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A CIS RUN HONG KONG Service Project.

Project Aim

RUN HK is a community service organization dedicated to helping out refugees in need, particularly from Africa. Our main objectives include providing refugees' health and wellbeing, providing quality education, and reducing inequality for those who are the most vulnerable. Many of these refugees even have severe trauma or PTSD. Hence, programs at RUN, such as exercise and mental wellbeing programs allow these refugees to recover from their past trauma and seek comfort. Recently, Hong Kong has been hit hard by a new wave of COVID, prompting the government to resume online learning. Many of the refugee kids simply do not have enough resources to effectively undertake online learning. Hence, our project aim is to remedy this issue, by providing aid to these children that they otherwise would not be able to access.

Our Outcomes and Impacts

Prior to the pandemic, our team would head to the RUN center every Monday from 4:00 to 6:00 to either organize homework help sessions or help facilitate the sport sessions for the refugee children. However as the pandemic situation worsened in HK, we had to suspend our in-person volunteering services. But we wanted to continue to be involved. Therefore we began discussing ways to help continue supporting the refugee community, hoping to directly address their needs in the midst of the pandemic. With our school, we held a "Run for RUN" fundraising event, where we raised more than 6.3K HKD that went directly to the NGO for them to purchase foods, clothes and other necessities for the refugees who are suffering from a lack of these resources.



We didn't want to stop there. Hoping to continue helping the refugee children with their studies, we designed a website that would allow them to post homework questions and ask for help when they need. On this website, we have discussion posts where volunteers can answer questions, access zoom links and calendars for the children to contact for direct individual help and school resources for different subjects.

Considering that one of the greatest challenges for the refugee community during this pandemic is the lack of resources, we decided to design care packages for the families. This process was definitely a challenging but rewarding experience given the current situation in HK. After interviewing the families and having a rough idea of the items they most need, we began ordering on online supermarkets for goods, trying to find the best quality yet affordable items. We packaged items such as food, sport equipment, earphones and more and had primary students design cards for the 60+ refugee children as little gifts to brighten their day.

Partners and Organizations

Our team runs our service project through RUN HK, an NGO that supports vulnerable refugees to build resilience and nurture self-reliance for a more hopeful future. We also partnered with the Hong Kong Inter School Debating Organization (HKIDO),

who set up a debate competition for our team and raised over \$21,000HKD. We used these funds to create the care packages for the refugees. Finally, we have also set up a partnership with Students For Science (SFS), a student-led NGO that teaches underprivileged children science. The lessons with SFS will commence after April 28th on a weekly basis.

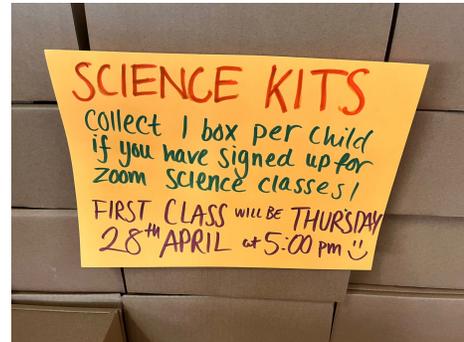
Our Approach to SDGs

Good Health and Wellbeing

Our care packages contained food and necessary resources to enhance their wellbeing. Additionally, prior to COVID restrictions, our weekly sports sessions for the kids helped improve their physical health. Lastly, constant and lighthearted conversations with the children enhanced their mental wellbeing.

Quality Education, Reduced Inequality

We have also provided weekly homework help, where kids can ask questions or help with any subject they are struggling with at school and hopefully provide the support that they need and lack. Additionally, we have partnered with Students for Science (SFS) to provide the kids a chance to learn about the sciences through experimental science kits and lessons in order to decrease education inequality.



Knowledge and Skills Gained

We have each learned a lot of new information about ourselves and our community. Prior to the pandemic, we had to take initiative to organize homework and sports sessions for the children. Through these activities, we made personal connections with a lot of the children and became sympathetic to their stories and lack of resources. Consequently, as classes went online, we did our best to improve the children's learning experiences. We learned to be organized through our weekly Zoom lessons where we were able to assist the children in their school homework. Through clear communication and effective collaboration, we were also able to fundraise to create care packages which allowed more refugee families to have access to basic necessities which enhanced their welfare in the pandemic.

Quotes and Testimonials

"While our children are on holiday, the snacks, earphones and pencils are **great to help us** keep the children busy. As our homes are small we can only accept **useful and well thought** donations and this box was **very helpful**- thank you CIS!", Rose, mother of 3 refugees

"We ate the snacks while hiking with our children during our weekly family hike, it was a **special** treat. My kids are now using the headphones during the weekly homework support organised by CIS. It **helps them** to focus as we **did not have any before**. We will use the new supplies when school resumes. **Thank you CIS!**" Anne, mother of 2

Future Plans

Our journey doesn't stop here. We have so many other creative ideas in mind that we hope to implement in the future to better the lives of the refugee community in Hong Kong. In the future, along with our fundraising initiatives, we hope to return to in person homework tutoring and sport sessions. This is undoubtedly what we enjoy the most, being able to interact with the refugee children more directly and form close relationships with them. In addition to that, we also wish to extend on our successful fundraising efforts, hoping to get more people involved by developing creative fundraising projects such as art competitions. We also found the care packaging project to be an effective and fun way to assist the refugee community, so we hope to continue doing that with the funds we raise. Furthermore, we are also working to improve our designed website to make it a long-term platform usable by the children to seek for homework help whenever they need it.