



Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions

Country Brief: Hong Kong

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About the British Council

The British Council was founded to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world. The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. We call this work cultural relations.

We work in over 100 countries, connecting millions of people with the United Kingdom through programmes and services in the English language, the Arts, Education and Society. We believe these are the most effective means of engaging with others, and we have been doing this work since 1934.

www.britishcouncil.org

About Plymouth University

Plymouth University is one of the leading modern universities in the UK, ranked in the top seven institutions under the age of fifty by Times Higher Education. The University was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in 2012, and was the first in the world to be awarded the Social Enterprise Mark in recognition of working as a genuine social enterprise, caring for communities, and protecting the planet. The study has been led by SERIO, an applied research unit based at Plymouth University, in collaboration with colleagues from the Institution's Futures Entrepreneurship Centre.

Using this report

Overview

This research seeks to identify the benefits and challenges of partnership between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs) with a particular focus on those operating within an international context. Specifically it explores:

- Existing partnerships between HEIs and social enterprise across twelve countries, spanning four continents;
- The benefits of existing cooperation between social enterprise and HEIs;
- The impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders; and,
- The role of HEIs in supporting an increased awareness of social entrepreneurship as a career option, and in assisting start-ups and early growth.

In May 2016, the British Council published the core research report¹ emanating from this study - *'Social Enterprise in a Global Context: The Role of Higher Education Institutions'* – which placed a deliberate focus on the macro international landscape for engagement between HEIs and social enterprise. In contrast, this report on Hong Kong provides a specific country focus, enabling a more granular view of social enterprise activity among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A similar report has been produced for each of the eleven other countries that participated in this study.

It is expected that the findings of this research will:

- Facilitate dialogue, networking and knowledge exchange, opening up avenues for greater international cooperation between HEIs, and a stronger global narrative on social value and the contribution of this activity to achieving social development goals.
- Assess and promote the role of HEIs in social enterprises and the benefits of existing co-operation, based upon an analysis of opportunities and challenges related to collaboration.
- Provide a body of evidence which supports and informs further research and collaboration opportunities.

All research outputs from this study, including this report, will be made available on the British Council Social Enterprise webpage: www.britishcouncil.org/society/social-enterprise/reports

¹ Referred to hereon after as 'the global research report'.

Introduction

Outlining the research

This research is set against a context of global growth in higher education, and seeks to understand and enhance the role of international cooperation between higher education institutions (HEIs) and social enterprises (SEs). The study, led by Plymouth University for the British Council, is one of the first to attempt to identify the range of HEI activity in the social enterprise sector. Specifically, the study maps and explores existing partnerships between HEIs and SE; the benefits of existing cooperation; and the impact of such cooperation on a range of stakeholder groups, such as students, social entrepreneurs, and funders.

One of the challenges of conducting social enterprise research on a global level is that the term is governed by different legal frameworks, terminology, and cultural approaches. For this study, the researchers adopted the www.socialenterprise.org.uk definition, which considers a social enterprise to be:

“A business that trades to tackle social problems, improve communities, people’s life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community”

Study approach

The global research was undertaken with over two hundred HEIs drawn from Canada, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, United Kingdom and the USA. These twelve countries were selected to provide a wide range of different geographical locations, higher education structures, and levels of economic development and rates of growth. The study comprised three core methodological stages:

Approach	Overview
Desk-based review of social enterprise activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This included academic and grey literature, as well as media sources such as HEI and news websites, blogs, and third party partner organisation websites. ▪ The review was supported by consultations with British Council representatives from each country and explored country-specific issues such as variations in the definition of social enterprise, legal structures for the sector, and challenges to growth.
HEI survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An online survey was sent to all known HEIs in each country to map social enterprise activity, and to explore the benefits and challenges of partnership working. ▪ The survey was disseminated to 993 HEIs, yielding a return of 205 (a 21% response rate).
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-depth semi-structured interviews with up to three HEIs from each country, to capture their social enterprise activity and partnerships in more detail. ▪ This data was combined with analysis from the preceding two stages to formulate a series of case studies of practice.

With specific regard to Hong Kong, twelve HEIs were invited to complete a survey, yielding a return of five – a response of 42%. Where possible, the survey was targeted toward named contacts with knowledge of, or responsibility for social enterprise at their institution. Whilst this approach was felt to provide the most rounded view of cross-institutional engagement and practice, it should be noted that any views expressed may not necessarily reflect the official stance of their HEI.

The survey findings have been exemplified and elaborated upon through the inclusion of case studies of practice from three Hong Kong HEIs, and consultation with representatives from the British Council team in Hong Kong.

The British Council's social enterprise programme

Social enterprises address social and environmental problems through innovative solutions that improve people's lives in our communities and societies. The British Council's global social enterprise programme draws on the UK experience in social enterprise to promote its growth around the world. We build capacity in the sector, forge international networks, and support policy leaders to create ecosystems in which social enterprise and social investment can thrive. Our work supports positive social change, inclusive growth and sustainable development while building trust and creating opportunities between the UK and other countries.

