

## A joint initiative – integration of theory and practice to indigenize and professionalize social work and social development

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Peking University  
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University  
China Social Work Research Centre



## outline

- Multi-disciplinary approach and research foci of China Research and Development Network, Department of Applied Social Sciences (APSS), Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Our Joint initiative with Peking University - Social work education as a catalyst for social change and social development
  - MSW programme
  - HKpolyU-PKU China SW Research Centre

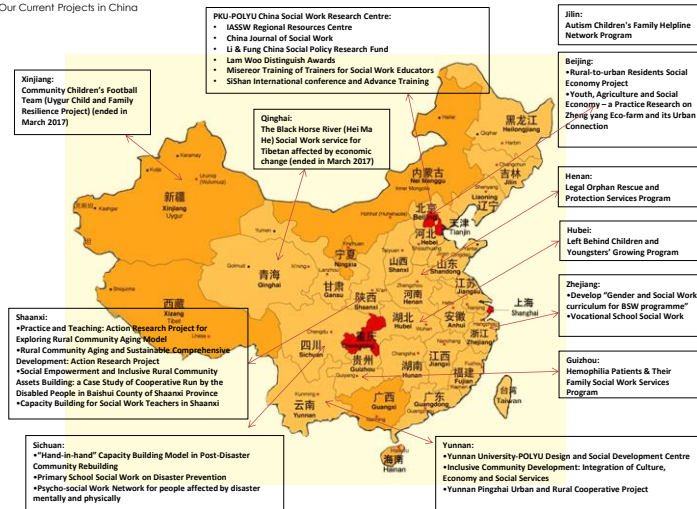
## Multi-disciplinary of APSS

- In APSS, we have a wealth of expertise in multiple disciplines including social work, social policy and administration, psychology, sociology and philosophy.

Head and Associate Head	4
Philosophy	6
Psychology	12
Social Policy & Administration	17
Sociology	14
Social Work	36
Leadership Program	12
Admin and Technical	33
Centres (e.g. China R&D)	Approx.. 15
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- Our strategic research foci cover a wide spectrum of research directions related to migration and population mobility, family and life span development, applied psychology, social economy, social media and culture, disaster and risks reduction, applied philosophy and social work practices.

Our Current Projects in China



## The HK PolyU - Peking U Partnership in developing social work education in China

### Social work education as a catalyst for social change and social development:

- The Master in Social Work (MSW) Program jointly developed by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Peking University
- Launched between 2000 to 2014, graduated 240 students (social work educators and NGO leaders).
- Aim to build the capacity of a critical mass of social work educators to take up the future leadership in developing social work education in China.

## Background

- Social work education first started in China in the 1920s in the major Universities.
- Social work, together with all social science disciplines were eradicated from the Universities in the early 1950s.
- Social work was reintroduced to Chinese universities in the late 1980s after the introduction of the Open Door Policy.

- Social work education programs rapidly developed because:
  - Growing social problems, i.e. increasing needs of social services
  - Rising public expectation for quality social service, i.e. increasing demand for professionally trained social work personnel
  - Enlarged admission quota for Universities, i.e. acute needs for social work educators



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## Rationale for the HK PolyU and Peking University to develop the MSW program in 2000:

### 1. Urgent need to “train the trainers”:

Serious lack of social work educators who have undergone professional social work training to run the numerous social work training programs in China



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### 2. Nurture future leaders

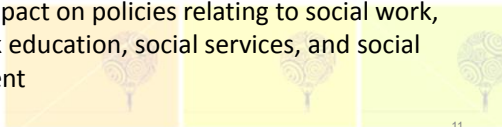
Need to develop a critical mass of social work educators and practitioners to lead the future development of social work education and social work policy and services in China

### 3. Develop indigenous theory and practice

Need to develop indigenous social work theories and practice appropriate to the Chinese context

### 4. Impact on policy

Need to impact on policies relating to social work, social work education, social services, and social development

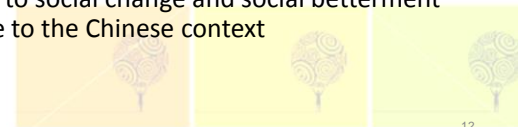


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## Program Aim

To prepare social work educators as advanced generalists who are:

- Professionally competent
- Flexible and versatile
- Reflective
- Culturally-sensitive
- Committed to the pursuit of “scholarship in practice”
- Committed to social change and social betterment appropriate to the Chinese context



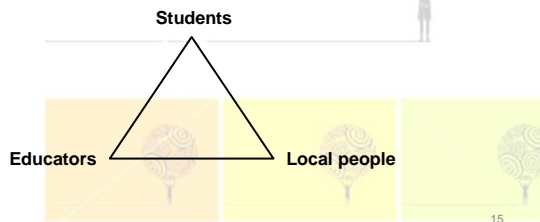
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## Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Integration of theory and practice
- Interdisciplinary approach
- Emphasis on indigenization
- Critical reflection
- Network building through regional clustering and peer tutoring
- Internship through involvement of graduates and teaching assistants and fieldwork supervisor trainees



