



Hong Kong Unison Limited
香港融樂會有限公司

Hong Kong Unison Limited 香港融樂會有限公司
(Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital)

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 2012

為
種族
平等
For
Ethnic
Equality



The association has engaged in projects and activities which promote equal opportunities in education and employment to disadvantaged groups of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, promoted cross-cultural understanding and appreciation in schools and community at large as well as provided direct social services and scholarships to young people of those groups.

Objectives

For the year of 2011-2012, our objectives were stated as below:

- 1. To advocate for equal opportunities in education and effective Chinese language education for ethnic minority students;**
- 2. To advocate for equal access to civil service and vocational training for ethnic minority residents;**
- 3. To monitor the governance of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and the implementation of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO);**
- 4. To promote cross-cultural understanding and racial harmony in schools and community;**
- 5. To empower and build the capacity of ethnic minority children and youth;**
- 6. To provide direct social services to ethnic minority individuals and families.**

A. Highlights

The year of 2012 was the CE election year which was dynamic and political and at the same time an encouraging and fruitful year to Hong Kong Unison. Our work has had greatly enhanced the equal access to education and employment of ethnic minority youth.

Efforts on fighting for equal opportunities for ethnic minorities have been paying off. The reduction of the GCE (Chinese) examination fees has enabled more ethnic minority students to pursue a higher level of Chinese proficiency. More senior high school students managed to qualify for tertiary education. Furthermore, a local-born ethnic minority candidate has joined the civil service as police constable, the first person benefiting from the change of the Chinese proficiency requirement of the Police Force.

The new Chief Executive has incorporated our call, i.e. *'establishing Chinese as a Second Language Curriculum and Assessment Standard'* and *'providing language support program to ethnic minority kindergarten students'*, in his policy pledge. We are happy to see that the issue of Chinese language learning of ethnic minority children, the most pressing one they face, has been brought to the top Government level.



We are particularly pleased to see that the Poverty Commission is willing to include ethnic minorities as one of its targeted groups. The commission sees ethnic minorities' inadequacy in Chinese as the key factor causing inter-generational poverty and in-work poverty among ethnic minorities.

The Government has responded to our call by adopting our proposal of providing support to ethnic minority kindergarten kids. The Education Bureau has commissioned a university to run a 3-year pilot project to enhance the learning and teaching of the Chinese language at kindergartens. More scholars show interest in minority issues. Researches and conferences organized by universities are seen more frequently in the past year.

21st March is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; we have made March the racial harmony month so as to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation at schools and in the community. Apart from our signature event, the 3-21 Carnival and roving exhibitions, new ideas and strategies such as photo exhibitions, poster and postcards with different themes and society-imitating games have all strengthened and enhanced the effectiveness of our community education.

The future of our ethnic minority children and youth is part of Hong Kong's future. Empowering and developing the potential of minority youth is part of our core business. We have continued to provide systematic career guidance programs and scholarships aiming to instil hope and inspiration in our youth. Besides, our youth had taken a more active role in voicing out their views on different social policies and issues affecting them through various ways, including speaking and writing to the media, meeting with top government officials and demonstrations.

We are also blessed to have more talented and passionate people joining us. Some of them even serve in the Executive Committee. We welcome and thank Mr Michael Vidler, Mr James Elms, Ms Margaret Ng, Ms Leesha Bharat Khemlani and Mr Andy Fung for their support for us.

Last but not least, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous funding partners, devoted volunteers and supporters. Without their selfless and tireless support, we would not have been able to make any positive change for a better and fairer Hong Kong society.

