

Post Event Summary: Thematic Session 3

Smart Neighbourhood & Community: Connecting All Without Boundaries

The third thematic session of the Social Innovation Regional Forum (SIRF2020), titled “Smart Neighbourhood & Community: Connecting All Without Boundaries”, organized by Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation (JCDISI) under the PolyU Jockey Club “Operation Solnno” project (“SOINNO”), was successfully held on 6 Nov 2020. The event took place from 2:30pm to 5pm. In the two-and-a-half hour event, six speakers shared their experiences of smart neighbourhood and co-design from Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Myanmar and Malaysia. The forum was live-streamed on the SIRF website and a Mainland streaming platform. Audiences participated in the session and interacted with the speakers online. The live-stream attracted 350 participants from the public.

Mr Ling Kar-Kan, Director of JCDISI gave a warm welcome to the guests and audiences. Elaborating on the session’s theme “Smart Neighbourhood & Community: Connecting All Without Boundaries”, Mr Ling commented that “human beings by our nature are social animals. We like, and indeed, need to communicate with other people. Neighbourhood and community are clusters of human settlement...where people can communicate and connect with each other, obtain the necessary services and develop a sense of belonging...[However, cities] were never intended to be built for the elderly population. Perhaps it is now the first time in human history that our cities need to accommodate such a high proportion of aged people.” Mr Ling believes that cities should focus on better community developments and strive to fulfill the needs of diverse cohorts through the application of ‘smart design’ in urban revitalization. These design strategies are not limited to accessibility and safety considerations, but should facilitate civic participation as well.



Mr Ling Kar-Kan, Director of JCDISI

JCDISI's Project Manager and Leader of Spatial Team **Dr Calvin Luk** introduced the seventh season of the PolyU Jockey Club Operation Solnno programme, "Intergenerational Community in a Vertical City", and one of its design projects "Intergenerational Play Space". Dr Luk pointed out that Hong Kong is a typical example of an ageing vertical city. Advocating to perceive this challenge as an opportunity, he emphasised that the aim of the seventh installment of Operation Solnno is to transform skyscrapers into multifunctional spaces that nurture social interaction and intergenerational living. Collaborating with a multidisciplinary team made up of elderly home residents, staff members, and researchers from PolyU's Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and School of Nursing, the project aims to revitalize the rooftop of an elderly home in Lai Kok Estate. Considering the needs of the residents, their families, caretakers, staff and neighbours and taking advantage of the abundance of natural sunlight, the project transformed the rooftop into five functional areas: a quiet area, a walking trail, a multi-functional lawn, a garden, a sports ground and a fitness track. Dr Luk also highlighted the utilisation of smart technology such as the Internet of Things to collect data for flexible moderation and functional optimisation.



