

2020/2021 Annual Report

EDUCATION FOR ALL FOUNDATION
www.efaglobal.org



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Message From the Executive Director

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I found something that 14 years in the education system never taught me: perspective.

The pandemic hindered all of our lives and ruined many others. As a student, the pandemic single-handedly disrupted my social life and day-to-day motivation. I went from taking the most rigorous courses to almost failing out of school. For a while, I fell out of touch with decade-long passions and I was unable to function in daily life.

Yet, I consider myself very privileged since I do not normally experience many personal issues holding me back from pursuing my passions. But in the past year, I experienced first-hand what it feels like to be so mentally and emotionally burdened that I could not work at my best.

Eventually, it was my executive team who helped me to pick myself up. When I was unable to attend events, plan initiatives, and lead the organization, they picked up the pieces I had dropped and pushed forward. Their eagerness to take on the challenges presented to them is truly inspiring. My team made me realize I will always be willing to go above and beyond for my teammates because I know that they would do the exact same thing for me.

Unfortunately, I am merely part of the lucky few able to access such support. I live in one of the wealthiest towns in Canada, my teachers supported my studies when I couldn't support myself, and I had access to mental health resources, therapists, along with incredibly supportive friends. In contrast, the rural communities in which EFA works tell very different stories. Those children faced even greater challenges of malnourishment, unfulfilled emotional needs, lack of physical care, and significant scarcity of intellectual stimulation, all by themselves.

Pedestrians who fall down on the sidewalk rarely ask passersby to help them stand back up. Most people only accept help once someone comes along and offers their hand.

Message From the Executive Director

EFA taught me that the ones who truly make a difference in this world are those who go out of their way to help others even when doing so inconveniences them.

It takes effort to extend our energy to help others, but not everyone is privileged enough to do so. Many people are altruistic and kind at heart, but are so burdened by systemic barriers that they lack any opportunity to show it. Thus, we ask a lot from our volunteers to spend more than 4 hours a week caring for the wellbeing of others while juggling their personal challenges.

This past year, our volunteers have proven that EFA will show up for whoever needs our services, even through a pandemic. As we rapidly expand, we will never stop searching for ways to help others because volunteering at EFA means being that person who stops their car just to help someone cross the road. Whether it is for underprivileged communities, our teammates, or anyone else in our lives, we will always lend a hand without being asked.

Through this post-pandemic world, we will continue to dedicate our efforts towards those who live in far worse circumstances. While many communities have begun vaccine deployments to return to "normal life" in North America, billions of people in rural areas across the world will take several years to recover from the pandemic. In the upcoming years, we will further develop our programs both in quality and reach to help us give back to others.

To anyone who spends their time and energy helping others: continue lending your hand to someone -- anyone -- while expecting nothing in return. You might not receive any praise or glory, or even any thanks, but your efforts can mean the world to someone else. Don't be afraid to fail because you are surrounded by people who won't hesitate to go above and beyond for you.

To creating a better future for everyone,

Alex Hu

Executive Director

Our Mission

Education For All Foundation strives to utilize education to break the poverty cycle.

Poverty deprives humans from achieving basic needs that are required to experience self-actualism and enjoy life to the fullest. Since EFA's founding, we have chosen education as the most effective solution to poverty.

