



CHIEF SECRETARY HEARS FROM ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITY ON ADDRESSING NEEDS OF HONG KONG CHILDREN

Town hall organised by The Zubin Foundation provides recommendations to preparatory committee for government's Commission on Children

Photo Caption 1. Mr. Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary for Administration, and Mrs. Shalini Mahtani, Founder of The Zubin Foundation, listen to a participant at a town hall on 6 November organised by the foundation. The event canvassed views from Hong Kong's ethnic minority community to help the HKSAR government establish a charter for the Commission on Children, set to launch next year.

Photo Caption 2. Mr. Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary for Administration, addresses participants at a town hall on 6 November organised by The Zubin Foundation. The event canvassed views from Hong Kong's ethnic minority community to help the HKSAR government establish a charter for the Commission on Children, set to launch next year.

Photo Caption 3. A participant addresses Mr. Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary for Administration, at a town hall on 6 November organised by The Zubin Foundation. The event canvassed views from Hong Kong's ethnic minority community to help the HKSAR government establish a charter for the Commission on Children, set to launch next year.

Hong Kong, 6 November 2017 – In the lead-up to the formation of the government's Commission on Children, The Zubin Foundation, a leading social policy think tank and registered charity, today hosted a town hall to gather views from the community on the issues facing ethnic minority children. The event was attended by Mr. Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary for Administration of the Hong Kong SAR Government.

The Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address – unveiled on 11 October 2017 – announced the establishment of a Commission on Children in mid-2018 to address issues that children face while growing up in Hong Kong. In the meantime, a preparatory committee, chaired by Mrs. Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of the HKSAR Government, with Mr. Matthew Cheung serving as Vice-chairman, will gather views to inform the Commission's focus and priority areas.

Over 150 people attended the town hall at Sai Ying Pun Community Complex. Participants included representatives from the Indian, Pakistani, Filipino, Thai, Nepalese, and Bangladeshi communities, as well as delegates from local healthcare, schools, social charities, chambers of commerce, and diplomatic missions.

Among the recommendations discussed were:

- Increasing non-Chinese language content, materials and facilities available to parents and children to ensure greater clarity, transparency and inclusion.
- Fully embracing and celebrating Hong Kong's diversity of cultures to ensure better inclusion of children from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Reexamining Chinese as a potentially unfair language requirement for employment in certain fields, such as medicine and the sciences, despite passion and academic qualifications among interested students.

- Increasing the number of social workers from ethnic minority backgrounds due to disproportionate number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds requiring child protection and child care services.
- Better training and proper curriculum alignment for teachers of Chinese as a second language.

At the event, Mr. Matthew Cheung emphasised that children are the future. He added that as the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address, the Government will set up a Commission on Children in the middle of next year to amalgamate the efforts made by relevant bureaux and departments, as well as child concern groups, with a view to addressing children's issues as they grow. He took the opportunity to thank The Zubin Foundation for organising the timely and meaningful meeting.

Mrs. Shalini Mahtani, founder and chair of The Zubin Foundation, said, "We were pleased to see some excellent views and recommendations being raised today. Our research shows that Hong Kong is home to a growing ethnic minority population under the age of 15. This group will form an important part of our labour force, so how effectively we help them to fulfil their aspirations and eliminate barriers to their success will determine Hong Kong's future as a competitive, healthy and happy city."

In 2015, The Zubin Foundation commissioned "The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong, 1997 to 2014", a landscape study of ethnic minorities and the first of its kind. The research was undertaken by Professor Puja Kapai, Director of the Centre for Comparative and Public Law at The University of Hong Kong.

Among the key findings were that:

- There is a growing ethnic minority population under the age of 15.
- There is a higher number of ethnic minority students are not in school between ages 3-5 years when compared with Hong Kong Chinese.
- There are higher rates of dropout from school between ages 13 and 17 among some ethnic minority groups when compared with Hong Kong Chinese.
- There is an overrepresentation of ethnic minority children in selected schools. This leads to de facto racial segregation.
- There is a shockingly low rate of university attendance among ethnic minorities compared to Hong Kong Chinese counterparts.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong, 1997 to 2014

Summary Report: <http://www.zubinfoundation.org/index.php/en/2013-12-27-07-21-21/2014-05-13-07-51-61>

Video Summary: <https://youtu.be/YyloCRjmsxA>

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About The Zubin Foundation

The Zubin Mahtani Gidumal Foundation (also known as The Zubin Foundation) is a non-partisan social policy think tank and registered charity committed to shedding light on enduring barriers to fairness and opportunity Hong Kong. The Zubin Foundation's core focuses are ethnic minority welfare and patient welfare. The Zubin Foundation was established by two Hong Kong individuals, Shalini Mahtani and Ravi Gidumal in memory of their son Zubin who died tragically in 2009.

See www.zubinfoundation.org