

Hong Kong Youth Statement 2026

Resilient Cities: Navigating Climate and Health Recovery



LCOYHK

Local Conference of Youth Hong Kong 2026

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PREAMBLE

The climate crisis is no longer a distant threat on the horizon; it is the heat we endure, the storms we weather, and the anxiety we carry in our rapidly changing city. Hong Kong is a city of extremes, a dense global metropolis of immense resources, yet one that remains dangerously tethered to outdated systems and disconnected from the natural ecosystems that sustain it. As the youth who will inherit the consequences of today's choices, we refuse to accept vulnerability as our default.

We are redefining what climate action means for Hong Kong. It is no longer just a metric of emissions; it is a matter of collective survival, health, and justice. True resilience cannot exist in a vacuum, nor can it leave anyone behind. We demand a systemic transformation where climate adaptation serves as the bedrock for our physical vitality, mental fortitude, and social equity.

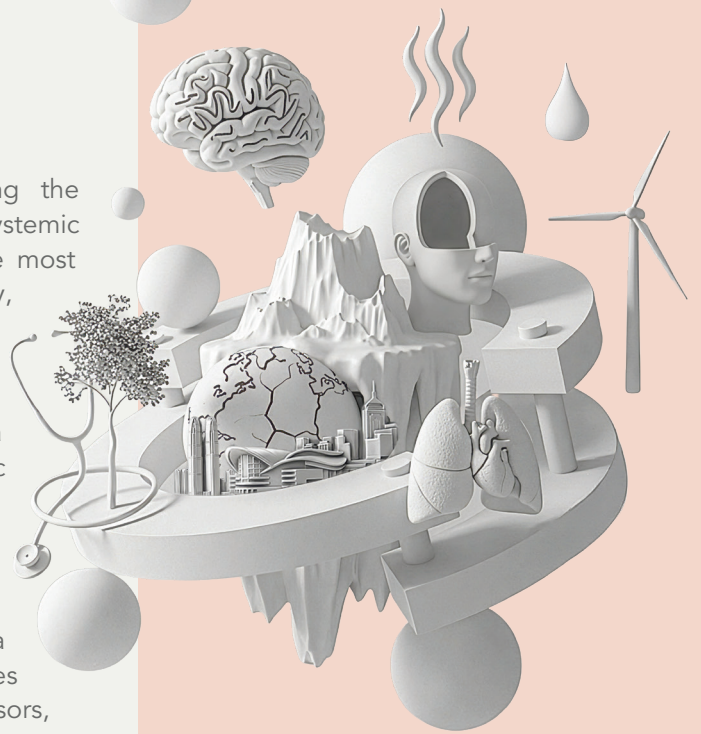
This statement is our unwavering mandate for a just transition. We reject piecemeal solutions. Instead, we advocate for human-centric policies that empower marginalised communities, weave nature-based solutions back into our concrete urban fabric, and equip every individual with the climate literacy required to lead.

We call upon all leaders, institutions, and citizens to bridge the gap between policy and people. Our vision is clear: we must co-create a deeply resilient, inclusive Hong Kong where our communities and our environment heal and thrive in unison, forging a legacy of true sustainability for generations to come.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CarbonCare InnoLab (CCIL) believes that addressing the human-driven climate crisis is a matter of urgent systemic survival for Hong Kong, which, despite ranking as the most disaster-vulnerable city in Asia and the third globally, suffers from a critical research gap regarding the physical, social, and psychological factors that motivate youth to support government mitigation efforts. To address this gap, LCOY Hong Kong 2026 establishes a vital link between environmental advocacy and public health, treating climate action as a form of preventative medicine that transforms physical and mental well-being into actionable systemic resilience. By integrating the core pillars of physical vitality, mental fortitude, and urban synthesis, CCIL aims to provide a clear roadmap that empowers local youth, mitigates climate-induced psychological and environmental stressors, and strengthens the city's overall social and structural immunity against future climate impacts.



Youth Climate Champion (YCC)
is **NEVER** about being a role
model, YCC is an inspiration, a
legacy to be carried on
every year.

Voices of LCOYHK 2026 Youth Climate Champion



Inspired by the spirit of Mutirão at international climate negotiations, I believe our deepest anxieties are healed when we step out of isolation and act together. As the YCC for LCOYHK 2026, I hope to channel this collective energy, empowering Hong Kong youth to reshape our systems and prove we are never too small to drive lasting global change.

Karis Chung
Youth Climate Champion
LCOYHK 2026

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Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)

Background

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE), a framework established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is critical for equipping societies with the knowledge and capacity to execute a just climate transition. In Hong Kong, however, ACE implementation remains severely fragmented. A successful transition relies not merely on infrastructural upgrades, but on a fundamentally empowered, climate-literate population. Currently, systemic administrative bottlenecks in the education sector, a pervasive lack of mandatory sustainability standards in corporate leadership, and the persistent marginalisation of civil society in top-down policymaking actively hinder holistic climate action. To build genuine systemic resilience, Hong Kong must consolidate its climate education, enforce rigorous capacity-building across both the public and private sectors, and institutionalise the participation of youth and NGOs in climate governance.

Recommendations

1. Consolidate the Climate Curriculum and Deploy AI for Localised Ecological Contextualisation

Problem Statement

Hong Kong faces a critical deficit in compulsory, structured climate literacy across the student lifecycle. At the institutional level, there is no consolidated climate curriculum. Following the integration of other mandatory educational frameworks, the Education Bureau's (EDB) structural guidelines have inadvertently squeezed out dedicated environmental learning hours (Fung & Lee, 2023). Consequently, the burden falls entirely on individual educators, who must condense dense scientific literature to plan a single 35-minute lesson. Furthermore, existing educational materials rely heavily on abstract, globalised tropes (e.g., polar bears or African droughts) rather than the tangible realities of Hong Kong's native ecosystems, rendering climate science distant and non-actionable for local youth (WWF-Hong Kong, 2022).

Proposed Strategy

The EDB must establish a streamlined, unified climate literacy framework that eliminates administrative overhead by providing pre-designed, "plug-and-play" 35-minute lesson matrices. These matrices should shift away from classroom-bound lecturing to co-opt local hubs—such as the Hong Kong Science Park, the Museum of Climate Change, and the Mai Po Nature Reserve—as experiential extension classrooms. Furthermore, the EDB should deploy an AI-powered curriculum-authoring tool to help teachers instantly auto-generate lesson plans tailored to local ecological data. This AI layer would replace global tropes with high-resolution, local simulations, allowing students to track district-level carbon footprints, model the altitudinal extinction risks for native species like the Giant Spiny Frog on Tai Mo Shan, and simulate how sea-level rise threatens the Mai Po winter foraging grounds of the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill.

2. Mandate Climate Capacity Building for Educators and Corporate Leadership

Problem Statement

A severe knowledge gap exists at both the educational and corporate levels regarding practical climate action. Large proportions of teachers receive no formal training in climate science or

pedagogy and lack confidence in teaching climate or addressing student emotions (NCSE, 2016; Plutzer et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2021b). Concurrently, within the corporate sector, while the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX) mandates Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures, there is no statutory requirement for sustainability literacy among corporate executives. This discrepancy often results in superficial compliance, greenwashing, and a failure to integrate genuine climate resilience into corporate strategies.

Proposed Strategy

To bridge this capacity gap, the EDB must transition climate education training from a voluntary option to a mandatory, standardised professional development programme for educators across all relevant subject areas, equipped with comprehensive local resource kits. In parallel, the government and financial regulators must introduce a mandatory "Sustainability Certification" framework for corporate leadership and designated ESG officers. By requiring verified climate literacy for corporate executives, Hong Kong can ensure that private sector climate claims are underpinned by scientific understanding, driving authentic, systemic changes in corporate ecological accountability and aligning local businesses with global decarbonisation trajectories.

3. Institutionalise NGO and Youth Participation in Climate Policymaking

Problem Statement

Despite international mandates for public participation under the ACE framework, Hong Kong's climate policymaking processes remain overwhelmingly top-down. Research on youth participation in climate governance shows that while young advocates are increasingly present at major policy platforms and summits, institutional frameworks frequently reduce their role to passive or tokenistic representation rather than genuine policy co-creation (Han & Ahn, 2020; Landeira, 2025). This lack of structural inclusion deprives policymakers of critical grassroots insights, limits the public's sense of ownership over the city's climate targets, and undermines the democratic formulation of equitable climate adaptation strategies.

Proposed Strategy

The Hong Kong Government must formally institutionalise the inclusion of NGOs and youth representatives in high-level environmental governance. Events such as Hong Kong Climate Week must be restructured to serve as binding, statutory consultation platforms rather than mere public relations exercises. This requires establishing formal advisory working groups where civil society and youth delegates can directly review, draft, and co-design elements of the city's ongoing Climate Action Plan. By legally embedding public participation into the policymaking apparatus, the government can ensure that future climate legislation is transparent, socially equitable, and informed by the frontline experiences of its citizens.

Conclusion

Empowering society to take decisive climate action requires dismantling the informational, educational, and civic barriers that currently limit public engagement. By integrating highly localised, AI-supported ecological data into a consolidated school curriculum, Hong Kong can transform climate science from an abstract concept into an actionable, local reality for the next generation. Simultaneously, mandating rigorous capacity building for both educators and corporate leaders will ensure that the city possesses the technical and institutional literacy required to execute its green transition. Ultimately, by giving youth and civil society a formal seat at the policymaking table, Hong Kong can build a truly inclusive, resilient, and climate-empowered society.

