



To: Mrs Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of HKSARG
Cc: Mr Matthew Cheung, Chief Secretary of HKSARG
Re: Chief Executive's Policy Address 2018
Subject: Hong Kong's ethnic minorities
Date: 3 August 2018

Dear Mrs Lam,

I would like to thank you and your administration for your continued commitment towards Hong Kong's ethnic minorities. In particular I would like to make a special mention of the Chief Secretary, the Education Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau for engaging directly with our stakeholders at The Zubin Foundation over the course of the last year. The dialogue is ongoing and much appreciated.

I would also like to say thank you for onboarding certain initiatives put forward by The Zubin Foundation for the benefit of Hong Kong's ethnic minorities. These include appointing diverse candidates on HKSARG advisory committees, putting racial discrimination centre stage with the new taxi guidelines and the setting up of an internal steering committee on ethnic minorities to streamline services to ethnic minorities and to iron out issues between bureau and departments.

In light of The Zubin Foundation's work in the last year, including research on special needs children in primary schools and kindergartens with ethnic minorities, town halls and countless other engagements, we put forward the following recommendations. All these are doable and we believe, needed.

I believe that we can all do more to make Hong Kong more inclusive for all those who live here. Please feel free to be in touch should you have any questions or comments on the below.

Yours sincerely,

Shalini Mahtani
Co- Founder and Chair, The Zubin Foundation

The Zubin Mahtani Gidumal Foundation Limited, known as The Zubin Foundation (registered charity in Hong Kong - IR 91/12344).

小彬紀念基金(香港註冊慈善機構 IR 91/12344)。

The Zubin Foundation also manages www.hospitaladvisor.org.hk, a Hong Kong social enterprise.

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Ethnic Minorities

Preamble

The ethnic minority and non-Chinese population is a part of the Hong Kong family. The population of ethnic minorities is one of the fastest growing populations in Hong Kong, particularly the youth population. With this population, Hong Kong is stronger in a global and connected to the world.

The ethnic minority and non-Chinese population bring a diverse range of skills, talent, language, culture and networks to Hong Kong. Many self-define as Hong Kong people and some families have a long history in Hong Kong. As Asia's World City, Hong Kong should be inclusive to this population and to find ways of mainstreaming this population.

The ethnic minority is also amongst the poorest in Hong Kong and opportunities exist to upskill and include population for the benefit for them as well as for the Hong Kong community at large.

The Zubin Foundation makes the following specific policy recommendations for the **Policy Address of the Chief Executive for 2019**.

A Liveable City for all starts with our Government

Imagery, Training and Representation

1.0 Hong Kong is made up of a majority population of Chinese and yet it claims itself as "Asia's world city" because of its rich history of international trade, its place in the world financial economy, its rule of law and increasingly its role and networks with Belt and Road countries. The hardware and software of the Hong Kong SAR government must reflect our internationalism and inclusion and essentially that Hong Kong is a 'livable city for all.' The following recommendations are made in light of this.

Policy Recommendations:

1.1 Increase representation of ethnicities on **government department websites and government imagery** in order demonstrate Hong Kong's commitment as an international and inclusive city.



- 1.2 In light of 1.1 above, to produce a **best practice resource for all departments and bureau**, to consider diversity in imaging and messaging.
- 1.3 To make mandatory for Bureaux and Department Heads Diversity and Inclusion Training as is the case in other countries in order to foster an inclusive mindset and address unconscious bias.
- 1.4 To include the views of ethnic minority and non-Chinese community in policy by **engaging a non-Chinese policy advisor(s)** who will report directly to the Chief Executive.
- 1.5 To continue to **on board ethnic minority advisors** from varied backgrounds who meet the criteria required, to sit on HK government advisory committees. This is particularly important in those departments that provide core services to Hong Kong people and include Housing, Health, Education and Labour and Welfare as examples.

Terminology

- 1.6 To work together with the non-Chinese community to **consider keeping or changing the existing terminology of “ethnic minorities”** that is inclusive to all our non-Chinese community.

Education

Changing attitudes of Teachers, Schools and Parents

- 2.0 In light of the negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities that exist in kindergarten and primary schools, the following policies are recommended. The aim of these is to over time, begin to **improve public attitudes towards ethnic minorities by changing mindsets**. The Zubin Foundation research has found that management, teachers and Chinese parents play a role in exclusion of ethnic minority students from learning from their Chinese counterparts. While we recognize that this may not be intentional, it has a detrimental impact on learning and self-perception of ethnic minorities.

Policy Recommendations:

- 2.1 An **Inclusive Toolkit** for all kindergartens and schools (kindergarten, primary and secondary schools) on how to incorporate and celebrate diversity and diverse learners.
- 2.2 To ensure that all teachers, as part of their teacher training qualification undergo mandatory **cultural sensitivity training**.
- 2.3 A complete **review of school resources** (including textbooks) to ensure the negative stereotypes are removed and to ensure that school materials are inclusive of ethnic minority communities.



