

**2015/16 學年
南亞家庭獲取
「中、小學生資助計劃」資訊調查**

**Accessibility of the South Asian Ethnic Minorities to
“Financial Assistance Schemes
for Primary & Secondary Students”
in the 2015-16 School Year**



天主教香港教區 教區勞工牧民中心 - 九龍

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Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers - Kowloon

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目標及意義

天主教香港教區 教區勞工牧民中心（九龍）（下稱「本中心」）一直關注本地基層南亞少數族裔居民的貧窮情況，致力協助他們獲得政府公共服務。

政府《2014 年香港少數族裔人士貧窮情況報告》顯示，南亞裔人士貧窮率偏高，達 26.4%，南亞裔有兒童住戶的貧窮率更高達 48.1%，極需政府政策介入以舒緩他們的經濟壓力。2014 年，本中心發佈的《香港南亞少數族裔家庭貧窮情況民間報告——南亞少數族裔的情況及需要》中發現，在收入未能應付家庭支出時，超過 4 成會減少子女參加付費的課外活動，近 3 成甚至會減少食物開支。因此，少數族裔基層家庭極需要政府的資助，才能擺脫跨代貧窮的問題。

對於有兒童的貧窮住戶來說，「中、小學生資助計劃」（包括學校書簿津貼計劃、學生車船津貼計劃及上網費津貼計劃）確能暫時舒緩他們的經濟壓力。然而，本中心發現部分少數族裔貧窮家庭仍然未能獲得上述計劃的資料，因而未有申請；亦有個案表示因申請程序過於複雜，在沒有任何協助下，最終只好放棄申請。

為此，本中心希望透過是次問卷調查，了解南亞貧窮家庭在申請「中、小學生資助計劃」時面對的困難，及政府有何相應措施支援南亞申請者，從而探討適切南亞申請者的措施，讓少數族裔獲得平等的機會申請資助，真正舒緩有在學子女的貧窮家庭的經濟負擔。

研究方法

本調查於 2016 年 5 月至 6 月期間，以問卷形式及方便取樣及滾雪球方式（convenient and snowball sampling method），訪問了 134 位 15 歲以上在職或非在職南亞少數族裔人士。

研究結果

1. 在學子女數目

絕大部份（94.03%）的受訪者家中都有就讀中小學的孩子。

表一：子女在學比率

	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
有在學子女	126	94.03	94.03
無在學子女	8	5.97	100.00
總計	134	100.00	
遺失數字	0		
總計	134		

表二：家中子女就讀小學數目

家中子女就讀小學數目	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
0	25	20.49	20.49
1	55	45.08	65.57
2	35	28.69	94.26
3	7	5.74	100.00
總計	122	100.00	
遺失數字	4		
平均數	1.51		
中位數	1		
總計	126		

表三：子女就讀中學數目

子女就讀中學數目	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
0	54	44.26	44.26
1	37	30.33	74.59
2	27	22.13	96.72
3	3	2.46	99.18
4	1	0.82	100.00
總計	122	100.00	
遺失數字	4		
平均數	1.53		
中位數	1		
總計	126		

2. 種族來源

126 受訪者中，逾七成為巴基斯坦人（70.16%）；另有 24% 為尼泊爾人，及 0.81% 印度人。

表四：種族來源

	人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
印度人	1	0.81	0.81
尼泊爾人	24	19.35	20.16
巴基斯坦人	87	70.16	90.32
其他	12	9.68	100.00
總計	124	100.00	
遺失數字	1		
總計	126		

3. 母語

67.74 % 受訪者的母語為烏爾都語；尼泊爾語為 19.35%，印地語為 0.81%。

表五：母語

	人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
印地語	1	0.81	0.81
尼泊爾語	24	19.35	20.16
烏爾都語	84	67.74	87.90
其他	15	12.10	100.00
總計	124	100.00	
遺失數字	2		
總計	126		

4. 語言能力

超過一半（52.46%）受訪者稱擁有一般及良好的英語閱讀能力；超過四成（44.63%）稱擁有一般及良好的英語書寫能力。但在讀寫中文方面情況較為嚴峻。只有分別 4.14% 受訪者稱擁有一般及良好的閱讀中文能力，書寫方面更只得 2.48%。

表六：自評英語閱讀能力

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
閱讀英語	良好	21	17.21	12.21
	一般	43	35.25	52.46
	欠佳	17	13.93	66.39
	不諳	41	33.61	100.00
	總計 1	122	100.00	
	遺失	12		
	總計	134	100.00	

表七：自評英語書寫能力

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
書寫英語	良好	14	11.57	11.57
	一般	40	33.06	44.63
	欠佳	16	13.22	57.85
	不諳	51	42.15	100.00
	總計	121	100.00	
	遺失	13		
	總計	134	100.00	

表八：自評中文閱讀能力

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
閱讀中文	良好	1	0.83	0.83
	一般	4	3.31	4.14
	欠佳	16	13.22	17.36
	不諳	100	82.64	100.00
	總計	121	100.00	
	遺失	13		
	總計	134	100.00	

表九：自評中文書寫能力

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
書寫中文	良好	2	1.65	1.65
	一般	1	0.83	2.48
	欠佳	14	11.57	14.05
	不諳	104	85.95	100.00
	總計	121	100.00	
	遺失	13		
	總計	134	100.00	

5. 學生資助計劃的認知度

近八成半（84.8%）受訪者稱已知悉學生資助計劃。

表十：知悉學生資助計劃

	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
是	106	84.80	84.80
否	19	15.20	100.00
總計	125	100.00	
遺失	1		
總計	126		

