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United Nations Literacy Decade

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

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Programme name: Literacy for Health Improvement and Poverty Eradication

Implemented by: Education Bureau of Luodian County, Quannan Autonomy Prefecture, Guizhou Province

Basic facts

Country: China

Starting year: 2002

Outreach: 30,370

Target Population: rural populations in the county of Luodian, Guizhou province, western China

Language of instruction: mother tongue, Chinese

Operating in: county of Luodian, Guizhou province in the western China

Facilitator/Beneficiary ratio: per 20-30 in rural areas of high illiteracy rate; 1 per 5-10 in rural areas of low illiteracy rate; 1 per 2 in mountain areas of quite low illiteracy rate.

Main Funding: Governmental Finance at Different Levels

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Brief Description

The programme was developed to improve the living conditions of a large number of illiterate and poor people in the county of Luodian, Guizhou province, in western China. While providing basic literacy skills, the programme focuses on the promotion of sanitation and health.

Rationale

As an economically and culturally underdeveloped county, with a population of 320,000, Luodian is identified as one of the pilot projects of the government's poverty alleviation efforts. Before 2000, its illiterate population numbered 350,000, and most

were women. The low literacy rate prevents the economy of the area from developing.

Objective

The purpose of the programme is to provide basic literacy skills and to improve the quality of life through health and sanitation and increasing income. Its goal is to make people aware of the importance of education and to help them acquire technical skills which will increase their earnings through learning.

Conceptual Model and Methodology

Programmes were carried out in various forms including small classes during the farming seasons and large classes in the off-season; household and field visits; relay teaching (from teachers to students, from students to parents, and from parents to other family members). An integrated approach is adopted, combining farming, technology and education, as well as incorporating literacy with farming skill training to ensure best results.

Innovative features

The program includes the following aspects: Under the guidelines of the government, the literacy programme covers the whole target population, especially the young and the middle-aged. They were mainly taught how to read and write, as well as work and household skills. The programme focuses on raising their awareness of healthy lifestyle. The literacy programme has brought changes to the county and has raised the local residents' awareness on public health. Women who benefited from this programme acquired basic knowledge on maternal and children's health, and on the prevention of common diseases. The overall health status has been greatly improved.