B. Activities carried out under the stated objectives

- 1. To advocate for equal opportunities in education and effective Chinese language education for ethnic minority students;**
 - i. CE Policy Platform**



Education is not only one's basic human right, but also an indispensable vehicle for ethnic minorities to lift themselves out of the vicious poverty cycle as well as participate in society fully and meaningfully. It is particularly important for ethnic minority children to learn the Chinese language effectively. In last year, we continued to advocate for the formulation of a "Chinese as a Second Language" (CSL) curriculum with corresponding support measures and assessment mechanisms. Together with our ethnic minority youth and parents we met with Mr Henry Tang, Mr CY Leung, Mr Albert Ho, Mrs Rita Fan, former Chief Secretary for Administration Mr Stephen Lam, current Chief Secretary for Administration Mrs Carrie Lam and law makers to express our concerns on Chinese education. The new Chief Executive has incorporated '*developing a curriculum and assessment criteria for "Chinese as a Second Language"*' and '*providing appropriate support to ethnic minority students and their parents in early childhood education*' in his election manifesto subsequently.

Besides, we also continued to lobby law makers to pay attention to the Chinese education issue. We met with Mrs Regina Yip, Mr Chan Ka Lok and Mr Abraham Shek. Mr Shek moved a motion on 'Reviewing Chinese Education Policy for Ethnic Minority Children' in the Legislative Council on 8th February. The motion was passed with enormous support.

ii. GCE (Chinese) examination fee subsidies and donation

Regarding the high examination fees for the GCE exams, we have sent lots of letters to different government bureaux and concerned parties, including the Education Bureau (EDB), the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, the Homes Affair Department (HAD), the EOC, the Community Care Fund, the Chief Executive, the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Executive Council (ExCo), the Legislative Council and individual legislative councillors. We have also had intensive media interviews as well as meetings with government officials and legislative councillors. Our efforts have paid off finally. We are grateful that the Government agreed to make the subsidies. Our students, parents and teachers who took part in it were encouraged and inspired in exercising their rights. We are also thankful to Mr Abraham Shek for donating \$150,000 to support some students to sit for the GCE exams before the Government agreed to make the subsidies.

iii. Media work

Media campaign is one of our strategies to draw more public attention to the unjust situation faced by ethnic minorities. We have held press conferences and issued press statements. Major newspapers and television and radio stations, both overseas and local, such as Finland TV, the ABC and the Strait Times, have covered issues faced by ethnic minorities, especially



Chinese education. The RTHK, the TVB and the ATV have produced documentaries on ethnic minority issues. The RTHK, the Commercial Radio and newspapers have done a considerable amount of reports on the difficulties ethnic minority faced in learning Chinese. Over the year, we have been interviewed in over 200 pieces of news reports and documentaries with regard to ethnic minority issues.

iv. Lobbying the United Nations

Hong Kong will report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) early next year. We have submitted a list of issues corresponding to the conventions. Some of our concerns under the ICCPR have been picked up by the committee for HKSARG to provide further information.

2. To advocate for equal access to civil service and vocational training for ethnic minority residents

i. Local-born ethnic minority civil servant

With many years of advocacy, the police have relaxed the requirement of Chinese proficiency for candidates as well as given extra merit to candidates with minority language abilities. A Pakistani female joined the Police Force as police constable in February 2012, being the first ethnic minority candidate to benefit from this policy. It symbolizes the opening up of opportunities for our youth to serve in the government. We also noticed the Correctional Services Department has been visiting designated secondary schools to promote its recruitment of ethnic minority residents. We will continue to advocate for more doors to be opened to ethnic minority youth, for example for them to become nurses, firemen and immigration officers.

ii. Post-secondary education and vocational training

We met with the seniors of the Vocational Training Council and the Institute for Vocational Education to exchange views on creating more opportunities and improving the quality of vocational training programs for ethnic minority secondary school leavers.

High school graduates still face difficulties or even rejection when they apply for admission to higher education institutions due to their inadequacy in Chinese. A group of DSE graduates were rejected due to their weak Chinese ability by HKU SPACE. We assisted the students by requesting the intervention of the EOC, HAD and EDB with the college and meeting with its deputy principal. Eventually, most of our students have been accepted and got exemptions on Chinese subjects attached to their programs.



