



Telephone Survey Research Laboratory  
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A study of the Impact of Introduction of  
the No-Saturday-Site-Work Arrangement  
on the Demand of Manpower Supply for  
Construction Industry in Hong Kong

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## **Executive Summary (English)**

### **Background, Objectives, and Methodology**

- The construction industry has played a very important role in Hong Kong's economy. With various major infrastructure projects and private works projects scheduled to be started in recent years, it is anticipated that the construction industry is going to face challenges of an ageing workforce and the lack of young skilled construction workers. Meanwhile, improving workers' benefits and promoting family-friendly policies have become a major concern of the community over the past few years. In order to relieve pressure of labour shortage, attract new blood and enhance workers' quality of life, the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) proposes "No Saturday" working arrangement which aims to help developing a viable and sustainable construction industry in the long run.
- The current study aims to: (1) gauge the attitudes of various stakeholders in the construction industry and the general public towards the introduction of "No Saturday Site Work" and (2) identify effective means to attract fresh blood to join the construction industry.
- In order to explore the subject matter deeply and comprehensively, the current study employed two methods: (1) a qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and (2) a quantitative analysis through a territory-wide representative telephone survey.

## **Findings from In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions**

- Between July and August 2012, four in-depth interviews with trade union leaders, sub-contractors, and employers of the construction workers and three focus group discussions with construction workers and young people were carried out.
- While subcontractors and current workers had reservations on “No Saturday Work Site” initiative, workers’ leaders of the industry and our young respondents generally favored the implementation of “No Saturday” working in the long run.
- From the perspective of sub-contractors, their main concern was to meet the deadline scheduled for project completion and they thus strongly opposed the change to 5-day week for construction workers as it would lead to the failure to meet the tight schedule of different construction projects.
- Current construction workers were particularly concerned with the effect of the new working time arrangement on the reduction of their overall take-home pay and they were very doubtful about the possibility of being given 6-day pay with only 5-day work.
- Trade union leaders regarded “No Saturday Site Work” as a way in improving the work benefits of construction workers, though they added that the proposal could only be implemented successfully if the existing employment relationship between construction workers and their sub-contractors and also the wage payment arrangement of construction workers are reformed.
- Young participants in our focus groups generally welcomed the proposal which allowed them to have more free leisure time. But, they also explicitly told us that career prospect and job satisfaction were more crucial factors for them when considering a long-term career.

## **Findings from the Telephone Survey**

- Between November 8 and 16, 2012, a representative territory-wide telephone survey of 1,520 respondents aged 15-59 was conducted successfully.
- Over two-thirds of the respondents (70.7%) favored the implementation of “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry in the long run. The percentage of support increased to 80 per cent if construction workers were paid at the level of existing 6-day pay under the proposed working time arrangement.
- More than two-fifths of our respondents (43.8%) said that they were willing to encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers if “No Saturday Site Work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay.
- Over three-quarters (77.4%) of the general public viewed that “No Saturday Site Work” was helpful to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers. Also, while over two-thirds of the respondents regarded the proposal as helpful to attract young people to join the construction industry, half of them also believed that it helped to reduce industrial accidents and enhance the image of the industry.
- Concerning the most effective ways in attracting new blood to become construction workers, a greater proportion of respondents opted for increasing work benefits (37.4%), followed by strengthening work safety (28.2%), enhancing the image of the construction industry (18.3%), and improving the working environment of construction sites (12.0%).



- A significantly greater proportion of younger respondents and “insiders” of the construction industry (including those who previously or currently worked in the industry) believed that increasing work benefits is the most effective means.

### **Implications and Suggestions**

- In order to solicit the support from “insiders” whom we regard as the major stakeholder of the proposed “No Saturday Site Work”, we propose (1) to actively engage construction workers in the discussion over the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal, (2) to fully consult relevant contractor associations and sub-contractor associations, employers of the construction workers, relevant bureaux, and public and private developers about their views and suggestions over the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work”, and (3) to carry out in-depth studies to examine the socio-economic impacts of the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative on different stakeholders in the construction industry and to explore viable ways in the successful implementation of the proposal. The overseas experience in implementing compressed working week could form the basis of discussion to address the concerns and worries of the construction workers about the reduction of their overall weekly wage.
- In order to attract younger people to become construction workers and to maintain an adequate supply of workers for the construction industry, we propose (1) to provide a career ladder system for new entrants of the construction industry, (2) to use more advanced and safer machines so as to match the increasing use of modern building and construction techniques, (3) to create a more young-worker-friendly working culture, and (4) to launch a large-scale public campaign to promote the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative.

- Given the highly complex nature of “No Saturday Site Work”, it is essential that both the public and major stakeholders within the construction industry are fully aware of the benefits it would bring, the issues that involved, and the potential implications to the construction industry. Specifically, a task group could be set up with representatives from all relevant sectors of the construction industry and the community to resolve differences amongst stakeholders and the problems that have to be overcome for its implementation.
- This current study is preliminary in nature and aims to kick-start a discussion on the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”. More in-depth investigations and informed discussions and exchanges will in the end contribute to the successful implementation of the initiative in the foreseeable future.

## Executive Summary (Chinese)

### 中文摘要

#### 研究背景、目標及方法

- 建造業對本港經濟一向扮演着一個非常重要的角色，隨着各項大型基建及私人建築項目的落實及推行，預計建造業將面對更嚴重的工人老化及年青技術勞工短缺問題。與此同時，過去幾年，社會對提升工人福利與推行家庭友善政策表示很大的關注。在紓緩勞工短缺壓力、吸引新人入行及提升建造業勞工生活質素的考慮下，香港建造商會提出「工地星期六休息」的建議，藉此希望長遠地建設一個可持續發展的建造業。
- 本研究旨在：(1) 了解建造業中各持份者與公眾對「工地星期六休息」的意見及看法；以及(2) 尋求吸引更多新人入行的有效方法。
- 本研究採用了兩種研究方法：(1) 以深入訪談及焦點小組為主的「質化研究」，及(2) 以隨機抽樣方式進行全港性電話調查的「量化研究」，從而更為深入及全面探討有關議題。

#### 深入訪談與焦點小組的研究結果

- 2012年7月及8月期間，我們共進行了四次深入訪談及三個焦點小組討論。深入訪談的對象包括：建造業的工會領袖、分判商及僱主。而焦點小組的參與者包括：現職建築工人及年青人。
- 對於「工地星期六休息」的提議，分判商及現職建築工人均表示有所保留。相反，工會領袖及年青人均基本上表示支持。
- 分判商指出「工地星期六休息」會導致他們難以準時完工，故此他們不支持這個建議。
- 建築工人則擔心「工地星期六休息」會令他們的整體收入減少。
- 工會領袖認為「工地星期六休息」能長遠地改善建築工人的工作福利。但是他們同時指出，若現時的分判制度及支薪形式不作任何改革，「工地星期六休息」將難以成功推行。

- 參與焦點小組的年青人對「工地星期六休息」的建議表示歡迎。但他們亦坦言，在考慮長遠事業發展時，事業前景與工作滿足感往往較為重要。

## 電話調查的結果

- 2012年11月8日至16日期間，我們進行了一個全港性的電話調查，成功訪問了1,520名年齡介乎15至59歲的人士。
- 超過三分二的被訪者（70.7%）贊成建造業長遠推行「工地星期六休息」。而當我們指出建築工人在「工地星期六休息」下將獲取不少於現時工作六天的收入時，贊成這個提議的被訪者上升至八成。
- 超過四成的被訪者（43.8%）表示，若「工地星期六休息」而建築工人的收入又不少於現時工作六天時，他們願意鼓勵自己的家人、親戚或朋友成為建築工人。
- 超過四分三的被訪者（77.4%）認為，「工地星期六休息」可改善建築工人的工作條件及福利；多於三分二的被訪者同意，這項建議有助吸引年輕人加入建造業；半數人相信，該建議能有助減少工業意外，並能提升業界形象。
- 問及吸引新人入行的方法時，三成七的被訪者（37.4%）認為增加勞工福利最有效，其次為加強工作安全（28.2%）、提升建造業形象（18.3%）以及改善地盤工作環境（12.0%）。
- 有顯著較多的年輕被訪者及「業界人士」（“insiders”）（包括那些曾經或現今正於業內工作者）相信增加勞工福利是最有效的吸引新人入行方法。

## 建議

- 為爭取建造業業界主要持份者的支持，我們建議（1）推動建築工人積極參與討論「工地星期六休息」的建議；（2）廣泛諮詢承建商、分判商及僱主對這個工時新安排的意見；以及（3）進行更深入的研究以評估「工地星期六休息」對建造業內各持份者的影響並探討成功推行建議的方法。外國有關縮短每周工作天數的推行經驗，也可作為回應建築工人對每周工資下降憂慮的討論基礎。
- 為了吸引更多年青人入行及保證建築工人的充足供應，我們提議（1）為新人提供一個清晰的事業階梯及晉升制度；（2）使用更先進及安全的機器以

配合現時在建造業內所採用的最新建築技術；(3) 提供一個對年青人更友善的工作環境；以及(4) 推行大規模的公眾宣傳以推廣「工地星期六休息」的建議。

- 鑑於「工地星期六休息」這個議題的複雜及專門性，讓公眾與建造業界各持份者清楚明白這建議所涉及的問題及其影響是極其重要的事情。我們建議可就此成立一個由建築界代表及社會人士組成的工作小組，以商討如何消除不同持份者的分歧，與及解決落實這項建議時所遇到的困難。
- 本報告為初步探討性質，目的只為啟動對「工地星期六休息」的討論。如要在可見的將來成功地推行這項建議，還需就這課題作更深入的研究、更細緻的討論和更廣泛的意見交流。

## **Part I: Introduction**

- 1.1 In Hong Kong, over the past decade, there have been widespread concerns over labour welfare in general and work-life balance in particular. In order to promote family-friendly employment policies and practices, the government took the lead and has introduced the five-day week arrangement into the civil service by phases since mid-2006. Non-emergency government service units have switched to this new work pattern so as to reduce the work pressure and to improve the quality of life of government employees. More work-life balance measures, such as the entitlement of 5-day statutory paternity leave for male civil servants, have been implemented earlier this year. Recently, a proposal on a 3-day paternity leave for all male employees in Hong Kong was endorsed by the government. Discussion over raising the statutory holiday allowance from 12 to 17 days per year has also been under way. Among these efforts, the introduction of minimum wage legislation in May 2011 has marked an unprecedented achievement, which has greatly improved the livelihood of low-skilled and low-paid workers. Subsequent to the enactment of the Minimum Wage Ordinance, the government of Hong Kong embarked on a policy study on standard working hours, which was completed in the middle of 2012.
  
- 1.2 It has been argued that the adoption of these family-friendly employment practices or “flexi work” arrangements is not only to help employees achieve a work-life balance, but also to boost staff productivity and morale and thus to strengthen the overall competitiveness of Hong Kong’s economy. Indeed, apart from statutory minimum wage, employers are voluntary to introduce these “fringe benefits” to their employees. Similar to the government’s move to 5-day week work arrangement, in its “Vision 2020”, the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) proposes to have “No Saturday” working commenced in 2015 and to have this practice fully implemented in the construction industry in 2020 (Hong Kong Construction Association 2012). According to the HKCA, the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal aims to improve the safety, health, quality of life, and overall social status of

construction workers in general and to develop a viable and sustainable construction industry in particular. Through enhancing the overall working environment of construction sites and the working conditions of construction workers, it is believed that more younger workers will join the industry and thus to reduce the ageing problem faced by the industry at the moment.

- 1.3 In the following, first, we shall give an overview of the existing working hours of workers in Hong Kong. A particular focus will be on the working hours situation of workers in the construction industry. Second, literature about the effects of standard working hours and compressed working week will be reviewed. Findings about these effects on construction workers will be discussed in detail. Before stating the objectives and the research design of the current study, we shall summarize the current situation of the construction industry and construction workers in Hong Kong. The structure of this report will be illustrated in the end of Part I.

#### **A. Working Hours of Workers in Hong Kong: An Overview**

- 1.4 A study by the International Labour Organization in 2007, *Working Time Around the World: Trends in Working Hours, Laws and Policies in a Global Comparative Perspective* (ILO 2007), found that an estimated 22 percent of the global work force were working “excessively” long hours, defined as more than 48 hours a week. More recent statistics on working hours of OECD countries (Labour Department 2012a: 165) show that, in 2010, Turkey (53.2 hours), Korea (49.2 hours), and Mexico (49.2 hours) had the longest average usual weekly working hours for full-time workers among OECD countries. Denmark (38.2 hours), Norway (38.5 hours), and the Netherlands (39.3 hours) had the shortest working hours.
- 1.5 Hong Kong was not included in the OECD study. Nevertheless, based on the official statistics of 2011, the average weekly total working hour of full-time employees was 49.0 hours, with the median at 48.0 hours (Labour Department

2012a: 277).<sup>1</sup> It can be concluded that employees in Hong Kong work long hours according to the international standard. Disaggregated figures reveal that workers in construction industry worked longer in terms of average weekly contractual hours at the level of 51.6, with over two-fifths of them worked at least 50 hours per week (Labour Department 2012a: 277-278). Nevertheless, 31.0 percent of workers in the construction industry were paid for their overtime work (Labour Department 2012a: 125).

## **B. Studies on Compressed Working Week and Five-day Week Arrangements**

1.6 In this section, we shall review empirical studies on compressed working week or five-day week, which are “flexi time” arrangements. The compressed working week is an alternative work schedule in which the hours of worked per day are increased while the length of working week is reduced. In a meta-analysis of reviewing 40 studies about the intervention effects of compressed working week, Bambra and her colleagues (Bambra et al. 2008) conclude that although the compressed working week initiatives might not always improve the self-reported health of shift workers, they are seldom detrimental. Also, these interventions improve the work-life balance of shift workers and with little or no adverse organizational effects. For example, in a Swedish study of 46 chemical plant workers, improvements were reported in leisure time, time spent with family, and conflict between work and non-work time amongst the intervention group. The authors thus suggest that the overall well-being of workers is improved through the introduction of compressed working week without damaging productivity or competitiveness of the organizations.

1.7 While Bambra et al.’s (2008) paper reviews on the effect of compressed working week intervention on shift workers in healthcare, police force, manufacturing, and energy sectors, Lingard and her colleagues (Lingard et al. 2007) specifically evaluate the effect of moving from 6-day to 5-day work weekly schedule on site-based employees in the Australian construction sector.

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<sup>1</sup> These figures exclude live-in domestic helpers and government employees.



They point out that, similar to other countries, the Australian construction industry is characterized by traditional work patterns, with a strong culture of long hours and weekend work with the average number of hours worked each week amounted to 62.5 among site-based project staff, which is believed to constrain the recruitment and retention of construction workers. Facing a shortage of skilled workers in the industry and the associated threats to the industry's long-term performance and competitiveness, a construction project of an Australian dam adopted the initiative of compressed working week to change from 58 hours in 6-day week to 11.5 hours per day in 5-day week in March 2005. Results from questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviewed of the affected workers and their counterparts in the control group are illustrated as follows.

- 1.8 First, compared with the workers in the control group, construction workers adopting the alternative work schedule of 5-day week experienced a better work-life balance and work satisfaction. The typical comment on the move to the 5-day week arrangement is: "Personally, I find that this is perfect. The eleven hour day, five-day week. Because I still have a good income, but I get two days off." (p.811). These workers also reported a number of benefits, including greater motivation, improved productivity, increased job commitment, and increased involvement in home or family activities. Second, contrary to the belief that the introduction of compressed work week in undermining the performance objectives of the organization, this project was finished well ahead of the scheduled completion date and it cost less than that of estimated originally. The authors thus argue that alternative work schedules designed to help employees to reduce work-life conflict are not incompatible with the attainment of time and cost objectives in the context of a construction project.
- 1.9 Before summarizing findings concerning 5-day week in the context of Hong Kong, as highlighted in the studies reviewed above, two factors are crucial in determining the successful implementation of compressed working week arrangement: workers' support over compressed working week and the maintenance of income especially among wages workers under this new arrangement. In their studies on employees with shift-working pattern,

Bambra et al. (2008) note that the positive effect on self-reported health found among workers were largely due to the popularity of the intervention which was either requested by the affected employees or implanted with their support. In their studies on construction workers in Australia, Lingard et al. (2007) point out that although both salaried and wages employees supported the move to 5-day week, wages workers particularly expressed concerns if this alternate work schedules would impact upon their weekly take-home pay. These two points suggest that any proposed changes in working time might not be implemented successfully without the support of workers and employees affected and without the guarantee that existing level of pay and benefits are maintained.

1.10 In Hong Kong, as aforementioned, the government has implemented a five-day week arrangement to most of its workforce since 2006. Although no systematic research has been done, it has been reported that there has been no loss of productivity nor any additional expenditure incurred. In contrast, an improvement in staff morale and motivation has been observed. An opinion poll of 1,000 opinion leaders carried out in 2010 reveals that while 70 percent of respondents favored the legislation for standard working hours, 54 percent agreed with the legislation of 5-day working week in Hong Kong (SCMP 2010). Respondents believe that these proposed working time arrangements will help employees achieve work-life balance.

### **C. Construction Industry and Construction Workers in Hong Kong: The Current Scenario**

1.11 With various major infrastructure projects and private works projects scheduled to be started in recent years, there has been a growing concern within the construction industry about the adequate supply of manpower in different trades to meet the rising labour demand in the next few years. Leaders of the industry have anticipated that the industry is going to face challenges of an ageing workforce and the lack of young skilled construction workers. In this section, we shall summarize the current situation of the construction industry in terms of

its manpower and the plausible reasons for the difficulties encountered in recruiting new and young workers.

1.12 According to the 2011 Population Census, there were 275,517 individuals working in the construction industry, which constituted 7.8 percent of the total workforce (C&SD 2012a: 58). The corresponding percentages were 7.6 percent in 2001 and 6.8 percent in 2006 (C&SD 2012a: 60). With the backdrop of a booming prospect, compared with other industries, the construction industry has been facing a problem of an ageing workforce, with 66.7 percent of its total workforce aged 40 or above and 39.0 percent aged 50 or above (C&SD 2012b).

1.13 A closer look at detailed breakdowns in terms of different trades within the industry reveals that more than 15 trades have been facing more serious extent of ageing workforce, including concreter, drainlayer, plumber, carpenter, joiner, plant and equipment operator, plasterer, asphalter (road construction), general welder, metal worker, mechanic fitter, fire service mechanic, trackworker, piling operative, and pipelayer (Construction Industry Council 2012a). The Construction Industry Council further predicts that it will be unable to find sufficient skilled and semi-skilled workers in different trades (including concreter, drainlayer, plumber, leveller, carpenter (formwork – building construction), rock breaking driller, metal worker, glazier, plasterer, bricklayer, marble worker, rigger or metal formwork erector, mechanical fitter, fire service mechanic, and registered general worker (RGW)) due to the massive growth of the construction work projects (Construction Industry Council 2012a).

1.14 It is argued that although the wage level of construction workers has been increasing remarkably, from 5 to 30 percent, over the past few years, the lack of registered skilled and semi-skilled workers has been prevalent. It is estimated that there will be a shortage of at least 3,000 construction workers yearly during the next five years. It is believed that this labour shortage is largely due to the undesirable image of the construction industry perceived by the general public. It is not uncommon to hear the news about the fatal accidents occurred in the construction sites. According to the statistics provided by the Labour

Department, there has been an increasing number of industrial accidents in the construction sector. Compared with the figures of 2,965 accidents in 2010, there was a rise of 8 percent to 3,188 accidents in 2011 (Labour Department 2012b). Among these 3,200 cases, 23 were fatal accidents. In the third quarter of 2012, the number was 12. In addition, delay of wage payment has happened from time to time. These factors are argued to act as deterrents for younger workers to join the industry.

