

# Love in Action

--A reflection on Amity's work

The Amity Foundation is an independent Chinese voluntary organization founded in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians and support of interested groups to promote education, social services, health, community development, environment protection, disaster relief, and poverty reduction in the underdeveloped areas of China. Amity projects have benefited more than ten million people both at home and abroad. In 2014 the Amity Foundation was granted the special consultative status by the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Abiding by principles of mutual respect and interfaith harmony, Amity builds friendship with people at home and abroad. Through the promotion of holistic development and public welfare, Amity serves society, benefits the people, and contributes to world peace.

Amity projects have focused on community governance through promoting rural community integrated development projects and urban community service. Our working areas include, but not limited to, primary education, environmental protection, and assistance to particular disadvantaged groups. With thousands of such projects, sustainable development in the project areas has been enhanced.

## **1. Amity's Practice**

### ***1.1 Rural community development***

#### **1.1.1 Community development and environment protection**

Amity has implemented over 30 Rural Integrated Development Projects in Hunan, Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, etc., helping establish more than 200 farmers' autonomous organizations, playing an active role in encouraging villagers participation in community construction. Project implementation items, including capacity building, education, health care, farming infrastructure, returning cultivated land to grassland and forests, animal husbandry, green and recyclable energy and cultural preservation have led to ongoing improvement in community economy, eco-environment, health care, education, cultural heritage, and community reconstruction and sustainable development, benefiting a target population of nearly 6 million.

#### **1.1.2. Public healthcare and HIV-AIDS prevention**

Based in rural communities, Amity projects have attempted to combine disease prevention and healthcare in integrated community service with an eye to building primary health care networks. To date, these public healthcare and HIV-AIDS prevention drives have run training workshops for 16,000 village doctors and 6,900

township hospital workers in 9 provinces in west China, helped establish hundreds of village clinics in poverty-stricken regions, and launched prevention and treatment campaigns for diseases like iodine deficiency disorder (IDD) and gynecological disease. From the mid-1990s, a series of anti-HIV-AIDS projects were implemented in communities in Yunnan, Henan, Hunan, Guizhou provinces, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and Chongqing Municipality, distributing free anti-virus drugs, peer education among sex workers, micro-credit to People Living with HIV/AIDS, and advocating safe sex behavior to people at high risk and juvenile groups, in order to probe new ways of HIV/AIDS prevention and cure.

#### 1.1.3 Scholarship and orphan fostering

The Amity Foundation has never ceased its attention to disadvantaged rural school-age children. Back to School has provided support for 120,000 middle and primary school children. Project Torch has supported 900 financially-challenged students throughout their college years. With our funding, at least 700 middle and primary schools have had their campuses not only rebuilt or renovated, but also received improved teaching facilities, activity rooms, solar shower rooms, physical exercise and music rooms. Amity's Orphan Fostering has financed schooling for 13,000 orphans and attempted to carry out psychological care for orphans.

#### 1.1.4 Social welfare

Our social welfare endeavors have stressed medical and educational services for the disadvantaged in social communities, involving 4 major sectors in 12 provinces and regions, namely, collaborative projects with orphanages, special education, medical treatment and rehabilitation and hospice care. Amity has carried out training for eye doctors and eyecareworkers, supported over 100 mobile medical teams of cataract surgeons, with tens of thousands of patients served. Amity also supported rehabilitation therapy for 1400 polio victims, scholarships to disabled children, and integrated education for visually impaired children, The pilot bilingual education projects undertaken in several provinces have reached the international leading level.

## ***1.2 Urban community service***

#### 1.2.1 Urban community senior service

Amity Rengu Nursing Home, directly managed by the Foundation, was set up in 2012 under the Civil Affairs Bureau of Qixia District, Nanjing. With a construction area of 10,000 square meters and 240 beds, it has adhered to the mission of offering "individualized and whole-person care". Through the adoption of proficient models of management and service, Rengu is now housing a comprehensive service team made up of social work professionals, nurses, therapists, and caretakers. We have also served seniors service in more than 10 neighborhoods in the vicinity of Rengu, who count on our professional support and on the Virtual Nursing Home — another Amity project. Through incorporating home, community and institution-based care, we have been exploring and practicing a multi-channel senior service system. Recently we signed an agreement with Jiangsu People's Hospital to co-found, over the

next three years, a pioneering elderly care center integrating medical-residential-caring services.