Climate Finance

Background

Climate finance is the indispensable engine for driving both global decarbonisation and systemic climate adaptation. However, the current architecture of international and regional climate finance is fraught with structural inefficiencies, fragmentation, and accountability deficits. Globally, the voluntary carbon market suffers from inconsistent certification standards and widespread concerns over additionality, severely undermining investor confidence and market integrity. Concurrently, while climate finance flows to the Global South have increased, they are frequently deployed without the necessary technological transfer or embedded expertise required to ensure long-term, accountable impact. Domestically, although Hong Kong has cemented its status as Asia's premier green finance hub, the vast majority of capital flowing through the city is channelled outwards as cross-border transactions, leaving a critical financing gap for the territory's own decarbonisation efforts. To rectify these disparities, systemic reforms are urgently required to mandate unified global carbon standards, embed active partnership mechanisms in Global South investments, and establish dedicated domestic green funding streams to finance Hong Kong's transition.

Recommendations

1. Establish a Unified Global Carbon Credit Certification System to Enhance Market Integrity and Transparency

Problem Statement

The voluntary carbon market (VCM) has grown significantly in recent years, yet it remains deeply fragmented, with numerous competing certification standards operating globally, including Verra's Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), Gold Standard, American Carbon Registry, and various national schemes — each with differing methodologies, additionality requirements, and verification processes.

A 2024 gap analysis by Allianz Entwicklung Klima found that certification programmes are "set up very differently" and that "many of the certification programmes' requirements fall well short of the IFC Performance Standards," underscoring the persistent lack of comparability and consistency across schemes.

A central concern is the issue of additionality, whether the emissions reductions claimed would have occurred without the carbon credit. A landmark 2023 joint investigation by The Guardian, Die Zeit, and SourceMaterial found that more than 90% of Verra's rainforest carbon offset credits, among the most widely used by major corporations, are likely to be "phantom credits" that do not represent genuine carbon reductions, with analysis indicating that approximately 94% of credits reviewed had no climate benefit.

Carbon Market Watch's 2024 report further highlighted that renewable energy projects — the most issued credit type on the market, are "highly unlikely to be able to demonstrate additionality" in most regions, with an estimated 85% of CDM-derived projects considered non-additional by a European Commission study.

At the market level, the 2023 VCM Review by Climate Focus noted that the supply side of the market is "becoming increasingly more fragmented due to the proliferation of new carbon standards".

While the Integrity Council for the Voluntary Carbon Market (ICVCM) introduced its Core Carbon

Principles (CCPs) as a baseline quality benchmark, adoption remains voluntary and uneven, and the absence of a binding unified framework continues to suppress investor confidence and expose buyers to significant greenwashing and reputational risk.

Proposed Strategy

To restore market integrity, a Global Carbon Credit Accreditation Body must be established, potentially under the auspices of the UNFCCC, to consolidate existing schemes into a single, universally recognised standard. This unified framework must establish rigorous, science-based methodologies for measuring, reporting, and verifying (MRV) emissions reductions, mandating strict additionality and permanence assessments for all credits entering the market. Furthermore, this body must deploy a publicly accessible, real-time global registry to ensure absolute transparency and eliminate double-counting across jurisdictions. By creating a unified transition pathway for existing schemes, this mechanism will provide investors with a definitive benchmark, significantly reducing due diligence costs and catalysing private capital into high-integrity, verified climate projects.

2. Embed Active Partnership and Technology Transfer Mechanisms in Climate Finance Directed to the Global South

Problem Statement

Mobilising climate finance for Global South countries has been a cornerstone of international climate negotiations. The OECD's most recent assessment (released May 2026) confirmed that climate finance grew to USD 136.7 billion in 2024, yet noted that this finance remained concentrated in middle-income countries, with private finance mobilisation for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remaining very limited.

While the quantum of finance has grown, serious concerns persist regarding the effectiveness and accountability of these investments on the ground. The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6, 2022) highlights that developing countries—particularly LDCs—have lagged in benefitting from technological opportunities due to higher financing costs, weaker planning and implementation capacity, and human resource constraints, underscoring that finance alone is insufficient without corresponding capacity building and technology transfer. A 2024 commentary in Climatic Change further noted that capacity building remains critically underfunded and poorly integrated into delivery frameworks. The current architecture of international climate finance, dominated by multilateral development banks, often creates significant distance between capital providers and project implementation, reducing accountability and limiting the ability to course-correct when governance or technical issues arise.

Proposed Strategy

International public climate finance institutions, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Climate Investment Funds (CIF), and bilateral development finance institutions, should establish a dedicated Active Partnership Mechanism as a standard component of large-scale climate investment programmes in Global South countries. This mechanism should comprise three core elements:

- i. Embedded technical advisory teams, where qualified experts from investor institutions are deployed on-site to work alongside local project teams throughout the project lifecycle;
- ii. Technology and equipment transfer protocols, ensuring that state-of-the-art clean technology and machinery are made available to recipient countries, accompanied by structured knowledge transfer programmes to build lasting local expertise; and

- iii. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks featuring independent third-party oversight, transparent reporting, and clear accountability mechanisms tied to disbursement conditions.

This model ensures that climate investments deliver genuine, measurable impacts while building the long-term institutional capacity of recipient nations.



3. Develop a Dedicated Domestic Green Investment Mechanism to Finance Hong Kong's Local Decarbonisation

Problem Statement

Hong Kong has firmly established itself as the leading international green and sustainable finance hub in Asia. According to the Climate Bonds Initiative's 2025 State of the Market report, Hong Kong arranged over USD 43.1 billion in international GSS+ bonds in 2024—capturing 45% of Asia's international sustainable bond market for the seventh consecutive year. The HKSAR Government's Sustainable Bond Programme has issued close to HKD 220 billion in green bonds as of August 2024, and the HKMA launched its Sustainable Finance Action Agenda in October 2024 to reinforce this regional leadership.

However, a critical structural gap persists: the vast majority of green and sustainable finance flowing through Hong Kong's financial markets is directed towards projects outside of Hong Kong, predominantly in Mainland China and other parts of Asia. Hong Kong functions primarily as a financial intermediary and capital conduit rather than as a direct beneficiary of the green finance ecosystem it hosts. Meanwhile, locally originated sustainable debt fell 41% year-on-year to USD 10.8 billion in 2024, reflecting the dominance of cross-border transactions over domestic green investment.

This financing gap has direct consequences for Hong Kong's own climate transition. The HKSAR Government's Climate Action Plan 2050 commits to achieving carbon neutrality before 2050 and halving absolute carbon emissions before 2035, requiring substantial domestic investment in green buildings, clean energy infrastructure, and sustainable transport. Yet, local green projects struggle to

compete for capital in a market dominated by larger cross-border transactions.

Proposed Strategy

Establish the Hong Kong Green Development Fund (HKGDF), a government-managed, sovereign-style investment vehicle dedicated exclusively to financing green and sustainable projects located within Hong Kong.

To ensure a consistent and self-sustaining capital flow into this fund, a "Sustainable Finance Levy" should be introduced, a small transaction fee applied to financial transactions in Hong Kong that do not qualify as green or sustainable under a defined taxonomy, such as the Hong Kong Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance published by the HKMA.

Revenue generated from this levy would be ring-fenced and channelled directly into the HKGDF, creating a reliable and market-driven funding stream. The HKGDF would prioritise investments in areas such as green building retrofits, distributed renewable energy, climate-resilient infrastructure, and nature-based solutions within Hong Kong, while also serving as a co-investment platform to crowd in private capital. Governance of the fund should be transparent and independent, with clear investment mandates, public reporting requirements, and stakeholder representation, including youth and civil society voices.

Conclusion

Rethinking climate finance is the linchpin of an effective and equitable climate transition. Without rigorous global carbon market standards and integrated accountability mechanisms for Global South investments, international capital will continue to risk greenwashing and operational inefficiency. At the local level, Hong Kong cannot claim true leadership in sustainable finance while its own domestic decarbonisation efforts remain underfunded. By instituting a unified global carbon accreditation body, mandating active capacity-building partnerships in developing nations, and establishing a robust, levy-funded mechanism for domestic green infrastructure, we can transition climate finance from a fragmented financial instrument into an accountable, targeted, and truly transformative global force.

Climate Justice and Human Rights

Background

Climate change is not only an environmental crisis but also a human rights crisis. Its impacts are felt most acutely by communities that contribute the least to global emissions yet face the greatest exposure to climate risks. In Hong Kong and around the world, rising temperatures, extreme weather conditions, environmental degradation and ecological destruction threaten the fundamental rights to health, safe working conditions, adequate housing and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Young people recognize that climate justice must be placed at the centre of climate action, ensuring that vulnerable communities are protected and that no one is left behind.

This year's discussions highlighted three key dimensions of climate justice and human rights: (1) labour rights and worker protection under extreme weather, (2) environmental accountability and ecocide, and (3) climate-related health rights and urban resilience. Participants emphasized that climate adaptation and mitigation policies must be designed through a rights-based approach, prioritising the well-being of frontline communities, workers, marginalised populations and future generations.

Recommendations

1. Safeguard the Right to Safe and Dignified Work Under Extreme Weather Conditions

Problem Statement

The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather hazards, including heatwaves, torrential rain, and severe typhoons, pose immediate risks to outdoor and frontline labourers, such as cleaners, construction workers, and delivery staff. Despite these hazards, systemic vulnerabilities persist as workers face immense pressure to operate in unsafe environments, compounded by punitive employer practices such as wage deductions, loss of benefits, or forced annual leave during severe weather disruptions. This shifts the economic and physical burden of climate disasters entirely onto marginalised workforces, undermining fundamental principles of safe and fair employment. Workers should not bear the burden of climate-related disruptions. Climate resilience must include stronger labour protections, improved communication systems and employer accountability during extreme weather conditions.