1.15 Indeed, as well as providing training courses to current construction workers for skill-upgrading, the Construction Industry Council provides comprehensive full-time courses for new entrants of the construction industry. In the academic year of 2011-2012, over 2,100 graduates attended those courses for new entrants (Construction Industry Council 2012b). Regardless of the turnover rate of these graduates, it is obvious that the number of 2,100 new entrants is not sufficient to meet the estimated shortage of at least 3,000 workers per year over the next five years, as illustrated above.

#### **D. Objectives of this Study**

1.16 With the commitment of Hong Kong Construction Association in building a viable and sustainable construction industry, this current project aims:

(1) To gauge the attitudes of various stakeholders in the construction industry and the general public towards the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” and

(2) To identify effective means to attract fresh blood to join the construction industry.

1.17 Based on these findings, we shall propose evidence-based suggestions concerning the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” to the construction industry and the plausible ways to retain experienced workers and to attract younger workers to the construction industry.

## **E. Research Design**

1.18 The current study combines two methods: (1) a qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions and (2) a quantitative analysis through a territory-wide representative telephone survey of around 1,500 successful interviews.

### **1. Qualitative analysis**

1.19 In the qualitative part, four in-depth informant interviews on employers and leaders in the construction industry were carried out while three focus groups targeting on construction workers and potential young people were held between July and August 2012. All the in-depth interviews / focus group discussions were conducted in Cantonese. Comments from each interview / discussion were audio-taped, transcribed and analyzed by the research team. In addition, each interviewee / participant's record is recorded on an anonymous basis using indirect identifier during the process of transcription. In order to safeguard the personal data privacy, the audio file recorded can only be accessed by the Principal Investigator and members of research team of this study. All audio records are kept properly and securely at the Telephone Survey Research Laboratory of Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, and they will be destroyed in 1 year after the study.

#### **a) In-depth interviews**

1.20 All the interviewees of the in-depth informant interviews are prominent leaders of the industry. They are Lawrence S. W. NG, Kim-kwong CHAN and Eric Chun-yuen TSE of the Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association (HKCSA), Philco N. K. WONG of the MTR Corporation Limited, Luen-kiu CHOW of the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union (HKCIEGU) and Charles Doon-yeek WONG of the Construction Industry Council. Details of the in-depth interviews and interviewees can be found in *Appendix 1*.

## **b) Focus group discussions**

1.21 Altogether three focus group discussions were held, in which two of them were composed of experienced construction workers and one was participated by young people. The lengths of the three focus groups ranged from 2 to 2.5 hours with a total of 15 participants. The participants of the first worker focus group were introduced by the HKCIEGU while the participants of the second one were referred by the Hong Kong Confederation of the Trade Unions. It is worthwhile to note that one of the participants in the second worker focus group is Mr. Pak-kan CHAN, the chairman of the Construction Site Workers General Union. Regarding to the youth focus group, snowball sampling was employed to identify those who were supposed to be most representative or typical of the target group. Three of them are fresh graduates of Form six and the remaining two have short-term working experiences in the construction sites that ranged from several to six months. All participants of focus groups were required to complete a brief questionnaire related to their socioeconomic status before attending the groups. A small monetary incentive as transportation allowance was also provided to each participant. Details of the focus group discussions and brief profiles of the participants are listed in *Appendix 2*. Discussion guides for in-depth interviews and focus groups (in Chinese) are in *Appendix 3*.

## **2. Quantitative analysis**

### **a) Methodology and sampling**

1.22 Except the qualitative method of in-depth interviews and focus groups on selected stakeholders, a quantitative study by means of telephone survey was employed. Telephone survey is a comprehensive survey tool to collect data from a large random sample within a relatively short period of time. In this survey, the process of telephone interview with the aid of a structured questionnaire which is manually handled by interviewers via CATI (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system will be employed. With the CATI system, the interviewers read each question displayed on the monitor and

enter the respondents' answers directly into the computer, thereby bypassing the time-consuming process of data coding, editing and entry. Moreover, telephone survey promises greater control over the quality of the entire data collection process and has an advantage of higher level of standardization.

1.23 The target population of this telephone survey covers Hong Kong residents aged 15 and 59 who can speak Cantonese or Putonghua. For the sampling frame, the initial telephone numbers were selected randomly from a pool of seed numbers based on the most updated Residential Telephone Directory (English and Chinese versions). In order to capture the unlisted telephone numbers, the last two digits of each selected telephone number were deleted and replaced by two random numbers generated by computer. Then, in each accessible residential unit, only one person aged between 15 and 59 was selected for an interview.

1.24 The duration of fieldwork was carried out from November 8, 2012 to November 16, 2012. The whole telephone interview process was conducted in the Telephone Survey Research Laboratory of the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, located at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the fieldwork process was under full supervision. In this survey, a total of 28,000 random telephone numbers were initially used. Of these, 20,854 cases were identified as “non-contactable”, including “invalid lines” (12,245), “non-residential lines” (1,090), “fax numbers/passwords/voice machine” (1,466), “busy lines” (358) and “no one contacted” (5,695). Then, among these 7,146 accessible numbers, 3,523 hung up before it could be confirmed that the line was a residential one or an eligible interviewees could be identified. 732 lines were confirmed that there was no eligible respondent living in these units. In addition, 1,339 targeted persons refused to be interviewed and 32 eligible respondents were unavailable (e.g. not at home or not in Hong Kong). In the end, a total of 1,520 eligible respondents were successfully interviewed, with a response rate of 52.6%. At a 95% confidence level, the standard error for a sample of 1,520 is 0.0128, and the estimated sampling error is within  $\pm 2.51\%$  (see *Appendix 4*). Thus, the sample size of this survey achieved would generally produce survey findings with acceptable levels of precision.

## **b) Data management and weighting**

1.25 All the data collected from the survey were carefully validated, recoded, and analyzed using the statistical software package SPSS. In order to be in line with the distribution of the population living in Hong Kong, the data of the telephone survey had been weighted based on the population's age-sex distribution (aged between 15 and 59 but excluding foreign domestic helpers) in 2011 Census, generated through the Census and Statistics Department Interactive Data Dissemination Service. The weighting factor was calculated by the proportion between the percentage of observation in a particular age-sex group in the survey and the percentage of distribution in the corresponding age-sex group in the population. For details of the weighting, see *Appendix 5* and for the frequency tables of unweighted and weighted variables, see *Appendix 6 and Appendix 7*. Questionnaire of the telephone survey (in Chinese) is in *Appendix 8*.

## **F. Structure of this Report**

1.26 The remainder of the report is set out as follows. In Part II, we shall present the findings from both in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Next, results from telephone survey will be reported in Part III. In Part IV, we shall summarize the empirical findings of both qualitative and quantitative analyses and discuss the implications to the introduction of "No Saturday Site Work" in the construction industry and the recruitment of younger workers to join the construction industry.



## **Part II: Findings from In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussion**

### **A. Background and Objectives**

2.1 In this Part, we shall report the research findings collected in the first stage of qualitative analysis that lasted for about three months. As illustrated in Part I, four in-depth informant interviews on employers and leaders in the construction industry were carried out while three focus groups targeting on construction workers and potential young people were held. The major objectives of the informant interviews and focus groups of the first stage are:

- (1) To elicit different perceptions of various informants and participants on the images of Hong Kong construction workers;
- (2) To identify the reasons of the shortage of local labour supply in the construction industry; and
- (3) To explore whether the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement or other possible options can effectively encourage more potential workers to enter the construction industry in Hong Kong.

### **B. Analysis**

1. Challenges and prospects of construction industry in Hong Kong

#### **a) Labour shortage and ageing of workers**

2.2 As a whole, participants from the youth focus group were reasonably aware of the problem arising from labour supply in recent years and their views were generally shared by other interviewees and focus group participants in subsequent discussions. Of the five participants from the youth group, three had no prior working experience in the construction industry but two had. To prevent bias and influences from the experienced young men, we asked the opinions from outsiders before the experienced ones.

- 2.3 The three young participants with no experience had learnt about the labour shortage problem in the construction industry through media, peers, neighbors and relatives. To everyone's surprise, one admitted that one of his friends had completed the Construction Industry Safety Training Certificate (Green Card / Safety Card). He further explained that his friend did not intend to join the industry but the qualification would help in case he really needed to join the industry as the last resort.
- 2.4 The other two young participants with relevant working experiences learnt about the issue first-hand. They forecasted the labour shortage problem would get aggravated in the future as the aging of current workers and young men's reluctance to join the industry as workers continued.
- 2.5 Mr. Charles Wong of CIC was very knowledgeable on various aspects of the labour shortage issue. He knew the relevant statistical figures on the worker's number, age, supply of fresh blood and wage level very well. Mr. Wong agreed that many workers in the construction industry were aged and demand for workers exceeded supply in recent years. Meanwhile, he pointed out the CIC was trying its best to increase the number of graduates as well as enhancing the skills and adaptability of the graduates of the construction industry.
- 2.6 Mr. Chow Luen Kiu, chairman of HKCIEGU, shared the same view about the structural root of shortage and aging of construction workers in Hong Kong. He noted that the existing number of registered construction workers (with about 300,000 workers in 2012) cannot reflect the current situation of labour shortage in the construction industry. Up to present, more than half of registered workers have been aged more than 50, which has been far over-aged when compared with other industries that workers' age ranged from 30 to 40 years. One of the reasons accounting for the ageing problem faced by the Hong Kong construction industry was that the vast majority of current workers were immigrants from mainland China before the Economic Reform in early 1980s and his views were widely recognized by workers participated in the two focus groups.

**b) Prospect of construction industry in coming years**

2.7 All interviewees and groups believed the industry's prospect would be good in the coming years with the high property price, strong pressure for the government to build more quarters for public rental housing and Home Ownership Scheme together with the rising government expenditure for a series of public infrastructure.

2.8 Mr. Chow Luen Kiu was optimistic in the industry's long-term future. He believed it offered very good prospect for young people and sincerely encouraged young people to join the industry, including his son.

2.9 All interviewees and focus group participants understood building projects would last for years while labour supply would dwindle due to population ageing. The labour shortage would continue and hinder the progress of these construction projects. Mr. Chow Luen Kiu mentioned that he was keen to refer relatives and his son to join this industry as he had confidence in this industry's prospect in Hong Kong.

**2. Reasons for labour shortage (particularly shortage of young workers)**

**a) Negative attitudes towards the construction site works**

2.10 In line with the previous section, we separated participants from the youth group into two-sub groups: with and without solid working experiences in construction sites. We asked those with no prior work experience first about their perception of construction site work in Hong Kong. Overall, their perception on work in construction sites can be summarized as:

- (1) Labouring
- (2) Tough in terms of physical strength
- (3) Rough
- (4) Dangerous
- (5) Middle-aged guys, with sun-tanned skin and strong bodies

2.11 As mentioned in the previous section, the other 2 participants with prior experience from the youth group had a better understanding on the construction industry. In the focus group interview, they suggested three key reasons for explaining why younger people have been less willing to join the construction industry in Hong Kong:

- (1) Aspiration to work in white collar and / or Civil Service jobs
- (2) Strong opposition from families, especially parents
- (3) No friend and peer support at work

2.12 The first two reasons were easily understood. The third was less mentioned by other stakeholders of the industry in subsequent informant interviews and focus groups, except the sub-contractor group. Some sub-contractors shared the point that the lack of friend and peer support has been a reason of driving young men away from this industry.

2.13 Experienced workers in the two focus groups generally agreed with the young men's first two reasons. When asked about their views on this question, they suggested identical reasons why the young people were reluctant to join the industry. Additionally, they emphasized that both rising education level and rising job expectation have been another prominent factor of explaining fewer young people working at the Hong Kong construction industry. Outdoor jobs demanding tough physical strength were looked down upon by the society. In their views, young people nowadays simply followed this view held by the many mature adults in Hong Kong.

2.14 Mr. Philco Wong of MTR held different views. To him, the critical reason of accounting for the labour shortage problem in Hong Kong was simply the low wage levels of construction workers which was not attractive to new comers for joining the industry.

**b) Negative image of the construction workers**

- 2.15 Similar to the perception on the construction site work, most participants from informant interviews and focus groups were generally aware of the slightly negative to very negative public image of construction workers.
- 2.16 With regard to the public image of dirty and shabby clothing, current workers pointed out that their tough working environments meant they had to wear corresponding clothing. They disagreed with the comments from the youth group that construction workers were careless and lousy. They emphasized that they were indeed attentive and cared about details at work, paying attention to the quality, standard and speed of their works.
- 2.17 Mr. Philco Wong and Mr. Charles Wong both shared the negative public image of construction workers. They both pinpointed the huge differences in public image and social status of construction workers in Hong Kong and other developed regions like Europe, Japan and the US. With their experiences in the industry, they noticed construction workers in these developed regions have enjoyed a much higher social status, respect and recognition for their efforts and contribution to society from the construction industry, governments and the public.
- 2.18 Apart from those noted, one particular term “地盤佬” was mentioned by all interviewees and focus group participants. This term has been a popular slang in Hong Kong to describe frontline construction workers. However, it also carries a much negative and discriminative perception on the construction workers. Some interviewees and workers from focus groups felt uncomfortable when the public or outsiders called them “地盤佬” in everyday life.

**c) Tough working environment of construction site works**

- 2.19 Participants with no prior work experience in the construction industry from the youth group had vague ideas about the working environment. To them, working environments in construction sites would be tough and perhaps undesirable.

Those with experience knew the industry's working environment and work safety situation much better, even though they stayed in the industry for months only.

2.20 In terms of working environment, they mentioned:

(1) Lack of toilet and related sanitary facilities for workers working in high-rise buildings under construction: a participant from the youth group particularly mentioned this situation as it has been common for workers directly urinating on floor during the later stages of construction period. It would severely worsen the hygienic condition of workplace.

(2) Very hot condition: two participants of the youth group mentioned this, even one worked outdoor and the other always worked indoor. This condition was even tougher in summer.

(3) The sub-contractors and Mr. Philco Wong of MTR shared the views from the youth group and expressed annoyance about the lack of toilets or dirty conditions of toilets in construction sites. Mr. Wong said he would inspect the hygienic condition of worker toilets when he visited any construction sites and insisted the contractors must provide clean toilets for all in construction sites.

2.21 To the sub-contractors, installing temporary lifts (籠輦) for workers in all construction sites was the most urgent and critical need in their working environment. As Hong Kong's skyscrapers got ever higher, it is unreasonable for workers to climb up tens of storey four times a day with all the tools. This would just unnecessarily waste their strength and time, which directly influence their productivity at the sites. Moreover, such arrangement would heighten the risk of workers at site, as an interviewee mentioned an incident happened at Wong Tai Sin last year, where a worker died at work after he fainted on 30+ storeys. The interviewee condemned that the tragedy might have been avoided if temporary lifts were available that could bring firemen and rescuers for emergency treatment to the fainted worker swiftly. According to the sub-contractors of the HKSCA, temporary lifts have only been found in some construction sites (mainly in the public sector). A large portion of construction projects in the

private sector and some approved projects in the public sector did not have such temporary lifts for the workers.

2.22 For a better and worker-friendly working environment, the sub-contractors demanded better consideration and planning for the transport needs of workers during the construction phase. They pointed out that almost all workers in Hong Kong took public transport to work in various construction sites. Unlike senior professionals and sub-contractors, frontline construction workers did not have private cars and could not drive to work. Sites in remote locations with no or poor public transport were troublesome for workers. Hence, they did not like working in certain big projects like Chek Lap Kok Airport and the Kai Tak Cruise Pier.

2.23 In addition, the sub-contractors opined that there has been an urgent need for providing shower rooms and clean toilets in construction sites, especially in summer. Shower rooms would allow workers to leave the construction sites with a neat and tidy appearance. They believed that this would help to attract more young people as they could meet friends and have social life after work. It would also improve the public image of construction workers and the industry as a whole. The workers echoed this view, adding that they had to bring extra clothing to change after work.

**d) General perception towards the occupational safety of construction site work**

2.24 In terms of occupational safety, participants with relevant working experience from the youth group mentioned two main points:

(1) Nails, tools and building materials were disposed on the floors and around the construction sites, which would pose risk for fellow workers in the site. They complained many workers were inconsiderate of others' safety by leaving the nails, tools and materials around. The two young participants in the focus group both quickly recognised these nails and materials were extremely dangerous and they had to be really careful while working in the construction sites.

(2) Poor teamwork and working attitude: As newcomers, the two young participants with prior work experience were shocked by the poor teamwork and selfishness among experienced workers. They observed most workers were not interested in the quality of their work. Working morale has been low among fellow workers, especially when the supervisors were not present. Teamwork was required for many tasks within construction sites. Good teamwork was even necessary for tasks with potential danger. A young participant was extremely disgusted that some experienced workers did not really care other workers' safety in such tasks. He felt these workers only cared about their own individual safety and did not consider the personal safety of other workers outside their social network in the sites. This was exceptionally discouraging and worrying for him.

2.25 As an experienced worker and a leader in the union, Mr. Chow Luen Kiu was highly concerned about the work safety as it was a "life and death" matter for the workers. He highlighted the joint efforts by the Union, the Government, the builders and the sub-contractors in improving work safety. It would be miserable when there is a fatal accident occurred at the site. He also blamed the Government's bureaucratic propaganda of "zero accident" for discouraging less serious injuries to be reported as it was detrimental for the builders' records in tendering for public construction projects.

2.26 The sub-contractors mentioned the biased reports of the local mass media and the public's misunderstanding about the industry's work safety standard. They emphasized that every stakeholder (including sub-contractors, the main contractors, property developers, labour unions and the Government) should work together to develop a list of measures to improve the industry safety.



**e) Lack of job security of construction site work**

2.27 Job security was significant for all groups and individuals interviewed without exception. Most participants of the youth group, both with and without experience in the construction industry, understood the flexible work nature on daily and/or piece-rated basis. They all resisted the insecure job nature of this industry, given the sub-contracting system as the mainstream mode of employment in Hong Kong construction industry. We prompted that this flexible employment might allow more flexibility and higher income to them. But they still complained about the highly uncertain income and employment prospect for working in this industry and preferred more stable full-time jobs. The “dream jobs” for some of them were civil service jobs, given the high pay and stable nature with job security.

2.28 All other groups and interviewees knew about the sub-contracting system in the construction industry very well. This institution was the core root for the job insecurity for construction workers in Hong Kong. Mr. Chow Luen Kiu and the workers in the two focus groups all had mixed views and deep feelings on its pros and cons. Under this extremely flexible sub-contracting system, most of the construction workers are not “employed” by their employers, and are not entitled to any fringe benefits or paid holidays. They are simply self-employed service providers to various sub-contractors.

2.29 Mr. Chow and the experienced workers proposed that a dual option should be available, where big developers and builders having resources and a constant labour need for construction and maintenance projects should delegate part of the work to their own full-time workers and the others to sub-contractors through the traditional way. In such case, workers would be able to choose between regular full-time and flexible self-employed modes.

