AN INDEPENDENT HONG KONG-BASED
PUBLIC POLICY THINK TANK
ABOUT CIVIC EXCHANGE

Civic Exchange is an independent Hong Kong-based public policy think tank established in 2000 with a mission to advance civic education and engage society to shape public policy.

Civic Exchange undertakes evidence-based research in areas such as air quality, energy, urban planning, climate change, nature conservation and water resources management, helping the Government and stakeholders gain a better perspective on these issues, thereby making better policy decisions.

HOW WE OPERATE

Generate Engagement
We engage key stakeholders such as government, academics, NGOs and the broader public to search for actionable solutions and to improve cross-sector understanding of key issues.

Conduct Evidence-based Research
We fill the knowledge gaps by conducting independent, evidence-based and multi-disciplinary research.

Identify the Issues
We identify issues and/or policy gaps.

Reframe Policy Debates
We make sense of complex issues through our research, and reframe the policy debates by quantifying and illuminating the issues before reaching out to the community.

Drive Change: Public Policy & Behaviour
We work in partnership with key stakeholders to drive public policy change. We also facilitate changes in mindsets, behaviours and practices in specific sectors.
WELLBEING

OUR WORK UNDER THE WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

With the mission to advance civic education and engage society to shape public policy, Civic Exchange undertakes policy research along three major themes (Air Quality, Nature Conservation and Urban Environment), all within the framework of Wellbeing.

SHAPING A LIVEABLE & SUSTAINABLE
HONG KONG TO ENHANCE OUR SENSE OF
WELLBEING

AIR QUALITY

OBJECTIVE
Better air quality for better health

FOCUS AREAS
- Exposure study & public health
- Outdoor air quality: roadside air pollution & ships emissions
- Regional air quality

NATURE CONSERVATION

OBJECTIVE
A balanced approach addressing conservation & development

FOCUS AREAS
- Biodiversity
- Country parks management
- Wildlife trade

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE
Better planning to build city resilience

FOCUS AREAS
- Energy & climate change
- Small house policy
- Sustainable transport
- Walkability & public space
- Water resources management
"ASIAN CITIES' WELLBEING INDEX" PROJECT

It is becoming increasingly important for cities to provide liveable environments in which their inhabitants can thrive. In order to do so, citizens and policy makers must have appropriate, relevant, and culturally sensitive tools to measure progress and indicate areas for improvement.

In 2011, Civic Exchange developed a survey tool to measure and compare liveability and wellbeing across multiple domains in Asian cities. Domains include:

MEDICAL CARE  |  EDUCATION

HOUSING  |  COMMUNITY & BELONGING
TRANSPORT & UTILITIES  |  RECREATION & PERSONAL TIME
ENVIRONMENT  |  PUBLIC SAFETY & CRIME CONTROL
WORK & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES  |  QUALITY OF GOVERNMENT

UNIQUENESS OF THE "ASIAN CITIES' WELLBEING INDEX"

Civic Engagement
- Promoting public discussion about the issues facing Asia's cities
- Increasing cross-national comparative policy awareness
- Helping residents push for positive policy change

Residents' Perspective
- Original data reflecting what residents think of their:
  - Cities
  - Neighbourhoods
  - Governments
  - Lives
  - Opportunities

Asian Context
- Survey questions are written to take account of:
  - Asian household structures
  - Asian cultural practices
  - Languages

Self-Weighting
- People of each city select their own biggest priorities. It allows the index to adapt as cities develop and people's needs and values change.

City Level Scale
- Our index enables comparisons:
  - Between cities
  - Within the same city over time

Selected Cities in the Pilot Phase (2012-14): Hong Kong, Penang, Delhi, Manila, Chengdu
Selected Cities in the Current Phase (2015-16): Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai

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Air pollution has been a long-standing issue in Hong Kong and will remain one of our biggest sustainability challenges in the years to come. Poor air quality undermines people’s health, causes premature deaths, and imposes other direct and indirect costs on society. Over the years, Civic Exchange has taken the lead in bettering air quality for better health in the following ways:

Conducting ground-breaking air pollution research at the local and regional levels

