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**Committee for the Promotion of Racial Harmony**

**Enhanced Support Services for Ethnic Minorities**

**Purpose**

This paper informs Members of the new initiatives of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to strengthen support services for ethnic minorities (EMs) in 2014-15.

**Background**

1. Various government bureaux and departments have been providing various services to help them integrate into the society as early as possible, such as educational support for EM students provided by the Education Bureau, vocational training and employment support for EMs provided by the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Labour Department (LD), and social welfare services for EM families provided by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). HAD makes good use of the district network of District Offices, and through non-profit-making organisations (NPOs) and district organisations, to provide support services for EMs.
2. The Chief Executive announced in his 2014 Policy Address that the Government will put in place a series of initiatives to strengthen support for EMs. Amongst others, HAD has undertaken to implement the following new initiatives to enhance community support –
   * establishing a support service centre for EMs in Kwai Tsing district;
   * setting up EM youth units in all support service centres and sub-centres to provide dedicated programmes for EM youths;
   * implementing ambassador schemes for EM youths to provide reach-out services for EM youths; and
   * strengthening manpower support through employment of staff familiar with EM cultures and languages.

**Enhanced Support Services for EMs**

1. HAD has implemented the above new initiatives for EMs. Details of the progress of the initiatives are set out in the following paragraphs.

***Support Service Centre for EMs in Kwai Tsing District***

1. Since 2009, the Government has commissioned NPOs to run four support service centres for EMs in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long respectively to provide various tailor-made support services for EMs to facilitate their integration into the community. To strengthen the support services for EMs, an additional centre in Yau Tsim Mong district and two sub-centres in Sham Shui Po and Tung Chung respectively were set up in 2012. In view of a high demand for EM support services in Kwai Tsing district[[1]](#footnote-1), the Government decided to set up a new support service centre in the district in 2014-15.
2. Similar to the establishment of the existing five centres and two sub-centres for EMs, an open “invitation of proposals” exercise for the set-up and operation of the centre in Kwai Tsing district was conducted in June to August 2014. Publicity was made through an invitation notice and a project brief uploaded to the HAD website, issue of press release and advertisements in Chinese and English newspapers, and letters to members of the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony (CPRH) and the EM Forum. A briefing session was also arranged for interested organisations. An inter-departmental vetting panel, comprising representatives from HAD, LD and SWD was formed to assess proposals received. After assessment by the vetting panel, the Government commissioned the Hong Kong Community Network to run the new centre in Kwai Tsing district. With the establishment of the new centre, the Government has provided a total of six centres and two sub-centres[[2]](#footnote-2) across the territory.
3. The new centre, operated by the Hong Kong Community Network, is named as LINK (**L**inkage, **I**ntegration, **N**eeds and **K**nowledge) Centre. It is located at the ground floor of Cheong Nin Building, Kwai Chung, with a floor area of around 400 square metres. It provides a wide range of support services for EMs, including Cantonese and English language classes, after-school tutorial classes, computer classes, visit programmes, interest classes, counselling, social activities, etc. A youth unit has also been set up to provide dedicated programmes for EM youths, such as sports training and interest classes. The Centre has employed seven full-time local staff and five full-time EM staff. Three more full-time local staff and three more full-time EM staff will be joining the Centre in the coming months. The estimated number of service recipients of the Centre per year is 7,000.
4. The Centre has commenced operation since late October 2014. It has been operating smoothly and progressing well. As at mid-November 2014, two tutorial classes for EM students and five integration programmes, including one parenting talk, two interest classes, one festival celebration and one family outing have been conducted. These activities have attracted over 300 EM participants. Language classes will start in early December 2014.
5. EM residents in the district greatly appreciate the provision of support services to meet their needs. The Centre is actively exploring collaboration opportunities with the EM communities through their community network, including EM organisations, District Council, district organisations, NPOs, religious bodies, schools and government departments.

