

# Moutai renovates African school

Liquor company helps children in Mozambique get better access to education

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Kweichow Moutai Group, a Chinese liquor producer, is sponsoring a school renovation project in an African country.

Until recently, a primary school in Maputo, Mozambique, for 425 students had only eight classrooms. The shortage forced students to attend school for only half a day, so that others could attend the same school during the other half.

Moutai has invested in a project to deal with the problem. The school's classroom capacity has been increased. The renovated campus was inaugurated on Nov 24, 2017.

Eight additional classrooms were built. In addition, two offices and recreational facilities were included in the project that cost 3 million yuan (\$461,500).

Both students and school staff are excited about the renovated campus. During the opening ceremony, they welcomed Moutai executives with local traditional dance and handmade gifts.

"The program is a great attempt to improve local development and boost cooperation under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative," said Su Jian, Chinese



Students at a primary school in Maputo, Mozambique, dance to welcome visitors from Kweichow Moutai Group.

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ambassador to Mozambique.

The initiative encourages Chinese companies to launch philanthropic works in Africa. China Petrochemical Corp, or Sinopec, for instance, supported educational initiatives in Zambia and Tanzania. Sinopec set up an occupational training center for single mothers in Colombia, South America.

According to ChinaNews, China has provided \$75 billion in financial aid for 1,673 projects across 51 African economies by 2011. Financial aid

covers areas of debt relief, education, healthcare and over 20 other fields.

The elementary school project in Maputo has been Moutai's first involvement in charity in Africa. The company runs many projects in China already under its corporate social responsibility campaign.

Since 2012, the Chinese liquor producer has partnered with the China Youth Development Foundation to promote development of rural regions in China. In June 2017, it

**3 million yuan**

was spent to renovate the campus at Maputo, Mozambique

pledged 300 million yuan to a project to lift certain backward areas out of poverty.

Since Aug 22, 2017, Moutai has provided 5,000 yuan each to 20,000 students from finan-

cially vulnerable families. Since 2012, Moutai has donated 615 million yuan toward education expenses of 123,000 students.

"An opportunity to receive education will change the life of the students and their families," said Yuan Renguo, chairman of Kweichow Moutai Group.

"We will continue our efforts in Africa in promoting regional development and overall well-being," said Li Baofeng, general manager of Kweichow Moutai Group.

# Shoe seller steps up to stomp out poverty, help kids

By XU JUNQIAN in Shanghai  
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Three years after Toms Shoes arrived in China and sold up to one million pairs of its canvas slip-ons in the country, Blake Mycoskie, the company's founder and CEO, thinks it's high time to remind consumers about the company's unique corporate social responsibility program.

Whenever a customer in China buys a pair of Toms shoes, the company donates another pair of shoes for free to an underprivileged Chinese child.

The donation depends on the conditions in which children are living, they might instead receive a pair of boots or sneakers.

California-based Toms Shoes, which is short for Tomorrow's Shoes and was founded in 2006, trademarked the phrase "One For One" in 2011 as its business model and charity cause.

"I think one of the important things for Toms at this moment in this market is for customers to know that giving is our mission and roots, not some marketing tricks," Mycoskie told China Daily on Dec 17.

The 41-year-old Texan embarked on his first "giving trip" in China the next day to southwestern Yunnan province, together with Chinese actress Zhou Xun.

By partnering since 2013 with NGO Heifer China — which focuses on poverty alleviation and rural community development — the company has given shoes to 60,000 kids in underprivileged regions such as Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

"Kids in these areas are usually responsible for heavy farm work, and the roads there are not as good as in big cities. It's heart-breaking to see them walking in broken or unfit shoes for miles. The shoes donated by Toms not only allow them to run faster and easier, but also makes our cause more meaningful," said Jia Ruting, the spokesperson for Heifer China.

Added Mycoskie: "It's important for me to keep connected to the mission, even beyond business reasons. On a personal level, it kind of brings me back to the original idea and why we started the organization."

