

Summary of the 2023 Survey Report of New Immigrants' Living Needs

According to statistics from the Ministry of the Interior, by the end of June 2024, the number of new immigrants in the Republic of China (Taiwan) had nearly reached 600,000, with their children exceeding 470,000. These groups are a key focus of government services. Therefore, the government initiated the New Immigrants' Living Needs Survey in 2003 to understand the living conditions of new immigrants in Taiwan. The survey has since been conducted every five years, with this being the fifth one. This survey covered all municipalities and counties (cities) in the Taiwan-Fujian area, focusing on foreign spouses holding valid Alien Resident Certificates, permanent residence permits, foreign spouses who have been naturalized and obtained ROC nationality, and spouses from Hong Kong, Macau, and Mainland China who reside, settle, or have household registration in Taiwan. The survey excluded new immigrants who had been abroad for more than two years. From June to October 2023, face-to-face interviews were conducted, successfully surveying 10,430 new immigrants in Taiwan. This survey gathered data on the family status and employment conditions of new immigrants, serving as a reference for the government's policy direction and services, aiming to foster a culturally rich and internationally friendly immigrant environment in Taiwan. Below is a brief summary of the key findings from the 10,430 valid samples in this survey.

I. Profile of New Immigrants

1. Basic Information

In this survey, the majority of new immigrants are female, making up 91.2%, with a trend of increasing male immigrants. The age structure is mainly between 35-54 years old, with 41.1% aged 35-44, and 35.2% aged 45-54. Looking at their places of origin, 48.8% are foreign spouses, and 51.2% are spouses from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau. The majority of new immigrants had a high school (vocational) education before coming to Taiwan, with the proportion of those with high school (vocational) and above increasing from 34.7% in the 2008 survey to 53.5%.

2. Residence and Marriage Status in Taiwan

In this survey, the proportion of new immigrants living in Taiwan for more than 10 years increased from 64.6% in the 2018 survey (with 18,260 valid samples that year) to 75.9%. Nearly 40% have lived in Taiwan for more than 20 years. Over 70% of both

foreign spouses and spouses from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau have obtained a Republic of China (Taiwan) National Identification Card.

The survey shows that 31.8% of cross-national marriages were introduced by relatives or friends from their place of origin, and 22.4% met through work. More than 20% of those who have been in Taiwan for over 15 years met through marriage matching services, while the proportion of those who have been in Taiwan for less than 15 years and used these services has dropped to below 10%, with introductions by relatives and friends (about 50%) and work relationships (about 30%) becoming more common. Those who have been in Taiwan for less than five years are more likely to have met through school, travel, or online. Among new immigrants, 42.9% have been married for more than 20 years, 37.1% for 10 to less than 20 years, and 20.0% for less than 10 years. Of these, 88.0% are still married, while 4.3% have divorced.

II. Overview of Life in Taiwan

In this survey, the National Health Insurance coverage rate is the highest among new immigrants, with 98 out of every 100 insured. Additionally, 74% have multiple types of employment insurance (including labor insurance, farmers' insurance, public insurance, etc.). Motorcycle licenses are relatively common among new immigrants, with 63 out of every 100 holding one. Additionally, 43 out of every 100 new immigrants have a car driver's license, both significantly higher than in the 2008 survey, where 32 out of every 100 had a motorcycle license and 14 out of every 100 had a car license. Furthermore, the proportion of those holding a technician's license has increased from 6.1% in the 2018 survey to 8.7%, showing the effectiveness of the government's efforts in guiding new immigrants through driving courses and technical licensing programs.

III. Labor Conditions

1. Labor Force Participation and Protection

In this survey, the labor force participation rate of new immigrants reached 75.0%, higher than the average labor force participation rate of the general population over the past five years (59.02%~59.22%). Labor insurance is the most common type of employment insurance, with 59 out of every 100 new immigrants covered. The labor insurance coverage rate has increased from 16% in 2008, to 30% in 2013, and 50% in 2018, now nearing 60%, indicating a significant improvement in labor protection for new immigrants.

2. Employment Status

Most employed new immigrants work in manufacturing (30.3%) and accommodation and food services (21.8%). In terms of occupation, service and sales positions (37.8%) and elementary technical and labor jobs (26.9%) are the most common. The majority are employed by private companies (74.8%), with a growing trend in self-employment, which accounts for 18.5%. Among the employed, full-time work is most common (84.3%), while part-time work accounts for 15.7%.

