



## VOLUNTEER BRIEFING NOTES

### Programme Information and Policies

#### A. Key Terminology

**Team leaders:** RUN's events and programmes are mainly organised by the Managing Director, one of the Directors, the Programme Officer and a few Co-ordinators. RUN has currently only one paid staff who is the Programme Officer. All other team leaders are volunteers.

**Volunteers:** RUN's volunteers support the different events and programmes by providing their time to assist with RUN's activities in Hong Kong.

**Programme Participants:** RUN's programme participants are refugees and asylum seekers who attend our hiking and/or running events. Childcare is centrally organised during the hiking events. For some events the participants attend along with their family members.

**Asylum seeker:** An asylum-seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee and seeks international protection from persecution or serious harm in their home country. While they are waiting for their claim to be accepted or rejected, they are called asylum-seekers (source UNHCR).

**Refugee:** A refugee is someone who is outside of his or her country and is unable or unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (source: Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), article 1).

#### B. Manifesto and Mission statement

RUN stands for Rebuild. Unite. Nurture. Thus, RUN works together with vulnerable refugees to support them to:

- **Rebuild** their mental and physical strength
- **Unite** as a community and with the local Hong Kong community
- **Nurture** each other through sport, food, friendship and education

We aim to achieve the above through

- rehabilitation of vulnerable refugees through running and other sports.
- helping them recover from past traumas in a warm, friendly and safe environment
- supporting them to develop skills for a more hopeful future.

#### C. Hong Kong Refugee Programme

RUN supports refugees and asylum seekers through sport to help them deal with past traumas, rebuild their self-confidence, and broaden their network of support. Refugees and asylum-seekers face extremely difficult conditions in Hong Kong as they are not allowed to work or even volunteer (for more information, see Annex C: Background information on asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong). The fitness activities offered by RUN provide for many programme participants the only opportunities they have to re-develop their mental and physical strength and break their social isolation. By offering a study programme, RUN further encourages its participants to invest in their skills and be prepared for a better future in their resettlement countries.

RUN prioritises particularly vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers for its programmes through consultation and collaboration with other NGOs in the Interagency Forum (i.e. Justice Centre Hong Kong, Christian Action, Health In Action, Crossroads). Being part of the programme, the participants are expected to attend all activities (of the groups they are part of) and to play a vital role in the group.

RUN currently has two main sports programmes and one study and mentorship programme:

(i) All-female “Hiking to heal” programme

RUN’s hiking programme with female refugees began in June 2015, in collaboration with Justice Centre Hong Kong, providing hiking activities for a small group of vulnerable refugee women. Currently, more than 30 female refugees and asylum seekers are participating in a hiking or fitness activity once a week. Childcare is being provided to their kids during the activity. Education about healthcare, nutrition, etc. is also offered to them.

(ii) Mixed Gender Track training programme

In August 2015, RUN began a mixed gender track training group. The group counts 35 athletes, who attend training one night every week on the Aberdeen track and participate in local road and trail races.

(iii) Study and Mentorship programme

Since February 2017, refugees who have rebuilt enough mental strength are encouraged to study online, with the support of a mentor from the Hong Kong business community. Over 20 refugees study online and a group of 15 attends individualised computer and English classes to prepare them to study online.

Further, RUN regularly organises special events, bringing together programme participants, their family members, volunteers, and RUN Team Leaders.

## D. Role of Volunteers

Volunteers play an important role in maintaining RUN’s programmes. Volunteers mainly assist by running and hiking alongside programme participants, as well as providing them with encouragement, company and support. A regular commitment is required to allow the community spirit to flourish, to maintain the activities within a safe environment and to help build trusting relationships.

## E. Expectations of Volunteers

Volunteers are expected to follow the instructions of the RUN Team Leaders during the activities. RUN Team Leaders have the discretion to ask a volunteer not to attend the activities in the future.

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend the regular training sessions about ‘Trauma and Self Care’, which are organised by RUN and taught by a qualified psychologist. It is also highly recommended that volunteers take a first aid course.

Every RUN Volunteer becomes an essential part of the RUN team. As such, we expect everyone involved with RUN to exhibit professionalism, respect confidentiality and cultural sensitivity, and to work with openness, honesty and dignity. We encourage all of our volunteers to ask questions when they are unsure of expectations in any particular situation, and to remain open to new experiences and challenges. For additional guidance, please refer to the Behavioural Guidelines and Boundary Policy (see Annex A).

## F. Confidentiality

Volunteers must not use, disclose or communicate to any person any confidential information, including information important to and relating to programme participants, of which they have or may have gained knowledge during their time as volunteers with RUN.

If volunteers become aware of any misuse or unauthorised disclosure of any information, they are obliged to immediately inform RUN Team Leaders in order to assist RUN in managing the situation.

## G. Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Harm

Where there are any concerns about the welfare of programme participants, including their family members, these must be discussed immediately with the RUN Team Leaders, who will help to coordinate a response. Volunteers must not try to investigate concerns on their own. Volunteers should be aware of and adhere to RUN's Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy (see Annex B)

## H. Boundary Guidelines

Clear boundaries are important for RUN's reputation and the safety of all our Volunteers and programme participants. All RUN volunteers are required to read and adhere to the Behavioural Guidelines and Boundary Policy (See Annex A).

