



Leisure and Culture

Hong Kong residents have access to a wide range of sports, recreational and cultural facilities. Many of these are built and managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). The main objective of the department is to enrich the community's quality of life through the promotion and provision of recreational and cultural facilities and activities.

Leisure Services: The LCSD provides facilities to foster public participation in recreation and sports activities and organises a wide range of programmes. It also promotes conservation of nature and greening of Hong Kong through planting of trees and other plants in public parks and amenity areas.

Recreational and Sports Venues: There are a great number of facilities to provide leisure services, including 25 sports grounds, 37 swimming pool complexes, 41 gazetted bathing beaches, 88 sports centres, 238 hard-surfaced mini-soccer pitches, 245 volleyball courts, 261 tennis courts, 294 squash courts and 678 children's playgrounds. Other facilities such as turf pitches, hockey pitches, horse riding schools and golf driving ranges are also provided. The LCSD also manages five water sports centres (Stanley Main Beach, St Stephen's Beach, Chong Hing, Jockey Club Wong Shek and Tai Mei Tuk) and four holiday camps (Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village, Lady MacLehose Holiday Village, Sai Kung and Tso Kung Tam Outdoor Recreation Centres). The 12 500-seat Hong Kong Coliseum and the 3 500-seat Queen Elizabeth Stadium are the focal points for important indoor sporting events while the 40 000-seat Hong Kong Stadium is a major venue for staging large-scale sporting and spectator events.

Recreation and Sports Activities: The LCSD organises and promotes a wide range of leisure activities for people of all ages. In 2008-09, the department organised some 34 500 recreation and sports activities for more than 2 288 000 participants of all ages and abilities.

With the aim of boosting sports at all levels of the community, the LCSD launches various projects throughout Hong Kong, such as Young Athletes Training Scheme specially designed for identifying talented young players, Corporate Games for the working population, Masters Games for people aged 35 or above, and District Sports Teams Training Schemes for enhancing a stronger sense of belonging among residents.

To encourage the public to improve their health through participating in physical exercises and sports, the LCSD and the Department of Health jointly organised the Healthy Exercise for All Campaign. In 2008-09, a total of 1 499 programmes were organised for some 87 000 participants under the Campaign which included 'Exercise and Health Roving Exhibitions', Dance Night under 'Dance for Health', 'Quali-walk Scheme', 'Hiking Scheme', 'Rope

Skipping Activities', 'Fitness Training Course for Children' and 'Outreach Fitness Programmes for Persons with a Disability and Older Persons'. To help promote the Healthy Exercise for All Campaign, 33 top athletes were appointed as Healthy Exercise Ambassadors. Health education and physical exercise-related materials were produced in the form of videotapes, VCDs, leaflets and booklets, and uploaded onto a dedicated webpage in the LCSD website. On top of these, a 'Healthy Living Fair to Welcome Major Sports Events' was held on January 17, 2009 to encourage public participation in sports and raise public awareness of two major sporting events — the 2nd Hong Kong Games and the 2009 East Asian Games.

In 2008, a study on 'Participation Patterns of Hong Kong People in Physical Activities' was conducted with a view to identifying trends in the development of 'Sport for All' worldwide and the participation patterns of Hong Kong people in physical and sports activities. The Study was completed in December 2008. Making reference to the results and recommendations of the Study, the LCSD formulated a follow up action plan in collaboration with other major stakeholders to publicise and encourage Hong Kong people to actively participate in physical and sports activities.

The Sports Subvention Scheme provides financial assistance to National Sports Associations (NSAs) and Sports Organisations (SOs) for organising sports programmes. In 2008-09, the scheme provided subventions for NSAs and SOs to organise more than 10 300 sports promotion events for about 720 000 participants.

The School Sports Programme and the Community Sports Club Project, launched by the Department, have been further promoting sports and cultivating a new sport culture in Hong Kong. The aim of the two programmes is to provide more opportunities for students and members of the public to participate in sports. In 2008-09, over 7 600 activities were organised with over 590 000 students participating. Subsidies were granted for community sports clubs to organise about 1 800 sports development programmes for 40 000 participants.

With the revival of the Bun Scrambling Competition in 2005, the Competition has become an annual spectacular event to local and overseas visitors and attracted extensive media coverage.

