

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS

教育促进农村可持续发展 国际能力建设研讨会

International Capacity Building Workshop on Education for Sustainable Rural Development

April 2024



April 22-26, 2024



Overview

On April 22-26, 2024, the International Capacity Building Workshop on Education for Sustainable Rural Development was successfully held in Beijing and Hebei Province, China. The workshop was co-hosted by UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (UNESCO INRULED), the Chaipattana Foundation, the China Institute of Education and Social Development at Beijing Normal University (BNU), Hebei Agricultural University, and Yunnan Agricultural University, with guidance and support from Secretariat of National Commission of the People's Republic of China for UNESCO and Beijing Normal University. The workshop attracted policymakers, experts, practitioners and youth representatives from Lancang-Mekong sub-region, with over two thousand more attending online.

On April 23, the opening ceremony was held at Beijing Normal University to give the introduction of the theme and showcase good practices from China, Lao, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. After the meeting, 18 delegates from six countries in the Lancang-Mekong sub-region embarked on a three-day field visit in Beijing and Hebei province. The delegation visited the World Food Programme (WFP) China Office, Huangwan Village and Baiyangdian in Xiong County, and demonstration villages for poverty alleviation in Fuping County, Baoding, Heibe Province. The event was successfully closed on April 26 at Hebei Agricultural University.

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Introduction

Since the 21st century, income inequality, climate change, and technological transformations have profoundly impacted global society. In response to these challenges, the United Nations introduced the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," outlining 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Although many actors have been implementing policies and programmes on sustainable development, rural areas in many contexts are characterized by high sensitivity and vulnerability. Rural communities that encounter problems of poverty, unemployment, population aging, social exclusion from ethnicity, and cultures often have less access to equal and quality education, which reproduces the dilemmas.

Education has long been considered a force for social transformation to promote shared prosperity, inclusion, and environmental sustainability. However, rural areas often grapple with issues ranging from agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability to economic development. There is an urgent need to re-orient education strategies and resources to respond to the specific conditions of rural areas.

In this context, UNESCO INRULED, together with the Chaipattana Foundation, China Institute of Education and Social Development of Beijing Normal University, Hebei Agricultural University and Yunnan Agricultural University co-organized this capacity building workshop for Southeast Asian and Chinese stakeholders. It aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the perspectives of rural development and the role of education in driving sustainable rural development to meet today's changing needs, allowing participants to glean insights into innovative approaches and best practices employed by their counterparts.

These sessions will go beyond theoretical discussions. Exchange, field trips, integral to the workshop, offer a hands-on experience and expose participants to innovative models of rural development. The activities encouraged them to adapt sustainable practices in their respective communities. In essence, this programme served as a catalyst for fostering collaboration, enhancing capacities, and driving positive change in the rural landscapes. This year, the workshop focused on the Lancang-Mekong Sub-region.

The following sections present main information that was shared during the four sessions that are the Opening Ceremony and International Seminar, Exchange with World Food Programme (WFP) China Office, Field Visits in Hebei Province, and Closing Ceremony.

This first draft of this Report was jointly prepared by Ms Ruixi Liu, Programme Coordinator of INRULED, Ms Wanying Chen, Intern from Beijing Normal University and Ms Ziyang Liang, Intern from Guangxi University. It was reviewed and enriched by Dr Xinjian Qi, Programme Specialist of INRULED. We also extend thanks to Ms Beibei Fan, for coordinating the editing and design of the Report.

Part I: Opening Ceremony and International Seminar

9:00-12:30, April 23, 2024. Beijing, China

Opening Remarks

Welcoming Remarks by Prof Zhou Zuoyu, Vice President of Beijing Normal University, Director of UNESCO INRULED



Prof Zhou Zuoyu delivered a compelling speech emphasizing the importance of sustainable rural development as a cornerstone of the country's overall development strategy, and the pivotal role of education. He stressed that education is crucial for upgrading skills and improving the quality of life in rural areas. Additionally, it plays a significant role in social governance, cultural heritage, and environmental protection.

Prof Zhou highlighted the role of the UNESCO INRULED, established in 1994 through a collaboration between the Chinese government and UNESCO, in promoting sustainable rural development for the past 30 years. He praised BNU for its support of INRULED and its commitment to cultivating globally competent talents and supporting rural education in central and western China. He detailed BNU's initiatives, including the Project to Strengthen Teaching Force, which aims to develop high-quality specialized teachers for rural areas.

The speech also marked the launch of INRULED development strategy for 2024-2029, introduced at a workshop attended by rural community leaders, government officials, scholars, experts, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders. The workshop aimed to establish a network of academic exchanges and practical actions among the Lancang-Mekong countries, fostering deeper traditional friendships and contributing to a shared future.

Remarks by Mr Robert Parua, Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia (UNESCO Beijing)



Mr Parua highlighted that the workshop's focus on sustainable rural development aligns with INRULED's core mission. INRULED has made substantial contributions to policy dialogue, rural development agendas, and skills transformation. International participants were encouraged to learn from China's rapid socio-economic development, which has lifted over 700 million people out of poverty, emphasizing the role of education and skills training in this success.

China's vision of rural revitalization, eco-civilization, and modernization aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This strategy, emphasizing shared prosperity, offers valuable insights for international participants. China's efforts in promoting education, vocational skills, digital literacy, and rural empowerment were commended.