## I. Insurance

RUN has obtained personal accident insurance for its athletes, volunteers as well as for childcare.

## J. Legal disclaimer

As a volunteer to the hiking and/or running programme, I understand that hiking and running may involve risks and RUN is under no liability (whether in negligence or otherwise) for any claim or loss in connection with the hiking and running activities organised by RUN.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(name) agree to volunteer with RUN. I have read and understood the RUN programme information, and I agree to adhere to RUN's Behavioural Guidelines and Boundary Policy, and the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy. I understand that these guidelines are not exhaustive and may be changed from time to time.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature and Date

## Annex A: Behavioural Guidelines and Boundary Policy

### Behavioural Guidelines

Most of RUN's programme participants have been through traumatic experiences which have left them vulnerable and disenfranchised. Our volunteers often form strong bonds with the programme participants, which can occasionally lead to the athletes divulging details of their experiences to the volunteers. If you would like to receive further guidance as to how to behave in these situations, please speak to the RUN Team Leaders.

When working with and around children and adults at risk, RUN staff, directors and volunteers should always:

- Treat everyone with respect;
- Respect a child's and adult at risk's right to personal privacy;
- Avoid any physical contact with a child or adult at risk that is not a direct result of proper service delivery as this may be misinterpreted;

When working with and around children and adults at risk, RUN staff, directors and volunteers should never;

- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or adults at risk;
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in the presence of children or adults at risk;
- Single out a particular athlete for personal attention and friendship;
- Address athletes or allow them to address you with personalised terms of endearment, pet names, or otherwise in an overly familiar manner;
- Engage in banter, allusions, jokes or innuendos of a sexual nature;
- Use profanity, racial slurs, or inappropriate jokes;
- Disclose personal, sexual, family, employment concerns, or other private matters;
- Encourage athletes to confide their personal or family problems and/or relationships;
- Exploit athletes for financial, sexual or other gain. Sexual or business relationships of any kind between volunteers and athletes are strictly forbidden;
- Send athletes on personal errands or involve them in activities that are not related to RUN's organised hiking/running sessions or special events.

### Boundary Policy

Clear boundaries are important for RUN's reputation and the safety of all our volunteers and programme participants. They help to ensure that no one is taken advantage of through their involvement in the RUN programme.

#### **Donations:**

- Volunteers must not give any amount of money directly to programme participants or their family members. This includes paying for things such as food, transport or mobile phone credit. Any request from a programme participant for financial help

must be directed to the RUN Team Leaders immediately, who will liaise with other agencies for possible referrals.

- Volunteers may not give clothes or shoes directly to programme participants. If you have any clothes or sporting goods you would like to donate, please pass them to RUN's Team Leaders who will distribute the items accordingly. All non-sport related items that you wish to donate to the refugee community can be brought to Christian Action or Crossroads.

#### **Photos/Mobile/email/social media:**

- Volunteers must not take pictures without prior agreement of the respective programme participants. However, please note that if consent is provided to take a photo, there are strict restrictions on posting of photos publicly:
  - Do not communicate, broadcast or share photos on open media channels that could identify athletes or compromise their safety, in particular photos from the front or of faces. When in doubt, refrain from posting photos, even if the programme participants agree to the publication.
- RUN uses Whatsapp to communicate with volunteers and programme participants, which means that if you participate in the Whatsapp group, your contact information will be seen by others. However, outside of this purpose, do not give your personal mobile number, email address or home address to programme participants directly.
- Do not befriend programme participants on social media.
- Avoid using names of programme participants in social media as well as obvious identifiers like country of origin.

#### **Social interactions**

- Volunteers may not arrange to meet the athletes outside of organised RUN events (running and hiking sessions or separately organised events). This includes not offering or accepting invites for dinner or other social functions. Any personal interaction with programme participants outside of the sessions must be approved by RUN Team Leaders.

## Annex B:

# Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

### Safeguarding policy

This policy applies to all staff, directors, volunteers and anyone else working on behalf of RUN.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and adults at risk who are involved in RUN's programmes. This includes children of adults who are RUN's programme participants.
- Provide staff, directors, and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding children and adults at risk. RUN believes that no person, particularly children and adults at risk, should experience abuse of any kind. This policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children and adults at risk are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, nationality or socio-economic background, all children and adults at risk have a positive and enjoyable experience with RUN. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and adults at risk and to keep them safe, and we are committed to running our organisation in a way that protects them.
- Ensure that by implementing safeguarding procedures, a safe environment for everyone involved with RUN is created and that these procedures are applied across the organisation.

#### **Children and Adults at Risk**

RUN considers "children" to be persons under the legally prescribed age of majority of 18 years. There is no legal definition of "adults at risk". For the purpose of this policy, RUN considers "adults at risk" to be persons of majority age who are at risk of exploitation by reason of their mental or physical conditions, socio-economic situation, or other factors related to their status as refugee or asylum-seeker in Hong Kong.

