ACS | Asian Charity Services

2020 Annual Report

2020: A YEAR OF CONNECTION, COMMUNITY, COMPASSION AND COVID

Our Impact

295
NGOs Served at least once

1048
NGO staff trained

1,191
Hours of NGO Training

5,889
Volunteer Hours

11.7M
Pro-Bono Hours (HK$)

2020 showed itself to be a year of extreme disruption in a manner without precedent.

NGOs struggled to provide essential services such as food and medical care to the most vulnerable and almost all of Hong Kong's nonprofits were forced to reduce services due to COVID and funding constraints.

The unemployment rate at the end of May 2020 was the highest it had been since SARS, when the city was last engulfed in a pandemic, and up to 1.5 million people in Hong Kong may be relying on NGOs to meet their needs.

Mental illness
42% of respondents to a survey conducted by the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups (HKFYG) Youth Crime Prevention Center reported an increase in psychological distress

Homelessness
45% increase in street sleepers

Poverty
1.4M Hong Kong citizens live below the poverty line of $4,000 per month

Education
Closure of learning centers and mental /physical health services cut off community and support systems for the young and elderly

Conversely, it has also been the catalyst for many positive changes, opening the door to unexpected collaborations, galvanising disparate forces towards common goals, and a reminder of how core, shared values are critical to stability and sustainability, especially in the face of external factors beyond our control.

2020 Highlights

Throughout COVID, ACS has been committed to continuing to serve those who serve and we have been able to quickly adapt our programs to work within the new circumstances.

There were many opportunities to collaborate and grow the community whether to jointly deliver service, or to jointly bid to extend or renew grants, or simply to work smarter, better and more efficiently, to support and learn from one another.

Serve
For the first time, our core training programs (IGNITE, SPRINT, ENGAGE and ASCEND) went online enabling us to serve more NGOs more efficiently.

Support
We launched an online Community Support Platform to raise the visibility of our peer NGOs and to connect their needs with potential donors.

Collaborate
A group of women leaders of NGOs, including ACS, collaborated to form an NGO Taskforce which successfully lobbied the government for emergency funding for registered charities.

Connect
In our role as a community connector, ACS also worked with different funders in a variety of ways to alleviate some of the funding pressures in the social sector such as:

- With a group of funders who had pledged to match public donations raised by their grantee NGOs under the #BridgeTheGapHK campaign

- With a large international bank in its sponsorship of grants for the Mind Matters Hackathon For Social Good, to put the spotlight on mental health and wellbeing programs offered by different NGOs

We are incredibly grateful to all of our sponsors and the more than 200 volunteers who contributed in excess of 5800 hours of their time and expertise and delivered over $11.7M of pro bono services to more than 295 unique NGOs!

Looking Ahead to 2021

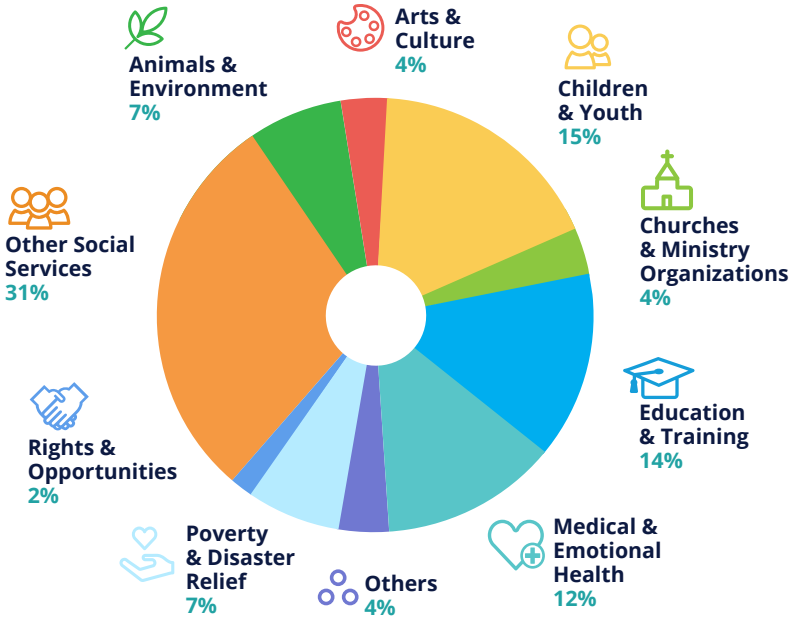
It's more important than ever that ACS continues to impact change and help NGOs become more efficient, effective and sustainable through our role as a community connector.