Proposed Strategy

To protect the dignity and safety of the workforce, the Hong Kong Government and labour authorities must establish stringent statutory labour protections that strictly prohibit employers from imposing wage deductions, benefit losses, or forced leave when weather conditions render travel or work hazardous. This regulatory oversight should be supported by flexible, location-sensitive work arrangements that allow remote working, delayed reporting, or early dismissal based on employees' commuting distances and localised weather risks. Furthermore, a highly coordinated, sector-specific early-warning system must be instituted between the Hong Kong Observatory and the Labour Department to provide clear, binding, and timely operational guidance during climate anomalies.

2. Elevate Environmental Accountability through the Recognition of Ecocide

Problem Statement

Global communities are increasingly suffering the acute human and socio-economic consequences of

severe environmental destruction, ranging from catastrophic biodiversity loss to widespread water contamination and ecosystem collapse. These ecological crises disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, directly undermining their rights to food, clean water, and cultural survival. Currently, international legal frameworks lack sufficient accountability mechanisms to deter or prosecute severe, long-term environmental destruction, decoupling human rights protections from environmental preservation.

Proposed Strategy

Addressing these global accountability gaps requires a concerted effort by the international community to formally recognise ecocide as an international crime prosecutable under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). In tandem with this legal recognition, global institutions must strengthen multilateral accountability mechanisms to target large-scale ecosystem destruction resulting from industrial negligence or conflict. Finally, national governments must mobilize increased funding and institutional resources for the ICC and associated victim-support mechanisms, thereby ensuring robust pathways for the independent investigation, prosecution, and remediation of severe environmental crimes.



3. Enshrine the Right to Health within Urban Climate Resilience Frameworks

Problem Statement

Climate change presents an escalating threat to public health, particularly within dense urban landscapes. Rising temperatures and the urban heat island effect disproportionately impact elderly citizens, low-income households, and residents of subdivided flats who endure extreme indoor heat, inadequate ventilation, and soaring energy costs. Historically, climate policies have treated mitigation and adaptation as issues of energy efficiency and emissions reduction, largely failing to address public health outcomes as a central, non-negotiable pillar of climate planning.

Proposed Strategy

To build a health-resilient city, the Hong Kong Government must integrate public health outcomes as an explicit, core pillar of all future Climate Action Plans, ensuring adaptation strategies directly mitigate the physical and mental health impacts of extreme heat. This policy shift must be supported by aggressive urban cooling investments, including the expansion of shaded walkways, urban greening, and the deployment of accessible cooling centres in heat-vulnerable districts. Additionally, land-use and urban planning processes must be reformed to prioritise natural ventilation corridors, expand public green spaces, and mandate comprehensive public consultations to mitigate urban heat accumulation.

Conclusion

Climate justice requires recognising that climate change affects people unequally and that climate policies must actively address existing social, economic and environmental inequalities. We believe that protecting labour rights, ensuring environmental accountability and safeguarding public health are essential components of an effective and equitable response to the climate crisis.

As young people, we call upon governments, international institutions, businesses and civil society to adopt a human rights-based approach to climate action. The transition to a climate-resilient future must protect the rights of workers, vulnerable communities and future generations while ensuring accountability for environmental harm. Only through justice-centred climate action can we build a sustainable future for all.

Energy Transition

Background

Hong Kong's current energy landscape remains disproportionately reliant on fossil fuels, with coal and natural gas constituting over 90% of the city's electricity generation. This overwhelming dependence yields substantial greenhouse gas emissions, impeding progress towards carbon neutrality. While the territory possesses considerable untapped potential for renewable energy, notably in solar and offshore wind, this deployment is currently constrained by economic barriers, structural limitations, and historically low adoption rates. Furthermore, the burgeoning deployment of green technologies introduces pressing waste management and environmental challenges as these assets reach their end-of-life. A holistic, forward-looking strategy encompassing innovative energy generation, technological optimisation, and rigorous lifecycle management is imperative to facilitate a successful and sustainable energy transition.

Recommendations

1. Accelerate the Solar Energy Adoption Rate within Hong Kong's Energy Mix

Problem Statement

Hong Kong's electricity generation remains profoundly dependent on fossil fuels, which collectively drive high greenhouse gas emissions. Conversely, solar power currently contributes marginally at 10% or less to the overall electricity composition. The overarching adoption rate remains fundamentally inadequate, notwithstanding the city's substantial, unexploited solar potential across rooftops, building facades, and other available urban surfaces.

Proposed Strategy

To drive solar adoption, Hong Kong must emulate successful large-scale deployments from Southeast Asia by integrating innovative applications such as solar panel assimilation within recreational and parkland areas. Simultaneously, the city should expand the installation of solar PV systems across urban infrastructure, specifically targeting building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV), rooftops, and floating PV technology on reservoirs. Finally, the government must prolong the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) scheme beyond the 2033 threshold, maintaining current tariff rates to preserve robust financial incentives and secure long-term private investment.

2. Optimise Wind Turbine Design and Infrastructure to Maximise Energy Efficiency and Return on Investment

Problem Statement

Despite Hong Kong possessing substantial offshore wind potential, the current landscape for wind power generation is impeded by prohibitive capital and operational expenditures, complex grid integration challenges, and a sub-optimal return on investment (ROI). These economic disincentives render offshore wind projects largely unappealing, culminating in highly restricted deployment relative to the territory's aggregate electricity demand.

Proposed Strategy

Overcoming these economic and spatial barriers requires a comprehensive redesign of wind turbine aerodynamics, specifically targeting blade morphology to maximise energy capture and overall operational efficiency. This physical redesign should be paired with the deployment of vertical-axis wind turbines (VAWT) and advanced gear motor systems strategically adapted to local meteorological

and topological conditions. Furthermore, targeted funding must be directed towards research and development in advanced gearing systems, AI-driven predictive maintenance, and enhanced structural stabilisation methodologies, while augmenting university grants to study cost-effective offshore foundation designs and innovative construction techniques.

3. Establish Comprehensive Recycling Frameworks to Enhance Resource Recovery and Operational Efficiency

Problem Statement

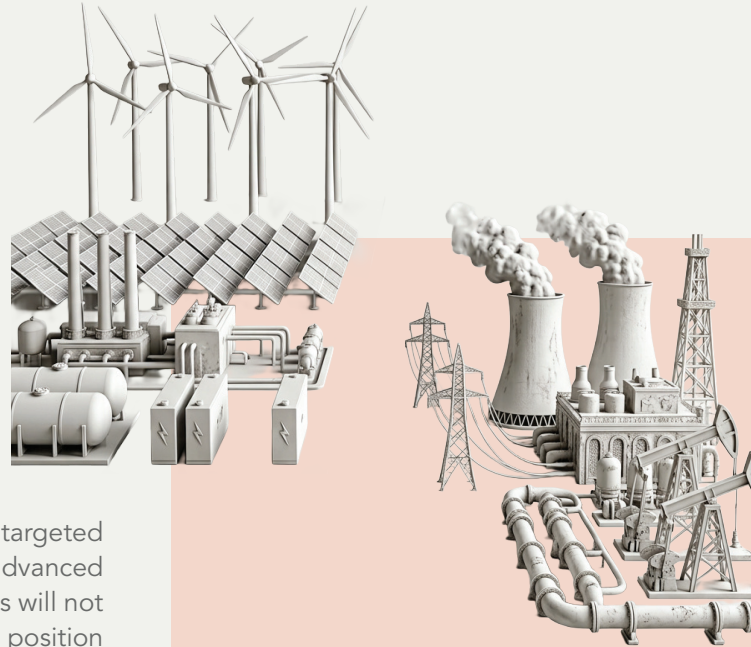
As Hong Kong accelerates its integration of solar PV systems and electric vehicles (EVs), the consequent volume of decommissioned solar panels and spent EV batteries is proliferating exponentially. In the absence of robust infrastructure, the disposal of these materials precipitates critical waste management crises, significant safety hazards (including fire risks and chemical leaching), and profound environmental degradation.

Proposed Strategy

Addressing this emerging waste crisis demands the immediate institution of an exhaustive collection and recycling infrastructure dedicated entirely to processing decommissioned solar PV components and spent EV batteries. To support this infrastructure, the government must formulate and enforce definitive guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guarantee the secure handling, transportation, and processing of hazardous waste by all stakeholders. This regulatory environment should be reinforced by a comprehensive “Battery Passport” framework to ensure rigorous traceability throughout the battery lifecycle, alongside the integration of artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics to streamline recycling logistics and optimise resource recovery.

Conclusion

Achieving a successful energy transition in Hong Kong requires a fundamental shift from fossil-fuel dependency towards a highly diversified, technologically advanced, and circular low-carbon economy. By aggressively accelerating solar PV integration, optimising wind turbine efficiency through local technological innovation, and establishing robust, proactive recycling frameworks for emerging electronic waste, the territory can significantly mitigate its greenhouse gas emissions while securing its long-term energy security. Addressing these multi-faceted challenges demands unified action—combining forward-thinking government policy, extended financial incentives, targeted academic research, and the strategic deployment of advanced technologies like AI. Ultimately, these integrated strategies will not only de-risk the transition for private investors but also position Hong Kong as a regional leader in urban sustainability and resilient green infrastructure.



