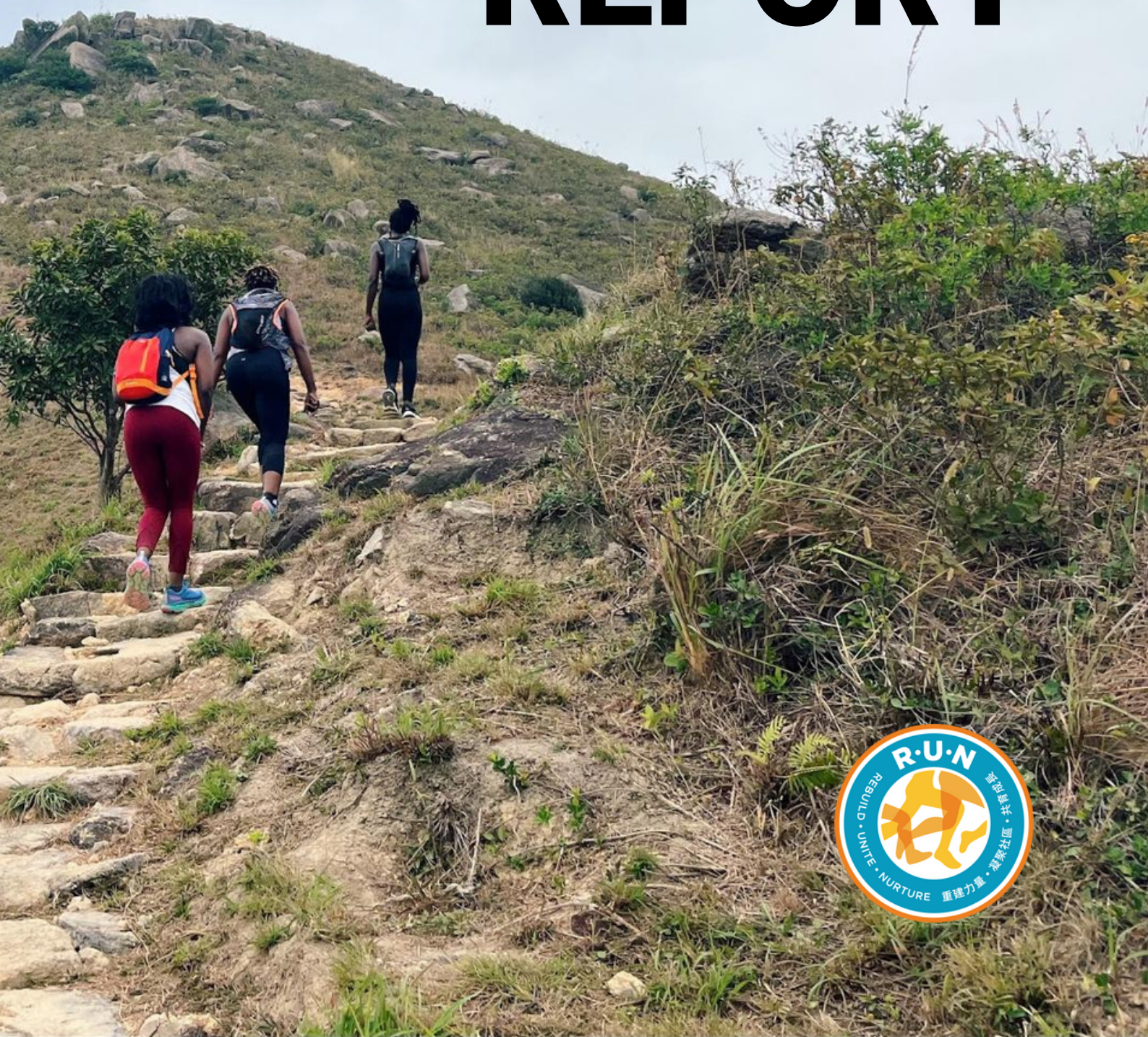


# RUN HONG KONG 2021 ANNUAL REPORT







# Letter From the Co-Founders

Dear friends of RUN,

In 2015, when I (Virginie) went on that first hike with a small group of refugee women, I was moved by the women I met that day. It was each of their individual stories that brought me back to the trails with them every week and what motivated our little team of volunteers to grow those hikes into what RUN is today.

