

**International Social Service Hong Kong Branch (ISS-HK)
Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong
Press Brief on April 7, 2009 at 1/F New Annex Central Government Offices**

Introduction

ISS-HK runs the Mobile Information Service at the Hong Kong international Airport for arriving ethnic minorities, language programmes and counseling and referrals in partnership with the government, consulates and various government and non-government agencies.

International Social Service Hong Kong Branch (ISS-HK)' commitment to serve migrants, ethnic minorities and the most vulnerable, children ,families and communities is what makes the Support Service Centre for Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong Island a very special project for us.

We thank the government of Hong Kong through the most honorable Mr. Stephen Lam and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau for embarking on this initiative and for the trust in our capacity and commitment to carry out the vision of this project. We, in the NGO community have always believed in doing our utmost best to effectively enhance the quality of people's lives.

Working hand in hand with the government in addressing the needs, potentials and interests of ethnic minorities, ISSHK and I am sure all of the NGOs here this afternoon, look forward to the next two years with excitement, enthusiasm, high energy and active interaction of ethnic minorities and the local community. If we have increased respect, appreciation and support for each other no matter our race, color and creed, Hong Kong would truly be a multi-ethnic society.

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An Integrated Approach

The Support service Centre is a one stop shop for information, enquiries, assistance, referrals, trainings and personal enhancement. The target clients are ethnic minorities – individuals, families and ethnic minority communities and also the local Hong Kong community in getting them actively integrating with the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

In the integration process, the individual requires initially basic information, after which there is an attempt to seek solutions to their problems and also plan on their future. It includes seeking help and getting it from all available resources in the community initially aided by others and eventually reaching a level of functionality and productivity and being a resource to others.

Through a committed and dedicated team of professionals we aim to provide a venue for information dissemination to all government and non-government agencies that provide services. We aim to advocate for the ethnic minorities full access to public services including opening avenues for their active involvement in the Hong Kong society.

The Service Coordinator of the Project is Ms. Sheila Jaucian assisted by her team which includes among others Mr. Raymond Lam and Ms. Nadia Khan.

Service Location and Operational Hours

The main office will be located in Wan Chai District, the address will be confirmed later. **The Centre will operate from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. daily , except on Mondays when the office starts in the afternoon session.**

Classes and other programme activities will also be conducted as scheduled in the ISS-HK Branch offices in the IFSCs in Sham Sui Po and Tin Shui Wai, Yuen Long, Kwun Tong and at the ISS-HK Head Office in Southern Centre, Hennessy Road, Wan Chai.

Services

1. Language Training

Language Training – Cantonese (18 classes), English Classes (18 classes) will be offered at HK\$100 per student for 50 hours course in the Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced Levels. Classes are scheduled in the morning, afternoon and evenings on weekdays and weekends.

Computer-assisted language classes will be introduced as well as a family approach to Chinese language instruction where parents can learn with their children and spend quality time together.

2. Integration Programme

A. Computer Training – 19 classes at 50 hours per course; HK\$100 per course

B. Social Adaptation

Orientation to Hong Kong – 6 outings per year

Personality Development Courses – 4 courses /year

Trainings and Seminars- Employment Skills Training (3 classes) , Financial management Training; Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Training, Know Your Rights Seminar, Accessing HK Public Services Seminar and Interest classes

C. Hotline(average of 30 calls per month), Interpretation on Site (18 sight translations per month) , Counseling (12 cases per month of intensive cases) and Referral Service(18-24 referrals/month) , Development of Mutual Support Groups (8 groups per year) and Volunteer groups (3 groups)

D. Publicity and Promotions – Orientation seminars, Cultural Shows (2 per year), Monthly newsletter; websites

Our vision is to have ethnic minorities and local Hong Kong communities actively interacting for the betterment of each other's lives and truly making Hong Kong a multi-ethnic society that is humane, caring and committed to ensuring the enhancement of individual rights, dignity and integrity. We look forward to achieving each step one day at a time in this initiative of providing support services for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.