

Position paper on behalf of Ark Eden on School places for South Lantau

**Local school places in South Lantau mean unique potentials
in promoting young people's knowledge and attitudes about the environment**

Background: Ark Eden Foundation has been providing inspiring environmental workshops and activities, mostly on Lantau Island, for students and organisations since 2006. It is now a registered HK charity and sponsors disadvantaged groups, youth leadership training for environmental and social change; ecological restoration and other environmental projects - most recently school carbon audits. On average 4,000 people join Ark Eden activities each year.

Main opinion points

1. Unique geographical position of the New Territories Heung Yee Kuk Southern District Secondary School (SDSS): accessibility to
 - i) wide-range of natural systems of high ecological value of Lantau - mountains, wetlands, coastline, mudflats, natural streams etc
 - ii) rich cultural heritage - historical villages, monasteries etc
2. Ark Eden is one of several organizations (e.g. LBA, Treasure Island) that can work alongside SDSS to deeply embed environmental education. Through exploring and learning from the surrounding natural environment students will draw up and implement projects to promote social responsibility and environmental sustainability
3. SDSS can become a leading green school
4. SDSS can invite other schools to share best practice, e.g. themed areas set up in school showcasing different parts of the island, its creatures, history and culture, simple but sustainable solutions offered by students to HK's environmental problems
5. A growing local environmental culture generated by the school would create community benefits such as
 - i) encourage different local specialists to share their knowledge so enhancing the community's social capital.
 - ii) local people could utilize their local knowledge and skills to develop their own sustainable amenities and specialist areas so enhancing local eco-tourism.
6. Students can initiate local sustainable and community projects such as
 - Restoring medicinal forests and learning traditional skills. .
 - Community work i.e. working with elderly on a Community Supported Agricultural farm (CSA) and community organic farms
 - Importance of conserving bovine populations on Lantau and in HK
 - Ecological restoration projects- native tree-planting, maintenance etc. show-casing an arboretum
 - Working in local native and fruit tree nurseries
 - Learning traditional skills such as rice planting/de-silting rivers/crafts
 - Working in local vegetable and flower gardens
 - Cleaning up beaches, villages and setting up compost facilities and beautifying projects
 - Manning tourist booths at weekends
 - Setting up a butterfly garden