
INFORMATION NOTE

Statistical Profile of Unemployed Youths in Hong Kong

1. Introduction

1.1 In recent years, youth unemployment has become an issue of concern in Hong Kong as the youth unemployment rate has considerably been higher than the overall unemployment rate for all age groups. It is noteworthy that young people are key ingredients for supporting economic growth and innovations in the community. If they are not participating in the job market, the inability of contributing to the society is considered wasting resources. The high youth unemployment implies a loss in human capital for the youths and the whole society. This information note provides the Legislative Council Members with a statistical profile of the unemployed youths in Hong Kong.

1.2 In this study, the Research and Library Services Division (RLSD) uses the Census and Statistics Department's (C&SD) definition of youths, which is referred to "*persons aged between 15 - 19 and 20 - 24*". RLSD also adopts C&SD's definition of employed population, which is referred to "*persons aged 15 and over who have been at work for pay or profit during the seven days before enumeration or who have had formal job attachment*".

2. Statistical profile of unemployed youths

Unemployment rates of youths and their distribution by sex (Appendix I)

2.1 In the period of July - September 2003, the overall youth unemployment rate (i.e. young people aged between 15 and 24) was 18.6%. In other words, nearly one-fifth of the young employed population were unemployed. It should also be noted that the overall youth unemployment rate was considerably higher than the total unemployment rate of 8.3% for all age groups in the corresponding period.

2.2 Unemployment rates amongst younger adolescents (aged between 15 and 19) were higher than those of older adolescents (aged between 20 and 24). For instance, in the period of July - September 2003, the unemployment rates of the younger and older adolescents were 36.1% and 14.6% respectively.

2.3 Young males experienced higher unemployment rates than young females. In the period of July - September 2003, the unemployment rates for young males and young females were 22.1% and 14.9% respectively.

Educational attainment (Appendix II)

2.4 In the period of July - September 2003, 47% of the unemployed youths had upper secondary education, while 21% had at most lower secondary education.

Duration of unemployment (Appendix III)

2.5 In the period of July - September 2003, about 22% of the unemployed youths had been out of work for less than a month, while 40% had been unemployed for more than three months.

2.6 The median duration of youth unemployment had increased from 65 days in the period of July - September 2002 to 72 days in the period of July - September 2003.

Previous industry (Appendix IV)

2.7 In the period of July - September 2003, 46% of the unemployed youths had a previous job in the wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels sector, while 21% worked previously in the manufacturing and construction sector.

2.8 The number of unemployed youths who had a previous job in the manufacturing and construction sector had increased from 8 800 in the period of July - September 2002 to 9 600 in the period of July - September 2003, which represented an increase of 9%.

Previous occupation (Appendix V)

2.9 In the period of July - September 2003, about 39% of the unemployed youths were previously worked as service workers or shop sales workers, 20% were previously workers in elementary occupations, and 16% were previously clerks.

2.10 The number of unemployed youths who previously worked as service workers or shop sales workers had increased from 15 900 in the period of July - September 2002 to 17 600 in the period of July - September 2003, which was equivalent to an increase of 11%.

Mode of leaving last job (Appendix VI)

2.11 In the period of July - September 2003, 66% of the unemployed youths had been dismissed or laid off, while 27% had left their jobs because of job dissatisfaction.

Main action taken by young job-seekers to seek work (Appendix VII)

2.12 There were 70 000 young job-seekers in the period of July - September 2003, constituting 96% of the unemployed youths. The other 4% did not seek work because they believed that work was not available. They were still classified as unemployed, being regarded as "discouraged workers".

2.13 Of those 70 000 young job-seekers, 43% answered advertisements or placed advertisements as their main actions to seek work, 24% searched through the Internet, 17% sought assistance from relatives or friends, and 14% sought from the Labour Department.

2.14 Young job-seekers had increased the use of both the Internet and the Labour Department as their main actions to seek work. The proportion of using the Internet to seek work had increased from 18% in the period of July - September 2002 to 24% in the period of July - September 2003. During the same period, the percentage share of using the Labour Department had increased from 11% to 14%.

Young job-seekers' desired industry of employment (Appendix VIII)

2.15 In the period of July - September 2003, among the young job-seekers, 56% did not have any preference for their desired industry of employment, while 20% desired to work in the wholesale, import/export trades, restaurants and hotels sector.

Young job-seekers' desired occupation of employment (Appendix IX)

2.16 In the period of July - September 2003, among the young job-seekers, 45% did not have any preference for their desired occupation of employment, while 20% preferred to work as service workers or shop sales workers.

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Appendix I

**Unemployment rate of youths aged between 15 and 24 by sex and age
(paragraphs 2.1 - 2.3)**

Sex	July - September 2002						July - September 2003 ¹					
	Aged 15 - 19		Aged 20 - 24		Total (Aged 15 - 24)		Aged 15 - 19		Aged 20 - 24		Total (Aged 15 - 24)	
	No.	Unemployment rate (%)	No.	Unemployment rate (%)	No.	Unemployment rate (%)	No.	Unemployment rate (%)	No.	Unemployment rate (%)	No.	Unemployment rate (%)
Male	17 100	37.2	26 600	16.4	43 700	20.9	14 800	37.3	29 300	18.4	44 100	22.1
Female	12 400	32.8	18 200	10.8	30 600	14.8	11 600	34.8	16 900	10.7	28 500	14.9
Total	29 500	35.2	44 800	13.5	74 300	17.9	26 400	36.1	46 200	14.6	72 600	18.6

Notes: ¹ Provisional figures.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix II

**Unemployed youths aged between 15 and 24 by educational attainment and age
(paragraph 2.4)**

Educational attainment	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Lower secondary and below	6 300	8 500	14 800	6 400	9 000	15 400
Upper secondary [@]	18 700	17 500	36 200	16 800	17 000	33 800
Matriculation	1 400	2 100	3 500	1 700	3 000	4 700
Tertiary: non-degree	2 800	8 700	11 500	1 300	8 700	10 000
Tertiary: degree	200	8 000	8 200	200	8 400	8 600
Total	29 400	44 800	74 200	26 400	46 100	72 500

Notes: [@] Including craft courses.

