Amity Newsletter
A Quarterly Bulletin of The Amity Foundation

Social Entrepreneurs

Doing Good but Making a Profit
Amity’s Own Social Enterprise: The Bakery
Rescue Efforts in Yu Shu
The Amity Newsletter is a quarterly publication reporting on the projects of the Amity Foundation. It is distributed free of charge.

**Bank details**
Account holder: The Amity Foundation Hong Kong, Ltd.
Account number: 127-5-017372
The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, 238 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

If you would like to receive the Newsletter, or desire further information on any of our projects, please feel free to write or call. Institutions receiving the Newsletter are welcome to reprint any article from it. Credit should be given to the Amity Newsletter, Quarterly Bulletin of the Amity Foundation.

Published by The Amity Foundation
Printed by the Amity Printing Company, Ltd.
Editor: Dr. Beate Engelen

**Hong Kong Office**
The Amity Foundation Hong Kong, Ltd., 13/F, Ultragrace Commercial Building, 5 Jordan Road
Kowloon, Hong Kong
Phone: (+852) 2723-8011
Fax: (+852) 2366-2769
E-mail: amityhk@pacific.net.hk

**Headquarters**
The Amity Foundation, 71 Hankou Road, Nanjing, 210008, China
Phone: (+86) 25-83260802
E-mail: amitynj@amityfoundation.org.cn

---

**Contents**

3 **A Visit to Beijing and Shanghai**
Listening in on the discussions on “Social Enterprise” in different organizations has been a memorable experience of Amity’s two Newsletter editors.

3 **Doing Business - Doing Good**
“Social Enterprise” has become a buzz-word in the charity world. What is happening in this field in China right now? Find out in this overview.

5 **Miaolosophy**
Helping people from the Miao ethnic group in Guizhou Province (picture right).

6 **One-Plus-One**
Visually impaired people in Beijing are broadcasting a radio program on a regular basis to draw attention to the plight of disabled people and help them cope with daily life.

7 **Le Ling - Happiness in Old Age**
Helping people of old age in their own homes has been a successful business model of this social enterprise in Beijing.

9 **Amity’s Social Enterprise**
Only a few years ago, Amity started its own social enterprise, the Amity Bakery, where mentally disabled young people can learn the profession.

10 **Amity’s Rescue Efforts in Yushu**
Oliver Engelen looks at what Amity has been doing during the rescue efforts in Yu Shu, a city in Qinghai Province, which was devastated by an earthquake.

12 **News**

The Amity Foundation is an independent Chinese voluntary organisation. It was created in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians. It has worked to promote education, social services, health, and rural development in the underdeveloped areas of China. Amity’s work is grounded in the belief that all human beings share the same dignity. Abiding by the principle of mutual respect in faith, Amity builds friendship with both Christians and non-Christians in China and abroad. In this way, Amity contributes to China’s social development and openness to the outside world. It makes Christian involvement and participation in meeting the needs of society more widely known to the Chinese people and serves as a channel for people-to-people contact and the ecumenical sharing of resources. Helping to develop civil society in China is one of the key aims of its work.

The Amity Foundation has about 50 full-time staffers at its Nanjing headquarters. Hundreds of volunteers work with Amity all over China. The foundation receives funds from partners abroad as well as in Hong Kong and mainland China.
A Visit to Beijing and Shanghai

Dear readers,

Wang Yi, editor of the Chinese-language Amity Newsletter, and I went on a special assignment in May to explore an area of civil society which might become an important model for civil society activities in China: social enterprises. The idea of running a business to do good is not entirely new, but in China, as in other places around the world, new variants of the concept are being tested.

For about a week Wang Yi and I trudged the streets of Beijing and Shanghai seeking out some of the more conspicuous agents of the nascent community of social entrepreneurs. The social enterprises we visited had definitely not yet entered center stage. All of them operate out of nondescript residential buildings at the capital’s periphery while the foundations which support them occupy the posh offices in Beijing’s business district. Between interviews we had ample opportunity to try out specialities of Beijing’s rich “food stall cuisine” (picture right). If the concept of social entrepreneurship does take hold in China, in theory all of the small street restaurants we visited could become social enterprises in the future. Will this happen? Find out in this issue.

Best,
Beate Engelen

Can Social Enterprises Succeed in China?

