



# 基督教聯合那打素社康服務 UNITED CHRISTIAN NETHERSOLE COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE

## South Asian Health Support Programme Annual Report - 2024/2025



# HEALTH among the South Asian Community in Hong Kong

## - through population-based interventions



Funded by the Community Chest

### Introduction:

South Asian Health Support Programme was established in 2007. It has evolved over the years and remains unique and in demand in Hong Kong. The programme aims to improve the health profile of the South Asian community through comprehensive health promotion and strategic healthy lifestyle interventions.

### The need: Investing to save lives

Hong Kong's health indices rank among the best in the world. Despite this, 8.4% of the population –mainly the South Asian ethnic minorities, still struggle with basic services such as health care. There is increasing evidence that South Asians are vulnerable to chronic diseases such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and some cancers. These diseases are the leading cause of death and can impose huge financial burden on the health care system. The paucity of health information in Hong Kong South Asians keeps this community prone to ill health. All too often, minority groups are treated as homogeneous populations, leading to inappropriate generalization, unmet needs, and unsuitable health management. To understand and manage an individual's health, it is necessary to appreciate the effects of their culture, experience, and environment.

The UCN's South Asian Health Support Programme mainly focuses on the prevention of chronic diseases by promoting healthy lifestyles and early detection by screening. Investing in preventing non-communicable chronic diseases and prevention of cancer by early identification of pre-cancerous changes not only improves health and saves lives but can also improve a country's economic productivity and workforce participation. In addition, the project has paid more attention to the emerging needs for mental health awareness among the general population particularly to the more vulnerable section of society and high-risk families, to enhance the help-seeking attitude, reduce stigma, introduce mental health resources, and hence create a mental health-friendly society for all.

Thus, this programme fills in the gap to meet the needs of the vulnerable group and reduce the risk of preventable diseases.

### Objectives:

1. Improve lifestyle and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, particularly obesity, hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, and cardiovascular disease among South Asians in Hong Kong.
2. Detect chronic diseases and pre-cancerous conditions in their early stage.
3. To train and develop health advocate volunteers, forming health support group for those suffering from chronic diseases particularly Diabetes Mellitus.
4. Improve family and child health through maternal education, and reduce injury among South Asian children.

5. Empower the South Asian community with health knowledge and raise their awareness of community health resources. Enhance awareness of mental health and strengthen social support networks.

### **Service Category**

1. Community-based health campaign and screening for chronic diseases (measuring blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body fat) and screening for anemia during community events.
2. Cancer screening for women (Pap smear test) and for men and women (Colorectal cancer screening).
3. Health talks on a community level, schools, religious centers, and community organizations.
4. Home visit for those who did not attend mass/outdoor events
5. Wellness programme such as healthy cooking classes, and exercise classes
6. Volunteer development
7. Health publicity
8. Health advocate training for women
9. Monthly women's health day where women can walk in for health workshops, screening, and socializing.
10. Workshops, health talks, and health advocate training for school children
11. Men's health
12. Medical interpretation service
13. Diabetes management through the formation and empowerment of diabetes groups
14. Mental health promotion
15. Elderly health workshop

### **Service provision methods:**

The service is provided through extensive collaboration with various agencies by focusing on health promotion, evaluation of health interventions, and dissemination of information on good health initiatives or practices. The programme also provides training to people engaged in health promotion activities and mobilizes the community to get involved in all aspects of health promotion through various channels of promotion and campaigns.

**Table 1: Output measures and variance (01 April, 2024 – 31 March, 2025)**

Serial No.	Health Activities	Pledged	Actual	Variance (+/- %)

1	<b>Health screening for (Hypertension, Diabetes, Obesity and cholesterol)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8,500 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14,247 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+5747(67.6%)</li> </ul>
2	<b>Pap smear for women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0(0%)</li> </ul>
3	<b>Heart health checkups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0(0%)</li> </ul>
4	<b>No. of screenings for anemia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>350 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>355 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+5(1.4%)</li> </ul>
5	<b>No. of colorectal cancer screening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>104 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+4(4%)</li> </ul>
6	<b>Community-based health events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of events</li> <li>Total no. of participants reached by the exhibitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25</li> <li>4000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40</li> <li>4,549</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+15(60%)</li> <li>+549(13.7%)</li> </ul>
7	<b>Home visit</b> (raising awareness on healthy lifestyle and safety of children at home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>150 homes to visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visited 150 homes,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0(0%)</li> </ul>
8	<b>Healthy lifestyle intervention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise classes</li> <li>Healthy cooking classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40 classes with 550 attendance</li> <li>14 classes with 170</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>42 classes with 576 attendance</li> <li>14 classes with 184</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+2 classes (5%) and +26(4.7%) attendance</li> <li>+0(0%) cooking classes and +14(8.2%) in participants</li> </ul>
9	<b>Volunteer development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of new volunteers recruitment</li> <li>No of training sessions for volunteers</li> <li>Volunteer service hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>60 new volunteers</li> <li>10 sessions</li> <li>800 service hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>62 new volunteers</li> <li>10 sessions</li> <li>957 service hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+2(3.3%)</li> <li>+0(0%)</li> <li>+157(19.6%)</li> </ul>