The Consequences of Poverty

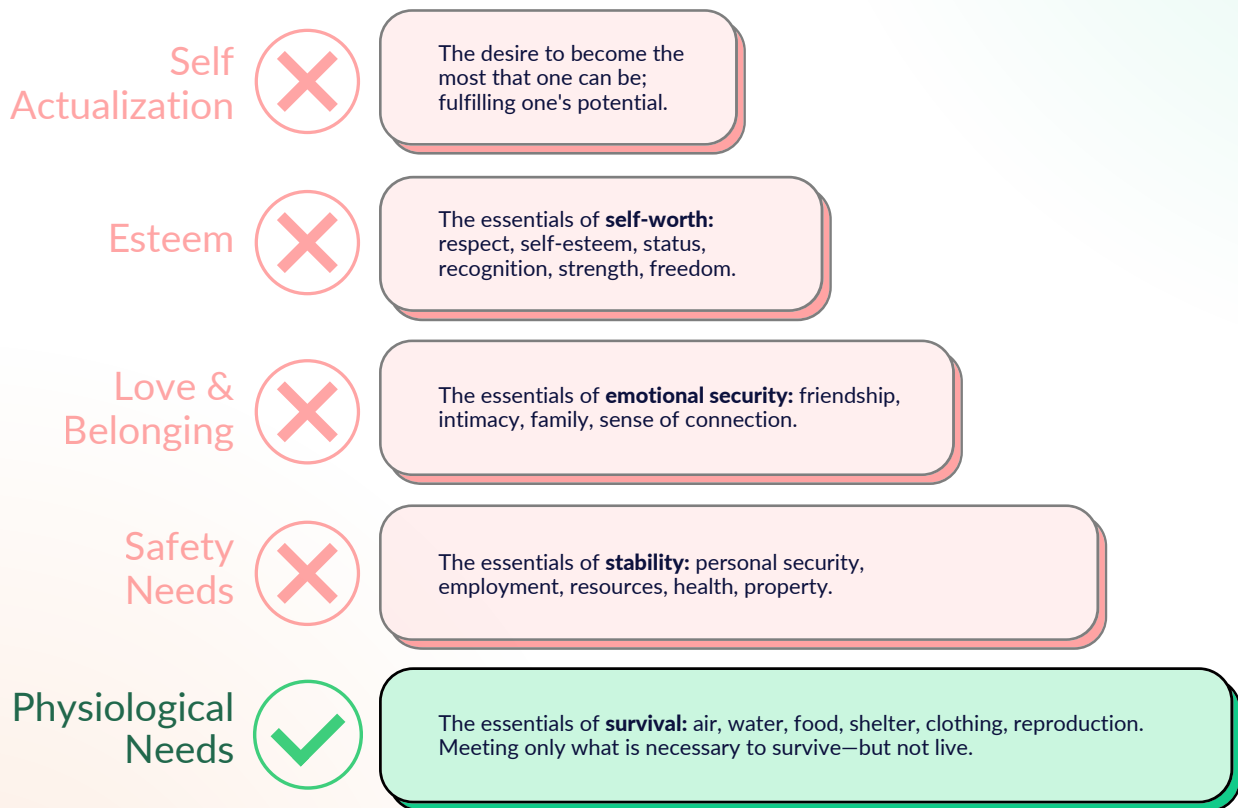


Figure 1: A reworked diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs illustrates the consequences of poverty in how most impoverished communities barely scrape by to obtain their most basic physiological needs let alone other following needs.

Breaking the Poverty Cycle

While EFA has simply taught English fluency as a weapon against poverty in the past, this strenuous year prompted us to develop a more sophisticated strategy to break the poverty cycle.

We have reorganized our operations to consist of 4 educational avenues of breaking the poverty cycle: English Education, EDGE Mentorship, Microfinance, and Spirit of Chess. These programs provide hireable skills, emotional intelligence, financial freedom, and strong work ethics, respectively.