**f) Perceived effect of current sub-contracting mode of employment on job security in Hong Kong construction site work**

2.30 This part is closely related to the previous part on job security. The previous part covers views of Mr. Chow Luen Kiu and experienced workers. This part focuses on views of the sub-contractors, Mr. Philco Wong of MTR and Mr. Charles Wong of CIC.

2.31 The sub-contractors opined the current sub-contracting system should not be overridden due to its importance and value on the construction industry in Hong Kong. They agreed there are some contractors without providing value-added service in the construction, who usually get a project with special relationships in the trade, then would contract out the jobs to other sub-contractors for actual works. They did not add any value through the process. But it is not the reason to deny the value of the sub-contracting system in Hong Kong while they pointed out that most sub-contractors have played a key role in the construction industry through their solid expertise and strong project management skills to complete every task within a scheduled time frame. For most productive sub-contractors, they would prefer the status quo of current sub-contracting mode of employment. Its greatest advantages are exceptionally fast speed of construction and the immense flexibility for the main-contractors and sub-contractors in undertaking construction projects. They regarded this mode of employment to be beneficial for the workers as well and the workers widely accepted and supported it.

2.32 Mr. Chow Luen Kiu and the experienced workers knew this employment mode's disadvantages and insecurity for the workers inside out. Yet they agreed that it also allowed more room and flexibility for some workers who wanted to work longer and earn more. From their experiences, the problem was not merely the current sub-contracting mode of employment but the combination of this mode and increasing government controls and limitations for the working hours, the regulations for workers' work procedures in sites and the introduction of official licenses, registration and tests required of the workers for the many tasks and skills in construction industry. Mr. Chow mentioned that the regulation

implemented by the Environmental Protection Department has implicitly limited the working hours of most construction site work to 8am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday only. Construction work beyond this time limit on weekdays and whole day on Sundays and public holidays has been prohibited unless permission is granted from the government. To abide these official requirements, construction workers needed to sacrifice their own working hours in working days, which have adversely affected their income as they were paid on piece-rate. It was naturally unwelcomed by some workers working under such flexible employment mode on piece rate. Mr. Chow and all veteran repeatedly emphasized the veteran workers' heavy pressure to work as fast as possible on pieced rate under the current sub-contracting mode of employment.

2.33 Mr. Philco Wong of MTR also shared the view with Mr. Chow Luen Kiu and the experienced workers on the current mode of employment in the Hong Kong construction industry. He pointed out that all stakeholders are responsible for the job insecurity in the construction industry. This has been an old issue but the various stakeholders and parties just repeatedly talked about it, without suggesting any concrete solution and action at the end.

2.34 Mr. Charles Wong of CIC saw this mode of employment as a given situation of the industry. He was aware that such mode of employment has deterred many young people from joining and staying in this industry for long. Young people always prefer employers with renowned reputation and stable full-time jobs with prospect for future. He cited one particular example: the recruitment and training of technicians by China Light and Power. The brand name of China Light and Power enjoys good public image. Though technicians' jobs in China Light and Power have been tough and blue-collar in nature, many young people are still eager to join because of the company's comprehensive and qualifying training scheme and stable job security. On the contrary, the construction industry does not enjoy these advantages.

**g) Influence of mass media on public image of the construction site work**

2.35 In regard to explain why the negative image on construction workers persists, participants in the sub-contractor group shared with workers' views. They highlighted two key problems for the industry's public perception:

- (1) Misunderstanding of the public
- (2) Bias of the mass media

2.36 The second problem rooted in local media's persistent bias in reporting accidents and casualties in construction sites. A sub-contractor opined that the mass media today are not interested in reporting any efforts to improve workers' welfare in the construction industry. In contrast, for serious accidents, the media would put them at the front page or prominent pages with sensational and illustrated reporting. These would pose a devastating impact on the public image on the construction industry in Hong Kong.

**h) Short-sightedness of employers and employees in the construction industry**

2.37 Interviewees of every interview and focus group mentioned this point. Again, this problem had its root tied to the sub-contracting system and the concern for self-interests by every stakeholder as discussed above.

2.38 The employers (main contractors and sub-contractors), employees, CIC, the unions, the Government and the society at large were aware that Hong Kong's construction industry cared about short-term interests and profits only. Little attention has been paid to the long-term development of the Hong Kong construction industry among all stakeholders in the industry amidst the evident up and down in the industry from 1997 to now. The current labour problems faced by the industry like aging of the workers, labour supply shortage, fluctuating wages, slow progress in workers' skills and knowledge plus negative public image and young people's reluctance to join, reflected this short-sighted vision.

2.39 Some construction workers participated in focus group interviews remembered that there were serious unemployment and under-employment problems in the industry between 1997 and 2006, when a large number of experienced construction workers had left the construction industry for other industries, e.g. transport or simply retired. This explained the significant discrepancy in the numbers of total registered construction workers and the number of construction workers active at work. The sub-contractor group cited two figures on the number of construction workers showing this difference: there were 270,000 registered workers in total, but just 70,000 of them were active in work.

**i) Rising expectation of the youth**

2.40 All interviewees and focus group participants, except the youth group, mentioned Hong Kong's changing educational system, even it was not on the interview/discussion guideline. They all saw the increasing number of places for post-secondary and university education to the younger generations in the past years as a key factor for the drop of young people entering this industry.

2.41 All interviewees and focus group participants, including the young participants of the youth group, believed that the current 3-3-4 senior secondary education reform would mean more young people moving on to senior secondary education (From 4 to Form 6) after completing junior secondary education. This meant there would be even fewer Form 3 school leavers as the potential new blood for this industry. The majority who completed Form 6 somehow would have a higher expectation for work and career prospect. They expected white collar jobs with higher pay and better prospect.

2.42 Mr. Charles Wong said CIC had seen this trend. The CIC understood even fewer young men would be interested in becoming construction workers. In return, the Construction Industry Council Training Academy (CICTA) would provide more courses for construction supervisors for the Form 6 school leavers.

2.43 As father, Mr. Chow Luen Kiu also knew Hong Kong's formal education system and the CICTA training schemes well. Mr. Chow's believed that CICTA's

training should be conducted in more realistic contexts. In his view, many fresh graduates from CICTA training have been intolerant to outdoor work under the sun in summer. He recommended the traditional apprenticeship to coach CITCA graduates on individual basis in the industry.

### **3. Proposal of the “No Saturday Site Work”**

2.44 As what have been mentioned above, the Hong Kong construction industry has been facing a dual challenge of labour shortage and aging of labour force. In order to retain the current workers, to lure the workers who have left the industry to return, and to attract newcomers, especially the younger generation, to join the construction site work, the HKCA have put forth a proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”. It suggests that apart from the day off on Sundays, there is also no need for the workers to return to the construction sites to work on Saturdays, meaning that the workweek would be shortened from six days to five days. One of the main objectives of this research is to make an initial attempt to study the attitudes and perceptions of various stakeholders towards the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement. The following sections will sum up the findings of the in-depth interviews as well as the focus group discussions on this issue.

#### **a) General perceptions of various stakeholders towards the proposal**

##### *i) Mr. Philco Wong of MTR*

2.45 As one of the major public work developers in Hong Kong, Mr. Philco Wong of MTR did not show a clear stand towards the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement. He opined that the construction site workers would not accept the arrangement if they finally get less pay due to fewer working days per week. The plan would be executable only if the Government steps in to enforce it by law.

##### *ii) Sub-contractors from the HKSCA*

2.46 The sub-contractors opined that the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement would be by no means workable and therefore they were strongly against it. One of the sub-contractors even believed that the “No Saturday Site Work”

arrangement, which was regarded by him as an explicitly infeasible plan, has been an excuse used by some main contractors to bargain with the Government to seek for the importation of foreign labours or to apply for the extension of construction time of public works they are currently at hands.

iii) *Mr. Chow Luen Kiu of the HKCIEGU*

2.47 Although Mr. Chow regarded that the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal as desirable in the long run, he had some reservations. He pointed out that the five-day week arrangement would never be successfully implemented without the introduction of other workers’ benefits such as monthly-rated salary, maximum working hours, long service payment and severance payment.

iv) *Mr. Charles Wong of the CIC*

2.48 Mr. Charles Wong also had no clear attitude on this proposal. He claimed that there remained no adequate and thorough discussion on this issue between various stakeholders of the construction industry. He said that the labour unions seem to be hostile to the proposal while there was no consensus among the employers on this issue.

v) *Workers from the two focus groups*

2.49 Most of the workers did not favor the proposal. The issue that the worker cared about the most was whether their wages would be reduced if they worked one day less per week. Many of them were doubtful about whether the employers would be willing to grant six day’s pay with only five day’s work to the workers. Like Mr. Chow, some workers suggested that other benefits such as monthly-rated salary and paid leave should be offered to the workers to safeguard the successful implementation of the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement.

vi) *Youth from the focus group*

2.50 The participants from the youth focus group generally welcomed the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal. However, all of them agreed that the number of working days per week was not their main concern in choosing a long-term career. Other factors like job satisfaction and career prospects are more

important. Besides, they have been objected by their parents, especially their mothers, to enter the construction industry because of the unsafe working environment in the construction sites.

**b) Potential challenges of the proposal**

2.51 Many interviewees and participants of the focus groups queried the feasibility of the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal and their opinions can be summed up as follows:

2.52 Mr. Chow, Mr. Philco Wong and many workers from the focus groups pointed out that the wages of construction site workers have been calculated on a daily-rated basis. This meant that the fewer days they work, the lower wages they would get. The working days would even be fewer if rainy days and public holidays are taken into account. If the “No Saturday Site Work” is put into practice, it is possible that the workers would only need to work 15 days or less per month. The reduction of working days would seriously affect the income of the workers because of the daily-rated payment system. Some of them might fail to earn enough money to support their family. It was particularly true to those unskilled workers who have lower daily wages.

2.53 Mr. Chow and the sub-contractors from HKSCA opined that the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement would be hard to be implemented in those occupations or work trades where piece-rated system is prevalent. In these kinds of jobs, the wages are calculated by the unit of works the workers completed but not by the number of days they work. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to guarantee that they could earn about the same amount of money each month if they work one day less per week. The sub-contractors also argued that it would be unfair to those piece-rated workers who preferred to work six days per week to earn more money. They claimed that such proposal was just an “exploitation” that would deprive the workers of their rights to work.

2.54 The sub-contracting system is another obstacle to the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement, as Mr. Chow claimed. He thought that no sub-contractor, the



smaller ones in particular, could ensure that the workers they hired would not be underemployed. In some cases, the workers even have to work under different sub-contractors with different construction projects in the same month. While switching from one sub-contractor to another, the workers may be forced to take rest in the transition periods. So there would be no guarantee that the workers would not be underemployed under the current sub-contracting system. If the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement is adopted, the workers may even have fewer working days as well as lesser income. Therefore there is no reason for the workers to support the proposal.

2.55 Mr. Charles Wong pinpointed that the schedule of many current construction projects have already been very tight. He wondered whether it is still possible to launch the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement that would finally result in a longer construction period. If the completion time of the construction projects have to be kept unchanged, Mr. Philco Wong suggested that more workers should be hired in the construction sites to compensate for the reduction of one working day per week. However, it would inevitably lead to the increase of construction costs. The sub-contractors from HKSCA and some workers from the focus groups estimated that private developers would neither accept the extension of construction time nor the increase of construction costs. It is because their profits would be adversely affected under both situations.

2.56 The sub-contractors from HKSCA stated that there have been too many public and private construction projects pending to start in the coming years but there are not enough construction site workers now. It would be unwise to require the workers to work fewer days on site by introducing the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement while the labour shortage problem becomes more and more serious in the future.

2.57 The sub-contractors claimed that under the daily-rated payment system of the construction industry, it would be up to the construction site workers to decide how many days they would like to work per week. Thus, they would be free to take leave whenever they want. The sub-contractors insisted that one day’s rest per week has been already adequate for the workers. If the workers feel tired or

are sick, they could take leave. There is no need to regulate their number of working days. It is also unreasonable to ban the workers from working on Saturdays if the workers are willing to.

2.58 The sub-contractors opined that most of the construction site workers prefer to work as many days per week as they can. Therefore they would not be willing to work at the construction sites where the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement is implemented. Those construction sites would be hard to find enough workers to operate and in return the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement would be doom to fail.

**c) Whether the proposal can attract new-entrants to join the construction industry**

2.59 Most of the young people from the youth focus group welcomed the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal that provides them with more time to spend freely. Only one participant preferred to rest on weekdays for the reason that the malls and the streets are less crowded for him to go shopping.

2.60 Mr. Charles Wong predicted that this proposal would be conducive to the student recruitment of the CICTA. To make the students to be more adaptable to the working day pattern of the construction industry, CICTA offers classes from Monday to Saturday per week now. If the “No Saturday Site Work” is finally adopted by the construction industry, he estimated that CICTA would also follow by reducing its school days from six to five. He believed that the reduction of school days in CICTA could attract more applications from young people who have been accustomed to studying five days per week in primary and secondary schools.

2.61 The sub-contractors, however, argued that even if the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement might be effective in recruiting more new-entrants, it would only attract those who are lazy and shiftless. Besides, the loss of the “No Saturday Site Work” would outweigh the gain if the proposal could only attract the

unskilled youth to join the construction industry but could not retain the skilled old workers who believed they would earn lesser money under this proposal.

**d) How to implement the proposal**

2.62 The prerequisite for the successful implementation of the “No Saturday Site Work”, as Mr. Philco Wong and most workers agreed, would be to ensure that the wages of the construction site workers would not be decreased under the new working days arrangement. In other words, the employers must increase the daily wages of the workers to compensate for their losses of income of one working day per week. As Mr. Philco Wong frankly stated, no workers would be unhappy if they could get six days’ wages with only five days’ work. Nevertheless, Mr. Chow and some workers were unsure whether the employers would be willing to increase worker’s wages voluntarily. They insisted that it is only a wishful thinking because the wages of workers have been mainly determined by market mechanism. In particular, the profit margins of the sub-contractors have been already small under the sub-contracting system that in most cases only the lowest bid is accepted. There would be indeed no room for the sub-contractors to raise the workers’ wages.

2.63 A worker from the focus group proposed that in order to make up for the time loss due to the reduction of working days under the “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement, the number of working hours per day could be increased. Not only could it relieve the financial burdens of the employers that bring by the increase of workers’ wages as many workers suggested, it might also accelerate the pace of construction to compensate for the loss of working days. Another worker rebutted that the extension of working hours would be actually impractical. Firstly, the time of daylight is shorter in the winter because of earlier sunset. Extension of working hour in the evening of winter is hence infeasible. It is also unreasonable to require the workers to start their works earlier, for example, at 7 o’clock in the morning. Secondly, most of the works in the construction site are very energy-exhausting. It would be inappropriate to demand the workers to work longer per day because it would make them more tired and in return might lead to more industrial accidents.

2.64 To ensure that the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal could be successfully implemented, Mr. Chow and most of the workers insisted that the widely-adopted daily-rated wage system in the construction industry must be replaced by a monthly-rated one. The “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement would only do more harm than good to the construction workers if their monthly income could not be guaranteed. Only a monthly-rated salary system could secure the incomes of the workers regardless of how many days they work. In addition, other fringe benefits such as paid leave, maximum working hours, long service payment and severance payment should also be granted to the workers to enhance their sense of belonging to the construction industry.

2.65 Mr. Philco Wong believed that the successful implementation of “No Saturday Site Work” can only be secured by the Government through legislation. Like minimum wages, any effort put on the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” would finally turn into lip services if it is not bound by law. No employers will be willing to launch the proposal unless it is legally enforced.

#### **4. Other possible solutions for the labour shortage in construction industry**

##### **a) Reform of the employment mode**

2.66 Mr. Chow and some workers from the focus groups believed that the daily-rated wage payment method should be reformed if the construction industry intended to recruit more newcomers and to retain the skilled and experienced workers. Under the current employment mode that provides almost neither fringe benefit nor long-term continuous employment, most if not all of the workers are only self-employed service providers to their employers. Lack of job security not only discourages the veteran workers from staying long in the industry but also repels potential young recruits in particular. Mr. Chow claimed that unlike the experienced workers, the young new-entrants lacked the courage and the initiatives to implore other sub-contractors to offer jobs to them after their current construction project was completed. The youth needed others to arrange

jobs for them, Mr. Chow said. They would leave the industry if they find no job to do. If job security cannot be guaranteed, it is inane to recruit a large number of young rookies because most of them would leave finally. Therefore, Mr. Chow and some workers proposed to transform the daily-rated wage payment to monthly-rated or to change the worker's self-employed status to a permanent one. Other benefits such as paid leave and long service payment should also be provided if the industry wanted to attract more people to join the construction site works.

**b) Guarantee of timely wage payment**

2.67 All the workers from the focus groups hoped that they could get their payments on time and there should be no delayed or non-payment. Some of them opined that in order to make sure that the workers must get timely payment, wages of the workers should be paid directly by the main contractors instead of by the sub-contractors. A worker claimed that such measure has already been put into practice in some construction sites of the Housing Authority. Other workers even suggested the abolition of the notorious sub-contracting system to let the main contractors hire all construction workers.

**c) Promotion of the image and social status of the workers**

2.68 Mr. Philco Wong and Mr. Charles Wong agreed that the public image and social status of the construction workers should be improved if the industry wanted to attract more young people to join. No youth would like to be labeled as dirty, tatty, uneducated and rude as what the general public thought a construction worker would be. Mr. Philco Wong proposed that the relevant authorities should find chances to educate the public that the construction industry has made significant social and economic contributions to the society, not only in terms of the construction of infrastructures and buildings, but also the share of the labour force.

2.69 However, it also has to be bore in mind that any image promotion campaigns of construction workers should involve participation of every stakeholder

(including the workers) in the industry. One typical example has been the uniform campaign for construction workers. All interviewees and focus group participants had strong views on this issue. And all of them opined that campaign has been a failure. Up to present, the social norm for experienced workers has been wearing rough and old clothing for work. According to Mr. Philco Wong and the sub-contractors, the workers did not like the uniforms specified by the Government and main builders. The sub-contractors also opined the many minute specifications for the uniforms were useless or redundant for the workers in reality. During the whole process, the decision makers of these uniforms had never consulted any opinions from workers to understand what they really wanted to wear at work.

**d) Improvement of occupational safety**

2.70 One of the main reasons why youth are not willing to join the construction industry was the belief that working environments in the construction sites are comparatively unsafe. The sub-contractors from HKSCA, the participants from the youth focus group and some workers agreed that the occupational safety must be improved. A sub-contractor suggested that since many industrial accidents were caused by the carelessness and negligence of safety measures of the workers, those workers who had repeatedly violated the safety regulations should be banned from entering the construction sites.

**e) Improvement of working environments**

2.71 As what has been discussed above, the sub-contractors from the HKSCA advocated that the improvement of the working environments, such as the provision of sheltered rest spaces, shower rooms, lockers and clean toilets in the construction sites could attract more young people to enter the industry.

**f) Increase of wage**

2.72 To Mr. Philco Wong and some workers, the increase of wage is the most effective way to lure the people to join the construction site works. Mr. Philco

Wong said that high wage could be a kind of substantial compensation for the poor image and inferior social status to many newcomers. Some workers quoted steel-blending as an example, arguing that many people were eager to join when they knew that the wages of steel-blenders were high and have increased rapidly.

