

On the Path to Their Truth

A Study in Six Factories in China Listening to the Voices of Young Migrant Workers



“On the path to their truth” – a study carried out in 2011 by the Center for Child-Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) and the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC)

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Foreword from the Center for Child-Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR)

There have been two key phenomena recently, often the focus of media coverage and research, which led CCR CSR to do a study of young migrant workers. Firstly there were many reports describing differences between the first generation of migrant workers and the so-called new generation. Second of all, there were many indications that factory owners were concerned about how to manage and also retain young employees once they had begun working.

The aim of this study was to hear from the young workers themselves how they perceive their lives, specifically their work situations, and listen to their dreams and aspirations. We hope this information will help us to develop suitable tools for employers to better understand and enhance communication with their young workers, which will in turn lead to better management strategies.

In our discussions with the young workers and with management staff it became clear that there is a communication gap. A gap which is important to bridge so the creativity, curiosity and willingness of the youngsters we met will not be lost. If this gap is not bridged, the young workers will continue to move around, changing jobs until they find a place which will satisfy their aspirations of a decent place to spend their working hours, which is for them, as for many of us, the majority of their time.

During the research we also met many young people who need care and protection while they try to manage their lives far away from the safe environment of a family. In the name of social responsibility, employers should really analyse their role of having many young people in the workplace, both from a business and from a human perspective.

We hope that our study truly reflects the thoughts of the young employees we interviewed and that it can be a positive inspiration to factory managers when they address the rights and needs of the new generation of migrant workers. CCR CSR welcomes further discussions with industry leaders based on the study's

recommendations about how to, in a practical way, take the next steps towards a more efficient and friendly environment for young workers.

A partnership with the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) was crucial to the result. Their knowledge and experience of industry and their good contacts with factories, coupled with our innovative study methods, created a dynamic collaboration. We would also like to thank the six factories involved which allowed us access to their shop floors and workers, and of course the young workers themselves who took part, sharing their hopes and disappointments with such honesty. Finally, we want to express our gratitude to the CSR Center at the Swedish Embassy for believing in us, financing the study and in so doing helping us to share the important things we learn.

Beijing, February 2012

Britta Öström

Executive Director CCR CSR

Foreword from the China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC)

Just as children are the future of the world, young workers are the future of the Chinese manufacturing industry. The textiles and clothing industries have been and still are traditional pillars of China's national economy, important for people's individual livelihoods and for giving the country an international competitive advantage. The sector is also where many young workers are employed; many of them began their careers in textiles and clothing factories. Over time, millions upon millions of these young people have helped to boost the nation's GDP with their hard work.

In recent years, as both the Chinese economy and society have developed, new issues have arisen in relation to the employment of young people in the manufacturing sector. For example, a high turnover of staff has made it difficult for young workers to improve their skills and fully develop their creativity, and an increased awareness of rights could be taken further. Furthermore, ineffective management approaches are failing to inspire and motivate the younger generation. We believe that in order to effectively deal with these challenges we must first listen closely to the young workers themselves, to learn how they see the world around them.

With this in mind, CNTAC and the Center for Child-Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) jointly launched "On the path to their truth" – a study in six factories in China listening to the voices of young migrant workers in July, 2011, with the support of the Swedish Embassy. What makes the study unique is the youth-centered, participatory approach; several young workers were employed as researchers and interviewers. After receiving basic training on research methodologies and tools, they went into factory production and living areas themselves, recording the daily lives of their friends and co-workers and learning about their thoughts and aspirations. This method helped to ensure that the young workers offered their opinions and ideas in a more open and relaxed manner.

The study report is a comprehensive, detailed and in-depth analysis of the findings. We believe it will help stakeholders further understand the opinions and feelings of

young migrant workers. It will also help them to explore practical ideas on how to set up and manage people-orientated workplaces and stimulate discussions about corporate social responsibility by employers and government departments. The study will therefore help to better protect the rights of young workers and promote the sustainable and sound development of industry.

Several companies participated in the project, and some local industry associations and government departments gave us a lot of support. Here let me extend our very sincere thanks to them.

Not long ago, the United Nations released the **World Youth Report 2011: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times**. It explores employment scenarios and global employment trends for young people. The report, which shares many similarities with our own study, highlights the ideas and voices of young people on employment and decent work around the world. In the report Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says: “Today we have the largest generation of young people the world has ever known. They are demanding their rights and a greater voice in economic and political life. We need to ...support a new social contract of job-rich economic growth. Let us start with young people!”

CNTAC's report echoes the UN's appeal. We hope all relevant parties will share our study and see it as the Chinese version of the UN report, starting to really understand young workers and exploring a harmonious, inclusive, preferable and sustainable path for economic growth.

Sun Ruizhe

Vice President of CNTAC

Director of the Office for Social Responsibility, CNTAC

February 2012

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Executive Summary

This report is a short version in English of the Chinese Study “The path to their truth” (《通向心路——倾听“后80”青年工人心声调研报告》). The full version in both English and Chinese can be downloaded from www.cccsr.com and www.csc9000.org.cn.

• Background and purpose of the study

China has an estimated 242 million migrant workers, according to government data. More than 100 million of these workers were born in the 1980s and early 1990s. In Beijing, in June 2010, Premier Wen Jiabao met with some representatives of young migrant workers and urged that **“government officials and all members of society should treat young migrants as their own children”**. This shows there is a central government focus on the lives of these young people. Finding ways to support them is on the Chinese government’s agenda.

The China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC) and the Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) carried out a joint study to find out more about the so-called ‘new generation’ of migrant workers. The initial aim was to reach the youngest workers, those aged 16-20, in order to better understand their aspirations and motivations. However, it turned out that most of those featured in the study are aged 18 – 22 as it was mainly this age group working in the six participating factories.

The youngsters are often referred to as the ‘new generation’ as they are considered to be different to their parents, the first generation of migrant workers. For example, the second generation is often unmarried with a better education. Furthermore, these young people move to the cities but few have the intention of returning to the family village (although

some want to return to their township or county), unlike their parents who wanted to save up as much money as they could before going back to the countryside. In addition, the 'new' generation is a moving workforce, often entering a factory for a short period of time then seeking new opportunities elsewhere. These young workers follow friends when they hear about a better workplace or simply move because they are curious and want to explore new places.

From the employer point of view, labour shortages in some factories have been reported and managers also face challenges recruiting and retaining workers. As the number of young workers has continued to increase and has changed the overall age structure in factories, this new generation is an important factor for sustainable business development. In the study it became clear that really understanding this new group of young workers could help employers to attract and retain them and therefore help to create a sustainable workforce.

The study was carried out from July to October 2011 in six factories in Fujian, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Gansu and Guangdong. Four were textiles factories in the coastal region and two were food and beverage factories inland. The ratio of young workers in the factories was high; for example, in one factory in Guangdong, the young workforce made up 80% of the total workers.

• **Methods used to collect data**

To ensure the young workers were really listened to the team took a participatory approach, allowing the migrants to reflect on their lives from their own perspectives and put forward solutions to any problems. It was decided that four workers would be chosen at each factory by factory managers to be co-researchers. They would receive training on how to

record data on their colleagues at work and off duty by taking photos, conducting interviews and encouraging the filling in of questionnaires. After that the whole team would gather to share and analyse the information.

Was this really possible to do in a factory in China? Would management feel threatened by the approach? When designing the study much thought went into thinking how to get close to the young workers, explaining the purpose of the study and also understanding and including the needs of management. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) was a key phrase, as the concept benefits both employees and employers.

The co-researchers roles were to:

- Give input on interview guidelines, discuss and propose photograph themes and select interviewees
- Take photographs reflecting working and living conditions
- Do interviews with other young workers
- Assist with questionnaires by, for example, pointing out which questions needed more explanation and helping to collect paperwork

Meanwhile, the rest of the team observed the working and living conditions of the young workers and organised interviews. Group discussions took place with 10-15 young workers and also with 10-15 frontline managers as well as individual interviews with young workers, general managers and HR managers.

The aim was to explore opinions about interpersonal relationships and the workplace and also to inspire workers and managers to consider the meaning of staff-centered management. It was also hoped that the migrant workers and their managers would experience the positive effects of better communication and respect when trying to improve management techniques.

• Study limitations

Opening the doors to a factory to carry out a study in any country might be difficult and Chinese factories are no exception. But thanks to CNTAC's network of good relationships in the industry the team managed to get approval to enter six sites. It is probable that the managers in these factories are exceptionally open to new thoughts and learning and also mature enough to understand that all workplaces have challenges to tackle; they did not fear transparency. We have to assume, therefore, that the chosen factories are better than average in management terms and so do not fully reflect the average Chinese factory.

The fact that the co-researchers were selected by the factories and not by CNTAC or CCR CSR could be seen by some as a limitation. However, as the main intention of the study was not to reflect on a particular workplace but in general listen to young workers' thoughts, hopes and dreams, we believe the information we gained is still valid and useful.

Ideally, we would have revisited the factories after the information had been gathered and the report drafted. The draft was sent for comments but time and budget constraints did not allow for face-to-face discussions with participants. It is likely, though, that CNTAC and CCR CSR will continue a second phase of management training for the factories involved.

Please note that the report is called a study as methods and processes to gain information did not follow formal procedures for academic research.