Just Transition

Adaptation, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) & Global Stocktake (GST)

Background

At a global level, adaptation, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Global Stocktake (GST) form the core structural engine of the Paris Agreement, designed to hold countries accountable and continuously ratchet up climate ambition. While the GST serves as the global report card assessing collective progress, NDCs are the localised, binding pledges where governments must turn these high-level global assessments into concrete, sector-specific domestic actions. Crucially, adaptation is a crucial mechanism within this framework, ensuring that as emissions are mitigated, communities are simultaneously built to withstand the locked-in impacts of the climate crisis. For Hong Kong, this three-part framework is critical. As an ultra-dense, subtropical coastal metropolis, the city faces acute climate risks from rising sea levels and extreme heat, making proactive adaptation a matter of immediate public survival rather than a distant goal. By aligning its Climate Action Plan 2050 with the global GST mandate and embedding sector-specific KPIs into its regional strategy, Hong Kong can leverage its status as an international hub to drive a transition that is both globally aligned and locally equitable.

Recommendations

1. Mainstream People-Oriented and Inclusive Adaptation Policies in Long-Term Strategies, Especially in New Development Plans

Problem Statement

Mainstreaming climate change adaptation into long-term planning is essential for securing social and economic development (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Given the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events under the climate crisis, adaptation policies must be considered in every aspect of policymaking, particularly in new development plans, so that they become standard practice. A people-oriented mindset and inclusive participation are crucial to the success of adaptation policies, ensuring measures are tailored to local needs and target the most vulnerable communities.

The current Hong Kong Climate Action Plan 2050 fails to address these needs; climate adaptation remains an isolated item that is reactive and contingent in nature. For instance, the primary measure for coping with extreme heat is the provision of temporary heat shelters, which are only opened when an extreme heat warning is in effect, and their locations often do not reflect local community needs. There is a distinct lack of mandatory processes to mainstream climate adaptation into the planning of various government departments, alongside an absence of meaningful and inclusive participation procedures in climate policymaking. Furthermore, the most recent Northern Metropolis Development Plan makes almost no mention of climate adaptation, despite facing high climate risks given its low-lying terrain and geographical location, which may exacerbate the urban heat island effect (The Nature Conservancy, 2025). This represents a missed prime opportunity to include such vital considerations at the planning stage.

Proposed Strategy

To mainstream climate adaptation effectively, the government must adopt a whole-of-government approach that extends beyond the Environment and Ecology Bureau. Mandatory procedures should be established across different government agencies to ensure adaptation is recognised as a vital priority by decision-makers, allocated adequate funding, and fully integrated into all long-term development planning. Furthermore, local stakeholders must be actively engaged during the early

planning phases of new development projects to guarantee inclusive participation and community-tailored solutions.

2. Establish a People-Oriented and Comprehensive Action Plan for Extreme Heat Events

Problem Statement

As one of the most urbanised cities in the sub-tropical region, Hong Kong faces immense risks regarding extreme heat events driven by the climate crisis. Scholars estimate that the total number of hot nights in Hong Kong between 2040 and 2049 could increase by 50% to 48 days annually, posing severe health risks to the general public, especially the most vulnerable communities such as the elderly and outdoor workers (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, 2023).

However, Hong Kong currently lacks comprehensive planning for adapting to extreme heat; departments work in a siloed manner and often adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. For instance, the current Heat Stress at Work Warning issued by the Labour Department adopts a different set of indices and ranges compared to the Hong Kong Observatory's warnings, which are more widely recognised by citizens. This discrepancy creates confusion and weakens protection for outdoor workers (Master Insight, 2026). Furthermore, there is an absence of guidance and support from the Social Welfare Department to address the heat risks suffered by the elderly and individuals living in inadequate housing, leaving them with no means to adapt. It is well-documented that extreme heat can lead to increased mortality and morbidity for older adults and those with chronic diseases, which will place heavy burdens on the public healthcare system without advanced planning and prevention.

Proposed Strategy

The government should consolidate the existing heat warning systems issued by different bodies, such as the Hong Kong Observatory and the Labour Department, into a single, unified warning system to improve clarity and ensure swift, coordinated responses. Additionally, a high-level action plan with cross-departmental participation must be created to ensure heat risks are systematically addressed across all levels of government, ranging from infrastructure enhancements like dedicated heat shelters to public education and emergency medical services.

3. Inclusion of Time-Bound, Sector-Specific KPIs in NDCs to Improve Accountability and Transparency

Problem Statement

Current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) focus on high-level, aggregate targets (e.g., net-zero by 2050) while failing to outline detailed, sector-specific pathways or time-bound interim Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Without a clear roadmap, this creates a significant "implementation gap," delaying critical structural reforms.

By failing to detail sectoral targets and clarify social indicators, such as local economic support and worker reskilling, governments risk leaving workers and marginalised communities behind to suffer the consequences of an unjust transition. NDCs are meant to respond to the outcomes of the Global Stocktake; however, the currently submitted NDCs fail to outline sufficient targets that align with the Paris Agreement (Peterson & van Asselt, 2026). A majority of the current NDCs are lagging significantly behind what is scientifically required.

Proposed Strategy

Governments must break down national mitigation goals into explicit, sector-specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), such as clean energy capacity additions in gigawatts, internal combustion engine phase-out timelines, zero-carbon building adoption rates, and agricultural

emission benchmarks. Alongside decarbonisation targets, societal KPIs with corresponding socio-economic indicators should be integrated, setting clear targets for workforce retraining, social protection coverage for affected workers, and dedicated community reinvestment funds in transitioning regions. Finally, these sector-specific KPIs should be embedded into national Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) under the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework, supported by mandated open-data platforms that enable civil society, youth groups, and independent researchers to monitor real-time progress.

4. Meaningful Integration of Health in Components and Sectors of NDCs, Centring Health as a Priority

Problem Statement

Although 91% of NDCs include health considerations, there is significant room for improvement in integrating health metrics across all components of climate change action, including mitigation and financial targets. For instance, only 11% of NDCs include an emissions reduction commitment specifically for the health sector (World Health Organization, 2023a).

The healthcare sector is a major contributor to emissions, accounting for roughly 5% of overall carbon emissions globally (WHO, 2023b). In the United States, the sector contributes close to 10% of national carbon emissions (Health Care Without Harm, 2019). Beyond mitigation, climate strategies often have substantial health co-benefits that are worth promoting. For example, mitigation actions that lessen air pollution simultaneously improve overall public health and reduce respiratory illnesses.

Proposed Strategy

Parties should strengthen the evidence base regarding the health benefits of climate mitigation actions and ensure health stakeholders are fully involved in climate processes at all levels, guaranteeing that health considerations are properly understood and integrated into national policies. Furthermore, NDCs must include explicit emission reduction targets for the healthcare sector, such as implementing energy-saving and energy-efficiency measures in hospitals and community health centres—while promoting the transition to renewable energy within medical facilities to enhance overall climate resilience and energy security.

5. Establish a Clear Timeline and Strategic Roadmap for Phasing Out Fossil Fuels to Align with the Global Stocktake

Problem Statement

The first Global Stocktake (GST-1) solidified the global mandate to triple renewable energy capacity, double energy efficiency, and transition away from fossil fuels. Despite these clear international directives, local policy frameworks like the Hong Kong Climate Action Plan 2050 lack comprehensive monitoring, evaluation mechanisms, and concrete timetables for the rapid deployment of renewable energy and the phasing out of fossil fuels. Without actionable timelines, Hong Kong risks falling behind in the global energy transition and failing to leverage its status as a financial and technological hub to facilitate regional decarbonisation.

Proposed Strategy

Hong Kong should establish a binding timeline and a strategic roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels and accelerating the deployment of renewable energy, fully aligning local policy frameworks with the outcomes of GST-1. In parallel, public and private investment must be directed toward low-carbon technology research and deployment to ensure the city actively contributes to and benefits from the global energy transition.

6. Shift from Incremental to Transformative Adaptation through Formalised Public Participation

Problem Statement

Current climate adaptation responses are often fragmented, sector-specific, and incremental, fundamentally failing to address the systemic vulnerabilities of a changing climate. In Hong Kong, this lack of ambition is evident in reactive policies—such as opening temporary heat shelters—rather than pursuing fundamental urban redesign. This is heavily compounded by the absence of formal, inclusive participation mechanisms for non-Party stakeholders, particularly youth, women, and marginalised groups. Without structured avenues for public engagement, vital lived experiences and community-rooted knowledge are excluded from shaping local climate resilience and adaptation policies (Women and Gender Constituency & YOUNGO, 2026).

Proposed Strategy

Policymakers must shift from implementing reactive, incremental adjustments to driving "transformative adaptation" that proactively mainstreams resilience across all long-term government planning. To guarantee inclusive participation, the government should establish a formalised, grassroots-driven "People Assembly", echoing calls for a GST Global People's Assembly. This assembly would provide a dedicated platform for frontline communities, youth, academics, and civil society to contribute directly to the design, monitoring, and evaluation of the Climate Action Plan and future NDCs, ensuring adaptation measures are fundamentally rooted in justice and local needs (Women and Gender Constituency & YOUNGO, 2026).

Conclusion

Hong Kong stands at a critical juncture in the global fight against the climate crisis. As the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake (GST-1) make clear, achieving a sustainable future requires far more than incremental policy adjustments, it demands a profound, systemic transformation. To secure its position as a proactive international climate leader, Hong Kong must urgently upgrade the Climate Action Plan 2050 from a fragmented set of reactive measures into a comprehensive, whole-of-government roadmap.

