

\$46m proposal for adult education

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A PROPOSAL of \$46 million for the purpose of subsidising private adult education institutions has been made by the Hongkong Association for Continuing Education to the Education Department.

● A co-ordinating body should be assigned or set up to ensure that the quality and contents of subsidised adult and continuing education programmes are maintained.

According to the chairman of the association, Miss Therese Shak, the Government has no policy whatsoever in subsidising voluntary agencies and non-profit making group for carrying out adult education.

The association pointed out that according to the Government education statistics in the last five years, 50 per cent or 259,639 students, of the 12-17 age group have no chance to study in secondary schools.

At present, only four institutions which provide adult education course receive subsidies from the Government. They are the two universities, Polytechnic, technical institutes and the Adult Education Section of the Education Department.

The association also revealed that the proposed amount represents only 2.9 per cent of the total education budget.

"However, over 60 per cent of the education budget goes to subventions for secondary schools. Adult education courses provided by voluntary and non-profit making organisations have been playing equal important role, therefore, the government should have a policy to subsidise them.

"It will turn out to be more economical and efficient for the Government to subsidise these organisations than setting up a separate programme to cater for the total potential student population of adult education," the association suggested.

Miss Shak said that if the Government approved to grant subsidies, a decrease in tuition fees and a raise in teachers' salaries might be possible.

She also suggested that training courses should be set up to train more professional teachers because one of the present difficulties is the lack of manpower.

Four recommendations have been made to the Education Department. They are:

● A clear and concrete policy on adult education should be spelled out in the Government Green Paper on Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education, which is now under preparation.

● A 5-year plan should be devised to fully subsidise non-profit making agencies offering adult and continuing education programmes.

● A budget of \$46,600,000 should be set aside initially for subsidising adult and continuing education.