



**Hong Kong Unison Submission to the
Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minority on
use of the support service centres for ethnic minorities**

Purpose

Hong Kong Unison ('Unison') is a local non-governmental organization that serves ethnic minority residents in Hong Kong. We aim at eliminating all forms of racial discrimination in Hong Kong through policy advocacy. This paper aims to share our views on the support service centres for ethnic minority based on our observations and our daily contact with service user.

Support service centres for ethnic minorities

Demands for tutorial services reflects the deficiency of the mainstream education system

1. Ethnic minority parents who do not know Chinese often find it extremely difficult to assist in children's homework, especially if their child is studying in a mainstream Chinese school which all subjects are taught in Cantonese. Therefore, the demand for homework tutorial classes is always high in different social centres.
2. Parents have been reporting to us that the quality of the tutorial classes provided by support centres is disappointing. Usually the teacher to student ratio is high with a big class size, and students with different standards are put in the same class thus the attention on each student is very limited. Most of the time students went home with unfinished homework, or some tutors just give out the answers without teaching the students due to limited time.
3. Tutorials provided by NGOs are just remedial programmes and it cannot address structural problems within the education system. Without a proper Chinese-as-a-second-language curriculum which enable non-Chinese speaking students to attain the local Chinese levels in suitable learning ways, students' Chinese cannot be improved effectively and language barrier will still hinders them from integrating into the mainstream society.

Service mainstreaming

4. Currently, most of the integration mass programmes like carnivals includes cultural understanding elements like henna drawing, food tasting, cultural dance performance etc., however, this kind of cultural event can only increase the knowledge of the public on 'ethnic minority cultures' and for entertainment purpose, and it is not an effective way to achieve integration unless people from different ethnic backgrounds have a chance to interact.



5. Moreover, with the growing population of ethnic minority communities in different districts, ethnic minority as local residents are also entitled to the enjoyment of social service provided by other NGOs, and are not limited to the specific centres. Many of the services provided by the NGOs under the SWD are overlapping with the services which HAD support centres are providing. To better serve the ethnic minority community as a whole and for better integration purpose, the government should adopt the service mainstreaming approach and encourage all NGOs in Hong Kong to respond to the needs of ethnic minority when they plan their service, instead of relying on the 6 support service centres and the 2 sub-centres for ethnic minority.

The urge to include cultural sensitivity training and ethnic minority related topics for social worker programme

6. As shared by the service users of these support centres, the turnover rate of the staffs of these centres is very high. Moreover, most of the time the Chinese staffs, including the social workers, do not have experience in any ethnic minority service before working in these centres.
7. Currently, there is no standardised course which touch on the topic of ethnic minority community among different social work programmes. Unlike other service fields, even if social work students do not choose to work in the 'ethnic minority field', they may still have to serve the ethnic minority community in other service streams since they are also local residents who are ID card holders and are entitled to use different social services in Hong Kong. Hence, the registered social workers are not prepared to serve the ethnic minority community if the courses in social work programme do not include the topic of ethnic minorities in their core subjects.

HAD should proactively collect data relating to support / needs of EM service users

8. Since the main service target of these HAD support service centres are local ethnic minority residents, they should be at the best position to closely monitor the situation of ethnic minority in HK, for example, with regard to the difficulties they face in different aspects of life, the rejection or discrimination which the community may face in their daily life such as flat rental, opening bank account, failure to catch up with their study in general due to medium of instruction etc. These are the important references and background information as these centers may be the first contact points for EM seeking support. Such information is crucial for the government and the law makers when deciding policies related to ethnic minorities, and the



collected data should be shared with LegCo and concerned government department regularly to enhance government support and services to ethnic minority community.

9. However, according to past experience in the legislative council meetings or public hearings, the attendance of support centres as deputations was very low, and they seldom have submissions to share their observations.
10. These support centres commissioned by HAD should regularly organize group meetings and consultations on new measures/ policies related to ethnic minority community, and encouraging ethnic minority participants to attend public hearings, so that the situation and the thoughts of ethnic minorities can be heard.

Questions

To facilitate an effective discussion, we hope the government can provide the following information:

11. Interpretation service provided by HAD support centre (CHEER Centre)

11.1 The frequency of the use of different forms of interpretation service by several major government departments, schools sectors, public in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17

(a) 2014/15, (b) 2015/16 and (c) 2016/17

	Telephone interpretation	On-site (Escort) Interpretation Service	Simultaneous Interpretation Service	Translation Service	On-sight Interpretation Service	Use of webcam in in interpretation
	No. of use of interpretation service					
Education Bureau						
Department of Health						
Hospital Authority						
Housing department						
Leisure and Cultural Services Department						
Legal Aid departments						
Labour department						
Social welfare department						
Hong Kong Police Force						
Immigration Department						
Schools and institutions						
Private Hospitals and clinics						
Employers						
General Public						



11.2 Can the government list out the number of interpretation service provided with different language?

No. of interpretation service provided	Hindi	Nepali	Punjabi	Urdu	Bahasa Indonesia	Tagalog	Thai
2014/15							
2015/16							
2016/17							

11.3 With the growing number of ethnic minority who possess Cantonese skills, does the government has any plan to hire suitable candidates and expand the interpretation service from Cantonese to the current minority languages and vice versa? If yes, what is the timetable? If no, why?

12. Tutorial service

Will the government provide the details of tutorial services provided by support service centres with the information listed in the following table:

Name of support service centres	No. of tutorials in total	No. of classes in total	No. of classes for public enrollment	No. of classes for specific primary school	No. of classes for specific secondary school	No. of enrollment	No. of attendance	No. of teachers	No. of helpers	Teacher to student ratio