



For discussion on 30 December 2020

**Hong Kong Unison's submission to the
Legislative Council's Panel on Welfare Services
2020 Policy Address Labour and Welfare Bureau & Home Affairs Bureau
Policy Initiatives**

1. Hong Kong Unison is a non-governmental organization that prioritizes on the rights and education of local ethnic minorities. This submission focuses on the policies and measures of the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Home Affairs Bureau in the 2020 Policy Address.

Cultural sensitivity training for SWD staff

2. As the purpose of the three outreaching teams for ethnic minorities (OTEM) is to “proactively reach out to ethnic minorities and connect those in need to mainstream welfare services”, therefore staff at SWD centres e.g. Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs), Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs), SWD Medical Social Service Units that have the prospect to receive cases referred by the outreaching teams, should have adequate cultural acumen and sensitivity training. The government should provide and/or arrange training to staff in these mainstream centres so that they are well prepared to provide services to ethnic minorities.

Recruitment and role of Ethnic Minority District Ambassador

3. Hong Kong Unison scrutinized the online recruitment advertisements of Ethnic Minority (EM) District Ambassador in nine districts. The requirements listed “(a) able to communicate effectively in Chinese or English both in written and spoken forms; and (b) be proficient in Bahasa Indonesian, Nepali, Urdu, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai, Hindi, or Vietnamese, in written or spoken form,” is not proportional to the salary offered. In addition the role of EM District Ambassador should not be limited to interpretation and cultural representation. The government should develop this entry level position into a complete career ladder with relevant trainings and the progression from entry level positions to higher levels of pay, skill, responsibility, or authority. This will attract more ethnic minority talents.
4. The government should propose a time-frame to expand the EM District Ambassador scheme to all 18 districts. The entry requirement should consider the current distribution and size of ethnic groups in each district.

Handling domestic violence, sexual violence and forced marriage issues

5. Hong Kong Unison welcomes the allocation of additional resources to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) “to raise EM awareness of domestic violence and sexual violence through community education programmes, and encourage victims to seek help.” The government should define the case handling mechanism in detail for the NGOs. The awareness programmes and activities should be conducted in schools and community at large.
6. The government should expand the scope and address forced marriage issues by setting up a dedicated team to provide victims of forced marriage with complete support, including but not limited to provision of temporary shelters, psychological support, legal counsel, mediation with the family, and coordination of the police to handle family enquiries. To facilitate timely assistance and the government should publish a handbook for victims in English and disseminate it to the minority communities.



7. Hong Kong Unison recommends the five Specialised Co-parenting Support Centres set up by SWD, which provides divorced parents and their children with one-stop co-parenting support services, to strengthen the promotion of services to ethnic minority families and help related families to understand the services.

Support measures for EM new arrivals

8. According to the “Fourth Report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China in the light of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)”, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) conducts quarterly surveys on the profile and service needs of new arrivals from the Mainland in collaboration with the ImmD. The survey results are distributed to relevant government departments and NGOs for reference. The HAD and the ImmD should accordingly implement the same measures to identify and collect the data of ethnic minority new arrivals. They should not be treated differently.
9. The HAD subsidizes non-governmental organizations to run language courses in the community to help ethnic minorities integrate into society. The Department should collect data and outcome of language courses to understand whether ethnic minorities can pick up the language through a comprehensive and clear language learning ladder to master the local language. In addition, the department should also standardize the level of the courses offered by various NGOs to ensure uniformity in the courses offered by all support centers.

Ethnic Minorities Forum by HAD

10. HAD should hold the Ethnic Minorities Forum more frequently. Currently the Forum meets once a year which is inadequate for minority community leaders and representatives of NGOs to effectively inform the government of the issues of EMs. In order to facilitate the efficiency of handling EM issues, HAD should change the forum to at least twice a year.

Mainstreaming EM Support Service Centre

11. The HAD should consider the mode of operation of Support Service Centres for EMs that only allow EM to join the activities. Hong Kong Unison suggests for HAD to cooperate with SWD on issuing activity guidelines to all support centers and social service agencies which can adjust the proportion of participants in terms of ethnicities, so that the interest classes provided by the support centres can act as a platform to facilitate the interaction among different ethnicities (including Chinese) and help them to build up an inclusive social network.

Strengthening the training on cultural sensitivity within the civil services

12. According to the LegCo document LC Paper No. CB(2)504/20-21(02), the Administration was requested to provide information on how to strengthen the training on cultural sensitivity within civil service, including the training details and effectiveness. The LegCo should put it onto the discussion table as soon as possible; we also urge the government to provide relevant information as well.

Progress of Central Databank on Children

13. The development of the central databank on children is delayed for two years. The government should disclose the progress of the survey and submit a timeframe of implementing the survey and the data that will be collected.