6. 如何知悉學生資助計劃

大部份由親友（66.98%）、學校（64.15%）及本中心（45.28%）得悉學生資助計劃。相對之下，由政府部門（3.77%）、少數族裔人士支援服務中心（4.72%）得知學生資助計劃的比例偏低。

表十一：如何知悉學生資助計劃

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
政府部門	不是	102	96.23	96.23
	是	4	3.77	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
學校	不是	38	35.85	35.85
	是	68	64.15	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
天主教勞工牧民中心 (本中心)	不是	58	54.72	54.72
	是	48	45.28	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
少數族裔人士支援服務中心	不是	101	95.28	95.28
	是	5	4.72	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
互聯網	不是	105	99.06	99.06
	是	1	0.94	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
朋友或親人	不是	35	33.02	33.02
	是	71	66.98	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
其他	不是	106	100.00	100.00
	是	0	0.00	100.00
	總計	106	100.00	

7. 宣傳學生資助單張的語言

雖然接近六成（57.7%）受訪者能夠從學校得到英文版本的學生資助單張，但只有 5.94% 得到政府出版，以少數族裔語言編寫的學生資助單張。所以，學校並不積極為少數族裔提供他們語言寫成的學資申請資訊。

表十二：英文版學生資助單張

	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
學校主動提供單張給我	50	48.08	48.08
當我向學校提出時，學校提供單張給我	10	9.62	57.70
學校沒有提供單張給我	44	42.30	100.00
總計	104	100.00	
遺失	2		
總計	106		

表十三：少數族裔語言¹版本的學生資助單張

	人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
學校主動提供單張給我	6	5.94	5.94
當我向學校提出時，學校提供單張給我	0	0	5.94
學校沒有提供單張給我	95	94.06	100.00
總計	101	100.00	
遺失	5		
總計	106		

¹ 少數族裔語言包括印尼語、印地語、尼泊爾語、菲律賓他加祿語、泰語以及烏爾都語。

8. 學生資助計劃申請情況

在沒有申請學生資助的受訪者中，接近四分之一（24.24%）表示太遲接收到相關資訊。另外四分之一（24.24%）表示不知道怎樣申請，近一成（9.09%）更表示程序太複雜所以放棄申請。

表十四：學生資助計劃申請率

	人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
有	72	68.57	68.57
沒有	33	31.43	100.00
總計	105	100.00	
遺失	1		
總計	106		

表十五：沒有申請學生資助計劃的原因

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
不符合入息限額	不是	21	63.64	63.64
	是	12	36.36	100.00
	總計	33	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
不符合資產限額	不是	33	100.00	100.00
	是	0	0	100.00
	總計	33	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
太遲得到相關資訊	不是	25	75.76	75.76
	是	8	24.24	100.00
	總計	33	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
不知道如何申請	不是	25	75.76	75.76
	是	8	24.24	100.00
	總計	33	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
申請太過困難	不是	30	90.91	90.91
	是	3	9.09	100.00
	總計	33	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
其他	不是	29	87.88	87.88
	是	4	12.12	100.00
	總計	33	100.00	

9. 如何完成申請學生資助計劃程序

大部份受訪者（48.61%）表示他們透過本中心完成申請程序，其次約三成（30.56%）透過親友及四分之一（25%）的受訪者由自己完成。值得注意的是，只有 2.78% 受訪者透過由民政事務總署撥款的少數族裔人士支援服務中心完成申請。

表十六：如何完成申請學生資助計劃程序

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
學校主動提供協助 完成申請程序	不是	64	88.89	88.89
	是	8	11.11	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
學校在我提出請求 時協助我完成申請 程序	不是	65	90.28	90.28
	是	7	9.72	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
透過少數族裔人士 支援服務中心協助 完成申請程序	不是	70	97.22	97.22
	是	2	2.78	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
天主教勞工牧民中心協助完成申請程序 (本中心)	不是	37	51.39	51.39
	是	35	48.61	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
自己申請及完成程序	不是	54	75.00	75.00
	是	18	25.00	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
親友協助申請及完成程序	不是	50	69.44	69.44
	是	22	30.56	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
其他	不是	72	100.00	100.00
	是	0	0.00	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

10. 申請學生資助計劃的困難

僅多於半成（5.56%）受訪者表示在申請程序過程中沒有遭遇困難。大部份的受訪者都面對各方面的困難，如接近七成（68.06%）表示申請程序繁複；超過四成（43.06%）表示無人能支援；約六成半（65.28%）表示不諳讀寫中英文及約四成半（45.83%）表示他們不能與學生資助處的職員溝通。

表十七：申請學生資助計劃時面對的困難

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
申請程序太繁複	不是	23	31.94	31.94
	是	49	68.06	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
不諳讀寫中英文	不是	25	34.72	34.72
	是	47	65.28	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
不能與學生資助處的職員溝通	不是	39	54.17	54.17
	是	33	45.83	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
沒有人幫助我完成申請程序	不是	41	56.94	56.94
	是	31	43.06	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
沒有遇到困難	不是	68	94.44	94.44
	是	4	5.56	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
其他	不是	71	98.61	98.61
	是	1	1.39	100.00
	總計	72	100.00	

11. 學校在解決相關困難時的角色

接近八成（77.14%）的受訪者表示他們在申請學生資助計劃遇到困難時並沒有嘗試向學校求助。被問及原因時，只有接近兩成（18.52%）稱沒有求助需要。大部份均稱不知道學校可以提供協助（64.82%）及未能與學校職員溝通（46.3%）。以上數字再次證明少數族裔因面對嚴重的語言隔閡並錯失不少得到支援的機會。

