

Empower & Create: Building a Volunteer-Led Healthy Aging Program for Tin Ping Village

Research Team: Dr. Crystal Kwan, Miss. Ho Chung Yan, and Miss. Huang Xiqing, The Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS), The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Funder: This project was fully funded by the Thetos Foundation through the Endowed Young Scholar in Social Services program.

Acknowledgements: This project would not have been possible without the invaluable support provided by the Hong Kong Church Network for the Poor (HKCNP) in recruiting participants.



Introduction

This study documents the development and evaluation of the "Healthy Ageing Leadership Volunteer Training Program" in Tin Ping Village, Sheung Shui, Hong Kong. The program brought together a diverse group of volunteer leaders, including regular community members, social workers, and church leaders like pastors. This mix allowed everyone to learn from each other, bringing different skills and experiences into the mix. The core concept of the program was centred on co-creation and experiential learning—learning by doing and learning together as a community. As volunteer leaders actively participated and collaborated, they practiced and reinforced their new skills in real-world scenarios, which strengthened the community's ability to promote healthy aging collectively.

The program, developed and facilitated by the PolyU research team, is a 20-week project where 14 volunteer leaders from the HKCNP learn to lead initiatives that help older adults in Tin Ping Village, a community with many elderly residents. During the first 8 weeks, the volunteer leaders go through training sessions that cover important topics like planning, recruiting, budgeting, and evaluating their projects. By the end of these 8 weeks, they will have worked together to create their own program for healthy aging. The next 12 weeks are hands-on: the volunteer leaders apply what they've learned and run the program in the village, seeing firsthand how their work makes a difference.

The selection of Tin Ping Village and its low-income elderly residents for this program was based on insights from the New Territories North Neighbourhood Survey Report 2023 (2023年新界北鄰舍調查報告). According to the report by Wong¹, the village faces several challenges, such as housing issues, high deprivation among elderly and single grandparent households, low social support, and dissatisfaction with local services. However, the community does benefit from high social acceptance and psychological well-being. A major recommendation was to address the manpower shortage in the area. This recommendation shaped the idea for this program, which seeks to empower local volunteer leaders to tackle these issues and capitalize on the community's strengths.

About the Intervention/Programme

The program was implemented from October 3, 2023(recruitment) to February 3, 2024.

Stage 1: Training Sessions and Co-design of Healthy Ageing Program

For the training sessions there were a total of eight. The workshops were conducted weekly, each lasting approximately 1.5 hours. Each workshop was structured into two parts: the first part involved knowledge sharing by PolyU staff, while the second part was dedicated to discussions where participants applied their newfound knowledge to design their own

¹ Wong, H. (2023). *New Territories North Neighbourhood Survey Report 2023* (2023年新界北鄰舍調查報告) Retrieved from chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.hkcnp.org.hk/fileadmin/user_upload/District/V2_Full_ver._%E5%8C%97%E5%8D%80%E5%B1%85%E6%B0%91%E7%94%9F%E6%B4%BB%E7%A0%94%E7%A9%B6%E8%AA%BF%E6%9F%A5202305.pdf

program for the elderly in Tin Ping Village. PolyU staff acted as volunteer leader leaders, encouraging participants to lead discussions and organize their ideas collaboratively. Below is an overview of the topics covered each week:

Oct 3	Key Outcomes and Impacts of Program (2 sessions)
Oct 10	-What do we hope to achieve from the programs we create?
Oct 17	Key “Ingredients” of the Program (2 sessions)
Oct 24	-What are the main activities we will do in our programs? -How long will our activities be and when will we do them?
Oct 31	Resources and Budget (2 sessions)
Nov 7	-What resources do we need to do this program? -How can we make the program low-cost to do?
Nov 14	Recruitment Strategies and Evaluation (2 sessions)
Nov 21	-How to write proposal -how will we find low income marginalized elderly to participate in our programs? -How will we know our program is working? -How to sustain the project -Consider sustainability and future planning

*All the training sessions are available in a ppt. at the end of the document

Stage 2: Implementation of the Program

During the workshops, participants developed an exercise program titled “天平書樂動起來” aimed at promoting health and well-being among local seniors. The program's objectives were to:

1. Foster positive emotions among elderly participants.
2. Create a happy social circle.
3. Encourage healthy living.

Program Activities:

1. **Stretching Exercises:** Conducted by volunteer leader coaches.
2. **Men's Walking Group:** Led by volunteer leaders around Tin Ping Village.

Participation:

- Stretching Group A: 9 participants
- Stretching Group B: 10 participants
- Men's Walking Group: 8 participants

The exercise program was implemented from **December 18, 2023, to February 3, 2024**, culminating in a graduation ceremony on the final day of the program.

*the budgets of the projects are available at the end of the document

Research Objective

The goal of this research was to evaluate the pilot project after its completion, providing insights into its impacts and the mechanisms behind its success. This evaluation will also offer recommendations to enhance and replicate the program, aiming to equip the HKCNP

with a blueprint that can be adapted and used across its networks. This will empower HKCNP’s communities to design, implement, and evaluate their own grassroots programs for healthy aging.

Research Methods

We evaluated the program using qualitative research methods, specifically through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). These interviews and FGDs were guided by a set of prepared questions but allowed for open-ended responses and follow-up questions to gain more in-depth insights (cite). Convenience sampling paired with maximum variation sampling was used to recruit both the volunteer leader leaders (n = 14) and the elderly participants of their programmes (n = 15) to capture a wide range of experiences and perspectives. All the interviews took approximately 1-hr and FGDs approximately 2-hrs.