• Implementation

The team spent three days in each factory to:

- Share the study purpose and methods with management
- Train young workers as co-researchers and assign staff to support them
- Do one-to-one in-depth interviews with around 10 young workers
- Have group discussions with around 10 young workers
- Have group discussions with around 10 frontline managers (team leaders or heads of production lines)
- Conduct a questionnaire of around 100 young workers
- Interview middle-level and senior managers
- Observe the environment
- Debrief and report back initial findings to management

In total around 700 individuals were approached across the six factories through the joint efforts of the co-researchers and the study team. A total of 48 young workers and 13 middle-level and senior management staff took part in in-depth interviews. Sixty young workers participated in group discussions and 408 young workers were involved in the questionnaire. Eighteen co-researchers between them interviewed 71 of their peers.

Most of the factories involved in the study are engaged in textiles and clothing. Of the young workers who filled in the questionnaires, males made up 35.2% and females 64.8%. 55% of respondents have completed junior high school and 35.4% have graduated from one of the following - senior high school, technical secondary school, technical school or vocational school. 88.7% of respondents have siblings and 92.3% are unmarried. Exactly half have not been involved in farming for more than six months. Many young workers tend to migrate to cities to work as soon as they finish their compulsory education.

• The meaning of work

Although most young workers involved in the study have worked for less than three years, 20.2% have already changed jobs once, 33% have changed jobs twice and 20.7% have changed jobs three times. Only 26.3% have had just one position. Those who have family or relatives in the same factory tend to move around less.

Through the interviews carried out it was seen that workers have many different expectations and interpretations of the meaning of work. Some defined it as a means of supporting themselves while others talked of how it would reduce the burden on the family, broaden the mind or allow money to be saved for the future, perhaps to start a business with. Many said that being employed is a temporary strategy while considering other options.

Workers are often introduced to a factory by family members, neighbours or friends. Before taking a job they consider various factors including salary, the chance to learn new skills and living and working conditions. As there are significant differences between actual salary and expectations, this can lead to frequent moves in the search for something better. This explains why many youngsters have little sense of belonging to a community.

• Why stay in the same workplace?

The quality of the work itself is considered important as well as initiative and efficiency being recognized by managers. Important attributes of 'good' work include:

- 1) if the work suits them
- 2) if they can learn different production procedures instead of just doing monotonous and very repetitive work
- 3) flexible working hours to enable them to properly accomplish the task
- 4) no need to work overtime

Although having a fair and satisfying salary/benefits is the main reason for workers to stay in a particular workplace, a caring and friendly working environment is also important. Many refer with resentment to domineering management styles and when they are discriminated against in relation to local residents. The general wish is for managers who communicate pleasantly and are fair and transparent.

The young workers also think the factories only look at labour issues from the perspective of the company and not from a staff point of view. They consider themselves as managed and 'subject to' instructions which they must 'follow', rather than being involved. They claim they have very few opportunities to articulate their ideas and opinions. Many young workers think their views could be a positive contribution but are not valued.

• Robots or people?

“We have become robots and I don’t want to be a robot who only works with machines.” Those are the words of one of the workers we spoke to. Others described their feelings about work using words like “annoyance”, “boredom” and “depression”. Only 36, or 8.6%, of the workers involved in the study indicated they feel “comfortable” at work.

Most of the factories adopt a piece-rate salary system. Many workers work extra hours in the evening and return to the dormitory around

8:30pm, sometimes later. They easily feel stressed and tired due to the long hours and the monotonous work. More importantly, the youngsters are working with machines and materials most of the time rather than communicating with others. Many workers say they become “numb” over time. Much of their free time during evenings and weekends is spent sleeping, talking to friends, watching TV or surfing the internet. Sometimes they go shopping or have a meal together. Generally, they consider leisure activities to be boring, monotonous and meaningless.

• Expectations and ambitions

We found that the young workers think self-esteem is important and they long for the independence to manage their own lives. They wish to have free time and their own space, and not only act in accordance with requests from others. They want to find someone to love, have a happy family and settle down in a city. They do not want to get married too early or have more than one or two children.

They also say they will not educate their children the way their parents educated them; many of them were left in villages while their parents went away to work, and they do not want to do this to their own children. They also want to be able to communicate more effectively with their children than their parents did with them. Overall, this is the first generation with aspirations reaching beyond a better material life; they are searching for a good quality of life.

• Problems the young workers face in the factory

- They come up against management models driven by strategies which are traditional and inadequate to meet the demands of a generation with different aspirations and dreams.
- Management mechanisms are adopted which serve the needs of production but do not fully understand the relationship between efficiency and a satisfied workforce. Strategies focus mainly on outcome and quantity and neglect the feelings and needs of workers.
- The young workers are often graduates of junior high school but a significant number only finished primary school, making them less competitive in the labour market and therefore not in a strong position to negotiate salaries. They are willing but not qualified enough to learn new technical skills. This prevents the workers from becoming professional technicians and/or getting a supervisory position. They are caught in a vicious circle as they cannot access training offered by the government and social organisations and lack feasible strategies to improve their skills.
- Managers are local residents which sometimes causes conflict; the migrant workers often live with a sense of being discriminated against due to their different place of birth.
- Young workers have limited opportunities to contribute and be involved and many complain that their opinions are not valued. This may be due to limited access to channels to articulate their thoughts. We noticed that few young workers realise their right to be listened to and therefore have little idea of how to articulate their opinions.

• Private life

- Having a rural household registration has turned the young workers into a marginalised population in the cities, resulting in a poor sense of belonging and numerous difficulties accessing social services.
- Often the youngsters live in communities where migrants concentrate, like a village within a city. Their living quarters are often isolated from local residents. They do not have many links with the cities they live in and often consider themselves just workers and unimportant passengers instead of valuable city residents.
- A lack of family support can lead to isolation. 25% of young male workers and 31.4% of young female workers were, as children, left behind at home while their parents migrated to cities for work. This has led to many feelings of loneliness. A long period of insufficient family support has hindered many young workers from developing skills such as expressing emotions and establishing and maintaining close relationships. This has made some workers distrustful with a sense of 'I don't care because no one cares about me'.
- The young workers yearn for love but have trouble finding partners because of a narrow social network; being separated from urban communities and residents, they can only choose partners from within their own group. They long for permanent relationships but have difficulty being truly committed because of job instability.

• Recommendations for employers

The following recommendations are put forward for firms to improve their management strategies. The purpose is to understand the characteristics of young workers, harmonise the relationship between management and young workers and give full play to the latter's creativity and willingness to contribute. It is hoped the recommendations will create a win-win situation and resolve labour shortages and challenges in management.

• **Recruit workers with respect**

Carry out an interview or a respectful 'talk' with the young potential employee before the decision to employ is taken. Give proper information about the job and be honest about expectations, possibilities and limitations so the worker can make an informed decision from the start.

• **Develop a staff scheme to win trust and give a sense of being cared for**

Young workers migrate with dreams. The first few months are the most difficult and they are in need of continuous support during this acute transition period. Firms could develop support schemes for new staff to get acquainted to the working environment and life in the factory. It could entail the establishment of support groups to enhance communication and activities between young and older workers and provide young workers with opportunities to ask questions and become better informed.

• **Develop friendly, understanding and trustworthy frontline managers**

Direct supervisors seem to be crucial people for a new young worker. They can listen to aspirations, meet the worker each day and become a kind of father/mother substitute. Such frontline managers are also responsible for implementing policies. It is important for firms to have administration strategies which are acceptable to young workers; such strategies will influence their lives and recognition of corporate culture.

- **Provide staff with more opportunities and methods to participate and contribute** Develop mechanisms to mobilise young workers to participate in daily activities; encourage and help them to organise cultural and leisure activities and get involved in community activities; regard young workers as vibrant and creative people rather than treat them as troublemakers who should be managed by authoritative models and strict rules.

- **Enhance relationships between firm and local communities; help young workers to integrate into society to improve their quality of life** Firms should take the lead linking young workers with local groups like the China Youth League or All-China Women's Federation. Managers could also encourage workers to take part in community activities and do voluntary work to improve interaction with local communities. Such activities may help to improve the image of workers among local residents who will learn more about the 'new' generation and hopefully accept them as valuable members of the community.

I. Overview



I.1 Caring new generation of migrant workers become consensus shared by Chinese society

The Chinese worker was Time magazine's Person of the Year in 2009. China is still the world's fastest-growing major economy despite the global financial crisis and could help the world on the path to economic recovery. Certainly, the nation's tens of millions of workers deserve credit for their efforts.

China's 2006 **Opinions of the State Council on Addressing Migrant Worker Issues** states that migrant workers are a major force for overall economic and social development. It says they are widely found in every sector of the national economy and account for more than half of the workers employed in processing, manufacturing, building, the extractive industry, environmental sanitation, housekeeping and catering.

In recent years, more and more Chinese people have migrated to cities from the countryside. According to China's Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS), **by the end of 2010 there were an estimated 242.23 million rural workers in China, an increase of 12.45 million on 2009; 153.35 million people migrated to work in the cities, an increase of 8.02 million on 2009.**

Sixty per cent of the 153.35 million were born in the 1980s or early 1990s, the equivalent of more than 100 million people. This young workforce is often referred to as the 'new generation' of migrant workers, a phrase initially used in 2010 in a central government document. That paper demands that problems faced by the new generation must

be resolved and promotes the urbanisation of migrant workers. This indicates that the Chinese government does realise the importance of this generation of migrant workers.

Migration has not only created money for the cities but has also increased farmers' incomes and helped rural prosperity, as money is usually sent back home by migrant workers. Another benefit of migration is that it promotes a way of looking for jobs which is more market-orientated and autonomous and gives rural workers the chance to try out different kinds of jobs in the cities. Some cities have begun to give some migrants more of an official registration; that is to say, not *a hukou*, but acknowledging them as citizens and giving them some access to social welfare.

