# The Youth Reference



青年参考

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## Creative Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition

Newsletter from All-China Youth Federation

## NOTE

This e-magazine is a product of All-China Youth Federation, China Youth Daily and China International Youth Exchange Center to introduce the youth work and youth development in China on a regular basis. We hope that it can provide you with updated information about Chinese youth, youth policy and youth programs, and we sincerely look forward to feedback and suggestions from friends all over the world.

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# Creative Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition

In a letter written for the China International College Students' Innovation Competition, President Xi Jinping stated that innovation is the engine of human progress and that young people are a vital force in advancing it.

China places strong emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. Six of the world's top ten "Science Cities" identified by the Nature Index are located in China. In Clarivate's 2025 list of the world's most cited researchers, one in five comes from mainland China. A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences found that a growing number of Chinese scientists are leading research teams worldwide. In the 2025 Global Innovation Index published by WIPO, China ranks among the world's ten most innovative economies.



## Young Chinese are at the forefront of the country's innovation.

**75%**
of DeepSeek's AI model team were born in the 1990s

**70%**
of the Chang'e-6 lunar mission's young engineering team were under 35

**<30**
average age of the Long March 3A rocket team

## Support from across society has enabled young people to innovate.

**16,000+**
startup incubators and makerspaces nationwide by 2025

**700,000**
startup teams and companies served

**≈5M** jobs created

**Global**
a network that now spans China and extends overseas

**700+**
leading incubators hosted by national development zones

**The All-China Youth Federation supports youth entrepreneurship. It has established a range of platforms for this purpose, the best known being the Creative Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition. Since 2014, the competition has been held twelve times.**

**560,000**
startup teams attracted

**2.27M+** young participants

**130+**
events held online and offline

**30M+** participants drawn

**10,000**
new ventures launched

**100+** high-quality projects brought together

**¥1.4B**
in intended funding generated

In November 2025 , the 12th Creative Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition was held in Hubei and Hainan. Its theme was "Youth Rising to the Task of Chinese Modernization." It featured tracks in technological innovation and the digital economy, attracting nearly 15,000 youth startup teams and over 30,000 young participants. Young founders took part in pitching sessions and matchmaking events, where they discussed ways to refine their business models, scale up their projects, build partnerships, and secure resources. They also engaged with leading scientists, experts, and business figures. The competition awarded more than 300 prizes, including gold, silver, bronze, and excellence awards. On site, it produced over 100 letters of intent and financing or incubation agreements.

Over the years, the competition has provided real and practical support to young entrepreneurs. It has brought talent and quality projects to local communities and helped foster a culture of innovation. It represents a genuine two-way exchange.



## Case Studies

### (1) Ragworm-Assisted Shrimp Farming — Silver Award, Rural Revitalization




In recent years, China has supported efforts to upgrade key agricultural technologies. Liu Dan, head of Yancheng Aogannike Agricultural Development Co., Ltd., launched the Ragworm-Assisted Shrimp Farming project. The project farms marine shrimp together with ragworms, helping to address a long-standing pollution problem in shrimp cultivation.

Through the competition, Liu Dan secured 12 million yuan in investment and over 20 million yuan in orders from across China in that same year. This raised incomes throughout the industry. The project is now being scaled up across the country.

### (2) Wuhan JIMU Intelligent Technology Co., Ltd. — Gold Award, 5th Creative Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition

JIMU Intelligent is a national high-tech enterprise. It develops and markets Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS). Using camera technology, it helps make roads safer and builds a foundational platform for autonomous driving.

Cheng Jianwei, the founder, noted that thanks to the competition, the company raised 200 million yuan in a Series C1 funding round in 2021 and built up a portfolio of more than 100 of its own patents.

### (3) Deep-Sea Muscle Project — a new type of deep-sea actuation device; Bronze Award, 12th Creative Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition

Deep-sea equipment has long faced several problems: low efficiency, difficult installation, and insufficient reliability. Su Weihong, a PhD student at Zhejiang University, and his team developed the Deep-Sea Muscle project. It uses a digital electro-hydrostatic actuation (EHA) system that eliminates the need for long hydraulic lines. This makes deep-sea equipment more compact and reliable, and gives deep-sea exploration a more flexible "hand" and "foot."

At the event, the project signed a cooperation agreement with the Overseas Chinese Innovation and Entrepreneurship Park in the Hainan Free Trade Port. Su Weihong said that the competition looks beyond technical matters to a product's market, business value, and practical application. This gave the team clear direction for its work.

