



17 March 2020

**The Zubin Foundation is giving out 60,000 masks to Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong
Challenges Ethnic Minorities Face is More Than Ever**

In support of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March and to assist ethnic minorities during Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease outbreak, The Zubin Foundation (TZF) is distributing 60,000 masks to the ethnic minority communities across Hong Kong. Each registered ethnic minority individual may collect their masks at 6 designated locations in Hong Kong between 17 March (today) and 22 March (Sunday). The organisation will also set up stations at madrasahs to give out the masks after this period.

Hong Kong's ethnic minority population represents 4% of population. One in 4 of these families live in poverty. Supplies to hygienic and protective products, like masks, have become tight since Chinese New Year and the surge of price make it unaffordable for many ethnic minority families. Mr. Ahmed Raheel, a Pakistani father living in Tuen Mun said: "The price of the masks is too high. Even though I have heard that there are cheap or free masks available out there, I do not know where to get them as most of the information is only available online and is in Chinese. We have 6 family members in my home and we have one box of masks at home only. We need masks and thank The Zubin Foundation for giving us masks and support other ethnic minority families," The organisation has received many enquiries about children masks and would appreciate donations of children masks from the public.

Shalini Mahtani, CEO of The Zubin Foundation, said " The ethnic minority working poor are facing even more challenges at this time. We have seen an increase in calls on our women and girls crisis helpline, Call Mira. The number one issue is the heightened anxiety around job security for male breadwinners as businesses are making redundancies or enforcing unpaid leave. The inability to pay for masks because of their high price is also a major source of anxiety. Families need help at this time."

The major mask distribution sessions will take place in Tuen Mun, Kwai Chung, Tung Chung, Chai Wan, Jordan and Kwun Tong during designated date and time from 17 March to 22 March. Further information can be found on: <https://www.zubinfoundation.org/free-mask-2020>.

This distribution is part of the The Zubin Foundation's Healthy Body Healthy Mind project supported by the Jockey Club "COVID-19 Emergency Fund". The project also seek to support the mental well-being of ethnic minorities during the Coronavirus disease outbreak, raising awareness of how to manage stress and anxiety, and also providing counselling service to those who are in need. The organisation also offers a helpline and an online hub that provide advice and support on employment and other opportunities for ethnic minorities.

Photos and Captions



In support of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March and to assist ethnic minorities during COVID-19, The Zubin Foundation is distributing 60,000 masks to the ethnic minority communities across Hong Kong.



An ethnic minority who came to collect the masks expressed that he could hardly know where to get affordable masks as most of the information is only available online and is in Chinese.



There is an increase of calls on The Zubin Foundation's helpline where ethnic minority callers feel anxious about the job security for their male breadwinners at home as businesses are making redundancies or enforcing unpaid leave. They are also anxious because of the inability to pay for masks.

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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 focuses on ethnic minorities. The Zubin Foundation was established by Shalini Mahtani and Ravi Gidumal in memory of their son, Zubin, who died tragically in 2009. See www.zubinfoundation.org for more information.