



Fondazione Amici di Qinghai

Report on the activities in 2018

Dear friends and donors

In 2018, the *Amici-di-Qinghai* paid four visits to the highlands, including one week by Yolanda. As in previous years, Erwin's loyal office clerk, Xiao Song, joined all activities, and Ms. Liu Jing handled *bono fide* the increasingly controlled money transfers to and within China.

The purpose of the visits was:

1. To inaugurate three additional nomad moving schools, financed and completed in 2018 (*Erguo, Baojie, Xibusha No2*). Furthermore, in order to facilitate the super-vision and control of the meanwhile 23 moving nomad schools on the highlands, the Foundation donated a car to the Education Bureau of Zeku.
2. To control the repair works of the severely damaged roof at the Duoning preschool building and completely redo the in- and outside painting of the classroom building at the said school. Furthermore, to control the complete renovation of the earlier built primary class buildings at Dongtang, as well the total refurbishment of the *Gulanghe* high altitude nomad school.
3. To distribute 127 e-books. 30 scholarships and winter clothes to needy students at two high altitude primary schools. These small, but meaningful activities could be successfully carried out thanks to the efficient help of the local *Civil Affairs Department*.
4. To evaluate a major renovation project of a primary school built in 2006, the upgrading of the wall and gate of the *JiCang* primary school near Tongren, and the launching of Mr. Guido Cherubini's five years' scholarship program for nomad children. One or two more moving nomad schools will be evaluated in the Spring of 2019.
5. To sponsor a *Long Life Ceremony* for the donors and friends of the *Amici-di-Qinghai* foundation, at the ancient Rebkhong Temple on the way to the highlands.

Updates on the above projects have been put on the website of the foundation or will be updated soon, at www.fondazione-amici-di-qinghai.org/
Please click on the name of the school you are looking for, under *major projects*, or under *small projects*. The provisional account for calendar 2018 will be published on the web in February 2019. The balance of the Foundation amounted to a comfortable CHF 202,000 at the end of January 2019.

The contacts with the local authorities continued to be very smooth during the whole calendar year 2018, in spite of tighter controls applied to Non Governmental Organizations operating in China. Strict concentration on purely educational activities, regularly cultivating close contacts with the authorities and low key visibility of the Foundation in the media paid off again.

The *provisional* accounts of the *Amici di Qinghai* for 2018* were approved by the foundation's Board of Trustees on November 26, 2018**. The *final* accounts, once approved by the Trustees in their Spring meeting, will be submitted to the external auditor, Mr. Cristiano Botta (Lugano). After that, the whole documentation will be submitted to the federal authorities in Berne (EDI) for regulatory approval. The foundation continues enjoying tax exemption in Switzerland.

As the year of the trustworthy good hearted *Earth Pig* starts on February 5, the Trustees of the Foundation are joining us in sending you and your beloved ones the very best wishes for all fortunes of this world in abundance in the forthcoming year, above all continued optimal health and profound peace in your heart.

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

Yours truly & gratefully

Yolanda & Erwin,
Chiang Mai, in early February 2019



* www.schurtenberger.biz/swiss/prov.accounts2015/pdf

** Avv. Eros Bergonzoli, Monica Cocchi del Ponte, Maurizio Checchi, Yolanda and Erwin Schurtenberger

1. To inaugurate three nomad moving schools, financed and completed in 2018 (*Baojie, Erguo and Xibusha*). Furthermore, in order to facilitate the supervision and control of the existing 23 moving nomad schools, the Foundation donated a car to the Education Bureau of Zeku.

BAOJIE

The *Baojie* moving nomad school, located at around 90 km Northeast of the county town of Zeku, covers a wide and very sparsely populated area at 3360 m above sea. The school covers two administrative villages, namely *Garang* and *Gongqiang*, with a population of totally 1758 people, including the 26 students in the pre- and first grade moving nomad school that the *Amici* have financed..

While the *Amici* had visited the teaching site of *Tangna* at more than 4300 m above sea in late October 2017, the villagers organized the formal opening at a lower altitude, namely in the township of *Zhamcun*, where the weather was less cold than on the higher grounds. More than 150 nomads welcomed the *Amici* on April 9, to express their big thanks to the donors for their financing of the *Baojie* moving nomad school. The enthusiasm of the parents to get their children to attend the moving nomad school remained very credible, as they have engaged two supervisors for the teaching sites, to help the kids to learn with the e-book on the days when there is no formal teaching at the given site.

