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# GO Global South Korea

## ◀ Mr Joseph Tsang Chairperson of HKACMGM

While Korean culture has literally stormed the world in recent years, its influence has lent a hand in elevating South Korea in the consciousness of Hong Kong people, with its effects that go well beyond the entertainment industry.

It is observed that more youngsters (secondary school students and graduates) have shown a strong interest in learning Korean language or even pursuing their further studies in this country.

At the same time, many private universities in South Korea are also venturing into recruiting students from Hong Kong. In light of this up-and-coming educational trend, a few core members of the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters visited 5 universities in Seoul in July 2017 to explore opportunities for collaboration.

The HKACMGM delegation was deeply impressed by the quality education and diverse fields of study available to Hong Kong students. We firmly believe that further studies in Korea will be an invaluable pathway to students in Hong Kong after they complete their secondary education.

As a result, a subsequent Korea Study Mini Expo was jointly organized by the Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters (HKACMGM) and the Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle Schools (HKCMS) on 5th and 6th January 2018 in Hong Kong.



▲ From left to right: Mr Joseph Tsang (Chairperson of HKACMGM), Ir Dr So Kwok-sang (Secretary General of HKEAA), Mr Liang Kwun Fan (Chairperson of HKCMS)

In April 2018, HKACMGM further extended our initiative by organizing a Korean University Study Tour for 33 Hong Kong school principals and teachers. It was a precious experience for these 33 local educators to witness the vibrant development of 7 different top-tier universities and interact with students from Hong Kong and learned their campus lives and career aspiration.



◀ Dr. Esther Ho  
Vice-chairperson of HKACMGM

Through the 3 encounters with Hong Kong teachers, admission officers of these Korean universities have also learnt more about our education system and multiple pathways. They are now working on different initiatives on giving generous offers to students who are interested in pursuing their further studies in their universities. Some examples are principal recommendation scheme with advance confirmed offer, scholarships and Korean language support. HKACMGM will continue our role as the bridge between South Korea and Hong Kong in these aspects.



Opening ceremony of Korea Study Mini Expo 2018 ▲



# Korea Study Mini Expo in Hong Kong

## A Testimony to Korean Influence

From the Perspective of a Careers Guidance Counselor

2018.1.5-6

◀ **Ms Caroline Sin**  
Vice-chairperson of HKACMGM

Over 600 education practitioners, parents and students flocked to the two-day Mini Expo at Pui Ching Middle School in an attempt to gain first-hand information from admission officers of 8 Korean universities. The participating universities included Ajou University, Ewha Womans University, Hangdong Global University, Hanyang University, Konkuk University, Kyung Hee University, Sogang University and Yonsei University. They are all renowned and prestigious international universities in South Korea.



To many students in Hong Kong, study options in South Korea had been a distant topic owing to the lack of information. The Mini Expo provided the public with a precious chance to explore possibilities and get informed in a very handy way, as they were allowed to meet the university representatives face-to-face on spot. A highlight of the event was the 2 parallel sessions of information talks. The first session, entitled 'Study in Korea - Opportunities and Strategies', was delivered by the university admission officers who talked about the special features of their programmes and admission requirements. Following is the second session 'Study Life in Korea: Rewards and Challenges', in which Ms Lowell Ng, a Hong Kong student currently studying at Yonsei University, shared her study pathway after she finished her secondary school in Hong Kong. The talks were well-applauded and provided insights for every participant who wished to get to know more about the study opportunities in South Korea.

During the Opening Ceremony, we had the honour to have Ir Dr So Kwok-sang, Secretary General of HKEAA, to be our guest of honour. This is also the first time our Association joined hands with the Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle Schools to run an education expo. We were heartily grateful that our event was fruitful and well-received.

A 45-page Information Pack, which features the overview of the 8 participating universities and their admission requirements, was published and distributed to all participants for free. The soft copy of the Pack can be downloaded from our Association's website



<https://www.hkacmgm.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Korea-Study-Mini-Expo-in-Hong-Kong-2018.pdf>

◀ **Ms Amanda Chan**  
Executive Committee Member of HKACMGM

The very first Korea Study Mini Expo started from the good intention of secondary school principals and teachers who are concerned about the possible pathways for Hong Kong students.

Being one of the facilitators at the Expo, I had the chance to meet representatives of Korean universities, Hong Kong parents, teachers and students. There were some observations that impressed me on those two days.

