



Hong Kong Unison Limited  
香港融樂會有限公司

12<sup>th</sup> April, 2012

Hon Starry Lee Wai-King JP

The Chairperson for the Education Panel

Legislative Council.

Dear Ms. Lee,

**RE: Kindergarten Education for Ethnic Minority Schoolchildren**

I am writing to bring to your attention the plight of ethnic minority kindergarten schoolchildren, in hope that you will discuss the situation of pre-primary education for ethnic minorities in one of the remaining LegCo Education Panel meetings.

Hong Kong Unison recently conducted a survey on pre-primary education of ethnic minority children in Hong Kong, and received responses from 102 kindergartens concerning 1213 ethnic minority kids. We found that mainstream kindergartens encounter various difficulties in teaching ethnic minority schoolchildren, and that the government's support to pre-primary ethnic minority schoolchildren is inadequate.

**Kindergarten is a critical stage for language learning**

The pre-primary years are a critical period for language acquisition. Building a solid Chinese language foundation from an early age is critical to ethnic minority children's future education career, and is determinant in whether some of them can escape intergenerational poverty.

Hong Kong Unison finds that if a student is able to build a solid foundation in the Chinese language during the kindergarten years, parents tend to be more comfortable in placing their children into mainstream Chinese primary schools, thus aiding the children's integration into mainstream Hong Kong society. However, since ethnic minority students do not receive a Chinese language training that suits their specific needs when they are young, they tend to lag significantly behind in their academic performances starting from around Primary 4. This is true



even for ethnic minority students who were born in Hong Kong and speak colloquial Cantonese fluently, and is detrimental to their education career.

During the critical language learning period in kindergarten, not only is it important to build up ethnic minority schoolchildren's listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in Chinese; it is also critical to build up their confidence and interest in the Chinese language so that they can succeed in schools where Chinese is used as the medium of instruction.

### **Mainstream kindergartens are unable to support ethnic minority students**

The most common difficulty kindergartens encounter when teaching ethnic minority schoolchildren is in coping with the children's varying Chinese abilities. However, only 36% schools had one or more measures that provided academic support for ethnic minority students, thus leaving many of the ethnic minority schoolchildren and families to fend for themselves.

Currently, the government does not provide Chinese teaching material support or teacher training for kindergartens that enrolled ethnic minority students. Only 13% kindergartens in our survey provided additional Chinese classes to ethnic minority students to help them catch up with the difference in Chinese ability, and almost in none of the schools had teachers who received professional training on how to teach ethnic minority students.

At present, the professional training programs (administered by HKIEd and HKU) on cultural sensitivity and teaching non-Chinese-speaking students are not open to pre-primary teachers.

89% of the kindergartens in our survey thought opined that support from the government was inadequate or very inadequate. Most kindergartens (81%) hope that the government would provide funding for schools to hire ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants.

### **Current government measures are inadequate**

The EDB claims in official documents that it is their goal to facilitate ethnic minority students' early integration into the local education system and wider community, and yet we



have been disappointed to find that this empty promise is not accompanied by concrete policy plans. According to the 2006 census, 3.2% pre-school students (5,452 students, excluding White students) are ethnic minorities. Yet as these students advance in their education career, this percentage drops to 1.1% in senior secondary school, and a mere 0.59% in tertiary education, a trend that warrants serious attention to the current education system and policies.

To give ethnic minority schoolchildren a good head start during the kindergarten years, Hong Kong Unison proposes the following suggestions:

1. The Education Bureau (EDB) should give concrete responses to the recommendations made by the Equal Opportunities Commission Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities and create a concrete action timeline.
2. The EDB should provide comprehensive Chinese-language teaching support to kindergartens with ethnic minority students. Such support should include Chinese teaching materials for ethnic minority kindergarteners and support to schools in hiring extra Chinese-language teachers. The EDB should also fund and support organizations that provide extra Chinese-language training for ethnic minority students.
3. The EDB should provide special funding for kindergartens to employ ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants in order to assist in classroom teaching and facilitate communications with parents.
4. HKIEd and VTC early childhood education programs should recruit ethnic minorities as professional kindergarten teachers and teaching assistants. For the ethnic minorities who are currently working in the field without professional qualifications, these training institutions should also provide certificated field-specific vocation training.
5. The EDB should open the on-the-job professional training programs (currently administered by HKIEd and HKU) on cultural sensitivity and teaching non-Chinese-speaking students to pre-primary teachers, and provide the same sponsorship as that for primary school teachers. Alternatively the EDB should open similar programs specifically for kindergarten teachers.



The EDB's negligence towards ethnic minority schoolchildren's needs have spoiled the futures for generations of students. Chief Executive-elect C.Y. Leung has specifically pointed out in his platform that he will support ethnic minority kindergarten students' Chinese education. Although Leung does not take office until July, we believe that education reform is a continuous effort that should carry on despite political changes. There is no better time than now, before the start of a new school year, to effect change on the legislative level.

We hope that you will insert a discussion item on pre-primary education for ethnic minority schoolchildren into the upcoming Education Panel agenda. Attached is the summary and full report of our survey on kindergarten education for ethnic minorities for your full reference.

We look forward to your favorably reply.

Yours sincerely,

Fermi Wong  
Executive Director

Attachments:

1. Survey Summary: the press release on 4 April
2. Full report: Survey on Kindergarten Education for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

c.c.

1. Hon Tanya CHAN, Deputy Chairperson of Panel on Education, Legislative Council
2. Hon Cheung Man-kwong, Panel Member, Education Functional Constituency
3. Mr. Lam Woon-kwong, GBS, JP, Chairperson of Equal Opportunities Commission



Press Release – 4 April 2012, Children’s Day

**Announcement of Results of Survey**  
**on Pre-Primary Education of Ethnic Minority Children in Hong Kong**

Hong Kong Unison announces results of a survey on pre-primary education of ethnic minority children in Hong Kong. It is found that kindergartens generally considered the government’s support to ethnic minority children’s education inadequate; mainstream kindergartens were unable to meet the ethnic minority children’s learning needs, causing their difficulties in further education and integration into the society.

