

Press Release

Equal Opportunities Commission effects change through mainstreaming and training

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) will focus its efforts in training and mainstreaming of equal opportunities this year.

Speaking at a press conference today (20 February), Ms. Anna WU, Chairperson of the EOC, reviewed the EOC's performance in 2000 and highlighted the key areas of work for 2001.

"2000 has been a very busy and productive year for the EOC. There has been an increase of 37.9% in complaints caseload and an increase of 75% in legal assistance applications," Ms. WU said.

In reviewing the trends of discrimination complaints, she pointed out that complaints received under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) which required investigation and conciliation increased significantly to 339 in 2000, compared to 192 in the previous year, i.e. an increase of 76.6%. Complaints received under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) increased to 323 in 2000, compared to 213, which is an increase of 51.6%.

She pointed out that complaint statistics on mental illness in 2000 has doubled that of 1999. There was a 41% increase in sexual harassment complaints when compared with the previous year. One of the important aspects reflected by these complaints is the employers' lack of awareness of their vicarious liabilities in taking reasonable and practical steps to provide their employees with a working environment free of sexual harassment.

Ms. WU said, "The government has accepted in principle a number of our proposals for legislative amendments. There are several significant proposals. The first is the right of the EOC to initiate

proceedings in its own name to seek declaratory relief to deal with situations of public importance but where either applicants or respondents to complaints may not be forthcoming. The second is the ability to seek binding and enforceable settlement agreements to minimize the need for litigation.”

A landmark court case of disability discrimination under the DDO was completed successfully. The judgment of the District Court has found that discrimination on the ground of disability of the plaintiffs’ family members and the stigmatization associated with the disability is unlawful. In order to ensure that the education system is fair and does not discriminate against girls or boys, the EOC initiated legal proceedings for a judicial review of the Secondary School Places Allocation System. Within the year, the EOC has commenced a review of the Immigration Department’s procedures on servicing the needs of persons with disabilities.

In view of the clear need to mainstream the culture of equal opportunities in our society, the Commission has expanded its training and consultancy function to assist the government, employers and service providers in the areas of training and review of procedures.

Ms. WU said, “There is the need for the government to look at mainstreaming equal opportunities in policy formulation and delivery of government services. We intend to develop training programmes for the civil service and disciplinary forces. We hope that training and sensitization to equal opportunities principles will achieve better compliance with equal opportunities laws within the government. We are pleased that we have been requested by the Training Wing of the Hong Kong Police to offer a training programme in the area of equal opportunities laws. This marks an important direction for the Commission to co-operate with the various sectors of Hong Kong and focus on developing an equal opportunities environment”

In promoting a closer partnership with business, the EOC had exchanged views with Hong Kong’s main chambers of commerce and business federations. A series of three surveys is planned, to assess the awareness of businesses and employees regarding compliance and

enforcement levels of equal opportunities legislation. To help Hong Kong's small and medium size enterprises adopt best business practices, the Trade Development Council has extended to the Commission assistance, by way of co-operation, promotion, and a hyperlink to the TDC website.

To promote greater awareness and inculcation of equal opportunities values, the EOC has expanded its education and promotion programmes. More intensive and large scale promotion programmes will be organized. The first inter-university bi-lingual speech contest and a youth drama competition are in the pipeline.

On the complaints arising from the Kowloon Bay Health Centre, Ms. WU confirmed that litigation will be commenced against a number of residents of Richland Gardens as soon as the court documents are prepared. She further welcomed the publication by the Police of a Headquarters order designating the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Support, as the central point of contact between the Force and the Commission and on the handling of complaints relating to the three anti-discrimination ordinances.

