SPEAKER: Professor John Liu Lecture on Participatory
                 Planning for Diversity

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TK	Distinguished guests and fellow colleagues. Welcome to today's CLC lecture series. My name is Thinesh and I'm from the Centre for Liveable Cities. The Center was jointly established by the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources in 2008 to distil, create and share knowledge on liveable and sustainable cities. The CLC lecture series is one of the platforms through which urban thought leaders share best practices and exchange ideas and experiences.	
	In today's session, we are honoured to have with us Professor John Liu, Chair of Board of Directors, Building and Planning Research Foundation, National Taiwan University. In his lecture, Professor Liu will share his involvement and insights on public policy implications as well as the growing need to find meaningful ways to allow stakeholders to participate in the formation of plans and urban planning designs.	
	The format for today's lecture will start off with a presentation by Professor Liu, followed by a question and answer session with the audience moderated by Ms Hwang Yu-ning, Director of Land and Liveability Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office. We would now like to invite Professor Liu to deliver his lecture. Professor Liu please.	
JL	Thank you very much. First, I appreciate very much the invitation from CLC to come and talk about Taiwan. And I also appreciate that Ms Hwang is going to moderate the session. Thank You.	
	The title of my talk is about how to do Participatory Planning for Diversity. And I hope that maybe throughout the talk, you will get a sense of why it is important to talk about diversit, and why it is important to talk about participation. And I am going to use a case in Taipei to illustrate. And this is a classic case. Many of you, if you go to Taipei, if you are a professional, and if you come into contact with the city government, in any form, they will likely take you to see this project. Okay.	

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A little bit about Taiwan because I am trying to make a point that different contexts requires different sort of strategies. And the Taiwan context is peculiar. Some similarity but also some differences. So if you can sort of get a sense of the background and context, it would be better for you to understand why we did it the way we did.

Taiwan—multicultural background. Many of you know, the Dutch, the Spanish the Portuguese, they all occupied Taiwan for various periods, much before the Han Chinese people came to Taiwan. At the time, only indigenous native people, what we call Austronesians, are in Taiwan. So it has a history quite long before the Chinese arrived. But nowadays, today, we have mainly immigrants beginning the 17th century, which we call Taiwanese. But they are Han Chinese, since the 17th century. And then a large group of Mainlanders, since the end of the second world war, 1949, and then we have Hakka people and a small group of Indigenous people now in Taiwan, and a growing group of new foreign workers. And these five groups of people are mixed together in what we call Taiwan today.

I consider Taiwan as an experiment, in culture, economy, politics, society, in general. And the reason why it is an experiment is that we are facing very difficult situation regarding our role, our position vis-a-vis Mainland China. And I think everybody understands that predicament. And because of that, we need to innovate, we need to create, and we need to experiment. We are 23 million people, 36,000 square kilometres, but only about 10,000 square kilometres are habitable. Therefore, a density of roughly 2300 people in a square kilometre. Our GDP per capita is only twenty-some thousand dollars. This is I think less than half of Singapore. And as many of you know, some time ago, 20 years ago, Taiwan was one of the top economies in Asia. But it is not today, and it is in not so good shape today.

So a picture of the geology of the island. And you can see on the left that roughly 20% of the land is habitable. We have very high mountains. We have 100 peaks over 3000 metres high. It's very incredible for such a small piece of land. So a lot of it is unusable. But it is natural. It's part of the ecology. Concentrated on the West side into three large metropolitan areas—Taipei, Taichung, Tainan Kaohsiung, roughly. Many of you have been to Taiwan and I'm sure you are quite familiar with this.

Okay. The context for community participation. Since the mid-1990s, we have had very rapid economic growth. But there is an increasing disparity between rural and urban sectors, and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor. So the need at that time, at the beginning of the 1990s, is how to manage the transition from the rural to the urban. How to deal with older sections of the city in terms of urban renewal and regeneration. And how to deal with large percentage of built-up areas but becoming vacant or dormant, as well as heritage conservation. That was the need at the time. And the opportunity we had at the beginning of the '90s was growth of civil society, this is very important. I will emphasise that a little later on.

A highly educated middle class, a self-awareness of intellectuals and professionals that…the need for bettering our living environment cannot be only the responsibility of the government. That as citizens, we need to do something about it ourselves. And that's the self-awareness of intellectuals and professionals. And the commitment of educated youth and the formation of large amounts, large numbers of NGOs. This was what was happening, beginning to happen, in the beginning of the '90s.

The timing was in our view, in retrospect, probably a good time. We were self-confident because our economy was strong. As one of four Asian dragons. It was at the time that public policy and professional initiatives saw things on the same level and agreed on what was needed to move ahead. And there was an increasing business and cultural exchange with Mainland China.

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Many of us, many of Taiwanese businessmen, went to China to develop our high tech industries, etc. It was a good time and that's what was important for participation to take place. Back up a little bit, in 1987, we started an experiment with democracy, by repealing the Martial Law. So right after that, all kinds of citizen groups, NGOs, civil society associations, all kinds, it just grew from everywhere. So by 1990, when I returned from the United States to Taiwan, at the National Taiwan University, we organised what we call, the Building and Planning Research Foundation and we were formed to focus on participatory community planning and design.

During the same year, important housing NGOs, one is called OURS and Tsui Mama, both of which were formed in the same year as our foundation, pushing for housing reform in Taiwan. And then in 1994, the government followed with what they called the Integrated Community Building Program. In Chinese we call it *shèqū zǒngtǐ yíngzào* ["社區總體營造"]. But the important thing was, this program was initiated by the Cultural Commission. It wasn't by the Planning Department, it wasn't by the Building Department, it wasn't by the Economics Ministry. No. It was initiated, pushed forward by the Cultural Commission, now the Cultural Ministry.