2021 will see much more innovation in the way ACS serves the ecosystem as well as development of new programs and the creation of new communities. We will particularly focus on community building through opportunities for NGOs to network and learn from each other. In addition, we will provide more opportunities for NGOs to connect with funders and other resource partners.

Together we can effect change in Hong Kong and make our communities stronger.

Our NGO Community Profile

Over the past 13 years, ACS has provided services to over 700 NGOs, with 46% in the Social Services* sector.



*Includes Children & Youth (15%) and Other Social Services (31%) - Community (11%), Minorities (7%), Women and families (5%), People with Disabilities (5%), Elderly (3%).

ACS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ACS offers four core programs (IGNITE, SPRINT, ENGAGE and ASCEND) and works with corporate partners to provide customized training and consulting services for selected NGOs.

Each core program is designed to meet the needs of the NGOs in terms of offering innovative content, depth of engagement and transformational opportunities. The Special Corporate project in 2020 focused on mental wellbeing.

NGO transformation

IGNITE

Seminars with cutting edge topics

Peer-to-peer learning and collaboration on cutting edge topics.

Topics

- Working Smarter in the New Normal
- Collaboration and the Future of Philanthropy
- Unleashing the Fundraising Potential of your Board

SPRINT

Develop key growth skills through "learning-by-doing"

Innovate and improve NGO programs or fundraising pitches.

Topics

- Social Media
- Fundraising

ENGAGE

Digital Storytelling Workshops / Competitions

Elevate NGO communications to stakeholders through digital storytelling and video development. in 2020, the video competition winners received $630,000 in production costs.

Topics

- Crowdfunding
- Corporate Communication
- Beneficiary Outreach
- Volunteer Recruitment

ASCEND

Consulting Workshops

Develop in-depth strategies and plans via critical analysis and research.

Topics

- Strategic Planning
- Fundraising Strategies
- Board Governance

Corporate Projects

ACS works with Corporations and Foundations to provide customized training and consulting for selected NGOs. Past and recent partners include: Macquarie, MTRC, Morgan Stanley, HSBC.

Our Programs

ENGAGE

Leveraging Digital Communications to Engage Stakeholders More Effectively

Jockey Club ENGAGE Digital Exploration is an experiential learning series designed to train NGO leaders to leverage digital technology in order to better communicate with their various stakeholders.

- Awarded storytelling videos that incorporated powerful messaging to make the most impact
- Created a dedicated online platform for NGO digital storytelling and access to ENGAGE resources.

Training Topics included:
- How to expand and maximize campaign results through Crowdfunding
- How to bridge the Corporate Communication gap
- How to develop thoughtful Beneficiary Outreach Strategies
- How to better Engage and Retain Volunteers

In the past 3 years, it was our privilege to serve 270 NGO leaders to develop some 74 communication strategies.

Looking forward to the new year, we are excited to bring about a sequel - Digital Advancement - to further equip NGOs for more effective and impactful Digital Communications and Campaigns.

IGNITE

Inspiring Thought Leadership and Smarter Organizational Methodologies

IGNITE's series of thought leadership seminars targets the C-suite of NGO leadership. It was the first of our programs to be delivered online, in February 2020, presciently addressing the topic of Collaboration as the Future of Philanthropy.

Despite a steep learning curve to master a new and different mode of delivery of all our programs via Zoom, we successfully delivered 5 IGNITE seminars on a range of topics which reflected the prevailing mood and needs of our NGO community, namely:

- Resilience in the Face of COVID-19
- Smart Strategic Planning for NGOs
- Collaboration and the Future of Philanthropy
- Working Smarter in the New Normal
- Unleashing the Fundraising Potential of Your Board

The online offering allowed us to expand the reach of the program to serve more than 173 NGO leaders representing 88 NGOs over the course of this eventful year.

