



SUPPORT EDUCATION IN RURAL CHINA PROGRAM SERIES

认助中国乡村教育项目系列

2011 Annual Report



*The magic of a story book -
a visiting ESS volunteer captures
the children's imagination
as he shares with them a picture
book he has bought for the school*

— A-Lou Primary School
Luxi County, Yunnan Province

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Education and Science Society, Inc. (ESS) is a non-profit, non-political educational organization, registered as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization in the State of New York. Its missions are to promote understanding between the peoples of the United States and China, and to promote human and social development in rural China by raising literacy levels and improving the quality of education.



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The ESS Board of Directors holds regular meetings every quarter; The SERC Executive Committee holds regular meetings bimonthly.

SUPPORT EDUCATION IN RURAL CHINA (SERC) PROGRAM SERIES

2011 Annual Report

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Foreword

Dr. Lungching Chiao, ESS Vice-President

A national reading survey released in April 2012 by the Chinese Academy of Press and Publication indicates that in 2011 Chinese adults (age 18-70) on average read about 4.4 printed books and 1.4 e-books per person. However, only about 54% of the adult population read any printed books at all during the year, and for the 14-17 age group, extracurricular reading has actually declined compared to the previous year. Moreover, people are spending less time on reading traditional printed media (books, newspapers and magazines), and more time on digital reading material, mostly browsing on the Internet on computers or cellular phones.

Reading activity on the Internet is generally “shallow” reading. The contents of such reading consist mainly of news briefs, information clips, and miscellaneous forms of entertainment. This kind of reading does not encourage focused attention, or strengthen the capacities for critical analysis, or develop the abilities to write with accuracy and coherence. On the other hand, “deep” reading of a book (whether in printed or digital form) allows the reader to chew on the details, think through the issues, draw on the power of imagination and association, and in the process develop the capacity for critical thinking and creativity.

Reading is different from speaking. Speaking is instinctive. Under normal circumstances, a three-year old child should be able to speak. Reading, on the other hand, has to be taught, guided, and learned. It is important for a child to learn how to read before he reaches ten years old. Between ten and fifteen, he can apply his reading skills to learn different subjects. At this young age, a child should be encouraged to read outside the regular school curriculum, so that he can accumulate a wide spectrum of knowledge, supplementing what he learns from textbooks. Cultivating a child’s interest in reading and fostering a good reading habit will build a strong foundation for his development. It will help him continue learning through life, build up his knowledge base, develop his potential to reach his goals, and participate fully in the community and wider society.



ESS is deeply concerned about the important role that reading plays in the education and development of rural children. Over the past two decades, ESS has launched a series of programs to support reading activities in China’s rural schools. The *Adopt a Rural School Library* and *Adopt a Rural Public Library* projects have helped provide reading material to school children, teachers and local residents since 1988/89. The *basic education conferences and workshops* conducted each summer since 1993 have helped train rural teachers and principals in pedagogy and school management. The annual *Read to Discover/Teach to Inspire essay contests* since 1996 have promoted reading and writing to encourage the full use of the library books. The *Read Classics* projects started in the year 2000 have helped strengthen abilities to understand and use the Chinese language. More recently, since 2007, the *Rural Multimedia Information Centers* have enabled selected rural schools to access the large body of knowledge available on the Internet.

The main objective of ESS programs is to help improve the quality of education in China’s rural areas. Sustained efforts of the *Financial Aid for Rural Students* program over the past decades have given opportunities for many poor rural children to continue their schooling. The provision of musical instruments and sports equipment has helped many rural schools enliven the school environment and organize extracurricular activities essential to the children’s development. Summer camps in recent years have enriched the life of many young rural children, bringing them the care and concern of ESS volunteers and sponsors within and outside China.

ESS is a small grass root educational organization. Our goal is to provide appropriate support to our beneficiaries, and we have experimented with various modes of operation to try achieve the best outcome at least cost. Despite our efforts, however, much more still needs to be done. To reach our goal, we need both human and financial resources. The education of future generations depends on everyone’s care and concern. Let us all do our part and participate in these efforts.

