

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2018**



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## A most exciting year!

We have reached the end of another exciting year. We have a new name, a clear strategy, and a great team of people in place to restore dignity, justice and hope for vulnerable and marginalised communities in Hong Kong. All this has occurred during challenging times, as human rights observers worry that Hong Kong people are losing civil liberties amidst an increased pressure on the right to free speech.

This year has been an ongoing journey towards greater justice for our communities, celebrating victories and losses. While we witnessed wins in the legal arena in the fight against trafficking, we also saw these victories appealed and verdicts deflated. Our refugee community saw an increase in substantiated claims and a slightly clearer path to obtain work, but also experienced disappointment when a subcommittee published a report labelling claimants as “illegal immigrants” and “false asylum seekers”.

Amidst the growing tension in our society, now is the time for us to speak up and continue fighting for the rights and protections of refugees and survivors of human trafficking. I ask that you join together with us to build a better, more just Hong Kong for all people.

Thomas Franz, CEO



# Rebrand: From VCSSL to Branches of Hope



We are excited to reveal our new name and look along with this year's annual report. Since 2012, we have been proud to serve the vulnerable among us as VCSSL, boldly pursuing our mission to be a beacon of hope to the marginalised of our society. 2018 has marked yet another change in season as we take on a new name and identity as Branches of Hope.

When we began working for justice in our community 15 years ago, we were given a vision that has taken root to form our new identity. It was of a large, lush tree with deep roots, growing healthy and strong. Above the tree, birds flew, some of which were tired and struggling to fly. These weary birds landed on the branches of the tree and found safety, shelter, healing, and nourishment. And once ready, they flew onward, healthy and strong, just like the branches that nurtured them.

With this vision came our new identity. That of branches, which are part of a tree—fully alive and bearing fruit. These same branches reach out and provide shade, shelter, and nourishment to at-risk communities in our city. In our logo, two branches form a circle. They look almost like hands, formed together in a protective embrace. The orange of the leaves signifies warmth and acceptance. They also inspire a new beginning and restored energy.

Just like the tree in our vision all those years ago, we look forward to continuing the mighty work of restoring dignity, justice, and hope in our city for years to come.

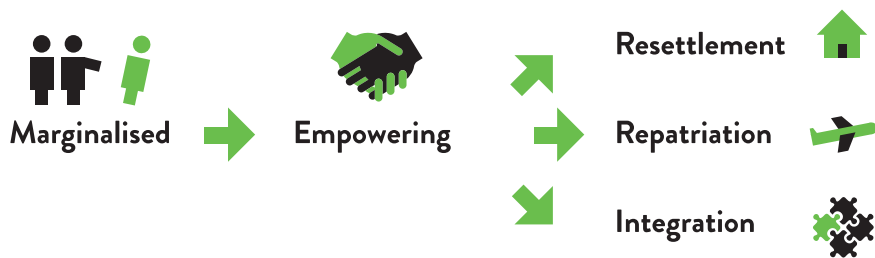
New and ongoing policies leave thousands of refugees in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. In response to the complex needs of this diverse community, the Refugee Opportunity And Development (ROAD) Programme emerged as a beacon of hope, determined to make a difference in the lives of refugees in Hong Kong through skills training, education, wellbeing, resettlement, and social impact.

We believe refugees have the potential to make a lasting positive impact on Hong Kong society when we empower them and give them a chance to make a difference. As we look back on the past year, we are proud to see ongoing and sustainable development in our programmes and communities.

## UNHCR's Durable Solution Strategy

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is encouraging communities that host refugees to apply what is known as the “durable solution strategy” through their refugee programmes. These solutions include but are not limited to “resettlement” to a third country, “local integration” in the host country, and “voluntary return” to the country of origin.

ROAD applies this strategy to help refugees prepare for their futures. We empower them to make the choice that is best for them and support them as they journey toward that solution.



