

**LAW FOR CHANGE
STUDENT
COMPETITION 2018**

TEAM 5	PROJECT TITLE EMpower – Ethnic Minority Domestic Violence Prevention Campaign
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SCHOOL	The Chinese University of Hong Kong

ABOUT EMPOWER

A survey¹ reported nearly 40% of EM women in HK experienced domestic violence.

Project Summary

This project aims to EMpower ethnic minorities (“EM”) and tackle domestic violence by (i) addressing their lack of understanding and misunderstanding on possible solutions when they encounter domestic violence and (ii) encouraging the EM to seek help if necessary.

The project includes setting up an electronic self-evaluation and reporting system and conducting workshops to enhance EM women’s understanding of domestic violence.

Instead of positioning the project as a high profile attempt to deal with domestic violence which is culturally sensitive and stigmatic to EMs, and therefore will not be well received, The project is to identify and EMpower EMs experiencing unhappy family life and possible domestic violence by solutions. At the same time the project packages itself as a platform to promote ways to achieve harmonious family life to avoid possible repercussions from the EM community.

Due to resource constraints, initially, the target group of the project is Pakistani women, but others are also welcome to utilize the channels offered. The project model may also be extended to other EM race groups facing similar problems.

Definition

“EM” in this project mainly refers to the South Asians in HK (including Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani , etc.) either born in or migrated to Hong Kong.

Domestic Violence in this project refers to the constant use of force, threat, words or deprivation of necessities of life (e.g. food/sleep) by a family member which causes physical, mental or sexual injury to another family member².

Need Assessment and Service Gap

Domestic Violence & Barriers Encountered By EM

Domestic violence is widespread within the EM community. A survey on domestic violence in the EM community showed 20% of the respondents fell victim to forced sex and beating by their husband.³ Worse still, some EM women are not aware that the above mentioned behaviours are domestic violence⁴ and are subject to unpleasant family life without solutions.

At the same time, for those who are aware of the problem, they are reluctant to seek help. They are worried about damages to their family honour and being blamed by the community for failure to be a “proper wife” if their help-seeking behaviours are known by others. In addition, they are concerned that divorce is inevitable if they seek help and their future livelihood is endangered as they are usually heavily reliant on the husband’s income. These fears bar them from seeking proper assistance from the community. The fears can also be attributed to the lack of confidence to the current institutionalised victim support system and the lack of understanding of the solutions available.