Doing Business - Doing Good

by Beate Engelen

A charity is generally expected to follow an implied set of rules in going about its business. Only if the organization makes sure that these rules are followed can it become a respected member of the philanthropic world and remain eligible for donations in the long run. The rules usually require staff members to make financial as well as personal sacrifices, adopt a stringent code of conduct and strictly adhere to a non-profit approach in their work. Of course, there is nothing wrong with making sacrifices or asking for pittances. But what happens when these qualities and working methods only take you so far in carrying out your mission of helping others? Depending completely on donors’ perpetual willingness to support a good cause isn’t necessarily a very reasonable strategy. A greater degree of financial independence is highly desirable, especially in an environment where charitable giving is not a common practice or where the majority of those who do make donations feel that only a few kinds of causes are worth supporting, for example causes involving children.

This characterizes the situation of a great many charitable organizations in China today. Especially those charities which operate at the grassroots are struggling to find the money they need for their daily operations. By far the largest part of public charitable funds in China is channeled to the large, government-run quasi-NGOs. Private donors, who would be able to fund independent organizations, often don’t trust small and obscure charities. Under these circumstances, launching a new organization or trying out new ideas is very difficult. Many of the thousands of promising NGOs which have sprung up in the last two decades, have had to pack up again because they were unable to expand their donor base. Moreover, new charities are constantly being hampered in their efforts to build recognized and trusted brands by China’s
Children in Beijing experience nature during a workshop organized by Friends of Nature. Here, they experience what it feels like “being” a caterpillar.

Children in big cities have little opportunity to be around natural things. Friends of Nature want to change the situation by offering educational courses.

Photos: Courtesy Friends of Nature

complicated NGO registration system. Registering a charity easily takes years, and only a tiny percentage of new organizations manage to get legally registered at all. Many of them are forced to register as commercial enterprises while keeping up their social work. No wonder donors are confused.

A new concept

Trying to find solutions to the pervasive problem of under-funding, a few NGOs in China have turned to a new concept which promises not only to solidify their financial basis but also to generate profits which can be used to expand an organization’s operational range. This type of organization, known as “social enterprise”, identifies a social problem; but instead of asking for money from donors to solve the problem, the organization designs a business model which allows it to earn the necessary money. The idea that an organization which creates social value can at the same time make a financial profit first drew broad international attention when Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. His bank has been profitable while disbursing microloans to poor people in Bangladesh. Yunus was certainly not the first person to reduce an organization’s dependence on donations by generating profits. However, the great international publicity created by the Nobel Committee’s decision led to a lively discussion on a global scale about what can be achieved by social entrepreneurs and what it means for an NGO to operate on a for-profit basis instead of asking for donations. At that time, a small but teeming social enterprise culture already existed in Great Britain. Sustainability was the buzzword of the day. Encouraged by the success of profits-based, sustainable social work in Britain, the British Council started disseminating the underlying ideas and principles in Asia about 15 months ago. China is one of the countries which are supported by the British Council in their efforts to develop their own models of social enterprises. The concept of social entrepreneurship is being discussed in a most lively way.

What precisely does the term mean, though? Listening in on the discussion, as my colleague Wang Yi and I did during a recent trip to Beijing and Shanghai, we found two things: The term doesn’t seem to be widely understood outside of the group of participants in the debate; worse, different people use different and sometimes mutually incompatible definitions. It is possible, though, to name a few characteristics of social enterprises which most people in the field agree upon. Finding a clear and commonly accepted definition is a matter of some importance: Without one, governments can hardly be expected to recognize social enterprises, much less to support them, e.g. with tax breaks or financial subsidies.

Defining “Social enterprise”

There is no limit to the range of problems a social enterprise may aspire to solve. Not much different from traditional NGOs, a social enterprise may help physically challenged people, draw attention to environmental issues, reduce discrimination or encourage small communities to improve social cohesion. Take, for example, the Beijing-based organization, One-Plus-One. In addition to raising awareness and helping visually impaired radio listeners cope with disability-related problems in their daily lives,
Preserving Traditional Culture

Miaolosophy

Liu Lijun is an energetic 52-year-old woman (picture right) with a warm smile and a firm handshake, who receives her guests at the narrow entrance of an apartment block compound and invites them to a little flat on one of the upper floors. No plaque or label reveals that behind the plain apartment door one of the more successful social enterprises in China has set up shop. The “living room” is packed with sewing machines, work tables and heaps of colorful fabric. Muffled voices can be heard from the adjacent room: A few seamstresses are working but they are to self-conscious to be seen by strangers. The walls are covered with beautiful batiks, embroideries and pictures of women wearing the traditional garb of the Miao, one of the larger ethnic minorities in China, whose history reaches back into prehistoric times.

