'User-centered design for public spaces in China's rapid transformation'

CEES DE BONT
SCHOOL OF DESIGN
HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

View from Li Ka Shing Tower
Introduction

• Me:
  ○ Trained in consumer psychology
  ○ Leading design school Delft (2005-2012), Hong Kong (2012 onwards)

• School of Design:
  ○ East-West
  ○ Human-Centered Design
  ○ Culture and Lifestyle
  ○ Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation (JCDISI)
The Problem

- Mathias Woo (2012): Urban renewal plans in Hong Kong resulted in “turning small streets and markets into spaceships, wiping out all styles and flavors of small communities”
Different levels of Human-Centered Design
## Traditions of Human-Centered Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Design</th>
<th>Architecture / Urban Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many pieces</td>
<td>One piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Users</td>
<td>Collective Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Prototypes</td>
<td>Non-working Images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customization part of development process</td>
<td>Customization often after delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>Transaction Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Two examples of participatory design

- Accessible park environments for the visually impaired (Siu, K.W.M., 2012)
Process of Participatory Design

- Non-Participant Observation and Recording of Oral History
- In-Depth Interviews
- Photo-voice (Picture taking and discussion)
- Creative Sessions (Modeling Kits)
- Focus Groups on Findings
- Implementation of findings into user requirements and policies
Factors inhibiting Human Centered Approach in China

- Traditions in Architecture and Urban Planning
- Recent history of social, cultural and economic hardship
- Lack of mutual trust among people
- Corruption
- Speed of change
- Short-term focus on material wealth
Ending with optimism...

- Power of Social Media
- Much experience in social / community work in China
- Many positive examples of successful community projects in China (Ezio Manzini) and India (Raghu Kolli)
- Include Asia (in collaboration with RCA)
- Post-graduate program: “Urban Environments”
Thank You