

Meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Forum
21 October 2021 at 3:00 p.m.
30/F Conference Room, Southorn Centre, Wan Chai

Present

Government representatives

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| Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3) | Mr Howard Yam (Chairperson) |
| Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs(5) | Mr Ivan Wong |
| Chief Executive Officer (3), Home Affairs Department | Ms Rebecca Chan |

Representatives of public bodies

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| Senior Equal Opportunities Officer, Equal Opportunities Commission | Mr Raymond Ho |
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Representatives of non-government organisations

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| Caritas – Hong Kong | Ms Ansah Malik |
| Christian Action | Mr Albert Lee |
| Global Social Service Ltd. | Mr Yousaf Zab Rashid |
| Hong Kong Christian Service | Mr Cheung Muk Yan Mike |
| Hong Kong SKH Lady MacLehose Centre | Mr Jonathan Chan |
| Hong Kong Unison | Ms Phyllis Cheung |
| India Association Hong Kong | Mr Mohan Chugani |
| Indian Businessmen’s Association | Mr Gul T. Mirpuri |
| Mission for Migrant Workers | Ms Tong Hiu Yan |
| Nepali Social Service Hong Kong | Mr MB Thapa |
| New Home Association | Mr YF Chan |
| Nigerian Community Hong Kong | Mr PC Clement |
| The Hong Kong Council of Social Service | Ms Angie Chan |
| The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong | Mr Qamar Zaman Minhas |
| The Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon | Ms Anna Tsoi |
| The Zubin Foundation | Mr Derek Chan |

Other attendees

For Agenda Item 1

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| Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) | Ms Pang Kit Ling |
| Senior Social Worker (Family) ² | Ms Shea Ka Shuen |
| Team Leader of the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council B Square Outreaching Team for Ethnic Minorities | Ms Faye Chan |
| Team Leader of Hong Kong Christian Service M.O.T.I.O.N – Multicultural Outreaching Team for Inclusion | Mr Lai Chin Wang |
| Team Leader of Hong Kong SKH Outreaching Team for Multi-Cultural Community | Mr Daniel Ma |
| Unit-in-charge, Hong Kong SKH Lady MacLehose Centre | Ms Noel Leung |

For Agenda Item 2

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| Assistant Secretary for Security (Narcotics) ⁴ | Ms Crystal Ng |
| Regional Service Administrator of HK Social Service Centre of the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers (SARDA) | Mr Horace Fung |
| Social Work Assistant of HK Social Service Centre of SARDA | Mr Pankaj Basnet |
| Deputy Project Officer, Hong Kong Social Service Centre, the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers | Ms Yau Lok Sze |
| Social Worker, Operation Dawn Limited | Mr Tso Wing Leong |

Secretary

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| Senior Executive Officer (RRU), Home Affairs Department | Mr Clarence Ching |
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1 Introduction

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed attendees to the meeting.

2 Enhanced Support Measures in Social Welfare for Ethnic Minorities

2.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms Pang Kit Ling, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) briefed attendees on the enhanced support measures in social welfare for ethnic minorities (EM), including the setup of dedicated outreaching teams to actively approach and assist EM families in need of welfare services; and the launching of Ethnic Minority District Ambassador pilot scheme in nine districts with higher EM population to enhance the support services provided by service units and deepen communication and cooperation with relevant stakeholder. Representatives from the Neighborhood Advice-Action Council (NAAC), Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) and Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (HKSKH) also shared their experiences on the operation of dedicated outreaching teams with the attendees.

2.2 Ms Faye Chan of NAAC shared how they reached out to people from multicultural backgrounds by using social media. Mr Lai Chin Wang of HKCS introduced the approach they adopted to help stakeholders of mainstream services understand the needs of multicultural service users and build up relationships with the service users. Mr Daniel Ma and Ms Noel Leung of HKSKH shared their experience in connecting with the service users with multicultural backgrounds.

2.3 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below:

2.3.1 An attendee said that about 8 000 Pakistani were stranded in Pakistan and unable to return to Hong Kong due to COVID-19 pandemic. As some of them were grassroots people, they were not able to afford the cost of 21-day hotel quarantine in Hong Kong. He suggested the Government to reserve Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre for those who received Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme so as to ease their financial burden.

