A PILOT STUDY ON CROSS-BOUNDARY FAMILIES IN HONG KONG

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Executive Summary

i. The boom of children born in Hong Kong to Mainland women has been a hot issue attracting extensive discussions over these years. This study aimed at addressing the issue by examining the socio-demographic profile of the families with Type I and Type II children, and assessing the parents’ plans for the future living, education, child care, medical service and social service arrangement for these children.

ii. There were two phases in this study. In the first phase, a total of 40 Mainland mothers who gave birth in Hong Kong during March and April 2012 were invited for an individual in-depth interview. The interviews were guided by a structured questionnaire. Information about their socio-demographic background, health and plans for the children’s future was gathered.

iii. With regard to the socio-demographic characteristics, findings showed that most families were from the Guangdong province. Over 60% of the parents had received tertiary education, and almost none of the families were dependent on social security. This reflected that the socio-economic status of these families was moderate.

iv. About 60% of the children were not the single child in the family. Most mothers had made their first maternal appointment and booking in Hong Kong by the second trimester of pregnancy, showing that these births were well planned.

v. As to the future plans of these families, over 40% of the children would definitely return to Hong Kong by the age of 12 years. Another 40% indicated that they might return. Only fewer than 20% claimed that they would not live in Hong Kong for long term.

vi. About 30% of the children would definitely attend kindergartens in Hong Kong, and this figure would rise to around 40%, 45% and 50% for primary, secondary and tertiary education respectively. About 50% of parents planned to travel between Hong Kong and Mainland China in order to take care of their children.

vii. Although only 3% of children would stay in Hong Kong during their first year of age, about 73% would use medical service in Hong Kong. Most of them would return for the vaccination programme.
viii. Less than 10% of the families planned to apply for the social security or public housing in Hong Kong, showing that they were not necessary dependent on the social benefits in Hong Kong.

ix. Generally speaking, the findings in the first phase are consistent with the results of surveys conducted by Census and Statistics Department.

x. In the second phase of this study, five focus group discussions were arranged. Participants included Government departments, medical professionals and non-governmental organisations (NGO) relevant to cross-boundary families or children born in Hong Kong to Mainland women. They were invited to share information about their services related to the issue, as well as their views on the information needed for policy making and service provision.

xi. Despite the fact that various departments and organisations in Hong Kong are providing services to help cross-boundary families, there is a need for a central system to guide inter-departmental cooperation and service coordination.

xii. Information about cross-boundary families and their members was seldom exchanged between departments. However, information could be better utilised when the databases of various departments could be merged. Merging of databases could provide the opportunity for a more comprehensive profile of the families in need.