SERC Program Series 1988-2011 Major Results and Activities at a Glance

SERC Series I: Providing Reading Material and Information Resources		
📖 Adopt a Rural School Library (ARSL)	(since 1989)	5,393 ARSLs
📖 Adopt a Rural Public Library (ARPL)	(since 1988)	46 ARPLs
📖 Adopt a Rural Multi-media Information Center (RMIC)	(since 2007)	17 RMICs
SERC Series II: Improving Teaching and Learning		
◆ Basic Education Conferences/workshops for rural teachers - Jointly held with provincial/municipal institutions	(since 1993)	47 conferences
◆ Summer Camps - Science	(since 2009)	15 camps
◆ Summer Camps - Music/General Activities	(since 2009)	4 camps
◆ Essay contests and publications		
❑ <i>Read to Discover/Teach to Inspire</i> *	(since 1996)	16 th year
* Since 2009, <i>Read to Discover</i> essay contests have included submissions from both students and teachers. Award winning essays are posted on the ESS website. A collection, entitled <i>Shan Ying</i> (Mountain Eagle) was published in 2011.		
◆ <i>Read Classics</i> projects	(since 2000)	192 schools in 11 provinces
◆ Teaching Equipment and Facilities		
❑ Science laboratory equipment	(since 2002)	26 schools
❑ Teachers training VCDs	(since 2002)	28 schools
❑ Audiovisual equipment	(since 2002)	12 schools
❑ Classroom desks, chairs and tables	(since 2002)	59 schools
❑ Students beds for boarding facility	(since 2002)	1 school
❑ Musical instruments in poor counties	(since 2003)	382 schools in 18 provinces
❑ Equipment/facilities for schools in specially poor counties	(since 2003)	5 counties in 3 provinces
❑ Equipment/material for rural teachers training centers	(since 2004)	10 counties in 8 provinces
❑ Equipment/material for physical education	(since 2005)	42 schools
❑ Multi-media classroom equipment (with large screen monitor/TV)	(since 2008)	10 sets (in Sichuan disaster area)
SERC Series III: Financial Aid for Rural Students		
Total number of scholarship awards	(since 1997)	19,158
Of which: Primary students (PS)		2,276
Junior secondary (JSS) and special education students		10,378
Senior secondary students (SSS and vocational school students)		5,916
College students (HE)		588
Special Projects		
◆ Tree planting project in Inner Mongolia & Gansu	(since 2003)	60,000 saplings
◆ Soya bean workshop & pig farm in Fuping County, Hebei	(2003)	1 school
◆ Art/skills training for girls in specially poor counties, Gansu	(2003)	2 schools
◆ School broadcasting systems in Guyuan, Ningxia; and Ziyang, Sichuan	(since 2005)	4 schools
◆ Multi-media classroom/large screen TV project, Sichuan	(2008)	10 schools in earthquake disaster area

A Special Event in 2011

– A delegation of school principals and education workers from Beichuan, accompanied by ESS Sichuan representatives, visited Chifeng in Neimenggu from June 17 to 25 to learn skills in teaching and school management. Beichuan was rebuilt after the devastating earthquake in 2008, but the education system has suffered severe losses in human resources and is badly in need of support and guidance. The trip to Neimenggu was first conceived when an ESS group, which included Ms Pei-zhen Shao of the Raybin Q. Wong Foundation, visited Beichuan in 2010. Ms Shao subsequently helped organize the Chifeng visit program and arranged for its financing.



SERC Program Series I – Providing Reading Material & Information Resources

Adopt a Rural School Library (ARSL)

In 2011 ESS provided books to help set up libraries in 152 rural schools in remote and mountainous areas in China. Generous donations from sponsors since 1988/89 have contributed towards the establishment of 5,393 ARSLs throughout the country (see Chart 1 and Table 1, page B-2, and Table 3, page B-3), providing much needed reading material to rural schools and communities.

