

HONG KONG OUTDOOR LEARNING ASSOCIATION



香港戶外學習協會

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24



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

We are thrilled to introduce the Hong Kong Outdoor Learning Association (HKOLA), bringing together a vibrant community 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 and workshops 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!



14 MEMBERS

Congratulations to our 14 dedicated members for their trust in HKOLA and their alignment with our mission! Your commitment to enhancing outdoor education is inspiring and vital to our collective success.

20 MEETINGS

Since launching in August 2023, we've been busy connecting with diverse stakeholders and understanding the sector's challenges. Key meetings included Outward Bound HK, HK Playground Association,, the UK's Institute for Outdoor Learning, and a representative of Singapore's Outdoor Learning & Adventure Learning Association. These meetings have been invaluable!

4 BADGE APPLICANTS

Four organizations have submitted their applications for the HKOLA Quality Provider Badge! This enthusiastic response showcases a strong commitment to excellence and high standards within our community.

1 CONFERENCE

We were thrilled to host our inaugural conference this year! After 3 years of pandemic, this event brought together passionate educators and schools, sharing innovative ideas and strengthening our sector for the future

FOREWORD

Hello all,

As I look back on the past year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere thanks to all the supporters of the Hong Kong Outdoor Learning Association. Your trust, input and encouragement have been crucial as we start this important work to improving the outdoor learning sector here in Hong Kong.

We've made steady progress towards our mission, and it's inspiring to see more and more people joining us on this journey. Together, we're laying the groundwork for a strong professional body that will advocate for high-quality outdoor learning and address the needs of our community.

Looking ahead, our goal for the next year is to continue building trust with stakeholders, boost our membership, and encourage participation in key initiatives like the Provider Badge, RPIOL scheme, conferences, teacher training, and our jobs board. These are all vital to nurturing a thriving and resilient outdoor education scene.

While we've made some great strides, we know we can't do this alone. We're calling on all our supporters to engage with us—whether through your feedback, becoming committee members, or getting involved in our various projects. Together, we can make a real difference!

Thanks again for being part of this journey. Let's keep the momentum going!

Best,



DAVE ADDIS

DIRECTOR & FOUNDER MEMBER





STANDARDS

4

organisations currently undergoing or completed the accreditation process

26

standards developed covering insurance, risk management, staff training, recruitment & vetting and child safeguarding.



HKOLA PROVIDER BADGE

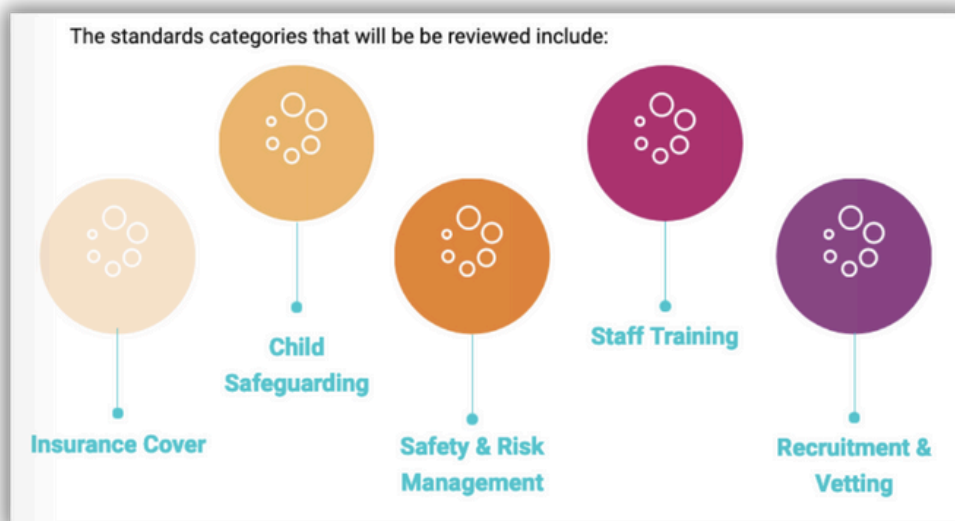


Over the past year, we have been trialling the HKOLA Provider Badge, designed for outdoor and experiential education organizations to demonstrate their commitment to high standards in safety, training, staffing and child safeguarding.

