

China

**Xinjiang Technical and Vocational Education
and Training Project Ethnic Minority
Development Plan**

(Abstract)

Project Management Office (PMO)

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Teacher and Student Groups of Ethnic Minorities in Project Schools	2
3. Policy Framework	4
4. Consultation and Public Participation	4
5. Attitude of Minority Teachers and Students.....	5
6. Issues Raised in the Survey.....	5
7. Suggestions and Measures	7
8. Conclusion	8

List of Tables

Table 1: Key Content of EMDP for Project Schools	7
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1. Introduction

For a long time, the relative small scale and low percentage of highly skilled labors are key factors restricting Xinjiang's economic and social development, which is important factor for causing increasing development gap between Xinjiang and the rest of the country. Hence, cultivating highly skilled talents is an important foundation in Xinjiang's economic and social development, and cultivating those of ethnic minorities is the priority among priorities. The cultivation of highly skilled talents of ethnic minorities is not only an important step for promoting development of the society of ethnic minorities and raising the production and living standard for ethnic minority population, but also an important pathway to strengthen and develop ethnic relationship with equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony among different nationality groups in Xinjiang. Given the fact that Xinjiang has relatively high proportion of different ethnic minorities, the regional economic and social development in Xinjiang should be closely associated with the participation of ethnic minorities in the society. Therefore, higher vocational education in Xinjiang shoulders the historical mission of training highly skilled talents of ethnic minorities and promotes development of the society of ethnic minorities. The proposed "Xinjiang Technical and Vocational Education and Training Project" (Xinjiang TVET project) should not only elevate the overall education quality of vocational colleges in Xinjiang and push forward the balanced development of vocational education, but also ensure that students and teachers of ethnic minorities under this Project will fully benefit from the Project and realize their own development. In order to achieve this goal, following the requirement of the World Bank and based extensive consultations in the project schools, an *Ethnic Minority Development Plan* is developed for the Project.

The unit in charge of the Project is the Education Department of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and the implementation units are five vocational schools, including Xinjiang Engineering College, Xinjiang Agricultural Vocational & Technical College, Xinjiang Vocational & Technical College of Light Industry, College of Xinjiang Uyghur Medicine and Urumqi Vocational University. The project design is fully consistent with the development objectives "to improve the quality and relevance of training offered by participating schools". It consists of five components, which include (i) school-based reforms, involving the introduction of a modular, competency-based curriculum, a learner-centered pedagogy and a new assessment system for students and teachers; (ii) strengthen linkage between school and industry; (iii) building up high quality teams; (iv) improve external support to other schools and local communities; and (v) upgrade facilities and equipment. The Project will be implemented in five years between 2015 and 2020, and the total investment is CNY636.625 million yuan. The loan from the World Bank is US\$50 million, accounting for 48.69% of total project investment, and the domestic counterpart fund is CNY 326.625 million yuan, accounting for 51.31% of total project investment.

In order to ensure ethnic minority students and teachers in five project schools will be able to receive project benefits, an experienced local consulting team was engaged by project PMO in July 2014 to carry out social assessment and EMDP preparation for the Project. The process of EMDP preparation is based on extensive consultation with minority students and teachers in the project schools, which include group discussions, stakeholder interviews and sample survey as

well as review of secondary data. As a result, a social economic profile of teachers and students in project schools were developed, the policy framework on ethnic minorities was reviewed, general attitudes and opinions for the proposed project was obtained, and concerns from project affected people particularly minority students and teachers were identified. Based on such consultations, a series of concrete measures were proposed and included in EMDP for each project school in order to address such concerns and ensure equal share of project benefits by ethnic minority students and teachers among project schools. In total, the five project schools plan to invest CNY30.67 million yuan to carry out the EMDP, in which CNY10.7105 million yuan is the loan fund from the World Bank. The EMDP consists of six sections, which includes introduction, profile of ethnic minority teachers and students in project schools, policy framework, consultation and stakeholder analysis, issues concerned with minority students and teachers, and suggestions and conclusion.