10	<b>Health publicity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of leaflets</li> <li>No. of newsletters</li> <li>No. of copies of newsletters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15</li> <li>4</li> <li>6000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18</li> <li>4</li> <li>6000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+3(20%)</li> <li>+0(0%)</li> <li>+0(0%)</li> </ul>
11	<b>Health service for women</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health advocate training</li> <li>Health talk</li> <li>Knowledge improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 training with 70 attendance</li> <li>35 talks with 800 attendance</li> <li>60%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 training and 75 attendance</li> <li>43 health talks with 817 attendance</li> <li>83%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+5 (7.1%) in participants</li> <li>+8 (22.9%) in talks and +17(2.1%) attendance</li> <li>+23% improvement</li> </ul>
12	<b>Health service for school children</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train the trainer workshop</li> <li>Health talks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 workshops with 500 attendance</li> <li>20 talks with 1,000 attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24 workshops with 551 attendance</li> <li>21 talks with 1,291 attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+9 (60%) workshops and +51(10.2%) attendance</li> <li>+1 (5%) + 291(29.1%) in attendance</li> </ul>
13	<b>Services for men</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 workshops with 250 attendance</li> <li>60% Improvement on knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15 workshops with 268 attendance</li> <li>79.5% Improvement on knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0 (0%) in talks and +18(7.2%) attendance</li> <li>+19.5% knowledge improvement</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of Face to face health counselling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>400 participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>576participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+176(44%)</li> </ul>
14	<b>Medical interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>400 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>411 times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+11(2.8%)</li> </ul>
15	<b>Workshops on management of chronic diseases</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of workshops</li> <li>No of participants</li> <li>No of individual peer counselling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20</li> <li>200</li> <li>50</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20</li> <li>234</li> <li>55</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0(0%)</li> <li>+34(17%)</li> <li>+5(10%)</li> </ul>
16	<b>Mental health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of workshop (attendance)</li> <li>% of participants showing increase in knowledge of mental health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 workshops with 350 attendance</li> <li>80%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 workshops with 413 attendance</li> <li>83%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0 (0%) in workshop and +63(18%) attendance</li> <li>+3(0%) in knowledge</li> </ul>
17	<b>Healthy aging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of workshop (attendance)</li> <li>% increase in knowledge of elderly disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12 workshops with 180 attendance</li> <li>50%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13 workshops with 290 attendance</li> <li>81%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+1(8.3%) in workshop and +110(61.1%) in attendance</li> <li>+31% in knowledge</li> </ul>
18	<b>Youth health volunteers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No. of workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10</li> <li>100</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10</li> <li>146</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+0(0%)</li> <li>+46(46%)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No of attendances</li> <li>• No of service hours by youths volunteers</li> <li>• No of health beneficiaries served by the youth volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800 service hours</li> <li>• 1000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 982 service hours</li> <li>• 2,134</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• +182(22.8%)</li> <li>• +1134(113.4%)</li> </ul>
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### 2024/2025 South Asian Health Support Programme executive summary:

- From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024- 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, health screening for prevention of chronic diseases was provided 14,247 times, which included measuring blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body fat. There were 355 anemia screenings, 50 cervical cancer screenings, 104 colorectal cancer screenings and 100 heart health screenings done.
- 123 health workshops and talks for women (43), men (15), elderly (13), and school children (21) with 2666 attendances were provided at the community level, schools, and religious organizations.
- 62 volunteers registered for the programme and our dedicated volunteers provided 957 service hours, in addition, youth volunteers provided 982 service hours.
- 150 home visits were conducted to promote healthy lifestyles and the safety of children at home.
- 4 versions of quarterly multilingual (English, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, and Urdu) newsletters with 6,000 copies were produced and distributed in the community.
- We collaborated with 47 partners, which included 33 organizations, 13 schools, and 1 religious organization to provide health services (Appendix 1- List of collaborating organizations).

SAHP provided service territory-wide within Hong Kong, with the majority of the services concentrated in Kowloon, New Territories, and some in Hong Kong Island.

