



For discussion on 8 May, 2017

**Unison's submission to the Subcommittee on the Rights of Ethnic Minorities on
Difficulties encountered by ethnic minorities in gaining access to housing and
healthcare services, and views on services provided by
Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities**

Background

This paper aims at providing views to the Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities ('the Subcommittee') for the discussion on 8 May related to the education difficulties faced by non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students as shown by the services provided by Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities, the need of service mainstreaming, the role of Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) related to the racial discrimination incidents in housing issues. It also includes our request to this Subcommittee to extend its timeframe in order to discuss the issues related to ethnic minority which are not yet discussed, and also to take forward and deliberate the complex and wide range of issues identified in the meetings, especially on education, concerning the ethnic minority community.

Demands for tutorial services reflects the deficiency of the mainstream education system

1. Tutorials provided by NGOs are supplementary programmes and they cannot address the structural problems within the education system. Without a proper Chinese-as-a-second-language curriculum which enable non-Chinese speaking students to attain the local Chinese levels in suitable learning ways, students' Chinese cannot be improved effectively and language barrier will hinder them from integrating into the mainstream society.
2. These support service centres are in the best position to observe real situation of NCS students, e.g. learning levels, performance in other subjects, student's integration in schools, social interactions with Chinese students, the effect of PMIC, etc. These observations should be valued and gathered to reflect to the Education Bureau so that they can target the needs when formulating policies.

Service mainstreaming and the cultural sensitivity of social workers

3. With the growing population of ethnic minority communities in different districts, ethnic minority as local residents are also entitled to the enjoyment of social service provided by other NGOs, and should not be limited to specific centres. Many of the services provided by the NGOs under the Social Welfare Department overlap with the services which HAD Regional Support Centres for Ethnic Minorities provide. To better serve the ethnic minority



community as a whole and for better integration purpose, the government should adopt service mainstreaming approach and encourage all NGOs in Hong Kong to respond to the needs of ethnic minority when they plan their service, instead of relying on the 6 support service centres and the 2 sub-centres for ethnic minority.

4. Currently there is no standardized course which touch on the topic of ethnic minority community among different social work programmes. Even if social work students do not choose to work in the 'ethnic minority field', they may still have to serve the ethnic minority community in other service streams since ethnic minorities are also local residents who are entitled to use different social services in Hong Kong. Hence, registered social workers are not prepared to serve the ethnic minority community if the courses in social work programme do not include ethnic minorities in their core subjects.

EOC should actively deal with the housing issues

5. Ethnic minority find it difficult to rent a flat due to the stereotypes of landlords and the negative attitude by housing agents. This have been repeatedly reported in the media as well as with clear evidence showing negative and discriminatory responses given to ethnic minority clients who were looking for flats.

6. However, even when these incidents are so obvious, the response from the Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC), whose work is to eliminate all forms of discrimination, has only been conducting workshops to housing agents reminding them what acts/ wordings may cause discrimination but not emphasizing on the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for ethnic minority residents.

7. The EOC should be more proactive and consider conducting direct investigation to the help eliminate racial discrimination in rental issues.

Extending the timeframe of the Subcommittee for further discussion

8. The Subcommittee is a good mechanism to provide recommendations to the government to improve and develop policies to ensure the rights of ethnic minorities. It helps bridge the gaps between the government, legislators and the community since community members can directly reflect their views and problems via the meetings with deputations.

9. Considering the wide range and complexity of ethnic minority rights issues, we hope the Subcommittee can consider seeking endorsement from the House Committee to extend its timeframe to take forward the issues identified at this stage of the meetings and deliberate the discussions.



5 May, 2017

**Submission to request the extension of
the Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities**

Purpose

1. This submission is from Hong Kong Unison to request the extension of the Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities ('Subcommittee'). The Subcommittee commenced work in November 2016. Till 5 May 2017, a total of seven meetings were held, including three public hearings attended by deputations and individuals to give views on issues related to Ethnic Minority on education, employment support services, access to housing, healthcare services, and services provided by Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities. There are only two more Subcommittee meetings scheduled until the end of 16/17 Session, Hong Kong Unison is concerned that there is not enough time to follow up on the recommendations made by the Subcommittee, and the relevant policies and measures relating to ethnic minorities. Hong Kong Unison requests that the Subcommittee seeks endorsement from the House Committee to extend another 12 months for the work of the Subcommittee.

