

明愛陳震夏郊野學園—— 環境教育與實地考察搖籃 Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre – a cradle of environmental education & fieldwork

長洲東灣山上有一所特別的學校，坐擁無敵海景，長洲居民以為它是一間研究所，學界僅少數知道它的存在，香港大部分人都未曾聽過這間學校的名字，但是知道這間學校的老師們，每年都會想盡辦法為學生報讀其住宿課程，去過上課的同學們都樂而忘返，到底這所學校是何方神聖？



Nestled on a mountain at Tung Wan, Cheung Chau, there is a unique campus that boasts breathtaking seaview. Locals believe it to be a research institute, with only a few in academia aware of its existence. The name of this school remains unknown to most people in Hong Kong. However, the teachers who are familiar with this school go to great lengths every year to enrol their students in its residential programme. Those who have attended classes cherish their experience and found it difficult to leave. What secrets lie behind the walls of this extraordinary campus?

為生物及地理科師生而設的郊野研習學校它原來是一所郊野學習館——以資助中學模式運作的明愛陳震夏郊野學園。本港首間自然學校為一九七八年興建的西貢郊野研習館，為學生提供戶外學習機會。由於當時的高級程度生物及地理科考試設有實地考察項目，令西貢郊野研習館的課程一直求過於供，因此，教育局決定成立更多郊野學習館，並接納了舊色園及明愛兩個辦學機構的申請，先後於一九九五年設立了位於大帽山山腰的可觀自然教育中心暨天文館，以及一九九六年由明愛於長洲創立了明愛陳震夏郊野學園（以下簡稱郊野學園）。

郊野學園旨在為學生提供課程和設施，讓他們能夠親身瞭解自然環境及學習野外考察的技巧。學園分為山上和山下兩間校舍，山上的是聖方濟校園，山下的是沿用舊明愛聖保祿中學校舍的聖保祿校園，兩座校園均設有不同設施，以輔助生物及地理等科目的教學，並讓學生在下課後自主參觀學習。郊野學園的課程包括生物、地理、全方位實地考察、環

A field study school designed for biology and geography teachers and students

It turns out to be a fieldwork school – Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre, an aided secondary school operated by Caritas Hong Kong. Built in 1978, Sai Kung Field Studies Centre was the first nature school in Hong Kong to provide outdoor learning opportunities for students. Due to the inclusion of field studies in the Advanced Level Biology and Geography exams at the time, the demand for courses at Sai Kung Field Studies Centre exceeded the supply. As a result, the Education Bureau decided to establish more field studies centres and approved applications from Sik Sik Yuen and Caritas Hong Kong. In 1995, Ho Koon Nature Education cum Astronomical Centre was built on the mountainside of Tai Mo Shan, followed by the establishment of Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre on Cheung Chau in 1996 by Caritas Hong Kong.

Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre aims to provide students with the right course and facilities that allow them to learn firsthand about nature and develop field research skills. The centre is divided into two campuses: St. Francis Campus located on the hill, and St. Paul Campus at the foot of the

境專題研習、中學天文及環境教育考察課程等，主要為生物及地理科學生而設，每年四月份便會接受全港中學報讀，並以抽籤形式分配名額。轉制後DSE學生對課程的需求有增無減，其後因地理科設有實地考察為本題目，更令郊野學園的課程每年都「爭崩頭」。

實地考察或郊野研習的模式，是由郊野學園的教師帶領參加課程的師生走進指定的考察點，例如樹林、河溪或岩岸，一同採集數據或樣本，如叢林中的枯枝落葉、河溪的水樣本，及岩岸的生物等。回到學園，學生需利用科學儀器，以及從日常課堂學到的知識及技能，進行觀察、研究和分析。實地考察的好處是從本地生態出發，讓學生跳出書本，以真實及可接觸的環境，引發他們對身邊事物的好奇心並提升觀察力，考試時亦毋需只死記硬背外國例子來答題。

校長老師充滿教學熱誠

郊野學園校長鍾智遠，二零零七年入職成為生物科教師，二零一八年升任為署理校長，至今已為學園服務十七年。他透露自己大學本科修讀中藥，為了不浪費讀書的四年時間，希望學以致用做教師，卻又不想做個只跟書本講課的一般老師，加上日常需到郊野地區辨認草藥，使他特別喜歡這類實地實戰經驗，因而毅然加入郊野學園成為生物科老師。他指郊野學園選址長洲有兩大原因，一是因為人跡罕至，自然生態豐富且無騷擾，附近亦沒有光害，方便學生作實地考察。二是因為學校主打住宿課程，明愛營地就在校舍旁邊，便利學生上課期間入住。



（左起）郊野學園實驗室技術員Zero及郊野學園校長鍾智遠。
（From left) Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre's laboratory technician, Zero; and Principal Chung Chi Yuen.

