

Part C Project Overview

Project Title (in English):
Promoting Emotional Wellness and Resilience in
the Self-financing Tertiary Education Sector

Project Title (in Chinese):
推廣情緒健康及抗逆能力計劃

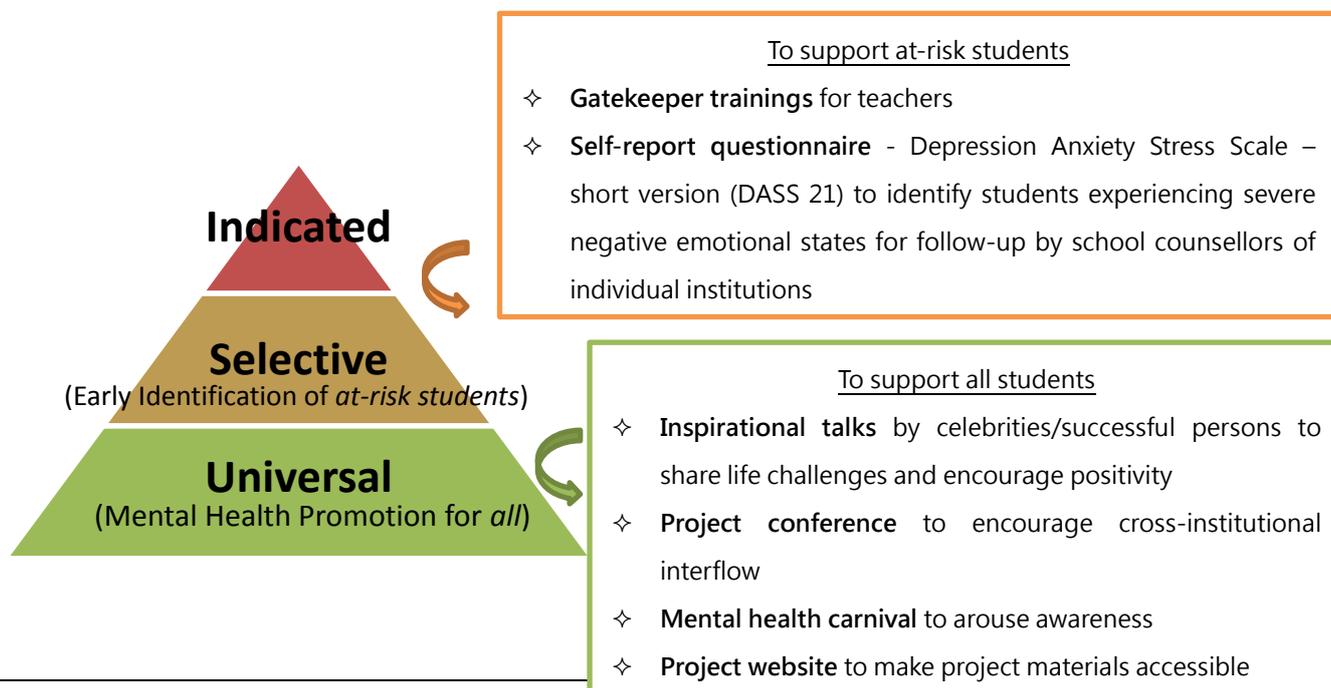
Executive Summary

(Please provide, within this page, an executive summary of the project.)

The emotional wellbeing of Hong Kong students has been a rising concern in recent years. At the beginning of academic year 2016/17, 22 young people took away their lives, 10 of whom were tertiary students¹. This is a stark increase in comparison to 2010-2014 – an average of 23 students committed suicide a year, with two to three being tertiary students².

Suicide is a complex behavior resulted from different interacting biological (e.g. neurochemical), psychological (e.g. mental/emotional health problems) and situational factors (e.g. family/peer relationships). The tragedy, however, is preventable. Warning signs are present in over 80% of completed suicide³. Early identification of at-risk students and development of emotional resilience – the ability to bounce back after experiencing trauma or stress, to adapt to changing circumstances and respond positively to difficult situations⁴ – which go hand in hand, are first line of defense.

In health promotion, the World Health Organization (WHO) promotes a three-level public health approach – (i) **universal**, (ii) **selective**, and (iii) **indicated** – which targets at different populations and risk groups and can be applied in suicide prevention⁵. In this project, adopted from the three-tier framework, FSTE proposes the first-ever sector-wide initiative to promote emotional wellness and resilience, with various genres of activities and trainings for students and teachers directed towards **universal** and **selective** levels introduced.



