

主旨: Paper in response to public engagement on population policy  
附件: AAPAL - Response to Public Consultation on Hong Kong Population Policy (Final).pdf

Dear Secretariat of Steering Committee on Population policy,

On behalf of Association for Aging in Place and Long Term Care (AAPAL), we hereby attaching our suggestions for the government's conscientious consideration.

We hope that our views would contribute to a better environment for elderly in Hong Kong in the short coming future.

Best regards

Alastair Chan,  
On behalf of AAPAL.



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# Response to Public Consultation on Hong Kong Population Policy

Promoting labour participation in elderly services

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## FOREWORDS

The Association of Aging in Place and Long Term Care (AAPAL) would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the HKSAR government, Chief Secretary for Administration, and the Secretariat of the Steering Committee on Population Policy for providing a platform to provide our views towards population policy.

Our population is growing at an extraordinary rate. It is projected that our totally population will grow from 7.18 million to 8.47 million in 2041, while the percentage of people aged 65 or above will rise from 14% to markedly 32% (i.e. 2.71 million out of 8.47 million person). Meanwhile, the average life expectancy Hong Kong people is ever increasing as the aged continue to aging as the median age will rise from 41.7 to 49.9 by 2041. Correspondingly, a local study indicated that at least 26% of age 85 or above now requires residential care in Hong Kong as the strata of aged 75 and 80 above population rise markedly. In just less than 4 years, our labour force will begin a decline as the baby boomer's generation enters in to their retirement age. The elderly dependency ratio is predicted to go from 1 elderly dependent supported by 5 workers to 2 workers supporting 1 elderly in 2014.

Thus we urge the government to take step in training and implement policy changes to counteract the high number elderly, aging of the aged, low number of labour phenomenon is going to be critical in preparing our population for such demographic change in about 15 – 20 years time.

This paper in response to the public engagement exercise emphasises the importance of nurturing new talents and attracting more labour to better facilitate the elderly population. Consequently it would enable a win-win situation for encouraging youth and homemakers to re-enter the labour market, as well as enabling more job openings to meet with the expansion of elderly population in the shortcoming future.

## **1 MAN POWER TRAINING FOR AGING POPULATION**

- 1.1 One of the views for which public engagement exercise wished to seek is how to avoid skills mismatch and lack of job diversity. Lack of labours and diversity of position was also considered by AAPAL as one of the key problems observable in elderly services in the community, including In-home care services, day care centres and residential homes for the elderly (RCHE).
- 1.2 The elderly service providers (such as day care services, old-age homes, and others) in Hong Kong are currently encountering great difficulties in providing affordable, quality services –a significant part of this lies in labour shortage. They are also facing the challenge of aging of fundamental workers and not enough new blood due to the common perception of the industry, which bears the label of “labour-intensive” in nature.
- 1.3 Youth unemployment rate stands at around 8.8% compared to the current average of 3.1% notwithstanding 30,000 youths currently not involved in employment, education or training. Meanwhile, elderly sectors are constantly demanding for more front line and professional workers. There are much potential for the sector to intake unemployed youth, and homemakers, given adequate support, training and encouragement from the government.
- 1.4 Following several youth training schemes piloted in RCHEs as a product of partnership between the government, training bodies, and RCHEs, the response has so far been very promising – indicating potentials for an alternative means of labour supplement.
- 1.5 Nevertheless it will be argued that import labour in this sector is still necessary as a short-medium term measure. We believed that local workers, import labour and existing training schemes at their pilot stage can co-exist to not only raising the number of workers to take care of the elderly, but also aiding the industry with enough manpower to raise the overall standard of services, so that the environment would then become a more age-friendly place to live in.

## **2 IMPORTING LABOUR**

### **BENEFITS FOR LOCAL**

- 2.1 It is worth mentioning that arguably, import labour in certain industries can actually bring benefit to the local workers. Take other countries like Singapore for instance, the result of importing foreign labour actually created more good jobs and opportunities for the locals where businesses were encouraged to generate better employment opportunities to create better role for local, and supplementing the residuary, more labour intensive job for foreign manpower.

### **REVIEWING THE STRINGENCY OF SUPPLEMENTARY LABOUR SCHEME**

- 2.2 In terms of population policy, perhaps the biggest concern for Hong Kong is the question of whether import labour will reduce job availability to local workers. It is illustrated in the recent public engagement exercise on population policy consultation paper, that overall, there has only been 2,415 imported workers in Hong Kong as at the end of 2012 (comprising 0.1% of total labour force), without undermining the interest of our existing local labour, without doubt, Hong Kong's capacity for foreign workers is apparent, especially when contrasting with Singapore (28% of total labour force) and Macao (comprising of 26% of the total labour force).
- 2.3 As at 2012, only 2,145 imported labours have been admitted in to Hong Kong via Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS), out of which a majority of workers are recruited by residential homes.
- 2.4 To alleviate the immediate needs of filling vacancies less desirable by the local workers, government should consider easing regulations under SLS on hiring import workers, and encouraging elderly businesses to create more supervisory roles for local workers to enable the idea of "import workers as buffer, opportunities for local workers". We urge the Government to work closely with institution/s on providing trainings with higher standards to ensure quality of import worker, in return for a less stringent import rule.

### **3 YOUTH TRAINING**

#### **YOUTH CAREER NAVIGATION SCHEME FOR ELDERLY SERVICES**

- 3.1 The Youth Career Navigation Scheme for Elderly Services (YCNSE) was introduced and piloted since 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2013. The scheme was designed to provide a career ladder opportunity to youth (17 – 24 year's old) from F5 or above via a combination of on-the-job training and further education. They would first start off as personal health worker under supervision by "mentor" from RCHE, become qualified as Health Worker in RCHE and Residential home for person with disability after first year, and eventually be equipped with various skills that enable them to be competent at assisting in nursing, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and others.
- 3.2 On the face of it, observations seem to indicate that YCNSE in the long run may be a possible solution for providing on-going replacements of younger labour at the level of personal care worker. As of November 2013, we were told that 60 student was admitted to the scheme out of 100 places, with a turnover of 10% (6 person dropped out of 60). Therefore, preliminary statistics seem to raise the point that as much as the scheme may potentially help easing labour shortage in the future, there is still a need to mitigate the huge differences between supply and demands of worker via import labour in the short to medium term.
- 3.3 A clear career ladder may be the way forward to encourage more youth to re-enter in to the job market, as well as a good way of promoting intergenerational relationship. Nonetheless, since the pilot YCNSE scheme is only opened to 100 places at the moment, it is yet to demonstrate in later phases its popularity amongst the youth at large, and whether it can maintain a reasonable stability of student admission every year to meet the high market demand. Meanwhile, the industry needs a buffer of more import labours to fill in the existing huge differences in supply and demand of worker.

## 4 ABOUT US:

### **ASSOCIATION OF AGING IN PLACE AND LONG TERM CARE (AAPAL)**

The Association of Aging in Place and Long Term Care (AAPAL) is a non-profitable organisation established by medical professionals and experienced residential home operator with the aim to actualise the policy framework of “aging in place’ and “continuum of care” by providing research, support and education to advance services of the community and residential homes.

Council members of AAPAL include reputable geriatrician with extensive experience on day care and clinical care services, as well as director of a residential home group with over 30 years of RCHE experience, operating 11 residential homes with a large number of homes participating in Government’s Enhance Bought Place Scheme (EBPS).

Association for Aging in Place and Long Term Care would be more than happy to answer any questions, or provide further information upon request.

We hereby thank you again for the opportunity.

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