A Report on Rural Community Learning Centers in China

I. Background

With the fast development of modern science and technology, the transition speed of world economy has been highly accelerated and the market economy has brought severe competition in all sectors of social economic development. To catch up with the fast development of globalization characterized by knowledge economy, it has become an urgent necessity to establish community learning centers (CLC) for the implementation of community education in rural areas. During the transition period for the rural development in China, the establishment of CLCs for rural community development has an in-depth international and national significance in empowering the rural population, particularly those living in the disadvantaged poverty-stricken areas, so as to promote the overall social and economic development in rural areas. The CLC establishment is an effective practice on the idea of education for community development, not only to tackle on the contemporary social economic problems but also to meet the learning needs of local people in achieving sustainable all-round development in rural areas.

1. The Needs for Popularization of Science and Technology in Rural Areas

“In China, there are over 7,000 scientific research outcomes invented in the field of agriculture. However, only 30% of them can be transferred into actual application and materialized as real productive force, which is much lower than that of 70 – 80% in advanced countries.” To improve the transferring from agriculture research outcomes to actual productive force, it is an urgent task to upgrade the overall quality of rural population through effective community education, for which we need a kind of longstanding and effective educational mechanism in rural areas. The establishment of rural CLCs is a practical way to have education connected with the development of rural communities.

2. The Needs to Promote the Economic Development in Rural Areas

To upgrade the level of agriculture production to an advanced level, agricultural modernization should be carried out through utilizing science and technology such as optimizing seeds for quality plantation, application of machinery in farming operation, economically intensive ways of production for planting and animal raising with introduction of biology engineering. To meet with the challenges all these practices, it is necessary for the farmers and rural community members to take training on both cultural knowledge and scientific technology so as to become modernized laborers with improved intelligent competence, no longer just manual laborers in the fields.
3. The Needs to Implement the National Strategy for Western Development

The Western Development needs the interact support of the eastern and coastal regions where successful experience have been accumulated in social economic development. The advantages in both regions should be fully used to accelerate the development in West China. However, there are some issues should be noticed in the implementation of West Development strategies. The first is the low quality of working force and the shortage of talented personnel of science and technology in the West. The second is the complicated issues among the ethnic minority populations and religions. The third is the difficult geographic location and climate environment with frequent natural harassment and disasters. With consideration on the principle of beneficiaries for both sides, special efforts should be made to promote the economic development in the West during the interact supporting action so as to achieve the balanced overall development of the national modernization drive. According to the real situation in the West, the establishment of rural community learning centers is an effective way for the West Region to conduct community education on the learning of successful experience in application of technology, utilizing of capitals and management of industries. As a result, the development gap will be diminished between the East and the West.

4. The Needs of Family Education

Family environment, as the first school for any growing up individual, plays the most important role in the process of physical development, knowledge accumulation, capacity fostering, moral understanding and character formation. As the first teachers in a family, the parents, particularly the mother, have to take the responsibility to educate their children and will impress the most important influence during the process of growing up. The established CLCs, operating as a permanent lifelong learning mechanism, will play an active role in family education in rural areas. The quality of family education can be effectively improved rough relevant activities conducted on home economics, new ways of family education for physical and mental development of children.

II. Legal Rationale and Policy Support to the Rural CLC

Up to now, quite some state laws and decisions have been stipulated and issued and put into effect, which provides the CLC establishment with lawful guarantee and strong policy support. In 2003, a special decision was made by the State Council about the Further Strengthening the National Work on Rural Education Development, which specified the important position of rural education in constructing the modern

1. The Education Law of the People’s Republic of China

The Education Law was ratified during the Eighth National Congress in 1995, which, based on the characteristics of educational development in China, put forward quite some innovative ideas about objectives, scope and target population in the education sector as a whole. “Governments, grass-root mass organizations and institutions at various levels ought to take every measures to conduct literacy education to eradicate illiterate phenomena.” “The State encourage social organizations to take measures in providing the citizens with conditions for life-long education.” And “without any negative influence on the normal schooling activities, schools and other educational institutions should take active participation in local activities of social welfare and charity.