Mycoskie discovered the special type of shoes worn by Argentina farmers while volunteering there 11 years ago and decided to turn the concept into a for-profit business so that shoeless children can be helped sustainably.

The shoes became an instant hit, appearing on some of the most sought-after celebrity feet in Hollywood just 60 days after the launch. Now available at more than 40 countries, the

**"I think one of the important things for Toms at this moment in this market is for customers to know that giving is our mission and roots, not some marketing tricks."**

Blake Mycoskie, founder and CEO of Toms Shoes

company has helped millions of children, according to Toms Shoes.

While Mycoskie emphasized that what differentiates the cause from many corporate social responsibility projects is that "it's not for the purpose of marketing," he admitted that in China, his team needs marketing to spread their ideology and drive growth.

"I think we have a lot to do to get the idea of 'One For One' more accepted and celebrated in China," Mycoskie said. He noted that once the idea is acknowledged, the market is going to "tip," as seen in other mature markets, and see much higher growth than the company sees now.

Together with Germany and the United States, China is already among the company's fastest-growing markets. Sales on its exclusive e-commerce platform on Tmall in particular, have risen by 50 percent year-on-year in 2017.

Globally, half of those who choose the brand's most popular footwear — its espadrille-like shoes, which retail for \$30 to \$80 — do so in large part because of the unique cause, according to the company's customer survey.

In China, the percentage is much lower, but 90 percent of the customers said they are aware of the program.

"The real challenge is to get customers, especially young ones in China, to think that wearing a pair of shoes is a statement about 'Who I am and what I care about is cool.' The more we can connect with a customer, the bigger growth we can get," said Mycoskie, who now owns nearly 50 percent of the company's stake.

In 2014, Boston-based private equity firm Bain Capital bought the remaining 50 percent. The company was valued at \$625 million at the time.

"It takes time. You cannot just advertise that. It's about building credibility. That's why I am here, to give the credibility to Toms," he added.

# Silk venture to improve lives of Sichuan's poor

By ZHENG YIRAN  
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A Hong Kong-based clothing company has launched an organic silk planting base in a rural area in Sichuan province, as the company steps up efforts to get more involved in the mainland's poverty alleviation efforts.

On Oct 26, Profits Fund Global Holding Ltd (PFGHL), a Hong Kong-headquartered textile and garments supplier, launched the silk base in Yilong, a county under Nanchong, Sichuan province. Covering an area of 67 hectares, the base has been established for organic mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing.

The products of the organic base — mainly raw organic silk materials and garments — will be sold both at home and abroad.

Li Wei, vice-president of Sichuan Silk Association, said that Nanchong is renowned for its silk industry. Planting mulberries, sericulture, filature and weaving are traditions that have been passed down by the local people for over 3,000 years. The mild climate and abundant rainfall offer ideal conditions for mulberry planting and silkworm breeding.

Xu Shaolin, director of operations at the Nanchong sub-



A farmer from Yilong county, Sichuan province, picks mulberry leaves at the organic silk planting base launched by Profits Fund Global Holding Ltd. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

sidary of PFGHL, said that teaming up with the mainland, the company is committed to becoming the world's largest supplier of raw organic silk materials.

"We plan to invest 30 million yuan (\$4.6 million) and 100 million yuan in the first and second phase of the project respectively, and develop 867 hectares of fields for mulberry planting in the next two years."

Within the next three to five years, the company plans to invest a total of 300 to 500 million yuan, develop 2,000 to

3,300 hectares of mulberry fields, and meanwhile prepare weaving and dyeing production, which will be put into use by 2020.

"In 2029, our total investment in the base will exceed 1.5 billion yuan," said Xu.

"Since our first investment in Sichuan province in 2013, the company's strategy has been providing better products and services in a sustainable way. Therefore, we choose to develop regenerative organic agriculture.

"From organic silkworm rearing to silk production, we

have strict rules for each process to make sure their production is non-polluting and of high quality.

