

# GGN – Geopark Annual Report 2019

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name:** Hong Kong UNESCO Global Geopark (HKUGGp)

**Country:** China

**Geopark networks:** Global Geoparks Network (GGN), Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) and Chinese Geoparks Network (CGN)

**Year of inscription:** 2011

**Last revalidation:** 2017

### Representative Photo



Students from Japan and Hong Kong enjoying an exchange activities organised in HKUGGp

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

<b>No. of geopark staff:</b>	24 staff, including 3 geoscientists
<b>No. of visitors:</b>	1.2–1.5 million per year
<b>No. of geopark events:</b>	11 events held by the management body and 7 events co-organised with cooperative organizations (Annex I)
<b>No. of educational programmes:</b>	54 geopark school activities, covering classes in primary schools, high schools and universities
<b>No. of geopark press releases:</b>	about 80

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

The major achievements in the reporting period were as follows:

### Contribution to the GGN – Networking and Participation

HKUGGp recognises the important role and function of networking and partnership in geopark networks. To facilitate knowledge exchange and experience sharing, we co-organised and participated in a series of networking and promotional activities, including the following:

- (i) The 5th Geoscience Capacity Building Workshop, co-organised with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in HKUGGp;
- (ii) Summer student exchange programme, co-organised with the geoparks in the Japanese Geoparks Network (JGN);
- (iii) Taking up the social media coordinator role for the Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN);
- (iv) The Tourism Working Group and Education Working Group of the GGN; and
- (v) The 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN) Symposium, held in Rinjani Lombok UGGp, Indonesia.

### Management and Financial Status

The management and financial status of HKUGGp remained stable, with an annual recurrent budget of US\$3.74 million. The provision covers key management areas, including (i) management and promotion; (ii) infrastructure; (iii) science popularization; (iv) networking; (v) capacity building; and (vi) local engagement and sustainable socio-economic development.

## **Geoconservation**

Located in the east part of Hong Kong and extending from the northeast New Territories to the Sai Kung area, HKUGGp is a single entity, where sites and landscapes of international significance are holistically managed with the support of local communities and other geopark stakeholders. The most sensitive areas of ecological, cultural and geological significance are protected and managed under the prevailing legal framework of Hong Kong.

## **Sustainable Tourism (Geotourism)**

HKUGGp has received 1.2 to 1.5 million local and overseas visitors each year for the past five years, with the number following the basic trend of Hong Kong's inbound visitor numbers. HKUGGp has continued to work closely with the tourism industry and local communities in capacity building and promoting sustainable and responsible tourism activities.

To enrich the visitor experience, the High Island Geo-trail was extended in 2019 to the Bui Tsim Kok vantage point, which oversees the caldera of the High Island supervolcano. In addition, training on the history and intangible cultural heritage of local communities was provided to 46 geopark guides to deepen and diversify their knowledge.

To further enhance accessibility to HKUGGp, we worked closely with transport and tour operators to explore opportunities to improve their coverage and frequency. A new geo-tour to Kau Sai Village and Sharp Island was launched in December 2019, and the kaito ferry service operator expanded its service to Saturdays and Sundays. Improvements to multiple piers in HKUGGp are in the final design stage.

2019 also marked the completion of the district office signature project to convert the vacant Siu Ying School in Lai Chi Wo to a Geoheritage and Ecological Education Centre and to upgrade the coastal boardwalk at Lai Chi Wo.

## **New Education Programmes on Geoconservation and Sustainable Development**

To promote earth science and enhance public awareness of the importance of nature conservation, in addition to the annual HKUGGp School Programme, we continued to host all-round science-popularisation activities, including (i) student exchanges under the geopark school program, co-organized with Arxan UGGp of China, Aso UGGp, Itoigawa UGGp, Oki Islands UGGp, Sanin Kaigan UGGp and Unzen Volcanic Area UGGp of Japan; and (ii) guided cultural tours to geo-sites and historical villages in HKUGGp.

## **Strategic Partnerships**

In collaboration with relevant geopark stakeholders, HKUGGp continued to support, promote, and in some cases operate geo-education, geo-conservation, socio-economic and cultural development initiatives. The operation of all visitor centres and story rooms was supported by HKUGGp or our supporting partners, together with on-going capacity-building endeavours.

We continued to engage local communities in our “Same Roots, Same Origins” project to record, preserve and promote their intangible cultural heritage, as well as to build up their capacity. The project led to the establishment of the Kat O Story Room and the Kau Sai Village Story Room in 2019. The story rooms are operated by local villagers, who can give visitors first-hand accounts of their community, culture and heritage. In addition, we continued to engage non-government organisations to promote nature conservation and manage rural areas with an innovative mindset. Three examples are the Sustainable Lai Chi Wo Project, the Chief Executive’s Community Project, and the Management Agreement Scheme in Lai Chi Wo.

## **Promotional Activities**

We collaborated with geopark partners, local operators and communities in the following promotional activities in 2019:

- (i) Organised media tours and opening ceremonies for the Kat O and Kau Sai Village Story Rooms;
- (ii) Published a book on Ap Chau and leaflets for Ap Chau, Kau Sai Village and High Island to promote their cultural heritage;
- (iii) Developed a new mobile-friendly website and a set of leaflets to promote green tourism in Hong Kong;
- (iv) Published an article on HKUGGp in the Japanese Geoparks Network magazine;
- (v) Provided technical support to the Hong Kong Science Museum for the establishment of the Earth Science Gallery to promote earth science knowledge and HKUGGp; and
- (vi) Recorded the decennial Dajiu festival of the Hing Chun Alliance (seven villages in Northeast New Territories) to promote cultural heritage.

## **4. CONTACTS**

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## Annex I – Geopark Events in 2019

### Events held by management body

Month	Event
Jan	Herbal plant training for geopark guides and communities
Feb	Temple architecture and decoration training
Apr	Mural painting outside the Kat O Story Room with a local artist and a geopark school
Apr	St. Paul's Secondary School student exchange to Aso and Unzen Volcanic Area UGGps
Apr	Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club Fung Yiu King Memorial Secondary School student exchange to Oki Islands and Sanin Kaigan UGGps
Jun	Herbal plant training for geopark guides and communities
Jun	Exchange tour to the CGN (HKUGGp and Lions Nature Education Foundation)
Jul	Unzen Volcanic Area UGGp student exchange to HKUGGp
Jul	Student Exchange Visit to Oki Islands UGGp and Yakage
Aug	Itoigawa and Sanin Kaigan UGGp student exchange to HKUGGp
Oct	Basic training and geo-site visit for Geopark Hotel staff

### Events co-organised with cooperating organisations

Month	Event
Jan	Opening ceremony for the renovated HKUGGp Visitor Centre
Mar	Intensive geology training for HKUGGp staff in Beijing, Yanqing and Tai Shan UGGp
Apr	Science popularisation capacity-building workshop for CGN and JGN geoparks
Apr	Launch of the book <i>Same Roots Same Origins series – The Story of Robinson Island</i>
Oct	Opening ceremony for the Kat O Story Room
Dec	Opening ceremony for the Kau Sai Village Story Room
Dec	Hing Chun Alliance Dajiu Festival