On the whole, these universal and selective strategies aim to promote emotional wellness and resilience towards specific goals to:

- a. Encourage positive attitude, thinking, and coping skills in face of adversity among self-financing sub-degree students by organizing inspirational talks by celebrities/successful persons;
- b. Facilitate early detection of at-risk students by introducing and administering web-based screening tool among newly admitted students, and by providing gatekeeper trainings for teachers;
- c. Draw synergy in fostering a school culture with heightened awareness of youth emotional wellbeing by organizing a mental health carnival; and
- d. Encourage cross-institutional interflow and sharing of information on/professional experience in emotional wellbeing by organizing a project conference, and establishing a website to make project materials alive and accessible.

The three-year project is expected to commence in October 2017. FSTE would serve as a central coordination unit to organize activities, procure trainings, and engage stakeholders. It is anticipated that 1,350 participants would be directly benefited from project activities and trainings while 45,200 new students of 14 FSTE Member Institutions would be indirectly benefited from the introduction of screening tool.

References:

1. Cheung, E. & Chiu, P. (2016). "Students at breaking point: Hong Kong announces emergency measures after suicides since the start of the academic year" . *South China Morning Post*, March 14. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/1923465/students-breaking-point-hong-kong-announces>
2. Ibid.
3. Education Bureau (2015). *An ebook on student suicide for schools: Early detection, intervention & postvention*. Retrieved from <http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/student-parents/crisis-management/about-crisis-management/EDIP-e.pdf>
4. Living is for Everyone (n.d.). *Resilience, vulnerability and suicide prevention*. Retrieved from <http://www.livingisforeveryone.com.au/uploads/docs/LIFE-Fact%20sheet%206.pdf>
5. World Health Organization (2010). *Towards evidence-based suicide prevention programmes*. Retrieved from <http://www.wpro.who.int/mnh/TowardsEvidencebasedSPP.pdf>

Part D Problems Identified

(Please provide your assessments to the problems / needs identified.)

1. Low help-seeking for professional service

Help seeking by young people is generally low. Barriers (e.g. stigma, waiting time) may block students from asking for help. In a local telephone survey investigating 1,010 12- to 29-year-old youths¹, 313 (30.9%) respondents revealed that they had expressed distress in the past four weeks. Among these at-risk youths, a considerable proportion (28%) did not ask for help, although most (71.9%) had expressed their distress through online means.

In the final report by Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides (CPSS)², it was reckoned that youths in need are more likely to reach out for help from their friends or teachers than counselling professionals. Further, after reviewing existing support scenario, it highlighted the need to strengthen measures of early identification and intervention for needy students.

➤ *Solution: Sector-wide teacher gatekeeper*

Teachers are at frontline position in students' wellbeing and suicide prevention. As they keep close contact with needy or at-risk students who are out-of-reach or missed out by school counsellors. Hence, gatekeeper training would facilitate early identification of at-risk students through picking up warning signs, and prepare timely intervention for needy students through referral to school counsellors.

2. Insufficient standardized mechanism to identify students with distress

Mental health problems put one at greater risk for suicide. In a psychological autopsy study comparing suicide deceased and living matched controls³, it was found that psychiatric illnesses were more common in the suicide group than control group. 80% of suicide group were retrospectively diagnosed with at least one psychiatric illness while there were only less than 10% in control group. In particular, mood disorders were the most prevalent psychiatric illness, accounting for half of the suicide cases and around 10% of control group. Therefore, a mechanism to identify students experiencing negative emotions is crucial. This corroborates with the same report by CPSS⁴ that screening mechanism for early identification of students with emotional or psychological distress is of the same importance to those with suicidal risks.

➤ ***Solution: Extension of DASS 21 to the self-financing post-secondary sector***

At present, mental health screening for students is in place in all institutions funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC). In view of the severe suicidal cases in recent years and adjustment, challenges experienced by post-secondary students, since the academic year 2015-16, Depression Anxiety Stress Scale – short version (DASS 21) has been implemented in all UGC-funded institutions, to identify students with potential risk of mental health issues so that timely intervention could be offered. However, this institution-wide screening is not present in the self-financing post-secondary sector, and an extension to the sector should be advocated.

About DASS 21⁵ (see Appendices 1-2)

The DASS 21 is a 21 item self-report questionnaire designed to measure the severity of a range of symptoms common to both Depression and Anxiety. In completing the DASS, the individual is required to indicate the presence of a symptom over the previous week. Each item is scored from 0 (did not apply to me at all over the last week) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time over the past week).

