


全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●  
USINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINE  
●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服  
OUR BUSINESS ●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR B  
務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您  
S SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERV  
您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會  
CIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL S



LC Paper No. CB(2)797/05-06(01)

HONG KONG CHRISTIAN SERVICE

## Opinion on Education for children of ethnic minority

(For the meeting of Panel on Education of the Legislative Council on 9 Jan 2006)

Education is vital to the development of our children regardless of race. As one of the agencies dedicated to the welfare of ethnic minority (EM) in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Christian Service has the following views on the education for children of EM. We believe that ***recognizing their language difficulty*** is most fundamentally important in helping their learning and adjustment in Hong Kong.

### 1. **Primary Education for EM Students**

Language barrier is always one of the main barriers that EM children come across in learning and adjustment. They experience difficulties in adapting to the Chinese learning environment and also relating with their local Chinese peers. Most parents cannot assist their children in school work because they know neither English nor Chinese. In the school year of 2004, EM students have been allocated to mainstream (Chinese medium) schools for the first time. It is really a good starting point for EM to integrate into our Hong Kong society. In the last academic year, the Home Affairs Bureau sponsored our agency, Hong Kong Christian Service, to run a pioneer project called “Project Connection” for EM students who had been admitted in mainstream schools. The Project provided after-school tutorial services and support for students and their parents in order to enhance their Chinese learning ability.

A survey had been conducted to examine the learning situation of the students and also collect the parents’ feedback. There were 61 students and 45 parents interviewed in the survey. According to the findings, with the help from this after-school support service, there was a gradual progress in Chinese language ability of the students. They were more ready to communicate and make friend with local Chinese kids. Besides, the parents also agreed that their kids had improvement in both academic and social performance. **100% parents agreed that learning both Chinese and English in early childhood could make their kids to integrate into Hong Kong society easily**, such as working, living and studying. The survey also illustrated that **95% of parents knew very little about Hong Kong education system**. They had no idea on how to choose secondary school, and only had the concept of “local



香港基督教服務處

HONG KONG CHRISTIAN SERVICE

school” but did not know the real differences among subsidized school and private school.

From our Project experience, the new placement allocation arrangement can facilitate EM children to have equal opportunity of study in mainstream schools. We can see that the earlier the EM children can be exposed to the Chinese learning environment, the earlier and better integration with the society can be facilitated. Yet not all the parents recognize this advantage. Many of the parents are still lacking information and feel uncertain in choosing the local kindergartens and CMI schools. Hence, *the advantages of choosing the local kindergartens and CMI schools can be further promoted by the government.* The government should also *update the parents about the information of Hong Kong education system and policy in their languages* via seminars and information pamphlets.

Learning a new language for children takes time and needs support. Also many of the EM parents do not know Chinese and even English. For those who are for the first time allocated to the CMI schools, they need encouragement and support in their learning. The government and the schools should design some *tailor made curriculum* rather than only use traditional teaching method for EM children in order to increase their interest and motivation in learning Chinese. In addition, the *after-school support service* should be continued to help the EM children to adjust to school life.

Teaching EM children also requires special skills and knowledge. *In-service training should be provided to teachers* in understanding more about the characteristics of EM. In the long run, the Hong Kong Institute of Education should also consider to include trainings on the cultural characteristics and needs of EM as part of its the curriculum so as to encourage more teachers to be ready in teaching EM children.

Teaching EM children also requires additional resources in helping the students' learning. Additional resources are needed in helping the schools in making tailor made curriculum for the students, additional manpower in communicating and translating school information to their parents and rendering adjustment support to the EM students and parents. Hence, the government should provide *additional resources* to schools in admitting EM students.



香港基督教服務處

HONG KONG CHRISTIAN SERVICE

## 2. Secondary Education for EM Students

Most secondary EM students feel very difficult to get further study after finishing Form 5 as many matriculation courses in subsidized schools requires the passing result in Chinese subject. Limited choices are available for EM students in continuing their study. Some of them have to pay several thousand dollars a month for Form 6, diploma or certificate course run by private institution. Obviously, it is out of the affordability of most deprived EM families.

From many of our youth participants in Project SAY-PRO which is a Youth Pre-employment Training Scheme for South Asians funded by Youth Sustainable Development and Engagement Fund in May 2005, it is not easy for the EM young people to find jobs in the labor market due to language barrier, lack of qualifications, lack of information in finding jobs and lack of knowledge and skills in work. Many of them become disengaged both from school and work. They are prone to negative peer influence, drug temptation and go astray, creating social problems. Hence the government ***should review the existing education policy*** and see whether there is enough and equal chance for EM students to get further study. From the perspective of resources, it can save much resource in preventing rather than remediating the problem.

In addition, according to the newly proposed “3+3+4” academic system, Chinese language is a compulsory subject in senior secondary education. Despite it is a good occasion for EM students to learn Chinese, the government should provide enough support to both schools and students. Just as primary schools, a ***tailor make curriculum*** should be designed for EM students and enough ***in-service training*** must be provided for teachers in secondary schools. Besides, students are required to develop other learning experience under the new “3+3+4” academic system. As many of deprived families, it is really difficult for those deprived EM students to afford additional learning cost. The government should provide ***extra financial support*** for them to meet the new system requirement. Besides, many parents are greatly in lack of information and understanding on the Education Reform. ***Information on the new academic system has to be further promoted*** through publishing pamphlets and organizing briefing sessions in their languages for parents.

全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●  
USINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINE  
●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服  
OUR BUSINESS ●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR B  
務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您  
S SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERV  
您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會服務全為您●社會  
CIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL SERVICE IS OUR BUSINESS●SOCIAL S

## HONG KONG CHRISTIAN SERVICE

### 3. Tertiary Education for EM Students

In principle, EM students have equal opportunity to access to higher education if they fulfill the entrance requirements of the tertiary institutions. Meanwhile, the Government's general policy assures that no qualified students are denied access to tertiary education due to a lack of financial means. After finishing secondary education, EM students are the same as other Chinese candidates. They can also admit to a wide range of undergraduate courses run by local universities, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), and etc.

But in reality, the existing practice is not the same as the policy stated. From many of our youth in different projects, it is impossible for them to enroll the local tertiary institutions as the minimum admission requirements of some local universities still request applicants to get a pass in their Chinese subject. Most of the EM students are not studying in mainstream schools and they have not learnt Chinese before. Even though some EMI schools provide Chinese language lessons to their EM students, the syllabus always lag behind those in the mainstream schools due to the learning difficulties of the students. Thus, many of them cannot fulfill the entrance requirement of the university. Though some of the universities or institutions may use their discretion in waiving the language requirement for individual outstanding EM candidates, it is not a usual practice nor established policy of the university. Therefore, we highly recommend that all local universities and tertiary institutions should ***relax the entrance requirement in Chinese language for EM students.***

From many of the youth participants, Chinese is still the main medium of instruction in most of the courses offered by the tertiary institutions. The EM students not only encounter difficulties in learning but also have limited choices in choosing their interested courses and finally limit their career development as well. Hence, the tertiary institutions should offer a ***wide scope of courses*** for EM students to choose and teachers should also use ***English as a medium of instruction*** when there are EM students admitted in the courses.

### 4. Conclusion

Though many EM children are still encountering difficulties in learning, we believe that they can integrate into our society with the support of the government, educational and social service sectors.