In Yunnan province, for instance, 348 ARSLs have been set up since 1989. In 2011 alone, 10 schools in Yongping County and 8 schools in Luxi County received ESS funding for their school libraries. The Luxi County schools received altogether 3,756 volumes of books with a total value over RMB 70,000, all financed with donations from the K. P. Tin Foundation in Hong Kong.



Students in Quanjing Primary School in Wenjiashi Township, Liuyang (Hunan) poured over the books that just arrived at the newly established ARSL.

Implementation of the ARSL projects usually takes about 8 to 9 months to complete. ESS representatives in China work with local institutions and communities to identify the schools that meet ESS criteria and help them submit applications to ESS headquarters in Washington. After approval by ESS, an agreement is signed with the school principal and the local education bureau. The schools then select and buy the books with the help of local ESS representatives. All ARSL schools are obligated to provide feedback information via ESS to the sponsors, including receipts and lists of books purchased, thank you letters, book reports and photographs of the opening and use of the library. ESS tries to ensure that the donated funds are used properly and according to approved procedures, and pay random visits to the schools to monitor the use of the libraries. Sponsors are also encouraged to visit the ARSLs.

Adopt a Rural Public Library (ARPL)

Since 1988, forty-six ARPLs have been set up in Guizhou and Guangxi Provinces (see Table 5, page B-5). These are intended to serve a demonstrative purpose, with ESS providing financial support in the first five years of operation. Subsequently, the local governments become fully responsible for the operating costs. ESS continues to provide incentive book funds of US\$300 to each ARPL (to be increased to US\$400 in 2012 to counter the effects of inflation).

Rural Multimedia Information Centers (RMIC)

Initiated in 2007/08, the RMIC project has established 17 centers in selected rural schools in China (see Table 6, page B-5). In 2011, ESS received funding for three RMICs from the K. P. Tin Foundation and for one RMIC from Mr. Siu Kuen Au. Four rural schools in Liaoning, Ningxia, Neimenggu and Hubei were selected as sites for these RMICs, each with a computer network comprising a server and 30 terminals. The system allows the students, teachers and local residents to learn how to use computers and to access the Internet for online information. In view of the high project cost, ESS decided not to include in the project the provision of additional books for these centers, thus cutting down the cost per project from US\$20,000 to US\$15,000. All four centers were completed and started operation at the beginning of the school year in September 2011.



The RMIC in Changjiang Primary School in Guandukou, Badong County (Hubei), established in 2010 with donations from Mr. Siu Kuen Au. Making full use of the computer network in the RMIC, the school has become a model in applying multimedia techniques in teaching.

SERC Program Series II – Improving Teaching and Learning

2011 Basic Education Conference

The 47th Basic Education Conference was held from July 20-22, 2011, in Zhengzhou, Henan Province. The conference was organized by ESS together with the Henan Provincial Education Bureau. Partner institutions included the Zhengzhou Normal University, the Central Education Committee of the China Democratic League (CDL), the Associated Colleges in China (ACC), the K. P. Tin Foundation in Hong Kong, and the Hsin-Yi Foundation in Taiwan. About 700 school principals, teachers and education personnel attended the conference. ESS sponsored 117 participants and the CDL sponsored 56 participants coming from rural areas in various provinces/autonomous regions

Lectures were given in the morning sessions by specialists from educational institutions (*Mr. Zhang Li, Chief, China National Education Development Research Center; Mr. Hong Han, principal from Ningxia; Professor Daisy L. Hong, Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, Taiwan National Central University; Dr. Samuel S. Peng, Taiwan Normal University; Mr. Shan-tai Lin, Taiwan Middle Level Education Society; Mr. Hsueh-ren Tsao, principal of Taiwan Lan-Yang Girls Senior High School; Professor Honggang Jin and Dr. Debao Xu from Hamilton College, New York; Dr. Wu-Teh Hsiang from Syracuse University, New York; and Dr. Xuejian Yu from Stonehill College, Massachusetts*). The lectures covered the following topics: macro trends and key policies in China's basic education development; the brain and learning, creativity and character development; the application of learning theory and strategy in teaching; reading classics and the ability of expression; comparison of education on the mainland, in Taiwan and in the US.

