Education and Professional Practice Skills Development for Rural Youth in China

Difei Shen, Iowa State University

Introduction  With the implementation of the economic reform from a central planning economy to a marketing economy in the later 1970s, China has experienced great improvements, both in its urban and rural areas. However, most of these achievements were stimulated by reform policies, which have reached its summit (Ma, 1990). China needs to transfer to a science- and technology-induced development strategy, the success of which depends a lot on the quality of human resources (Ma). Considering the fact that about 70% of China’s 1.3 billion people reside in rural areas, education for rural youth, no doubt is critical in the transformation of the development strategy in terms of producing qualified rural human resources.

Purpose  The purpose of this poster is to introduce rural education system in China to the audience of the conference, so that an understanding of the importance and necessity of reform can be formed to help China switch smoothly to the science- and technology-induced development strategy.

Information to Share in the Poster  This poster includes the history and the status quo of the rural education system in China, as well as challenges it is facing with regard to the new development strategy. Some reform recommendations in view of extension education are also included.

Conclusion  The challenge China’s rural education system faced with concerns both educational quantity and educational quality. However, as a whole, the development of “Professional Practice Skills” (PTS), which is a critical composition of qualified human resources, is neglected in the formal rural education system. And there are few nonformal education programs existing as compensations either. Reform is thus called for.

Educational Importance  Even though this poster focuses on rural China, the lack of PTS education in the formal education system is a universal problem. The discussion of this problem and solutions for rural China in confluence with extension education will no doubt give implications to education practitioners from other countries when they try to address similar problems in their own countries.