



Project Shine 2019

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Place:	Huan Jiang County, Hechi City, Guangxi 環江縣，河池，廣西
Date:	July 11-28, 2019
Team members:	24 people (Vancouver, Toronto, California, New York, Hong Kong)
Students taught:	160 students
School:	Huan Jiang Senior High School 環江毛南族自治縣高級中學

Project Shine Summer Trip is a two week English summer camp program where our North American team members facilitate English cross-cultural activities with students in rural areas of Guangxi, China. This year we are blessed with an intergenerational team of 24 members including 3 CRRS staff, 8 alumni, 11 teenagers and 2 parents. Our team members came from Vancouver, Toronto, New York, California, and Hong Kong. We were able to teach 160 students in total. About 80 of those students are sponsored by CRRS which means they come from families with difficult financial background.



You may be surprised why I chose this photo of myself showing a squat toilet? This photo was taken during Project Shine at the rural high school where we conducted English cross-cultural exchange activities. One of the activities in the Project Shine is that we have the local students bring our North American team members to visit their school dorm rooms.

Shocked and surprised, our team members would find out that eight to twelve students need to share this one small squat toilet washroom as shown in the photo; they also have to bathe there as well. Where is the separate area for the shower they asked? Well there isn't one and everything goes into the hole in the ground.

Since half of our team is teenagers and college students, I can tell this experience is very eye-opening for them. For lack of better words they would share how "sad" they feel to find out the local students who are the same



age as they live in such conditions which are very different than teenagers in North America.

When we go on trips like Project Shine we are confronted with our own "privilege" head on. It causes us to reflect about how blessed we are with our upbringing and opportunities we already have. We may have seen pictures, videos or heard stories about the underprivileged, but the transformation in our hearts happens in a much deeper level when we experience it in real life. Sometimes we need these kinds of "shocking experiences" in our lives to push us out of our comfort zone in order to grow.

Suddenly the problems we think is so important in our lives become irrelevant when we learned that the students in China have to worry about making enough money to support their family. Suddenly we appreciate more of what our parents have done for us. Suddenly we complain and grumble less about our own lives.

But don't get me wrong, I do not support "poverty tourism". When we go on trips like this we need to come as servant leaders, serving in humility. In our training we stress that we are there to give, but we are also there to learn and receive. Remember even though they may have much less in material things, but their inner being maybe much richer than us. The joy



of simplicity seems to be an ongoing theme we learn from the students and the community there.

As I read the reflections of the team members, many of them mentioned their lives have been changed and transformed by going on the Project Shine summer trip. I pray that these life lessons and memories with the local students will continue to help them grow as they pursue their dreams as they journey in life. My dream is that each person going on this trip is not just to realize they have privilege, but also figure out ways to use their privilege to "shine" and serve others with humility.