

Waste Management or Management of Waste? --- Going Green in Hong Kong: A Case Study on the Green Lunar New Year Fair

Author Detail: Eunice Yin-yung CHIU
Heidelberg University, Germany

Abstract

The production of waste has been a huge concern across the globe; in many big cities, the situation is even more serious owing to size of population and people's environmental awareness. This research singles out the occasion of Chinese New Year Market in Hong Kong--- the annually held 'Lunar New Year Fair' during which food stalls for traditional street food, booths for traditional games and temporary floral shops are set up in at least five parks with the size of two to four basketball courts, lasting for one to two weeks, and operating from 5pm to 2am during those two weeks. Seeing the need to control waste production during this festive event, the 'Green Lunar New Year Fair' has been introduced in 2018, in the form of public-private partnership (PPP); a collaboration between the government and green groups. Since the LNYF was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 owing to the pandemic, the data of this research covers the Green LNYF in 2018 and 2019. Through in-depth interviews, this research delineates the bureaucracy and problems of institutionalisation exemplified in such partnership. Through the lens of stakeholder-mapping, the intricate power relations amongst collaborators are analysed. This research argues that the involvement of the government might be a source of hindrance to the effectiveness of waste reduction, but at the same time, they might also be the source of cohesion amongst green groups.

Keywords: Green LNYF; power relations; public-private partnership; stakeholder-mapping; waste management

Introduction

Chinese New Year marks the beginning of a new year, in which its dates are based on traditional Chinese calendar, is considered by many Hong Kongers as one of the most important festivals of the year. Lunar New Year Fair (LNYF) is the place for families to go to after family reunion dinner; it is also the place for friends and couples to gather and spend time at, during the period of Chinese New Year. The start of the new year is not marked by only one day, but commences the last week of the year. By taking a stroll and spending money at the LNYF, it signifies good luck and fortune for the new year ahead.

However, massive waste is produced during this festive event, since food stalls use countless disposable eating utensils; booths that sell lucky charms and festive items also produce lots of plastic waste in their packaging; and even bio-waste from various types of wilted plants and flowers are also produced in great volume. In 2016, LNYF produced 447 tonnes of waste; in 2017, Green LNYF was rolled out as a trial, 365 tonnes of waste was produced, marking a decrease of 82 tonnes as compared to 2016. In 2018, Green LNYF continues to generate less waste, 330 tonnes of waste were produced; and in 2019, 258 tonnes of waste were reported, marking a drop of 42.3% as compared to 2016 (Cheung, 2019). As reflected in the data, it seems that Green LNYF is quite effective in controlling waste production; however, the work involved to achieve such results should also be closely examined. As a matter of fact, Green LNYF was initiated by several green groups starting from 2015; these green groups volunteered to manage waste and to engage in promotional work beforehand in order to remind the public about the importance of waste reduction. After several negotiation and discussion with the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), EPD finally accepted the proposal of Green LNYF, marking the official start of Green LNYF in 2017.

Green LNYF operates based on a type of PPP, the government is responsible for assisting the green groups in funding and collaboration with other government departments, such as the Police Force (PF), Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), and Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC), etc. On the other hand, the actual work such as the promotion beforehand; the actual duties of collecting and sorting waste; and the proposal of alternatives to waste reduction are outsourced entirely to green groups. Before this collaboration has been officially formed as PPP, several green groups are already involved in voluntary works of similar nature. For instance, they would be standing near the recycling bins and trash cans, and politely remind people to sort their waste; and some of them even collect waste from stall owners at the end of each day and offer to handle the unwanted

substances or items. The effectiveness was limited, however, owing to the lack of power and legitimate ground of the green groups; by all means, some, if not the majority, choose to ignore them, thereby leaving the green groups with extra work, since they would still sort the waste and trash by themselves from the numerous cans of trash. Therefore, it is for certain that the government's involvement in Green LNYF has provided certain power to the green groups, making it easier for them to motivate, encourage, or even monitor the behaviours of the public. However, despite having the common objective of waste reduction; it might not be the sole objective of the government, and there too exists conflict of interests and differences in value judgement in between.

Operating as PPP, each stakeholder serves a particular function in the coordination; yet their conflicts of interests unavoidably and inevitably hinders the intended policy outcome. Using in-depth interviews and participant observation, the problems encountered during the collaboration is examined; stakeholder mapping and the power and resistance amongst stakeholders is delineated; a collaboration model is proposed in this research, as a possible 'third way' to the dilemma in the complexities involved in this case of PPP.

Public Private Partnerships in Hong Kong

Public Private Partnerships (PPP) has been considered as an opportunity for project delivery by the Hong Kong government ever since 2004. There are no universal definitions of PPP, but the efficiency unit of the Hong Kong government defines PPP as the arrangements in which 'the public and private sectors both bring their complementary skills to a project, with varying levels of involvement and responsibility, for the purpose of providing public services or projects' (Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2004). Furthermore, PPP could be adapted in different forms, such as Build-Operate-Transfer, Build-Own-Operate, Buy-Build-Operate, Design-Build-Finance-Operate and Design-Build-Operate (Lee, 2005). In recent years, types of PPP have been increasingly adapted especially in infrastructure; examples include the construction of the cross-harbor tunnels, which is an example of the Build-Operate-Transfer model; and the construction of the West Kowloon Cultural District and Cyberport, which exemplifies the Design-Build-Finance-Operate model (Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, 2009).

