Last December, our team decided to forgo the usual "year in review" coverage knowing that few would wish to relive one of the most tumultuous years in memory. It was a roller-coaster 12 months for our news team too as the protests gave way to the pandemic, leaving us to quickly swap our gas masks for medical masks. The upheaval continued with the onset of the national security law in June as we scrambled to adjust to the new reality and threats to free expression in what was once a press freedom hub (pg.13-15).

On the upside, 2020 also saw us redesign and relaunch our website, publish a Freelance Charter and Code of Ethics and quadruple our amount of original reporting. We also won a SOPA award, were recognised as the equivalent of a charity, launched an anti-censorship app and Covid-19 story book, and were awarded top marks by NewsGuard for credibility and transparency (pg.7-9). And although we are unlikely to see a funding boost like we saw during the 2019 protests, hundreds of monthly backers continued supporting us, giving us a sustainable income to help invest, expand and secure our future (pg.11-12).

In 2021, there are new threats on the horizon. When HKFP was launched in 2015, our mission to uphold press freedom and fight censorship were based on the constitutional guarantees in the Basic Law. But since the vaguely-worded and broadly-applied security law was imposed by Beijing, we saw Apple Daily’s newsroom raided and its proprietor detained, RTHK undergo a government crackdown, a freelance reporter arrested, and self-censorship sweep across all sectors. Meanwhile, democrats were rounded-up, a slogan was made illegal and democracy books were pulled from libraries.

We were not immune to the turmoil at HKFP. We found that sources were less willing to speak, op-ed writers withdrew, and our incoming editor became the city’s third Western journalist to be inexplicably denied a visa and ousted from Hong Kong (pg.13). We nevertheless acted quickly to future-proof our operations - seeking legal and business advice, encrypting and securing our work devices, setting up back-up entitles, training staff, and even locking our PCs to our desks.

My team is extremely grateful for, and motivated by, the sustained support from our Patrons and backers in Hong Kong and across the world. In this new climate, it is more important than ever that we continue to bear witness and hold the powerful to account, so your backing has never been more critical.

As we invite you to review our work over the past year, let me extend a big thank you to all of our supporters and readers. And as we enter the new year, let us all hope for the best, prepare for the worst, and stand firm in safeguarding press freedom.

Tom Grundy,
Editor-In-Chief/Co-founder,
Hong Kong Free Press.

hongkongfp.com
Tel: +852 9447-3443, info@hongkongfp.com
The Hive, 6/F, Cheung Hing Industrial Bldg, 12P Smithfield Road, Kennedy Town.
Our mission: We aim to be the most independent and credible English-language news source in Greater China. We seek to amplify the voices of the voiceless, not the powerful and will monitor the status of Hong Kong’s core values and freedoms. The HKFP team is fully committed to reporting the facts, without fear, favour or interference.

#2 on social media among all local English-language news outlets.


267,830 Facebook followers – up 21% in 2020.

83,962 Instagram followers - up 67% in 2020.

20,148 YouTube subscribers - up 13% in 2020. 1,188 videos. 1.6 million views in 2020.

9,534 newsletter subscribers - up 13% in 2020.

2,791 Telegram followers.

& 1,428 LinkedIn followers

- 88% of HKFP readers use English as a first language.
- 33% are aged between 25-34; 20% are aged 18-24.
- 33% are Hong Kong-based, 19% are US-based.
As part of our 2020 relaunch, we committed to doubling the amount of original reporting on HKFP. Our dedicated team beat the target – quadrupling our output from four to 16 original features per month.

**Exclusive Features:** In 2020, HKFP explored how booksellers were preparing for potential censorship under the security law, how dissident artists continued to shine a light, and how some Hongkongers founded a new community abroad in the UK. We also wrote about the medical professionals looking to leave the city over political pressure, the future of Hong Kong hip hop and how the opening of the national security bureau affected a neighbourhood.

We also produced original features on the plight of student reporters after police stopped recognising them as legitimate journalists and examined how ethnic minorities were being treated unequally by the police. We looked at why Hong Kong activists fell out of love with NBA basketball star LeBron James, profiled the city's wheelchair-bound reporters, the Hongkongers who backed President Donald Trump for a second term, the Liberal Studies students resisting increasing government pressure on education, and an activist group combating censorship in textbooks.