Addressing rural-urban migration by making rural areas attractive and creating employment opportunities is crucial for sustainable development. New initiatives under the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD for 2030) framework, such as greening education, climate change education, biodiversity protection, and STEM education, are essential for building robust, sustainable rural systems. UNESCO is committed to collaborating with stakeholders in China to promote rural sustainable development within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2021-2025. The organization pledges to support rural transformation and advocate for sustainable development globally.

Remarks by Prof Wei Hongjiang, Vice President of Yunnan Agricultural University



Prof Wei Hongjiang emphasized the workshop's focus on leveraging education to promote sustainable rural development amid current global challenges. He acknowledged the significant economic and cultural ties within the Lancang-Mekong River basin and the crucial role of agriculture in regional prosperity.

He highlighted the university's proactive role through the China-ASEAN Education and Training Center, organizing over 30 agricultural technology training programs for the region. These programs, benefiting over 600 participants from universities, government departments, and research institutes, have demonstrated the potential of education in enhancing agricultural and rural sustainability.

He underscored education's ability to provide intellectual support, talent, and technological innovation essential for sustainable agricultural development. He called for strengthened international cooperation and exchange to address common challenges in agricultural education and promote innovative practices.

Remarks by Ms Adhinand Indrapim, Minister Counsellor (Agriculture), the Royal Thai Embassy, Beijing



Ms Adhinand Indrapim expressed appreciation for attending the International Capacity Building Workshop on Education for Sustainable Rural Development. She acknowledged UNESCO INRULED's role in fostering synergies and catalyze positive transformations in rural landscapes across Southeast Asia and China.

Highlighting Thailand's agricultural sector, which contributes 80% to the agricultural GDP with key exports like rice, rubber, sugar cane, and cassava, she emphasized the potential for expanded cooperation, particularly aligning with the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model. This model promotes balanced growth in food and agriculture, medical services, bioenergy, sustainable tourism, and the circular economy, leveraging biodiversity and technology.

The Thai Ministry of Agriculture's "3-S policy" (Safety, Security, and Sustainability) aims to establish Thailand as the "Kitchen of the World" by adhering to international production standards. She stressed the importance of education cooperation in cultivating talent and human resources to achieve sustainable development goals.

Furthermore, she advocated for greater collaboration between Thailand and China in higher education, knowledge sharing, and joint programs. Emphasizing the role of agricultural development in improving the quality of life for farmers, she called for a commitment to agricultural innovation and productivity.

Keynote Speeches

Moderator: Dr Zhao Yuchi, Executive Director of UNESCO INRULED



Dr Zhao Yuchi, Executive Director of UNESCO INRULED, addressed the significant challenges faced by rural education as we approach 2030. These challenges include setbacks in educational achievements, disruptions due to COVID-19, a shortage of qualified teachers, unequal resource distribution, and limited information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure in rural areas, widening the urban-rural divide. He stressed the importance of inclusive, equitable, and quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for rural populations to achieve Education 2030. Sustainable development must encompass economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions, relevant to the rural context. Rural education should go beyond formal education to include non-formal and informal aspects, focusing on skills development and lifelong learning for adults.

UNESCO INRULED, with its core concern for education for sustainable development, has published several significant works and is preparing a new publication, "Reimagining the Futures of Rural Education". The center's framework of action includes research, policy dialogue,

capacity development, and information sharing, with priorities in quality teaching, skills development, empowerment of girls and women, and leveraging technology for rural education.

Dr Zhao highlighted the importance of retaining talent in rural areas to support local development and the need for a supportive learning environment for all age groups. The seminar aimed to contextualize these issues and set the stage for further discussions on advancing rural education and sustainable development goals.

[Yunnan's green agriculture, smart agriculture and Lancang-Mekong cooperation outlook](#)

Prof Lu Yao, Vice Dean of International College, Deputy Director of China-ASEAN Education and Training Center, Yunnan Agricultural University



Prof Lu Yao used three colors (green, silver, and blue) to describe the development of agriculture in Yunnan, China, and its prospects in the context of the Lancang-Mekong region. Green represents the traditional agricultural practices that are eco-friendly, while silver signifies the integration of smart technology in modern agriculture. Blue is associated with the Lancang-Mekong region's influence on the area's development.

Yunnan is in the southwest of China and shares borders with Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, encompassing over 4,000 kilometers of frontier. The province boasts diverse industries, including bio-resources, tourism, information, logistics, and distinctive agricultural sectors such as tea, flowers, fruits, herbs, plantations, livestock, and tobacco. These industries play a crucial role in Yunnan's economy and highlight the region's biodiversity.

The presentation also touched upon the cultural diversity of Yunnan, home to 26 ethnic groups, 16 of which are transborder communities found in neighboring countries. Prof Lu introduced various initiatives, including the use of smart agriculture technologies like remote training systems for farmers, online marketing platforms that have significantly boosted the sale of agricultural products, and innovative techniques that enhance the value of dairy production.

She concluded by discussing the mission of their university, which focuses on rural education and improving household livelihoods. She emphasized the university's commitment to fostering sustainable development practices and community engagement. As a parting gesture, the speaker promoted Yunnan coffee, which accounts for over 98% of China's coffee production,

and mentioned a collaborative book publication, [Case Study of Agricultural and Rural Development in Lancang-Mekong Region](#), expressing hope for future cooperation and joint progress.

