

For discussion
12 February 2004

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Extension of the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme

Purpose

In his Policy Address delivered on 7 January 2004, the Chief Executive announced that the Government would extend the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme for two years to place 10 000 young people aged 15 to 24 into employment. This paper briefs Members on details of the proposal.

Background

2. To address the problem of youth unemployment, the Labour Department has since 1999 launched the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (“YPTP”) to provide comprehensive pre-employment training for young school leavers aged 15 to 19. Over the past four years, some 45 000 people have been trained and close to 70% of them have found jobs. Recurrent funding has been provided for the Labour Department to run the YPTP, initially until 2006/07.

3. In July 2002, we implemented the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (the “Scheme”) to provide employment and on-the-job training to 10 000 young people aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment below degree level in two years. As at 9 January 2004, we have placed 11 094 trainees in training vacancies under the Scheme. In addition, another 7 682 trainees were also able to find jobs with the assistance of their case managers. In view of its success, we have decided to extend the Scheme for two years.

Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme

4. The Scheme operates on the premises of social partnership under which the Government, employers and the social services sector join hands to enhance the employability of young people. It features:

- 40 hours of induction training on communication and interpersonal skills for trainees;
- 50 hours of guidance and counselling services to trainees by case managers who are registered social workers;
- employment with on-the-job training for 6 to 12 months provided by employers;
- training subsidy payable to employers at the rate of \$2,000 per trainee per month during the period of on-the-job training; and
- training allowance of \$4,000 payable to trainees who undertake vocational training courses on an off-the-job basis.

5. Under the Scheme, some 730 registered social workers from 48 Non-government Organizations have been appointed as case managers to provide counselling and guidance services to trainees. These case managers assist trainees to formulate career plans, look for suitable training opportunities, prepare for selection interviews, review their job search strategies, and adapt to the work environment after they are placed into employment. The extensive mobilization of NGOs and social workers in helping and counselling the trainees is an important feature of the Scheme and underlines the importance that the Labour Department attaches to not only enhancing the employability of the trainees but also moulding their personalities.

Special Employment Projects

6. In order to provide diversified training opportunities to young people, the Labour Department has organized special employment projects tailor-made for various industries and occupations. These special projects include:

- (a) the "IT Seeds" providing IT teaching support, IT administrative support and IT technical support in schools;
- (b) the School Activities and Administrative Assistant Project to train young people to provide support and assistance in teaching activities;

- (c) the “Airport Ambassadors” to provide customer services to passengers in the Hong Kong International Airport;
- (d) a special employment project for the creative and arts performance industries;
- (e) the “Travel Pioneers” for the tourism industry;
- (f) the “Sports Instructor Trainees” in sports and recreation activities;
- (g) the “Action S4” project for vulnerable trainees;
- (h) the Youth Work Experience and Skills Enhancement Programme for the Manufacturing Industry to prepare young people for entry into the manufacturing industry.

Placements

7. As mentioned in paragraph 3 above, as at 9 January 2004, 11 094 trainees have been placed into jobs under the Scheme and another 7 682 have found jobs through the assistance of their case managers. These have far exceeded the original target of placing 10 000 young people into employment by July 2004, when the Scheme is due to be completed.

Review and Evaluation

8. Independent consultants from the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University conducted a mid-term review of the Scheme in 2003 and confirmed its effectiveness in enhancing the employability of young people. The consultants recommended an extension of the Scheme to benefit more young people.

9. The Commission on Youth highly commends the Scheme and considers it useful in promoting youth employment. Feedback from many of the employers and youths participating in the Scheme has been favourable.

Extension of the Scheme

10. In view of its success and the strong support from the community, we propose to extend the Scheme for two years with the target to place another 10 000 young people into employment.

11. To cater for the divergent training needs of young people, we will launch more tailor-made employment projects. Special efforts will be made to help those who are more vulnerable. In addition, coordination among the social partners will be further strengthened to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.

Financial Implications

12. Based on actual experience in administering the Scheme, we have worked out a budget of \$300 million for extending the Scheme for another two years to benefit about 10 000 young people. A breakdown of the expenditure items is as follows:

<i>Items</i>	<i>Amount (\$m)</i>
Induction training course on personal qualities and job-search skills	15
Counselling and guidance services by registered social workers	36
Training subsidy for on-the-job training of 6-12 months with the average being 9 months	180
Off-the-job training allowance	20
Publicity and promotion	10
Administration and staffing	15
Training of mentors and case managers, review and evaluation, organization of special employment projects, and incidental expenses	15
Contingency	9
<i>Total:</i>	<i>300</i>

13. We plan to seek Finance Committee's funding approval in March 2004.

Advice Sought

14. Members are invited to comment on the proposal.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau
Labour Department
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