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Chinese Village Education for Rural Transformation

ERT Case Studies of Good Practices

Special Issue

Wen Zhang

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Chinese Village Education for Rural Transformation

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Wen Zhang

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Foreward

The Yellow Report Series is an integral part of the Institute of International Education (IIE) strategy to promote and to disseminate academic writings of national and international nature since the 1970s. This series allows first and foremost academic and research staff as well as visiting researchers to publish valuable research material acquired in the course of research and projects at IIE. This series as all other IIE series, namely: (1) IIE Studies in International and Comparative Education; (2) IIE Master’s Degree Studies; (3) IIE Work-In Progress Reports serve to keep updated the institution’s extensive programmes, projects and activities for research, education, training, scholarship, and networking in the field of International and Comparative Education which are always inclusive and connect the Northern with the Southern, the Eastern and the Western hemispheres.

The present Special Issue report, “Chinese Village Education for Rural Transformation, ERT Case Studies of Good Practices” is the 123\textsuperscript{nd} of the Yellow Series and specifically outlines “good practices” for Rural Transformation at the relevant village level, within the context of China. Thus, fulfilling one of the key research objectives put forth by the IIE committee for Education for Rural Transformation (ERT) in the long term research project supported and commissioned by the Swedish Research Council. This in collaboration with the on-going series of International Symposiums co-organized and hosted by the institute, makes great strides in both the collection and analysis of the context and current rural situation as well as puts forth exemplars and a platform from which future good practices are able to spring forth.

I would like to express my deep appreciation for the Swedish Research Council contribution and support for this pressing global phenomenon. Most of all, I would like to thank visiting researcher Ms. Wen Zhang of China, for her contribution to the series.

Vinayagum Chinapah
Professor and Head of IIE
Source: Xin Hua News Agency,
http://www.pway.cn/vilage/pics/201005/175847.htm
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Rural education is the hope for rural area. The development of rural education and improvement of the quality of farmers will form a huge advantage in human resources; on the contrary, if rural education cannot play its role, the large population will become an enormous pressure for development.

Wen Jiabao, Premier of China
Source: Sanxia News.
Introduction

It is a well-received notion that the future of a developing country rests in how well the nation tackles the development of rural people, as they are the most deprived and disadvantaged group in large numbers. Within contemporary society, education has an important role in enabling individual-level changes, which in turn has a broader impact on society (Shaw, 2011). As in the UNESCO-INRULED (2001) study entitled ‘Education for Rural Transformation-Towards a Policy Framework’, education is perceived as the driving force and proactive facilitator in the changing process of rural transformation. To be more precise, it is an effective instrument for poverty alleviation, upward social and occupational mobility, empowerment and redistribution of resources and thereby, an improvement of equity (Tilak, 2011).

Rurality itself is subject to different interpretations by various institutions. Thus, it is explicit that the improvement of education in rural areas has to take into account different contextual dimensions (Mincu, 2011). Tailor-made educational programmes that address the diverse learning demands of varying rural groups are what the grassroots level needs.

China, as one of the most populous developing countries, with its diverse context, serves as an interesting example for investigating how educational interventions are implemented in order to provide necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for people to cope with the changing rural scenario and improve their livelihood. The daunting problems of poverty eradication, women empowerment, etc. and the emerging issues of building a green economy, democratic progress, etc. all requires attention from the perspective of restructuring education.

One decade has passed since the first initiation of Education for Rural Transformation (ERT). This report, through the investigation of successful education and training practices in rural China, tries to examine the role of education from a thematic perspective. The overall aim of the report is to provide empirical evidence for ERT and to shed some light for further research.

The report consists of two parts, in the first part, contemporary rural China including the socio-economic status, rural policy evolution and rural education, is explored by mapping the context. In the second part, the role of education is discussed from investigating successful stories under six different themes, namely, from the angle of 1) poverty reduction; 2) skills training (including technical and vocational skills training, life skills training and the use of Information
and Computer Technology (ICT); 3) capacity building of local community and lifelong learning system; 4) dissemination of sustainable development; 5) spiritual civilization building; and 6) women empowerment. These are all heated areas that education steps in as a form of intervention for overall human development and agriculture advancement. These themes portrait the primary concerns upon rural transformation and rural development in China. The chosen cases therefore, provide examples of possible solutions and innovative initiations that education and training can furnish as to the address the problems rural China facing.

**Profiling Rural China**

In China, rural identity does not merely refer to one’s residence in the countryside or occupation in agriculture industry but also comes from the household registration system, known as the ‘hukou’ system. This system started from 1958. It divided people between rural and urban identities and led to an extremely unequal dual system; as one’s urban or rural ‘hukou’ determines access to various resources regarding education, employment, housing, healthcare and social welfare (Han, 2012; Li, 2012). With the widening gap between rural and urban areas in terms of living conditions, educational resources and social welfare after the country’s economy took off; there have been some attempts to reform the household registration system. The first change was that farmers are allowed to migrate freely to urban areas. The second change was to give autonomy to local government to reform on the household registration system to different levels according to local circumstances. In some small cities, it is already realizable for one to settle down and change to local ‘hukou’. The third innovation was that the benefits previously attached to the ‘hukou’ have now been limited to minimize urban-rural disparities, for instance, the regulations and laws that protect migrant worker’s right, etc. (Li, 2012). The most recent reform issued by the General Office of the State Council entitled ‘Notice of the General Office of the State Council on Actively and Steadily Promoting the Reform of the Household Registration System’ in February, 26th, 2011 has loosen up the small and medium-size cities’ household registration control for one
had worked for three years in such city can obtain the local ‘hukou’. Unfortunately, the door of municipalities and sub-provincial cities are still closed for outsiders to settle down.

Actually, the Chinese government is quite responsive and flexible in dealing with problems the country encountering. The rural household registration system reform is just one piece of the emerging issues in the rural transformation process. Starting from 1982 when the Twelfth National Congress of the CPC (Communist Party of China) Report pointed out that agriculture is the most important aspect of national economy, rural problems have become the primary concern of the nation. Agriculture is addressed with a different emphasis in the following National Congress of the CPC reports. This top priority is shown in policy, finance inclination and human resource support. Through these years, national policies regarding rural problems have evolved according to the changing scenario as showed in Table 2.
## Table 1: Rural China at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Population</td>
<td>656,560,000, 48.7% (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanization Rate</td>
<td>49.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the Agriculture Production in GDP (%)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Annual Income (Yuan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>8119.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from Wages and Salaries</td>
<td>2431.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from Household Operations</td>
<td>4937.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from Properties</td>
<td>202.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income from Transfers</td>
<td>548.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of People Obtained the Government Minimum Living Allowance</td>
<td>53,135,000 ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Employed Persons in Agriculture Industry</td>
<td>279,310,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Consumption Expenditure(Yuan)</td>
<td>4455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Per Capita Living Expenditure of Rural Households (Yuan)</td>
<td>4382 ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Engle’s Coefficient</td>
<td>41.1(urban 35.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Labour Force</td>
<td>252,780,000 (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Rural Labour Force</td>
<td>158,630,000 (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy Rate of Rural Labour Force (%)</td>
<td>6.8 (2006)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China

↑ Increased compare to last year
↓ Decreased compare to last year
## Table 2: Agriculture Policy Evolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Agriculture-related Content</th>
</tr>
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| **Twelfth National Congress of the CPC (1982)** | - Agriculture is the most important aspect of national economy;  
- Improve infrastructure;  
- Increase productivity. |
| **Thirteenth National Congress of the CPC (1987)** | - Improve agriculture industrial structure;  
- Promote township enterprises and income generation;  
- Develop various kinds of contract responsibility systems;  
- Strengthen land management and protect farming land. |
| **Fourteenth National Congress of the CPC (1992)** | - Sustain increase on grain production and continuing improve industrial structure;  
- Develop high efficiency agriculture;  
- Deepen reform on production operational system;  
- Develop social service system. |
| **Fifteenth National Congress of the CPC (1997)** | - Ensure agriculture and countryside development and income increase;  
- Develop collective economy;  
- Perfecting social service system;  
- Lightening farmers’ burden. |
| **Sixteenth National Congress of the CPC (2002)** | - Speed up urbanization process and provide guidance for rural migrants;  
- Enable transferring of land management right;  
- Establish and perfect social service system, including financial service for rural resident;  
- Promote agriculture tax and fee reform, lightening farmers’ burden;  
- continuously support and increase input to education. |
| **Seventeenth National Congress of the CPC (2007)** | - promote construction of ‘the new countryside’;  
- better tackle the problem of agriculture, farmer and village;  
- ensure food security and protect farming land;  
- increase farmer’s income and develop township enterprises;  
- Cultivate educated, skillful new type of farmers who know about business;  
- Enrich spiritual and cultural lives of rural people;  
- Improve quality of rural teachers and promote balanced compulsory education;  
- Perfect rural social welfare system. |

Besides these reports, there are eight continuous No. 1 Central Documents that focus on the issue of the ‘Three Rural’, namely agriculture, farmer and village. These policies all emphasized the fundamental position and strategic significance of agriculture in national development. It is clear to see that the focus of the 20 years policy practices is on the following two dimensions:

- **Unleash the Potential of Rural Productive Forces**
  - Industrial structure improvement
  - The raising of small and medium enterprises in rural areas

- **Close Gap between Urban and Rural Areas and Build a New Countryside**
  - Agriculture operational system innovation: on the basis of household contract responsibility system, speed up cooperation and coordination between rural households to form organized large-scale production.
  - Rural tax and comprehensive reform: from 2006, the agriculture tax was repealed. There has been a comprehensive reform in rural areas, including repealing of the agriculture tax, transformation of government and ensuring access and quality of compulsory education (including exempting tuition and incidental fees).
  - Establish and perfect rural social service system.

