

# Practice Insights



EAST ASIA SPECIAL ISSUE

WCDC2018

**iACD**  
International Association for Community Development  
Associação Internacional de Desenvolvimento e Ação Comunitária  
2018 65TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR  
WITHOUT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
THERE IS NO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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IACD aims to give its members a voice at the global level, advocating for community development principles and practice in international forums and consultations. IACD has consultative status with the UN and its agencies.

## Contributing articles

Our international *Practice Insights* publications are issued three times a year, each one focusing on a particular theme of relevance to community development. If you would like further information or to contribute to future editions, please contact [charlie.mcconnell@iacdglobal.org](mailto:charlie.mcconnell@iacdglobal.org) Alternatively, IACD members are welcome at any time to contribute news items, research, case studies or other materials to our members' Facebook site and to the IACD website.

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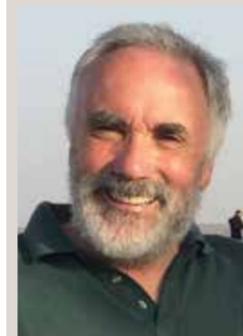
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*The views expressed in this publication are primarily those of the respective authors and not necessarily those of IACD.*

## Foreword

Charlie McConnell



Periodically IACD publishes a special issue of *Practice Insights* magazine. These have usually been thematic e.g. about poverty or the Sustainable Development Goals. This special issue is geographic. It profiles community development initiatives in eastern Asia, with a strong spotlight upon parts of China. Our guest editor and IACD East Asia Director, Kwok-kin Fung has gathered together over a dozen articles. Most are case studies, written either by practitioners or research scholars working in the community development field. As with all of the articles in *Practice Insights*, they are intended to be short, giving the busy reader a glimpse into work in the area, together with the contact details of the author/s should readers wish to make contact. Huge thanks to the authors and above all to KK and his colleague Chan Yu Cheung, for getting this issue together.

We have been asked many times whether *Practice Insights* is peer reviewed and the answer is yes. At least two external people look at each article. *Practice Insights* is not however intended to be an academic journal, but rather a practitioner magazine. There are over a dozen academic community development journals around the world and, as IACD members will know, we have had a longstanding relationship with the international *Community Development Journal* (CDJ) published by Oxford University Press. Indeed the February 2017 edition of CDJ also looked at eastern Asia, co-edited by KK Fung and Gary Craig, IACD Past President. (see <https://academic.oup.com/cdj/issue/52/1>).

## Contents

Editorial .....	04
<b>Community organizing for residents who are living in sub-divided flats</b> .....	06
<b>Working with people in non-decent housing</b> .....	08
<b>Grassroots Organizing in Hong Kong</b> .....	10
<b>Innovative Community Economic Venture – The Case of Sharing Kitchen HK</b> .....	12
<b>Heritage preservation in old urban community – “Viva Blue House” revitalization project</b> .....	14
<b>People Service Centre – “The Food Friend Action” Food Recycling Program</b> .....	18
<b>Community Building and Civil Society – Practices and Experiences of Taiwan</b> .....	20
<b>From Social Service to Solidarity Economy – Local Tribal Communal Kitchen in Da’An Basin of Taiwan</b> .....	24
<b>New Development of Urban Community Service in China</b> .....	26
<b>Community Reconstruction Projects in China: The empowerment of a dysfunctional community in Pearl River Delta</b> .....	28
<b>Neighborhood Community Project in Macau</b> .....	30
<b>Educational Tourism and Community Development: An Insight for Malaysian Practice</b> .....	32
<b>“Balik-Tanaw” Revisiting Community Development in the Philippines</b> .....	34

# Editorial

Fung, Kwok-kin



**This issue of Practice Insights, is a special collection focusing on the diverse community development practice in the East Asian region, and particularly on the Chinese speaking communities. Ten years on from IACD's Hong Kong Declaration on Community Development in Asia, the community development field in this part of the globe experienced continuous changes and abrupt challenges. Development in terms of scale of the services, (particularly in mainland China), emergence of new concerns, particularly about sustainable community development and diversification of the practice models and strategies are among the manifested changes.**

The under-reporting of practice experience in these Asian communities is among the reason behind the selection. Also, the limitation of the personal network of the issue editor is another. There are totally thirteen articles covering Hong Kong, Macau, and the Pearl River Delta parts of the mainland China. In addition, we have contributions from Taiwan, Malaysia and the Philippines. This special issue tries hard to reflect the diversified experience of community development services in East Asia, and particularly those in the Chinese speaking communities, though it does not claim to be representative.

In Hong Kong, the Philippines and Taiwan, community development has had its long history since the 1960s, but practitioners have been undergoing changes in their practices in response to the neoliberal changes in government policy. For the case of Hong Kong, following the residual welfare orientation, the government has attempted to freeze the subvention of community development services and has emphasized the role of community in supporting families in need. In the cases covered in this issue on the local community practices, the community practitioners demonstrate their diversified strategies to respond to the changes and the local needs of the communities.

The community centres, both in the cases of Caritas-Hong Kong and SKH Lady MacLehose Centre, have supported and worked with the residents living in poor housing (the so called split-flat or sub-divided units). The community workers helped build social capital of the community members and organized concerned groups and alliances for collective action for policy changes. Ng of SKH Lady MacLehose Centre emphasizes the importance of community organizing strategies for policy advocacy to deal with the worse housing conditions, but he also comments on the significance of relationships building among the residents. To Ng, deliberative process in organizing is crucial for long-term changes. Meanwhile, Wong of the Caritas-Hong Kong highlights the alliance work by the six community centers under the agency. The alliance has provided the platform for different groups and organizations to advocate for policy change. In addition, Wong reports on their use of "photo-voice" tools for the low-income families to voice out their grievances. Wong further recommends the significance of using bottom-up approaches in community organizing.

The Concerning CSSA & Low income Alliance, which is a non-government funded community activist organization, emphasizes its mission in tackling income inequalities and poverty, and defending the rights of the

disadvantaged in local communities of Hong Kong. The Alliance adopts the conflict approach and unites the disadvantaged communities to fight on different poverty issues, including social security policy, split-flat housing problems, youth poverty, etc. Moreover, the Alliance initiates activities to develop community-based economy to help the low-income communities as well. These various community economic initiatives include development of collective production, facilitating collective purchases, organizing local bazaars, and building up local exchange trading systems.

Community economic development, which is a new agenda item relating to sustainable community development, has been one of the main strategies adopted in response to the needs of low income households in Hong Kong. The "Sharing Kitchen HK", which is a recent example, received funding support from the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund in 2016. It linked up the grassroots vendors with the private for-profit restaurants that shared their kitchens and equipment to enable the vendors to prepare food and beverages during the time when these restaurants are not in business. The project makes use of the community resources to help the grassroots to start up their own business under a context of having to pay rocket-high commercial rent for average business.

In addition, the "Viva Blue House" revitalization project is the first heritage preservation project which focuses on retention of both the residents and the buildings to rebuild the community capacity for sustainable community development. The project is renowned in Hong Kong adopting the community-led and participatory model for heritage conservation. It facilitates collaborative planning with the town planning professionals to deal with the conservation of the buildings, and most important of all, the community living there. Afterwards, following the social enterprise framework, the project decided to rent out some of the units to new tenants who share the ideal of cultural conservation and that of co-housing. Last but not the least, "The

Food Friendly Action", which is a food recycling programme to integrate environmental concerns and mutual help of disadvantaged communities, demonstrates another alternative strategy for community economic development. The project has set up the food recycling service system for a low income community to support the people in need. It successfully built up the community based mutual help networks and facilitated user participation in the project.

Lu, who is the Chairman of Taiwan Community Alliance as well as Chairman of the Association of Community-Activists in Taiwan, reported on the historical and political background of community building in Taiwan. The Taiwan government has implemented the community building policy and has continually invested resources into the community since the 1990s. The community building practices emphasize the bottom-up approach in identifying community assets and building collaborative partnership at the local level and supporting different initiatives, for example, civic education, local community economic development, social welfare and environmental protection, etc. Lu comments that community building is one of the important pathways for the development of civil society in Taiwan.

Huang, who is Assistant Professor of National Dong Hwa University, shares the experiences of indigenous community work in Taiwan. A group of social workers entered and stationed in different indigenous tribes after the 921 Earthquake Disasters in Taiwan in 1999. They started with developing in the Da-An River Tribe a 'Communal Kitchen' to maintain the tribes' traditional mutual help culture. Afterwards, they helped with developing their local economy and building self-help mechanism in the tribal community. The Communal Kitchen is a new direction for indigenous social/community work. It demonstrates the significance of respecting the culture of the indigenous community throughout the community development process.

Community work in China is incorporated under the framework of social work. The article by Lu, who is Professor of the South China Normal University, and her colleagues gives a brief introduction of the different changes in recent decade, and testifies to the development of community development services in the Mainland. Under the context of the substantial

development of social work practice in China, the article by Leung reports on how the local government of Lunjiao in Foshan, Guangdong, responded in implementing Community Reconstruction Projects in its villages. Leung as a social work officer from Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants Association has been invited by the Foshan government in helping to design the community projects. It reflects how social work professionals are involved in the development of social work services in mainland China, with community development included.

All these projects aim at enhancement of the social functioning of village members by rebuilding their community capital like trust, neighbourhood networks, local economic activities and social cohesion. The projects help the villages to build up their local economy, such as eco-tourism, and temple cultural activities, to nurture community leaders and the identity of the village members. The project is a typical example of community work in response to rapid development in mainland China.

The Neighborhood Community project in Macau provides the practice experience of locality development in building a "neighborhood friendly zone" in Taipa community. They fostered partnerships among residents in different housing estates, merchants, schools, government agencies and civil organizations inside the zone as well as facilitated the formation of the "Mutual Aid Network" through the internet.

The article by Maryam Ahmadian, who is a visiting scholar of George Mason University and a Regional Director of IACD, and her colleague unravels how education tourism has become integrated with community development in Malaysia. The intention of the decision makers to incorporate the different principles of sustainable community development while developing partnerships with local community members of different kinds testifies further to the increasing concerns of the sustainable community development agenda in this part of the globe.

