

HONG KONG OUTDOOR LEARNING ASSOCIATION

香港戶外學習協會

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25



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

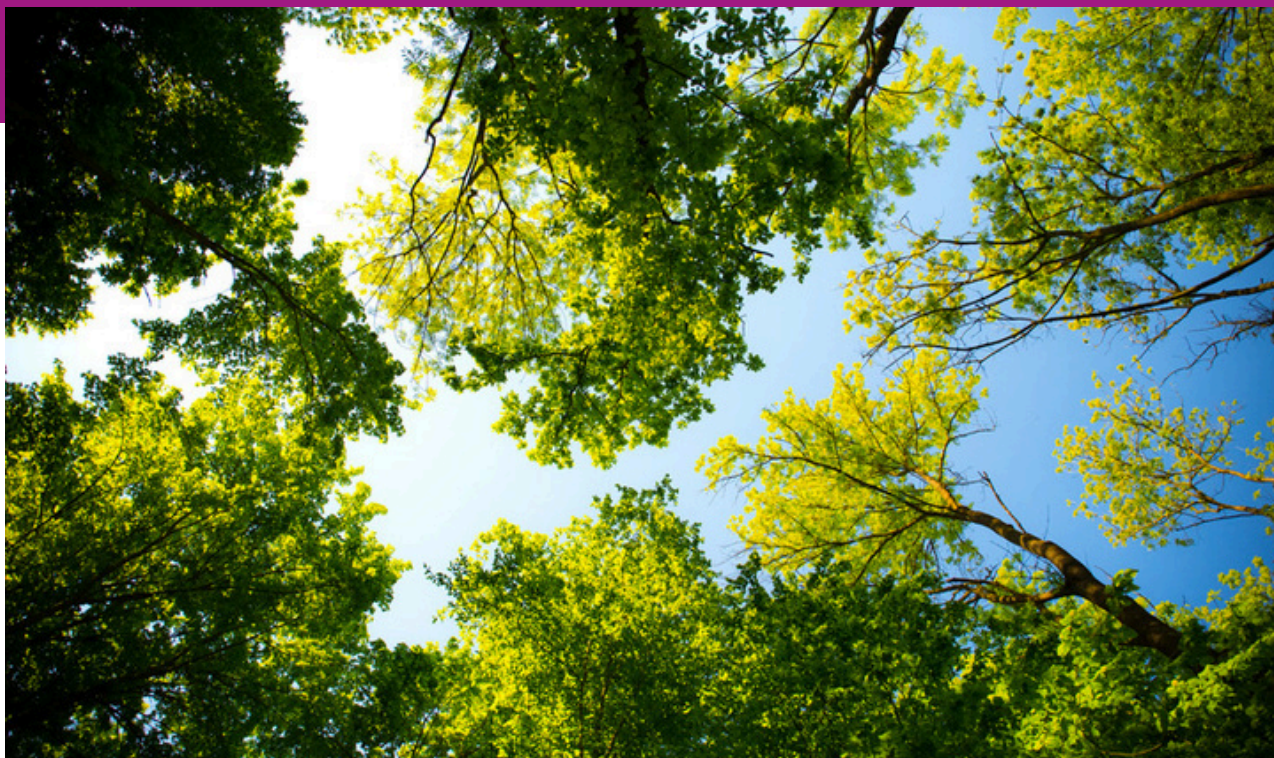
Ensure respect for all participants and staff, minimise environmental impact, and promote sustainability throughout their practice

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

Welcome everyone!

I'm genuinely excited to share the second annual report for the Hong Kong Outdoor Learning Association. Reflecting on our first year, the words that come to mind are "fast and furious." We poured our hearts into creating initiatives that truly support our industry, build connections, and show our community that we're serious about developing outdoor education in Hong Kong.

After that whirlwind of enthusiasm, I'm happy to say we've found a more sustainable rhythm. Our second year has been all about learning and growth. As we work to professionalize our association, we've stepped into new territory. Like adventurers on a journey, we've picked up new skills—yes, even tackling social media marketing!—adapted our plans, and occasionally felt a bit lost in the maze of government paperwork.

I want to take a moment to thank each of you who have shared your time, advice, and support—those who joined us at events, renewed your memberships, and liked our posts. Your involvement means the world to us.

Looking ahead, we're eager to focus on building our community. We'll be curating a calendar of events to bring together professionals who are passionate about outdoor learning and create a supportive network.

So, here's my invitation: become a member, make use of our services, and encourage others to join us. Together, let's be advocates for outdoor learning in Hong Kong and inspire the next generation to explore and appreciate the great outdoors.

All the best,



DAVE ADDIS

DIRECTOR & FOUNDER MEMBER





8 NEW MEMBERS

We welcomed 8 new individual members to HKOLA this year. 8 individuals committed to enhancing outdoor education for all. Well done!

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.

1 NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

Our Steering Committee has gained a wealth of experience and knowledge in the shape of Dr Xoni Ma. His expertise will be truly valued as we work to improve outdoor education.

1 CONFERENCE

We were thrilled to host our second conference of 2024! This event felt like the pre-pandemic conferences, full of energy, discussions and even attracting speakers from Singapore!

ACHIEVEMENTS

42

attendees at the annual
conference

1ST

booth held at a regional
conference



HKOLA'S SECOND CONFERENCE



With more time to prepare, our December conference was a chance to continue the conversations from January. This time we saw a turnout of **42 attendees over two days** - a big jump from the **27 attendees in January!**



Utilising the beautiful hilltop venue of the Breakthrough Youth Village, the two themes of **'Strengthening the Sector'** and **'Impactful Individuals'** attracted an inspiring range of speakers and attendees.

