

Refugee Services & Community Organizing, Hong Kong

Global Activities Field Placement

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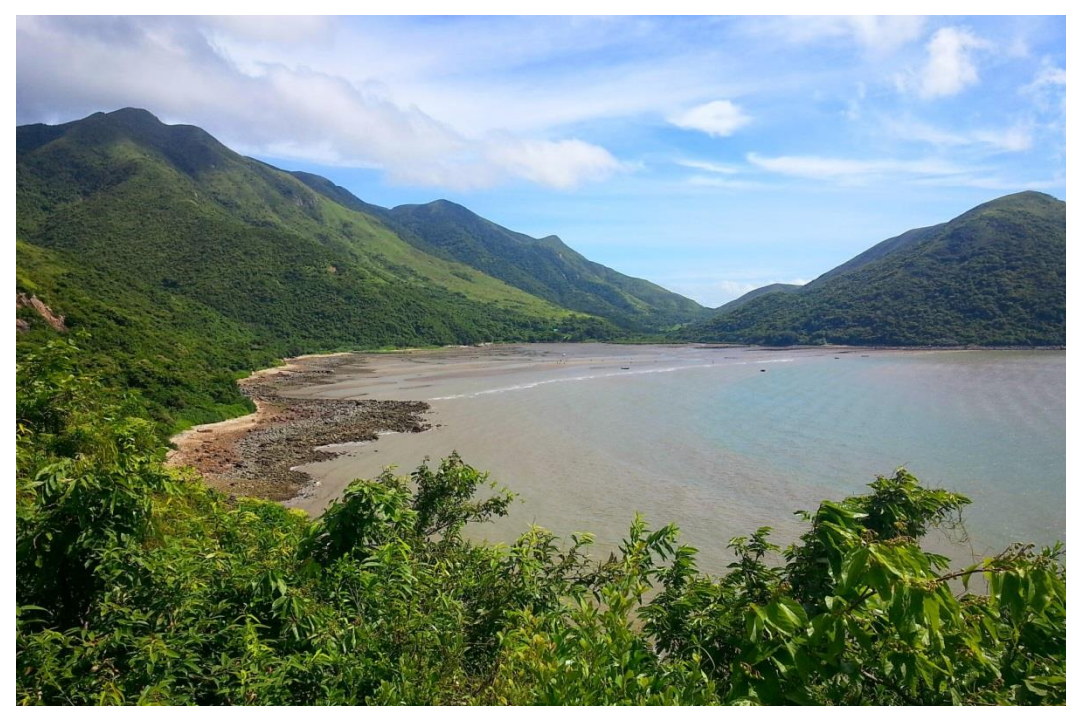


Hong Kong, China

- **Special Administrative Region of China** since 1997, after transfer of sovereignty from UK



- **Population:**
 - 7.18 million
 - One of the most densely populated regions in the world
- **Official Languages:**
 - Cantonese 89.5%
 - English (less common)
- **Humid, subtropical climate**
- **Only ~25% of land is developed**



The Issue

Refugees in Hong Kong have severely restricted rights. Because it is illegal for them to work, they must rely on what the government provides them through insufficient, discriminatory, and corrupt contracted services. It is typical to spend 10 years in this limbo while refugee status and resettlement applications are processed, appealed, and most often—ultimately rejected.



Field Placement: Vision First

Established to improve the livelihood of refugees in HK, Vision First is a non-profit NGO that facilitates advocacy, activism, and advice in collaboration with the refugee community. My role was to contribute to all three aspects, as well as manage particular sub-programs.

Outcomes

- I managed the resource center, assisted people with their UNHCR applications & appeals, connected people to essential services, offered supportive drop-in meetings & did outreach
- I created a 5-day summer program for refugee parents & children & 3-day advocacy skills workshop for the Refugee Union
- I authored a grant application to foster development and self-sufficiency of the Refugee Union



Skills Developed

- Leading workshops across diverse educational levels, language barriers, and cultures
- Cross-cultural IP skills with survivors of trauma
- Navigating contentious group dynamics

Connections

PUBPOL750. This course gave me a strong foundation in UN policies as they pertain to refugee topics
SW701. In this course I studied the Hong Kong policy environment and pertinent social justice topics
Career: I prefer to work in settings like Vision First that see community members as colleagues, not clients.

Lessons Learned

Don't take on too many projects—learn to (respectfully) say “no.”

Advice

- Dedicate time *daily* for processing and reflection. Find a local “insider” if possible that is willing to do some of this with you
- Thoroughly research the political and historical context of the agency and issues before departing
- Locate things that you will need for self-care— e.g. hiking spots, social groups before departure



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