The landscape for social enterprise

Country overview

Comprising 26 institutions, Hong Kong's higher education system is widely recognised for its high quality and boasts a number of world-class institutions, offering international visibility for the sector.² In 2013, there were over 300,000 student enrolments representing around 4.2% of the total population in Hong Kong.³ This is higher than the average number of student enrolments as a proportion of the total population across the 12 study countries described in this research, with the mean average across the 12 countries being 3.6%.

In Hong Kong the demand for higher education currently outstrips supply and the market has insufficient places for all applicants, driving a trend for overseas education. In 2013, almost half of those qualifying for a publicly funded university place were not admitted (13,000 of 28,418 students)⁴ and the number of publicly funded university places has not increased since the mid-1990s. A budget surplus means the government has had extra funding available to develop the education sector² – in contrast to other countries such as Greece who have experienced severe budget cuts in recent years – however, this funding is predominantly being used to expand the private rather than public education sector, which has attracted some criticism.

Approach to social enterprise

Through desk-based research and consultations with in-country representatives, we understand that the term 'social enterprise' has been used in Hong Kong for around a decade. Development of the sector has occurred particularly over the past five years with strong government support.⁵ The Hong Kong government has deliberately avoided defining the social enterprise sector with any form of rigidity; citing the importance of self-regulation and encouraging a flexible, market-led approach.⁴ Feedback from our consultations supports this notion with the view that the government does not want to hinder innovation by legally defining a social enterprise; rather they want to enable an eco-system that is led by social entrepreneurs themselves.

There is a trend for SEs in Hong Kong to stem predominantly from charitable organisations rather than as new start-up companies. In 2014, a report found that only 37% of responding SEs were registered as companies whereas 60% were registered as, or part of, charitable organisations.⁵ Feedback from our consultations suggests that this may be related to a cultural norm in Hong Kong where low-risk ventures are favoured over those that are new and the likelihood of success uncertain. Where established charitable organisations have a steady income stream, they have opportunities to test other forms of income-generation without the same risks that independent start-ups face.

The 'work integration social enterprise' (WISE) is a popular form of SE in Hong Kong and refers to ventures that provide meaningful employment for socially disadvantaged groups, facilitating their integration into society. The WISE is considered a useful tool to address issues of poverty alleviation and social exclusion in Hong Kong and is widely supported by both Government and non-governmental organisations.⁴ Although the WISE might be the oldest form of social enterprise

² British Council (2014). Country Brief Hong Kong: Education Intelligence. British Council: London

³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2016). Enrolment by level of education. Available at: http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT_DS

⁴ Time Out (2013). 'Hong Kong's growing shortage of university places'. Available at: <http://www.timeout.com.hk/big-smog/features/60578/hong-kongs-growing-shortage-of-university-places.html>

⁵ Home Affairs Bureau and the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee (2014). Research Study on the Social Enterprise Sector in Hong Kong - to capture the Existing Landscape of the Social Enterprises in Hong Kong. Available at: http://www.social-enterprises.gov.hk/file_manager/pdf/research/capture_existing_landscape_se_hk_eng.pdf

in Hong Kong, more recently there has been an increase in the numbers of ventures addressing diverse societal needs such as protecting the environment and caring for the elderly.

Support for social enterprise

Although non-restrictive in their approach, the government are a pivotal source of support for social enterprise in Hong Kong and they are the main source of funding for individual enterprises and associated SE-support organisations.⁴ Two of the most prominent government start-up finance programmes are the 'Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership' Programme and the 'Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities through Small Enterprise' Project. The former seeks to promote sustainable poverty prevention and alleviation, providing seed grants to non-profit organisations for them to set up their own SEs; and the latter enhances employment prospects for people with disabilities through the direct creation of work opportunities for this group.

In addition, the Home Affairs Department established the Social Enterprises Promotion Unit which exists to promote and support the development of social enterprises in Hong Kong. They implement programmes and initiatives with the aim to strengthen SE support services. For example, the Social Enterprises Partnership Programme is a scheme facilitating collaboration between different sectors of the community under which SEs receive business advisory services and mentorship from professional and business volunteers. Similarly, the Social Enterprise Training Programme aims to raise the operational capabilities of the SE sector by providing entrepreneurs with practical and management training. The Social Enterprise Awards scheme is also run by this unit, giving recognition to successful Hong Kong social enterprises, encouraging the sharing of best practice, and boosting public awareness of the sector.

The role of HEIs

Whilst the government is the key source of funding for SEs and SE-support organisations, HEIs in Hong Kong play a prominent role in developing and promoting the sector. They provide support for capacity building and cross-disciplinary exposure; working alongside the government, welfare and business sectors to enhance and strengthen the provision of support for social enterprise.⁴ The Inter-University Social Entrepreneurial Taskforce, a collaboration facilitated by the British Council and Education for Good CIC, comprises academics and researchers from Hong Kong's eight government-funded universities. Along with an international advisory board of members from the UK, USA, Germany and India, the taskforce initiate inter-university and cross-disciplinary research, teaching and learning; hoping to learn from global best practice and integrate social entrepreneurship into their courses and programmes.