Our features also delved into gender issues, including sexual harassment suffered by female politicians, the pro-democracy female activists challenging sexual taboos on social media, the city's female gamers and male sex workers, the historical evolution of the fable of Mulan after activists vowed to boycott the Disney film, and we also had a sit-down with a local dominatrix.

Our team continued to cover the aftermath of the 2019 pro-democracy protests, speaking to the protesters who suffered from mental health issues one year on and the lingering impact of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University police siege. Earlier in the year, we explored the stores peddling protest figurines and memorabilia, how student protesters were facing their exams, a pro-democracy sign language interpretation group, social workers on the protest frontlines, and local demonstrators who have chosen not to have children.

HKFP also published stories on the composer of the protest anthem “Glory to Hong Kong” and a pro-democracy tailor providing free suits to arrested protesters for their court hearings. And we spoke with the mother of one of the 12 Hong Kong fugitives arrested by mainland authorities.

Further afield, we caught up with the Hong Kong diaspora about their fears of Beijing's encroachment and returning to their home city. We also covered the plight of protesters who fled to Canada and a US teen activist advocating against police brutality online.

Other features included news of persistent worker rights abuses at Apple's biggest suppliers in China, the plight of Chinese dissidents seeking asylum in Taiwan and political resistance in Macau.
As the city fought to contain Covid-19, our features explored the struggles of new mothers and the visually-impaired during the pandemic. We also published features relating to the doctor strikes at the start of the outbreak, a facemask shortage among the city's street cleaners, and how shipping firms came under fire after a mask delivery backlog. As the pandemic progressed, we highlighted the 1,000 HK residents stranded in India, the local asylum seekers who joined the fight against the virus, and looked at how some Hong Kong fresh grad nurses felt underprepared for the pandemic. We also examined how ex-Cathay Pacific staffers coped with severe cutbacks.

We also considered political, environmental, and economic angles to the pandemic, with features on why protesters insisted on calling Covid-19 the "Chinese coronavirus", how protesters cheered a wave of infections in the Hong Kong Police Force, how a drop in recycling practices during the pandemic sets a dangerous new norm, and the struggles of the underground music scene and pole dancing studios.

Other features we published covered the political motivations behind the planned development of China's Greater Bay Area, a new "greening master plan" for the city's streets, a Kenyan domestic worker who suffered forced labour, how Hong Kong's fight against climate change fell short and Hong Kong's first freshwater wildlife identification app.

Explanatory Reporting: With the passing of the national security law in mid-2020, HKFP launched a monthly series documenting the main developments under the broad-ranging new law.

Other explanatory reporting covered the potential impact of US sanctions against officials abroad and how targeted officials' reacted to the sanctions. We also profiled the first political figure to be charged under the security law.

We also wrote pieces breaking down the city's major political developments, including the outcome of the unofficial democrat primary polls, the government's barring of 12 candidates from the now-delayed legislative race, how the government asked Beijing to solve the legislative lacuna after the postponement, and the developments that led to the democrats quitting the legislature en masse.

HKFP wrote explainers detailing how authorities cracked down on public broadcaster RTHK, the debate over separation of powers in Hong Kong, Apple Daily scandal involving the Hunter Biden dossier and the national anthem law.

Our Covid-19 coverage included why Hongkongers were angry about government response to Covid-19, how the police were selectively enforcing Covid-19 laws, how authorities accelerated its crackdown on dissent during the initial outbreak, and how different countries carried out elections during the pandemic.

Our explainers also focused on property scandals among police officers, hidden differences between police rifles, and the pepper spray deployed by the force. And we considered the evolution of Hong Kong protests slogans, how the official account of the Yuen Long attacks and how Chief Executive Carrie Lam's response to the 2019 protests changed over a year.
**Exclusive Interviews:** We conducted interviews with key figures, including the last British governor Lord Chris Patten, Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai before he was remanded in custody, Hong Kong’s “Grandfather of Democracy” Martin Lee, China diplomacy expert Jerome Cohen, and activist-scholar Benny Tai on the sixth anniversary of the Occupy Central movement. We also spoke with former opposition lawmakers Kenneth Leung and Ted Hui following his move to “self-exile” in Europe.

