

Employees Retraining Board

Existing and planned measures on the promotion of equality for ethnic minorities

- Services Concerned
- The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) provides training courses and services to enhance the skills, quality, employability and competitiveness of the labour force (with an education attainment of sub-degree or below). The full-time training courses are career-oriented, with the aim at helping the unemployed get jobs through appropriate skills training and job placement support services. The part-time vocational skills upgrading courses enable the labour force to update and upgrade their skills. The part-time generic skills training courses, encompassing foundation skills such as languages, numeracy and information technology, aim at enhancing the overall quality of the labour force.
 - With a view to improving the employability of the ethnic minorities and facilitating their integration into the local community, the ERB provides dedicated training courses delivered in English since mid-2007 to suit the aspirations and training needs of the ethnic minorities. Special measures and services are provided to facilitate and support their training and job search.

Existing Measures

Dedicated courses for ethnic minorities

- In 2010-11, around 400 ethnic minority trainees attended 18 full-time placement-tied courses and 14 part-time courses.
- The ERB has offered a job-searching integrated course known as “Employment Set Sail” conducted in English

for ethnic minorities since 2008-09 to enhance their understanding and knowledge of local job market, workplace culture, as well as job-searching channels and skills.

- The ERB launched a pilot “Workplace Chinese Communication” programme in collaboration with the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research, and the Vocational Training Council to provide part-time workplace Cantonese training for ethnic minorities in 2008-09. Based on the experience of this pilot scheme, the ERB has revised the course contents. Two new courses on workplace Cantonese for ethnic minorities were developed and launched in 2009-10.
- The ERB has devised a systematic scheme to offer Chinese language training to the ethnic minorities. In addition to the two workplace Cantonese courses mentioned above, two Chinese reading and writing skills training courses were launched in 2010-11 to help them acquire and upgrade their Chinese proficiency for social integration and employment.
- The ERB set up two separate focus groups in June 2008 to help identify the training and employment needs of ethnic minorities, as well as to advise on strategies for promoting ERB courses and services to ethnic minorities. The focus groups comprise representatives from ethnic minority groups, NGOs, training bodies (TBs) and employers.
- Based on the advice of the focus groups and proposals submitted by TBs, 13 full-time and 17 part-time courses are offered in 2011-12. They include a tailor-made Youth Training Programme which targets ethnic minority non-engaged youth aged 15-20 and offers altogether four different streams of skills training.

Special measures and support services

- The ERB has been exercising flexibility in regard to the minimum class size for training courses dedicated for ethnic minorities.
- Interpretation services have been arranged in class where necessary and appropriate through teaching assistants who can speak English and ethnic minority languages to facilitate teaching and learning.
- Ethnic minority trainees who have completed the placement-tied courses are provided with six-month placement follow-up service, whereas a three-month placement follow-up period is normally provided for other trainees.
- The ERB has extended the coverage of its existing Course Development Incentive Scheme to include courses dedicated for ethnic minorities, so as to encourage TBs to develop more new courses that cater to the needs of the ethnic minority target group. Up to 2010-11, ERB has approved six new course proposals submitted by TBs.
- To foster awareness of the training opportunities available to ethnic minorities, the ERB has issued a series of promotional materials (including prospectus, poster, leaflet and roll-up banner) in English and six ethnic minority languages (including Hindi, Urdu, Nepali, Indonesian, Tagalog and Thai) for distribution to ethnic minority groups via different channels. Advertisements on courses have been placed in different newspapers targeting the ethnic minorities.
- In reaching out to the ethnic minorities and gauging their needs, the ERB staff have carried out frequent visits to cultural and religious gatherings of the ethnic minorities.

- The ERB also sponsors TBs to run district-based promotional activities targeting the ethnic minorities and employers. The ERB will continue to explore more channels to reach out to the ethnic minorities.
- To further enhance its promotional efforts, the ERB has been in close liaison with the regional support service centres for ethnic minorities operated by NGOs funded by the Home Affairs Department in disseminating information on the ERB to ethnic minorities.
- Targeted support services are offered for ethnic minorities at ERB Service Centres in Sham Shui Po and Kwun Tong to meet their specific needs. The ethnic minority groups can make use of a wide range of services and facilities, as well as participate in workshops offered by the Centres. Mutual support groups have been formed to facilitate sharing of information and mutual support among ethnic minority members. Training and social service referrals are also offered to meet their needs.

Staff training

- To promote understanding of the culture of ethnic minorities and enhance staff sensitivity in providing services to ethnic minorities, the ERB organised four sessions of workshop in collaboration with Unison for frontline staff in the ERB and its TBs on cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong in July 2008 and January 2010. Similar workshops will be held annually for refreshing the cultural awareness and understanding on ethnic minorities among ERB and TB staff.
- The ERB conducted four tailor-made training sessions for agency heads of its TBs and ERB staff in May 2009 and March 2010. At the sessions, attendees were

briefed by training officers of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) on the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) with special focus on vocational training. Similar training sessions will be conducted annually by the ERB for briefing newly appointed TBs, and for sharing of experience on application of the RDO and the Code of Practice issued by the EOC.

Assessment of Future Work ● The ERB will continue to gauge the views of ethnic minority groups on its current measures and support services and develop dedicated courses and services to meet their training needs.

Additional Measures Taken / To Be Taken ● In 2010-11, the ERB started making available English training manuals for selected general/non-dedicated courses to facilitate the participation of ethnic minorities who can comprehend Cantonese (the medium of instruction of which being Cantonese). Ten such courses will be offered in 2011-12, covering various industries including Hotel, Business, Healthcare Services, and Information & Communications Technology.

- The ERB will keep under review the outcome of the dedicated courses organised taking into account trainees' and TBs' feedback as well as market demand so as to keep enhancing the training contents and programmes for the ethnic minorities.

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June 2011