## Chamila

Chamila has been involved with ROAD for many years, and we have been so encouraged by her servant heart and willingness to use her gifts to love on other members of the refugee community. When she first came to Branches of Hope, she was scared and alone. She left everything else behind to find safety and was struggling to find belonging in Hong Kong.

Since joining our refugee community, Chamila has gotten deeply involved in the day-to-day life of ROAD, serving meals in the kitchen every Thursday, volunteering for Summer School, and even helping hand out flyers during Branches of Hope's rebrand earlier this year.

Through the years, Chamila has found a spiritual home among her refugee brothers and sisters and hopes to continue growing among this nourishing community. “To me, church means coming together, no matter what we dislike. No matter what we may think is right or wrong. I’m glad that I have found a place where I can grow closer to God.”

Her time with Branches of Hope has been powerful. She shares, “I’m starting to learn that God has a design for my life.”

## Sylvia

Forced to flee her home in Uganda in 2007, Sylvia and her children found Branches of Hope (then VCSL) in 2010. Since then, our team has worked hard to improve this family's livelihood through education for two of her children under our K3 programme.

Though she arrived in Hong Kong as a single woman without many social connections, Sylvia is now part of a thriving community of friends who support her and give her a sense of home in this often pressurised city environment. When asked about the impact of Branches of Hope in her life, she shared with us, “I feel like I’m at home at Branches of Hope.”

# ROAD Assistance

 **Service Hours**  
approx. 2000

 **Hot meals served**  
approx. 7000

 **How many people received financial assistance?**  
**TOTAL: 336**

 **Emergency Relief**  
approx. 180 people served


 **Tech Collection**  
31 items distributed  
10 Laptops /  
14 Smartphones /  
7 Tablets

**Fellowship Attendance Statistics**  
Total 710 people

African Fellowship	360 people
Asian Fellowship	350 people



## In 2017–2018, we have successfully:

  
**Resettled 10 refugees**  
to a third country  
such as Canada  
or the US

  
**Supported 6 refugees**  
to return home  
under favourable  
conditions

  
**Supported 5 refugees**  
to gain lawful  
employment  
in Hong Kong

Our goal for the future is to work with refugees to develop their careers, allowing them the opportunity to partner with local and international NGOs to grow the durable solution concept as started by UNHCR.

# ROAD Education

Our Keeping Kids in Kindergarten (K3) programme enables children of refugees to attend kindergarten through matching children in need with sponsors. We also support adults through various educational opportunities including parenting classes, vocational training, language programmes, and IT courses.

## 2017-18 Statistics

 **43 students**

 **Extra-Curricular**  
5 Events

 **Adult Education**  
8 courses  
85 students

 **1 Partner Organisation Class**  
10 families

 **Children's Education**  
5 classes  
**Education Support**  
39 students  
15 volunteers

 **Holiday School**  
75 students and  
60 volunteers

# ROAD Ministry

  
**25 Students**  
Faith Development  
Course

  
**26 Students**  
Million Leaders  
Mandate

  
**39 Students**  
ROAD Bible  
School



# STOP.

STOP TRAFFICKING OF PEOPLE

Stop Trafficking of People (STOP.) has had a dynamic and challenging year. We celebrated the launch of new educational materials (Cards Against Trafficking) and co-hosted Hong Kong's first International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking with Legislative Council members Dennis Kwok and Kenneth Leung. We learned how to work together and push ourselves as a close-knit, three-person team and faced stretching and difficult moments. And as always, we continued pursuing our mission of raising awareness, supporting survivors, elevating

their voices, and serving as a catalyst for positive change in the fight against modern-day slavery.

We could not have achieved this without the steadfast support of our community partners and generous donors and would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for another successful year. Whatever comes our way in the year ahead, we remain ever-committed to the fight against human trafficking with your help and encouragement.

