

主旨: Opinion response towards the consultation doc.
附件: pop consult op response.docx

As attached, originally would like to submit through the website but failed.

Regards,
Jason Hung(See attached file: pop consult op response.docx)

Opinion response regarding to releasing women and ethnic minority group's potential labour force, importing migrant workers and government intervention for increasing the number of child rearing.

For releasing the potential workforce from women, I will take a reverse perspective to see the problem, i.e., to reduce the burden of housework for women. Government interventions, employers willingness and change of social norms, are all relevant. And I will use Denmark as an example to demonstrate these concepts. As Denmark is having one of the most gender-balanced labour forces, with a proportion between male and female full time workers near 1:1.

For government interventions, the most direct way for providing a friendlier environment for working, is to transfer some housework, into a kind of public service, such as young child caring. For example, the government should expand the network of day-care nurseries, and to consider for extending the working hours of those nurseries. Then, two pools of labour force from women could be released, firstly, those who are having older children who do not require a full-day caring, but not willing/able to return to the labour market due to lack of working experience, can work for the nurseries, and secondly, with a more flexible and improved nursery service, than, younger women with young children could still participate in full time working. While in Denmark, the network of nursery is an intensified one, with a similar network of supermarket branches, and the opening hours is matching up with typical working hours. However, the working hours in Denmark is much shorter, and definitely not comparable with the situation in HK, but the concept and direction, is what might be able to transfer.

For employer's willingness, another obstacle for women to participate in full time working is because of role conflict between housekeeper and full time employee, as the working hours in Hong Kong is a bit 'unfriendly' towards family posts. The government can provide policy incentives, for rewarding those employers who are able to provide 'family friendly' opportunities, with awards for improving their image of CSR, or, with actual financial incentive such as tax incentive. The main difficulty for this is to establish a framework of judgement of 'family friendly'. While in Denmark, employers are providing these jobs, not due to policy incentives, but the huge participation rate of trade unions, as $\frac{3}{4}$ of full time workers are members of trade unions in Denmark, the power of negotiation and collective bargaining is extremely high for workers, while this is the different situation with HK, but we can achieve the same result through a different pathway.

For social norms, this is relevant to the willingness of men to take part in housework. In Denmark, as female's participation in public sphere has been normalized, men are also more willing to take up house work, and in fact most of the families in Denmark are having a balanced division of labour between men and women, for both the role of bread-winner and housekeeper. However, under the traditional norms of Confucianism, the participation within public sphere by women is still having some social restrictions in HK, and men are also more reluctant to take up responsibility in housework. This is more difficult for interventions, as it is a micro process of social construction, but this is the root for the problem.

For releasing the work force from local ethnic minorities. Again, some interventions should be taken by the government, particularly regarding to employers' willingness, and, the problem of lack of formal Chinese qualifications for members within ethnic minority group. For boosting employers' willingness,

the approaches mentioned above could also be used for this, and combining gender and ethnicity together, is to provide incentives to encourage workplace diversity. And for the lack of Chinese qualifications, I personally suggest 3 interventions should be done by the public sector.

1. For those who are already finished full-time education/schooling, mainly adults, the public sector could organize some kind of Chinese proficiency tests just like IELTS for English, which is just available for ethnic minorities whose first language is not Chinese, and do not hold any other HKEAA Chinese qualifications. The test is aimed to test Chinese proficiency for daily interaction, not for academic purposes.
2. For academic public exams, like Chinese Language for DSE, I suggest that we can transfer the practice for the old HKCEE (before 2007) English exam, to introduce the split of syllabus A and B, while the HKEAA can approve ethnic minority students whose first language is not Chinese to take an easier syllabus, with less literature elements but aim to test for practical Chinese.
3. This is a more long-term/strategic intervention. As from my personal observation, most of the teachers are treating Chinese teaching as a first language education, but as those who have studied education will know that, the pedagogy of teaching a first and second language is quite different, I suggest that the government can provide funding for some further education programs to current Chinese teachers about teaching Chinese as second language, and also, requesting universities to add this element into education programs. This should be a way to improve the learning experience of ethnic minority students.

Regarding to the **import of migrant workers**, I personally suggest that this should only be taken as the last resort for solving the problem.

1. It is difficult for us to match up migrant workers with what we are exactly wanted, for instance, it is easy for importing 100000 workers, but may be only half of them are really fitting in our demand.
2. It will arouse huge controversies, and under the current political atmosphere, the government should first to conduct policies to release local labour force, after evaluating the effect of such policies, if result has revealed that, problem of labour shortage still cannot be overcome, then, it would be more persuasive and less controversial for importing migrant workers, also, more easier for policy deliberation.
3. Before importing migrant workers, we have to establish a framework for handling a range of potential social issues that might be led by the inflow of migrant workers, including housing, cultural clashes within local community, and the mode for managing such clashes, for example, what kind of principal should we adopt for the management? (e.g. multiculturalism?), in short, we have to take the lesson from those cities having a strong reliance on migrant workers, such as London; from the 2011 London riot, we can see that, the potential social consequences of importing migrants could be huge.
4. We should first improve the general level of living standard, before we start to expand our program for recruiting highly-skilled workers, as the ultimate goal is to attract them to join the HK society permanently, and in fact, the unsatisfactory living standard, including overcrowding, environment degradation, also the stuck of political institution reform, and fear of narrowing of

a range of freedom and human rights, has already pushing many middle class talents to migrate, as revealed from the recent data of external migration from Hong Kong.