We conducted the interviews and transcribed them, which means we wrote down everything that was said. To analyze these conversations, we used a method called thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) which helps us identify and understand common themes or topics discussed during the interviews. We used a software tool called NVivo to help us organize the data and keep track of these themes. The process involved several steps: First, we familiarized ourselves with the data by listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts multiple times. Next, we noted down key ideas or concepts that appeared frequently, grouping these into broader themes. We then reviewed and adjusted these themes to better capture the essence of the discussions. After defining and naming each theme, we finalized our analysis by writing a report that explains the main themes and insights we gained from the interviews. This thorough approach allowed us to deeply understand the experiences and opinions shared, providing qualitative insights into the program’s impacts and mechanisms. This structured method demonstrates how to systematically analyze qualitative data, ensuring our findings are both comprehensive and reliable.

Before starting the interviews, all participants gave their written consent. Elderly residents were given a \$25 supermarket voucher as a thank you for participating. To keep everyone's information private and anonymous, we removed any identifying details from the interviews, such as using pseudonyms instead of real names. We also received ethical approval of the study from the Human Subjects Ethics Review Board at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HSEARS20231114001).

Tin Ping Analysis

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Running Group (n=3)	
Age	
<65	0
>65-70	0
>70	3

Gender		
	M	3
	F	0
Stretching Group (n=12)		
Age		
	<65	3
	>65-70	7
	>70	2
Gender		
	M	0
	F	12

Findings

We identified five key themes related to impacts of the programs created by the volunteer leaders. These impacts can be categorized under physical impacts, social impacts and psychological impacts, also indicating that the program is a holistic one that has the potential to create positive impacts to the physical, psychological and social health and wellbeing of elderly participants.

Physical Impacts:

Theme: Enhanced comfort and agility (n=11, 10 refs)

Stretching exercises seem to have impacts on comfort and flexibility for the elderly, reducing muscle rigidity and stiffness, and gently enhancing physical well-being. Participants report a sense of relaxation and comfort from engaging in the stretching and walking exercises, underscoring the benefits of maintaining activity to slightly alleviate soreness and support mobility in older age. The following quotes illustrate these impacts:

我做完一系列運動後，立即感到舒服。我的肌肉鬆弛了。我不能說這種舒服感極高，畢竟我們只上了幾堂課。

I felt immediately comfortable after the set of exercise. My muscle was relaxed. I could not say the comfortable was extremely high. Ultimately, we only attended few classes. (Stretching, I10)

感到舒服。痛楚不會消失，特別是對所有長者來說。只要能讓筋腱變得柔軟，你就會感到舒服。

Feeling comfortable. Pain will not go away especially for all elderly. As long as it makes the tendon flexible, you will feel comfortable. (stretching I12)

是的，我注意到有很好的改善。因為在你過夜睡覺後，筋腱和韌帶會緊繃，人們應該拉伸一會兒，這對身體有好處。一旦我早上拉伸，我一天的感覺都會很好。

Yes, good improvement I noted. Because tendons and ligaments were tense right after you slept overnight, people should stretch awhile and it was good for the body. Once I stretch in the morning, I feel quite good during the day. (stretching I7)

我完成動作時感到非常開心。我發現我的身體感到放鬆，之前的肌肉僵硬和緊繃已經改善了。起碼，我的筋腱更加放鬆，我感到舒服。坦白說，我的骨頭很硬。在我這個年齡，骨頭和筋腱都很堅硬。（意思是她的肌肉僵硬，無法自由活動。）

I was very happy when I finished the postures. I found my body felt relaxed, not before my muscle rigidity, stiffness. P: At least, my tendon is more relaxed and I feel comfortable. Frankly speaking, my bone is tough. In my age, my bone and tendon are very hard. (meaning her muscle is stiff and she is unable to move freely). (stretching, I9)

This impact was also noted in one of the walking men's group participants:

我們只是做一些輕柔的運動，只要我們的筋腱和腰不感到疲倦。有時候我們醒來時會感到酸軟，但不痛，只是酸軟。只要稍微動一下，會對身體有幫助。確實有改善，我的腰現在不再有問題了。最重要的是幫助長者伸展四肢和活動，這總比一直坐著要好。我們的日常生活中活動不多，是吧，譚先生？我們真的沒什麼可以做的，我已經這麼老了。

We just do some gentle exercises, as long as our tendons and waist don't get tired. Sometimes when we wake up, we feel sore and soft. It's not painful, just sore and soft. As long as you move a bit, it'll be helpful. There has been improvement, my waist doesn't give me any problems now. The main thing is to help the elderly stretch their limbs and move around, that's better than just sitting all the time. We don't have much activity in our daily lives, do we Mr. Tam? There's nothing we can really do, I'm already so old. (walking, I1)

Theme: Pain Relief (n=6, 10 refs)

Some of the participants also reported how the stretching has helped them relief their chronic pain symptoms.

我手臂有問題。感到不適，筋腱和韌帶非常緊繃。朱老師教我減輕不適和痛楚的方法。做完運動後我感到舒服。正如我所說，向專業人士學習會好得多，這幫助我舒緩了痛楚。

My arms had a problem. The discomfort exists. The tendon and ligaments are so tense. Chu Sir taught me the way to reduce discomfort and pain. I felt comfortable after exercises. As I said, it is a lot better to learn from a professional. helped to soothe my pain. (Stretching I1)

訪問者：雖然課堂數量不多，你有沒有注意到在這個計劃後身體的改善？

參與者：有的。痛楚減少了。我希望將來可以學到更多。

Interviewer: Although the number of class is not many, did you note that any improvement of your physical after the program?

