

Crisis, Communication, and Care: Dialogues on Hong Kong–Africa Partnerships

The symposium will explore the role of cross-cultural communication in humanitarian and development contexts. Bringing together policymakers, NGOs, academics, and community representatives, the event will provide a platform to examine how Hong Kong's institutions engage with African partners in responding to crises, managing disaster relief, and fostering sustainable collaboration. Through focused panels on disaster management, crisis communication, and cross-cultural collaboration, the symposium aims to generate critical dialogue on the practical and ethical challenges in creating partnerships between Hong Kong and Africa. Participants will reflect on how language, culture, and care practices can strengthen inclusion and mutual understanding. By highlighting both institutional perspectives and local voices, the symposium seeks to advance knowledge exchange and reimagine models of collaboration grounded in care, equity, and effective communication.

14 March 2026, Saturday
11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Xiqu Centre, GF - 06 - 02
West Kowloon Cultural District,
88 Austin Road West, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong

ORGANIZERS

Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK)
Centre for Research on Linguistics and Language Studies (CRLLS)
Generocity Hong Kong
Africa Centre Hong Kong

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Dr Chaak Ming LAU, CRLLS, Education University of Hong Kong
Dr Marija TODOROVA, CRLLS, Education University of Hong Kong
Dr Larry BAUM, University of Hong Kong and Generocity Hong Kong
Mr Tinotenda Kelvin MUZARIRI, Africa Center Hong Kong
Ms Amy LI, The London School of Economics and Political Science

Programme Schedule

Saturday, 14 March 2026 · Xiqu Centre, West Kowloon

11:00 – 11:15

Opening Remarks

11:15 – 12:15

Panel 1: The Role of Hong Kong in International Disaster Management

Moderator: Dr Larry Baum (HKU / Generocity)

Speakers: Dr Joyce Ching (HKRC); Mr Martin Searle (MSF HK); Mr Sanday Chongo Kabange (Lingnan University)

12:15 – 13:30

Lunch Break

13:30 – 14:30

Panel 2: Care in Crisis — Cross-Cultural Communication in Disaster Response

Moderator: Ms Amy Li (London School of Economics)

Speakers: Dr Marija Todorova (EdUHK); Dr Kizito Tekwa (Shenzhen Technology University); Ms Caroline Dubois (GX Foundation)

14:30 – 14:45

Coffee / Tea Break

14:45 – 15:45

Panel 3: Creating Caring Partnerships and Cross-Cultural Dialogues

Moderator: Mr Tinotenda Kelvin Muzariri (Africa Centre HK)

Speakers: Prof. Mette Hjort (EdUHK); Dr Emily Chow-Quesada (HKBU), Mr Innocent Mutanga (Africa Centre HK)

15:45 – 16:45

Keynote Address

Prof. Lucía Ruiz Rosendo, University of Geneva (UNIGE)

Communicating with Vulnerable Populations in Crisis Situations

16:45 – 17:00

Closing Session

Speaker Biographies

Keynote Speaker



Prof. Lucía Ruiz Rosendo

Associate Professor, University of Geneva (UNIGE) • Director, Interpreting Department, FTI

Lucía Ruiz Rosendo is an Associate Professor at the University of Geneva's Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (FTI), where she serves as Director of the Interpreting Department. Her main research interests include interpreting in conflict zones and the history of interpreting, with a particular focus on armed conflicts, as well as interpreting in international organisations. She has recently co-edited *Interpreting Conflict: A Comparative Framework* (Palgrave, 2021), *Interpreter Training in Conflict and Post-conflict Situations* (Routledge, 2022), *Towards an Atlas of the History of Interpreting: Voices from around the World* (John Benjamins, 2023), and *The Routledge Handbook of Translating and Interpreting Conflict* (Routledge, 2025). Her research has been published in numerous edited volumes and academic journals in the fields of translation studies, peace and conflict studies, journalism, and social and military history. She coordinates several field-based interpreter training courses, including a joint programme run by the FTI and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and has participated in training projects for interpreters working within the Centre of Competence for Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN). In addition to her academic work, Lucía Ruiz Rosendo is a conference interpreter for international organisations based in Switzerland and an active AIIC member.

