



樂施會  
**OXFAM**  
Hong Kong

# **Survey on the Chinese Learning Challenges South Asian Ethnic Minority Kindergarten Students from Low-Income Families Face**

## **Executive Summary**

December 2014

### **Introduction**

Oxfam has always been concerned about the rights of ethnic minorities and their social participation, particularly their Chinese education in Hong Kong. With more emphasis on 'biliteracy and trilingualism',<sup>1</sup> failing to be proficient in Chinese would compromise academic performance and undermine the chance of getting into a post-secondary institution. Cantonese is the common language in Hong Kong; being unable to speak it means being unable to communicate with a large number of people in Hong Kong. Apart from having to deal with all sorts of communication problems in their everyday lives, ethnic minority people also have to face the problem of limited job choices. It is often the case that they are limited to manual, low-paying and dangerous jobs. This thus becomes an obstacle to their upward mobility in society, makes it difficult for them to make ends meet and could lead to poverty.

According to the 2011 Population Census, a total of 32,400 ethnic minorities aged under 15 were studying full-time courses in educational institutions in Hong Kong. In the 2012/13 school year, a total of 27,188 non-Chinese speaking students were studying at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools. 12,324 of them studied in kindergartens, accounting for 7.5 per cent of the total number of kindergarteners in Hong Kong.<sup>2</sup> In that same period, the

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<sup>1</sup> Biliteracy means being able to read and write in Chinese and English; trilingual means being able to speak Cantonese, Putonghua and English.

<sup>2</sup> The number 27,188 does not include students who were studying in both primary and secondary private or international schools. Source: *Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14*. Legislative Council paper no. EDB251.

child poverty rate for South Asian or Southeast Asian children aged under 15 was 32.5 per cent, higher than the population's figure of 25 per cent.<sup>3</sup> We should not take their situation lightly.

Since 2006, Oxfam Hong Kong has been advocating with our partners for the Education Bureau to launch a curriculum for students for who are learning Chinese as a second language. With quality and appropriate education, ethnic minorities or non-Chinese speaking students will be able to enjoy more life opportunities.

The government announced the 'Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework' for the first time in the 2014 Policy Address in order to provide ethnic minority students with Chinese-language learning support. However, such support only applies to non-Chinese speaking students from Primary One to Secondary Six; it does not cater to non-Chinese speaking pre-school students. In its publication 'Guide to the Pre-Primary Curriculum', the Curriculum Development Council of the Education Bureau stated that the period between birth and the age of 8 is the best time for learning.<sup>4</sup> Disappointedly, the government has not taken advantage of this period to provide ethnic minority students with direct and regular support, thereby letting the opportunity of laying a solid foundation in Chinese slip through their fingers.

As such, we commissioned Policy21 Ltd to carry out fieldwork through a survey, which was distributed from April to July, 2014 in order to keep our finger on the pulse of the Chinese learning obstacles of South Asian kindergarten students in low income families<sup>5</sup> as well as pertinent learning support provided by kindergartens for South Asian students.

## **1. Survey methods**

Our target respondents are low-income families (with a monthly household income of less than 50 per cent of that of the population) which have at least

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<sup>3</sup> The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 2013. *Poverty situation of South and Southeast Asian Ethnic Minorities*.

<sup>4</sup> The Curriculum Development Council of Education Bureau, 2006. *Guide to the Pre-Primary Curriculum*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> A 'low-income family' is defined as a household with a monthly income of less than 50 per cent of the median household income in Hong Kong. Cash benefits of social welfare are also regarded as income, e.g. CSSA, Student Financial Assistance Agency's subsidy.

one South Asian child studying in kindergarten. We first invited kindergartens that admit South Asian students from the 11 poorest District Council districts. A total of 103 kindergartens were contacted. Amongst them, 66 kindergartens agreed to participate in the survey and 1,016 questionnaires were sent to the parents through the kindergartens. A total of 469 completed questionnaires from 53 of the kindergartens were returned, representing a response rate of 46.2 per cent. Out of these 469 South Asian families, **271 (57.8 per cent)** of them had a monthly median household income of less than 50 per cent of that of the population. The survey data was analysed based on the information of these 271 low-income South Asian families.

## **2. Demographic characteristics and socio-economic characteristics of interviewees**

### **2.1 Personal particulars of kindergarten students**

In our survey, 54.9 per cent of students were Pakistani, 28 per cent were Indian and 17.1 per cent were Nepali. 46.8 per cent were male, 52 per cent were female. 96.5 per cent were six years old or below. 91.7 per cent studied in a half-day session. 86.8 per cent were born in Hong Kong. (Please refer to Chart 1, Table 1 in the appendices or Tables 3 and 4 in the research report.)

### **2.2 Personal particulars of the kindergarten students' parents/guardians and their household characteristics**

2.2.1 56.9 per cent of parents/guardians (hereafter 'parents') were Pakistani, 22.9 per cent were Indian and 17.4 per cent were Nepali. 38.9 per cent of parents were fathers, and over the half (52.8 per cent) were mothers. Parents with post-secondary education or above accounted for 35.3 per cent of the total number of parents. 21 per cent of fathers and 11.5 per cent of mothers were born in Hong Kong. Fathers who came to Hong Kong generally stayed longer than the mothers. The percentage of fathers and mothers who had resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years was 11.8 per cent and 21.5 per cent respectively. The percentage of fathers who had lived in Hong Kong for 16 years or more was 40.9 per cent – a figure twice as high as the mothers (20.2 per cent). (Please refer to Charts 2 and 3 in the appendices, or Tables 11-13 in the research report.)

2.2.2 For the 271 parents who were surveyed, 62.6 per cent were employed. (Please refer to Table 4 in the appendices or Table 14 in the research report.) The average household size was 4.9 persons. (Please refer to Table 3 in the appendices or Chart 18 in the research report.) 44.6 per cent of the parents lived in public housing and 35.9 per cent lived in private rental housing (whole flat). (Please refer to Chart 2 in the appendices or Chart 17 in the research report.)

### **2.3 Kindergartens that admit South Asian students**

According to the figures the Education Bureau submitted to the Legislative Council,<sup>6</sup> there were 164,764 kindergartners studying in 861 local kindergartens during the 2012/13 school year<sup>7</sup> in Hong Kong. 12,324 or 7.5 per cent of them were non-Chinese speaking students.

Our survey also revealed the distribution of South Asian students in the sampled kindergartens. Close to two-thirds (65.9 per cent) of the 44 kindergartens that filled out Part A of our questionnaire had, within the entire school, fewer than 10 South Asian students. So typically, there are only one or two students in every year or every class. (Please refer to Chart 3 in the appendices or Chart 48 in the research report.)