I remember a student coming with his parents who were obviously doubtful about studying in Korea. The parents did not seem to have much confidence and interest in sending their son to Korea, especially the father, probably due to the fact that Korea has never been a popular destination for studying abroad. However, the family did stay for a few hours visiting booths of various universities, asking questions and attending the introductory talks. What I saw were two caring parents who were willing to support their son by understanding the actual situation and possible difficulties that he would be facing. In the end, they left the Expo with more information, looking less puzzled but more relaxed. No matter what their final decision will be, they are going to make an informed choice because of the openness in the part of the parents.

There were also teenage girls coming in twos and threes, dressing up exactly like Korean teenagers. One could immediately tell how much they admire the Korean culture. Representatives from Korean universities even told us that some students actually chatted with them in fluent Korean! These students told us that Hong Kong lacks officially-recognized Korean courses. As a result, students who do not meet the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) requirements will have to spend at least one year studying Korean language there and pass the proficiency test before they can apply for the degree programmes. This creates hesitations, especially in terms of fees and expenses. This also leads to the discussion about the possibilities of offering such courses in Hong Kong so that the threshold can be lower.



▲ A glance at the Information Talks:  
The lecture theatre is packed with attendees

In the Introductory Talks by the Korean universities, the recurring questions that parents and students asked were related to admission requirements and lives in Korea. From the questions they asked, it was clear that there were still gaps to fill. More popular destinations like the UK, the USA, Australia and Taiwan have developed systematic application and admission procedures for Hong Kong students. Unlike them, Korean universities are still exploring ways to be familiar with the Hong Kong education and assessment system. At this point, the HKACMGM steps in and makes an effort to bridge the gap.



▶ Student sharing by Ms Lowell Ng



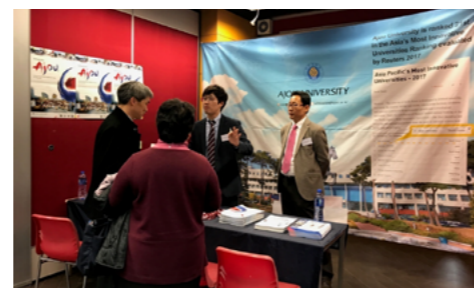
The demand of Hong Kong students studying in Korea may not be too great at the moment. However, with the Korean culture being more popular and the need for globalization in education being more widely accepted, it is worth building connection with Korean universities and exploring ways to help our students.



▲ Working committee from Korean universities, HKACMGM and HKCMS



8 Booths of the participating universities





A Connection to Universities at

# Seoul Study Programme 2018<sup>4.3-7</sup>

Organized by Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters in collaboration with The Association of Hong Kong Chinese Middle Schools

## ▼ Itinerary

● 4 April 2018 (Wed)

AM EWHA WOMANS University,  
YONSEI University  
PM HANYANG University,  
KONKUK University

● 5 April 2018 (Thu)

AM SUNGKYUNKWAN University,  
AJOU University  
PM KYUNG HEE University  
(Global Campus SUWON)

### ◀ Ms June Ho

Executive Committee Member of HKACMGM

The Korea Study Mini Expo was well-received by over 600 attendees across different schools and stakeholders. Inspired by this, we decided to organize a study tour to visit seven Korean universities in Seoul during the Easter break. Our purpose was to connect Hong Kong educators, secondary school principals and teachers, to the Korean universities so they could see for themselves the authentic pictures of these new study opportunities for their students. The visit well-served our purpose which was reflected from feedback from all participants.

Visiting seven universities within two days was a fruitful and rewarding experience, albeit a little rushed. We were offered admission talks and guided tours on campuses, displaying before our eyes the physical scenarios of the campus icons and photogenic alleys enclosed with hedges or shrubberies, and the long awaited blooming cherry blossoms. Treading on buildings of old and new on various campuses, sustaining dialogues both formal and informal between university personnel, all contributed to the unveiling of possibilities for Hong Kong students to embrace a new global study and career path.



EWHA WOMANS University /  
Dominique Perrault Architecture

The visit of EWHA amazed us with its magnificent architecture of the iconic University Campus Centre, which shone under the blue sky, permeating the legacy of pride and heritage of wisdom through this architectural expression of landscape and topography. We couldn't help taking a liberal number of photos and videos, reflecting our awe and admiration.

Meeting the heads, having the admission talks and campus tours provided us with a profound understanding of this leading women's university in Seoul.



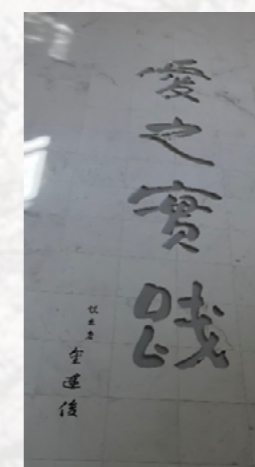
## Strolling along the 7 Visiting Universities



An Unforgettable Luncheon at  
YONSEI University

We were welcomed with an elegant Korean gourmet luncheon arranged by Yonsei University. We were able to meet the heads of different divisions of the university and given information of admissions through a talk during lunch.

