

# National Pingtung University

## Proposal for the Establishment of Positive Aging Research and Extension Center (PAREC)



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# 1. Purpose of Establishment

The Taiwanese population is aging rapidly, having already reached the criterion for an aging society as defined by the United Nations. To deal with the myriad social effects of an aging society, public awareness is needed so that measures for aged care can gradually be implemented. From a positive aging perspective, aging is no longer synonymous with frailty and weakness. If the elderly do exercises to sustain their mental and physical health, the occurrence of illness can be reduced, thereby holding off the need for costly medical procedures and freeing up valuable human resources in the medical sector. Furthermore, this approach affords the elderly an active and vigorous lifestyle characterized by freedom, independence, and autonomy.

As shown in Figure 1, senior citizens of 65 years or older make up 15.69% of Pingtung's population, a number which vastly outpaces the national average. As a response, the Pingtung County Government in recent years has actively promoted the concept of "local innovation." Moreover, faced with health issues and aging trends associated with an elderly population, the question of how to lighten the social burden is a key focus and a factor that led to the establishment of this Center.

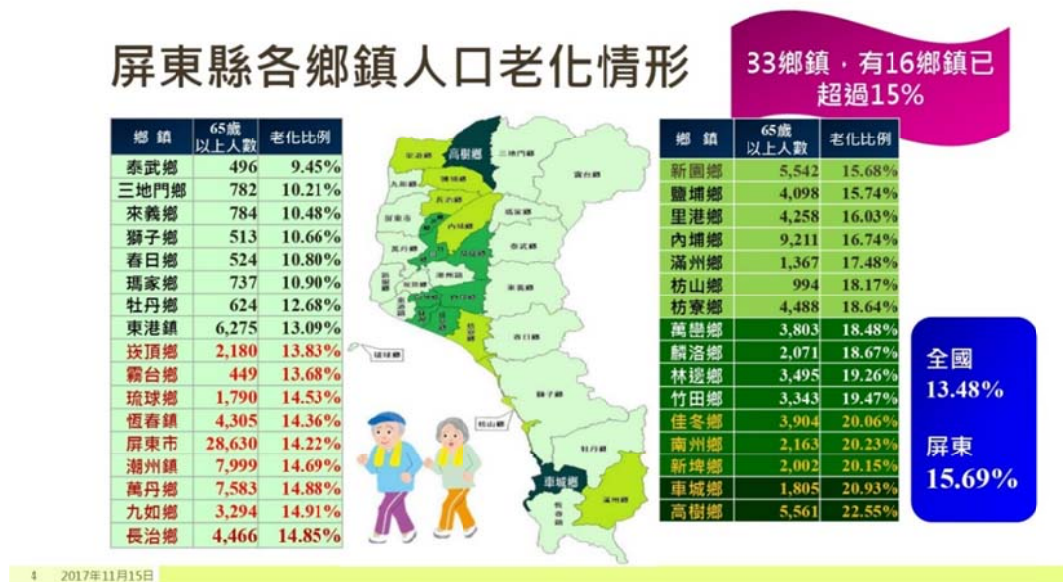


Figure 1: The aging population in each region of Pingtung County (2017)

Source: Current Situation and Recommendations for the Promotion of Long-term Care in Pingtung County, Pingtung County Government.

The Center was established to strengthen the spirit of UGSI at National Pingtung University and to attain a number of other objectives, which are outlined as follows.