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<sup>6</sup> *Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2013-14*. Legislative Council paper no.: EDB251.

<sup>7</sup> Education Bureau website:

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/tc/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/kg.html>

### **3. Main findings**

#### **3.1 The majority of the parents deemed learning Chinese important for their children's future development**

According to our findings, an absolute majority of parents deemed learning Chinese important for their children's educational advancement (80.4 per cent), career advancement (68 per cent) and integration into the local community (69.5 per cent).<sup>8</sup> (Please refer to Chart 4 in the appendices or Charts 43-45 in the research report)

63.7 per cent of parents planned on sending their children to mainstream primary schools. The two chief reasons for their decision were that it could help their children learn Chinese (68.3 per cent) and because mainstream schools are often rated better (36.2 per cent). (Please refer to Charts 5 and 6 in the appendices, or Charts 39 and 40 in the research report.)

#### **3.2 Close to three-fifths of the parents were illiterate in Chinese, making it difficult to help their children learn Chinese**

Nearly three-fifths (58 per cent) of the parents reported that they could not read Chinese, and a quarter of them (26.6 per cent) could not speak Cantonese. It is therefore difficult for ethnic minority parents to help their children learn Chinese. (Please refer to Tables 5 and 6 in the appendices, or Tables 15 and 16 in the research report.)

It is often the mother's responsibility to help their children with their homework. In this survey, 38.3 per cent of the mothers helped their children with their homework in Chinese subjects or Chinese-instructed subjects. Less than one-fifth (19.8 per cent) of the instructors were fathers. Concerning both proficiency in speaking and reading, mothers (31.8 per cent of whom could not speak Cantonese; 61.7 per cent could not read Chinese) were weaker than fathers (19.5 per cent of whom could not speak Cantonese; 52.8 per cent could not read Chinese). The difference is especially obvious in their speaking abilities. Their insufficient proficiency in Chinese was not only an obstacle to

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<sup>8</sup>The questionnaire asked parents to rate the importance of Chinese learning in these three areas. 5 meant 'most important' and 1 meant 'least important'. We grouped scores of 4 and 5 as 'important'. The importance of Chinese learning in these three aspects was 80.4 per cent, 68 per cent and 69.5 per cent.

helping their children in their studies, but also led to miscommunication between parents and schools. Consequently, parents were not able to fully understand their children's performance at school, learning progress and the information schools provide them. (Please refer to Chart 7, Tables 5 and 6 in the appendices, or Charts 15, 16 and 25 in the research report.)

### **3.3 Close to 80 per cent of the parents reported that the kindergartens were the only places their children learnt Chinese**

Results of our survey showed that, due to the parents' lack of proficiency in Chinese, only 8.6 per cent of South Asian students primarily spoke Cantonese at home even though 86.8 per cent of the students were born in Hong Kong. (Please refer to Tables 1 and 7 in the appendices, or Tables 4 and 5 in the research report.)

Furthermore, 60 per cent of parents said their children never or only watch less than an hour of Cantonese television programmes at home each day, while almost half of the children (47.2 per cent) never read Chinese books (except textbooks). 71.8 per cent of students reported that most of their playmates were of the same ethnicity or of other ethnicities (they communicate in English). (Please refer to Table 8 and Chart 8 in the appendices, or Table 26 and Chart 27 in the research report.)

Most parents (79.1 per cent) indicated that kindergarten was the only place where their children learn Chinese. (Please refer to Chart 7, Tables 5 and 6 in the appendices, or Charts 15, 16 and 25 in the research report.) Some parents did not enrol their children in after-school Chinese language enhancement courses generally for one of two reasons: either they did not know where to find these courses (39.5 per cent) or the course fee was unaffordable (26.6 per cent). (Please refer to Chart 10 in the appendices or Chart 24 in the research report.)

As such, children from low-income families whose parents do not know any Chinese are more dependent on kindergartens to learn Chinese.

### **3.4 Over half of the kindergartens did not provide South Asian students with additional Chinese learning support**

According to our survey results, 52.3 per cent of kindergartens did not provide their South Asian students with additional Chinese learning support.

For the 43.2 per cent of schools that did provide additional support, none of them offered 'Chinese Enhancement Classes' (e.g. parallel classes) to cater to South Asian students' Chinese learning needs. Furthermore, 43.2 per cent of kindergartens had not planned to provide additional Chinese learning support for the 2014/15 school year, while 11.4 per cent did not know whether they were going to provide such support. (Please refer to Chart 12 in the appendices or Chart 51 in the research report.)

Additional Chinese learning support (like Chinese Enhancement Classes) are especially important for ethnic minority students. To learn the language, they need to practice repeatedly and analyse the formats, sounds and meanings of Chinese characters and sentences. With their parents' lack of language skills in Chinese, students seldom use their newly acquired Chinese vocabulary to express themselves at home. As a result, their Chinese language skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing skills) lag far behind their counterparts. (Please refer to Chart 11 in the appendices, or Chart 50 in the research report.)

## **4. Review of the government's existing measures**

### **4.1 'Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework' does not apply to kindergartens**

The Educational Bureau has started to implement the 'Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework' (hereafter 'the Framework') for ethnic minority students in primary and secondary schools. The Framework has a set of expected learning outcomes for each learning stage, and provides funding to schools to employ teachers to teach non-Chinese speaking students. Unfortunately, this Framework does not apply to pre-school institutions.

It is easiest for children to pick up a language between birth and five years of age. So naturally, the earlier a child begins to learn a language the better. The Education Bureau has always suggested that minority parents send their children to local curriculum kindergartens to learn Chinese earlier. However, the Bureau has not provided kindergartens with substantial resources and constant support. As such, teachers are unable to tailor-make teaching materials, hire additional teachers to follow up on students' learning progress or adopt suitable teaching methods to cater to the specific learning needs of ethnic minority students. This makes it hard for ethnic minority parents to send their children to local Chinese kindergartens confidently knowing that their children will learn Chinese and be provided proper support.

### **4.2 The Education Bureau provides non-Chinese speaking students with very limited support**

The Education Bureau commissioned the University of Hong Kong's Education Faculty to carry out a three-year project: 'Kindergarten-University School Support Program'.<sup>9</sup> It emphasises training for kindergarten teachers so that they can learn suitable teaching methods to teach non-Chinese speaking students, develop a school-based curriculum, as well as teaching materials and assessment tools. This programme is one way in which the Education Bureau is providing non-Chinese speaking students' support in their learning. However, there were only 26 kindergartens that joined the programme in the

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<sup>9</sup> <http://kgusp.cacler.hku.hk/main/introduction.php>

2013/14 school year,<sup>10</sup> and will end in 2015. The Bureau has yet to decide whether or not to continue financing the programme.