An expected joy was to meet Lowell Ng again, a current 3rd year student of Yonsei majoring in Cultural Anthropology. Needless to say, her presentation and sharing in the Mini Expo in January was informative. With her presence at the lunch, teachers could chat with her regarding life and study in Yonsei. It was a real joy when one of the participating teachers recognized Lowell as one of her former girl guides under her commissioning district. It's a small world!



A Pitch from HANYANG University

The university has an emphasis on community services and knowledge applications. There was a call to students who are good at Mathematics and Natural Sciences to apply for Engineering Faculty. Students who have achieved high academic results such as grade 5 or above will be given scholarships. The school will also hold Careers Expo annually for students to seek their career opportunities.

Meeting the personnel of Office of International Affairs in the round-table, we were able to exchange information and suggestions regarding the package of admissions for Hong Kong students.







**Highlights from KONKUK University**

We experienced a heart-warming welcome by KONKUK from the round-table discussion to a gourmet buffet dinner. On top of their criteria for admissions and procedures set in the Information Pack, they also provided a "Special Privilege Program", i.e. Principal's Nominations, to Hong Kong students.

We had a great chance to hear Ms Leung Tsz-ying share her story. She is a current KONKUK freshman from Hong Kong studying Digital Culture & Contents. Joining us at the reception dinner, we were able to chat with Tsz-ying in depth about her time in KONKUK that is to say her study period in South Korea. We thank her for her time and hospitality.



The sumptuous buffet was definitely a highlight. We were introduced to a wide range of Korean specialties and desserts, which fulfilled and energized us.



**A Brief Glimpse of SUNGKYUNKWAN University**

Sungkyunkwan University is established as a private research institution with over 600 years of history, bearing the mission of teaching Confucianism the underlying social philosophy of modern Korean society. The university has made remarkable advances towards becoming a leading research facility, in particular after the joining of Samsung to their foundation in 1996.



**A Hospitable Welcoming Luncheon at AJOU University**

We must express our gratitude to Mr Andrew Doyeon Kim, Coordinator of Office of International Affairs, who liaised with the visiting Korean universities on our behalf.

A warm welcome awaited us. With colourful umbrellas sheltering us from the rain, we were led to the main building, and onto a lavishly arranged luncheon with the heads and dean of the School of Business. We were arranged to sit with different personnel of the university so we could speak with them regarding life at Ajou University. We were given full and frank answers over a range of topics.

The tailor-made Korean luncheon was as impressive as the admission talk. Also arranged was a sharing session by a Hong Kong student Abby, who has spent three years at Ajou University. That was an interesting touch, listening to Abby's presentation on her reasons to study at Ajou and life there answering a lot of questions in our mind. Details of her sharing can be found in the sharing section in this newsletter.



**The Spectacular KYUNG HEE University (Global Campus SUWON)**

Shining in its architectural charisma, KYUNG Hee University is admired as a grand and beautiful campus. We were inundated with spectacular views of The Philosopher's Square, capturing our eyes and cameras without a break. The Central Library (University Administration Hall) accommodates a cozily-designed library and a café which spoke volumes about life at this huge university. The alleyways with blooming cherry blossoms stirred our emotions and indulged our sensations, expressing divine creation!

Our visiting itinerary ended with an informative admission talk by Kyung Hee University Office of International Affairs.





# Conclusion

We will proceed to further negotiation with other visiting Korean universities regarding the admission packages on

- ▶ Principal's nominations
- ▶ Conditional offers to students with expected academic performance
- ▶ Scholarships for Hong Kong students

The expression of welcome by the visiting Korean universities manifested a new era of collaboration, connecting the educators of Hong Kong to the well-advanced city of Seoul, paving the way for Hong Kong secondary school graduates to forge a new path for further studies and career projects.

The tour offered us precious opportunities to mingle with teachers from different schools; to build friendships and cultivate platforms for sharing experiences on matters concerning students' career and life planning. We found the trip served more than just a way to see the campuses, but a move forward to express our passion for education, in all its incredible and meaningful forms.