2. The Decision about the Reform on Education System

Early in 1985, the Central Committee of the State circulated the Decision, in which the key point stipulated is that “the ultimate aim of the reform on education system is to upgrade the population quality of the nation and foster more talented and gifted personnel.” The education in China must serve the development of the socialist construction, which should depend on the education. To accomplish the grand task of socialist modernization, we should not only rely on the present talented personnel, but also foster a large quantity of qualified personnel among the young generation who would get prepared to be professionals and skillful workers for the new century. This has been the arduous task for the development of education course and the reform on educational system.

3. The Guideline about Education Reform and Development in China (1993)

With the nine-year compulsory education is stipulated as the foundation for overall development of education in China, the Guideline calls on for the active development of vocational education, adult education and higher education to ensure the outstanding position for training of skillful workers, technicians and junior senior personnel of engineering. With model schools and model training centers set up for
industries and trades in each city or county, the vocational training network should be established with various forms of long term and short term training workshops. The development of adult education in rural areas should be vigorously promoted with effective management of township culture and technical schools. With increased government funds allocation, the literacy education for youth and adults should be combined with technical training in order to achieve concrete results.

The township and county governments should have education development enclosed in the overall planning for local social and economic development. All kinds of education in rural areas should be unified with the development plan of economy, science and technology so as to enhance the implementation of national projects in rural areas. Local enterprises, organizations and institutions are encouraged to support school construction participate in the school management so as to improve the schooling conditions and explore a proper form for the integration of primary and middle school education with the society or community. The establishment of CLC is a right choice to have education closely connected with the development of local social and economic development.

4. The Notification about Issues on Strengthening the Reform on School Education in Rural Areas (1983)

Issued by the State Council, this notification stressed on the active functions of rural schools in the new situations with fast development of rural economy achieves through implementation of responsibility system in rural areas. It was pointed out that during the transition process from traditional agriculture production to modernized agriculture, the farmer are in urgent needs to master both literacy skills and scientific knowledge, which give rise to the higher requirements for all kinds of schools in rural areas. The importance and significance of rural education reform should be fully realized by governments at all levels and educational administrations.

The main tasks of rural schools are to provide formal education to the young generation as well as non-formal education to raise the literacy level of rural population. The functions should be fully played to meet the needs of local farmers in the development of actual production and the improvement of living standards. Therefore, the CLC establishment in rural areas is a necessity to have education integrated with the local economic construction to promote the development of local social and economic development.

5. The Action Plan for Education Vitalization in 21st Century

The Action Plan was formulated by the Ministry of Education, which emphasized on the combination of education, agriculture, science and technology through comprehensive rural education reform. Through coordinating the
development of basic education, adult education and vocational education in rural areas, the active function of education would be fully played in the construction of rural modernization. It was planned that a national life-long learning system will be established by the year 2010. The piloting on community education should be practiced for the construction and accomplishment of life-long education system in order to upgrade the population quality of the whole nation. It is believed that the implementation of this Action Plan will drive the community education in rural areas to a new stage.

6. The Decision about Further Reform on Education System and Overall Promotion of Quality Education (1999)

In the Decision, it is requested that the education on productive work and practical life-skills should be strengthened and innovated according to the real situation of schools so as to let the students get in touch with the nature, understand the society and love to work. It is necessary to set up a kind of mechanism for children and youth to participate in community service and community construction.

The development of rural education should be further promoted through comprehensive education reform in rural areas. Literacy education should be closely connected with technical training for farmers on practical skills and techniques so as to achieve poverty alleviation in rural areas. Various forms and flexible ways should be adopted for different kinds of training activities to foster a large number of personnel urgently needed in rural areas.

The successful experience in the last few years has proved that the establishment of CLCs is an effective mechanism of rural education for the development of social economy in rural areas. With concrete measures to strengthen the established CLCs in rural communities, more experience has been accumulated for the wide-range CLC dissemination to more rural communities.


As the first State law about the development of agriculture in China, the Agriculture Law was ratified in 1993. Although it is concentrated mainly on the legal construction for development of agriculture, the function of rural education is also highlighted in it. “The State encourages the collective economic organizations, state-owned enterprises or institutions and other social associations to work at educational causes of science and technology.” The State supports the dissemination of agricultural science and technology and enhances the application of advanced research outcomes in agriculture production. “The disseminating institutes of agriculture technology ought to work on the dissemination of advanced technology of agriculture production, in coordination with research institutions of agriculture
science and educational institutions”.

