

主席的話

Chairperson's Message

主席 何毅良先生

苗圃行動在香港已有23載，作為幫助內地教育的團體，身為主席，我深切體會在這瞬息萬變的世代、面對中國經濟發展一日千里，我們既要堅守信念、虛懷若谷，亦不能固步自封，方能另覓發展境地。

創會之初，我們致力「將人口包袱轉化為智力資源」。隨著中國人口政策轉變，在學校建設投放不少資源，及至留守兒童和少子化的問題出現，我們不能只安守在建校、學生資助和師資培訓的工作上；加上近年的中港矛盾，為我們的籌款工作帶來阻力。在善款不斷下降和項目成本不斷上漲的擊下，我們必須認知到自身的能力、社會認受性及實際的需求，從中作出平衡考慮。當中我們瞄準福利院的項目，可以作出更大的平衡發展，不單能擴大內地孩子的資助範圍，亦能加強籌款能力，遂把兒童福利院歸入「兒童青少年福利」，為我們的五大服務之一，加強對水富苗圃兒童福利院(水苗)和化旦尖措孤兒學校(化旦)的援助。正因上述種種，我們最近對願景和使命作出修改：

願景：中國沒有孩子因困境而得不到學習機會

使命：凝聚社會資源，透過義工熱誠參與，投放在教育和福利院，讓困境兒童得到良好學習條件及健康成長環境。

Chairperson Mr. Albert Ho

Sowers Action was established in 1992 with its commitment in promoting education aid in rural China. 23 years on, we have witnessed significant changes in China's economy. These changes, like ocean waves, are coming bigger and faster. As the Chairperson of Sowers Action, I see a necessity for us to ride in front of these waves to create our future, a future adhering to our mission and original intents without losing our humility.

For many years since our establishment, we dedicated our efforts to transform China's population burden into intellectual resources through building rural schools, subsidizing students and training teachers. Since then, China has shifted its population policy and has dedicating more resources on school constructions. At the same time, we have seen a decline in birth rate and hence number of children left behind in rural villages. On the other hand, escalating tensions between Mainland China and Hong Kong in recent years have put pressure on our fundraising efforts. All these are building up to significant changes to our services, creating a wave we must ride on. For this, we must have a clear view on our own capability, the actual needs and public's view and acceptability of our approaches. We must then strike a balance amongst all these factors. After thorough consideration, we decided to dedicate more efforts onto children's home projects for orphans and children including those with disabilities. We see this as an extension in coverage for those in need and also expanding our fundraising causes. For this reason, we have added "Children and Youth Welfare" as one of our five service categories and dedicated more supports to Shuifu Sowers Children's Home and Huadanjiancuo Orphan School. Our vision and mission statements have been revised accordingly as:

Vision: No child in China should be deprived of their education due to poverty

Mission: To provide children in poverty with good education conditions and healthy environment to grow up by pooling social resources and mobilizing volunteers' efforts on school and children's home projects.



兒童青少年福利現涵蓋水苗和化旦兩個重點項目，孩子年齡層廣，包括嬰孩、幼兒、中小學生，他們或許是孤兒或殘障生，要照顧他們周全，莫過於提供一站式服務：讀書溫飽、發展潛能、復康訓練、心理輔導、工作實習，甚至讀大學或海外升學，讓他們日後自力更新，而我們正著力從這方向發展。

回想兩年前成立水苗，困難重重，甚至不被看好，到現在獲捐款者支持，更獲當地政府肯定其理念和創新的管理服務模式，邀請我們在昭通市福利院會議上分享活動策劃、培訓和孩子康復醫療等情況。更令我們鼓舞的是，民政局把水苗列為昭通市的學習典範，透過參觀和經驗分享，讓內地同業學習和複製經驗，這實在令我們雀躍，為我們日後拓展福利項目，注入一支強心針。

當福利項目如火車頭般火速前進，我們亦不會忽略原有工作。未來高中生的資助將有新的嘗試，我們在2015至2016年度先作試行，挑選40名高一生參與「陪苗成長營」計劃，此乃為學生資助的延續和發展，通過成長營、書信、社交媒體、電話等多樣聯系，讓學生得到課堂以外的知識、經驗和關懷，同時建立互動的支援網絡，陪伴學生在自信積極的氛圍下成長。

面對籌款的挑戰，我們重思籌款策略，今年新成立捐款發展小組，主要開發中港商界和基金資助，集中跟進他們的資助需要，加強與投資者的關係，擴展網絡。

These two projects are key examples of our Children and Youth Welfare, serving orphaned or disabled children ranging from infants to secondary school students. Comprehensive supports are provided at these centers, including daily necessities, schooling, training, rehabilitation, counselling, apprenticeships and even local or overseas higher education opportunities. In these ways the children can be best prepared for a long term self-sustainable development.

