

Radio Television Hong Kong Board of Advisors
Annual Report 2017 - 2018
(1 September 2017 – 31 August 2018)

Overview

The Radio Television Hong Kong Board of Advisors (the Board) was set up on 1 September 2010 pursuant to the Charter of Radio Television Hong Kong (the RTHK Charter). The Board advises the Director of Broadcasting on a range of issues relating to the services of RTHK including editorial principles, programming standards, performance evaluation, service improvements and community participation in broadcasting in accordance with the RTHK Charter. The Board also receives reports on complaints as regular agenda items and conducts public opinion survey on RTHK's performance bi-annually.

2. The Board comprises non-official Members from different sectors of the community who are appointed by the Chief Executive for a term of two years. The Director of Broadcasting is an ex-officio Member. The Membership list of the Board for the term of 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2018 is at Annex.

3. In the past year, the Board met on a bimonthly basis. Members were also invited to attend functions and observe the production of programmes by RTHK.

Highlights of works in 2017– 2018

2018 Opinion Survey initiated by the Board

4. Following the opinion surveys conducted in 2012, 2014 and 2016, the Board conducted a biennial survey to track the trend in public perception and expectation on RTHK over the years.

5. Before conducting the survey, the Board provided views on the objectives, methodology, questions and time frame of the survey. It was agreed that the survey aimed to gauge the public's views and expectation on RTHK in terms of its public purposes and missions set out in the RTHK Charter, as well as to assess the public's usage of RTHK radio, TV and new media services.

6. RTHK commissioned the Aristo Market Research & Consulting Company Limited to conduct the opinion survey with Cantonese-speaking residents of Hong Kong aged 18 or above in April 2018. A total of 1,023 valid responses were collected by telephone interviews, of which 69% were conducted via landline phones and 31% via mobile phones.

7. Based on the survey results, the Board offered the following observations and suggestions –

- (a) The respective numbers of respondents viewing RTHK TV programmes via the local commercial channels and those viewing via RTHK's own channels were similar. It revealed that the commercial channels were no longer the most prominent publicity platforms for RTHK. RTHK should therefore step up its efforts to promote its own channels;
- (b) The frequency of accessing RTHK programmes via the new media was relatively low. The usage of new media services should be further promoted;
- (c) There was an increase in the frequency of using RTHK television service and a decline in the frequency of using RTHK radio and new media services. It reflected the global trend in the broadcasting industry;
- (d) RTHK should consider reviewing the allocation of resources for sports and health programmes; and
- (e) It was proposed to explore the feasibility of increasing the sample size and use alternative platforms to collect data in the next survey in order to enhance its representation.

8. The Board was pleased to note that the management would consider the key findings of the survey while reviewing existing programming strategies. The Board looked forward to further updates from RTHK on its programming plans in response to the survey results.

Report on Television Appreciation Index Survey

9. The Board was briefed on the outcome of the Television Appreciation Index Survey. The Board noted the methodology of the survey as well as the performance of RTHK's programmes in this regard.

90 Years of Broadcasting in Hong Kong (90A)

10. The Board was briefed on the special radio and television programmes in celebration of 90 years of broadcasting in Hong Kong. The Board rendered advice on the content and general approaches of the campaign. The Board noted that RTHK would adopt more interactive, retrospective and humanistic approaches in producing the programmes on 90A with a view to arousing active participation of the public in the historical journey of RTHK.

40 Years of Top 10 Chinese Gold Songs Awards

11. RTHK presented to the Board the history and development of the Top 10 Chinese Gold Songs Awards. The Board recognized the synergetic benefits brought by producing television special of flagship radio music programme; and acknowledged the tremendous value of RTHK's archival database in respect of programme development and heritage preservation.

12. The Board noted that RTHK encountered great challenges in publicizing the Top 10 Chinese Gold Songs Awards in the context of shrinking local music market and continuous competition from the Mainland. The Board welcomed RTHK's undertaking to promote young local singers and wished that RTHK would help set a new trend for the industry with its valuable resources.

30 Years of Operation Santa Claus

13. The Board was briefed on the fundraising campaign "Operation Santa Claus" co-organized by RTHK and South China Morning Post. Members expressed their appreciation for the fundraising campaign and noted the fruitful fundraising result in 2017.

