



As we enjoy the beginning of a beautiful summer, I would like you to know that I just came back from a trip to China; a trip mainly focused on the work of EGRC. In this letter I would like to share some details of my trip and good news with you.

Beijing

On May 9th Canadian Ambassador David Mulroney hosted a luncheon in Beijing in honor of the BC Society for Educating Girls of Rural China. I brought a graduate student - Jinming Yang - as my guest. Other guests attending the luncheon included a BC Government representative, a Journalist from Toronto Star, Canadian CEO's, and Embassy officials.

Jinming Yang graduated in 2009; currently she is working as a software engineer for a leading technology smart-phone company in Shanghai. She is one of five graduates who donated money back to EGRC earlier this year. At the luncheon she talked about her journey, the benefits of being sponsored by EGRC and how important she felt it was to give back.



Jinming Yang

Rosalyn Ediger is the Ambassador's private chef. She had sold her own hand-made chocolate truffles to the Embassy staff during Easter and raised funds for EGRC. She presented her donation to me at the luncheon.



Rosalyn Ediger

I also gave a presentation to the Ambassador and other guests. All people there agreed on the importance of our work and how impressed they were with how much EGRC has achieved to date. As a direct result of the luncheon, Vancouver based [Eldorado Gold Mining Corporation](#) has committed a donation of \$15,000. The China Managing Director Richard Li [third from left] also discussed with me the possibility of future cooperation.



Canadian Ambassador David Mulroney [third from right] hosted a luncheon in Beijing in honor of BC Society for Educating Girls of Rural China.

Gansu

My ten – day visit in Gansu was intense and productive. The purpose of this trip was to do marketing research on middle and high school girls' education.

Since 2006 the Chinese government has enforced the policy of free education up to grade 9. However, after grade 9, high school education in general is not only costly; it is beyond affordability for poor rural families.

I visited a total of 7 middle schools and 3 high schools in the rural regions of Yuzhong, Kangle and Huining. Kangle County has a population of 250,000 with more than 50% of Hui (Muslim) minority. Huining has a population of 500,000 - well known for both its severe poverty, yet high academic standards. Because there is almost no way to make a living there from earth, the only hope for its population is higher education and to earn a salary elsewhere to lift their families out of poverty. This driving force for survival has resulted in comparatively large numbers of students moving on to higher levels of education.

In Kangle County I met with a few groups of mixed Hui and Han (Chinese) girls grades ranging from Grade 7 to Grade 9. It came to me as a surprise that many of them suffered from the separation of their parents where the mother left them, never to return. Most of them are living with aging grandparents. It still happens that Hui girls quit school and marry at the age of 15 or 16.

In Huining County, as we drove on the highway through a sand storm, the only landscape I saw were huge yellow mountains, barren of any growth or vegetation. In one middle school I saw 52 girls crammed in a room the size of normal bed room. They ate plain dry home-baked thick pancakes with water for lunch. Many of them can only afford to spend 45 cents to buy one hot meal a day - a bowl of noodle soup.



Desperation of the rural Families

In another school a teacher told me that one girl passed out on the floor one day because she had not had enough food for days. The teacher discovered that her father had an accident while working in a coal mine and lost both legs. Another father was taking dry food to his daughter to school on his bicycle, and on his way back in the dark he fell off the cliff and died. This happened just two weeks before my visit. These are only two of many shocking accidents I learned on this trip. The girls I was meeting all had their heads buried deep and sobbing while they were trying to tell their families' situations. Towards the end of my school visits, I could not bear to see any more tears and desperate faces of these girls.

In the regions I visited, on average less than 50% of the students make it to high school after grade 9; some regions are as low as 30%. Unlike universities there are no loans, no jobs and very little help from the government for rural regions high school education.



**A group of Grade 8 & 9 Girls in Huining
Without financial help most of them won't have the opportunity to go onto high school.**



A happy day for some of the sponsored girls who graduated in 2011. Congratulations!

Among the girls under our sponsorship, there will be 40 who graduate in June 2011. Since 2009 a total of 116 girls have now graduated from universities. I met up with some of the 2011 graduates in Gansu this time. It was a very happy reunion!

As we were taking photographs and enjoying a picnic in a park, they could not wait to tell me and tell each other their many stories. Eight of them have made it to Master's Programs and rest of them either found work or are waiting for good news. Compared to last year's job market, 2011 has brought hope and good luck to these girls. I saw many confident and beautiful smiles.

Bixia Wang graduated in 2010 from Shanxxi Normal University. Recently she was accepted by Simon Fraser University into Master of Science program with financial assistance of \$20000 TA & RA per year. She will be the first EGRC sponsored student to come to Canada and study. You will have the opportunity to meet her in the fall.



Bixia Wang

In 2011 five of the EGRC graduate students have donated money back. They want to use their own money to help one or more students in need.



A Happy Reunion in May 2011, Gansu

The Journalist Bill Schiller from Toronto Star travelled with me to Huiling and visited schools there. Please read his article "Saving the Girls of Rural China" on May 27th by visiting our blog from www.egrc.ca

Your Contribution Counts

I am fortunate to have a group of very generous people like you to share my vision and support my work. In these 6 years we have worked hard and achieved a lot. I hope I can count on your support again to make this success continue.

I am going to Gansu in August to distribute the funds to the girls for the next school year. Please mail your donation or donate on line before the mid of July if you wish to contribute.

With appreciation,

Tien Ching



Tien Ching - Founder and Executive Director EGRC