While we are proud of the number of refugees and asylum seekers who have come through our programmes over the past six years, we have never wanted to grow for the sake of numbers - our goal has always been to grow in the impact that we could have on each individual participant. That's why we are extremely proud to be able to offer more tailored and individualised support to our participants across all of our programmes this year. As you'll read in our annual report this year, we have worked hard to offer multiple levels of sports activities and multiple streams of educational opportunities to meet the needs and interests of our participants. Our goal is to accelerate every participant's journey through our programmes so that they can begin a new life of safety and dignity beyond Hong Kong as soon as possible.

We wouldn't have been able to do this without additional resources, so we were incredibly proud to welcome five new team members this year! These include:

- Erin Brown, Sports Programme Coordinator
- Kennis Chow, Office Administrator
- Joice Sam, Finance Manager
- Jayne Schrantz, Education Operations Manager
- Nida Sophasarun, Education Operations Assistant

Each of them has hit the ground running to significantly enhance both our programmes and operations.





In addition to the new talent on our team, we were also able to secure additional office space in our current building. For the past few years, RUN has operated out of a single open space unit. This space has served us well as a place where all of us - participants, staff, volunteers - could be together in community, a place where our participants can feel at home. However, as our programmes and team grew, it became clear that we would need more space to accommodate us all. As you'll read about in the coming pages, our new space serves as a classroom for learning, a treatment space for our participants to share health concerns, as well as a private meeting and work space for our team.

We are deeply grateful to you, the RUN community, for making all of this possible. Because of your support, we were able to invest in the infrastructure we needed to be able to serve the needs of our individual participants, some of whom you'll read about in this report.

This past year, one of our participants, JC, won first prize in a local poetry competition. Her poem, 'Woman, Arise', is about a woman rising from her past, and beautifully captures the transformation we hope to see in each one of our participants. As you read this report, we hope that you will not only see our updates and the numbers, but the individual stories of our participants rising to overcome their past and build a new future for themselves.

With gratitude,

Virginie & Brenda  
Co-founders  
RUN Hong Kong

# Woman, Arise!

*A poem by a RUN participant, JC, which won first prize in a 2021 World Poetry Day competition*

They may have stripped you of your jewels and dimes  
Broke you or broken into you a thousand times  
They may have been happy to see your demise  
Who you are, they may not anymore recognize.

You may have lain among the pots  
Your blacks and bruises like dirty dots  
Been with you like birthmarks, or Dalmatian spots  
But are cleansed and washed by the LORD Jesus' touch.

For in you is a piece of the Divine  
A blueprint, in your being, intertwined  
Destined to rise, rise again after a fall  
Persist to your call though for a moment you crawled.

Crawled to the branches of your trees  
Fed on the greens as you felt the breeze  
And, hang on there, for it wasn't long  
Your wings are growing, you're being transformed.

You are no longer the lesser version of you  
"Old things are passed away, all things are become new."  
You have power over the demons that tried to shatter you  
For greater is He who is for you than he who is against you.

Break forth, Come forth, Arise!  
From your cocoon, from your cave, or your grave  
Like a silver-winged dove or a lovely butterfly  
Woman, you are His element of surprise.



# Refugees Around the World & In Hong Kong

## Globally

(as of June 2021)

- 26.4 million refugees, around half of whom are under 18 years of age
- 4.1 million asylum seekers
- 1 in every 95 people on earth has fled their home as a result of conflict or persecution

## In Hong Kong

- Nearly 13,000 refugees and asylum seekers
- <1% of asylum seekers have their claims recognised
- Refugees and asylum seekers are given a tiny monthly allowance of HK\$1,200 in food vouchers and HK\$1,500 for rent
- Refugees and asylum seekers have no right to work

## At RUN

RUN serves the most vulnerable refugees in Hong Kong. This includes many who are victims of torture and sexual violence, those who are significantly impacted by trauma, and those who have very little support, especially women who are alone or alone with their children.

- In 2021, we directly served 131 refugees and asylum seekers from 21 countries, including 22 men, 52 women, and 57 children
- At any given time, more than 40% of our participants have been recognised as refugees, indicating the most extreme cases and most vulnerable individuals within the wider refugee and asylum seeking community.

