

Disaster Risk Reduction Completed in Five Schools

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Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation has completed its Project Hope of Disaster Risk Reduction in Pingtung County in southern Taiwan. Five schools in remote townships in need of urgent repair now have new buildings that will protect both faculty and students from harm. The five are: Ligang Junior High School, Kung Cheng Junior High School, Fang Liao Senior High School, Gao Tai Junior High School and Nei-pu Junior High School.

"In order to have a safe and peaceful school campus, it is important to consider risk prevention in advance. Tzu Chi Foundation's Project Hope of Disaster Risk Reduction aims to provide a safe, functional and green campus for students that is also full of local culture. It is to improve the learning environment in remote areas," said Master Cheng Yen, founder of Tzu Chi Foundation.

For people in Taiwan who live with a constant threat of dangers like earthquakes and typhoons, disaster risk reduction is very important. Tzu Chi Foundation works closely with communities and the government to reduce such vulnerability. The Foundation has started Disaster Risk Reduction projects in 21 schools in Kaohsiung City, Pingtung County, Taitung County and Hualien County. In addition to building and rebuilding, Tzu Chi has also provided assistance for the repair of over 300 lavatories in 59 schools in Hualien County.

On March 12, 2016, a joint inauguration ceremony was held in Kung Cheng Junior High School. Mr. Cheng Lai-Chang, Deputy Director-General of the K-12 Education Administration of the Ministry of Education, Mr. Pan Meng-An, governor of the County, representatives of local government, Ms. Lin Bi-Yu, vice-president of Tzu Chi, and guests from the neighboring communities of Fang Liao, Nei Pu, Li Kang and Gaoshu joined the event to witness the completion of the project.



At the ceremony, Tzu Chi volunteer Hsu Yun-Tsai read a letter of blessing from Master Cheng Yen: "In 2009, Typhoon Morakot hit southern Taiwan and caused great damage, including on school campuses. Therefore, Tzu Chi conducted the disaster risk reduction project in Pingtung County. I thank the local government for paying great attention to the safety of students and am grateful for entrusting us to execute the project. Tzu Chi took the project seriously and focused on disaster prevention."

"I walked onto the campus and stood right about there. I saw the exposed steel, while pieces of concrete continued to fall off. The school was in bad shape," recalled Vice president of the Foundation Ms. Lin. She also said that, as the reconstruction after Typhoon Morakot disaster came to an end, in 2014 Tzu Chi started the repair plan for 21 schools in Pingtung County,

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Kaohsiung City, Taitung County and Hualien County. Each school has a unique design to fit its needs but all function well and conserve energy.

New facilities in five schools:

- Ligang Junior High School: 28 classrooms and one taekwondo dojo
- Kung Cheng Junior high School: 50 classrooms
- Fang Liao Senior High School: one dormitory building
- Gao Tai Junior High School: two administration buildings
- Nei-pu Junior High School: 23 classrooms

Mr. Cheng Lai-Chang of the Ministry of Education said: "Tzu Chi has always supported campus safety. In 1999, after the 921 earthquake struck Taiwan and caused great damage to many schools, Tzu Chi took on the construction work of rebuilding 51 ruined schools. As I see the completion of the five schools and the smiles on students' faces, I feel very touched by what Tzu Chi has done." Mr. Cheng then announced the official opening of the newly finished buildings.

Now that the renovation is completed, students in the five schools and all future generations can go to school free of anxiety.