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## Where does budget support for Hong Kong youth leave those from ethnic minorities?

The government's funding pledge to promote youth entrepreneurship and promote upward mobility is welcome, but the lack of information for non-Chinese speakers hampers access by ethnic minority youth

**Topic | Ethnic minorities in Hong Kong**



**Letters**

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Although the [2020-21 budget](#) [1] announced last week included resources for education and the promotion of youth upward mobility, and caring for society, Hong Kong Unison is concerned that those from the ethnic minorities may face difficulties when accessing such initiatives.

The government has set aside [HK\\$1 billion](#) [2] to support the work of the Youth Development Commission, HK\$300 million of which has gone into the Youth Development Fund to support youth entrepreneurship and promote upward mobility.

However, the [website](#) [3] of the commission, one of its major communication channels, is not too user-friendly for non-Chinese readers. Information on the [Youth Development Fund](#) [4] and other programmes such as internships and exchanges refer readers to the Chinese versions for more information.

The Chinese-language proficiency of ethnic minority youth is generally poor due to systemic flaws of our mainstream education. Since the government acknowledges that people from ethnic minorities are important members of Hong Kong society, these locally born and raised young people should be given equal access to information and opportunities, particularly on youth development.

On early childhood education, the government has allocated HK\$990 million [5] to provide social work services for pre-primary institutions. Hong Kong Unison has always advocated cultural sensitivity training for all social workers; to date, however, it is not a mandatory training.

This is an oversight, as there are now more than 400 “free” kindergartens [6] with ethnic minority children. The funding should train social workers in pre-primary institutions to be more sensitive towards the needs of ethnic minority children and their families to provide effective counselling and referral services.

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Minority children should not struggle to get quality education

1 Jul 2019



[7]

Since the launch of a learning framework for Chinese as a second language (Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework) in 2014, with funding of HK\$200 million every year, Hong Kong Unison has urged the Education Bureau to develop longitudinal studies to track the Chinese learning [8] of non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) students.

We are pleased to learn that the bureau finally allocated funding [9] this year to “gauge NCS students’ progress in learning Chinese language through longitudinal studies”. This move can certainly help evaluate the effectiveness of the current measures and provide a basis for future improvement.

It’s time the government stopped using Band Aid treatment for minority education. Money should be used towards more sustainable measures to help ethnic minority children thrive in the mainstream education system.

*Phyllis Cheung, executive director, Hong Kong Unison*

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**Links**

- [1] <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3052405/hong-kong-budget-hk120-billion-relief-package-includes>
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- [9] <https://www.budget.gov.hk/2020/eng/pdf/head156.pdf>