



SUPPORT EDUCATION IN RURAL CHINA PROGRAM SERIES

认助中国乡村教育项目系列

2010 Annual Report



*Learning could be so much fun!
Children had a hearty laugh at a presentation in the ESS Science camp
in Haiyan County, Qinghai Province, in July 2010. (Details on page E-7)*

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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 and the SERC Executive Committee holds regular meetings bimonthly.

Support Education in Rural China (SERC) Program Series 2010 Annual Report

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Foreword

Dr. Mu-ming Poo, President, ESS

As every recent visitor to China can testify, Chinese society is undergoing massive changes at a pace unprecedented in world history. As we marvel at the impressive transformation of the urban landscape, undreamed of just a few decades ago, we are also acutely aware of the disturbing signs of polarization, the increasing gap between the rich and poor, and various social contradictions and problems. A trip beyond the tourist sites immediately reveals the price that “rural China” has paid for “urban China” – deteriorating living conditions, marked by the lack of basic health care, quality education, or any form of social welfare, and a large number of children deprived of parental care. Without the sacrifices made by migrant workers from rural China, it would not have been possible for the country to achieve rapid urban growth, or boosts in trade surpluses, or increases in miscellaneous economic indicators in the past two decades. As young parents from the rural areas toil for low wages at urban factories and construction sites, the children are left behind in their home villages, cared for by relatives and friends as may be available, struggling to cope with schooling and other challenges in the crucial stages of their development.

Support for education in rural China has been the focal point for ESS activity over the past two decades. With the rapid changes in Chinese society, our program has been evolving to meet the changing needs of the rural community. All of us who have seen the impoverished environment for the rural children with absentee parents – a majority in many villages – feel that these children deserve our utmost attention. Our desire to help them, as much as our concern for the importance of science education in the rural areas, has in part led to the development of the ESS summer camp programs in the past two years.

In a recent meeting in Hong Kong with the K. P. Tin Foundation, a major ESS sponsor for many years, the ESS delegation was posed with two critical questions: What is the goal of our education program in rural China now, and does our program really make a difference in rural China?

In my opinion, our goal is to do what we can to help enrich education in rural China. This has been our goal over the past two decades as our series of program activities evolved, beginning with the *Adopt a Rural School Library* projects in 1988/89, and expanding to include the basic education conferences and workshops (since 1993), the essay competitions for students and teachers (since 1996), the financial aid program for rural students (since 1997), and the rural multimedia information centers (since 2007). This is also our goal for the summer camp programs initiated in 2009. In fact, these camps have served as an enrichment program not only for the rural children, but also for college and graduate students who participate as volunteer instructors. We believe there is no better way to cultivate a sense of social responsibility in city-bred young people than to provide them with an opportunity to understand the needs of the rural people, and to experience the gratification derived from helping others in need. In a way, it is our hope that the care and concern for education in rural China, shared by many ESS volunteers and sponsors, will be carried further among China’s future generations.

Can we really make a difference? ESS is a small grass-root organization, dependent on a network of volunteers and constrained by a meager annual operating budget. What we can achieve may indeed seem insignificant in comparison to what the government can possibly do. However, as a grass-root organization in close contact with our target groups, ESS can effectively help to identify the needs of these groups and to explore various approaches to provide appropriate support to meet those needs. Through our activities of limited size and scope, we hope to gain experience and provide lessons for large scale programs that could be funded in the future by the government or other institutions. In the summer camp programs, for example, we hope to develop useful formats and approaches that require minimal cost but achieve maximal involvement and benefit for the participants.

Finally, I would like to stress that the ESS programs would not have been possible without the continuing devotion of our volunteers within and outside China, as well as the generous donations from individual and foundation sponsors. As usual, we welcome support in all forms and we invite you to send in your comments and suggestions after reading this annual report. Indeed, it has been your care, concern and support that have sustained the ESS activities in rural China for more than two decades!



