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## Impact of the Japanese Tsunami

Japan's most powerful earthquake since records began struck the north-east coast, triggering a massive tsunami on March 11, 2011. Cars, ships and buildings were swept away by a massive wall of water after the 8.9-magnitude tremor struck about 400km north-east of Tokyo. A state of emergency was immediately declared at a nuclear power plant, where pressure exceeded normal levels. The tsunami triggered by the earthquake knocked out the Fukushima nuclear plant's water cooling systems, leading fuel rods inside several reactors to partially melt and sparking explosions.

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Photo from Eastweek 東周刊



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**SS<sup>2</sup> on-line : <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/ss/newsletter>**

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人文社會科學院  
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## Impact of the Japanese Tsunami

(from the cover page)

Japanese authorities rated the core damage at the Fukushima plant at Level 5 on the International Nuclear Events Scale (INES) scale on 18 March, 2011. INES is used to communicate to the public the safety significance of events associated with sources of radiation. The scale runs from 0 (deviation) to 7 (major accident). Nearly one month after the initial disaster on 12 April, 2011, following another major aftershock, the severity of the Fukushima nuclear disaster was raised to the highest level, putting it on a par with the world's worst disaster nuclear accident at Chernobyl. This implies that there has been a major release of radioactive material into the atmosphere, with widespread health and environmental effects.

Chernobyl was a case of an active nuclear reactor exploding on April 26, 1986, which resulted in radioactive material being released into the atmosphere for 10 days. Thirty one men died trying to contain the disaster, and the total number of cancers induced by the catastrophe is still unknown.

Nuclear power is used to generate heat, and provides about 6% of the world's energy and 13–14% of the world's electricity<sup>1</sup>, with the US, France and Japan together accounting for about 50% of nuclear generated electricity<sup>2</sup>. Following the Fukushima nuclear catastrophes, the International Energy Agency halved its estimate of additional nuclear generating capacity to be built by 2035<sup>3</sup>. The crisis at Japan's Fukushima nuclear plants has prompted leading energy-consuming countries to review the safety of their existing reactors and cast doubt on the speed and scale of planned expansions around the world<sup>4</sup>. Although global nuclear expansion plans may get back on track, some analysts suggest the Fukushima disaster will have long-term implications.

A lot of what is known about cancer caused by radiation exposures from nuclear power plant accidents comes



Photo from Eastweek 東周刊

from research on the April 1986 nuclear power plant disaster at Chernobyl. At high doses, ionizing radiation can cause immediate damage to the human body, including radiation sickness and death. Lower doses may cause cancer, usually many years later. The cancer risk depends of course on the amount of radiation, the type of radiation, the parts of the body exposed (for example, through contaminated food, water, air, or on the skin), and the age of the individual – the younger the exposure, the greater the risk.

Japanese health officials have attempted to calm a worried general public by reporting that the potential health consequences of the nuclear crisis at Japan's Fukushima plant are not equal to those caused by the disaster at Chernobyl. Adding that "We do not think the radiation in Japan will contribute to an increase risk of cancer and leukemia," these comments were made at the World Health Organisation's 64th General Assembly. However, the comments have done little to alleviate public outcry and worry regarding the potentially disastrous health impact should anything go wrong at nuclear plants.



Indeed there have even been calls from Legislative Council members in Hong Kong calling on the government to hold back and even shelve the intention to increase our reliance on nuclear energy as well as prepare more comprehensive plans in the event of a nuclear crisis in Daya Bay<sup>5</sup>. Daya Bay nuclear power plant is located on Daya Bay in Longgang

*Photo from Eastweek 東周刊*



District in Shenzhen, China, just north of Hong Kong and the closest nuclear plant to Hong Kong.

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*By Dr. Tina L Rochelle  
Assistant Professor*

## Social Capital and Impact Assessment Research Unit - SoCIA



Interview with  
*Dr. K.K. Leung,*  
*Associate Professor*

### Can you give a brief introduction about SoCIA?

The full name of SoCIA is Social Capital and Impact Assessment Research Unit. The focus of SoCIA is on research related to social capital and/or impact assessment. The simplest explanation of social capital is social networking, which is about interpersonal relationship, such as how one helps each other and builds up connection, hence to achieve a harmonious society. Study on impact assessment covered various dimensions, ranging from individual levels to societal levels, such as impact from the government policy, which is also one of the major cross-disciplined topics in social sciences.

### What is the function of SoCIA?

Currently the Research Unit is working on an evaluation research on the Community Investment Inclusive Fund (CIIF). SoCIA also contributes to assist SS colleagues in drafting research proposals, collecting data, and drafting in scholastic reports.

### What are the major challenges in SoCIA from your perspective

It is not easy to generate funding to support research work and maintain the operation of SoCIA. The funding largely depends on bidding for research projects. Therefore to ensure adequate funding in supporting the operation of SoCIA is a great challenge.

### What did you plan to do after retirement?

I shall spend one year travelling around the world, and another year driving in China. Apart from relaxing, the journey is also planned for a sociolinguistics project that I wish to work on for long. It is about to break down the Chinese character into different basic and meaning-carried components (部件), which allows people to learn and understand its meaning easily. I plan to capture some visualized images, which look very similar to the words they represent, and then to interpret the exact meaning contained in different Chinese characters. If children learn all these components, they will understand the meaning of many words even they have not learned them before. After having a clear concept on the components, new words can be easily created.



### SoCIA Office

Ms. Crystal WONG, Mr. Oscar LIU,  
Mr. Gabriel LEE, Dr. Linda TJIA,  
Ms. Cecilia WONG, Mr. Stanley CHOI  
(From the left to right)



Interview with  
*Dr. Jacky Cheung,*  
*Associate Professor*

### **Why does the SoCIA set the research target on social capital and impact assessment?**

Social capital and impact assessment significantly indicate the direction of social research. Sociology and other fields within social science such as economics, political science, and psychology have put much emphasis on social capital. Since social capital and impact assessment are both hot and popular issues across different fields, it was imperative to carry out social research on these two topics. Besides, we have been doing social research about social capital and impact assessment all along since the time of the Quality Evaluation Centre (QEC, forerunner of the SoCIA). With the experience gained in the past, the social research can achieve its purposes, match with the need of contemporary society, and contribute to other research areas.

### **What expectations towards SoCIA you had during its establishment?**

One of the expectations is definitely to develop social research about social capital and impact assessment. Being the major concern of government and the focus in formulating policies, social capital draws great attention in society. Most ultimate goals of implementing certain social policies and establishment of some funds commonly aim at the building of social capital. As social researchers, we can contribute to the social studies, and provide additional support and assist policymakers in setting policies. Similar to social capital, impact assessment has a close relationship with the transformation of society and



urban renewal. Consequently, SoCIA seeks to match with the policy making using its practical social research, and to provide suggestions for helping improve the society.

### **What challenges SoCIA are now facing?**

The ever growing demands and pressure on social research are challenges. Government and various non-governmental organizations now have higher demands on social research, such as higher accuracy and a higher response rate. In addition, there are many research units in other institutions vying for the opportunities of doing research, and these results in competition. Consequently, it is not too easy for SoCIA to secure resources to conducting social research.

### **Being the new director of the SoCIA, what are your worries?**

The operating procedures laid out by Dr. Leung in SoCIA have already been impeccable. What I can do is to try my best to keep SoCIA as the same as what we have now. The best approach is to keep the status quo, and follow directions and guidelines set by the former director. As the new director of SoCIA, I will do whatever I can to tackle the aforementioned difficulties and challenges of SoCIA.

### **Will there be any new elements in the operation of the SoCIA in future?**

New directions greatly depend on instructions from the top management in the department. In the present stage, SoCIA may not be able to have a lot of room for development. Anyway, I will try my best to be a competent director of SoCIA.

## Congratulations to the **Following SS Members...**

### Academic staff

**Dr. WONG Sing-wing Dennis** (Associate Professor)

has been appointed as Associate Dean of College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

### Students & Alumni

**CHENG Kin-chak Anthony** (BSocSc Criminology graduate, Cohort 2008-2010) has been awarded the Silver Whistle Award (銀笛) and Sit Fu Cup (薛富盃).

**CHEUNG Tak-yuen Rowan** (BSocSc Psychology, Year 3) has won the Hang Seng Bank Community Scholarship 2011, for recognizing his outstanding voluntary service to the community.

**HUI Kwai-shan Cathy** (BSocSc Applied Sociology, Year 2) has been elected as a Student Ambassador of CityU to promote the image and community relations of the University.

**LAM Chun-wah Zeno** (BSocSc Criminology graduate, Cohort 2006-2008) has won the Outstanding Junior Social Workers Award 2011.

**MOK Wai-yin Louis** (PhD candidate) has been awarded the Sir Edward Youde Fellowship 2011. This has been the second time for him to win the Sir Edward Youde awards. Louis has been also selected as one of the outstanding prize winners this year.

Louis was graduated with his Associate Degree in Public Administration and Management at CityU and studied Criminology in our department during 2007-2010. He was graduated with the 1st Class Honour and directly admitted into the PhD programme. He is now researching how restorative justice be practiced for dealing with domestic violence under the supervision of Dr. WONG Sing-wing.

## Words from the Head

Dear alumni, friends, and students of SS:

I am happy to inform you that in past few months we have successfully recruited the following new academic and teaching staff: Professor Samuel Mun-yin HO (Clinical PSY), Dr. Linda Oi-ling HUNG (SWK), and Ms. Mui-ying FAN (SWK). However, on the other hand, we are reluctant to see the departure of Dr. David Ping-pui LOK (PSY), and Dr. Kwan-Kwok LEUNG (SOC) due to retirement, and Dr. Wai-yip HO (SOC), Mr. Joannes Ming-wai LEE (SWK), Dr. Terry Tse-fong LEUNG (SWK), Ms. Sylvia Siu-yin WONG (SWK) due to personal plans. Therefore we are still in the process of actively recruiting high quality academic staff in SS. Programme-wise, we are in the process of launching the MSW (with registration) and MSSCPsy in 2012. Our SS Colleagues are well prepared for the arrival of double cohorts in 2012. We look forward to your unfailing support, participation, and advice in SS's future events.

*Professor Alex Kwan*  
Head of SS



## Learning Excellence: Community Awareness and Equal Opportunity Project



In November 2010, a group of 24 SS undergraduates of different years studying Applied Sociology, Psychology or Social Work took the initiative in coordinating with Hong Kong Stewards to create the "Equal Opportunity Project". It is one of the major student-initiated Community Awareness Projects from Project X, which aims to provide first year students with initial exposure to various social service providers and the needs of various specific communities in the society.

The Equal Opportunity Project used different strategies as well as multi-media (including narra-drama and multi-media creation) to examine and promote the message of anti-discrimination and equal job opportunities to the community. Through participating in a series of training workshops, students got the chance to learn more about the anti-discrimination ordinances and explore equal job opportunities, then advocated social inclusion by making video-clips and organized a multi-media variety show at Wei Hing Theatre on March 27, 2011, which was very well attended.

SS students carrying out the project took the initiative in organizing the variety show together with workers and

staff of social enterprises from Hong Kong Stewards. It is a multi-media show consisting of 3 components: installation art exhibition, drama performance; and playback sharing of personal experiences from audiences and the participants.

For further information about the multi-media variety show, please refer to the link [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBCL3yk\\_DIA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBCL3yk_DIA)

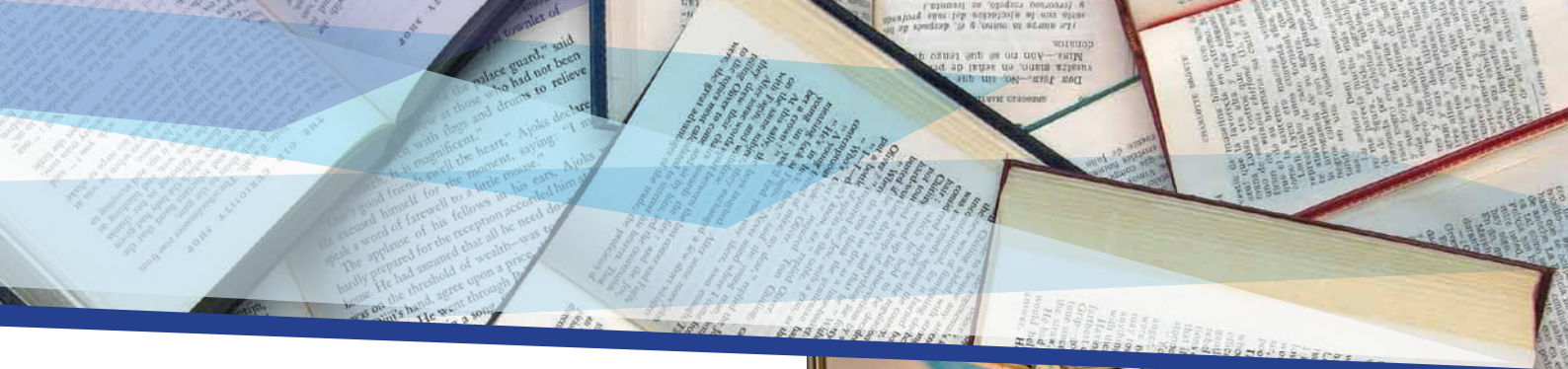
### Sharing from a participating student, Ho Ching Chi Maria (BSSSW, Year 1)

"We are different. We are in common." Can you figure out how do these sentences relate to each and every one of us?

During the Community Awareness Project, I got the opportunity to contact a group of participants who try to prove to the world their efforts in pursuing their dreams and attempting to reintegrate to the society.

Half-a-year ago, I was asked about how I feel about "equality". I doubt the possibility of equality to be put into practice in this society. Recently, I have been asked the same question. I answered, "We are able to achieve an equal society, if we have common belief and goal." The determination and optimism of the participants I met in this project have reignited my hope for an equal and harmonious society.

Through cooperation and hard work, we successfully put the aspirations of all participants into reality and finally we reached the stage. The videos that we made and the drama that we prepared express our heartfelt wishes about how we view an ideal society with equal opportunities for everyone. We all deserve to enjoy the same rights. We all deserve to be respected as unique individuals.



### Sharing from a participating student, Yim Kin Hang (BSSPSY, Year 3)

Unequal opportunity in job setting and discrimination disabled persons are real concerns but often neglected in our society which stress the importance of effectiveness and efficiency. The effort of disabled persons should be recognized. In fact, they are definitely not disabled, they could also be expert in area of their interests. However, chance and acceptance from the public are what they really need. It is the time to change our attitude and belief to re-evaluate the talent and effort paid by towards those disabled persons in our society. Personally, it is my pleasure to participate in this meaningful event, and it is probably one of my memorable moments in my university life before graduation. Also, I appreciate the effort of my mentees, the disabled person worked with us, the staff from Hong Kong Stewards, SS Department, and our supervisor, Ms Stephanie Lai.