HEIs are also undertaking capacity building programmes, both independently and as partners in multi-sectoral partnerships. The Hong Kong Social Enterprise Challenge was devised by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and is at the frontier of educating students and the public about social enterprise. Students pitch their business ideas and are trained to participate in the work of social enterprise, receiving training and mentorship to develop as future social entrepreneurs. Wofoo Social Enterprises provide support to various societal issues such as youth development, elderly care, and humanitarian services. They run the Wofoo Leaders' Network, a higher education student organisation spanning the breadth of Hong Kong's higher education system which promotes social entrepreneurship amongst young people, and seeks to act as a bridge between professionals and students.

Overview of social enterprise activity

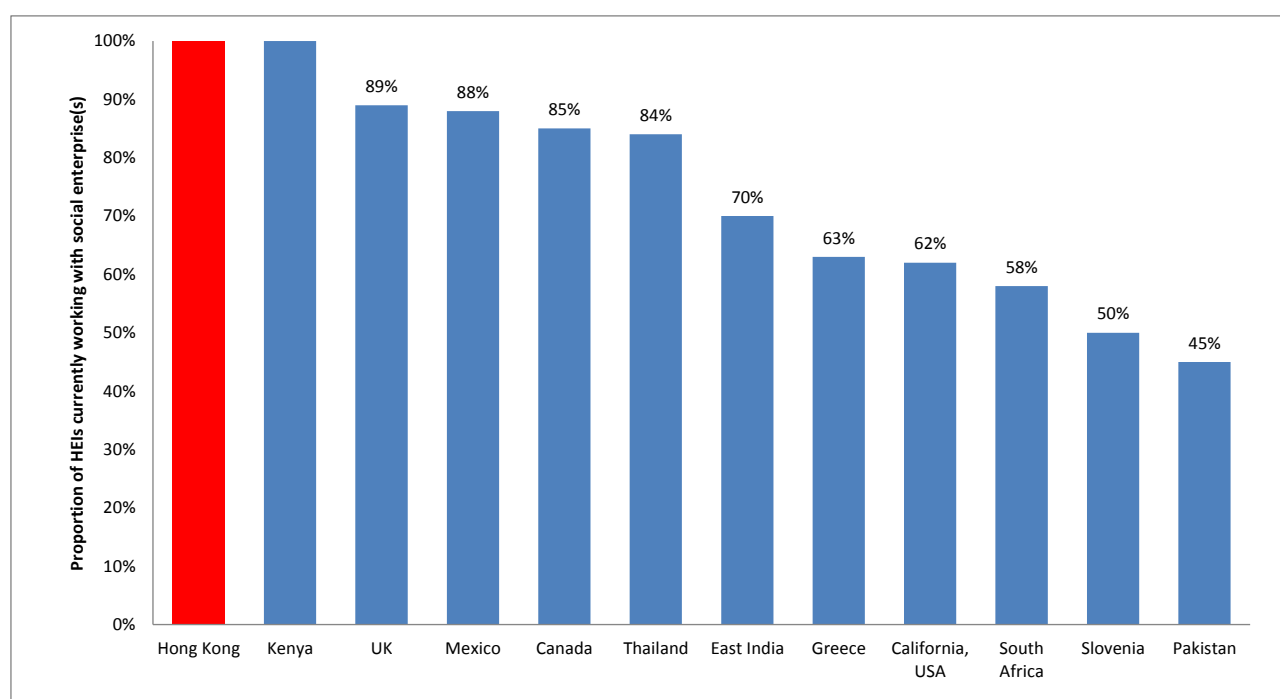
Introduction

This section firstly summarises the scale and characteristics of HEI and SE partnerships in Hong Kong, followed by a review of priority areas, and discussion on the benefits and approaches to supporting social enterprise. Where appropriate, the analysis draws on findings from the eleven other countries of focus in order to provide a comparator position to Hong Kong (see 'Using this report').

The scale of social enterprise activity

Social enterprise activity amongst Hong Kong HEIs was found to be commonplace. As illustrated in Chart 1, although the survey yielded a relatively small sample from Hong Kong (5), all of the responding HEIs had active partnerships with social enterprise – the highest proportional concentration of HEI/SE activity across all study countries alongside Kenya. This wealth of current HEI engagement with social enterprise potentially reflects the aforementioned supportive role that HEIs play in promoting SE in Hong Kong (see 'The landscape for social enterprise').