*This epilogue from the writer riding home from the airport*

Good Times Fly  
but Spirit will not Hide  
with Eagerness in Ride  
our Vision and Mission  
Stands H!gh

*Hong Kong Association of Careers Masters and Guidance Masters is committed to providing professional support for all front-line guidance and careers guidance teachers in secondary schools of Hong Kong.*

# Feedback in Verbatim from Participating Teachers

**May Leung Yee Yan** ▶ Lingnan Dr. Chung Wing Kwong Memorial Secondary School

We paid a visit to 7 universities during the five-day tour. The visits were informative which helped us better understand the requirements and the application procedures for studying in Seoul. Of all the visits, I enjoyed the one offered by Konkuk University Korea the most. I really enjoyed the dinner gathering offered by the university in which we could chat with some students from Hong Kong to learn more about their life as foreign students in Seoul. Finally, I would like to say thanks to HKACMGM for the wonderful arrangements for the tour.

**馮志紅老師** ▶ 嶺南鍾榮光博士紀念中學

參加了五日四夜的韓國大學交流團，實在獲益良多。

首先探訪了七所數一數二的韓國大學，包括梨花、延世、建國、亞太、漢陽、成均館及慶熙大學。很欣賞各間大學給予的招待及安排，尤其是由香港學生自己介紹了大學的生活、到韓國升學的原因、收生情況等.....都令我了解更多。其中遇見一位是香港去讀書的學生，原來是我之前在港認識的香港女童軍，更顯親切及奇妙。除此之外，亦發現每所大學給予的感覺明顯不同，重視的學科也不同，相信亦能配合我們香港學生的多元需求。

當然，能與其他學校的老師作簡單的工作交流，亦是這個活動所帶來的收穫之一。

最後，其他景點的參觀及全個行程的安排，令我一定要再次多謝香港輔導教師協會各委員的工作及照顧！

回港後，我一定把今次的收穫分享予本校師生！

**陳碧瑩老師** ▶ 聖公會蔡功譜中學

一直以來，韓國給我的印象是「高科技」、「現代化」、「韓流文化」.....似乎都與升學不太扣上關係。礙於語言因素，韓國算是在海外升學中較為冷門的選擇。

參加過這次交流團後，令我對韓國升學改觀。經過與院校代表、香港留學生會談，頓然發覺韓國升學充滿機遇。當地大學的優美環境及現代化設施媲美歐美等先進國家，收費亦較為相宜，更重要是可以掌握多一種語言，增強競爭力。

衷心感謝香港輔導教師協會舉辦這次交流團，令我更了解韓國升學，以及認識了一群「同路人」- 一群為下一代前途而努力打拼的同工，交換升學資訊、教學心得及互相扶持。

**鄧柏駿老師** ▶ 香港培正中學

有賴香港輔導教師協會安排是次考察團，我接觸了幾位赴韓升學的香港學生，了解她們的故事。她們在欠缺參考例子下，隻身漂泊異鄉追尋理想，絕不容易！文憑試成績高與低，確實其次。她們對生命的承擔與熱誠，才令老師和家長最引以為榮，不是嗎？



# Abbey LAU 香港留學生經驗分享

劉同學是在韓國亞洲大學就讀大三的香港學生，我們很高興她願意分享她的升學故事。



▶ 我們知道你是香港考完DSE後，便選擇到韓國升學。你是否完成香港的公開考試後，便立即前往南韓升學？

我在完成DSE之後無即刻前往韓國升學，而是在香港做兼職累積工作經驗。

▶ 在眾多的國家中，為什麼你會選擇到韓國升學？

其實有幾個原因令我選擇到韓國升學。首先，在香港到韓國只需要4小時飛行時間，比起其他歐美國家近好多。而且，韓國始終都係亞洲區，文化差異唔會好大。仲有當時對KPOP好有興趣，令我更加確定要到韓國讀書。

▶ 你是先到南韓修讀韓文，才再升讀大學嗎？請問讀了韓文多久？

我係香港讀咗3個月韓文，之後發現係韓語學校嘅教程唔太適合我。所以，我開始自學韓文。之後到咗韓國之後，再讀咗6個月嘅韓語學堂。

▶ 韓文是否一種很複雜的語言嗎？

我認為韓文可以算係一種容易上手嘅語言，因為大部分嘅韓文都係由漢字演變（例如：學期 = 학기 [hak-ki]），而且發音同中文都好相似。同理因為韓國嘅歷史背景，令韓文有好多外來語（例如：taxi = 택시 [teak-si]）。而我地講廣東話嘅時候，都會有中英夾雜嘅情況。所以，特別對於香港嘅同學嚟講應該會更容易上手。

▶ 你如何克服修讀韓文時遇到的困難？

我覺得學任何語言都係一樣，要不停練習先可以精通。口語方面，我會同韓國同學不停傾計，同時留意佢地用嘅詞語同語氣去學習點樣可以令我嘅韓文講得更加自然。而聽寫方面，可以睇綜藝節目，韓劇同新聞來訓練聽力，而且新聞會有比較難嘅單字，而綜藝節目同韓劇一開始可以較成無字幕去睇。

