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## Advocacy

### Appeal for political participation and rights in election for EMs

The ethnic minority population in Hong Kong is on the increase, there are more than 140,000 of them and yet their voice and opinions are often overlooked in the election process. Our EM service and Hong Kong Council of social service conducted a research on Legco election. 55% of the qualified ethnic minority voters would cast their votes in the election. However, about 70% of them felt that none of the candidates can represent their rights.

The research was conducted by phone calls, questionnaires and online survey. The research successfully interviewed 799 minorities from June to July. Among them, 476 being interviewed were eligible, 260 (55%) of them have registered as voters, 138 (29%) of them were eligible but did not register as voters. It was found that the registration rate of the EM was lower than Hong Kong's overall registration rate which is 73.5%.

The findings indicated that more than half, ie. 55% of the interviewees indicated that they would vote in the election, 25% were undecided about it and 20% would not vote. Nevertheless, 70% of the interviewees expressed that not one candidate can represent them.

Education, housing, employment and public services were issues that drew interviewees' attention. The findings showed that the most concerned topics were: household issues, too demanding on Chinese language ability which hinder them to find jobs, insufficient Chinese language classes for adults/non-students, ineffective Chinese curriculum for non-Chinese students and insufficient public awareness on racial equality and cultural sensitivity.

Take the example of the District Council (Second) Functional Constituency, of the nine lists of candidates, seven of their election platforms did not mention anything about ethnic minorities. There were only Chinese versions of publicity materials and promotion channels. When 90% of ethnic minorities cannot read nor write Chinese, it is impossible for them to comprehend the ideas of the candidates. Nevertheless, some candidate did notice the need of EMs and have publicity materials in English and some were even translated into Urdu language.

The rights to election and political participation of EMs in Hong Kong have always been ignored. We appealed to the candidates to pay attention to EM's needs on education, employment and housing and to include topics of concern of ethnic minorities into the election platform to fight for their deserved rights. The government and the election office should require potential candidates to have both English and Chinese versions in publicity materials to ensure that the ethnic minorities will not be deprived of exercising their civil rights due to language barrier. Departments concerned should strengthen promotion for EMs to understand representative government, election and political rights

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