The policy outcomes intended in projects using PPP vary depending on the nature of projects; according to the Efficiency Unit of Hong Kong, often it depends on the government's agenda, budgeting and time frame. In Green LNYF, for instance, five intended outcomes of any PPP listed in the official governmental document are singled out owing to their relevance to the Green LNYF. They include i. realizing better exploitation of public assets, data and intellectual property; ii. achieving substantial improvement in the quality of public facilities and services; iii. achieving better allocation of risks; iv. utilizing the skills and experience, access to technology, and innovation of the private sector for better delivery of public services; and v. enhancing unity of responsibilities for delivering services. (*Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2004*)

Based on the definition of the Hong Kong Government, the adaption for either PPP or conventional government procurements usually requires a public agency to start under three conditions. First, the establishment of the need regarding the services and facility; second, the identification of the location for the facility or services; and third, the consideration of the value-for-money issues (Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2003). When PPP is interpreted from this perspective, it is noteworthy that the partnership involved in Green LNYF might not entirely fit in the typical definition of such, though it also fulfills requirements and characteristics of PPP. Most importantly, since it fulfils the intended policy outcome enlisted in the official document regarding PPP, this research still considers the Green LNYF as a type of PPP that operates in Hong Kong.

Green LNYF in Hong Kong

Green LNYF, according to my informants from the ECC, EPD and representatives from the involved green groups, could be defined as an activity that aims to educate the general public about the possibility of waste reduction during Chinese New Year. The series include pre-Green LNYF activities focuses on promoting the idea of the 'six must-have' items when attending the fair, these items are: a water bottle, a food container, reusable cutlery, a handkerchief, a shopping bag and green festive decorations. The most important goal of such is to reduce waste at source, since it would not be as effective and might also be too

late if recycling and sorting is only done after waste has been produced. In addition, reusable items are also collected during the fair; these items are then redistributed at community centres when the celebration is over. This not only saves items in good conditions from being wasted; it also allocates resources in a fairer and better manner, helping the underprivileged ones in society to have access to more resources (The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2018). For instance, in picture 1, it showcases the poster that spread the message about free resources available at the community centre in Tsuen Wan; these resources include storage racks, furniture like tables and chairs, and tents that were used in the fair. In addition, during the fair, contractors are required to promote and include the idea of 'going green' to the public, and to constantly remind the public to reduce the waste and to recycle the used items before throwing them into the trash cans. In fact, as highlighted by my informant, who is the project officer of ECC, the key objective of Green LNYF is only limited to waste reduction, but also sheds light on raising Hong Kongers' environmental consciousness.

In 2017, a pilot scheme of Green LNYF was launched, and it only involved the ECC and The Conservancy Association, which is considered as the leader of many green groups according to my informants. The Green LNYF was first manoeuvred in one of the locations of LNYF, since it was a huge success, PPP of Green LNYF officially commenced in 2018. In the same year, four green groups including Ecobus, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, The Conservancy Association and Green Sense were involved in the collaboration; four fairs at different locations, spreading from Kowloon to the New Territories, were the first ones in which Green LNYF were held. In 2019, ECC was determined to expand Green LNYF to all 15 fairs in Hong Kong, all in the form of PPP.



Picture 1. Poster by Green Sense to promote event of resource redistribution

Justifying Green LNYF as PPP

As stated by the Efficiency Unit, any form of PPP usually exhibits seven identified attributes; and Green LNYF exhibits five of them:

- i. the public agency defines the quality and quantity of services, and the timeframe in which the services are to be delivered.
- ii. the private sector entity is responsible for delivering the defined services, while the public agency is involved in regulation and procurement of such services.
- iii. responsibilities and risks involved in the relationship are allocated to the party best able to manage them.
- iv. the private sector entity is encouraged to make use of its innovation and flexibility to deliver quality and cost-effective services throughout the project lifecycle.
- v. the different functions of design, construction, operation and maintenance are integrated.

Each of them will be explained in detail in the following. As for the two characteristics that are not reflected in Green LNYF, the first one includes a long-term relationship which lasts for at least a decade. However,

this is not possible at this stage owing to how recent the Green LNYF still is; and the fact that it is still operated under an event-based contract. The second one is about the finances of the project, in which the private sector should be responsible for the finances. Nevertheless, Green LNYF is entirely subsidised by EPD, owing to the limited financial ability since the involved green groups are non-governmental organisations (Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Efficiency Unit, 2004). Despite so, this research considers Green LNYF as a type of PPP, because the work is still allocated and outsourced to these green groups, and the other five attributes are fulfilled; it is just that these 'private sectors' differ from the typical ones, as they do not aim at profit making. This will be elaborated in the following.

- i. The public agency defines the quality and quantity of services, and the timeframe in which the services are to be delivered

ECC provides the venues of fairs; while the public, including individuals with or without former experience or established green groups which might or might not have previous experience are allowed to submit proposals by filling out tenders that are pre-designed by ECC. In the standardised form of tender, a proposal framework and events criteria are decided the special committee within ECC; they are also responsible for deciding on the successful bidders. The ECC did not specify the criteria that they are looking for, nor did my informant, the spokesperson of ECC, reveal any details regarding these criteria. However, in this partnership of Green LNYF, it is no doubt that the ECC, as a government department, a representative of public agency, is responsible for defining the quality and quantity, and time frames of services to be delivered. A fragment of the tender evidencing the conditions can be found in picture 2, specifying the that the quality of services will be monitored by the ECC.

