

## Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Issues relating to ethnic minority women (including poverty and employment assistance)

### **1. Language as a barrier while seeking employment**

Language is one of the major factors that acts as a barrier in seeking job opportunities for most of the ethnic minorities living in Hong Kong. Despite holding certain professional attributes as well as academic qualifications, our ethnic minorities women are often said to be “not eligible” for the designated job. For example, we have ethnic minorities women in the community with health sciences background, as well as many young women willing to join the healthcare industry too, but are discouraged because of lack of language.

### **2. Seeking help for health**

Language and cultural barrier are the major problems which is common to most of our ethnic minority women in seeking help for health. Although there are medical interpreters available in hospitals in Hong Kong, but medical interpreters unable to work as cultural broker, it is sad that healthcare professionals do not understand the cultural needs while seeking help for health. Likewise, there are also not enough health promotion materials, health-related information, as well as health screening programmes available in linguistically and culturally suitable designed for our ethnic minorities women.

### **3. Training ethnic minorities women for employment**

In comparison to women from the mainstream community, socio-culturally most of our ethnic minorities women are bound to support family as a bread maker, however there are also women who aspire to be breadwinners. In addition, the job training available for these women are mostly limited to food & beverage industry, housekeeping and beauty care sectors. Furthermore, with the provision and attainment of proper trainings, our ethnic minorities women can provide support to their families as well as the whole Hong Kong community. For example, we at Health connection aim to bridge ethnic minorities and healthcare professionals to promote and protect health, which will eventually help to reduce healthcare burden of Hong Kong. However more collaboration is needed and support from the government together with such social innovation.

#### **4. Employment & on-the-job training opportunities in public healthcare workforce**

While there is an increase demand in healthcare workforce in public healthcare sector, there are many ethnic minorities women in the community who already have achieved education in health sciences, but despite their skills and knowledge, They are struggling and unable to get the opportunity to serve in the public healthcare system. Moreover, other ethnic minorities women can be trained for serving in the health sector. Providing employment and on-the-job training cannot only help to alleviate poverty of ethnic minorities but also empower women as well as to fulfill the demand of healthcare workforce in public healthcare sector.

#### **5. Teaching entrepreneurial skills**

While focusing mostly on the language skill and provision of financial assistance, it would also be better, if ethnic minority women are provided with entrepreneurial skills, by which they can learn on how to generate and manage income. It will be great if government can initiate to teach or provide subsidize courses on social business to ethnic minorities women where they will not only be able to do business for their personal economic well-being, but also can contribute something for the betterment of Hong Kong society!