## Global Compact on Refugees

On 17th December 2018, the UN General Assembly presented a plan to strengthen international support for refugees and the countries who host them. This plan, which is known as the Global Compact on Refugees, was affirmed by all 193 Member States of the United Nations. RUN directly supports three of the key objectives as outlined in the Compact to:

- Ease pressure on host countries
- Enhance refugee self-reliance
- Expand access to third-country solutions





# Our Impact

## Sports

The core of RUN's programmes is our Sports Programme. We support our participants to rehabilitate from trauma, improve physical and mental strength, and build resilience through participating in sports such as hiking, running, and swimming.

In 2021, we enhanced our Sports Programme by tailoring our sports sessions to meet the needs of participants at different levels of fitness and ability. At both our weekly Women's Hiking to Heal and Mixed Gender Track Training sessions, we offer multiple levels of challenge of hiking, running, and swimming, so that our participants can train with others who are at a similar level. Additionally, our Sports Programme Coordinator meets regularly with our participants one-on-one to set individual goals and help stay on track.



I didn't think there was any way that I could do this but I just kept coming to the training and then on the day I just did it! I was proud of myself for that. Next time I can go further!

- Alice, from Burundi,  
about completing RUN's  
Hong Kong Trail challenge



While many races were still on hold in 2021, our participants took whatever opportunities they could get to challenge themselves including:

- 1 of our female participants completed the HK100 Flex, after first attempting the race in 2019.
- 2 of our participants paired up with T8 running legends to compete in the Wonders of Asia Challenge, a 9-day trail running challenge organised by Asia Trail Girls.
- 3 of our male participants competed in the AVOHK 5km and all of them placed in the top 3 for their respective age categories and one even placed in the top 3 overall!
- 4 female and 6 male participants took part in BuffCo's distance track series, racing distances between 800m and 5,000m over several weeks.

“

I feel like now that I have learned how to swim, I can do anything! I feel powerful and strong, but also like I can learn better in class. It has also made me feel some sense of purpose to learn this skill so quickly.

- ZB

We also organised our own Hong Kong Trail challenge in the fall of 2021. 12 of our women participants spent three months training (twice a week - rain or shine!) and they impressed us with their grit and determination throughout the whole process. Two of the women completed the full trail of 50km in under 10 hours, while the remaining completed the half trail of 25km in under 5 hours!

In addition to our own programmes, some of our participants were also hosted by local running groups GoneRunning and BuffCo to train with and compete against other runners. We are extremely grateful to the running community for welcoming our participants into their groups and providing them with additional opportunities to challenge themselves and integrate into the Hong Kong community.





Our weekly Kids Programme combines sports activities with homework help for children of our adult participants. As we have spent more time with our child participants, we recognised an increasing need for more structured programmes for refugee children who often face physical and mental health issues related to the trauma of fleeing their home countries and/or the reality of living as a refugee in Hong Kong. We were proud to partner with the Hong Kong Rugby Union, with support from Laureus, to launch SHINE, a 12-week rugby and mental wellness programme for refugee children in Hong Kong. SHINE stands for Sports, Health, Inclusion, Nurture, and Emotional well-being, and while we're just getting started, we are already seeing the impact of these sessions and hope that this can be the foundation for more child-specific programmes in the future.



In 2021, we organised:

**54**

women's hiking  
sessions

**46**

mixed gender track  
training sessions

**34**

kids programme  
session



## Education

Our Education Programme helps our participants to restore independence and dignity through education and provides training to prepare for re-entry into the workforce. While refugees and asylum seekers are generally not allowed to work here, learning new skills and developing professionally means that they improve their chances of securing stable employment in their future country of resettlement and ultimately build a better future for themselves and their families.



With RUN's support, one of our participants, Glad, was able to enroll in a month-long woodworking course with German master carpenter, Ulli Drews, at Drewswork Workshop. As an experienced carpenter himself, we wanted to support Glad to continue developing his unique skill that he not only enjoys and excels in, but can also lead to future employment opportunities. "I really like the class because I feel like I can demonstrate my talent. Ulli is teaching me to join wood without nails or glue and make it perfect," says Glad.