***EM Youth Units***

1. To help the personal development of EM youths, the Government has decided to set up youth units in all support service centres and sub-centres for EMs[[3]](#footnote-3). The relevant centre operators were invited in June 2014 to propose dedicated services and activities for EM youths, on top of their existing services, and based on their operational experiences and special needs of EM youths. Particular attentions were drawn to those school leavers and unemployed youths. A one-off setting up grant and an annual operating grant have been provided for each centre/sub-centre.
2. All the youth units have commenced operation since late July 2014. The tailor-made programmes include sports and interest classes for EM youths to spend their leisure time by engaging in their hobbies and interests. Counselling and guidance services for EM youths are also provided with a view to empowering them to foster personal growth and overcome difficulties. Those EM youths with welfare and special counselling needs will be referred to appropriate government departments or NPOs for follow-up as necessary. A summary of the major programmes provided in the youth units of the existing and new centres and sub-centres is at **Annex**. The youth units have employed a total of 15 full-time EM staff and 6 full-time local staff. The estimated total number of service recipients per year is 3,600.
3. These programmes are well received by the EM youths, particularly reaching out to those youth groups not yet covered by the centres. From the feedbacks of the centre operators, more and more EM youths are attracted to participate in the youth programmes. The sports and band training are particularly popular.

***Ambassador Schemes for EM Youths***

1. To further strengthen the support for EM youths, the Government has decided to implement ambassador schemes for EM youths. The ambassadors, who are familiar with EM cultures and languages and with background and experience similar to those of EM youths, are tasked to proactively reach out those with service needs, share their experience, offer advice and, where necessary, make referrals to government departments for specific follow-up.
2. Through a quotation exercise conducted in May and June 2014, the Christian Action and the New Home Association have been commissioned to implement the schemes in Urban and New Territories regions respectively.
3. The two schemes have commenced operation since late July 2014, and have been progressing well. As at end October 2014, 390 outreach visits have been conducted at places where EM youths usually gather, such as public housing estates, parks, playgrounds, basketball courts and game centres in different districts. The ambassadors talked to the EM youths and shared with them their experience, understood their difficulties and service needs, and made referrals to government departments and local organisations for cases requiring follow-up actions. As at end October 2014, a total of 78 referral cases have been made to relevant departments and organisations, concerning mainly student financial assistance and job seeking services.
4. Besides outreach visits, various integration programmes such as volunteer service and leadership training, sports and recreational activities, cooking classes and arts programmes, etc. will be conducted under the schemes according to the youths’ interests to sustain their participation and build up their positive social values. Some activities such as Chinese learning by creative drawing, understanding food culture of Hong Kong by making Hong Kong style dessert, etc. have been organised. 13 programmes/interest classes such as basketball competition, barbecue outing, Ukulele, etc. are being organised in November and December 2014. The NPOs are actively exploring collaboration opportunities with schools, EM and religious organisations, etc. to attract more EM youths to participate in the programmes. Over 1,100 EM youths have been served between end July and end October 2014.
5. The two commissioned NPOs have employed a total of four EM full-time and two local full-time staff for the schemes. In addition, over 20 EM part-time staff have been employed as ambassadors. More EM full-time staff and part-time ambassadors will be joining the schemes in the coming months. The estimated number of service recipients per year is 4,500.

***Strengthened Manpower Support for EM Support Services***

1. Many local people may not have a clear understanding of the culture and custom of EMs. There is a need to step up publicity and public education programmes to enhance cross-cultural understanding between local and EM communities. HAD has therefore recruited non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff who are familiar with EM cultures and languages to perform the duties, liaise with EM groups as well as promoting our support services for EMs.
2. A recruitment exercise was conducted from July to September 2014. We are thankful to five CPRH members, viz. Dr Sharmila Gurung, Mr Hameed Jalal, Ms Rosalia Kamariah Kesuma, Mr Mohammad Liaqat and Ms Bungon Tamasorn, for their assistance in assessing the EM language proficiency of the candidates. A total of four Publicity Officers/Publicity Assistant (one Indian, two Nepalese and one Pakistani) have joined the Department since November/December 2014. They have been working well with other colleagues and providing valuable support for HAD in the provision of support services for EMs.

**Conclusion**

1. HAD will closely monitor the implementation of the new initiatives to ensure that our services best suit the needs of EMs and help them integrate into the community.

