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THE YOUNG REPORTER magazine

March 2014



Cover A frequent patron of brothels and a sex worker tell *The Young Reporter* young men see paid sex a way out as a girlfriend becomes increasingly unaffordable.

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In the February issue, we took our readers on a trip down one of the city's most art-infused streets, Sik On Street, where a group of local artists reflected on and fought against the relentless urban development through interactive art installations.



Letter from the Editor

The Young Reporter has recently undergone a revamp by launching multimedia stories and a new section dedicated to academic talks and events at university campuses throughout Hong Kong.

In our latest March issue, we give you an inside look at the emerging phenomenon of frequenting sex workers among some of the city's young bachelors who seek hassle-free sex without having to commit to an expensive relationship.

With a growing number of charities and the accompanying concerns over donation fraud, our reporters have spoken with different government officials, charity watchdogs and academics to shed light on loopholes in the existing regulatory mechanisms.

Nearly 20 years since section 33 of the Personal Data Ordinance was enacted, which prohibits any overseas transfer of personal data by companies, it has never been enforced.

With the mounting threat of personal data leakage facilitated by open access to smartphone applications, The Young Reporter has decided to bring to attention that there has been a sharp rise in the number of complaints filed with the city's Privacy Commissioner over the use of personal data.

Finally, we give you a rare peek into what life is like in the Freetown of Christiania, a self-proclaimed autonomous neighborhood in Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, which is known as a safe haven for hipsters and drug traders.

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View

Spring festival travel implies more than mass migration

Chenglish

Epic traffic jams in many Chinese cities and in the country's capital city, Beijing, in particular, has been in the press for years. No matter if it is because of bad weather, road construction, school year commencement or weekend rush, even a trivial matter can virtually bring the municipal traffic to a halt, leaving tens of thousands of drivers stranded on the street. Journalists are already callous to endless complaints against these year-round scenarios and ironically have started to report on empty roads instead of routinised congestion. Together with uniform shutdown of government houses and private businesses, the bizarreness of city-wide smooth traffic marks the week-long Chinese New Year celebration – the height of Chunyun, when hundreds of millions of urban dwellers migrate back to their hometown for family reunions.

Dubbed as the largest scale of human migration in the world, Chunyun, literally translated as spring commute, refers to the massive exodus of Chinese people returning home from work or study elsewhere during the spring festival. It forms an annual stress test for the country's transportation system. The two biggest national "golden-week" holidays in China, namely the Lunar New Year and national day celebrations that each last for one week, are often compared to each other. Both of them give people enough time to travel to a more distant place, but it is Chunyun that evokes people's emotional bonds to their family and poses a near mandatory duty for all Chinese people to go home, regardless of how much they earn.

Of course, the well-off class can afford to go anywhere on either occasion, but for the giant army of lowly-paid migrant workers who have been consciously saving every penny that they pocketed, a sightseeing trip during the national day celebration seems too luxurious. They prefer to work overtime in this festive week of October and if the wallet allows, buy the cheapest train ticket to enjoy their family gathering once in a year. Even though they might barely have a place to stand on the train for their whole journey, let alone have a seat in an overcrowded carriage whose toilet is often stuffed with several passengers, all their tiredness and unhappiness becomes replaced by joy and laughter as soon as they return to their most familiar place.

Dictated by both the Chinese tradition and the overwhelming majority of the population heading back home, Chinese authorities set up the Chunyun mechanism two decades ago to cope with the national travel rush from January to February. Seven government departments in charge of Chunyun, including the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Transport, the newly-revamped National Railway

Administration and the all-powerful National Development and Reform Commission, designated about 40 days for the travel season, required local governments to mobilise public transport vehicles at almost full capacity and deployed more than 180,000 police officers this year for inspection and patrol to facilitate the migration.

Despite the administrative effort to conduct ad hoc routes to accommodate more passengers and vehicular checks to ensure people's safety, Chunyun remains a headache, if not a cancer, for the officials to stand the pressure brought by the increasing passenger turnover, which was estimated to exceed 3.6 billion this year.

Coach riders embrace the biggest risk of encountering fatal accidents and air passengers have to fight for limited tickets that can be three times more expensive than the same tickets sold in other months. As to the railway system notorious for its suffocating population density and high charge over unswallowable food, I am sure you would bear all this "inhumane" stuff once you have known how tough it is to get a single ticket. Many people either have to spend hours and hours queuing at train stations only to find out there is no ticket left or pay more to buy a black-market one from the "yellow bull" – Chinese euphemism for scalpers. This explains why people cheered a couple of years ago, as they learnt they could also book a ticket online. But their excitement quickly shattered, because the fragile website quickly went paralysed, and buyers whose transactions failed had to wait for 30 minutes to submit a new order. As usual, people exhibited their creativity online, parodying a literary Chinese song with low-brow lyrics to voice out their disappointment.

Without any need to deal with Chunyun, I stayed in Hong Kong during the holiday and enjoyed watching the satirical song. However, life was much harder for the Chunyun horde without Internet literacy. Obviously they had to buy tickets in person and if their only channel was blocked, they could not even resonate with the song. Their urge to return home was so strong that news reports of "Chunyun motorcycle brigades" began to grab people's attention in recent years. Beyond my common understanding, they were willing to be totally exposed to the freezing temperature, occasional rainfalls and most dangerously, immense risks of losing their life on mountain roads that sometimes could not be even recognised by Global Positioning System, just to realise a simple dream of family reunion. I feel sympathetic towards them and hope they can help each other to reach their Utopia-like hometown peacefully and joyfully.



