
Chapter 6

Education, Population and Human Resources

Preamble

People are the most precious resource for this city's continued success. For Hong Kong to stay competitive, we need to nurture local talents with global perspectives, while proactively attracting talents from around the world to build up our pool of human capital. We should also foster an inclusive environment where people of different backgrounds can develop their potential. The Steering Committee on Population Policy is conducting a public engagement exercise, with a view to mapping out key strategies and specific measures to address these challenges.

Development of one's potential starts with education. The overall vision and mission of our education policies is to offer all-round and balanced learning opportunities for our students, in order to lay the foundation for their lifelong learning, so that they not only learn successfully but can apply what they have learnt. We will ensure the quality of education by making further improvements within the framework of the existing policies. Providing 15-year free education and better quality kindergarten education is our aim. We have set up a dedicated committee to study how to practicably implement free kindergarten education.

The Government is committed to providing flexible and diversified study pathways with multiple entry and exit points for secondary school leavers. We shall increase the opportunities for youngsters to pursue quality post-secondary programmes. At the same time, we attach equal significance to vocational education and training, which provide valuable credentials and articulation opportunities through a full range of pre-employment and in-service programmes. We will strengthen our life planning and career guidance services to better prepare our young people to make informed decisions on the different choices available to them from school to work, and also promote continuing learning, so as to strengthen their confidence in the future.

Employment for local workers has always been our priority. We provide comprehensive recruitment and employment services as well as specialised employment programmes to cater for job seekers with different employment needs.

In protecting workers' rights and benefits, we take rigorous enforcement actions against breaches of labour laws. We will facilitate informed and in-depth discussion on the way forward for a working hours policy.

Cherishing the family is a core value of our community. We will continue to collaborate with various sectors in the community to create a pro-family environment. We will take forward legislation for paid paternity leave and will continue to promote other family-friendly employment practices to help employees achieve a better balance between work and family lives.

New Initiatives

We will:

Kindergarten Education

- Taking into account the short-term measures proposed by the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education, increase the voucher value of the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme by \$2,500 per year in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 school years. This will alleviate the financial burden in respect of kindergarten education on parents and relieve the pressure of kindergartens in meeting the expenses such as teachers' salary, staffing and operating expenditure (including rental). (EDB)
- Lift the fee remission ceiling to offer greater assistance to the needy families to better facilitate their children's access to quality kindergarten education. (EDB)

School Education

- Provide public sector primary schools with recurrent cash grant equivalent to the salary of a Clerical Assistant with effect from the 2014/15 school year for employment of staff to cope with the additional administration and clerical work in implementing various initiatives, in particular those relating to poverty alleviation. (EDB)

- Expand the Career Guidance Team in EDB to strengthen the support for life planning and career guidance services to facilitate a paradigm shift in secondary schools; publicise multiple pathways in further studies, vocational education and occupations in collaboration with various stakeholders and related organisations; and enhance the provision of career-related experiences to meet the diverse needs of students through more co-operation with the business sector and related organisations. (EDB)
- Provide each public sector school operating senior secondary education levels with a recurrent cash grant equivalent to the salary of a graduate teacher with effect from the 2014/15 school year to facilitate schools' enhancement of the life planning and career guidance services meeting the students' development needs. (EDB)
- Provide all public sector schools with Wi-Fi coverage to enhance learning through the use of mobile computing devices, in preparation for the launch of the fourth IT in education strategy after consultation with stakeholders. (EDB)

Post-secondary Education

- Increase the annual intake of senior-year undergraduate places in the University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions by 1 000, from 4 000 to 5 000. (EDB)

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- Explore how to practically introduce a new subsidy scheme to subsidise up to 1 000 students per cohort to pursue self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to meet Hong Kong's manpower needs. The scheme, if implemented, will benefit three cohorts of students, and will then be subject to a review on its effectiveness. (EDB in collaboration with relevant bureaux)
 - Introduce a scholarship scheme to support up to 100 outstanding students per cohort to study in renowned universities outside Hong Kong to help nurture a diversified pool of top talents to propel Hong Kong's development. Apart from receiving a scholarship of up to \$250,000, needy students will also receive means-tested bursary of up to \$200,000. The scheme will benefit three cohorts of students, and will then be subject to a review on its effectiveness. (EDB)
 - Introduce the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme so that needy students pursuing studies under the Scheme for the Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions may receive a means-tested grant of up to \$15,000 per year during their study period. The scheme is not subject to any quota. The scheme will benefit three cohorts of students, and will then be subject to a review on its effectiveness. (EDB)

Vocational Education

- Launch a pilot training and support scheme at VTC to integrate structured apprenticeship training programmes and clear career progression for industries with keen demand for labour. (EDB in collaboration with relevant bureaux)

- Provide funding support for VTC's Industrial Attachment Programme for students so as to enhance their employability and prepare them for a smooth transition from study to work. (EDB)
- Set up a Task Force on Vocational Education to map out the strategy for promoting vocational education in the community, and invite VTC to draw up a strategic development plan for its campuses in order to enhance synergy and provide state-of-the-art facilities which are pivotal to enhancing the image and quality of vocational education. (EDB)