▶ 南韓有那麼多大學，你選擇亞洲大學的原因是甚麼？

大多數香港學生會先考慮首爾嘅大學，但實際上首爾嘅物價比較高，對於學生嚟講比較負擔大。所以係選擇學校嘅時候，我首先考慮係京畿道嘅學校，一來同首爾比較近，二來消費物價比較低。而且亞洲大學有一個預備班比畢咗業嘅同學去重溫佢咗中學時候學過嘅課程，不單止有韓文仲有英文數學等等其他嘅課程，可以算係銜接班上大學。而且佢咗嘅升學率比其他學校嘅語學堂高，所以我揀咗亞洲大學。

▶ 你現在在大學修讀哪一科呢？另外，除了主科外，大學有沒有一些必修課？如有，可以分享一下嗎？

我現在主修英文與文學科，另外還有同時副修商科和韓國學。而且在大學的必修課裡面有英文，作文同4個唔同領域嘅必修課：人文1&2，社會科學，自然科學。如果係Humanities，就會另外有4個必修嘅課程包括：一門外語（德文/中文/法文/日文），《文：Life and Dream》、《史：Era and Spirit》和《解：Symbol and Reason》，讀關於文學、哲學和歷史等等名作。

▶ 可以分享一下你參與大學的社團活動經驗嗎？

咁我係YEAR 1嘅時候，就有參加過叫Friends嘅Club。佢地嘅活動就係韓國嘅同學同外國來嘅交換學生或者留學生交流，大部分都係會出去飲吓嘢，或者係出去一齊玩同帶我地去學校附近景點。但係當我升咗上YEAR 3之後，就無咗咁多時間參加社團活動。反而去參加一啲對將來搵工有幫助嘅校內活動去爭取經驗。

▶ 你是住在大學宿舍，還是外出租屋？為什麼？

我係學校外面租屋。對於我嚟講，自由度比較大，雖然離學校比較遠，但附近設施都比較好，而且比較近郊區，所以我係學校外面租屋。不過大部分租屋嘅話，月租金由30-80萬韓圓，按金會係500-1000萬韓圓，視乎番屋嘅大細同地理環境。所以如果同學想租屋嘅話，都會比較推薦同人share按金。同理要唔怕麻煩行多幾間中介嚟做比較。

▶ 在韓國留學，你需要自己煮食嗎？

大部份嘅時間都係會出去食飯，因為上堂嘅時候中間有嘅空堂嘅話，就會係學校嘅canteen食，又或者係出去同同學食飯。間中都會係屋企自己煮飯食，但係就比較少。雖然係比出去食飯平，但係始終因為我一個人住，好難控制到份量，所以通常唔會係屋企食飯。

▶ 在南韓讀書時，你有沒有做兼職賺取生活費？

喺上一個學期嘅時候，我就有做TA。而兼職收入算係唔錯，一個月會有400,000嘅韓幣圓左右。工作量唔大，通常都係幫教授執頭執尾，又或者係對卷同監考等等。同理喺學校提供嘅兼職比起出面嘅兼職有保障，一來準時出糧，二來有機會可以跟到教授一齊工作，同理第時畢業嘅時候可以當做一個經驗寫落CV。

▶ 你可以告訴我們留學生在韓國做兼職，有沒有時數限制？如有，上限是多少？

有，每周兼職時間是不能超過20個小時。而且兼職之前，要先向出入國管理事務所登記。

▶ 我知道你是亞洲大學唯一的一位香港學生，你和南韓學生相處如何？

我同呢度嘅同學相處得唔錯。首先韓國同學會好驚訝我係外國人，因為我啲口吻令佢聽唔出同本地人有咩分別，而且佢地都會好好奇究竟點解我會去韓國讀書，同埋究竟香港嘅生活係點樣嘅。而且佢地大部份都好nice，就算我咁咁到韓國，韓文無而家講得咁流利嘅時候，佢地都會好比心機咁聽嚟盡量了解我想講嘅咩。如果真係溝通上有問題嘅話，佢地都會用英文再同我解釋。

