



Fondazione Amici di Qinghai & Swiss Friends of Qinghai

Chiang Mai, in late January 2015

Activities report 2014, whole year

Dear friends and donors

The *Amici di Qinghai* paid eight visits to Qinghai in 2014, including one week on the highlands by Yolanda. Furthermore, Mr. U. Bühler and his daughters, as well as Simone & Mona, visited their projects also during one whole week in August. The purpose of the foundation's visits was:

1. To inaugurate the *Huanquhu* canteen whose completion was repeatedly delayed due to extremely harsh weather.
2. To inaugurate three additional nomad moving schools, all realized in 2014: *Walema*, *Heri* and *Gaqiang*.
3. To control the implementation of various small scale projects.
4. To control the progress of the *Luohexiang* primary school (district Tongren).
5. To evaluate new projects for 2015, with one additional moving nomad school (*Wangjia*) and a repair project (*Qiakeri*) already approved by the Board of Trustees at its December meeting.

While the cooperation with the Education authorities and the nomad chiefs continued very smoothly in early 2014, new regulations issued by the Central Government in March to control any transfer of money from abroad to local authorities, triggered a set of additional approvals that delayed the implementation of the projects. But patience on our side, avoidance of any politics and concentration on purely educational goals paid off. The money transfers, made in April, were finally released by the bank in September. Ms. Liu Jing of *Swisstec* was instrumental in getting the green light from the Chinese bank and the supervisory authorities.

Updates on the various projects have been or will be put soon on the website of the foundation at www.schurtenberger.biz/swiss/ Please click on the name of the school you are looking for under projects 2013, 2014 or 2015.

The provisional accounts of the *Amici di Qinghai* for 2014* were approved by the foundation's Board of Trustees on December 4, 2014**. The final accounts will be submitted to the external auditor, Mr. Cristiano Botta (Lugano) in early 2015, and then sent to the federal authorities in Berne (EDI) for regulatory approval. The foundation continues enjoying tax exemption in Switzerland.

The accounts of the *Swiss Friends of Qinghai*, administered by Anne-Marie Schmid, was closed in May 2014. The remaining balance of CHF 18'255 was transferred to the account of the *Fondazione Amici di Qinghai*, and is being used for repair works of earlier built schools and/or for scholarships, in the same spirit and under the same conditions as in the past, namely without deduction of any administrative fee.

As the year of the goat or sheep will start soon, we wish you and your beloved ones continued good health, profound peace in your heart and a generous portion of personal happiness. May the good-hearted goat/sheep guide you safely and skillfully through the volatile, uncertain and complex times ahead !

Renewing our heartiest thanks for your highly appreciated, continued support, we remain

Yours truly & gratefully

Yolanda & Erwin, Chiang Mai, in late January 2015



• www.schurtenberger.biz/swiss/prov.accounts2014/pdf

** Avv. Eros Bergonzoli, Monica Cocchi del Ponte, Claudio Metzger, Yolanda and Erwin Schurtenberger

1. To inaugurate the canteen at HUANQUHU whose completion was repeatedly delayed due to extremely harsh weather.

The construction of a new canteen for the *Huangquhu* nomad school at 3800 m above sea, had been delayed again and again, mostly because of heavy rain, sometimes because the workers walked away (too heavy hardship). But the building was finally completed in early October. Although the new kitchen's equipment cannot be used yet -- the electricity line to the canteen will be laid in Spring 2015 --, the *Chongren Foundation* who financed the new building, celebrated the inauguration on October 26. During the winter, the students will nonetheless have their meals in the new building, though prepared outdoor. More than 180 students and 7 teachers were attending the ceremony.



2. To inaugurate three additional nomad moving schools, decided and realized in 2014. *Walema, Heri and Gaqiang*

WALEMA: This moving nomad school, located at 50-60 km west of Zeku city, is serving the pre-school children of the sub-districts of Zhisai, Xiuqia, Renzong and Cuofudun. The area concerned has a population of 3100 people with 67 children in pre-school age. The teaching is being done at 9 learning sites, along the system of other moving nomad schools of the Amici. The project has been fully financed by the numerous individual donors of the *Amici di Qinghai* and was inaugurated in April 2014.



SOFT OPENING OF *HERI* AND *GAQIANG*

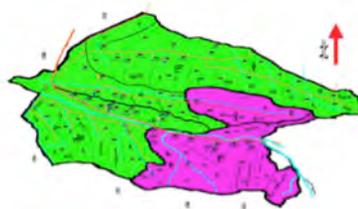
Because the bank retained the money that the foundation sent in Spring, the Heri and Gaqiang moving nomad schools could not be inaugurated in June, as planned. As the students wanted very much demonstrating the progress they made since April 2014, when they got some material for self study, the Amici organized an informal opening at the end of June. It was amazing to see their writing and reading of the Tibetan and English alphabet as well as of a dozen of Chinese characters.



HERI: The *Firmenich School of Hope* in Heri is covering five of seven administrative sub-counties of the *HERI* county. Each of the said sub-counties has one (1) to three (3) teaching sites that were selected after due discussion with the nomad parents concerned. Altogether 10 teaching sites have been decided for the *HERI* moving nomad school. This school was formally inaugurated in a heart touching ceremony in late October. The young students demonstrated with visible pride, what they learnt since April, when the *Amici* distributed to each student an electronic teacher, allowing them self teaching at home. Their strong will to learn and to compete, fits well into the general picture of today's rural Chinese youth.



