



Annual update 2019-2020

The fiscal year 2019-2020 was one of unprecedented challenges but also one of great achievements. Hong Kong was hit throughout the reporting period by social unrest that was hitherto unknown in our city. Just as the intensity of the protests began to recede, the city was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to major interruptions of ordinary life in Asia's leading financial centre. Since January 2020, HKHTC's biggest challenge has been the ongoing closure of all schools and universities.

Despite the upheaval, we had our most active and successful year to date - both in terms of educational programming and reach as well as community engagement. The highlight of the year was the visit that we hosted by the internationally renowned Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss. The intensive programme of her visit culminated with the United Nations Holocaust Memorial Day (UNHMD) commemorative event we organised for the first time at City Hall, a premier venue for the performing arts in Hong Kong. The turnout to our signature annual event almost doubled from the previous year.

The combined challenges of social unrest and an epidemic of global proportions underscore the importance of HKHTC's educational work. Months of political agitation and turmoil led to increasing political polarisation which made the finding of a sustainable solution to Hong Kong's social, economic and political problems all the more difficult. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has augmented incidents of discrimination, racism, stigmatisation and scapegoating all around the world which distract from the urgent task to work together to fight the worst global health crisis in a century.

As an independent, non-political and secular non-profit organisation, HKHTC is uniquely positioned to navigate these challenging times and make practical contributions to fostering a culture of dialogue and understanding through Holocaust education and the promotion of tolerance. Our independent platform has proven to be great asset and we continue to be entrusted by our partners and stakeholders to provide a voice of objective information, critical reflection and warning about the dangers of intolerance, discrimination and blindness to the suffering of others.

As a testament of HKHTC's active contributions to the wider community, we achieved significant growth in all of our main programming areas in the last year:

- In dozens of schools visits, we directly reached a **target audience of over 10,600 students** at local and international schools in Hong Kong and Macau - this was a record year for us.
- Our **workshops for educators** on teaching the Holocaust included over **300 teachers**.

- Our media presence expanded significantly, with more than **7.4 million media impressions** generated by interviews and articles about our work appearing in major English and Chinese-medium media outlets. We also interacted on a very regular basis with our growing number of followers via our social media channels.

Last year, the thematic conceptual framework for many of our activities was the **experience of children during the Holocaust**. The objective was not only to raise awareness about this harrowing dimension of the Holocaust but also to reach a new audience by delivering relevant materials that enable junior secondary students to engage with the Holocaust. This thematic emphasis led to a dedicated exhibition on this topic and culminated in the visit by Mrs Eva Schloss, herself a child Holocaust survivor.

The following selection of major events throughout the reporting period is indicative of the increasing thematic depth and reach of HKHTC activities:

- **Yom HaShoah memorial** at the Jewish Community Centre (April 2019)
- Educator workshop conducted in cooperation with Facing History and Ourselves and the Asia Society (April 2019)
- Presentation of Holocaust literature at the **Hong Kong Book Fair** (July 2019)
- Public **exhibition** ‘Stars without a heaven - children in the Holocaust’, in partnership with City University of Hong Kong and Yad Vashem (October 2019)
- Annual **field trip and teaching workshop** for Chinese educators, in cooperation with Yad Vashem (October 2019)
- **Life writing and history workshop**, in partnership with the City University of Hong Kong (October 2019)
- Participation in the **Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival** (November 2019)
- **Testimonial sharing** session with Eva Schloss, in partnership with the Tsim Sha Tsui Baptist Church and the Jewish Community Centre (January 2020)
- **Dialogue with Eva Schloss**, in partnership with the Asia Society Hong Kong (January 2020)
- **School visits by Eva Schloss in Hong Kong and Macau** (Hong Kong International School, Elsa High School, Chinese International School, German Swiss International School, St Stephen’s College, Li Po Chun United World College, West Island School, South Island School, Victoria Shanghai Academy; the University of Macau) (January 2020)
- Memorial service on the occasion of the **United Nations Holocaust Memorial Day** (January 2020)
- **Yom HaShoah online memorial** (April 2020)
- Participation in the 24 hour vigil on the occasion of **Genocide Awareness Day** (April 2020)

Last but not least, we have also worked hard to make part of our educational programming and learning resources available online. Not only did we create new bespoke learning resources and educational handouts for different audiences, but also created Zoom lectures on specific topics that were already included in school teaching activities this term.

The above activities are in addition to the myriad school visits we undertake throughout the year as the core component of our ongoing commitment to advance Holocaust awareness and tolerance education. We are also approached to handle other issues, such as dealing with incidents of hate speech and engagement in academic research on the Holocaust.

All of our work would not be possible without the support of our numerous volunteers, partners and generous donors to whom we are immensely grateful and indebted. Their generosity is the foundation that enables our activities and contribution to society. If you would like to support the HKHTC or have questions regarding our work, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

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