Sustainable development: case studies of the Chaipattana Foundation

Dr Suleeporn Bunbongkarn Choopavang, Director of Foreign Affairs Department, the Chaipattana Foundation



Dr Suleeporn Bunbongkarn Choopavang began the speech by introducing the history and background of the foundation. Then, she detailed several key projects. One such initiative is the Ampawa Chaipattananurak Project, which revived the Ampawa community near Bangkok. This project addressed issues of polluted water and declining tourism, restoring cultural and economic vitality to the area. In 2008, the project earned a UNESCO cultural heritage conservation award. Another significant effort is in Chiangrai, where the foundation promotes food security by encouraging farmers to adopt Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). This initiative focuses on growing quality, chemical-free produce, promoting self-reliance and community sharing, and contributing to both local and international food security. Additionally, Dr Suleeporn Bunbongkarn Choopavang highlighted the Camellia Seed Oil and Other Plant Oil Research Center in northern Thailand. This project involves villagers in cultivating camellia plants for oil production, promoting sustainable reforestation and local economic development. The initiative balances conservation with income generation, offering a model for sustainable rural development.

Throughout her speech, Dr Suleeporn Bunbongkarn Choopavang emphasized the importance of balancing economic, social, and environmental aspects in development. She underscored the need to involve local communities and prepare future generations to continue these efforts. The Chaipattana Foundation's initiatives demonstrate effective rural development, sustainable agriculture, and community empowerment.

Industrial development for rural revitalization: the Caixi mode

Prof Li Bowen, Chief Engineer and Deputy Dean of Rural Revitalization Research Institute, Hebei Agricultural University



Prof Li Bowen, Chief Engineer and Deputy Dean of the Rural Revitalization Research Institute at Hebei Agricultural University, introduced the Caixi model of industrial development in Caixi Village, Hebei Province. He highlighted the village's transformation from poverty to prosperity through innovative agricultural practices.

Caixi Village, once plagued by poor land conditions and poverty, saw a significant change in 1998 when experts from Hebei Agricultural University established a science and education base. Leveraging the area's unique climate and low pollution, they introduced greenhouse cultivation of honeydew melons. This initiative dramatically increased the villagers' income, turning barren sandy soil into productive farmland.

The project faced initial challenges, including persuading skeptical villagers and building necessary infrastructure. However, with persistent efforts from experts and the local government, the villagers were taught advanced techniques for growing honeydew melons. This new agricultural practice quickly proved profitable, motivating widespread adoption and lifting the village out of poverty within three years. Today, Caixi Village has over 3,000 mu of melon plantations, generating an annual income of around 100 million RMB. The project also improved the villagers' living conditions, leading to the construction of new houses and local amenities.

Prof Li emphasized three key strategies for the Caixi model's success:

- Mobilizing the villagers' enthusiasm by demonstrating the economic benefits of new agricultural practices.
- Prioritizing education and training to equip villagers with necessary skills and knowledge.
- Establishing a unified management model to ensure consistent quality and market competitiveness.

The Caixi model illustrates the importance of government support, expert guidance, and a cooperative approach among stakeholders. Prof Li concluded by advocating for continuous innovation and high-quality development to sustain and expand such agricultural initiatives in the future.

Country Report

Moderator: Dr Qi Xinjian, Programme Specialist of UNESCO INRULED
China

E-commerce promotes inclusive rural development: The case of Taobao Village

Dr Zuo Chenming, Deputy Director of Taobao & Tmall Group Research Centre, Director and Senior Expert of Alibaba Research Center for Rural Dynamics.



Dr Zuo illustrated how Taobao villages in China exemplify the transformative power of e-commerce in driving inclusive rural development.

At the beginning, Dr Zuo provided a deep dive into China's e-commerce development, illustrating its impact through four key numbers. He introduced the concept of Taobao villages, highlighting their definition, product range, and socio-economic significance. Building a Taobao village requires specific pre-conditions, including skills development, infrastructure enhancement, and a supportive business environment.

To develop rural e-commerce effectively, Dr Zuo outlined the importance of product selection, emphasizing the need for high-value products that meet market demands. Education and training are crucial, with a focus on establishing service organizations and nurturing professional teams. Government support is essential, particularly in developing network and logistics infrastructure, establishing e-commerce public service bases, and providing training centers and incentive policies.

Lastly, he presented the case of Cao County in Shandong Province exemplifies how e-commerce can revitalize rural areas, with over 20,000 residents lifted out of poverty through e-commerce employment. This success underscores the potential of China's rural e-commerce model to offer insights to other countries.

In conclusion, the development of Taobao villages reflects China's rural e-commerce growth, driven by grassroots entrepreneurship, technological advancements, and government policies. Taobao villages exemplify how online platforms can bridge the gap between rural producers and urban consumers, unlocking new opportunities for economic growth and poverty alleviation. As China transitions to industrial digitization and comprehensive digitalization, rural areas will witness profound changes, leading to a more integrated digital and physical economy.

Laos

Strategy for agriculture and forestry research of Lao PDR

Dr Tick Nouanthavong, Senior Researcher, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Lao People's Democratic Republic



Dr Nouanthavong focused on the Strategy for Agriculture and Forestry Research of Lao PDR, covering its introduction, objectives, proceeded plan, and results. The presentation started with an introduction of the importance of agriculture and forestry in Laos, highlighting how these sectors are crucial in the Lao government's plans to eradicate poverty and move the country out of the Least Developed Country category.