We had insightful sessions on LGBTQ+ in the outdoors, a range of new facilitation skills to add to the tool box, learnt about the state of environmental education in Hong Kong and explores pathways to professionalism. We also got outside to enjoy the sunshine and learn about Forest Schools!

The event was a success with engaging topics that felt relevant to the professional lives of attendees.

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 two applicants undergoing the accreditation process, with two organization having successfully met the standards and received their badge!

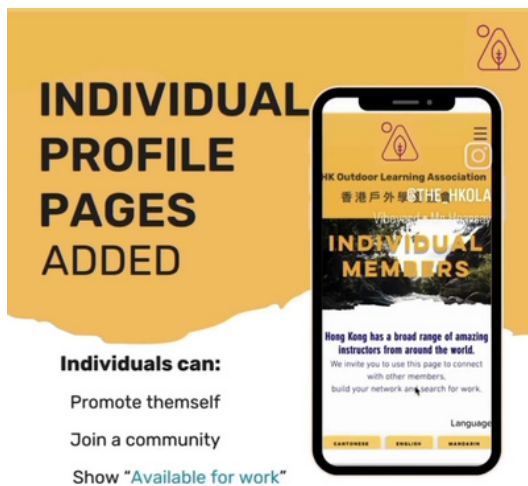


HIGHLIGHTS

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER PAGES

Work has gone into the website to allow individual members to create public profile pages.

The profiles have a variety of benefits, in particular to connect freelance instructors with organisations. Members looking for additional work can display their qualifications and experience, and be contactable for work.



Other uses include looking for collaborators on projects, team mates for your next adventure or climb, or simply to tell your story.

ORGANISATION PROFILES AND SEARCH FUNCTION

Along with individual profile pages we've updated the website to allow member organisations to create a public profile.

Organisations can share their ethos, expertise, social media and types of program to a wider audience.

Additionally, schools and potential clients can select a variety of filters to help find the right organisation for them. A one-stop shop for finding their next providers.

AEE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

HKOLA held a booth at the AEE Asia Pacific Conference hosted by BELL at The ISF Academy.



It was a great chance to showcase the Association to a wide range of organisations, outdoor professionals and schools from across the region.

Thank you to The ISF Academy for organising such a large event. Events like these bring Hong Kong's outdoor sector to the global stage, while also bringing decision-makers together to share ideas and develop professionally.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Attending events, networking and social media have been our core method for **broadening our reach**. Over the last year, we have improved our use of social media and increased our followership. Most notably on LinkedIn with a jump of 180 new followers in the last year!

Paid posts for the annual conference have also been effective and quickly shown returns with new members and ticket purchases off the back of these ads. They'll be a key part of the strategy in the following year.



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 & 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

We'd like to welcome Dr Xoni Ma as our newest steering committee member. A long-term advocate for environmental education, we truly look forward to working with him. His experience and background make a valuable contribution to the team.

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.

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.

FUTURE PLANS

Moving into the next year, we aim to bring these services to life and have members using them on a more regular basis. Through relationship building and cultivating a thriving community of outdoor professionals, we intend to show members the value of engaging with these services for themselves and their organisations.

We are excited to announce several other initiatives for the upcoming year:

- **Transition to a Registered Charity:** This will enable us to access essential grants and benefits to further our mission.
- **Community Engagement:** We will organize regular meetup hikes and social dinners, providing instructors a platform to connect, raise issues, and build a community of practice.
- **Subsidized Workshops:** We plan to offer workshops on crucial topics currently underrepresented in Hong Kong's outdoor learning community, such as:
 - Working with neurodiverse students
 - Conflict resolution
 - Facilitation skills to enhance outdoor learning experiences
- **Collaboration:** Recognizing the fragmented nature of the sector, we will actively partner with other associations and organizations. Our participation in events like the HKU Planting Knowledge seminar, support for OWL HK's Nurture via Nature conference in October and the UK's IOL's Global Online Conference will showcase this commitment.
- **Membership:** We will continue promoting membership and our services with the aim to increase their uptake with organisations and individuals.

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

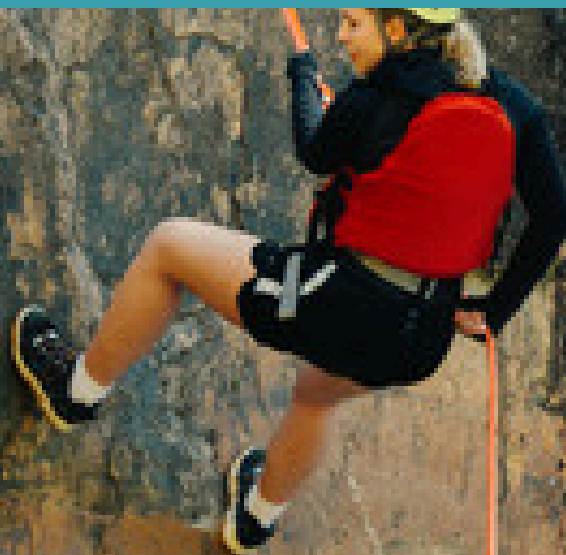
Make a donation

Spread the news

Volunteer on the committee

Sponsor the conference

Contact: info@hkoutdoorlearning.org







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