

Chapter VI The Way Forward

Clear Goal Setting

1. To ensure the success of the way forward, clear goal setting is the first step. The following are the proposed goals in resolving the problem of non-engaged youth in Hong Kong:

- 1.1 To create opportunities for youth to receive education designed to suit their multiple intelligences and diversity of needs.
- 1.2 To create opportunities for youth to develop the skills and knowledge needed for work.
- 1.3 To increase work opportunities for youth in Hong Kong.
- 1.4 To explore and increase work opportunities for youth in Mainland China and overseas.
- 1.5 To help youth respond to the changing nature of work.
- 1.6 To help youth address barriers that may prevent them from learning or working.
- 1.7 To engage non-engaged youth meaningfully, and to prevent them from involvement in risk behaviours.

Meaningful Engagement for Unmotivated Non-engaged Youth

2. Preliminary findings of the research on “Needs Assessment of Non-engaged Youth” revealed the needs of young people in a holistic manner in areas of personal development, support from family, education, vocational training and employment opportunities. If young people are disengaged from study, work and family, there is the risk of them getting involved in undesirable activities including drug abuse, triad or other illegal activities. The findings also show that there is a group of non-engaged youth who are not motivated to re-enter school or other forms of formal training, and they lack the skills and experience to enter the job market.

3. The Commission proposes that some schemes need to be devised to meaningfully engage these young people, not on a hit-and-run basis, or just to keep them entertained. The following are some guidelines for meaningful engagement:-

- 3.1 To engage the target longitudinally, for example, at least for three months or longer if necessary.

- 3.2 To provide informal training in:
 - intra-personal and interpersonal skills
 - basic language skills
 - basic thinking skills
 - work attitude and habits

- 3.3 To ensure programmes are outcome focused in the following aspects:-
 - helping youth to regain motivation
 - reconnecting youth with family or support group
 - helping youth to re-enter school if feasible
 - connecting youth with vocational training, pre-employment training or on-job training scheme

4. Social workers with special training and passion for non-engaged youth can lead these projects, and work closely with their parents, other training organizations or potential employees. Some proposed schemes and schemes which have been tried out with success are given below.

4.1 *Training program for unmotivated non-engaged youth with low education attainment – a pilot project*

This proposal is put forward by the Committee on Children and Youth Service Development, Hong Kong Council of Social Service. This is an outcome-focussed, holistic training program targeted to youth aged 15-24 with low education attainment and low motivation for study or work. The agencies which will take part in this project would attempt to engage the young people in their districts, and try to motivate them to join this program which includes the following elements:

- 4.1.1 Personal development: independent thinking, ethical discernment, emotional management, life skills for adverse situations;
- 4.1.2 Interpersonal skills;
- 4.1.3 Basic language skills necessary for further vocational training;
- 4.1.4 Word skills: work attitude, specific work attitude, specific work skills, work experience.

The entire program lasts for 3-6 months with some flexibility according to individual cases. There will be a case manager to follow-up each trainee to ensure that they are eventually re-connected to the family, the community, further vocational training, education system, or the work place. The program has clear outcome indicators, and follow-up scheme.

This pilot project can serve 300 non-engaged youth. The implementation required the reallocation of human and financial resources, or some seed funding to kick off the program.

4.2 *All Night Drop-in Centre*

This is an initiative of the Youth Outreach. The agency considers that one way of approaching non-engaged youth is to set up a 24-hour drop-in center which gives young people a safe environment to meet with friends and engage in various activities. This center should be trendy with a minimum of regulations so as to encourage usage, and it should be free and autonomous. The proposed drop-in center should also have the following characteristics:

- 4.2.1 a place with inexpensive entertainment/activities where young people can socialize, laugh, eat and drink;
- 4.2.2 a place that is situated in a convenient location easily accessible by various means of public transport;
- 4.2.3 a place that provides plenty of personal space with a minimum of authority and control;
- 4.2.4 a place where the staff can provide support for the emotional needs of the young people; and
- 4.2.5 a place that is physically and psychologically safe.

Such drop-in center can be an integral part of an outreach programme, and can be opened at the same time as the other parts of the outreaching programme, e.g. 10.00 p.m. until 6.00 a.m., 5 nights per week. When the center is open, it can be staffed by at least three workers, two of whom will preferably be male. Apart from services provided at the centre, workers in the centre should aim to persuade the young people to go to the residential centers operated by NGOs if necessary, or go home or be referred to other appropriate agencies.