Chart 1: Proportion of institutions from each country currently working with social enterprises



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016
Base: 205

With regard to the number of active partnerships for each of the responding Hong Kong HEIs, there was no obvious trend; one indicated they worked with between one and five social enterprises; one stated that they had between six and ten partnerships; and two proposed the HEI had seventeen or more active partnerships.⁶

As with the findings from the global research report, the number of active social enterprise partnerships in Hong Kong was found to be diverse, and do not represent one homogenous group.

⁶ One respondent was unsure how many partnerships the HEI currently had.

However, the size of the individual social enterprise could go some way toward accounting for these differences. For example, in the global research report, one university was found to have between one and five active partnerships; but one of these was with an umbrella organisation which is home to several large scale social enterprises.

International activity

In terms of the geographical scope of engagement, three of the five responding Hong Kong HEIs reported that this included a partnership within their own country. However, three also specified their work with social enterprise(s) had included some element of international activity, such as supporting the development of incubation facilities; micro-financing; involvement in international events; knowledge exchange; and rural construction activities.

“In terms of engagement on an international level, our HEI took part in the Skoll World Forum”

“We have been involved in publication sharing with a social enterprise abroad”

“We have links with NPI Shanghai, which is a non-profit incubator that supports the third sector in China”

In terms of the scale of this international activity, two institutions reported that international SE partnerships amounted to between one and five projects, whereas one indicated that this amounted to seventeen or more projects. In addition, as a proportion of total work with social enterprise, two HEIs stated that international partnerships accounted for twenty per cent of their social enterprise engagement and activity, yet for another it accounted for ten per cent. The remaining HEI was unable to attribute a proportion for which international activity accounted for.

With regard to the key motivations for working internationally, Hong Kong HEIs tended to focus on opportunities for knowledge exchange. However, as identified on a global scale, cultural differences posed as the main barrier to international collaboration.

“We work internationally so that we can respond to requests for insights and input”

“We’re motivated to work internationally to learn good practice from others”

“Different cultures have different values, which can be a challenge when collaborating internationally”

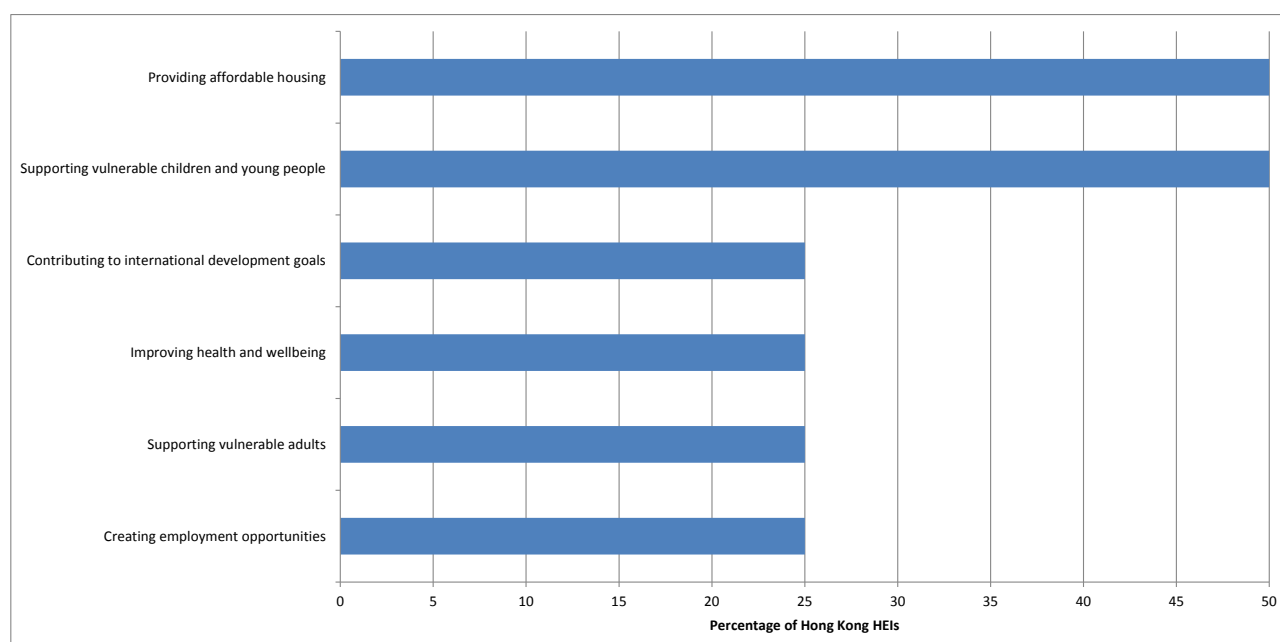
Priority areas

Notably in Hong Kong, and contrary to the global findings, the most commonly cited social purpose that Hong Kong HEIs would be most likely to support⁷ was providing affordable housing and supporting children and young people, each reported by two institutions. In comparison to the global findings, developing specific communities and creating employment opportunities were the most frequently reported social purposes. This perhaps underlines some emerging societal needs which are pertinent to Hong Kong. Furthermore, contributing to international development goals; improving health and wellbeing; supporting vulnerable adults; and creating employment opportunities were each identified as purposes likely to be supported by one HEI. The latter two social purposes appear to be in line with the popularity of WISE - a particular type of social

⁷ HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second choice they would be most likely to support.

enterprise in Hong Kong which focuses on providing meaningful employment for socially disadvantaged groups (see *'The landscape for social enterprise'*).

