

# Bottom-up Resilience Webinar Series

Fixing HK – Carrying on our fight for democracy  
while combating Covid-19

7 July 2020



Fixing HK

# A Brief History of Fixing HK

Founded in 2014 after the Umbrella Movement

Based in Tokwawan, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Hong Kong

An all-volunteer group that promotes democracy, community self-help and civil engagements through

- Repair works
- Street fairs, street screenings and other community activities
- Organizing community self-help projects
- Community recycling
- Rallies and marches
- Elections Campaigning



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Handing out masks to cleaning workers in Tokwawan





Handing out masks to cleaning workers in Tokwawan



# Covid-19 in Hong Kong

## A Timeline

June 2019

### Start of the protests

Large scale protests over the Fugitive Offenders Amendment Bill began

Mistrusts against the govt grew due to police brutality and continued interference from China

Oct 2019

### Anti-mask Law

Enacted using a century old colonial era law

The govt continued to appeal a lower court's ruling against the anti-mask law even during the Covid-19 outbreak

Jan 2020

### Beginning of outbreak

First confirmed cases

More imported cases from China during and after Lunar New Year

Shortage of facemasks and disinfectant products

Feb 2020

### Community self-help

Medical workers went on strike as they urge the govt to close border with China. The govt refused

Shortages continue, but the govt would ship part of their mask stock to China

Community self-help began with groups starting to distribute masks and disinfectant to those in need



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# Covid-19 in Hong Kong

## A Timeline

Mar 2020

### Ban on public gatherings

Second wave of outbreak as Hongkongers returned from overseas

Public gatherings of more than 4 people banned. The ban, with a fine of HKD2000, has been used repeatedly by the police against protesters

Apr 2020

### Closure of bars and pubs

as well as other public venues but massive confusions over implementations

May 2020

### Getting under control?

Streak of 23 days with no new local cases broken

Cap on public gathering raised to 8 people

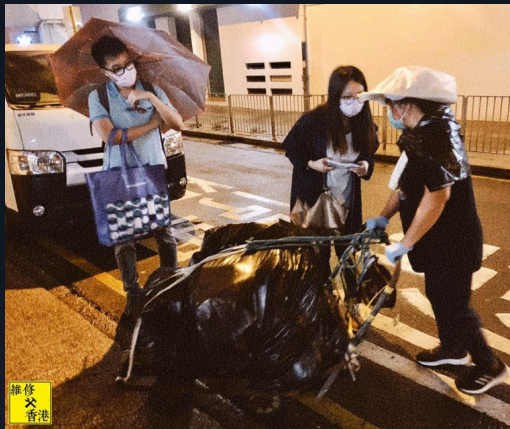
Govt began distribution of reusable facemasks after 3 months

Jun 2020

### Social distancing continues

Social distancing measures extended until June 18

Annual Tiananman Square Massacre commemoration banned for the first time



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Repacking masks and adding pro-democracy and Covid-19 prevention messages





Repacking masks and adding pro-democracy and Covid-19 prevention messages





# What have we done so far?

50K+

## masks given out

to cleaning workers across Hong Kong, as well as elderly, poorer families and ethnic minorities in Tokwawan

50+

## visits to cleaners

and other groups in need to hand out masks, hand sanitizer and PPE, share news on Covid-19 and the government's response and relief measures and promote democracy and civic engagement

20+

## street booth sessions

to reach out to residents of Tokwawan to promote community self-help, give out hand sanitizer and other supplies, share news on Covid-19 and promote democracy and civic engagement



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## Why focus on cleaning workers?

They stood on the frontline against Covid-19 but their efforts were often overlooked

- Old and vulnerable – average age over 60 and often do not have access to timely news
- Neglected and underequipped – They were never properly equipped with PPE during the best of time and at the height of the Covid-19 outbreak, some of them had to use one disposable mask for days
- Poor – with an average hourly of US\$5-6 (HK\$40-50) and long working hours, they couldn't afford purchasing PPE themselves nor have the time to queue up for them





Surgical masks were often washed and reused at the peak of the Covid-19 outbreak







# How did we do it?

There were rumors of the outbreak of a SARS-like virus in Wuhan in January.

We purchased a few thousands masks during a trip to Taiwan to observe its presidential election.

This allowed us to become one of the first groups to hand out masks during the Lunar New Year.



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## Donations

After we started handing out masks, through social media promotions, we have received over 50,000 masks and several hundred liters of hand sanitizers from donors



## Messaging

We would then repack the masks into packs of 5 masks and with pro-democracy, police brutality, government and triad collusion, and Covid-19 prevention messages



## Reaching out

We visited various parts of Hong Kong at least once a week to give masks to cleaning workers, tell them the latest news on the outbreak and listen to their concerns

# How did we do it?

But what we did was more than just handing out, we also organized street booths and learning sessions so those in the community without internet access can know the latest Covid-19 related news.



## Education

We organized street booths in Tokwawan to educate our neighbors on community self-help, democracy and anti Covid-19 tips while handing out hand sanitizer and other supplies



## Learning

As cleaning workers are one of the key groups we serve, we invited The Hong Kong Cleaning Workers Union to conduct a learning session so we could understand more about the difficulties they face



## Discounted masks

We were able to source several thousand facemasks which we sold at a discount to people in Tokwawan who could afford to buy their masks, thus letting us reach a group who would normally not need our service





Street recyclers were another group that we focused on





Street booths were an effective way  
to disseminate information and  
distribute supply



# Why has Hong Kong been able to contain Covid-19?

Successful community efforts despite the government



## Experience from SARS

*People have been wearing mask and taking other preventative measures from Day 1*



## Civil society involvements

*People are better equipped to self-help following the 2019 protests*



## The protests

*Which reduced the number of visitors from China to a trickle thus limiting the spread of the virus*



## Our medical workers

*Unsuccessful strike action to force the govt to close the border with China but stood firm on their duties during the outbreak*



## Distrust in the govt

*Incoherent govt responses have led many to take actions in organizing community self-help*



## Self-help

*From setting up masks production lines to sourcing and sharing supplies, Hongkongers have done it all*



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**Thank you!**

維修  
父  
香港