Wow! This is an entirely different world under the microscope! --
Children at the ESS summer camp in Linxi County, Inner Mongolia

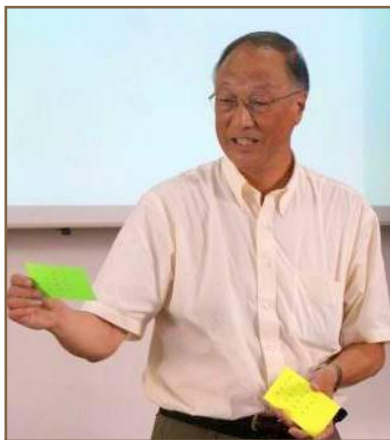
SERC Program Series 1988-2010 Major Results and Activities at a Glance

SERC Series I: Providing Reading Material and Information Resources		
 Adopt a Rural School Library (ARSL)	(since 1989)	5,241 ARSLs
 Adopt a Rural Public Library (ARPL)	(since 1988)	46 ARPLs
 Adopt a Rural Multimedia Information Center (RMIC)	(since 2007)	13 RMICs
SERC Series II: Improving Teaching and Learning		
◆ Basic Education Conferences/workshops for rural teachers - Jointly held with provincial/municipal institutions	(since 1993)	46 conferences
◆ Science Summer Camps	(since 2009)	7 camps
◆ Music Summer Camps	(since 2009)	1 camp
◆ Essay contests and publications □ <i>Read to Discover/Teach to Inspire</i> *	(since 1996)	15 th year
* Since 2009, <i>Read to Discover</i> essay contests have included both students and teachers. Award winning essays are posted on the ESS website.		
◆ <i>Read Classics</i> projects	(since 2000)	163 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)	360 schools in 18 provinces
□ Equipment/facilities for schools in specially poor counties	(since 2003)	63 schools in 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)	41 schools
□ Computer equipment	(since 2007)	270 sets (including 9 RMICs)
□ 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)	18,201
Of which: Primary students (PS)		2,257
Junior secondary (JSS) and special education students		10,029
Senior secondary students (SSS and vocational school students)		5,465
College students (HE)		450
Special Projects		
◆ Tree planting project in Inner Mongolia & Gansu	(since 2003)	>55,000 saplings
◆ Soya bean workshop & pig farm in Fuping County, Hebei	(2003)	1 school
◆ Arts/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

2010 Basic Education Conference



The 46th ESS Basic Education Conference took place at Heilongjiang University from July 20 to 23, 2010. Cooperating institutions included the Heilongjiang Education Bureau, the Central Education Committee of the China Democratic League, the Associated Colleges in China (ACC), the Washington University in Seattle, the K. P. Tin Foundation in Hong Kong, and the Hsin-Yi Foundation in Taiwan.



Dr. Wu-Teh Hsiang (Syracuse University)
discussing mathematics education

More than 900 teachers, principals and education research workers attended the Conference. Morning sessions offered lectures on special topics by education specialists from the US, Taiwan and mainland China:

- *The trend of development in basic education in China* – Mr. Zhang Li, (Chief, Education Development Research Center, Ministry of Education, China);
- *Looking at the brain in education in the 21st century* – Dr. Denise Hsien Wu (Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, Taiwan);
- *Classical Reading and Articulation* – Dr. Debao Xu (Hamilton College, New York);
- *The application of learning theory and strategy in teaching* – Dr. Honggang Jin (Hamilton College, New York);
- *How to stimulate creativity* – Dr. Jingye Wu (National Chengchi University, Taiwan); and

- *The comparison and critique of education in China and the US* – Dr. Samuel Peng (retired officer, US Education Department), Dr. Xuejian Yu (Stonehill College, Massachusetts) and Dr. Wu-Teh Hsiang (Syracuse University, New York).

Afternoon sessions were divided into several groups: Principals' Forum; Reading; Early Childhood Education; Mathematics; and presentations by ACC students. Teachers, school principals, researchers and specialists from Taiwan, Singapore and the US were invited to chair and join discussions in the group sessions. Each group selected a representative to present a summary report to the general assembly on the closing day of the conference.

Conference participants were appreciative of the rich content of the topics covered, the interesting presentation methods, and the extensive knowledge of the presenters. They felt that the conference had enhanced their understanding of education systems and teaching methods both in China and other parts of the world. They suggested that future conferences increase focus on the following issues:

- close linkage with current reforms in basic education in China, including curriculum reforms;
- school management, including practical examples of experience in rural schools; and
- new research findings and teaching methods, especially ways to increase the hands-on participation of students, special classroom arrangements, and self-learning methods.

Participants also hoped that Conference material could be disseminated and shared online.



Dr. Jill Hudson, school principal from Seattle, speaking on methods of teacher evaluation in the US.
An ACC student helps to interpret.