Baidu's migration infographic

In short, the two-character Chinese word Chunyun is deeply ingrained in the 1.3 billion Chinese population, conveying their mixed emotions of longing for returning home, perseverance of making a living elsewhere, bitterness of the migration, and happiness of family reunion. I always cannot help shedding tears when glancing at media coverage in this period, no matter if it is about people's completion of their journey or a tragic accident that ruins a whole family. Putting aside the humanity aspect, we might easily blame the National Holiday Tourism Coordination Office, an official body affiliated to the country's State Council that decides the exact dates of public holidays.

Mass vocation is no one's vocation, and it is particularly true in the world's most populous nation where people simply shift the intra-city traffic jam to inter-city congestion. While certain holidays deserve to be kept, it is the time to encourage employers to give their staff the chance to enjoy more flexible holiday arrangements. Unlike in Hong Kong, where most companies clearly list out their annual leave policies before recruitment, many enterprises in mainland China are unlikely to overcome their bureaucracy to cater their employees. Worse still, with an aging population, the country's economy is slowing down, gradually driving the prospect of enhancing employee benefits into wishful thinking.

But how can Chunyun throw the country into traffic disorder every year? If people were working in their hometowns

or somewhere nearby, they would not be involved in the travel rush, right? Yes, the logic sounds pretty simple and straightforward, but the reality is not the case. A recent infographic made by China's search engine Baidu showed that traffic during Chunyun spanned the whole country, but it was extremely centred on the three first-tier cities, namely Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The process of urbanisation has turned the metropolises into magnets, attracting those migrant workers holding a traditional belief of "water flows downwards yet men climb upwards."

Regardless of their hard work, many people cannot manage to obtain a hukou in these cities - an invincible piece of household registration document that could bring benefits of various kinds ranging from social security, permit to buy car and flat, to children's education. Their weak living conditions and inferior social status do not drive them away, because they envision a more promising career there than what they could have enjoyed back in interior areas. In this sense, Chunyun accurately reflects China's uneven development, as well as people's constant struggle between economic pursuit for a better life and traditional obligation to kinship.

Having little confidence that the Chunyun dilemma could be solved in the near future, however, I still wish all these migrants a safe journey back and forth, as well as a bright future in the Year of the Horse.

by Song Cheng

Sex services often go under the name of massage.

Confessions of a brothel patron: Girlfriends are expensive

Young men find paid sex more affordable than a girlfriend







Patrons can watch football games and horse racing news and enjoy free Wi-Fi at some brothels.



Pink neon-lit brothels are often found in old tenement buildings.

AMIDST THE MELLOW GLOW OF A PINK neon light stand Peter and his friends, who are gulping beers by the curb of a dim street. Having emptied the last can, the group goes straight into a narrow doorway flanked by shops and up the stairs, which lead them to a night of affordable, commitment-free lustful company.

"I'd rather pay for someone who agrees to have sex with me for sure. Dating is expensive," said Peter, a 26-year-old logistics worker who frequents brothels.

He is one of the young men in the city who ring the doorbells of sex workers to spare themselves the financial as well as emotional investment into a stable romantic relationship. Experts say the media may have played a role in the preference for sex workers to a girlfriend and warn the sexuality may take its toll on young men's psychological well-being.

Forty-two per cent of young adults aged 18 to 32 said they could not afford dating and getting married, a survey by the APM mall revealed in January.

Even having one-night stands with girls picked up at nightclubs was not as economical as visiting sex workers, Peter said.

"You have to buy those girls drinks. I would rather spend the same amount of money on sex services."

Ching Ching, a 26-year-old sex worker, told *The Young Reporter* she understood why young men saw patronising a sex worker as more "economic."

"Coming to us is absolutely cheaper," she said. "Even if you are lucky enough to have a girlfriend who doesn't ask for money, you still have to spend quite a lot on regular dates with her, like going to movies, not to mention on buying her luxury goods on special occasions."

Some young adults opt for paid sex to evade the hassles of establishing and maintaining a committed relationship.

Peter said looking for true love was no easy job, as sometimes he would either get stuck inside a woman's friend zone or be put at her beck and call.

He added going to brothels was a much quicker way to

“I’d rather pay for someone who agrees to have sex with me for sure. Dating is expensive.”

Peter, a 26-year-old logistics worker who frequents brothels

satisfy his cravings as it saved him the troubles of courting a woman for sex.

“You don’t have to think about whether sex workers are willing to have sex. They must be willing to.”

Ching Ching said some men came to her because they could go straight to sex without being grilled by typical girlfriends’ questions such as “do you love me.”

Experts have said porn films may have swayed a preference for paid sex among young men.

Ms Grace Lee Ming-ying, education officer-in-charge of the Family Planning Association, said such films had distorted the younger generation’s attitudes towards sex by presenting a life of debauchery.

“Those films may only reveal a single side of our society,” she said, concerned that young people would internalise everything shown in the films without critical thinking.

Ching Ching said she had sensed the power of the media over her clients and recalled how the media had been shaping patrons’ preferences.

As Japanese porn videos showing having sex with married women catch on, the prostitution industry has seen a growing appetite for more mature sex workers, according to Ching Ching.

“My neighbour who is in her 50s has seen a rise in the number of clients while those 20-somethings suffer a loss of clients,” she said.