Maryam Ahmadian and Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah briefly look at the impact and opportunities for community development in Malaysia of educational tourism. As the authors conclude Malaysia, is now able to attract visitors not only in search of quality education but also healthcare, but what is the impact of this upon local people? And finally Excelsa Tongson reflects upon the

legacy of decades of community development in the Philippines from the 1960s to the present day, concluding that community development has become an 'in-word' for many initiatives.

**All these articles offer the rich experiences of community development practice in the East Asian region and unravel the diversified strategies adopted in response to the changing needs, despite constraints and limitations, including the marginalizing and unfriendly policies of different governments, and limited resources and cultural differences in different communities.**

All in all, it is crucial for all community practitioners and academics from around the world to be united as a community, to develop together the critical knowledge and skills in community development to advance the interests of disadvantaged communities amid global changes and challenges.

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# Community organizing for residents who are living in sub-divided flats

Ng, Kwan-lim



*Demonstration for statutory rental control and increasing building public housing*

In the past, the main focus of community work in the old urban districts was on urban renewal problems or old building maintenance issues. In recent years, the housing problem in Hong Kong has been increasing in severity and the number of sub-divided flats in old urban districts has been increasing. According to a Thematic Household Survey Report called "Housing conditions of sub-divided units in Hong Kong in 2015" by the Census and Statistics Department, the total number of sub-divided units was 88,800, which is about 20,000 more than that in 2013. Moreover, the number of residents in these units was 199,900 in 2015. These are substantially high numbers and therefore, the focus of community work must also shift to address this problem.

Most of the households who are residing in sub-divided flats are low-income families. They pay high rent but their tenancy period is short, and the fees for water and electricity

are unreasonably high. Their living area is small and crowded, and the conditions are unsafe with hygiene problems. All these have a negative impact on their health and family relationships, and even the development of their children. In fact, the problem is due to the housing policies, shortage of public housing and housing bubble, so it has become necessary to intervene through community organizing strategies to advocate for policy changes.

It is difficult to tell who is living in a sub-divided flat. Some of them work long hours and others have to take care of their young children, and therefore, it is difficult to identify them from others who do not live in sub-divided flats and engage with them on the streets, in comparison to the other functional groups, such as the elderly and ethnic minorities. Outreach and home visits may help as forms of engagement and for organizing strategies, by knocking on every door to search for those who are residing in sub-divided flats in old buildings.

**Due to the high mobility of these households (there is no statutory control on rent or security of tenure since 2004 in Hong Kong and the tenancy period of sub-divided flats is very short), it is not easy to engage with them and organize any strategies.**

Furthermore, with reference to the figures quoted in the 2015 Thematic Household Survey Report, 46.8% of the households are waiting for public housing (mostly, the waiting time is five to eight years), which means that they will not stay long in a particular community which is another obstacle for community organizing.

In assessing the past experiences of organizing work, there are two main directions:

**1) Relations based deliberative community organizing - non-crisis intervention for residents who suffer from structural housing policies**

**Relations based community organizing is a type of non-crisis intervention. Most of the residents in subdivided units suffer from high rent and adverse living conditions, which are due to a severely low supply of public housing to meet social needs and absence of statutory rent control in the private rental market.**

The rent for tiny subdivided flats has increased twofold in comparison to other flats in the private sector, according to the survey carried out by a concern group on sub-divided flats. The social structural causes and the imbalance of housing policy to intervene, is unable to reach the needs of most of the residents. Although this dilemma is commonly found in old urban districts and even if the residents can be reached, it is still not easy to organize direct social action. This is because the residents slowly accommodate and adapt to the problems with time.

**They think that the problems, such as annual rent increases, are a fact of life and feel that they do not have the power to make changes.**

Even if some of the households are forced to move, the urgency that they face may not align with social action. Therefore, it is not easy to begin to organize social action. A common dilemma of the housing problem is, of course, the incentives for intervention, but the relationship between the organizer and residents or the social capital between residents, is a more decisive factor in this kind of community organizing.

Work can be started through home visits by engaging each household and assessing their needs. Working at the individual level is crucial for building relationships, and then, inviting them to join the group. The second strategy is a deliberative process in that every member can voice out, then set the common goals and decide on the actions collectively. Moreover, community groups are the means through which residents participate in social actions and work together, and also provide the opportunity to build trust, networks and a sense of belonging. Relations based community organizing is quite time-consuming, but



*Forum with one of the candidates of 2017 Chief Executive Election*

provides space for empowerment and consciousness arising, and is a constant means of continuing in-group relations. Currently, for example, the "Kwai Chung Sub-divided Flats Residents' Alliance" and the "West District Relocated Tenant Conference" have been established for many years, but both community groups have a strong membership. Even though there are members who move into public housing or out of the community, some new neighborhood members would join the groups which increase their sense of belonging to the groups.

**2) Issue based crisis community organizing - community events trigger immediate crises**

Sub-divided flat residents may face sudden crises. In the past, it was not uncommon to see a number of households that were forced to move out in a short period of time due to repossession by owners or based on orders of the Buildings Department so that different resident groups were formed in a short period of time. A few years ago, the "Kwai Ying Building Concern Group" was formed by 72 households when they were forced to move out. Meanwhile, the Buildings Department also forced residents to move out from a large number of sub-divided units in industrial buildings in Tsuen Wan and they reacted collectively. All of these community events required a quick response in group format, and the groups easily formed with clear objectives to fight for either a replacement of their current housing or compensation.

**It is easy to gather people for crisis organizing, but the members also quickly leave afterwards because the task or action that gathers people together is issue based.**

Due to the quick response required for events that are likened to "a war", it is difficult to establish solid relationships. Regardless whether the goal is achieved, the purpose of a crisis group is only to seek remedies or compensation. When the issue is resolved, it is generally hard to continue to organize the group. Even if some of the residents have needs that require follow up, they are mostly addressed at the individual level.

In sum, the two types of community organizing discussed differ in characteristics and each community group is formed for different reasons and through different events. However, the most crucial factors are the values and attitudes of the community organizers; that is, they need to start at the level of the residents and work with them collectively.

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# Working with people in non-decent housing

Wong, Chi-hung Edmond



Demonstration for rental protection

According to a report by the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, there were 25,200 quarters with sub-divided units (SDUs) in private domestic flats which accommodated more than 87,600 households and 199,900 individuals in 2015. However,

the average living area of the SDUs per capita in Hong Kong is only 5.8 square metres whereas that of public housing is 13.1 square metres. Based on the feedback of frontline social workers, most of the sub-divided flats are around 10 square metres in size which

accommodate 3 to 4 family members. Therefore, the actual situation may be even more dire than the findings in the Census and Statistics report.

**The living conditions of SDUs are substandard, not only in terms of the size of the units, but also the overall environment. In terms of the physical environment, the ventilation is poor and tenants may need to pay more money for electricity.**

In the past, the housing rights of tenants fell under the protection of the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, which included information on landlords and tenants, protection and determination of tenancies, and control and recovery of rent. In 2004, the government amended this legislation and terminated the rental protection of tenants and allowed landlords to evict tenants at the end of a contract without any restrictions.

These changes have had significant impacts on tenants. They can no longer negotiate with their landlord on their rental contract. As a result, the average rent in the private housing market especially that of SDUs has increased sharply in recent years and these tenants have had to move more frequently than before. Due to the instability of private rental housing, more people have applied for public housing in the past decade. The waiting time for public housing is much longer than before and the average waiting time has already exceeded three years, which is the target of the housing policy.

The six community centres operated by Caritas - Hong Kong have a long history of supporting people with housing problems. Housing is one of the key foci of their services. The community centres have adopted community development approaches to organize individuals into different concern groups. Each concern group has different foci and concerns. The community workers help them build networks and find solutions through their own collective efforts. These groups have specific housing related issues that draw people together, such as those who were living in private buildings in old urban areas and forcibly evicted by private redevelopers. The community workers approached these tenants and helped them organize themselves into concern groups. Through these groups, they are able to obtain information about their own legal rights and also receive clear



Forum with legislative councilors

updates on the progress of the actions of the redevelopers. Some of these groups have helped tenants extend the deadline for moving out and some even obtained compensation from the redevelopers through collective actions.

In 2010, an alliance was formed which comprised the concern groups on housing related issues from the six community centres. People who came from different districts all had concerns about housing and worked on different housing issues. In the alliance, they built stronger and wider networks. They discussed the housing policy as a whole instead of focusing on their own specific housing issues. They advocated for a policy that would give higher priority to the housing needs of the grassroots. They urged the Community Care Fund of the government to provide financial

support to low income tenants to supplement exorbitant rent and the cost of frequent moving due to the lack of rental protection of tenants in the private market. In the past few years, the alliance has organized an annual demonstration that implores the government to reassess the laws for better protection of tenants. There were other groups and organizations who take part along with the alliance members. The alliance has created a platform for these groups and organizations to advocate for a policy change which would ease the housing difficulties in the different communities.

Meanwhile, the community workers have organized training for the members of the alliance so that they attain the skills for taking videos and photos with their mobile phones.

**Through these “photo-voice” programmes, the community workers have helped the members to share the details of their living conditions and physical environment with the public.**

The members feel that it is easier this way to share their daily life challenges of living in an SDU with their family members in a very limited space. The sharing of photos and videos resonated within the groups and society at large as well. Their shared photos and videos in the media also caught the attention of the public on the housing conditions of these low income families.

In Hong Kong, the housing conditions of low income families are now worse than ever before. The community centers have the role of linking different people to form community groups and extend their connection to other communities. Through the collaborated efforts of the alliance, the power of the people is reinforced, and information is shared among those in need. In the near future, housing problems may be still one of the key agenda items in Hong Kong. Therefore, the alliance along with the help of the community centers still needs to put forth greater efforts to organize different people together and seek better solutions through a bottom-up approach.