14. The Board discussed the initiatives taken by RTHK to enhance the local awareness of the project, especially in the school sector. The Board enquired about the financial transparency of the campaign and made suggestion

on the presentation of the published financial reports as well as the selection of local charities.

15. The Board was delighted to note that the scheme was well received by all the parties involved. The Board complimented the campaign for enhancing the image of RTHK and fostering a meaningful partnership between the participating non-governmental organizations and companies from the business sector. The Board believed that the project had brought widespread benefits to the community.

Community Involvement Broadcasting Services (CIBS)

16. RTHK updated the Board on the latest development of the CIBS. The Board discussed the assessment mechanism and procedures of the scheme as well as the archive arrangement of the finished programmes. The Board also advised on the measures to give more incentive to CIBS programme producers, such as airing such programmes on radio channels with better reception quality and selecting outstanding programmes for broadcast during regular radio programme time slots.

17. The Board acknowledged the contribution of CIBS in fostering social inclusion and appreciated RTHK's efforts in stepping up the promotion of the project.

Programmes on Arts, Culture and Heritage

18. The Board was briefed on the programmes on arts, culture and heritage produced by the Television and Radio Divisions of RTHK. The Board commended the high quality of these programmes which were unique in the local television scene.

19. Members discussed the challenges faced by RTHK in arousing public interest of the programmes, including the relatively small audienceship for this type of programmes and the limited budget allocated for promotion. Members also noted the difficulty of repeating the programmes on RTHK TV 32 due to the channel's identity as a live relay channel.

20. The Board appreciated RTHK's attempt to employ different promotion strategies on this front, including the use of new media platforms and email marketing, as well as collaboration with educational organisations. The Board also offered suggestions for further extension of audience reach of the programmes, such as change of broadcast time, increase in the re-run frequency and co-production with universities.

Health Programmes

21. RTHK presented to the Board the health programmes produced by the the Television and Radio Divisions. The Board appreciated the programming strategies to package health programmes with sports-related elements and to include the topic of mental health in such programmes. The Board also suggested that English subtitles be provided to cater for the need of ethnic minority audience and that health indexes be included in RTHK's mobile apps. The Board urged RTHK to invest more resources into this programme genre and brand itself as a health-focused channel in the long run in view of the stable demand for this type of programmes in the community.

Cantonese Opera Programmes

22. The Board was briefed on the Cantonese Opera Programmes produced by the Television and Radio Divisions of RTHK. The Board praised RTHK for its contribution to the preservation of this traditional folk art.

23. The Board deliberated over the means to promote this special music genre, including RTHK's collaboration with the Education Bureau and local schools in providing students with the opportunity to watch live performance of Cantonese opera and the station's attempt to explore the possibility of relaying future performances in the Xiqu Centre of the West Kowloon Cultural District on radio and television.

Radio Drama

24. RTHK introduced the radio dramas produced by RTHK to the Board. The Board complimented RTHK for producing many memorable radio dramas in the past. The Board also noted the high costs involved in producing radio dramas and was briefed about the scheduling and promotional strategies for reaching target audiences of different genres of dramas.

RTHK Programmes on 2018 Legislative Council By-election

25. RTHK presented to the Board the programmes on 2018 Legislative Council by-election. The Board noted the public attention given to the occasion on RTHK's online platforms. The Board was also briefed on how the duration of election forums and the presentation sequence of candidates therein were determined, as well as the principles applied to deal with concerns about election advertisement in election forums. The Chairman congratulated RTHK for its successful production of the programmes for this occasion.

RTHK Annual Plan

26. RTHK would publish its annual plan to give members of the public an outline of the programming directions of RTHK for the year. The Board provided comments on several aspects with regard to the Annual Plan for 2018-19 for the consideration of RTHK management.

27. Regarding the campaign for 90A, the Board suggested that RTHK devise a major theme for the whole project and highlight the impartiality and authenticity of the station's news reporting.

28. In respect of radio and television services, the Board appreciated the upcoming radio drama series about the life of inmates and RTHK's continuous effort in improving the reception of AM channels. The Board proposed that the research data of radio and television services should be shared in order to maximize the synergetic effect.