Preserving traditional Miao culture and craft-work and, at the same time, providing Miao women in Guizhou Province with employment opportunities: These are the two basic goals of the enterprise. Ms. Liu's hope for the long run is that these women will earn enough money to send their children to school and enhance their own status in their families. Today, the Miao women receive 30% of the profit Ms. Liu makes by selling the crafts. A big part of the money is reinvested into the enterprise. Besides supporting the Miao people, Ms. Liu also recruits unemployed women in Beijing who are highly skilled seamstresses. They turn the fabric and embroidery manufactured by the Miao women into high-end handicrafts which can be sold as far as France or the United States. Ms. Liu has a strong sense of purpose, the conviction of doing something which more people should do and a lot of contagious enthusiasm. It is probably this attitude which has helped her stay focused on her goal despite many setbacks. Before she started her social enterprise, Ms. Liu worked as a math teacher, then she managed three different restaurants. This provided her with the necessary experience to run an enterprise. Starting with Miaolosophy, however, was a different thing. "If you start a restaurant, guests just walk in the door, but with handicrafts, it's different," says Ms. Liu. Of all the things she has done in her life, running the social enterprise has turned out the toughest job so far. Especially during the first few years, she was completely left to her own devices and invested a lot of her own money.

A great part of the funds have had to be spent on training. The Miao women in the villages of Guizhou have needed detailed instructions to produce high-quality crafts. Ms. Liu didn't want her customers to buy the products out of pity and charity but because they were of good quality. She tried to convince officials in different places to support the cause, because, says Ms. Liu, after all it's Chinese culture which is being preserved. So far, though, she's been struggling all on her own. In Ms. Liu's view, one of the most serious difficulties social enterprises face in China today is the level of expertise among social entrepreneurs. Social enterprises need leaders with a long-time commitment and solid business knowledge. Neither is easy to find these days. Ms. Liu is optimistic none the less that her business will be sustainable.

the organization itself employs physically challenged people. At One-Plus-One almost all of the staff are visually impaired. By providing them with jobs, One-Plus-One has prevented its staffers from ending up like most blind and visually impaired people in China do for a complete lack of alternatives: working as massage therapists. Yet all of this still doesn't sufficiently distinguish this organization from other NGOs. What makes One-Plus-One a social enterprise is its goal of making enough money with their radio programs and other publicity products to become financially self-sustaining - and thus independent from donations.

The term “social enterprise” mainly explains the way an organization intends to secure its financial base and rise above reliance on charitable giving. Unlike a conventional NGO, a social enterprise combines business methods with its aim of solving a particular social problem. In other words: While traditional charities raise funds, social enterprises make money by selling a marketable product. However, profit-maximization is not the aim. Social entrepreneurs aren't motivated by the prospect of personal wealth: First and foremost, they strive for social improvement, for example by creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities, providing social services to small communities or raising awareness of environmental problems. In reality, of course, there is no clear line between for-profit businesses on the one hand and social enterprises on the other. The debate continues on what precisely qualifies any given set-up as a social enterprise. So far, experts in the field are reluctant to
One-Plus-One

Giving a Voice to the Blind

China’s blind and visually impaired population is estimated at 12 million, most of them living in the countryside. Discrimination is still widespread and most blind people are expected to take up manual work. In 2006, a radio production facility was set up by One-Plus-One, a non-governmental organization run mainly by visually impaired people in Beijing (picture above). By broadcasting a radio program on issues concerning visually impaired people, One-Plus-One wants to increasing public understanding of the situation of disabled people, while simultaneously helping people with impaired vision to improve their lives, says .

come up with a rigid definition in order not to suppress the creative spirit of the new trade. Ian Robinson, Director of Society & Development of the British Council Beijing, argues that a fairly broad definition will help promising social entrepreneurs find their right place.