Children’s day is traditionally a day to celebrate children’s rights and well-being, and yet ethnic minority children in Hong Kong have not been receiving the same care and attention from the society. Several times, the Equal Opportunities Commission tried to raise the Education Bureau’s awareness on ethnic minority students’ pre-primary education but did not receive concrete responses. We hope that the new Government under Mr. Leung will put promises into action and seriously address the issue of pre-primary education for ethnic minority children.

The survey questionnaires were distributed to over 900 local kindergartens along with the “PTU News” published by the Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union (HKPTU). Of the 102 kindergartens responded, 71 were from kindergartens serving a total of 1,213 ethnic minority children. Nearly 70 percent (69%) of the responding kindergartens considered that the ethnic minority children’s Chinese language competency varied significantly, making teaching difficult; yet only 36% of the kindergartens could currently provide





extra academic support to ethnic minority children; nearly 90 percent (89%) of the responding kindergartens considered that the Government's support to ethnic minority children was inadequate, and 80 percent (81%) of the schools hoped that the Government could provide more resources for kindergartens to hire ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants.

In the survey, it was also found that the Government and institutes of education seldom provide kindergarten teachers with professional training on cultural sensitivity and skills for teaching ethnic minority children (only 2% kindergartens had teachers who have received such trainings). Kindergarten management and teachers felt helpless when facing the special needs of ethnic minority children. In the survey, nearly half of the schools hoped that the Government could provide teaching and learning materials for ethnic minority children (44%), training for teachers on cultural sensitivity (45%) and training on teaching ethnic minority students (49%).

Hong Kong Unison opines that the Education Bureau should provide immediate support to kindergartens with ethnic minority students, including the provision of Chinese teaching and learning materials, additional resources to employ ethnic minority teachers, teaching assistants and extra Chinese language teachers, and assisting other organizations to provide systematic Chinese learning support to ethnic minority students.

Hong Kong Unison also opines that the early childhood education programmes offered by Hong Kong Instituted of Education (HKIEd) and Vocational Training Council (VTC) should admit more ethnic minority students. As for the serving ethnic minority pre-primary education practitioners with relatively low education level, Hong Kong Unison suggests that



HKIED and VTC may consider offering on-the-job certificate programmes in early childhood education to train more ethnic minority professional kindergarten teachers and teaching assistants.

Besides, the existing training for serving teachers organized by the HKIED and the University of Hong Kong on cultural sensitivity and Chinese language teaching methods for non-Chinese speaking students is not for pre-primary teachers. Hong Kong Unison urges the Education Bureau to allow and subsidize pre-primary teachers to enrol in these training programmes, or provide similar training for them.

According to the 2006 Census, Hong Kong has 5,452 ethnic minority children (excluding Caucasian) receiving pre-primary education in Hong Kong (1,213 of them covered in this survey). Most of them are South Asian and Southeast Asian children from low-income families who cannot afford to study in private and high-tuition international kindergartens, and therefore are mostly educated in mainstream Chinese kindergartens or low-tuition international kindergartens. Early childhood is a critical period for language learning. Having a firm foundation in Chinese language during kindergarten and junior primary school is of utmost importance for children's further education, employment and integration into the mainstream society in Hong Kong.

In view of the existing situation of inadequate support to ethnic minority children, the Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities of the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) has submitted reports with recommendations to the Education Bureau<sup>1</sup> and Legislative Council<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Equal Opportunities Commission, March 2011 "Education for all: Report on the Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities" Appendix "Submission to Education Bureau"



respectively in 2011. But so far no concrete response was received from the education authorities. Hong Kong Unison urges the Education Bureau to concretely respond to EOC's recommendations with an implementation schedule as soon as possible.

In view of the lack of Chinese learning support to ethnic minority schoolchildren from the Education Bureau, Hong Kong Unison and HKIEd jointly organized the "Chinese Language Enhancement Project for Non-Chinese Speaking Kindergarten Students" in 2008-2012. With subsidies from different charity funds, HKIEd students and retired teachers were dispatched to kindergartens with ethnic minority students to provide them with Chinese learning support. The annual interim and final assessments indicated that the project was able to improve the ethnic minority students' Chinese language proficiency in terms of listening, speaking, reading, writing and identification of Chinese words. The project could also augment ethnic minority students' interest and confidence in learning Chinese, as well as their academic results in Chinese language. This is the last academic year of the project. Hong Kong Unison hopes that the Education Bureau can take up the task, first with pioneer projects and eventually giving comprehensive and regular Chinese learning support to ethnic minority students. The Education Bureau may consider hiring retired Chinese language teachers for these projects so as to benefit from their expertise and at the same time provide them with a second career.

Hong Kong Unison welcomes the Chief Executive-Elect Mr Leung Chun-ying's concern over the education of ethnic minority children. Mr Leung has made several pledges on the education of





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ethnic minority children in his policy platform, one of which being to “support ethnic minority children in learning the Chinese language.” Hong Kong Unison, kindergartens and ethnic minority families are all looking forward to the new Secretary for Education putting Mr Leung’s promises into action as soon as possible.

For press enquiries, please contact Ms Fermi Wong, Executive Director of Hong Kong Unison at 2789 3246.

為  
種族  
平等  
For  
Ethnic  
Equality

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# Report: Survey on Kindergarten Education for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