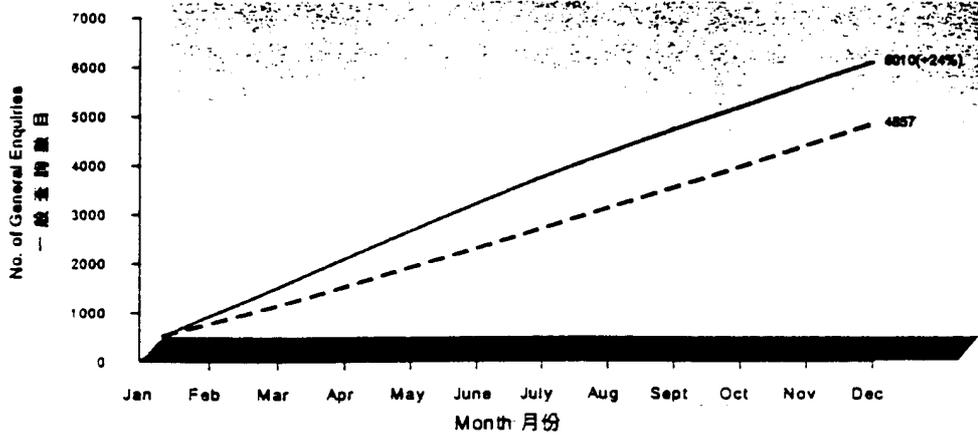
At the press conference, Ms. WU also highlighted the EOC's programmes to promote equal opportunities in 2001 which included launching an educational TV programme on equal opportunities for children in partnership with Cable TV and a promotion campaign on sexual harassment education targeting the general public and schools.

Ms. WU expected 2001 to be another busy and fruitful year. She pledged that the EOC would strive harder to promote equal opportunities in partnership with Government and the business community.

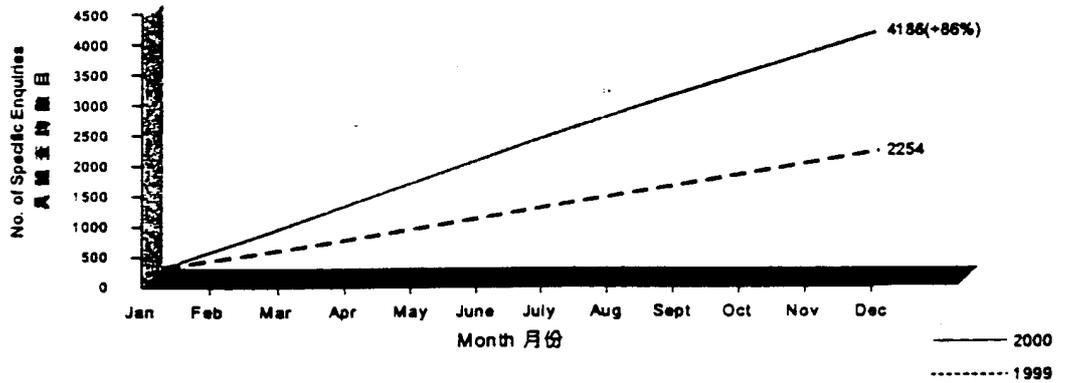
Equal Opportunities Commission
20 February 2001

Comparison of Enquiries (1999 and 2000) 查詢數字比較 (1999年及2000年)

