DESIGN FOR RURAL PUBLIC SPACE TO CREATE A RURAL-URBAN INTERACTION PLATFORM

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ABSTRACT
Chinese rapid urbanization has great influence on both urban and rural. The movement of young labour forces from countryside to city promotes urban development while also bring negative impact on rural area. Most of the people stay in the rural is still live in poverty. And their public culture life is boring. On the other hand, citizens’ interest for natural life is increasing. There is going to have more interaction between rural and city. The paper aims to explore the transformation of rural public space in the new era and redesign the public space for better rural-city interaction.

The project showed in this essay is named DESIGN Harvests which locates in Xian Qiao village on Chongming Island. The project goal is to build a sustainable rural community by linking the resources both in the city and rural and establish new business models to enhance the quality of local life. The paper introduces an initiative action to build an interactive platform for better rural-urban communication. We renovate an agriculture greenhouse into a multi-functional public space. The space is flexible used for dinning, meeting, relaxing and working. What’s more, related services and events are provided to a creative experience for citizens to know of local community.

DESCRIPTION
The research background of this paper is fast Chinese urbanization. Since China’s reform and opening up, numerous capital, knowledge and labour resources have been put into the urban construction which results in huge unbalance between cities and rural areas. The economic level in most of the countryside is low and mainly elderly and children stay there, which brings the weakness of local public space and culture life.

On the other hand, as the problem of food security and huge life stress, people in the city show more interests in natural and green life. They desire for closing to rural area not only enjoy sightseeing but also live in a more relax and easy lifestyle from different aspects such as fresh food and understanding local culture. The problem is that, current rural space cannot satisfy their needs well. How rural public spaces can adapt to the demand of tourists and local residents and serve for better interaction between cities and rural is the question going to answer in this paper.

The author takes Xian Qiao village as research objective. In this village, there are different types of unused spaces could be used into public. For instance, an abandoned wool factory, idle private family space and inefficient community centre (Figure 1). The author develops different scenarios to redesign these spaces into public use in her graduate thesis. (Figure 2)
The first prototype is an agriculture greenhouse built in year 2012. We work together with local people to renovate the greenhouse. Function and material are fully considered by designers in order to provide comfortable experience. (Figure 3)

How to run this space is as important as the space itself. The strategy is place-making and event-driven. We organize different activities to link the citizen and villages together using this platform. For instance, photo exhibition and movie time is the way to inspire local people’s involvement. (Figure 4) It can meet the demands of different city users as well. Small companies have teambuilding, family enjoy traditional festival, and kids learn to do local crafts. (Figure 5)

The metaphor of the greenhouse is that, it’s a social platform and also business model in local community connected city and rural. We hope it could be copies by more entrepreneurs to change the rural area into a more sustainable and lively future.

References