

Event Summary

Main Forum: Tackling Double Ageing By Double Smart

The Main Forum, titled “Tackling Double Ageing by Double Smart”, of the Social Innovation Regional Forum (SIRF2020), organised by Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation (JCDISI) under the PolyU Jockey Club “Operation Solnno” project (“SOINNO”), was successfully held from 2:30 to 5:30 on 11 December 2020. The Forum was live-streamed on the SIRF website and a Mainland streaming platform. Audience members can watch the Forum online and interact with speakers. The live-stream attracted close to 1000 participants from the public.

President of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Prof. Jin-guang Teng gave a welcome address at the beginning of the event. Prof. Teng introduced the social context behind SIRF2020 and its significance, and thanked the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for their funding and support of the PolyU Jockey Club “Operation Solnno” project. He also thanked the 28 experts, four strategic partners, 26 supporting organisations and 15 exhibitors from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Asia Pacific and beyond for supporting and participating in the Forum since October, contributing to a comprehensive exploration of the topic “Tackling Double Ageing by Double Smart”. Prof. Teng commended the JCDISI team led by Director Prof. KK Ling in successfully holding SIRF2020 despite the impact brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.



President of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Prof. Jin-guang

Executive Director of Charities & Community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Leong Cheung, then gave his welcome address. Mr Cheung introduced in detail The Hong Kong Jockey Club's strategy and efforts in tackling the Double Ageing challenge, stating prevention and care as two main funding areas. Jockey Club's funding of JCDISI enabled innovation and collaboration, sparking many innovative ideas for the community, and the sharing of knowledge to solve issues faced by society. Lastly, Mr Cheung thanked JCDISI's efforts in bringing together local and international experts to join hands in advancing the development of cities.



Executive Director of Charities & Community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Leong Cheung

Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit Wing-hang, JP, Guest of Honour of the Forum, then gave a keynote address. Mr Sit introduced the Government's strategy towards addressing population ageing, including the newly announced Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong 2.0 which continues the promotion of technological innovation and using Internet of Things (IoT) to help elderlies live more actively.

The HK\$ 500-million Innovation & Technology Fund for Better Living was also launched to subsidise families in purchasing technological products to improve elderlies' quality of life. Furthermore, the Government also launched a project to provide WIFI connectivity in over 1,400 locations, including in establishments that provide elderly care services.

The Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) has also advanced the development of gerontechnology, having supported 34 gerontechnology ventures to date. The SIE Fund will launch a gerontechnology platform with the aim of fostering cross-sector partnerships and collaborations. This platform will cover four main aspects, namely knowledge hub, network and capacity building, consultancy, product localization and testing and support, and impact assessment.

The Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit (GIES) organised by the HKSAR Government and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service is an annual highlight event in the social welfare and IT sectors, and has also increased public awareness towards gerontechnology, while fostering cross-sectoral collaboration. Lastly, Mr Sit stated that the Government will continue to place emphasis on innovation and technology, offer funding for research and development through the Innovation and Technology Fund, and support academia, researchers, and especially young entrepreneurs who are a major driver in the advancement of gerontechnology development.



Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit Wing-hang, JP

Executive Director of Charities & Community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club, Mr Leong Cheung, returned to give his keynote speech focusing on the Jockey Club Age-friendly City Project. Mr Cheung first introduced The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to the Forum’s audience from around the world – the Trust is a charity organisation with no shareholders, but also the single largest taxpayer in Hong Kong. Making donations of around US\$ 550 million, the Trust is one of top ten largest non-government Trusts in the world. Taking reference from the eight domains laid out in the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Global Age-friendly Cities Project (AFC), the Jockey Club adopted a bottom-up, district-based model to launch projects with over 70 local NGOs, and four gerontology research institutes. These projects have included an assessment of the age-friendliness of each of Hong Kong’s 18 districts, making constructive recommendations across various domains. One finding was that public transport fares were seen as too costly for many elderlies, which prompted a push for the Government to launch a concession scheme for the elderly. Another aspect was in conducting home safety assessments to help perform home modifications for elderlies who lack the funds to do so. The “My Home My Reimagination!” programme further deployed augmented reality (AR) technology to help older people reimagine their homes, while the Age Watch Index for Hong Kong and Hong Kong Elder Quality of Life Index also assist in the monitoring and assessing of local age-friendly facilities. These and other funded projects have all achieved practical results. The Jockey Club AFC projects have helped each of Hong

