

Bills Committee on Race Discrimination Bill

**Administration's response to views received from deputations
on vocational training and on interpretation services at hospitals**

Vocational Training

Deputation	Comments
<p>Equal Opportunities Commission (LC Paper No. CB(2)1600/07-08(01))</p>	<p>Publicity efforts to inform ethnic minorities about programmes and courses should be strengthened. (Para. 4.2.1)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>Publicity efforts of Vocational Training Council (VTC) include organisation of school talks; distribution of leaflets to target students, teachers and parents; advertisements in ethnic minority newspapers; and outreaching to ethnic organisations either directly or through NGOs.</p> <p>A dedicated website on Vocational Education and Training for ethnic minorities has also been launched since March 2008.</p> <p>VTC will further strengthen its effort by enlisting the assistance of ethnic minority groups and NGOs in distributing leaflets at religious establishments where ethnic minorities congregate, and VTC will also work more closely with school management and teacher-parent associations of schools with a relatively high concentration of ethnic minority students.</p> <p>The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) endeavours to disseminate its course information to the ethnic minority groups through various appropriate channels including community groups and newspapers serving/targeting ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.</p>

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	<p>Programmes and courses should be held in districts with high concentration of ethnic minorities. (Para. 4.2.2)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>VTC has set up an Ethnic Minority Student Support Centre in its Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) (Haking Wong) Campus in Sham Shui Po District for the provision of dedicated support for NCS students. A training annex in IVE (Tuen Mun) is also being built to provide more training places on catering, beauty care and hair-dressing for non-engaged youth in the New Territories North and West districts, including ethnic minority youth.</p> <p>VTC will continue to explore the possibility of spreading out the venues where courses for ethnic minorities are offered, especially in districts where there is a relatively high concentration of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>The ERB plans to work with its training bodies to offer dedicated training and employment support services for ethnic minorities in districts with a larger population of ethnic minorities. A resource corner catering to the special needs of ethnic minorities will also be set up in the one-stop Training cum Employment Resources Centre to be opened in Sham Shui Po.</p> <hr/> <p>Appropriate alternative Chinese language requirements should be recognized. (Para. 4.2.3)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>Where Chinese Language is a requirement, alternative qualifications in Chinese, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate in Education (GCE) and International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), are recognised for admission purpose by VTC.</p>

Deputation	Comments
	<p>Supposedly English courses were in fact conducted in Chinese. (Para. 4.2.4)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The IVE and the School of Business and Information Systems (SBI) of the VTC mainly use English as the medium of instruction for their post-secondary 5 level courses. Teaching and assessment materials are all in English. Where the learning needs and language abilities of the students so warrant, Chinese may be used on a supplementary basis and normally in earlier years of studies. In classes where there are ethnic minority students, teaching staff will pay special attention to accommodate their learning needs.</p>
	<p>More advanced courses should be provided. (Para. 4.2.5)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The VTC offers courses at different levels which provide articulation pathways for all its students who may choose full-time or part-time studies in pursuit of lifelong learning. Where there is sufficient demand, more advanced courses could be organised.</p> <p>The ERB plans to provide more placement-tied skills training courses conducted in English that suit the market needs as well as the career aspirations of ethnic minorities. The training courses will be pitched at different levels under the Qualification Framework (QF) so as to meet the training needs of ethnic minorities with different qualifications and backgrounds.</p>
	<p>Steps should be taken to promote employability. (Para. 4.2.6)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>Placement services are available to all VTC graduates. VTC will further explore partnership with various organisations to enhance the employability of ethnic minority graduates.</p>

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	<p>To enhance the employability of ethnic minorities, the ERB is working with the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research and the Vocational Training Council on the pilot training courses in “Basic Vocational Chinese Programme” to be launched in the third quarter of 2008.</p> <p>In view of the employment difficulties encountered by ethnic minorities, the ERB plans to organise, on the basis of the “Community Harmony Course” (CHC) targeting new arrivals, a specialised English version of CHC for ethnic minorities to help enhance their motivation to work and facilitate their integration into the society. The course will be held on a pilot basis in districts with a higher concentration of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Opportunities for ethnic minorities and concerned groups to participate in identifying courses and programmes, planning publicity strategy and strategies for enhancing employability of ethnic minorities. (Para. 4.2.7)</p> <p><u>Administration’s Response:</u></p> <p>The VTC welcomes the suggestion and will continue to maintain close liaison with NGOs and ethnic minority organizations.</p> <p>The ERB plans to set up focus groups to facilitate exchange with ethnic minority groups on skills training, language training and interpretation needs of ethnic minorities, so that suitable training and employment support services could be developed for them.</p>

