



# IMPACT REPORT 2019 & 2020



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 background or ability.



#accessiblewellbeing  
#yogartmeditation

# Meet MARCO



“Marco has finally found a place that totally accepts him for who he is. He feels seen and understood.”

- Anne, Marco's mother

When Marco first came to YAMA, he was angry about being wet from the rain. He screamed at the top of his lungs, and threw things.

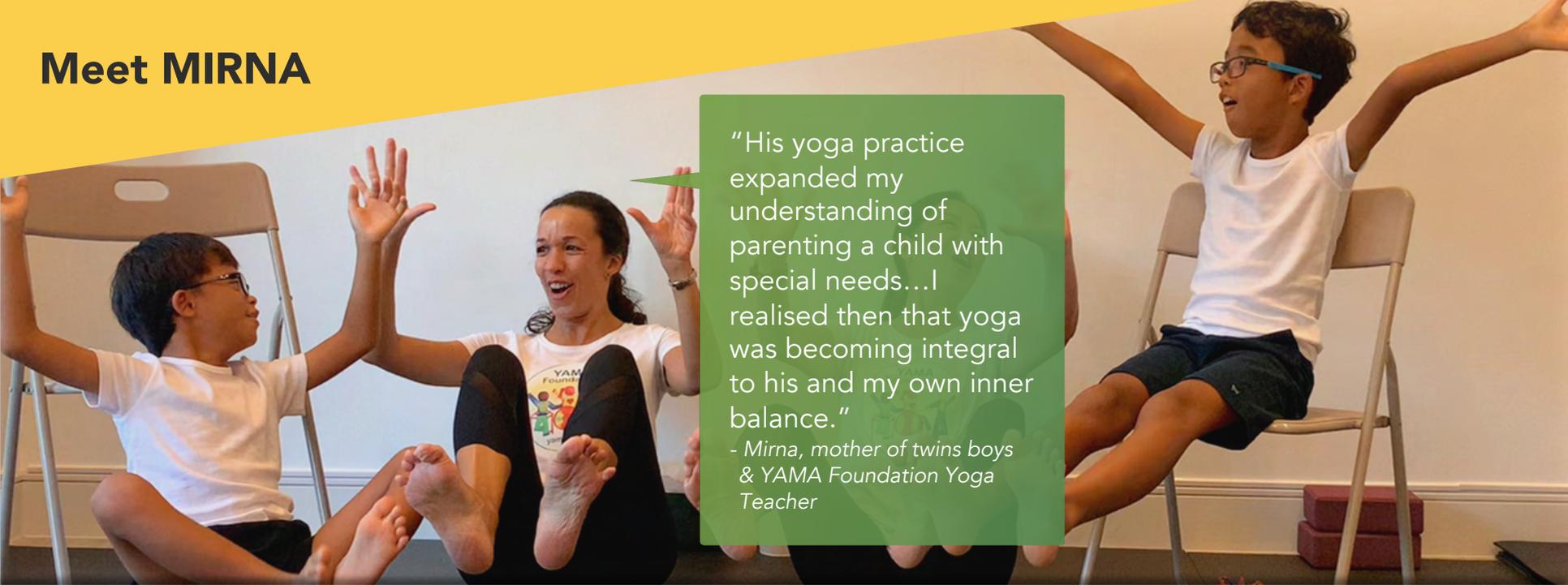
Marco spent a few days each week at an SWD-provided Sheltered Workshop and his mom Anne told us, “The job is not suitable for Marco’s intelligence, so it is easy for him to lose his temper.”

His size and strength was intimidating, but our teachers saw a frightened young man, unsure of the new surroundings. Then, he heard the music and chanting and Marco immediately grew calm. As he copied the teacher’s movements and breathing techniques, Marco was transformed. From that very first class, he went home, happy and renewed.

Marco came through our Individual Adaptive Yoga Therapy Programme and graduated to a small group classes. He has since become one of YAMA’s most dedicated students and a ‘gentle giant’ — kind, caring and relaxed. He regularly participates in YAMA Foundation’s Accessible Yoga programmes for youth with disabilities and special needs.