Engaging key stakeholders in the public and private sectors

Reframing policy discussion on air pollution with the all-important public health angle

Shaping policy change

**MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Driving policy change**

- Convened stakeholders to formulate the Fair Winds Charter – the world’s 1st ever industry-led voluntary fuel switching initiative
- Facilitated the launching of At-Berth Fuel Switching Regulation from 1 July 2015

**Reframing the policy debate**

- Clarified the social stakes by quantifying the significant health impact of air pollution
- Introduced new perspectives on the subject for effective communications, e.g. by quantifying air pollution in social and economic cost
- Forged partnership with Government departments and facilitated inter-departmental dialogues
- Confronted barriers to progress by generating synergies among different sectors

**Strategic cross-sector dialogues**

- Actively connected stakeholders and experts on specific issues
- Strategically influenced policy discussion by providing practical solutions
- Worked in partnership to influence public policies

**Generating civic engagement**

- Informed public dialogue via interactive seminars and meetings
- Tapped social concern about the true cost of air pollution
- Encouraged active social initiatives by spinning off the Clean Air Network after “The Air We Breathe” – a Public Health Dialogue Conference in 2009

**Ground-breaking research**

- Developed ship emission inventories of Hong Kong and the PRD region
- Investigated the public health impacts of air pollution in Southern China
- Identified major loopholes in Hong Kong’s vehicular inspection and Maintenance system
NEW PROJECT IDEAS

- Ship emission control strategy: PRD emission control area
- Air pollution exposure study in a highly dense urban environment
- Inspection and maintenance of on-road vehicles
- Ship emission control strategy: alternative fuel, emission reduction technologies, shore power, etc.
- Air pollution monitoring with next-generation portable sensors
- Application of Air Quality Health Index

RECENT COLLABORATORS (in alphabetical order)

Atmospheric Research Center, Fok Ying Tung Graduate School, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Clean Air Network
Desert Research Institute
Division of Environment, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Environment Bureau, HKSAR Government
Environmental Protection Department, HKSAR Government
Friends of the Earth Hong Kong
Hong Kong Shipowners Association
Hong Kong Liner Shipping Association
Institute for the Environment, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
Marine Department, HKSAR Government
Norwegian Maritime Authority
School of Energy and Environment, City University of Hong Kong
School of Environmental Science and Engineering, South China University of Technology
Shanghai Environmental Monitoring Center
The Health Effects Institute
The Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, Chinese University of Hong Kong
The School of Public Health, University of Hong Kong
United States Environmental Protection Agency

More about Air Quality Management:

More about Fair Winds Charter and Ship Emissions Control:
Hong Kong's wide range of habitats and rich biodiversity provide a considerable number of ecological functions that serve the city and the whole region. Civic Exchange has raised concerns about balancing urban development and nature conservation since 2001, and focuses on the following scopes of work:

- Applying rigorous ecological principles and theory
- Benchmarking world-class practices for conserving nature in Hong Kong
- Taking the lead to engage local and international parties to "mainstream" nature conservation across different sectors in the community

**MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

**Monitoring and evaluation**
- Assessed the effectiveness of current conservation management plans
- Evaluated best practices for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources
- Liaised with policymakers and Government officials on the progress of implementing BSAP and combating illegal wildlife trade

**Knowledge transfer and mainstreaming**
- Examined the importance of strategic environmental assessment, the biodiversity strategy and action plan (BSAP) and sustainable wildlife trade to biodiversity conservation management plan
- Facilitated constructive dialogues with policymakers, leaders of international and local green groups on conservation management plans
- Informed general public via interactive seminars, infographics, social media platforms, videos and news articles

**Strategic conservation framework**
- Created a checklist and guide for nature conservation for policymakers
- Identified key conservation indicators in Hong Kong
- Developed a framework for systematic conservation planning
NEW PROJECT IDEAS

- Examine the smuggling of local animals and plants out of Hong Kong
- Urban Green Lung: taking an Ecosystem Service Approach to Greening Development
- Wildlife Trade Phase II
- Developing the NGO Focus Groups final report as a blueprint for stakeholder actions to increase awareness about biodiversity and conservation

RECENT COLLABORATORS
(in alphabetical order)

- ADM Capital Foundation
- Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, HKSAR Government
- Bloom Association
- Conservation International
- Designing Hong Kong
- Forest Stewardship Council
- Friends of Hoi Ha
- Grateful Green Group
- Greenpeace
- Green Power
- Hong Kong Bird Watching Society
- Hong Kong Explorers Initiative
- Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden
- Ocean Park Corporation
- Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, Hong Kong
- Ocean Recovery Alliance
- Pew Environment
- Plastic Free Seas
- Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (HK)
- SquAir Roots
- Tai Tam Tuk Foundation
- The Conservancy Association
- The Kadoorie Institute
- The Nature Conservancy
- TRAFFIC
- WildAid
- WWF-HK

Hong Kong is renowned for being a fast-paced, high-density, highly efficient city, but this comes with numerous challenges in planning for sustainability, liveability and resilience. Over the years, Civic Exchange has spearheaded research, knowledge sharing and stakeholder engagement on a broad range of urban issues, which include:

**Energy & Climate Change**

- Conducted extensive surveys and hosted conferences on:
  - Water security and management in the Pearl River Basin and Hong Kong
  - Risks of intensification of hydropower development in Southwestern China
  - Growing effects of urbanisation, industrialisation, hydropower development, and mining activities on the Dongjiang
  - Water as a material factor in investment analysis and action within China
  - Innovative financing methods and cross-border solutions for water and wastewater treatment plants in the Pearl River Delta
  - Ecological and hydrological impact of agricultural and infrastructure developments as well as mining and industrial relocation in the Dongjiang Basin
  - Industrial relocation in Guangdong Province
  - Hong Kong's water resources management under "One Country, Two Systems"
  - Divergent approaches to water dependency in Singapore and Hong Kong

**Small House Policy**

- Organised conferences and conducted research on:
  - Walkability
  - Town planning policy
  - Urban renewal policy
  - Public open space
  - Tram & pedestrian precinct

**Sustainable Transport & Urban Planning**

- Being the only think tank working on this issue
- Conducted first policy overview in 2003
- Published a 10-year policy review analysing major stakeholders' positions in 2013
- Released a Public Opinion Survey initiating an inclusive community dialogue in 2015

**Water Resources Management**

- Generated civic engagement (Energy & climate change):
  - Hosted 20 events as part of the Energy Forum Series since 2006
  - Conducted scientific and policy research including:
    - 2013 Energy Mix Research Series
    - Energy supplies and fuel supplies in Guangdong
    - Hong Kong's climate change strategy and action agenda
    - Emissions trading and green finance

**Major Achievements**

- Reframing the policy debate (Sustainable transport & urban planning)
- Identifying issues within a forward-thinking approach (Water resources management)
RECENT COLLABORATORS
(in alphabetical order)

British Consulate-General (Hong Kong & Macao)
Business Environment Council
C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group
Clean Air Network
Climate Change Business Forum
CLP Power Hong Kong Limited
Community of Road Safety
Consulate General of the United States (Hong Kong & Macao)
Department of Geography and Resource Management, Chinese University of Hong Kong
Designing Hong Kong
Development Bureau, HKSAR Government
Energizing Kowloon East Office, HKSAR Government
Environmental Protection Department, HKSAR Government
European Union Office of the European Commission in Hong Kong and Macao
Friends of the Earth Hong Kong
German Consulate Hong Kong
Greenpeace
Hongkong Electric
Hong Kong Institute of Planners
Hong Kong Public Space Initiatives
Kowloon Motor Bus (1933) Co. Ltd.
MTR Corporation Limited
MVA
New World Development
Planning Department, HKSAR Government
Society for Protection of the Harbour
The Climate Group
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects
The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
The Link Management Limited
Transport and Housing Bureau, HKSAR Government
Transport Department, HKSAR Government
UDP International
Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College
West Kowloon Cultural District Authority
WWF Hong Kong

More about Energy & Climate Change:
More about Small House Policy:
More about Sustainable Transport & Walkability:
More about Water Resources Management:
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