In the global context, this roadmap must be anchored in transparency and accountability, driven by explicit, sector-specific KPIs and a binding timeline for accelerating renewable energy and phasing out fossil fuels. Furthermore, the true measure of a Just Transition lies in how a government protects and empowers its people. By mainstreaming transformative climate adaptation into all long-term development plans, integrating public health as a core priority, and formalising grassroots participation through a dedicated "People Assembly," policymakers can ensure that climate strategies are fundamentally equitable and community-tailored. Ultimately, implementing these recommendations will not only bridge the current implementation gap but also build a resilient, inclusive society that leaves no one behind in the global energy transition.

Nature and Biodiversity

Background

Despite its high urban density, Hong Kong boasts globally significant ecosystems that are increasingly threatened by rapid urban expansion, climate-induced extreme weather, and unmanaged eco-tourism. This ecological vulnerability is compounded by a lack of experiential biodiversity education in schools, leaving the youth disconnected from local conservation. To secure a sustainable future, Hong Kong must undergo a paradigm shift, transitioning from viewing nature as an optional amenity to recognising it as critical urban infrastructure. This requires a holistic strategy that embeds nature-centric design into city planning, secures absolute protections for vulnerable habitats, regulates eco-tourism, and integrates comprehensive ecological education into primary and secondary schools.

Recommendations

1. Strengthen Nature and Biodiversity Education within Hong Kong's Primary and Secondary School Curriculum to Enhance Environmental Awareness, Ecological Literacy, and Long-term Engagement among Students for Environmental Action

Problem Statement

Environmental and Biodiversity education remains underdeveloped in Hong Kong's formal school curriculum for local primary and secondary schools, due to the lack of a systematic, curriculum-integrated approach. There is no dedicated unit, programme, or coordinating body focused specifically on nature and biodiversity learning, causing these topics to be addressed only in a fragmented way.

Existing curricula tend to emphasise broader environmental topics, such as global climate change, pollution, recycling and UNSDGs, without sufficient attention to local flora and fauna, ecosystems, or conservation practices. As a result, students may only learn about environmental issues in theory and have limited opportunities to develop practical ecological knowledge and skills, such as field observation, habitat assessment, and participation in citizen science or conservation projects.

In addition, schools face practical barriers that limit the implementation of environmental and biodiversity education. Many rely on one-off external workshops delivered by NGOs or professionals, rather than integrating biodiversity education into continuous learning. Teachers often lack specialised training in ecology and biodiversity, and tight academic schedules restrict opportunities for outdoor, experiential learning. Consequently, most teaching remains classroom-based and theoretical, which weakens students' ability to connect biodiversity concepts with real ecosystems in Hong Kong.

Proposed Strategy

Establish a structured nature and biodiversity education programme within primary and secondary schools, fully integrating it into the formal curriculum rather than treating it as optional enrichment or extra-curricular content. To support this integration, targeted professional development and training must be provided to build teacher capacity in delivering biodiversity-related content and field-based learning. This should ensure that nature and biodiversity education becomes a core component of Continuous Professional Development, alongside a robust certification system for outdoor learning providers to guarantee safety and educational quality.

Furthermore, each school should be assigned a designated biodiversity coordinator, consultant, or partner organisation to assist with curriculum planning, implementation, and community engagement. This institutional support will facilitate increased opportunities for experiential and outdoor learning, including regular field trips, place-based learning in local ecosystems, and active student participation in citizen science and conservation initiatives. Finally, science assessment methods must be reformed to encourage inquiry-based learning, critical thinking, and independent research on environmental topics, shifting the academic focus away from rote memorisation.

2. Promote Nature-Centric Urban Planning and Development in Hong Kong by Setting Clear, City-Wide Targets for Vegetation Coverage, Biodiversity, and Access to Quality Green Spaces

Problem Statement

Hong Kong's dense urban form and increasing exposure to heat stress and extreme rainfall highlight the need to integrate vegetation and nature-based solutions into city planning and building design. Strategically planned greenery, including street trees, parks, and green roofs, can mitigate urban heat island effects, improve stormwater management, and provide social and health benefits for residents. However, green elements in redevelopment projects are yet to be treated as core infrastructure for resilience.

Proposed Strategy

Address this urban imbalance by setting binding greening and biodiversity targets for new and redeveloped areas. This requires incorporating minimum vegetation coverage standards into planning and building control for redeveloping districts, such as To Kwa Wan, Kwun Tong, and Kowloon City, including strict mandates for layered planting structures (comprising trees, shrubs, and groundcover), the exclusive use of native species, and a requirement that at least 20% of outdoor spaces be designated as accessible, active green spaces. Simultaneously, nature-based solutions must be mainstreamed directly into design codes and guidelines so that green roofs, vertical greening, and blue-green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, are treated as standard climate adaptation measures rather than optional decorations or bargaining chips in voluntary schemes like BEAM Plus. To enforce these guidelines, Hong Kong must look to international best practice, adapting successful frameworks like Tokyo's building greening ordinances to our local density and climatic conditions, complete with clear thresholds and strict enforcement mechanisms (C40 Cities, 2015).

3. Secure Long-Term Protection and Ecological Management of Key Terrestrial, Wetland, and Marine Habitats in Hong Kong, with Particular Attention to Northern Wetlands, Ecologically Important Marine Areas, and Sensitive Mountain Habitats

Problem Statement

Hong Kong's updated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP 2035) recognises the importance of conserving wetlands, fishponds, and marine ecosystems, and calls for the establishment of a wetland conservation system and further identification of marine areas for protection. However, many ecologically important marine and coastal sites, such as Shui Hau, Pak Nai, Lau Fau Shan are still only partially protected or subject to heavy recreational and development pressure. The Northern Metropolis development strategy covers extensive lowland areas in the New Territories, including wetlands and fishponds around Deep Bay, which the government acknowledges as habitats of high conservation value. Yet, without clear, binding safeguards aligned with BSAP 2035 and Ramsar commitments for Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay, accelerated planning relaxations and large-scale development could lead to habitat loss, fragmentation, and reduced ecological connectivity for migratory birds, fish, and other wetland-dependent species.

Proposed Strategy

Prioritise the creation and long-term ecological management of wetland parks and conservation areas within the Northern Metropolis before allowing major surrounding development to proceed. Developers must be legally required to provide "no-net-loss" or "net-gain" mitigation measures for adjacent wetland and fishpond habitats, ensuring that preventive measures are prioritised and that compensation commitments are submitted in a dedicated habitat protection plan alongside the statutory Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Aligning these local efforts with broader policies, the upcoming review of the Hong Kong Climate Action Plan 2050 (CAP2050) should formally recognise wetlands, fishponds, and ponds as indispensable, nature-based assets for flood mitigation and carbon storage. Fully integrating their conservation and restoration into urban design, drainage planning, and climate adaptation measures will directly support the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP 2035) in preventing aquatic ecosystem deterioration, strengthening wetland conservation systems, and restoring degraded habitats, so that climate and biodiversity policies reinforce each other rather than operate separately.

4. Establish a Strategic Policy Framework for Responsible and Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Hong Kong, Ensuring that Tourism Development Supports Biodiversity Conservation, Respects Ecological Limits, and Delivers Fair Benefits to Local Communities

Problem Statement

Although Hong Kong's countryside, coastal areas, and rich biodiversity are increasingly promoted as tourism assets, highlighted by proposed "ecology + tourism" nodes in sensitive areas like Tsim Bei Tsui and Pak Nai, the region's eco-tourism development currently lacks a dedicated, territory-wide policy framework that prioritises habitat protection and carrying capacity over sheer visitor numbers and commercial returns. While international standards define ecotourism as nature-based, small-scale, and locally-led travel designed to minimise environmental and socio-cultural impacts while driving conservation and community benefits, the current model in Hong Kong risks overtourism in ecological areas, with issues including habitat disturbance and transport pressures in sensitive sites, if development proceeds without science-based assessments of ecological, environmental and transport carrying capacities and clear visitor-management standards.

Proposed Strategy

To drive truly sustainable development, we must develop a strategic policy framework for ecotourism that adopts internationally recognized principles of responsible travel, prioritising biodiversity and natural habitat protection while ensuring local communities are engaged early and meaningfully in both planning and benefit-sharing. Crucially, this framework must establish dedicated reinvestment mechanisms that channel a defined portion of ecotourism revenues directly back into long-term conservation, restoration, monitoring, and research. By actively funding the preservation of these sites, tourism transitions from a potential ecological strain into a direct contributor to maintaining the very natural assets upon which it depends.

Conclusion

Safeguarding Hong Kong's unique biodiversity requires recognising nature not as an optional amenity, but as the bedrock of our climate resilience and public health. By embedding ecological education in schools, enforcing equitable urban greening, securing vulnerable habitats, and regulating eco-tourism, we can successfully harmonise urban growth with environmental preservation. This proactive approach will protect our rich natural heritage and ensure a sustainable, liveable, and equitable future for all.

Food, Agriculture and Health

Background

Hong Kong's food system is characterised by a profound dependency on global imports, a significant educational divide separating youth from agricultural knowledge, and urban planning frameworks that often overlook the ecological value of community farming. The current food labelling system, while robust in nutritional data, fails to provide consumers with critical information on the carbon footprint and upstream agricultural practices of imported goods. This lack of transparency is compounded by a systemic omission of agriculture from mainstream education, which fosters a generational disconnect and endangers the future of local farming. Furthermore, short-term land use policies for urban agriculture undermine long-term soil health and climate resilience, while large-scale developments frequently lead to the irreversible loss of mature ecosystems. A holistic strategy is therefore imperative, one that enhances food transparency, embeds agricultural education within school curricula, and champions community-based agriculture as vital urban infrastructure.

