



**Hong Kong Unison Submissions for the Consultation for
the 2016 Policy Address and 2016/17 Budget**

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Chinese language measures

1. Although the Chief Executive announced in the 2014 Policy Address the implementation of the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework”, these measures are inadequate. The Education Bureau (“EDB”) leaves the adaptation of the mainstream curriculum to school-based decisions without benchmarks and teaching targets. This has been proven ineffective because teachers find it difficult to adapt the curriculum without the relevant training and time.
2. We maintain that only a comprehensive “Chinese as a Second Language” (CSL) policy can enable ethnic minority students to learn Chinese well and fully integrate into the Hong Kong Society. This includes a policy that provides support in subjects other than Chinese language and addresses the different learning needs of ethnic minority children dependent when they migrate to mainstream school.
3. Although the government had spent \$198 million in the 2014/15 school year to step up support for NCS students, the progress of developing such initiatives is unclear and it is doubtful whether such funding has led to substantive improvement in the education policy benefitting ethnic minority students.
4. Unison suggests the Government to set up a **task force** to review and examine the issues arising from Chinese learning of ethnic minority children and ensure use of resources is appropriate and effective. The task force should discuss with stakeholders, including representatives from various school councils, other Government departments, non-Governmental organisations (NGOs), teachers groups and parent groups, etc., the development of CSL and possible improvement measures.
5. The LegCo Panel on Education should establish a **Subcommittee** to review the CSL policy, the implementation of inclusive education, and improvement measures.
6. The Government should fulfill its promise in the 2014 Policy Agenda of setting up a **dedicated team** in the Education Bureau (EDB) for implementing and monitoring the enhanced school support of Chinese learning to ethnic minorities as soon as possible. It is necessary for one central unit to coordinate, develop, and improve measures for the learning and teaching of Chinese across all grades from K1 to S6.
7. Such **CSL teaching and learning team/centre** should gather actors including recognized experts and teachers who are committed to improving the education of ethnic minorities. The centre should develop the following based on evidence:



- a. Quality and systematic “second language” curriculum and teaching materials;
- b. Stage learning objectives and assessment tools;
- c. Outcome indicators and review mechanism;
- d. Professional teacher training;
- e. Professional support for schools including guidelines on teaching plans and use of resources
- f. Reporting mechanism from schools

The centre should also develop transitional programmes to ease ethnic minorities into mainstream schools at all grades.

8. The current policy lacks public accountability; there are currently no plans to make the policy evaluation research full report available to the public. We urge the government to make the **full reports of policy evaluations** available to LegCo.

9. Budget:

Estimated expenditure for the CSL learning and teaching team/centre:

- Development of curriculum: HK\$6 million
- Development of teaching reference materials and assessment tools: HK\$6 million
- Teaching training subsidies: HK\$2 million (to all CSL coordinators in schools)
- Salary of centre in charge: HK\$1 million
- Salary of 3 senior education officers: HK\$2 million
- Salary of 2 education officers: HK\$1 million

Including administrative costs, the total budget for the team/centre is approximately HK\$20 million per year.

Teacher training and preparation of mainstream schools

10. Increasing numbers¹ of ethnic minority students are entering so-called mainstream schools that do not have experience in catering ethnic minority students’ needs. Since much of the support measures and resources, such as curriculum support and funding, are only available to schools with more than 10 Non-Chinese Speaking students, many schools are underprepared to receive these students. Moreover, it perpetuates de facto racial segregation since parents do not have confidence placing their children in mainstream schools with no experience or support.

11. The EDB should require all schools to have teachers that have received sufficient training on catering the needs of ethnic minority students. This is in reference to the current requirement that at least 15% to 25% teachers in all schools should have received some

¹ In 2006/07, 30% of non-Chinese speaking students were enrolled in ‘non-designated schools’ (or ‘mainstream schools’); in 2011/12, the percentage is 40% (source: EDB PowerPoint presentation, Sept 2012). The EDB refuses to release updated statistics on the distribution of ethnic minority students.



training in catering to needs of SEN students. In proportion to the number of ethnic minority students, every school should have at least **8% to 13% teachers trained to teach ethnic minority students**:

- a. Training should include cultural sensitivity, Chinese as a second language support, curriculum and pedagogy in catering diverse learning needs, and discrimination laws and their principles.
- b. Training targets should include Chinese language teachers, teachers of other subjects, principals and school administrators, and teaching assistants.
- c. To provide incentives, training should be recognized for promotion purpose.

The Government should consider utilizing the Community Care Fund (CCF) to provide a cash grant on pilot basis for mainstream schools with relatively more ethnic minority students and financial needs to strengthen the teaching team of the schools so that a designated teacher with relevant knowledge and experience can be deployed to lead the student support team and co-ordinate matters relating to inclusive education.

Eliminating the *de facto* racial segregation in the public education system

12. The government should take effective, immediate steps to **eliminate the *de facto* racial segregation** in the public education system. This includes:
- a. Improving ethnic minority parents' information access on school choice;
 - b. Improving support for ethnic minority students in all schools, especially schools that uses Chinese as the medium of instruction; and
 - c. Improving support and resources to schools to facilitate better school-parent communications and cooperation.

