
Chapter 6

Education, Population and Human Resources

Preamble

People are our most precious resource, providing the impetus for the continued social and economic development of Hong Kong. To address the challenges brought about by the anticipated decline in labour force from 2018, the Steering Committee on Population Policy, led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, formulated in late 2014 a series of measures with the major objectives of unleashing the local labour force and attracting talent from outside Hong Kong. These measures were subsequently announced in the 2015 Policy Address. The latest population and labour force projections released by the Census and Statistics Department in September 2015 confirm that our labour force will probably decline from 2018 onwards. The projected figures also show that our population is entering an era of rapid ageing. The elderly population is expected to rise from 1.12 million at present to 2.56 million by 2064. To make Hong Kong a better home for our elderly citizens so that they will lead a respectful and enjoyable life here, we have put forward a number of initiatives in this year's Policy Address with a view to developing Hong Kong into an age-friendly city.

The issue of manpower is one of quantity and quality. We will give priority to nurturing local talent, which starts with education. Starting from the 2017/18 school year, we will implement the free quality kindergarten education policy and provide kindergartens with direct subsidy with a view to greatly enhancing the quality of kindergarten

education and laying a solid foundation for children's balanced development and lifelong learning. Primary and secondary education is an important stage for students to accumulate knowledge, develop personal character and equip themselves for challenges ahead. We will enhance the support for secondary schools to provide life planning education and career guidance services to help young people better understand themselves and plan for their future. At the same time, we will provide flexible and diversified study and articulation pathways with multiple entry and exit points and promote continuous learning. These will help young people equip themselves to pursue their dreams and will strengthen their confidence in the future. We will continue to provide opportunities for young people to enrol on quality post-secondary programmes, and further develop and promote vocational and professional education and training (VPET) to cater for their diversified interests.

Apart from the school, support and nurturing from the family are pivotal to the development of young people. Therefore, we must strengthen the family and make it one of the core values of the community. We will collaborate with various sectors in the community to create a family-friendly culture and enhance the functions of families. We will also promote family-friendly employment practices and encourage employers to help their employees achieve a balance between work and family life. A new law was implemented last year granting eligible male employees three days of paid paternity leave under the Employment Ordinance.

Promoting employment of local workers and protecting the rights and benefits of workers have always been our priority. We will continue to provide recruitment and employment services for employers and job seekers with different employment needs. We take rigorous enforcement actions against violation of labour laws and will actively follow up the work of the Standard Working Hours Committee.

New Initiatives

We will:

Population Policy

(a) Creating an Age-friendly Community

- Provide covers on certain walkways connecting to public transport facilities so that members of the public, especially the elderly, can walk under shelter without being exposed to the weather. (THB)
- Examine the application of technologies to extend the pedestrian green time to facilitate the elderly and the disabled to cross signalised road junctions. (THB)
- Enhance the service of the HKeTransport to facilitate its use by the elderly. (THB)
- Update the facilities in public libraries and organise activities to promote reading among senior citizens. (HAB)
- Install more fitness facilities for the elderly in recreation and sports venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to encourage the elderly to participate regularly in health-building activities, and designate priority seats at indoor recreation venues to better meet the needs of the elderly. (HAB)
- Continue the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities and extend it to cover all green minibus routes. (LWB)

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- Provide additional resources for DCs to promote the building of age-friendly communities at the district level, and encourage DCs to participate in the World Health Organization’s “age-friendly community” accreditation scheme. (LWB)

(b) Supporting Women in Fulfilling Work and Family Commitments

- Implement the free quality kindergarten education policy to provide direct subsidy for eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens from the 2017/18 school year. The basic provision will enable kindergartens to provide quality half-day service for all eligible children aged between three and six. The Government will also provide an additional grant for whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens to alleviate the financial burden of school fees on parents and encourage kindergartens to provide whole-day services to support working parents. Additional financial assistance will also be given to students from needy families. (EDB)