General Enquiries 一般查詢



Specific Enquiries 具體查詢



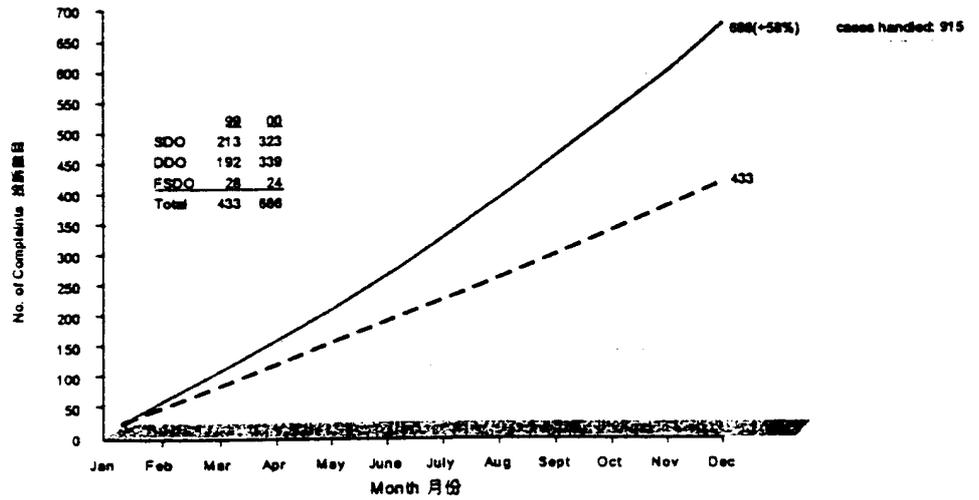
Total No. of Enquiries 查詢總數

	1999	2000
Total no. of Enquiries 查詢總數	7111	10196
General Enquiries 一般查詢	4857	6010
Specific Enquiries 具體查詢	2254	4186
Disability Discrimination Ordinance 殘疾歧視條例	864	1541
Sex Discrimination Ordinance 性別歧視條例	943	1528
Family Status Discrimination Ordinance 家庭崗位歧視條例	133	170
Equal Opportunities Commission 有關平等機會委員會	24	106
Outside Jurisdiction 其他查詢	290	841

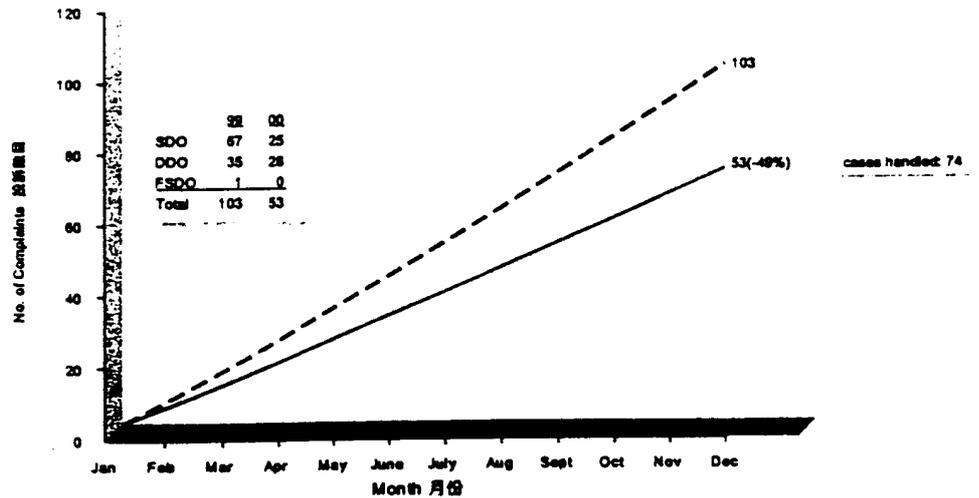


Comparison of Complaints Received (1999 and 2000) 投訴個案比較 (1999年及2000年)

Complaints for Investigation & Conciliation 需作調查及調解的投訴



Complaints for Follow-up Action 需作跟進的投訴



SDO - Sex Discrimination Ordinance 性別歧視條例
DDO - Disability Discrimination Ordinance 殘疾歧視條例
FSDO - Family Status Discrimination Ordinance 家庭地位歧視條例

— 2000
- - - 1999



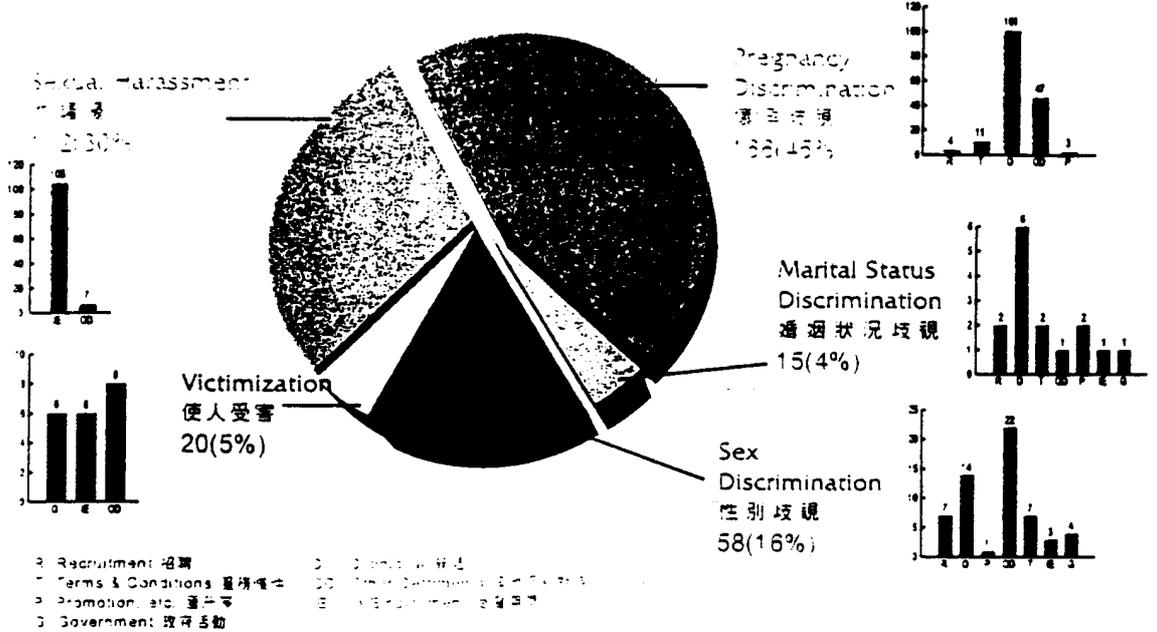
Breakdown of Complaints Handled under SDO for Investigation and Conciliation in 2000