- 2.4 To request that all primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary and special schools' **websites are also in English.**
- 2.5 To reinforce messaging to education institutes that ethnic minorities must be integrated into the mainstream classroom.

Kindergartens

- 2.6 In light of The Zubin Foundation findings from "*Securing a Good Start for Students of Chinese as an Additional Language in Kindergartens*", [07 May 2018]¹ a number of challenges face kindergarten principals who admit ethnic minority children into their kindergartens. Many of these principals wish to onboard such students but face pressure from teachers who prefer not to work with ethnic minority children, Chinese parents who threaten to take their children out of kindergartens if their child has ethnic minority classmates, and the massive amount of time required by teachers to produce resources for such children. Good hearted teachers spent time pasting romanisation on school books and developing resources for ethnic minority children because resources do not exist for teaching non-Chinese speakers how to learn Chinese. Many principals, perhaps understandably, bow to client pressure and chose not to bring on ethnic minority children because it is just too difficult- and ethnic minorities who sense this go elsewhere, generally an EMI kindergarten or a CMI kindergarten that segregates the NCS children into a different classroom. It is in light with these findings from our research that the following recommendations are being made:

Policy Recommendations:

- 2.7 To provide a **pro-rata subsidy** (NCS grant) to kindergartens with less than 8 NCS students.
- 2.8 To **increase messaging to ethnic minority parents** on the importance of Chinese language learning at a young age, from kindergarten.
- 2.9 To consider recommending **use of romanisation** (for example, *Jyutping*) to assist children as well as NCS parents to acquire the Chinese language (as is used generally across the study of Putonghua).
- 2.10 To develop or support the **development of materials** for kindergartens to use for teaching NCS kindergarten children Chinese.

¹ Securing a Good Start for Students of Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL) in Kindergarten, The Zubin Foundation, 7 May 2018, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/da2d17_b42292daf5124ff6bbdd963df27cd732.pdf and Exec Summary in Eng: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/da2d17_2f61643eb176495fb2f1e8788ffa0dc5.pdf and Chi: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/da2d17_8eafbcdbf6d5434597af3cc036d6e300.pdf.



Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

2.11 The needs children from NCS families are perhaps amongst the most “invisible” given the shame and pain that many families face when they have a child with special needs, coupled with their inability to speak Chinese and their lack of knowledge about how they can be helped. This has resulted in both the child and the family suffering, has led to the breakdown of family unit’s, mental health problems, as a result of large amounts of stress, as well as the splitting of families where one parent will leave Hong Kong with their NCS SEN child. In addition, NCS children are not able to access resources and early interventions are therefore being denied as a result of a lack of places, lack of facilities in English language or an inability of trained professionals to distinguish between a genuine special need or a language delay because of learning in Chinese. The following recommendations are being made in light of the research “*Landscape Study: Primary School Education for Non-Chinese Speaking children with Special Education Needs*”, [27 November 2017]²:

Policy Recommendations:

- 2.12 For children under 6 years old with mild and moderate special needs, to increase the existing number of places for children in the **Early Education Training Centres (EETCs) in English**.
- 2.13 For children under 6 years old, with severe special needs to develop **EMI Special Child Care Centres (SCCCs)**. Alternatively to accommodate EMI children in existing SCCC by developing and employing specific English language resources for them.
- 2.14 For all NCS SEN students: To develop or support the development of **an assessment tools for NCS special education needs (SEN) students** coupled with training in order for professionals to distinguish if a child has a genuine impairment or difficulties due to language delay in learning Chinese.
- 2.15 In primary schools: For suspected **NCS SEN children (not yet diagnosed), to offer subsidies to schools** to provide or acquire support services for these children and their parents. (Early intervention is key.) This is particularly important in light of 3.3 above and the time lag in having an ethnic minority child assessed.
- 2.16 There is no English language classroom in any Special School in Hong Kong. As such an ethnic minority child with severe special needs, has to learn in Chinese which is both difficult and unfair given the severity of a child’s special needs. The EDB should consider the setting up of **English language resources and classrooms in selected existing Special Schools** to onboard NCS speaking children.
- 2.17 Private and international schools are found to not admit children with special needs and exclude them through the admission process through activities and exercises that would be difficult with children with certain behavioural issues in particular. As such NCS

² Landscape Study: Primary School Education for Non-Chinese Speaking children with Special Education Needs 27 November 2017, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5242b7_389718f03a5d4d56b5f299ee24df12dc.pdf



children who would like to be in private schools are coming to public schools- or leaving Hong Kong. **The EDB to reinforce messaging to private and international that discrimination on the grounds of special needs is unlawful** and to require then to review admission policies to ensure that this is so. Also, to ensure that as part of all land leases, this is being complied with.

- 2.18 In light of 3.6 above, to require private and international schools to be accountable also for children with special needs also and to be transparent to the HKSARG. We ask that you make it a requirement for them to report on a yearly basis, admission of children with special needs per year by gender, type of special needs and provisions provided.

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