Currently, three applicants are undergoing the accreditation process, with one organization having successfully met the standards and received their badge!



The Badge currently has **26 standards across five categories**. The standards were developed in line with common requirements and expectations of schools and best practices from around the world. Alongside producing **'paperwork' evidence** to demonstrate the standards are met, applicants must also undergo an **observation** to check that procedures are followed in the field.



⇒ **THE ORGANISATION...**

2.1 has a written commitment to protect employees and participants from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of harm on their programmes

- A statement outlining who the child safeguarding policy applies to and its purpose.
- An overview of any supporting documents or policies that work in conjunction with the child safeguarding policy

2.2 has a clear, written definition of abuse or neglect

- A statement outlining the organisation's definition of abuse and neglect

2.3 has written methods for the prevention of abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of harm on their programmes

- An overview of the training provided to staff on child safeguarding

It's the Association's intention to conduct a **full review** of the standards and accreditation process in the 2025/26 financial year. We are exploring broadening the badge to include the *environmental sustainability* and *educational aspects* of programming.

To be able to do this, we will canvas our members' and other stakeholders to participate in discussions and the redrafting process.

WORKFORCE & CPD



2

MeetUp events held for
outdoor educators

7

outdoor learning professionals
interviewed and career profiles
created.



HKOLA INAUGURAL CONFERENCE



Our January conference, though a bit rushed, saw a turnout of **27 attendees over two days**. We are incredibly grateful to all our speakers and attendees. Staying true to the spirit of the original HKEEN conferences, we welcomed session proposals from anyone in the community, fostering a culture of idea-sharing, collaboration, and community building.



A second conference in December is planned and aims to build on the discussions from the first. Themes of **“Strengthening the Sector”** and celebrating **“Impactful Individuals”** shifted the spotlight back onto education with a strong emphasis on facilitation skills, professionalism, and tools for engaging participants. The website has also been upgraded to allow for clearer promotion and smoother payment systems.

7 CAREER PROFILES MADE

The [HKOLA Career Profiles Project](#) was an exciting initiative aimed at showcasing the vibrant career pathways available for outdoor instructors in Hong Kong! We interviewed seven of our members, including a first aid trainer, a freelance instructor, a seasonal instructor, a forest school teacher, a mindfulness coach, a small business owner, and a rope technician. Each profile delved into the realities of these positions, celebrating the positives while addressing the challenges.



Looking ahead, we plan to expand the project to feature senior roles and support positions, such as equipment, sales, and logistics managers—essential roles that drive our sector forward. This project builds on our commitment to supporting rewarding, long-lasting careers in the field.

APPROVED RPIOL CENTRE

We are thrilled to be building a closer relationship with the UK's Institute for Outdoor Learning! One of the standout benefits of this connection is our status as the first [APPROVED RPIOL CENTRE](#) in Hong Kong—and potentially in all of Asia. This allows HKOLA to provide coaching and support for RPIOL applicants from Hong Kong and the wider Southeast Asia region. Achieving the RPIOL is often a crucial first step for instructors aspiring to see themselves as outdoor professionals and committing to the industry.

We hope this award—open to both freelancers and employed staff—will pave the way for greater professional recognition for outdoor educators in Hong Kong!



IOL COMMUNITY PAGE

HKOLA is excited to now manage a community/geographical region page on the [UK's Institute for Outdoor Learning website](#) - the premier platform for outdoor professionals in the UK seeking job opportunities.



The community page provides us with a valuable space to showcase the latest opportunities, events and developments in Hong Kong's outdoor learning sector. This initiative not only highlights our vibrant community but also helps broaden our network connecting us with outdoor professionals in the UK. We're eager to foster further collaboration with the global outdoor education community!

