

Indonesian graduates short on industry skills: Study

JAKARTA – Indonesia lacks skilled workers due to a huge gap between academia and industry, as educational institutions often do not train students to meet the needs of employers, a year-long study by global financial services firm J P Morgan and Singapore Management University has revealed.

In information and communications technology, one of Indonesia's key growth sectors, many graduates lack skills applicable to the industry, the study found. It recommends that the Indonesian government revise outdated curricula, improve consultations between schools and industries, and provide appropriate infrastructure and qualified teachers to produce more industry-ready graduates.

According to the study, training graduates is not only the responsibility of the government and schools, but also of the private sector, especially large corporations. The study cites apprenticeship programmes by companies such as Toyota Indonesia as a possible model.

The Indonesian government is also urged to relax the rules on the employment of skilled foreign workers in key growth industries to attract more foreign investment. It should also increase youth employment, as a young and dynamic workforce is one of Indonesia's main assets. The unemployment rate among Indonesia's youth currently stands at more than 18 per cent.

"Indonesia should leverage its young workforce as a competitive advantage, and prioritise education and skills training — ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of qualified teachers and greater involvement by industry players, who can offer industrial apprenticeships and practical training for the country to achieve sustainable growth," SMU president Arnaud De Meyer said this week. **THE JAKARTA GLOBE**