Mr Mark Wu Yiu-fai, director of popular erotic film

Due West: Our Sex Journey, disagrees, doubting films as his have played any part in young men’s choice to visit sex workers. He instead thinks people’s sexuality shapes the production of films.

“We produce a film only when we think our society will accept it,” he said.

Internet is also a hidden hand behind the trend, experts say.

“If young adults do not have the basic knowledge of sex, they will not know whether or not people are telling the truth on the Internet,” said Dr Matthew Yau Kwai-sang, Chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Sexuality Educators, Researchers & Therapists Ltd.

Dr Yau noted some people often boasted on social networking websites they had many sexual partners and

enjoyed the mode of life. “Young adults who bump into such posts online tend to believe and follow suit,” he said.

A mess-up of sexual arousal, emotional attachment, and money would make it hard for young men frequenting brothels to build up a long-term romantic relationship, said Dr Yau.

“As time passes by, their sexual desires will decrease. But chances are high that they will not have a stable partner to spend the rest of their lives with,” he said. Worse, he added, such young men would be so lonely as to develop depression.

“Seeing sex as trade can lead to distortions in a romantic relationship,” said Dr Francois Fong, medical director at the Hong Kong Sexual Health Centre.

He said some frequent patrons would ignore the feelings of their spouses during sex as they did with sex workers.

People with excessive sexual experience, Dr Fong believes, also have a larger tendency to end up having sex-related problems in marriage. “They are more likely to have difficulties developing a satisfactory sex life with their spouses,” he said.

But to Peter, marriage is more of a “mission impossible.” He said he had had enough of failed relationships and enjoyed his current lifestyle. “I’m still young and I’ve still got enough time.”

The pink neon light glimmers through the curtain as Peter closes the door behind him.

This is just another night.

Cashing in on charitable donations

The absence of a centralised charity law in Hong Kong has led to legal loopholes exploited by individuals and organisations to generate income through bogus fundraising





Organisations wishing to raise funds in public areas have to register for the Social Welfare Department.

TWO YEARS AGO, A MAN bought a pack of Chinese sausages that cost \$480 from a fundraising booth on a housing estate called Lung Poon Court in Diamond Hill.

The man found no donation boxes for collecting proceeds but gave the hawker his money, all the while thinking that it would be used for charitable purposes.

He later found out through his neighbours that the hawker rented the area to set up a booth to do his own business, rather than to raise funds for the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, one of Hong Kong's most reputable charitable organizations providing a wide range of welfare services.

Tung Wah invites volunteers from both the public and private sectors – including housing estates such as Lung Poon Court – to help in raising funds for its Tung Wah Charity Gala held annually in Hong Kong.

The incident violated Tung Wah's rules of fundraising and Lung Poon Court was suspended from engaging in Tung Wah's fundraising activities for at least three years.

Lawmakers have pointed to the absence of legislation and a commission overseeing charities in Hong Kong.

"People are punished for inappropriate fundraising only when it has been discovered and reported to the police," said Ms Tam Heung-man, a district councillor who represents Wong Tai Sin.

"There isn't any approval process for determining which organizations will be allowed to hold fundraising activities or what kind of charitable events they are," said Ms Tam.

She added that the same group of people who had disguised themselves as fundraisers signed up to volunteer with Tung Wah in their charity gala again under the name of a different operating committee.

Tung Wah and the Social Welfare Department approved their applications.

Government regulations

While the city's charity sector has witnessed rapid growth in recent years, there is neither a single piece of legislation nor a particular government department tasked with monitoring charities.

As a result, charities are not statutorily bound to submit audited financial statements to the government for a review.

The transparency of charities has always been an issue for the public. Some jurisdictions hence have their charity laws and watchdogs well-developed to ensure the accountability of their respective charities.

According to Mr Damian Alexander Bethke, a PhD candidate in Laws who studies charity law as one of his research interests at Chinese University of Hong Kong, there are laws regulating charities in Hong Kong, but they spread across a number of statutes, including the Companies Ordinance, Societies Ordinance and those that regulate trusts.

A report released by the Law Reform Commission in December last year suggested that amendments be made to the current charity regulations, instead of formulating a charity law.

But the commission only included "the advancement of human rights" in this recent report after it was blamed for having failed to do so in a consultative paper released two year earlier.

"There is no ideal charity law," said Mr Bethke. "You cannot make a statute that's specific, otherwise you may have ten thousand million pages of statutes."

Legislative Councillor Mr Fernando Cheung Chiu-hung is disappointed by the exclusion of a clause stating "advocacy of social policies for charitable purposes" in the Law Reform Commission's report, and believes doing so violates the core values of social work profession.



The report advised against the establishment of a charity commission at this stage due to a lack of general consensus among the public on this issue. Many residents have expressed their concerns over, among other things, the organisational structure of and the lack of checks and balances on the proposed charity commission.

Instead, it made the recommendation that a government bureau or department be appointed to oversee the registration of charities in Hong Kong.



The definition of charitable purposes

A company or a society can easily register as a charitable organization by applying for tax exemption with the Inland Revenue Department (IRD).

According to case law, organisations need to provide documents that clearly state their objectives and sufficient proof that their income and assets are for the following four main charitable purposes:

the relief of poverty, the advancement of education and religion, and anything beneficial to the community.

The Law Reform Commission has suggested in its 2013 report that the number of charitable purposes be expanded to 14.

Ms Tam said that a specified proportion of income and assets of organizations for charitable purposes should be considered when determining the eligibility of registration applicants.

