

LCQ16: Book donation and reading promotional activities at public libraries

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Following is a question by Hon Abraham Shek Lai-him and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Ms Florence Hui, in the Legislative Council today (June 24):

Question:

The authorities organised the Book Donation and Sale Campaign annually from 2002 to 2006, so as to promote reading and book recycling, as well as to raise funds for The Community Chest of Hong Kong. On the other hand, public libraries under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department have recently refused to accept used books donated by members of the public. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) why the authorities have ceased organising the aforesaid Campaign since 2007;
- (b) how many resources were deployed in the past three years by the authorities to promote reading and book recycling, and whether they have assessed the effectiveness of such work; and
- (c) whether the authorities will consider organising the Book Donation and Sale Campaign again; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) The Hong Kong Public Libraries (HKPL) under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) welcomes donations of materials from the public and organisations to enhance its library collection. The major materials to be collected are items related to the study of Hong Kong and those that can enrich the various HKPL specialised and reference collections, especially rare books or series unavailable in the market. The objective is to tie in with the overall collection development of HKPL and to meet the public needs for both general self-learning and intensive research.

To accept donated books, HKPL needs to put in enormous time and effort to process the registration, sorting, transportation, cataloguing, etc. Considering the

cost-effectiveness, HKPL normally would not accept donations of general books already acquired.

A series of activities are organised every year by HKPL to promote reading. The promotional activities for each year are subject to review and adjustment. The Book Donation and Sale Campaign was one of the reading activities held by the LCSD in the past. To make provision for the District Councils' (DC) involvement in the management of public libraries in the districts, HKPL adjusted its annual plan of reading activities in 2007 to take into account the characteristics of individual districts. More activities are geared towards catering for the needs of the local communities and community collaboration initiatives are dedicated to reinforce the culture of reading for all. As resources have to be redeployed into the above district activities, some events (including the Book Donation and Sale Campaign) ceased to be organised.

(b) The number of activities to promote reading held by HKPL, the attendance, and the expenditures incurred over the past three years are as follows:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
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No of reading activities	10,650	10,740	11,980
Attendance	16,398,600	16,274,170	17,048,020
Expenditure (\$m)	2.08	2.10	2.16

The reading activities organised by HKPL are well received by readers. Territory-wide activities organised are Reading Programmes for Children and Youth, Reading Clubs, Paired Reading Talks and Story Telling Workshops, "Meet-the-Authors" Sessions, "Summer Reading Month", "4.23 World Book Day Creative Competition", etc. Activities held jointly with other organisations include "Reading Carnival", "Selection of Good Books for Secondary School Students", and "Hong Kong Book Prize", etc. Thematic panels as well as roving exhibitions of books with tie-in recommended booklists will also be displayed at various libraries. Since January 2008, HKPL has been collaborating with the DCs and local bodies to organise more reading activities catering for the needs of the districts so as to reinforce the culture of reading for all.

To promote reading and to optimise the use of the library collection, HKPL has

actively collaborated with school libraries and community libraries. The public library collection is made available for these organisations by means of block loans, thus facilitating more people to enjoy reading. In the past year, about 3.2 million books were loaned out by HKPL to 771 partner organisations.

(c) Through organising a rich array of reading activities, HKPL aims to encourage the public to make good use of the library resources to cultivate a good reading habit. At present, the focus of the reading activities is to enhance the implementation of diversified activities at the district level. For example, HKPL continues to work in collaboration with the DCs and local bodies in organising such reading activities as the "Summer Reading Month" in Wong Tai Sin, "Summer Reading Programme" in Sham Shui Po, "Reading Promotion Week: Vote for Good Books for Children and Youths and Creative Book Report Writing" in Tuen Mun, "Enjoy Reading in Sha Tin" Carnival, etc. These reading activities are all designed to meet the needs of different communities and to reinforce the culture of reading for all. Having considered the development strategies and the deployment of resources, HKPL has no plan at present to organise the Book Donation and Sale Campaign for the time being.

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