

Zaffar Iqbal

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Good afternoon,

My name is Zaffar and I have finished my secondary school in Pakistan. I have come to Hong Kong around a year ago. Today I am here to share my job seeking experience in the Labour Department.

When I came to Hong Kong I started looking for job through different means including Interactive Employment Service or iES of Labour Department. Through iES website, I came across a job at a printing company in Tsuen Wan with did not require any Chinese and as newly arrived I thought it is suitable job for me. Job posting mentioned registering labour department for job application and I did so both online and in-person. Job centre gave me the address of the company to go for the interview.

When I went for the interview the employer said that candidate applying for this post should read and write Chinese; and refuse to have an interview. How ironic it that job post does not even mentioned Cantonese requirement but employer asking for reading and writing Chinese. And these are employers that Labour Department supposed to have engage for hiring EMs. I am very keen in developing a career however there was no other support provided to me except one job referral on my request and occasionally I would receive job fairs emails but none of the job is suitable for me as it is general dissemination of job fairs' information catering Chinese jobseekers rather tailor-made service for EMs.

Left helpless from the job centre, I got a casual labour job through help of my father's friend. It has been a year that I have very unstable work. In fact I am unemployed even now but never received any personalised follow up from job centre. Currently with help of Catholic Worker Centre I am planning on career development and Centre is exploring an opportunity for me to be Elevator Mechanic Trainee. Had this kind of career counselling was provided to me by Labour Department my one year would not have been wasted.

Therefore I strongly demand that labour department should set up designated employment service centres for EMs. These centres should include well-trained case managers providing tailor-made career counselling, intensive case follow up, connecting with vocational and non-vocational training courses and Hiring Specialist Employment Advisers to proactively open up employment opportunities in different sectors in order to cater needs of EM Job seekers genuinely.