

31st August 2023

Editor in chief: Daniel Zheng, Editor: Cathy Xie



HOPE marketing staff, joined by HOPE overseas returned Students, planted a taxaceae at Ant Forest Nature Reserve Under the Yellow Mountain as part of the team building event of environment protection on 29<sup>th</sup> August.

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## *INSIDE HOPE --- August News*

### **HOPE Consultant Training Nailed in Jiaxing**

HOPE launched Annual Consultant Training from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> August in Jiaxing, Zhejiang with the aim of team building and elevating the professionalism of HOPE consultant team on students counselling and institutions applications.

22 HOPE consultants coming from three cities Shanghai, Nanjing, and Hangzhou, attended this two-day event, bringing expertise to this special training.

The meeting started off by Chanel, Consulting Director of HOPE providing an overall training presentation on the counselling skills and how to handle customers under various circumstances. Then came with the mock counselling practice based on an elective mix of challenging cases. Consultants were tested their knowledge of institutions applications and co-operated within teams to tackle tricky problems. Peer-review and professional feedback were provided at the end of the activity for the betterment of skills.



[On-site mock consulting practice](#)

Following the group practice, consultants in charge of various fields of applications, such as UK, US, Singapore, and Hongkong shared their expertise



to the team, and brought updates on the application data, winning waves of applause from the audience.

Apart from the training, the event was also a fantastic opportunity of team building for HOPE members. They gathered and celebrated the harvest of 1568 offers in the past fiscal year.

“It was a true delight to meet up and learn from each other, as we all have strengths in different sectors of applications”, said Haylee, who has been a counsellor for 6 years. “It (the event) helps me refresh my knowledge of applications, and as a consultant, I think nothing is more important than keep learning.”



*The ancient town under sunset*

Besides, the trip offered a great opportunity to break away from the hustle-bustle vibe of metropolis, and enabled everyone to unwind a bit in the historical city of Jiaxing, a city of riveting views and abundant in hospitality. With success of the event, HOPE expects more trainings coming up in the new fiscal year and a strengthening bond with greater efficiency in achieving higher targets in applications.

## HOPE Visits SUIS for Possible Cooperation

HOPE made its official visit to Shanghai United International School (SUIS) Qingpu Campus on August, 21<sup>st</sup> 2023 for the purpose of exploring possible cooperation within the field of international education.

Daniel Zheng, Managing Director of HOPE together with Cathy Xie, Marketing Manager, met with Principal Wang and David, Academic Dean of SUIS in the afternoon discussing future opportunities of cooperation including teacher development and training, college fairs, student recruitment, and establishing sister school partnership with UK schools.



*SUIS student hall*

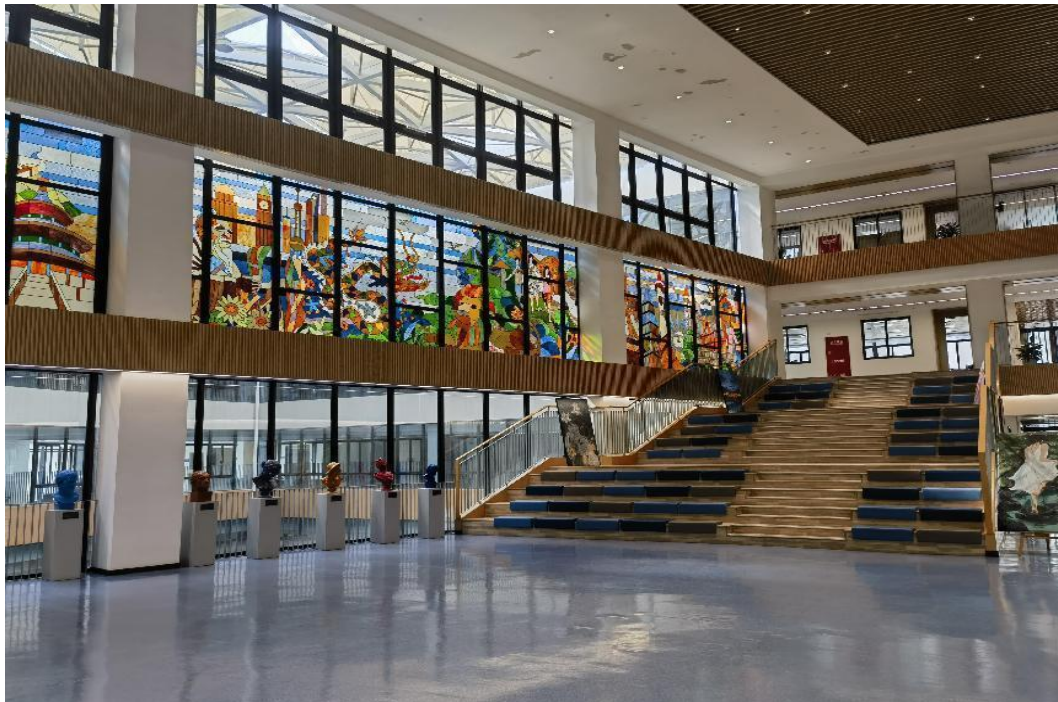
HOPE has been assisting international schools with teacher development and training for a great couple of years. Online courses, including IPGCE course, prove to be an excellent tool for young schools to improve teaching quality and staff profiles. SUIS shows great interest in such training for their teachers.

A short campus tour was led by David, Academic Dean of SUIS after the talk, and the school was abundant in learning resources and has plenty of multi-media space for hosting college fairs, which according to David, were highly expected this year. Working closely with many UK universities, HOPE will continuously organize UK university fair in international schools in autumn.



*A school tour led by David, Academic Dean*

With new academic year starting soon and more demand for international cooperation from local schools, HOPE expects more visits to international schools and help them grow and expand their overseas links.



*Reception area of the school*



## HOPE Assists Westlake University with Talent Recruitment Scheme

Daniel Zheng, Managing Director, Chanel Zhang, GM of HOPE Hangzhou, Alice Zhang, International Partnership Manager were invited to visit Westlake University, a famous newly established research university in Hangzhou, for cooperation on 22nd August. Specialized in life science and engineering, the institution is dedicated to foster innovative scientists that would contribute to the domestic technology and the sustainable development of China.



