

Speech for Public Hearing on 27/2/2018

Laiba

Hi, I am Laiba currently studying in Delia Memorial Secondary School Broadway. My family applied for Student Financial Assistance Scheme in 2015 for the first time. We did not know about this scheme before when I was in Primary School. My Primary School never mention or give information about Student Finance Schemes. It was a real Struggle for my family to manage book fees and other school related expenses. I have 3 siblings too. In our family of 6 members, only my father is working. We spend quite hard time in order to manage all things with 1 salary. My 2 siblings were young at that time, my parents stop giving them Formula Milk when they were just 1 years old because Formula milk was too expensive and we cannot afford to buy it. My mother used to give them packed milk 1 or 2 times only. They would be often sick because that milk did not suit them well. My mother even did not use disposable diapers for them. My family spend less on food, we eat meat occasionally.

Then my mother came to know about Catholic Workers Centre from her friend, they introduced SFA to us. It was still quite hard for us to apply because of language barrier. It was difficult to fill up the forms and go through the complicated process. Catholic Workers Centre helped us to complete the application. Those ethnic minorities who do not know about this NGO how they are going to apply?

I want to request that it will be great if there is specific form filling services for ethnic minorities.

It would be more helpful if EDB and SFA employ local ethnic minority staff who can help not only to publicize the scheme but also to help throughout the application of SFA.

I agreed that some schools will send notices about SFA in the beginning of school year but notice does not have much information about the scheme and it is not useful at all.

EDB and SFA can collaborate with schools to arrange form filling sessions and seminars about SFA.

We can get better education only if we are economically satisfied.

Thanks.