

A Research and Practice Report on Pilot Project of Rural Community Learning Centers in Education for Poverty Alleviation

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I. Background

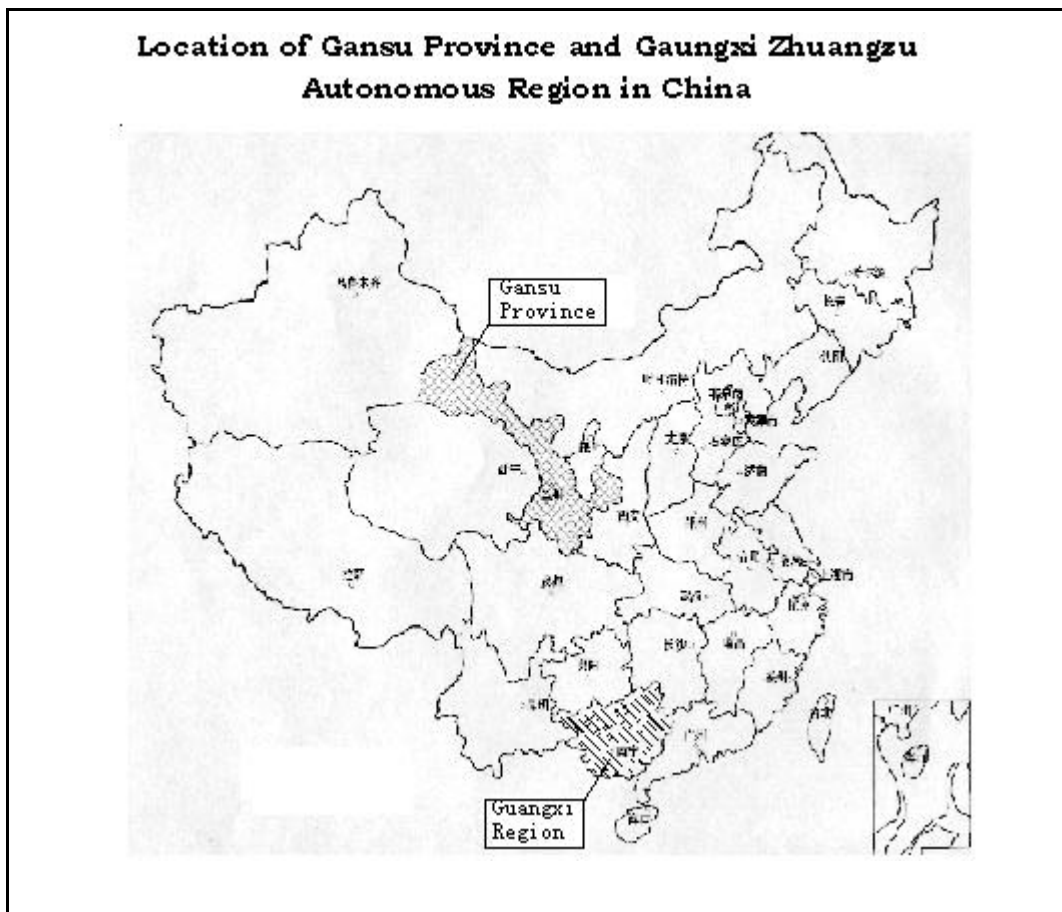
At the threshold of the 21st Century, Chinese people have greatly improved their living standards with the material wealth accumulated since China adopted the policy of reform and opening to the outside world. However, It is also observed that at present there are some millions of population still living in comparatively poverty. Higher rate of illiteracy and out-dated ideology constitute the fundamental causes of poverty. As a matter of fact, under many circumstances, it is the poverty of spirituality and ideology that plays a decisive role in trapping people in economic poverty. Therefore, only through changing the out-dated ideology and eradicating illiteracy shall we achieve the aim of poverty alleviation. The most important objective of education for poverty alleviation is to empower the poor not only with basic knowledge, skills, but also with commitment to modern ideology thus to obtain an inner drive to combat with the problems of poverty.

In China, the most prominent emphasis is put on the poverty alleviation in rural areas where the major obstacles exist. Observing the geographic distribution of poverty population, we can see that most of the poverty population is concentrated in a few provinces in Central and West China. Gansu Province and Guangxi Zhuangzu Autonomous Region are the two typical poverty-stricken regions in West China. So it is of great significance to carry out the Pilot Project of Rural Community Learning Center on Education for Poverty Alleviation in these two provinces as project models.