GAQIANG: The *Gaqiang* moving nomad school, financed by the *Calvin Grieder Family*, is covering an area of 15 km to 25 km in the county of Ningxiu, around 120 km west of the district city of Zeku, at an altitude of 3700 m to 3900 m above sea. There are altogether 6 teaching sites taking care of 48 preschool children, for a population of totally 902 people, The school was formally inaugurated in yet another modest, but also heart touching ceremony in late October 2014. The students of *Gaqiang* demonstrated, similar to *Heri*, with visible pride what they had learnt since April, when every student got an e-book to help them self-learning in reading of simple Tibetan, Chinese and of a few words of English, as well as basic arithmetic.



3. To control the implementation of various small scale projects, each below RMB 60'000, that were allowed to be financed through the personal account of Ms Liu Jing of Swisstec.

KARGHUM: The renovation of the Karghum primary school included the flooring of the entire play ground, the construction of one (1) additional room and of the interior painting of some rooms. The *Swissair Staff Foundation for Children in Need* financed this project.



15th ANNIVERSARY of the TIMO & RETO school:

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of the *Timo&Reto Quma School* that had been built in memory of the two young men who lost their life in a tragic car accident, the parents concerned, Mr. & Mrs. Ronner and Mrs. & Mr. Nothegger, financed a ceremony on October 26 that was highly appreciated by the villagers, students, parents and the Education authorities alike. Each student got a nice school apparel and the school new sport equipment, while the teacher appreciated a *hongbao*. Furthermore, Mr. & Mrs. Ronner, who had regularly financed improvements of the school buildings and equipment, since its start, offered to finance a new flooring of the large sports ground of the school.



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS for the school year 2014-15

QUMA: 12 students who are still at the Quma primary school, or who pursue their studies at a college or university, were given a scholarship for the third consecutive year of the scholarship program of Mrs. and Mr. Ronner.



HUANQUHU: 12 scholarships of RMB 1000 each were given to needy students at the high altitude nomad school of Huanquhu on behalf of Mrs. and Mr. Roth, in the realm of their scholarship program for 2014-15



E-BOOK PROJECT: The overwhelming success with the so-called e-teacher in various moving nomad schools of the Zeku district during 2012-13 motivated the foundation to provide more young students in very sparsely populated areas with the most helpful electronic tool to enhance their self-learning. A great number of donors have offered to finance a specific number of e-books to help the students in their efforts to improve their reading and writing ability. More than 120 e-teachers could, therefore, be distributed to selected students on the highlands of the Zeku district during 2014, each set with the name of the sponsor concerned.



4. To control the progress of the LUOHEXIANG primary school (district Tongren)

Due to a seriously threatening landslide, the local Government of Tongren had requested the whole population of the *Luohexiang* village in late 2013, to move their houses to a site around 6 km on the other side of the valley. The Government offered new jobs to the teachers in Tongren, and asked the children to attend a boarding school in the same city, including the 4-8 years old ones. After the villagers expressed their worries that the separation of the children from the parents at such an early stage would negatively influence their mind, the authorities agreed to let the pupils stay at a school in the new village, subject to work out a bearable solution for the financing of this rather large project. The *Bank of China* offered to fully finance the buildings for the pre-school instruction. The Amici agreed, thanks to the *Chongren Foundation* and Mr. *Guido Cherubini's* support to co-finance, together with the local Government of Tongren, the two floor classroom building for grades 1 to 3.

Once the comprehensive geological surveys were completed, the construction started swiftly and is since then progressing smoothly. The authorities expect the building to be operational by early spring 2015. The formal inauguration by the donors is scheduled for early September, when the new school year will start. 45 students in the classes 1-3 at least are expected by then.



5. To evaluate new projects for the calendar year 2015

WANGJIA: The area covered by this moving nomad school is very wide and with extremely harsh winter conditions (minus 20°C to 35°C). The authorities have, therefore, proposed to provide the pre-school teaching at different sites in winter (6 sites) and in summer (3 sites). The altitude of 3200 m to 3500 m above sea is normal for the highlands of Zeku. There will be altogether 116 students at the Wangjia moving nomad school, when it will be launched in Spring of 2015, including 53 girls. The *Amici* have visited three teaching sites of the school in late October and were impressed by the enthusiasm of the students and the eagerness of the parents to see their children to attend the pre-school teaching as soon as possible. *Wangjia* will be financed by the many individual donors of the *Amici die Qinghai* and implemented in the Spring of 2015.



QIAKERI: A small extension project. The relationship between *Qiakeri* and the *Swiss Friends of Qinghai* dates back to 2003-2004 (*Bauma* building), and continued with two moving nomad schools in their *Qiakeri* administrative area. Given the management's outstanding dedication to education, the *Amici* agreed to co-finance with the Education Bureau of Zeku a small extension project. The costs for the cementing of the new play & sports ground amounts to RMB 120'000, of which RMB 60'000 will be paid by the *Amici* and the other half by the Education Bureau, while the nomads would do the labor.



Thank you so much for your generous help!



The monks of the monastery of HERI, 60 km north of Zeku city, held a *Long Life Ceremony* for all donors and their families, on June 30. 2014. They wanted to express their deep gratitude to the donors for enhancing education of the young nomads in this remote and sparsely populated region.



Long life Ceremony for the generous donors
of the Swiss Friends and Amici of Qinghai

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为青海的瑞士朋友们举办的长寿仪式

Rebkong, June 30 . 2014

A vibrant Buddhist thangka painting. In the center, a golden Buddha figure sits on a lotus throne. Above him, five smaller Buddha figures are seated on clouds. Below the central figure, there are various other figures, including monks and deities, in a lush, green landscape with flowers and a small shrine.

For the *Amici di Qinghai*, Yolanda & Erwin,
in late January 2015