

The 22nd Working Trip to Guangxi (16th – 21st October 2014)

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Project Mingde has done a lot to improve the living environment of the underprivileged children in rural China for the past ten years. This requires the efforts from different parties. The trip to celebrate its 10th anniversary has not only witnessed the success and the achievements of the project — but also most importantly — the growth of Project Mingde. Also, we are very honored to have invited the Vice-Chancellor and the President of HKU, Professor Peter Mathieson and his wife, Dr. Christina Mathieson to join the Celebration Ceremony held at Mingde Building on Oct 21.

On Oct 16, while the setting sun shed light on the railway track to Guilin, our journey began. After 18 hours of travelling by train and shuttle bus, we finally arrived at the hotel in Rongshui and started our first task — packing gifts for the children.

The following day, we went to Dabao Village with Dr. George Wong to do some measurements and to check strength of the concrete walls and columns. We could apply knowledge learnt from the laboratory sessions in the University. In the afternoon, we were invited by the principal Mr. Luo to enjoy our lunch at his home and we all had a great time.



Figure 1 Students are doing measurement and checking the concrete strength of the walls.



Figure 2 The benches decorated by us.

The next day, we went to Mingde Building to do some preparation works for the ceremony and to beautify the chairs there by painting different patterns on them. Although we were not professional painters, we tried our best to complete them. I was so glad that the children liked our painting.



Figure 3 The local students are happy to receive gifts from Professor and Dr. Mathieson.

On Oct 20 — the day of the 10th Anniversary Celebration Ceremony — we went to Mingde Building early in the morning to do preparation. When more and more people arrived, we started to distribute the T-shirts of Project Mingde to the local people. After listening to the speeches by Professor Mathieson and Mr. Huang Jianfei, Former Mayor of Dalang Village, we enjoyed the wonderful performances by the local children and villagers, such as dancing and singing. We also prepared gifts to the children and they were very happy to receive it from Professor and Dr. Mathieson. At the end, Professor and Dr. Mathieson planted a tree in front of the basketball court to mark the end of the ceremony. Then we went to Gewu Building to have lunch with the local students and to communicate with them. Hours later,

we got on the shuttle bus to Guilin to take the train to Hong Kong. And the whole trip ended.



Figure 4 The happy faces of the village children.

Having joined Project Mingde for one and a half years, this is the first time I have visited Rongshui. Although this trip does not include many technical works, I can still gain a lot. In Hong Kong, we are quite spoiled; we can have everything we want easily, but for the children in rural China, it is a totally different story. I have learnt to be grateful for what I have. I also learnt to appreciate genuine things around us. People say, "The laughter of children is the voice of angels", and it was true when I saw them receiving the gifts from Professor Peter Mathieson.

Meanwhile, when I visited Dabao Village, the project that I engaged in, it's just like seeing your little baby growing up stage by stage. The feeling at that moment was beyond words. From calculations, drawings to construction, now I can see the framework of the building. This sense of achievement does enhance my interest in civil engineering. I am so glad that I have had the chance to join this project.

Construction is not a one-day work, Project Mingde is not an easy task because it needs continuous works and efforts from different parties. I hope that the 10th Anniversary trip can arouse people's attention so that, in the future, more and more people can be involved in the project.



Figure 5 Our team members are enjoying the work!