表十八：向學校求助比率

	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
有	16	22.86	22.86
沒有	54	77.14	100.00
總計	70	100.00	
遺失	2		
總計	72		

表十九：沒有向學校求助的原因

		人數	有效百份比 t (%)	累積百份比(%)
不需要	不是	43	79.63	79.63
	是	10	18.52	98.15
	無效	1	1.85	100.00
	總計	54	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
不知道學校可提供協助	不是	18	33.33	33.33
	是	35	64.82	98.14
	無效	1	1.85	100.00
	總計	54	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
不能與校方溝通	不是	29	53.70	53.70
	是	25	46.30	100.00
	無效	0	0	100.00
	總計	54	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
不知道如何向校方求助	不是	53	98.15	98.15
	是	1	1.85	100.00
	無效	0	0	100.00
	總計	54	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
其他	不是	51	94.44	94.44
	是	3	5.56	100.00
	無效	0	0	100.00
	總計	54	100.00	

12. 學校於申請學生資助計劃的程序中的角色

學校主要提供支援的途徑包括提供英語（50%）及少數族裔語言（12.5%）的單張。只有不超過兩成（18.75%）的受訪者得到直接填表支援，或在少數族裔語言的支援下自己完成填表。

表二十：學校提供的支援

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
學校給我英語單張	不是	8	50.00	50.00
	是	8	50.00	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
學校給我少數族裔語言的單張	不是	14	87.50	87.50
	是	2	12.50	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
透過子女充當翻譯，學校教我如何填寫申請表格	不是	13	81.25	81.25
	是	3	18.75	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
透過少數族裔語言教我如何自己填寫申請表	不是	13	81.25	81.25
	是	3	18.75	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
直接幫助我填寫表格	不是	13	81.25	81.25
	是	3	18.75	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
學校沒有提供任何支援	不是	14	87.50	87.50
	是	2	12.50	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比(%)
其他	不是	16	100.00	100.00
	是	0	0	100.00
	總計	16	100.00	

13. 學校支援申請學生資助計劃的效率

超過八成（81.25%）成功申領學生資助計劃的受訪者認為學校支援「極有幫助」或「有幫助」。

表二十一：學校支援申請學生資助計劃的效率

	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比(%)
極有幫助	3	18.75	18.75
有幫助	10	62.50	81.25
無幫助	2	12.50	93.75
極無幫助	1	6.25	100.00
無意見	0	0	100.00
總計	16	100.00	
總計	16		

14. 由政府撥款資助的少數族裔人士支援服務中心的角色

超過九成（90.14%）受訪者表示當他們在申請學生資助計劃遇到困難時，不會嘗試向政府撥款資助的少數族裔人士支援服務中心求助。原因估計為語言隔閡而生的資訊不足所致。接近七成（68.75%）的受訪者表示他們不知道可以到少數族裔支援服務中心求助，亦有超過四成（42.19%）的受訪者認為他們不能與這些中心溝通。這間接反映這些中心未能接觸大部份有需要的少數族裔人士。

表二十二：由政府撥款資助的少數族裔人士支援服務中心的服務比率

	人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
有向其求助	7	9.86	9.86
沒有向其求助	64	90.14	100.00
總計	71	100.00	
遺失	1		
總計	72		

表二十三：不向其尋求協助的原因

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
不需要協助	不是	53	82.54	82.54
	是	11	17.46	100.00
	總計	64	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 (%)
不知道可以到少數族裔人士支援服務中心求助	不是	20	31.25	31.25
	是	44	68.75	100.00
	總計	64	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比 (%)	累積百份比 t (%)
不能與支援服務中心溝通	不是	37	57.81	57.81
	是	27	42.19	100.00
	總計 1	64	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
不知道如何尋找這些中心求助	不是 No	61	95.31	95.31
	是 Yes	3	4.69	100.00
	總計 Total	64	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
其他	不是 No	60	93.75	93.75
	是 Yes	4	6.25	100.00
	總計 Total	64	100.00	

15. 解決困難：政府撥款的少數族裔人士支援服務中心的角色

縱使少數族裔人士支援服務中心受政府撥款資助，他們提供學生資助計劃的直接支援並不多。由於本身接受其服務的受訪者已經不多，當中更只有一位（14.29%）得到直接填寫申請表格的支援。另外，只有兩位（28.57%）受訪者在其子女充當翻譯才透過職員口中指示完成填寫其申請表格。

表二十四：政府撥款的少數族裔人士支援服務中心的支援

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
提供英文單張	沒有	4	57.14	57.14
	有	1	14.29	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
提供少數族裔語言單張	沒有	4	57.14	57.14
	有	1	14.29	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
子女充當翻譯，透過職員口中指示完成填寫表格	沒有	3	42.86	42.86
	有	2	28.57	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
以我的母語提供指示，協助我自己填寫申請表格	沒有	5	71.43	71.43
	有	0	0	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
直接協助我填寫申請表	沒有	4	57.14	57.14
	有	1	14.29	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
沒有提供任何協助	沒有	4	57.14	57.14
	有	1	14.29	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

		人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
其他	沒有	5	71.43	71.43
	有	0	0	71.43
	遺失	2	28.57	100.00
	總計	7	100.00	