Located on upper reaches of Yellow River in Northwest China, Gansu Province with a total population of 24.95 million, is an economically backward province because of difficult natural conditions. The provincial agricultural population is 20.18 million, about 81.8% of

the total. As a multi-ethnic groups inhabited province, there are 2.27 million of minorities (9% of the total provincial population) living in the province, such as, Hui (Chinese Muslims), Tibetans, Dongxiang, Tu, Yugu, Baoan, Mongolians, Sala, Kayzak and Manchu. With the annual agricultural net income of about 1,100 yuan per capita, Gansu is in a disadvantaged position for the development of social economy.

Although it is a coastal area located along the boarder of Southwest China, Guangxi Zhuangzu Autonomous Region is also an under-developed minority inhabited region. The total population is 46.63 million, of which the agricultural population is 37 million (79.86% of the total). It is also a multi-minority inhabited region with a total minority population of 17.51 million, mainly Zhuang, Miao, Yao and Dong. The annual farming net income is 1,972 yuan per capita in Guangxi (see the graphics I).



In these two provinces, the development of education is restrained by the backward economy. On the other hand, the fallen-behind education is seriously constraining the development of local economy. During the process of struggling with poverty, both the governments and the people realized that the fundamental work for the sustainable development of social economic construction is to make great efforts in promoting educational development so as to upgrade the population quality. According to the national development strategy of “Revitalizing the nation through science and technology”, the governments of the two provinces emphasize the universalization of nine-year compulsory education as the first priority before all the other important tasks. As a matter of fact, the development of basic education has been greatly accelerated in the two provinces (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1.
The Situation of Compulsory Education Development in Gansu and Guangxi (1997)

	Province	Number of Schools	Number of Students (in 1,000)	Situation Of Universalization		
				Number of Counties	Percent %	Population coverage%
Primary Schools	Gansu	22,848	2,992.8	68	79.07	84.4
	Guangxi	16,197	6,267.9	112	100	100
Junior Middle Schools	Gansu	1,643	841	37	43.02	42.37
	Guangxi	2,624	2,113	64	57.14	68.56

Table 2.
The Quality of Compulsory Education Development in Gansu and Guangxi (1997)

	Province	Enrolment Rate		Drop-out Rate		Repetition Rate		Retention Rate at Grade 5		Graduation and Promotion	
		total	girls	total	Girls	total	girls	total	girls	total	girls
Prim. School	Gansu	99.68	96.7	2.69	2.54	7.38	7.36	52.61	52.79	87.65	89.34
	Guangxi	98.54	98.4	1.67	1.75			84.8	83.4	90.5	
Junior Middle School	Gansu	76.65	74.28	4.97	3.68	1.30	1.13	87.64	92.12	37.55	33.61
	Guangxi	87.5	86.73	5.41	4.39			84.15	83.33	82.94	82

In Gansu and Guangxi, Large proportion of poverty population and high rate illiteracy are the two obvious problems. Therefore, illiteracy eradication and poverty alleviation are the two most important tasks as well as the most difficult ones in the construction of rural economy (See Table 3).

Table 3.
The Situation of Literacy Education Development in Gansu and Guangxi
(1997)

	Completion of literacy Ed.		Illiterate population of the total	Illiterate youth and adults (age 15-40)	Number and standard of Poor counties		Poverty Population	Rural Population
	Number of counties	Proportion of the total			National	Provincial		
Gansu	38	40%	22%	9.6	41	12	19.7	81.8
Guangxi	112	100%	9.14%	2%	28	22	7.77	79.86

Entrusted by Chinese National Commission for UNESCO, the Pilot UNESCO Project of Rural Community Learning Center on Education for Poverty Alleviation has been undertaken in Tianzhu, Yongdeng, Jingning and Huining counties of Gansu Province as well as in Longshen, Tiandong and Rongshui counties of Guangxi. In line with the project requirements, the Provincial Project Implementation Groups have been established in each province. The inter-provincial cooperation plan was made for the project implementation in the two project provinces. At the same time, project implementation plans were formulated at schools, township and county levels according to their practical situations. After a year's implementation, satisfactory progress has been achieved with the timely instruction and strong support from institutions of UNESCO.

II. Understanding of Community Learning Centers and Community Education

1. Community and characteristics of rural community

A community refers to a comparatively complete social body, in which a group of people is living together in a certain location and united by shared interests, religion, nationality. This means that a local community must have its own number of people, located in a certain geographic area with social serving facilities and traditional culture or customs. The people of a certain community have a kind of feelings attached to their own community. According to their ways of living, structures of social economy and scales of production, communities are divided by two categories, the rural community and the urban community.

