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Ideas are a dime a dozen. Honestly, I think Hong Kong has no shortage of ideas. Hong Kong has no shortage of innovation either. Innovation does not necessarily have to lie in scientific / technological innovation (and I would argue that we do have technological innovation too - Hong Kong tops the world in slope control techniques), but also in industrial process innovation, operation innovation, and business process innovation.

So how do you have sustainable innovation? Three factors - 1) monetary incentives and/or the need to stay alive + low barrier of entry (the pull factor), 2) a creative-inducive environment to nurture creativity in kids (the push factor), and 3) to be actively competitive, rather than reactively competitive and passively competing against a certain group of people like Chinese people.

1) When there are enough incentives (e.g. monetary incentive for businesses, and / or the incentive to stay alive - like Hong Kong's need to have slope control to minimise mud slides - so Hong Kong tops the world in slope control, and Japan's need to fight against natural disasters resulted from tsunami - so it tops the world in tsunami research), and when the barrier to trying out new things is low enough, then you would have innovation. And winners will come through natural selection. So, so long as Hong Kong maintains a low barrier of entry to all industries (e.g. with less monopoly and cartail for businesses, and with a larger 'applied' market for research and technologies - this is the job of a government), and there are enough incentives and /or intense need to stay alive, then you would naturally have innovation, which will make you competitive. So this is the first point that I want to make - you got to have a good 'pull factor' - attractive incentive and/or intense need to stay alive + low barrier of entry to spur competitive and sustainable innovation.

2) Other than the pull factor, I think you got to have the 'push factor' - the right people. How to nurture 'innovative people'? Perhaps you got to have an 'innovation gene'. But perhaps more importantly, much lies in how creative-inducive a child's grow up environment is. But how to do that? I don't know. I don't have kids and I am not an educationist. But what I know is, I don't feel comfortable with Hong Kong's education system, which has so many local kids going to international schools (which implies that the local school system suffocates innovation in children), and has so many 'tutor kings' (which implies that the local schools are not doing their jobs in making children grasp knowledge effectively).

3) The third point I want to make is I think there's too much discussion around Hong Kong people's competitiveness vs China people's competitiveness. People are people, and I do not think we should focus the issue on Hong Kong people vs China people. In a globalised world, people only compete with each other, no matter the race and nationality. Therefore the focus should be on what characteristics should a competitive person have - what kind of attitude, personality, education, integrity, values, etc. and we try to breed the next generation as such, rather than passively and reactively focusing on what China people are like and how Hong Kong people could compete against or over take them.