

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Impact Case Study

University: Lingnan University
Unit of Assessment (UoA): 34 - History

Title of case study: Knowing our history and heritage: Working with community and fostering public engagement

(1) Summary of the impact

The Hong Kong and South China Historical Research Programme (HKSCHRP) created by the History Department of Lingnan University is at the forefront of research on Hong Kong local history. This work has had considerable impact on local communities and on Hong Kong's primary and secondary education systems. Professor Lau Chi-pang's research has been used as the basis for a variety of endeavors including lectures, publications, online resources, and collaborative projects with governmental cultural bodies to promote the community's engagement with their local history and heritage.

The impact that ensued as a direct result of the HKSCHRP is presented in this case study as three main points: impact on primary and secondary education, impact on public understanding, and impact on regional collaboration.

(2) Underpinning research

The research which underpins the impacts described in section 4 was generated in the HKSCHRP, by the lead researcher Prof Lau Chi-pang.

Prof Lau Chi-pang's research mainly focuses on Hong Kong local histories, which include the stories of a variety of prominent historical figures and events. These include: (1) the history of the Wong Chuk Hang, a district in the southern part of Hong Kong Island [R1], (2) the war crimes of Japanese Army in Hong Kong [R2], (3) the study of historical and cultural heritage of Tuen Mun, one of the oldest districts in Hong Kong [R3], and (4) Hong Kong people's public rental housing life [R4].

For each of these topics, Professor Lau had authored or co-authored a monograph, published major publishers such as Joint Publishing and Chung Hwa Book Company, with the general public readers as the main target audience. These are all deeply researched projects; at the same time, the respective resulting monographs were written in a highly accessible plain language that is easily comprehensible to a broad range of audience, not just the scholars in the field of Hong Kong or Chinese studies. They were also used as the basis of various projects aimed at public engagement with history and heritage which are described in section 4.

His expertise in Hong Kong history has led to him being appointed to positions in a range of local organizations, including the Advisory Committee on Built Heritage Conservation, Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

(3) References to the research

[R1] Lau, Chi-pang and Wong, Kwan Kin Kenneth, <黃竹坑故事——從河谷平原到創協坊> [Wong Chuk Hang Story—From Valley Plain to Chuangxie Square], Joint Publishing HK, 2015.

- [R2] Lau, Chi-pang and Ding, Xinbao, <日軍在港戰爭罪行：戰犯審判紀錄及其研究> [Military Crimes Committed by Japanese Army during the Occupation of Hong Kong: A Study of War Crimes Trials Record], Chung Hwa Book Company, 2015.
- [R3] Lau, Chi-pang and Liu, Shuyong, <香港地區史研究之四：屯門> [Hong Kong's Local History Research (IV): Tuen Mun], Joint Publishing HK, 2012.
- [R4] LAU, Chi-pang, <我們都在蘇屋邨長大—香港人公屋生活的集體回憶> [We all Grew Up in So Uk Estate: Collective Memory of Public Housing of Hong Kong People], Chung Hwa Book Company, 2010.

(4) Details of the impact

The HKSCHRP is the leading organization in the Hong Kong on the research of the city's local history. The impact that Lau Chi-pang's research has had on the community can be summarized in three main points:

(i) Jockey Club Hong Kong History Learning Programme

With the donation of HK\$14.83 million from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, Professor Lau Chi-pang's research was used to establish the "Jockey Club Hong Kong History Learning Programme" in 2015 at Lingnan University.

From August 2015 to July 2018, this three-year programme worked with about 60 primary and secondary schools on the implementation of related teaching and learning activities that delved into the breadth of Hong Kong history, supporting the key learning area of "Personal, Social and Humanities Education" (**source 1**). The Programme's key output was the creation of tailor-made teaching kits based on Lau Chi-pang's research findings. These kits were trialed, reviewed and refined through thematic seminars, study tours, oral history workshops and mobile exhibitions. At launch, in the first round of surveys, teachers were asked to complete a feedback questionnaire (**source 2**). The large majority of the 22 participating teachers gave very positive evaluation. They believed that these teaching kits would increase students' interest in learning history. There are now four online teaching kits, with 75 topics covering areas in geography, politics, economy, society, cultural, biography, buildings and other thematic records, for lower primary school, higher primary school, middle school and high school respectively.

Although these teaching kits were designed for primary and secondary schools, they are freely available for download to anyone. As a result, the teaching kits have been downloaded by the public over 1,000 times since July 2018.

