

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Research & Innovation

Changing the Trajectory of Children Living in Small Group Homes (SGHs)

Via the PolyU Jockey Club Operation Solnno, the Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation (DISI) was invited by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to examine ways to modernise the SGHs service and improve the living environment for children and youths with adverse childhood experiences.

In line with the University's commitment to social responsibility, DISI worked closely with the Department of Applied Social Sciences, the Department of Computing, the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences Professional Practice Assessment Centre, the Squina International Centre for Infection Control, the School of Nursing, and the School of Design to ideate hardware and software solutions that PolyU could help deliver to boost the future-readiness of young SGH residents and alleviate burn out in frontline staff caring for them.

Through comprehensive user engagement and cross-sector research and development, DISI developed a set of guiding principles incorporating trauma-informed care design considerations and WELL building standard™ to support NGO operators in improving the living quality of residents and provide a more child-centric service.

More than 3,600 SGH residents benefitted from this project, while to-be-graduates of the SGHs were empowered as they joined DISI as interns, where they consulted their peers on their desired SGH design, building their confidence and interpersonal communication skills.



01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11



Intergenerational Digital Inclusion Programme "SmartConnect"

At the invitation of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council and in receipt of a **HK\$200,000 grant**, the Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation (DISI) participated in research evaluating the effectiveness of the "SmartConnect" Digital Inclusion Programme and introduced the Programme's impacts on promoting intergenerational digital inclusion at a sharing event.

"SmartConnect" participants were aged 74 on average. The data showed that the programme effectively increased their trust in digital technology, significantly improving their attitudes to and confidence in using information technology. Through the programme, elderly participants collaborated and interacted with

young people, effectively breaking down inherent stereotypes and greatly facilitating intergenerational communication and inclusion.

With a view to enhancing the information technology capabilities of the elderly, DISI proposed the adoption of specific teaching methods to better address their learning needs: improved explanations of the logic of how mobile devices operate, beyond their technical applications; the strengthening of structural support services, with a focus on the long-term well-being and benefits of the elderly in online social relationships, as well as addressing their concerns and anxieties; the implementation of a "train-the-trainer" approach; and an emphasis on intergenerational inclusion.

12

13

14

15

16

17

Teaching & Learning

Embracing the Diversified Society

With this academic year marking a decade since the launch of Service-Learning at the University, the Service-Learning and Leadership Office organised the Service-Learning Festival to connect PolyU members with numerous under-represented local communities. The event aimed to enable participants to develop better mutual understanding and learn more about the diverse lives in our city, thereby promoting service-learning, community engagement, and a caring culture in our society.

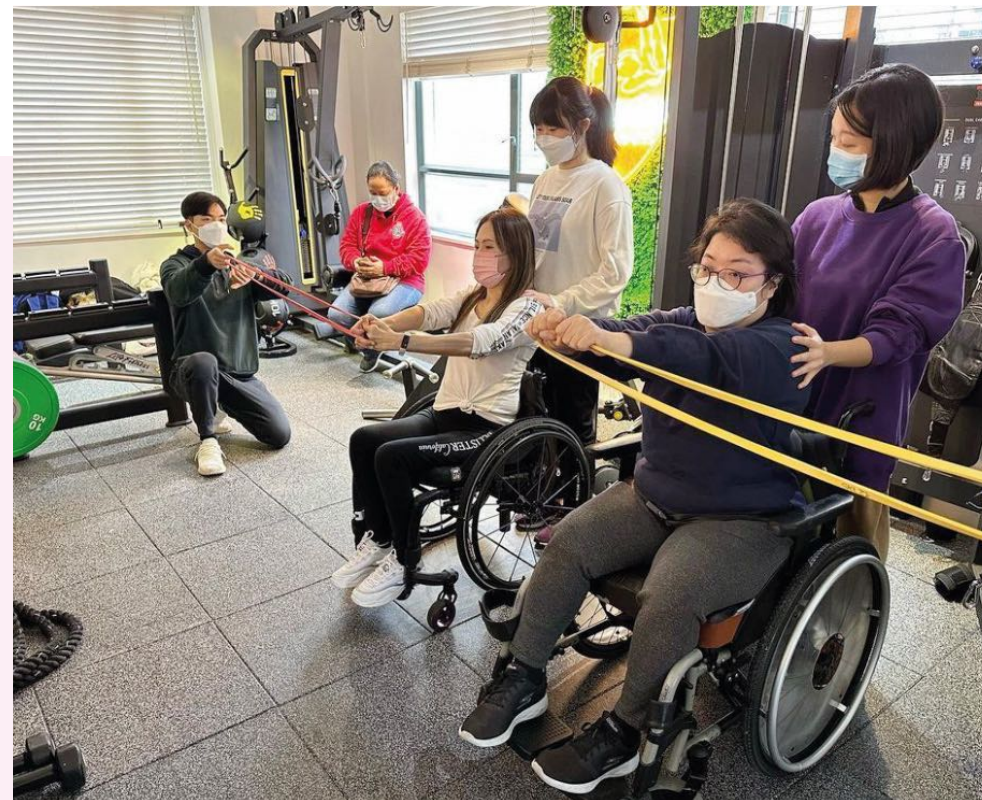
The Festival featured an expressive arts workshop, in which participants explored the characteristics and needs of ethnic minorities via art. PolyU students also acted as big brothers/sisters to guide non-Chinese-speaking secondary school students in relieving stress through art-making.

