



Activists welcome measures to help jobseekers among Hong Kong's ethnic minority groups as 'potential game-changers'

PUBLISHED : Wednesday, 10 October, 2018, 11:06pm

UPDATED : Thursday, 11 October, 2018, 12:36am

News › Hong Kong › Society

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Carrie Lam announces slew of new measures to further strengthen support for minorities, including pilot programme to provide employment services

Improved services for ethnic minority jobseekers and outreach teams for families in need are among proposed measures to help Hong Kong's non-Chinese speaking communities.

"The [ethnic minority] population in Hong Kong has been growing steadily and their need for public services and support has become more diversified," Chief Executive [Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor](#) [1] said in her [policy address](#) [2] on Wednesday.

She announced a slew of new measures to further strengthen support for minorities, including the Labour Department launching a pilot programme with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide employment services for jobseekers through a case management approach.

A government internship programme for university students from ethnic minorities would also be introduced on a pilot basis to enable them to gain work experience.

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Lam said guidelines on promoting racial equality would be improved for all government bureaus and departments.

The Social Welfare Department would also commission NGOs to set up dedicated outreach teams to “actively approach needy ethnic minority families and assist in their access to mainstream welfare services”, she said.

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On education, Lam said the government would provide support for non-Chinese speaking students to learn the language, and provide tiered subsidies to kindergartens that admit pupils from ethnic minorities.

The Home Affairs Department would enhance interpretation and translation services and organise more district-based activities to encourage interaction between different communities.

Advocacy group Hong Kong Unison said ethnic minorities should be considered in the government’s policymaking process.

“Ethnic minorities are part of the Hong Kong community. Admin guidelines should not be applied only to government departments providing services for them. The entire administration should comply with the guidelines,” Unison executive director Phyllis Cheung Fung-mei said.

Unison campaign officer Kayla Tam said: “We do see that there are new measures concerning ethnic minorities in terms of employment and public services. But there is not much progress for ethnic minorities’ education.”

Lam’s future vision is a HK\$500 billion housing development in sea [4]

Tseng Ka-chun, of the Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon), welcomed the pilot programme for jobseekers.

“We have been advocating for this for sometime,” he said, adding that the government should provide a post-employment follow-up service and proactively engage with employers.



On enhancing interpretation services, Tseng hoped there would be more engagement with minorities about their experience with using them so they could be improved.

He also welcomed the move for outreach teams for minorities in need.

“We think ethnic minorities are missing the linkage with mainstream services. We hope the outreach teams will have trained social workers and government officials who are familiar with EM languages and cultures.”

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Shalini Mahtani, co-founder of the Zubin Foundation, a social policy think tank and charity, said civil servants receiving cultural sensitivity was “a massive breakthrough and would have positive knock-on effects”.

The measures announced by Lam “are potential game-changers,” she said.

“They are practical and some of them actually go directly to the mindset, to children and education, youth and employment and to women.”



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