4.3 *Youth Employment Start-up Programme (Y.E.S.!)*

The objective of the Youth Employment Start-up Programme (Y.E.S.!) by the Youth Outreach is to enable non-engaged youth to make their first entrance into the job market. The programme has been implemented in three different modalities. All of the young people employed are offered a one-year contract. They are told at the beginning that the contract will not be renewed and they are offered every assistance in the course of the year to find other employment and/or to increase their skills and education, while holding down a full-time job. During their year in the programme each young person gains experience working in a variety of posts under real working conditions. This equips them with first hand experience of real work and provides a basis for evaluation and the issuance of a testimonial letter on completion of their participation in the project. The channels for the YES programme include:

4.3.1 *Express Delivery Service*

This is a fully functioning Express Delivery Service which specialises in picking up and delivering packages and letters on a commercial basis throughout Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories. It is run as a self-supporting commercial operation and employs approximately 20 young people who would otherwise be unemployed. This project has already been running for almost two years.

4.3.2 *7-Eleven*

As part of the new Youth Outreach Center in Kwun Tong, the Centre operates a 7-Eleven franchise. The manager of the store is one of the regular staff of Youth Outreach. All of the 10 shop assistants are unemployed young people. The head office of 7-Eleven has expressed interest in providing further employment to the young people in the store once they have been trained and demonstrated their ability to work.

4.3.3 *The Hangout*

In July 2002 Youth Outreach opened an experimental drop-in center on the ground floor of the new Youth Outreach Center in Kwun Tong. Ten of the staff are social workers or welfare workers. Programme Assistants are members of the YES Programme.

Although the programme is not meant for skill training, the participating young people are provided with generic training in areas related to work and personal development such as:-

- dressing for work
- good manners in the work place
- personal hygiene
- ethical work practices
- introduction to computers/word processing
- basic filing
- basic bookkeeping
- taking telephone calls

The above will better prepare them for their ultimate entrance into the job market.

4.4 *Modern Apprenticeship*

This programme is initiated by Breakthrough Ltd. The philosophy of the programme is bridging the gap between work and study through a gradual

blending of the two. The programme may be a one-year programme targeting 20 youth aged 15 to 18. It should be provided jointly by non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Major components of the programme may include:

4.4.1 *Part of the week study*

Students may learn problem-solving skills, get emotional support from peers and get help from tutors. The curriculum may include life and leadership skill, information literacy, work management, language and mathematics.

4.4.2 *Part of the week work*

Students may work as interns in a job environment with close supervision by participating employers. They may develop personal work plans and profiles for progress and review. Tutors may work with job supervisors to ensure a progressive learning and work performance of the students.

The outcome measures of the programme may include students' competencies and confidence to transit from study to work, peer support for the students during and after the programme, whether employers will have a solid batch of youth who are productive and with good work-study habits, etc.

4.5 *Leadership Programme for Potential Jobless School Leavers*

The programme is proposed by Breakthrough Ltd. and aims:-

- 4.5.1 To help potential school leavers understand themselves and explore their potential;
- 4.5.2 To help potential school leavers increase self-esteem and resilience in facing the future;
- 4.5.3 To enhance potential school leavers' communication skill and pathfinding ability; and
- 4.5.4 To build up a positive and optimistic atmosphere for the younger generation.

The Breakthrough Ltd. proposes to choose new immigrant school leavers as the main target for early intervention, and the following special services/programmes should also be organized for them:-

- A three-workshop and a day camp volunteer training programme for 30

volunteers to enhance self-understanding, knowledge of unemployment youth and leadership ability, etc;

- 3 day camps to explore the perspectives of self-understanding, community sensitivity, communication skill and pathfinding ability; and
- A 3-day-2-night camp for resilience training and a graduation ceremony to recognize the achievements of the youth participating in the above-mentioned camps and related activities.

4.6 *The Hong Kong Award for Young People* (香港青年獎勵計劃)

This proposal is put forward by the Hong Kong Award for Young People. Over the years, 436 organization participated in the Hong Kong Youth Award Scheme, and they have successfully mobilized over 40,000 youth to complete the training requirement for the gold, silver and bronze awards. The training programs include voluntary service, outdoor survival skills, life skills and skills for sports and recreational activities.

