

Encouraging young people to participate in the development of innovation and technology

Report
No. 4

Innovation for growth

There is a strong imperative to put innovation at the top of the agenda as economies grow. Not only advanced economies but developing nations are finding that innovation is an important driver and developing nations are no longer lagging behind those with high incomes. However, Hong Kong's ranking in the Global Innovation Index fell to 11th in 2015.¹ About 6,000 Hong Kong students graduate in science, engineering or technology every year but few enter the field of "Innovation and Technology" (I&T). What factors prevent them and how can a greater number of young people be attracted to engage in I&T in order to stem the outflow of talent?



Attitudes and values

- Many find insufficient practical elements in university programmes.
- Most of them believe they are at best only fairly innovative.
- Many know little about I&T.
- The majority say too little emphasis is placed on I&T by government.

Concerns

- Many believe that the university programmes provide little chance to find out about I&T.
- Lack of understanding about the nature of I&T is an obstacle to participation in related industries.
- Nearly two-thirds feel pessimistic about youth engagement in I&T industries.
- Over 60% believe attitudes in society are a crucial factor for I&T development.
- Over 90% agree that the development of I&T in Hong Kong should be strengthened.
- Young people expect the proposed Innovation and Technology Bureau to facilitate communication and cooperation between government, industry, academia and the research sector.

Practical responses

- More information on I&T would strengthen understanding of and interest in related industries.
- Increasing investment in research would be the most effective way to facilitate the development of I&T.
- Many young people believe that the diversification of market-driven industries is the main reason for developing I&T in Hong Kong.
- Improved concrete policies, infrastructure support, talent nurture, investment and market expansion are essential factors for development of I&T.

Suggestions and recommendations

- Arrange more local and overseas internship opportunities to enrich experience of I&T.
- Encourage cooperation between universities and private enterprise.
- Help young people at school to market innovative ideas and research deliverables.
- Persuade government to use innovative technological products developed by local enterprise.
- Develop a global mindset for expanding into overseas markets.
- Raise awareness of I&T in schools and among the general public.

Comments from Youth I.D.E.A.S. think tank convener and member

Education & Innovation group

Arnold Chan "Besides expanding the market, there should be more cooperation between universities and private enterprises to help commercialize students' innovative ideas. Moreover, to broaden students' horizons, more internship opportunities, both locally and overseas, should be provided to help them understand more about innovation and technology."

Freddy Law "The government should be a role model, taking the lead by using innovative, technological products from local companies. This will give affirmation and encouragement. In each government department, there is a need to improve attitudes towards innovation and technology."

1. globalinnovationindex.org/userfiles/file/reportpdf/GII-2015-v5.pdf