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Photo-voice training for grassroots individuals

# Grassroots Organizing in Hong Kong

Lee, Tai-shing



Protest to review allowance scheme for low-income working families

“Concerning CSSA & Low income Alliance”, a grassroots citizens concern group in Hong Kong, that strives to tackle income inequality and poverty related issues, and to defend the rights of the disadvantaged in local communities. Our mission is to alleviate poverty in Hong Kong and uphold the rights of civil participation. The alliance was founded in 1998, united to protest against the welfare retrenchment in the social security scheme proposed by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Our committee comprises devoted members from grassroots and labor organizations, district-based self-help and women’s rights groups, religious groups and the social welfare sector as well as new arrivals

from the mainland. Allied through common goals, we have facilitated mutual-help and raised hope and support within local communities, and also encouraged social advocacy. Eventually, we hope to empower the underprivileged and marginalized to engage in social participation and sustainable mutual-support.

Since social and income inequalities have been worsening in recent decades, the quality of lives of the disadvantaged has severely deteriorated. We see lower-income citizens who are suffering from unjust treatment, including welfare recipients, the working poor, and residents who are living in poor conditions and inadequate housing units (such as sub-divided flats, cubical units, rural shelters, container houses or industrial buildings).

**We are here to unite these marginalized disadvantaged individuals in order to fight for a better social security system**

As the circumstances and difficulties of the needy can be fairly diversified, different alliances have been established to handle particular areas of needs. All of our alliances share the same ideology and direction. We all believe in equal participation and bottom-up management, in pursuit of a more pluralistic and civilized society.

In the past few years, we have increased the awareness of Hong Kong about various poverty issues. To reveal the living conditions of the poor, our alliance, along with other concerned NGOS, conducted a press release

conference on the soaring rent paid by grassroots families. It is shown that the actual rent can far exceed the rental subsidies granted to CSSA recipients. It is widely known that low-income families cannot afford to rent private housing, while the average waiting time for public housing is much longer than that predicted by the government. Thus, during the July 1 2017 march in Hong Kong, we displayed a ‘coffin size room’ on the streets to depict the living conditions of the grassroots families and to satirize the collusion between corporates and government officials. Besides, we conducted a study on the high temperature environment in subdivided flats, and explored the reasons as to why residents are forced to reside in industrial buildings at the risk of their own safety.

As for the social security of the working class, even though the government has mandated a minimum wage, the current income level can hardly meet the basic needs of most low-income families. Even worse, some employers exploit the loopholes in the regulations by excluding paid meal breaks or paid days off in contracts. That is, the wage level of workers has scarcely improved. In fact, even the government realizes that the minimum wage policy itself has not offered much protection for the working class, so they have introduced the ‘Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme’ and the ‘Low-income Working Family Allowance’. However, the number of applicants that have successfully received these two allowances has been disappointing, owing to the complicated application procedures and strict eligibility requirements.

**In the face of adversity, teenagers of grassroots families are not exempted from hardships.**

Since the mainstream education curriculum advocates all-round development of students, many schools require each student to learn at least one sport or musical instrument. Obviously, grassroots families can afford neither the equipment nor the lesson fees. Aside from extra-curricular activities, digital learning has recently become an integral part of the core curriculum in many schools. High-tech gadgets are routinely used in teaching and for learning. Apple computers, iPads or Android tablets are not as easily available to these students as to other adults. How can they complete homework which requires particular software/apps on different devices? The lack of accessibility of electronic devices could further widen the disparity between rich and poor students,



Press conference for delicatessen food bazaar - a community economy project for grassroots

thus increasing intergenerational poverty. Therefore, we have carried out research work and forums to discuss the physical and academic needs of students.

**We urge the government to review their financial assistance for under-privileged students, and provide equal opportunities for students from different socio-economic backgrounds.**

To achieve social advocacy, we have taken concrete action to promote a community-based economy. The Tin Shui Wai (TSW) district is considered as an ‘area of tragedies’ in Hong Kong, as most of the residents are low-income families. The Link Real Estate Investment Trust (LINK), created by the government to privatize assets from the Housing Authority and replace it to manage facilities in public housing estates, has monopolized numerous food markets and shopping centers in TSW, which has led to unaffordable prices for groceries and daily necessities in the area. Moreover, the public transit fees are too high for residents to access other districts. Therefore, our proposed community-based economy has four dimensions: 1) caring for the earth, 2) caring for the people, 3) emphasizing value instead of price, and 4) achieving democracy. In order to sustain such a system, collective production and collective buying platforms are the essential elements. We have cultivated community farms for the residents in TSW, where they

work collaboratively and grow fresh produce to be sold in bazaars or wet markets. To downplay money as the only medium of trade, we have set up a bartering program, in which people can earn ‘community currency’ by offering manual labor or other particular services. The ‘community currency’ can be exchanged for food or daily necessities. Labor value is once again appreciated, avoiding manipulation by capitalism and globalization.

Poverty alleviation is always our mission. Different approaches such as social actions and achieving social economies are means of social advocacy. We believe that society can only advance through collective power. Through empowerment and social participation, the underprivileged will understand how the macro system affects their lives. Poverty is not the problem of individuals, but a social structure problem. The public should not continue to blame the poor but condemn an unjust society. With a better understanding of inequalities, more civic organizations like ours will steer the city towards a more just, fair and equal society.

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# Innovative Community Economic Venture – The Case of Sharing Kitchen HK

Cheng, Yiu-tung Dodo



*Chefs of Sharing Kitchen HK making traditional mooncakes*

“Inside a small cafe on a busy street in Cheung Sha Wan there is a continual bustle of people coming and going, but nothing can distract Debbie Yan Ka-oi. She is completely immersed in preparing her special brownies, and whisks flour with melted chocolate, cocoa powder, eggs and other ingredients in a mixer as a delicious aroma gently wafts through the air. At slightly over 100 square feet, this is her dream factory where she churns out her beloved desserts with the help of an adjacent kitchen – borrowed, free of charge, from a Thai restaurant upstairs called Tum Yum Thai during its daily afternoon break. When the restaurant is closed from 3 pm to 6 pm on weekdays, Yan, in her 50s, may freely use the kitchen’s facilities to flex her culinary muscles, defined by the training she received from a veteran patisserie in her youth. Her cafe is in fact owned by the Thai restaurant, but she is allowed to use

it rent-free thanks to restaurant bosses who are willing to take part in a “sharing kitchen” project under the concept of a ‘sharing economy’.” (Yau 2017)

This story was posted in the South China Morning Post on 14 February 2017 to report on a new social innovation venture called “Sharing Kitchen HK”. The article exemplifies that community economic ventures can be a good way to support the poor. According to a survey conducted by Oxfam in 2015, 80% of the bazaar vendors agreed that a bazaar can encourage grassroots women to participate in the economy. Furthermore, 50% of the respondents are able to earn 20% of their total family income at the bazaar. The previous Secretary for Food and Health of Hong Kong, Dr. Ko Wing Man, announced at the time that the government will look into developing a policy for a bazaar in the near future for Hong Kong.

However, there are many barriers when grassroots microenterprises (which usually have less than 10 employees) try to enter the market. For example, there are not enough production places for vendors to produce food and beverage. Unlike other products which can be prepared and produced at home, food and beverage can only be prepared in authorized venues which adhere to food safety regulations. However, grassroots vendors cannot afford the rent and renovation costs to comply with these regulations.

In response, Dodo Cheng, chairman of a non-governmental organization called the Community Development Enhancement Fund (CDEF), founded “Sharing Kitchen HK”. He had promoted the idea of a “sharing kitchen” a few years ago as he hoped to explore the concept of a “sharing economy” to help the grassroots start their own business in light of the difficult economic situation in Hong Kong



*Retail shop of Sharing Kitchen HK – free shared space from Thai restaurant*



*Rice dumpling made by Sharing Kitchen chefs for sale at Dragon Boat Festival*

which has been worsened by property hegemony. In April 2016, the government-run Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund, which supports start-ups and community projects to alleviate poverty, provided three years of funding for Sharing Kitchen HK which totaled HK\$800,000.

**Sharing Kitchen HK is a good example of a project that uses the concept of “sharing economy”, which is an innovative means of linking grassroots vendors with restaurants.**

In this particular cafe, the kitchen of the restaurant is not being used in the afternoon, which means that Debbie Yan Ka-oi, the grassroots vendor, can use the space and equipment to prepare her own food specialties. This sort of arrangement

mutually benefits both grassroots vendors and restaurants. On the one hand, grassroots vendors can gain entry into the market more easily. On the other hand, their products can supplement the restaurant menu.

To date, the CDEF has secured the support of seven restaurant partners that are willing to share their kitchen with underprivileged chefs. So far, 18 female chefs, who are either housewives or migrants from Mainland China, have been involved in the project.

Prior the start of the venture, the CDEF determined that there were over 9200 licensed restaurants in Hong Kong in 2015. Cheng assumed that 70% of the restaurants would close for three hours each day and some may even be closed on holidays. Cheng realized that there was a “gap” in the operating hours of restaurants. There were restaurants that start business later in the day or would shut down for a

few hours in the afternoon. He estimated that about 9.5 million business hours are lost every year, which is equivalent to a loss of HK\$1.57 billion in economic resources annually.

Cheng said, “Given the sky-high commercial rents in Hong Kong, the grass-roots dream of starting up their own business only seems too remote to be attained” (Yau 2017). Therefore, “Sharing Kitchen” could take advantage of this gap and use kitchen space during the off hours of the restaurant, and at the same time, allow grassroots individuals to have job flexibility that nurtures their talent and passion, which would otherwise not be readily available in the mainstream job market.

The funding from the government allows the venture to acquire restaurant partners, create a business model for each “sharing kitchen”, match food products and cover the start-up and overhead expenses for each kitchen, which include wages for the chefs as well as insurance. This is considered to be a win-win situation for everyone involved, as the business of the collaborating restaurants will be stimulated with the addition of the participating chefs who offer one of a kind products and services. In turn, the restaurants are doing a good deed and providing new and innovative products for their clientele.

