

Half the Sky Foundation

1) How has the current economy affected the need of services that you give to the community?

The current downturn brings more of the same to many millions who continue to live in poverty in China. Half the Sky was named after the Chinese adage, “women hold up half the sky,” to denote the fact that traditionally, most healthy babies abandoned in China are little girls, a sad collision between persistent poverty, China’s one-child policy and an age-old preference for sons.

Increasingly, in larger cities, a “floating population” of migrant workers – leaving economically destitute rural areas in search of employment - abandons healthy infants of both sexes. And because of rising costs of health care and lack of social services in this still developing economy, children with special needs are also more likely to be abandoned.

2) How has the current economy affected the donations of goods and services that your organization receives?

Many private donors have cancelled subscriptions, many private and corporate donors who have continued to give have reduced their gifts and grants, and some large sponsors have disappeared; Lehman Brothers was a major sponsor of HTS.

3) How have the services that your organization provides to the community affected our local economy?

Half the Sky employs and trains many local woman from the communities where we have centers. Because local women have found much-needed jobs at our centers, they are rooted in the community. In fact, our centers, located in government-run orphanages, have become community-wide resources for child development and child-rearing information.

In addition, at “Blue Sky” Model Centers – eventually one in every province and municipality in China – Half the Sky will train hundreds of orphanage directors, administrators, teachers, nannies and foster parents about the importance of nurturing care and how to best deliver that care to orphaned children.

Finally, Half the Sky’s goal is to support/create entrepreneurial models that will help its programs become self-sustaining—a bakery at the social welfare institution in Urumqi staffed by older orphaned children with special needs, an idea to open up our preschools to families in the community, who will pay a fee to attend our highly regarded preschools, etc.