Home-Street-Home was a programme run in collaboration with Christian Concern for The Homeless Association, where participants went on a tour led by Sham Shui Po residents who were or had been street sleepers, enabling them to gain first-hand insights and re-imagine the meanings of “home”. They also took part in a human library session to better understand housing and social capital issues in the district. PolyU students were also invited to join a guided tour along Ping Lai Path in Kwai Chung to learn about ethnic minorities and experience a day in the South Asian community. Meanwhile, with the support of Christian Action, refugee and non-refugee participants were paired up for experiential activities in different locations along a specially designed nature walk to enable participants to learn from each other through sharing and reflection.

Campus-Wide Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Activities

The “Limitless” Festival is an annual event organised by the Student Affairs Office to foster a caring campus culture by heightening University members’ awareness of inclusivity, which this year **attracted more than 2,200 participants**. “Limitless” ambassadors shared with the audience their goals and plans to enhance inclusion and disability awareness on campus.

Additionally, various PolyU departments, non-governmental organisations, social enterprises, and student ambassadors joined hands to organise a series of diversity activities enabling PolyU students and staff gain a better understanding and enhance their acceptance of community members with disabilities as well as students with special educational needs (SEN). The activities included an exhibition, an SEN drama, inclusive sports, workshops, a mental health first aid course, and sharing sessions, all designed to encourage peer support and help prevent harassment on campus.



Student-Initiated Venture “FITCESSIBLE” to Promote Equal Access to Fitness

A group of occupational therapy students from the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences established a new social enterprise, “FITCESSIBLE”, which was shortlisted as one of the champions among a hundred applications for Good Seed funding this year. The name of the award-winning “FITCESSIBLE” comprises “fitness” and “accessible”, which aptly reflects its striving to promote equal participation in fitness exercises for all physically impaired citizens in Hong Kong, thereby improving their quality of living.

“FITCESSIBLE” pursues the objectives of enhancing wheelchair accessibility in public and private fitness rooms, educating the disabled to train with and without fitness equipment, training certified personal trainers to specialise in disabled fitness, and arousing social awareness through hosting experimental workshops to eliminate public stigmatisation towards the disabled. Ultimately, “FITCESSIBLE” endeavours to create a physical and social environment free from discrimination for the disabled to enjoy physical activities as they wish.

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

Outreach & Engagement

Community Support Network for Families of Wheelchair Users

The Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation joined hands with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and 1st Step Association to launch an eight-month programme aiming to build a community support network for carers from wheelchair families and provide them respite care through volunteer mobilisation. These home visits ensured wheelchair users were regularly offered high-quality home support, as well as enhancing the confidence of these families in accepting substitute carers and their willingness to utilise community support. This arrangement allowed family carers to temporarily relinquish their caregiving responsibilities and focus instead on themselves and recharge. Wheelchair users had previously been surveyed to understand their preferences as to activities in which they were most interested, including having health check-ups, doing muscle-strengthening and pain-relieving exercises, and obtaining community and accessibility information.

The programme offered significant flexibility as it engaged all parties involved in deciding on the service content and schedule. Apart from introducing the latest products to the wheelchair users, volunteers were encouraged to proactively propose optional activities related to their clients' personal expertise or interests, further strengthening their relationship with the wheelchair users. This design thinking approach empowers service users to take ownership, fostering a working partnership with volunteers and increasing their autonomy within the overall project process, in turn offering fresh insights and empirical evidence to reimagine the conventional voluntary home visiting service model.



Governance & Operations

Barrier-Free and Inclusive Campus for All Users

To affirm PolyU's strong commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, several major improvement works have been undertaken to enhance campus user experience, with a particular emphasis on reducing inequalities. Ramps, elevators, and wheelchair-friendly access are installed in main buildings and areas to ensure those with physical disabilities can navigate with ease.

The work completed at the University Square has exceeded statutory requirements to provide more gently inclined and accessible ramps, enabling people with physical disabilities to more easily move between different levels, including the large grass lawn to enjoy the green outdoor space. In addition, automated doors in buildings like the Library can eliminate the challenges entailed in manual door opening. Furthermore, students who are wheelchair-bound or visually impaired are offered conveniently located hall residence to facilitate their commute to campus.

Targeting users from diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds, the ongoing campus redevelopment has incorporated prayer rooms in the design, while dedicated facilities such as shattafs in bathrooms are provided to respect the needs of non-local users. These improvements demonstrate the University's dedication to creating an inclusive campus environment where all individuals can participate and thrive, regardless of their physical, religious, or cultural background.

01

02

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17