Participant: Yes. Less pain. I hope I can learn more in the future. (Stretching, I2)

我有一些疼痛症狀。在學習後，我明白了哪些動作應該避免，以免進一步受傷和損害。這是我得到的好處。換句話說，如果我不知道這些知識，我的情況可能會變得更糟。

I have some pain symptoms. After I have learned, I understand what type of movements I shall avoid getting further hurts and damages. This is the benefits I have got. In other words, if I do not know the knowledge, I may get worse. (stretching I7)

是的，確實如此。我的膝蓋不再這麼緊繃。因為當我彎曲膝蓋時，膝蓋後面會出現尖銳的痛感。上過幾堂課後，我明顯感到膝蓋不再緊繃。是的，我感到膝蓋的痛楚減少了，變得放鬆了。之前是非常僵硬的，我的膝蓋真的很僵硬。這是因為一些特定的姿勢真的幫助了我，舒緩了我的痛楚。

Yes, indeed. My knees are less tense. This is because when I bent my knees, sharp pain occurred from the back of the knees. After a couple classes, obviously I felt my knees less tense. Yes, I felt less pain and relaxed on my knees. Like before very stiff. My knees were very stiff at all. This is because some particular postures really help and soothe my pain. (Stretching I8)

Social Impacts:

Participants noted both physical benefits from stretching exercises and increased socialization.

Theme: Increased socialization (n=12, 30 refs)

訪問者：社交方面怎麼樣？你在課堂上交到新朋友了嗎？

參與者：有的，我有新朋友。

訪問者：你是指新的朋友還是之前認識的朋友？

參與者：不是的，他們不是我之前認識的朋友。

Interviewer: How about socially? Have you made new friends in the class?

Participant: Yes, I have, I have new friends too.

Interviewer: You mean the new one or the ones you knew before.

Participant: No, they're not, they're not the ones I knew before. (Stretching, I3)

我不想一直待在家裡。在家裡.....哈哈，只有我和我丈夫。我的孩子要麼結婚後搬走，要麼白天出去工作。當我丈夫出門時，我通常會跟著他.....這已經成了一種習慣，總是和他在一起。所以，一旦我注意到這個有趣的課程，我馬上報名了。當我參加我感興趣的課程時，我會讓我丈夫有自己的時間。

I do not want to stay at home all the time. At home... ha... only me and husband. My children either moved out after marriage or out for work during the day. When my husband is out, I normally go with him...It happens as a habit being with him all the time. Therefore, once I noted this interesting class, I have signed up immediately. When I attended my interest class, I would let my husband being his own time. (Stretching, III)

我在課堂上交了兩個朋友，但只是簡單聊天。至少，我們有一個地方可以聚會社交。他們不會因為被關在家裡而感到無聊。我們必須找到一些東西來吸引他們走出家門。

有些人根本不想動。如果他們試一次，就會習慣聚會的模式。對我來說，我試過一次，覺得很有趣，想更深入地學習.....對，我交了一些朋友，至少我們在遇到時會互相打招呼。我們在街上不認識對方。遇到時不會點頭。

I made two friends from few times in class. But only for brief chats. At least, we have a place for them to hang out for social gatherings. They won't be bored in locking up at home. We must find something to attract them from walking out of their homes. Some of them do not want to move at all. If they try out once, they will get used to the gathering pattern. Similarly to me, I tried once and found it interesting and loved to learn more in-depth.... Right, I made some, at least we do say hi to each other when we meet. We don't know each other on the street. No nodding head when we meet. (stretching, I10)

其實，每次我去那裡，我都可以和同學聊天。這讓我感到很開心。

In fact, every time I go there, I can chat with classmates. It is very happy. (stretching, I6)

當然，認識一個朋友是好的，總比認識少好。我們有時可以交流想法，一起喝早茶，聊各種事情。

Of course, it's good. It's better to know one more friend than knowing less. We can exchange ideas sometimes, chat over yum cha, talk about all sorts of things. (Walking Group, I1)

是的，有時我們會一起喝早茶.....這很愉快，有時我們會坐在一起喝早茶，聊天。有人會談自己的生活方式，分享有趣的事情。最重要的是我們都感到開心。是的，認識鄰居，聊天，感到快樂。這比坐在家裡看電視要好。

Yes, sometimes we have yum cha... It's enjoyable, sometimes we sit together and have yum cha, chat. Someone will talk about their lifestyle, share interesting things. The main thing is we all feel happy. Yes, getting to know the neighbors, chatting, feeling happy. It's better than just sitting at home watching TV. (walking group, I2)

人們變得更開心，至少在運動後，至少有幾個人聊天。至少不會感到那麼空虛。有時我會反思之前說的話。在我運動結束後，或者當我去其他地方.....我們的活動在星期三和星期四。明天早上我運動完後，會去威爾斯親王醫院打針。打完針後，我會回去參加活動。你看，我喜歡這些事情，即使時間很短，非常短。我去那裡大約一個多小時。我實際上覺得很好，時間過得很快。我喜歡這些事情。我覺得時間過得很快。

People become more cheerful, at least after exercising, at least a few people chatting. At least it won't feel as empty. Sometimes I would reflect on what was said earlier. After I finish exercising or when I go somewhere else. ... Our activities are on Wednesdays and Thursdays. After I finish exercising tomorrow morning, I'll go get an injection at Prince of Wales Hospital. After the injection, I'll come back and go there for the activities. You see, I enjoy these things, even though it's very short, very short. I go there for a little over an hour. I actually think it's good, time passes easily. I like those things. I feel like time passes easily. (Walking Group, I3)

However, it is important to note that while the participants shared their socialization increased – the quality of the friendships and relationships was not that deep:

此外，由於我們彼此不太熟悉，所以幾乎無法找到共同的話題來交談。只是點頭而已。

In addition, since we are not quite familiar with each other, we hardly bring out common subjects to talk. Only nodding head. (stretching I10)

也許，我的性格比較害羞（內向）。我不會主動交朋友。通常.....在這類活動後，所有參與者都會立即消失。我們沒有機會進一步聊天。

Perhaps, my character is shy (introvert). I am not proactively making friends. It's normally... after this type of program/activity...all participants were disappeared immediately. We won't have a chance to chat further. I11

在這段時間內，我們只是一般朋友的階段，只是互相點頭問候。我並沒有和他們進行深入的交流。

As of this period, we only as fair friend stage, only nodding heads for general greetings. I did not carry deepen communication with them. (stretching I2)

Psychological Impacts

Participants also reported that they gained new knowledge from the programme and that it also helped to build their confidence in exploring new neighbourhoods for a participant in the walking group and also even for the participants to share what they learned to their family members.