- The rural community has the following characteristics:
- Agriculture is the main form of production and farming is the major profession;
 - Low density of population sparsely living in small groups;
 - Families play a very important role in the rural community;
 - Compared with urban areas, rural communities have less categories of professions, which simplified the social structure of the community

2. Analysis on the Reasons of Poverty Phenomena

Poverty has been one of the most puzzling perplexing problems for the development of human beings. Poverty is derived from many causes and because of various reasons, mainly affected by ecological, population, political, economic, cultural and ideological factors. On many occasions, these causes for poverty, at the same time, are also the results of poverty, such as unbearable increase of population, mad plunderage of natural resources and pollution of environment, low efficiency of labour force and high rate of illiteracy. Therefore, analysis on poverty should start with a multi-dimensional view, considering both economic factors and non-economic factors e.g. spiritual and ideological factors, so as to find out the effective strategies for poverty alleviation.

It is very important to strengthen the economic support in poverty alleviation and improve the living standard of the poverty-stricken population. However, the most important factor that prevents the poor areas from economic development is the poverty of ideology. So the most effective way of alleviating poverty thoroughly is through carrying out education for poverty alleviation to change their out-dated ideas, improve the population quality and empower them with the ability for sustainable development. This is what we called "Eradicating ignorance before poverty alleviation." One of the major goals of education for poverty alleviation is to help the poor to eliminate the poverty of ideology and obtain the inner force in overcoming poverty.

3. Education for poverty alleviation in rural community learning centers

The rural community-learning center is a non-formal education institution for continuing education of adults, education for youth and children out of schools as well as local literacy education. This kind of centers is usually run and managed by local communities with support from local governments. They are often established in local schools so as to make full use the schooling facilities.

The community learning centers play an active role in mobilizing local people to participate in various kinds of education and technical training. It also serves as local organizations to carry out activities in developing the local intelligence in poverty alleviation so as to promote the local economic development and improve the living standard of the people in poverty-stricken areas.

4. The main objectives of rural community learning centers

- To raise the priority position of education in rural economic construction in line with the national policy of "Vitalizing the nation through science and education";
- To promote the development of literacy education;
- To upgrade the quality of labour force in utilizing science and technology;
- To raise the science and technology content in local agricultural production;
- To increase the income of local farmers;
- To enhance the farmers ability to maintain the sustainable development

5. Target population of the rural community learning center

Male Youth and Adult among Rural Labour Force

Due to historic and cultural reasons, up to now China has been a traditionally male-centered society for several thousand years. The inequality for men and women is still prominent in many places, particularly in poor and isolated rural areas. A father is head of a family who has decision-making authority in big or important matters of a family, such as productive activities, economic management, ways of living and education of children. They have comparatively broader contacts with other people in social activities and so they can get more information from the outside. It is usually the father who makes the decision about whether to adopt the new productive techniques or whether to change their traditional ways of living. In a family, a male adult is often the first of the family members to make an attempt in going out to work or conducting commercial activities. In a village or a family clan, it is usually a male adult of noble character and high prestige who has the authority to preside and coordinate the affairs and relations within the clan or the village. Male adults often have certain places informal forums where they will make decisions about their attitude and react to many affairs through random discussions.

Illiterate male adults, especially those family heads, are the key targets in literacy education in poverty-stricken areas, for they play an important or vital role in poverty alleviation. The literacy requirements

for them should be higher. Once they have got the ability of reading, they should take functional literacy education quickly so as to obtain practical knowledge, such as new ways of planting, techniques of breeding, strategies of management, new ideas of value, awareness of professional competition and vocational skills for employment.

Women and Girls

In poor areas, education and development of women are still plagued in a weird cycle of "Poverty and ignorance -- Difficult for girls to go to school -- Low quality of mothers -- Early marriage and more children -- More difficult for girls to school". In traditional Chinese families, the status of women are not so important as that of men, but they undertake all the housework and the raising of children. If a mother is illiterate, unfavorable effect will likely be produced in fostering their children. While doing housework, women always deal with family economic plans, sanitation habits, nutritious state and ideas of birth and children fostering. Women also have advantage in development of household economy, which is an important way of poverty alleviation in many poor areas. The upgrading of women's education can produce desirable results in population control, which can prevent the increase of poverty-stricken population. The contents of literacy education for women should include awareness of birth control, sanitation habits, healthy living, family economics, techniques of household economy and ideas of equality of men and women.

