

YAMA Foundation

Activity Report 2021 & 2022

YAMA Foundation provides equitable access to yoga, art, and meditation for Hong Kong's most vulnerable communities.



We believe that all people have the fundamental right to feel good in their bodies, peaceful in their minds, live colourful and rewarding lives, and be part of a caring community — no matter their ability or background.

Message from our Founder

In 2021, it was easy to despair as the world reeled from the effects of a global pandemic that raged on. In Hong Kong, amidst some of the most restrictive Covid measures in the world, we saw what we've always known: Wellbeing needs to be supported and sustained. This is true for the privileged few, and certainly true for underserved communities.

With our social fabric under enormous strain, the public health crisis continued to flout expectations of any return to “normalcy.” Now almost three years into a deep economic downturn, the physical and mental wellbeing of Hong Kong residents are at an all-time low. Yet it is against the backdrop of such insurmountable challenge that YAMA's work with vulnerable communities is most needed.

Now experts in flexibility and adaptation, our team continued to demonstrate resilience and agility in adjusting programmes to ensure our beneficiaries received the support for which they have come to rely on us. Our teachers and therapists worked almost without rest and, for their efforts, YAMA's programmes more than doubled over the last 24 months — and demand for our services continues to grow. My heartfelt thanks goes out to my remarkable YAMA Foundation colleagues!

The work described in this report would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors and the collaboration of our community partners. While much work remains to integrate long-neglected communities into mainstream society frameworks, we remain deeply grateful for this collective commitment to our mission.

In 2023 and beyond, YAMA Foundation will continue to work to move Hong Kong closer to a vision of wellbeing that is accessible and available to all.

In service and with love,



Hersha Chellaram
Co-founder & Executive Director



Impact Highlights

7683 Programme attendees recorded

2346

Individuals
served

264

Families
directly supported

1242

Sessions
delivered

Core Service Areas



PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS (PWD/SEN)



PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY



PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Yoga Therapy Subsidy Scheme

During a time where children with special needs hardly left their homes and isolated families were desperate for support, YTSS provided a unique method to enhance wellbeing and manage stress.

YAMA's flagship programme provides individual adaptive yoga therapy for children with complex needs who are not suited for group therapy. Tailored interventions are delivered by specially-qualified therapists, backed by assessment protocols and developed and administered in partnership with early intervention experts.

Since 2016, YTSS has been recording measurable impacts including:

- Notable improvements in participants' body awareness and gross motor skills;
- Reduction in sensory-seeking behaviours;
- Enhanced mood and overall wellbeing after therapy sessions; and
- Improved communication and daily living skills

Additionally, most participants are able to graduate into group activities after the intervention.

These findings suggest yoga therapy to be a viable alternative to traditional forms of intervention for children with special needs. No other charity in Hong Kong provides this unique service.

“The programme improves the students' mood, reduces tantrums and restores order to the family 😊.”

— Maggie (parent of YTSS participant)



6



Yoga Therapy Subsidy Scheme

“Our child has shown greater interest and attention towards yoga, enjoyed the exercises with his teacher a great deal. She was really kind, patient and understanding towards him.”

— Tina (parent of YTSS participant)



47

PWD/SEN children
& their families served

89

Developmental
assessments conducted

469

Individual adaptive yoga
therapy sessions delivered

Here To Be: Yoga & Mindfulness for Teen Mental Health

Here To Be offers yoga and mental health support for teens and at-risk youth across Hong Kong, promoting self-esteem and self-reliance for physical and mental health.

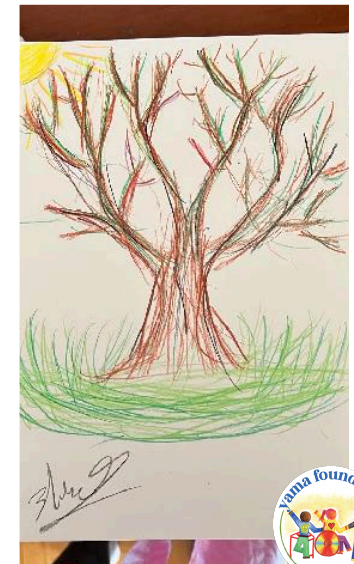
Here To Be was developed in direct response to the mental health crisis of Hong Kong youth. Since 2018, the programme has served as a resource and support for troubled teens. YAMA offered two intakes in 2022: one online and the other, in-person at a co-ed secondary school where the majority of students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Participants had access to regular yoga classes and mental health support group sessions, supplemented with self-paced online home practices.

Teens reported:

- Improvements in body awareness and connection;
- Enhanced mindful awareness; and
- Feeling acknowledged and cared for by YAMA programme staff.

