

主旨: My Views on Population Policy
附件: PopulationPolicyResponse_Vivien.pdf

Hi,

Please kindly see the attached file, thank you!

Cheers,
Vivien

To Whom It May Concern

I. Demographic Background

	Me	Husband
Age	37 y.o.	39 y.o.
Education background	Master (Australia)	Bachelor (Canada)
Career & background	Homemaker; Former teacher	Manager
Monthly salary	-	~HKD80,000
Number of children	0	0

II. Views on Population Policy

1. Education reform – possible ways to grow local talents

[My views in response to Policy Chapter 3 “Enhancing the Quality of our Home-grown Talent”]

I strongly agree with vocational education will need to be re-emphasized in our society as Germany has set a very good example of offering a broaden career choices at school and in their society where individual can excel in his true potential. It also broadens the economic activity in our society as a whole.

Issues with youth unemployment (9.7%) are usually related to uncertainty, lack of work experience, skills mismatch, issues with work attitudes and unrealistic expectation of job. I have proposed the following suggestions.

1.1. Work experience & Internship

1.1.1. Secondary education

Introduced 1 week compulsory “work experience” in both form 4 and form 5 to enable the students to explore their interest, potential and understanding of the real world. It enables them to make a wise choice for their subject choices and career path as well as learning the attitudes required at work.

With the limitation of school teachers’ knowledge and work experience, I would suggested to include vocational subject studied outside school(e.g. IVE) as part of the

students' subjects which shall also contribute to their New Secondary School certificate. For example, the TAFE-delivered vocational education and training ([TVET](#)) courses in Australia allow secondary school student to start or complete a nationally recognised TAFE(Technical and Further Education) qualification while still at school.

In the past, students who has talents other than academic can leave school in form 3 or form 5, nowadays, some of these academically behind students have to stay at school until form 6. It was quite a challenge to both students and teachers. The valuable time they spent in their youth should allowing them to further develop their interest and equip themselves to integrate at the workplace. I still recalled how ridiculous it has been for a teacher to teach subjects like tourism at school without any prior subject knowledge. With limited teacher resources, both teachers and students were disadvantaged if the vocational subjects will be taught at school. I believe students' subject choices should not be limited due to the restricted knowledge of their teachers resources at school.

1.1.2. Tertiary Co-operative education

Introduced compulsory course-related internship program (partnership with either local/mainland/overseas companies) which combines academic studies with work experience. As my husband told me he benefitted the most when he underwent his undergraduate degree in this pattern of alternating between academic terms and work terms while he was studying in the University of Waterloo in Canada (you may checked out details from his university). It helped him to build up his work experiences in his resume and support his own tuition fees in addition to being able to apply his knowledge, gain real experience of the industry and networking. Government institution can be the first one to open up and set up incentive or subsidized program for corporate to offer placements to university. It can be a win-win situation as young university often offers fresh ideas to the company in returns. The company can also recruit the right graduate easier.

As the majority of Hong Kong residents have limited interaction with mainland. The internship with companies in mainland (not limited to mainland owned companies, can be multinational companies stationed in mainland) will offer the opportunity for local students to get the first hand experience and understanding of the development in mainland which will enable them to become an open-minded person.

1.2. Education starts with a bright mind before post-tertiary

1.2.1. Reduce the amount of homework

The large amount of repetitive copying and drilling type of homework will post no benefit to any children. In contrast, it is lack of real learning and diminishes their interest in learning. We should aim to develop leader in our education, not a hardworking machine. It also posted harms to the workload of teachers, parents and children for zero meaning.

The government should set a maximum amount of homework time to protect the three parties mentioned above especially the school children from suffering such bad practice. Coping with the amount of children homework is also a factor pulling people to consider having an additional child.

1.2.2. Reduce class size

An appropriate number of class sizes will be related to efficiency in teaching and learning which also related to teachers' workload. Classroom size should be reduced to 20 students for kindergarten and primary 1-2; 30 students for primary 4 to form 3; 20-25 for form 4 to form 6.

1.3. Recruit talents to the education industry

With my experiences with kindergarten, primary and secondary school before, I would say improving the work life of teachers e.g. points 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. will allow more talents to join or remain in the education industry.

1.3.1. Enhance teachers training

Teachers should be trained to design school based curriculum and skills of differentiated teaching in classroom. The teaching style based entirely on a textbook or work book should be abandoned. While I was studying high school in Sydney, all school practiced school based curriculum. For government school in Sydney, textbooks are provided for free and kept passing to the students in the next year as a reference book. This practice enabled student to learn beyond the text instead of just memorizing everything printed on the book and passed their exams. It helps to stop the students' habit for just memorizing the model answer instead of real thinking and learning.