“Marco has finally found a place that totally accepts him for who he is. He feels seen and understood.” says Anne. “Thanks to the dedication of YAMA’s teachers. He now has ways to help him control his anger, and for that I will always be grateful.”

# Meet MIRNA



“His yoga practice expanded my understanding of parenting a child with special needs...I realised then that yoga was becoming integral to his and my own inner balance.”

- Mirna, mother of twin boys & YAMA Foundation Yoga Teacher

Mirna is mom to twin boys, Artur and Alex. Diagnosed with Mosaic Down syndrome, Alex was one of YAMA's first yoga therapy students. Yoga was the perfect complement to his other early intervention therapies as it helped him to build core strength and balance. It also helped him learn to express his emotions and to gain physical and social confidence.

“Alex’ yoga practice expanded my understanding of parenting a child with special needs,” says Mirna. “One day, during a family holiday, he asked me to lead a yoga practice with his brother. I realised then that yoga was becoming integral to his and my own inner balance.”

Mirna has since changed career and joined YAMA to train to become a Yoga for the Special Child® practitioner. She now regularly shares yoga with her sons and YAMA's community programmes for children and young adults with special needs. Mirna shares, “Thanks to my work with YAMA Foundation, I have been able to witness that each person is unique, and that yoga brings out the special gifts and abilities in every student.”

**YAMA FOUNDATION EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO DEVELOP SELF-ACCEPTANCE AND SELF-RELIANCE TO IMPROVE THEIR WELLBEING AND QUALITY OF LIFE, SO THAT THEY MAY POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD.**





**Accessible Wellbeing**  
無障礙身心健康

**Saturday**  
**7/14/21/28**  
**NOV 2020**

A series of events featuring workshops and inclusive recreation activities for Persons with Disabilities and Special Education Needs, their families, and communities.

**Featured Speakers**



**YAMA Foundation**  
@yamafoundation

Info & registration at [yamahk.org/conference](http://yamahk.org/conference)








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### **Hersha Chellaram**

Co-Founder & Executive Director  
YAMA Foundation

*Heartfelt gratitude to our partners, teachers, staff, and volunteers who have shown such strength, grit, resilience, and compassion*

## MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019 and 2020 were years no one could have predicted. Events in Hong Kong brought unprecedented change, struggle, and uncertainty for all. But more than ever, the disparity between the affluent and able-bodied, and people from disadvantaged backgrounds grew wider and became increasingly apparent.

When schools, training centres, residential care homes, hospices, and prisons all shut their doors, most of our in-person programmes were suspended, YAMA was forced to reduce hours and cut pay for key staff. In spite of this, it turned out to be a big year!

In 2020, YAMA Foundation was granted tax-exempt charity status under the Inland Revenue Ordinance. Our team produced over 70 hours of free online and evergreen content, and we piloted our evidence-based Individual Adaptive Yoga Therapy programme. YAMA also launched Hong Kong's first-ever Accessible Wellbeing Community Events Series – to resounding success! But our work is only just beginning.

Shaman and I co-founded YAMA to end discrimination and exclusion in wellbeing by helping marginalised communities reclaim their physical, mental, and emotional health. Our community-based approach and teaching methodologies are designed to meet the specific needs of vulnerable populations. Our generous donors enable us to invest in the long-term wellbeing of each person that finds their way to YAMA. While our services sometimes require a little extra resourcing, our results speak for themselves.

It has been the most rewarding experience to serve Hong Kong in these unparalleled times. We have such admiration and heartfelt gratitude to our partners, teachers, staff, and volunteers who have shown such strength, grit, resilience, and compassion. We are immensely proud of what you've helped YAMA to accomplish this year, and we look forward to building a bigger, brighter, and more inclusive tomorrow!

In service and with love,

# IMPACT TO DATE



1,023

Yoga, Art &  
Meditation classes  
delivered



1,819

Students  
taught



>2,000

Families  
served



54

Community  
Partners  
supported



3,000

Face Masks to  
homeless persons  
during Covid-19



414

Pairs of School  
Shoes to children  
in poverty

## THE YAMA DIFFERENCE

We effect lasting change in Hong Kong by enhancing physical wellbeing, mental health and quality of life for our city's most vulnerable communities.

