

EO Files (Sep 2015)

“THINGS WE DO, PEOPLE WE MEET - Reflections in Brief”

Race discrimination is still far too common in Hong Kong

I refer to the article by Yonden Lhatoo (“Ethnic minority gangs rampaging in Hong Kong: that's what you get when you ignore reality”, September 25).

Like Lhatoo, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is deeply concerned with the recent incidents of discrimination involving ethnic minorities, including in access to housing as well as their portrayal in the public domain and the media.

These incidents demonstrate that there is still a great deal of negative stereotypes and misunderstanding regarding Hong Kong's ethnic minority community, many of whom have been here for generations and continue to make important and positive contributions to our society. Moreover, they show that race discrimination is still far too common here.

The EOC strongly disapproves of any unfair comments and detrimental treatment on the basis of one's race. We feel that this runs contrary to Hong Kong's core values and commitment to equality.

The commission has been following up on these incidents with responsible stakeholders, including relevant Government departments. We will continue to monitor the situation and take action as appropriate

Moreover, all along, the commission has been dedicated to advancing the spirit of equal opportunity in our city. Through public education and advocacy, we hope to challenge stereotypical views about Hong Kong's ethnic minorities and encourage everyone to embrace a more inclusive definition of a “Hongkonger”.

We also feel that there is a clear need for better policies and practices to address systemic inequality, and ensure that Hong Kong's ethnic minorities can access equal opportunities in everyday life, including education and employment, so as to enable social mobility and widen our pool of talent.

This is why the commission has named the issue of education and employment of our ethnic minority children a strategic priority work area, as well as forming a dedicated unit to address the issues faced by the community.

Such developments are also to society's overall benefit. Given our rapidly ageing society and low birth rate, Hong Kong must ensure a diverse and well-prepared workforce for our future development. After all, whatever our racial origin, we are all people of Hong Kong, and we all deserve to have every opportunity to pursue our dreams.

The Commission is thankful that the *Post* continues to shed light on this important issue.

We look forward to working with various sectors of society towards fostering equality for all.

York Y.N. CHOW
Chairperson
Equal Opportunities Commission

(Note: The above article was originally published in the South China Morning Post "Letters to the Editor" on 30 September 2015.)