



Utilizing \$500 million to Strengthen Support for Ethnic Minorities
Recommendation on Initiatives Enhancing
Employment Support for Ethnic Minority Jobseekers

Purpose

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers - Kowloon of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong has all along been paying close attention to the plight of the grass-root ethnic minority (EM) groups. We dedicate our all-out effort to assisting them in getting the public service and employment support provided by the government all the time.
2. It is stated in the 2018-19 Budget that a provision of \$500 million will be earmarked for enhancing support for EMs. The data on the high unemployment rate of certain EM groups recently released by the government is alarming. To reduce the employment gap, the employment service for EMs should be revamped. Therefore, we urge the government to allocate part of the \$500 million to beef up employment support service for EM jobseekers with the following measures:
 - 2.1 An integrated approach with social work intervention in the delivery of personalized employment assistance to the jobseekers by commissioning NGOs to provide case management, targeted employment assistance and follow-up support service for both employees and employers.
 - 2.2 An innovative approach in developing employers' network and opening up more employment opportunities by setting up a team of "Employer Engagement Consultants" to explore networks with employers and open up job opportunities for EM jobseekers.
3. This paper outlines the above recommendations.

Background

4. The latest study released by the government revealed that the poverty situation of ethnic minorities (EM) in Hong Kong is getting worse, with close to one in five EM individuals living in penury. Even after policy intervention, the poverty rate of EMs rose from 13.9% in 2011 to 17.6% in 2016, and was obviously higher than that of the general population. Worryingly, the number of poor working households has increased. Among these poor family circles, 64.7% of them are EMs, and around 80% of these EMs are Pakistanis and Nepalese.
5. Above all, the unemployment rate of EMs was comparatively high (4.6%), with 5.3% of South Asians out of jobs, and 9.2% of Pakistanis unemployed. Barrier to employment is a main issue which is the cause for a considerable number of these ethnic groups falling below the poverty line. Thus, the government should pay more attention to strengthen employment supports for EMs to eliminate the gap between the employment rates of the ethnic minority and general populations. The phenomenon is more discouraging in that some particular ethnic groups has high education levels, but a relatively large proportion of them are working as elementary labourers, with low salaries, as proved by statistics from 2016 by-census.¹
6. Though the Labour Department (LD) claims that it provides comprehensive employment services to all jobseekers, including EMs, data shows that in 2016, 63,814 able-bodied registered for using the LD employment service, only 1.36% of them were EMs. Among the registered jobseekers listed for employment through the referral service, only 7.86% were EMs while 19.6% of them were from other groups. It shows that EMs were at a disadvantage. Our experience and the recent study on “Ethnic Minorities' Awareness and Satisfaction towards Selected Public Services”² (stated “the Study” as below) show that the department’s services are insufficient to enhance EMs’ employment opportunities. Furthermore, mismatches between EM jobseekers’ talents and employers’ demands constantly came to light.

¹ According to the 2016 by-census figures, the proportion of Nepalese with post-secondary qualifications working as “managers and administrators” and “professional/associate professionals” is only 7.7% and 32.4% respectively, far lower than that of the overall population with the same qualification (18.2% and 53.5%). Meanwhile, 48.3% of highly-educated Nepalese were earning less than \$15000 per month, comparing to only 23.8% of the overall population of the same education level.

<https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/eng/pdf/A%20Study%20on%20EMs%20Awareness%20and%20Satisfaction%20towards%20Selected%20Public%20Services%20-%20Report.pdf>

Comments on the Existing Employment Service for EMs provided by the LD

7. Special counters to provide EM jobseekers with job referral service and employment information:

7.1 When EMs approach the job centres to seek assistance from the Employment Services Ambassadors (ESA) for Ethnic Minorities, they find it difficult to identify the relevant counters. The EMs consulted in the Study commented that the roles and responsibilities of the Ambassadors manning the “counters” were “rather limited”. When EM jobseekers try to use the facilities and services at the centres or job fairs, the ambassadors can only assist them in breaking the language barriers, short of providing information about local job market due to lack of such knowledge. (pt. 10.6)

7.2 The LD has hired two full-time EM Employment Assistants (EA) to partner with employment officers to serve EM jobseekers. This new initiative was welcomed by the respondents in the Study. Yet, as their entry requirement is graduation in Form 5 or equivalent and the monthly salary is \$12,120, the meagre pay is hardly appealing to jobseekers with talent, technical knowhow and experience of the labour market. Even if the job is taken by gifted persons, it is foreseeable that they will not stay long in the post. A number of jobseekers who sought help from the LD responded that the EAs only acted as ESAs and failed to provide further assistance towards EM jobseekers but mere amateur-level interpretations.