## **Part III: Findings from the Telephone Survey**

- 3.1 As illustrated in Part I, a telephone survey was carried out between November 8 and 16, 2012. In total, 1,520 respondents who were aged between 15 and 59 were interviewed, with a response rate of 52.6 per cent. Data presented in this chapter are weighted based on the age-sex distribution of the population, excluding foreign domestic helpers, recorded in the 2011 Population Census.<sup>2</sup>
- 3.2 There are two objectives of the telephone survey on “No Saturday Site Work”: first, to gauge the public views on the proposed “No Saturday Site Work” and second, to explore ways to attract new blood to join the construction industry. To attain these goals, we focus on the following four areas in the telephone survey: (1) perception on the construction industry, (2) attitudes toward 5-day week arrangement, (3) attitudes toward the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal of the construction industry, and (4) views about effective means to attracting new blood to join the construction industry.
- 3.3 The present part is structured as follows. First, after presenting the socio-demographic characteristics of our survey respondents, we shall report the survey results of the afore-mentioned four areas. Second, as well as simple description about the frequency distribution, we shall look into the similarities and differences between various socio-demographic groups in terms of their views, attitudes, and perceptions on the construction industry in general and “No Saturday Site Work” in particular.<sup>3</sup>

### **A. Socio-demographic Profile of the Survey Respondents**

- 3.4 As described above, the current sample is weighted to match the age-sex distribution recorded in the 2011 Population Census. As such, the age pattern of our survey respondents is exactly the same as that of the whole population in Hong Kong. From Table 1, of those who reported their age, while 50.1 per

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<sup>2</sup> For the frequency distribution of unweighted data of socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, refer to *Appendix 6*.

<sup>3</sup> All “Don’t know/ Hard to say” responses are excluded from the crosstabulation analyses.



cent aged between 15 and 39, the corresponding figure for those aged 40 and above was 49.9 per cent. In terms of sex, 48.2 per cent were males and 51.8 were female. In the current sample, while fewer than 20 per cent of the respondents attained lower secondary or below education (19.8%), over two-fifths received tertiary education (42.6%). And over one-third of the respondents finished upper secondary schooling (37.7%).

3.5 Concerning the economic activity status of the respondents, almost 70 per cent of them were currently working (68.9%), the respective proportions of respondents being students, home-makers, retired, and unemployed were 13.2 per cent, 11.3 per cent, 2.8 per cent, and 3.9 per cent. Among those who were currently working, while over one-third of them were in high-level occupations (including managers and administrators, professionals, and associate professionals) (36.8%), the respective figures for clerical support workers and service and shop sales workers were 22.9 per cent and 16.1 per cent. Fewer than 10 per cent of these working respondents were in elementary occupations and 15.1 per cent were craft and related workers and plant and machine operators and assemblers (skilled and semi-skilled workers). In terms of monthly income, two-fifths of the working respondents received between \$10,000 and \$19,999 per month (40.5%). Of those who reported their monthly income, 17.4 per cent and 18.5 per cent earned less than \$10,000 and between \$20,000 and \$29,999 respectively. And a quarter of them got at least \$30,000 per month (23.7%).

3.6 As this survey focuses on the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry, we are particularly interested in the views of those who were familiar with the trade and were working in the industry. Among those who were currently working or unemployed, 16.0 per cent of them have worked in the construction site or involved in decoration and maintenance work for buildings. Over two-fifths of them were still in the trade (43.1%). Another half of these former and current construction workers (51.6%) worked in the trade for less than 5 years.

3.7 To facilitate the following analyses, first, we have grouped our respondents into three categories to indicate if they have had any experience in the construction industry: (1) those who are currently working in the industry, (2) those who previously worked in the industry, and (3) those who have never worked in the industry. While 5.1 per cent of our respondents are currently working in the construction industry, 6.6 per cent were in the trade previously. A majority of respondents (88.4%) had no experience in the construction industry. Second, another grouping with three categories is also created based on respondent's level of experience in the construction industry: (1) those who have worked in the industry for less than 5 years, (2) those who have worked in the industry for at least 5 years, and (3) those who have never worked in the industry. We can see that, while 5.9 per cent of the total respondents have worked in the industry for fewer than 5 years, 5.6 per cent reported to be in the industry for at least 5 years.

**Table 1. Socio-demographic profiles of the respondents**

	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	48.2	
Female	51.8	
Total (n) =	1,520	
<b>Age</b>		
15-19	9.1	} 50.1
20-24	9.4	
25-29	10.0	
30-34	10.5	
35-39	11.1	} 49.9
40-44	11.7	
45-49	13.7	
50-54	13.5	
55-59	11.0	
Total (n) =	1,497	

*(to be continued)*

**Table 1. Socio-demographic profiles of the respondents (cont'd)**

	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Not educated or pre-school level	0.3	} 19.8
Primary education (P.1 – P.6)	5.5	
Secondary education (S.1 – S.3)	14.0	
Secondary education (S.4 – S.7)	37.7	} 42.6
Tertiary education (Non-degree)	11.5	
Tertiary education (Degree and above)	31.1	
Total (n) =	1,507	
<b>Economic activity status</b>		
Student	13.2	
Home-maker	11.3	
Retired	2.8	
Unemployed	3.9	
Working	68.9	
Total (n) =	1,514	
<b>Occupation</b>		
Managers and administrators	14.1	} 36.8 (High-level occupations)
Professionals	11.5	
Associate professionals	11.2	
Clerks	22.9	} 15.1 (Skilled and semi-skilled workers)
Services workers and shop sales workers	16.1	
Craft and related workers <sup>2</sup>	11.5	
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	3.6	
Elementary occupations	9.1	
Total (n) =	1,011	
<b>Personal monthly income</b>		
<\$10,000	17.4	} 23.7
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	40.5	
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	18.5	
\$30,000 - <\$40,000	8.7	
\$40,000 or above	15.0	
Total (n) =	983	
<b>Whether worked in the construction site or involved in decoration and maintenance work for buildings</b>		
Yes	16.0	
No	84.0	
Total (n) =	1,100	

*(to be continued)*

**Table 1. Socio-demographic profiles of the respondents (cont'd)**

	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Whether still working in the construction site or involving in decoration and maintenance work for buildings at the moment</b>		
Yes	43.1	
No <sup>3</sup>	56.9	
Total (n) =	176	
<b>Years of working in the construction site or involving in decoration and maintenance work for buildings</b>		
Less than 1 year	24.2	} 51.6
1 year to less than 5 years	27.4	
5 years to less than 10 years	12.9	} 48.4
10 years to less than 20 years	14.3	
20 years or above	21.2	
Total (n) =	174	
<b>Whether have worked in the construction industry</b>		
Yes, currently	5.1	
Yes, previously	6.6	
No experience	88.4	
Total (n) =	1,519	
<b>Level of working experience in the construction industry</b>		
Less than 5 years of working experience in the trade	5.9	
At least 5 years of working experience in the trade	5.6	
No experience	88.5	
Total (n) =	1,518	

1 All “Refused to answer”, “Don’t know / Hard to say” are excluded.

2 Including construction site workers, decoration and maintenance workers.

3 Including unemployed respondents.

## **B. Perception on the Construction Industry**

3.8 In this section, we shall report the views of respondents on the construction industry. Specific focuses will be on respondents’ level of optimism about the prospect of the construction industry, their level of knowledge about the wage

level of the construction workers, and their estimation concerning the job market for the construction workers. We shall also tap other aspect of subjective perception of our respondents on the construction industry by asking them if they would encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to join the industry.

3.9 First, three-quarters of respondents were optimistic about the prospect of the construction industry in the next five years (of them 8.1% answering “very optimistic” and 67.5% “optimistic”). About 15.0 per cent and 1.2 per cent reported being “not optimistic” and “not optimistic at all” respectively. And 8.2 per cent of respondents did not give their views (Table 2).

**Table 2. Level of optimism about the prospect of the construction industry in the next 5 years**

	Frequency	Percentage	
Very optimistic	123	8.1	} 75.6
Optimistic	1026	67.5	
Not optimistic	229	15.0	} 16.2
Not optimistic at all	18	1.2	
Don't know / Hard to say	125	8.2	
Total	1520	100.0	

3.10 A significant difference between men and women and between respondents in various educational levels was found in terms of their optimism about the prospect of the construction industry in the next 5 years (Table 3). First, while 84.5 per cent of men reported feeling very optimistic or optimistic, the corresponding percentage for women was 80.1. Second, a clear educational gradient is observed, with a greater proportion of those with tertiary education (85.1%) showing optimism. 81.2 per cent of respondents with upper secondary education and 78.5 per cent with lower secondary or below education said “very optimistic” or “optimistic”.

**Table 3. Level of optimism about the prospect of the construction industry in the next 5 years by socio-demographic profiles of the respondents**

	<b>Very optimistic &amp; Optimistic (%)</b>	<b>Not optimistic &amp; Not optimistic at all (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>*Sex</b>			
Male	84.5	15.5	692
Female	80.1	19.9	704
<b>Age</b>			
15-39	82.0	18.0	693
40-59	83.5	16.5	683
<b>*Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	78.5	21.5	261
Upper secondary	81.2	18.8	528
Tertiary	85.1	14.9	598
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	80.8	19.2	428
Currently working	83.0	17.0	964
<b>Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	84.4	15.6	352
Clerical support workers	83.5	16.5	218
Service and shop sales workers	79.6	20.4	147
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	85.3	14.7	136
Elementary occupations	81.9	18.1	83
<b>Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	76.9	23.1	147
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	82.2	17.8	371
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	86.6	13.4	172
\$30,000 or above	86.3	13.7	219
<b>Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	77.8	22.2	72
Yes, previously	81.7	18.3	93
No	82.5	17.5	1,230
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	77.1	22.9	83
At least 5 years	84.8	15.2	79
No experience	82.5	17.5	1,232

\* p < 0.05

3.11 Second, when asked about the wage trend of the construction workers during the past few years, a majority of respondents (70.8%) said it has been increasing and 16.8 per cent reported the wage level remaining unchanged. Only a negligible 2.1 per cent of respondents stated that the wage level of construction workers has been decreasing. It should be noted that 10 per cent of respondents did not give an answer (Table 4). From Table 5, we can see that there are significant differences in the knowledge about the wage level of construction workers between sexes, between age groups, between educational levels, between economic activity statuses, and between levels of monthly income from employment. A significantly greater proportion of men (82.8%), those aged 40-59 (85.2%), those with tertiary education (83.1%), working respondents (82.9%), and those who earned between \$20,000 and less than \$30,000 per month (88.3%) reported an upward trend of wage for construction workers.

**Table 4. Level of knowledge about the wage trend of construction workers**

	Frequency	Percentage
Increasing	1077	70.8
Remain unchanged	256	16.8
Decreasing	32	2.1
Don't know / Hard to say	155	10.2
Total	1520	100.0

**Table 5. Level of knowledge about the wage trend of construction workers by socio-demographic profile of the respondents**

	Increasing (%)	Remaining Unchanged (%)	Decreasing (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Sex</b>				
Male	82.8	15.4	1.8	681
Female	74.9	22.1	3.1	684
<b>*Age</b>				
15-39	72.7	24.5	2.8	677
40-59	85.2	13.0	1.8	667

*(to be continued)*

**Table 5. Level of knowledge about the wage trend of construction workers by socio-demographic profile of the respondents (cont'd)**

	Increasing (%)	Remaining Unchanged (%)	Decreasing (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Educational attainment</b>				
Lower secondary or below	74.8	22.9	2.3	266
Upper secondary	76.5	20.0	3.5	520
Tertiary	83.1	15.7	1.2	567
<b>*Whether working</b>				
Not working	70.0	25.4	4.6	417
Currently working	82.9	15.8	1.3	943
<b>Occupation</b>				
High-level occupations	83.7	15.1	1.2	331
Clerical support workers	86.8	12.3	1.0	204
Service and shop sales workers	80.0	18.6	1.4	145
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	80.0	17.3	2.7	150
Elementary occupations	81.2	18.8	0.0	85
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>				
<\$10,000	74.5	22.9	2.6	153
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	81.3	17.4	1.4	363
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	88.3	10.5	1.2	171
\$30,000 or above	87.6	11.5	1.0	209
<b>Whether working in the construction industry</b>				
Yes, currently	77.9	20.8	1.3	77
Yes, previously	86.0	14.0	0.0	100
No	78.4	19.0	2.6	1,188
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>				
Less than 5 years	86.7	13.3	0.0	90
At least 5 years	79.8	19.0	1.2	84
No experience	78.4	19.0	2.6	1,188

\* p < 0.05

3.12 In the telephone survey, we also asked the respondent to estimate the job-seeking prospect of the construction workers in the next few years. While nearly half of them (44.1%) reported being easier, two-fifths (41.5%) said the level of easiness for construction workers seeking jobs would remain unchanged



in the next few years. Less than one-tenth (9.0%) believed that it would become more difficult (Table 6). In terms of socio-demographic differences, we have found that significant differences are observed between men and women, between younger and older respondents, between individuals with different levels of education, and between working and non-working respondents. A significantly greater proportion of men (52.2%), older respondents (aged 40-59) (53.3%), individuals with upper secondary education (47.8%), and working respondents (48.8%) believed that it would be easier for the construction workers to find jobs in the next few years (Table 7).

**Table 6. Estimated condition of job market for construction workers**

	Frequency	Percentage
Easier	670	44.1
Remain unchanged	631	41.5
More difficult	136	9.0
Don't know / Hard to say	83	5.4
Total	1520	100.0

**Table 7. Estimated condition of job market for construction workers by socio-demographic profile of the respondents**

	Easier (%)	Remain Unchanged (%)	More Difficult (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Sex</b>				
Male	52.2	40.3	7.5	693
Female	41.3	47.4	11.3	745
<b>*Age</b>				
15-39	40.3	49.8	9.9	719
40-59	53.3	37.7	9.0	700
<b>*Educational attainment</b>				
Lower secondary or below	47.3	39.7	13.0	277
Upper secondary	47.8	42.2	9.9	533
Tertiary	45.6	46.9	7.4	618
<b>*Whether working</b>				
Not working	42.3	45.0	12.8	447
Currently working	48.8	43.3	7.9	984

*(to be continued)*

**Table 7. Estimated condition of job market for construction workers by socio-demographic profile of the respondents (cont'd)**

	<b>Easier (%)</b>	<b>Remain Unchanged (%)</b>	<b>More Difficult (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>Occupation</b>				
High-level occupations	45.5	46.6	7.9	356
Clerical support workers	52.6	40.5	7.0	215
Service and shop sales workers	47.7	43.6	8.7	149
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	52.4	39.5	8.2	147
Elementary occupations	50.0	38.6	11.4	88
<b>Monthly income from employment</b>				
<\$10,000	48.3	43.0	8.6	151
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	46.7	45.1	8.2	379
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	52.0	40.5	7.5	173
\$30,000 or above	48.7	44.7	6.6	226
<b>*Whether working in the construction industry</b>				
Yes, currently	47.4	38.2	14.5	76
Yes, previously	58.3	31.2	10.4	96
No	45.7	45.3	9.0	1,266
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>				
Less than 5 years	57.0	30.2	12.8	86
At least 5 years	50.0	39.3	10.7	84
No experience	45.7	45.2	9.1	1,268

\* p < 0.05

3.13 Being asked if they would encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers, three-tenths of respondents (31.1%) said “yes” and nearly three-fifths (58.8%) reported “no”. 10.1 per cent of respondents did not give an answer (Table 8). It can be seen from Table 9 that significant differences of views are found in terms of age, level of educational attainment, occupation, monthly income from employment, whether working in the construction industry, level of working experiences in the construction industry, level of optimism towards the prospect of the construction industry in the next 5 years, perception on the changing direction of wage of

construction workers in the past few years, and estimated level of difficulty in job-seeking prospect for construction workers in the next few years.

**Table 8. Whether encouraged job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	472	31.1
No	895	58.8
Don't know / Hard to say	154	10.1
Total	1520	100.0

**Table 9. Whether encouraged job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers by socio-demographic profile of the respondents**

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Weighted n
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	34.2	65.8	646
Female	34.9	65.1	720
<b>*Age</b>			
15-39	29.9	70.1	688
40-59	39.8	60.2	659
<b>*Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	47.5	52.5	263
Upper secondary	37.5	62.5	512
Tertiary	25.9	74.1	582
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	32.9	67.1	431
Currently working	35.4	64.6	930
<b>*Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	25.4	74.6	331
Clerical support workers	37.3	62.7	209
Service and shop sales workers	41.5	58.5	147
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	42.3	57.7	137
Elementary occupations	46.8	53.2	79
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	46.4	53.6	153
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	32.5	67.5	351
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	39.4	60.6	170
\$30,000 or above	27.5	72.5	204

*(to be continued)*

**Table 9. Whether encourage job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers by socio-demographic profile of the respondents (cont'd)**

	<b>Yes (%)</b>	<b>No (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>*Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	46.4	53.6	69
Yes, previously	44.7	55.3	85
No	33.1	66.9	1210
<b>*Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	39.2	60.8	74
At least 5 years	50.0	50.0	78
No experience	33.1	66.9	1,212
<b>*Level of optimism towards the prospect of the construction industry in the next 5 years</b>			
Very optimistic & Optimistic	38.8	61.2	1,043
Not optimistic & Not Optimistic at all	18.2	81.8	225
<b>*Perception on the changing direction of wage of construction workers in the past few years</b>			
Increasing	38.5	61.5	969
Remaining unchanged	25.7	74.3	237
Decreasing	16.7	83.3	30
<b>*Estimated level of difficulty in job-seeking prospect for construction workers in the next few years</b>			
Easier	43.4	56.6	590
Remain unchanged	29.3	70.7	584
More difficult	20.0	80.0	125

\* p < 0.05

3.14 A greater proportion of older respondents (aged 40-59) (39.8%), individuals with lower secondary or below education (47.5%), those in elementary occupations (46.8%), low-income earners (with less than \$10,000 per month) (46.4%), current workers in the construction industry (46.4%), experienced workers in the trade (with at least 5 years of experience) (50.0%), those who were “very optimistic” or “optimistic” about the future prospect of the construction industry (38.8%), respondents who reported an upward trend of

wage of construction workers (38.5%), and individuals who perceived a better job market for construction workers (43.4%) said they would encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives or friends to join the construction industry. In contrast, their young, more educated, non-manual working, and high-income counterparts and those who had no experience in the construction industry, individuals who were less optimistic about the prospects of the construction industry and construction workers, and respondents who had little knowledge about the industry showed a negative stance.

### C. Attitudes toward Five-day Week Arrangement

3.15 As reviewed in Part I, the 5-day week arrangement has been introduced in the HKSAR Government by phases since mid-2006, with suitable government units switching to this new work pattern. In the telephone survey, we asked the respondents' view over the implementation of 5-day week arrangement in all industries in the long run. A majority of respondents (67.0%) supported this idea, though a quarter (24.9%) rejected so. 8.1 per cent of respondents did not give an answer (Table 10). We found significant differences in age, economic activity status, and monthly income from employment concerning the attitude toward the introduction of 5-day week in all industries (Table 11). A significantly greater proportion of younger respondents (age 15-39) (78.4%), those who were currently working (74.7%), and low-income earners (less than \$10,000) (79.4%) said that the 5-day week should be implemented in all industries in the long run.

