

EXTRAS

Sour, sweet, bitter and spicy : the GBEP story

Full Article

Why the Gansu Basic Education Project (GBEP) continues to influence

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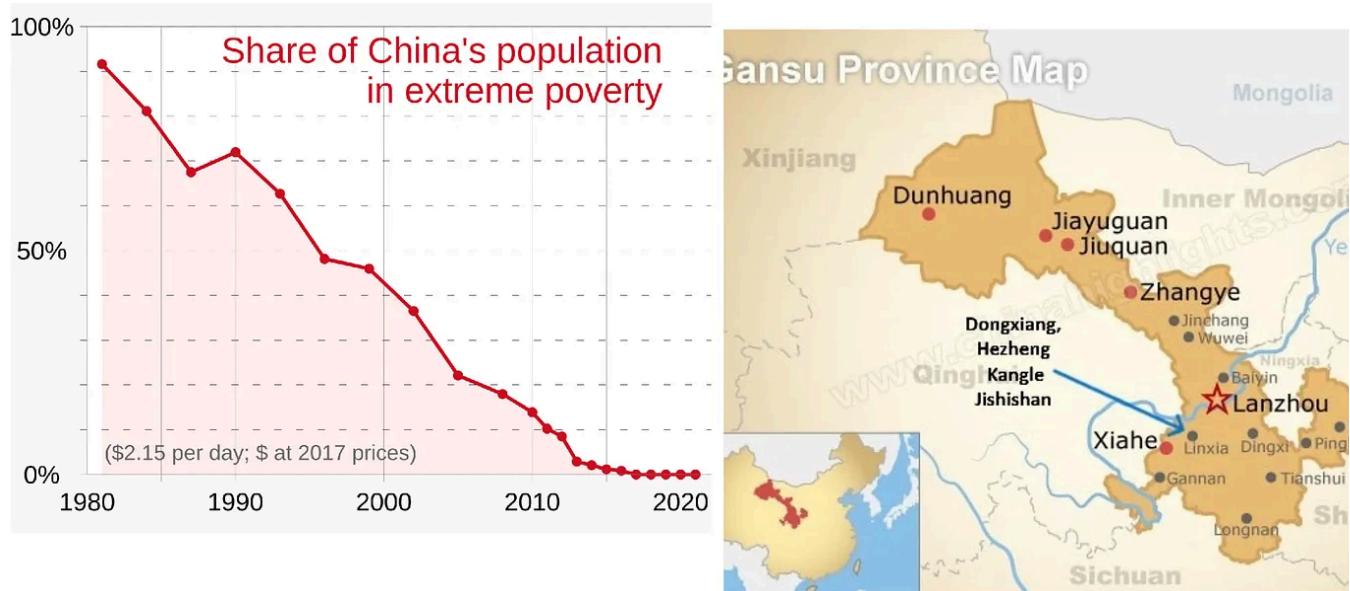


Gansu specialities

Introduction

In 2000 the Gansu Basic Education Project (GBEP) was launched in one of China's poorest Western provinces, Gansu, in four of its poorest counties. GBEP was a pilot project addressing poverty by testing and scaling new w:

of tackling long-standing issues of low access, gender inequity and poor quality in rural education. At the time China accounted for 40% of the world's poor (that figure is close to zero today).



Aside from being the first UK project to support basic education in China, what was also unique about GBEP was that it was one of the first education system strengthening projects – addressing reform in multiple areas at the same time – and one of the first projects in China to allocate more than a quarter of its funding to training and the same to technical support. A third of the funds were spent on constructing and rehabilitating schools.



Top - An old teaching point, old classroom 1999 ; Bottom - new school, new classroom 2004

The project focused on four of the poorest counties : Dongxiang, Hezheng Kangle and Jishishan. Each had significant Muslim minority populations and catered to 125,000 children and 6,200 teachers in the 700+ primary schools, many of which were single classroom rural schools called teaching points.

Fifteen new initiatives were introduced including :

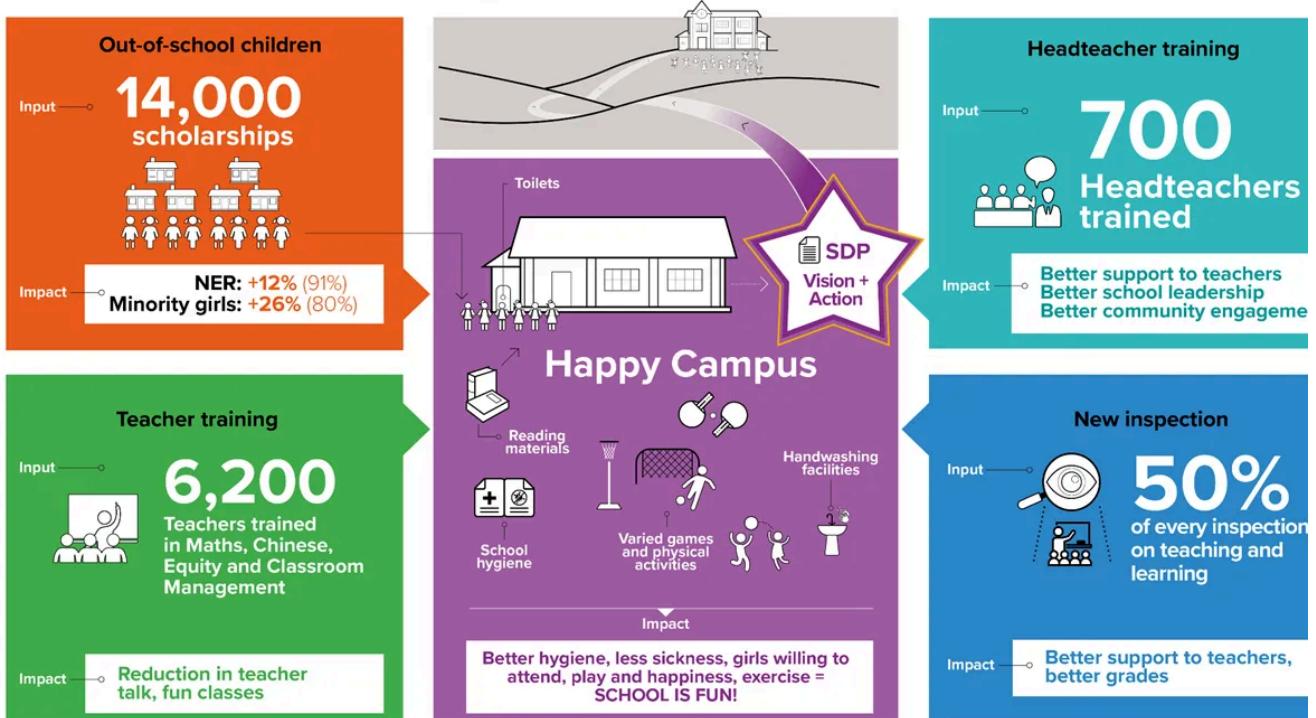
- **Participatory approaches to teaching** – engaging students in fun and active learning. All 6,200 teachers attended training several times
- A **scholarships** programme for 14,000 children, 70% aimed at girls
- **Head teacher training** for all 700+ headteachers to improve leadership in schools
- **School development planning**, engaging the community in solving school problems
- **Happy Campus** programme to make school campuses fun and attract kids
- **Disability inclusive training** – helping teachers identify and support children with learning and physical disabilities
- **Early years education** – developing local stories in supplementary readers and “Big Books” for whole class learning
- A **new inspection** approach – focused on whether learning was taking place
- **Education planning** to make the siting new schools more data based
- **Social development** analysis to look at participation and representation throughout the school system

