Improving Minority Compulsory Education in Yunnan, China: Challenges and Policies

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November 14, 2006
Outline of Presentation

(I) Background
(II) Key Questions
(III) Method & Data Sources
(IV) Major Challenges in Minority Education at the Compulsory Level
(V) Policy Goals, Strategies and Interventions
(VI) Looking Ahead

Publication A-11, www.tc.edu/centers/coce
Map of China with Yunnan Province Highlighted
(I) Background: Yunnan

- 43 million people
- Frontier (stability)
- Mountainous (94%)
- Minorities (14 million, 25 minorities with over 5,000 people)
- Multiple spoken and written languages
- Among the least developed provinces in China (2003-04)
  - Per-capita rural income: 1,697 Yuan (64% of national average)
  - Per-capita income: 7,643 Yuan (90% of national average)
  - No. of post-secondary students: 80 per 10,000 people (56% of national average)
- Economy
  - Tobacco
  - Tourism & Cultural Services
  - Hydropower
  - Biological resources
- History of Educational Development (see paper on CoCE website)
(II) **Key Research Questions**

- Concepts: Minority population, Minority Areas, Minority Education, Minority Compulsory Education
- Importance of minority education in achieving quality compulsory education in Yunnan
- What are the key challenges confronting the development of minority compulsory education today?
- What policies may contribute to the improvement of minority compulsory education?
(III) Methods and Data Sources

• Literature review
• School and community visits
• Discussion with policymakers
• Experience from education development projects
• Government policy papers
(IV) Major Challenges in Minority Compulsory Education

- (IV.a) Expanding education opportunities for minority children
- Significantly lower enrollment ratios
- Inadequate funding
- Higher dropout rates
- Cultural & religious impacts
• (IV.b) Raising the quality of compulsory education for minority children
• Significant lower learning outcome
• Inadequate resources & poor school facilities
• Lower teacher quality
• Inadequate bilingual instruction, curriculum, & textbooks
• (IV.c) Improving efficiency in minority compulsory education
• Significant dropout rates in certain minority counties (Deqin, Lu Jiang)
• High unit cost in teaching points and low quality
• Outdated teaching technology
(V) Policy Goals, Strategies, and Interventions

(V.1) Factors constraining the development of minority (compulsory) education in Yunnan

- Weak economic & cultural foundations, highly uneven development
- Weak education foundation, rapid expansion with limited resources
- Dispersion of minority populations, in rural/mountainous/border areas
- Large varieties of languages & ethnic groups
- Impact of religious and diverse cultures
(V.2) Factors influencing minority education policies in Yunnan: Policy-making Contexts

- Macro-economic and social policies of the country (rapid growth vs. balanced growth, growth vs. social inequality, etc.)
- Central policies (fiscal and education) towards poor, rural, and minority areas
- Yunnan provincial socio-economic policies
- Yunnan response to central policies
### (V.3) Policy Goals, Strategies, and Interventions (1)

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<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
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<td>Increase coverage</td>
<td>Expanding supply</td>
<td>Rational distribution of schools; boarding schools; remove dilapidated buildings; strengthen education technology; significant increase in government resources; guaranteeing funding for poor areas</td>
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<td>Strengthening household demand</td>
<td>Establishing &amp; improving financial aid scheme for poor students; strengthening school-community relation; properly dealing with religious &amp; cultural factors</td>
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<td>Improving quality</td>
<td>Increasing education funding</td>
<td>Developing a qualified teaching force; assisting low-performing schools</td>
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<td>Improving instruction</td>
<td>Strengthening bilingual instruction, the use of education technology, parental involvement, school-community relation</td>
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<td>Raising learning outcome</td>
<td>Curriculum reform &amp; better knowledge and skills</td>
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<td>Improving efficiency</td>
<td>Improving internal efficiency</td>
<td>Strengthening board schools; Economies of scales &amp; school distribution</td>
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<td>Improving external efficiency</td>
<td>Strengthening parental &amp; community participation in school; curriculum reform &amp; learning goals for 21st century</td>
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Policy Recommendations

- Significant increase in funding for compulsory education, especially in minority areas
- Establishing and improving the system of financial aid for needy students
- Establishing a stable and qualified teaching force
- Eliminating unsafe school buildings
- Achieving efficient distribution of schools and strengthening boarding schools
- Strengthening bilingual education at the primary level
- Strengthening information and technology education
- Improving school community relationship
- Implementing curriculum reform
- Strengthening research on minority education
(VI) Looking Ahead

- Implementation of selected policies
- Macro economic, political, and social stability
- Social inequality vs. harmonious society
- Strategic role of Yunnan Province
- Cautious optimism