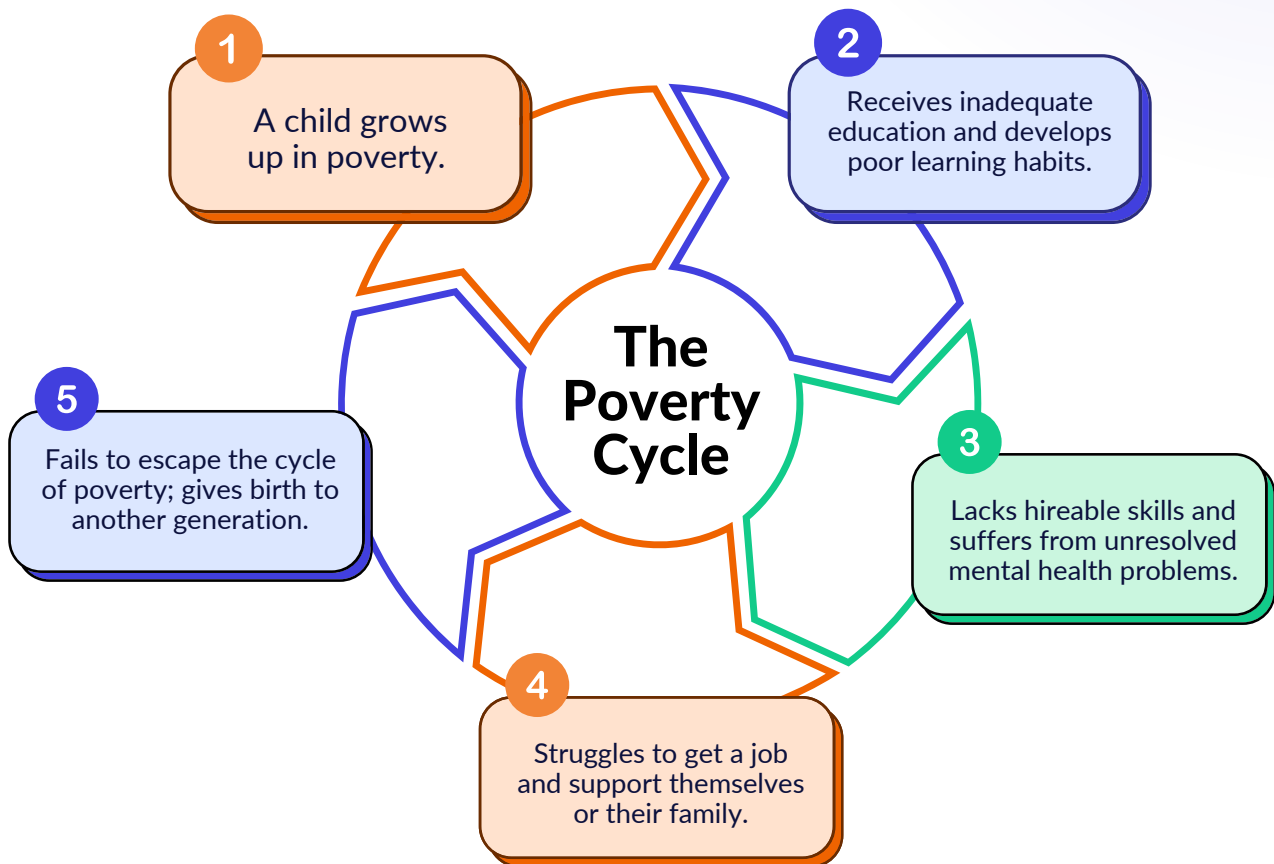


Figure 2: A diagram illustrating the cycle of poverty entrapping generations of impoverished rural inhabitants who struggle to leave the cycle and therefore it continues on to the next generation.

Breaking the Poverty Cycle

We will develop these 4 operations as part of the official EFA educational experience which we will bring to all of our partner schools with the goal to target each step of the poverty cycle.