Theme: learning and building confidence (n=10, 22 refs)

我不知道什麼類型的運動對我的健康有幫助。現在，我從中心學到一些新知識，可以在家練習。我在專業的指導和監督下學到了正確的拉伸姿勢及其好處。這是專業的。

I don't know what type of exercises are good for my health, in the way of providing help. Now, I learned something new from the center, I could practice at home. I learned the correct postures of stretching and its benefit under the professional guidance and supervision. It's professional. I2 stretching

例如，他教我這個拉伸和彎曲的動作。在前兩堂課時，我根本做不到。我慢慢地做得很好。是的，我完全不知道.....從一開始，朱老師就提到有多少個姿勢可以改善.....我對此沒有任何知識。他向我們示範，我們都跟著做。一旦我在課堂上學到，我有時在家也會做。

For instance, he taught me this pull and bend. I could not do it at all from the first two classes. I did slowly and well. Yes, I had completely not knowing...From the beginning, Chu Sir mentioned how many postures could improve blar, blar, blar...I had no knowledge about it. He demonstrated to us and we all followed. Once I learned from the class and I sometime did it at home. (stretching I5)

我有一些疼痛症狀。在學習後，我明白了哪些動作應該避免，以免進一步受傷和損害。這是我得到的好處。換句話說，如果我不知道這些知識，我的情況可能會變得更糟。

I have some pain symptoms. After I have learned, I understand what type of movements I shall avoid getting further hurts and damages. This is the benefits I have got. In other words, if I do not know the knowledge, I may get worse. (stretching I7)

訪問者：我聽說你之前去過比較遠的地方，北區公園。你有去過兩次嗎？

參與者：有的，我們去過兩次。

訪問者：接下來你計劃去濕地公園嗎？

參與者：是的，現在這已經成為計劃的一部分。也許我們每個月會離開上水一次。

訪問者：你覺得這個安排好嗎？

參與者：我覺得更好。無論如何，我想花時間。出去幾個小時總比待在這裡要好。出去的話，回來至少需要兩到三個小時。

Interviewer: I heard you previously went to a farther place, the North District Park. Did you go there twice?

Participant: Yes, we went there twice.

Interviewer: And next, you plan to go to the Wetland Park?

Participant: Yes, now it has become part of the program. Maybe once a month, we'll leave Sheung Shui.

Interviewer: Do you think this arrangement is good?

Participant: I think it's better. Anyway, I want to spend time. Going out for a few hours is better than staying here. When you go out, it takes at least two to three hours to come back. (Walking Group, I3)

哈哈...我在教我姐姐。我能記得的姿勢，我都教過她一次。

Ha...ha...ha... I am teaching my elder sister. Whatever I can remember the postures, I have taught her once.I2

我學到的東西可以教我丈夫和女兒。有時她在工作時花很多時間在電腦上。這個地方也會疼。我可以分享老師教我的。例如，如何放鬆肩膀。我會告訴她我今天學到的，讓她晚上有空的時候試試。其實，全家都能從中受益。哈哈...我覺得定期運動對整個社區的人都有幫助。至少，我們不需要依賴藥物。

Whatever I have learned that I could teach my husband at home. As well as my daughter. Sometimes she spends a lot of time on computer at work. This area hurts too. I could share what tutor has taught me. For instance, how to relax your shoulder. I would tell her what I have learned today and ask her to try out when she was free at night. In fact, the whole family can get the benefit from it. Ha...ha..ha... I think doing the regular exercise helps the people in the entire community better. At least, we do not need to rely on medication. I7

What makes the program work?

What makes the program successful? We've looked into the impacts of the program, and through interviews and group discussions, we've started to understand what drives these positive results. Think of the program like a new recipe. Does it taste good? If it does, who likes it and why? Feedback from participants suggests they really benefit from the program. Now, we're asking, "Why does it work so well?" We've pinpointed four key factors: 1) the skills of the volunteer leader leader, 2) the timing and location of activities, 3) the small

group sizes. These are the main ingredients that seem to make the program effective, and they're what we may need to keep using in similar future programs.

Theme 1: Small Group Size and Gender Dynamics (n=15, 50 refs)

Feedback from nearly all participants highlighted the importance of group size in enhancing session effectiveness. In the stretching group, participants appreciated the smaller group of 10, which was not only practical due to the limited space at the center but also crucial for receiving personalized attention from the professional:

訪問者：課堂上理想的參加人數是多少？

參與者：大約10個。

訪問者：為什麼是大約10個？

參與者：志願者領袖可以幫我們矯正姿勢。如果班上人太多，他可能無法立即照顧到我們。需要時間一一矯正。

I: What is the ideal number of participants in class?

P: Around 10

I: Why around 10?