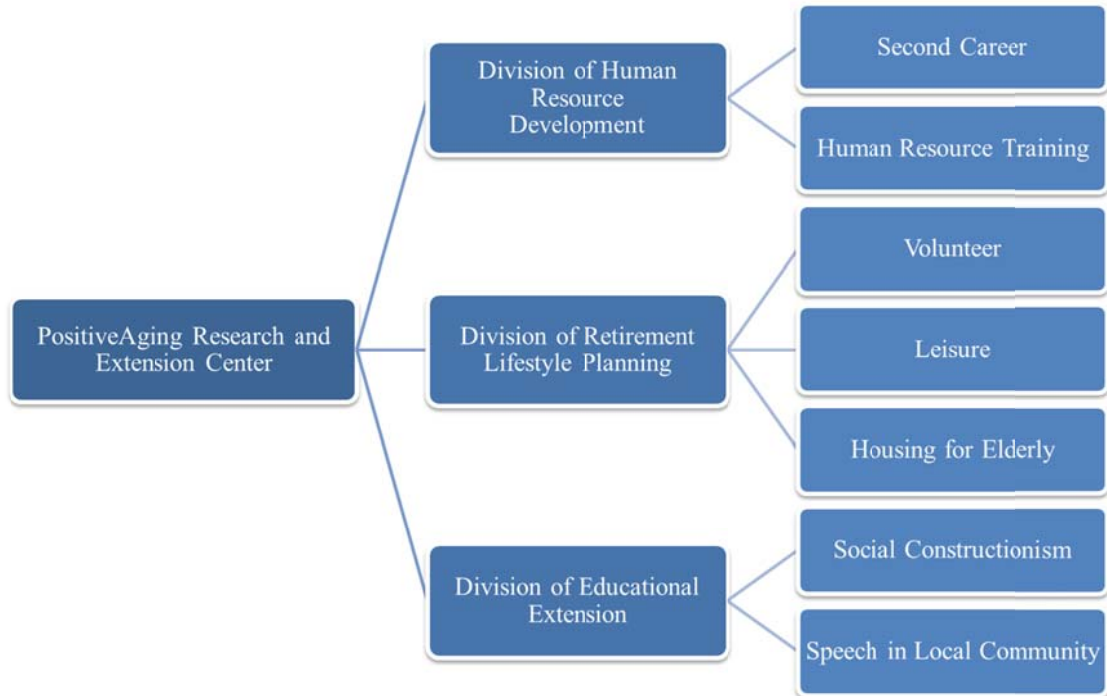
- (1) Research: Apply social constructionism to deconstruct stereotypes assigned to older learners, thereby allowing such learners to view aging in a more positive light and consequently develop the ability to adapt to modern society; conduct research on delaying dementia and look into the feasibility of converting elementary schools into education centers for senior citizens.
  
- (2) Extension: Offer courses for the elderly that include exercises to improve their mind and physical fitness and provide them with medical knowledge, thus reducing the occurrence of illness; promote positive aging from a social constructionist perspective, and plan nursing and long-term care projects to develop the Pingtung region and its surrounding communities in the context of an aging society; encourage healthy aging among local residents and allow the elderly to remain active as they age. This approach will first be applied to one community, and after achieving success the method will then be replicated in other communities. By joining one dot at a time to form a larger pattern, the project will benefit communities far and wide, spreading a positive view of aging and helping cut down medical expenses for society as a whole.

The Center has set up three separate divisions as follows: (1) the Human Resource Development Division; (2) the Retirement Lifestyle Planning Division; and (3) the Education and Extension Division.

By providing assistance with second career opportunities, arranging leisure and recreation courses for retirees, and holding community lectures, the Center promotes a positive aging perspective which breaks down age-based stereotypes and enables the elderly to lead a more diverse and vibrant lifestyle well into their later years.

## 2. Organizational Structure and Operation

### (1) Organizational structure



### (2) Operation

The Center consists of two honorary advisors and one advisor responsible for all consultancy matters;

a chair responsible for setting policy directions and overseeing all matters of business; an assistant to help with research and extension, and to carry out miscellaneous office tasks; and three members (section directors) charged with reviewing research and promotion projects.

Title	Name	Current Job
Honorary Advisors	Dr. Kenneth Gergen	Co-founder and President, Taos Institute, USA
	Dr. Mary Gergen	Co-founder, Treasurer, and Secretary, Taos Institute, USA
Advisor	Dr. Shi-jiuan Wu	Founder, Center for Creative Dialogue Taipei, Taiwan
Chair	Dr. Su-fen Liu	Associate Professor,

		Dept. of Marketing and Distribution Management, National Pingtung University
Director, Division of Human Resource Development	Dr. Kuo-chiang Wu	Associate Professor, Dept. of Marketing and Distribution Management, National Pingtung University
Director, Division of Retirement Lifestyle Planning	Dr. Chiou-fan Chiou	Associate Professor, Dept. of Real Estate, National Pingtung University
Director, Division of Extension and Education	Dr. Da-wei Wang	Assistant Professor, Dept. of Educational Psychology and Counseling, National Pingtung University

### 3. Location of Premises

The Center will ask the University to provide it with a research room to serve as an office. The office will be located in North Building 1 on the Pingtung University Pingshang Campus, and shall be furnished with all the basic office equipment, such as tables and chairs, bookshelves, computers, printers, and telephone sets.

