

Swiss Community Project

Reconstruction in Sichuan: School & Housing Sponsorship Project

Background

On May 12th 2008, a massive earthquake and subsequent aftershocks struck Wenchuan County in China's densely populated Sichuan Province, killing more than 80,000 people, injuring more than 220,000 others, and leaving an estimated 20,000 missing or buried under collapsed buildings. The earthquake overwhelmingly affected children as schools were particularly hard hit. Many of the schools simply folded and collapsed. While temporary housing and schooling is now available, reconstruction of permanent buildings is pressing.

Rebuilding Lives

The Swiss Business Community in China, under an initiative of SwissCham Shanghai, cosponsored by SwissCham Beijing and in co-operation with the Swiss Embassy, the Consulates General in Shanghai and Guangzhou, the Swiss Club in Shanghai and the Swiss Society in Beijing, aims to help rebuild lives. A project team has been established to assess the possibility of building an earthquake-proof school building in one of the most severely hit areas, where 80% of buildings collapsed. Our goal is to ensure children can return to school as quickly as possible in a permanent and safe building. Reconstruction will use local materials, be constructed by a local workforce and be built according to the safety standards being developed by the Chinese government.

The project is under the patronage of the Ambassador of Switzerland to China and already has the support of some major Swiss companies such as Syngenta, Oerlikon, Bobst, Rieter, Zurich Financial Services and others.

Project objectives

As well as constructing an earthquake-safe, high-quality, sustainable, environmentally friendly and accessible school, the following additional value-added components have been proposed:

- Training for local workers in sustainable construction and Chinese Building Codes
- Localized risk management manuals and procedures
- Risk engineering expertise to ensure the design is of appropriate standard
- Quality control skills to be applied by local construction companies and officials
- Enable the community to maintain the infrastructure themselves at lowest costs possible
- Stimulate the local economy by using local enterprises where feasible and possible



Timeframe

The project will be implemented under the supervision, guidance and management of the SwissCham and the Swiss Business Community. There will be close coordination with both local and central governments for approvals and government backing. We are in advanced discussions with local authorities in Chong Zhou where the local government is very positive about the cooperation with the Swiss community on this project. The project team is in the final stage of discussions on the contract with the local government. We hope to complete this in the coming weeks. The Swiss Embassy is working with officials to include this project in the NDRC national master plan for reconstruction. The nursery school is planned to be opened in summer 2009.

Steering Committee

The project is led by a Steering Committee, including key people from the Swiss Embassy, Swiss Chamber and Swiss companies. The Steering Committee is open to companies who donate or support the project in a proactive way and wish to participate at the steering committee level. In any event, all donors will be kept informed of status and progress on a regular basis. The following link provides the list of Steering Committee Members <http://www.swisscham.org/sha/>.

How you can help

We are looking for other Swiss organisations to join in and assist 'The Swiss Business Community Reconstruction Project' rebuild the futures of these communities by providing the funding and non-financial resources that are needed to reconstruct schools and homes.

To date we have raised over RMB 6.15 million in financial donations and multiple non-financial support commitments including materials, transportation, etc. Furthermore, many of the Swiss companies will look to engage their local staff where possible, to help with this activity. To complete the project, we estimate the total budget required is around RMB7 million.

Donations will be coordinated through the steering committee and PricewaterhouseCoopers will provide monitoring services to ensure that the resources are used effectively and can be appropriately accounted for during and after the project.

If you would like to make a donation or have further enquiries, please contact

In China

- Liv minder l.minder@sha.swisscham.org Tel. +86 21 6149 8208
- Felix Sutter felix.sutter@cn.pwc.com Tel. +86 10 6533 2110
- Krystyna Marty krystyna.marty@eda.admin.ch Tel. +86 10 8532 88 88 ext. 8829

In Switzerland

- Natasha Issa natasha.issa@zurich.com Tel. +41(0) 44 639 2015

Alternatively, donations can be paid into the following bank account with the reference:

"EARTHQUAKE RELIEF"

Bank: UBS AG Beijing Branch
Account Name: Swiss Chinese Chamber of Commerce
Account Number: 2701450101
Bank Address: 12/F Winland International Finance Center, No.7 Finance Street, Xicheng District, Beijing 100140, China
General Line: 86-10-58327000

Help us lay a foundation from which the earthquake victims can rebuild a future for themselves and their families.

