

# EDUCATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: ISSUES, CONCERNS AND PROSPECTS

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Miron Kumar Bhowmik • Kerry J. Kennedy

# ‘Out of School’ Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong

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## Series Editors' Introduction

This is an important, ground breaking book on a topic which is of central importance to those of us with a keen interest in the key issues, concerns and prospects concerning access and equity in education and schooling, and with identifying best ways to most effectively promote equity in education on an evidence based basis.

The research study reported on in this book seeks to ascertain the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, to identify the reasons why ethnic minority young people are 'out of school', and to showcase the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority group young people in Hong Kong. In doing this the study fills in some important gaps in the existing literature. The authors provide a portrait of ethnic minority populations in Hong Kong, examine the issue of access and equity in education for such groups in Hong Kong, and assesses what can and is being done to protect the vulnerable against discrimination in education and elsewhere throughout Hong Kong society.

The research answers three main questions concerning Hong Kong: the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong; the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'; and, what is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

In terms of research methodology the authors adopt a well considered, comprehensive and sophisticated approach where they blend together both quantitative and qualitative data, including data from official government and schools records, in-depth interviews with young people, interviews with stakeholders related to ethnic minority education, and case studies of individual schools. Of special interest to us are the insights gained from the case study presented of a young girl who had never been to school.

This study demonstrates that although there are several instruments in Hong Kong aimed at protecting ethnic minorities from discrimination (such as the Racial Discrimination Ordinance), racism against ethnic minorities exists to varying degrees in all areas of the economy and society. In the words of the authors, the study shows that beneath the surface of what many consider to be a 'harmonious society', there are groups of young people for whom current educational

arrangements are not working. The study explores what can be done to remove the various forms of discrimination that exist against ethnic minorities.

Although the book focuses on Hong Kong the issues examined and conclusions drawn will resonate with those living in countries and communities throughout the region. The issues, concerns and prospects examined are relevant to the Education for All agenda which is concerned with providing a high quality, relevant and sustainable education for all individuals in society, based on notions of lifelong learning, regardless of their gender, age, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, religion and geographical location.

Rupert Maclean (The Hong Kong Institute of Education)

Lorraine Symaco (University of Malaya)

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# List of Abbreviations

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DDO	Disability Discrimination Ordinance
EC	Education Commission
EDB	Education Bureau
EFA	Education for All
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HAB	Home Affairs Bureau
HK	Hong Kong
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTR	Mass Transit Railway
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking Students
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RDO	Race Discrimination Ordinance
SDO	Sex Discrimination Ordinance
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



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