Speaker Biographies (continued)

Panel 1 · The Role of Hong Kong in International Disaster Management



Moderator
Dr Larry Baum

Research Officer, Department of Psychiatry, University of Hong Kong · Co-Founder, Generocity

Dr. Larry Baum is a Research Officer in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Hong Kong, where he conducts brain disease research and teaches the Common Core course, The Evolution of Civilization. He has lived in Hong Kong since 1996 and in 2016 co-founded Generocity, which promotes increased official development assistance from Hong Kong.



Dr Joyce Ching

Head of International and Relief Services, Hong Kong Red Cross

Dr Joyce Ching is a Family Medicine specialist with a Master's degree in Public Health in Developing Countries from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She has extensive experience in emergency response and long-term development, with her international career beginning in 2006 during a 10-month deployment in Ethiopia supporting a tuberculosis programme. Over the years, Dr Ching has worked with a range of international humanitarian organisations—including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the Red Cross, and World Vision— across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. She currently serves as Head of International and Relief Services at the Hong Kong Red Cross. She is also a founding board member and current Chairperson of Health In Action, a non-profit organisation dedicated to community health and health equity.



Mr Martin Searle

Director of Analysis, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Hong Kong

Martin Searle is Director of Analysis at Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) Hong Kong section. His unit focuses on political risk analysis, humanitarian diplomacy, and public positioning. He has spent a cumulative eight years at MSF, working in South Sudan, Central African Republic, Malaysia, and as part of the Operational Support Team covering South and Southeast Asia. Martin was previously Associate Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, where his work focused on the implications of new technologies on humanitarian theory and practice. He has consulted for UNOCHA, ICRC, and the World Economic Forum on the ethical and practical challenges surrounding the use of cyberspace in humanitarian work.



Mr Sanday Chongo Kabange

Journalist · Compliance Practitioner · Frontline Community Volunteer

Sanday Chongo Kabange is a journalist and compliance expert from Zambia. He first arrived in Hong Kong in 2011 to pursue a Master of Journalism at The University of Hong Kong. His professional background is in business journalism, where he has worked as a senior reporter covering regulatory news and compliance for the financial services sector in the Asia-Pacific region. He is a dedicated community volunteer with over eight years of service in Hong Kong, supporting the homeless through organisations like ImpactHK, engaging in environmental conservation with Plastic Free Seas and the Green Hour Foundation, and aiding vulnerable communities through groups such as Sunshine Action and Habitat for Humanity. His extensive volunteer work has been recognised with the 2022 Hong Kong Volunteer Award, the 2023 Spirit of Hong Kong Award, and the 2024 Person Touching Hong Kong Award. His community engagement is guided by a philosophy of "silent communication" - using body language and a smile to connect across cultural and linguistic barriers.

Speaker Biographies (continued)

Panel 2 · Care in Crisis: Cross-Cultural Communication in Disaster Response



Moderator
Ms Amy Li

London School of Economics and Political Science

Amy is an MSc International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies graduate from the London School of Economics and Political Science. During her study, she was drawn to the intersection of the humanitarian field and communication. She conducted a humanitarian consultancy project with International Organization for Migration (IOM) and was the Career Officer of the LSE Red Cross Society. Dedicated to contributing to her hometown, she is working in the non-profit sector to drive social impact and inclusion in Hong Kong.



Dr Marija Todorova

Assistant Professor, Department of Linguistics and Modern Language Studies, The Education University of Hong Kong

Marija Todorova is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Modern Language Studies at the Education University of Hong Kong. She is the author of *The Translation of Violence in Children's Literature* (Routledge, 2021) and co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Translating and Interpreting Conflict* (Routledge, 2025); *Interpreter Training in Conflict and Post-Conflict Scenarios* (Routledge, 2023) and *Interpreting Conflict* (Palgrave, 2021). Her research focuses on crisis communication, translation and development, and translation for refugees. She serves as Co-Chief Editor for *New Voices in Translation Studies* and Co-Vice President of the Executive Council of the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS). Before joining academia, she worked for several international organizations, including OSCE, DfID, UNHCR, and UNDP.