(c) Building an Inclusive Society

- Focus on social groups with special needs in the development of courses and services by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB), including the development of more dedicated courses for mature persons, women and ethnic minorities. The ERB will also launch a pilot part-time job referral platform known as “Smart Starter” to provide registration, vacancy referral and follow-up services for new arrivals who have completed ERB courses. (LWB)

Kindergarten Education

- Implement the free quality kindergarten education policy from the 2017/18 school year to improve the quality of kindergarten education in various aspects, through the following measures:
 - providing eligible local non-profit-making kindergartens with a basic subsidy for the provision of three-year quality half-day service for all eligible children. The Government will also provide an additional subsidy to eligible whole-day and long whole-day kindergartens. Besides, the Government will revise the planning standards to provide more whole-day places progressively;
 - further improving the teacher-pupil ratio to 1:11 so as to strengthen the support for students with diverse needs. We will encourage kindergartens to establish a career ladder and provide competitive remuneration for teachers to retain and attract quality teaching staff;
 - reviewing the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum, taking into consideration the experience of learning and teaching in kindergartens, the changes of society as well as future needs;
 - refining the Quality Assurance Framework; enhancing the governance and transparency of kindergartens, and the Government's monitoring;
 - strengthening the support for students from needy families, NCS students, and students with diverse learning needs;
 - enhancing parent engagement and parent education; and

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- improving school premises and facilities, and exploring feasible measures to increase the provision of kindergarten premises in the long run. (EDB)
 - Before the implementation of the new policy in the 2017/18 school year, invite the CCF to consider implementing a programme to provide a one-off grant for kindergarten students from needy families in the 2016/17 school year to cover their school-related expenses. (EDB)

Primary and Secondary Education

- Upon the completion of the New Academic Structure Medium-term Review at senior secondary level, recommendations were announced in stages. To enhance the implementation of the senior secondary curriculum and strengthen life planning education and related guidance services, the Government plans to turn two recurrent grants namely the Senior Secondary Curriculum Support Grant and the Career and Life Planning Grant into regular teaching posts. This is expected to provide about 1 000 regular teaching posts at the Graduate Master/Mistress rank. (EDB)
- To cater for students' learning interests and to further stabilise the teaching force, the surplus teachers arising from the reduction of Secondary One classes in aided secondary schools in the 2013/14 and 2014/15 school years are allowed to be retained, where there are sufficient justifications, until the end of the 2017/18 school year. (EDB)

- To cultivate more talents, the Government proposes the setting up of a Gifted Education Fund of \$800 million in support of the Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education's work in nurturing exceptionally gifted students aged between 10 and 18 and providing special academic and non-academic training as well as counselling services. Meanwhile, the Education Bureau (EDB) will continue to implement school-based gifted education programmes, which include training for principals and teachers in primary and secondary schools, establishing school networks to share practices and experiences, so as to enable schools to identify more talents, expand the talent pool in Hong Kong and enhance our competitiveness. (EDB)
- Encourage students to learn the languages of countries along the Belt and Road so as to strengthen their skills in communicating with people from these countries, and also enhance students' understanding of the historical, economic, religious and cultural developments of these countries and regions through the relevant course subjects and learning activities. These will enable them to contemplate the significance of the Belt and Road Initiative for the world today, its importance to the future development of Hong Kong and the opportunities it presents. Furthermore, we will set up priority theme under the Quality Education Fund to encourage students to learn more about the Belt and Road and to have exchange in the region. (EDB)

Post-secondary Education

- Increase the number of offers under the Targeted Scholarship Scheme with a view to encouraging more students from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and nearby regions along the Belt and Road to pursue study in Hong Kong. (EDB)
- Strengthen the connection with and support for students from regions along the Belt and Road to enhance their understanding of the culture of China and Hong Kong, and encourage tertiary institutions to organise visits to regions along the Belt and Road for Hong Kong post-secondary students in the form of exchange, field trip or short-term internship, with a view to facilitating interactions and exchanges in the whole region. (EDB)
- Advance the review of the three-year pilot Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme as to how to expand its scope to benefit more students studying in the Mainland. (EDB)

