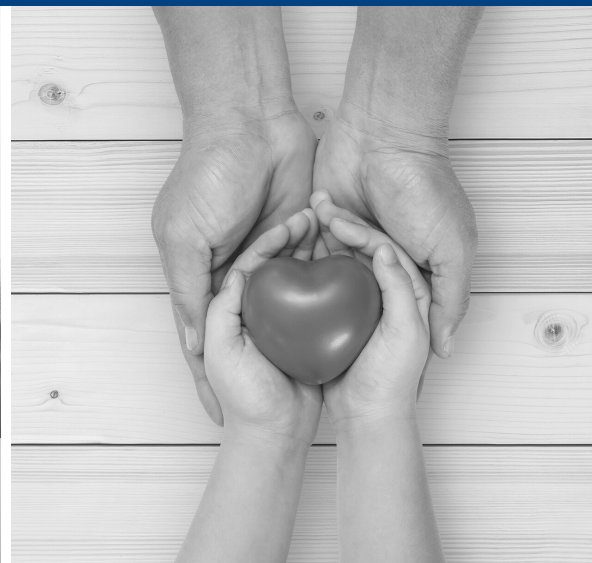**2 NOVEMBER 2021**
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Research Skills for Social Services Mentoring Programme

PROJECT ABSTRACTS

CONTENTS

Ready, Get Set, Go: A Programme Evaluation of the Job Support and Retention Programme for Persons Living in Various NHCS Homeless Shelters

Lim Gail Anne, Martina Rehnu Ambrose
(New Hope Community Services)

Employment has been shown by research to be a key factor in securing and sustaining housing, and that employment support services could lead to positive outcomes for underprivileged persons by increasing their employment readiness, and abilities to gain and sustain jobs. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Job Support and Retention Programme for homeless persons at New Hope Community Services (NHCS).

A hybrid focus group discussion (FGD) format was adopted. 4 participants aged between 50 to 64 years old and residing at two NHCS shelters took part in the FGD. All participants have been receiving employment support services for more than 3 months.

Key findings included aspects of the programme which participants found useful, in particular the encouragement and moral support provided by the career coaches, job referrals and applications made, and the link-ups to key training bodies such as Workforce Singapore. Limitations and gaps of the programme, and areas for development, will also be discussed. These findings are intended to be shared with the career coaches at NHCS so that the program can be improved and developed further to better meet shelter clients' needs.

A Study of Kreta Ayer Family Services Clients With Accommodation as Their Presenting Issue

Janarthanan S/O Lingasparan, Tan Lee Ping Esther, Nur Batrisyia Binte Abdul Rani (Montfort Care)

Despite the efforts taken by the Government and various community and religious organisations, homelessness has persisted in Singapore. The primary purpose of this research is to study cases receiving assistance from Kreta Ayer Family Services with accommodation as their presenting issue. The source of data was generated from Social Services Net (SSNet) for FY2020 to FY2021.The total number of such cases was 169.

Data analysis of the demographic characteristics of the 169 clients was conducted. In addition to housing needs, other identified concerns were also investigated. As part of the data analysis, the duration of casework & counselling (C&C) services rendered, as of 31 March 2021, was calculated to compare closed (71) and open cases (98).

The study also looked at selected cases to explore i) factors that facilitated or hindered the process of securing temporary housing and ii) motivating factors for C&C clients to find temporary or permanent housing. The findings of this study will guide the agency in planning future research and service delivery to homeless persons.

Poor Sleep, Poor Me, Poor Children: Lived Experiences of Sleep Among Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Families

Huzaifah Bin Hassan (AMKFSC Community Services)

Adequate sleep is needed for an individual's physical and psychosocial well-being. However, little attention is paid to the lived experiences of sleep and the sleep environments among socioeconomically disadvantaged families in Singapore. This research explores factors influencing sleep for these families, particularly the interplay between sleep practices or habits, with their home environment.

Using a qualitative design, I conducted 4 semi-structured interviews with caregivers with children, living in one-room public rental flats. As sleep practices are personal and private experiences, I used Photovoice to enable families to narrate their experiences during the interviews. Respondents shared photos they took on items important for their sleep or on their sleeping spaces and the interview questions centred around the photos shared.