After that, only after that, the Ministries of Interior, Industry, Transportation, Agriculture, etc., they followed suit in developing various versions of the Community Building Programs. And then by 2000, another new national policy called the Six-Star Healthy Community Plan was put in place and the Six-Stars include industrial development, social welfare, public safety, education, landscape, and ecological development. Okay. The important thing here is that in the early 1900s, civil society, including the academia, had already started doing this. And then by the mid-1990s, the government followed suit. So, a picture of Taiwan, and I just want to introduce a little bit of our foundation.

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Our foundation, currently based in Taiwan, with a permanent office in the county of Yilan, and we have also had work stations in these other places. So over the years, over the past 25 years, we have conducted roughly 500 commissioned projects during this time.

And our goal, in a simple way, is to transform the rural and urban environments by two-way, bottom-up process, to balance and to reach some kind of a collaboration with the government programmes. The basic building blocks, in our view, regarding participation is culture. Priority importance. And we mean common sense, everyday, local…culture at the local level. Culture that is close to us. It's not the culture with the capital "C". It's the small "c" culture. We use empathy because we want to understand how different people live, how different groups conduct their daily lives. That's our technique. And three, we like telling stories. We like to hear stories and we like to tell stories. And that's our basis for getting into participation.

We generally use three levels of participations. Problem-oriented…very specific local small-scale problem. And we try to work with the user, the stakeholder, on how to resolve that problem. We deal with issues that are conflicting. Problems that are cross-groups that requires coordination, that requires negotiation, that requires mediation, etc. Middle-scale. And Large scale, there are complicated urban rural national issues, that are very large, very complicated, and we think there are also ways of conducting participatory process of resolving and planning regarding these issues.

So we have used these methods both in the rural and in the urban sectors at all scales and regarding all different kinds of issues. For example, climate change. We have big problem with sea level rise and land subsidence. We are actually losing land to the sea. We are doing some reclamation. But we are losing faster than we are reclaiming the land.

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We had big problem with agricultural land being converted to development. This is a big problem for us, because we…I think as well as you in Singapore, there is a problem or an issue in regarding food security. And we are trying to protect the amount of agricultural land and not to lose it to development.

We have a big problem with speculative real estate development. We have large large percentage of vacant space in Taiwan, because our real estate development is largely free market. Wealthy people, they have many many different units of housing, and they are holding on to that space for speculation, while we need housing for another sector of population. That's a huge problem for us.

We have problems in renewal and regeneration. Again, different from Singapore. Almost every inch of our land is in private hands and when a family pass down the property, they cut it up again. So each piece is in many many small pieces. So it is impossible to do a large scale renewal project. Almost impossible.

Okay. So that is a very brief introduction to Taiwan. And now I want to go into the case. This is a village right in the heart of Taipei. And it is along the side of a river, right here. We call it *Dànshuǐ Hé* [淡水河]. It is a branch of the river that comes in. Self-built houses and long neglected by the government. So about 20 years ago, 25 years ago, the mayor of Taipei, later becoming the president of Taiwan, Lee Teng-Hui, he was then the Mayor. One day, he drove by this place and asked his aides, "What is this place?" And his aides said, "Well, that's just some illegal houses." So he says, "Okay. Take it down and turn it into a park."

So the city planners, redraw the map and make it a park site. Designated park. But what it is, is illegal squatters, low-income elderly. And who are they? These are retired soldiers from a 1950s military camp.

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And all of these people, have come along with the KMT from the Mainland to Taiwan. They are all what we call Mainlanders. They have been conscripted into KMT army in their teens, in their early 20s, against their own wishes, and they came along to Taiwan along with the army. And when they are discharged from the army, the government doesn't take care of them. So they have to build their own houses.

True, at the time, the government is in difficulty…big difficulties. They had no resources, no money, no infrastructure, they are trying to put out fires all over the place, so they had no time to take care of these guys. So their military camp was right by the river, right by about here. And after a few years, they were discharged, and these people had no place to go, so they started building these houses, alongside of their former camp.

So here they are. Some of them. This guy is still there, this guy is still there, and they were in the army. Old pictures, etc. They left their families, came to Taiwan, and they are single, they had no relatives, nobody to turn to, they built their own houses.

After discharging from the army, of course they had to find some work. Uneducated, no skills, so they found whatever they could do, in the neighbourhood, in the community. And some of them got married to local Taiwanese girls. So you begin to see little families forming. So, it became a community but at the bottom of society. Low income, illegal, etc.

When we got…. This place is quite near our university, within walking distance…. So when we got…when we heard about the news of this, that the Mayor is going to tear down the whole place and just move people out, we got involved. We did this kind of thing, is we held meetings and we listened to a young wife of old soldier, speaking about their situation. And we got our students to do things in the community.

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And the idea is that these people, if the government pushed them out and do not have an adequate way of housing them, it would be better to keep them where they are and not kick them out. Okay, that was the basic idea. But how to do that?

We came up with the idea of historic conservation but along with what we call live-conservation. It's keeping the people where they are. Rather than asking them to leave. In Chinese, we call it "*Huó de lìshǐ bǎocún*" ["活的歷史保存" conserving living history], it's alive. Historic conservation needs to be alive, in this case. So, what we did, we asked the city to save it. And the city wouldn't do it because it was designated as a park, it was the Park's Department that had charge over the land. And the Parks Department said we can't do that, because we can't have people living in the park. That's against the law. And it's true. Anywhere in the whole world, you don't have people living in the park.