"Meanwhile, we build standardized demonstration zones to serve as a template for farmers in surrounding areas. We plan to invite experts in sericulture to provide guidance to farmers in order to increase income for poor households and promote Yilong's agricultural economy," added Xu.

"Yilong is a relatively poor county. The organic silk project we brought here is expected to create over 1,000

**"From organic silkworm rearing to silk production, we have strict rules for each process to make sure their production is non-polluting and of high quality."**

Xu Shaolin, director of operations at PFGHL's subsidiary

jobs, while the total number of jobs we created in Chinese mainland has reached 2,000 so far.

"The third phase includes silk reeling, dyeing and weaving. The project will offer employment for the local farmers," said Xu.

So far, the company has offices and clothing manufacturing plants in provinces including Guangdong, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Sichuan.

Lan Linfeng and Fan Chenwei contributed to this story.

## Briefly

### Health plan for teachers launched

The Pro-Health Public Welfare Foundation and the China Youth Development Foundation kick-started the "Caring for Teachers' Health Plan" in Beijing last month. The plan is the largest public welfare program in the country that supports teachers. Starting September 2017, the plan has become operational in 19 Chinese cities and provides teachers in rural areas with professional health consultation and personalized nutrition support. The Beijing leg of the program will cover four Pro-Health Hope Schools, all

of which are schools for children of migrant workers, by offering teachers free physical examinations. In addition, BaoDao Optical will also provide optical examinations and repair glasses for teachers. Feng Leiming, supervisor of the Pro-Health Public Welfare Foundation, said that Pro-Health will purchase health insurance for rural teachers in the future.

### Insurance scheme for single mothers

The Bohai Life Insurance Company and the Tianjin Women's Federation recently raised funds to cover the dona-

tions for the "A Thousand Villages Vulnerable Single Mother Families" program. The proceeds will be used to provide accident insurance coverage totaling 30 million yuan (\$4.59 million) for all single-mother families in 1,000 Tianjin villages during the next three years. More than 3,000 single mothers and their children are expected to benefit from the program. Every year, each family will get an accident insurance with coverage of more than 20,000 yuan.

### Nestle program to support patients

Nestle Health Science and

LIH Healthcare launched a welfare program called "Nesting, Growth Plan for Slow Angels" last month in China to rehabilitate children with cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy takes a long time to cure and often causes irreversible damage to children's lives. About 310,000 kids under the age of six in China suffer from cerebral palsy, said Gu Xinxin, CEO of Nestle Health Science in China. "Children under the age of three are most likely to recover from cerebral palsy. Those aged above three can take care of themselves after long-term rehabilitation. But the cost of long-term rehabilitation is often a heavy burden

for many families," said Gu.

### Stationery firm donates classrooms

Shanghai M&G Stationery Inc, a leading stationery manufacturer and supplier in China, has joined hands with the Happy Book House project of the China Population Welfare Foundation by donating "M&G Rainbow Creative Classrooms" to Zhouji Experimental School in Yancheng City, Jiangsu Province, last month. The classrooms are equipped with support facilities and have, more than 1,200 books and 900 painting materials. It will benefit more

than 1,000 students. Zhouji Experimental Primary School is the first stop of M&G's donation, followed by Hai'an, Xindang, Wuxun and Caiqiao Central Primary Schools.

### Xianyu campaign to sell unused items

Xianyu, the used-goods auction platform backed by Alibaba, recently launched a campaign called "No-Idle-Belongings," that encourages people to sell unused items online, to boost recycling efficiency. Up to 50 organizations and corporations, including the China Association of Circular Economy and Zhima

Credit, joined the auction. As a subsidiary of Alibaba's Taobao, Xianyu now has more than 200 million users, among which 52 percent were born after 1990. On average, there are 50 million active users on Xianyu, and most of them are in their 20s.

"With its 50 partners, Xianyu is struggling to build a professional standard and value chain of the used-goods auction platform, so that the release, valuation and recycling of the second-hand goods will be conducted by the rules," said Chen Weiye, general manager of Xianyu.