7.3 Employment officers are obliged to help jobseekers of different cultures with different needs. Yet without good training and EM ethnic backgrounds, it is difficult to match the jobseekers with suitable vacancies and remove the barriers for employers to hire EMs.

8. Experienced employment officers to provide personalized employment advisory service:

8.1 A genuine personalized employment advisory service is crucial to EM jobseekers as they are lack of job-seeking information and skills, knowledge on local cultures, employers’ expectations, ways to pursue their careers, etc.

However, the Study shows that although the EM jobseekers contacted found the LD staff in the job centres friendly and courteous, as far as finding jobs is concerned, their services are not helpful. (pt.10.8)

8.2 A number of EM jobseekers who approached our centre complained that they were not informed of the “personalized employment advisory service”. Even those who had the chance to meet the Employment Officers were not consulted about their career aspiration or provided with any pathways to their career ladder. Frustratingly, some EM jobseekers with high education attainment expressed that they were offered elementary job vacancies.

8.3 A genuine personalized employment advisory service for EM jobseekers should have case managers who have abundant knowledge of both EM cultures and local labour market to provide intensive vocational counselling and follow-ups. The case managers should not only be able to match the job seekers to suitable employment, but also provide the necessary incentive to encourage employers to hire them.

9. Special efforts to constantly remind employers to consider the genuine occupational qualifications

9.1 Though special efforts had been made by the LD to advise employers to do away with the Chinese language requirement, EMs interviewed in the Study reflected that such requirement is still quite frequent for many jobs. It was suggested the LD should review such job advertisements and discuss with employers concerned to ascertain if the language requirements stated are really a must for the posts concerned. (pt.10.3)

9.2 Even though ability to read and write Chinese is not set out as one of the conditions in the job advertisements prepared in English, such requirement is verbally conveyed to EM jobseekers when they attend job interviews with the employers. The LD should proactively follow up such cases.(pt.10.3)

9.3 We have come across vacancies marked as “Ethnic Minorities are welcomed for the post”. They are in fact mostly low-ranking occupations with little or modest pay. It discouraged the EM jobseekers to use the LD service and limits their options. The LD should take a more proactive role to explore more job

opportunities for EMs.

10. Talent hunting support for employers

10.1 “Study on the Training Needs of Ethnic Minorities” reveals employers’ expectation on the Employee Retraining Board (ERB) and the LD when hiring EMs. They suggested to the government that it provides training techniques as well as funding to help employers organize such training courses for their EM employees. Employers also found very few channels to recruit EMs.³

³ Employees Retraining Board, “Study on the Training Needs of Ethnic Minorities”, 2011, p. 151-156.

Experiences drawn: Best Practices in the delivery of employment services for EMs

11. In view of the high unemployment rate of certain EM groups and the insufficient employment service for EM jobseekers provided by the LD, experiences have been drawn from local non-government organizations (NGOs) which are familiar with rendering employment support services to EMs. We conclude that an intensive case management, employment and post recruitment support service with the following elements are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of the service.

11.1 Jobseekers' case managers (JCM) of social work background should be employed to provide individual counselling, tailor-made and focused employment support services to EM jobseekers by assessing their skills and education levels, working experience and job preferences. Career development goals and upward mobility could be evolved through personal guidance with appropriate steps.

Case 1

The Employment support provided by our centre aims at helping jobseekers to find jobs. We are also concerned with their personal and career development. Regardless of the result of job interviews, we help our jobseekers to review, reflect and consolidate their experience throughout the process. Through experience, jobseekers can learn that building up careers is a matter of choices and opportunities. The consultation session would be featured as the tool to intensify their capacity and widen their pathways. For example, some EM jobseekers with higher levels of qualification attained in their home countries are not familiar with the Hong Kong qualification framework. Their awareness is raised after information about qualification accreditation and support were provided to them. Mr. A was a qualified teacher in Nepali. We explained to him the aforesaid information and assisted him to apply for qualification and teacher assessment organized by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications. (HKCAAVQ). The application is under process.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

- 11.2 JCMs should assess jobseekers' further training needs to achieve career development goals and recommend them for activities or training programs.