HKFP sat down with moderate ex-lawmaker James Tien about the city’s polarized politics, veteran pollster Robert Chung after a police raid on his polling institute, policing expert Clifford Stott about the role of the force in the 2019 protests and outgoing EU diplomat Carmen Cano on how the security law changed the city.

We spoke with local dissident artists Kacey Wong, Giraffe Leung and Lau Kwong Shing, as well as exiled political artist Badiucao. Our team also discussed fears for the future of education with president of the city’s largest teachers’ union Fung Wai-wah and the University of Hong Kong’s student union chief Edy Jeh. Modern China historian Jeffrey Wasserstrom, Hong Kong constitutional law expert Michael C. Davis and media law expert Doreen Weisenhaus also shared their views on the new security law era.

The team did not shy away from conducting interviews with opposition figures and pro-democracy activists both locally and abroad, including Wayne Chan, Simon Cheng and Nathan Law after they fled to the UK, Baggio Leung before his four-week prison sentence, and Finn Lau. We also spoke with a several female district councilors, including Chan Kim-kam, Kwong Po-yin, and Leticia Wong.

**Scoops:** In 2020, we commissioned an exclusive poll with the Public Opinion Research Institute which found that only 17 per cent of Hongkongers agreed with a government proposal to allow Hong Kong residents on the mainland to vote remotely. We also published exclusive scoops on how the government spent HKD$7 million of taxpayer money on promoting the national security law, showed how Facebook admitted an error in marking Hong Kong police videos as “false,” and how Telegram temporarily refused data requests from Hong Kong courts.

Our other exclusive stories included features on how Hongkongers were coping on a quarantined cruise ship, Colgate’s decision to rebrand Darlie toothpaste during the Black Lives Matter movement, the slow and confusing quarantine centre admissions arrangements in Hong Kong, and Ken Tsang’s reaction to the Court of Final Appeal’s rejection of an appeal on his assault case against the Hong Kong police.

**Opinion & Analysis:** HKFP carried over 380 opinion, analysis and commentary pieces in 2020 from a host of renowned writers, academics, activists and NGOs.
**Website relaunch:** HKFP won a position on the Newspack project - an advanced open-source publishing platform designed by Wordpress for small newsrooms. 50 winners were chosen from around 500 applicants. In April, HKFP migrated to a new, cutting-edge website through the project, which is supported by Google and other grant-making bodies. It is designed to relieve newsrooms like ours of tech troubles, bugs and security concerns, empowering us to focus on journalism. The cost to HKFP is US$1,000/month and includes access to a community of over 100 other independent news sites.

**Redesign:** The relaunch also included a comprehensive design refresh across our site and social media by szs.io.

**Newspack**

**Code of ethics:** HKFP faced multiple ethical dilemmas during the recent protests, highlighting the need for clear ethical guidelines. HKFP’s Code of Ethics was adopted by the team on March 11, 2020, to govern all future reporting practices. Our code was shared publicly in the interests of transparency.

**Corrections and fact-checking policy:** To promote greater transparency, we publicly disclosed policies on when and how we make corrections and how we ensure the accuracy of our reporting.

**Journalism prizes:** Two HKFP publications were nominated as finalists in the prestigious 2020 annual Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) awards. Our explainer on the 2019 storming of the legislature won an honourable mention for Excellence in Explanatory Reporting. We were also shortlisted for an Index on Censorship Free Expression Award in February. And Deputy Editor Jennifer Creery won a Clare Hollingworth Fellowship at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club.

**Staffing:** We hired an editorial assistant in 2020 to help ease the pressure when it comes to production, as well as a freelance senior reporter and a part-time editor with three decades of experience.
**Top marks in credibility and transparency:** HKFP met all nine of the [NewsGuard initiative’s credibility and transparency](https://newsguardtech.org/) criteria, a week after we launched our Code of Ethics and just ahead of our website relaunch. NewsGuard lists green or red credibility scores for over 4,000 news websites, representing 95 per cent of all online news engagement.

**Charity equivalency:** Following a legal examination, NGO Source certified HKFP as the equivalent of a US charity. Hong Kong law does not allow media outlets to register as tax-exempt charities, thus HKFP is a limited by guarantee company - a non-profit, answerable to readers not shareholders. Donors can now be assured we meet the same standards as a US public charity in terms of our structure, accountability and governance.

