



「玫瑰，不管換個甚麼名字，還是一樣的芬芳。  
*A rose, no matter how its name is changed, is still fragrant.*」

## 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

2011

## ***Objectives***

For the year of 2010 - 2011, our objectives were stated as below:

- 1) To advocate equal opportunities in education and effective Chinese language education for ethnic minority students;
- 2) To advocate equal opportunities in vocational trainings and employment for ethnic minority people;
- 3) To monitor the implementation of the Race Discrimination Ordinance;
- 4) To promote cross-cultural understanding & racial harmony in mainstream 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. Foreword***

The year of 2011 was encouraging and fruitful to us. Our work has brought real impacts on the improvement of government policies and practices. In general, the Government and the society are more aware of the diversity and the needs of ethnic minority communities. We are particularly pleased to see the Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) more assertive stance towards defending human rights issues under the new chairperson's leadership.

With regard to education policies, a major development was the EOC's positive action to address the difficulties faced by ethnic minority students. The EOC formed a working group on the education for ethnic minority and proposed concrete recommendations to improve the situation. A series of documentaries and news reports about the Chinese language education for ethnic minority children enhanced peoples' awareness and concern on this matter. We have continued our efforts to engage political leaders and senior government officials, and expect the process to gather momentum in coming year.

Our constructive partnership with the EOC has resulted in our suggestions and views being taken into account and the EOC taking a more proactive approach to promote its services to ethnic minority e.g. hiring of ethnic minority staff to reach out to the communities. We are glad to see that community awareness on equal opportunity and discrimination concepts has been rising gradually.

There are positive developments concerning opportunities in vocational trainings and employment as well. After years of lobbying and dialogues with the concerned government departments, the Police Force has reviewed its recruitment policy and extra merit points are now given to the applicants with minority language skills. Also, the Correctional Service Department (CSD) has cancelled the internal Chinese proficiency test. These initiatives have significantly improved the chances of ethnic minority people for joining the Police Force. The ethnic minority officers serving in the CSD now have a fairer opportunity for promotion.

Hong Kong youth is an important pillar of our society, and this includes ethnic minority youth, their future

is also part of Hong Kong's future. Empowering and developing the potential of minority youth has always been our focus. Equal access to higher education is an important way to actualize this. Like past years, we have continued to grant scholarships which were sponsored by individuals and foundations.

We are proud of our minority youngsters as they have been doing extraordinary well. More youths managed to qualify for higher education. Some of these higher education ethnic minority students are committed to be social workers to serve the community by taking up professional social work training. Apart from their studies, the minority youths stepped out further by enhancing their community participation e.g. joining activities organized by local civil societies, voicing out their views on different issues to media, political leaders and government officials etc.

Lack of Chinese proficiency has always been the main hurdle for minority people in obtaining equal opportunities and in fully participating as equal members of Hong Kong society. We believe better Chinese proficiency of kindergarten students would create good foundation for the learning of Chinese language in later education stages as well as giving them wider school choices. We are encouraged to receive many positive feedbacks from the Chinese Proficiency Enhancement Project, providing significant benefit not only to ethnic minority children, but also to their parents, the kindergartens and student teachers.

As an integral part of Unison's services, we have always provided counseling, tangible and direct social services to individuals and families in need. Our rapport with the minority communities is maintained by being responsive to their needs. Without funding support, we continued to provide such services this year as well, together with career guidance programmes to assist ethnic minority college students in early planning of their career paths.

We believe people do not discriminate by nature, they learn it. We endeavor to raise public's cultural sensitivity and promote racial harmony in Hong Kong society through community education. Talks, seminar, cultural activities and exhibitions on understanding minority issues, cultural characteristics and background etc have been delivered to different professional sectors, teachers, police and university students. Our devoted volunteers and supporters have played an important role in the success of these community education activities.

## ***B. Activities carried out under the stated objectives***

### **1. To advocate equal opportunities in education and effective Chinese language education for ethnic minority students**

Since Unison's establishment, education has been our top priority in advocacy work. We believe education is not only one's basic human right, but also an important means for ethnic minority people to lift themselves out of the vicious poverty cycle. It is particularly important for ethnic minority children to learn Chinese effectively, so that they could participate fully and meaningfully in the Hong Kong society.

Year after year, we have kept calling for the formulation of a “Chinese as a Second Language” (CSL) policy that should be comprised of a suitable curriculum with clear stage learning objectives, appropriate assessment tools & relevant teaching materials.

***i. EOC working group***

The working group formed concerning the education for ethnic minority is a notable progress for the EOC to address the unsolved problem. We have worked very closely with the working group. We met the convenor and some members to express our views. Most importantly, our deputy Chairperson was appointed as one of the co-opted members for the working group to listen to views from different sectors. We organized ethnic minority parents and youth to attend the meetings to share their difficulties with the working group. Besides, we have submitted 3 written position papers to the Education Panel of Legislative Council and the EOC respectively. We also met the EOC head two times to exchange our views on the issue in depth.