Groups of Minorities

Minorities are the weakest disadvantaged groups among the poverty population in the process of poverty alleviation and literacy education. Most of minorities are living in remote and boarder areas with backward infrastructure and unfavorable natural and ecological environment. Observed from the angle of economic development, the poverty of minorities has the characteristics of "historical inequality", which means the starting point of economic development is much lower than that of other areas. What is more, their particular culture, customs of life, religious beliefs and languages enlarged their disparity in term of development. It is a very complex task to conduct literacy education in minority communities. Many problems need to be studied conscientiously, such as the study on the special ecological environment, the research on their customs of life and religions and beliefs, the research on the relation of their mother tongues with Chinese language, etc.

Functional Illiterates

In China, the evaluation and examination of literacy education used to be conducted mainly through testing the learners' ability and skills of reading, writing and calculating. According to this standard,

we had no idea whether the people out of illiteracy have actually mastered the knowledge and skills needed in daily production, whether the knowledge is effective in poverty alleviation, whether they have been well prepared with vocational skills and ideas of value before going to work or conducting commercial activities in cities. Therefore, in the process of literacy education we would rather want to make sure that the learners really have a good command of the knowledge and skills that are more effective in adapting themselves to the society, alleviating poverty and enhancing individual development. The objective of functional literacy education is to conduct training for the people who will undertake various tasks in social and economic activities. Reading and writing are no longer the only objectives. They should be used as a tool for individual development instead. It is inevitable that new mode of production and new ways of life are always connected with some new technologies and new skills. With its practical utilization and effectiveness, functional literacy education is able to initiate and keep the learners' interest and motivation

6. Main categories of rural community learning centers

Centers in natural villages

Organized and managed by the village committee, this kind of learning centers has a natural village as the covering area. It carries out educational activities through coordination with the village schools and other village organizations. The leading group is usually made up of village administrative leaders, school headmasters or teachers and village celebrities.

The main responsibilities of the village learning center are:

- To coordinate the relationship between the school development and social economic development;
- To conduct cultural and technical education for farmers in the village;
- To mobilize the villagers to care about and support education development through fund raising so as to improve the conditions of village schools;
- To get involved in the supervising of village schools;

The characteristic of village learning centers is that located in the village, the learning center has the advantage to adapt to the local reality of economic and social development. With the coordination of village farmers committee, the learning center is more powerful and attractive to local people. The villagers, no matter men or women, young or old, who can undertake learning and training in a place close to their home, welcome it.

Centers at township level

Depending on the township vocational middle schools or technical schools for farmers, community learning centers are established at township level. These centers are run and managed through the coordination of township government and local mass organizations. There is an inter-related preferential relationship between the learning center and local people. All the township organizations and people would provide the center with strong support in terms of spirit and materials, while the learning center should make full use of the local education facilities and intelligent resources to make contribution to the development of local social economic development through conducting literacy education and technical training.

School centered

In rural community villages, primary schools are the centers of basic education as well as the learning centers for cultural and technical education. Besides conducting formal basic education, the primary schools have the responsibility and the capacity to act as the centers for literacy education, technical training and cultural exchanging. Aiming at promoting the development of local economy, the establishment of rural community centers, with primary schools as the cores, forms a new rural community education system being reinforced by science and technology and depending on formal schooling.

7. Functions of rural community learning centers

- 1) Making full use of the advantages of rural schools, the community learning centers established participate in literacy and post-literacy education for adults in order to enhance the overall quality upgrading of local population.
- 2) Through coordinating all community education resources, the community learning centers provide useful information and technical training for the community members so as to help them solve the problems in poverty alleviation. In this way, the cultural education, technical training and formal education are integrated in a unified system in rural community.
- 3) The community learning centers can keep connections among themselves as well as the contact with the latest information from outside, which enhances the understanding and cooperation among communities and local schools.
- 4) The community learning center is the base for spiritual civilization construction in a certain community. The open way of teaching and learning makes the center functioning as an education center and gradually a center for culture learning and technical training.

- 5) It is their responsibility for the learning center to conduct wide publicity of Compulsory Education Law to strengthen the local people's awareness of education law and use legislative measures to guarantee the children's right to education.
- 6) The rural community learning center will mobilize the community members involve in education. Parents' schools will be organized to conduct classes about culture, science, technology, health and sanitation, family planning and early childhood education. All these activities will upgrade the quality of parents, improve the social status of women and understanding of girls education.