From the briefing about education issues in the State laws and policies, it is clear that great emphasis has been put on the combination of education development with local economic development, which set up a reasonable and lawful environment for the development of rural CLCs. It was with all these laws and policies that the implementation CLC are strongly supported and guaranteed by governments at all levels, with active participation of people in rural areas.

III. Main Objectives of Rural Community Learning Centers

The main objectives of rural community learning centers are the following:

1) To improve the function of education in rural economic construction to materialize the State policy of “Vitalizing the country through science and technology”;
2) To promote the development of literacy education and post-literacy continuing education;
3) To upgrade the quality of labor force in utilizing science and technology so as to raise the science and technology content in local agricultural production;
4) To increase the income of local farmers;
5) To establish a permanent life-long learning mechanism in rural areas to enhance the farmers’ ability in maintaining the sustainable development

The main population targets of rural community learning centers cover all the community members, including adults and youth of rural labor force, with particular attention paid to rural women and girls, ethnic minority groups and those who need training in vocational and income-generating skills.

IV. Organization and Management of Rural CLCs

In Gansu Province, the management of project implementation adopted the way of signing agreement. As the responsible institution for the project, Gansu Institute for Educational Research signed the project contract with PROAP, UNESCO for the project implementation in the province. The project counties signed agreements to fulfil the tasks of project implementation with the Provincial Project Research Group of GIER. Then the project townships and project schools will carry out the project work according to the arrangement of county project leading groups. For some community learning centers, the project management committees were set up in township technical schools for farmers under the leadership of township governments. The members of the committee are from local schools, farming technical stations and
clinics or hospitals. In some other communities, the learning centers were established in central primary schools. The CLC management committees are made up of village heads, school headmasters and deans.

V. Fields of Rural CLC Activities

1. Literacy education in rural areas

   Literacy education is one of the major activities conducted in community learning centers. The low quality of rural population with under-developed intelligence is one of the key factors that prevent the development of rural economy. Literacy education is conducted to build up a good foundation for the farmers to further participate in technical training on practical skills.

   As a large agriculture province, the agriculture population is 20.21 million (79.5% of the total) in Gansu Province. The social economic development is always facing the issues of agriculture, rural economy and farmers. It has been realized that the only way for rural areas to get out of the poverty is to implement the State policy of “Vitalize the agriculture through science, technology and education”. To do this, the very first step is to eradicate illiteracy among the rural population.

   With the advantage of local established CLC, most of the community learning centers are depending on the facilities of local schools to conduct literacy education first. There are three kinds of people involving in literacy education: local women, adults and youth without compulsory education.

   **Case Study**

   *In Yongdeng County of Gansu Province, the CLC of Kushui Township Agriculture Technology School for Farmers have conducted literacy education since 1997. There were 13 literacy learning classes held for over 1000 learners. With joint efforts made by all the facilitators and learners, the literate population reached 13,584, the literacy rate is 96.4% by 2001.*

2. Education on health and sanitation

   It is of great significance to conduct sanitation and health education in poor rural areas. Due to the limitation of economic conditions and natural environment, the local people are weak in awareness of sanitation and health. In this aspect, the community learning centers have a broad field for sanitation and health education activities, such as training classes on healthy customs of sanitation, diet, entertainment and environment protection. This kind of activities will make great contribution to the change of people’s ideas on health, sanitation and environment protection.
Regional Seminar on Community Learning Centres (2004)

Case Study

In Tianzhu County, the community learning center was set up in Sangoutai Primary School. Since 1997, there are 9 training workshops held on health and sanitation and animal disease prevention, with participants from over 95% of village families. The training upgraded the local people’s awareness about health and illness prevention. At the same time, 4 qualified clinic workers and 3 nurses were trained, which make the local people are convenient to treat their illness timely. He Yuhua, one of the local women, opened a private clinic by herself.

