

Chapter I Introduction

1. On 1 July 2002, during his speech at the swearing-in ceremony, the Chief Executive of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region made the following remarks:

“Among those who are over 15 years old, about 50% only have education attainment equivalent to Form 3 or below. If we include immigrants and foreign domestic helpers, the mismatch of human resources in Hong Kong is serious. There is an urgent need for development of a comprehensive population policy, and we will work on this within this year. This population policy will be designed to fit Hong Kong's long-term social and economic development, will complement family requirements, and will address the interests of different sectors in our community. We also need to focus on some 90,000 young people among us who are unemployed and unable to pursue further studies. I have asked the Youth Commission to come up with a clear and practical plan within six months to provide our young people with pluralistic options both in terms of training and employment opportunities.”

2. This statement expressed the concern of the Government for non-engaged youth in Hong Kong, and the determination to tackle the important issue of continuing development and employment opportunities for these young people.

3. The Commission on Youth decided to tackle this assignment from multiple angles:-

- 3.1 To assess the size and nature of this issue, starting from an update of the demographic and psychographic data;
- 3.2 To conduct a research study to assess the needs of non-engaged youth in personal development, skills training, career development and employment opportunities;
- 3.3 To stock take with the government and non-governmental organizations on the existing education, pre-employment training and on-job training opportunities for non-engaged youth;
- 3.4 To analyze the issue of youth unemployment from multiple angles comprising economic, education, family and global perspectives;
- 3.5 To attempt to construct a conceptual framework for future actions;
- 3.6 To set clear goals in the provision of more continuing development and employment opportunities for non-engaged youth;

3.7 To search for pilot projects to test the feasibility of the conceptual framework for future actions. The following are the key areas of such exploration: -

3.7.1 meaningful engagement for unmotivated non-engaged youth

3.7.2 building an integrated co-ordination and monitoring mechanism

- pre-vocation screening mechanism
- on-job training mechanism
- assessment and accreditation mechanism for vocational training
- mechanism to oversee the continuing development and employment opportunities for non-engaged youth

3.7.3 identification of sectors with potential for vocational job training and job creation

- local: sports, culture, arts, creative industries, information technology
- Mainland China and overseas: industry and commerce

3.8 To make recommendations to policy makers, educators, youth workers, parents, the private sector and non-engaged youth.

4. The Commission on Youth expresses sincere gratitude to all the people and organizations that have laboured intensively and convergently to make this study possible. They include:-

4.1 The Government:

- Chief Executive's Office
- Central Policy Unit
- Home Affairs Bureau and Leisure and Cultural Services Department
- Education and Manpower Bureau and the then Department of Education
- Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and the Social Welfare Department
- Economic Development and Labour Bureau and Labour Department
- Census and Statistics Department

4.2 Non-governmental organizations:

- Hong Kong Council of Social Service
- Many youth services organizations

4.3 Researchers and consultants from:

- Centre for Clinical Trials and Epidemiological Research, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- The University of Hong Kong
- The Chinese University of Hong Kong

- Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Committee on Home-School Co-operation, Education and Manpower Bureau
- Breakthrough Research Team
- The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups

4.4 Private Sector

- Corporations in the industrial and commercial sectors, local and Mainland China
- Professionals in the following sectors:
Sports, culture, arts, creative industries and information technology

4.5 Youth

- Participants of the Youth Forum and Youth Summit organized by the Commission on Youth
- Participants in related focus groups and research project

5. Owing to the constraint of time (the Commission was given six months to complete this report), it is impossible for the Commission to conduct a truly comprehensive and in-depth study. However, the Commission completed this investigative report in time with initial recommendations pointing to possible opportunities for continuing development and employment for non-engaged youth in Hong Kong. The Commission trusts that this report will serve as a useful starting point to tackle this important subject, and that the directions proposed will eventually turn young people into useful contributors in our community.