Deputation	Comments
HKSKH Lady Maclehole Centre (LC Paper No. CB(2)1600/07-08(03))	<p>Full adoption of English as the primary medium of instruction, to be supplemented by Chinese. (Para. 1.1.2)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>It will not be reasonable or practicable for all VTC courses to be conducted in English. At present, the IVE and the SBI of the VTC mainly use English as the medium of instruction for their post-secondary 5 level courses. Teaching and assessment materials are all in English. Where the learning needs and language abilities of the students so warrant, Chinese is used on a supplementary basis and normally in earlier years of studies. In classes where there are ethnic minority students, teaching staff will pay special attention to accommodate their learning needs.</p>
	<p>Dedicated courses for ethnic minorities should only be a transitional arrangement. The medium of instruction of pre-employment training courses should be adjusted to facilitate the choice of ethnic minorities. (Para. 1.1.2)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>VTC supports better social integration of ethnic minorities in the community and endeavours to help NCS students in learning the local language.</p>
	<p>Inclusion of the Basic Vocational Chinese programme into the curriculum of VTC's vocational training programmes. (Para. 1.1.2)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>VTC has introduced a pilot Basic Chinese programme for NCS students. Pending the outcome of the pilot, VTC will consider integrating Chinese language modules into the tailor-made courses for NCS students.</p>

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	<p>Instead of merely translating the training contents into English, the ERB should incorporate the element of career-oriented language training into the training courses for ethnic minorities to facilitate their integration into the labour market. (Para. 1.2.1)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The ERB will provide more placement-tied skills training courses conducted in English that cater to the training needs and career aspirations of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>In addition to skills training, these courses will also include workplace Cantonese training to better equip the trainees for employment.</p>
	<p>The ERB should expand its target clientele and strengthen publicity efforts to inform ethnic minorities of the training courses available to them. (Para. 1.2.2)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>With effect from 1 December 2007, the eligibility criteria of the Employees Retraining Scheme have been relaxed to cover young people aged 15-29, including ethnic minority youth, and people with education level at sub-degree or below. The ERB will enhance publicity efforts to promote the availability of its training courses among ethnic minority youth.</p>
	<p>The ERB should provide more resources for training bodies to employ teaching assistants who can speak ethnic minority languages. (Para. 1.2.3)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The ERB will continue to respond positively to requests for in-class interpretation services as necessary and which are conducive to teaching and learning.</p>

Deputation	Comments
<p>Joint submission from Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor and Hong Kong Unison</p> <p>(LC Paper No. CB(2)1628/07-08(01))</p>	<p>The VTC should more actively promote its basic vocational Chinese programme to ethnic minority communities and the programme should be run at different districts besides Yuen Long, especially in areas with concentrated ethnic minority populations. (Para. 2)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The VTC will continue to work closely with ethnic minority groups and relevant NGOs in promoting the programme and will explore the possibility of running the programme in more districts with high concentration of ethnic minorities.</p>
	<p>Choice is limited as only two streams of the Foundation Diploma (FD) and the Certificate in Vocational Studies (CVS) dedicated for ethnic minorities are offered. (Para. 3)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>Eligible NCS students may apply for various VTC courses. More dedicated courses could be considered if there are sufficient numbers of students.</p>
	<p>A research should be conducted in order to better understand the demand and the interest of ethnic minority youth so that the courses organised are more responsive to their needs. (Para. 4)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>VTC gauges the demands and interests of ethnic minority students by working closely with NGOs and ethnic minority organizations to ensure that its courses can cater for their needs.</p>

Deputation	Comments
	<p>Although IVE's language policy specifies English as the medium of instruction for most courses, the reality is that most teachers use Cantonese supplemented with English terminology only and this adversely affects the motivation of ethnic minority students attending the lessons. (Para. 5)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The IVE and the SBI of the VTC mainly use English as the medium of instruction for their post-secondary 5 level courses. Teaching and assessment materials are all in English. Where the learning needs and language abilities of the students so warrant, Chinese is used on a supplementary basis and normally in earlier years of studies. In classes where there are ethnic minority students, teaching staff will pay special attention to accommodate their learning needs.</p>
	<p>Ethnic minority students feel they are unwelcome in classes of IVE's courses. (Para. 6)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>To help ethnic minority students better integrate with local students, additional activities like sharing sessions, buddy groups, and workshops have been organised for them. Special Chinese/Cantonese modules have also been arranged to help them master the local language/dialect for better social integration.</p> <p>Ethnic minority students are invited regularly to provide feedback on their learning and additional student counsellors have been deployed to enrich their campus life.</p>
	<p>Extra support/measures should be provided to ensure that ethnic minority students can understand and follow the lessons. (Para. 7)</p> <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>Additional teaching, counselling and career support services have been put in place for ethnic minority students.</p>