On its website, the Education Bureau provides non-Chinese speaking parents with information about education for non-Chinese speaking kindergarten students. For example, the Bureau has information on the 'Non-Chinese Speaking Parent Information Package, Your Guide to Education in Hong Kong' as well as its annual briefing session on the Primary One Admission System in English.

However, based on the data we collected from the survey, it seems as though information from the Education Bureau is not disseminated widely enough among ethnic minority parents. A small percentage of parents (19.1 per cent) looked for Primary One admission information from websites (including the Education Bureau's) or went to the Education Bureau's District offices in person (11.4 per cent). (Please refer to Chart 13 in the appendices or Chart 42 in the research report.) And even though the Education Bureau has provided outreach services, summer bridging programmes and district-based programmes for the students, such assistance is not comprehensive and auxiliary in nature nor has it provided constant supports in Chinese learning.

#### **4.3 After-school tutorial classes at Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities do not include kindergarteners**

After-school tutorial classes offered at Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities are a social service funded by the Home Affairs Department. These class tutors assist ethnic minority students with their homework and carry out classroom-based activities to enhance students' Chinese reading and writing skills as well as their understanding of other academic subjects. Kindergarten students, however, are not entitled to these classes.

#### **4.4 The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research's (SCOLAR) project: Supporting Non-Chinese Speaking Children in Learning Chinese is yet to be reviewed**

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<sup>10</sup> <http://kgusp.cacler.hku.hk/main/school-support.php>

In the 2012/13 and 2013/14 school years, SCOLAR, in collaboration with two non-governmental organisations, organised 10-40 hours of after-school classes, activities to get to know Hong Kong and cultural classes for non-Chinese speaking children aged between three and nine. The project was put together with the aim of helping these children learn Chinese. This project is still in its early stages and will only be reviewed in two years. As such, it cannot provide ethnic minority students with consistent support in learning Chinese.

#### **4.5 Lexical items with English Explanations for Fundamental Chinese Learning in Hong Kong Schools do not include ethnic minority languages<sup>11</sup>**

The Education and Manpower Bureau<sup>12</sup> commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to select and compile almost 10,000 most frequently used Chinese words in 2003. This was done with the aim of helping students learn four-character expressions, idiomatic phrases, words used in classical Chinese, terms and proper nouns, transliterated loan words, characters used in names, Chinese character strokes, and Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciations. Although the lexical list can be searched in both Chinese and English with simple supplementary English explanations, it is not helpful for parents who are not proficient in English. This also puts them at a disadvantage when learning Cantonese and Putonghua pronunciations.

#### **4.6 Curricula of Chinese Language classes for non-school ethnic minorities are not standardised**

Our survey results show that the parents' lack of proficiency in Chinese affects their communication with schools and prevents them from effectively helping their children with their homework. Also, the various adult Chinese language courses offered by Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities, the Employees Retraining Board and various non-governmental organisations vary in course content, learning goals and duration of study. In addition, the course duration is capped at 60 hours for each level,<sup>13</sup> however, this is not be enough time for an ethnic minority student to become proficient in Chinese, a

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.edbchinese.hk/lexlist\\_en/](http://www.edbchinese.hk/lexlist_en/)

<sup>12</sup> It is now called the Education Bureau.

<sup>13</sup> The duration of each level (three levels in total) ranges from 25-60 hours.  
[http://www.had.gov.hk/rru/english/programmes/programmes\\_edu\\_lan.html](http://www.had.gov.hk/rru/english/programmes/programmes_edu_lan.html)

highly complex language. Even if an adult ethnic minority student finishes an advanced Chinese class, there is no international course to further their studies, unlike English courses. The certificate attained after finishing those Chinese courses are not a socially recognised accreditation to demonstrate their Chinese standard for academic or occupational purposes.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The IELTS, TOEFL or CIE, for example.

## 5. Oxfam's recommendations

### 5.1 Commission on Poverty implements pilot scheme; government needs to provide comprehensive Chinese teaching support and funding for kindergarten

As pre-primary education is not funded by the Hong Kong government,<sup>15</sup> and ethnic minority kindergartners attend school all over the territory, the majority of kindergartens cannot afford to provide their ethnic minority students with additional Chinese learning support. However, not providing these students with support during their pre-school years only means postponing the issue and having it addressed in primary school. Hence, the government must extend the newly-initiated Framework to kindergartens. That way, kindergartens can recruit teachers to deliver a 'Chinese enhancement class', which follows up on ethnic minority students' Chinese learning progress. The goal of doing this is to ensure that students' Chinese proficiency are on a par with Chinese-speaking students, so that they all can take Chinese classes together in Primary One.

It takes time for the government to do plan and applying for a budget, the precious time when kindergartners pick up a language easiest is short. Oxfam recommends the Commission on Poverty to first launch a pilot scheme that subsidises kindergartens so that they can provide 'Chinese enhancement classes' and hire two teachers and one teaching assistant. The teacher-to-student ratio should be 1:10, and all ethnic minority students should be grouped together irrespective of their ages. The Commission could invite ten kindergartens to participate in the scheme during the first three years. An evaluation can then be done after three years to review the effectiveness of the scheme and decide what the best teaching practices and classroom arrangement is when teaching ethnic minority students Chinese. This can then be set as a model for other kindergartens in Hong Kong to follow.

Teachers who join the scheme can employ alternative teaching approaches, such as storytelling, singing songs as well as one-on-one teaching.

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<sup>15</sup> The 'Voucher Scheme' aims to lessen school fees and therefore alleviate parents' burdens, not directly finance the operational costs of kindergartens. (Every parent's voucher is of the same value.) Thus, kindergartens will not receive extra funding to provide ethnic minority students with Chinese learning support.

One-on-one teaching minimise any potential embarrassment students may feel when speaking Cantonese in front of the whole class, and provides them with more chances to practise listening and speaking in Cantonese. Teachers could also use second-language teaching methods to teach students to read and write Chinese in class. By breaking down Chinese characters into parts, for example, teachers can show students the linguistic elements that constitute a Chinese character. Also, teachers can explain concepts like quantifiers (量詞), which do not exist or are not commonly used in other languages, like Urdu.

With such measures, students can also work on with their homework with the aid of teachers before or after these enhancement classes. This will also provide students with more opportunities to be exposed to the Chinese language. The earlier the students learn Chinese<sup>16</sup>, the smaller the gap between their Chinese proficiency and that of native Chinese speaking students when they begin studying in Primary One.

Teachers will follow up on non-Chinese speaking students' progress in their Chinese studies as well as other Chinese-instructed subjects, particularly in terms of their reading and writing abilities. Besides this, the teacher should also facilitate communication with parents, provide translated Chinese homework instructions and school circulars in English or other languages parents use. Students' performance would greatly improve if parents understood what their children are taught at school and work in tandem with the school.