Hong Kong Games: With a view to further promoting 'Sports for All' in the community, the LCSD collaborated with the Sports Commission and its Community Sports Committee, 18 District Councils (DCs), the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China (SF&OC) and the relevant NSAs to hold the Hong Kong Games (HKG) biennially from 2007 onwards. The 1st HKG were held from April 21 to May 6, 2007 smoothly. The 2nd HKG were successfully held from May 9 to 31, 2009. A

total of 2 307 athletes from the 18 DCs participated in the competition events of six sports, namely athletics, badminton, basketball, table tennis, swimming and tennis. To publicise the 2nd HKG and to encourage public support and participation, a total of 13 publicity/public participation programmes were held, including a launching ceremony, Voting for 'My Favourite Sporty District' and Guessing 'the Overall Champion of the 2nd HKG', elite athletes' demonstration and experience sharing sessions on the six sports of the HKG, a grand opening ceremony, a cheering team competition for the 18 districts, a closing cum prize presentation ceremony and the newly-introduced 'Dynamic Moments Photo Contest', so as to enable more members of the public to participate in the HKG through different ways. These activities attracted an aggregate of over 160 000 participants and had achieved the aims of enhancing the community's cohesiveness, fostering harmony and promoting a stronger sporting culture in the community.

Hong Kong 2009 East Asian Games: With the efforts made by the SF&OC, the full support of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and also the local sports community, Hong Kong won the hosting right of the 5th East Asian Games (EAG). The LCSD worked closely with the SF&OC, 2009 East Asian Games (Hong Kong) Limited and NSAs to prepare for the organisation of the first-ever multi-sport international games in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong 2009 EAG had 22 sports events and awarded 262 gold medals, representing the largest scale of EAG ever held in terms of number of sports events and medals. To meet the requirement of the Games, the Hong Kong Government invested more than \$1.2 billion to build a new sports ground in Tseung Kwan O and upgrade 13 existing government venues. The Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground has been opened for use since last May. During the Games period, all the competition venues were nicely decorated with EAG theme to create a coherent identity and enhance the sporting and festive atmosphere.

There was a total of 330 000 public tickets for the Games, of which 120 000 educational tickets were sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for free distribution to students for them to enjoy the atmosphere of the EAG. The remaining 210 000 tickets were for public sale.

To promote the Games, a 200-day Countdown was held in last May and the City Dress-up Programme was rolled out from June. A 100-day Countdown cum Torch Relay was held on August 29. Apart from this, from September to November, over 500 schools including both primary and secondary schools with hundreds of thousands students and teachers took part in the School Torch Relay to spread the sporting spirit in schools.

More intensive publicity strategies were adopted to drum up public support for the EAG and the athletes. Various activities including some 300 EAG supporting activities organised in 18 districts, were held through different channels to encourage the public to involve actively in the EAG and to attend the competition events as spectators.

The HKSARG sent more than 380 athletes and about 100 officials to participate in the 5th EAG. The Games was successfully held with great achievements by the HK team winning a total of 110 medals, including 26 gold medals, 31 silver and 53 bronze. On the other hand, a total of 58 new Games records were set throughout the Games.

The Opening Ceremony was held in the piazzas of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Victoria Harbour. This unprecedented arrangement for using Hong Kong's magnificent harbour as a backdrop, was well received by the guests, athletes and the public alike, leaving an unique and enjoyable memory for all. In addition, the Closing

Ceremony was held in the Hong Kong Coliseum during which the EAG Association flag was handed to representatives of Tianjin, host of the 6th EAG, signifying a smooth completion of the Hong Kong 2009 EAG.

Horticulture and Landscape Services: The LCSD is responsible for improving the environment with landscape planting, beautification schemes and tree preservation. It manages about 1 500 parks and gardens of various sizes, including 24 major parks throughout Hong Kong.

Since 2000, the LCSD has been holding the annual Hong Kong Flower Show at Victoria Park. The show is the biggest horticultural event of its kind in the territory. Besides numerous colourful landscape displays, flower arrangements and beautiful horticultural exhibits, the show has provided many other interesting fringe activities such as horticultural workshops and seminars, cultural presentations as well as drawing and photographic competitions for the enjoyment of the public. The show was held at the same venue from March 13 to 22, 2009.

To enhance public awareness about greening the environment, a series of interesting and educational green activities such as Green Volunteer Scheme, Greening School Subsidy Scheme, 'One Person, One Flower' Scheme, Community Garden Programme, Community Planting Day, theme flower shows, horticultural courses and seminars are also organised for public participation every year.

Cultural Services: The LCSD provides a wide range of performance facilities, cultural and entertainment programmes to promote the development and appreciation of performing and visual arts. Apart from managing 15 performance venues, the Department also stages presentations for various art forms as well as international festivals and educational arts activities. Besides, it also runs URBTIX (Urban Ticketing System) and offers concessionary discounts to full-time students, senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Major Performance Venues:

Hong Kong Cultural Centre: Opened in 1989, the Hong Kong Cultural Centre has established itself as a major performing arts venue attracting overseas leading artists and local major performing companies, and a prime performance venue for large-scale arts festivals. It houses a 2 019-seat Concert Hall, a 1 734-seat Grand Theatre and a 303-496 seat Studio Theatre.