Hong Kong Unison

April 2012

## A. Background

1. The Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) was gazetted in 2008 and became effective in July 2009, specifying the rights of individuals to enjoy equal access to education irrespective of their race. Despite this domestic legislation, ethnic minorities in Hong Kong are not enjoying the same opportunities in education as their Chinese peers. According to the 2006 census, 3.2% pre-school students (5,452 students, excluding White students) are ethnic minorities. Yet as these students advance in their education career, this percentage drops to 1.1% in senior secondary school, and a mere 0.59% in tertiary education, a phenomenon that warrants serious attention to the current education system.
2. In April 2011 the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) submitted “Education for all: Report on the Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities” to the Education Bureau (EDB). The report states that ethnic minority students’ low Chinese proficiency is a major obstacle to the students’ advancement in education. Educators, NGOs, parents and students reflect to the EOC that the government provides inadequate support and resources to support ethnic minority students studying Chinese.
3. The EOC report echoes the viewpoint of many educators and psychologists that language acquisition is most effective at an early age, preferably during pre-school years. In providing better education to ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, the Government cannot neglect early childhood education. Furthermore, Hong Kong Unison finds that if a student is able to build a solid foundation in the Chinese language during the kindergarten years, parents tend to be more confident in placing their children into mainstream primary schools, thus aiding the children’s future integration into mainstream Hong Kong society.
4. For four school years from 2008 to 2012, Hong Kong Unison collaborated with the Hong Kong Institute of Education on the Chinese Language Enhancement Project for Non-Chinese Speaking Kindergarten Students<sup>1</sup>. Through dialogues with kindergarten educators in the program, Hong Kong Unison collected a list of difficulties faced by kindergartens with ethnic minority students. Hong Kong Unison thus conducted the present study in order to systematically explore the common difficulties faced by kindergartens in teaching ethnic minority students.

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<sup>1</sup> 《一齊同學，一齊同樂——非華語學童中文學習支援計劃》“Chinese Language Enhancement Project for Non-Chinese Speaking Kindergarten Students” The program organizes HKIEd students to conduct outreach Chinese-language support programs for ethnic minority students in participating kindergartens and primary schools

## **B. Research Purpose**

5. To investigate the difficulties faced by kindergartens that admit ethnic minority children
6. To explore the measures taken by individual schools to help ethnic minority students
7. To collect kindergarten educators' opinions on the best strategies to help ethnic minority kindergarteners and the schools that admit them

## **C. Methodology**

8. This quantitative study was conducted through written questionnaires.
9. Preliminary studies were done via conversations with kindergartens that participated in the Chinese Language Enhancement Project for Non-Chinese Speaking Kindergarten Students. We compiled a list of difficulties mentioned by kindergarten teachers and administrators, which formed the basis of the questionnaire questions used in this study.
10. This study targets all kindergartens that are registered with the Education Bureau. A written survey was sent out via fax by the Hong Kong Professional Teacher Union (PTU) to more than 900 registered kindergartens in November 2011. A reminder and a copy of the survey was attached to the PTU newsletter and mailed in February 2012.
11. All completed questionnaires were sent to the Hong Kong Unison office. 102 completed questionnaires were collected.
12. The questionnaire used multiply-choice questions to assess schools' difficulties in teaching ethnic minority students, their adaptive strategies and their opinion on government policies regarding early childhood education for ethnic minorities. For the full Chinese and English questionnaire, refer to Appendix B.

## D. Results

### i. School Backgrounds

13. 102 kindergartens responded and 102 surveys were returned to the Hong Kong Unison office.
14. Out of the 102 responded kindergartens, 71 (70%) admitted ethnic minority students in the 2011-2012 school year.
15. A total of 1213 ethnic minority students were admitted in the 71 schools. While some schools only admitted one ethnic minority student, others have up to 124 ethnic minority students in the kindergarten. A breakdown by class year is listed below in Table 1:

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Total number of students</b> | <b>Average number of students per school</b> | <b>Range: number of students in a school</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| K1          | 382                             | 5.38   | 1 - 43                                       |
| K2          | 447                             | 6.30   | 1 - 53                                       |
| K3          | 384                             | 5.41   | 1 - 44                                       |
| Total       | 1213                            | 17.08  | 1 - 124                                      |

**Table 1: Breakdown of the numbers of ethnic minority students by school year**

16. Among the ethnic minority students admitted by these 71 kindergartens, the largest ethnic group was Pakistani (35.5%). A breakdown by ethnicity is listed below in Table 2:

| <b>Ethnicity</b> | <b>Number of students</b> | <b>% out of total number of admitted ethnic minority students</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Pakistani        | 407                       | 35.5%   |
| Filipino         | 214                       | 18.7%   |
| Indian           | 191                       | 16.7%   |
| Nepalese         | 172                       | 15.0%   |
| Indonesian       | 56                        | 4.9%  |
| Thai             | 32                        | 2.8%  |
| European         | 14                        | 1.2%  |
| North American   | 9                         | 0.8%  |
| African          | 5                         | 0.4%  |
| South American   | 2                         | 0.2%  |
| Others           | 45                        | 3.9%  |

**Table 2: Breakdown of the numbers of ethnic minority students by ethnicity**

**ii. Difficulties faced by schools**

17. The 70 schools that admitted ethnic minority students were asked about difficulties they faced regarding teaching ethnic minority students. Only 7% schools stated that they did not encounter difficulties. Most schools cited the varying Chinese language ability among ethnic minority students as a difficulty. A breakdown is listed below in Table 3:

| <b>Difficulties</b>  | <b>Number of schools</b> | <b>% of schools</b> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Chinese language ability varies greatly among ethnic minority students   | 48                       | 69%                 |
| Language barriers between ethnic minority parents and teachers   | 41                       | 59%                 |
| Ethnic minority parents can provide very limited academic assistance to their children   | 41                       | 59%                 |
| Language barrier between ethnic minority students and teachers   | 39                       | 56%                 |
| Learning ability and motivation varies greatly among ethnic minority students  | 38                       | 54%                 |
| Teachers have to teach bilingually using simple English  | 37                       | 53%                 |
| Teachers cannot provide the individual attention ethnic minority students require  | 35                       | 50%                 |
| Teachers are unable to assess whether ethnic minority students understand the teaching content and conversations                   | 30                       | 43%                 |
| Teachers do not know concrete and effective teaching methods, and have to spend a lot of time to achieve their teaching objectives | 24                       | 34%                 |
| Others   | 6                        | 9%                  |
| No difficulties  | 5                        | 7%                  |
| Total responses  | 70                       |                     |

**Table 3: Difficulties faced by kindergartens that admit ethnic minority students. Schools can select multiple options that apply to them**

18. About half of the schools with ethnic minority students encountered administrative difficulties in accommodating ethnic minority students, and 44% cited that they have to make translation arrangements for ethnic minority parents.