But we say, well, we think that this place is of a certain kind of historic importance. We need to save it. They wouldn't do it. We went to the Cultural Department. This is a new Mayor coming in. And the new Mayor at that time, is called Ma Ying-jeou. And he had hired this woman, Lung Yin-tai, the writer, as the Cultural Director. She had just come back from Germany, and she's a writer. And she listened to us and she said, "Well, okay. If nobody else wants to do it, I'll do it." So that's what happened. And here is Lung Yin-tai with one of the residents, talking over the situation.

So, with the agreement of the culture department, our students, including experts, planners, from outside, we started to do the planning work for preservation and conservation. Things such as a place, under a tree, where old people gather to spend their time. We were trying to figure out what made this place work. Why is the place configured this way, how are the chairs placed, so that it's best for people to gather and commune and become a

| | community. That was very important to us. |
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| JL | Of course we also worked on the houses. And we figured out how each house worked in terms of daylighting, air circulation, relationship to the neighbours. How could they build illegal buildings one on top of the other without it all falling down. They went up all the way seven floors separately, and structurally, it was sound.

Okay. We talked to young generation, new generation, we figured out why this community is so important for this class of people. Why it is important, not for a historical point of view but also from just a daily life point of view. We figured out who is related to whom, what kinds of services they are providing to each other. For example, there is a community barber shop where they help to cut each other's hair, or cooking food to share, etc. Okay.

One of the stories, which I thought was quite poignant…. Mr Wang here, old soldier, in a wedding with a young immigrant from Thailand. The story goes, she came from Thailand to work in Taipei. Didn't have a place to live. And happened to find a room in Treasure Hill that was for rent. And this room was right next to Mr Wang. And where did she work? She worked in the Taipei 101 as a waitress in a restaurant. Because the Treasure Hill is on a direct bus line to the Taipei 101, it was very convenient for her. But soon after she moved in, Mr Wang got ill. Heart disease or something. And as his neighbour, she started taking care of him. And after couple of years, they got married. An old man married a young immigrant woman, and they are living in Treasure Hill. In the meantime, she works in a restaurant in the Taipei 101. And the story goes, well, it's a true story, it's true. A group of… here's a picture of the village. It's all along the hillside, along the river. You go along here, and you take a bus and you get to Taipei 101.

The story goes like this. A group of American tourists came to Taipei. And they read in the Lonely Planet that you should go to Taipei 101. So they go to |

Taipei 101.

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But at the same time, the New York Times, the tourism section, had a piece on visiting Taipei, and what they said is, if you go to Taipei…. Of course, everyone goes to 101. That is the top-end of the destination. And then you have something to eat, you shop, and you do this and that. But in the same article, the reporter said, after you go to 101, if you really want to know what Taipei is like, if you want to get a feeling for the diversity of Taipei, you should also go visit Treasure Hill. Okay.

These American tourists sitting in 101, while this woman from Treasure Hill is serving them, was talking about this article. So they said, after we eat, we will go to visit Treasure Hill. She probably didn't know English or something. So afternoon, she goes back to 101, sitting in her room, taking care of her husband, and here comes these American tourists, looking at her. Subject object gets reversed. In 101, the tourists are the subject, she was merely just a server, invisible. But when they came to Treasure Hill, she became the subject. She became what the tourist came to see. So they talked to her, hear her story, and they got a little bit more of the diverse cultures that exist in Taipei. And then this story in the New York Times is picked up by Taipei Times.

Then we have another story, what we call the Family Movie Club. As our students and our staff spend time with the residents, with the people that live here, we discover that lots of movies were made on location at Treasure Hill. Why? Because Treasure Hill was interesting, it was different, it was exotic, it was kind of unstructured, and it's great for backdrop for some drama movie. So we dig out all these movies…old films, and we showed it back to the residents, these old people. We hold the evening movie thing and we asked everybody to come, and they got all excited because one, they see their own home, their own community, in a commercial film. Many, several commercial films. And, or sometimes, they may even see themselves, in the

background, walking by or climbing steps, going somewhere, going home.

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They become props in the movies. This got them all excited, and thereafter, the community is organised to do what we were trying to do.

So we organised a film festival and we asked all the Directors who had ever made a film there, to come in person to talk to the people that they used in their films. They had never done that. They made the film, they go away, make the film, then go away. So we asked them to come back, show the films, ask them to talk about the films, and ask them to talk to the people that they actually filmed. This was a great success and we got the community activated to do following things.

Part of the following things is that the community got together and organised their own film club…own movie club. With or without us, they would organise movie showings every week. And along the movie showing, they would organise potluck, food, and they would get young people…some people who have moved out, to come back, because it is so much fun.

And by this time, the Director of Culture, and the famous film Director Hou Hsiao-hsien, some of you know, they got interested in this whole project, and then they began to lend their weight. Movie director Ho—probably the premier director in Taiwan—he would organise the movie people, film makers, movie stars and all that, to support the project to preserve this place. Of course the Culture Director, she is in it already. But she still has to deal with the Parks Department. She still has to deal with the Building Department, etc. And here is Ma Ying-jeou, with the local people. And he is a key person, a key person in the community.

With that kind of activating the community, we were able to do our plan to preserve, to fix up the houses, so that people can move back in to live, as well as to deal with land-use or city-planning, zoning code, fire codes, safety code and all of those issues.