Chart 3: Types of social enterprise Hong Kong HEIs would be most likely to support



Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

Base: 4

Motivations for engagement

Hong Kong HEIs identified a range of motivating factors that underpinned their engagement with social enterprises. Notably, all five responding institutions indicated that they were particularly motivated⁸ to engage with social enterprise to improve the student experience. This was followed by a motivation to: address local and regional needs (cited by 3 HEIs); develop services and products (1); and build SE partnerships if such practices were part of the curriculum of some of the courses (1).

These findings were partially comparable to those found globally. Across the twelve study countries, both improving the student experience and addressing local and regional needs were identified as two of the most motivating factors underpinning HEI partnerships with social enterprise, with 45% and 50% of global HEIs selecting these motivators respectively.

“To see is to believe. When students engage with social enterprise they expand their horizons, building their understanding of the operation and challenges of social enterprise”

“Through partnership working with social enterprise, we are able to offer support and care to local communities”

Working with and supporting social enterprise

Hong Kong HEIs currently working with social enterprise(s) were asked to indicate the ways in which this took place, and to exemplify the associated type of support they provide.

⁸ HEIs nominating each variable as their first or second most motivating factor.

As shown in Table 1, (and in common with the findings from the global research report), by far the most common approach was through a project, partnership or joint venture, cited by all five responding Hong Kong institutions. This was exemplified by the provision of: expertise, training, and collaboration or research opportunities, which were cited by all five responding HEIs. In addition, four Hong Kong HEIs offered placement students, access to facilities such as buildings and equipment, and promoted goods and services. A further three institutions specified that they provided a business support service accessible to all types of venture, access to funding, and took part in the purchasing of social enterprise goods and services. Finally, two institutions indicated that they also provided a dedicated social enterprise support service.

Somewhat echoing the findings from the global research report, the joint second most commonly cited support approaches were through supporting student-led social enterprises, provision of incubation space where new social enterprises can develop, and institutional commitment to working with or supporting social enterprises in the HEIs mission or strategy, each reported by four Hong Kong HEIs. This was followed by two institutions that held institutional membership of a social enterprise network and also developed HEI or staff-led social enterprises.

Table 1: Approaches to working with social enterprise⁹

Approach	Percentage	
	Hong Kong	Global
A project, partnership or other joint activity with one or more social enterprise(s)	100%	96%
Student led social enterprises	80%	78%
Incubation space/ facility where new social enterprise(s) can develop	80%	68%
Institutional commitment to working with/ supporting social enterprises in mission/ strategy	80%	81%
Institutional membership of a social enterprise network	60%	70%
HEI/ Staff-led social enterprises	60%	67%