| <b>Does your school encounter any difficulties in administration?</b> | <b>Number of schools</b> | <b>% of schools</b> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Yes   | 40                       | 56%                 |
| No  | 32                       | 44%                 |
| Total responses   | 72                       |                     |

**Table 4: Number of schools that encounter administrative difficulties**

| <b>Administrative difficulties</b>  | <b>Number of schools</b> |
|---|--------------------------|
| Language barriers with parents (e.g. having to translate notices and conduct bilingual meetings, difficulties communicating with parents with poor English and Chinese abilities) | 32                       |
| Difficulties arising from cultural differences (e.g. special dietary needs, parents being unfamiliar with Hong Kong systems)  | 6                        |
| Difficulties arranging extra manpower to cater to ethnic minority students' and parents' needs  | 4                        |

**Table 5: Administrative difficulties write-ins. Some schools wrote in more than one administrative difficulties.**

### **iii. Measures taken by schools**

19. 31% of the schools with ethnic minority students needed to create tailored Chinese language curricula for ethnic minority students.
20. 41% of the schools with ethnic minority students provided no supporting measures for ethnic minority students. The breakdown of present supporting measures is listed below in Table 6. Table 7 lists the breakdown of write-in “other” supporting measures.
21. Only 36% schools had one or more measures that provided academic support for ethnic minority students. Academic support includes specially designed learning, employing ethnic minority teachers, teaching assistants and non-teaching staff, additional Chinese classes and increasing the number of total staff.

| <b>Present supporting measures for ethnic minority students (*academic support)</b>         | <b>Number of schools</b> | <b>% of schools</b> |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|
| No supporting measures are provided, they receive the same support as Chinese students      | 27                       | 41%                 |
| Others  | 17                       | 26%                 |
| Provide racial harmony/ inclusive activities to ethnic minority students                    | 15                       | 23%                 |
| Provide specially designed learning materials to ethnic minority students                   | 11                       | 17%                 |
| Ethnic minority staff are employed as teachers/ teaching assistants                         | 8                        | 12%                 |
| Provide additional Chinese tuition/ after-class tuition classes to ethnic minority students | 9                        | 14%                 |
| Increase the number of total staff  | 6                        | 9%                  |
| Ethnic minority staff are employed for non-teaching duties                                  | 4                        | 6%                  |
| Total responses   | 66                       |                     |

**Table 6: Schools' current supporting measures for ethnic minority students. Schools may select all options that apply**

| <b>“Other” present supporting measures include:</b>  | <b>Number of schools</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| Strengthening communication with parents (e.g. explaining school notices in person, inviting parents to be volunteer translators, providing English notices) | 10                       |
| Participating in programs organized by other organizations (e.g. racial harmony programs, Chinese programs for non-Chinese speaking students)                | 7                        |
| Making curriculum and assessment accommodations  | 1                        |

**Table 7: Write-ins of present supporting measures for ethnic minority students**

#### **iv. Staff training and ethnic minority staff members**

22. Most teachers did not receive professional training on teaching ethnic minority students. Only two schools (2% of all responded schools) had teachers that received professional training on teaching ethnic minority students. The teachers in one of the said schools only received one hour of Chinese-language teaching training.
23. 88% schools did not employ ethnic minority teachers, teaching assistants or non-teaching staff. Even among kindergartens that enrolled ethnic minority students, 87% of them did not employ ethnic minority staff members.



**v. Government policies and resources**

24. 89% of schools thought that support from the government was inadequate (53%) or very inadequate (36%). On a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 is “very inadequate” and 4 is “very adequate,” on average the schools gave the government a score of 1.74.
25. About 80% of the kindergartens thought that the government should provide funding to hire ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants. Listed below in Table 8 is the breakdown on other forms of support that schools thought the government should provide:

| <b>Measures the government should take</b>   | <b>Number of schools</b> | <b>% of schools</b> |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Fund ethnic minority teachers/ teaching assistants                                 | 80                       | 81%                 |
| Teacher training on teaching skills  | 49                       | 49%                 |
| Teacher training on cultural sensitivity   | 45                       | 45%                 |
| Teaching materials   | 44                       | 44%                 |
| A special fund   | 42                       | 42%                 |
| Additional Chinese-learning class  | 40                       | 40%                 |
| Fund additional Chinese language teachers  | 35                       | 35%                 |
| Establish a Chinese-as-a-second-language curriculum and related teaching materials | 28                       | 28%                 |
| Others   | 8                        | 8%                  |
| Total responses  | 99                       |                     |

**Table 8: Measures the government should take to support ethnic minority students in kindergarten education. Schools may choose all options that apply**

26. The kindergartens were asked to rate the effectiveness of some suggested policies that might help ethnic minority students learn Chinese. The responded kindergartens believed that it will be most effective if the government allocates more resources to allow schools to employ ethnic minority teacher assistants and Chinese language teachers to teach ethnic minority students. Below in Table 9 is the breakdown of schools that rated these policies as most effective or second most effective (marked “1” or “2” in the questionnaire).

| <b>Suggested measures in assisting ethnic minority student in learning Chinese</b>  | <b>Rated most effective by % schools</b> |
|---|--|
| The government to provide funding for schools to hire ethnic minority teacher assistants  | 64%                                      |
| The government to allocate more resources to allow schools to employ additional Chinese language teachers to teach ethnic minority students                               | 59%                                      |
| Teacher training organization to provide more training to frontline teachers  | 43%                                      |
| To have ethnic minority students and Chinese students study in the same class, but have ethnic minority students stay after school for additional Chinese tuition classes | 25%                                      |
| Other suggestions   | 3%                                       |

