

Vocational education deserves elevation to higher status

As in past years, the Hong Kong Civic Association has taken a long-term view of the chief executive's annual policy address to the Legislative Council. We are therefore putting forward our views to the government on one major issue that would have long-term impact on Hong Kong's educational, social and cultural development, as well as our economic competitiveness.

In his address, Chief Executive CY Leung emphasised "young people can develop their interests and realise their potential through vocational education". The government has accepted the 27 recommendations of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education. CY promised the administration will now "actively consider how to implement them".

Our association proposes the government fill as soon as possible the vacant post of deputy secretary for labour and welfare (welfare 1), since the post is responsible for "policy matters relating to manpower planning, vocational training and retraining", among other responsibilities.

We also propose whoever is appointed should concurrently be appointed as "Commissioner for Manpower Development" to coordinate cross-bureau or cross-departmental manpower development initiatives.

Foremost among the task force recommendations is that vocational education and training in Hong Kong be rebranded as vocational and professional education and training, covering programmes up to degree level with a high percentage of curriculum consisting of specialised content in vocational skills or professional knowledge. In other words, students pursuing such training are not inferior to those following the traditional academic route. They may have the ability to pursue traditional academic education but they have chosen vocational and professional training because of personal interests.

The government, as recommended by the task force, should embark on an extensive and long-term programme to promote this route and to emphasise that those graduates with lower qualifications can articulate to higher education under a multiple entry and exit system underpinned by the qualifications framework. Hence it's not a dead end.

Secondary schools should be encouraged to undertake career and life planning education and enhance individual guidance and support to students to facilitate self-understanding and explore multiple pathways.

Finally, the government should give priority to earmarking a site in the urban district, as stated in the policy address, to develop a Vocational Training Council campus with adequate capacity and state-of-the-art facilities.

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職業教育須發展 理應提升其地位

英文原文刊於 2016 年 1 月 30 日《南華早報》

一如以往，香港公民協會對行政長官向立法會宣讀的施政報告均從長遠著眼。故此本協會就一項重要議題向政府提出意見，這項議題對本港的教育、社會和文化發展，以至經濟上的競爭能力都有長遠的影響。

行政長官在報告裡強調：「職業教育可以讓青年人發揮興趣和潛能。」而政府亦接納了「推廣職業教育專責小組」的 27 項建議，並且「會積極考慮如何落實」。

本協會建議政府應盡快填補勞工及福利局副局長（福利）1 一職的空缺，因為該職位其中一項職責是負責「與人力策劃、職業訓練及再培訓有關的政策工作」。

我們亦建議，出任此職位者應兼任「人力發展專員」，以協調跨局及跨部門的人力發展計劃。

專責小組的建議裡，最重要的是香港的「職業教育及培訓」應重塑為「職業專才教育」，涵蓋達至學位程度的有關課程，而當中有很大比重應為職業技能或專業知識的專門內容的課程。換句話說，接受培訓的學生不比循傳統學術途徑求學的學生遜色。這些學生有能力接受傳統術教育，但他們因個人興趣而選擇職業專才教育。

按專責小組建議，政府應展開全面及長遠的計劃循此方向推廣，並且強調學歷較低的畢業生可在資歷架構下循不同的階梯進修更高的教育。所以這並不是死胡同。

政府亦應鼓勵中學推行職業與生涯規劃教育，以及加強學生的個人輔導和支援，使學生能更認識自我及探討不同的發展途徑。

最後，如施政報告所言，政府應在市區撥地，發展一個有足夠容量和先進設備的職業訓練局校園。

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