

Women Leadership and Rural Education Development

Course Description

UNESCO International Research and
Training Centre for Rural Education
(UNESCO INRULED)

August 31,2021

I. Background Information

1.1 Organization Information

This course is designed by UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (hereinafter referred to as “UNESCO INRULED” or the Centre). UNESCO INRULED is an international organization (UNESCO Category Centre) jointly established by the Chinese government and UNESCO in 1994 to conduct specialized research, training, information dissemination and network connection. The Centre moved to Beijing Normal University in 2008 for better coordination and connectivity. Through research and publicity, education and training, knowledge management and distribution, INRULED works in the area of rural education, aiming to bring about positive changes in the thinking and behaviour of rural people, and to achieve the social, economic and ecological development of the rural areas that contribute to the realization of the SDG4 and the 2030 Agenda. INRULED’s mission statement is “Education for Rural Transformation”. The Centre is committed to conduct researches and relevant projects in the following five areas: Gender Equality and Women Leadership, ICT in Education for Rural Development, Skill Development for Rural Transformation, Quality Teachers for Rural Schools, and Ecological Civilization and Rural Revitalization.

1.2 Context information for the course

The proportion of female teachers is growing in education systems worldwide, yet education systems are still dominated by men, making it difficult for women to

enter management positions and become headmasters and principals, especially in rural areas. For example, in China, the proportion of female teachers in rural areas is increasing dramatically, even causing social debate about the 'feminisation of rural teachers'. However, the proportion of rural female teachers in leadership positions is still far lower than the proportion of male teachers.

In reality, rural female teachers face a variety of constraints in entering leadership positions. The job of working as a rural teacher is often perceived as of low level. The job is low pay, and their working environment is often very complicated; these makes the job a 'last resort' for less professional teachers or women under the external pressures to choose a job with stability and to be able to taking care of the family. Rural teachers face difficulties in transport and accommodation, lack of resources, heavy working loads, lack of home-school cooperation, and a lack of career enhancement mechanisms, etc. These often leads to a sense of slackness in the work field. Female rural teachers often face even more difficult circumstances, including systematic neglect and rejection by schools and communities, and threats to their personal safety. In the rural context, where gender inequality is obvious, men are often expected to be the actual decision-makers and leaders, while women are expected to take on more of a caring role for the family, and there is a lack of social recognition and appreciation of this 'dedication' to the family. The reality of gender inequality in the countryside is a great barrier to women teachers taking leadership positions in schools. Meanwhile, because of their difficult situation and cultural attitudes, women teachers tend to dwarf themselves, identify themselves as having the main responsibility to care for their families, and consider themselves as not competent enough to work in management positions and 'cannot be leaders'. Therefore, many of them are reluctant to take responsibility and are resistant to actively participate in management and self-empowerment.

In response to the lack of women leadership in rural education, to promote of women leadership in rural education development through research, courses and training has many positive implications:

- 1) Gender equality is a fundamental human right, and education and training

through the curriculum can empower women and stimulate the potential of rural female teachers, allowing society, development practitioners and rural female teachers themselves to recognise their personal abilities and values, achieve personal development and promote gender equality.

2) More female teachers in leadership and management positions will help to redress the gender imbalance and male-dominated status quo in the education system as a whole, allowing more views with a gender perspective to be heard and leveraging systemic change and social-cultural change through individual change, promoting a more gender-equal rural education system, and gender-equal rural communities

3) With more women teachers to take on leadership roles and enter leadership positions, based on their own experience, they will more likely to pay more attention to disadvantaged groups and promote girls' development, etc. They can actively promote gender equality and become role models for girls and rural women, boost women's self-confidence and contribute to the realization of inclusive education and UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework.

4) Rural schools play an important role in rural communities. By promoting women leadership, guiding the development of women leadership and management characteristics, and encouraging female creativity, rural education system can bring into play the unique advantages of women leadership, such as flexible management, concern for disadvantaged groups, seeking win-win situations, etc., promote the development of rural communities through rural schools.