Kong's 18 districts receive WHO AFC accreditation, pushing district councils and the Government to make long-term considerations for AFC. In November this year, the Jockey Club AFC project was one of eight solutions from around the world selected to present in the Global Solutions Forum 2020.

Director of JCDISI of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Mr Ling Kar-kan, presented the Institute's social innovation projects for tackling double ageing in his keynote speech. With the increasing prominence of the double ageing issue in Hong Kong, a change in mindset is required – population ageing does not have to be a catastrophe, but rather can be an opportunity for us to explore sustainable development in cities. This has driven JCDISI to adopt a strategic focus on tackling double ageing, and to propose the “double smart” solution framework. By applying smart technologies to improve environments including “smart homes”, “smart buildings”, and “smart communities”, the elderly are able to live independently and enjoy a high quality of life.

Mr Ling shared in further detail several of JCDISI's social innovation projects, each belonging to a particular thematic season. The “Transitional Social Housing” season aimed to disrupt the traditional public-private dichotomy of innovative housing types, effectively grouping resources from across society and enabling cross-sectoral collaboration. In one project, the revitalization of the Ma Wan old village, JCDISI focused on balancing revitalization with the housing needs of inhabitants to achieve sustainable development. This project recently won the silver award in the Hong Kong Institute of Planners' HKIP Awards 2020, and promises to be a blueprint for the revitalization of other old villages.

The season “Empathising with Elderly in the Workplace” focused on creating better working conditions for the elderly. One project was to improve trolleys commonly used by elderly waste-pickers in Hong Kong. Through a user-centric perspective, a co-creation team improved the design of the trolley, adding features such as brakes, rollers to aid pushing trolleys onto curbs, straps to secure cargo, and racks to increase payload. With the team spending close to a year conducting tests and making improvements, an external organization has now committed to building 50 of these trolleys to distribute to waste-pickers. Another project proposed ways to improve the environment and workflow in community kitchens in a bid to create more elderly-friendly working environments in the food and beverage industry. The season “Re-imagine Elderly Centres” explored ways to improve elderly centre services by implementing technological innovation, while “Intergenerational Play Space” invited professionals from across various sectors to redesign public space in ways that benefit users of all ages, not only in instilling confidence and improving their health, but also in increasing social cohesion and fostering a sense of community.

Mr Ling concluded by sharing the principles that all JCDISI projects abide by, including being led by design thinking, being evidence-based, drawing on trans-disciplinary knowledge, and engaging in cross-sectoral collaboration. He stressed that JCDISI will continue to focus on the theme “Tackling Double Ageing by Double Smart”, and will call on the participation of even more parties in order to realise smart ageing in smart cities.