Vocational and Professional Education and Training

- Actively consider how to implement the recommendations in the report of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education submitted to the Government in July 2015, including:
 - conducting a series of publicity and promotional activities;

- subsidising fully the provision of Applied Learning courses by secondary schools;
 - extending the Pilot Training and Support Scheme to benefit two more cohorts of 2 000 students in total; and
 - supporting major VPET providers in organising large-scale skills competitions. (EDB)
- Plan to first earmark a site in the urban district for developing a VTC campus with adequate capacity and state-of-the-art facilities, having considered the recommendations of the Task Force and the strategic campus development plan submitted by the VTC in August 2015. (EDB)

Women

- Implement a pilot scheme to test the application of gender mainstreaming in the welfare sector. (LWB)

Employment Support and Employees' Welfare

- Follow up the work of the Standard Working Hours Committee. (LWB)
- Conduct a public engagement exercise on the proposed code of practice for employment agencies so as to protect the interests of foreign domestic helpers and their employers, and continue to work closely with the home countries of foreign domestic helpers. (LWB)

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- Set up a dedicated employment information platform to enhance employment support for job seekers with higher education, in particular Hong Kong students educated in overseas tertiary institutions as well as persons from overseas with higher academic/professional qualifications. (LWB)
 - Establish a task force comprising representatives of relevant bureaux/departments and public bodies to explore the proposals put forward by the inter-departmental working group, consult stakeholders about relevant issues in a timely manner, and implement the agreed measures so as to improve protection for injured employees in high-risk industries. (LWB)

Occupational Safety and Health

- The LD will collaborate with trade associations, workers' unions, professional bodies, related organisations and other government departments to explore measures to enhance work-at-height safety to further protect workers' safety while working at height. These measures include urging contractors and workers to use standard-conforming mobile working platforms and requiring workers to use safety helmets with chin straps. (LWB)

On-going Initiatives

We are:

Population Policy

(a) Development Strategy for a Diversified Economy

- Developing policy and support measures necessary for the further development of four clusters of sectors (namely transportation; convention and exhibition industries and tourism; manufacturing industries, innovative technology, and cultural and creative industries; and professional services) through the Economic Development Commission and its four working groups with a view to diversifying our economy and creating more employment opportunities. (CEDB/DEVB/THB/ITB)

(b) Adhering to the Direction of Sustainable Development

- In the context of the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” study and its public engagement exercise, examining the strategy and possible options for the development of Hong Kong beyond 2030, aligning with the objectives of our population policy from the perspectives of creating capacity for improved living space and better quality of life, enhancing economic competitiveness and facilitating sustainable development. (DEVB)

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- Developing high value-added industries to broaden our economic base and provide new areas of economic growth. This will also give the young generation a wide variety of job opportunities with good prospects. (All relevant bureaux)

(c) Extending Working Life

- Since 1 June 2015, the retirement age for new recruits to the civilian grades has been raised to 65 and that for the disciplined services grades to 60. As regards extending the service of serving civil servants, a Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme has been introduced, which enables departments to engage retired civil servants on contract terms to undertake ad hoc duties requiring specific civil service expertise or experience. Meanwhile, the staff sides have been engaged in discussions about the implementation details of adjusted mechanism on further employment of civil servants beyond retirement age. The above measures enable the Government, as an employer, to take early actions to address the challenges arising from an ageing population and provide flexibility for meeting the manpower needs of departments taking into account their different operational and succession needs. (CSB)
- In line with the Government's arrangement of extending the retirement age of civil service new recruits, encouraging other employers, in particular public and subvented organisations, to implement appropriate measures according to their own circumstances to extend the working life of their employees. We will also review the existing welfare arrangements to see if they may reduce the incentive for older persons to continue to work. (All relevant bureaux)

