

Voices of Strength: Co-creating ELM with Caregivers of Children with Developmental Needs

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OVERVIEW

Objective

Developing a platform that empowers caregivers and fosters a strong community of support

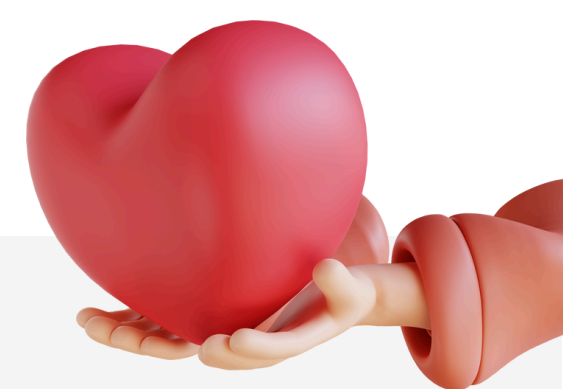
Approach

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with caregivers to gather insights on perspectives, needs, and experiences

Key Points

Findings highlight the need for:

1. Appropriate content and usability, emphasizing safe spaces and connection building
2. Involving the voices of caregivers to foster trust and engagement
3. Ensuring cultural and contextual sensitivity



WHAT IS ELM?

Empowered Learning CoMmunity (ELM) is a one-stop digital platform for caregivers of children with developmental needs

Why?

- > Long waitlists and insufficient knowledge often leave caregivers *feeling unsupported* during critical early years
- > These families face **unique and multifaceted challenges** that can negatively impact both parental well-being and child outcomes

How does ELM hope to help?

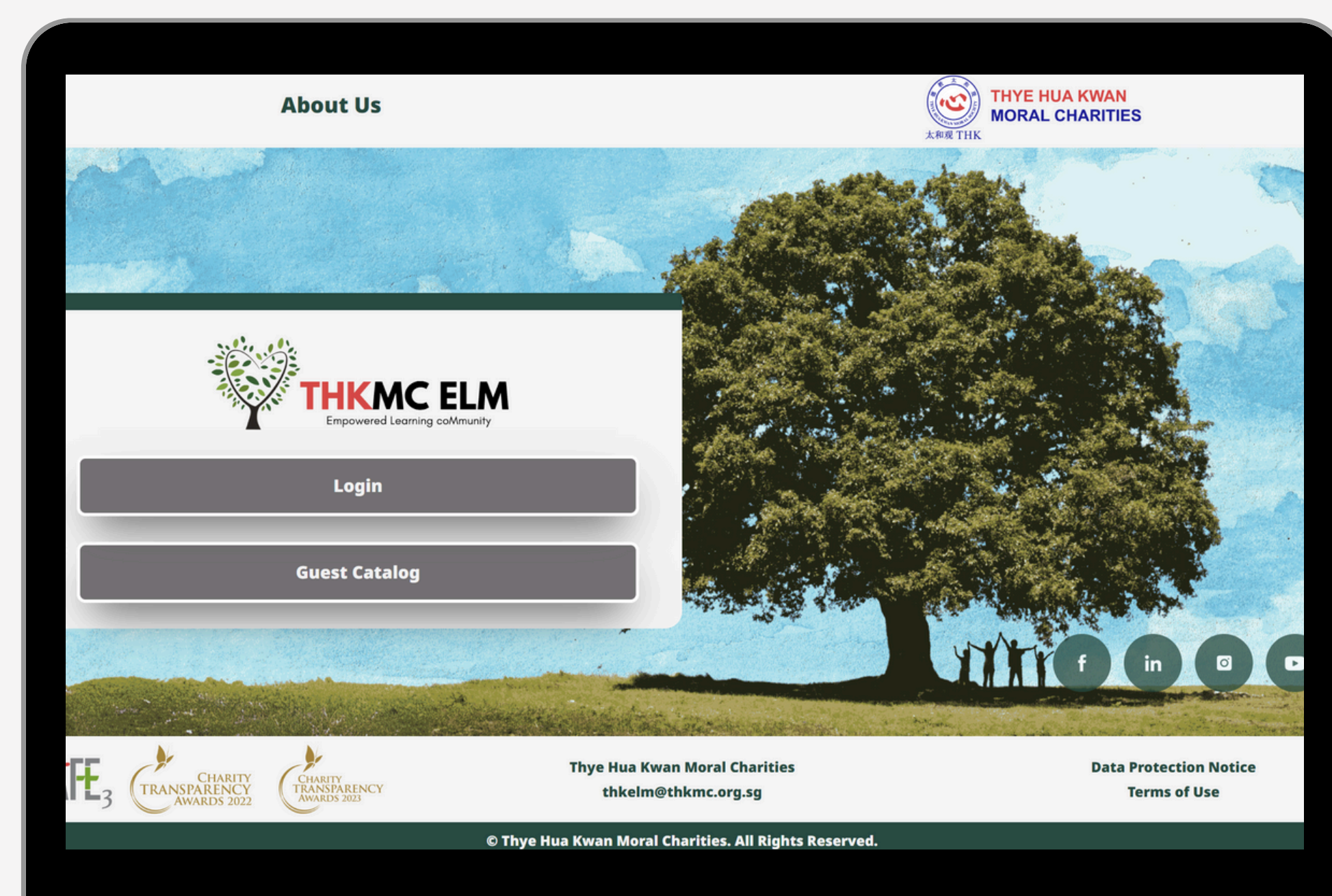
- ✔ Provide ongoing support for families that integrates into daily routines
- ✔ Offer a range of useful resources (e.g., activities, webinars) and virtual interaction opportunities (e.g., forums and support groups)

COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT

To design an effective **caregiver-centred platform**, it is crucial to understand needs and challenges



Caregivers, as primary users, possess **first-hand insight into the demands of parenting**, making their input invaluable for identifying key support mechanisms and guiding content creation

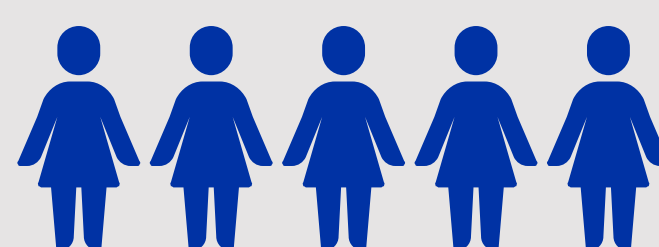


METHODS

Focus Group Discussion

- ! Elicit perspectives and explore the reasons behind responses
- Through group interactions, insights that are less likely to emerge in individual data collection may be obtained
- Observe language & framing preferences

Participants



5 caregivers of children currently enrolled in THK EIPIIC centres

Procedure

- Trial use of ELM
- Semi-structured guide to explore:
 1. *Challenges*
 2. *Relevant technology usage*
 3. *Desired platform features and content*
 4. *Potential implementation barriers*

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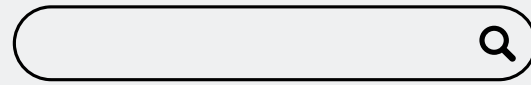


CAREGIVERS' PERSPECTIVES 3 Key Themes



1 SUGGESTIONS FOR ELM

User Experience



- Structured Organization of Resources
- Welcoming Tone & Language

Content Topics

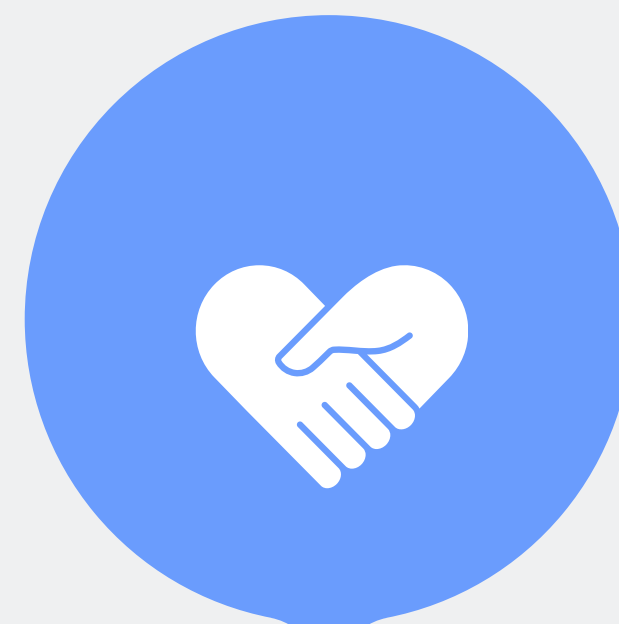
- Developmental Milestones – what is atypical?
- EIPIIC Timeline & Transition Post-EIPIIC
- EIPIIC Alumni Support

Resource Types

- Simple home-based activities
- Printables / Physical resources to accompany portal activities
- Videos / Animation
- Curated content



Example resource on ELM showing a home-based activity for sensory play



2 CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Building Community

- "...Connect with someone on a similar journey... know that we're not alone..."
- "I like to post pictures of my kids... and sharing resources with each other..."

Providing Safe Space

- Sharing opinions without judgement
- Reach those who are less confident

- "no right or wrong... without stigma..."



3 BEYOND ELM

Enhancing In-person Parent Involvement

- Opportunities to organise focused events among ELM caregivers
- "An organised activity just for parents of children with ASD... and one for another need...etc.."
- Opportunities on ELM for parents to join in EIPIIC activities promoting children's independence

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Caregivers express a need for:

- Actionable, easy to use resources
- Emotional support and peer connections
- Access to reliable, expert-validated information

Iterative process of incorporating FGD insights ensures platform evolves with caregiver input, addressing complex interplay of needs

Future research will explore the longitudinal impacts of ELM on family outcomes

Acknowledgements

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