8. Guiding Principles for activities of rural community learning centers

Enhancing the Motivation of Learners

It is regulated in education laws that the illiterate youth and adults aged 15-45 must undertake literacy education. However, not all of the illiterates have the initiative learning needs, especially in poor areas. The attitudes and motivation of the illiterate constitute a serious problem in carrying out literacy education. It is because of the particular peer pressure and isolated traditional ideas that the illiterates in poor areas are shortsighted and eager for quick success and instant benefit. The deviation in forms and contents of literacy education makes it unsuitable for the spiritual and material needs of the people in poor areas. Therefore, the priority for the success of rural community learning centers is to change the outside requirements into inner needs of the learners.

Utilization of Education Contents and Functionality of Teaching Methods

Practical utilization and functionality are a vital to sustain the motivation and initiative of learners. The major task for rural community learning centers in poor areas at present is to improve people's living conditions and achieving the aim of poverty alleviation in the end. Due to this purpose, the basic principle for selecting the contents of literacy education is to have the characteristics of utilization and effectiveness integrated. To carry out this principle, respective researches must be made on the major causes of poverty so that the most urgent problems can be solved quickly.

Local Relevance of Curriculum and Teaching Materials

The education objectives and contents of rural community learning centers can be widely used in any poor area. However, there is not any unified requirement when they are transformed into curricula and teaching materials. It is because that among different poor areas there

are many different features, such as differences in cultural background, productive ways and geographic environment. Particular teaching materials should be compiled according to the characteristics of poverty population and local features in poor areas so as to make the materials most practical, effective and suitable for the learners. At the same time, the excellent cream in local culture, customs and traditions should be selected into teaching materials, such as folk legends, local history, geography, natural resources and merits of hard working. To connect new knowledge, techniques and ideas with native culture will make the learner feel the teaching materials familiar, reliable and useful during their learning.

Sustainable Characteristics of Action in Literacy Education

Sustainable Characteristics of literacy education refers to the post-literacy education for those who have become literate. To carry out the post literacy education, innovation on forms and contents should be conducted first. Emphasis must be attached to practical effectiveness so as to make literacy education become the action out of learners' own willingness. Then it should be realized that literacy education is a relative concept with short-term objectives, mid-term objectives and long-term objectives. In order to realize the ultimate aim, rural community learning centers should provide all kinds of opportunities for the learners. Functional education must be carry out for the literate learners to participate in professional competing, such as training workshops on technology of planting, resource developing according to the learners' different levels and learning needs.

Integrated Contents of Literacy Education as a Whole

The content of education in community learning centers should include basic knowledge, basic skills/techniques as well as attitudes and values. The three components are closely integrated and mutually complementary. In the literacy education programmes critical importance should be attached to the formation of appropriate attitudes and values, which to a greater extent, plays a vital role in the fulfillment of ultimate literacy objectives. It always occurs in certain areas that the rapid upgrading of living standards has not necessarily enriched the quality of modern life. Many farmers, who have just got rid of poverty very recently, are apt to over-exploit the land, forest and other natural resources. Some are even indulged in superstition (e.g. building luxurious tombs and temples) gambling and other unhealthy life styles. Therefore, It is apparent that without the modernization of people's attitudes and values, neither individual nor social development could be sustained, let alone to achieve the ultimate aim of poverty alleviation .

III. Main Project Activities Conducted

1. The organizations establishment for project implementation with plans made at provincial, county, township and school levels

- In Gansu Province, a provincial project leading group was set up in Gansu Institute for Educational Research (GIER), headed by Mr. Jing Min, deputy director of GIER. The provincial project implementation plan was formulated by the leading group. Then project-implementing groups were also established in the major project counties, such as Tianzhu, Yongdeng and Jingning. Under the leadership of the project leading groups, project townships and schools were decided and implementation plans were made at county, township and school levels. For example, in Jingning County, Chengchuan and Bali townships were selected as two project townships. After thoroughly survey about the situations of labour force, culture and science technology utilization in all the 20 administrative villages, four of them were selected as the first project villages, Gaowan and Dazhai in Chengchuan, Dalu and Xiaoshang in Bali. In 1999 the project will be disseminated to all the 20 villages in the two townships. And then the project will be carried out in the whole county by the year 2000,
- In Guangxi Autonomous Region, The project-leading group was also established with one deputy director of education commission as the head. Mr. Huang Wenyi, deputy director of Adult Education Division is the executive director of the project implementation. It was decided that the project would be carried out in three townships from three counties, namely Longsheng County, Rongshui County and Tiandong County. In each project county, a county learning center is set up. At the same time, project leading groups were established at each project county or township, jointed by participation of local institutions or departments of education, agriculture, health, finance, women federation and so on. The leading groups at all levels took their responsibility in formulate the project implementation plans and organizing the project activities.