- ii. the private sector entity is responsible for delivering the defined services, while the public agency is involved in regulation and procurement of such services regarding Green LNYF

Upon decisions are made by the ECC, the selected bidders/ contractors are notified instantly, and a temporary contract is signed by both parties. The selected bidders will then be legally obligated to carry out the stated duties and promised services as stated in the tender as well as the finalised contract. As reflected in picture 2, the contractors will be supervised whilst complying to the instructions and amendments proposed by the ECC Representatives. It is noteworthy that the proposed budget might also play an important role as a selection criterion, and for this reason, the green groups only agreed to share with me part of the tender.

4. Quality of Services

- (a) The ECC Representative will oversee the progress and implementation of Services and is the contact point for day-to-day liaison with the Contractor.
- (b) The Contractor shall be supervised by the ECC Representative. In the course of service execution, the Contractor shall fully cooperate with the ECC and/or ECC Representative and shall comply with all instructions and amendments of the ECC and/or ECC Representative in relation to the Services. The Contractor shall provide the Services as required in a timely and effective manner in accordance with the Work Schedule in Appendix 2 or upon receiving instructions from the ECC Representative.
- (c) The Contractor's performance will be closely monitored and may be taken into consideration in future when the Contractor's tenders or service proposals are evaluated by the ECC or the Government of Hong Kong.
- (d) The Services shall be as specified in the Service Brief and shall fulfil all the conditions and terms of any drawings and specifications (if any) supplied to the Contractor.

Picture 2. Quality control of services enlisted in the tender

- iii. Responsibilities and risks involved in the relationship are allocated to the party best able to manage them

From the in-depth interviews conducted with representatives from both public and private sectors, responsibilities of each stakeholder are usually allocated in meetings. For example, Ms M. from Green Sense, Ms W. from The Conservancy Association and Ms I. from Ecobus all mentioned that the initial duties of green groups are heavily focused on promotional and educational aspects. Ms H. from ECC and Mr J. from FEHD have mentioned that their duties include dealing with entrepreneurs and those temporary stalls owners at the Fair, whose sole interest lies on profit-making and might therefore place 'going green' or 'waste reduction' as lower priority. ECC and FEHD are government departments, and hence have the power and authority over these stall-owners, thereby being able to ensure and monitor their compliance with the designated rules and regulations, such as the inclusion of 'going green' in their products or banners of the stores. Responsibilities are assigned to the party most suited and best able to accomplish them, therefore, illustrating how the Green LNYF fulfils the third attribute.

- iv. The private sector entity is encouraged to make use of its innovation and flexibility to deliver quality and cost-effective services throughout the project lifecycle

With reference to the tender and according to both Ms H. from ECC and Ms I. from Ecobus; successful bidders are highly encouraged to come up with innovative ideas about ways to promote 'green awareness' to Hong Kongers. Ms. H has in fact, stressed multiple times that the focus of Green LNYF is not just on LNYF per se, but ultimately the LNYF functions as a large-scale promotion itself that reaches out to as many as possible; hence, any creative activities and/or ideas which could spark the public's interests and attention to the importance of going green are highly encouraged. For instance, the contractors are encouraged to include games or initiate gift-giving to reward those who sorted their trash correctly into different recycling bins. In other words, as long as those ideas are aligned with the stated tasks and responsibilities in the contract, contractors are given high flexibility in delivering their services.

- v. The different functions of design, construction, operation and maintenance are integrated

In Green LNYF, the design, construction, operation and maintenance are itself interconnected and hence the functions embedded are also integrated. An example would be the promotional work before the actual Green LNYF takes place; the contractors are responsible for designing and constructing the promotional materials needed to spread out the message about 'going green' and educating the public about the ways to do it, for example, the six 'must-haves' as mentioned before. At the same time, the scope of services is distinctly listed in the contract, in which it is stated that ECC would be responsible to monitor, maintain and sustained the services provided; and since Green LNYF are financially funded by the government, the maintenance and actualisation of the operation is also integrated and is an outcome of the collaboration of both the government and the green groups, thereby illustrating how Green LNYF exhibits this attribute; and further showcasing how Green LNYF is a type of PPP despite how it does not fulfil all seven attributes.

Methodology

This research is qualitative based, five in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from both the public and private sectors in the partnership. It is noteworthy that not all government departments are willing to be interviewed; three spokesperson, who are from the ECC, EPD and FEHD were interviewed using semi-formal interview guide, with open-end questions, so as to expand the discussion from their point of view. As for the private sectors, representatives from Green Sense, Green Peace, Ecobus, and Conservancy Association(CA) were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Cantonese, they were recorded and were transcribed accordingly. Translation was done from Cantonese to English, and to increase accuracy, back-to-back translation was also adopted.

These green groups were approached via emails, since they were the most active ones in Green LNYF; they have been involved in organising the Green LNYF in 2017, 2018 and/or 2019. Owing to this, they are key informants of this research, and their views and perspectives are especially important, since

they have accumulated first-hand experience in negotiating with the government; and their description of events and incidents reveal the intricate power relations, difficulties and challenges of promoting 'going green' in Hong Kong.

