

## **INTERCULTURALISM AND MOTHERHOOD: EVALUATING THE EFFICACY OF A RESEARCH-IN-ACTION PROJECT**

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### **Abstract**

While Hong Kong is a multicultural society, cross-cultural knowledge and cultural sensibility is low, due to the lack of intercultural education in school and of positive intercultural experience in everyday life. In particular, women of minority communities suffer double marginalization, with many having little choice other than taking up fulltime homemaking and/or part time work in low-paying occupations. On the other hand, women of Chinese origin have limited knowledge about Hong Kong's minority communities who have settled in the city since 19<sup>th</sup> century. The ICONIC Mums Program is a knowledge transfer project that brings women of different ethnic backgrounds together, to break down cultural barriers between minority and mainstream communities. Through intercultural workshops and project design experiences, participants form small mix-ethnic groups to offer support and peer learning opportunities. This close-knit relationship seeks to break down social stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings, and on a personal level develops friendship across cultures. Participants also plan and implement intercultural projects together, which will disseminate their newly developed worldviews and intercultural skills to their family and the community where they live, to inspire a new round of social innovation among different ethnic groups in Hong Kong. Ethnographic data is collected regarding the participants' perception of themselves and of social participation in different stages of the program. Using an intercultural competence development model that examines multiple domains, this paper explores the cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes of participants, and evaluates the efficacy of the program in longer term intercultural education in everyday life.

**Keywords:** Interculturalism, Motherhood, Hong Kong, ICONIC Mums Program.

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