**Community economic development emphasizes the use of local resources in a way that enhances economic opportunities as well as improves social conditions in a sustainable way.**

“Sharing Kitchen HK” demonstrates the practice of using idle resources to create social value, which creates an alternative option to conventional economic development. More evidence is however needed to prove the importance of “sharing” in contributing to practices that are related to community economic development. However, it is always good to have someone who is willing to try innovative ideas to promote social goods and sustainable development. Therefore, when it comes to community economic development, let’s think outside the box and innovate practically.

**Reference:** Yau, C. 2017, ‘Hong Kong chefs savour project in which they share kitchens of popular restaurants’, South China Morning Post 14 February. Available from: <<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/2070853/hong-kong-chefs-savour-project-which-they-share>>

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The Blue House and Mid-Autumn Festival celebration with kaifongs

# Heritage preservation in old urban community – “Viva Blue House” revitalization project

Ng, Sze-on

Wan Chai, one of the oldest urban areas in Hong Kong, is facing community disintegration. The turnover of residents and massive urban renewal projects only serve to intensify and speed up the process. As a result, the social support capacity in Wan Chai is breaking down. The “Viva Blue House” revitalization project is therefore the first project of its kind which embraces the mission to “retain both residents and buildings”. This is an opportunity to rebuild community capacity and develop the strengths and characteristics of a local neighborhood to facilitate the development of a sustainable community.

**Hong Kong is commonly described as a city without history. Old buildings are demolished and the indigenous population is heartlessly uprooted. Then, sleek skyscrapers occupied by wealthy residents rise in their place.**

In response to the prevalence of this scenario, Hong Kong has witnessed a wave of activism on heritage preservation, such as the call for the resurrection of the Queen’s Pier in front of City Hall, saving the former Star Ferry pier from land reclamation and redevelopment of Lee Tung Street, or the Wedding Card Street renowned for all sorts of services related

to wedding cards. Preservation efforts are again beginning to emerge and inspire.

In March 2006, the Hong Kong government announced a preliminary conservation proposal for the Blue House Cluster in Wan Chai, a historical tenement block which is named after its blue colour walls. The proposal was based on a tourism driven concept. The entire community began to come up with ideas for preserving this community heritage site. In the meantime, St James’ Settlement Community Development Services collaborated with The Heritage Hong Kong Conservation Foundation, Community Cultural Concern and the Blue House Resident Group to organize workshops and focus groups with the local community, concerned citizens and professionals to facilitate the development of a more sustainable

conservation model. The work committee incorporated the views and agendas of current and former Blue House residents, kaifong (neighborhood) preservation activists and social workers, and consulted them on a weekly basis.

**The project is the first effort made on a Hong Kong heritage site to preserve and revitalize a community, which includes its original residents and the existing way of life, and also extends to incorporate cultural and socio-economic dimensions.**

After a significant amount of research and community feedback, we introduced a policy, planning and development proposal for the Blue House Cluster, which we submitted to the government for consideration.

After four years of hard work, the preparation work and negotiations reached a milestone. In February 2008, the Development Bureau of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region adopted a more people-oriented approach, which meant that tenants who opt to remain within the cluster would become an integral part of the social network

in its future revitalization plans. This is the first time that the Hong Kong government has adopted such an approach, and this demonstrates a significant change in the preservation culture of Hong Kong.

## What is the Blue House Cluster?

The Blue House Cluster is a community made up of three tenement buildings (tong lau 唐樓) that were built in the 1920s to 1950s located on Stone Nullah Lane in the Wan Chai district. The Blue House itself is listed as a Grade 1 historic building, Yellow House is Grade 3 and Orange House has not been graded yet. Throughout the life span of these buildings, they have mainly been used for residential purposes and a range of commercial uses on the ground level. However, for most of their history, a wide range of cultural and community uses were also commonly found. The building cluster is at the heart of a district rich in history and community human capital. It is a characteristic mixed-use tenement cluster, which houses a well-integrated living community. It radiates the spirit of a tong lau neighborhood and is a valuable living specimen of the tong lau way of life.

## Previous heritage preservation models in Hong Kong

Previous heritage preservation projects in Hong Kong have only involved vacated historical buildings. Adaptive reuse of heritage places often diverts focus away from their historical significance. Although most would agree that changes are needed to meet the demands of users today, there have to be better ways of preservation which adequately conserve and link the past. Total decontextualization of inherent heritage contents to the point where history becomes too inconspicuous to have any real meaning is not acceptable.

In many cases, the focus of the government to date has been almost exclusively on the financial costs of heritage preservation. So much that they have mandated heritage buildings to generate enough revenue on their own to cover all of the costs for maintenance and conservation. The contents of the heritage buildings are not as important as the ability to be financially viable. Thus, many heritage spaces either become over-commoditized or high-end restaurants and shopping malls.



Gala dinner after completion of first phase of renovations

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Bird's eye view of Blue House Cluster

**Existing conservation cases in Hong Kong are usually devoid of the participation of residents in the neighborhood or kaifongs. Without their participation, the heritage structures often become devoid of their original spirit and instead, become spaces operated by an imposing and intimidating new culture that has no connection with the local community.**

## First project to retain facilities and tenants

Our mission for the project was to conserve one of Hong Kong's living heritages: to encourage people to share their time, skills and experience which would benefit both themselves and others, and by doing so, conserve a community way of living that is relevant to future generations and valued by them. Eight families have chosen to stay in the building cluster. Twelve new apartments will be available for rent after renovations are completed.

The cluster of buildings represents a rare group of well-preserved examples of pre Second World War urban tenement houses. However, the existing building fire safety and electrical codes are not up to current standards. The project therefore takes the health and safety of the residents as its top priority and intends to improve living standards while promoting community participation. Previously, if residents had to use bathroom facilities or take a shower, they walked down flights of

stairs to use the public toilets because there are no flushing facilities. Aside from in-flat bathrooms, the project will install an exterior elevator for the safety and convenience of the older residents.

In order to honor the desire of the majority of the existing residents to stay and witness the renovation of the Blue House Cluster, as well as to maintain their social ties during the renovation period, the construction was proposed to take place in two phases. The Yellow and Orange Houses would first undergo renovations. During the renovations, the residents would temporarily move to the Blue House. After the renovation work is completed for the Yellow and Orange Houses along with the construction of the means of escape, the Blue House will undergo renovations. All of the tenants will then temporarily move to the Yellow and Orange Houses. When the renovations of the Blue House Cluster are completed, all of the tenants will move back to their original residence. New tenants and the social enterprises will move into the vacant units.

We hope that all of the tenants (both current and new tenants) will be able to participate in the entire project. However, it is not enough that tenants pay rent as part of their eligibility to live in the cluster. They will be expected to volunteer in the community and contribute their time, skills and experience to benefit both themselves and others, perhaps by guiding tours or carrying out publicity duties.

The goal is to preserve the integration of living tangibles and the intangible heritage of tong laus with mixed uses, and share its architecture, living culture and history with the next generation.

Some initiatives have already begun. We are already operating the Hong Kong House of Stories on the ground floor of the Blue House, which is earmarked for expansion to include house exhibitions, workshops and guided tours. Through interaction with the residents, visitors will increase their knowledge on the history of the tong laus and their lively surroundings.

Job opportunities will be offered to the deprived for the self-sufficiency of the project in the long run through the operation of two innovative social enterprises. A Chinese dessert shop which sells family style sweet soups is also in the proposal, as is a vegetarian restaurant in the cluster. These showcase the unique characteristics of local common cuisine, but also create employment opportunities and provide additional revenue to the project.

**The preservation of heritage and tradition does not necessarily mean replication of the past. Cultural sustainability can also imply the articulation of traditional wisdom, knowledge, experience and principles in ways that are respectful of the past, but also sensitive to the present and meaningful for the future.**

Thus, the programs of Blue House will be able to connect with visitors today while also revitalizing the spirit of the old to delight and inspire future generations. To impart a sense of cultural connectivity also requires a balanced and holistic approach in living environment in which different needs and resources are managed and integrated in a meaningful way.

The Blue House has been often lauded as a success story in the myriad efforts of preservation in Hong Kong. There is no doubt that the approval of the government for this revitalization proposal is encouraging to Hong Kong people who care about heritage buildings in the city. There is still much to be done to ensure that the execution of the project will in fact take place. The government has taken the first step and approved the project. However, it will take an even greater commitment to truly preserve the Blue House and its neighborhood, and for those who wish that these heritage sites remain part of Hong Kong's history, to not only maintain their existence but ensure their growth and vibrancy.

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# People Service Centre – “The Food Friend Action” Food Recycling Program

Chan, Wai-ye



Redistributing the recycled food to the residents in need

“The Food Friend Action” food recycling program has been operating in the Sham Shui Po district since April 2011, extended to the Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City and Tuen Mun districts in 2013, and then extended to the Yau Tsim Mong district in 2014. The program aims to collect unwanted yet still consumable food or randomly donated food, and then, redistribute them to people in need in the districts so as to make good use of food and reduce landfill volume and food wastage. As well, the program establishes a mutual network of elders, individuals and families to develop linkages between different classes of people in the districts.

## All in all, the goals of the program are as follows:

1. To mobilize the organization of local residents and merchant groups;
2. To target unwanted yet still consumable food to reduce wastage, and redistribute the food to the poor;
3. To raise consciousness of food wastage through increasing the self-awareness of individuals and community issues of the target groups; and
4. To promote the meaningfulness of food and environmental protection through recycling services.

## Service objectives:

1. To establish an individual contact system for those who wish to donate unwanted yet still consumable food, and create a donor network;
2. To assess and screen needy residents and organize a user network;
3. To continuously review the system of collecting and redistributing unwanted yet still consumable food including the logistics, distribution principles, and implementation details, as well as determining those who are more needy, and coordinating with the relevant groups and government departments to ensure the smooth implementation of the services;

4. To raise public awareness on “cherishing food and reducing waste” and the serious problem of food waste in Hong Kong; and
5. To collaborate with community groups, institutions and volunteers to meet community needs, conduct community-based education, and share the concept of a mutual help community.