3. To monitor the governance of the EOC and the implementation of the Race Discrimination Ordinance

i. Dual appointments of the EOC head

We have maintained a constructive relation with Mr WK Lam, the EOC head and he is still supportive to Unison's mission and work. Yet, we are disappointed by his acceptance of the appointment as the Covenor of ExCo, which constituted dual appointments. After serious criticisms by civil societies, Lam has decided not to renew his contract with the EOC, thus leaving the EOC in February 2013. Unison attended two press conferences and issued three statements and an open letter to Lam aired out through the RTHK.

Since the EOC head plays a crucial role in the EOC's governance and performing of functions and duties, we have nominated two candidates to the employment agency, hoping that a suitable person who has relevant experiences in and commitment to human rights and equal opportunities will be appointed as the new leader of the EOC.

Furthermore, we are particularly discouraged when seeing the EOC has failed to engage the EDB to change to improve its Chinese education policy for ethnic minority children. The situation remains almost unchanged.

ii. Education study and cases collection for the EOC

Our volunteer had completed the first part of the research on education for ethnic minorities (Racial Segregation) while our staff member has also started the second part, which is a narrative of the cases (Chinese Education). The report is a part of our campaign for the improvement of Chinese language education. Moreover, we have been paying home visits to ethnic minority families to understand the situation better. We are assisting some families to lodge complaints against education authorities and establishments with the EOC. It will continue to be our working focus in coming year. Apart from cases concerning Chinese education, we also assisted individuals who suffered from other types of discrimination, such as denial from bank service and denial from education support for gifted children. However, due to the serious flaws of the RDO, some of our cases could not be established as racial discrimination cases. We will continue to call for amendments to the RDO.

iii. Summer Internship

Miss Shirley GU, a third-year law student of HKU had her summer internship at Unison. She has done excellent internet research on overseas court cases relevant to racial discrimination in the field of education. The information is useful for our later work on EOC cases.



4. To promote cross-cultural understanding and racial harmony in schools and community

i. Survey on Racial Acceptance

The report on Racial Acceptance Survey was released in late March 2012. The findings showed the police and teachers in general hold negative views and stereotype towards South Asians. Together with Legislative Councillor Ms Emily Lau and the Human Rights Monitor, we have met with the Public Relations Branch of the Police Force to raise our concerns.

ii. Cultural Sensitivity Training and Talks for Different Professions and Mainstream Schools

We have delivered 50 cultural sensitivity training programmes and talks to around 2,800 participants from different sectors, such as teachers, students of Chinese ethnicity, church groups, social work students in the past year. In March, the racial harmony month, we organized the 3-21 Carnival outside the Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui and conducted 16 roving cultural and photo exhibitions at schools, streets and shops.

We also produced posters and post-cards on the themes of ‘Celebrating Diversity in Hong Kong’ and ‘Effective Chinese Education for Ethnic Minority Students’ aiming to raise public concerns on the topics.

iii. Hikathon and Society-imitating Game

Unison Hikathon not only serves as our fund-raising event but is also a good platform for ethnic minorities and people of Chinese ethnicities to interact and mingle with each other. We have organized a society-imitating game for the public to experience the lives of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Positive feedback on the new idea from the participants has been received.

iv. Anti-national education

We actively took part in the anti-national education campaign. Ethnic minorities were visible in the movement and voices have been heard. We see it was a good strategy to put ethnic minority issues and concerns through mainstream campaigns. Unison participated in most of the important public assemblies and held our own press conference

v. Public Engagement



We have launched our new web-site and created a fan page on Facebook so as to better engage our volunteers and supporters. In addition, we also conduct monthly talks for the public so as to promote our mission and services.

vi. Hong Kong Humanity Award

Our Executive Director Ms Fermi Wong received the Hong Kong Humanity Award from the Red Cross in 2012 in recognition for her long-term contribution to the ethnic minorities. We congratulate Ms Wong for receiving the award and thank her for the tireless contribution to the cause.

