CARING FOR SENIORS
CARING FOR SENIORS

Guide to Effective Collaborations and Partnerships for Senior Activity Centres

A Centre of Specialisation Project by Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities
Supported by the National Council of Social Service
CONTENTS

Foreword viii
Preface x
Acknowledgements xiii
Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited xv
Introduction xvii

Part One
   About SACs

Chapter 1  Introduction to Senior Activity Centres (SACs) 3
   1.1 Successful Ageing for Singapore 3
   1.2 What are Senior Activity Centres 6
   1.3 Objectives of Senior Activity Centres 6
   1.4 Significance of Senior Activity Centres 7

Chapter 2  Meeting the Needs of Seniors through SACs 9
   2.1 Identifying the Needs of Seniors 9
   2.2 Using Rolland’s Model to Understand the Needs of Seniors 10
   2.3 Knowing the Significance of Rolland’s Biopsychosocial Model in Meeting the Needs of Seniors through Programmes/Activities 12
   2.4 Linking Seniors to Services and Resources in the Community 14
Part Two
Partnerships & Collaborations

Chapter 3  Partnerships and Collaborations  17
3.1 Introduction to Partnerships and Collaborations  17
3.2 Benefits of Partnerships  18
3.3 Attributes of Partnerships and Collaborations  19
3.4 Forming Partnerships: A Framework  21
3.5 Understanding the Framework of a Partnership:
   An Example  22
3.6 Why and How Partnerships are Formed  24
3.7 Understanding How a Partnership is Formed:
   Examples  25

Chapter 4  Rapport Building and Forming Partnerships  31
4.1 Rapport Building with Seniors through
   Information Gathering on Community
   Surrounding Seniors’ Residence  32
4.2 Forging Partnerships with Stakeholders  32
4.3 Partnering with External Stakeholders  36
4.4 Partnership Synergy  39

Chapter 5  Evaluating Partnerships and Collaborations  47
5.1 Purpose of Evaluating Partnerships  47
5.2 Process of Evaluating Partnerships  48
5.3 Evaluation Plan for Evaluating Partners  52

Chapter 6  Challenges of Partnerships and Their Solutions  55
6.1 Challenges of Partnerships  55
6.2 Overcoming the Challenges in Partnerships  58
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 7</th>
<th>Partnerships Case Study – Cared Living Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Introducing the THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Meeting the Needs of Seniors through Links to Services/Resources in the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Getting to Know the Community and Gathering Information of Client’s Personal Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Partnerships/Collaborations by the THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Challenges faced by the THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Measures to Overcome the Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Outcome of the Collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 8</th>
<th>The Distant Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The concept of Senior Activity Centres (SACs) was first introduced by the Singapore Government in the early 1990s. The aim then was to reach out and help needy seniors staying in one- and two-room HDB\(^1\) rental flats to age-in-place, and live independently.

Since the set up of the first SAC 15 years ago, many seniors across different parts of Singapore have been served by SACs under different Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs). Their tireless commitment towards the seniors is exemplary.

Nonetheless, more can be done to enable and empower these seniors to age better. To do so would mean a need for creative collaborations and partnerships among SACs, as well as with external agencies, especially those extending relevant services to the seniors in the community.

It is for this reason that this guidebook *Caring for Seniors: Guide to Effective Collaborations and Partnerships for Senior Activity Centres*\(^2\) has been published. I’m pleased to mention that this project has been undertaken by Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited (THKMC), with support from the National Council Social Service (NCSS). This guidebook serves as an important reference for SACs to understand the myriad opportunities and challenges in a collaboration, and thereafter to develop the right approach, and innovate ways to partner, both in the short- and long-term – all of which are geared to serve the seniors more effectively.

\(^1\) Housing Development Board, which manages public housing in Singapore

\(^2\) This book is a follow-up to the first book *Caring for Seniors: Effective Programmes for Senior Activity Centres*. TOUCH Community Services Limited, 2012
The Singapore society is ageing fast. By 2030, seniors who are expected to live alone will rise to 83,000. Soon there will be more than 50 SACs serving about 30,000 vulnerable seniors. It is hence vitally important for SACs to come together and tap on one another’s strengths, to achieve synergistic capability and capacity to meet the expanding breadth and depth of seniors’ needs in the future.

I am confident that with the introduction of this guidebook, many SACs will benefit from the knowledge, practices and experiences shared by THKMC. Itself a Centre of Specialisation, I also believe that THKMC is well ready to share with their counterparts in the SAC sector beyond what is covered in the guidebook.

Finally, as a community serving seniors, let’s extend our hands to one another so that together, we may better help seniors to be socially engaged, and ultimately, inspire them to age with grace and dignity.

Sim Gim Guan  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Council of Social Service

---

3 The Straits Times, 12 Apr 2012
4 An initiative by the National Council of Social Service
Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong, in a recent speech in November 2013, implored Singaporeans to “bring the ‘kampong spirit’ back into our community by looking out for each other”. This message is especially relevant and vital for our nation as increasingly more seniors are staying well and active, and living longer. It also means there is a greater demand for eldercare services. To ensure that we continue to deliver high quality services for our seniors, we as service providers need to partner and work together.

Senior Activity Centres (SACs) play a pivotal role in helping our seniors to integrate as valued members of society. It gives them a sense of belonging to the local communities they live in, and keeps them active and well in the community. When we think about “Caring for Seniors’ in the SACs context, we often think about what we need to do in order to provide care for our seniors. Effective partnerships and collaborations are not often at the forefront of our minds. They are however intrinsic and important elements in ensuring the successful operation of SACs.

By publishing this guidebook *Caring for Seniors: Guide to Effective Collaborations and Partnerships for Senior Activity Centres*, we hope to turn the focus on partnerships and collaborations. They are core to SACs’ successful operations. This guidebook highlights why and how partnerships and collaborations are established, and the key roles they

---

play in caring for our seniors. We are humbled that we are able to share Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities’ (THKMC) experiences in operating 14 SACs – the approach and ways through which we develop strong partners and work collaboratively in various capacities. We hope that this guidebook can be used as a tool for SACs and beyond, and that it will be a guide on fostering effective partnerships and collaborations.

It is gratifying to know that this guidebook has been developed as part of a series of Centre of Specialisation projects supported by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS). I applaud NCSS’ commitment in ensuring that expertise and knowledge gained by SACs are shared, and that we can learn from one another in our journey in “caring for seniors”.

The guidebook arises from the good work of and collaborations among SACs – THKMC SACs and SACs under different Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs). I am grateful to all the dedicated SAC managers and staff, and those who have contributed to the book in one way or another. Their input and contributions have been invaluable. My appreciation also to NCSS, our government agencies and community partners for their support, encouragement and patience. We hope that this guidebook will bring about positive changes in embracing partnerships and collaborations.

Lee Kim Siang BBM (L)
Chairman
Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited
This publication is part of the National Council of Social Service’s (NCSS) Centre of Specialisation (CoS) initiative. Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities was appointed a CoS in 2012 and would like to acknowledge NCSS’ support and partnership in making this guidebook available to the various voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs). We hope that the guidebook will highlight the importance of partnerships and collaborations in the operation of Senior Activity Centres.
In the course of writing this guidebook, focus group discussions were held with some of our fellow Senior Activity Centres (SACs). The experiences and ideas shared during the focus group discussions have been incorporated in this guidebook wherever possible.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the following partners for their participation. Without their contributions and invaluable feedback, this guidebook would not have been possible.