**Table 9: Effectiveness of measures that assist ethnic minority students in learning Chinese**

### **E. Discussion and Analysis**

27. The majority of kindergartens encountered difficulties teaching ethnic minority students. Only 7% of the kindergartens expressed that they did not encounter difficulties.
28. Most kindergartens encountered difficulties teaching ethnic minority students mainly because of the students' varying Chinese abilities and language barriers between parents and teachers, and felt that they did not receive sufficient support from the government on this front. Many schools only had limited measures supporting ethnic minority students, and they wished that the government would provide more support on hiring and training teachers.
29. Chinese abilities: Most kindergartens faced difficulties related to ethnic minority students' low Chinese abilities, and yet most did not have the resources to cope with these difficulties. For 69% kindergartens, the difficulties lied in the fact that ethnic minority students have varying Chinese language abilities, and some students do not have enough Chinese ability to function well in school. Similarly, in 50% schools teachers found it difficult to assess how much ethnic minority students were able to understand in the classroom. These are unique difficulties pertaining to teaching ethnic minority students.
30. And yet, few schools have measures in place to cope with these difficulties. Only 13% schools with ethnic minority students provided additional Chinese classes to ethnic minority students to help them catch up with the difference in Chinese ability, and almost in none of the schools had teachers received professional training on how to teach ethnic minority

students. Employing ethnic minority staff members could help alleviate the difficulties, but even then only 13% schools employed ethnic minority staff members, and that number includes schools that employed staff from English-speaking backgrounds.

31. Working with parents: In early childhood education, parent-school collaboration is especially important, and yet language barriers pose great difficulties to kindergartens that admit ethnic minority students. 59% kindergartens faced language barriers between teachers and ethnic minority parents; and an equal number of kindergartens found that ethnic minority parents cannot help with their children's homework. While only 13% kindergartens employed ethnic minority staff members, others have to invite parents to help translate messages to parents with poor Chinese and English. 80% out of the schools that encountered administrative difficulties cited that having to translate notices and meetings into English also posed heavy administrative burdens onto schools.
32. More government support: 86% kindergartens thought that government support was not enough. Many schools had not provide support to ethnic minority students, and many schools that did could not provide systematic and long term measures such as employing a comprehensive learning support for ethnic minority students and employing ethnic minority teaching and non teaching staff. 81% schools thought that the government should provide funding to hire ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants, and almost half of the schools also wished that the government provide teachers' trainings.

#### **F. Policy Suggestions**

33. The Education Bureau (EDB) should give concrete responses to the recommendations made by the Equal Opportunities Commission Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities and create a concrete action timeline. Currently, the Education Bureau encourages ethnic minority students to integrate into the mainstream Hong Kong society, but, as stated by in the EOC report, fails to provide adequate and comprehensive support to students, teachers and schools.
34. The EDB should provide comprehensive Chinese-language teaching support to kindergartens with ethnic minority students. Such support should include Chinese teaching materials for ethnic minority kindergarteners and support to schools in hiring extra Chinese-language

teachers. The EDB should also fund and support organizations that provide extra Chinese-language training for ethnic minority students.

35. The EDB should provide special funding for kindergartens to employ ethnic minority teachers and teaching assistants in order to assist in classroom teaching and facilitate communications with parents.
36. HKIEd and VTC early childhood education programs should recruit ethnic minorities as professional kindergarten teachers and teaching assistants. For the ethnic minorities who are currently working in the field without professional qualifications, these training institutions should also provide certificated field-specific vocation training.
37. The EDB should open the on-the-job professional training programs (currently administered by HKIEd and HKU) on cultural sensitivity and teaching non-Chinese-speaking students to pre-primary teachers, and provide the same sponsorship as that for primary school teachers. Alternatively the EDB should open similar programs specifically for kindergarten teachers.
38. The new government under C.Y. Leung should fulfill their election promises and provide assistance to ethnic minority kindergarten children learning Chinese as soon as possible, and prevent the flawed system from ruining the future of yet another generation of young ethnic minority children.

## Appendix A

Results to each survey question

Question 1: Has your school admitted any ethnic minority students (non-Chinese speaking) this school year (2011/2012)?

|       | no. | %   |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Yes   | 71  | 70% |
| No    | 31  | 30% |
| Total | 102 |     |

If yes, how many ethnic minority students were admitted?

|       | no.  | average per school | range |
|-------|------|--------------------|-------|
| K1    | 382  | 5.38               | 0-43  |
| K2    | 447  | 6.30               | 0-53  |
| K3    | 384  | 5.41               | 0-44  |
| total | 1213 | 17.08              |       |

Question 2: Please describe the distribution of the ethnic minority students (please state the number of students)

|                | no.  | % out of all total number of EM students |
|----------------|------|--|
| Pakistani      | 407  | 35.5%                                    |
| Filipino       | 214  | 18.7%                                    |
| Indian         | 191  | 16.7%                                    |
| Nepalese       | 172  | 15.0%                                    |
| Indonesian     | 56   | 4.9%                                     |
| Thai           | 32   | 2.8%                                     |
| European       | 14   | 1.2%                                     |
| North American | 9    | 0.8%                                     |
| African        | 5    | 0.4%                                     |
| South American | 2    | 0.2%                                     |
| Others         | 45   | 3.9%                                     |
| total          | 1147 |  |

Question 3: What difficulties do your school teachers encounter when teaching ethnic minority students? (You may choose more than one option)

|  | no. | %   |
|--|-----|-----|
| C. Greater variation in the Chinese language ability of ethnic minority students   | 48  | 69% |
| H. Language barriers between ethnic minority parents and teachers  | 41  | 59% |
| I. Ethnic minority parents can provide very limited academic assistance to their children  | 41  | 59% |
| A. Language barrier between ethnic minority students and teachers  | 39  | 56% |
| B. Greater variation in the learning abilities and motivation of ethnic minority students  | 38  | 54% |
| F. Teachers have to use simple English and teach in both Chinese and English   | 37  | 53% |
| G. Teachers cannot provide the individual attention ethnic minority students require   | 35  | 50% |
| D. Teachers are unable to assess whether ethnic minority students understand the teaching content and dialogue   | 30  | 43% |
| E. Teachers do not know what specific and effective teaching methods are available to them, there they have to spend a lot of time to achieve the teaching objective | 24  | 34% |
| J. Others  | 6   | 9%  |
| K. No difficulties encountered   | 5   | 7%  |
| total  | 70  |     |

Question 4: Does your school encounter any difficulties in administration?

|       | no. | %   |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Yes   | 40  | 56% |
| No    | 32  | 44% |
| total | 72  |     |

Q4: What are the administrative difficulties?

| Administrative difficulties   | no. |
|---|-----|
| Language barriers with parents (e.g. having to translate notices and conduct bilingual meetings, difficulties communicating with parents with poor English and Chinese abilities) | 32  |
| Difficulties arising from cultural differences (e.g. special dietary needs, parents being unfamiliar with Hong Kong systems)  | 6   |
| Difficulties arranging extra manpower to cater to ethnic minority students' and parents' needs  | 4   |

\* Some schools cited more than one administrative difficulties.