Case 2

Our training and employment service provided several courses related to business, social service and customer service industry. We observed that many ethnic minority youths have passion for the above industries. However, they were lack of information about the counterparts, for example, their education levels, career paths, etc. Moreover, they did not fully understand industrial norms and values of the organizations in these sectors. Therefore, training should not be limited to job skills but should include accurate information on the pathway in order to raise jobseekers' job aspiration. Moreover, EM jobseekers face different kinds of issues like family problems or arranged marriage which are affecting their career development. Those issues were also being identified and addressed during the training in order to provide effective career development service.

(Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service – Training and Employment Service)

- 11.3 JCMs should support jobseekers with curriculum vitae (CV) preparation, job application, and interview technique if necessary.

Case 3

Many jobseekers are unfamiliar with resumes or CVs and their importance. Jobseekers who just want to get jobs in sectors in which they have working experience still prepare handwritten CVs. Other jobseekers who wish to explore more opportunities and crave for white-collar jobs design their CVs sophisticatedly, demonstrating their language proficiency and making them more attractive and appealing to employers. Some of them only provide factual information on a need-to-know basis, lacking the effort and will to add value to their CVs, such as their experiences as volunteers, interpersonal and communication skills, interests and hobbies etc. Hence, we give advices to them to further improve their CVs.

For instance, Ms. Z was trained at the Labor Department for six months and was a volunteer in some NGOs. She was nonetheless not familiar with

preparing a presentable and well formatted CV. Since her CV lacks consistency and adequate information, we invited her to our centre and worked with her together to prepare her CV. Mr. B came from Pakistan and obtained an accounting qualification. Yet his CV was too detailed and focused too much on his overseas qualification. So we invited him to our center and revised his CV together with him, making the contents therein more compatible with the Hong Kong job market.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

- 11.4 JCMs should address jobseekers' vocational and non-vocational barriers and offer them suitable supportive measures or actions to achieve sustainable employment.

Case 4

In some cases of EM young jobseekers, we involve the jobseekers' families in planning their career pathways as familial support is really important for them. Usually, we emphasized particularly the significance of the prospects and stability of different occupations.

For instance, we helped Mr T to apply for a job as a mechanic after discussing with him his preference for career development. However, as the salary as a trainee is not attractive enough, he was afraid that his father would not support his decision. Therefore, we arranged a meeting engaging both of them in the discussion. We explained to his father the possible career prospect of the job. Finally, the father agreed to let his son try this job. It relieved the pressure of Mr T.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

- 11.5 JCMs should assist jobseekers in familiarizing themselves with local work culture and give them advices if culture clash arises.

Case 5

During the consultations and briefing session on recruitment days, we raise

job seekers' awareness of the general expectations of local employers and the working culture. Their understanding and knowledge of the local job market has also been heightened.

For instance, we found that some jobseekers tend to avoid face-to-face encounter when they want to decline any offer. Meanwhile, they are not assertive enough to explain their reasons for not taking up the job or not showing up. So we provide sharing sessions with them to help them familiarize with the local working culture and successfully encouraged them to explain their concerns and raise questions before accepting a job offer.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

- 11.6 JCMs should identify the skills, experience and strengths of the jobseekers and match them with suitable vacancies. They should also explore with the jobseekers for more possibilities of career development.

Case 6

We explore with all enrolled jobseekers their skills, qualification, working experience, interests, talents and job preferences they dream of or think about. This information may be helpful later when there is job opportunity meeting their interests. For instance, Mr K who expressed his desire for working in technical fields and his interest in physics. However, he was lack of information about working opportunity and devoid of career aspiration in this field. After counselling, we helped him to join a trainee mechanic program of lift/escalator in VTC. Eventually he was offered his dream job, being the first EM employee of the company. He is determined to attend VTC programmes for career progression.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

Case 7

We do casework with EM jobseekers. In our experiences, we observed that every jobseeker had his/her own interests and specific skills which formed the strengths for their career development. For example, we noticed that some Nepalese youths were good at playing football. They have joined some teams

in Hong Kong and they would like to become football coaches in the long run. In order to pursue his dream, one of the youths tried to look for a training course for football coaches which is taught in English. Yet, his attempt was in vain. As a result, he can just do elementary work in Hong Kong. In fact, numerous cases have emerged revealing that a considerable number of EMs have good specific skills. Nevertheless, they are unable to find the proper channels to develop their abilities. Certificate courses, placement, volunteer work or career development in the community hardly avail them.

(Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service – Training and Employment Service)

- 11.7 JCMs should provide on-going in-work support (aftercare) to jobseekers for a period of time once they are in employment. They should be provided with coaching enabling them to understand their roles and responsibilities at work as well as fostering effective employer and employee communications.

Case 8

On-going in-work support (aftercare) is essential for effective communications in the workplace. Ms. S took some training courses in ERB. After graduation she approached the Labor Department for employment support but her attempt proved futile. After remaining unemployed for over 1 year, she approached our centre to seek employment support. Our centre connected her to a law firm which was looking for a candidate to work as an office assistant. After the centre's close liaison with the firm, it finally hired her. She is the first candidate from EM community who is in the employ of this firm. Soon after placement, Ms. S called us and complained that she felt upset for being assigned to take out the trash and wanted to quit the job. We invited her to our centre for an in-depth career counselling and looked into the possible reasons for the undesirable task. Meanwhile, we empowered her to tell the boss her grievance and request a change of assignment. Her employer agreed. After that, it has been 6 months and she is still working in the firm. During all this process her mother was also engaged in the advice and support for S.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

Case 9

Apart from job-matching services, we think post-job-matching support services are more important. Once the candidates got the jobs, NGO staffs should play the role of a go-between to liaise between employees and employers for at least half a year. For the employers, we will keep in touch with the HR staffs and the front-line managers to review the daily performance of the EM employees. If there are any comments from the management side, we will follow up with the employees. For the employees, NGO staffs will pay them workplace visits and home-visits regularly. In case the employees lodge complaints or mention difficulties during the visit, the NGO staffs should render the necessary assistance. One example is employer's denial of employees' leave for going back to their mother countries. In such circumstances, we discussed with the employer whether there is any flexible arrangement to facilitate the employees' return to their hometown. In addition, according to the employees' family conditions, we provided them with different community resources to give them comprehensive support.

(H.K.S.K.H Lady Macle hose Centre)

Case 10

While we recommended our employers to hire our EM jobseekers, it is just the beginning of the story. During the recruitment process, we need to make sure employer understand the cultural needs and employment supporting needs of ethnic minorities. For example, there was a chain furniture store contacted us and would like to hire ethnic minority. We approached them and discuss their expectations on the employees. We also need to discuss the language requirements or the job post, like Chinese oral requirements in order to decide a reasonable requirements for the job post. Interestingly, the furniture did not expect ethnic minority to speak fluent Chinese and they have designed "English-speaking staff" batches for the EM employees, which we think some of the modifications could be done.

(Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service – Training and Employment Service)

- 11.8 A group of Employer Engagement Consultants (EEC) should take proactive actions to engage with employers, to spot vacancies and recruitment opportunities including apprenticeship opportunities available to jobseekers.

Case 11

A fast food restaurant has been in need of manpower for a long time. However, kitchen staff is required to prepare food and meat which is not halal. Ms J, a Muslim, is averse to the work there because it infringes her religious instruction. Therefore, we contacted the restaurant to find out if the duties of Muslim kitchen staff can be adjusted to suit their religious belief. Finally, they hired Ms J and allowed her to prepare and clean kitchen utensils. In return, she has to go to work half an hour earlier than other colleagues. She is also willing to wear a mask instead of hijab. She has been working for 4 months and is still working there.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

- 11.9 EECs should network, secure and manage effective relationships with potential employers by providing support and advices on how to create a workplace with employees of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Case 12

We help employers to familiarize themselves with EM culture and provide them with advices on social and cultural accommodations. After contacting a laundry company which hired a few EMs, we received a call from them to enquire about cultural issues. Besides sharing information on Islamic religion and culture with them, we suggested special arrangement for Muslim employees to pray, wear scarf and fast in the workplace. The employers then become more willing to hire part-time workers during fasting periods. For every new employer we engaged, we would raise their awareness of multiculturalism.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