The one topic on which social entrepreneurs and promoters of the new concept are still profoundly divided is the question whether social enterprises, in order to attract higher amounts of venture capital, can - or indeed should - be allowed to distribute at least part of their profits to investors and shareholders. A multitude of venture capitalists in China are keen to promote philanthropic activities with their money, says Ian Robinson. “Right now, in China, there are organizations that want to give venture capital and venture philanthropy, but they will expect returns.” If there are no financial incentives in it for them, they don’t invest. Social enterprises, according to Mr. Robinson, will never be able to become self-sustaining, much less to scale up, if they can’t attract “big money” in the long run.

Not everybody agrees with this. The views of Amy Zhou, executive chairman of the One Foundation, are poles apart from those of Mr. Robinson. Paying dividends would not be in line with a commonly accepted idea of social entrepreneurship and would confuse people in China, says Ms. Zhou, whose organization cooperates with big-league social enterprises like the Grameen Bank. “Chinese society has not yet understood the concept of what social entrepreneurs do,” says Ms. Zhou. If a social enterprise invites heavyweight investors too early, its social aims could be undermined by evil-minded shareholders. This
would shed a bad light on the fledgling community as a whole.

Gan Dongyu, secretary general of YouChange the China Social Entrepreneur Foundation, goes even further than Ms. Zhou. He always warns young social entrepreneurs against drawing too much attention to the “enterprise” aspect of their organization. In his view, it still too early to advertise the money-making features in China because social enterprise still depend on donations, grants and public funds. The term could lead to misunderstandings and have a negative effect on the financial basis of an organization, especially during its start-up phase, he thinks.

An interesting model for China?
There are obvious advantages of creating social enterprises in China. First, social enterprises can be expected to have a soothing effect on widespread social tensions. “The opportunities of social enterprises to assist the government to create social harmony are immense,” says Yang Xiaoyu, a representative of one of the government-related youth organizations. A surge in the number of social entrepreneurs could also help to reduce the massive underfunding of the social sector in China and, at the same time, foster citizens’ involvement in a large range of social causes.

The government has become increasingly supportive of the idea, says Ian Robinson. It has already started to sell its service obligations to private care-givers and social service providers, and this, in his view, gives reason to believe that the government is working on changing policies in a positive way.

Less obvious but none the less beneficial are social enterprises for a well-off but still discontented middle class. Being a social entrepreneur has the potential to provide people with the meaningful task they so often miss in their daily lives. Jun Ru, a former businesswoman who founded Golden Wings - a social enterprise supporting autistic children - says that becoming a social entrepreneur helped her escape an unfavorable business environment in the private sector. Years of rather disappointing experiences in the business world made her look for to something new, something which would give her more work satisfaction. An opportunity came when she realized how she could help autistic children by selling their pictures. With a small team of full-time staff and a larger group of volunteers recruited from local universities, she “discovers” gifted autistic children and helps them to sell their pictures for a profit. In this function, she finally discovered her vocation: “It gives me joy and, at the same time, helps to solve however small a social problem.”

That ordinary citizens can draw rewards from realizing that they can help others is a huge advantage of the new model. Especially young people seem more and more interested in finding meaningful work outside the rat race. Gan Dongyu of YouChange believes that social enterprises, in addition to helping the poor, provide comfortable but spiritually empty urban residents with a purpose in life: “Many people are rich but they are often unhappy because they don’t see any meaning in what they do,” he says. Social enterprises would help such people find fulfillment, according to Mr. Gan. It seems that the potential of the social enterprise model is huge. But will the concept of social entrepreneurship really work on a large scale?

Big challenges
In spite of all the support they are currently enjoying in China, doubts remain if social enterprises will leave a permanent mark on China’s civil society. Even though the central government has shown a growing interest in the concept of social entrepreneurship and has supported policy changes, the implementation process at the local level remains sluggish. So far, local governments are not yet purchasing enough services from social enterprises to keep them alive. Representatives of care-providing organizations even doubt they will ever get enough funding. Similar problems arise when it comes to education. At the Beijing office of “Friends of Nature”, staff try to offer...
environmental education to metropolitan kids who have little experience with all things natural. Even though the government lists environmental education for children as a desirable part of “civil education”, it has stopped short of making it an obligatory part of the school curriculum. The organization needs to raise all the necessary funds itself, without any help from schools or the government. In order to survive in a competitive market environment, social enterprises, like any other business, need to be forthcoming with advertising their presence. However, social enterprises often keep a very low public profile, which makes it difficult to find them at all. None of the social enterprises we visited in Beijing announced their presence e.g. with a sign outside their entrance. The enterprises usually operated out of private apartments in residential areas - far away from Beijing’s city center - where public attention is minimal.