1.3 Purpose of the course

This course on " Women Leadership and Rural Education Development" is one of the five modules of UNESCO INRULED's "Education and Rural Development" series course for the international community. The course series, designed by UNESCO INRULED in 2021, is one of the key projects of the centre to summarise,

distil and disseminate the concepts, tools and valuable experiences of education for poverty reduction and sustainable rural development in China. The construction of the "Education and Rural Development" course series is an important venue for UNESCO INRULED to actively fulfil its mission, which is to achieve sustainable development of the rural areas through education and training, knowledge management and distribution. The design of "Women Leadership and Rural Education Development" course reflects the centre's commitment to empower women and girls through education, leadership and capacity building, and achieve its strategic objective to "Promote Gender Equality and Foster Women Leadership".

Gender equality is a key element in achieving the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is critical to a sustainable future. Gender equality continues to be established as one of the global priorities in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy 2014-2021(37/C4), as well as in the draft Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2029 (41 C/4). Rural women play a key role in rural development and are increasingly valued and recognised by society for their role in sustaining families and communities, maintaining livelihoods and improving quality of life. However, the social, economic and political conditions of women and girls in rural areas make them susceptible to risks and vulnerabilities. They are of many cases extremely marginalised and many suffer from structural poverty. This course proposes a pathway for rural girls, rural women's development and gender consciousness change through the empowerment of female teachers, many of whom are rural women themselves, using rural schools that are already rooted in rural communities as a starting point.

With this in mind, UNESCO INRULED designed this course, "Women Leadership and Rural Education Development". In this course, we focus on rural education development, discuss gender issues and women leadership development under this background. Though this way, we hope to promote the empowerment of rural women teachers, rural girls and rural women, and to promote gender equality in rural education and rural development, and further promote rural development through increased women's social participation. The course will guide participants into the field of rural education, participants will be able to gain a deeper

understanding of the importance of women leadership in rural education and rural development, clarify the meaning of women leadership in the context of rural education development, and explore the opportunities and challenges faced in promoting women leadership and gender equality in rural education development work.

II. Course design

2.1 Capacity and language.

This course is designed as a 16*30min English course.

2.2 Teaching format

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the course has been designed as a recorded course to facilitate dissemination to a multi-regional global network. To make the learning process as participatory as possible under this circumstance, interactive measures will be carefully designed to adjust to the recording format. It is expected that videos and interactive multiple-choice questions will be designed to be interspersed during the course delivery, and interaction will be ensured in the form of quiz question assignments and access to forum discussion boards for assignments.

In addition, the course design is still in its early stages; the course outline and content will continue to be adjusted.

III. Target Audience

Participants will be recruited globally (especially from developing countries). The course is aimed at learners 1) who have an interest in rural education, rural development and gender equality and 2) who are able to use English as the study language. Given the nature of this series of courses, the potential target groups of this course are:

1. Interns from international organisations and students who wish to pursue a career in international development field in the future;
2. Staff members of institutions involved in rural education, rural development and gender equality, and international development

3. University students who are interested in the field of rural education development and gender equality

4. Students, teachers and people interested in women leadership, women empowerment and development

Besides, based on this course, a face-to-face course in English and Chinese for students from Beijing Normal University and a training course for rural women teachers from China and abroad can be developed.

IV. Course Modules

4.1 Overview of the concepts

To be added

4.2 Overview of Course Modules

Module 1 The Importance of Women leadership in Rural Education (4 credit hours)

Session 1 The situation of women leadership in rural education

Session 2 The role of women leadership in rural education development

Module 2 Women leadership in Rural Education (6 hours)

Session 1 Concepts of Leadership - Dispelling Leadership Myths

Session 2 The Strength of Women leadership

Session 3 Concepts and connotations of women leadership in the context of rural education (Using case study of female principals collected by UNEESCO INRULED)

Module 3 The plight of women leadership and Counter measures (6 hours)

Session 1 External Environmental Constraints and Personal Constraints

Session 2 Strategies for women leadership enhancement

Session 3 Rural development and women leadership development

(theory extension and course review)

4.3 Course outline

To be confirmed

V. Evaluation

1. Process evaluation: students' participation in classroom activities, completion of exercise questions;
 2. Summative assessment: written examination and essay writing to test students' knowledge acquisition and application skills.
- (To be confirmed)