11.10 EECs should explore with employers the language proficiency requirement for the vacancies.

Case 13

When we contact the employers, we clarify with them the genuine requirement of languages, skill level and education level for the job vacancies. It is crucial to engage with the employers especially those who are in need of manpower. We have found that language requirement can be adjusted to suit the job if both jobseekers and employers are provided with enough support. We approached a company which needs a mechanic and posted job vacancies on LD website. One of the requirements was the ability to read and write Chinese. However, after our direct contact with the company, discussing with them whether writing Chinese is a must for the post, they agreed that fair spoken Cantonese for basic communication is acceptable. At the same time, we supported the company by teaching the jobseekers technical terminologies in Chinese.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

Case 14

Some employers ignore the linkage between job nature and language proficiency. For example, a jobseeker who applied for the position of a cargo handler is required to write and read Cantonese, and speak Cantonese fluently. Nowadays speaking Putonghua fluently is also needed for some positions. Language proficiency is always an excuse for the employers to reject EM candidates.

(H.K.S.K.H Lady Maclehorse Centre)

11.11 EECs should provide employers and corporate HR personnel with information packages or trainings on social and cultural accommodations to make a workplace with cultural diversity.

Case 15

We have a close cooperation with the HR department and training department of the employers. We regularly send the updated training

information to those related departments. When the training department has prepared the annual training plan, we try to propose and promote cultural diversity elements on the annual training list.

(H.K.S.K.H Lady Macle hose Centre)

Case 16

In 2015, Equal Opportunity Committee has conducted a research about the condition of hiring ethnic minority in different industries. One of the results shows that around 80 % of interviewees of employers do not know much about ethnic minority's cultures. In our working experiences, companies would like to have a cultural workshop to prepare their staff, especially for the front-line staff about ethnic minority culture before hiring. Each year, around 5 companies approach us to conduct such talks or programmes which indicated that there are needs for the industries to hire ethnic minorities, but they were hesitated because they were not familiar with the culture.

(Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service – Training and Employment Service)

11.12 EECs should explore with employers any opportunities of apprenticeship or further study for jobseekers' career progression.

Case 17

We successfully contacted a mechanic company which hired an EM trainee for the first time. At first, the employer hesitated and asked the jobseeker a number of reasons for getting this job. We helped them to engage the jobseeker's family in demonstrating his expectation of a long term career development with familial support. Finally, the company offered him an apprenticeship.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

Case 18

During the collaboration with the Hong Kong Airport Authority, we discovered seven EM employees working in the airport under our 'Pioneer' Programme. Once they have worked in a company for a year or above, our

staffs will explore with them any chances for the employees to receive job-related training, overseas internship, placement programme in other units etc. The purpose for such investigation is: firstly, to widen the horizon of the EM employees about the company working culture; secondly, to increase the belongingness of the employees to the company.

(H.K.S.K.H Lady Macle hose Centre)

11.13 EECs should provide on-going in-work support (aftercare) to employers for a period of time once the employers hire the jobseekers.

Case 19

For every successful referrals made by our centre, we contacted the employers for evaluating the performance of the jobseekers. For example, we have dealt with an issues related to the application of sick leave. We helped the company to explain the proper procedure of applying for sick leave to the jobseeker who got the offer through our service.

(The Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers – Kowloon)

Case 20

In order to encourage the employers to hire more EM candidates, we provide cultural sensitivity training talks to the HR department staffs and the front-line managers, to educate them to understand the working features of EMs and how to establish a good working relationship with EM employees, and to reduce the rate of staff turnover of the company. Apart from talks, we provide cultural learning classes or cultural integration programs for the employers, who can also practise cultural integration within a company in a fun way.

(H.K.S.K.H Lady Macle hose Centre)

Case 21

After placing the jobseekers, we need to work closely with the employers for a period of time because of the actual operating issues like computer literacy and front-line working experiences. We act as a moderator to communicate

with both parties in order to deal with working culture or sometimes ease conflicts. Most of the time, the number of ethnic minority employees are very few or even just 1 or 2. In such circumstances, support for EM employees is limited and barriers in the communication between employer and employees exist. Therefore, extra service is needed to remove the barriers, facilitate cultural exchange in workplace and improve the work practice.

(Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service – Training and Employment Service)

Recommendation: An Integrated Approach to provide Dedicated and Personalized Employment Service for EMs

12. NGOs have been providing employment supports to EM jobseekers in the past few years. Based on the above observations and the operational experience, we found that to address the employment difficulties faced by EMs, it is crucial to adopt the following ways:

12.1 An integrated approach with social work intervention in the delivery of personalized employment assistance to EM jobseekers.