Question 5: Does your school have to create a tailor-made Chinese language curriculum to cater to the learning needs of ethnic minority students?

|       | no. | %   |
|-------|-----|-----|
| Yes   | 22  | 31% |
| No    | 48  | 69% |
| total | 70  |     |

Question 6: Did your school's teachers receive any special teacher training in teaching ethnic minority children?

|     | no. | %   |
|-----|-----|-----|
| Yes | 2   | 2%  |
| No  | 96  | 98% |
|     | 98  |     |

If yes, the number of training hours is \_\_\_\_\_ and the training organization is \_\_\_\_\_

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Number of hours | 1        |
| Organization    | 香港大學現龍小組 |

Question 7: Has your school employed any ethnic minority teachers/ teaching assistants/ non-teaching staff to assist in daily teaching and administrative tasks?

| Total schools with ethnic minority staff members | no. | %   |
|--|-----|-----|
| Yes  | 12  | 12% |
| No   | 88  | 88% |
| total  | 100 |     |

|                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| average number of EM staff           | 2.8 |
| min number of EM staff in one school | 1   |
| max number of EM staff in one school | 6   |

Among schools with ethnic minority students:

| Schools with ethnic minority staff members         | no. | %   |
|--|-----|-----|
| Yes  | 9   | 13% |
| No   | 61  | 87% |
| total no. of schools with ethnic minority students | 70  |     |

Question 8: What present supporting measures does your school provide for the ethnic minority students?

|  | no. | %   |
|--|-----|-----|
| H. no supporting measures are provided, they receive the same support as Chinese students      | 27  | 41% |
| G. others  | 17  | 26% |
| F. provide racial harmony/ inclusive activities to ethnic minority students                    | 15  | 23% |
| E. provide specially designed learning materials to ethnic minority students                   | 11  | 17% |
| A. ethnic minority staff are employed as teachers/ TA  | 8   | 12% |
| D. provide additional Chinese tuition/ after class tuition classes to ethnic minority students | 9   | 14% |
| C. increase in the number of total staff   | 6   | 9%  |
| B. ethnic minority staff are employed for non teaching duties                                  | 4   | 6%  |
| total responded  | 66  |     |

Q8: Number of schools that provide academic support:

|  | #  | %   |
|--|----|-----|
| # with one or more academic or Chinese support | 26 | 29% |
| # with supporting measures but not academic    | 18 | 20% |
| # without any supporting measures              | 47 | 52% |
| total  | 91 |     |

Q8: “Other present supporting measures” write-ins include:

|   | no. |
|---|-----|
| Strengthening communication with parents (e.g. explaining school notices in person, inviting parents as volunteer translators, providing English notices) | 10  |
| Participating in programs organized by other organizations (e.g. racial harmony programs, Chinese programs for non-Chinese speaking students)             | 7   |
| Making curriculum and assessment accommodations   | 1   |

Question 9: In your school’s opinion, are the supporting measures provided by the government to ethnic minority kindergarten students adequate?

|  | no.  | %   |
|--|------|-----|
| Very adequate                                      | 0    | 0%  |
| Adequate   | 10   | 11% |
| Inadequate   | 50   | 53% |
| Very inadequate                                    | 34   | 36% |
| total  | 94   |     |
| Average score (1=very inadequate; 4=very adequate) | 1.74 |     |

Question 10: What measures should the government provide to ethnic minority students in kindergarten education? (You may choose more than one option)

|   | no. | %   |
|---|-----|-----|
| G. Fund ethnic minority teachers/ teaching assistants                                 | 80  | 81% |
| B. teaching skills training   | 49  | 49% |
| A. Cultural sensitivity teacher training  | 45  | 45% |
| C. Specially designed teaching and learning materials                                 | 44  | 44% |
| E. a special fund   | 42  | 42% |
| D. additional Chinese learning class  | 40  | 40% |
| F. Fund additional Chinese language teachers  | 35  | 35% |
| H. Establish a Chinese as a second language curriculum and related teaching materials | 28  | 28% |
| I. Others   | 8   | 8%  |
| total   | 99  |     |

Q10: “Other measures” write-ins include:

|  | no. |
|--|-----|
| Ethnic minority staff support (e.g. provide ethnic minority teaching assistants and staff, systematic translation support, subsidize ethnic minority staff salary) | 5   |
| Parent-supporting programs (e.g. parents’ Chinese classes, child-care classes)   | 3   |



Question 11: Please rate the effectiveness of the following suggested measures in assisting ethnic minority students in learning Chinese: (1=most effective; 5=least effective)

|  | average score |
|--|---------------|
| government allocates more resources to enable schools to employ additional Chinese language teachers for teaching ethnic minority students                         | 1.64          |
| government provide funding for schools to hire ethnic minority teacher assistants  | 2.10          |
| provide more training to front line teachers by teacher training organizations   | 2.31          |
| ethnic minority students and Chinese students study in the same class, but ethnic minority students have to stay after school for additional Chinese tuition class | 2.99          |
| other suggestions  | 3.65          |
| total  | 97            |

Question 11: List of “other suggestions”

Education for parents on the importance of Chinese language and integration into Hong Kong mainstream society:

- 教導家長與他們說中文及多看中文電視節目
- 對少數族裔家長的教育，以幫助他們更快融入社區
- 應從家長教育出發，讓他們明白香港文化、習慣及學習方法等
- 家長一同參與學習中文課(可課後)