Education issues of ethnic minority students

2. A number of key education issues have emerged from the previous Subcommittee meetings pertaining to ethnic minority students in the public education system. More work is needed at the policy level to ensure equal and equitable education for ethnic minorities of Hong Kong; including (please refer to Annex A for details):
 - (a) kindergarten education of ethnic minority students;
 - (b) Chinese learning of ethnic minority students and relevant funding and support measures;
 - (c) de facto racial segregation in public schools;
 - (d) provision of information in school selection for ethnic minorities students;
 - (e) teacher training in teaching non-Chinese speaking students;
 - (f) higher education of ethnic minority students;
 - (g) home-school cooperation.

Other important issues

3. There are issues which are listed in the work plan of this Subcommittee but not discussed yet (including but not limited to the following):
 - (a) implementation and review of the Race Discrimination Ordinance;
 - (b) difficulties encountered by ethnic minorities in applying for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Passport;
 - (c) implementation of the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality.

Conclusion

4. Hong Kong Unison urges the Subcommittee to request an extension of timeframe from the House Committee to tackle the above mentioned issues to allow ethnic minorities truly enjoy equal rights in Hong Kong.



Below are some key education issues relevant to ethnic minorities that emerged from previous Subcommittee meetings. Hong Kong Unison requests the Subcommittee to follow up on the issues and recommend the Administration to develop and implement a comprehensive education and language-acquisition policy to enable ethnic minority students study with fellow HongKongers and develop proficiency in Chinese that is necessary for success in school and society.

- (a) Kindergarten education of ethnic minority students
 - i. Utilization and monitoring of additional funding under Free Quality Kindergarten to kindergartens with 8 and more non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students;
 - ii. Ensuring compliance and monitoring of Education Bureau (EDB) Kindergarten Admission Guidelines and Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines;

- (b) Chinese learning of ethnic minority students and relevant funding and support measures
 - i. Intensive follow up on the motion passed in this Subcommittee at the meeting on 12 December 2016 – “Education for children of ethnic minorities – implementation progress of the ‘Chinese language as the second language’ curriculum, placement of ethnic minority students and support measures to these students and to schools admitting them”;
 - ii. Developing teaching and learning materials for Chinese learning of NCS students;
 - iii. Monitoring the effectiveness of the Learning Framework, including accountability and transparency of funding and the number of NCS students who bridged to mainstream Chinese language;

- (c) De facto racial segregation in public schools
 - i. Measures taken by the EDB to tackle the situation of de facto racial segregation in public schools;
 - ii. Feasibility of setting a ratio of non-Chinese students to Chinese students in public schools;
 - iii. Establishing the Code of Practice on Education under the Race Discrimination Ordinance;

- (d) Provision of information in school selection for ethnic minorities students
 - i. Ensuring transparent school information including support to NCS students in school profiles;
 - ii. Role of EDB School Place Allocation Team in assisting parents in primary (POA) and secondary (SSPA) school selection;
 - iii. Role of EDB Regional Education Office (REO) in supporting NCS parents;

- (e) Teacher training in teaching non-Chinese speaking students
 - i. Evaluation of the usage and effectiveness of the current support to teachers and schools, professional development workshops and courses;



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- ii. Including “Education for NCS Students” as a core module in all pre-service teacher training programmes;
 - iii. Follow up on the manifesto of the Chief Executive-elect on providing incentives for teachers to further improve their skills in teaching NCS students;
 - iv. Explore ways/support to enhance teachers' capacity in catering for NCS students;
- (f) Higher education of ethnic minority students
- i. Recognition, suitability, and accommodations of alternative Chinese qualifications in JUPAS and non-JUPAS programmes;
 - ii. Evaluation of multiple pathways for NCS students in adapted Chinese curriculum;
- (g) Home-school cooperation
- i. Training programme for non-Chinese speaking teaching assistant in schools;
 - ii. Public schools to adopt “Equal Opportunities Racial Integration Guidelines”;
 - iii. Public education initiatives to enhance public awareness on culturally diverse learning environment, thereby helping to reduce the incidence of misunderstanding and disputes between Chinese and NCS parents.