

---

## Hong Kong-born Nepali, 21, to speak at UN about local ethnic minorities' fight against racial discrimination

PUBLISHED : Monday, 30 July, 2018, 8:33am

UPDATED : Monday, 30 July, 2018, 9:46am

News › Hong Kong › Community

**Mary Ann Benitez** [mary.benitez@scmp.com](mailto:mary.benitez@scmp.com)

*HKU fresh graduate Suskihanna Gurung taking part in NGO delegation to Geneva to raise points about local school system and effect on job searches*

A young woman from an ethnic minority group in Hong Kong will for the first time bring the fight against racial discrimination in education and jobs to a [UN](#) [1] committee in Geneva next week.

Suskihanna Gurung, 21, who graduated from the University of Hong Kong earlier this year, will take part in an NGO delegation, meeting experts and members of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The committee will hold hearings on August 10 and 13 to assess how Hong Kong has implemented provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which the city has been party to since 1965 when it was still a British colony.

It submitted its third update to the committee in April last year.



Gurung said one of the points she would raise in Geneva concerned Hong Kong's school system, where ethnic minorities struggle with learning the Chinese language, as teachers are not equipped

to teach it as a second language. This means many students [struggle with spoken Cantonese](#) [2] and find it difficult to obtain better-paying jobs.

Racial profiling continued to be a problem, she added.

“They see the colour of my skin and they see my ethnicity. Recently somebody told me: ‘Why don’t you join your mother in the hotel field? You can make up the beds as well’,” the journalism and literature graduate recalled.

### Why is ‘international’ Hong Kong still unable to accept black people? [3]

Phyllis Cheung Fung-mei, the executive director of Unison, an NGO that advocates for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, said local Chinese media tended to portray the community, especially South Asian males, in a negative light. This, she suggested, had led to racial profiling by the police force.

“Law enforcement (officers) always have this feeling that all South Asians, or all dark-skinned people – South Asians, Africans, South Americans, any darker-skinned people – are criminals or are potential criminals. So they are susceptible to a lot of ID checks and this is racial profiling.”

Gurung added: “A lot of the time in Chinese media, they have news about how Nepalese men are gangsters, drug abusers and start fights with people. We also get accused of being fake refugees when we were born and raised here.”

Excluding [foreign domestic helpers](#) [4], ethnic minorities account for about 4 per cent of Hong Kong’s population of 7.34 million.

Earlier this year, the government announced a HK\$500 million (US\$63.7 million) fund for initiatives to improve the lot of the city’s non-Chinese population, though no plans have been announced. It already spends HK\$200 million a year on two funding schemes so schools can help ethnic minority pupils [struggling with the Chinese language](#) [5].

But Gurung, whose grandfather came to Hong Kong as a Gurkha soldier, wants more. The city’s Race Discrimination Ordinance was enacted in 2008 and came into full operation in 2009, she pointed out, but a law on its own would not stop discrimination from happening.



We also get  
accused of being  
fake refugees  
when we were  
born and raised  
here

Suskihanna Gurung, 21



Gurung's ties to Hong Kong run deep: her grandfather came to the city as a Gurkha soldier during British colonial times. Photo: Nora Tam

"Even more important than that is to promote integration and racial harmony within society."

Law Yuk-kai, director of the Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, another local NGO, said the delegation to the UN would also raise issues such as hate speech, topics relating to screening [asylum seekers](#) [6] and refugees, human trafficking, and foreign domestic workers being forced to live with their employers.

### Let Hong Kong's ethnic minorities become house servants, lawmaker says [7]

A Hong Kong government group will meet the committee in Geneva as part of a China delegation.

In its report, it said it had given additional recurrent funding of HK\$4.69 million to the city's [Equal Opportunities Commission](#) [8] to set up a dedicated unit on ethnic minority issues and to promote racial integration. The EOC, it said, was reviewing the city's four anti-discrimination ordinances.





