A three-week Design.Lives Lab: a case to introduce solution-focused design methodology in participatory design for social inclusion

PREPARING ACTIVE AGEING RESEARCH
The HKDI is located in Tiu Keng Leng, a new town in the Tseung Kwan O district of the New Territories in Hong Kong. Its new campus was built in 2010 and surrounded by six different housing estates of over 20,000 households.

The focus of this Design.Lives workshop was to rethink the design implications of our ageing population by working with the existing neighbours of a design school. Over 30 HKDI students from three design disciplines participated in this three-week design lab. There were six teams and each team worked with one housing estate, engaging local residents from different generations as their creative partners, developing creative tactics. These interactions engaged older residents as co-investigators helping them to co-develop new design ideas for our healthy and active future selves.

DESIGN.LIVES PROJECTS
The Design.Lives Project was launched in 2009 to provide training and experience to people on how to design participation for social inclusion as well as designing their own lives. The Design.Lives team is composed of a design researcher and a sociologist.

Our version of Inclusive Design has a strong link with Participatory Design which in our view should be renamed Design Participation(s); a term that we would like to employ to name our practice. We aim to deal with the important issue of awareness and educating in social inclusion through design practice.
During the three-week design lab, we asked design students to investigate six housing estates around their design school’s new campus.

**Preparation DEC 2010**

1st week: Problem Solving (10-15 Jan, 2011)
In the 1st week, student participants were asked to use simple and traditional methods of social inquiry to carry out research in their assigned estate. The aim of this initial stage was to allow students an understanding of design inspired, problem solving. After this students were encouraged to work out solutions to social problems, which they identified. Students were then asked to participate in a design lab. Here they would explore methods of exchange with residents and develop ideas as to how they could involve them from potential users to creative design partners.

2nd week: Solution Focused (17-21 Jan, 2011)
In the second week, solution-focused methods were introduced to let students find out how proposed solutions simultaneously reflect the nature of the issues in question. Experiences gained in week 1+2 become the starting point for students’ reflexive activities.

3rd week: Prototyping (24-28 Jan 2011)
In the third week, students translated their proposed solutions into concrete form. They presented their solutions to the public as a design ‘market’ celebrating Chinese New Year. The Market aimed to provoke discussion with people about the students’ proposed solutions. Modification of their solutions is also a process by which students reflect on their pre-reflexive being and the power of habitus, determining the practice of designers.

1. Briefing session:
   Designing Participations by Dr Yanki Lee
   Date: 10 Jan 2011 (Monday)
   Time: 10:30am
   Venue: LW 003

2. Guest Lecture 1:
   Disguised: a true design story by leading international designer
   Professor Patricia Moore
   Date: 17 Jan 2011 (Monday)
   Time: 10am-12noon
   Venue: LW001

3. Guest Lecture 2:
   Design as a tool for local transformation by Award-winning Social designer
   Paula Dib
   Date: 20 Jan 2011 (Thursday)
   Time: 10am-12noon
   Venue: LW001
4. DESIGN.LIVES Chinese New Year Design Market
29th – 31St Jan 2011
(Sat to Mon),
public area, G/F, HKDI

Interactions with local residents
為建立學校與居民之間的聯系，及開拓新市鎮社區關係的拓展，香港知專設計學院於學院設計廣場擺放學員為六個屋邨而設計的活動。

為期三星期的工作坊，知專學院設計高級文憑學生設計開始在調景嶺新市鎮中建立學術機構接近民居的“社區和合”活動。六個設計攤位的負責同學將會邀請各屋邨的居民參與“再創作”的活動，以“和合設計”（inclusive design）和“參與設計”（participatory design）的精神打破設計師與用家的界限，務求建立社區參與設計的目的。

DESIGN.LIVES LAB: Ageing in TiuKengLeng for HKDI (Dec 2010 - June 2011)

Next Step - student feedback

Our preliminary findings include how problem-solving methods encourage the dominance of designers and discourage reflexivity.

Students also easily take design education as a kind of craftsmanship rather than a process of exchange between designers and people. We also found that students would take design as a kind of technical profession, which has nothing to do with political participation and social change.

More interviews were conducted until May and a conclusive exhibition documenting the process and the project was shown during graduation in June 2011.

Each team was offered $2000 for materials but the idea is to use Minimum resources to create Maximum impact:

- $5,106.4 for 6 teams
- $10,000 for bamboo structure
- $4,000 for creative partners
- $2,000 for printing

Total: HK$21,106.4

***Abstract of this lab had submitted to the 4th World Conference on Design Research, IASDR2011, October 31 - November 4, 2011 at the Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering of TUDelft in the Netherlands Interactions with local residents