



香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Multiculturalism in Action Project

Intercultural Ambassador Program 2018-19

Intercultural Neighborhood Program – Food Culture

IAP partnered with the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Services Centre to form a food culture group “Mind Flourishing V Hub” which aimed to use food to promote interculturalism and mental welling. Based in Wan Chai, this group has partnered with the Sikh Temple and organized three events from January to March 2019. Group members include local Chinese, Nepalis, Indians, and Sri Lankans.

The first activity on 20 January 2019 included cooking and gatka. Gatka is an Indian martial art popular in the Sikh community. The Chinese Intercultural Ambassadors visited the Sikh Temple and cooked cross-cultural dishes for the Sikh members, while the Sikh Intercultural Ambassadors taught gatka. This activity enhanced mutual understanding among the Intercultural Ambassadors of different ethnic backgrounds. They also felt mutually supported and accepted when working together for the activity.

The second activity organized on 10 February 2019 included cooking and mindful art. The friendship, communication, and trust built among the Intercultural Ambassadors brought a smooth operation to the second activity. Besides, this group also hosted a clam bottle workshop as part of their art mindfulness activity. Women and children were recruited to join this activity.

The third activity on 31 March 2019 was a cooking activity at the Baptist Oi Kwan Centre. The Intercultural Ambassadors prepared different dishes such as halwa (Nepali dish), Indonesian vegetable salad, and chicken wings. They shared the cultural meanings of the food and hence intercultural sensibility was enhanced.

Overall speaking, the activities organized by the Mind Flourishing V Hub created a partnership among IAP, Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service Centre, and the Sikh Temple. Cross-cultural friendship

has been established through food and art. The group is exploring future collaboration opportunities with the Sikh Temple.

In June and July 2019, The Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service Centre organized two more intercultural programs entitled “Intercultural Kitchen” in order to enhance Intercultural Ambassadors’ experiences on intercultural food culture. These two programs were also sponsored and supported by the MIA Intercultural Ambassador Program.

The first activity on 30 June was a truly intercultural platform which showed participants’ passion on intercultural food experiences. The Centre invited a Malaysian volunteer who demonstrated Malaysian curry puffs, and a local Chinese Intercultural Ambassador taught how to make Vietnamese rice paper rolls. Moreover, the Filipino and local Chinese Intercultural Ambassadors worked together and cooked dessert soup with lotus seeds and eggs, which is a recipe from the MIA bilingual cookbook *The ICONIC Mums Kitchen: Tastes of Intercultural Hong Kong*. Through sharing on food, interculturalism, and mental wellness, the Intercultural Ambassadors were able to gain mutual support and arouse their passion on intercultural food experiences.

The second activity on 6 July 2019 was intercultural as there was a local Chinese volunteer introducing Italian cuisine and demonstrated gnocchi with seafood or avocado. The Centre also invited a Sri Lankan volunteer to assist the cooking demonstration. Hence, a discussion on the comparison between Italian and Sri Lankan food culture was conducted. The Intercultural Ambassadors found this activity very useful as they learnt new cooking skills. Also, they found that foodways of different cultures are connected to nature and health of people.

As this intercultural neighborhood program on food culture received positive feedbacks from the Intercultural Ambassadors, the social worker in charge told us they will continue to organize similar programs in near future and will extend the programs reach out more people in Wan Chai.