5. Although we can assign working visa to lower-skilled migrant workers on a temporary base, from many developed countries' example we can see that, there will always be a reluctant for visa workers to leave after they finished their work, as they to want a loss of opportunity for upward mobility, and many of them might transfer from legal to illegal migrants, which will also cause a range of social problems such as their participation in criminal activities. How can we ensure that, our law enforcing units can found out those who overstay in HK, in order to maintain our social order, after the demand for temporary migrant workers has been diminished?

In short, I am not opposing importing migrant workers, but not at this moment, and we should only consider for that, after we have established an all-rounded framework for the management of migrant workers' social cohesion.

Obstacles for attracting people to come if the import of labour force has to be carried out.

Obstacles for highly-skilled workers to come to HK/to attract HK people have migrated to return:

Put it simple under the push and pull factors model, it is very clear that, comparing with other countries or regions, the pull factor of HK is clearly disadvantaged. High level of expenditure, crowded living environment, poor air quality, and many others are all diminishing the pull factor of HK for attracting people to come. Using Bauman's distinguish between 'tourist' who are moving by choice and 'vagabonds' who are moving for necessity, these two groups of people are definitely fitting in the former one. While they are having the ability, to go for other places with more pull factors, like Western Europe, Singapore, or the US. So, the obstacles are indeed formed by ourselves, and the only way out is to improve the general living standard of HK in a multi-perspective way, including increase the mean housing area, urban renewal, improving air quality, also, conservation of culture and heritage, as global metropolitans like London, are all having heritage and business towers side by side, with large parks, and such combination is the much more attractive for highly-skilled migrants.

Obstacles for lower-skilled workers to come to HK:

For those from mainland China: migration is a way for social mobility for those who are from the rural area of China, and in fact there are very little administrative obstacles to come, but the increasing hesitation towards mainlanders from locals, might be an obstacle for the government to increase the amount of migrants from mainland, also, diminishing the pull factor for mainlanders to come.

For those from non-Chinese speaking countries: the job nature and tasks for lower skilled jobs in HK are more closely related to Chinese language, comparing with highly skilled jobs which could be able be done by English, the language barrier might be an obstacle for them to come to HK. The situation of HK is not comparable to those developed countries in Europe, which can recruit a large amount of migrant workers from developing countries easily base on former colonial ties. And according to migration scholars, lower-skilled migrant workers tend to receive information from informal networks like family

members, rather than formal channels, so, may be the government can target some countries which are having a closer tie, such as Philippines or Indonesia, as the focus of importing migrant workers.

For Child rearing:

The problem is a bit complicated. For those from the lower to middle end of the social spectrum, the main concern for child rearing is about education, housing and finance.

For education, the current problem of a lack in school places is mainly due to the previous shut down of schools in the early 2000s. I think the government can adopt a more flexible system regarding to school quotas and funding, i.e. when the demand for school places is high, then, the student number of each class could be enlarged, vice-versa, rather than simply shutting down schools, then, the supply of school places could be tuned in response to change in supply and demand. While the funding to schools, could be provided in a form of a value of funding multiply with student headcount, which would not led to a waste of resources.

For housing, I think the most direct way, for changing young couples' behaviour, is to put child rearing as a requirement for specific subsidised housing schemes. The government could implement a specific housing scheme, for young couples with young children (for example, the oldest children for a nuclear family cannot over 3, or 5, or 6, just in case), then, in between the announcement of the policy, and the actual operation of allocation, the birth rate might rise, however, this method might arouse controversies and criticisms, as this method is putting young children into a position for achieving instrumental rationality.

For finance, direct finance subsidy might be the most direct way, while parents must be able to provide invoices for baby/child-caring relevant products/services, and the subsidy will be provided on a reimbursement basis. An upper limit of disposable household income should be implemented, in order to focus on those families who will really change their behaviour due to a financial consideration.

For those who are from the upper middle to upper end social spectrum, their main concerns might not be the above three, but about their career, particularly for those working for transnational corporations. As the job nature and requirement for those work are increasing requiring a flexibility in geographical terms, while many HR and migration papers has pointed out that, these employers will treat having children as an obstacle for such geographical flexibility. While this is more difficult for a local government to intervene, as this is a global trend.