



The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation

TRAINING IN HEFEI CITY BY "HUA PO PO" (MS. FANG SUZHEN)

Hefei Trainings	2
Should kids do homework?	2
Workshop: Supporting Education Programs in China	3
NGO Training	3
Workshop: Effective Communication for Non-Profit Organizations	4
Reading Exchange: Schools from Zhangjiajie, Jinzhai, and Hefei	5-6
School in the Library	7
A Model for Teacher Learning	8-9
Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance—Taiwan Visit	10-13



In response to demand from members of the Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance, the Foundation invited Ms. FANG Suzhen – popularly known as Hua Po Po – a famous children’s literature author in Taiwan and an active and passionate reading advocate, to visit several primary schools in Hefei City and Changfeng County in April 2014. During her 5-day trip to the region, Hua Po Po gave trainings and lectures, and also shared her passion for picture books, family reading, creative work, and creating picture books to teachers and students of the Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance.

Hua Po Po’s first training session was held at Shuguang Primary School Longtu Campus on April 10. The morning audience was mainly composed of headmasters from various middle and primary schools in Baohe District. Focusing on introducing strategies for promoting reading on campus and picture books from Taiwan, Ms. Fang began her seminar by introducing a wide range of picture books written by Taiwanese authors in the 90s, as well as describing the basic structure and creation process of

picture books. She also shared activities about reading on campus such as a “Reading Gift Bag” for newborns in Taiwan, “Leveled Reading on Campus” and “Storytelling by Headmasters”, in hope of providing references to all headmasters .

During the second part of the lecture, Hua Po Po set aside 30 minutes to read two picture book stories aloud with the audience. With on-screen pictures as well as vivid storytelling, the audience was delighted, with much laughter ringing through the crowd. Headmasters and teachers alike were enthralled by the beauty of picture books and Hua Po Po’s talented narration. A session titled “Reading Picture Books Happily” was presented in the afternoon, during which Ms. Fang showed various books to teachers: wooden books, plastic books, pillow books, and bath books, which gave teachers new ideas about books, taking their appreciation of picture books and their possibilities to new levels. She also shared tips and guidance on reading picture books aloud.

(continued on page 2)

CONTACT US:

cysf@cysff.org

To find out more, please visit :

<http://www.cysff.org/>

TRAINING IN HEFEI CITY BY “HUA PO PO” (MS. FANG SUZHEN)

(continued from page 1)

The following day, Hua Po Po continued her Hefei trip by visiting two Alliance schools, Primary School Affiliated with Hefei Normal School, and Wanghu Primary School, where she participated in their reading festival activities with the children. In the afternoon, she explored methods of creative writing with over 150 children from Alliance schools. The children loved this interactive session: Hua Po Po invited them onstage to share their feelings about characters in the stories, and encouraged them to hold and touch the books themselves.

Hua Po Po gave a lecture titled “An Introduction to Picture Book Making” to over 300 kindergarteners in the meeting venue of Kindergarten of Hefei University of Technology on April 13. Looking to highlight features of good books for young children, she prepared picture books that could be made by teachers and children together, and guided teachers as they made picture books onsite. Afterwards, Ms. Fang shared her methods and experiences dealing with children with hyperactivity or concentration problems.

On the last day of training, Hua Po Po traveled to Changfeng County and promoted the enjoyment of reading picture books to local teachers and headmasters. After introducing the significance of picture book making and reading, she set



an example and read two picture books on site to show the audience the fun and affection possible when reading. Her carefully prepared presentation, visual aids and stories delighted many teachers who were discovering picture books for the very first time.

People’s reading habits cannot be changed by just one training session; but reading advocates FANG Suzhen, the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation and the Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance all hope that at least the “seeds” of reading have been sown to encourage educators to work harder to promote children’s reading.

SHOULD KIDS DO HOMEWORK? A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

The Victorian Parliament’s Education and Training Committee in Australia recently initiated [a review of homework policy](#), after its own research confirmed a body of scientific research indicating that **children in primary school do not benefit academically from doing homework**. Reading, however, *has* been found to aid learning and increase academic achievement. As advocated by [Dr Stephen Krashen](#), reading is most effective when voluntary, and not followed by testing.

[In a 2002 study](#) looking at children’s well-being rather than their academic performance, Kouzma & Kennedy found that increased time on homework was linked with increased anxiety, depression, anger, and mood disturbances among students. Parents are also affected by increased homework loads, with family tension rising with homework demands.

Naturally, context is very important when contemplating these studies, and it is important to note that character-based languages, which require much more memorisation than English, may have implications for the learning process.

That said, [a 2014 study of over 19,000 Chinese schoolchildren](#) between the ages of 5 and 12 found that “more homework was significantly associated with later bedtime, later wake time, and shorter sleep duration.”

With no scientific backing for academic achievement or for the developing of organisational or other skills, might primary school children be better off spending time with their families and friends, reading, or playing?