P: [Volunteer leader leader] can correct our postures. If too many people in the class, he may not care for us immediately. It takes time for him to correct one-by-one. (stretching, I9)

For the elderly, a smaller group size is preferable, as articulated by a participant in the walking group:

有時一些長者不喜歡和太多人一起活動.....特別是對我們這些長者來說，聚在一起很不容易。5-6個人已經很好，超過10個人就非常困難。其次，有時候散步後我們會去喝早茶，互相聊天，感到很開心。

Sometimes some elderly people don't like to move around with too many people... Especially for us elderly, it's hard to get together. Having 5-6 people is already good, 10-plus people is very difficult. Secondly, sometimes after the walk, we go have yum cha, chat with each other, feel happy. (I2 Walking Group)

The men's walking group also benefited significantly from a smaller group setting, which facilitated deeper engagement and community involvement among older men:

之前出遊的時候，我們通常有50-60位參加者。根本無法和每個人單獨交談。雖然一位志願者領袖可能會照顧10-15個人的小組，但進行溝通並不容易。但這次，我能夠花時間單獨交流。

Before for the outing, we normally had 50-60 participants. There was no way to talk to individual. Although, one volunteer leader might take care for 10-15 people in group, communication was not easy to carry out. But this time, I could individually spend time to communicate. (Volunteer leader leader, Walking Group)

Challenges specific to male participants in opening up and building rapport underscore the value of smaller, more intimate group sizes:

我以為這個目標會很容易，但結果發現男性因為有保護機制，其實不太想和陌生人互動.....如果沒有某種關係，他們大多只是敷衍地回應.....我說男性最難的是什麼呢？就是我們找到他們報名，但他們和你沒有關係，即使報名了，他們可能還是會缺席.....甚至有些人可能在走一次後覺得無聊就離開，因為男性真的需要時間.....也就是說，慢慢熱身。

*I thought the target would be easy, but it turns out that men, because they have a protective mechanism, actually do not want to interact with strangers... If you don't have a certain kind of relationship, they mostly just give perfunctory responses... What did I say is the hardest with men? It's that we find them to sign up, but they have no relationship with you, because even if they sign up, they might still be absent.... Even some people might find it boring after walking once and leave, because men really need time to... that is, warm up slowly.
(Volunteer leader leader, Walking Group)*

Lastly, the reluctance of men to participate in mixed-gender groups where they are a minority was highlighted by one woman regarding her husband's experience in the stretching group:

我丈夫之前參加過這類型的課程。他說他是班上唯一的男性。他曾經對我說，請不要強迫我再去，因為我感到不自在和尷尬。

My husband participated in this type of program before. He said he was the only male in the class. He said to me once that please don't force me to go again because I have felt uneasy, embarrassed. (stretching, I7)

Here a volunteer leader leader/volunteer leader talks about how inspired she was in seeing the men's walking group:

我看到男性步行小組。我認為他們可能有不同的情況.....在我之前的訪問中，獨居的人大多是女性。這些男士的伴侶都已去世。看起來這裡有很多年長的男性躲在家裡。但他們願意出來，願意聊天，願意分享他們的生活。在這樣寒冷的天氣裡，他們能夠一起出來散步和聊天，真的很讓我感激[志願者領袖]在那裡。我沒有參加，我不知道他們在談什麼，但我覺得這個價值，即使他將來無法再走，或者這個計劃消失，但在他的心中，對於這段時間，他們依然有一個地方。這是他們的回憶。我覺得這非常美好，也非常有價值。在這個計劃中，價值還在於激勵他們未來能夠多出來。男性，我認為年長男性，不僅需要關注身體健康，還需要關心心理健康，過著不抑鬱的生活。為什麼我會這樣說？幾天前，當我聽到這樣的新聞時，我會哭。這是關於在天朗大廈的一個六十或七十歲的男性，他自殺了。所以我為什麼這麼關心天平邨，為什麼我希望教會能進入？我希望當他們面對困難時，不會那麼容易放棄生命。因為我認為自殺對家庭有很大的影響。如果他自己去世了，沒有人知道，這會給鄰居帶來陰影，並影響到他的家庭。我不認識他們，但每次聽到這些，我的心情都會感到非常不快。未來，他們可以去教會，和朋友聊天，這會更好。所以我認為這是最有價值的部分。

I saw the men's walking group. I think they can have a different... from my past visits, those who lives alone are mostly women. These gentlemen have their partner passed away. It seems like there are many older men here hiding at home. But they are willing to come out, willing to chat, willing to share their lives. They are very compatible at this time, in such cold weather, coming out to walk and chat together. I really appreciate [Volunteer leader leader] being there. I haven't participated, I don't know what they are talking about, but I think this

value, even if he cannot walk anymore, one day he can't walk or this program is gone, but in his heart, they still have a place for this period. It's their memory. I think this is very beautiful, and very valuable. In this plan, the value also lies in inspiring them to come out more in the future. Men, I think older men, not just physical health, but also cares for mental health, living free from depression. Why would I say this? A few days ago- when I hear news like this, I would cry. It's about a man in Tin Long Building, who is in his sixties or seventies, he committed suicide. So why do I care so much about Tin Ping Village, why do I want the church to come in? I hope when they face difficulties, they will not give up their lives so easily. Because I think suicide has a great impact on the family. If he passes away on his own, and no one knows, it casts shadow on neighbors and impact on his family. I don't know them, but every time I hear these, my heart feels very unhappy. In the future, they can go to church, and talk to their friends, which is better. So I see this as the most valuable part. (volunteer leader leader)

Overall, the insights gathered reflect the critical role of managing group size and considering gender-specific preferences to foster a supportive and comfortable environment for all participants.

Theme 2: Timing and Proximity of Activity (n=15, 24 refs)

This theme explores participants' preferences regarding the timing and location of activities, which are crucial factors influencing their willingness to engage in various programs. The participants' responses indicate a strong preference for activities that are conveniently timed and located close to their residences, minimizing the need for travel and fitting well within their daily schedules.

訪問者：是什麼讓你想參加？之前你提到時間。

參與者：時間和健康。

訪問者：那麼，時間、健康還是朋友，哪個更重要？

參與者：時間最重要。

Interviewer: What makes you want to participate? Earlier you mentioned timing.

Participant: Timing and health.

Interviewer: Which comes first, time? health or friends?