The Hong Kong Youth Award Scheme is willing to mobilize adult volunteers as mentors, and Youth Award winners as big brother and big sisters to create a support system for non-engaged youth, so that they may participate in the various level of training programs offered by the organization. This project will provide meaningful engagement for non-engaged youth, and help motivate and equip them for other training opportunities.

4.7 *Church Concern for the Unemployed*

4.7.1 *“Job Establishment Fund”*

The Church Concern for the Unemployed has collected about \$3.5 million to encourage employers to create new jobs for the unemployed by subsidizing them not more than \$10,000 in total for a period of six months. Through this initiative, 177 new jobs have been generated in the private sector and the non-profit making sector. New jobs created include waiters, auto mechanics, youth workers, IT assistants and clerical assistants, etc.

4.7.2 *Involvement in Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme of Labour Department*

Following a luncheon in June 2002 for Christian leaders of local business and social services, and the delivery of a keynote speech on youth unemployment by the Commission on Youth, many employers and social service organizations have expressed support for the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme and plan to provide on- job training for young people.

4.7.3 *Mentoring and Coaching*

Since the church is strong in the expertise of character formation and community building, it is workable to have joint partnership between corporations and Christian communities in recruiting youth counselors to mentor and coach the back-to-job youth.

4.7.4 *Emergency Fund*

Local churches have resources to help those caught out by unemployment. Some churches set up a distress fund to help those in need, while a group of Christian organizations have formed a network “Christian Care for the Poor” and over \$2 million has been disbursed to the unemployed and poor.

4.8 *Voluntary work: Building the foundation for future employment*

The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups has been a strong advocate of youth voluntary services. In 1998, they have started a “Youth Volunteer Network” which has registered close to 50,000 young volunteers, and have accumulated a total of 1.5 million hours of voluntary services.

Through a more systematic and structured scheme to recruit, motivate, and train young people to participate in voluntary services, they will be better equipped for future work life and community life.

Encouraging students to participate in voluntary services is an important part of holistic education, and would help prevent them from dis-engagement. Providing opportunities for non-engaged youth to take part in voluntary work is an effective means of meaningful engagement, and this would help to motivate and equip them for other training programs.

4.9 *Career Development: Building the foundation for future employment*

This is another initiative by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, providing developmental and counseling services for youth in preparation for their future work life.

Career development is a life-long process, starting from the discovery of one’s vocational aptitude and career interests, moving towards a clear career goal, and equipping oneself for a meaningful and productive career path.

Career development is an important concept, which can be integrated with the school curriculum or extra-curricular programs. The Hong Kong

Federation of Youth Groups have injected this concept into their youth service centres, so that counseling and training programs can be delivered to young people to support them as they move ahead in their process of career development, vocational training, and eventually enter their chosen career paths.

Building an Integrated Co-ordination and Monitoring Mechanism

5. To operationalize some key concepts and to achieve the goals of continuing development and employment opportunities for non-engaged youth, there is a need to build an integrated co-ordination and monitoring mechanism. There are presently some initial steps taken in this direction. The Labour Department provides careers information to help students understand the world of work before they leave school. The Department of Social Work of the Baptist University has also developed a tool to assess the vocational aptitudes of high school students. These tools can be further tested and refined. The Labour Department has launched the “Youth Pre-employment Training Programme” and “Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme”, and these projects can be the initial steps towards the development of an on-job training mechanism. The following proposals by Dr. William Wong (consultant from Alberta, Canada), the Education and Manpower Bureau, and the Commission on Youth in consultation with other Bureaux, represent attempts to tackle this issue.

“Youth Employment Strategy”—an integrated, outcome-based framework

6. Dr. William Wong recommends an integrated, outcome-based framework to be developed for the Youth Employment Strategy (YES). This strategy or framework should include the following major components:

- 6.1 screening, assessment, counseling and referral
- 6.2 screening, assessment, counseling and referral
- 6.3 basic education and vocational training interface
- 6.4 support for the journey to work model
- 6.5 basic skills training and employment preparation
- 6.6 successful connections with employers

7. To develop and implement such an integrated YES requires close partnership among government, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The objectives of the strategy are to :

- 7.1 create the best labour market intelligence, systems and processes, that are crucial for the education and employment of non-engaged youth;
- 7.2 help such youth to develop the skills and knowledge needed for work;
- 7.3 respond to the changing nature of work and the labour market;
- 7.4 increase job opportunities in public, non-profit making and private sectors;

- 7.5 remove the social, economic, behavioral and systemic barriers that prevent youth, particularly disadvantaged at-risk youth from participating in the labour market; and
- 7.6 transit such youth successfully to independent, self-reliant adults.