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One by one, we were able to overcome. For example, fire safety people said, "No way, you can't do this. Absolutely not up to code, you cannot do this." And we would work out all kinds of compromise, ways of getting them to accept an alternative solution, etc. We had to strengthen the foundations of the buildings, so that it won't collapse and fit seismic codes. We have earthquakes, etc.

A big problem here is the mix. By the time…this is already several years now. 150 units. When we started, about half of the units were occupied. So we said 75 people. By this time, nothing had happened yet. Several years later, the people have already dwindled to about 50 people, roughly one-third. So we came up with a compromise with the city, that in the future, this place will not just be housing for the lower income elderly people, but you could introduce new users.

Being Culture Department, they say – yah, okay, we want to turn it into an artist village, creative arts. And along with the artists, we also want to make it like a hostel for young people. Cheap housing for young people who come to the city. They spend a day or two or a week. So we entered into a compromise with the city on a one-third, one-third, one-third solution. So at least 50 people—original residents—will remain in the settlement, which was important to our original stand point, that we should not kick people out.

However, as you can see, the blue-part, artists, the light purple part, the residents, and the yellow part, is the youth hostel. But how do you mix them together? Because many of these old people, they are living in different parts over the village. But if 50 of them, do we group them all together into one place, which means they still have to move out of their house, the house maybe they built themselves, into somebody else's house, if you want to group them together. But if you let them remain where they are, which means the artist that come in, and the young people that come in, will be all mixed together with the old people, so what kind of problem will that cause?

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Well, I'm skipping along. So what happened was, we proposed to the city that they should not go ahead with this one-third plan too hastily. They should try it out. So we spent another year doing an experiment of doing one-third, one-third, one-third. We got artists to come in. We interviewed each artist. We wanted to make sure they would not be disruptive of the old people's lives. Artists are rowdy, they drink at night, they make a lot of noise, music and all that. And old people need to sleep.

In one incident, an artist out of his good heart, he says he is going to help old people clear out, clean out their house. You know old people, if you've lived in a place for 50 years, your room is piled up with stuff. But that stuff is not junk. That stuff is valuable…some old newspaper from 30 years ago…it's quite important to you. But this guy, this artist starts throwing this stuff out and caused a huge, huge conflict between the old person and the artist. And it almost became like a fist fight, and we had to step in and resolve it and all that. But it was part of the experiment to see how that mix could work. Anyway, then we went through a couple of years of all that, trying it out, and finally, after maybe five years, everything is set, we are going ahead with the restoration of the village and we need to move people temporarily out, and then fix up the houses and then move them back in.

And here you see the temporary housing during restoration. We thought, well, maybe take half a year, eight months, nine months, fix up the whole thing, get them back in. By the time they moved back in, it was two and a half years later. It took us two and a half years to restore the village, make sure it's all safe and getting people back in, and here they all are, kind of all settled into this temporary housing! They developed their own community, like eating festivals and then finally they go back home.

So conservation with people in mind. People comes first, culture as the driving force, collaboration between different government agencies. The cultural department had to take on the burden of negotiation with all the

different parties that were involved, in order to make this thing work. And then professionals and NGOs are…optimal mix is still a question even today.

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That was 2006. Today '16, we are still working on this project. We want to know what will be the best kind of mix for the future. We are still working on that. Because the old people are getting fewer and fewer right? The city says, "Okay, just let them vanish because they are going to go anyway, and then we are going to turn the whole thing into [an] artist village. And worst thing, there are still poor elderly singles without a place to go, people in the city that have no place to go. We want to create a place where they can be housed.

That's the Treasure Hill case, humanist about training. When we did Treasure Hill, we trained our students, but we had not, at that time, gone into really focus on training community people. But the national programme in training of community planners actually started a bit before. In 2002, another national policy to support universities and professionals to help train community…what we call community planner's objectives to improve community space, how to get into the process of spatial production, how to do public participation and to empower the communities.

Generally speaking the content of training: public space as opposed to private space, community bonding, networking, issues about climate change, disaster prevention and particularly rural rejuvenation—rural area rejuvenation. Generally, two phases. We give lectures to large groups, maybe 100 people, or more. These are lectures, but we don't think lectures alone will do that much, it must be complemented with intensive training directly to planners over a period of time, onsite, hands on.

On the right is pretty much what we do in a lecture format, this type of thing. We still have exercises, etc. Now we ask them to do things, interact and we focus, we emphasise team work a lot. But here, this part here, is that smaller group—40 or 60 people, and we divide them into smaller groups. And the key is here, is that in the beginning, we, professionals, are mentors to the

planner, or to a small group. But when they get trained, when these people get trained, in the following year, they become the mentors.

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So the people, over several years, the community kind of trains itself and we just initiate the process. And then the people that we train, they work with residents and other community organisations, and this circle means they work on a project in a community, they will be working on a project. For example, in the county of Yilan, we train more than 1,500 people each year, and we work on 12 to 16 small-scale projects.

In terms of money or the resource, very little money, We spend about 30% of each dollar on training and we save roughly 70% of each dollar for the actual work, making some space improvement and all of these are very low money, no more than USD 10,000 for one project.

Examples of some projects. This is what it looked like before (refers to slide) and the top is what it looks like after they do the work, and here is the…they don't hire contractors or anything, it's people in the community doing the work themselves after being trained.