3. Job Satisfaction and Work Difficulties

94.8% of employed new immigrants are satisfied with their current jobs, while only 5.2% are dissatisfied. Additionally, 74.9% reported no difficulties in their work in Taiwan. Among those who did encounter challenges, the primary issues were unmet expectations regarding salary or benefits (8 out of every 100) and weak Chinese literacy and writing skills (5 out of every 100).

85.8% of employed new immigrants reported no difficulties in job hunting (including 9.8% who had no job hunting experience and 76.0% who had job hunting experience but encountered no difficulties). The main challenges faced by those who did struggle were weak Chinese literacy and writing skills (30 out of every 100), poor communication skills in Chinese (26 out of every 100), employment discrimination (such as gender, language, race, place of birth, disability, etc.) (24 out of every 100), and difficulty finding jobs that match their expertise (23 out of every 100).

4. Employment Services and Training Needs

New immigrants primarily find jobs through recommendations from Taiwanese relatives and friends (including spouses) (34 out of every 100), hometown friends and relatives in Taiwan (23 out of every 100), self-employment (14 out of every 100), and private employment agencies (12 out of every 100). The job search process is closely linked to businesses around their homes. Regarding employment services, new immigrants mainly need "free participation in vocational training" and "living allowances during vocational training."

5. Entrepreneurial Intentions and Assistance Needs

15.4% of new immigrants are currently employers or self-employed, and 14.2% have future entrepreneurial intentions. During the preparation for entrepreneurship or business operations, 44.0% encountered difficulties, mainly due to insufficient funds or difficulty in obtaining loans (24 out of every 100), economic fluctuations (16 out of every 100), fierce market competition (14 out of every 100), and insufficient marketing

(12 out of every 100). The most desired forms of government assistance for entrepreneurship include entrepreneurial loan subsidies (35 out of every 100) and entrepreneurial training courses (28 out of every 100).

IV. Family Status and Child Education

1. Profile of Taiwanese Spouses (Citizens)

Nearly 78% of Taiwanese spouses (citizens) are married for the first time, and the remarriage rate of Taiwanese spouses (citizens) from Southeast Asian countries and Mainland China is over 20%. 80% of Taiwanese spouses (citizens) are employed, mainly in manufacturing (29.5%), construction engineering (12.9%), and wholesale and retail (12.9%). In terms of occupation, they mainly work in skilled trades, mechanical equipment operation, and assembly (43.4%). Most of them earn a monthly income of "30,000 to less than 50,000 TWD", with an average monthly income of about 44,207 TWD.

2. Family Socioeconomic Background

The family structure of new immigrants is mainly nuclear households, followed by extended households. The proportion of nuclear households has increased compared to the 2013 and 2018 surveys. The average monthly family income is 62,150 TWD, although it is lower than the average monthly income of general households at 117,250 TWD. However, it has increased by 18.21% compared to the 2018 survey, with a higher growth rate than the 7.37% for general households. The proportion of households with an income level above 60,000 TWD has also significantly increased.

3. Child Education Situation

In this survey, 88.7% of new immigrants have children, mostly with two children, with an average of 1.60 children. The proportion of those without children has gradually decreased, and the average number of children has shown an upward trend. The survey collected data on 17,222 new immigrant children. The data shows that 87% of these children are long-term residents of Taiwan. Currently, about 30% of new immigrant children are in the preschool or elementary education system. Over half of the children are over 16 years old, preparing or having already entered the labor market. 43.1% of new immigrants support their children returning to their place of origin for employment, with higher education levels and shorter stay times in Taiwan correlating with a higher support rate for cross-national employment.

V. Life Adaptation and Social Participation

1. Chinese Language Proficiency

New immigrants' Chinese listening and speaking abilities are stronger than their reading and writing abilities. 86.7% and 84.5% of new immigrants consider their listening and speaking abilities good, while 52.2% and 40.4% consider their reading and writing abilities good. Listening and speaking abilities improve with longer residency in Taiwan. The primary language used in daily life is Chinese, followed by the original local language (used by 24 out of every 100).

2. Overview of Social Participation

31.5% of new immigrants participated in social activities in the past year, with higher participation rates in leisure and religious activities. Among them, 28.3% of new immigrants were involved in organizing activities. The main reasons for not participating in activities include being busy with work or studies (56 out of every 100), lack of interest (41 out of every 100), and needing to care for family members (32 out of every 100).

