

WHY HERE?

DECODING **DONORS'** CHOICE OF RURAL VILLAGES

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

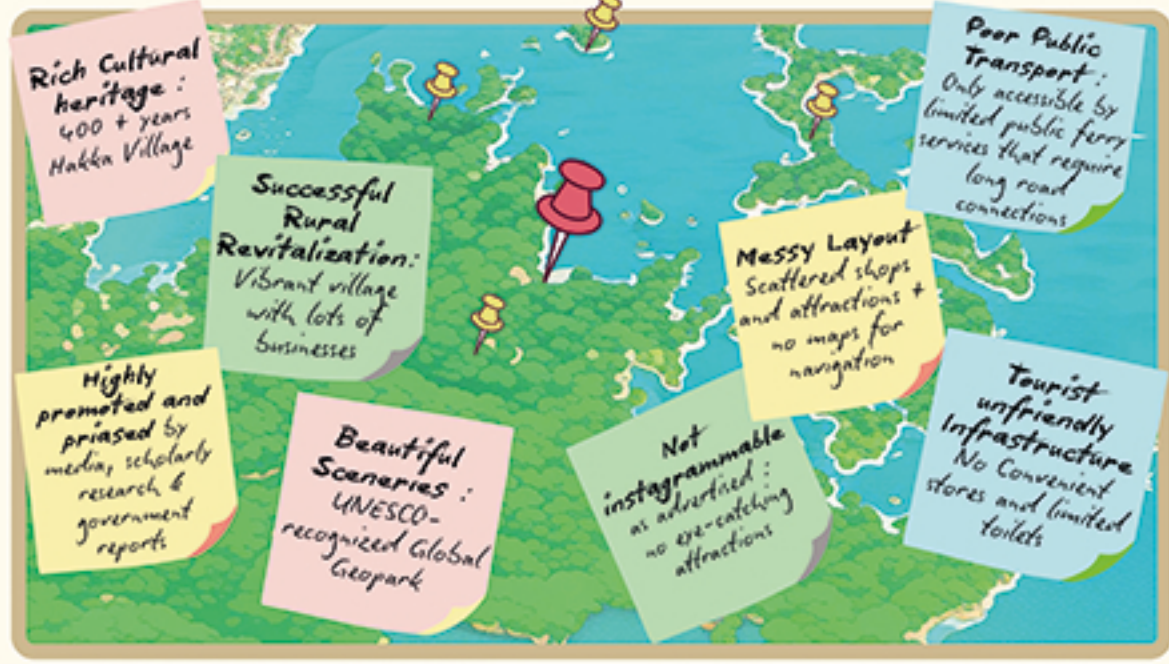


CURRENT SITUATION

OUR FIELD TRIP OBSERVATIONS BOARD

Pre-Field Trip

Post-Field Trip



Large **INCONSISTENCY** between the Media & Actual situation

Why do NGOs still choose **THIS PLACE** out of all potential villages?

Potential **REASONS** for this phenomenon

Complicated Power Dynamics	Indigenous property ownership is fragmented through generational inheritance (Mak & Decaudin, 2024), vested interests and potential distrust towards newcomers (Chang, 2022, p.28-31); More than 20+ projects & 10+ NGOs working concurrently in the same area (Environmental & Ecology Bureau, 2025; Law et al., 2018); → Indigenous vs Non-indigenous forces
Weak Community Coherence	Most people who engage in activities within the villages are not permanent residents , treating them only as staging grounds for commercial, research, art, cultural, & leisure activities (Chang, 2022, p.23-25; p.32)
Poor Stakeholders Coordination	Unsustainable : projects have grand visions without longitudinal planning; Minimal Cooperation between NGOs : Only collaborate based on networking instead of a systematic, centralised system (Mak & Decaudin, 2024)
Reach NGO's KPI	NGOs introduce projects to maintain financial and organisational stability (attract donations, sustain operations) → project prospects based on the Needs or Reputation of NGOs/Donors rather than those of villagers (Waters, 2008)
Biased Research Work	Conflict of Interest : NGOs commission most projects to complete sustainability reports e.g. Social / Environmental Impact Assessments and scholarly research → more likely to paint projects as collaborative & positive (Magnus & Rai, 2024)
Government Laissez-faire Approach	Focuses on monetary assistance without clearing long-standing obstacles , e.g. land ownership and community building, individual projects remain as disintegrated, private properties rather than centralised, public facilities (Mak & Decaudin, 2024)

DONOR'S CONSIDERATIONS

Objectives to Achieve

Workforce

- **Fulfil ESG requirements** → mandatory for listed companies under HKEX
 - Codified reports showcasing positive and measurable results (HKEX, 2025)
- Direct participation (project management, fund negotiation) or indirectly (volunteering, workshops) helps with **Human Capital Development and Management**, which are essential for corporate governance and boost investors confidence (Kotsantonis & Serafeim, 2020)
 - Boost morale and loyalty → employees committing to positive social impact → less turnover

Political Influence

- **Corporate political activity (CPA)** are corporate strategy to influence political actors and shape governmental outcomes (Katic & Hillman, 2023)
 - Direct CPA, e.g. lobbying seeks immediate **policy influence** among politicians
 - Indirect CPA, e.g. donation, subtly **shapes public opinion** to pressure policymakers for **long-term leverage**.
- Donations, as indirect CPA, build goodwill with communities without overt participation or lobbying
 - Enhance **legitimacy** or **networking** within policymakers
 - Gain Government **subsidies** to expand their projects

Corporate Reputation

- **Brand Visibility**
 - Appealing & High profile project required
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**
 - Showing environmental commitments (Pure philanthropy > Investment)
- **Aligning with Global Trends**
 - Rural Revitalisation Under Spotlight
 - Fulfilling Global SDG goals

What makes LCW area Special?