Prior to GBEP many teachers had not been trained for years, some even decades, and any training they did receive was in the form of lectures. Few headteachers had been trained in leadership, and community engagement with schools was almost non-existent.

I remember asking one headteacher what defined a good school ? He answered **“You hear chanting as you approach”**.

After six years of project support the four counties demonstrated a dramatic rise in net enrolment rates, from **79% to 91%** overall. For minority girls in one county, it rose from **54% to 80%**. In another the dropout rate at Grade 1 decreased from **17% to 1.4%** and in Grade 3 from **11% to 2%**.

Gansu Basic Education Project (GBEP)



But, impressive as those results were, arguably the more interesting story GBEP is the impact it had on the pupils, teachers, officials and consultants who took part in project – how this project **transformed many lives** and careers, and continues to impact to this day.

To give just a few of many examples : even now there is an active Wechat group with over 40 teachers, officials and consultants still discussing, reflecting, celebrating and disseminating GBEP ideas and practices ; in 2018 there was a large-scale reunion, smaller ones happen yearly ; a course on rural education at Beijing University ran in 2021/2 focused heavily on GBE the project has featured in many articles about rural education in China, including a chapter of a book published only this year.

As teachers and officials have risen in seniority – in both officialdom and academia – they have carried their experiences of this influential project with them. A number of local project experts have worked in other provinces on education reform, several are now professors. Junior officials have risen to posts of seniority and one, a former Professor at Northwest Normal

University, is now a Vice-Minister of Education at national Ministry. National consultants who worked on GBEP have advised the MoE on education reform. They have implemented projects in other provinces and have contributed to research on rural education.

Now, many of those who worked on the project are also retiring, and the extent to which GBEP initiatives have become institutionalised, without depending on personalities, introduces an interesting aspect to the discussion about sustainability of the changes seen in the project counties.

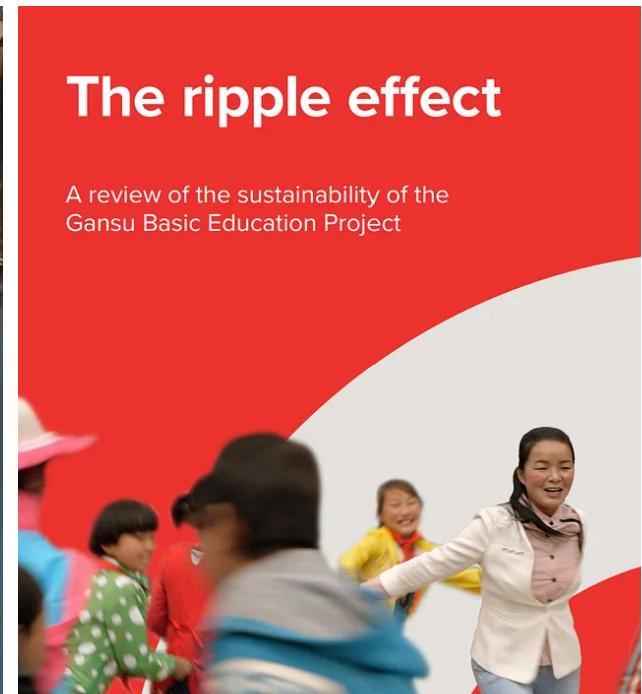
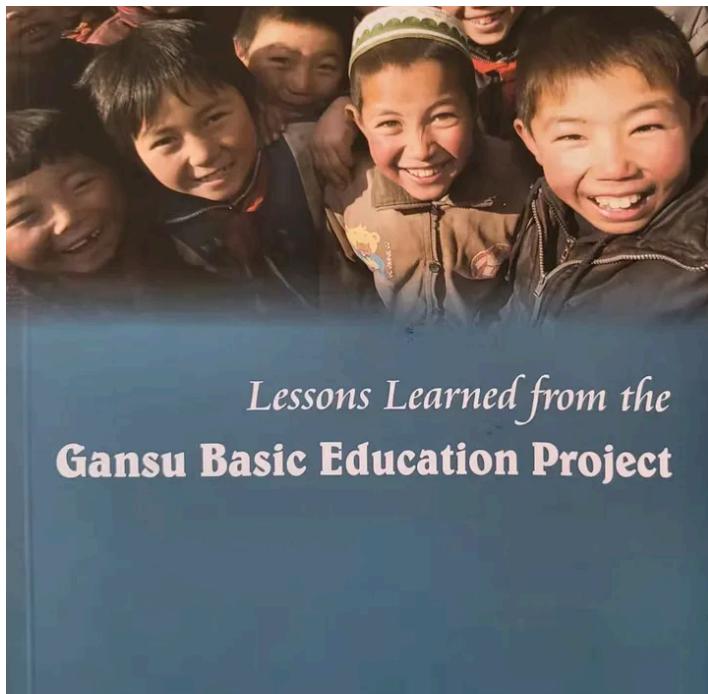
This article looks at four key aspects of GBEP that were influential in creating long lasting personal and systemic change :

- localisation and capacity building;
- the processes of change ;
- sustainability through change ;
- learning and scaling

Before diving into an assessment of these aspects, it's worth acknowledging an unanswered, and maybe unanswerable, question : what happened to the 125,000 children impacted by the project?