Participant: Timing first. (stretching I3)

只要在北區內，我覺得對我來說沒問題。我不想搭公共交通去那裡。我最遠只去北區運動場，位於天平邨旁邊。

As long as within North District, I think it is no problem to me. I don't want to take public transportation to go there. As far as I go is North District Sports Ground located next to Tin Ping Village. (Stretching I 10)

其實，如果中心推出的項目符合我的時間表，我通常會報名。

Actually, if the launched programs from the center fit my schedule, I normally sign up (stretching I2)

對的。我也可以控制我的時間和旅行。最好是不需要來回搭乘公共交通。如果我去得更遠參加學習課程，那就沒有選擇了。否則，我還是更喜歡待在社區內。

Correct. I can also control my time and travelling. It's better I do not need to take any public transportation back and forth. There is no choice if I go further for attending my learning course. Otherwise, I still prefer to stay within the community. (Stretching, I7) the time commitment is not too long...The timing fit my schedule (Walking, I1)

*但現在開始得太早，我覺得這個活動也會解散，因為他們無法繼續下去。
But now it's starting too early, I think this activity will also disband because they can't continue. (Walking Group, I3)*

These insights underscore the importance of considering the logistical preferences of participants when planning and scheduling activities. Ensuring that activities are both timely and conveniently located can significantly enhance participation rates and overall satisfaction.

Theme 3: Attributes of Volunteer leader leaders (n=11, 18 refs)

Participants across various programs, particularly in stretching classes, emphasized the importance of several key attributes in trainers, volunteer leader leaders, or coaches. These attributes significantly enhanced the experience and effectiveness of the sessions. Here are the highlighted characteristics:

Subtheme: Nurturing and Supportive Approach:

Trainers were often described as caring and patient, especially with elderly participants. They were attentive to individual needs, such as adapting exercises for those with injuries and encouraging persistence.

Illustrative Quotes:

[導師]教得很好，對我們很關心。對，他對我們的長者很關心。

*"[The tutor] is teaching in good manner and caring. Right, he is caring to our elderly."
(Stretching, I12)*

他一直在鼓勵我們，說『加油』，當我們在做的時候。他說：『多練習，總有一天你可以做得很好。』因為雙手在背後不容易碰到。他說你練習得越多，碰到雙手的機會就越高。

"He kept encouraging us and saying 'add oil' while we were doing. 'Do more practicing and one day you can do well.' Because both hands were not easily met on the back. He said the more you practice, the higher chance you can touch both hands." (Stretching, I5)

[志願者領袖]和[志願者領袖]一直耐心地告訴我們，如果你無法跟上或做出姿勢，沒關係，放輕鬆。如果今天失敗了，明天就要做得好。他們的心地都很好。

"[Volunteer leader leader] and [Volunteer leader leader] kept telling us patiently no worries if you were not able to follow and perform the postures. Took it easy. If we failed today, you should do it well next days. They were having good hearts." (Stretching, I6)

[志願者領袖]會提醒你.....他提前一天打電話給我，提醒我明天幾點見面.....他打給我，這樣我就知道是7:30。

"[Volunteer leader leader] will remind you... He called me a day early to remind me what time we're meeting tomorrow... He called me, and that's how I knew it's 7:30." (Walking, I1)

Subtheme: Professional Knowledge and Immediate Feedback:

Participants valued the expertise of trainers who provided direct supervision and immediate feedback, crucial for mastering correct techniques and preventing injuries.

Illustrative Quotes:

嗯，有時我會看 YouTube 學習。不過，我沒有從專業人士那裡得到即時的建議和評價。我想報名參加這個課程的原因是至少他們提供了一位教練。這位教練會教我正確的姿勢。

"Well, sometimes I watched and followed YouTube to learn. However, I did not get immediate advice and comments from professionals. The reason I wanted to sign up for a program is at least they have provided a trainer. The trainer would teach me the correct postures." (Stretching, I11)

我在專業的指導和監督下學到了正確的拉伸姿勢及其好處。這是專業的，導師會即時作出回應。特別是當他看到我們做得有困難時，他會立即幫助和修正我們。

"I learned the correct postures of stretching and its benefit under the professional guidance and supervision. It's professional Tutor would respond immediately. Especially, when he saw our difficulties of doing, he helped and corrected us immediately." (Stretching, I2)

是的，這對身體有益。畢竟，越多活動越好，特別是對我們這個年齡的人。唯一的問題是，如果你懶惰，不想動。但如果有人指導你，你就會去做。*"Yes, it's beneficial for the body. After all, the more you move, the better it is, especially for us of this age. The only thing is, if you're lazy, you don't want to move. But if someone guides you, you'll do it." (Walking, I1)*

Subtheme: Age Proximity:

Being closer in age to the participants was seen as beneficial, enabling volunteer leader leaders to better understand and relate to the experiences and challenges faced by the older adults.

Illustrative Quotes:

[志願者領袖]基本上理解他們的困難.....例如，當他們提到過去的生活時.....年輕人可能不理解他們的困難.....而且，他們可能有不同的態度。

"[Volunteer leader leader] pretty much understood their difficulties... For instance, when they mentioned the olden days life... The young might not understand their difficulties...moreover, they may have a different attitude." (Volunteer leader leader)

這樣更好。我發現我們的年齡相差不遠。因此我們能夠很好地交流。是的，我們知道他們的意思和感受.....如果他們和年輕人談話，那就會有問題.....他們可能不知道他們所指的是什麼。

"That's better. I found that our ages are not far apart. That's why we were able to communicate well. Yes, we know what they meant and their feelings... If they talked to the

younger folks, that would be a problem... They probably did not know what they were referring." (Volunteer leader leader, Walking Group)

These attributes underscore the importance of a volunteer leader leader's approachability, expertise, and ability to connect with participants on a personal level, significantly enhancing the overall effectiveness and enjoyment of the programs.