### Student Safeguarding

This is at the heart of everything we do. All our teachers hold higher-level professional qualifications, are first-aid certified, and undergo regular background checks.

### Accessible & Trauma-Aware

Our teachers are trauma-informed and specially-trained to be sensitive to the needs of the communities we serve.

### Individualised & Small Group Settings

Our targeted programmes are designed to meet the individual needs and abilities of each student. Small class sizes enable those with more complex needs to benefit from group activities.

### Evidence-Based

Our programmes are supported by research protocols to measure progress, demonstrate outcomes, and communicate impact.

# CORE SERVICE AREAS

## People with DISABILITIES & SPECIAL NEEDS (PWD/SEN)



Accessible Wellbeing 2020  
Community Events Series  
Art In Your Life | Yoga In Your Heart  
Adaptive Yoga Therapy  
Pilot Programme  
NGO & Community  
Outreach Classes

## People living in POVERTY



Group Accessible Yoga  
for Homeless / Street Sleepers

School Shoe Drive for Society for  
Community Organisation (SoCO)

## People living with MENTAL HEALTH Challenges



Here To Be:  
Yoga & Mindfulness  
for Teen Mental Health

Online Classes & Workshops

# PWD/SEN

## OUTPUTS

- 167 individual and group adaptive yoga classes (in-person and online)
- 24 online videos

## BENEFICIARIES

- 133 children and young adults with complex needs and moderate to severe disabilities
- 42 participating families
- 1 SEN school
- 5 NGO community partners

## IMPACTS

- AIYL participants showed improved focus and engagement and lower incidence of self-stimulatory/self-injurious behaviour
- School reported 50-75% of entire student body still use online videos 1-2 times/week
- All six Cornwall School videos are the Top-10 “Most Watched” on YAMA’s YouTube channel, with 1296 unique views.

Since 2016, YAMA Foundation has provided yoga, art, and meditation programmes to support the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of people with disabilities and special needs, including those living in long-term residential care, and those living with chronic illness. Today, our services to these communities remains the bulk of our work and we offer a number of in-house classes as well as through our network of NGO community partners.

Our 2019 and 2020 key programmes included:

- **Art In Your Life | Yoga In Your Heart (AIYL)** — A two-year expressive arts and yoga therapy programme for 30 children with profound and multiple physical and learning disabilities attending The Mental Health Association of Hong Kong’s Cornwall School. Developed in partnership with The Joshua Hellmann Foundation for Orphan Disease and sponsored by Swire Trust, participants received twice-weekly classes over the academic year. Unfortunately, classes were interrupted when the school building sustained significant damage during the December 2019 social unrest. While YAMA reallocated funds to support repairs to the school, the programme was subsequently cancelled in 2020 with the onset of Covid. To stay connected to the students and their families, YAMA Foundation produced six videos for the school to share with their student community.
- **Individual Adaptive Yoga Therapy Pilot** – This programme was developed in 2020 in direct response to parents struggling to manage their children’s wellbeing during Covid. (See Programme Spotlight on next page)

All of our in-person community outreach classes in residential care homes and day training centres were suspended in 2020 due to Covid. YAMA produced a series of YouTube videos and offered online classes, and virtual workshops to support our NGO partners and the broader community during these challenging times.



# Programme Spotlight

## OUTPUTS

- 153 Individual Adaptive Yoga Therapy sessions

## BENEFICIARIES

- 10 children and young adults with moderate to severe disabilities and special needs (age 2 to 34)
- 10 families

## IMPACTS

- Participants showed improvements in gross-motor skills and personal-social development
- Participant self-reporting showed increased body awareness, emotional awareness, and energy
- Programme provided relief to families struggling to manage children's wellbeing during Covid

## INDIVIDUAL ADAPTIVE YOGA THERAPY PILOT PROGRAMME

In May 2020, with all group classes suspended, YAMA launched our Adaptive Yoga Therapy Pilot Programme to provide much-needed relief to families struggling to manage their children's wellbeing during Covid.