In 2021, with feedback from our participants who have been resettled and from our partners in Canada, we reviewed our Education Programme with an emphasis on work readiness and preparing our participants to obtain work as quickly as possible after resettlement. Our in-house Foundational Skills classes in English, computer, and math provide our participants with essential skills and knowledge for further professional development and support them in language exam prep, which can improve their chances of employment once resettled. Our Computer/IT classes expanded to include CV and cover letter writing, business and professional communications, and comprehensive Google Suite skills. Similar to our Sports Programme, our Education Programme Manager also meets one-on-one with participants to help them develop a personalised professional development plan based on their education, work experience, and interests.

This year, when our RUN garden at the Repulse Bay needed some help, one of our participants Richard put his hand up to lead the effort. Together with another participant, he worked to completely overhaul the gardens, demonstrating tremendous leadership and self-initiative. Richard helps to manage both of our RUN garden locations (at the Repulse Bay and Hysan Place) and both gardens are flourishing with fresh vegetables that are regularly harvested for our weekly lunches. Through his work on our gardens, Richard is actively preparing himself for a new life outside of Hong Kong and developing practical skills in an area of interest in which he hopes to find employment when he is resettled.





In the late spring of 2021, we were also extremely honoured to partner together with The Entrepreneurial Refugee Network (TERN) to develop an entrepreneurship curriculum for RUN participants. Over the course of several months, several of our participants learned about the ins and outs of launching and running a business and honed their entrepreneurial ideas. In 2022, we plan to build on this foundation and support our participants to grow their business ideas.

In the latter part of the year, we were able to lease an additional space in our current building. This has significantly improved our educational lessons and workshops, offering a quiet space for our participants to focus and study.

In 2021:

We obtained

**6**

employment contracts for our participants in companies such as Escapade Sports, PURE Fitness & Sylebra

We facilitated

**5**

internships in companies such as KPMG, Feeding Hong Kong, Christine Ritter, and Sylebra

We supported

**5**

participants to study full-time at university to study design, law, human rights law, and psychology

Participants earned

**40+**

certificates from external online platforms such as Coursera.org and Alison.org

**9**

participants earned their caregiver certification in either the Hong Kong course or US caregiver course

**4**

4 participants participated in urban farming workshops from September through December on the rooftop of Hysan Place

**15**

participants completed Parent Effectiveness Training





## Pathways

The goal of our Pathways Programme is to enable as many participants as possible to find solutions that allow them to rebuild their lives outside of Hong Kong. The main way we do this is through community sponsored resettlement - a programme in Canada where local communities are able to sponsor refugees and asylum seekers to resettle in their community and commit to helping them integrate into their new home for their first year of stay in Canada.

While 2021 was a particularly difficult year for travel, we continued to deepen our relationships with Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) in Canada and worked to ensure that as many of our participants as possible could depart once travel restrictions were lifted. As a result, we broke several records in terms of new community sponsorship applications submitted, as well as number of participants departing Hong Kong for a new life!

Tom was resettled through private community sponsorship to Canada in 2020. After settling in and taking some language training, Tom is now working in a distribution warehouse. It's been difficult to make friends and build community during the pandemic, but his sponsors have supported him to start his new life. Tom recently told us, "The best thing about Canada is to be able to work and feel human again!"



This year, we supported an Egyptian family of five with their resettlement. While their applications were arranged by a third party, we supported the family with plane tickets, legal support, and their departure/ installation costs. Anne, the mother, told us, "I feel a bit nervous about moving [to Canada], but at least my children will have the chance to attend university in Toronto. Starting again will be hard but I will prepare the foundation for other RUN participants to arrive in Toronto so that I can welcome them and help them integrate."



“Before we joined RUN, we were hopeless, lonely, surrounded by darkness only. After we joined RUN, we became stronger and stronger every day. There, we met a nice family that changed our lives, the family that we will never forget - RUN is our parent, our sister, our brother, our family. RUN is everything to us. We are smiling now because of RUN. We will miss their love, their care, their lovely faces...

- Aaron, from Rwanda, who we helped to resettle to Canada with his family this year

In 2021:

8

community sponsorship applications were submitted for a total of 32 participants

4

community sponsorship applications were approved for a total of 10 participants

10

participants departed for Canada





## Health & Essential Services

While we ultimately hope that all of our participants can begin a new life abroad, our Health & Essential Services are critical to ensuring that all of our participants can meet their basic needs and thrive while they are with us in Hong Kong. We take a holistic approach to supporting our participants' physical and mental health by providing access to food, housing, healthcare, and childcare.