Considerable progress concerning the improvement of quality of life for rural people and agricultural development have been made through these favourable polices, as pointed out by Han (2010), the Minister of Agriculture in the Central Rural Working Conference.

**Positive outcomes**

1) The fundamental position of agriculture has been strengthened.

2) Agricultural productivity has been highly improved.

   In 2010, the annual grain output was 546.41 million tons, which increased 2.9% compared to 2009.

3) The process of industry modernization is progressing smoothly.

   As estimated by the Ministry of Agriculture, the contribution rate of agricultural science and technology advancement reached 52%, coverage rate of fine seeds was 96% and production mechanization level of the farming process rose to 52% in 2010.

4) The agricultural subsidies system was further improved.
The expenditure for the ‘Three Rural’ issues from the Central Government amounted to 857.97 billion Yuan in 2010, which accounts for 9.6% of the total national expenditures.

5) The income of farmers was significantly increased.

The annual per capita net income was 5919 Yuan in 2010, 766 Yuan more than 2009.

6) The social service system has been built up and gradually improved.

According to the statistics of 2006, 10.8% counties and villages have technical and vocational schools. 71.3% of the counties and villages have radio and television stations; 98.8% of the counties and villages have at least one hospital or one health centre; and 66.6 percent of the counties and villages have nursing homes. 87.6% of the village’ primary schools are in the range of 3 km and 69.4% of the village’s secondary schools are in the range of 5 km. 30.2% of the villages have kindergartens and nurseries. 10.7% of the villages have sports facilities, 13.4% have libraries and cultural centres, and 15.1% of villages have their own cultural organizations.

7) Besides closing the gap between urban and rural, efforts were also made for balanced development of eastern, central, western and northeast regions of the county.

In 2010, the gross output value of agricultural (current prices) of the eastern, central, western and northeast part was 1301.3 billion Yuan, 1055.7 billion Yuan, 998.6 billion Yuan and 337.6 billion Yuan. The average net income was 8143 Yuan, 5510 Yuan, 4418 Yuan and 6453 Yuan respectively. The result was disparities among these regions were diminished (National Bureau of Statistics, 2008; Ren, Ji, Zhao, Bi, 2010; Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2011).

Despite the achievements made, there are still great challenges brought by the rapid economic, social, demographic, cultural and political changes, domestically and internationally, that need to be addressed in order to promote the balanced and sustainable development of rural China.

First, the continuously provision of adequate food for the large population and assured food security is a primary concern. It is estimated that, during the period of 12th Five-Year Plan (2011-2015), the urbanization rate will exceed by 50%. At such a rapid pace of urbanization, continuing to provide adequate food and ensure food
security is one of the most urgent challenges, as less people will be working in agriculture, while the demand increases from urban areas.

Second, in spite of the income increase, the growing income gap between urban and rural areas is still severe, increasingly widening and reflects in growing discontent. Although the income of rural people increased 9.5% in 2007, the urban-rural income ratio reached 3.3:1 - one of the largest urban-rural income gaps in the world (Cui, 2010). Ge (2008) found that China was still on the ascending side of Kuznets’ curve, which implies the quicker the development, the higher the inequality will be.

Third, in China, land holdings per household are very small compared to other developing countries like India, while other resources are also extremely scarce. Effort has to be made to establish a welfare system and allocate more resources to rural areas to attain a more equitable society. The attempt to build the New Rural Welfare System started only two decades ago. It is still in the experimental and reforming period with many problems. For the New Rural Social Endowment Insurance System, the coverage scope so far is quite small and the protection level is not high. By the year of 2009, it was implemented in 320 counties accounting for 11.6% of the total and covering only 15 million rural people. As the peak of the aging population will occur in 2030, rural China will face unprecedented pressure on pension problems. Furthermore, although the New Rural Cooperative Medical System has covered 833 million people in 2009, there are still problems on raising funds, the low level of compensation and the poor quality of medical services. The long-term task in the development process will be to perfect the Rural Welfare System and provide equal living assurance (Wang, 2009; Li, 2010).

Fourth, the grassroots level democracy of rural areas, as initiated by the Villager Autonomy System in 1987 has made some progress. Yet due to the limited cognitive ability of villagers and lack of democratic awareness, there are problems regarding achieving the real democratic progress and democracy efficiency. Women’s political participation in village autonomy and village elections should also be encouraged to execute everyone’s right, reflect everyone’s will and promote gender equity (An, 2012; Xiao & Zhu, 2012).

Finally, as agriculture modernization and urbanization continues, there will be a huge surplus in the labour force. Providing proper training and creating employment opportunities for them should be seen as an important part of the transformation equation (Huang, 2010). From 1983 to 2009, internal-migrants increased from two million to 152 million. For those internal-migrants, only 67% have basic education and 64.8% have no technical and vocational training. Also, migrant children and left-behind children’s education and
development, which generated from the inner-migration trend, require serious attention.

It is clear to see that the solutions to these problems lie in agriculture advancement; income increase; building the idea of democracy at grassroots level; and mainstreaming rural migrant workers as well as sustaining and increase input, for which education is the very tool to achieve most. Thus, it steps in as one of the most influential interventions in rural China to tackle the challenges illustrated above. Education in rural China has first strived to provide universal compulsory education to all. Tuition fee was exempt and free learning material and subsidies are provided to poor rural families. By the end of 2009, the coverage rate of the 9-year compulsory education is 99.7% (Information Office of the State Council, 2009). The government also attached great importance to technical and vocational schools. Free secondary vocational education was provided to poor rural students. The school curriculum was reformed to match the labour market need. Resources of the schools are also utilized for training rural migrant workers and local income generation programmes.

Meanwhile, informal and non-formal education increasingly plays an indispensable role. Education programmes are reforming towards more decentralized management and a demand-based tailor-made nature, which addresses diverse learning needs. There is also a tendency for a closer link between schools and the market, research and practices. Local communities are more and more involved to enhance quality, sustainability and accountability of education programmes. Modern technologies such as ICT were utilized to facilitate learning, improve quality of education and share resources between urban and rural areas.

The ultimate goal of rural education in China is to cultivate new type of farmers who are skilful, well-educated and capable of doing business. In the “Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development” (2010-2020), the future focuses of rural education were listed as following: 1) create equal access to education giving preference to rural impoverished, border, and ethnic autonomous areas. 2) Strengthen preschool education in rural areas. Make sure that all the children left behind by parents working away from their home villages are sent to kindergartens. 3) Improve infrastructure and promote quality of rural compulsory education. 4) Profoundly develop
vocation education to meet rural learning needs. 5) Accelerate development in continuing education. Form a system of lifelong learning. 6) De-volute administrative power to provincial governments so the local government may have more autonomy in arranging education reflectively. 7) Improve the quality of teaching staff. 8) More financial input for rural education. 9) Promote the use of ICT in rural education.

In the reforming and restructuring process, innovative cases and successful stories of rural education and training flourished at national and grassroots levels to address the either chronic or newly emerging problems and to empower disadvantaged groups. Some of the cases are selected in this report to shed some light to countries in similar situations, more specifically E-9 countries, and to further research.
Chinese Village Education for Rural Transformation

ERT Case Studies of Good Practices

Theme 1  Poverty Reduction

Source: Xinhua News Agency Shaanxi Branch.
http://www.tcedu.gov.cn/include/topic_pic_view.php?id=297
Poverty reduction must be at the core of any attempt to address rural-related issues, not only because rural people accounts for more than 60% of the world’s poverty-stricken population, but also because poverty is the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of income (Sen, 2006; IFAD, 2011).

