

**ILO Expert Group Meeting on Inclusion of
People with Disabilities in Vocational Training**

Country Report for

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, People's Republic of China

INTRODUCTION

In Hong Kong, the provision of vocational rehabilitation service focuses on developing the ability of people with disabilities (PWDs). It is believed that, with sufficient opportunities for PWDs to receive vocational education and training, they can develop their potential to take up employment and integrate into society. Besides, they can also make valuable contributions and participate in social development, just like their able-bodied peers.

POLICY OBJECTIVE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

2. Vocational rehabilitation (VR) is part of the continuous and coordinated process, which involves the provision of vocational guidance, vocational training and selective placement. VR enables PWDs to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and thereby, to further their integration into society. To this end, dedicated or specialized training is provided to enhance PWDs' knowledge and skills, so that they are better equipped for open employment. Re-training programmes are also provided, so that PWDs can update their skills and knowledge to meet the market demands. On the other hand, supported or sheltered employment is provided for those who cannot cope with the demands of the competitive job market.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

3. The Vocational Training Council (VTC) was established in 1982 under the Vocational Training Council Ordinance. The main aim of the VTC is to provide and promote a cost-effective and comprehensive system of vocational education and training to meet the needs of the economy in line with the Council's vision and mission, which are to be a leading provider of vocational education and training in the region, and to provide cost-effective alternative routes and flexible pathways for school leavers and adult learners to acquire skills and knowledge for lifelong learning and enhanced employability.

4. The VTC establishes, operates and maintains the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), the VTC School of Business and Information Systems (SBI) and Training & Development (T&D) Centres, and the Skills Centres. Through the 3 Skills Centres, the VTC provides and coordinates skills training to PWDs aged 15 and over for the purpose of improving their employment prospects and preparing them for open employment.

5. The service in the three Skills Centres is co-ordinated through its Vocational Training for People with Disabilities Section (VTPDS). In general, measures and methods for training the able-bodied trainees should equally apply to PWDs as far as medical and educational conditions permit.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES SECTION

6. In addition to the administration of Skills Centres for PWDs, the Vocational Training for People with Disabilities Section (VTPDS) of the VTC co-ordinates the enrolment procedures for PWDs in IVE, SBI and T&D Centres, and provides technical aids and counselling services to PWDs through its Technical Aids and Resource Centre (TARC).

SKILLS CENTRES

7. For PWDs aged 15 or over who, because of the nature of their disabilities and special needs, cannot follow mainstream vocational training, the Skills Centres provide special facilities and training programmes for them. Full-time programmes at the operative level and pre-craft level are offered in the Skills Centres. The major aim of these programmes is to equip trainees with skills they need to secure open employment. For more aspired ones, they may pursue further vocational training in the mainstream courses upon completion of the skills training. All skills training programmes are organized in modular structure which allows a trainee to progress at his / her own pace until he / she reaches his / her full potential usually in a period of two years. The duration of a pre-craft bridging course is two years. A list of the training courses is given in the Appendix.

8. Training programmes at the skills centres are regularly reviewed by the Course Sub-committees under the purview of VTC's Committee on Vocational Training for People with Disabilities. Members of the Committee and the Sub-committee include representatives from the Special Schools Council, Integrated Vocational Training Centres, employers' associations, relevant government departments and non-government organizations (NGOs). They provide valuable

input for the design of the training programmes to ensure that these programmes would match the local occupational skills requirements and meet the needs of the employment market.

9. In 2005/06, the three Skills Centres offer more than 10 full-time programmes in technical, commercial and service-related streams. Admission to these programmes is mainly based on the results of vocational assessment of the applicants. The three Skills Centres offer a total of 630 full-time training places for PWDs, of which 120 are provided with boarding facilities. The employment rates of the full-time course graduates of Skills Centres who were economically active from the year 2000/01 to 2004/05 were 83%, 83%, 82%, 75% and 79% respectively. In addition to the full-time programmes, the Skills Centres, in consultation with relevant NGOs, run short training courses with flexible mode of attendance to meet the specific vocational needs of PWDs. About 300 short course training places are provided annually. Continuous education and training is provided for people with disabilities to enable them to upgrade their work skills in the evenings. About 60 part-time evening course training places is provided per annum.

