Ma, Why Can’t My English Teacher Speak English?

Ian Groves

After concentrating its work predominantly in China’s eastern provinces for many years now, Amity has recently shifted its emphasis to working more in China’s remote and underdeveloped western regions. This year, Amity’s Education Division has placed teachers in Shanxi Province and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region for the first time. Liu Ruhong, Director of Amity’s Education Division, visited these new placements in October 2001 along with Ian Groves from Amity’s Hong Kong Office.

How would you feel if you sent your kids to a school where the English teacher doesn’t know how to speak English?

Unfortunately, this is a reality facing many parents and their children in China today. Many middle school teachers of English in China cannot themselves speak or understand the language very well. Stories abound of teachers with miserable pronunciation who can barely make themselves understood when called upon to communicate with visiting foreigners. Such teachers pass on their shortcomings and errors to their students who, in turn, do poorly in English language tests. Many otherwise bright students often do well enough in other subjects to earn a place at a good university where they might acquire skills which would be of benefit to their local communities in the future. However, poor English language scores often drag down their grade average and thus deny them their university place.

This is not necessarily the fault of the English teacher. Many middle school teachers of English were trained a long time ago and were drilled in grammar and translation techniques, not practical communication skills. Even recent graduates often have poor oral English ability due to lack of opportunities to use the language with native speakers during their training. Hence, errors in pronunciation and comprehension abound, become fixed, and are passed on to students in turn.

Since its Teachers Program started in 1985, Amity has traditionally placed most of its teachers in Teacher Training Colleges in order to help train
future teachers of English, German and Japanese. However, when Amity decided to place long-term teachers in the poorer provinces of Shanxi and Inner Mongolia this year, it decided to take a different approach. Instead of training future teachers, Amity is offering in-service training programs to existing middle school teachers of English in these provinces. Amity is seeking to upgrade the oral English and teaching methodology skills of these teachers in the hope of raising the overall English teaching level in these areas.

### A rare commodity: Middle school teachers

As with all its projects, Amity is working closely with local partners to make its in-service training programs function well. Amity provides support in the form of supplying foreign teachers and also offering a small subsidy to students. Local education bureaus provide housing and teaching facilities for Amity’s teachers and also undertake to recruit middle school teacher “students” for the program. The middle school teachers’ expenses are covered by their home middle schools which will ultimately benefit when their teachers return with upgraded English language and teaching skills. The in-service training programs run for one term (half a year) and Amity stipulates that a minimum of 40 students must be enrolled in each program for the project to be financially sustainable.

As with any new projects, these new in-service training programs have not been without their fair share of problems so far. Middle school teachers are a “rare commodity” in many areas of China and middle school heads are often loathe to let their precious teachers go, even for only one term and for the benefit of the school in the long run. Many middle schools are also very short of funds and cannot spare any money to pay for further training for their teachers. Furthermore, Amity is not really known in these new areas and middle school heads are unwilling to send their teachers to an organization they’ve never heard of for training which is of uncertain value.

As a result, local education bureaus have been struggling to recruit for Amity’s new programs. In each of the areas where Amity is running its new in-service training programs, it is estimated that there are somewhere between 2000 and 4000 middle school English teachers in need of further training. However, in Hohhot, capital of Inner Mongolia, only 32 students have enrolled for the first program. In Yuncheng in Shanxi province, the programs have had to be shortened from one term to one month as middle school teachers cannot be released for any longer there. 23 teachers enrolled for the first month and 19 for the second month, well below Amity’s target of 40 teachers per program.

### Helping overcome the program’s birthing pains

In its initial evaluation of these new in-service training programs, Amity held frank discussions with local education bureaus about the long-term feasibility of the programs in light of recruitment problems. In each place, Amity found a strong determination on the part of local authorities to make the programs work. In Yuncheng, the city mayor herself met with Amity and pledged municipal funds to enable the program to be offered at a greatly reduced cost during its first few months. In Hohhot the local education authority has pledged to underwrite the program fully, making up any initial financial losses due to low recruitment numbers and putting its weight and authority behind future recruitment drives. The overwhelming feeling is that there is a great need for this kind of program but that it takes time for it to take off and gather momentum. The hope is that, as middle school teachers graduate from Amity’s programs, their upgraded skills will translate into better English teaching ability and better English scores for their students. When this happens, word will quickly spread of the benefits of Amity’s programs and recruitment should no longer be an issue. But, until that time, these programs need extra help to get them through their “birthing pains”.

