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For Immediate Release

Survey on "Perceptions of Racial Inclusion among Hong Kong Chinese and Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong"

Reveals 80% Agree with Racial Inclusion in Hong Kong and 30% of Ethnic Minority Youths need Mental Health Services

A survey on "Perceptions of Racial Integration among Hong Kong Chinese and Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong" was conducted by Task Group on Developing Ethnic Minorities Services in Hong Kong under Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong (YMCA) late 2022, in which over 800 Chinese and ethnic minority secondary school students were interviewed. The survey revealed that over 90% of the Hong Kong Chinese youths expressed their willingness to make friends with ethnic minorities, while those who indicated their unwillingness to make friends with ethnic minorities cited language barrier, less exposure and limited knowledge as the main reasons. In addition, nearly 30% of the ethnic minority respondents reported a need for mental health services, but 70% of them were not aware of the services available and did not know how to seek help. YMCA recommended more support for racial integration education and more targeted mental health services for ethnic minorities.

Nearly half agree that ethnic minorities are discriminated against

The survey was conducted between June and November last year. 518 Hong Kong Chinese and 300 ethnic minority secondary school students in Hong Kong were interviewed in two separate sets of questionnaires. According to Mr Simon Ho, Research Officer of YMCA, nearly 80% of the interviewed youths agreed that Hong Kong Chinese and ethnic minorities get along well, and about 80% agreed that Hong Kong is an ethnically inclusive society. Comparing the two sets of questionnaires, it was found that the Hong Kong Chinese youths were more willing to interact with ethnic minorities than the ethnic minority respondents thought. For example, 92.6% of Hong Kong Chinese youths said they were happy to have ethnic minorities in their class, compared with only 81.8% of those ethnic minorities who agreed with this statement. In addition, over 60% of the Hong Kong Chinese respondents agreed that ethnic minorities experience discrimination (68.4%) or unfair treatment (60.9%) in Hong Kong, while only 43.7% and 44.6% of the ethnic minority respondents agreed with such statements respectively.

90% of the young Hong Kong Chinese respondents were willing or very willing to make friends with ethnic minorities, mainly for the reasons of "emphasis on equality and human rights" (61.4%), "care and respect" (53.1%) and "to expand social circles" (47.2%). Rather than "discrimination and personal prejudice" (6.1%), the main reasons for the Hong Kong Chinese youths not to make friends with ethnic minorities were "language communication barrier" (54.5%), "rare contact and limited knowledge" (39.4%) and "different religious customs and cultures" (36.4%), which could be considered for future services to promote racial integration.

Nearly 30% of ethnic minority youths need mental health services

The questionnaire for the ethnic minority youths also assessed their awareness and need for mental health services in Hong Kong. 27.9% of the ethnic minority youths surveyed indicated their need for mental health support services, but 70.8% of which said they were not aware of the available mental health services in Hong Kong, and 79.7% said they did not know how to seek help.

For further details, please refer to the presentation slides on the [YMCA website](#).

Regular review on racial integration education

The survey not only assessed the perceptions of the Hong Kong Chinese and ethnic minority youths on racial integration but also sought their suggestions on how to promote racial integration in Hong Kong. After taking into account the many views expressed, the most popular suggestions from the local Chinese and ethnic minority youths were twofold, including to organise more activities with the participation of different ethnic groups to enhance the understanding of ethnic minorities among the Chinese and alleviate discrimination and prejudice, and to organise talks on the theme of racial integration with the community and schools to foster respect for different ethnic cultures and the understanding of the importance of inclusion among children at an early age.

To further promote diverse racial integration in Hong Kong, the Convener of the Task Group on Developing Ethnic Minorities Services in Hong Kong and Coordinating Secretary, Mr Lee Man-key, has recommended strengthening education on racial integration and cultures of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong schools. While the Government has implemented measures to promote the integration of ethnic minorities into campus, it is recommended that the curriculum and measures to support ethnic minorities should be reviewed in due course to ensure racial integration in practice. Public education should also contribute to raising the community's social awareness of racial diversity.

The government urged to set up counselling service centres

While there are already support service centres for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, the survey results revealed a strong demand for mental health services for ethnic minorities. The majority of ethnic minority youths in need do not know how to seek help or appropriate support services. Mr Lee opines that the Government should provide mental health services tailor made for ethnic minorities, such as setting up dedicated counselling centres for ethnic minorities, in order to improve the mental health of ethnic minorities with greater focus.

Arfan Tariq, a young Pakistani studying a Bachelor's degree in English at the City University of Hong Kong. He grew up in Hong Kong and is able to communicate in Cantonese and Chinese. Although he is surrounded by friends of Chinese descent, he still faces discrimination. "One time, for example, when I was on the MTR, no one would sit next to me in the empty seat even though the train was packed with passengers. When I was working part-time as a tutor, I was also discriminated against in the workplace. Some parents turned me away when they found out I was an ethnic minority, without knowing my academic qualifications." He believes that ethnic minorities who do not speak Chinese or Cantonese are more likely to encounter discrimination, rudeness or unfriendliness.

Having also received mental health counselling services from the university, Arfan believes that most ethnic minorities do not know how to find relevant support services, or are resistant to seek help due to their cultural backgrounds. For this reason, he recognises a need for dedicated counselling services for ethnic minorities. "It is because I am a university student that I can use the free counselling services provided by my university, but I believe that most of my ethnic minority friends, especially the non-university students, do not know how to look for mental health support services. Even if they are aware of the availability of such services, they are often discouraged from seeking help due to cultural differences or religious factors. Therefore, the provision of mental health services to ethnic minorities needs to be adapted to their cultural or other needs."

YMCA Brilliant Multicultural Centre helps ethnic minorities integrate into the community

In January this year, YMCA set up the Brilliant Multicultural Centre to promote multiculturalism in Hong Kong and help ethnic minorities integrate into the community. Through regular public events such as the Multicultural Day, the Centre educates the public to understand and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of different ethnic minorities and enhances the acceptance and inclusion of the community. The Centre also actively collaborates with schools and other stakeholders to provide different activities for ethnic minorities, equipping them with the skills to seize opportunities, develop and excel in various careers.



Photo 1: YMCA set up the Brilliant Multicultural Centre in January 2023 to promote multiculturalism in Hong Kong



Photo 2: The Brilliant Multicultural Centre educates the public to understand and appreciate the cultural backgrounds of different ethnic minorities through activities to enhance community acceptance and inclusion



Photo 3: Arfan Tariq, an ethnic minority youth

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About Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, established in 1901, is a Christian Service organisation based in Hong Kong as part of the global YMCA movement. The Association is committed to building a civil and compassionate Hong Kong through uniting people with the same spirit to extend the Kingdom of God; fostering youth leadership to shoulder social responsibility with keen concern for the motherland and the world; promoting multiple service programmes based on holistic personal growth, commitment to the underprivileged and reconciliation extending from self to society; and actively integrating ESG principles into social services, leading the industry to implement the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. To learn more, please visit www.ymca.org.hk.

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