10. Supportive rehabilitation services are rendered to PWDs in Skills Centres by a multi-disciplinary team of rehabilitation professionals including vocational counsellors, social workers, occupational therapists and registered nurses to facilitate better adjustment and independence of the trainees. The professional team equips the trainees with life skills including work adaptation and adjustment skills, interpersonal and community living skills as well as knowledge in occupational health and personal hygiene to prepare them in leading an independent life in the community. Other supportive services such as boarding and school bus services are provided for trainees if needed to strengthen the independent living and social skills for those trainees who need specially structured programmes and activities conducted outside normal vocational training hours.

MAINSTREAM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: IVE, SBI & T&D CENTRES

11. The IVE, SBI and T&D Centres of the VTC are encouraged to admit and integrate PWDs into their programmes as far as possible. They provide a great variety of full-time and part-time courses and study programmes at levels ranging from operative to higher technician / technologist for school leavers and in-service workers in various academic departments, including Applied Science, Business Administration, Child Education & Services, Construction, Design, Printing, Textiles & Clothing, Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Hotel, Service & Tourism Studies, Information Technology, and Mechanical, Manufacturing & Industrial Engineering. Those PWDs meeting the minimum entry requirements of the courses are considered for direct-entry admission.

12. For PWDs who are being enrolled into mainstream courses, support services are provided to them by Student Affairs Officers, Student Counsellors and the TARC of the VTPDS, such services include visits and counselling sessions to help PWDs overcome problems in adjustment; liaison with academic staff regarding special teaching methods and special needs of the students; provision of the technical aids and adaptations; and advice on special arrangements for examinations, etc.

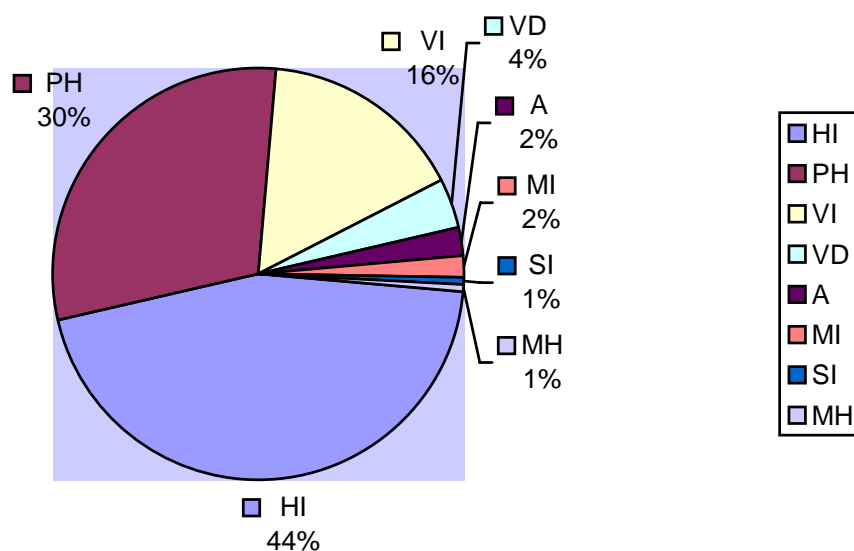
13. In 2005/06, there were 172 PWDs attending various IVE, SBI and T&D Centres' courses. In general, there has been an increase in the number of PWDs enrolling in the IVE's courses over the years as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Enrolment Statistics of PWDs in the IVE, SBI and T&D Centres' Courses from 1999/2000 to 2005/06