Mr Ang Yong Huat  Chong Hua Tong Senior Activity Centre
Mr Joseph Cheong  THK SAC Group
Mr Ian Foo  THK SAC @ MacPherson
Ms Ho Gang Hiang  Community Care Network Senior Activity Centre @ Teck Ghee 420
Mr David Koh  Fei Yue Senior Activity Centre (Teck Whye)
Mr Koh Guan Huat  Moral Senior Activity Centre @ Kaki Bukit
Ms Julia Lam  TOUCH Senior Activity Centre
Ms Karen Lam  Community Care Network Senior Activity Centre @ Teck Ghee 420
Ms Lee Li Juian  King George’s Ave Senior Activity Centre
Mr Tommy Lee  THK SAC @ AMK 645
Mr Lim Yubing  
COMNET@ Sin Ming
Senior Activity Centre

Ms Lin Pei Lian  
Kreta Ayer Senior Activity Centre (Chin Swee)

Mr Veera Moorthi  
THK SAC @ Ang Mo Kio 257

Mr Maikal Nadan  
CARElderly Senior Activity Centre

Ms Elsie Ng  
THK SAC @ Toa Payoh 15

Ms Angelia Seow  
NTUC Silver ACE @ Bishan

Mr Michael Sim  
Indus Moral CARE

Ms Francisa Sally Tan  
NTUC Silver ACE @ Bishan

Ms Tay Zhen Wei  
NTUC Eldercare (Henderson)

Ms Judy Wee  
PEACE-Connect Senior Activity Centre

Ms Carol Wong  
Kreta Ayer Senior Activity Centre (Jalan Kukoh)

Mr Jegathisan Yogaraja  
Sunlove Senior Activity Centre (Chai Chee)
THYE HUA KWN MORAL CHARITIES LIMITED

Since its establishment in 1978, Thye Hua Kwan Moral Society (THKMS) continuously strives to be a one-stop service hub for the less fortunate. Attributed to the overwhelming support received from both the government and the public, THK has been able to continually expand its centres and services to reach out to more people. The community-based services of THK cater to the social, health, emotional, educational and financial needs of all people, including the needy, disabled and seniors.

In October 2011, THK underwent restructuring to consign its centres and services to a new subsidiary welfare arm – Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Limited (THKMC). THKMC was set up to ensure proper governance as a non-profit voluntary welfare organisation in Singapore and to have better segregation of the social services. With its own independent board of directors, THKMC aims to assure the community that their donations are in good hands.

To date, THKMC has over 50 welfare services, including the Ang Mo Kio – Thye Hua Kwan Hospital, various welfare homes, family service centres, senior activity centres, communal housing, community-based services, and case management services. THKMC generally caters directly to beneficiaries and provides relief to those who are in need, regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, language, or religion.
Singapore is becoming an ageing society and the number of seniors living alone in Singapore is increasing. This has sparked significant concern from the government and public. The number of seniors living alone in Singapore is expected to rise to 83,000 by 2030; this was reported by The Straits Times on 12 April, 2012.¹

Noting that there will be more numbers of seniors in the coming years, Senior Activity Centres (SACs) might feel overburdened while dealing with the multifaceted needs of the seniors. In order to enhance the strength of SACs so as to provide support to the seniors, SACs need to form partnerships with local organisations, community groups and government agencies. This guidebook Caring for Seniors: Guide to effective Collaborations and Partnerships for Senior Activity Centres answers vital questions like why and how partnerships and collaborations are formed by SACs.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

HELEN ADAMS KELLER
American Author, Political Activist and Lecturer

It is well established that social isolation is a serious health risk, particularly for seniors who are more likely to develop clinical dementia over a period of three years.² Considering this is a crucial issue in today’s

society, SACs are poised to play an important role in providing seniors with a place to interact and socialise. By working in a collaborative manner with a partner organisation, SACs can organise events and activities; this is one way of addressing the issue of social isolation amongst seniors. This book intends to help SACs identify potential organisations that they can seek to partner and collaborate with. The case study “Cared Living Concept” in chapter 7 and the case study of Mr Wong and Mr Lim in chapter 3 will help illustrate the need for partnerships and collaborations of the SACs.
PART ONE

ABOUT SACs
2   Caring For Seniors
INTRODUCTION TO SENIOR ACTIVITY CENTRES (SACs)

1.1 Successful Ageing for Singapore

The Committee on Ageing Issues (CAI) in 2006 reported that from 2006 to 2030, Singapore will witness an unusual extensive age shift. The number of residents aged 65 years or older will multiply threefold from the current 300,000 to 900,000 in 2030. Going by statistics, it is estimated that the number of seniors will increase from 8.4% in 2005 to 18.7% in 2030.
Referring to Figure 1.1, it is clear that Singapore is quickly becoming an ageing society. As such, the CAI sought to realise the vision of “Successful Ageing for Singapore”. It means that all levels of society are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of an ageing Singapore. There are two desired outcomes of this vision:

a. To empower individuals to age with dignity and security, as integral members of society.5

b. The family, as the first line of support, should look after the physical and emotional needs of their senior members.6

---

At the 3rd Ageing Asia Investment Forum held on 11 April, 2012, Madam Halimah Yacob, then Minister of State for Ministry of Social and Family Development, discussed Singapore’s serious population issue. The number of seniors living alone is expected to increase significantly from the current 35,000 to 61,000 by 2020 and 83,000 by 2030. Madam Halimah highlighted the crucial role played by SACs in facing the challenges of a fast ageing Singapore. She believes that SACs can be a prime centre of support for vulnerable seniors by detecting their problems and finding suitable resources and solutions to solve them, so as to enhance their quality of life.

---

1.2 What are Senior Activity Centres (SACs)

SACs were established as a result of a collaboration between the then Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) and the Housing and Development Board (HDB). They are “drop-in” centres for poor and needy and vulnerable seniors staying in one- or two-room HDB rental flats. SACs form the hub for activities, providing a warm, receptive and familiar environment for seniors to drop by during SACs’ opening hours.

1.3 Objectives of Senior Activity Centres (SACs)

SACs were developed to meet the following objectives:

a. *To improve the quality of life of seniors with low-incomes*
   SACs serve as a hub for activities where seniors can gather and engage in meaningful recreational activities, which are designed to keep them physically, socially and mentally active.

b. *To prevent social isolation of poor and vulnerable seniors*
   SACs allow seniors to socialise with others in their community and lead meaningful lives, thus helping them to continue to be active members of the community and enabling them to age-in-place.

c. *To facilitate better co-ordination in the provision of community-based support services to seniors*
   SACs play a key role in advocating, linking up, and monitoring a support system of medical, home care, and social services. This is to enable seniors to gain access to available community services/resources.

---

1.4 Significance of Senior Activity Centres

SACs function as a one-stop service and resource centre to meet the needs of seniors. As seniors frequent SACs, SAC staff naturally become the first-line of service providers, whom the seniors can approach to address the various issues they face. To better manage these issues, it is vital SACs form partnerships and collaborations with different stakeholders. By tapping on the resources of their partners, they will be able to provide effective support to seniors. Hence, SAC staff are encouraged to constantly keep tab of the community resources that are available. This will help them work towards realising the vision of “Successful Ageing for Singapore”.
MEETING THE NEEDS OF SENIORS THROUGH SACs

2.1 Identify the Needs of Seniors

A study conducted by the *Lancet* medical journal suggests that Singapore’s mortality rate has dropped from 64% to 24% in the last four decades and the number of seniors are expected to increase rapidly. Unfortunately, the process of ageing is most likely to be accompanied by illnesses such as dementia and depression, loss of autonomy and costly medical expenses. Therefore, Singapore has to be prepared to face the challenges of an ageing population, which requires studying and predicting the needs of the seniors and determining what Singapore as a nation can do to meet their demands.

---

2.2 Using Rolland’s Model to Understand the Needs of Seniors

The needs of seniors can be best illustrated with the framework of Rolland’s Biopsychosocial Model.

