

**LegCo Panel on Manpower  
(Meeting on 20 February 2003)**

**“Action S4” – A Special Project for Vulnerable Trainees of  
the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme**

**Purpose**

This paper informs Members of a special project titled “Action S4” which provides intensive training and counseling services to the more vulnerable trainees of the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS).

**Background**

2. In July 2002, the Labour Department launched the YWETS to provide on-the-job training of six to twelve months for young people aged 15-24 with educational attainment below degree level. The target is to provide 10 000 training places in two years. The YWETS has met with overwhelming response from young people and over 18 000 trainees have enrolled. Of these trainees, 16% possess an educational level of Form 4 or below.

3. As at the end of January 2003, about 7 000 trainees of the YWETS have secured employment. However, among these 7 000 trainees, those with an educational level of Form 4 or below only constitute 9%.

4. Feedback from non-government organizations (NGOs) participating in the YWETS reveal that besides the academic under-achievers, young people having behavioural problems also encounter great difficulties in their search for jobs. They need intensive support and special assistance in getting their first job.

5. In the light of the above, the Labour Department, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, will organize a pilot project - “Action S4” - to help the more vulnerable trainees obtain on-the-job training opportunities.

## **Objective**

6. Through intensive counseling and training, “Action S4” aims at raising the **self-respect** and **self-confidence** of the participating trainees, and helping them make **self-reflection** and achieve **self-enhancement** (i.e. the 4 Ss). The project will cultivate an enabling work environment supported by caring mentors and case managers in order to assist trainees to overcome the hurdles at work and benefit fully from the on-the-job training opportunities. On completion of “Action S4”, trainees are expected to be better equipped with job skills and interpersonal skills, and possess more positive attitudes towards life and work.

## **Eligibility Criteria**

7. “Action S4” will be a highly focused programme and will be open to trainees of the YWETS who belong to any one of the following groups:

- (a) Possess an educational level of Form 4 or below; or
- (b) Have experienced repeated failures in their job search; or
- (c) Have emotional disturbance or behavioural problems.

Applicants must be nominated by NGOs which should set out the reasons for the nominations. All applications will be vetted by a committee comprising representatives of the Labour Department, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and participating NGOs.

## **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

8. So far, 40 NGOs have indicated their support to this project by providing about 250 on-the-job training vacancies in a variety of work including project maintenance, event organization, library and camp site management, promotion and publicity, and general administration. The trainees will be engaged by the Labour Department at a monthly salary of \$4,000, and placed to work in NGOs for a period of six months commencing in the latter part of March 2003.

9. Apart from on-the-job training, the trainees will be encouraged to enroll in relevant vocational training courses on an off-the-job basis with a view to enhancing their vocational skills. Like other trainees, they are entitled to reimbursement of the course and examination fees up to a maximum of \$4,000 if they pass the vocational examination or achieve a 90% course attendance rate.

### **Programme Pillars**

10. “Action S4” is developed on the basis of five pillars, which are:
- (a) caring mentors to provide intensive counseling and on-the-job training and support to the trainees;
  - (b) real work experience to facilitate the trainees to acquire vocational skills through hands-on practice and interpersonal skills through workplace relationship building;
  - (c) early intervention by case managers to resolve problems with adaptation and of interpersonal relations;
  - (d) assessment of weaknesses, training needs and work progress by a well-structured mechanism; and
  - (e) meaningful involvement of the trainees in tasks with social value to help them restore self-esteem and foster positive changes.

“Action S4” will strive to create an enabling environment for trainees to develop and nurture their abilities and potentials.

### **Timetable of Implementation**

11. NGOs will be invited to nominate suitable trainees to join this project in mid February 2003. The vetting committee will consider the applications in early March 2003. Successful candidates are expected to commence work in the latter part of March 2003.

12. A launching ceremony is scheduled for 16 March 2003.

### **Financial Implications**

13. The total financial commitment for the whole project is \$6.75 million. Of this sum, \$6 million will be used to pay for the wages of 250 trainees for a period of six months (i.e. \$4,000 x 6 months x 250 trainees). The remaining \$0.75 million will be incurred for MPF contributions and other staff benefits (i.e. \$500 x 6 months x 250 trainees).

14. Training subsidy payable under the YWETS will amount to \$3 million (i.e. \$2,000 x 6 months x 250 trainees). The balance of \$3.75 million will be met from the internal resources of the Labour Department.

### **Review and Evaluation**

15. The Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University has been appointed to design a mechanism to help trainees ascertain their needs, and evaluate the effectiveness of the project, in particular the trainees' changes and how far their employability has been enhanced after completing the project.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau (Labour Branch)  
February 2003