



For discussion on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2015

**Submissions to the Subcommittee to Study the Implementation of Free Kindergarten Education of the Legislative Council on the Support for Non-Chinese Speaking Students in Kindergartens**

**Background**

1. Free kindergarten education should give all students an equal opportunity in education. To ensure equal education opportunities for all students, it is essential to provide adequate support to minorities, including ethnic minority students. An equal opportunity to study in mainstream kindergartens is very important for the integration of ethnic minority children. As agreed by the Education Bureau (EDB), it is also conducive to ethnic minority children's learning of the Chinese language. Better Chinese proficiency will improve their prospects in higher education and employment.
2. However, the 'Research on Kindergarten Support and Attitude Towards Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong' ('the Research') (*attached*) that Hong Kong Unison conducted from December 2014 to April 2015 shows widespread discrimination in the admission procedures and a lack of support for ethnic minority children in many kindergartens. 239 kindergartens were surveyed on phone. Detailed findings are stated below with policy recommendations in the final part of this paper.

**Current *de facto* racial segregation across kindergartens**

3. The data provided by the EDB<sup>1</sup> shows that 43% of all the kindergartens in Hong Kong do not have ethnic minority students in 2014/15. According to the EDB's reply number 515 to Hon. Abraham Shek's initial written in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-16, at least 5 kindergartens have no Chinese speaking students at all in the 2014/15 school year. This *de facto* racial segregation may violate the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO).
4. The EDB claims that *de facto* racial segregation in primary and secondary schools is a result of parental choice. The EDB cannot evade responsibility with this inaccurate claim. The EDB has the responsibility to rectify the following causes of this *de facto* segregation:

**Discrimination of the EDB in providing information related to school choice**

5. The EDB gave inaccurate and misleading answers to question number 394 to Hon. Fernando Cheung's initial written in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-16. Hon. Cheung asked for the list of information disseminated or publications published by the EDB including its blogs, webpages, school directories, reports on schools' qualities and videos, particularly those about school choice, that are only available in Chinese but not in English, or only available in Chinese for printed versions (if applicable). The EDB stated that all information related to school choices is available in both Chinese and English on the Bureau's website.

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<sup>1</sup> p.1288 of [www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/EDB-2-e1.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/EDB-2-e1.pdf).



6. The truth is much official information related to school choice is only available in Chinese, including the Quality Review Reports of the EDB of individual kindergartens<sup>2</sup>.
7. Also, some important information including curriculum type, teaching approach and learning assessment in the supposedly bilingual 'Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres' ('the Profile') is only available in Chinese for some kindergartens.

#### **Discrimination in the admissions mechanism of kindergartens**

8. Requiring ethnic minority children to speak Chinese before entering kindergarten  
According to the Research, 62% of the kindergartens used only Cantonese in admission interviews, disregarding the fact that not all Hong Kongers speak the same mother tongue of Cantonese.
9. The Research shows that among kindergartens that mentioned that they only used Cantonese as the language of admission interviews, only 45% of them were willing to modify their regulations. They would not give out such information voluntarily; we had to probe further.
10. When admission interviews are conducted in Cantonese, Chinese language proficiency is an admission criterion because children who do not understand Cantonese would not know how to respond to the instructions of the interviewer.
11. It may constitute indirect discrimination for kindergartens to require ethnic minority children to speak Chinese for admissions because the proportion of ethnic minority children who can fulfill this requirement is considerably smaller than that of Chinese children. This Chinese language proficiency requirement is not justifiable because kindergarten is the first stage of education outside home and it is not reasonable to expect a kid whose mother tongue is not Chinese to be able to speak Chinese before even starting to learn it at school.
12. To be able to use the Pre-Primary Education Voucher is a right of all children who are residents of Hong Kong. However, according to the Research, many kindergartens under the Pre-Primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) are not welcoming towards ethnic minority children; therefore, these children cannot truly exercise the right to use the Voucher even though they are Hong Kong residents. 71% of the PEVS kindergartens surveyed use Cantonese only for admission interviews.

#### **Lack of transparency about admission procedures**

13. The EDB requires kindergartens inform parents in advance of the details of their school-based admission mechanism, which should include the admission procedure and criteria, the number of candidates to be interviewed, etc. through effective channels such as application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets and

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.edb.gov.hk/tc/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/quality-assurance-framework/qr/qr-report/index.html>



school website in its Circular Memorandum 66/2014<sup>3</sup>. However, according to our experience of working with ethnic minority parents, very few kindergartens provided information on admission criteria.

### **Lack of support in school**

#### 14. Lack of support on Chinese language learning to ethnic minority children

The Research shows that 64% of the kindergartens did not have additional support on Chinese learning for their ethnic minority students. A mere 13% of surveyed kindergartens claimed they provided supplementary support, 56% of which could not specify the kind of support.

#### 15. School notices only available in Chinese

The Research shows that around 60% of the kindergartens provided Chinese written school notices; only 18% provided bilingual notices. When kindergartens that provide only Chinese school notices were asked further, 79% of them did not provide any form of translation or interpretation. Only 21% offered verbal translations. 76% of PEVS kindergartens provide Chinese notices only, and when asked, 78% of these PEVS kindergartens did not provide any translation for ethnic minority parents. This hinders ethnic minority parents who do not read Chinese from choosing these kindergartens.

### **Policy recommendations**

16. The EDB should continuously monitor whether there is *de facto* racial segregation across kindergartens.
17. The EDB should establish guidelines on admission arrangements in kindergartens (PEVS and non-PEVS) to ensure non-discriminatory, open and just mechanisms, including admission procedures, admission criteria, and language of interviews.
18. Supplementary funding and school-based support should be provided to all kindergartens that admit ethnic minority students, including support on translation services, teaching ethnic minority students Chinese, or hiring ethnic minority teaching assistants.
19. The EDB should ensure equal access to information on kindergartens for ethnic minority families, including the Profile of Kindergartens, the School Self-Evaluation and Quality Review Report.
20. The government should be transparent in its use of funds, including its support to academic institutions to enhance effective Chinese learning in kindergartens, and improve its accountability to stakeholders through public reporting.
21. Understanding of the RDO should be promoted among all kindergarten staff.

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<sup>3</sup>[http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kindergarten-k1-admission-arrangements/EDBC M662014\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kindergarten-k1-admission-arrangements/EDBC M662014_Eng.pdf)



**Hong Kong Unison Limited**

香港融樂會有限公司

**Research on Kindergarten Support and Attitude  
towards Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong**

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May 2015



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## **Executive summary**

Hong Kong Unison conducted a research to evaluate if admission policies of kindergartens in Hong Kong are fair and non-discriminatory and if kindergartens have adequate support to ethnic minority parents and children for an equal opportunity to learn Chinese during the early formative years.

A telephone survey was carried out in 239 kindergartens in 5 districts in Hong Kong (Central and Western, North, Sham Shui Po, Yau Tsim Mong and Yuen Long) from December 2014 to April 2015 to explore the percentage of ethnic minority students in each kindergarten; the language of admission interviews and school notices; and support available to ethnic minority students. We also studied the attitudes of kindergartens towards ethnic minorities through face-to-face interviews with ethnic minority parents about their experience in the admission process.

The research findings revealed that:

1. **Ethnic minority students were concentrated in a few kindergartens**

Some of the kindergartens we surveyed have more than 90% ethnic minority student population, contributing de facto racial segregation.

2. **Most kindergartens conduct admission screening interviews in Chinese**

More than 60% kindergartens surveyed conducted admission interviews in Chinese. Moreover, when further probed, among those that conduct interviews in Chinese, only less than half (45%) expressed willingness to make adjustments or conduct the interviews in English for ethnic minority children. Conducting admission interviews to ethnic minority children in a Chinese only may constitute indirect discrimination under the Racial Discrimination Ordinance. The survey also finds that kindergartens that joined the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) were less likely to accommodate ethnic minority children's language needs in the admission process.

3. **Schools lack language support to both parents and children**

More than 60% surveyed kindergartens provided school notices in Chinese only. Almost 80% surveyed kindergartens said they would not provide any form of translation even if parents do not understand Chinese. Moreover, more than 60% surveyed kindergartens do not have support measures for ethnic minority students to learn Chinese. Kindergartens that joined the PEVS were also less likely to have language support for ethnic minority parents and children.

4. **Ethnic minority parents lack access to information**

Although the profile of kindergartens published by the EDB is officially bilingual, much of the crucial information such as curriculum details and school characteristics are in Chinese only, making the information inaccessible to most ethnic minority families. When asked via the phone, some kindergartens were unwilling to disclose information about admission arrangements.