- Implementing the measure to raise the upper age limit of Category B security personnel from 65 to 70. (SB)
- Examining whether and how the new policy concerning the retirement age of newly recruited government school teachers should be extended to aided schools through consultation with educational bodies conducted by the EDB. The EDB is formulating the development plan having regard to the analysis of the relevant views. (EDB)

(d) Enhancing Employment Support for Elderly People and Others

- Continuing to promote the employment of elderly persons by enhancing the employment support services for elderly job seekers. We will continue to implement various publicity initiatives to raise public awareness of the part played by elderly persons in the potential labour force and encourage employers to build an elderly-friendly working environment. (LWB)
- Continuing to provide on-the-job training allowance of up to \$3,000 per month for employers for a period of three to six months under the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged, so as to give employers financial incentive to employ elderly persons in full-time or part-time jobs and provide them with on-the-job training. (LWB)

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- Taking the elderly as one of the target groups in the future, the ERB will help elderly people rejoin the job market. The ERB has conducted a market research on elderly or retired persons and employers to understand elders' views on continuing employment as well as opinions of employers on hiring elderly or retired persons. The ERB will explore suitable types of work for these people and continue to launch training courses on a pilot basis. (LWB)
 - Continuing to organise large-scale, district-based and thematic job fairs regularly in collaboration with employers from different sectors and through the recruitment centres established specifically for the retail, catering and construction sectors. Job seekers can submit job applications and attend interviews on the spot. (LWB)
 - Continuing to organise large-scale job fairs which include employment and vacancy information on the Mainland so as to help job seekers, in particular young people, better understand the employment opportunities on the Mainland and find suitable jobs. (LWB)

(e) Supporting Women in Fulfilling Work and Family Commitments

- Continuing to make an annual provision of around \$240 million to support needy students to participate in after-school activities including after-school support on learning through schools and NGOs. A \$200 million matching fund is provided through the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged to encourage the business sector to work with organisations and schools to launch more after-school learning and support programmes for primary and secondary school students from grassroots families. (EDB/LWB)
- Setting an example on the part of the Government as a good employer by implementing more family-friendly employment practices for other employers to follow. Apart from considering to offer more part-time positions on non-civil service contract terms, the Government, subject to exigencies of the service and sufficient personal grounds, will also continue with the existing arrangements of giving priority and sympathetic consideration to leave applications, including unpaid leave, on family care grounds. (CSB)
- Providing in phases about 5 000 additional places of Extended Hours Service at aided child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres in districts with high demand from 2015-16 onwards so that more pre-primary children in need (aged below six) can continue to receive extended hours of service in the same service units being attended by them, with a view to alleviating the pressure on their working parents. (LWB)
- Providing in 2018-19 about 100 additional aided long full-day child care places for children aged below three. (LWB)

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- Continuing to invite NGOs to establish work-based child care centres through the Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses. Besides, the Government will continue to explore the feasibility of providing in the proposed Government Complex in Tseung Kwan O, on a pilot basis, 100 NGO-operated child care places for staff members. (LWB)
 - Commissioning a consultancy study in 2015-16 to advise on the long-term development of child care services. (LWB)
 - Implementing a pilot project in 2015-16 to help grandparents become well-trained child carers in a home setting, with a view to reinforcing support for nuclear families. (LWB)
 - Enhancing the provision of training and employment services for women by the ERB to help them rejoin the job market. (LWB)
 - Continuing to step up the LD's efforts in promoting family-friendly employment practices, including the use of Announcements of Public Interest on television and radio, to encourage employers to help employees achieve a balance between work and family life. (LWB)

(f) Providing Better Support for People to Start a Family

- Continuing to meet the housing needs of the public, including young married couples, by providing more PRH units and subsidised sale flats and maintaining the steady development of the private property market. On PRH, we will encourage young married couples to live with or near their elderly parents through the Harmonious Families Priority Scheme, with a view to promoting mutual care among family members, including the assistance provided by the elders in taking care of young children. (THB)
- Strengthening the promotion of breastfeeding and encouraging the implementation of breastfeeding-friendly measures in the community and workplaces through the Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding under the Food and Health Bureau, with a view to enhancing sustained breastfeeding and promoting breastfeeding as a norm widely accepted by the general public for baby care. (FHB)
- Considering enhancing collaboration among hospitals in various clusters through the HA to improve the waiting time for assisted reproductive technology services. (FHB)

