

More connected and deeply engaged

Dao Lu CIC Business Plan: The Next 5 Years

Dao Lu's Vision: An ever-expanding community of people and organisations who believe in and benefit from regular Tai Chi and Qi Gong practice are on a journey to eternal wellbeing.

Dao Lu's Mission: Dao Lu promote interest in and train people and communities in Tai Chi and Qi Gong practice for holistic wellbeing.

Our Values:

1. **Community.** We build relationships with our students and care for one another's progress in our Tai Chi and Qigong practice.
2. **Friendship.** We are bonded by love of Tai Chi and Qigong and shared interests.
3. **Empowering.** We enable and support our students to gain confidence in their individual practice, including outside our classes.
4. **Inclusive.** We reach out to and engage people and communities who would normally be barred from access to community exercise, especially elderly people, those with disabilities, young people, and people from different ethnic backgrounds.
5. **Entrepreneurial.** We reach out to different groups and settings in order to promote Dao Lu, Tai Chi and Qigong, always taking advantage of opportunities and contacts.
6. **Ambitious.** We support our students to benefit the most they can from their Tai Chi and Qigong practice, and we want to reach the widest community we can to promote the benefits of regular Tai Chi and Qigong practice.
7. **Collaborative.** We enter into partnerships with other organisations to achieve our ambitions, our goals and to pursue our mission.

Our Goals for the next 5 years

Some of these goals will be quicker to achieve than others, some can be achieved without much resources, but slight changes to our ways of working. Others will require investments of money, time and effort from the Board, volunteers and students.

Goal 1: Grow Dao Lu's income base to sustain the organisation, the growth of its reach and development of its offer to people and communities.

Dao Lu will maintain diverse income streams, including three main sources: paid-for classes, grant-funding for projects and service contracts with institutions (local government, GP service, housing association, etc.). Dao Lu's priority focus clientele include people over 50s, people with disabilities, people from different ethnic backgrounds and young people who live, work and study in Waltham Forest and surrounding areas.

Specific Objectives:

For our paid-for community classes:

1. By the end of Year 5, the number of regular paying students will grow to at least 150 – 200 per year, ensuring classes are self-financing. We will achieve this through:
 - a. Improvements to our communications and use of communication channels appropriate to our priority groups. It will be easier for people to find us, to know what our classes offer, to be more aware of the benefits of regular Tai Chi and Qi Gong practice, and to sign up and pay for classes and projects.
 - b. At least 2-3 new beginner classes at different times of the day in different locations, including online, teaching Chen or Yang style Tai Chi or Qi Gong will become available every year to attract new students.
 - c. Long-standing or senior students will be supported to become part of Teaching Teams especially for beginner classes, or to train as new instructors.
 - d. We will explore and instigate regular paid-for Tai Chi and/or Qi Gong exercise sessions in places of work.
 - e. We will manage actively all fee payments.
2. We will enhance student retention through separate classes for senior students (those who have been with Dao Lu for at least 3 years), with a clear curriculum of forms training for accuracy, proficiency and flow.
 - a. We will go deeper into Chen and Yang style Tai Chi forms (eg, refinements to form, introducing new forms), including through advance practice classes and discussions of principles/underlying philosophy and martial applications so students get a rounded understanding of the theory and practice of Tai Chi forms.
 - b. We will establish dedicated weapons classes (in particular, fan, 2 swords and staff) with a clear curriculum of forms to be learned over time.
3. We will regularly incorporate Qi Gong exercise routines into our classes: (eg, Ba Duan Jin, Yi Jin Jing, Wu Qin Xi, DYSSG, other Health Qi Gong forms), including through learning new Qi Gong forms with the help of external instructors.

For our grant-funded workshops and projects:

4. We will increase our income from grant-funded workshops per year by 50% (based on the 2022 baseline), to promote Tai Chi and Qi Gong practice to our priority groups in the community. We will achieve this through:
 - a. Expanding our networks with social prescribers, commissioning authorities in local and health authorities, as well as other voluntary organisations to promote Dao Lu, our offer and classes.
 - b. We will establish a standard curriculum for 10/12-week introductory course to Tai Chi training, or 6/8-week introductory course to Qi Gong exercises, as part of our regular offer and for standard grant applications.