8. The entry points for youth to access service is through multiple sites, such as schools, integrated youth centres, career counseling centres, etc. The key is to have a consistent case management process to screen and provide youth with appropriate services via assessment, counselling and referral. A computerized information system containing a broad range of current information on education, training, occupations, industries, labour market trends, manpower supply and demand estimates, working conditions, wage and salary trends should be developed and made accessible to youth via the internet. The formal education system, vocational training and skills up-grading opportunities should be coordinated to help youth gain knowledge and skills to become employment-ready.

9. The vast array of youth oriented education courses, employment preparation and skills training programmes, career planning and labour market services designed and delivered by various policy bureaux, departments and NGOs need to be rationalized. The key to long-term success in employment is to link job seekers with employers that lead eventually to job placements. A number of existing programmes are already achieving this.

10. Dr. William Wong has presented an integrated, outcome-based framework for “Youth Employment Strategy”. In Hong Kong, the “Employees Retraining Board” has accumulated ten years’ valuable experience in building up a similar framework. Although further work need to be done to improve and refine the entire mechanism, the hardware is already in place, as well as a team of competent staff. The important task is the development of software in the area of development and monitoring of quality training programmes for non-engaged youth, and connect them with the needs of the employers and the Hong Kong economy. There is no need to re-invent the wheel from scratch.

11. It is suggested that government could consider removing the age limit imposed on Employees Retraining Board, and change the term from “retraining” to “training”. The restructured and expanded Board can retain its accountability to the Education and Manpower Bureau, and maintain a close working partnership with the Labour Department. It is however recognized that this may result in duplication of work currently covered by the Youth Pre-employment Training Scheme, which already performs the function of providing relevant quality training for non-engaged youth which meets the needs of employers.

12. The Commission on Youth would like to make this proposal to the policy makers, since an integrated, outcome-based mechanism is crucial to the implementation of the various proposals put forward to the report.

Development of an assessment and accreditation mechanism for vocational training

13. The Education and Manpower Bureau of the Government considers it necessary to provide an alternative avenue to cater for the education and training needs of young people who may not have the aptitude or interest to continue with mainstream education. This can be achieved through the development of a vocational education and training framework which could :

- 13.1 provide a wide variety of courses in terms of discipline, duration and mode of delivery;
- 13.2 recognise outcomes of vocational education and training as qualifications in terms of competency reached;
- 13.3 provide clear progression pathways through the implementation of a qualifications framework (QF);
- 13.4 assure quality of training through a quality assurance mechanism;
- 13.5 allow multiple entry points along the progression pathways;
- 13.6 balance elements of vocational, generic and interpersonal skills; and
- 13.7 respond to the changing needs of employers and trainees.

14. To develop the vocational education and training framework, a QF and its associated quality assurance mechanism are required to provide the foundation to determine the competency level of training courses. A QF is made up of a hierarchy of qualifications. It sets out the general outcome standards of qualifications at each level and provides the foundation for quality assurance of the service standards of training providers. A well-structured QF will bring wide recognition of the qualifications that it encompasses and provides clear progression pathways between qualifications at different levels. To ensure quality of training and the qualifications to be conferred, all qualifications must go through a stringent quality assurance mechanism before they can be placed into the QF. With such a framework, young people can draw up their own roadmaps for pursuing further education and training based on their own interests and ability and gain qualifications that will be widely recognised by employees.

15. The recently formed Manpower Development Committee is actively examining the recommendations for a QF and its associated quality assurance mechanism. When adopted, it should lead to the provision of more diverse and flexible training courses which would suit the needs and interests of young people. More young people may be attracted to pursue vocational education and training. This would meaningfully engage them and help their continued development.