Over the past 15 years, Laos has reduced its poverty rate by 40%. With more than 75% of its population relying on agriculture and natural resources, these sectors are crucial to the nation's development. The Lao government emphasizes adaptive, demand-driven research, led by the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), a key part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). NAFRI integrates various research centers across agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and forestry. Its main goal is to develop agriculture and forestry sustainably, ensure food security, manage forest resources, and alleviate poverty.

The overall objective is to implement the development strategy for the agriculture and forestry sector through research, with specific goals of using modern science and technology for green and sustainable development, achieving food security and nutrition, managing forest resources sustainably, developing rural areas, and formally eliminating poverty.

The MAF's development plan includes four components: commodity production, food security and nutrition, rural development and poverty reduction, and forestry management. NAFRI's six research programs focus on biodiversity conservation, seed production, processing technology, socio-economic research, capacity building, and information systems.

The strategy has produced fruitful results. Key achievements include local ownership in planning, adaptive working methods, and capacity building for government staff and farmers, particularly young women and children. Efforts in sustainable biodiversity management have identified and cultivated species like rice, maize, corn, bananas, taro, rattan, and fish. Productivity improvements have developed suitable crop varieties and livestock breeds, enhancing food

security and income for rural farmers. To address climate change, Laos is developing climate information services, adaptive agricultural technologies, and resilient policies. Policymakers receive information to make informed decisions, supporting sustainable agriculture and forestry development for a prosperous future.

Myanmar

Innovative value-added drinks to create new market for local farmers

Dr Tin Mar Lar Thein, Founder/R&D Director of Sweetie Home Production



In response to the economic downturn and the increasing demand for healthy food and drink options, Dr Tin Mar Lar Thein and her team at Sweetie Home Food Production have developed an innovative solution. They have created a range of healthy, fermented ginger drinks using locally sourced ginger, aiming to both support local agriculture and provide a nutritious option for consumers looking to boost their immune systems. The range includes ginger ale and ginger-blended kombucha, utilizing 25 grams of ginger per bottle. According to their research, 320 grams of ginger can support the needs of 11 women per household. By producing 1,000 bottles, they can meet the needs of approximately 100 households, helping to increase domestic consumption of ginger.

Despite the economic challenges, Sweetie Home Food Production has managed to establish a significant market presence. Their products are sold in well-known supermarkets such as Myanmar Supermarket, Ocean, and City Mart, as well as in hospitals and clinics. The company has a potential market of 12,000 and currently sells around 75,000 bottles annually, demonstrating the potential for growth in the market.

Since its inception in 2020, Sweetie Home Food Production has expanded its product range and achieved several milestones. They have received recognition from prestigious awards, including the ASEAN Entrepreneurship Prize in 2021. Their budget is allocated towards research and development (50%), marketing (20%), and production (30%), ensuring continued growth and innovation.

Looking ahead, Sweetie Home Food Production plans to expand its factory and export its products to neighboring countries such as Singapore, Japan, Thailand, and China. This expansion will not only benefit local ginger farmers but also create employment opportunities for women

in the region.

Thailand

105 Royally-granted Jasmine Rice Production Group at Ban Koh Kaew

Ms Khotchasorn Thavornkongrsisiri, Deputy District Chief of Samrong Thap District, Surin Province



Ms Thavornkongrsisiri presented the achievements and practices of the 105 Royally granted Jasmine Rice Production Group at Ban Koh Kaew. The group's focus is on promoting the production of 105 rice species while also aiding in disaster relief efforts. With their consistent efforts, their organic rice production has reached export standards.

The production principles of the group emphasize reducing the use of chemicals and fertilizers. They use dry species such as green beans and peanuts as green fertilizers after harvest, along with animal feces and dolomite to improve soil quality. Chemicals and fertilizers are prohibited, with only self-produced organic manure and bacteria-based pesticides used. The group's efforts have been supported by the royal family, providing animals for manure and equipment for plantation. They have faced challenges such as natural disasters and the golden apple snail crisis, which they have addressed with community initiatives and the support of the royal family.

Despite challenges, the group has maintained a strong sense of unity and solidarity, which they credit for their success. They received various endowments from the royal family, including buffaloes, ducks, chickens, pigs, and tilapia, which have enhanced household income and reduced production costs. They also received vehicles for rice planting, reducing labor costs.

The group practices the philosophy of the "sufficient economy" advocated by King Rama IX, promoting mutual help and sharing within the community. They have been able to maintain their quality of life physically and environmentally without toxins, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thailand

Bang Sa Kae Community Enterprise

Mr Manat Boonphayung, Farmer Network Leader of Bang Sakae District, Samut Songkhram Province



Mr Boonphayung provided a detailed overview of the agricultural practices, community development efforts, and sustainability initiatives taken by Bang Sa Kae community in Thailand. He began by introducing themselves as a grapefruit farmer and the leader of the Bang Sa Kae community. The speaker emphasized the rich resources available in Bang Sa Kae, including access to both sea and freshwater, which contribute to the high quality and sweetness of their agricultural products. They explained that the community primarily focused on growing grapefruits, particularly the ca variety, known for its white color and exceptional sweetness.

Despite facing challenges such as remote location and lack of visibility about their products, the community has been able to increase the value of their agricultural produce through advanced technologies and packaging methods. They have also successfully penetrated the local supermarket market, educating consumers about the unique qualities of their grapefruits.