3. Advocacy activities

The advocacy of the State policies, laws and regulations is one of the CLC activities in rural areas. It is a kind of information dissemination to the local people to know the development of the country so as to protect their own interest and lawful right. Many ideas of modernization and knowledge of market economy can be learned through this kind of activities.

4. Social services

Improving the social service is also one of the jobs that CLC conducted in rural areas, which is the needs to build up the spiritual civilization. Through social services, the people will become close to each other and help those in need.

Case Study

In Sangoutai Village, the primary school students always help the aged persons when they have difficulties. Once a farmer’s wife got serious ill, but the family could not afford to send her to hospital. On hearing this, the school called on all the teachers and students and collected a donation of over 1400 yuan. There was a time when some children could not go to school because of poverty. The school carried out activities through Hope Project and provided financial assistance for those children to return to school. It has become a custom that whenever there is a person in need; the school would come to help.

5. Income generating activities

One of the main objectives for the establishment of community learning centers is to conduct publicity of modern ideology and activities of income-generation so as to help the local people get rid of poverty. The poverty phenomenon appears to be caused by the harsh basic living conditions, such as shortage of resources and bad natural environment. Through deep research, however, it is found that the main cause for poverty is that there are shortage of
resources for development, such as literacy ability, nutrition, health care and efficient productive technology. In a word, the people are lack of capacity to improve their living standards. There are two kinds of poverty in poor rural areas. One is the poverty of ideology and the other is lack of technology and skills. So the activities designed in community learning centers aim at these two aspects. One kind of activities is designed to upgrade the cultural and spiritual quality; The other kind is to provide the local people with practical technology and skills to increase their income, such as training on advanced agriculture technology, forestry, husbandry and operating and repairing farming machinery.

Case Study

Located in the suburb of Lanzhou Municipality in Gansu Province, Balizheng Township is a rural district with only a small amount of cultivated land but a large population. Since the CLC established in Dongguoyuan School, efforts have been made to explore a way to increase the income of the local farmers. The training workshops were conducted to improve the traditional production on chicken raising, vegetable growing in plastic greenhouse and homemade crafts. At the same time, it was noticed that many labors that want to do odd jobs in cities didn’t have senior middle school certificate. To improve the qualification of the local adults, four classes for senior middle school was opened for community members in 2002. Up to now they have recruited 38 learners with basic subjects of Chinese language, history, maths, English and some vocational training. After one-year study, the learners will get certificates of senior middle school, which have them ready for future work.

6. Improving living standards

Besides the low level of economic development, some out-dated traditional ideas are also the major obstacles for the improvement of quality life in poor rural areas. To overcome these problems, various activities were designed at community learning centers, mainly introducing ideas of new life through publicity and training on health, sanitation, hygiene and disease prevention.

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 literacy education programs critical importance should be attached to the formation of appropriate attitudes and values, which to a great 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.

VI. Action Models for Rural CLC

During the CLC project implementation in recent year, efforts were made to have CLC implementation connected with other national project of poverty alleviation projects in rural areas in order to explore an effective model for the comprehensive integration of agriculture production with science, technology and education.

1. Model of Project Integration with Agriculture, Science and Education

With the active functioning of county and township technical schools in Jingning County, a framework has been formed for the integration of agriculture production with science, technology and education. A vocational education network has set up led by the county Vocational Education Center with township and village CLC as the main agents. Integrated with the implementation of national projects, literacy education was carried out together with technical training in actual agriculture production. A successful way has been practiced for vitalizing the community, which is described as “Through disseminating a new technology to train a large number of talented personnel, to develop a kind of industry and to enrich a community”

2. Model of School Plus Experiment Base

This model refers to the practice of setting up an experiment base within an adult vocational school, a primary school or a middle school. Run by institutions of education, agriculture, science and technology, this base is to introduce and experiment on some high value added products of plantation and cultivation, which will provide place for students to practice as well as for the local people to learn about the technology. A good example of this model is Sangoutai Primary School in Tianzhu County, where the school conducted vegetables growing first and then disseminated the techniques to local people. The school ended the history that no vegetable was able to grow in the place with high altitude and cold weather.