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	<p>These courses do not help the youth of ethnic minorities much, because courses including “Security and Property Management”, “Local Domestic Helper” and “Environmental Hygiene and Cleaning Worker” are boring and often do not fit the needs of young people. Board should create and plan more different courses that meet and suit the need and potentials of ethnic minority youth. (Para. 8)</p> <p><u>Administration’s Response:</u></p> <p>The ERB plans to organise more dedicated new courses that meet the interests and aspirations of ethnic minority youth, such as courses on IT technical support and convention and exhibition management training. The pilot Youth Training Programme to be launched by the ERB for youth aged 15-20 also aims to serve the ethnic minority youth, among others.</p> <p>The Government should promote more on the QF so that the ethnic minorities can be familiar with the system and are able to choose the courses which will be recognized under QF. (Para. 9)</p> <p><u>Administration’s Response:</u></p> <p>In tandem with the official launch of the Qualifications Framework (QF) in early May, EDB will launch a series of publicity activities to promote QF.</p> <p>Information on the QF and the Qualifications Register (QR) will be disseminated through bilingual leaflets, posters, dedicated websites and Announcements of Public Interest on television and radio. Through the QR website, the public including ethnic minorities can search for information on QF-recognised qualifications and the respective learning programmes.</p>

Interpretation services at hospitals

Deputation	Comments
<p>Equal Opportunities Commission CB(2)1600/07-08(01)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff are not aware of policy on interpretation services • Interpretation services not effectively provided • Triage information not clearly explained • HA to consider direct recruitment of a pool of interpreters. <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>The following improvements will be made by Hospital Authority (HA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) enhance service management, policy and standards; (b) enhance transparency of service commitments and performance pledge; (c) engage and train frontline staff (including telephone operators, clerks at enquiry/ registration and Patient Relation Officers); (d) produce posters and leaflets for promoting access to the interpretation service, use electronic display to promote service and promote service through meetings in local networks with ethnic minority group; (e) arrange on-site interpretation service; and <p>[Note: The first pilot will be rolled out in New Territories West Cluster, Kowloon Central Cluster, Kowloon East Cluster and Kowloon West Cluster in mid-2008. The initial pilot will provide on-site interpretation for 4 common ethnic minority languages viz Urdu, Nepali, Hindi and Punjabi.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (f) provide on-going telephone interpretation service through the use of speaker phones, where necessary

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Hong Kong Human Rights Commission, Society for Community Organization and Asylum Seekers' and Refugees' Voice (LC Paper No. CB(2)1600/07-08(02))	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training is required for the frontline workers on interpretation arrangement• Hospitals to set aside budget for interpretation and training about equal opportunities and non-discrimination• Interpretation to be arranged no matter the urgency of the requirement• Hospitals staff not to rely on friends of patients for interpretation to ensure accuracy of interpretation• Provide information to ethnic minorities about the free-of-charge translation service• Establish a formal/ central booking system in hospitals• Arrange training in medical interpretation and arrange in-house interpreters. <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>Please refer to our response above. Other planned improvements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) train interpreters on medical terminology and hospital services (pilot project);(b) provide timely interpretation service to patients in the pilot project, covering the following areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Accident and Emergency Department- Specialist Out-patient Department / General Out-patient Department / In-patient cases- Appointment cases; and(c) streamline and standardize the service usage guides and workflow for service arrangement

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<p>HKSKH Lady Macle hose Centre (LC Paper No. CB(2)1600/07-08(03))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ full-time interpreters in HA • Stop using Multilingual Phrase Book for Emergencies • Train interpreters from contractors and NGOs on medical terminology <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>As explained in our response above, HA will introduce new measures and improvements to address the concerns.</p>
<p>Hong Kong Integrated Nepalese Society (LC Paper No. CB(2)1600/07-08(04))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation service is not effective and not far reaching • Hospitals that are mostly visited by ethnic groups to employ a full-time interpreter <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>As explained in our response above, HA will introduce new measures and improvements to address the concerns.</p>
<p>Joint submission from Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor and Hong Kong Unison (LC Paper No. CB(2)1628/07-08(01))</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff knowledge and attitude on interpretation service to be improved • Patient are unaware of the interpretation service provision • Interpretation service are often not provided • Number of interpreters is inadequate and their priority for working in hospitals is low <p><u>Administration's Response:</u></p> <p>As explained in our response above, HA will introduce new measures and improvements to address the concerns.</p>