*HOPE met with the Ms Jie Zhang, dean of International Cooperation Department*



*Beautiful campus of the Westlake University*

According to Chancellor Yigong Shi, the former vice president of Tsinghua University, the Westlake University aims to expand its recruitment to overseas students. Ms Jie ZHANG, Dean of International Cooperation Department Westlake University, who worked with HOPE as the principal from an international school in Shanghai, also believes Hope International Education can provide valuable assistance to the university in overseas students recruitment and help the university build its international profile.



## INSIDE HOPE ---- Photo News



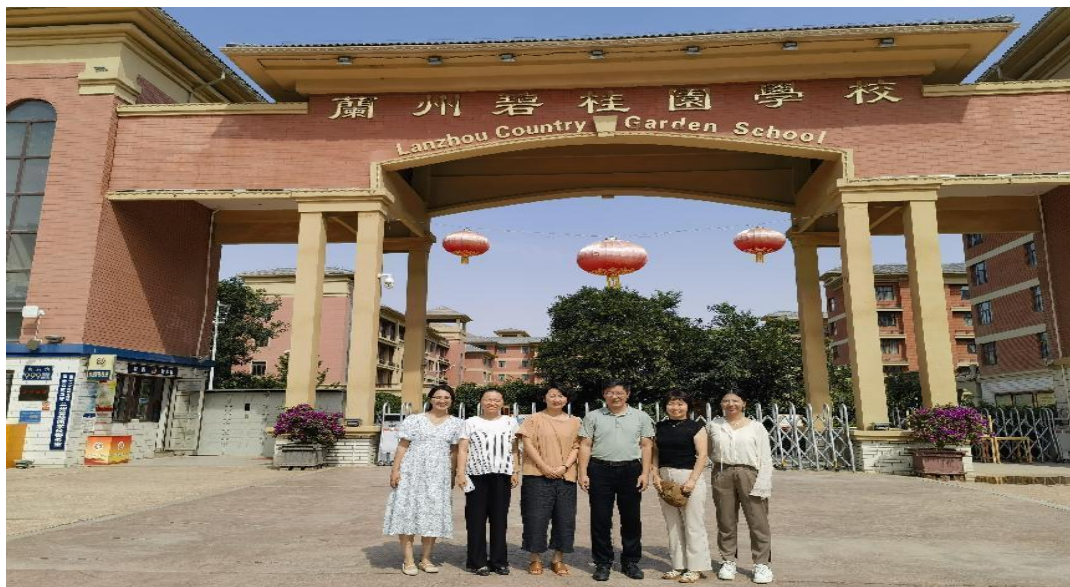
Sylvia Li (right), Head of Business Pursuit, British Council China, was interviewed online on 17<sup>th</sup> August by HOPE for a series of hot topics including exam security, future of IELTS and various other exams the BC conducts in China.



Daniel Zheng and his two colleagues were invited to visit the newly founded Zhongshan Whampoa International School (ZWIS) in Guangzhou on 16 August. The principal, who was Daniel's peer at Tsinghua University- UCL Education Leadership Programme, was greeted "good luck" for school's inauguration in early September.



Daniel Zheng, Managing Director, was invited to visit ISA International School in Guangzhou during his recent tour to South China mid August. Enrichment activities and summer camps are the main areas both parties discussed for collaboration.



On 2<sup>nd</sup> August, HOPE was invited to visit Lanzhou Country Garden School in Northwest China's Gansu Province. HOPE has successfully recruited two foreign teachers for the school.





**Industrial Bank Lanzhou:** On 1<sup>st</sup> August, HOPE was invited to give a presentation followed by one-to-one counselling on international education and study abroad to 30 bank's VIP clients.



**Industrial Bank Guangzhou:** On 18 August, HOPE was invited to give a presentation followed by one-to-one counselling on international education and study abroad to 20 bank's VIP clients.



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM LOCAL MEDIA

### What ails vocational education?

By Chu Zhaohui | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2023-08-16 15:04



*A pottery making contest is held in June during the Seventh National Vocational Skills Competition for the Disabled in Jinan, Shandong province.*

The increasing challenge of college graduates to get a suitable job, and the decreasing value of university degrees have become a matter of concern. Yet vocational education remains underappreciated, with, contrary to expectations, few college graduates turning to vocational institutions for acquire additional skills.

This year, the number of students taking the college entrance examination (or gaokao) has increased by 980,000 to about 12.91 million. Notably, about two-thirds of the students who took the exam from Henan province were from regular high schools, while the rest were from vocational high schools — a major contributor to the increased number of applicants — or were graduates of vocational colleges.

These figures show that while some vocational school graduates have better chances of getting a job or are more skillful in certain fields than their counterparts from conventional universities, the quality of jobs and level of salary they get, as well job

stability and career progress are not on par with graduates from conventional universities.

Consequently, a substantial number of vocational school graduates are taking the college entrance exam to sharpen their competitiveness in the job market.

China is seeing an oversupply of university graduates and white-collar professionals, while there is a shortage of skilled technical workers. But it is difficult to change people's traditional mindset of pursuing education to get a bureaucratic or other high-end job. Students with such a mindset are less likely to opt for vocational education and, instead, pursue conventional education.

Also, the disparities between blue-collar and white-collar workers in terms of social welfare, healthcare, societal status and work environment are apparent. The Chinese economy is still largely driven by low-end manufacturing, and jobs for vocational education graduates are often physically demanding and less technologically complex.

As such, a majority of students are not attracted to vocational education. In terms of teaching resources, vocational education, in general, requires a more diverse range of resources and higher costs compared with general education stream. And there is still a significant gap in the resources allocated for general education and vocational education.

To begin with, there is a shortage of funding for vocational education, not to mention the mismatch between the teaching staff and the actual teaching needs. While there is much room for improvement in terms of funding, teaching materials for vocational education need to be categorized and updated. There also a need to modernize the content of professional skill courses.

