

Chapter 3 Our Repositioning

- 3.1 Over the years, the ERB has been serving the unemployed of age 30 or above and with education level up to Secondary Three. Since 1st December 2007, in response to the decision of the Executive Council, our services have been extended to cover the unemployed Hong Kong residents at age 15 or above and with education attainment at sub-degree level or below. Starting from 2009-10, we plan to further open up our training services to in-service workers who meet the above eligibility criteria. With the expansion of our service scope, the ERB is stepping onto a new era of development.
- 3.2 In line with the relaxed age and qualification criteria of our target trainees, the ERB has also waived the requirement that course applicants should have two years of working experience. At the same time, the training places provided in the current year (2007-08) will be increased by around 10% to more than 10,000, all of which will be for full-time placement-tied courses. This increase will enable more people to re-enter the employment market through training. The ERB aims to gradually expand the scope as well as the volume of training in the future.
- 3.3 While our training services will be expanded, our training objectives would also be extended not only to assist the unemployed to seek employment, but also to prepare them to cope with the complex working environment and the fast-evolving technologies, so that they can maintain their employability and productivity in the ever-changing market.
- 3.4 Through provision of appropriate training, the ERB aims to improve the skill level of the local working population, enabling individuals in the local work-force to commit to work, enjoy their work, ever seek improvement, and be multi-skilled. For the work-force at grassroots level, we aim to provide training and retraining opportunities for them to upgrade their vocational skills, personal attributes, and foundation skills. For the young people with little work experience and training, we shall focus on nurturing their motivation to learn, positive attitude and understanding of work

ethics and values. Career counselling, career planning, betterment of personal attributes, and work experience would be core elements of training. For the working population with sub-degree level of education, we shall bring them up to date with new knowledge and technologies, assist them to obtain professional qualifications so that they can cope with broader and higher-end tasks. In sum, our ultimate objective is to facilitate sustainable employment and upward mobility of our work-force amid globalisation.

- 3.5 To encourage lifelong learning in the community, thus enhancing the quality of our work-force, the Executive Council approved in 2004 the setting up of a Qualifications Framework⁶ (QF) in Hong Kong. The QF systematically orders academic, vocational and continuing education qualifications into seven levels, thus providing clear learning pathways. By having a better understanding of the different qualifications through the QF, the public will be encouraged to pursue continuous learning and higher qualifications. Those striving for self-improvement could plan their progression systematically with reference made to the learning pathways provided by the QF for realization of their aspirations.
- 3.6 To improve our education system, the Government started the Education Reform in 2000. One of the core initiatives is the implementation of the 3-year New Senior Secondary and 4-year University system in 2009/10. Under this new academic structure, all students shall be given the chance of having six years of secondary education, with which they can acquire broader knowledge, balanced development, good language proficiency and other transferable skills, as well as high motivation for life-long learning. Accordingly, the training to be provided by the ERB should align with and complement this new philosophy in education.
- 3.7 In its new course of development, the ERB would be pleased to commit to the following functions: to strengthen the competitiveness of the local working population (and industries) by offering forward-

⁶ Please visit www.hkqf.gov.hk for further information on the Qualifications Framework.

looking training or retraining; to strive to lower structural unemployment by filling the skills gap and rectifying mismatch; to support the development of Hong Kong's Qualifications Framework and to foster ongoing improvement of the quality of the work-force, so as to ensure sustainable employment and continuous development of employees.

- 3.8 The Chief Executive's 2007-08 Policy Address⁷ stated that the Government "*will examine how to rationalise, integrate and enhance the employment and training services currently provided by the Labour Department, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and the ERB. We will also launch a pilot scheme to trial the one-stop employment support mode and on-the-job training. We hope that the revamped service mode will more effectively help the unemployed.*" The ERB would be pleased to undertake the pilot scheme aforementioned and is making preparation to strengthen our training and placement services to the unemployed, and to help the needed to seek available social resources to ease their family or financial difficulties.
- 3.9 To further improve the productivity of our work-force, to alleviate the problems brought by mismatch between skills possessed and jobs available, and to be more responsive to the society's expectations, the ERB recommends its future directions as follows:
- (i) In line with the announcement in the Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive in October 2007, the eligibility criteria in terms of education and age limits for the applicants have been relaxed and the requirement for two years' working experience has been waived. It will benefit those people who need skill training as well as the unemployed. Starting from 1st December 2007, the target group of our training courses has been extended to cover people aged 15 or above, with education level of sub-degree or below. The ERB will also launch pertinent training services geared to the needs of different disadvantaged groups

⁷ The Policy Address "New Direction for Hong Kong" delivered by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council meeting on 10 October 2007, Para.77.

such as the ethnic minorities, the disabled and people recovered from industrial accidents, the new arrivals and the rehabilitated offenders.

- (ii) To work in line with the development of Qualifications Framework in Hong Kong, all the training courses offered by the ERB have to meet the quality requirements of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications and be listed on the Qualifications Register and recognized by the Qualifications Framework. We shall help the working population to attain recognized qualifications and map out the progression ladder and direction for individuals.
- (iii) For our programmes, apart from training on vocational skills, training on generic skills encompassing foundation skills such as languages, numeracy, and information technology, as well as training to enhance personal attributes and life skills (e.g. personal financial planning, career planning, work place culture and ethics, team spirit, adversity management, etc.) should be included. We hope that our trainees would have a better grasp of their orientation in life and direction of career development, that their ability of self-learning, introspection and adversity management would be enhanced, and that a more positive and proactive attitude towards life and the future would be nurtured.
- (iv) Besides provision of placement-tied training courses, we shall also endeavour to upgrade the vocational skills, personal attributes, and foundation skills of the employees through provision of courses ranging from QF Level One to Level Four, with a view to enhancing the overall quality of the work-force, thus promoting the economic development of Hong Kong.
- (v) We would collaborate with all sectors in the community to promote career-oriented and forward-looking training, including employers, trade associations, employees, professional bodies, training institutions, academic circle, non-governmental organizations and government departments. Trainees will be provided appropriate training and employment support, so that

manpower will be nurtured for various trades and the potential of each trainee will be fully exerted. As such, the ERB shall become the strong back-bone for the development of manpower in Hong Kong.

- 3.10 Looking into the future, our prime objective is to serve the lower and middle tiers of our work-force through providing them with training and employment support. For our future development, the ERB has drawn up:

Our Vision

To provide flexible, quality and resilient work-force for the knowledge-based economy of Hong Kong.

Our Missions

- ◆ *To keep up with market development and team up with partners, to strengthen the recognition of the vocational qualifications*
- ◆ *To offer outstanding training courses and services so as to enhance the working population's skills, quality, employability and global competitiveness*
- ◆ *To support the working population in self-improvement, develop progression pathways for further education; with foresight, to offer employers the manpower they need*
- ◆ *To promote self-actualisation, encourage disadvantaged groups to capitalize on their own value, and offer proper services with empathy*

Our Key Objectives

- ✦ **Strengthen research; Expand networks; Fortify recognition; Promote employment;**
- ✦ **Provide optimal training; Enhance quality; Offer innovative services; Help people to help themselves;**
- ✦ **Invest in people; Construct learning pathways; Support enterprises; Create win-win situations;**
- ✦ **Promote self actualization; Develop individuals' potential, Be caring and understanding; Instil social harmony.**