**Advice Sought**

1. Members are invited to note the new initiatives for EMs described in paragraphs 4 to 19 above.

Home Affairs Department

December 2014

**Annex**

**Major Programmes and Additional Facilities and Staff of Youth Units**

| **Centre/**  **Sub-centre &**  **operator** | **Major programmes** | **Additional facilities and staff** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| HOPE Centre  (Wan Chai) ISS-HK | *Sports and interest classes*   * Music and dance classes, such as band jamming, guitar, traditional dancing * Photography and design workshops * Skill-based interest classes, such as arts and crafts making, T-shirt printing, embroidery * Team building activities, e.g. camping and outings   *Guidance and support*   * Counselling services * Volunteer activities | * A band room and a youth corner * Photographic equipment and design softwares * 2 EM, 1 local |
| CHEER Centre  (Kwun Tong)  HKCS | *Sports and interest classes*   * “Dare to Dream” Competition to help EM youths realise their dreams   *Guidance and support*   * Workshops on self-understanding, life planning, career development, etc. * Personal development programmes, such as training on communication skills, problem-solving skills, volunteer service | * A youth corner equipped with multi-media devices and various games for youths * 2 EM, 1 local |
| SHINE Centre  (Tuen Mun) Christian Action | *Sports and interest classes*   * Band and musical training * Cooking classes * Sports classes   *Guidance and support*   * Life planning seminars and student group activities for schools * Social integration programmes | * Band room facilities with improved soundproof and additional musical instrument * Enhanced kitchen facilities * A youth corner with audio and visual equipment for youth activities * 2 EM, 1 local |
| YLTH Centre  (Yuen Long)  YLTH | *Sports and interest classes*   * Sports training   *Guidance and support*   * Personal and talent development training programmes by collaborating with schools to set up a scout team * Skills training programmes, such as emotional control, social skills, volunteer service, etc. | * A youth corner with internet service, reading materials for youths * Musical instrument, sports equipment such as cricket, skateboard * Arts tools and photographic equipment * 2 EM, 1 local |
| LINK Centre  (Kwai Tsing)  HKCN | *Sports and interest classes*   * Sports training * Photographic and video editing classes * Arts and cultural activities * “Hong Kong in My Eyes” photo exhibition   *Guidance and support*   * Lifespan education workshops * Leadership training * Volunteer programmes * Youth inclusion programme to establish link between local and EM youths | * A youth activity room equipped with multi-media devices and various games for youths * 2 EM, 1 local |
| HOME Centre (YTM) and Sub-centre (SSP)  NHA | *Sports and interest classes*   * Sports training * Adventure training * Cantonese classes   *Guidance and support*   * Teenage support groups * Volunteer programmes * Career development workshops | * A youth zone in both YTM Centre and SSP Sub-centre providing computer, audio and visual facilities for organising youth activities * A relax corner in both YTM Centre and SSP Sub-centre providing different kinds of games, reading materials for youths * 4 EM, 1.5 local |
| TOUCH Sub-centre (Tung Chung) NAAC | *Sports and interest classes*   * Music lessons * Cricket and soccer training   *Guidance and support*   * Personal growth programmes, such as self-understanding and self-discipline training, leadership training, career development workshops, etc. * Social inclusion programmes such as volunteer service, and cultural exchange programmes | * A youth activity room with various games and reading material for youths * Improved sound proof facilities in the band room * 1 EM, 0.5 local |

1. According to the 2011 Population Census, the number of Pakistani residents in Kwai Tsing district is the third highest among 18 districts, after Yau Tsim Mong district and Yuen Long. There are also many Nepalese and Indian residents in the district. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The existing centres and sub-centres are –

   1. HOPE Centre operated by International Social Service-Hong Kong Branch in Wan Chai;
   2. CHEER Centre operated by Hong Kong Christian Service in Kwun Tong;
   3. SHINE Centre operated by Christian Action in Tuen Mun;
   4. YLTH Centre operated by Yuen Long Town Hall in Yuen Long;
   5. HOME Centre and Sub-centre operated by New Home Association in Yau Tsim Mong district and Sham Shui Po respectively; and
   6. TOUCH Sub-centre operated by Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council in Tung Chung.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. A youth unit has also been set up in the LINK Centre in Kwai Tsing district as a basic service of the new centre. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)