Each interview lasted for around two hours; they were conducted in-person; it is noteworthy that the interviews with public sectors were not recorded owing to their refusal. To compensate for this, memo writing was adopted during the interviews; quick notes and summary were also jotted as soon as the interviews were over. This allows me to identify the repeated themes or topics that come up at the interviews. In addition to this, this also allows me to use thick description (Geertz, 1979) at the analysis of the interviews, by paying attention to the informants' change of tone, eye contact and body language, their emotions intensity can be identified and they act as guidance for me during my analysis, since it reveals the some of the difficulties that are tacit or not delineated or articulated clearly by the informants.

Furthermore, participant observation was also conducted. Since the green groups in Hong Kong are quite close amongst themselves, words spread quickly and after the interviews conducted with the representatives from CA and Green Sense, I have been invited to their private meetings as a participant; it was a meeting that involves all the other green groups in Hong Kong, regardless of the size of the organisation; their experience in Green LNYF or previous experience in collaborating with the government. During those meetings, these green groups actively engage in discussions the bargaining power that they have, and come up with strategies to help each other, especially for those who would be negotiating with the government representatives soon. In the two meetings that I attended, strategies upon how to tackle the unreasonable requests of ECC and EPD, and ways to resolve the conflicts of interests were discussed in detail. As refused by the representatives of those at the meeting, audio recording was not done, but note-taking was allowed. The interactions amongst different organisation were observed and notes were also made on it apart from the content of their discussion.

Stakeholder-mapping--- Analysis of Green LNYF

From a holistic view, the stakeholders of Green LNYF could be divided into six major parties, namely LCSD, EPD, FEHD, ECC, stall owners and contractors of the 'green' elements. Figure 1. displays the relations among them with regards to their functions and hierarchical relations in the institutionalised collaboration. The explanation of the figure will be explained in the following.

LCSD is responsible for recreational land management in Hong Kong, which reasons its legal entitlement of determining the usage of the corresponding lands such as sports grounds and stadiums. LNYF are organised in opened sports grounds in Hong Kong, and therefore, LCSD's approval is required before Green LNYF could be actualised. LNYF, however, is under the management of FEHD, because FEHD has always held responsible for food and hygiene in Hong Kong, and for LNYF, two specific teams have been assigned: cleansing team and hawker control team. FEHD therefore, has the legal legitimacy to give license to temporary stall owners in LNYF (Hall, 1996).

During LNYF, the management of sports ground are temporarily mediated from LCSD to FEHD. FEHD then calls for auction for stall owners, and are legally required to monitor their services and actions on the sports ground. As mentioned, Green LNYF has started in 2017 as a pilot scheme in Cheung Sha Wan, as the senior campaigner of The Conservancy Association and the head of ECC acted as policy entrepreneur (Howlett, M. & Ramesh, M., 1995), and stimulating the appearance of the policy window, thereby explaining the stance of ECC and contractors of Green LNYF. (Downs A., 1972) Therefore, it explains the cooperation between ECC and its tendency to select green groups as contractors.

Bargaining of interests

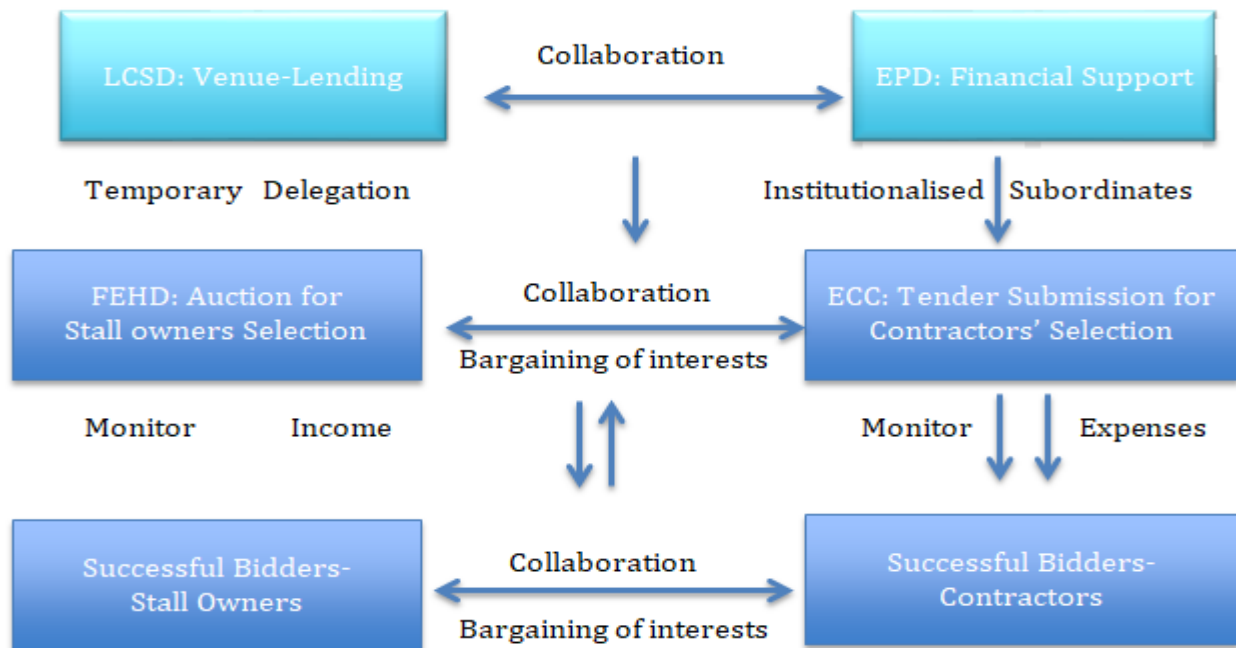


Figure 1. Stakeholders Mapping of the PPP in Green LNYF

EPD has supported Green LNYF financially while ECC works under EPD institutionally. The power of decisions regarding the event was delegated to ECC. Hence, LCSD and EPD has a collaborative relation in Green LNYF as without either one, the Fair would not be able to take place. ECC hence has the legal rights to select suitable bidders for service delivery in Green LNYF. It is noteworthy that FEHD and ECC hence might have assumed roles and legal or social obligations to represent the stall owners and contractors respectively, especially when conflicts of interests arise.