While rural poverty often results from the lack of assets, limited economic opportunities, poor education and capabilities, as well as being intrinsically rooted in social and political inequalities, the mobility out of poverty however, is predominantly associated with government policy, personal initiative and enterprise. In addition, household characteristics such as educational background, ownership of physical assets and even good health can be decisive in the chance of moving out of poverty. Factors beyond household-level, as economic growth, local availability of opportunities, market, infrastructure and enabling institutions—including good governance—are all crucial in combating poverty (IFAD 2011; FAO 2009).

Education is decisive for households’ poverty reduction because non-farm incomes are increasingly important income sources for rural people. Income increase in households is generally related to the advancement in agro-technology, adjustment to market demands, a shift towards more non-agricultural wages and self-employment income, the ability to involve in such higher return activities—whether in agriculture or outside is determined by one’s productivity, employability, adaptability etc. all which can be obtained from education and training (FAO, 2007).

Mobility out of poverty is predominantly associated with government policy, personal initiative and enterprise.
Rural areas are diverse and are in a transition state. In the hope to reduce poverty, a basket of practical solutions and a coherent approach for tackling today’s myriad challenges are needed. Structural transformations, in the terms of building people’s assets and strengthening their capabilities—both individual and collective, creating locally available opportunities and helping them to better manage risks they face, are focal points for interventions (Manzoor, 2011; UNRISD, 2010; IFAD 2011). Today’s paramount need for education programmes is to adapt, adjust and re-direct national educational priorities, strategies and resources to the specific local conditions and needs of diverse and changing rural communities through the committed support of governments, communities, businesses and civil society (Manzoor, 2011).

In many developing countries, like China, the ever interconnected rural and urban areas and the changing nature of ‘rurality’ offers new possibilities and opportunities for poverty alleviation and rural growth (IFAD, 2011). In China, there is a large rural population who suffer from poverty, thus to a large extent, poverty reduction in China rests in solving poverty problems in the rural areas. From 1986, the Chinese government has started the development-oriented poverty reduction programme in rural areas. It formulated and implemented: The Regional Development-Oriented Poverty

Rural policies on one hand concentrate on relieving farmers’ burdens in terms of abolishing the agriculture tax and on the other hand subsidies to help with agriculture production. Moreover, regional policies for the most underdeveloped western region were carried out at the end of 20th century, focusing on infrastructure building such as water conservancy projects, projects of returning cultivated land to forest and projects of resource exploitation. In 2007, the State established a rural subsistent allowance system to cover rural residents whose per capita annual net household income was below the prescribed standard. The standards were determined by the local government according to the necessary living expenditure of the area. This was further developed in the pilot scheme of Social Endowment Insurance for rural people in 2009. By 2011, the scheme has extended to 60% of rural China, covering 493 key counties in the national development–oriented poverty reduction programmes, accounting for 83% of such counties. Under this new type of social endowment insurance for rural residents, the funds needed are pooled from personal contributions, collective grants and government subsidies. In 2010, the Central Government provided a total subsidy of 11.1 billion Yuan for the basic old-age pension funds of the new social endowment insurance for rural residents, while the local finances supplied 11.6 billion Yuan (Information Office of the State Council, 2011).

In the report ‘New Progress in Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction Programme for Rural China’ (ibid.) it showed that in the past decade the national economy of China grew rapidly and poverty incidence decreased from 30.7% to 5.05%. The national poverty line for rural residents was raised from 865 Yuan in 2000 to 1274 Yuan in 2010. Based on this change, the poverty-stricken rural population decreased from 94.22 million at the end of 2000 to 26.88 million at the end of 2010; and their proportion in the total rural population decreased from 10.2 percent in 2000 to 2.8 percent in 2010.

Although China has realized the MDG goal of eliminating poverty-stricken population by half ahead of schedule, levels of poverty vary considerably within the country. Poverty is still rampant in the middle and western regions, mountainous areas and disaster-prone areas, which are key areas for poverty reduction (Wang, 2011).
UNESCO (2010) once stated that education may be the only way to greater social mobility and a way out of poverty in Chinese society. Education and training indeed play a very important role in combination with financial support, including increased input and loans, industrialization and infrastructure building in the national poverty-reduction framework. There are many successful national-wide and bottom-up education, and training projects that either promote agriculture development or aim to increase non-farm income for farmers. For instance the ‘dew programme’ started from 2006. The following cases present two examples of how education and training help with poverty alleviation and local development.
**Dew Programme**

*Source: http://www.yulujihua.com/*

“Dew programme” is led by the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, a government initiative that aims to enhance the quality of human resources, employability and entrepreneurial ability of the poverty-stricken rural population as to enhance their possibilities to work in non-agriculture industries. It targets poverty-stricken people, including 16-45 year-old farmers who have been registered as poor people in the programme; retired veterans who suffer from poverty; and village leaders in the key villages of the programme. It is a training project for surplus rural workforce, specially designed for poverty-stricken populations (another project called “Sunshine Project” that has a wider beneficiary for all rural migrants rather than just people suffering from poverty will be discussed later).

All the transfers of employment activities for poverty-stricken households conducted after the release of the Outline for Poverty Reduction and Development of China’s Rural Areas (2001-2010) were referred as the Dew Programme.

**Way of Implementation**

- Establishing poverty population profile and making training plans according to the actual situation to make sure one economic active person from one household get trained;

- Strengthening and perfecting demonstration bases: 2323 training bases were set up, which forms a training network covers most of the poverty-stricken areas;

- Increasing financial input and exploring multiple funding channels: in the year of 2006, the total amount of training funding is around one billion Yuan. For the purpose of increasing financial investment, multi-channel input methods were actively explored as credit funds, social funds etc. Subsidies for participants of the Dew Programme range from 500 Yuan to one thousand Yuan.

- Standardizing recruiting, training, employment service, fund and subsidy management to ensure the programme benefits
those in need. The whole process of training consists of five steps namely: enrolment, training, job placement, follow-up management and distribution of funds. Stakeholders involved in the process are: trainees, poverty alleviation departments at different level and township government, village committee, training institutions and the employer. The training institutions provide training and employment opportunities for trainees. The training content is demand-oriented, mostly on the subjects of housekeeping, catering, security, hotels service, construction, landscaping, manufacturing, and professions where labour force is in shortage. There are also courses on legal knowledge, rights protection etc. to help rural migrant workers to know and execute their rights. The training time is determined according to the training content, usually from three to six months, generally not more than one year. Poverty alleviation departments are in charge of making training plans, recruiting students, distribution of funds, and supervising of the training institutions.

**Diverse Models in Different Provinces**

There are different implementation models in different provinces. Each province explores its own way of delivering the training according to local context.

Hubei province is the earliest in practicing the Dew Programme. The province focuses on building a syndicated regional training network to gain scale advantages.

Hunan province adopts the ‘work-study’ model. Through cooperation between schools and enterprises, the programme is able to provide work, while the study training programme aspect solves the problem of income loss that trainees face if they take on full-time studies.

Guizhou province employs the ‘three contracts’ approach, which consists of: training bases and department of poverty alleviation; training bases and trainees; and training bases and enterprises. Each respectively, sign a contract that clears responsibilities and protects one’s legitimate rights and interests.

Heilongjiang province actively executes the brand strategy to cultivate a competitive labour force. Brands such as: ‘Yian children’s nurse, Hegang security, Qiqihaer’ taxi driver etc. These brands have become famous and trainees have been well-received by the market.

Chongqing province modified the short-term training programme of the Dew Programme to a medium and long-term training that lasts for one to two years and raised the subsidies for trainees as to fully prepare the poor population for non-farm work.
Impact of the Dew Programme

By 2010, more than four million people suffering from poverty received training from the Dew Programme and 80% of them found jobs outside agriculture. A sample survey revealed that workers who have received training earn 300 to 400 Yuan monthly more than those who have not. The programme not only helped employment and income growth in poorer areas, but also provided chances for the workers to get access to new information and technologies. Thus, broadening their horizon and enhancing their confidence (Information Office of the State Council, 2011).

A sample survey revealed that workers who have received training earn 300 to 400 Yuan monthly more than those who have not.
‘Promoting Agriculture through Science and Education’: The Case of Houjia County in Fujian Province


“Promoting Agriculture through Science and Education” is a strategy that stresses the importance of technology, science and education in agriculture development executed since 1989. It points out that the development of agriculture and rural economy should rely on technology development and improvement of labour force quality. The overall aim is to increase farmers’ income and ensure food production. The strategy is realized through closer integration between agriculture department, science department and education institutions. Under the coordination of government, resources of agriculture, technology, education etc. can be shared and fully utilized to promote local agriculture development that further enhances dissemination and improvement of advanced agricultural technologies and therefore, improves agriculture development and rural economy.