Many migrants get better benefits in the city than farmers do in the countryside; for example, schools for migrant children in cities may be better than village schools. So in that sense migration can help to alleviate some of the problems related to the more backward nature of the countryside. However, there are naturally negative aspects to migration too, such as children being left behind in rural areas and being brought up by relatives instead of by their parents. Migrant workers also tend to lack skills, have inadequate access to healthcare and other benefits, and face job uncertainties and difficulties with household registration. It is vital that all levels of government work to protect the rights and interests of migrant workers.

Most of the new generation of migrant workers is aged between 18 and 30 years old. They usually want to integrate into the cities rather than work on the land, and face many difficulties during the journey to self-fulfillment and integration. At such a critical age, at a time when their ideals and their realities clash, many of these young people suffer from stress and need additional support, which they often do not get.

In June 2010, Premier Wen Jiabao held a meeting in Beijing with

representatives of young workers. He noted that **“government officials as well as all members of society should treat young migrant workers as their own children”**. This has led to more concern for migrant workers throughout the nation. Giving pragmatic social support to the new generation and helping them to resolve their problems is now high on the agenda of Chinese society.

Firms which employ young migrants, particularly those companies with a very large number of such employees, have a big responsibility. In recent years, the proportion of these youngsters has been increasing in many workplaces, and the competence and skills of many has improved. How to prevent them leaving for other workplaces is a real challenge. Many firms face labour shortages and managers are often unsure how to supervise the new generation. Several factors contribute to these problems. On the one hand, unlike the first generation of migrant workers, most of the new generation finds jobs in the cities after they have completed nine years of compulsory education. They are often not familiar with agriculture or with rural areas. Many of them did grow up in rural areas, both as left-behind children or with their parents. But most did not work on the land although their parents might well have done so.

They are said to have received a higher level of education than their parents and have higher expectations for their careers, wanting more material and also more spiritual enjoyment. Due to overall improvements in living conditions and education standards, the new generation has higher expectations for work, life and career development. They yearn for understanding and respect from others and strive for self-fulfillment. Their desires are often far more diverse than those of their parents who may have left the countryside to work for a while in the city to save some money before returning home.

On the other hand, labour shortages and the new generation becoming the majority of the workforce have challenged management models adopted by many firms. For Chinese companies undergoing rapid

development, cheap labour is no longer such a competitive advantage. Some enterprises and factories are backward in management ideology and strategies and are not able to adapt to change quickly. They recruit and retain workers only by raising salaries, which does not meet the needs and expectations of many of the new generation. So, some managers say that the young workforce is too difficult to deal with.

It is important that firms take the initiative and make changes to improve management techniques. A company can show its concern for young workers by altering the mentality of managers, adapting their mindsets to the workers' new characteristics and needs. This is a direct way of fulfilling corporate social responsibility (CSR). Moreover, truly and adequately caring for the new generation of young workers is the best way to resolve labour shortages and management problems.

Against this background, CCR CSR and CNTAC conducted this joint study in the textile and food industries, where there are many young workers. The aim was to support firms so they can fulfill CSR more effectively, helping them to change management mentality, improve practices and efficiency of management and create better career opportunities and a better work climate.

From July to October 2011 the study took place in six firms in five provinces. The research team obtained much firsthand information from both young workers and managers. This report is based on the information collected.

I.2 Who did we target?

Our research was aimed at migrant workers aged 16 to 20. They are often said to be the ‘new generation’ of migrant workers which many young workers do not like; they think it sounds derogatory. In this report, they are referred to as young workers.

I.3 Methods: Participation of young workers

The following methods were adopted for the study.

I.3.1 Workers became researchers

This method was used so that some young workers could try to reflect on their lives and the lives of their colleagues and put forward solutions on some issues. Three or four young workers from each factory were chosen as co-researchers to work alongside the study team. After some training they recorded the routine work and lives of their peers both at work and in their living quarters. They took photographs and carried out interviews, helping to present the lives, aspirations, and recommendations of their young colleagues. Please note that the arguments, evidence and conclusions of this report have been integrated and reflect the joint findings of the study team and the co-researchers.

Roles of young co-researchers

1. After training, co-researchers discuss and propose interview guidelines, determine photograph themes and select interviewees.
2. Use assigned cameras to take a series of pictures reflecting the working and living conditions of young workers and the management style of the factories
3. Interview 10-15 young workers and document the findings
4. Assist with questionnaires by helping to explain how to fill them out and collecting them afterwards

1.3.2 In-depth interviews

There were two groups for this. Firstly, individual one-on-one interviews between the study team and young workers took place. Secondly, there were one-on-one interviews between researchers and members of the company's middle-level or senior management staff.

1.3.3 Activities to facilitate group discussions

In each firm the study team adopted problem-solving and learning-from-experience training activities to explore opinions about relationships in the workplace. All questions were drafted by the study team and young workers or frontline managers offered opinions and information during the discussions. Well-designed, systematic and interactional group activities were adopted to involve staff and inspire them to consider the meaning and connotations of people-centered management models. The discussions also allowed personnel to take part in role reversals and better understand communication, respect and the importance of non-financial care.

1.3.4 Questionnaires

The team developed a questionnaire consisting of 45 questions and randomly selected about 100 young workers in each factory to complete it.

1.3.5 Participatory observations

The team observed the working and living environment of some of the young workers by visiting workplaces, participating in their leisure activities and eating with them.

1.3.6 Literature review

The team collected and analysed relevant research and government policies and then worked out the theme and focus of the study.

I.4 Hundreds of pieces of data

Around 700 pieces of data from questionnaires, interviews and group discussions were collected for the study, which was carried out from July to September 2011 in six factories. The team consisted of five professionals (one responsible for training and supporting young co-researchers, two responsible for in-depth interviews and questionnaires, one who dealt with group discussions and training, and one who took photographs and made videos). There were also three or four young co-researchers chosen from each factory. The study team spent three days in each factory to do the following:

1. Share the purpose and methods of the study with management staff
2. Train three or four young workers as co-researchers and assign staff to support them
3. One-to-one in-depth interviews with around 10 young workers
4. Organise group discussions and training for around 10 young workers
5. Organise group discussions and training for around 10 frontline management staff (team leaders or heads of production lines)
6. Conduct questionnaires with around 100 young workers
7. Interview middle-level and senior managers
8. Observe the environment in the workplace
9. Debrief management staff

Factory information

Factory	Industry	Location	No. of staff	% of young workers
Factory A	Textiles	Fujian	About 1000	Nearly 70%
Factory B	Textiles	Jiangsu	About 1500	Nearly 60%
Factory C	Textiles	Zhejiang	About 800	Nearly 40%
Factory D	Beverage	Gansu	About 600	Nearly 30%
Factory E	Beverage	Gansu	About 500	Nearly 30%
Factory F	Textiles	Guangdong	About 2000	Nearly 80%*

The data for the study came from samples from young co-researchers, questionnaires, in-depth interviews and group discussions, as shown below.

	Questionnaires	In-depth interviews (YM)	Group discussions (YW)	In-depth interviews (MS)	Group discussions (MS)	Young co-researchers	Workers interviewed by co-researchers	Total
A factory	80	8	10	4	10	4	11	127
B factory	100	10	15	2	15	4	15	161
C factory	40	10	10	4	10	3	20	97
D factory	60	5	10	1	10	3	4	93
E factory	28	5	0	0	0	0	0	33
F factory	100	10	15	2	20	4	21	172
Total	408	48	60	13	65	18	71	683

* Note: YM: Young workers MS: Management staff

Most of the factories involved in the study are engaged in textiles, and traditionally and also currently more women are employed in that industry than men. Therefore, the percentage of female young workers responding to the questionnaire in those factories was higher than the number of men who responded.

Male workers accounted for just 35.2% of all those who filled in the questionnaires across all six factories and female workers accounted for 64.8%. 55.0% respondents have completed junior high school, 35.4% are graduates of senior high school, technical secondary school/ technical school/vocational school; 88.7% have siblings, 89.4% are unmarried and exactly half have never been engaged in farm production for more than six months. Many tend to migrate to cities as soon as they graduate.

I.5 Innovative youth-led study

A key feature of the study was the participation of the young workers and the co-researchers. We believe that young people are vital in the process of solving their own problems and it was, and is, important that they can observe the principle of youth-centered study methods. Feedback was provided for the young workers involved and hopefully this will help them to address identified issues.

We took into consideration when designing the study the needs and common goals of both the young workers and the firms, and highlighted the fact that CSR can benefit both companies and employees. A small amount of money was paid to the co-researchers and to the other workers who took part in the study to make sure they did not lose any income from taking time out to participate. Training on life skills, improving confidence and problem-solving techniques were also included. Management staff, especially frontline managers, also received training on understanding young workers and learning how to better communicate with them. This all made the study innovative and added value to the data gathered and feedback.

The workers and management staff showed enthusiasm and a keen interest in the study. Many were moved to tears during training sessions and hugged researchers. Many said it was the first time someone had communicated and discussed anything with them with respect and on an equal footing. It was also the first time for many of them to really understand the feelings of their colleagues.

In the in-depth interviews, many young workers did not want to end the conversation or take the cash distributed by the study team. The majority said they were often too busy to talk to other people and it was helpful to have someone to talk to during the study; therefore, they did not want to take the money.

Change amongst the co-researchers was evident. They were committed and excited throughout the two days the team spent in each factory, expressing their opinions and working well with others. Many said the study was exciting and interesting and said it enhanced understanding with their colleagues. They learned communication skills, how to work with others and also see themselves and others from different perspectives. The study process helped the young workers to 'grow' and, as one said, **“enabled us to have more confidence and reflect on our lives and futures”**.