![Figure 2.1: Biopsychosocial Model by John S. Rolland](#)

Rolland’s Model looks at the interaction between biological, psychological, and socio-cultural factors directly related to an individual’s health. These factors are believed to interact dynamically and are inter-related (if one of the three factors is affected, the other two factors will be affected as well).

---

**Biological Aspect**

The biological aspect illustrates the multiple health problems potentially faced by seniors due to the process of ageing or because of genetic inheritance. The biological aspect can be addressed by providing seniors with various health services, such as medical escort services, medication, monitoring services and appropriate dietary services.

**Psychological Aspect**

The psychological aspect addresses the importance of seniors’ psychological needs, in particular, their emotional needs. For instance, for seniors who have been working for about half or three-quarters of their lives, the abrupt transition from work life to retirement could potentially leave a “gap” in their lives resulting in boredom and a feeling of insignificance. Negative emotions may thus manifest in the form of anxiety, depression, or other psycho-emotional problems. In such instances, SACs are well-placed to provide support and fill in the “gaps” for these seniors.
Socio-cultural Aspect

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), the socio-cultural aspect addresses the importance of how seniors adjust to new social roles caused by ageing. SACs can serve as a hub to provide volunteering opportunities for seniors and tap on their specific skills and expertise; in turn, the seniors feel empowered to be able to impart their knowledge and skills to others. This allows the seniors to be involved in the community and promote active ageing. A clear understanding of Rolland’s Model will help SACs to serve the needs of seniors more efficiently and effectively.

2.3 Knowing the Significance of Rolland’s Biopsychosocial Model In Meeting Seniors’ Needs Through Programmes/Activities

Activities to Keep Seniors Socially Engaged and Cognitively Stimulated

A senior’s life can be tiresome and meaningless, and seniors are more prone to progressive diseases such as dementia if they are not engaged in activities that are cognitively stimulating. In order to meet their psychological needs, as addressed by Rolland in his Biopsychosocial Model, SACs can organise programmes and activities to help the seniors socialise and interact with other seniors, thereby, reducing their social isolation and promoting the idea of ageing-in-place.

A study by the TSAO Foundation in 2011 says that older men and women who have stronger social networks tend to have lower incidences of psycho-emotional and health-related problems, as opposed to those with weaker social networks.

---

11 Reeder, Leo G. Socio-cultural Aspects of Living. An article published by NCBI. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1575842/pdf/califmed00166-0078.pdf

12 Dementia is defined by the World Health Organization as a disease caused by the deterioration of the brain tissues due to lack of cognitive stimulation. http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs362/en/

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
To Keep Seniors Socially Engaged and Cognitively Stimulated

- Encourage newspaper reading among seniors.
- Engage seniors in traditional games like Chinese chess, Carrom, Sudoku, Mahjong, Jenga, Mancala, Bingo, etc.
- Encourage seniors to learn new skills e.g. internet and iPad use, English language.

Activities to Keep Seniors Physically Fit

Rolland’s Biopsychosocial Model also addresses the various health issues that seniors face. To keep seniors physically active, SACs can organise exercise classes where seniors can have access to various exercise equipment. By doing so, they have easy access to equipment to help keep them fit and physically active. In addition, SACs can conduct regular morning exercise regimes such as tai chi or qi-gong for seniors.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES
To Keep Seniors Physically Fit

- Provide exercise equipment like weights and treadmills to encourage seniors to keep physically active.
- Organise health check-ups and other services like blood pressure monitoring, distributing Traditional Chinese Medicine.
- To meet the needs of seniors who are very poor and struggling with multiple physical problems, SACs can arrange Doctors-On-Wheels (DOW) services, where medicines and other services are provided at subsidised rates.

2.4 Linking Seniors to Services and Resources in the Community

There are a number of community services to meet the needs of seniors and to help them age-in-place in the community. However, it is often a challenge for seniors to navigate through these services. As a social service hub, SACs play a key role in identifying seniors who need support by firstly referring them to suitable services and secondly by monitoring their progress.
PART TWO

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS
3.1 Introduction to Partnerships and Collaborations

The term “partnership” is defined as a voluntary collaborative agreement between two or more parties in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task, and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits. Often, both the terms – “partnerships” and “collaborations” – are used interchangeably. However, it is important to understand that partnerships have to be established first before collaborations can occur. This chapter seeks to explain how SACs can form successful partnerships to work towards effective collaborations.

14 Building Partnerships, http://it4b.icstl.su/1000ventures_e/business_guide/partnerships_main.html
3.2 Benefits of Partnerships

Meaningful partnerships are the foundation for success. There are many benefits brought about by engaging in partnerships. Some of the benefits include the following:

More Resources
The most obvious benefit is that it enables partners in a partnership to have more resources to tap on and help partnerships to flourish.

Creativity
By forming partnerships with identified potential partners, creativity is stimulated and this helps in the exploration of ways and ideas that deviate from the norm. Partnerships can also challenge accepted ideas and help in the discovery of innovative solutions to multi-faceted problems.

Comprehensive Thinking
Working together in groups allows partners to see the problem from multiple angles, have a clear view of the various issues which contribute to the problem and thereafter, help to come up with possible solutions.

Practicality
Professionals from various disciplines can work together to tackle multi-faceted problems and come up with sound solutions. This is because they are likely to be more knowledgeable in their areas of expertise.

Transformability
All organisations have their unique set of rules, culture, procedures, and methods of tackling problems. Partners can learn from one another and apply key lessons to achieve partnership goals.
**Shared Responsibility**

Partnerships focus on the sharing of responsibilities among partners. This is achieved by shouldering the burden and stress of a situation. These include sharing the success of collaborations as well as the liability of unsuccessful collaborations by all the partners.

### KEY FEATURES OF PARTNERSHIPS AT A GLANCE

1. **The mutual dependency** that arises from sharing risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits.
2. **Explicit commitment** or agreement on the part of the participants.
3. **Working together** in the most strategic partnerships, the partners work together at all levels and stages, from the design and governance of the initiative to implementation and evaluation.
4. **Shared competencies and resources** through partnerships are a mechanism to leverage different types of resources and competencies.

### 3.3 Attributes of Partnerships and Collaboration

**Partnerships**

There has been much literature written about partnerships. According to Ros Carnwell and Alex Carson, the attributes of partnerships include:

- Trust in partners
- Respect for partners
- Teamwork
- Partners share the same interests and goals
- Appropriate governance structure
- Transparency between partners
- Reciprocity
- Empathy
- Agreement about objectives
- Eliminating boundaries

---

Collaboration

Collaboration is frequently equated with a bond, union or partnership, characterised by mutual goals and commitments.\(^\text{16}\) The significant attribute of collaboration is that “two or more individuals must be involved in a joint venture, typically one of an intellectual in nature … in which participants willingly participate in planning and decision making”.\(^\text{17}\) Research suggests that joint working is the defining attribute of collaborations coupled with trust and respect for partners.\(^\text{18}\) However, successful results of collaborations can be achieved by joint assessments, planning, service delivery, and evaluation.


\(^\text{17}\) Henneman et al. 1995, 104

3.4 Forming Partnerships: A Framework

**Involvement.** The first stage of the partnership framework includes:

a. Identifying potential partners and getting them involved with the SACs and also identifying the needs of the seniors.

b. Raising awareness within the group of seniors as well as the partners. On the one hand, the seniors come to know about the partners who are involved with the SACs to help them out in their time of need. On the other hand, the partners also identify the areas where the SACs lack sufficient resources which they specialise in, thus offering relevant services to the seniors.

**Participation** between the potential partners and seniors can be encouraged by:

a. Inviting potential partners to participate actively in events organised by SACs for the seniors.

b. Informing potential partners about the nature of operations of the SACs.

c. Helping partners to develop a clear sense of what to expect from SACs and to determine whether a partnership has to be forged with the SACs.