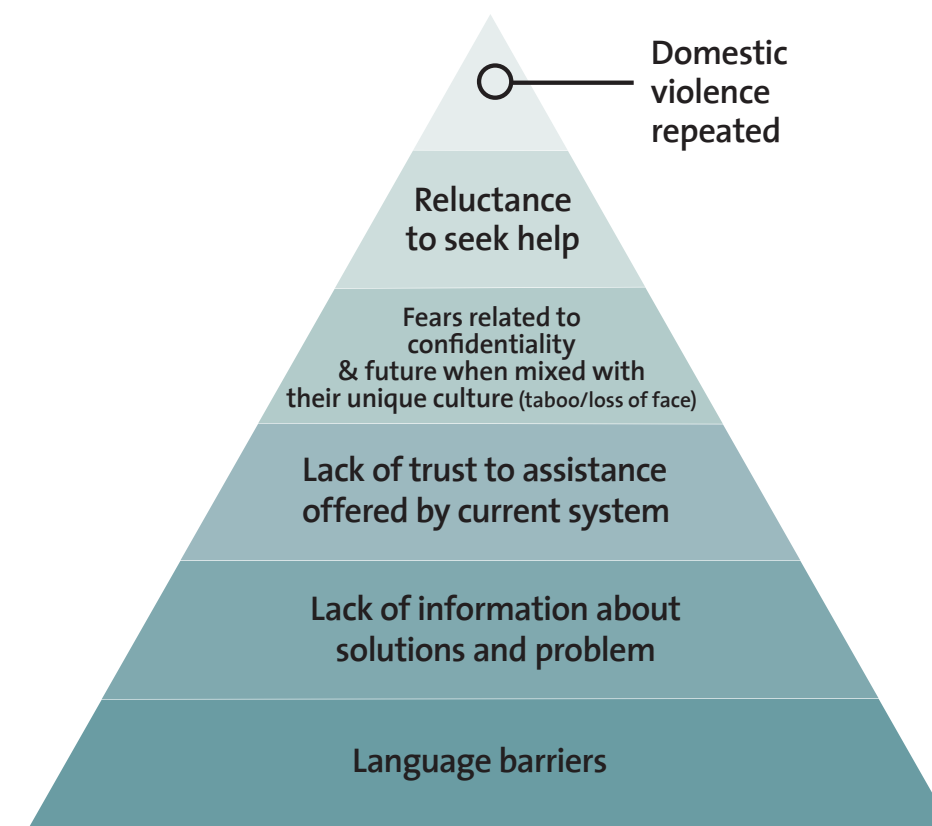
Existing Service Gap

Despite the plenty of related services offered by a number of NGOs in Hong Kong, there are still service gaps. The current services are not specifically tailor-made for EM. The services currently available include shelter and counselling service, hotline service and legal education program. The hotline, shelter and counselling services run by different NGOs generally cater all women suffering from domestic violence in Hong Kong without addressing the particular needs of the EM. Rainlily once operated the hotline for EM suffering domestic violence, but ceased to operate due to resource constraints. As some of the social workers in the field commented, most of the current service providers do not have sufficient understanding of the particularly vulnerable situation of EM women and therefore fails to build the rapport at the early stage. This discourages EM victims from seeking institutionalised help. In fact, there is only a centre in Jordan run by Hong Kong Christian Service specifically offering family guidance and counselling service to EM.

The existing service fails to ensure confidentiality when the EM women would like to seek help. Many EM women are housewives and live with some other relatives apart from their husband and children. They may be subject to constant monitoring of the other family members and therefore it may be difficult for them to seek help by calling NGOs or reaching out to social service centres. Moreover, these services are only able to help victims who are aware of their situation and are willing to actively seek help. It fails to identify those victims who potentially need help.

To address the existing service gaps, our current proposal is to set up an online platform particularly customised for EM. By packaging itself as an anonymous family life self-evaluation questionnaire, the platform will actively identify the victims of domestic violence who are suffering from unhappy family life. Since the platform’s presentation as a family life survey can be a camouflage of the real intention of identifying victims and facilitating assistance from the existing service provider, it will also guarantee confidentiality to users.

How EM domestic violence becomes a complicated problem – summary diagram



Particular Target Groups

Among the entire EM community, this project is targets at those suffering from a certain extent of domestic violence, feeling aggrieved but and without ways to mitigate their plight. This is not a general advocacy campaign against the prevalence of domestic violence existing in the EM community. It is a campaign to identify those suffering from domestic violence, suggest possible solutions and try to build support network in the EM community for those in need to share their feelings and concerns.

We also focus on the Pakistani community in HK which is reported to be the most insensitive to domestic violence when compared to other race groups. We will aim to connect them to the social security systems as most of the Pakistani women are stay-at-home housewife and are socially isolated. This project also aims to educate the EM community about other conflicts resolution methods they may not be very familiar with as a tip to pleasant family life.

Application of Law

When facing domestic violence, the victims with an ethnic minority background often have misunderstanding related to the remedies available and the legal consequences if they seek protection. They have the following misbeliefs:

- 1) Constant harassment by husband leading to physical or mental injuries does not amount to a problem in their culture
- 2) The only remedy available would be a divorce and their partner would be imprisoned. They are also concerned about the risk of exposing their domestic problem when they seek help and the lack of means of sustaining their life without depending on their husband.

In fact, some alternative and less intrusive remedies are available with an aim of repairing the strained or broken relationship, including mediation and family therapy. The law of Hong Kong also ensures confidentiality in family-related proceeding. Further, not all domestic violence can lead to criminal prosecution.

The project aims at correcting the misunderstanding and letting the victims know that they are entitled to remedies to resolve their family conflicts in mediation or in other civil proceedings. It hopes to encourage women subject to domestic violence to seek help and suitable remedies. They will also be advised the rights a spouse may have in case divorce is inevitable.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project has two main components:

1. EMpower Legal Workshop for Women
2. An Innovative Mobile App (“EMpower App”)

Goal

To promote awareness of the domestic violence issue and reduce the occurrence of domestic violence among Pakistani women in Hong Kong.

Objectives

- 1 To assist at least 100 Pakistani ladies in reviewing their family life and to offer information on help channels for victims of domestic violence among them in a year
- 2 To inform at least 15 Pakistani ladies of the particular protection available under the laws of Hong Kong who will become the counselors to EM women and disseminate the information informally in the community after a 2-month workshop series.

