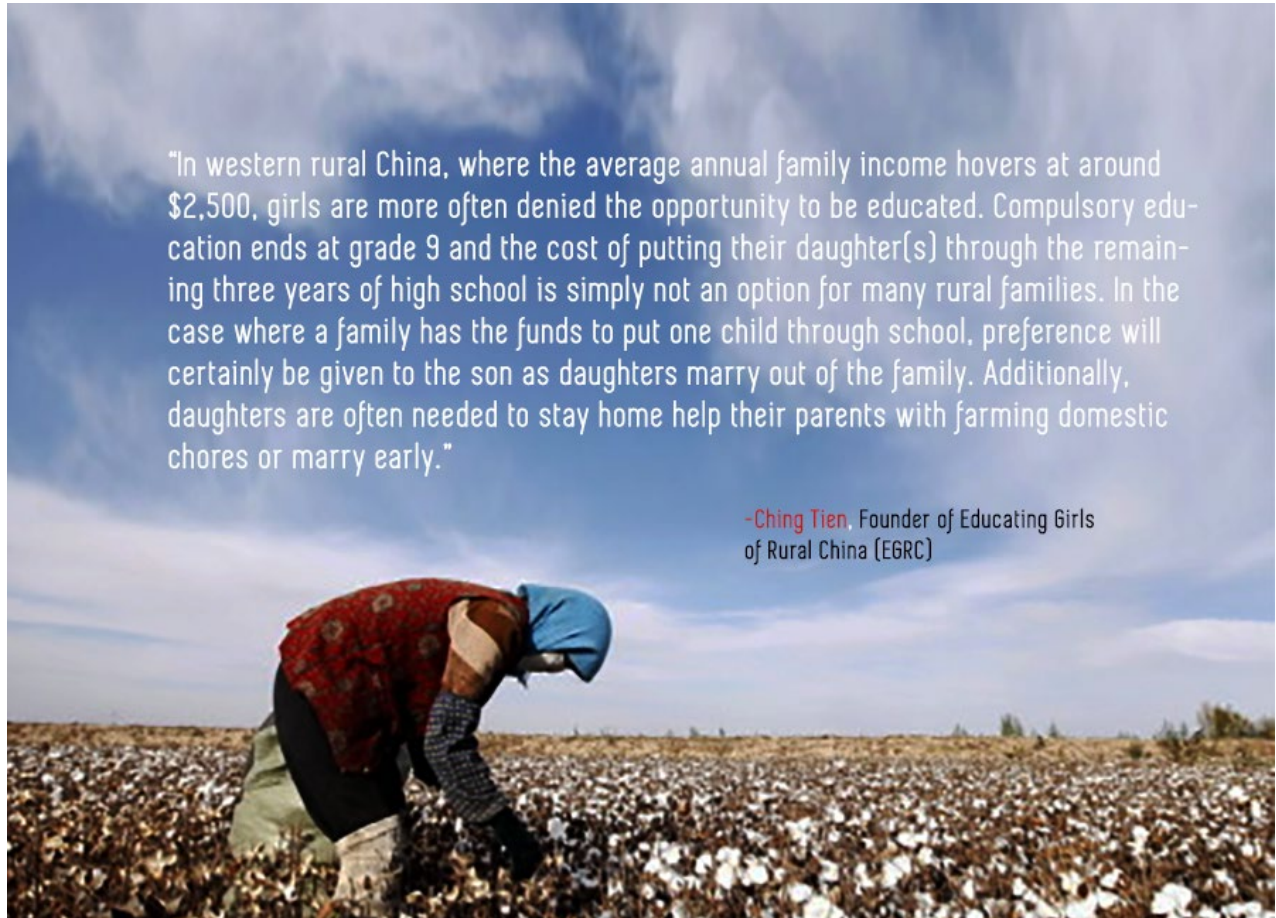




EDUCATING GIRLS OF RURAL CHINA

How Chinese-Canadian Ching Tien is changing the lives of hundreds of girls in rural China



"In western rural China, where the average annual family income hovers at around \$2,500, girls are more often denied the opportunity to be educated. Compulsory education ends at grade 9 and the cost of putting their daughter(s) through the remaining three years of high school is simply not an option for many rural families. In the case where a family has the funds to put one child through school, preference will certainly be given to the son as daughters marry out of the family. Additionally, daughters are often needed to stay home help their parents with farming domestic chores or marry early."

-Ching Tien, Founder of Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC)

As urbanites living in this vibrant, concrete jungle of dreams and opportunity, we are not easily exposed to what lies beyond the shadows of Shanghai's skyscrapers. There are still millions in western rural China living in poverty, where education is a luxury that many families cannot afford. What's more, in a system where boys are favoured, it is usually the young girls who are denied access to further education, and face difficult futures with little opportunity.

This is a reality that Ching Tien, founder of the Educating Girls of Rural China (EGRC) charity, herself is no stranger to. As a young girl she was a student with ambition at one of the most prestigious schools in Beijing, when her life took a quick turn.

"Growing up in China during the post-Cultural Revolution period, I experienced first-hand what it was like to be denied an education. During the years that I should have been going

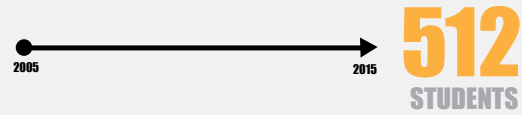
to school, I was forced to work in a factory in Gansu province. I never forgot the poverty that I witnessed during that time, and after moving to Canada and starting my own family, watching my children growing here with all the choices fulfilling their dreams, I decided to establish EGRC as a means of offering rural Chinese girls the education that I was denied” says Ching Tien. Founded in Vancouver in 2005, EGRC has been raising funds to give girls in the western provinces of China the opportunity to attend secondary and post-secondary schools both in Chinese cities and abroad.

Today, Ching Tien’s charity has transformed the lives of hundreds of young Chinese women. Since its foundation in 2005, the charity has helped over 400 young women with their University education and over 100 girls with their high school education. The girls of EGRC have an impressive 100% graduation rate, and have moved on to become engineers, scientists, doctors and teachers and positively influence their surroundings.



Ching Tien is involved in all of these young ladies’ development and success and checks in with them on a regular basis. When asked what

EGRC IN NUMBERS



she would like the public to know about these girls, their development, and about the impact EGRC has had on their lives, she responded with:

A LOOK AT SOME OF THE EGRC GRADUATES



Luhong Zhang | Headmaster of Pioneer Elementary School in Longxi, China



Yanxia Liu | Masters Candidate in Electrical & Computer Engineering



Lipei Chen | Major in Chinese Literature & First employed by EGRC



Bixia Wang | Masters in Chemistry and now enrolled in Med School



Wenjing Ma | Graduate in Journalism & now works for Xinhua News in Beijing

“I would like the public to know that these young women are intelligent, ambitious, and hard-working and have gone on to do amazing things with the education that they have received under EGRC’s sponsorship. Many of them have become teachers and have returned to their home villages in order to educate future generations. Some of them have set up summer camps for the children in their home villages

every summer. There is very much a sense of gratitude inherent in these young women and a need to ‘pay it forward’ in some way. Furthermore, two of EGRC university graduates are studying PhD and Master’s programs in Canada, some of them have established in their chosen professional fields in cities. It is a thrill to see that four EGRC high school students are now sponsored by EGRC Alumni Association.”

After a successful 10 years of existence, Educating Girls of Rural China is continuing their fundraising efforts to help more and more girls. “EGRC relies on individual, corporate donations and fundraising events to generate funds to fund the sponsorships. Raising awareness of the great work EGRC is doing and making new connections to potential donors is always our top agenda” says Ching. They are also focusing on building a strong alumni, as these are the women that are having a ripple effect in their environments, educating and empowering other young women, and continue to sustain the program.



Want to get involved? [CLICK HERE](#) to find out how you can donate & support Ching Tien and EGRC. ■



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