The government should also continue its funding to support research in Chinese teaching and learning methods, and related teaching materials for ethnic minority students. Also, when the funding periods of two projects, i.e.,

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<sup>16</sup> In the US, teachers used other teaching approaches and arrangements to teach non-English speaking students, e.g. teaching students using non-English speaking students' mother tongue (usually is Spanish). Teachers tailor made the teaching material so that it would include topics familiar to students' life experiences or background. They used more non-textual methods of teaching, e.g. visual aids, singing songs, reciting poems, etc. Teachers ensured that they spoke at a suitable pace, and used simple words and sentence structures. It would have been nearly impossible for non-English speaking students to attend the same English lessons as their native classmates, as teachers would not be able to provide such dedicated support in those classes. (Source: 'Teaching English Language Learners: What the Research Does—and Does not—Say', in *American Educator* Summer 2008, pp. 8-44.)

the University of Hong Kong's 'KG-USP' programme and SCOLAR's 'Supporting Non-Chinese Speaking Children in Learning Chinese' programme are over, the Education Bureau should go on to support them if their evaluation is satisfactory.

We mentioned in paragraph 4.2 that information from the Education Bureau has limited reach among South Asian parents. We suggest that the Bureau reach out to ethnic minority communities via intermediaries, like schools or community centres, in order to organise talks and Q&A sessions. This way, parents can obtain updated information about further education and Chinese learning support available for their children.

## **5.2 Providing after-school tutorial classes at Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities for kindergarteners**

Based on our study, there are two main reasons why some students do not take after-school Chinese language enhancement courses: Firstly, they do not know where to find these courses or tutorials, or secondly, the fee is unaffordable. Also, after-school tutorial classes at Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities are only available to Primary One to Secondary Three students. As such, Oxfam recommends the Home Affairs Department to extend this service to kindergarteners in order to help them learn Chinese as early as possible. The purpose of this class is to help students with their Chinese homework<sup>17</sup>, provide them with more opportunities to listen and speak in Cantonese, and expose them to more of a stimulated learning environment.

## **5.3 Enhancing Lexical items with English Explanations for Fundamental Chinese Learning in Hong Kong Schools with including ethnic minority languages**

We understand that with a weak command of Chinese, ethnic minority parents not only find it difficult to communicate with their children's schools, it also prevents them from providing their children with effective guidance in their homework. Oxfam recommends that the Education Bureau enhance the existing Lexical Items with English Explanations for Fundamental Chinese

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<sup>17</sup> Homework kindergarteners are assigned could include composing short sentences, parents reading Chinese storybooks with children and completing exercises afterwards, as well as homework for subjects instructed in Chinese. It is not uncommon for ethnic minority parents to ask for help from Chinese security guards in their apartment building or to ask them to help translate the instructions in their children's homework.

Learning in Hong Kong Schools' website. Furthermore, besides providing Chinese and English versions, translations in Hindi, Nepali and Urdu should be provided. With the website, parents can better understand their children's homework and provide effective guidance. This could also help both parents and students learn Chinese through their mother tongue.

#### **5.4 Reform adult Chinese classes, standardise curriculum and set up recognised Chinese language benchmark**

We understand that there are various reasons for the challenges South Asian kindergarten students face in learning Chinese. One reason is that the children's families do not know the Chinese language and are thus unable to provide effective support in this area. As such, support must be given to not only children but also their parents. Regarding parents, Oxfam suggests that the government review existing adult Chinese classes to see whether these classes enable students to obtain the necessary Chinese language skills needed to live in Hong Kong. To do this, the government should ensure that the course framework (e.g. its goals, curricula, duration of study, etc.) of Chinese language courses offered by the Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities is standardised. By doing so, the courses can progress systematically, with each course picking up where the other left off. In the meantime, however, more advanced courses should be provided for ethnic minorities who are interested in and capable of doing so. To make classes more user-friendly, the Home Affairs Department should also ask the Centres to provide childcare services for those students who have to look after young children.

We would also recommend the Education Bureau to set up an internationally recognised Chinese language benchmark, like the Hong Kong version of the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (漢語水平考試), a Chinese proficiency test<sup>18</sup> An

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18 The Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) is an international standardised Chinese proficiency exam. It assesses non-native Chinese speakers' abilities in using the Chinese language in their daily, academic and professional lives. The HSK has six levels: HSK (level I) to HSK (level VI). A person's vocabulary and how well they speak and write in Chinese are stipulated for each level. The HSK levels correspond to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. For details, please visit [http://www.hanban.edu.cn/tests/node\\_7486.htm](http://www.hanban.edu.cn/tests/node_7486.htm).

internationally recognised benchmark would greatly help ethnic minorities enrol in academic institutions and apply for jobs in Hong Kong or abroad.

Chart 1: Ethnicities of the South Asian students from low-income families

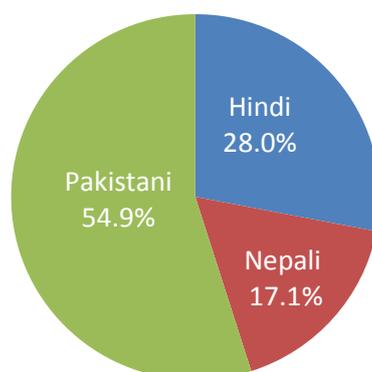


Table 1: Background information on the South Asian students from low-income families

<b>Age</b>	<b>%<sup>19</sup></b>
3 years old	11.9
4 years old	22.3
5 years old	37.7
6 years old	24.6
7 years old or above	3.6
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	46.8
Female	52.0
Refused to answer	1.2
<b>Class session</b>	
AM / PM session	91.7
Full-day	8.3
<b>Place of birth</b>	
Hong Kong	86.8
Other places	12.0
Refused to answer	1.2

<sup>19</sup>Students from families that have a monthly median household income of less than that of the rest of the population (compared to corresponding number of households).

Table 2: Personal particulars of the South Asian parents from low-income families

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>%</b>
Indian	22.9
Nepali	17.4
Pakistani	56.9
Other	0.9
Refused to answer	2.0
<b>Relationship to the student</b>	
Father	38.9
Mother	52.8
Grandparent/relative/guardian	3.5
Refused to answer	4.8
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	40.6
Female	56.5
Refused to answer	2.8
<b>Age</b>	
20-29	17.1
30-39	57.1
40-49	14.1
50-59	1.4
60 or above	0.4
Refused to answer	9.9
<b>Educational attainment</b>	
Primary or below	16.3
Lower secondary	11.4
Upper secondary	29.3
Post-secondary	15.5
University or above	19.8
Refused to answer	7.7

Table 3: Personal particulars of the South Asian parents from low-income families (cont.)

