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ASIA/CHINA - Faith and service to people with mental disabilities: a parallel and complementary path for Huiling

Rome (Agenzia Fides) - The commitment towards the mentally disabled, inspired by Mother Teresa, has not only changed her life, but has paved the way of faith, hitherto unknown, which led her to baptism and to take on the Christian name of Teresa, in homage to the Blessed Teresa of Calcutta. This is Teresa Weina Meng's experience, founder and president of Huiling (which means "spiritual wisdom"), a Chinese NGO that was awarded the International Prize Vittorino Colombo on October 20.
When on 1 September 1985 Zhiling, today Huiling, opened its first school for 96 children with mental disabilities – recalls the founder - the news had a great social impact and found wide resonance in the world of media and among local authorities. Teresa Meng Weina and her friends were in fact "the pioneers in the field of social work in China" and the first members of a non-governmental reality having to deal with this social group. Today, after numerous difficulties and obstacles that have occurred in nearly 30 years, "thanks to the help of the Holy Spirit" says the founder, Huiling has more than a hundred centers in 13 major cities in China, with about 300 operators that assist more than a thousand people with disabilities, and has given rise to an internet network that enables thousands of disabled people to connect with each other every day. Huiling is considered by government authorities the model for Chinese social service and for other NGOs.
"In today's context of China, where a growing number of people fall prey to depression, we continue to have so many requests for assistance - says Teresa Meng Weina in an interview with Fides Agency - . In the future we will further improve our work, with the aim to raise awareness in society about the mentally disabled, to offer a better service to our guests and to support ongoing development of Huiling". (NZ) (Agenzia Fides 31/10/2013)

> LINKS
The full text of the interview with Teresa Meng Weina, in Italian:
http://www.fides.org/ita/attachments/view/file/Huiling_Int_Meng.doc:

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