▶ 在韓國升學，對你個人成長和生活技能有何提升？

來韓國升學之後，我覺得我個人變得比較樂觀同積極。以前我算係一個好怕羞嘅人，我唔會主動想同人講自己嘅諗法。但係嚟咗呢度讀書之後，我覺得我個人變得有責任感，同埋我會主動，仲有積極參加課外活動。係做project嘅時候，我會主動lead其他嘅同學，而且我盡量爭取機會做presenter同主動問教授問題等等。而係生活技能上，我覺得我個人比較獨立。因為始終你做好多嘢，都係靠你自己一個人解決。屋企人唔係身邊幫到你，好多瑣碎嘅事你都要學會自己處理，例如點樣交管理費。你嘅起居飲食，要你自己處理，就會開始發現屋企人有幾重要。同理離開咗香港之後，我發覺自己嘅生活圈子會比以前大，除咗以前中學嘅同學，而家韓國嘅同學，之外仲會有同其他嘅韓國留學生做照應，仲有可以同喺其他地方嚟嘅同學做朋友。除咗係韓國可以學到韓國嘅文化同語言之外，仲可以透過呢啲外國人朋友識到佢地自己國家嘅文化。

▶ 對打算到南韓升學的學生，你有甚麼提醒？

首先，要清楚自己想讀咩major，而你選擇嘅學校最出名嘅major係咩，同對外國人選科嘅時候有咩限制。（係亞洲大學，外國人係無得選擇醫科，護理學同建築學）因為每一間大學會根據佢地最出名嘅科，而投放唔同程度資源比該科嘅學生。而且始終人生路不熟，我會建議先喺香港學咗基本嘅韓文，再過嚟韓國讀語學堂。因為當你識咗基本嘅韓文，會對學校同埋生活方面都有好多幫助。同嚟韓國之前盡量練番好啲

英文，雖然好多韓國嘅學校都唔會特別睇香港學生嘅英文成績，但係因為依家好多韓國嘅學生都有係外國生活過，我個人覺得韓國人嘅英文水平漸漸追上香港人。當你學好咗英文之後，上到大學嘅課程嘅時候，你嘅競爭力會比其他同學高。如果係啱啱入學嘅同學，我會建議同學係第一學期盡量選修以英文授課嘅堂「원어강의」，又或者係為外國人而設嘅韓文堂，會比較無咁吃力。到咗第二、三個學期嘅話，先選修以全韓文嘅授課。

▶ 對於因熱愛韓流、追韓星而對到南韓留學產生興趣的同學，你有什麼建議給他們？

如果係因為鍾意韓國明星而來到韓國留學嘅同學，我會建議佢地要再諗清楚。因為始終追星需要好多嘅時間，會令你冇辦法專注係學業上面。如果你入嚟韓國係只係想係語學堂讀韓文嘅話，咁我覺得追星都係個大問題，因為始終語學堂嘅功課壓力無咁大。但如果你上咗大學嘅話，我覺得會好難平衡追星同埋課業壓力。以我自己嘅經驗來講，當我上咗大學之後，功課壓力好大同埋已經冇乜時間可以出去追星，又再加上我咗學校又唔係首爾區，所以會令我覺得出去追星變咗一件好麻煩嘅事。仲有就係當你上咗大學嘅時候，會有好其他多嘢需要你pay attention，例如因為你嘅生活圈子慢慢擴大咗之後，你會想俾更加多時間去陪你嘅朋友多過追星。因為當我而家諗返，只係覺得追星係件好短暫嘅事，你始終都要對韓國呢個國家有興趣，你先會堅持到想繼續留嚟度讀書。如果唔係嘅話，你可能突然對韓國明星冇晒興趣嘅時候，覺得呢個國家冇咩值得留嚟嘅地方。所以，我會想同學嚟韓國讀書之前再諗清楚佢地係咪真係想係呢一度讀書，同一定要同爸爸媽媽商量，唔好自己一個決定。

▶ 完成韓國大學課程，你會有何打算？

我會打算係韓國搵工先，大概會搵返翻譯或者做教育方面嘅工作，例如係補習班教英文/中文。可能會係韓國呢度儲咗工作經驗，先考慮返香港工作。

▶ 你在韓國讀書花費了多少？

我這學期約用了850,000至1,000,000韓圓（約港幣\$6000至\$7000），包括屋租及其他開支。因為這學期有全額獎學金，所以花費不多。但花費多少因人而異，如選讀哪間學校（以亞洲大學為例，人文學科學費為3,800,000韓圓，其他學系為400,000韓圓）、居住在哪兒等。留意租屋需要繳付按金，而以上金額不包括按金的。

▶ 你是否取得大學頒發的獎學金呢？

是，我有三個學期都取得全額獎學金，而其他學期平均取得75%的獎學金，所以我在韓國的花費主要是在住宿方面。



# Can Girls Do Well in STEM?

Dr Esther Ho  
Vice-chairperson of HKACMGM

*Life is not easy for any of us. But what of that? We must have perseverance and above all confidence in ourselves. We must believe that we are gifted for something and that this thing must be attained.*

Marie Curie

## Stereotype vs. Evidence

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) education has been a hot topic among primary and secondary education sectors, in response to the rhetoric of deficiency in producing human capital regarding the globalized and blooming trend of innovation through information technology (Lun et al., 2016). The dominance of male in education and occupations in STEM-related areas, however, has widely been criticized as a consequence of hegemonic masculinity in private and public sectors, and education is always one of the crucial battle grounds (Blackmore, 1997; Arnot & Dillabough, 2006).

