

HOME AFFAIRS BUREAU – RACE RELATIONS UNIT

The Race Relations Unit was set up in 2002 under the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), primarily to render secretarial support to the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony. Over the years, it has grown in size and functions, and is now running a host of service to facilitate the social integration of settled and newly arrived ethnic minorities, and to promote racial harmony in Hong Kong.

Public education programmes

Currently, the Unit's work in this area comprises –

- (a) **Equal Opportunities (Race) Funding Scheme (since 1998-99):** an annual programme to encourage community-based initiatives to promote awareness and to encourage contact between the minorities and the majority population;
- (b) **Hotline for Complaints and Enquiries (since 1998):** to promote this service, the Unit has published a guide to its procedures in Chinese, English, Thai, Indonesian, Nepali and Urdu. The guide explains how to make a complaint, describes the investigation process, and provides answers to frequently asked questions;
- (c) **School Talks (since 2002):** the Unit gives talks to schools, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government departments. The talks include briefing on the concept of racial discrimination, examples of cases that the Unit handled and the culture of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong;
- (d) **Storybooks for school children:** the Unit published two storybooks, which target at primary students and secondary students respectively, in 1999 and 2006. The purpose of the storybooks is to arouse students' awareness and interest in the subject of racial harmony at an early age;
- (e) **Education kit:** the kit was designed for teachers to use in the classroom. It includes a teacher's guidebook, a CD-ROM (for presentation by the teachers), and information on inter-active class activities. The Unit published 2,000 copies in Chinese in 2003 and 1,000 copies in English in 2004;
- (f) **Exhibitions (since 1999):** the Unit has three sets of roving boards which it lends to schools and youth centres for display. One set is in story

format and aims at fostering respect for people of different ethnicities. The second set describes the culture and lifestyles of Hong Kong's minority communities. The third set tells four stories of ethnic minorities in real-life situations;

- (g) **Multilingual Phrasebook for Emergencies:** published in March 2006, the phrasebook was designed as an aid for front-line emergency service staff to communicate with patients who do not speak Cantonese or English. It is now being used in both private and public medical establishments;
- (h) **After-school Support Programme:** the programme helped minority children and their parents to adapt to school life in Hong Kong, through such means as language lessons and assistance with homework. It was run by the Hong Kong Christian Service and funded by HAB from October 2004 to August 2006;
- (i) **Cross-cultural Learning Programme for Non-Chinese Speaking Youth:** this is a pilot programme started in October 2006 to help minority youth to integrate into the wider society through such means as Cantonese lessons and mentorship programmes;
- (j) **Harmony Scholarship:** the scholarship was introduced in 2004 to recognise schools that have made much effort in diversifying their enrolment;
- (k) **Community Organiser Training Programme (since 2004):** the programme aims at helping potential community organisers to address problems experienced by the minority communities and to promote racial harmony. In its capacity as the secretariat to the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony, the Unit has formed an expert sub-committee to design the curriculum and to work out a plan for programme delivery;
- (l) **Sensitivity kit (March 2006):** the Unit produced a self-learning education kit on valuing diversity for front-line civil servants in association with Civil Service Training and Development Institute, Health Welfare and Food Bureau and Equal Opportunities Commission; and
- (m) **Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment (on the ground of race):** it was published in 1998 with a view to facilitating self-regulation on the part of employers and employees in eliminating discriminatory practices in employment. It was distributed to employers through various Chambers of Commerce and upon enquiry/request at Race Relations Unit.

Publicity programmes

The publicity programmes primarily focus on raising the public's awareness of racial harmony and promoting the Unit and its services.

- (a) **Drawing Competition-cum-Mural Project:** the project aimed at encouraging community organisations to enhance the public's awareness of racial harmony among multi-racial groups through active participation and among the general public, through the medium of a highly visible mural. In January 2003, the Unit held an open drawing competition which was won by the Mong Kok Kai-Fong Association Chan Hing Social Service Centre. The Association enrolled 100 participants of different ethnic origins, trained them in a series of mural workshops and, in August 2003, painted the final design on the outer wall of the Osman Ramju Sadick Memorial Sports Centre in Kwai Chung; and
- (b) **Announcements in public interest (APIs) and Poster Campaign (since 2003):** the Unit has produced two APIs which are broadcast periodically. It has also run several poster campaigns in MTR, KCR and LRT stations. The poster includes the Unit's hotline number and the message of equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race and colour.

Integration programmes

These are practical measures to help minority communities – both established and newly arrived – to adapt to the Hong Kong way of life.

- (a) **Your Guide to Services in Hong Kong (since 1998):** this is a service guidebook that is available in eight languages¹. The guides provide comprehensive information on Government and NGO services and are tailored to the needs of each client community;
- (b) **Mobile Information Service (since 2002):** the Unit engaged the International Social Service to recruit and manage a team of six 'information ambassadors' from the main minority communities. The ambassadors distribute information kits to our target clientele on arrival at the airport and handle their enquiries in their own native languages;
- (c) **Language Courses (since 2000-01) :** HAB funds the International Social Service, Caritas, and Christian Action to provide courses in Cantonese and English. The Unit co-ordinates the promotional

¹ English, Indonesian, Tagalog, Thai, Sinhalese, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu

campaigns with a view to promoting the programme to our target clientele;

- (d) **Radio Programme** : the Unit's work in this respect includes –
- (i) launching radio programmes in Urdu and Nepali on a pilot basis in November 2004. The fifth series are now being launched on the Commercial Radio;
 - (ii) launching a radio programme in Bahasa Indonesia on RTHK Radio 2 in October 2006;
- (e) **Culture in Motion (since Feb 2005)** : it is a series of thematic Sunday cultural programme in which ethnic communities are invited to showcase their culture through dances, songs, games, photographic and art exhibits. The Unit provides a sponsorship of \$80,000 for each show;
- (f) **Community Development Team**: As a pilot project, HAB has sponsored two Community Development Teams for Ethnic Minorities serving clients in Yau Tsim Mong and Yuen Long District respectively. The budget for each team is HK\$1.3 million per year. The primary objectives of the project are to build up the ethnic minorities' capacity to tackle the problems facing them, provide services to and assist ethnic minorities in getting access to community resources and social services, promote social integration, and to collaborate with other social service agencies and ethnic community organizations to provide better support to the South Asians;
- (g) **Community Support Teams for Ethnic Communities**: HAB started this pilot programme in April 2006 to provide sponsorship for the establishment and operation of a Pakistani service team and a Nepalese service team. The teams are operated by their respective ethnic minority community groups and the Pakistani team is in partnership with an experienced NGO. Both teams offer a range of services to members of their own communities in their own languages and in a culturally sensitive manner.

Resources used in the promotion of racial harmony

Over the past years, HAB has drastically increased the resources used in promoting racial harmony and the elimination of racial discrimination, from \$4.83 million in 2002-03 to \$10.39 million in 2006-07. The amount does not

include further initiatives targeting at vocational training for ethnic minorities recently endorsed by the Commission on Poverty.

Home Affairs Bureau
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