

Youth I.D.E.A.S. releases research report on “Connecting Young People with Countryside Conservation”

Summary:

- Youth I.D.E.A.S., a youth think tank established by the Youth Research Centre of The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, today (28 May) releases its research report on “Connecting Young People with Countryside Conservation.”
- The survey, conducted online from 18 March to 2 April, collected the views of 534 local youth aged 15 to 34.
- Alongside the online survey, 15 young people and 5 experts and scholars were interviewed as part of a case study.

Key findings:

- 90.8% of young respondents consider countryside conservation essential to sustainable urban-rural development; 83.0% identify it as an opportunity for young people to engage in the community.
- Over three-quarters agree that young people have a key role to play in conserving the rural areas (82.2%), while two-thirds think that countryside conservation is vital to local economic development (68.7%) and opens new avenues for youth career development (62.9%).
- However, only a small fraction (9.6%) is optimistic about countryside conservation in Hong Kong; one-third (33.7%) believe that emphasis on economic development is its major obstacle.
- Around 14.0% has experience participating in local countryside conservation projects; three-fourths (76.8%) have not participated due to a lack of time, knowledge or access.
- Interviewees point out that rural areas offer a new lens on local history and culture. By exploring the multidisciplinary facets of countryside conservation, young people from different backgrounds can better connect with society, inherit traditions and co-create values.

Recommendations:

- The government should develop a sustainable urban-rural development blueprint with a new vision for countryside conservation that incorporates the elements of social co-creation, co-sharing and inheritance.
- The government should initiate the launch of annual rural events to raise public awareness and engage young people through a series of workshops, dialogues and experiential activities.
- The authorities should open positions on the Advisory Committee on the Northern Metropolis to young people through self-nomination, enabling them to contribute their opinions on Hong Kong's future development.
- With reference to the Mainland's youth-involved rural revitalisation strategy, stakeholders should organise more exchange activities centred on sustainable urban-rural development to broaden youth perspectives.