The young co-researchers also gave their opinions on what to include in this report and how to write it. Although the young co-researchers were not involved in actually writing it, they said they hoped it would reflect their genuine lives and aspirations and help people to understand them better. Their opinions were fully taken into account in terms of the structure, content and writing style of the report. The authors tried to present the real state of mind of the young workers through their perspectives and describe their attitudes to life, their aspirations, expectations, realities and problems. We hope the report will be read by firms, government departments and other people in the community, and help young workers gain more respect and care from others.

2. Attitudes to Life and Expectations



The young workers' attitudes to life and their expectations are often different to those of their parents. They regard working in the cities as a means to change their lifestyles and they often want a career, not to just make a living as their parents did. They pay far more attention to their quality of life. They long for independence and the chance to act on their own.

2.1 Independence

Most of the young workers want to live a good life and have dignity. They wish to have free time and their own space and not to have to act in accordance with the will of others. They want to be independent from their families, with their own money, and be masters of their own affairs, to live a comfortable life instead of being worried about money.

2.1.1. What is most important

Generally the most important goal for the young workers is to be independent.

The questionnaire (multiple choice) showed how they rank what is important to them: 1. Independence (66.1%), 2. Health (55.6%), 3. Happiness (41.1%), 4. A higher level diploma (33.2), 5. Wealth (22.4%).

It seems that to them money on its own is not enough. The youngsters not only want to support themselves by working but also want to live a happy and healthy life. They have high expectations for work and life.

However, the study indicated that some young workers do not earn enough to cover what they spend. They are sometimes referred to as 'the moonlight clan', which means they spend their wages before they get paid again. Then they ask their families for money or borrow from

the factories or friends. Some managers think those who spend all their money without considering their families are selfish. But the study suggests most young workers are thrifty. The majority of them save money, particularly the female workers. Naturally, ideas on what to buy and payment ability varies from person to person.

2.1.2. The point of work

The young workers have various expectations and interpretations of the meaning of work. These include supporting themselves, lightening the financial burden on families, broadening their views and saving some money for the future, perhaps to start a business with. The youngsters also say work will help them to learn useful skills, such as tailoring and operating machines.

For example, in factory F, a 17-year-old boy from a rural area of Jiangxi said he planned to save money for tuition fees and also learn some new skills for a couple of years. Then he intended to return to his hometown to learn how to design clothes in a vocational school. Most of the young workers say working for others is a temporary strategy which has some benefits other than cash.

2.1.3 Autonomy

The questionnaire results showed that 68.2% want to start their own business such as a shop or factory, with only 24.3% planning to remain working in the cities. However, many of the co-researchers thought their peers lack a feasible plan and practical support and guidance, making it hard for their dreams to come true.

A boss is often a 'successful model' for them because that is who they usually see around them, other than their own peers. The youngsters have limited knowledge of and access to other parts of society, which has restricted interpretations of success. Having interviewed some young workers, one co-researcher said: **“The interviewees are either too ambitious or too narrow-minded. It seems that they don't really have a clue”**.

2.2 Earning more and learning new skills

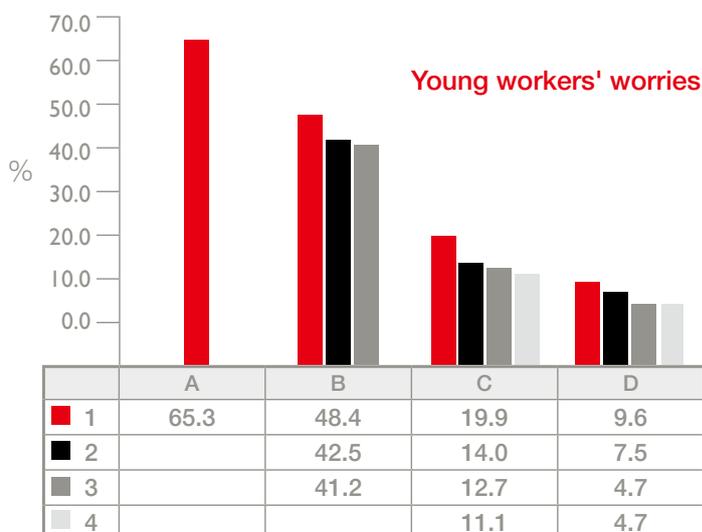
The young workers have diversified needs and expectations. Increasing their wages and participating in professional training to learn some useful skills are their primary needs.

2.2.1 Expectations of a fair salary

There are differences between the actual salaries the young workers earn and what they think they should get. The questionnaire showed that in the previous month their average income was 1885 yuan but they expect an average salary of 2500 to 3000 yuan according to skills and experience. 61.5% of respondents said increasing salaries was their main recommendation to employers, while 39.3% said firms should help them to improve the quality of their spare time. Skilled workers were the most anxious to increase their salaries. They thought factories should give them adequate payment according to performance, and they expected fairer payment for work done.

2.2.2 Reasons to worry

For 65.3% of young workers the primary worry was earning too little money, followed by gloomy career prospects, boredom and monotonous work. They were also concerned they could not afford an apartment or



- A:** Earning little money
- B:** Gloomy career prospects, boredom and monotonous work
- C:** Unable to afford an apartment, poor relationships, looking after parents, love and marriage
- D:** Making friends, education for children, looking after themselves when old, medical care (Multiple choice)

were concerned about poor relationships. Looking after parents, love and marriage were also issues playing on their minds.

For the young workers being able to earn a lot of money demonstrates their abilities. The workers seem to look up to those who earn more and see them as more competent.

2.2.3 Learning new skills

The youngsters want to learn new knowledge and skills.

Their views on training needs and ways to improve

%	Training needed most	How to improve competence	%
68.8	Better working skills	Have some professional training	66.9
43.3	Financial management skills	Further education eg diploma	39.1
40.8	Interpersonal skills	Learn from mentors	18.2
28.5	Psychological health	Self-study	8.8
28.2	Laws and regulations	Earn while wandering around	8.8
16.1	Local dialects and customs	Learn as an apprentice	8.3

Currently only a small portion of few young workers have been able to learn new professional skills as factories do not carry out much training. Also, any training content is rather narrow and delivered in a dull way meaning little useful knowledge or skills are learned. One young worker said the factory organised training on safety but said it was delivered in a very boring manner. **Development training also took place but there was a real lack of participation and interaction; for example, workers were just asked to watch a video. “We fell asleep during it and now don’t want to attend training anymore”.**

Few young workers can afford to pay for training themselves. In order to increase incomes they need to work long hours which means they have little time or energy to spare. Even if they do have enough money for training, they usually lack relevant information and guidance so cannot identify suitable ways to move forward.

2.3 Finding love and raising a family

Most of the young workers had been children left behind by parents who had to go away to find work. Some of the workers even used to be street children. Many workers said that they now want to spend more time with their parents and families. When asked “What’s your understanding of how to be a happy person?” the most frequent answer was “having a harmonious and stable family, able to stay with families and have friends”. **They all said that “being happy is more important than being successful”.**

When asked when they would marry and if they wanted to live with their partner and children, the majority of the youngsters said they were not worried about getting married before the age of 25, “not until we are financially able to have a home”. They plan to live in the cities with their families and have one child, at most two children. In terms of education many have the same idea as their parents in that they hope their children can study hard and be top of the class. They hope to be able to support their children so they can complete as much education as they want to. Many of the young workers told us they do not want their children to be brought up like them, back in the hometown with relatives while the parents worked elsewhere. They also want to be able to communicate more effectively with their children than their parents did with them.

3. Career Orientation, Job Security and Conditions for Career Development



The young workers have a limited choice of jobs because of lower education levels and a lack of skills and experience. They therefore tend to concentrate on working in labour intensive industries and the service industry. Several factors contribute to their job security such as salary and the living environment. Besides individual competence, job stability is closely related to management strategies.

3.1 Valuing salary, learning opportunities, living environment and working conditions

The youngsters, particularly skilled and experienced workers, are not merely content to find just any job; instead, they choose a job after considering various factors. Therefore they change jobs or migrate to other places according to their own desires.

3.1.1 Good pay, learning opportunities, decent living and working environment

The workers prioritise salary when job-hunting. The next factor is learning opportunities followed by living and working conditions. They consider more factors in job-seeking than the older generation of migrant workers whose main focus was on salary.

3.1.2. Why do they hop from job to job?

The attractions of the factory for young workers include living conditions followed by learning opportunities and the introduction of acquaintances. There are significant variations between expected and actual working conditions.

Comparison of expected working conditions and actual benefits

What is valued when job-hunting	Ratio (%)		The actual situation in the factory
Salary/wage	71.6	52.3	Living environment
Chance to learn new skills	63.4	37.9	Chance to learn new skills
Living environment	56.2	30.2	Having acquaintances
Working environment	50.5	28.9	Working environment
Management style	36.8	22.1	Leisure time
Making friends	26.1	19.8	Making friends
Leisure time	24.4	19.3	Salary/wage
Position in firm	21.6	17.3	Management style
Chance to stay with family	16.4	8.3	Position in firm

It is easy to see that there can be significant contrasts between actual work benefits and expectations; this leads to a high turnover and migration elsewhere. In factory A, one 18- year-old girl said:

“We are quite flexible and just go to prosperous places. Some people leave but then return to the same factory later. We just want to live a happy life and making money is not the most important matter.”

3.2 What affects stability

Job stability is closely related to work expectations. Whether or not actual benefits meet expectations will have an impact on workers’ attitudes and actions. Many co-researchers said that their young colleagues do not only expect a higher salary but also want a good life, interesting job and nice working environment.