Resources:

<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/why-kids-are-better-off-without-homework/story-fni0cwl5-1227032684827>

<http://www.sdkrashen.com/>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12353781>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24256420>

WORKSHOP: SUPPORTING EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN CHINA

On 14 April 2014, 45 people from six Mainland Chinese charity organizations, donors, and educational organizations participated in the “Workshop on Supporting Education Programs in China” held by the Foundation in Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

As part of our 10-year anniversary celebration, we hoped to share our experiences and lessons and, more importantly, to build a platform for exchange between Hong Kong donors, organizations, and Mainland non-profit organizations. By discussing educational policies and introducing selected charity organizations, we hoped to help participants in Hong Kong learn more about some of the needs and trends in Mainland China, and to collaboratively come up with solutions for better programs and support.

We invited Ms. Hesun Geng from China Foundation Center and two of our Foundation board members, Mr. Alan Wang and Mr. Guangshen Gao, to speak to the group in the morning. They introduced the current landscape of philanthropy in Mainland China, focusing on educational organizations, as well as the challenges they are facing and the government’s reform of educational policies. Following this, four non-profit organizations: Teach Future China, Western Sunshine, INCLUDED and Growing Home, introduced their programs, which all tackle specific educational problems.

In the afternoon, participants were divided into 6 groups. Led by Ms. Jufang Zhang from Capacity Building and Assessment Center (CBAC), each group discussed challenges faced by Hong Kong parties looking to work with Mainland NGOs (and vice versa), as well as relevant solutions. Both parties agreed that there were no proper

channels for them to get to know each other, and they mentioned that Mainland NGOs should improve their project management. They unanimously agreed to build more platforms to enhance mutual understanding and trust.

Feedback from the event was most encouraging:

“We learned that many Hong Kong foundations are willing to support Mainland NGOs”

“It made us think more about how to find a suitable NGO partner in the Mainland”

“It’s helpful to analyze the information behind the figures”

Based on the positive response to this event, we will look to build more platforms to share our 10-year experiences in supporting Mainland programs, and facilitate exchange and dialogue between Mainland China and Hong Kong based organizations.

Please visit http://cysff.org/event_2014_april.html for more detailed information about this workshop.



CONNECT NGO TRAINING

As part of an effort to further build capacity for our NGO partners, the Foundation has hosted a half day Communication Excellence training session on 8 April 2014 at the Boys’ & Girls’ Clubs Association of Hong Kong.

The training was designed to help NGO managers and fundraisers improve their presentation and communication skills, essential when organizations engage in speaking opportunities, media reviews and fundraising events. Facilitated by trainer Patrick Ng from Connect Communications, 27 participants attended the session, which covered topics including the principles of presentation, choosing and using the right tools, structuring presentations, and using visuals beyond powerpoint. With practical tips and lots of practice and critique time, participants were able to learn from their peers while getting help from our professional trainer.

The feedback from the session was most encouraging, with all participants reporting that the session was practical, and had met or exceeded their expectations.

Our sincere thanks to Patrick from Connect Communications for running this wonderful session for us and more importantly, thanks for all the participants’ input and involvement. We look forward to organizing more of such events to facilitate learning within the NGO community.

“It was very practical and I learned a lot within 4 hours”

“The content was engaging and impactful. The trainer spoke clearly, concisely and the general atmosphere was great!”

“I learned the importance of being myself and communicating important messages from the heart, not just by using presentation tools.”

WORKSHOP: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

How can we maximize our influence and improve fundraising by storytelling? How should we introduce ourselves to different groups? These are challenges many small organizations face in their PR activities. According to their needs and challenges, the Foundation invited Inspiring NPO, a Beijing organization, to develop a program for a Workshop on Effective Communication. Inspiring NPO provide professional and effective brand management, as well as marketing and communication services for organizations. We invited the principals and publicity officers from 10 organizations to participate in training in Beijing from May 12th-14th.

The three half-day courses were designed to include theory, case studies, and plenty of classroom exercises.

The first day, "Brand Communication", focused on determining core demands and making brand communication plans. The trainers from Inspiring NPO explained several core concepts, e.g. EX-Branding, The Brand IDEED, "Non-profit brand is not equal to fundraising tool", brand contact point, and funnel-shaped brand communication strategy. The emphasized concept was that, in brand communication, firstly we should know who we are and what we can do to support our positioning; and what we did is not just the organization's program.

The main topic on the second day was storytelling – "my story, our story, and the present". The three stories are not simple; they are touching stories which focus on the organization, and they make your audience accept your brand, and attract them to your work. The exercise was not designed to encourage crowdfunding, but to help participants clearly see the thinking behind branding. Among the many programs carried out by organizations, how can an organization vividly introduce their work to others while precisely answering the question, "who are we"?

On the third day, presentation training was provided, exploring how best to communicate with a foundation, the public, and the media. Other participants acted as the audience to give comments on the presentations.