Houjia County of Fujian province serves as one of the many good examples of the “Promoting Agriculture through Science and Education” strategy. Located in a remote mountainous area, Houjia County’s agriculture used to depend solely on limited crop species planting due to poor farming resources and unfavourable cold weather conditions for agriculture development. Therefore, it is an economy backward county and the households’ income of Houjia County mostly comes from selling grain and pigs.

To reduce poverty and increase income, the county government decided to make full use of the resources of the local schools. First, six scattered primary and junior high schools were merged into one school and all the financial support went to this school. Then the school imported around 100 species of crops. Through experiments, 20 species, which are suitable for the local cold weather, were selected and the greenhouse technology was adapted to plant counter-seasonal vegetables. Finally, the counter-seasonal vegetables were put into a large-scale production of 4000 Mu (6 Mu=1 acre) and a large scale production based on the research result was formed. During the process teachers of Houjia School played a very important role in teaching and disseminating agro-technologies to local farmers through classes, field operation demonstrations and providing consulting services. In order to promote the advanced technologies to every household in Houjia, students were also encouraged to study in the vegetable planting group and brought the knowledge to their families. Moreover, teachers of Houjia School also

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formed close connections with experts from Fujian provincial Academy of Agricultural Science as to resolve problems that they encountered in the planting of non-seasonal vegetables.

**Outcome of the programme**

Vegetables produced by Houjia County gradually gained fame and become a well-known brand. The County was assigned as an organic vegetable production base and the average income of vegetable planting households was over ten thousand Yuan. The development of the local economy also means comprehensive development of the county. The government improved infrastructure of the local school and the promotion rate from primary education to junior high school is 100% and from junior high to senior high school 75.8%. Meanwhile, local farmers also raised funds to build a senior citizen service centre, three cement concrete roads and six small hydro-power stations to improve their living conditions. Agriculture advancement, which is dependent on science and technology development and dissemination, is the most important way for farmers to increase their incomes. Through applying the strategy of ‘Promoting Agriculture through Science and Education’, the local economy of Houjia County was revitalized and rural people’s living conditions were improved.

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**Local farmers also raised funds to build a senior citizen service centre, three cement concrete roads and six small hydro-power stations to improve their living conditions**
Poverty Reduction

Source: Ganzhou News
Theme II Skills Training

Skills are essential for lifting the disadvantaged rural population. Skills improve one’s productivity, adaptability to handle changes and crisis, and to facilitate the diversification of livelihoods. To manage risks are a primary importance in the rural transformation process. Effectively providing these skills is one of the key challenges for today’s education and training, yet it is still not well met, usually due to contextual factors that prevent farmers from accessing and applying training (Collett & Gale, 2009).

Skills and capacity development for rural people do not limited to technical and vocational skills. Education and training for the purpose of rural transformation does not deviate from other forms of education all which have the ultimate goal is to improve the overall quality of life for people. Thus, skills needed in the transition process direct to a wider scope that does not only refer to professional skills for improvement of rural residents’ economic conditions, but also to one’s life skills, attitude towards changes, changes of values etc. that leads to overall empowerment (Zhang, 2010).

In China, different stakeholders such as the Chinese government, civil society and educational institutions are actively involved in skills training for the rural population. Training is often needs-based, tacking different learning needs of diverse rural groups, varying from professional skills training to life skills training to training of new technologies as ICT, and the following cases are good examples of such practices.

Professional Skills Training

Technical and vocational training is essential for improving productivity and entering non-agricultural industries. The Sunshine Project and the Green Certificate Project are two national-wide training projects for improving rural residents’ professional skills.
As mentioned before, the Sunshine Project is the twin project to the Dew Programme. It aims to help rural migrants to get employment in non-agricultural industries through proper training. It is a nationwide pilot project that operates under the cooperation of Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Construction since 2004. The project mainly practices in grain producing areas, labour force regions, poverty-stricken areas and areas with revolutionary history.

The Sunshine project administration structure is divided into two levels. The national office is responsible for policy-making, coordination and supervision of the whole project. At the local level, where actual training takes place, local offices are responsible for the project implementation in terms of relevance to local contexts. The local office selects a training provider in an open, fair and impartial manner in the form of open tender. Then the training institution develops and organizes training programmes as well as furnishes job placement services with consideration of local market demands. The Sunshine project mainly focuses on short-time vocational skills training lasting from 15 to 90 days. The most common training subjects are skills required by catering, hotels, health care, construction and manufacturing industries etc.
Implementation

The national office, by judging available funding, labour force condition and employment situations of different provinces, determines the training task—the number of rural people that need to be trained during a period of time. Local offices take the responsibilities of planning and implementing a specific programme in order to meet the assignment. Through public bidding, training institutions are chosen. According to the “Provisions of Management of Sunshine Programme (For Trial Implementation)”, the training institutions have to fulfill the following conditions to be legitimate:

1) an independent legal representative with qualification for vocational education and training;
2) qualified infrastructures and teaching staffs for required training;
3) well-established contacts with the labour market as to facilitate employment of trainees;
4) familiar with education and training rural people and has good outcomes from previous training;
5) geographically close to the targeted training population.

The training unit has to provide a detailed report about the specific programme in terms of training subject, time duration, number of trainees, employment possibilities and tuition fees, to the local office to be approved. Once the application has been accepted, it will be reported to the national office. The local office is also requested to provide a quarterly progress report of the programme to the national office for quality control. We can see the operational process of Sunshine programme more clearly in the following Figure (Figure 1 Operational Process of Sunshine Project).
Figure 1 Operational Process of Sunshine Project

- **Sunshine Project National Office**
  - Policy-making, coordination and supervision
  - Providing quarterly progress report

- **Sunshine Project Local Office**
  - Determine training provider through Open tender
  - Provide detailed report about the training plan

- **Training Institutions (mostly schools)**
  - Develop and organize training programs as well as providing employment opportunities.

- **Rural surplus labor force**
Chinese Village Education for Rural Transformation
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Source: Ganzhou News.
**Funding**

In Sunshine project, the expense of training is shared by the government and the individual trainee. Government funds come from the Central Government budget and ear-marked local financial support. Government subsidizes training institutions to reduce the training fees. But according to investigation by national office, the average cost for training is around 602 Yuan (RMB), while subsidies granted by the government was only 254 in 2007, which means trainees still have to pay a considerable amount of money. This may be a problem for the most disadvantage groups to access to training when needed.

**Quality control and supervision**

When it comes to supervision of the Sunshine project, there are two key points of concern. One is quality and outcomes of training. The other is the use of government funding. Supervision focuses on the use of project funds to ensure financial support directly benefits trainees. The training institution bears the responsibility of the use of funding, and the legal representative will be inspected by local and central government, unauthorized changes in the use of funds, misuse will be strictly punished. For ensuring quality education and training, local offices are requested to hand in quarterly progress report to national office, and randomly some programmes will be checked by national office.

**Impact of Sunshine Project**

It is a typical top-down model where planning, implementation and supervision of the project are controlled by the national office. It is less participatory but the demand-oriented element is still strong as the training content is determined by the needs of local farmers and the market (Shan, Zhao and Wang 2010). In addition, as it is carried out by Central Government, its breadth spreads to the whole country. The mission is imperative to the local government, which expands access of learning opportunities to rural people.

According to the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, 8.3 million rural migrants participated in the training that the project provided between 2004 and 2006, in which 7.2 million that is 86.7% of the total trainees successfully found jobs in towns and urban areas. The participants of the Sunshine project have an average income of 883 Yuan monthly, which is 400 Yuan more than the income they get from farming and 200 Yuan more of the income of their untrained counterparts (ibid.).
‘Green Certificate’ Project


In 1990, the State Council and the Ministry of Agriculture promoted the technical qualification system for farmers in order to ensure the quality of agricultural practitioners. Professions within this qualification scheme are planting, animal husbandry and veterinary, fisheries, agricultural machinery management, rural cooperative economic management, rural energy and agricultural environment protection etc. There are three levels of qualifications, namely, the Preliminary-level Certificate, which is equal to the Junior Vocational Certificate; the Intermediate-level Certificate, which equals to the technical secondary school diploma; and the Senior-level Certificate, which is the same as a college diploma.

In consideration of the national situation of China, the aim of the project is to develop a farmers’ technical backbone team that serves as a role model for other farmers and further promotes the application of scientific and technological achievements. The target groups of the project are social service department workers who hold high school certificates, village officials, specialized households, scientific and technological demonstration households and practitioners of technical-oriented positions rather than all rural people. The innovative qualification system for farmers not merely provides
training opportunities for professional development of agriculture technicians, but guarantees standardized quality control of the technical-oriented positions. The training process of the ‘Green Certificate’ project can be seen from the Figure following (Figure 2).