Foreign language ability is vital to China’s continued development and opening up to the outside world. This has been recognized in recent years with the introduction of a new English language curriculum, syllabus and textbook for middle schools aimed at emphasizing practical oral communication skills. But there are still thousands of middle school language teachers all over China who simply do not possess these skills themselves and who therefore struggle to cope with the new materials. With its in-service training programs, Amity is seeking to address such problems and ultimately give middle school teachers and their students a better chance in the future.
Coming As A Stranger, Leaving As A Friend

Initiated in 1985, the Teachers Program is one of Amity’s oldest and most successful ventures. Every year, teachers from overseas are invited to work in China. Apart from a few Japanese and Germans who teach their native languages, most Amity teachers work as English language instructors in teacher training institutions. Many rural Chinese middle school teachers lack adequate spoken English, a situation which puts their students at a disadvantage compared to urban pupils. Accordingly, the main aim of Amity’s teachers program is to equip future teachers of English with better language skills which they will, in turn, pass on to their students.

Currently, 76 teachers from 12 nationalities are teaching through Amity in China. They are scattered over eight provinces, two of which are new provinces for Amity teacher placements: Shanxi and Inner Mongolia. The placing of Amity teachers in these poor western provinces is part of Amity’s overall effort to move west with its program work.

Meet two new teachers below as they talk about their hopes and expectations for their two-year assignment with Amity.

New to the program but not to China - John Close

John Close is teaching at Baotou Teacher’s Training Center in Baotou, Inner Mongolia. He graduated from Bluefield College in the Appalachian Mountains of Southwest Virginia. John holds a Bachelor’s Degree in English and completed his teacher certification program. His term with Amity is supported by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA).

How did you come to know about Amity?

As a student at college in Virginia, I was selected as a member of a team of Virginia Baptist students to come to China and lead a summer English camp in Shanghai. An Amity teacher organized the trip and camp. I quickly came to respect what Amity is doing in China and returned two other times, each time continuing to work with Amity. In 2000, I served as a teacher in Yinchuan, Ningxia, through Amity’s Summer English Program.

What motivated you to become an Amity teacher?

The fact that Amity is a Chinese Christian Organization, founded and run by Chinese Christians, is something that I greatly respect. So, as an Amity teacher, I am part of something greater than just being a foreign teacher at a school in China. I am not only a small part of China’s development but also a part of Christianity’s growth and presence here.

What are your hopes and expectations while in China?

I want to do the best job I can as a teacher, motivating the middle school teachers I am working with each day to have confidence in their spoken English and to be better teachers of English. I also hope to absorb as much Chinese culture and language as I can. Mostly, I hope to live my life each day, in and out of the classroom, so that others know that I am Christian.

As a younger person, why did you choose to teach in China at this point in your life?

China holds a very special place in
my heart. Last summer when I decided to come as a SEP teacher, my mother was very ill. I left with the possibility that I may not see her again. God gave me the confidence that He was ultimately in control and that I could not put serving Him on hold. He did work everything out, for I returned one day before she died. Through that experience I developed a deeper understanding of how God works in people’s lives. I knew that returning to China was what I was supposed to do, and I had the confidence to follow that vision.

**How long do you expect to stay in China?**

I don’t have a set amount of time I expect to stay in China but I know that I will continue to return and support China long after my time with Amity.

**From Singapore to Nanjing - Richard Seow**

Richard Seow was previously teaching at the English Language Communication Centre, National University of Singapore. He resigned from this work at the end of June 2001 to prepare himself to join the Amity Teachers Program. He is married to Adeline, who is on leave from work at NUS, where she has been teaching Community Medicine for the last eight years. They have two children, Joanne (11) and Jonathan (5). Richard will teach at Nanjing Xiaozhuang College.

**What is your background?**

I have been an English teacher since I graduated in 1985. I first taught in a high school for eight years and later taught at the NUS after my graduate studies in applied linguistics. We have made many good friends among Chinese nationals who were in Singapore for graduate studies, and I even had a few Chinese colleagues at NUS. Now, in hindsight, we see this as divine providence in our preparation to live and work in China.