***ii. Media work***

Media campaign is one of our working strategies to draw more public attention to the unfair situation of the ethnic minority student. We held a press conference immediately after the EOC’s report on ethnic minority education. For that, we pitched to major media to cover the story, both overseas and local e.g. ATV and Cable TV had done documentaries on the issue, the RTHK City Forum selected the topic to be discussed, TVB, Now TV, Commercial Radio and a newspaper based in Boston, US had feature stories as well. The news reports subsequently attracted coverage of the topic by some influential individuals in their columns. Over the year, we have responded, lined up and created over 200 pieces of news and documentaries with regard to ethnic minority issues.

***iii. Participation in different platforms***

We actively participated in different platforms e.g. HAB Ethnic Minority Forum, HKCSS EM Network, forums organized by the YTM District Council etc to ensure education issues are always in the discussion agenda. Ethnic minority youth were organized to express their views at these platforms.

In order to draw attention from influential politicians, we have submitted our proposal to Chief Executive and Financial Secretary. Two of the potential candidates for the coming Chief Executive election, Mrs. Rita Fan & Mr. Henry Tang, visited us to meet our ethnic minority youth group in Oct and Nov 2011.

***iv. Summer Internship***

Two HKU students had their summer internship at Unison; they have done excellent internet research on overseas court cases relevant to racial discrimination in the field of education. The information has established a good foundation for us to explore the issue further.

***v. Lodged a case to the EOC***

We have been assisting an Indian gifted child to file his case to the EOC for the unequal treatments by the Education Bureau. We drew media attention to the case so as to arouse public concerns and awareness of the ethnic minority education issue.

#### *vi. Talks to Parents*

Parents are our important partners in our advocacy work. We engaged parents in educational talks in order to establish stronger rapport and alliance. 3 talks were given to 280 parents in different occasions.

## **2. To advocate equal opportunities in vocational trainings and employment for ethnic minority people**

Vocational development and employment is another area that we have kept focusing. 2011 is a fruitful year, we are happy to see more job opportunities and vocational training programs are available for ethnic minority. We have engaged communications with concerned parties to open the door for ethnic minorities to join civil services. Our youths spoke in different platforms e.g. mass media, LegCo, rally etc to show their dedication to contribute and be part of Hong Kong government sector.

#### *i. Opportunities of joining Police and CSD*

The Hong Kong Police Force reviewed and amended its recruitment policy by giving extra merit to the applicants with minority language skills while the Correctional Service Department (CSD) has cancelled the internal Chinese proficiency test in mid 2011. These two changes offered a higher chance for ethnic minority youth in joining civil service. However, due to historical reason i.e. poor education quality, none of our youth successfully recruited by the Police and CSD after the new policy.

In addition, the Police Force has increased the number of temporary post of “Police Community Liaison Assistant” (PCLA) from 5 to 13 districts. During our liaison work with the concerned departments, we find that the Police and the CSD are more ready and willing to recruit ethnic minority. A police recruitment officer shared interview skills and hints with our youth at Unison’s office in summer 2011.

#### *ii. ERB retaining services*

Apart from advocating employment opportunities in civil service, we also target to different professions so as to broaden career options for ethnic minority. With ERB’s financial support, we collaborated with the CTU to organize a Certificate course in Community Organizing and Program Planning for the Program Workers who work for welfare sector. 15 youths completed the course and some of them are further pursuing professional training. Among them, 8 youths have enrolled into a sub-degree in Social Work study at Caritas Institute of Higher Education. That means there will be the first batch of social workers with minority backgrounds in town to serve the community in 3-4 years.

#### *iii. Study on training needs*

The ERB commissioned us with a study on the training needs of ethnic minority. With the support of the Policy 21, Dr. Donna Wong and Dr. Eric Tsui from HKU, we managed to accomplish the study with

recommendations timely. Besides, we are honored to receive an award of the strategic partner offered by the ERB.

#### ***iv. VTC and IVE courses***

Concerning courses offered by the VTC and IVE, we have met the senior management in March 2011 to ensure there would be enough training courses continuously available to ethnic minority students under 334 new academic structure. Nevertheless, the choice of programs still has to be discussed with the VTC management after this gap year. Besides, we witnessed the 7<sup>th</sup> batch of students graduating from different IVE programs in June 2011, many of them continued to pursue higher education.

#### ***v. Opportunities in private sector***

More big corporate and companies approached us to offer job opportunities to ethnic minority residents. In this year, we have received and referred over 130 job vacancies to more than 410 job seekers in our network.