(g) Building an Inclusive Society

- Keeping in view the implementation of the One-Way Permit Scheme and maintaining effective communication with the Mainland authorities for the orderly entry of eligible Mainland residents into Hong Kong for family union. (SB)

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- Improving the employment opportunities of persons with disabilities through:
 - continuous provision of follow-up service for job seekers with disabilities for at least six months after placement so as to provide support for employers and help employees with disabilities adapt to their work; and
 - implementation of a two-year pilot project funded by the Lotteries Fund in 2015-16 for trained ex-mentally ill persons to serve as peer supporters to provide support and encouragement for other persons in rehabilitation through sharing their recovery experience. The project also aims to improve the employment opportunities of ex-mentally ill persons. (LWB)
 - Continuing to implement a pilot project to engage trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme who can communicate in ethnic minority language as Employment Services Ambassadors in the Job Centres and job fairs of the LD to provide employment services for ethnic minority job seekers. The LD will review the pilot project and draw up future arrangements. (LWB)
 - Helping different social groups seek employment and integrate into the community through the ERB's new courses and support services geared towards their needs, including:
 - organising dedicated training courses for new arrivals;
 - continuing to conduct training courses in the support centres for ethnic minorities under the Home Affairs Department on a pilot basis to facilitate attendance of ethnic minorities;

- organising dedicated training courses for persons with disabilities; and
- extending the Modular Certificates Accumulation System to cover other in-demand programmes to enable trainees to obtain full-time course certificates upon completion of a number of specified half-day or evening courses. This allows trainees who are unable to pursue full-time courses due to work or family commitments to make flexible arrangement for further studies and acquire recognised qualifications. (LWB)

- Continuing to strengthen the support platforms for social enterprises and step up publicity and public education to promote social enterprises. Through co-ordination between social enterprises and NGOs, on-site training opportunities in social enterprises and related support services will be offered to persons with disabilities and other groups in need in order to enhance their employment prospect. We will continue to implement the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme with enhanced measures to benefit more types of social enterprises and encourage greater participation of the commercial sector. (HAB).

(h) Attracting Overseas Talent

- Continuing to expand our pool of talent by encouraging talent and entrepreneurs to come and stay in Hong Kong in accordance with the relaxed stay arrangements under the General Employment Policy, the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, and the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. (SB)

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- Continuing to attract a larger pool of talent with excellent educational background or international work experience to come to Hong Kong in accordance with the adjusted General Points Test under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme. (SB)
 - Studying the feasibility of drawing up a talent list in the light of overseas practices so that we can attract people with exceptional quality in a more effective and focused manner to support Hong Kong's development into a high value-added and diversified economy. (LWB)
 - Setting out clearly the factors for consideration when processing applications to enter Hong Kong for investment under the General Employment Policy to attract more entrepreneurs from overseas to run their business in Hong Kong. (SB)
 - Continuing to implement the pilot scheme to attract the second generation of Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents who have emigrated overseas to return to Hong Kong. (SB)
 - Continuing to step up the promotion of the above-mentioned admission schemes by the overseas Economic and Trade Offices and Mainland offices of the Government. (CEDB/CMAB)
 - Encouraging non-locally trained healthcare professionals to practise in Hong Kong through introducing more flexibility into the internship arrangements for non-locally trained doctors and increasing the frequency of examination sittings for non-locally trained dentists and nurses. (FHB)

