



## 邁步向前

# Big Step Forward

回顧過去一年，慈善業界所面對的難題，相信必定是公眾對慈善機構善款運用及資助項目質素的存疑。對苗圃行動來說，自2008年四川汶川、2012年雲南彝良，至2013年四川雅安地震，都是給苗圃和苗校的重大考驗。

在三次天災中，苗校都能做到「中震可修，大震不倒」，沒有師生傷亡，實在是不幸之中的大幸。仔細思考會發現，此大幸來之不易，也並非理所當然，這有賴我們在二十一年來，義工和職員一直以務實嚴謹的工作態度，對資助項目進行長期跟進，確保建築物的質量符合國家標準，抵禦強震以保護師生，亦為當地帶來標準示範，顯示質量的重要性。監管善款運用方面，與受助方簽訂協議，分期撥款及直接匯款予受助方等安排，均可有助監察善款的去向及使用情況，免除外界擔心善款被貪或挪用的憂慮。當然，我們亦會不斷與時並進，適時檢討跟進資助項目及監察善款的規則，務求改善工作系統，讓捐款人及大眾放心。

隨着去年底修改會章，我們突破三大資助工作，在特教的範圍內，開展了嶄新的孤兒資助項目，登記成立民辦非企業的水富苗圃兒童福利院（水富苗圃），營運福利院，為苗圃在內地資助的一大突破。資助孤兒服務，仍是與助學相關，以苗圃的理念去營運福利院，為孩子提供基本的生活保障下，幫扶他們升學及接受個人成長的指導，並協助殘障兒童爭取康復治療服務，希望為他們提供安全溫暖的成長環境。苗圃踏出這新的一步，除了做到「拾遺補缺」，幫助弱勢兒童之外，亦希望以水富苗圃的成功開展為藍本，輻射各地，為內地保護兒童的工作發展，帶來裨益。

Over the past year, the use of donations and the quality of projects subsidized through donations has aroused public suspicion to the point where overcoming this perception has become one of the primary challenges faced by charitable organizations in Hong Kong. However, for Sowers Action, our biggest challenge remains, and will always remain, providing relief in the wake of natural disasters, including the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan, the 2012 earthquake in Yiliang and the 2013 earthquake in Ya'an. All of these catastrophes caused untold harm and remain in our minds the most difficult hurdles our schools and organization have had to overcome.

We were very fortunate that none of the three quakes mentioned caused any fatalities among either our students or our teachers. Indeed, in the aftermath of each of these earthquakes, our schools were categorized as "repairable post a mild earthquake and capable of remaining upright in a strong earthquake". This outcome was not simply a matter of luck. Over the years, the efforts and contributions of our devoted staff members along with the pragmatic and conscientious attitude they bring to their work had much to do with the safety record of our schools. For it was these members that took the trouble to conduct long-term follow-up inspections for all our projects, ensuring that the work done complied with national standards for earthquake resistance. The follow-up work that these individuals undertook ensured the safety of the buildings that protected the teachers and students from the effects of the earthquakes. Our buildings had the additional benefit of providing an example to the local community of the importance of strictly adhering to construction standards.

Part of the money that went into these schools came from donations. The use of donations at Sowers Action is strictly monitored; for example, our practice is to sign a contractual agreement with the recipient of our funds. The funds are paid in installments directly into the recipient's bank account. This practice allows us to carefully monitor all furnished monies and greatly reduce the chances that these funds will be funneled to a third party. An added benefit is that this method goes far to ease public concerns over corruption and fund diversions. By no means, however, do we wish to imply that we have become complacent about our monitoring. We remain vigilant and also regularly review

配合國家教育政策的發展，我們將會把資源更有效地投放於師生資助及軟件發展上，亦探討軟硬兼施的可行性，讓師資培訓、學生資助及特殊教育的項目可以持續及均衡發展。新方向能令苗圃的資助緊貼內地發展的需要，把善款用到真正所需之餘，也藉此改善學習質素，讓學生由「能上學」，提升至「上好學」的更佳環境。基於內地學校拼撤問題的放緩，一些村小仍有其保留價值，我們亦會關注這方面的需要，如我們也重開在湖南的資助。同時，我們的資助不會因一些地方政府的不配合而卻步，我們會因應調整在不同地區的資助，尋求與不同政府單位、地區及夥伴的合作。

要把各類型的資助項目做好，當然需要穩定而充足的善款來支持。隨着去年籌款活動部部會的組成及籌款策略部的成立，我期望籌款與資助事務同步，透過活動傳遞我們的助學訊息，讓參加者更加了解苗圃、受助者和山區學校。有賴各活動籌委會的配合，現每個活動皆明

our policies, best practices and monitoring mechanisms, always wary of the latest chicanery practiced by others. In times when the public's distrust of charitable organizations is high, it is more than ever critical that we have the proper management systems in place to avoid all appearance of impropriety.

