



Submission from Ethnic Minority Services (EMS) of Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS)

Implementation and review of the Administrative Guidelines
on Promotion of Racial Equality

Purpose of the Paper

This paper sets out the views from Ethnic Minority Services (EMS) of Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS), hereafter refer to as EMS to the Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities regarding the Implementation and review of the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality.

Background

The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality, hereafter refer to as the guidelines, has been set up since 2010 with the purpose to provide guidance to relevant public authorities so that they would adopt the good practice of considering the promotion of racial equality as an integral dimension in the formulation, implementation and review of relevant policies and measures, and which CMAB will keep the scope of the Guidelines under review.

Within the guidelines, key public services were listed which included medical, education, vocational training, employment and major community services. Those listed public service providers have particularly relevance to meeting the special needs of ethnic minorities and facilitating their integration into the community.

Observation

One of the major obstacles for the ethnic minority residents in accessing these public services is language barrier. A Study on Ethnic Minority's Most Concerned Issues and Voting Behavior, 2016 conducted by Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) and The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) showed that one of the most concerned



issues was “Difficulties in accessing public services (e.g. hospital, housing, employment, social welfare and education)”.

However, according to the statistics provided by the public service providers in last year’s Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities meetings, the use of interpretation and translation services were limited with some providers could not even provide such statistics.

Recommendations

1. The guidelines should be compulsory for all public service providers to implement to ensure accessibility of services by Ethnic Minorities.
2. As CMAB has the responsibility to review the implementation of the guidelines of the major public service providers, CMAB should monitor further such implementation by recognizing which public service providers are implementing good practices according to the guidelines, and to collect, promulgate and promote policies and measures implemented that can meet the needs of Ethnic Minorities (including collaboration with community groups/ NGOs, means of promotion and publicity).
3. With regard to the Administrative Guideline part 4.6, it is mentioned that "The relevant public authorities should consider appropriate steps to facilitate their assessment. These steps may include collection of relevant information and statistics, consultation with relevant stakeholders and other appropriate measures." In line with this, public service providers should collect information about Ethnic Minority users such as race, language proficiency and use of interpretation services to enable public service providers to assess and seek continuously enhancement of providing an accessible service for Ethnic Minorities.
4. To ensure Ethnic Minorities have access to public services, monitoring should be put in place by requiring service providers to keep and promulgate statistics of usage of services by Ethnic Minorities, languages used and whether interpretation was provided on regular basis. CMAB should take the initiative and has the responsibility to set up and develop such monitoring mechanism.