**Unique fundraisers:** Activist clothing brand Obey Giant and Ed Nachtrieb raised HK$72,685 (US$9,378) in a “Long Live the People” poster sale for HKFP. Meanwhile, author Kong Tsung-gan donated all of his book proceeds, raising HK$27,640 for HKFP, whilst Mekong Review raised HK$21,000 for us after donating 100 copies. Reader Pishun Tantivangphaisal raised over HK$1,000 by shaving his head. Oliver Ma - a well-known busker - donated HK$21,000 on his 21st birthday to HKFP, Minute Studio ceramicists raised HK$5,300 at a New Year event and Patisserie Anoki raised funds throughout the year for our news team.

**Google News Initiative**

**NewsStream project progress:** In 2019, HKFP won a US$78,400 (HK$615,440) [Google News Initiative grant](https://newsinitiative.org/) to create an open-source funding platform for small newsrooms focussed on nurturing reader membership. The funds went to third-party developers to help create NewsStream - a fundraising micro-site to reduce barriers and costs for independent news start-ups. Progress was hampered by the 2019 protests and Covid-19, but the project is set to launch in 2021.

**Anti-censorship app launched:** Thanks to the Greatfire Appmaker project, HKFP launched a [special downloadable app](https://greatfire.org/) which made HKFP viewable in China, where the site is censored. It is available alongside our Android and Apple mobile apps, which relaunched in 2020.

**Freelance Charter:** With freelance journalists increasingly in the crosshairs, HKFP launched a new [Freelance Charter](https://freelancecharter.org/) in September to attract, protect and support journalists as well as to help enrich and diversify our coverage. Though we remain a small company on a tight budget, the charter represents a step forward in setting new standards.

**Official poll:** For the first time, HKFP commissioned a public survey with HK PORI.
2020 Achievements

**HKFP appearances:** The HKFP story and fight for press freedom appeared in several international newspapers and news shows including in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Tatler*, and *Neiman Lab*, and on *Al-Jazeera* and the *ABC*. We also spoke at the *Splice* digital media conference and staff appeared live on BBC World, ABC, Radio New Zealand, LBC, CTV and DW-TV. Last July, *The Guardian* printed an op-ed by the founder.

**New income streams:** HKFP is receiving new income streams through content sales via MSN News and Lexis Nexis.

**HKFP links with HKU JMSC on data project:** HKFP provided support to the Journalism and Media Studies Centre at the University of Hong Kong to update and expand its protest research data archive. The archive tracks statistics, arrests, artwork and terminology related to the 2019-2020 anti-extradition law demonstrations.

**HKFP History Museum archive project:** Days before the Tsim Sha Tsui History Museum closed, HKFP documented all of the display panels and shared the images under a free license amid fears of future censorship.

**Live coverage abroad:** In 2020, for the first time, HKFP sent a reporter overseas to cover the Taiwanese election.


**Hong Kong’s 2020 media landscape:**

**Independent English-language news:**

- HKFP

**English-language traditional news (digital/print):**

- South China Morning Post
- *The Standard*
- ejinsight
- *ATHK*
- *The Standard*
- *China Daily*

**Chinese-language traditional news (digital):**

- 文匯報
- 晴報
- 明報
- 成報
- 大紀元
- 星島日報
- metro
- hket

**Chinese-language traditional news (print):**

- 香港商報
- 信報
- 頭條日報
- 成報
Staff & Structure

Hong Kong Free Press is structured as a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, not shares. HKFP does not answer to any business tycoon, mainland Chinese conglomerate or media mogul. We are run by journalists, and are answerable only to ourselves and our readers.

Editor-in-Chief Tom Grundy is a British multimedia journalist based in Hong Kong for 15 years. He has a BA in Communications & New Media from Leeds University and an MA in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong. He has contributed to BBC World TV/radio, Quartz, Global Post, Sky News and others. He previously founded the popular culture platform, hongwrong.com and a campaign for domestic workers.

Reporter Kelly Ho has an interest in local politics, education and sports. She formerly worked at South China Morning Post Young Post, where she specialised in reporting on issues related to Hong Kong youth. She has a bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Hong Kong, with a second major in Politics and Public Administration.