Tenants living in Lung Poon Court also complained to Ms Tam that donation

boxes had been spotted in the lobby of their housing blocks.

According to the Social Welfare Department, anyone wishing to raise funds in public areas has to register with the department.

“Some people may make use of loopholes and raise funds in private areas to collect more donations,” said Ms Tam.

Where does it all go?

Under the Basic Law, there is no statutory requirement for self-proclaimed charities to submit annual reports on their finances to the government or the public.

Charities are only encouraged to follow the Reference Guide on Best Practices for Charitable Fund-raising Activities promulgated by the government, which aims to enhance transparency of fund-raising practices and financial accountability. However, this reference guide is voluntary.

According to a Public Consultation document published in 2003, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) stated that having the government monitor all fundraising activities of every charitable organization to ensure they disclose their finances is “unrealistic.”

“Not only would this incur substantial manpower and resources for the Government, it would entail additional administrative costs and onerous bureaucratic requirements on fundraisers.”

Charitable organisations are also guaranteed tax exemptions. According to Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance, more than 7,500 charitable organisations in Hong Kong are exempted from paying tax.

According to the Social Welfare Department (SWD), donations allowed for deduction under profits and salaries taxes last year amounted to \$3.69 billion and \$5.76 billion, respectively.



People are strongly advised to verify the identity of a charitable organisation with its fundraising volunteers before making a donation.

“Philanthropy means doing good, but it doesn’t mean doing it for free.”

Mr Damian Alexander Bethke, a PhD candidate in Laws who studies charity law

In Singapore, where the legal system also stems from the English common law, the existing rule on charities is contained within the Charities Act, which states that a charity must apply for registration with the Registrar of Charities within three months after its establishment and failure to comply would be classified as an offence under the Charities Act.

Hong Kong, however, has no mandatory registration system for charities. A charitable organisation can apply for tax exemptions with the Inland Revenue Department (IRD), where their status will be reviewed for inspection of accounts and annual reports.

Hong Kong has minimal governmental monitoring of the financial affairs of charity organisations as there is no governing authority of a registered charity, similar to the Commissioner of Charities in Singapore.

The IRD is not responsible for examining the conduct of charities, but will intermittently call for accounts, annual reports or other documents to review whether a charitable status is justified.

Charity Watchdogs

With all sorts of charities of different backgrounds and purposes asking for donations, it is difficult separate the genuine ones from the somewhat dubious organisations.

Last year, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) reported 34 cases of suspected illegal fund raising to the police.

In 2010, the first comprehensive charity evaluator website in Hong Kong, iDonate, was founded by Ms Bonita Wang Ze-jin, who is a full-time analyst and a part-time programmer.

Modelled on the US-based charity guide the Charity Navigator, the city’s first charity rating platform is a self-funded private company that uses publicly available information to rate the credibility of charities, according to Ms Wang.

Rating hundreds of charities for public reference, the watchdog corporation purchases audited financial reports from the Companies Registry and evaluates the operational efficiency and transparency of non-governmental organisations.

The website’s main role is to look into each charity’s efficiency by assessing the relation between its fundraising expenses, charitable project expenses, staff salaries and administrative costs on the one hand and its total expenditure on the other.

Each factor is graded using a 10 point system. Fundraising efficiency measures the costs of generating every \$100 charitable contribution. Charities that use less than \$10 to generate a \$100 donation are awarded 10 points.

Charities that have lower ratings on the website are often plagued with problems such as excessive overhead costs and administrative expenses. Those organisations do not disclose their fundraising expenses, said Ms Wang.

To increase the transparency and accountability of charitable organisations, the Law Reform Commission has recommended that the government should work with professional bodies to establish financial reporting standards for charities in Hong Kong. It also wants to force charities to publish their financial statements and activities for the public to inspect.

“The biggest disappointment a donor can experience is when they realise their contribution – and most of it – has gone to ‘fund’ a charity’s operation and less so on their actual projects,” said Mr Damian Alexander Bethke, PhD candidate of Law at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

But there are exceptions. CharityWater, a non-profit organisation in the United States, has put forward an idea called the 100% Model, where it uses 100 per cent of public donations to fund their clean water projects.

The project depends on private donors, foundations and sponsors to cover everything from staff salaries and basic office systems, to office rent and supplies.

By **Tsau Jin Cheng, Karen Leung & Natalie Leung**
 Edited by **Natasha Chan & Brian Yap**

POLITICS

Plugging the Personal Data Leak

A protracted delay in implementing a key data protection clause has raised alarm over the risk of private information leaks

LAWMAKERS and information technology experts have stepped up calls for stringent government regulation of the use and transfer of personal data, as the public is increasingly vulnerable to unauthorised access to and exchange of private information.

Under section 33 of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, organisations are prohibited from transferring users' personal data to places outside Hong Kong, unless the receiving destination has in place legislation that provides the same privacy protection as that guaranteed by the Ordinance.

The section was enacted in 1995 but has never been enforced.

Legislative Councillor Mr Charles Mok Nai-kwong, who represents the information technology sector, said it was the government's job to ensure the full enforcement of the Ordinance.

"There is no reason for having delayed the enforcement of section 33 for more than 10 years," said Mr Mok.

In Singapore, the government is due to introduce legislation in July this year outlawing the transfer of personal data to places outside the country by organisations unless they can prove that the data will be accorded the same protection as that guaranteed by the Act.

Mr Mok said that Hong Kong government should address the lack of enforcement immediately to avoid falling behind other countries.

