



AFTER retiring as a headmaster in 2000, Ipoh-born David Liao spent 24 years teaching English in a rural village called Changjiao in Dabu County, Guangdong Province, China.

Overall, he has been teaching English for more than 50 years and is now considering continuing in Africa.

According to reports in Sin Chew Daily, Liao, who is single, not only helped rural Chinese children master English but also helped develop the village.

He used his grandfather's ancestral home at the La Salle Study Centre to teach, while students from other villages could also stay at the centre for free.

However, things were not always smooth for Liao, who was initially seen as a 'mad foreigner' by the local villagers.

Also, Liao who wanted to settle down in the rural village was not proficient in Mandarin.

He was also later forced to learn Hakka to communicate better with the villagers.

He initially started with just a few students and focused on preparing them for examinations in three years.

After scoring impressive results, one of the students was also admitted to a local university, and the size of his class began growing.

Parents from nearby villages also started sending their kids to learn English with Liao.

Changjiao Village eventually became known as the English Village and Liao also received an award in 2013.

He taught English using an integration of English and Chinese pronunciation and also converted grammar rules to music which his students could sing.

Apart from teaching English for free, he also sponsored about 40 students to study at universities.

"I wish to thank my students from Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong for helping to support and encourage me all this while," he said.

He also helped develop the village by convincing the villagers to plant pomelo trees.

Growing up in Ipoh, he was familiar with the techniques of planting pomelo.

Initially, three families agreed to try and after they made lucrative incomes, other villagers began following.

The village began developing with Liao's help and after 25 years, he is now looking for his next adventure - probably Africa. –

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