

## Interest in GBA jobs wanes among youth: survey



A new survey suggests the number of young people who are keen in pursuing full-time jobs in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) has dropped slightly to 12.5 percent, while 82 percent say they aren't interested.

MWYO, a think-tank, commissioned the Chinese University's Institute of Asia Pacific Studies to interview 1,002 people aged between 18 and 34 over the phone from May to July.

Researchers said 12.5 percent of the respondents expressed interest in working full-time in the GBA, compared with 13.4 percent in a similar survey in 2019.

Eighty-two percent said they were not interested, while the remaining 5.5 percent said they did not know, were not sure, or refused to answer.

About half of the respondents who said they weren't keen on working in the GBA cited personal and family concerns, such as their language skills and the need to take care of their family. Forty-seven percent cited the lack of free flow of information on the mainland as a disincentive, while 30 percent cited bad living standards.

Researchers also found that young people studying IT, engineering and natural sciences tend to have a more positive outlook about working in the GBA than those studying other subjects.

Researcher Justin Chan from MWYO said the GBA has a high demand for research and development talent, and some young people studying related subjects feel that they would have a better career working there than in Hong Kong.

He added that the government should target young people with more working experience when promoting career opportunities in the GBA.

“We find that young people with a higher salary, with a monthly salary of 30,000 Hong Kong dollars or above, they’re more interested. The reason behind that is that people with that higher level of salary, they have experience, they have industry knowledge, and GBA employers value that. They’re willing to pay more for that kind of experience and knowledge. So therefore, young people with such experience and knowledge find it easier to find a suitable job there,” Chan said.

“We think that if the government can focus more on that, rather than purely focusing on fresh graduates, then that would be a more ideal solution.”

The think-tank also said the government could partner with mainland authorities, businesses, universities and other groups in encouraging more young people to work in the GBA.

It said, for example, more opportunities should be given to students to visit, go on exchange or intern in the area. It said the government could also liaise with mainland authorities to try to provide more housing benefits to young people working there.

The margin of error for the survey is plus or minus 3.1 percent, at a 95 percent confidence level.