

**For discussion on  
25 April 2014**

**Legislative Council Subcommittee on Poverty**

**Measures to Support Ethnic Minorities  
in relation to Employment and Integration into the Community**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the existing and enhancement measures of the Administration to support ethnic minorities (EMs) in relation to employment and integration into the community.

**Background**

2. According to the “Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities” of the 2011 Population Census published by the Census and Statistics Department, there were around 451,000 EMs, constituting 6.4% of the whole population of Hong Kong (around 7,072,000). They or their ancestors were mostly from six South Asian/Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines (around 133,000), Indonesia (around 133,000), India (around 29,000), Pakistan (around 18,000), Nepal (around 17,000) and Thailand (around 11,000). Among the EM population, roughly more than half were foreign domestic helpers who were mainly from the Philippines and Indonesia.

3. Various government bureaux and departments have been providing a range of services to meet the needs of EMs and help them adapt to life in Hong Kong, with a view to facilitating them to integrate into the community as early as possible, such as educational support for EM students provided by the Education Bureau, employment training and support for EMs provided by the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Labour Department (LD), social welfare services for EM families in need provided by the Social Welfare Department and support services for integration into the community by the Home Affairs Department (HAD).

4. The existing public services for EMs are set out in paragraphs 5 to 14 below. In addition, as announced in the 2014 Policy Address, the Administration will introduce a series of enhancement measures in

education<sup>1</sup>, employment and community outreach to help EMs, especially the younger generation and newcomers, integrate into the community more smoothly. This paper focuses on public services relating to employment and community outreach as in paragraphs 15 to 21 below.

## **Existing Measures**

### **(A) Employment**

#### Labour and Welfare Bureau, Labour Department and Employees Retraining Board

5. LD provides a full range of employment service free of charge to all job seekers, including the ethnic minorities, through its network of 12 job centres, two industry-based recruitment centres, Telephone Employment Service Centre, Interactive Employment Service (iES) website and vacancy search terminals (VSTs) installed at various convenient locations throughout the territory. All job centres offer employment services in both Chinese and English and interpretation services will be arranged, where necessary, for job seekers who do not speak Chinese or English.

6. All job centres have set up resource corners and special counters to serve EM job seekers. Tailor-made briefings are organised regularly to help EMs better understand the local labour market and improve job search skills. EM job seekers may meet employment advisors in job centres to obtain personalised job search advice, information on training/retraining courses, and/or to receive career aptitude assessment as appropriate.

7. Moreover, LD reminds employers using its recruitment services the need to consider the genuine occupational qualifications of the posts when specifying the language requirement. Employers are also encouraged to relax the language requirement of their vacancies as far as possible so as to facilitate the employment of EMs.

8. The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) offers full-time placement-tied and part-time “Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus” (SUS Plus) courses and generic skills training dedicated for EMs to meet their employment needs. These dedicated courses and training are conducted in English. Placement follow-up services are provided by the training

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<sup>1</sup> Details of the enhanced Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking students starting from the 2014/15 school year were discussed at the Panel on Education on 14 April 2014 with Members of the Subcommittee on Poverty invited to take part in the discussion.

bodies of ERB to trainees who completed full-time placement-tied courses. ERB sponsors training bodies to organise district-based activities, including industry exhibitions and job fairs to disseminate employment and training information and provide services to EMs to enhance their employment opportunities. Eligible EMs can also make use of a wide range of training and employment support services, including personalised training consultancy service, at the three ERB Service Centres.

9. Since 2012-13, the Capacity Building Mileage Programme of the Women's Commission has become a recurrent project with an annual funding of around \$8 million. Courses in English have been developed for EMs to facilitate their integration into society and pursuit of lifelong learning.

#### Civil Service Bureau

10. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) works closely with all bureaux and departments to ensure that EMs, like other applicants, will continue to have equal access to job opportunities in the Government. Measures include reviewing and adjusting the Chinese language proficiency requirements (LPRs) and recruitment formats of relevant Government jobs on the basis that the adjusted requirements/formats will continue to allow the satisfactory performance of duties concerned.

#### Disciplined Services

11. In connection with the adjustments mentioned in paragraph 10, the Police modified the format of part of the recruitment test for Police Constable in mid-2011. Candidates are arranged to participate in a job-related "Practical Incident Handling Test", under which they are required to reply in both written English and Chinese. This has replaced the previous requirement for candidates to answer questions in Chinese only. In addition, extra marks will be awarded to candidates who possess foreign/ethnic language skills. The Police also hire non-ethnic Chinese as Police Community Liaison Assistant to enhance liaison with EM communities. To date, there are 15 Police Community Liaison Assistant positions in 14 Police Districts.

12. Since September 2011, the Correctional Services Department has abolished the Chinese written test in the recruitment exercise of Assistant Officer (AO) II and replaced it by a group interview. There were 21 non-Chinese applicants among 9,731 applications and 51 non-Chinese applicants among 10,109 applications in the 2011 and 2012 recruitment

exercise of AO II respectively. From September 2011 to early 2013, a total of five of them have been appointed as AO II.

