



國內服務 China Services Department

國內服務部回顧

烏龜除了給人的感覺是長壽和行動緩慢之外，有一點我倒喜歡的，就是牠的頭是不能回頭望。一直以來，我並不喜歡緬懷過去，因為我深信未來的路該怎麼走？遠比檢討過去和把握現在更為重要。

過去一年給每個苗圃人的感覺都是過得這麼快，我隨意問問國部友：「過去一年那件事苗圃國部事情令你印象最深刻？」十居其九都是四川大地震，其次的是有北京的國情培訓班、工作組遇上的交通意外等等。有關一些呆板的統計數字，例如建校多少間？資助多少個學生？相信這年報一定給你不少準確的答案，所以這方面的回顧，大可下刪三百字。

只要是流著龍的血，有思想的你，相信在512過後的四川地震的片段，一定觸動你不少的心靈。繼去年六月的普洱市地震，多災多難的中國又遇到世紀浩劫，而作為一個有良知的NGO，我們可以做的，就是集中在恢復教育這一方面了。過去每次接到內地天災、雪災或地震的消息後，我們便會立即從多方面，分工合作地去研究，可以為山區的學童提供什麼幫助，並且坐言起行。而在這次受災地方那麼廣，受影響的學生那麼多，我們該怎樣去協調呢？幸運地，苗圃於甘肅省文縣（汶川地震震央以北）的幾所苗圃重建的學校，沒有受到結構上的影響。亦因為我們過去的認真工作方式，十二字真言，對施工和學校的質量那麼執著，苗圃也因此受到外間，

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Turtles impress people with their longevity and slowness in motion. But I like turtles for the way in which their heads are made, as they can never look backwards. I do not care to cherish past memories, because I believe that having confidence in choosing for the future is more important than reflecting on the past or seizing the moment.

The majority of Sowers Action's volunteers felt that year 2007 went by rapidly. When I asked fellow volunteers of the China Services Department what, for them, was the most impressive event of 2007, nine out of ten pointed to the Sichuan earthquake. Following the earthquake, most impressive events of 2007 included the China affairs training course that took place in Beijing, the accident that happened to the Organization's work team and etc. Since rigid statistical numbers, such as the number of schools built and students receiving assistance, are accurately set out in the annual report, I shall shorten this report by 300 words.

As long as Chinese blood runs in your vein, an intelligent being like you would certainly be moved after seeing film fragments of the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan. Following the Puer quake in June 2006, ill-fated China was again faced with catastrophe. As a conscientious NGO (non-profit organization), Sowers Action could but concentrate on education restoration. In the past, every time after hearing news of natural disasters, snow storms or earthquakes in China, Sowers Action's staff and volunteers would immediately spread out, divide up tasks and ponder over what could be done to help students in the mountainous regions. Once plans were formulated, action followed. In view of the extensive area hit by the quake and the large number of students affected, how could we help? Schools re-built by Sowers Action in Wen County, Gansu Province, north of the epicenter in Wenchuan, were fortunate enough not to have suffered structural damage. Owing to Sowers Action's stringent compliance with the principles of on-the-spot investigation, direct assistance and long-term follow-up and the importance it attributed to the quality of construction, the Organization's reputation on "compliance and quality" spread far and beyond, drawing admiration from local, domestic and international peers. Sowers Action's reputation had again been boosted as its work had won worldwide recognition. As for post-quake follow-up, Sowers Action collaborated with the Institute of Engineers, hopefully members



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以及遠至內地和外國所注視。亦因此苗圃的知名度及認受性也得以提高不少。在地震後的跟進工作組，我們已和工程師學會合作，希望更能有系統和效率地發揮各人的所長。亦因為地震後，太多的熱心人士想參與山區工作組，有一次的培訓班人數，更突破八十多人。為了回應社會間各人對苗圃的期望，我們要做得更好。

一直以來，國內服務部的義工和職員，都是本著對助學的熱誠工作，可以說是業餘，但對大部份人來說又顯得很專業似的。在北京國情培訓班的數天，一行二十人，包括義工、香港和雲南的職員，接受了各學術領域權威人士的講課，大部份都是大學講師。這對苗圃各人員的國情了解和未來發展產生重要的幫助，可惜的是我未能抽空出席，不過因應捐資者的要求，這次培訓後回來的人員，需要開辦多次的座談會，再向外教導分享，薪火相傳。我們經常說助學的硬件例如學校是基本的，軟件方面，例如師資培訓也不可缺少，這次向前線人員提供的國情培訓，正正表現出我們對這方面的重視。

過去十多年來的山區工作組，雖然面對的是變化萬千的天氣，崎嶇的山路，但我們總得到上天的保佑，未有重大事故的發生。可是去年年底的大關縣工作組卻發生了一次重大的交通意外，四名工作組義工受了傷，其中一位更是重傷，幸好現在的她已經大致上康復。從這件事給我的感受是，雖然苗圃只是一個義工為主的助學團體，但是內裡卧虎藏龍，在危機管理

of the post-quake work team could systematically and effectively bring out their skills to best play. After the quake, many compassionate individuals sought to join Sowers Action's work teams and visit the mountainous regions. As such, over 80 persons participated in the China-service training course. To not disappoint the public and live up to the expectations they have for Sowers Action, we will work harder and do better.