- 2.3.2 An attendee commented that the enhanced support measures provided by SWD should cover Africans living in Hong Kong and the Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) commissioned by SWD should also hire Africans as their ethnic minority district ambassadors. Ms Pang replied that SWD and the NGOs operating the outreaching services would provide services to all ethnicities. If Africans had relevant qualification and experience, they were welcome to apply for the posts of district ambassadors.
- 2.3.3 In response to an attendee's enquiry on the types of services provided by mobile truck, Ms Faye Chan advised that the mobile truck would travel to different places. Social workers could conduct interview, counselling and exhibition for the non-ethnic Chinese service targets. Information like Consumption Voucher Scheme and COVID-19 Vaccination Scheme were also disseminated to the non-ethnic Chinese targets. Mr Daniel Ma added that programme workers would handle questions involving a wide variety of issues and refer the enquirers to the relevant service centres for further assistance whenever necessary.
- 2.3.4 An attendee asked if interpretation service was available to non-ethnic Chinese patients at the public hospitals. Mr Johnathan Chan responded that the Hong Kong SKH Lady MacLehose Centre had been providing interpretation services for non-ethnic Chinese at the public hospitals. However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, interpreters were not allowed to stay inside the hospitals. Nevertheless, they could still provide interpretation services to non-ethnic Chinese patients via telephone conferencing.
- 2.3.5 An attendee asked if outreaching teams could work together with the district ambassadors to achieve synergy. The attendee also suggested that the district ambassadors could enhance cultural sensitivity of local social workers in the NGOs they served. Moreover, he recommended that outreaching teams should share their good practices across different teams.
- 2.3.6 An attendee commented that the efforts and functions of the outreaching team, the support service centres commissioned by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the NGOs might overlap. Mr Daniel Ma advised that the outreaching teams had collaborated with the support

service centres with the aim of providing services to people of diverse race. Their principle was not to duplicate the efforts of the outreaching team and HAD's support service centres.

- 2.3.7 An attendee appreciated the work of the outreaching team and the district ambassadors scheme. He considered that these two schemes would allow ethnic minorities to have the chance to work in social service setting. He hoped that the two schemes could be regularised after the end of the three-year pilot period. Ms Pang replied that the outreaching team was a regular service subvented by SWD, whereas the district ambassadors scheme was a pilot scheme until September 2023.
- 2.3.8 Ms Pang said that under the above enhanced support measures, training would be provided to both the district ambassadors and the non-ethnic Chinese staff of the outreaching teams so as to equip them with skills and knowledge to reach out to those service users in need of welfare services. On the other hand, they would share their culture with local social workers so as to enhance their knowledge on cultural diversity. In addition, the outreaching teams would share their experiences and practices among teams for developing strategies for effective service delivery.
- 2.3.9 An attendee asked whether the services would be provided to domestic helpers and refugees. Ms Pang said that the outreaching teams would proactively reach out to non-ethnic Chinese and connect the needy ones, including domestic helpers.
- 2.3.10 An attendee expressed that interpretation service was very important in bridging the communication gap between ethnic minorities and the service providers. The Chairperson advised that the CHEER Centre, which was commissioned by the HAD, provided a hotline for interpretation service in eight languages. They also arranged on site services to render support for people accessing public services. HAD had strengthened the quality of the translation services by recruiting a professional interpreter as a team leader, raising the qualification of interpreters to university degree, and strengthening the manpower support of CHEER Centre.

3 Drug Situation in Hong Kong

3.1 Ms Crystal Ng of Security Bureau (SB) briefed attendees on the latest drug situation in Hong Kong, Government's multi-pronged anti-drug strategy and anti-drug work on ethnic minorities, followed by sharing from Mr Horace Fung, Mr Pankaj Basnet, Ms Yau Lok Sze of the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers (SARDA) and Mr Tso Wing Leong of Operation Dawn Limited for their drug treatment and rehabilitation services.

3.2 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below:

3.2.1 An attendee expressed appreciation to Mr Basnet's effort to overcome the difficult process of drug rehabilitation and continue his studies to pursue his dream of being a registered social worker. He hoped that Mr Basnet's story could be widely spread among the Nepalese community.

4 Any Other Business

4.1 An attendee said that the business run by many non-ethnic Chinese in Hong Kong mainly served foreigners who came to Hong Kong from other countries. However, the 21-days hotel quarantine requirement deter many foreigners from coming to Hong Kong. He would like to know when this quarantine requirement could be relaxed. The Chairperson replied that the situation was not unique to people with multi-cultural backgrounds. Same as the request to open up Penny Bay's Quarantine Centre as an alternative to hotel quarantine for the underprivileged, the Chairperson believed that these concerns had been heard loud and clear by the Government.

4.2 An attendee reported a case where a Nepalese booked a quarantine hotel in Hong Kong but was later sent to Penny Bay's Quarantine Centre. The attendee asked if the hotel fee paid for reservation could be refunded. The Chairperson suggested the attendee to check with the relevant authority and he believed that there should not be any differential treatment for ethnic minorities under the prevailing rules.

4.3 An attendee enquired why the waiting time for a Hindi funeral was shorter than that for Buddhist at one of the funeral services provider in

Hong Kong. The Chairperson suggested the attendee to clarify the case with the concerned service provider.

- 4.4 For the date of next meeting, attendees would be duly informed nearer the time.

Home Affairs Department
December 2021