按《性別歧視條例》需作調查及調解的投訴個案分類(2000年)

Employment Related Complaints

僱傭範疇方面之投訴

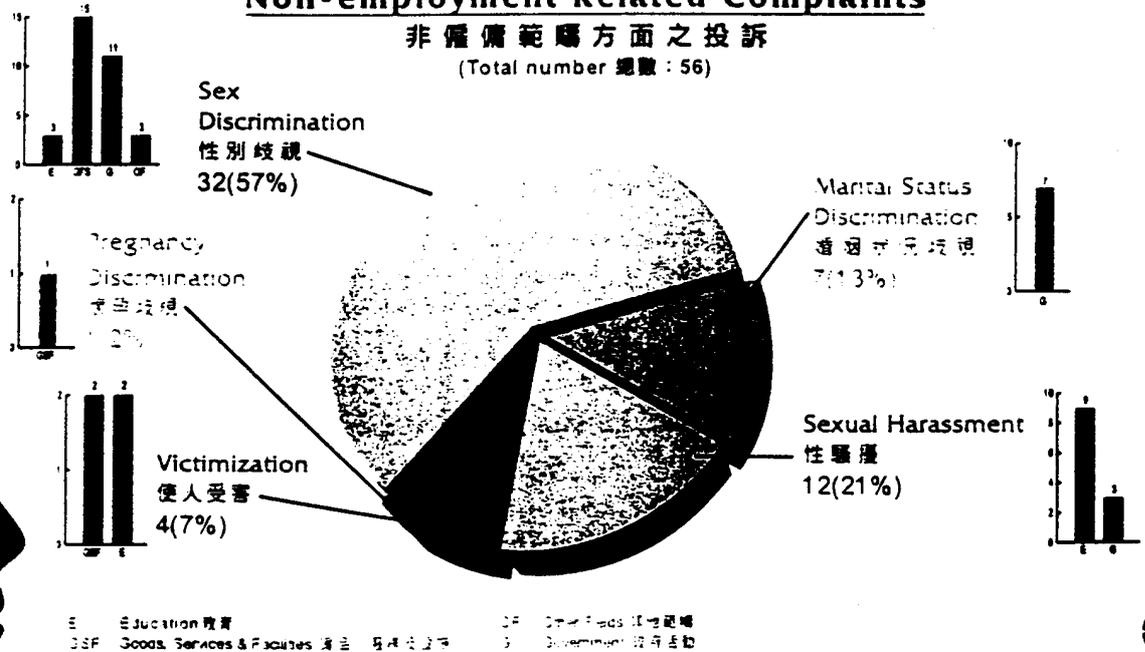
(Total number 總數: 371)



Non-employment Related Complaints

非僱傭範疇方面之投訴

(Total number 總數: 56)