**Table 10. Whether supported the implementation of 5-day week arrangement in all industries in the long run**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1019	67.0
No	378	24.9
Don't know / Hard to say	124	8.1
Total	1520	100.0

**Table 11. Whether supported the implementation of 5-day week arrangement in all industries in the long run by the socio-demographic profile of the respondents**

	<b>Yes (%)</b>	<b>No (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	71.0	29.0	679
Female	74.8	25.2	718
<b>*Age</b>			
15-39	78.4	21.6	704
40-59	68.0	32.0	672
<b>Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	70.8	29.2	264
Upper secondary	72.7	27.3	528
Tertiary	74.3	25.7	592
<b>*Whether working</b>			
Not working	69.3	30.7	433
Currently working	74.7	25.3	958
<b>Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	73.3	26.7	341
Clerical support workers	78.9	21.1	213
Service and shop sales workers	71.2	28.8	153
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	68.3	31.7	139
Elementary occupations	83.1	16.9	83
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	79.4	20.6	160
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	74.9	25.1	358
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	78.9	21.1	171
\$30,000 or above	67.3	32.7	214
<b>Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	63.9	36.1	72
Yes, previously	69.7	30.3	89
No	73.7	26.3	1,236
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	70.7	29.3	82
At least 5 years	64.9	35.1	77
No experience	73.7	26.3	1,236

\*  $p < 0.05$

## **D. Attitudes toward the “No Saturday Site Work” Proposal of the Construction Industry**

3.16 As one of the main objectives of the current study is to examine the proposed “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry, we have asked a series of questions in the telephone survey in order to gauge public views over this proposal. Specifically, we first asked if the respondents supported the implementation of “No Saturday Site Work” in the long run. Second, for those who rejected this idea, we asked if they would change their mind and agree with the proposal should the weekly income of construction workers not be lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay. The rationale of posing this question to our respondents is that, in every focus group discussion or in-depth interview, our interviewees repeatedly mentioned the daily-wage or piece rate system adopted by the construction industry and its associated implication for overall wage reduction of workers if “No Saturday Site Work” is implemented. Finally, those who favored the proposal were asked if they would support the government introducing the legislation for “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry.

3.17 From Table 12, we can see that a majority of our respondents (70.7%) favored the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” to be implemented in the construction industry in the long run (with 18.7% said “strongly agree” and 52.0% “agree”). One-fifth (20.9%) did not support the idea, with 18.6 per cent disagreed and 2.3 per cent strongly disagreed. And 8.5 per cent of respondent did not give an answer. And out of those who were against the proposal, while 45.0 per cent changed their mind and instead favored the implementation of “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry should the level of weekly income be guaranteed to the comparable amount of the existing 6-day pay, 46.1 per cent insisted and did not agree with the idea. 8.9 per cent of respondents did not give an answer (Table 13). As shown in Table 14, among those respondents who were against the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”, three-fifths of respondents (63.5%) who rejected the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal was

due to the fear of income reduction of construction workers under the 5-day week arrangement.

**Table 12. Whether agreed with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	285	18.7
Agree	790	52.0
Disagree	282	18.6
Strongly disagree	35	2.3
Don't know / Hard to say	129	8.5
Total	1520	100.0

**Table 13. Whether agreed with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” if the weekly income of the construction workers is not lower than the amount of existing 6-day pay 【Asked those who were not agreed with the proposal】**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	143	45.0
No	146	46.1
Don't know / Hard to say	28	8.9
Total	317	100.0

**Table 14. Whether disagreement with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” is due to the fear of income reduction of construction workers under the 5-day week arrangement 【Asked those who did not agree with the proposal】**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	201	63.5
No	109	34.5
Don't know / Hard to say	6	2.0
Total	317	100.0

3.18 As some respondents switched to show support to the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal with the guarantee of the construction workers receiving at least the same amount of existing 6-day pay weekly, we re-grouped our respondents in three categories: (1) those who supported the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal unconditionally, (2) those who supported the proposal given that the weekly income of the construction workers is not lower than the existing 6-day pay, and



(3) those who did not support the proposal. Under this grouping, only a minority of respondents (9.6%) did not agree with the implementation of “No Saturday Site Work”. Over 80 per cent favored this idea (with 70.7% unconditionally and 9.4% conditionally) (Table 15).

**Table 15. Whether agreed with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”: 3 categories**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes, unconditionally	1074	70.7
Yes, conditionally	143	9.4
No	146	9.6
Don’t know / Hard to say	157	10.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>

3.19 Concerning the socio-demographic differences in views on the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”, a significantly greater proportion of women (83.3%) and younger age respondents (84.4%) favored this proposal unconditionally. Nevertheless, a significantly smaller proportion of skilled and semi-skilled workers (65.2%), high-income earners (with at least \$30,000 monthly income) (71.6%), current construction workers (56.9%), experienced workers in the trade (with at least 5 years) (56.2%), and those who did not support the implementation of 5-day week arrangement in all industries in the long run (52.4%) agreed with the proposal unconditionally (Table 16).

**Table 16. Whether agreed with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” by socio-demographic profile of the respondents**

	<b>Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” unconditionally (%)</b>	<b>Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” only if paid with at least the 6-day pay equivalent (%)</b>	<b>Does Not Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>*Sex</b>				
Male	74.0	11.2	14.9	645
Female	83.3	9.7	7.0	718

*(to be continued)*

**Table 16. Whether agreed with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” by socio-demographic profile of the respondents (cont’d)**

	Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” unconditionally (%)	Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” only if paid with at least the 6-day pay equivalent (%)	Does Not Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Age</b>				
15-39	84.4	8.0	7.6	697
40-59	73.5	12.9	13.6	649
<b>Educational attainment</b>				
Lower secondary or below	76.5	13.3	10.2	264
Upper secondary	79.5	10.1	10.3	533
Tertiary	79.4	9.5	11.1	558
<b>Whether working</b>				
Not working	82.6	9.3	8.1	443
Currently working	77.0	11.1	11.8	915
<b>*Occupation</b>				
High-level occupations	77.7	9.0	13.3	323
Clerical support workers	82.1	9.5	8.5	201
Service and shop sales workers	77.0	14.2	8.8	148
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	65.2	15.6	19.3	135
Elementary occupations	81.7	11.0	7.3	82
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>				
<\$10,000	82.9	11.4	5.7	158
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	77.3	11.2	11.5	348
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	78.8	12.1	9.1	165
\$30,000 or above	71.6	9.8	18.6	194
<b>*Whether working in the construction industry</b>				
Yes, currently	56.9	18.1	25.0	72
Yes, previously	67.8	12.6	19.5	87
No	80.8	10.0	9.2	1,206

*(to be continued)*

**Table 16. Whether agreed with the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” by socio-demographic profile of the respondents (cont’d)**

	Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” unconditionally (%)	Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” only if paid with at least the 6-day pay equivalent (%)	Does Not Agree with “No Saturday Site Work” (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Working experiences in the construction industry</b>				
Less than 5 years	72.0	9.8	18.3	82
At least 5 years	56.2	20.5	23.3	73
No experience	80.8	10.0	9.2	1,206
<b>*Whether support the implementation of 5-day week in all industries</b>				
Yes	88.8	6.9	4.3	945
No	52.4	20.1	27.4	328

\* p < 0.05

3.20 It might be intriguing to see that those who would be directly affected by the proposed “No Saturday Site Work” arrangement tended not to support this idea. As shown in Table 16, while only 9.2 per cent of those who had no experience in the construction industry did not agree with the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work”, around 20 per cent of the former and current workers in the industry were against the proposal. The comparatively higher level of resistance among “insiders” of the construction industry over the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” shown here actually echoes our findings of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with construction workers and contractors and sub-contractors of the industry being doubtful about the possibility of this proposed change in working time arrangement in the construction industry.

3.21 Nonetheless, a further point to note is that, those who were currently working in the industry (18.1%) and those who were more experienced in the trade (20.5%) tended to be more concerned about the possibility of income reduction under the proposed arrangement, which is reflected by the fact that a greater proportion of

them would agree with the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” if they were guaranteed to be paid with the existing level of 6-day pay weekly. These findings suggest that more support could be obtained from construction workers if their level of wage is not affected by the new proposal.

3.22 Indeed, in the survey, we asked former construction workers whether they would consider returning to work in the industry should “No Saturday Site Work” be implemented and the weekly income of construction workers not be lower than the amount of existing 6-day pay. Around one-fifth of them (21.2%) said that they would give it a thought. 75.7 per cent expressed unwillingness to return to the industry (Table 17).

**Table 17. Whether considered returning to work in the construction industry should “No Saturday Site Work” be implemented and the weekly income of construction workers not be lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay**  
**【Asked only those had previously worked in the construction sites or involving in decoration and maintenance work for buildings】**

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	21.2
No	69	75.7
Don't Know / Hard to say	3	3.1
Total	91	100.0

3.23 As afore-mentioned, in the telephone survey, we asked those who strongly agreed or agreed with the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal in the construction industry if they would also favor the government to introduce a legislation for “No Saturday Site Work”. A majority of respondents agreed (62.0%) or strongly agreed (24.5%). While 10.9 per cent said “disagree”, 0.3 per cent showed strong disagreement (Table 18).

**Table 18. Whether agreed with the government introducing the legislation for “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry  
【Asked only those who agree / strongly agree that construction workers should be off on Saturdays and Sundays】**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	264	24.5
Agree	666	62.0
Disagree	117	10.9
Strongly disagree	4	0.3
Don't know / Hard to say	24	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1074</b>	<b>100.0</b>

3.24 As the proportion of respondents favoring the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” increased from 70.7 per cent to 80.1 per cent should the weekly income of construction workers not be lower than the existing 6-day pay, we asked the respondents again if they would encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers if “No Saturday Site Work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay. From Table 19, we can see that while two-fifths (43.8%) of respondents reported they would encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to join the construction industry workers if “No Saturday Site Work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay, nearly half (47.3%) said otherwise.

**Table 19. Whether encouraged job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers if “no Saturday site work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	666	43.8
No	719	47.3
Don't know / Hard to say	136	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>

3.25 Nevertheless, when comparing with the results shown in Table 8 (31.1 per cent of respondents saying “yes”), we can argue that both “No Saturday Site Work”

and the guarantee of equivalent amount of weekly pay could effectively motivate more of our respondents to support their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends in joining the construction industry. Furthermore, a greater proportion of younger respondents would become more encouraging and supportive with this proposed package of better benefits than when they were not told to have these two benefits added (46.4% of those aged 15-39 in Table 20 vs. 29.9% of the same group in Table 9). As also illustrated in Part II, younger respondents in the focus groups were more concerned about job security and income stability when looking for jobs and planning their careers.

3.26 Also, from Table 20, we can see that less advantaged groups are significantly different from their more advantaged counterparts in terms of whether showing encouragement to their family members, relatives, or friends in becoming construction workers. A significantly greater proportion of those with lower secondary or below education (59.6%), service and shop sales workers (58.1%), workers in elementary occupations (58.5%), and low-income earners (less than \$10,000) (64.1%) were supportive.

**Table 20. Whether encouraged job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers if “No Saturday site work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay by socio-demographic profile of the respondents**

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Weighted n
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	46.7	53.3	664
Female	49.4	50.6	721
<b>Age</b>			
15-39	46.4	53.6	702
40-59	50.8	49.2	662
<b>*Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	59.6	40.4	265
Upper secondary	52.2	47.8	523
Tertiary	39.3	60.7	585
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	47.7	52.3	436
Currently working	48.3	51.7	944

*(to be continued)*

**Table 20 Whether encouraged job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to become construction workers if “No Saturday site work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay by socio-demographic profile of the respondents (cont’d)**

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	36.4	63.6	335
Clerical support workers	51.7	48.3	211
Service and shop sales workers	58.1	41.9	148
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	55.0	45.0	140
Elementary occupations	58.5	41.5	82
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	64.1	35.9	153
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	47.1	52.9	359
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	50.3	49.7	173
\$30,000 or above	37.0	63.0	208
<b>Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	57.1	42.9	70
Yes, previously	53.9	46.1	89
No	47.2	52.8	1,224
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	50.6	49.4	81
At least 5 years	59.2	40.8	76
No experience	47.1	52.9	1,226

\*  $p < 0.05$

3.27 According to the Hong Kong Construction Association and the Construction Industry Group, major goals of implementing “No Saturday Site Work” are to improve the overall quality of working life of construction workers and to create a more sustainable future of the construction industry. As such, in the telephone survey, we asked the respondents about their views on whether the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” would be useful in four aspects: (1) to attract young people to join the construction industry, (2) to reduce industrial accidents in construction sites, (3) to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers, and (4) to enhance the image of the construction industry. It can be seen from Table 21 that, among these four

aspects, a far greater proportion of respondents (77.4%) believed that “No Saturday Site Work” would be very helpful or quite helpful to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers. Nonetheless, almost 70 per cent of respondents (69.6%) thought that the proposal would be very helpful or quite helpful to attract young people to join the construction. The corresponding figures for enhancing the image of the construction industry and reducing industrial accidents in construction sites were 58.1 per cent and 52.8 per cent.

**Table 21. Views on “No Saturday Site Work”**

	<b>Very helpful or Quite helpful</b>	<b>Not very helpful or Not helpful at all</b>	<b>Don’t know/ Hard to say</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Whether helpful to attract young people to join the construction industry</b>				
Frequency	1057	424	39	1520
Percentage	69.6	27.9	2.6	100.0
<b>Whether helpful to reduce industrial accidents in construction sites</b>				
Frequency	802	664	54	1520
Percentage	52.8	43.7	3.6	100.0
<b>Whether helpful to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers</b>				
Frequency	1176	293	51	1520
Percentage	77.4	19.3	3.3	100.0
<b>Whether helpful to enhance the image of the construction industry</b>				
Frequency	883	583	52	1519
Percentage	58.2	38.4	3.4	100.0

3.28 Overall, our survey respondents showed positive attitudes concerning the helpfulness of the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” to improve the overall quality of working life of construction workers and to create a more sustainable future of the construction industry. Concerning the differences between



socio-demographic groups in terms of the helpfulness of “No Saturday Site Work” in attracting young people to join the industry, significant differences were found between individuals of different levels of education, between occupational groups, and between respondents of different levels of income (Table 22). A significantly greater proportion of respondents with lower socio-economic background (with upper secondary or below educational attainment, being in elementary occupations, and earning less than \$10,000 per month) thought that the proposal would helpful in this particular aspect.

**Table 22. Whether “No Saturday site work” is helpful to attract young people to join the construction industry by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

	Very helpful & Quite helpful (%)	Not very helpful & Not helpful at all (%)	Weighted n
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	71.7	28.3	713
Female	71.1	28.9	768
<b>Age</b>			
15-39	70.7	29.3	736
40-59	72.5	27.5	724
<b>*Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	73.6	26.4	288
Upper secondary	75.7	24.3	552
Tertiary	66.8	33.2	630
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	71.6	28.4	464
Currently working	71.2	28.8	1,012
<b>*Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	67.8	32.2	363
Clerical support workers	73.3	26.7	225
Service and shop sales workers	70.7	29.3	157
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	69.9	30.1	146
Elementary occupations	85.4	14.6	89
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	79.9	20.1	164
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	67.4	32.6	384
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	75.4	24.6	179
\$30,000 or above	67.8	32.2	227

*(to be continued)*

**Table 22. Whether “No Saturday site work” is helpful to attract young people to join the construction industry by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (cont’d)**

	Very helpful & Quite helpful (%)	Not very helpful & Not helpful at all (%)	Weighted n
<b>Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	65.8	34.2	73
Yes, previously	75.3	24.7	97
No	71.5	28.5	1,310
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	77.3	22.7	88
At least 5 years	65.0	35.0	80
No experience	71.4	28.6	1,311

\*  $p < 0.05$

3.29 And concerning the helpfulness of “No Saturday Site Work” in reducing industrial accidents in construction sites, first, significant differences are observed between sexes and between socio-economic groups. A significantly greater proportion of more advantaged respondents (with tertiary education and with more earnings) were critical about the helpfulness of the proposal in this aspect. Second, we see significant differences between “insiders” and “outsiders”. Both current and former construction workers held a significantly less optimistic view than those who had no experience in the industry (Table 23). While 44.1 per cent of “outsiders” (who have never worked in the construction industry) believed that “No Saturday Site Work” was not useful in helping to reduce industrial accidents in construction sites, over half of the “insiders” (who have worked in the construction industry) held the same negative view.

**Table 23 Whether “No Saturday site work” is helpful to reduce industrial accidents in construction sites by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

	Very helpful & Quite helpful (%)	Not very helpful & Not helpful at all (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Sex</b>			
Male	48.8	51.2	709
Female	60.3	39.7	758
<b>Age</b>			
15-39	54.4	45.6	731
40-59	55.4	44.6	715
<b>*Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	61.7	38.3	282
Upper secondary	56.5	43.5	543
Tertiary	50.3	49.7	630
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	55.8	44.2	453
Currently working	54.2	45.8	1,006
<b>Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	48.6	51.4	364
Clerical support workers	55.7	44.3	219
Service and shop sales workers	59.5	40.5	153
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	52.3	47.7	149
Elementary occupations	59.6	40.4	89
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	66.9	33.1	160
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	51.3	48.7	384
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	56.2	43.8	178
\$30,000 or above	46.3	53.7	227
<b>*Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	45.9	54.1	74
Yes, previously	44.9	55.1	98
No	55.9	44.1	1,293
<b>*Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	46.6	53.4	88
At least 5 years	45.1	54.9	82
No experience	56.0	44.0	1,294

\* p < 0.05

3.30 In assessing the helpfulness of “No Saturday Site Work” in improving the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers, first, women and younger respondents were different from their male and older counterparts. Second, a significantly greater proportion of those in less advantaged groups said that the proposed working arrangement was not helpful in improving the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers. 31.3 per cent of less educated respondents and 39.3 per cent of skilled and semi-skilled workers said it was not helpful. In addition, “insiders” were also significantly different from “outsiders”, with a significantly greater proportion of current workers (50.0%) and more experienced workers (46.9%) saying that “No Saturday Site Work” was “not very helpful” or “not helpful at all” in improving the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers (Table 24). In other words, these insiders were more critical about the proposal in helping them to get better employment conditions.

**Table 24. Whether “No Saturday site work” is helpful to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

	Very helpful & Quite helpful (%)	Not very helpful & Not helpful at all (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Sex</b>			
Male	77.1	22.9	715
Female	82.9	17.1	754
<b>*Age</b>			
15-39	83.6	16.4	737
40-59	76.7	23.3	712
<b>*Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	68.7	31.3	278
Upper secondary	82.4	17.6	552
Tertiary	83.0	17.0	630
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	82.1	17.9	458
Currently working	79.1	20.9	1,007

*(to be continued)*

**Table 24. Whether “No Saturday site work” is helpful to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (cont’d)**

	Very helpful & Quite helpful (%)	Not very helpful & Not helpful at all (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	81.8	18.2	363
Clerical support workers	85.0	15.0	227
Service and shop sales workers	84.2	15.8	152
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	60.7	39.3	145
Elementary occupations	75.8	24.2	91
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	82.9	17.1	164
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	74.5	25.5	381
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	83.9	16.1	180
\$30,000 or above	79.2	20.8	226
<b>*Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	50.0	50.0	74
Yes, previously	70.1	29.9	97
No	82.5	17.5	1,297
<b>*Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	69.0	31.0	87
At least 5 years	53.1	46.9	81
No experience	82.5	17.5	1,298

\* p < 0.05

3.31 From Table 25, we can see that significant differences are found between sexes and between income groups in views over the helpfulness of “No Saturday Site Work” proposal in enhancing the image of the construction industry. A significantly greater proportion of women (64.6%) and low-income earners (less than \$10,000) (70.0%) believed that the proposal would be helpful to enhance the image of the construction industry.