Participants shared constructive feedback and proposals after the three half-day courses:

"The skill to make presentations more attractive is an effective combination of three steps. In my opinion, there are lots of stories, but it is important to select the most representative story to reflect the organization's core values. Communication should be prepared carefully and with structure, not randomly. The effect on the listener should remain essentially the same despite audience changes. An organization must distinguish itself from others, with sufficient reasons and evidence to be convincing".

On time management and content, partners made lots of suggestions, including: intensify practice and comment section, spend less time on known concepts, and highlight and emphasize core concepts.

We would like to thank Inspiring NPO for sharing their experience in communication, and thank our participants for their active involvement. As a pilot training program, the content will be adjusted according to feedback proposals and class assessments. We hope to further promote the program to support NGOs' organizational development, and to encourage more sponsors to consider providing such trainings to their NGO partners.



READING EXCHANGE: SCHOOLS FROM ZHANGJIAJIE, JINZHAI AND HEFEI



From 12-17 May 2014, the Foundation arranged for seven headmasters and teachers from “Love Light Up” project schools in Zhangjiajie, Hunan, to visit Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance in Hefei, and for the Jinzhai “Wisdom Boat” project schools to share and exchange experiences in promoting school reading and library construction. The trip received full support from the Zhangjiajie Education Bureau, and the Bureau also sent another 9 headmasters and teachers to visit the schools.

“Love Light Up”, “Wisdom Boat” and “Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance” are three school reading and library projects carried out by Ying Gao (a writer from Taiwan), Shanghai Heart-Education Community Youth Development Center, and the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation, respectively. Each project has its own unique characteristics. “Love Light Up” creates a “Gold Medal of Reading” to show teachers and children how to read a book and write a reading report, and uses a “Themed Cultural Wall” to display children’s ideas. “Wisdom Boat” aims to provide an open reading environment in rural schools, in which students can manage and borrow books independently and with ease. “Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance” attaches great importance to combining learning activities with happy reading, and aims to “build a school in the library”, where an entire school’s approach to learning revolves around books.

What did visitors say?

- Before this visit, I thought we had become a base of Love Light Up Reading Alliance as a way to repay Gao’s kindness. She donated books to us when our school had just been founded and had no books in the library at all, and she kept providing elementary and further reading trainings to our teachers and students for 4 years. But now, I realize that when reading becomes a pleasurable habit instead of simply being associated with studying, it will have significant benefits. We plan to allocate a fund to support teacher visits to schools well known for reading, including schools in Anhui, and we will revitalize Love Light Up Reading Alliance to become like Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance.

- Renjie Chu
Headmaster
Tianmen Primary School

- I envied the spacious and beautiful libraries and new equipment. But what surprised me most was the reading environment. Children there can get books freely at any time and any place. How lucky they are! Our library is only available to children at

Headmasters and teachers from Hunan Zhangjiajie visited Stone Soup Alliance schools, including Wanghu Primary School, the Primary School Affiliated with Hefei Normal School and Shuguang Primary School, as well as Guanmiao Primary School, which participated in the “Wisdom Boat” project. During school visits, seminars, and demo classes, teachers were able to exchange ideas and experiences.

As the saying goes, “There are always other hills whose stones are good for working jade”. Through the visit and exchange, teachers could identify areas they could improve. In her report on this visit and exchange, Ms. Ying Gao said, “Since 2010, when we started donating books and providing reading trainings in Zhangjiajie, what has frustrated our efforts most is that ‘The words were earnest but they fell on deaf ears’. We provided lots of trainings, repeatedly modified the content and format, endeavored to reduce theoretical courses concerning reading promotion and teaching, and shared reading experiences of Taiwan and achievements in other Mainland schools to prove feasibility; we also provided lots of practice sessions using the master-apprentice method; and I even went to Zhangjiajie every other month and stayed there one month every time, helping teachers review previous trainings from one school to another. Some teachers were moved, but they still thought they were simply helping me realize my dream. They did not realize at all that good reading could change the breadth and depth of theirs and their pupils’ lives. Many thanks to the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation, Hefei Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance and Jinzhai Guanmiao Primary School for their enthusiastic support and sharing. They have lighted a lamp of confidence and hope for teachers in Zhangjiajie.”

Building platforms for studying and sharing, visiting others and giving cause and opportunities for introspection, and learning from each other to promote mutual development. These outcomes serve as encouragement and motivation for the Foundation’s continued support of exchanges between different organizations and projects.

READING EXCHANGE: SCHOOLS FROM ZHANGJIAJIE, JINZHAI AND HEFEI

fixed times, and it seems to be a room for collecting books only. This visit has broadened my outlook, and I will do my best to create a free reading environment for our children!

Qin Gong
Librarian, Tianmen Primary School

•In the past, I thought reading guidance was a task for Chinese teachers only. But now, I'm aware that it can be combined with all other disciplines. We will arrange for teachers of other disciplines to join in reading guidance!

- Zhongxiong Zhu
Dean of Teaching Affairs, Tianmen Primary School

•As the leader of a teaching and research group, I totally neglected the valuable resources around us, i.e. parents. Leaving Anhui, I will immediately initiate parent volunteer activities in the class I lead.

- Lingling Zhou
Leader of Teaching Group, Tianmen Primary School

•In previous reading guidance classes, I always tried to teach Chinese or Morals & Ethics, and encouraged my students to comprehend and learn general principles from the stories, which made reading a burden on the students. After this study in Anhui, I have decided to put happiness back into reading with my students.

- Hongmei Zhang
Teacher, Tianmen Primary School

•I witnessed the reading environment in Taiwanese schools shared by their reading teachers. They create a happy reading setting in which books leave the shelves and become part of each student's life.

- Zhongqiang Li
Tianmen Primary School

•It's really a shame! I've been lazy in my approach to reading trainings provided by "Love Light Up", but teachers here have practiced excellently! I have no excuses now. It's time to catch up with them!

- Teacher who asked to remain anonymous

•I have decided to convert our equipment room into a small library with free access for students.

- Hongxing Zhang
Headmaster, Hezuoqiao

•The "Bookcase Drift" program of Jinzhai Guanmiao Primary School has enlightened us. Ms. Ying Gao expressed that she's willing to support us, but required librarian training finished first. We will start as soon as we get back!

- Jianxiong Fu
Headmaster, Siduping Primary School

•Having attended this workshop, I want to make a reading room together with the students in which they can enjoy reading, and try to apply what I've learned from the training and the reading guidance demonstrated by teachers from Anhui to my classes.

- Ting Liu
Librarian, Siduping Primary School

•The school leaders adopt many methods and design all kinds of different activities to attract children to reading, which impressed me a lot.

- Hongmei Chen
Teaching and Research Group, Zhangjiajie Yongding Education Bureau



SCHOOL IN THE LIBRARY - THE 1ST TEACHER LIBRARIAN TRAINING PROGRAM GRADUATION CEREMONY AND READING PROGRAM SHARING EVENT



On June 28, 2014, the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation held the 1st Teacher Librarian Training Program Graduation Ceremony and Reading Program Sharing Event, in the 3rd Primary School Affiliated to Hefei Normal School, Hefei, Anhui Province. The Foundation invited many reading specialists from Taiwan, Hong Kong and the U.S., as well as NGO charity partners from Mainland China and teachers from every primary school in Hefei. In total, about 350 people attended this event.

One of the Foundation's flagship projects, the Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance has, after many years of hard work, become an increasingly mature and independent organization. In order to promote further development of school libraries in Hefei City and Changfeng County, the Foundation collaborated with the Education Bureau in Baohe District to launch the 1st Teacher Librarian Training of Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance in November 2012. The training program has been certified, with 12 sessions in total. With the support of Hong Kong Teacher-Librarians' Association and National Taiwan Normal University, the Foundation has invited more than ten reading specialists from Hong Kong and Taiwan as trainers.

On the morning of June 28, Ms. Xuemei Chen, the director of the Education Bureau in Baohe District, first gave an opening speech at the Graduation Ceremony. Next, Ms. Tina Chan, the executive director of the Foundation, and Mr. Gang Chen, the chairman of Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance, introduced the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation and Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance respectively. The Foundation and the Alliance have been working together for six years. Today's graduation ceremony represented a milestone and cause for celebration for both.

After these introductions, 34 trainees from the 1st Teacher Librarians Training Program were presented with graduation certificates and gifts. Ms. Min Zhao, President of the Association of Hefei Teacher Librarians, gave a speech on behalf of trainees and the Association. She shared key benefits she had gained from the training, and introduced the Association, which had been established during the training.

In the afternoon, Ms. Dorne Eastwood, the executive director of Boundless Readers (a reading agency in Chicago, U.S.A) gave a speech titled "Releasing the Power of Reading". She gave the audience an introduction to the organization Boundless Readers, and shared their many years' experience in promoting reading in the local communities of Chicago.

Afterwards, the Stone Soup Alliance Library Incentive Scheme was presented. This scheme was designed to encourage teacher librarians at Alliance schools to explore new ways of combining library and subject teachings together so as to develop the "school in the library" initiative by better use of library resources. Ms. Kamlin Ip, the president of Hong Kong Teacher-Librarians' Association, together with Ms. Chaochen Chen, the academic dean of National Taiwan Normal University, facilitated this session. Their humorous and witty styles filled the venue with laughter. Eight teachers from Alliance schools won the first, second and third prizes.

After the award presentations, Ms. Kamlin Ip gave a speech named "Library – the Most Important Place in School". She emphasized that the library was so much more than a place to store books: rather, a library should be used as a resource center for the school, and it should be a paradise where children love to spend their time. Next, Professor Yuanling Lai from National Taichung University of Education (NTCU) of Taiwan gave a speech titled "Collaborated Teaching by Teacher Librarians and Subject Teachers", and discussed the experiences and methods used in collaborated teaching in Taiwan. Two teachers from Stone Soup Alliance also shared their experiences of using the library to carry out Mathematics and English teaching.

The 1st Teacher Librarian Training Program of Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance was concluded successfully. We have obtained 34 graduates, and have also sown the "seeds" of the first group of ambassadors for campus reading promotion. The Foundation plans to conduct the second training program and build on the courses in the future, so as to spread the idea of happy reading to more regions.

For more details about this sharing event, please visit http://cysff.org/event_2014_june.html



TEACHER STUDY GROUPS

A MODEL FOR TEACHER LEARNING AND PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

Ms. Dorne Eastwood (Executive Director, Boundless Readers)

As the executive director of Boundless Readers (BR), an NGO in Chicago, IL, USA, which believes every child deserves the opportunity to become a successful reader, I am always looking for new literacy research, strategies, and ideas to share with our teacher awardees. It was therefore with great excitement that I accepted an invitation from Tina Chan and the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation this summer to visit several Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance schools and to participate in the first, and hopefully many more, Reading Conference in Hefei, Anhui Province, China.

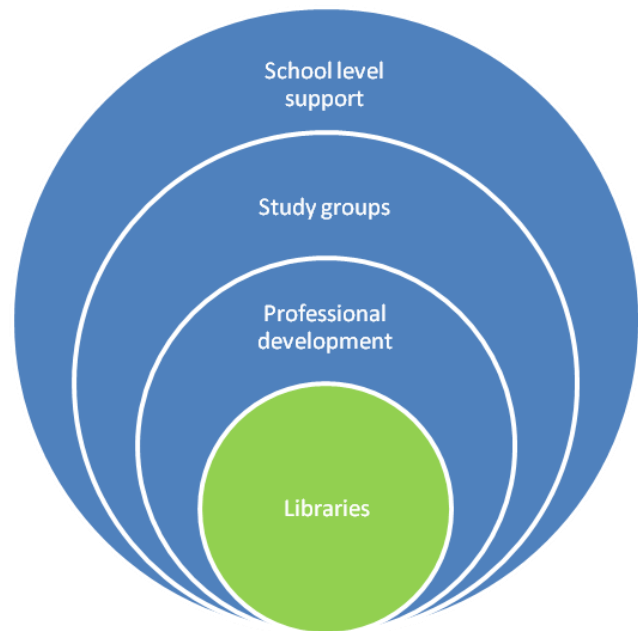
It was clear from the outset that I was in the company of many talented professionals who share a common vision with Boundless Readers to inspire the love of reading and develop lifelong readers, learners, and thinkers. Even the Happy Reading Alliance's three pillars are similar: Books/Time/Teachers.

We have all learned that to ignite that excitement of reading in our school children, they must have access to books, lots of books, which actually interest them. And when the libraries are amply stocked, that important element of 'choice' is satisfied.

Time and space must then be provided for the children to independently immerse in their chosen text. The libraries and spaces created by the Alliance schools and Foundation were so warm, comfortable, inviting. The children were totally engaged in their storybooks and I was envious that I could not take my current book (that I always have in my bag!) and join them.

It is the pillar labeled "Teachers" that I want to focus on today because it is the teacher that effectively pulls all the pieces together and is the driver of literacy change in our respective schools. Research has confirmed many times over that teacher quality is the single most important element of student success, regardless of family or economic circumstances. By raising the expectations of what can be accomplished in the classroom, we help teachers to help children become lifelong readers. During my site visits, I observed that transformation successfully taking place with the teachers and schools of the Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance. The evidence was in the pride shown by both teachers and students when sharing the families' reading journals, pointing out all the wonderful hidden spaces maintained for independent reading (even under the staircases!), performing Reading Theatre, and beaming while talking about their annual Reading Festival.

How do we export this excitement about reading? What is the



most effective way to broaden the impact of a burgeoning literacy culture change?

Boundless Readers also grew out of our founder's commitment to develop children into passionate, lifelong readers. It was initially focused on the most concrete aspect of that mission: getting more high quality children's literature into the Chicago Public Schools classrooms and into the hands of the children. While classroom libraries remain a central component of all BR programming, over two decades of research, experimentation and learning, we have built in additional layers of support for effective instructional use of those books with high quality professional development for the teachers.

Over the years the range of literacy instructional strategies covered in the PD sessions has grown while remaining centered on the core ideas of using real children's books in a way that fosters the love of reading.

As BR grew and developed, we began to look for ways to make scalable and sustainable change. Linking together likeminded teachers within schools provided participants with more comprehensive and ongoing support during the school year. From these basic connections, BR has evolved today's study group model—a well-developed, research-based system of norms and supports that helps groups function together more effectively and, crucially, keeps teacher learning closely tied to the improvement of classroom

TEACHER STUDY GROUPS

A MODEL FOR TEACHER LEARNING AND PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

Ms. Dorne Eastwood (Executive Director, Boundless Readers)



practice and student learning. Moreover, this type of model has been shown to be helpful in supporting teachers to adapt and implement strategies and concepts learned at workshops, from professional texts, and other information sources.

Currently BR teacher study groups are comprised of teachers who voluntarily apply for a classroom library book award and participate in required summer professional development. Teachers apply as a team with other teachers from their school (sometimes comprised as a grade-level team, other times across grade-levels) and then participate in a study group during that school year. The group is provided a professional text of the group's choosing to study throughout the year with the purpose of the group being to support teacher learning and practice change related to student literacy.

Traditional forms of professional development (e.g., one-shot workshops) can be helpful in certain circumstances but such detached and decontextualized methods have been shown to have low utility in actually changing teachers' classroom practice. Study groups are intended to provide the structure, space, time and norms for teachers to support one another in learning about effective practices and iteratively applying it with their own students in their own classroom contexts. When implemented well, study groups have the potential to help teachers translate theory and research into practices and routines.

Unique to our study group model is there is not a set of specific practice changes our teachers are expected to implement. Rather, BR emphasizes and encourages the use of authentic children's books and practices that tap student motivation and love of reading, but there is no one "instructional model." Specific practice changes are identified by individual teachers and pursued collectively in their study groups. All of the teachers are seeking to improve some aspect of literacy

teaching and learning and choose a corresponding professional text to support the group learning. The study group model is designed intentionally to incorporate teacher choice and adaptability to their personal capacities and classroom contexts.

BR has learned, however, that even a highly effective study group can be limited in its impact if it is isolated from the main currents of literacy teaching and learning within the school. Over the past four years BR has been experimenting with whole-school programs, aptly named Building Exemplary Schools through

Teams (BEST), attempting to reach a critical mass of teachers within a school. BEST was designed with the intention that the work of the study groups, supported with strategically timed on-site coaching, could become the core of the school's literacy professional development rather than an additional task taken on by only a few.

Our annual outside evaluations, the most recent completed on 30/06/2014, help identify the most valued program components of study groups and the contributions made to improvements in professional practice. Importantly too, this critical process always drives the development of next year's essential questions: What is the optimal amount of ongoing support and in-school coaching necessary to transform a literacy culture built on the love of reading? How do we leverage the most important elements of the study group model to effect sustainable change?

Our respective organizations recognize the answer lays within the common pillar: teachers. Our collective investment in developing our teachers' professional practice is well placed. Boundless Readers welcomes the opportunity to continue to study this together with CYSFF and all the voices from the Happy Reading Alliance. Working from our shared vision of literacy for all children and learning from the exceptional work already taking place at the Happy Reading Alliance schools in Hefei, together we could begin to answer the questions in the next chapter of being agents of change.

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your celebration and to learn about the successes of Stone Soup Happy Reading Alliance. I truly look forward to an open line of communication so we may both profit from one another's work.

STONE SOUP HAPPY READING ALLIANCE - TAIWAN VISIT

For more on this story, please visit http://cysff.org/event_2014_may.html

The Hefei Delegation to Taiwan (from 19-23 May) was sponsored by the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation, with supports from the Interlibrary Cooperation Association and Taiwan Normal University. During this period, the Hefei Delegation visited 4 Taiwan Elementary Schools, the National Library of Public Information, the Eslite Bookstore and the Hsin-Yi Children Bookstore. Hopefully, this exchange can help the Education Bureau and member schools of the Stone Soup Happy Reading School Alliance to:

1. Understand the planning and policies made by Taiwan education authorities for developing primary school libraries, so as to promote their development;
2. Visit elementary schools and public libraries in Taiwan to learn from education philosophies on school library development and the integration of library with subjects in Taiwan;
3. Introduce hands-on experience gained by the Stone Soup Happy Reading School Alliance in building and developing school libraries to schools and education authorities in Taiwan;
4. Facilitate the academic exchange on school library development between Mainland China and Taiwan.

Time	Topic	Speaker
08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00-09:10	Opening Ceremony	Professor Chao-chen Chen National Taiwan Normal University
09:10-09:50	Current situation of Reading Promotion at Primary and Middle Schools in Taiwan	Professor Chao-chen Chen National Taiwan Normal University
09:50-10:00	Introduction to the Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation	Tina Chan The Chen Yet-Sen Family Foundation
10:10-11:10	Introduction to Hefei Stone Soup Happy Reading School Alliance	Chen Xuemei Education Bureau of Baohe District, Hefei Chen Gang Stone Soup Alliance Zhou Qinqin Stone Soup Alliance
11:20-12:00	Sharing of Foundation Innovative Programs	Jiang Ying Stone Soup Alliance
12:00-13:00	Lunch and break	
13:00-14:30	Exchange and Sharing of Taiwan Visit	Team of school library and reading promotion teachers from Hefei
14:30-14:50	Introduction to Hefei Teacher-Librarians' Association	Zhao Min Hefei Teacher Librarian Association
15:00-15:50	Reading Promotion in Taiwan: Experience Sharing	Team from Taipei Municipal Wanxing Elements School
15:50-16:30	General Discussion	Professor Chao-chen Chen National Taiwan Normal University

STONE SOUP HAPPY READING ALLIANCE - TAIWAN VISIT

On the last day of the visit, the Exchange Seminar for School Library and Reading Promotion Teachers Visiting Taiwan from Hefei was organized. Library and reading promotion teachers from Taiwan were invited to the seminar to share their practices and experiences.