Why did you choose to join Amity as opposed to other teaching organizations?

We are very comfortable with the ethos of Amity. We believe that God’s mission for the church is not just to evangelize but also to serve by providing for the needs of society.

**What is your personal goal for your stay with Amity?**

I hope to influence those I get to teach, that they may see the great potential in their vocation and be inspired to choose to teach, as I did many years ago.

**Who supports your work for Amity?**

We were not sent by a big mission agency. Our support comes from a group of close friends and our local congregation at Aldergate Methodist Church, Singapore. Few people knew about Amity when we first applied to join the program. But our church and friends are comfortable with the ethos of Amity’s work as we have explained it to them.

**What are your hopes and expectations for your stay in China?**

We hope to serve the people we get to know and help them in their professional training. We also hope that, in our life and work, we may be found fruitful witnesses of Christ.

The interviews were conducted by Rita Mok, Staff Associate at Amity’s Hong Kong office.
AIDS Awareness Education Video and VCD Completed

With a view to intensifying national public health education, the Chinese Health Education Association has launched an ambitious three-year plan to produce a 100-series VCD program on public health education: Q & A on Health Problems. AIDS, the first of these, will be released on International AIDS Day on December 1, 2001. The video, featuring Amity's HIV/AIDS awareness education and care projects in Yunnan Province, is intended to help launch a massive nation-wide education campaign on the disease. Another documentary on Amity's AIDS awareness education and care projects in Yunnan Province is currently under production.

Bilingual Teaching Symposium for Deaf Children Held in Nanjing

A Bilingual Teaching Symposium for Deaf Children was held in Nanjing on August 29 and 30, 2001. Deaf children's bilingual education aims at deaf children's practical usage of two languages, one of them being sign language – the deaf's first language and mother tongue, the other one being the language used by mainstream society as the deaf's second language.

The symposium was co-organized by Areopagus and the Foundation Home For The Deaf from Norway. Other attendees included Mr. Shen Yulin, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Modern Special Education, the Director of the Nanjing Association for the Deaf, representatives from schools for the deaf in Jiangsu and Jiangxi, and nine deaf teachers.

Mr. Rune Anda and Ms. Margaret Fartard from Norway, both of whom are deaf, introduced the historical development and the current situation of Norway's education for the deaf. Among the issues covered were the situation of Norway's bilingual teaching for the deaf, communication between the deaf and the hearing, and interpretation through sign language. The historical development, present situation and existing problems of China's education for the deaf were presented by Mr. Shen Yulin. The audience was then briefed by Ms. Wu An'an on Amity's rehabilitation and education projects for deaf children, including Amity's experiences with deaf bilingual education. Mr. He Shenghua, Principal of Jiujiang Fraternity Deaf School, also gave an introduction on the bilingual education program carried out at his school.

With its harmonious cooperation between deaf and hearing participants, the seminar was in itself a strong symbol for the promotion of education for the deaf. Representatives also reached some tentative agreements regarding future cooperation.
Church-Run Projects in Shaanxi Province: New Roads to Development

Rev. Ewing W. Carroll, Jr.

Ask Mr. Li Jianshe and his family "What is The Amity Foundation?" and he will quickly reply, "Goats, cows and a better life..." The Li's live in Yanjiashu Village and are one of dozens of farm families in Shaanxi Province's Yongshou County who are benefiting from Amity-supported church-run projects. For the Li's, this meant an initial 1,000 RMB [=US$125] loan towards the purchase of cows and goats.

Amity's 2000 Annual Report notes that, over the past year, Amity-supported church-run projects have increased 400%. Amity's fundamental purpose is to help the people of China live more meaningful and productive lives. However, one major objective is to provide a channel for Chinese Christian participation in social development. This is in keeping with Amity's Directors' 1993 call for "the church to enter society" and "society to understand the church."

Five years ago, Ms. Li Enlin, Head of Amity's Medical and Health Division and the Church-run Project Program, met with leaders of the Shaanxi Christian Council to discuss possible avenues for Amity-Church cooperation. A decision was made to first concentrate on three villages in Yongshou County.