JCDISI Project Manager and Leader of Spatial Team Dr Calvin Luk

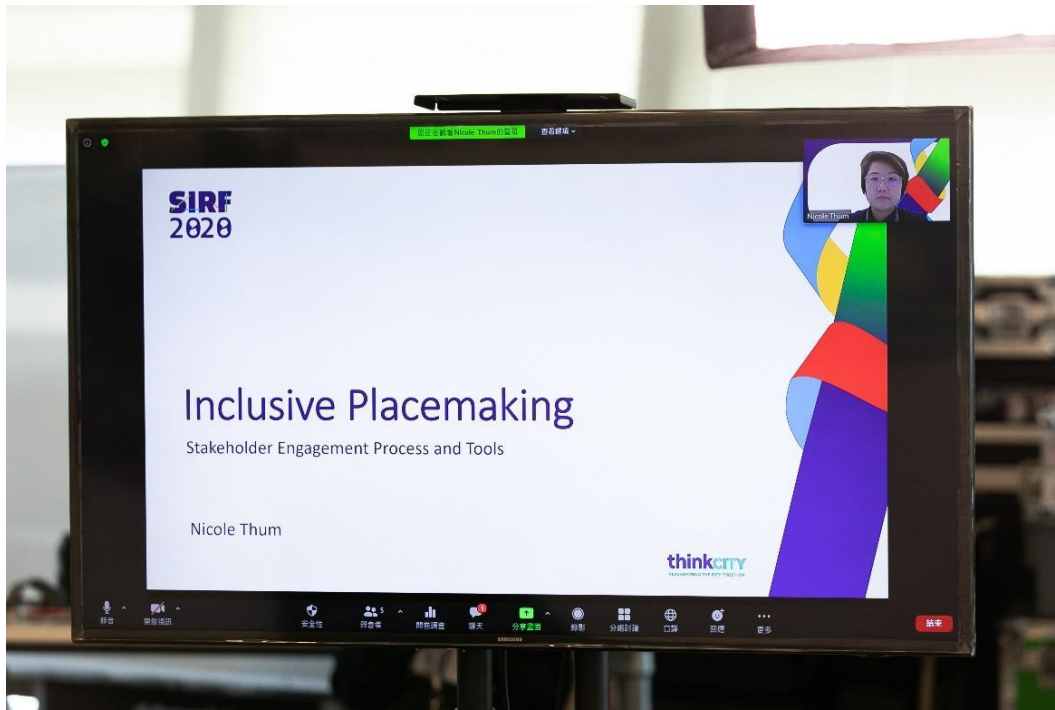
MM Community Co-founder **Mr Justin Chan** introduced his company's innovative crowdfunding model in Myanmar: solving infrastructural needs through local self-financing. He further elaborated on the procedural difficulties of launching infrastructure projects in the country. His model provides a platform for local citizens to make community proposals to the government as well as crowdfunding. The fundings are treated as a two-year zero-interest bond and will be reimbursed by the government upon the completion of the infrastructure. This model not only realises the hopes of local citizens, but also improves the efficiency of budget allocation by allowing community members to contribute and have their voices heard by the provincial and the central government. It is a 'four-win' solution for the stakeholders

involved. He concluded by illustrating the model's operation and results with a recent example of an outdoor gym project for the elderly.



MM Community Co-founder Mr Justin Chan

The Malaysia-based **Think City** is an urban regeneration organization aimed at improving urban resilience and liveability. Senior Programme Executive **Ms Nicole Thum** introduced their five-step inclusive approach to placemaking: discovery, ideation, prototyping, implementation and replication. Ms Thum also shared the process of placemaking and emphasised the importance of communication and trust among stakeholders. Concluding her presentation, she illustrated her argument with a case study of a city park in Penang. Originally a flea market with a bad reputation, Think City was able to reactivate the space by establishing trust and understanding with the stakeholders through comprehensive communication with the local city council and businesses of the flea market. The park is successfully transformed into a multi-functional community garden that hosts cultural events and leisure activities for the whole neighbourhood.



Senior Programme Executive of Think City, Ms Nicole Thum

Urban planners **Mr Runlin Huang** and **Ms Guangye Rui** from **Urban Elephant and FAN-WU-QI Institute** explained their participatory design process at the century-old Pan-Tang-Wu-Yue Village in Guangzhou. Facing a general distrust and refusal to participate from the residents, the project began on a rough start. However, after many active communication and persuasion attempts from the planners, including interviews, historic maps, visionary boards, oral history collections and community exhibitions, the planners and residents developed mutual trust. They collectively rediscovered the history of the community and planned for its future. Ms Rui summarized her knowledge gained during the three-year process of urban micro-intervention: urban planners are not a spectator of urban revitalization, but co-existing participants with the community members. Having their traditions recognized and respected, the villagers' attitude towards the government changed from one of dissatisfaction and grievance to that of support and anticipation.



Urban Planners, FAN-WU-QI Institute & Urban-rural Planners, Urban Elephant, Mr Runlin Huang and Ms Guangye Rui

In order to improve the public's negative stereotypical image of an elderly, JCDISI organised a series of multidisciplinary co-design social innovation projects to foster a more inclusive culture and encourage the elderly to adopt a more active lifestyle. JCDISI's Project Manager and Leader of Social Team **Ms Debby Cheng** presented three of these projects: waste-recycling trolleys designed for silver-aged waste pickers, an age-inclusive community kitchen and the reinvention of elderly community centers. Thoroughly considering the current and future trends of population aging and the local context of age-friendliness, the project encourages the silver-aged to impart their wisdom and actively participate in social affairs. For example, in the co-design process of waste-recycling trolleys, the elderly waste pickers participated throughout the prototyping and testing process; in the community kitchen project, the third-age volunteer waiters designed the staff aprons, complete with their name badges as a way to recognise the worth of their labour; in the elderly community center project, elderlies, engineers, social workers, elderly home staff members and compassionate teenage volunteers formed a co-design team to develop a tailor-made digital platform for senior citizens. She concluded her presentation by restating JCDISI's commitment to elderly active aging and age-inclusive culture through the study and promotion of social innovation projects.