#### **5. Unwelcoming attitudes towards ethnic minority families**

Some ethnic minority parents felt humiliated and discriminated during kindergarten application process. One parent recounts her experience of being rejected or dissuaded by multiple kindergartens; one kindergarten even said to her, “we are a ‘local kindergarten’ so if you only know English you should find another school.” The full research report contains fourteen testimonies from ethnic minority parents.

#### **Policy Suggestions**

- Unison recommends that the Education Bureau (EDB) monitor ethnic minority student population in all kindergartens to prevent de facto racial segregation. Understanding of the Race Discrimination Ordinance should be promoted among all kindergarten staff.
- The EDB should establish guidelines on admission arrangements in kindergartens (PEVS and non-PEVS) to ensure non-discriminatory, open and just mechanisms, including admission procedures, admission criteria, and language of interviews. Moreover, the EDB should require all kindergartens to make public their admission arrangements to prevent misunderstanding and discriminatory practices.
- Supplementary funding and school-based support should be provided to all kindergartens that admit ethnic minority students, including support on translation services, teaching ethnic minority students Chinese, or hiring ethnic minority teaching assistants. Cultural sensitivity should be enhanced among all kindergarten staff including administrators and front line staff.
- The EDB should ensure access of information on kindergartens to ethnic minority families, including support available to ethnic minority families and supplementary measures to facilitate ethnic minority children learn Chinese in kindergartens.
- The EDB should especially monitor ‘Learning and Teaching’ and ‘Support to Children and School Culture’<sup>1</sup> in kindergartens to ensure effective measures are used to promote Chinese learning and integration for ethnic minority students.
- The government should actively outreach to the ethnic minority community to build better rapport and improve information flow on education related issues, such as kindergarten admission arrangements and support for ethnic minority students in kindergartens.
- The government should be transparent in its use of funds, including its support to academic institutions to enhance effective Chinese learning in kindergartens, and improve its accountability to stakeholders through public reporting.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Learning and Teaching’ and ‘Support to Children and School Culture’ are 2 performance indicators in SSE.

## **1. Introduction**

Established in 2001 and incorporated in 2005, Hong Kong Unison Limited (hereinafter Unison) is a non-governmental charitable organization with the mission to promote racial equality and advocate for change so that all ethnic minority residents of Hong Kong have equal opportunity and equal access to public services and information regardless of race. Education for ethnic minorities has long been one of Unison's strategic work priorities. "Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realising other human rights."<sup>2</sup> If ethnic minority children do not have adequate proficiency in Chinese, their educational achievements are likely to be limited and their ability to take part in Hong Kong society and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms is likely to be impaired.

Experts agree that the best time to acquire language ability is during the early formative years. If ethnic minority children from the outset can benefit from an environment conducive to integration and learning Chinese, their competitiveness towards better opportunities in further studies could be enhanced. Better Chinese proficiency will improve their social mobility and work prospects. Kindergarten is the first stage of education outside home. In this research, Unison explores if current kindergartens provide fair and non-discriminatory kindergarten admission policies to enable equal learning opportunities for ethnic minority children.

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<sup>2</sup> CESCR Committee, General Comment 13, 1999, Para.1.

## **2. Research Rationale**

Unison started kindergarten outreach in September 2014; in an attempt to offer tangible support and services to ethnic minority parents who faced difficulties in their children's education. Since the outreach, we received requests from ethnic minority parents to provide more information on kindergartens. Parents mentioned they did not know how to select kindergartens that are suitable for their children and they did not know how to access information such as prior admittance of ethnic minority students and support available to ethnic minority children and parents, which to them, are key information to facilitate their decisions. Moreover, many parents needed assistance and support from Unison as they faced difficulties during kindergarten applications. Some were outright rejected by kindergartens which "only accept Chinese students"; some were informed that the kindergarten "will not accept students whose parents do not speak Chinese"; and some simply got cut off from the phone line when parents started speaking to them in English. Parents felt very helpless when they look for kindergartens and find kindergartens' comments insulting and racially discriminatory. Concerned about the difficulties and feedback of parents, Unison conducted a survey to look into the kinds of support accessible to the ethnic minority community in kindergarten, as well as their attitude in admitting ethnic minority children. We wanted to find out if kindergarten admission policies are fair and non-discriminatory and if kindergartens have adequate support to ethnic minority children and parents so that they have an equal opportunity to learn Chinese during the early formative years.

### **3. Research Objectives**

- 3.1 To explore admission procedures of kindergartens in Hong Kong and observe their attitudes in admitting ethnic minority children
- 3.2 To explore kindergartens' support for ethnic minority children in learning Chinese and their efforts in communicating with ethnic minority families
- 3.3 To make recommendations to the government on ways to eliminate prejudices and limitations of kindergarten towards ethnic minority students, and suggest ways to better support ethnic minority children and their parents in kindergartens to facilitate early integration of local ethnic minority residents

### **4. Description of Research**

In this research, we aimed to find out:

- 4.1 The distribution of ethnic minority children in kindergartens in the five districts
- 4.2 Kindergartens' attitudes towards ethnic minorities as manifested in the admission process and procedures, willingness to provide information the kindergarten, support for ethnic minority students, and communications with parents.
- 4.3 If there is difference in kindergartens' attitudes based on district demographics, previous experience with ethnic minority students, and pre-primary education voucher scheme.
- 4.4 Parents' perception of kindergartens and factors that affect parents' decision-making on kindergartens.

From the findings, we analyzed if kindergartens have fair and transparent admission mechanisms, if support for ethnic minority families is adequate, and if the learning environment is conducive to early integration.

## 5. Research Methodology

- 5.1 Preliminary studies were done via conversations with ethnic minority parents who were looking for kindergartens for their children. We noted their comments and based on their difficulties faced on kindergartens, we compiled a list of questions to form the basis of the questionnaire for the survey (Appendix 1).
- 5.2 Kindergartens that are registered with the Education Bureau were selected, in the following 5 districts: Yau Tsim Mong, Yuen Long, Central and Western, Sham Shui Po and North District. Information of the kindergartens was collected from individual kindergarten profile from the website of the Committee on Home-School Co-operation.<sup>3</sup>
- 5.3 The rationale for selecting these 5 districts was to provide different demographic backgrounds to see how they affect the attitudes of kindergartens and the kinds of support provided to non-Chinese students in Hong Kong.
- 5.4 Yau Tsim Mong, Yuen Long and Sham Shui Po districts were chosen as most parents we met live in these districts; hence the findings of the survey would facilitate the choices of kindergarten for their child. Central and Western district has a relatively higher population of Caucasians in the district. In the North district, there is a shortage of vacancies in kindergartens due to the influx of cross-border children.
- 5.5 In total, there are 239 kindergartens in the 5 districts.

<b>No. of kindergartens</b> <b>District</b>	<b>Joining the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS)</b>	<b>Not joining the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Yuen Long	41	30	71
Central and Western	23	16	39
Sham Shui Po	38	6	44
North District	40	7	47
Yau Tsim Mong	28	10	38
<b>Overall</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>239</b>

Table 5.1 Number of kindergartens registered in each district

- 5.6 Out of the 239 kindergartens we contacted, 210 (88%) of the kindergarten responded, while 26 (13%) kindergartens did not answer the phone<sup>4</sup>; thus we are not able to get any information from them.

<sup>3</sup>This information was collected from the website: <http://www.chsc.hk/kindergarten/en/>

<sup>4</sup> If a kindergarten cannot be reached after 3 attempts, it will be considered as 'not answer'.

- 5.7 The survey was conducted through phone conversations with kindergarten staff/receptionist using a standard questionnaire (Appendix A). 5 volunteers and intern students used Cantonese to call each kindergarten over a period of 8 weeks (from mid-December 2014 to mid-February 2015). They were asked to make note of any specific comments and/or remarks made by kindergartens.
- 5.8 To conduct the survey, volunteers were asked to portray themselves as friends of ethnic minorities. Kindergartens may answer differently if we told them we are a non-governmental organisation. We want to investigate from a parent's perspective and study the attitudes of kindergartens towards ethnic minority admission.
- 5.9 For Yau Tsim Mong district, we had to call the kindergartens twice because information obtained in the first round was incomplete. In the second round, an ethnic minority Unison staff called the kindergartens as a parent, speaking English. After the analysis, we see no conspicuous difference in the kindergartens' attitudes between enquires asked using English or Cantonese.
- 5.10 After the volunteers and intern students completed calling the schools, 2 volunteers translated the comments and remarks from Chinese to English. Thereafter we collated the data and analyzed the findings in March and April 2015.

## 6. Main findings and analyses

### 6.1. Ethnic minority children are concentrated in a few kindergartens.

According to our findings, among the 239 surveyed kindergartens, 43% did not admit ethnic minority students and 35% admitted a few<sup>5</sup> ethnic minority students. This finding coincides with the data provided by the Education Bureau<sup>6</sup> for 2014/15 school year, whereby 43% of the total number of kindergartens in Hong Kong does not have ethnic minority students and 35% has fewer than 10 ethnic minority students, showing that our research is representational of the kindergarten admission situation in Hong Kong.

