



## 新里程 新契機

# New Milestone Augurs Bright Future

2012-13 年度，本會於 2012 年 9 月 22 日於昆明舉行大型的會師典禮，接着於 10 月 28 日舉行晚宴，慶祝成立二十周年。今年苗圃行動踏入第二十一個年頭，在慶祝二十周年的歡呼聲中靜下來，我們需要重思前路，讓苗圃可以走得更遠。過去一年，雖然面對不少的挑戰，但我們仍堅守理念及使命，並在前人的基礎下繼續拓展，隨着轉變亦帶來新的契機。

苗圃行動一直以備案身份在內地進行助學服務，未能正式註冊也未具備公募的身份。令人欣喜的是，我們今年正式設立合法的募款平台及成功註冊水富苗圃兒童福利院（水富苗圃），為本會在內地發展的一個里程碑。今年 1 月 1 日，本會正式與雲南省青少年發展基金會（青基會）簽署協議，可以透過青基會的戶口公開收取內地捐款，或舉行籌款活動時透過戶口收取善款，均開具內地免稅收據。

我們在今年 5 月與雲南省昭通市水富縣政府達成協議，簽署三年的合約，正式註冊成立水富苗圃兒童福利院，在 7 月 1 日開展我們的第一步，以小小園地，養育幼苗。這個開始並非一帆風順，從註冊程序、聘請員工、裝修院舍等都是千頭萬緒。如聘請院長的過程中，便先後有合適人選在赴任前，各自因健康理由或家庭阻撓而放棄。另外，我們亦面對與內地合作單位、員工或內部，在管理及處理手法上的不同看法。然而當中的一些小片段，令我相信這個項目的意義。水富苗圃的理事由內地的熱心人士組成，他們在起步初期呼籲身邊約 30 位朋友支持，捐贈圖書、風扇、日用品等，聚沙成塔。理事會主席薛永剛，更在短時間內為兩位高中的孩子提供實習

On 22 September 2012, Sowers Action organized the 20th Anniversary Joint Ceremony in Kunming, and followed with the anniversary dinner commemorating the 20th anniversary of Sowers Action on 28 October 2012. The festivities ended with great applause. Indeed, we have accomplished much, yet we cannot rest on our laurels. It is important for those we have committed to helping that we continue to move forward. Last year was a difficult time for us, but I'm proud to say that through it all we held to our founding principles and mission. These form a solid foundation that will see us through future transitional phases, be they good times or bad.

We now have a track record of executing educational aid services for those in need. And it is a credit to us that we were able to accomplish this without being a registered organization or an accredited fundraiser in China. This year we are delighted that Sowers Action has managed to establish an official fundraising platform, and further, has successfully registered "Shuifu Sowers Children's Home" in China. By signing an official agreement with Yunnan Youth Development Foundation (YDF) on 1 January 2013, Sowers Action can now receive donations from the public or raise funds through activities via YDF's account in China and, significantly, issue tax deductible receipts. Such legitimation marks an important milestone in the history of Sower Action's development in China.

In May 2013, Sowers Action established a working partnership with the Government of Shuifu County, Zhaotong City of Yunnan by signing a three-year official agreement for the registration of "Shuifu Sowers Children's Home". On 1 July 2013, we made our first small but meaningful step towards the creation of "Children's Home for the Betterment of Needy Children", an establishment dedicated to providing care and education for needy children in China. From the beginning, the project posed great challenges which we did our best to overcome. Registration procedures and efforts to decorate the Children's Home were far more difficult than expected. Another major hurdle was the hiring of the administrator for the Children's Home. Though we found several qualified candidates, each had to bow out due to health and family matters. In addition, adapting to the different mindset of each of the stakeholders, be they the staff members, contract workers or government officials, proved a

的機會，其中一位深有體會，因暑期實習令他找到理想，將來想為有需要的孩子做點事。雖則現時仍然荊棘滿途，我相信在不同義工、同事的共同努力下，我們必能披荊斬棘，逐步改善水富苗圃的硬、軟件的建設，造福更多處於困境的兒童。

與此同時，我們仍在既有的工作上默默耕耘。資助事務部方面，去年9月的昭通彝良及今年4月的四川雅安先後發生地震，本會皆有項目在兩地，十分關心災情，並迅速作出回應，立即派出工程工作組，視察學校的損壞情況，並劃撥救災基金作賑災之用。重點的師資培訓，我們去年培訓了4,600位老師，並已在五大範疇定下基礎，未來將探討集中地區及深化範疇的方向。學生資助方面，去年我們資助了9,509名高中生及228名大學生，並引用新計分法，有系統地揀選最需要幫助的學生。同時，成立學生發展小組，不再局限於金錢資助，期望有更深的發展，提供更多針對個人成長的培訓及活動。

去年我們亦面對不少挑戰，包括甘肅文縣七校的處理、建校項目因不符工程要求而撤資。雖然我們不能保證內地與我們百分百同步，曾出現與我們的要求有出入，要忍痛撤資的個案，無損我們的投入，正是有這種差異，我們才做倡導的工作，並明白不是一蹴而就。為着孩子的將來，我們願意繼續這份愚公移山的工作。