In 2000, this kind of model was set up Silong Middle School of Baiyin District, Baiyin City, which is an integrated school for universal compulsory education and vocational education. The school has an attached company with an animal farm, a processing plant, an aquatic pond, meat processing plant, a service station for
dissemination of farming science and technology. The aims of their service are to serve the development of rural economy and increase the farmers’ income. Making full use of the technology, place and equipment to serve the farmers, the vocational school follows the service mechanism of “training, production and market sales”. The establishment of the community learning center has all local people engaged in using the scientific ways of production and in practical marketing. Through practical training activities of community education, a close relationship has been set up between the school and the local people.

4. Model of Integration among Basic, Adult and Vocational Education

In Santan Township of Jingyuan County, the Township Technical School for Farmers merged with Santan Primary School, which strengthened the comprehensive education of basic, vocational and adult education. The technical knowledge of vocational teachers and professional ability of primary school teachers are combined in conducting literacy education, basic education and technical training.

5. Model of Institutional Combination for Agriculture, Science and Education

In Longquansi Township of Yongdeng County, the CLC merged the township technical school for farmers, the cultural center and the township kindergarten in order to conduct comprehensive education for all the population out of formal schools. After years of practice, the functions of the CLC have been fully played and extended to more areas.

VII. Main Work of Rural CLC for Poverty Alleviation

Located in the inner land in Northwest Chins, Gansu is an agriculture-oriented province with backward economy, bad natural conditions and large population of ethnic minorities. Facing with this kind of situations, the activities in rural community learning centers are designed according to the principles of actuality, utility and practical results. All the activities are aiming at changing the out-dated ideas, upgrading literacy quality, developing family economy and improving the life quality.

1. Holding Various Training Workshops

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 local project 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: 1) rationale and practice of community learning centers; 2) researches on maths teaching at primary schools; 3) teaching and learning materials for activity classes at primary schools; 4) compiling of learning materials for post-literacy education; 5) introduction of learning materials on environment education.

2. Developing Relevant Material According to Practical Needs

Lacking appropriate teaching materials is one of the most urgent tasks that the CLC face with. So from the very beginning, great efforts were made in compiling suitable learning materials for CLC training. Connected with the project implementation and the ultimate aim of CLC for poverty alleviation, quite some relevant materials have been compiled and distributed to the learners.


In Tianzhu County, some local learning materials were compiled and printed for CLC learners: “Practical Use of Agriculture Machinery”, “Training Materials on Veterinary”, “Practical Training on Tailoring”, “Practical Skills for Agriculture and Husbandry”, “Health Care for Women and Children” and “Practical Cooking”.

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, which greatly helped the local farmers in their production.

3. Advocating for Change of Out-dated Ideas

Kushui Township in Yongdeng County of Gansu Province was once a poverty-stricken place with less land and large number of people living in bad conditions because of the bad weather and backward way of production. With the establishment of Community Learning Center, the energy saving green house is disseminated as one major project activity in education for poverty alleviation. 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 through growing vegetables. Up to now, the vegetable growing in green houses has become
the main economic production all over the township.

Through project implementation in Bali Township of Jingning County, the ideology of the local people changed dramatically. Using various channels, the social advocacy has become a regular work in the township. The local people realized the importance of education in local economic development and become active in accepting new ideas and learning new technology.

3. Setting Up Models for Project Implementation

Limited and restrained by geographic location, backward economy and cultural conditions, the people in poverty-stricken communities are always wondering about and feeling afraid of something new. Therefore, it is an urgent task for CLC project implementation to set up some good examples so as to mobilize the community members to participate in project activities. Seeing believes. Through project implementation, quite some successful CLC models have been set up as the initiatives to the further development and dissemination of CLCs.

4. Establishing CLC Bases

In Jingning County, three CLC bases were set up in Chengchuan Township and Bali Township. Cheng Chuan Township made great efforts in dissemination of scientific ways for agriculture production, with a base of 800 mu for fruit trees growing fields, a base of 2,000 mu for highland cultivation and a base 400 mu for vegetable growing in green houses. According to the geographic location and natural conditions, Bali Township developed a comprehensive way for agriculture production and social advancement. During the process of setting up development model villages, they considered the overall development of rural community with scientific planning for management on forestry, grain, fruit and vegetables.