Project impact analyses rarely look at the longer-term impacts that all education work really should be measured in i.e. cohorts, school cycles and generations. These are the true measures of impact, not simply learning outcomes measured by a snapshot of tests in the final year of a project.

But, this is also where GBEP has, to a small extent, been groundbreaking. There was a major review 11 years after the end of the project with a report called "The Ripple Effect" and several films that followed some of the children over a 15 year period. The reflections that follow draw on that later material as well as the project records (a full list with links is given at the end).



Top - GBEP Publications 2008 and 2017 ; Bottom - GBEP reunion 2021 ; Beijing University Course 2

Localisation and Capacity Building

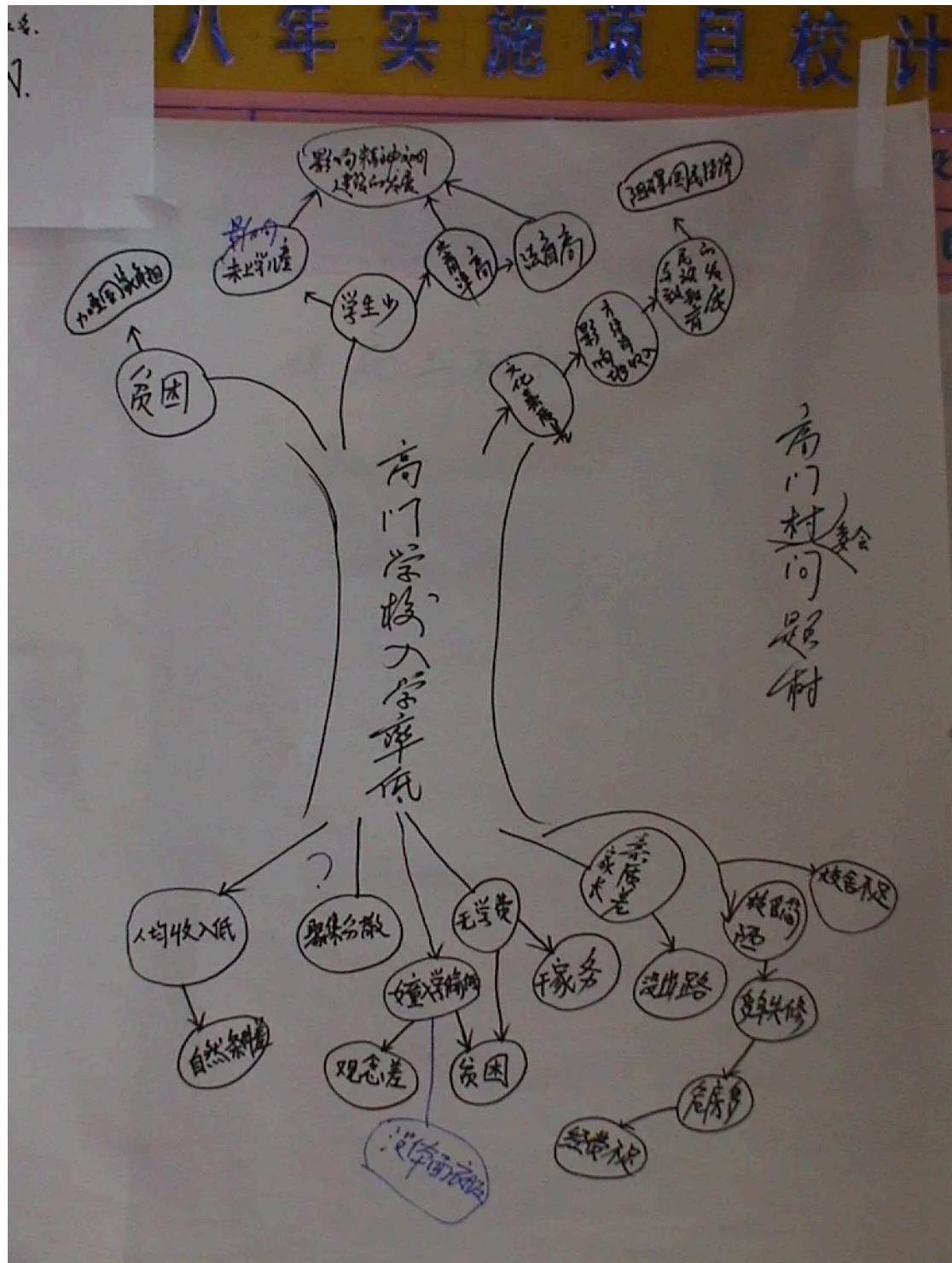
“Go fast, go alone. Go far, go together”

In China in 2000 most government policy in education was delivered from top down. Authority and wisdom was held to be higher up the hierarchy. Deference to this idea was common ; many argued this was the best and natural way in Chinese culture – aligning with what people expected.

But, GBEP wasn't designed to do what people expected : it was very deliberately a pilot project and its purpose was to challenge the status quo, try out new methods and to see whether what was successful on a small scale could be expanded.

For example, in the stakeholder workshop to help design the project, the administration only wanted to invite other officials and some headteacher. Instead, villagers, teachers, headteachers, county officials and prefecture officials were asked to join and purposely mixed together.

Rather than traditional speeches from important cadres there were a series of tasks ("games" to the people who didn't like them) such as creating "problem trees" where educational problems were traced to causes. The opinions of villagers were accorded as much weight in the outcomes of these tasks as provincial officials, something deeply uncomfortable for all (even the villagers). Nonetheless, gradually, those whose voices were least often heard became emboldened and the officials found themselves having to persuade rather than tell.