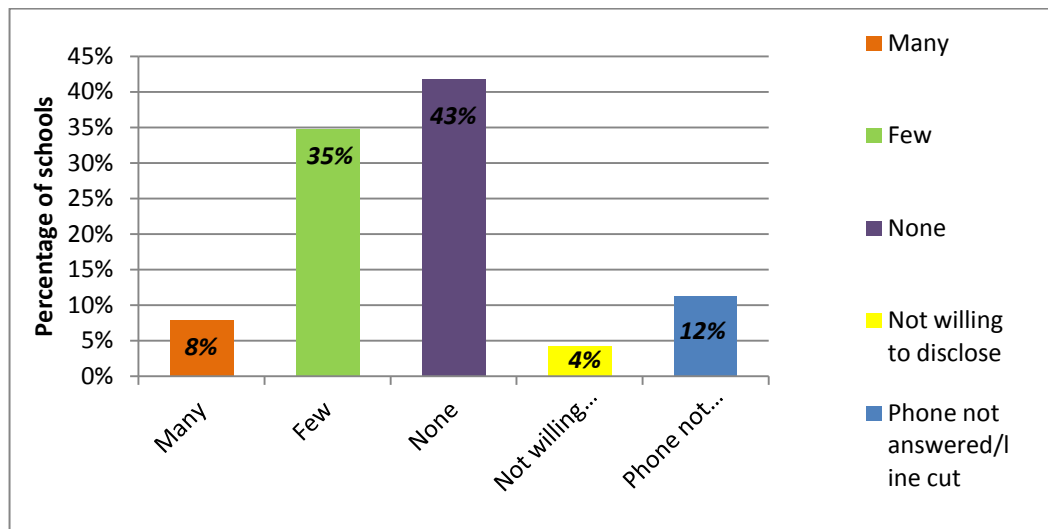


Table 6.1 Percentage of kindergartens by admittance of ethnic minority children

The ethnic minority student population was concentrated in 8%<sup>7</sup> of the surveyed kindergartens, whereby more than 50% of these kindergartens replied that they had over one half ethnic minority student population.

### 6.2. Most kindergartens required the applicant to speak and comprehend Cantonese at interviews.

According to the survey, only 10% would provide interviews in Cantonese or English, depending on the language ability of the applicant. 62% kindergartens used Cantonese as the interview language, disregarding the fact that not all Hong Kongers speak the same mother tongue of Cantonese. It is almost impossible to request a 3-year old child,

<sup>5</sup> "A few" denotes less than 10 ethnic minority students. Most kindergartens under this category mentioned they have 1 to 6 ethnic minority children; others said a few, and we assumed it is likely less than 10.

<sup>6</sup> In 2014/15 school year, there is a total of 978 kindergartens in Hong Kong (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/kg.html>) where by 421 kindergartens do not have ethnic minority students and 343 have fewer than 10. (<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/EDB-2-e1.pdf>)

<sup>7</sup> "Many" denotes more than 10 ethnic minority students.

whose mother tongue is not Chinese and whose family does not speak Chinese, to attend a Chinese interview.

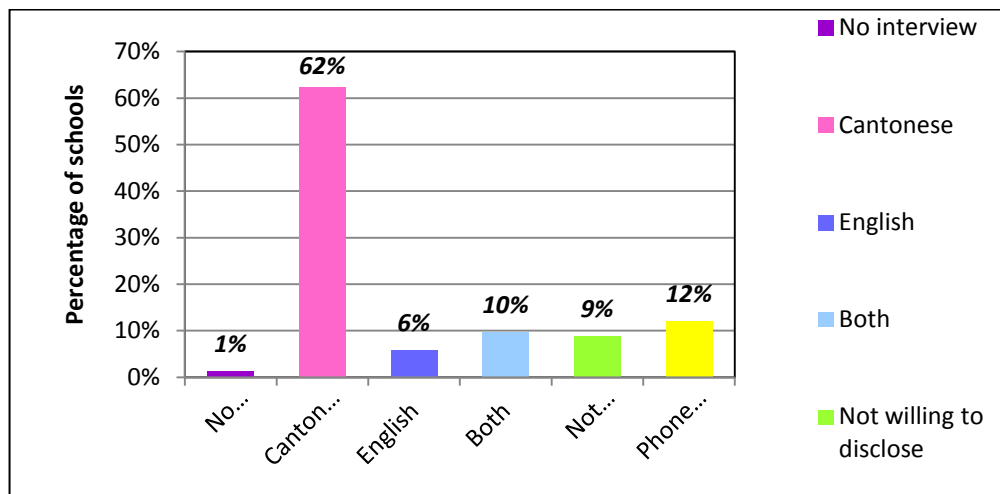


Table 6.2.1 Percentage of kindergartens by language used at interviews

*Safia (pseudonym), a Pakistani mother seeking admission for her 3-year old daughter, applied in kindergartens and took her daughter to respective interviews in November and December of 2014. 2 out of the 3 kindergartens used Cantonese as the language of interview, disregarding the fact that Cantonese is not the mother tongue of the applicant. Unfortunately her daughter was refused admission in all the 3 kindergartens. Safia got verbal feedback from all 3 kindergartens that her daughter was rejected because she could not speak Cantonese.*

As stated by the EDB<sup>8</sup>, “kindergartens are required to inform parents in advance of the details of their school-based admission mechanism” which should include the **admission procedure and criteria**, and the number of candidates to be interviewed, etc. Suggested communication channels include guidance notes in application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, school website, etc. However we found that only very few surveyed kindergartens provided admission criteria on their application forms and websites.

Our findings show that 71% of PEVS kindergartens used Cantonese for interviews and only 7% used Cantonese or English. There were more non-PEVS kindergartens that used Cantonese or English for interviews. If ethnic minority children cannot speak Cantonese, they will be disadvantaged during interviews at PEVS kindergartens. Requiring ethnic minority children to use Cantonese during interviews may potentially constitute indirect discrimination according to the Race Discrimination Ordinance.

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kindergarten-k1-admission-arrangements/EDBCM662014\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kindergarten-k1-admission-arrangements/EDBCM662014_Eng.pdf); Paragraph 7 School-based Admission Mechanism



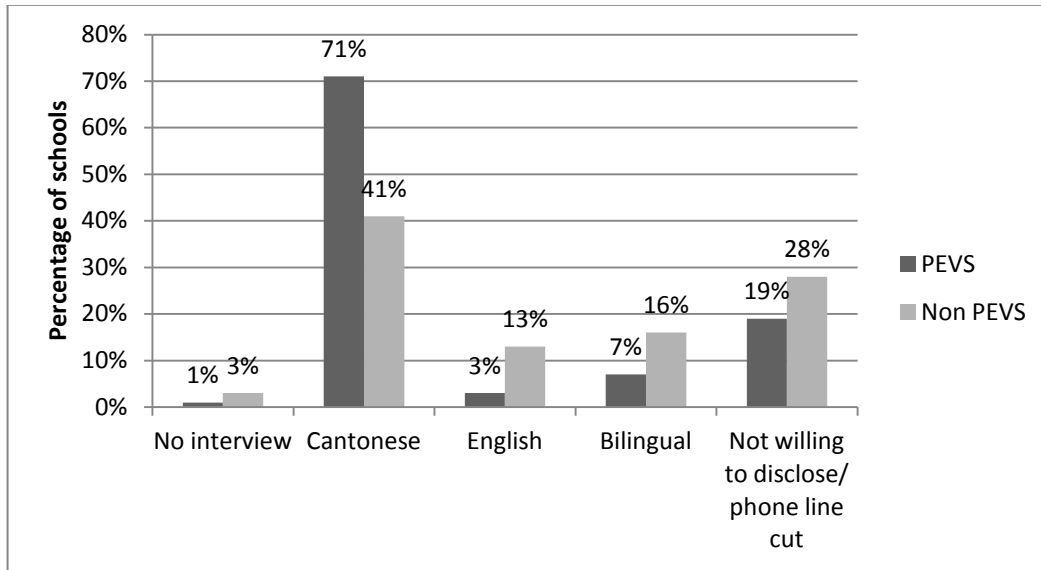


Table 6.2.2 Percentage of kindergartens by language used at interviews in PEVS and non-PEVS kindergartens

*Shailen (pseudonym) is a Nepalese father who applied to a kindergarten for his daughter. The interview process was in two parts: individual interview in English and group interview in Cantonese. Shailen was with his daughter during the entire interview process and he thought his daughter gave good responses at the individual interview. However his daughter did not get admitted and the kindergarten told him there was 'no vacancy'. Shailen is not satisfied with this reply as he applied early and her daughter did well in the English interview. He did not understand why the school refused to accept his daughter. He feels it is unfair to consider*

If the kindergartens mentioned they only used Cantonese as language of interview, we further asked if they would adjust the language of interview for ethnic minority students. Less than half (45%) of them were willing to modify their regulations, make elbow room for ethnic minority students or conduct interviews in English. They would not give out such information voluntarily; we had to probe further to request. Some remarks (Appendix B) made by kindergartens implied they expected these 3-year old ethnic minority children be able to communicate in Cantonese even though kindergarten is the first experience outside home and his/her entire family may not understand Chinese at all.

