

## **Education for All in China**

By

China Education Association for International Exchange

1. The development level and quality of education for all (EFA) directly reflects to what extent a citizen's right to education is realized in a country. Since the adoption of reform and opening up policy 30 years ago, China has made great efforts in EFA and has made achievements that impressed the whole world: compulsory education has made historical progress; adults' literacy education has made great achievements; vocational education and adults' technical training has been further developed; pre-school education has made steady progress; gender difference has been further narrowed; ethnic minority education and special education has been further developed and education quality has been comprehensively improved. However, there are still problems and challenges. The government and the civil society are both exerting efforts to find the solutions.

2. The nine-year compulsory education has been basically universalized at the beginning of this century. China has now entered a new stage of universal coverage of compulsory education. In 3,022 counties (cities and districts), 98.5% of the total in China, nine-year compulsory education is universalized and illiteracy is basically eliminated among the young and middle-aged adults. The population with "9-year Compulsory Education Universalized and Illiteracy Eliminated" had reached 99% of the total. There were 320,100 primary schools in 2007 which enrolled 17,360,700 students. The net enrollment rate of the primary schools had reached 99.49% with the qualified full-time teachers reaching 99.1%.

3. From 2004 to 2007, the central government has invested 10 billion Yuan for the implementation of constructing boarding schools in rural area: supporting more than 22,000 primary and secondary schools to reconstruct, renovate, extend and build over 8000 boarding schools, which had greatly improved the conditions of primary and secondary schools in western rural area. At present, a comprehensive financial aiding system at

compulsory education stage has been established. All rural students' compulsory education tuition and fees are exempted with free text books. Living subsidies are also provided for boarding school students from poor families. Having benefited 150 million students and 7,800,000 boarding school students from poor families, it has become a milestone showing that China is now a county with high-level free compulsory education.

4. To expand the coverage of rural compulsory education and improve the education quality, the central government has taken effective measures to actively promote modern distance education in rural primary and secondary schools. From 2004 to 2007, 37,000 secondary schools had been equipped with computer classrooms. 370,000 primary schools installed facilities for satellite-transmitted educational programs. 110,000 outreaching teaching sites of primary schools had been equipped with VCD players and sets of CD for instructional purposes. In 2007, modern distance education covered 360,000 rural primary and secondary schools, over 0.1 billion students were able to use high quality education resources.

5. In 2006, there were about 6.5 million migrant children who had moved from rural areas to cities with their parents. There were also 22.9 million "stay-at-home" children in the rural areas. To solve the migrant children's problem of getting compulsory education, Chinese government adopted the principle that migrants influx cities should assume the main responsibilities in the provision of compulsory education to migrant children with schooling mainly provided by public schools. In addition, urban civil forces have also set up a number of primary and secondary schools for migrant workers' children. Some famous ones like Xingzhi School have made great contributions to solve this problem. Meanwhile, the central government and local governments have established education and custody systems for rural "stay-at-home" children to ensure that they were able to get compulsory education.

6. From 2001 to 2006, China's illiteracy populace was decreasing at 2 million people a year on average with the adult literacy rate rising gradually. By 2006, China's illiterate populace among the young and the middle-aged adults had dropped to 3.58 percent. To achieve the sustainable development and consolidate achievements of literacy education, China had adopted flexible and various forms in different areas, including focused study in

the class of literacy education, study with neighborhood, use of radio, TV broadcasting and various programs and teaching films suitable for the illiterate to study. From 2006 to 2010, the central and local financial aid to rural compulsory education will increase about 218.2 billion Yuan. Till 2010, it is endeavored that the national illiteracy rate of the young and the middle-aged adults falls to 2% below and the adults' illiteracy rate below 5%.

7. Rural vocational education and adult's technical education have been further developed. Through implementing "Green Certificate Training Project", "Training Project for Young Farmers" and other projects, farmers were provided with practical technical training, consultation and demonstrations. By the end of 2006, over 20 million people had taken part in the training; over 10 million people had obtained certificates. It had become the typical enrichment example via technology and effectively improved farmers' scientific and technological quality. According to the "Training Plan for National Rural Migrant Workers from 2003 to 2010", the vocational and adult schools had provided a large amount of labor transfer training in rural areas. There were 151,000 national farmers' training schools in 2006, which had given farmers 45,205,800 times technical trainings. From 2001 to 2006, 366,205,600 trainings had been held nationwide.

8. The pre-school education has been developed steadily and healthily through the joint efforts of government and civil forces in a way of formal and informal education developing together. In 2007, there were a total of 129,100 kindergartens, 11,200 more compared with 2004. There were 23,488,300 in-school students, 2,594,300 more compared with 2004. The net enrollment rate was 44.6%, with an increase of 3.6% compared with 2004. While supporting successful operation of state-owned kindergartens, the government also encourages various civil organizations to run kindergartens in different forms by issuing "Law of Promoting Non-state-run Education". In rural areas where there were a small number of kids scattering in a large area, the government provides the early education opportunities through seasonal kindergartens, children's activity station, game groups, "caravan" circuit tours and other flexible and various informal education ways. The Chinese Ministry of Education is aiming to increase the net enrollment rate of pre-school education to 55% by the year 2010.

9. At present, the Chinese girls at primary school age basically have access to

education. In 2007, the net enrollment rates of boys and girls at primary schools were 99.46% and 99.52% respectively. The girls' enrollment rate was 0.06% higher than the boys' rate. In general, gender difference in schools at different levels is no longer a problem in China.

10. Minority education and special education have been further developed. In 2007, there were a total of 1,618 special education schools, 13 more than the previous year; 63,400 disabled children had been enrolled, 13,600 more than 2006; there were 419,300 disabled children in schools, 56,400 more than 2006. Among them, 44,800 students studied in schools for the blind, 256,000 students studied at schools for the mentally retarded and special coach classes. The number of disabled children enrolled at regular schools and attached special classes accounts for 67.11% of the total number of special education student enrolled in 2007. The total disabled children number at regular schools and attached special classes accounts for 64.88% of the total school student population. The number of disabled graduates in 2007 was 50,300, 5,100 more than 2006.

### **Brief Introduction to China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE)**

China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE) is China's nationwide not-for-profit non-governmental organization conducting international educational exchanges. It was founded in July, 1981 with the approval of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (PRC). In 1991, it was registered with the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the PRC. In July, 2006, it becomes NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. In July, 2008, it became an NGO associated with the Department of Public Information, United Nations.

CEAIE has a full commitment to meeting the needs of China's modernization construction, developing exchanges and cooperation between the Chinese educational community and other parts of the world, promoting the advancement of education, culture, science and technology, and strengthening understanding and friendship among the peoples

of all countries and regions of the world.

As its basic missions, CEAIE extensively conducts exchange and cooperation by working together with educational and research institutions, academic bodies, exchange organizations, schools as well as organizations, enterprises, foundations and individuals in other countries and regions who are enthusiastic for supporting educational development on the basis of principles of equality and friendship.

CEAIE's major work covers five areas: bilateral and multilateral working mechanisms, sharing visions and providing services, government-entrusted programs, programs with CEAIE's characteristics, publications and research.

CEAIE and its local EAIE constitute the non-governmental network for Chinese international educational exchange. As the center of this network, CEAIE provides professional guidance and coordination to its 145 member institutions, local educational associations for international exchange in 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities as well as in 11 other cities. So far, CEAIE has established long-term working relationships with over 170 educational organizations in 53 countries and regions.