

A PAC student, Steven Wong, who participated in the Young Leaders Program

Steven Wong, a student from our Professional Accountancy Programme, participated in the Young Leaders Program (YLP), which was established by the Global Institute For Tomorrow (GIFT). The YLP emphasizes learning through the eyes of others. In the YLP's learning programmes, the handpicked Asian site projects are directly related to globalization issues and have a real bearing on business – and public sector policies. Just this past June, Steven went to Yunnan, China, to work on the Pingzhang Village Project. Below are some of Steven's reflections he noted after joining the programme.

"Before we went to Yunnan to draft our business plan for the Pingzhang villagers, we had weeklong lectures, which were aimed to equip us well before our journey. I was introduced to a couple of topics that are important for business leaders in an increasingly globalized economy, for example, the Corporate Social Responsibilities, Impact of Globalization, and the Asian Governance. Some of the learning points did revolutionize my mindset, like:

- The key point to economic development is no longer **strong growth** but **sustainability**.
- Business people should not only be responsible for their **stockholders** but the **multi-stakeholders**. They should not just be working for themselves, but for the **future generations**.
- The globalized world is going mad. The increasing environmental pollution, global warming, and already large wealth gap are the awful symptoms of the ill-developed trend of globalization. The world is calling for **leadership**, looking for the ones who have the vision and power to direct the way of development back onto the right track, to a fair world of sustainable economic development.
- A journey of a thousand miles begins with a small step. We, as **young leaders**, are taking this little, but important, step. I am looking forward to the field work in Pingzhang!

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The one-week YLP Module 2 has come to an end. I've gained many valuable experiences and good memories.

Managing a Meeting – Participants of YLP are leaders from different sectors in different nations. Working with them, I have observed how they managed a meeting of around 20 people, how they reached compromises, made decisions and solved conflicts effectively and efficiently. I could see there was much improvement from the first meeting to the last one. Sometimes, when it seemed that everyone had agreed to a proposal due to "groupthink", some members would immediately air their ideas and remind the group of better alternatives and direct them to think more thoroughly. From this, I have learnt that in a team, individuals have to have the courage to bring new ideas in, even when everyone has already agreed to a certain proposal.

Work Hard, Play Hard – From what I observed, there is a common characteristic among the participants in our team: they work hard and play hard. In the field visits, preparation work, and team meetings, I saw that they were devoted to making the team better. When they went to the street, they somehow went “crazy”, laughing and playing. Even in the team meeting, the atmosphere was not very tense at all. Everyone was respectful of the others, and we even had some fun during the meetings.

Linkage between Actions and Ideas – Though it turned out that our business plan was a development plan rather than a plan for the villagers to carry out business, it was important and meaningful. As Mr. Lim, the CEO of Shell China, said, the plan was like a charity, not innovative. Nevertheless, I finally realized that there may be other similar or even better proposals to help the villagers, but few of them have been implemented due to a lack of initiative and capital. If there are people willing to help and people in need of a helping hand, the middleman to link such “demand” and “supply” is important. GIFT acts as this middleman.

Having worked in a great team with a great mission, I have really learnt a lot!”

Steven Wong, PAC, Year 3, 2007 YLP Participant

