

Summary of the 2018 Survey Report of New Immigrants' Living Needs

In order to conduct the care measures for new immigrants, the Ministry of the Interior convened a meeting on matters related to the division of labor for counseling measures for foreign and Mainland Chinese spouses in 2003. The meeting resolved that a comprehensive survey on the living conditions of new immigrants will be conducted. The first survey was conducted in 2003, and it has been carried out every five years since. This is the fourth survey of new-immigrants' living conditions in Taiwan. The various care measures for new immigrants have been revised many times since 2003, and various laws and regulations related to new immigrants' living and employment in Taiwan have changed over time. With the relaxation of laws and regulations, the social ethos and the qualities of international marriage are getting mature, the qualitative changes in new immigrants can be seen in each survey.

This survey spans all municipalities and counties (cities) in the Taiwan-Fukien region, with a period ranging from August 21 to December 20 in 2018. The interview work for additional samples was done from May 13 to June 30 in 2019. The subjects of the survey are foreign spouses with a valid Alien Resident Certificate or Alien Permanent Resident Certificate, foreign spouses who obtain citizenship through naturalization, and spouses from Hong Kong, Macau, and mainland China who acquire residency and permanent residency, and residency with household registration, excluding new immigrants who have already departed from the country for two years or more. The total number of valid new-immigrant samples is 18,260. Through the survey this year, we can understand how new immigrants are currently faring in Taiwan in terms of acclimation, family situation, employment status, and child education. We will use this information to explore their needs regarding adapting to life in Taiwan. Survey results will be used as reference for future government policies and services planning. This usage is expected to upgrade Taiwanese society to a premium environment for integrating diverse cultures and treating marriage-based immigrants equally, achieving a win-win situation for all races. Below is an abstract of the important survey results.

I. New-Immigrant Population Characteristics

Below is the analysis of the 18,260 valid new-immigrant samples in this survey:

A. Basic Information

New immigrants in Taiwan are mostly female (92.5%), aged between 35 to 54 years old (70.1%), having received a mid-level education, such as middle school (30.3%) and high school/vocational school (34.3%); 10.0% of new immigrants obtained a degree from Taiwan after they came to Taiwan, and 96.3% are in good health. From the year-over-year comparison we can tell that the majority of the new immigrants in Taiwan are female, and male new immigrants increased slightly in this year. The young population (15 to 24 years old) has been shrinking, and the main population consists of 35-to-54-year-old women of child-bearing age.

B. Living Conditions and Marital Status in Taiwan

A total of 64.6% of new immigrants have lived in Taiwan for at least 10 years, with higher percentages of spouses from both Southeast Asia (66.7%) and mainland China (66.1%); 25.4% of spouses from other countries have lived in Taiwan for five years or less. The number of new immigrants who are married is 90.1%. In 34.1% of international marriages, the couple was introduced by friends or relatives in their hometown, and in another 21.5%, the couple met at work. Higher percentages of spouses from Southeast Asia and mainland China are introduced by friends or relatives in their hometown (32.2% and 39.5%, respectively), and the percentage of Southeast Asian spouses introduced by marriage agencies (29.2%) is also higher than spouses from other countries. Spouses from other regions and Hong Kong/Macau mostly met at work (37.4% and 27.4%, respectively).

From the year-over-year comparison we can see the percentage of new immigrants living in Taiwan for at least 10 years has increased from 44.4% in 2013 to 64.6% this year, 12.6% of whom have been living in Taiwan for at least 20 years, and their life journey has evolved from acclimating, caring for their children until they grow into adults, to also facing the loss of family members and spouses. Through holding focus group interviews, we observed that new

immigrants are now learning about issues regarding rights in family asset inheritance and allocation. Also, some new immigrants encountered problems regarding care of senior family members.

