

Social Impact Assessment for the Pilot Run of FOOD-CO

Executive Summary

1. Background

In 2016, the SIE Fund has engaged St. James' Settlement (SJS) as the intermediary to launch its first Food Support Flagship Project (Flagship Project) to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of food support services in Hong Kong. SJS is responsible for designing, building and operating an inclusive platform, FOOD-CO, to connect food support service operators, food donors and volunteers by making use of information technology and data analysis. Food donors and operators can share information on the demand and supply of food items and related services on FOOD-CO platform, thus enabling a better coordination of food support services. The platform also promotes public awareness about food support services in Hong Kong.

One of the major scope of works of FOOD-CO is to conduct social impact assessment to examine the overall situation of the food support services in Hong Kong. SJS has commissioned Policy 21 Limited (Policy 21) to conduct a baseline assessment before the launch of FOOD-CO and another social impact assessment after a six-month pilot run of FOOD-CO in three districts. It aims to understand and analyse the impact of FOOD-CO during the pilot run.

2. Objectives of the Social Impact Assessment

FOOD-CO platform was launched as a pilot in Kwai Tsing, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long in May 2017. The key objectives of this Social Impact Assessment are:

- (a) to examine the situation of the food support services;
- (b) to collect views from the service recipients; and
- (c) to identify any geographical gaps and unmet demand of services in three districts during the pilot run of FOOD-CO.

3. Operation definition

Different service points are currently running different food support services. This Social Impact Assessment covers the service points providing the following services to the service recipients during the period from June to September 2017:

- (a) *Hot meal service*
 - (i) to provide hot meals;
 - (ii) to distribute edible food surplus collected from food donors; or
 - (iii) to distribute food coupons which the service users can redeem meals in restaurants or canteens
- (b) *Food bank*
 - (i) to distribute food items, usually dry food, non-perishable food packs, food coupons.
- (c) *Discount market and bulk purchase services*
 - (i) to offer food items and other necessities at discounted prices; or
 - (ii) to organise a group of service recipients to purchase the food items and other necessities directly from wholesalers or manufacturers in bulk quantities at a lower price.
- (d) *Food recovery services*

To collect wholesome food from donors in order to -

 - (i) provide meals to service recipients;
 - (ii) re-distribute food packs to service recipients; or
 - (iii) re-distribute the collected food to other service points.

4. Method of Collection

- (a) This Social Impact Assessment covers all the service points providing food support services to their service recipients in Kwai Tsing, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long.
- (b) Noting that the list of service points providing food support services is not readily available, desktop research was conducted to thoroughly examine the government official statistics, annual reports of NGOs, and the information available online. The information collected during the baseline assessment was also used for compiling a comprehensive list of service points.
- (c) Full enumeration is adopted for collecting statistics and views from the service points.

5. Enumeration Result

(a) The Survey was conducted during the period from November 2017 to February 2018

Table 5.1 Enumeration results of service points

Total number of service points identified	104
Successful case [(a)+(b)]	62
(a) The service points provided direct food support services[a(i)+a(ii)]	47
(i) Enumerated	36
(ii) Partially enumerated	11
(b) Enumerated but the service points did not provide direct food support services [b(i) + b(ii) + b(iii) + b(iv)]	15
(i) Did not provide any food support services currently and the previous food support projects were completed	7
(ii) Conducted assessment and referral for service recipients	5
(iii) Provision of venues for delivering food support services; Provision of storage for food support services	2
(iv) Provided resource for food support services only	1
Unsuccessful case [(c)+(d)+(e)]	42
(c) Non-response (No reply after 10 times of contacts)	32
(d) Non-contact	7
(e) Refusal	3
Response Rate (%) [(a)+(b)]/104]	59.6%

(b) The target outcome indicators for FOOD-CO during pilot run include: (1) an increase of 50% of meals served, (2) an increase of 30% of beneficiaries, (3) an increase of 25% of food recovered and (4) an increase of 6 service points. The four target outcome indicators are all overachieved in three pilot districts during the six-month pilot run. Details are as follows:

Table 5.2 Overview of the food support services in three pilot districts

Target outcome indicators			Actual Result							
			Hot meal services		Food bank services		Discount market and bulk purchase services		Total (Increase %)	
			T0	T1	T0	T1	T0	T1	T0	T1
(1) Daily numbers of meals served	+50%	1,970	5,618 (+185%)	5,962	10,367 (+74%)	-	-	7,932	15,985 (+102%)	
➤ Yuen Long		0	23	3,245	5,377	-	-	3,245	5,400	
➤ Kwai Tsing		734	1,260	1,299	2,365	-	-	2,033	3,625	
➤ Kwun Tong		1,236	4,335	1,418	2,625	-1	-	2,654	6,960	
(2) Daily numbers of beneficiaries	+30%	1,109	3,121 (+181%)	2,048	3,575 (+75%)	-	-	3,157	6,696 (+112%)	
(3) Volume of food recovered (tonnes)	+25%	-	-	-	-	-	-	121	231 (+91%)	
(4) Numbers of service points	+6	11	19	14	31	2	7	27	47* (+20)	

T0: Baseline assessment result

T1: Result of social impact assessment for the pilot run of FOOD-CO in three districts

*Some of the service points providing more than one type of food support services.

(c) Since most of the service points did not have a waiting list to record unmet service requests, Policy 21 was unable to have a quantitative analysis on the demand of food support service. Instead, qualitative analysis was conducted through interviews with the representatives of the services points. Some of them suggested that there was unmet demand for the food support services in the three pilot districts. When the food support service of their service points had reached the maximum capacity, they would refer the additional service demand to other service points.

(d) With the efforts made from the FOOD-CO, the daily number of meals distributed were increased significantly, indicating that there was continued need for the food support services. As the progress and results of FOOD-CO have been overwhelming, FOOD-CO has grown fast from a pilot run in three districts to a full operation in all 18 districts in Hong Kong since November 2017.