3.2.1. Frequent turnover

The majority of young workers don’t plan to work in their current factories for a long time. The study shows that 34.2% of those who filled

in the questionnaire plan to continue working where they already are for less than one year and another 34.7% plan to work there for just one to two years. Just the remainder, or 31.1%, plan to work with their present employers for over two years. 20.2% have changed jobs once, 33% have changed jobs twice and 20.7% have changed jobs three times since they began working in the cities (most of them have worked for less than three years). Only 26.3% have never changed jobs.

3.2.2. Salary is paramount

There are often labour shortages in manufacturing industries in China. Firms have to increase salaries to retain workers, meaning young workers often have the confidence to ask for more money. But that is not always the case. A 20-year-old from factory A said he originally went to work at that particular factory because the boss is a nice person. He said he did not earn much but was too embarrassed to mention it although he planned to tell his boss soon. If he did not get an increase, he said, he would leave for another factory nearby which has promised to give him an extra 1000 yuan a month. For most young workers, particularly skilled workers, a satisfying and fair salary and benefits are the main reasons to stay in a position. They do take the initiative to change jobs if they consider it necessary.



3.2.3 Living environment helps with job stability

This is highlighted in factories B and F. The living quarters of factory B have good facilities such as a library and an activities room so the workers can enjoy their leisure time. The young workers like the pleasant surroundings and the nice lunches provided by the factory. Although the salary is not really high, many young workers said they wanted to work

there for several years. Many of them have left the factory only to return later on. A 17-year-old girl from Guizhou told us:

“I was impressed by the beautiful environment of the factory when I came here the first time. We were served chicken legs for lunch and the dormitory has an air conditioner and a TV. We did not have such things in school. It’s so comfortable here. My parents are working in Guangdong and we have been apart for a long time. They have asked me to go there because the salary would be higher, but I want to stay here for a while”.

Factory F in Guangdong has built a “couple dormitory” for young married workers to live in. One couple from Sichuan has stayed there since they arrived seven years ago. The husband is a supervisor of a production line. They live a comfortable life in the dormitory and plan to bring their child to Guangdong to go to school.

3.2.4. Job stability depends on how attractive the work is

The young workers want to do things they are interested in and also have challenging and exciting new experiences. They want to learn new skills through working. Many said the attractions of work include 1) whether or not the type of work assigned suits them or is interesting 2) whether or not they can experience and learn different production procedures instead of doing the same type of work year after year and 3) being able to accomplish the task with no need to work overtime. Few of the six factories can meet all of these expectations.

3.2.5. Management decisions directly influence job stability

Most of the young workers are concentrated in labour intensive industries such as processing and manufacturing. In these sectors, production and recruitment tends to fluctuate. More workers are needed when orders go up but when orders go down the reverse is true.

Sometimes factories lower production capacity so some workers look for another job or change jobs because of an inadequate income. Workers from three factories talked to us about such a situation, particularly the

export-orientated firms in the coastal regions.

One female worker from factory A said she was quite worried about not having enough work to do and could not earn enough money that month. If the situation did not improve the following month, she was going to look for a job elsewhere. It is clear, then, that the operation and management of the firm directly influences the stability of the workers.

How production departments and dormitories are run also affects stability. Young workers who have just started out on their careers yearn for respect and understanding from others. They expect other people to value their needs, personalities, talents and interests; they want to have good relationships and communication skills; they hope management can be fair and transparent; they want to quickly adapt to life in the factory and have a good social network. They dislike bossy management staff and also do not like to be treated differently to local residents. If they feel the work environment is caring and friendly, they cherish it.

3.2.6 Young workers who are near relatives or friends are more stable

Many managers have found out that young workers working in the same factory or a neighbouring factory to other family members don't change jobs so frequently. Some of the young workers say having friends or acquaintances is an important factor they bear in mind when looking for a job and staying in it. Some co-researchers said that without good communication with colleagues or with communication restricted to just a worker's own production team or dormitory, the youngsters will often feel lonely and helpless. Some then want to leave the factory.

Compared to young workers who live in the city alone, those who live with parents or relatives are more stable and happier. Moreover, they don't change jobs so frequently and feel happier. Some young workers have got married and had children but have had to send their children to their hometowns to be looked after. Those children become the new generation of left-behind children. Some workers bring their children

along to the city to look after them, or give up their jobs to look after their children. If their children can be well looked after, young workers are more likely to stay in the factory for a long time and work harder.

3.3 What about career development?

Career development is important for both the young workers and the companies they work for. Stable career development ensures the workers have personal growth and also guarantees them a certain income. Otherwise they can't make a living let alone integrate into the cities. For firms, the stable career development of the young workers means their quality constantly improves and that in turn helps to improve the companies.

However, career development is closely related to the support offered by the firms, especially management strategies. For example, has the firm developed training plans and career development programmes for the young workers, organised team building and established capable frontline management teams to enable young workers to acquire professional growth? Do the youngsters recognise the corporate culture and have a sense of belonging? These measures can help the young workers develop professionally and create a good environment to do so. One young woman from factory B who was born in the early 1990s told us that, as the youngest team leader in the workplace, she is admired by her peers.

From a rural family in Shandong, after graduating from junior high school she decided to follow her relatives to work in the cities, unlike many other children who stayed in the village. At the beginning she worked in a small factory in Qingdao, but the factory was not running on full production capacity. The management of the factory was inadequate, she said,

and workers came and went. After less than one year she resigned and returned home because she could not earn much money or learn new things, let alone have any real career development. Later, relatives introduced her to factory B which better met her expectations, and she decided to work there for several years. Managers were pleased with her attitude, competence and performance. In the fourth year of her career, she was promoted to group leader.

The woman said that besides working hard, good managers and other staff members plus support from her family have also contributed to her success. Currently, she said, she does not want to leave the city and would settle down there if she had a local boyfriend. The most important thing for her is to keep on making progress. Her experience shows that personal competence and external support jointly facilitate career development for the young workers, and their personal growth will produce a skilled workforce.

4. Management approaches



Managers often think the young workers are quite different to the older generation of migrant workers, and say they can be difficult to manage. Managers feel that sometimes the opinions and behaviour of the young workers are unreasonable, and they think they can do nothing about it. For their part, the youngsters often think management in the factories is only so-so, with some effective management measures but also some inadequate ones. Interestingly,

however, both management and young workers believe management should be improved and can be more effective.

4.1 Ineffective management techniques

Many young workers think the company only sees issues from its own point of view and not from that of its staff. Workers are managed; they are subject to and follow instructions using old-fashioned management methods, rather than being actively involved in management decisions. Meanwhile the firm often thinks it has done enough for its workers, while workers think the managers lack initiative.

4.1.1 Production-centered management

Decisions adopted by the firms serve the needs of production. A worker is regarded as just one of the production factors. In such a context, management staff focus on outcomes, quantity and efficiency, and neglect the feelings and needs of workers, whether they realise it or not. For example, many young workers said they don't always want to work

overtime even if that means they can earn more money, but they feel they have no choice when the factory requires them to work more hours.

4.1.2. People-centered concept

In China, a people-centered concept is widely talked about, especially by management staff. Some think they should focus on treating young workers decently and not argue with them, coaxing them like children into doing what is needed instead of, for example, using aggressive language. **One middle-level manager said: “For younger workers born in the 1980s or 1990s, we coax them around; all we require is that they accomplish the task well”.**

4.1.3. Most management staff are local residents

In many firms, most of the middle-level, senior and frontline management staff are local residents. Due to differences in language, culture and habits, management often don't mix freely with the young workers. The managers often just carry out the firm's instructions rather than communicate in a proactive way with the youngsters. Some co-researchers said the '*laoda*' (meaning boss or head) are local residents who don't communicate with them at all except in relation to work issues. As the young workers do not always understand local dialect, they sometimes don't see what their '*laoda*' means or find it hard to obtain support from them when facing difficulties. They youngsters often feel neglected and helpless. As they are not local, they are unlikely to be promoted.

4.2 Firms know improving management techniques is important

Several firms understand some of the management problems relating to the young workers. Some have made improvements and achieved good results. They have created an atmosphere of respect, communication

and participation, which has enhanced a sense of belonging and recognition for the young workers.

In factory B, in order to understand the needs of the young workers and support them, management staff assigned a young well-educated supervisor to be responsible for other young workers. He learns about the needs of his peers through such things as setting up a postbox for them to write down their complaints, broadcasting announcements in the factory and organising art and sports games, meetings and competitions.

These activities have enriched leisure time and encouraged the involvement of the young workers. They easily accept the young man because he is close to their age and has similar characteristics and habits. They like talking to him and participating in the activities. Also a migrant worker, he has bridged the gap between management staff and young workers, presented the opinions and needs of young workers, and helped to harmonise management mechanisms with the needs of workers.

In factory D, the chief executive of the firm communicates with young workers face-to-face each week, listening to and documenting their advice, and putting forward solutions on the spot. Staff will monitor the implementation of the solutions, which has created a sense of equality and shared management between management staff and workers. Managers converted a car park into a bicycle shed for young workers, which has also improved their relationship. There are fruit trees in the grounds and each year the fruit is shared with the workers. This has created a nicer environment and made workers feel more cared for.

4.3 Participation of young workers in management decisions can be improved

When asked about management strategies used with the young workers, the popular answer given by many firms was “acting in accordance with regulations”. When we asked how regulations were developed, they usually said they had been developed by managers or said they had been there for a long time. It is clear the young workers are in a subordinate position, rarely involved in the development of regulations.

