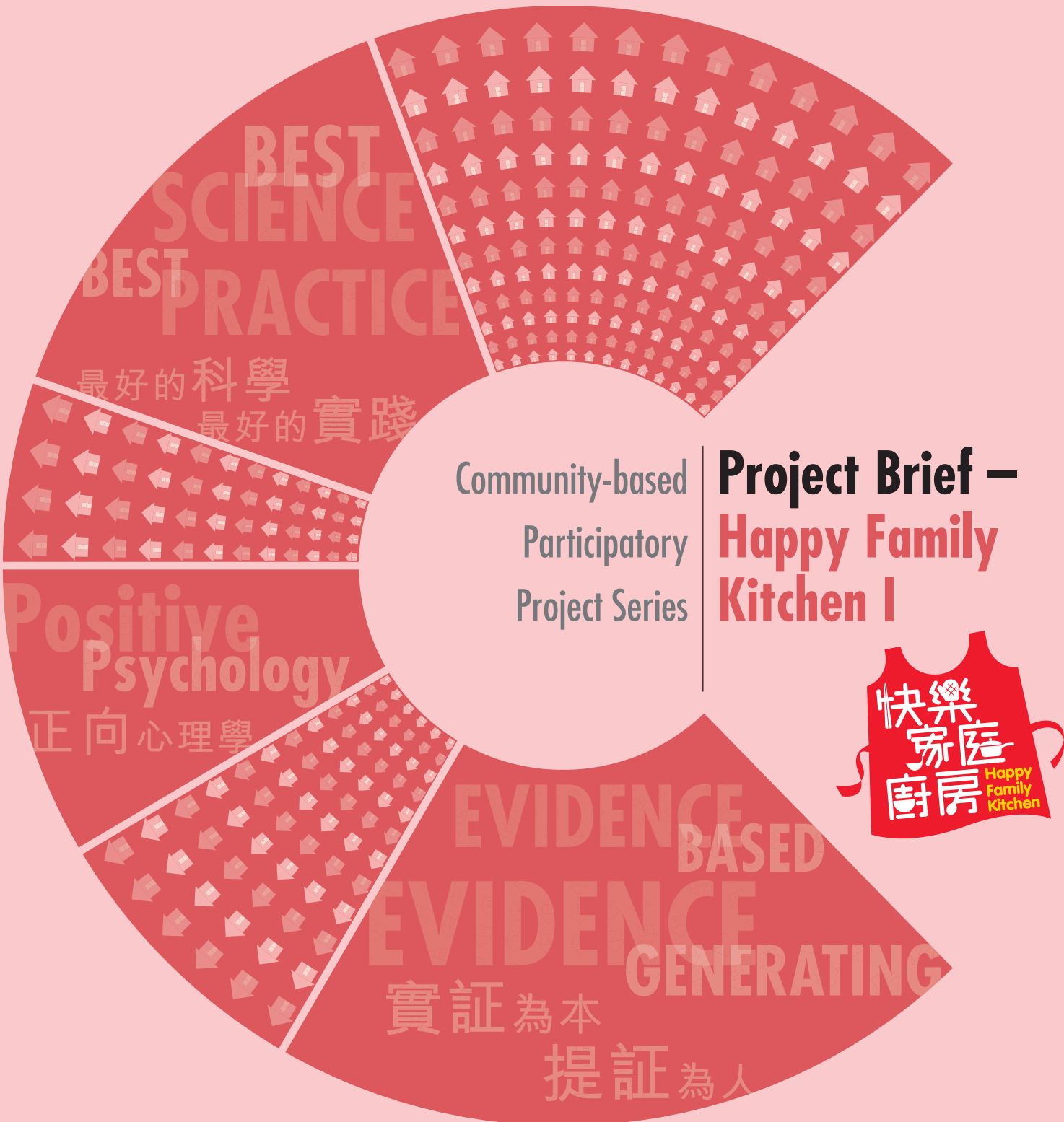


## FAMILY: A Jockey Club Initiative for a Harmonious Society

愛 + 人：賽馬會和諧社會計劃



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# HAPPY FAMILY KITCHEN I

## INTRODUCTION



### BACKGROUND

All over the world, the family is the fundamental social unit, and social problems are often rooted in different family problems. A lack of proper care and attention towards teenagers, for instance, may contribute to resentment against society. It is therefore important to support and strengthen the family, by fostering a sense of responsibility and obligation in every family member, nurturing care and love, and developing relationships of mutual support.