2. Various types of project training activities organized for farmers and teachers

- From March 7 to 9, 1999, a project training workshop for project officers and teachers was conducted in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County by Mr. Zhang Tiedao, director of GIER, Mr. Jing Min and other project researchers. During the workshop, they make detailed introduction about the project aim and

implementation plan, which greatly upgraded the understanding and initiatives of the participants.

- In the same month, another training workshop was carried out for all the teachers in six primary schools and Sangoutai Central School of Anyuan Township in Tianzhu County. The main contents of the training workshop were: a) rationale and practice of community learning centers; b) researches on maths teaching at primary schools; c) teaching and learning materials for activity classes at primary schools; d) compiling of learning materials for post-literacy education; e) materials on environment education
- In Kushui Township of Yongdeng County, the community learning center in the township technical school conducted training on science and technology for all farmers, especially those from poverty-stricken families. They held six training classes for 1,137 farmers and distributed over 480 copies of materials on agricultural science and technology. The township training workshops were combined with training activities in villages in order to select model families and key families for further dissemination. The centralized training was integrated with decentralized training so as to make full use of community learning centers at different levels. The contents of training were closely connected with the local agriculture productive activities at different seasons.
- In Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, over 50 training classes on practical technology were conducted at county and township levels. The training classes had wide range of contents, such as planting, tailoring, computer use, health and nutrition, farming machinery and family education. Before the training, Special attention was paid to the training of trainers and the function of model families. In Piaoli Township of Longsheng County, the effective way of “Sending science and technology to villages” was adopted. With centers set up in villages, all kinds of consulting activities about agricultural science, education and hygiene were carried out right in the fields. Training on “Green Cards” was also conducted for graduates from junior middle schools. In Rongshui County, the community learning center held training workshops on computer use for the laid-off workers and issued certificates for them to find jobs.

3. Relevant teaching and learning materials compiled according to the local reality

- Gansu Institute for Educational Research compiled several learning materials for community learning centers, such as “Life Skills for Girls”, “A Textbook Activity Class for Quality Education at Primary

Schools” . In Jingning County, some 17 types of simple materials about agriculture techniques were compiled based on the local productive needs, namely “The Reservation of Cabbage”, “The Keeping and Storage of Fruit” and “A Handbook of New Technology in Agriculture”. Over 2,100 copies of material and more than 20 videotapes were distributed to farmers. In Yongdeng County, over 20,000 copies of learning materials and pamphlets were printed and distributed, which greatly helped the local farmers in their production.

- In project counties of Guangxi, educators and specialists were organized to have various kinds of teaching / learning materials printed and distributed to learning centers at various levels. In Rongshui County, eight cardboard bulletins were made on publicity of agricultural science and technology, 2,600 copies of technical materials about practical techniques were distributed together with 1,800 items of particular technical skills on productive methods. In Longsheng County, the rural community learning centers have been equipped with computers, TV sets, video recorders, tape recorders, projectors and library books. Over 2,800 copies of learning materials and pamphlets were compiled. The improvement of learning conditions steady supplies of materials greatly upgraded the quality of learning and teaching.

4. Efforts made to get community support so as to improve conditions of the centers (schools) as the bases for experiments of agriculture technology utilization

- Sangoutai central primary school is a project school in Anyuan Township of Tianzhu County. Ever since the beginning of project implementation, the cultural education has been integrated with productive labouring. Small gardens, small woods and farming field are managed by the school as practice sites. The School not only has the young generation educated to become the new labour force, but also conduct technical training for local farmers on scientific technology and practical skills about farming, husbandry, agricultural machinery, tailoring and hygiene. The door of the school is open to the community and the limited formal education becomes big community education for poverty alleviation. As a result, the community leaders and local people become active in supporting the development of the school. In recent years, a large amount of funds was collected through various channels. The teaching and learning conditions in the school greatly improved and the quality of formal education was upgraded enormously.