Parent engagement in education

13. Many ethnic minority parents expressed that they do not know how they can support their children once the children are enrolled in Chinese medium schools. Many ethnic minority parents also find it difficult to understand the education system in Hong Kong and thus cannot help their children in navigating the education system as well as Chinese parents do.
14. In reference to similar education models in other countries², we propose a pilot scheme to engage ethnic minority parents in their children's education. The project will include the following three components³:

² Such as the Even Start Family Literacy Program in the United States: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/evenstartformula/index.html>

³ Through these sessions proposed by us, ethnic minority parents may observe and participate in the learning process in a Hong Kong classroom setting, so that they can "visualise" the school environment of their children and thus better help their children navigate the school system and environment. They will thus engage more in the education, particularly Chinese learning, of their children. Ethnic minority parents' trust towards the school makes it a suitable venue for such Chinese sessions. Moreover, these sessions will potentially lay the foundations for the Chinese education of ethnic minority adults.



- a. Chinese classes for parents, preferably held on site at kindergartens or primary schools;
 - b. Coaching for parents in navigating the Hong Kong education system and planning their children's educational path; and
 - c. Coaching for parents in engaging in their children's education at home, especially in aiding their language learning outside of school. This includes sessions where parents and their children will learn Chinese together, and in the process parents can be coached on how to continue the education in the home environment.
15. Ten kindergartens and ten primary schools will participate in the scheme, with two non-governmental organisations running these Chinese sessions for them. At the end of the pilot scheme, the design and implementation of these sessions should be evaluated.

Limited quality education pathways for ethnic minority students

16. Many ethnic minorities are employed in low-paying jobs and living at or below the poverty line. Education and vocational training are supposed to enhance economic opportunity and social upward mobility. However, students who do not acquire minimum university requirement have very limited choice⁴. Currently, “only 4 out of 160 vocational education programmes provided by the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education are conducted in English”⁵. Due to discrepancies in programmes' medium of instruction, interview language and accommodations on Chinese compulsory courses, 71% of the 186 non-degree programmes surveyed is not suitable for students who do not have proficiency in Chinese and 50% of those programmes is not suitable for students who do not read or write Chinese⁶.

The government should encourage vocational training programmes, such as the Yi Jin Diploma, Diploma in Vocational Education, Construction Industry Council and Clothing Industry to provide and increase programmes taught in English to provide more opportunities for ethnic minority youth.

Long term and sustainable measures to help employment of ethnic minorities

17. Ethnic minority job seekers find the Labour Department (LD) services hard to access⁷ due to language barrier and limited promotion. Moreover, higher education qualifications obtained in south, southeast and central Asian (and other) countries are often not recognized by employers, contributing to unemployment, low-paid jobs, and being trapped in the poverty cycle.

⁴ *Research on Ethnic Minority Students' Access to Post-Secondary Education*, Hong Kong Unison, 2015.

⁵ *The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong 1997-2014*, Chapter 3, p 13, Puja Kapai, 2015.

⁶ *Research on Ethnic Minority Students' Access to Post-Secondary Education*, Hong Kong Unison, 2015.

⁷ *Survey on the Government's Support towards Employment of South Asian Ethnic Minorities*, Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong – Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon), 2015.



We urge the LD improve and better promote its services to ethnic minorities, hire ethnic minority staff, and, when necessary, provide interpretation services promptly. The LD should provide job-matching services in order to bridge the needs of employers experiencing labour shortages and the needs of ethnic minority job-seekers. We ask the government to subsidize accreditation of overseas qualification for low-income groups and provide incentives for employers to hire minority job-seekers. These strategies can make the most of minority job-seekers' talents while encourage them to integrate into the Hong Kong society and move up socially.

Social inclusion for new immigrants

18. We urge the government to launch a **comprehensive social inclusion programme** for new immigrants, modeling on that for new arrivals from the Mainland in place before 2004, including the following measures:
- a. Collection of the contacts and details of new immigrants by the Immigration Department, and the distribution of such information to regional support centres for ethnic minorities;
 - b. Mandate regional support centres for ethnic minorities to include outreach support to new immigrants;
 - c. Assessment of the Chinese and English proficiency of new immigrants; and
 - d. Organize effective classes on Chinese and/or English languages and on the social system, resources, rights and protection, culture and values of Hong Kong for new immigrants, and incentives in the immigration procedure for them to attend these classes.

Chinese classes for ethnic minority adults should be standardized and promoted

19. Although there are many subsidized Chinese languages courses run by NGOs and government departments such as the Employment Retraining Board and Home Affairs (regional support centres) for ethnic minority adults, there is no benchmarking on the levels. There is no standardization of curricula in basic, intermediate and advanced courses.

We recommend the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to set up a team to coordinate, promote, and ensure such course curricula are standardized so that adult students can take them at different centres convenient to their work places or homes and according to their schedules. Childcare service during class hours and transportation subsidy to and from the classes should be considered to accommodate needs of ethnic minorities. HAD should coordinate with relevant statutory bodies to provide accreditations of the courses qualifications so that their Chinese qualifications are recognized.