

Paper Waste, Recycle First

As an undergraduate student, I face with plenty Waste Paper Collection Points on Hong Kong Campus. For example, in City University of Hong Kong, where I came from, waste paper collection bins are located at general offices, staff quarters, student halls and designated points.

Perhaps few people know that Hong Kong used to have the highest paper recycling rate in the world, followed by Germany, Korea and Japan. It's said, each year, around 1 million tons of waste paper and cardboard are recycled in Hong Kong with about 230 local waste paper recycling businesses.

Its motivation is quite obvious — to Hong Kong, the need to reduce and recycle waste is crucial, due to the large population and rapidly filling disposal facilities. Compared to Madrid, since paper is the most significant waste in Hong Kong, recycle boxes and procedures of paper recycling are more commonly installed.

As a result, Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department has set reclamation boxes in every metro station, says the recycled paper is going to be used to produce greener note paper. That is, the volume of paper being recycled is clearly documented and the effectiveness of paper recycling can be ensured.

The waste paper collected will be separated by types, including the high value waste paper, (for instance, the computer printout), old corrugated cardboard, newspapers and other mixed paper. The sorted waste paper will then be compressed and baled for export. Over 90% of the collected waste paper and cardboard is exported to mainland China, and the remainder goes to the Philippines and other regions to be made into recycled paper and its products such as printing paper, tissue paper, corrugated card and cardboard.

Several policies adopted by the Hong Kong Government have successfully led Hong Kong to an economically prosperous stage by the use of top-down measures, such as legislation and fiscal policies which serve for a sustainable waste management.

To conclude, Hong Kong has to deal with an unsustainable amount of waste in such a small geographical area, therefore, everyone needs to be aware of what we can do to improve the situation. Our landfills will be full, one by one, in the mid to late 2010s, which requires us to take responsibility and act now.