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

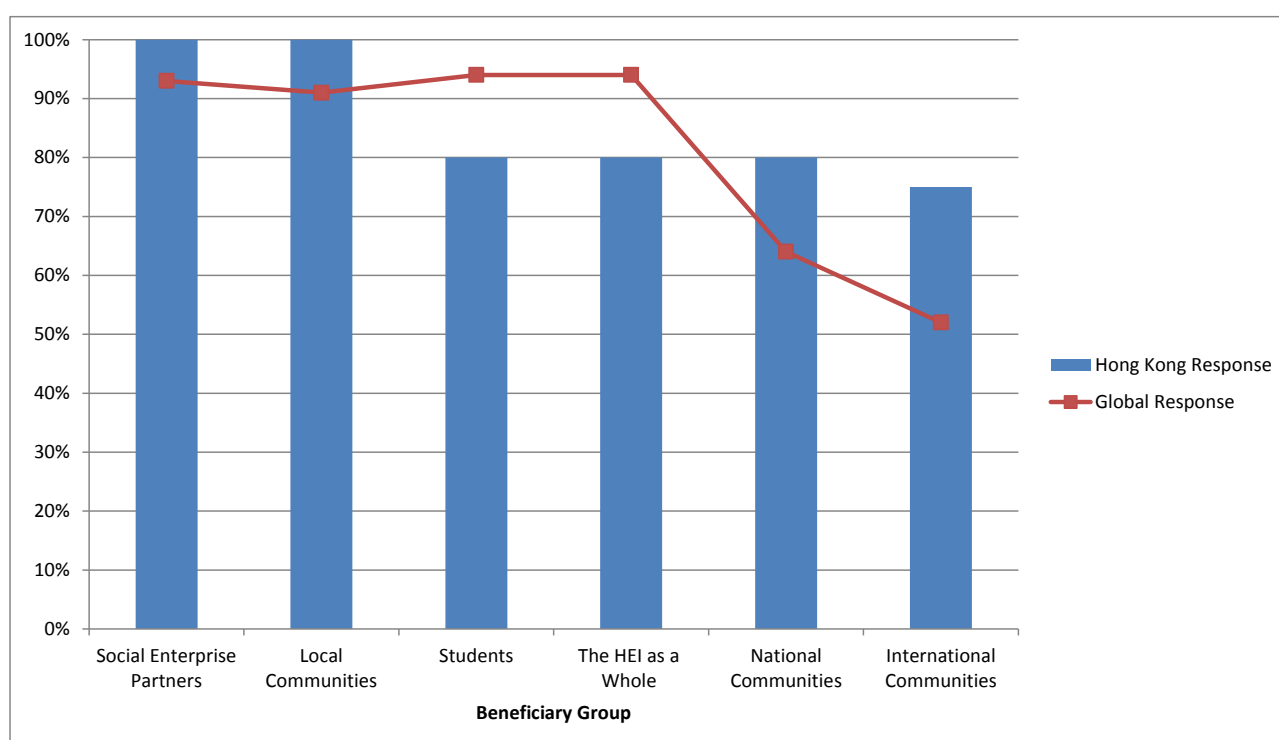
Base: 5

Benefits of partnership working

Hong Kong HEIs identified that their work with social enterprise(s) had created benefits for a range groups. This is presented in Chart 4, and benchmarked against findings from the global research report, indicated by the red trend line.

Hong Kong HEIs identified social enterprise partners and local communities as the primary beneficiaries of partnership working – both of which were highlighted by all five HEIs. This was broadly in line with global findings of 93% and 91% respectively. A total of four Hong Kong institutions identified students and the HEI as a whole as a primary beneficiaries, which was slightly lower than the global response for both groups. In contrast, however, institutions in Hong Kong provided more recognition for both national and international communities (each cited by four institutions) than found on a global scale, where only 64% and 52% identified these groups respectively. This potentially is a reflection of the efforts of Hong Kong institutions in working internationally; sharing global best practice and conducting cross-disciplinary research (see '*The landscape for social enterprise*').

⁹ N.B. Percentages have been provided so that a global comparison can be made, however caution should be exercised when interpreting this data because of the small sample from Hong Kong.

Chart 4: Hong Kong views regarding the key beneficiaries of HEI/SE partnership

Source: Social Enterprise in a Global Context Survey, 2016

Hong Kong Base: 5, except 'International Communities' where B=4

Global Base: 157, except 'Social Enterprise Partners' where B=156; 'Students' and 'Local Communities' where B=155; and 'National Communities' and 'International Communities' where B=148

Embedding social enterprise in higher education

Reflecting findings from the eleven other participating countries, all five responding Hong Kong HEIs used social enterprise to support the delivery of extracurricular activities. Notably, a further three indicated that they offered accredited social enterprise courses, and also involved SE in the delivery of curriculum teaching. However, unlike the 30% of HEIs globally, no Hong Kong HEIs incorporated SE across all courses.

Good practice in developing partnerships

Introduction

As noted previously, the research sought, in part, to facilitate dialogue and knowledge exchange, and to inform further collaboration opportunities (see *'Using this report'*). In support of these objectives, the survey asked HEIs to share examples of good practice stemming from their experience of developing partnerships with social enterprises.

HEIs in Hong Kong provided a range of good practice approaches that could be shared more widely, which were broadly categorised as follows: focus on business sustainability and impact; communication and knowledge exchange; and logistical flexibility. These are discussed in turn, and exemplified by quotes from responding institutions.

Focus on business sustainability and impact

While much of what HEIs in Hong Kong reported reflects the global findings, there was a particular focus on the need to understand and grow the business aspect of a social enterprise first. HEIs stressed the importance of developing a sustainable business in order for social impacts to follow and have longevity.

“An important element of good practice is that social enterprises must always be a viable and sustainable business. Ensure the business is sustainable first, then the social impact will be realised over a longer term”

Communication and knowledge exchange

In line with global findings, communication between social enterprise partners and openness in sharing knowledge were also highlighted as good practice approaches by HEIs in Hong Kong. As articulated in the global research report, it is essential that HEIs take the time to understand both the issues being addressed by any given social enterprise, and the socio-economic and cultural context in which it sits.

Logistical flexibility

Another distinctive piece of advice offered by HEIs in Hong Kong to those looking to embark on a partnership with a social enterprise was to assess the HEIs own internal systems such as admin processes and adapt them to reflect the often more innovative ways of working inherent with the SE sector. Embracing change in this way is far more likely to result in a smooth partnership.

