

# Report No. 45 of the Director of Audit — Chapter 9

## THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS IN GETTING THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED TO KEEP HONG KONG CLEAN

### Summary

1. The Government's efforts to keep Hong Kong clean have a long history. The first clean-up operation was launched in 1948 under the Clean Hong Kong Campaign. This was followed by the Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign from 1970 to 1999 and the launching of a three-year Clean Hong Kong Programme in December 2000. In May 2003, after the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in March 2003, the Chief Executive announced the setting up of Team Clean, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, to develop and take forward proposals for entrenching a high level of public and environmental hygiene in Hong Kong. On 9 August 2003, Team Clean published its final report putting forward longer-term and sustainable measures on a number of areas. Government bureaux and departments were tasked to develop sustainable systems to sustain Team Clean's intensive efforts. After the dissolution of Team Clean on 31 August 2003, the Steering Committee on Team Clean Follow Up, chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs, was established in November 2003 to follow up on all Team Clean's proposed measures.

2. The Audit Commission (Audit) has conducted a review of the extent of success of the Government's efforts in getting the community involved and developing sustainable systems to keep Hong Kong clean. This report contains the audit findings of the review of the Government's efforts in getting the community involved to keep Hong Kong clean.

#### Community involvement at the district level

3. *District Hygiene Squads.* The 18 District Offices (DOs) established District Hygiene Squads (DHS) by recruiting volunteers from local groups. Audit has found that: (a) some DOs did not recruit any new DHS members during the period from April 2004 to March 2005 and the number of DHS members as at 31 March 2005 varied considerably among the 18 districts, ranging from 18 to 1,614 members; (b) the 18 DOs adopted different bases of counting the number of DHS inspections; and (c) based on the number of operations reported by the 12 districts, there was a significant variance in the number of DHS inspections, ranging from 8 to 92 inspections for the period from April 2004 to March 2005. *Audit has recommended that the Director of Home Affairs should:*

*(a) encourage the DOs, particularly those which have not recruited any new DHS members for some time, to consider recruiting more DHS members from the local community to widen the community involvement at the district level; (b) establish a standardised and consistent basis of counting the number of DHS inspections to provide reliable management information on the performance of the DHS in the 18 districts; and (c) encourage the DOs to organise more community hygiene activities and invite more DHS members to participate in these activities with a view to maintaining the momentum of the community involvement initiatives.*

4. ***Blackspot monitoring scheme: closed-circuit televisions.*** To eradicate hygiene blackspots, Team Clean proposed to install closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs) at these sites for monitoring and deterrent purposes. Team Clean emphasised that the CCTV scheme would be a community project to be operated by community groups. In November 2003, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) launched a pilot project in five districts for testing the cost-effectiveness of the scheme. Audit has found that: (a) the CCTV systems of two of the five pilot districts were operated by the DOs without any community participation and the DOs experienced difficulties in recruiting suitable volunteers to view the CCTV tapes; (b) a large proportion of blitz operations conducted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in two pilot districts did not correspond with the time patterns identified by the CCTV systems; and (c) one DO has relocated its CCTV system and another DO has planned to relocate its CCTV system upon identification of the time patterns of offences at their pilot locations. *Audit has recommended that: (a) the Director of Home Affairs should, in the light of the difficulties in getting the community involved in the CCTV scheme, critically evaluate the extent of achievements and cost-effectiveness of the scheme; (b) the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene should consider arranging more blitz operations which correspond with the time patterns of offences identified by the CCTV systems; and (c) the Director of Home Affairs should consider relocating the CCTV systems to other hygiene blackspots with persistent and recurrent environmental problems once the time patterns of offences at the pilot locations have been identified and the hygiene conditions have improved.*

5. ***Coordinating role of the Home Affairs Department.*** The HAD plays the central coordinating role in spearheading interdepartmental efforts in district hygiene improvement as well as in community involvement, and civic and health education. Audit has found that the HAD lacks consistent management information for monitoring and evaluating the extent of success in such efforts because the 18 DOs compile management information on different bases. *Audit has recommended that the Director of Home Affairs should: (a) conduct a comprehensive review of the various types of management information for measuring the performance of the relevant parties in keeping Hong Kong clean, and establish proper procedures to ensure that the management information provided by the 18 DOs is compiled on a standardised and consistent basis; and (b) develop meaningful performance indicators to monitor the work of the relevant parties and set performance targets to evaluate the extent of success in district hygiene improvement, community involvement, and civic and health education.*