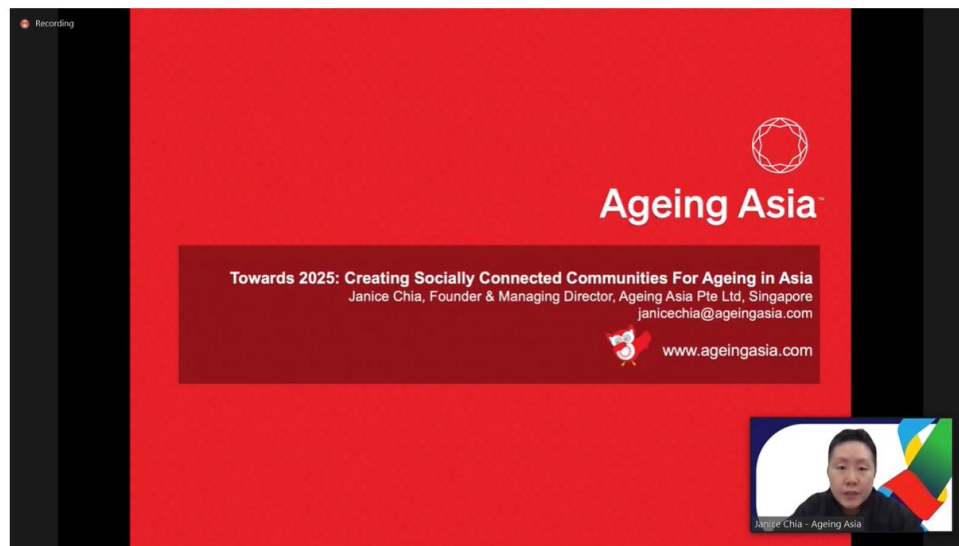


Director of JCDISI of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Mr Ling Kar-kan

Founder & Managing Director of Ageing Asia, Ms Janice Chia, shared insights on business opportunities and future trends in the ageing industry. Ageing Asia’s vision is to help elderlies age with laughter. Ms Chia recognised how population ageing has caused a rapid increase in demand in the ageing market and in elderly care. According to a report on the ageing industry by the Asian Development Bank, there is a market potential of US\$ 4.56 trillion in Asia Pacific, a region that represents 60% of the world’s ageing population.

Ms Chia introduced several areas where opportunities for the ageing market are ripe. The first is to improve quality of living for elderlies suffering from dementia, with Ms Chia noting the safe living concept in Germany where fall prevention and remote health monitoring technology are implemented. The second area is care technologies, where current demand for robotic technology in increasing efficiency of care is high. These technologies can be broken down into five aspects, namely remote medical care, assistive technologies to support care workers, smart home technologies, AI technologies, and virtual reality to assist in the training of care staff. The third area of healthy ageing is driven by the growing understanding and expectation of healthy living by the ageing population, who are also more willing to spend money on exercising, insurance, long-term care and so on. The fourth area, fun rehabilitation, injects fun and excitement into mundane rehabilitation. An example is a Japanese company that develops toys for the elderly to help foster their interest in leisure activities. The fifth area, rehabilitation tourism, offers opportunity for the tourism industry to offer travel services tailored to the needs of elderlies. The sixth area, longevity economy, is driven by people’s attention to their health and desire to live longer lives. The seventh area is senior living care communities, one example being the Singapore government’s recent launch of elderly-friendly housing units where residents will also have to

purchase a SG\$ 22,000 care package in advance as part of purchasing and living in the unit. The eighth area is to reduce loneliness by offering social activities to help middle to low income individuals enhance their ageing-in-place experiences. The ninth area, virtual care, is driven by greater acceptance among the older generation to receive remote healthcare management through technology. Lastly, the tenth area, local economy, calls for self-sufficient villages and communities, where nearby businesses and facilities are able to provide the healthcare and lifestyle services needed for the elderly to live independently.



Founder & Managing Director of Ageing Asia, Ms Janice Chia

Community Designer of Studio-L, Ms Noriko Deno, shared insights on the act of community design in Japan's ageing society. Studio-L is formed of a group of community designers tasked with designing the environments with and within which people interact, the scope of their work relating to areas including ageing, education, and welfare. Ms Deno argued that the serious ageing issue in Japan has brought many social issues, including distancing between elderly and society, shortage of care workers, accessibility issues in neighbourhoods and so on. With these in mind, Studio-L focused on addressing a particular issue: to close the distance between care workers and care receivers. Their social design project, which was to launch The Design School of Care and Welfare, invited participants to imagine the future of care and welfare. The project invited 470 participants from the care industry and beyond to take part, and organised workshops and exhibitions in eight regions across Japan. The school did not have teachers or a fixed curriculum, instead it asked each student to participate with one question in mind – how would you like to live your life now and in the future? Participants visited care homes to gain an understanding of the environment and interact with caregivers. Comprehensively familiarizing themselves with the care process and living conditions of elderlies suffering from dementia, they began to rethink the products, services, and designs from a clean slate in order to improve the current situation.