The concrete measures taken by the school are the following:

- The managing organization established for technical training on farming and husbandry.
- A leading group for agriculture and husbandry was set up through coordination between the school and the local community, headed by the village leader and the school headmaster. The school dean and the director of village committee are in charge of the management and implementation of training activities.
- Education facilities and training funds collected through different channels
- For literacy education, the school's facilities are used while the village provides equipment and practice sites for technical training. The funds are collected through government subsidize, village financing, school's income from farming activities and private fees of the learners.
- Experts invited to reinforce the teaching contingent
- The school teachers conduct the training classes on literacy education, cultural knowledge, and theory of science and technology. For technical training classes, professionals or experts are invited to undertake. At the same time , excellent young teachers are sent to other places for the learning of advanced experiences in technical training for farmers.
- Flexible ways of teaching and learning adopted
- In line with the education principles and the practical situation of local community, various flexible ways of teaching and learning are adopted to combine the classroom theoretical learning with practical skill operation, long term centralized learning with short term decentralized training.

5. Setting up model villages and model families for rural economic development

- The most striking characteristics of project implementation in Guangxi is that quite some numbers of model families have been set up as examples for rural community learning centers. During the process of project implementation in all the project counties, special emphasis is attached to the establishment of model families with various project activities. Through the improvement of the model

families, more farmers have been mobilized to become active in project participation. In January 1999, the county rural learning centers organized training for 60 model families on practical skills of agricultural technology, such as scientific planting of crops, fruit trees and vegetables, insect's prevention, cattle breeding. Through these training activities, the capacity of the farmers from model families have been greatly upgraded and become the front groups in leading other people on the way to prosperity through utilization of science and technology.

- Madam Pan Jifeng from one of the model families used to be illiterate women. In 1987, she participated the evening classes of literacy education and became literate in 1990. In 1992, she mobilized other 24 women to undertake the training of literacy education, who also got rid of illiteracy by 19996. At the same time, Madam Pan was honored as one of the National Ten Tops in Literacy Education. In 1999, she again took the lead to mobilize all the village women participating in technical training classes conducted by the rural community learning center. Through learning, the women got trained on Chinese culture, science and technology for farming, literature, arts, embroidery and tourist English. Using all the knowledge learned, they carried out productive economic activities and got beneficial outcomes, which accelerated the development of local economy'
- In Dontou Township of Rongshui County, 20 model families had technical training in the local community learning center and became prosperous through developing family economy in planting and processing. Mobilized by them, the people of the whole got involved in family economy of planting and processing. By 1998, the average grain per capita was 246 kilo. and the per capita income reached 1,163 yuan. Most of the families in the township got rid of poverty.

6. Implementation conscientiously organized with inspection strengthened

- In Guangxi Region by January, 1999, a project counterpart funding of 60,000 yuan have been materialized. At the same time, the education commission of the Region had all the community learning centers equipped with teaching / learning instruments and library books, which improved the conditions of the centers. In all the project counties and townships, the counterpart funds are also materialized and the project implementation is going on smoothly. In Xiangzhou Township of Tiandong County, 5,000 yuan was allocated for the project for just one time. 46,5000 yuan were

collected in Longshen County as the project counterpart funds. Rongshui County invested 6,500 yuan for the project. In Xiangzhou Township of Tiandong County, 67 various training workshops were conducted for 5,500 person times and quite some model families were set up. In March 1999, a technical training workshop was held for 35 minority women on poster literacy education in Longsheng County. In Rongshui County, 30 minority women were organized to undertake literacy classes and poster literacy training at the same time. To make sure the smooth implementation of the project, the project officers in Guangxi carried out many investigation at grass-root units in project counties and townships. Requirements and regulations were formulated about the keeping of project archives at all levels, which will be used in project evaluation.

- In late May of 1999, an expert group headed by Mr. Yu Fuzen, Secretariat of Chinese National Commission made a supervision visit on UNESCO project implementation in Gansu Province. The group conducted special visit to the rural community learning centers in Kushui Township of Yongdeng County and Sangoutai Central Primary School of Tianzhu County. During the visits, the experts about training materials and project management provided specific guidance and expertise to the rural community learning centers. The experts also showed interest in the achievement made by the rural community learning centers.

IV. Beneficial Results of Project Implementation

1. Initiative results of project implementation in Guangxi

- 1) The working efficiency and professional capacity of the project management personnel have been upgraded through training of project implementation.
- 2) The quality of local has been improved. Through various kinds of training on culture, science and technology, the local farmers have been empowered with new knowledge and new ideas. They become active in using science and technology for increasing agricultural production and upgrading their quality of life. Educated through literacy learning and technical training, the local women experienced special success in learning centers. Many women got beneficial results in utilizing science and technology and acted as leading figures on the way to prosperous. The local government awarded some of them and some were elected as members of the local people's congress. The social status of women was highly raised.

