



Eric seizes every opportunity, resource, and method to help Hong Kong people rediscover the beauty of food and things around them, from upcycling food waste to reconciling relationships.

“I hope people can rediscover things that they are familiar with but never had a chance to feel, be it cheesy hot dogs or sweet potatoes, or even their families,”

Eric proclaimed. When they were invited by the Milan Expo to share about their food waste dyes in 2015, the organisers said that they had created “the most beautiful colours in the world”, and those beautiful colours not only dyed pieces of cloths, but also touched the hearts of people.

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I TRAVELLED, AND I SAW THE WORLD AND PEOPLE

SENIO TECH FALL DETECTION DEVICE -
LEE SUI HA CELIA

“ Once we start working, the burdens on our shoulders increase, such as our prospects, jobs, and partners — all we care about is ourselves. After six years of work, Celia gave up her stable life and set out into the world. Along her journey, not only did she see sceneries, but also the needs of people around her. The experience inspired her to embark on another journey in social innovation to develop products for the elderly. Letting go does not necessarily mean losing; whenever we close our fists again, we gain more.

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Babies and the elderly are on the opposite ends of life's spectrum, and both need care and attention. Yet, most of us tend to be happy to see the arrival of new life, but feel reluctant to take care of the elderly. 35-year-old Celia Lee held up a model of a baby's foot and admitted that the original idea of the product was to measure a baby's heartbeat and blood oxygen, before deciding to make a fall detection device for the elderly.

“From a business point of view, parents are willing to spend money on their babies, but many people would also tell you that the elderly have more needs. We hoped that the product would help mothers take care of their babies, but if the product was for the elderly, it might save lives.” To make it easy for the elderly to wear, the device will have a bracelet or watch design. If the elderly user falls, the built-in program will confirm their condition, connect to their smartphone via wireless signal, and call their family members or organisations for help instantly.



A YEAR OF CONSTANT TRIALS

Celia's team is developing two products at the same time, and even though both have prototypes, it has already taken a full year. From the formation of the team to the initial idea, it took several months of discussion and compromising.

“We didn't know each other at that time — we were introduced to one another by friends, and it just so happened that we all wanted to do something meaningful.”

Celia is good at programming, while other team members have their own specialties, including hardware design and business development. However, even friends would have conflicts when working together, not to mention new colleagues who are strangers. “I'm relatively easy-going, and fortunately, we are all very rational. Instead of throwing around comments starting with ‘I think’, everyone provides sufficient reasons to support their points during discussions. After all, we all care about the product most.”

This is always easier said than done. Celia and her team encountered many obstacles when they put the idea into

practice. “We spent a lot of time on hardware research and testing. Now, we have a lot of electric fuses and wires scattered around the office. After the design was ready, it was time for testing. We had to go to Shenzhen to find a manufacturer and wait for it to send the prototype back. If there was a change, we had to take the hardware to Shenzhen in person, because we could not send electronic parts there from Hong Kong,” Celia sighed. The team kept testing, waiting for the prototype, and then testing again. Celia laughed and said that they had pretended to be a falling elderly user many times. “We kept falling on the sofa to test how long it would take for the test device to respond — because the device was designed to respond only after confirming that the user has actually fallen down,” Celia explained.

