

# Quality Education Fund – Hong Kong

The Quality Education Fund (QEF) was established by the Education Bureau, Government of Hong Kong, early 1998 with an allocation of HK\$5 billion (approximately AUD\$600 million). The aim of QEF is to support non-profit making initiatives that promote quality education in Hong Kong in the context of pre-primary, primary, secondary and special education. Since its establishment, the Fund has supported over 8,000 applications with grants amounting to more than HK\$4 billion. To learn more, visit: <http://qef.org.hk/eng/>

## Governance

The Quality Education Fund (QEF) is a charitable fund under a Declaration of Trust, and the Grantor is the Permanent Secretary for Education, who acts as Trustee and undertakes to apply the income and capital of the QEF for the promotion of quality education in Hong Kong. The operations of the QEF are overseen by a Steering Committee, which has two subcommittees: Assessment and Monitoring; Dissemination and Promotion. Each committee is comprised of members from the tertiary and school education sectors and the corporate sector.

## Innovation

Innovation in capacity building in schools to enhance the quality of student learning is recognised as an important part of the QEF work. The QEF aims to galvanise school initiatives in enhancing the quality of student learning by supporting innovation, generating knowledge and disseminating effective practices. *Collaborate for Pedagogical*

*Innovation, Cultivate for Quality Education* are the key phrases on the home page of the website <http://qef.org.hk/>

The Executive Officer Lim Kuen comments: “QEF supports one-off initiatives which are not normally funded by the Government or other sources”. Professor Brian Caldwell, Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne, says:

Thematic Networks have been established for the last decade, with sharing of projects made available through the sale of reports and findings to promote a sharing culture and collaborative professional development. Past themes have included Language Education, Living and Thinking, Home-School Cooperation, Special Educational Needs, Teaching and Learning and Moral and Civic Education. In announcing the

....innovation pervades the system of approximately 1,200 government and non-government schools in Hong Kong. While a small number of grants were given to universities (by QEF), these had to be implemented through partnerships with schools. In simple gross terms, there was an average of nearly six grants per school over the first ten years. (Professor Brian Caldwell, Professorial Fellow, University of Melbourne)

priority themes for the current academic year (2012/13), the Chair of the Steering Committee Mr Duffy Wong said: “The QEF encourages school-based innovation and will continue to support the application of the innovations across the school sector.....The QEF aims to galvanise school initiatives in enhancing the quality of student learning by supporting innovation, generating knowledge and disseminating effective practices.”



Example of how project information is reported and searchable online.

Priority themes guide and focus grants for each 12 month period. Executive Officer Lim Kuen comments that "The Quality Education Fund Steering Committee advises on the priorities for each year with reference to the prevailing education policies and inputs from education stakeholders to address the needs and concerns of the school sector".

The nine priority themes for the 2012/13 school year are:

- Effective Learning and Teaching of Languages;
- Assessment for Learning;
- National Education;
- Creative Arts and Culture Education;
- Healthy Lifestyle and Positive Development of Students;
- Education for Sustainable Development;
- Support to Students with Special Educational Needs;
- Promoting Whole Child Development in Pre-primary Education; and
- Supporting Effective School Management and / or Teacher Wellness.

Other innovative projects that meet the needs of schools or enhance the quality of school education are also considered.

### Model

The Hong Kong government, through the Education Bureau, provided establishment funding of HK\$5 billion for the QEF to be established as a separate fund through which grants are distributed to schools and approved researchers to promote quality education.

The QEF operates under the guidance of a Steering Committee, which decides on themes and priorities. A Secretariat administers the funds from application to reporting as well as publication and sales of reports. QEF Secretariat Project Officers review and monitor projects for the length of the project, and Secretariat Reviewers evaluate outcomes. Monitoring and Evaluation is mainly through written reporting, based on agreed goals, plans, processes and intended outcomes and impacts. A cycle of evaluation and development is expected, with impacts for continued development within the particular site of the project, as well as potential for wider dissemination and commercial application.

### The collaborative practices

The possibility of collaboration between schools and other organisations is recognised

in the application form which requires the following for a project:

- seek prior consent from the collaborating / participating schools and organisations;
- provide a list of collaborating / participating schools and organisations;
- request nominated schools and organisations to confirm collaboration.

Important factors for QEF are innovation in capacity building in schools to enhance the quality of student learning, and the dissemination of successful projects as resources for school improvement.

### Impact

There is public access to project outcomes as the QEF makes these available for purchase on-line at the QEF Cyber Resource Centre (<http://qcr.qef.org.hk/>). The resources are listed under five main area headings: *All Round Education; School Based Management; Information Technology; Effective Learning; Educational Research.*

Projects recently completed include research and development in areas including enhancing student's self-understanding; positive life-values; home and school partnerships; using technology to monitor attendance and campus activity; understanding in natural science, astronomy and technology and school engagement. For example, with a focus on improving family empowerment within a home-school initiative, a grant was given to a kindergarten for promoting home-school cooperation and developing care for the community culture through organising training workshops for 20-30 parents of the applicant school and arranging services and school visits for the trained parents. Other examples of publications reporting on various projects available for purchase on-line are: a preschool life-education project; a project aimed at increasing the understanding of China; aspects of personal growth including self-esteem; enhancing teacher-child and parent-child relationship and children's social competence. Executive officer Lim Kuen explains the process of evaluation of impact: "*Grantees have to conduct self-evaluation of the QEF project with regard to success of the activities in the light of the impact on the participants.*"

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