

A Working Trip to Guangxi in May 2015

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Our project team leader Dr. Ryan C.P. Wong led seven students to Guangxi Province from 24th to 27th May 2015. This trip enables students to get exposure to the ongoing construction project in Dabao Village, particularly in the preparation of as-built drawings. This trip also serves as an early preparation of the future school repairing project at Hongdeng Village. We had an unforgettable and meaningful learning experience in terms of applying theory into practice. Apart from that, we also learnt the local situation and social issues.

Upon early arrival to Rongshui on the first day, we visited a high school in the town centre. We walked around the school and observed its operation. We were surprised by student's perseverance to their study. The school was well organized and was full of cheering words advocating a positive attitude towards learning.



Figure 1 The team discussing the drawings

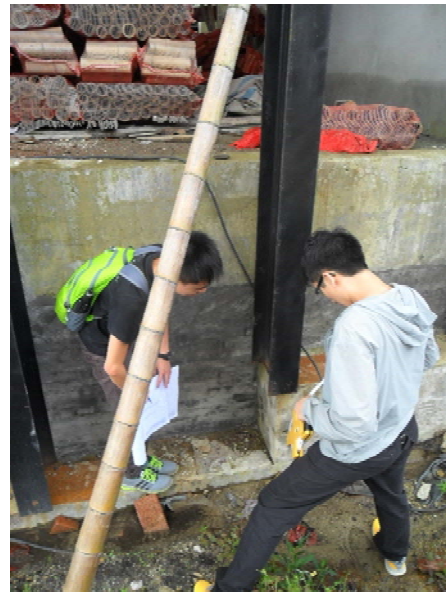


Figure 2 The team conducting site measurement at Dabao Village

On the second day, we visited the Dabao Community and Cultural Centre for which the construction work is ongoing. Workers were preparing to hang the bamboo frames to its final position and the land formation was in progress. Being led by the Site Engineer, we appreciated the typical construction practice in rural China. We also did site measurement by using tapes such that we can prepare the as-built drawings for

future reference after the trip. There are quite a number of design changes observed, we learn that it is very hard to strictly follow everything in the design, sometimes it is necessary to make slight modifications to suit the current situation. In the evening, we conducted a casual debriefing session. We tidied up our findings and observations, studied the drawings and shared our feelings to the Dabao project. It was a fruitful conversation as we have an in depth reflection towards the work on that day.



Figure 3 Distributing small gifts to children in Dabao



Figure 4 The team observing the current condition of Hongdeng Primary School

On the third day, we visited Hongdeng Primary School, teachers wholeheartedly hosted us with lunch. We chatted with them and listened to their stories of being a teacher in a village school. I really appreciate them as they are fully devoted to helping young children in rural village despite that they are facing a lot of hardship. We then observed the conditions of the school, played games with children, conducted interview with teachers and took aerial photo of the school.

Hongdeng Village was one of the poorest village in Rongshui County. The sanitary condition was poor. They do not have a proper toilet that can discharge and treat sewage properly. The ground is soaked with water, cattle live together with people. Besides, the wooden school is not in good condition; water leaks from the roof, the columns are displaced, walls and windows are damaged. To ensure that the structure can be fit for use, we found that it is necessary to undergo a series of repairing works.

Project Mingde is a platform where students from various disciplines can expose to experiential learning. It is about integration between theory and practice outside classroom and it is about understanding ones strength and weakness. It is all about helping the needy. There are unlimited things for us to explore, experience and reflect through this trip.

For instance, we get the chance to understand some of the social issues in rural China. There are left behind children whose parents have to leave them alone for work. Although there are volunteer groups to support those children, the resource in hand is far less than required. Also, the children are hardworking kids, they are eager to learn so as to strive for a better future.

All these make us feel deeply. As we are living in a wealthy society, do we treasure what we have, the quality of life we enjoy and the education opportunity? We definitely need to treasure all these. Can we do something to help them? Sure we can!



Figure 5 Group photo of the team taken at Guilin train station. From left to right, Mr. Kelu MENG, Dr. Ryan C.P. Wong, Wong Pak Yue Martin (III), Chu Wing Nin Winson (III), Lau Cheuk Yin Andrew (II), Tse Yat Sing Oliver (II), Ho Chak Hin Spark (II), Chan Wing Lam (II) and Yu Jing Yee (II).