Education for parents on the Hong Kong education system

- 舉行家長講座，讓家長了解兒童在不同階段的成長特徵和發展需要，加強家長對學前教育學費資助的資訊及幼稚園與小學銜接的重要性
- 由教育局各地區統籌家長講座，多講解(要有翻譯)香港情況，可配合邀請校長作高中分享

Other support for ethnic minority parents:

- 政府亦需要給予少數族裔的家長講座
- 政府應增撥資源為少數族裔學生作親子教育
- 提供少數族裔行政助理支援，翻譯通告及學校文件給家長，另作口頭翻譯(溝通橋樑)

District-based support resources

- 一位專科老師走 3-4 間學校，每週協助幾次，如學生不多學校可能只有 1-2 位少數族裔學生
- 每區設有一些中心集中協助區內不同學校的少數族裔學生學習中文
- 設地區性家長資源中心，課後輔導班等
- 組織支援網絡，令學校可以須作出合適的轉介，培訓查詢，組織活動(識字班)得一站式服務基地，將資源能妥善的運用和有到位的服務安排

Other suggestions:

- 增加學習媒體，如教育電視，網上平台中

**Appendix B:**

Questionnaire sample

Jointly Organised by Hong Kong Unison & Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union  
(HKPTU)

**Survey of Kindergarten Education of Ethnic Minority Students 2011**

Dear Principal / Person-in-charge,

The Education Bureau (EDB), Schools, Front-line Teachers and parents are paying particular attention to the effectiveness of integrating Ethnic Minority Students into the mainstream education system and the Chinese language learning of Ethnic Minority Students.

In order to understand the situation facing front-line kindergarten teachers and schools, your school is invited to participate in a survey, jointly conducted by Hong Kong Unison and HKPTU, of the Kindergarten Education of Ethnic Minority Students. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete. Your invaluable response will assist us in making recommendations to the EDB for supportive measures to cater the special needs of EM students.

The results of this survey will be announced in April 2012. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Hong Kong Unison

**Please submit the completed questionnaire to Hong Kong Unison on or before 30th November, 2011 by the following methods:**

- 1. By Fax : 2789-1767**
- 2. By Email: [service@unison.org.hk](mailto:service@unison.org.hk)**
- 3. By Post: Room 1303, 13/F, Wang Yip Industrial Building, 1 Elm Street, Tai Kok Tsui, Kowloon**

Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact our Social Worker, Miss Queenie Choi of Hong Kong Unison (Tel: 2789-3246).

# Survey of Kindergarten Education of Ethnic Minority Students 2011

Please put a  in the appropriate box and/or write down your opinion:

1. Has your school admitted any Ethnic Minority students (i.e. Non-Chinese speaking) in this school year (2011/12)?

- Yes       No (Please skip to Question 6)

If yes, how many students were admitted?

K1: \_\_\_\_\_ K2: \_\_\_\_\_ K3: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please describe the distribution of the Ethnic Minority students is (Please state the no. of students):

Indonesian: \_\_\_\_\_ Pakistani: \_\_\_\_\_ Indian: \_\_\_\_\_ Nepalese: \_\_\_\_\_ Filipino: \_\_\_\_\_

Thai: \_\_\_\_\_ African: \_\_\_\_\_ European: \_\_\_\_\_ North American: \_\_\_\_\_ South American: \_\_\_\_\_

Others (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. What difficulties do your school teachers encounter any difficulties when teaching Ethnic Minority students? (You may choose more than 1 option)

- Language barrier between Ethnic Minority students and teachers.
- Greater variation in the learning abilities and motivation of Ethnic Minority students.
- Greater variation in the Chinese language ability of Ethnic Minority students.
- Teachers are unable to assess whether Ethnic Minority students understand the teaching content and dialogue.
- Teachers do not know what specific and effective teaching methods are available to them, there they have to spend a lot of time to achieve the teaching objectives.
- Teachers have to use simple English and teach in both Chinese and English.
- Teachers cannot provide the individual attention Ethnic Minority Students require.
- Language barriers between Ethnic Minority parents and teachers
- Ethnic Minority parents can provide very limited academic assistance to their children
- Others (please specific): \_\_\_\_\_
- No difficulties are encountered

4. Does your school encounter any difficulties in administration?

- Yes       No

If yes, please specify what these difficulties are: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does your school have to create a tailor-made Chinese language curriculum to cater the learning needs of the Ethnic Minority students?

- Yes       No

6. Did your school's teachers receive any special teacher training in teaching Ethnic Minority children?

- Yes       No

If yes, the number of training hours is around \_\_\_\_\_ hours, and the training organisation is \_\_\_\_\_

7. Has your school employed any Ethnic Minority Teachers / Teaching Assistants / Non-teaching posts to assist in daily teaching and administrative tasks?

- Yes, Total no.: \_\_\_\_\_  No

8. What present supporting measures does your school provide for the Ethnic Minority students? (You may choose more than 1 option)
- Ethnic Minority staff are employed as the Teachers / Teacher Assistants
  - Ethnic Minority staff are employed for non-teaching duties (eg. administrative support, communication with EM parents and etc. )
  - Increase in the number of total staff
  - Provide additional Chinese tuition / After-class tuition classes to Ethnic Minority students
  - Provide specially-designed learning materials to Ethnic Minority students
  - Provide racial harmony / inclusive activities to Ethnic Minority students
  - Others (please specific): \_\_\_\_\_
  - No supporting measures are provided to Ethnic Minority students, they receive the same support as Chinese students.
9. In your school's opinion, are the supporting measures provided by the Government to Ethnic Minority Kindergarten Students adequate?
- Very adequate       Adequate       Inadequate       Very inadequate
10. What measures should the Government provide to Ethnic Minority students in Kindergarten Education? (You may choose more than 1 option)
- Cultural sensitivity teacher training
  - Teaching skills training
  - Specially-designed teaching and learning materials
  - Additional Chinese learning classes
  - A Special fund
  - Fund additional Chinese language Teachers
  - Fund Ethnic Minority Teachers/ Teaching Assistants
  - Establish a Chinese as the Second Language Curriculum and related teaching materials
  - Others (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
11. Please rate the effectiveness of the following suggested measures in assisting Ethnic Minority students in learning Chinese:  
(1 – the most effective way      5 – the least effective way)
- Government allocates more resources to enable schools to employ additional Chinese language teachers for teaching EM students.
  - Provide more training to front-line teachers by Teacher Training Organisations.
  - Government provides funding for schools to hire Ethnic Minority Teacher Assistants
  - Ethnic Minority students and Chinese students study in the same class, but Ethnic Minority students have to stay after-school for additional Chinese tuition class  
( \_\_\_\_\_ times for 1 week, \_\_\_\_\_ hours for each meeting)
  - Other suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