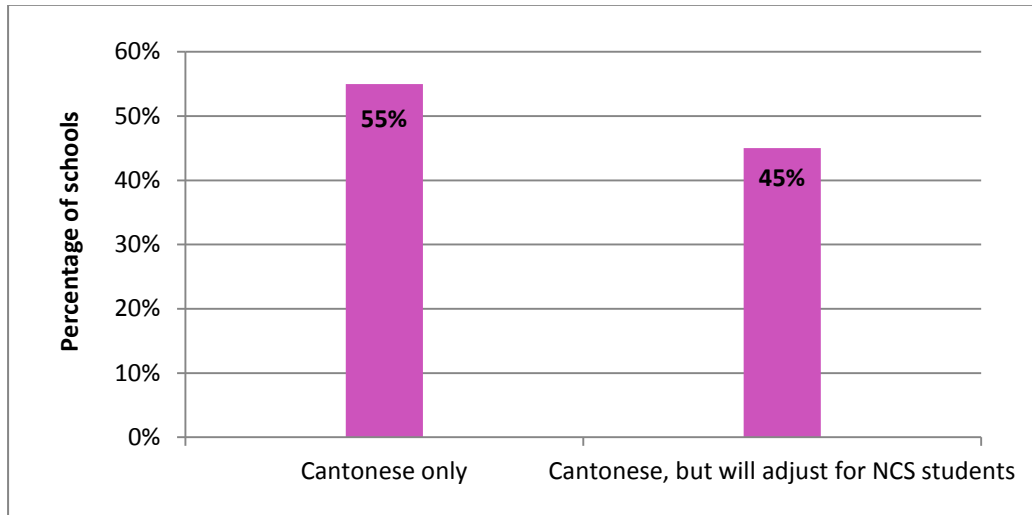


Table 6.2.3 Percentage of kindergartens by interview language adjustment in kindergartens which used Cantonese as the interview language

*Dilip (pseudonym) is a Nepalese father. His daughter was rejected at a kindergarten because she could not answer the questions in Cantonese at the interview. He did not understand how the school would expect a non-Chinese 3-year old child speak Cantonese. He said this blocked the opportunities for the many ethnic minority parents who wanted to send their children to mainstream kindergartens to learn Chinese.*

**6.3. Most kindergartens provided only Chinese notices or circulars, and most kindergartens were not willing to provide an alternative to parents who did not read Chinese.**

The survey reveals that around 60% kindergartens provided Chinese written school notices; only 18% provided bilingual notices. Ethnic minority families who do not read Chinese would miss out important information if school notices were in Chinese only.

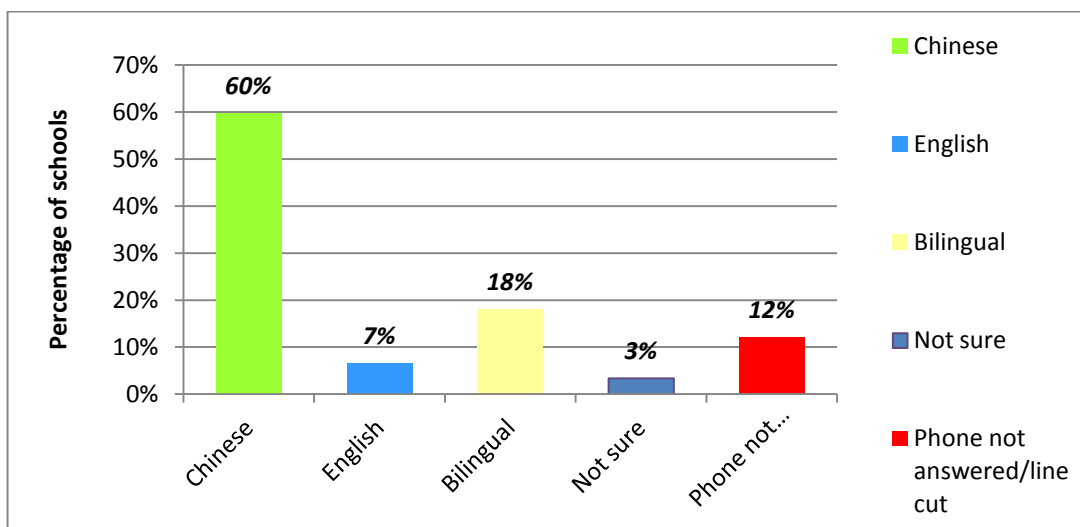


Table 6.3.1 Percentage of kindergartens by language used in school notices

PEVS kindergartens (76%) tended to provide Chinese notices; only 4% provided English notices and 8% provided bilingual important notices.

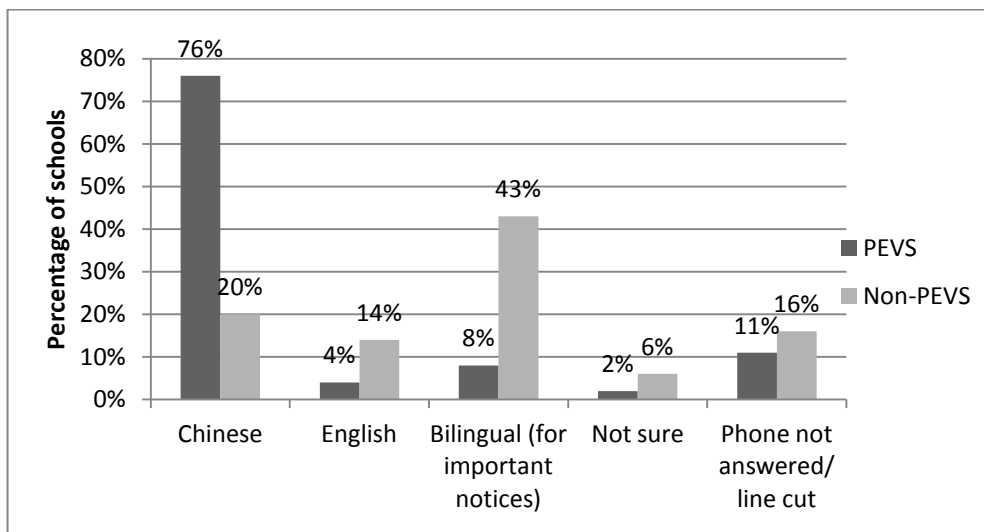


Table 6.3.2 Percentage of kindergartens by language used in school notices in PEVS and non-PEVS kindergartens.

The data reflect that those kindergartens that joined the PEVS were less likely to have language support for ethnic minority parents and children.

We proceeded to ask further those kindergartens which provided Chinese notices if they would adjust to ethnic minority families. 79% of them actually did not provide any form of translation or interpretation. Only 21% offered verbal translations. Ethnic minority parents who did not understand Chinese would have no other ways but to rely on support from friends, teachers, ethnic minority support centres or social service centres to understand the notices, causing inconveniences to ethnic minority families. Not only is seeking for translations time consuming; often, important information can be lost in translation.

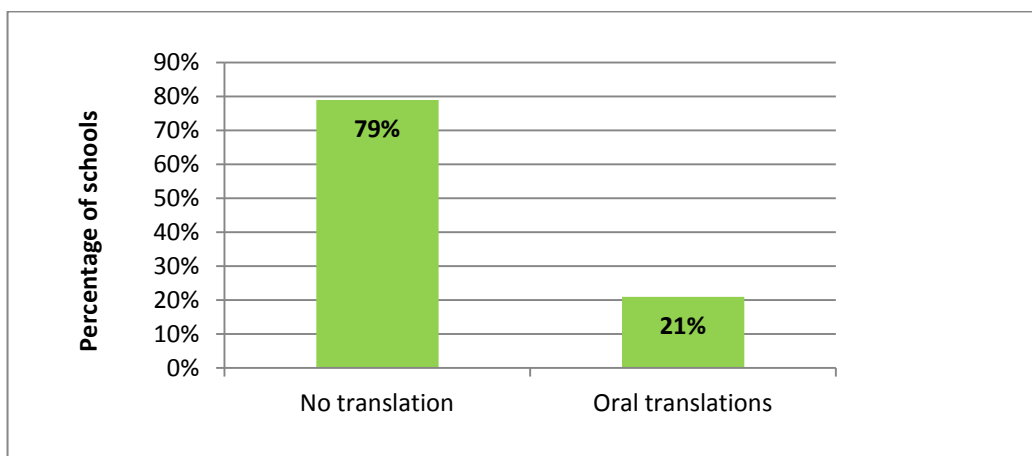


Table 6.3.3 Percentage of kindergartens by additional support provided by kindergartens which use Chinese in written notices

**6.4. There was negligible or inadequate school support for non-Chinese speaking students.**

Ethnic minority parents who do not know Chinese can provide limited or no assistance in Chinese learning for their children. Hence they often rely heavily on kindergartens to offer support to their children in learning Chinese. Among those kindergartens surveyed, 64% did not have additional support on Chinese learning for their ethnic minority students.