Our team continued to collaborate with health professionals of, the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health with regard to South Asian health needs.

Our website was updated regularly and is made more user-friendly [www.ucn-emhealth.org](http://www.ucn-emhealth.org).

Internship and placement opportunities were provided to local and overseas secondary and tertiary students, including The City University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and The University of Hong Kong.



## South Asian Health Support Programme descriptive report for 2024/2025

### I. Health campaign with Screening for Chronic disease management:

Health screening is the major element of this programme. Its aim is early detection and prevention of chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, hyperlipidemia, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, cervical cancer and colorectal cancer. In total, 123 health campaigns were conducted where 14,247 times screening was done for hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol level, and obesity (measuring blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and body fat %), of which 5213(37%) were screened positive i.e., they had either blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol or body fat higher than usual.

Of those with high blood pressure and blood sugar, 100 (men and women) received heart health screening for early detection of cardiovascular diseases.

Fifty women received Pap smear screening, of which 22% had abnormal results, and 6 % had cellular abnormalities, indicating a higher risk for cervical cancer.

Moreover, 355 men and women were screened for anemia; 45 (12.8%) had low hemoglobin levels, and they were followed up.

One hundred people under went colorectal cancer screening by enrolling the Colorectal Cancer Screening Program.

All the cases that were screened positive were advised to seek medical attention. (Table 2)

**Table 2: Health screening and finding (01 April, 2024 – 31 March, 2025)**

S. No	Activity	No. times of screening test done	No. of times Screened positive	Intervention
1.	Screening for Hypertension (measuring Blood Pressure)	2359	1071(45.4%) (Blood pressure >140/90 mmHg)	Referral and telephone follow-up within a week
2.	Screening for Diabetes (measuring Blood Glucose)	3776	188(4.9%) (Blood Glucose Random 11mmol /L)	Referral and telephone follow-up within a week
3.	Screening for Obesity (Measuring body fat %)	3338	2961 (88.7%) (Body fat % >27% among female and >23% among man adults)	Health advice, referral to exercise class, healthy cooking class, and follow-up
4	Screening for total cholesterol level	3366	993(29.5%) (Total cholesterol level >5.2 mmol)	Health advice and referral for heart health checkup



5	Screening for anemia	355	45(12.8%) Adult Male: 13.0-17.0 g/dl, Adult Female: 11.0-16.0g/dl	Health advice was give on site and referral to seek further medical attention
6	Pap smear screening	50	11 (22% all case abnormal) 3(6% Cellular changes **)	100% of the ASCUS cases were followed up in UCN Health Centres within 2 weeks
7	Colorectal cancer screening	104	9(8.7%)	5 patients underwent colonoscopies.

ASCUS\*\* Atypical squamous cells of undetermined significance

## II. **Wellness classes:**

As there is a significant number of people from the South Asian community who continue to be at risk of chronic disease, our wellness classes have played a vital role as preventive interventions. Our wellness classes focus on a healthy diet.

A total of 14 healthy cooking classes were conducted, with 184 participants, all taught by dietitians.

Similarly, 42 exercise classes were conducted for women, with an attendance 576. Monthly women's health day and wellness classes were conducted in different venues in collaboration with many organizations.

## III. **Volunteer development:**

62 new volunteers registered for this health promotion service, and they provided 957 service hours, which is much more than we anticipated. And 982 hours of service were provided by youth volunteers. Most volunteers served during large-scale outdoor health campaigns and women's health events.

## IV. **Health publication:**

Four quarterly health newsletters were produced. The newsletters covered topics such as Colorectal Cancer, Measles, the Updated HPV Vaccination catch-up programme, and Combating Antimicrobial Resistance.

All the content was produced in five languages, including four South Asian languages: Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, and Urdu (Attached -Appendices 3 a, b, c, d).

One thousand copies of health booklets and 2,000 pieces of health souvenirs (ego bags) were produced and disseminated during health events as a cue to remind.

## V. **Health activities for women:**

In 2024/2025, as in the previous year, significant health promotion was done amongst women, as we have identified that the majority of them are the core caretakers of the

family. Hence, it is paramount to empower them in order to achieve the goal of a healthy family. In addition, the service was extended to new partners to reach out to those who had not received it.

Thirty-five women had completed our Health Advocate training. The intensive health training included talks and workshops on women's health, child health, chronic diseases, lifestyle, and measures to prevent diseases. Furthermore, 43 health talks were given to women during Women's Health Day, with an attendance of 817. The pre-and Post-talk knowledge enhancement test showed an average increase in basic health knowledge level to 78 % compared to baseline. The health events were held territory-wide and in collaboration with many organizations.