Guest Editor Tim Hamlett has been HKFP's weekly guest editor since 2015 and writes a weekly column. He came to Hong Kong in 1980 to work for the Hong Kong Standard and has contributed to, or worked for, most of Hong Kong's English-language media outlets. In 1988, he became a full-time journalism teacher.

Assistant Editor Rhoda Kwan previously wrote for Time Out Hong Kong and worked at Meanjin, a literary journal. She holds a double bachelor's degree in Law and Literature from the University of Hong Kong.

Reporter Candice Chau previously worked as a researcher at a local think tank. She has a BSocSc in Politics and International Relations from the University of Manchester and an MSc in International Political Economy from London School of Economics.

Hong Kong Free Press would be impossible without the support and assistance of our countless tech, editorial, accounting, freelance staff and volunteers, and The Hive.

Distribution channels

We seek to ensure our news remains accessible and free of charge. Find us on:

HKFP Apps:

Social media & distribution:

Syndication:
As Hong Kong’s most transparent news outlet, and as a non-profit company, HKFP is externally audited annually. Our income during 2019 was as follows:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All donations</td>
<td>HK$6,056,859*</td>
<td>HK$2,463,408</td>
<td>HK$1,769,760</td>
<td>HK$1,063,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ads &amp; content sales</td>
<td>HK$271,066</td>
<td>HK$136,084</td>
<td>HK$328,759</td>
<td>HK$92,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>HK$263,361</td>
<td>HK$24,390</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
<td>HK$8,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank interest</td>
<td>HK$226</td>
<td>HK$21</td>
<td>HK$1</td>
<td>HK$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>HK$6,591,512</strong></td>
<td><strong>HK$2,623,903</strong></td>
<td><strong>HK$2,098,520</strong></td>
<td><strong>HK$1,163,765</strong></td>
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*Includes HK$303,939 Google grant (first tranche) for NewsStream project (assigned to 3rd party developers; cannot be spent on HKFP running costs).

Our current revenue streams:
All donations: includes one-off & monthly Patron contributions by cheque/transfer, cash PayPal & card, as well as merch sales profit & shopping referral links. HKFP also retains 2.51 Bitcoin, as of 2020.

Ads & content sales: includes ad income from display ads; Apple News & Facebook ads, directly purchased rate card ads & content sales [from media outlets, institutions and syndication partner LexisNexis, Dow Jones Factiva & Nordot.

**Direct donations:**
- **stripe**
- **VISA**
- **mastercard**
- **PayPal**
- **PayMe**
- **Flattr**
- + Events & HKFP merchandise

**Ads & content sales:**
- **LexisNexis**
- **Dow Jones Factiva**
- **nordot**
- **Apple**
- **facebook**
- **msn**
- + HKFP rate card

**Advertising partners since 2015:**

**Surplus carried forward:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Surplus/Deficit (HK$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>2015 total surplus:</td>
<td>HK$91,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 total deficit:</td>
<td>-HK$45,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 total surplus:</td>
<td>HK$445,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 total surplus:</td>
<td>HK$574,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 total surplus:</td>
<td>HK$3,698,358</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Surplus recycled:** As a non-profit, with no shareholders or investors, HKFP’s surplus was recycled back into the company for use in 2020. As of 2021, HKFP is retaining a HK$1.5m legal defence fund in light of the national security law and new threats to press freedom.

**Efficiency:** HKFP is run as efficiently and prudently as possible, in order to maximise the impact of our donors’ generosity. We make savings by partnering with other media outlets, using free software and making full use of teamwork and automation to save on costs.

**Staffing:** During 2019, we employed 4-5 full-time staff members and expanded our pool of freelancers to cover the city-wide protests and unrest. Before tax, we spent 82% of donations on paying our hard-working staff and freelancers (see pg.12)
HKFP Patrons in 2020: HKFP has shifted towards a membership model. Small amounts of income from a large pool of Patrons helps support our team, sustain our operations with more security, and guarantee our independence. Our monthly income as of January 2021:

- The number of HKFP Patrons rose by 10% in 2020, whilst income from Patrons rose 16% to HK$172,966. Most Patrons are from Hong Kong, though we also have backers in the US, UK, Australia and China. Growth has slowed since the 539% increase in Patrons we saw in 2019, but income is steady.

- In addition to the above, we receive at least HK$10,000 per month from donors who contribute via cheque, transfer or by coin donation via CoinDragon.

- Patrons are given priority and/or free entry to HKFP events, merch and our Annual Report.

Our expenditure for our latest audited year – 1/1/2019 to 31/12/2019 - was as follows:

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time staff payroll</td>
<td>HK$1,606,352</td>
<td>HK$1,499,071</td>
<td>HK$1,340,230</td>
<td>HK$1,035,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Provident Fund (pensions)</td>
<td>HK$68,123</td>
<td>HK$69,234</td>
<td>HK$66,180</td>
<td>HK$50,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website, newswire text/photo, software</td>
<td>HK$80,038</td>
<td>HK$129,543</td>
<td>HK$58,693</td>
<td>HK$33,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office, sundry, recruitment/training, telecom</td>
<td>HK$164,256</td>
<td>HK$110,414</td>
<td>HK$57,565</td>
<td>HK$25,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals/drinks for volunteers &amp; staff</td>
<td>HK$29,686</td>
<td>HK$14,028</td>
<td>HK$17,106</td>
<td>HK$25,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal, professional, registration, audit fees</td>
<td>HK$12,340</td>
<td>HK$7,385</td>
<td>HK$45,231</td>
<td>HK$10,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; insurance</td>
<td>HK$50,615</td>
<td>HK$78,067</td>
<td>HK$8,169</td>
<td>HK$8,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery/merch, postage, printing</td>
<td>HK$42,311</td>
<td>HK$11,827</td>
<td>HK$686</td>
<td>HK$17,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank charges &amp; exchange losses</td>
<td>HK$4,240</td>
<td>HK$1,705</td>
<td>HK$1,170</td>
<td>HK$2,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freelancer payments &amp; gear</td>
<td>HK$289,387</td>
<td>HK$64,400</td>
<td>HK$34,090</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax</td>
<td>HK$509,211</td>
<td>HK$29,816</td>
<td>HK$13,343</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>HK$36,597</td>
<td>HK$34,371</td>
<td>HK$10,261</td>
<td>HK$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: HK$2,893,154*</td>
<td>HK$2,049,861</td>
<td>HK$1,652,724</td>
<td>HK$1,209,334</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As part of its 2019 expenditure, HKFP contributed 30% of the cost of its NewsStream Google project, totalling HK$130,204

More details on our audited 2019 expenditure:
2021 Priorities & Impact

- **Fundraising**: By the end of 2021, we will launch our open-source funding platform for small newsrooms, backed by Google’s Asia-Pacific Innovation Challenge. We will launch a 2021 Funding Drive before opening up the platform to all newsrooms to adopt.

- **Platforms**: HKFP will relaunch its Instagram strategy in 2021 to better engage young readers. We also plan to invest more in video.

- **Expansion**: We will seek to expand our team in 2021 with a sixth full-time staff member and a correspondent in Taiwan. We will also expand our circle of freelancers.

**Wide impact**: HKFP’s reporting was cited by numerous int’l outlets in 2019-20.

![HKFP Press Freedom Update](image)

- In August, Hong Kong Free Press was denied a work visa for a journalist following an almost six-month wait without any explanation. Aaron Mc Nicholas, previously a Bloomberg staffer, was forced to leave the territory, becoming the third Western journalist to be ousted. The move received international attention and was widely condemned by local and international press freedom groups.

- In December, bookstore Bookazine declined to distribute a book by HKFP political columnist Kent Ewing, citing fears over the national security law.

- During 2020, HKFP had difficulties printing merch and business cards.

**HKFP Press Freedom Update**

- In August, Hong Kong Free Press was denied a work visa for a journalist following an almost six-month wait without any explanation. Aaron Mc Nicholas, previously a Bloomberg staffer, was forced to leave the territory, becoming the third Western journalist to be ousted. The move received international attention and was widely condemned by local and international press freedom groups.

- In December, bookstore Bookazine declined to distribute a book by HKFP political columnist Kent Ewing, citing fears over the national security law.