Vocational education also suffers from a severe lack of specialized teachers and skilled mentors. Many instructors rely on limited teaching methods that focus only on imparting knowledge to the students, which is not advisable for building a highly skilled and advanced workforce.

The teaching environment in vocational high schools and vocational colleges, too, is not conducive to imparting knowledge and skills to students, while the lack of academic vibrancy makes it difficult for students to focus on learning and prevents them from acquiring the needed knowledge and skills, thereby hindering their intellectual growth.

Additionally, since many students entering vocational schools have lower academic starting points, they often develop a negative attitude toward learning. As a result, their self-confidence and motivation are relatively low, and aspirations and expectations limited, resulting in a wide disparity between them and traditional university graduates in terms of employability and pay.

It is therefore clear that despite enhancing students' practical abilities, vocational education still doesn't have a solid foundation, which limits the employability of vocational college graduates.

Graduates of vocational colleges and regular colleges are in an unequal competitive position when it comes to pursuing further education. As for pursuing education throughout one's life, most vocational school graduates find it appealing but inaccessible, because there are many barriers for them on the road to lifelong learning.

Besides, the current limited curriculum for vocational education is not conducive to vocational college graduates to further their lifelong learning process.

In conclusion, to improve vocational education and enhance its appeal, the government, schools, businesses and society as a whole should set specific targets and work together to achieve them. For that, however, measures should be taken to help change people's mindset, and allow vocational education to play an increasingly effective role in people's pursuit of a better life.

The author is a senior researcher at the National Institute of Education Sciences.



# Jack Ma celebrates imagination in rural agriculture

By Fan Feifei | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2023-08-24 14:21



*Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba Group*

Jack Ma, founder of Chinese tech heavyweight Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, said rural education should pay more attention to children's imaginations and unique thinking while sharing his experiences exploring agriculture technology.

During a video speech to a group of headmasters from rural schools posted by the Jack Ma Foundation on Wednesday, Ma said, "I have found that a place where agriculture developed well but is not necessarily a place with good resources, rather it was a place with unique thinking and people with imagination."

Ma said he has studied agriculture in different countries during the past several years and hopes that rural schools will cultivate people who are full of creativity and unique thinking, and who dare to create the future.

Ma, who officially stepped down as Alibaba chairman in 2019, has turned his focus to agriculture and education. He has made several international trips to learn about sustainable food production. Media reported that Ma spent time studying fisheries and tuna farming in Japan, and he also traveled to Thailand where he visited a sea shrimp farming factory.

# Integrated tertiary studies to expand job options

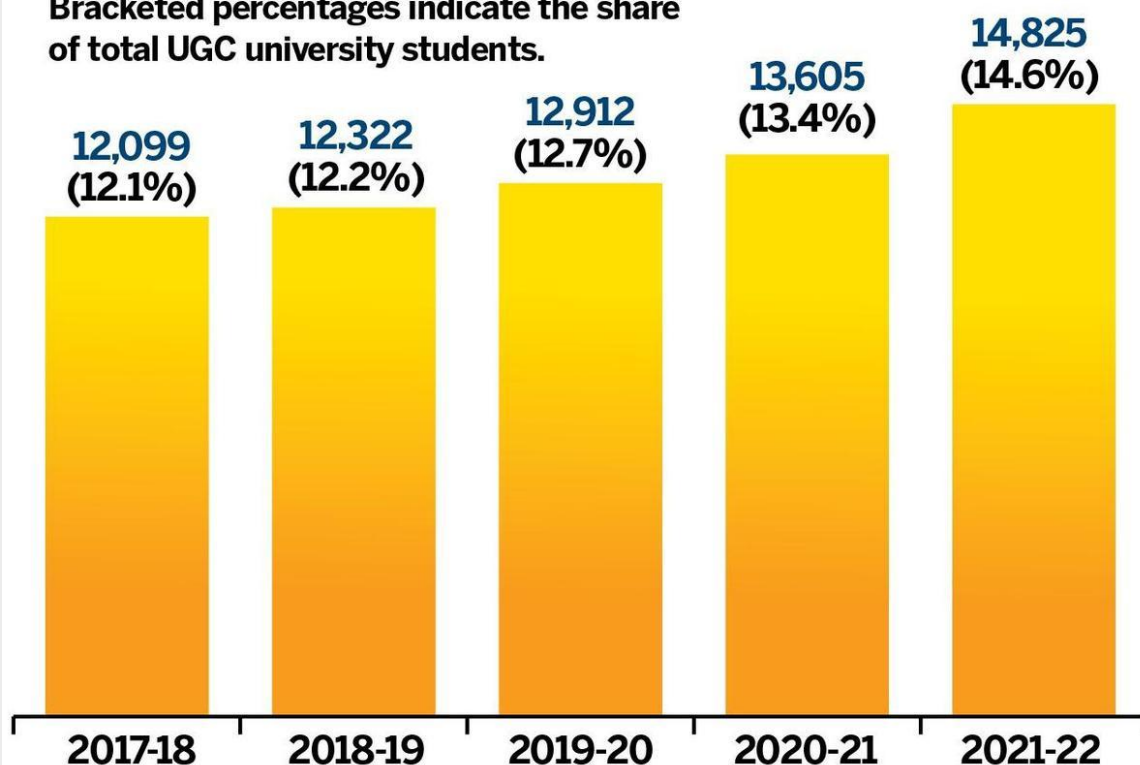
By Zhou Mo | HK EDITION | Updated: 2023-08-25 14:42

*Hong Kong graduates have limited scope in a narrow services economy. Integrated universities on the Chinese mainland give students insights into society, economy and peer networking. Cross-border policy alignment is vital to fully energize the Greater Bay Area. Zhou Mo reports from Hong Kong.*



## More mainland students studied in Hong Kong's UGC\*-funded universities

Bracketed percentages indicate the share of total UGC university students.