***End of the questionnaire***  
***Thank you!***

如 貴校之前已填寫過  
此問卷，並已提交予香  
港融樂會，則無需理會  
這個邀請。如有引起

香港融樂會及香港教育專業人員協會合辦

## 本港少數族裔學童學前教育情況調查 2011-12

致 貴校校長/負責人：

本港少數族裔學童的人數愈益增加，對於如何能有效協助這些學童學習中文和融入主流教育系統，對教育局、整個教育界(包括學校及前線教師)、家長以致學童本身均是很值得關注的課題。

為了掌握前線教師及學校在推行少數族裔學前教育的實際情況，現誠邀 貴校參與一項由融樂會及教協會合作的「本港少數族裔學童學前教育情況」問卷調查，提供寶貴資料以協助我們向教育當局建議適切可行的支援措施予有需要的幼稚(兒)園老師及少數族裔學生。是次調查結果將會於 4 月上旬作新聞發佈。

衷心感謝 貴校的協助！本問卷調查需時約 10 分鐘。

\* 提交已完成的問卷方法：

填妥問卷後，請把問卷於 2012 年 3 月 9 日或之前 傳真、電郵或郵寄至香港融樂會

1. 傳真號碼：2789 1767
2. 電郵：[service@unison.org.hk](mailto:service@unison.org.hk)
3. 郵寄地址：九龍大角咀榆樹街 1 號宏業工業大廈 13 樓 1303 室
4. 如有任何查詢，請致電 2789 3246 香港融樂會社工 蔡樂婷姑娘



學校名稱：\_\_\_\_\_

請在適當地地方以  或文字表示：

2. 貴校於本學年 2011/12 有否取錄少數族裔 (非華語) 學童？

有  沒有 (→ 請跳至第 6 題)

如有，請問共取錄了多少名少數族裔學童？ 幼兒班：\_\_\_\_人 低班 / 或稱中班：\_\_\_\_人 高班：\_\_\_\_人

3. 少數族裔學童的族裔人數分佈是多少？(請填上實際人數)：

印尼：\_\_\_\_人 巴基斯坦：\_\_\_\_人 印度：\_\_\_\_人 尼泊爾：\_\_\_\_人 菲律賓：\_\_\_\_人

泰國：\_\_\_\_人 非洲：\_\_\_\_人 歐洲：\_\_\_\_人 北美洲：\_\_\_\_人 南美洲：\_\_\_\_人

其他 (請註明所屬種族)：\_\_\_\_\_

4. 貴校老師在教導少數族裔學童過程中有否遇到困難？(可選多項)

- 少數族裔學童與教師語言不通，未能溝通
- 少數族裔學童學習能力、動機差異極大

- 少數族裔學童的中文水平差異極大
  - 老師未能了解學童是否明白教學及對話內容
  - 不知道有甚麼具體及有效教學方法，要花費很多時間才能達到效果
  - 教師需要以簡單英語作雙語教學
  - 要顧及全班學生進度，未能兼顧個別學童
  - 教師與少數族裔家長語言不通，未能溝通
  - 少數族裔家長未能協助學童的課業
  - 其他 (請列明)：\_\_\_\_\_
  - 沒有困難
5. 貴校在行政上有否困難？
- 有 (請說明：\_\_\_\_\_ )       沒有
6. 貴校有否需要剪裁中文課程，以配合少數族裔學童的需要或中文程度？
- 有       沒有
7. 貴校的教師曾否接受任教少數族裔學童的專業培訓？
- 有 (培訓時數大約為\_\_\_\_\_ 小時，培訓機構：\_\_\_\_\_ )       沒有
8. 貴校現時有否聘請少數族裔老師 / 助教 / 非教學人員協助日常教學和行政工作？
- 有，共有\_\_\_\_\_ 名       沒有
9. 貴校現時為少數族裔學童提供的額外支援，包括哪些措施？(可選多項)
- 聘請少數族裔人士擔任教學/教學助理工作
  - 聘請少數族裔人士擔任非教學工作 (如行政支援、家長溝通等)
  - 增聘整體人手
  - 為此類學童提供額外的中文班/課後功課輔導
  - 為此類學童提供特別的教材/學習材料
  - 為此類學童提供共融活動/課程
  - 其他 (請列明)：\_\_\_\_\_
  - 沒有特別的支援，與本地生所獲得的支援相同
10. 貴校認為政府現時提供予少數族裔幼稚(兒)園學生的學習支援是否足夠？
- 非常足夠       足夠
- 不足夠       非常不足夠
11. 貴校認為有關當局應該提供甚麼支援予少數族裔學童的學前教育？(可選多項)
- 文化敏感度教師培訓
  - 教學技巧教師培訓
  - 教材及學習材料

- 額外中文班
- 特別資助金額
- 資助額外中文教師名額
- 資助少數族裔教學助理/教師
- 設立以中文作為第二語言的課程及相關教材
- 其他，請說明：\_\_\_\_\_

12. 貴校認為下列的方案是否能有效幫助少數族裔學童學習中文：

( 請依序排列，於方格中填上 1 至 5，1 為最可行 )

- 政府增撥資源讓學校能聘請額外中文教師，專責教授少數族裔學生
- 教師培訓機構增加對前線老師的專業培訓
- 政府資助校方聘請少數族裔教學助理
- 少數族裔學生與華語學生一同常規上課，但少數族裔學生放學後留校接受額外中文輔導  
( 一星期\_\_\_\_\_次，每次\_\_\_\_\_小時 )
- 其他可行建議：\_\_\_\_\_

**全卷完，多謝！**