2. Teacher and Student Groups of Ethnic Minorities in Project Schools

Among the five project schools, three are located in Urumqi, one in Changji, Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture, and one in Hotan, Hotan Prefecture. As a whole, Xinjiang has a population consisting of 38.1% Han Nationality people and 61.9% ethnic minority people, being a region with relatively large ethnic minorities. Among the three cities, Urumqi and Changji have relatively lower proportions of ethnic minority people, being 27.4% and 26.95% respectively. This is because both Urumqi and Changji Prefecture were concentrated with Han people in history. Among ethnic minorities in Urumqi, the Uyghur people and Hui people respectively rank the top two places, while among those in Changji Prefecture, the Hui people and Kazak people respectively rank the top two places, followed by the Uyghur people. Different from ethnic groups of the aforesaid two cities, Han people in Hotan Prefecture accounts for only 3.5% and ethnic minorities account for 96.5%. Most of them are Uyghur people, which account for 96.27% of the total population in the prefecture. This is because the prefecture is Uyghur people concentrated area in history.

At present, there are 56,708 students in five project schools, with 24,670 being ethnic minorities, accounting for 44% of the total students in these schools. Since 2010, the number of minority students in project schools has been doubled or tripled and the proportion of minority students has also increased rapidly. For example, in Xinjiang Agricultural Vocational & Technical College, the proportion has increased from 24.4% in 2010 to 43.8% in 2014; in Xinjiang Engineering College, the proportion has increased from 19.6% in 2012 to 39.5% in 2014; and in Urumqi Vocational University, the proportion has increased from 38.8% in 2010 to 51.2% in 2014. These three schools shared relatively high growth rate of minority students, and proportion of minority students increased by 20 percentage points. In Xinjiang Vocational & Technical College of Light Industry, the proportion has increased much slower by only 6.1% from 22.9% in 2012 to 29.0% in 2014. Prior to 2014, all students of College of Xinjiang Uyghur Medicine were minority ones, and in 2014, the college enrolled 81 Han students, which resulted in lower proportion of minority students to 97.6%. Among them, Uyghur students are in the majority, accounting for 97.8%. It is obvious that the increase in the total number of students in the college is mainly attributable to the increase of minority students there. These data reveals that the increase in the number and proportion of minority students in vocational education colleges and universities in Xinjiang has become a common trend, which is not only the reflection of implementation of government

policies on promoting vocational education for ethnic minorities (such as requiring 30% to 40% of college enrollment to be ethnic minority students), but also a response to the strong demand by the ethnic minorities for high-level vocational education in Xinjiang.

One important characteristics among minority student population in project schools is relatively high poverty rate. According to the school statistics, there are 18,002 impoverished minority students there, accounting for 72.9% of total minority students there, which is about 20-30 percentage points higher than that of Han students. Most of them came from four prefectures in southern Xinjiang, including Hotan, Kashgar, Aksu, and Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture, as well as traditional pasturing areas in north Xinjiang like Altay, Tacheng, and Ili. In fact, southern and northern Xinjiang are two main impoverishment regions in Xinjiang, where most state-level poverty-stricken counties in Xinjiang are located. Among 27 state-level impoverished counties in Xinjiang, 25 are located in these two regions, accounting for 92.5%. In addition, in project schools, the employment rate of minority students is about 10-15 percentage points lower than that among Han students. In another word, minority students face more employment difficulties compared with Han students.

Another key characteristics among minority students is limited capacity of common language skill. In project schools, there are 4,701 minority freshmen who are required to receive one year preparatory Chinese language program before starting subject learning, which accounts for 70% of the total number of minority freshmen there. Given the current situation in Xinjiang, the requirement for preparatory language education will remain for near future. In fact there's strong possibility that the number of minority students receiving preparatory language education will further increase. This is because (1) the scale and proportion of minority students are increasing in project schools, including number of "native-tongue-using minority students" which is growing at a relatively fast speed; (2) many bilingual freshmen have relatively low Chinese language proficiency, and quite a proportion of them is also required to receive preparatory language education before starting formal subject learning.