Recommendations

1. Enhance Food System Transparency through Mandatory Eco-Labelling and Digital Traceability

Problem Statement

While Hong Kong enforces a legally binding food labelling system, the framework omits critical data on food miles and carbon footprints, despite growing public demand for environmental transparency (Centre for Food Safety, n.d.). With over 98% of fresh vegetables being imported, current tracking mechanisms are inadequate to illuminate upstream supply chain activities, such as agricultural production methods or the use of chemical fertilisers (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2024). This information gap prevents consumers from making informed decisions that connect local procurement with reduced emissions, improved food safety, and the preservation of local soil health, which is fundamental to long-term food security.

Proposed Strategy

To bridge the gap between climate awareness and food safety, the global community must mandate a standardised, legally binding international eco-labelling system, modelled on leading benchmarks like the European Union's proposed EcoScore and Digital Product Passports. This framework must include a unified A-to-F grading scale for all cross-border food products, factoring in lifecycle carbon emissions and production impacts to eliminate fragmented regional metrics. Concurrently, the Hong Kong government should spearhead the adoption of a global digital traceability network, aligned with the UN's Codex Alimentarius guidelines, requiring all producers to provide a farm-to-table passport via a dynamic QR code. This digital infrastructure is essential to transparently verify agricultural inputs, prevent transnational food fraud, and empower consumers to make choices that support climate resilience and food safety.

2. Integrate Food, Agriculture, and Health into Primary and Secondary School Education to Foster a New Generation of Agricultural Innovators

Problem Statement

Within Hong Kong's mainstream primary and secondary school education, agriculture is almost entirely absent as a standalone subject, relegated to a minor sub-topic within other disciplines (Education Bureau, n.d.). This institutional omission is the primary cause of local youth's detachment

from sustainable food systems. The issue is intensified by societal attitudes and educational materials that often misrepresent farming as an outdated and low-value enterprise (Conservancy Association, 2021). With over 60% of Hong Kong's farming population aged 60 or above, young people predominantly encounter an elderly workforce, reinforcing the stereotype of agriculture as a "sunset industry" and creating a severe shortage of new talent (Conservancy Association, 2021).

Proposed Strategy

To cultivate a new generation of agricultural leaders, experiential field trips to local farms must be integrated into the formal primary and secondary school curriculum, offering students direct insight into sustainable land management and soil health. This foundational knowledge should be reinforced by practical, school-based initiatives such as "Eat Local" lunch programmes, which provide financial support to local farmers while educating students on sustainable consumption. Furthermore, schools should establish campus gardens equipped with seed banks. This hands-on approach not only helps conserve indigenous plant species and deepen students' understanding of local agricultural history but also fundamentally strengthens regional food security and community resilience (Teixidor-Toneu et al., 2023).

3. Champion Urban Community Agriculture to Drive Source-Level Recycling and Enhance Climate Resilience

Problem Statement

Urban community agriculture in Hong Kong is predominantly facilitated through the "Community Garden Programme," which, with its short 18-week rotation cycle, is structurally insufficient for cultivating perennial plants and fostering long-term soil health (Leisure and Cultural Services Department, n.d.). This short-term approach is symptomatic of a broader planning deficit where green spaces are treated as temporary land uses rather than permanent ecological assets. Consequently, when urban expansion encroaches on rural areas, such as the destruction of agricultural land in Yik Yuen Tsuen for the Northern Metropolis, mature ecosystems are routinely cleared instead of preserved, weakening natural drainage and local flood mitigation capacity (South China Morning Post, 2024).

Proposed Strategy

To harness urban agriculture as a core component of climate resilience, the government must allocate permanent land and infrastructure for community-based farming, implementing secure land tenure and management systems that encourage perennial planting. These community hubs will facilitate localised composting, enabling residents to process food waste at the source and reduce the carbon footprint associated with waste haulage. It is also crucial to promote the cultivation of perennial crops and mandate the relocation of native mature trees from development sites as a Nature-based Solution to regulate the urban microclimate and enhance flood mitigation. By fostering broad public participation, these initiatives will not only strengthen ecological resilience but also build community cohesion and social capital.

Conclusion

Hong Kong's path to a climate-resilient future depends on transforming how it imports food, educates youth, and utilises urban space. By implementing mandatory eco-labelling and digital traceability, the city can empower consumers to make low-carbon, transparent purchasing choices. Concurrently, integrating agricultural education into school curricula will bridge the generational knowledge gap, training future innovators to safeguard food security. Finally, establishing permanent urban community agriculture will secure vital Nature-based Solutions that enhance local recycling, microclimate regulation, and flood mitigation.

By unifying transparency, education, and permanent green infrastructure, Hong Kong can bridge the gap between urban life and natural ecosystems, turning its food system from a point of vulnerability into a cornerstone of community resilience.

Women and Gender

Background

Climate change is not a neutral crisis; it is a profound multiplier of existing gender inequalities. In Hong Kong and globally, women and gender-diverse individuals bear a disproportionate burden of its impacts, stemming from entrenched socio-economic vulnerabilities, occupational segregation, and systemic gaps in public policy. This year's discussions highlighted three critical areas where climate change intersects with gender injustice: the escalating occupational health and safety risks for gendered workforces, the invisible and severe mental health toll on women and persons with disabilities, and the acute physiological and psychosocial dangers posed to pregnant individuals. Despite clear evidence of these differential impacts, current climate adaptation, public health, and labour protection frameworks remain predominantly gender-blind, failing to protect those most at risk and undermining the principles of equitable climate action.

Recommendations

1. Mandate Gender-Responsive Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Protections for Climate-Exposed Workforces

Problem Statement

In Hong Kong, climate change poses a direct and escalating threat to workers in gender-segregated occupations. The city's female-dominated cleaning workforce faces extreme heat exposure with inadequate protection, as over 70% report heat-related symptoms while lacking appropriate protective equipment or mandated rest breaks (Occupational Safety and Health Council, 2022). Similarly, while the construction industry is predominantly male, the ineffectiveness of current heat stress warnings is evident, with 60% of all outdoor workers experiencing heatstroke symptoms (Hong Kong Free Press, 2023). This one-size-fits-all approach entirely ignores the unique physiological vulnerabilities of female workers. Furthermore, the city's over 368,000 female migrant domestic workers are excluded from all OSH frameworks, leaving them to perform physically demanding care work in dangerously hot and unventilated private residences without regulated working hours or mandatory rest (WOCAN, 2025).

Proposed Strategy

To rectify these systemic failures, labour policies must be reformed to mandate legally binding, gender-responsive heat action plans. This requires employers of all outdoor workers to conduct sex-specific heat risk assessments and provide mandatory rest breaks, cooling facilities, and real-time temperature monitoring, with enforceable penalties for non-compliance. Crucially, the OSH framework must be extended to include domestic workplaces. The Standard Employment Contract for migrant domestic workers must be amended to mandate the provision of a private room with adequate cooling (maintained below 28°C) and to define uninterrupted rest periods, aligning Hong Kong with International Labour Organisation recommendations and recognising that climate-induced heat is a non-negotiable occupational hazard.

2. Integrate Gender-Disability-Responsive Mental Health Support into Climate Adaptation Frameworks

Problem Statement

Women, particularly those with disabilities, carry a disproportionate and systematically invisible

psychosocial burden from climate change. Globally, women report higher levels of eco-anxiety and climate-induced psychological distress, a vulnerability that is amplified for those with disabilities who face compounded barriers to resources and support (Humanity & Inclusion, 2026). Research confirms that heat exposure significantly increases the risk of anxiety and depression in women, yet Hong Kong's climate and health policies contain no gender-disaggregated mental health provisions or accessible crisis support protocols (Gayathri et al., 2025). This institutional invisibility renders the profound psychosocial harm experienced by women with disabilities unaddressed, representing a direct violation of state obligations under international human rights conventions, including the newly adopted Belém Gender Action Plan (UNFCCC, 2025).

Proposed Strategy

A three-tiered strategy is required to address this critical policy gap.

Tier 1: The Hong Kong government must establish immediate, gender-disability-responsive psychosocial first-response protocols for all climate emergencies, including accessible mental health hotlines and targeted outreach.

Tier 2: Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) must be formally integrated into the Hong Kong Climate Action Plan 2050, with women with disabilities designated as a priority vulnerable group requiring dedicated resilience programming.

Tier 3: At the international level, the Belém Gender Action Plan must be implemented with binding accountability mechanisms, requiring all nations to report on disability-inclusive MHPSS provisions within their National Adaptation Plans and ensuring the meaningful participation of women with disabilities in all UNFCCC working groups.

3. Incorporate Protections for Pregnant Individuals from Climate-Induced Physiological and Psychosocial Harm

Problem Statement

Pregnancy is one of the most acutely climate-vulnerable biological states, yet pregnant individuals remain systematically invisible in climate adaptation frameworks. Every 1°C increase in heat exposure significantly heightens the risks of preterm birth, congenital anomalies, and gestational diabetes (Zhang et al., 2024). In Hong Kong, pregnant women in inadequately cooled housing or those with disabilities face compounded physiological risks with no targeted protection. Beyond the physical, climate-induced stressors are independent risk factors for perinatal depression and anxiety, which can inflict intergenerational harm by impairing mother-infant bonding and long-term child development (Oxford University Press, 2026). Current policies fail to address this dual physiological and psychosocial threat, leaving pregnant individuals and future generations exposed.