曾在長洲居住了六年的鍾校長表示：「長洲夜生活單調，至多就是散步到碼頭吃宵夜，最多年青人聚腳的地方就是球場。正因為這裏沒有繽紛的生活分散學生注意力，加上一程船已經好像去了另一個國度，學習氣氛和體驗跟平常的課堂截然不同，同學們來到這裏特別開心，上課專注力比平常更高。令人驚喜的是，學生們在這裏不論興趣、態度及學習動機都十分強，根本毋需老師扭盡六王叫他們專心。」

hill, which was an old campus of Cheung Chau Caritas St. Paul Secondary School. Each campus is equipped with different facilities that support subjects such as biology and geography, allowing students to explore and learn independently after school. Primarily designed for students studying biology and geography, the diverse curriculum at Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre covers biology, geography, life-wide and field-based learning, environmental education for primary studies, as well as secondary-school level astronomy and environmental education courses. Every April, Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre accepts applications from secondary schools across Hong Kong and allocates admission slots through a lottery system. Even after the transition to HKDSE, the demand for Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre's programmes continues to grow. The inclusion of field studies in geography's mandatory curriculum has only fueled the competition for places in the Centre's courses each year.

Field trips or countryside learning, led by teachers of Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre, involve teachers and students venturing into specific exploration sites such as forests, rivers or rocky shores. Together, they collect data or samples like fallen leaves in forests, water samples from rivers and organisms residing on rocky shores. Upon returning to the Centre, students would utilise scientific instruments and apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their daily classes to observe, study and analyse their findings. The beauty of these field trips is that they take students beyond the confines of textbooks and into the real, tangible local ecosystem. This sparks their curiosity about their surroundings and sharpens their observational skills, eliminating their need to rely on memorising foreign examples during exams.

A passionate principal and teaching team

Principal Chung Chi Yuen joined Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre as a biology teacher in 2007 and was promoted to Acting Principal in 2018. Having served at the Centre for 17 years, he revealed that he had pursued an undergraduate degree in Chinese herbal medicine. Eager to make the most of what he learnt at university, he aspired to become a teacher who does not simply lecture from textbooks. On top of that, his rich experience in identifying herbs in rural areas fostered a passion for hands-on fieldwork, which ultimately led him to join Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre as a biology teacher. When discussing the Centre's location, Principal Chung highlights two key factors. Firstly, Cheung Chau's small population ensures a rich and undisturbed ecosystem, free from urban disturbances. The absence of light pollution in the area facilitates field studies for students as well. Secondly, the Centre's focus on residential programmes is supported by the convenient proximity of the Caritas camps, allowing students to easily stay on-site during their studies.

Principal Chung, who once lived in Cheung Chau for six years, shares, "The nightlife in Cheung Chau is rather limited. At most, people take a leisurely stroll to the pier for a late-night snack. The sports centre stands out as the go-to hangout spot for young people. The absence of a vibrant city atmosphere helps students stay focused, as if taking a ferry to Cheung Chau transports them to a whole new world and creates a unique learning experience that is distinctive from the traditional classroom setting. Students are thrilled to be here, and their level of concentration during classes is

學生們來到郊野學園特別開心和專心，還有一個重要原因——這裏的老師位位周身刀，更充滿教學熱誠。例如地理老師以「石頭記」為主題，將漫畫元素加入長洲海岸出名的奇形怪狀岩石，如大象石、人頭石，令同學更有興趣去瞭解何謂風化和侵蝕；生物老師會自製昆蟲標本，如將本地螞蟥精細地逐隻貼於小黑色三角紙上向學生展示。校內的教育海報、專題展區、課程內容及教育刊物等，從設計到排版、收集展覽樣本，甚至自製測量工具，全部由老師們一手一腳親自製作，不少帶學生來上課的老師都表示「學到嘢」。



郊野學園向漁護署借出各種瀕危動物的獸皮在校展示。
Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre borrowed endangered animal pelts from the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to display on campus.