As a bustling modern city, Hong Kong is characterized by highly efficient operation and busy working lives. Traditionally, Chinese people place great importance on their families, but an increasingly busy lifestyle leaves little time for family gatherings and communication. A survey by the Hong Kong Government showed that nearly 78% of respondents never, or only occasionally or rarely, listened to their parents' concerns and views; and over 50% rarely or never listened to their siblings' concerns and views. This lack of communication raises the problem of neglect or indifference, rigid relationships within the family, which tend to exert negative effects on FAMILY Health, Happiness and Harmony (3Hs). As a result, every effort should be made to improve effective communication in Hong Kong families.

A considerable amount of evidence has demonstrated the benefits of applying the principles of positive psychology to family well-being. The principles of positive psychology can be instrumental in our conceptualization of services provided to parents, family members, teachers and other adults with whom children live. We have developed a framework using "Five principles of positive psychology" to enhance family communication. Using "eating" and "kitchen" as a platform, we proposed to develop a positive environment for family well-being and communication based on five positive psychology approaches to improve communication in the family, and in turn promote FAMILY Health, Happiness and Harmony (3Hs). The five principles concerned are happiness ( 嚟快樂 ), flow ( 嘗投入 ), gratitude ( 嘗讚美 ), savouring ( 嚟細味 ) and health ( 常健康 ). The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) collaborated with the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong to conduct an integrated CBPR project, "Happy Family Kitchen I", in the Yuen Long district from September 2010 to November 2011.

This project was an evidence-based and evidence-generating district-based mega-project designed with a vision to integrate the best science from the university, with the best practice from the social service providers. With the ultimate goal of enhancing the 3Hs for Hong Kong families, the public health researchers collaborated with community members – social services units and other major stakeholders – (1) to build capacity among social service providers; (2) to plan, implement and evaluate specially designed community-based programmes for families; (3) to disseminate the findings through a practice wisdom forum; and (4) to develop a service delivery model to improve the 3Hs for Hong Kong families.

### PROJECT AIMS

1. To build capacity and an effective community partnership with various stakeholders and social service units in Yuen Long;
2. To establish a CBPR approach and determine its efficacy in changing individual behaviours and enhancing family functioning and communication by applying the principles of positive psychology;
3. To promote FAMILY Health, Happiness and Harmony (3Hs) by building the family's capacity for positive communication;
4. To build and test a service delivery model to strengthen family communication and the 3Hs;
5. To evaluate the various components of the project, including its structure, process and outcomes.



## OVERALL PROJECT DESIGN AND METHODS

This was a community-based participatory project consisting of several components and stages, and using both quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluation. Process and outcome evaluations were conducted at different times throughout the various stages of the project.

The project was conducted in three stages.

**Stage 1 – Gestation:** Needs assessment, planning, implementation and evaluating a training programme for social workers of the 23 participating social service units, to equip them with the knowledge and skills of positive psychology and for the design of community-based programmes for families. Also included was a launch event to promote the aims of this CBPR project and arouse community stakeholders' and the public's awareness of 3Hs.

**Stage 2 – Dissemination:** Designing, delivering and evaluating 23 community programmes organized by the 23 social service units under one conceptual theory and framework to promote 3Hs through the Happy Family Kitchen I programmes in their service settings. A detailed process evaluation was also conducted on the community programmes.

**Stage 3 – Consolidation:** The release of a special design and rigorous evaluation of the “Happy Family Cookbook” to promote the project's theme, and finally the organization of a practice wisdom forum for social workers and other major stakeholders to share their experiences and the outcomes of the district-based programmes in promoting the 3Hs and better communication among families in Yuen Long.

