Development of a methodology for creating social activities run by the elderly themselves


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Increasing importance of community in hyper-aged society in Japan:

- Government cannot afford to expand social expenditure under limited budget
- Family cannot endure the burden of care (single and couple households)
- Community is expected to work as third axis to enhance the lives in old age (members help each other etc.)

Problems:
- Governments and today's families cannot necessarily afford to cope with the burdens of care or the needs to live independently.
- The participation rate in traditional neighborhood and elderly associations has continued to decline. Moreover, such associations don't usually meet the needs or wants of the community-dwelling elderly (weak relationship among the members, lacked problem solving capacity etc.).
- Government doesn't have realistic means of encourage community activity.

Proposed method:

Holding a series of programs which enhance the reflective interactions among the elderly participants.

Phase 1
Activity change making
- Planning the event
- Gathering many elderly

Phase 2
Relationship building
- Facilitating the interactions among the participants
- Finding key persons for residents’ team building

Phase 3
Residents’ team building
- Telling that our support will eventually end
- Recruiting and organizing the residents’ team for managing the program

Phase 4
Plan making
- Transmitting the know-how to the residents’ team

Phase 5
Capacity building
- The voluntary team starts to run the program by themselves
- Withdrawing from the management side

Follow up
Monitoring
- Sometimes checking whether there is any problems.

Launching ‘cinema club of neighborhoods’

Program: Movie + Lunch
- From 10:00 to 13:00
- Once every two weeks
- Many chances to talk with each other.
- In workshop session, the participants discussed their wants and concerns.
- Lunch and workshop session are not mandatory.
- Reasonably priced fee ($100 for movie and $300 for lunch)
- 30 to 60 participants each time

Timeline
- 2016 July 29
- 2017 September 16
- 2017 July 24
- Celebrated the 25th anniversary
- By 5th time, the residents’ team started to run the program by themselves
- Launched the 1st time program on July 29, 2016

Results and voices of the participants:

Most of the participants are late-elderly (75+).
- It is hard for them to go to the commercial movie theater because of physical problems. The cinema club gives them the chance of outdoor activity and improves their quality of daily life.

1. The program gives to the participants a reason to go out routinely. “I check off every program’s day in my calendar.”
- Before coming here, I had been staying at home and watching TV shows.” Not a few people have joined because their friends asked them to come with.

2. The program provides ties in their neighborhood. “I greet many people in these days.” “We remember each other since we have been meeting in the program.”

3. The program may change participants’ feelings positively. “It is a pleasure to work as a staff in this gathering.” The face-to-face interaction among the participants gives to the team members usefulness to others.

Discussion: Why was the long-lasting residents’ team formed?
- Full support phase was temporal.
- Transition phase was provided for strengthening the residents’ team initiatives and enhancing the confidence to manage the program.
- Supports from our team were minimized after the team’s take off.

Future work:
- Evaluation on the effects of the intervention to the participants
- Conceptualization of the facilitation methods and application to other fields