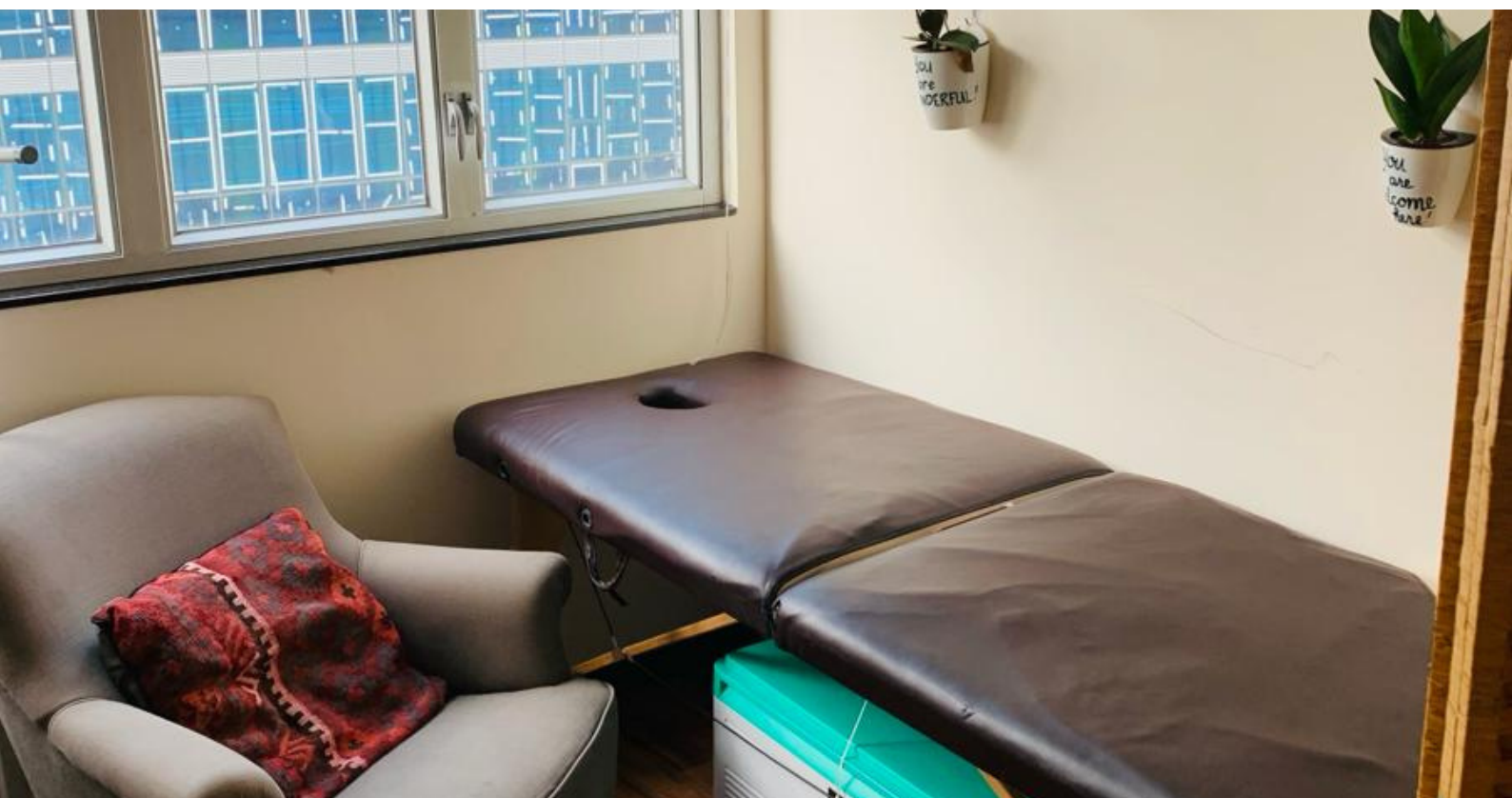
When the pandemic first began in 2020, it was clear that as some of the most vulnerable in our community, refugees and asylum seekers would be deeply impacted. Responding to the need, we began increasing our provision of basic items such as food and hygiene products. Since then, our office convenience store has become a regular fixture. Thanks to our wonderful community partners, our convenience store regularly stocks pantry staples, household supplies, as well as baby items, which are provided free to our participants who need them.