I. EMpower Legal Workshop

Proposed Dates and Time	6 classes from May to June, once every week Two time slots - 1. From 10am-12pm for housewives 2. From 6pm-8pm for the employed/ youth receiving tertiary education
Target Participants	10-20 Pakistani women We expect them to be relatively outspoken in their community and willing to share the learnings to their social circle
Format	Interactive model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divided into groups for discussion and activities • A two-way dialogue - participants are led to identify the potential issues from their own experience and brainstorm possible methods to help their community. • Participants will work on tasks and report on their findings for further discussion in class Involvement of legal practitioners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The class will be partly taught by legal practitioners • All contents will also be approved by legal practitioners to ensure accuracy
Curriculum	“Workshop for Frequently Encountered Questions in Daily Life” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid the taboo of “women rights advocacy” which may cause embarrassment to participants, the workshop will promote itself as a workshop that aims to introduce legal knowledge and other welfare channels relevant to their daily life • The workshop will cover 60% of domestic violence-related topics and 40% of general topics including equal opportunities, education and healthcare Topics on domestic violence includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection under Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance • The right to confidentiality • Social service protection available to victims of abuse (in particular, victims do not have to undergo divorce to be eligible for shelter) • The procedures of police arrest or police interview • Matrimonial proceedings in Hong Kong

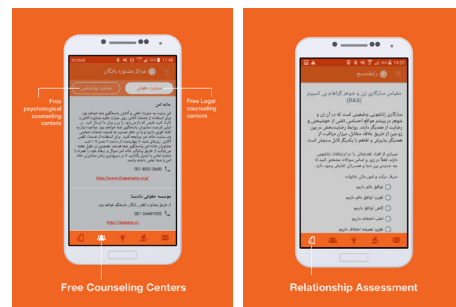
II. EMpower Mobile App

Purpose of the app	To inform the victims about their rights
	To inform victims about the different options they have when facing domestic violence
	Inform the victims the details of each option and the procedure involved in each option
Languages of the app	When launched, our app will be in both English and Urdu (the official language of Pakistan)
	We aim to expand to regional languages of Pakistan in the future, including Punjabi, Saraiki, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, Kashmiri, Hindko and more
Duration of usage of the app	Both during the execution of the project and in the long-term
	Possible collaborations with NGOs in Hong Kong
Users of the app	Participants in the workshop and their friends by word of mouth
	20- 50 Pakistani women

- There will be one multiple choice question on each page of the app.
- No questions are mandatory. The user is free to skip any questions.
- The first page of the app will be a self-assessment of their quality of life, family happiness, etc.
- After some general questions, the topic of domestic violence will come into the picture.
- If the user identifies herself as having immediate danger, the app will suggest the option of calling the police at 999.
- If the user identifies herself as not having immediate danger, the app will inform them of the options available to them.
- The details of each option will be shown on the app page including contact details of the relevant organizations which will be able to support.
- Social, cultural and legal barriers made it difficult for victims to seek help. Therefore, a user-friendly app which ensures confidentiality is vital to providing support to individuals suffering from domestic violence and raising awareness about their rights.

Successful overseas example

- Similar apps are available in the market and are proven to be a success, for example, Toranj, an app designed to quickly connect victims of domestic violence with the resources and support they need to be safe, both in the moment and for the long term. It was selected as one of the small grant winners of the IranCubator contest by United for Iran in 2016.
- However, so far no similar apps are available for EM in Hong Kong. Our app will offer services including: legal support handbook, key points put forward in workshop, self assessment of family relationships and more.



Resource Requirements

Input	Output
4 student volunteers from universities to recruit potential participants for the domestic violence workshops	A mobile app/ online platform for assessing the general family life and domestic violence situation of the respondents
2 student volunteers to write the code for the app	5 interactive workshops running weekly in 5 weeks to identify various areas in domestic violence and family disputes in general
Pro bono lawyers to review the accuracy of materials used and provided at the workshops	A checklist for counselors and victims to evaluate current situation
2 translators for translating the materials and the information in the workshops	A Q&A offering answers commonly enquired by the victim

Problems and Solutions

Problem	Solution
There may be difficulties in promoting the usage of the website/app developed.	To reach out to the NGOs serving EM, whenever they work in the field of domestic violence or not. We will also package the questionnaire as psychology test prevalent on social networking websites and use a number of interesting photos attached to the results to encourage users may choose to share with their friends.
There might be difficulties in reaching out to the community and ask them to join the workshops as many of them think exposing domestic disharmony is a social stigma.	The workshop will not be solely on domestic violence but also on a number of other family legal issues (though less time will be allocated to that part compared to the main theme), including resolving family conflicts successfully by mediation and equal opportunities, healthcare and education. These provide incentives and the participants would not resist from the very beginning outright.
Participants may not be able to devote their time to participate in all the sessions, since they need to take care of the family	The workshops will be held in the morning when the husbands are at work and children are at school; and will not be in a very intensive manner so that it will be easier for the participants to spare time to attend. The workshops will also target at the younger generations as they probably have less commitment to the family when compared to the mothers.

