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## Views

### From Election Platform to Social Inclusion

The Legco Election held once every four years was settled with 70 seats of the geographical and functional constituencies filled. While heated debates among political parties aroused much attention, we were happy to notice that livelihood issues raised was one step closer to social inclusion.

What is "social inclusion"? One may associate it with diverse views held by people or groups with vested interest on politics, economic development, resources allocation, etc, on top of a growing concern about dissension within the society. Promoting inclusion is to strengthen social cohesion with positive attitudes like understanding, respectful and caring, to resolve conflicts. Both "social cohesion" and "social inclusion" are essential interlocking elements of social development. The stronger the cohesiveness of a society is, the more harmonious it is where people have mutual trust and respect for one another's diversities.

However, from a macro perspective, "social inclusion" is not merely to eliminate discords at personal level. Apart from concern about marginalised groups being alienated from the community due to differences (identity such as: age, gender, race, cultural, and disadvantages like physically, economically and socially), social inclusion should be more about eliminating structural obstacles of the society, through promoting an equitable, more righteous policies and systems, those who are being isolated socially can participate in activities like social, economic, cultural and political and that their basic rights are ensured.

The election platforms exhibited candidates' concern to the less advantaged, and aroused public concern to them within a short period of time on issues like legislation against discrimination on sex orientation, strengthen support to Ethnic Minority, disabled, children with special needs, offenders, discharged prisoners, to promote universal retirement protection scheme, elders friendly community, family friendly policy, to develop economy through communities and bazaars. And, what is more important, with the perseverance of elected counsellors, their continuous advocacies and actions, improvements of related policies and the rights of the less advantaged can be promoted. They can have the opportunity of equitable participation and contribute to the society and eventually could enjoy the fruits of social development.


When implementing the election platforms, we hope that counsellors would consider these aforementioned groups as important stakeholders and communicate with them actively and set up multiple platforms to listen to their opinions while on the other hand, they could monitor the carrying out of election platforms. This is an important process of empowerment of the deprived and social inclusion.

Lastly, we were impressed by the use of various means of promotions during the campaign: use of bilingual promotion materials, sign language, braille signs and web accessible versions in publicity materials. Getting hold of information is an important step towards equitable participation, we hope counsellors could maintain this good accessibility practice both within and outside the council.

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#### Reference

[http://www.socsc.hku.hk/cosc/Full%20paper/Kan%20Gloria\\_full.pdf](http://www.socsc.hku.hk/cosc/Full%20paper/Kan%20Gloria_full.pdf)  
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr04-05/chinese/sec/library/0405in35c.pdf>

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