



Press Release
For Immediate Release

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Colour is Still a Hindrance for Job Seekers Employer should Value Ethnic Minority Talent
YMCA announces its latest figures on the employment and recruitment of ethnic minorities

Ethnic minorities constitute about 6% of Hong Kong's population¹. With their establishment in Hong Kong for some time, the majority of them can use Chinese to communicate with Hongkongers, but they are still facing difficulties in employment. To understand the employment and recruitment of ethnic minorities, and the perception and consideration of employers, funded by Equal Opportunities Commission under 'Funding Programme of Research Projects on Equal Opportunities 2013/14, **Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong (YMCA)** conducted a research during September 2014 to April 2015.

The research includes both questionnaires and focus groups, in which interviewed 233 employers or employers on behalf from different industries, and conducted focus groups with 23 ethnic minorities and 10 employers, in the hope to have a comprehensive understanding on the difficulties of ethnic minorities while job seeking.

Amongst the 223 questionnaires, 70% of the respondents operating Hong Kong-capital companies, in which 40% are import and export trading firms, wholesaler and retailers. 60% of the responded employers and employees on behalf said that, the primary consideration of recruitment is the work attitude of employee, followed by the work experience (54%) and interpersonal communication skills (46%). Over the past 5 years, only 28% has encountered ethnic minority job seekers, and only 20% of them have recruited ethnic minorities.

Employers behave in contradictory Subjective Views Hindering Recruitment

The study found that nearly 90% of the responded employers claimed that they would not take the skin colour or race of the job seekers into account, but only concern about their talent; and 82% of respondents said that they are willing to provide internship opportunities for ethnic minorities, if their performance are satisfied, they will also consider providing job opportunities. Meanwhile, there were 62% of respondents agree that lack of work experience is the barrier for ethnic minorities in job seeking, while 67% of respondents believe that the problem is the lack of recognition of their academic qualifications. In addition, there were respectively 82% and 81% of respondents believe that ethnic minorities cannot communicate with others in Cantonese and or write in Chinese, causing inconvenience at work.

The study further found that, for those who have experience in hiring ethnic minorities, 84% of them have a satisfaction index ranging between 3 and 6 (give a rating of 0-6, 6 is the highest rating). Companies willing to offer internships opportunities and have employed ethnic minorities are tend to accept them and rather open-minded.

Remarks:

1: "Hong Kong 2011 Population Census Thematic Report : Ethnic Minorities "by Census and Statistics Department



In the aspects of qualitative surveys, on the surfaces, some employers seems to have no prejudice on the employment of ethnic minorities, however, they brought up many concerns during the in-depth focus group sessions, and some consideration even involved racism. An employer pointed out that “they (ethnic minorities) have awkward body odor, I think it affects others”, “I have seen those people unexpectedly walk away during a conference and go worship, and this is worth worrying”. In addition, another responded employer said “I sometimes meet those guys in public transports, they speak loudly, and look very unfriendly, and they seem rude.” Another employer said that most of the staffs in office would not accept ethnic minorities and believes that should reserve job opportunities to Hongkonger.

While 23 respondents of ethnic minority youth said that, they always receive unfriendly reception whether in job seeking, job interview and after they accepted the jobs. “They thought I was a local in the telephone conversation and asked me to go for a job interview, but when I arrived they told me there was no job vacancy.” Apart from that, when waiting for the interview, other candidates would try to keep a distance from them. Even when an ethnic minority youth and a local youth serve the same position and start the job on the same date, but the remuneration of the ethnic minority youth is only 2/3 of the local youth. Some ethnic minorities pointed out that, most of the advertisements at Labour Department and recruitment website are in Chinese, some are written in both Chinese and English, it is quite confusing.

Propose the Promotion of race-friendly policy

Ms Shiu Yuen Ling, Coordinating Secretary of Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong said that YMCA has been paying attention to the integration problems of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong; we suggest the government and the public to promote racial -friendly policies. The survey found that employers who have hired ethnic minorities highly evaluate their ability to work. Some ethnic minorities are talented, as long as the employers provide them job opportunities. We advise employers to take the first step to provide internships or work trials opportunities for ethnic minorities; and offer same treatment for all recruits, avoid unequal wages. The ethnic minorities should also uphold an attitude of open-minded when job seeking and to explore potentials for jobs.

Ms Shiu added that, the Government should organize outreach programmes to encourage business sector to provide more job opportunities to ethnic minorities, Labour Department should also provide translation services for employers to increase job opportunities for ethnic minorities. The Government also increase public awareness of the new generation of ethnic minorities through television, brochures and other promotions.

Dr. Ferrick CHU Chung-man, Head of Policy & Research of Equal Opportunities Commission said, EOC will carry out a detailed study of the proposed recommendations of the report, and actively promote equal opportunities for ethnic minorities in employment. EOC also encourages business sectors to consider hiring talented ethnic minorities.

20-year-old Hong Kong born Indian girl Monica, currently working in an educational institution as an English teaching assistant, she recalled that there was also a Chinese girl interviewee at the interview.

Remarks:



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Monica believes that her English is competent to serve the position, plus she performed very well in the job interview. She finally appreciated by her employer and got the job offer. Although she used to receive discrimination in the past, she is confident on her own talent, and believes that is the critical reason of getting a desirable job.

While Billy, also as an ethnic minority, is not that lucky; he has been discriminated by his boss and colleagues not only once. He once worked in a bar, served the same position and started the job on the same date with a local youth, but he was only paid HK\$40/ hour while the local youth received \$60/ hour. He also rejected by his boss when applied for a day off, while local colleagues could take day off anytime they want.

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1: "Hong Kong 2011 Population Census Thematic Report : Ethnic Minorities "by Census and Statistics Department