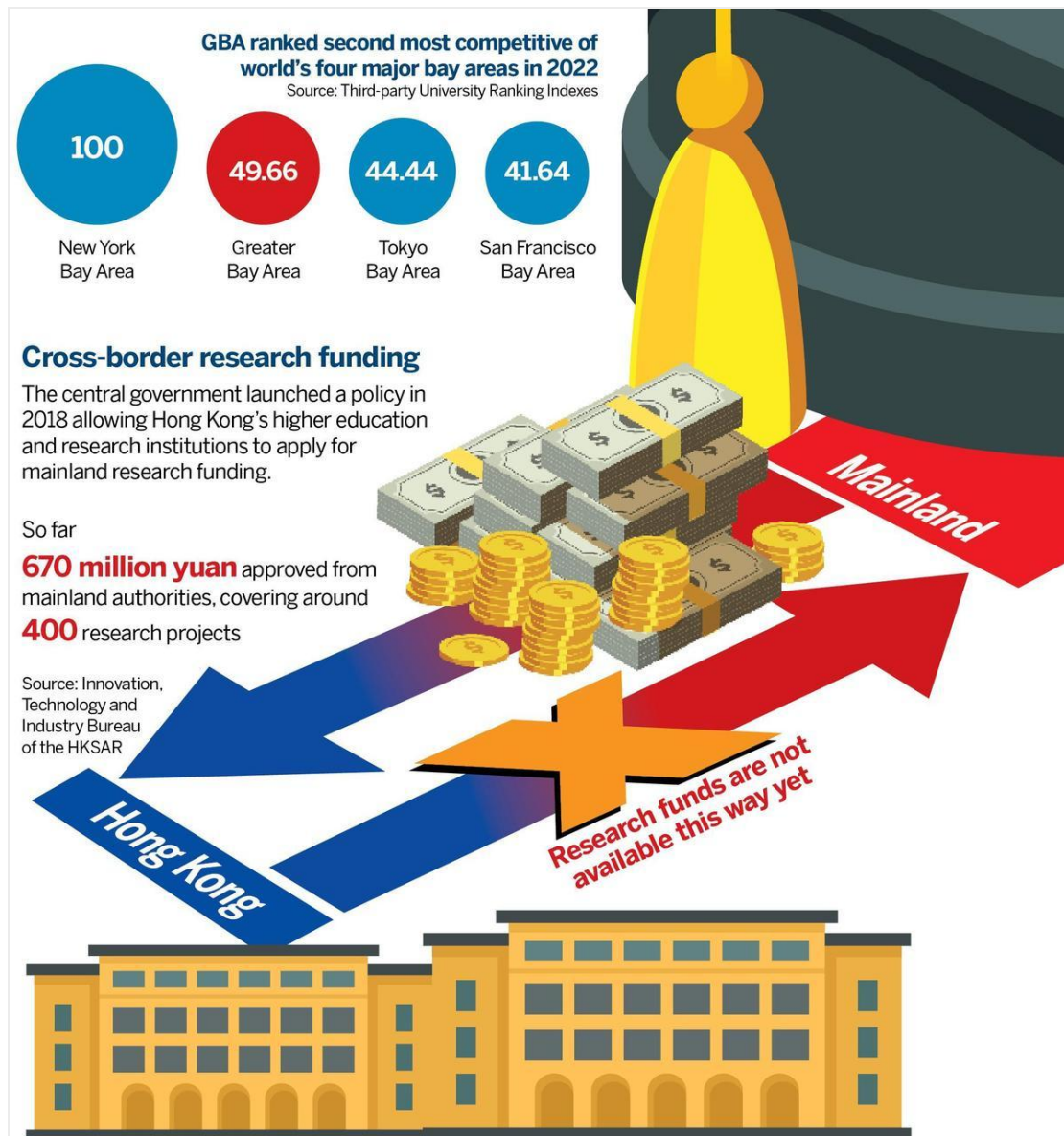


Source: \*University Grants Committee of Hong Kong, the nonstatutory body which advises the HKSAR government on the funding and strategic development of higher education in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's economy receives over 90 percent of its GDP from services sectors. The city's narrow economic structure severely restricts career choices for local university graduates.

Speaking to students at the United International College, a pioneering collaboration in Zhuhai, Guangdong province between Beijing Normal University and Hong Kong Baptist University, Leung Chun-ying, vice-chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, pointed to the more diverse economic structure of the Chinese mainland, for greater job opportunities.

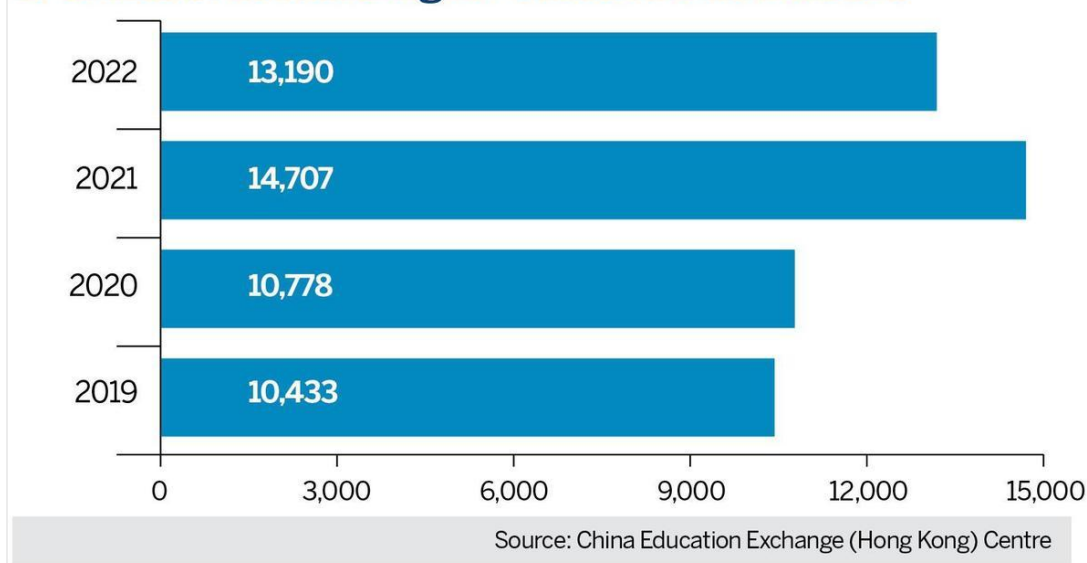
Leung said that tertiary studies with mainland students will give Hong Kong undergraduates a deeper understanding of the national economy, mindset, and society, while nurturing peer group networking for jobs.