In addition, one small difference between FEHD and ECC towards their selection of successful bidders should not be neglected, FEHD looks for bidders who offer the highest amount of money; while ECC favours for bidders who are more cost-effective, this would be further discussed in the following. To FEHD, stall owners have generated income for them; but for ECC, the bidders are their expenses, it is noteworthy that both are then legally responsible in monitoring their activities. Stall owners and contractors has a collaborative relationship in a relatively equal level, because both parties do not have legal power that could override one another, particularly in terms of monitoring, and this would be elaborated. Theoretically, FEHD and ECC also has a collaborative relationship, with the key objectives to promote green senses to Hong Kong citizens and waste reduction during Green LNYF. Nonetheless, as both parties are different departments of the HKSAR, they are considered of equal level and could only bargain and compromise, instead of order and command.

Conflict of Interests amongst Stakeholders--- Cost-benefit analysis

LCSD vs. Green Groups

The major concern of LCSD is the undisturbance of the sports grounds, provided that their essential values is to “promote synergy with sports, cultural and community organizations in enhancing the development of the arts and sport in the territory” (*Leisure and Cultural Services Department, 2018*) Despite the fact that they were informed of the organisation of Green LNYF, it has never been included as their duties officially nor unofficially. In terms of the actualisation of the event, it relies heavily on contractors, in this case, mostly green groups.

Conflict of interests hence emerges between LCSD and green groups in various aspects, such as the placement of promotional booth, recycling corners or materials collection point. (*Ms Wong, 2019*) The major concern of LCSD is the possible threat to the existing infrastructure, like damages to the basketball stands or scratches to the floor of the sports ground. The major concern of the green groups however, is of

the noticeability of the placements of recyclable collection points in order to maximise scope of users. LCSD was therefore strict about the object's placement, especially during and by the end of LNYF.

Nevertheless, the costs of LCSD actually outweigh the benefits of complying with the requests of green groups. Human costs of extra staff guarding the sports ground during the Fair will incur, and possible financial costs of infrastructure replacement might also be resulted; the benefits might be rise of environmental consciousness in the department but limited to and only beneficial to the department in an individual level unless legally and officially institutionalised. On the contrary, if LCSD refuses to compromise, extra costs would be generated to green groups. For example, human costs and promotional costs where green groups might need more staff and promotional gestures to maximise the scope of users of materials recycling.

Assuming the green groups might give in to the incurrance of such costs, the benefits of both compromising to LCSD and insisting would result in the success in green sense promotions, which parallels to the objectives and intended policy outcome of Green LNYF, and more importantly, fulfils the responsibility as listed in contractors' tenders. The green groups have a closer connection with the objectives of Green LNYF per se both legally and institutionally, therefore have greater incentives and is more rational to place "green" as top priority when compared to LCSD, thereby explaining the occurrence of such conflicts during the Green LNYF in both 2018 and 2019. (*Simon, H. A., 1979*)

FEHD vs. ECC

As illustrated in the previous discussion, FEHD and ECC has a collaborative relationship, because the intended ends of such collaboration were supposed to be the intended policy outcomes of Green LNYF. However, the mission of FEHD per se does not include the ideology of green senses promotion, unlike the ECC, which had indeed be established to "campaign for the environment with the objectives of instilling the sense of environmental responsibility and motivating attitude and behavioural change towards environmental protection" (*Environmental Campaign Committee, 2017*) It is noteworthy that both FEHD and ECC are of the monitoring roles and the execution and actualisation of plans are under their supervision, namely the stall owners and services providers respectively.

