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Social enterprise and housing education in Hong Kong

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School of Social Policy academic, **Professor David Mullins (/staff/profiles/social-policy/mullins-david.aspx)** is visiting City University, Hong Kong, in his capacity as external academic adviser for the BA (Hons) Housing programme in the Department of Public and Social Administration. The programme which has provided over 600 mainly part time students working in the property management sector with Honours Degrees and professional accreditation by the Chartered Institute of Housing and Hong Kong Institute of Housing, has been running since 1998. Working with David on his visit are course director Associate Professor Ky Lau (who has a PhD from the University of Birmingham) and Miss LC Wong, External Academic Adviser (Practice) who recently retired after some 40 years in the housing profession and as Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Housing Society, which is the leading non-profit housing provider in Hong Kong. It manages, 30,000 rental flats housing about 100,000 people, and has completed around 20,000 flats for sale and provided home loans to over 40,000 families.

David and Miss LC Wong met with current students and graduates of the BA (Hons) programme to discuss their experiences and visiting a public housing estate. "I was really impressed by the dedication and commitment of the students who typically combine long working days and evening residents' meeting with three evenings a week at City University. Their comments highlighted how much they valued the degree level qualification alongside their professional accreditation and in what high regard Dr KY Lau and his team are held."

During his visit David is presenting a research seminar paper on his work on social enterprise and hybridity in the housing sector, drawing on papers for a special issue of *Housing Studies* which David is editing for publication in 2012. "In discussing common interests with Miss Wong, I learned of the ways in which Hong Kong Housing Society embraced a social innovation and social enterprise model long before it became fashionable to use this language. For example, it was frequently asked by government to pilot innovative programmes such as the 'sandwich class housing scheme' for middle income groups too poor to enter home ownership but too well off to qualify for public housing. In true social entrepreneurial style, it was able to reinvest surpluses from this scheme in other activities such as provision of legal assistance and support to home owners corporations - the Hong Kong model to tackle the common problems of place management and joint services in multi-occupied blocks and residential and commercial developments."

Following the City University visit David will be attending the **Asia Pacific Network for Housing Research Network Conference in Hong Kong (http://web.hku.hk/~apnhr/)** on Neo-liberalism and Urbanisation in Asia Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities for Housing. He represents the European Network of Housing Research of which he is a co-ordination committee member. He will be presenting a paper on social enterprise and housing.

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