In Yongdeng County, Kushui Township and Longquansi Township are the two outstanding bases for CLC implementation. From 1998 to 2002, there was nearly 1000 mu of greenhouses constructed in the villages of Kushui Township. With technical training provided in CLCs, the successful experience in greenhouse management have been disseminated to all the villages in the township. Demonstration bases were set up on value-added agriculture and industrialized agriculture in Longquansi Township. The Three-one development model has been practiced, which means a new type of product in each village; an agriculture technician in each co-op and a talented person in each family. All the three-ones have formed a strong promoting force for the social and economic development in the township.
5. **Strengthening Capacity-building**

The project management is one of the key factors that will decide whether the project can be successful and sustainable. During the CLC implementation, various ways of project management were adopted in different areas. However, there is one thing in common that all the CLC management has a close connection with local governments, school leaders and other administrative or educational institutions.

In Kushui Township of Yongdeng County, the responsibility method was adopted for management of CLC activities. The township leaders are responsible for the management of village CLC activities. The village leaders will take the responsibility of household activities. For the dissemination of greenhouse vegetable growing, a special leading group was set up with township and village leaders and specialists. There are 7 facilitators in the township CLC center, 2 of them are full time and the others are part-time teachers.

In Jingning County, a qualified contingent of CLC facilitators has been established, which work efficiently on promoting poverty alleviation and the development of social equity. Through coordination with related departments in the county, a working team is set up with teachers, technicians and talented persons from specific farming models.

6. **Strengthening Monitoring on the Implementation**

During the process of project monitoring, detailed indicators are formulated about the project achievements and outcomes, such as literacy pass rate for anti-illiteracy classes, the number of local individuals that benefited from project activities, the average increase of income for the local community. Take Xicao Township of Yongdeng County for instance, in 1998 there have been 84 centralized training classes held in Township Community Learning Center with 660 participants. And combined with villages, another 33 technical training classes were conducted for 930 participants. The township had 75% of farmers trained on practical skills in 1998. With a 10% increase in 1999, it has been planned to make another 10% increase in 2000.

Based on the county annual project plans, checking and review were conducted on the situations of project implementation at county and township levels by provincial project working groups in the two project provinces. At the same time, Chinese National Commission for UNESCO conducted irregular supervisions on provincial project implementation.
Assessments and Monitoring during the Third Phase of Project Implementation

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7. Cooperation and Communication with Other Education Experts

As a component of an international project, it is of great significance for the exchanges and communication among different project counties, provinces and countries. Through the activities organized by CLC project, the understanding about the project is deepened and the project management is improved.

In August 1999, a visiting delegation consisted of local project officers from Guangxi project counties made a study tour to Gansu Province. They visited the rural community learning centers in Yongdeng County and Tianzhu Autonomous County. They praised highly of the project achievement in Gansu. This kind of exchange activities greatly improved the project development.

In 2000, the project was disseminated to Yunnan Province. With similar situations of minority education issues, a good communication has been built up between Gansu and Yunnan since then. A cooperation on compiling local learning materials was conducted in 2002.

In September 2002, two professors from Hiroshima University, Japan, visited the CLC implementation in Gansu. They visited over 10 CLCs in Yongdeng County, Baiyin District and Jingyuan County, which deeply impressed them by the effective and successful integration of literacy education and technical training.
VIII. Achievements of CLC for Poverty Alleviation in Rural Areas

1. The working efficiency and management capacity of the project personnel has been upgraded through training workshops on project implementation. Both the project officers and trainers are enthusiastic in carrying out the project work.

2. The quality of local people has been improved. Through various kinds of training activities 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 actual income of the local farmers and herdsmen were increased obviously. The statistics of project areas shows that the average income per capita, financial revenue and the GDP were all upgraded. (See Annex)

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.

IX. Issues and Problems for CLC Development

1. Inadequate Understanding of CLC Significance

As the whole country has realized the importance of education in rural areas, great progress has been made in rural school development. However, the CLC implementation is only a kind of experiment or piloting and has not been widely accepted in China, for it is still recognized as a kind of non-formal education. Due to this kind of situation, more efforts need to be made for the widely disseminating the ideas of CLC implementation.
2. Uneven Development at Initiative Stage

The implementation of CLC is still at an initiative stage with various forms and structures in practice. The CLC development varies in different areas because of different understandings about the functions and educational environment. There is not a systematic plan at national for the sustainable development.