#### 1.2.2 Service for disabled juveniles

As the first professional non-profit institution in Nanjing, Amity Home of Blessings is dedicated to provide training in skills for daily life, community adaptation and various vocational settings. It received an award as a “Model Shelter & Care Facility” in Jiangsu Province in 2010 from the Jiangsu Disabled Persons’ Federation. The Amity Bakery has been functioning as a professional, safe and fair vocational training base. The above-mentioned efforts, coordinated and backed up by social resource mobilization, will avail trainees a platform for earning their own lives with dignity. The Bakery, as a recipient of the “Pilot Non-government Social Service Institution” award from the China Association of Social Work, has now been transformed into a social enterprise whose advocacy and innovation has received extensive recognition at home and abroad.

#### 1.2.3 Rehabilitation service for children with autism

In 2008, to address the developmental and educational challenges confronting children and their families, we set up the Amity Children Development Center to provide professional assessment, rehabilitation, early intervention and support as well as training and group activities for autistic children and students in primary and junior middle schools and their caregivers. In 2014, the center was appointed by the provincial Disabled Persons’ Federation as the sole institution qualified to host rehabilitation training for children ages 7 to 14 in Gulou District, Nanjing. Additionally, six international symposiums on autism have been important in spurring exchanges and sharing of medical, therapeutic and caregiving expertise and experience.

### ***1.3 Disaster Management***

In response to the fire in the Greater Xing’an Mountains in 1987, Amity launched its first-ever disaster relief project — the Greater Xing’an Mountains Construction Reward Fund. Since then, Amity has responded to an average of 2-3 natural disasters every year and has made relief efforts in over 50 major natural disasters, including the floods in East China in 1991, the Yangtze River flood in 1998, and the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008. Amity has left its disaster-relief footprints in more than 20 Chinese provinces, as well as in North Korea, Kenya, the Philippines and Nepal.

After the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, Amity launched a community reconstruction project at Woyun Village in Mianzhu County. The project mobilized the participation of earthquake-affected villagers, aiming to explore a new path of post-disaster reconstruction through both material aid and spiritual support. In April 2015, Amity’s prompt relief response to the earthquakes in Nepal was a landmark in Chinese non-profit organizations’ involvement in international relief efforts.

### ***1.4 International Exchanges and Cooperation***

The education and international exchange programs aim to provide equal education opportunities for vulnerable groups and promote intercultural exchanges. Encouraging young people to participate in social services, the programs provide young adults at home and abroad with a platform covering overseas study, volunteering, internship, and interpersonal networking opportunities. With the goal of building the younger generation's competence in knowledge, volunteerism and innovation, young adults in these programs are imbued with an international view and caring humanism.

For 30 years, these programs attracted more than 2,000 long-term foreign teachers to teach English in colleges in China. The Summer English Program trained over 32,000 Chinese teachers from primary and secondary schools. Thousands of young adults from the United States, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Australian, Japan and other countries, as well as Hong Kong SAR volunteered with the Service Learning Program, which promoted exchanges between Chinese and foreign youth.

For 30 years, Amity has directly received thousands of overseas friends who came to China for cooperation, study and visits. Just during the last ten years, Amity has been visited by many worldwide Christian leaders, including the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, two Archbishops of Canterbury, the General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance, the Global South Archbishops, and the Nigerian Bishops. In 2013, US ambassador Gary Locke and Mrs. Sharon Johnston, the wife of the Governor General of Canada, visited the Amity Bakery. In recent years, major foreign media, including ARD Fernsehen, BBC, CNN, the Los Angeles Times, the Chicago Tribune, and The Financial Times, conducted interviews and reported on the Amity Foundation. As a member of China NGO Network for International Exchanges, Amity actively participated in exchange and cooperation with Africa and was granted special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 2014. Amity's non-governmental diplomacy efforts have not only widened its international perspective but also promoted understanding and communication between China and other countries and made contributions to people-to-people friendship and world peace.

