

A Study on Education and Career Pathways of Ethnic Minority Youth in Hong Kong

Study Brief

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Youth in Hong Kong

Public discussion over the delayed and problematic school-to-work transition experienced by young generations has been widespread in the local society over the past decade. In his analyses of life course development of individuals from different birth cohorts, Lui (2007) argued that chances for upward social mobility have become more limited for younger cohorts due to a changing opportunity structure in both educational and labour market arenas.¹ Results from cross-cohort comparison further showed that youth from the post-80s generation were in more vulnerable positions facing more bumpy transition from school to work and protracted transition to adulthood which have not been experienced by the generation of their parents.²

2. Against this backdrop, in recent years, lack of upward mobility and economic predicaments of youth have become a top public policy concern in Hong Kong. Acknowledging the determining effect of first job or early labour market experience on subsequent life chances in different domains, the government and relevant stakeholders have introduced various measures to facilitate the school-to-work transition of young people. In the case of ethnic minorities (EMs), their race and language barrier pose an additional disadvantage on them in obtaining post-secondary education and securing a decent job.

¹ 呂大樂。2007。《四代香港人》。香港：進一步多媒體有限公司。

² Wu, Xiaogang. 2010. "Hong Kong's Post-80s Generation: Profiles and Predicaments." A Report Submitted to the Central Policy Unit of the HKSAR Government.

3. In 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive not only called for creating a more inclusive environment for ethnic minorities and other groups with special needs, but also announced the development of Vocational Chinese Language courses for ethnic minority school leavers to enhance their employability.³ Starting from the 2014/15 school year, the Education Bureau has introduced the Applied Learning Chinese (ApL(C)) pegged at the Qualifications Framework Level 1 to 3 for non-Chinese speaking students at senior secondary levels.⁴ Since the results of ApL(C) will be recorded in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, it is hence expected that EM students have an additional channel to acquire an alternative Chinese qualification, which will be useful for their academic and career pursuits. The effectiveness of these supportive measures to facilitate the further education and employment of EMs remains to be seen in few years time.

Previous Studies on Education, Occupation and Earnings Attainment of Ethnic Minority Youth in Hong Kong

4. To portray the socio-economic profile of young ethnic minorities, based on 5 percent sample data of 2001 and 2011 Population Censuses, Ip and Chiu (2015) compared and contrasted the education, occupation and economic attainment between the local-born ethnic minorities⁵ and the overall employed population aged 15-29.⁶ It was reported that, first, a smaller proportion of local-born ethnic minority youth received university degree education (5.9% and 13.7% in 2001 and 2011).⁷ The respective

³ HKSAR Government. 2014. "The 2014 Policy Address: Support the Needy Let Youth Flourish Unleash Hong Kong's Potential." Hong Kong: HKSAR Government.

⁴ Legislative Council, HKSAR Government. 6 June 2017. "Panel on Education Meeting on 12 June 2017: Updated Background Brief on Issues Related to Supporting Chinese Learning and Teaching for NCS Students." LC Paper No. CB(4)1165/16-17/(02).

⁵ Local born ethnic minorities refer to those who were born in Hong Kong and their ethnicities are or who speak the following languages at home: Bangladeshi, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Thai and Vietnamese. Foreign domestic helpers were excluded from all of the analyses.

⁶ 葉仲茵、趙永佳。(2015)。「少數族裔在港教育、工作概況」。《紫荊論壇》，總第 19 期，頁 66-73。

⁷ *Ibid.*

percentages for the overall population aged 15-29 were 19.0% in 2001 and 29.9% in 2011.⁸ Second, compared to the overall figures, a smaller proportion of EMs was in middle-class occupations (such as managers and administrators, professionals and associate professionals) and a larger percentage was in elementary occupations.⁹

5. Besides, while local-born EM youth earned 90% of the overall median monthly employment earnings of individuals aged 15-29 in 2001, this figure dropped to 80% in 2011.¹⁰ In other words, compared with the picture of 2001, although a higher proportion of young local-born ethnic minorities were degree holders and in middle-class occupations 10 years later, they earned less in 2011.

6. Disaggregated by level of education attainment, the two researchers further showed that a clear ethnic gradient occurred in terms of employment earnings: in both 2001 and 2011, regardless of education level, ethnic minority youth earned less than the overall youth population.¹¹ The latter result clearly demonstrated the labour market disadvantages suffered by young ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

7. Small scale but more in-depth studies also suggested that EM continued to face labour market and employment disadvantages in Hong Kong.¹² By presenting case studies of three second-generation South Asian (SA) young adults, Ku et al. (2016) argued that ethnic minorities were discriminated against when looking for jobs and faced unequal treatment in the workplaces.¹³ Owing to the racial stereotypes widely held

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Ku, Hok-bun and Kam-wah Chan. 2011. "Racism and Social Inequality: The Work and Employment of the South Asian Ethnic Minority." Pp. 135-165 in *Hong Kong Divided? Structures of Social Inequality in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Stephen Wing-kai Chiu and Siu-lun Wong. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

