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Recommended Citation

Yong, Xiuzhi (2014). "A study on the policy and model of large-scale effective training to rural compulsory education teachers: A case study of Beijing "Green-Planting Action";" *Adult Education Research Conference*. <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2013/pre-conferences/7>

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A STUDY ON THE POLICY AND MODEL OF LARGE-SCALE EFFECTIVE TRAINING TO RURAL COMPULSORY EDUCATION TEACHERS: A CASE STUDY OF BEIJING “GREEN-PLANTING ACTION”

Xiuzhi Yong¹

ABSTRACT: Using Beijing "green-planting action" as a case study, the author exams and analyzes the policy and the implementation of a ten-year long, large-scale training for rural compulsory education teachers in the suburban districts and counties of Beijing. In this presentation, the author first summarizes the large-scale training rules and characteristics, then examines the effectiveness of the model for large-scale training of rural teachers. It is hoped that the study provides some strategies to improve the quality of teachers' training, puts forth a scientific basis for decision making and reasonable policy recommendations. It concludes with a review of the balanced development of compulsory education.

To promote the balanced development of education between urban and rural areas, it is the key to improve the quality of teachers in rural areas. Ten years ago, the Beijing Institute of Education started the Green-planting Action Program, a large-scale training program for rural compulsory education teachers in the suburban districts and counties of Beijing, and it has achieved very good results. Taking the Green-planting Action Program as a case, this study examines the implementation of the model and features of large-scale training of rural teachers, by which we could share some useful insights to improve the quality of training teachers in rural areas, and enrich the theories of balanced development of compulsory education as well as equity in education.

The Green-planting Action Program was implemented to improve the professional qualifications of the compulsory education teachers. The surveys at the beginning of the 21st century showed there was a big gap between the professional development levels of urban and rural teachers in Beijing (Li, 2004). One of the most important reasons for this difference was the limited government investment on the large-scale rural teachers training. The majority of rural schoolteachers were usually trained through networks, CD-ROM, and massive lectures. Consequently, though most of the rural schoolteachers received training, they have not evidently improved the quality of their teaching. The Green-planting Action Program was designed to not only solve the problem of large-scale training of rural teachers, but also hope to improve the quality of their training.

The Green-planting Action Program consisted of three stages of training: unified learning on theoretical foundations of education, group application and practical supervision, and individual projects/presentation of learning. The first stage focused on theoretical study, during which the trainees received about 10 days' face to face training in the training institutions. The training was

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designed to improve their knowledge, theories and methods based on their own needs/experiences. The second stage was on-site training, implemented in the trainees' schools, supervised by both academic experts and expert practitioners. The on-site training aimed to implement advanced theories and methods in classroom teaching. This stage was the application, feedback, and diagnosis of the previous stage's theoretical intensive training. The third stage aimed to help the trainees to establish and develop their own teaching philosophies, instructional theories, and form their teaching strategies, communicate with each other, and to help other teachers to improve.

After 10 years experiment and implementation, the Green-planting Action Program achieved very good results and gradually formed its training features. First, the training program was a large-scale training with a wide-radiating influence. The program started in 2004, and about 40,000 primary and secondary school teachers had been trained during the past 10 years. The trainees came from 800 primary schools (95% of the total suburban primary schools) and 363 secondary schools (99% of the suburban high schools) (Fang & Yang, 2008). Secondly, this program was the first of this kind to use the key and integrated training resources to train schoolteachers. Besides the funding from the Beijing Municipal Education Commission and Beijing Municipal Finance Commission, the Beijing Institute of Education integrated and made full use of both internal and external training resources in Beijing to assure its success. Thirdly, the program was a scientific exploration of individualization in the implementation of training. According to the ever-changing background and needs of the suburbs schoolteachers, the objectives of training have been adjusted constantly and accordingly.

The Green-planting Action Program has strong implications and has greatly promote the teachers training in the suburbs areas. The professionalization of the rural teachers has been significantly improved, bringing a profound impact on the qualifications, structure of the schoolteachers as well as the development of the society.

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