Design Harvests
An open innovative platform to link urban and rural area.

Tongji University, Studio TEKTAO
Tongji DESIS Lab
Lou Yongqi, Ding Chan, Lei Jiong, Feng Kan, Wu yiting
Lan Yu, Meng Liqin
Promoter(s).
College of design and innovation, Tongji University
Studio TEKTAO

Funder(s).
College of design and innovation, Tongji University
Studio TEKTAO

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Context.
As a major content and an important consequence of China’s 30 years of rapid development, urbanization has not only brought about economic growth, but also intensified the imbalance between urban-rural economic and social development. Especially since 1992, with the acceleration of the regional integration of the Yangtze Delta, this imbalance has exacerbated.
The project.
The aim of DESIGN Harvest is to build a new developing model through “design thinking” to integrate rural resources and improve social environments, economic situations and social relations, so as to blur the boundary between rural and urban, then to achieve balanced development. All those design projects are prototypes of visions for the future.
The design process.
| 2007  Launching of the long-term research project based on Xianqiao Village of Chongming |
| 2011 Design+Agriculture prototype in Xianqiao Village |
| 2013 Design+Rural vacant space prototype in Xianqiao Village |
| 2016 Design+Rural experience prototype in Xianqiao Village |
| 2017 Prototype Replication(new innovation hubs in DesignHarvests network) |
Each prototype in this service system of DesignHarvests is an independent business model operated by local entrepreneurs. They are small, local and innovative, which can support each others.
Just as acupuncture gives influence to the human body by giving the acupoints moderate stimulation, this project stimulates the economy of the surrounding area and encourages more and more local young people to stay and start their career in the village.
As an open and innovative platform, DesignHarvests is coordinating the participants in the project, including the local government of Chongming Island, village communities, entrepreneurs and university resources to establish a connected product and service system between urban and rural area including healthy food, agricultural tourism, natural experience, local art, and so on.
Each innovation hub in DesignHarvests network is mainly based on local potential resources and social culture characteristic, through the creative business technology integration support entrepreneurs to develop a series of interconnected high value-added commercial projects. All the activities happened in each hub represent different ways of living and producing, keep the characteristic both in urban and rural areas and stimulate a better urban-rural interaction.
This project not only offers local and healthy food to citizens, but also brings people from cities to experience a more sustainable way of living and producing in rural area.
In this project, the result of this networked, participatory process is the establishment of a foundation for sustainable solutions informed and designed by everyone involved.
A number of new business models created by young entrepreneurs are launched in this creative network, which requires more local labor. Much rural surplus labor force is reused in this case.
These design tools mainly used for different participants to understand each other in the co-design approach, especially when local community is involved.