- Continuing to improve air quality and increase the provision of international school places as necessary with a view to enhancing Hong Kong's attractiveness to overseas talent. (ENB/EDB)
- (i) Importation of Labour
- Importing labour on an appropriate, limited and targeted basis to relieve the manpower shortage of individual sectors on the premise of according priority in employment to local workers. (LWB)
- (j) Active Ageing
- Continuing to install barrier-free facilities such as lifts at the existing PRH estates and public walkways maintained by the Highways Department. This will allow people in need, including the elderly, to move around in the community with greater ease. (THB)
 - Upgrading the physical setting, facilities and equipment of some 230 elderly centres under the Improvement Programme on Elderly Centres. (LWB)
 - Implementing the new Opportunities for the Elderly Project after it is merged with the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project for better use of resources in encouraging elderly people to actively take part in community affairs. (LWB)

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- Enhancing district network support for elder academies, promoting their curriculum development and training for trainers, so that these elder academies can provide the elderly with diversified courses on an on-going basis for the promotion of life-long learning and cross-sectoral harmony. (LWB)
 - Continuing to implement the Government Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and Eligible Persons with Disabilities to enable elderly people aged 65 or above and eligible persons with disabilities aged below 65 to travel on the MTR lines, franchised bus routes, ferry routes and most green minibus routes covered by the scheme anytime at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip, with a view to building a caring and inclusive society by encouraging these people to participate more in community activities. (LWB)
 - Providing choices of service for the elderly and at the same time promoting the development of the silver hair market through the Senior Citizen Residences Scheme and the Reverse Mortgage Programme, which are operated by the Hong Kong Housing Society and the Hong Kong Mortgage Corporation Limited respectively. (THB/FSTB)

(k) Implementation and Progress Monitoring

- Monitoring regularly the implementation of the above initiatives through the Steering Committee on Population Policy led by the Chief Secretary for Administration. To incorporate views of experts, academics, service organisations and other stakeholders into the work relating to population policy, the Steering Committee conducts seminars where appropriate to disseminate the effectiveness of the population policy initiatives and seeks participants' comments on the enhancement of various initiatives having regard to the latest developments. (CSO)

Kindergarten Education

- Continuing to implement 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 before the introduction of the free quality kindergarten education policy. (EDB)

Primary and Secondary Education

- Continuing to implement relief measures to facilitate the sustainable development of secondary schools and stabilise the teaching force before the overall Secondary One student population rebounds progressively. (EDB)

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- Monitoring the demand of cross-boundary students and babies born to Mainland women in Hong Kong whose fathers are not Hong Kong permanent residents (Type II babies) for public sector primary school places, and continuing to implement flexible measures to increase the supply of school places to cope with the demand. The measures include:
 - temporarily expanding the size of each class to cope with transient demand; and
 - further diverting cross-boundary students through the revised arrangements for the central allocation under the Primary One Admission System, and utilising fully the handling capacities of the existing immigration control points to facilitate the arrangements for cross-boundary students of tender age through proper management of traffic and security measures at the boundary areas. (EDB)
 - Monitoring the impact of demographic changes on the long-term planning for the provision of public sector school places, including the transient impact on primary and secondary education caused by Type II babies. (EDB)
 - Monitoring the supply and demand of international school places, and facilitating the development of international schools mainly through allocating vacant school premises and greenfield sites as well as supporting in-situ expansion of existing international schools to meet the demand, especially that of overseas families. (EDB)

- Continuing to provide professional support for schools to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching, including catering for learner diversity, after completing the medium-term review of the senior secondary curriculum, assessment and related measures under the New Academic Structure. (EDB)
- Continuing to organise teacher training and student learning activities. We have sought the views of the education sector on the renewal of the curricula of Science, Technology and Mathematics education, and held a STEM forum for teachers. We will also organise a related student education fair. (EDB)
- Continuing to renew the curricula of humanities subjects like Chinese History and World History, and enhancing students' interest in and understanding of Chinese history and culture as well as broadening their global outlook by enlivening classroom resources for learning and teaching and providing students with rich learning experiences. (EDB)
- Consolidating the experiences and results of the Pilot Project on Strengthening Schools' Administration Management and, continuing to disseminate good practices through various channels with a view to benefiting other public sector schools and teachers by providing them with support. (EDB)
- Providing principals and teachers with structured training on curriculum and management, keeping them abreast of the latest development of the New Academic Structure. (EDB)