A Problem Tree during GBEP design

When the project itself began, workshops rather than meetings were a standard GBEP working method and 50% of the participants were requested to be women ; which in male-dominated rural Muslim areas caused great difficulty. To their credit the county officials made great progress in meeting this requirement.

This new approach to equity was not just about voices and representation the biggest disagreement came over scholarships for girls. GBEP's commitment to equity meant that we proposed to give 70% of scholarship girls. This created heated arguments and attempts to game the system by putting girls' names down for boys.

But, after a year of piloting, when it came discussing the allocations for the following year, the counties, on their own volition, proposed that 100% of scholarships should be given to girls. They had seen the impact and realised that, to address historical imbalances, sometimes you have to take radical approaches.

Perhaps the most successful aspect of more inclusive approach was the engagement of parents, communities, teachers and headteachers in **School Development Planning (SDP)**. In rural areas in Gansu, schools were seen as belonging to the government and little to do with parents. GBEP aimed to change that relationship by engaging parents in the planning of the school development. Community meetings were held, teachers visited parents of those not enrolled, meetings were held with parents to discuss children's academic progress, the school shared problems about financing and resources – seeking community support.





Top : SDP Community meeting ; SDP priority ranking. Bottom : SDPs in 2017 ; Han Jialing SD consultant reviews SDP in 2024

The result was improved enrolment, greater morale and a clear and transparent plan that could be communicated widely. SDP became the cornerstone of a reformed inspection system, also piloted by the project. Using the SDP to judge how the school saw itself and its ambitions allowed inspectors to engage in a much richer and more useful conversation about academic progress of children.

This was all new. Some took to it, champions who were energised by the opportunity to really make changes. Others resisted, often scared by the changes, and many suspicious of the involvement of foreign experts. But, as the old saying goes, we were feeling the stones on our way across the river “摸着石头过河Mōzhe shítou guòhé” .

We were doing it together, but for many (including some experts) it was confusing. We were trusting that if our goals were clear, the path to get there would be found together. And that's why the emphasis on the **process** of creating that path became so important.

The Process of Change

“Do the right thing by doing things right”

By the end of GBEP, in 2006, a mantra had become so ingrained and so often said that it had become the unofficial motto of the project : **“the process is important as the results”**. Understanding why is another key insight into GBEP’s lasting influence.

On one level the phrase was banal – and simply reminded all who worked on the project that there are many ways of achieving results – but, also warned that not all ways have equal value. But, at a more profound level, it highlighted a key aspect of the GBEP approach – that we cared about doing things right not only doing the right thing. Yes, results were important but so too was the path taken to achieve them. As the old saying goes : “If you don’t know where you are going, any path will take you there”.

A good example of this is the development of teacher training materials to train primary school teachers. At the beginning of the project the provincial teacher training authorities were shocked when the international experts said they estimated it would take about nine months to develop the new materials. “Why would it take so long ?” they said, “We can give it to a professor at Northwest Normal University and have it finished in two months”.

The reason it took nine months, was that materials were developed by teams that included local teachers, university professors, officials and experts. Some of these also visited other countries to be exposed to different systems. Materials were also tested as they were developed – with children. The draft materials were trialled in real lessons by the writers, with real teachers giving feedback, then revised before finally being published. This all took time, but the result was much better-quality teaching materials reflecting real classroom realities and pitched at the right levels for primary school teachers.



Teacher training workshop in 2000

In another example, the project tested out a school feeding programme and trialled a textbook revolving fund. Each of these initiatives was carefully developed with local input, trialled and evaluated. In both cases the results were not positive enough to expand the pilot – saving time and expense in the long run.

The emphasis placed on undertaking slower, more inclusive processes to achieve results, created an environment of experimentation where failure was permitted. It also recognised that creating capacity through collaborative working took longer but was a valuable exercise in its own right. The thinking was not dissimilar to tech start-ups today who see learning from failure as part of the road to their success. But, not all agreed, and for some local counterparts it was frustrating and too slow.

Another advantage of this method was that in the process of debate, create and testing, whether of materials or methods, open and **hidden resistance was revealed**. Some was good resistance (highlighting poor appreciation of local realities) and some was bad resistance (laziness or self-interest). Development teams had to either address this resistance head on and overcome it, or bend to it and change. But, there could be no real progress without differences resolved.

One area of potential resistance that the project avoided - by chance - was the gatekeeping attitudes of local officials (the middle tier). Early on, the project **co-opted local officials at the county and prefecture level as trainers** in SDP and Inspection.

This came about almost accidentally because there were insufficient funds for external trainers. By co-opting them as trainers, these officials had to really engage deeply with the project in order to understand the change the project was trying to achieve - they had to become the vanguard of that change.

The benefit was that by making them champions of change they were prevented from exercising their administrative power unthinkingly and those who were keen to see change (younger officials) were emboldened to embrace it. It also created a critical mass of officials at the county level who, as they became more deeply involved in delivering the project, had to become advocates for equity and inclusion since these were foundational principles. Many reflected on the personal change this created in their attitude to exercising authority.

When I review the last six years' experience in school development planning, there is a mixture of sour, sweet, bitter and spicy. I feel deeply that the process was more important than the result. The process of these six years is the development of ourselves, as well as of schools. (Wang Guo Cai, County Official)

GBEP's impact was also greater because it aimed to reform the whole education system. Many education projects focus on one or two areas only: teacher education or EMIS for example. Because GBEP focused on multiple change initiatives simultaneously, the attempt to impact the education system became catalytic and reinforcing: change in teacher training was complemented by change in inspections, which was complemented by change in school development planning etc. etc.

But, processes have to be implemented by people and to be consistent over time. The relationships between local, national and international educators were the bedrock of making that change happen.

Sustainability through Change

“Unfreeze-change-refreeze”

GBEP set out to change and improve educational practices. To change practices you need to change behaviour; to change behaviour you need to change beliefs; to change beliefs you need to find a reason why – a motivation.