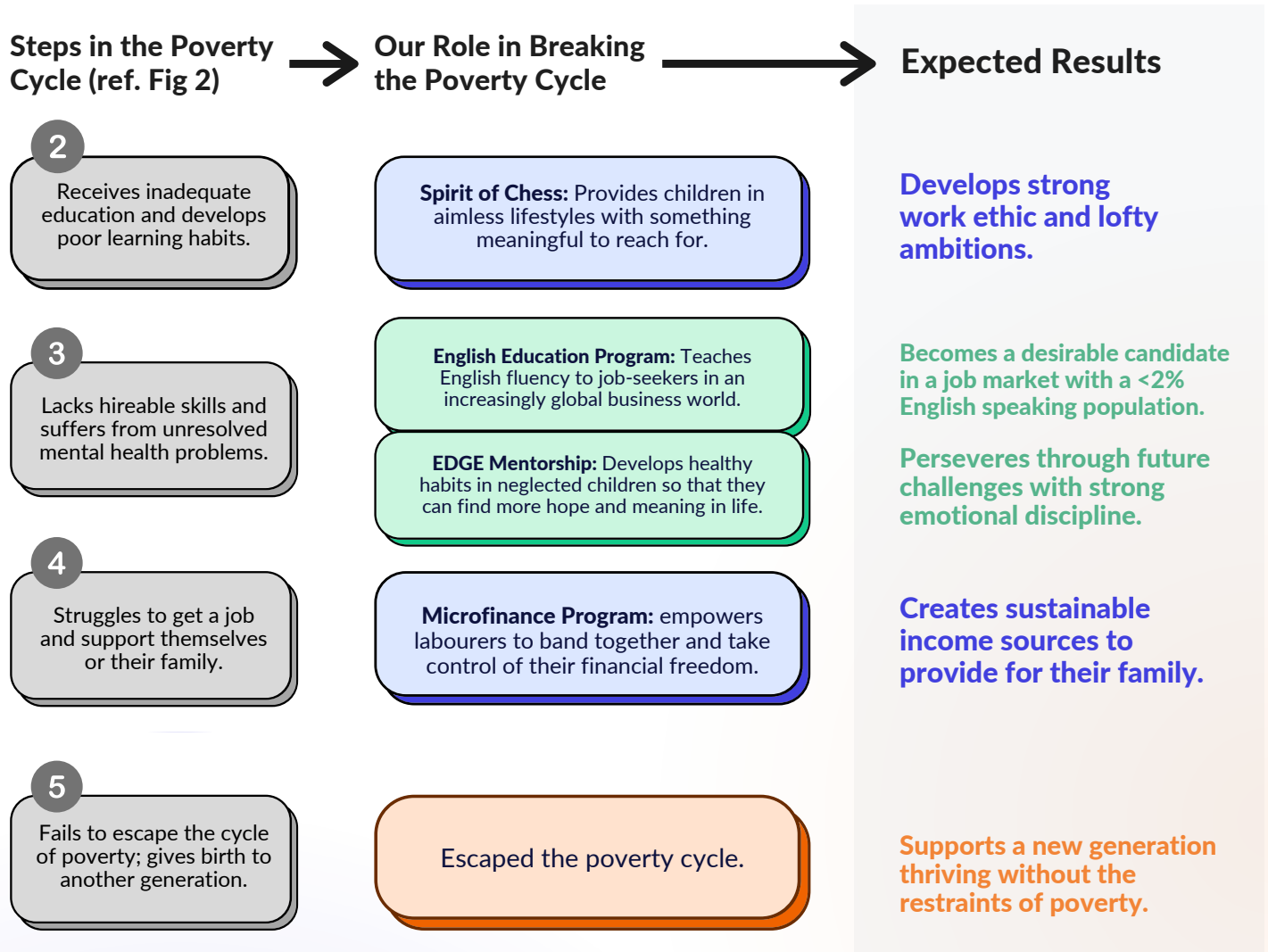


Figure 3: A diagram illustrating the breaking of the cycle of poverty for an impoverished individuals through EFA's different operations including our English Education Program, our EDGE Mentorship Program, our Spirit of Chess Program and our Microfinance Program.

Review of 2020-2021

Throughout this year, the pandemic has hindered all of our lives, yet our volunteers persevered and fuelled us to create the most impact to date. Here is an overview of our work in the last year.

English Education

The English Education department has expanded our program to more than 9 new schools across rural China with 40 teachers proudly providing 29 weekly English lessons to 500+ students during the 2020-2021 school year.

