

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2021

Urban Renewal Fund Celebrates Its 10th Anniversary
Connecting Communities for Sustainable Urban Renewal: Innovations and Inspirations
Cum "Community is Renewing" Community Online Exhibition

The Urban Renewal Fund was founded in 2011, with “People First, Districts Based, Public Participatory” as its conception of urban renewal, serving citizens affected or dislocated by urban renewal projects, and promoting heritage preservation and revitalisation of local districts.

As the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Urban Renewal Fund approaches, it celebrates the occasion recurring the theme of “**Connecting Communities for Sustainable Urban Renewal: Innovations and Inspirations**”. Previous collaborations with various partners is showcased through different platforms and events, chronicling projects the Fund has achieved with its partners, reviewing our past experiences while looking forward with an innovative mind towards future challenges, to continue support for social programmes and services, realising our aim of sustainable urban renewal and the betterment of the quality of life of citizens.

Anniversary Celebration Opens with Online Exhibition on 10 Years of Urban Renewal

“In the past ten years, the Urban Renewal Fund has worked closely with NGOs and different stakeholders to promote heritage preservation and district revitalisation projects in different regions within Hong Kong. The Fund has also continually served citizens living in renewal areas. With the achievement of the 10-year milestone, the Fund has organised “Community is Renewing”, an online exhibition looking back at highlights of the Fund’s past projects over the past 10 years.”

—The Chairman of the Urban Renewal Fund’s Board of Directors, Professor Steven Ngai Sek-yum

The exhibition takes on four core directions: "Connecting, Inheriting, Co-creating, and Integrating", highlighting projects that are funded by URF and created by URF’s team of social workers under each service area, including projects and events aimed at creating social interactions and community building via various artistic mediums; in-depth, heartfelt stories from older districts, carrying collective memories to the next generation; research and practice of local traditional handcraft, revitalising them and helping them create new,

alternative value; acceleration of dynamic cultural interaction, building of an inclusive society. In the past decade, URF has funded multiple communal projects, revolutionising older districts and revitalising communities through mutual creation, community design, local creations, and social innovation.

Under the pandemic, the exhibition takes place online, utilising interactive elements on the website such as words, videos, and motion graphics, together with an energetic design, to showcase the inner workings of older communities. Through the exhibition, the public will be able to see how URF connects various NGOs and stakeholders in detail, and investigate how each and every project innovate and inspire the community.

An Abundance of Events Celebrating The First Decade, Diversifying The Scope of Recipients

The URF fully committed itself to pushing the Urban Renewal Authority and Urban Renewal Fund in the past decade. Right now, the amount sponsored has reached 160 million dollars, funding 17 different projects which are held by NGOs and other stakeholders in conducting heritage conservation and district revitalisation within urban renewal areas. 4 NGO Social Services Teams are also funded by URF, giving aid to the inhabitants of over forty urban renewal projects conducted by the Urban Renewal Authority. In reaching the milestone of a decade, other than showcasing the fruits of the Fund's work through the years, various activities are also held surrounding the theme of "Connecting Communities for Sustainable Urban Renewal: Innovations and Inspirations", expending and diversifying the scope of recipients of the Fund.

In May, URF has revamped their website and increased presence on two additional social media platforms, providing timely updates to information regarding project funding and services, nurturing the connection and bond between different stakeholders and partners, interacting with the general public anytime and anywhere. A series of videos celebrating each of our past projects and partners is released, each project is seen through the lens of a participant, detailing their experiences of participating in events and receiving services from URF, leading the public to gain a deeper understanding to *Our* community. The Fund has also organised several seminars and a closing forum for URF's celebration of its 10-year anniversary, inviting scholars and stakeholders from different fields, discussing topics in-depth from various angles, inspiring thinking related to sustainable development.

After a decade's worth of effort, URF has sponsored multiple community co-creation projects, such as "Our Community of Love & Mutuality—Nurturing Cultural Diversity & Community Legacy in Kwai Chung", "Kengaku' Small Shop Handcraft Master Nurturing & Community Revitalisation Project" ", "Inheriting the sense of lane: we-build the Sai Ying Pun", "Live in C&W", "REstore – Small Shop Culture Reconstruct Project", "To Kwa Wan Community Dining Room", "Kowloon City Themed Walking Trail", and more. Each project is centred around how to enhance district-wide characteristics, and are welcomed with enthusiasm. In the following year, URF will continue to serve citizens, collaborating with the community to innovate policies, increase residents' sense of belonging to their communities and raise cohesion, all in the name of improving the quality of life of citizens.

URF hopes to raise public knowledge on the Fund via this series of events celebrating the 10th anniversary, integrating and increasing the strength of the collaborative relationship with partners, promote knowledge and experience exchange of related organisations in order to encourage more NGOs to utilise URF to serve and unite the community, and to ensure future support for community development and service users, ultimately contributing to the betterment of communities in Hong Kong.



(Image 1: Online Exhibition of the 10th Anniversary of Urban Renewal Fund)



(Image 2: The brand new website for URF has been launched

URL: <https://urfund.org.hk/>).

About Urban Renewal Fund

The infrastructure of Hong Kong is rapidly aging. The government, specialised agencies like the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and the Hong Kong Housing Society, owners' corporations and professional organisations have contributed great effort to improve the situation. However, the overall situation of old buildings in Hong Kong remains unsatisfactory, posing great threat to public safety.

Hence, on 24 February 2011, the “Urban Renewal Strategy” is published after a two-year long period of public consultation by the Development Bureau. It aims to put humans as a priority, and to arrive to their goals starting from the local and public collaboration. The founding of the Urban Renewal Trust Fund was also one of the highlights of “Urban Renewal Strategy”.

The Fund was established on 15 August 2011, as the trustee and settlor of the Urban Renewal Trust Fund. On 10 November in the same year, the Urban Renewal Trust Fund was recognised as a charitable organisation or trust of a public nature by the Inland Revenue Department, and thus is exempt from taxes in accordance with Article 88 of the Tax Regulations.

The Fund received a grant of 500 million dollars from the URA to serve as an independent source of funding, providing aid for Social Services Teams that provide services to citizens affected by redevelopment projects implemented by the URA, funding for research projects and social impact assessments conducted by the Urban Renewal District Consultation Platform, and to provide funding for heritage conservation and district revitalisation projects conducted by NGOs and other stakeholders within urban renewal areas.

Looking forward, URF is going to revamp itself as an active participant of the force of realising sustainable urban redevelopment projects. The Fund will continue its focus on the feasibility and sustainability of funding projects, through co-creation, social design, place making, and social innovation to revamp the image of old districts, to discover even more district characteristics that are unique, and plant the seed of renewal in the community.

-end-

For more information, please visit:

Website: <https://urfund.org.hk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/urf.hk>

Instagram: @urf.hk

1. Via North Point, A place for Imagination. A place for belonging

Corporation:

Hong Kong Arts Centre

Brief description of the plan:

"Via North Point" aims to inspire community residents to think about and design the future use of public space as a vision, hoping to bring changes to the community and improve the quality of life of residents.

The Hong Kong Arts Centre will work hand in hand with cross-sector individuals and organizations to design a series of community participation workshops and creative art works to connect new and old residents, enhance residents' awareness of public spaces, and showcase the unique local charm of North Point. The aim is to create a sense of community belonging and cultivate cultural citizenship and spontaneous community building through imagination.

2. South – The Heritage and Communities Arts Project

Corporation:

The Warehouse Teenage Club

Brief description of the plan:

Preserving and promoting the South side and its unique historical cultural significance and community features of the Southern District through multiple cultural activities.

The purpose of the project is to create an artistic and cultural space that is a symbolic of the rich region and build a collaborative, self-reliant community.

Through a series of programmes including community study, guided tours, community arts events and thematic exhibitions, we aspire to transform the district into an arts and cultural hub by revealing its unique characters, and revitalize the community by strengthening its local neighbourhood network.

3. Our Community of Love & Mutuality – Nurturing Cultural Diversity & Community Legacy in Kwai Chung

Corporation:

HKSKH Lady MacLehose Centre

Brief description of the plan:

Kwai Chung was built on the hillside, the public staircase is the major carrier of the pedestrian flow in the district. Its "numerous, long and steepness" characteristics have always been criticized by the community. In view of this, the third phase of the project is to renew and revitalise the public staircase in Kwai Chung. Based on our experience in the past four years, we aim to extend the district renewal model of Kung Yung Koon and "Ping Lai Plus" projects to the staircases of Kwai Chung, to catalyse the community's ability to turn disadvantages into advantages. As the heart of the project, Kung Yung Koon and Ping Lai Path will turn the manpower mobilization and resources into the energy of the community. They will be transported through the staircases, like blood vessels, to all parts of Kwai Chung, enhancing the mutual communication between Chinese and South Asian low-income neighbourhoods, enriching the landscape of Kwai Chung and bringing back the power to Kung Yung Koon and Ping Lai Path as a loop.

4. Kowloon City Themed Walking Trail

Corporation:

HKSKH Welfare Council Limited

Brief description of the plan:

Kowloon City is a diverse community full of different histories, cultures, attractions and specialty shops.

Potentially the longest in Hong Kong, the planned themed walking trail will be 6.5 kilometres, divided into five different characteristic road sections. The goal is to promote the preservation of historical and cultural relics and the promotion of art and culture by connecting local residents and stakeholders in the district. At the same time, it is hoped that the district will embrace major urban changes such as reconstruction and railway completion, while maintaining the favour of the local community.

*For earlier funding schemes, please visit: <https://urfund.org.hk/projects/>