## **2. Religious philanthropy**

*Bishop K. H. Ting and other church leaders made great efforts to adapt Christianity to Chinese conditions making the development of the Church fit with Chinese socialist society. They held that Christians should not only focus on personal salvation but also show their humanistic care to vulnerable groups. Thus the Amity Foundation was established in 1985 with this original intention becoming a demonstration and window of Chinese churches' social service, hoping Chinese Christians to get more involved in social affairs of China and contribute to the country's reform and opening-up process and letting society know more about Christianity and Christians.*

A prominent difficulty for churches to participate in social service lies in the contradiction between churches' religious features and China's no proselytizing policy. In 1980s, China was just at the beginning of its social service work while Chinese churches had the responsibility of helping Chinese Christians in poverty. Establishing a social service agent like the Amity Foundation when there was no well-written law to stipulate churches how to conduct social service work provided a good opportunity for common people to better know and accept Amity's service under China's actual conditions. It started a new way for Christianity to get localized in China and was an attempt for it to provide social service with Chinese characteristics.

As an Christian initiated NGO, one of Amity's goals is to make Christian involvement and participation in meeting the needs of society more widely known to the Chinese people. Amity strives to hasten the involvement of Chinese religious circles, especially Christians, in social construction and to upgrade their social service capacity to meet the increasing needs of society.

## ***2.1 Church and social service***

Since 2002, Amity has supported over 210 church-run social service projects with a total investment of 100 million yuan, benefiting 300,000 people, mainly in central and western China. By the end of 2015, more than 80 non-government social service organizations mostly from Jiangsu and ten other provinces, including Shandong and Anhui, have joined the social service network, mainly consisting of church social service organizations.

## ***2.2 Jiangsu Christian Fund for Social Service***

With support from the United Front Work Department of CPC Jiangsu Committee and Jiangsu Religious Affairs Bureau, Amity and Jiangsu TSPM/CC jointly founded Jiangsu Christian Fund for Social Service. The fund focuses on rural health, environmental protection, children development, service for disability, church

volunteer team building and social service capacity building, and so on. The fund implements capacity building projects as project management, service for the elderly and the handicapped. The Fund has raised over 20 million yuan, supported 138 social service projects of 22 categories and benefitted over 100,000 people. Among others, Church Environmental Protection Action has carried out 24 environmental protection events in 9 places in Jiangsu attracting over 46,000 Christian participants.

### ***2.3 Interfaith cooperation***

Entrusted by the United Front Work Department of CPC Jiangsu Committee and Jiangsu Religious Affairs Bureau, Amity held the first Jiangsu Religious Philanthropy Training Workshop in July 2015. It was attended by more than 60 leaders from the five major religions in Jiangsu. The five-day workshop focused on both theory and practice achieving good results and scored a first in China by providing a platform for inter-religious dialogue and philanthropic cooperation, winning wide acclaim from religious circles in China and overseas. Amity's role as a bridge and platform for religions to be involved in social service development has become increasingly important.

## **3. Cooperation and Resource development**

The allocation of resources has been the strong backing for each of Amity's successful transformations. Amity's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a decade ago, was the first time Amity had raised more than 100 million RMB in a year. We were encouraged. Yet, Amity's astute management personnel perceived a crisis. As China's comprehensive national strength continued to improve and developed countries overseas experienced an economic slowdown, it was dangerous to rely on overseas resources for 95% or more of Amity's funding. It is gratifying that Amity's domestic fund raising has continually exceeded from overseas for the past 4 years, and that Internet philanthropy, philanthropy for all, special funds, and others have become new resource gathering platforms.

Amity works closely with overseas partner to raise fund for the project. In the past 30 years, Amity received a lot of care and support from friends at home and abroad. In the recent years, Amity feels its responsibility to contribute to the outside world. Amity supported earthquake in Nepal, flood in Philippines, flames in the African. On the Amity website, there is a regular fund raising project for the medical support for Africa people. We raise fund domestically and support the people outside of China. Financially speaking, Amity has transformed resource structure to guarantee Amity's sustainable development. Last year Amity's domestic fund is 76% of total funding.

Philanthropy goes beyond borders, languages, and ethnic groups. Presently, as never before, people are aware that the planet they live on has long been an interdependent community, sharing the same fate. In the past three decades, Amity's development has

always gained strong support from many friends and partners at home and abroad. The Amity of today would not exist without universal sharing. Therefore, Amity has the responsibility and obligation to enable ecumenical sharing of its practice and achievements through South-South cooperation and South-North cooperation. “ I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting that lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14)

There is a long way ahead. Amity needs the continuous support of more friends and partners at home an abroad. If you walk alone, you walk fast; if you walk together, you walk further. Amity hope to walk with all of you hand in hand in light of Amity’s mission and vision to achieve more abundant lives, more justice, and a better world!