II. General Living Conditions in Taiwan

A driver's license is the main certificate new immigrants hold in Taiwan. Out of every 100 new immigrants, 59 have a motorcycle driver's license and 38 have a car driver's license. Additionally, a high percentage of Mainland Chinese spouses hold a technician certificate (9 out of every 100 people). From the year-over-year comparison we can see the positive impact of the government's measures in helping new immigrants obtain driver's license by offering multilingual counselling services and test materials as well as the test itself. The percentage of new immigrants holding a driver's license has increased every year; in each of the past three surveys, the driver's license holding rate for either cars or motorcycles increased by an average of 10 out of every 100 people.

Among all new immigrants with insurance in Taiwan, most are insured by National Health Insurance (97 out of every 100 people); 52 out of every 100 people are covered by Labor Insurance. The overall rate of new immigrants who have Labor Insurance increased from 16% in 2008 to 30% in 2013, and then 52% for this year, showing improvement in the government's protection of new immigrants' labor rights.

III. Employment Status

A. Labor Force Participation Rate

Among the 18,260 valid new-immigrant samples in this survey, the labor force participation rate is 70.92%, and the unemployment rate is 1.22%. Compared to the 58.54%~58.99% average labor force participation rate of Taiwanese citizens in the past five years, new immigrants' labor force participation rate is higher while the unemployment rate is relatively lower.

B. Employment Status

New immigrants mainly work in the manufacturing industry (31.7%), the hospitality industry (23.4%), as service and sales personnel (37.0%) or basic technician and manual laborer (26.4%). The majority of new immigrants are employed in the private sector (76.4%), and 15.3% are self-employed. In terms of income, most get paid monthly (57.5%), while 52.1% of them receiving a monthly salary of above NT\$20,000 but less than NT\$30,000.

Based on the year-over-year comparison, the trend for the industries new immigrants are employed in has been consistent in the four surveys conducted. More than 50% of new immigrants work in the service industry. In 2018, the ratio of "accommodation and catering industry" to "education industry" increased slightly. In terms of jobs-occupation categories, most new immigrants work as "basic technicians and manual laborers" and "service and sales staff" according to the 2008 survey; As of 2013, it can be found that the occupation category "mechanical equipment operation and assembly personnel" had grown rapidly. The distribution in 2018 is similar to that of 2013.

In terms of the comparison of main source of working income across years, the ratio of less than NT\$20,000 fell from 67.6% in 2008 and 50.5% in 2013 to 22.3% in 2018. The overall salary of new immigrants has gradually increased. At this stage, more than half of the main source of working income is concentrated from NT\$20,000 to less than NT\$30,000, and the main work income of 20% of new immigrants has reached more than NT\$30,000.

C. Job Satisfaction and Workplace Challenges

89.8% of employed new immigrants are satisfied with their current jobs, while 10.2% are dissatisfied. Overall, 71.7% of the new immigrants working in Taiwan expressed that they did not suffer from distress, and those who were distressed mainly due to low wages (15 per 100 people) and extensive work hours (7 per 100 people), followed by weak Chinese literacy and writing skills (5 per 100 people), working hours cannot meet the needs of the family (4 per 100 people), weak Chinese language communication skills (4 per 100 people), and the workplace is not friendly or discriminatory towards new immigrants(4 per 100 people).

D. Employment Services and Vocational Training Needs

New immigrants' job search channels are mainly "recommended by Taiwanese family and friends (spouse included)" (40 out of every 100 people), "recommended by compatriots in Taiwan" (23 out of every 100 people), "self-employment" (16 out of every 100 people), and "newspaper and ads" (14 out of every 100 people). In total, 17.7% of new immigrants had difficulties finding a job. The percentage of mainland Chinese spouses who have experienced difficulties is higher, with main difficulties being "workplace discrimination" (30 out of every 100 people) and "employer won't hire someone without a National Identification Card" (29 out of every 100 people). Foreign spouses' main difficulties encountered are language barrier and illiteracy, with both rates exceeding 40 out of 100 people.

In terms of employment services, new immigrants mainly need "free vocational training" (21 out of every 100 people) and "living allowance during vocational training period" (12 out of every 100 people).