In the last 6 years, the People Service Centre has become a large food recycling service provider which offers both recycling and distribution of food in Hong Kong. Our recycling services are extended to 15 wet markets, 70 bakeries and large chain stores, and sometimes, there are the urgent situations where a large volume of food is discarded and we are there to rectify the issue. Moreover, our food donation network includes more than 100 venues, and networking is established through visits to local leaders, street vendors, and district councilors to lobby them to become a member.

**The key element that started our work was organizing local merchants, who are also the residents of the local community, to become donors. They helped to identify community needs and became involved**

**with the recycling system by offering suggestions for changes and collaborated with us through open and frequent communication.**

The current distribution network is now extended to the 5 districts of Sham Shui Po, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City, Tuen Mun and Yau Tsim Mong with 20 venues, which serve a total of 3,920 members and 1,600 families. We recruit food users through community centres and non-profit organizations, and they are good assets for identifying others in need in the community. When food is collected, we then inform the users through phone messages so that we can redistribute the food to them immediately through on-the-spot distribution or home visits. In addition, the recycling process is mainly managed by our staff members, but at the same time, we encourage our users to participate in the process, for instance, by setting the recycling time, identifying families in need and also evaluation. Through participation and discussion, users are the link in the relations among the recycling services, government policy and mutual help in the community. These practices aim to build cohesive social capital and self-help capacity of the community and transform the role of the “users”.

**In sum, the program is characterized by user participation, a self-help community, a donor network of local merchants, environmental protection and sustainable development.**

Our program does not assess the level of need of the users, but focuses instead on alleviating their food expenditures as well as reducing the food waste problem in Hong Kong. Even though the recycling services include different components and concepts, but each of them, such as the corporate responsibility of enterprises, community resources, self-help and environmental issues, is interlinked.

In reviewing the services, there are three main strategies for program development, including implementation and evaluation of the recycling system, community advocacy for poverty related to the issues of food expenditures of the grassroots residents, and community education. Lastly, general promotion, community communication and relations, media advertisement, internet social media and community education, are all important in contributing to the holistic ongoing work of the recycling services.

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Food donation by the stores in the wet market

# Community Building and Civil Society – Practices and Experiences of Taiwan

Lu, Szu-yueh



Ecological community building project with focus on agriculture in indigenous community in Kaohsiung

'Community building' has been proposed and promoted by the Taiwanese government for the last 22 years and is often regarded as 'a social project that envisions a civil society' or 'a social movement towards a peaceful revolution'. However, the concept has not been clearly defined or fully discussed. After its promotion by government agencies, the civil sector which includes community experts, academics, practitioners of civil society organizations and grass-roots community organizations gradually enriched the concept through their own reflections, dialogue and feedback, and continual amendments to the version of the concept put forth by the state.

In fact, before implementation of the community building policy, Taiwan introduced the 'Community Development Policy' obtained from the United Nations in the 1960s, and the 'community council', which was composed of village representatives and their designated

agents, but lacked any legal foundations or support from the government. Due to this top down policy which did not have any concrete inspiration or support, the primary outputs at the local level focused on the infrastructure, such as construction of roads, repair of drains, initiation of community centres, construction of village archways, emergence of community graffiti walls, handwriting of spirited slogans and so on and so forth.

**At the time, the policy was known as 'community building' by the village representatives, but the projects did not involve the participation of the community residents, and 'community development' was not based on community 'characteristics' so that every community looked similar.**

This policy coincided with the authoritarian rule of the Kuomintang (KMT) Party for about 30 years. In the early 1990s, the government encouraged grassroots villages to establish the Community Development Association in accordance with the Civil Association Act. At the end of 1994, a committee of the Ministry of Culture, the Executive Yuan, proposed the 'Community Building' policy and started to make community changes. In light of the political, economic and social contexts at the time, it is found that first, politically speaking, the martial law had been lifted for seven years, so it was the end of social unrest, which released bans on political parties and publications, established limits on the term of representatives, and implemented a comprehensive national election process.

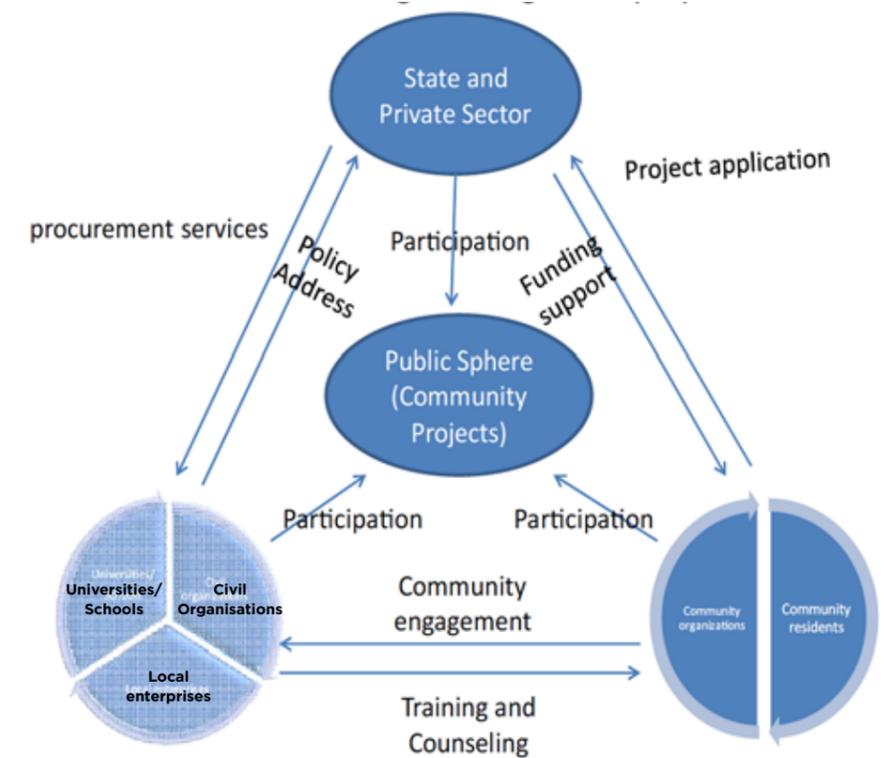
Economically speaking, the economy experienced rapid growth; national income increased substantially, middle class increased in size, stock market boomed, but the disparity between the rich and poor increased. Socially speaking, the as authoritarian system collapsed, social

liberation and social movements increased, and civil society, including different ethnic groups and groups of different communities or regions, continually advocated for civil rights.

**After reform of the political democratic system, the people in Taiwan began to fight for both economic and social democracy. Therefore, the 'Community Building' policy did not just appear from nowhere, but was created under historical and critical conditions in Taiwan in the 1990s.**

Moreover, the 'Community Building' policy started at the local level and was bottom-up, and involved the daily life issues and other personal matters of citizens. Compared to the intense social movements, it was more conducive to citizen participation which was moderate, positive and progressive. Chen Chi-nan, founder of the community building policy and now Vice-Chairman of the Ministry of Culture, claimed that the community policy is a "local re-rights movement". Community building in Taiwan was defined through objectives that

(Figure 1) The System of Community Building in Taiwan  
Social network linkages through multiple parties



Using cultural assets in a fishing village in Changhua for a new tourism spot

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empower citizens by using strategies of 'building communities', and one of the pathways towards a civil society as well as democratic and social movements.

In view of the public administration efforts of the government to resolve the issues around the community policy, the Executive Yuan proposed 'the core values of communitarianism' in a policy address in 2005, which was the most representative in: (a) identifying the community as a fundamental policy unit of the government and emphasizing community identity and autonomy; (b) raising community consciousness through self-interpretation and building capacity of communities for problem solving; and (c) building community assets and emphasizing the importance of empowerment.

As a result, the 'Six Star Plan for Healthy Communities' was launched by the Executive Yuan in 1994. Then, the 'New Hometown Community Building Project', which started in 2003, expanded from 9 to 13 government agencies, and now oversees 60 projects with a budget that exceeds NT \$ 10 billion. In these 22 years, there have been no changes in community policy guidance by the government but only continuous invested resources in the community, despite three changes in the ruling government.

**In relation to civil society, the community policy has two practical aspects. First is bottom-up intervention. The main focus of community projects is community participation and community practitioners emphasize community-led practices that incorporate community assets – bottom-up, operations by citizens and their creative input.**

They start by using strategies that involve 'humans', 'culture', 'history', 'the economy' and 'landscape'. The second aspect is community based collaboration. Local cadres, volunteers, and residents are all crucial parties in community policy planning. Community based collaboration for building partnerships needs to involve all local parties before and after the implementation of community projects. Policy and practical supports in the areas of civil education, environmental and ecological protection, local economic development, social welfare and community safety by different levels of government are important.

Meanwhile, one of the keys of community building is that all community programme expenditures are provided by government agencies

but no funds for staffing are made available. Therefore, all the cadres, volunteers, and residents voluntarily contribute their labor. If in-kind labor is taken into consideration in terms of staffing costs, materials, and other expenses addressed through fundraising by the different parties involved, the expenses and labour of the third sector may not be less than those of government agencies.

In addition, it is important to clarify that the community building policies and practices in Taiwan are not the same as 'government procurement services', but rather, the introduction of intermediary organizations (social organizations, universities, specialized companies, etc.), and establishment of long-term training and services programmes, which then form social network linkages through multiple parties, as shown in Figure 1.

The so-called 'democracy' can be in different forms. From the viewpoint of voting, democracy consists of three categories: 1. representative democracy, 2. direct democracy or referendum, and 3. participatory or grassroots democracy. Community building in Taiwan has been partial to the third kind of democracy for many years, and its focus is not on the 'equivalent number of votes', but rather to determine the participation level of each person in grassroots activities. That is the role of community organizations or non-profit organizations (NPOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which should be properly understood and valued.

