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# HKUST and APRU partner to study transformation of work in Asia-Pacific

Parties will study the impacts and opportunities of tech on workforce and living quality in Asia-Pacific economies.

by Alita Sharon — 15 March, 2019

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The School of Business and Management of The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST Business School) announced that it has joined a research collaboration with the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU).

The two parties will closely examine the impacts and opportunities of technology on workforce and living quality in Asia-Pacific economies, according to a recent [press release](#).

Digital automation is transforming the world with unprecedented scope and speed, and its impact is compelling, including the demand for new roles and skills in many sectors. This joint HKUST-APRU Project connects ten scholars from leading universities across the APRU network to examine the changes presented by rapid digitalization in society.

The Project Lead and Dean of HKUST Business School noted that the project is aimed at opening up a dialogue to facilitate policymakers, leading thinkers and researchers to exchange ideas and collaborate on solutions to the challenges.

It was noted that, through the studies, the researchers hope to stimulate an informed discussion in society, but also gather insights and recommendations from different regions, on ways to minimize the negative impacts and to protect and prepare the workforce for the future.

The findings are presented in seven chapters in the report: Transformation of Work in the Asia-Pacific in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The report highlights issues of the Asia-Pacific region and outlines policy recommendations to leaders of higher education, government, and industry.

These recommendations include:

- cultivating an innovative workforce through STEM education and investment in

teachers;

- developing reskilling and reform capacities to support the displaced workforce;
- meeting the skills demand through workforce mobility and immigration policy;
- addressing the increasing income inequality through social welfare programs; and
- investing in the technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship infrastructure to provide agility in the market.

According to the APRU Director (for Policy and Programs), the organisation is pleased to see this timely report offer guidance to policymakers as it draws on the rigorous research and knowledge of APRU experts and partners. These recommendations are relevant to the unique context of Asia-Pacific and will influence the way individuals will work and live in the future.

One of the unique strengths of this Project lies in the diversity of national contexts from which the authors write and the refining of their insights into policy recommendations.

The ten academics represent APRU member universities and a partnering institute across the Asia-Pacific region, including Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and Singapore.

The report draws attention to specific issues and their resolutions, and at the same time, complement each other's chapters to offer a richly holistic view on this important topic.

### ***The Hong Kong Budget 2019-20***

The new [Budget](#) for 2019-2020 by the Hong Kong Government notes that the aim is to develop a robust ecosystem and the Government aims to establish through various I&T policy initiatives.

The Government has stepped up support for the scientific research and I&T sectors by developing I&T infrastructure, promoting research and development (R&D), pooling talent, supporting enterprises and promoting re-industrialisation. All these efforts have brought significant enhancements to the local I&T ecosystem.

Moreover, to pave the way for nurturing local technology talents, the HKSAR

Government aims to encourage the promotion of popular science education in schools.

The Financial Secretary has earmarked \$500 million to be implemented in the IT Innovation Lab in Secondary Schools Programme in the coming three school years.

Each secondary school benefiting will be granted \$1 million to procure the necessary information technology (IT) equipment and professional services, and organise more relevant extra-curricular activities to deepen students' knowledge of cutting-edge IT, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, cloud computing and big data, with a view to helping young people build a good IT foundation early during their secondary school years.

Thus, the aims to the aforementioned partnership are in line with the Government's aims.

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