Besides weak public support for social enterprises and their low public profile, a lot of internal problems need to be solved as well. Social entrepreneurship is still in its fledgling stage in China and many of the small enterprises struggle to make ends meet by continuing to rely heavily on donations and subsidies. Many entrepreneurs admit that they haven’t yet found a viable method to generate enough money to be sustainable because they either lack management skills, the right business idea or a responsive market for their products. At One-Plus-One, only a minor part of the organization’s income is generated by sales: There simply aren’t enough radio stations which purchase their broadcasts for visually impaired people. The director is therefore reluctant to call his organization a genuine social enterprise. Most other organizations we visited share this view: So far, they can only survive because they receive a hefty amount of charitable financial support – often from abroad.

According to Mr. Robinson, small social enterprises in China enjoy a favorable investment climate because Chinese venture capital shows an interest. However, they are hardly capable of giving venture capitalists what they want. The huge gap between investors’ expectations and the realities on the ground will need to be bridged somehow. The people in charge at many social entrepreneurs lack even the most basic business skills – they don’t know how to draw up a business plan, calculate profitability, professionally manage human resources or do networking in a business environment. “Most of the staff of social enterprises have an NGO background,” says Song Xi from Friends of Nature in Beijing, “but what they really need are management experts with experiences in for-profit enterprises.”

If the new model is to succeed, the overall mindset of those who run social enterprise will need to change dramatically. In order to meet the needs of young business people, teach them leadership and management skills and provide them with a network of experts, media staff and government officials, a series of foundations - among them the Narada Foundation, YouChange and the Amity Foundation - have set up training centers for social entrepreneurs. It remains to be seen if they succeed in launching a “social enterprise culture” in China.

Is there a future? The number of social enterprises has not yet gained critical mass. It can hardly be described as a “movement” yet. It is still unclear if it has the potential to become a larger trend or if it is just a short-lived fashion. Some organizations consider it a major advantage that the social enterprise scene is still largely unregulated. The lack of control leaves room for experiments and unobstructed development. The environment does look promising - not least because some social enterprises have braced themselves for a possible setback. At One-Plus-One, for example, staffers will be able to work at massage parlors again, at least temporarily, if the going gets tough.

It is difficult to see what the future will bring. Wang Yanrui from the Senior Citizen Cooperative succinctly concludes: “No matter if you call it social enterprise or anything else, the important thing is that there are still many problems in Chinese society which have to be solved one way or another.”

Amity has been helping smaller NGOs in Nanjing to operate more and more like a social enterprise. People who work for these organizations enhance their capacities and skills by receiving work space, trainings and networking opportunities. They also meet with Amity staff on a regular basis to discuss problems and share experiences (picture left).
Entering the Business World

Amity’s Social Enterprise

The Amity Bakery

Only a few years back, Amity started its own social enterprise: a bakery, headed by Chu Chaoyu, Director of Amity’s Social Service Center (left). The idea of opening a bakery and creating vocational training opportunities for developmentally disabled and slightly mentally disabled people came up during a trip of Amity’s staff to Hong Kong, where a similar social enterprise showed good results. Potential apprentices would come from the Amity Home of Blessings, a charitable institution which helps adults aged between 16 and 40 with down syndrome to live better lives and integrate into society through education. A great number of the clients have spent basically all their lives at home, which not only leaves them less able to develop skills and interact with other people but also adds to the economic and emotional burden on their families. Given the great number of developmentally disabled people who need to be trained and the few resources available, this is an all but impossible task. Arguably, a more realistic approach is to provide vocational training to those who are able to do some light work.

A bakery was a good choice for mentally challenged apprentices because the work involves repetitive actions, from making the dough to pulling the bread out of the oven, thus creating a real-life work habit. So, in 2007, with assistance from Hong Kong Bakery Association, the Amity Bakery was founded.

