



## FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVITIES FOR ELDERS' CLUBS

Elders' Clubs are community organisations of elders. After retirement older people often become socially isolated. There is strong evidence that social isolation and loneliness increase the risk of both mental and physical illness. Elders' Clubs can help to keep older people active, healthy and happy and prepare them for healthy ageing. Social participation helps to protect against chronic conditions.

Elders' Clubs can be developed in many different ways. While it is helpful for all clubs to follow a general structure and have certain common elements, the development of Elders' Clubs will depend on the needs of members and existing community structures, such as community-based organisations and women's groups.

Organisations wanting to start clubs should map existing community structures and think about what their role might be. Existing groups should be approached, given information about the potential clubs and their suggestions and cooperation sought. Often there will be elders within these existing structures.

It is important that the elders are encouraged to take responsibility for their clubs. They should be encouraged from the beginning to organise and participate in activities and to think about how they can sustain their clubs when organisational support ends.

Elders' Club meetings are usually held once a month; however, smaller groups can be encouraged to meet more often to follow their own interests. This might be to sew quilts, read

stories, play sport, play games or make music together. A small budget might be set aside for supplies or equipment, such as buying some cloth for teaching children to sew, sports equipment or a musical instrument.

A suggested framework for activities is below.

### SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FOR ACTIVITIES

- Enables learning of new skills or knowledge
- Promotes health
- Includes and promotes some form of regular physical activity
- Improves knowledge and practice about good nutrition
- Promotes good mental health and relaxation
- Advocates for elders' rights and needs
- Enables elders to better understand and apply for their entitlements
- Makes elders more visible to the general community
- Encourages intergenerational contact, with both youth and small children
- Helps others in the community
- Supports the bereaved
- Encourages fun
- Allows opportunities for artistic and cultural expression, such as painting, drama, music, singing, poetry or dance
- Enables opportunities to practice religious rituals
- Supports microfinance activity, such as savings or small loans scheme, and stimulates income generation



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