In terms of faculty situation, five project schools have 2,519 teachers with 755 as minority ones, accounting for 30.7%. College of Xinjiang Uyghur Medicine has 190 minority teachers which account for 80.5% of the total teachers in the college. In the other four schools, the proportion of minority teachers ranges from 23.5% in Xinjiang Engineering College to 30.4% in Urumqi Vocational University. It should be noted that a considerable proportion of minority teachers hold non-teaching positions in project schools. In addition, there are 105 teachers specifically responsible for language teaching, accounting for 4.1% of the total teachers in project schools. Xinjiang Agricultural Vocational & Technical College has only 8 language teachers, the least among the five schools, accounting for only 1.9% of the total number of teachers in the college. Xinjiang Engineering College has 36 language teachers, the most among the five schools, accounting for 6.3% of the total number of teachers in the college. The insufficiency in teaching faculty for preparatory language education is in contrast with the fast increase of the number of minority students requiring preparatory language education, which results in large class size for preparatory language education (50-60 students per class) and the extremely low teacher to student ratio (mostly between 1:50 and 1:60). In general, the current condition for preparatory

language education in project schools could not meet the requirement for language learning environment, which is not beneficial for minority students to complete preparatory language program. As a result, the average annual passing rate of MHK test by minority students from preparatory language program in project schools is only 20% to 30%. Moreover, most those minority students are generally weak in Chinese listening, speaking, reading and writing, which create difficulties for many minority students from project schools to complete subject learning, internship, and employment.

3. Policy Framework

The Ethnic Minority Development Plan for Project is based on relevant laws & regulations of the People's Republic of China, and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and requirement of the World Bank Indigenous People Policies (OP4.10 and BP4.10). Both China's laws and regulations and the World Bank's policies share common objectives and put emphasis on respecting dignity, right, economic and cultural of ethnic minorities, and their equal rights of development. For the proposed development project in the areas of ethnic minorities, the World Bank policy focus on obtaining broad support of the project by ethnic minorities through free and informed consultation and develop a series of concrete measures to avoid or minimize potential negative impacts and enhance positive benefits to be brought by the project to the ethnic minority communities. The process of consultation with ethnic minority communities and detailed measures proposed will be documented into an ethnic minority development plan for the Project.

4. Consultation and Public Participation

To achieve this goal, extensive consultation were carried out among students and teachers in project schools, particularly among minority students and teachers there. Since August 2013, project offices at both provincial level and school level have issued information relating to the "Xinjiang TVET project" to teachers & students and the society through websites (www.ts.cn and www.iyaxin.com), special meetings, press information and school bulletins. Information publication has reached the expected effect, and the awareness rate of those 400 interviewed teachers and 1,731 students reaches 99.75% and 96.59% respectively, including 100% of minority teachers and 96.66% of minority students.

In the process of social assessment and EMDP preparation, a survey team was formed with 20 persons (exclusive of students), including 7 ethnic minority researchers with 5 being female researchers. The survey is based on combination of questionnaire survey, interview and group discussions. A total of 2,131 questionnaires were sent and all of them back got back with 100% effective. There were 400 questionnaires for teachers with 135 from minority teachers, accounting for 33.75%. There were 1,731 questionnaires for students, with 688 from minority students, accounting for 39.7%. A total of 33 group discussions were held in five schools; 292 teachers and students participated in discussions, and 117 of them were ethnic minority people, accounting for 40%. A total of 66 key informants were interviewed in project schools and 51 of them are minorities, accounting for 77.2%. Among different method of surveys, since the proportion of minority teachers and students is slightly higher than that actual representation in the project schools, the opinions and suggestions from minority teachers and students could be objectively

and accurately reflected.

5. Attitude of Minority Teachers and Students

Given the fact that the proposed Project will support various improvements in the project schools, from improving teaching system to enhancing physical conditions, students and teachers of five schools regardless their nationalities all expressed strong support of the Project. From the result of the questionnaire survey, 133 minority teachers expressed support of the project, accounting for 98.5% of all minority teachers; 628 minority students welcome the project, accounting for 91.3% of all minority students; 57 minority students say they don't care about the project, accounting for 8.3% of all minority students; only three minority students oppose the project, accounting for 0.4% of all minority students. These figures indicated that proposed Project with different component design will support different aspect of school improvement, which will meet their development needs and is also in line with general expectation of students and teachers in the project schools. At the mean time the survey also identified a number of issues facing minority students and teachers, which need to be addressed so that they could better receive the benefits to be brought by the Project.

6. Issues Raised in the Survey

The key issue facing minority students and teachers in project schools is how to enhance their capacity for development. For ethnic minority students, the key issues include improvement of effect of preparatory language education and improvement of rate of employment upon graduation. For minority teachers, the key issue is to enhance their development capacity and outcome for their development. These issues and concerns need to be identified and their causes need to be carefully analyzed.

