



# Gift of life

Taken for granted by most of the world, access to clean water is not so simple for many of the world's poor

Clean water is the gift of life. Worth more than gold, it is the most precious resource on earth. It can prevent disease, quench the thirst of entire communities and keep children alive.

As stated by the World Health Organisation, access to clean water is a basic human right.

Yet so many developing countries don't have enough for their own survival. The real tragedy is that it needn't be so. Science has given us the tools and knowledge to overcome water shortages effectively and sustainably – all it needs is the will to do so. To this end, aid agencies worldwide are calling for a concerted commitment by private companies, governments and interest groups alike to ensure all communities have access to clean, properly distilled drinking water.

It sounds like a gargantuan task, given the sheer weight of numbers. An estimated one billion people worldwide are in need of clean drinking water – including about 300 million in the poor rural villages of China.

The solution is take one step at a time. Or, in the words of international humanitarian organisation Global Water, to save the world "one village at a time". This is also the approach adopted by the Kerry Group Kuok Foundation for its philanthropic work in China.

Established in 2007, the Foundation aims to change lives by transforming poor rural villages into sustainable middle-class communities. It does so by promoting harmony between humans and nature, and respect among all people. This is the basis of the Foundation's mission: to foster advancement through opportunity for all.

Projects fall into four core strategies: health, education, enterprise and water resources. Each follows a set of guiding principles. These require that the projects be of sustainable social and economic value, and that they are replicable by the Foundation

and other charitable organisations so that more people in other communities may benefit.

The guiding principles are people-focused. They require that projects unite villages and towns, and help the poor to build their own capabilities. They ensure integration of all the available social resources, to be effectively used in the right place for maximum value.

The starting point is identifying the greatest need in the poorest prefectures/counties in China. Foundation team members go into the villages of those poorest regions to set up bases where they will work in partnership with local authorities and the villagers themselves to bring them out of poverty in 15 years.

As Dr David Pang, chief executive of Kerry Group Kuok Foundation, explains, the journey above the poverty line requires a concerted effort. "In the end, you really have to change people's mindset. Money cannot change mindset – only people devoting their loving hearts and committing their valuable time can do it."

Guiding principles are strictly adhered to. And "you don't take your eyes off the people", Dr Pang adds. "Hardware is helpful but not critical – the focus is on changing people."

"We identify the current state – i.e. how poor they are, why they are so poor, and our future vision: what their lives will be like in 15 years' time. We will then develop and execute projects in health, education, enterprise and water to close the gap. The work has to be measurable, and disciplined. Only in a very disciplined way can you close the gap."

Rural China's water problems are diverse. In the north, where it's very dry, there are chronic shortages. Southern provinces get more rain, but it runs off quickly in the steep terrain, and is often tainted by industrial pollution.



Village children work together to collect clean drinking water and take it home.  
村童合力收集乾淨食水，扛回家中。

The Foundation's solution aims for long-term cure and, short-term care. It works to cure the root cause of poverty and water problems through river management, while simultaneously caring for immediate needs by bringing safe drinking water to the poor and their livestock.

In one village, the Foundation might build a dam, and provide each family with a water tank. In another, it may need to dig a well to find a reliable source of clean water, build pipelines, then pump it, after purification, into homes.

In every case, it's done in partnership. In addition to participation by government, the villagers are expected to contribute, too. Poor though they may be, in order for the model to work, these villagers must play a hand in building a better life for themselves.

At the initial village meetings, Dr Pang outlines "the bad news" first, telling the villagers what is required of

them. And if they're not prepared to do it, he says, he'll go to another village. To date, no-one has said no. Their response is always an enthusiastic, "what do you want from us"?

Later, Dr Pang will be back and call follow up meetings to see what changes have been made with time.

At one of these return meetings, an old man stood to speak. He told how he'd heard it all before, from outsiders who'd turned up at their village with promises of a better life. Even one group sent by a foreign government had spouted their grand plans to bring water, but were never heard of again. If they couldn't do anything, he thought, who could?

Two years later, the Kerry Group Kuok Foundation had earned the community's trust. The village now has clean water, and a better future within its grasp. Its project even reunited a family – the old man had called his son back from Guangzhou, "because now there is opportunity here".

## 生命之泉

潔淨的水，是生命的饋禮，大地最寶貴的資源，價值遠勝黃金。

潔淨的水，能煥發強大的力量：供水充足，就能防病入侵，惠澤社群，養活下一代。正如世界衛生組織所指，使用清潔的食水是基本的人權。

可是，目前不少發展中的國家淨水匱乏，不足生存，其實此情況應可避免。現今科學造就了知識和工具，足教我們有效和持續地解決食水短缺的問題，一切只欠身體力行。全球的援助組織無不為此疾呼，促請私人企業、政府當局和相關利益團體齊心合力，確保各地區能有清潔的食水可用。

這無疑是一項龐大的任務，皆因全球需要清潔食水的人數估計多達10億，當中約三億來自中國的貧困農村。

欲速則不達，解決的良方在於一次一步，或如國際人權組織Global Water所提倡，以「一次一村落」來拯救世界。嘉里集團郭氏基金會亦採取同樣的方式，在中國推行扶貧工作。

