

* *Teacher's version P.125-130*

(Activity 3: Examine effects of different government measures on improving post-social transfer income distribution)

Read Information sheet A and discuss the following questions.

Information sheet A

Mr. Chow, a member of the Lok Kwan Cooperative Society

The Lok Kwan Cooperative Society (LKCS) is a social enterprise that has finally won the support of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF). LKCS was founded in 2003 by a group of unemployed construction workers (carpenters, painters, bricklayers and cement workers). It has received a grant of \$900,000 from CIIF and since earned a total of \$5 million through the provision of decoration and renovation works and building maintenance services.

“We used to make HK\$20,000 a month in 1997. A lot of jobs came our way in those good old days. But after the financial crisis, we ran out of jobs for months,” said Mr. Ng, Chairman of LKCS.

Mr. Chow, now 60, was very depressed when he could not get any jobs for almost six months in 2003. After joining LKCS, he has got some renovation and maintenance works and some income. Mrs. Chow has also joined LKCS. She spoke with a smile, “I follow his instructions. I have learned to be more patient with his grumbling and we work much better now.” Though Mr. Chow earns far less than before, he has gained some new experiences such as giving out leaflets in the streets and teaching secondary students about the trade.

LKCS has to be self-sufficient because CIIF is going to stop its funding.

Source:

Adopted from a report of Ming Pao, 7 April, 2007

Discussion Questions:

1.
 - a. Explain why Mr. and Mrs. Chow has joined LKCS.
 - b. How CIIF could help unemployed workers like Mr. Chow? How effective is it?

2. Examine the details of different measures stated in Activity 2 and suggest another possible measure that can help unemployed workers like Mr. Chow. Explain your suggestion.

Read Information sheet B and discuss the following questions.

Information sheet B

Lo Wing Kin: 1-Point F.5 graduate

Wing Kin, 19, is a F.5 graduate who scored only 1 point in the HKCE. He had tried over 10 temporary jobs, but with not much qualification, he made little money and could hardly see a bright future.

Acting on the advice of his relative, he joined the Youth Work Experience Training Scheme (YWETS) run by the Labour Department. After an initial training course on human relationship, Lo underwent a 6-month field practice in a hotel, where he learnt a great deal about the trade, such as making the bed, cleaning up rooms, washing toilets, vacuuming carpets and folding towels, etc. It was a hard time for him. Lo recalled, "I have had two unforgettable experiences. I had a guest throwing up all over the room. It took me a lot of effort to clean it up and it was the toughest time ever! Another guest left behind an old tooth brush. So I threw it into the rubbish bin when tidying up the room. Then the guest returned and asked me for the tooth brush. I have since learnt to work with great care after some good scolding from the guest and my supervisor."

Wing Kin's good performance during the placement has earned him a full-time job of \$8,000 a month in the hotel.

Source:

Adopted from a report of Ming Pao, 19 February 2007

Discussion questions:

- Explain why Wing Kin had to join YWETS.
 - Explain how YWETS could help a youth like Lo Wing Kin. How effective is it?
- Examine the details of different measures stated in Activity 2 and suggest another possible measure that can help a youth like Wing Kin. Explain your suggestion.

Read Information sheet C and discuss the following questions.

Information sheet C

Ah Sheung, a cleaner

Ah Sheung, aged 55, lives alone in a public flat in Tuen Mun. She started to work in a factory at the age of 15 and became a skilled garment worker when she was 18 in 1970. She earned good income in the 70s and 80s while there were a great number of firms exporting garments to the USA and Europe. But when most garment factories moved to the mainland in the 90s, Ah Sheung could no longer find a full-time job in local factories. She was jobless for several years in the late 90s and has since become a cleaner.

Ah Sheung earned about HK\$4,000 a month in 2005, but around HK\$3,800 in 2006. She usually works for 10 hours a day, walks 30 minutes to go to work, and makes herself a lunch box. After work, she stays home watching TV and seldom goes to the cinema.

On holidays she would have Chinese tea and dim sum for breakfast at the nearby outdoor food court. Afterwards, she would buy food, such as frozen meat, for the whole week. She enjoys singing and dancing in the public park in the afternoon, but could hardly afford to travel outside Hong Kong.

- In 2005, the median of monthly income of an one-person household was \$6,000

Sources:

1. RTHK, Hong Kong connection, 18 December 2006.
2. Research report on working poor family, Caritas, Hong Kong, 29 April 2006.

Discussion questions:

1. a. Explain why Ah Sheung has to become a cleaner.
b. There is a strong voice for introducing a law on minimum wage. Explain the possible impacts of such a law on a cleaner aged over 50, e.g. Ah Sheung. How likely would Ah Sheung be benefited if there was a law on minimum wage?
2. Examine the details of different measures stated in Activity 2 and suggest another possible measure (apart from minimum wage law) that can help a cleaner like Ah Sheung. Explain your suggestion.

Read Information sheet D and discuss the following questions.

Information sheet D

Ah Hung: from a part-time to a full-time worker at McDonald's

Ah Hung, 22, is now a full-time team leader at a McDonald's restaurant, earning less than \$4,000 a month. When he was studying at the IVE, he worked part-time at a McDonald's.

The McDonald's paid \$17 an hour in 2006 and pays \$20 an hour now.

Hung said, "The McDonald's is a place for youngsters to kill time, to learn and to enjoy! I earn so little that I'd stay at home after work and I can only afford to go out on holidays. When I am hungry at work, I would ask my supervisor for a hamburger. So hunger is not a problem!"

"The hardest thing for me to work in the McDonald's is to forget 'myself'," Ah Hung went on, "I strongly felt being looked-down when I swept the lobby before. But I got over this uneasy feeling before long. The McDonald's gives me a sense of family. We have parties to celebrate festivals and birthdays of colleagues here. The supervisor always takes good care of us. The working hour is very flexible and I can easily find time to hang out with my friends. I have fun here despite the low pay. Nevertheless, I am looking for a better-pay job, about \$8,000 a month. I need to think for my future."

Source:

Adopted from Ming Pao, 6 Oct 2007

Discussion questions:

1. a. Explain why Ah Hung has to work for the McDonald's even though the salary was low.
b. There is a strong voice for introducing a law on minimum wage - explain the possible impacts of such a law on a young worker (under 20 like Ah Hung) of the local fast-food chain. How likely would Ah Hung be benefited if there was a law on minimum wage?
2. Examine the details of different measures stated in Activity 2 and suggest another possible measure that can help a youth like Ah Hung. Explain your suggestion.