It is with immense sadness that we said goodbye to one of our participants, Swarna, who lost her fight with cancer this year. Swarna was diagnosed with cancer in 2020, and with the support of our healthcare volunteers, doctor Charlotte and nurse Michelle, fought courageously every step of the way. She was a strong and brave mother of two who was loved by all of us in the RUN community and we will deeply miss her.



With our volunteer healthcare team, we have also created a dedicated treatment space in the newly leased office space, where our participants can feel comfortable and safe in discussing their health concerns. In addition to the pro bono support we receive from doctors and psychologists, our volunteer healthcare team also organised regular workshops especially on women's health, helped our participants to access the right medical services, navigate language barriers, and addressed basic healthcare concerns.

In addition to physical health, we were also able to provide regular psychological counselling to our participants through pro bono or generously discounted psychiatrist professionals. In 2021, we also welcomed a new volunteer counsellor to our team to provide dedicated mental health support to our kids and teenagers.



In 2021:

We distributed an average of  
**500**  
meals per week

Our healthcare volunteers provided  
**weekly health & wellness consultations**  
to our participants

With thanks to our partners and volunteers, we were able to offer  
**weekly & bi-weekly counselling**  
to our adult and children participants who need it





## Community Engagement

When it comes to creating a more welcoming community for refugees and asylum seekers, we believe that we all have a role to play. We are intentional about engaging the community for collective impact.

In 2021, we continued to play an active role in the Refugee Concern Network (RCN), a group of organisations and individuals who work collectively to better the lives of protection claimants and refugees in Hong Kong and advocate for their rights. Together with members of RCN, amongst others, we successfully advocated for refugees and asylum seekers to receive COVID-19 vaccines. This was a huge win for the refugee community, many of whom expressed their desire to do their part to protect those around them and fight the pandemic. Additionally, we celebrated World Refugee Day by organising an art exhibition titled "I Believe I Can Fly", featuring artwork from 22 refugee children from across RCN's member organisations. In September, our Co-founder and Managing Director Virginie Goethals wrapped up her term as the first general convenor of RCN.

At the end of the year, we organised our Great Refugee Challenge: Holiday Edition - an interactive team activity designed to raise awareness about the situation facing refugees around the world and in Hong Kong. The Challenge was well-received by those who participated and we hope to build on this to engage more people in the community around refugee issues.

In 2021:

Our team delivered

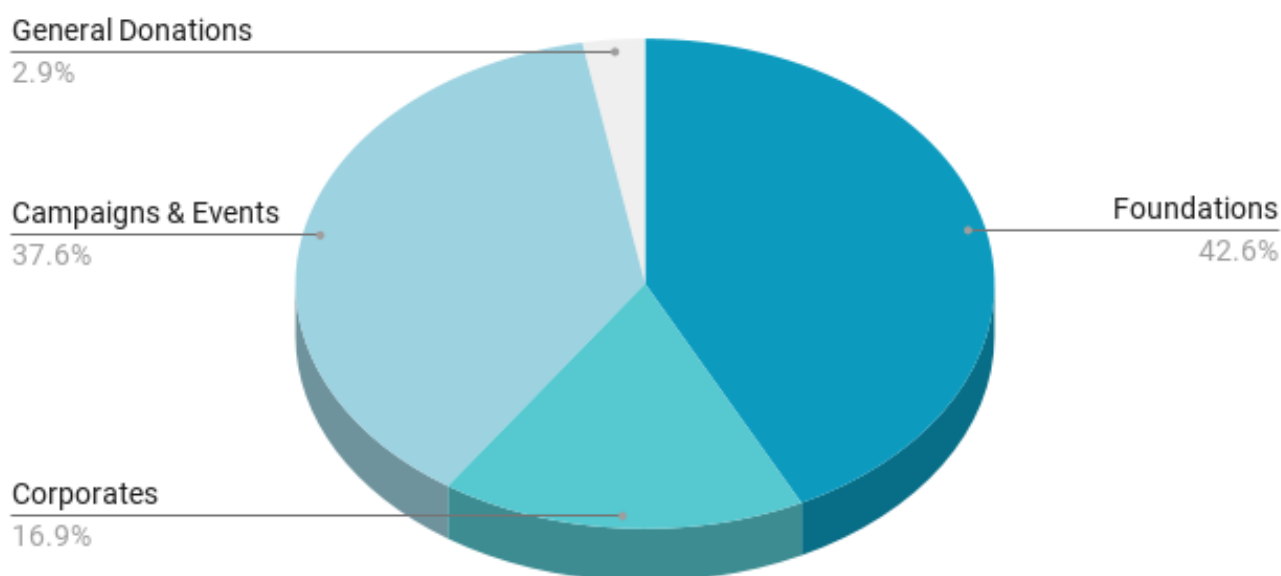
10

presentations to schools, companies, and other groups to raise awareness about refugees in Hong Kong

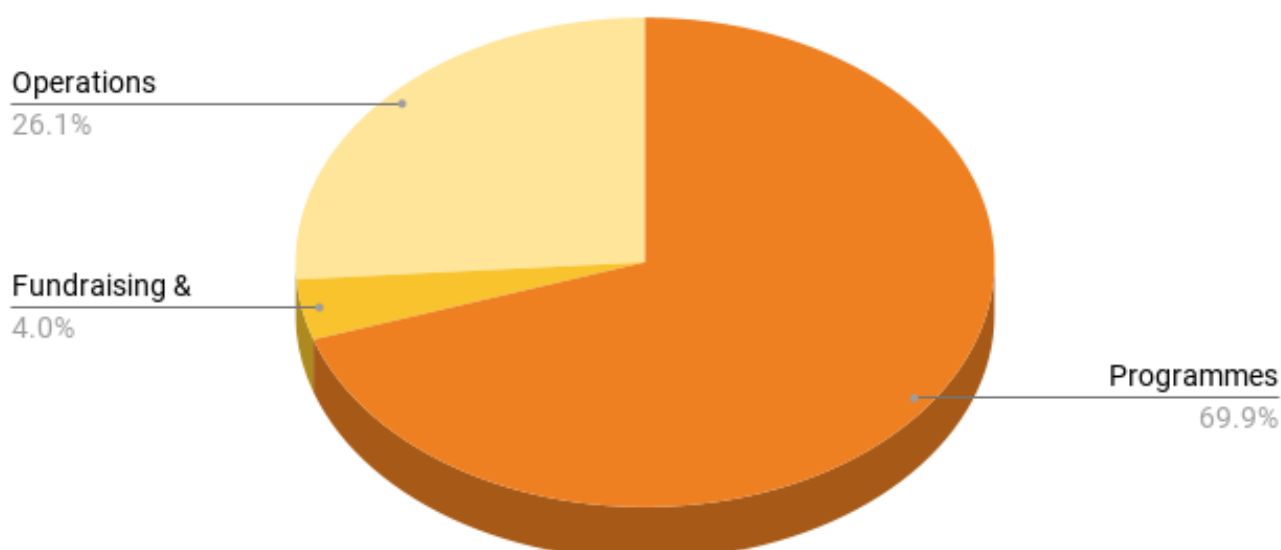
# Our Financials

Every dollar we raise means a more hopeful future for our participants, whether that's building mental and physical strength through our Sports Programme, developing skills through our Education Programme, helping refugees start a new life through our Pathways Programme, or supporting their daily needs through our Health & Essential Services.

## 2021 Income HK\$7,960,673



## 2021 Expenditure HK\$7,929,594







# Our Supporters

## Funders & Partners

Thank you to the following organisations who played a major role in RUN's work in 2021:

- Active Global Caregiver
- AllianceBernstein
- American Women's Association
- Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network
- AVOHK
- Baker McKenzie
- Central Health
- Clifford Chance
- Feeding Hong Kong
- Goldman Sachs
- Gone Running
- Health in Action
- The Hongkong & Shanghai Hotels Ltd
- Hong Kong Swimming Academy
- The Jadis Blurton Family Development Center
- Jewish Immigrant Aid Services Toronto
- Joint Dynamics
- Kering Foundation
- Keswick Foundation
- Lane Eight
- Lantau Basecamp
- Laureus
- Linklaters
- lululemon
- Macquarie
- Marshall Wace
- Permira
- Racebase
- The Repulse Bay Co Ltd
- Ronald & Rita McAulay Foundation
- Swire
- Telos
- WiFA
- ZeShan Foundation
- 10 x 10

## Volunteers

While flexible funding is a critical part of keeping our lights on, we wouldn't be able to do what we do without the support of our 100+ regular volunteers who dedicate their time and energy on a weekly basis to keep our programmes and operations running.