#### **VI. Health activities for School Children:**

Thirteen schools participated in the SAHP school health programme. 24 Health ambassador training sessions were provided in various schools, with a total of 551 attendances. The health topics included preventing infectious disease, healthy diet, injury prevention, and first aid skills. In addition to the health ambassador training, an exercise session was included. During the injury prevention training, basic first aid skills were taught to the children.

Twenty-one health talks, total attendance of 1291, were provided at schools. Teachers and parents also participated, particularly during the parent's day.

#### **VII. Health activities for men**

Fifteen health workshops with an overall attendance of 268 were conducted for men. The workshops emphasized the prevention of chronic diseases such as Hypertension, Diabetes, and Cardiovascular diseases among the male population. In addition to workshop-based interventions, outdoor health events were organized during weekends and holidays, which had a very high response rate and addressed the needs of working males who were less likely to receive health information and services. Those identified as higher risk, i.e., high blood pressure, blood sugar, and body fat, were given on-site health counseling; in total, 576 face-to-face counseling on healthy lifestyles were provided to male participants.

#### **VIII. Diabetes support group:**

Diabetes is a chronic disease that is increasing among all populations. Thus, to encourage prevention, raise awareness, and strengthen prevention and control, the diabetes support group was ongoing. In total, 20 workshops were conducted, with 234 attendees.

#### **IX. Mental health awareness**

With reports of suicides and self-harm amongst high-risk groups like school students and elderlies, there is an urgent need to put more focus on meeting the needs of mental health issues of vulnerable groups and at-risk families (Hong Kong suicide rates remain high, especially among youth, 2024) (Elderly suicides on the rise, 2024). Thus, many health promotion interventions and strategies are being initiated to improve the mental well-being of individuals. However, many of those interventions may not reach the ethnic minority community due to language and social barriers.

Thus, 25 workshops (with 413 attendees) on mental health awareness were conducted. These workshops included general information about mental health, early signs of depression, coping mechanisms, and where to seek help.

#### **X. Healthy Aging:**

South Asian elderly are a vulnerable group; thus, we filled in the gap by promoting healthy aging services. 13 workshops related to common elderly diseases and healthy aging were conducted, with 290 attendees. An 81% improvement in knowledge regarding elderly disease and self-care was observed.

#### **XI. Ongoing need identified:**

Many of the 8 % of the population - the ethnic minorities, still struggle to gain access to basic services such as health care because of language, culture, and often simply due to lack of awareness.

There is increasing evidence that South Asians are vulnerable to diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and some cancers.

Often, the latest health issues and population-wide campaigns don't reach this community promptly. This was evident in promoting COVID-19 vaccination, seasonal flu vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and colorectal cancer screening programmes. Thus, the programme has evolved according to needs in the past years.

#### **XII. Key lessons during the 2024/2025 health promotion`**

- Health promotion is a much-needed service for the South Asian community in Hong Kong especially disease preventive measures as well as information on available resources for early testing, and treatment.
- Emphasis should be given to life style change, chronic disease, and cancer screening.
- Health promotion activities in a culturally sensitive manner, are important while approaching this community.
- The face-to-face approach works well for the health promotion for this community thus, more onsite health talks, workshops, health booths, and screenings were done.
- Collaboration and support from other organizations, community groups, religious affiliations, health care professionals, and the community themselves is vital in conducting any health promotion activities.
- The SAHP programme is acting as a bridge between the community and the formal health system, therefore there is a need to scale up support for such health promotion and other community health programmes.
- Professional input is vital in evaluating and gaining trust from the community.

SAHP is evaluating its strategies in reference to the Glasgow RE-AIM model (R- reaching, E- efficacy, A- adoption, I –implementation, M-maintenance).

There is a need for continuity of this programme as there are still many ethnic minority community members who still need to be reached, and the Ethnic Minorities groups are the fast-growing section of Hong Kong community.

**Acknowledgement:**

Special thanks are given to:

All the dedicated staffs of United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service

All the volunteers of SAHP without whom we could not have achieved more than we expected.

All the collaborating organization (Appendix 1)

**Appendix 1: List of Collaboration organization 2024/2025****Appendix 2: Photo report****Appendix 3: Newsletters (Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d)****Our contact:**

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**Reference:**

Hong Kong suicide rates remain high, especially among youth

Source URL : Hong Kong suicide rates remain high, especially among youth | The Standard

<https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/article/220349/>

Elderly suicides on the rise

Source URL: Elderly suicides on the rise | The Standard

<https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/article/61293/>