

TA COMPLETION REPORT

Division: AEEH

TA NO./NAME: 2455-PRC: Strengthening the Department of Ethnic Minority Education			TA AMOUNT APPROVED: \$500,000	SOURCE: Government of Norway
			REVISED AMOUNT:	
EXECUTING AGENCY: Foreign Investment and Loan Office of the Ministry of Education ¹			TA AMOUNT UNDISB.: \$72,831.40	TA AMOUNT UTILIZED: \$415,918.92 ²
DATE: APPROVAL: 4 December 1995	SIGNING: 31 May 1996	FIELD: 17 May 1997	CLOSING : ORIGINAL: February 1997	ACTUAL: May 1998

TA DESCRIPTION

PRC has made great progress in achieving universal primary education. Enrollment rates vary substantially, however, within the country and are lowest in those provinces with large ethnic minority populations. Ethnic minorities, which comprise about 91 million people, or 8.4 per cent of the population of PRC, have a lower enrollment rate than the population as a whole, and their primary school drop out rate is particularly high - especially for girls. Recognizing that achievement of universal primary education requires special attention to ethnic minority groups, the Government has established special programs for ethnic minority education coordinated by the Department of Ethnic Minority Education (DEME) of the Ministry of Education (MOE). DEME has been handicapped in its work by (i) an inadequate data base for ethnic minority education, (ii) a fragmented policy base of many diverse documents that have been poorly disseminated, (iii) insufficient research capacity for better understanding the problems of ethnic minority children and for devising strategies to resolve them, and (iv) limited capacity to train ethnic minority educators and administrators at the provincial and county levels.

TA OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The main objective of the TA was to support the achievement of universal basic education for ethnic minority groups through strengthening the management capacity of DEME. Specifically, the objectives were to (i) design and pilot test a system for collecting and analyzing data from ethnic minority schools, (ii) develop research capacity, (iii) compile and disseminate policy guidelines for ethnic minority education, (iv) enhance administrative training capacity, and (v) inform DEME about ethnic minority and bilingual education strategies being used in other countries. The scope of the TA included (i) provision of 6 person-months of international and 22 person-months of domestic consulting services in statistics, research design, minority education practices, ethnic minority policy, and administrative training; (ii) publication of policy guidelines, research studies, research training manuals, and a training manual for education data collection and analysis; (iii) local administrative training workshops; and (v) short overseas study visits for key administrators to examine ethnic minority education strategies in other countries.

TA INPUTS EVALUATION

The formulation of the terms of reference for consultants was adequate although some additional person-months and additional visits of international consulting services were required in order to provide sufficient guidance and input. The consultants performed very well, and in fact exceeded expectations by developing training materials of a more comprehensive nature than originally envisaged. Supplementary resources made available by the MOE allowed additional persons to be trained in ethnic minority administration and teacher training strategies. At the request of the Government, counties in additional provinces were included as sites for research and data collection as well as for training. A minor change of scope during implementation allowed for a final dissemination workshop at which the research and data collection manuals and the compilations of policy documents were shared with a much larger group of ethnic minority educators and administrators from a larger number of provinces. The addition of the dissemination workshop, the inclusion of additional counties, and the increased number of trainees for certain workshops reflect DEME's eagerness to benefit from the TA. All TA inputs were provided on time, and the TA was completed within the originally planned twelve months from inception of field services.

¹ The title of the Executing Agency changed during TA implementation from State Education Commission to Ministry of Education.

² This amount excludes an outstanding advance of \$11,249.68.

TA OUTPUTS EVALUATION

The TA generated a large number of reports, including: (i) research reports on boarding schools for ethnic minority students in Yunnan Province, bilingual education, and ethnic minority teachers; (ii) manuals for research, a teacher information system, and statistics; (iii) training materials for minority education administrators, and teacher trainers; and (iv) a three-part policy ethnic minority education manual compiling policy materials and policy training guidelines. The quality of the reports and manuals was excellent, and the documents have been widely disseminated. About 60 senior provincial ethnic minority education administrators and over 100 principals of ethnic minority teacher training schools participated in training workshops. Education managers in four provinces with large ethnic minority populations benefited directly from participation in field activities such as the development of an information system for ethnic minority teachers and pupils. The TA was the first directed at DEME, and senior officials of DEME benefited from general participation in TA implementation as well as from the overseas study visits.

TA OVERALL ASSESSMENT/RATING

The TA was generally successful.

MAJOR LESSONS LEARNED

TA contract signing was delayed by several months because the MOE wanted domestic consultants to be paid through the MOE itself and not by the consulting firm. The issue was resolved after Bank adoption of a uniform policy whereby all domestic consultants are paid at market rates by the consulting firm. TA implementation was somewhat constrained by the inadequate time allowed in the design for provincial-based activities and adjustments had to be made. Subsequent TA with substantial provincial involvement (especially if the provinces are remote) should allow more time in the original implementation schedule. The TA employed a staggered approach for international consultants' inputs in recognition of DEME's limited absorption capacity and inexperience with TA implementation. This strategy worked effectively and allowed DEME to work more intensively with each consultant in turn.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethnic minority education in PRC is a relatively neglected area where the small input provided by TA can make a substantial difference. Accordingly, provincial-focused ethnic minority education should become a major thrust of the Bank's subsequent TA for the PRC education sector. The 1999-2001 PRC Country Assistance Plan reflects this, and two additional TA projects in the area of ethnic minority education are planned, each concentrating on a specific province. The Ministry of Education has followed up on the TA by disseminating research and data collection guidelines to all provincial ethnic minority education offices and by preparing a preliminary proposal for future TA projects focusing on ethnic minority education in specific provinces.