**Hong Kong Press Freedom in 2020**

A summary of major press freedom incidents in Hong Kong:

**January**
- A police officer displayed the identity card and press card of a Stand News journalist during a livestreamed protest.
- A live stream of the world’s biggest debating contest was halted and later deleted during a discussion on Hong Kong democracy.

**February**
- Photos of Hong Kong protests were taken down from the website of an international photography contest.
- The Communications Authority said free-to-air television broadcasters are no longer required to air programmes from public broadcaster RTHK.
- Police apologised after an officer pushed a reporter to the ground during a protest in Tseung Kwan O.

**March**
- Hong Kong police chief Chris Tang blamed public distrust of the force on “fake news and fake information.”
- The Communications Authority said free-to-air television broadcasters are no longer required to air programmes from public broadcaster RTHK.
- Police apologised after an officer pushed a reporter to the ground during a protest in Tseung Kwan O.

**April**
- Chief Executive Carrie Lam defended government criticism of public broadcaster RTHK after a World Health Organisation official was asked during an interview about Taiwan’s membership status.
Hong Kong Press Freedom in 2020

May
- The government warned young people against reporting on protests after riot police took away two underaged volunteer reporters.
- Police ordered journalists at a protest in Mongkok to kneel and stop filming. They fired pepper spray at close range, and told them to read out personal details in front of a police camera.
- The government set up a team to review the governance and management of public broadcaster RTHK.

June
- A government-appointed board of advisers told RTHK to “embrace” the national security law and help Hong Kong people nurture their national identity.
- RTHK satirical news show “Headliner” ended its 31-year run following police and public complaints.
- A Stand News reporter was pushed over by plainclothes police at a protest in Yuen Long.

July
- The Foreign Correspondents’ Club issued an open letter to Chief Executive Carrie Lam demanding the government give assurances of press freedom under the national security law.
- Lam said she would guarantee press freedom if the media guaranteed that it would not violate the security law.
- The Hong Kong Journalists Association warned of the “chilling effect” of the law.
- The New York Times moved a third of its Hong Kong staff to Seoul, citing the national security law and the difficulty in securing work visas.
- Police fined journalists at a protest in Yuen Long for allegedly breaching anti-coronavirus social distancing rules.

August
- Police ordered reporters from five Hong Kong digital media platforms to leave a press conference.
- Apple Daily newspaper claimed that personal data of staffers had been published on a doxxing website.
- The Foreign Correspondents’ Club said reporters were facing “highly unusual” problems obtaining visas, including months-long delays.

September
- The University of Hong Kong was asked a long list of “unusual” questions by the Immigration Department when applying for a work visa for a Pulitzer-winning journalist.
- The government reportedly told an independent film distributor to include an official warning in two documentaries about the anti-extradition bill protests.
- Media groups criticised the police decision to stop recognising accreditations issued by journalist associations.
- RTHK journalist Nabela Qoser had her probation extended and was investigated again after she grilled Chief Executive Carrie Lam.

October
- National security police raided the private office of Jimmy Lai.
- A district councillor was given a suspended prison sentence for publicly identifying the policeman who allegedly shot an Indonesian journalist in the eye.
November
- Freelance producer Choy Yuk-ling was arrested for searching car licence plate records while researching a TV documentary about the 2019 Yuen Long mob attacks.
- A student journalist was charged with obstructing police and resisting arrest in a protest in May.
- Police arrested a journalist for obstruction after she refused to stop filming the arrest of two women in a mass protest in Mong Kok in May.
- Hong Kong Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung banned a planned journalists' protest against the arrest of Choy Yuk-ling citing Covid-19 restrictions, despite earlier approval.

December
- iCable News’ China desk resigned en masse after the broadcaster fired 40 people in the newsroom, citing the impact of Covid-19.
- Secretary for Home Affairs Caspar Tsui said the government would examine “loopholes” in the laws against fake news and misinformation.
- The Court of First Instance rejected the Hong Kong Journalist Association’s legal challenge against police “ill-treatment” of the media at protests.
- Prosecutors filed an appeal against the granting of bail to Jimmy Lai after Chinese state media criticised the decision.
- Lai resigned from Apple Daily parent company Next Media to “spend more time dealing with his personal affairs.”

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