ADVOCACY AND VOICE



304

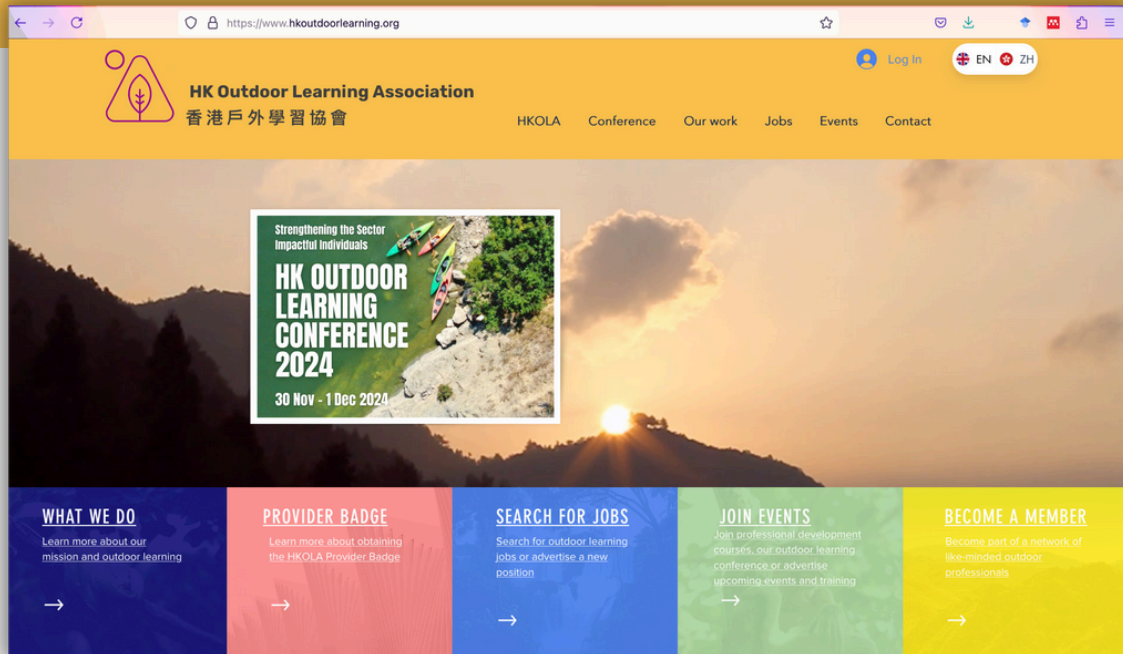
followers across all social media platforms.

20

meetings with providers, schools, educators and other associations were held,



HKOLA WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT



Since its launch in Autumn 2023, the HKOLA website is slowly establishing itself as the premier platform for outdoor professionals in Hong Kong.

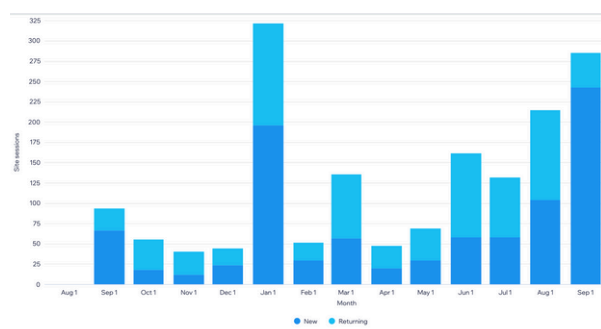
It serves a dual purpose:

- 1.promoting our members, jobs and events to foster more work for practitioners and organizations,
- 2.sharing best practices through blogs, research studies and our initiatives such as the RPIOL and Provider Badge.

Our 40-page website is fully accessible in both English and Traditional Chinese. Additionally, it has been optimized for mobile devices, making it easier for users to access information on the go and broadening our reach within the target market.