In 2021, we are grateful to  
our volunteers for  
contributing nearly

**900**

hours to RUN!



# Fundraisers

We are also grateful to some wonderful individuals who chose to dedicate their audacious challenges to RUN in 2021, to help us raise the money we need to keep our programmes running.





A photograph of two women in an indoor setting. On the left, an older woman with short grey hair is wearing a red and black patterned top and a white face mask with a red floral pattern. She is looking towards the right. On the right, a younger woman with long brown hair is wearing a pink sleeveless top and is looking at a board covered with many colorful sticky notes (green, yellow, orange, purple). The title 'Looking Ahead' is overlaid in white text on the left side of the image.

# Looking Ahead

While we are extremely proud of what we achieved in 2021, we are always working to improve our work so that we can have an even greater impact on refugees and asylum seekers in Hong Kong. This past year, we embarked on a rigorous process of evaluating our programmes with the support of Lighthouse Partnerships. With the invaluable insights gleaned from this process, we hope to strengthen our programmes even further. Additionally, here's a snapshot of what you can expect from RUN in 2022:

- More targeted and individualised sports activities - In 2022, we will launch a new Get Active group, which engages participants who are new to RUN and/or exercise and combines different ways to get active and reach their fitness goals. By creating this group, we want to make sports more accessible to our most vulnerable participants and ensure that they can get the most out of our programmes. Additionally, we plan to build on SHINE, to provide more targeted support for refugee children in the form of structured sports activities and mental health education.
- Enhanced work-readiness training - We plan to bring back our mock job fair (which we organised for the first time in 2019) to give our participants an opportunity to sharpen their interview skills and receive invaluable feedback from real employers. We will also build on the success of our entrepreneurship course to help our participants strengthen their ideas and give them practical experience of starting a business.
- Alternative pathways for our participants to build a new life: We are working closely with our Canadian partners to increase the number of participants who can be resettled through community sponsorship. Additionally, we are also exploring alternative pathways including a new pilot programme from the Canadian government, known as the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), which helps skilled refugees immigrate to Canada through existing economic programs to support Canadian labour market needs.

And on top of these exciting improvements to our programmes, we are also excited to announce the launch of our long-awaited vegetarian cookbook in 2022! After publishing our first RUN Cookbook in 2020, our participants have been hard at work cooking, tasting, and perfecting their home recipes and we can't wait to share those with you soon.

# Get Involved



## Become a Monthly Donor

Your monthly donations can make a huge difference to us and our participants by providing a reliable and flexible source of funds so that we can plan for the future, take advantage of opportunities, and respond to our participants' needs. Visit [www.runhk.org/donate](http://www.runhk.org/donate) or use the QR code for more info.



## Fundraise for RUN

You can make a difference for refugees and asylum seekers in Hong Kong by dedicating your next challenge to RUN. Whether you want to run a race, throw a bake sale, or organise a movie night, you can use the opportunity to tell your friends and family about the situation facing refugees in Hong Kong and fundraise on behalf of RUN. Visit [www.runhk.org/get-involved/fundraise-for-run/](http://www.runhk.org/get-involved/fundraise-for-run/) or use the QR code for more info.

## Hire a Refugee

While refugees are not normally allowed to work in Hong Kong, it is possible to apply for work authorisation on a case-by-case basis. We've been able to pair many of our participants with paid work this way, and these opportunities go a long way to helping refugees develop professionally and increase their self-reliance. If you know of any employment opportunities or if your company may be interested in hiring a refugee, please reach out to us!

## Get Educated


One of the best things you can do for refugees in Hong Kong and around the world is to educate yourself and those around you. Make sure you're following us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, where we share news and other content about refugees, or better yet, invite us to speak at your company/school!

Find out more at [www.runhk.org](http://www.runhk.org).





RUN is a Hong Kong-based nonprofit that supports vulnerable refugees, particularly women, to build resilience and nurture self-reliance for a more hopeful future. With sports as the springboard and education as the foundation, we help refugees to create a life of safety and dignity, in Hong Kong and beyond.

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