16. 政府撥款的少數族裔人士支援服務中心解決申請學生資助計劃的效率

在僅有七位得到新家園及其他政府撥款的少數族裔人士支援服務中心提供的服務之受訪者中，亦只有三位（42.86%）認為其服務有幫助。

表二十五：政府撥款的少數族裔人士支援服務中心解決申請學生資助計劃的效率

	人數	有效百份比(%)	累積百份比 (%)
極有幫助	0	0	0
有幫助	3	42.86	42.86
沒有幫助	1	14.28	57.14
極無幫助	3	42.86	100.00
無意見	0	0	100.00
總計	7	100.00	
遺失	0		
總計	7		

分析

是次調查發現，被訪者讀寫中英文的能力不高，能讀寫英文的受訪者分別只有 52.46% 及 44.63%，懂讀寫中文的受訪者更低至 4.14% 及 2.48%。因此，他們實在需要英文甚至少數族裔語言單張以認識政府提供的公共服務和資助計劃。雖然教育局除了提供英文及中文「綜合申請」單張外，亦有將之翻譯成 6 種少數族裔語言（包括印尼語、印地語、尼泊爾語、菲律賓他加祿語、泰語以及烏爾都語），可惜，這些單張只能於學生資助辦事處或其網頁上索取或瀏覽。在受訪者當中，只有 48.08% 獲學校主動派發「中、小學生資助計劃」英文單張，而獲學校派發少數族裔語言單張的，更只有 5.94%。

另外，從調查發現，絕大部分受訪者（94.44%）表示在申請計劃時遇到困難，這些困難包括申請程序太繁複（68.06%），不諳讀寫中英文（65.28%）及不能與學生資助處職員溝通（45.83%）。縱使受訪者遇到以上困難，當中只有 22.86% 有申請學生資助而遇到困難的受訪者向學校求助。沒有向學校求助的受訪者中，64.82% 根本不知道可向學校尋求協助，46.30% 因不能與校方溝通而沒有求助。最終，有申請計劃的受訪者分別向本中心（48.61%）、親友（30.56%）求助，或自行填寫申請表（25%）。

雖然政府已資助八間少數族裔人士支援服務中心（下稱「支援中心」）及分中心，但從調查發現，向支援中心求助的受訪者比率非常低，只有 9.86%，當中 68.75% 表示不知道支援中心可以幫助，42.19% 表示不能與支援服務中心溝通，因此沒有尋求協助。雖然，政府聲稱支援服務中心的設立是為「輔助少數族裔人士融入社區，以及協助他們使用公共服務」，但效果強差人意。

建議

基於以上調查結果，本中心建議政府制定有效政策，給予適切少數族裔的措施，讓少數族裔獲得平等的機會申請資助，真正舒緩有在學子女的貧窮家庭的經濟負擔。建議如下：

1. 為學校提供六種少數族裔語言的「學生資助計劃綜合申請」單張

雖然教育局已印備六種少數族裔語言的「學生資助計劃綜合申請」單張，卻未能派發到少數族裔家長手中，白白浪費了現有資源，更令因語言問題而未能獲得資訊的少數族裔家長，白白錯過了改善學童學習環境的機會。本中心促請教育局按學校需要，給予每間學校少數族裔語言的「學生資助計劃綜合申請」單張，讓少數族裔有獲得政府扶貧資訊的平等機會。

2. 聘請少數族裔人士協助宣傳

現時，若干政府部門都有為少數族裔提供或多或少支援措施，例如勞工處自 2014 年 9 月開始聘請少數族裔就業服務大使，於各區就業中心服務，為期 6 個月，以協助少數族裔求職者使用就業中心服務。另外，勞工處鼓勵就業交通津貼科已聘請少數族裔服務大使，於辦事處內協助少數族裔申請者遞交申請、解答查詢、或提供其他特別支援服務。本中心建議教育局以此作參考，聘請

少數族裔服務大使，到各區學校為少數族裔家長舉辦簡介會以作宣傳，讓更多有需要的少數族裔家庭獲得有關資訊。

3. 與學校合辦支援少數族裔家長填寫申請表的服務

現時，在職家庭津貼辦事處亦與服務少數族裔的民間團體合辦填表支援服務，更將於部分勞工處轄下就業中心及社會福利署轄下綜合家庭服務中心提供填寫申請表格地區支援服務。這些安排某程度上解決了少數族裔家長因語言障礙而未能填寫申請表的問題。本中心亦建議教育局與招收較多少數族裔學生的學校合作，於校內舉辦填表支援服務，在少數族裔服務大使的協助下，支援少數族裔家長填寫申請表及跟進申請。

4. 將學生資助計劃「申請表範本」翻譯成少數族裔語言

在多年爭取下，勞工處鼓勵就業交通津貼科終於將最新一期鼓勵就業交通津貼計劃「申請表範本」翻譯成三種少數族裔語言，教授少數族裔申請者如何填寫申請表及所需遞交的證明文件。這起著良好的示範作用，讓不諳讀寫中英語的少數族裔申請者，可根據範本上的指示，自行填寫申請表，並遞交所需文件。本中心建議教育局效法此一措施。

5. 將「協助填寫政府資助申請表」納入少數族裔人士支援服務中心服務範圍內

《2014年香港少數族裔人士貧窮情況報告》顯示，只有13.9%南亞裔有兒童住戶人口曾使用支援中心。從本中心經驗所得，除了因為對支援中心服務知悉率低以致使用率亦低之外，支援中心服務未能適切服務受眾的需要也是重要原因。當中，協助少數族裔申請政府資助正是他們最需要的協助。因此，本中心建議民政事務總署將「協助填寫政府資助申請表」納入少數族裔人士支援服務中心新服務合約的服務範圍內。

Objective and significance

The Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon) of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong (stated “DPCW-KLN” as below) has all along been paying close attention to the plight of the grass-root ethnic minority groups. We dedicate our all-out effort to assisting them in getting the public service provided by the government all the time.

The Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2014 released by the government revealed that the poverty rate of the South Asian Ethnicities was on the high side of 26.4%. The poverty rate of South Asian Ethnicities with children even reached 48.1%. This indicates the government needs to step in to allay their economic pressure. According to the “Poverty situation report on South Asian Ethnic families – situation and needs of the South Asian Ethnicities” promulgated by DPCW-KLN, it was found that most of them cannot make both ends meet due to the bread winners’ low income. As a result over 40% of these families had to cut back on paid extracurricular activities for the children. Nearly 30% of them had to reduce expenses on food. Hence, it is necessary for the government to provide financial assistance to the underprivileged South Asian Ethnic Minority families, so that they may shake off intergenerational poverty.

As to the poor households with children, the “Financial Assistance Schemes for Primary & Secondary Students”, including the School Textbook Assistance (TA) Scheme, the Student Travel Subsidy (STS) Scheme and the Subsidy Scheme for Internet Access Charges (SIA), can really relieve them of their financial difficulties. However, DPCW-KLN discovered that some of these families have not yet applied for assistance under these schemes because they have no access to the relevant information. There are also cases of giving up the application owing to the complicated procedures and lack of any help.

For this reason, DPCW-KLN hopes that through questionnaires on this occasion, the difficulties the poor families of South Asian Ethnicities faced when they apply for assistance under the “Financial Assistance Schemes for Primary & Secondary Students” can be fully understood. Hopefully the government can explore suitable steps and take appropriate measures to support these applicants, give the ethnic minorities equal opportunities to apply for financial assistance and alleviate their economic burden.

Method of research

Our research lasted from May to June of the year 2016. The investigation was conducted in the form of questionnaires, convenient and snowball sampling method. Our staff had interviewed a total of 134 persons of South Asian Ethnicities aged 15 or above, who were either in employment or unemployed.

Result of research

17. Number of Children attending School

Nearly all (94.03%) of the respondents claimed that they have children studying in primary or secondary schools.

Table 1:
Percentage of Having Children attending School

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Families with children in school	126	94.03	94.03
Families with no children attending schools	8	5.97	100
Total	134	100	

Table 2:
Figure of children in the families attending Primary School

Number of Children in Primary School	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
0	25	20.49	20.49
1	55	45.08	65.57
2	35	28.69	94.26
3	7	5.74	100.00
Total	122	100.00	
Missing figures	4		
Mean numeric value	1.51		
Median numeric value	1		
Total	126		

Table 3:
Number of Children attending Secondary School

Number of children in secondary school	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
0	54	44.26	44.26
1	37	30.33	74.59
2	27	22.13	96.72
3	3	2.46	99.18
4	1	0.82	100.00
Total	122	100.00	
Missing figure	4		
Mean numeric value	1.53		
Median numeric value	1		
Total	126		

18. Nationalities of the ethnic minorities

Among the 126 respondents interviewed, about (70.16%) of them were Pakistanis, 24% of them were Nepalese, and 0.81% Indians.

Table 4: Ethnic Origins

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Number of Indians	1	0.81	0.81
Number of Nepalese	24	19.35	20.16
Number of Pakistani	87	70.16	90.32
Others	12	9.68	100.00
Missing figures	1		
Total	126		

19. First Language

67.74 % of the respondents speak Urdu; 19.35% speak Nepali; and 0.81% speak Hindi.

Table 5:: First Language

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Hindi	1	0.81	0.81
Nepali	24	19.35	20.16
Urdu	84	67.74	87.90
Others	15	12.10	100.00
Total	124	100.00	
Missing figure	2		
Total	126		

20. Language Proficiency

Over half (52.46%) of the respondents claimed that they had normal or good ability to read English, and 44.63% of them said their writing ability in English is either average or above. However, in the aspect of writing Chinese it is not so encouraging. Only 4.14% said that their reading ability is normal or good, and merely 2.48% can write Chinese characters.

Table 6:
Proficiency in Reading English

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Read English	Good	21	17.21	12.21
	Fair	43	35.25	52.46
	Poor	17	13.93	66.39
	Not at all	41	33.61	100.00
	Total	122	100.00	12.21
	Missing Figure	12		
	Total	134	100.00	

Table 7:
Proficiency in Writing English

		Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Write English	Good	14	11.57	11.57
	Fair	40	33.06	44.63
	Poor	16	13.22	57.85
	Not at all	51	42.15	100.00
	Total	121	100.00	
	Missing figure	13		
	Total	134	100.00	

Table 8:
Proficiency in Reading Chinese

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Read Chinese	Good	1	0.83	0.83
	Fair	4	3.31	4.14
	Poor	16	13.22	17.36
	Not at all	100	82.64	100.00
	Total	121	100.00	
	Missing figure	13		
	Total	134	100.00	

Table 9:
Proficiency in Writing Chinese

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Write Chinese	Good	2	1.65	1.65
	Fair	1	0.83	2.48
	Poor	14	11.57	14.05
	Not at all	104	85.95	100.00
	Total	121	100.00	
	Missing figure	13		
	Total	134	100.00	

21. Familiarity with the Student Finance Assistance Scheme (SFA)

84.8% of the respondents claimed that they are familiar with the SFA.