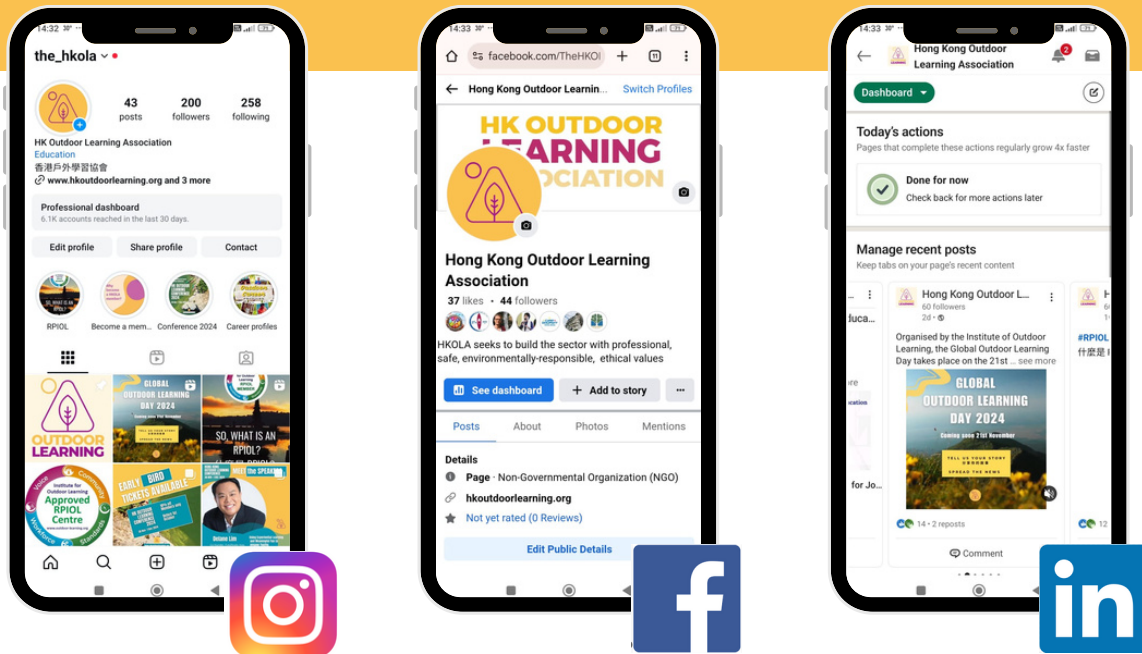
In the initial months, the website attracted around **60 site sessions per**

month. However, with the introduction of more targeted community-interest content—such as career profiles, conferences, RPIOL updates—alongside strategic paid promotions on Instagram, **monthly sessions have surged to 200, peaking at 325** in the lead-up to the conference.



Looking ahead, we aim to further increase traffic to the "Find a Practitioner" and "Jobs" pages. This will involve additional targeted paid posts and encouraging members to share job listings and create practitioner profiles.

SOCIAL MEDIA



In the past year, a key component of the HK Outdoor Learning Association's strategy to **broaden our reach** and effectively **tell our story** has been leveraging social media. Instagram has become a powerful tool for connecting with the instructing community, showcasing our work. Meanwhile, LinkedIn has opened doors to collaboration with other associations and professional organizations, strengthening our network. Sponsored posts have proven particularly effective and will be used more frequently in the future.



We embrace the rule of thirds in our social media strategy: one-third promotes our projects, another third focuses on interacting with others in the community, and the final third shares industry news and valuable tips that we believe will benefit our followers. This approach not only boosts our visibility but also ignites a passionate community around outdoor learning.

GOVERNANCE & FINANCIAL

3

committee members





STEERING COMMITTEE

During the year and up to the date of this report, the Steering Committee members of the Association were:

David Addis - Director / Treasurer

Mike Thomas - Director / Secretary

Ian Gabrielson - Founder Member

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.

The Association aims to form a Committee composed of dedicated practitioners, organizations, and school representatives actively involved in Outdoor Learning.

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.

We encourage interested parties to apply and help support the Association!

ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION UPDATED

We are proud to announce that we have updated our Articles of Association to better reflect the mission and governance of the Hong Kong Outdoor Learning Association. Key updates have been in our objects of association, members voting rights and the rules on the formation of a Steering Committee and re-election of Committee members.