In October 2010, a group of information and communication technology experts from various non-profit organisations, including Internet Society Hong Kong, joined forces and submitted a paper to the SAR government calling for the enforcement of section 33 of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

But the government has yet to provide a timetable for the discussion.

Information technology professionals have also expressed concern about the inadequate government oversight of the use of residents' personal data by app developers and corporations in the city.



Smartphone users are advised to read through the privacy policy of smartphone applications before agreeing to share your personal data.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD) received about 2000 complaints in 2013, up 48 per cent from the previous year. They were related to the use of personal data, data security and data access requests.

Ms Fiona Shek Hoi-wai, the corporate communication manager of PCPD, said that the increase in the number of complaints could be attributed to the new provisions on the use of personal data, which require organisations to seek users' consent before using their data for direct marketing.

Currently, the PCPD promotes the

adoption of transparent privacy practices to the city's app developers by issuing guidelines on data protection.

For example, app developers are required to state clearly whether an app would extract users' personal data from their smartphones, and what types of information it would have access to.

But lawmakers such as Mr Mok have pointed out that the guidelines are only applicable to Hong Kong app developers, as those based outside the city's jurisdiction are not bound by the rules.

In January 2014, Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre reported that, in the 167 scanned applications from the Google Play App Store, six of them were found to pose a high security risk to smartphone operating systems and users' interests.

Dr Joe Yau Cho-ki, a lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at Hong Kong Baptist University, said different app developers might collaborate with each other to collect users' personal information for marketing purposes.

A study conducted by Appthority, a San Francisco-based mobile risk management firm, in February 2013 found that free mobile apps on Apple's iOS platform extracted greater amount of personal data from users' smartphones than those on Google's Android platform.

Dr Yau said that users should be aware of the data to which an app has access before installing it, and that they should not download apps from unreliable sources.

"Although users are not able to deal with the technical problems, they should be educated about ways of protecting their privacy," he added.

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BUSINESS

Have strangers pay for your dreams

Crowd funding is gaining momentum, but locals have yet to be ready to give away money for projects neither charitable nor creative



Ms Maryann Hwee Teng-teng says crowd funding in Hong Kong currently only works out in charitable or creative projects.

WHILE seed money remains a headache for many entrepreneurs, a local miniature artist and his business partner secured theirs, \$3.3 million, over months last year through donations online from 1,800 people in Hong Kong and abroad.

They thanked their donors, who heaped up money nearly eight times their target funding amount at US\$55,000 (\$430,000), with T-shirts and miniatures.

The artist Mr Ray Wong Wai-man and his business partner Mr Ho Hon-wai turned to Kickstarter, a popular American crowd funding website, instead of banks when they were about to launch a board game featuring sculptured characters Mr Wong designed.

The sum their account had been credited with by last December marks a record amount of money amassed in the city through the platform.

Crowd funding is defined by the Canada Media Fund as “the raising of funds through the collection of small contributions

from the general public using the Internet and social media.” Originated in the United States, crowd funding websites are believed to have become an incubator for cash-starved creative projects.

Local websites are burgeoning as Hong Kong passport holders are not eligible to raise funds on foreign platforms. At least five local crowd funding websites are known to be operating, but official figure is unavailable.

While calling on strangers online for donations to finance one’s business is catching on in the city, early movers say projects involving neither well wish nor enthusiasm for creativity can hardly make locals put hands in their pockets.

Ms Maryann Hwee Teng-teng, Executive Director of local crowd funding website FringeBacker, said crowd funding in the city was mainly confined to public welfare and creative projects.

Mr Chan Ka-ying, co-founder of Dreamna, another local crowd funding website, agrees.

“I think certain projects are just not suitable for Hong Kong,” he said. “That is why we concentrate on charitable events, which we think Hongkongers readily accept.”

Mr Leonard Steinbach, a museum consultant who works closely with local artists and crowd funding websites in Hong Kong, attributes Hongkongers’ reluctance to give away money for other kinds of projects to their investment mindset.

“People here are not familiar with the idea that one pays without getting tangible returns,” he said.

Initiating a fundraising campaign is as simple as having a proposal pass a website’s vetting, but crowd funding is no easy job even when one has had a creative proposal, according to Ms Hwee.

“A lot of people have this misunderstanding that as long as their ideas are creative, all they need to do is post them online and wait for money to be transferred to their accounts, because the website will take care of the rest,” she said. “This is completely wrong.”

She stressed that a fundraiser’s creativity, reasonable budget and proper marketing were what ultimately led to success, although her website would provide consultation services and facilitate the fundraising.

“But at the end of the day, it is still your project. If you don’t feel like promoting it yourself, I can’t see much future of it,” she said.

Echoing Ms Hwee, Mr Ho said their triumph was hard-won with a promotion video clip that took \$200,000 and numerous sleepless nights.

He said the choice of crowd funding websites was also a result of deliberation.

“The reason we chose Kickstarter was that our target audience were board game lovers and miniature collectors, neither constituted a large proportion of our potential market in Hong Kong,” he said.

Mr Ho also calls attention to the importance of revising one’s proposal based on backers’ feedback.

“This not only gives you a better project, but also makes the backers feel rewarded because they know that they are making contributions,” he said.

Mr Steinbach agrees, saying making backers feel involved

“People here are not familiar with the idea that one pays without getting tangible returns.”

Ms Maryann Hwee Teng-teng, Executive Director of local crowd funding website FringeBacker

and intrinsically rewarded was key to successful crowd funding, especially for cultural projects.