Adopt a Rural School Library (ARSL)



In 2010, ESS helped 130 rural schools in China obtain books and set up libraries, bringing the total number of ARSLs to 5,241 since 1988/89 (*Chart 1 and Table 1, page B-2; Table 3, page B-3*). These schools are mostly in remote and mountainous rural areas, where resources are limited. The ARSLs have provided much needed reading and reference material to the students, teachers and residents in the local communities. The sponsored schools usually organize activities to encourage students and teachers to read, including essay contests, exhibitions, recitals, storytelling, and drama presentations. Some schools set up book corners in the classrooms to ensure easy access to the library books.

In some older ARSLs, the books have become outdated and are badly in need of replacement.



Rural Multimedia Information Centers (RMIC)

With generous donations from sponsors, ESS helped four schools in poor rural counties set up RMICs in 2010. They are located in Anhui, Hubei, Guangxi and Inner Mongolia. Since 2007, ESS has helped establish 13 RMICs (*Table 5, page B-5*), providing rural communities with computers and accessory equipment that help them link up to the Internet. For these remote areas, the RMICs serve as windows to the outside world. Through the Internet, users can gain access to a broad range of online information, keep pace with developments in the rest of the country, and learn about the peoples and societies in other parts of the world. Teachers and students now have interesting tools to help them teach and

learn. Local residents can obtain updated information useful for the management of their produce or animal farms, or other concerns of their daily lives. To ensure efficient usage of the RMICs, ESS volunteers pay random visits to the sponsored schools and maintain close contact with them to track their performance.

Read to Discover Essay Contest

This annual contest was initiated in 1996 to promote reading in rural schools. In 2010 about 1,800 essays were submitted by students and teachers from eight provinces/autonomous regions. Volunteer editors from the Joint Publishing Company in Beijing carried out thorough reviews and selected fifty-nine essays for three different levels of merit awards. A collection of selected essays that won outstanding awards over the past ten years is planned for publication early next year.

Read Classics Project

The Read Classics Project was first introduced as a pilot project in 2000. Over the past decade, it has been implemented in 163 rural schools, funded by ESS sponsors especially concerned about the heritage of traditional Chinese culture. Students learn to read and recite classical Chinese literary texts, including the Analects of Confucius. Finding that these exercises have a good influence on the behavior and learning capacity of the children, schools have actively participated in this project and organized activities such as recital competitions to encourage the students to learn.



Financial Aid for Rural Students (FARS)

A total of 18,201 ESS scholarship awards have been made since the FARS program began operation 14 years ago in 1997. Initially the program focused on primary and junior secondary students. As government input for these levels of education increased, ESS support has shifted to senior secondary and college students, and to groups which specially need assistance, including children with disabilities and children without parental care. In 2010, a total of 927 awards were made, of which 10 were for primary students, 314 for junior secondary students, 474 for senior secondary students and 129 for college students (*Chart 2 and Table 2, page B-2; Table 4, page B-4*).

Students who received scholarship awards have come from poor rural areas all over China. Timely assistance from ESS has made it possible for these children to continue schooling, and thereby created opportunities for them to gain essential knowledge and skills. The love and care of ESS sponsors have saved the children and their families from falling into desperation, and inspired them to work hard to overcome the difficulties they face. Many of the students who were in primary schools when they were first awarded ESS scholarships have now graduated from college and started their working careers. Some of them have returned to their native villages to contribute to the development of the local communities.

2010 was the second year that ESS organized Science Summer Camps in rural China. Four camps were conducted – one in Sichuan, two in Inner Mongolia, and one in Qinghai – in cooperation with local education institutions and with the assistance of the *Seeds for Science*, a special group of volunteers from Guangzhou and Qinghai led by Mr. Li You. Funds to support the camps were donated by Dr. and Mrs. David Hsu. About 360 students from 4th - 6th grades attended the four camps.



Zhaohua Primary School, rebuilt after the 2008 earthquake, was the site for the ESS science camp in Sichuan in 2010.

Science Camp in Sichuan

Following the successful science camps in the earthquake disaster areas in northern Sichuan in 2009, ESS decided to return to this region to bring love and support to the children. This time the camp site was at Zhaohua Primary School in Guangyuan. About one hundred 6th graders attended the four-day Science Camp in July 2010. Teachers for the camp were student volunteers from Sichuan Normal University, headed by Mr. Chen Zhirong.