E. Entrepreneurial Intention and Assistance Needs

In terms of entrepreneurial intention, 15.9% of new immigrants are willing to start their own businesses; in terms of the industries they are interested to engage in, spouses from mainland China and Southeast Asia mainly chose accommodation and catering industry (more than 56 out of every 100 people) and other service industries (more than 16 out of every 100 people). Based on the observation of focus group interviews, most new immigrants that start their own business as micro-entrepreneur in Taiwan; those from Southeast Asia mostly engaged in catering services for hometown cuisine, and those from mainland China mostly embark on E-commerce that has lower initial costs.

In terms of entrepreneurial assistance, most new immigrants still hope the government can offer "subsidized loans for entrepreneurs" (68 out of every 100 people), while others want "entrepreneur training courses" (62 out of every 100 people), "entrepreneur consulting and counseling" (45 out of every 100 people), etc.

IV. Family Status and Child Education

A. Taiwanese Spouse (National) Population Characteristics

The majority of Taiwanese spouses (nationals) have received a high level of education (40.2% either went to a high school or vocational school), and 76.9% of them are married for the first time. More than 20% of Taiwanese married to Southeast Asia and mainland China spouses are in their second marriage (20.7% and 26.1%, respectively).

82.8% of Taiwanese spouses (nationals) are working, and most of them have paid jobs. The industries they work in are mainly manufacturing (31.1%), construction (13.5%), and wholesale and retail trade (11.6%), and their jobs are mainly service staff and sales personnel (20.5%), mechanical equipment operation and assembly personnel (17.3%). Their monthly salaries are mostly “above NT\$30,000 but less than NT\$40,000” (26.8%) or “above NT\$20,000 but less than NT\$30,000” (20.1%), with the overall average monthly salary being NT\$38,654.

B. Family Social and Economic Background

The new-immigrant family structures are mainly nuclear family (54.5%) and extended family (34.3%); the family structures have remained roughly consistent year over year, with a trend toward nuclear family. The monthly household income is mostly “above NT\$50,000 but less than NT\$60,000” (15.3%) followed by “above NT\$40,000 but less than NT\$50,000” (12.8%). The average monthly household income is NT\$52,574; compared with the NT\$109,204 average monthly household income of general Taiwanese families, new-immigrant families are still considered economically disadvantaged. The percentage of new immigrant families with an average monthly household income less than NT\$40,000 has decreased from 55.9% in 2008 to 49.8% in 2013 and 34.1% in 2018. Families with an average monthly income between NT\$50,000 and NT\$100,000 have increased compared with those in the 2008 survey, and the average monthly household income also increased by NT\$6,401 compared with those in the 2013 survey.

C. Childbirth and Child Education

A total of 76.3% of new immigrants have children in their current marriage; most of them have two children (36.9%), and the average number of children of all new immigrants is 1.3 per person. By interviewing new immigrants, this survey collected data on 23,567 new immigrant children; according to the survey data, 54.5% of the children are still in preschools or elementary schools, and 98.2% claim Taiwan as their permanent residence. In terms of year-over-year comparison, the percentage of new immigrants with no child decreased in each of the past three surveys, from 41.0% in 2003 to 23.7% in 2018. The percentage of new immigrants with two or more children increased in every survey, and the average number of children showed an increasing trend.

Based on the survey data, 73.4% of new immigrants are willing to let their children learn the mother tongue of their country of origin at school. 26.7% of new immigrant children have reached the age of 16 or above and are preparing or have entered the labor market. In terms of the expectation of their children's future development, 53.2% of new immigrants are supportive to send their children to their country of origin for employment, while 46.8% are not. New immigrants with higher education level and shorter period of stay in Taiwan have seen higher supportive ratio.

V. Life Adaptation

A. Chinese Ability

New immigrants are better at listening and speaking Chinese than they are at reading and writing it. For spouses from Southeast Asia who are challenged by language and communication the most, their listening and speaking abilities get better and the gap between them and Taiwanese people shrinks as they age and as the time they have stayed in Taiwan increases. In terms of listening and reading abilities, listening is better than reading. The main language new immigrants use in daily life is still Chinese (97 out of every 100 people), while some use Taiwanese or the languages spoken in the countries they are originally from (19 out of every 100 people). When providing new immigrants with any information or services in the future—such as internet information for dummies, and explanations of laws, regulations or taxes—it will be more

effective to convey the message via verbal communication, audio, and videos than with text.

