

A Fund with a Difference, and a Research Consortium that makes a Difference

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Hong Kong needs capital of a social nature to move ahead in a world undergoing radical and rapid changes. This social capital, along with financial and other forms of capital, will make a positive difference to Hong Kong's socio-economic development.

Equally important, individuals and the community will also benefit from the building of social capital. As the World Bank and research on social capital have attested to, key elements that make social capital possible are the resilience of human beings and their capacity to look out and care for each other. These (and many other) human virtues lie in waiting. By harnessing them collectively, social capital can invigorate the healthy development of individuals, weave community relationships across social strata, create new opportunities through cross-sector partnerships, and uplift cultural norms for greater social inclusion, harmony and solidarity.

The Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF), established by the HKSAR Government in 2002 with an initial budget of HK\$300 Million, is charged with the mission of helping the territory to build up its social capital in response to new social realities. So far it has identified, funded and supported 90 projects that would eventually involve over 300,000 residents.

To evaluate the outcomes of the projects as a whole and the impact of the CIIF, seven teams of researchers from five universities have pooled their expertise in applied social research to form the CIIF Evaluation Consortium. This exceptional level of collaboration has given me much pleasure in my role as the President of one of the participating universities. I have every confidence that not only will the Consortium produce a joint report of high quality, it will also become a model of the partnership between town and gown in social capital development.

On behalf of researchers from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong University, Lingnan University, and Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, I welcome you all to this campus. CityU is honoured by your presence and by the trust that the CIIF has placed in our staff and facilities.

I wish the 3rd CIIF Annual Forum cum Expo, held for the first time in a university setting, will continue to be successful and chart new heights.