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*Poor Gps Ed Action Gps*

# Action called for on early school leavers

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The Education Action Group (EAG) has made a plea to the Government to study and take action on the problem of young children not attending or dropping out of school at an early age. The EAG describes the situation as an appalling wastage of young minds.

The EAG, an organisation formed by teachers, parents, social workers and other parties interested in improving the local educational system, noted that there are more than 100,000 children up to the age of 14 who do not go to school and of this number, 60,000 are aged 12 and under.

The Group also urged the Government to pay attention to roof top schools.

"With a total enrolment of 47,329 pupils, the roof top schools need further consideration since they

function in poor areas with insufficient money, teachers, and over-crowded classes," it said.

The EAG remarked that the heavy cost of education was another factor for the high percentage of early leavers.

"Thirty-six per cent of primary children live in resettlement estates and the people who live there are often of the lower income group," the EAG pointed out.

"Education in Hongkong, with the cost of school fees, books, and school uniforms, is still an expensive item, in some cases a luxury, and thus the financial burden, the necessity of contributing to the family income or looking after younger siblings while both parents work are all the reasons why children fail to go to school," the group said.

The EAG investigation showed that there were 500,000 children in the age group of 10-14 and of this, 36,000 work in various types of factories.

The EAG stressed that the less-than-brilliant children, the problematic children, the children from difficult home backgrounds were as much the community's and the Government's concern as the clever ones.