

# MINDMATTERS

## Preparing and Deploying Ethnic Minority Lay Leaders to Promote Mental Well-Being Among Hong Kong's Major Ethnic Minority Communities

Division of Public Policy  
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

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Mental Health Initiatives Funding Scheme,  
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# Every Mind Matters!

Regardless of race, religion, and ethnicity

MindMatters is a 24-month mental health project led by the Division of Public Policy of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), and is funded by the Hong Kong Government.

It aspires to communicate mind-to-mind, and heart-to-heart, with members of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong regarding mental health support and encouragement.



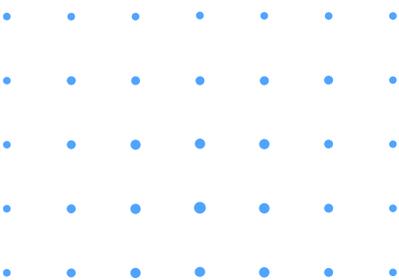
# Project Vision

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the world as we know it. With borders shut, economies disrupted, movements of people halted, social distancing in place, and loved ones succumbing to the virus, the outbreak has significantly upended not only our physical, but also our mental, well-being.



Hong Kong has, inevitably, been one of the innumerable places across the globe to be affected by the ongoing pandemic. Long-term effects from the outbreak – ranging from job losses, social isolation, reduced business activities, etc. – have all compounded the collective mental well-being of the city's population, on top of the existing job and cost-of-living pressures.

The impact of COVID-19 on marginalized communities (with our particular attention on ethnic minority groups) has been especially serious, but this is an issue that remains inadequately discussed in our public discourses.



Ethnic minorities, historically, have substantially contributed to the development of Hong Kong as a vibrant international hub, but a lingering irony is the lack of attention on structural issues surrounding these communities, e.g. income inequality, discrepancies in educational attainment, job discrimination, communication gap, etc. COVID-19, in turn, has rendered such social divide even more obvious.

Given the serious lack of attention on the mental well-being of ethnic minority communities in Hong Kong – especially in light of the pandemic, we are motivated to launch this project.

**We envision – through close collaboration with stakeholders relevant for their communities – to reach out to the existing community leaders, provide them opportunities for mental health first aid (MHFA) training, and, in turn, disseminate the knowledge they have acquired back to their communities.**

# Project Background

## Vision



Through our emphasis on ethnic minorities, we aim to remedy the lack of connection between Hong Kong's ethnic minorities and professional mental health support services locally, and to destigmatize the conversation surrounding mental health.



We also aim to train lay leaders from ethnic minority backgrounds in mental health first aid so as to promote community-based mental well-being support networks and set the foundation for early identification of ethnic minority individuals with particular mental health needs.

**As the “Mind Matters” title implies, we also seek to provide a contextualized relational space that allows the lay leaders to communicate mind-to-mind, and heart-to-heart, with community members regarding mental health support and encouragement.**

## Target beneficiary groups

Hong Kong residents who are ethnic Indians, Nepalese, Pakistanis, and Filipinos, expected number of beneficiaries: 5%–10% of population of these ethnic groups. Specifically, target groups include:

1. School-age children (primary- and secondary-age children)
2. Religious associations
3. Community associations
4. Individuals registered with their home countries' consulates