This is a vital step in creating a solid foundation for governance, ensuring accountability, and fostering a transparent and effective operational environment for HKOLA to thrive. We hope this task will help HKOLA stay true to its mission for years to come, while promoting trust and engagement among members and other stakeholders

The full articles of association can be seen on our website.

KEY MEETINGS

Over the past six months, the Steering Committee has held more than twenty meetings with providers, schools, educators, and associations.

Our efforts have included productive discussions with key organizations such as the UK's Institute for Outdoor Learning, the Hong Kong Playground Association, as well as connecting with the Singaporean Outdoor Learning and Adventure Education Association to learn more about the newly drafted Singaporean Outdoor Adventure Education standards.

This work is crucial for understanding the challenges facing our sector, cultivating closer partnerships, sharing resources, and exchanging innovative ideas and best practices. Furthermore, it amplifies the voice of HKOLA in our advocacy efforts, ultimately helping to raise awareness about the importance of outdoor education.

UNDERSTANDING HKOLA'S Articles of Association

The Articles of Association are the rules for how HKOLA manages itself. As members these are important to know as they outline your rights and responsibilities, and how your voice can be heard.

#1 OUR MISSION HKOLA's mission is written into the Articles. It guides all our decision-making

HKOLA members strive to...

- SUPPORT** ... outdoor learning as a professional & rewarding career
- PROMOTE** ... outdoor learning as a valuable approach to education
- ADVOCATE** ... for high standards in safety & education
- RESPECT** ... all stakeholders & minimise environmental impact

#2 ASSOCIATION STRUCTURE The Articles outline how we govern HKOLA, member's rights, and how to be heard

STEERING COMMITTEE
3 - 9 elected full members, voluntary

- Manage day-to-day operations, finances, conferences
- Meet quarterly to make decisions in support of the mission
- Engage with members on current issues and direction
- Can arrange votes for members on selected topics

FULL MEMBERS

- Individuals, providers, schools
- Can raise discussion topics at AGM
- Can be nominated for Steering Committee at AGMs
- 1 vote per person, on selected topics

ASSOCIATES

- Other associations, retailers
- Not eligible for Steering Committee
- No voting rights

#3 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING The Articles require HKOLA to hold an AGM for all members

Every year we must hold an AGM which all Full Members can join.

At this meeting we will:

- Present the financial records to the Steering Committee
- Elect a new Steering Committee
- Discuss and vote on important issues to HKOLA

30 DAYS NOTICE for new nominations & discussion topics

#4 WINDING UP & DISSOLUTION In case we need to close down

If HKOLA needs to close down, the Articles state...

- the remaining assets will be given to institutions with similar goals as HKOLA.
- money can not be paid back to the Members
- that Members may need to contribute \$10 to costs.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

For more information info@hkoutdoorlearning.org

FINANCIAL REVIEW

HK OUTDOOR LEARNING ASSOCIATION LIMITED BALANCE SHEET

FOR THE PERIOD FROM 18 AUGUST 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

	2024
	HK\$
CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash and bank balances	45,358
	<u>45,358</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES	
Accrued expenses	4,200
Amounts due to directors	2,150
	<u>6,350</u>

NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>39,008</u>
EQUITY	
Share capital	
Retained earnings	39,008
	<u>39,008</u>
	<u>39,008</u>

FINANCIAL REVIEW

HK OUTDOOR LEARNING ASSOCIATION LIMITED PROFIT & LOSS

FOR THE PERIOD FROM 18 AUGUST 2023 TO 31 MARCH 2024

	Period from 18/8/23 to 31/3/24 HK\$
REVENUE	50,755
LESS: COST OF SALES	
Purchase	-
GROSS PROFIT	50,755
OTHER REVENUE	
Interest income	58.00
	50,813
LESS: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	
Auditors' remuneration	4,200
Bank charges	1,920
Business registration fee	2,150
Conference fee	525
Incidental expenses	770
Site use fee	2,240
	11,805
PROFIT BEFORE TAXATION	39,008

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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OUTDOOR
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION**

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