



Social Innovation Landscapes: The Synergy and Development of Social Innovation in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou

“Social innovation brings profound impact. Research in social innovation and implementation has attracted the attention of the public sector, academia, the private sector and NGOs. There is still no consensus on the definition and the best practice of social innovation, nonetheless many individuals and groups from all walks of life who have taken part in social innovation are passionate in building a better society. Leveraging on their talents and creativities, they collectively explore better and more efficient approaches to solve social issues and address social needs. Many organisations are committed to nurturing talents for social innovation, bringing a surge of positive energy to sustainable social development,” **Mr Ling Kar-Kan**, Director of JCDISI, comments.

Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation, or JCDISI, proposes a regional research approach on broadening the understanding of the current state of social innovation. This thematic session marks the first step of this endeavour, guided by a regional focus on the Greater Bay Area. The session gathered revered scholars from Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou in social innovation to share their opinions and research outputs.

A new theory to better predict the performance of social innovation

Dr Yanto Chandra, Director of the Centre for Social Policy and Social Entrepreneurship at PolyU, dedicated his career to social innovation research. Dr Chandra, who has published over

30 articles on entrepreneurship and social innovation, believes that social innovation is transforming into a public policy tool for mitigating social challenges such as inequality, population ageing and climate change. “Although social innovation has captured much public interest, we still lack research in evaluating the performance of social innovation and determining whether these projects effectively alleviate poverty, social exclusion and other social issues,” says Dr Chandra.

Dr Chandra received funding from The Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) to examine factors and processes that affect social innovation performance. He discovers that “social innovation performance is closely related to the business and social strategies adopted, as well as the human and social capital of the social innovator”. His research makes a substantial contribution to the prediction of social innovation performance. The best practice guidelines on social innovation his research put forward serve as a great reference for practitioners in both Hong Kong and societies across the globe.



Dr Yanto Chandra, Director of the Centre for Social Policy and Social Entrepreneurship (left) and Dr Norah Wang, Associate of the Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation

An Initial Analysis of The Social Innovation Ecosystem in Hong Kong

The research of **Dr Norah Wang**, Associate of the Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation, also concerns the ecosystem of social innovation. Dr Wong points out that social innovation in Hong Kong has provided many new ideas and approaches to alleviating poverty and facilitating social inclusion. The social innovation ecosystem is the key foundation on which these are built.

Focusing on the beneficiaries of social innovation projects, she compared and analysed the enterprising ideas of more than 268 participants of Social Enterprise Summit to better comprehend the challenges faced and solutions offered by projects with different target audiences such as the youth, the elderly, the disabled, low-income groups and minorities. Her research builds a more thorough understanding of the social innovation ecosystem in Hong Kong. “This methodology can give research teams a better grasp of the needs of the target beneficiaries and the plurality of solutions, creating a synergy between research and other projects sharing a common social goal by providing data and examples.”



Young entrepreneurs participate in different competitions and present their social enterprise ideas to a panel of judges.

Comparing Guangzhou incubators in search of advancement in social innovation

In recent years, Guangzhou has become the spawning ground of social innovation talents, a case in point being the city’s dozens of social innovation incubators that foster the development of social innovation organisations. These incubators act as the fulcrum for social organisations, laying the foundational soil for an ecosystem of social innovation. **Prof. Runan Zhou**, Associate Professor at the School of Communication and Design, Sun Yat-sen University and Director of Guangzhou Social Innovation Center, anchored his research in social innovation incubators in Guangzhou and conducted a comparative analysis of the regional ecosystem. Through investigating the background and developmental history of these incubators and their related policies, mechanisms, contents and impacts, his research provides an analysis on the impact and challenges of incubators, bringing forward suggestions for improvement.



Prof Runan Zhou, Associate Professor at the School of Communication and Design, Sun Yat-sen University and Director of Guangzhou Social Innovation Center

Social Innovation Flourishes In Shenzhen's Supportive Macro-Environment

President of Shenzhen Institute of Non-Profit Organisations **Mr Jinxing Rao** has been an avid participant in social innovation in the Mainland. One of the founding members of the inaugural China Social Innovation Award, he pointed out that in the last decade many social innovation spaces have flourished in Shenzhen, benefiting from the supportive policy environment that cultivates the development of social innovation and talents. “Though different in their operational models, these spaces mainly provide services such as office space rentals, incubators and resource matching.” With a deep understanding of the current state, characteristics and functions of these spaces, Mr Rao analysed their operational challenges and provided corresponding solutions.



President of Shenzhen Institute of Non-Profit organisations Mr JinXing Rao

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Social Innovation Regional Forum 2020

How do social innovation initiatives in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Guangzhou inspire and borrow from each other? The Social Innovation Regional Forum (SIRF2020) organized by

JCDISI of PolyU under the project PolyU Jockey Club “Operation SoInno”, will invite the aforementioned experts as forum’s speakers. The panel discussion, moderated by Mr Ling Kar-Kan, Director of JCDISI, will explore the social innovation experience from the three cities.