To evaluate the success of the program, our students completed our current informal assessments testing their grasp on our cumulative subjects taught. However, we have identified several areas for improvement and so, we are currently developing more standardized yet effective ways of assessing their English abilities. This system will be released at the end of the 2021-2022 school year's first semester. Furthermore, all teachers worked through a set of rigorous training workshops throughout the semesters to continuously improve their abilities. We can proudly say that all of our teachers are qualified experts who can provide the best English education possible to our students through our program.



Figure 4: Our teachers typically teach in pairs and lead a lesson each week for an entire class.

Moreover, our permanent teaching trainers continuously provide volunteer teachers with workshops and webinars on improving teaching quality. All new recruits are required to complete a month-long training process. During the month, our trainers will impart basic classroom procedures and methods to engage a class. Our team is another testimony of the progress that the education department has made.

English Education *cont.*

This year to meet our goal of constant improvement and quality, we implemented an innovation pod. The new innovation pod became the center of research to improve our English education quality. In the pod, selected volunteers created and tested innovative teaching approaches during their classes. This includes teaching English through songs and art pieces. The local teachers expressed their appreciation for each different method.

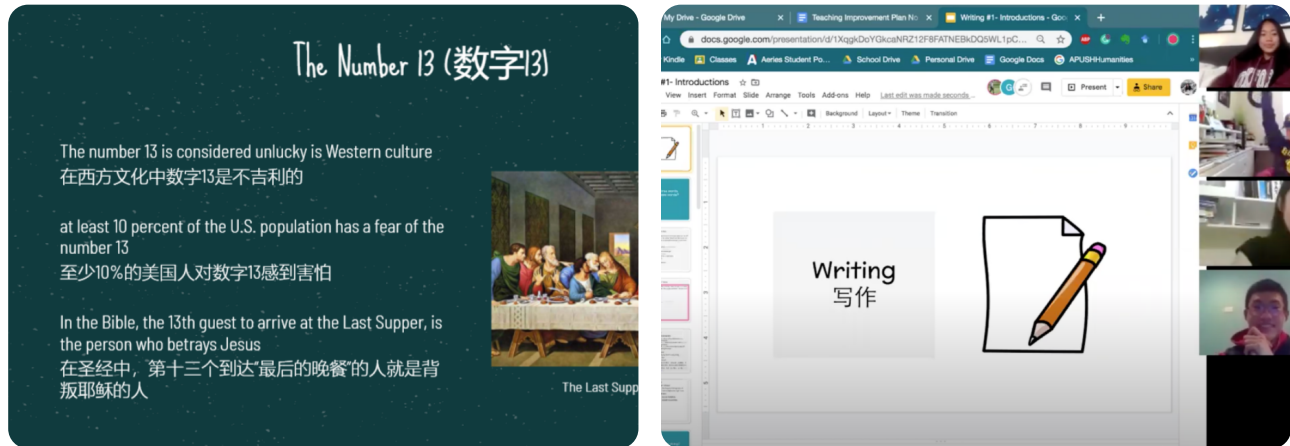


Figure 5 & 6: Our teachers follow the curriculum designed by our curriculum team who prioritize engaging visuals and activities to cater to all learning styles.

Besides a dramatic improvement in the quality of our teaching department, our curriculum team has revamped all textbook lessons to incorporate Western cultural elements, including virtual sightseeing, songs, and other elements to give our students a glimpse into the daily lives of different cultures. Besides culture, our curriculum team also designed supplemental materials, such as additional videos, hands-on activities, and other materials for teachers to spark engagement and creativity. All in all, the curriculum team has taken our program quality to the next level through innovative designs and new activities.

EDGE Mentorship

In 2020, the EDGE (Emotional Development Guarantees Excellence) department has successfully established our first program in Yang Lin Primary School in China's Jiangxi province. Our EDGE program aims to support underprivileged kids by widening their emotional horizons and teaching them soft skills through forging a close, positive bond between mentors and children.



Figure 7: Our 2020-2021 group of student graduates from our EDGE Program who each earned a scholarship of 850 yuan. These students will also continue the program for the following school year.