Compared to the widest democratic movement, social movements challenge that existing system and conventional values need to pay for the high social costs of conflict, bloodshed, imprisonment and public disorder. Community building policy guides the use of different resources, challenges the operations of the current system and participates in local public issues to create new value. Therefore, it is one of the important means for Taiwan to move towards a civil society, strategies and practices that encourage participation and empowerment and maintain stability (reducing conflicts and social costs).

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Community building training by Lu for community organization members

# From Social Service to Solidarity Economy – Local Tribal Communal Kitchen in Da’An Basin of Taiwan

Huang, Ying-hao

**The original inhabitants of Taiwan are the indigenous people who have lost their culture due to rapid societal changes as well as the long-term government policy of assimilation. The indigenous people are now considered one of the minority groups in terms of the economic and social structures in Taiwan. Consequently, indigenous social work has emerged as a response to issues related to the indigenous people.**

Starting from 1999 a group of social workers entered regions with indigenous people and were stationed to work with indigenous tribes after the Jiji or 921 Earthquake hit Taiwan. This article aims to share the experience of both driving a tribal communal kitchen in the Da’An River Basin and implementing a solidarity economy.

When social work was first carried out in accordance with the government’s neoliberal policies, opportunities for implementing community work were at first marginalized and social initiatives and union actions were oppressed. This collective predicament for social workers in Taiwan seemed to produce certain gaps in what they could do, which led to the re-emergence of community work and provided social workers with opportunities to acquire experience from local practices and reflection while being employed in a disaster area.

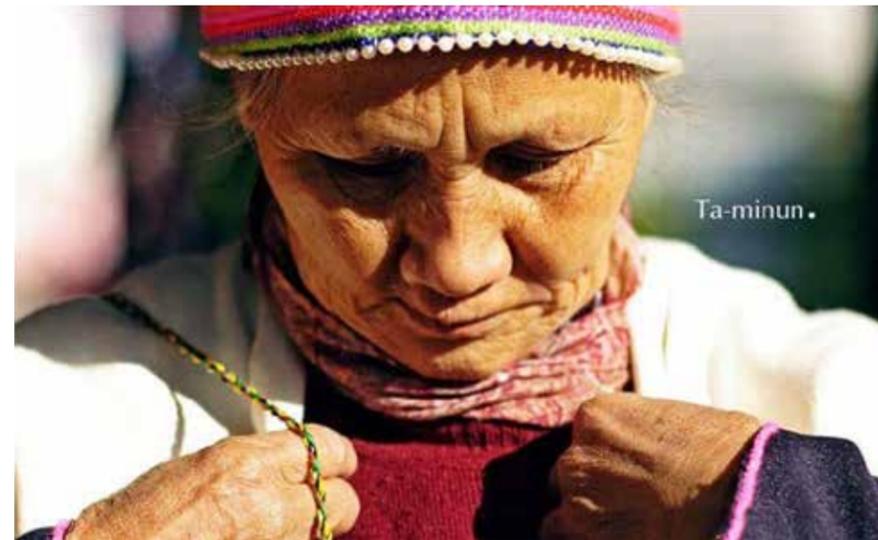
## Development of Communal Kitchen in Da’ An River Tribes

After the 921 Earthquake hit Taiwan in 1999, a group of social workers from various places teamed up with local tribe

members, i.e. youths and mothers, and established the Da’An River workstation for the Tayal tribe where a mode of stationed work commenced right away. The tribal communal kitchen of the Da’An River Basin was later established and has now been operating for 17 years.

**The Da’An River Basin is located in a mountainous area in central Taiwan. Along the river are more than ten Atayal tribal villages which originate from the Atayal indigenous group.**

The objectives of the workstations were to: (1) empower young tribe members by increasing their competence through



*The traditional clothing of Taiwan’s indigenous people*

establishing local organizations, and (2) lend the impetus to encourage the tribes to provide mutual support. The Da’An River tribal communal kitchen discussed in this article has undergone a transformation from the original social work project conducted by the workstation through continuous modifications, ongoing perseverance and introspection and local reflection, adopting the orientation of anti-oppression work.

## Ideas behind the Communal Kitchen

The core of the spiritual culture of traditional Atayals is ‘Gaga’, which are not only teachings of their ancestors but also a common code of conduct. All Atayal tribes share the ‘eat together, work together’ Gaga tradition, i.e., they farm and hunt together and share this with each other. In Atayal, ‘UTUX NIAN’ means sharing food with each other, e.g. if one is away from home, one’s child can visit any home in the tribe simply with a spoon in her/his hand because one’s child is also the child of the entire tribe. The same applies to the elderly; one’s elderly relative is also the elderly relative of the entire tribe.

This philosophy used to underlie the fundamentals of a strong traditional caretaking system, but unfortunately has been slowly eroded following the sinicization (the process whereby non-Chinese come under Chinese influence) and modernization of the tribes, and the implementation of a so-called professional caretaking system. After the establishment of the communal kitchen in the Da’ An River Basin, tribal enterprises developed and the profits are used to support a mutual caretaking system in the tribes.

The elements of this system include:

1. Mutual caretaking: Since a tribe is communal, a mutual-helping network is facilitated when there are senior tribe members who live alone. The establishment of the communal kitchen

is reminiscent of the ‘eat together, work together’ tradition and further extended to communal caretaking so that the needs of the marginalized within the tribe can be met without reliance on outside resources;

2. Coping and exchanging labour: The food and services provided by the communal kitchen can be traded for something other than money, e.g. actual labour (helping with cleaning or cooking in the kitchen), bartered (for home-grown vegetables), and so on. In addition to delivering meals to senior tribe members, there are other activities, including home visits, providing credit services, communal procurement of food items, communal cleaning activities, land-friendly farming, etc.; and
3. Self-care: Since a sustainable community welfare model should not be entirely dependent on government funds or subsidies, the development of tribal enterprises can be regarded as another way to support the caretaking necessities of tribes.

Since the primary operational mechanism of the mutual caretaking system is collective participation and eating together, communal cooking and procurement of food items can both reduce the cost and increase the affordability of delivering meals to older tribe members in need. The produce (perishable vegetables) and protein (chickens) from the communal farm are used in the kitchen and also sold in markets. The profits of the sales are then put into the funds for communal caretaking. In addition to preparing lunch for communal meals, the kitchen has also adopted certain business strategies to sell Atayal specialties, such as Atayal gourmet food, specialty coffees, millet wine, traditional woven and knitted crafts, local tours, etc., to increase profits and contribute to the funds for communal caretaking.

Culture needs to keep pace with the times and the communal kitchen has, on one

hand slowly created new value and its own Gaga through communal living as well as collective operations, and on the other hand, implemented and passed on certain values accumulated by a group of tribal workers resultant of years of practice and introspection. These include: ‘mutual helping and sharing’, ‘more haste, less speed’, ‘people are always more important than matters’ and ‘just enough is the best policy’.

We have deeply reflected on what we had been advocating for empowerment all these years. Is it allowing more tribal people to become familiar with the format and content of government proposals and plans so that they can continue to receive (rely on) government resources? Is it focusing on the workstation as a turning point for tribal youths so that they are empowered to enter the public system? What makes a good community worker or tribal worker as far as tribes are concerned? What competencies and indicators could we have proposed if we had not wanted the tribal people to merely fit established mainstream social work criteria?

**In terms of ideology, the mainstream social work system very often justifies its services by problematizing indigenous tribes. Therefore, the matters, which can be left and continued in the name of social work within the tribes in question, are neither projects developed by local organizations nor tribe-oriented working conditions, but needs and services fabricated by various national and social welfare organizations.**

Consequently, it is likely and easier for social work conducted within indigenous tribes to adopt other national and [professional social welfare] organizational objectives (political, religious, etc.) and to create welfare colonialism. Through a local economic practice, that is, the communal kitchen of the Da’An River tribes, we have found new directions for social workers and communities to take into consideration, in addition to providing both the value of a traditional indigenous knowledge system and the importance of cross-cultural social work, which include ongoing introspection on the effects of professionalism, culturally-oriented caretaking and the efforts of a solidarity economy.

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*The communal kitchen of the Da’An River tribes*

# New Development of Urban Community Service in China

LU, Xiao-yuan, LIU, Xue-yong, CHEN, Xiang-jun



The Guangzhou Baiyun Jingxi family integrated service centre. It is a community activity centre, street office and also a service centre for migrant workers.

The social transformation in China since 1978 could be described as the disintegration of “danwei system”. The “danwei” (danwei refers to the main administrative and integrated system of the departments of the government and the Chinese Communist Party) reduced in the cities, and even stopped supplying social welfare services. That had a serious impact on the daily life of urban residents and because the units had been forced to convert or close, pensioners and the laid-off workers often suffered.

At the same time, rapid industrialization has attracted a large number of rural people as migrant workers, but the cities could not provide enough resources for their needs.

In 1986, the Ministry of Civil Affairs put forward the “urban community service” concept, and hoped that neighbourhood committees could replace the “danwei” as the providers of social welfare. Three years later, the Ministry of Civil Affairs requested neighbourhood committees to provide comprehensive community services, to facilitate support services for residents, and to provide social assistance, social welfare, and social security services for special groups in need and re-employment services and social security services for laid-off workers as well.

**Urban communities were not ready for the policy. First, the neighbourhood committees did not have enough experience in**

**organizing welfare services on such a large scale; second, there were no residents’ self-help groups experienced in giving assistance to the neighborhood committees to organize their services; in addition, people were used to seeking help from “danwei” rather than acting together as a community to solve the difficulties.**

As a result, in 2000 the Ministry of Civil Affairs adopted “Community Building” in all cities to develop a well-managed and comprehensive social life system. After more than 10 years efforts, the urban

community service has realised four major achievements.

**First, the neighborhood committee has become the core of the organization network.** This includes the enterprises within the jurisdiction of the district, the volunteers or enthusiastic residents in the buildings, and the small groups through QQ, WeChat, APP and other social network interactive platforms. In March 2013, the State Council announced to release the limitation of the registration of four types of social organizations, such as industry and business associations, science and technology, charity and urban and rural community service, and the number of community organizations has started to proliferate. For the case of Guangzhou, where social services is relatively well-developed, there are 417 non-government social work service agencies in 2016.