A vacant house, dormant for some time, they fix it up for a kids' playroom and stuff. And an old house, well, I wish I had time to talk about this one but I really don't have time. It's an old abandoned house that we used to solve a different problem, but it became…soon the community participation and their own initiative, they turned it into another use. We were trying to solve how old people cross the street, and you can see the street over here, aut once we developed this, it's like a little pavilion for old people to sit and wait for the bus to come and be able to cross the street safely. The community itself took over an empty vacant house with the agreement of the owner, and turned it into an old people's kitchen. And they actually got old people in the community to come out each day and work together to prepare meals to serve themselves as well as to serve other older people who cannot move around so much and they will bring the food to their house. So it becomes a community

kitchen and it activated the older people in the community to do something useful other than just sitting at home watching TV.

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And that's what it looked like before, and we didn't even know there was a house there, and then we cleared it out and found a house there. And then we did water work. Waste water passing through the community, we used ecological methods for cleansing, cleaning the water, filtering it and then we're pumping it into another thing, which I'll come…next stop.

This is an old aeroplane hanger left over by the Japanese. Very heavy concrete like this, you can't knock it down. You don't know what to do with it right? The community turned it into a community centre and it's a great place, and it was discovered by the community, all the work is done by the community, but we had to do it through story telling. In other words, see this plane here? This bamboo aeroplane and it's a fantastic story, if you give me another minute, I'll tell you the story, but I'll go to the next slide, next one.

Okay, so we pumped the water in here, and we used a vacant fishpond, we turned it into a swimming hole, which is pump clean water in and the kids are having a great time, and all of this work again, is done by the community themselves. Okay, so why participate? I need five more minutes.

This is my personal observation, I must admit, it's very surface maybe superficial. Singapore, strong economy, it…but seems to me, the government is carrying most of the burden. Everything is on the shoulder of the government. It is a well-structured and working society, right. But faced with challenges of population growth and transition to a more democratic society, the role of civic institutions needs to be more apparent. Where are the NGOs, the civil society organisations, professionals, young people, where are they? I…well, maybe they are there…but. The need is to find more concrete expression of the diversity of cultures. I think that's important, especially for a place, a country like Singapore as is for us in Taiwan.

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Building distinctive neighbourhoods and communities and cultivating committed professionals and civic organisations. That's what I see as a need. The opportunity, I see, is that there is great strength in multi-cultural interactions here. There is a great deal of respect and appreciation for cultural differences. That's very important, and there is a very strong and ordered, well working physical infrastructure. These are the opportunities.

And timing, I think, is important. In Taiwan, early 1990s, that was the timing. But here in Singapore, today, Singapore [is] leading Asia in economic growth, and it is resource rich, it can innovate, it can experiment, it can create. So, planning for diversity. Directly involving the community in the process of planning and design, we think, is a way, in our view, an important way to get to diversity.

And the reasons for participation, now a couple of points, a few points. One is that a lot of things, in terms of cross-cultural communication, is tacit. It's something that you cannot entirely use words or pictures. You cannot verbalise. It's tacit. It's a feeling, it's a kind of understanding, it evolves over time. So you need to bring that person directly into the decision-making.

Second, the identity and confidence of people. When they participate, they identify with what they've done even if the final plan is not perfect. It's just like you have a baby, baby is not the most beautiful baby in the world, but to you it's the most beautiful baby in the world because you made it. So when you participate, no matter what you make, it's beautiful. It's true. We've had time and again, that's our experience with flaws, imperfections…the people identify, they feel good and they are willing to take care of it. Different cultures, promoting different cultures to understand each other, that's self-evident.

So finally, greater social equity and justice can be gained from people who are able to participate in the design process. So to me, participatory design is both a process— you think about the steps, how to get there—but it is as well,

	at the same time, something that we strive for, that we try to reach. It is a goal because participation is the basis of democracy. If we agree that democracy is important and we are trying to move towards democracy, then participation is a necessary step that we take. Thank you very much
	01:11:08
HYN	I think those of us here were very privileged to hear a very, very interesting presentation from Professor Liu. And one of the things I was struck with was that even though a lot of us are involved in the land infrastructure type of work, and we've been involved in the various types of improvement projects, the real strength of what Professor Liu was talking about is that it's really about the community bonding opportunity that the project brings, rather than the physical improvement itself. I think one of the key takeaway things I have. And the 500 projects that your foundation has been involved with over the years is a very, very rich of learning as well as inspiration to us. And I'm glad you came to share the slides on that with us today. Maybe I can hear from the floor, any questions, so that then we can get the conversation going. Professor Liu, if I may start first since the audience is still thinking through what questions they want to pose. One of the things I was a little bit concerned with is that, through that process, you're there to, in a way get community advocates, or people who are more passionate or interested in the process and as well as the project to step forward and participate. But how do we make sure that these people are representative of the wishes of…maybe the minority would…or the rest of the majority wasn't…wouldn't really step forward to participate but have an interest in the project? So the one step forward would be typically more of the minority but the very passionate ones, how do we ensure that they represent the wishes of the rest of the community?

| Prof Liu | Thank you for your question. I think the answer to the question, it's often asked, because when we do participation it's very hard to [01:13:20] [inaudible] and most of the time, it's a few [inaudible], so it's kind of minority participating and deciding, and the question is how representative they are.

I think that's a question about democracy in general. When you take a vote, you say majority vote, so 10 people take a vote and then say okay, over half, six people decide, vote for A, we're going to go for A. And it's over half. And that's what we usually work on in an association like that, and often, that's the case.