This is similar to what the organisational philosopher, Kurt Lewin, proposed as a three stage “unfreeze-change-refreeze” model of change that tries to explain the process that those who change practices need to go through. It is suggested that for external support to be effective it should be interventionist, not diagnostic.

All of this change takes place in the minds of individuals and institutions and largely groups of individuals, following processes, united by common beliefs. To adopt a new belief people need to break or discard an old one, have a motivation for doing so, and see a reason why a new belief is better for the individual.

In a school, teachers have to see that something is not working or could be better (requires reflection), have to see an alternative (requires

demonstration) and then have to have an incentive to change practices that they may have used for years (requires carrots and / or sticks).

This kind of change is profound, unsettling, iterative and needs constant support and reinforcement (see Zeng Tao's reflection below). GBEP was designed to provide this – and it is why so much of the resource was allocated to the support of experts and training. Like individuals, it often takes people unconnected to us (not friends / family / co-workers) to show us where we could be doing better.

However, although I accepted participatory teaching in theory, my understanding was still superficial, lacking real experience. When I actually used it, I simply copied activity designs from textbooks, which felt like prosthetics that didn't work well for me. (Teacher Zeng Tao on her 3-year struggle to accept participatory teaching methods).

GBEP was the first education project in China to engage so many national and international experts – accounting for over a quarter of the budget. Another quarter was spent on training and only a third was spent on rehabilitation and construction of schools.

In contrast, a typical World Bank education project in China might spend 30% on construction, 20% on training and 5% on experts. As a pilot project the costs were necessarily higher – on subsequent projects, like the expansion to 36 more counties in Gansu, and on SBEP, the technical assistance costs were much lower (c. 10-15%) as there did not need to be such intensive support for piloting.

The emphasis on expert support was a key characteristic of the long-term sustainability of GBEP practices and ideas. In each of the project technical areas there was a tripartite relationship between an international expert, a national expert and a provincial, prefecture or county level counterpart.

To many this looked like overkill – why so many people ? And certainly, if the project had been funded by the Chinese government alone the international layer could have been cut out (along with international experience).

What gave these partnerships strength was that the international experts brought knowledge and practical experience of other rural education systems in the world, and successful approaches to address common issues such as access, equity and quality. The national experts brought an exposure to international education and an understanding of China's national policy and practice. Local counterparts brought knowledge of practical realities on the ground. It was the combination of this experience that made the quality of what GBEP did so strong : **informed by international best practice, designed to align with national government policy and adjusted to reflect local realities.**

Of these three, the national experts were the most important : the real glue that held the tripartite relationship together, and the people who created trust between international experts and local implementers. Their role was unique in several ways. They gave confidence to the local counterpart – they spoke the same language, shared the same culture, understood the same national political realities.

Most of the national consultants were well known academics from Beijing University, Tsinghua University and Beijing Normal University. The national experts also gave confidence to the international experts – they generally spoke English, shared similar technical understandings, but stood independently of both local and international political pressures.



Some of the National experts in 2017 : Front Row L-R : Xue Jieying (Social Development), Guo Wenge (Teacher Training), Liu Yunshan (Research), Zhao Jing (Deputy TL), Chen Xiangming (Teacher Training), Shi Jinghuan (Teacher Training), Zhen Xingrong (Social Development), Zhang Lili (Research). Back Row L-R : Andy Brock (Team Leader), Meng Hongwei (M&E), Kang Jian (Headteacher Training), Hu Wenbin (Deputy TL), Deng Meng (Disability)

In the initial stages of the project national experts were indispensable in helping translate unfamiliar concepts such as participatory teaching or social development planning in ways that could be understood and accepted. This is not only a matter of language – an interpreter could have done that. It is a matter of helping, by example and persuasion, to understand concepts, without losing sight of how to introduce those concepts into educational practice and ultimately help embed those concepts so they become part of local practice.

The international experts had decades of experience in working in poor rural schools to implement this kind of change, but they didn't know China well. National experts knew that China at this time was moving in this direction and the project aligned with national policy. But, even they were not familiar with the practicalities of making these changes in resource poor areas.

How do demonstrate how participatory approaches actually work ? How can you reassure teachers about the impact on pupils ? Typically, piloting education changes in China would involve starting with the best schools in the best areas first, not some of the worst !

Thus, international experts took the lead in the early stages, then national experts took on greater responsibility, until finally the balance shifted to local counterparts leading the whole process with national consultants supporting and international consultants barely involved. In this way, over the 6-year of the project, the approaches to participatory teaching become embedded and contextualised and a wide cadre of local expertise was developed.

The GBEP approach may appear costly, but that is because the real benefits have been underrepresented by only looking at the benefits in the project period. Taking an intensive coaching / training approach over several years not only yields better results but also has a ripple effect that, as this reflection shows, is rarely captured, but has an impact on people and institutions that can be profound and long-lasting.

