

Charity Football Tournament Empowers Inclusion and Connects Refugees and the Community Together

(18 October 2021, Hong Kong) Branches of Hope, a local charity, hosted one of its most impactful events “Home and Away” Charity Football Tournament on 14 October at King’s Park. The aim of the tournament was to raise awareness and funds for refugees, asylum-seekers and human-trafficking survivors living in Hong Kong. Through the game of football, the organisation hopes to bridge the gap between refugees and the community, and promote social integration within the society.

Over 440 people participated and over HK\$150,000 was raised at the event. A total of 16 teams joined the match with a combination of three refugee teams, four corporate teams, and nine public teams. There were also mixed-gender teams that took part in the game. The mixture of teams with different backgrounds playing together led a unifying power for the refugees as part of the society, and for the community to foster unity.

“Football is a very popular sport played around the world, it is always enjoyable in particular when it involves teams formed by different parties and volunteer helpers coming from various sectors,” said Mr. Yeung Tak-keung, Commissioner for Sports of HKSAR’s Home Affairs Bureau, the officiating guest of the tournament. “It instills hope and shows the goodness of Hong Kong citizens in promoting integration in the society while having the fun of playing sports.”

Since 2014, Branches of Hope has been organising the football tournament annually to unify community and help refugees rebuild their lives. According to government sources, there are around 13,000 non-refoulement claimants in Hong Kong. There is also an unidentifiable number of trafficking victims in Hong Kong who are mostly migrants from developing countries. These marginalised sectors are facing multiple challenges especially during the times of the pandemic. The “Home and Away” Football Tournament enables the marginalised and vulnerable to feel that they are being cared for and experience “home” away from home.

“The meaning of ‘Home and Away’ is to break the barrier between Home team or Away team in football matches, and make everybody feel like playing their game at home” said Mr. Aman Yee, Executive Director of the Branches of Hope. “We believe everybody has a role to play in order to support marginalised groups in our city and provide a more welcoming home for the vulnerable, and we want to demonstrate this spirit in the event.”

Mohammed, a player from one of the refugee teams, said the football tournament created a platform for the refugees to make friends with people of different backgrounds in the community and has helped him become a part of the society.

Photos download: https://bit.ly/footy2021_photos



Group photo with Mr. Yeung Tak-keung, Commissioner for Sports, Home Affairs Bureau (9th person from the left), Mr. Aman Yee, Executive Director of Branches of Hope (7th from the left), and team captains.



Representatives of corporate, public and refugee teams were invited have a quick warmup game with Mr. Yeung (2nd from the left) during the ceremony to signify the importance of inclusion with people of various cultures and backgrounds.



Mr. Aman Yee, Executive Director of Branches of Hope, hopes that more people will be aware of the needs of the marginalized groups and to give support.

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About Branches of Hope

Branches of Hope, established in 2012, is a registered charity, established to restore dignity, justice and hope to the marginalised and vulnerable in Hong Kong. We are dedicated to utilising education, training and physical, financial, and spiritual resources to bring changes. There are two branches under the organisation.

Refugee Opportunity And Development (ROAD) supports over 600 refugees and asylum seekers, mainly from Africa and Southeast Asia. The mission of ROAD is to equip, educate and empower individuals and families to become positive and contributing members of our community. ROAD also aims to provide educational enhancement for the vulnerable in Hong Kong society by delivering quality teaching and learning which is otherwise not readily available (or affordable) in their everyday lives.

Stop Trafficking Of People (STOP) is another branch that works in partnership with the Hong Kong community, including NGOs, concerned individuals, and other stakeholders so as to end trafficking in and through Hong Kong.