Hong Kong City Hall: Established in 1962, the Hong Kong City Hall is the first multi-purpose cultural complex built to enhance the quality of life amongst the Hong Kong community. Hong Kong City Hall has taken on the role of popularising arts activities and promoting eastern and western cultures. Its cultural facilities include a 1 434-seat Concert Hall, a 463-seat Theatre, a Recital Hall, an Exhibition Hall and an Exhibition Gallery.

Hong Kong Coliseum and Queen Elizabeth Stadium:

These are two well-equipped indoor venues in Hong Kong most suitable for sports, cultural and entertainment programmes. The Coliseum is a leading venue for pop concerts, entertainment spectacles and international sports and cultural events. The Stadium is suitable for holding sports events, cultural and entertainment performances, school ceremonies and variety shows.

Other performance venues in the territory including Sha Tin Town Hall, Tsuen Wan Town Hall, Tuen Mun Town Hall, Kwai Tsing Theatre, Yuen Long Theatre, Sheung Wan Civic Centre, Sai Wan Ho Civic Centre, Ngau Chi Wan Civic Centre, Ko Shan Theatre, North District Town Hall and Tai Po Civic Centre have also become the focus for cultural activities in the local community spectrum.

Cultural Festivals and Performances: Cultural life of the citizens of Hong Kong is enriched by the year-round cultural and entertainment programmes organised by the LCSD. In 2008-09, a galaxy of exciting programmes was organised, covering different types of performing arts by world-renowned visiting artists, distinguished local companies and young talents round the year, among which were the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Ballet UK, and the Peking Opera Theatre of Shanghai. The Department also presented the first-ever large-scale Dance Day to promote dance to the local community. The annual Cantonese Opera Day held on the last Sunday of November aims to highlight the preservation and development of the traditional art form of Cantonese opera. The annual International Arts Carnival held in July and August provides children, youth and their families with a diversity of enjoyable educational, cultural and entertainment programmes during the summer vacation. The Carnival attracts nearly 134 000 participants in 2008 to a total of 402 stage performances and activities. Autumn comes the Fourth New Vision Arts Festival that continues its avant-garde style of programming to showcase innovative and outstanding cross-cultural music, dance and theatre programmes with an Asian focus. Over 80 000 people have participated in the Festival's 100 performances and activities. Other mass events in festive seasons organised during the latter part of the year include the Lantern Carnivals and Thematic Lantern Exhibitions during the Mid-Autumn Festival and Lunar New Year as well as the New Year's Eve Countdown Carnivals.

On top of these, cultural and entertainment activities, audience-building and arts education activities under various schemes are also presented with an aim to promote appreciation of the arts in the community and at schools in collaboration with local arts groups and educational and district organisations. A total of 1 150 arts education and audience-building activities are organised under these schemes in the same year, attracting over 310 000 participants.

The annual Hong Kong Arts Festival, organised by the Hong Kong Arts Festival Society in February and March, has established itself as one of the most important international festivals in Asia featuring over a hundred performances of music, dance, opera, theatre and entertainment of all kinds.

Music Office: The Music Office, managed by the LCSD, promotes knowledge and appreciation of music in the community, especially among young people, through the provision of instrumental and ensemble training and the organisation of various music activities with a view to building a new generation of concert audiences. It provides music training to more than 8 000 trainees each year and its activities attract about 170 000 participants annually.

URBTIX: Commencing its operation in 1984, URBTIX has become the most popular computerised ticketing system in Hong Kong offering the public a range of convenient and reliable ticketing services for cultural and entertainment programmes through its wide network of 36 outlets as well as internet and telephone booking services. In 2008-09, over \$496 million was paid through URBTIX for some 3.48 million tickets for over 6 900 performances.

Other Performance Venues and Performing Companies in Hong Kong:

Hong Kong Arts Centre: Established in 1977, Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC) is a non-profit, self financing arts organization which focuses on promoting contemporary arts and cultures within and across the border, with facilities including theatres, cinema, galleries, classrooms, studios, cafe and office space. It provides a wide range of programmes featuring local and overseas artists. Its education arm, Hong Kong Art School, is an accredited

institute run by a group of dedicated artists. The focus of its award-bearing curriculum lies in four core academic areas, namely, Fine Art, Applied Art, Media Art, and Drama Education, and its scope covers programmes with academic levels ranging from Foundation Diploma, Higher Diploma, Bachelor Degree to Master Degree. The short courses and the outreach projects of the School that run parallel to the award-bearing curriculum span an even wider variety of artistic disciplines. With its recent acquisition of a campus site in Shaukeiwan, the School aims at further bridging art and the community.

Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts: The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, established by Government Ordinance in 1984, is one of the leading institutes of higher arts education in Asia. It provides professional education, training and research facilities in the performing arts, theatre and entertainment arts, film and television. Its educational policy reflects the cultural diversity of Hong Kong with emphasis on Chinese and Western traditions and interdisciplinary complementarity.

Starting from 2006, the Academy launched the Master of Fine Arts in three disciplines, including dance, drama, theatre and entertainment, plus two Master of Music in composition and performance. The admission of postgraduate students signaled a new era for the Academy, extending educational offerings to include opportunities for the most talented graduates from Hong Kong and abroad to obtain internationally recognized higher degrees in the performing arts.

The Extension and Continuing Education for Life (EXCEL) was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in June 2007, a self-funding activity centre of the Academy. It offers part-time personal enrichment courses to the general public of all age groups, as well as in-service professional training to corporate clients, Government Departments and courses designed for persons with disabilities.

Major Performing Companies:

The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, established in 1977, is a professional theatre company which performs mainly in Cantonese. Its repertoire covers Chinese and Western classics and original works by local playwrights. It stages over 100 performances each season.

The Hong Kong Dance Company was set up in 1981 with an aim to promote Chinese dance. Its repertoire ranges from traditional and folkloric dances to original dance dramas on Chinese and Hong Kong themes.

The Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, founded in 1977, is one of the world's largest professional Chinese orchestras. The 85-member orchestra presents about 100 concerts a season.

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra: The 90-member orchestra presents about 100 concerts and ensembles each season.

Heritage and Museums: LCSD endeavours in providing and developing museums and related services to collect historic, art and science objects and to preserve local cultural heritage and to promote public appreciation for it. Efforts are focused on preserving and conserving cultural relics, antiquities and monuments and promoting heritage education to foster a sense of belonging among the people of Hong Kong.

The LCSD manages two art museums – Hong Kong Museum of Art and Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware; two science and technology museums – Hong Kong Science Museum and Hong Kong Space Museum; 10 history and folk museums – Hong Kong Museum of History, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Hong Kong

Museum of Coastal Defence, Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, Lei Cheng Uk Han Tomb Museum, Law Uk Folk Museum, Sheung Yiu Folk Museum, Sam Tung Uk Museum, Hong Kong Railway Museum and Fireboat Alexander Grantham Exhibition Gallery; two heritage centres – Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre and Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery cum Heritage Trail Visitors Centre; Hong Kong Film Archive and Art Promotion Office.

The Hong Kong Museum of Art plays an important role in preserving the cultural heritage of China as well as collecting and promoting art with a local focus. The Hong Kong Science Museum, with its predominantly interactive exhibits, illustrates various scientific principles and the ways technology is used to improve the quality of life. The Hong Kong Space Museum serves to popularise astronomy and space science. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum features a variety of specially designed exhibition possibilities to cover different aspects of history, the arts and culture. The Hong Kong Museum of History collects, conserves, processes, studies and displays cultural objects which are closely related to the history, ethnography and natural history of Hong Kong and the South China area. The Hong Kong Film Archive's major functions are to acquire, preserve, catalogue and document Hong Kong films and related materials. The Art Promotion Office is responsible for the promotion of public and community art in Hong Kong. Up till now, LCSD museums have acquired 1.21 million items of collection in which 210 000 items are historic, art and science objects and 1 million items are film and film-related materials. The LCSD museums organise large-scale thematic exhibitions every year as well as the year-round extension activities to raise interest and popularise museum services.

The Antiquities and Monuments Office is responsible for the protection and preservation of Hong Kong's archaeological and built heritage. There are at present 94 gazetted monuments, most of which have been properly repaired and restored for public viewing. In addition, the office also monitors archeological surveys and excavations necessitated by public projects or developments and assists the Development Bureau in launching a partnership scheme to revitalise the historic buildings.

Public Libraries: With its 66 static libraries and 10 mobile libraries, the LCSD provides an efficient service to users in meeting community's needs for knowledge, information, and research, supports life-long learning, continuous education and profitable use of leisure time, and promotes local literary arts. Besides, it also manages the Books Registration Office which helps preserve Hong Kong's literary heritage through the registration of local publications. The library system has a comprehensive collection of library materials which include 10.77 million items of books and 1.62 million items of multi-media publications. It has 3.69 million registered borrowers who borrowed more than 59.93 million items of books and other library materials during the year of 2008-09. A balance mix of activities for people of all ages is organised regularly throughout the year. In 2008-09, a total of 20 270 outreach programmes were carried out at the libraries. Opened in 2001, the Hong Kong Central Library, with a gross floor area of 33 800 square metres, is the largest purpose-built public library in Hong Kong. Being the main library of the network as well as the major information centre of Hong Kong, it serves an average of 13 000 readers each day.