Gender Mainstreaming in Hong Kong and Implications for support to Home-carers

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What is gender mainstreaming?

• Gender mainstreaming is a global strategy proposed in the Beijing World Conference on Women in 1995.

• Gender mainstreaming integrates a gender perspective in the design of policy formation and implementation to ensure equality.
Gender Mainstreaming strategy

1. Collection of gender-disaggregated statistics
2. Gender training
3. Gender impact assessment
4. Checklists, manuals and handbooks
5. Monitoring and evaluation
Gender Mainstreaming in Hong Kong

- The Hong Kong SAR government has set up the Women’s Commission in January 2001
- Introduced the Gender mainstreaming (GM) checklist to different government departments from 2002
- Has set up Gender Focal Points (GFPs)
- Training workshop and seminars for civil servants
Progress in Hong Kong

- How far does the western concept of gender mainstreaming effectively applied in policy formation and implementation?
- The progress review of gender equality in the context of child care as an example to assess the impact of gender mainstreaming in Hong Kong.
Gender equality in the context of child care

- Unequal sharing of caring responsibilities
- Inadequate child care provision
- Gender inequality in employment
Unequal sharing of child care responsibilities

• In 2010, women represented 94.2% of the 689,600 full-time homemakers in Hong Kong.
• Women still shoulder unequal weight of caring responsibilities in the family.
• A research study in 2016 shows that fathers have taken less caring work than mothers in three aspects of caring tasks: physical care, homework supervision and accompanying children.
Workload distribution in physical care

Mother
- All (17.9%)
- Most (35.7%)

Father
- All (1%)
- Most (5.6%)
Workload distribution in homework supervision

Mother

- All (16.2%)
- Most (41.6%)

Father

- All (4.3%)
- Most (15.6%)
Workload distribution in accompanying children

- **Mother**
  - All (16.2%)
  - Most (41.6%)

- **Father**
  - All (4.3%)
  - Most (15.6%)
# Inadequate Child care provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronic shortage</td>
<td>690 Aided Standalone Day child care centres, 8,0517 kindergarten-cum-child care centres to serve 2,244,400 children aged between 0-4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffordable for working class families</td>
<td>Monthly charges for children aged between 0-2 years range from HK$3,457 to 5,100 hourly charges for temporary care service is HK$18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inflexible and inaccessible services</td>
<td>Open from 8am to 6pm Extended hour service is very limited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender inequality in employment

The labour force participation rate for women increased gradually from 48.7% in 2004 to 50.7% in 2014. On the other hand, the labour force participation rate of men decreased from 71.6% in 2004 to 68.7% in 2014.

Source: Census and Statistics Department
Median Monthly Employment Earnings of Employed Persons (Excluding Foreign Domestic Helpers)

Notes: (2) Based on International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08).
Source: Census and Statistics Department
Median Monthly Employment Earnings of Employed Persons (Excluding Foreign Domestic Helpers)

Notes: (2) Based on HSIC Version 2.0.
(3) Accommodation services covers hotels, guesthouses, boarding houses and other establishments providing short term accommodation.

Source: Census and Statistics Department
### Number of Part-time Employees by Sex, 1982-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>20100</td>
<td>33700</td>
<td>53800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>25800</td>
<td>42000</td>
<td>67800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>52300</td>
<td>69700</td>
<td>122000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>56300</td>
<td>94600</td>
<td>150900</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Chart Title
Main Reasons for Part-time Employees not Working Longer Hours, April to June 2009

- Caring of children, elderly, disabled or sick members at home (56.5%)
- Custom of trade / norm of company / business arrangement of company (14.4%)
- Insufficient work in company (12.6%)
- Educational pursuit (12.3%)
- Health problem / old age (9.6%)
- Could not find job of longer working hours (8.3%)
- Others (8.3%)
- Others (11.2%)

Source: Census and Statistics Department
## Barriers to Gender mainstreaming Child Care Policy in Hong Kong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare orientation</th>
<th>Gender equality concept</th>
<th>Political commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ideological underpinning of child care policy</td>
<td>• Policy makers tend to assume a gender-neutral stance in policy-making process</td>
<td>• The government lacks strong political commitment to the promotion of gender equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-interventionism</td>
<td>• concern about the equal accessibility of women and men to the benefits instead of tackling the inequalities between the sexes.</td>
<td>• ‘Watering down’ gender mainstreaming as a ‘technical tool’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Confucian values as guiding principles – family support</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
New challenges

Changing family structure
- Weakened family tie
- Less support from kindship network

Women’s increasing participation in the labour market
- Drop in fertility rate
- Increased demand for social care

Child care model
- Male breadwinner model (women as natural carer)
- Confucian welfare model (emphasis on family obligation)
Suggestions

- Revisit the policy assumptions on child care
- Review the distribution of roles among different sectors in providing care
- Strengthen the family-friendly policy in Hong Kong
- Introduce cash allowances and increase subsidised service for childcare
- Promote gender education
- Set up infrastructure for child care
- Improve coordination among different government departments
Thank You