- Moreover, we believe that the capacity of the educators (ourselves) as well as the local people could also be enhanced in the process, so that the three parties could interact and collaborate in a common process to bring about social change and social development (the “triple capacity building” process)



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## Approaches used by the Program

### 1. Capacity Building and Social Development:

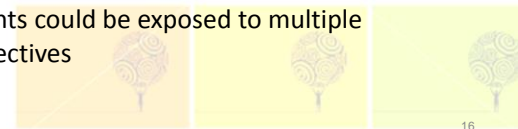
- Our primary concern is to enhance the capacity of our students so that they could become subjects in their own learning and knowledge building process, could determine their own values and priorities, and have the courage to act on these decisions



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### 2. Interdisciplinary Approach

- We involve academics from both the PolyU and Peking U from different disciplines and backgrounds so as to broaden the perspectives of the students. They include colleagues from social work, philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, social policy and administration.
- We engage policy makers, local officials and local people in the learning process so that the students could be exposed to multiple perspectives



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### 3. Participatory Action Research

- We adopt the participatory action research approach in many of our practicum projects so that students could learn to generate indigenous social work knowledge and practice models through partnership with local communities
- We endeavor to develop innovative practice models in collaboration with local Universities and Government units so that they could serve as demonstrations for local initiatives and could be used by local Universities as practicum sites

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- Practicum/ action research projects developed:
  - Women empowerment project in Beijing
  - Home-School-Community Delinquency Prevention Project in Shanghai
  - Community Inclusion project in Wuhan
  - Occupational Social Work project in Harbin
  - Community-based mental health project in Yunnan
  - Community-based rehabilitation project in Hunan
  - Community-based family networking project in Beijing
  - Community-based asset building project (disaster reconstruction) in Sichuan

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### 4. Networking Strategy

- We develop a peer tutoring system so that students could provide mutual support to each other
- We involve graduates as teaching assistants and supervisor-trainees so that they could learn to become trainers
- We recruit and group students from different geographic regions into regional clusters so that they could form strategic partners for future collaboration

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## Impact of the MSW Program

### 1. Impact on Students:

- Graduated a total of 240 students who come from over 150 Universities and 80 NGOs from all over China
- They are making positive impact on social change and development through practice, education, research and policy advocacy

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## Distribution of our MSW graduates in China



## 2. Impact on Social Work Education:

- Developing a critical mass of dedicated social work educators who have become the core group to lead the future development of social work education in China
  - Providing a curriculum model the MSW. The model has significant influence on the new MSW program in China initially launch in 2010
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## 3. Impact on social development:

- Providing innovative models for social work practice and social development in China
  - Advocating for social change and social betterment through consultancy, research, practice projects and policy advocacy in regional and national levels.
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## Establishment of the PekingU -PolyU China Social Work Research Centre

- Established the centre as a national hub to promote social work practice & research
  - To impact on social policy in China
  - To become a centre for international exchange
  - Becomes the IASSW Regional Resource Centre in 2016 to support developments of our neighbor countries
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**Purpose in establishing the Centre:**

- Network building among educators, local officials and practitioners
- Promoting indigenization of knowledge and practice in China
- Impact on social policy in China
- Dissemination and sharing of indigenous knowledge and practice with the international social work community

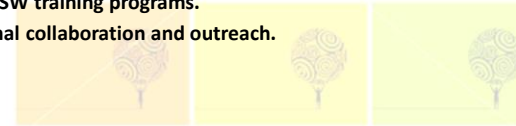
- **Development Strategies:**

- Integration of education-research-practice
- Regional clustering and differentiation
- Developing thematic action research groups (aging, migrant workers, rural development, mental health, children & family, disaster...)
- Involvement of educators, practitioners and officials
- Fostering international partnerships



- **Major projects and programs organized by the China Social Work Research Centre:**

- Publish the “China Journal of Social Work” by Taylor and Francis.
- Regular training workshops and symposiums for social work educators and practitioners on specific topics (migrant workers and children, rural social work, social economy, women issues, aging, asset building etc.)
- Research projects and research seminars. Also provide support for the Keswick small research fund for participatory action research.
- Support MSW training programs.
- International collaboration and outreach.



## Principles underlying International Partnership

1. Respect for mutuality and interdependency
2. Maintenance of organizational identity
3. Democratic participation as equal partners
4. Critical reflection and Continuing improvement
5. Co-evolvement and co-generation of knowledge
6. Commitment to Capacity building at all levels





**Thank You**

