



For discussion on 2 November, 2018

**Hong Kong Unison's Submission to the Panel on Education  
in response to the Policy Address 2018  
(on Education Support to Ethnic Minority Students)**

**Background**

1. The government has announced in its Policy Address 2018 some new measures concerning ethnic minorities in areas of employment and public services; however, there is not much progress for ethnic minorities' education, which impacts greatly on their social integration and mobility. This submission is Unison's response to the education policies related to the learning and teaching of ethnic minority students, as mentioned in the Policy Address 2018.

**Chinese learning of NCS students**

2. The Education Bureau (EDB) will continue to use the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework ("Learning Framework") to support non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students' Chinese learning (para 244.2). Unison is concerned about the **transparency and effectiveness of the support and funding**. \$667 million had been spent from 2014/15 to 2016/17 school year. The EDB is supposed to review the Learning Framework to enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students three years after its implementation in 2014, however Unison is informed that they are still in the process of analyzing data and there is no information on when the review findings will be shared with the public. *The EDB should announce the review results of the Learning Framework and the Evaluation Framework within 2018.*

3. The Policy Address mentioned that the EDB would continue commissioning post-secondary institutions to provide school-based support services for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students; the school-based curriculum, learning and teaching as well as assessment arrangements will also be adapted with reference to the Learning Framework (para 244.2). However, currently most adapted **school-based curricula** are developed to teach a **low level of Chinese**; ethnic minorities born and raised in Hong Kong could only attain a level of Chinese equivalent to mainstream Primary Two upon Form Six graduation. *The government should immediately implement a Chinese as Second Language*



*Policy with stage learning objectives coupled with suitable teaching methods to teach students whose mother tongue is not Chinese so that their Chinese ability can reach similar levels as their Chinese peers.*

#### **Early integration for ethnic minority children**

4. The Policy Address mentioned that starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB will provide **subsidies for kindergartens** joining the Free Kindergarten Education Scheme based on the number of NCS students admitted (para 244.2). But apart from increasing funding for schools, the EDB should also *periodically report on the details of such additional subsidies and their effectiveness to Chinese learning of NCS students.*

5. The EDB should closely monitor kindergartens' compliance with the 'Kindergarten Administration Guidelines' to facilitate the teaching and learning of ethnic minority children. The *English version* of the Guidelines should be made available no later than December 2018 so that parents who cannot read Chinese are aware of the new measures.

6. To ensure fair admission and early integration of ethnic minority children, EDB should regularly monitor kindergartens' compliance to "Guidelines on Kindergarten Admission Arrangements' and set up a policy requiring all kindergartens to *collect data on admissions throughout application and selection procedures.* The data should be disaggregated by ethnicity, sex, district, home language, mode of interpretation services during interviews, etc.

7. Ethnic minority children in mainstream kindergartens will become a norm. The government should make pre-service training and professional development mandatory for kindergarten teachers to develop their skills to cater to the diverse needs of NCS children. Such training should be provided in early childhood education programmes as well as for in-service teachers. Regarding the EDB training targets of kindergartens with NCS grants, the government should review the content, length and format of the current Basic Course and its effectiveness to see if it fully prepares teachers to teach NCS students in the classroom.

#### **Medium of instruction in Chinese and other subjects**

8. The Policy Address points out that the EDB will provide additional resources to facilitate NCS students' learning of **Chinese History** in secondary schools (para 244.2). In fact, under the Mother Tongue Policy, most NCS students in mainstream primary and secondary



schools have to learn other subjects such as Mathematics and Liberal Studies in Chinese, they may even have to use Putonghua, a language foreign to them, to learn Chinese Language. The EDB should consider *providing similar or equivalent support to schools* on other subjects so that NCS students in mainstream education system can manage their studies.

### **Professional ladder for teachers with specialised training**

9. In the Chief Executive's election manifesto, Mrs. Carrie Lam said she would consider *"establishing a professional ladder for primary and secondary school teachers, recognising teachers with expertise in certain subjects, and encouraging teachers to acquire specialised skills in teaching Chinese as a second language* and students with special educational needs (SEN), etc." To prepare mainstream teachers work with NCS students and improve teaching effectiveness, the EDB should determine qualifications, develop a systematic teacher professional development framework, and establish consistent and specific guidelines on pre-service teacher education and in-service training to address the needs of NCS students. The EDB should consider incremental credit for relevant qualifications.

### **Conclusion**

10. Unison hopes the recommendations mentioned above will be considered to improve the education situation of ethnic minority students.