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## People

### From waitress to the first Nepalese social worker in Hong Kong

We seldom meet ethnic minorities in our daily life, the most likely occasion will be waiters in high end western restaurants, and our protagonist today, Miss Sita Limbu (Sita) had been employed in different settings, like being a waitress in a restaurant in Discovery Bay, however, as soon as she came into contact with social service, she found her lifetime career.

Sita is a programme worker in our Hong Kong Jockey Club Community Project Grant: Integrated Service Centre for Local South Asians (ISSA), she mainly helps to carry out Centre's activities. Sita has been helping with promoting our projects for South Asians. Last year Sita received the 10 year long service award. Recently she completed the higher diploma of social work in Caritas Institute of Higher Education and became the first Nepalese social worker in Hong Kong.

#### Perseverance despite of hardships

In order to become a social worker, Sita determined to take up social work course. Born in Hong Kong and a Gurkha father, Sita grew up and received her education in Shek Kong Barracks, therefore, education system in Hong Kong was very remote to her and social work course meant starting all over.

She applied for social work degree course with the University of Hong Kong in 2009, then associate degree course with City University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 2010 and 2011. Despite these unsuccessful attempts, they only strengthened Sita's determination to become a social worker, eventually she was admitted to the higher diploma of social work in Caritas Institute of Higher Education in 2012. However, this was just the beginning of the hardship as the curriculum was taught in Chinese which Sita does not know at all.

Ever since Sita became a social work student, she had been working during day time, and on top of this, she had to study, do homework and placement as well. Apart from insufficient sleep and rest, she still had to face the language barrier, "I had to keep my eyes open even though I did not understand what the lecturer was talking about". Whole day tutorials were other difficult times for her as she could only speak English, classmates were unwilling to partner with her which made her very upset. In the face of all the difficulties, Sita completed the course with her mighty effort and assistance from classmates.

#### Social work opens another window

In fact, the salary Sita received was no better than being a waitress. However, she enjoyed very much the satisfaction from helping others. After completion of the social work course, she found the scope of social work was more extensive than merely voluntary work or rescue work as most of the Nepalese have thought. There are many professional knowledge involved, in particular, she likes counselling work very much, the demand for counselling service among Nepalese and South Asians was high, however due to language barrier, they might not receive timely support.

Four tough years of social work course widened Sita's perspective and enhanced her problem solving skills. "Generally South Asians women lack knowledge in raising their children, they only scold or batter them when their children disobey or have poor academic results. Sometimes, they would batter their children with umbrella which made an negative impact on children's body and mind. Then I would apply my knowledge to tell them they are actually abusing their children, I could use the skills I learnt to help my clients more effectively."

After completing the higher diploma course, Sita is planning to further her studies to obtain a master degree in order to become a more outstanding social worker to offer counselling service to her clients.