<b>Place of birth – Father</b>		<b>%</b>
Hong Kong		21.0
Other places		63.9
Refused to answer		15.1
<b>Place of birth – Mother</b>		
Hong Kong		11.5
Other places		66.0
Refused to answer		22.6
<b>Years of residence in HK – Father</b>		
Less than 7 years		11.8
7-15 years		22.4
16 years or above		40.9
Refused to answer		24.9
<b>Years of residence in HK – Mother</b>		
Less than 7 years		21.5
7-15 years		34.6
16 years or above		20.2
Refused to answer		23.7
<b>Average household size</b>		
Average household size		4.9

Table 4: Economic activity status of the South Asian parents from low-income families

<b>Economic activity status</b>	<b>%</b>
Employed person	62.6
Employee	53.2
Employer	2.8
Self-employed	6.6
Student	1.0
Home-maker	14.0
Retired person	1.5
Unemployed person	11.4
Refused to answer	9.5

Chart 2: Type of housing of the South Asian parents from low-income family lived in

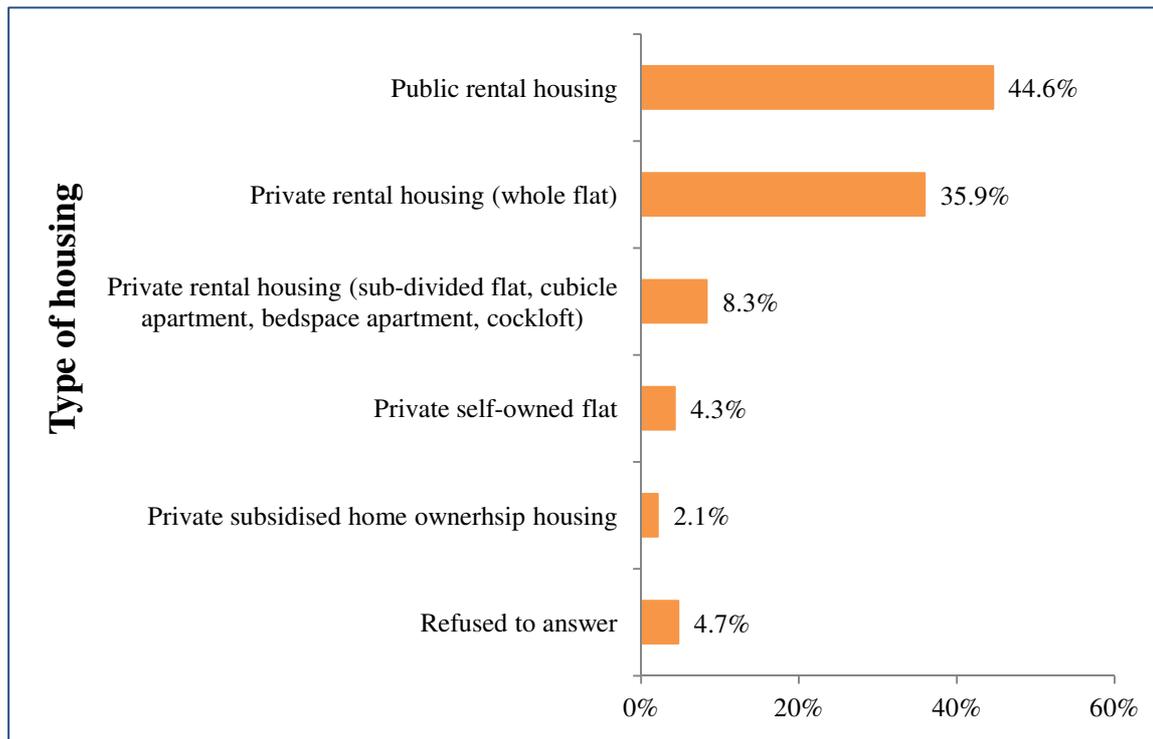


Chart 3: Total number of South Asian ethnic minority students in kindergartens that admit ethnic minority children

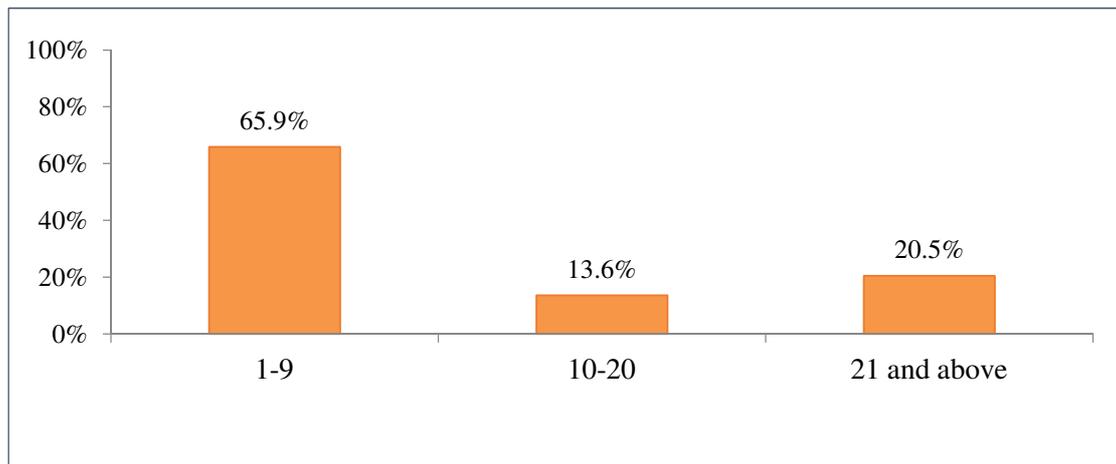


Chart 4: The parents' perceived importance of learning Chinese in terms of educational advancement, career advancement and integration into the local community