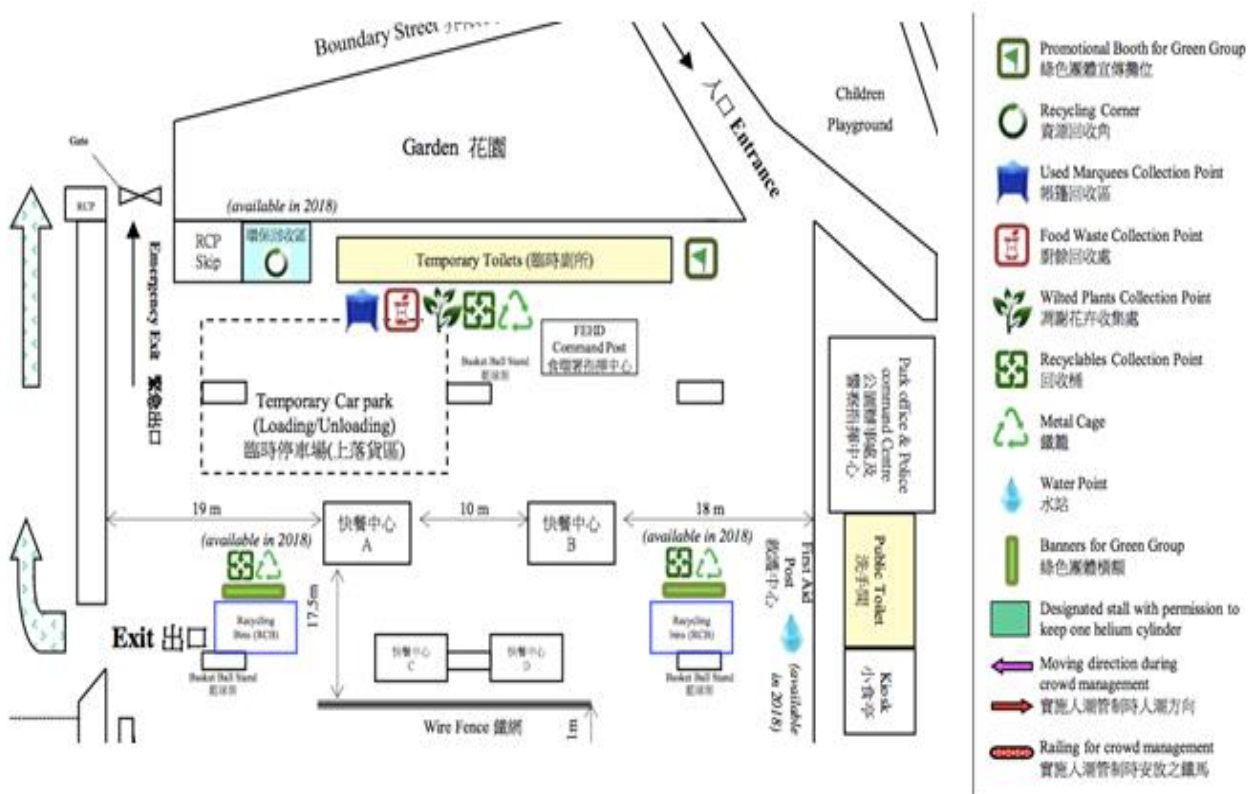
The selection of stall owners are based on an auction that takes place in November each year. In other words, potential stall owners compete through bidding with higher prices for the stalls and license, which generated income for the government especially FEHD. For instance, the income generated solely from the Fair in Victoria Park in 2019 had reached 14 million. (*Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, 2018*) In addition, FEHD is held responsible for activities on the sports ground, and have to report to LCSD if damages are found. FEHD therefore, has both legal and social obligation to protect stall owners' rights and interests, by limiting the scope of activities of contractors who are not monitored by them. On the other hand, ECC and the contractors function as a team, they share the same goal and objective in the event of Green LNYF. According to my informants, conflicts arise in the placement of recyclable collection points.

In fact, placements of recyclable collection points has also been an issue for FEHD and ECC as it might lead to blockage of stalls. As the auction of stall owners occurs before the auction of contractors of Green LNY Market, FEHD has a legal obligation to protect the stall owners' interests over the objectives of Green LNY Market. (*Ms Harriet, 2019*) Due to limited spaces of sports grounds in Hong Kong, and the need to consider the interests of stall owners, LCSD and FEHD insisted that those could only be placed in areas which causes the least influences to the stall owners, which in fact are also places which attract the least attention, hence hampering the intended effectiveness of those collection points. A map of Fa Hui Park 2019 can be found in picture2, illustrating the limitations of collection bins placements, and the full map could be found in the appendix. It is important to mention that the map is extracted from the service briefing given from ECC to different institutions before the bidding actually happens. However, according to their project manager, "nothing on this map had been actualised in reality except for the existing infrastructures and the locations of the stalls". (*Ms Wong, 2019*)

In this regards, FEHD's grounds to protect the stall owners' interests are in direct conflict with ECC's insistence in protecting servicer bidders' interests. In 2019, this had been resolved by compromising

the interests of contractors, which the final placements of collection points were near the exit, and promotional booth was near the public toilet, attracting lesser attention than expected. In other words, the difference between FEHD and ECC towards their choice of successful bidders is indeed key to their conflicts of interests and could possibly explain the compromise of the contractors.

The costs of FEHD and ECC to compromise their successful bidders' interests are the loss of faith from potential bidders in the future. The costs of both departments in insisting would be the damage to the collaboration harmony between them. However, if the objectives of Green LNYF are compromised, the costs of ECC are higher than FEHD, because ECC is responsible for the event. By the same token, if the interests of stall owners are compromised, the costs of FEHD would be higher than ECC, because stall owners are not technically a major part in the Green LNYF under the current organizational structure. In other words, the conflicts of interests would be traced back to the duties and responsibilities of FEHD and ECC, as previously illustrated.



Picture 3. Map of Fa Hui Park Lunar New Year Fair 2019

Green Groups vs. Stall Owners

In terms of Green LNYF, although both stakeholders have the obligations to carry out their legal duties, stall owners possess the identity of entrepreneurs, while green groups are viewed as contractors. The conflict of interests is found in their priorities between “green” and convenience. Stall owners’ main concern in the LNYF is to earn money, and with the limited time they have during the Fair, it is inevitable regarding their pursuit of speed and convenience. Green groups, however, operate with volunteers and their strong environmental consciousness, the pursuit of convenience is not their concern, but whether or not an action is “green”. During the Green LNYF, Ecobus had initiated “Green entrepreneurship” in 2018 at Kwun Tong LNYF; in 2019, ECC had included the idea as a compulsory duty to its contractors. Green entrepreneurship

refers to the non-legally binding contract between contractors and stall owners, stall owners are required to sign documents promising to make use of the recyclable collection points in the Fair, and in return, a sign would be given to them indicating their support to “greenness”.

