

LegCo Panel on Manpower
(Meeting to be held on 15.11.2001)

**Proposal on Continuing the
Youth Pre-employment Training Programme on a Recurrent Basis**

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' views on a proposal by the Administration to continue the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) on a recurrent basis beyond 2001/02, initially for a period of five years.

Background

2. In September 1999, the Government launched the YPTP for young school leavers mainly aged between 15 and 19. In May 2000, the Finance Committee approved funding to continue the Programme in 2000/01 and 2001/02. The object of the Programme is to prepare young people for employment and bridge them into jobs through workplace attachment.

3. The training is delivered in four modules: -

- (a) Leadership, self-discipline and team building – the main programme elements include footdrills, leadership and confidence training, orienteering, team building, organising skills and development of self-awareness. This aims to build up the trainees' self-confidence, self-esteem and improve their self-discipline and perseverance.
- (b) Job search and interpersonal skills – the focus of this module is on developing problem solving skills, communication skills, interview techniques, labour market information etc. The

purpose is to cultivate a positive work attitude and to equip trainees with job search and job interview skills. Social workers with exposure to the employment market provide career guidance to each individual youth in identifying their personal strength, mapping out their career choices and training plans. They also provide the youth with follow-up services to tackle problems encountered, if any.

- (c) Computer application – this module provides training on basic computer knowledge and usage. It covers the commonly used software programmes. Trainees who develop a keen interest in IT may continue to progress onto more advanced computer training provided under job specific skills.
- (d) Job specific skills - this module provides a wide range of short and focused bridging training to facilitate young school leavers to enter into jobs requiring some basic skills. Tailored-made programmes have also been developed whereby employers in jobs with a career prospect are identified, suitable candidates shortlisted, initial job interviews arranged before training, followed by a short and focused skills training.

4. The Programme has utilised the training expertise and resources of the seven disciplinary forces in the Government, as well as both public and private training institutions, including the Vocational Training Council, trade unions, non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and schools of continuing education or tertiary institutes.

5. On completion of modular training, trainees are encouraged to undertake one-month workplace attachment training whereby they can acquire practical experience in a real working environment. This enables them to better prepare themselves for employment and enhances their level of confidence in their job search. Government departments, private and public organisations, as well as NGOs provide the attachment opportunities in their capacity as “host organisations”. They will appoint

experienced staff as mentors to support trainees throughout the attachment period. An allowance of \$1,000 is available to trainees upon satisfactory completion of the attachment.

6. A new On-the-Job Training Scheme, was added to the Programme in June 2000. Under this Scheme, the Labour Department (LD) provides a number of incentives for employers who are willing to provide on-the-job training to trainees of the Programme, with a view to **continued employment** thereafter. The incentives include a training subsidy of \$2,000 per trainee per month, up to a maximum period of three months, a free resource kit and the provision of a half-day train-the-trainers workshop.

7. In an effort to enhance and improve the Programme, LD has introduced new measures in the 2001/02 modules. These include strengthening of counseling service, enhancement of language training elements and provision of additional training option with a longer duration of about 6 months for trainees who have satisfactorily completed a module (d) course of similar nature. LD will also extend the workplace attachment from one to three months on a voluntary basis, i.e. where both employers and trainees wish to do so. Throughout the three-month training period, the Government will pay the training allowance of \$1,000 to trainees, whereas the employer will offer \$1,000 in the second month and \$2,000 in the third month.

8. Altogether, 23,000 young people have been trained since the commencement of the Programme in September 1999. For the Programme for 2000/01, which concluded in June 2001, 1,339 training classes were organized and 12,066 trainees were trained. About one-third of the trainees subsequently opted to return to school. The placement rate for the remaining trainees was 80%, which was 30 percentage points higher than the corresponding figure for the Programme of previous year.

Effectiveness of YPTP

9. From time to time, the LD conducts opinion surveys among trainees and strategic partners in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the Programme in meeting the objectives. In a recent review conducted between March and May 2001, all the training bodies surveyed confirmed that the Programme was useful in enhancing the employability of trainees. They were also satisfied with the improvement of trainees after training. Besides, 96% of the respondent employers considered that the Programme provided very valuable opportunities for young people to meet the challenges of the employment market. As regards trainees, all of them considered the training courses effective. 94% of them would recommend the Programme to their friends and 80% of them rated workplace attachment training as useful in enhancing their confidence and understanding of the real working world.

10. The Comprehensive Review of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme conducted by the Centre for Social Policy of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University between May and September 2001¹ endorsed the overall effectiveness and positive value of the Programme in bridging the transition from school to work. The Review reported on the enthusiastic support of various sectors for the Programme, including trainees, training bodies and employers. The Review also highlighted the young academic under-achievers as a vulnerable group and reaffirmed the usefulness of the Programme in addressing their special needs.

Assessment on the need to continue with YPTP

11. There will always be young people who have problems in coping with their academic study or who may face difficulties in climbing up the academic ladder. Given their lack of work experience and job skills, they are in a disadvantageous position in the employment market. The YPTP assists these young fresh school leavers by better preparing them to meet the requirements of the employment market. The Programme aims at restoring their self-confidence; developing their interpersonal,

¹香港理工大學社會政策研究中心，「青年職前綜合培訓—展翅計劃」研究評估報告書（2001年10月）

problem-solving, and job search skills; rendering them basic training in information technology and computer application; and equipping them with a range of entry-level job skills. By cultivating positive work attitudes and work habits, developing sensitivity towards the changing needs of the employment market, and encouraging personal development and life-long learning, the Programme is an effective vehicle bridging the classroom to the workplace. As such, we believe that in the near term, the need for the continuation of the YPTP is well established. This is affirmed by the increasing number of young people applying for enrolment each year. For the first phase of the current Programme which commenced in September 2001, LD has received over 12,000 applications which already exceeded the total number of applications for the previous Programme.

12. As many of the components of the YPTP, such as interpersonal skills, leadership, basic computer skills, are an integral part of the curriculum reform currently undertaken by the Education Department, the YPTP will need to be reviewed so that the training or career related services provided will compliment the reform once it takes root. In the meantime, the LD will collaborate with the Education Department to ensure a smooth transition. The role of the YPTP will need to be reassessed in the medium term.

The Proposal

13. We are in the middle of a global economic downturn. We anticipate a continued and strong demand for pre-employment training and related services for young people in the next three to five years. We propose to continue the YPTP beyond 2001/02 initially for five years.

Financial Implications

14. To meet the demand for pre-employment training and related services from young people, the Programme will need annual funding of around \$116 million, broken down as follows:

Modular training courses (13,000 trainees) ²	\$80 m
Workplace attachment allowance (8,000 trainees) ³	\$8 m
On-the-Job Training Scheme (2,000 trainees)	\$12 m
Publicity and incidental expenses	\$5 m
Administration, staffing and incidental expenses	\$11 m
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	Total : \$116 m

The exact funding requirements will be worked out in consultation with the Education and Manpower Bureau and the Finance Bureau. As announced in the Budget Speech 2000/01, a total recurrent expenditure of \$300 million has been allocated for a package of training, retraining and employment related initiatives, including the YPTP. Hence, sufficient funding is available for implementing the YPTP on an ongoing basis.

Advice Sought

15. Members are requested to advise whether the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme should be continued on a recurrent basis beyond 2001/02 initially for a period of five years.

Labour Department
November 2001

²Over 12,000 trainees have enrolled in the first phase of the Programme for 2001/02. It is estimated that over 13,000 trainees will be trained under the whole year's Programme. The same figure is expected for future Programmes.

³Not all trainees will undertake workplace attachment training. Some of them will secure employment in the course of the Programme.