## STOP. Statistics



**Trained 3,000 people** through our workshops and seminars



**Received 25 new clients** in the past twelve months



**Reached out to more than 1,000 at-risk sex workers and migrant domestic workers**



**Covered by 8 media agencies**



**Conducted 104 outreach visits**



**Co-hosted 1 international conference**



**Served 54 clients** since the beginning of the programme



**Produced 1 educational material**

Malika's Story

**“Although we don't get to see each other often, I will never forget how people from STOP cared for me and came to see me every day when I was hospitalised.”**

— Malika RD from Sri Lanka, Survivor of Human Trafficking



It's been more than three years since I fled from my employment. I had thought that it was going to be the end of my nightmare and I would be able to move on with my life. Contrary to my optimism, it became the beginning of a long journey of anticipation and waiting for justice to be served. Fortunately, I am not in this waiting game alone. I have STOP's support by my side. Through the painful experience of being trafficked and exploited, I was hospitalised due to emotional trauma. Nothing was able to calm me down, but staff from STOP stayed with me the entire night. I could not speak a word of English, but now I am able to express myself and even shared my story in an interview with an international news agency. It was STOP's support that calmed my nerves and helped me regain my confidence – I will never forget their impact on my life.



“Ten Years” film producer Andrew Choi was invited to deliver a speech at the opening of the Cards Against Trafficking Launch & Exhibition event



International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking 2018

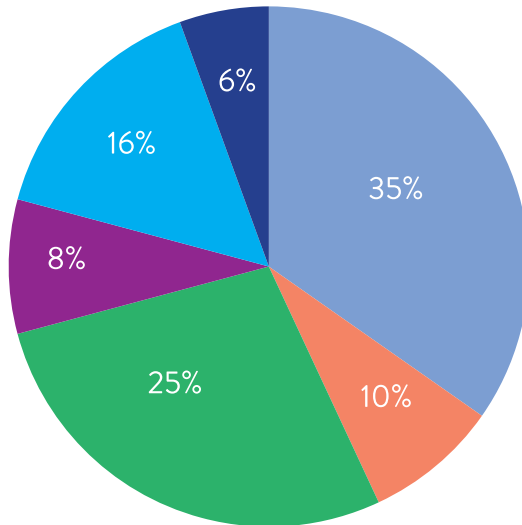


# Financial Update

## Income

- The Vine
- Campaigns & Events
- General Donations
- Grants & Foundations
- Partnerships & Matching
- Monthly Sponsorship

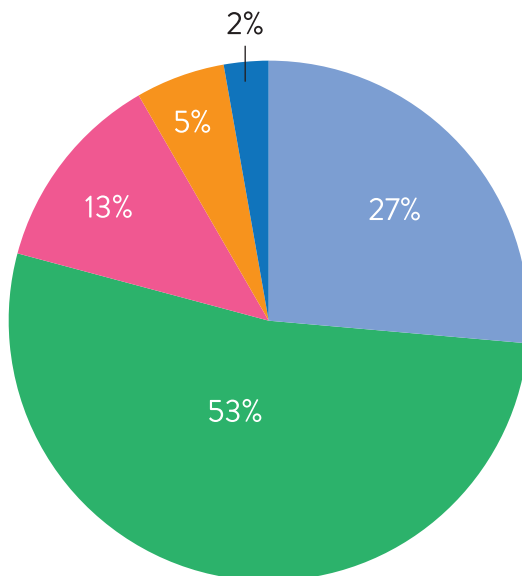
**Total - \$10,446,103**



## Expenses

- Salary/Admin/Rental
- ROAD
- STOP.
- Advocacy
- Fundraising

**Total - \$9,627,312**



# Fundraising Events

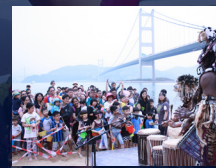
## Bikeathon 2018 - The Challenge for the Challenged

30 March–8 April 2018, Taiwan / Amount Raised **HK\$ 250,000**

A group of 3 supporters participated in riding 1,000km in 10 days over the mountainous and coastal roads of Taiwan to raise awareness and funds for Branches of Hope's ROAD programme.

