

**Hong Kong Arts Development Council
International Arts Leadership Roundtable 2017**

Plenary 1: Connecting the Arts with Audiences

HKJC: A Unique Integrated Business Model to Channel Surplus to Charity/Philanthropy

Full transcript of speech by

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Dr Wilfred WONG (Chairman, Hong Kong Arts Development Council), distinguished speakers, moderators, ladies and gentlemen, I'm hoping to perhaps use two or three minutes to give you an overview of what the Hong Kong Jockey Club (the Jockey Club) and the Jockey Club Charities Trust (the Trust) are, what we do with the Trust and then perhaps a little bit more time on addressing today's question about arts and audience. I'm definitely not an expert in the field of arts, but perhaps consider myself a friend of artists, but that's pretty much it.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club is quite unique in the world in the sense of there's no shareholders in the Club. So, it is almost the only business model globally, if you consider any other jockey clubs in other jurisdictions. We basically operate four major units, if you will, from world-class racing to responsible wagering and lottery, these are generating the income. Then, we also operate a membership club and of course the charities and communities through the Trust. So if you think about the quantum of the club, the club is the single largest taxpayer in Hong Kong. We paid up to almost \$22 billion of tax last year, and also globally we're one of the top ten non-government foundations. Last year, we donated HK\$7.6 billion, then we also contribute to the lottery fund which is then measured by the Social Welfare Department. It is a very long history for the Jockey Club to have been doing this.

The Jockey Club was established in 1884 over 130 years ago, but tracing back our official records, our first donation happened in 1915. We don't exactly know what the donation was about but it was 2,000 pound sterling to the Prince of Wales Fund in England. So that was then, in 1915, and we have really gone through a very, very long journey today. Now, we rank seventh among the global non-government foundations. So you have the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation right up there.

If you look at also what we have done overall in the last hundred plus years through the Trust, I think we started off probably mostly in the 1950s when there was a huge influx of people from the north (China) coming in to Hong Kong. So, at that time, I think, you know, the government, was very busy obviously dealing with all sorts of issues to accommodate the immigrants. The Jockey Club went in to start with building

community swimming pools and also a lot of public clinics. Then, we built the Ocean Park. The Jockey Club did not only donate money to build the Ocean Park, but also we actually operated it for ten years before handing over to the government. We also helped build the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. I think one of our very critical contributions to the arts scene is funding the construction of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. This is something we're all very, very proud of. Subsequently, or currently, we are working on Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts (The Jockey Club CPS Limited), so we're hoping to open it soon.

So, again, if you look at overall – this is the last slide about the Jockey Club Charities Trust, this is what we have done over the last ten years. You have also seen a huge increase in terms of annual giving to the community. Last year, our regular giving was HK\$4.1 billion, roughly US\$500 million, and we also had a one-time donation to support the Hong Kong Palace Museum, so that brings the total to HK\$7.6 billion. A very quick summary: so about HK\$12 billion in the last three seasons, roughly 50% software, 50% hardware, and arts culture and heritage is definitely one of our very key strategic initiatives. So when it comes to the arts this is the way we think about the arts culture and heritage. I don't think this is any surprise to anyone here, we talked to a lot of people in the field and try to come up with this framework. It is about infrastructure, about talent, about audience and programmes.

For us, we think that capacity building and infrastructure in the arts and culture sector is very, very important. We try to come up with different programmes to support that. And then, we believe audience building and reinforcing public education is also very, very important, so we're also building up different programmes to support that.

Improved accessibility to the arts, and also the arts as tool to tackle social issues which I think to us this is probably one area we will try to put a lot more emphasis into in the next few years when we talk about audience building. So to us, it's beyond just coming in to appreciate the arts, it is about how you then bring the arts to certain people who might not even think the arts are related to them, but then the arts, culture and potential heritage can in fact have a huge impact on their lives. So this is a big piece that we or our team is spending quite a bit of time thinking through, bringing them particularly to a lot of the disadvantaged groups.

Then, finally, it's the heritage revitalisation for the general public. I think in terms of capacity building infrastructure, I don't need to go through all these different programmes but I think, to us, particularly on the talent development side, it is very important. So we help the music and dance fund since the 80s, and particularly, say, we have supported the Hong Kong Arts Festival for the last 46 years, and a couple of big programmes in contemporary dance, in grooming local talents. So these are all in our heart even when we go, say, capacity building or infrastructure. It's not necessarily the hard kind of infrastructure that we're talking about. We prefer our funding, or at least a large part of the funding, goes to education, goes to underprivileged groups of particular students, bringing them to the venue so they can be inspired as well. Like the El Sistema in Venezuela, we are also using music, instruments and disciplines to help underprivileged kids to have access to build esteem and self-confidence.

Of course we work with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department quite often. We support three mega exhibitions a year, and I think this year is particularly encouraging.

One of the exhibitions, “Eternal Life - Exploring Ancient Egypt”, attracts 850,000 people to the show. And of course, we are working closely with the Hong Kong Arts Development Council on the "[Jockey Club New Arts Power](#)" programmes.

I also want to share with you my personal anecdote of our “Hand-in-hand Capable Theatre”. Actually, I tried to do what we call in business "the mystery shopping" once with this group. I sent my boy, 13 years old, for an audition there and he didn't get the slot. Nevertheless, I got to see the whole process. It was fun. What they do is they open up to people with different kind of challenges, whether they're sitting on wheelchairs, whether they have visual impairments, but through a rehearsal process, through the process, that they eventually put up a show on stage with people from different sort of challenges. I think that's really a life-changing experience, not just I think for the performers themselves, but also for the audience. When you see how a visually-impaired person can actually go on stage when the light was dim and when, you know, things can be confusing.

Now, this is the point that I want to emphasise, is how do we then use the arts actually as tool to tackle social issues? We have tried many things in the last two or three years and we will continue to try new things, and we will really welcome your feedback and your ideas on how we can do even better in that sense.

I'm not going to go through all that because I'm reminded that time is up. So, last but not least, regarding our work on heritage revitalisation, and I have to say one word about Tai Kwun, maybe ten words, that this is a site in Central with 16 heritage buildings and two new buildings. I hope perhaps the next time when we have this conference, we will be able to invite all of you to come on site for a private tour. So with that, thank you very much.

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