67 teams ultimately designed projects and products in workshops. Examples included a “5-senses lesson” for letting children experience elderly life, a magazine titled “Cyun Cyun” to offer elderlies an opportunity to openly and comfortably engage in discussions about sex life, a toolkit named “Me and My Dad’s Dementia” to help family members recognize the needs of elderly relatives with dementia and take care of them appropriately, a logbook project named “My CV” to help elderlies log their health conditions and so on. Following the workshops, Studio-L organised the Oi Oi Oiten Exhibition to showcase these projects, where many participants felt that their stereotypical understanding of elderly and care workers have changed. With the completion of the project, some of these products were put on sale in the market, and some participants were even offered jobs at elderly centres.



Community Designer of Studio-L, Ms Noriko Deno

Chief Executive of Centre for Ageing Better (CAB), Dr Anna Dixon, shared her insights from the Centre’s work in tackling double ageing. Dr Dixon highlighted the increased life expectancy in the UK, where over eight million baby boomers born in the 60s have reached the elderly age of 60 years old. This ageing population would drastically increase again by 2039. Many people in the UK hold a negative impression of ageing, facing anxiety about the impending financial burden of affording care and medical attention.

CAB is a charitable organization with the vision of a society where everyone enjoys later life. They focus on four main areas of life, on which Dr Dixon further elaborated.

Building Better Housings: The issue of building stock ageing is severe in the UK, with 93% of houses not reaching basic sustainable standards. They also often lack access-friendly facilities, and are also plagued by less obvious underlying issues. CAB have, on the one hand, urged the government to impose sustainable standards on all new builds, and on the other, provided assistance to low-income households in carrying out repair and maintenance work.

Creating Better Communities: Many elderly people over 65 years of age are prevented from being socially active due to poor health or surroundings which are hard to access. Dr Dixon believes that everyone should have the opportunity to participate socially. As such, CAB have both invested in enhancing community infrastructure by improving accessible public transportation systems, and also kickstarted active ageing projects.

Creating Better Work: In order to encourage continued employment among the elderly, employers should demonstrate an age-friendly attitude towards their employees. CAB have published guidelines on becoming an age-friendly employer, urging employers to allow work flexibility, actively hire elderly people, and encourage professional development opportunities for all.

Being in Better Health: While many people now live longer, the gap in healthy life expectancy between the rich and the poor has continued to grow. CAB hopes to support more people in staying fit by promoting healthy exercises, walking, cycling and so on.

The efforts above made by CAB have received support from the British government, whose industrial strategies have reflected a shifting perception of ageing from one of burden to one of economic opportunity.



Chief Executive of Centre for Ageing Better (CAB), Dr Anna Dixon

The panel discussion which followed was moderated by **Executive Council Member Dr The Hon Lam Ching Choi, SBS, JP**. Guided by the topics that audience members were most interested in, Dr Lam led a lively and insightful discussion.

Topic 1: Elderlies are contributors to society, and not just vulnerable service targets in need of care. How do we help elderlies realise their worth as we tackle double ageing?

Drawing from research findings, Dr Dixon argued that negative stereotypes of the elderly are common in British society, who are seen to be old, weak, ill, and in decline, and only serve to make people worry more about ageing. She believes we must actively change these impressions and acknowledge not just the challenges brought about by ageing, but also the diverse possibilities.

Mr Cheung believes that elderlies have different abilities, which with appropriate training can allow them to be volunteers and lend a helping hand while benefitting from the experience themselves.

