

**Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony**  
**Notes of the meeting on 7 March 2019**

**Present**

**Home Affairs Department (HAD)**

Miss Vega Wong (Chairperson)	Deputy Director of Home Affairs
Mr Howard Yam	Assistant Director of Home Affairs
Mr K Y Cheng	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Alfred Shum (Secretary)	Senior Executive Officer

**Official Members**

Ms Judy Chung	Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5), Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Ms Elaine Ng	Education Officer (Placement & Support)2, Education Bureau
Mr John Chong	Labour Officer (Employment Services)2, Labour Department
Ms Joey Yu	Information Officer (Campaign)1, Information Services Department

**Non-official Members**

Mr Mohamed Ibramsa Sikkander Batcha  
Ms Ping Somporn Bevan  
Ms Cheung Yee May, Mimi  
Dr Theresa Cunanan  
Mr Syed Ekram Elahi  
Ms Rita Gurung  
Mr Vijay Harilela  
Mr Avinash Chandiram Hotchadani  
Mrs Poonam Vijayprakash Mehta



## **2. Confirmation of the notes of discussion on 24 October 2018**

2.1 The notes of the last meeting held on 24 October 2018 were confirmed.

## **3. Matters arising from the meeting on 24 October 2018**

3.1 There was no matter arising from the meeting on 24 October 2018.

## **4. A Research funded by Equal Opportunities Commission: Acculturation and Needs Assessment of Elderly Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong: A Qualitative Study**

4.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Dr Ferrick Chu of the EOC, Dr Paul Wong of HKU and Ms Karrie Chan of HKCS briefed Members on the findings and recommendations of a research on the service needs of Nepalese elderly and their caretakers.

4.2 Issues raised by Members and the discussions were summarised below:

4.2.1 A Member expressed concerned about the limited supply of residential care service for elderly EMs. She said the Indian community would raise fund to establish such an elderly home if the Government could provide the required space such as vacant school premises.

4.2.2 In response to a Member's enquiry about the tools being used to assess the cognitive ability of elderly EMs, Ms Chan replied that the Social Welfare Department (SWD) had developed a tool known as Minimum Data Set-Home Care (MDS-HC) to assess the need for long-term care (LTC) of an elderly. However, the test questions were only available in English and Chinese, and they were so culturally localised that elderly EMs or even the interpreters could not understand them. Ms Chan said that while her centres had tried to use Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA) which had been translated into different language versions to assess the cognitive ability of the elderly, she recommended that SWD enhance MDS-HC to make it more culturally sensitive in assessing the LTC needs of elderly EMs.

- 4.2.3 With regard to the finding that there were cultural biases of existing professionals, Dr Wong explained that due to the lack of cultural sensitivity training and language barriers, some practitioners in the field were afraid of serving non-Chinese people. He said that the research team had therefore arranged a workshop in collaboration with the HKCS for over 30 social workers to discuss the issue and received positive feedback. A Member suggested that more training on inclusivity be given to social work students; and tertiary institutions to initiate curriculum change and attitudinal change in the academic sector. Dr Wong suggested and the EOC agreed to consider conducting further research into social inclusion education in the curriculum for professionals.
- 4.2.4 Some Members who had close contact with the Nepalese community offered to collaborate with the research team in future projects.
- 4.3 The Chairperson thanked Dr Chu and representatives from HKU and HKCS for their presentation.

## **5. Welfare Services for Elderly Ethnic Minorities**

- 5.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Tan Tick Yee of the SWD briefed Members on the welfare services for elderly EMs.
- 5.2 Issues raised by Members and the discussions were summarised below:
- 5.2.1 A Member said the condition in some private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) was poor and enquired about the monitoring mechanism. Mr Tan said all public and private RCHEs in Hong Kong had to be licensed with SWD. He was aware that the quality of service of different operators varied and SWD was conducting a review on the related ordinances and codes of practice for residential care homes with a view to enhancing the quality of RCHEs in terms of area of floor space, manpower, etc. He added that SWD would purchase 5 000 places from RCHEs in the coming five years and only those which could meet the stringent standard set by SWD would be qualified.

5.2.2 A Member noted that the waiting time for Integrated Home Care Services stood at three to nine months and urged SWD to reduce the waiting time. She also considered that it would be helpful in service planning if SWD would collect data on the number of EM service users. Mr Tan replied that as announced in the 2019-20 Budget, SWD would increase the number of places for enhanced home and community care services by 2 000 in the coming year. Additionally, all eligible elderly persons would receive an additional \$1,000 worth of Elderly Health Care Voucher.