Issue 1: Low Quality of Preparatory Language Education

Though ethnic preparatory students have received one years' preparatory education, the MHK passing rate could hardly reach 30% for most schools. According to many preparatory language teachers, such situation could not be improved if the current teaching condition could not be changed. The phenomenon of "Dumb Chinese" is widely exist among minority students. About 30% of the minority students who has passed the MHK still have difficulty in communicating with others in Chinese. Therefore, the problem that minority students can't improve their Chinese ability through the preparatory education has become the biggest barrier of the professional learning and employment, which seriously influences their personnel development.

There are a few factors contributing this problem. First, the project schools have not paid sufficient attention on preparatory language education and the issue of serious shortage of preparatory language teachers has not been resolved for a long-term, resulting in the extreme low teacher-student ratio and over large class size. As a result, the language learning could not be conducted satisfactorily. Second, lack of equipped language labs and multimedia classrooms as well as other language learning conditions is common in project schools, which is not conducive to the teaching methods reform and language learning for students. Thirdly the language learning

environment is not ideal in the campus of project schools, where shared classroom and dormitory and learning partner by minority students and Han students have not yet been implemented. Fourthly, the current language learning materials could not meet the actual language levels of minority students, and lack of close integration between preparatory language education and subject learning. In many cases, raising MHK test passing rate becomes the only standard for designing the preparatory language program. Finally, language teaching could not be conducted in accordance with different language conditions among minority students; and no unified standards and policy requirements are set for bilingual students with substandard language level and whether they should be required for preparatory language education.

Issue 2: Low Employment Rate for Minority Students

Another issue facing minority students is relatively low employment rate in project schools. Compared with Han students, the employment rates among minority students is generally 10 to 15 percentage points lower. The reasons come from language ability and employment attitude of minority students on the one hand, and the employment environment and policy implementation on the other hand. There are as follows according to the significance. First, most minority students share a rather "outdated" employment attitude. They not only prefer to work in the government institutions and near their own hometowns, but also have high expectation of salary, which is affected by their employment attitude, language ability, and custom. Second, the internship and practice conditions are not ideal for most minority students. For some majors, there are no permanent bases set up to offer internships and practical training for minority students from project schools. This is because some enterprises that in cooperation with project schools are not willing to accept minority students for practical training due to the consideration of reducing their management cost, which greatly restricts the improvement of professional skills for minority students. Third, the policy of giving preference to minority employment by the state and Xinjiang Autonomous Region could not be implemented smoothly. And many enterprises do not have strong desire to actively employ minority students. Finally, according to students interviewed, the employment guidance courses in project schools are not effective. With no innovation and consideration of special needs of minority students, most such courses are considered ineffective and no use for seeking employment by students.

Issue 3: Development Opportunities for Minority Teachers

On the whole, project schools have already provided numerous self-development opportunities, including study for degree, studying visits and training for teachers. According to the survey, although all teachers were given such development opportunities, but for ethnic minority teachers, they tend to have more concern when taking them. There are two reasons. One is the concern of difficulty by minority teachers in language, custom and habit for their studies and daily lives. The other is the heavy burden the ethnic minority teachers have in their homes, particularly female teachers. Comparing with the Han teachers, they have rather large family size with more children to raise and the old family members to support. In conclusion, the current various self-development opportunities for teachers in project schools are out of line with the actual situations of the ethnic minority teachers which result in many minority teachers giving up such

development opportunities.

7. Suggestions and Measures

The above mentioned issues and concerns facing minority students and teachers have negative impacts on their development. If these issues could not be addressed properly, the benefits and degree of benefits of the Project received by ethnic minority teachers and students will be limited. In order to address these issues, extensive consultations were carried out among project schools, based on which an Ethnic Minority Development Plan (EMDP) is developed by each project school. Under EMDP, problems facing minority students during their preparatory learning and employment will be addressed accordingly and minority teachers will be provided more guaranteed development opportunities. For example, on the preparatory language education, proposed measures in project schools include recruiting more language teachers, reducing class size, adding more teaching equipment including language lab, developing language training materials better suitable for minority students, and promoting campus environment construction that is helpful for language learning. At Xinjiang regional level, suggested measure include conducting a study to objectively assess language ability of bilingual students. On the employment, one suggestion is for project schools to seek successful employment examples to guide minority students to change their employment ideas. On the self-development of ethnic minority teachers, the model of "local cultivation and improvement" should be proposed. All these suggestions are agreed by the project schools and included in EMDP for each project school. Some of these activities are included in the five components of the Project.