**Table 25. Whether “No Saturday site work” is helpful to enhance the image of the construction industry by the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

	Very helpful & Quite helpful (%)	Not very helpful & Not helpful at all (%)	Weighted n
<b>*Sex</b>			
Male	55.6	44.4	711
Female	64.6	35.4	755
<b>Age</b>			
15-39	59.8	40.2	733
40-59	61.2	38.8	714
<b>Educational attainment</b>			
Lower secondary or below	61.6	38.4	276
Upper secondary	63.5	36.5	551
Tertiary	56.8	43.2	630
<b>Whether working</b>			
Not working	63.3	36.7	455
Currently working	58.7	41.3	1,006
<b>Occupation</b>			
High-level occupations	54.6	45.4	361
Clerical support workers	62.0	38.0	229
Service and shop sales workers	60.5	39.5	152
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	58.3	41.7	144
Elementary occupations	65.9	34.1	88
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>			
<\$10,000	70.0	30.0	160
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	53.9	46.1	380
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	63.1	36.9	179
\$30,000 or above	53.9	46.1	228
<b>Whether working in the construction industry</b>			
Yes, currently	57.5	42.5	73
Yes, previously	54.0	46.0	100
No	60.8	39.2	1,293
<b>Working experiences in the construction industry</b>			
Less than 5 years	56.7	43.3	90
At least 5 years	54.3	45.7	81
No experience	60.8	39.2	1,294

\* p < 0.05

## E. Views about Effective Means to Attracting New Blood to Become Construction Workers

3.32 As stated in the beginning of Part III, a major objective of the telephone survey is to examine public views concerning the effective means to attracting new workers to join the construction industry. In the telephone survey, respondents were given four options and asked about their personal views about which one of them was the most effective in attracting new workers to join the industry. As shown in Table 26, a greater proportion of respondents thought that increasing work benefits was most helpful (37.4%), which is followed by strengthening work safety (28.2%), enhancing the image of construction industry (18.3%), and improving the working environment of construction sites (12.0%). Another 1.2 per cent of respondents indicated other options, including a combination of more than one of the four available options, professionalization of the construction industry, and so on.

**Table 26. The most helpful way to attract new blood to become construction workers**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Improving the working environment of construction sites	183	12.0
Strengthening work safety	428	28.2
Enhancing the image of construction industry	278	18.3
Increasing work benefits	569	37.4
Others	18	1.2
Don't know / Hard to say	44	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1519</b>	<b>100.0</b>

3.33 Significant differences are found between all types of sub-groups in terms of their views concerning the most effective ways in attracting new workers to join the industry (Table 27). First, while respondents with lower socio-economic background (less educated respondents, skilled and semi-skilled workers, and low-income earners) tended to believe that materialistic rewards (such as work benefits) were the most helpful to encourage people to join the construction industry, their better-off counterparts (those with tertiary education, were in high-level occupations, and earned a higher income) were more concerned about

the non-materialist aspect (such as image of the construction industry). Second and nevertheless, a significantly greater proportion of respondents in lower socio-economic groups (those who were less educated, earned fewer income, and respondents in elementary occupations) stated that strengthening work safety was the most helpful to attract new blood to become construction workers.

**Table 27. The most helpful way to attract new blood to become construction workers by socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents**

	<b>Improving the working environment of construction sites (%)</b>	<b>Strengthening work safety (%)</b>	<b>Enhancing the image of construction industry (%)</b>	<b>Increasing work benefits (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>*Sex</b>					
Male	13.1	24.9	23.3	38.7	695
Female	12.1	33.5	15.2	39.2	762
<b>*Age</b>					
15-39	14.9	25.6	19.1	40.4	738
40-59	10.0	33.2	18.9	37.9	702
<b>*Educational attainment</b>					
Lower secondary or below	8.5	33.2	8.8	49.5	283
Upper secondary	11.1	33.2	18.1	37.6	542
Tertiary	15.5	24.5	24.8	35.2	625
<b>*Whether working</b>					
Not working	12.6	36.2	14.2	37.0	459
Currently working	12.6	26.1	21.4	39.9	991

*(to be continued)*



**Table 27. The most helpful way to attract new blood to become construction workers by socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (cont'd)**

	<b>Improving the working environment of construction sites (%)</b>	<b>Strengthening work safety (%)</b>	<b>Enhancing the image of construction industry (%)</b>	<b>Increasing work benefits (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>*Occupation</b>					
High-level occupations	12.0	24.4	27.5	36.1	357
Clerical support workers	12.4	28.4	21.6	37.6	218
Service and shop sales workers	12.7	25.5	19.7	42.0	157
Skilled and semi-skilled workers	13.2	20.8	16.0	50.0	144
Elementary occupations	10.5	36.0	11.6	41.9	86
<b>*Monthly income from employment</b>					
<\$10,000	10.6	35.0	10.0	44.4	160
\$10,000 - <\$20,000	13.2	25.4	19.3	42.1	378
\$20,000 - <\$30,000	11.3	22.6	29.9	36.2	177
\$30,000 or above	12.6	23.4	27.9	36.0	222
<b>*Whether working in the construction industry</b>					
Yes, currently	15.3	15.3	13.9	55.6	72
Yes, previously	11.6	15.8	21.1	51.6	95
No	12.5	31.0	19.2	37.2	1,289

*(to be continued)*

**Table 27. The most helpful way to attract new blood to become construction workers by socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents (cont'd)**

	<b>Improving the working environment of construction sites (%)</b>	<b>Strengthening work safety (%)</b>	<b>Enhancing the image of construction industry (%)</b>	<b>Increasing work benefits (%)</b>	<b>Weighted n</b>
<b>*Working experiences in the construction industry</b>					
Less than 5 years	12.2	18.9	17.8	51.1	90
At least 5 years	14.9	12.2	18.9	54.1	74
No experience	12.5	31.1	19.2	37.2	1,291

\* p < 0.05

3.34 Furthermore, as one of the main objectives of the current study is to explore ways in recruiting more construction workers, we shall attempt to look into the views of young people and of those who have got first-hand experiences of the construction industry so as to examine the concerns of these two potential sources of construction workers about their considerations to join or stay in the construction industry. Compared with their older counterparts, a significantly greater proportion of those aged 15-39 reported increased work benefits and improved working environment were the most helpful in attracting new workers to join the construction industry. As elaborated in Part II, young construction workers in our focus group discussion complained about the poor teamwork and low working morale they had experienced in their daily working lives. A collegial working environment is more crucial to younger people. Those who have ever worked in the construction industry were far more realistic with a significantly greater proportion of them believing that increasing work benefits would be most helpful for the recruitment of new construction workers. Indeed, in the focus group discussion, as well as increasing level of wage, they welcomed the change to monthly-rate wage system and the introduction of fringe benefits and paid holidays.

## **Part IV: Conclusion**

### **A. Background and Objectives**

- 4.1 Over the past few years, improving workers' benefits and promoting family-friendly policies have become a major concern of the labour organizations and the wider society. While the introduction of a statutory minimum wage in 2011 has been regarded as a remarkable success in the labour history of Hong Kong, a policy study on standard working hours was completed in the middle of 2012. The proponents of the legislation of standard working hours argue that its implementation would help workers to achieve a better work-life balance so as to increase the overall competitiveness of the economy of Hong Kong. Indeed, the government and some local enterprises and work organizations have already adopted a 5-day week working time arrangement in order to improve the overall quality of life of their employees and to create a motivated and high-morale workforce.
- 4.2 Sharing the belief of creating a people-centred workplace culture embraced by the entire society, the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) has set out one of its industry priorities as to improve the safety, health, and quality of life of people working in the construction industry. Specifically, the HKCA proposes "No Saturday" working arrangement which aims to help developing a viable and sustainable construction industry.
- 4.3 According to the government statistics, employees and workers in construction industry worked long hours. In 2011, while the average weekly total working hour of full-time employees was 49.0 hours, the average weekly contractual hours for those in construction industry were 51.6 hours (Labour Department 2012a). The long working hour culture among construction workers in Hong Kong is not atypical from an international perspective. For example, in Australia, site-based project staff in construction industry worked an average of 62.5 hours per week (Lingard et al. 2007). A consequence of this culture of long hours and weekend work is the difficulties to retain experienced and to recruit new construction workers. Empirical studies have concluded that "flexi

work” arrangements, such as compressed working week, are effective in helping to reduce the work-life conflict of employees and to maintain the overall productivity of organizations in different sectors (Bambra et al. 2008; Lingard et al. 2007).

4.4 In Hong Kong, there has been a rising concern over the shortage of labour and ageing of workers in construction industry in recent years. Part of the reason is the launch of ten major infrastructure projects, urban renewal plan, and other private and public works projects. Despite an increasing demand of manpower, there is an insufficient supply of construction workers, especially the younger ones. It is estimated that there will be a lack of 3,000 construction workers yearly over the next 5 years. Although the wage level of construction workers has been rising more rapidly than the rest of the workforce, severe difficulties are encountered in recruiting and retaining construction workers. Danger in construction work is always cited as one of the major obstacles in finding workers in the industry.

4.5 Given this background, with the financial support of the HKCA, the Dashun Policy Research Centre has commissioned the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong to study the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” in the construction industry and the ways in recruiting new and young workers to join the industry. The ultimate goal is to create a sustainable future for the construction industry. Accordingly, the two major objectives of the current research are:

(1) To gauge the attitudes of various stakeholders in the construction industry and the general public towards the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” and

(2) To identify effective means to attract fresh blood to join the construction industry.

4.6 In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and a representative territory-wide telephone survey were carried out in order to gather views of the insiders and young people in particular and the Hong Kong public in general concerning

various topics over the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” and the recruitment of more construction workers. In the following, we shall highlight the key findings from our qualitative and quantitative parts of the study. While their implications will be further discussed, suggestions will then be illustrated.

## **B. Findings from In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions: Highlights**

- 4.7 Between July and August 2012, four in-depth interviews with trade union leaders, sub-contractors, and employers of the construction workers and three focus group discussions with construction workers and young people were carried out. As well as eliciting their views on the general image of the construction industry and construction workers and their diagnoses of labour shortage problem in the industry, they were asked to comment on the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative and to suggest effective ways in encouraging more potential workers to enter the construction industry.
- 4.8 Similar to the rather negative image of construction industry and construction workers held by the general public in Hong Kong, our respondents saw construction work as “tough”, “rough”, and “dangerous”. Young respondents who were former construction workers also pointed out the non-friendly working environment and lack of peer support culture in the construction sites. Their older counterparts not only complained about the undesirable working conditions, but also expressed their safety concerns in working in the construction sites. Furthermore, young potential workers in our focus group discussions were particularly unhappy with the job insecurity and income instability incurred from the sub-contracting system and the mode of self-employment conventionally adopted in the construction industry in Hong Kong.
- 4.9 As for their views on “No Saturday Site Work”, there were both for and against. While subcontractors and current workers had reservations, workers’ leaders of the industry and our young respondents generally favored the implementation of “No Saturday” working in the long run. First, from the perspective of

sub-contractors, their main concern was to meet the deadline scheduled for project completion and they thus strongly opposed the change to 5-day week for construction workers as it would lead to the failure to meet the tight schedule of different construction projects. Second, current construction workers were particularly concerned with the effect of the new working time arrangement on the reduction of their overall take-home pay and they were very doubtful about the possibility of being given 6-day pay with only 5-day work.

- 4.10 Sharing the worries of their fellow workers, workers' leaders suggested reforms over the existing employment relationship between construction workers and their sub-contractors and also the wage payment arrangement of construction workers. Although they regarded "No Saturday Site Work" as a way in improving the work benefits of construction workers, these leaders added that the proposal could only be implemented successfully if the employment system for construction workers was reformed. Young participants in our focus groups generally welcomed the proposal which allowed them to have more free leisure time. But, they also explicitly told us that career prospect and job satisfaction were more crucial factors for them when considering a long-term career.
- 4.11 In brief, in principle, many of our respondents in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions did not oppose the introduction of "No Saturday Site Work" if other measures, such as maintaining the new level of weekly wage as that received under the current 6-day week arrangement, reforming the mode of employment and the sub-contracting system used in the construction industry, etc., were introduced at the same time. In addition, the proposal of new working time arrangement was well perceived by young respondents in the focus groups, which suggests that it would help to attract younger potential workers to join the industry.
- 4.12 As well as ensuring the job security and income stability of construction workers, our interviewees suggested other possible ways in retaining current workers and attracting new workers of the construction industry, including strengthening the occupational safety of the construction sites, promoting the image of the construction industry and the social status of construction workers,

improving the working environments of the construction sites, and increasing the wage of construction workers further.

### **C. Findings from the Telephone Survey: Highlights**

4.13 Apart from the active involvement of direct stakeholders of the construction industry (current construction workers, sub-contractors, and employers), the successful implementation of “No Saturday Site Work” and the development of a constant and sufficient level of labour force in the construction industry also lie in the support from the general public who are the potential workers and their family members, relatives, or friends. In order to tap the views of the public in Hong Kong, a territory-wide representative telephone survey was conducted in the middle of November to interview over 1,500 respondents aged 15-59.

4.14 First, a majority of respondents were not only optimistic about the prospect of the construction industry, but also knowledgeable about the wage level of construction workers. More educated respondents were significantly different from their less educated counterparts with the former being more positive and knowledgeable. Nevertheless, the respondents were more cautious when being asked to estimate the job market for construction workers. Less than half of them said it would be easier for construction workers to find jobs in the next few years.

4.15 Second, unlike the “insiders” we studied in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, “outsiders”, who never worked in the construction industry and probably had little first-hand knowledge about the industry, showed a more favorable view towards the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative. We have found that, first, over two-thirds of respondents favored the proposal. The proportion of supporters to “No Saturday Site Work” has been increasing to over 80 per cent should the weekly income be guaranteed to the level of the existing 6-day pay. In other words, most of our respondents hoped to see this new working time arrangement to be implemented in the long run, which is one of the visions of the Hong Kong Construction Association to have the plan fully introduced by 2020.

- 4.16 The view of the construction workers interviewed in the telephone survey was shared by their counterparts in the qualitative part of this research, with a significantly greater proportion of these “insiders” felt hesitated about the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work”. A closer look at the data reveals that their reluctance to support was due to their concerns over the potential reduction of overall wage should they work 5 days instead of 6 days a week. A point to note is that, both the “No Saturday Site Work” and the 5-day week arrangement were strongly welcomed by younger respondents in the telephone survey.
- 4.17 On the contrary, compared with those who had no working experience in the construction industry, “insiders” were more supportive in terms of encouraging their family members, friends, or relative to become construction workers. Overall, over two-fifths of our respondents in the telephone survey said that they would encourage their family members, friends, or relative to become construction workers if “No Saturday” working is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay. In addition, a majority of the respondents viewed the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” in a very positive light in terms of its helpfulness to attract young people to join the construction industry, to reduce industrial accidents in construction sites, to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers, and to enhance the image of the construction industry.
- 4.18 Indeed, similar to our respondents in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, many of those interviewed in the telephone survey believed that increasing work benefits was the most effective way in attracting fresh blood to become construction workers. A significantly greater proportion of younger respondents shared this view.
- 4.19 Overall, results from the telephone survey reveal that the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” was well supported by the general public. Nevertheless, construction workers showed some reservations about this proposed change in working time arrangement. Also, from the telephone survey, we have found



that increasing work benefits was regarded by both younger respondents and those who had experience in the construction industry as the most effective way in attracting new blood to become construction workers. This might suggest that, first, the successful implementation of “No Saturday Site Work” would require the widespread support from all stakeholders in the construction industry in general and construction workers in particular. Second, in order to attract more younger workers and to retain more experienced workers so as to build a sustainable future of the construction industry, work benefits, including both wage and fringe benefits, should be set at the level at which both potential and existing workers are reasonably happy with.

#### **D. Implications and Suggestions**

4.20 As pointed out in Part I, existing studies show that two factors are crucial in determining the successful introduction of compressed working week arrangement in various occupational contexts: workers’ support and the maintenance of existing level of pay especially for wages workers under this new arrangement (Bambra et al. 2007; Lingard et al. 2008). In the current research, we have found that not only a majority of Hong Kong public favoring the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative, but also many of these supporters agreed with going down to the legislative route. Obviously, this high level of support from the general public provides a promising start for the stakeholders in the construction industry to launch this new working time arrangement as set out as one of the visions of the Hong Kong Construction Association.

4.21 From our results, it seems that the obstacle of introducing “No Saturday” work comes from the “insiders”, including construction workers, sub-contractors, and employers of the construction workers. On the one hand, they have had concerns over the possibility of maintaining the existing level of wage of the workers under the current sub-contracting system and self-employment mode. On the other, they have explicitly seen the long-term benefits of this new initiative in terms of improving the work benefits of existing workers and attracting fresh blood to join the construction industry.

4.22 In order to solicit the support from “insiders” whom we regard as the major stakeholder of the proposed “No Saturday Site Work”, the research team proposes the following:

(1) To actively engage construction workers in the discussion over the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative: From our findings and observations, some of the oppositions expressed by the workers are due to their incomplete knowledge about the benefits of the new working time proposal. More campaign work has to be done in order to let workers fully informed about the details of the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal. The overseas experience in implementing compressed working week could form the basis of discussion to address the concerns and worries of the construction workers about the reduction of their overall weekly wage.

(2) To fully consult relevant contractor associations and sub-contractor associations, employers of the construction workers, relevant bureaux, and public and private developers about their views and suggestions over the introduction of “No Saturday Site Work”: Although meetings with contractors, sub-contractors, and employers of the construction workers over the proposed “No Saturday” work have been held, more wider-scale consultation and lobbying work are needed in order to collect views of these stakeholders. Particular focuses would be on discussing the viable ways of implementing “No Saturday Site Work” without leading to the loss of workers’ income which they are currently receiving.

(3) To carry out in-depth studies to examine the socio-economic impacts of the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative on different stakeholders in the construction industry and to explore viable ways in the successful implementation of the proposal: As emphasized by our informants in the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, unlike other sectors, implementation of new working time arrangement in the construction industry involves more complex issues, such as the synchronization of compressed working week with the sub-contracting system, daily wage payment arrangement, and project-based working approach widely adopted in the industry. Further investigations are needed in order to

formulate workable plans to cater for the specificities of the construction industry when introducing workers' benefits across the industry.

4.23 As reported in Part II and Part III, both current workers and young people acknowledged “No Saturday Site Work” as one of the benefits for construction workers and these two groups of respondents believed that increasing workers' benefits would be the most effective way in attracting new blood to become construction workers. Therefore, we argue that the proposed introduction of “No Saturday Site Work” is a right direction when considering ways in retaining experiences workers and recruiting new workers for the construction industry so as to build a sustainable construction industry. In addition, we propose the following in order to attract younger people to become construction workers and to maintain an adequate supply of workers for the construction industry.

(1) To provide a career ladder system for new entrants of the construction industry: Young people of this generation have higher expectations over their jobs and careers than their parents and older counterparts. They rank career prospect as a top priority when looking for jobs and long-term careers. A wider range of skill-upgrading courses and a more sophisticated accredited training system could be offered to enable young construction workers to promote from craft workers to master craftsmen, construction supervisors, or construction superintendents in the industry.