Impression and Reflection on Taiwan's Reading Promotion

--Stone Soup Reading League's Communication Delegation to Taiwan

I. Impression

1. Cozy and elegant environment; delicate design

We have visited four elementary schools, which are Neihu Elementary School (Taibei City), Wanxing Elementary School (Taibei City), Dapeng Elementary School (Taizhong City), and Zhongshan Elementary School (Xinbei City). Although they are different in history, scale, development concepts and geographical conditions, they have one thing in common: the reading environment is cozy and elegant, with delicate design and full of childishness and fun. Libraries in Taiwan do not give priority to the luxury of equipments or decoration. Some libraries even look a little old, but the outlook will not affect their usage. Because their delicate and user-friendly design, libraries are the favorite place for the children. There are story rooms, theme reading, book recommendations, meetings with writers, worksheets to prepare for reading, borrow registries, opening book bars, achievement exhibitions, e-reading, etc. Traces of reading can be found anywhere, such as walls, corners, pavilions, suspended ceilings, etc. In this way, libraries have been the place with the largest amount of information and the center of learning resources.

2. In-depth integration of reading courses with students' theme activities and other courses

Compared with reading activities held by "Stone Soup" schools, reading activities in Taiwan's schools are more systematic and school-based. School libraries are the center of learning resources, but reading education is not solely carried out by teachers of the libraries. With the participation of all the teachers in the school, it is a school-based curriculum. For example, Zhongshan Elementary School (Xinbei City) impressed us deeply during the tour. There, a reading concept is proposed that "Reading is not a single subject, but the base of all subjects. It is a tool, a junction point and supporting point for various activities." As is stipulated by the school, teachers of each subject shall, based on the characteristics of the subject, undertake reading tasks. There developed a subject reading school-based curriculum outline, which specifies the reading content that shall be

accomplished in each grade by each subject, and the goals that shall be reached in reading education. The School's reading team has 18 members, including the principal, director of education, director of student affairs, director of general affairs, director of guidance, chief of curriculum, chief of equipment, chief of consultancy, teacher representatives, parent representatives, volunteer representatives, etc. Under the curriculum goal of "Cultural Zhongshan, Energetic



Campus", information quality, reading quality, library utilization and other courses related to reading are integrated in "learning territory", "important projects", "flexible courses", "special classes" and other five modules, to achieve the humanity core, affection to homeland, technicalization and global perspective of the school-based curriculum.

3. Long-term support from government, colleges and universities

Taiwan's reading promotion is not carried out by grass root organizations like Stone Soup, but has policy and financial support from Ministry of Education of Taiwan. Firstly, National Taiwan Normal University takes the lead to call together professors from other normal universities and form a mentor team. Then the mentor team will guide some seeded teachers to conduct experiments in some schools, and after achievements are made, the activity will be promoted step by step. In this way, government, colleges and universities and seeded teachers work together to ensure that reading promotion is carried out orderly and efficiently. Because of the three parties' joint effort and the fact that most citizens in Taiwan attach importance to reading, Taiwan's reading education has a high starting point and high efficiency from the beginning. For example, Interlibrary Cooperation Association was established in 1972. It is an interlibrary and inter-data unit cooperative organization, and is aimed at improving information exchange and service between different organizations. In 2009, Taiwan began the teacher execution plan of library reading promotion, and the position of reading teachers was set up in 50 schools. In 2010, it increased to 113 schools. It is

(continued on page 12)

STONE SOUP HAPPY READING ALLIANCE - TAIWAN VISIT

(continued from page 11)

expected that the position of reading teachers will be set up in all elementary schools after 2013, who will carry out the special duty of managing the library and reading promotion in the school. With the effort of the mentor team, which is led by Professor Chen Zhaozhen from National Taiwan Normal University, and their seeded teachers who are called "Yangtze One" by the mentor team, Curriculum Outline for Library Information Utilization, Handbook for Teacher-Librarians, and E-paper for Teacher-Librarians have been developed, teaching design and resources (PPT for teaching, worksheet, etc.) have been developed and can be downloaded by the frontline teachers for free. They have also established various online platforms, through which people from different places and schools in the world can exchange information and latest news about reading. The reading promotion from top to the bottom, especially the leadership and direct participation of professors from colleges and universities, has guaranteed the systematization and professionalization of reading educational curriculum in Taiwan. During its early research, not only a unique reading educational curriculum system has been developed, but also some excellent teacher-librarians



have been cultivated.