In fact, green entrepreneurship has not fully achieved the intended outcome, but the policy output does include raising environmental knowledge among stall owners, as green entrepreneurship has given the opportunity for green groups to communicate and be connected with stall owners. However, as it is not legally binding, the sole existence does not alter the benefits of stall owners in the Fair.



Picture 4. Green Entrepreneurship Sign designed by Ecobus

The costs of stall owners to “act green” are the extra human cost and time cost to sort recyclable materials and take them to the designated location, which could be far away from their stalls as illustrated in the above. The benefits for them might be a cleaner environment during the Fair, but this is not their major concern, because whether or not they are being “green” does not affect the number of customers they have in the Fair. By contrast, the continuation on the pursuit of speed could increase their numbers of customers. The costs for stall owners to “go green” outweigh the benefits embedded, hence it is rational that stall owners do not actualise the non-legally binding conditions on the contract of green entrepreneurship. (Simon, H. A., 1979) The organisational structure has given stall owners and contractors equal status, where neither of them could override one another. This however, has also rooted the problem of green entrepreneurship- the creation of a toothless tiger. The possibilities and potential problems of granting legal power to green groups will be further discussed in the following.

Challenges of Going Green in Hong Kong

From the Green LNYF, it could be observed that citizens in general are keen to “greening” Hong Kong, as observed from their activeness in promotional booths of green groups in different Fairs, and willingness to use reusable eating utensils provided in the Fairs. However, two major problems lie on i. the lack of unified information and knowledge about recycling, e.g. types of plastics, and ii. the lack of sense of urgency. Plastic has been massively produced in LNYF, and in Green LNYF, they are encouraged to be recycled. However, citizens are mostly unaware of the facts about recycling. For instance, the fact that there are six types of plastic, and each has a different method to be dealt with is widely not known. (Lin, Senior Project Manager of Green Peace, 2019) This is indeed related to the lack of unified knowledge about recycling. The major recycling plastic enterprise that Hong Kong uses is the Baguio Waste Management & Recycling Limited. Despite the government funding for recycling industries, the costs and land required has been more than the supply of the government, hence the methods and even types of recyclable plastics fluctuate and change very often. This is a vicious cycle as it in turn leads to the inability for the government

to widely educate the citizens about recycling industries, not knowing about the difficulties faced by them, it counterproductively contributes further waste production.

The other issue is the lack of urgency to go green. The geopictureal location of Hong Kong is not severely nor often affected by natural disasters. In addition, ranking 19th in world's GDP growth in 2018, and with the economic emphasis with capitalistic features that Hong Kong enjoys, the negative impacts of climate change and global warming have not yet invaded citizens' lives. (*Statistics Times, 2019*) The needs to change one's life styles for the environment do not seem rational right now. Therefore, the issue of going green is not highly-prioritised in Hong Kong, in both top-to-bottom policies and bottom-to-up approach. (*Roque, 1986*) (*Dimitrov, 2010*) In fact, this problem of urgency is correlated to the first problem, which could be seen as the lack of resources for recycling industries. Theoretically, if the sense of urgency is raised in the governmental level, it might as well solve the first issue as mentioned above.

Moreover, as exhibited in the Green LNYF, green groups are the contractors in the PPP, they are legally obliged to the contract and tenders. However, being cost-effective is the key to becoming a successful bidder of the job, therefore, despite the funding provided by EPD, those institutions especially green groups still have limited manpower, resources and hence the audience their promotional campaigns can reach. Moreover, it is rather difficult for these organizations to recruit volunteers, based on the information given by my informants from Green Sense, Ecobus, and Yeah Man, Conservancy Association has done a slightly better job specifically in this aspect given its long-established reputation. The key to volunteers recruitment is earning the public's trust, which could be very time-consuming. (*Wong, 2019*)

The above problems concern mainly the distinct nature of green groups as compared to the other stakeholders. One specific limitation is their lack of legal power over the others, and this is exemplified in the enactment of Green Entrepreneurship. In fact, the contract includes rules that encourages stall owners to place wilted flowers and remaining stocks into specific collection points. However, as elaborated above, such requirement is often breached despite their on-the-site agreement.

This correlates to the other problem, which is institutionalised in FEHD, as the two teams for LNYF concern hygiene as their top priority. Added to that, FEHD is legally responsible for returning the sports ground to LCS D by the end of the Fair, which is why FEHD has in fact arranged trash lorries which would wash out all the trash remaining in the sports ground and transfer them to the landfill directly. The arrangement is justifiable, yet it also implies that contractors (green groups), have to compete with time to "save materials", because there is only one hour in between evacuation and the arrival of the truck. (*Ms Wong, 2019*) Stall owners leaving their materials at the stalls and throwing useful ones into the bin have created other duties for green groups, as they need to sort out and pick up useful materials in limited time with limited human resources.