In addition to their agricultural practices, the Bang Sa Kae community is actively involved in environmental protection efforts, particularly in maintaining water quality. They collaborate with universities and private enterprises to conduct research and implement advanced technologies for water quality governance.

The community has also made efforts to promote tourism in the region, but they emphasize the need to balance tourism development with agricultural sustainability. They have implemented measures to control the number of tourist groups visiting the community to ensure that the focus remains on agriculture.

Vietnam

The role of universities in education for sustainable rural development in Vietnam

Dr Tran Thi Nhu Ngoc, Lecturer of Vietnam National University of Agriculture



The presentation aimed to provide an overview of rural development, education, and the role of universities in education for sustainable rural development, focusing on the case study of the Vietnam National University of Agriculture. Vietnam's rural development boasts strengths and opportunities, including diverse products and labor sources, alongside support policies for education and capacity building. However, challenges such as access to capital, technology, and infrastructure, as well as the need for knowledge and skills in rural development, remain.

The government has implemented policies and activities to support education for rural development, such as reforming general education towards regional and world standards and the National Education Initiative with general education. Despite these efforts, there are limitations, including a mindset that favors urban areas and a lack of development in continuing education in rural areas.

The role of universities in education for sustainable rural development in Vietnam is crucial. They provide highly qualified human resources for rural development, training in informal and non-formal education in rural areas and engage in research and projects that support agriculture and rural development. The Vietnam National University of Agriculture, as a leading university in agricultural economics, agriculture, and rural development, plays a vital role. The Faculty of Economic and Rural Development offers formal and non-formal education, including undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs. The faculty also provides practical training, internships, and community learning centers, contributing to the development of high-quality human resources for rural areas.

Q&A

Q1: How have you integrated education and skills training into your agricultural development initiatives? We are interested in understanding the connection between education, skills acquisition, and agricultural development within your programs.

A1: In China, we have implemented several initiatives to integrate education and skills training into agricultural development. One key effort is the establishment of formal education systems, such as the China-ASEAN Education and Training Center. The primary function of these mechanisms is to promote agricultural trade and technological skills across ASEAN countries, thereby enhancing the application of advanced agricultural technologies. In addition to formal education and training mechanisms, universities and institutes also run various projects and

programs aimed at training farmers. For example, we have a Rural Leaders Training Base in Yunnan. This base hosts rural leaders, including representatives from Thailand, and allows them to share their experiences and practices. By showcasing successful practices, these leaders serve as models, demonstrating to others what can be achieved through learning and practical application.

A2: As mentioned in the presentation, integrating knowledge and skills into education for agricultural development involves multiple aspects. It's not just about production techniques but also about marketing and processing. For example, some of our projects focus on exporting products, processing, and working with businesses and factories to support marketing on a larger scale. This includes using QR codes for tracking and online verification, labeling, and other skills. Our approach is to improve farmers individually, starting with the leaders. These leaders then transfer their knowledge to the broader community. In rural areas, information spreads quickly—when one farmer learns something new, it rapidly disseminates throughout the community. This peer-to-peer learning ensures that knowledge and skills are effectively integrated and shared among all farmers.

A3: I'd like to share some insights about the application of e-commerce technology. With the further adoption of e-commerce, we have observed that more and more farmers are realizing its profitability and the additional income it can bring. When farmers see a fellow villager making a good profit from e-commerce, they are motivated to adopt the technology themselves. This creates a ripple effect, making it easy to spread the use of e-commerce. Additionally, the government supports farmers by funding platforms that educate them on the skills needed for live streaming and managing e-commerce stores. For instance, Alibaba has a top university and business units that provide training both online and offline. I believe other companies are doing similar initiatives. The involvement of these players has significantly contributed to the successful development of e-commerce in rural areas.

A4: Nowadays, we hear about many innovative policies and cases related to education and rural development. To address your question, we have initiated a project on learning villages in the digital era. We believe that rural development requires efforts from governments, universities, rural communities, and enterprises. Our goal is to bring these stakeholders together and provide platforms for policy dialogue and exchange of ideas. Through this project, we aim to document various forms of lifelong learning in rural areas. One example is the Taobao village, which we consider an innovative case. Another example is the agricultural university, which involves cooperation between the university, government, and local communities. Our initiative seeks to bridge the gap between practices and policies and contribute to promoting education for rural development.

A5: I would like to add that each community faces unique challenges, such as climate issues or land problems. Communities understand their specific issues very well and often collaborate with other communities to find solutions before bringing their products to market. For example, if the market is too far from the community, we work together to find a solution to this common problem. After addressing these local challenges, we then consider broader applications, extending our solutions to the county or even larger areas. We also receive substantial support from the Thai government, including Her Royal Highness, which greatly aids our efforts.

Q2: I'm a student from Cambodia, currently studying in China, and I'm also a farmer. In Cambodia,

we have plenty of water during the rainy season, which is beneficial for agriculture. However, we face a significant challenge: there is no market to sell our products. How can we address this issue and find better markets to sell our agricultural products at higher prices? Additionally, I heard an expert mention e-commerce. How can we educate farmers, who are not tech-savvy, to effectively use smartphones and e-commerce platforms?