But I have found, over the years that when you do this, when you do this very simple kind of majority rule method, often, very often, the minority tend to suffer because the four people that did not agree or did not vote for this option, what do they do? They go away? Okay, so, the question is, about the majority who won, so in a way, to compensate, our society then develops ways to deal with that problem. And I think that you have, in Singapore have dealt with that in a pretty straightforward way. So in a HDB flat, you have certain percentage vote for this and certain percentage for that, so different votes, and you mandate, in order to compensate for the people who are always in the minority.

For example, in the United States, the black people are always in the minority. In a community, if you take a vote, the black people will never win. Period. So when you say what's wrong with it? Just by taking a vote will not solve the problem. Solving a problem, part of it is what you do in Singapore, which I actually agree with. You have to do that, the reverse of that is—sure, minority dictate the majority. So you're saying participation sometimes, only a few people when they decide and participate, and they decide what to do. But do they or do they not represent the majority?

Example, one organisation that I work with, they have maybe 200 volunteers, NGO, how do they decide? They hold a meeting every time? 200 people has |

	to come? They can't do that. So they made a rule. They held a big meeting, and made a rule and said, "Our organisation has to move forward based on decisions. Well, we know that we know that we cannot get 200 people to come every time we need to make a decision." So they made a rule—five people can propose an issue, we need to have five people so that you can raise a congregation among the 200. You make an announcement that such and such a day, you're going to discuss this issue. And at least five people have to show up to make this meeting legal, and whatever is decided, is decided. So information is 200. 200 people know about it, but if you don't come, that's your problem. You have to come. And if you come, your view will be counted, will be considered.
HYN	So in a way, it's about making the rules of engagement as well as the process of decision making clear, so that those who want to step up will step forward, and the rest would know, in a way, that will be pushed, your decision making rights in that sense. So they know that if they want to be part of it, they need to be able to turn up at some point and participate in the process.
JL	Yeah, so along with participants in the process, I think you will need a full, information access, free access, total access to what is going on. It needs to be transparent. It needs to be…it's not the ideal [inaudible]. It's not just the small group [inaudible]. And when you go into the community, you actually don't know how many people will show up. It could be just five people, or it could be a hundred people, you never know. It depending on the issue. But of course, in the end, there are all kinds of things.

One case, old people say, "Oh, kids? Kids get out of here, you don't come participate, this is grown ups." We were deciding on a playground, (laughter in room) and old people were trying to kick the young saying out, saying "You have no decision!" So then we have to argue with them, we were saying, "Look, we are designing this for them" and they have even drew up a plan, they made a proposal, and their proposal is just as good as yours. Why can't they participate in making the decision? Things like that. |

01:18:07

HYN	Professor Liu, one thing that struck me about the process that you described is that training is very much a key component out of your 01:21:44 programme and that's something that I think in Singapore's context we haven't been doing that much of, training the community leaders to be ready to participate in this planning process. Could you describe a little bit about what led you to go on that approach?
Prof Liu	Well, I must admit that was it all started fine without the training programme for the community partners because all these different ministries, following the Culture Ministry, they all started doing community participation in different communities and that's good, in a way, but we also had problems because all the sudden, there are so many communities that are trying to do participation and there weren't any…weren't enough professionals, who knows how to conduct the workshop in or run them, just not enough expertise to do that.

So the government thought they need to train people to do participation for us before they get into these programmes, so they started. So we were doing it in the university, we were just doing it while we taught the students rather than doing it in the community

Once the government came in with this programme, they got a hold of money, they then decided that we would help out start [inaudible] for the community and continue to do that. Vice versa, the community faced some problems when different government agencies all came to them and saying, "Okay, we're going to come the community to participation." And tomorrow, another agency comes and say, "Oh, we're going to have to do this community." They get confused, they don't know…they got all flustered, they don't know what is happening. So eventually, over the years, it got more interrelated, more [inaudible] So it gets quite confusing at times. |
| HYN | I'd like to invite questions from the floor. If anybody has a question? Yes, back there, the right? |

Jerry?	Good afternoon, my name is Jerry, I'm just a passer-by who passed by this auditorium, I got interested in this conversation. I just want to ask about this idea of participation for the public, like where do you define the boundary whereby it is allowable for public to express their decisions and where is the boundary where professionals should come in to make the decision, because if you think about that, if you have sickness, you would not ask the public for advice on how do you treat a heart attack. And you get the information online on the Internet, everybody can read it, everybody can prescribe, but would you listen to the public for such information? Or would you rather listen to the doctor of say maybe Mount Alvernia or Raffles Medical Group? Which one would be your choice? So I think my question is really asked to like, how can professionals be professionals in today's world? Especially in Singapore and if you think about it, for designers, when can they consider that it is alright to engage the public and when is it that designers should step in to say that this is the best way for the public? Thank you.
HYN	That's a great question from our passerby! You should join us more for these sessions. Please Professor Liu.
Prof Liu	Good question. Generally speaking, I think our role, is that professional, when you first enter a community, you lead a little bit more, you are more upfront, you are trying to settle down and yet talking about some ideas and what you should, and what the community should think about and all that. So in the beginning, we would pretty much, by and large, in most cases, we would tend to be more up front in leading.

But as we go along, one month, two months, three months or with the community, we would slowly step back and let the community more or less begin to take on their own direction. Of course, sometimes, we would say, "No, the community is obviously going off the edge, they are doing something totally useless" or not like…sometimes we might say that, but we wouldn't say it out loud. We would go back to the community and try to steer them and pull them back. |

But our experience, you mentioned that patient-doctor relationship. Of course we all know there's the Western doctor and there is the Chinese doctor. Sometimes, if your heart has a problem, it appears to the Western 01:28:16 doctor that you have a heart problem, but to a Chinese doctor, it's not the heart that's the problem, it's something else, it's the whole body that's not working well, that's causing the heart problem. The community, in many cases, knows more about the ills of the community than the professionals and the reason is what I call local knowledge. Local knowledge means you know what is more immediate to you. Professionals know the framework, the structures, like the concepts, the ideas, but applying it to that specific situation, there needs to be a way to give and take between the professionals and the residents' view.