一招令學生上課興致勃勃

教書十多年的鍾校長表示，大部分學生其實對植物零興趣，「跟學生介紹植物，得到的回應往往就一句『哦』」。鍾校長自己有一對子女，幼子今年剛上小一，令他更明白如果想學生有更強的學習動機，必先引起他們的興趣。「怎樣講植物才能變得有趣？郊野學園樹徑有一株細葉榕正以它的氣根慢慢絞殺旁邊一株刺莚，你以為死氣沉沉的植物，其實都會為了爭奪資源而鬥爭。又或者跟他們講香港有毒植物，如屬於香港四大毒草之一、果實形狀如羊角的羊角藤，在長洲可以見到，你一講有毒植物同學們便醒神。又如下雨天城市都很常見的蝸牛，原來即使沒有手腳都會為了爭食仔而扭頭扭頸地打架，我跟六歲的兒子講過這個故事後，他每次見到蝸牛都會忍不住觀察一番。當學生對一件事物有興趣，便可大大發揮自己的潛能。我們的天文課程每次都會為學生提供一些天文儀器，讓他們配合手機鏡頭拍攝天象，如月球表面，他們會為了拍得一張靚相放上社交網站而花盡心機。即使課程內容未夠深刻，學生們都必然會記住與同學和老師一起創造的愉快回憶，如到碼頭食宵夜、一同瞓地觀星或落水考察等，回到學校再由老師帶領進行知識鞏固練習，所學的自然更立體更入腦。」

郊野學園課室內大大小小的科學儀器最能吸引學生

noticeably heightened. What is even more impressive is that these genuinely curious, positive and motivated learners can pay attention without our teachers constantly reminding them to do so."

The students at Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre are focused and elated upon their arrival. This is mainly due to the incredibly capable and passionate teaching team. For example, the geography teachers who add a touch of creativity to their classes with "The Story of the Stone" have cleverly incorporated comic elements into the strangely shaped rocks found along Cheung Chau's coastline, like the elephant rock and the human head rock, to spark genuine interest among students to learn about the concepts of weathering and erosion. Similarly, the biology teachers go the extra mile by crafting insect specimens, such as mounting local ants on tiny black triangular paper to showcase to students. The teachers' commitment extends well beyond the classroom too. They design educational posters, curate themed exhibitions, develop engaging course materials and even create their own educational publications. They even take it upon themselves to craft their own measuring tools. Their passion for teaching shines through in every aspect, and many of them express that they, too, continue to learn alongside their students.

A game-changing technique to spark students' interest in class

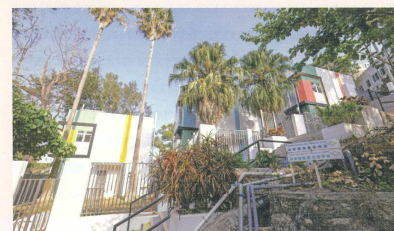
Principal Chung, who has dedicated over a decade to teaching, acknowledges that the majority of students have little interest in plants. "When I introduce plants to students, their response is often an indifferent 'oh,'" he remarks. As a parent of two, with his youngest son just starting Primary One, Principal Chung understands the importance of sparking students' interest to foster their learning motivation. "How can we make the subject of plants more captivating? On our campus, the aerial roots of a Chinese Banyan can be seen slowly strangling a mountain date palm nearby. This intriguing phenomenon reminds us that seemingly lifeless plants do actively compete for resources. Another educational approach is to introduce local poisonous plants, such as the common Indian mulberry – one of the four notorious poisonous plants in Hong Kong – with fruits shaped like goat horns and can be found in Cheung Chau. From our experience, this topic instantly grabs students' attention. Moreover, despite their lack of limbs, snails get into intense battles by twisting their bodies in their quest for mates. After sharing this anecdote with my six-year-old son, he cannot resist observing every snail he encounters. When students develop a genuine interest in a topic, their potential can be fully realised. In our astronomy course, students are given astronomical instruments so they can use their smartphone cameras to capture celestial objects, such as the surface of the moon. They always try their very best to capture the perfect shot to share on social media. Even if the course content is not memorable, students will always cherish the delightful memories they make with their teachers, like indulging in late-night snacks at the pier, stargazing on the ground or embarking on field trips to local rivers. These experiences, coupled with exercises in the classroom, ensure a comprehensive understanding of nature."