A2: Thank you for your question. To find better markets and sell your products at higher prices, you need to think beyond the physical product. Consider the value and story behind it. For example, in China, agricultural products are marketed with added value, such as beauty or health benefits. One successful case is Professor Li Baoguo, who increased the price of apples by incorporating Chinese culture into the packaging. This approach transformed the apples into cultural items, significantly raising their value. Additionally, e-commerce requires a solid infrastructure, including a payment system and logistics. Simply transferring offline sales methods to online platforms won't work. You need to tailor your approach for the online market. For example, Alibaba's Taobao platform started with a consumer-to-consumer model, then expanded to brand creation with TMall. Now, it connects manufacturers directly to consumers with TMall Supermarket, handling production and logistics for the merchants.

Part II: Exchange with World Food Programme China Office

15:00-16:30, April 23, 2024. Beijing, China

In the afternoon of April 23, the delegation visited World Food Programme (WFP) China Office and met with the team of South-South Cooperation (SSC). Dr Jia Yan, Head of SSC at WFP China introduced key initiatives and projects of WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation (WFP China COE).



Particularly, she demonstrated four thematic areas of COE including value chain development for

small holders, post-harvest loss management and food systems, disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience, and innovative poverty alleviation initiative. Moreover, she introduced SSC cases in four value chains of rice, juncao, cassava, and millet. The delegates exchanged related practices of these crops in their countries. Besides, she highlighted [WFP China SSC knowledge platform](#) and encouraged delegates to use the learning resources on [WFP China COE Cloud School](#), which provides contents on China's policies, knowledge and practical techniques of sustainable rural development. The delegation and WFP team agreed to enhance the exchange of rural transformation and SSC between China and Lancang-Mekong countries in the future.



Part III: Field Visits to Hebei Province

April 24-25, 2024. Hebei Province, China

During April 24-25, the delegation visited model sites of rural revitalization in Hebei Province. On the first day, they discovered shared farms, B&B and agricultural demonstration garden in Huangwan Village, Xiong County. The shared farm is one of significant ways in China to support rural revitalization. They are jointly operated by farmers, enterprises and government. Rural residents lent spare farmlands, tools and houses to citizens who wish to enjoy the idyllic life in countryside. Through this way, they could have access to rural resources without purchasing the property rights. The government provides resources and technical assistance during the establishment and companies acts as the key investor and operator.

In the B&B village, led by the rural enterprises, spare and old houses were collected from rural residents and refurbished to build B&Bs. This project has gained remarkable success in income generation of Huangwan Village. The livelihood of villagers has been greatly improved.

Thereafter, the representatives of Xiong County government introduced smart agricultural

technology development in China at the agricultural demonstration garden and showcased the actions of ecological restoration and green development in Baiyangdian.

On the next day, the delegation visited two model villages of poverty alleviation: Luotuowan Village and Gujiatai Village in Fupin County. Both are located at the remote areas of Taihang Mountains and were identified as poverty-stricken areas in China.

Luotuowan Village has developed fruit, edible fungi and tourism industries, which significantly improved their lives. The per capita disposable income of residents has grown from solely 950 RMB in 2012 to 20,057 RMB in 2022¹. Here, the delegation visited the industry park of edible fungi to learn about the environmentally sustainable production methods of edible fungus and operating modes. It highlighted the key role of universities in providing technical support and the role of government in facilitating the strategic planning and funding of the industrial development.

In Gujiatai Village, there were 150 households in the village with per capita net income of 980 RMB in 2012. In 2014, 110 households were registered as in poverty.² With the movement of poverty alleviation in China, in 2019, per capita disposable income reached 16,109 RMB.³ A few industries including fruits, edible fungi, Chinese medicine, handicrafts and tourism have been developed with the collective support of the government, enterprises and communities. During the tour, the delegation visited Baigou Jiuge Leather Company and its handicraft workshop. The Company has established marketing channels with Chinese common e-commerce platforms such as JD.com, Taobao, and Pinduoduo. Each worker's income increased by more than 2,000 yuan per year. Now, more young people have come back to their hometown and create their own business.

The delegates reflected that the field visits inspired good practices of industrial development in rural areas to be replicated in their countries. They expected more exchanges held in the future.



1 <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bzouMJNnxvSxUSRNTNfYRw>
2 <https://www.iprcc.org/article/43jTlsGp5dg>
3 https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_11385430



Part IV: Closing Ceremony

10:00-11:00, April 26, 2024. Baoding, Hebei Province, China

The workshop was successfully concluded on April 26 at Hebei Agricultural University. During this session, four Thai farm leaders firstly shared on their community projects with participants. Following that, Prof Zhao Jianjun, Vice President of Hebei Agricultural University, gave a closing remark and issued certificates to the delegates.

Experiences Sharing of Thai Farm Leaders

Community Palm Oil

Ms Chanpen Chidchue, Oil Palm Company, Wangpamek County, Trang Province, Thailand



Ms Chidchue mainly introduced the products from the oil palm industry in Wangpamek County, Trang Province, Thailand and illustrated the general processing procedure of natural palm oil. Under the challenge of price decrease in oil palm industries, the Oil Palm Planting Company decided to upgrade their business with the support of Chaipattana Foundation and the Thai royal family. Besides, the company also sought cooperation from Walailak University with a studio established in the village.

The main products include edible plant oil, soap, animal feed, biological gasoline, massage gel, and cosmetics. The red palm oil is one of the unique products which is natural and produced in a traditional way. Ms Chidchue elaborated that the core philosophy in the product variety is sustainability referring to making good use of every part of the oil palm to produce products with less waste. As a result, the whole working group is in research of reusing the waste from red palm oil. She explained 2 ways to handle the waste in oil production. First is to use the waste as an element in massage gel and aromatic roller which are suitable for Thai massage industries. The second is to make the waste part of the TMR feed for cattle.

In the future, Ms Chidchue planned to develop more types of products in the cleaning and fertilizer sectors which can not only bring income to villagers but also enable producers to enjoy their own products.

Banana Tree Planting Project

Mr Watcharapong Songtawee, Project Researcher, Pai Village, Chiang Mai, Thailand



Mr Songtawee emphasized that the Wetland Forest Project was started to satisfy the development demands of the local villages. Needs in planting, life and environment are considered thoroughly. Thanks to financial aid from the Rama IX Foundation and technical support from Maejo University, the project could eventually be implemented for forest fire prevention and respiratory health safeguarding. To realize the predicted outcome of the project, banana trees are planted because of the rich water contents in the trees and the function of refreshing air in the areas. Additionally, the speaker emphasized that all the actions and decisions are made after the group discussion in the village and conducted jointly by the villagers. Now the project brand has been set up successfully and for the next step, the project is about to conduct a group study for the heads of the villages so that new demands from the villages can be collected and analyzed comprehensively.

Promotion of Development: Group of weavers in Ban Nong Khaen

Mr Tanapol Khongman, Project Manager, Nong Khaen Village, Surin Province, Thailand



Mr Khongman introduced the project objective which is poverty alleviation in Nong Khaen Village so that the villagers can earn their living. Two projects are conducted that are Reed and Silk Weaving Project and the No. 105 Aromatic Jasmine Rice Planting project. All the projects are supported by the Chaipattana Foundation and the Thai royal family.

Firstly, He introduced the reed weaving project and its products which maintain the traditional way of production. In the project, the weavers learn the skills from the King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang and local experienced weavers. Local kids can enjoy the weaving lessons held by the Chaipattana Foundation. Besides, international exchanges in weaving skills are realized. German students also came to the village and studied the traditional skills. All unique weaving patterns in the project will get access to their own patent and products like mats and bags were sold in local markets.

No. 105 Aromatic Jasmine Rice

Mr Somsak Insamran, Farmer Network Leader of Surin Province, Thailand.



Mr Somsak Insamran demonstrated the case of the No. 105 Aromatic Jasmine Rice. The rice is planted in a sustainable and organic manner where organic fertilizer and rotary planting are utilized in the field. Water irrigation and fertilizer play an important role in the rice planting. Using organic fertilizer gained from local farms can reduce the cost input of the rice. He addressed the vital role of the royal Thai family and the government.

Closing Remarks

Remarks by Prof. Zhao Jianjun, Vice President of Hebei Agricultural University

Prof Zhao Jianjun extended his warmest congratulations to all participants who have successfully completed the training, and to the dedicated teachers and staff.

He stressed that this year marks the 12th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China has signed cooperation documents with 152 countries and 30 international organizations. BRI has significantly boosted trade and investment, benefiting many nations. By 2030, BRI cooperation is expected to lift millions out of poverty. China also promotes the Global Development Initiative and has established substantial funds to support sustainable development goals.

Hebei Agricultural University, founded in 1902, is a key institution in Hebei Province with a strong emphasis on agricultural sciences. It has extensive international cooperation and has trained over 823 participants from 75 developing countries since 2004.

Prof Zhao highlighted that this workshop was the new beginning for further collaboration. He hoped the knowledge and experiences gained here will inspire and benefit broader communities.



Annex 1: Agenda

| Tuesday 23 April 2024: | |
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| Morning: International Seminar (open to the public) | |
| 8:30-9:00 | Registration |
| 9:00-9:30 Opening Ceremony | <p>Moderator: Dr ZHAO Yuchi, Executive Director of UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED)</p> <p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcoming remarks by Prof. ZHOU Zuoyu, Vice President of Beijing Normal University, Director of UNESCO INRULED - Remarks by Mr Robert Parua, Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia (UNESCO Beijing) - Remarks by Prof WEI Hongjiang, Vice President of Yunnan Agricultural University (pre-recorded video) - Remarks by Ms Adhinand Indrapim, Minister Counsellor (Agriculture), the Royal Thai Embassy, Beijing (pre-recorded video) |
| 9:30-10:15 Keynote Speeches | <p>Moderator: Dr. ZHAO Yuchi, Executive Director of UNESCO INRULED</p> <p>Yunnan's green agriculture, smart agriculture and Lancang-Mekong cooperation outlook</p> <p>Prof LU Yao, Vice Dean of International College, Deputy Director of China-ASEAN Education and Training Center, Yunnan Agricultural University</p> <p>Sustainable development: case studies of the Chaipattana Foundation</p> <p>Dr Suleeporn Bunbongkarn Choopavang, Director of Foreign Affairs Department, the Chaipattana Foundation</p> <p>Industrial development for rural revitalization: the Caixi mode</p> <p>Prof LI Bowen, Chief Engineer and Deputy Dean of Rural Revitalization Research Institute, Hebei Agricultural University</p> |
| 10:15-10:30 | Group photo and tea break |
| 10:30-12:00 Country Report and Good Practice Showcase | <p>Moderator: Dr. QI Xinjian, Programme Specialist of UNESCO INRULED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● China <p>E-commerce promotes inclusive rural development: The case of Taobao Village</p> <p>Dr ZUO Chenming, Deputy Director of Taobao & Tmall Group Research Centre, Director and Senior Expert of Alibaba Research Center For Rural Dynamics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cambodia <p>Experiences of international cooperation on education for sustainable rural development</p> <p>Mr Loeun Chhany, Second Secretary for Education, Royal Embassy of Cambodia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laos <p>Strategy for agriculture and forestry research of Lao PDR</p> <p>Dr Tick Nouanthavong, Senior Researcher, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Lao People's Democratic Republic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Myanmar |