The programme provided 10 children and young students with moderate-to-severe rare disease and special needs with 16 sessions of 1:1 yoga therapy. The intervention was supported by a research track, which included developmental assessments conducted by a medical professional, parent questionnaires, and regular student self-reporting. The research track aimed to prove the efficacy of YAMA's yoga therapy methodology as a viable alternative to more traditional forms of therapy.

The pilot wrapped up in January 2021 and preliminary findings showed positive trends across all self-reported categories: physical wellbeing, mood, and energy levels. Furthermore, the research recorded marked improvements in participants' gross-motor skills and personal-social development.

Special thanks to our supporting organisations:

The Joshua Hellmann Foundation for Orphan Disease and Swire Trust



# Programme Spotlight

## OUTPUTS

- 1 launch event
- 19 classes and workshops
- 1 roundtable discussion

## BENEFICIARIES

- 210 participants
- 979 online viewers

## IMPACTS

- 254 online engagements
- 20 media impressions to raise awareness and education public on the need for accessible wellbeing services
- 100% of attendees said they would recommend this programme to friends and families with PWD/SEN

## ACCESSIBLE WELLBEING 2020 COMMUNITY EVENTS SERIES

With generous support from title sponsor lululemon, YAMA Foundation launched the inaugural Accessible Wellbeing Community Events Series in October 2020, promoting barrier-free access to wellbeing services.

The programme was designed as a series of small-scale targeted events (in-line with restrictions on group gatherings), and kicked off with in-person launch event, live-streamed to the public from the Holiday Inn Golden Mile Hotel. The launch was well attended and featured a keynote speaker and panel discussion with some of Hong Kong's leaders in accessibility.

Community events continued over four weekends in November and offered adaptive, inclusive, and body-positive classes and workshops with experts and pioneers dedicated to serving people with disabilities and special needs.

The six-week events series concluded with a roundtable discussion, which brought together our city's thought leaders to solidify future partnerships in accessibility.

Special thanks to our sponsors for their generous support:

Lululemon, Harilela Group, Platform Events Space, Opendoor Café+Courtyard, Lokumal Group, and Lilian Aromatherapy



# POVERTY

## OUTPUTS

- 22 group Accessible Yoga classes
- 187 pairs of school shoes
- 3,000 face masks donated during mask shortage

## BENEFICIARIES

- 15 class participants
- 187 children living in poverty
- 2 NGO community partners
- ~600 homeless people sleeping on the street

## IMPACTS

- Class participants reported improvements in physical wellbeing
- NGO partners reported that participants felt safe in the class and could actually fall asleep during relaxation (something they cannot do on the streets)

Traumatised communities have more complex needs and chronic stress levels are particularly high among Hong Kong's poorest populations. For those facing financial difficulties and living on the streets, this year has been particularly challenging. In the wake of the sustained economic downturn, our city's unemployment rate rose to a 15-year high and more people slipped below the poverty line.

YAMA works with prominent NGO partners to support this community with yoga and wellbeing services. Restrictions on group gatherings meant most of our programmes had to be suspended this year. However, we were able to continue providing small group classes and essential items, including donation of 3,000 face masks to homeless people during the mask shortage. Our annual Christmas Shoe Drive also donated 187 pairs of school shoes to children living in caged homes and subdivided flats.

## ACCESSIBLE YOGA FOR THE HOMELESS

In partnership with ImpactHK, YAMA's group accessible yoga classes for people living on the streets provide community, connection, and a safe place to help participants manage stress.

YAMA's teachers and therapists are specially-trained to accept students as they are. In not trying to fix or change them, the potential for our students to experience personal transformation is immense.

Our unique, rehabilitative approach enables participants to enjoy one full hour in safety – to release tired and sore body parts, relax and let go of stress, and to just breathe.



