

Study on Effective Strategies to Facilitate School-to-work Transition of Young Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong

Study Brief

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Difficulties in obtaining gainful employment experienced by school leavers have been major public concerns in the local society in recent decades. In order to facilitate school-to-work transition, the Government has implemented various programmes, such as the Business-School Partnership Programme and the Work Experience Movement for secondary school students to learn about the reality of working lives. Young persons with disabilities (PWDs) face extra hardships in securing decent jobs. Having a university education does not necessarily reduce the risk of being unemployed. Government-released statistics show that only about one-third of PWDs who have attained higher education have jobs. It has recently been reported that a young PWD with a Master degree was referred for a job as a janitor by the Labour Department.

2. Indeed, the unemployment rate of PWDs is much higher than the overall figure. Results from a territory-wide representative survey in 2013 revealed that compared to the whole population, a lower proportion of PWDs attained post-secondary education (7.6%) and was in middle-class occupations (25.7%). The figures for the entire population were 25.5% and 37.3% respectively. According to the *Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Disability 2013*, the poverty rate of PWDs (45.3%) was notably higher than the overall level (19.9%).

3. Employment difficulties experienced by PWDs are, to a certain extent, rooted in discrimination. From Table 1, a perception of

increasing discrimination against PWDs in Hong Kong between 1994 and 2002 was found.¹ Significant increases were observed for discrimination against people who were physically handicapped, blind, deaf and dumb, and mentally ill.

Table 1: Perceived Discrimination against People with Different Types of Disability, 1994-2002 (%)

	1994	1995	1996	1998	2002	Change between 1994 and 2002 p-value
All PWDs	66.5	60.7	72.1	72.9	69.8	n.s.
<i>Physically Handicapped</i>	20.9	n.a.	32.0	30.6	29.4	***
<i>Blind</i>	14.5	n.a.	25.1	23.0	20.9	**
<i>Deaf and Dumb</i>	15.1	n.a.	24.4	19.8	21.6	**
<i>Mentally Ill</i>	37.2	22.8	49.9	46.4	52.8	***

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01, ***p<0.001; n.a.=not available; n.s.=not significant

Table 2: Attitudes towards PWDs Related to Employment in 2010 (%)

“Fewer opportunities for PWDs than those without a disability”	
All PWDs	85
<i>Physical Impairment</i>	92
<i>Sensory Impairment</i>	91
<i>Mental Illness</i>	88
“Simple repetitive work tasks are suitable for workers with a disability.”	
<i>Physical Impairment</i>	65
<i>Sensory Impairment</i>	66
<i>Mental Illness</i>	62

4. The above observation corresponds to the picture shown in Table 2. In a survey commissioned by the EOC in 2010, it was found that a majority of respondents (85%) opined that PWDs had fewer employment opportunities than their non-disabled counterparts. In addition, around two-third of the general public believed that simple repetitive work tasks are suitable for PWDs.

¹ Joseph T. F. Lau, “Report on Public Attitudes toward Disabled People in Hong Kong: 1994-2002” Submitted to RAC Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation, Health and Welfare Bureau (Hong Kong, 15 April 2002). This paper is available on the web site: http://www.fhb.gov.hk/download/press_and_publications/otherinfo/020623reha_report/report.pdf.

5. Among 209 companies surveyed in 2014-15, only a quarter (24%) were employing PWDs. It was further found that less than two-fifth of the surveyed employers (37%) planned to hire PWDs in the next 5 years and 35% of the sampled employers were neither employing PWDs at the time of the survey nor planning to do so in the next 5 years.

6. Acknowledging the difficulties encountered by PWDs in the labour market, the Government has implemented a series of measures to provide skill training and support services for PWDs to facilitate their labour market integration. For example, job matching, referral, and employment counselling services have been offered under the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department to job seekers with disabilities who are fit for open employment. Employers of PWDs are subsidised for procuring assistive devices and carrying out workplace modification works for their employees with disabilities under the Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities, and may receive a monthly allowance for paying their employees with disabilities under the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme. To further encourage employment for PWDs, the maximum level of disregarded earnings for disabled recipients under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme has been raised and an additional subsidy has been provided for Higher Disability Allowance recipients in paid employment for hiring carers.

INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

7. This EOC-commissioned study aims at examining the challenges faced by young PWDs in accessing post-secondary education and entering the labour market, as well as the effectiveness of existing policy measures in promoting employment of young PWDs. As past research tended to regard the experiences, aspirations, and strategies of young PWDs accessing post-secondary education or under school-to-work

transition as secondary concerns, the current study is expected to focus on the effectiveness of the strategies adopted by young PWDs in facilitating the transition. As such, factors facilitating and hindering their access to education and the labour market, as well as their outcomes, could be identified, and evidence-based policy recommendations could be made. More importantly, both the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities spell out the obligations to provide equal opportunities to PWDs and to protect them from discrimination in employment and education, amongst other arenas. The EOC encourages proposals submitted by research teams with expertise in this specific area.

Specific Objectives

8. Specific objectives of the study are as follows:
 - (a) To give an overview of the local and overseas policies and approaches adopted to facilitate PWDs' access to post-secondary education and school-to-work transition, as well as their outcomes of post-secondary education (e.g. rates of completion) and labour market outcomes (e.g. duration of employment, wage, training and promotion opportunities, etc.);
 - (b) To gauge the views from young PWDs and their parents, teachers/ school administrators, and employers concerning education and employment of PWDs;
 - (c) To examine the educational and occupational aspirations of young PWDs and the strategies they adopt to achieve their academic and career goals and the effectiveness of these strategies;

- (d) To investigate the experiences of young PWDs in transitioning to post-secondary education and to the labour market;
- (e) To identify the mechanisms facilitating successful transitions as well as the obstacles inhibiting these transitions;
- (f) To evaluate the effectiveness of subsidies, allowances, and related employment support services provided by Government departments/ bureaux and other stakeholders in facilitating labour market integration of young PWDs; and
- (g) To make concrete policy recommendations on institutional support to facilitate young PWDs' transition to post-secondary education and to the labour market.

9. Inter-group comparison between young PWDs of different sexes and education levels should be conducted to reveal similarities and differences in terms of aspirations, experiences, strategies, and outcomes. Given the wide spectrum of disability and the likely heterogeneity in aspirations, experiences, strategies, and outcomes among people with different types of disability, the EOC welcomes proposals that focus on a specific group of PWDs but sufficient empirical and policy justifications should be provided. Such suggestions and related research design should be included in the research proposals and will be counted towards the teams' score in the assessment exercise.

Duration of the Study

10. It is expected that the project will be commenced before the end of September 2019 and completed within a time-frame of 12 months.

Budget of the Study

11. The upper limit budgeted for the research project is capped at HK\$600,000. The amount of fee paid to the commissioned research team will be published in the EOC's website after the completion of the research study.

Briefing Session for Interested Research Teams

12. A briefing session will be held to give an introduction of the current invitation. Research teams who are interested in submitting proposals are welcome. Details and registration method of the briefing session can be found in the EOC's website.

Research Proposal

13. Research teams who are interested in taking up the research project are required to submit a Technical Proposal and a Fee Proposal.

14. The Technical Proposal should include, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) An overview of the research team's perception and understanding of the subject matter of the study;
- (b) A detailed illustration of the approach employed in conducting the study and the analytical framework adopted in achieving the objectives of the study specified above;
- (c) An in-depth discussion of the research design and methods of data collection;

- (d) A description of the pilot survey conducted to verify testing instruments and procedures, the research ethics practices, and the quality control measures used in both fieldwork and office editing;
- (e) A presentation of data processing and data analysis plans;
- (f) A proposed work schedule of the entire study according to the duration specified above;
- (g) A description of the research teams, including the qualifications and experiences of the principal investigator and other key research personnel; and
- (h) Any other information that might assist in the evaluation of the proposal.

15. The Fee Proposal should include a budget plan with breakdown of costs for the research study and the method of payment.

Other Conditions

16. In addition, the research team (including members of the research team and, if any, all interviewers and facilitators) is required to fulfill the following conditions:

- (a) To discuss regularly with EOC staff in designing survey instruments, if applicable, which should be approved by the EOC;
- (b) To provide detailed plans of data analyses; and
- (c) To have basic knowledge of equal opportunity issues and to conduct the study in a sensitive manner when dealing with equal opportunity issues.

Copyright

17. Copyright of the research report, data collected and information derived from the study shall remain the property of the EOC. Subject to the prior approval of the EOC, the research team might be allowed to use the data and information for the purposes of academic research and academic publication.