The 14th Five-Year Plan for Education Development in Guangdong Province anticipates three to five new cooperative educational institutions between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao by 2025. Additionally, three to five unincorporated cooperative institutions and joint research institutions will also be set up within that time.

"Integration of higher education in the (Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao) Greater Bay Area has been vigorous in the past few years and it is necessary to push forward," said Ronald Chan, founding president of The Greater Bay Area Education Integration and Development Think Tank.

## Number of Hong Kong secondary school students applying to Chinese mainland higher education institutions



### Mutual benefits

Hong Kong universities are highly internationalized, with management systems and curricula benchmarked to global standards with global recognition, said Chan.

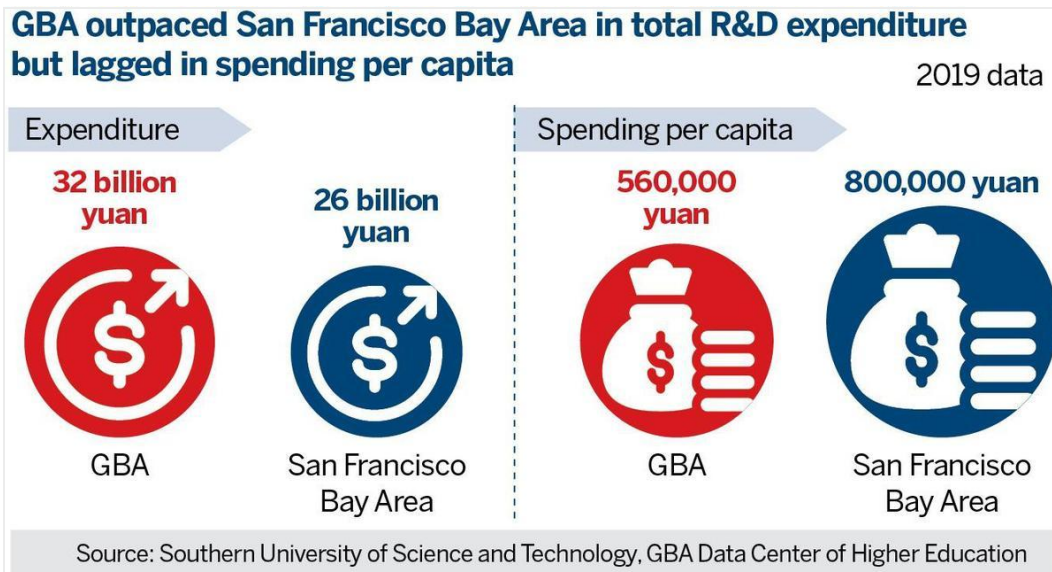
"Collaboration with the mainland will help drive high-quality development and breakthroughs for mainland universities mirroring Hong Kong's flexible and forward-looking education system," he added.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) is the third cooperative university between the mainland and Hong Kong approved by the Ministry of Education. That follows UIC in 2005, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) in 2014.

The mix of the first group of undergraduate students at HKUST (GZ) is 125 from the mainland, 12 from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and three from abroad. They will commence at the Guangzhou campus in Nansha district of the Guangdong provincial capital next month.

Such cooperation is accelerating with the City University of Hong Kong (Dongguan), the University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen), Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Foshan) and Hong Kong Metropolitan University (Zhaoqing) in the pipeline.





### Policy alignment, talent mobility

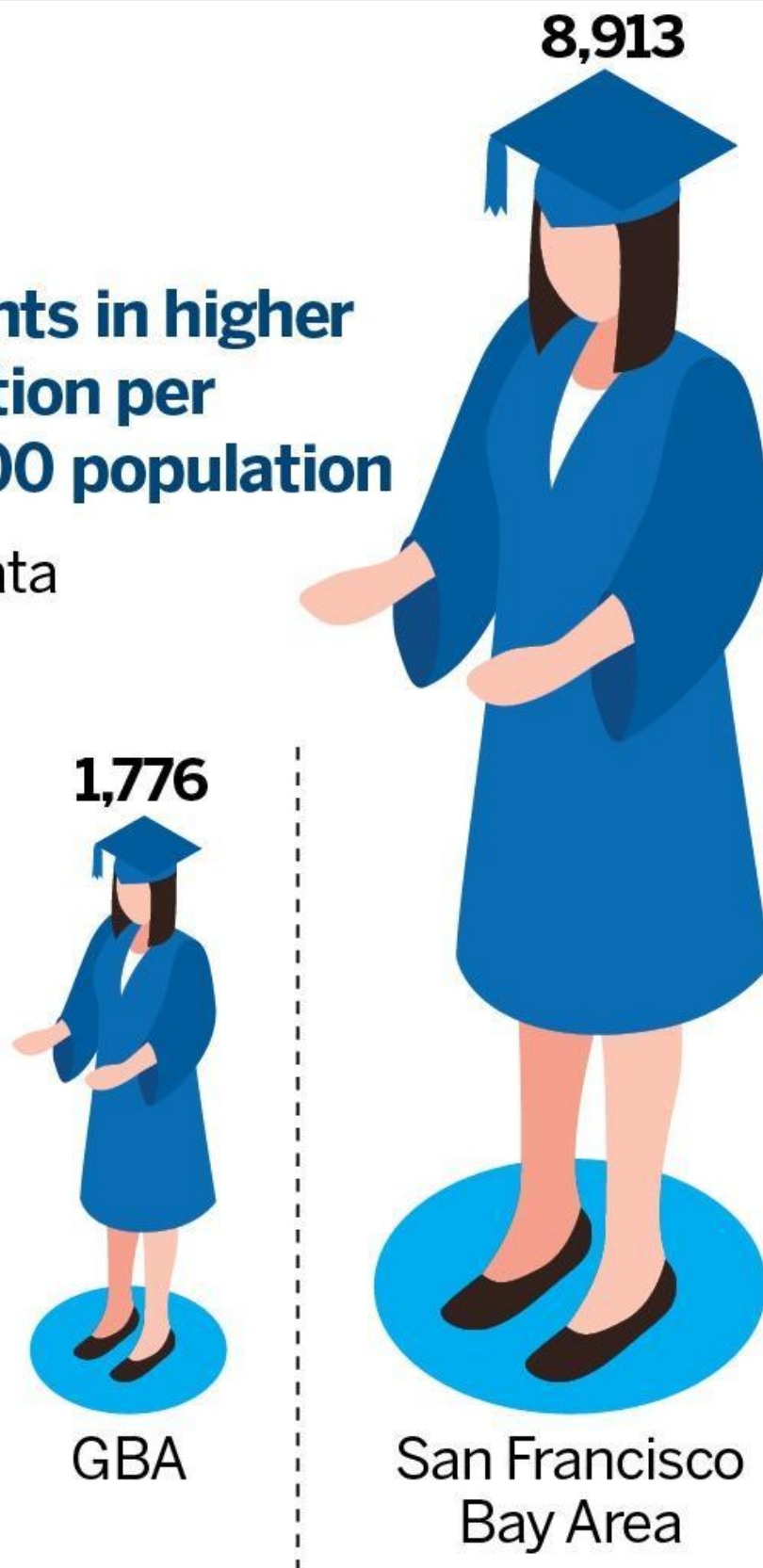
Higher education in the GBA requires guarantees in stable policy and talent mobility, noted Chow Man-kong, associate vice-president (institutional advancement) of the Education University of Hong Kong. "Policy stability is essential to let people know that educational cooperation in the GBA is long term and in-depth," said Chow.