3. Organizing Mechanism Incomplete

In the large rural areas, the educational resources are all under the allocation of education administrative departments with limited arrangement right to schools. The CLC activities as a big education concept need to establish an effective mechanism to coordinate all the education resources and make comprehensive plan for the community education. It is only in this way that CLCs can become a real community center.

4. Implementation Quality Needs Improving

The development of CLC in Gansu is still at the stage of exploration and has not been standardized. Although quite some achievements have been made in literacy education and technical training, the quality and impact are still limited depending on the local governments and the schools. The functions of CLCs have not been fully played for quality community education.

5. Lack of Theoretical Research

The operation of CLCs in Gansu Province has not formed a systematic mechanism in rural areas. This is because the CLC practice is lack of theoretical guidance. There are quite some issues need to make serious research, such as the position of CLC in a community, the relationship with schools, the system and mechanism of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

6. Lack of Experience in Sharing Educational Resources in Market Economy

China is still in the transition period from planning economy to market economy in many sectors, particularly in the education sector. After over 20 years of reform, the education system still has some rigid limitation, which cannot meet the needs of rural education development as well as the CLC implementation.

X. Recommendations and Suggestion

1. Strengthening Understanding the CLC Project at Grass-root Level

There are quite some difficulties for the implementation of CLCs in rural areas, for many people are not familiar with it. Connecting with the implementation of
“Action Plan for Education Vitalization in 21 Century”, advocacy should be conducted about the significance of CLC practice. With dissemination of successful CLC models, the objective should be widely spread to local people so as to motivate their interests in participation.

2. Improving Management to Upgrade Actual Efficiency

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. Developing Full Utilization of Local Educational Resources

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. Meanwhile, other potential educational resources should be fully mobilized in CLC activities, such as local culture centers, model families, and retired teachers, engineers, technicians and doctors in the community. In this way the CLC can play even greater function in education as well as in the development of culture and social economy.

4. Strengthening Summarization Communication and Scientific Research

Although satisfactory achievements have been made for the CLC implementation in Gansu Province, there is not a systematic and scientific summarization to upgrade the theoretical level of the practice. Work should be done to sum up the successful experience of CLC implementation so as to improve the further development and dissemination of the project.

5. Conducting Activities in Line with Reality

As kind of non-formal education activities, the contents of CLC training should be appropriate to the real situation and necessity of the local community. Three combinations should be practiced for project activities: the combination of long-term learning and short-term training; the combination of theoretical learning and practical operation; the combination of literacy learning and skills of poverty alleviation.

6. Developing Strategies

After years of literacy education in China, the aim of eradicating illiteracy has been basically achieved in most of the regions. However, the traditional definition of
literacy only means that a person can read, write and calculate to a certain degree. It has not included the competence to learn about technical skills in improving their life quality. What is more, we are living in a changing world with characteristics of knowledge economy. What we learned today might become outdated tomorrow. So the continuing education will be a long-term task. The establishment of the community learning provides the local people with a permanent organization for functional learning and continuing education. It is a real manifestation of the further development of post-literacy education for farmers in poverty-stricken areas.

7. Striving for Standardization

Regular monitoring and evaluation should be conducted for project implementation to ensure the effectiveness and quality of activities. At the same time, the management of CLC should be standardized with clear responsibilities, organization regulations, activity rules and evaluation criteria. This will build up a solid foundation for the smooth and sustainable development.

8. Increasing Investment

The development of rural community learning center needs necessary funds. Besides UNESCO support, some government counterpart funds can be allocated for project activities to upgrade the literacy level and improve the quality of life. It is also possible to raise some individual donation and fees for project activity so as to maintain the normal operation of CLCs.

9. Merged into Local Administration

The management of community learning center can be included in local administrative departments. Without formal organization and permanent personnel arrangement, the community learning center is run just like an evening school under the jurisdiction of local education departments. In this way, the community learning center can combine the formal education with non-formal education and make full use of the human resources and material resources of the local education departments to serve the local economic development.
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