Evaluation Plan

Evaluation will be done monthly, at the end of each workshop and at the end of the project.

Legal Workshops for Women

A pre-workshop questionnaire will be completed by the participants as the benchmark. 3 months after the end of the series of workshops, another questionnaire will be sent to the participants to evaluate their awareness of domestic violence and knowledge of the protection methods available. They will also be asked about a hypothetical scenario that if an acquaintance suffers from possible domestic violence, what advice they will give to that person. On top of this overall evaluation of the effectiveness, another set questionnaire will also be distributed throughout the workshop series to collect feedback from participants on the content and practicality of and level of interaction in the workshop.

Relevant Key Performance Indicators:

- Reported score of overall satisfaction of the workshop
- The reported level of confidence of counselors when advising peers in domestic violence situations;
- Reported usefulness of the information given to the counselors
- Number of friends the counselors actually helped after the workshops.

Anti -Domestic Violence App

Statistics will be obtained from the operation of the website in evaluating the effectiveness of the platform. Users are also invited to rate the platform.

Relevant Key Performance Indicators:

- Number of users of the platform
- Average rating given by the user
- Number of users agreed to be referred to relevant NGOs concerned for further assistance

Sustainability

The program is sustainable in the following manner:

- 1) **Low cost** - The maintenance of the app requires minimal fees and the users needing assistance will be directed to the NGOs automatically.
- 2) **Reusability of materials** - Even though the workshop itself requires workers to operate and recruit participants and therefore will need resources for ongoing operation in future, the materials educating EM about domestic violence and proper conflict resolution will be left and distributed to different relevant NGOs and can be utilised for further advocacy by the relevant NGOs in the future.

NGO partners

The NGO partner of this project is “Translate for Her”.

This is a relatively newly found NGO which recruits helpers to assist in the translation of the Chinese text encountered daily by EM women and particularly Pakistani.

They make use of “Whatsapp” which is easy for the women to access and women encountering difficulty in understanding community information will send a message to the group for the helpers to assist. This NGO has lots of connections to the EM community and helpers, therefore it is a good platform for us to recruit participants into the legal education workshop and to promote relevant materials.

Relevant Stakeholders

Vital to Engage	Necessary to Engage	Good to Have on Board	Courtesy to Inform
Funder: Provide the financial and material support and give feedback on the effectiveness and goals	Volunteers and helpers: Help recruit the participants and promote the use of the app	Other EM NGOs in the field: Promote the project and the app and help us evaluate the needs of EM community as a whole	Community leaders in the field: Ensure the cultural sensitivity of the project and keep constant communications with the EM community
NGO Partners: Provide networking and venue support	The pro-bono lawyers: Help review the materials, ensure the correctness and conduct community legal talks NGOs specialising in domestic violence and family therapy: Offer advice on domestic violence issues and how to resolve family conflicts		

Project Timeline

Task	Start Date	End Date
PHASE 01		
Research, preparation and assessment	Feb 2018	Feb 2018
PHASE 02		
Developing mobile app Developing contents of legal education workshop	Mar 2018	Apr 2018
PHASE 03		
Recruiting volunteers and participants Fine-tuning materials and trial run of apps	May 2018	May 2018
PHASE 04		
Publishing app & advertisement Running workshops Interim evaluation on impact of app/workshop Final evaluation against objective set	Jun 2018	Dec 2018

Budget Breakdown

Item	Estimated Budget (HK\$)
1. Mobile App/Website	
Wage Employing student web developer and designer for developing the App/Website (HK\$55/Hour) x 300	16,500
Renting server/ App store listing fees	7,000
App promotion fees (Advertising on social media/pamphlet/ posters in NGO centres)	2,500
2. Legal Education Workshop	
Interpreter (\$400 X6 sessions)	2,400
Refreshment	2,000
Workshop materials and stationery	3,000
Student helper (HK\$55 x40)	2,200
Participant subsidy (Travelling) (HK\$600 x 15)	9,000
Contingency	5,400
GRAND TOTAL (HK\$):	50,000

NOTES:

1. Hong Kong Christian Service, (2017) The domestic violence and help-seeking behaviors of minority ethnic women in Hong Kong.
2. Department of Justice, HKSAR (2015) The Policy for Prosecuting Cases involving Domestic Violence.
3. Hong Kong Christian Service, (2017) The domestic violence and help-seeking behaviors of minority ethnic women in Hong Kong.
4. Rainlly, (2018) Understanding Gender-based Violence of Girls of South Asian Ethnic Groups in Hong Kong.
5. Rainlly, (2018) Understanding Gender-based Violence of Girls of South Asian Ethnic Groups in Hong Kong.