Topic 2: Should the government and other sectors be doing more to tackle double ageing?

Mr Ling believes that both the government and wider society should take double ageing seriously. Over half of the elderly population in Hong Kong live in public housing, and while the government allocates resource to subsidise the repair and restoration of public housing, further funding for repair work should be made available to those living in private housing too.

Mr Cheung explained that The Jockey Club does not specifically serve elderly inhabitants of public housing, but rather offers funding based on individuals' specific needs. Nevertheless, over half of the elderlies supported by The Jockey Club live in public housing, and any effort to improve their lives would be a good suggestion.

Topic 3: How can private organisations help tackle double ageing?

Ms Chia suggested several age-friendly innovative ideas from an entrepreneurial and economic approach. For example, elderly hawkers in Singapore hawker centres may struggle to consecutively work seven days a week. However, by sharing a stall with others, they would be able to take turns every few days. This arrangement of sharing makes starting a business more viable and increases efficiency. More than just an income source for the elderly, such innovation also offer them the chance to be self-reliant, and to live more meaningful, dignified lives.

Ms Deno believes that the public sector enables an environment and platform in which to discuss issues of ageing. Studio-L's purpose is to invite participation from people who were not previously interested in the topic, and to help them realise its relevance to their own lives.

Topic 4: What is the significance of intergenerational interaction?

Dr Dixon believes in the importance of intergenerational interaction, and that we should create the opportunities and networks for such interactions to take place so to change our negative understanding of ageing. We should not simply focus on caring for the old, but should also bring people of all ages together through common issues and shared interests, thereby dismantling the age barrier to offer mutual support.

Topic 5: What is flexible work, and how do we encourage elderly people to re-join the labour force?

Dr Dixon argued that flexible work encourages elderly people to work, but such arrangements are not yet commonplace, and many employers lack awareness and understanding for creating age-friendly workspaces. She pointed out that employers should provide elderly employees with a clear guide for

flexible work, while the government should also offer further support and assistance for elderly employment.

Topic 6: What is the role of technology in tackling double aging? Are we optimistic or pessimistic about its role?

Mr Ling argued that despite the availability of various gerontechnology products on the market, they are often steeply priced and therefore not affordable to every family. He suggested cooperation between the public and private sectors to help elderly attain these products more economically. Additionally, the installation of these products and amenities in typical Hong Kong homes also pose further challenges.

Mr Cheung raised three aspects of gerontechnology development that are worth paying particular attention too. The first was to introduce equipment rental services through community organisations. The second was to explore ways to improve people's health through the use of medical research data and the collection of personal health data. The final aspect was finding ways to encourage service providers to apply and deploy technologies that help increase the efficiency of their services.

Ms Deno believes that while technology is helpful, it is no more than a tool for connecting us together. People, and their participation, should remain the centre of our attention.

Dr Lam raised a further question – “Will gerontechnology be increasingly found in the homes of elderly people, and not just in service providing organisations?” Ms Chia felt positive about this trend, arguing that the use of technologies such as Zoom conference calls and free WiFi among the elderly have encouraged them to embrace new technology.

Topic 7: Dr Lam raised a final question to seek concluding thoughts from the panellists – “If you can only do one thing to help improve the quality of life of the elderly, what would you choose?”

Each panellist gave a concise response regarding the area which they would prioritise, including the design of age-friendly housing, bonds and connection between people, intergenerational exchange and interaction, psychological health and care issues, and the encouragement of enterprising and entrepreneurial spirits.

With the Main Forum of the Social Innovation Regional Forum 2020 successfully held, the SIRF 2020 Digital Exhibition was also launched on the day and is now open for viewing to all.



Executive Council Member Dr The Hon Lam Ching Choi, SBS, JP



Director of JCDISI of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Mr Ling Kar-kan, in a group photograph with keynote speakers and moderator



The Forum was live-streamed online due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic