

Zigen November Activity Report (December 1, 2010)

Zigen Beijing College Tour

From October to November, Zigen was invited to give a seminar titled “The Dilemmas and Challenges Facing Rural Education” at five Beijing universities. Zigen chairperson Pat Kwei Ping Yang spoke to audiences of university students and professors about the challenges that the policy of school closures and mergers pose to rural education, as well as about Zigen’s 20 years of experience working in remote rural villages. Over 200 audience members left their contact information in order to receive information and updates from Zigen in the future.

The five universities are: the Department of Graduate Studies at Beihang University (October 17), Department of Student Affairs at China Agricultural University (November 2), The Children of Peasants Institute at Beijing Normal University (November 5), Party Committee of Minzu University’s School of Education (November 11), and Qiushi Society at Tsinghua University (November 13).

Beijing Gao Lin

The Migrant Workers’ Children School Dongfanghong in Beijing Opens Its Library

In September and October, volunteers arranged, classified, recorded, and finished preparing the books for the opening of the Dongfanghong School library on November 10. Students are now able to borrow books simply by using their “reading passport”. From now on, volunteers will open and staff the school’s library every Wednesday. (The

Dongfanghong School is a pilot site for Zigen’s reading project.)

Beijing Gao Lin

Fall Adult English Classes at the Dongxiaokou Community Center in Beijing Come to an End

Recently, the second adult English language training course at the Dongxiaokou Community Center in Beijing was successfully completed. The teachers were volunteers from abroad, and the students were working adults. The training course of six classes began in September and has since been held twice. The current class had a total of 20 students. A number of the students have become community volunteers since the end of the class.

West Sanqi Volunteer Bao Dongping

Tong Xiaoxi Attended the Yuanyangzhifan Forum on University Students Financial Aid

On November 20, Zigen board member Tong Xiaoxi represented Zigen in attending the first annual Yuanyangzhifan Forum on University Students Financial Aid and the second annual Yuanyangzhifan University Students Volunteer award ceremony. As a guest of honor, Tong Xiaoxi was interviewed on behalf of Zigen. He introduced Zigen’s history, mission, and project impact, as well as its experience in building grass-roots partnerships, developing core projects, conducting policy advocacy efforts, and expanding sources. During the discussion

session, Tong Xiaoxi and Gao Lin explored issues in volunteering and shared experiences with the students from the various university organizations. Many volunteer-oriented university organizations and individuals expressed interest in future collaborations. In addition, Zigen China participated in the judging for the University Students Volunteer award ceremony.

Hebei Qinglong Held Symposium on “One Village One School”

On November 10, Hebei’s Qinglong office invited officials and partners from six schools located in four villages spanning two counties to describe the project implementation and experiences as well as to discuss effective methods of strengthening community-based mutual assistance. Through the symposium, partners from new and existing projects gained a clearer understanding of Zigen’s position and strategies: by conducting pilot programs, Zigen can spur development and provide local governments and communities with lessons learned from experience. These partners also gained a more concrete understanding of how to implement Zigen projects. After the symposium, 30 project partnership agreements for Qinglong County’s “two county, four villages, six villages” cluster were signed. These agreements focus on a variety of issues, including rural education, culture, health, and the environment. The projects are especially concerned with addressing the needs of women and the elderly in the countryside, as well as with encouraging greater interactions between schools and the community. The total budget for these projects is 410,000 renminbi (approximately \$61,612 USD).

Hebei Qinglong Li Guangdui

Weng Ying-ying Attended “Anhui Environmental Protection Forum”

The Ecological Protection Education Forum, co-sponsored by Anhui Normal University and China Zigen Fund, was held in Anhui Normal University. Ms. Weng Ying-ying, the Former United Nations vice Deputy Director of Personnel and Zigen China’s new director, attended the forum. Mr. Ni Rong-wang of Zigen China South, Anhui University’s related project managers, team leaders, field instructors and volunteer representatives, also attended the meeting. The cooperative programs between Zigen and Anhui Normal University include: to publish <Environmental Protection Menu>; to organize and to train 50 college student volunteers for this cause. The volunteers are separated into 5 teams to lead 380 village environmental young helpers. They will launch an environmental protection program called “Five One’s” to send out one <Environmental Protection Menu>, to hold one training session, to organize a series of advertisements, to have a series of environmental services, to start a series of environmental protection research.

Sichuan Shimian National Middle School Held Zigen Funds’ Grant Ceremony

November 25, Zigen held a Grant Ceremony in Sichuan Shimian National Middle School. There are 71 poor minority students who received the grants, each getting 300 yuan per semester. At the ceremony, the recipients were signed on the financial grants letters to their parents. The parents must sign the letters and return them to the school. At the ceremony, vice president Zhang Pugang explained to students the significance of the grants, and

encouraged them to become honest students who study hard to serve the community in the future. Students also expressed their deep gratitude to Zigen, and their strong hopes to strengthen themselves and help each other to achieve academic success.

Sichuan WangChangGu City Built “Zigen Book Corner”

November 16, the “Zigen Book Corners”, which were sponsored by Zigen China and built by “Action Carriers”, was successfully completed at Wangchanggu city elementary school. Now there is a book corner in every classroom. This greatly enhances the knowledge base for students and helps them grow academically.

“Traditional Culture Heritage Research Project” Launched in LeiShan, Guizhou

November 7, “Traditional Culture Heritage Research Project” held a discussion meeting at Leishan, Guizhou. This project was launched by Guangzhou Miao ethnic group and their rotating “Traditional Culture Heritage Action Research Projects” committee, and was co-sponsored by Guizhou Leishan Miao Study Institute and Zigen China South. The meeting was hosted by Guizhou University professor Zhang Xiao, the project leader. The 20 attendants included leaders from Guangzhou Miao youth associations, Leishan Miao Institute, Zigen China Leishan associates, and representatives from three project area students and villagers.

This is a two years project that covers the three project areas of Shuixi, Huangli, and Maomahe. Students and citizens in these areas will be taught Miao songs, the Lusheng flute, embroidery, etc. The project organizers will offer small amounts of funding. After the training sessions

end, there will be competitions and sharing between villages. Through these lively practices between city and villages, there are hopes to figure out ways to carry on the cultural heritage and traditions.

Guizhou Releases Village Health Workers Scholarships

China Zigen and Guizhou Province Taijiang County Health Department have cooperated in supporting 14 poor rural health workers to enroll at Qiandongnan Nationalities Technical Institute Community Medicine Middle Vocational Class and Nursing Middle Vocational Class. Following a study period of 3 years, the students may participate in an “assistant doctors qualifying examination” in order to obtain a medical practice certificate. Zigen will provide 1700 yuan per person each year for tuition and 400 yuan per person for 3 years of book fees for a total of 5500 yuan per person. Students will fund their own living expenses. All students in this class originate from low-income families in Taijiang County’s below-poverty Paiyang Township.

On October 22, 2010, Zigen released 1750 yuan per person for tuition and book fees at the Taijiang County Health Department Conference Room.

Ni Yongwang, Leishan South

Bik-Lam Lee Visits Leishan

From October 26 to October 31, U.S. Zigen Chairperson Bik-Lam Lee and Zigen friends Chen Xiaocheng and Liu Linlin visited the Zigen Southern Office, the Rongjiang County School for Special Education and interviewed 4 Maoping women including Yang Xiaoli and Yan Yanqing whom Zigen supported in 1989 to go to school. They enjoyed the beautiful Dong Nationality songs at Xiaodanjiang Township, Rongjiang County, and paid a

visit to the Maoping Women's Center. They exchanged ideas on the development of embroidery with the Zigen Sisters Group, and discussed women's development issues in the countryside.

After growing up, many Zigen-supported girl students have become the major forces in the construction and development of their villages. They have formed small women's groups, and frequently study, exchange ideas and pass on Miao handicraft embroidery methods at the Zigen-supported women's center. Bik-Lam has participated in long-term small group activities, and supported the women's small group to engage in outside studies and exchanges. Bik-Lam Lee and Zigen began this aid project in 1989.

Zhang Yunfei, Leishan, Guizhou

Zigen Donors Mr. Yao and Ching-ho Chang Visit Guiyang Area Universities and Kaili, Guizhou

On November 7, Zigen friends Mr. Yao and Ms. Ching-Ho Chang visited 13 supported Guizhou area university students. These students originate from Guizhou University, Guizhou Nationalities Institute, Guizhou Normal University, Guiyang Medical Institute and Guiyang Institute. They are all poor students with excellent grades, and the majority of these students subsidize their living expenses through work-study programs, temporary work or working as tutors.

During one week they toured Qiandongnan State Kaili No. 1 Middle School, Kaili Zhenhua People's Middle School, Qiandongnan Nationalities High School and called on 61 excellent poor high school students receiving support, in addition to holding interactive discussions with students at the three schools.

The two donors wish to deepen their understanding of the

studies and living situation of the supported students through two meetings with students each year. They encourage students to bravely face reality, overcome difficulties and to grow up in health and joy!

Ni Yongwang, Zhang Yunfei Leishan, Guizhou