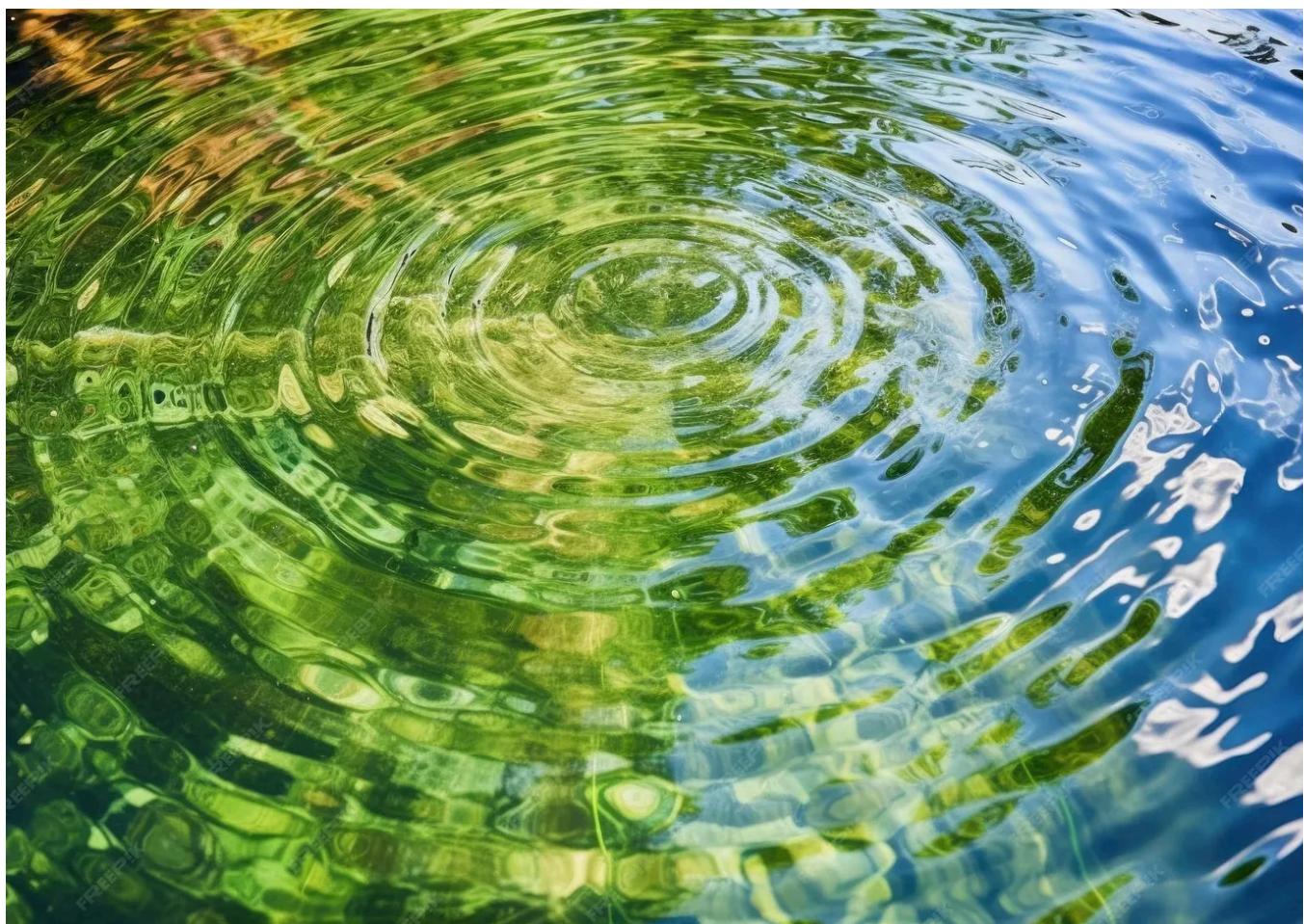
Learning and Scaling

“The ripple effect”

The main reason we are still talking about GBEP today is due to the positive influence the project experience had on the wide range of educators engaged in the project. That influence was largely on individuals and reflected the multiple approaches to engagement, the many opportunities for training,

collaborative and inclusive working methods used and the relationship with external influences through experts.

There were also many opportunities for reflection within the project – both in terms of the lessons learned from piloting and from reflecting on how relationships helping bring about change. Many of those individuals have gone on in their own careers to influence institutions, in Gansu and other Chinese provinces, and at a national and international level.



For example, Professor Sun Dongmei, who was a local teacher expert during GBEP, became the education director and general consultant of the Mingde Foundation in mainland China which widely promoted SDP using the approach from GBEP, with added school self-diagnosis and evaluation. This was implemented in hundreds of schools across eight provinces.

Professor Chen Xiangming of Beijing University designed online teacher training courses for the Ministry of Education that were interactive and participatory, drawing on her experience with GBEP. The positive response to these courses was part of the impetus for the Ministry of Education to start the National Training Program. The influence of participatory methods from GBEP is seen in the increasing requirement for participation in teaching and research in subsequent National Training Programs.

During the project life, and for many years after, hundreds of educators visited GBEP schools to learn about the different initiatives. In one school alone, in Hezheng County, He Long, the headteacher received over 400 visitors in one year ! International visitors also came from South Africa, Pakistan, Vietnam and Bangladesh.



Nationally, DFID funded a second project called the Southwest Basic Education Project, covering 27 counties in Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi. The project took SDP, Participatory Approaches and Inspection, the lessons learned from each, and scaled up across these four provinces covering 2.4m pupils, 8,000 schools and 88,000 teachers. The [SBEP Student Achievement Survey](#) found a significant learning outcomes impact resulting from SDP – especially on more disadvantaged schools.

Internationally, GBEP has also had an influence not widely recognised and little known within China. Cambridge Education, the organisation that engaged the international and national experts is one of the largest special education consultancies in the UK. Between 2008 and 2021 the company was involved in a number of high-profile projects whose design was influenced and shaped by the experiences of GBEP.