嘉里集團郭氏基金會於2007年創立，旨在把貧窮的農村發展成穩健的小康社區，改善村民的生活。基金會提倡「敬天愛人」，人與自然和諧共存，人與人之間互相尊重。「締造機會，促進發展」正是該會使命的基礎。

基金會主要針對健康、教育、產業和水資源四個方向去策劃扶貧項目，每項皆依循一套原則推行，講求持續性的社會與經濟價值，以及可供基金會和各慈善團體於其他社區複製採用，讓更多民眾受惠。

基金會每項工作皆離不開「以人為本」這個原則，透過結合城鄉力量幫助貧困村戶自力更生，並融匯所有社會資源，確保一切用得其所，發揮最大的效用。

會方首先會界定中國最貧困地區或縣區最殷切的需要，然後派員到區內的村落設立基地，與地方當局和村民攜手合作，務求在15年內幫助他們脫貧。

嘉里集團郭氏基金會總裁彭定中博士解釋，脫貧的道路漫長，需要你我一同努力。「我們最終需要改變的是人的心態。金錢不能將之

改變——只有大家獻出愛心和寶貴的時間，才能達成目標。」

我們必須堅守原則，著眼貧困村民的需要。彭博士續稱：「硬件固然重要，但並非關鍵所在，改變人心，才是重點。」

「我們首先評估受助地區的現況，即村民的窮困程度和原因，以確立項目的目標和願景，如他們15年後的生活會如何。然後，我們循衛生、教育、產業和水等範疇發展和推行項目，逐步將問題解決。有關工作必須能體現成果，推行時按部就班，謹守紀律，才能達成目標。」

中國偏遠地區有多種食水問題，北部地區長期缺水乾旱，而南部省份雖然雨量較多，但因地勢陡峭，雨水迅速流走，工業污染亦嚴重影響水質。

基金會的解決方案，治本與治標並重，一方面希望透過河道管理，拔除地區窮根，解決食水問題；另一方面，亦會向當地的貧民和生畜提供安全食水，以解燃眉之急。

基金會的方案具彈性，既可為一條農村興建堤壩，給每戶設置儲水缸，亦可為另一村落掘井尋找可靠的乾淨水源，然後鋪喉抽水，加以淨化，讓各農戶都有水可用。

每個項目都以伙伴的形式進行，除了政府參與外，村民當然亦要出一分力。生活縱然清苦，但為了工程能順利進行，他們亦須投身參與，親手打造更美好的生活。

彭博士與村民初次會面時，先會陳述種種「壞消息」，並列舉村民需要配合的要求。如果村民無意實行，他便會到另一村落幫忙。時至今日，並沒有村民說「不」，他們往往反應熱烈：「那你需要我們怎樣配合呢？」

隨後，彭博士會定期再到村內與村民召開會議，跟進他們生活的改變。曾在一次會議中，有位老村民主動發言，他講及早有外人入村說過同樣的事情，承諾如何改善他們的生活。當中甚至有外國政府派來的團隊，說得天花亂墜，提及引水入村的大計，但都只是空談。他認為，外人都愛莫能助，誰又可改變目前的困境？

兩年過後，嘉里集團郭氏基金會已取得村民的信任。全村現有清潔的食水供應，手握更美好的未來。項目更促成一個家庭的團聚——那位老村民著兒子回鄉，只因「現在這兒機會處處」。

## Creating destiny

Currently, the Kerry Group Kuok Foundation has bases in six Chinese provinces: Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Sichuan, Shanxi and Shaanxi. Teams of local people are assembled at each site to plan and execute the projects, and support the villagers to accumulate the knowledge and experience that will elevate them out of poverty.

The Foundation's targets are both clear, and ambitious. Goals include raising income levels, enhancing health conditions, educating children and adults, and bringing clean drinking water to all. The ultimate aim is to establish a replicable and sustainable model that can begin to be replicated in other small villages, and eventually across the whole of China.

The Kerry Group Kuok Foundation is committed to curing the root cause of poverty and water problems in China, one village at a time. In the words of its mission: "We will help the poor to build their own capabilities so that they can create their own opportunities and change their own destiny and that of others, and the world can become a better place for our children and generations to come".



Some of the poorest regions of China now have access to clean water.  
國內一些貧窮地區現已有潔淨水供應。

## 矢志投入脫貧工程

嘉里集團郭氏基金會日前在中國湖南、貴州、雲南、四川、山西和陝西等六省設點，集結當地民眾組成團隊，一同籌劃和推行各個項目，支持村民從中累積知識和經驗，以提升水平，脫離貧窮。

基金會雄心萬丈，目標清晰，包括提高收入水平、改善衛生狀況、教育長幼，以及解決食水問題。最終的目標，就是建立可複製和持續發展的楷模，好讓其他小村落以至全中國皆可參照採用。

嘉里集團郭氏基金會矢志朝著一次一村落的方向，逐步斷絕中國致貧和食水問題的根源。誠如基金會的使命所言：「我們竭誠幫助貧困村民自力更生，讓他們能自創機會，改變自己甚至他人的命運，為我們的子女和下一代創造更美好的世界。」