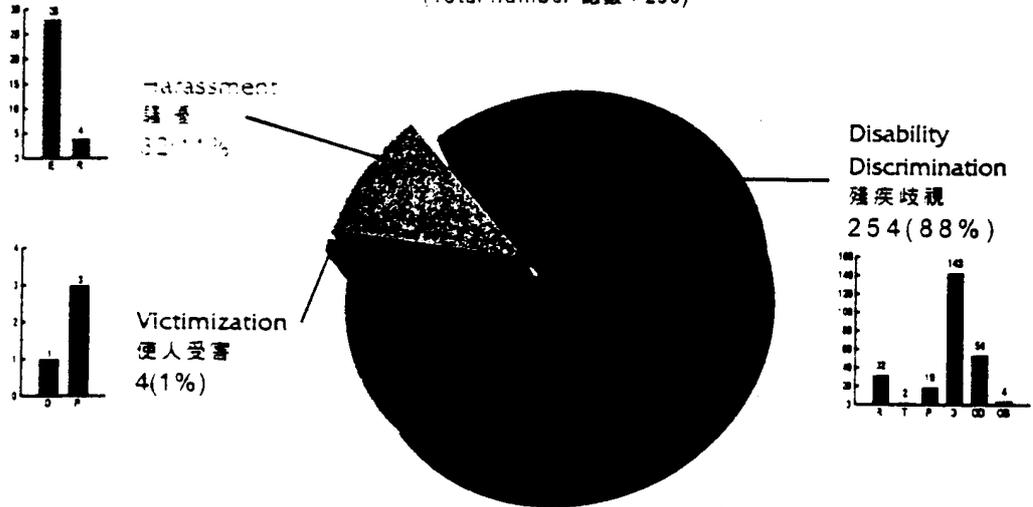
Breakdown of Complaints Handled under DDO for Investigation and Conciliation in 2000

按《殘疾歧視條例》需作調查及調解的投訴個案分類(2000年)

Employment Related Complaints

僱傭範疇方面之投訴

(Total number 總數: 290)

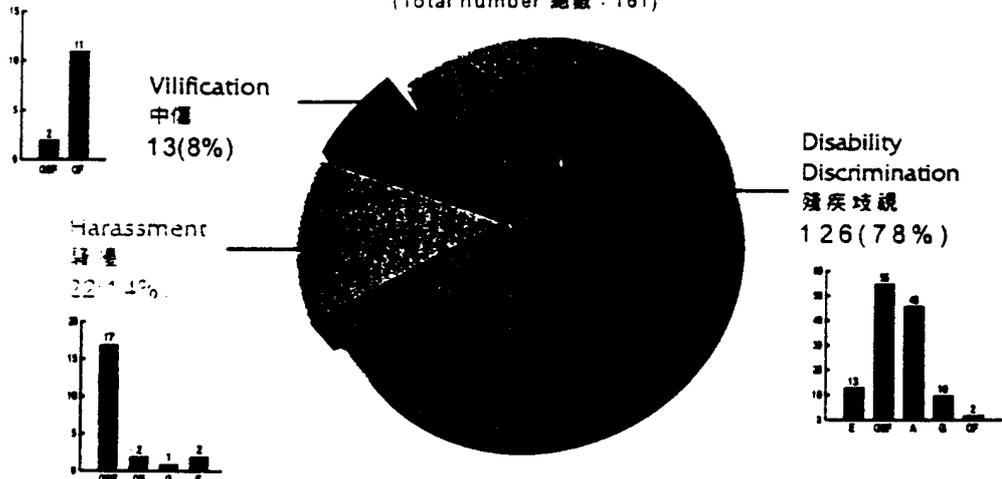


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|---------------------------|----|-------------------------|----|
| R Recruitment 招聘 | 10 | Recruitment 招聘 | 10 |
| T Terms & Conditions 僱傭條件 | 5 | Terms & Conditions 僱傭條件 | 5 |
| P Promotion etc. 晉升等 | 16 | Promotion etc. 晉升等 | 16 |
| D Dismissal 解僱 | | Dismissal 解僱 | |

Non-employment Related Complaints

非僱傭範疇方面之投訴

(Total number 總數: 161)



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|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|
| E Education 教育 | 1 | Education 教育 | 1 |
| OF Other Fields 其他範疇 | 1 | Other Fields 其他範疇 | 1 |
| G Government 政府活動 | 3 | Government 政府活動 | 3 |