Mechanism to oversee the continuing development and employment opportunities for non-engaged youth

16. In view of the complexity of the issue of non-engaged youth and the need to co-ordinate action straddling a wide spectrum of the Government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, the Commission proposes the following arrangements :

16.1 As the principal advisory body to the Government on matters pertaining to youth, the Commission should set up a dedicated task group headed by the Chairman to monitor the implementation of and progress on the various recommendations and proposals in this report, as well as tender its advice as appropriate. Apart from members of the Commission, the task group could incorporate and co-opt representatives from relevant government bureaux and departments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector including the creative industries and sports sectors, academics, etc as appropriate.

16.2 The Secretary for Home Affairs, being the Principal Official for youth development, should take up the role of co-ordinating the efforts of relevant government bureaux and departments in the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

Sectors with Potential for Job Creation

17. To provide training opportunities for young people without eventual job placement and career development will only lead to a sense of defeat and despair. It requires the united efforts of the Government and the private sector to tackle the difficult task of job creation. The following paragraphs consist of not merely concepts, but pilot projects to test the feasibility of the concepts. These projects are launched with the following assumptions:-

17.1 Young people are creative, adventurous and willing to be mobile when they see that there are opportunities ahead.

17.2 Hong Kong has the potential to become a world city and there is room for further development in culture, arts, recreation, sports and environmental development. Further developments in these areas will not only boost the tourism industry, but will also make Hong Kong a city with unique cultural attractions.

17.3 Hong Kong will move in the direction of integration with other economies in Mainland China and overseas.

17.4 The Government is determined to adopt policies that will facilitate the development of creative industries and improve the environment.

17.5 Creative development of leisure activities will improve the quality of life, and opens up opportunities for financially viable business.

17.6 Hong Kong young people have potentials in the above-mentioned sectors, and they can be equipped to pursue new career paths.

17.7 The private sector will open up on-job training opportunities for young people in Hong Kong, Mainland China and overseas.

17.8 The Government, through its existing funding schemes, and the private sector would consider providing financial support for the pilot projects.

18. The gists of these pilot projects are highlighted below:

Sports

18.1 *Sports Career Development Project for Youth* (青年體育工作計劃)

Young people are interested in sports activities and they are interested in pursuing a career in sports, even though they may not be interested in formal education programs.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is aware of the need for sports coaches in schools, and in various community centers. The Education and Manpower Bureau has discovered that there is a demand for coaches of various sports activities, and parents are willing to pay for coaching lessons for their children.

In order to facilitate the career development for young people who are interested in pursuing a career in sports, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department is willing to open up the sports facilities under their management, to serve as training ground for young people.

A majority of the 56 Sports Associations have indicated their interest and commitment to participate in this project. The Hong Kong Coaching Committee (香港教練培訓委員會) responsible for coach training and accreditation is willing to assist in the training program and the accreditation assessments.

The “Sports Career Development Project for Youth” will provide training opportunities for youth according to their interests and capabilities. Upon completion of the training programs, they will receive accreditation and can be employed as “outreach sports instructors” serving students in various

schools. Other employment opportunities include: sports instructors or sports activities coordinators in various community centers.

To initiate the various training programs, the Sports Associations may require some funding assistance initially, and young people from low-income families may need assistance to pay the fees for training. This project will be able to engage and equip non-engaged youth who will be motivated to take the first step in sports career development.

18.2 *Sports Instructor Trainee Programme*

At present, the Leisure and Culture Service Department (LCSD) employs part-time instructors to conduct sports training programmes. The employment of these instructors during office hour is unstable and is relatively costly. In order to provide a quality leisure service for the public and to enhance the training and employment opportunities for non-engaged youth, LCSD will launch a Sports Instructor Trainee Programme in April 2003. The programme will form part of the Labour Department's "Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme" and offer training and employment opportunities for 150 young people aged 15 to 24 with education attainment at Form 5 level. Trainees enrolled will be paid \$4,000 per month and will be deployed to the 82 indoor sports centers managed by LCSD. Their duties are to assist in the daily administrative work of the designated centre, organize community recreation and sports programmes, and act as assistant instructors of the sports training courses organised by the LCSD at the centres. The tentative employment period of these sports instructor trainees is one year. Training will be provided for them to obtain sport instructorship within the year. On completion of the training programme, qualified trainees will be recruited as full-time resident instructors of their respective centers and paid at a monthly salary of \$12,595.