There are two main reasons why the Bakery can justifiably be called a social enterprise: First, it employs mentally challenged staff; in fact the Amity Bakery is the first bakery in mainland China which is run mainly by disabled people. Second, the Bakery has been devised to provide funds for running Amity’s Home of Blessings. There is a great demand for the service offered by the Amity Bakery because few bakeries in China produce goods of high quality. Professional support and known-how has come from Kwong Kin-Chong, an award-winning master baker from Hong Kong. He spends several months every year creating new recipes for the Amity Bakery, helping develop management skills among staff and teaching the apprentices how to produce bread, cookies and other baked goods.

Yet Chu Chaoyu is reluctant to project grand schemes for the future as long as the enterprise is still subject to chillingly unpredictable profit margins. Although the business has been profitable over the last few months, the Bakery owes this success mainly to several campaigns during the holidays, such as the “Amity Moon Cakes” campaign during Mid-Autumn Festival. Also, support from the state is not exactly strong. Whereas social enterprises in other parts of the world receive hefty subsidies and tax reductions, a business like the Amity Bakery needs to survive without special protection, not to mention financial support from the state.

Chu Chaoyu wants to keep a realistic view of a possible break-through on the market, taking things one step at a time. If everything works out as planned, his next move will involve hiring more clients from Amity’s Home of Blessings, further raising the quality of products and scaling up.
An earthquake of magnitude 7.1 on the Richter scale hit Yushu County in the southern part of Qinghai Province on 14 April 2010 at 7:49 a.m. Beijing time. According to official statistics, 2220 people died, 70 are still missing, 12,135 were injured, 1434 of these severely. The epicenter was some 30 km from Yushu, the county seat. More than 85% of buildings were destroyed here.

He Wen, Amity’s assistant general secretary, and a group of Amity staffers left for the disaster region in the early morning of 15 April. They were accompanied by Nanjing-based journalists.

Amity’s Zhang Yuxiang followed with another group of staffers the next day, 16 April. More Amity staffers, some of whom had been involved in relief work in Sichuan after the 2008 earthquake, joined the team over the next few days.

On 17 April, the first batch of relief goods from Amity arrived in the earthquake region of Yushu. Late at night, 480 warm blankets, 850 packages of instant noodles and 350 cartons of mineral water were distributed in Cuoduo, a village in Longbao Township at an elevation of 4400 meters. The temperature was 17 degrees Celsius below freezing point.

The second batch of relief goods, including quilts, flour and rice, was distributed one and a half days later. The next batches arrived in quick succession over the following days. Medical supplies, candles, milk and shoes were part of the more recent batches.

Within one week of the earthquake, Amity had distributed a total of 1680 quilts, 3140 cartons of drinking water, 1365 cartons of instant noodles, 45,000 sausages, 27 tons of rice, 10.5 tons of flour and 50 cartons of candles.

Amity also helped organize missions by volunteers and experts from other Nanjing-based organizations, who looked after people injured during the earthquake.

Medical supplies worth CNY 240,000 (ca. US$ 35,100), donated by long-term Amity partner, Carefree Medicine Company, were shipped in 7 cross-country cars to the earthquake region by volunteers from the Songda Racing Car Club in Nanjing a few days after the quake. More medical supplies followed with Amity’s regular relief goods transports. As of 16 May, after the arrival of the 11th batch, Amity had delivered not only foodstuffs and water, clothes, quilts and other things distributed to villages around Longbao, but, additionally, 17,288 cartons of milk for schoolchildren; 100 bags of rice, 100 bags of flour, 200 packages of rice noodles and 100 sets of padded warm clothes for the homeless in Yushu County; and 88 boxes of medical supplies.

In marked contrast to some other relief work groups, Amity ensured that relief goods were delivered to people in need in an orderly fashion. Cooperating with local authorities and partners, staffers took measures to guarantee that quilts, clothes, food and water reached every single household in the towns and villages where Amity has worked. Nothing got lost, nothing was misappropriated.

All the relief goods have had to be procured in Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province, and then shipped by truck over hundreds of kilometers to the earthquake zone. Aftershocks,
temperatures far below freezing point, high winds, a sandstorm and the low oxygen content of the air at high altitudes have made Amity’s disaster relief efforts difficult. All along, Amity staffers have been unfazed, though, and have kept working hard for the benefit of earthquake victims, often going without more than a few hours of sleep for several days in a row.

