

For information on 13 February, 2017

**Submission on “Employment support services for ethnic minorities” to the  
Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities**

One issue that requires immediate attention is job employment opportunities for the young ethnic minority (EM). Many EM university graduates find it extremely difficult to find jobs in their fields, due to the Chinese requirement of the job positions. Over 90% of the jobs openings require excellent command of written and spoken Chinese, some of these positions may not require Chinese per se; but the requirement is there, forcing EM university graduates to go for English teaching or settle for lower paying jobs such as waiter in a restaurant.

English language ability is not given much importance and Chinese is single handedly more important than holding any of other language. With Hong Kong being called an international city, English should be given higher priority and job seekers should not be screened out just because they cannot speak good Chinese. Certain firms in Japan take the initiative to teach Japanese to the international graduates they hire, Hong Kong employers need to learn from this and try to cater towards EM job seekers.

Most of the EM graduates who completed their secondary and tertiary education in Hong Kong cannot speak Cantonese up to the working proficiency level, however even if they can that is not good enough for employers since reading and writing Chinese is also important in their eyes. Cantonese is a difficult subject which requires a lot of practice. EM students do not have a good Chinese curriculum at school, as most of them go to designated school where the Chinese level is far too low for the working world, and the environment for practicing Chinese is poor as most classmates are non-Chinese, thus there is no need to speak in Cantonese, and they forget the Chinese they have learnt in school.

If they cannot learn Chinese in high school, can they learn in university? The answer is **NO**. Most universities only offer a very basic Cantonese class only, for international students' survival in Hong Kong. There is no mandatory Chinese class that helps to build up on EM students' Chinese level. As a result they graduate with a Bachelor Degree and still not able to speak Cantonese fluently and write Chinese fluently.

If Hong Kong wants to be truly international, the job employment sector needs to be fairer and less strict on the Chinese language requirement. When EM graduates get local jobs and immerse into the local environment, that's when they get the chance to practice Cantonese properly and integrate into the mainstream society.