Table 10:
Familiarity to the SFA

	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Yes	106	84.80	84.80
No	19	12.50	100.00
Total	125	100.00	
Missing figure	1		
Total	126		

22. The Way of Comprehending the SFA

Most of the respondents got to know of the SFA from friends or relatives (66.98%), school (64.15%), and DPCW-KLN (45.28%). However, few people can obtain information from the authorities or government-subsidized organizations. For example only 3.77% obtained information from the relevant department or office, and 4.72% from Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities (SSCEM) funded by the government.

Table 11:
The Way of Comprehending the SFA

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Government Department or office	No	102	96.23	96.23
	Yes	4	3.77	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
School	No	38	35.85	35.85
	Yes	68	64.15	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Catholic Workers Centre (DPCW-KLN)	No	58	54.72	54.72
	Yes	48	45.28	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
HOME Centre or other SSCM funded by Government	No	101	95.28	95.28
	Yes	5	4.72	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Internet	No	105	99.06	99.06
	Yes	1	0.94	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Friends or relatives	No	35	33.02	33.02
	Yes	71	66.98	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

	Replies	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	106	100.00	100.00
	Yes	0	0.00	100.00
	Total	106	100.00	

23. Languages of SFA Leaflets

More than half (57.7%) of the respondents obtained SFA leaflets in English from schools. Only 5.94% of the respondents could get SFA leaflets in their mother tongues published by the government. It indicates schools are not proactive in providing SFA leaflets in their first language or in the lingua franca of the ethnic minority groups.

Table 12:
SFA Leaflets in English

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Yes. The school proactively gave me the leaflets	50	48.08	48.08
Yes, the school gave me the leaflet when I asked	10	9.62	57.70
No, the school did not give me any SFA leaflets.	44	42.30	100.00
Total	104	100.00	
Missing	2		
總計 Total	106		

Table 13:
SFA Leaflets in EM Languages²

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Yes. The school proactively gave me the leaflet	6	5.94	5.94
Yes. The school gave me the leaflet when I asked	0	0	5.94
The school does not give me any SFA leaflets.	95	94.06	100.00
Total	104	100.00	
Missing	5		
總計 Total	106		

24. Application for assistance under the SFA

Among the respondents who did not apply for the SFA, 24.24% of them revealed they were too late to get the information, 24.24% of them did not know how to apply, and 9.09% of them found it too difficult to complete the application procedure. These are the reason(s) why they did not submit the applications.

Table 14:
Rates of Applying the SFA

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Yes	72	68.57	68.57
No	33	31.43	100.00
Total	106	100.00	
Missing	1		
Total	106		

Table 15:
Reason(s) for Not Applying for the SFA

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Not eligible because of the income limit	No	21	63.64	63.64
	Yes	12	36.36	100.00
	Total	33	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Not eligible because of the asset limit	No	33	100.00	100.00
	Yes	0	0	100.00
	Total	33	100.00	

² 6 EM languages include Indonesian, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalo, Urdu, Thai and Tagalog.

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Too late to get the information	No	25	75.76	75.76
	Yes	8	24.24	100.00
	Total	33	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Didn't know how to apply	No	25	75.76	75.76
	Yes	8	24.24	100.00
	Total	33	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Too difficult to complete the application procedure	No	30	90.91	90.91
	Yes	3	9.09	100.00
	Total	33	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	29	87.88	87.88
	Yes	4	12.12	100.00
	Total	33	100.00	

25. Ways to Complete the Application Procedures under the SFA

Most of the respondents sought assistance to complete the application procedures from the DPCW-KLN (48.61%). 30.56% of them asked for help from friends and relatives. 25% of them complete the application procedure by themselves. However, scarcely had the respondents asked the SSCEM funded by Government for assistance to complete the application procedures. These respondents amounted to only 2.78%.

Table 16:
Ways to Complete the Application Procedures of the SFA

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
School proactively helped me to complete the procedure	No	64	88.89	88.89
	Yes	8	11.11	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	
		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage

				(%)
School helped me to complete the procedure when I asked for help	No	65	90.28	90.28
	Yes	7	9.72	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Through the SSCEM funded by Government helped me to complete the procedure	No	70	97.22	97.22
	Yes	2	2.78	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Catholic Workers Centre(DPCW-KLN) helped me to complete the procedure	No	37	51.39	51.39
	Yes	35	48.61	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
I completed the application procedure myself	No	54	75.00	75.00
	Yes	18	25.00	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Friends or relatives helped me to complete the procedure	No	50	69.44	69.44
	Yes	22	30.56	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	72	100.00	100.00
	Yes	0	0.00	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

26. Difficulties in Applying for the SFA

Only 5.56% of the respondents claimed that they faced no difficulties to complete the application procedures. In fact, most of the respondents were beset with a wide range of difficulties in applying for SFA. The common difficulties are the complicated application procedure (68.06%), language barriers, and lack of assistance (43.06%). For language barriers, 65.28% of the respondents cannot read or write Chinese or English and 45.83% of them could not communicate with the Officer from Student Finance Office.

Table 17:
Difficulties of Applying for the SFA

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Application procedure is too complicated	No	23	31.94	31.94
	Yes	49	68.06	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Illiterate in Chinese or English	No	25	34.72	34.72
	Yes	47	65.28	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Could not communicate with the Officer from Student Finance Office (SFO)	No	39	54.17	54.17
	Yes	33	45.83	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
No help available in the application procedure	No	41	56.94	56.94
	Yes	31	43.06	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage
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				(%)
No difficulties	No	68	94.44	94.44
	Yes	4	5.56	100.00
	總計 Total	72	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	71	98.61	98.61
	Yes	1	1.39	100.00
	Total	72	100.00	

27. Tackling Difficulties: the Role of School

77.14% of the respondents claimed that they did not try to seek help from school when they encountered difficulties in the application procedure. It is not because they did not need help (18.52%) but because they were not sure whether the school could help them (64.82%). Moreover, they could not communicate with the school staff. (46.3%). It again indicates that lack of information and language barriers are obstacles for the South Asian ethnicities to improve their lives.