FROM HIDING BEHIND THE COMPUTER TO FACING PEOPLE

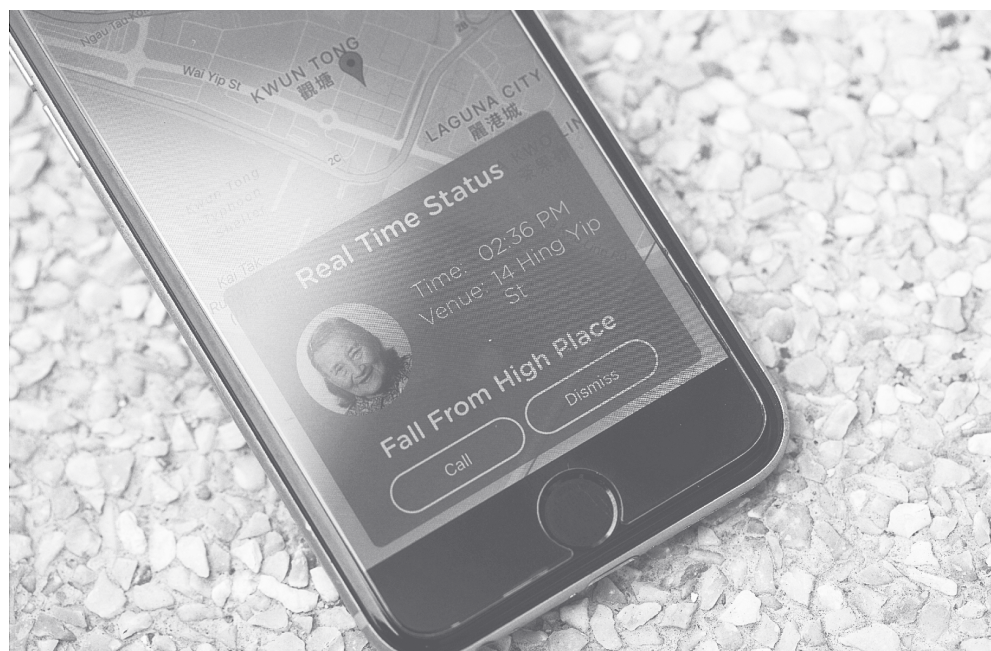
While testing the prototype repeatedly, Celia and her team continued to participate in competitions and workshops, meeting professionals from different sectors, which meant that they had to deal with a variety of social situations. Before starting her own business, Celia spent six years writing programs on the computer. She told us that the office used to be so quiet that you could only hear typing sounds. Since initiating the project, she is no longer just looking at the cold glow of a computer screen, but living and breathing people. At first, she was a little shy when attending these occasions. “People in the business world can talk for hours with a glass in their hands, and I often wondered what they were talking about. Then, I found out that they would mostly share their success stories, and I would just listen,” she laughed.

The team member responsible for business development often accompanies Celia to networking events, and she is deeply impressed by his social skills. “People at these events tend to take the initiative. They would approach you,

immediately hand out their business card, and introduce themselves. You don't see that when working with a computer,” She paused, and then continued,

“Sometimes, you don't do that because you're too concerned about what people may think of you. But after second thoughts, it's not strange at all because everyone does the same. It is common to rush over and shake hands, but I often wonder if I would look weird,”

she said with a smile. After a few events, Celia gradually figured out her place and started to get used to expressing herself in front of people. “When someone walks by, I would introduce the product and let my teammate do the socialising. Even if he can't make it, I believe I can handle it now.”



LEARNING TO LET GO IN TWENTY MONTHS

Looking back on the past year and a half, Celia admitted that she had never imagined she would experience something like it. She left behind six years of stable life and embarked on the unpredictable journey of social entrepreneurship. This change was triggered by a journey that lasted 20 months. “After six years of work, I felt a bit bored with my job, so I went on a trip with my boyfriend,” Celia said.

During this 20-month-long trip, they did not rush to visit all the tourist spots. They stayed in the homes of locals, bought

food and cooked meals, visited markets, and chatted. This relaxing time allowed Celia to settle her mind and redirect her attention to people around her.

“Because we had a lot of time, I started to see other people’s worlds and their needs instead of just thinking about myself. This inspired me to observe people around me even after I returned to Hong Kong.”

They travelled with heavy backpacks to many European countries, including the UK, Italy, France, and Spain. The farther they travelled, the less weight they carried

on their backs. Not only did they let go of their baggage, but also their original thoughts. “During the trip, I thought about what I wanted to do after I get back. I wanted to do something for society. If that something is meaningful, I would be even more dedicated,” Celia said.

The interview lasted for more than an hour. Whether we were talking about travel or the long wait in the development process, Celia spoke nonchalantly; it felt like a cup of hot coffee that had been sitting for a while, still a bit warm and very soothing. But when it came to the stories of the elderly around her, she suddenly became choked up and drops of tears fell slowly. “My grandpa just passed away last week because of pneumonia. He was almost 100 years old. None of us knew he was ill, and by the time he was admitted to hospital, his condition was already severe.” As she spoke on, she calmed down a bit and took a deep breath, and her tone returned to its usual calmness. “I don’t know if my grandpa would’ve been saved if we had launched our product earlier, but at least we would’ve known his health condition earlier.” But we cannot change the past. It’s been a year and a half since the development of the

product began, and Celia only hopes that the product can be launched to help the elderly in need as soon as possible.

“After the product is launched, we will have to face new problems in areas like sales and marketing, but it doesn’t matter. Right now, I just want to launch the product and see how the market responds. I am ready to face the response, be it good or bad.”