

LCQ12: Strive and Rise Programme

Following is a question by the Hon Martin Liao and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (October 30):

Question:

Regarding the second round of the Strive and Rise Programme (the Programme), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Strive and Rise Alumni Club (Alumni Club) under the Programme has organised a number of exchange tours to the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and also offers local job tasting or internship programmes for Alumni Club members aged between 16 and 21, and it is reported that some Mainland multinational enterprises intend to hire mentee graduates of the Programme, whether the authorities will consider extending the job tasting or internship programmes of the Alumni Club to GBA, so that mentees may gain a deeper understanding of the development of GBA at an early stage and widen their horizons; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as it is reported that some mentors in the first round of the Programme were unable to spare time and participate in the activities with their mentees due to their busy schedules, and remained unaware of the emotional issues among the mentees by the end of the first round of the Programme, whether the authorities will make appropriate adjustments to the mentorship mechanism in the second round of the Programme to accommodate mentees with special needs and arrange for the mentors to receive training first, so as to help the mentors identify and address the emotional needs of the mentees; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as it is learnt that a number of interest classes offered to mentees under the basic training sessions of the Programme are very popular among the mentees, but the costs of the interest classes in sport, musical instruments, art, etc, are too high that it is difficult to meet mentees' long-term learning needs despite a subsidy totalling \$10,000 is provided to them in two phases under the Programme, whether the authorities will introduce measures and collaborate with schools and various sectors where practicable, so as to support mentees in continuing to develop their interests; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as there are views that the Child Development Fund is similar to the Programme in nature and content, for example, both with the elements such as "personal development plan" and "mentorship", whether the Government will consider reviewing their contents and make appropriate integration or project collaboration, so as to optimise resources; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The second cohort of the Strive and Rise Programme (the Programme) was launched in October 2023, with a number of enhancement measures introduced with reference to the results from the impact assessment conducted by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University research team on the programme's first cohort. The enhancement measures include increasing the number of mentees from 2 800 to 4 000 with the coverage expanded to Secondary 4 students, enriching the variety of group activities (such as organising more Mainland study and exchange tours), introducing mentorship groups, and establishing the Strive and Rise Alumni Club (the Alumni Club) for graduates.

The reply to the question raised by the Hon Martin Liao is as follows:

(1) Graduates of the first and second cohorts of the Programme will automatically become members of the Alumni Club established in November 2023. It organises different types of activities for the alumni, including exchange activities to the Mainland, with a view to broadening their social network and horizons, and sustaining the effectiveness of the programme. Also, the Alumni Club provides short-term five-day job tasting/internship opportunities for alumni aged 16 or above to assist them in identifying their talents and career aspirations. It will continue, in collaboration with supporting organisations, to line up Mainland study and exchange tours as well as various experiential activities, including visits to workplaces of different enterprises, to help alumni understand the development and prospects of different industries on the Mainland, widen their horizons and set goals for their future.

(2) One of the enhancement measures implemented in the second cohort of the Programme is the introduction of mentorship groups on top of the one-to-one mentor-mentee pairing, under which two to three pairs of mentors and mentees would form a mentorship group to participate in group activities and exchanges for better interaction, sharing and support. When matching mentors and mentees, consideration will be given to the latter's career aspirations and hobbies/interests, as well as their gender, language and special needs (e.g. special educational needs (SENs)). The programme also provided different kinds of training for mentors, including basic and advanced training, and skills for interacting with mentees with SENs or from ethnic minority groups and their parents. If mentors encounter difficulties in offering guidance to mentees, they may contact the respective District Organisers which will arrange social workers to render support as appropriate.

(2) The enhanced Programme consists of a one-year intensive foundation programme and two years of activities in the Alumni Club. In the first year of the Programme, a start-up sum of \$5,000 is awarded to student participants for implementing their personal development plans under the guidance of their mentors, whereas a scholarship of \$5,000 is further awarded to student participants upon completion of the Programme for their own deployment by

applying the financial planning skills acquired. Graduates will automatically become members of the Alumni Club and can continue to participate in its whole-person development activities covering six major aspects, namely Financial Education, Career and Life Planning, Leadership Development, Sports and Healthy Lifestyle, Arts and Cultural Expressions, and Social Networking and Civic Engagement, as well as job tasting/internship opportunities, with a view to broadening their social network and horizons while continuing to facilitate their development of talents and interests.

(4) In 2023, the Social Welfare Department completed a review of the Child Development Fund Programme (CDF Programme) to enhance its uniqueness and ensure effective use of resources in supporting underprivileged children. Relevant enhancement measures have been introduced to the projects launched in March 2024. For example, target participants have been changed from students of Primary 4 to Secondary 4 to students of Primary 3 to Primary 6, so that underprivileged children can benefit at an early developmental stage from the CDF Programme, including development of savings habits, good characters and positive values through the three components of Personal Development Plan, Mentorship, and Targeted Savings. The enhanced CDF Programme complements the Strive and Rise Programme which focuses on supporting Secondary 1 to 4 students from underprivileged families. The two programmes complement each other in catering to the needs of Primary and Secondary students from underprivileged families at their different developmental stages.