

Education

Go green by staying home

Katie Hung

AROUND-TRIP FLIGHT TO Japan by plane spews one tonne of carbon emissions, while the carbon footprint of each Hongkonger is about 13 tonnes per year. But carbon emissions don't seem to be factored in traveling costs.

Student-run non-profit organization V'air – or *vert*, which means green in French – is determined to change the new “flash-traveling” trend of going to nearby destinations for a few days by plane.

Instead, the alternative is to encourage local tourism, exploring the glamour of Hong Kong that we might overlook in our daily lives, according to group co-founder Natalie Chung, a third-year student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

“We are so willing to plan when doing outbound traveling – such as reading through a whole travel guidebook for a trip to Taiwan. But you hardly hear someone saying that I want to stay in Hong Kong,” said Chung. “De-stressing doesn't necessarily mean one has to get on an air plane.”

The idea germinated from Chung's entry in the Hong Kong Sustainable Campus Consortium COP21 Challenge contest in conjunction with Arthur Yeung, her senior who also read geography and resource management for his degree.

Their task was, of course, to come up with a solution aimed at reducing emissions, which led to the building of a website promoting local tourism.

Winning the competition has since opened a new chapter. V'air was established in 2015, with the aim of changing people's mindset, from sharing tips on reducing one's carbon footprint as well as natural sites on the website, to co-organizing local ecological tours with other parties.

They also want to build up Hongkongers' sense of identity. “When you get more and a better understanding of your own place, you are able to discover something different,” Chung said. “Every time you pass through the same place, it is not merely somewhere that is full of pressure and difficulties.”

Some blame the monotonous living environment

Doing their bit for the environment and local tourism are, from left, Tommy So, Natalie Chung and Nicole Cho. Inset: their Low-Carbon Tours and postcards of the countryside.



Although all the routes and spots were discovered during team members' leisure time, they took six months to walk through the routes again to update photographs and information.

in the SAR as the reason locals travel a lot. However, that doesn't mean Hong Kong is a boring place, said activity coordinator Tommy So, a third-year nursing student at CUHK.

He believes Hong Kong is a hidden gem with a long history and stories behind the scenes to be told, citing his experience of noticing a milestone in Tai Tam Country Park for an example. It was built in the colonial period – marking how many kilometers from there to the City of Victoria, which today encompasses Central, Wan Chai, Sai Wan, and Sheung Wan.

“Some people stay at home all the time, so they don't realize Hong Kong has so many fun and beautiful places,” he said. “V'air gives youngsters a good opportunity to become aware of Hong Kong's attractions.”

The team has recently co-authored the Chinese book, *Low-Carbon Tours*, introducing 39 routes urban and rural areas with ecological knowledge and low carbon tips attached to each route.

“We cross-checked the information and facts quite a few times,” said Nicole Cho, who is reading translation of Chinese literature at the University of Hong Kong. She proofread the articles every weekend for a month, despite working as an intern on weekdays.

However, the underlying real challenge wasn't in planning routes or writing, but bringing in tailor-made environmental tips to each spot, such as reminding the public not to step on the seaweed when going to Ha Pak Nai, in Yuen Long. “We were kind of lost at the beginning,” Chung said.

Starting with a team of three people and expanding to 10, V'air has been participating in competitions and funding schemes. For example, the team won gold in Wu Yee Sun College's Sunny Passion Programme at CUHK, raising HK\$10,000.

Members are looking to turn the organization into a social enterprise to offer paid eco-tours for the public. katie.hung@singtaonewscorp.com

Creating a positive impact in the business world

Specifically tailored to support senior executives' endeavors to maintain a competitive edge in the global market, City University of Hong Kong's (CityU) Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program offers a combination of advanced taught subjects and rigorous research.

In an increasingly globalized world, technology has become a driving force of the knowledge-intensive economy. Facing rapid changes in the marketplace and phenomenal advances in technology, many senior executives are keenly aware of the need to better equip themselves to tackle the new challenges in business.

A DBA degree satisfies this demand through research-based offerings that are different from a PhD. It allows for a more in-depth investigation into a single topic than an MBA, whilst providing PhD-level education through practical and applicable coursework.

All students studying a DBA at CityU have over ten years of work experience. In

order to match the high level of knowledge of each student, all faculty members are at least of Associate Professor level.

“We are very proud of our world-renowned professors who possess extensive global expertise and in-depth China knowledge,” says Prof. Muammer Ozer, Director of CityU's DBA program. “In the same vein, we are honored to work with our diverse group of students who are successful business leaders with a passion to solve complex business issues that have implications well beyond the boundaries of their organizations.”

Rajeev Chib, a student of the program since 2016, explains why he chose CityU's DBA. “As a strong advocate of lifelong learning, I chose the DBA over the PhD because the DBA is based on both theory and practical application in its design. It also offers flexibility, which is important for me, as I can work, attend classes, and still be available for my family. Furthermore, the facilities and access to resources at CityU is world class, and this was certainly a deciding factor.”

With a background in banking and finance from Canada, Chib points out, “The program has been very deliberate in selecting a diverse set of students from different industries – a scenario that broadens my perspective and enhances my learning experience.”

“At CityU DBA, we value diversity because while people work in different industries or come from different cultures, they deal with similar business challenges such as innovation and competition,” Prof. Ozer adds. “I believe our students can learn better if they hear a diverse set of solutions to such common challenges.”

Commenting on his decision to do the DBA program, Chib says, “I can say that I have made one of the best decisions in my life. Sharing of experience and knowledge within the cohort as well as colleagues at work has taught me to look at issues from various angles. Furthermore, the rigorous approach towards business research has refined my skills of identifying real issues and getting to the crux of the problem. All in all, the program has been of immense benefit to my work.”

Chib rates CityU's DBA as a top-notch program with world-renowned professors who have taken them through the theory required



Professor Muammer Ozer
CityU DBA program director

to engage in rigorous business research with practical application. The professors are also very approachable and he is sure that he will enjoy his DBA journey in the coming years, learning both from teaching staff and fellow learning partners.

“At CityU DBA, we place emphasis on creating impact,” says Prof. Ozer. “If the candidates' research unveils new findings and yields positive results, it will be not only a personal achievement, but also a great contribution to society, and that is precisely the objective of the program.”

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