Proposed Strategy

To protect maternal and infant health, the Hong Kong Government must immediately designate pregnant individuals and pregnant women with disabilities as priority climate-vulnerable groups in all emergency response protocols, ensuring priority access to cooling shelters and accessible crisis communication. Systemically, pregnancy-specific and disability-inclusive maternal health provisions, including MHPSS protocols, must be integrated into



the Climate Action Plan 2050, consistent with WHO recommendations (WHO, 2023). At the international level, all parties to the UNFCCC must formally recognise reproductive justice as a core climate justice issue. This requires that all National Adaptation Plans include pregnancy-specific provisions and mandate intergenerational impact assessments, ensuring the meaningful participation of pregnant and postpartum women in the co-design of all relevant climate policies.

Conclusion

Addressing the climate crisis with justice and equity demands an explicit recognition of its gendered dimensions. The disproportionate risks faced by women, pregnant individuals, and persons with disabilities are not inevitable consequences of a changing climate but are the direct result of policy and planning frameworks that have historically ignored their specific needs and vulnerabilities. By mandating gender-responsive occupational safety standards, integrating disability-inclusive mental health support into climate action, and enshrining protections for maternal and infant health, Hong Kong can lead in building a truly resilient society. We call upon policymakers to move beyond gender-blind approaches and adopt a proactive, rights-based framework that ensures the safety, health, and dignity of all individuals in the face of the climate emergency.

CONTRIBUTORS

Policy Team

This Hong Kong Youth Statement was edited by CarbonCare InnoLab (CCIL), CCIL is representing the LCOYHK 2026 Management Team.



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Editor-in-Chief



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Thematic Agenda

Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE)



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Climate Justice and Human Rights



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Energy Transition



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Just Transition (Adaptation, Nationally Determined Contributions & Global Stocktake)



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Food, Agriculture and Health



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Women and Gender



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LOCAL CONFERENCE OF YOUTH HONG KONG 2026

EVENT RECAP



Resilient Cities: Navigating Climate and Health Recovery

The climate crisis, largely driven by human activity according to the IPCC, presents a severe threat to Hong Kong, a highly industrialised and populated region currently ranked as the most disaster-vulnerable city in Asia and third globally. Despite this high-risk profile, there has been a notable research gap regarding the social, physical and psychological factors that drive local youth to support government mitigation efforts. There are studies that mark the examination of Climate Change's impact on mental health within the Hong Kong context, identifying it as a crucial adaptive mechanism that positively shapes public attitudes toward climate policy.

The overarching objective of LCOY Hong Kong 2026 is to transform health, including physical and mental health, into actionable systemic resilience by addressing the intersection of environmental stressors and public well-being.

By aligning these pillars, LCOYHK 2026 positions climate action as a critical form of preventative medicine, providing a roadmap for the community to strengthen the city's social and structural immunity through the following lenses:

- Physical Vitality
- Mental Fortitude
- Urban Synthesis

KEYNOTES

This year, our theme returns to 'every individual living amidst climate change' as we explore how extreme weather impacts both physical and mental health, and examine the unique roles Hong Kong youth can play. My hope is that through this Conference, every young participant can find their own positioning, seize the present moment to drive meaningful change, and fully embrace their responsibility as global citizens.

Ivy Leung

Executive Director
CarbonCare InnoLab



Under the weight of climate change, both Hong Kong and the global community face unprecedented challenges. In response, the HKSAR Government has introduced a series of key policies designed to accelerate the transformation of our city's development model. I strongly encourage our young people to strive for the 'unity of knowledge and action'—to translate their understanding into practical, everyday steps so we can collectively tackle and improve these urgent climate issues.

Sammy Yeung, JP

Commissioner for Climate Change
Environment Branch, Environment and Ecology Bureau



Participating in the Climate Advocacy Training for Youth (CATY) programme gave me the practical foundation I needed, which ultimately led to profound insights during my time at Bonn and COP30 in Brazil. At COP30, I was deeply moved by the vision of 'Global Mutirão'—which beautifully translates to 'gathering collective power.' I want to call on more young people to take their climate thoughts, concerns, and emotions, and channel them into collective action. Together, we can drive the real social change our world so urgently needs.

Karis Chung

Youth Climate Champion
LCOYHK 2026



Mental Health & Gender

Panel Discussion

Climate Inclusive Nexus: Gender, Youth Health Equity and Resilience

This panel delves into the multifaceted impacts of climate change, extending beyond environmental science to explore its profound societal and psychological repercussions. We will examine how often-overlooked climate crises are exacerbated through a gender lens, particularly affecting vulnerable communities. A significant focus will be placed on the growing challenge of climate anxiety, exploring their various forms and the additional anxiety they can induce. The discussion will also cover protective factors that foster resilience and mental well-being in the face of climate stress.



SPEAKERS



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Ms Si-si Liu

Director
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MODERATOR

Ms Kylie Lai

Programme Manager
CarbonCare InnoLab

YOUTH ADVOCACY SHOWCASE

The following four youth-led community climate projects were incubated under CCIL's Climate Advocacy Training for Youth (CATY) programme. CATY empowers its participants to translate their training into real-world practice by initiating advocacy projects focused on the climate issues they care about most. These initiatives urge governments and stakeholders to adopt ambitious, committed actions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, limit global warming to 1.5°C, and reflect climate justice in the policy agenda.



Agents of Change

The team focused on frontline outdoor workers in Hong Kong. They advocated that the government should use the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) as an indicator to improve the "Guidance Notes on Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work," suggested incorporating heatstroke prevention guidelines into government tender contracts, and set a long-term goal of elevating this to a statutory protection scope.

Youth Advocates: Andy Law, Angel Lam, Justina Chung, Katy Dong, Tiffany Yeung Yanni Chan



Battery rEVolution

Advocating for stronger regulation, recycling and traceability mechanisms for retired electric vehicle batteries in Hong Kong. The proposal seeks to enhance public safety, protect the environment and support the development of a local circular economy.

Youth Advocates: Alice Hui, Ashley Yau, Jeffrey Ng, Jesse Ko, Sam Hui, Selena Liang, Winfield Ngo





Cooling Neighbours

The team focused on how to increase the climate resilience of older districts against extreme weather events through Nature-based Solutions (NbS). They advocated starting a pilot scheme to improve public spaces like "pocket parks," incorporating NbS into Hong Kong's planning standards and environmental impact assessment systems, having the government take the lead in adopting NbS designs, and eventually establishing a comprehensive NbS certification system.

Youth Advocates: Annie Kwok, Carolus Kwok, Cece Wong, Coey Chau, Hazel Fok, Sammi Cheung



Mindspace

Advocating for the inclusion of mental health considerations within climate-related policies. The initiative highlights the psychological impacts of climate change and focuses on people in mental health recovery as an entry point to better understand and address the needs of climate-vulnerable groups.

Youth Advocates: Haylie Wong, Kate Jung, Rachel Cheung, Ronald Ng, Tommy Leung



The Future of Climate Action Starts Here.

Over months of tireless dedication, these four project teams poured their hearts and minds into turning vision into reality. Remarkably, these young advocates aged 18 to 30 balanced intense project work alongside their demanding full-time jobs and academic studies, willingly contributing for the climate cause.

As the organiser of LCOYHK 2026, CarbonCare InnoLab (CCIL) extends its deepest gratitude and a massive shout-out to these exceptional youth leaders. Their advocacy is far more than desktop research; they spent countless days and nights on the front lines—lobbying Legislative Council (LegCo) members, engaging key stakeholders, and championing climate justice. By taking direct action, they have fought bravely to defend the rights and secure a fairer, climate-resilient future for their target communities.

Workshops



CyclePunk

Climate Lab Summit: Sustainable Transport Strategy Board Game

In this simulation, participants will step into the role of a district governor tasked with connecting land use while navigating the complex realities of economic demand and environmental limits.

Throughout the game, participants will face critical trade-offs: will they prioritise high-carbon transport for immediate economic gain, or invest in sustainable public transit and cycling infrastructure to build climate resilience? As carbon emissions trigger rising sea levels on the map, they must engage in climate negotiations and cross-district cooperation to safeguard their territory. The session concludes with a facilitated reflection, bridging the gap between game-based decisions and real-world urban transport challenges.





HealingParks

HealingParks • Urban Park Resilience Tour

The "HealingParks • Urban Park Resilience Tour" aims to boost awareness of people about the potential of urban parks as a nature-based solution to enhancing climate adaptation and resilience in communities. Through this guided tour, participants will assess the park through Planning & Design, Biodiversity, and User Experience perspectives. Through engaging discussions and hands-on activities, participants can also explore how these urban green spaces can be designed and maintained to mitigate climate effects and adapt to changing environmental conditions. future.

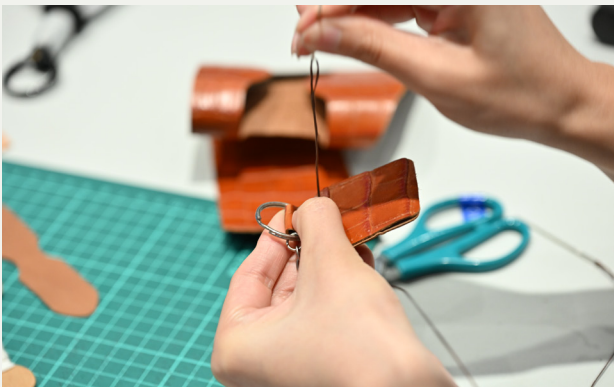




Stage Lab HK

The Resilience Playground: Gamifying Climate Action

Feeling overwhelmed by climate doomism? Take a breath and play. The Resilience Playground, an interactive lab where we tackle eco-anxiety using fast-paced social games inspired by Applied Improv and Forum Theatre. So, what's in it for the participants? They will release conference stress, cure their climate burnout, and find their "climate squad" through fun, team-based problem-solving. They will also walk away with a practical, everyday toolkit to sustain their long-term advocacy. Nervous about acting? Don't be! It's a live-action, choose-your-own-adventure game. Jump into a scene to change the outcome, or just strategise from the sidelines. Zero pressure!