I can still recall the difficult times when we first set up children's home projects. Staying ahead of a wave demands trying new approaches and constantly challenging ourselves and those around us. Two years on, we are beginning to reap what we have sowed — rapports from donors, as well as recognitions from local governments on our model of management and service. We have been invited to share our experiences in these welfare projects on provision of training and rehabilitation for children at the Zhaotong City Welfare Conference. What's more encouraging is that the Civil Affairs Bureau has listed Shuifu Sowers Children's Home as an exemplary service and arranged our Mainland counterparts to visit and draw lessons from our experiences. This is undoubtedly a much needed shot in the arm to keep up our effort in forthcoming children's home projects.

Whilst we are in full steam on these new developments, we have not overlooked our original scope of services. Amongst many, we have a new initiative intended for high school students called the "Sowers Growing scheme". This will be introduced with Zhaotong and Lincang as pilot cities in 2015-16. As an extension to our existing student subsidy initiatives, 40 students in their first year of high school will be selected and provided with opportunities to expand their knowledge through different interactions, such as "growth camps" and communications through different means — by post, social media, telephone etc. This is intended to broaden their knowledge and experiences to that beyond their classrooms and normal daily routines. The interactive network to be formed amongst the participants shall also foster their personal development in a confident and active manner.

To support our ongoing works, fundraising is a key and inevitable challenge. For this we have reviewed and strategized our approaches. A new Fundraising Development Committee has been set up and will focus on working with business corporates both in Hong Kong and Mainland China to garner funding. Tailoring for needs based on different corporate social responsibility requirements, the team will focus on development of potentially longer term partnerships and development of networks that has broad reaches.

主席的話

Chairperson's Message

此外，近來中國政府提出對境外非政府組織管理法進行草案修改，擬確立公安部門為登記機關，並加強對境外非政府組織資金來源及使用的管理。雖然修定內容還未落實，但對我們這等境外機構而言，可說是有潛在風險，亦可能是機遇的到來。我們會密切留意事態發展，因為機會只留給早作準備的人。

向來良好管治，是持續發展的重要基石，因此我們致力提升機構管治效能。今年董事局和執委會成員參與了管理層培訓工作坊，優化管治和籌募發展；同時亦通過年度大會，讓香港和雲南辦事處的一眾管理層和職員聚首，加強溝通，減少合作和行事上的文化差異。由於反應良好，對促進上下和各辦事處齊心合一的機構文化起積極作用，我們計劃每年舉辦，以穩定完善的團隊，共同面對將來挑戰。

我們明白面前任重而道遠，但願社會各界齊心並肩，實現內地教育全面普及，為每個孩子送上一對自由的翅膀，減少跨代貧窮，讓願景成真。

The Chinese government has recently proposed a legislative amendment requiring non-local, i.e. external non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to register with local public security authorities before they can commence operations. Scrutiny over their sources of finance and expenses will also be stepped up. Although the bill has yet to be formally endorsed, external NGOs like Sowers Action must be alert to the potential risks and opportunities. We see this as the next wave rolling in the horizon, and are keeping a close eye on its development so we can be already moving when that next wave arrives.

Sustainable development always rests on good governance, therefore we are devoted to continuously enhance the organization's quality of governance. Earlier this year, members of our Volunteer Board of Directors and Executive Committee attended various senior management training workshops. Our annual meeting was also utilized as a platform for the senior management and staff members in the Hong Kong and Yunnan offices to gather together, interact with each other, enhancing mutual understanding to minimize cultural differences in a cooperative and practical manner. These meetings were very well received amongst participating colleagues and we are planning to make it an annual event to foster team building efforts and prepare ourselves for future challenges.

Ahead of us, we know we have huge responsibilities to fulfill. We sincerely hope that the society as a whole can work together towards the goal of making education accessible to all in Mainland China. In doing so, we are empowering children to go for their dreams, breaking the cycle of generational poverty and making our vision a reality.

