



12 January 2021

**Submission to the first meeting of the Subcommittee to Study the Development of Textbooks and Teaching Materials for Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools**

1. Hong Kong Unison is a non-governmental organization that focuses on the education rights of local ethnic minorities and "Chinese as a second language" education. This submission is on **“Management, quality monitoring and complaints mechanism for school-based teaching materials”** for the first meeting of the Subcommittee to Study the Development of Textbooks and Teaching Materials for Kindergartens, Primary and Secondary Schools. It mainly focuses on the school-based curriculum of "Chinese as a Second Language", the support measures of the Education Bureau for relevant teachers, and the quality monitoring of kindergartens.

**Adding “Chinese subject teaching material of Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students” into the agenda of the subcommittee**

2. Unison welcome the subcommittee’s discussion on specifics of preparation of textbooks and teaching materials for kindergarten, primary and secondary. We suggest that the subcommittee should set the agenda of one of the meetings as "Chinese language teaching materials for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students" and discuss on the issue of "Chinese as a second language course" for primary and secondary schools. Since this agenda is directly related to whether all NCS students in Hong Kong can smoothly master the Chinese language and integrate into the local society through the central curriculum and school-based curriculum provided by the government, this important agenda should not be ignored by the subcommittee specializing in teaching materials.

**"Chinese as a Second Language" School-based Chinese Curriculum Design**

3. The discussion paper submitted by the government states “schools should adhere to the aims and contents of the central curriculum when adapting learning targets, employing different approaches to organising learning contents, and using diversified learning, teaching and assessment strategies to develop their school-based curriculum.” Unison believes that the current Chinese language for NCS students in various schools can only refer to the "Chinese as a Second Language" learning framework, but the second language teaching component of this learning framework is doubtful; the "framework" itself is not a complete curriculum and it is difficult to help teachers teach, the government should establish a real one as soon as possible. "Chinese as a Second Language" central curriculum. In addition, support measures for supporting non-Chinese



speaking students and designing teaching materials for non-Chinese speaking students should be strengthened in each school.

4. According to “A study on the Challenges Faced by Mainstream Schools in Educating Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong” published By Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in Jan 2020, 61% of Non Chinese Language subject teachers and 86% of Chinese Language subject teachers finds they have greater difficulty in making NCS students achieve the learning goal of the mainstream curriculum; 96% of the Chinese language subject teachers expressed that there is a lack of teaching Chinese as a second language teaching resources that match the mainstream curriculum. The Education Bureau should allocate additional resources to encourage publishers to develop relevant teaching materials, so as to assist teachers to help non-Chinese speaking students achieve the learning goals of mainstream courses. More than 95% of interviewed teachers and principals) suggested the Education Bureau to “provide teaching materials matching with the "Second Language Learning Framework”. The Education Bureau should respond to this request as soon as possible.
5. Another research report published by EOC in September 2019 “Closing the Gap: Report of the working Froup on Education for Ethnic Minorities”, pointed out all the teachers and experts interviewed said that pedagogy is where the learning framework felt short. “Second language pedagogy is missing in the Learning Framework, which should govern all aspects of second language teaching. The “small step approach” highlighted as the principal strategy is basically applicable for all kinds of underachievers but does not specifically address the second language learning needs of NCS students.” Hence it is clear that “Chinese as a second language framework” is not a complete curriculum and it has failed to meet the needs of related learning and teaching. It is necessary for the Education Bureau to design a "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum that truly has a second language perspective.

### **Support measures for teachers who teach Chinese subjects to non-Chinese speaking students**

6. The Closing the Gap report also pointed out “As one of the weakest areas in the implementation of the Learning Framework, teacher training, both in-service and pre-service, has been roundly criticised by most stakeholders as being insufficient, ineffective and unsystematic.” The report and Unison’s communication with frontline teachers reveal that training provided by the Education Bureau is theoretical and fails to provide practical advice. Therefore, even if the teacher enrolls in relevant courses, it still fails to solve of teaching non-Chinese students in person. We recommend for the government to strengthen relevant support measures and the practical aspects of teachers’ professional development



courses so that they can teach non-Chinese speaking students with the teaching skills of second language learning.

### **Teaching material management of "Chinese as a Second Language" curriculum**

7. Unison recommends that the government should promote experience sharing and communication among schools on the teaching materials of "Chinese as a Second Language". With the cancellation of the "designated school" policy, more and more schools have begun to admit ethnic minority students. The government can further promote teachers with more experience in teaching non-Chinese speaking students to share their personal experience and with other less experienced teachers. The teaching materials and skills will greatly help schools that are just starting to admit ethnic minority students to provide quality teaching for non-Chinese speaking students. In addition, the Education Bureau should also encourage continuous and closer cooperation between school and university experts on the design of relevant teaching materials.

### **Supervision and teaching materials for admission of non-Chinese speaking students in kindergartens**

8. Unison recommends that the Education Bureau allocate additional resources to kindergartens to allow the library to purchase more books and teaching materials for learning Chinese in a second language to facilitate learning and teaching outside of the regular curriculum.
9. According to our research released in June 2019 "Survey of Minority Parents' Opinions on Support Measures for the Kindergarten Education", we found that not all mainstream kindergartens can provide Chinese learning and language environment. Some kindergartens do not use Chinese as the main language of instruction, and do not even teach mainstream Chinese to ethnic minority students. Therefore, even if parents send their children to local kindergartens, most parents have no confidence in choosing mainstream primary schools after completing the kindergarten curriculum. Unison recommends the Education Bureau to strengthen the proactive monitoring of whether kindergartens comply with the admission guidelines; they should also start collecting admission data, request kindergartens to report on the progress of ethnic minority students' Chinese language learning and the status of inclusiveness in schools, and the effectiveness of funding.