Full-Time Instructors for School Outreach Coaching Programme

LCSD implemented the Schools Sports Programme in 2001. The main objectives of the programme are –

- 18.2.1 to enrich the life of students;
- 18.2.2 to arouse students' interest in sports;
- 18.2.3 to cultivate a new sporting culture;
- 18.2.4 to improve the quality of student sport delivered in schools; and
- 18.2.5 to provide opportunities for students to be continuously involved in sports.

The programme lines up local national sports associations (NSAs) to provide instructor service for the sport training in schools. Under an

Outreach Coaching Programme, schools are invited to apply to LCSD for training courses to be held for students. The remuneration for instructors is to be met by the programme fees paid by schools or students participating in the training programmes.

Since October 2001, the response from school to the programme has been overwhelming. However, about 25% of the 468 applications for the programme training courses were declined as NSAs failed to deploy instructors for these courses. Shortage of instructors during school hour is the major problem for not meeting the needs of schools as most of the instructors of the NSAs are serving on a part-time basis.

In the 2002/03 school year, it is expected that about 3,800 applications for such programme training courses will be received. On the assumption that an instructor is able to give a service of 30 to 40 hours a month, about 500 instructors of various sports will be required to meet the needs of schools. There is thus scope for NSAs to maintain regular pools of instructors who are available for serving schools during school hours. The LCSD will encourage NSAs to expand their instructor training programme and train up non-engaged young people who are good at sports to become full-time sport instructors to serve schools.

18.3 *Hong Kong Tennis Association's Mini-Tennis Instructors Scheme*

The Hong Kong Tennis Association (HKTA) announced in July 2002 a scheme to recruit and train 200 mini-tennis instructors with priority given to non-engaged youth with good sense in sports. Subsequently, more than 700 applications have been received and the HKTA has short-listed 20 candidates for enrollment in the Mini-Tennis Instructor Training Programme, the programme provides a full series of 8-week training to participants, and opportunity to expose to the intensive 4-day International Tennis Federation (ITF)-endorsed Mini-Tennis Instructor Course. Candidates who successfully graduate from the ITF-endorsed Mini-Tennis Instructor Course may be deployed to primary schools to roll out school demonstrations and school visits, and to conduct mini-tennis courses in schools with experienced coaches. As long as they are independent enough and have become well-experienced, they can conduct mini-tennis courses by themselves in the future.

18.4 *Hong Kong Life Saving Society (HKLSS) Special Employment Opportunity Scheme*

There is presently a rise in demand for lifeguard services in Hong Kong, mainly because of the increased popularity of swimming pool facilities in

newly developed residential complexes or as part of district sports facilities. The rise in demand is also strengthened by the imminent implementation of upgraded lifeguard qualification scheme in 1 January 2003. It is presently estimated that there are about 4,000 lifeguard job opportunities in Hong Kong while only 2,537 have been processed for fully qualified lifeguards by the end of July 2002. In other words, there are about 1,500 lifeguard job vacancies by the end.

In view of this situation, the HKLSS has launched a Special Project “HKLSS Special Employment Opportunities Scheme” targeted 1,000 job-seekers (especially the younger generation). Through a specially designed subsidized scheme of professional lifesaving trainings, the participating youth will acquire the essential lifeguard qualifications and obtain job referral and internship service.

So far the Scheme has met with an overwhelming response. A total of 1 349 applications had been received and 1 127 youths were enrolled. Positive feedback has been obtained from the participants, sponsors and potential employers. Meanwhile, substantial supports in terms of provision of lifeguard job opportunities and financial sponsorships are offered by some potential employers. The LCSD also generously supports the Scheme by means of waiving the swimming lane booking charges.

Arts & Culture

19.1 Hong Kong Arts Development Council

Another avenue of career development for youth is the arena of arts and culture.

The Hong Kong Arts Development Council has partnered with the Labour Department to organize a Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme: Arts and Creative Industry. The scheme was to provide training and employment opportunities for the young people. Unemployed young people between the age of 15 to 24 with education attainment below degree level were eligible to join the scheme.

