



**1<sup>st</sup> World Congress on Healthy Ageing, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

**ABSTRACT 42**

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Holistic Ageing for Older Women

WINGS (Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully) was conceived in mid 2005 in Singapore after local research suggested that women in the city-state were growing older, sicker, poorer, more disabled and more isolated.

This paper outlines the genesis of WINGS, its model development over time, its programmes and the challenges and replication issues faced by the organisation.

WINGS was launched as a membership-based drop-in education centre for older women in June 2006 to provide preventive and active ageing skills for a vulnerable group. It was the first organisation of its kind to lend a gender focus to active ageing in Singapore.

The WINGS model aims to empower women aged 40 and older to have a holistic view of ageing which encompasses good health (health), financial security (wealth) and societal engagement and volunteerism (happiness). WINGS' emphasis is on prevention and it aspires to give younger women real life older role models within the centre. At WINGS, women aged from 40 to over 70 learn with and from each other.

The WINGS programmes are divided into three tiers: tier 1 focuses on knowledge, tier 2 on skills and tier 3 on follow-up action. In terms of format, tier 1 is presented in short talks, tier 2 in a series of workshops and tier 3 in peer-led support groups to effect behaviour change. There are tier 1, 2 and 3 programmes for each of the three key areas of health, wealth and happiness.

The Health WAGS (WINGS Action Groups) and Money WAGS are key programmes at WINGS. The WAGS are peer-led support groups to catalyse very specific action among the group participants. Other key programmes include "My Health Guide" – a health tracking workbook for older women, "The Bond" – an interactive workbook for a grandparent and a grandchild, and Confinement Nanny Training which trains older women to work as in-demand confinement nannies who assist new born infants and new mothers.

WINGS faces challenges in two different areas. It faces programme challenges due to a very heterogeneous target population of older women and it faces operational challenges as a young non-profit organisation. These challenges have led to significant replication issues involving programme ownership, quality control, language, culture and religious sensitivities but it has not stopped WINGS from launching a sister organization in Hong Kong in May 2011.