Education discourse on gender issues, based on persistent stereotypes under the assumption that differences among boys and girls in abilities, aptitude, performance and in turn choices in study and career in STEM disciplines, is biological rather than a socially constructed and manufactured reality (Weiner, 2017).

But is that true?

Evidence shows conflicting realities<sup>1</sup>:

► 2015 PISA results reveal that

► about one quarter of both boys and girls would like to work in science-related fields, but a large disparity exists within the field with many folds of boys expecting engineering/IT professions and the vice versa for health and associate professions

► though in almost all systems participating in PISA, boys outperformed girls in mathematics, the research team commented that gender gaps in school performance are not determined by innate difference in ability.

► A Hong Kong-based research study confirms similar variations.

► While Hong Kong boys and girls perform equally well in math and science, as evidenced in PISA and TIMSS, girls are much less confident than boys in learning and their ability in STEM-related subjects.

No education policy exists in power vacuum. In response to the potential hinderance of girls' development in STEM, affirmative actions would be crucial in the formulation of STEM education policy and public discussion or debate. Regrettably, policy makers choose to stay silent.

<sup>1</sup>The following are links to relevant resources:

OECD's Women Studying STEM:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OECDPublications/photos/a.371495076263018.90215.366003796812146/1670522396360273/?type=3&theater>

Gender disparities in skills:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OECDEduSkills/photos/a.509378035785821.1073741828.508986735824951/1723542441036035/?type=3&theater>

OECD comparing ability of boys and girls:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OECDEduSkills/photos/a.509378035785821.1073741828.508986735824951/1723622947694651/?type=3&theater>



► Both boys and girls should be given ample opportunities to explore STEM-related careers. A team of S.3 students visiting a world-renowned architect, Mr. James Law, who designed the OPod Tube Housing.

## Reviewing the STEM education discourse

OECD's *The ABC of Gender Equality in Education: Aptitude, Behaviour, Confidence*:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264229945-en>

OECD's *The Future of Work for Women: Going-Digital-the-Future-of-Work-for-Women.pdf*  
<http://www.oecd.org/employment/future-of-work/Going-Digital-the-Future-of-Work-for-Women.pdf>

OECD's *PISA 2015 Results on Excellence and Equity in Education*:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264266490-en>

The Hong Kong Component of Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2015:  
<http://web.edu.hku.hk/f/page/3932/TIMSS-2015-Presentation-for-Press-Conference.pdf>

Use the simple and interactive tool to find out how HK 15-year olds differ from their counterparts in OECD countries in Science and Math ability across genders: [https://www.compareyourcountry.org/pisa?cr=oeed&lg=en&utm\\_content=buffer08d63&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://www.compareyourcountry.org/pisa?cr=oeed&lg=en&utm_content=buffer08d63&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

It is generally believed that Chinese, in comparison to the Caucasian who are more inclined to the democratic values, lag behind in dealing with gender-stereotypes in society.

*Report on Promotion of STEM Education - Unleashing Potential in Innovation* (Education Bureau, 2016) is the key official policy text on STEM education initiative in Hong Kong, stipulated by the Curriculum Development Institute of the Education Bureau. The document spells out the missions and strategies of STEM education development in primary and secondary schools.

Vocationalism discourse dominates the rationale in promotion of STEM education, in which the development of STEM education is regarded as a response to the challenges arising from the changes in the development of technology, economy and science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and thus as a means to maintain the competitiveness of HK in a global scale and to complement China's development (One Belt One Road Initiative). Among 6 major strategies on curricular reform and learning activities, none of them, in principle and content, address the gender issue and make reference to any existing data on gender disparities in STEM learning and performance.

STEM Education (<http://stem.edb.hkedcity.net/en/home>) is supposed to be one of the key web platforms on STEM education resources for educators, developed by the EdCity which is sponsored by the Education Bureau. Very limited information or resources relevant to gender issues are available on the website.