The essential function of the DASS is to assess the severity of the core symptoms of Depression, Anxiety and Stress. Accordingly, the DASS allows not only a way to measure the severity of a patient' s symptoms but a means by which a patient' s response to treatment can also be measured.

3. Mental health stigma in Chinese culture

Discussion on mental health openly and positively is crucial to raise awareness of the subject, and to foster a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Rooted in traditional Chinese values, being mentally healthy imply the control of emotions; and lack of emotional moderation is considered to have negative consequences for both the individual and social group⁶. While this culture helps maintain harmony within the group, restrained emotion expression would continue to make mental health as a taboo subject in the society and students would refuse support during a mental health crisis. With over 4 in 10 Hongkongers aged 11-30 reported experiencing thoughts of suicide, it should be alarmed that many young adults may go through mental crisis some points in their lives⁷.

➤ ***Solution: Various genres of mental health/positive activities***

Fostering a mentally-friendly school culture requires the engagement of various stakeholders, including students, educators, and mental health professionals. It is expected that the mental health carnival would enhance understanding and awareness of mental health through activities. On the other hand, the project conference would promote sharing of good practices between institutions. Inspirational talks by celebrities/successful persons would focus on building strengths or positive coping skills to promote mental health with an open mindset.

References:

1. Yip, P. (2016, April 8). *An epidemiological study of suicide deaths in Hong Kong SAR*. Retrieved from http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/teacher/student-guidance-discipline-services/lecture-notes/lecture-notes-201516/20160408_prof_%20yip.pdf
2. Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides (2016). *Final report*.
3. Chen, E. Y. H., Chan, W. S. C., Wong, P. W. C., Chan, S. S. M., Chan, C. L. W., Law, Y. W., . . . Yip, P. S. F. (2006). "Suicide in Hong Kong: A case-control psychological autopsy study" , *Psychological Medicine*, 36(6), 815-825. Cambridge University Press.
4. Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides.
5. Gomez, F. (n.d.). *A guide to the depression, anxiety and stress scale (DASS 21)*. Retrieved from https://www.cesphn.org.au/images/mental_health/Frequently_Used/Outcome_Tools/Dass21.pdf
6. Koo, L. C. L. (1976). *Nourishment of life: The culture of health in traditional Chinese society*. California: University of California, Berkeley.
7. Pang, W. & Lee, K. (2016). Student suicides in Hong Kong signal distressing lack of mental health support for our youth. Retrieved from <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1922786/student-suicides-hong-kong-signal-distressing-lack-mental>

Part E Project Objectives and Deliverables	
Measurable Objectives	How it can be achieved
1. Encourage positive attitude, thinking, and coping skills in face of adversity among self-financing sub-degree students by organizing inspirational talks by celebrities/successful persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Organizing 6 inspirational talks by celebrities/successful persons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To share life challenges and encourage positive attitude, thinking, and coping skills ▪ Celebrities/successful persons may come from different disciplines, and topics may include but not confined to the followings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Athlete life - Cultural inclusion - Rehabilitation - School achievement
2. Facilitate early detection of at-risk students by introducing screening tool and providing gatekeeper trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Organize 3 gatekeeper training workshops/seminars for staff which highlight suicide warning signs and useful intervention tips ✧ Adopt web-based Depression Anxiety Stress Scale – short version (DASS 21) ✧ Administer web-based DASS 21 each academic year
3. Draw synergy in fostering a school culture with heightened awareness of youth emotional wellbeing by organizing a mental health carnival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Host a mental health carnival which may include but not confined to the followings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health talks ▪ Game stalls ▪ Information exhibition ✧ Experiential workshops
4. Encourage cross-institutional interflow and sharing of information on/professional experience in emotional wellbeing by organizing a project conference, and establishing a website to make project materials alive and accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Organize conference to share the overall project achievement and provide talks by guest speakers to staff of the sector ✧ Prepare conference proceedings to maintain a collection of presented papers and insightful information ✧ Establish a website to inform stakeholders of the sector of project information and activities updates