Dr Kizito Tekwa

Associate Professor, School of Foreign Languages, Shenzhen Technology University

Kizito Tekwa is a Canadian associate professor at the School of Foreign Languages, Shenzhen Technology University (China). He holds a PhD in Translation Technology and its Application in Foreign Language Teaching (University of Ottawa, 2018) and his research centres on machine translation, real-time communication tools, and technology-enhanced language access for vulnerable and minority communities. He is the author of the widely cited 2024 *Sage Open* study on linguistic minorities and crisis communication, as well as several works on grassroots healthcare communication, NGO language support in rural and crisis-affected communities, and localisation strategies for marginalised groups. Dr Tekwa teaches Machine Translation Post-Editing, Translation Technologies, and Crisis-related Audiovisual Translation. He has published over 15 articles in top SSCI-indexed journals and reviews for about 20 top-tier SSCI- and Scopus-indexed journals.



Ms Caroline Dubois

Director (Africa and Youth), GX Foundation

Caroline Dubois is currently a Director at GX Foundation, managing the implementation and monitoring of health service programmes in Africa, coordinating governmental and partner engagement in Africa, and overseeing the Foundation's youth training initiatives. A seasoned public health professional with extensive international and institutional experience, she brings particular expertise in immunisation programmes and health systems strengthening across Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Fluent in Chinese, English, and French, Ms. Dubois previously worked at Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) in Geneva, Switzerland, where she provided technical immunisation support across Francophone Africa. Ms. Dubois holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from University College London and a Master's in Global Health and Development in the UK. She currently holds an honorary academic affiliation with the Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care, at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, where she is also completing her Doctor of Public Health degree.

Speaker Biographies (continued)

Panel 3 · Creating Caring Partnerships and Cross-Cultural Dialogues



Moderator
Mr Tinotenda Kelvin Muzariri
Chief Operating Officer, Africa Center Hong Kong

Tinotenda Kelvin Muzariri, a Zimbabwean-born professional, serves as the Chief Operating Officer at Africa Center Hong Kong, a social enterprise and creative hub dedicated to rebranding Blackness, raising Black consciousness, and fostering genuine, value-driven connections between African and non-African communities in Asia through educational exchanges. He spearheads various initiatives in schools across Asia, corporate engagement, and other organisations—initiatives that move far beyond superficial cultural displays and focus on sustainable social impact. He is the driving force behind the Center's day-to-day operations and projects such as the talent pipeline programs, which focus on empowering high-potential youth through mentorship, professional development, and networking opportunities that bridge the gap between under-resourced communities and the corporate sector.



Prof. Mette Hjort
Chair Professor of Film and Media, The Education University of Hong Kong

Mette Hjort is the Chair Professor of Film and Media at The Education University of Hong Kong, where she is the Head of the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies and the Co-Director of the Research Centre for Creative Arts and Public Value. A film scholar, Mette holds a PhD from the EHESS in Paris and an Honorary Doctorate in Transnational Cinema Studies from the University of Aalborg. She has served on the Board of the Danish Film Institute (appointed by the Danish Ministry of Culture) and as President of the Jury of the Zanzibar International Film Festival.



Dr Emily Chow-Quesada
Associate Professor, Academy of Language and Culture, Hong Kong Baptist University

Emily Chow-Quesada is Associate Professor at the Academy of Language and Culture at Hong Kong Baptist University. Her research focuses on postcolonial Anglophone literature and representations of "Blackness." In addition to her journal articles and book chapters, she produced a documentary on the Black female diaspora in Hong Kong titled *Echo: Black Women Artists in Hong Kong*, and published a monograph on Dambudzo Marechera, *The Zimbabwean Maverick: Dambudzo Marechera and Utopian Thinking*.