Table 18:
Rates of Seeking Assistance from Schools

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage(%)
Yes	16	22.86	22.86
No	54	77.14	100.00
Total	70	100.00	
Missing	2		
Total	72		

Table 19:
Reasons for not Asking for Help from school

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
No need	No	43	79.63	79.63
	Yes	10	18.52	98.15
	Invalid	1	1.85	100.00
	Total	54	100.00	

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage
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				(%)
Did not know the school could help	No	18	33.33	33.33
	Yes	35	64.82	98.14
	Invalid	1	1.85	100.00
	Total	54	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Cannot communicate with the school	No	29	53.70	53.70
	Yes	25	46.30	100.00
	Invalid	0	0	100.00
	Total	54	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage(%)
Did not know how to seek help from school	No	53	98.15	98.15
	Yes	1	1.85	100.00
	Invalid	0	0	100.00
	Total	54	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	51	94.44	94.44
	Yes	3	5.56	100.00
	Invalid	0	0	100.00
	Total	54	100.00	

28. The Role of School on the Application Procedure

The principal assistance provided by schools was to provide English (50%) and EM leaflets (12.5%). Merely 18.75% of the respondents were either verbally taught to fill up the form in their own language or helped to fill up the form.

Table 20) Assistance from Schools

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
The school gave me the English leaflet	No	8	50.00	50.00
	Yes	8	50.00	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage
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				(%)
The school gave me the EM leaflet	No	14	87.50	87.50
	Yes	2	12.50	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
The school staff taught me how to fill up the form verbally through the kid's translation	No	13	81.25	81.25
	Yes	3	18.75	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
I was taught me how to fill up the form verbally in my own language	No	13	81.25	81.25
	Yes	3	18.75	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Helped me to fill up the form	No	13	81.25	81.25
	Yes	3	18.75	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Did not give any help	No	14	87.50	87.50
	Yes	2	12.50	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	16	100.00	100.00
	Yes	0	0	100.00
	Total	16	100.00	

29. The Effectiveness of Assistance from School on the Application for SFA

81.25% of the respondents who received assistance thought that the school was helpful or very helpful.

Table 21:
Effectiveness of Assistance from School

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Very helpful	3	18.75	18.75
Helpful	10	62.50	81.25
Unhelpful	2	12.50	93.75
Very unhelpful	1	6.25	100.00
No comment	0	0	100.00
Total	16	100.00	
總計 Total	16		

30. The Role of the Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities (SSCEM) Funded by the Government

90.14% of the respondents did not try to seek help from SSCEM funded by the Government when they found difficulties in the application procedure. The reason why so many respondents refrained from approaching the aforesaid organization is, again, lack of information and language barriers. 68.75% of the respondents claimed that they did not know the SSCEM plays the role in helping them. It explains that the information of the services provided by the SSCEM could not reach them. In addition, 42.19% of the respondents mentioned that they could not communicate with the SSCEM. It illustrates that there were language barriers between the respondents and staff of the above-mentioned organizations.

Table 22:
Rates of Assistance from the SSCEM Funded by the Government

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	累 Cumulative Percentage (%)
Yes	7	9.86	9.86
No	64	90.14	100.00
Total	71	100.00	
Missing	1		
Total	72		

Table 23:
Reasons for Not Asking for Help

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
No need	No	53	82.54	82.54
	Yes	11	17.46	100.00
	Total	64	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Did not know SSCEM could help	No	20	31.25	31.25
	Yes	44	68.75	100.00
	Total	64	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Cannot communicate with SSCEM	No	37	57.81	57.81
	Yes	27	42.19	100.00
	Total	64	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Did not know how to seek help from centre	No	61	95.31	95.31
	Yes	3	4.69	100.00
	Total	64	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	60	93.75	93.75
	Yes	4	6.25	100.00
	Total	64	100.00	

31. Resolving Difficulties: The Role of the Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities (SSCEM) Funded by the Government

The SSCEM, despite being financed by the Government, did not provide much direct assistance to the South Asian Ethnic Minorities. Only 1 (14.29%) of the respondents said that he/ she was helped to fill up the application form. Additionally, only 2 (28.57%) of the respondents were taught to fill up the form verbally through their kids' translation.

Table 24:
Assistance from HOME Centre or Other Support Service Centre Funded by the Government

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gave me the English leaflet	No	4	57.14	57.14
	Yes	1	14.29	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gave me the EM leaflet	No	4	57.14	57.14
	Yes	1	14.29	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Taught me how to fill up the form verbally through the kid	No	3	42.86	42.86
	Yes	2	28.57	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	累 Cumulative Percentage (%)
Taught me how to fill up the form verbally in my own language	No	5	71.43	71.43
	Yes	0	0	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Helped me to fill up the form	No	4	57.14	57.14
	Yes	1	14.29	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	
		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)

Did not give any help	No	4	57.14	57.14
	Yes	1	14.29	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	

		Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Others	No	5	71.43	71.43
	Yes	0	0	71.43
	Missing	2	28.57	100.00
	Total	7	100.00	

32. The Effectiveness of the Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities (SSCEM) Funded by Government on Tackling Difficulties

Only 7 of the respondents could have help from the SSCEM financed by Government. Another 3 respondents (42.86%) thought that the service provided by those organizations are helpful in tackling difficulties in the application procedure.