# MENTAL HEALTH

## OUTPUTS

- 13 video lessons
- 2 online workshops
- 1 online course

## BENEFICIARIES

- Online course:  
22 participants (age 15-19)
- Online workshops:  
35 participants

## IMPACTS

- Online course video engagement outperformed industry benchmark (62% vs 25%)
- Participants reported improved mood and overall wellbeing

*“Compared to previous weekly classes, the online course is definitely more flexible in terms of time and place.”*

*“I really enjoyed it and most importantly it relieved me from a lot of stress caused by school work.”*

For people living with mental health challenges, yoga, art, and meditation can help to alleviate stress and regulate emotions – especially for those with a history of trauma and abuse. Since 2016, YAMA Foundation has shared these practical, rehabilitative tools with thousands of people across Hong Kong, including those living in remand. As the threat of Covid loomed over us, access to prisons was suspended in 2020 and YAMA’s programmes had to be cancelled.

## HERE TO BE: YOGA & MINDFULNESS FOR TEEN MENTAL HEALTH

Similarly, Covid also meant that our school and community teen programmes had to be cancelled.

The collective mental health of Hong Kong’s youth suffered a profound setback in the wake of the 2019 social unrest. In early 2020, with the city in near-lockdown, YAMA Foundation devised a way to deliver targeted content to our youth facing increasing levels of anxiety. The Here To Be Online Programme was born.

Developed in collaboration with OCD & Anxiety Support Hong Kong, the original in-person curriculum was re-packaged as a series of video modules and offered as an online course through the Teachable e-learning platform.

The programme ran from July through November 2020 and, although screen fatigue remained an ever-present challenge, feedback from course participants was overwhelmingly positive.



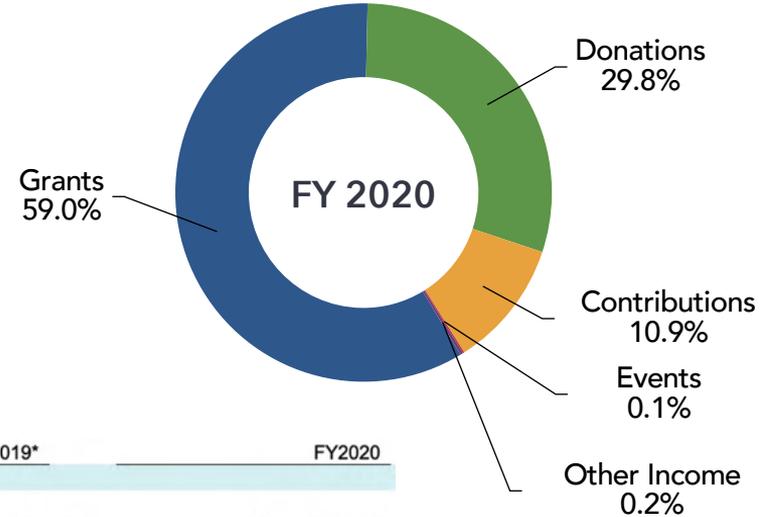
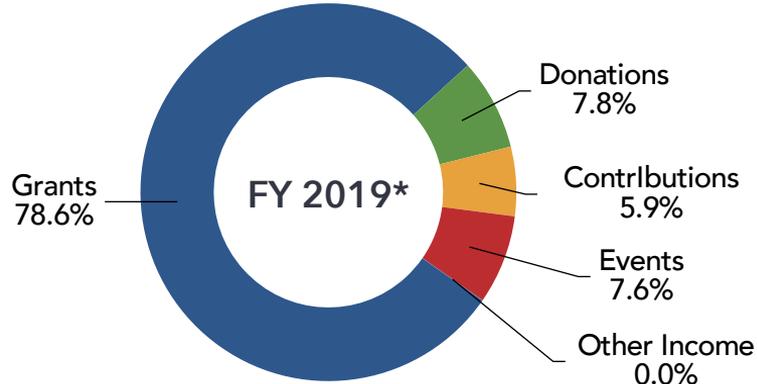
**HERE TO BE**  
YOGA & MINDFULNESS FOR  
TEENS MENTAL HEALTH

