your meaningful contributions to the work of the Fund and we count on your continued support to our work in the future years to come. On behalf of the Committee, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Dr Yau Wing-kwong
Chairman, Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee