



180Degrees
CONSULTING

180 DEGREES CONSULTING HKU

ISSUE 01 • APRIL 2021



THE PANDEMIC AND HEALTH

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180 DEGREES CONSULTING HKU - WHO ARE WE?

Founded in 2007, 180 Degrees Consulting (180DC) is a global collection of student-run, pro-bono consultancies at over 100 leading universities in 35 countries. Our scale and impact enable us to be the world's premier social impact consultancy, operating to support the local (and collectively international) non-profit spaces in our respective countries.

180 Degrees Consulting – Hong Kong Island Branch (180DC HKU) was established in 2016 at The University of Hong Kong. Since then, we have served 27 projects with 10+ local and multinational organizations, including the World Green Organization, Crossroads Foundation and Amnesty International Thailand. Our projects are diverse, ranging from social media strategy, event planning to market research and segmentation.

As a student organization, we place strong emphasis on academic and cultural diversity, with our consultants coming from 6 different countries/regions and more than half of our consultants coming from non-business backgrounds this semester. Throughout the semester, we provide training support to our student members through professional mentors and organizing seminar-style workshops on relevant topics in consulting.

We are very delighted to share that we are able to work with 10 different organizations for 12 consulting projects in the academic year 2020/21; the projects covered various aspects of our partners' operations from program delivery to marketing outreach. Recognizing the recent trends within both the consulting and social impact organization industries, we have been refining our consulting model and aims to share pragmatic and actionable recommendations with our partners so that we can evolve together and create genuine impact in the community.

The 180DC HKU Team is grateful for the trust and support that every partner has given us in the past year. With an expanded vision to further penetrate our presence in the community, we hope to nurture the next generation of student leaders who are socially conscious and ready to serve our community. The following newsletter is a showcase of our work this year – hope you will enjoy this read!

INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP TEAM



Thomas Tang
Co-President



Stephanie Kwong
Co-President



Jjin Ju
Vice President



Tiffany Cheung
Partnership Director



Swanny Wijaya
HR Director



Jennifer Kwong
Partnership Director



Karina Yip
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Tracy Cheng
Team Leader



Lahari Basu
Team Leader



Jocelyn Ho
Team Leader



Jayant Sharma
Team Leader



Antra Kapoor
Team Leader



Emile S
Team Leader



Ellen Ryou
Team Leader

OUR PROJECTS IN 2020-21 SEMESTER 1

Curious about what 180DC HKU Team has achieved last semester? Below are our Team Leaders' summaries and thoughts of the projects taken up – read to learn more about us!

Justice Centre Hong Kong

“Working with Justice Centre Hong Kong on the consulting project has been a rewarding experience. From we all trying to clarify the issues to be tackled, to cracking the problems into separate blocks, conducting extensive research and eventually, formulating tailor-made recommendations – we have acquired a lot along our journey with JCHK. Having presented our findings to JCHK, it is our utmost pleasure that our efforts do add value to their organization and the wider community.

It is also through this project that my teammates and I understand how marketing strategies shape public perception towards NGOs whose mandates are to raise awareness of important social issues while improving the access to justice for all. There are certainly a lot more ways for we global citizens to contribute – no doubt working as a consultant is one of the best ways to begin with.”

– *Tracy Cheng, Team Leader of Project Justice Centre Hong Kong.*

Country Park X

“Our work with Country Park X was to help this new initiative develop a strategy for their launch on social media. The broad project scope gave us a lot of freedom to be creative in brainstorming new ideas and approaches for the campaign. Our course of research not only helped our team become more familiarised with the network of green NGOs in Hong Kong, but also the community of outdoor enthusiasts of the city. We’ve learned so much about how a lacuna in Hong Kong’s conservation space may be filled, and we’d like to thank the Project Director Krisdean L. for this great learning experience!”

– *Tiffany Cheung, Team Leader of Project Country Park X*



"HOW MARKETING STRATEGIES SHAPE PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARDS NGOS"



OUR PROJECTS IN 2020-21 SEMESTER 1

Branches of Hope

"This cycle, 180 Degrees Consulting HKU worked with Branches of Hope Ltd – an organisation that aims to restore dignity, justice and hope to the vulnerable and marginalised in Hong Kong, namely refugees and asylum seekers.

Over the project duration, the team focused heavily on building research and analysis skills: distilling large quantities of information down to its core substance, as well as insightfully reading trends and themes while doing so. This was challenging at first, but by logically structuring the problem at hand and finding gaps in knowledge that needed further research, the team managed to successfully find answers to our client's questions. Supported by the training programmes and learning opportunities provided by the branch, as well as through constant communication with the branch's partnership manager Joy Cheng, the team experienced a steep learning curve, extending our knowledge and skills outside of the classroom to support Branches of Hope in their future endeavours."

- Jjin Ju, Team Leader of Project Branches of Hope

SparkRaise

"I cannot stress enough how much of a learning experience leading this project has been for me. SparkRaise was unique because as a crowdfunding platform for social organisations, it acts as a connecting point for Hong Kong's entire socially conscious organisational network. Rather than deep diving into a single social issue I was able to get a gauge on the entire landscape of NGO's and social enterprises in Hong Kong. We were able to present a solution that would allow SparkRaise to increase its stakeholder engagement and maximise the use of its resources.

I'd like to thank Yeone Fok for taking the time to help us get a thorough inside view of her organisation and sharing some of her personal projects with us. Her mission and vision to realize social impact and create a community of like-minded individuals is truly an inspiring one. I really have to thank my team (Daphne Lam, Pradyut Bhatnagar & Bianca) for all the time, effort and ideas they have contributed and I can say with confidence they really went above and beyond and I couldn't have asked for a better team. I wish the best of luck to SparkRaise and my team members and I'm excited for the next project. "

- Lahari Basu, Team Leader of Project SparkRaise



**"DISTILLING LARGE
QUANTITIES OF
INFORMATION
DOWN TO ITS CORE
SUBSTANCE"**



STAYING HEALTHY IN THE ERA OF PANDEMIC



The sudden emergence of the pandemic has not only struck many of us unexpectedly, but also posed unprecedented challenges to the NGO community. Despite the current adversity, 180DC HKU Team continues to dedicate our relentless endeavour to providing consulting services and offering help to organizations in need. Let's have a look at our consultants' sharing on the pandemic and health, and get some insightful tips as to staying healthy!

Read more on health and pandemic on the following pages...

Public healthcare system - Si Wai Yan (pg 6)

Mental Health of Modern People - Shriya Bedi (pg 8)

Our lives when COVID ends, what's next? - Lee Chi Wei, Emma (pg 9)

PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

SI WAI YAN

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided the context, or the excuse, for the government's proposal to let doctors trained overseas work freely in Hong Kong after five years in the public sector. This is in response to the rapidly exacerbating shortage of medical professionals in the city. Before we look into whether this is a plausible approach to the issue, we should take a look at some of the figures to understand our public healthcare system:



Q: How Serious is the Aging Population in Hong Kong?

A: According to the Office of Government Economist, the number of residents who are 65 or above is expected to be 2.44 million, 92% up from the figure in 2018.

Q: Why Should We be Concerned?

A: Aging population is further complicated by the increasing need for healthcare services for chronic illnesses. According to the Thematic Household Survey Report No. 68, in 2019, it was estimated that over 2.2 million (31%) residents in Hong Kong had chronic health conditions as diagnosed by medical practitioners.

Q: What is the Exact Doctor-to-Population Ratio in Hong Kong?

A: By the end of 2018, according to data from the Department of Health, the ratio is 1:511. This figure is 134% times more than that in Australia and 43% more than that in the UK.



Q: Is the Current Rate of Increase in Doctors Supply Sufficient?

A: The growth rate of public hospital doctors did not match that in service demand and workload: the number of public hospital doctors increased by approximately 25% in the past 10 years, the growth in the number of public hospital inpatient and day inpatient discharges was round 45%.

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PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

SI WAI YAN

Now that everyone has grasped the basic idea of how Hong Kong is doing in this respect. We should proceed to outline the details of this proposal. Under the current proposal, a doctor trained overseas would be able to work freely in Hong Kong after five years in the public sector if he/ she (1) is a permanent resident of HKSAR, (2) graduated from a recognised non-local medical school and obtained a practice license or a specialist qualification, (3) received a job offer from HA, DH, HKU Med, or CU Medicine, and work for a minimum period of 5 years post-fellowship under these organisations.



The first concern surrounds the language capabilities of doctors trained overseas where the official language is not Cantonese. The second concern surrounds the differences in teaching focus and thus clinical approach to pathologies. These two concerns apply particularly to doctors trained in mainland China, where the medium of research-focused teaching is in Mandarin, instead of Cantonese or English, the main language used for medical consultation and professional communication among colleagues respectively. On top of this, there is also fear as to the culture in mainland Chinese hospitals as reported, often in a critical way, by the media.

These are all, indeed, valid concerns. But it might also be useful to consider whether the current registration system has dealt with the issues. Otherwise, whether introducing a new way of entry or not, the loophole would still be overlooked and not dealt with. Deferring such important decision to political scepticism without thorough assessment, similar to the ill-consulted proposal, is clearly not ideal.





MENTAL HEALTH OF MODERN PEOPLE

Shriya Bedi



Mental health has been one of the biggest debates within psychology over the past few decades. While medicine is advancing and reaching new milestones every day, mental health issues are often misunderstood and far less easy to diagnose. The ideas surrounding mental health have changed immensely over the past two decades. Mental health disorders are more open to the public as an illness that affects many people and is not as shrouded by stigma as it once was.

However, this century has seen an alarming spike in mental health problems in young people; most notably stress, depression and anxiety. While there is plenty of awareness on how to deal with these, this stress can also manifest in the form of self-harm and substance abuse.

The most common reasons for such psychological problems include greater academic demands, changes in social and family life and adapting to new and different environments. Other factors that often lead to depression and stress are the pressure of time management, ever-growing competition, and the fear of failure. Stress in the workplace is one of the foremost challenges faced by organisations worldwide, affecting not only the health of the people but ultimately the success of businesses.

Social media plays a large role in the universal deterioration of mental health in young people. We glorify technology for its ability to make life convenient, but it also serves as a conduit for self-consciousness and image issues. While social media grants us access to more information and opportunities than ever before, it has also enabled a virtual reality where success and failure are measured against the benchmarks of others.

Apart from the social aspect of today's world, there are several other factors at play. Millennials face immense pressure and challenges due to competition in the job market and the demand to do better in the 'real' world. The eternal chase for better grades, better internships and better placements is often at the cost of our mental well-being.

In a society so obsessed with wealth and greed, a new and rather uncomfortable question arises: is modern life incompatible with mental well-being for most people? Millions of people experience psychological distress and fail to pursue or receive help from mental health services.

The modern struggle for mental health will be a long and difficult one, but one should take comfort in the knowledge that they are not alone. Though there are problems that come along with modern society, it is within this very society that the solution lies. We are becoming adept at identifying and treating these illnesses, and with a bit of patience and compassion, we can evolve into a truly healthy society.



OUR LIVES WHEN COVID ENDS, WHAT'S NEXT?

Lee Chi Wei, Emma

A lot has happened on a global scale within the past week - the top 100 million COVID vaccines doses administered in the United States, the World Health Organization listed the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for emergency use, and the vaccination program in Hong Kong has commenced in full swing.

It seems like everything is heading on the right track and we are reaching the end of the monotonous quarantines, lockdowns, restriction orders and will soon return to normality.

While we are ready to say our goodbyes to zooming and stay-at-home orders, would life after COVID really be the same? Can we return to the lives we once called "normal" a year ago?

COVID-19 will most definitely have permanent effects on all of us, and this effect will not only be shown in the external changes in our working and living styles, but internal changes in our mental health.

Mental health crises have emerged globally under the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, four out of ten adults in the US have reported symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder. The number has significantly increased from the one in ten adults who reported these symptoms before the pandemic.

Although here in Hong Kong there were no massive lockdowns, the mental health situation in the city has still worsened. Studies have shown that compared to 2016 and 2017, Hong Kong's stress level, the prevalence of anxiety, and depression symptoms drastically increased during the virus outbreak.

When digging into the main reasons behind the emergence of mental health burdens, social isolation appears to be a key factor.

People's fear of getting infected and the government compulsory restraining orders have pushed many to stay indoors for days, weeks, and months without much human interaction. The low social participation gradually increases loneliness, which appears to be a crucial cause of mental disturbances such as anxiety, depression and avoidance behaviours.

In addition, the economic, social and political crisis that comes along with the pandemic may even cause previously healthy individuals to start avoiding social contact. It is shown in studies that these previously healthy people will likely put themselves into social isolation when faced with traumatic events with the hope of escaping real-world stresses.

The long period of social isolation thus creates an endless, unhealthy cycle. Starting with people avoiding social participation (voluntarily or not), followed by the social anxiety and psychiatric conditions that derive from the loneliness, and will then result in a fractured society.

It has never been clearer that there is an urgent need for public mental health interventions. The mental health burden will not just magically disappear with the vaccinations but will outlast the pandemic.

While our living styles may fundamentally be changed by COVID-19, experts suggest the need to form voluntary community social support and emergency remedy to reduce the burdens from mental health. The first step to send help may be to take up your phone and send a message to your loved ones - show your love and support and reduce some loneliness amid the pandemic.

OUR VISION AND MISSION

Maximising social impact and enriching consultant experience

- These are the two strategic objectives that guide the 180 Degrees Consulting HKU branch. Our two objectives work hand in hand. By equipping our student consultants with the necessary skills and knowledge, we can create a 180-degrees positive transformation for partnering organisations. In this consulting cycle, we are continuing with the same guiding principles; but we are improving upon existing processes and starting new initiatives to better realise our organisational vision.

Our first objective is to enrich consultant experience. This semester, we are pursuing this objective internally by creating inter-team experiences and externally by inviting key speakers. We have introduced a streamlined meeting and training schedule that gathers all consultants to the same platform each week. Before consultants work on their respective projects, they gather together for a weekly training or networking session, fostering inter-team interaction. At the same time, our training sessions have become more structured and comprehensive, as we implemented a weekly training schedule with external speakers from a range of relevant industries. We hope to bring learning and growth opportunities to our consultants each week.

Our second objective is to maximise social impact. This cycle, we have expanded our reach to seven different consulting projects working with a diverse range of organisations with various goals: cultural promotion, human rights protection, social inclusion, youth development and women's empowerment. We believe that expanding both the scale and the scope of partnering organisations is essential to maximise impact in the local community. We are also working on creating an internal resource base and feedback mechanism to ensure a higher level of output quality. By doing so, we aim to deliver quality advice and implementable strategies to our partnering organisations.

Through these initiatives, we hope to tangibly fulfil the founding vision of 180 Degrees Consulting:

“transforming organisations, and – in turn – transforming lives.”



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WHAT ARE WE DOING THIS SEMESTER?

In this consulting cycle, our branch was able to take in a record-high 7 projects from clients with different social visions and missions through restructuring and expansion. As students and members of this society, we are committed and dedicated to maximizing the social impacts that 180DC HKU Team creates. Most importantly, we strive to give back to this world that we love so much, and aim to create a win-win situation for both our clients and student consultants in this difficult time.