The Centre's classrooms are filled with a wide array of scientific instruments that never fail to capture students' attention. Laboratory technician Zero shares the story of a biology student who lacked access to the appropriate microscope equipment at his school. When he used a microscope for the

眼。實驗室技術員Zero表示，曾經有一位生物科的學生，自己本校沒有合適的顯微鏡設備，來到這裏上課時第一次玩，結果被顯微鏡下的世界完全吸引，更將收集得來的昆蟲樣本仔細地在顯微鏡下進行清潔。臨走時他說他最喜愛的科學本來並非生物課，現在完全改觀了。鍾校長表示，希望透過課程讓家長和老師知道，很簡單的科學實驗或小工具，已經可以引起學生對科學的興趣。「郊野學園的課程其實很STEM，不過不是時下流行的STEM類型如編程，但我們就是在推行科普及科學的概念，藉三天五天課已經可以開啟到學生對科學的興趣，同時可以讓他們瞭解香港的生態，把科學的種子種在他們心中。」

拉近學生與大自然的距離

鍾校長希望藉實地考察課程拉近學生與大自然的距離：「作為家長我十分明白，父母很多時出於擔心和安全考量而規限子女在大自然中的探索，其實大自然需要大家去接觸才會瞭解。大自然是一個教室，可以從小訓練孩子的觀察力，觀察現實跟書本上的相同與不同，學習描述和比較。我們最希望培養孩子對自然環境負責任，但在此之前，應先讓學生明白為甚麼自己要對環境負責任？因為大自然是有趣的、好玩的，出於喜愛便會想去保護它。小朋友的探索能力和好奇心很強，因此這些都不應留待他們長大後再做，不要擴大他們與大自然的距離感。我希望環境教育能放進現時的學習綱領中，由同學培養它成長。」



Next to Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre are the Caritas camps – Jockey Club Ming Fai Camp, Oi Fai Camp and Ka Fai House – which provide both day and overnight accommodations for students and members of the public. Currently open for public reservations, Ming Fai Camp has the longest history and underwent renovation around 10 years ago. Oi Fai Camp and Ka Fai House have received funding support from the Jockey Club and are currently undergoing renovation, which is expected to be completed between April and June this year. Oi Fai Camp primarily caters to groups and includes an indoor sports field, swimming pool, archery range and rope course among other amenities. Ka Fai House features charming Spanish-style villas that can be rented either as individual suites or as the entire lodge. Guests who rent the entire lodge are entitled to use the communal living room and kitchen, making it particularly suitable for multiple families travelling together. Moreover, campers staying at Ka Fai House are granted access to the amenities provided at Oi Fai Camp. The campsite boasts a wide range of activities, including canoeing, stargazing, orienteering and air rifle shooting, all of which can be reserved in advance.

first time at the Centre, he was so mesmerised by the microscopic world that he meticulously cleaned the collected insect samples under the microscope. Before leaving, he admitted that his favourite subject had not been biology, but his experience at the Centre completely transformed his perspective. Through these courses, Principal Chung aims to enlighten parents and teachers about the powerful impact even simple scientific experiments or tools can have in igniting students' passion for science. He explains, "While the courses at Caritas Chan Chun Ha Field Studies Centre are STEM-oriented, our focus is not on the popular STEM disciplines like coding. Instead, we prioritise promoting science education. Through intensive courses that last from three to five days, we can kindle students' interest in science whilst teaching them about Hong Kong's ecosystem and planting the seeds of scientific curiosity deep within their hearts."

Bringing students closer to nature

Principal Chung hopes to bring students closer to nature through fieldwork programmes. He elaborates, "As a parent myself, I understand that many children are restricted from exploring the wonders of nature due to their parents' understandable concerns regarding their safety. However, I believe that children can only truly learn through direct contact with the environment. Nature serves as a classroom that nurtures children's powers of observation, allowing them to compare real-life experiences with what they learn from books by describing and analysing their findings. Our ultimate goal is to instill a sense of responsibility towards the environment in students. But before this can be achieved, we must help them understand why they should be responsible. By highlighting the allure and joy that nature offers, we aim to cultivate students' genuine affection towards the environment that naturally compels them to protect it. Children possess an innate curiosity and an insatiable thirst for exploration. These qualities should be nurtured from an early age, rather than waiting until they are older, to avoid creating distance between children and nature. Therefore, I hope to encourage students to take an active role in the development of nature by integrating environmental education into the existing curriculum."

明愛陳震夏郊野學園旁邊就是明愛營地，包括賽馬會明暉營、愛暉營及家暉苑三個營地，為學生及市民提供日營及宿營設施。明暉營歷史最悠久，約十年前經過翻新，目前開放營位予公眾租用；愛暉營及家暉苑獲得賽馬會批出資助，現正進行全面翻新工程，預計今年四至六月竣工。愛暉營主要供團體使用，設有室內運動場、游泳池、射箭場及繩網陣等。家暉苑則為西班牙式別墅，可租用獨立套房或全幢出租；全幢出租包使用客廳及廚房，適合數個家庭同行，營友可使用愛暉營的設施。營地設有不少活動，包括獨木舟、觀星、野外定向及氣鎗射擊等，入營前可預約參加。