

HONG KONG OUTDOOR LEARNING ASSOCIATION

香港戶外學習協會

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26



MISSION

To promote outdoor learning as a valuable approach to education and development, and as a professional, viable and rewarding career.

OBJECTIVES

The Hong Kong Outdoor Learning Association will build the outdoor sector by bringing together experienced and qualified individuals who will:

PROMOTE

Promote outdoor learning as a valuable approach to education and development

SUPPORT

Through subsidies, guidance materials, training and conferences, and advocating for professional recognition, support individuals to start and maintain a professional and viable career in outdoor learning

RESPECT

Ensure respect for all participants and staff, minimise environmental impact, and promote sustainability throughout their practice

ADVOCATE

Raise awareness of, advocate for, and collaborate on global best practices in safety standards and outdoor learning across the sector

REPRESENT

To promote, represent and safeguard the interests of Hong Kong's Outdoor Learning community



ABOUT US

The Hong Kong Outdoor Learning Association (HKOLA) proudly continues its work to bringing together a community of outdoor educators in Hong Kong. Together we strive to enhance and unify the outdoor education sector in Hong Kong. Comprising passionate outdoor education providers and dedicated schools, we share a common vision: *to promote safe, high-quality outdoor learning experiences as a valuable approach to education and development.*

Our mission goes beyond advocacy; we strive to elevate the standards of outdoor education through initiatives like our Quality Provider Badge, which encourages organizations to commit to excellence in safety, training and child safeguarding.

We organize engaging conferences, workshops, community meals and meetup hikes that bring together educators from Hong Kong and beyond, creating opportunities for professional growth and knowledge sharing.

By providing resources, training, and mentorship, we aim to empower practitioners to thrive in rewarding, sustainable careers and grow a professional, diverse workforce.

Together, we are paving the way for a brighter future for outdoor learning in Hong Kong, one that nurtures a love for nature and cultivates resilient, confident individuals. We invite you to join us as we continue to expand our impact and embrace the great outdoors!

FOREWORD

This year has been a meaningful one for HKOLA. As we continue to grow, it has been encouraging to see more people recognise the importance of outdoor learning in Hong Kong, and to see our work gaining greater recognition across the sector.

When we started HKOLA, we hoped to help create something that would support and connect the outdoor learning community in a practical and lasting way. That vision continues to guide us. Over the past year, we have kept working to build strong foundations of trust and value through our membership, the HKOLA Provider Badge, and opportunities for people and organisations to come together, share ideas, and learn from one another.

We know that trust is built over time. It comes from doing the small things well, listening carefully, and making sure our services are genuinely useful. That is why we remain committed to reviewing, refining, and improving what we offer, so that HKOLA can continue to meet the needs of our members and the wider sector.

Looking ahead, we want HKOLA to remain a supportive and useful presence in Hong Kong's outdoor learning community. That means helping educators build sustainable careers, supporting new and growing organisations, and strengthening the sense of community around this work. It also means continuing to advocate for outdoor learning more broadly, so that its value is better understood and more widely supported.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has supported HKOLA so far. Your trust, encouragement, and shared belief in the value of outdoor learning mean a great deal. This report reflects not only what has been achieved, but also the care, collaboration, and steady effort that continue to shape the association's journey.

All the best,



DAVE ADDIS

DIRECTOR & FOUNDER MEMBER





11 NEW MEMBERS

We welcomed 11 new individual members to HKOLA this year. 11 individuals committed to enhancing outdoor education for all. Well done!

1 TRANSLATED GUIDE

HKOLA translated the IOL's High Quality Outdoor Learning - Guide for All into Traditional Chinese.

2 BADGES AWARDED

Two organizations have been awarded the HKOLA Quality Provider Badge! This showcases a strong commitment to excellence and high standards within our community.

2 CONFERENCE

We were thrilled to host our third conference as HKOLA! Attracting many new attendees and 11 speakers from across Hong Kong. Our Founder also represented Asia on the organising committee for the IOL International Conference.



ACHIEVEMENTS

42

attendees at the annual
conference

1

international outdoor learning
conference



HKOLA'S THIRD CONFERENCE



Our December conference provided another opportunity to build on the conversations throughout the year. This time we welcomed 42 attendees over two days—many first timers showing interest in our growing community.



Held at the scenic Breakthrough Youth Village, the conference centred on the theme *"Small Actions. Big Impact."* with the goal of inspiring meaningful, achievable changes in personal practice. Sessions were designed to raise awareness and provide new tools to help participants enhance their work in outdoor learning.

Topics included the Australian Adventure Activity Standards, Play, Measuring the Outcomes of Your Programs, Neurodiversity in the Outdoors, Self-Regulation, Nature Journalling, and Primary School Programming.

The event was energising and filled with engaging discussions that felt deeply relevant to the professional lives of everyone involved.

HKOLA PROVIDER BADGE



The HKOLA Provider Badge is designed for outdoor and experiential education organizations to demonstrate their commitment to high standards in safety, training, staffing and child safeguarding.

Currently, there are four applicants having successfully met the standards and received their badge!

A review of guidance materials will be undertaken in 2026/27 to improve consistency and transparency.



HIGHLIGHTS

SAFETY EARBUD TRIAL WITH HERA LETO

In November, HKOLA assisted Hera Leto, a wearable-tech company, to pilot innovative safety earbuds designed for solo hikers and runners. Drawing on our network, HKOLA helped to recruit outdoor enthusiasts to test the product on a walk around Braemar Hill and share practical feedback.



This collaboration reflects HKOLA's role as a safety advocate, supporting new ideas and technologies that help people enjoy time in the hills with greater awareness, protection and peace of mind.