Sponsored by



## YAMA FOUNDATION INCOME BY SOURCE

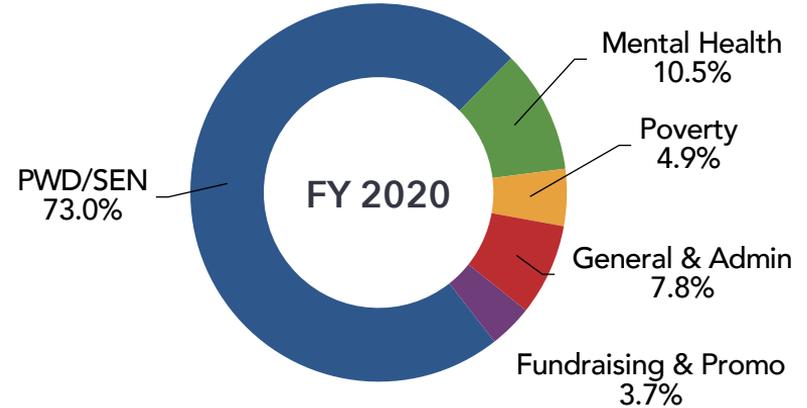
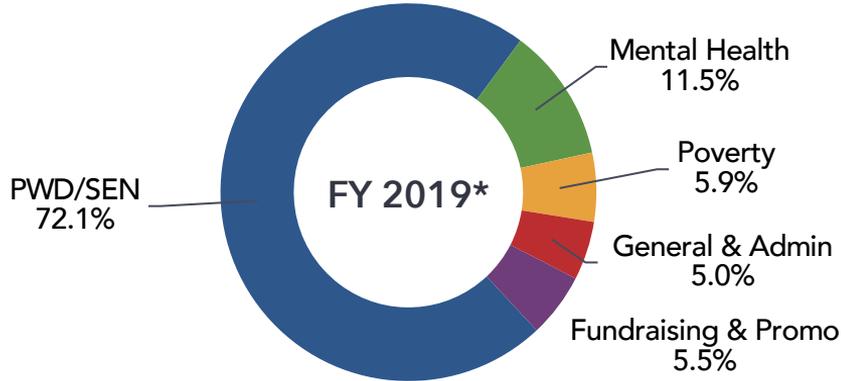
\*audited accounts for fiscal year ending March 31st



| INCOME              | FY2019*           | FY2020              |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Grants              | \$ 687,641        | \$ 783,750          |
| Donations           | \$ 68,543         | \$ 395,523          |
| Contributions       | \$ 51,915         | \$ 145,316          |
| Events              | \$ 66,820         | \$ 1,580            |
| Other Income        | \$ 372            | \$ 3,304            |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b> | <b>\$ 875,291</b> | <b>\$ 1,329,473</b> |

## YAMA FOUNDATION EXPENSE BY SERVICE AREA

\*audited accounts for fiscal year ending March 31st



| EXPENSES                |            | FY2019*           |            | FY2020              |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|---------------------|
| Programmes              |            | \$ 554,796        |            | \$ 888,440          |
| PWD/SEN                 | \$ 447,142 |                   | \$ 733,512 |                     |
| Mental Health           | \$ 71,054  |                   | \$ 105,995 |                     |
| Poverty                 | \$ 36,600  |                   | \$ 48,933  |                     |
| General & Admin         |            | \$ 31,183         |            | \$ 78,824           |
| Fundraising & Promotion |            | \$ 34,118         |            | \$ 37,614           |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>   |            | <b>\$ 620,098</b> |            | <b>\$ 1,004,878</b> |