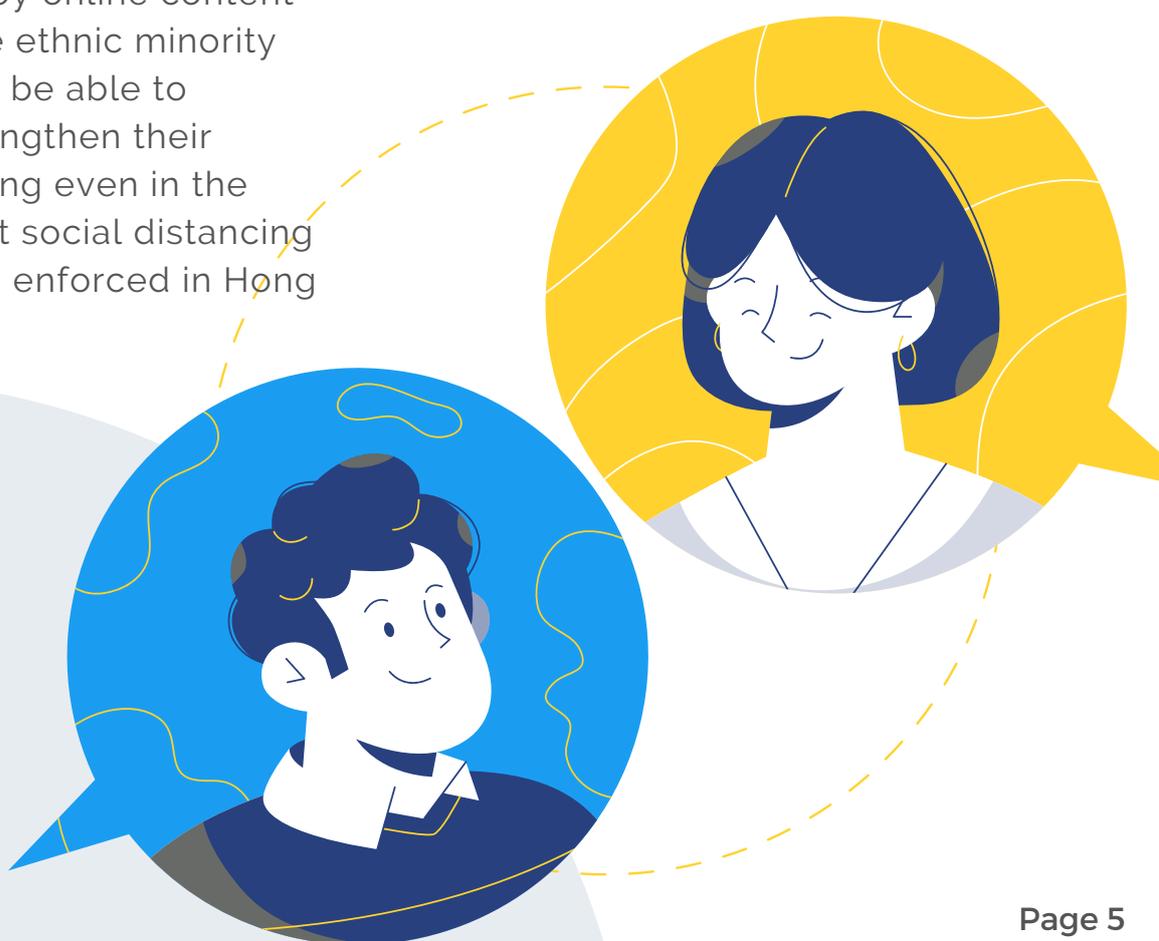
# Project Impact

Mental health first aid (MHFA) courses will be offered for ethnic minority community leaders who express their interest to participate as lay leaders for our programs. These courses will provide prospective lay leaders with knowledge that can be relayed to their community members. Ethnic minority individuals in Hong Kong with mental health needs will acquire a basic understanding of mental health wellbeing so as to enable them to actively seek professional help for themselves, their families, friends, and colleagues.

Further, this project will be supplemented by online content and tools where ethnic minority participants will be able to continue to strengthen their mental well-being even in the face of stringent social distancing measures being enforced in Hong Kong.

It will also lead to the creation of multimedia online content, online support groups, and self-assessment tools tailored to address the different segments of the various ethnic minority populations in Hong Kong (e.g., youth, adults, the elderly, recovered persons, etc.).

We aspire that this project bring both short-term and long-term impacts for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, as elaborated in the following page:



1

Through mental health first aid training provided to community lay leaders, they can more broadly disseminate valuable information on mental well-being, whether through web content or direct face-to-face interaction with the community members.

2

This project can help raise the level of awareness among ethnic minority communities about existing mental health issues. In the long run, we hope this project offers a pathway for ethnic minority members to proactively seek mental well-being services offered in Hong Kong and, more importantly, to destigmatize the perception surrounding mental health, openly discuss topics surrounding this issue among their community, and where necessary, seek help from the appropriate professional bodies.



# Project Implementation

This project will be implemented in four sequential stages. The timeline below summarizes the workflow for the implementation of this community lay leader program from April 2022 — April 2024.