For a long time, China Services Department's volunteers and staff carried out their work on education assistance on the strength of their passion and compassion, they were non-pros! However, results achieved by their efforts were somewhat professional. During the few days when the China affairs training course was held in Beijing, the group of 20 (including Sowers Action's volunteers and staff from the Organization's Hong Kong and Yunnan Offices) received lectures from academics of authority who were mostly university professors from various disciplines. This was extremely helpful to the Organization's volunteers and staff with regard to knowledge on China's current situation and direction for Sowers Action's future development. My only regret was that I had been unable to participate in the training because of conflicting schedules. To accommodate donors' requests, individuals having participated in the training were liable to host seminars and pass their knowledge to all those seeking to know. We often referred to schools as the basic hardware of education assistance while teacher training being the software. Providing China affairs training to frontline personnel illustrated that Sowers Action saw the importance of training up all those designated to carry out the Organization's work.

In the past decade and a half, work teams servicing the mountainous regions had to confront ever-changing weather and rugged roads, yet no major incident had ever happened. We seemed to have been blessed by the Lord in heaven. However, at the end of 2007, a serious traffic accident happened to members of the work team dispatched to Daguan County. Among the four volunteers who had sustained injuries, one was seriously injured. Fortunately this seriously injured member has been close to full recovery. What I learned from this accident was, even though Sowers Action was a volunteer-led charity organization providing education assistance, it had no lack of elites camouflaged under a humble demeanor. Therefore, whenever a dangerous situation arose, Sowers Action's Board of Directors would immediately establish a work group



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中，我們的董事局已即時成立危機處理小組，統籌各項工作，正面地去處理這事故。

曾在苗圃親身參與各活動的義工，相信定必經驗過花在開會討論的時間會是很多。過去每個資助建校的項目，是需要每月舉行的國內服務部討論和投票通過的，人多並不一定會好辦事，相反地，會因為一人一張咀而令到討論項目的時間過長。另一方面，也因為沒有一個既定的標準，從而影響到審批的流程。所以國內服務部為了加快審批的時間，已成立審批委員會，授權委任的四人去審批所有項目。

另外，為了加強跟進項目的進度，地區幹事、香港和雲南的職員共同研究並設計了項目動態表的檔案，以便統一各方面的資料，以便向各界或捐資者，匯報項目的進度。

緊隨著內地的教育方向，職業中學這一個名詞也因溫總提出的政策而被重視了，這個令到初中生畢業後，不能升讀高中的學生，可以多一門出路就是被職業培訓，學習一技之長。雖然現在中央對這些職中學生的補貼也算多，但是在高昂的住校生活費之下，很多偏遠窮鄉的學生就不能入讀，所以過去一年苗圃已資助了十間職業中學的困難學生。

雖然內地經濟發展非常之快，GDP仍保持著雙位數的增長，但是在教育方面的每年撥款依然是很細少，而用在特殊教育這一方面的支出更是極少。而苗圃也開始了資助殘障人士的一

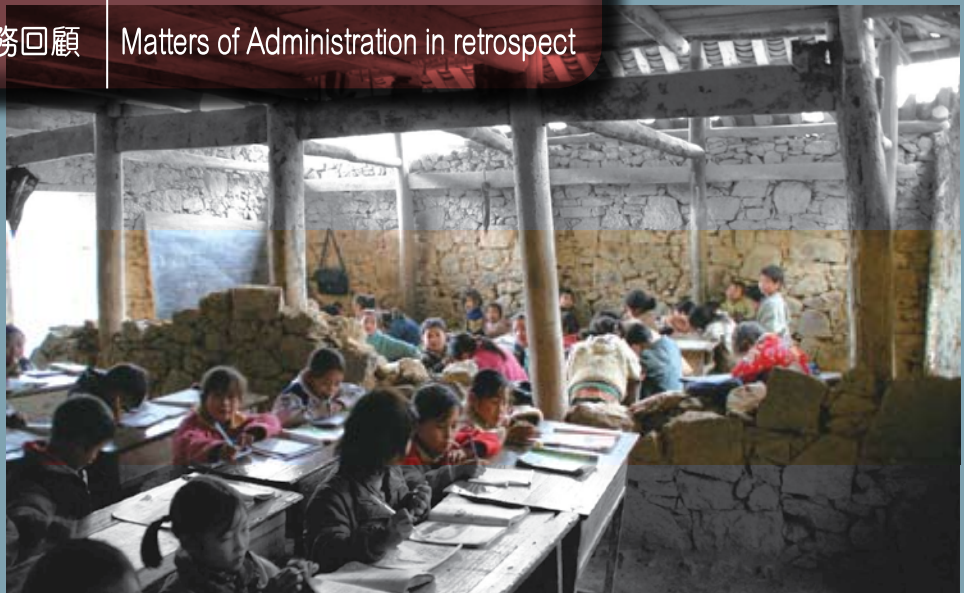
to organize various tasks aiming to tackle the issue, hence confronting the situation in a positive manner.

