



Hong Kong Unison Limited
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Our Views to the Report on the Study on Tracking the Adaptation and Development of Non-Chinese Speaking Children

- (1) **No explanation has been given by the Government as to why the publication of the results of the Study had been deferred for a year, yet it is only a summary.**

The Study was completed in mid-2007. Ms Bernadette Linn, the former Deputy Secretary of the Education Bureau had undertaken that the concerned results would be publicized in September 2007. Yet, only under repeated urges of Hong Kong Unison, the Government publicized the results (summary only) on November this year, while without making any explanation on the deferment.

- (2) **The Government refuses to publicize the whole Report. With the summary only, the public is unable to assess the Study and its survey methodology and to have a full comprehension of learning situation of the targets of study.**

We had made repeated requests to the Government to publicize the whole Report, including the content of the questionnaire of which the targets were headmasters, teachers, non-Chinese speaking children and the latter's parents, but in vain. We believe that publicizing the whole Report would enable the public in assessing the Study and its survey methodology, and in keeping informed more fully of situation of the targets of study which included the progress of learning and concrete difficulties. In fact, as the Study was subsidized by public money, people have the right to know its full content.

- (3) **The Report avoided the important parts but dwelt on the trivial parts. It purposely emphasized on the good aspects and could not reflect the reality.**

The Report emphasized that the pace of improvement of non-Chinese speaking children in examination performance in the subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics was faster than that of their Chinese counterparts (see P.2 of the Conclusion). However, it did not reveal the





performance level they had actually achieved. In fact, it was within expectation that non-Chinese speaking children made greater achievements than Chinese speaking children in studying, given that the former had begun at a lower starting point. The question is whether non-Chinese speaking children's actual performance level has reached a reasonable standard, especially in the subjects of Chinese and Mathematics.

(4) Concerning the learning difficulties of non-Chinese speaking children, the Report puts the blame on children themselves and their parents.

The Report stated that parents of non-Chinese speaking children were not keen on sending their children to participate in after-school programs and the summer vacation programs (see P.6 of the Summary of Report). It also stated that the non-Chinese speaking children did not enjoy attending the Mathematics classes (see P.7 of the Summary of Report). However, it did not probe into the causes and provide suggestions for improvement. As such, it would only put the blames about learning difficulties to children themselves and their parents.

We understand that the main reason for low participation of non-Chinese speaking children in after-school programs and summer vacation programs is that most of such programs are not held in their own schools, or that the parents could not afford to pay the extra traveling expenditures. On the other hand, since Mathematics are taught in Chinese, non-Chinese speaking children could not understand the content and find it difficult in involving themselves deep into the classes.

(5) The Report emphasized the necessity to provide non-Chinese speaking children with after-school make-up classes, but it neglected an even more fundamental issue: the Government have not provided independent and tailor-made Chinese Language curriculum for non-Chinese speaking children.

The Report emphasized the necessity in providing extra assistance for non-Chinese speaking children in learning Chinese, such as after-school make-up classes (see P.3 in Conclusion). However, it did not deal with an even more fundamental issue. In fact, their difficulties in



learning Chinese are mainly due to lack of independent curriculum suitable to their needs and progress. Concerning the after-school make-up classes, they are not unimportant, but they could only render supplementary assistance.

(6) The Report stated that non-Chinese speaking children had not been discriminated. Such conclusion could hardly reflect the reality.

The Report stated that the non-Chinese speaking children had not been discriminated, and they had not had difficulties in making friends. However, such conclusion did not match with the real situation. In fact, we have handled lots of complaints from non-Chinese speaking children cases. Many of them changed from mainstream to designated schools just because they could not stand against being discriminated, isolated, and bullied in schools.

(7) The sample size in the Study were too small, and they could not fully reflect learning situation of non-Chinese speaking primary school children.

The Study had ultimately covered learning situation of 31 children from Primary one to three only. In comparison with thousands of non-Chinese speaking children scattered in over 300 primary schools, one could easily doubt about the representativeness of the Study. It could hardly reflect learning situation of non-Chinese speaking children in the entire course of their primary schooling. In addition, many teachers and parents reflected that, for non-Chinese speaking children, the stage of learning started from Primary 4 is the most critical one. Due to the increased degree of difficulty, more often than not, they begin falling behind in this stage.

In this regard, we queries the reference value of this Study and strongly objects the Government to formulate its future policy direction for non-Chinese speaking children upon the results of the Study.



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(8) The Report did not disclose situation of those children who had quitted in the course of the Study.

According to Government statistics, there were a total of over 60 non-Chinese speaking children who had joined Primary 1 program of mainstream schools in 2004/05, and finally only 41 of them were included in the Study. The Government did not tell about the situation of the rest children. For those 41 children joining the Study, 10 quitted in the course of the study. Again, the Government did not disclose about causes of these quittances.

Based on our contact and acquaintance, many non-Chinese speaking children who had studied in mainstream primary schools encounter discrimination and adaptation problems. Many were compelled to return to designated schools. We consider the omittance of their situation in the Report has rendered it as lack of comprehensiveness and objectivity. It seems that the Report revealed only the good things but not the bad ones. At last, the credibility of the Report is affected.

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