“Consider the protocols inside the HEI before starting a partnership with social enterprise, and be open to changing them so as to fit with the flexible and creative initiatives”

Summary

In Hong Kong the social enterprise sector is growing and becoming more established. A common form of enterprise here is the 'WISE', providing work integration opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Despite actively avoiding defining the sector with any legal regulations, the government is a strong source of support and a key point of funding for social enterprises in Hong Kong. In addition, HEIs provide various pathways of support, engaging in capacity building programmes, research opportunities, and partnerships with social enterprises. Indeed, this was reflected in the fact that 100% of responding HEIs from Hong Kong indicated that they had an active partnership at the time of the survey, as opposed to the 75% level of active engagement across all twelve study countries.

In terms of the geographical scope of engagement, three responding Hong Kong HEIs specified that this included a partnership within their own country, whilst three also stated that their partnership involved international activity. Motivations to develop partnerships with social enterprise primarily revolved around improving the student experience and addressing local and regional needs. Institutions in Hong Kong also reported how the inclusion of social enterprise within the curriculum would further encourage them to develop partnerships, as would the opportunity to develop goods and services. .

Indeed, reflecting the desire to address local and regional needs, the most commonly cited social purposes that Hong Kong HEIs were most likely to support were providing affordable housing and supporting vulnerable children and young people. Furthermore, in line with the popularity of WISE in Hong Kong, institutions were also drawn to supporting the creation of employment opportunities and supporting vulnerable adults.

With regard to the ways in which Hong Kong HEIs approach their work with social enterprise(s), all responding institutions reported that this was through a project, partnership or joint venture, such as the provision of expertise, training and/or research opportunities. This was followed by the support of student-led social enterprise; provision of incubation space; and institutional commitment to working with or supporting social enterprise, which were all reported by all but one institution. All of these approaches were generally in line with the global findings, however, Hong Kong HEIs were less likely to hold an institutional membership of a social enterprise network, or support staff-led social enterprises than HEIs globally. Notably, although improving the student experience was identified as a most motivating factor, the local community and social enterprise partners themselves were identified to be the primary beneficiaries of partnership working, as cited by all responding institutions.

Considering the future of HEI/SE partnerships in Hong Kong, although there exists an abundance of activity, there is still room for institutions to embed social enterprise into the curriculum further. All responding HEIs in Hong Kong reported using social enterprise in the delivery of extracurricular activities, and three also offered accredited social enterprise courses and involved SE in the delivery of curriculum teaching. However, there were no responding HEIs in Hong Kong who incorporated SE across all courses, which although some evidence for this was found on a global scale, is an area for development for many of the study countries. Moreover, institutions in Hong Kong are looking to further develop and widen their international reach with regard to social enterprise and in doing so will contribute to the sector through sharing global best practice and conducting cross-disciplinary research.

Case studies of practice

Case Study: The University of Hong Kong

Institution overview:

Founded in 1911, the University of Hong Kong 'HKU' is a public research university located in Pokfulam, Hong Kong. HKU is the oldest tertiary institution in Hong Kong and has subject specialisms in Engineering, Medicine, Science, Social Science and Law. Within HKU's broad mission lies a dedication to educate the next generation of globally-minded citizens, equipped with a range of skills to make a positive impact on local, national and international communities by catalysing change and contributing to social progress. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 students currently enrolled.

Approach to social enterprise:

For close to a decade, social innovation has been an emergent strategy at HKU, stimulated by initiatives taken by students and academics. They provide a raft of support services, professional advice and logistical assistance to help students experiment challenges such as sustainability, poverty and health care. HKU works with social enterprises to improve their student experience, address local, regional or national needs and to help them innovate.

Strategic support for social enterprise:

Working with social enterprises is part of HKU's strategic mission and they engage in various forms of support to advance the sector. They run an 'HKU Social Entrepreneurs' network, have projects/ partnerships with social enterprises and also run student-led and staff-led enterprises. They provide various types of physical support, including a dedicated social enterprise support service, expertise, training, access to their facilities and placement students. They collaborate on research and promote/ purchase enterprises' goods and services, such as using social enterprise-operated catering outlets on campus.

The social causes the university is most likely to support include those that provide affordable housing, contribute to international development goals, improve health and wellbeing, protect the environment and/ or support vulnerable children and young people. They create a nurturing and supportive environment where origin thinking, experimentation and risk-taking are prized and harnessed; they also raise awareness of the importance of innovation and creativity by integrating it into the curriculum and embedding it into daily activities. Their approach to embedding innovation into learning takes place across three domains: social, cultural and technological.

The benefits of social enterprise for students:

HKU perceive that working with social enterprises creates learning experiences for students. Social responsibility and service are core HKU values, and formal engagement with a global society is an expectation they place on students, who are mobilised through direct service, research, knowledge transfer, social enterprise and a vast array of community engagement activities. By providing more opportunities to take up social responsibility, students can apply classroom learning to authentic situations, address real life needs, and in many cases help the underprivileged and make a difference to their life.

Service100:

The CEDARS Student Development Department of HKU work with faculties to provide educational opportunities for students outside classrooms. CEDARS runs the Service 100 initiative which encourages students to engage with community projects related to peace and development, climate change, environmental sustainability, AIDS, fair trade, hunger and poverty alleviation, and universal education.