Re-examination refers to obtaining the ‘Green Certificate’ accordingly through the agricultural scientific and technological progress and productivity improvement. The holders of the ‘Green Certificate’ have to learn continuously and participate in training and examination on a regular basis. The validity of the ‘Green Certificate’ depends on the time to time re-examinations, which consists of two aspects: the certificate holder’s production condition- their working performance, and participation in training.

![Figure 2 The Training Process of the ‘Green Certificate’ Project](image-url)

**Figure 2 The Training Process of the ‘Green Certificate’ Project**
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The certificate gives the holder priority access to production materials, loans, training and seminars, village official selection and higher agriculture institutions. On the other hand, the certificate holders must also assist technical personnel demonstrate and promote technologies, to disseminate knowledge and technology as well as provide technical services to local farmers.

The training of the project is usually carried out by the Township Agricultural Broadcasting and Television Schools, technical and vocational schools, adult schools and technology promoting training centres. Multiple sources including tuition fees, ear-marked funds from education and agriculture sectors are gathered for the funding of the ‘Green Certificate’ project.

**Impact of the project**

Up to the year 2000 there were 10.29 million people who benefited from the training project, in which 4.58 million obtained the ‘Green Certificate’. During the ten years of implementation, the government financed 250 million Yuan and trainees themselves raised 180 million Yuan. 72 thousand training bases and 34 thousand practice bases were established. It is a well-received training project by all levels of government and farmers. The ‘Green Certificate’ project not only standardizes the qualifications for technical-oriented agriculture occupations, but also ensures the quality of practitioners. The certificate holders also have clearer view of their career development prospects.

**Life Skills Training**

Life skills including communication and interpersonal skills, decision-making and critical thinking skills as well as coping and self-management skills are all aspects of basic learning needs for all (UNICEF, 2006). Early childhood education is one of the weakest spots in rural education, as it is not included in the compulsory education system and requires more resources to implement. Providing necessary knowledge and skills for child-bearing age rural women and mothers is of crucial importance. The ‘Mother School’ in Dayi County provides a way of filling this gap.
Health skills are one of the most significant aspects of life skills needed in rural areas, in which motherhood education is a primary concern. The demand for breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, morbidity, reduced learning capacity and mortality in rural areas where mothers lack infant care knowledge and skills are paramount (Government of India, 2011). The newspaper story of the ‘Parenting School’ in Dayi County of Chengdu is one example in addressing the problem.

The zero to three years old infant-toddlers ‘parenting school’ was officially opened in the Longhua community in 2008. More than 60 families and expectant mothers attended the first class. Teachers from the county’s bilingual kindergarten explained the concept of infant and early childhood education, taught knowledge and methods...
of scientific feeding and preparation for entering school to the class participants.

The Longhua community is one of the four demonstration bases for ‘Parenting Schools’ of Dayi County that provides training in parental guidance, childcare, child growth and development, to expectant mothers, parents and their relatives. The training deliverance is flexible and responsive to individual needs. Class participants can choose from various forms of training, for instance, training class, mother salon, parent-child club, seminars, consultation service, online guidance and / or door-to-door service.

Early childhood education is fundamental for children’s cognitive and health development. The parenting school of Dayi County provides training on motherhood education and scientific parenting knowledge assists in making up the missing element of preschool care and education in sharing and utilizing good educational resources in the local area. It enables children from rural areas to enjoy the same resources as urban children.
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The Use of ICT

Agriculture ‘Electronization’ in Lichuan


The agriculture “electronization” project in Lichuan City started from 2003 when the agriculture electronization leading offices at the city and village level were established for project implementation.

The government initiative gives priority to the promotion of ICT in agriculture. Around four million Yuan was given to build the electronic agriculture base and one million Yuan was offered to establish a city-county-village three levelled network. At first, the promotion work was to expand the use of ICT to the maximum extent, but this model was constrained due to limited financial resources, no relevance to specific needs of each household and no follow up technical assistance. Therefore, the promotion model was changed to develop key demonstration villages and collectives with certain industrial basis.

Wuzhou Animal Husbandry Company of Wangying Town is an example, the company is a farmers’ professional cooperative that focuses on pig breeding and organic fertilizer producing. It consists of 648 rural households in 13 counties and towns. Since it was assigned as the demonstration base for agriculture electronization in 2008, the company has sent many staff members to attend ICT training organized by the city leading office, on the subjects of how to collect useful agricultural information, how to use expert systems and the internet. Furthermore, the city leading office organized experts to make a detailed development plan for the company including developing a series of software on ‘pig disease diagnosis’, feed formula and standardized breeding, which were later utilized for the company’s production management, staff training, and instruction for members of the collective and local farms. The city leading office invested 300 thousand Yuan to build a computer network monitoring system that allows automated monitoring and remote network management.
Impact of the project

The application of ICT has highly improved the work efficiency of managers, technicians and members of the collective. For example, managers of the company who are on a business trip to Beijing or Shanghai can easily monitor the conditions of the farms and execute remote command; technical staff can carry his laptop into the pigpen to impart knowledge and techniques on pig breeding and disease control. Through accepting training and adopting advanced information technology, the management efficiency was greatly improved, while the cost of labour, marketing, staff training etc. was reduced. Moreover, the competitiveness of the company was upgraded resulting in more than 3 million Yuan of profit.
Theme III

Capacity Building of Local Community & Lifelong Learning System

Source: Agricultural Bureau of Muding County
http://t1.baidu.com/it/u=583308852,843026463&fm=18&gp=0.jpg
The decentralization of responsibilities to local communities has emerged in the domain of education as one of the major strategies supported by the government. This is a timely response to the desire for a sustainable local institution that can meet the diverse and actual learning needs of the various local groups (UNESCO, 2006).

Community-based educational programmes are not new to many countries. There have been innovative programmes launched by the government and NGOs over the years around the world. The Community Learning Centre (CLC) is a local educational institution outside the formal system, usually set-up and managed by local people to create various learning opportunities (APPEAL, 1995). The intention is to generate grassroots level interest and participation in education and training programmes as well as to utilize the resources and advantages of the local community to ensure sustainability and pertinence of the programmes. In this regard, the CLC is an effective mechanism in implementing needs-based educational activities to enhance skills and capacities for seizing economic opportunities and improving the overall quality of life (UNESCO, 2006).

In the meantime, it is also clear that CLCs have several corollary advantages related to community development, “such as increased social cohesion, upgraded organizational skills and a sense of empowered community commitment to problem solving” (UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, 2002, p.3). The sustained institutions of CLCs enable lifelong learning opportunities through the diverse ‘time to time’ training according to the community learning needs.

In China, community education is receiving increasing attention at the policy-making level as the means of creating lifelong learning opportunities and building the learning society since a national meeting on the development of Community Education Centres in 2001. Currently, there are more than 200 municipal level community training bases, designated as pilot bases by the Ministry of Education,
which accounts for a quarter of the total number of such municipal centres (Hengyang Lifelong Learning Networking, 2010).

The rural CLCs programme in China was an UNESCO initiation in the Asia-Pacific Region in the 1990s (Chen, 2010). The pilot CLCs were set up in Gansu and Guangxi province in 1997 and more than 60 CLCs were established at the village and county levels. The main task of the CLCs is to improve labour force productivity and the overall quality of rural livelihood. The ultimate goal of CLCs is to promote community development and to serve as a platform for lifelong learning in rural areas. The two provinces were chosen because of the comparatively high illiteracy rate and the high proportion of poverty-stricken population (Gansu Institute for Educational Research, 2007). Later the institution of CLCs flourished within the country at the rural grassroots level. It functions as a focal point of the community's empowerment for transformation, poverty alleviation and equitable and sustainable human development since then.

Generally speaking, the target groups of rural CLCs are youth and adult male, women, children and minorities. All diverse groups with different learning needs thus, activities launched by the CLCs are tailor-made for different groups. For the male labour force technical and vocational trainings classes were provided such as: agricultural machinery, animal husbandry and veterinary, raising livestock, planting technology, pruning fruit trees, and making cement. Women play a significant role in the family's healthcare and household economy. In this regard, knowledge on fertility awareness, healthcare, civilization way of life, family planning, family economic skills and gender equality concepts were included in the basic content of education for women. Special training classes such as training in sewing, healthcare etc. were supplied also for income generation. Minorities are the most vulnerable groups of the poor, as most of them live in remote areas with backward natural conditions and social infrastructure. Historical inequality, unique culture, customs, religion, language and other factors more or less contribute to the current challenging situation they face, which make training more complex (Jing, Qi and Cui, 2001).

According to local conditions and learning demands, there are different implementation models of CLCs, such as 1) school plus demonstration model; 2) school plus enterprise plus rural household model; 3) school plus cultural station model (Chen & Jing, 2003). It is...
worth noting that local schools are always at the centre of the training projects.