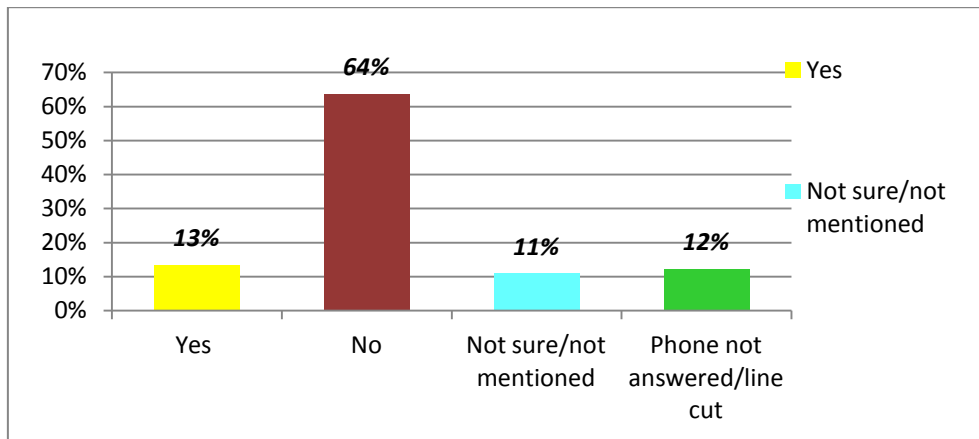


Table 6.4.1 Percentage of kindergartens by support for ethnic minority students

A mere 13% of surveyed kindergartens claimed they provided supplementary support. However, not all kindergartens that provided support were able to identify the kind of support given at school on Chinese learning for ethnic minority students:

Kindergartens that claimed they provided support for ethnic minority students	No. of kindergartens
Not able to explain what support they provided	18 (56%)
Support specified	14 (44%)

Table 6.4.2 Ability of kindergartens to identify support provided to ethnic minority students in learning Chinese

56% of those kindergartens that claimed to provide support could not specify any tangible support or effective ways to enhance Chinese learning of ethnic minority students. According to ethnic minority parents we interviewed, support given to ethnic minority students and parents is one of the important considering factors when choosing a kindergarten for their child. Such information is currently absent from the *Profile of Kindergartens*<sup>9</sup>. Without this information, parents expressed that it is difficult for them to

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.chsc.hk/kindergarten/en/>; Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergartens cum Child Care Centres; available in English and Chinese but information such as Curriculum Details and School Characteristics are mostly provided in Chinese only.

identify a kindergarten that better suit their child and thus cannot make an informed decision.

**6.5. Among those schools which already had ethnic minority students, most of them still did not have support or adjustment for their families.**

Among those schools which already admitted ethnic minority students, more than half (52%) still gave Chinese notices; and amongst them, 75% did not have any verbal or written translation for parents. 70% of them did not provide any additional support for non-Chinese students to learn Chinese. Even though these kindergartens admitted ethnic minority students, they did not feel obliged to provide any supplementary support to facilitate their Chinese learning.

Schools which already admitted ethnic minority students	No. of Kindergartens
<b>Language used in school notices</b>	
Chinese	53 (52%)
English	10 (10%)
Mainly Chinese notices but bilingual for important information	35 (34%)
Not specified	4 (4%)
Phone was not answer/ cut the line	0 (0%)
<b>Schools providing oral translation of school notice if parents cannot read Chinese</b>	
Yes	40 (75%)
No	13 (25%)
<b>Schools providing support for ethnic minority students</b>	
Yes	22 (21%)
No	71 (70%)
Not sure	9 (9%)

Table 6.5 Support and adjustment provided by kindergartens which had ethnic minority students

**6.6. Kindergartens in Central and Western district were overall more helpful than other kindergartens towards ethnic minorities.**

Kindergartens in Central and Western district seemed to have a more helpful attitude towards ethnic minority students. They were more willing to make adjustment for ethnic minority students during the interview process (95%) and more accommodating (47%) to provide verbal translation to parents if notices are in Chinese only; while in other districts, less than half of the kindergartens would adjust.

<b>Schools willing to adjust the language of the interview for ethnic minority students</b>					
	<u>Yuen Long</u>	<u>Central and Western</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Sham Shui Po</u>	<u>Yau Tsim Mong</u>
No	34 (87%)	1 (5%)	21 (57%)	21 (75%)	18 (69%)
Yes	5 (13%)	<b>18 (95%)</b>	16 (43%)	7 (25%)	8 (31%)

Table 6.6.1 Percentage of kindergartens by district willing to adjust the interview language

<b>Schools providing oral translation of school notices if parents cannot read Chinese</b>					
	<u>Yuen Long</u>	<u>Central and Western</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Sham Shui Po</u>	<u>Yau Tsim Mong</u>
No	38 (88%)	9 (53%)	30 (86%)	19 (73%)	17 (77%)
Yes	5 (12%)	<b>8 (47%)</b>	5 (14%)	7 (27%)	5 (23%)

Table 6.6.2 Percentage of kindergartens by district provided verbal translations if notices are in Chinese

In Central and Western district, all kindergartens that provided support to ethnic minority students were able to specify the kind of support available or given to ethnic minority students. Not all kindergartens in the other 4 districts could name the kind of support even though they claimed they provided support to ethnic minority students.

<b>Schools that claimed they provided support for ethnic minority students</b>					
	<u>Yuen Long</u>	<u>Central and Western</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Sham Shui Po</u>	<u>Yau Tsim Mong</u>
Cannot specify	3 (43%)	0 (0%)	4 (100%)	7 (70%)	4 (80%)
Can specify	4 (57%)	<b>6 (100%)</b>	0 (0%)	3 (30%)	1 (20%)

Table 6.6.3 Percentage of kindergartens by district that could specify support for ethnic minority students

Central and Western is a district which has a relatively high population of Caucasians (26%). From our findings, we deduce that kindergartens in Central and Western are more sensitive to ethnic minority's language limitations whereas the apathy displayed in the other 4 districts is palpable.

## 7. Discussions

- 7.1 From the survey, we observe that there are some misconceptions about ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Many ethnic minorities in Hong Kong are in fact born and grow up in Hong Kong; thus they are local residents no matter what their ethnicities, skin colors or nationalities are. However, many kindergartens considered them as non-local students. Some kindergartens did not accept ethnic minority students because they claimed to admit only “local” students. This categorization of “local” and ‘non-local’ is incorrect and a big hindrance to the integration of ethnic minority residents in the Hong Kong society. As a world-class international city, ethnic Chinese people must embrace ethnic minority residents as one of them and acknowledged them as Hong Kongers. Being identified as non-locals, ethnic minorities may face a loss of identity and cannot meaningfully contribute to the Hong Kong society.

*Ramdevi (pseudonym) was disappointed as she had spent a lot of effort in finding a good kindergarten for her child; but whichever kindergarten she went she received humiliating statements. Most kindergartens did not consider her as a Hong Kong citizen and told her that their schools were for only ‘local people’.*

*Chandra (pseudonym) is a Nepalese mother who faced a lot of humiliation while seeking admission for her daughter in mainstream kindergartens. Remarks such as ‘you do not have 3 stars in your ID card’; ‘you are not Chinese’; ‘we only accept children whose parents can speak Chinese’; ‘we are a “local” kindergarten so if you only know English you should find another school’ were not uncommon. Finally she put her daughter in a kindergarten with many ethnic minority students. She knows this is not conducive for her daughter to learn Chinese but she had no choice.*

- 7.2 Some kindergarten policies encouraged misunderstanding, isolation and racial prejudice. De facto racial segregation is found in some kindergartens, separating Chinese from ethnic minority children in the same grade. If ethnic minority students from the outset cannot benefit from a Chinese learning environment, their competitiveness towards better opportunities in further studies in Hong Kong would be limited by their Chinese capabilities.

