



Volunteer Briefing Notes

Programme Information and Policies

A. Key Terminology

Staff: RUN's events and programmes are mainly organised by the Directors and the Programme Officer.

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 sports or education activities. Childcare is centrally organised during the Tuesday 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

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. **We rehabilitate vulnerable refugees through sports, education, and beyond**

- We help them recover from past traumas in a warm, friendly and safe environment
- We support them to develop skills for a more hopeful future
- We promote equality and understanding amongst participants and with the local host population
- We have a special focus on women
- We are a community beyond sport

C. Hong Kong Refugee Programme

RUN supports refugees and asylum seekers through sports and education 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 sports activities offered by RUN provide for many programme participants the only opportunities they have to redevelop their mental and physical strength and break their social isolation. By offering an education programme, RUN further encourages its participants to invest in their skills and be prepared for a better future.

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

In addition to providing support for food, emergencies, childcare, and leadership, RUN currently has two main sports programmes and one education 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 provided to kids during the activity in the office or babysitting support is provided. Education about healthcare, nutrition, and more is also offered.

(ii) Mixed Gender Track training programme

In August 2015, RUN began a mixed gender track training group. The group counts over 45 athletes, who attend training every Thursday on the Aberdeen track and participate in local road and trail races.

(iii) PATHS for the Future education programme

In 2017, RUN launched a pilot study programme. Since the pilot, RUN has expanded the pilot into a structured education programme for participants focusing on: **Professional development, Access to education, Training and service, Help and mentorship, Skill building.** All RUN participants now study online or in person classes.

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. Other volunteers act as mentors for participants who are studying. 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 staff or coaches during the activities. RUN staff or coaches 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. 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 staff 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 staff, 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 Staff and Volunteer Briefing Notes, 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.

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**:

- Take or share photos of participants or the RUN office without the expressed approval of RUN staff, even if participants' faces cannot be seen
- Single out a particular participant or family for personal attention, friendship, gifts, or donations;
- Have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children or adults at risk;
- Make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures;
- 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;
- Ask participants to confide information about their personal history, cases, or trauma;
- Exploit participants for financial, sexual or other gain. Sexual or business relationships of any kind between volunteers and participants are strictly forbidden;
- Send participants on personal errands or involve them in activities that are not related to RUN's organised hiking/running sessions or special events.
- Disclose or communicate to any person any confidential information, including information important to and relating to programme participants

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, studies, or mobile phone credit. Any request from a programme participant for financial help must be directed to the RUN staff immediately, who will liaise with other agencies for possible referrals as needed.
- 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 staff who will distribute the items accordingly.

Photos/Mobile/email/social media:

- **Volunteers must not take photos** without prior agreement of the respective programme participants. However, please note that if consent is provided to take a photo, **photos cannot be shared publicly without consent from RUN staff**, even if participants have expressed approval.
- 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 unless approved by RUN staff.
- Do not befriend programme participants on social media. If participants request to follow or be your friend on social media, do not feel obligated to approve their request.
- Never disclose names, or obvious identifiers of programme participants on social media

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 staff.



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 a 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, or classes with programme participants and/or 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 shared responsibility of the Managing Director and the Programme Director.
- All RUN staff, directors and volunteers must be reminded of this policy at minimum once a calendar year, responsibility for which falls to the Managing Director and Programme Director.

Safe recruitment, selection and vetting of future staff

RUN will conduct any background checks considered necessary when recruiting staff members in order to ensure suitability of interacting with children and adults at risk. References and identity checks may be requested 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:
 - Abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, psychological abuse and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to health, development or



dignity.¹

- 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.²

Any suspected or actual incidents must be reported immediately to the RUN Managing Director. 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 Refugee Concern Network.

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.

Reporting Incidents

1. How to Report

- a. Anonymously
 - i. [RUN Incident Report Form \(online\)](#)
 - 1. - <https://forms.gle/hGGeMcYNk1mBrEYcA>
 - ii. Incident Report Form (submitted to box outside of RUN office)
- b. Directly
 - i. Email or in person contact with Managing Director (Virginie) or Programme Director (Pristine)

2. Review

- a. Managing Director or Programme Director refer concern to the RUN management team and/or local police or social services for investigation and records action taken
- b. A print copy of the incident reporting form is recorded and stored securely

3. Action

- a. RUN team participates in local police or social services investigation as required
- b. RUN team to handle incidents on a case by case basis

4. Record/Reports

- a. Managing Director or Programme Director records outcome of any investigation

¹ WHO, http://www.who.int/topics/child_abuse/en/

² WHO, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/3_chap6.pdf



(external or internal)

- b. Incidents and outcomes to be reported to the RUN Board of Directors and to any parties as required (grantors or other third party partners who require safeguarding reports)



Annex C: Background information on asylum seekers and refugees in Hong Kong

Refugees in Hong Kong

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates the total number of displaced persons worldwide to be 70.8 million. (June 2019)

In Hong Kong, there are an estimated 14,000 asylum seekers (November 2019). According to Security Bureau figures (March 2019), there are 160 substantiated refugees and torture survivors in Hong Kong from the 21,590 claims determined since 2009. The rejection rate of 99.4% is one of the highest in the developed world. Today, asylum claims are assessed by the Immigration Department's Unified Screening Mechanism (USM, implemented since 2014).

The 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees does not apply to Hong Kong. An asylum seeker is called a "non-refoulement claimant" and a refugee is called a "substantiated claimant". They are considered illegal immigrants by the Immigration Department as they are not in Hong Kong lawfully.

Government Support

Asylum seekers and refugees survive on food coupons of 1200 HKD per month (about 40 HKD per day), and are granted 1500 HKD per month in housing, paid directly to the landlord. A number of refugees have been allowed to work at the discretion of the Director of Immigration on an exceptional basis. Adults have access to higher education but it is not free. As government welfare assistance for this community is limited, gaps remain in obtaining bare essentials, such as clothing, shoes, school uniforms, books, diapers for babies, and basic cooking utensils, which some non-profits provide.

The very few asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status in Hong Kong cannot stay long term and must be resettled to the USA, Canada, or Australia. However, resettlement is almost at a standstill today and long periods of waiting of 5 years and over are common.

Dealing with Trauma

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. 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.