JCDISI's Project Manager and Leader of Social Team Ms Debby Cheng

The ending panel discussion is moderated by Council Member of Hong Kong General Chamber of Social Enterprise and Founder of Senior Citizen Home Safety Association **Mr Timothy Ma**. Six guests engaged in a thought-provoking exchange surrounding topics such as the application of design in flexible urban design, the implementation of MMC crowdfunding model in Hong Kong, ways to resolve conflicts of interest during project implementation, strategies to handle different views among stakeholders, considerations to mend the differences between new and old buildings. 'Conversations', 'communications', 'respect', 'participatory design' and 'the participation of stakeholders' were some of the key words that were repeatedly mentioned throughout the panel discussion.

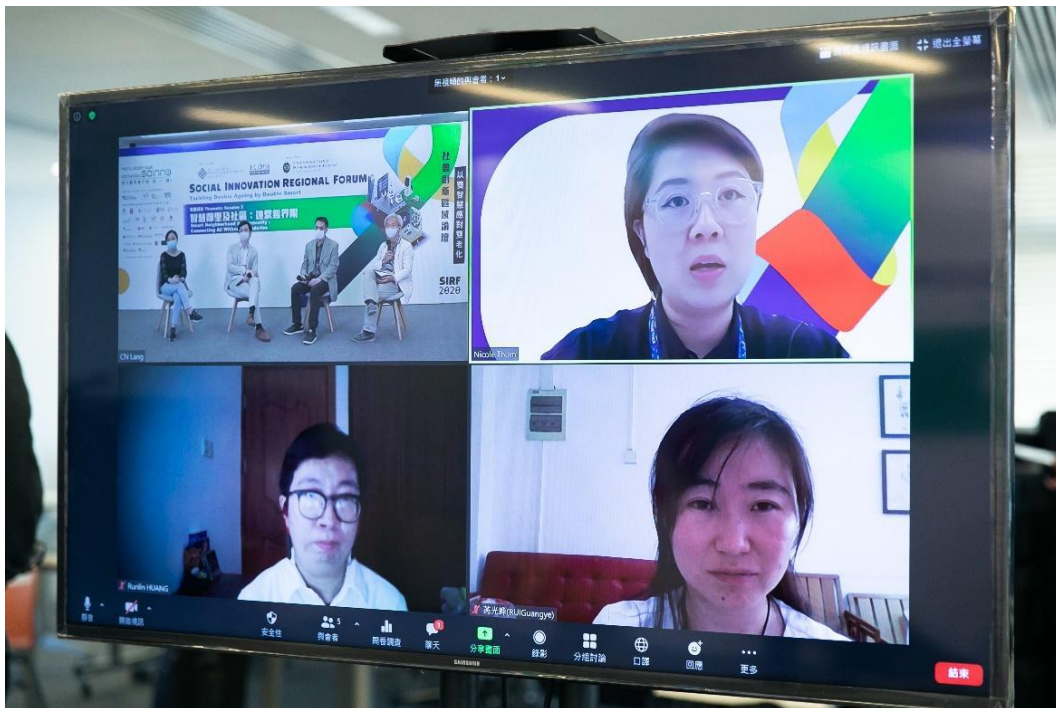


Council Member of Hong Kong General Chamber of Social Enterprise Mr Timothy Ma hosts the panel discussion as moderator

Following the successful completion of the third thematic session of SIRF2020, the next session “Regional Landscape on Social Innovation” will take place on 20 Nov (Fri) at 14:30pm. The event will be live-streamed. We invite you to register and look forward to welcoming you in the upcoming session.



Mr Ling, guest speakers and the host listening intently to the presentations of online speakers.



Live conversation with guest speakers online during the panel discussion