

Internship Programme for Non-ethnic Chinese University Students

The Civil Service Bureau introduced a pilot internship programme for non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) university students this year, aiming to help young NEC students gain work experience and enhance their competitiveness for employment. A total of 16 NEC university students joined the programme and they were posted to various government bureaux / departments for internships lasting for about eight weeks. Amongst a variety of job nature, some placements were relevant to the provision of public services to NEC communities and required knowledge of NEC languages or cultures. This not only played to the interns' strengths, but also provided an opportunity for the interns to see for themselves the Government's efforts in strengthening support for NEC communities.



The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, met students participating in the internship programme on 31 July 2019 to exchange views on the internship experience. He encouraged them to be well-prepared for their career development, and mentioned that the Government will continue effort to provide NEC with equal access to government job opportunities as other applicants.

One of the interns, Miss Sumanjit Janday, Amy, had an unforgettable time working with the Race Relations Unit of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and wish to tell us more about her experience in HAD.

Hi I'm Amy. I am currently studying in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, majoring in Hotel and Tourism Management. I am an Indian with Chinese blood. My grandpa came to Hong Kong from India as a member of the British Army and met my grandma who was half Shanghainese and half Indian. They then formed a family rooted in Hong Kong.



I had a fruitful experience and learnt a lot in the two-month internship in HAD. One of my major duties was conducting exhibition together with the Publicity Officers. We went to public housing estates and promoted Ethnic Minority (EM) culture to the local residents. Through our interaction, I realised that local Chinese were enthusiastic and curious about EM culture and they asked a lot of questions. I answered them patiently and explained the reasons behind some of the practices and culture of EMs.



For example, Indians who are Hindus do not eat beef because they believe cows are sacred animals which help them with farming and provide milk; Indian men with a turban are Sikhs and they believe that the hair and the head of a man are sacred and thus should be kept covered and they do not cut their hair.



Besides, I also visited an elderly home and introduced EM culture to them. Surprisingly the elderly were very interested to interact and communicate with us. Other than raising questions, they also shared their encounters with EMs in the past, such as Nepalese who served as Gurkhas or Indian who served in the British Army like my grandpa. I was touched to know that EMs have a long-established connection with the history of Hong Kong.

The most rewarding experience in these two months was that I discovered that local Chinese were actually way more willing to accept EMs as part of Hong Kong than I originally thought. To achieve the goal of racial harmony in Hong Kong, we should build a more supportive and accepting environment for EMs to feel comfortable and at ease to approach the local Chinese community. EMs should also be pro-active in reaching out to the community. Hong Kong is very culturally diverse and I believe that the Government would continue to promote social integration and facilitate people of different backgrounds to live, learn and grow together in harmony.