Although managers do at times attach importance to what young workers think of them, there is certainly space to improve the participation of employees in management decisions. Their participation can help management staff to change their mentality, enhance their skills and strategies and generally improve the effectiveness of management. Management decisions should not be unilateral ones and the participation of young workers is vital.

4.3.1 Difficult for young workers to participate in management decisions

Firstly, managers take on a dominant role and require young workers to follow instructions in order to achieve objectives. When talking about the young workers, many management staff said the youngsters:

- Cause trouble or are not focused
- Are not stable
- Do things their own way
- Know their own minds
- Don't always follow instructions or abide by regulations
- Are difficult to deal with
- Are disobedient
- Ask for too much
- Are not co-operative
- Do not listen to reason or bow to force

It seems clear that most management staff ask the young workers to follow their instructions and be obedient, not seeing them as equal partners. They don't seem to want to spend time understanding the inner world or psychological needs of the young workforce.

Secondly, young workers have limited channels to express their opinions or participate in management. Few factories encourage the youngsters to participate in the decision-making process. Managers interpret the participation of workers simply as collecting the opinions of workers through complaint boxes, workers' representative assemblies or open days held with bosses. Young workers have limited opportunities to participate in management decisions directly.

However, complaint boxes often do not function well. Some management staff complain that few workers put forward valuable recommendations, while the young workers are not sure whether factory management will really listen to their opinions. Workers' representative assemblies function quite effectively in some well-established enterprises but private firms with large numbers of young workers rarely set them up or organise meetings. Only limited issues are usually discussed in any assembly that does take place, hence the mechanism exists only in name.

Open days with factory bosses could be an effective way for young workers to communicate directly with middle-level and senior management staff, which can help firms and workers to resolve some problems. However, in reality young workers have few opportunities to participate in such open days due to their infrequency, duration and limits on numbers. This means young workers can't fully articulate their ideas. Young workers who are new to a factory and the less eloquent among them have even less chance of expressing their opinions and their needs are therefore ignored. Many young workers think their opinions are not valued at all.

4.3.2 Young workers should improve their participation skills

Young workers do not seem to have a strong desire to participate in management decisions. They have two kinds of attitudes to management. The first group of young workers is indifferent to it. We found out that many young workers just want to earn money working in the factory and want to get paid on time. They think management is nothing to do with them. They continue to work in a factory if they like it or leave when they think it is not good enough. Therefore turnover is often high.

The second group of young workers cares about the management of the factory but they can't access it properly. They care about management policy that directly concerns them such as daily schedules, holidays and the calculation and distribution of salaries. However, they lose interest in being involved with management over time due to restricted access and their own lack of skills. The traditional way of thinking, of avoiding trouble whenever possible, prevents many young workers from participating more. Some of them don't want to take the lead because they feel unsafe articulating their ideas. This leads to little motivation in speaking out.

Most young workers lack the skills to participate in management. When treated unfairly, most of them choose to endure humiliation, just telling close friends or leaving the factory if they can't bear it. Few people complain to management staff because they think that would be a waste of time or could make things worse. The research indicated that few young workers realise participation is their right or view potential problems with management from the perspective of defending their rights. Therefore they do not point out problems in an adequate manner.

5. Social Problems of Young Workers



The contradiction between the young worker's role as a worker and their rural, not urban, household registration has turned them into a marginalised population in the cities. This has led to numerous difficulties and obstacles in accessing a quality life, stable career development and social welfare. For these reasons they often cannot properly settle down in the cities and have to migrate frequently, nor can they give full play to their talents.

5.1 The lack of close family nearby can lead to a poor sense of security and well-being

We found that about one third of the young workers had experiences of being apart from their parents, who had also been migrant workers. This meant the youngsters had inadequate parental support during childhood. It also emerged that many young workers live in the cities with no family nearby. Such a limited emotional connection with relatives has led to, for many, difficulty establishing relationships. Therefore, many young workers believe it is hard for them to feel secure and happy in cities.

5.1.1 They yearn for close relationships

Twenty-nine per cent of the young workers who filled in the questionnaires were children left behind at home by parents who went to work elsewhere. Some young female workers said their brothers went to cities with their parents while they stayed in their hometowns with their sisters.

Such separation meant that the parents could only try to satisfy the material needs of their children, with little chance of giving them adequate emotional support. This has hindered the development of certain skills

such as being able to express emotions and establishing and maintaining close relationships. This has made some young workers indifferent to others and distrusting of people around them.

In factory F, a 17-year-old girl who graduated from junior high school said her parents went to work in Guangdong when she was very young. She later went to work in the same factory and live with them but by then, the damage had already been done to their relationship. **She said: “ I am not very close to my parents because when I was still in our hometown they only came home at the end of each year; sometime they could not even come home once a year, so we had little time together. They called me each week and asked me to work hard at school and take good care of myself. But that’s all.”** When asked if her parents cared about her feelings and opinions, the girl said: **“We are all from the countryside, where people don’t know how to talk about these issues”.**

It seems clear that many of the youngsters did not receive crucial advice from their parents at a critical time in their development, which has had a big impact on them. In factory A, a girl who was left behind as a child told us: **“I missed my parents and really wanted to stay with them so I planned to quit school and go to Guangdong. When I was in the second grade of junior high school, I called them one day and asked if I should continue with school or work with them in the factory. They said it was up to me. So I left school and went to live with them. But I did not feel anything special when I saw them. Now we have been living together for six years, but we talk very little. There is not a lot to say.”**

Many young workers want to live with their parents now because they were not able to spend much time with them in the past. In factory B, one female worker resigned from her job as she wanted to go to Guangdong to be with her mother and father. **She said: “I really envy colleagues who can stay with their parents. I will soon be reunited with mine.”** The study shows that young workers who stay with their

5.1.2. Yearning for love and happiness but difficult to find suitable partners

parents or with other relatives are more satisfied with their lives than those who work in the cities alone. The government should consider this issue more and create a more enabling environment so that young workers can be reunited with their families.

Love and marriage are considered important by many young workers. They all hope to meet someone to love. However, they face various difficulties during the process of finding a partner. Our research found three kinds of relationships:

The first type involves the young worker who is obedient to his/her parents and plans to find a partner from back home, often helped with this by parents or other relatives. When the youngsters return home for Chinese New Year, they are busy with blind dates. These young people prefer to settle down in their hometowns when they find their partner.

The second type of relationship is one where the young worker falls in love with a colleague in the factory. The pair usually live together first and get married later. Some young workers don't meet their partner's parents or marry until the woman falls pregnant. Usually, in this type of relationship, most of the young workers choose a partner from the same region as them.

The third type of relationship is where the female migrant worker marries a local man after being introduced by factory staff or a local resident. Sometimes young workers marry a local, have children and settle down in the city. This is more likely to happen to female migrant workers in places where there is not so much social discrimination. Usually, these female workers are pretty and articulate and the family background of the local man is relatively disadvantaged.

As the young workers are quite separate to other urban communities and residents, they can only really choose partners from their own limited

social networks. They would like a permanent relationship but cannot be really committed to each other because of job instability. They also usually want to settle down in the city where they work, but the cities only accept them as workers and not as local residents. It is not easy for most young workers to find their ideal partner and get married and settle down, regardless of which one of the three types of relationship they choose.

5.1.3 No choice but to compromise on education for their children

As previously mentioned, the young workers don't want their children to be left behind elsewhere as so many of them were previously. But the reality is that taking care of their children is difficult. Our study team found that many migrant workers can't afford city medical costs for giving birth. This means some young pregnant women have to go back to their hometowns to deliver their children and return to work a few months later, leaving the baby with grandparents. Although some young workers bring their children with them to their place of work, they can't take care of them properly there.

Some have to rent an apartment next to the factory where their parents take care of the children. In that case, the workers struggle with expensive rental accommodation and expenditures for the whole family. They can't afford to send their children to state schools and well-established nurseries. Many therefore send the youngsters to informal private nurseries or don't send them to nursery at all. Some people even bring their children to the workplace and let them play there. Some young workers ask their parents to take their children to their hometowns and send them to nursery there. These children then become a new generation of children left behind by their parents.

5.1.4. Young workers have few channels to make friends

The social network of the young worker is mainly made up of friends, colleagues and fellow villagers. Our study found that over 80% of the young workers came to their current factory after being introduced to it

by relatives and existing friends. They gradually make new friends, with their roommates and colleagues in the factory, as well as with other people from the same province or region.

The team discovered that usually young workers are most familiar with workers on the same production line or in the same factory. They don't mix with workers from other production lines or factories and have few chances to make new friends. Many young workers make a decision on whether to stay or leave a factory by considering whether their friends can work with them. In one interview, a female worker said she was going to resign because many of her close friends had left the factory.

Our research showed it is difficult for young workers to maintain long-term relationships with friends who are in different places. They become estranged from each other over time. One ramification of this is that the youngsters do not easily trust strangers. During interviews in factory A and B, some female workers said they rarely went to other people's dormitories because they were worried others might blame them if they lost anything. Thus the social network becomes even narrower.

5.2 Lacking in competitiveness and other skills needed for a professional career

Many young workers hope to open their own business in order to live a better life. However, few of them have a feasible plan of action and they are unlikely to get on a training course or get support opening a business from the government or social organisation.

5.2.1 Difficult to realise the dream of being a boss

Many young workers said they wanted to open a shop, or run a factory or snack-bar. In terms of strategies to realise their dreams, some said they planned to work in a clothing store to gain experience

and understand the profession. Some workers said they planned to save money for a business venture. However, very few seem to have thought about concrete implementation strategies or started any initial preparations. Their plan to be a boss is perhaps more of a complaint about their present life and shows a yearning for a better one.