*Bashir (pseudonym) applied to a mainstream kindergarten for his son as he wanted him to learn Chinese and interact with Chinese children. After his son was accepted, he was told that his son would be placed in a class of ethnic minorities in the afternoon session. The kindergarten informed him that they divided students by ethnic Chinese and other ethnicities. Children mingled with each other on special occasions like birthday parties or Christmas parties (which were held only a few times per school year). The principal informed Bashir that if students were not separated into different classes, the Chinese ability of ethnic minority students would hinder the learning of Chinese students. The principal added that Chinese parents might not like ethnic minority students in the same class with Chinese students. When Bashir asked why ethnic minority students are allocated to the afternoon session, the principal replied that 'it is common to allocate smarter kids to the AM session; and most ethnic minority parents prefer PM session because the school fee is cheaper'. Bashir did not agree with the comments and felt that principals stereotyped ethnic minorities.*

The fact that ethnic minority students made up more than 90% of the roll in some surveyed kindergartens also constitutes de facto racial segregation and may violate anti-discrimination laws. As mentioned above, de facto racial segregation is not conducive for ethnic minority children to learn Chinese and integrate into the predominantly Chinese-speaking society.

- 7.3 From the remarks, many kindergartens did not seem to be aware of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO). Refusing to provide a kindergarten application form and declining to accept ethnic minorities based on their race blatantly violates the RDO. Ethnic minority parents told us that they were discriminated by kindergartens based on their race. Some were dissuaded by kindergartens to apply to other schools or those already with ethnic minority admittances, which could further enhance the de facto racial segregation situation. Many parents felt humiliated during the application process because of comments made by kindergartens.

*A Pakistani father who speaks Cantonese and put his older children through secondary school system in Hong Kong went to a mainstream kindergarten to ask for an application form for his youngest child. The kindergarten refused to give him the form because he was Pakistani. He felt angry and hurt by this response.*



*Zainab (pseudonym) is a Pakistani mother whose daughter was not able to secure kindergarten admission even in December 2014. After EDB released the updated list of vacancies in February 2015, Zainab called up many kindergartens on the list to enquire. Most of them told her that classes were actually full and admissions ceased. Some kindergartens told her there were still vacancies and asked her to go the next day. But when she visited the school, the kindergartens told her that the class was full. Zainab felt she was possibly being discriminated because she is not Chinese.*

- 7.4 If kindergartens conduct interviews in Chinese only, it potentially constitutes indirect discrimination under subsection 4(1)(b) of the RDO because the proportion of ethnic minority who could comply with this requirement would be considerably smaller than the proportion of Chinese students who could comply with it.
- 7.5 From the survey, it is noted that PEVS kindergartens likely have less support for ethnic minority students in Chinese learning or support for parents during communications. As the government is currently discussing free kindergartens, it is important that the government pays attention to the difficulties faced and the needs of ethnic minority students to ensure support to ethnic minority students on Chinese learning.
- 7.6 Some kindergartens expressed the lack of resources in supporting ethnic minority students in schools, and hence evade the responsibility of effective communications with parents. They shared with our volunteer callers that they had to refuse applications from ethnic minority parents because they did not have enough support for ethnic minority students and could not communicate effectively with parents who did not know Chinese. When asked if they knew of the Education Bureau School-Based Professional Support Services or the University-School Support Programme<sup>10</sup> in the learning and teaching of Chinese for ethnic minority children in kindergartens, and interpretation services supported by the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents financed by the Home Affairs Department, the kindergartens were not aware.
- 7.7 The survey revealed that 23% was unwilling to disclose any information on the phone or disconnected the line in the middle of the conversation when asked about the support they provided to ethnic minority students in Chinese learning. Some said in order to receive information about the school, parents should attend open day/ briefing sessions or go to the schools directly to ask; some said they could only provide information after they handed in the application form. According to the

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<sup>10</sup> The 3-year programme financed by the Education Development Fund is collaborated with the Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research (CACLER) of the Hong Kong University since 2012/13 school-year.

EDB Circular Memorandum<sup>11</sup> on Admission Arrangements for Nursery Classes in Kindergartens, kindergartens must provide timely response to parents' enquiries about admission arrangements and handle related complaints.

*Ruksana (pseudonym), a Pakistani mother, went to get an application form in a kindergarten. She asked the receptionist about information on support provided by the kindergarten to ethnic minority children. The receptionist told her to first apply and obtain admittance; they will let her know about the support when the school year began.*

*Norisa (pseudonym), a Nepalese mother, wanted to put her second child in a kindergarten with more Chinese students. When Norisa walked into a neighborhood mainstream kindergarten for enquiries, the kindergarten just gave her an application form and told her that information would be provided once the form was submitted.*

Not only were kindergartens unwilling to disclose information, they had dismissive and unaccommodating attitudes towards enquires of ethnic minority admission. Their remarks and comments are captured in Appendix B.

*Anuradha (pseudonym), a Nepalese mother, applied to a neighborhood Chinese kindergarten by post in early October 2014. Until January 2015, she did not hear back from the kindergarten. When she called the kindergarten, she was informed that the kindergarten did not receive the application form; the kindergarten did not provide any follow up suggestions. Anuradha was frustrated because they did not let her know the next steps for her daughter's application.*

7.8 The reluctance of kindergartens to provide information to ethnic minority parents, the lack of information on support available for ethnic minority students and families in the *Profile of Kindergartens*, and the lack of access and friendliness to kindergarten information from the Education Bureau to ethnic minority families frequently constrained ethnic minority parents to make uninformed choices for their children's education. Without adequate information, it is difficult for parents to choose a kindergarten that is beneficial to their child's learning.

7.9 We observed that almost no surveyed kindergarten provided admission procedure and criteria in a transparent manner; although required by the Education Bureau of

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kindergarten-k1-admission-arrangements/EDBCM662014\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/kindergarten-k1-admission-arrangements/EDBCM662014_Eng.pdf); paragraph 7 School Based Admission Mechanism

Hong Kong. Most kindergartens did not have publicized and standard procedures/rules in admitting students, making the application process complicated, confusing and without transparency. Without standard procedures, it is difficult to guarantee equal opportunity for children seeking kindergarten admission.

*Bibi (pseudonym) is a Pakistani mother whose son was admitted to K1 in the middle of the school year. Her son was interviewed on the day she submitted the application form and within a week, her son was enrolled and started school after the fees were paid. On the other hand, there were other children who applied to the same kindergarten a few months before Bibi and they were still waiting to be interviewed. Parents would not know if kindergartens adhere to the admission procedures as admission mechanisms were not communicated to parents.*

*Tariq (pseudonym) is a Pakistani father who sought kindergarten (in October) for his 3 year-old son in the neighborhood he planned to move to. One kindergarten assured him a K1 place in the morning session when he enquired. The kindergarten staff told him to complete the application process and not to worry. Tariq completed the application and moved into the neighborhood. By then the kindergarten told him that there was no place in the morning session and allocated his son in the afternoon session. However afternoon session did not work for Tariq as both him and his wife work in the mornings and no one could take care of their son. Tariq was disappointed that the kindergarten suddenly changed their mind when they had promised him a place in the morning session during the application process.*

*Ghazala (pseudonym) is a Pakistani mother who tried to apply for K1 in the middle of the school year around the last week of February 2015. When she went to a kindergarten to enquire about vacancies, she was suggested to pay the application fee and school fee on the spot to keep the place and her child could start K1 the following month, although there were other parents on the waiting list. She was informed there was no need for a formal interview; meeting once with the principal was adequate. Ghazala found this application procedure not appropriate. She did not understand why there would be a waiting list if interviews were not necessary and places were guaranteed with full payment of school fees. Thus, in the end, she did not apply.*

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 Unison recommends the Education Bureau (EDB) monitor the ratio of ethnic minority students in all kindergartens to prevent de facto racial segregation. Understanding of the Race Discrimination Ordinance should be promoted among all kindergarten staff.
- 8.2 The EDB should establish guidelines on admission arrangements in kindergartens (PEVS and non-PEVS) to ensure non-discriminatory, open and just mechanisms, including admission procedures, admission criteria, and language of interviews. Moreover, the EDB should require all kindergartens to make public their admission arrangements e.g. in the *Profile of Kindergartens*, application forms, admission guidelines/leaflets, school websites to prevent misunderstanding and discriminatory practices.
- 8.3 Supplementary funding support should be provided to all kindergartens that admit ethnic minority students, including support on translation services, teaching ethnic minority students Chinese, or hiring ethnic minority teaching assistants, etc. Cultural sensitivity among all kindergarten staff including administrators and front line staff should be enhanced.
- 8.4 The EDB should ensure accessibility of information on kindergartens to ethnic minority families, including the *Profile of Kindergartens*, School Self-Evaluation (SSE)<sup>12</sup> and Quality Review Report<sup>13</sup> of kindergartens. Support available to ethnic minority families and supplementary measures to facilitate ethnic minority children learn Chinese in kindergartens should also be made accessible to parents.
- 8.5 The EDB has set up review teams to ‘*make professional judgment on overall school performance, so as to assess if the KG has met the prescribed standards*’. The teams should especially monitor the performance indicators in the SSE report, namely ‘Learning and Teaching’ and ‘Support to Children and School Culture’ to ensure effective measures are used to promote Chinese learning and integration for ethnic minority students.
- 8.6 Active outreach to the ethnic minority community should be conducted by the government, to build better rapport and improve information flow on education related issues, such as kindergarten admission arrangements and support for ethnic minority students in kindergartens. During the 2014/15 school year, there was only one talk<sup>14</sup> organized in Mong Kok in English with minority languages translation. This is much less compared to the number of parents’ talk conducted in Chinese<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> The School Self-Evaluation (SSE) Report of kindergartens is currently not available to the public.

