

Section 7: Increase in Education Opportunities

(1) Increase in Senior Secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To provide all Secondary Three students studying in publicly funded schools, who have the ability and wish to continue with their studies, with subsidized Secondary Four or training places, starting from the 2002/03 school year.

Last Year's Progress

- We have allocated six school premises for setting up senior secondary schools. Another two will be allocated soon. These schools will come into operation in the 2003/04 school year.
- The senior secondary schools mentioned above will have their own characteristics and offer diversified curricula to cater for the varying needs and abilities of different students. For example, some schools will place emphasis on IT, computer software and hardware, finance, financial management, creative design or communication.

(2) Increase in Post-secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To support the progressive increase in post-secondary education opportunities so that 60% of senior secondary school leavers will have access to post-secondary education by the 2010/11 school year.

Last Year's Progress

(i) **Common Descriptors of Associate Degree (AD) Programmes**

In consultation with the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and the Federation of Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions, the Education and Manpower Bureau announced in June 2001, a set of common descriptors for AD programmes in Hong Kong to ensure a consistency of standards in AD qualifications.

(ii) Recognition of AD Qualifications by the Government

The Government announced in June 2001 that it would accept the qualifications of accredited local AD programmes for appointment to all civil service and non-civil-service contract posts with general entry requirements set at the Higher Diploma level.

(iii) Financial Assistance for Students

With effect from the 2001/02 academic year, financial assistance has been provided to students pursuing self-financing accredited full-time post-secondary education courses to ensure that no students are deprived of education due to a lack of means.

(iv) Financial Assistance for Providers

With effect from the 2001/02 academic year, start-up loans have been provided to non-profit-making education providers for running accredited post-secondary programmes on a self-financing basis.

(v) Quality Assurance

To be eligible for the above financial assistance scheme, students have to select those programmes which meet the accreditation requirements that have been stipulated in order to ensure quality.

(vi) Accreditation Grant

Financial assistance to education providers has been granted for institutional reviews and programme validation.

(vii) List of Accredited Post-secondary Programmes

With information provided by post-secondary education institutions, a list of accredited self-financing full-time post-secondary programmes has been compiled for public reference.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

Publicity will be stepped up in order to enhance the public's understanding of sub-degree (including Associate Degree, Higher Diploma and Professional Diploma) qualifications and the prospects for employment or further studies. This should help to promote recognition of these qualifications.

(3) Promoting Continuing Education

Target

To provide a favourable environment for the development of continuing education through the promotion of mutual recognition and transfer of qualifications and enhancing co-operation among various sectors. The ultimate aim is to provide diversified and multi-channel education opportunities to encourage lifelong learning.

Last Year's Progress

- A working group has been set up by the Education Commission to provide advice on the overall strategy for promoting continuing education. The working group has examined the current situation of continuing education from different angles, and proceeded to assess ways to promote co-operation among different continuing education providers, enhance the database on Continuing Education, as well as provide different learners with more continuing education opportunities.
- The working group has mapped out a preliminary proposed qualifications framework, which outlines progression pathways in mainstream academic education, vocational education, professional education and continuing education. This would serve as a basis for promoting mutual recognition and the transfer of qualifications among different institutions.
- In respect to the existing regulatory framework for continuing education, the working group will explore ways to provide continuing education providers with more room for promoting the development of continuing education.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- The working group will submit proposals on the above issues to the Education Commission by mid-2002. The Education Commission will consider these proposals and consult the public before submitting its recommendations to the Government.