¹ Provisional figures.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix III

**Unemployed youths aged between 15 and 24 by duration of unemployment and age
(paragraphs 2.5-2.6)**

Duration of unemployment (Months)	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
< 1	7 000	9 600	16 600	6 100	9 700	15 800
1 - < 2	7 500	11 000	18 500	6 300	10 100	16 400
2 - < 3	4 800	8 800	13 600	3 700	7 700	11 400
3 - < 6	5 600	6 300	11 900	4 300	8 800	13 100
> = 6	4 600	9 000	13 600	6 000	9 900	15 900
Total	29 500	44 700	74 200	26 400	46 200	72 600
Median (Days)	62	67	65	68	74	72

Notes: ¹ Provisional figures.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix IV

**Unemployed youths aged between 15 and 24 with a previous job by previous industry and age
(paragraphs 2.7-2.8)**

Previous industry	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Manufacturing and construction	2 700	6 100	8 800	2 600	7 000	9 600
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	7 500	13 400	20 900	6 600	14 200	20 800
Transport, storage and communications; financing, insurance, real estate and business services; community, social and personal services	5 600	11 300	16 900	4 100	11 000	15 100
Total	15 800	30 800	46 600	13 300	32 200	45 500

Notes: ¹Provisional figures.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix V

**Unemployed youths aged between 15 and 24 with a previous job by previous occupation and age
(paragraphs 2.9 - 2.10)**

Previous occupation	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals	1 100	4 200	5 300	700	3 400	4 100
Clerks	2 200	6 700	8 900	1 900	5 600	7 500
Service workers and shop sales workers	6 400	9 500	15 900	5 700	11 900	17 600
Craft and related workers	1 900	5 000	6 900	2 400	4 700	7 100
Plant and machine operators and assemblers, and elementary occupations	4 300	5 400	9 700	2 600	6 600	9 200
Total	15 900	30 800	46 700	13 300	32 200	45 500

Notes: ¹ Provisional figures.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix VI

**Unemployed youths aged between 15 and 24 with a previous job by mode of leaving last job and age
(paragraph 2.11)**

Mode of leaving last job	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Dismissed or laid off	8 400	19 800	28 200	7 800	22 500	30 300
Dissatisfied with job	5 900	9 000	14 900	5 000	7 300	12 300
Others	1 600	2 000	3 600	600	2 600	3 200
Total	15 900	30 800	46 700	13 400	32 400	45 800

Note: ¹ Provisional figures.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix VII

**Job-seekers aged between 15 and 24 by main actions taken to seek work and age
(paragraphs 2.12 - 2.14)**

Main actions taken to seek work	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Answered advertisements or placed advertisements	13 500	22 500	36 000	10 300	19 700	30 000
Searched through the Internet	3 200	10 100	13 300	5 000	11 500	16 500
Sought assistance from relatives/friends	5 900	5 500	11 400	4 300	7 600	11 900
Sought from the Labour Department	3 800	3 800	7 600	4 700	4 800	9 500
Others	2 300	1 100	3 400	1 400	700	2 100
Total	28 700	43 000	71 700	25 700	44 300	70 000

Notes: ¹ Provisional figures.

* Estimate is based on a small sample observations and is not presented.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix VIII

**Job-seekers aged between 15 and 24 by desired industry of employment and age
(paragraph 2.15)**

Desired industry of employment	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Manufacturing and construction	1 800	4 000	5 800	1 500	4 700	6 200
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	4 900	8 300	13 200	5 900	8 300	14 200
Transport, storage and communications; financing, insurance, real estate and business services; community, social and personal services	3 900	8 000	11 900	2 800	7 800	10 600
No preference	18 000	22 700	40 700	15 500	23 500	39 000
Total	28 600	43 000	71 600	25 700	44 300	70 000

Notes: ¹ Provisional figures.

Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

Appendix IX

**Job-seekers aged between 15 and 24 by desired occupation of employment and age
(paragraph 2.16)**

Desired occupation of employment	July - September 2002			July - September 2003 ¹		
	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)	Aged 15 - 19	Aged 20 - 24	Total (Aged 15 - 24)
Managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals	900	5 900	6 800	400	5 800	6 200
Clerks	3 100	7 700	10 800	3 100	7 100	10 200
Service workers and shop sales workers	5 900	6 900	12 800	6 500	7 500	14 000
Craft and related workers	2 100	3 500	5 600	1 700	3 100	4 800
Plant and machine operators and assemblers, and elementary occupations	1 800	2 100	3 900	800	2 800	3 600
No preference	14 800	16 800	31 600	13 200	18 100	31 300
Total	28 600	42 900	71 500	25 700	44 400	70 100

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Census and Statistics Department.

References

1. Census and Statistics Department. *Quarterly Report on General Household Survey*, various issues.