“Raising \$100,000 and biking 1,000km were daunting targets. When people saw me post photos and updates during the journey, they knew it was for real. Donations started flowing in and people wanted to learn about the cause that we devoted so much time and effort towards. In the end, the journey created a bond with the refugee ministry which we have served for the last few years.”

—Alan Hung



## Ma Wan Easter Egg Hunt 2018

30 March 2018, Ma Wan (Hong Kong)

Attendance **4,000 participants, 250 volunteers**

Amount Raised **HK\$ 400,000**

The Ma Wan Easter Egg Hunt started as a small gathering of families who come together to celebrate Easter. In 2016, Branches of Hope (then VCSL) was welcomed as a charitable partner.



## Run for STOP (2017)

3 December 2017, Siem Reap

Attendance **20** / Amount Raised **HK\$ 400,000**

A group of supporters flew from Hong Kong to Cambodia to participate in a marathon in an effort to raise awareness and funds to fight human trafficking in Hong Kong.

“We are immensely grateful for the overwhelming support we received from the runners and all who contributed to the success of this event. We look forward to the impact the programme funds will have on the communities and people we serve.”

# Our Team



**Thomas Franz**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Tony Read**  
Justice Advocate



**Sandi Chan**  
Fundraising Team Manager



**Pamela Wong**  
Marketing & Communications



**Joselito Natividad**  
Senior Grant Writer & Fundraiser



**Lisa Bryant**  
Fundraising Support

## Refugee Opportunity and Development (ROAD) Programme



**Roy Njuabe**  
ROAD  
Programme Manager



**Stephen Negus**  
ROAD Pastor



**Lilian Warui**  
ROAD  
Coordinator



**Cherry Chan**  
ROAD Caseworker



**Rosana Viana**  
ROAD Casework  
Support



**Jessica Oliveira**  
ROAD Financial  
Assistance



**Jennifer Moberg**  
Education  
Officer



**Aline Ruzzon**  
Education  
Administrator



**Lynette Coyne**  
Education Support



**Simon Aladjem**  
Education Support

## Stop Trafficking Of People (STOP.) Programme



**Tina Chan**  
STOP.  
Programme Manager



**Vivian Ng**  
Programme  
Assistant



**Jacqueline Au**  
Research & Policy

# Partners, Sponsors, and Supporters

“Branches of Hope is one of the few local NGOs serving the most marginalised groups in Hong Kong. We are pleased to work with them to increase awareness and support these marginalised groups.”

Porticus Asia Limited

“Branches of Hope follows the call on humanity to help one another. They see the orphan, the widow, the unemployed, the asylum seeker, the homeless—and do something about it. They get involved, and all they ask is for some support. Support of any kind, in fact.

If we didn't help them to help others, we should worry about our humanity. We trust them because we have seen the work they do. They are accountable to the community we are a part of, and we are grateful to be able to take part in their cause and mission.”

Jason Hodges, Second Officer at Cathay Pacific & Lara Hodges

“Hong Kong continues to be a very prosperous and successful city, but its residents often forget there is a massive refugee and asylum seeker population that is undernourished, marginalised, and excluded from society. Branches of Hope gives this neglected group a voice, financial and emotional support, and most importantly, hope for a brighter future.”

Elmer Cheng, Director, Polygroup

“Branches of Hope provides critical, life-transforming services to the most vulnerable among us in Hong Kong, especially refugees and asylum seekers. As a regular supporter and volunteer, I have experienced first-hand how this organisation brings hope and compassion to families in need, surrounding them with a loving community that paves a way toward a better future.”

Albert Yu, Operations Director China, World Vision

“I strongly believe that decent education is vital so that children can grow up to fulfil their potential and lead happy, productive, worthwhile lives. Without the support that Branches of Hope provides for these children, all that potential would be lost. These children don't have any other opportunities. That's why my wife and I have chosen to support this charity.”

James Hughes, Chief Executive Officer, Buchanan Capital Limited & Isabelle Hughes



# Restoring Dignity, Justice and Hope



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