SPRINT

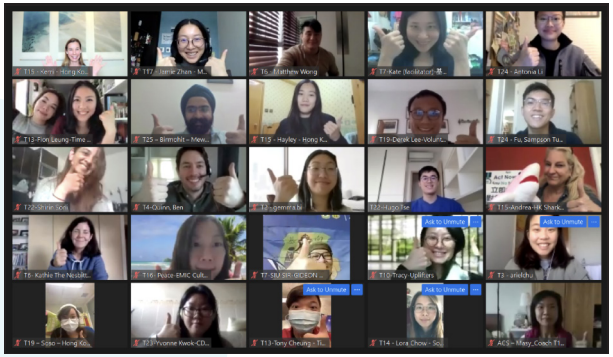
Hackathon for Social Good: Developing Critical Skills to Grow an Online Presence and Jumpstart Fundraising

During 2020, limited in-person interaction highlighted the need to help NGOs strengthen their online presence as well as develop their ability to effectively engage a wider community online.

Thus, two SPRINTs were organized:
- "Power Up your Social Media: Launch a successful campaign"
- "Be a Crowdfunding Hacker: Launch a successful campaign"

These one-day "learning-by-doing" workshops helped 50 NGOs develop creative content and actionable plans to build online awareness of their organizations, enabling them to attract more donors and volunteers to support the social causes they are serving.

In addition, collaboration and sharing with other NGOs helped develop new fundraising approaches.



ASCEND

1-1 Consulting for Deepest Strategic Impact

The ASCEND Workshop Series offers management consulting style workshops aimed at improving an NGO's strategic capability in fundraising, strategic planning and board leadership.

Often used at an inflection point in an NGO's development, ASCEND can help build leadership consensus and clarify organizational strategy. NGO leadership teams work closely and deeply with committed volunteers to develop an implementation plan which addresses their key internal and external challenges.

Community Connector

In our role as a community connector, ACS worked with different funders in a variety of ways to alleviate some of the funding pressures in the social sector:

ACS "CHAMPIONS"

Community Support Platform: Facilitating Connections between Funders and Needs

This Community Support Platform was conceived, and launched, in the space of 2 months in June this year, as a direct response to the urgent situation faced by many impactful NGOs at the height of the first wave of the Covid pandemic in May.

The Platform provides our peer NGOs with a forum to articulate their cause and their urgent needs, and facilitates connections with potential resource partners - whether for funding, volunteer support or in-kind donations.

Since its launch, close to 70 NGOs across the service and geographic spectrum in Hong Kong have been profiled on the Platform, many of whom have connected with in-kind donors, volunteers and prospective funders.

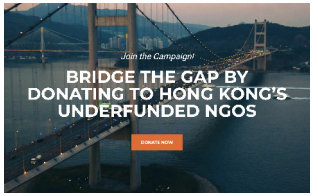
MIND MATTERS

Partnering with HSBC to Provide Grants and Capacity Building Support

Since very early on in the pandemic, many people in Hong Kong have suffered emotional distress due to social isolation, worry about health and financial instability.

In 2020, ACS and HSBC Private Banking seized this opportunity to help this growing mental health sector and launched "Mind Matters - A Hackathon for Social Impact". This multi-week project connected local philanthropists with NGOs who presented the most impactful mental wellbeing project ideas.

Over 120 NGOs received training on proposal writing and 76 NGOs presented exciting project ideas to address the imminent mental health needs in the community. 12 teams were shortlisted to receive further coaching from 40 ACS Volunteer Consultants and 12 funders to strengthen their project plans and 5 of them received a total of $12M funding to implement their projects.



BRIDGE THE GAP

Raising Public Awareness of Crisis and Matching Funding

ACS worked with a group of 9 influential funders, led by The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation and the American Club Foundation, to coordinate and promote a 6-month long campaign aptly named "Bridge the Gap".

The campaign sought to raise public awareness of the crises being faced by NGOs and their service users from among Hong Kong's neediest and marginalised communities.

Bridge the Gap funders matched public donations raised by a group of 25 NGOs from July to December 2020. In total, $25M was raised to benefit these 25 NGOs.

NGO TASKFORCE

Collectively Advocating for NGOs and Lobbying Government

A group of women NGO leaders (including ours) came together to form a voluntary Taskforce to raise public awareness of the important role played by NGOs in Hong Kong, in collectively serving a wide swathe of Hong Kong's population, which relies on NGOs for their basic needs whether physical, mental or emotional.