12.2 An innovative approach in developing employers' network and opening up more employment opportunities.

13. We urge the government to allocate part of the \$500 million to enhance employment support service for EM jobseekers by commissioning NGOs in districts densely populated by EMs to operate integrated employment assistance service for EMs. The service should be operated in the following ways:

13.1 Providing case management and employment support services for follow-up actions by Jobseeker Case Managers (JCM) possessing the qualifications and experience of registered social workers

13.2 Networking and engagement with employers by a team of "Employer Engagement Consultants" (EEC) to support the case managers (the Employment Officers) in job matching, job coaching and other apprenticeship or on-the-job training programs.

13.3 Conducting tailor-made trainings that suit the jobseekers' needs by the commissioned NGOs.

14. The elements outlined in paragraph 16 to 24 should be included in the service.

Scope of Service

15. The government should commission NGOs to deliver the service with details set out in but not limited to the following:

Case management

16. The purpose of the Dedicated Employment Service is to assist EM jobseekers who face multiple barriers to access the labour market in the form of case management. It provides jobseekers with direction through a menu of service. **Jobseeker Case Managers (JCM) should provide services** include but are not limited to:

16.1 Initial Engagement

- Working with jobseekers to establish whether the service can meet their employment needs
- Explaining the service offer in a way which meets the communication needs of the jobseekers

16.2 Vocational Assessment and Counselling

- Undertaking a full vocational assessment, exploring with the jobseekers their career pathway by assessing their skills, qualifications, experience, abilities and job preferences.
- Addressing the jobseekers' vocational and non-vocational barriers to achieve sustainable employment and referring suitable training opportunities or supportive measures to them.
- Providing counselling as and when required to help jobseekers with social or family problems.

16.3 Job Search and Matching

- Arranging job matching, job attachment opportunities and job placements according to the capacity, work experience and preferences of the jobseekers.

16.4 Job Coaching

- Coaching the jobseekers to understand their roles and responsibilities at work.

- Assisting the jobseekers in familiarizing themselves with local work culture and give them advices if culture clash arises.
- Training the jobseekers interview skills and other job preparation techniques in line with the employers' stipulated requirement.
- Supporting the jobseekers to complete workplace training and to develop natural supports in the workplace among their work colleagues.

16.5 On-going In-work Support (Aftercare) to Jobseekers

- Supporting the jobseekers to foster effective employers and employees communications on job experience and to remove their barriers and obstacles in workplace for no less than 3 months once the jobseekers are hired.

17. The JCMs should possess the qualifications and experience of registered social workers, with some of them having EM ethnic backgrounds. They should work collaboratively with the Employer Engagement Consultants (EEC) to explore employment and training opportunities for EM jobseekers.

Employer Engagement

18. **A team of Employment Engagement Consultants (EEC)** should be set up to strengthen and maintain close liaison with employers both within and outside the districts including but not limited to the following:

18.1 Supply and Demand Analysis

- Conducting market research to locate the available job opportunities and human resources policies.

18.2 Job Opening

- Taking proactive actions to engage with employers to identify vacancies and recruitment opportunities including apprenticeship opportunities.
- Encouraging employers to hire EMs by discussing with employers the business benefits of a diverse workforce;

- Exploring with employers the genuine language proficiency requirement for the vacancies and providing advices or supports to employers to open up more job opportunities for EM jobseekers.
- Exploring with employers for any opportunities of apprenticeship for jobseekers.
- Providing creative solutions to improve workforce diversity including positive action, job creation and job-carving.
- Introducing suitable incentive schemes (if any) provided by the government to support employers to hire EM or train them after being employed.
- Creating a data base of employers' network to match up to that of the EM jobseekers.

18.3 On-going In-work Support (Aftercare) to Employers

- Supporting the employers to foster effective employer and employee communications on job experience in workplace for no less than 3 months once they hired the jobseekers, be available to answer queries or concerns about the jobseekers.
- Offering advices, information packages or trainings on social and cultural accommodations for the employers and corporate HR personnel to foster a workplace with cultural diversity.

18.4 Tailor-made and Focused Employment Assistance Services

- Providing trainings on basic social/soft skills (e.g. communication, stress management, EQ improvement) as well as job seeking and related skills (e.g. interviewing techniques, application letter and resume writing, language, computer and other technical skills) to jobseekers according to the needs and circumstances.
- Collaborating with the employers to provide on-the-job training or other job-related trainings to the jobseekers the employers newly hired.
- Arranging in-store recruitment days, orientation days, workplace visits and briefing sessions on certain sectors to enhance jobseekers' understanding on the local labour market and provide job opportunities for them.