Afternoon sessions were organized in different groups: principals' forum; science education; early childhood education; special education; and presentations by ACC students. In addition to the visiting lecturers in the morning sessions, the following individuals helped lead the different group sessions – *Zhang Yongquan, principal from Tianjin; Yang Aizhen, researcher from the Henan Education Bureau; Hao Ruihui and Zhao Yunling from the Jiangsu Handsbrain Education Training Center; Bi-chu Wen from the Pre-school Education Research and Development Center of the Hsin-Yi Foundation; De-yi Chiu, who works on the promotion of reading among children in Taiwan; Professor Bao-gui Lin, special education specialist from Taiwan Normal University; and Professor Bao-hsiang Chi, from the Taipei Education Institute.*

Participants indicated in their evaluation reports that they were inspired by the presentations of many advanced educational concepts, experience and methods during the three-day conference. They were especially impressed by the spirit and personality, knowledge and teaching skills of the visiting scholars. They suggested that, for future conferences, (1) more specialists on basic education and on school management be invited; (2) the time for interaction and discussion be extended, if possible holding separate discussion groups for primary, secondary and higher education; and (3) more opportunities to attend be offered to first-line teachers from poor and mountainous rural areas and to those working in special education. They also hoped that an exchange platform could be set up between schools on the mainland and in Taiwan.



Left and Center: participants at the Basic Education Conference having hands-on experience in group sessions.
Right: ACC students preparing for their presentations.

ESS Summer Camps for Rural Students

2011 was the third year since ESS initiated the summer camp programs in China. Altogether 19 summer camps have been organized in the past three years in various locations in eight different provinces/autonomous regions. They involved the active participation of local educational institutions and voluntary organizations, the Shanghai Institute of Biological Sciences, as well as the ACC and the National Chengchi University in Taiwan (see Table 8, page B-6).

About 1,400 children participated in the 12 summer camps held in 2011. Nine of these camps were science camps and three were general activity camps. Financial support for these activities came mainly from the K. P. Tin Foundation; the Washington Association of Chinese Intellectual Youths also provided funding for one camp. Volunteers planned and organized the camp activities so that the children would not only gain basic knowledge but also appreciate their local environment. Learning was made interesting and enjoyable, with hands-on experience that the children did not usually have during normal school days. Field trips on environmental issues took them to river banks, nature reservation areas, local mines, weather stations and agricultural sites. In one of the camps in



Learning about environmental protection
-- a major theme in the science camp in Liuyang, Hunan



A farewell song as we part – volunteer counselor with the children at the closing ceremony of the camp in Shaanxi

Lengshui township (Chongqing), most of the children came from homes where the parents worked out of town throughout the year. Another camp in Luzhou (Sichuan) was specially arranged for children with disabilities. The care and concern of the volunteers touched the children as well as the local communities.

The volunteers, on their part, were motivated by the desire to contribute to the community. The thought of the children waiting for them at the Wushijiazi Primary School in Linxi (Neimenggu) hurried the volunteers forward, undeterred by roadblocks created by floods after a heavy rain. Hardships at the campsites could not dampen their enthusiasm -- the children's eagerness to learn made it all worthwhile. Many volunteers wanted to sign up for the camps next summer, and some were planning to share their experience and make it a tradition through successive generations of students at their respective universities.

Read to Discover Essay Contest

The 16th *Read to Discover* essay contest in 2011 received over 1,400 submissions from ten provinces/autonomous regions. After three rounds of thorough review by volunteers from the Joint Publishing Company in Beijing, fifty-five essays were selected for different levels of awards. 2011 also saw the publication of a collection of the essays that won awards in previous contests, entitled *Shan Ying (Mountain Eagle)*. It was distributed to the award-winning students and teachers, the rural schools that participated in the contests, ESS partner institutions and ARSL sponsors.