Project Deliverables	
<i>(Please list out all the deliverables to be achieved and how they can be shared with, if possible, other institutions.)</i>	
Deliverables	Sharing mechanism
1. Project website	✧ Open to public
2. Inspirational talks for students and staff	✧ Promote through posters, emails, and liaison with relevant staff of Member Institutions who support the followings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mass promotion in institution ▪ Participant recruitment ▪ Logistic support (if needed) ✧ Upload activity information, photos, and materials (if applicable) onto FSTE project website ✧ Mental health carnival: Open to all students and staff in the self-financing tertiary education sector ✧ Project conference: Invite staff both within and outside FSTE Membership to participate ✧ Provide access to web-based DASS 21 to 14 FSTE Member Institutions
3. Gatekeeper training for teachers	
4. Mental health carnival	
5. Project conference	
6. Conference proceedings	
7. Web-based DASS 21	
<i>(Please indicate the information that can be uploaded onto relevant EDB websites during and after the project period.)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project proposal ➤ Project progress reports ➤ Conference proceedings ➤ Web-based DASS 21 ➤ Link to FSTE project website for accessing uploaded information, photos, and materials of all activities 	
Beneficiaries	
Expected type and number of beneficiaries of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Direct beneficiaries: 1350 participants and 14 institutions ➤ Indirect beneficiaries: 45,200 new students

(Please provide justification to support the above estimation and explain how they can be benefited from the project.)

The new initiatives on emotional wellness and resilience would be promoted to all current and new sub-degree students and staff members in 14 FSTE Member Institutions. Specific breakdown is as follows:

Project Item	Beneficiaries
1. Project website	Unlimited visitors
2. Inspirational talks for students and staff	100 students and staff from FSTE Member Institutions X 6 sessions
3. Gatekeeper training workshops/seminars for teachers	50 teachers X 3 sessions
4. Mental health carnival	400 students and staff in the sector
5. Project conference	200 participants within and outside FSTE Membership
6. Conference proceedings (e-version)	Unlimited visitors
7. Web-based DASS 21	14 FSTE Member Institutions

Direct beneficiaries 1350 participants and 14 institutions
Indirect beneficiaries 45,200 new students (see below)

The web-based DASS 21 will be introduced to first year students of 14 FSTE Member Institutions upon their admission. Based on enrolment figures of Higher Diploma (HD) and Associate Degree (AD) collected from FSTE Member Institutions, between 2012/13 and 2016/17, student population has decreased by 10% on average. Assuming AD and HD student number drops by a constant rate of 10% and the web-based DASS 21 would be introduced in the second phase of the first year, it is projected that a total of 45,200 newly enrolled students would be benefited indirectly in the project period.

**Enrollment Number of New Students (Higher Diploma and Associate Degree)
in FSTE Member Institutions**

					1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year
					Web-based DASS 21		
2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
29,600	20,100	19,000	19,100	18,600	(16,700)	(15,000)	(13,500)

*corrected to the nearest hundreds

Implementation Schedule	
<i>(Please list out the implementation schedule and key milestones to be achieved on a half-yearly basis.)</i>	
Estimated start date of the project (month/year)	October 2017
Estimated end date of the project (month/year)	September 2020
Project duration (months)	36 months
Month	Key milestones
	In terms of project activities and deliverables In terms of monitoring and evaluation
1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recruit project staff ➤ Develop project website ➤ Appoint contractor whose tasks will be mainly for mental health carnival. Key tasks include but not limited to the followings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inspirational talks – promotional materials design ▪ Mental health carnival – venue setting and equipment installation ▪ Project conference – promotional materials design ➤ Convert DASS 21 into website format to facilitate students’ participation ➤ Organize inspirational talk ➤ Organize gatekeeper training
7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize inspirational talk ➤ Administer web-based DASS 21 and data analysis
13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize inspirational talk ➤ Organize gatekeeper training ➤ Administer web-based DASS 21 and data analysis ➤ Invite NGO, departments/centers of local universities/ mental health practitioners to set up booths in the mental health carnival

19-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize inspirational talk ➤ Organize mental health carnival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Implementation Team and Project Evaluation Team meetings ➤ Progress report ➤ Post-event evaluation
25-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize inspirational talk ➤ Organize gatekeeper training ➤ Administer web-based DASS 21 and data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Implementation Team and Project Evaluation Team meetings ➤ Progress report ➤ Post-event evaluation
31-36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organize inspirational talk ➤ Organize project conference ➤ Prepare conference proceedings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Project Implementation Team and Project Evaluation Team meetings ➤ Progress report ➤ Post-event evaluation

Publicity Plan

(Please describe all the publicity activities to be organised and materials to be produced to acknowledge the support of Quality Enhancement Support Scheme. Please suitably reflect the publicity activities as key milestones in the implementation schedule above.)