### **3. To monitor the implementation of the Race Discrimination Ordinance**

We are happy to see that the EOC head has taken a more proactive role in media; He spoke on issues related to equal opportunities and human rights quite frequently. His high profile and strong stance approach is much welcomed by the public.

#### ***i. Hiring of ethnic minority staffs***

The EOC has adopted our views to hire more staffs with minority backgrounds; a team with diversity background has formed recently reaching out to the ethnic minority communities to promote EOC services and the RDO. Besides, an enquiry desk to collect racial discrimination case has been set up in a NGO.

#### ***ii. Low complaint figures***

The number of complaints under RDO receiving by the EOC is still low; we believe more public education on the Ordinance to the communities is needed. However, increasing enquiries about racial discrimination have been received by Unison from time to time. We have referred few cases to the EOC; however, it was regrettable to know the experiences of the victims with the EOC were negative due to the indifferent attitudes of the officers and the complicated procedures. We will channel their feedbacks to the EOC and hope that their staffs would be more cautious and sensitive when they are handling racial discrimination cases.

#### ***ii. Reaching to the Nigerian community***

We gave talks on the RDO and services of EOC to the Nigerian community couple of times in this year. We also referred a Nigerian couple to EOC to produce an educational video; it has been uploaded to different social platforms which facilitates the public to better understand the situation they faced.

#### **4. To promote cultural sensitivity and racial harmony in mainstream community**

Promotion of multicultural understanding and racial harmony is also our mission. We believe if people hold negative perception and stereotypes towards non ethnic-Chinese, genuine racial equality and acceptance could never be achieved through merely legislation; Public education is an essential means to change people's mindset and attitude. Despite lack of funding support, Unison continues to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation at schools and community levels by using various means e.g. sensitivity talk, workshop, seminar, exhibition, art performance etc.

##### ***i. 3-21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination activities***

We have made good use of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21<sup>st</sup> March every year to promote the message of racial equality and harmony, 7 exhibitions and talks were delivered ; on the other hand, 29 cultural sensitivity trainings to police, teachers, primary and secondary students, social workers, university students were conducted during the year.

##### ***ii. Talks given by Dr. Fisher***

Our Deputy Chairperson gave talks on the RDO and ethnic minority education issues to Home Affairs Bureau, HKIEd, Social Workers Association and University students.

##### ***iii. Forum and Symposium***

We were invited to different symposiums concerning minority issues e.g. Forum on CEDAW at HKU, Symposium on Poverty at CUHK.

##### ***iv. Agency visits and enquiries***

Agency visits, student interviews, volunteer networking and general enquiries also served as ways to promote our mission and facilitate their understanding of ethnic minority issue. We have received hundreds of visitors and enquiries last year.

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

We are conscious that Unison could not speak for ethnic minority all the time. It is important to engage and empower the community themselves in our work. To nurture potential minority leaders to speak for themselves is also a step for them to take up during the process of our capacity building work. Since young people are the pillar of the society, we also focus our efforts in organizing the youth group.

##### ***i. Youth voices***

Throughout the year our youths actively participated in different Unison activities. They voiced out their needs and difficulties encountered in education and views on social issues which affecting them. In community participation, they took part in 1<sup>st</sup> July Rally to express their opposition to the proposed arrangement for filling a vacancy arising from resignation of the LegCo Members, participated and spoke in the meetings of EOC, LegCo panels and forums of YTM District Council.

### ***ii. Scholarship for post-secondary youths***

Among the scholarship applicants, we noticed there is a rising number of an EM student found in the post-secondary/higher education programs with different professions; we are hoping to have more role models and success stories through education.

We continued the scholarship scheme to support 14 post-secondary students who faced financial difficulties to pursue higher education but performed well academically. On one hand, we provide concrete financial subsidy to ease their hardships. On the other hand, we keep engaging the awardees in our school and community programs to develop their potentials and leaderships. We aim to enhance their confidence, inspire younger generations to pursue for higher education and realize their dreams. Up to the end of 2011, more than 80 scholarships have been awarded to students.

### ***iii. Career guidance talks***

Due to lack of updated information in mainstream society, minority secondary students usually feel confused and uncertain about their future. Unison continues to reach out to the schools giving career guidance talks and conducting experiential workshops - workplace visits for students to have earlier planning of their future career path. During the past year, 15 career talks and activities had been delivered and 1500 students have benefited.

### ***iv. Other activities – extraordinary exposures***

Thanks to the Kadoorie Charitable Foundation and the U.S. General Consulate in Hong Kong, for granting us a precious Helicopter trip to 25 youths on Christmas day last year and offering a golden chance to 20 youths and volunteers to pay a visit to the USS Ronald Regan Aircraft Carrier in July this year respectively.