(2) To use more advanced and safer machines so as to match the increasing use of modern building and construction techniques: Unsafe working environment and the occurrence of fatal industrial accidents were repeatedly mentioned by our young respondents as factors of pushing them away from joining the construction industry and of making them leave the industry. As elaborated in Part I, the construction industry records the highest number of industrial accidents, which certainly discourages potential people from entering the industry. While contractors should provide their workers with safer machines and tools, the government should persevere with the drive and motivation for the contractors in enhancing their safety systems at work and best practices in the construction sites.

(3) To create a more young-worker-friendly working culture: Some contractors have participated in the new scheme of taking extra care of the safety of new entrants in the construction sites, with new workers putting on stickers on their hamlets. The stickers would enable existing and experienced workers to identify new entrants and so to keep an eye on their work safety. Instead of a voluntary scheme, it should become mandatory. In addition, a mentor scheme could be introduced to each contractor or sub-contractor and so experienced construction workers could provide more practical tips and knowledge to their new and young fellow workers. Young workers especially need support from their peers as shown in our focus group discussions.

(4) To launch a large-scale public campaign to promote the “No Saturday Site Work” initiative: Results from the telephone survey show that the “No Saturday Site Work” proposal in the construction industry motivated more respondents, particularly the younger ones, to encourage their job-seeking family members, relatives, or friends to join the industry. Intensive and territory-wide promotion activities of this newly proposed working time arrangement are needed especially at the times prior to its implementation. As such, not only the benefits of “No Saturday Site Work” could be reinforced, but also the image of the construction industry and construction work could be enhanced. The promising prospect of the industry could have a positive impact on attracting new blood to join the industry and developing a sustainable industry.

4.24 The proposed “No Saturday Site Work” initiative has been well perceived by the general public in Hong Kong. Given the highly complex nature of “No Saturday Site Work”, it is essential that both the public and major stakeholders within the construction industry are fully aware of the benefits it would bring, the issues that involved, and the potential implications to the construction industry. Specifically, a task group could be set up with representatives from all relevant sectors of the construction industry and the community to resolve differences amongst stakeholders and the problems that have to be overcome for its implementation. This current study is preliminary in nature and aims to kick-start a discussion on the proposal of “No Saturday Site Work” with active

participation from construction workers, contractors, sub-contractors, developers, and the general public through provision of empirical findings. More in-depth investigations and informed discussions and exchanges will in the end contribute to the successful implementation of the initiative in the foreseeable

*(The End)*

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## Appendix 1: Profiles of Interviewees of In-depth Interviews

### Interview 1

*Interviewees:* Lawrence S. W. NG (*President, Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association*)  
CHAN Kim-kwong (*Chairman, Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association*)  
Eric Chun-yuen TSE (*Permanent Honorary President, Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association*)

*Date:* 9 July 2012

*Venue:* Office of Hong Kong Construction Sub-Contractors Association

*Duration:* 3 hours

### Interview 2

*Interviewee:* Philco N. K. WONG (*General Manager-SCL, MTR Corporation Limited*)

*Date:* 10 July 2012

*Venue:* MTR Hung Hom Building

*Duration:* 1 hour 15 minutes

### Interview 3

*Interviewee:* CHOW Luen-kiu (*Chairman, Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union*)

*Date:* 12 July 2012

*Venue:* Office of Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union

*Duration:* 2 hours



#### **Interview 4**

*Interviewee:* Charles Doon-yee WONG (*Director-Training and Development, Construction Industry Council*)

*Date:* 16 July 2012

*Venue:* Headquarters of Construction Industry Council

*Duration:* 1 hour 15 minutes

## Appendix 2: Profiles of Participants of Focus Groups

### Focus Group 1 (Target : Youth)

#### 1. Basic Information:

*No. of participants:* 5

*Date:* 11 July 2012

*Venue:* Conference Room of Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific  
Studies (Room 506 Esther Lee Building, CUHK)

*Duration:* 2 hours

#### 2. Composition of Participants

Participant No.:	1	2	3	4	5
Gender:	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age:	18	17	22	17	25
Education:	Form 6	Form 6	Form 5	Form 6	Form 5
Place of Birth:	Mainland China	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Occupation:	Student	Student	Un-employed	Student	Warehouse keeper
Years of working experience	None	None	Unknown	None	7
Working experience in construction industry	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

<b>Focus Group 2 (Target: Construction Site Workers)</b>
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1. Basic Information:

*No. of participants:* 4

*Date:* 25 July 2012

*Venue:* Conference Room of Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (Room 506, Esther Lee Building, CUHK)

*Duration:* 2 hours 30 minutes

2. Composition of Participants

Participant No.:	1	2	3	4
Gender:	Male	Male	Male	Female
Age:	51	61	61	53
Education:	Secondary School	Uneducated	Primary School	Primary School
Place of Birth:	Mainland China	Mainland China	Hong Kong	Mainland China
Marital status:	Married	Married	Married	Married
Occupation:	Plasterer	Formwork worker	Labourer	Labourer
Working experience in construction industry	30 years	39 years	18 years	10 years

## B. Focus Group 3 (Target: Construction Site Workers)

### 1. Basic Information:

*No. of participants:* 6

*Date:* 1 August 2012

*Venue:* Office of Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees  
General Union

*Duration:* 2 hours

### 2. Composition of Participants

Participant No.:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gender:	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age:	46	52	45	58	45	61
Education:	Post-secondary	Secondary School	Primary School	Primary School	Secondary School	Secondary School
Place of Birth:	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Mainland China	Hong Kong	Hong Kong
Marital status:	Single	Married	Married	Married	Married	Married
Occupation:	Painter	Carpenter	Plumber	Painter	Plumber	Decorator
Working experience in construction industry	28 years	38 years	23 years	35 years	30 years	36 years

## Appendix 3: Discussion Guides for Informant Interviews and Focus Groups (in Chinese)

### A. In-depth Interviews 1 & 2: Developers & Sub-Contractors

#### 1. Perception of Construction Work (對地盤工的觀感)

- 1.1. 你覺得一般市民會點睇香港嘅地盤工作？
- 1.2. 咁你覺得做地盤嘅前景如何？（如：夠唔夠工程？）
- 1.3. 咁你覺得現時地盤工人手夠唔夠？（追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？）
- 1.4. 咁你覺得現時地盤工人嘅流失率嚴唔嚴重？（追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？）
- 1.5. 咁你覺得現時地盤工多唔多新人入行？（追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？）
- 1.6. 咁你會唔會覺得不少嘅地盤工作均出見青黃不接嘅情況？
- 1.7. 咁長遠嚟講，你覺得人手問題會唔會影響到你哋？（追問：咁會點樣影響？點解會有咁嘅睇法，宜家業界 / 政府有無做過啲乜嘢嚟解決呢個問題？）

#### 2. No-Saturday-Site-Work Scheme (工地星期六休息)

- 2.1. 你覺得如果地盤工好似一般寫字樓工咁唔駛再返禮拜六嘅話，呢個提議對鼓勵新人入行，同埋減少現時工人嘅流失有無幫助？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.2. 除咗吸收新人入行同埋減少現時工人嘅流失外，你覺得呢個建議對提升整個行業嘅印象會有啲乜嘢影響？
- 2.3. 咁對你嚟講，如果真係實施呢個建議，會對你哋有乜嘢影響？（如：成本、時間，工期）
- 2.4. 你覺得呢個提議喺現實上做唔做得到？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.5. 咁你覺得如果真係落實呢個建議嘅話，喺執行上有啲乜嘢需要考慮？
- 2.6. 咁長遠嚟講，除咗實施「工地星期六休息」之外，你認為有啲乜嘢係政府、工會同埋業界可以做去鼓勵多啲新人入行？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？同埋你覺得呢個建議對整個行業有乜其他影響？）

## **B. In-depth Interviews 3: Leaders of Trade Union**

### **1. Perception of Construction Work (對地盤工的觀感)**

- 1.1. 你覺得宜家一般市民會點睇香港嘅地盤工作？
- 1.2. 你覺得地盤工作有乜嘢優點或者缺點？(如工時長、日曬雨淋、安全、工作穩定性、工資、自由度、退休保障、職業病...)
- 1.3. 咁你覺得做地盤嘅前景如何？
- 1.4. 咁你覺得現時地盤工人手夠唔夠？(追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？)
- 1.5. 咁你覺得現時地盤工人嘅流失率嚴唔嚴重？(追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？)
- 1.6. 咁你覺得現時地盤工多唔多新人入行？(追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？)
- 1.7. 咁你會唔會覺得不少嘅地盤工作均出見青黃不接嘅情況？
- 1.8. 咁長遠嚟講，你覺得人手問題會唔會影響到本地嘅建築業嘅發展？(追問：咁會點樣影響？點解會有咁嘅睇法？ 宜家業界 / 政府有無做過啲乜嘢嚟解決呢個問題？)

### **2. No-Saturday-Site-Work Scheme (工地星期六休息)**

- 2.1. 你覺得如果地盤工好似一般寫字樓工咁唔駛再返禮拜六嘅話，呢個提議對鼓勵新人入行，同埋減少現時工人嘅流失有無幫助？(追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？)
- 2.2. 除咗吸收新人入行同埋減少現時工人嘅流失外，你覺得呢個建議對提升整個行業嘅印象會有啲乜嘢影響？
- 2.3. 你覺得呢個提議喺現實上做唔做得到？(追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？)
- 2.4. 咁你覺得如果真係落實呢個建議嘅話，喺執行上有啲乜嘢需要考慮？
- 2.5. 咁長遠嚟講，除咗實施「工地星期六休息」之外，你又認為有啲乜嘢方案可以鼓勵新人入行(追問點解會有咁嘅睇法？同埋你覺得呢個建議對整個行業有乜嘢其他影響？)

## C. In-depth Interviews 4: Construction Industry Council

### 1. Perception of Construction Work (對地盤工的觀感)

- 1.1. 你覺得宜家一般市民會點睇香港嘅地盤工作？
- 1.2. 咁你覺得做地盤嘅前景如何？
- 1.3. 可唔可以講吓宜家嚟讀建造業議會訓練學院嘅人係以咩人為主？
- 1.4. 咁你覺得現時建造業議會訓練學院收生嘅情況如何？又多唔多學員完成課程之後唔入行？（追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？）
- 1.5. 咁你覺得現時有無學員流失嘅問題？（如有，追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生？）
- 1.6. 咁你覺得現時地盤工夠唔夠人手？（追問：咁你覺得點解會有咁嘅情況發生嘅？）
- 1.7. 咁你會唔會覺得不少嘅地盤工作均出見青黃不接嘅情況？
- 1.8. 咁長遠嚟講，你覺得收生問題會唔會影響到本地嘅建築業發展？（追問：咁會點樣影響？點解會有咁嘅睇法？宜家業界 / 政府有無做過啲乜嘢嚟解決呢個問題？）

### 2. No-Saturday-Site-Work Scheme (工地星期六休息)

- 2.1. 你覺得如果地盤工好似一般寫字樓工咁唔駛再返禮拜六嘅話，呢個提議對鼓勵新人入行，同埋減少現時工人嘅流失有無幫助？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.2. 除咗吸收新人入行同埋減少現時工人嘅流失外，你覺得呢個建議對提升整個行業嘅印象會有啲乜嘢影響？
- 2.3. 你覺得呢個提議喺現實上做唔做得到？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.4. 咁你覺得如果真係落實呢個建議嘅話，喺執行上有啲乜嘢需要考慮？
- 2.5. 咁長遠嚟講，除咗實施「工地星期六休息」之外，你又認為有啲乜嘢方案可以鼓勵新人入行？（追問點解會有咁嘅睇法？同埋你覺得呢個建議對整個行業有乜嘢其他影響？）

## **D. Focus Group 1: Youth**

### **1. Perception of Construction Work (對地盤工的觀感)**

- 1.1. 你哋對地盤工作有啲乜嘢認識？好似有啲乜嘢地盤工種？佢地會有乜嘢資歷或學歷？
- 1.2. 一般嚟講，你對做地盤工作有乜嘢印象？（如工作性質，行業從業員的社會地位、工資、晉升機會等）（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 1.3. 你覺得做地盤工有啲乜嘢優點或者缺點？  
（如工時長、日曬雨淋、安全、工作穩定性、工資、自由度、退休保障、職業病...）
- 1.4. 你通過啲咩途徑認識地盤工？  
（如認識一些地盤工人，追問：咁喺佢哋嘅身上，你對本港的建築業有乜嘢印象？）  
（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 1.5. 咁你覺得宜家一般市民會點睇香港嘅地盤工作？
- 1.6. 咁有機會嘅話，你想唔想入 / 轉行做地盤？（追問點解？）
- 1.7. 咁你覺得做地盤嘅前景如何？（追問：如開工情況、人工增長等）
- 1.8. 你有否考慮其他行業？（追問其他行業吸引原因）

### **2. Attitudes towards “No-Saturday-Site-Work Scheme” (對工地星期六休息的看法)**

- 2.1. 你覺得如果地盤工都好似一般寫字樓工咁唔駛再返禮拜六，呢個提議對鼓勵新人入行做地盤有無幫助？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.2. 除咗吸收新人入行外，你覺得呢個建議對提升整個行業嘅印象會有啲乜嘢影響？
- 2.3. 咁對你嚟講，如果真係實施呢個建議，你會唔會考慮入 / 轉行做地盤？（追問點解？）
- 2.4. 你覺得呢個提議喺現實上做唔做得到？
- 2.5. 咁你覺得如果真係落實呢個建議嘅話，喺執行上有啲乜嘢需要考慮？（如有回應，追問點解會有咁嘅睇法？）



- 2.6. 咁長遠嚟講，除咗實施「工地星期六休息」之外，你又認為有啲乜嘢方案可以鼓勵新人入行？(追問點解會有咁嘅睇法？同埋你覺得呢個建議對整個行業有乜嘢其他影響？)

## **E. Focus Group 2 & 3: Construction Site Workers**

### **1. Perception of Construction Work (對地盤工的觀感)**

- 1.1. 一般嚟講，你點睇自己嘅工作？（如工作性質，行業從業員的社會地位、工資、晉升機會等）（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 1.2. 你覺得你嘅工作有乜嘢優點或者缺點？（如工時長、日曬雨淋、安全、工作穩定性、工資、自由度、退休保障、職業病...）
- 1.3. 咁你覺得宜家一般市民同你身邊嘅人會點睇香港嘅地盤工作？
- 1.4. 咁你覺得呢一行夠唔夠人手？同埋有無青黃不接嘅情況？
- 1.5. 咁有機會嘅話，你想唔想轉行做其他行業？（追問點解？）
- 1.6. 咁你又會唔會建議你嘅親人或朋友轉行做地盤？（追問點解？）
- 1.7. 咁你覺得做地盤嘅前景如何？
- 1.8. 你有否考慮其他行業？（追問其他行業吸引原因）

### **2. No-Saturday-Site-Work Scheme (工地星期六休息)**

- 2.1. 你覺得如果地盤工都好似一般寫字樓工咁唔駛再返禮拜六，呢個提議對鼓勵新人入行做地盤有無幫助？（追問：點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.2. 除咗吸收新人入行外，你覺得呢個建議對提升整個行業嘅印象會有啲乜嘢影響？（如之前有參與者曾考慮轉工）咁對你嚟講，如果真係實施呢個建議，你會唔會考慮打消轉行嘅念頭？（追問點解？）
- 2.3. 咁如果實施呢個建議之後，你又會唔會建議你嘅親人或朋友轉行做地盤？（追問點解？）
- 2.4. 你覺得呢個提議喺現實上做唔做得到？（追問點解會有咁嘅睇法？）
- 2.5. 咁你覺得如果真係落實呢個建議嘅話，喺執行上有啲乜嘢需要考慮？
- 2.6. 咁長遠嚟講，除咗實施「工地星期六休息」之外，你又認為有啲乜嘢方案可以鼓勵新人入行？（追問點解會有咁嘅睇法？同埋你覺得呢個建議對整個行業有乜嘢其他影響？）

## Appendix 4: Details of the Fieldwork of Telephone Survey

Date	:	November 8-16, 2012 (6:15 p.m. to 10:15 p.m.)
Target population	:	Hong Kong residents aged 15 to 59
Method	:	Random sample telephone survey
Sampling	:	Firstly, telephone numbers were randomly selected from the latest Hong Kong Residential Telephone Directory (both the Chinese and English versions) as seed numbers. To include unpublished telephone numbers, we replaced by computer the last two digits of the selected telephone numbers with two new, random digits. This became the sample of the study. Secondly, when telephone contact was successfully established with a target household, only a person aged 15 to 59 was randomly selected for an interview.
Successful sample size	:	1,520
Fieldwork Results		
Total Telephone Numbers		28,000
<i>Non-contactable households:</i>		<i>20,854</i>
Invalid lines	12,245	
Non-residential	1,090	
Fax number/password/voice machine	1,466	
Busy line	358	
No one contacted	5,695	
<i>Contacted telephone numbers:</i>		<i>7,146</i>
No eligible respondents	732	
Initial refusal and other problems	3,523	
(No valid respondents could be identified)		
Refusals by eligible respondents	1,339	
Eligible respondents were unavailable	32	
Successfully interviewed	<u>1,520</u>	
Response rate	:	$1,520 / (1,520 + 1,339 + 32) * 100\% = 52.6\%$
Sampling error	:	At a 95% confidence level, the standard error of the sample is 0.0128 and the maximum estimated sampling error for a sample of 1,520 cases is within the range of $\pm 2.51\%$ .

## Appendix 5: Details of Weighting in Telephone Survey

In order to be in line with the distribution of the population living in Hong Kong, the data of this survey has been weighted based on the population's age-sex distribution (excluding foreign domestic helpers) in 2011 Census provided by the Census and Statistics Department.

The calculation is summarized in the following table:

Age group	Age-sex distribution of residents in 2011 Census		Age-sex distribution of respondents from the survey		Weighting factors 【Note 2】	
	Male (A)	Female (B)	Male (C)	Female (D)	Male (A÷C)	Female (B÷D)
15-19	4.678	4.442	5.611	4.81	0.834	0.923
20-24	4.772	4.625	4.342	5.478	1.099	0.844
25-29	4.934	5.110	3.741	3.474	1.319	1.471
30-34	4.855	5.633	3.874	3.808	1.253	1.479
35-39	5.039	6.058	4.275	6.079	1.179	0.997
40-44	5.213	6.466	5.945	8.216	0.877	0.787
45-49	6.350	7.312	5.878	6.346	1.080	1.152
50-54	6.729	6.819	5.812	10.22	1.158	0.667
50-59	5.464	5.502	5.544	6.546	0.986	0.841
Total	48.034	51.967	45.022	54.977	1.067	0.945

\* Those who refused to disclose their age in the survey will be weighted according to the sex ratio.