Volunteers having participated in activities organized by Sowers Action must have noticed that much time was spent in meetings. Every single school re-construction project undertaken by Sowers Action in the past had to go through lengthy discussions, followed by approval by vote, at the China Services Department's monthly meetings. It was difficult to arrive at a decision when too many people were involved in a single task, as a word from each person would necessarily prolong the meeting. Also, the examination and approval process would be affected as there was no pre-set standard. Therefore, to shorten the time needed for examination and approval, the China Services Department had set up an Examination and Approval Committee, authorizing the appointment of four persons to examine and approve all projects.

Furthermore, to hasten the progress of project follow-up, upon deliberation by Sowers Action's Regional Executives and staff of the Hong Kong and Yunnan Offices, project development charts were designed and folders assigned to every single project were created to bring together all the information concerning a project. This would facilitate the task of informing donors and the public on project progress.

Following the trend of education in China, the importance of vocational-secondary schools began to emerge after Premier Wen unfurled his new policy: lower-secondary graduates not eligible to enroll in upper-secondary schools could take up vocational training. This aimed to give students with lesser academic records one more way to make a living: to learn a specific skill. Even though the Central Government had been generous in providing subsidies to vocational schools, such schools were still out of reach of students from impoverished remote rural areas as a result of high boarding and living fees. In the past year Sowers Action had provided assistance to impoverished students studying in 10 vocational-secondary schools.

Despite rapid economic development sustaining a double-digit GDP growth, the amount of funds allocated for use in education by the Chinese Government remained meager, and sums allocated for special education was minimal. Sowers Action had, therefore, started to provide



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些學校項目，首次的資助是南寧的一所學校，捐助了電腦連盲文點顯器，也是希望他們能學有所成，自力更生。

同樣地，經濟急促發展就需要龐大的勞動力，各省市的民工就湧到一些大城市工作，而他們的子女一同到了當地後，沒有合法戶籍的結果就是未能入讀當地的學校，民工子弟學校也隨之而出現。而苗圃也本著助學的心，亦在未來跟進這些項目的資助可行性。

為了配合零八北京奧運，以及本會的籌款活動新春助學行，我們資助的學校配套項目，再不只是圖書了，還有一些供學生使用的體育用品和設施。這便能讓學生從書本上得到應有的知識之餘，也希望有強健的身體，或許未來的奧運冠軍在小學期間，也曾享受過苗圃資助的用品。

展望將來，苗圃的腳步是不能停下來，更不能放慢來的。過去一年除了開拓了一個新的長期資助地區四川省瀘州市之外，苗圃更已在甘肅省展開更多的資助項目。學生資助方面，受惠於兩免一補的政策下，我們的方向便要考慮資源應怎樣重新調配，是加強高中生獎學金的資助？還是研究資助貧困和成績優異的大學生呢？

總括而言，我在苗圃的八個年頭以來，過去的一年是我所見到，最團結、最有質素的義工和職員團隊。這麼漫長的助學路，是需要你這麼火熱的助學心。

國內服務部長
劉國雄

assistance to projects undertaken by schools catering to the handicapped. The first of such assistance was provided to a school in Nanning, which involved the purchase of braille-equipped computers that catered also to the blind. Hopefully, even the blind could manage to make a living upon receiving proper schooling.

Similarly, rapid economic development required the support of a large labor force. As such, workers from provinces all over China rushed to work in China's large cities. Not registered as permanent residents of the cities, children of workers who went to the cities with their parents could not enroll in the cities' schools. Therefore, schools for children of migrant workers started to spring up. Following the objective of education assistance, Sowers Action would look into the feasibility of providing assistance to such schools.

In view of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the Organization's fund-raising event CNY Walk for Education Assistance, auxiliary school facilities sponsored by Sowers Action were no longer limited to library books, sports equipment and facilities also became objects of assistance. Besides acquiring knowledge through reading, students should also have a healthy body. Perhaps, future gold medalists of China in the Olympics are benefiting from the sports equipment and facilities purchased with Sowers Action's assistance now.

Looking into the future, Sowers Action can neither slow down its pace nor stop advancing. In the past year, besides having opened up for long-term assistance a new region in Luzhou City, Sichuan Province, Sowers Action had also developed various assistance projects in Gansu Province. As regards students, under the "2-waivers & 1-subsidy" policy, in view of the direction we are heading, Sowers Action must consider resource re-allocation. For instance, should we raise the amount in scholarships given to upper-secondary students? Or, should we provide assistance to impoverished students with outstanding academic achievement so that they could attend university?

In conclusion, of the 8 years I have worked for Sowers Action, 2007 was to me the year where the Organization had achieved the highest degree of unity, as supported by quality volunteers and staff. The long road of education assistance truly needs the unrelenting support of your fervent heart.

Eric Lau
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