To ensure agreed EMDP will be fully implemented, a five years' monitoring program is proposed as part of requirement of EMDP. The monitoring institutions includes PMOs at project schools, PMO at Xinjiang Autonomous Region and a qualified external monitoring team, and a set of mechanisms of effectively monitoring with monitoring indicators, procedures, and work plan will be established. To ensure full implementation of EMDP and allow all students and teachers to acquire information of EMDP timely and correctly, the content of EMDP will be disclosed locally in the project schools with both Chinese and Uygur.

The five projects have planned to invest CNY30.6715 million yuan for EMDP. Among them, CNY10.7105 million yuan will come from loan of the Bank. The key content of EMDP activities for five project schools are summarized in Table 1. The details of such activities are included in EMDP for each project school.

Table 1: Key Content of EMDP for Project Schools

Colleges	Investment (CNY 10,000 yuan)	Minority Students Group	Ethnic Minority Teachers Group			
		New Chinese teachers	new language labs	Development of Teaching Materials, etc.	Backbone Teacher Cultivation (Person)	Training (Person -time)
Xinjiang Engineering College	376.5	Twenty -five persons	3	bilingual materials of eight courses	2	50

Xinjiang Agricultural Vocational and Technical College	699.5	Over six persons	1	①The full sets of resources of two courses	2	60
Xinjiang Vocational and Technical College of Light Industry	507	Three persons	2	Eight bilingual materials	5	115
College of Xinjiang Uyghur Medicine	1080.1	Four persons	1	The 16 core courses materials of Uyghur Medicine and Pharmacy	2	200
Urumqi Vocational University	404.05	Ten persons	2	Three competency based curriculum for students	15	93

8. Conclusion

To sum up, the EMDP of the Project is developed in order to solve the problems faced by the ethnic minority teachers and students in the project schools and ensure they will obtain benefits of the Project for their development. To the group of the minority students, they will probably get the better preparatory Chinese teaching services, including the teacher-student ratio and classroom size fitting to the language teaching law, better guaranteed language teaching equipment, the more targeted language learning plans as well as the more favorable language learning environment. That will be helpful for minority students to improve the MHK passing rate and their actual Chinese levels, lay solid language foundation for their subject knowledge learning, narrow the gap between them and the students taking Chinese as mother tongue in the aspects of professional learning, practical training and so on. The improvement of language ability will create better condition for minority students to achieve higher employment rate with better quality. In that regard, the construction of internship and practical training bases in project schools and the innovation of employment guidance courses will also make huge contributions to that. And to the group of ethnic minority teachers, they will enjoy various development opportunities funded by the Project and will probably achieve their dreams of "local cultivation and improvement". The key lies in the implementation of the ethnic minority development plan that ensures ethnic minority teachers to "take opportunities to achieve self-development" without worries behind to a large extent. Ethnic minority teachers and students will benefit from these projects which also will promote the improvement of the overall teaching quality and the staff structure in a future way to create better environments for colleges' sustainable development.

We also should realize the fact that ethnic minority teachers and students will receive great benefits from the Project and achieve self-development or improve their abilities from the EMDP. This will expand the scale and improve the rate of high-skilled ethnic minority talents in Xinjiang. Along with increase of minority student ratio in project schools in future, the social benefit will also be expanded accordingly. In addition, it must be pointed that the implementation of the Project will also enhance the abilities of these five higher vocational and technical colleges to serve the ethnic minority society in the agricultural and pastoral areas. The vocational education system with different levels covering all over the Xinjiang will be formed through the support of the local vocational education development, which will continuously provide labor resources for the new Four Modernizations in Xinjiang, and benefit its economic and social development.

The full sets of resources of two courses are *Chinese Intensive Reading* and *Professional Chinese*.

Besides, these projects are also conducive to the development of agricultural and pastoral areas in South and North Xinjiang, especially the ethnic minority society, creating conditions for the economic income increase of all ethnic people (especially the ethnic minority people). In a word, these transformations will be favorable to narrow the economic and social development gap among all ethnic groups, promote the reforms of production and life modes as well as the social structure and cultural concept, advance the development of the ethnic minority society and finally achieve the common development and prosperity of all ethnic groups.