5.2.2 Difficult to access vocational education and support

In recent years, government at all levels and social organisations have organised technical training and support for university graduates and laid-off workers in urban and rural areas to start their own businesses. However, such support is not aimed at young migrant workers. Only a few organisations can provide professional training to young workers and the costs are quite high. Also, such organisations might offer a full-time learning schedule. The training is neither realistic nor attractive for young workers because of their low income, time constraints and academic levels.

5.2.3 Lower level of education and skills restrict young workers' competitiveness and prospects of promotion

Most of the young workers are graduates of junior high school and technical secondary school. A significant portion of them are only primary school graduates. They do labour intensive jobs requiring lower technical skills and knowledge. They are not competitive in the labour market and therefore are not in a strong position to negotiate salary. They are willing but unable to learn new technical skills. Most of the jobs just require a small amount of training. A lot of demand for unskilled labourers means the youngsters easily find jobs needing few or no skills. Some young workers lose all interest in improving their professional skills, which in turn helps to prevent them becoming professional technicians or managers.

5.3 Negative emotions impact young lives

It was found that many young workers frequently have negative emotional experiences, which may decrease their satisfaction with both work and life. A dull working life and boring spare time has led to many of them seeing themselves as robots. They want to have enjoyable and meaningful leisure time.

5.3.1 Most young workers are not happy while working

In the questionnaire, some of the young workers talked of annoyance, boredom and depression. 47.1%, 39.5% and 37.5% respectively said they had these feelings. Only 36 of young workers involved in the questionnaire - just 8.6% - said they felt comfortable at work. The youngsters frequently said their spirits were low or they felt annoyed while working.

These negative emotions have influenced interpretations of life and values and reduced satisfaction with life and work. More importantly, serious emotional or psychological problems might occur if such negative emotions exist for a long time without being resolved or at least eased. The workers might even begin to have more radical attitudes towards their problems, possibly leading to violence and other serious social consequences.

5.3.2. "Robots" that only work with machines

On average, workers at the six factories work eight hours per day and rest on Sundays; sometimes they work extra hours at night to complete production. A piece-rate salary system is adopted for most workers. Many of them work extra hours in the evening and return to the dormitory around 8:30pm, even 9:30pm or 10pm if they have a lot to do. They easily feel agitated and tired because of the long working hours and the monotonous and repetitive work.

5.3.3 Unsatisfied with existing leisure time

More importantly, the workers can only work with machines and materials most of the time rather than communicate with others. Many youngsters say they become “numb” over time. **One told us: “We have become robots and I don’t want to be a robot who only works with machines.”** The boring work may help to make the young workers indifferent and evasive to others, exacerbating their helplessness and their inability to resolve their worries and depression.

The young workers spend their free time in the evenings and at weekends doing things like sleeping, watching TV and surfing the internet. Sometimes they go shopping with friends or to have a meal. Generally, though, they think their leisure activities are boring, monotonous and meaningless. The interviews conducted by co-researchers in different factories suggest the young workers are not really satisfied with personal and leisure activities which cost them nothing like watching TV and talking to friends. Instead, they would prefer more commercial activities such as singing, dancing, travelling and shopping with friends.

We can see that the young workers do not think work and income is everything. They value quality of life, happiness and well-being. However, there is a big gap between their expectations for leisure activities and the reality, which has exacerbated their feelings of emptiness.

5.4 Factory workers, not residents in communities

Given current government policies, young workers with a rural *hukou*, are unlikely to be able to fully access social insurances. Most of them live in dormitories provided by the factories, or in urban ‘villages’ inhabited by

migrants. It is very difficult for them to integrate fully into urban society. They usually only know a small group of people made up of relatives, friends and acquaintances who move in the same circles. This means they have few channels to find out new information, to find out where they can get social services or even what these services are.

5.4.1. Unable to access same social insurance as urban residents

Just like many of the first generation of migrant workers, the current group of young workers cannot access all social (government) insurance schemes (such as health, pension, and maternity insurances) because of the household registration or *hukou*, system. Most of the factories we visited have signed labour contracts with their workers, but few workers were clear about the terms, conditions and their rights. Only one factory of the six we visited paid compulsory social insurance for all of its workers, explained the importance of it and tried to persuade them to pay their portion to ensure any insurance is valid. Our study team found that very few young migrant workers pay social insurance. However, local workers do usually pay for social insurances in which case the factory has to pay a portion for them.

The research did not focus on medical, maternity and industrial injury insurance, but we did find out that only some local governments in Fujian and Guangdong have set out policies on medical insurance for migrant workers. Most of the young workers we talked to were not able to be reimbursed for medical expenditures in the factories or cities they work in. The team interviewed two young mothers who had to return home to give birth because only there would they be reimbursed for some of the costs.

5.4.2. Reliance on relatives and friends to help resolve problems

The questionnaire showed that when faced with personal difficulties, young workers try to sort it out themselves or get support from their social network. 31.3% of the youngsters said they resolved problems themselves, while 26.5% obtained support from relatives and 19.3%

from colleagues and friends. Only 1.2% asked for support from their employers.

When coming up against difficulties relating to work, 69.5% of young workers said they tried to get support from their colleagues and peers, 43% from frontline management staff and 39.3% from mentors (multiple choice).

Very few people mention labour unions even though they organise cultural and leisure activities for factory workers. Why is this? It seems there are two key reasons. Firstly, only relatives and acquaintances seem able to offer support for young workers outside of support from the factory or community. Secondly, young workers don't trust or get too familiar with many of the factory staff, managers and unions, so therefore don't ask them for support in times of trouble. In other words, a poor sense of belonging has estranged them from most staff. Besides not being able to access social security because they are not documented as urban workers, young workers have few ways to learn about social services. They don't understand or seem to care about trade unions, local governments and communities, nor do they know about the services provided by these departments or how to obtain support from them.

5.4.3. Not true members of the community

Factories are usually built in industrial parks or suburbs where only factory buildings, dormitories and the odd village here and there can be seen. The houses in the villages are rented out to migrant workers. As more and more of them rent such homes, these remote places become busy with internet cafes, hair salons, restaurants, night markets, small supermarkets, libraries, medical clinics, karaoke venues and more.

Young workers often go to these areas after work to have dinner, midnight snacks, and take part in other leisure activities. However, such streets are isolated from the local community. Young workers are not



Many young workers have limited access to healthcare

connected to the cities even though they live in them. Except for local workers and local landlords, they rarely communicate with local residents or mix with them. Dialect is often also a natural barrier which separates them from local residents.

When they are free or on holiday, young workers often go with friends into the city for shopping, the most popular leisure activity for both male and female workers. Shopping connects young workers to city life. While shopping they watch and learn about other lifestyles, then return to their factories and continue to work. They have few links to the cities they live in. This may have a big impact on their migration patterns and future decisions, and make them less likely to settle in one factory or city.

6. Recommendations



Caring for and supporting young workers is an important part of CSR and something firms should do. Providing non-financial support for young employees can build and improve soft power and the competitiveness of the company and facilitate sustainable development. Our team encouraged young workers to take the initiative in the research process. Having heard their voices and listened to their opinions and advice, we discussed development strategies which would benefit both companies and their young workers. In order to improve relationships between firms and young workers and enhance management strategies which will give full play to young workers' initiative and creativity, the team put forward the following recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

6.1 Change attitudes and regard interviews as a starting point

Young workers yearn for respect and control of their lives. When applying for a job, they don't want to make a decision until they have proper knowledge of the factory. An impressive interview is the starting point for many young workers.

When we asked young workers from factories C and F why they chose to work in those particular workplaces, they gave similar answers. **"The members of staff who interviewed me were very kind and made me feel welcome, so I stayed"**. Employees who carry out interviews should adopt a manner which facilitates mutual understanding. We found that 54.8% of young workers were interviewed before being recruited. They said the interview included such things as general information about the work, the filling in of an application form and information about salary,

food and accommodation.

All of the six factories give applicants basic information but job descriptions often lack clarity. Most of the young workers have plans for their future careers, expect regular timetables and flexible vocations and want to experience respect and happiness. These expectations set higher standards for firms; they need to adopt an appropriate manner to deliver their message during interviews. The young co-researchers gathered some data on what young workers would like during the interview process:

Recommended interview procedure and content

- Spend time communicating with young workers in private and listen to their job expectations in a respectful and friendly manner, treating them like equals
- Provide detailed information on professional training, offer recommendations on career development based on skills and expectations
- Provide detailed information on salary and social insurances, and increase wages over set periods of time. Show the applicant around working and living areas of the factory
- Answer questions raised by applicants in honest and patient way

6.2 Establish trust and sense of security through a 'care' scheme

The young workers often pay a lot of attention to their innermost feelings; they think about having a sustainable plan for career development and the hope of a proper family life. Bearing this in mind managers could perhaps help the youngsters by coming up with a 'care' plan for newcomers. This could help them to trust the firms they work for and give them more of a sense of security too.

6.2.1 Develop in accordance with physical and mental characteristics

Young workers migrate to cities from their hometowns, often with high aspirations. They have to deal with busy schedules and live isolated and monotonous lives, which might make them feel depressed, frustrated and helpless. The first few months are often the most difficult for them as they have to cope with a new environment and a new job. Nervousness, depression and frustration have a negative impact on young workers struggling to get adjusted.

Moreover, the majority of young workers are in the process of changing their social identity, perhaps from student to worker, from farmer to worker or from child to low-level employee. Their previous social network was mainly students and teachers but now they need to cope with supervisors and colleagues. They need to work with machines and materials instead of pens, paper and textbooks. Young workers need psychological and emotional support during such an acute transformation period. In group discussions, many youngsters suggested providing new young workers with special care to help them to adjust during the first few months.