The idea of the EDGE Mentorship Program was sparked from realizing the toxic cycle entrapping youth in Jiangxi, China holding children back from achieving their future-self potential. This cycle is a result of decades of economic and psychological negligence from the rest of society.

Children born in rural areas are often raised in impoverished households with little life guidance due to a lack of parental figures from migrant working. These children without strong support systems lead to a deficiency in self-control, self-discipline, self-ambition and self-actualized purpose in life. Even though local teachers try to help children learn life lessons and transferable skills at school, the large student to teacher ratio and underfunding of rural schools negatively impacts the quality of the education delivered.

As children grow up and become adults, the vicious poverty cycle repeats and entraps yet another generation with the same emotion and psychological struggles. Thus, EDGE department has been established to help us find a way to break the cycle.

Our First EDGE Program Launch

After a period of time for outreaching, background researching and curriculum planning, our EDGE Program eventually launched in Yang Lin Primary School in September 2020. This is the first and the most important milestone on our journey with 7 student mentees and 7 mentors in the program in total where each pair meets once per week.

The positive feedback we have received from both teachers and students have been a constant source of illumination. The students' teacher, Miss Lin shared that she witnessed how students become more extroverted and courageous in the face of challenges in class. Students have also mentioned how much they enjoyed each mentorship section throughout the school year. In July 2020, 7 mentees each received 850 yuan as scholarship for a test run. It takes effort for each mentor to overcome challenges during interacting with mentees.



Figure 8: Our EDGE Mentors (as shown through the attached image) come from all across the world, hailing from the U.S., Canada and even Australia. Each day, our EDGE Mentors put their compassionate hearts and listening ears to use in the support of vulnerable youth in need of a mentor.

Note from Angel Law, EDGE Mentorship Executive: I would like to say a big thank you to all of you because you guys [EDGE Mentors] have defined and will continue to define what being an EDGE Mentor is.

Moving Forward With EDGE

In order to solidify the EDGE Mentorship Program, several revisions regarding structure and internal management will be made. In 2021-2022, the program will be designed at a more theme-based approach where there is a specific topic for mentors and mentees to discuss each time. More details could be found in the section of EDGE's Plan for Main Operations later in the report. In terms of internal management, Jenny, our previous executive for EDGE has transferred to the financial department while EDGE Program leads: Angel, Sunny and Catherine will continue to lead and seek new opportunities for EDGE in the future.

Fundraising Report

The unforeseen circumstances of 2020 led to major changes in the activities of our financial team. Considering the personal struggles and financial difficulties felt by everyone, we were unable to operate a full fundraising campaign and instead, focused on increasing our donations to the schools and our partner communities.



Despite all setbacks, our financial team was able to successfully run outreach and fundraising operations. This year, we managed two fundraisers on GlobalGiving, and in total we have raised around \$20k USD. We were also fortunate to have been discovered by Manqing Zhou from Iress, an Australian software company, who awarded us with a grant of 5000 AUD. In a collaborative effort with STEMEY, the financial team also organized STEM World II, a free virtual convention consisting of professional speaker workshops, high-school level competitions, and networking opportunities. This allowed us to receive a sponsorship from Admissions Ally, which we used to fund the convention competitions.

Overall Growth

In summary, the last school year was a breakout year for EFA. We reaffirmed the effectiveness of 2 main operations and cemented them as vital programs for impoverished children's educations. While we did experience growth (from serving 150 students last year to 500 students a week this year), our efforts went towards making sure our programs actually carry the momentum to change lives.