The Education Bureau organized teaching by this moving nomad school at five different places, be it in Winter or in Summer. There was no formal pre-school and first class teaching at this stage, but the villagers have employed a young teacher to teach the kids some basics, when the teacher of the moving school is not on site.

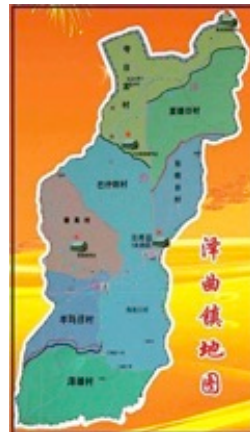


ERGUO

The Education Bureau of Zeku asked the Amici during the visit of the site in April, 2018, for financing yet another moving nomad school in this very remote region that is really not spoiled by mother Nature, namely the *Erguo* school

The *Erguo* moving nomad school, located at 30 to 40 km West of the district city of Zeku, at an altitude of 3600 m to 4300 m above sea, is really not spoiled by mother Nature. The climate is harsh in winter with temperatures going down to minus 35°C. No surprise that the area is sparsely populated, though not very far from the city of Zeku. The formal inauguration of this moving school was held on July 26, 2018 at the teaching site of *Xiadetang*, at 3890 m above sea and 35° 8' 57" N and 101° 27' 11" E. Because of heavy rain in mid July, the opening could not take place at the summer teaching site of *Zhijiaguo* at 4300 m above sea, as planned. The nature road did not allow to drive there, and walking distance would have been 15 km.

The students of all three teaching sites of the *Erguo* moving nomad school attended the ceremony on July 26, 2018, i.e. 53 students altogether. And so did around 20 nomad parents as well as the district governor and the Education authorities of Zeku.



XIBUSHA No 2

During the visit of the site in late July 2018, the *Education Bureau of Zeku* asked the *Amici*, to finance, if possible, yet another moving nomad school in the very remote region of Xibusha. The area in question is also really not spoiled by mother Nature. Furthermore, the weather is very cold during the long winter, with frequent gusty winds. There are three teaching sites: *Deji*, *Ranwaertang* and *Saerlong* that are offering education for 28 students. Because the natural roads are not yet modernized, it is rather difficult to bring the children to three teaching sites.

The moving nomad school at *Xibusha no 2* is located at 20 to 30 km East of the district city of Zeku, at an altitude of 3700 m to 4100 m above sea, with a population of around 2700, including children. The remote mountain area to be deserved by this new moving nomad school is very large, and the sparsely populated grassland is connected by natural roads only. It is therefore not easy to bring the students to the teaching sites.

The *Amici* visited the area in July 2018, discussed the planned nomad school with the Education authorities and the nomad elders, and submitted the project with its three teaching sites, to the Trustees of the foundation for their consideration. The latter evaluated the project during their August holiday and agreed to finance it. This allowed to transfer the CHF 27'000, equivalent to RMB 180'000, to the Education authorities of Zeku in early September. The formal inauguration of the moving nomad school of Xibusha No 2 could, therefore, be held in mid September 2018. The school was named "*Xishuba No 2 Edith moving nomad school*", in memory of Yolanda's aunt Edith Simon-Maurer, a very generous donor of the foundation.



CAR for the supervision of the already 23 established moving nomad schools

The *Amici* financed the establishment of 23 moving nomad schools from 2012 until the end of 2018 on the highlands of Zeku. The supervision and controls of these schools are being well done by the Education Bureau of Zeku.

In order to more effectively supervise this quite significant number of moving schools, the Education Bureau of Zeku has created a new job for one education official. He got his office in the department of education in the district city of Zeku. His salary is being paid by the Education Bureau. In order to facilitate his daily supervision work in the sparsely populated districts and the inexistence of public transport, the *Amici* have agreed to finance a car, subject that the maintenance and gasoline are taken care by the authorities. -- The amount necessary for an ordinary all rounder apt for the largely natural roads and/or no roads on the highlands has been transferred in July, enabling the authorities to buy a solid all weather car. The *Amici* handed over the vehicle to the authorities in a modest ceremony in mid September 2018.