We would like to suggest that firms develop a support scheme for new staff to help them get used to the working environment and life in the factory. Such a scheme would probably be much more useful in coaching staff and retaining skilled workers than three hours of induction training on basic skills and safe production.

6.2.2 Combine short and long-term plans and mobilise resources to help new staff get used to their new environment

Firstly, a firm can help new staff develop a detailed and pragmatic short-term and long-term plan. Looking at the short term, the focus can be on developing personal skills. Management staff can develop a skill-learning plan and timetable with new staff, and help them learn the skills through regular training and coaching. The factory should also provide them with opportunities to learn different skills. Staff will be more motivated to learn skills as they will be laying a solid foundation for their future development. Meanwhile, a long-term plan can help new staff to plan their careers.

The enterprise can choose staff who are model workers and organise activities with them and new staff. This will help the young workers to build up their confidence for career development and consider their professional orientation and personal development from a long-term perspective.

Secondly, the factory should make use of existing human resources and encourage experienced staff to offer one-to-one support to new staff, including technical support and help with daily life. Firms can offer various incentives for experienced staff who have been really dedicated when supporting new staff, such as more holiday allowance or choosing them as a 'star' employee.

Thirdly, the factory can encourage new staff to organise one-on-one and group discussions to talk about their lives and work, help them to solve problems and alleviate negative emotions before they get out of hand. To ensure such discussions are as effective as possible, it is important that appropriate facilitators and methods acceptable to young people are chosen. It is best that people who are trusted by the young workers and share a similar background are chosen as facilitators. Perhaps they could be other young workers who have worked in the factory for some time. It would be best to organise one-on-one chats and also group work for new staff in a comfortable and relaxing environment.

6.2.3 Supporting one member of staff can lead to supporting a whole family

It is important to encourage young workers to communicate with their families about work or other issues and get family support. This can help the firm in several ways; for example, staff turnover can be reduced and employees may feel more satisfaction with their lives. These are indispensable strategies in people-centered management. A company can encourage migrant workers to introduce their relatives and friends to the business. To help that process to happen, a firm should consider the individual needs of young workers and make them feel at home. Through group discussions, young workers put forward the following suggestions

to improve support mechanisms:

Key points in family-support scheme

- Accommodation support: for example, provide a family apartment and basic living facilities for the whole family; if that is not possible, the factory could give a cash allowance so that young workers can stay with their families
- Develop a flexible timetable and vocational system for young workers to balance their work and personal lives
- Help to take care of young children; for example, a factory could offer free childcare for staff living in the factory, or co-operate with nearby kindergartens/ schools to send workers' children there

6.3 Encourage frontline managers to create a safe and healthy environment

How good frontline managers are at managing has a very significant influence on the development of both the young workers and the factories. It is vital to improve management skills and there are various ways this can be done.

6.3.1 The importance of strengthening the capacity of supervisors

Young workers frequently interact with frontline managers/supervisors. They can therefore either establish and build a good relationship with them or have conflict with them. Frontline management staff, the '*laoda*', are basically 'grassroots' managers who are supposed to be a bridge between top managers and the young workers. Getting on well with the '*laoda*' can directly impact the mood of the young worker. '*laoda*' can be their role models as well; they can be those who listen to what they

have to say. For the factory in general, the frontline management team is essential for implementing administration regulations and care schemes.

It is important for supervisors to adopt fair and people-centered administration strategies based on the characteristics of young workers and which are acceptable to them. Such strategies will influence the productivity of an enterprise and a worker's level of recognition of the corporate culture. To ensure the growth and development of the young workers, it is critical to develop a frontline management team that understands the characteristics and thoughts of this group of young people, communicates with them effectively, allocates tasks according to their needs and helps them to resolve any problems.

However, our study has shown that most training opportunities are offered to middle-level and senior management staff. Frontline managers have little training. They often say they don't have enough skills, experience and methods to deal with the young workers and some supervisors feel a lot of pressure. This can trigger or intensify conflict between the young workers and factory managers.

6.3.2 Respect, communication and fairness are basic principles of management

Firstly, young workers want management to treat them as adults with independent views and feelings. This often requires management staff, especially those working directly with young workers, to change their attitudes towards them. They need to use respectful language and actions and respect that their thoughts and ideas may be different to previous generations. They also need to show empathy for their feelings and difficulties and offer timely responses and support. Senior staff should take the lead in creating an equal and respectful corporate culture which encourages low-level managers to apply such a culture to the young workers. In interviews, some "*laoda*" did seem to realise the importance of respecting young workers and said they would change their attitudes, putting themselves into the young workers' shoes, encouraging them and making them feel valued.

Secondly, young workers want to improve their communication with management. Our study showed that some young workers left their jobs because of difficulty communicating with their employers. A few obstacles seem to hinder effective communication. For example, some management staff behave in an old-fashioned way and are reserved, which can lead to resistance amongst young employees. The language barrier can be an important issue, particularly in Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian where local people usually speak with a strong accent. Language problems can lead to estrangement between local management staff and migrant workers.

Factories need to strengthen training in communication skills and establish mechanisms which will encourage managers to spend more time with young workers, thereby reducing misunderstandings caused by poor communication. When asked about strategies to improve the management of staff, frontline managers mentioned giving feedback and one-to-one talks; they said it was important to not only care about the work but also about the lives of the young workers. The youngsters and managers will have a better relationship if the former know they are cared for the latter.

There is a vital need for fair and just management systems. In order to respect the young workers it is necessary to eliminate discrimination attached to differences in status and the different treatment that results from it.

One way respect can be shown is through meeting reasonable needs. A factory's regulations and policies should ensure that different terms of employment cannot be offered to young migrant workers simply because of their background. A factory should provide migrant and local workers with the same opportunities, in promotion, salary increases and holidays. Fair management is only guaranteed by well-established management policies and procedures. Clear and specific regulations on such things as how working hours and salary are calculated, assignments are allocated

and the promotion structure is developed must be laid out and strictly adhered to. This can help to create a fair and just working environment. There should also be an effective complaints procedure. When workers think they are treated unfairly, frontline management staff and the personnel department should hear their concerns and resolve problems in accordance with the complaints procedure. One human resource manager summed it up like this. **“We need impartial regulations and caring bosses. This means everyone is equal before the regulations and gets no special treatment. But the leaders should care and help staff to resolve their problems.”**

6.4 Improve the participation of young workers in factory management

Young workers and frontline management staff suggested improving participation through the following strategies.

6.4.1 Change management philosophy, establish participation mechanisms and create a participatory environment

One manager from factory D suggested the factory should change its management philosophy and regard young workers as vibrant, creative, studious and hardworking people, adopting management strategies acceptable to them rather than treating them as troublemakers who should be managed by authoritarians with strict rules. It is important to create an equal, respectful and friendly environment for young workers to work in, one in which they can express themselves.

Another point is that a factory should develop policies to ensure young workers can participate in management in their daily lives. ‘Salons’ for new staff could be something relevant to all workers in the factories, allowing management staff and workers to have a regular dialogue. Prior to these talks the young workers should take some time to prepare by discussing important issues amongst themselves. When they meet

6.4.2 Empower young workers and organise capacity building according to their characteristics and needs

with managers, they can put forward recommendations and ideas from themselves and other young workers. The management staff of factory C and D suggested having regulations to ensure management staff give feedback about meetings.

Firstly, it is necessary to increase the young workers' awareness of how to protect their legal labour rights. Such training should be integrated into induction days and capacity building activities. This lays a foundation for young workers to start to participate in factory management.

Secondly, co-researchers at factory B recommended setting up support and hobby groups to give young workers more chance to develop themselves. They need to be encouraged to organise leisure activities and communicate with each other in order to make their spare time more interesting, make new friends and live more meaningful and happy lives in the factory.

Thirdly, the participation skills of the workers needs to be improved. There should be training to develop their communication skills and enhance their self-esteem and confidence. Such training can help to improve participation skills as the youngsters will be more able to articulate their ideas accurately and therefore will be more in control of their lives. The more they participate the more they will feel they belong.

6.5 Strengthen links between firms and society

In order to guarantee that the young workers have decent working lives and are happier overall, government departments, companies, factories, communities and various social organisations should make a concerted effort to establish a thorough social support network.

6.5.1 Each firm should connect its workers with the local community, invite professional organisations to visit and encourage staff to integrate

Firms tend to have good resources and good support systems in local communities. They should take the lead linking young workers with other parts of society by inviting public interest organisations (such as the All-China Women's Federation, neighbourhood committees and unions) related to the rights and interests of young workers to the factory. Firms should also help young workers to find out what social resources are available to them and how to access them.

Companies can also encourage workers to participate in community activities and do voluntary work, both of which can improve interaction with local communities as well as give local public interest services more vitality. These activities can help to improve the image of young workers amongst local residents who can learn more about the new generation and hopefully come to accept them as community members.

6.5.2 Government, communities and firms should work together to create a stronger social support network

All areas of society should work together to enable young workers to enjoy their rights and live happier and more dignified lives. The government should eliminate existing barriers between urban and rural residents and provide young workers with the same quality services such as admitting their children to kindergartens/schools.

In conclusion, only when the government, communities and firms work together can workers born in the 1980s and 1990s become more integrated into society in the 21st century. Only when everyone pulls together can the new generation of young workers work and live in the cities with grace and dignity. And this is surely the best way to ensure the sustainable and healthy development of the economy.