The following case of CLC in Liushao County and Lianhe County is one of the best practices of CLCs in Yunnan province. Yunnan is one of the poorest provinces of the country in 2002, per capita GDP was US $627 and the rural per capita income was US $195. Of the total population, 74% lived in rural areas and 33% of the rural people lived below the national poverty line (around 0.31 US $ per day). It is also a target province in the national development plan, as indicated in the 11th Five Year Plan for National Economy and Social Development (2006-2010).

Community Learning Centre in Liushao County and Lianhe County of Yunnan Province


**Background**

In order to explore a way that fully utilizes the power of schools and the local community, in order to promote socio-economic development and empower rural people, Community Learning Centres (CLC) as a programme was founded in 2001 in Liushao County and Lianhe County (both minority inhabited areas) of the Yunnan province. Through practical experience and trial, a structure has developed in the CLC, which consists of four components (or pillars as they are called), namely, a training centre, a library, a development centre and a cultural activity centre. The principles of participatory-learning and the close link between educational activities and the community are taken as the guide for the CLC to produce comprehensive benefits for all in the community.

**Implementation**

The CLC was designed by a research group of Yunnan Normal University. A unique local model was attempted to be developed according to education and social situation of Liushao County and Lianhe County. Local primary schools and community committees were directly involved in establishing the CLC with the support of the local government and technical guidance from higher education institutions. The aim was to fulfil the learning needs of teachers, students, parents and villagers of the county. The four components or pillars, noted above, represent different and somewhat independent functions of CLC; but they serve a shared goal, which is to improve
the overall quality of local human resources, facilitate economic growth, and preserve and promote minority cultural heritages in the area.

The training centre provides three kinds of education and training: a) training for rural teachers; b) courses for community members (including literacy and basic “life skills”); and c) training in modern agro-technologies. The library was set up in 2005 in order to “enrich knowledge and spiritual development” of the local people. The development centre offers opportunities for trainees to put knowledge learnt from the CLC into practice and to help trainees undertake income-earning activities. New and advanced agro-technologies are also demonstrated and promoted by the development centre. The cultural activity centre of the CLC is a unique feature of the CLCs. Located in an area of ethnic minorities, preserving and promoting the local cultures has been seen as one of the functions of the CLC. By adding knowledge from the traditional culture into the learning content and holding various traditional cultural activities, trainees are encouraged to learn about and be proud of their ethnic identities. The organizational structure including the four “pillars” and how they interact with each other and promote the objectives of the CLC in Liushao and Lianhe County are shown in Figure 3.
Villagers (including students, teachers and parents)

Community Committee

Provide education and training

Establish the CLC

CLC in Liushao County and Lianhe County

Local Primary Schools

Cooperation

Training Centre

Library

Development Centre

Cultural Activity Centre

Figure 3 Organizational Structure of CLC in Yunnan
Impact of the CLC

Over a period of seven years, approximately 1500 people directly benefited from the training provided by the centres. The library enriches the spiritual life of training recipients and strengthens their connection with outside world. The CLC took advantage of the geographic condition in Liushao and Lianhe County to establish a potato planting laboratory. After four years of research and practice, potato planting has become a competitive industry for the two counties. In addition, numerous cultural promotion activities were undertaken to enhance appreciation and respect for ethnic cultural identity and traditions. The four components of the CLC were directed to serve multiple purposes: to empower rural people, cultivate human resources, improve livelihood, and promote ethnic culture. The CLC represents a bottom-up model, where learners from the local community are closely involved in establishing the centre and in implementing its activities. Organizational skills and capacity of the local community were enhanced through the participatory approach. The emphasis is on empowering people to help themselves through learning and development activities including skill development, income generation and well-rounded development of human resources. Education and training is no longer a time-bound activity but can be obtained whenever there is a need.

Four components of the CLC were directed to serve multiple purposes: to empower rural people, cultivate human resources, improve livelihood, and promote ethnic culture
Theme IV Spiritual Civilization Building

Theme IV Spiritual Civilization Building

Driven by Marxism ideology, the Chinese government believes that the superstructure including society’s culture, institutions, political power structures, roles, rituals and state are as important as the economic base. To be more precise, spiritual civilization building of rural people is as crucial as to economic development in respect to the overall well-being of rural people. The blueprint of ‘a new countryside’ consists of five aspects, including production development, living standards improvement, civilized atmosphere, neatness of the villages, and democratic management. Civilized atmosphere refers to the spiritual life of and relationship between villagers (Wang, 2008). As far as ‘constructing the new rural countryside’ is concerned, social cohesion, integration, assimilation, behaviour and psychological norms that brought by the spiritual civilization are indispensable in the process (Yu, 2009). As pointed out by Ji (2012), relying only on laws and regulations would be insufficient to effectively promote sustainable rural development. Building of spiritual civilization serves as intangible power for community management and development.

In 2011, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued “the Opinions on Further Promoting the Strengthening of the Construction of Villages’ Cultural and Ethical Progress in a New Situation”. This is a further promotion of the government document of “Opinions on Promoting and Strengthening the Construction of Villagers’ Cultural and Ethical Progress” of 1995. The policy document pointed out several aspects for building spiritual civilization: 1) to speed up infrastructure construction, while protecting rural historical and cultural heritance; 2) to construct civilized, peaceful rural communities with democratic management and a monocratic, honest and trustworthy, neat and orderly market environment; 3) to develop and improve village regulations and agreements and guide farmers to self-education and self-management; 4) to put great efforts on the popularization of science and to carry out promotion activities on democracy and law to avoid wrong behaviours such as illegal gambling; 5) to carry out cultural and recreational-related activities to preserve and revitalize Chinese cultural traditions etc.

We can see that the emphasis is on moral building, culture revitalization and the promotion of the sense of democracy embedded within the village independent system for which civic education and moral education are of great importance. Awareness and knowledge on democracy, political and legal system determine one’s ability to execute democratic choices and realization of democracy hence, civic
education is indispensable. In China, civic education and moral education to a large extent interact with each other. Fostering the concept of patriotism and collectivism between farmers is also important in the building of spiritual civilization in rural areas (Liu, 2007; Liu & Yu, 2012).

The chosen case presents an interesting experience of how rural spiritual civilization is pursued in the rural areas of the Beilun District in Ningbo city.

Source: Shuangfeng County Government
http://www.hnsf.gov.cn/item/2589.aspx
Spiritual Civilization and Construction of a New Rural Countryside: the Case of Beilun District


The first step for a spiritual civilization construction in Beilun District is to increase investment for infrastructure building to promote cultural activities in the villages of the District. Several actions were taken including: 1) supporting and improving the village and town-level cultural stations; 2) through multi-channel fund raising, 12 million Yuan was collected to establish recreation facilities, including 147 cultural facilities, 35 exercise corridors and 113 parks. It is ensured that every village has a reading room, a recreation room and a transmitter to share information and knowledge, laws and regulations to villagers, and two thirds of the villages have a library. 3) Revitalizing folk cultural resources: to preserve and promote local folk cultural activities like lion dance, stilt walking and etc.

The second step was to improve the living environment of the villages, including the water supply for most of the villages, improvement of public transportation, electricity network upgrading, river clean-up and three-squared septic tank building. In inner-migrants concentrated areas, strengthening of public security. Furthermore, villagers were involved in formulating village rules and regulations under the guidance of the Department of Civil Affairs during the re-election of villagers’ committee. This activity made one component of the re-election, which gave the chance for villagers to better understand the rules and regulations, and increased their interest in the democratic progress.

Finally, civic education, education and training regarding morality, policies promotion, environment protection etc. were carried out through local adult schools and the Party School of CPC. The Ningbo City Committee enabled and enhanced the above mentioned actions. Different mediums as blackboards, newspapers, television, news-window, and role model campaigns were utilized for popularizing knowledge, value and information in relation to moral and civic building on a daily basis. There is also an annual training on ‘how to become a national civilized village’.

Impact

Through the action of building a spiritual civilization 49 villages out of 215 been rated as ‘civilized villages’. Various cultural activities were organized, which on one hand enriched local farmers’ lives and on the other hand, preserved and promoted traditional folk culture.
Wrongful behaviours like gambling were effectively eliminated. Moreover, the active participation in drafting regulations has enhanced the rural people’s awareness of democracy as well as their familiarization of the legal system. It not only improves the living environment in rural areas of Beilun District, but also enriches rural people’s lives, builds up good values and a sense of democracy, which will help further with economic development and the overall well-being of Beilun rural residents.
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Source: Cixi Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Film, TV, Press and Publication.
Theme V

Spreading of New Concepts as Sustainable Development

Source: Yongshun County Labour Employment Service Administration Center
Theme V

Spreading of New Concepts as Sustainable Development

The 2009 UNDP China Report pointed out that in the process of rapid growth, China is facing two major challenges: sustainability and equity. Today, in some areas of the country, environmental pollution threatens people’s health and productivity. The unsustainable way of resource usage due to a low technological level as well as the rapid depletion of resources, result from an increased demand-making the current economic growth unsustainable.