Recommendations to Enhance and Replicate the Programme

Apply the Bio-Psycho-Social Framework When Designing Healthy Ageing Programs

Applying a bio-psycho-social framework involves designing programs that not only focus on the physical aspects of healthy aging but also incorporate elements that cater to psychological and social needs. For example, integrating more socialization time within physical activities can enhance participants' enjoyment and fulfillment, thereby improving attendance and longevity in the program. Social connections formed during these sessions can provide emotional support and a sense of community, which are vital for mental health and resilience. Programs could include group discussions, team-building activities, or coffee breaks that encourage participants to share experiences and support each other.

Continue to Explore Men's Only Groups

Continuing to explore men's only groups can address specific needs and interests that might not be as effectively met in mixed-gender groups. Men might feel more comfortable participating in activities and discussing health-related issues in a male-only setting. This could lead to increased engagement, consistency in participation, and potentially better health outcomes. Activities can be tailored to appeal to interests commonly shared among men in the community, possibly focusing on sports, strength training, or even discussions on topics they might find particularly relevant. Ensuring that volunteer leader leaders are trained to engage men in these contexts is crucial for the success of such groups.

Small is Beautiful

This recommendation emphasizes the importance of keeping group sizes small, advocating for a balance between reach and depth. While larger programs can engage more participants, they might not always delve deeply into individual needs and outcomes. Smaller groups, on the other hand, allow for a more personalized approach where volunteer leader leaders can closely interact with each participant. This fosters deeper connections, more tailored support, and a stronger community feel. Such an environment can lead to more significant and meaningful changes in participants' lives. By focusing on the impact and quality of engagement rather than solely on participant numbers, programs can achieve a balanced approach that enhances both personal growth and overall effectiveness.

Findings Related to the Training (8-Sessions) Program Organized by PolyU

We also conducted two focus group discussions with all the volunteer leader leaders/volunteer leaders of the two groups. Three key themes regarding the training sessions:

Summary of Key Insights from Training Session Feedback

Theme 1: Effective Structure vs. Flexibility

Some of the participants appreciated the structured approach to the training sessions, as it helps in keeping discussions focused and organized. Illustrative quotes from the feedback emphasizes this point:

是的。還有組織最後的嘉年華。有一位工作人員——我忘了她的名字。她會把我們所有的意見寫在白板上，記下我們討論的內容，以便在討論後不會忘記。她會寫下我們談過的事情。最後會有一個標題。我覺得這不只是走過場的討論。我覺得這樣非常清晰，不會混亂。例如，很多時候我們一邊講一邊散開，當它開始變得雜亂時，我們可以回到那個重點，我注意到了。然後似乎在收集所有意見後，她會再問一次：「我們要這個嗎？我們要這個嗎？」有時我們甚至不知道自己想要什麼。但她會問你：「你想要這個、這個和這個嗎？」然後她會把重心放回到那個中心，找到共識。我覺得這是在引導，而不是讓我們進入迷宮，而是像這樣回到那個重點。

Yeah. And also to organize the final carnival. There is one staff- I forgot her name. She will write down all our opinions on the board, write down what we discussed so that we won't forget after the discussion. She will write down what we talked about. Finally, there will be a title. I feel it's not just about going through the discussion. I feel that it's very clear and won't be chaotic. For example, many times when we talk and talk, when it starts to scatter, we could come back to that focus, I noticed that. Then it seems like when all opinions are collected, she will say it again, "Do we want this? Do we want this?" Sometimes we don't even know what we want. But she will ask you, "Do you want this, this, and this?" Then she will focus back on that center and find that consensus. I feel that it's about leading, not letting us go to that maze, but coming back to that point like that. (volunteer leader leader)

我個人認為一開始有一些基本的培訓是非常必要的，這讓我們這些沒有接受過這種培訓的人有一個有用的基礎來進行協調工作。然後，當我們真的開始做的時候，每個人都可以發揮他們所學到的。我覺得每一步都有其用處。你們設計的內容是針對我們的。

personally think that at the beginning, there are some basic trainings. That part is very necessary, it allows us, who have not received such training, to have a useful foundation for the coordination work. Then, when we really get down to doing it, everyone can perform what they have learned. I think every step has its use. The designs you come up with are tailored to us. (volunteer leader leader)

同意。基本培訓一定要有。前幾堂課的概念和知識一定要有。我們的目標也必須非常清晰。就像她說的，活動的內容可以改變，是的，還有兩位學生老師教我們，這是非常不同的。如果你給我們完全的自由去做，我們不會像他們那樣好。

Agree. basic training must be there. The concepts and knowledge of the first few classes must be there. And our goals must be very clear. It's like she said, the content of the activities can change, yes, and there are two student teachers who teach us, that's very different. If you give us all freedom to do, we would not be as good as them. (volunteer leader leader)

While the structured sessions are valued, there is a strong desire among some of the participants for more flexibility to allow for creative exploration and personal development. This feedback suggests that integrating more discussion time could enhance learning and engagement. Reflecting this sentiment, are these illustrative quotes:

我不認為任何一節課比其他的更有用或更沒有用，因為這實際上是一個循序漸進的過程。但我有一些意見。一開始，我覺得進度有點快.....我不知道為什麼會有這種感覺，我們必須做我們必須做的事情。為什麼會這樣？理工大學的志願者領袖真的理解她的教學計劃，但有時我們的志願者領袖可能會有點偏離，但她會把我們帶回來。但是她給我們的感覺是，「兄弟，放鬆點，不要太苛求」。我不敢說其他同學，但我感覺有點急促。這感覺有好有壞。好的一面是我們真的感受到每一節課都需要達成的一切。但這是否變得太像一項任務？這變得非常以任務為導向，只專注於任務。因為就我個人而言，除了任務本身，我覺得同事之間也應該有一些互動。例如，如果有更多互動，可能需要兩三個小時，仍然無法達成。因此，這其實也有其好處。你明白我的意思嗎？

