



Comments of Hong Kong Unison on the
“Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide” Consultation Draft
(August 2011)

1. Introduction

The HKSARG has spared no efforts in promoting “patriotic” education for the past decade, and is heading to heighten efforts in covering all primary and secondary schools at one time through the Education Bureau (EDB). In view of the “Moral and National Education Curriculum Guide” Consultation Draft, the proposed curriculum framework comprises five domains, namely, personal, family, social, national and global. However, we find that the “national” domain has over emphasised the achievements and prosperity of the country, and has made no mention of its dark side such as those recent occurrences in Mainland China including the 4 June Incident, the Sanlu Milk Scandal, the oppression of human rights activists, and tofu-dreg projects, etc. We think this one-sided favoritism to promote the image of the nation would not facilitate students’ critical thinking, but prevent them from gaining a deeper understanding of the nation and their national-identity recognition in a passionate and rational manner.

We are concerned that “national education” of this kind, with over emphasis on personal emotions, would make no use to developing critical thinking and attitudes for whole-person development among the primary and secondary students in Hong Kong. Eventually, not only would it fail to cultivate students’ recognition to their nation, but would get them biased, taking the risk of turning “moral and national education” into a “brainwashing education” as a result.

2. Support a comprehensive and sophisticated moral and civic education

Hong Kong Unison fully supports a comprehensive and sophisticated civic education which, to foster mature civic character, should include essential elements such as “moral education”, “national education”, “human rights and equality”, “democracy and freedom” and “society and rule of law”. We believe the current consultation documents have failed to meet the objectives of a genuine civic education, therefore, we stand firm to urge the EDB to **withdraw the current Consultation Draft**. We also demand that the EDB should review and re-design the civic education curriculum to integrate four subjects, namely, Chinese history, moral education,



national education and human rights education, with an aim to **re-launch a genuine civic education for public consultation**, leading Hong Kong to move forward to a truly civic society.

We strongly advise the EDB to consider the following suggestions when implementing “national education” in any form:

(1) Conduct thorough consultation with ethnic minority parents

The current consultation documents are only provided in Chinese and English versions, with no other languages to meet the needs of ethnic minorities; ethnic minority parents are deprived of participation in the consultation process; the majority of ethnic minority parents are unaware of the consultation and neither have they received any information about the consultation documents. In practice, however, parents are encouraged to participate in their children’s homework and projects, thus leaving them with no room to follow the direction. We urge the EDB to publish consultation documents in at least six ethnic minority languages to provide ethnic minority parents with sufficient information, as well as to organise adequate seminars for them with regard to the learning objectives and assessment of the new curriculum in order to secure their understanding and support.

(2) Avoid the mix-up of nationality with Hong Kong identity and Chinese identity

In an international and multi-dimensional city like Hong Kong, people of different racial origins have different views to identity recognition according to their nationalities or length of stay in Hong Kong. As such, the diversity of nationality and ethnicity and the length of stay in Hong Kong should all be taken into consideration when formulating the curriculum guide. We suggest that ethnic minority students who have been granted Hong Kong residency or Chinese citizenship should study the same curriculum as local Chinese students. For those who have lived in Hong Kong for less than seven years with a one-way permit, or have lived in Hong Kong for more than seven years but have yet to gain Chinese citizenship, they are more likely to be perceived with “Hong Kong identity”, and we recommend a separate curriculum for them which places less emphasis on the content and assessment of national situations but more focus on the spirit of inclusion, understanding, human rights and equality among the ethnic groups. Furthermore, for students coming from international schools or staying in Hong Kong for only a



short period, they should be exempted from the new curriculum. It is important not to over-emphasise “nationalism” in the curriculum design in order to avoid the risk of turning into “racism”.

(3) Provide ample training opportunities for teachers

The “national education” curriculum covers a wide variety of topics, and requires ample training for teachers to cope with the various needs in civic, moral and national domains. Apart from the learning content, it is crucial that teachers are equipped with adequate sensitivity with a grasp of the pluralistic backgrounds and the complexity of identity recognition among the ethnic groups. We urge the EDB to carefully examine the content and assessment of the new curriculum to fulfill the practical needs of ethnic minority students.

(4) Provide ethnic minority students with a diversified curriculum and assessment

Both the position and assessment criteria of the national education curriculum as specified in the consultation documents fail to observe the circumstances of ethnic minority students. For instance, *Appendix 3* in the consultation papers states that students “**should foster a sense of belonging towards the country and one’s ancestral home when tracing traditional Chinese customs and one’s ancestral home**” (Primary 1 to 3, pp. 120) and “**..... take the initiative to care about our compatriots, reflecting that we are of the same family**” (Primary 4 to 6, pp.122); *Appendix 4: Teacher’s Observation Form* spells out the need of students to “**demonstrate Chinese virtues.....**” (pp. 126); *Appendix 7: Assessment Report on Student’s Performance* states that students should “**be happy and proud of the achievements of our compatriots**”. Students should review their performance if they are unable to express these feelings. Following this assessment mode, ethnic minority students will either fail the teacher-assessment and peer-assessment, or be forced to disguise a fake feeling. Based on the underlying assumption that all students in Hong Kong are “Chinese nationals” or have “Chinese identity”, the EDB has overlooked the status of Hong Kong as a multicultural and multinational international metropolis, with the result of making heightened efforts to impose Chinese culture and Chinese-identity recognition on other ethnic groups. This clearly shows that the one-way lesson design is seriously lacking in ethnical sensitivity, as well as care and respect for ethnic cultures. We strongly urge the EDB to formulate a tailor-made curriculum and assessment to suit the ethnic minority students based on the spirit of inclusion and mutual respect.