Table 25:
Effectiveness of Assistance from the SSCEM Funded by Government

	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Very helpful	0	0	0
Helpful	3	42.86	42.86
Unhelpful	1	14.28	57.14
Very unhelpful	3	42.86	100.00
No comment	0	0	100.00
Total	7	100.00	
Missing	0		
總計 Total	7		

Analysis

The research on this occasion found that our interviewees' proficiency in the Chinese and English languages is not high, only 52.46% can read and 44.63% can write English, with their Chinese reading and writing abilities are respectively lowered to 4.14% and 2.48%. Therefore they really need leaflets or brochures in English or even their mother tongues in order to know the financial schemes provided by the government. Although the Education Bureau has published "Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Scheme" leaflets in Chinese and English and were translated into six languages of the ethnic minorities (Indonesian, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalo, Urdu, Thai and Tagalog), it is a pity that they are only available for collection at the SFA centres or browsed on the website. Among the interviewees, only 48.08% of them had the leaflets in English distributed to them by the school. Only 5.94% of them obtained leaflets in their first language from the school.

Besides, the research reveals that 94.44% of the respondents expressed that they encountered difficulties during the application. These difficulties include the complexity of the application procedures (68.06%), their illiteracy in Chinese and English (65.28%) and their inability to communicate with staff of the SFA centre (45.83%). Even though confronted by difficulties, only 22.86% of the SFA applicants approached the school for help. 64.82% of the applicants who had not sought help from their schools were not aware that schools could render them assistance. 46.30% of them could not communicate with the school and so did not ask for help. Eventually, respondents who planned to apply sought help from DPCW-KLN (48.61%) and relatives (30.56%), or complete the application forms themselves (25%).

Although the government has financed six support service centres (SSCEM) and two sub-centres for ethnic minorities, the research found that the rate of seeking help from the SSCEMs was as low as 9.86%. Among these interviewees, 68.75% said that they did not know these centres could provide assistance. 42.19% of them expressed that they could not communicate with the SSCEMs. Though the government professed that the establishment of the SSCEMs is to facilitate the integration of ethnic minorities into the community, and enhance their access to public services, the effect is far from satisfactory.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the above research, DPCW-KLN proposed effective measures to be instituted by the government, so as to give ethnic minorities equal opportunities to apply for assistance. Hopefully these measures can really allay the financial burden of the poor families with children attending school. Our proposals are outlined as follows:

6. Provide schools with “Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Scheme” leaflets in six ethnic minority languages

Although the Education Bureau has published the leaflets stated in the paragraph heading, more often than not they cannot reach the parents of the ethnic minorities. It is a waste of existing resources. Furthermore, since these parents failed to receive the relevant information due to language barrier, their children miss the opportunities to improve their studying environment. DPCW-KLN urges the Education Bureau to supply these leaflets to schools on their basis of their needs, so that they have equal opportunities to obtain information on poverty alleviation.

7. Employ local ethnical minorities to help publicize

At present certain government departments have ambassadors for ethnic minorities to provide support to their compatriots. For example the Labour Department has since September 2014 hired ethnic minorities as employment services ambassadors. They serve at the job centres of various districts for a period of six months, helping their compatriots to seek jobs. Furthermore, the Labour Department’s Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Division has employed a few of these ambassadors to assist their compatriots to apply for the subsidy, answer enquiries and provide other support services. DPCW-KLN would suggest that the Education Bureau refer to the measures taken by the Labour Department, employ the ethnic minorities as service ambassadors to hold briefing sessions at different schools to disseminate the relevant information.

8. Collaborate with schools to help parents of ethnic minorities complete application forms

Nowadays, the Working Family Allowance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistant Agency (WFSFAA) and nongovernmental bodies which help the ethnic minorities collaborate to provide form-filling support service to them. Such services are also available at the job centres under the Labour Department and the Integrated Family Service Centres of the Social Welfare Department. The aforesaid arrangement has solved the problems of the ethnic minorities’ inability to fill the application forms to certain extent. DPCW-KLN would propose cooperation between the Education Bureau and schools which enroll students of ethnic minorities to organize support services. With the help of services ambassadors, students of ethnic minorities may be provided with form-filling facilities and follow-up actions on their application.

9. Translate samples of the ‘Household Application for Student Financial Assistance Scheme’ application form into 6 languages of ethnic minorities

After years of striving, non-government bodies succeeded in persuading the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Division of the Labour Department to translate ‘samples of application’ for the latest Incentive Transport Subsidy scheme into three languages of the ethnic minorities. The sample teaches them how to complete the application forms and the relevant documents required. It demonstrates that ethnic minorities who are illiterate in Chinese and English can, based on the sample, fill the application forms themselves and submit the necessary documents. DPCW-KLN suggests that this is a good example for the Education Bureau to follow.

10. Put assistance in completing ‘government finance assistance’ application forms within the parameter of Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities (SSCEM)

The ‘Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2014’ revealed that only 13.9% of the families of South Asian Ethnicities with children had made use of the SSCEM. According to our experience, apart from lack of knowledge of the duties of the SSCEM, the fact that the services provided do not meet their needs is another important reason for the low rate of use. Helping the ethnic minorities to acquire government financial assistance is first and foremost for them. Hence DPCW-KLN suggests putting assisting ethnic minorities to complete government finance assistance application forms into the job parameter of the District Offices under the Home Affairs Department.