

主旨: Give Views

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Comments:

How to help young couples to overcome the major hurdles of affordable housing, education and childcare?

Nowadays, people in Hong Kong tend to get married at a later age, most couples get married in their 30s, this directly slow down the population growth and as a result local labor cannot meet the demand of the aging society. The major reason is that young couples have to overcome and deal with numerous problems before they can get married, like those mentioned in the question, and the corresponding solutions to these problems are to be discussed in this article.

Firstly, concerning the issue of housing, there is no denying that while the property prices of the territory is rising at such a rocketing rate and remain high, it is very difficult, or even impossible for young couples earning a standard family to afford a flat that is suitable for them to form families. In order to solve the problem, various policies shall be implemented by the authority. First of all, the authority should continue to monitor the market and suppress the speculation of properties. Yes, some people might see this as interference of free market which contradicts the government principle. However, it is more important to protect public interest, and it is actually the job of the government to ensure the general public enjoy a descent life. As a result, though criticized by many representatives from business sector, the authority are to stand firm on its current stance and continue to suppress the speculation and rise in property prices, under certain circumstances, like when the property prices start to rise again at a relatively fast rate out of the expectation, the authority could learn from the ways how mainland deal with the unreasonable property price rise, and hence adjust it to an affordable one for the general public. Yes, as mentioned above, resistance from business sector is inevitable, but in order to make Hong Kong a livable place for most people, the government has to intervene at appropriate times so as to benefit public interests.

Second of all, apart from proactively working on the market, in order to solve the housing problems faced by young couples, the government could consider to roll out measures that allow young couples to purchase public housing at lower prices or enjoy more benefits. For instance, the government could allow certain discounts on the property price for the couples who are getting married for the first time, and return them some sums of the money which they have paid in the previous year for the property in the current year if the couples are not divorced in the current year. This could definitely arouse the young couples interest to form families as the housing problems could be effectively solved.

On the other hand, concerning education, as the whole society is now promoting life long learning, relevant policies have to be made by the government so as to ensure that young couples can get chances and

opportunities to learn even after they are married or with several children at home. One thing that is important is the fee for learning. Attending different trainings and courses is undoubtedly beneficial, however, the costs could be quite scary for married couples when they already have a lot to spend. As a result, in order to ensure they could receive learning opportunities, the government must allocate enough money to subsidize them. Also, the authority should promptly organize different skill-oriented and work-related trainings and courses, that allow young couples to be specialized in particular fields after attending lectures, and have better prospect at workplace, so as to dismiss their concerns on the income of their families. Hence, this could encourage young couples to form new families.

Lastly, regarding childcare, as many young couples prefer to take care of their children by themselves rather than employing maids. As a result, the government has to ensure that young couples have enough time to take care of their next generation despite working, to achieve so, the authority could limit the working hours of couples with kids. For instance, couples with a small kid like a child who is aged between 0-6 could enjoy limited working hours, without a reduction in their salaries, or limited reduction, thus the couples are assured to have enough time to take care of young kids and are therefore more willing to form families though they are currently working long hours. Secondly, if one of the couples work as full time housewife or househusband after the birth of infants, the government could consider to give out subsidies to these families so as to sustain their living standard and hence encourage young couples to get married as this backs them up even if they are forced to give up their careers after marriage.

All in all, in order to solve the problem, the government has to promptly listen to public opinions and always place the public interest over the interest of the minority though the public may not be that influential. I believe if the government could react swiftly, the above problems could be tackled smoothly and successfully, and Hong Kong would march into the new era with prides proudly.