## YAMA FOUNDATION BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES

\*audited accounts for fiscal year ending March 31st



|                                | PWD/SEN           | Mental Health     | Poverty          | General & Admin  | Fundraising & Promotion | FY 2020             | FY 2019*          |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Manpower                       | \$ 426,941        | \$ 60,801         | \$ 9,450         | \$ 61,377        | \$ 33,150               | \$ 591,719          | \$ 376,757        |
| Professional / Consulting Fees | \$ 42,000         | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ 15,554        | \$ 750                  | \$ 58,304           | \$ 21,459         |
| Venue Rental                   | \$ 7,072          | \$ 2,000          | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 9,072            | \$ 45,548         |
| Equipment & Supplies           | \$ 5,575          | \$ -              | \$ 37,400        | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 42,975           | \$ 53,218         |
| Insurance                      | \$ 19,740         | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 19,740           | \$ 18,092         |
| Meals & Entertainment          | \$ 9,288          | \$ 762            | \$ -             | \$ 85            | \$ -                    | \$ 10,135           | \$ 903            |
| Translation/Interpretation     | \$ 12,500         | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 12,500           | \$ -              |
| Photography/Videography        | \$ 112,938        | \$ 40,000         | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ 1,400                | \$ 154,338          | \$ -              |
| Research                       | \$ 38,495         | \$ -              | \$ 250           | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 38,745           | \$ -              |
| Advertising                    | \$ 30,000         | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 30,000           | \$ 15,000         |
| Marketing Materials            | \$ 18,985         | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 18,985           | \$ 62,983         |
| Cleaning Expense               | \$ 1,710          | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 1,710            | \$ -              |
| Travel                         | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ -                | \$ 16,825         |
| Transport - local              | \$ 1,943          | \$ 160            | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 2,103            | \$ 200            |
| Office & Tech Expense          | \$ -              | \$ 2,249          | \$ -             | \$ 1,272         | \$ -                    | \$ 3,521            | \$ 1,272          |
| Operations - Other             | \$ 5,412          | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ 5,412            | \$ -              |
| Training Expense               | \$ -              | \$ -              | \$ -             | \$ -             | \$ -                    | \$ -                | \$ 5,000          |
| Bank & Finance Charges         | \$ 914            | \$ 24             | \$ 1,833         | \$ 536           | \$ 2,314                | \$ 5,620            | \$ 2,841          |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>           | <b>\$ 733,512</b> | <b>\$ 105,995</b> | <b>\$ 48,933</b> | <b>\$ 78,824</b> | <b>\$ 37,614</b>        | <b>\$ 1,004,878</b> | <b>\$ 620,098</b> |

## YAMA FOUNDATION FINANCIAL TRACK RECORD

*\*audited accounts for fiscal year ending March 31st*



|                                     | FY 2017*                      | FY 2018*                      | FY 2019*                      | FY 2020                       |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total Income<br>HK\$<br>(Audited)   | HK\$205,115                   | HK\$148,301                   | HK\$457,594                   | HK\$874,919                   |
| Total Expenditure HK\$<br>(AUDITED) | HK\$112,053                   | HK\$140,026                   | HK\$218,821                   | HK\$620,068                   |
| (Loss) / Surplus HK\$<br>(Audited)  | HK\$93,062                    | HK\$8,275                     | HK\$238,821                   | HK\$254,821                   |
| % Admin vs.<br>% Programming        | Admin: 1%<br>Programming: 99% | Admin: 3%<br>Programming: 97% | Admin: 5%<br>Programming: 95% | Admin: 8%<br>Programming: 92% |

# OUR TEAM



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Hersha Chellaram, Co-founder & Board Chair  
Shaman Chellaram, Co-founder  
Victor Leung  
Shalini Mahtani  
Pilar Morais  
Alexandra Norton

**Executive Director** Hersha Chellaram

**Chief of Staff &  
Director of Programmes** Yvie Chang

**Finance Officer** Katia Bacon

**Administrative Assistant** Rosanna Wong

**Research Consultant** Dr. Annette Berg

## Teachers & Therapists

Gabrielle Baumgaertner Elizabeth Lam  
Julia Byrne Minal Mahtani  
Margaret Chung Mirna Salgadoinho  
Lakshmi Harilela Melody Tse  
Pacy Lam Wai Yan Tse  
Jacqueline Leung Mina Weight  
Angelita Li Edwin Yau

## Ambassadors

Catrin Anderson Mui Thomas

# DONORS & SUPPORTERS

(In alphabetical order)

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Sino Group  
Sip n Sound  
Sandrine Sle Zack  
Oliver & Emily Spensley  
Swire Trust  
Lulu Taylor  
King King Yu

## Supporting Partners

Accessible Yoga Foundation  
Hersha Yoga  
Plus Group International Limited  
Red Bus Consulting  
Twopresents  
UBU Productions

*Special thanks to our students, families,  
and NGO partners who also contributed  
to YAMA Foundation.*



**SUPPORT OUR WORK!**  
[yamahk.org/donate](https://yamahk.org/donate)



**YAMA Foundation**

(IR File#: 91/14328)

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