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**Hong Kong students from ethnic minorities star in documentary to help break negative stereotypes**

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**Kylie Knott** [kylie.knott@scmp.com](mailto:kylie.knott@scmp.com)

*Hong Kong-born Filipino Jianne Soriano made the video **Own Voices: Breaking Stereotypes** to help bridge the culture gap between young people from ethnic minorities and their Chinese counterparts*

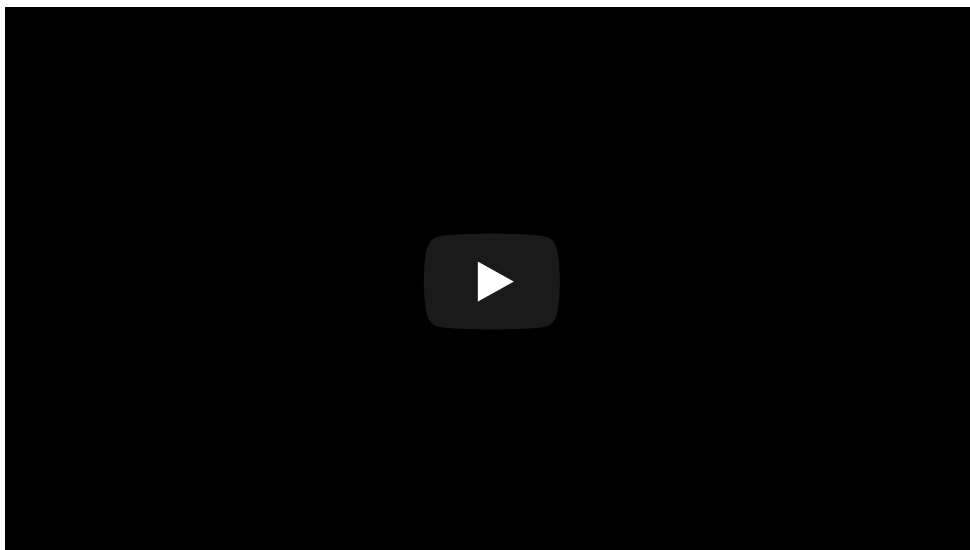
Hong Kong-born Filipino Jianne Soriano feels she didn't have a voice while growing up as a member of an ethnic minority in Hong Kong. That prompted her to make *Own Voices: Breaking Stereotypes*, a multimedia project comprising documentary-style videos and photographs that tell first hand the stories of ethnic minority members of the community.

**Carrie Lam's help for ethnic minorities is appreciated, but should only be the start [1]**

"Growing up in Hong Kong I didn't really see a lot of people who looked like me on TV or in the wider media. That is why I became a journalist – to give a voice to the voiceless, to tell the stories of people like me," Soriano says.

Soriano hopes the stories, which examine the stereotypes about ethnic minority youth in Hong Kong, will help form a bridge of understanding between non-Chinese youth and their Chinese counterparts, and start conversations about how to make positive changes.

[2]Hong Kong-born Pakistani Mahum Shaikh took part in the project because she felt Hong Kong's education system segregates ethnic minority students.



According to the government's [Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities](#) [3], which uses data from the 2016 population by-census, the number of Hong Kong residents from ethnic minorities, including foreign domestic helpers, increased 70.8 per cent from about 342,000 in 2006 to more than 584,000 in 2016.

The report found 19.4 per cent of people from ethnic minorities were living in poverty, up from 15.8 per cent in 2011. It also found that lack of proficiency in languages, especially Chinese, was one of the obstacles to community integration and employment.



“It’s time we spoke out against this injustice because [people from] ethnic minorities are suffering because they are not provided with the same education level or the same privileges that local Chinese students receive,” says 18-year-old Shaikh. “This has left us with minimum or no opportunity to enter tertiary education or to get a job [locally].”

“The lack of integration in schools has hindered the chance of cultural cohesion because a majority of [people from] ethnic minorities do not have the ability to communicate with their local Chinese counterparts because they have not been taught mainstream Cantonese.”



Among the people featured in the documentary is 20-year-old Hong Kong-born Indian Deeran Kumar, who shares his frustrations about racial profiling in the city. He says he is often “stopped and checked”, referring to police powers to stop and check people in the street.

“I hope the police force keeps a record of racial profiling discrimination and be fair by checking the locals as well,” he says.



Kathleen Magramo, a Filipino born and raised in Hong Kong, says she joined the project to empower other young people from ethnic minorities.

**[How Hong Kong’s non-Chinese-speaking ethnic minority pupils can benefit from targeted government budget support \[4\]](http://www.scmp.com/print/culture/film-tv/article/2138179/hong-kong-students-ethnic-minorities-star-documentary-help-break)**

“The odds may be against us but with our resourcefulness and hard work, we can pave our path that deviates from traditional stereotypes,” she says.

**Topics:** Ethnic minorities in Hong Kong

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[In Hong Kong's battle over language, ethnic minority children should get to learn Chinese in Mandarin, rather than Cantonese](#) [5]

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2138016/carrie-lams-help-ethnic-minorities-appreciated-should-only>

[2] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n446Lzx1iuw&feature=youtu.be>

[3] <https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11200622012XXXXB0100.pdf>

[4] <http://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/2137343/how-hong-kongs-non-chinese-speaking-ethnic-minority-pupils-can>

[5] <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2134112/hong-kongs-battle-over-language-ethnic-minority-children>