1.3.2. Sponsorship for overseas school visits or scholarship for overseas education program

Visit to overseas school will broaden the teachers' horizon of education. Sponsorship offer to overseas teacher training should require a contract with specific length of work in government or related institution to justify the money invested in such talent.

1.3.3. Grant for recruiting overseas teachers

Grant should be given not limited to Native-speaking English(NET) Teachers. Employ overseas English speaking foreign teachers to teach history may pose more benefits than teaching English itself. Also allow qualified native Mandarin teachers from Mainland to teach Chinese history/Chinese subjects by using Mandarin.

1.4. Restructuring Subsidization in Pre-tertiary Education

In recent years, quite a number of traditional prestigious aided schools have become Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) schools one after another. These schools only offer limited number of scholarship to poor students where application is hardly known to most families. The development of such practice will continue to withhold the upward social mobility of

disadvantaged students and create a wider social barrier between the rich and the poor in the very early age. Nowadays, many students graduated from DSS schools do not realized there were poor people existing in the society until they enter university.

In long term, I would suggest to prohibit prestige school to become DSS schools and let alone newly founded school to be eligible for DSS for a specific time frame e.g.10 years. As most prestige school already had a huge network of alumni which would provide them with a lot of funding, they would be the least school in need of receiving subsidization from the government e.g.DGS, St. Paul Co-ed College...etc. Government subsidizing should provide to those in needs.

I would suggest to impose a standardized school fee for all schools (DSS schools, government schools and aided schools) with the exception of private schools and special schools. For those prestige schools which want to remain her profile as noble schools with higher school fees, they may consider to become private schools to run on their own finances, not from the government.

Subsidization should go to each student (for those below a certain household income) instead of going directly to the school, i.e. all students are required to pay including at government and aided school. So that, the fees receiving from other students (economically well off) can be used to subsidize those disadvantaged one e.g.Maryknoll Convent School. Government school will also strive to perform better in order to compete for the number of student enrolled, with exception of new schools and special schools. This will help those economically disadvantaged students have more access to prestige DSS schools, enjoy the same upward social mobility as in the old days and also create a platform for the rich and the poor students to interact at school.

A school children tax allowance should be introduced for the middle class.

1.5. Medium-of-Instruction

Medium-Of-Instruction should be based on the language skill of the student alone, not on the overall academic performance. At the moment, only the top students with overall good academic performances are able to enroll in English Medium-of-Instruction (EMI) secondary school. For those non-Chinese students, the underperformance in Chinese subject will hinder their overall academic performance, thus causing them to get into a *Chinese Medium-of-Instruction(CMI)* secondary school. I have personally encountered a very smart student who was born in Hong Kong from Philippines background, who were completely ripped off in learning during secondary school because his grade in Chinese was not good enough to get him into a EMI school, thus he was further disadvantaged from using all Chinese textbook to learn in secondary school. As he cannot afford international school, he was later return to Philippines for schooling.

1.6. Differentiated curriculum

In long term, compulsory subjects such as Chinese, English and Mathematics should offer various levels. For example, Chinese for native speaker and Chinese as a second language.

When I was studying in [NSW, Australia](#), we have various level of English and Mathematics to choose according to the strength and academic needs of students. Choosing the right level of subjects will enable both teachers and students to enjoy their lessons which is applicable to their needs..

2. Encourage a healthy family lifestyle

[My views in response to Policy Chapter 2 "Unleashing the potential of existing population & Chapter 5 "Fostering a Supportive Environment for our People to Form and Raise Families"]

Speaking from someone who marriage at a late age and still trying to have children as well as having university degree, healthy, retired parents, I have the following suggestions.

2.1. Fertility issues

2.1.1. Include age-fertility/fertility-economic information in secondary school education for both genders (possibility provides scientific facts in form 1 integrated science) and for liberal studies (Under the theme: Hong Kong Today & *Personal Development* and *Interpersonal Relationships*).

2.1.2. Introduce tax allowance for pregnancy (including miscarriage)

2.1.3. Increase the amount of tax allowance for children and supporting parents

2.1.4. Introduce tax allowance for subfertility (ART) treatments (including overseas). Current scenario in Hong Kong is where people are married at a later age and long waiting time for a simple subfertility consultation. The waiting time for initial appointment with a private subfertility specialist is about a year and with the subfertility clinic in government hospital is about 3 years. Sub-fertility specialist is highly lacking in Hong Kong at this stage and age is the most critical factor in most fertility issues.