With the hope that the mastery of science would help reduce the children's fears of natural disasters, ESS added geographic and earthquake sciences to the curriculum, explaining the causes of earthquakes and ways to minimize damages in case of such happenings. Music and sports activities were organized to bring joy and laughter, to help the children heal from the misery caused by the earthquake in 2008. Environmental protection was another theme of this camp. Using recycled materials, the instructors helped the students create various types of handicrafts and costumes for a presentation at the camp's closing ceremony. The creative talents displayed by the teachers and students were a big hit in the ceremony.

Everyone involved in the camp – its organizers, teachers as well as attendees – all had a great time. The children had four unforgettable days of learning and laughing; the organizers and teachers were very happy to see the smiles returning to the faces of the children.

Science Camps in Inner Mongolia

Two camps were conducted in Linxi county, north of Chifeng City in Inner Mongolia. Nine ethnic groups reside in this county, where most of the people live below the national poverty line. In spite of limited resources, the local government spares no effort in supporting education. Teachers from the Linxi Educational Research Office helped organize the camps, which was held at the Wushijiazi Primary School and attended by more than two hundred 5th and 6th graders.

The camp curricula included physical and biological sciences. Human anatomy was introduced to help the children understand their own body. A primary component was environmental science, as in the camp in Sichuan. The children learned why it was important to have clean water, how to collect and analyze water samples, and how to keep water resources from being polluted. They also learned how to make small rockets, and were excited when they safely launched them into the sky. This hands-on learning process was a new and fascinating experience for the children. Parents and local leaders expressed strong interest in having more camps of this type conducted in the future.

Science Camp in Qinghai

Haiyan County, located on the northern shore of Qinghai Lake, has a sparse population made up of many ethnic groups scattered over a vast grassland area dependent on ranching and farming. The Haiyan County Primary School was selected as the site for the ESS science camp. This school has about 500 students, a third of which comes from herdsman families. All the children who attended the camp were 4th graders of



Is our water clean? Let's collect some samples for testing! -- Learning about water pollution in the summer camp in Linxi County.



Children at the ESS science camp at Haiyan County Primary School. Many students of this school come from herdsman families of various ethnic groups, including Tibetan and Mongolian.

the school. The camp's volunteer team was led by Mr. Li You, who grew up in Qinghai. Knowing from personal experience how important it was to expose young children to science education, he organized the *Seeds of Science* volunteer group and brought it to this remote area.

This camp was the first to introduce the concept of experiment design and the method of keeping a record of each step of the experiment. Results showed that the self-designed experiments greatly aroused the curiosity and interest of the learners and the hands-on experiments helped reinforce the knowledge taught in class. Some of the camp attendees even started doing experiments on their own at home during the camp period.

Unlike the camps in Sichuan and Inner Mongolia, teaching activities for this camp were organized in the form of team competitions. Camp attendees were divided into eight small groups. Each group conducted ten different experiments in chemistry, physics, biology and other subjects. Each time a team completed a process, it would be given points based on the results. The team that won the most points at the end of the day would be the winner of the day, and the team that accumulated the most points at the end of the camp became the champion. Such competition inspired the team spirit and heightened the attention of the children throughout the learning process.

Summary. In these remote rural areas in China, the science camps have sowed the seeds of science among the children, who are hungry for knowledge and eager to learn. The successful experience has also encouraged the volunteers to continue their efforts to help the children and the rural communities.

ESS Music Program for Rural Schools

Since 2003, ESS has provided assistance to 360 rural schools to help them purchase musical instruments (Table 6, page B-5). This has brought a lot of joy and laughter to the children and the teachers. Music lessons have become interesting. School choirs have acquired a high standard within a short time, and regularly participate in performances at local festivals and special occasions.

The type of musical instruments acquired by the schools varies. For example, a rural school in the Balinzuo Banner in Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia, has established special interest groups for Chinese wind instruments, the hulusi (cucurbit flute) and bawu. The groups have expanded to over 100 students, and many students have now reached a high level of performing standards. The sound of children practicing these instruments is heard every day around the school. Another school in Baokang county, Hubei, received a batch of waist drums. The school immediately organized special training and practicing sessions for the students. Their performance in the county in the fall of 2010 won high acclaim.

These extracurricular activities have enriched the life of the children and stimulated their overall interest to learn. Seeing the progress that the children have made, the parents have become staunch supporters of music and art education in the rural schools.



Learning to playing the waist drums donated by Dr. and Mrs. David Hsu, at Maqiao Primary School in Baokang County, Hubei



Young hulusi and accordion players in the summer camp at Zhaohua Primary School in Guangyuan, Sichuan