Funding is the "biggest limitation" for Hong Kong universities to operate across the border, said Chow, who is also a member of Hong Kong's Legislative Council. "If Hong Kong's subsidized institutions want to operate on the mainland, they cannot use funding from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government. They must find other funding sources, such as donations or bank loans." Chow said the government should provide financial support to those universities, instead of expecting them to raise funds.

"Policy coordination is the most serious challenge facing mainland and Hong Kong universities in the process of collaboration," said Victor Kwok, education and youth researcher at Our Hong Kong Foundation.

## Students in higher education per 100,000 population

2020 data

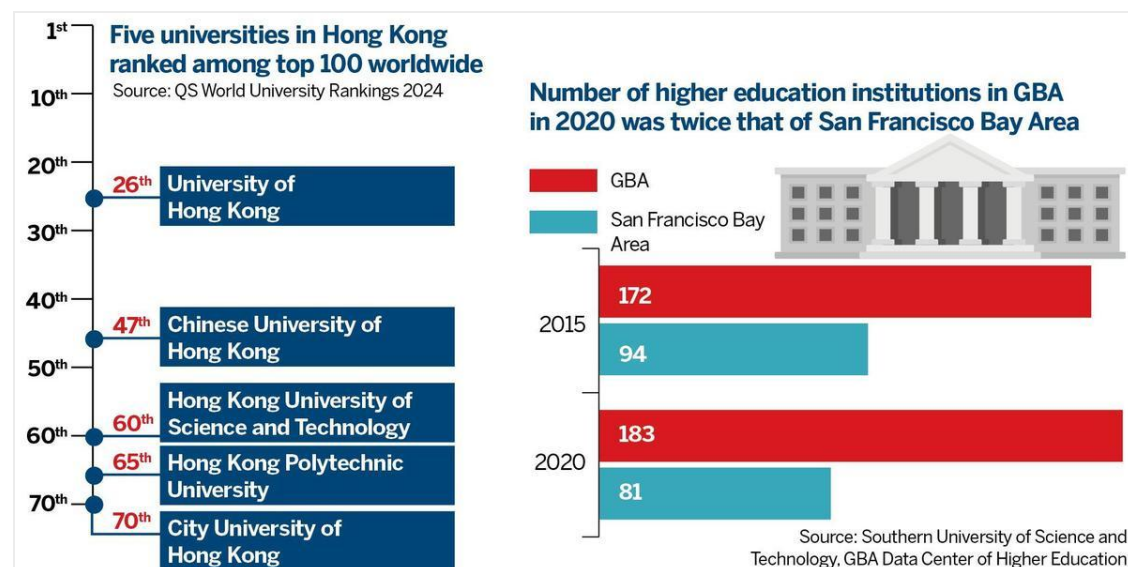


Source: Southern University of Science and Technology, GBA Data Center of Higher Education

"It is necessary to create a win-win situation by addressing policy issues that need to be better aligned," said Kwok. The issues range from courses offered, personnel placement, mutual recognition of degrees, taxation and visas.

The positioning and development goals of universities affect cross-border cooperation. "Some universities have a clear development blueprint and complement partner strengths, but overlapping courses should be streamlined," noted Kwok.

"Talent mobility is also very important. We need to strengthen communication on population and talent policies, encourage talent from Hong Kong and the mainland to study, work, and set up enterprises across the border. Meanwhile, we need to increase internship opportunities for students, and introduce better human resources policies to build youth confidence in the value of higher education in the GBA," added Chow.



