

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: AEEH

<b>TA NO./NAME:</b> 1893-PRC: Policy and Planning Support for Education for All in Hebei Province				<b>TA AMOUNT APPROVED:</b> \$600,000	
<b>EXECUTING AGENCY:</b> Hebei Education Commission				<b>REVISED AMOUNT:</b>	
<b>DATE:</b>				<b>TA AMOUNT UNDISB.:</b>	
<b>APPROVAL:</b> 25 May 1993		<b>SIGNING:</b> 23 July 1993		\$57,804 <sup>1</sup>	
<b>FIELD:</b> 18 April 1994				<b>TA AMOUNT UTILIZED:</b> \$542,196 <sup>1</sup>	
<b>CLOSING :</b>				<b>ORIGINAL:</b> 30 June 1996	
				<b>ACTUAL:</b> 6 Sep 1996 <sup>2</sup>	

### Background and Rationale

As follow-up of the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA), Bank RETA No. 5446 (approved in 1991) supported the development of national plans of action for EFA in six DMCs. Given the size and diversity of the PRC, however, it was decided to prepare an action plan for a single province. Hebei Province was selected by the Government. It has a population of over 60 million (including two million illiterate adults, of which 70 percent are women), and 35 percent of its 140 counties are categorized by the Government as "poor". Basic education in these counties is of poor quality, in part because of inadequate planning and inefficient management. This TA aimed to improve the capacity of the Hebei Education Commission (HEC) to implement the EFA action plan.

### TA Objectives and Scope

TA objectives were to (i) improve planning and management of EFA; and (ii) strengthen early childhood, adult literacy, and continuing education programs. The scope of the TA included (i) 11 personmonths of international and 31 personmonths of local consulting services; (ii) development of prototype instructional materials; (iii) training of teacher trainers for rural preschools and adult literacy programs; (iv) workshops on educational planning, management, and finance; (v) in-country and overseas study visits for education planners and administrators, (vi) in-depth field studies to identify strategies to improve the quality of early childhood education, teacher training, and rural adult education, and (vii) equipment essential to TA implementation.

### TA Inputs Evaluation

The terms of reference of the TA were detailed and guided the activities of the consultants quite satisfactorily. The TA design process was highly participatory, involving consultation with key officials of the HEC and the provincial EFA committee. As a result the overall design reflected the priorities of the HEC. Equally importantly, the HEC was actively involved in its implementation at all stages and successfully integrated the TA activities with the overall Hebei EFA action plan. The HEC established a steering committee headed by the Deputy Chairman to oversee implementation and to maximize involvement in TA management. TA implementation was contracted to the regional office of UNESCO which did an outstanding job of managing the TA activities while ensuring that the HEC was ultimately in control. Furthermore, UNESCO was able to supplement certain TA activities through its own PRC program for EFA, thus creating considerable "value added" within the overall provincial EFA program. The consultants, both international and local, performed effectively. The Bank monitored TA implementation through three review missions. A final workshop involving participants from a number of other provinces helped to disseminate to a broader audience of education officials the experience of Hebei in managing the implementation of EFA programs. Finally, the dynamic and committed leadership of the HEC contributed significantly to the effectiveness of TA implementation.

### TA Outputs Evaluation

The TA produced 13 reports, including the three field studies, two study visit reports, and reports on EFA evaluation and program implementation. All reports were of satisfactory quality and were translated into Chinese for wide dissemination within and beyond Hebei Province. The early childhood education study focussed on strategies for using locally available natural materials for learning activities and for strengthening parental involvement. The field study on primary teacher training identified teacher skill deficiencies and developed new in-service training materials for use by 200,000 primary teachers. The study on rural adult education resulted in the development of prototype booklets on such topics as village gardens, greenhouse construction and medicinal plants for use by newly literate adults. The quality of both the prototype instructional materials and the training materials developed for the workshops was good. However, the short duration of the workshops themselves was inadequate for the list of skills and topics to be covered. The overall impact of the TA was enhanced by the publication of a major report in English and Chinese on EFA in Hebei Province incorporating the experience of the HEC, the TA, the International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED), and the regional UNESCO office. Prepared by the HEC and INRULED, the report was edited by UNESCO and supported financially by the TA. It will maximize the sharing of lessons learned in Hebei Province with other provinces in PRC.

### TA Overall Assessment/Rating

The TA was generally successful.

<sup>1</sup> Balance as of 31 August 1996, including billings currently being processed; the amount is tentative and subject to the closing of TA account.

<sup>2</sup> Subject to submission of final billing by UNESCO-PROAP.

### **Major Lessons Learned**

The success of the TA relied to a very large extent on a participatory approach to planning and management. The HEC sense of TA ownership was strong throughout, and success would have been constrained without this. The high level of interest and commitment on the part of the senior leadership of the HEC was an essential condition for TA success. A second important element in the TA's success (although not generalizable) was the fact that the Consultant (UNESCO) had its own parallel local program in Hebei that reinforced TA objectives and enabled additional supervisory inputs at no cost to the TA.

### **Follow-up Actions and Recommendations**

Hebei Province with its effective education management and commitment to achieving and improving EFA would be a logical candidate for a loan investment in basic education. However, constraints on PRC borrowing for social sector development make this impossible. However, to the extent that Bank-assisted projects in other sectors involve Hebei, an effort should be made to include a component to strengthen basic or adult education — e. g., a component could be included in an agriculture loan project to upgrade the literacy and basic education of farmers in order to increase their productivity. The Hebei EFA implementation model and the design of the associated TA can in any case serve as a model for replication in other provinces.

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