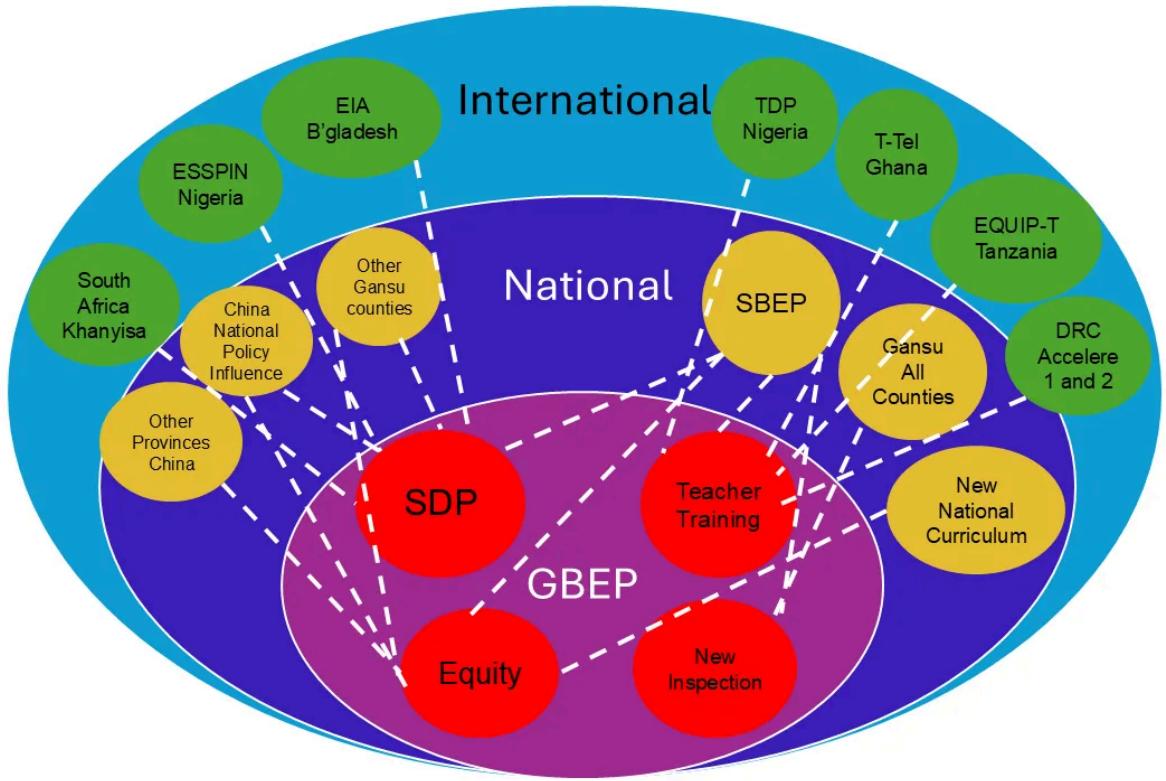
For example, in Nigeria in 2008, Cambridge Education won an 8-year education project to improve access and quality in 6 Nigerian States. Key components of this project including School Development Planning and Participatory Approaches to teaching drew directly, but not exclusively, on the experience of Gansu. The bid designer and lead on teacher training for this project was John Martin, also the lead international Teacher Training expert in Gansu.

In Ghana in 2014 Cambridge Education started implementing a project focused on enhancing the practical element of initial teacher training, called T-Tel. The design of the intervention drew heavily on the experience of working closely with Northwest Normal University to pilot a new teacher training curriculum for trainee teachers, including greater time spent in the classroom learning hands-on skills. Again, John Martin was the project designer.

A third example was in Pakistan, Cambridge Education won a World Bank project to support reform of primary education in the Punjab. Hu Wenbin, of two Deputy Team Leaders of GBEP took on the role of Team Leader. In personal reflection Wenbin spoke candidly about how he used the experiences in Gansu to shape the approach taken to education reform and project management in the Punjab.

These are just a few examples of what is estimated to be at least half a dozen major education projects implemented by Cambridge Education that can trace influences back to GBEP. Separately, many of the 20 or so international experts on the project took their learning into other countries and other work.

GBEP is an example of something rarely captured in the literature of education development projects : a project with “ripple effect”. The initial project inputs over only a six-year period have had such deep impact on those engaged that, like a stone thrown into a pond, the impact keeps rippling outwards like waves, making wider and wider circles. It gives a clear example of how the right investments, made in the right ways with the right people, can have multiplier effects far beyond those originally intended.



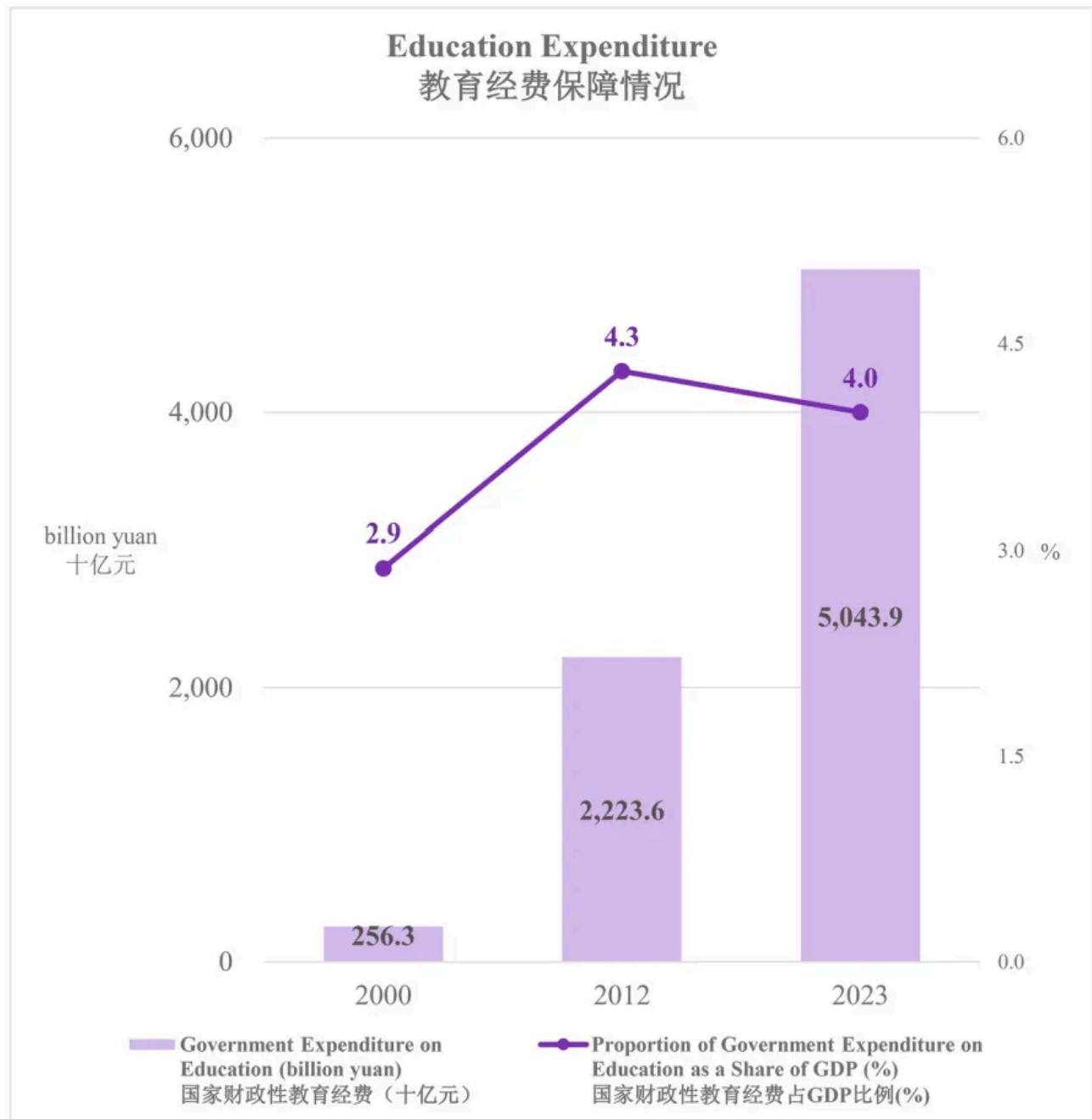
National and international influences of GBEP