<sup>13</sup> The Quality Review Report is available online in Chinese only.

<sup>14</sup> Schedule of EDB parents talks which are conducted in English - <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/events-services/parents-talks/index.html>

<sup>15</sup> Schedule of EDB parents talks which are conducted in Chinese - <http://www.edb.gov.hk/tc/student-parents/events-services/parents-talks/index.html>

- 8.7 The government should be transparent in its use of funds, including its support to academic institutions to promote effective Chinese learning in kindergartens. Accountability to stakeholders should be improved through public reporting.
- 8.8 The EDB should encourage parents to lodge complaints and report unequal treatment and opportunity in the education system to the EDB and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

## **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 The main objective of this survey was to find out the attitudes of kindergartens towards ethnic minority students and ethnic minority parents in admission procedures, accessibility of kindergarten information and the kind of support provided.
- 9.2 The findings indicated that the majority of ethnic minority students were congregated in a handful of schools. To tackle this de facto segregation, the Education Bureau should provide guidelines and ensure kindergartens adhere to their admission arrangement to provide equal opportunities of admission to ethnic minority students.
- 9.3 The language requirement generally for admission interview is Chinese in most kindergartens. This is not fair to ethnic minority students. Imposing ethnic minority students to speak Chinese as an admission requirement may constitute indirect discrimination. The Education Bureau should ask the kindergartens to review their admission procedures and adopt fair methods.
- 9.4 The survey also threw light on the inaccessibility of kindergarten information especially on support to ethnic minority parents and ethnic minority students. Many schools refused to divulge information on phone or the information on the support given by the schools was not clear. The English version of school profile booklet should be readily available for parents and it should include the measures that schools would take to assist the learning of non-Chinese speaking students.
- 9.5 Based on the various negative responses received by a number of surveyed kindergartens, we inferred that some kindergartens were insensitive towards ethnic minority families. Cultural sensitivity and training in understanding ethnic minorities should be implemented and enhanced for staff in kindergartens.
- 9.6 The Government has committed to facilitating non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students' early adaptation to the local education system and early integration into the community. NCS parents are encouraged to send their children to local kindergartens<sup>16</sup>. However, our research strongly suggests that ethnic minority children still face significant barriers to entering mainstream kindergarten and receiving support on learning Chinese in kindergartens. The Government should take concrete actions and measures to enable and ensure ethnic minority parents make real choices for their children to access quality kindergarten education.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/tc/student-parents/ncs-students/about-ncs-students/brief%20on%20support%20measures\\_english.pdf](http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/tc/student-parents/ncs-students/about-ncs-students/brief%20on%20support%20measures_english.pdf)



## **Appendix A**

### **List of questions for phone interviews**

1. Do you have non-Chinese speaking students in your school?
  - 1.1. If Yes, how many?
2. What language do you use for the admission interview?
  - 2.1. If the child cannot speak Cantonese do you use an alternative language?
3. What is the language used for written notices to parents?
  - 3.1. Do you have an alternative for the parents of non-Chinese speaking students?
4. Do you provide any support for non-Chinese speaking students to learn Chinese?
  - 4.1. If yes, could you specify what kind of support do you provide?
5. The volunteers conducting the survey were asked to note down the attitude of the staff /receptionist who answered the questions.
6. The volunteers were asked to write down any particularly striking remarks.



## Appendix B

### List of kindergarten response (both positive and negative)

Comments by kindergartens	English translation
「學生適應能力強，三個月左右已能理解簡單中文指令。」	‘Students adapted well, around 3 months they will be able to understand simple Chinese instruction.’
「你去搵其他學校啦。」	‘Go and find another school.’
「要介紹人陪同報名。」	‘You need to bring along your referee.’
「我地係本地學校黎架，要英文就去報國際學校啦。」	‘We are a local school, if you want English for your child, you should apply to the international kindergarten.’
「唔方便透露太多。」	‘We cannot disclose too much information.’
「建議去開放日/簡介會攞資料。」	‘We suggest the parents to come to our open day/ briefing session to get the information.’
「叫家長報名時才親自打電話來問。」	‘Ask parents to ask us personally when they apply.’
「唔會提供額外支援，靠家長自己處理。」	‘We will not provide any extra support. The parents need to handle it by themselves.’
「建議報讀同區其他學校 (及提供該幼稚園名稱)。」	‘You should try to other school in the same district (with school name).’
「佢地本身要自己識中文架，唔係會好難跟。」	‘The child should be able to understand Chinese, or else it will be difficult for him/her to catch up later.’
「父母都唔識中文會好難入。」	‘It will be hard for us to admit the child if both parents are not able to speak Chinese.’
「面識要識中文。」	‘The child needs to know Chinese for our admission interview.’
「我地既面試公平公正架，個個都要用中文答。」	‘Our interview is fair and equal. Everyone will be answering in Chinese.’
「內地小朋友都淨係用廣東話面試，點	‘Even children from mainland are using Cantonese in the interview, why would we allow non-Chinese speaking

解少數族裔要比佢用英文。」	children to reply in English.’
「學校是中文教學，所以不懂中文會很麻煩。」	‘We are a Chinese school, so it will be very troublesome if the applicant is non-Chinese speaking.’
「學校現時的少數族裔學生的父母均有一方懂得中文，所以他們溝通不成問題，亦沒有額外服務提供。」	‘Amongst our non-Chinese speaking students, at least one of their parents are able to speak Chinese. Therefore, we do not find that there is any communication problem and it is not necessary to have extra supportive service.’
「學校從來沒有少數族裔學生，因基督教背景，有崇拜等等，所以沒有少數族裔學生報讀。」	‘Our school has never admitted non-Chinese speaking students. Based on our Christian background, we have religious activity, and thus far there is no ethnic minority of non-Christian faith has been admitted.’
「已收的少數族裔學生均懂中文，所以沒有提供特別協助。」	‘All the ethnic minority students we admitted, thus far, know Chinese, so we are not providing any extra support.’
「學校收少數族裔有限額，每班一個，所以一年最多收兩個。」	‘Our school has limited quota for non-Chinese speaking students, one per each class and thus each year we can only have 2 non-Chinese speaking students at most.’
「學校的入學表格只得中文。」	‘We only have application forms in Chinese.’
「外籍學生會與本地學生分開上堂，確保學生能趕上進度。」	‘Students with foreign nationality attend classes separately from local students so that they can catch up easier albeit the difference in their mother tongue.’
「因為學校係中文學校，學校主要用中文，如家長不懂中文好難溝通。」	‘As we are a Chinese school, we mainly use Chinese as teaching and communication language. If the parents do not know Chinese, it will be hard to communicate with them.’
「學校從來沒有收過不懂中文的外籍學生，所以不太清楚情況。」	‘We never have any foreign nationality students who do not know Chinese, so we do not know the situation well.’
「學校有雙語班（中英文）及國際班（全英文），如家長及學生本身不懂中文不要報雙語班，因為學生會追不上進度。」	‘Our school has bilingual classes (Chinese and English) and international classes (All in English). If both the parents and students do not know Chinese, they should not apply for bilingual class as the students may have difficulty in catching up with the study.’
「學校對少數族裔的配套不足，即使報	‘We do not have enough resources for the non-Chinese speaking students. Even if they apply, we are not able to

<p>名都唔敢收，建議揀配套較好之幼稚園，而老師的英文水平亦未足以準確地向家長解釋學生的學習進度。」</p>	<p>take them. It is better for them to choose some other kindergartens that have better support and resources. Furthermore, our teachers are not able to communicate with the parents about their child's learning status in school in English articulately.'</p>
<p>「不願意透露資料，表示想知更多資料可先報名，之後會再解答。」</p>	<p>'We do not want to disclose the information, if you want to know more you can first apply, and we will answer you Apply first and we will answer your questions later.'</p>