Low Risk & Mass Participation

- **Clear Metrics** for Reporting (Mak, 2023)
 - Lai Chi Wo projects tend to host activities such as guide tours, workshops
 - Restoring 100+ acres of farmland
 - Photos of the restored buildings
 - Allow statistical reporting
- Eco-tourism created **training and volunteer opportunities** for employees to participate
 - Increase the feeling of satisfaction

Government Policy Focus

- **Reputable Development Path** that aligns with future government plans
 - Situated within UNESCO-recognised Hong Kong Geopark
 - International award-winning Rural Sustainability Programme (2020) promoting Hong Kong's Rural Cultural Landscape
 - Recreation, Tourism & Conservation Focus in Northern Metropolis Development (2025)
- A record of **consecutive government grant** approval and a legacy of **non-profit participation** within the area (Environmental & Ecology Bureau, 2025)
 - Gaining recognition from the government
 - Participation indirectly strengthens ties with local authorities

High Narrative & Reporting Potential

- **Good Storyline**
 - High **emotional resonance**: with strong Hakka roots, villages are abandoned and then revived
 - **Tangible legacy**: preserve a piece of disappearing heritage
 - Meaningful and unique instead of a generic rural upgrade
- Low developmental pressure
 - Unlikely to be placed under large urban projects due to remote location → **High predictability & visibility for project outcome**
- Resonates with International Agenda (SDG Goals)
 - Preserving biodiversity, cultural heritage, and environmental protection (3 major goals in one project)
 - Receive international recognition

IMPLICATIONS

Impacts on Stakeholders

Villagers

- **Overly High expectations** for long-term benefits (Ho & Chung, 2025)
- Villagers have **limited space for input** in the development of projects, **unable to fulfil their needs** e.g. reason to stay in the village, motivation to be involved

Capacity Building of Villagers

- Allow more agency for villagers to contribute to the project → boost sense of **ownership and involvement**
- **Enhance skills & knowledge** among villagers to ensure sustainability
 - Implementation of framework

NGOs & Government

- Projects' impact often **short-lived**
- Wasting time and resources of both donors and the government
- Only **superficially successful**, posing danger to future implications

Establish Development Outline

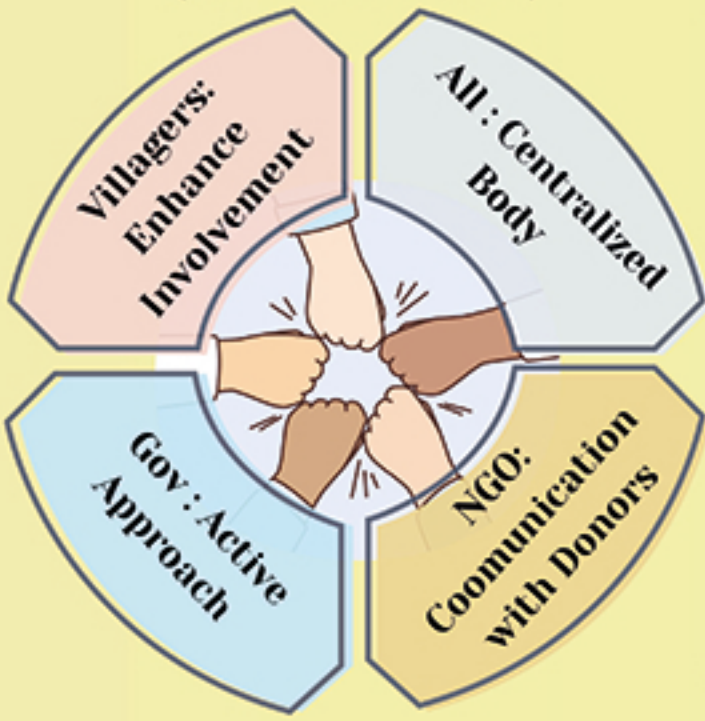
- **Long-term, Outlined Planning** for Rural Revitalization
 - Differentiate & update land use
 - Coordination of projects through funding
- Set **minimum requirements** for projects
 - Continual impact assessments

OUR VISION

For Rural Revitalization

EXPLORE & PRESERVE MORE POTENTIAL VILLAGES !!!

(Mak & Decaudin, 2024)



Centralized Association Required

- Create a forum to gather all related stakeholders (**Collective Governing**)
- A place for everyone to voice their opinions & foster cooperation
- Enhance branding and marketing by **combining influences**

Realistic Expectations for Donors

- Make sure donors understand projects require long-term investment and are **willing to take calculated risks**
- Create **interim reports** to satisfy corporate needs
- Include **business prospects** for villagers, donors for sustainability
 - e.g. souvenir shops, museums etc.

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