The Arts and Creative Industries programme for youth has well defined objectives:

- to build up confidence through the training exercise and group interaction,
- to acquire art skills, or at least, to arouse their interest in the art,
- to develop team spirit, and
- to find the meaning of life through the activity.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has indicated the willingness to open up their facilities to provide training ground for young people. Through a collaborative approach, there will be more training and employment opportunities for non-engaged youth in this attractive arena of arts and culture.

19.2 *Cultural Projects on Creative Use of Public Space*

This is a programme by the Breakthrough Ltd. targeting at 40 to 60 jobless and schooled young people aged 15 to 19. The programme aims to promote the youth's sense of belongings and ownership to the environment through creative use of public space. The programme deliverables include lectures, workshops and excursions, disseminating basic concepts and history of architecture, environmental design and interior design. 3-D sketch models on space-utilization will be taught with MTR and public estate, garbage bins, kiosk, bus stops, benches and home being used as themes. Participants will be required to attend such lectures and workshops on a part-time basis over a period of 3 to 4 months. Depending on resources available, the programme can be conducted 2 to 3 times a year.

The Potential of Creative Industries in Providing Opportunities for Non-engaged Youth

- 20.1 Creative industries are a good match for non-engaged youth for the following reasons:
- (a) The creative industries are a fast-growing sector and they are labour-intensive in nature. Talents of diverse cultural background and creativity are demanded, but basic skills and suitable work habits are still needed. Workers in the creative industries are still skilled labour, but the innovative nature of the business and the flexible work-life does not always require institutional training like industrial colleges and traditional vocational schools.
 - (b) Players of the creative industries in Hong Kong are mostly small and medium enterprises (SME's) with relative low cost in creating new jobs and training opportunities. Flexible in hiring free-lance and switching their business to meet market demands.
 - (c) Youth are close to the entertainment market as they themselves are well-informed consumers.
 - (d) Youth workers can better tolerate and adjust to the unstable nature of employment conditions of the creative industries.

SME's in local creative industries however may have difficulties in thriving by themselves and need government's assistance. Their relatively low turnover, individual market niches and lack of effective association make them difficult to bargain for better business environment in Hong Kong, in comparison with the well-established big companies. The SME's in creative industries need collection and exchange of business information; network with market players (new buyers, foreign partners/investments, new talents, cheap local labour, low rentals, etc.); external trade; copyright protection outside Hong Kong, etc. In this respect, the government may consider offering assistance in these areas because it is in line with the current policy of improving the business environment and helping local SME's.

20.2 *Building for Creative Industries*

In preparation for the launching of creative industries, it is necessary to re-examine the demand for hardware, software and human-ware. Presently, there are many buildings designed for traditional industries which are vacant. These buildings can be modified to meet the needs for development of the creative industries. The Government can facilitate the process of modification by drafting policies and regulations to expand the usage of these industrial buildings.

The 田家炳 Foundation has purchased an industrial building in Tuen Mun, and is ready to dedicate the entire building for the development of the creative industries with designated space for training, manufacturing and activities or exhibitions related to creative industries. The Foundation needs partnership support by the Government, trainers, operators of creative industries and youth workers in order to make good use of the building and help engage young people in continuing development in creative industries. The availability of hardware is a necessary first step towards the future development of the creative industries. The Government can be the catalyst to speed up this process.

20.3 *Animation of McDull & McMug*

In December 2001, a Hong Kong production animated movie "My Life as McDull" was on commercial release and created a box office of more than \$15 million. The production company is ready to move ahead to maximize its creativity and build a cost-effective and systematic creative capacity. On the side of movie production, the company estimates that 30 people will need to be engaged each year. On television series, some 20 to 25 people will need to be engaged over a period of 2 to 3 years. This will offer a point of entry for young people who take an interest in the animation industries.

20.4 *Daydreamer Cartoon Co-op Studio*

This initiative is proposed by Daydreamer Cartoon Academy (DCA) as a partnership programme with the Government and the Vocational Training Council (VTC). As part of the deliverables of this initiative, a co-op studio should be set-up as a self-contained premises with classrooms, studios, workshops, production and postproduction center, library, dining and recreational areas and medical clinic. Using the classrooms and studios as training ground, DCA and VTC can offer different training and studies in classical animation. By paying a minimal fee, animators who joined the studio (co-op animators) can enjoy a personal workspace, secretarial services, centralized work placements, film library, counseling, food and health services. They will also have priority to rent and use the production and postproduction facilities. Co-op animators are encouraged to fully utilize the studio for freelance commercial jobs, independent projects supported by grants or creating their own portfolios, etc.