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**Light years behind the provincial capital**

Yongshou is only a three-hour bus ride from downtown Xi'an City, the provincial capital. However, it is light years behind the capital in economic development. Known by many as "The apple capital of China," Yongshou is a salt-and-pepper contrast of countless cave homes nestled into barren-faced hillsides and thousands of acres of every imaginable variety of apples. Harsh, dusty living conditions are further complicated by the lack of a sufficient water supply for human and animal consumption and for growing crops.

I asked Rev. Wang Huaien, General Secretary and Vice President of the Shaanxi Christian Council: "Why then Yongshou County and cows and goats?" He replied, "It's an area of both poverty and potential. Furthermore, the raising of cows and goats is highly suitable for this area and provides a fast financial return for these farming families. It's also an area where local church leaders and villagers have an extremely good working relationship." Wang added, "This project is a clear cut sign of the church's witness to the community."

Rev. Wang also noted that participation in such development projects is also a challenge for the church. He said, "We are being called to learn how to preach and share Christian faith outside church buildings." In his late seventies, Rev. Wang has handed over the church-Amity liaison work to Rev. Wang Jun, a Shaanxi Christian Council colleague. A graduate of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, the younger Wang works closely with church, county and village leaders in project implementation.

There is yet a third Wang [none are related] whose participation in the Yongshou project is highly crucial. Wang was himself a farmer until ten years ago when he converted to Christianity. In addition to providing daily oversight of 16 Yongshou County churches with a combined membership of 4,000 believers, Wang is also the Shaanxi Christian Council development program "point person" for the project.

Elder Wang praises the provincial government's decision to concentrate on developing a good road infrastructure. While costly in financial terms, Wang noted, "It is now  much easier for me to travel throughout the county." He added, "New
roads are bringing untold benefits to rural people. New roads mean more convenient transport of apples and other crops and livestock and, best of all, the sharing of new ideas between village and city people."

Elder Wang coordinates the heavy task of selecting village families to receive a 1,000 RMB (=US$125) loan for the purchase of livestock. Recipients are required to repay their loan within three years, not to Amity, rather to the participating villages. These funds are then used to enable other villagers to purchase livestock. To date, most have repaid their loans within two years, thereby accelerating the number of participants.

Purchase has focused mainly on buying goats and cows. Male goats, from Australia and Germany, are especially preferred for breeding purposes. Annual stud fees from such purebreds can more than offset their initial purchase price. Villagers seem to prefer buying goats, since a female goat can bear one or more offspring twice yearly while a cow is limited to bearing one calf per year.

Li Jianshe and his family decided to use their loan to purchase higher quality cattle. With the advice and assistance of local department of agriculture officials, Li has converted his original loan into ownership of several cows and bulls. Li rents out the better bulls for breeding and raises other cattle to sell for eating purposes.

I asked Li, "What practical difference has the Amity loan meant for you and your family?" Although a somewhat shy and reserved person, Li quickly responded, "Well, just look around you. We have a new house. Our older son is engaged and now studying to be a village doctor. Our daughter can continue her secondary school education and we can afford to send our younger son to primary school." Li continued excitedly, "Look over there. You see that three-wheeled motorized cart? That belongs to us!"

As we traveled to Yongshou County, Rev. Wang told me, "Look we're bringing a large box of your Amity-printed Bibles with us." He added, "We sell most of the Bibles to local persons. Some we give away to poorer villagers. Others we present to local government officials. We want them to know more about Christianity!"

Elder Wang added some personal reflections: "This project not only helps local villagers but also has a positive effect on the thinking and actions of local government officials. It also helps with the growth and development of our sixteen churches in Yongshou County."

Elder Wang concluded our day's visit to Yongshou County by saying, "Tell your Amity colleagues in Nanjing and your friends abroad, the government has greatly helped by building roads. But most of all, thanks to God and to Amity, these villagers are now on the road to better and more meaningful lives."
Every Child Has A Right To A Family

Foster Care Seminar in Suzhou

Wu An’an

September 10-13, 2001, a seminar on foster care was held in Suzhou together with American Bethany, a Christian social service organization from Michigan, USA. The seminar, with the theme of “Every Child Has The Right To A Family”, was organized in cooperation with the Suzhou orphanage. 33 participants from 15 orphanages of 9 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions attended the seminar.

