

Reflection on Guigang Working Trip (20th - 23rd October, 2016)

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This is my first time to join a project in Project Mingde, it was my pleasure to become a member of the Guigang working team. This trip was meaningful and insightful.

I was responsible for interviewing the principal and teachers of Chang Cheng Primary School with two students from the South China University of Technology. Working in a multidisciplinary and multinational team is definitely a valuable experience for me. What I have learnt from my teammates is their passion and professional skills. Before the trip, I was quite anxious as I am a surveying student with no prior knowledge on land surveying and building design, but eventually my teammates have helped me a lot and I have gain a deeper understanding in the civil engineering field. Due to language and cultural barriers, the interviewees and I have some discrepancies on the meaning of the interview questions. My teammates from the South China University of Technology were very generous in helping me with the culture in China and mandarin communication, they helped me to elaborate and explain the questions so that the interviewing process went smooth.

Through communicating with the principal and teachers, I can feel that they were really dedicated to the school and students, despite the hardship that they were going through. One of the teachers said that she could overcome any difficulties regarding accommodations, as long as the students could have a better learning environment. I definitely appreciate their efforts on enhancing students' learning conditions.

From this trip, I learnt that to help the people there, we are not just simply providing them with something that we supposed they are lacking, but first fully understand them through interviews and observations, so as to design a proposal that complies with their needs. It is a precious experience for me to know more about the living condition and social problems there, like the problem of left-behind children. I am so grateful that I have the chance to work with the Guigang working team.