The group successfully lobbied the Hong Kong Government for emergency funding for NGOs, when NGOs were included in the Government's Employment Subsidy Scheme launched in April this year.

An Open Letter to Funders was published at the same time, to encourage funders to work more closely with NGOs so that Hong Kong's vulnerable could continue to be effectively served, in the face of the deepening Covid crisis.

This Open Letter was endorsed by more than 170 small to medium-sized NGOs. On the back of this Open Letter, a series of roundtable discussions was organised with different groups of funders and NGOs to collaborate on effective action to be taken in order to prioritise community needs.

OUR IMPACT

Since 2007, ACS has provided professional development, training and consulting services to over 700 NGOs - based on a foundation of over 1200 skills-based volunteers and subject matter experts.

This translates to more than 57,000 volunteer hours or $115M in value of pro bono hours.

Impact since 2007...

+700
NGOs trained

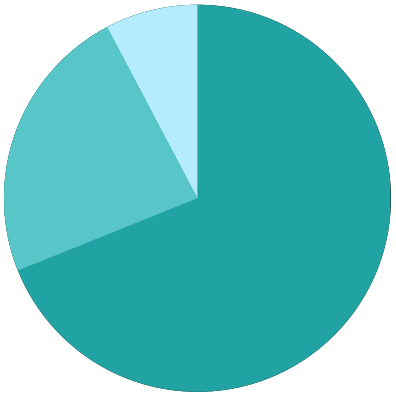
+1,200
Skills-based Volunteers

57,712
Total Volunteer Hours

$115M
Pro Bono Hours in Value

2020 Financial Snapshot

ACS remained financially healthy, thanks to multi-year grants and the ongoing commitment of our valued supporters. In 2019, we were particularly blessed by a family trust which graciously provided three full years of advance grant funding to SPRINT (due to a cash accounting policy, this funding amount was credited in full in 2019).



Sources of Income*

$4.46M
(Total $4,461,692)

- **FOUNDATIONS 67.5%** *($3,009,578)*
- **CORPORATES / OTHERS 25%** *($1,119,637)*
- **INDIVIDUALS 7.5%** *($332,476)*

Expenses*

$5.55M
(Total $5,559,371)

- **ENGAGE 50%** *($2,809,947)*
- **IGNITE 15%** *($841,874)*
- **SPRINT 17%** *($905,433)*
- **ASCEND 3%** *($142,155)*
- **OPERATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT 15%** *($859,962)*

*ACS income and expenses are calculated on a cash basis, rather than on an accrual basis.

Testimonials

“The workshop came at a critical time for our strategic planning as we were experiencing unprecedented and extreme challenges and needed to make pivotal changes to our operations and programmes in response to COVID-19. The workshop is a fast track to defining the organizational priorities and has set us on the right track to now document what we need to do to efficiently plan for the next few years.”

Jo Hayes
CEO, Habitat for Humanity, Hong Kong

“I gained new insights on simplifying complex concepts and using fun games so that new ideas and thinking could resonate better with NGO participants. These insights also broadened my own horizon as a business professional. It was wonderful to witness the birth and the evolution of Sprint!”

Dora Wong
ACS Volunteer

“It’s very satisfying to see results and work with the NGO staff on the challenges of implementation.”

Penny Van Niel
ACS Volunteer

Acknowledgements

ACS relies on highly-skilled volunteers and partnering organizations to create a collaborative network of experienced professionals, business resources and civic-minded individuals.

We are extremely grateful to our seminar speakers, volunteers, corporate partners and foundations for their generosity and support.

Our Partners

Actualize

American Club Foundation

Carolina Gutterres Memorial Fund

Credit Suisse (Hong Kong)

Deloitte

Fu Tak Iam Foundation

HSBC Private Banking

Morgan Stanley

PwC

Synpulse Hong Kong

The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation

The D. H. Chen Foundation

The Hong Kong Club Foundation

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

The Macquarie Group Foundation

The Yeh Family Philanthropy

Transcend International

UBS

Thank You

Asian Charity Services

We serve those who serve

Donate

ACS is funded by a series of private and corporate grants. As we continue to expand our reach into the social sector, we are actively looking for donors who share our vision and passion for capacity building and community connection in Asia.

To make a donation, scan the QR code or visit: asiancharityservices.org/donate

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