IOL INTERNATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE

HKOLA was proud to support the UK's Institute for Outdoor Learning's international online conference, themed "*What is Outdoor Learning For?*". The event celebrated diverse outdoor learning approaches from around the world.

HKOLA used its Asia-wide network to help bring regional voices into this global conversation, connecting the organisers with three inspiring speakers: Ai Chin Tan from Singapore, Yuen Li Chan from Malaysia and William Tsang from Hong Kong. Their contributions showcased innovative outdoor learning in different cultural and urban contexts, while also helping to place Hong Kong and the wider region more firmly on the international outdoor learning map.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION RESEARCH

A team of HK-based researchers have published a study on Hong Kong's outdoor education sector. Titled "*Outdoor Education in Hong Kong: Twenty Years Onwards.*". The study builds upon an earlier paper from 2005. The updated research takes a fresh look at how the field has evolved over two decades, highlighting sector changes, challenges and opportunities.

HKOLA is proud to support research of this kind, seeing it as essential for deepening understanding of key topics and issues across the sector. By grounding decisions in evidence, HKOLA aims to help educators, organisations and policymakers develop more informed solutions that strengthen outdoor learning for everyone in Hong Kong.

HIGH-QUALITY OUTDOOR LEARNING RESOURCE TRANSLATED INTO TRADITIONAL CHINESE

HKOLA organised the translation of the UK Institute for Outdoor Learning's High Quality Outdoor Learning – Guidance for All document into Traditional Chinese. This internationally recognised framework offers clear, research-informed principles for designing and delivering meaningful outdoor learning experiences, and its translation marks an important step in making high-quality guidance more accessible to the Hong Kong education community.

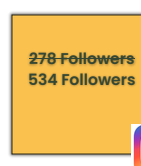
By providing this resource in Traditional Chinese, we aim to reduce language barriers and ensure that practitioners, and organisations across Hong Kong can more easily engage with and apply best practices in outdoor learning. This initiative supports greater inclusivity, encourages wider professional dialogue, and helps strengthen a shared understanding of quality across the sector, ultimately benefiting both educators and learners.



SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Attending events, networking and social media have been our core method for **broadening our reach**. Over the last year, we have steadily increased our followership. Most notably on LinkedIn with a jump of 180 new followers in the last year! Community posts (ie.tagged members) and release of guidance and blog articles have been the most popular posts.

Paid posts have also been effective and show returns with new members and purchases off the back of the ads. They will continue to be a key part of the strategy in the following year.





GOVERNANCE & FUTURE PLANS

4

Steering Committee members



STEERING COMMITTEE



At the date of this report, the Steering Committee members of the Association were:

David Addis – Director / Treasurer

Mike Thomas – Director / Secretary

Ian Gabrielson

Dr Xoni Ma

This Committee will engage regularly with Association members to discuss the current and future directions of Hong Kong's outdoor learning sector.

Comprising of 3 to 9 members, we are eager to welcome new voices to our group. To facilitate this, we will be posting advertisements for these roles before the Annual General Meeting in December.

The main activities of the Steering Committee are to:

- 1) execute the mission on behalf of the Members and,
- 2) to ensure that the operations of the Association are in line with its mission and vision.

FUTURE PLANS

Over the past three years, HKOLA has begun to see encouraging signs that our work is building trust and growing support for our mission across the sector. We will keep strengthening our foundations while continuing to improve our core services, including career support, guidance documents, the HKOLA Provider Badge, and community meet-ups.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, we will aim to:



Review HKOLA Provider Badge guidance

Review and enhance guidance and support materials for the HKOLA Provider Badge to improve consistency and transparency in the application process.

Alongside improvements of the Badge guidance, we will raise awareness among schools and teachers of the content and benefits of the accreditation scheme.



Develop CPD training courses

Develop training courses in curriculum-based outdoor learning and facilitation, alongside efforts to secure CPD accreditation for our conference.

While many Hong Kong educators have access to technical qualifications, research highlights a gap in facilitation and curriculum-focused training; these initiatives aim to address that need.



Build foundations for further advocacy work

Develop an annual provider and practitioner survey to understand the state of the sector and support an evidence-based approach to future work.

Improve governance around accreditation work.

HOW YOU CAN HELP?

As the professional body for outdoor learning in Hong Kong, join us and together we can continue to advocate for high-quality outdoor education and support professionals in their work.

SUPPORT US:

Become a member

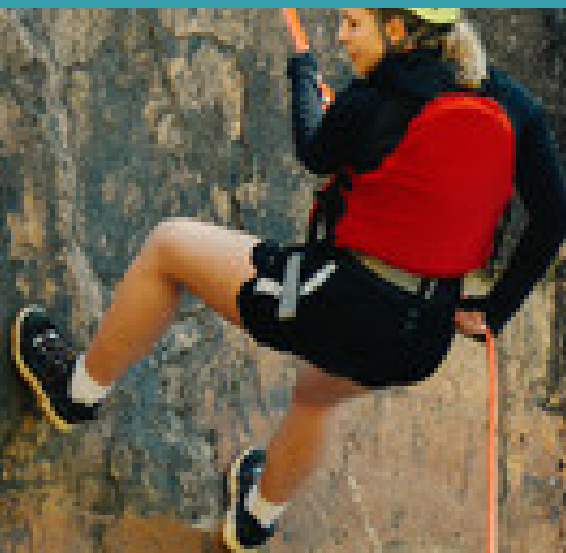
Make a donation

Spread the news

Volunteer on the committee

Sponsor the conference

Contact: info@hkoutdoorlearning.org







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