**Partnership**, the last stage of the framework, involves the SAC partnering a partner. This happens only when both the SAC and the partner organisation agree to the terms of how seniors within the service cluster can be supported. After forming a successful partnership, SACs must work towards developing the attributes of the partnership (in section 4.2). Attaining these attributes would naturally lead to an effective and successful collaboration, because trust and respect are key attributes of partnerships.

---

3.5 Understanding the Framework of Partnerships: An Example

Seniors have a higher risk of being targeted by criminals due to their frailty and vulnerability. To adequately protect them, SACs and Neighbourhood Police Posts (NPPs) can come together to partner and collaborate. While SACs provide access to active and independent seniors in the community, NPPs serve to prevent, deter and detect crimes, and ensure the safety and security of residents. SACs can work with NPPs to educate seniors about safety and security, and on how to best protect themselves by being vigilant.
Involvement
*SAC as a Driver in the First Stage of Participation Framework*
SAC, upon realising a couple of reported cases of assaults on seniors in the neighbourhood, organises an educational talk, involving seniors in the neighbourhood. It invites a NPP to the session to help create awareness and educate seniors about security issues.

Involvement of the seniors in such talks help them to learn what to do, what to look out for and who to call when faced with a criminal act. It also enables them to help a victim of a criminal act.

Participation
*SAC, NPP and RC as Facilitators in the Second Stage of Participation Framework*
SAC acts as a facilitator to ensure seniors are informed about the free talk by the NPP. The centre uses its activity room as the education venue; light snacks and refreshments are provided to participants.

NPP, by partnering with the SAC, addresses the safety issues of seniors. The SAC finds an ideal partner in the NPP to give educational talks to seniors, making them self-confident and vigilant.

Residents’ Committee (RC) and Community Centre (CC) are kept informed about the NPP talks for seniors. They can help to advertise the talks on their notice boards and to provide information to their volunteers, members and grassroots personnel. All of this serves to ensure maximum participation in the talks by seniors.

Partnership
*SAC Forms Partnerships with NPP, RC and CC in the Last Stage of Partnership Framework*
SAC, NPP, RC and CC work towards some common goals and objectives to ensure local senior residents are engaged, educated and empowered about safety and security.

Outcomes
Both the NPP and SAC ensure that the goal of helping the seniors is met by setting up the following indicators:
- Number of participants who benefitted from the educational talk sessions
- Number of talks held per year
- Number of crimes committed in the local area relating to seniors
- Participants feedback (post-talk survey)
- Review of partnership and feedback from Drivers and Facilitators (face-to-face meeting and survey)

*Figure 3.2: An Example of Framework of Partnerships*
3.6 Why and How Partnerships are Formed

SACs need to form effective partnerships in order to tap on the resources, skills and knowledge networks of potential partners and service providers. This allows SACs to better serve the needs of the seniors. To ensure that the needs of seniors are being addressed properly, it is necessary to build rapport with them when they “drop-in” at the centres. SAC staff should try to know and understand their different problems or issues (e.g. areas of concern, health-related problems, financial and family issues) by closely monitoring them. The SAC staff should also be well informed about local resources and community services available, so that they can refer the seniors for help and connect them to the appropriate services.

The whole process of identifying the appropriate service providers and referring seniors to them is more effective when there is a partnership in place. The service providers then act as partners in the partnership with the SACs.

It is hoped that partners share certain common viewpoint and approach as a SAC. This way, the chance for them to work towards solving seniors’ problems in a collaborative manner is greater. In this regard, the SAC should try to appreciate its partners’ organisation visions and values before forming a partnership. Also it is important for the SAC and its partners to communicate with one another frankly. This is to highlight possible barriers or issues that may arise upon the formation of a partnership, and how potential disagreements and conflicts may be resolved. Close dialogue between parties will instil a sense of confidence within the SAC and partner organisations. In turn, this will prepare them to take precautionary measures to avoid future conflicts.

Once the partnership is formed, where the SAC and its partners start working collaboratively, it is crucial for the SAC to measure some indicators. This is to determine if specific benefits have been derived from the partnership. The indicators should be based on the help rendered to
Partnerships and Collaborations

the seniors by the partner organisations. This way, the outcome of the SAC’s collaboration with its partners can be monitored and evaluated. More will be discussed about partnerships and collaborations in the next chapter, along with an example in chapter 7.

3.7 Understanding How a Partnership is Formed: Examples

a. Wish to Live More: Story of Mr Wong

Eighty-two-year-old Mr Wong lives in a two-room HDB rental flat. Although he has nine children, his relationship with all of them is strained. This is due to long-standing unresolved family conflicts. Three months ago, as he tried hard to cope with social isolation, disaster unfortunately hit him. He had a fall in his bathroom and fractured his back and right hip. He was hospitalised for over two weeks and attended a Day Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) for two-week post-hospitalisation.

Mr Wong also has several chronic diseases such as hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, glaucoma and osteoporosis. He is usually compliant in taking his medication; however he realises that he has been getting forgetful since his fall and thus has stopped taking his medications.

His neighbour Mr Chang, having observed that Mr Wong was in a vulnerable condition, asked him to visit the SAC centre near their block. With some hesitation, he joined the SAC.

When Mr Wong started visiting the SAC, the staff noticed that there were some mood changes in him. He had weakness in both his legs and walked with an unsteady gait. Gradually, Mr Wong became less chatty, seemed to be depressed and often mentioned that he had no wish to live anymore, since he no longer could manage the activities of daily living.

The SAC staff identified that Mr Wong would benefit from community intervention and support. So they referred him to
Senior Activity Centre (Cluster Support) [SAC(CS)] for case management and CREST (Community Resource and Engagement Support Team). The SAC(CS) case manager conducted a thorough assessment of Mr Wong’s needs. These included family, social, medical, financial, home environment and psychosocial aspects.

After conducting the assessment, the SACs took the following action:

- Partnered with a hospital pharmacy to provide Mr Wong with pre-packaged medication.
- Referred him to Home Help Services so that he could receive assistance with self-care and housekeeping.
- Referred him to Escort Services as he required assistance to attend hospital outpatient appointments.
- Assisted with his application for financial assistance as Mr Wong’s savings were depleted and he had no source of income.
- The case manager worked on the recommendation of the occupational therapist (OT) to facilitate and coordinate home modifications for Mr Wong, including installation of grab bars in the toilet.
- Assisted with the application through the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) Senior Mobility Fund for a walking frame to aid Mr Wong with his walking.

The CREST team assessed that Mr Wong was at risk of depression and conducted on him a basic screening assessment for depression. He was subsequently referred to the mental health department for medical assessment. Mr Wong was later prescribed anti-depressants in order to cure his depression.

Positive Changes in Mr Wong’s Life
Following the formation of partnerships with the Cluster Support, AIC and CREST, the SAC staff closely supervised Mr Wong’s
MERRY CHRISTMAS
mental and physical condition and referred him to the relevant services. The SAC staff were able to provide the service providers with useful information on Mr Wong as they knew him well and had a good relationship with him. They also noticed that Mr Wong had started taking interest in the activities organised by the centre. He also became cheerful and started to make friends in his community. Today, he can manage his daily activities, and has expressed his wish to live many more years.

The SAC will continue to monitor his mental, social and physical well-being and liaise with the Cluster Support and CREST; this is in case of changes, improvements or new needs. Meanwhile, to help ensure that Mr Wong is safe and well, the SAC staff and volunteers will go on visiting him at his home, especially when he does not visit the SAC for a few days.