58

Hong Kong teens
and at-risk youth
served



Accessible Wellbeing Conference 2022

YAMA's biannual inclusive recreation event showcases leaders in accessible wellbeing with the aim to optimise quality of life experiences for vulnerable populations.

Hong Kong lacks wellbeing professionals qualified to work with people with special needs or mobility challenges. YAMA works to develop a core of expertise to make wellbeing more accessible to all through sport, fitness, and mental health awareness.

This year's conference was hosted online and featured family workshops and activities and support for parents and caregivers. YAMA also took the opportunity to present for the first time "The Effects of Yoga Therapy on Children with Special Needs," showcasing research findings from our adaptive yoga therapy programme.

12

Online sessions delivered

162

Conference attendees

200+

Online views

The poster features the 'Accessible Wellbeing' logo with a heart and infinity symbol, and the text '無障礙身心健康'. It lists the date 'Saturday 23 APR 2022' and describes the event as an online workshop and inclusive recreation activity. A grid of 18 circular portraits shows the speakers, including Shamari Chellarani, BEYOND Bollywood, Frankie Chan, and others. The bottom section includes the website 'yamahk.org/conference' and logos for sponsors like the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting grid titled 'Session: Chair Yoga For Every Body 尹剛坐，瑜伽樂'. The grid shows 16 participants in a 4x4 layout. Several participants are using the YAMA Foundation logo as their virtual background. The interface includes a 'LIVE' indicator and a 'Zoom Events Lobby' dropdown menu.



Community Outreach Programmes

YAMA's supports communities in need with yoga, mindfulness, and expressive art therapy programmes that promote self-acceptance and self-reliance so that people can take charge of their wellbeing and positively contribute to their communities.

Sustained economic downturn and continued school and workplace closures meant extreme stress and deteriorating mental health for all, but vulnerable communities in Hong Kong were disproportionately affected. In these times of great uncertainty, YAMA delivered over 750 workshops and classes to over 4000 participants from across the city. Working in collaboration with 16 community NGO partners, schools, day training centres, and social service organisations, classes were offered at no costs to participants.

During this time, we also produced 24 online videos to support wellbeing at home and raised funds to donate 487 pairs of school shoes for children living in poverty.

Reported impacts include:

- Improvements in physical wellbeing and quality of life
- Reduced stress levels and enhanced mood
- Improved self-regulation and ability to focus



Community Outreach Programmes

“身心愉快，情緒穩定，上完堂以後每天都期待下一堂快到！這是孩子的心聲。”

“Happy physically and mentally, emotionally stable.
Everyday after class, my child says, I look forward to the next class.”

— Ting Ting (parent of music therapy participant)



800+

Classes taught

1220

Individuals supported

1902

Online video views

4384

Programme attendees

Education & Advocacy

Accessibility awareness and continuing professional development programmes help to educate the public and build support for a more diverse and inclusive society.

YAMA shares knowledge and skills with professional caregivers, education institutes and civil society partners to support their work with people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our long-term aim is to make mainstream wellbeing programmes inclusive and accessible for all.