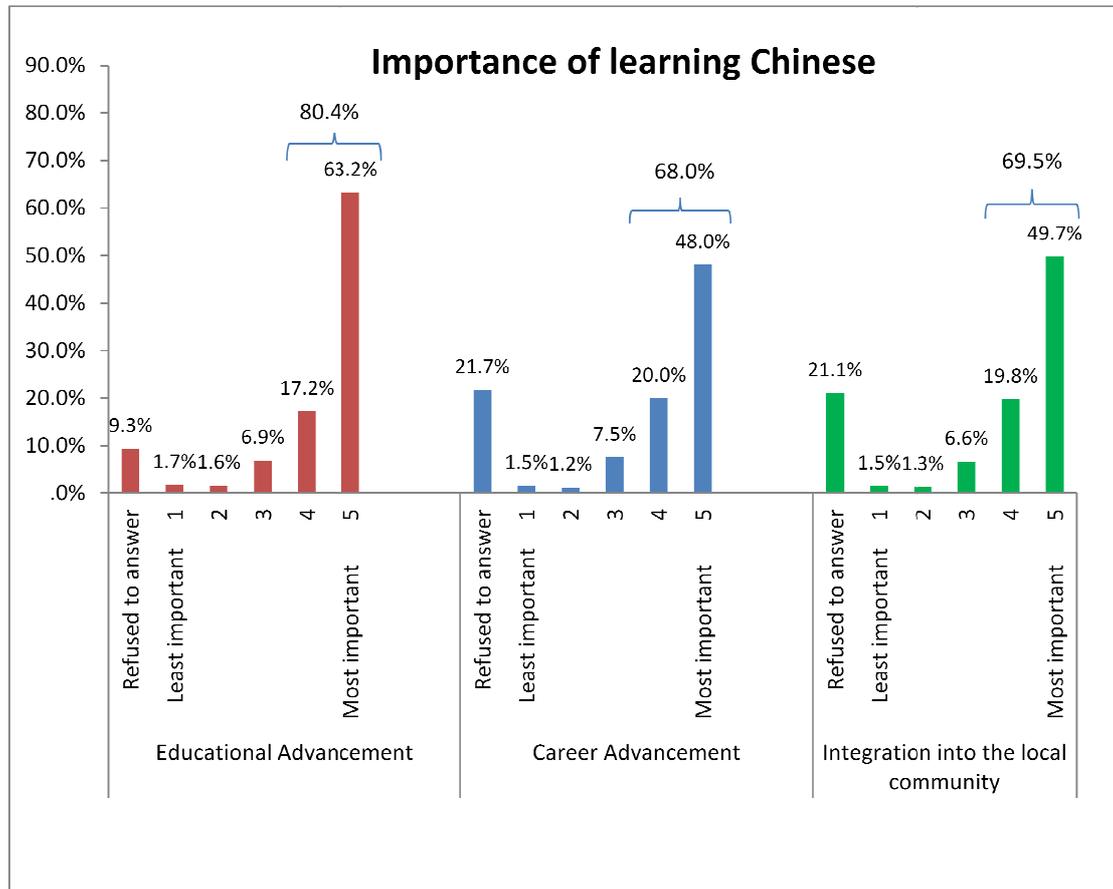


Chart 5: Type of primary school in which the South Asian parents from low-income families planned to enrol their children

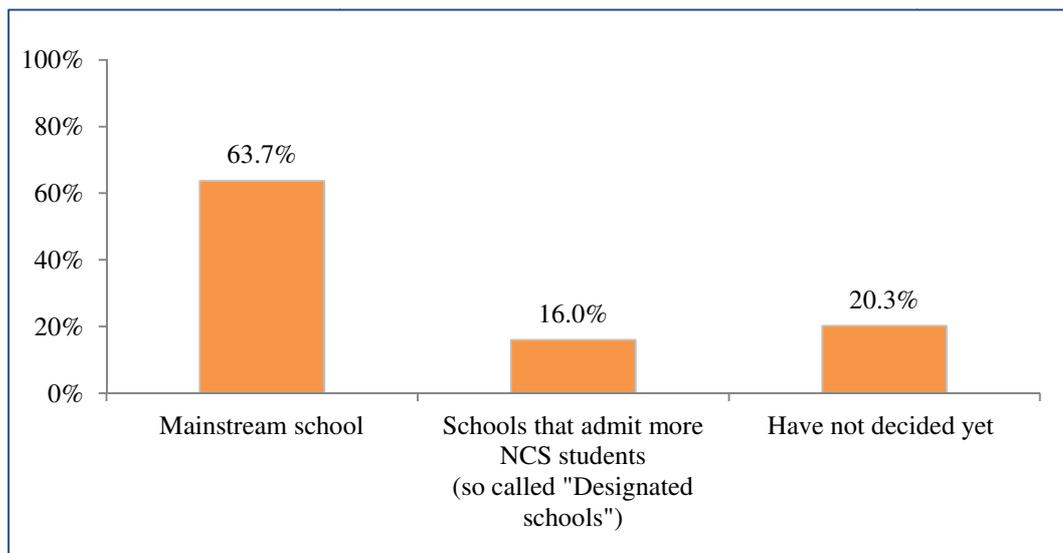


Chart 6: Parents' reasons for choosing a mainstream primary school

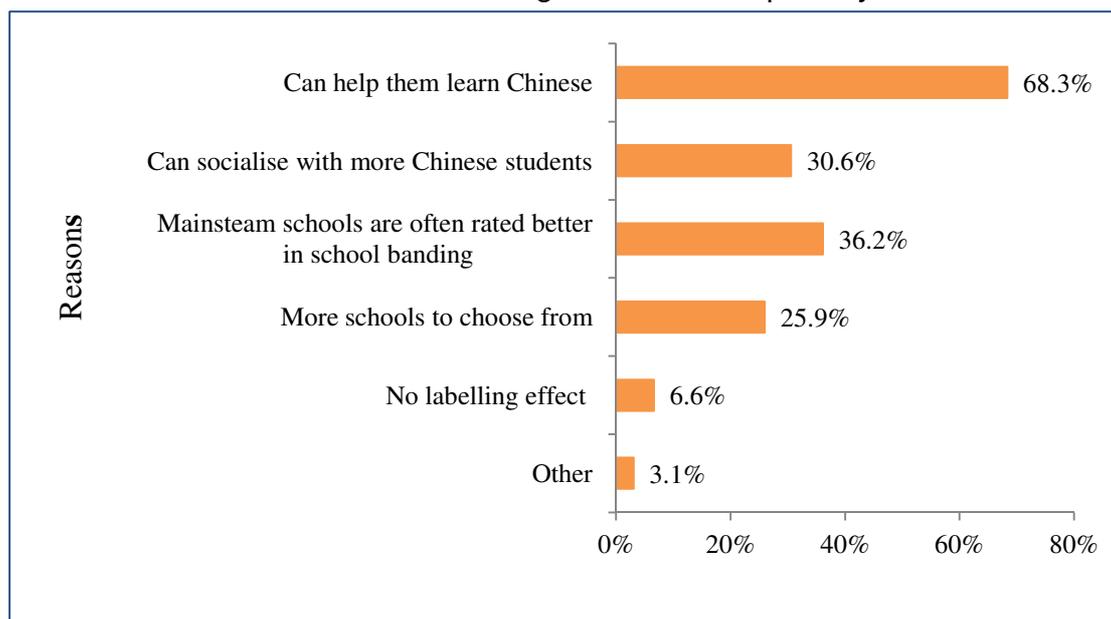


Table 5: Parents' self-evaluated fluency in Cantonese

<b>Father</b>	%
Fluent	23.8
Fair	28.8
Weak	23.3
Cannot speak	19.5
Refused to answer	4.6
Total	100.0
<b>Mother</b>	
Fluent	5.8
Fair	30.7
Weak	29.7
Cannot speak	31.8
Refused to answer	2.0
Total	100.0
<b>Both parents</b>	
Fluent	13.4
Fair	29.9
Weak	27.0
Cannot speak	26.6
Refused to answer	3.1
Total	100.0