So the problem is how to get into the right frame of mind, the right kind of relationship with the community. Once we get into the frame of mind, you will feel, you will find that between you and the community there is a force that is greater than either this [inaudible] professional or the community. Or, one plus one is bigger than two, you will find that something will happen that will lead you to much more appropriate solution to the problem that you are facing. So many of the cases I showed you, whether it's the Treasure Hill, all those laws at the end of it, are solutions to the particular problem that we would not have gotten, but it's something that happens between us and the community, combined together that came up with that solution. And that solution is obviously more appropriate to the community. From a professional point of view, it might not be the most perfect, the most pretty solution, but for the community, it really works and they will keep on working at it.

Once you get this process going, once you get the energy going, you will go on the value, so you go away and the community is still going on. They will be talking about new problems, they will be talking about how to solve old problems and a year later when you go back, they would have changed it somehow to fit their needs and solve the old problems. And that's how we mean by community, because community takes on its own life.

HYN	I would just add on that probably at the community local level, often the problems are more of a slow boil, it's not going to be kind of a life and death issue, and the real value is in the community bonding and 01:32:23 developing solutions that would suit the local context rather than have a very high level sophisticated solution in that sense, imposed on the community.
Prof Liu	Yeah, one, it's slow. So if you are asking for something fast, you are asking something for fast results, it's often, it might not work, it might backfire. So, to time it, difficult to pace it, to pace the steps and how to time the thing, it is quite a [inaudible], but the result is long term. If you can get the community to activate, energise, in real, because in many, many cases, it would work quite good, because they will have big event, festivities, if you have all these government people come and it's just a big show, and then the next day, nothing, next day, everybody go home.

You want to make sure that after you've completed the project, it goes on. The community goes on, so that next year, when you're building something else, next year you come…so after five years, 10 years, it becomes really healthy community. |
| HYN | Well, I know that we are overtime, but I think we have a couple more questions here, so I'd like to seek the audience' indulgence to just go on for another ten minutes? If I may take the questions in front here. |
| Question 2. | I think the question just now actually, Prof is really…

Sorry, I'm Hong See[?]. Hi, I'm from the Singapore Institute of Planners, I think just a question, Prof has actually answered it. And I would go and look back at the slides again, or if you post it on the website, I can look it. There's one slide where you said that certain issues, ideal for community participation and at another level, you need professionals and technical experts to come in, and then at one more higher level, it's beyond the community, so that slide will be excellent, if you can…

So, my question is, at the level where it's suitable for community 01:35:16 |

	participation, playgrounds, parks, incidental spaces. Okay, give some examples, then the next level where you really do need some experts to come in, what are those? Maybe those like total redevelopment, you might need some experts. So maybe give us some examples, there's one slide with the three levels.
HYN	Slide 13 (waits for slide to appear on screen)….that's at 14 now (Long pause).
JL	Yes, I know that slide, it's the circle with three layers. So you want some examples?
Hong See	Examples that would make it easy to understand.
HYN	So, the middle was the problem, the problem based, and then the trans-issue, and then the final circle outside is the issue automation.
Hong See	There's one more where you say you need experts…doesn't matter, I think we are running short of time. If you could post this on your website…there's one earlier on where you have [inaudible] say that some you need experts, some is [inaudible]
JL	There are some issues that are clearly…would require some expert knowledge. For example, sea level rise, climate change, land subsidence. Big issue along the coast in Taiwan. Now when we go to the community, what they will tell us is exactly how then land, under what the circumstance is subsiding. But they don't know why, but they can point to the areas where it's not subsiding. And they may guess, they say, "Oh this is because they pump too much underground water." Or they may say, "It's because this year, it seems like the sea is rising." This is what we call local knowledge.
	Here, in this situation, we will clearly need somebody to sign us, to tell us what the science is, and we will bring the expert in to talk, to interact with the local fishermen, we would not hold the [unclear word] workshop back at the university, among the experts, we would bring the experts directly to the site and face to the local people, and we would hold the workshop there. And

| | that's what we would call, a [first/cross?] issue.

Smaller ones are more like…the last slide we showed, something we can deal with, and that's the part where they do most of the training. 01:40:17

Training people in the community, they are normal people, they are just regular people, there are like housewives, they are like shop keepers, they are school teachers. We train them and then they can do the work of community environment improvement, improvement of the environment.