Impact of Partnership
The example above shows how the SAC has tapped on the resources available in the community by partnering community, government and private agencies to meet the needs of a senior citizen. It demonstrates the SAC’s adoption of a holistic approach to serving seniors with multifaceted physical and psychological problems. Evidently, a well-established relationship with service providers makes a service linkage more effective and seamless.

b. Triumph over Tragedy: Story of Mr Lim
Misfortune struck Mr Lim two years ago when he had an accident with a motor vehicle. Seventy-four year old Mr Lim became wheelchair-bound since, and has also survived a major heart attack after the accident.

His wife passed away over 10 years ago and they have no children. Mr Lim is a retired cleaner and relies on his savings for daily necessities like rental, utility bills and food. A month ago, Mr Lim came to know about the SAC located near his home, through
attending a community outreach event organised by the Active Ageing Committee (AAC), which promotes active ageing in the community, and a local Resident Committee (RC) member, who encouraged Mr Lim to visit his local SAC so that he may participate in activities and light exercises.

Mr Lim decided to participate with his friend Mr Fong. They both became members of the SAC and started visiting the centre a few times a week. The SAC staff began to get acquainted with them and knew them well over time.

Mr Lim and Mr Fong also started taking interest in indoor games such as tai chi and chess. Meanwhile, the SAC staff noted the physical disability of Mr Lim and referred him to SAC (CS) for detailed assessment.

Today, Mr Lim enjoys spending his daytime at the SAC instead of facing the four walls of his one-room flat, and in the company of his 12-inch television.

How Does Mr Lim’s Story Relate to Partnership?
The AAC and RC members have been working closely with the local SAC with the mission to promote active ageing amongst seniors. All three parties have conducted several meetings together, which helps to foster healthy working relationships among them. Through collaboration, the AAC and RC members are familiar with SAC services and activities, enabling and inspiring them to advocate and encourage residents to visit the SAC.

Note: The above examples are based on real-life stories. They show how SACs can partner with various organisations for the benefit of seniors. The names mentioned have been changed for confidentiality reasons.
RAPPORT BUILDING AND FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

The illustration below shows how SACs can tap on to the resources of relevant stakeholders, both in the local community as well as beyond the community. This is to better serve the needs of seniors.

Figure 4.1: Partnering SACs and Relevant Stakeholders
4.1 Rapport Building with Seniors Through Information Gathering on Community Surrounding Seniors’ Residence

Effective rapport building with seniors begins with knowing the local community that surrounds the seniors’ residence. By studying and understanding the local community, SACs will be better positioned to serve the seniors in the community. The information to gather may include the culture of the community (where the seniors live), their neighbours, common meeting places, etc. Moreover, it is important to collect relevant personal information on the seniors. This helps to keep track of their wellbeing and through it, build up a sense of familiarity between the seniors and SAC staff.

4.2 Forming Partnerships with the Stakeholders

It has been mentioned in the previous chapter that it is vital for SACs to tap on the resources and aid of multiple community partners, so as to effectively meet the needs of seniors. Here, we present a list of common local community partners, their area of expertise and resources available to them.

a. Educational Institutions

SACs can work with nearby educational institutions to organise events where students can socialise with seniors. Such events provide excellent opportunities for intergenerational bonding. Students can get in touch with the seniors and in turn, seniors can impart their knowledge and expertise to the students. SACs can formally write to educational institutions and invite students to hold activities for the seniors. In some instances, students who find satisfaction in helping the seniors may continue to volunteer at the SACs in their free time.
b. **Neighbourhood Police Post (NPP)**

SACs should know their NPPs well to alert seniors about criminal activities in the community. SACs may arrange for the police to educate seniors about security and safety issues. For example, the police can discuss recent cases of theft and fraud involving seniors. By being aware of such incidences in their community, the seniors will be more alert of potential dangers.

c. **Community Development Councils (CDCs)/Social Service Offices (SSOs)**

The CDCs/SSOs can provide various community and social assistance services to seniors in the community. For instance, under the ComCare Transition Scheme, seniors having no or little family support may get temporary assistance in the form of vouchers (rental, utilities and conservancy charges), monthly cash grants and medical assistance. The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) will set up about 20 Social Service Offices islandwide over the next 2-3 years to serve needy residents in HDB towns. These offices will be built on the existing network of help touch points. They will also strengthen service delivery as social assistance and services become more accessible and coordinated in each locality.

d. **Grassroots Organisations (GROs)/Community Centres (CCs)/Residents’ Committee (RCs)**

One of the objectives of GROs is to help those in need. Examples of GROs are Community Centres (CCs) and Residents’ Committees (RCs). Community Centres manage the common meeting ground for residents by organising recreational activities and learning opportunities, whereas Residents’ Committees work closely with

---

other GROs and various government agencies to improve the physical environment and safety of their community.

e. **HDB and Town Councils (TCs)**
Seniors who live alone or with another senior frequently run into issues that arise from situations in common property areas, such as corridors, void decks, lifts, water tanks, public lighting, and open spaces of their flats. Therefore, it is important for SACs to establish good working relations with Town Councils (TCs) to manage, maintain and improve the common property areas of HDB flats and commercial properties within the community. TCs should be approached to address problems like the cluttering of corridor spaces, stairways, and other relevant issues that affect seniors.

f. **Family Service Centres (FSCs)**
FSCs provide a range of assistances including short-term financial assistance, counselling services, family medication, and information and referral (I&R) services to needy seniors. As there are slight variations in the services provided by FSCs and SACs, networking sessions between them and with the seniors should be held. This is to facilitate a better understanding of the services provided by both FSCs and SACs.

g. **Religious Groups**
Religion to a large extent helps to shape one’s beliefs, personality and actions. It is therefore good to connect seniors to their respective religious affiliations. This helps to meet their spiritual needs. Especially for those seniors who feel that “something is missing” in their lives, religious groups can play an important role in helping them find meaning and purpose in life.
h. Polyclinics/Hospitals/Healthcare Groups

In the area of medical aid for seniors, it is good for SACs to know the contact details of Medical Social Workers (MSWs) in the nearest polyclinics and hospitals. This facilitates critical support for seniors who are unable to afford the various healthcare services and facilities. The types of assistance that a MSW may provide include:

- Subsidised outpatient fees
- Subsidised walking aids, listening aids, and spectacles
- Free short-term supply of health supplements
- Arrangement for inpatient or outpatient rehabilitation centres
- Application for transport vouchers
- Referral services to help seniors access to community-based services (e.g. case management services, home help services, etc.)
- Referral services to help seniors to be placed in nursing home placement, if necessary
4.3 Partnering with External Stakeholders

In order to better meet the myriad needs of seniors, SACs must be willing to explore and work with diverse partners and sponsors who are not in the local community. Below are references of partners and initiatives SACs can tap on to help seniors to age in place.

a. *Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)*\(^{21}\)

Agencies such as the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) provide holistic care for seniors. The AIC is an independent corporate entity under the Ministry of Health Holdings (MOHH), which develops and promotes client-centric initiatives and programmes to help seniors and their caregivers to better navigate the healthcare system. The AIC facilitates multiple schemes for seniors and caregivers and referral services for Home Help, Day Centres and Stay-In Facilities. Such coordinated programmes include the Medifund Silver and Senior’s Mobility Fund for seniors and Caregiver Training Grant (CTG) for caregivers.

b. *Agencies Promoting Lifelong Learning Initiatives*

Lifelong learning helps seniors to maintain mental alertness and be engaged in society. Also, it has been shown that continuous learning helps in the prevention of dementia in older persons.