5. To empower and build the capacity of ethnic minority children and youth

We are proud of our youth as they actively participated in different Unison activities throughout the year. They voiced out their needs and difficulties encountered in education and employment as well as their views on social issues affecting them or the society at large, such as the GCE fees and national education. They presented their views with confidence to the Chief Executive candidates, the Chief Secretary and members of Poverty Commission on various occasions. They spoke and wrote to the press as well as took part in the 1st July rally and petitioned at the Central Government Offices to call for the GCE exam fee subsidies by the government. Young people are the pillars of society; to nurture potential ethnic minority young leaders to speak for themselves is part of our work. Recently, we have founded the Unison Scholar Association so as to better engage the minority youth in social issues.

6. To provide direct social services to ethnic minority individuals and families

i. Chinese Proficiency Enhancement Project for Kindergarten Students:

We believe early intervention and adequate language support in an early stage would lay a better foundation for our ethnic minority kindergarten kids. We continued to provide language support to 12 kindergartens which admitted ethnic minority kids. There were 185 students benefitting from the project last year. Basing on our 4 years' experience and the results of the survey on the kindergarten education for ethnic minorities we conducted in early 2012, we formulated a proposal on supporting pre-education kids and submitted to Legislative Council and the EDB. We are happy to see that the government has considered the proposal and commissioned the Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research, Faculty of Education, the HKU to run a similar project in a 3-year pilot programme.

ii. Career Guidance for secondary and post-secondary students



In 2012, we conducted more than 30 career talks and workshops for around 1,350 students of the Delia group (HW, BW, MRC and GP) and Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College. We arranged 177 form-five and post-secondary students to visit different industries and workplaces so as to drive the students to have a better career planning.

iii. Scholarship Schemes

34 post-secondary students benefited from our scholarship schemes (granted with an amount from \$5,000 to \$30,000) last year. We also granted bursaries to five students who had difficulties in paying tuition fees. A series of leadership training programmes were organized for the scholars.

iv. Naturalization and Passport issue

Some individuals with South Asian background came to us with complaints that their applications to be naturalised as Chinese Nationals failed and they could not obtain an HKSAR Passport. Our ExCo member Mr Michael Vidler and member Ms Magaret Ng have been assisting the affected persons. A letter was sent to the Secretary for Security Bureau and follow-up actions are being taken. We have successfully drawn the media's attention to the issue and an oral question on the topic will be tabled at a Legislative council meeting by Ms Claudia Mo. We will draw the attention of the United Nations to the issue in March next year.

C. Activities and Casework:

A trip to Hong Kong Disneyland was organized for ethnic minority families and a premier show 'My Name is Khan' was sponsored by the UA Cinema entertaining 250 Unison members and volunteers. About 50 individual cases were served in the past year.

D. Financial and Human Resources

i. Project Funds

In 2012, we were blessed with enough funds to maintain our services and office operation. We are thankful to the Starbucks (HK), BNY Mellon, Fu Tak Iam Foundation, Lee Hysan Foundation and Global Fund for Children for their generous support to our projects.

ii. Fund-raising drive and private donations

With hundreds of our ethnic minority students, volunteers and the rest of the public, we successfully organized our 4th Unison Hikathon and raised about a half million. Together with the donations from the Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation Limited (\$100,000),



the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation (\$80,000), Towngas (\$50,000) and private individuals, we have been able to sustain our operation for the past year.

iii. Scholarship schemes :

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Zonta Club of the N.T., the Chariot Club Limited and Ms Janet Wai, the descendent of Mr. Yun Lin HU, for setting up scholarship schemes supporting our ethnic minority youth to pursue higher education.

iv. The staff team and volunteers & supporters

The Executive Committee is most grateful for having a competent and committed staff team which consists of 6.5 members in the past year. We would like to give our sincere thanks and appreciation to the colleagues for their tireless efforts and excellent work. Besides, Unison is a tiny organization; volunteers and supporters are always our precious assets. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their great contributions to Unison as well as to the ethnic minority community.

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