Findings demonstrated how respondents maximised limited space for their household members within their homes. Respondents indicated consistent struggles with sleep and an uncomfortable sleep environment, resulting from factors out of their control affecting their daily functioning during their waking hours. Such factors include limited space within the flat, recurrence of pest infestations, disturbances by certain neighbours and feeling unsafe because they observed frequent police involvement in their neighbourhood. Respondents also exhibited signs of learned helplessness followed by 'resignatory gratitude' to their predicament. Families' sleep routines were shaped by overlapping work schedules and educational obligations, health, and illnesses of family members, as well as family/cultural/religious rituals and practices. Hence, the poor sleep of caregivers and space constraints led to inconsistent sleep routines for the children.

In conclusion, social service agencies need to pay greater attention to how inadequate sleep affect socioeconomically disadvantaged families and play an active role in enabling them to sleep well.

Future Planning and Finances in Singapore: Exploring the Views of Family Caregivers of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disability

Elaine Yan Jalleh

There is a research gap on whether the future needs of family members with intellectual and/or developmental disability (IDD) are met adequately in Singapore. Future planning is important to ensure that the well-being of individuals with IDD are looked after when parents are no longer able to care for them.

This research mapped how and why caregivers plan for the future needs of their family members with IDD. In doing so, it explored the effectiveness of existing plans, including the Special Needs Trust Company Ltd. (SNTC), to meet the future needs of these families. Five caregivers participated in semi-structured interviews and shared their perspectives on their future planning for their children or siblings with IDD. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data.

The study found that caregivers aspired for their family members with IDD to be part of the community, be meaningfully engaged and not be taken advantage of. Caregivers chose different combinations of future planning options that cover living and caregiving arrangements, financial, medical as well as recreational needs. Future planning options include engaging the SNTC or family in estate planning and tapping on insurance or health management to meet medical needs. Families who had SNTC accounts reported positive experiences and found that it met their expectations for estate planning. Nevertheless, adequate future planning depends on family caregivers having adequate understanding on the various options available and having resources of their own such as savings or the capability to make discerning choices for their family members with IDD.

The Philanthropic Behaviours, Perceptions and Challenges of Ultra-High Net Worth Individuals

Chan Zhu En Joan (SymAsia Foundation)

Little research on the philanthropic behaviours, mindsets, and challenges of ultra-high-net-worth individuals (UHNWI) based in Singapore has been conducted. The role of UHNWI can be significant in the funding landscape and can be crucial to Social Service Agencies (SSA) in Singapore and non-profit organisations in the neighbouring ASEAN region.

A better understanding of the philanthropic perceptions and behaviours of this donor segment may provide insights to more effectively support both UHNWI and the non-profit sector, highlight potential barriers, and allow for the design of new solutions (e.g. grant-making tools, learning journeys), which in turn could have a significant impact on the ecosystem.

A pilot survey questionnaire on 2 individuals was conducted, and an interview guide was created, some findings will be shared. The survey will touch on how participants make their giving decisions, where do they seek advice or information, and what are their pain points around giving effectively. Participants would be invited to do an online survey followed by in-depth interviews, with the intention to interview approximately 25-30 UHNWI over a six month period from Dec 2021 to May 2022.

The findings may be written in a report or an infographic to be shared with target audiences, and guide SymAsia Foundation in its engagement with UHNWI in enabling effective philanthropic giving.

Process Evaluation of a Positive Mindset Pilot Programme for Community-Dwelling Elderly

Erin Toh Xiao Xuan (Lions Befrienders Service SG)

Community-dwelling seniors are generally well-served by social services in terms of their practical, physical and social needs, but less so in terms of their subjective well-bring and ability to cope with the challenges of old age. As such, a positive mindset programme was developed and piloted at an Active Ageing Centre to help seniors cultivate a positive frame of mind in old age.

Using the MRC process evaluation framework (Moore et al., 2015), this process evaluation seeks to examine the implementation of this pilot programme and understand the contextual factors that facilitate and/or impede the implementation. Data collection methods include observations, semi-structured interviews with external trainer and focus group discussions with participants and centre staff. A theory of change, which makes explicit the inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes, and the links between them, was developed to inform the planning process.

However, findings showed that despite having a theory of change at the outset, programme developers and implementers could still have different expectations of the programme. The key challenges were ensuring that the "activities" conducted by programme implementers contributed to the intended outcomes, and that recruitment efforts targeted those who might benefit the most from the programme instead of "centre regulars" who can be relied upon to attend it. Although the study was intended to study the pilot implementation, the findings prompt the need to revisit the programme design, in order to improve the programme logic prior to future implementation.

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