Shortly after the amendments to Sowers Action's constitution last year, a breakthrough was achieved with respect to our three core educational aid programs: School Constructions, Student Sponsorship and Teacher Training. During the course of our work to lay the administrative groundwork for our new orphan project in Shuifu County — the "Shuifu Sowers Children's Home" — we successfully registered as a private non-enterprise unit. This means that we are now authorized to operate a Children's Home in Shuifu, thus marking an important milestone since we made our first foray into China.

Children's Home is not a stand-alone project but rather one closely aligned with our core philosophy of providing a safe and comfortable home for children by first attending to their basic needs, helping them get an education, and even assisting them with personal life training, including helping them to further their education beyond secondary school. For our physically disabled students we do all we can to provide adequate rehabilitation





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確資助項目，並在步行中加插探訪資助學校、學生交流及家訪等活動，令參加者明白善款的用途，增加籌款推動力，參加者可從中感受到山區生活的困難及助學工作的意義，我期望有更多人藉此加入苗圃，成為我們的支持者及義工，最終目標就是讓更多學生受惠。

苗圃內部工作方面，會力求上進，不斷提升服務的質素。例如，透過加強各個部門、財政及資助範疇的運作機制，有指引可循，配合推行資料文件的電腦化保存，以確保工作的準確性及提升效率。

隨著水富苗圃的成立，以及本會寄掛雲南省青少年發展基金會下，可公開收取善款，標誌着有正式的途徑募捐，可說是本會在內地的重要里程碑。因此，我們計劃更集中拓展內地的平台，招募更多志願者參與和支持，並希望能增加善款來源及數目。

展望未來，我們依靠前人的經驗，堅守助學原則，配合創新的思維與技術，繼續發展，也不會因一時的成功而滿足現狀。前面還有很多的希望、機遇、挑戰及難關，憑著苗圃的精神，一顆火熱的心，以及苗圃同仁的並肩努力，相信我們都可以一一迎接和跨越。

我們藉此機會，感謝社會各界、熱心市民、捐款者及義工們，多年來一直對苗圃的關心和支持。助學之路有您們同行，是一股多麼強大的力量，推動我們繼續邁步向前，為中國教育事業描繪出更光明的前景。您，就是我們當中的梵高和畢加索！

我想用一句話與大家共勉：不管是大震來襲，中震來擾，苗圃精神屹立不倒！

services. Apart from furthering our efforts to aid minority children, we hope that the success of Children's Home presents a framework for our projects in other areas.

Aligning more closely with national education policies, we will, going forward, have the wherewithal to allocate more resources to charitable projects related to teachers and students, including the furnishing of software support. We hope that the new direction we have taken will ultimately lead to stronger social cohesion between the various parties involved in our charitable endeavors, helping us to make better use of our donations leading to a higher quality of education for the children under our care.

Our program comes at a critical juncture in the transformation of China's national education system, a time when the push to merge smaller schools into large schools is being slowed. Thus, village schools are still playing an important role within the national education system and, as such, are worth cultivating. Towards this end, we have taken the step of reactivating our school subsidy projects in Hunan. For schools in areas that have received less than adequate local support, we are committed to continuing with our services without interruption. Our approach will be to continue to modify our programs to work more efficiently with the resources we have at hand. At the same time we will work closely with our local government contacts and partners to fill in any shortfalls in funding.

Stable and adequate funding is the lifeblood of any sustainable charity. Following the revitalization of our Fundraising Tactics Department, we expect more fundraising events that will in turn subsidize our various charitable projects. Through fundraising events, we will be able to promote our work in China, giving the public a deeper understanding of what we do here at Sowers Action. Our Fundraising Activities Department, working in collaboration with our Organizing Committee for Fundraising Events, ensure that each fundraising event is tied to a specific corresponding charitable project as opposed to Sowers Action, the organization. In this way, participants get a fuller picture of how donations are to be used and of the difficulties faced by underprivileged students. Images of trips to our schools and of the homes and living conditions of the students have proved quite effective in this respect. Our new approach holds the promise of injecting new life into fundraising drives while at the same time encouraging more people to become supporters and volunteers.

Some resources have been directed to improving the infrastructure of our organization in order to improve our overall effectiveness. For example, we set out clear guidelines to strengthen the operations of our various departments, mainly by computerizing our document management systems. We are already seeing the fruits of these efforts in terms of better work efficiency and accuracy.

With the establishment of Children's Home and with the partnership of the Yunnan Youth Development Foundation, Sowers Action is now eligible to receive funding in China through an official donation platform. This marks an important milestone in our history. We plan to build on this platform by appealing for more donations, volunteers and supporters within mainland China.

By leveraging on past experience and by sticking to our working principles, we will continue to expand our charity through innovation and hard work. We will never compromise our core values for short-term results. The future holds both challenges and opportunities, but we will overcome all obstacles through teamwork and team spirit.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to you, the public, as well as our partners, donors and volunteers for your long-term support and contributions. We are glad that you are with us as we all walk towards what is sure to be a bright future.

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何毅良  
董事局主席

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Albert Ho  
Chairperson of the Board of Directors