## Quota restrictions

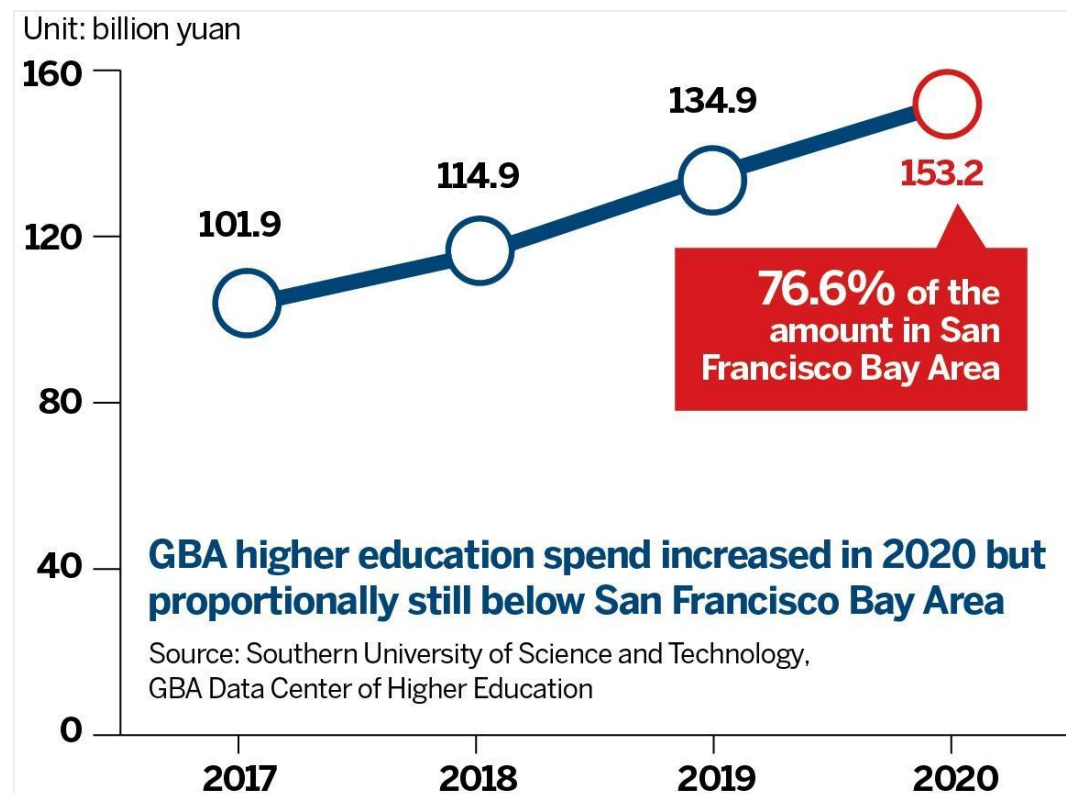
Hong Kong's publicly funded universities set a 20 percent quota on the admission of first-year-first-degree nonlocal students, or 3,000 places, a policy Chow believes should be reformed.

"This policy itself is unreasonable. Other major study-abroad countries such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand do not have such protectionist measures. It is not appropriate for Hong Kong to implement such protectionism, and it must be dismantled," stressed Chow.

He suggested increasing the proportion of nonlocal students, as demographics show a decline in the young population. There are reports that the University Grants Committee in Hong Kong plans to raise the nonlocal student quota to 40 percent in the 2024-25 academic year.



Kwok urged the cooperating universities to consider double degree programs, for students to earn mutual recognition of credits. "Through double-degree programs, universities from Hong Kong and the mainland can provide complementary resources, promoting talent flow in the GBA. The ultimate goal is to foster a university ecosystem in the region, and attract global young talent," he said.



### Global ranking

In the 2022 Third-party University Ranking Indices, of the 1,905 universities covered, 157 are in the world's four bay areas - New York Bay Area, San Francisco Bay Area, Tokyo Bay Area and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao GBA, accounting for 8.24 percent of the total.

The GBA ranked second in the index with 49.66 points, behind the New York Bay Area, which scored 100 points. Tokyo and San Francisco bay areas ranked third and fourth, at 44.44 points and 41.64 points, respectively.

Twenty-four universities in the GBA made it onto the list, with two ranking among the Top 100 worldwide - the University of Hong Kong at 67th place and the Chinese University of Hong Kong at 83rd.

## Key factors to develop cross-border campuses



### **Institutional integration**

- Aligning academic standards and requirements with the parent institution
- Collaborative leadership
- Progress is tracked, monitored, and supported by the home campus



### **Host region's support and regulatory environment**

- The flexibility of adapting to changing needs and capabilities
- Positive working relationships with local regulators and complying with local regulations



### **Academics and resources**

- Active collaboration between the parent institution and the branch campus
- Avoid “flying faculty” mode; Introduce academic staff development
- Financial sustainability
- Track and engage branch campus' alumni



### **Student experience**

- Perceive students to be international or internationally minded, with an openness to new models of education
- More diverse areas (e.g., program offerings, staff models) in line with local needs and norms
- Student mobility between different campuses in order to take advantage of different academic programs or cultural experiences

Source: The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education,  
the Cross-Border Education Research Team

## **Inno-tech ecosystem**

With outstanding academic strengths, the GBA can develop global leadership in innovation and technology. Much effort is needed for Hong Kong and other cities in the region to fully exploit their strengths, observed Chan.

"Hong Kong's universities are not short of research achievements, but they are often confined to the academic stage. After the publication of papers in world-class journals, the process seems to halt, with no effective commercialization." Chan highlighted the need to ally with mainland cities in the GBA, to leverage their industrial chains to turn ideas into real products.

The scholar called for a review of the university appraisal system to encourage staff to move beyond research. "Instead of focusing on how many papers they have published, more attention should be paid to contribution to social progress, and the improvement of people's livelihoods," asserted Chan.



## Collaboration between Hong Kong and mainland on establishing universities

Three collaborative universities between Hong Kong and the mainland are currently operating in the GBA.

### 2005

- **Beijing Normal University-Hong Kong Baptist University United International College established in Zhuhai**



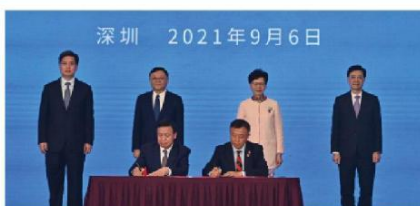
### 2019

- **Hong Kong Polytechnic University** signed a memorandum of understanding with Foshan government to establish its Foshan campus.



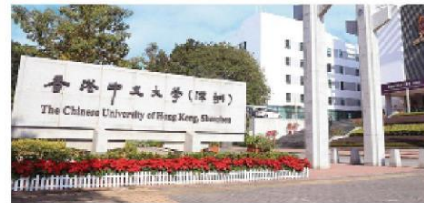
### 2021

- **University of Hong Kong** signed a memorandum of understanding with Shenzhen government to establish its Shenzhen campus.