	Number of PWDs						
	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
IVE	49	87	133	152	172	156	172
SBI	N.A.	N.A.	1	2	2	2	N.A.
T&D Centres	6	21	30	39	36	N.A.	N.A.
Total	55	108	164	193	210	158	172

14. The percentage distributions of students with different types of disabilities are: hearing impairment (44%), physical handicap (30%), visual impairment (16%), visceral disability (4%), autism (2%), mental illness (2%), speech impairment (1%) and mental handicap (1%) as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1: Distributions of Students with Different Types of Disabilities Attending IVE, SBI and T&D Centres' Courses in 2005/06



- HI - Hearing impairment
- PH - Physical handicap
- VI - Visual impairment
- VD - Visceral disability
- A - Autism
- MI - Mental illness
- SI - Speech impairment
- MH - Mental handicap

15. Open employment rates are usually used as a performance indicator. A survey conducted in January 2004 showed that about 84% of the economically active full-time IVE graduates obtained open employment.

POLICY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR PWDs

16. According to the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) which came into operation in September 1996, an educational establishment in Hong Kong has to provide reasonable accommodation to facilitate education and training for PWDs, and it is unlawful for an educational establishment to discriminate against them. In this aspect, the VTC already has a clear policy, long before the introduction of DDO, for facilitating PWDs in their pursuit of further vocational education and training, as well as providing special services to them.

17. In view of the introduction of the DDO, there is a need to strengthen the provision of services to PWDs on campus. Based on the recommendation of the IVE Management Committee, a “Task Force on Provision of Support to PWDs” was set up to provide a comprehensive range of services and facilities to students with hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical disability or other disabilities.

18. The aim of this task force is to meet the special needs of PWDs for suitable accommodation, transportation, access to buildings, library facilities, computer and information, classroom seating, learning aids and equipment, special lecture or examination arrangements (e.g. providing soft copies or enlarged version of handouts, preparing examination paper in Braille, allowing extra time for examination, etc.), counselling for personal growth and development, and guidance on job search. PWDs are given equal opportunities as their able-bodied counterparts to pursue a further vocational education and training to realize their full potentials.

19. During the admission period, an interview panel on which the Special Education Support and Placement Section of the Education and Manpower Bureau, the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department and the VTPDS is represented would assess the applicants with disabilities. The interview panel also includes representatives of departments offering the courses, which the applicants have applied for, and experts from external bodies. An applicant with disabilities would be given a direct offer to a course if (a) he / she meets the entry requirement for the course; and (b) he / she satisfies the interview panel that he / she is likely to complete the course successfully.

20. Not only is it a requirement by law for the VTC to continue to open up learning opportunities for PWDs to study in IVE, SBI and T&D Centres, the VTC has a social responsibility to admit those disadvantaged students to its courses. By admitting them, the VTC provides equal opportunities for them to develop their potential and abilities, and thereby enabling those PWDs to better integrate into the society.

TECHNICAL AIDS AND RESOURCE CENTRE (TARC)

21. To cater for the needs of PWDs and to improve their productivity and employment opportunities, the TARC of the VTPDS designs and manufactures technical and employment aids, modifies standardized industrial machineries and provides professional advice on the use of technical aids to employers and PWDs who are being employed or trained. The TARC is equipped with various types of learning aids which are available for loan to students of IVE, SBI and T&D Centres. It also operates a small reference library to keep a good collection of literature on

rehabilitation for loan to all Council staff and other co-workers in the rehabilitation field. A special study and examination room, equipped with personal computers and scanners, magnifying devices, powered-braille, braille-printers and thermo-printers for the use of students with visual impairment or total blindness, is also available in the TARC.

22. In addition, the TARC will liaise with the Academic Secretariat, Student Affairs Officers / Student Counsellors and frontline teachers to determine the level of professional support for PWDs in the following areas: (a) application for special exemption / special examination arrangement; (b) visit and professional counselling; and (c) special support services / technical aids requisition, etc.

