

For discussion on
21 December 2006

LegCo Panel on Manpower

Progress of the Labour Department's Youth Employment/ Training Programmes and the Setting up of Youth Employment Resource Centres

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme offered by the Labour Department and the setting up of the Youth Employment Resource Centres.

YOUTH PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAMME (YPTP)

2. Launched in September 1999, the YPTP aims to enhance the employability and competitiveness of school leavers aged 15 to 19 through a wide range of employment-related training. Each year, we provide 12 000 training places which are sufficient to accommodate all eligible applicants. Over the past seven years, the YPTP provided training to more than 73 000 young people. Our surveys revealed that excluding those who pursued further studies on completion of the training, about 70% found jobs.

The 2005-06 Programme

3. The 2005-06 Programme was delivered in two phases: in September 2005 and February 2006. A total of 7 182 young people were trained.

Modular Training Programmes

4. The YPTP offers the following four modular training programmes:

Module A : Leadership, discipline and team building

Module B : Job-search and interpersonal skills

Module C : Elementary/intermediate computer application

Module D : Job-specific skills (over 300 courses in 18 job categories are offered)

Attendance of Module B is mandatory. A trainee may take a maximum of four other training courses from a mix of Modules A, C and D.

Job Skills Training

5. The YPTP also organizes tailor-made training courses to meet the recruitment needs of individual employers. For the 2005-06 Programme, 20 tailor-made training courses were run for employers in the retail, catering, tourism, aircraft engineering, telemarketing and beauty industries. This tailor-made training mode is popular among larger establishments and enables trainees to find jobs and attain sustainable career development.

Workplace Attachment

6. After completing the modular training, trainees may undergo a one-month workplace attachment training at government departments, social service institutions, as well as public and private organisations. During the period of workplace attachment, each trainee will receive an allowance of \$2,000. In the 2005-06 Programme, 1 409 trainees participated in workplace attachments.

Career Counselling and Support Services

7. Career counselling and support services are provided to trainees throughout the programme and after job placement. The whole training under YPTP lasts about six to nine months.

8. We will continue to offer the programme in 2007.

YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING SCHEME (YWETS)

9. The YWETS was launched in July 2002 to enhance the employability of young people aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment below the degree level by providing them with real work experience in the form of on-the-job training of 6 to 12 months.

10. Together with the YPTP, we provide a one-stop service in offering training and employment opportunities to young people. Through a “revolving door” mechanism, trainees may move between the two schemes at different stages during the programme year. If there is a need, case managers of

YWETS trainees may refer them to take up appropriate YPTP training. Similarly, YPTP trainees will undergo on-the-job training under YWETS when they are ready for employment.

Placements

11. The original target of the YWETS is to place 20 000 young people into employment by July 2006. This was achieved in early April 2005 - 16 months ahead of schedule. As at end-October 2006, we placed a cumulative total of 30 782 trainees in training vacancies. They were mainly engaged in clerical (23%), sales (13%), and information technology (11%) posts. In addition, another 15 516 trainees found employment in the open market with the advice and assistance of their case managers.

Training Vacancies

12. As at end-October 2006, we received a cumulative total of over 72 000 vacancies from about 12 000 employers. Of these, 12% were from the wholesale and retail trade, 10% from catering trade and 10% from education services. It is encouraging to note the rising trend in the salaries offered to our trainees. As at end-October 2006, among the vacancies available for referral, 81% offered a monthly salary of \$5,000 or above as compared with 68% during the corresponding period in 2005.

Tailor-made Employment Projects

13. The YWETS offers a variety of tailor-made employment projects to cater for trainees' needs and interests. Over 40 projects, including those in conjunction with YPTP, offering about 2 500 vacancies have been organized, covering such industries as wholesale and retail, aviation, tourism, information technology, film and entertainment, education, social services, and catering. We will continue to develop special tailor-made projects for industries and individual establishments.

Job Fairs for Youths

14. To enhance the employment opportunities of young people, in particular those living in remote districts, the YWETS office works in close partnership with non-government organisation ("NGO") to stage job fairs in various parts of Hong Kong. In March 2006, the YWETS office organized a thematic job fair at Olympian City in collaboration with seven NGOs. The LD participated, assisted or provided sponsorship in these job fairs. From January to October 2006, 10 job fairs were organized.

JOINT ENROLMENT OF YPTP AND YWETS in 2006-07

15. Joint application for Phase I of the YPTP and the YWETS 2006-07 commenced on 29 July and ended on 15 November 2006. A total of 13 759 applications were received, of which 6 264 applied for YPTP and 7 495 for YWETS.

16. Owing mainly to the sustained recovery of the economy and the improving employment market, there was a decrease in the number of trainees enrolled during the 2006-07 Programme Year. (The corresponding 2005-06 figure was 16 523, with 7 521 for YPTP and 9 002 for YWETS.) In this connection, it is pertinent to note that the unemployment rate for the 15-19 age group dropped from the peak of 36.1% (with 28 700 persons) in July-September 2003 to 20.6% (with 13 300 persons) in August-October 2006. For the 15-24 age cohort, the jobless rate fell from 11.3% (or 44 900 persons) in August-October 2005 to 10.7% (or 42 600 persons) in the same period this year. Improved opportunities for further studies (such as Secondary 6 courses and sub-degree programmes) also affect the number of young people entering the employment market.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTRE (YERC)

Objective of YERC

17. As announced in the 2006-07 Policy Agenda, the Government will set up two YERCs to provide one-stop advisory and support services on employment and self-employment to youths aged between 15-29. This is designed to facilitate their sustainable development. It is intended that the two YERCs, one to be set up in Kowloon and the other in the New Territories, will be located in popular gathering places for young people.

Target Clients

18. The target clients of the YERCs are :

- (a) past and existing trainees of the YPTP and YWETS;
- (b) young people aged 18 to 29 who wish to pursue self-employment; and
- (c) young people falling within the age bracket of 15-29 and interested in using the services of YERC.

Services Available at YERC

19. The YERC will provide self-administered assessment kit for young people to evaluate their interests, capabilities and aptitudes in order to come up with preliminary suggestions on suitable employment options. In-depth counselling and case management services will be provided to those with difficulties in pursuing their career choices.

20. Job-search facilities and services including vacancy search terminals, Internet and computer facilities and recruitment seminars will be available at the YERC to assist young people in their search for employment. Other employment-related services such as training sessions and workshops to enhance their employability will also be provided.

21. As far as self-employment is concerned, we intend to invite professionals and experts in the legal, accounting, finance and business services to share their experience with young people as the latter pursue self-employment.

22. A mentorship scheme will also be launched, with volunteer business entrepreneurs and professionals acting as mentors of the young people who choose to start their own businesses.

23. Young self-employed persons will also have free access to the full range of office facilities such as computer, fax machine, photocopier, scanner and Internet connection at the YERC. Conference rooms will be available for them to hold meetings with customers and business partners. Their services will be put on the centre's database and promotional activities will be organised.

Timetable

24. We aim at setting up the two YERCs in the latter half of 2007.