In addition, as FEHD is only responsible for the sports ground management and hygiene during the Fair, although they are legally eligible to ensure stall owners do not leave any materials in the Fair at their booth when the Fair is over, the officers stationing at the Fair mostly refuse to do so. Based on the information given by FEHD, the top propriety is to clear out the sports ground, and as there would be a trash lorry afterwards, asking stall owners to clean up their own mess is a less efficient and effective way, and at the same time, possibly incurring more costs, such as potential disputes between FEHD and stall owners hence affecting future and potential stall bidders; or extra human costs as it may require even more staff to monitor the stall owners. Therefore, the limitations faced by green groups are institutionalised and are interconnected with the system and stakeholders' relation as mapped out in figure 1.

Policy Implications & recommendations

To conclude, it could be argued that the PPP in Green LNYF in the previous years have achieved partial success in its intended policy outcomes. Green LNYF has realised better usage of public assests, achieved substantial improvement through evaluation meetings, achieved better allocation of risks through stakeholder engagement strategies; utilised the skills of experiences as shown in ECC and green groups especially CA which was involved in the pilot scheme' and enhanced the utility of responsibilities as exhibited in the efforts of contractors in bargaining with stall owners regarding Green Entrepreneurship.

It is, however, a partial success, precisely due to the mismatch of objectives among different stakeholder, hence resulting in information asymmetry, conflicts of interests and ultimately compromising

the objectives of Green LNYF. In this regards, structural changes should be applied in the objectives of each stakeholder, in fact, the collaboration has only been required due to the events of Green LNYF, hence it will only function as expected if all stakeholders share the same objectives. First of all, the actual policy outcomes of Green LNYF might be closer to the expected ones if a new team could be added to FEHD. Apart cleansing team and hawker control team, a green team should also be added, it would institutionalise the legal duties of monitoring stall owners in green waste management, and structural changes could also stimulate and nurture the green atmosphere and possibilities of green Hong Kong. In addition, other than simply considering the highest bids, including green elements into the bidding criteria for stall owners.

In fact, different parties involved in Green LNYF have already proposed adjustments and recommendations needed to improve the event. Green groups have proposed the possibility to be granted the legal power over stall owners to solve the current 'toothless tiger' dilemma. Alternatives like urging FEHD to make changes to the current law regarding temporary hawker license, which requires stall owners to provide only disposable items due to hygiene concerns. Besides, the green groups have also proposed to the FEHD regarding the possibilities to make stall owners pay deposits during the auction to ensure that they would be responsible for their waste and unused items when the Fair ends. All three proposals have been discussed in the evaluation meeting among green groups, FEHD and ECC.

The first proposal might arise other legal concerns and collusion between green groups and stall owners might occur as well. Therefore, it might not be very cost-effective or practical to achieve the objectives of Green LNYF. The second proposal is still under discussion, it has also been illustrated in the above, that the institutional problem of FEHD is key to success of Green LNYF. It is noteworthy that FEHD has made it clear that they are opened to probable adjustments regarding this aspect. (*Ms. Harriet, ECC, 2019*) As for the third proposal, neither FEHD nor ECC has the legal power to collect deposit from stall owners, as this has not been included as their legal obligations. However, this suggestion could be analyzed in a hypothetical manner, in which if it really were implemented, it would surely raise the effectiveness of green entrepreneurship. The deposit- collection suggestion makes use of stall owners' major concern, which is profit. Originally, they might need to spend more human costs and time costs in implementing the requirements of green entrepreneurship, but with the deposit system, their marginal profit might decrease if they do not comply with the contract. The deposit system makes use of stall owners' concerns and at the same time does not compromise the objectives of Green LNYF. (*Hanemann, 1994*) Therefore, the deposit system is included as this research's policy recommendation.

Conclusion

Green Hong Kong is likely to be the future path of Hong Kong, with the increasing realisation of the needs of going green, and because this is becoming a global trend. Nonetheless, the key to green Hong Kong is not about one or two single and separate events, but should be implemented in a much bigger scale in which all citizens are aware of the importance of going green and have the knowledge, senses and assistance to live green.

In fact, ECC and green groups and FEHD have applied stakeholder engagement strategies in their collaboration, and evaluation meetings are held each year after all the Fairs end. Changes have been brought to improve the execution of Green LNYF in an incremental manner. (*Hall, 1996*) For example, the idea of green entrepreneurship has been included as a compulsory item in the year of 2019 after the proposal and try-outs by Ecobus in 2018. Moreover, companies like Wash-Up have also been approved by ECC and FEHD as the employed dish washing companies to increase the usage of non-disposable items among citizens. It is something that cannot be done by stall owners at the moment based on the current laws and regulations. With stakeholder engagement strategies, FEHD has been informed of and also recognises the need to make adjustments. However, as it takes a long time to make legal changes, the fact that FEHD is also willing to better the Green LNYF has been well-manifested in the gesture of permitting the employment of instant dish-washing companies.

LNYF is a traditional event that concerns every individual in Hong Kong, utilising it to promote Green LNYF is indeed a very big step towards green Hong Kong. However, as it has only been organised for two years, excluding the pilot scheme year, the PPP is still flawed and further adjustments could still be made to the collaboration among different stakeholders. The most desirable outcome is that the collaboration

regarding Green LNYF could be perfected, and LNYF could be fully utilised as a channel to promote the easiness and essentiality of going green in Hong Kong. If this could be achieved, it is very likely that Hong Kong might become a green city itself, instead of a city that organises a lot of green events.

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Appendix:

Map of Fa Hui Park Lunar New Year Fair, 2019

Annex

