

## **Reflection on Project Mingde Summer Camp 2017 (11<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2017)**

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In the beginning of summer, I went to a Guangxi service trip organized by the HKU Project Mingde Committee with 19 other HKU students. We come from a variety of disciplines, including engineering, education and medicine. Our disciplines might be different, but there is one thing in common: All of them can bring great benefit to a community. Buildings from engineer give people a place to live; Knowledge from education empowers people to make life choices; Treatments from medicine save lives. However, at the same time could we create catastrophe if we are being careless of the power we possess. Being cautious of that, instead of expressing my deep gratitude to the organizers, sponsors and participants, I would like to write about the goods and harms of the camp we have done.

To commence with, we have brought new knowledge and joy to the local community. My team, the medic team, had prepared teaching materials about hand hygiene, dental health and smoking cessation. We spent the whole day teaching students of age 6-10 years old. We had also distributed toothpaste and toothbrushes and stuck posters in their washrooms to strengthen their memory of the knowledge. The arts team had taught students origami animal folding, which had obtained great success as we could all observed the large smile worn by students after the lesson. The science team had prepared several interesting chemical experiments, including simple acid-base reaction. These knowledges are all new to the students. We can observe the eagerness of learning from the attentiveness of them.

Moreover, we have also brought quality-of-life changes to the school. The medic team carried out various health checks to the villagers and gave relevant advices regarding healthy eating and exercising. More importantly, we had repeatedly reminded them the harmful consequences of smoking and excessive alcohol consumption. The two behaviours were found to be extremely common among villagers and even teachers of the community. For the engineering team, they had crosschecked the construction dimension of the staff dormitory. They have found out some major and minor errors in the dimension which may imply potential danger of the building and deserve immediate attention.

However, the effectiveness of our trip is indeed in doubt. First, it took us around one whole day to arrive the school due to the remoteness of the region. Eventually we

could only spare two days out of five for teaching. This significantly limited the amount of knowledge we could bring to them. Secondly, the applicability of the subjects we taught may not be high. For example, we taught them how to wash their hand properly, as soon as we found that they did not have a very stable water supply. Lastly, we have used up a lot of resources of the community even we only stayed in the school for two days: Charging all our phones at night may well use up their monthly, if not yearly, serving of electricity resources. Therefore, our service trip was not without shortcomings.

In conclusion, we have brought both goods and harms to the Guangxi Daping village. I would very much want to judge whether we did more goods or more harms. Yet, being a 3-dimensional creature, I believe that I do not possess such an ability. Only the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension, time, could tell us the final judgement on whether the knowledge we transferred to them could outweigh the drawbacks we brought.