

# CURRENT PROBLEMS IN THE EDUCATION POLICY FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES

According to a report published by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2011, ethnic minority students accounted for only 0.59% of the post-secondary student population, which is not commensurate with their population in Hong Kong at all. This shows their further education and employment opportunities are severely limited and they cannot fulfil their dreams in this 'Asia's world city'.

## 1. DEFECTS OF THE CURRENT EDUCATION POLICY

The Chinese language curriculum in mainstream schools is designed on the false assumption that the mother tongue of the students is Chinese. Without a Chinese speaking environment and support from parents, most ethnic minorities struggle with Chinese. Some schools can only resort to using a foreign curriculum which is easier. As a result, most senior secondary ethnic minority students can only sit for the GCSE (Chinese) examination, the level of which is similar to that of local Primary 2 or 3.

## 2. MANY ETHNIC MINORITY RESIDENTS ARE FLUENT IN CANTONESE. IS READING AND WRITING CHINESE REALLY DIFFICULT TO THEM?

Many ethnic minority youths manage to learn to speak Cantonese in their daily life, but learning to read and write Chinese under this defective education policy is extremely difficult to them.

## 5. A "CHINESE AS A SECOND LANGUAGE" CURRICULUM

The Chief Executive has promised in his election manifesto to implement a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum. We hope the Education Bureau will do so as soon as possible and introduce a suitable curriculum, teaching materials, stage learning objectives, an accredited assessment mechanism and training for teachers.

## 2. THE EDUCATION BUREAU CLAIMS THAT IT HAS DONE ENOUGH FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES. IS THAT TRUE?

The measures taken by the Education Bureau, such as summer bridging programmes and funding to schools, are scattered, piecemeal and inadequate. Scholars and teachers alike have reflected how ineffective it is to teach Chinese as a second language without support and a policy from the government. Developing a logical and smooth curriculum with stage learning targets and teaching materials across primary and secondary schools, setting a recognized assessment mechanism and providing professional training to teachers require coordination and a policy from the government.

## 4. MANY EXPATRIATES WHO WORK IN HONG KONG DO NOT SPEAK CHINESE. IS CHINESE PROFICIENCY REALLY ESSENTIAL IN GETTING A JOB IN HONG KONG?

Unlike expatriates, local recruits are mostly expected to read and write Chinese and have a good sense of mainstream society. In fact, an ethnic minority youth who has a First Class Honours LLB degree and has won awards in international mooted competitions finds her employment opportunities very limited due to her inadequate Chinese writing skill. She did not have the opportunity to study Chinese at all throughout her primary and secondary school education. She is now deferring her professional practice to study Chinese full-time at university. Another ethnic minority youth who worked as a delivery assistant was asked to resign, because despite having attained grade A in GCSE Chinese, he could not read the Chinese on the invoices and receipts.

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LET ETHNIC MINORITIES ENJOY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT