

# **Sino-UK Higher Education Collaboration on Upcycling of Industry Leftovers**

6 – 19 May, 2012

Guangzhou

British Council China

25<sup>th</sup> June 2012

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## PROJECT BACKGROUND

With China becoming the “Factory of the World”, the manufacturing enterprises in China are producing numerous industrial left-overs every day, which have become one of the biggest sources for environmental pollution, and recycling them consumes more energy.

Unlike recycling, upcycling involves using something in a new way without doing anything to reprocess the material it is made from. As well as being more energy efficient, another major benefit of upcycling is that it makes it possible to reuse items made of materials which could not be dealt with by conventional recycling methods.

UK is in the leading position in the world on industrial design, and this is also reflected in its higher education. In China, the education on industry design has been attached greater importance in recent years as it is regarded as one of the most important areas under creative industry. With interests and needs for collaboration shown from universities both in UK and China, we initiated this project with local partners, which include government, universities and business.

This initiative aims to reach the following objectives through various activities:

- For students: by working together with students from the other country in Chinese enterprises, students will develop their language skills, team working spirit and intercultural skills, and demonstrate their creativity and improve their employability.
- For universities: we hope some institutional links will be set up as the result of the activities we organize. By working with industry, their curriculum may be improved to be more practical.
- For enterprises: they will be able to find an environmental-friendly and energy-efficient way to deal with their industry left-overs.

## PARTNERS AND PARTICIPANTS

### I. Partners

To develop and implement this initiative in China, we worked with the following four key partners:

1. **The Low Carbon Industries Association of Guangzhou** is supported by Guangzhou Municipal Development and Reform Commission. It has a wide network with industrial enterprises and educational institutions around China while it also owns rich experience in organizing industrial design related programmes such as Guangzhou International Design Festival.
2. **The School of Innovation Design, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts**, is one of the universities which introduced the course of Industrial Design into China. It has nearly 30 years' experience in both the education of industrial design and the international collaborations in related areas. It is one of the key organizers of the annual international event of Guangzhou Design Week and has long history of cooperating with the Cultural and Education Section of British Embassy in China.
3. **Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESI-China)** is a network composed of 6 top Chinese design schools sharing common orientation and sense of mission on the promotion of design for social innovation and sustainability.
4. **Guangzhou Valuda Group Co. Ltd**, one of the leading enterprises in the area of recycling of resources, was founded in year 1994, with accreditation from the Economic and Information Commission of Guangdong Province. With over 17 years' efforts, it has grown into an enterprise which provides services ranging from re-collecting, reprocessing and recycling of both industrial wastes such as plastics, iron, steel, other metals and non-woven materials and city wastes.

### II. Participants

**6 Chinese universities include:**

- The School of Innovation Design, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
- College of Design & Innovation, Tongji University
- Academy of Arts & Design, Tsinghua University
- School of Design, Hunan University
- School of Design, Jiangnan University
- School of Design, Hong Kong Polytechnic University

**10 UK universities include:**

- Teesside University
- University of Lincoln
- University of Brunel
- University of Leeds
- Loughborough University
- London Metropolitan University
- Central St. Martins College of Arts and Design
- University of Central Lancashire
- Plymouth University
- Nottingham Trent University

**Number of Teachers and Students involved:**

A total of 68 participants who were:

21 Chinese students

30 British students

17 teachers

## ACTIVITIES

### I. Workshop & Competition

The key content of the project was a two-week workshop based in Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts from 6<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May 2012 and a competition for the products worked out from the workshop at the end.

Led by 17 teachers (one from 15 participating universities, while two from GZ Academy of Fine Arts), 51 students from 10 UK and 6 Chinese universities had been mixed up and divided into 17 groups of 3 one month before they came to China. They were given descriptions and specifications of 24 kinds of industry left-overs provided by Valuda Group Co. Ltd prior to their arrival in China and began team discussions online and thinking of individual works from then on.

As soon as all participants arrived in Guangzhou, they actively started working in teams – getting to know team members, having discussions about materials/tools to be used and brainstorming design ideas etc. At the same time, they worked diligently on their individual works. Many students arrived at the Model Room where the production was done very early in the morning and spent long hours a day there in order to work out high quality and creative products.

By 18<sup>th</sup> May, 17 group works and 51 individual works were completed successfully by students as scheduled. A professional judging panel worked overnight to select the winning works. All the five judges spoke very highly of the products because of the innovation, multicultural awareness and highly efficient team working ability reflected from the works.

On 19<sup>th</sup> May, the Awarding Ceremony and the Opening ceremony of the exhibition were held at the same time in Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. 3 group works and 6 individual works were awarded prizes.

## **II. Visits**

During the stay in Guangzhou, students and teachers were organized to make several visits, i.e. the visit to Valuda Group Co. Ltd; Shunde Industry Park, Printing Museum and the Graduation Exhibition of Students from Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts. From these visits, students and teachers were able to develop a more direct awareness of local recycling business and a better understanding of the development of industry design in China.

## **III. Public Lectures**

During the two-week's time, we organized four academic events where the 17 UK and Chinese teachers gave public lectures to students in university campus of Guangzhou.

Concentrated on "Design", the topics and contents of the lectures ranged from cultural implication, social functions, and academic challenges as to further development, to the marketing and international collaborations in the area of upcycling and industry design.

The lectures attracted over 700 students. After the events, many students commented them as "great opportunities for us to get more cutting-edge information in the world and in the UK about design and industrial design, and our eye-views were broadened." For each event, teachers had to spend over one hour to answer questions from audience.

## **IV. Teachers' Workshop**

In order for the teachers to exchange experience on teaching and have discussions on potential collaborations among universities, a teachers' workshop was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May. Some initial links were built among teachers and many universities showed interests in further collaboration.

## **V. Evening of Designers – Reception and Party**

On the evening of 11<sup>th</sup> May, a Reception/Party was organized. This was a networking event where participating students and teachers had the opportunity to meet with local business representatives as well as well-known designing practitioners.

Dr. Jo Beall, Director of Education and Society and Terry Tony, Regional Director of East Asia attended the reception together with accompanying China senior managers. Officials from Guangdong Development and Reform Commission and senior leaders from Low Carbon Industries Association of Guangzhou represented partners from Chinese government. From business end, senior managers from several successful companies based in Guangzhou joined the party. Also presented in the party were several well-known designers from Guangzhou, two of who were UK alumni who had studied in the participating UK universities.

## **VI. Exhibitions**

From 19<sup>th</sup> May, all works done from the workshop were exhibited – the first week in Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and the second week in the monthly local event of “Creative Market”.

Around 20,000 people visited the two exhibitions. Over 1000 pieces of questionnaires were collected and information is now under analysis.



## VIP VISITS

On 11<sup>th</sup> May, Dr Jo Beall, Director of Education and Society and board member of British Council, together with Terry Toney, Regional Director of East Asia, Lucy Watkins, Director Programs of China, Susan Milner, Director Education China, Angus Bjarnason, Area Director South China and Zhang Jing, Director Higher Education China, visited the workshop in Guangzhou.

After a lunch meeting with key partners of the project, the group of senior leaders from British Council visited students and teachers while they were working. As described by Joanna Burke in her May Newsletter:

*“... the highlight of Jo’s trip was a visit to Guangzhou where she saw some of our IHE work in practice. Jo and Terry were able to meet staff and students and hear first hand from them what involvement in the project meant to them as well as seeing some of the amazing new designs the students were producing from the industry leftovers. Jo was very impressed indeed with how we are developing these IHE Knowledge Economy partnerships.”*



*Talking to participants*



*Appreciating the amazing design*

Dr. Jo Beall spent over an hour with students and teachers in the workshop. After the visit, she headed to TIT Creative Industry Park and received interviews from three local media. They were:

- Guangzhou Television Station, English Channel  
(The only English Channel in South China region)
- City Pictures  
(Front culture magazine targeting at youth, biggest circulation number of 200,000 of this kind in China; bimonthly)

- New Express Daily  
(One of the most popular newspapers of Guangzhou targeting at young readers, with circulation number of 500,000)

After being interviewed, Dr. Jo Beall joined the networking party.

Having learnt from various channels the innovativeness of the programme, a number of senior people from the following organisations came to visit the workshop:

- Mr. Ouyang Zhi, Director of Finance and Trade Commission of National People's Congress of Guangzhou
- Professor Wang Yuesheng, Vice President of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
- Mr. Hu Shoubin, Director General of Low Carbon Industries Association of Guangzhou
- Mr. Zhang Xiaojun, Director of Carbon Exchange and Guangzhou Property Exchange
- Mr. Ni Qin, Deputy President of Guangzhou Branch of China Development Bank
- Mr. Li Yuanfeng, Chairman of Guangzhou Valuda Group Co. Ltd
- Mr. Chen Chaosheng, Party Secretary of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
- Mr. Li Ming, President of Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
- Mr. Wu Hong, Director of Resource & Environment Department of Guangzhou NDRC
- Mr. Ma Jinke, Deputy Director of Resource & Environment Dept. of Guangzhou NDRC
- Mr. Nie Bing, Director of Carbon Asset Management Department of Ceprei Certification Body
- Ms. Huang Xiaojun, Development and Reform Bureau of Tianhe District of Guangzhou

British Council Skills for Employability team also organised a dozen vocational colleges to visit the workshop which they thought was inspiring.

## MEDIA REPORTS

The project attracted huge media attention, and was widely and extensively covered.

### I. Print media and news agencies

Most of the important local media reported the programme throughout the two weeks' time, and many of the coverage were feature stories rather than short news. Media which reported the programme include:

- BBC World Service – two long stories
- Xinhua News Agency – one page long story
- Yangcheng Evening News
- Guangzhou Daily
- Southern Metropolitan Daily
- New Express Daily – long interview to Jo Beall
- China Environmental Daily
- Private Business News
- City Pictures – four pages long story
- Environmental Magazine

### II. TV programmes

Several local TV stations reported the workshop and wraparound activities as well.

TV stations	Broadcasting Dates and Time
Guangdong TV Station 广东电视台	7 <sup>th</sup> May Pearl River News 5月7日广东台《珠江新闻眼》
	20 <sup>th</sup> May, Guangdong Report 5月20日广东台《广东报道》
Guangzhou TV Station 广州电视台	27 <sup>th</sup> May 11:15pm Guangzhou Economic Channel 5月27日晚 11:15 广州经济频道
Guangzhou English Channel 广州英文频道	8 <sup>th</sup> May, Discovering Guangzhou 5月8日 发现广州
	14 <sup>th</sup> May, Discovering Guangzhou 5月14日 发现广州
	21 <sup>st</sup> May, Discovering Guangzhou 5月21日 发现广州

News Centre of Guangdong TV Station 广东电视台新闻中心	7 <sup>th</sup> May 18:00 News 2012-5-7 18: 00 正点新闻
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### III. Website promotion/blogs

With support from the Digital Manager of Marcomms Team, we reached agreement with qq.com to promote our project online. Main promotional activities include:

- Special webpage on qq.com
- Blogs promotion
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The online activities attracted a total of **273,910** unique visitors within 40 days.

## FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

The project received very good feedback from participants including teachers and students and partners.

### Analysis of Scorecard Survey

There are 4 general questions on the questionnaire.

1. For the first question of “How likely is it that you would recommend the British Council to a friend or colleague”, 9 out of the 10 UK teachers chose the highest score of 10 with only one chose 9.
2. For the other three questions of “This project met your expectation” “Overall, this was a high quality project” and “British Council is among the leading organizations in this field”, 9 out of the 10 UK teachers chose “Strongly agree” while just one teacher selected “Agree” for the second question.

According to the questionnaire, all teachers and students strongly hope that the project can be repeated and become an annual event in future, and they all express strong interest in participating in the project again

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## A summary of main figures about the project

<u>Descriptions</u>	<u>Number</u>
T1 (senior officials from UK/China)	5
T2 (officials)	10
T2 (teachers and participating students)	68
T3 (public lecture)	700
T3 (exhibition visitors)	20,000
Number of coverage and reports	26 articles/ 18media
Number of TV broadcasting	8 times
Media Reach (print media)	20 million
Media Reach (TV media)	10 million
Unique Visitors from QQ.com	273,910

## Quotes from Teachers

*The workshop was excellent for initiating connections between UK and Chinese Universities at a subject (Design) level. The students will certainly have gained invaluable intercultural experience. There were numerous impressive aspects. Just one was the decision to form intercultural teams for the workshop work. On the whole this seemed to be working excellently as a means for the UK parties to more deeply integrate with the Chinese culture. – **Stephen Green, Brunel University***

*The project appears to have surpassed the initial objectives that were set out and there has been a considerable amount of valuable dialogue between UK and Chinese staff, students and organizers which has enhanced the experience. ... The British Council have clearly instigated a very positive project with a very important message. The outcomes from the exhibition and publications will attract further comment from a much broader audience. - **David Bramston, Lincoln University***

*This programme, which combined on-site projects, with academic and industry visits was an ideal vehicle to achieve the objectives of internationalization and links. The format of workshops established the perfect opportunities to learn about other institutions, their specialisms and staff expertise.... It was an inspired choice of project: internationalisation;*

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*sustainability; employability. Such work is vital, in shortcutting the sometimes heavy processes which are involved in bidding for other projects which cover these subjects. **Paul Denison, Teesside University***

*This project tries to explore the connections between creativity and sustainability. It uses real products to prove the existence of the connection but not only on the theoretical basis. Such project is just the dreamed kind of activity for UK teachers and students as their field of vision has been largely widened through participating in it and the opportunities for them to exchange ideas with Chinese teachers and student are great. – **Jane Panty, Central St. Martins College of Arts***

*It was great to be part of a motivated and passionate team of professionals and students. All of us were engaged in a rigorous and meticulously organised project, with high expectations to address critical issues on sustainability through the knowledge and expertise of design. - **Carl Silvester. Loughborough University***

### **Quotes from students**

*The impact of this programme is a lifetime experience of parting ideas and design experience .* **- Manju Sugathan, Leeds University**

*It was one of the best things I have joined. It is something I will never forget* **- Evie Kemps, Lincoln University**

### **Suggestions**

There are some suggestions by teachers and students as listed below:

- More time for staff interaction
  - Only team product required rather than both team and individual product
  - Cultural visits to be included
  - Visiting to product design manufacturing factory
  - Better facilities and tools
  - More materials
  - Longer time
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## **FOLLOW-UP**

### **Visit to UK**

On 12 – 20 September 2012, a reciprocal visit to UK will be arranged. Delegates will include the major partners of the project, responsible teachers from Chinese universities and winning students. During the visit, a workshop will be held in Brunel University, where universities from UK and China which are interested in further collaborations in the area of industry design will have in-depth discussions.

The delegation will also visit important events of 2012 London Design Festival to develop further understanding of UK's excellence in design and arts.

### **Publication**

A publication which collects pictures and descriptions of all works by UK and Chinese students will be printed in September 2012. It is expected that the publication can attract wider audience and generate bigger impact as how creativity can be connected with sustainability.

### **Plan for 2012/13**

After seeing the unexpectedly great results and feedback from this year's activities, all partners have shown great interests in continuing this initiative next year. Initial discussions are being made and a solid plan is expected to be worked out by October 2012.

## APPENDIX

### Winning teams/individuals

#### Best Group Work

Stephen Green	Brunel University
Laura Hodges	Brunel University
Colin O'Dowd	Central St. Martins College of Arts
Yolanda Huang	Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts

#### Excellent Group Work I

Pete Davis	Plymouth University
Pete May	Plymouth University
Feng Lu	Jiangnan University
Liu Yi	Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts

#### Excellent Group Work II

Jez Bradley	London Metropolitan University
Robert Cripps	London Metropolitan University
Joel Seddon	University of Central Lancashire
Ge Yanming	Tongji University

#### Best Individual Works

James Garner	Leeds University
Robert Cripps	London Metropolitan University
Zhang Zhifeng	Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Pete May	Plymouth University
Xiao Lin	Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts
Feng Lu	Jiangnan University



Sino-UK Higher Education Collaboration on  
Upcycling of Industry Leftovers



**Best and Excellent Group Works**



**Best Individual Works**