- c. Ensure we build the capability to take advantage of appropriate grant-funding opportunities within LBWF and surrounding areas and from other community engagement and sports donors.
5. We will plan for and facilitate conversion of participants of grant-funded workshops/courses into regular paying students, eg through hybrid financing and other efforts. The target for conversion will be based on our learning from 2022-2023 courses.

For our service contract stream:

6. Ensure there are at least 5 active service contracts per year. By Year 5, we will have achieved 25-30 service contracts. We will achieve this through:
 - a. Standardise the service offer for contracts: length of programme, curriculum to be covered, level of fees for Dao Lu.
 - b. Expanding our networks with commissioning bodies in health, social care, housing, sport authorities, local authorities and schools.

Goal 2: Engage young people to be lifelong practitioners of Tai Chi/Qigong and support youth mental wellbeing.

We are aware that working with young people through their schools and colleges or outside schools will be a new and demanding challenge. We will learn along the way and ensure we have the right partnerships and the appropriate knowledge, skills and training in our Board, instructors and teaching teams to undertake this effort successfully.

Specific Objectives:

7. Establish a youth-focused Tai Chi/Qi Gong programme through schools-based sessions. In the next 5 years, we will have programmes in 2 Sixth Form Colleges and 3-4 secondary schools in the borough or equivalent out-of-school provision. We will achieve this through:
 - a. Exploring and building relationships and partnerships with colleges and secondary schools and youth projects in LBWF.
 - b. Develop standard Tai Chi training curricula achievable within school and youth club terms.
 - c. Ensure our instructors and their teaching teams get the necessary and appropriate training for working with and coaching young people within and outside school-based settings.
 - d. Develop and promote bespoke communication content aimed at this youth audience.

Goal 3. Improve our communication content, use of platforms and targeting of advertising towards the audiences we seek to engage.

Specific Objectives:

8. We will get to know our audiences better and differentiate our communications content for them. To achieve this, we will regularly evaluate our courses, survey different sections of our student-members and seek expert advice from sport bodies, local authority and our partner voluntary organisations.
9. We will energise our social media platforms where relevant to our priority audiences. We will achieve this through:
 - a. Enabling and inspiring student-generated content contributions
 - b. Commissioning communication materials from professionals

Goal 4. Strengthen the organisational capability of Dao Lu CIC to implement and achieve this strategy.

Dao Lu CIC has grown in terms of its offer to the communities over the last 10 years. Most of that growth has been on the backs of passionate and dedicated loyal volunteers – various members of the Board and some students, as well as our lead instructors. The growth outlined in this 5-Year Business Plan will require not only the continued passion, dedication and voluntary work of Board members and students, but also growing our organisational capabilities, knowledge and skills.

Specific Objectives:

10. Raise funds to employ a part-time (2-day/week) Dao Lu Coordinator, with specific skills in fund-raising and networking.
11. Employ an 8-hr/month Dao Lu Communications contractor with specific skills in content-creation for social media and to actively manage Dao Lu's website.
12. Increase the number of Board members to include those who have wider social capital (networks amongst social prescribers, local authority), communication skills and representatives of the priority groups we aim to reach.
13. Increase teaching time from our lead instructors.
14. Build senior students' confidence and abilities to teach or support beginner and introductory Tai Chi and Qigong classes through:
 - a. Establishing Teaching Teams to support lead instructors in beginner classes
 - b. Supporting and deploying senior students interested in training to be instructors, and those who have trained to be instructors through the Deyin Taijiquan Institute, British Health Qigong Association (and other Tai Chi and Qi Gong teacher-training programmes).

15. Develop, improve and standardise our monitoring of outcomes from Tai Chi and Qi Gong classes, in particular to support expansion of grant funding and service contracting.