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- Fully implementing the Fourth IT in Education Strategy starting from the 2015/16 school year. The major measure is to upgrade the Wi-Fi infrastructure in some 1 000 public sector schools across Hong Kong to facilitate e-learning through the use of mobile learning devices. As at the first term of the 2015/16 school year, about half of the eligible schools have completed the enhancement process, while the works for the remaining 500 schools will commence in the next two school years as scheduled. Furthermore, other related measures such as establishing centres of excellence for schools to share experience, revising curricula, providing training for school leaders and teachers and increasing the supply of e-learning resources have also commenced. (EDB)

 - Creating an environment conducive to language learning through a wide range of initiatives planned and undertaken by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research as scheduled, such as enhancing the teaching of English, conducting a study on the learning of Chinese by ethnic minorities, providing support for young children in learning Chinese and English, and offering Vocational Chinese Language courses to ethnic minority school leavers. The aim is to promote biliteracy and trilingualism and enhance the language standards of our students to meet the changing needs of the community. (EDB)

- Providing secondary schools with support and strengthening professional training for teachers to promote life planning education and related guidance services. We will continue to deepen the co-operation between schools and the business sector and related organisations by encouraging more business organisations to form stronger partnership with schools in organising various career exploration activities in the triennium from the 2015/16 school year to help secondary students better understand the world of work and prepare themselves for further studies and employment in the future. We will also consolidate the key elements of effective practices to facilitate the setting up of a platform for showcasing exemplars of business-school partnership and sharing successful experience. (EDB)
- Continuing to provide more Mainland exchange opportunities for primary and secondary students through a variety of strategies. Apart from reinforcing and consolidating students' classroom learnings and deepening their understanding of the relationship between our country and Hong Kong, the exchanges enable students to gain first-hand experience of our country's development in aspects of history, culture and economics from multiple perspectives. (EDB)
- Providing designated funding and professional support for local public sector or Direct Subsidy Scheme primary and secondary schools as well as special schools that have formed sister schools with the Mainland under the three-year pilot scheme launched in the 2015/16 school year. The scheme will serve the purpose of further promoting professional exchanges and enhancing the breadth and depth of co-operation between local and Mainland sister schools. (EDB)

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- Further enhancing the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector primary schools to 60% and 65% in the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years respectively upon increasing such ratio from 50% to 55% in the 2015/16 school year. The aim is to attract more talent to join the teaching force of primary education so as to enhance the quality of teaching. (EDB)

Post-secondary Education

- Increasing progressively senior year intake places of institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to 5 000 per annum by the 2018/19 academic year. (EDB)
- Supporting UGC's initiatives to strengthen the internationalisation efforts of UGC-funded institutions, such as funding student-initiated projects that encourage multi-cultural integration. (EDB)
- Providing 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)
- Supporting the quality and sustainable development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector through a package of support measures. The measures which have been implemented so far include:
 - 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 make available vacant government premises to be leased out at nominal rent under the scheme;

- 39 loans amounting to about \$7.3 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 the quality of teaching and learning in the sector. (EDB)
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- Providing over 9 000 scholarships and awards for post-secondary students under the Government Scholarship Fund and the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund in the 2014/15 academic year. (EDB)
 - Implementing incremental steps to enhance the quality assurance mechanism of post-secondary education, and overseeing the implementation of periodic external quality audits of sub-degree operations of UGC-funded institutions by a newly formed working group. (EDB)
 - Continuing to implement measures and relevant arrangements to facilitate Hong Kong's development into 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)