¹³ 古學斌、陳錦華、羅嘉敏。2016。「族群與階級不流動：香港南亞青年的處境」，載趙永佳、葉仲茵、李鏗編，《躁動青春：香港新世代處境觀察》。香港：中華書局，頁

by Chinese employers, many SAs could only find employment in a racially segmented labour market, which was filled with “bad jobs”. Moreover, even with recognized qualifications, university educated SA youth encountered enormous difficulties in securing a job in Hong Kong.¹⁴

8. These findings further concluded that racism against SAs is prevalent in the local society.¹⁵ Regardless of place of birth and education credentials, chances of upward mobility for second generation South Asians are limited. The racial disadvantage inevitably results economic disadvantage. The researchers highlighted that color still matters in nowadays Hong Kong and insufficient awareness of race would reinforce the marginalization and exclusion of and discrimination against ethnic minorities.¹⁶

INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS

9. It has been suggested that, in Canada, compared with their ethnic majority counterparts, racial and migration experiences have posed specific effects on expectations, choices, and outcomes of EM youth education and employment.¹⁷ In the case of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, many research studies have pointed out that insufficient knowledge about local education system, lack of social network to access to information about local labour market, cultural preferences in early marriage for girls and so on contribute to under-achievement of EM youth in the education system and labour market.¹⁸ To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ See for example: (1) Wilkinson, Lori. 2008. “Labor Market Transitions of Immigrant-Born, Refugee-Born, and Canadian-Born Youth.” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 45, 2: 151-176 and (2) Taylor, Alison and Harvey Krahn. 2013. “Living Through Our Children: Exploring the Education and Career ‘Choices’ of Racialized Immigrant Youth in Canada.” *Journal of Youth Studies* 16, 8: 1000-1021.

¹⁸ See for example, (1) Chee, Wai-chi. 2018. “Opportunities, Challenges, and Transitions: Educational Aspirations of Pakistani Migrant Youth in Hong Kong.” *Children’s Geographies* 16, 1: 92-104 and (2) Kapai, Puja. 2015. “The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong, 1997-2014.” Hong Kong: Center for Comparative and Public Law, the University of Hong

education and labour market attainment of young ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, the EOC encourages proposals submitted by research teams possessing expertise in this specific area.

Specific Objectives

10. Specific objectives of the study are as follows:
 - (a) To provide statistical trends of EM education and employment in Hong Kong;
 - (b) To examine the education and occupation aspirations of EM youth and the strategies they adopt to achieve their academic and career goals;
 - (c) To explore if support, advice and information concerning further studies, employment and career are obtained and their channels and to evaluate their usefulness;
 - (d) To investigate the experiences of EM youth in transition to post-secondary education, be it academic or vocational;
 - (e) To illustrate the school-to-work transition experiences of EM youth;
 - (f) To identify the mechanisms of these two types of transition and outline the factors leading to successful transitions as well as the obstacles inhibiting these transitions;
 - (g) To gauge the views from EM youth, EM parents, teachers and other related professionals in schools, and employers concerning EM education and employment;
 - (h) To include ethnic Chinese as part of the sample for comparing and contrasting the aspirations, strategies, experiences and

determinants mentioned in (b) to (f) of EM youth with those of their ethnic Chinese counterparts; and

- (i) To make concrete policy recommendations on institutional support to facilitate successful transitions for EM youth and to draw up a practical guidebook for EM youth in education and career planning.

11. Inter-group comparison between sexes and among sub-ethnic groups (such as Indians, Pakistanis and Nepalese) of EM youth should also be conducted to reveal the similarities and differences in terms of trends, experiences, expectations, strategies, and views.

12. Research teams are welcome to cover other specific issues which would facilitate the research exercise. Such suggestions and the related research design should be included in the research proposal and will be counted towards the teams' score in the assessment exercise.

Duration of the Study

13. It is expected that the project will be commenced before the end of September 2018 and completed within a timeframe of 12 months.

Budget of the Study

14. As well as a research report with comprehensive policy recommendations, the EOC expects the research team to produce a practical guidebook for ethnic minority youth in education and career planning. The upper limit budgeted for the research project of this scale is generally capped at HK\$750,000. Any proposed budget exceeding this limit would only be allowed with exceptionally strong justifications. The amount of fee paid to the commissioned research team will be published in the EOC's website after the completion of the research study.

Research Proposal

15. Research teams who are interested in taking up the research project are required to submit a Technical Proposal and a Fee Proposal.

16. The Technical Proposal should include, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) An overview of the research team's perception and understanding of the subject matter of the study;
- (b) A detailed illustration of the approach employed in conducting the study and the analytical framework adopted in achieving the objectives of the study specified above;
- (c) An in-depth discussion of the research design and methods of data collection;
- (d) A description of the pilot survey conducted to verify testing instruments and procedures, the research ethics practices and the quality control measures used in both fieldwork and office editing;
- (e) A presentation of data processing and data analysis plans;
- (f) A proposed work schedule of the entire study according to the duration specified above;
- (g) A description of the research teams, including the qualifications and experiences of the principal investigator and other key research personnel; and
- (h) Any other information that might assist in the evaluation of the proposal.