3. Living Difficulties and Personal-Safety Social Support Network in Taiwan

New immigrants experience various difficulties in Taiwan related to personal life, rights, family, interpersonal relationships, and environmental interactions. The main difficulties include economic problems (20 out of every 100), personal health issues (8 out of every 100), and work-related problems (5 out of every 100). When facing difficulties in daily life, rights, or personal safety, the main support channels for new immigrants are their spouses, Taiwanese or hometown friends, and relatives. Public institutions like police stations, local government offices, village chiefs, domestic violence prevention centers, the 113 protection hotline, and new immigrant family service centers are also prioritized to some extent. As new immigrants live longer in Taiwan, their reliance on spouses and spouses' parents decreases, while their reliance on children tends to increase.

4. Information Source Channels

The main channels for receiving information about government care and service measures are "notification by relatives and friends" (57 out of every 100), "online searches" (37 out of every 100), and "TV program introductions" (36 out of every 100), showing the importance of interpersonal networks in spreading information.

5. Happiness Index in Taiwan

When asked if they have been happy recently, 92.1% of new immigrants said they were happy, while 7.9% said they were unhappy. The proportion of those who are happy

increases with higher education levels and family income. However, those aged 55 and above report a higher rate of unhappiness compared to those under 55, possibly related to concerns about their own or their spouse's health and old-age financial security.

VI. Demand for Various Care Service Measures

1. Participation in Care Service Measures

63.9% of new immigrants have participated in new immigrant care service measures, with the most common being participation in "motorcycle and car driving training courses" (44 out of every 100) and "adult basic education and literacy classes" (14 out of every 100). 37.1% have not participated, with the main reasons being work (priority 42.4), family/childcare responsibilities (priority 30.5), lack of interest (priority 26.5), and household chores (priority 21.7).

2. Course and Service Needs

Overall, the highest demand for life-related courses is for "medical care skills," "language training and literacy education," and "healthcare knowledge." In terms of medical and health services, the highest demand is for "providing medical subsidies," "assisting with communication during medical visits," "providing knowledge on infectious diseases and illnesses," and "providing children's health check-ups." For life care services, the highest demand is for "protecting employment rights," "providing life assistance measures," and "assisting children's education." Additionally, the survey shows that the longer new immigrants stay in Taiwan, the higher their demand for "providing long-term care services and information." Those who have been in Taiwan for less than five years have a higher demand for "protecting employment rights," "assisting children's education," "establishing more new immigrant consultation service centers," and "assisting with childcare."

VII. Life of New Immigrants Over 50 Years Old

1. Concerns and Worries About Elderly Life

The main concerns for new immigrants over 50 years old are "their own health" (60.4%), "spouse's health" (39.8%), and "economic sources" (34.5%). The proportion of those worried about these issues increases with age. Among those concerned about "the care of their own or their spouse's parents," 98.2% of new immigrants' parents live in their place of origin, with long-distance care being much more difficult than other challenges.

2. Thoughts on Retirement Location and Life Arrangements

77.3% of new immigrants over 50 years old choose to retire in Taiwan, 7.1% want to return to their place of origin, and 15.6% are undecided. If they choose to retire in Taiwan, the most needed assistance includes "providing long-term care services and related information" (56.0%), "providing employment assistance for the middle-aged and elderly" (18.6%), and "providing legal consultation" (10.1%).

3. Overall Feeling About the Living Environment in Taiwan

When asked about the difference in the living environment in Taiwan from the time they first married and moved to Taiwan to the present, more than 50% of new immigrants over 50 years old feel that the "Taiwanese society's attitude towards new immigrants," "the friendliness of the Taiwanese work environment towards new immigrants," and "the care and protection of new immigrants by Taiwanese government services and welfare measures" have all improved, with more than 40% feeling it has remained the same. Regarding "the rights of new immigrants in Taiwan," 46.0% feel it has improved, and 51.2% feel it has stayed the same. The proportion of those who believe any aspect has worsened is less than 4%, indicating that the government's policies for new immigrants have been effective. However, there is still a need for ongoing adjustment of relevant policies, informed by long-term big data and research, to ensure that Taiwanese society continues moving towards greater diversity and friendliness.