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| | <p>Innovative value-added drinks to create new market for local farmers</p> <p>Dr Tin Mar Lar Thein, Founder/R&D Director of Sweetie Home Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thailand <p>105 Royally-granted Jasmine Rice Production Group at Ban Koh Kaew</p> <p>Ms Khotchasorn Thavornkongsrisiri, Deputy District Chief of Samrong Thap District, Surin Province</p> <p>Bang Sa Kae Community Enterprise</p> <p>Mr Manat Boonphayung, Farmer Network Leader of Bang Sakae District, Samut Songkhram Province</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vietnam <p>The role of universities in education for sustainable rural development in Vietnam</p> <p>Dr Tran Thi Nhu Ngoc, Lecturer of Vietnam National University of Agriculture</p> |
| 12:00-12:20 | Q&A |
| 12:20-12:30 | Wrap up |
| 12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch |
| Tuesday 23 April 2024: | |
| Afternoon | |
| 14:00-17:00 | Exchange with World Food Programme China |
| 19:00-20:30 | Dinner |
| Wednesday 24 April 2024: | |
| 7:30-15:30 | Field visit to Xiong'an New Area and Huangwan Village, Xiong County |
| 15:30-16:30 | Field visit to Baiyangdian |
| Thursday 25 April 2024: | |
| 8:00-12:00 | Field visit to Luotuowan Village |
| 14:00-18:00 | Field visit to Gujiatai Village |
| Friday 26 April 2024: | |
| 10:00-11:00 | Experiences sharing of Thai farm leaders |
| Closing Ceremony | <p>Ms Chanpen Chidchue, Oil Palm Company, Wangpamek County, Trang Province, Thailand</p> <p>Mr Watcharapong Songtawee, Project Researcher, Pai Village, Chiang Mai, Thailand</p> <p>Mr Tanapol Khongman, Project Manager, Nong Khaen Village, Surin Province, Thailand</p> <p>Mr Somsak Insamran, Farmer Network Leader of Surin Province, Thailand.</p> <p>Closing remarks</p> <p>Prof. Zhao Jianjun, Vice President of Hebei Agricultural University</p> |

Annex 2: List of Delegates

| Name | Nationality | Title |
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| Ms Tick Nouanthavong | Lao PDR | Senior Researcher, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry |
| Ms Sounath Atsanani | Lao PDR | Expert, Rice seed and commercial production groups in Hardsaifong district |
| Ms Khamtay Vongxayya | Lao PDR | Researcher, Rice and cash crops research center, National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. |
| Ms Tran Thi Nhu Ngoc | Vietnam | Lecturer, Vietnam National University of Agriculture |
| Ms Tin Mar Lar Thein | Myanmar | Founder/R&D Director, Sweetie Home Production |
| Mr Manat Boonphayung | Thailand | Farmer Network Leader of Bang Sakae District, Samut Songkhram Province |
| Mr Watcharaphong Songtawee | Thailand | Farmer Network Leader of Fang District |
| Mrs Chanpen Chidchue | Thailand | Chairman of the Oil Palm Plantation Enterprise Group |
| Ms Khotchasorn Thavornkongsrisiri | Thailand | Deputy District Chief of Samrong Thap District, Surin Province |
| Mr Tanapol Khongman | Thailand | Village Headman in Nong Khean |
| Mr Somsak Insamran | Thailand | Farmer Network Leader of Surin Province |
| Ms Nattanun Prasertpornsakun | Thailand | Officer, Foreign Affairs Department, Chaipattana Foundation |
| Ms Sarisa Ungchomchoke | Thailand | Officer, Foreign Affairs Department, Chaipattana Foundation |
| Ms Suleeporn Bunbongkarn | Thailand | Director, Foreign Affairs Department, Chaipattana Foundation |
| Mr Robert Parua | Papua New Guinea | Education Programme Specialist, UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for East Asia (UNESCO Beijing) |
| Kang Saoraksmeay | Cambodia | University of International Business and Economics |
| Pon Sakpheareth | Cambodia | University of International Business and Economics |
| Dr Zuo Chenming | China | Deputy Director, Taobao & Tmall Group Research Centre, Director and Senior Expert of Alibaba Research Center for Rural Dynamics |
| Prof Zhao Xusheng | China | Director, International and Exchange Office, Hebei Agricultural University |
| Prof Li Bowen | China | Deputy Dean, Rural Revitalization Research Institute, Hebei Agricultural University |
| Prof. Lu Yao | China | Associate Professor, Institute of New Rural Development, Deputy Dean of International College, and Deputy Director of China-ASEAN Education & Training Center (Yunnan), Yunnan Agricultural |

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| | | University |
| Mr. Yang Jun | China | CEO&Village Secretary, Shangyi County Jiatian Vegetable Specilaized Farming Cooperatives |
| Mr. Zhao Lianhong | China | Village Secretary, Sancheng Village |

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