

**EO Files (June 2015)****"THINGS WE DO, PEOPLE WE MEET - Reflections in Brief"****With little fanfare, the fight against racism is ongoing**

I refer to the Public Eye column published on 3 June 2015 ("Ugly sickness of racism shames our society").

Like Mr. Michael Chugani, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) has all along been deeply concerned with the discrimination faced by Hong Kong's ethnic minorities, including in accessing equal education and in the provision of services. Since the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) came into effect in 2009, we have handled thousands of enquiries and investigated into hundreds of complaints received under this law. A number of these cases are settled confidentially at the conciliation stage or out of court. Therefore, it is misleading to say that the EOC "has prosecuted just one racism case, which is still languishing in the courts." Indeed, we urge anyone who feels that they have faced discrimination on the basis of their race to approach us to seek assistance.

In recognition that discrimination often stems from a lack of awareness and stereotyping, we have worked to heighten public attention on the need for racial equality. We named education and employment opportunities for ethnic minorities one of our strategic priority work areas, and we have been stepping up our efforts over the last few years. The Commission has recently set up a dedicated unit to focus on the specific needs of ethnic minorities through policy advocacy, training, and outreach to the public.

To address the difficulties faced by some ethnic minorities in opening bank accounts and enhance culturally sensitive services, the Commission will partner with the Hong Kong Association of Banks and The Hong Kong Institute of Bankers (HKIB) to provide training for banking practitioners in July. Interested banking professionals may enroll through the HKIB's website.

With respect to kindergarten education for ethnic minority children, we are also preparing new RDO resource materials for school administrators and teachers, as well as parents and students. We will continue to follow up with the Education Bureau on the policy aspect to ensure an equitable learning environment, and consider providing appropriate training for kindergarten principals and teachers in the future.

As a diverse city committed to inclusion, we must do better to remove the existing systemic barriers faced by ethnic minority community members and

ensure everyone is treated with respect. The Commission appreciates Mr. Chugani's views and his efforts to help raise awareness on this issue, and we will continue to work with our stakeholders to advance equality for all.

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(Note: The above article was originally published in the South China Morning Post "Letters to the Editor" on 5 June 2015.)