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You are what you eat!

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Balancing urbanization and rurality

APIAS "co-operated with Ho Koon Nature Education cum Astronomical Centre to document the culture, history along with the ecological environment of the Ha Fa Shan Village in preparation for its revitalization through ecological tourism in the future."

Having received 6 hours training in botany from the nature education centre and in photography skills from a renowned butterfly photographer Mr. Yiu Vor of the Hong Kong Lepidopterists' Society, 12 student ambassadors were recruited from Lingnan University to record the population of plants, insects and animals, as well as places of historical and cultural importance.

With help from the enthusiastic and hospitable Village leader Mr. Li Wo-cheong, students were able to gather the narratives collected from villagers and to write an oral history.

"The Project not only helped to bring a compassionate atmosphere and a good sense of neighbourhood in Ha Fa Shan Village, but it also deepens society's understanding in the ecology of the region," observed Dr. Leong Che-hung, ex-chairman of the Elderly Commission. "It encourages the promotion and development of ecological tourism, which will infuse vitality into the village through the attraction of tourists."

A post-production pamphlet will be designed to introduce the rich cultural significance of the village. Through a 3-hour walking trail around the outskirts of the village, tourists can learn about the village without disturbing its residents' livelihood.

"The Ha Fa Shan case may be the tip of an iceberg, that resembling problems are very likely to be found in other villages all over Hong Kong," warned Ms. Chung the coordinator, but not without hope. "Yet through the success of this piloting project, I hope the good traits as shown by the Ha Fa Shan dwellers, including determination and persistence, simplicity and joyfulness, confidence and hospitality, can be felt by all visitors."

The Ha Fa Shan Revitalization Project is still ongoing and the cases are continually followed by the Home Affairs Department and other NGOs. There is a plan to explore the possibility of "agritourism" in the village.



Facts:

- 20% have no mobile phone
- 30% feel that their properties are not protected
- 50% have water leakage in their homes
- 80% farm
- 50% experienced animal threats in the village
- 70% think emergency call service is not sufficient
- 60% claim that they have not been visited by any government representatives
- 60% thinks the outsiders have offered insufficient help

Knowledge Transfer Programme: "Cooking MaMa Series"
Ms. Fanny Chan Hiu-yan, Project Officer (Research)



You are what you eat!

Hong Kong is a bustling city, where busy schedules are common to many such that they are not allowed to eat punctually, or have the luxury to cook.

Or, are we too lazy to cook?

Hong Kong is a food paradise, where gourmets of a vast variety are so convenient to access, that many food lovers take their liberty to enjoy.

But sometimes, we eat without restraint.

As most of the geriatric diseases are induced by the poor lifestyles since early life stages, it is vital to address health problems from a life-course perspective that an appropriate living habit must be established.

Food Matters

"Many think they know how to keep themselves healthy, but they don't," commented Ms. Chan Hiu-yan, Fanny, Project Officer of Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies. "In accordance to the spirit of knowledge transfer, we'd like to spread the knowledge of health-keeping to as many people in the community as possible."

Organized by our Project Officer Ms. Fanny Chan, APIAS has launched a health-oriented programme under the canopy of Knowledge Transfer Project, namely "Cooking MaMa Series".

Many have found it interesting to see an institute of ageing studies to address the food issues.

APIAS has observed that very few have paid attention to their own health conditions related to the consumption of food and the eating habits.



Cook for your own health

"Cooking MaMa" programme has run successfully for a year that workshops have been arranged for students to transfer both health knowledge as well as skills. Participants, who are students of Lingnan University residing in hostels, find the events benefiting and has significantly changed their eating habits and life attitudes.

To concur with the spirit of Knowledge Transfer, the "Train-the-Trainer" approach is well adopted in hope of initiating a "nuclear fission" in the community, that a continuous and sustainable conveyance of health messages, knowledge and skills can be achieved.



Recruited by APIAS, a group of students and elders are trained as "master trainers" to conduct need assessments and to deliver their learnt wisdom. Our research centre has arranged seminars and workshops to provide essential training to commence the knowledge transfer sequence.

Research has been conducted and it is observed that many young people, especially those who live on campus failed to eat healthily. The result reflected a potential threat to the deterioration of health in the future ageing population.

Students accounted for their inappropriate diet with a vast range of reasons, such as poor cooking skills, lack of equipment, insufficient knowledge in nutritious food,

no access to healthy food sources, etc. APIAS has addressed the shortcomings of the hostel's residents eating habits and living environments by arranging to target-specific knowledge transfer to our participants.

When asked about health knowledge such as to describing the food pyramid, only 40% of the respondents managed to provide a correct answer, revealing a lack of health knowledge amongst the students. Several of the respondents even revealed in their returned questionnaires that they do not know how to cook.

6 workshops are organized at 6 hostels in the University correspondingly where information to a balance diet is introduced and techniques in reading nutrition labels were taught in order to equip students with the capability to distinguish between healthy and harmful foods and to formulate a balanced diet.

The Elderly were invited to provide demonstration to participants on cooking simple but healthy recipes as prescribed by nutritionists, using limited cookery available in the hostels, which generally comprised of an electric stove, a pot and a frying pan. Through the train-the-trainer process, participants are trained to put into practice what they have learnt about nutrition-balanced cooking to other hall residents and even to their families at home.



Beyond food and drink

APIAS aims not only to satisfy your appetite, but also the mental wellbeing of the community. "It is not only about food and drink within a meal. Interpersonal communication and sharing throughout the dining process are also essential nutrition to the healthy development of familial relationship," commented Fanny Chan.

"Stories related to food can be shared," she added. "Intergenerational collaboration has proved to be beneficial to close gaps between elderly and young people."

Participants have reported changes in attitudes and impressions of senior citizens, including their older family members, who are powerful and skillful with rich life experiences. Working as a team, students appreciated the older citizens for their being attentive to detail, as well as being organized, devoted and enthusiastic.

Students had undergone a self-reflective process after the programme and learnt to be more respectful to elderly, while treasuring the opportunity to dine with their families as well as appreciating the efforts of those who prepare the meals.

They are now more aware of how food can affect their physical wellbeing, and have taken one big step towards the prevention of chronic and non-communicable diseases in the long term.