- 3) Beneficial results have been achieved for local economic development. Through the implementation of the project, the number of model families was extended from original 10 to 30 in Piaoli Township of Longshen County. The area for economic planting has been enlarged. Many people began to use bank loans to conduct family economic activities.
- 4) The universalization of nine-year compulsory education and literacy education has been enhanced. Through the implementation of the rural community learning center project, the quality of local people and the capacity administrator were improved. They experienced the process of vitalizing agriculture and alleviating poverty through science and education. Besides sending their children to schools, they also became active themselves in participating cultural learning and technical training. As the project results, the community learning center not only promoted development of universalization of the enrollment rate and retention rate of school-aged children, but also enhanced the development of literacy and post literacy education as well as the construction of socialist material and spiritual civilization.

2. Initiative achievements of project implementation at township and school levels

The beneficial results of project implementation at Sangoutai Primary School:

- 1) From 1987 up to now, there have been 10 programmes of literacy education carried out in the literacy classes at the school and 207 participants have become literate now. Among all the families in the village, farmers from 75% of them have got trained on scientific knowledge and agricultural technology. Four terms of agriculture machinery training have been held and 56 farmer learned driving and repairing. Hygiene and veterinary classes were conducted for nine terms and 437 women(73.5 % of the village total) participated in the learning. The school held eight terms of Mother Education Classes and all the mother of the school students got trained on family education.
- 2) The development of the community economy has been enhanced. In the village now, there are 31 families having reached the well-off living standard through utilizing the scientific knowledge in agriculture and husbandry. The technical training that held in the community learning center could bring obvious beneficial results to the local people.

- 3) The improvement of culture quality strengthened the people's awareness in learning law and using law in their daily work and life. There are 21 families honored as civilized family and 38 parents honored as excellent parents.
- 4) The social environment and schooling conditions have been optimized, which creates a sound foundation for the development of basic education. In the serving area covered by the school, the enrollment rate reached 98.8% (97.5% for girls), the retention rate was 98.7%. The dropout rate was decreased to 1.8%, the repetition rate was 3% in the end of 1998.
- 5) In the process of project implementation, the school's revenue was increased through income generating activities. In this way, the teachers training got some supplementary funds and some school aged children from poor family got financial help to go to school.

Through project implementation in Kushui Township and Qinchuan Township of Yongdeng County, the ideology of the local people changed dramatically. Having been trained in learning centers and learned from the model families, they mastered the technical skills and scientific ways of planting vegetables in plastic green shelters and caring fruit trees. The income of the farmers was increased. The literacy rate was raised. And the children enrolment rate was also reached a high level. This is an inter-acted process: the project implementation initiates the ideological change of the local community people and promotes the development of local economy. On the other hand, the change of ideas and improvement of community economy reinforced the support to educational development.

V. Experience Learned form Project Implementation

1. The rural community learning centers must depend on the local community schools. The local community schools have already got good foundation in teachers' qualification, schooling facilities and experience of teaching methods. The community learning centers can make reasonable use of the educational resources of the local schools in training and learning activities in order to serve the development of local economy.
2. The learning centers should make efforts to get the strong support of the local governments. Because of the out-dated ideology of the local people, it is understandable that they will have some doubt about the project implementation. With the support from the governments, the learning centers will be in an advantageous position in project publicizing, organizing and implementing.

3. The contents of learning and training in learning centers should be appropriate to the real situation and necessity of the local community. For example, an extension construction on the national highway is under going in Tianzhu County of Gansu Province. The construction needs a lot of transportation machinery and the site is close to the location of Sangoutai village. Seeing that many farmers have bought a lot machines, the local community center held training classes on driving and repairing, which attracted many farmers.

VI. Thoughts on Follow-up Activities

Through the project implementation up to now, quite some beneficial results have been in achieved in project schools, townships and counties. This indicates that the rural community learning centers project is a great help to the education development and improvement in poverty-stricken areas. The main work in the future is to sustain the project implementation and achieve the greatest success. At the same time, it is necessary to sum up the experience and outcomes of the project implementation so as to disseminate the project to a larger scale and benefit more people in poor areas.

1. Experience and outcomes from project model families, project schools, townships and counties will be conscientiously summarized and compiled or edited in forms of printing materials, audio-visual materials both in Chinese and English.
2. The out comes of project implementation will be further disseminated in project counties to an extensive scale.
3. The exchanges and coordination between project provinces and project counties will be reinforced in order to learn from each other and accelerate the project development.

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