Amity’s Hong Kong office secured a grant of HK$ 4.5 million (ca. US$ 580,000) for relief work in Qinghai from the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Big donations were received soon after the earthquake by Amity from American Baptist Church (US$ 5,000) and United Church of Christ (US$ 10,000). Within the first two weeks after the earthquake, Amity had received donations totaling more than CNY 2 million from several hundred individual donors in China and abroad.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all donors and supporters. All contributions, big or small, in money or otherwise, are deeply appreciated. For Amity’s ongoing relief efforts as well as for the planned reconstruction and rehabilitation work, lots of additional help are still needed.

By 12 June 2010 Amity had delivered (selection):

- 2680 quilts
- 2200 quilt covers & bedsheets
- 125.5 tons of rice
- 108.5 tons of flour
- 418984 boxes of milk
- 20 tons of cooking oil
- 8001 cotton overcoats
- 8100 sets of thermal underwear
- 8000 pairs of shoes
- 634 cartons of medicine
- 60500 candles
- 30 sets of solar power systems

One health care volunteer team provided medical services to 80 injured people in Xining.
Water Pollution

An Open Word

The urgent need for safe drinking water in China was discussed during a workshop organized by Amity and EED. More than forty participants and speakers attended the two-day workshop, including Amity staff, faculty and students from Nanjing-based universities, experts on waste water treatment, Amity’s local partners and representatives of environmental NGOs.

Zhang Yulin, a sociology professor at Nanjing University, noted that economic growth during the last three decades has been accompanied by an unprecedented level of environmental damage. He described the “water crisis” as an impending, creeping disaster, still unnoticed by most. Many rivers no longer reach the sea and their waters have turned black. There are cancer villages as well as new kinds of deformities and diseases among people in polluted areas. Most policy responses have only had short-term effects. Unfortunately, local governments continue to worship economic growth making matters worse.

Chen Ah Jiang, sociology professor at Hohai University in Nanjing, reported that many local factories discharge their waste water into rivers during rainy weather expecting polluted discharge to be quickly washed away downstream. In his view, rivers have not just become “dumping grounds” of scrupulous businesses but also because farmers themselves have given up on protecting the rivers. In the past, farmers had carefully protected the rivers as their source of drinking water. However, after industrial pollution has led to a dramatic degradation in water quality, farmers have given up the battle against pollution and joined in as polluters themselves. Unfortunately, he concluded, gathering information on cancer villages or drawing direct links between water pollution and cancer outbreaks is very limited. Moreover, there is more to lack of clean water than health degradation. Farmers in areas with limited access to safe drinking water face stigma, difficulties in finding wives, difficulties in finding jobs and severe social inequality.

Other speakers emphasized the need to reduce pollution by reducing pesticides, using biogas digesters or special plants, and educating the public on how to protect drinking water. Water issues were further discussed in detail during different workshops when people from affected areas in Southwest China described the bad effects of water scarcity during the recent drought.

The workshop concluded with the proposal of different action plans including activities which focused on raising awareness of water issues and influencing policy makers to improve laws and regulations as well as helping with implementation.

HIV/AIDS

AIDS Specialist From Nigeria Joins Amity

Safiya Doma, an AIDS specialist from Nigeria, has recently joined Amity’s HIV/AIDS prevention program. Several years of experience in working with African young adults and women on AIDS prevention have made Safiya an ideal consultant who can provide an innovative perspective to Amity’s longterm efforts to slow the spread of AIDS in China.

Safiya has published a doctoral thesis on how to prevent HIV by empowering adolescent girls through education. Yet her expertise goes beyond academic discourse. She has demonstrated her commitment in working with vulnerable groups. As a secondary school teacher, Safiya established an AIDS club at her school in Kwarhi (Nigeria) in order to raise awareness among students for AIDS-related topics, to gather evidence that HIV prevention is possible through education, and to learn more about the attitudes of young adults. She has served as volunteer with many NGOs.

Safiya will assist Amity in strengthening the structure of its HIV/AIDS programs and its capacity to cope with some of the challenges posed by AIDS. She also hopes to learn more about the HIV/AIDS situation in a multi-religious and cultural context like China. HIV/AIDS, says Safiya, is not yet as serious a problem in China as it is in Africa. She wants to help Amity relieve the current situation. Safiya is supported by United Evangelical Mission in Germany (UEM) and Mission 21 in Switzerland.