Mr Innocent Mutanga
Founder and CEO, Africa Center Hong Kong

Innocent Mutanga is a Zimbabwean-born anthropologist, the Founder and CEO of the Africa Center Hong Kong, a social enterprise he established to "rebrand blackness" and bridge cultural gaps in Asia. After arriving in Hong Kong as a refugee with almost nothing, he made history as the first refugee to graduate from the Chinese University of Hong Kong before rising to become a prominent investment banker. Through the Center, he spearheads over 700 annual programs, including the "African Book Club," authentic culinary workshops, and school outreach initiatives designed to dismantle racial stereotypes and up-skill the youth in globalisation. His work shifts the narrative from charity to dignity and investing in the youth, positioning the African diaspora as a source of intellectual and cultural value rather than just a marginalized group. By blending his background in anthropology with social activism, he creates a unique space where local communities can engage with African heritage through meaningful, dignifying interactions.

Presentation Abstracts

Keynote Address

Prof. Lucía Ruiz Rosendo

Communicating with Vulnerable Populations in Crisis Situations

In recent years, communication in crisis situations has become a central focus of academic research and professional practice, prompted by ongoing global armed conflicts, pandemics, and disasters. In these settings, communication functions as a core element of crisis response, shaping access to protection, assistance, and care for vulnerable populations. Interactions occur across linguistic, cultural, and institutional boundaries, and often in a climate of urgency, insecurity, and unequal power relations. Communicators serve as essential nodes within complex communication ecosystems. This presentation analyses communication practices in crisis contexts, with particular emphasis on interactions involving vulnerable groups. It examines the institutional frameworks and operational environments in which communication occurs, followed by a discussion of positionality. Individuals involved in crisis communication often occupy transitional and shifting roles, managing competing mandates, ethical obligations, and relational dynamics while working closely with populations affected by violence, displacement, and trauma. The presentation further addresses the challenges inherent in these environments, including ethical dilemmas as well as emotional and psychological implications. Effective communication with vulnerable populations in crisis situations requires more than accuracy or efficiency; it demands contextual sensitivity, recognition of power imbalances, and an understanding of how communication can influence experiences of harm or protection. These challenges prompt critical questions regarding responsibility, boundaries, and institutional support for communicators. Advancing an interdisciplinary understanding of how communication operates—and at times fails—in these settings is essential. Such insights can foster more ethical, effective, and sustainable practices, benefiting both crisis communicators and the vulnerable individuals and communities who rely on being able to communicate for survival, dignified treatment, and care.

Panel 1 • The Role of Hong Kong in International Disaster Management

Dr Joyce Ching

Hong Kong Red Cross's Experience in International Disaster Management

This presentation outlines the Hong Kong Red Cross (HKRC)'s recent experience in international disaster management and the role of the Hong Kong Disaster Relief Fund in supporting overseas responses. It highlights key successes as well as challenges faced in implementation and accountability. The talk also examines the use of cash assistance as a practical and dignified modality, alongside HKRC's growing work in anticipatory action.

Mr Martin Searle

Examining How Anti-Aid Narratives Shape Humanitarian Actions

The humanitarian system is undergoing a deep structural upheaval to become more polarised and fragmented. The further unprecedented donor withdrawal, shrinking humanitarian access, and significant erosion of international humanitarian law has direct impact on the possibility and even the meaning of global medical humanitarian work. How do the anti-aid narratives that accompany these changes impact those giving and receiving assistance? How might narratives assist policy change to increase the space available to provide humanitarian aid?

Panel 2 · Care in Crisis: Cross-Cultural Communication in Disaster Response

Dr Marija Todorova

Language Hierarchies and Community Resilience: Multilingual Disaster Communication in Rural Malawi

This study examines the role of language in enhancing disaster resilience for cyclone-affected communities in rural Malawi. It focuses on the linguistic challenges faced in humanitarian aid efforts in a multilingual context, where English dominates institutional communication, and Chichewa is largely used for community outreach, despite most affected communities primarily speaking local minority languages such as Chiyao. Drawing on surveys conducted with NGO staff and affected populations, the study analyses patterns of language use, formal and informal translation practices, and technological communication methods. The findings reveal significant gaps in professional translation services, reliance on bilingual community members operating informally, and limited use of translation technologies. The absence of formal translation frameworks often results in barriers to communication, particularly with marginalised populations, including women and illiterate citizens. The article highlights the need for structured translation approaches, utilising multilingual community members, culture- and gender-sensitive communication, and the integration of technology to ensure equitable access to disaster information with the aim of strengthening resilience and inclusivity in humanitarian responses.