Sometimes, yes, even on small projects, we would still need some expert. There's one more thing about filtering the wastewater, so it becomes water supply for swimming pool. And we will need somebody to come in and help us, say how do we do a natural filtration thing just using local materials, do you put the rice on top, the gravel on the bottom? How are you going to do that? So the water, the dirty that runs through will become clean at the end. Things like that. So [unclear name] will come and they will actually demonstrate how to do that and then the local people will learn how to do that and they can go ahead. |
| HYN | So depending on the nature of the problem, the foundation bring in the relevant experts to help advise on different… |
| Prof Liu | Big scale, we did a project, 1,200 hectares. That's 12-storey tower. Anyway, the site is 12 square kilometres, and it's a new town, and it's behind a high speed rail road station. Farm land, very good farm land, but because it's right next to a high speed railroad station, it is facing incredible developmental pressure. It's being taken over for new development. From the high-speed point of view, yes, but from a farming point of view, from one of the best rice producing farming areas, no. The farmers haven't had… Some say yes, some say no, some want to preserve, some say they don't want to. Big scale issue, required some scientific knowledge, some expert knowledge, but on the whole, whether to preserve, whether to development is an issue that involves all these people who are living there and we have to come up with a way of |

	engaging the discussions.
HYN	Okay, maybe one last question from William. 01:42:29
William	I'm William, I [unclear organization name]. I like…Professor, I like your item two for Singapore—distinctive neighbourhood, in your recommendation. So in my mind, there are a few kinds of neighbourhood we are talking about, one of course is HDB New Town, under Town Council, very well planned, but everything seem to be a cookie cutter, clone, clone clone. And private estate, there are also a lot of upgrading up on the roadside, mainly building over the drains, and playgrounds, those are also cookie cutter, very standard. And lastly, in my estate, I come from Kampong Bahru and Blair Road conservation, when we… I am representing as the chair of the Kampong Bahru Business Association. When some of our people wants to do a bit of alfresco dining outside the restaurant, neighbours complain and then authorities comes in and then we cut back. Any suggestion of maybe, why don't we do something else? When URA land use come in and clamp us down. So in such an environment, how do you…what is your advice? How can we work with government agencies in order to perhaps do something more unique? Citizens cannot participate because it is according to the rules and regulation, as what you way, in a very highly-regulated environment and we work together. So there are three levels, sorry, three levels. Number one, a lot of cookie cutters in HDB precinct as well as the private estate. Thankful for the government for upgrading but a lot of cookie cutter solution, or same kind of treatment, same kind of procurement, question number one. Question number two is in a neighbourhood where citizen participation often come into conflict with government rulings and a lot of things can't be done on the ground. So how can we have a better platform of participation. Yes,

	thanks.
Prof Liu	So, I think we all work within a frame, no problem, right? Whether it's in Taiwan, it's only a frame, it seems. Well, we are still within a framework. Only thing is, when the frame is this big or this big, or one of the frame is very solid or sort of permeable kind of thing. So that's just the rules that you work with. I don't think we, from our point of view…unless you challenge the system, unless we challenge the frame… We prefer to work with what we have. So in Singapore, it will be different from in Taiwan. We know what we can do in Taiwan, but I don't know what you can do in Singapore. 01:45:00

So well, I think it's also true that we know there are many, many different cultures trying to live many, many different kinds of life, each one distinctive, each one valuable, each one important. That's why we respect different cultures. This is where we appreciate, we interact with each other and we want different cultures to flourish, and I think we have general consensus to agree on that. So the whole thing is, how to make that and the structure more or less come together or fit?

So the first question, the cookie cutter thing. Cookie cutter is like a frame, you kind of like [unclear phrase]? Do we make different cookie cutter, or do we make a different cookie cutter that would accommodate different cultures? I don't know, I mean, I think we need to think about it.

But also on the third one, I was trying to make a point, is that there's a whole tendency, also a human tendency, not just in Singapore, not just in Taiwan, not just in China, not just in…it's a whole human tendency is that we are moving towards a quote, un-quote democracy. I know that we have a lot of problems with Western models—the voting, the this and that, the elections this and that, we have problems with the West? We are trying to develop something here and we are trying to develop something in Taiwan and elsewhere, including [inaudible]. This is what we call our democracy. Democracy for our society, and what is that? What is that is basically how we

relate to each other, how we can make decisions together, but the basis of that is that I need to understand you. When you say something, I will understand what you really mean, and I think we start from this very basic 01:49:21 level.

So for example, when I say, we need to make more distinctive neighbourhoods, the back of it, behind that is that I am making an assertion that the neighbourhoods are not distinctive, therefore we need to make distinctive neighbourhoods. And the assertion that neighbourhoods are not distinctive, is it only my personal preference, or only in my personal judgement? That is the question. They all look the same, but somebody else might disagree, "No, no, no."

Just yesterday, one of the professors took me to see different…older HDBs, versus newer HDB blocks and I said why, to me, and a very distinctive thing about Singapore houses, is the void decks. You almost won't see that anywhere else. Surely not in Taiwan, impossible. Unimaginable. I said, "Void deck, where did that come from?" Well, he showed me a couple [inaudible] and if you look carefully, this one looks very different, that one looks very different, from that. The newer ones are very different from the older ones, so I started looking around. And it's true, they are different! Now to what extent we want to deal with cultural distinction, when you look at housing [inaudible] you say, oh this is Malay, this is Indian, that is Chinese, or not, I don't know. So it's…I think it's an open question, but I'm glad that you picked up on that one. I have go back and…

| HYN | But I suppose if we really want to experiment, we have to start working on different projects and bring the community together, find out what the community want to work on, and let them evolve from there and develop, because they've taken like 20 plus years really get the process going and in a way, learn through doing and to get to this stage, and I like what the professor said about participating in a design, being part of a process, as well as a goal. I think this is something to bear in mind as we collectively embark on this journey. |

	And maybe with that note, we call this session to a close. Please join me in thanking Professor Liu for. 01:52:59 I give the time back to Thinesh then.
TK	Thank you Professor Liu and Ms Huang for sharing your insights and experiences with us. We will now like to invite Mr Lee Kwong Weng, Deputy Executive Director, Centre for Liveable Cities, to present our speaker and moderator with a token of our appreciation. [Applause and photo taking. Transcript ends at 1:53:31]