5.2.3 Members generally agreed with SWD's approach of training foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to take care of the elderly persons. A Member enquired whether an FDH was allowed to live with an elderly residing in a public rental housing estate. Mr Tan replied that tenants could apply to the Housing Authority for temporary stay of their FDHs. Other Members expressed concern whether employing an FDH to take care of an elderly person living in a separate household would contravene the Immigration Department's live-in requirement. The Chairperson asked the Secretariat to check the relevant rules.

*(Post-meeting notes: According to the Immigration Department website, Clause 3 of the Standard Employment Contract (ID407) stipulates that an FDH shall work and reside in the employer's residence specified in the contract. In general, Immigration Department may consider accepting the financial proof provided by the employer's child in support of the application for employing an FDH made by an aged parent. In the event that the parent is not capable of acting as an employer due to health or other justifiable reasons, his/her child should state clearly the special circumstances and produce relevant supporting documents. Each case will be dealt with on its individual merits.)*

5.2.4 Referring to the research discussed in agenda item (3), Mr Raymond Ho of EOC conveyed three observations to representatives of SWD, i.e. many elderly EMs did not know about welfare services in Hong Kong, practitioners had limited exposure to the EM cultures and languages, and the assessment tools could not cater for the cultural differences of EMs. Another problem was that EM healthcare workers lacked promotion prospects because the requisite training programmes were only

offered in Chinese. Mr Ho asked whether SWD had any measure to cater for the needs of elderly EMs in their mainstream services. Mr Tan agreed that training for practitioners was essential and had to be specific due to the diverse background of different ethnic groups. He said that the new outreaching team would also facilitate elderly EMs' access to mainstream services. As for the assessment tool, Mr Tan explained that it was an internationally-accepted clinical assessment for determining an elderly's ability to take care of oneself. Interpreters would be arranged where necessary.

5.2.5 Mr Howard Yam suggested that HAD could assist in raising the awareness of public services among the practitioners, end users as well as intermediaries. For example, operators of the RCHEs might engage interpreters from the CHEER Centre to explain the services offered to EM service users and their caregivers.

5.2.6 A Member noted that SWD offered service information in a variety of EM languages and suggested that the Bengali language should be included.

5.3 The Chairperson thanked Mr Tan for his presentation.

## **6. Any Other Business**

### **6.1 Youth Engagement in Community Activities**

6.1.1 The Chairperson said that joining uniform groups could help EM youths explore their potentials and build up their confidence, sense of responsibility, self-discipline and the spirit to serve others. HAD had recruited several EM youths through its support service centres to join the Civil Aid Service (CAS) Cadet Corps and they had recently completed their basic training. A video on their training and passing-out parade was shown. Members were invited to encourage EM youths through their network to join the CAS, which organised recruitment days every month.

## 6.2 Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youths

6.2.1 The Chairperson said that the Government launched Phase II of the Member Self-Recommendation Scheme for Youth in December 2018 to recruit young persons aged between 18 and 35 to become members of ten government advisory committees, including the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony. She thanked Members for volunteering to sit on the assessment panel to interview the 125 candidates wishing to join this Committee.

## 6.3 New Initiatives on EM Support Services

6.3.1. Mr Howard Yam reported the new measures to be implemented by the HAD arising from the \$500 million fund earmarked in the 2018-19 Budget for strengthening support for EMs. Firstly, HAD would enhance the interpretation and translation services in the CHEER Centre including the introduction of Vietnamese service. Secondly, more district-based activities would be organised to promote social inclusion and cultural diversity. Thirdly, we would strengthen the services of our EM centres, particularly those services catering for EM new arrivals and youths. He added that in addition to direct grants on a per centre basis, some funding would be allocated on a competitive basis to projects of innovative and worthy cause.

## 6.4 Other Businesses

6.4.1 A Member suggested that the Committee could invite relevant bureaux and departments to report the progress of their new initiatives arising from the \$500 million funding for strengthening EM support services. The Chairperson agreed to follow up at an appropriate time.

6.4.2 A Member enquired about the progress of making legislative amendments to the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) as recommended by EOC. Ms Judy Chung replied that the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau had already introduced a bill to LegCo to take forward eight of the priority items in EOC's recommendations and would continue to study and follow up the other 19 recommendations of priority as appropriate. With regard to the reason why the proposed

recommendation of bringing government functions under the scope of the RDO was not taken on board now, Ms Chung said that further consultations with bureaux and departments concerned would be needed.

6.5 The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

**Home Affairs Department**  
**August 2019**