

A photograph showing the silhouettes of a group of people standing on a rooftop or high vantage point, looking out over a city skyline at sunset. Several people have their arms raised in the air, suggesting a celebratory or hopeful mood. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue, with the city lights beginning to glow in the distance.

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Empowering Ethnic Minorities: A Spotlight on Community Mental Health Projects

Public policy benefits immensely from community projects backed by real-world data, especially those focused on mental health. Using this data-driven method, we can gain insights into the specific mental health issues ethnic minority communities face. This knowledge helps us craft customized strategies and solutions, resulting in more impactful policies. Our faculty member, Professor Naubahar Sharif's ongoing projects underscore the value of this approach, emphasizing the need to base public policy on solid, empirical research.

While Hong Kong's ethnic minority population is still small, it's growing quickly, particularly among the young. The percentage has risen from 2.79% in 2011 to 4.07% in 2021. Meanwhile, the proportion of ethnic minority youth increased from 9.90% to 11.40% during the same period. Even with a declining overall youth population, the number of ethnic minority youth continues to rise. Their mental health needs are as urgent as the majority's. Sadly, current mental health services often overlook these diverse communities' unique cultural and linguistic needs. Our project aims to bridge this gap, offering culturally sensitive mental health services to everyone in Hong Kong.

Our team is committed to tackling mental health issues in Hong Kong, with a focus on encouraging help-seeking, reducing stigma and discrimination across all groups, including ethnic minorities. We strive for inclusivity, fostering open conversations among all ethnicities. As mental health gains priority in Hong Kong, we ensure our ethnic minorities receive equal focus alongside the Chinese majority. In essence, our work centers on inclusivity and equal effort for all.



Professor Naubahar Sharif



Miss Cassy Ying Tung Chan

Projects Overview

Activity Highlights

Motivated by our dedication to providing culturally fitting and language-sensitive support in Hong Kong, we're excited to launch three practical, evidence-backed projects, each running for two years. Funded by the Advisory Committee on Mental Health, Health Bureau, these initiatives aim to boost mental health and well-being among Hong Kong's key ethnic minorities.

Project 1 (April 2022 - March 2024): Preparing and Deploying Ethnic Minority Lay Leaders to Promote Mental Well-being

Launched in April 2022, our first project aims to boost mental health awareness amongst Hong Kong's key ethnic minorities, including the Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, and Filipino communities. We're training community lay leaders in mental health first aid, enabling them to share mental health information that fits both their culture and language.

We aim to engage 5%-10% of each ethnic group, hoping to make a significant impact on mental health awareness and support. Stay tuned for the interim results of this project in our next section!

Project 3 (May 2023 – April 2025): Supporting Ethnic Minority Elderly with Mental Health Needs

Also launched in May 2023, our third project aims to connect the ethnic minority elderly population — specifically Pakistani, Indian, and Nepalese — with mental health services in Hong Kong. We're concentrating on early identification, outreach, and delivering culturally sensitive support for those at risk of mental health issues.

Our goal is to boost the mental well-being of elderly individuals in ethnic minority communities and encourage a greater understanding of Hong Kong's diverse socio-cultural population. Key to this is the early detection of 'hidden' elderly individuals at risk of mental health issues, for whom we provide scientifically-backed programs to improve their well-being. We aim to positively impact 150 elderly individuals from ethnic minorities through this initiative.

Project 2 (May 2023 - April 2025): Strengthening Family Relationships for Hong Kong's Ethnic Minority Communities in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Launched in May 2023, our second project is geared towards bolstering family bonds and boosting mental well-being among ethnic minority families following the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative offers broad family-based training services and activities to support the mental health of Indian, Pakistani, and Nepalese families in Hong Kong.

The project's goals are to spread mental health knowledge, raise awareness, and build lasting support networks. We aim to equip families with the tools for conflict management, communication, and mindful healing practices. We're also focused on identifying families in need and directing them to mental health services they might not know exist. Our goal is to positively impact 105 ethnic minority families through this initiative.

Snapshot of Interim Impact

Over the past year, our Mental Health Project Team has been dedicated to supporting Hong Kong's ethnic minority community. Here's a brief update on our first project's accomplishments:

Outreach to Community Members: We have successfully connected with over 5,000 community members through online and in-person channels, spreading mental health first aid awareness and delivering crucial mental health information. Our activities ranged from large-scale lectures to more intimate, interactive group discussions, fostering a sense of community and mutual support.

Training of 28 Community Lay Leaders: These leaders have played a key role in overcoming cultural and language barriers bringing mental health first aid and information to their communities. This step has been vital in increasing mental health first aid awareness within these communities.

Our team's commitment to delivering mental health programs for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong has caught the attention of local media. Ming Pao and

HK01 have spotlighted our innovative projects and the crucial need to tackle mental health issues within the city's ethnic minority communities.



Read the Ming Pao article here: <https://bit.ly/3Dph3EI>



Read the HK01 article here: <https://bit.ly/3KuzRGT>



Professor Sharif was a main speaker at an Emotional Support Seminar hosted by the Sham Shui Po District Office. Supported by our trained lay leaders, the seminar allowed local residents to express their thoughts, learn about mental health first aid, and discover how to reach crucial support services.



Dr. Michael Magtoto Manio from HKU, a lay leader of ours, along with Ms. Cassy Chan from our team, have actively engaged in disseminating essential mental health information. They've focused on insomnia and Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), specifically tailoring the information for our Filipino audience in Hong Kong.

Get Involved

Follow us to stay updated on our progress and the impact of our work!



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