23. Occupational therapists would be invited by the TARC to conduct specialized assessment for some PWDs to determine the granting of special exemption / special examination arrangement, especially for those who cannot provide documentary evidence, such as the notification letter issued by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) certifying the granting of special exemption / special examination arrangement to the applicants in previous open examinations, or assessment reports issued by doctors, psychologists, audiologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc. to support their applications.

24. The TARC provides support services and technical aids to facilitate successful inclusion of PWDs in IVE, SBI and T&D Centres, such as: (a) production of ramps at the entrances of the classrooms, workshops, toilets and canteens for wheelchair-bound students; (b) adaptation of the toilets for students with physical handicap of the lower limbs; (c) adaptation of the computer input device for students

with physical handicap of the upper limbs; (d) provision of magnifiers, closed-circuit televisions, text-enlarging software for computer and powered braille for students with visual impairment; (e) production of studying materials and examination papers in enlarged format or in Braille for students with visual impairment from low vision to total blindness; and (f) professional counselling for students with mental illness, autism or mental handicap, etc.

STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICERS / STUDENT COUNSELLORS

25. The Student Affairs Officers (SAOs) / Student Counsellors (SCs) and other teaching and supportive staff on campuses play an active role in helping PWDs. The SAOs / SCs provide services to PWDs to ensure that they have equal access to opportunities as other students available in the VTC. They liaise with teaching staff of various departments and the TARC on how to cater for the special needs of those PWDs, and offer counselling services for staff and students to enhance general understandings of the special needs of PWDs.

26. The SAOs and SCs will contact newly admitted PWDs to explore their needs at the beginning of the term. Particular attention will be paid to students' adjustment, learning and personal development. During their stay in the courses of VTC, students will also be invited to review their needs from time to time, aiming to provide a comprehensive and a more personal service to these students from admission through graduation.

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

27. Campus life in IVE, SBI and T&D Centres is full of options and opportunities. Academic departments of the IVE, SBI and T&D Centres are committed to give all possible assistance to PWDs to facilitate their learning process. PWDs are strongly advised to identify themselves to their departments as early as possible, so that necessary assistance for them can be arranged.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP

28. All full-time students who are assessed to be in genuine financial needs, no matter they are with or without disabilities, can apply for grant and loan from the “Government Local Student Finance Scheme”. In addition to the scholarships available to full-time students, full-time PWDs meeting the requirements and criteria would be nominated by the Principal of IVE and the Head of VTPDS to compete for the Sir Edward Youde Memorial Awards for Disabled Students and Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fellowship(s) / Scholarship(s) for Disabled Students. Other scholarships are also available from the community, such as Li Kwan Hung Education Fund administered by the Hong Kong Physically Handicapped and Able-Bodied Association and S.K.Y. Lee & Lee Chi Hung Scholarship Fund for Hearing Impaired Students administered by The Hong Kong Society for the Deaf.

THE WAY FORWARD

29. In order to cope with the shift of Hong Kong’s economic structure from the manufacturing sector to commercial and servicing sectors, the VTC will continue to develop new and revise existing training courses and programmes to meet the changing needs of the employment market, so as to broaden the employment

opportunities of PWDs. In particular, close liaison with government departments, employers, non-governmental organizations and self-help groups will be maintained to improve the quality of vocational training for PWDs. It is hoped that with concerted efforts from all parties concerned, an efficient and effective vocational rehabilitation service would be provided to ensure PWDs to enjoy equal opportunities and full participation in our community, thereby making Hong Kong a better home for everyone.

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Vocational Training Council

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL

Full-time Courses in Skills Centres (2005 - 2006)

Course Name	Number of classes	Training Places
Basic Catering Service	7	105
Commercial and Retailing Service	3	45
Computer and Network Installation	2	30
General Service Work	10	150
Interior Decoration	1	15
Logistics Service	2	30
Massage Service	1	15
Office Computing and Practice	1	15
Office Practice	8	120
Packaging Service	3	45
Printing	4	60
Total	42	630