

**Civic Responsibility, Social Cohesiveness  
And the University Community:  
The PolyU FHSS Anti-SARS Campaign and Future Research Agenda**

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***The Meaning of SARS to us:***

- A multi-dimensional crisis which will significantly impact on the medical and health, environmental, economic, and social aspects of our lives.
- The need to transform the crisis into opportunities and to respond to them in a positive and proactive manner.
- A call for the University community to exercise our social responsibility through concrete community service and voluntarism.

***Our Approach:***

- Formed inter-disciplinary coordinating team in Faculty to analyze changing environment and to coordinate anti-SARS efforts
- Collaborating with PMH and NGOs to form strategic alliance.
- Developed quick, sharp, flexible, viable and realistic action strategies in response to identified needs, drawing upon expertise of different departments.
- Multi-level intervention – individual empowerment, community-ties, and social synergy.
- Involving staff and students as partners in the campaign.

***Our Values and Principles:***

- Enhancing individual empowerment and efficacy
- Strengthening social ties and support networks
- Promoting community participation, leadership, and synergy

***Our Actions Taken:***

- Anti-SARS Hotline and Children’s Hotline (4,582 calls, 170 volunteers)
- Community Ambassadors (12,000 participants, 8,000 signatures, 50 volunteers)
- Warm calls to elderly (1650 calls, 40 volunteers)
- Patients’ hotline at PMH.
- Set up 21 community health information outposts in Tsuen Wan area.
- Tree of 10,000 blessings, collected from the community, for medical personnel (>10,000 greeting cards)
- Research on the impact of SARS on the health and social needs of isolated elderly (996 elderly persons aged from 60 to 99).
- In-depth interviews with SARS survivors (to interview 12 cases)
- Consultation sessions for school principals, teachers and parents on decision making with regard to school suspension.
- Documentation of our actions, and archive of SARS-related information

***Future Research Agenda:***

Research informing social work and healthcare practice:

- In-depth interviews to capture the personal voices of the underprivileged and marginalized groups (e.g. elderly, low-income families) with regard to their predicaments during crisis situations like the SARS epidemic and their implications on social work practice.
- Action research on post-infection counseling and social work intervention
- Recapturing the processes experienced by community groups in anti-SARS actions and conceptualizing indigenous models for community networking and sustainable development.
- Action research on inter-disciplinary intervention models on promotion, reinforcement and maintenance of hygiene behaviors at home and in the community (new ways to deal with the old public health issue of information-education-prevention behavior loop and exploration of innovative partnership such as professional-lay teams).

Research on community cohesion:

- A practice-oriented framework for the cultivation and accumulation of social capital: a longitudinal study to measure and understand the key determinants of social capital arising from the SARS epidemic, the essence in community practices that facilitate the accumulation of social capital, and the impact of such changes on social capital.
- Research on management and leadership of NGOs under the SARS crisis. Issues might include risk management and crisis response of human service organizations and hospital management during and after crisis situations.
- Research on fostering a conducive environment for inter-sector collaboration among government, NGOs, private sector, and community.