China’s determination to develop a green economy was made clear at the UN Climate Change Summit in September 2009, when President Hu Jintao committed that China will step-up efforts to develop a green, low-carbon and circular economy and enhance research, development and dissemination of environment friendly technologies” (UNDP China & Renmin University, 2009).

Every year, there are around 6000 agriculture, scientific and technological achievements, but the transfer rate of these achievements is only 30% to 40%. This same figure in developed countries is 70% to 80%. Furthermore, the popularization rate of the transferred technology is only 30% to 40% in China, which means that two thirds of the transferred scientific and technological achievements were not applied into agriculture production practice (Zhao, 2004). This shocking fact implies the severe gap between agriculture academia and the actual production in the field.

Serving local development is higher education institution’s main task and way of improving related disciplines and quality of students. It is a win-win action for both sides (Tong & Qiu, 2011). Since the promotion of the strategy-‘Integrating Agriculture with Education and Science’, there have been a lot of attempts to bridging education, science and agriculture. Successful cases that materialized the strategy according to local conditions emerged successively, for instance, the ‘Taihang Mountain Road’ of Agricultural University of Hebei; the ‘science and technology caravan’ project and ‘hundreds professors serve the villages project’ of Nanjing Agricultural University.
Integrating Agriculture with Education and Science: The Experience of Building an Ecological Agriculture System in Daguan Town


Guizhou province is an agriculture-based area with low productivity and a fragile natural environment. Arable land per person is only 0.046 hm² and the karst area accounts for three fourths of the province. Meanwhile, agriculture is unsustainable due to backward agricultural technology, low resource utilization efficiency, waste and a severely damaged local environment. Therefore, the promotion of agricultural science and technology into practical productive forces, promoting sustainable agricultural growth patterns, strengthening the construction of ecological agriculture, accelerating the modernization of Guizhou agriculture, and increasing farmers’ income is necessary to achieve prosperity and sustainable development.

In 2003, Guizhou University started a programme entitled ‘integrating agriculture with education and science, and building an ecological agriculture system’ in the Daguan Town of Qianxi County of Guizhou. The trick of this successful model was described by local...
farmers as ‘circle around farmers, help farmers to understand, set examples for farmers’: circle around farmers’ points out the purpose of serving farmers (farmer-centred); ‘help farmers to understand’ means that to assist farmers to compare and to understand the examples for farmers: ‘circle around farmers’ points out the purpose of serving farmers (farmer-centred); ‘help farmers to understand’ means that to assist farmers to compare and to understand the benefits of scientific farming in a simple understandable language and to find the path to move out of poverty; ‘set examples for them’ refers to the ‘in person’ demonstration of advanced technologies and knowledge, which allowed farmers to grasp advanced, practical and effective agricultural technologies.

The project team first examined the land, population, agriculture production, and the environment conditions of Daguan County, then proposed a development plan for ‘sustainable agriculture,’ including a balanced industrial structure, an ecological circle and increased income as well as local development. Based on the development plan, the corresponding training and technology dissemination plans were implemented.

The programme tries to set up a sustainable agriculture at Qianxi Town through four dimensions:

**Promote Suitable Species and Good Cultivation Method**

To promote corn, rapeseed, tobacco, potatoes, and other crops, and related agricultural production techniques, such as: seed, seedling nutrition, directional transplanting, balanced fertilization, pest control, intercrop maize and alfalfa etc. in Daguan Town. These technologies have been well received by local farmers, which increased the production for more than 20%. Also, the ternary structure planting pattern of intercropping corn, tobacco, rapeseed, and high-quality forage introduced by the programme guaranteed the synchronized and coordinate development of both crop production and animal husbandry for ensured pasture and grain output. As showed from Table 3-1, the grain production in 2004 was 15125 tons, which increased by 22% and per capita income of local farmers increased 21% compared to 2002.
Table 3: Per Capita Income Development in Daguan Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grain output(ton)</th>
<th>Per capita net income of farmer(Yuan)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>12371</td>
<td>1430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>15125</td>
<td>1724</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Strengthen the development of animal husbandry and improve livestock species*

The implementation team from Guizhou University and the Animal Husbandry Bureau of Qianxi County has imported cross-bred pigs and cattle to improve the local breeds. In 2004, the production value of animal husbandry industry was 20.37 million Yuan, which increased to 48.7% in 2002. The production value proportion of the industry in total agriculture production value increased to 15% in 2002.

Table 4: Development of Animal Husbandry in Daguan Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Output of animal husbandry (million)</th>
<th>Agriculture output(million)</th>
<th>Proportion of animal husbandry output in total agriculture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>43.63</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>20.37</td>
<td>56.58</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Technical and Vocational Trainings for Farmers*

During the years of implementation, the project team organized several trainings on corn, rapeseed, tobacco, potato planting, plant nutrition etc. There were more than 20 training programmes carried out with 10 thousand participants. The team compiled and gave out 20 thousand various learning materials to local farmers. Meanwhile, various seminars, television teaching and field instructions were adopted to solve problems that the farmers faced in the process of production.

Furthermore, more than 600 farmers obtained the ‘Green Certificate’ through training, 4300 households became technology demonstration families promoting the dissemination and usage of technology and economic development in Daguan Town.
With the help of the programme, local farmers built up 120 horizontal silos, 40 ammoniation pools and 52 biogas digesters, which formed a virtuous cycle that not only reduced farmers’ dependence on environment and destruction of it, but also formed a virtuous cycle in favour of an ecological environment and sustainable agricultural development.

**Establish Out-school Bases to Promote Integration of Agriculture, Science and Education**

Due to the implementation of the programme, the link between farmers, higher educational institution, local government, agriculture research institutes were greatly enhanced. There has been more communication to combine research and practice and to convert research results to actual productivity. Guizhou University, the Qianxi County Animal Husbandry Bureau and the Qianxi County Agriculture Bureau jointly established an ‘agriculture, science and education integration base’. Over the past few years, the planting and breeding professionals of Guizhou University came to the base several times to give instruction. Students majoring in animal husbandry, veterinary, agriculture, soil etc. are able to take an internship at the base. The research conducted by Guizhou University was closely related to local needs, such as rational fertilization of hybrid corn, screening of superior varieties; tobacco scientific picking and baking etc. in addition to the internship, students were responsible for conducting investigations and providing consultation services to local farmers, and publicising advanced agricultural science knowledge and technology.

The setting up of the out-school base not only catered to the needs of the programme, which is to establish an profitable ecological agriculture system in Daguan Town, but also promoted the combination of theory and practice improving the utility of related research at Guizhou University.
Theme VI
Women Empowerment and Democratic Development

Source: Leli County Government
http://www.hnsf.gov.cn/item/2589.aspx
The disadvantaged status of rural women resulting from historical and cultural reasons is still pervasive in most developing countries (Saxena, 2011). Thus, it is self-evident that rural women need to be empowered to equally participate in the economic, political and social developments of rural society. Especially in the intensifying process of urbanization when more and more males migrate to urban areas and women who were left behind have to shoulder the burden of the family and function under multiple identities (Han, 2008).

The empowerment of women means firstly for them to grasp the necessary skills to undertake a number of tasks either individually or in groups, so that they have further access to, and control of, social resources. Through this discrimination against women can be reduced allowing women to take a more influential role in confronting gender discrimination (Saxena, 2011). According to the experience of developing countries, women empowerment is realized through comprehensive development, economic empowerment and upgrading of people’s mind-sets (Han, 2008).

The notion of women empowerment was introduced to China in the early 1990s through foreign aid programmes (Chen, 2008). The ‘Chinese Women Development Guideline’ (2011-2020) refers to the last decade as a ‘golden time’ for women development, due to China making significant progress in promoting women’s development and gender equality. More and more women can enjoy the benefits of social welfare; poverty-stricken women’s livelihood have been improved; women’s political and social participation were further enhanced; the educational level of women has been improved steadily, which further narrows the educational gap between men and women; women’s health was significantly improved, the average life expectancy was extended; continued increase of the protection of women’s rights legislation and laws regarding protection of women’s rights were strengthened; and the social environment for women’s development was further improved. According to the Third Survey of Chinese Women’s Social Status, the ratio of women working in agriculture is 45.3% (Information Office of the State Council, 2011b), while rural women who entered in the village party branch and village committee in the year of 2008 accounts for 21.7%, an increase of 5% compare to 2005 (Zheng, 2010; Lu, 2011). The number increased due to government promotions as stated in the ‘Chinese Women
Development Guideline (2011-2020), women’s participation in the political domain is to be further enhanced.