1. To provide activity updates and upload talk and training materials (upon permission from speakers and trainers) onto the project website
2. To design posters to be circulated to Member Institutions
3. To send promotion and invitation emails in relation to project activities (i.e. inspirational talk, gatekeeper training, mental health carnival, project conference) to current and new students and staff
4. To organize project conference to share overall project achievement and good practices amongst practitioners
5. To publish conference proceedings to maintain a collection of presented papers and useful information for circulation

All publicity activities and materials would acknowledge the support of Quality Enhancement Support Scheme.

Part F Cash Flow and Budget				
Project Expenditure (please update according to the latest budget)				
	Amount in HK\$			
Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Manpower	456,000	478,800	502,740	1,437,540
Equipment / Facilities	105,000			105,000
Services	221,000	289,000	287,000	797,000
General Expenses	38,000	123,000	93,000	254,000
Others (e.g. auditor's fee)	24,805	26,500	65,400	116,705
Total	844,805	917,300	948,140	2,710,245
Project Income (if any, e.g. fees received)				
	Amount in HK\$			
Period	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Total				
<i>(Please provide a detailed breakdown of the project budget by completing the following Excel file.)</i>				
Grant Sought under the Quality Enhancement Support Scheme			2,710,245	
Funding from the Applicant			/	
Funding from Other Sources			/	
Total Project Value			2,710,245	
<i>(Please specify the amount to be funded by each funding source (e.g. donations, contributions from applicant / its parent organisation) and whether the funding has been secured. If not, please provide the plan to obtain the funding.)</i>				
/				
<i>(Please provide the duty lists of manpower to be funded by this project.)</i>				
Post	Duties			
Project Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To lead, coordinate, and oversee the entire project under the supervision and guidance of the Project Coordinator; ➤ To formulate implementation plans of project activities; 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To maintain close liaison with Member Institutions and external parties in arranging for project activities; ➤ To report the project progress and achieved outcomes regularly to the Project Coordinator who leads the Working Group; ➤ To coordinate Working Group meetings and serve as a secretary; ➤ To prepare project documents, including QESS progress reports for submission to Project Evaluation Team and EDB ➤ To update project website regularly; ➤ To analyse collected feedbacks from Member Institutions and participants; ➤ To supervise the Project Assistant.
Project Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To assist implement the project under the supervision of Project Officer; ➤ To collect students' and teachers' feedback for analysis; ➤ To handle enquiries from Member Institutions regarding project activities; ➤ To provide administrative and logistic support to meetings and activities throughout the project.

Project Sustainability

(Please estimate the amount of recurrent expenditure and describe how you will commit the resources to ensure sustainability of the project. Please put supplementary information (e.g. proof of financial support) at appendix.)

1. Model to emotional wellness and resilience

The current project framework (i.e. universal: mental health promotion, selective: gatekeeper training and self-report questionnaire) could be replicated in other self-financing and UGC-funded tertiary institutions. Strategies directed towards indicated level in the three-tier model could be developed in collaboration with interested institutions, with a view to promoting emotional wellness and resilience in a comprehensive manner.

2. Inspirational talks

Sharing of life challenges and tips on positive attitude, thinking, and coping skills by celebrities/successful persons would be useful for students overcoming difficulties throughout lifetime. With positive feedback received, more talks could be considered after consultation with Member Institutions. Talks could be video-taped/translated into text to form a collection of videos/articles, to be uploaded onto online video channel or published as book for open browsing and widely dissemination.

3. Gatekeeper training

Upon completion, a well-developed project website housing training workshops/seminars information and materials (if available) can be deployed by Member Institutions for future sharing purpose. Additional sessions and incentives for trainings would be considered after consultation with Member Institutions.

4. Web-based Depression Anxiety Stress Scale – short version (DASS 21)

With web-based DASS 21 made accessible to 14 FSTE Member Institutions, individual institutions may integrate DASS 21 as part of its yearly new student intake registration procedure to facilitate early identification of needy students. In long run, pilot study could be run to understand prevalence of sub-degree students experiencing distress symptoms and to provide necessary supports accordingly.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the three-year project would cultivate a positive school atmosphere with heightened awareness, better understanding, and open mindset of mental/emotional health. Through activities, both students and staff would be significantly benefitted, they would learn how to help themselves and others positively and effectively in face of life challenges. With positive outcomes, FSTE would endeavour to provide further relevant programs/activities. Costs would be discussed with interested institutions.