資助的項目實施有賴社會大眾捐款的支持。籌款方面，籌款收入下降為本會近年面對的挑戰，運作經費固然得來不易，而籌款活動的捐款及參加人數亦有減少的跡象，這將是未來仍要面對的問題。因此，我們不敢鬆懈，一方面改善資助項目的跟進，另一方面加強宣傳。基於現時各部門的人手緊絀，無暇兼顧拓展性的工作，董事局通過成立籌款策略部，主管定期捐款、企業社會責任(CSR)及內地平台，希望招募一些這方面的專才義工，為會方開拓新的善款來

challenge. Yet, through all of these travails, touching stories arose which empowered us to move forward with the project. We were particularly impressed by the council members for the Children's Home, all of them mainlanders, who displayed considerable dedication to the project. Each appealed to friends and family for donations of books, cooling fans, and other daily necessities. Our Council Chairman, Mr. Xue Yong Gang, tried very hard to provide two high school children with the opportunity of a summer internship program in a very short period of time. One of the children Mr. Sit managed to enroll was deeply inspired during her internship and subsequently decided to devote herself to help whom having similar situation in the future. From these experiences and others, we have learned that we can muddle our way through the hard times. And there will certainly be difficult times ahead, but I believe that through the joint effort of staff members and volunteers we will overcome all obstacles to finally bring the Children's Home for the Betterment of Needy Children to completion.

Apart from Children's Home, our most recent project, we have also been moving forward with our existing educational aid projects. A good case in point is our subsidy services. We are all aware of the earthquakes recorded in Yiliang, Zhaotong in September 2012 and in Ya'an, Sichuan in April 2013. As we already had subsidy projects in the affected areas, we immediately sent work groups to access the impact of these two disasters and allocate relief funds to the affected regions. Our teacher training projects are also making good progress, with 4,600 teachers receiving training last year.

At present, we have five specific focus areas in teacher training: English Learning, Special Education, Pre School Education, Mental Health and School Management. Looking ahead, we are committed to exploring new directions, including work in different locations and in different fields of aid. One of our recent initiatives is our student sponsorship project, which to date has sponsored 9,509 high school students and 228 undergraduates. We managed to maximize our sponsorships in large part by employing a new calculation method that allows us to stretch our funds such that they can be allocated in a widespread and effective manner to the neediest students. Helping with this endeavor is our recently formed Student Development Team dedicated to overcoming funding constraints while developing personal growth programs for needy students.

As mentioned earlier, last year we encountered difficult challenges in running our subsidy projects including management issues at our schools in Wen County, Gansu Province as well as withdrawal of disqualified school construction projects. We were not able to keep



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源，籌募穩定的收入。而籌款活動部成立的部會，讓各籌委會清晰會方的支援及指引，定下劃一的守則、程序，每個籌款活動皆有一個對口的部員，讓溝通的渠道更順暢，期望提高效率及統一形象。

everything in sync between China and Hong Kong in terms of standards and requirements; withdrawal of projects occurred but we will not be discouraged by this setback. But in saying this, we have always been aware that there is no fast track to success; moreover, we are willing to do whatever we can to get around the problems that confront us as our cause, the betterment of children, is well worth the trouble.

總括而言，我們有二十年來建立的基礎及累積的強項，但不諱言面對的挑戰，亦不迴避不足之處。就像一個孩子的求學路或人生路，路不是平坦的，即或如此，我深信現時職員、義工團隊皆心懷熱情及理想，冀望在助學路上盡一分力，發揮所長。助學之路任重道遠，深盼苗圃上下能同心同步前行，走得更遠。

The execution of educational aid projects are supported by public donations but the decline in donations has made carrying out our mandate particularly challenging. It is difficult to raise operational expense and making matters worse, we have noticed a drop in the number of participants in our events and the amounts brought in by our fundraising activities is steadily declining. Now more than ever, we should not slacken in our efforts. Instead, we should focus on enhancing the quality of our educational aid projects while strengthening our marketing strategy. For example, many of our development projects have gone idle due to manpower shortages, so the Volunteer Board of Directors established a new department, the Fundraising Tactics Department, responsible for regular donations, Corporate Social Responsibility and finally for the development of a viable donation platform in China. At present, the Fundraising Tactics Department is looking to recruit skilled volunteers in order to tap multiple funding sources and secure stable income streams. Among the sub-groups under the umbrella of the Fundraising Activity Department is an organizing committee with the mandate of establishing clear guidelines, backup support and standardized procedures for all fundraising activities. A committee member in the role of a coordinator will be assigned to each fundraising activity. He or she will be charged with smoothing the lines of communication, enhancing the overall efficiency of the project in question and maintaining the consistency of the Sowers Action brand image.

Twenty years of experience has availed us of a solid foundation from which to conduct future projects and a competitive advantage over other charities chasing after a shrinking pool of donations. Part of being an effective organization is having the humility to admit one's failures. Only by doing so will we improve and become better equipped to face future challenges. The process is much like that of a child trying to learn to walk: it gets up, it stumbles, it gets up again, it stumbles, but very soon it is walking distances and then running. Any worthwhile job is going to entail pain and struggle. Our staff members and volunteers are aware of this yet they are willing to strive to provide the best they can for a cause they know to be noble. I'm looking forward to working with our team to make our organization more sustainable and long lived.

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總幹事

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