

**Students participate in classroom and school actively and enjoy their rights better.**

## **CHINA'S FINAL REPORT**

We received the training programme on CRC in May,2009 in Lund and learned a lot about it which broadened our horizon and improved our special knowledge . Since then, we have been eager to do something for Chinese children and try our best to implement the project plan fully.

### **General Background in China**

China signed the Convention on the Rights of Child in 1990 and ratified in 1992. The government has been focusing on the rights of child such as right to education, right to participation, right to life, and right to development. Some laws on CRC have been made and passed.

Meanwhile, media play an important part in the work as well. People have learned something about children's rights form newspapers, TV, radio and Internet. The conventional opinion that children should listen to their parents and do what their parents require them to do is being transformed. The adults come to realize that children are the equal humans and deserve respect from us.

The Chinese children receive the free 9-year compulsory education. All the children aged 6-7 must go to school. Nevertheless, what they need is

not only the educational environment but also spiritually beautiful school. Their rights should be protected.

Till 2009, the new curriculum reform is being implemented in all the provinces and autonomous regions, which is aimed at changing teaching content and methodology from teacher-centered class to pupil-centered class. Students' participation study, individuality, creativity should be explored. On the one hand, the reform provides open spaces and opportunities for implementing CRC; on the other hand, CRC will assist the success of New Curriculum Reform.

## **Challenges**

We are faced with plenty of challenges though we have gained some achievements.

We are faced with examination-oriented education. Children have to face fierce competition in order to be a college student, which means they must spend a great deal of time on study and examinations. The students have to gain good scores to achieve their goal of going to university. As a result of that, principals and teachers are burdened with great pressure. What they are concerned about is the high enrollment ratio. Many other qualities such as body and mind, personality, creativity and individuality are ignored even though we advocate quality education today.

We have a large class in number.

China has a large population, so we have large classes in number.

Generally speaking, there are about 70 students to teach in one class, which means not every student can enjoy the rights equally. So how to ensure every one of them participate actively in classroom management is one of the challenges we are facing.

Inner Mongolia is less developed, compared to other provinces in China, which has an impact on the education in this area: the qualified teachers prefer to work in the southeastern parts, for they can enjoy a more comfortable life; with the implementation of the new curriculum, we need to improve the educational environment, more qualified teachers, more space for students to develop their other qualities besides study; different cultural backgrounds makes it difficult to implement CRC equally. Some people in poverty-stricken areas think that children, especially girls, needn't receive education. So they tend to make their children stay at home and help them on the farm to earn more money.

### **Activities in implementation**

*Location:* Tongliao No.1 Middle School, Inner Mongolia

*Support from the school authority*

Chao Kuiou had a talk with the principals about what she learned about CRC in Lund as soon as she came back to Tongliao. And they were much interested in her project plan and supported implementation of the

plan actively. The school authority decided to start the project at the beginning of September,2009, when the new term began. In the meanwhile, other teachers were called on to visit Chao's class if they had interest in the plan. After over one year's hard work on the implementation, Chao has accomplished the following tasks concerning the project plan.

*Action:* Chao Kuiou started the implementation in September after the long summer vacation. She works in Senior Grade one. There are 76 students for her to manage. According to the project plan which was made in Lund, she made a survey on how to make the students participate more in class and school management. The students made various suggestions, some of which are practical, such as form of daily report, how to elect the class council, how to divide groups among themselves,etc.

*A class council* was elected soon after the term began, and soon afterwards, the first class meeting was held and made rules for the class by themselves, which, undoubtedly, can help teachers manage the class easily.

*The school council* was set up and started working efficiently. The members organized a series of activities: founding the English Corner which improves their interest in learning the language and cultures of

English-speaking countries; holding the Campus Art Festival in May, 2010, enriching their life and reducing heavy study pressures ; organizing students to help elderly people with their housework, and so on.

*The parent council has been set up.*

The parent meeting was held in October,2009. Representatives was elected in every class and the parent council which is supposed to participate in the school management came into being. The members have talks with the principals regularly to participate in school management . Meanwhile, they will learn the good ways to get on well with the teenagers who are experiencing adolescence when they try to break away from their parents to show they are independent . In addition, the members will check tuition as well, for, in China, senior high school doesn't belong to compulsory education system.

In class, Chao transformed the conventional top-down teacher-centred way by organizing the following activities

*Group work*

In class, the students work in groups while studying. They can get more opportunities to study and explore knowledge by themselves. They help and learn from each other and the teacher acts as the organizer and helper.

In this way they find more pleasure and confidence in learning, for they

all have more chances to express themselves, not only high-level students but also low-level ones.

### *Daily reports*

Students form groups of 3-4 people freely. Each group can make an introduction of a film, perform short plays, make a speech, etc within 5 minutes. They can make use of PPT, music or any other techniques in the classroom. The students have to work together and cooperate with other group members to make their report more wonderful than others. So their team spirit is becoming stronger and have learned the importance of solidarity as well. So daily report is very popular with Chao's class.

### *Organizing Christmas English party by students themselves*

To celebrate Christmas, the class council organized an English party by inviting all their teachers, including the American teacher. Singing, dancing and performing, the students showed another side of the character.

### *Achievements that have been gained and influence on colleagues around*

The implementation of the plan has been on for over a year, and the students are getting more interested in learning and activities of school, more enthusiastic, more cooperative and most important of all, more self-confident, and they have done a good job in self-management; as a

result of which, the project attracts a lot of attention from not only the principals but also the other teachers. And some of them even began implementing the plan in their own classes:

Ms He, a physics teacher who is the head of the department where Chao works. She gradually made adjustment in managing her class when she saw the great changes of students in Chao's class. She encourages her students to explore knowledge by themselves, making experiments in groups and comparing results on their own. To her delight, they love the way of learning and management and are gaining more and more self-confidence.

Ms Ding, an English teacher in Chao's department. After visiting Chao's class several times, she changed her way of teaching. She divided her class into different groups and encouraged them to finish their assignments in groups. And happily for her, the students are growing more interested in her class.

In June,2010, our mentors paid a visit to Chao's class and Tongliao No.1 Senior High School and they were very satisfied with her efforts and work. And we firmly believe that more and more teachers will join the team since Chao is doing a better job.

*Location:* Helin No.1 Middle School in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia

*Action:* There are 16 classes in Zhangzhixin's grade. This term, he is still the headteacher of Class 14 in Senior Grade Two. So he continues to implement CRC in his class. There are forty-eight students in his class. In the past, all the students sat in lines. They listened to the teacher carefully and after class they did their homework. They had few opportunities to express themselves. They always followed the teachers and obeyed the rules of school. They were taught in the traditional way.

To implement CRC in the class, Zhang has made some changes:

#### *Group work*

The students sit in groups, six students one group. At first, they were surprised at this. But now, they enjoy sitting in groups, working in groups, talking to each other and helping each other. They come to realize that group work is very important in their process of learning.

#### *English corner and English speech competition*

Every Saturday afternoon English Corner is held. All of them speak English; they practise their spoken English actively. At the end of September, 2010, they held an English speech competition. All of them did a good job, and ten of them won the prizes which were given by school.



*The class council* has been set up to help manage the class. They deal with some daily things, such as doing morning exercises, handing in homework, cleaning the classroom and so on. Every Monday afternoon, a class meeting is held. They discuss the defects of things done last week and improve them and put forward new demands of next work. They also make new rules to manage class.

*The school student council*, which participates in the school management, has been founded after Zhang gave some practical suggestions to the principal. The student council plays an important role in school management. Every Monday morning, they have a flag-raising ceremony, and give a speech under the national flag. Before the classes begin, they organize students to enter the school gate and put bikes in order. They help check the setting-up exercises during the break to improve the quality of exercises. They check child activities between classes, such as making noise, playing basketball in the classroom, smoking and so on. They collect suggestions from the classmates and send the information to school. They also participate in making rules and regulations of school.

*The parent council* was set up in order to improve school management. Parents give rationalization proposals through the parent council to school. It turns out to be effective. Parents also have a parent meeting

every month. The principal always listens to their suggestions. Our principal also meet the representatives of the students and parents. They have regular meetings.

### *The achievements that have been made*

After nearly one school year, Zhang Zhixin has found some changes both in class and in school. Firstly, the relationship between teacher and student is improved. In traditional culture, teachers are like parents, students are like parrots. Teachers' instruction are all correct, students show disrespect if they doubt teachers. Under such circumstance, students can't build friendly relationship with teachers. But now, Zhang's students and he often discuss the problems they meet, like good friends. There is always a friendly atmosphere in the class. Both students and he realize and implement the right to participation, the right to expression, etc. The relationship between teachers and students is no longer that of cat and mouse, but friends with equality and harmony. Secondly, students become more outspoken and attentive. In Zhang's school, it is not so common to see foreigners, so the students have few opportunities to communicate with foreigners. The shy, timid feeling lies in no chance to participation. But now, with the progress of English Corner, students are becoming more open. They often practise their spoken English. CRC

changes some students' personality. Thirdly, parents begin to engage in CRC. Parents regarded children as their private property. This phenomenon has changed a lot in his school. The parent council has changed the parents' attitude to their children, and made parents realize child rights more profoundly. Finally, the situation in his class and school is changing slowly, the traditional way of teaching is changing---from teacher-centred to child-centred.

*Zhang Lixia* works as a training teacher in a teacher training school.

She participated in a similar project called CFP (Child Friendly Project) in China which is aimed at advocating the idea of loving children and strengthening child participation. So, obviously, the training that she received in Lund not only broadened her eyes but made her much clearer about what to do on CRC in China.

Meanwhile, as a coordinator, Zhang Lixia has done the following work. Getting in touch with Mr. Sun Baijun after returning to Inner Mongolia. Sun Baijung, an official in the Education Department of Inner Mongolia, who has been supporting the implementation of CRC in Education in Inner Mongolia. In addition, Mr. Sun is the key person of linking from international to national and to local. Sun offered us some advice on how to implement our project plan smoothly. Instructing Ms Chao and Mr

Zhang in their in their work on how to carry out the plan and learn about their progress in the project.

### *Giving a lecture*

Coming back from Sweden, She made lectures on CRC to make other teachers learn about the most advanced teaching ideas and methodologies by taking advantages of what she learned saw in Lund. She focused on respecting children, taking children's rights seriously, all for children, how to make children participate in class and school management indeed and how to make them live and study in an environment of love and harmony. Till now, Zhang Lixia has given lectures on CRC to as many as 500 teachers in both Liangcheng County and Yuquan District in Hohhot.

### *Implementing Child Friendly Project in Liangcheng.*

Ms Zhang Lixia started the project of child participation in Liangcheng No.3 Primary School. She made questionnaires from principals, teachers, students, and parents and discussed CHILD PARTICIPATION with them. The teachers in the school held a special pro-seminar. In this way, Zhang learned a lot about the students and their school and made the detailed implementation plan for our project as well. She organized the following activities:

### *Creating the principal mailbox*

Students can write to the principal directly and express their own opinions.

The student council was set up and participates in the school management.

Encourage students to participate in making plans for the school development, transforming the conventional way that just the principals made decisions, making rules for their class and deciding on their after-school activities.

Encourage students to write articles on child-friendly school, child-friendly principals, and child-friendly teachers, which make adults learn the children's thought and can be used to guide the future work.

Esteem individualities of every student. Students form different groups according to their own interest.

**After over one year's of practice, we have made some progress in implementing CRC.**

Thanks to the instructions of our mentor---Per and help and support of Mr Sun Baijun, we have seen some changes:

We can find students enjoy the pleasure of participating in class and school management learning. They try to work together to gain success.

Everyone has to play a part in the tasks to win the honour for their groups when they work as a team. And they have learned the importance of

cooperation and team spirit by group work. The students are getting more and more confident and eager to express themselves in front of people freely, which is very important for the development of children. The principals and other teachers were surprised at the changes of students when they visited the classes.. They came to realize that they need to transform the traditional teacher-centred way to learner-centred way. Nevertheless, we are still facing some problems when we are working on the plan. Some work didn't turn out as good as we had expected:

As teenagers, they reach the period when they try to prove themselves and be independent from adults. So sometimes, communicating with them gets difficult, for they just hide their opinions and feelings from teachers.

We are still faced with the examination-oriented environment which places principals in a dilemma. On the one hand, they try to develop student's qualities; on the other hand, they are heavily burdened, for community often judges schools by the number of students who can enter universities. Therefore, the rules and regulations in schools can be disconnected.

And the environment has a great influence over students as well. Some students prefer to spend more time on study rather than take part in the activities organized by class and school, for they desire high marks in exams. They think it a waste of time participating in them.

In class management, the class council can get enough space offered by teachers to participate in and make decisions about activities in class by themselves, while in school management, it is usually teachers who make arrangements for students beforehand and assign the tasks to students which means they can't express themselves fully.

Some teachers have got used to the conventional teacher-centred methods. It is hard for them to do changes in their daily work. For example, they prefer their students to sit in lines instead of in groups; they prefer their students to keep quiet in class instead of discussion; they prefer their students to listen to teachers instead of express their opinions freely.

We are working in Senior High Schools where the students are studying to pass the National Entrance Examination for college. Therefore, most parents focus more on students' study than on other qualities such as personality, self-confidence, individuality and so on which we think are more important in people's development. They hope their children can have a bright future by working hard and entering famous universities.

### **Plan to be continued**

Changing is not that easy, because it means difference, it means revolution, it means reform. But we need to make necessary changes. We will continue working hard on the implementation of CRC in Inner Mongolia to achieve the goal of learner-centered in classroom and

child-centered in school and transforming the traditional teaching and managing strategies and, finally, to make the children here enjoy their rights better.

PS: Thank you very much, all the participants and our mentors in Lund, especially Per . Without your help, nothing would be achieved. We sincerely hope that a long and sustainable touch among all countries would bring us a brighter and more successful future with the implementation of CRC.

Zhang Lixia

Chao Kuiou

Zhang Zhixin

November 6, 2010