



### ***Igniting social innovation, a design perspective from Hong Kong***

In the last decade sustainability has covered many areas, varying from dealing with environmental issues to dealing with social issues in society. Social issues to be addressed by designers arise from aging societies and poverty, to mention two important sources. Many design projects have been conducted nowadays in developing nations to relief problems of hygiene and health care. In the School of Design of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, there is a special focus on the living environments of elderly people. This is not just a design problem, it also covers healthcare matters which are the focus of the medical disciplines, including nursing, and social problems which are the focus of social work. In Hong Kong, the elderly care centres and hospitals have been designed primarily to serve the needs of the caregivers. Much less has been done to incorporate the needs and wishes of the patients. Since social innovation requires the involvement of many different stakeholders and disciplines, a model has been developed, the so-called “Ignite Innovation Model”, to work towards design outcomes that generate value for all stakeholders and that have the potential to be implemented. The Ignite Innovation Model has been tested in the development of fire-safe hawker stalls. Unsafe hawker stall caused some big fires and many people lost their lives. These new hawker stalls have been co-designed with the hawkers, using the expertise of fire engineering, design and social work. They are manufactured in Hong Kong by the same companies that used to manufacture the old ones. The outcome is that the income of the hawkers is secured, they have more ergonomic and practical stalls and that the vibrancy of the Hong Kong neighbourhoods is kept.

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