In Singapore, there are centres in local communities that start programmes to promote active ageing. One example is the Marine Parade Family Service Centre. It has started a community college “YAH!”\(^{22}\) (Young-At-Heart), a programme that helps individuals aged 55 and above to take lifelong certificate courses in areas covering line-dance, yoga and creative painting. These courses aim to

\(^{21}\) [Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) official website. http://www.aic.sg/]

promote productive and active ageing. SACs may invite organisers of the YAH! Programme to give talks and promote the programme to the seniors.

c. **National Library Board (NLB)**
   Another initiative introduced is by the National Library Board (NLB). It lends books to SACs, to promote reading and learning amongst seniors. SACs may like to request large print and audio books that seniors may find more appropriate and appealing.

d. **National Arts Council (NAC)**
   The National Arts Council (NAC) has a Silver Arts Programme that involves artists and community partners who teach various aspects of the arts to seniors. In September 2012, a Silver Arts Exhibition was held at the National Library Building, where artworks by seniors were displayed.

e. **Infocomm Development Authority (IDA)**
   A complementary initiative by the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) involves the setting up of ‘Silver Infocomm Hotspots’ at accessible locations island-wide, such as Community Centres, Senior Citizen Connect areas or Clans and Societal buildings. It provides access to computers and internet services free-of-charge to seniors. In this regard, it is good SACs keep abreast of the current and new initiatives rolled out for seniors by government organisations and service providers.

f. **Eye Check-ups**
   Eye check-up initiatives like “Spectacles Hut” and “The Lens Men” provide free eye check-ups and spectacles respectively to seniors at some SACs.
g. *Pest Control*

Pest Control companies such as “The Pestman” work with a few SACs to provide free pest control services, managing bed bug infestation at the seniors’ homes.

h. *NUS Dentistry Department*

The Dentistry Department of the National University of Singapore has linked up with a nearby SAC to provide free dental treatment to seniors.

i. *Hairdressing Service*

The hairdressing service facilitates up to 2 hair-cuts a day for seniors on a free-of-charge basis.

In summary, SACs, community partners and Volunteer Welfare Organisations (VWOs) must strive to work together to meet the growing needs of Singapore’s ageing population. Partnerships should be undergirded by common goals, shared commitment, and strong enthusiasm, all aimed to help seniors age well physically, emotionally and mentally. All of this will make possible a holistic approach to equip and empower seniors to enjoy grace and dignity in ageing.

4.4  **Partnership Synergy**
The key to a successful and healthy partnership depends largely on whether respective partners’ needs are met. If either party’s needs are not addressed, unhappiness is likely to breed and productivity of the partnership adversely affected. It may also lead to a breakdown of the partnership. A healthy partnership can be achieved by having a partnership synergy. Synergy is derived from combining two or more resources of partner organisations so that the performance of the combination of resources is higher than that of the sum of all resources (e.g. manpower, skill, network, wealth, etc.) of an individual organisation. Simply, synergy is $1 + 1 = \text{more than } 2$. The figure below explains the determinants of Partnership Synergy.

---


---

Figure 4.2: Determinants of Partnership Synergy$^{23}$
Resources and Partner Characteristics
In the context of partnerships, resources are usually referred to tangible\textsuperscript{24} and intangible\textsuperscript{25} resources. It is through the combination of these two sets of resources (forming partnerships) that yield better results, compared to those achieved by organisations working alone:

- **Tangible resources.** Many partnerships emphasise the importance of tangible resources such as money, space, goods such as computers, medication, books, etc. and form partnerships to cater to their needs.
- **Intangible resources.** On the other hand, skills, connection, expertise which are intangible resources are also considered to be the main incentives behind organisations’ engagement in partnerships. This enables organisations to tap on one another’s expertise and connections, as they work more dynamically to solve multi-faceted problems.

Relationships Among Partners
Successful collaborations can only occur when there is a healthy working relationship between partners and they communicate effectively with each other. The following are few key factors for building up a healthy relationship between partners.

a. **Trust.** In order to cultivate a trustworthy relationship, it is important to be confident about the other partner’s sense of responsibility and obligations.

b. **Respect.** Partners need to appreciate the varied perspectives and contributions of the other partners.

\textsuperscript{24} Tangible: perceptible by touch, material like money

\textsuperscript{25} Intangible: unable to be touched, not having a physical presence like talent, skill
c. **Conflict management.** Another important factor in establishing healthy relationships between partners is conflict management. It helps to manage conflicts and differences in opinion between partners. The partners who find the partnership beneficial are most likely to compromise when there is disagreement or conflict. It also leads to stimulating discussions on issues and development of new ideas and approaches.

**Partnership Characteristics**

Certain characteristics of partnerships like leadership, administration and management, governance, and efficiency of partnerships have a strong influence on the level of partnership synergy.

The type of *leadership* a leader possesses is an important factor. It determines whether a partnership will achieve successful collaborations. Good leaders often build strong partnerships. They are those who seek to understand their counterparts, and who spur one another to be
creative in combining resources, so as to overcome challenges and solve problems together. On the contrary, leaders who are not flexible in their ways usually end up building weak or unsuccessful partnerships.

*Governance* is another key factor in determining whether collaborations will be successful and effective. This is because it impacts the following areas:

- Who is involved in the partnership decision-making process?
- How do partners make decisions?
- How do partners accomplish their work?

Finally, the success of partnerships depends on how well a partnership optimises the involvement of its partners. The level of each partner’s involvement significantly impacts the partnership’s ability to achieve effective and successful collaborations.

*External Environment*

The ability of a partnership to achieve successful collaboration is influenced by internal factors as well as external factors beyond the control of the partnership. Geographical issues, other policy barriers in areas such as finance, performance standards, compensation, benefits, promotion and tenure, may create a rift between key people and organisations, thus affecting their willingness and ability to participate in partnerships.
SUMMARY

The key points about the partnership and collaboration are:

a. Partnership and collaboration refer to the state of sharing common interests and working together to achieve a common goal.

b. The main attributes of partnership and collaboration are trust, respect, teamwork, transparency and agreement about the goals.

c. The three important stages for forming partnership are:
  • Involvement. Identify potential partners for partnership.
  • Participation. Build a relationship between seniors and potential partners (by knowing the needs of seniors, and informing seniors about the services that partners and SACs can render).
  • Partnership. SAC and partner organisations come to an agreement to serve the seniors better in a collaborative way.

a. The SACs need to form partnerships with the local community and/or the governmental/external institutions in order to connect seniors to the appropriate service providers. SACs should keep itself updated with the available resources and forge a partnership with the suitable service providers, in case the SACs are unable to cater to the seniors’ needs.

b. Certain goals must be set by SACs and partner organisations to ensure that needs of seniors are met better.

c. In order to sustain a partnership and derive more benefits from a collaboration, both SACs and partner organisations must have mutual trust and respect. Both should be able to tap on one another’s resources to find the best solution to the senior’s problems. It is important to have a capable leader in order to make a collaboration successful; the leader should be one who does not hold “an upper hand” in the partnership relationships, but one who combine partners’ diverse resources to achieve goals and outcomes.

d. After a partnership is formed and relevant services are provided to the seniors, it is important that a follow-up is done to ensure that the seniors’ benefits and their needs are cared for. Evaluating the results of partnership is necessary because it will help to strengthen the relationship by identifying areas where partners need to focus.
Caring For Seniors
5.1 Purpose of Evaluating Partnerships

Evaluation is a vitally important component in developing and sustaining partnerships. This is because it helps partners to:

- Monitor progress by ascertaining if a partnership is effective and efficient;
- Increase awareness by assessing if respective roles and responsibilities are being fulfilled; and
- Reach objectives by affirming if partnership goals are met in the form of milestones.

Figure 5.1: Purpose of Evaluating Partnerships
5.2 Process of Evaluating Partnerships

**USE AND USER**

The first step of evaluation is to find out how the evaluation results will be used and for whom. It also includes identifying resources available for evaluation like money, staff time, expertise, etc.

**STAKEHOLDERS/POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

The second step is to identify and engage stakeholders/potential partners in the evaluation process. The stage also requires determining the need for and feasibility of the partnership and building up required infrastructure for a healthy working environment. It is also ensured that the partnership is sustained.