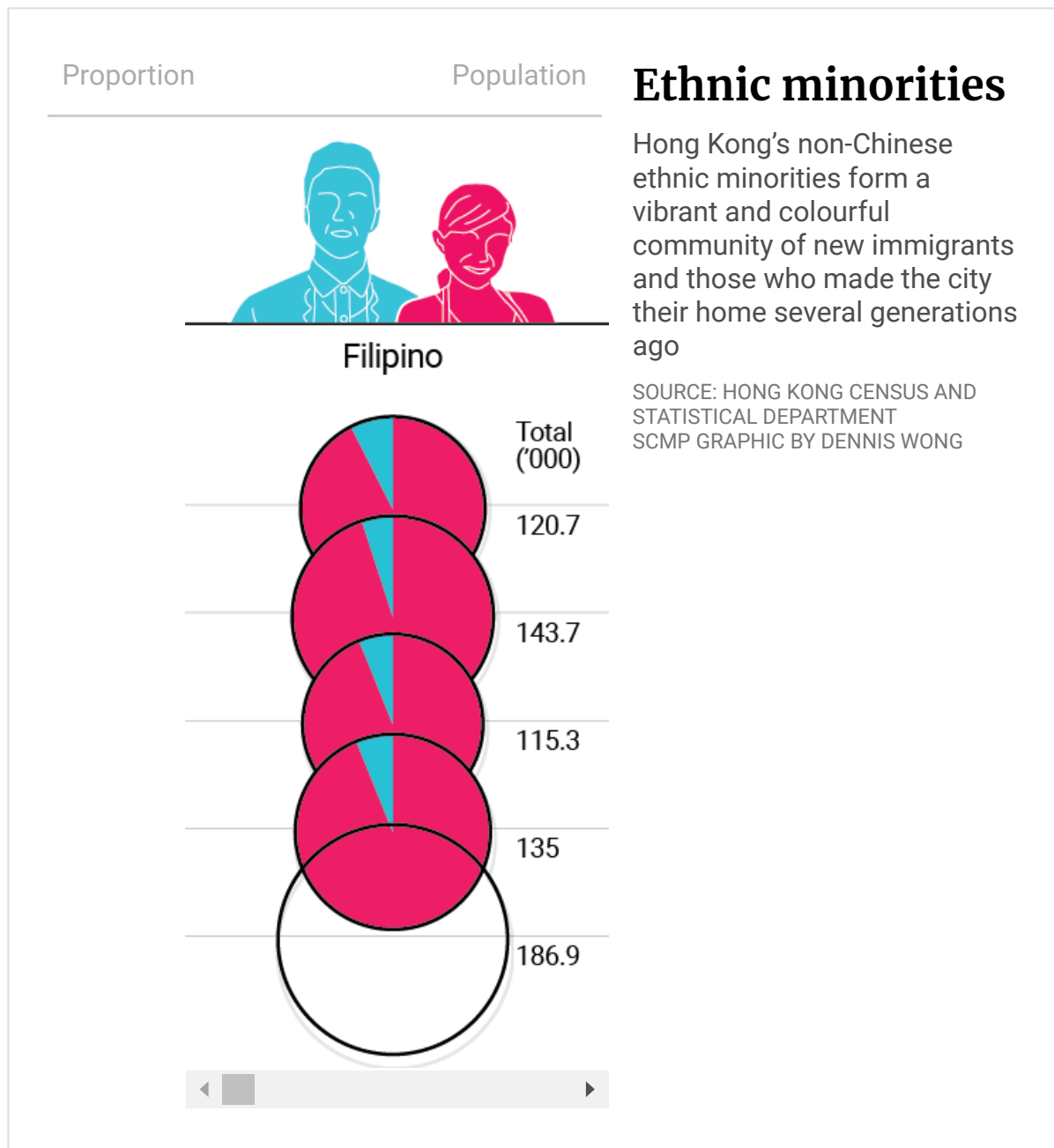
Gurung recalled secondary school classmates who did not go to university and instead started to work right away to support their families locally and abroad, or only gaining admission into community colleges because they could not afford university fees.

### [How one student is fighting back against hidden racism in Hong Kong \[9\]](#)

The HKU graduate won scholarships and grants from Unison but said she abandoned an earlier ambition to be a journalist as her Chinese standard was that of a Primary Two pupil's – in her words, enough to “just get around Hong Kong” but not for the profession.

She will soon begin working as a teacher at a local school with a relatively large proportion of ethnic minority pupils. And she planned to draw on her “cultural sensitivity”, a quality she believed many teachers in the city lacked.

“Because I am from the community, I know the kind of struggles these kids go through, how much pressure their parents have,” she said. “I think I will be better at helping them, like teaching them the importance of education and helping them with family problems.”



**Topics:** Ethnic minorities in Hong Kong  
Racism  
Hong Kong youth

**Source URL:** <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2157349/hong-kong-born-nepali-21-speak-un-about-local-ethnic>

### Links

- [1] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/united-nations>
- [2] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/2148166/hong-kongs-ethnic-minority-pupils-still-struggling>
- [3] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2156199/hong-kong-racist-prejudice-against-ethnic-minorities>
- [4] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/foreign-domestic-workers-hong-kong>
- [5] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2144877/what-happens-when-hong-kongs-ethnic-minority-students-are>
- [6] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/asylum-seekers-asia>
- [7] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2154608/hong-kong-lawmaker->

suggests-reserving-10000-domestic

[8] <https://www.scmp.com/topics/equal-opportunities-commission-eoc>

[9] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/2136449/hidden-racism-plaguing-hong-kong-and-how-one-student>