### 2014

- **Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) established**



### 2020

- **Hong Kong Metropolitan University\*** signed collaboration agreements with Zhaoqing government and Zhaoqing University to establish a new campus in Zhaoqing.



\*Previously known as the Open University of Hong Kong

### 2022

- **City University of Hong Kong (Dongguan)** received preparatory approval from the Ministry of Education. The first phase of the Dongguan campus was completed this month.
- **Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) commenced operation.**



## **Gap persists**

The Higher Education and Economic Development Report of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao, Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, and Yangtze River Delta Region - published last year by the Greater Bay Area Data Center of Higher Education at Southern University of Science and Technology in Shenzhen, recorded 18 percent growth from 2010 to 2020 of higher education institutions in the GBA.

The 11-city cluster GBA had 183 in 2020, an increase of 11 from 2015. The San Francisco Bay Area, meanwhile, registered 81 in 2020, dropping by 13 from 2015. According to the report, the GBA had 1,776 people studying in higher education institutions for every 100,000 people. That is 20 percent of the San Francisco Bay ratio of 8,913 per 100,000.

The GBA committed 32 billion yuan (\$4.39 billion) to research and development in 2019, higher than San Francisco Bay Area's 26 billion yuan. But the per capita average R&D spending was 560,000 yuan, compared with 800,000 yuan for the San Francisco Bay Area.

Government coordination and policy alignment need to improve the links between cities of the GBA, to raise the comparative advantages for the benefit of their populations and economies.

Chen Yuting and Lin Zhiyi contributed to this story.



Hong Kong's universities are not short of research achievements, but they are often confined to the academic stage. After the publication of papers in world-class journals, the process seems to halt, with no effective commercialization. Instead of focusing on how many papers they have published, more attention should be paid to contribution to social progress, and the improvement of people's livelihoods."

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**Victor Kwok**, , education and youth reseacher at Our Hong Kong Foundation



# Huai Jinpeng visits New Zealand for education events

By Zheng Caixiong | CHINA DAILY | Updated: 2023-08-19 06:58

Chinese Minister of Education Huai Jinpeng led a delegation to New Zealand from August 16 to 19, receiving a warm welcome by the New Zealand education sector. This visit is expected to implement the important consensus reached by Chinese President Xi Jinping and New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins and promote pragmatic educational cooperation between China and New Zealand.

Prime Minister Hipkins met with Minister Huai and praised the positive impacts of educational cooperation on relations between the two countries. Minister Huai and his New Zealand counterpart Jan Tinetti co-hosted the 11th China–New Zealand Educational Consultation Mechanism meeting, which aimed to increase cooperation between the two countries in areas of preschool education, vocational education, higher education and Chinese language education.

Minister Huai also attended and addressed the New Zealand International Education Conference (NZIEC) 2023. In his speech, Huai introduced China's vision for educational development as well as its educational achievements and proposed an initiative for international cooperation. He also visited Lincoln University, Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Canterbury, Unitec Institute of Technology, Burnside High School, and Springfield School, where he exchanged views with local school principals and university leaders. Additionally, he met with Christchurch Mayor Phil Mager and participated in a tree planting event in celebration of New Zealand author, poet, and humanitarian Rewi Alley.



Relevant officers from the Chinese Embassy and Consulates in New Zealand attended these activities.

# Foreign students relish life, opportunities in China

By Zou Shuo | China Daily Global | Updated: 2023-08-22 07:14



*Students attempt Chinese calligraphy at the Confucius Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa, during a United Nations Chinese Language Day event on April 19.*

In recent years, China has welcomed a growing number of students from overseas, especially from the BRICS countries, in part due to the five nations' close economic and trade cooperation and international exchanges.

With its long history, rich culture and warm and friendly people, studying in China provides a great opportunity for personal development, according to Brazilian Igor Eduardo Fortes Li.

The 29-year-old is a postgraduate student at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing, and has lived in China for 15 years.

"China has huge potential for development, and China's economy, in particular, has made remarkable achievements during the 40-something years of reform and opening-up," he said.

"The Belt and Road Initiative is a wise initiative to better realize a community with a shared future for mankind. It is full of the wisdom of the Chinese civilization, which is not hegemonic, and in which all are equal. We all work together to improve our lives."

Russian student Victoria Bonkaeva, 24, is an undergraduate student at Beijing Language and Culture University.

She has been learning Chinese for about nine years and her interest in the language was first piqued while watching Chinese TV shows and listening to Chinese songs.

Like many foreign students when they first come to China, Bonkaeva thought she might struggle adjusting to her new life, but her fears were quickly put to rest.

"China is developing very rapidly technologically and economically. I like the way the Alipay payment system works, you can pay electronically almost everywhere," she said.

Technology makes everyday life very easy, so you can buy tickets for an event, shop online and get anything delivered via various apps, she added.

Fellow Russian, Anastasia Kalgonova, a postgraduate student at Beijing International Studies University said she loves China and thinks the people are smart and hospitable.

"China has developed rapidly. In terms of technology, I believe China is the closest to what I've read in science fiction novels," she said.

Kalgonova, 29, said she was also impressed by China's poverty alleviation efforts, which she has seen the results of firsthand after visiting the Ningxia Hui autonomous region.

Under the Belt and Road Initiative, many international students have gained the opportunity to study in China and they have become a bridge between their home country and China, she said.

The initiative has been effective and benefited China and the world, she added.

Irina Kazak, a Russian doctoral student at Beijing Jiaotong University, decided to come to China to study because the country offers excellent educational opportunities and has become a leading global economic and technological power.

China has become a leader in artificial intelligence, electronics and information technology. This creates immense opportunities for innovation and the development of new technologies, said the 26-year-old.

She said she was particularly impressed by the development of the transportation infrastructure, especially high-speed trains and the subway, which provide fast and convenient transportation.

The BRI promotes economic cooperation among countries and the creation of a sustainable world. It also helps strengthen connections among peoples and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and experience, which are key factors in achieving peace and prosperity, she said