29. Concerning the new media services, Members were briefed on the content and identity of each of the existing seven RTHK mobile apps. While Members commented that too many apps would dilute the branding effect, they noted the difficulties in combing the existing apps and the ongoing efforts of RTHK in refining them and reviewing the app strategy.

30. The Board also expressed concern about the progress of the New Broadcasting House and noted the latest development of the project.

RTHK Controlling Officer's Report

31. The Board was updated on the allocation of resources in the RTHK Controlling Officer's Report 2018-19. The Board was briefed on the sponsorship revenue received by RTHK and the participation of ethnic groups in the CIBS project. The Board also rendered suggestions on the promotion of sports on RTHK.

Chairman's Visits to Overseas Public Broadcasters

32. The Board noted the fruitful experience of the Chairman during his visits to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) in Sydney and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in London in June and July 2018 respectively.

33. The Chairman shared his observations at the ABC and the BBC in respect of the broadcasting arrangement of morning programmes and the common challenges faced by public broadcasters in different regions. To conclude, the Chairman acknowledged the benefits of such exchange opportunities and encouraged Members to visit overseas broadcasters when opportunities arose.

Functions Attended by Members

34. The Board was invited to take part in major events organized by RTHK. The occasions that Members had attended included the concert "Our Hong Kong Young Notes" on 21 October 2017; "Christmas Concert in the Park" on 24 December 2017; "Top 10 Chinese Gold Songs Awards Concert" on 4 January 2018; the closing ceremony of "Operation Santa Claus 2017" on 16 January 2018; and "Lunar New Year Gathering" on 27 February 2018.

Programmes Updates

35. The Board received reports on a bimonthly basis from RTHK on programmes/major projects and offered comments and advice for the consideration of RTHK's management.

Complaints Updates

36. The Board received reports on a bimonthly basis from RTHK on the complaint cases concerning RTHK handled by the Communications Authority. The current-term Board also introduced the presentation of a one-page statistical summary of direct feedback from the public to RTHK at every meeting which had facilitated the Board to grasp the latest overview of public opinion.

37. The Board provided suggestions on how to minimize the number of complaints, including a defocus from political programmes and concentration on cultural and educational programmes, as well as invitation of guests from different quarters. The Board also noted the current complaint culture that RTHK, like many other organizations, was subject to.

38. The Board also offered advice on some complaint cases in accordance with the functions of the Board as stipulated in the Charter of RTHK, i.e. advising on the matters pertaining to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming.

39. The Board was glad to see that the management had taken prompt actions and conducted timely reviews on the cases concerned after receipt of the complaints. The Board was also delighted to note the continual downward trend of the number of complaints during the current term of the Board. The Board appreciated RTHK's endeavour to prevent recurrence of similar complaints under the existing complaint handling mechanism. The Board was confident that the credibility of RTHK would be further enhanced with the continual efforts of RTHK colleagues in this aspect.

Acknowledgement

40. The Board appreciated the support of the RTHK staff for the meetings of the Board, in particular the many useful in-depth briefings given by RTHK colleagues on their work.

**The RTHK Board of Advisors
August 2018**

Membership List of RTHK Board of Advisors
(for the term 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2018)

Chairman:

Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, BBS, JP

Members:

Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, SBS, JP

Ms Mimi CHEUNG Yee-may

Mr Leslie CHING Pui-wai

Mr Robert CHUA Wah-peng

Mr Mohan DATWANI

Ms Anna HUNG Wing-chee

Ms Helen KWAN Po-jen

Mr Douglas LAM Tak-yip

Mr LEE Luen-fai

Dr Carol MA Hok-ka¹

Mr Jimmy NG Wing-ka, JP²

Mr Augustine WONG Ho-ming, JP³

Professor WONG Kam-fai, MH

Dr YEUNG LAW Koon-chui, JP

Ex-Officio Member:

Director of Broadcasting

¹ Dr Carol MA resigned on 12.10.2017.

² Mr Jimmy NG resigned on 18.11.2016.

³ Mr Augustine WONG joined the Board on 3.3.2017.