Foster Care is a new concept in China. Amity started its first foster care projects in Danyang County, Jiangsu Province, in 1996. Since then, Amity’s foster care projects have extended to 31 orphanages throughout the country. With the cooperation and co-sponsorship of these orphanages, some 449 children with mild disabilities have been placed in foster care families.

The seminar provided an opportunity for orphanage staff working in the field to share their experiences, thus enabling them to gain mutual support and encouragement. All representatives voiced the same experience of how the children living in foster care families had witnessed a dramatic and positive change after being transferred into families, as if foster care had given the children new lives. For the orphanage staff concerned, this experience once more emphasized the role of family for healthy child development.

Orphanage representatives also shared with each other some of the practical methods for preparing and implementing foster care projects. Most of them had used public media, such as local newspapers and TV stations, to advocate foster care projects and raise support among the local community.

This was the second time for Amity and Bethany to join hands in a foster care training program, following a previous seminar in Nanjing in October 2000. As the seminar in Suzhou showed, participants have creatively put their previously acquired knowledge into practice, adjusting it to the Chinese context, thus letting foster care projects take root and grow in Chinese society.

Apart from offering a forum for sharing experiences, the seminar also provided further training on child-focused foster care. The training session was conducted by Ms. Pamela Awtrey, Director of the Social Work Program in Cornerstone University, Michigan. Among the topics covered in the training were normal child development versus the development of children separated from birth-families, and preparations for ensuring a smooth transition of the child to the family.

The seminar concluded with a field visit to a foster care project in Qixia Township in the suburbs of Nanjing, where 34 children from the Nanjing Orphanage are now living in foster care families, a visit which left Pamela Awtrey deeply impressed: “I visited a community that should be written up as a model program – they have put many children with disabilities into families. I visited many of the homes and saw the children with their new moms and dads. [...] The children were obviously cherished and the families were very excited to show off their new skills including poems and songs that they had taught the kids.”
More Than A Band-Aid Troupe

Rev. Ewing W. "Bud" Carroll, Jr., served as Amity's Hong Kong Office Coordinator from January 1998 to October 2001. On his last day with Amity Hong Kong, he shared with ANL some of his insights into Amity's work. Below are some of the highlights from this interview.

**ANL: How has working within Amity changed your perception of Amity's work?**

**BC:** Working on the inside has helped me to reaffirm the strength that Amity has as a Chinese NGO. As a Chinese organization, Amity is truly trying to reach out to the poorest of China's poor. Many gifted, talented people started out with Amity with practically no experience but are now tremendously experienced. For me that's an example that development can work from within. The not-so-good side? Amity says we have a small staff dealing with big projects, whereas governments have a large staff and small projects. I think Amity is spread too thinly. Amity staff are incredibly dedicated people but almost stretched to the end of their capabilities. To be fair to them, I hope Amity can take even more seriously the development of existing staff and recruitment of new staff to meet the needs that are inevitably going to occur.

**ANL: Do you see a framework in China for doing work that not only achieves practical development but also encourages democratic participation?**

**BC:** Let me share one example - Amity's Integrated Community Development programs. Fraught with both possibilities and problems, part of the goal of these programs is to enable greater involvement by all participants. I'm a strong believer in democracy, but Western friends in particular need to be cautious and sensitive. Even if you wanted to, you don't change 5,000 years of working style in a century, much less overnight. In the way some of this integrated rural development training is being lived out, seeds are being planted for fruit that will not be harvested in my lifetime. And I hope to live a long time!

Fuller participation IS happening. But it will take years to minimize, eradicate or lower the intensity of bureaucracy - of "me first." The process involves helping local people and grassroots government agencies, to empower them and help them really work with one another. I don't think that Wei renmin juwu ("Serve the people") is an outdated concept. I think it just has to express itself in new clothing and new styles.

I believe Amity must not only continue to work with grassroots partners but also within its own structure, be more intentional in developing a style and way of living out participatory decision making.

**ANL: How will China's entry into the WTO affect Amity's work?**

**BC:** I think it's very clear that WTO is going to bring a tremendous amount of new problems. I fear that sometimes the most patriotic and well meaning Chinese are a little bit naïve. They think they can overcome all of these problems overnight. It's not to lessen the West or to strengthen
China, it’s just to say it has been difficult for other countries and I think it’s going to be very difficult for China. Unfortunately, it will be the underside of China again that hurts the most. And that’s where Amity comes in, because that has been our opportunity and challenge: to help those who hurt the most.

