

Challenges and Possibilities in Implementing Reading Programs in Rural Schools: A Case Study in a Rural High School in Northwest China (Abstract)

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This paper is based on a reading program that the author has participated in when she volunteered in a rural high school in Northwest China in summer 2007. As a volunteer from a US-based NGO, Dream Corps for Harmonious Development International, which advocates for rural library building in China, the author, together with five other volunteers, spent three weeks' time in a key point rural high school in Northwest China. With the financial support from Evergreen Education Foundation, the rural high school has built a decent size library with over 60,000 books and has been conducting reading programs regularly throughout the academic year. The volunteer team aimed at expanding the library's collection, improving the usages of the library, and developing and organizing more reading programs for the high school students. In the end of the program, the volunteer team achieved some original goals. It also found out that many of its planned activities fail to implement due to constraints of daily schedule of the high school, lack of support from the faculty, and lack of interest or/and time of students.

Using observations and interviews as main methods, the author reflects upon the three week's program activities and draws lessons and experience for future program development. In particular, it examines the assumptions the volunteers have had about rural library building and reading program development, reveals key factors and players that are decisive to a successful implementation of reading program, and assesses the feasibility of various reading programs. Drawing upon the author's expertise on rural education studies, the paper will also discuss how the current education structures and policies might impact rural library building and reading program development. In particular, special emphasis will be placed upon the implementation of the new curriculum, the pressure of national college entrance examination, and the achievement and resources gap between rural and urban schools. The author will share a reading program manual developed by Dream Corps and discuss various possibilities and formats to conduct readings programs in different levels of school and how to incorporate the reading programs into different subjects of teaching.

There are three purposes of this paper. First, it is to benefit future volunteers who would like to conduct similar activities in rural schools. Second, it is to help evaluate Evergreen's library building project and provide recommendation for its improvement. Last but not least, it also intends to speak to the rural schools, especially rural high schools, and point out the connection between library building, reading programs, and the formal curriculum. The paper aims at demonstrating that library building and program building will not weaken students' academic performance. On the contrary, library and reading programs can be incorporated into formal curriculum constructively and students' time spent in library will be paid off both in short run in their academic tests but also in long run in their pursue of career and life goals.

在乡村学校开展阅读活动的挑战和可行性——以中国西北农村的一所高中为例（摘要）

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本文是对一所中国乡村高中开展的阅读活动的报告。作者是美国非政府组织“梦想行动国际”的志愿者，该组织一直致力于推动和促进中国农村图书馆的建设和发展。作者和另外五位志愿者在2007年夏天，花了三个星期的时间，参加了中国西北农村一所高中的阅读活动。在美国青树教育基金会的赞助和推动下，该高中的图书馆馆藏量超过了60,000，并开展了常年定期的阅读活动。志愿者们积极地帮助图书馆扩大馆藏，改善图书馆使用率，为学生组织更多的阅读活动。该阅读活动结束时，志愿者们达到了一些既定目标。但因为学校课程安排的限制，缺乏老师的支持，学生缺乏兴趣，学生时间冲突等原因，一些原定计划没有实现。

以观察和访谈为主要方法，作者回顾了历时三个星期的阅读活动，并总结了经验教训以便为今后的活动开展提供借鉴。本文对志愿者提出的乡村图书馆建设和阅读活动发展的假设进行了验证，揭示了成功实施阅读计划的关键因素，并评估了各种阅读计划的可行性。基于对农村教育的研究，作者还提出了当今的教育结构和政策可能对乡村图书馆建设和阅读活动开展产生的影响。尤其是新课程的推行，高考的压力，以及城乡学校的成绩和资源差距。作者还将介绍梦想行动国际的阅读计划手册，讨论在各种不同学校实施阅读计划的可能性和形式，以及如何将阅读活动和各种教学课程相结合。

本文有三个目的。首先，为后续志愿者在乡村学校进行类似活动提供借鉴。第二，帮助青树基金会图书馆项目的评估并提出改善建议。最后，向乡村学校，尤其是乡村高中，指出图书馆建设，阅读活动，和学校课程的密切相关性。本文想证实图书馆建设和阅读活动不会削弱学生的学业表现，相反，图书馆和阅读活动可以被结合到课程中，短期会对学生的成绩有帮助，从长远角度来说，还有益于他们对的事业和人生目标的追求。