**DESIGN/EVALUATION PLAN**

At this stage of partnership, evaluation questions are developed, taking into consideration the partnership’s members, activities, expectations and outcomes. These form the basis of evaluation plan.
At the fourth stage of the process of evaluation, the sources of evidence like people, documents, network, etc. are identified, and methods to obtain reliable, valid and timely information are also figured out.

The next step involves analysing and interpreting the data, and drawing conclusions on basis of information gathered. The factors that might affect or bias the findings are taken into consideration.

At the last stage of evaluation, reports are distributed among relevant partners. The end result of the evaluation process emphasises on the weakness, strengths, and resources and needs more attention in the mentioned areas to build up a stronger partnership relationship, benefiting the society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INPUT</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>OUTPUT</th>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development &amp; planning</td>
<td>Partnership formulation &amp; building</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Do the SACs have adequate human resources, funding, and equipment?**
- **How many partnerships have been formed by the SACs in order to provide required help to seniors?**
- **What kind of help is being rendered to the seniors by service providers/partner organisations?**
- **Are the partnerships and collaborations benefitting the seniors?**
- **To what extent are the partnerships sustainable?**
- **Are the partnership goals achieved?**
- **What are the positive changes noticed in the seniors’ lifestyle?**
- **Are the seniors satisfied with the help provided?**

**Information drawn from routine data collection tools: door to door survey, sampling, etc.**

**Information drawn from assessments, studies and surveys conducted on ad hoc basis.**

Figure 5.2: Significance of the Evaluation Process in regard to SACs with the Help of Some Relevant Questions at Each Stage of Evaluation
5.3 Evaluation Plan for Evaluating Partnerships

The following is an example of a partnership evaluation plan based on the process of evaluating a partnership as discussed above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation questions</th>
<th>Indicators/ Measures</th>
<th>Data Sources/ Analysis</th>
<th>Time Frame/ Frequency</th>
<th>Communicate results</th>
<th>Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the partnership necessary?</td>
<td>Number of participants who attended the talks</td>
<td>Registration List</td>
<td>Bi-annually</td>
<td>Yes, there is a need for continuous talks by the NPP</td>
<td>NPP, SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of crimes relating to seniors</td>
<td>NPP database</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do participants find the talks beneficial?</td>
<td>Participants' Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the collaboration helping to meet the goals?</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Bi-annually</td>
<td>Review participants’ feedback, crime statistics</td>
<td>NPP, SAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all the partners satisfied with the partnership?</td>
<td>Feedback from partners</td>
<td>Survey Face-to-face discussions</td>
<td>Bi-annually</td>
<td>Meeting outcomes Survey outcome</td>
<td>NPP, SAC, RC, CC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can be done to improve the current partnerships?</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Bi-annually</td>
<td>Meeting outcomes Survey outcome</td>
<td>NPP, SAC, RC, CC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GOAL**

By February 2014, evaluate the processes and short-term outcomes of the partnership between the SAC and the NPP. The results of the evaluation will be used to improve the performance of the partners.

Stakeholders: SAC, NPP, Seniors, RC, CC
Partnerships, while broadly beneficial, do face certain issues and challenges. What is important is how we approach these challenges, and find solutions to overcome them?26 This chapter covers some common challenges experienced by partners, and proposes ways to overcome them.

6.1 Challenges of Partnerships

Diversity
It can be a challenge to form successful partnerships between partners of diverse backgrounds. Without a well-grounded process, diversity can lead to conflicts and tension, which can potentially destroy partnerships.

Conflicts and Disagreements
Partnerships involve different organisations. They are likely to have different sets of beliefs and values, procedures and protocols, and organisational hierarchies and rules which they base their operations on. Some of these differences may compliment or conflict with another organisation’s beliefs, values, and/or procedures, leading to conflicts and disagreements between partners.

Power
The issue of power and control is central to the development of partnerships of power. Disempowerment is a common problem related to power.

Accountability
Within an organisation, employees are usually aware of the colleagues or persons whom they are to report and answer to. However, since partnerships tend to involve a wide range of people from different organisations, among them individuals who hold important positions, it can be a challenge for employees to identify the specific persons whom they should be accountable to.

Group-think
Group-think is a social phenomenon that occurs within a group of people. Partners within a partnership often focus too much on preserving the good relationship they have, and in the process, critical evaluations required for very important decisions are sacrificed. This may result in unsuccessful collaborations, and ultimately lead to partnership breakdown.
**Timescale**  
The time to complete projects in partnerships is always longer than usual. This is because more time is invested on the dissemination of information, inter-organisational communication, and the process of reaching a consensus on how to best reach certain milestones.

**Trust**  
Although trust and respect for each other are at the heart of partnerships, the process of building a relationship based on trust and respect is usually time-consuming. To make matter worse, some organisations may not be willing to take time off from their own projects, on which they place a greater value or priority. In such cases, the partnership will be less effective.
Communication
Communication between partners is a vital component for effective and successful partnerships. However, barriers to effective communication, such as the choice of words, misinterpretation of body language, tone, and other non-verbal gestures, language barrier, etc. may pose serious challenges in achieving effective and successful partnerships.

6.2 Overcoming Challenges in Partnerships

To achieve an effective and successful partnership, besides addressing the challenges each partnership may face, it is crucial to find ways to overcome them.27 Here are some possible ways to tackle the challenges as mentioned in the preceding section.

- Derive the best of diversity by being willing to address multi-faceted problems and make good use of different perspectives, resources, and skills
- Manage conflicts and disagreements by turning them into constructive and meaningful discussions; exploring and mapping out all possibilities to a problem so as to agree and adopt the best solution.
- Align power (or authority) by establishing a balanced structure/hierarchy. This serves as a guide for partners to work together, at the same time, to mitigate or prevent any “power imbalances”. It is also important for partners to maintain transparency with one another and create an environment where they can express their views respectfully, especially in cases when certain partner’s actions are perceived to be inappropriate.

---

• Install clear lines of accountability so that partners (and their respective employees in their organisations) are able to identify the important persons in a partnership, to whom they are to report and account to

• Overcome lack of creativity or individual responsibility in group-think by respecting each other’s opinion and acknowledge each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

• Set a realistic timescale by establishing a timeline that is agreed by all partners, with specific dates to achieve milestones. This helps to keep partnership goals manageable and achievable.

• Build trust by establishing honesty, transparency, and open communication with partners, at the same time, by being flexible with one another.

• Keep communication between partners open and easy by using simple language and jargon-free terms. This helps to overcome language barriers.
7.1 Introducing THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit

One of the best partnership examples is the “Cared Living Concept”, currently being replicated at the THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit. This is a communal-living project for seniors with limited or no family support. The THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit is a living arrangement for three low-income seniors who are housed together in a one-room HDB rental flat. The home is located at Block 94 of Pipit Road, occupying eight units on the seventh floor.
7.2 Meeting the Needs of Seniors Through Links to Services/Resources in the Community

The staff of SAC (Cluster Support) @ Pipit conduct regular home visits to assess the needs of seniors living in the area. Thereafter, they link the seniors to the appropriate services providers through whom the seniors and their caregivers receive relevant support. The various services include a Day Care Centre, a Home Help service, counselling, a home modification service and more. These linkages help to better support frail seniors and enable them to continue living in the community. It is hence important for staff to be familiar with service providers within their service area; this is to link seniors to relevant service providers whenever necessary.
Figure 7.2: Range of Services SACs Can Tap Onto
The Needs of Seniors

The needs of residents (the seniors) in THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit are categorised into two broad areas – social and medical. The shared housing concept of the Home allows the seniors to enjoy social interaction, thus helping them to get out of social isolation. They are also made to be responsible for peer supervision. This way, the seniors’ general well-being is ensured, their social needs met and their need for self-actualisation achieved.