### 4. Future Positioning

The purpose of the Center is to promote positive aging, assist in the development of local communities, apply the spirit of UGSI, and comply with the government's current policy directions. Moreover, the Center aims to break down stereotypes regarding age and allow the elderly to have a diverse and abundant lifestyle into their later years, and maintain a healthy and happy mindset. In doing so, it helps to reduce social medical costs, achieve a synergy between community development and resource sharing, generate more opportunities for collaboration between civil institutions, and thus raise people's expectations of elderly life.

Operating methods and plans include:

(1) Research:

a. Conduct research on elderly participants using both quantitative and

qualitative methods to understand the process of deconstructing old viewpoints and replacing them with new ones. At the same time, conduct research on the effectiveness of instruction as a basis for continuing such projects in the future.

- b. Figure 2 shows a dementia research center established by the Pingtung County Government in Haifong, Pingtung. It facilitates local collaboration through the exchange of resources.
- c. Research the feasibility of transforming elementary schools into education centers for senior citizens.

## 海豐社區型失智多層級照顧園區計畫



Figure 2: The Haifong Multi-level Care Facility for Dementia Project

Source: Current Situation and Recommendations for the Promotion of Long-term Care in Pingtung County, Pingtung County Government.

### (2) Extension:

- a. Starting with the Haifong community, National Pingtung University (NPTU) will work hand in hand with Haifong Elementary School. The former will organize the courses, while the latter will provide the facilities.
- b. In the future, when operations are thoroughly on track, the Center will actively expand operations to include community lectures that promote the concept of positive aging.
- c. Expand collaboration opportunities to include other relevant units and

divisions.

## 5. Three-year Operating Plan and Sources of Funding

(1) The Research Center will have no staff quota, and all expenses related to everyday operation will be entirely self-funded. It is estimated that in the next three years, the Center will successfully raise or apply for funding equivalent to at least NT \$200,000. All requests for funding reimbursement will be handled in accordance with related regulations.

(2) Task content:

Time period	Work tasks	Staff
8/1/2019 - 7/31/2020	1. Raise funds or compile project applications. 2. Prepare all necessary hardware and software for the Center.	Chair, Assistant
8/1/2020 - 7/31/2021	1. Raise funds or compile project applications. 2. Conduct research projects.	Chair, Assistant, Section Directors
8/1/2021 - 7/31/2022	1. Raise funds or compile project applications. 2. Conduct research projects. 3. Carry out extension work.	Chair, Assistant, Section Directors

(3) Sources of funding:

a. Fundraising: As a rule, all of the Center's operating costs will be self-funded. The Center intends to raise funds from businesses and institutions by providing the book "Positive Aging – A New Vision for Senior Citizens" .

b. Project applications: The Center can apply for project funding under the Pingtung County Government Senior Citizen Education Project, or apply



to a government body such as the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW), or to the Taos Institute in America.

(4) Requests for reimbursements of funds: Handled in accordance with related NPTU regulations.

(5) Budget statement:

The budget for the first year

Item	Cost	Description
Student staff wages	90,000	Wages for student assistant: NT \$150 x 10 hours x 4 weeks x 12 months. Labor pension: NT \$1500 x 12 months.
Miscellaneous expenses	30,000	Printing of handouts, general printing materials, and purchase of stationery.
<u>Total</u>		NT \$ <u>120,000</u>

## 6. Desired Outcomes

By establishing the Center, we hope to blend research with extension, apply research results gained at universities to courses set up at local elementary schools, enhance the participation of learners and increase their chances for personal interaction, help improve the health of their mind and body, and increase their grasp of medical knowledge, thus reducing the occurrence of illness. In addition, by holding community lectures in various townships and regions, we hope to engender a more positive view of aging among senior citizens. After this method of collaboration between university and elementary school has been established, it can be duplicated in other schools and regions. The results of the project will be finalized at the end of July each year and kept in CD format.

In the future we hope to convert elementary schools on the verge of closing into education centers for senior citizens. This would allow senior citizens to study

together with children and prevent resource waste, with facilities to be used by the elderly. It would also furnish teachers with an alternative teaching option, no longer having to leave schools due to dwindling student numbers caused by low birth rates.