13. As for the Immigration Department, the recruitment procedure for the Immigration Assistant grade does not include any Chinese written test in the recruitment procedures.

## **(B) Integration into the Community**

### Home Affairs Department

14. HAD has put in place a series of support services to help EMs integrate into the community, including –

- (a) Support Service Centres for EMs: five support service centres for EMs in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Yau Tsim Mong, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long and two sub-centres in Sham Shui Po and Tung Chung to provide language classes, after-school tutorial classes, counselling and referral services, and integration programmes (computer classes, employment workshop, etc.). One of the support service centres provides interpretation<sup>2</sup> and translation services;
- (b) Community Support Teams: sponsor two community support teams to provide special services for EM groups through their own communities;
- (c) District-based Integration Programmes: organise through district levels adaptation courses, mutual help networks and community visits, etc. to help EMs better understand the districts they are living in and facilitate them to participate in community activities;
- (d) Ambassador Scheme: recruit persons of background and experience similar to EMs as ambassadors, who reach out to the EMs in need of service and make referrals to government departments to follow up where necessary;
- (e) Media Partnership: provide funding for five radio programmes broadcast in EM languages;
- (f) Language-related Financial Assistance Programmes: provide subsidy for EMs in taking language examinations and ERB dedicated language courses;
- (g) Language and Cross-Cultural Programmes: provide funding for non-governmental organisations to organise language classes for

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<sup>2</sup> In addition, the relevant government departments provide tailor-made interpretation services for their EM users to facilitate access to public services.

- EM adults and Cantonese classes, mentorship programmes and homework tutorials for EM children;
- (h) Harmony Scholarship Scheme: grant scholarships to students with outstanding performance in school and community services (especially in promoting racial harmony);
  - (i) Website: set up a designated website (<http://www.had.gov.hk/rru/>) available in six EM languages;
  - (j) Mobile Information Service: distribute information kits to newly arrived EMs at the airport and answer their enquiries in EM languages; and
  - (k) Service Guidebooks: publish guidebooks in English and six EM languages.

## **Enhancement Measures**

### **(A) Employment**

#### Labour and Welfare Bureau, Labour Department and Employees Retraining Board

15. LD will continue to canvass suitable vacancies for EM job seekers and promote their working abilities to employers so as to enhance their employment opportunities. In 2014-15, two large-scale job fairs and nine thematic district-based job fairs will be staged specifically for EMs to help them find work and encourage employers to hire them. LD will continue to widely disseminate information on these job fairs to EMs through NGOs and the mass media serving them, and encourage their participation so as to speed up their job search. Messages of LD's employment services are also broadcast in ethnic minority languages on RTHK and Metro Plus through radio programmes sponsored by HAD. In addition, LD will continue to organise experience sharing sessions and invite relevant NGOs to share their knowledge of the culture of EMs with employers with a view to enhancing employers' understanding of EMs.

16. ERB will continue to provide dedicated training courses in English for EMs to meet their employment needs. In 2014-15, ERB will offer 14 full-time placement-tied courses dedicated for EMs, including five courses, under the Youth Training Programme, which target non-engaged EM youths aged 15-20. ERB will also offer 16 part-time SUS Plus and generic skills training courses dedicated for EMs.

17. The Construction Industry Council has promotional activities and collaborates with the construction industry to stage job fairs to attract new

EM entrants, and attracts in-service EM construction workers to attend training courses to enhance skills.

### Civil Service Bureau

18. The CSB has issued guidelines to bureaux and departments reminding them to review and, where appropriate, adjust the LPRs of civil service grades from time to time, taking into account any changing operational needs. Since 2010, there have been a total of 20 grades which have relaxed the Chinese LPRs upon review. In addition, as a new initiative, the CSB has organised Chinese language training tailored for the vocational needs of serving non-ethnic Chinese staff in the Government to facilitate their effective performance of duties and career advancement.

### Disciplined Services

19. Disciplined services departments will continue to explore the feasibility of modifying their recruitment format / requirements to facilitate EMs' applications for jobs. The Government Flying Service has started making modifications to the Chinese LPRs and recruitment format of its major grades since 2013. The Fire Services Department also intends to make similar arrangements.

20. Generally speaking, disciplined services would continue to attract more potential candidates to join their departments by enhancing their efforts in outreaching EM population such as through secondary schools with a substantial number of EM students and local religious organisations and community leaders.

## **(B) Integration into the Community**

### Home Affairs Department

21. To enhance the support services for EMs to better integrate into the Community, in 2014-15 HAD will –

- (a) establish an additional support service centre for EMs in Kwai Tsing district;
- (b) set up an EM youth unit in each of the support service centres and sub-centres, and to implement an ambassador scheme for EM youths in order to strengthen support services for EM youths; and
- (c) strengthen manpower support for EM support services through employment of staff who are familiar with the culture of the EMs

and fluent in their languages for implementing the various initiatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

22. Members are invited to note the measures for supporting EMs set out in paragraphs 5 to 21 above.

Civil Service Bureau  
Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Security Bureau  
Home Affairs Department  
Labour Department

April 2014