Table 6: Parents' self-evaluated proficiency in reading Chinese

<b>Father</b>		%
No problem for work purposes		7.6
No problem for everyday life		18.9
Can read with aid/help		18.0
Cannot read		52.8
Refused to answer		2.7
Total		100.0
<b>Mother</b>		
No problem for work purposes		3.8
No problem for everyday life		21.3
Can read with aid/help		12.7
Cannot read		61.7
Refused to answer		0.5
Total		100.0
<b>Both parents</b>		
No problem for work purposes		5.4
No problem for everyday life		20.3
Can read with aid/help		14.9
Cannot read		58.0
Refused to answer		1.4
Total		100.0

Chart 7: People who helped the students with their Chinese homework and homework for subjects instructed in Chinese

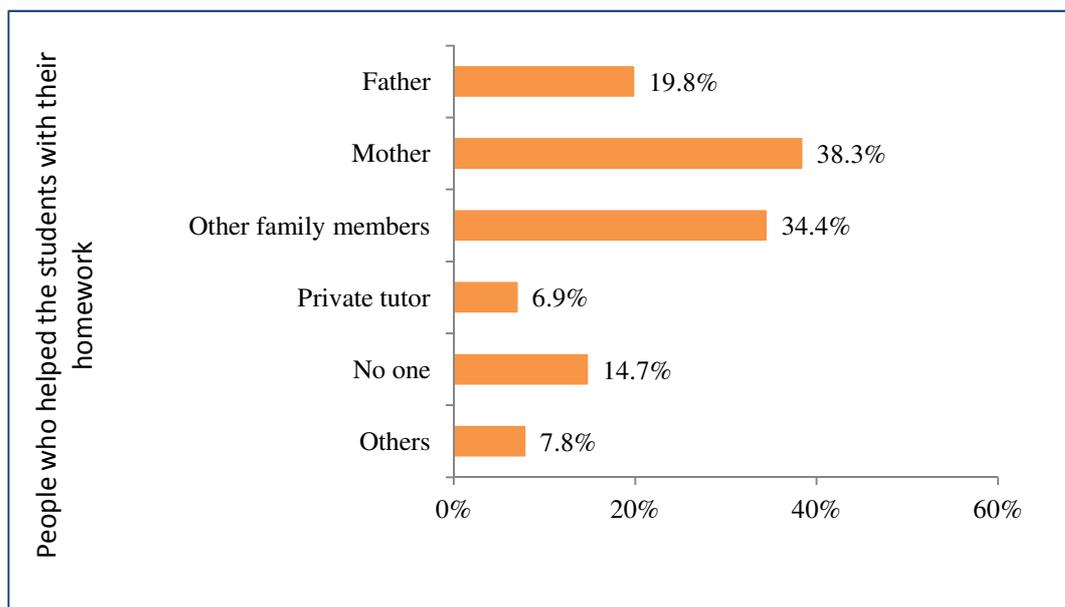


Table 7: Students' primary language/dialect spoken at home

Language	%
Hindi/Punjabi	27.8
Nepali	16.9
Urdu	49.5
Cantonese	8.6
English	25.2
Other	4.2

Table 8: How frequently students watch Cantonese television programmes and read Chinese books (besides textbooks) at home each day

<b>How frequently students watch Cantonese TV programmes at home every day</b>	<b>%</b>
Never	32.3
1 hour or less/ day	27.7
1-2 hours/ day	27.9
3-4 hours/ day	9.1
5 hours or more/ day	0.4
Refused	2.7
<b>How frequently students read Chinese books at home (excluding textbooks) each month</b>	
Never	47.2
1-2 books/month	34.1
3-4 books/month	10.2
5 books of more/month	3.4
Refused	5.1

