Su-Mei Thompson, CEO of The Women’s Foundation, said that Hong Kong, including extending statutory leave for women after the birth of a child, was a “lawful strategy needed to tackle the shame of current employment conditions.”

Of all the reasons cited by government officials for Hong Kong’s slow recovery and continued high unemployment, some say the real problem is the absence of Hong Kong’s professional, white-collar women. Many of them have given up on the professional world, leaving behind their dreams and good positions to raise children instead.

This is not, however, a problem that can be remedied by one or two measures. It is a systemic problem. We need to take a closer look at the issue and come up with a solution.

For example, the government could provide more childcare subsidies. Despite the setback, the government is still offering subsidies to families with children. However, the amount of subsidy is not enough to cover the cost of childcare, and it is still very difficult for working parents to find affordable childcare.

Another way to address the problem is to encourage employers to offer part-time or flexible work arrangements. This is something the government could consider implementing. It would help women balance their work and family responsibilities and would also help to reduce unemployment.