"I don't think any session is more useful or less useful, because it's actually a step-by-step process. But I have a few opinions. At first, I felt it was a bit too quick...I don't know why I have this feeling that we must do what we have to do. Why is that? The polyu volunteer leader leader really understands her teaching plan, but sometimes us volunteer leader may be a little side-tracked, but she really brings us back, but the feeling she gives us is like "bro, chill out, don't be too demanding". I dare not say about other classmates, but I feel a little bit hurry. It feels like there are good and bad aspects. The good thing is that we really feel that we need to achieve everything we need to do for each session. But has it become too much like a task? It becomes very task-oriented, just focusing on the task, because personally, besides the task itself, I feel that there should also be some interaction among coworkers. For example, but if there is more interaction, it may take two or three hours and still not work out. So actually, it also has its benefits. Do you understand what I mean?" (volunteer leader leader volunteer leader)

但我也覺得我同意剛才所說的，也許因為跟隨那個時間表，她的確有點急促。很多時候，似乎我們想要有一些發散性思維.....似乎有一次我感覺，當我們想計劃畢業典禮並需要提出一些想法時，似乎她已經有了一個框架.....我明白她不想有一個框架，我知道。但因為我們無法做到，因為似乎我們走得太遠，偏離了框架.....也許是因為她的時間表不允許，就像我說的，這不是大問題，讓我們再上一次課再談。所以我也理解她.....理工大學可能有一個現有的框架。她真的想給我們創造的機會，但她發現我們的創作仍然無法實現她希望在那堂課上達成的目標。

But I also feel that I agree with what is said just now, maybe because following that schedule, she really was a bit hurried. And many times, it seems like we want to have some divergent thinking...It seems like there was a time when I felt that, for example, when we wanted to

plan the graduation ceremony and needed to come up with something, it seems like she already had a framework ... I understand she didn't want to have a framework, I know. But because we couldn't, because it seems like we've been going too far and leaving the framework...because maybe her schedule doesn't allow it, like I said, it's not a big deal, let's have another class and talk again. So I also understand that she...PolyU maybe has an existing framework. She really wants to give us the opportunity to be creative, but she found that our creations still cannot achieve what she wants to achieve in the class that day. (volunteer leader leader, volunteer leader)

這與我的期望有點不同。這種邏輯就像為了活動而進行活動，完成它。但對我來說，我基本上想學習如何成為志願者領袖，我想知道我需要做什麼才能成為志願者領袖，如何真正幫助長者，這些事情。但現在所有的重點都放在為活動做一些事情上。 A bit different from my expectation. This logic is like achieving an activity for the sake of an activity, completing it. But for me, I basically want to learn about volunteer leading, I want to know what I need to do to volunteer leader, how to truly help the elderly, those things. But now it's all about doing something for an activity. (volunteer leader leader, Volunteer leader)

This theme captures the tension between the need for clear, organized leadership and the desire for a more adaptive and creative learning environment. Balancing these aspects could lead to more effective and satisfying training sessions.

Theme 2: Community Building between Volunteer leaders and Churches

The sessions have also been instrumental in strengthening community ties, with volunteer leader leader/volunteer leaders forming valuable relationships that enhance teamwork and collaboration across different groups. This aspect is crucial for fostering a supportive and interconnected community environment as illustrated by these quotes:

我可以聽到來自不同人很多不同的觀點。我很少接觸來自不同教會和不同年齡組的人。剛才所說的實在非常有趣。我從來沒有這樣想過。原來我聽到的、從未想過的事情其實可以實現。

I can hear many different things from different people. I rarely have contact with different people from different churches and different age groups. What was just said turns out to be quite interesting. I never thought of it that way. It turns out that what I've heard and never thought possible can actually be achieved. (volunteer leader leader)

一開始，我只認識彭牧師和他的妻子。我們之前一起工作過。通過這個計劃，我認識了楊牧師、Raymond 和蔡小姐。一開始我們見面時不太熟悉。現在我們接觸了很長時間，參加了多次課程後，已經熟悉了。如果將來有合作的機會，我們會更好地合作。但這次已經很好了，雖然大家來自不同的教會，但我們都有很好的了解，朝著同一個目標努力。很高興大家為天平邨付出了時間和努力。感謝大家和理工大學。這是一個非常好的計劃，幫助我們提供資金、努力和人力。只有這樣，我們才能有這麼多資源來幫助天平邨。

In the beginning, I only know Pastor Pang and his wife. We have worked together before. Through this program. I get to know Pastor Yeung, Raymond, Ms. Choi. At the beginning

when we all met, we were not familiar. Now that we have been in contact for a long time, after attending classes multiple times, we are familiar. If there are opportunities for cooperation in the future, we will cooperate even better. But this time was already very good, although everyone comes from different churches, we all have good understanding and work towards the same goal. Very happy that everyone has dedicated time and effort to Tin Ping Village. Thankful to everyone and the Polytechnic University. It's such a good plan that helps us with funding, effort, and people. Only then do we have so many resources to help Tin Ping Village. (volunteer leader leader)

Key Limitations of This Study:

It's a First Try: This was an initial test to see if this program could potentially work. The results so far are promising but not final.

Early Findings: Our results don't prove for sure what effects the program has or why exactly these effects occur. We think these effects and reasons are likely, but to be sure, we need not only more research but also more people trying different versions of the program.

Based on Self-Reports: All the information we have comes from what participants told us themselves. In future studies, we plan to use more precise methods to better understand the changes in physical, mental, and social aspects.

Engage with the Findings: Treat these findings as guidelines, not as strict rules. Use them to inform and shape how you design and develop healthy aging programs in your community. Engage with the research, adapt it as needed, and see how it can best serve your specific goals and context.