Presentation of the Results of the Study

18. The research team should present the results of the study according to the following:

- (a) A bilingual (English and Chinese) full report of the study, including if necessary a glossary of definition of terms and technical jargons, should be produced. The format of the report should be agreed by the EOC. As well as an executive summary, the full report should include the following as its contents: research objectives, methodology, findings, discussions, recommendations, and implications.
- (b) Info graphics in bilingual format should be produced to present the research findings.
- (c) A validated and clean data file in a mutually agreed electronic format should be submitted to the EOC.
- (d) Oral presentations of the research results to the EOC and to the public at a media briefing should be made.
- (e) Research progress is subject to monitoring by the EOC. It is imperative to submit progress reports and present results orally as means of evaluation.

Selection Criteria

19. The EOC will consider both the cost and quality of the research proposals concurrently in reviewing the proposals. Selection criteria can be found in the EOC's website.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

20. Submission in Two Envelopes

- (a) The **Technical Proposal** and the **Fee Proposal** should be submitted in two separate, sealed envelopes.
- (b) **Technical Proposal Envelope:** One original and three duplicate copies of the Technical Proposal in bilingual (English and Chinese) format should be prepared and submitted in a separate, sealed envelope.
- (c) **Fee Proposal Envelope:** (i) One original and three duplicate copies of the Fee Proposal in bilingual (English and Chinese) format and (ii) one original copy of completed and signed form of "Warranty for Anti-Collusion" (Annex 1) in bilingual (English and Chinese) format should be prepared and submitted in a separate, sealed envelope.
- (d) The two sealed envelopes containing the Technical Proposal and the Fee Proposal (with the completed and signed form of "Warranty") should be put in one sealed envelope and placed in the HVQT Box at the reception counter of the EOC Office (address as shown below) **before 5:00p.m. on 3 July 2019 (Wednesday)**. The envelope must be marked with the title of the research project but should not bear any indication which may relate the submission to the research team.

Equal Opportunities Commission
16/F., 41 Heung Yip Road,
Wong Chuk Hang,
Hong Kong

21. Research team that has submitted a proposal will be contacted for the electronic version of the Technical Proposal and the Fee Proposal.

22. Research team that has submitted a proposal may be required to give an oral presentation to Members of the EOC.

Equal Opportunities Commission
April 2019

To: Equal Opportunities Commission

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Warranty for Anti-Collusion

- (1) By submitting a tender, the Research Team represents and warrants that in relation to the invitation to tender of “Study on Effective Strategies to Facilitate School-to-work Transition of Young Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong”:
 - (a) it has not communicated and will not communicate to any person other than the Equal Opportunities Commission the amount of any tender price;
 - (b) it has not fixed and will not fix the amount of any tender price by arrangement with any person;
 - (c) it has not made and will not make any arrangement with any person as to whether it or that other person will or will not submit a tender; and
 - (d) it has not otherwise colluded and will not otherwise collude with any person in any manner whatsoever in the tendering process.

- (2) In the event that the Research Team is in breach of any of representations and/or warranties in Clause (1) above, the Equal Opportunities Commission shall be entitled to, without compensation to any person or liability on the part of the Equal Opportunities Commission:
 - (a) reject the tender;
 - (b) if the Equal Opportunities Commission has accepted the tender, withdraw its acceptance of the tender; and
 - (c) if the Equal Opportunities Commission has entered into contract with the Research Team, terminate the contract.

- (3) The Research Team shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Equal Opportunities Commission against all losses, damage, costs or expenses arising out of or in relation to any breach of any of the representations and/ or warranties in Clause (1) above.

- (4) A breach by a Research Team of any of the representations and/ or warranties in Clause (1) may prejudice its future standing as the Equal Opportunities Commission’s supplier or service provider.

- (5) Clause (1) shall have no application to the Research Team's communications in strict confidence with its own insurers or brokers to obtain insurance quotation for computation of the tender price, or with its professional advisers, and consultants or sub-contractors to solicit their assistance in preparation of tender submission.

- (6) The rights of the Equal Opportunities Commission under Clauses (2) to (4) above are in addition to and without prejudice to any other rights or remedies available to it against the Research Team.

Signature of the
Authorized Person
Representing the Research Team: _____
Team:

Name of the Authorized
Person (in Block Letters): _____

Organization Chop: _____

Date: _____