In a case as early as 1885, renowned newspaper publisher Mr Joseph Pulitzer amassed donations from 120,000 people and resumed the construction of the base of the Statue of Liberty, whose funding then ran short, by declaring the statue “the People’s Statue” and promising to acknowledge contributors in the press.

Crowd funding is expected to have raised US\$10 billion (\$78 billion) globally by the end of this year, US research firm Massolution reported. Major players in the US including Kickstarter have seen a consistent growth of the industry both at home and overseas.

Ms Hwee is optimistic about the future of crowd funding in Hong Kong. She believes crowd funding is a sustainable business model, although it needs some “fine tuning” along its way to be more compatible with the city.

PEOPLE

Drugged up, settled down

A chat with the longest resident in Christiania provides a glimpse of life in Denmark's self-proclaimed autonomous neighbourhood known as a safe haven for hippies and drug peddlers



Enclosed by graffiti-ed redbrick walls, the Freetown of Christiania has become a safe haven for hipsters and drug sales.

AWAY from Copenhagen's apple-pie-order urban area, enclosed by graffiti-ed redbrick walls, enveloped in tobacco fumes and whiffs of weed, the Freetown of Christiania has become a safe haven for hipsters and drug sales.

Here is where Ms Tanja Fox, 46, has been calling home – and loving it – for the past 42 years. She has lived in Christiania

since the squatter community got its autonomous status in 1971.

Currently working at the self-governing community's Folkeaktie, or "Share Office", Ms Fox remembers the old days when she, as a rebellious teenager, ran away from home and took shelter in Christiania. But she could not recall the reason. "Maybe for the drugs,"



she said, and laughed.

Yet for the then 13-year-old, it was not her first time to set foot on this mysterious land.

When she was four years old, her family broke apart due to financial difficulties. For two years little Tanja Fox had lived with her mother in this neighbourhood filled up with “nice people that smell like weed”.

“Believe it or not, as I remember it to be, people here are nicer than those out there wearing nice clothes and nice perfume,” Ms Fox added, dangling a bone-shaped cookie in front of her three dogs, who accompany her to work every day.

Despite the prevalence of soft drug use, Christiania is gaining its popularity among immigrant families in Denmark, statistics by the Share Office showed.

No one owns his or her own house in Christiania, according to the Office. Everything is temporarily borrowed from the regional administration unit. Such “rule” emerged as most of the residents are too poor to afford anything.

The housing does not come for free. Successful applicants above the age of 18 should pay the Christiania membership fee of

1,200 kroner (about \$1,714) per month. In addition, residents have to cover the expenses of necessities, such as heat, electricity and water, on their own.

“If someone moves out, the Office will take over the vacant house and post an announcement. Anyone can apply to move in, but it is the neighbours who decide which applicant should have the place,” Ms Fox said, explaining about the application process.



Residents' views are taken into account in things from planting a new tree to amending the common law that governs the region.

“Choose likeminded people as neighbours” is what Christiania residents call the “Christiania rule”. “It looks stupid to have someone that goes to bed early live nearby people that would stay up late partying,” Ms Fox added.

While making peace and harmony, the rule also makes it difficult for newcomers to settle down, since people always prefer having someone they know next door rather than get along with a total stranger, the Office said.

Mr Luffe Jeppesen, 34, who lives five-minute away on foot from Christiania, has been working at a bar in the region for more than eight years. He has applied for the housing for two years, yet never succeeded.

“When children in Christiania turn 18 and decide not to leave this region, they get to apply for the housing,” said Mr Jeppesen. “And vacant houses always go to them, because local people are more familiar with them than with us.”

“Normally it takes a couple of years before Christiania residents count you as a member of them,” an Office spokesperson said.

When the weather is nice in Christiania, people would get together on Pusher Street, a main strip that local residents refer to as “Green Light District”, and cut up weed into blocks of dye. Vendors sell drugs open-air.

Soft drug use is a norm here, just like drinking and smoking. While it is illegal, authorities have been reluctant to launch a crackdown.

Ms Fox started taking drugs when she fled home to Christiania at the age of 13, but she “got tired of it” and quit after six years. “It was simply not interesting anymore,” she recalled. “I think it is the same with many of us living here.”

The prevalence and lenient penalties of soft drug use have made Christiania a favourable place of residence, Ms Fox told The Young Reporter. “What is more, I think people like to live here because we own our lives in Christiania.”

“Here you have a say in who are to be your neighbours, although you might not be the only one making the final decision,” said Ms Fox.

Residents say their views are taken into account in things from planting a new tree to amending the common law that governs the region. Everything is direct and paperwork is eliminated.

“Outside Christiania, power is away from commoners and it seems almost impossible for an ordinary citizen to get a seat in parliament,” Ms Fox said.

ARTS & CULTURE

The artistically wild and wacky manifestation

Performance artists are struggling to overcome public misperceptions of performance art and to advance social causes

At the top near the ceiling hung a funnel-shaped bag filled with sand. A performance artist grabbed a handful of sand and knelt on a cream-coloured quilt, then slowly he leaned forward and made contact with the water in a finger bowl.

To everyone's surprise, he tilted his head and plunged his face into the sand. As he straightened up, sand particles came gushing out and scattering all over the cloth.

The series of acts was called "Exile".

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, performance art is a nontraditional art form often with political or topical themes that typically features a live presentation to an audience.

Hong Kong-based performance artist Mr Sanmu Chan Shisen was performing live on the last day of a three-day exhibition series entitled Embodied Action, Enacted Bodies, which was intended to introduce the human body's relationship with action to the public.

Performance art, with the human body as canvas and the use of few daily items, is a relatively low-budget and convenient visual medium. Unlike theatrical production, performance art does not require a lot of coordination between performers.

With increasing presence at either local art fairs or on the front line of political activism, performance art has been used by some local artists as a way of getting involved in social advocacy.

Among those who have found themselves intrigued by performance art is Hong Kong-based performance artist Ms Ko Siulan, who is attracted to its "democratic and liberal production and presentation".

But the non-mainstream art form has been hit by problems arising from the public's misinterpretation of it.

Ms Ko said that performance art had been fraught with prejudice and was sometimes considered a freak show or a sensational act.

During a June 4 commemorative event, Mr Sanmu Chan, who had stuck needles into his face, cut a piece of heart-shaped cloth from his shirt at the area where his heart was. He then pierced his chest with needles to convey the pathos of the June Fourth Incident.

"I tried to draw the attention of passers-by who wouldn't usually stop to look," said Mr Sanmu Chan.

He added that it was not the audience's misunderstanding but their thinking process that counted.

Mr yuenjie MARU, whose original name is Mr Yuen Kin-leung, agreed: "The ambiguity of art itself is an advantage and, at the same time, magic."

But Mr yuenjie MARU found the local audience relatively slow in embracing performance art.



Durational art entitled "Consumerism" performed by local artist Mr Cheng Man-tsai features a pig's lungs and cigarettes

He once performed nude art with significant political overtones to encapsulate the concept of gender stereotypes in Hong Kong.

Portraying himself as a woman, he used symbol substitution to portray male pubic hair as that of females. With beard on his face, he tried to act like a female on a man's body.

"The audience in Taiwan, if they don't understand my acts, they will ask me about the purpose of them after passionately thanking me for my performance," said Mr MARU.

"The response of onlookers on the streets (of Hong Kong) is to report to the police, who will come quickly to dislodge us," he added.

These wondrous and enigmatic works have also been questioned if they are in the fine art realm, said Ms Ko.

"But I think one of the deepest spirits of performing art is to challenge the conventional aesthetics and the orthodoxy of what can be considered 'art'."

By **Annie Lee**
Edited by **Venus Ho**

CAMPUS NEWS

Telling stories to alter victims' lives

Narrative therapy helps victims of sexual harassment overcome traumatic experiences through storytelling techniques

說故事改變生命： 性侵犯「幸存者」的敘事

洪雪蓮博士

香港浸會大學社會工作系副教授，資深社會工作者，家庭調解員，香港專業輔導協會認證輔導員及認可督導員，一直從事婦女工作及社區發展的教學和研究，並發展融滙不同社會工作手法和層次的介入模式，包括「女性主義實踐」、「充權實踐」、「敘事治療／實踐」等。曾服務的對象包括離婚婦女、單親婦女、新來港婦女、被虐婦女、少數族裔等。近年與非政府服務機構合作，為受害者提供心理輔導。

「幸存者」是一群性暴力受害人給予自己的身份認同，表示曾受性暴力傷害、衝擊的女性能在復康過程中蛻變，幸福及充滿生命力地生存。

性侵犯「幸存者」除了經歷被侵犯的創傷外，在接觸不同的社區系統包括法律、醫療、教育等的過程中也會遭遇到「二度傷害」。運用「敘事治療／實踐」模式，「幸存者」重塑她們的故事，發展抗衡權力

Hong Kong Baptist University held a seminar called Telling Stories in Ways That Make Us Stronger for victims of sexual harassment.

VICTIMS of sexual harassment are encouraged by the government to seek help and sue offenders so they will be penalised for their crimes. While many assume the pain ends after reporting such cases, most of the time it ends up prolonging the victim's nightmare instead.

During a university seminar called Telling Stories in Ways That Make Us Stronger, experienced social worker and lecturer in the Department of Social Work at Hong Kong Baptist University, Dr Shirley Hung Suet-lin, said she had seen many victims suffering second victimisation due to social discourse that encouraged doubtful and judgmental attitudes towards sexual violence case reporting.

“Being raped is never the victim's fault,” said Dr Hung. Serving the

disadvantaged group for more than 20 years, she said in the current community system, sexual harassment victims are required to repeatedly recall and revise their unpleasant memories.

Police authorities and the courts require victims to give specific details of such incidences as evidence, often causing psychological harm to the victim.

“They consider themselves as a useless person when they fail to give specific details required to imprison the offender,” said Dr Hung.

Once they adopt “useless” as the theme of their life story, they perceptively pick incidents that support this storyline, resulting in low self-esteem and bad psychological mindsets.

To improve the situation for sexual harassment victims, Dr Hung introduced narrative therapy which places emphasis

on helping victims set an alternative storyline when asked to tell stories of their experience during the narrative collective practice.

The technique aims at assisting participants to magnify positive attributes and construct a different identity by externalising the problem which has been haunting them.

“The famous narrative motto: ‘the person is not the problem, the problem is the problem,’ helps victims a lot,” said Dr Hung.

“Narrative therapy can be applied as a daily essence,” she added. As pressure usually comes from the standards and expectations set within society, separating ourselves from attributes that are taken for granted in social discourse may help ease our psychological burden, said Dr Hung.

By **Amie Cheng**
Edited by **Jessica Lee**



*Legislator councillors
Mr Ronny Tong
Ka-wah and Mr Alan
Leong Kah-kit bring
the atmosphere to
a climax during the
free-debate session.*

Pro-democracy heavyweights drive the centenary debate

Two veteran legislators went to great lengths to outwit each other in a debate to celebrate the centenary of Hong Kong University's Debating Society

FORMALLY-CLAD legislative councillors engaged in a verbal showdown as they eloquently expressed their views on different issues and skillfully challenged those of others.

The arena was not the Legislative Council complex, but rather the Rayson Huang Theatre of the University of Hong Kong, where outstanding past members of the University of Hong Kong's Debating Society returned to their alma mater to celebrate the society's 100th anniversary.

On January 25, the Debating Society of Hong Kong University Students' Union hosted The Centenary Debate, in which past and present team members debated the motion "One should always express his or her affection verbally".

The spotlight of the debate fell on the "free-debate session" where LegCo members Mr Ronny Tong Ka-wah and Mr Alan Leong Kah-kit faced off against each other. As they moved beyond the Legislative Council complex to a lecture hall, tension was replaced by ironic jokes about the TV licensing saga.

"He (Leung Chun-ying) has an inclination to dislike HKTV but has refused to disclose his reasons for it. How can this be justifiable," said Mr Ronny Tong Ka-wah, representative of the affirmative team made up of alumni members.

If one has an inclination for something, he or she should express it verbally. Therefore Mr Leong should explain why HKTV did not get a TV license," added Mr Tong.

Mr Leong, who was assisting his fellow junior teammates on the opposition team, echoed his opponent's words.

"Regarding Mr Leong's case, of course he should explain verbally his reasons (for not granting a free-to-air license to HKTV). He is a principal official who is accountable to us, right," said Mr Leong.

The affirmative team was eventually crowned the winner after guest of honour Professor Peter Fung Chin-wan, who served as the HKU Debating Team's coach from the 70s to the 80s, delivered his speech on the history of the Debating Society.

"Over the past years, many of our alumni team members have become government officials and legislative councillors," said Prof Fung.

"Looking up to them as role models and working hard, you may eventually become one of those famous alumni of the team."

By **Nathaniel Suen**
Edited by **Andrew Wan**



BUSINESS

China market is off-limits to international e-cigarette companies

Overseas electronic-cigarette makers encounter barriers to entry in China, where their products are made



The world spent US\$2 billion (about \$16 billion) on e-cigarette products in 2011.

VAPING, the smoking of electronic cigarettes, is still uncommon in China, even though the country is the biggest consumer of cigarettes and manufactures 95 per cent of the world's electronic cigarettes.

E-cigarettes are gaining popularity globally. The world spent US\$2 billion (about \$16 billion) on e-cigarette products in 2011, according to London-based market researcher Euromonitor International. Bloomberg Industries analysts expect global e-cigarette sales to soar to US\$2.3 trillion (about \$18 trillion) by 2050.

Nevertheless, they only account for a tiny part of China's 1.2 trillion yuan (about \$1.4 trillion) cigarette business.

Beijing announced last month it would ban smoking in public areas by the end of this year, opening up an opportunity for e-cigarettes to share the world's biggest tobacco market.

The Vapor Group, a Florida-based e-cigarette company whose products sell in the United States, Europe and South America, has made several attempts to open the door to China market, but been barred by the authorities.

"A large source of revenue for the government comes from taxes on the conventional cigarettes. That is why they do not allow electronic cigarette companies to sell their products in China," Mr Yaniv Nahon, the company founder, said.

In fact, all the e-cigarettes of The Vapor Group are manufactured in China's southern metropolis of Shenzhen, and

then shipped to all over the world. Mr Nahon expects the net profit of Vapor's e-cigarettes to reach US\$35 million (about \$273 million) by the next year.

Mr Nahon is optimistic about the future of e-cigarettes. "Everybody smokes and everybody wishes to quit smoking. And that (vaping) is the easiest way to quit smoking," he explained.

Vaping is viewed by many as a healthier alternative to smoking, as e-cigarettes do not burn the tobacco, and thus produce less of the major carcinogens present in conventional cigarettes. But some also say there is not enough long-term research to determine exactly how safe and healthy e-cigarettes are.

In view of the surging popularity of e-cigarettes in the U.S., Mr Nahon believes the federal government will soon start to tax on the products.

E-cigarettes in some states, including Minnesota, are already subject to tobacco tax.

The U.S. Congress, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Union have been jointly examining ways to regulate the use of e-cigarettes and ban the advertising of them.

The Chinese authorities would also make laws to regulate e-cigarettes, predicted Prof Zhao Yun, director of the Centre of Chinese Law at The University of Hong Kong. "Perhaps in the future, a judicial interpretation will be released by the Supreme People's Court," he added.

The Mist Shisha Sticks, a Hong Kong-based company who produces sticks for vaporizing flavored tobacco called shisha, has sold around 15,000 to 18,000 electronic shisha sticks internationally. The company launched its manufacturing facilities in mainland China and has just entered into its second year of operation.

Mr Nav Lalji, director of the Mist Shisha Sticks, expressed his concerns over lucrative patent infringement of the company's Chinese counterparts. "If we are to sell our mist there, I'm sure within the span of two to three months, you will see copies of our products pop up one after another," he said.

"Plus, I'm not too sure if the Chinese is ready for the product because they are very old-school in terms of tobacco consumption," Mr Lalji told The Young Reporter.

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