



Employment for the young-olds

This is the first of two recent studies that look at ways of tackling problems created by an ageing population. It asks what can be done to encourage those in the “younger old” age-bracket to continue or return to the workforce. Turn to page 50 for the second study.*

Population ageing is increasingly evident and the phenomenon is reflected in Hong Kong’s shrinking labour force. It was 59.2% in 2016 and is forecast to fall to 49.6% by 2066, probably hindering overall economic development in Hong Kong.

Key problems from the young-olds' perspective

- Lack of up-to-date job skills
- Negative image commonly associated with more elderly people
- Complicated worker insurance procedures
- Insufficiently flexible job vacancies to meet their needs

Comments from Youth I.D.E.A.S. think tank members

Ernest Chan, convener Employment for the young-olds not only has a beneficial effect on the shrinking labour force, it can also enhance health and personal development of senior citizens. Since the labour force participation rate of young-olds in Hong Kong is low compared to other Asian countries, we recommend that government tax concessions are made to encourage enterprises to hire at least 3% of people in the young-old age bracket.

Tony Lau, group member Given that the government recognizes the value of employment for the young-olds, it should take the lead in creating flexible jobs which meet their abilities. It should also adjust its own employment patterns and those of subvented organizations while developing an employment scheme with career planning, training and job market information for senior citizens.

Manson Chow, group member Complicated worker insurance procedures for young-olds may discourage employers, so the government should encourage the insurance sector to set up standards for worker insurance premiums up to the age of 75. It should also subsidize employers by offering them the difference in premiums that applies to employees aged 65 or above.

2017 Labour Force Participation Rates

Age	Singapore	Japan	South Korea	Hong Kong
55-59	74.9%	83.0%	74.2%	67.8%
60-64	63.6%	68.1%	62.5%	45.8%
65 or above	26.8%	23.5%	31.5%	10.7%

Sources

- stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Labour-Force-In-Singapore-2017.aspx
- stat.go.jp
- stats.oecd.org/
- censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?tableID=008&ID=0&productType=8. [Hong Kong figures in the table are for the 4th quarter 2017]

Key points from younger survey respondents

- 71.7% support the idea of employment for young-olds
- 28.1% think there should be no upper working age limit

When asked about possible negative outcomes of retired people continuing to work, these were average ratings on a scale of 0-10:

- Likelihood of reduced youth employment opportunities **3.83**
- Probability of fewer promotion opportunities **4.66**

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Respondents 520 18-34 year-olds were surveyed. 20 young-old people aged 55-74 and 6 experts or scholars were interviewed.

More details [in Chinese] yrc.hkfyg.org.hk/2018/06/26/yio31/

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*Note Those aged 55-74 are considered the “younger old” in this survey.