The initiative may be funded by the Government in that the latter may provide the appropriate accommodation and capital costs for the running of the studio with a view to making the studio self-financing in 5 years. The target size of student intake should be a maximum of 600 and 100 co-op animators. DCA can operate the facilities, run the programmes and be responsible for studio management.

Information Technology

21. *The Development of IT Skills for Hong Kong Youth*

The coming era is the “information era” which relies heavily on the development of information technology. The new generation is called the “e-generation”, and they are heavily involved in information technology as a user, and contributor on this new information platform.

iTVentured Limited proposes a new scheme to train young people for a career in the I.T. field. They will attempt to use a new animation technology which enables the use of human hands to create 3D animation movies on a computer screen in a virtual manner akin to a puppeteer using his fingers to manipulate the puppets to move in real space. iTVentured Ltd. is willing to collaborate with youth organization to create a training program for youth to develop such new puppeteering skills so that some of them could end up with careers in animation movie production.

The private sector can contribute concepts, technologies, and venture capital, whereas the youth organizations can serve the role of mentors. For non-engaged youth from low-income families, they need financial

assistance to go through the training program, to be equipped for a career in the I.T. industry.

Manufacturing Industries

22. *Training and Employment Project for the Watch Manufacturing Industry*

As we explore for training and employment opportunities for the non-engaged youth, we should not neglect the manufacturing industries. Hong Kong still takes a leading role globally in the following industries: watches, toys, textiles, and electronic goods manufacturing.

The watch manufacturing industry, in collaboration with the Vocational Training Council, has been running training programs for youth, equipping them to enter this industry as designers, and professional with high- tech skills. This can become a promising career track for the non-engaged youth, although they do not have university degrees.

The government should re-examine the policies with regard to the manufacturing industries, so that these industries still retain an important role in the Hong Kong economic structure. While certain tasks of the manufacturing industries will move into Mainland China, they still need the support locally to update the training of a new generation of skilled people to sustain the competitiveness of these industries.

The manufacturing industries have a significant contribution to the Hong Kong economy, and they can definitely provide more training and employment opportunities for the non-engaged youth.

Youth Employment Training Scheme in Mainland China – Pilot Project

23. Whether unemployed youth are able to work in the Mainland will much depend on the availability of employers in Mainland who are willing to offer training and jobs for our young people. It also depends on how prepared such young people are. Factors that would affect young people in considering seeking jobs in the Mainland include (a) their own initiatives, willingness and family members' attitude, (b) salary expected, (c) nature and prospect of work, (d) development opportunities, welfare, benefits insurance and leisure arrangements and (e) appropriate employment counseling and support network. Considerations by prospective employers would include whether the offer of jobs to young people from Hong Kong would be cost-effective, and to a limited extent, whether this would be seen as a contribution back to Hong Kong. The Commission on Youth is pleased to note that some industrial and community organisations have already started or are planning to launch

employment training or work attachment programmes in the Mainland for our young people. Indeed, these programmes will provide very good opportunities to young people in broadening their horizon and work experience. No doubt, such programmes will better equip them for employment in Hong Kong or in the Mainland. While we commend the good initiatives of these organisations, we would suggest that, as a start, these programmes should be carried out as pilot projects on a small scale. Drawing on the experience of the pilot schemes, a model may be developed for reference of other similar programmes in future. In implementing a Mainland employment or training programme, we recommend that the organizers should consider, where possible, incorporating the following ingredients in their programme:

- People who are aged 18 or above, motivated, and are prepared and willing to undergo the employment training at the salary offered would be the target group. At the same time, they would need to meet the employer's basic requirement and go through the normal selection process.
- To assign mentors to provide guidance to young people and to oversee their progress during the training period in the Mainland.
- Community organizations may be lined up to make arrangements and offer appropriate follow up services to the target group on their return to Hong Kong. Such services may include employment guidance, recreational and related training programmes such as teamwork, physical and discipline training.
- Non-governmental organizations may be requested to provide social workers who have career guidance experience to offer job-related counselling and services to trainees. We understand some NGOs are willing to provide such services.
- To commission academic institutions to conduct evaluation of the project.