Chart 8: The ethnicities of most of the students' playmates

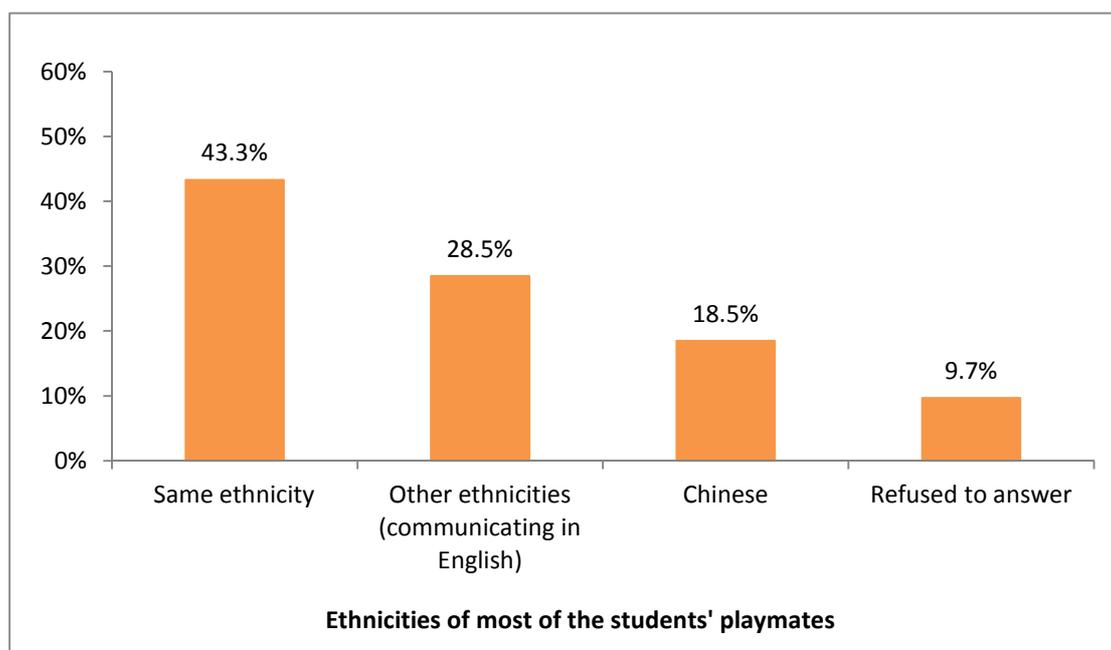


Chart 9: Where the students are taught Chinese

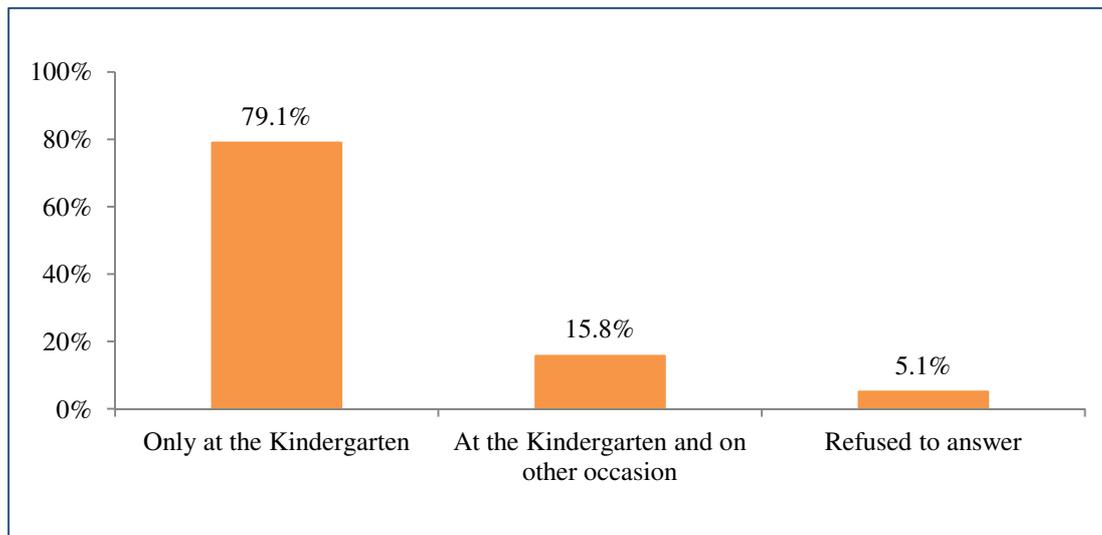


Chart 10: Students' reasons for not taking an after-school Chinese language enhancement course or tutorial

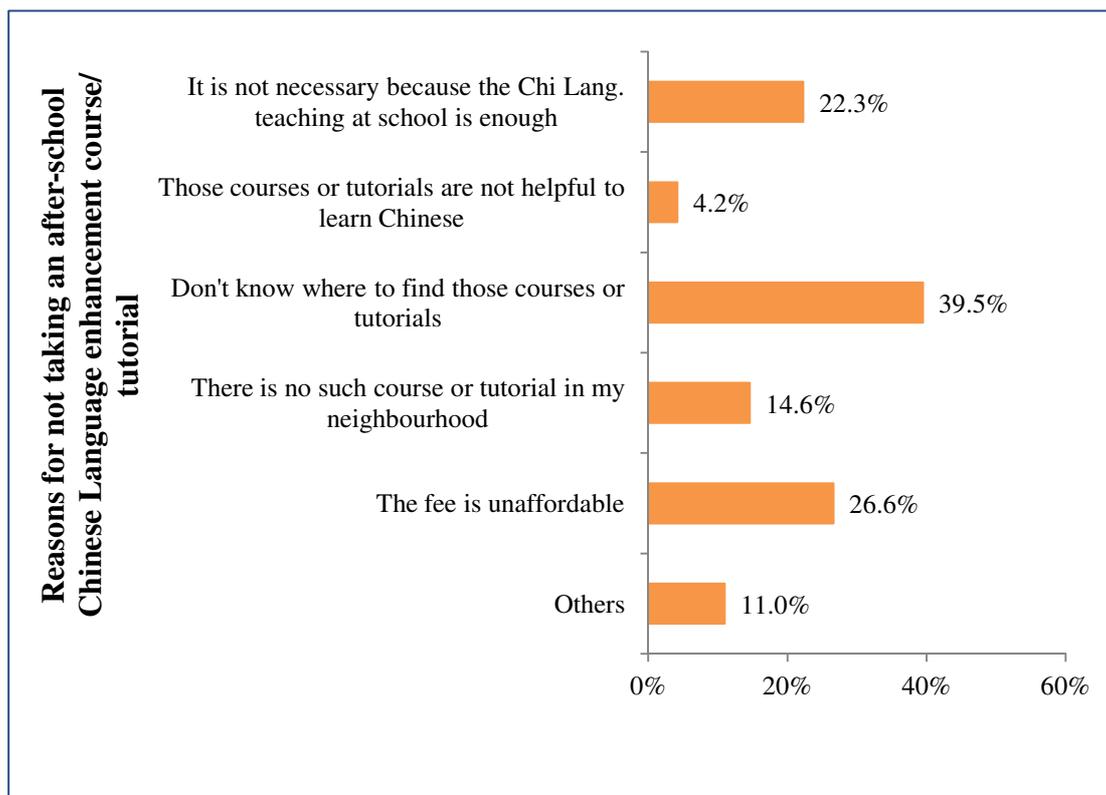
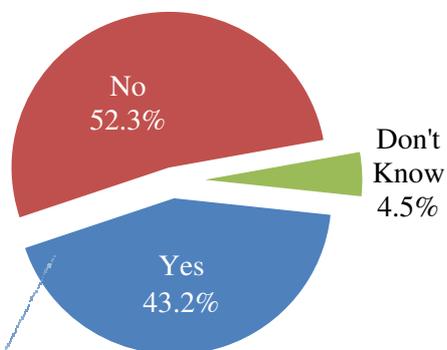


Chart 11: Whether the kindergartens provided the students with additional support to learn Chinese



Additional Chinese learning support	
In-class support	68.4%
Other teaching methods	47.4%
After-school tutorials	36.8%
Adapted textbooks	31.6%
Additional teaching assistant for EM students	10.5%
EM students are taught separately from their local classmates in ALL classes	5.3%
Chinese enhancement class (incl. parallel classes)	0%

Chart 12: Whether the kindergartens will provide the students with additional support in the 2014/15 academic year

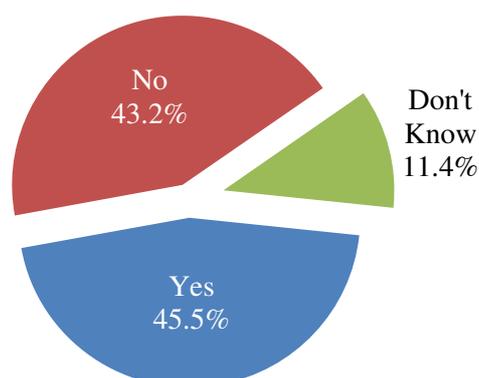


Chart 13: How parents gathered information about primary schools