Future Plans for Operations

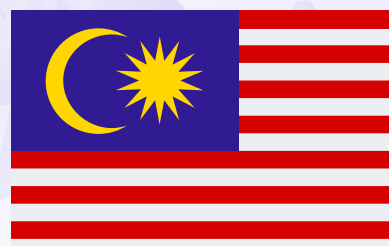
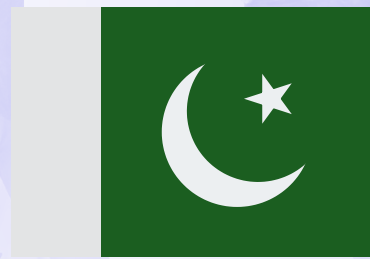
EFA's overall expansion strategy lies in establishing connections and building relationships with rural schools. We first establish one operation - most often English Education - at one of our schools in order to build trust and understanding on both sides of the relationship. We then bring our other operations to the school, eventually serving multiple programs to their fullest.

We have lofty ambitions to expand our operations into more areas and diversify our impact. Here are the new initiatives we are launching and our expansion plans.

Future Plans for English Education

In 2021, the English Education department aims to expand to multiple countries, a further step to achieving education for all. We aim to establish operations in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Malaysia, each with different teams leading local operations. We aim to finish the ideation process and begin operations later this year.

Within China, we aim to teach 1500+ students in the 2021 - 2022 school year. This expansion will be a test of our scalability and effectiveness, which we hope to surpass as the year progresses.



Future Plans for English Education Cont.

Within our teams, the leadership structure changed dramatically to adapt to our fast growing scale. We established the position of education department directors to assist the executives to better our education quality. Along with the execs, the directors will act as research & development and oversee the entire English education department to implement overall strategic changes.



Figure 9: A photo taken by a local teacher at Tangli Primary School during one of our teacher's weekly lessons delving into a new English topic.

Future Plans for EDGE Mentorship

Starting from 2021, EDGE will establish a rolling recruitment system to recruit new mentors. Each mentor will go through 8-week long training sessions to practice their active listening skills and empathetic ability through regular lessons with psychologists and assignments in 7 Cups.

In order to solidify EDGE, there are several revisions in program structure and internal management for the upcoming school year. The program will be adapted to a theme-based approach where there is a specific topic for mentors and mentees to discuss each time. Mentors will share their personal experience on relevant topics and mentees will be challenged to elaborate on the conversation, helping mentees drastically improve their communication skills.

By the next school year, EDGE will expand to primary and middle schools which are currently partnered with EFA. However, our focus will remain on quality-improvement and we will not scale before we are confident in the effectiveness of EDGE.



Future Plans for Microfinance

In order to fully support our students' education, we must also support their financial situation. At EFA, we believe that simply exposing low-income families to various support programs will not suffice because the poverty cycle runs on deep-rooted behavioral norms that perpetuate an impoverished community's status quo. The complexity of the formal bank loan process often leads to inaction or suboptimal decisions. Thus, any effective anti-poverty policy must aim to make it easier for underprivileged families to obtain the basic necessities for healthy, productive living.

Furthermore, families in poorer regions generally cannot take out loans directly from a bank. Their low-income status means that they have low credit and are thus considered "unbankable" by financial institutions. Microfinance programs exist to serve low-income families who cannot take out loans from banks, using human collateral instead of physical collateral to directly provide small loans that are easily repayable and have no consequences for defaults.

Our solution is to create our own microfinance program. As microfinance operates by essentially "bringing the bank" to the doorsteps of families in need, the program eliminates the long, difficult processes required to take out loans, making financial support much more accessible to underprivileged families hoping to run small businesses and improve their financial situations.

While major microfinance institutions require credit scores and complex algorithms to calculate loan eligibility, we believe that with a proper education and guidance in running a business, our partner communities and families can succeed in the long-term.

The EFA Financial Team is currently establishing a partnership with an established microfinance institution to develop a new program that is tailored to families in rural China. Through collaborations with MFIs and with our current partner schools, our mission is to better support the financial needs of the underprivileged communities EFA currently serves.

Future Plans for Spirit of Chess

In China, schools put immense academic pressure on students since their futures are determined by tests. As a result, most students do not have any hobbies or extracurricular interests, instead choosing to play games and watch online videos to escape from the pressure. However, for rural students, one bad year or failed test can trap them within the poverty cycle for the rest of their lives.