In the complex and diverse rural community practice, female village officials serve as important participants, active for the villagers’ autonomy and grassroots leaders to shoulder the major task of the comprehensive development of rural society. Rural women’s political participation has become one of the important indicators to measure the degree of social democracy and gender equity. To improve the majority of rural women’s political participation is not only conducive to gender equity, but also beneficial to promoting China’s rural social, political, economic and cultural construction. As stated by Lu (2011), female county officials are often more careful, responsible, good at family planning, and mediating of disputes between villagers.

The chosen case is an on-the-job training programme for women village officials who demonstrate an educational intervention for the purpose of women empowerment and gender equity.

![Image of women in a classroom](http://www.westwomen.org/peixun/2008/0722/article_36.html)

**Jade Polishing Plan (Women Village Official Training Programme)**

*Source: Shantou University*

The Jade Polishing Plan—the women village official training programme is funded by the Li Kashing Foundation in cooperation with the National Women’s Federation, higher education institutions,
China Education Television and other multi-stakeholders. It is an innovative initiation designed to improve the comprehensive quality and capability of the village’s ‘two committees’ women leaders through advanced technology and educational concept and thus maximizing leverage effect to draw more government and social resources and investment, and further promote gender equity and Chinese rural women’s development.

The pilot projects were firstly implemented in Anhui Province, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Chaozhou and Shantou regions of Guangdong Province from 2010. The project implementation is divided into research preparatory phase, implementation phase and evaluation and summarization phase. In the end of 2009, the programme entered into the preparatory phase. The China Women’s Federation and Li Ka Shing Foundation have successively organized seminars in Hefei of the Anhui province, Shantou of the Guangdong province and Nanning of the Guangxi province to determine the learning needs of women village officials. The core curriculum, framework and content of special courses were settled during these seminars, which laid a solid foundation for the smooth implementation of the programme. There was also a training class held at Shantou University to prepare project managers from the Women’s Federation. In the implementation phase, the main activities are to organize teacher training courses, the demonstration classes for village women leaders and series of training courses. A seminar on grassroots women leader capacity was held as a discussion and reflection of the programme. From July 9, 2010 to July 15, 2010, the Li Ka Shing Foundation and China Women’s Federation organized a teacher training workshop at Shantou University, which formed a core teachers’ team that can be seen as play the role of the ‘seed’ teacher staff for the programme. From July 28, 2010 to August 2, 2010, the first demonstration training class of rural village women officials took place at Guangxi University that played an exemplary role for later training classes in the training content, methods and effect.

The programme passed into the full implementation process and training classes were carried out in Anhui University, Shantou University, Guangxi University and Guangxi Agricultural College simultaneously.
**Participatory Training**

The training usually takes five to six days at the campus and adopts the participatory, scenario-based, case-based pedagogy to help women leaders to get to know themselves; to understand the concept of women leadership and make development plans; to learn basic skills of ICT and to learn how to handle relationships and mobilize resources; to interpret village laws and regulations and to design a profitable project for their own village. One of the most valuable elements of the Jade Polish Plan is that it provides 20 thousand Yuan as funding for feasible projects that are designed by the training participants, and this is called the ‘seed plan’. Training participants are able to apply what they learned from class allowing for practice and the materialization of it. After the on-campus training, there are also follow-up practice support including consultation services, supervisions and other services provided for the trainees. At the later stage of the programme, China Education Television will be involved in assisting the development of distance training resources, which can benefit more rural women leaders. The programme intends to organize international forums to summarize and evaluate the programme in the last phase. One training project at Shantou University is given as an example of the on-campus curriculum in the Table ‘Example of the On-Campus Curriculum’.

**Impact of the programme**

Female village officials are a key element for democratic development and gender equity. The training for women village officials does not merely realized their own development and participation in the political domain, but also enables them to better understand management and use that knowledge to benefit local people. In addition, the ‘seed plan,’ which supports the establishment of local businesses, is a concrete aid and starting point for local prosperity.

Up until now, there have been 112 training projects that trained 4305 women village officials. There are 225 ‘seed plans’ put into practice that has been given 1.3465 million Yuan funding.
Women Empowerment & Democratic Development

Source: Shantou University.
http://qipu.stu.edu.cn/style.aspx
### Table 5: Example of the On-Campus Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Theme 1 Self-exploration and Development Planning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Leadership style recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Self-evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar on women leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2</td>
<td>Theme 1 Self-exploration and Development Planning (continued)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gender consciousness and women leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The advantages of women leadership and expanding support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reduce the pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Development planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 2 ICT Training**
- Basic training on ICT
- How to find information and knowledge
- How to use distance education

Self-evaluation
Team sports training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Theme 3 Ability of Leading, Mobilization and Coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Effective communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Mediation of disputes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Conflict management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identification and management of community resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Community development planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Theme 4 Interpretation of Laws and Regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Interpretation of laws and regulations and gender perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How to apply national laws and regulations to local conditions and make autonomy regulations at village level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Strategies and methods for promoting policies and distributing resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme 5 Implementing, Designing and Managing a Project**
- How to design a unique project with high input-output ratio for your village
- Project management: accountability, transparency and supervision and evaluation
- Introduce the concept and design of the ‘seed plan’

Self-evaluation
Practicing ICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Optional Courses (choose one out of two)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Economic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Supporting and serving family education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Optional Courses (choose one out of two)**
- Community care and service development
- Promoting rural healthcare

Project participants design the ‘seed plan’ individually and have group discussion
Self-evaluation
Practicing ICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 6</th>
<th>Reporting the ‘seed plan’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summarizing and evaluating the five-day training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completion of the training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concluding Remarks

Source: Lu’an Xinhua Educator Blog
http://luanpim.blog.edu.cn/2010/571363.html
Concluding Remarks

China is a huge and diverse country and education for rural transformation is a complex topic thus as a result, this current report reflects only a piece of the whole picture. However, the report through presenting good practices reveals the multi-faceted role of education in the rural transformation process and the restructuring direction of rural education in China. Education has to respond to the urbanization process as well as to lift agriculture industry and promote local development.

Education for rural transformation is not a rhetoric discourse. It is income increase in a poverty reduction programme; it is connection with the outside world; it is empowerment of understanding one’s rights and executing wise choices to improve livelihoods.

Through exploring the best practices presented in this report, it is explicit that education serves as a proactive facilitator for rural transformation. It not only prepares rural people to reduce risks and seize the opportunities brought by the transition period, but reinforces local development and the transformation process through providing better quality of human resources. The question here, then, is not about the role of education in the process, but how to utilize education to facilitate the well-rounded development of rural people and socio-economic development of local communities.

Decentralization and Strong Support from the Government

Judging from the Chinese context, government support is of great importance to the success education programmes. The emphasis on rural problems and education is self-evident from all the policy documents mentioned before. The interesting point, however, is the devolution of power from the Central Government to the local communities in such a centralized country. Decentralization has become a main trend in addressing the ‘Three Rural’ issues, which means the Central Government has realized that community participation is very important in identifying the needs, meeting the needs and sustaining the achievements. As shown in this report, the successful cases are either initiations of the local community or centrally planned but locally implemented programmes with great autonomy.

A Good Education Programme

A good education programme must be needs-based. The need here refers not merely to the learning needs of the training recipients, but also the needs of the market. Education programmes have to be
carefully planned to cater to the both sides, as to materialize knowledge and skills. Local schools often play a significant role in grassroots education and training programmes. As indicated in the case of Houjia County under Theme I, in underdeveloped rural areas, the school has the richest resources in terms of intellectuals, training venues, connections with professionals, ability and fame to organize training etc. According to the Chinese experience, it is also important to carry out training demonstration bases or set up model households for the dissemination of knowledge and skills. This can create a sense of reality and farmers are more motivated by seeing the actual benefits from the training. In addition, training and education itself is not enough, poverty reduction and empowerment programmes should be combined with financial support or follow up services that would lift them up and enable them to practice what they learnt, such as in the example of the ‘Seed Plan’ of the ‘Jade Polishing Plan’.

A Win-Win Situation

In the process of rural transformation, education is not just a ‘giver’. There is a need for a closer link between academia and the production field, between research and practices. There have been many best programmes launched under the strategy of ‘Promote Agriculture through Science and Education’ in which education institutions and rural people both developed during the implementation of the training programme, as the example of Guizhou University’s ecological programme under Theme V demonstrated. Local education institutions, especially higher education institutions should serve for local development, bring together research and practice and in return, benefit from the tightening connections with agriculture.
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