Qualifications Framework

- Establish an endowment fund of \$1 billion and use its investment income to provide long-term support for the sustainable development and implementation of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework, benefiting various stakeholders such as students, practitioners, employers, education and training providers as well as quality assurance bodies. (EDB)

International Year of the Family

- Launch through the Family Council a series of territory-wide activities to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014, including the organisation of symposium, educational events and publicity campaigns. (HAB)

On-going Initiatives

We are:

Population Policy

- Conducting a public engagement exercise through the Steering Committee on Population Policy on a host of issues relating to population policy. The engagement exercise will end in February 2014. (CSO)

Kindergarten Education

- Implementing the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme and the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme to provide support for parents with children attending eligible kindergartens. (EDB)
- Providing course fee reimbursement for principals and teachers serving in Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme kindergartens to pursue relevant approved courses in the 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years. (EDB)
- Studying how to practicably implement free kindergarten education, and will make recommendations within 2015. (EDB)

School Education

- Implementing a series of targeted relief measures to sustain the development of secondary schools and stabilise the teaching force, in view of the temporary decline of Secondary One student population in the coming few years. (EDB)

- Monitoring the demand of cross-boundary students for public sector primary school places and implementing measures to cope with the upsurge, including –
 - facilitating the transportation arrangements for cross-boundary students of tender age through measures to increase the handling capacities of boundary control points and proper management of traffic and security measures at the boundary areas; and
 - revising the arrangements for the central allocation of Primary One places for admission to Primary One in September 2014. (EDB)
- Monitoring the impact of the demographic changes on the long-term planning of the provision of public sector school places, including the transient impact on primary and secondary education caused by babies born to Mainland women in Hong Kong whose fathers are not Hong Kong permanent residents (Type II babies). (EDB)
- Monitoring the supply and demand of international school places and facilitating the development of international schools to meet the demand, especially that from overseas families. (EDB)
- Keeping under review the curriculum reform in basic education and senior secondary education under the New Academic Structure as well as related assessment initiatives to secure continuous enhancement to school curricula and the effectiveness of learning and teaching, including catering for learner diversity. (EDB)

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- Continuing the pilot project in some public sector schools to consolidate more experience and evidence on effective means to strengthen schools' internal management and reduce teachers' administrative work. (EDB)
 - Providing principals and teachers with structured training on curriculum and management as well as the latest development of the New Academic Structure. (EDB)
 - Providing related professional development to principals and teachers to pave the way for a more extensive and optimal use of e-learning in schools, including how pedagogy may be adapted to better harness the potentials of e-learning. (EDB)
 - Creating a motivating and conducive language learning environment through the continued efforts of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research. The aim is to promote bi-literacy and tri-lingualism and enhance the language standards of our students to meet the changing needs of the community. (EDB)

Post-secondary Education

- Increasing the number of first-year first-degree places to 15 000 and doubling senior year intake places to 4 000 per annum in the UGC-funded institutions in the current triennium, as well as supporting the implementation of the New Academic Structure in the higher education sector. (EDB)
- Supporting research in the higher education sector through the \$23 billion Research Endowment Fund and other funding sources through UGC. (EDB)

- Supporting UGC's initiatives to enhance teaching and learning. Notable initiatives include sponsoring theme-based projects in areas covering blended learning, new pedagogies, curriculum development and development of massive open online courses (MOOCs). (EDB)
- Supporting UGC's initiatives to strengthen UGC-funded institutions' internationalisation efforts, such as funding student-initiated projects that encourage multi-cultural integration. (EDB)
- Supporting the quality and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector through a basket of support measures. So far –
 - 11 sites and six vacant school premises were allocated under the Land Grant Scheme. In 2013, the Scheme was modified to cover self-financing institutions offering part-time locally-accredited post-secondary programmes, and to make available vacant government premises under the Scheme to be leased out at nominal rent;
 - 37 loans amounting to about \$7 billion were granted under the Start-up Loan Scheme. The ambit of the Scheme was expanded in 2012 to provide financial support for self-financing degree awarding institutions to develop student hostels; and
 - the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund, with total injections of \$3.52 billion, will continue to provide scholarships and awards and enhance quality of teaching and learning in the sector. (EDB)

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- Providing over 5 600 scholarships and awards for post-secondary students under the Government Scholarship Fund and the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund in the 2012/13 academic year, including the following two new measures –
 - a total of \$2 billion was injected into the two funds in 2012 to support new scholarships and awards, namely (i) the “Talent Development Scholarship” to encourage students to pursue their talents in non-academic areas, and (ii) the “Reaching Out Award” to enable students to participate in international events, short-term exchange or internships to broaden their international exposure and horizon; and
 - a total of \$40 million was injected into the two funds in 2013 to establish scholarships to give recognition to deserving post-secondary students with special educational needs in the pursuit of academic and other excellence. (EDB)
 - Implementing incremental steps to enhance the quality assurance mechanism of post-secondary education. A working group is being set up to oversee the implementation of periodic external quality audits on sub-degree operations of UGC-funded institutions. (EDB)
 - Implementing measures and making refinements to facilitate Hong Kong’s development as a regional education hub to attract and retain non-local students. These include relaxing employment and immigration restrictions for non-local students of locally-accredited local programmes, as well as implementing the PhD Fellowship Scheme and Targeted Scholarship Scheme for outstanding local and non-local students. (EDB)