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- Implementing the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors starting from the 2015/16 academic year to subsidise about 1 000 students per cohort to pursue self-financing undergraduate programmes in selected disciplines to meet Hong Kong's manpower needs. The scheme will benefit three cohorts of students, and is being reviewed on its effectiveness. (EDB in collaboration with relevant bureaux)
 - Implementing the Hong Kong Scholarship for Excellence Scheme to support up to 100 outstanding students per cohort to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate studies in renowned universities outside Hong Kong with effect from the 2015/16 academic year to help nurture a diversified pool of top talent to propel Hong Kong's development. The scheme will benefit three cohorts of students, and will then be subject to a review of its effectiveness. As at mid December 2015, a total of 92 students were selected as the first cohort of awardees. (EDB)

Qualifications Framework

- Providing a steady source of income through the Qualifications Framework (QF) Fund, which was established by the Government on 1 September 2014 with a financial commitment of \$1 billion, to support the sustainable development and implementation of the QF, benefiting various stakeholders such as students, practitioners, employers, education and training providers as well as quality assurance bodies. (EDB)

Vocational Training and Manpower Development

(a) On-the-job Training

- Funding the VTC to implement the traineeship scheme in services industries such as beauty care and hairdressing, aiming to provide young people aged 15 or above with in-service training and relevant vocational education. (LWB)

(b) International Culinary Institute

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

(c) Manpower Development for the Construction Industry

- Continuing to collaborate with the Construction Industry Council and other key stakeholders to monitor the manpower situation in the construction industry and implement measures to meet the industry's manpower demand in the future. (DEVB)
- Working closely with the Construction Industry Council to facilitate registration of construction workers and implementation of prohibition in phases in order to fully launch the construction workers registration scheme. (DEVB)
- Facilitating local construction workers to find jobs and employers of the industry to recruit workers through the newly established Construction Industry Recruitment Centre. (LWB/DEVB)

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- Continuing with the further enhancement measures introduced in May 2015 to increase the flexibility in deploying imported workers for public sector works contracts so as to achieve a more effective utilisation of the productivity of the workers. (LWB/DEVB)

(d) Manpower Development for the Welfare Sector

- Training additional enrolled nurses and allied health professionals for the welfare sector. (LWB)

(e) Manpower Development for the Retail Industry

- Implementing a series of measures on vocational education and training, employment support, promotion etc. with a view to supporting manpower development of the retail industry. (CEDB)

Supporting the Family

- Working with the Family Council to ensure that family perspectives are duly considered in the policy-making process. We will commission a study to review the effectiveness of the assessment framework, and organise training and experience sharing activities for civil servants. (HAB)
- Working with the Family Council to:
 - advocate a pro-family environment and further promote family core values of “Love and Care”, “Respect and Responsibility” and “Communication and Harmony” as well as the positive messages and values on family formation 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 different types of families; and
 - further promote family education at the district level in collaboration with relevant bureaux/departments. (HAB)
- Riding on the success of the first two rounds of Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme (Award Scheme), the Home Affairs Bureau and the Family Council will launch the third Award Scheme to continue to promote family-friendly employment practices in the community in 2015-16. (HAB)

Women's Interests

- Providing support for the Women's Commission in promoting the interests and well-being of women through:
 - provision of an enabling environment;
 - empowerment of women, including implementing the Capacity Building Mileage Programme; and
 - public education. (LWB)
- Continuing to apply gender mainstreaming in major policies and initiatives across the board, and working with the Women's Commission to further promote gender mainstreaming. (LWB)

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- Continuing to enhance women's participation in the work of government advisory and statutory bodies. (LWB)

Employees' Welfare

- Supporting the Minimum Wage Commission in its review of the Statutory Minimum Wage rate. (LWB)

Occupational Safety and Health

- Continuing with the publicity, education and enforcement efforts, including prevention of accidents owing to systemic deficiencies by containing work risks at source, to promote the occupational safety and health of construction workers in view of booming development of new works projects and building renovation and maintenance works. (LWB)
- Continuing to launch large-scale promotional programmes to raise the standard of occupational safety and health in sectors such as the construction industry and food and beverage services sector and the awareness of relevant stakeholders. (LWB)