**Second, community welfare service facilities have been scaled-up.** At present, every urban community generally includes a “community service station”, “elderly

activities home”, “women’s home”, and other services, and the street office includes “community service centre”, “community library”, “community culture station”, “children service centre” and “employment and rehabilitation station” for people with disabilities. In addition, some street offices in Shanghai provide the civic hall, and in Guangzhou, there is “family integrated service centre” in all street offices

**Third, the content of community services has been much richer.** Neighbourhood committees, social organizations, informal organizations and volunteers have provided more than 200 services, both physical and personal, in all areas, including social assistance, domestic service, property management, employment intermediary, psychological counseling, and health care, etc.

**Fourth, social work services have been professionalised.** In order to respond to the special needs and to solve some special community problems, some local authorities in the cities have set up

social work services projects through outsourcing, to make up for insufficient of community services. For example, in Guangzhou since 2007, the accumulative investment in financial resources by the government to buy social work services has reached 1.77 billion RMB yuan, and it has employed 13,755 certified social workers for the elderly, young people, people with disabilities, migrant workers and other groups to provide high-quality services and then, 2.9 million person-time are served every year.

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The Guangzhou Liwan District Changhua Street family integrated service centre, and the department of elderly service provides integrated service for elder people, such as hostel service, day care centre and community care service.

# Community Reconstruction Projects in China: The empowerment of a dysfunctional community in Pearl River Delta

LEUNG, Kin-hung

In recent years, 'social work' has been developing rapidly in China under the advocacy and support of the Chinese central government. Due to the special political, economic and cultural contexts, some of the service projects in China are incomparably unique. For example, the community reconstruction projects that are found in the Pearl River Delta, which emphasize rejuvenating dysfunctional farming communities by rebuilding neighborhoods and local businesses.

In contrast to Hong Kong, community development projects in mainland China did not emerge to address problems that resulted from rapid urbanization. In fact, under the planning and management strategies of the government, the steady pace of urbanization in large cities like Guangzhou have not given rise to unmanageable community problems. Even though there are issues like reduced neighbourhood support and less public security, these can be addressed by increasing community activities and police resources so that community development projects are not yet vital for maintaining social stability in highly urbanized areas.

Yet in second-tier or even third-tier cities like Foshan and Zhuhai, community problems are more obvious and alarming at the county / sub-district level. What are called 'community problems' refer to the deteriorating function of traditional farming communities, which used to be stable and self-sufficient with high capacity output. Although farmlands and villages are still very prevalent in most counties, most people do not farm nowadays.

**Most of the original villagers are now working outside the village or even in other cities, while many non-local residents including mainly factory workers from other provinces have moved into the village.**



Community reconstruction project in Lunjiao (伦教), Foshan

The changes in production activities and profile of the residents have resulted in disruption of the balance of life in these areas. The elderly villagers feel sad about losing their simple lifestyle, local history, culture and strong neighbourhood ties, while the younger residents do not feel that the community cares about them, or accepts or supports them. The complaints and grievances soon resulted in requests for more government intervention in providing all round services.

In witnessing the community dysfunctions in these counties and village areas, some of the sub-districts attempted to transfer the community development model in Southern Taiwan to their own old communities, with the desire to rejuvenate them through preservation efforts and self-help. For example, in Lunjiao (伦教) a sub-district in Foshan, Guangdong, the local authority decided to implement community reconstruction projects in all of its ten villages in 2014 based on the recommendations of a research report.

I was one of the authors of the report, and we designed the primary components of the project and invited social work agencies to facilitate the work. The aim of all of the projects was to enhance the social wellbeing of the villages by rebuilding community capital, like trust, neighbourhoods, local economic activities and cohesion. The operating agencies and social workers were required to accomplish several tasks including but not limited to:

1. Developing and cultivating cultural, sport, art and self-help organizations in the village so that the villagers would have various means to enjoy leisure activities and take part in village affairs,
2. Identifying and mentoring both formal and informal community leaders to become real civic heads and steer improvements in community functions,
3. Helping locals to inherit and validate their local and traditional culture so as to rebuild a common identity among the villagers,
4. Helping locals to establish local businesses with local characteristics to



Different cultural activities in different villages

increase the productivity of the village, attract investment and encourage locals who are working outside of the village to return to the village, and

5. Advocating for the preservation of unique local sceneries.

After three years of implementing the project, Lunjiao is now well known in Guangdong for its community reconstruction projects. One of the villages, Siban (仕版), has established local businesses (operated by local villagers) that focus on eco-tourism, and branded with their ancestral temple (Chenghuang Culture 城隍文化). There are cultural activities and related organizations everywhere in the village.

The GDP has significantly grown and civic power has substantially increased. The Siban people, whether they are local or not, now see themselves as one entity with the same identity. Recent interviews with the Siban people indicated their pride as Sibanese.

In highly urbanized cities like Hong Kong, rapid development has created a place without a soul. Stores are identical and buildings are cold. New districts do not have the power or ability to solve problems at the neighbourhood level. People tend to rely on formal services, including those provided by social workers, to address their pain and difficulties. If priority could be given to building trust and community identity and strength, or at least given as

much priority as economic development, the lives of people should be less lonely and alienated while the government will not be held accountable for solving almost every problem. This is what I have learnt from my involvement in the community reconstruction projects in China.

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# Neighborhood Community Project in Macau

Leung, On-i



*"Vintage Bazaar" - utilizes concept of a 'sharing economy' in which residents obtain goods through bartering or at low price*

## Background

The Catholic Church in Macau has seven parishes as well as administrative divisions<sup>1</sup>. The Pou Tai Youth and Family Service Complex (hereinafter referred to as the Complex) has served Taipa for many years. The total population of the Taipa district was 101,200 in 2016, which accounted for 15.72% of the total population of Macau. Compared to 2011, the population of Taipa back then was 79,200, which means an increase of 22,000 people in a period of five years.

Most of the households in the Taipa district are young families. The flourishing of the gambling industry in Macau means that more and more people and even young people are working in this sector. This industry involves shift work, which results in less time for interaction with family, friends and the community. As well, the economic development in Macau has resulted in changes in the work life of the Macanese, which has now become more diversified.

Dual-career families are common which means that due to work,

**Macanese have fewer opportunities to interact with others in their neighbourhood community. In contrast to the solid community relations of the old Macau, the city has now become inhospitable due to the rapid population increase and other changes in the city.**

## "Neighborhood Community Welfare Project"

In its 1987 report called "Our Common Future", The World Environment and Development Committee put forth the concept of sustainable development to meet current needs without putting into jeopardy the capability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In this regard, our agency's consultant, Professor Lo<sup>2</sup> has suggested that "we should combine the development of social, environmental and economic aspects, such as housing, buildings, transportation and other construction and software such as environmental protection, cultural conservation, and even neighbourhood relations."

**Neighborhood relationships are therefore an important part of community sustainable development.**

With economic and social development, changes in the demographics of Macau, housing, and lifestyle greatly affect neighbourhood relationships. In light of this, the Complex, as a neighborhood-based service centre, has implemented the 'Community Neighbourhood Welfare Project' in the Buddhism spirit of being 'compassionate, joyful, and detached'. The purpose of the project is to gain a better understanding of the current circumstances



of the community, as well as the voices and needs of Taipa residents to provide better services for this community.

The first phase of the project was to develop a community zone<sup>3</sup>. The Complex was established as the starting point and a circle that is a 15-minute walk was drawn to establish the community zone, which was divided into ten smaller districts. The community zone is about 0.75 square kilometers in size, or 10.14% of the Taipa district. Moreover, the key strategy of the community zone was to build partnerships among the housing estates, merchants, schools, government agencies and civil organizations which are located within the community zone. The project requires workers to reserve at least 2 hours a week for outreach work with the project partners, such as managers, residents and merchants, for project promotion and also community assessment.

**Youth participation is one of the characteristics of the project. Young people**



*"Giving room" allows residents to donate and exchange items.*

## Future expectations

The "Mutual Aid Network" is another component of the community project which aims to form community networks through the internet electronically and partnerships among housing estates, merchants and social welfare organizations in the community zone. The community networks provide platforms to share and reuse community resources in several ways, including "giving room"<sup>4</sup>, barter exchange, and volunteer services (such as free rides, home maintenance, etc.). All of these different forms of community sharing aim to reduce waste and the living costs of families, as well as also achieve a "sharing economy".

Meanwhile, the community networks also provide platforms for residents to interact and build trust and networks within the community. In the long run, the community networks will rebuild neighborhood relations and enhance the social participation of residents to achieve 'good neighbourliness', 'community cohesion', and "sustainable community development" in the Taipa district. Finally, the community networks promote and build mutual aid for everyone in Macau.