Throughout the project, a series of territory wide promotion and publicity strategies were implemented including:

1. Publication of Happy Family Cookbook
2. Publication of Practice Manual
3. Leaflet promotion
4. Banner promotion
5. Website promotion
6. Video advertisement
7. Several corporate publications
8. Newspaper, magazine and radio programme introduction
9. Souvenirs
10. Celebrity video features

# HAPPY FAMILY KITCHEN I

## PROJECT SUMMARY



To enhance family functioning and communication in collaboration with various stakeholders and social service units so as to promote FAMILY Health, Happiness, and Harmony (3Hs); and to evaluate the various components of the project in terms of its structure, process, and outcomes, the Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach was adopted to design, implement and evaluate a community-based project entitled “Happy Family Kitchen I” collaborated by The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (a non-government organization with around 400 NGO agency members in Hong Kong) and the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong, under the FAMILY: A Jockey Club Initiative for a Harmonious Society project.

During September 2010 to November 2011, the project was conducted in three stages in Yuen Long district. Stage 1 included needs assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of a train-the-trainers programme for participating organizations’ workers and a launching event. Based on the training kit under the selected theme and objectives, and with minor modifications to suit the different client groups, the trained workers designed and delivered its own programme, with one to two sessions only, to its own target groups in Stage 2. Participants must join in with at least one family member. In Stage 3, the specially designed “Happy Family Cookbook” and “Practice Manual” were released and a practice wisdom forum for sharing experiences was held after the completion of the project. Both quantitative (pre-, post- and further follow-up surveys), and qualitative (focus groups and individual in-depth interviews) methods were used to collect information on 3Hs indices and communication behaviour for process and outcome evaluations.

A total of 2,447 individuals from 1,006 families participated in Happy Family Kitchen I project’s 23 community-based programmes. These were organized by 19 organizations with 23 social service units. Findings from 612 families with 1,419 individuals revealed that the mean communication time showed a significant increase from 153.44 to 155.19 minutes ( $p$ -value<0.01) per week and the mean communication score increased from 67.18 to 69.56 ( $p$ -value<0.001) at 12 weeks after the intervention. The overall mean happiness score showed a significant increase from 7.80 (pre-intervention) to 7.82 ( $p$ -value<0.001) at 12 weeks after the intervention, the mean health score enhanced from 7.70 to 7.73 ( $p$ -value<0.001) and the overall mean harmony score improved from 7.93 (pre-intervention) to 8.07 ( $p$ -value<0.001) at six weeks after intervention but returned to 7.92 ( $p$ -value<0.001) at 12 weeks after the intervention compare to six weeks after intervention.

The CBPR approach has provided an effective way to engage public health researchers and social service providers, other major stakeholders, and participants in an active partnership in this project in Hong Kong. This is the first and probably the largest CBPR focusing on FAMILY Health, Happiness and Harmony with a close partnership with social service providers in Hong Kong. It engaged the community and generated evidence for an effective practice model. The preliminary results have shown its effectiveness in improving communication and in promoting 3Hs, but some barriers still exist in practice. Challenges in maintaining the research rigor during data collection and the implementation of community programmes were also observed. Given the minimal approach of programme design with 2 core sessions plus a booster session, the effect size was small but the cost was low.

This project also provides evidence and generates impacts at different levels. At the individual level, families experienced positive feelings and learnt strategies which can be applied in their daily life. For the frontline social workers, they have been trained to conduct positive psychology programmes for families in the community. At the family level, family members were able to learn and share their experiences in the community-based programmes leading to an improvement in family communication and relationship. The messages on positive psychology and family values were conveyed through the launching event, mass media and Happy Family Cookbook. All these resulted in a greater impact on the community. As we make references to the outcomes of the project, a government may consider placing more effort to promote positive family communication and 3Hs at policy level, place more resources in district planning, and design programmes to help those with low social-economic status.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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