

**LegCo Panel on Manpower
(Meeting on 17 July 2003)**

**Progress Report on the
Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme**

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the progress of implementation of the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (“the Scheme”) which was launched in July 2002.

OBJECTIVE OF THE SCHEME

2. With a budget of \$400 million, the Scheme aims to provide, in two years, on-the-job training of 6 to 12 months for about 10 000 young people aged 15 to 24 with education attainment below degree level with a view to enhancing their employability.

FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

Induction Training

3. Upon joining the Scheme, a trainee will be assigned a case manager, who is a registered social worker. The case manager will conduct pre-employment assessment with the trainee. Those who have not received similar training before will be arranged to attend a 40-hour induction course on job-search, communication and interpersonal skills.

Counselling Services

4. Trainees are provided with counselling services by case managers. These case managers assist trainees to formulate career plans, look for suitable training opportunities, prepare for selection interviews, review their job search strategy, and adapt to the work environment after they are placed into employment. Altogether, 587 social workers from 43 non-government organizations have been appointed as case managers for the scheme.

Application for Training Vacancies

5. Training vacancies offered by employers are uploaded onto the dedicated website of the Scheme for selection by trainees under the guidance of their case managers. Trainees may apply for these training vacancies according to their own preferences through the Scheme Office. Suitable candidates are referred to employers for selection interviews. If employed, they are coached by the mentors appointed by their employers. They can also seek the advice and assistance of their case managers if necessary.

Training Subsidy and Support Services

6. Employers participating in the Scheme are entitled to a training subsidy of \$2,000 per trainee per month during the period of on-the-job training. The Scheme also provides free training on counselling and problem-solving skills to mentors nominated by employers.

Allowance for Off-the-job Vocational Training

7. While undergoing on-the-job training, trainees are encouraged to enrol in suitable off-the-job vocational training courses of their own choices. On passing the relevant vocational examination or achieving a 90% attendance rate, trainees may claim reimbursement of the course and examination fees, subject to a maximum of \$4,000.

ENROLMENT OF TRAINEES

8. Over 18 000 trainees were enrolled in the Scheme during the application period from 24 July to 13 August 2002. Of these, 54% were male and 46% female. The majority of them (83%) were aged 18 or above. In terms of education, 83% of the trainees had attained a standard of Form 5 or above, while the number of trainees with F.3 standard or below constituted 12% of the total. About 6 000 of them had attended the induction course on job-search, communication and interpersonal skills before they proceeded with their search for suitable training vacancies under the Scheme.

CANVASSING OF TRAINING VACANCIES

9. A comprehensive promotion and publicity plan comprising TV and radio Announcement of Public Interest; advertisements in newspapers,

magazines and the Labour Department's publication "Labour Focus", briefings for professional organizations and employer associations, promotional visits, etc is in place to encourage employers to provide training vacancies to the Scheme.

10. As at 30 June 2003, the Scheme had received 13 906 vacancies from 3 155 employers. The majority (86%) of the vacancies came from the private sector. Wholesale and retail (12%), catering (11%), business services (10%), and education services (8%) were the major suppliers of training vacancies.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

11. Special employment programmes tailor-made for specific industries or occupations have been organized to enhance the employment opportunities of trainees. They include:

- (a) the "IT Seeds" project to train over 500 young people to provide IT teaching support, IT administrative support and IT technical support in schools;
- (b) the special employment programme for the creative and arts performance industries to train over 100 young people in areas like advertising, publication, stage management, script writing, and editing;
- (c) the "Airport Ambassadors" project to train some 100 young people to provide customer services in the Hong Kong International Airport;
- (d) the "Travel Pioneers" project to train over 350 young people in various aspects of tourism such as ticketing and escort services;
- (e) the "Sports Instructor Trainees" project to train 150 young people as assistant training instructors in different sports and recreation activities; and
- (f) the "Action S4" project to provide on-the-job training opportunities in non-government organizations for 250 vulnerable trainees.

PLACEMENTS

12. As at 30 June 2003, 6 048 trainees were successfully placed in training vacancies under the Scheme. They were mainly engaged in clerical (27%), sales (18%), and information technology (13%) posts. In addition, 5 159 trainees were placed in other jobs in the open employment market with the advice and assistance of their case managers. The latter placements do not involve the payment of training subsidy under the Scheme.

EVALUATION

13. We have commissioned the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) to evaluate the performance of the Scheme, recommend improvement measures, and undertake a longitudinal study to track the longer-term effects of the Scheme on trainees. The HKPU has recently undertaken a mid-term review of the Scheme and its key findings and recommendations are summarized below:

(a) Performance

The Scheme has fully met its objective and achieved its performance target by arranging on-the-job training for over 5 000 trainees in its first 10 months of implementation. The design and structure of the Scheme caters well for the needs of job-seeking young people with minimal job skills and work experience. The on-the-job training opportunities, complemented by professional case management services and off-the-job vocational training, are capable of enhancing the employability of young people.

(b) Tailor-made packages

Innovative tailor-made packages have been pioneered by the Scheme, both on an industry basis as well as on a company basis. With the involvement of employers' associations, professional organizations and training institutions, these packages combine meaningful work experience with specific job skills training to better equip trainees for future employment. The Scheme should further strengthen its efforts in this direction and explore new on-the-job training opportunities with social partners.

(c) Publicity efforts

With the predominance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the economy of Hong Kong, the Scheme should step up its promotional efforts to penetrate the SME sector and cultivate a corporate culture in nurturing young talents. This will enhance the employment opportunities of young job-seekers.

(d) Pre-employment assessment and career counselling

The pre-employment assessment and career counselling services under the Scheme provide useful advice and guidance to young people and help them navigate their career life with full consideration of their needs, interests, abilities and aspirations. These services will be of even higher value and greater impact if given at an earlier stage in their school lives.

(e) Case management service

The success of the Scheme depends heavily on an efficient and effective case management service, which in turn hinges on a variety of factors including the ownership and commitment of the case managers, the working relationship and interaction between case managers and mentors, and the support and quality assurance work of the Labour Department. It is important to enhance communication, understanding, and partnership among different parties involved in the implementation of the Scheme.

THE WAY FORWARD

14. To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Scheme, we will adopt improvement measures as proposed by the HKPU. We will also step up our promotional efforts to canvass training vacancies from employers, in particular from SMEs. More tailor-made projects will be developed in conjunction with employers, professional bodies, and training institutions to enhance the employment opportunities of trainees.

15. To streamline procedures and avoid duplicate applications, we will organise a joint enrolment exercise for this Scheme and the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme from 26 July to 18 August 2003.

Labour Department
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