Qualifications Framework

- Supporting the development of the Qualifications Framework by –
 - working with the Industry Training Advisory Committees to implement new initiatives funded by the recurrent provision of \$10 million starting from the 2013-14 financial year;
 - exploring the development of a credit accumulation and transfer system; and
 - fostering collaboration with the Qualifications Frameworks of other areas. (EDB)

Vocational Training and Manpower Development

(a) On-the-job Training

- Funding VTC to implement the pilot traineeship scheme in services industries, which aims to provide young people aged 15 or above with in-service training and relevant vocational education. We are planning to expand the scheme's coverage from the existing beauty care and hairdressing industries to other services industries, including the elderly care services industry. (LWB)
- Promoting the employment of young school leavers through providing enhanced on-the-job training allowance for employers and workplace attachment training allowance for trainees under the Youth Employment and Training Programme. (LWB)

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- Promoting the employment of middle-aged persons through providing enhanced on-the-job training allowance to employers under the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged. (LWB)

(b) Support for Employment

- Setting up a new job centre in Tung Chung. (LWB)
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai which aims at streamlining, integrating and enhancing the existing employment and training/retraining services of the Labour Department, Social Welfare Department and Employees Retraining Board. (LWB)

(c) International Culinary Institute

- Developing the International Culinary Institute under VTC as a centre of excellence in international cuisine. The Institute aims to enhance Hong Kong's status as Gourmets' Paradise and regional education hub, and improve education opportunities for young people. (EDB)

(d) Manpower Development for the Construction Industry

- Collaborating with the Construction Industry Council and other key stakeholders to monitor the manpower situation in the construction industry and to implement measures to meet the manpower demand for the implementation of upcoming infrastructure projects. (DEVB)

- Working closely with the Construction Industry Council to facilitate registration of construction workers and implementation of prohibition in phases, including making legislative amendment to the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance. (DEVB)

(e) Manpower Development for the Healthcare Sector

- Conducting a strategic review on healthcare manpower planning and professional development to ensure an adequate supply of quality professionals for meeting the community's future healthcare needs. (FHB)

(f) Manpower Development for the Welfare Sector

- Training additional Enrolled Nurses and allied health professionals for the welfare sector. (LWB)

Attracting Talents

- Stepping up promotion efforts for various talent admission schemes in view of Hong Kong's human capital needs. (SB)

Employee's Welfare

- Taking forward the work of the Standard Working Hours Committee on promoting informed and in-depth public discussion of the working hours policy. The aim is to build consensus and identify the way forward. (LWB)
- Consulting stakeholders on the continuous contract requirement under the Employment Ordinance on the basis of the review conducted by the Labour Department. (LWB)

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- Organising publicity campaigns to promote compliance with Statutory Minimum Wage. (LWB)
 - Taking enforcement action against wage offences, including breaches of Statutory Minimum Wage provisions, and offences of wilful defaults of Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board awards. (LWB)
 - Adopting an intelligence-based and proactive strategy in combating illegal employment. (LWB)
 - Intensifying systematic prevention and enforcement measures to ensure construction safety in anticipation of the increase in the number of new works projects and expected growth in building renovation and maintenance works. (LWB)
 - Launching safety enhancement initiatives and large-scale promotional programmes to raise the standard and awareness of stakeholders in the construction and catering industries on occupational safety and health. (LWB)

Supporting the Family

- Legislating on three days' paid paternity leave for working fathers with newborn child to help them take up their family responsibilities. (LWB)
- Promoting family-friendly employment practices and encouraging wider adoption of such practices to help employees achieve better balance between work and family lives. (LWB)

- Working with the Family Council on the application of family perspectives in the policy-making process following the introduction of a mandatory assessment of family implications for all policies as from 1 April 2013. Bureaux and departments are encouraged to consult the Family Council on new policies which may carry family implications. (HAB)
- Working with the Family Council to –
 - advocate a pro-family environment and further promote family core values to encourage the community to attach importance to the family; and
 - foster a culture of loving families. (HAB)
- Introducing family education packages through the Family Council to –
 - address the needs of underprivileged families and cross-border families, etc.; and
 - further promote family education at the district level with collaboration among relevant bureaux/departments. (HAB)

Women's Interests

- Providing support to the Women's Commission in promoting the interests and well-being of women through –
 - the provision of an enabling environment;
 - empowerment of women, including implementing the Capacity Building Mileage Programme; and
 - public education. (LWB)

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- Applying the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist or the concept in different policy areas progressively and working with the Women's Commission to further promote gender mainstreaming. (LWB)
 - Implementing the Capacity Building Mileage Programme to encourage women to pursue continuous life-long learning. (LWB)
 - Conducting a Time-use Survey to understand the time-use pattern of women in Hong Kong, circumstances surrounding women's decision to take part in or withdraw from the workforce, as well as factors which would attract them to work. (LWB)