**ANL: Has Amity done anything specific to assess the impact of China’s entry to the WTO?**

**BC:** One example: In 1998 Amity co-sponsored, along with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, a very helpful and provocative consultation on globalization and how various segments of China face this new era. I’d like to see Amity be even more intentional and help further explore this through discussion and research. In my view, Amity shouldn’t just do projects, we need to strengthen our research. Part of this is to strengthen research and understanding about both the good and bad impacts globalization and WTO will have on China.

**ANL: What other things would you like to share - insights into development work, important lessons you would like to share?**

**BC:** I firmly believe Amity should continue to find new and increased avenues to help church bodies reach out to serve the needs of society. But this shouldn’t be some kind of band-aid troupe. It needs to be more systemic, more deeply thought out. One good example, for instance, is Amity’s relations with the Hunan Provincial Christian Council. It is an excellent example where you have church leadership - in this case by a younger woman pastor, Yao Zhengyi, head of the Provincial Christian Council - with the vision and ability to unite church circles, government circles and people's organizations to be involved in development. I've had people in recent weeks say to me in several places in other provinces: "We think Amity should pay more attention to us and to work with us to develop projects." Well, these people are not necessarily asking Amity for money. Some are, but more so they want our expertise and our commitment to share in helping to enable and empower them to do things.

**ANL:** You have served as head of Amity’s Hong Kong office. How would you define the role this office plays in Amity’s overall work?

**BC:** I think the Hong Kong office will continue to play an important role in the promotion and publicity of Amity’s work, particularly in non-Chinese languages. I think this office will continue to play a significant role in the conveying of ideas back and forth. This office can be a conduit, as it were, in many directions, to help all kinds of participants to have fresher, better and more ideas about development, about what's possible and what's not.

**ANL:** Can you give any concrete examples about ideas coming in through Hong Kong?

**BC:** For example - there is practically nothing happening in China today with the concept of hospice. Conceptually, this is not a high priority or practice in China and it's fairly new in Hong Kong. But a number of organizations here blend together faith commitment, professional expertise and human compassion. Our Hong Kong office has assisted in bringing these people together with Amity staff to develop a hospice program in Nanjing.

**ANL:** I think we've already talked about some of Amity’s strengths and weaknesses. Do you have anything you would like to point out or emphasize?

**BC:** I think more and more we need to be both personal and professional. To find the kinds of people - potential and existing ones - who can fill crucial positions to move us into the new era. It won't be easy. Alfred North Whitehead, a famous western philosopher and mathematician, once said: "It is better to fail in moving ahead than to succeed in standing still." I think that's a good goal for Amity - ever marching forward, always willing and daring to try new things, knowing that we will fail at some, but to learn from the experience. Also, that in the long run, the people of China will benefit from this, and Amity will be able, with a little bit of pride but more with thanksgiving, to say: "Well done, we were a part of this." That will be one of the joys that staff can have. It certainly has been one of mine.◆
Human Development At The Beginning Of The 21st Century - Where does China stand?

China is ranked 87 out of 162 countries in the “Human Development Index” published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its 2001 Human Development Report. Thus, China is ahead of neighbours Vietnam (101) and Mongolia (116) but comes after Russia (55) and the Philippines (70).

Other indicators also reflect China’s middle position among other nations. With a life expectancy at birth of 70.2 years, China comes behind top-of-the-list Norway (78.4 years), but is ahead of India (62.9 years) and Sierra Leone (38.3 years). Similarly, China’s GDP per capita (PPP USD) is 3,617 USD, leaving China below Brazil (7,037 USD) but above India and Indonesia (2,248 and 2,857 USD respectively). With an adult literacy rate of 83.5%, China is way ahead of India (56.5%) and about on equal terms with Brazil (84.9%) and Indonesia (86.3%).