## **Community involvement in public housing estates**

6. ***Estate Drainage Ambassadors Scheme.*** In 2003, the Housing Department (HD) launched the Estate Drainage Ambassadors Scheme to prevent the spread of SARS in public housing estates (PHEs) through defective internal drainage installations. The scheme revealed that the problem of defective internal drainage installations in PHEs, if not resolved, might adversely affect the hygiene conditions of PHEs. The HD has formulated an inspection plan to conduct regular inspection of the drainage installations inside older flats by its technical staff. Audit has found that as at 30 June 2005, the first round of inspection had not commenced as additional staff resources had yet to be deployed from other HD divisions. Audit considers that the HD inspection plan lacks community involvement. *Audit has recommended that the Director of Housing should: (a) expedite the deployment of staff resources from other HD divisions to carry out the inspection programme for defective internal drainage installations in PHEs; and (b) consider involving non-government organisations (NGOs) to provide minor home repair and maintenance services in PHEs.*

7. ***Public Housing Estate Cleanliness Incentive Scheme.*** Under the PHE Cleanliness Incentive Scheme, estate managers of PHEs organise cleansing exercises to mobilise members of Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) and residents' associations, and volunteers of NGOs to clean the common areas of PHEs, and organise various activities to promote estate cleanliness. During the period from January 2004 to March 2005, the HD organised 247 cleansing activities (including 100 cleansing exercises) under the scheme, involving 77,499 local residents and 2,292 volunteers. Audit has found that the local community involvement in the 100 cleansing exercises conducted in PHEs in two HD regions during this period was inadequate. *Audit has recommended that the Director of Housing should: (a) review the adequacy of the incentives provided under the PHE Cleanliness Incentive Scheme to give recognition to the efforts and contributions of EMACs and NGOs; and (b) encourage all EMACs and more NGOs to participate in the cleansing exercises.*

8. ***Estate Commercial Cleanliness Incentive Scheme.*** The HD obtained government funding of \$3 million to launch an Estate Commercial Cleanliness Incentive Scheme in June 2003 to encourage cleansing workers to maintain high sanitary standard and boost the hygiene conditions of food premises located in HD shopping centres. Audit has found that the scheme, well received by the public and the commercial tenants, ended in December 2003. *Audit has recommended that the Director of Housing should take the lead to introduce incentive award schemes, similar to the Estate Commercial Cleanliness Incentive Scheme, on an ongoing basis to further improve the cleanliness of HD shopping centres.*

## **Civic and health education**

9. ***Civic and health education in schools.*** After the outbreak of SARS, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) reviewed the school curriculum and teaching mode with regard to civic and health education. The EMB subsequently adopted a new

approach to promote life-long civic responsibility and healthy lifestyle among students. Under the new approach, the EMB has implemented measures to promote civic and health education in schools and highlighted the Health Promoting School (HPS) concept as one of the useful tools. The HPS framework is a holistic, whole school approach covering all aspects of schools. The Professional Diploma Programme in Health Education (the Diploma Programme) and the Hong Kong Healthy Schools Award Scheme (the Award Scheme) were initiated and conducted by the Centre for Health Education and Health Promotion (CHEHP) of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), with grants from the Quality Education Fund, to try out the HPS concept through training courses for teachers and granting of awards to schools. Audit has found that the evaluation results of these projects are very positive. The overall assessment of the Diploma Programme is excellent and that of the Award Scheme is very favourable. *Audit has recommended that the Secretary for Education and Manpower should: (a) conduct a comprehensive assessment of the overall impact of the health promotion measures as early as possible; (b) make full use of the benefits derived from the Diploma Programme and the Award Scheme run by the CHEHP of the CUHK, and keep track of their subsequent development to ensure that they supplement the measures taken by the EMB on health promotion; and (c) evaluate the need for providing a trained health educator in each school, as initiated by the CHEHP of the CUHK, and the desirability of encouraging all schools to achieve the status of a health-promoting school.*

10. ***Civic and health education outside schools.*** The Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE), the main advisory body for promoting civic awareness and responsibility, works jointly with the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) to strengthen and intensify civic education. The CPCE launched civic and health education programmes and implemented the Community Participation Scheme to provide financial sponsorship to NGOs for organising civic education projects at the district level. The DOs organised civic and health education programmes at the district level. Audit has found that for the district civic and health education programmes organised by the DOs: (a) there was no established procedure for the DOs to report the results of their programmes and the extent of community involvement to the HAB; and (b) the number of programmes, organised in partnership with NGOs, varied significantly among the 18 districts, ranging from zero to 102. *Audit has recommended that: (a) the Secretary for Home Affairs should, in coordination with the Director of Home Affairs, devise a proper mechanism for the DOs to report to the HAB the evaluation results of the civic and health education programmes conducted by the DOs at the district level, and provide regularly to the CPCE the evaluation results; and (b) the Director of Home Affairs should solicit the collaboration of NGOs to organise more civic and health education programmes to promote civic responsibility at the district level, particularly in those districts which have organised only a small number of programmes.*

### **Response from the Administration**

11. The Administration generally agrees with the audit recommendations.

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