17. The Fee Proposal should include a budget plan with breakdown of costs for the research study and the method of payment.

Other Conditions

18. In addition, the research team (including members of the research team and, if any, all interviewers and facilitators) is required to fulfill the following conditions:

- (a) To discuss regularly with EOC staff in designing survey instruments, if applicable, which should be approved by the EOC;
- (b) To provide detailed plans of data analyses; and
- (c) To have a basic knowledge of equal opportunity issues and to conduct the study in a sensitive manner when dealing with equal opportunity issues.

Copyright

19. Copyright of the research report, data collected and information derived from the study shall remain the property of the EOC. Subject to the prior approval of the EOC, the research team might be allowed to use the data and information for the purposes of academic research and academic publication.

Presentation of the Results of the Study

20. The research team should present the results of the study according to the following:

- (a) A bilingual [Chinese and English] full report of the study, including if necessary a glossary of definition of terms and technical jargons, should be produced. The format of the report should be agreed by the EOC. As well as an executive

summary, the full report should include the following as its contents: research objectives, methodology, findings, discussions, recommendations and implications.

- (b) A validated and clean data file in a mutually agreed electronic format should be submitted to the EOC.
- (c) Oral presentations of the research results to the EOC and to the public at a media briefing should be made.
- (d) Research progress is subject to monitoring by the EOC. It is imperative to submit progress reports and/ or present results orally as means of evaluation.

SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

21. The EOC will consider both the cost and quality of the research proposals concurrently in reviewing the proposals. Selection criteria can be found in the EOC's website.

22. Research Teams who submitted proposals in March 2018 will be considered by EOC again in this round of invitation.

23. Submission in Two Envelopes

- (a) The **Technical Proposal** and the **Fee Proposal** should be submitted in two separately sealed envelopes.
- (b) **Technical Proposal Envelope:** One original and two duplicate copies of the technical proposal in bilingual (English and Chinese) format should be prepared and submitted in a separately sealed envelope.
- (c) **Fee Proposal Envelope:** One original and two duplicate copies of the fee proposal in bilingual (English and Chinese) format and one original copy of completed and signed form of

“Warranty for Anti-Collusion” (Annex 1) in bilingual (English and Chinese) format should be prepared and submitted in a separately sealed envelope.

- (d) The two sealed envelopes containing the Technical Proposal and the Fee Proposal (with the completed and form of “Warranty”) should be put in one sealed envelope and should be submitted by hand or courier to the EOC Office (address as shown below) **before 5:00p.m. on 25 June 2018 (Monday)**. The envelope must be marked with the title of the research project and “Attention: Ms Lo (ext. 136)/ Miss Lam (ext. 132)”.

**Equal Opportunities Commission
16/F., 41 Heung Yip Road,
Wong Chuk Hang,
Hong Kong**

24. Research team that has submitted a proposal may be required to give an oral presentation to Members of the EOC.

*Equal Opportunities Commission
April 2018*

To: Equal Opportunities Commission

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Warranty for Anti-Collusion

- (1) By submitting a tender, the Research Team represents and warrants that in relation to the invitation to tender of “A Study on Education and Career Pathways of Ethnic Minority Youth in Hong Kong”:
- (a) it has not communicated and will not communicate to any person other than the Equal Opportunities Commission the amount of any tender price;
 - (b) it has not fixed and will not fix the amount of any tender price by arrangement with any person;
 - (c) it has not made and will not make any arrangement with any person as to whether it or that other person will or will not submit a tender; and
 - (d) it has not otherwise colluded and will not otherwise collude with any person in any manner whatsoever in the tendering process.
- (2) In the event that the Research Team is in breach of any of representations and/ or warranties in Clause (1) above, the Equal Opportunities Commission shall be entitled to, without compensation to any person or liability on the part of the Equal Opportunities Commission:
- (a) reject the tender;
 - (b) if the Equal Opportunities Commission has accepted the tender, withdraw its acceptance of the tender; and
 - (c) if the Equal Opportunities Commission has entered into contract with the Research Team, terminate the contract.
- (3) The Research Team shall indemnify and keep indemnified the Equal Opportunities Commission against all losses, damage, costs or expenses arising out of or in relation to any breach of any of the representations and/ or warranties in Clause (1) above.
- (4) A breach by a Research Team of any of the representations and/ or warranties in Clause (1) may prejudice its future standing as the Equal Opportunities Commission’s supplier or service provider.

- (5) Clause (1) shall have no application to the Research Team's communications in strict confidence with its own insurers or brokers to obtain insurance quotation for computation of the tender price, or with its professional advisers, and consultants or sub-contractors to solicit their assistance in preparation of tender submission.
- (6) The rights of the Equal Opportunities Commission under Clauses (2) to (4) above are in addition to and without prejudice to any other rights or remedies available to it against the Research Team.

Signature of the Authorized
Person Representing the
Research Team: _____

Name of the Authorized
Person (in Block Letters): _____

Organization Chop: _____

Date: _____