B. Challenges of Life in Taiwan

This survey studies the challenges of new immigrants' lives in Taiwan, including difficulties, such as personal life, rights, family relationship, and environment interaction. The survey found the main challenges are “economic problems” (16 out of every 100 people), “living rights in Taiwan” (8 out of every 100 people) and “problems at work” (5 out of every 100 people).

C. Family Situation

A total of 95.1% of new immigrants do not have challenges in terms of getting along with their families, and the main family members they have problems with are spouses (2.7%), parents-in-law (2.1%), and children (1.0%). In the past three surveys, the percentage of those who struggle to get along with parents-in-law decreased in each survey; this should have something to do with the trend of new-immigrant family structures moving toward nuclear families. As their children enter the education system and society, the problems new immigrants have in communicating and getting along with their children will gradually transition from those related to schoolwork, learning and behavior education to issues on employment. Future surveys should pay attention to employment related issues as well.

(四) 生活起居、權益、人身安全情形之社會支援網絡

D. Daily Life, Rights, and Personal-Safety Social Support Network

The survey results show that when meeting challenges regarding daily life, rights, or personal safety, new immigrants mainly reach out to their spouses (priority 76.4), compatriots, or Taiwanese relatives/friends (priority 20.5 and 18.9, respectively) for help. Public sector authorities such as police department/station, country or city government, head of the neighborhood or village, domestic-violence prevention center, 113 protection hotline, and new-immigrant family service center are all given certain degrees of priority, and the

degree of a new immigrant's dependency upon spouse or parent-in-law is inversely proportional to the time they stay in Taiwan.

E. Source of Information

In terms of new immigrants' sources of information related to government care programs, "government agencies" and "shared by compatriots or new immigrants from other countries" are the main sources (both are 17 people out of every 100 people), while the secondary source is "told by Taiwanese relatives or friends" (15 people out of every 100 people). Among those who know about the care programs, the main source of information is still "notified by family or friends, word of mouth" (55 people out of every 100 people), and the secondary sources are "new-immigrant-related social networking sites (Line, Facebook)" (23 people out of every 100 people), "online searches (unofficial websites)" (22 people out of every 100 people), and "notices on bulletin boards at related agencies, direct mail and flyers" (18 people out of every 100 people).

VI. Care Program Needs

A. Participation Rate of Care Programs

In terms of new immigrants' rate of participation in care programs, those who have participated in any government care program mostly participated in "driver's license classes for cars or motorcycles" (39 out of every 100 people), followed by "elementary and junior high supplementary school" (10 out of every 100 people), and "basic education class for adults, literacy class" (9 out of every 100 people).

The survey results indicate that 45.8% of new immigrants have never participated in any care programs, with the main reasons being "have to work" and "have to take care of family, children" (both have an importance higher than 16), followed by "not interested" (importance 9.2) and "doing house chores" (importance 9.0).

B. Life-Related Course Needs

The most in-demand life-related courses are “language training, literacy education (13 out of every 100 people),” “medical-care skills (basic medical knowledge and skills regarding care of patients) (7 out of every 100 people),” and “parent education, common-sense childcare (5 out of every 100 people).”

C. Health Care Services Program Needs

In terms of health care services, new immigrants give top priority to “provide medical subsidies” (14.7), followed by “assistance in obtaining National Health Insurance” (5.4), “provide health examinations for young children” (4.7), and “provide information about epidemics and diseases” (4.6).

D. Life-Care Program Needs

In terms of life-care programs, the priority is given to “protection of employee rights” (15.9), followed by “set up service agencies specifically for new immigrants (the competent authority sets up a single window or agency specifically for new-immigrant services)” (14.5) and “widely set up new-immigrant consulting service window (the competent authority increases service windows where new immigrants can seek consultation about all kinds of information related to life counseling, employment, health care, and care for infants and children)” (13.2).