## ● PHASE 1

Identification and Outreach

- The project team will **identify 6 – 8 community leaders from each of Hong Kong's four major ethnic minority groups**, namely Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalis, and Filipinos (i.e., a total of 24 – 32 community leaders)
- The project team will contact the identified leaders to secure their consent to participate in this project

## ● PHASE 2

Training and 1st Dissemination (video)

- Lay leaders will **undergo mental health first aid training**
- They will also **commence efforts to disseminate mental health knowledge** by initially participating in the **shooting of 3 separate videos on various mental health topics in their native language(s)**

## ● PHASE 3

2nd Dissemination (community visits)

- Each lay leader will **engage in 3 community outreach visits** with members of their respective ethnic group to **disseminate knowledge by delivering course module talks** at schools, religious sites, and/or community associations

## ● PHASE 4

Follow-up Visits

- The **project team will conduct follow-up visits** and listen to the experiences shared by community members regarding the state of their mental health

# 01

## Identification and Outreach

**Apr 22 - Jun 22**

The project team will identify 6 – 8 community leaders from each of Hong Kong's four major ethnic minority groups, namely Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalis, and Filipinos



Upon identification of prospective community lay leaders, the project team will contact the identified leaders to secure their consent to participate in this project

## 02a

# MFHA Training for Lay Leaders

**Jul 22 - Aug 22**

Prospective lay leaders will undergo thorough mental health first aid (MHFA) course by certified professional organization

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These training modules will focus on the areas relevant to training they have received under mental health first aid courses:



**1- Fundamental comprehension about mental well-being issues and stigma associated with these problems in Hong Kong**



**2- Building an effective conversation about mental well-being issues**



**3- Basic intervention that laypersons can practice under distressing circumstances and where and how community members can seek professional mental health-related assistance in Hong Kong**

Upon completion of the course, lay leaders will be issued "Mental Health First Aid Course Certificate" – which is officially recognized by the Mental Health First Aid International

## 02b

# Recording-based Dissemination – Creation of Video Content

**Sept 22 - Dec 22**

Trained lay leaders will share their understanding and perspectives about mental well-being through recorded talks in the form of 3 videos and web content in their native languages

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Socialization and dissemination of information about mental health will be implemented under two sequential approaches: Recording-based dissemination and face-to-face dissemination.

We will work with lay leaders to create a series of videos where these community lay leaders will share their knowledge and perspectives on mental well-being given the training they have received through mental health first aid courses that we arranged for them.

**Each lay leader will provide insights into mental well-being information in the form of three videos (approximately 5-10 minutes for each video), which relate to the three points above. These videos will be shot in the native languages of these lay leaders (Hindi/Nepali/Urdu/Tagalog), in combination with English and Chinese translations.**

## Face-to-face Dissemination – Community Engagement Activities

**Jan 23 - Jun 23**

Lay leaders will be engaging in 3 events with members of their respective ethnic minority group to deliver their course modules and participate in live discussions with community members

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Face-to-face dissemination\* will be implemented as soon as the recording-based dissemination stage is completed. We believe the face-to-face stage will substantially complement the videos featuring these lay leaders as this approach will allow for a more direct and personalized “touch” between the stakeholders, enabling audience members to immediately engage in question-and-answer (Q&A) 10 sessions with these trained lay leaders, and providing opportunities for the audience to approach the lay leaders on a one-to-one basis.

**In this regard, each lay leader will be involved in 3 community outreach visits to implement the three course modules (delivered in the form of “talks”) with their ethnic minority constituents.**

These modules will be implemented with a spacing of two months between modules. The talks embedded under these modules will be organized in the native languages of these ethnic group members (Hindi/Nepali/Urdu/Tagalog) to allow better and tailored dissemination of mental well-being messages crafted in accordance with the sociocultural contexts of these communities.

Supplementary printed materials (e.g., booklets) will be provided, and these materials will be bilingual – in English and in the native languages of the community members – given that some of these individuals may be proficient in speaking but not in reading the characters associated with their mother tongue.

Overall, throughout the community engagement activities, the sessions will be run in a two-way exchange format, where the lay leaders will deliver their talks for approximately 20-30 minutes for each activity.

To make the activities more interactive, a select group of ethnic minority participants chosen in advance of the activities will share their stories, experiences, as well as difficulties they are facing with regard to the mental health topic. Representatives from collaborative NGOs and/or organizations serving ethnic minority needs will be invited to these activities as observers, so that they can better understand the perspectives of these minority groups.

## 04

### Follow-up Visits

**Jul 23 - Dec 23**

Project team will conduct follow-up visits with members of ethnic communities

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Project team will conduct follow-up visits and listen to the experiences shared by community members regarding the state of their mental health and other important updates.

# Change begins with each of us

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MindMatters is led by a team consisting of enthusiastic people with different ethnic backgrounds and different expertise.

We welcome you to join us, and build an inclusive, caring city together!

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