## Appendix C- Survey Results

Table C1 - Response from kindergartens in 5 districts, including both PEVS and non-PEVS

Survey questions asked to the kindergarten	Kindergarten response	Total no. of KG:239	%
1. Do you have ethnic minority in your school? If yes, how many?	Many	19	8%
	Few	83	35%
	none	100	42%
	not willing to disclose	10	4%
	ph not answered/ cut the line	27	11%
2. What language do you use for admission interview?	No interview	3	1%
	Cantonese	149	62%
	English	14	6%
	both	23	10%
	not willing to disclose	21	9%
	ph not ans/cut the line	29	12%
If the child cannot speak Cantonese do you use an alternative language for eg Eng?	Total no. of KG which answered 'Cantonese' in Q.2	149	
	Cantonese	82	55%
	Cantonese, but makes adjustment for EM	67	45%
3. What is the language used for written notice to parents?	Chinese	143	60%
	English	16	7%
	Bilingual	43	18%
	not sure	8	3%
	ph not ans/cut the line	29	12%
Do you have any alternative for the parents of ethnic minority?	Total no. of KG which answered 'Chinese' in Q.3	143	
	Chinese- no translations	113	79%
	Chinese-oral translations	30	21%
4. Do you provide any support for ethnic minority to learn Chinese?	Yes	32	13%
	No	152	64%
	not sure/not mentioned	26	11%
	ph not ans/cut the line	29	12%
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Yes' in Q.4	32	
If Yes, could you specify what kind of support do you provide?	Support not specified	18	56%
	support specified	14	44%
5. The volunteer/staff conducting the survey was asked to note down the attitude of the staff/receptionist who attended the ph call.	Pleasant	124	52%
	Unpleasant attitude	59	25%
	Regular & Routine	38	16%
	ph not answered	18	8%

Table C2 - Response of kindergarten which have ethnic minority students (Extract from the main findings)

Survey questions asked to the kindergarten	Kindergarten response	Total no. of KG:102	%
2. What language do you use for admission interview?	No interview	1	1%
	Cantonese	68	67%
	English	8	8%
	both	17	16%
	not willing to disclose	8	8%
	ph not ans/cut the line	0	0%
If the child cannot speak Cantonese do you use an alternative language for eg Eng?	Total no. of KG which answered 'Cantonese' in Q.2	68	
	Cantonese	34	50%
	Cantonese, but makes adjustment for EM	34	50%
3. What is the language used for written notice to parents?	Chinese	53	52%
	English	10	10%
	Bilingual	35	34%
	not sure	4	4%
	ph not ans/cut the line	0	0%
Do you have any alternative for the parents of ethnic minority?	Total no. of KG which answered 'Chinese' in Q.3	53	
	Chinese- no translations	40	75%
	Chinese-oral translations	13	25%
4. Do you provide any support for ethnic minority to learn Chinese?	Yes	22	21%
	No	71	70%
	not sure/not mentioned	9	9%
	ph not ans/cut the line	0	0%
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Yes' in Q.4	22	
If Yes, could you specify what kind of support do you provide?	Support not specified	12	55%
	support specified	10	45%
5. The volunteer/staff conducting the survey was asked to note down the attitude of the staff/receptionist who attended the ph call.	Pleasant	70	68%
	Unpleasant attitude	19	19%
	Regular & Routine	13	13%
	ph not answered	0	0%

Table C3 - Comparison between PEVS and non-PEVS kindergartens

Survey questions asked to the kindergarten	Kindergarten response	PEVS: Total no. 170	%	Non-PEVS Total no. 69	%
1. Do you have ethnic minority in your school? If yes, how many?	Many	9	5%	10	14%
	Few	58	34%	25	36%
	none	81	48%	19	28%
	not willing to disclose	6	4%	4	6%
	ph not answered/ cut the line	16	9%	11	16%
2. What language do you use for admission interview?	No interview	1	1%	2	3%
	Cantonese	121	71%	28	41%
	English	5	3%	9	13%
	both	12	7%	11	16%
	not willing to disclose	13	8%	8	12%
	ph not ans/cut the line	18	11%	11	16%
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Cantonese' in Q.2	121		28	
If the child cannot speak Cantonese do you use an alternative language for eg Eng?	Cantonese	68	56%	14	50%
	Cantonese, but makes adjustment for EM	53	44%	14	50%
3. What is the language used for written notice to parents?	Chinese	129	76%	14	20%
	English	6	4%	10	14%
	Bilingual	13	8%	30	43%
	not sure	4	2%	4	6%
	ph not ans/cut the line	18	11%	11	16%
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Chinese' in Q.3	129		14	
Do you have any alternative for the parents of ethnic minority?	Chinese- no translations	100	78%	13	93%
	Chinese-oral translations	29	22%	1	7%
4. Do you provide any support for ethnic minority to learn Chinese?	Yes	22	13%	10	14%
	No	110	65%	42	61%
	not sure/not mentioned	20	12%	6	9%
	ph not ans/cut the line	18	11%	11	16%
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Yes' in Q.4	22		10	
If Yes, could you specify what kind of support do you provide?	Support not specified	13	59%	5	50%
	support specified	9	41%	5	50%
5. The volunteer/staff conducting the survey was asked to note down the attitude of the staff/receptionist who attended the ph call.	Pleasant	18	11%	38	55%
	Unpleasant attitude	44	26%	15	22%
	Regular & Routine	32	19%	6	9%
	ph not answered	8	5%	10	14%

Table C4 - Comparison amongst the five districts (Yuen Long, Central and western, North, Sham Shui Po, and Yau Tsim Mong district), including PEVS and non-PEVS

Survey questions asked to the kindergarten	Kindergarten response	71	Yuen Long	39	Central & Western	47	North	44	SSP	38	YTM
1. Do you have ethnic minority in your school? If yes, how many?	Many	5	7%	5	13%	0	0%	1	2%	8	21%
	Few	28	39%	11	28%	13	28%	12	27%	19	50%
	none	28	39%	14	36%	30	64%	18	41%	10	26%
	not willing to disclose	2	3%	0	0%	1	2%	6	14%	1	3%
	ph not answered/ cut the line	8	11%	9	23%	3	6%	7	16%	0	0%
2. What language do you use for admission interview?	No interview	0	0%	2	5%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%
	Cantonese	39	55%	19	49%	37	79%	28	64%	26	68%
	English	0	0%	7	18%	1	2%	5	11%	1	3%
	both	8	11%	1	3%	4	9%	1	2%	9	24%
	not willing to disclose	16	23%	1	3%	1	2%	2	5%	1	3%
ph not ans/cut the line	8	11%	9	23%	4	9%	7	16%	1	3%	
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Cantonese' in Q.2	39		19		37		28		26	
If the child cannot speak Cantonese do you use an alternative language for eg Eng?	Cantonese	34	87%	1	5%	21	57%	21	75%	18	69%
	Cantonese, but makes adjustment for EM	5	13%	18	95%	16	43%	7	25%	8	31%
3. What is the language used for written notice to parents?	Chinese	43	61%	17	44%	35	74%	26	59%	22	58%
	English	1	1%	8	21%	0	0%	6	14%	1	3%
	Bilingual	17	24%	4	10%	8	17%	3	7%	11	29%
	not sure	2	3%	1	3%	0	0%	2	5%	3	8%
	ph not ans/cut the line	8	11%	9	23%	4	9%	7	16%	1	3%

	Total no. of KG which answered 'Chinese' in Q.3	43		17		35		26		22	
Do you have any alternative for the parents of ethnic minority?	Chinese- no translations	38	88%	9	53%	30	86%	19	73%	17	77%
	Chinese-oral translations	5	12%	8	47%	5	14%	7	27%	5	23%
4. Do you provide any support for ethnic minority to learn Chinese?	Yes	7	10%	6	15%	4	9%	10	23%	5	13%
	No	49	69%	23	59%	28	60%	26	59%	26	68%
	not sure/not mentioned	7	10%	1	3%	11	23%	1	2%	6	16%
	ph not ans/cut the line	8	11%	9	23%	4	9%	7	16%	1	3%
	Total no. of KG which answered 'Yes' in Q.4	7		6		4		10		5	
If Yes, could you specify what kind of support do you provide?	Support not specified	3	43%	0	0%	4	100%	7	70%	4	80%
	support specified	4	57%	6	100%	0	0%	3	30%	1	20%
5. The volunteer/staff conducting the survey was asked to note down the attitude of the staff/receptionist who attended the ph call.	Pleasant	26	37%	23	59%	19	40%	26	59%	30	79%
	Unpleasant attitude	20	28%	9	23%	10	21%	12	27%	8	21%
	Regular & Routine	21	30%	0	0%	16	34%	1	2%	0	0%
	ph not answered	4	6%	7	18%	2	4%	5	11%	0	0%