19. The team of EECs should work closely with the JCMs, referring suitable employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities to jobseekers and fostering effective employer and employee communications on job experience.

Continued Trainings provided to JCMs and EECs

20. The JCMs and EECs should be trained constantly for the following specific knowledge and skills so that they can deliver quality services to EM jobseekers:

20.1 Knowledge on different cultures and religions, being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without assigning them a value

20.2 Understanding barriers that jobseekers from varied cultural backgrounds can face

20.3 Skills to engage with jobseekers and undergo vocational and needs assessment

20.4 Ability to create a synergy among the four parties, i.e. the jobseekers, the employers, the JCMs and the EECs.

20.5 Grasp of information on existing training/retraining activities, various supportive measure and services

21. The commissioned NGOs should review regularly their service to ensure a quality service is provided.

A System of Measurement

22. A system of measurement should be established for regular reviews and on-going improvement of the service. Possible areas for the measurement should include but not limited to:

22.1 Reduction of EM unemployment

22.2 Upward social mobility

22.3 Engagement with employers

22.4 Career guidance

22.5 Creation of partnerships for employment

- 22.6 Effective up-skilling/training of the jobseekers
- 22.7 Facilitation for better employer and employee communication
- 22.8 Promotion of workplace diversity

23. Indicators used could be for example the following:

- 23.1 EM unemployment rate, comparing to that of the whole population
- 23.2 Transition from unemployment into employment
- 23.3 Transition from training into employment
- 23.4 Transition from unemployment to mainstream full-time schooling
- 23.5 Attendance at training/retraining
- 23.6 Employers engaged
- 23.7 Employers in sectors in which EMs are underrepresented
- 23.8 Job retention
- 23.9 Career progression
- 23.10 Career preparation
- 23.11 Satisfaction for the service

24. A comprehensive assessment of the dedicated employment service for EMs should be conducted jointly by both the job centres and the commissioned organization(s), on the basis of quantitative and qualitative indicators to allow for a liable measurement and assessment of performance for the continuous quality improvement of the service. To monitor the service and to provide more support to strengthen its effectiveness, the LD should set up the EM Employment Division.

EM Employment Division – to monitor the service

25. The EM Employment Division should be set up to coordinate the dedicated employment service for EMs and monitor their effectiveness for planning the way forward based on the system of measurement and indicators mentioned in paragraphs 23-24. Review reports on annual basis should be made public to enhance the accountability.
26. Researches and Policy Analyses on EMs under local context are all-time scarce. The EM Employment Division should take lead investigating EMs' employment situation, for instance, their job-seeking practice, expectation towards job-market and difficulties in job-seeking. At the same time, feedback from employers on hiring EMs should also be collected so as to design better supports for not only the EM jobseekers, but also the local employers.
27. The Government should also set a goal for closing the employment gaps between EMs and the overall population.

Other Job-related Supports

28. To reinforce the efforts in engaging employers in breaking barriers for EM employment, the Division should make reference to the “On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities”⁴ and the “Support Programme for Employees with Disabilities”⁵ to launch incentive and supportive schemes for employers to hire EM jobseekers. Allowances should be provided to employers who allow their employees to attend language and vocational courses during working hours. Funding should also be available to employers to support them in making adaptations and accommodations when they hire EMs, e.g. translation of internal notices, instructions and safety precautions.

⁴ https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_vocational/id_onthejobtr/

⁵ https://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_vocational/id_sped/

Conclusion

29. As cited by the Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung, Hong Kong is home to EM living here. The economic boom and prosperity of Hong Kong could not be sustainable unless stable supply of manpower is guaranteed. It is unreasonable that the EM community has endured high unemployment for years when we claim “full employment” enjoyed by the population at large. The dire situation can be changed if more employment opportunities and relevant supports can be brought to EMs. Then we can rightly name our city a culturally diversified international city, and a real integration in daily life in workplaces.
30. Hence, we urge the Government to allocate part of the \$500 million fund promised in the 2018 Budget to establish Designated Employment Centres for EMs and strengthen support for ethnic minorities.

31st May, 2018