ESS Music Program for Rural Schools

In 2011 twenty-two rural schools in China, located in Neimenggu, Hubei, Henan, Liaoning, Jiangxi and Ningxia, received musical instruments donated by ESS sponsors. Since initiation of the music project in 2003, the ESS music program has benefited 382 rural schools (see Table 7, page B-5). These schools have limited financial resources, and would not have been able to acquire the musical instruments without the support from ESS sponsors. Now the teachers enjoy teaching the children how to sing and how to play the instruments, and the children are eager to learn and practice. The sound of music has made school life much more joyful and is conducive towards the children's full development.



Little musicians at the Chadianzi Primary School in Badong County (Hubei)

SERC Program Series III – Financial Aid for Rural Students

Between 1997 and 2011, ESS gave out 19,158 scholarship awards to students from poor rural families in China (see Chart 2 and Table 2, page B-2 and Table 4, page B-4). These were initially targeted towards students in primary, junior secondary, senior secondary and vocational schools. To meet the changing demands in the education sector, ESS expanded the program, in 2004 and 2006, respectively, to include students in higher institutions of learning and students with disabilities.

Over the past 15 years, the ESS financial support program has not only helped the students continue their schooling, but also attracted the active participation of a number of volunteers in China. One of these volunteers is Zhang Lubing, a graduate from Shanghai University, now working with the China Construction Bank. In the summer of 2008, as a university student, she went with a support group to Yunnan province to help needy students obtain financial assistance. She was able to connect with ESS and find support for 15 students. Now, nine of these students are attending universities, with ESS continuing to provide financial support.

In the spring of 2012, Lubing and two other volunteers went to Yunnan again, this time to visit five of the students now attending universities. Lubing remembered very well how they were when she first met them four years ago in their home villages – bashful and hesitant youths in their last year of junior secondary school. Now they have blossomed into a new generation of university students, full of vigor and vitality.

One of the students, Zhu Wenbo, was in tears during her first visit. Wenbo's mother died when she was young. Her father was crippled and her grandmother had been suffering in bed without adequate medical attention for more than a month. Her dream was to become a successful entrepreneur who would be able to improve life for her family and help people in her village to become rich. Now Wenbo is a brilliant student in finance in the Economics and Management Institute of Yunnan Normal University. She still holds on to her dream.

Another student, Lin Lin, came from a peasant family in the high mountains. Both of his parents were too feeble to work in the fields. A shy teenager who loved to play basketball, Lin had an excellent academic record, gaining first place in his class. The volunteers remembered him holding onto his basketball in the school grounds as they left, watching them as if unwilling to let them go. Now as a university student, he studies hard and does odd jobs to earn his keep. His dream is to become an economist and a philanthropist with a global vision, to contribute to the community as a tribute to all the people who have given him support.



Lin Lin, an all-round student from a remote village in the mountains, is now attending university in Yunnan. He has been awarded ESS scholarships since senior secondary school.

Of the age group that Wenbo and Lin belong, less than 20% managed to complete senior secondary education. When the volunteers initially helped the 15 students apply for ESS assistance, they were only hoping that these



On a home visit in June 2011, ESS volunteer Jiang Gongwei met with some of the students awarded ESS scholarships in Heishan County (Liaoning).

children would not be forced to quit school because of financial difficulties. Seeing that the students have excelled and gained admission to key universities, they are deeply gratified. They can feel the powerful motivation of these students from the rural areas, their strong sense of responsibility for their families and home villages, their firm resolve to struggle hard for their ideals, their passion for life even as they lead simple and thrifty lives.

What the ESS financial aid program has given these children is not only financial support but also the care and concern from the community at large. It serves as a catalyst that helps to sustain the dreams of these children, their families and their home villages. Seeing their dreams fulfilled is the greatest reward for our ESS sponsors and volunteers.