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

### ***i. Chinese Proficiency Enhancement Project***

Chinese proficiency serves as the foundation for minority kids' Chinese education in their later stage. It is also the key factor for ethnic minority parents to decide the type of school that their children should attend. We believe early intervention would largely increase the possibility of success in schools with the medium of instruction as Chinese. Thanks to the Lee Hysan Foundation for supporting the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> year project since 2010.

With the collaboration with Dr. Kwan, Assistant Professor of HKIEd, 44 student teachers and 7 retired teachers were recruited to serve in the project. They reached out to 22 kindergartens to serve nearly 300 minority kids in the past year. We are pleased to know the Chinese abilities of those participated kids have significantly improved. Their interests and confidence in learning Chinese were stepped up as well. More importantly, the project also served as professional training for student teachers. They had better understanding of the characteristics and needs of minority children, thus strengthening their professional competence.

## ***ii. Casework***

Without funding support, we have struggled very hard to work for individuals and families in need. Caseworks would allow us to be sensitive to the current situation of ethnic minorities and, serves as the basis of our policy advocacy work. During the past year, we have assisted about 50 individuals and families through casework. Different case nature involved substance abuse (5), lack of educational opportunities (5), with special educational needs (3), unemployment (5), financial hardships(5), labor injury (2), mental/psychological disturbance (2), racial and disability discriminations (4), police malpractice (2), legal or court (3), personal growth and life direction (4), interpersonal relationships (4) and some referrals have been done to respective social service organizations.

## **7. Efforts and contributions to other issues**

Apart from racial equality, we care about other core values of Hong Kong e.g. freedom of speech, rule of law, democracy and liberty etc. We have submitted our views and comments on few consultation papers e.g. Charity Law, Moral and National Education, Equal Opportunities Tribunal, Community Care Fund, Free Legal Services and Interpreting Services in Hong Kong; these important issues affect minority people as well as other concerned parties . We also spoke to the media supporting the Judicial Review on the Immigration Ordinance filed by foreign domestic helpers.

## ***C. Financial and Human Resources***

### ***i. Project Funds***

#### **a. Oxfam Hong Kong**

Oxfam Hong Kong has continued supporting our policy advocacy project since 2004 but the funding will come to an end in spring 2012. We are most thankful for its unfailing supports over the past years. Oxfam funding has allowed us to adopt a right-based approach to fight the rights for ethnic minority, successfully challenge some racially biased policies and practices through various working strategies and tactics. Awareness of the society has been raised and concrete resources from the Government have been allocated to improve the life of ethnic minorities.

#### **b. Lee Hysan Foundation**

We are thankful to the Lee Hysan Foundation for granting us funding for a two-year Chinese Proficiency Enhancement Project for Ethnic Minority Kindergarten kids. Lack of Chinese proficiency is the major barrier for ethnic minority to obtain equal opportunity and participate in mainstream society, we believe this project would help them establish concrete foundation in their self-confidence and motivation to learn Chinese.

#### **c. Keswick Foundation**

Unison does not receive government supports in order to maintain its autonomy. We rely on project funds, yet most of them in Hong Kong do not support administration expense and office daily operation costs. We are blessed to have Keswick's support on our admin expenses in the past two years (ended in

September 2011). The funding allowed us to hire an Executive Officer managing most of the administrative work, fund raising events, volunteers networking etc, the project helped relieve much of our team's burden.

#### **d. Scholarship Schemes for Ethnic Minority Students**

On behalf of the scholarship awardees, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to our member, Mrs. Janet Wai for her continued support of the 4<sup>th</sup> year 'Yun Lin HU Memorial Scholarships for Ethnic Minority Students' and The Chariot Club Ltd for setting up a new scholarships scheme 'Chariot Club Scholarships for Ethnic Minority Students' for local degree programme.

Thanks to our generous individuals who have given financial supports to families and students in need, and the Zonta Club N.T. for their contribution in setting up the "Zonta Club of the New Territories Scholarships for Ethnic Minority Students" since 2008 while it has come to an end in mid 2011. Their 3 years support has encouraged few ethnic minority ladies to attain a prominent academic result at their graduations.

#### ***ii. Fundraising and private donations***

Our immense gratitude to dear supporters, volunteers, donors and participants, our 3<sup>rd</sup> fundraising drive, Unison Hikathon 2011, was successfully held on 23rd October 2011 at the Taipo 4-color Forest Walks. About 600 people from different backgrounds joined including ethnic minority and ethnic-Chinese students, general public and volunteers. The Hikathon proceeds will be used for our future advocacy work in education issues and policies. Besides, we are thankful to our monthly and occasional donors, without their support, our work could never been continued.

#### ***iii. The staff team***

The Executive Committee is grateful for having a stable team which consists of 5.5 staffs in the past year. We would like to give our sincere thanks and appreciation to the staffs for their tireless efforts and excellent work.

#### ***iv. Volunteers and supporters***

Unison is a small organization, volunteers and supporters are 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 communities.