Conclusion

In the years that followed the end of GBEP the Chinese government embarked on a major drive to improve rural education – with substantial additional funding targeted at rural areas. Over the first decade of this century education expenditure as a % of GDP rose from 2.9%-4.3%, a significant change (see chart below).



Educational Conditions in China 教育条件保障



Source. http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_jfzxgg/; http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A05/s304012/t20241219_1167656.html

Gansu found itself in an excellent position to take advantage of this increased support, with significant numbers of teachers and officials who were well trained and prepared to improve rural education using the new funds.

Nonetheless, there were and are sceptics in China. Some saw GBEP as a “foreign project” with “foreign” ideas, difficult to replicate due to the outside investment. Over the years those objections have diminished somewhat due to the numerous examples of Chinese provinces and counties implementing GBEP inspired initiatives with their own resources.

Others think the claims of influence made for GBEP are too large and underestimate the fact that what mattered most to rural Chinese education was not the example of GBEP but rather the massive injection of financial support to rural education that happened after 2008.

So many years after the project this may not be the most important discussion : trying to capture the essence of a project like this, and its influences, will always be more of an art than a science, and the threads more tentative the more time passes.

Nevertheless, there are some areas where it is easier to draw firmer conclusions. One of those is that cost-benefit analyses, undertaken as part of project design, tend to underestimate the catalyst effect of effective capacity building. Not only were thousands of children and teachers benefitted through GBEP support (14,000 scholarships, thousands of teachers trained etc.) but, the impact of training and support on officials, master trainers, university professors, consultants, etc. has been positive, profound, long-lasting – but, little recorded and even less quantified.

The duration of that impact was certainly helped by the involvement of experts and officials who were in the middle of their careers and ideally placed to carry on implementing these successful experiences in other roles and institutions. Additionally, the very wide range of both training and dissemination materials generated by the project meant that it was easy to share new ideas and practices.

Perhaps the most important lessons GBEP provides are these : if your aim effect lasting change, invest widely and repeatedly in training and support your aim is to change the education system co-opt the administrative pow of the system (the middle tier) and provide them with continuous support training. And, if you want to scale your successes to other places focus on what is really transferable at the cost those places can afford. Finally, invest heavily in materials and dissemination so there are funds to share success

Ultimately, education system reform is the result of the changed behaviour of people : teachers, heads, administrators, officials etc. It is only by changing the beliefs, practices and motivations of these groups of people that you can hope to reform institutions and thereby the education system itself. Those practices lie at the core of what a good education system should be – a continuous learning process.

Well directed, long-term investment in helping people to explore and adopt continuous change is almost always worthwhile, and holds the additional promise, as GBEP amply demonstrates, that the benefits may continue to ripple onwards and onwards, outwards and outwards, for decades.



2004 Going by train to meet Tony Blair in Beijing, and 2017. L-R : Ma Jin Hua, Ma Yu Feng, Kang Lan Lan ; Ma Jin Feng

Resources :

All these films plus two shorter ones can be found at youtube / mottmacdonald

Films

1. [Equity in Education](#) (2004) Interim overview of GBEP after 4 years. (16 mins)
2. [Reaching the Unreached](#) (2006). The end of project overview of GBEP (mins)
3. [The Story of Ma Haimei](#) (2004) The uphill struggle, against her own mother, faced by a young girl receiving a project scholarship. (5 mins)
4. [The Story of Ma Zhengqing](#) (2004) A boy who had polio as an infant, has opportunity to go to school as GBEP initiates support to children with disabilities (4 mins)
5. [Ten Years, Ten Voices](#) (2010). A celebration of DFID's ten years of support to education in China (8 mins)

Films from 2017 Review

1. [Escaping Poverty](#) (2017). A film that follows the progress and setbacks of Ma Haimei and Ma Zhengqing (see films above) in 2004, 2010 and 2017. (mins)
2. [Educating a Generation](#) (2017). The stories of four girls who received scholarships through GBEP – and met Tony Blair – showing the impact it had on their lives. (9 mins)
3. [Gansu Revisited](#) (2017). Documentary film about the project review in : with the lows and highs : no sugar coating. (15 mins)

Reports and Books

1. [Lessons Learned from the Gansu Basic Education Project \(2006\)](#) The lessons of GBEP, complete with failures, distilled into 85 pages. Relevant to project designers today.
2. [The Ripple Effect](#) (2017) A review of GBEP undertaken ten years after the project ended.
3. [The Making of a Champion : Obituary Wang Guocai](#) – how a champion stepped forward
4. [How Does a Teacher's Transformation Occur?](#) Really insightful reflection by a Gansu teacher on the long and painful process of changing teaching practices. Zeng Tao, Chen Xiangming
5. [SBEP Student Achievement Survey](#). (2012)
6. [Moving Mountains Stone by Stone](#). (2009) DAA Brock. International Journal of Education Development. Article about GBEP

Other reading about education in China

1. [Book Review of “Other Rivers”](#) (2024) Peter Hessler. A very readable, funny and sympathetic portrait of education in China today by the author of “River Town”.
2. “[New Pathways of Rural Education in China](#)” (2024) Jialing Han. Chapter on Gansu.

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