2. To control the repair works of the severely damaged roof at the Duoning preschool building and completely redo the in- and outside painting of the classroom building at that school.

Buhler-Wuxi Co Ltd, together with the *Education Bureau of the Huangnan Prefecture*, had financed the construction of a modern three floor classroom building for the children of the *Duoning* village and its surrounding area. Inauguration was held in July 2011.

Duoning pre-school building

Due to harsh weather conditions with rather high temperatures in summer and extremely cold temperatures in winter, the roof of the Kindergarten showed serious leaks during a control visit in Spring of 2018. The villagers made a request to the *Amici* for renewed help for the roof of the pre-school class building, by financing a Sika like isolation, covered by a PVC roof. The work was swiftly undertaken, as soon as the weather conditions allowed to do so.



Duoning classroom building

The harsh weather conditions in the region with hot and humid summers and extremely cold and dry winters have left strong marks on the roof of the classroom building over the 10 plus years. When *Wuxi-Buhler chairman Tao Shaohua* visited the school in October 2017, he was pleased that the leaking roof has been well repaired, but proposed to also redo the painting of the school. The *Amici-di-Qinghai* foundation has taken up his proposal and agreed to finance the renovation. A control by the Foundation's representative on July 26, 2018, showed that the work has been professionally done, to the satisfaction of the authorities as well as of Wuxi Buhler and the foundation.



Furthermore, to control the complete renovation of the earlier built primary class buildings at Dongtang, as well as the total refurbishment of the Gulanghe high altitude nomad school.

GULANGHE

Extreme weather conditions in winter with temperatures of minus 30° C. at an altitude of 3400 m above sea, are obviously a major challenge to any building on the highlands of Jianzha, and make renovation again and again necessary, in a cycle of 5 to 8 years. Tiles have shown to be highly resistant to both, extreme cold and rather hot summer temperatures. The family of Dr. Fumagalli had, therefore, arranged to replace the painting by high quality tiles that remained almost undamaged since then, and just needed to be cleaned in the recent renovation.

But the weather in the last five years triggered major leaks on the roof, causing serious damage on the ceilings in all classrooms. To repair the roof and to paint the inside of the building was, therefore, very necessary. The donor family agreed again to finance the renovation of “their” school



DONGTANG Nelly & Kurt Giger School Renovation of the old part of the school

The Nelly & Kurt Giger School, located in the village of Dongtang (Jianzha district), at less than two km from the mouth of the Tongren stream into the Yellow River, at 2100 m above sea level. had been constructed in 2005, and was renovated two times due to the harsh winter climate. Sylvia Etter, daughter of Nelly & Kurt Giger, offered repeatedly her hand to upgrade the school equipments with computers, sport accessories., et al. And did so again in 2018.



3. To distribute e-books and winter clothes to particularly needy students at high altitude primary schools.

DISTRIBUTION OF MORE E-BOOKS (e-teachers)

The overwhelming success with the so-called e-teacher in various moving nomad schools of the Zeku district since 2012-13 motivated the *Amici di Qinghai* to continue providing more young students in these very sparsely populated areas with the most helpful tool to improve their self-education. The “electronic teacher” consists of a set of printed books that, when touched by a battery-driven pin, pronounces the given text in the chosen language (Tibetan, Chinese, English). The battery is a rechargeable solar battery. The new method allows the young pupils to get ready during their 2 years pre-school education for the time when they must attend the nearest boarding school for formal primary classes. The results of the new method have proven to be of very effective help in improving the pre-school education level since its introduction in 2012. -- The nomad children are getting familiar with the “electronic teacher” in a surprisingly short time, some smart kids “got it” in literally a few minutes. – In 2018 a total of 127 additional e-books have been distributed, most of them financed by donors of the foundation, namely 10 copies to students of Baojie, 54 to students of Erguo, 33 copies to JiCang and 30 copies to Xibusha. To ensure “brand recognition”, each copy was provided with the donor’s name. Various donors financed all the e-books in 2018.