The Mental Health Association of Hong Kong

Leather Reborn: Upcycling Workshop

This hands-on workshop invites participants to explore sustainability through creativity by transforming donated eco-leather—originally worn or no longer usable—into stylish, meaningful accessories such as bracelets, key holders, and small personal items. Guided through design and making, participants will discover how upcycling can reframe waste as a valuable resource. More than a craft session, the workshop connects art, innovation, and environmental awareness, encouraging youth to reflect on consumption and the impact of creative choices. Participants will leave not only with a one-of-a-kind handmade piece but also with a fresh perspective on how creativity can contribute to a more sustainable future.



Research Centre for Environment and Human Health School of Continuing Education, Hong Kong Baptist University

Nature's Shield: From Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Resilience

This workshop offers a hands-on journey into the world of Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), blending scientific discovery with creative play. Moving beyond abstract theories, it shows how nature quietly connects to our daily lives through trees, coastlines and wetlands, while also inspiring creativity through play to nurture climate resilience in the next generation. In Hong Kong, where storms intensify and resilience is vital, nature is both protector and educator, safeguarding and inspiring our homes, health, and daily lives. Through two interactive "Nature-to-Inspire Circles" (20 min each), participants experience nature's "superpowers" and shift from learners to creators.

In Circle A – Nature Defends Storms (Experimental Lab), participants discover how mangroves work like a living sponge and storm shield, offering our coastlines more flexible protection than any hard walls.

In Circle B – The Play-Based Future (Design & Pitch), participants explore new approaches to environmental education through AR-powered biodiversity storybooks and nature-themed board games, experiencing firsthand how play and storytelling spark creativity and awaken heartfelt empathy for the planet.

This workshop turns ideas into lived experience. Participants will gain a fresh perspective on nature's value, realising that protecting nature is not only about the environment, but also about shielding our coastlines, protecting homes, and strengthening community resilience, while equipping youth with creative tools to advance nature conservation and climate resilience.

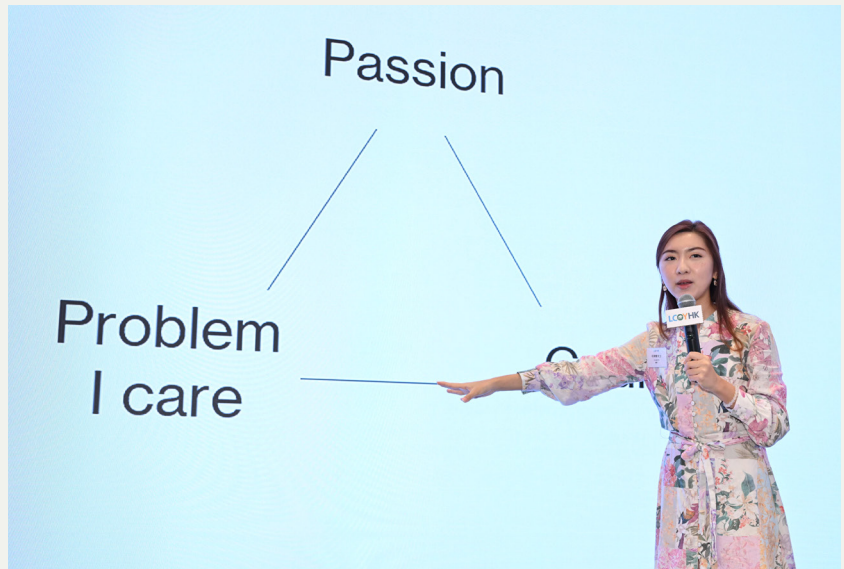


Wear & Bites

A Climate-Resilient Flavour Experience

After planting a food forest in Mui Wo, our CATY graduates are bringing the harvest to your teacup. This sensory experiment is all about the taste of climate resilience. Participants will be tasting several "Climate Herbal Teas" that survive even in Hong Kong's extreme weather. Explore the unique notes of our climate-resilient crops through a Taster's Flavour Wheel, tasting how nature adapts to climate change. Blend their own bespoke "Climate" tea bag to take home—a simple, flavorful way to keep climate action in their daily routine.





The Sound of Change: My Climate Advocacy Journey Through Music

Through the artist, Annabelle's personal journey of founding ClimateXArt, this 20-minute programme illustrates how passion for music can intersect with climate advocacy to inspire change. By sharing her story of merging violin performances with environmental activism, Annabelle will encourage the attendees to reflect on their own passions and explore how they can contribute to climate action through creative expression. The session will feature live violin performances, a dynamic presentation, and interactive elements to foster an inclusive and inspiring experience, empowering youth to envision their role in the climate movement through art and culture.



The Salvation Army

Mental Wellness Cooldown Toolkit

"Mental Wellness Cooldown Toolkit" workshop is based on the concepts of heat stress and mental health, and introduces tools such as the "Emotional Thermometer" and the "Emotional Cooling Kit" to help participants understand how their emotions may "heat up" when facing climate change and personal stress, and how to "cool down" using the five senses.

Through interactive activities, participants will create their own personalised five-senses "Emotional Cooling Kit," enhancing self-awareness and learning practical, immediate techniques for emotional regulation. The kit includes sensory-based items such as flavored candy (taste), visual cards, calming aroma sticks, a mood playlist (CD), and cooling sensory squeezes.

Participants will take home their own Emotional Cooling Kit, equipping them with practical tools to care for their mental wellbeing in a rapidly changing world.





The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong x Climate Adaptation for Everyone (CAFE)

Hong Kong Survival Mode: Climate x Gender Challenges

This workshop will guide participants to explore, from a gender perspective, the physical and psychological challenges faced by different genders in Hong Kong under climate change.

By activating a "survival mode" scenario, participants will be encouraged to step into others' shoes and reflect on how climate change intersects with individual needs, the distribution of social resources, and gender-related policies within this dynamic urban environment.

Acknowledgements

LCOYHK 2026 Organiser

CarbonCare InnoLab (CCIL)

Founded in 2014, CarbonCare InnoLab (CCIL) is an independent community NGO dedicated to catalysing the transition to low-carbon lifestyles and promoting climate action. CCIL envisions a sustainable future where climate actions are accessible and inclusive, with a strong mission to nurture and expand a community active in climate justice through innovation, education, and action. We actively engage NGOs, businesses, policymakers, and youth in achieving a just transition to a low-carbon economy that respects and protects vulnerable communities.

Through youth empowerment, community engagement, and multi-stakeholder collaboration, while combining knowledge of the intricate issues of climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, CCIL aims to empower our society to effectively respond to the global climate crisis.



LCOYHK 2026 Programme Partners

ClimateXArt

ClimateXArt aims to harness the power of music to raise public awareness about pressing climate change issues. Through a combination of informative climate-related topics presentation, live violin music performance and, interactive discussions, audience are encouraged to learn in-depth knowledge, participate and reflect on their climate actions at the Climate Change Concert.



CyclePunk

CyclePunk is a group of young, climate-conscious Hongkongers on a mission: to transform cycling from a weekend hobby into a go-to for daily errands and commutes across the city. Over the coming year, they are dedicated to building out comprehensive cycling infrastructure and route maps. They also push the government and both public and private sectors to provide more complete cycling amenities, making cycling around Hong Kong more comfortable, feasible, and convenient for everyone.



HealingParks

HealingParks Concerned about the design of Hong Kong's parks, they strive to enhance the sustainability of Hong Kong's urban parks and to inspire the public to see urban parks as a solution to climate change.



Stage Lab HK

Stage Lab HK is a specialised training consultancy dedicated to helping leaders and changemakers become more human and reconnect with themselves in the Age of AI. Integrating Visual Synthesis with drama-based Applied Improv, Stage Lab HK delivers high-impact training in executive presence, public speaking, strategic creativity, and adaptive leadership. Through signature impact initiatives like the Climate Resilience Lab, Stage Lab HK uses applied improvisation to equip youth and emerging leaders to optimise cognitive load, navigate ESG complexity, and convert climate anxiety into unscripted, confident action.



Wear & Bites

Wear & Bites links sustainable living directly to what we wear and eat. We tackle overconsumption by sharing knowledge on garment quality and workmanship, showing individuals how to build a sustainable wardrobe instead of buying fast fashion. We also focus on regenerative farming as a practical way to revive rural areas and restore nature. Our goal is to build resilience in our communities during the climate crisis through behaviour change.



Meet our Representatives of LCOYHK 2026 Programme Partners



Group photo of LCOYHK 2026 Programme Partners with Guest of Honour

From left to right: **Ms. Sinying Ng**, Founder and Director of Wear & Bites and YING ECOLIFESTYLE; **Ms. Joscelin Yeung**, Founder and Principal Consultant of Stage Lab HK; **Ms. Ivy Leung**, Executive Director of CarbonCare InnoLab; **Mr. Sammy Yeung**, Commissioner for Climate Change, Environment Branch, Environment and Ecology Bureau; **Ms. Karis Chung**, Youth Climate Champion (YCC) 2026; **Ms. Katy Cheng**, Co-founder of CyclePunk; **Mr. Oscar Leung**, Co-founder of HealingParks; **Ms. Annabelle Ho**, Founder of ClimateXArt.

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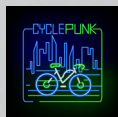
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