## Appendix 6: Frequency Table of Demographics of Telephone Survey

SEX	Gender of the respondents					
	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Male	688	45.3	45.3	733	48.2	48.2
2. Female	832	54.7	54.7	788	51.8	51.8
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0
Valid cases: 1520			Valid cases: 1520			
Missing cases: 0			Missing cases: 0			

### AGE "What is your age?"

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. 15-19	157	10.3	10.5	137	9.0	9.1
2. 20-24	147	9.7	9.8	141	9.3	9.4
3. 25-29	108	7.1	7.2	150	9.9	10.0
4. 30-34	114	7.5	7.6	157	10.3	10.5
5. 35-39	155	10.2	10.4	166	10.9	11.1
6. 40-44	213	14.0	14.2	175	11.5	11.7
7. 45-49	182	12.0	12.2	205	13.5	13.7
8. 50-54	240	15.8	16.0	203	13.3	13.5
9. 55-59	181	11.9	12.1	164	10.8	11.0
99. Refused to answer	23	1.5	Missing	23	1.5	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0
Valid cases: 1497			Valid cases: 1497			
Missing cases: 23			Missing cases: 23			

**EDU “What is your educational attainment?”**

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Not educated or pre-school level	4	0.3	0.3	4	0.3	0.3
2. Primary education (P.1 – P.6)	93	6.1	6.2	83	5.4	5.5
3. Secondary education (S.1 – S.3)	221	14.5	14.7	210	13.8	14.0
4. Secondary education (S.4 – S.7)	578	38.0	38.4	567	37.3	37.7
5. Tertiary education (Non-degree)	169	11.1	11.2	174	11.4	11.5
6. Tertiary education (Degree and above)	442	29.1	29.3	469	30.8	31.1
9. Refused to answer	13	0.9	Missing	14	0.9	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases: 1507

Valid cases: 1507

Missing cases: 13

Missing cases: 14

**WORK “Are you working?” (If no, please specify the reasons)**

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. No: Student	220	14.5	14.5	200	13.1	13.2
2. No: Home-maker	192	12.6	12.7	171	11.2	11.3
3. No: Retired	48	3.2	3.2	42	2.8	2.8
4. No: Unemployed	57	3.8	3.8	59	3.9	3.9
5. Working	997	65.6	65.9	1043	68.6	68.9
9. Refused to answer	6	0.4	Missing	7	0.4	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases: 1514

Valid cases: 1514

Missing cases: 6

Missing cases: 7

**WORKER1 “Have you worked in any construction site or involved in any decoration and maintenance work for buildings?”**

**【 Asked only those who are working or unemployed 】**

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes	166	10.9	15.7	176	11.6	16.0
2. No	887	58.4	84.2	924	60.7	83.9
8. Don't know/Hard to say	1	0.1	0.1	1	0.1	0.1
0. Inapplicable	466	30.7	Missing	419	27.6	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0
	Valid cases: 1054			Valid cases: 1101		
	Missing cases: 466			Missing cases: 419		

**WORKER2 “How long have you worked in the construction site or involved in decoration and maintenance work for buildings?”**

**【 Asked only those who have worked in construction sites or involved in decoration and maintenance works for buildings 】**

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Less than 1 year	40	2.6	24.1	42	2.8	23.9
2. 1 to less than 5 years	44	2.9	26.5	48	3.1	27.0
3. 5 to less than 10 years	21	1.4	12.7	22	1.5	12.7
4. 10 to less than 20 years	23	1.5	13.9	25	1.6	14.1
5. 20 years or above	36	2.4	21.7	37	2.4	21.0
8. Don't know/Hard to say	2	0.1	1.2	2	0.1	1.3
0. Inapplicable	1354	89.1	Missing	1344	88.4	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0
	Valid cases: 166			Valid cases: 176		
	Missing cases: 1354			Missing cases: 1344		

**WORKER3 “Are you still working in the construction site or involving in decoration and maintenance work for buildings?”**

【Asked only those who have worked in construction sites or involved in decoration and maintenance works for buildings】

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes	73	4.8	44.5	76	5.0	43.1
2. No (currently working in other industry)	84	5.5	50.6	91	6.0	51.7
3. No (currently employed)	9	0.6	5.4	9	0.6	5.2
0. Inapplicable	1354	89.1	Missing	1344	88.4	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases: 166

Missing cases: 1354

Valid cases: 176

Missing cases: 1344



**OCCUP “What is your occupation?”**

**【Asked only those who are working (but excluding those who are working in the construction site or involving in decoration and maintenance work for buildings)】**

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Managers & administrators	138	9.1	15.4	143	9.4	15.3
2. Professionals	108	7.1	12.1	116	7.6	12.4
3. Asso. professionals	104	6.8	11.6	113	7.5	12.1
4. Clerks	218	14.3	24.4	231	15.2	24.7
5. Services workers & shop sales workers	160	10.5	17.9	162	10.7	17.4
7. Craft & related workers	38	2.5	4.3	40	2.6	4.3
8. Plant & machine operators & assemblers	34	2.2	3.8	36	2.4	3.9
9. Elementary occupations	94	6.2	10.5	92	6.1	9.9
99. Refused to answer	30	2.0	Missing	32	2.1	Missing
0. Inapplicable	596	39.2	Missing	554	36.4	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Valid cases: 894

Missing cases: 626

Valid cases: 934

Missing cases: 586

**INCOME “What is your personal monthly income?”**  
**【Asked only those who are working】**

	Unweighted			Weighted		
	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Less than \$10,000	176	11.6	18.5	171	11.2	17.2
2. \$10,000 to \$19,999	369	24.3	38.8	398	26.1	39.9
3. \$20,000 to \$29,999	169	11.1	17.8	182	11.9	18.2
4. \$30,000 to \$39,999	80	5.3	8.4	85	5.6	8.6
5. \$40,000 or above	145	9.5	15.2	147	9.7	14.8
8. Unstable	13	0.9	1.4	14	0.9	1.4
9. Refused to answer	45	3.0	Missing	46	3.0	Missing
0. Inapplicable	523	34.4	Missing	478	31.4	Missing
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Valid cases: 952

Missing cases: 568

Valid cases: 996

Missing cases: 524

## Appendix 7: Frequency Table of All Variables (Weighted) of Telephone Survey

**Q1 “Are you optimistic about the prospect of construction industry in the next 5 years?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Very optimistic	123	8.1	8.1
2. Optimistic	1026	67.5	67.5
3. Not optimistic	229	15.0	15.0
4. Not optimistic at all	18	1.2	1.2
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	125	8.2	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q2 “According to your knowledge, has the wage of construction workers been increasing, decreasing, or remaining unchanged during the past few years?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Increasing	1077	70.8	70.8
2. Remain unchanged	256	16.8	16.8
3. Decreasing	32	2.1	2.1
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	155	10.2	10.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q3 “According to your estimation, will job seeking of construction workers become easier, more difficult, or remain unchanged in the next few years?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Easier	670	44.1	44.1
2. Remain unchanged	631	41.5	41.5
3. More difficult	136	9.0	9.0
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	83	5.4	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1520</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q4 “If your family members, relatives, or friends are looking for jobs, would you encourage them to become construction workers?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes	472	31.1	31.1
2. No	895	58.8	58.8
8. Don't know / Hard to say	154	10.1	10.1
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520 Missing cases 0

**Q5 “Some organizations in Hong Kong (including the HKSAR Government) have already adopted 5-day week. In the long run, should 5-day week be implemented in all industries?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes, should	1019	67.0	67.0
2. No, should not	378	24.9	24.9
8. Don't know / Hard to say	124	8.1	8.1
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520 Missing cases 0

**Q6 “Construction workers have to work on Saturdays and are off on Sundays. In the long run, to what extent, do you agree with construction workers to be off on Saturdays and so they are off two days a week?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Strongly agree	285	18.7	18.7
2. Agree	790	52.0	52.0
3. Disagree	282	18.6	18.6
4. Strongly disagree	35	2.3	2.3
8. Don't know / Hard to say	129	8.5	8.5
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520 Missing cases 0

**Q7 “In the long run, to what extent, do you agree with the government introducing the legislation for “no Saturday site work” in the construction industry to prescribe that construction workers would be off on Saturdays and Sundays?”**

**【Asked only those who agree / strongly agree that construction workers should be off on Saturday and Sunday】**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Strongly agree	264	17.3	24.5
2. Agree	666	43.8	62.0
3. Disagree	117	7.7	10.9
4. Strongly disagree	4	0.2	0.3
8. Don't know / Hard to say	24	1.6	2.3
0. Inapplicable	446	29.3	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q8 “You said that you do not agree with construction workers to be off two days a week. Is that because of you being afraid that the 5-day week arrangement would reduce the income of construction workers?”**

**【Asked only those who disagree / strongly disagree that construction workers should be off on Saturday and Sunday】**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes	201	13.2	63.5
2. No	109	7.2	34.5
8. Don't know / Hard to say	6	0.4	2.0
0. Inapplicable	1204	79.2	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 317      Missing cases 1204

**Q9 “If “no Saturday site work” is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay, would you agree with “no Saturday site work”?”**

**【Asked only those who disagree / strongly disagree that construction workers should be off on Saturday and Sunday】**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes, agree	143	9.4	45.0
2. No, not agree	146	9.6	46.1
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	28	1.8	8.9
0. Inapplicable	1204	79.2	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 317      Missing cases 1204

**Q10 “If ‘no Saturday site work’ is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay, would you encourage your family members, relatives, and friends to become construction workers?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes	666	43.8	43.8
2. No	719	47.3	47.3
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	136	8.9	8.9
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q11 “To what extent, do you think ‘no Saturday site work’ is helpful to attract young people to join the construction industry?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Very helpful	323	21.3	21.3
2. Quite helpful	734	48.3	48.3
3. Not very helpful	377	24.8	24.8
4. Not helpful at all	47	3.1	3.1
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	39	2.6	2.6
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q12 “To what extent, do you think ‘no Saturday site work’ is helpful to reduce industrial accidents in construction sites?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Very helpful	249	16.4	16.4
2. Quite helpful	553	36.4	36.4
3. Not very helpful	524	34.5	34.5
4. Not helpful at all	140	9.2	9.2
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	54	3.6	3.6
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1520      Missing cases 0

**Q13 “To what extent, do you think ‘no Saturday site work’ is helpful to improve the working conditions and work benefits of construction workers?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Very helpful	386	25.4	25.4
2. Quite helpful	790	52.0	52.0
3. Not very helpful	250	16.5	16.5
4. Not helpful at all	43	2.8	2.8
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	51	3.3	3.3
9. Refuse to answer	1	0.0	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1519      Missing cases 1

**Q14 “To what extent, do you think ‘no Saturday site work’ is helpful to enhance the image of the construction industry?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Very helpful	268	17.6	17.6
2. Quite helpful	616	40.5	40.5
3. Not very helpful	488	32.1	32.2
4. Not helpful at all	95	6.2	6.3
8. Don’t know / Hard to say	52	3.4	3.4
9. Refuse to answer	2	0.1	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1518      Missing cases 2

**Q15 “As well as increasing wage and introducing ‘no Saturday site work’, which of the following is the most helpful in attracting new blood to become construction workers?”**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Improving the working environment of construction sites	183	12.0	12.0
2. Strengthening work safety	428	28.1	28.2
3. Enhancing the image of construction industry	278	18.3	18.3
4. Increasing work benefits	569	37.4	37.4
77. Others	18	1.2	1.2
88. Don’t know / Hard to say	44	2.9	2.9
99. Refuse to answer	1	0.1	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 1519      Missing cases 1



**BACK “If ‘no Saturday site work’ is implemented and the weekly income of construction workers is not lower than the amount of the existing 6-day pay, would you consider returning to work in the construction industry?”**

**【Asked only those who have working experiences in construction sites or in decoration and maintenance works for buildings but had already left the industry】**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1. Yes	19	1.3	21.2
2. No	69	4.5	75.7
8. Don't know / Hard to say	3	0.2	3.1
0. Inapplicable	1429	94.0	Missing
Total	1520	100.0	100.0

Valid cases 91      Missing cases 1429

## Appendix 8: Questionnaire of Telephone Survey (in Chinese)

SEX 受訪者性別： 1. 男 3. 女

### A. 建造業形象 / 前景

Q1 「整體嚟講，你對香港建造業未來五年嘅前景有幾樂觀呢？係非常樂觀、樂觀、不樂觀，定係非常不樂觀呢？」

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1. 非常樂觀  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 樂觀    | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 不樂觀   |            |
| 4. 非常不樂觀 |            |

Q2 「以你所知，近幾年建築工人嘅人工係上升緊、下跌緊，定係無乜點變呢？」

- |         |            |
|---------|------------|
| 1. 上升緊  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 無乜點變 | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 下跌緊  |            |

Q3 「以你估計，建築工人未來幾年嘅搵工方面會係更容易、更難，定係同依家差唔多呢？」

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| 1. 更容易    | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 同依家差唔多 | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 更難     |            |

### B. 工地星期六休息

Q4 「如果你有家人親戚朋友想搵嘢做，你會唔會鼓勵佢地去做建築工人呢？」

- |       |            |
|-------|------------|
| 1. 會  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 唔會 | 9. 拒絕回答    |

Q5「依家香港一啲機構包括政府已經實行五天工作，你認為長遠嚟講，五天工作應唔應該嚟各行各業全面推行？」

1. 應該
2. 唔應該
8. 不知道／好難講
9. 拒絕回答

Q6「依家做建築工人一個星期返六日，星期日休息。你有幾贊成建築工人，長遠嚟講，都唔駛再返禮拜六，一個星期休息兩日呢？係非常贊成、贊成、不贊成，定係非常不贊成呢？」

1. 非常贊成【繼問 Q7】
2. 贊成【繼問 Q7】
3. 不贊成【跳問 Q8】
4. 非常不贊成【跳問 Q8】
8. 不知道／好難講【跳問 Q10】
9. 拒絕回答【跳問 Q10】

【此題只問 Q6 答非常贊成／贊成者】

Q7「長遠嚟講，咁你又幾贊成由政府立法規定建造業星期六、星期日都休息呢？」

1. 非常贊成【跳問 Q10】
2. 贊成【跳問 Q10】
3. 不贊成【跳問 Q10】
4. 非常不贊成【跳問 Q10】
8. 不知道／好難講【跳問 Q10】
9. 拒絕回答【跳問 Q10】

【此題只問 Q6 答非常不贊成／不贊成者】

Q8「你唔贊成建築工人一個星期休息兩日，係唔係因為擔心返五日工會令建築工人人工少咗呢？」

1. 係
2. 唔係
8. 不知道／好難講
9. 拒絕回答

【此題只問 Q6 答非常不贊成／不贊成者】

Q9「如果地盤星期六都休息，而每個禮拜嘅人工唔會少過現時返六日工嘅收入，你又會唔會贊成地盤星期六都休息呢個建議呢？」

1. 會
2. 唔會
8. 不知道／好難講
9. 拒絕回答

Q10「如果地盤星期六都休息，而每個禮拜嘅人工唔會少過現時返六日工嘅收入，你又會唔會鼓勵你嘅家人親戚朋友去做建築工人呢？」

1. 會
2. 唔會
8. 不知道／好難講
9. 拒絕回答

Q11 「如果地盤星期六都休息，你認為對吸引年輕人入行有幾大幫助呢？係好有幫助、幾有幫助、無乜幫助，定係完全無幫助呢？」

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1. 好有幫助  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 幾有幫助  | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 無乜幫助  |            |
| 4. 完全無幫助 |            |

Q12 「如果地盤星期六都休息，你認為對減少地盤嘅工業意外有幾大幫助呢？係好有幫助、幾有幫助、無乜幫助，定係完全無幫助呢？」

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1. 好有幫助  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 幾有幫助  | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 無乜幫助  |            |
| 4. 完全無幫助 |            |

Q13 「如果地盤星期六都休息，你認為對改善建築工人嘅工作條件同福利有幾大幫助呢？係好有幫助、幾有幫助、無乜幫助，定係完全無幫助呢？」

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1. 好有幫助  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 幾有幫助  | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 無乜幫助  |            |
| 4. 完全無幫助 |            |

Q14 「如果地盤星期六都休息，你認為對改善建造業嘅形象有幾大幫助呢？係好有幫助、幾有幫助、無乜幫助，定係完全無幫助呢？」

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 1. 好有幫助  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 幾有幫助  | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 無乜幫助  |            |
| 4. 完全無幫助 |            |

Q15 「除咗加人工同埋星期六都休息之外，你認為以下邊一項最能夠吸引新人入行做建築工人呢？」【讀出 1-4，只選一項】

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| 1. 改善地盤工作環境 | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 增強工作安全   | 9. 拒絕回答    |
| 3. 提昇建造行業形象 |            |
| 4. 增加勞工福利   |            |
| 5. 其他       |            |

### C. 個人資料

「為咗方便分析，想問你一啲簡單嘅個人資料。」

AGE 「請問你今年幾多歲呢？」

\_\_\_\_\_ 【註明歲數      99. 拒絕回答

EDU 「請問你嘅教育程度去到邊呢？」

【回答中學：追問初中還是高中；回答大專：追問是否學士 degree】

1. 無受教育或幼稚園
2. 小學
3. 初中 (中一至中三)
4. 高中 (中四至中七)
5. 大專非學士 (包括文憑／副學士／  
IVE 等)
6. 大專學士或以上 (包括大學學士／  
碩士／博士等)
9. 拒絕回答

WORK 「請問你而家有無做嘢呢？」 (包括全職及兼職) 【冇：追問】

1. 冇：學生【問卷結束】
2. 冇：主理家務【問卷結束】
3. 冇：退休【問卷結束】
4. 冇：失業【續問 WORKER1】
5. 有工作【續問 WORKER1】
9. 拒絕回答【問卷結束】

【此題只問現有工作或失業的受訪者】

WORKER1 「你有無做過地盤或者裝修呢？」

1. 有【續問 WORKER2】
2. 冇【跳問 OCCU】
8. 不知道／好難講【跳問 OCCU】
9. 拒絕回答【跳問 OCCU】

【此題只問有做過地盤或裝修的受訪者】

WORKER2 「你總共做過幾多年地盤或者裝修呢？」

1. 一年以下
2. 一年至五年以下
3. 五年至十年以下
4. 十年至二十年以下
5. 二十年以上
8. 不知道／好難講
9. 拒絕回答

【此題只問有做過地盤或裝修的受訪者】  
WORKER3 「你依家係唔係仲做緊呢？」

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. 係【跳問 INCOME】 | 8. 不知道／好難講【跳問 OCCU】 |
| 2. 唔係【續問 BACK】  | 9. 拒絕回答【跳問 OCCU】    |

【此題只問現在有工作但並非從事地盤或裝修的受訪者】  
BACK 「如果地盤星期六、星期日都休息，而且每個禮拜嘅人工唔會少過現時返六日  
工  
嘅收入，你會唔會考慮返去做地盤呢？」

- |       |            |
|-------|------------|
| 1. 會  | 8. 不知道／好難講 |
| 2. 唔會 | 9. 拒絕回答    |

【此題只問有工作（並非從事地盤或裝修）的受訪者】  
OCCU 「請問你現時嘅職位係乜嘢呢？」

- |                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| 1. 經理及行政級人員             | 99. 拒絕回答 |
| 2. 專業人員                 |          |
| 3. 輔助專業人員               |          |
| 4. 文員                   |          |
| 5. 服務工作及商店銷售人員          |          |
| 6. 漁農業熟練工人              |          |
| 7. 工藝及有關人員（包括建造業技<br>工） |          |
| 8. 機台及機器操作員及裝配員         |          |
| 9. 非技術工人                |          |

【此題只問有工作的受訪者】  
INCOME 「請問你個人每個月嘅收入大約有幾多呢？」

- |            |          |
|------------|----------|
| 1. 一萬以下    | 88. 收入不定 |
| 2. 一萬至二萬以下 | 99. 拒絕回答 |
| 3. 二萬至三萬以下 |          |
| 4. 三萬至四萬以下 |          |
| 5. 四萬或以上   |          |

\*\*「問卷已經完成，多謝你接受我哋嘅訪問，拜拜！」\*\*