DISTRIBUTION OF WINTER CLOTHES

As most parents of the village of Gawuang are working in cities on China’s East coast, as migrant workers, the situation of many children left in the village and the surrounding hills is rather difficult. They are usually taken care by grand parents staying in the village. Having discussed their situation with the village head and master teacher, a special need for a financial support to buy bed covers and a winter jacket was needed, given the winter temperatures of minus 5° to 10°C. The *Amici* together with the associates of Wuxi-Buhler financed the action, i.e. RMB 160 for each of the total of 118 students of *Gawuang*, as well as RMB 150 for the bed sheets of each of the 80 most needy ones who are actually staying during night at the school.



SCHOLARSHIPS for school year 2018-2019

The Amici continued with the scholarship program for needy nomad students whose parents dispose of no or very little cash income. as this is often the case for nomads with yaks and sheep as their only wealth. The *Civil Affairs Department of the Huangnan Prefecture* is receiving and controlling the applications for scholarships very consciously. Remittance was done in early September, at the beginning of the new school year.

Quma: 10 students of the village of *Quma who visited the primary school in the past or do still today*, got a scholarship for the school year 2018-19, namely RMB 1000 for each student in primary, and RMB 1500 for each student in college or university.. For the college/university students the money was entrusted to the parents.



Huanquhu: 20 students have been selected from this high altitude nomad school, who were given RMB 1000 for the school year 2018-2019. The remittance ceremony was held in September 2018.



Furthermore, **Mr. Guido Cherubini** has generously offered to finance the scholarships for 30 students per year during four years 2019-2023, starting in September 2019. The full amount to cover this program has already been credited to the account of the foundation in January 2019.

4. To evaluate a major renovation project of a primary school built in 2006, and the upgrading of the wall and gate of the JiCang primary school near Tongren. One or two more moving nomad schools will be evaluated in the Spring of 2019.

GERONGTI

Mr. Patrick Firmenich financed the construction of the primary school building in Gerongti in 2005. Since then various actions were taken to improve the school (computers, renovation of the painting, new windows, renovation of the teachers rooms, tiles instead of painting, et al). As in other schools, the roof has recently started to leak, thus damaging the ceiling of the classrooms on the second floor. Besides, an unfortunate accident happened recently (a student fell from the narrow path leading to the school 6 m down to the agricultural field below). The child broke a leg, but suffered otherwise no injury. This triggered the question, to look for another path leading to the school. A farmer on the Southern side of the school kindly agreed that a staircase can be built on his land, thus allowing the students to reach henceforth the school on a safe way. The *Amici* are discussing the budget for such a staircase and the fixing of the roof's leak with the Education authorities and the construction company involved. The project is likely to be implemented in Spring-Summer 2019.

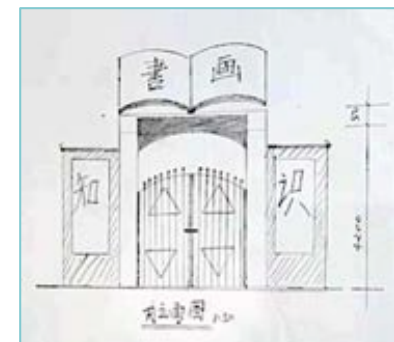


ADDITIONAL NOMAD MOVING SCHOOLS

One or two more moving nomad schools will be evaluated in early April 2019, when the *Amici* will pay their next visit to the highlands of Zeku.

JICANG

The *Jicang* primary school, located at round 18 km east of Tongren city, with altogether 87 students at present, Including 33 students in pre-school and 1st grade education has regular contacts with the *Amici* for many years (donation of used clothes, e-books, scholarships, et al). Yolanda visited the village again in April 2018, and acknowledged the rather modest level of development, although the people remain very happy. When the villagers asked the *Amici* to help them build a new, safer gate for the school, the Trustees agreed to offer, after due discussion of the budget, a financial support of maximum RMB 40'000 (i.e. CHF 6.500). Burglary has become an unfortunate feature of many buildings close to district cities.



5. To sponsor a Long Life Ceremony for the donors and friends of the *Amici-di-Qinghai* foundation, at at the ancient Rebkhong Temple on the way to the highlands .

On July 25, 2018, monks of Rebkhong Monastery held a Long Life Ceremony to express their heartfelt thanks to all donors of the *Amici-di-Qinghai* Foundation. During one hour, ten monks sang mantras so that you and all your beloved ones may enjoy a healthy, long and happy life.

In case you are interested to join the mantras for 2-3 minutes, then please connect with the following link in the Internet: <http://www.schurtenberger.biz/ceremony/>