2.1.5. Provide training and incentive for subfertility specialist to stay in the government services. Equip the services offered by Family Association as the first line of family planning. I personally have various bad experiences with them and found them very unprofessional. I am more than happy to share in details with related department.

2.2. Create a family friendly society

2.2.1. Flexible working hours

Provide incentive/subsidized company to provide flexible working hours or home-work arrangement or job-sharing to encourage women to continue to work while enabling her to care for their child at the same time. Government department may take a leading role in this issue.

This will actually not only benefit women but also elderly who may prefer to work flexible hours, so that they can spare time to enjoy their old age or look after their grandchildren at the same time. However, the major obstacles encountered by many professional healthy elderly is, many companies are not willing to hire them, not because of their ability but because the company's group insurance does not cover employee over 60 years of age. Government should negotiate with insurance company to offer flexibility with the elderly arrangement.

Tax allowance should also be introduced to encourage both employer and employees to implement flexible working hours. In Australia, both parents who work flexible hours can pay less tax and share the load of caring of their children besides working.

2.2.2. Reform maternity leave (10 weeks paid and 4 months optional unpaid to encourage breast feeding and adjustment to family lives with newborn)

2.2.3. Introduce paternity leave for men (10 days paid) to provide support for this critical time for his spouse and child to prevent postpartum depression.

2.2.4. Provide quality childcare services with quality child care training programs.

2.2.5. Provide child friendly environment e.g. Include protocols of establishment of paternity space in public facilities and company where mother can continue to breastfeed after resuming to work.

2.2.6. Tax allowance for married couple who live independently, i.e. away from their parents especially for the first year of marriage, the expenses of wedding and housing, new furniture are tremendous.

2.2.7. Hostel arrangement for domestic helper

Many women in Hong Kong were homebound to take care of their children because their flat do not have enough space to accommodate for a domestic helper. If outside residence arrangement for domestic helper is allowed, more women will be liberated to the workforce. Domestic helpers on the other side, will be able to gain more social support from living in a hostel with other domestic helpers and a better work-life balance. The management of such hostel can be organized by NGO(Non-government organization). After all these years, we should show the world that domestic helper are being cared and well treated in our city.

The possible interest of conflict with local home assistant can be solved by giving such arrangement for family with children only. Others household unit such as single or married couple with no kids can continue to employ part-time local home assistant if they do not have enough space in their flat to accommodate for a domestic helper.

2.3. Promote a healthy work-life balance

2.3.1. Measurements to maintain a work-life balance, so that young people can start building a family at an earlier age and married couple are able to spend time with their kids while still working. The establishment of standard working hours will help to promote healthy family relationship.

3. Recruiting talents

[My views in response to Policy Chapter 4 “Complementing our existing population and workforce with new sources”]

3.1. Medical doctors/Healthcare improvement

Before the handover in 1997, the qualifications of all doctors trained in UK, Australia...etc were recognized to practice in Hong Kong. As the policy changed in 1997, these doctors who are Hong Kong citizens were forced to stay and work overseas. The cost of training a medical professional is very high and these Hong Kong citizens were already completed their training in overseas. Due to the high and increasing demand of medical need in Hong Kong, I strongly suggest to resume the recognition of their overseas qualification to allow them to return and meet the need of the urgent medical need in Hong Kong. Requirement can be specified to serve for a certain number of years in the public hospital. Work hours of doctors will also require reviewing to maintain all talents to stay in the public system.

3.2. Capital investment entrant scheme(CIES)

Investment criteria for immigration to Hong Kong should include criteria of setting up a business which employs a certain amount of local people and running for at least a certain period of time.

3.3. Qualification recognition

Hong Kong should adopt more international professional recognition of those from developed countries to lessen the barrier for them to seek working opportunity in Hong Kong e.g. Medical doctors from United States, surveyors, teachers (not limited to NET).

3.4. Offers scholarship to overseas talents with the requirement of working specific years in the Government related sectors afterwards.

III. Conclusion

Nowadays, talents are global citizens. They have different need at different stages at their life and they move around the world to meet that need. In addition to salary and working opportunities offered easily in Hong Kong; other factors such as education, work-life balance, health care and living environment are all crucial factors for both local and overseas talent to

decide whether they will stay or come over to Hong Kong. As a matter of fact, some of my friends, who are citizens of Hong Kong with overseas education qualification, have already or considering leaving Hong Kong due to the other crucial factors mentioned above.

I am more than happy to discuss more in details.

Yours,
Vivien