The medical needs of the seniors, on the other hand, are met through referrals to THK Blister Packing Service, Moral Home Help East (Meals-on-wheels & Escort Service), Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) as well as other community partners such as Tzu Chi. THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit also works closely with THK SAC @ Macpherson to encourage residents to be more socially active.

Separately, to help lighten the seniors’ financial burden, subsidised monthly rental facilities, including highly reduced costs of lodging, utilities and conservancy charges, are extended to them by the relevant authorities.

7.3 Getting to Know the Community and Information Gathering of Client’s Personal Details

Prior to setting up THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit, a focus group study was conducted to gather information about seniors’ perception of communal living. A survey was also conducted to know the public’s response on the use of technology (in the form of a CCTV) to monitor their general well-being. The gathering of information was done through interviews with the residents, which were arranged by THK SAC @ MacPherson. Vital information such as the seniors’ profiles and personal details was collected during the interviews, and upon which, THK SAC programme admission criteria were drawn up.
7.4 Partnership/Collaboration by THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit

THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit strives to identify and understand the different needs of the seniors they serve, and evaluate if it has all the resources to meet them. All of this is aimed to better serve the seniors.

The process of partnership and collaboration begins with the receipt of referrals from various sources, such as the Housing Development Board (HDB), the Destitute Person’s service, Ministry of Social and Family Development (MFS), Meet-The-People sessions and the public. Thereafter, an assessment is conducted to determine whether the Senior Group Home can render adequate help to the seniors. At the moment, THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit accepts seniors with the following profile:
a. A Singapore citizen or Singapore permanent resident

b. Aged 60 years and above

c. Meets HDB one-room rental flat criteria

d. Assessed to be Category 2 or 3, according to Resident Assessment Form (RAF)

e. Requires assistance in Activities of Daily Living (ADL), Personal Care and or Basic Nursing Care

f. Fit for communal living

For seniors who fail to meet the criteria mentioned above, they are referred to the relevant services/institutions for their needs.

*Partnership/Collaboration in Action*

For the THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit, the partnership/collaboration action started upon the selection of seniors for its programme. Its parent organisation, Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities Ltd. (THKMC), kick started the Home programme by reaching out to its key partners – the then Centre for Enabled Living (CEL), HDB and officials from the Marine Parade GRC. THKMC also engaged Elderwise Living to develop a special wrist band, which allowed the residents within the THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit to activate a panic button when required. The panic button is programmed to send an emergency message to the cell phones of the Programme Manager and THKMC nurses. At the same time, THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit continues to work closely with the SAC (Cluster Support) @ Geylang for case management services. The staff at the SAC (Cluster Support) @ Geylang conduct regular visits to ensure that the seniors’ needs and concerns are adequately resolved.
THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit is managed by a Programme Manager, who interacts with the seniors and renders due assistance, which includes monitoring of medical appointments, arranging for escort services to medical appointments and monitoring of medication compliance.

7.5 Challenges Faced by THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit

Like any programme, THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit also faces a range of problems and challenges. Some of the major ones are:

a. At the time of establishment of the Home, it was assumed that a partnership between certain partners had already been formed and that the partners had agreed on the desired goals of the partnership. However, the potential partners failed to meet, resulting in a lack of proper dialogue between the partners, hence a weak collaboration and sub-standard partnership.

b. The partners had their own perceptions and often their opinions did not match the ideology of THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit. In addition, a lack of proper dialogue with partners yielded only partial attainment of goals.

c. Being a relatively new idea in Singapore, “Cared Living Concept” did not readily receive the support from the community. To garner more support, publicity programmes to educate and bring awareness to the residents in the community were needed.
7.6 Measures to Overcome the Challenges

a. Both THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit and partner organisations agreed to meet more regularly. The meetings would feature pre-planned agendas, where goals already achieved were reviewed and new goals were set according to the multifaceted needs of the seniors. The timely review of the goals and face-to-face meetings helped to develop a healthy relationship with partner organisations. By having more regular dialogues with partner organisations, the partnerships were strengthened, and more importantly, the needs of the seniors were better addressed.

b. THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit learnt to be selective in choosing its partners. It sought to understand the organisational ideologies and work ethics of potential partners, and tried to anticipate flash points, such as differences in viewpoints and ideology. It also considered if differences with its potential partners could be amicably resolved.

c. In order to gain public support for the “Cared Living Concept”, THKMC strived to assure residents (the seniors) that their privacy would not be compromised even with the use of CCTV monitoring. It was also necessary to inform them that this technology would in fact enhance their safety at Home.

To ensure the smooth functioning of THK Senior Group Home @ Pipit, the manpower limitation within the group home was taken into consideration. In order to meet the residents’ multiple needs, the Programme Manager now works closely with the SAC (Cluster Support) @ Geylang. This is to help ensure that residents’ care issues are well addressed and attended to. In addition, the Programme Manager also receives on-the-job training in conducting simple health assessments on the residents, e.g. taking of blood pressure. He is also
trained to do follow-ups based on the urgency of a case. Such training is useful for staff of SACs. It enables them to be more organised and meticulous at work.

7.7 Outcome of the Collaboration

In conclusion, today, residents of the THK Seniors’ Group Home @ Pipit now have a place of abode, where they receive social support from their home mates, the care of the Programme Manager and the respective services that they have been referred to. Seeing clear improvements in the emotional well-being and functional health of the seniors – which is the foremost outcome – THK Seniors’ Group Home @ Pipit is deeply grateful to its partners and hopes to continue forging successful collaborations with them.
By 2030, Singapore will witness a steep increase in its greying population, from 8.4% to 18.7%. This means that 1 out of 5 residents in Singapore will be a senior citizen by 2030. In this context, SACs will play a pivotal role in addressing this issue by being an educator, a mediator and a social service hub.

**Educator**
As an educator, SACs have a vital role of educating the youths of today and tomorrow about Singapore’s inevitable greying population. The SACs need to raise awareness – that each person has a part to play in Singapore’s ageing crisis.

**Mediator**
As a mediator, SACs will need to be a bridge between seniors and the various service providers. Linking seniors with the service providers will help to address the seniors’ needs, which the SACs may not be capable of handling alone. In addition, as a mediator, SACs is effectively the spokesperson for seniors; to present their views to policy makers,
such as government agencies, so that conceptualisation, planning and execution of various events for the seniors are well rolled out.

**Social Service Hub**

Most importantly, it is the role of the SACs to be a Social Service Hub. This Hub enables seniors to age-in-place and to mitigate the issue of social isolation. The main objective of the SACs, as a Social Service Hub, is to be the second home of the seniors, where they get to live life meaningfully, instead of being passive individuals. To serve as an effective Social Service Hub, it is important for SACs to continue to keep up-to-date with issues relating to ageing and to duly upgrade their facilities to meet the changing needs of the seniors.

**Conclusion**

In less than 20 years from now, Singapore will be faced with a greying population. Therefore, it is imperative to build a nation that is prepared and equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for the challenges of an ageing population. Since SACs are not self-sufficient to solve all the issues of an ageing population, the need to forge partnerships will be felt more urgently. Successful partnerships will help to address multiple problems of the seniors and more number of seniors will benefit from this. It is important for SACs to choose the partner organisations carefully to derive the maximum benefit out of the partnership. In this way, the psychological, social, and emotional welfare of the seniors will be addressed.
Write Editions® is inspired to publish good books that engage and enliven readers. Besides publishing books under the Write Editions® imprint, we also publish books commissioned by organisations, groups and individuals.

write your story.

publisher@writeeditions.com

writeeditions.com