## Staying "gender neutral" is not an excuse

Voices of gender are silent in STEM education policy text - to stay "gender neutral" in language. For critical feminists, it is a way to rationalize the gender division with an ill-informed and narrow view of equality (Mooney, 2011; Blackmore, 1997).

Avoidance of addressing the problem of gender stereotypes and lack of affirmative actions to resist perpetuation of the bias not only reinforce the gap, but may even widen it given the unique nature of STEM-related disciplines. STEM education may even be a tool in alliance with the "make under-achievement" rhetoric being increasingly popular among the public and educators.





▲ S.1 & 2 girls learn to integrate coding, engineering and fashion design in the TWF's Girls-Go-Tech Programme. A S.1 girl is showcasing her design in our GGT Catwalk Show cum Presentation.

## Action

### Gender awareness is the first step of social transformation

Unlike Hong Kong, UK actively addresses the issue with reference to statistics, action planning and mobilization of different sectors to actualize educational initiatives for girls (Department of Education & Department for Employment and Learning, 2009). Gender imbalance with women under-represented in STEM subjects was discussed with evidence; nature and nurture are both cited as factors of influence with gender bias appearing to start at an early age. Additional support to girls is evidenced by initiatives aiming at fighting gender bias through the involvement of business in partnership with schools, colleges and universities, particularly in areas like physical sciences and engineering. The UK's model illustrates how the gender awareness has been consciously incorporated in the policy text and agenda, with sustained effort as accessible actions (programmes, resources, news, public discussion and media initiatives on websites) and the deliberate involvement of female voices to construct career identities (stories shared by female engineers and scientists).

Girls learn and understand STEM better when they are given opportunities to apply knowledge in daily life. A team of four S.2 girls utilized IoT to design a practical device to save energy in the Cisco Innovation Challenge - they grabbed the second runner-up.



## Recommendations

### Bringing in the career perspective in the discussion and actions!

In no way is STEMs a "neutral" discipline because of the traditional biased representation of male in both educational and workforce settings. Liberal feminism asserts that access to education is fundamental to the development of women's potential; radical feminism challenges the oppressive and exploitative relation due to male domination in the workplace and education settings, including curriculum formulation; poststructural or postmodern feminism emphasizes the new discourse formation by transforming the way we understand and making sense of female's experiences (Weiner, 1997; Arnot & Dillabough, 2006).

Counter-balance actions, in various forms including policy advocacy and provision of tailored programs addressing diversity and differentiated aptitude of girls in STEM, thus become really crucial. The followings are some possible options:

### 1. Challenging and Fighting Gender Stereotypes in Occupational and Career Choices in Basic Education. Examples:

- ▶ Diversity starts in schools (<https://amp.theguardian.com/science/occams-corner/2018/jan/26/children-can-only-aspire-to-the-roles-visible-to-them-time-to-get-into-the-classroom>)
- ▶ Inspiring girls with real-life examples and role models - Inspiring Women China (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cE2VhzSGiSU&sns=fb>)
- ▶ Launching campaigns to promote gender awareness in career choices and options through educational programmes and mentoring - Inspiring Women in the UK (<https://inspiringwomenscampaign.org>)



### 2. Promoting and launching STEM educational programmes that cater for aptitudes and interests of girls in schools. Example:

- ▶ A community-initiated Girls Go Tech Programme (GGT): A successful programme on STEM education for junior secondary school girls. It aims at encouraging the junior females from secondary schools and also disadvantaged backgrounds to explore STEM-related subjects to expand the possibilities of girls' career choices. (<https://twfhk.org/>; <https://www.facebook.com/TWF-Girls-Go-Tech-110850482648004>)

### 3. Promoting gender awareness in education, among parents, educators and students, through solid evidence-based research and policy advocacy. Example:

- ▶ To STEM or Not To STEM? Factors Influencing Adolescent Girls' Choice of STEM Subjects Final Report (<https://twfhk.org/research/girls-and-stem-education-hong-kong/summary>)

## Conclusion

The policy rhetoric on STEM education in Hong Kong is a "double omission" – deficiency in both gender sensitivity and career connectedness. The former has been discussed in detail, which possibly intensifies the gender bias on female's engagement in study and occupational choices. Nevertheless, the lack of career connectedness in actively bridging STEM to diversified career choices and options, if any, could be problematic for both male and female students.

"STEM for ALL" is a mission shared by many educators in Hong Kong; for HKACMGM, we also advocate "STEM for the FUTURE".

**For whatever reason, I didn't succumb to the stereotype that science wasn't for girls. I got encouragement from my parents. I never ran into a teacher or a counselor who told me that science was for boys. A lot of my friends did.**

**Sally Ride**  
(The first American woman in space)

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