#### **Scope**

This Policy applies whenever RUN services are provided where children and/or adults at risk are present at the same time as, or in contact with, RUN staff, directors, or volunteers. This encompasses regularly scheduled RUN hiking and running activities as well as specially organised events with programme participants and their families.

#### **Requirements**

Whenever this policy applies, the following measures shall be taken:

- All RUN staff, directors and volunteers shall be made explicitly aware of the contents of this policy before engaging in any RUN programme. Compliance with this point is the responsibility of the Governance Officer.
- All RUN staff, directors and volunteers must be reminded of this policy once a calendar year, responsibility for which falls to the Governance Officer.

#### **Safe recruitment, selection and vetting of future staff**

RUN will conduct any background checks we consider necessary when recruiting staff members in order to ensure suitability of interacting with children and adults at risk. References and identity checks may be sought for new employees.

The employment contracts further contain an amendment referring to the Behavioural Guidelines and Boundary Policy as well as Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy (this document) and specifying any provisions for dismissal or suspension in case of breach of these policies.

We will not allow anyone, whether staff, directors or volunteers, to work with children or adults at risk where it becomes apparent that it would be inappropriate to allow them to do so.

### **Behavioural guidelines and boundary policy**

All RUN staff, directors and volunteers must adhere to RUN's "Behavioural Guidelines and Boundary Policy".

### **Incidents**

RUN has a duty to act immediately when we encounter incidents that are detrimental to the well-being of children or adults at risk. Incidents may include:

- Actual or suspected abuse of children or adults at risk by others;
- Surrounding circumstances resulting in unsafe situations or environments for children or vulnerable adults, including (but not limited to) intimate partner violence and adult sexual violence;
- Actual or alleged encounters between children or adults at risk and RUN staff, directors or volunteers that could be considered inappropriate:
  - Child abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, psychological abuse and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to the child's health, development or dignity<sup>1</sup>.
  - Intimate partner violence refers to physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression by a current or former intimate partner<sup>2</sup>.
  - Adult sexual violence includes any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. It may include psychological intimidation, blackmail, rape, attempted rape, forced abortion and forced prostitution<sup>3</sup>.

Any suspected or actual incidents must be reported instantly to the RUN Managing Director who is also the president. All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously by staff, directors and volunteers, and responded to appropriately. In many cases, appropriate responses to incidents will fall outside of the scope of RUN's services and therefore will require a referral to other organisations or services, including through the Interagency Forum.

If anyone covered by this policy believes that a criminal abusive act has been or is about to be committed against a child or adult, they should report to the police as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO, [http://www.who.int/topics/child\\_abuse/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/child_abuse/en/)

<sup>2</sup> WHO, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.36\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77432/1/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> WHO, [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/global\\_campaign/en/3\\_chap6.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/3_chap6.pdf)

## Annex C:

### Background information on asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong (source: Justice Centre Hong Kong)

Unlike most developed economies, Hong Kong has not sought the extension of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and consequently does not recognise refugees or provide them with long-term protection. There are over 10,000 refugees in Hong Kong waiting for their protection claim to be determined - a process that will take many years. In the meantime, they have no chance to integrate and lead a normal life in Hong Kong, and must exist here in limbo until, if their claims are successful, they are perhaps resettled to a third country. The Hong Kong Government still has an obligation to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement, which means they cannot return a refugee to their country of origin while their protection claim is under review or accepted.

Refugees in Hong Kong are in urgent need of rehabilitation on account of the human rights violations they have endured in their countries of origin, which have a detrimental impact on their mental and physical health. Many of the refugees are survivors of torture, and they have a legal right under United Nations Convention Against Torture to access rehabilitation programmes. However, the Hong Kong Government does not meet this obligation and few NGOs are able to fill this gap.

Many refugees come to Hong Kong with no more than the clothes on their backs, and while they may enter HKSAR legally, they are forced to overstay their visa before they can submit a protection claim. Many are detained on arrival. Once they have filed their protection claim and are registered in the USM (which can take up to 3 months after arrival in Hong Kong) refugees start to receive humanitarian assistance as they are not allowed to work and are therefore forced to depend on government handouts. They receive food coupons worth HK\$1200 per month (the equivalent of HK\$40 per day) and HK \$1500 allowance towards their rent, paid directly to the landlord. This low level of rental assistance forces many refugees to live on the margins in rundown settlements that can hardly qualify as housing.

Many refugees and torture survivors arrive in Hong Kong with very serious physical and psychological trauma, as a result of the persecution and torture they have experienced. In psychological terms, they could be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), chronic anxiety, suicidal ideation, sleep disturbances, flashbacks of the trauma, hypervigilance about strangers and unfamiliar situations and feelings of helplessness and powerlessness. This initial trauma is usually exacerbated by the prolonged process of seeking asylum, lack of basic needs (like food and housing) being met, as well as the isolation and anxiety caused by separation from family and friends. This is further exacerbated by the lack of social integration, autonomy and ability to contribute to society. Unfortunately, there is limited access to mental health facilities and assistance for refugees in Hong Kong unless it is an emergency (suicide or risk of harm to others) in which case they are likely to be admitted into hospital, then treated and detained in a mental health unit for 72 hours.