Dr Kizito Tekwa

In Survival's Own Words: Reclaiming Forgotten Voices in Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis

The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon, now in its tenth year since escalating in 2016–2017, has resulted in profound humanitarian devastation. Recent estimates indicate over 6,500 civilian deaths and approximately 493,000–584,000 internally displaced persons in the Northwest and Southwest regions, with hundreds of thousands more in need of aid amid ongoing violence between government forces and separatist groups. Despite this scale, the Cameroonian government has consistently downplayed the conflict's severity, while much scholarly and media attention focuses on political, military, or structural dimensions rather than lived civilian experiences. This study addresses a critical gap by presenting a narrative-based account drawn from direct interviews with survivors of the crisis. Conducted amid challenges of access, security, and language barriers, the research incorporates testimonies sometimes mediated through translators (from local languages/Pidgin English to English/French or other international languages), prioritising survivors' own voices to document personal accounts of violence, displacement, loss, and survival strategies. These narratives reveal not only the human cost—killings, abductions, destruction of homes and livelihoods—but also the stark inadequacies in care provision, including limited humanitarian access, insufficient government support, and barriers to psychosocial or material assistance for displaced populations. This work, centred on survivor perspectives, contributes to crisis translation scholarship by highlighting the ethical and practical challenges of voicing marginalised testimonies in multilingual, high-risk contexts. It underscores how linguistic and representational exclusion perpetuates invisibility, calling for more inclusive approaches to amplify "forgotten voices" in global humanitarian discourse and policy responses.

Panel 3 · Creating Caring Partnerships and Cross-Cultural Dialogues

Prof. Mette Hjort

Transnational Experiential Learning: The Economics of Care and Collaboration

Drawing on the experience of designing and implementing a transnational experiential learning opportunity—for 30 EdUHK students and 4-5 Zanzibari and Tanzanian students—on the East African island of Zanzibar, I attempt to tease out the relationship between funding and care. More specifically, I argue that a university's protocols for funding disbursement typically remain agnostic about the social impact of economic decision related to the infrastructure of experiential learning in cross-border contexts. Yet, the ethics and pragmatics of economic decision making are an integral part of a transnational framework and pedagogy of care. My aim is to make the case for seeing transnational experiential learning as an opportunity for universities to become actively engaged in processes of sustainable institution building that reflect local agency and choice. That is, beyond pedagogy there is a whole other dimension to transnational experiential learning, one that concerns the legacy of a university's particular way of investing in cultures and countries beyond national borders.

Dr Emily Chow-Quesada

Retelling Resilience: Intercultural Encounters on a Service-Learning Trip to Uganda

This presentation examines how service-learning (SL) can challenge and reshape dominant narratives of resilience, with a focus on intercultural encounters experienced during a service-learning trip involving students from Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) in Uganda. Notions of “Blackness” are multifaceted and vary significantly across sociocultural contexts. For participants from outside sub-Saharan Africa, especially those from contexts like Hong Kong, such immersive experiences often prompt a critical re-evaluation of preconceived assumptions regarding race, privilege and representation. In contrast to the often reductive portrayals of “Blackness” in Hong Kong, where it is frequently conflated with skin color and socio-economic status, the Ugandan context offers a nuanced, locally rooted understanding of the complexity of African identities. The service-learning trip thus becomes a meaningful space in which students confront the limitations of mainstream media narratives that routinely frame African communities as the “Other,” reinforcing stereotypical discourses of lack and suffering. These problematic representations, coupled with enduring structural inequities, underline the urgency of cultivating counter-narratives grounded in lived experience and mutual respect. Through community-engaged service-learning and guided storytelling initiatives, students are encouraged not only to listen deeply to Ugandan voices but also to reflect critically on their own positionality within broader global narratives of race, identity, development and power. By drawing on collaborative projects, this presentation argues that service-learning in Uganda fosters both self-awareness and narrative agency. Centering co-created stories between Ugandan and Hong Kong students, it demonstrates how SL can challenge exclusionary frameworks and contribute to a more just and inclusive model of global citizenship – one that affirms the multiplicity of Black identities and resists simplistic or essentialist representations.