The Spirit of Chess program, launching in September 2021, aims to rectify this issue by using chess as the medium through which students learn to have personal interests. Our goal is not to turn every student into a chess master - rather, we hope to show them the joy of setting a personal goal and achieving it through study and practice.

The program will run at a few of EFA's existing partner schools as an after-school program with several sessions a week. Our chess teachers, a collection of expert youth chess players across the world, will consolidate an EFA chess curriculum alongside ChessKid lessons to deliver a comprehensive virtual chess education.

Spirit of Chess is inspired by the Chess in Slums program in Nigeria, who's founder, Tunde Onakoya, has posited:

“The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something.”

We look forward to reporting the development of this program and its impact throughout the upcoming year.



Other Initiatives

Outside of EFA's 4 main operations, we constantly work towards furthering our mission. Next year, we are launching several independent initiatives as well as growing our supporting initiatives.

Fundraising

In 2021, the Financial Team will be pursuing a different approach to marketing our fundraisers. Instead of pushing donations for general EFA operations, we will be focusing on specific fundraising for individual students. The purpose of student-centered fundraising is two-fold. By telling the stories of our students, not only will we spread awareness of the struggles of impoverished communities in rural China, but there will also be an increase in transparency on who the donations are supporting and how the funding will be used to improve their lives.

Summer Trip

Due to the pandemic, our plans to run a service trip in the summer to our partner schools has been repeatedly delayed. With vaccine deployments being implemented across the world, however, we are officially planning our first trip in the summer of 2022.

Service trips give students a chance to first-hand experience poverty and negligence. As a result, trip members start to empathize with underprivileged communities and start to advocate for them, which is exactly how EFA started.

In our service trip, we hope to inspire trip participants to take initiative in helping others. Our trip will be a hackathon-style entrepreneurship bootcamp, where students will receive funds and mentorship to create and implement a nonprofit solution that addresses the poverty cycle. We will release more details in early 2022.

ESL Program

EFA has never delivered programs outside of rural villages. However, poverty exists almost everywhere, including in Canada. Government-run ESL programs are strangely undeveloped in Canada, resulting in ESL teachers who have never learned English as a second language before and are unable to properly empathize with and teach international students.

ESL Program Cont.

For many newcomers to the country, they cannot afford tutors to improve their fluency, which negatively affects all other aspects of their lives in an English-speaking country.

Even when international students can speak the same language, their accent and lack of understanding of local culture often alienates them from opportunities available to everyone around them. Thus, our ESL program aims to teach international students not only the English language, but also Canadian culture.

We are still developing key areas of the program, but we hope to start teaching in late 2021. Our team is currently beta-testing and researching to create a better method of teaching local culture.

Our Impact

Throughout developing our programs, we will always prioritize quality and effectiveness. We believe that it is more impactful to completely change the lives of 500 students than simply play a part in the lives of 500,000. Therefore, every single program we develop will not scale until we have proven that the program can help change someone's life.

As poverty is so deeply ingrained into rural communities, we will never be completely satisfied with the impact of our programs until we are able to eradicate poverty from communities. We hope to prove the conceptual effectiveness of all of our main programs (English Education, EDGE Mentorship, Microfinance, Spirit of Chess) by the end of 2022.

Similarly, our volunteer body is our greatest asset in combating the poverty cycle. As we continue to set high expectations for volunteers, they continue to surprise us with how much effort they put into delivering our programs to the fullest. Every hour they spend at EFA proves that anyone who is willing to put in the work to help others can create genuine change, no matter if they lack experience or talent.

Management Team

New Team for 2021/2022



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Closing Note

We look forward to further realizing the Education For All Foundation vision in the upcoming years, and we promise to all of our supporters that we will not stop dedicating ourselves towards this unjust phenomenon impacting billions of people around the world. Every donation and resource is invaluable and appreciated to further our impact.