4. Parent-volunteers give a hand in reading promotion

During the tour, we found that each school has an excellent volunteer team and we could see them everywhere busy with something in the school. Later, we know that parent-volunteer teams have existed for many years and become a bright visiting card and an indispensable cultural element of the school. And, the parent-volunteer teams are quite big in Taiwan. For example, the team in Neihu Elementary school has over 160 members. The school divides the tasks to the volunteers and specifies their time schedule and obligations. So the parent-volunteers can work orderly and be a strong helper in reading promotion. All volunteers are very familiar with the school and know everything and every corner of the

school. They do not appear occasionally to offer a hand, instead, parent-volunteers offer their assistance on a daily basis. Some parents continue to be volunteers after their children graduated from the school. They are not doing the work for the sake of their children, but contributing to the society for the sake of education. What keeps the parents here is the good relationship between school and parents and the recognition to the school from the parents. At the same time, the school often offer various training and learning opportunities to the parents. In this way, a two-way service comes into being. Volunteers serve the school, and the school also helps the volunteers. Although there are not enough teachers in the school, when many volunteers come to offer their help and many things can be done by them, the teachers don't need to rush now.

II Reflection and Inspiration

1. Reading courses shall be continuously standardized

As a member of "Stone Soup" Reading League, each school has opened reading courses based on its conditions. Compared with schools in Taiwan, our reading courses are still on the surface level, which lack systematicness and operability. Especially, we have to continue to work on the assessment of reading activities.

School libraries in Taiwan is well utilized and they show very good cooperative spirit between different subjects. Many activities are not carried out by reading teachers alone, but together with teachers of related subjects. Centering on their own development vision, the four schools which we have visited have extracted their own reading strategies. Two schools mentioned "Mind Map", which is a good way to guide students' reading. Combining with the implementation of their reading activities, all the four schools have established reading activities curriculum systems with their own features, and have developed corresponding reading evaluation systems. For example, Zhongshan Elementary School (Xinbei City) offers Reading Diligence Award, Authentication Award, Book Award and Principal's Award on Reading. Based on the development goal of "Cultural Zhongshan, Energetic Campus", theme reading activities, such as "Share Library", "Better Reading, Better Taste", "Reading Space, Activate the Campus", "Best Library", are carried out to encourage the students to love reading and read more.

Hefei Library teacher association's major work task this year is to design a teaching manual for frontline teachers, including the teaching design and worksheet of the three modules, namely, library utilization, reading quality and information quality. The manual is designed to provide convenience to the teachers.

STONE SOUP HAPPY READING ALLIANCE - TAIWAN VISIT

(continued from page 12)

2. Reading promotion needs attention from the whole society

In Taiwan, not only schools attach importance to students' reading activities, but also the government, colleges and universities, libraries, book stores, communities spare no efforts to promote reading. For example, we have visited some public information libraries, where there are reading zones for the children. There, the color, decoration and seats are especially chosen for the children, and theme reading activities for the children are held periodically by the libraries. There are 526 public libraries in Taiwan, which covers every county and township. A good atmosphere of reading is created in the whole island.

There is another unique landscape of reading — Eslite Book Store. It is a local brand in Taiwan and this book store is quite different from the traditional ones. When you enter Eslite, you will smell a fascinating odor, which is created by the smell of coffee swirls from comfortable seats and the smell of books. With brightness and openness in space, it is a book city embodying the feature of European libraries. It is symmetric yet layered, coherent yet segmented. Not like the traditional book stores, which are dull and standardized, it uses the steady, elegant and cozy colors in its decoration and creates a good cultural and artistic atmosphere. Everyone who enters the store will naturally lower down their voice and slower down their steps. Eslite has been an index of Taiwan's culture promotion.

The government also carries out the deep ploughing plan of reading, to promote reading in the whole island through administrative policies. Reading is promoted through schools, communities, families, and public libraries, and a rich cultural atmosphere has been formed in Taiwan.

The promotion of reading activities is not only the business of

schools. It needs the participation of the whole society, which is what we are in need of.

3. Cultural communication shall be enhanced between Taiwan and mainland

Through the seven-day tour, each member of the delegation has reaped a lot. During those days, we were exposed to all sorts of Taiwanese. What impressed us deeply is their hospitality and courtesy. When they greeted us, no matter they are principals, teachers or students, they would nod or even slightly bow. We never need to worry about getting lost on the street, because warm-hearted Taiwanese will show us the way. What we heard most often was "thank you". As people in Taiwan and mainland come from the same root, during the tour, we could feel that Taiwanese have also inherited and developed China's traditional culture. Thanks to this tour, we have a better understanding about Taiwan, especially the reading and culture in Taiwan. Only through communication and contact, can we better understand each other and have a better relationship.

We believe that Stone Soup Reading League will continue to communicate with schools in Taiwan about reading education in the future. Both parties will learn from each other, exchange information, improve together, and make more delicious "stone soup".

