

Section 7: Increase in Education Opportunities

(1) Increase in Senior Secondary Education Opportunities

Target

To provide all Secondary 3 students studying in publicly funded schools, who have the ability and wish to continue with their studies, with subsidized Secondary 4 or training places.

Last Year's Progress

- The Secondary 3 students concerned have been provided with sufficient Secondary 4 or training places.

(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 academic year.

Last Year's Progress

- The overall post-secondary participation rate for the 17-20 age cohort rose to 42%.
- Approved interest free start-up loans to support non-profit-making education providers in providing accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes.
- Invited applications for 5 pieces of land to be granted by private treaty to non-profit-making post-secondary education providers for construction of purpose-built premises.
- Increased the total commitment of accreditation grant scheme for post-secondary education providers to conduct institutional reviews and programme validations.
- Provided financial assistance to post-secondary students.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- Subject to the availability of resources, plan to increase second and third year of undergraduate places to provide more articulation opportunities for sub-degree graduates.
- Continue to step up publicity to enhance the public's understanding of sub-degree qualifications and its prospects for employment or further studies. This should help promote recognition of these qualifications.

(3) Promoting Continuing Education

Target

To provide a favorable environment for the development of continuing education through the promotion of mutual recognition and transfer of qualifications and to increase education opportunities.

Last Year's Progress

- The public was consulted on the proposal of setting up a qualifications framework and associated quality assurance mechanism. The Government and the Manpower Development Committee are examining these comments.
- A \$5 billion Continuing Education Fund was set up in June 2002 to subsidise eligible Hong Kong residents to study in reimbursable courses. As at March 2003, there were 1 215 reimbursable courses and more than 28 000 applications.

Tasks Ahead for the Coming Year

- To gradually implement and promote the qualifications framework, to introduce legislative proposal to set up an effective quality assurance mechanism, and to enlist the support and input of the stakeholders in the process.
- To review the eligibility for and operation of the Continuing Education Fund.