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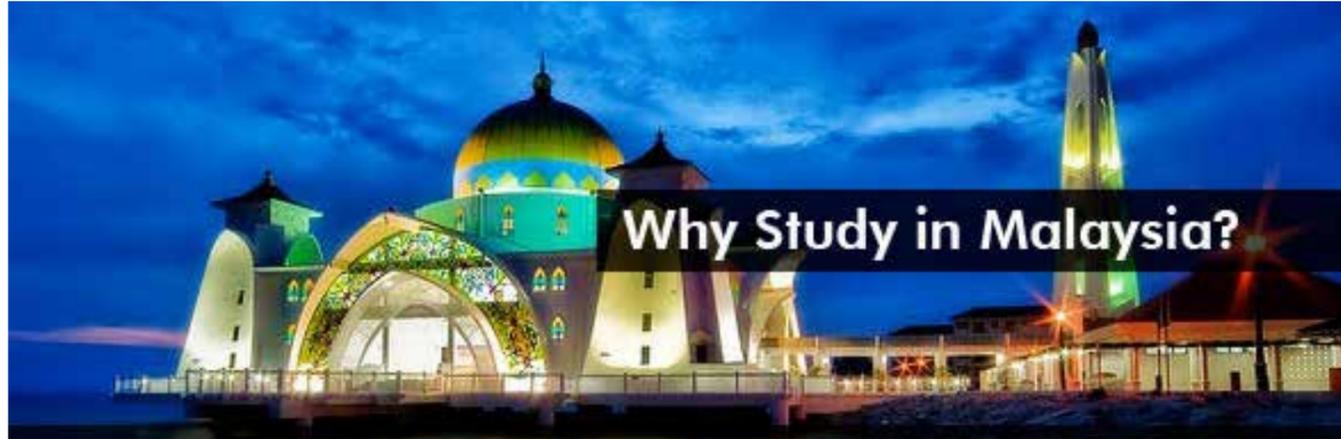
**participate in the community through volunteer activities and different community activities. They can serve the vulnerable in the community to broaden their horizons, develop leadership skills. Thus, young people have become the new impetus for community development that will revitalize the community and drive sustainable community development.**

In general, the community project applies the concept of 'good neighbourliness', and works with neighbourhood families, regardless of their religion, sex, age, race, etc., to rebuild a mutually recognized neighbourhood culture, so that families can work together and even build networks with other neighbourhood groups to achieve the goal of good-neighbourliness.

1. The administrative divisions of Macau had been following the seven parishes of the Catholic Church and the district planning of social services and housing fall within the boundary of the parishes.
2. Professor Tit-wing Lo of the City University of Hong Kong is the consultant of the agency
3. Community zone: 15-minute walk circle
4. "Giving room" allows residents to donate their unwanted but still in good condition goods, and acquire desired items through barter, volunteer service hours, or money donation.

# Educational Tourism and Community Development: An Insight for Malaysian Practice

Maryam Ahmadian and Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah



Educational tourism has been acknowledged as a new industry in Southeastern Asian countries, particularly in Malaysia. Educational tourism programs were established by the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism and the Ministry of Education fifteen years ago.

Further, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture is aiming for 29.4 million foreign tourists to come to Malaysia with an estimated revenue of RM<sup>1</sup> 89 billion, and 63.7 million domestic tourists who are anticipated to make RM43 billion for the country. In order to popularize the university, the "Edutourism" packages which is part of the government's efforts were generated so that people are able to experience the research and education system in Malaysia. <https://www.pata.org>

Educational tourism brings potential learners to Malaysia with the aim of learning a new knowledge and applying to a graduate or postgraduate program with regard to their discipline. This activity/journey helps to empower students and host communities simultaneously. By implication, this sector of tourism creates a platform to sustain the development of career paths for workers and host communities in Malaysia. However, host community or local people's perception and attitudes may affect educational tourism practice

and the estimated potential revenue from tourism in the nation.

Malaysia has been witnessing the increasing socio-cultural, environmental, and economic impact of educational tourism on local communities in recent years. In fact, we believe that dealing with international students from other countries is a way of working with host communities in a bottom up approach. In line with this, the relationship allows the local communities to learn other cultures from foreign students. Positively, a better perspective of residents toward learners supports sustainable tourism and community development practice in the region via developing social capital.

Previous studies revealed that educational tourism encourages a process of local participation in job opportunities and provides a better community's quality of life in Malaysia. For instance in a study by Abu Samah & Ahmadian (2013)<sup>2</sup>, the local community's positive attitudes influenced the educational tourism development and residents acknowledged the socio-cultural and economic impacts of educational programs on their life. Nevertheless, little practical studies have been done on learners and students' attitudes towards hosting and studying in Southeastern Asia, particularly in Malaysia.

Tourism is turning into a vital industry for community development in Malaysia. Therefore, there is a need to build on forward-looking policies towards a harmonious relationship among local communities, students, and possible learners, the private sector and government regarding educational tourism development.

If tourism is still Malaysia's second largest earner of foreign exchange, practitioners and policy makers should pay attention to the link among potential stakeholders in educational tourism and maintain the balance amongst them. Above and beyond, local communities' wellbeing can be impacted by this link, together with the stakeholders' awareness and acceptability of the importance of educational tourism. Service industries such as the local food operators, stationaries outlet, convenience shops and stores, and taxis drivers can also benefit from the educational industry.

The social capital is here considered as a social relationship between the local communities and the foreign students which is a pull factor to uplift the social well-being, and for some, the economic wellbeing of the local communities.

In the same way, policy and decision makers and higher education should provide an environment in which there is potential for students and learners to



study fundamental academic subjects and majors to a high standard and to develop their professional skills, abilities, and knowledge. To our mind, educational tourism, not only benefits local people in a short term, but also it is a platform for developing international research collaborations between local researchers and foreign students after they graduate and travel home, which would sustain human capital too.

With a powerful tourism infrastructure and a multi cultural environment in Malaysia, this country is able to attract visitors not only in search of quality education but also healthcare facilities at low prices. Malaysia has already started to have international standards of services and private medical amenities

which are rapidly becoming a preferred destination for foreign visitors, especially from Muslim communities.

We also emphasize the need for decision makers' to ensure comprehensive management which are relevant to the actions to protect nature, climate change, economic growth, and cultural heritage while being sociable with foreigners and visitors. This initiative is about enhancing and sustaining tourism benefits which is part of community development work and is crucial to help achieve sustainable development goals in Malaysia.

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1. The Malaysian Ringgit is the currency of Malaysia and its symbol is RM.

2. Samah, A. A., & Ahmadian, M. (2013). Educational tourism in Malaysia: implications for community development practice. *Asian Social Science*, 9(11), 17.

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# “Balik-Tanaw” Revisiting Community Development in the Philippines

By **Excelsa C. Tongson**

*San Juan Barangay Water and Sanitation Association (SJBAWASA) members doing reforestation/tree planting within a 1 km radius from the water source so that they have a sustainable supply of water.*



Today, many can bear witness to the multitudinous initiatives that have transformed Community Development (CD) in the Philippines into a field that has its roots from simple “local self-help productive and relief effort’s to multi-stakeholder comprehensive and integrated programs,” Professor Elmer Ferrer, University of the Philippines Professor of Community Development and Professorial Lecturer explained. He added that the discourse on community development in the country requires to cover a host of significant details that characterizes the enigmatic situation of Philippine society including its colonial past, multi-ethnic background, profound social and political unrest,

and current dominant political, economic and cultural situation. In addition, its unique topography with its land area that sprawls to 7,100 islands, its mosaic of protected areas, small island ecosystems, geo-hazard spots, ancestral lands and distributed populations have to come into the picture in order to visualize community development in the country.

**Like in other developing countries, community development concepts and programs in the Philippines have their roots located in the West.**

As a war-ravaged country, CD programs were first introduced in the country for the purpose of promoting welfare and reconstructing communities after the Second World War. In the 1950s, CD initiatives started to flock in the Philippines through the Alliance for Progress. Meanwhile, the United States has also started its own brand of community development approach between 1953 and 1959. These initiatives eventually reached Philippine shores through the United States Agency on International Development or more popularly known as the USAID.

Filipino CD scholars and practitioners questioned the pomposity of Western CD

concepts and processes as well as the rationality behind those initiatives, which are detached from the real issues and needs of people and are devoid of sensitivity to social stratification and innate capacity of people to organize themselves. They decried the heavy dependence of these programs on the proponent’s goals and resources and their lack of substantial contributions to the improvement of people’s lives. Because of these observations,

development programs,” Prof. Emmanuel Luna, UP Professor of Community Development wrote. Even President Ramon Magsaysay utilized CD as a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy against the HUKBALAHAP or the Hukbong Bayan Laban sa Hapon (People’s Army Against the Japanese). He organized the barrios through the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD) to coordinate the delivery of basic services from the government and private organizations, Prof. Ferrer added.

Drawing from his long CD practice, Prof. Ferrer continued relating the history of CD and narrated that across the globe, the period between 1960 and 1975 was considered the apex of social action, which was highlighted by “the resistance of the Third World against Western Imperialism.” According to him, in the Philippines that period will always be remembered as the “time of mass insurgence, radical politics and youthful experimentation, which is marked by the First Quarter Storm.”

The despotic situation during the Martial Law period transformed the landscape of social movements in the Philippines where a large number of activists were forced to go underground and wage an armed struggle against Marcos. Community organizing was seen as the “rallying strategy” in tackling the structural roots of poverty, inequality, and injustice, which could not be hidden by community programs and projects espoused by the dictator. As repression continued and more human rights violations were committed, community organizing efforts grew exponentially across the country in both rural and urban areas through the efforts of Non-Government Organizations (NGO) and cause-oriented groups.

**Programs like education and health, economic enterprises and cooperative development were used as entry points to harness the support of the masses against the dictatorship.**

The Department of Community Development (DCD) of the UP Institute of Social Work and Community Development (ISWCD) was not silenced by the imminent danger of the Martial Law regime and its attempts at community organizing were not put to a halt, Prof. Ferrer noted. In the 1970s, the Link-COD or Linking with Communities for Development became a turning

point for “more participatory and empowering perspective of community development. The ‘learning from and living with communities’ highlighted the importance of integration with the masses and trusting in the people,” he shared. Even if the ISWCD became a college, it continued to strengthen its partnership with various communities. Apart from supervising CD students through the Link-COD program and field instruction, the faculty of DCD also engaged in participatory action researches and direct extension services through the support of the University, communities and other organizations. This tripartite function of teaching, research and extension provided a solid ground in shaping development work as a career and a profession in the country with its own set of concepts, theories, tools and methods drawn from a rich and vibrant local practice, he added.

The contribution of CD in enhancing participation and mobilization for development can no longer be ignored.

**Over the years, CD has become an in-word or a catchword for many initiatives.**

Currently, there is a hodgepodge of programs and projects under the brand of community development or community organizing. Many organizations, individuals and sectors including the business sector have already joined the bandwagon. The challenge lies in the need to recapture community development as a genuine people’s initiatives where democratic participation and self-help provide the mooring for the actions of community development workers.

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