HKSCHRP also produced a mobile exhibition on 20 of the 75 teaching kit topics. About 15 primary and secondary schools have borrowed these mobile panels for free since September 2018. An estimated more than one thousand students visited these mobile exhibitions. Professor Lau Chi-pang also organized thematic seminars and study tours. These were well attended, with about 50 teachers participating in each thematic seminar and about 20 teachers participating in each study tour. One of the participating history teachers said that this kind of seminar and study tour provided special opportunities for secondary school teachers to learn the latest research on local history. In addition, the HKSCHRP organized three oral history workshops for secondary students. About 100 students from 8 schools took part in these workshops. Most of these said that the workshops helped them conduct oral history research.

In addition to leading the compilation of teaching kits, Professor Lau Chi-pang also provided professional suggestions on general studies for primary schools. His contribution was praised by the Curriculum Development Council (**source 3**).

(ii) Deepening public understanding of local history of Hong Kong

Compiling local records is helpful for the public understanding of their own society and for the enhancement of community cohesion. The HKSCHRP is committed to research in this area, and its work resulted in the publication of what is now known as the first ever village gazetteer in Hong Kong (Chung Hwa Book Company, 2015).

The “Lin Ma Hang Village Gazetteer (蓮麻坑村志)” was compiled using content taken directly from Lau Chi-pang’s research to systematically introduce and describe the natural and social conditions of the Lin Ma Hang village, which is located on the Shenzhen-Hong Kong border. The Gazetteer aims to help readers to learn the history of Hong Kong and the Lin Ma Hang Village in the context of various historical concepts such as the relationship between Hong Kong and China and the history of overseas Chinese and Hakka culture.

The first printing of the Gazetteer produced 2,500 copies, 300 of which were sold by Chung Hwa Book Company’s book stores. The rest were distributed by the Hong Kong Local Records Office and the Lin Ma Hang Village Office. The Gazetteer is now considered to be essential for the study of Hong Kong history and is present in all eight public university libraries of Hong Kong and in all Hong Kong public libraries (**source 4**).

Prof Lau Chi-pang’s research also resulted in the creation of a book called <日軍在港戰爭罪行：戰犯審判紀錄及其研究> [Military Crimes Committed by Japanese Army during the Occupation of Hong Kong: A Study of War Crimes Trials Record]. This book was selected by 13 professional reviewers as being one of the 10 top books from the 340 entries in the Ninth Hong Kong Book Prize (2016) (**source 5**).

Lau Chi-pang also serves as a consultant for television programs on the history of Hong Kong, which aims to enhance public awareness in Hong Kong’s history. His contribution was highly appreciated by RTHK (**source 6**).

(iii) Regional collaboration and main beneficiaries

The HKSCHRP has always been committed to the preservation the local history of Hong Kong through collaboration with local governmental bodies. The chief beneficiaries were the general public in the local communities. In 2017-2018, the Sai Kung District Office commissioned Professor Lau Chi-pang to create a training program for schools centred around the “Oral History of the Tseung Kwan O Community.” About 80 middle school students from ten schools in Tseung Kwan O and 27 adults attended the training. Over 90% of the 27 adult trainees were satisfied with the training program, thereby deepening their interest in learning Hong Kong history and improving their skills in oral history (**source 7**). In addition, in 2017 the Sai Kung District Office also commissioned Prof Lau Chi-pang to create an exhibition on the “The History of Wan Yiwan Village”. This exhibition is still running and offers the public a way to learn about the Wan Yiwan Village. Over 10,000 people have visited these exhibitions since 2017, passing down village history to future generations (**source 8**).

(5) Sources to corroborate the impact

Source 1: LAU Chi-pang (PI). Jockey Club Hong Kong History Learning Programme, 2015-2018.

Source 2: Jockey Club Hong Kong History Learning Programme teaching kits questionnaire, 2015-2017.

Source 3: Thank you letter from Curriculum Development Council, 8 June, 2018.

Source 4: <香港首部村志——蓮麻坑村志出版> [The first village gazetteer—the publication of Lin Ma Hang Village gazetteer] , <讀書> [Read], 03-11-2015.

Source 5: <第九屆「香港書獎」揭盅十本優秀作品獲嘉許> [Ten good books are praised in the “Ninth Hong Kong Book Prize”], 21-06-2016.

Source 6: Letter from RTHK, 3 April, 2017.

Source 7: Oral History of the Tseung Kwan O Community training program, trainees’ opinion questionnaire, 09-12-2017.

Source 8: <萬宜灣村展覽傳承鄉思> [Wan Yiwan Village exhibition inherits homesickness] <東方日報> [Oriental Daily News], 26-06-2017.