Contact Information: www.hku.edu.hk

Case Study: City University of Hong Kong

Institution overview:

City University of Hong Kong 'CityU', is a public research university located in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Founded in 1984, the institution became an accredited university in 1994 and aspires to become a leading global university, aiming to develop the talents of students and to create applicable knowledge in order to support social and economic advancement. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 current student enrolments.

Approach to social enterprise:

CityU have a commitment to support social enterprises as part of their mission statement, embedding teaching and application of the concept in the academic curriculum and implementing a cross-disciplinary approach in the promotion of social enterprise. They offer accredited social enterprise courses and involve social entrepreneurs in both the delivery of curriculum teaching and extracurricular activities.

Embedding social enterprise across the curriculum:

CityU implement a cross-disciplinary approach in the promotion of social enterprise throughout the academic curriculum. Schools such as the Department of Management, the Department of Asian and International Studies and the School of Law provide various social enterprise course modules such as the 'Social Innovation and Entrepreneurial Venture Exploration'; 'Changing Our Society: Turning Social Problems into Business Opportunities' and 'Corporate Social Responsibility: A New Paradigm for Sustainability'. They even introduce Computer Science students to the concept of social entrepreneurship by encouraging them to develop new technological solutions to society needs in their 'Designing Apps for Social Innovation' course.

Promoting social innovation:

Project Flame is CityU's interdisciplinary platform to promote social innovation and entrepreneurship among staff and students. The network consists of more than 30 members from 18 academic and administrative support units and functions as a community-centred Collaborative Hub for the incubation and support of social innovation and entrepreneurship. They provide incubation space, overseas scholarships and interventions, and facilitate the exchange of innovative ideas, practices and social interventions.

Various social enterprises have been initiated by Project Flame such as Hand2Spot which acts as a social enterprise model, providing a second hand item sales and collection platform in three locations across campus. CityU also invite social entrepreneurs in residence to spend time with students; sharing their experiences, conducting research, holding seminars and research and spearheading international knowledge exchanges and collaboration.

Challenges:

CityU are continually exploring new ways to work with social enterprises. In order to do this they acknowledge the need to overcome several key challenges, such as:

- A need for designated social enterprise funding sources
- Greater sharing of knowledge/ research findings between institutions
- Acknowledging different cultural contexts when working with international partners

Contact Information: www.cityu.edu.hk

Case Study: Hong Kong Baptist University

Institution overview:

Hong Kong Baptist College was founded in 1956; gaining university status and a name change in 1994. The university prides itself on its dual focus on teaching and research and encourages service to society among its staff and students. Currently, Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) has a full-time student population of around 11,000 and its main campus is located in Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong.

Approach to social enterprise:

HKBU note that they have always been supportive of social enterprises in Hong Kong and they promote the development of the sector in various ways, including: offering courses in social entrepreneurship, providing social enterprise information, training and support via their Business Entrepreneurship Support and Training (BEST) programme and supporting the establishment of on-campus social enterprises where possible.

Incubation, acceleration and business support:

The Knowledge Transfer Office at HKBU works in partnership with university staff members to proactively contribute to the community, enabling knowledge transfer from the university to meet the needs of the wider community.

Through the Knowledge Transfer Office, HKBU run several business plan competitions under the auspice of the Entrepreneurship-Challenge (E-Challenge). Student social entrepreneurs at all stages of development are encouraged to apply and winners receive funding, incubation space and networking opportunities. One of the previous winners, 'Barrier-free School' (BFS) is a social enterprise providing training and job coaching for people with disabilities in Hong Kong. Created by six HKBU students, BFS provides e-learning materials designed to be easy and accessible with high quality career-oriented course content. Through their period of incubation at HKBU, BFS were able to establish collaborations with various external partners and take part in other social enterprise competitions, promoting the company, seeking investors, and building awareness for their work.

HKBU also support the development of social enterprises developed in conjunction with their research endeavours. Led by faculty staff, the Multilingual Interpreters' and Translators' Association (MITA) was developed by HKBU staff in response to their research findings from a project exploring the language rights of ethnic minorities and their access to public services in Hong Kong. They found that there was a serious lack of medical and legal interpreters capable of serving the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong; so in response created MITA, an enterprise dedicated to the provision of medical/ legal interpreter training courses. The lead staff member on the project has been named "outstanding mentor of social enterprise" in the Friends of Social Enterprise Award Scheme organised by the government.

The benefits and challenges of working with social enterprise:

HKBU note that social enterprises stemming from the university have created both social and economic success; for the enterprise and the university itself, and students benefit from opportunities to work with social enterprises, learning how they operate and even developing as social entrepreneurs themselves.

The main barrier to working with social enterprises, as cited by HKBU, is the lack of funding opportunities for these activities. In addition, due to their lack of resources, social enterprises often lack the time to interact with universities, resulting in them missing out on useful training, guidance and information.

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