



# DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

## Research



### The Socially Inclusive Waste Management Hub

Taking the opportunity of a planned six-storey Government, Institution or Community (GIC) building with the refuse collection and recycling facilities, a Jockey Club Design Institute for Social Innovation project proposed an alternative waste management model that emphasises improving the working conditions of frontline cleaners and destigmatising the waste management industry by championing a community planning-based approach to waste management and supporting waste reduction. The project, which involves the design of a community waste management hub that promotes the concept of a friendly working environment and respects the dignity

of sanitation workers who are generally marginalised, won a Silver Award at the Hong Kong Institute of Planners Awards 2021.

### Customised Trolleys for Waste Pickers

Dr Crystal Kwan, Assistant Professor of the Department of Applied Social Sciences, and Dr Arnold Wong, Associate Professor of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences have released a research report on a project investigating the needs of frontline elderly waste pickers and assessing their physical and mental health by providing customised trolleys for their collection of recyclables. The trolleys not only indicated a clinically significant reduction in back and leg pain, but also the collection of an enhanced volume of recyclable items. Interestingly, it was also found that participation in the intervention enhanced the pickers' social relationships at their worksite, where they gained peer support, new friendships and increased respect.

### Assessment of System for Reducing Physical Stress in Construction Workers

PolyU scholars from the Department of Building and Real Estate have conducted a research studying the effects of a passive exoskeleton system on spinal biomechanics and subjective responses during manual repetitive tasks in the construction industry. It was found that the system significantly reduced perceived discomfort in the lower back for the heaviest lifting loads, indicating that the system could reduce the internal muscle force, extensor moments and spinal forces in the lumbar region. The majority of participants

rated the passive exoskeleton system as acceptable, further supporting its value in the industry.

### Informal Employment of Workers in Food Delivery Platforms in Mainland China

Dr Jenny Chan, Associate Professor of the Department of Applied Social Sciences, has investigated how food delivery platform firms in Mainland China manage their couriers through service contracting rather than formal employment, and how the couriers experience control and autonomy at work. She found that a combination of data-driven surveillance systems and customer feedback mechanisms incentivise workers' efforts. Individual freedom, she suggests, is framed as the lack of a requirement to work a minimum number of hours. This flexibility, however, means that when there is lower customer demand, the platform automatically reduces the company's dependence on labour. Thus, minimum earnings are not guaranteed, leaving informal workers struggling for their livelihoods.

### Centre for Economic Sustainability and Entrepreneurial Finance (CESEF)

The Centre, hosted by the School of Accounting and Finance, aims to encourage economic growth by promoting sustainability among local enterprises, developing partnerships with various industries through knowledge transfer and helping them embed environmental, social and governance (ESG) and green finance into practice. With a global and professional outlook, the CESEF team has achieved remarkable results and contributed to areas such as sustainable economy and entrepreneurship.



## Education

### Work-Integrated Education (WIE)

The mandatory WIE programme, the first of its kind in the tertiary institution in Hong Kong, provides undergraduate students with work-based learning experiences relevant to their future profession. Students who undertake non-local internships are able to reap the dual benefit of gaining practical work experience while broadening their cultural horizons. In the 2021/22 academic year, around **4,900 students** completed the WIE programme either physically or virtually in a wide variety of industries, including around **300 opportunities** in various cities in Mainland China and overseas countries.

## Education



### Career Development and Training for Students and Recent Graduates

The Student Affairs Office empowers students and recent graduates to make informed decisions about their careers and provides them with the support and resources they need to achieve their goals. Apart from sourcing internship opportunities from employers around the world, the Office hosts the “INSPIRE” Mentorship Programme, various career training and development workshops, and provides one-to-one career consultation sessions to facilitate students’ acquisition of necessary work competencies. Over **4,300 engagement** were recorded in 2021/22.

### Subject: Corporate Governance

The School of Accounting and Finance hosts this subject for the Master of Professional Accounting which aims at helping students identify and analyse business ethics issues pertaining to corporate governance, apply the concepts and principles of corporate governance to current corporate governance practices, and critically evaluate the corporate governance systems of Hong Kong and PRC-listed companies. Among the topics covered are business ethics, corporate responsibility, corporate codes of conduct, professional ethics, ethics and international business, the interests of stakeholders and corporate social responsibility. Students should be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the corporate governance system in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

## Engagement

### Project Delivery Capability Programme

In December 2021, the Department of Building and Real Estate was appointed to design and deliver the Project Delivery Capability Programme for senior construction professionals of the Hong Kong Government. Students included architects, engineers, surveyors and other industry specialists – comprising the core of the public project delivery team and serving as a critical bridge between frontline workers and project leaders. The programme aims to boost participants’ managerial skills and ensure that Hong Kong infrastructure projects are completed to a high quality, on time and within budget, and that they add value to the economy and community.

### Foundation Certificate in Opinion Survey Interview Training for Elderly

Funded by the Employees Retraining Board and hosted by the PolyU Institute of Active Ageing, the Foundation Certificate in Opinion Survey Interview Training for Elderly course commenced in July 2022. Students are unemployed individuals aged 50 or above who are seeking re-employment. The course focuses on different modes of interviewing; techniques for on-street, door-to-door and telephone interviewing; handling interview issues and conflict; and enhancing participants’ personal and job-hunting skills, and preparation for employment.

## Policies and Operations

### PolyU Staff Association (PUSA)

All university full-time staff, with the exception of the President and his deputies, may join PUSA on a voluntary basis. PUSA is a registered trade union, aiming at raising the quality of professional life in the University. University Management has regular meetings with PUSA and engages them proactively on important policy changes. Currently, two staff representatives in the University’s Council are PUSA Chairman and Vice-Chairman. PUSA also organises from time to time activities such as outings, promotional sales, and other initiatives that promote environmental or sociopolitical awareness to its members.

### Employment Practice Appeal Process

Harmony and cooperation amongst staff members are one of the essential elements of the University’s success and its pursuit of becoming a world-class university with an emphasis on the application value of its education and research. To support this, PolyU recognises the importance of establishing effective channels for addressing disputes, grievances and appeals. As a result, PolyU has developed a clear set of guidelines on grievances and human resources related appeals.



Staff on contracts of more than 24 months **>80%**



Salary rate of FT staff: at least **178%** of the minimum wage (HK\$37.5)

