

自力更生

A courageous step towards:

Self-reliance



香港網絡科技的發展，令香港經濟得以在金融風暴後漸露曙光，然而亦衍生了不少社會問題。企業逐漸把後勤工作北移，意味著隨著網絡科技日益發達，文職工作均可遷移至成本較低的地區。這現象令不少香港白領人士響起警號，他們的處境跟八十年代香港經濟轉型，勞動工人面對的失業問題無異。文職工作若然不斷北移，只會釀成更多結構性的失業問題。失業率潛伏上升的危機，對於早已是失業大軍的人而言，壓力可謂百上加斤。

在香港社會，普遍人認為領取綜合援助金是一種恥辱，但社會上有不少弱勢社群，因低學歷及支援不足，最終亦不能避過墜入綜援網。今年我們被社會福利署委任推行為期兩年的「窗外有藍天」-特別就業見習計劃及「共闢新里程」-深入就業援助計劃，協助失業綜援受助者，加強他們重投勞動市場的自信心，重新就業，自力更生。

由十五年前創會至今，基督教勵行會一直與時並進，不斷開辦配合市場需要的課程，為失業人士提供最切合社會需求的技能培訓，好讓他們更容易投入就業市場。

自力更生這個課題不單只困擾著佔全港4.5%人口的失業人士，這亦是新近從中國內地來港人士的期望。對新來港家庭及學童而言，雖然一家團聚，但面對新生活、新工作及新學習環境，談何容易。本會一如過往不遺餘力地籌募經費，不斷擴展新來港人士服務計劃的服務範疇，加強地區支援服務，期望他們盡快融入新生活。

朝著協助弱勢社群自力更生的方向，我們亦致力幫助中國西北青海省的兒童。本會與當地政府共同管理的全省第一所兒童院，透過為孤兒及殘疾兒童提供康復訓練、矯治手術及教育，加強他們照顧自己的能力，好讓將來他們能自立成長。去年，本會在同仁縣籌辦了兩所鄉村小學，我們相信教育能賦予下一代自力更生的知識及權力，這才是真正打破貧窮代代相傳的惡性循環的最有效方法。

基督教勵行會近年積極探索及拓展服務範疇，以適切的服務協助面臨不同生活危機的人士，加強他們為自己的生命作出主導的能力。我們一直所持的宗旨，不是施與受，而是喚醒及引領弱勢社群朝著自力更生的目標進發，加上他們的自愛自強，這樣生命才能發亮發光。

Developments in Hong Kong's communications technology have allowed a few rays of light to filter into the economy after the recent financial storms, but nonetheless have also created many social problems. Gradually enterprises have moved northwards, away from Hong Kong, as the information revolution has spread into China. Just as in the 1980s when factories moved from Hong Kong to the Mainland where wages were much lower, so white collar jobs are now shifting across the border. As a result, there is now **structural reorganisation** across many sectors in Hong Kong, with unemployment rates approaching crisis point. In this situation, some people have immense difficulties finding work and now Hong Kong has many long term unemployed.

In Hong Kong society, there is a great stigma against claiming welfare benefits, but more and more people are doing so, as low educational attainment and lack of other forms of support leaves them with few other options. This year Christian Action has been chosen by the Social Welfare Department to set up two schemes called "A Brighter New Future - Special Job Attachment Programme" and "Gateway to Success" - Intensive Employment Assistance Programme, both aimed at long term unemployed people who are claiming Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) benefits. By gradually introducing them back into work environments and giving intensive training and counselling, we **increase these people's confidence, vocational abilities and self-reliance.**

Since its inception fifteen years ago, Christian Action has never ceased to develop and grow. One of the secrets of our success is our **responsiveness to changes in market conditions**, allowing us to quickly update our training courses so that our retrainees can offer skills which are really relevant and so find jobs quickly.

Helping people to become self-reliant underpins our training programmes, however it is not aimed solely at the 4.5% of Hong Kong's population who are unemployed but also extends to New Arrivals from Mainland China. These families, who have come to Hong Kong to be reunited and to find a better life face all kinds of problems of adaptation. They must overcome the difficulties of **new social, work and school environments**. Last year, we have worked very hard to raise funds for organising new services to New Arrivals, strengthening our support and easing their adaptation to their new home.

Based on the basic **philosophy** of promoting self-reliance to the vulnerable group, Christian Action has also extended its scope of work into Mainland China. The first Children's Home in the poor Qinghai Province in cooperation with the local government, continues to provide comprehensive rehabilitation, surgeries and education to orphans and children with disabilities. Our efforts are always directed at increasing the children's physical abilities so that in the future, wherever possible, they can **live independently**. Last year, we have also raised funds to build two rural primary schools in Tongren County. Giving children access to education will have a powerfully transforming effect in this very poor area. The next generation will be able to read and write; education will give them the power to **break out of the cycle of poverty** and to become more self-reliant.

Christian Action seeks in all of its projects to give people the tools to take more control of their own lives. We realise that **giving 'handouts' does not allow people in need to grow and develop** but rather creates dependency. However, by concentrating on building confidence and self-reliance by providing opportunities to learn skills we can create lasting change, facilitating those in need to **transform their lives through their own efforts.**