12

Workshops delivered

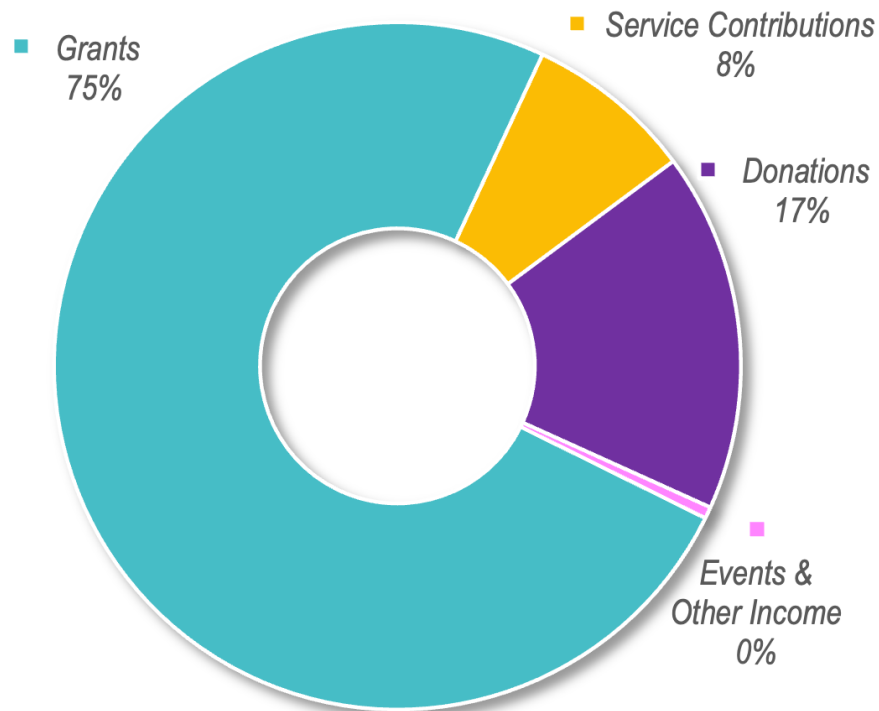
250+

Participants trained

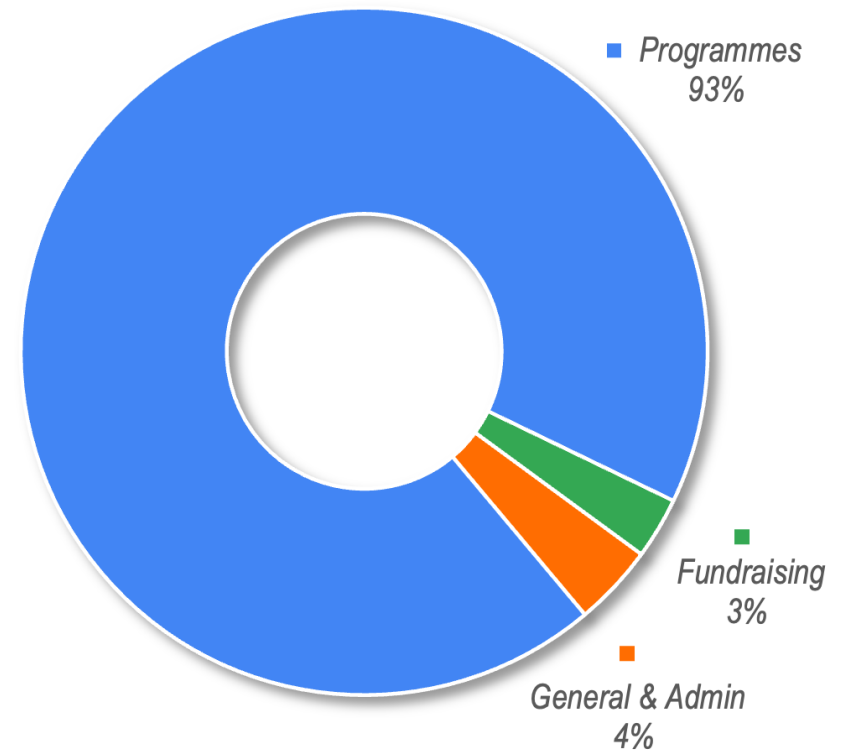


Our Financials

2021-2022 Income



2021-2022 Expenditure



Thank you for your generous support

Financial donations listed in alphabetical order:

Apex Tax Advisory Limited	Laura Harilela	Tejal Patel	Supporting Partners: Accessible Yoga Foundation Benevity Hersha Yoga IN Yoga & Fitness Red Bus Consulting Platform Events Space Sparkraise TwoPresents UBU Productions Zentre Support our work! yamahk.org/donate
Katia Bacon	Mahesh Harilela	Platform Events Space	
Blossoming CPA Limited	Ramon P. Harilela	Skylar Rach	
Paul Cadman	Sandee Harilela	Anisha Sakhrani Laungani	
Jamie Cheung	Vijay Harilela	Carmen B Beana Sanz	
Tryphena Chia	Amandine Hervey	Chion Sasaki	
Hui Fern Choo	Hong Kong Club Foundation	Melissa Shadforth	
Shivaun & Suren Chotirmall	Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust	Social Innovation Entrepreneurship Fund	
Jenny Chung	Brittany Kirksey	St James's Place Foundation	
Vada Chung	Yvette Kwan	Sylvia Suen	
Charlotte Cotton	Liz & Geoff Lam	Trisha Tran	
Creative China Creations Limited	Choi Look Leong	Swire Trust	
Robyn Evans Cunningham	Louis Leung	Andrew Tseui	
Neena Daswani	Angelita Li	Pamela Tung	
D.H. Chen Foundation	Laura Li Kinoshita	Joyce Wang	
Louise Foo	Lilian Ma	Andrew Winner	
Aurelie Gauthier	Iululemon	Cherry Yee	
Han H.	Margaret Mason	Charlotte Yip	
Divia Harilela	PS Melwani	Grace Yung	
Kamilla Harilela	Operation Santa Claus		

Special thanks to our community partners and beneficiaries who made financial contributions to support YAMA Foundation programmes.