Measuring development has never been easy. In order to arrive at an overall picture, development agencies often rely on a wide array of data ranging from life expectancy at birth to the number of cell phone users per thousand people. An overall development index is then derived from a combination of factors, resulting in rankings such as the one above. In countries with great income and wealth disparities, average figures may be deceptive, as they can hide actual incomes and the living conditions under which the majority of people live. The Gini coefficient is one way of measuring income distribution. For China, the Gini coefficient in 2001 was 40.3, indicating a relatively unequal distribution of incomes. While more and more families in coastal cities enjoy a lifestyle of affluence, farmers in China’s western regions barely make ends meet.

How can development be measured? Development indicators can not only be misleading but also confusing. In one area, China is ahead of numerous other countries: With an annual cigarette consumption of 1,818 cigarettes per adult, China topples such diverse countries as France, South Africa and Bangladesh.

Sources: China Development Brief Volume IV Number 1 Summer 2001 and www.undp.org

For a view of all indicators and countries, please consult: www.undp.org/hdr2001/indicator/

More News

Special School Principals’ Seminar Held in Nanjing

In recent years, Chinese special education has made considerable progress. However, problems remain as the history of China’s special education is short and China has a lot of catching up to do in comparison with some western countries. Among these problems, a central element is the management of schools for special education. Amity tries to tackle this problem by offering further training to school principals through seminars. From August 18–23, Amity’s Blindness Prevention and Special Education Division held one such seminar in Nanjing for principals from schools for special education. The conference drew more than thirty participants from schools for the blind and the deaf-mute across the country.

Seminar resource persons included Dr. Xiang Huanyong, Director of the Center for Special Needs & Studies in Inclusive Education (CSNSIE) of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, Dr. Xian Quanfeng, Senior Lecturer of CSNSIE, Cao Zhengli and Yuan Jinxing, senior principals from two blind schools in Qingdao and Shanghai respectively, and Shen Yulin, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Modern Special Education. CSNSIE boasts over ten years of experience in training special educational personnel and teachers. The experts, together with the participating principals, discussed a variety of issues regarding the management of schools for special education, and exchanged new concepts and ideas. They also shared some of the experiences and advanced teaching methods of inclusive education practiced in Hong Kong.
Feedback from seminar participants suggested that the principals concerned were particularly appreciative about the seminar's very practical content, providing them with knowledge easily applicable to their day-to-day work.

**Presbyterian Church USA delegation visits Tibet**

From August 18–24, Dr. Stephen Yenren Ting, Vice President of the Amity Foundation, accompanied a three-member delegation from Presbyterian Church USA to visit several places in Tibet. During their six-day stay there, they visited Tibetan families and Amity projects, acquainted themselves with Tibetan cultural life, and held informal discussions with local government officials. At the farewell banquet, delegation members expressed their happiness at having had the opportunity to witness the great achievements Tibetan people had made, and showed themselves confident about a bright future for Tibet.

**Amity's Mobile Medical Services in Shanxi and Shaanxi**

From August 24 – Sept. 14, the Amity Mobile Medical Team traveled once again into Yizhou City, Wutai County of Shanxi Province and Yan'an of Shaanxi Province to render medical services to the people there. A total number of 2,324 patients were examined, over 30 medical workers apprenticed, seven training lectures delivered, and 35 difficult or complicated cases resolved. These medical experts also helped three local medical stations carry out new medical techniques, including artificial insemination and diagnosis and treatment of peripheral blood vessel diseases.

**Welcome**

On 1st November 2001, the Amity Foundation welcomed Dr. Theresa Chong Cariño as the new coordinator of the Amity Foundation's Hong Kong office.

Dr. Cariño brings a wealth of academic and practical experience on development issues in China to her new position. She formerly served as founding executive director of the Philippine-China Development Resource Center (PDRC), and she is a specialist on overseas Chinese relationships with the People's Republic of China. Dr. Cariño is from Singapore but worked in the Philippines for 18 years before moving to Hong Kong in 1996.

Dr. Cariño is no stranger to the Amity Foundation. In 1991, she initiated the South-South development exchange program between the Amity Foundation and the PDRC. From 1997–2000, Dr. Cariño worked in Amity’s Hong Kong office as editor of Amity Newsletter (ANL). During the past year, she has been based in Manila and involved with the APEC Business Advisory Council as a consultant. Dr. Cariño now takes over from Rev. Ewing W. Carroll, Jr. who retired from the post of Hong Kong Office Coordinator in October this year.