

Research on the Long-term Mechanism of Local Universities' Participation in Education Assistance for Rural Revitalization——Taking Yan'an University as an Example

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Abstract: Local universities have played an important role in winning the battle against poverty. In the stage of connecting poverty alleviation and rural revitalization, with the advantages of geography, talents and intelligence, and local governments' supports, they are still a new force in rural construction. Taking Yan'an University, a local university, as an example, this paper discusses the long-term mechanism of local universities' participation in education assistance for rural revitalization, according to its practical path of participating in rural construction through building college and local government cooperation practice bases, carrying out rural construction consulting services, strengthening rural construction talents training and carrying out rural construction services.

Keywords: Local universities; Rural revitalization; Long-term mechanism

1. Introduction

In promoting the effective connection between poverty eradication and rural revitalization, Yan'an University implements the strategic layout of the National Rural Revitalization Bureau, Shaanxi Provincial Rural Revitalization Bureau and Shaanxi Provincial Department of Education on rural revitalization work, based on helping rural revitalization, making full use of the intellectual advantages of talents, highlighting regional characteristics, deeply participating in rural construction, continuously enhancing the ability of local universities to serve rural revitalization, and contributing wisdom and strength to rural revitalization.

2. Advantages of Local Universities' Participation in Rural Revitalization

In the process of participating in the construction of the countryside, Yan'an University conscientiously implements the Implementation Plan of the Countryside Construction Action and the Opinions on Accelerating the Revitalization of Rural Talents, pursues the construction of the countryside in an important position in the construction of socialist modernization, fully utilizes its advantages in geography, population, education, science and technology, talents and other resources, and constantly promotes the effective connection between the results of poverty eradication and rural revitalization in the villages targeted for assistance, and effectively improves local economic and social development.

2.1 Geographical advantages

As the only university in Northern Shaanxi jointly built by the People's Government of Shaanxi Province and the Ministry of Education, and one of the first batch of universities for students to apply in Shaanxi Province, Yan'an University has made significant contributions to the construction of the old revolutionary area for a long time. Living in this special environment, the faculty and students of Yan'an University have a better understanding of the "three rural issues" in northern Shaanxi. Moreover, in terms of the source of the faculty and students of Yan'an University, as most of them come from the Northern Shaanxi region, they have a better understanding of the region where they were born and raised up and have lived for several years, no matter from the perspective of language or personal emotion. Therefore, all of them are enthusiastic in helping the counties and districts, naturally becoming the main force in rural revitalization. In terms of social services, Yan'an University also has

geographical advantages in helping counties and districts in Northern Shaanxi. In terms of the same level of technical situation, taking factors such as cost, time and energy in consideration, local enterprises and institutions in Northern Shaanxi are also more willing to choose local university to cooperate, and realize joint research and result sharing with Yan'an University, so as to get more effective and faster services.

2.2 Intellectual advantage of talents

Yan'an University has 16 subordinate schools and 11 affiliated hospitals. Meanwhile, the university also has 18 master degree authorization units in first-level disciplines, 6 provincial superior and characteristic disciplines, 2 provincial first-class disciplines, and 14 professional degree authorization categories. Yan'an University also owns 61 undergraduate majors, 12 national first-class professional construction units and 13 provincial first-class professional construction units. More importantly, it also possesses 1 key research base of humanities and social sciences of the Ministry of Education, 1 research base of red tourism innovation and development of the National Tourism Administration, 16 provincial and ministerial research platforms, 6 provincial and ministerial innovation teams, 5 academician workstations and 2 workshops of famous social scientists. In particular, with the financial support of Xi'an Foundation for Rural Development, the Rural Development Institute, a second-tier teaching and research unit under Yan'an University, is exploring the establishment of a comprehensive service model integrating scientific research, social service and talent training, focusing on the needs of rural innovation and entrepreneurship, rural enterprise management, agricultural production technology and rural economic and social management enhancement, in order to build a high-end think tank for the in-depth implementation of rural revitalization strategy, a demonstration platform for enhancing rural innovation and entrepreneurship, and a first-class base for training agricultural management talents, with the goal of comprehensive revitalization of rural areas in the old revolutionary areas of northern Shaanxi and the realization of "advanced agriculture, beautiful countryside and rich farmers". At present, based on the advantages of cultural and natural environment in Northern Shaanxi, the university identifies the foothold and entry point to serve rural revitalization, integrates social resources, plays a great role of "idea bank", "information bank", "talent bank" and "achievement bank", and actively participates in the development planning, policy consultation, agricultural technology guidance and transformation of agricultural science and technology achievements in helping counties and districts to provide scientific and technological support for rural revitalization in Northern Shaanxi. For example, the research results of "Yuyang Practice of Rural Collective Economy Development" have been approved by the main leaders of Shaanxi Provincial Government, providing advice and support for major decisions of local governments and enterprises and public institutions.

2.3 Advantages of local government's support

Yan'an University is the first comprehensive university founded by the Communist Party of China, and its development has always been highly valued and cared for by successive leaders of the Party and the Nation, even all sectors of the community. Governments at all levels are deeply concerned about the development of Yan'an University. What's more, the rate of Selected Graduates of Yan'an University ranks among the top universities in Shaanxi Province, and the proportion of the number of students employed in the west of the country reaches more than 70%, which has been cultivating various qualified talents for the grassroots government, enterprises and public institutions and elementary education for a long time in Northern Shaanxi. Many graduates have become the backbone of working on "issues of agriculture, farmer and rural areas" in Northern Shaanxi. As the alumni have deep feelings for their alma mater, they will support its development within their full capacity. Sufficient alumni network resources facilitate the gathering of information resources from all walks of life for the think tank of Yan'an University. Governments at all levels have developed paths for the integration and development of schools, universities and enterprises, and jointly built Enterprise-University-Research Institute Cooperation base, creating a good social service environment for Yan'an University to participate in rural revitalization.

3. Practical Exploration of Yan'an University's Participation in Rural Revitalization

Yan'an University insists on putting rural construction in an important position of socialist modernization, and highlights the development of human capital in rural areas. According to the principles of "initiative and free will, school and local government co-construction, decentralization,

highlighting characteristics and steady advancement”, the university guides talents and technologies of higher education institutions to go to rural areas, strengthens rural construction planning and consultation, talent cultivation, technical support, farmers’ counseling and students’ service practice, explores the mechanism of talents going to rural areas, school and local government co-construction and accompanying construction, promotes the ability of scientific and technological innovation, talent support and organization and mobilization in rural construction, and promotes the construction of beautiful rural areas which are livable and have desirable industries.

3.1 Main tasks

3.1.1 Construction of colleges and local governments cooperation practice bases

Rural construction practice bases will be established, and rural construction services will also be carried out. The colleges and local governments cooperation bases serves as an important place for Yan’an University to carry out social practices such as national and agricultural conditions, red culture education, scientific and technological innovation, internship and practical training, as well as to display service achievements and bring together social forces such as alumni, enterprise groups and scientific research units. Based on the resource endowment and characteristic advantages in the counties that get assistance, Yan’an University expands the functions and service scope of the bases, and support the teachers and students team of the university to offer long-term resident service.

3.1.2 To carry out advisory services on rural construction

Technical consulting services, such as rural development and construction planning and design, is provided for counties and district that get assistance, with a focus on providing support and guidance for infrastructure management and protection, improvement of rural living environment, and improvement of basic public services. Special studies have been carried out focusing on technical problems such as the renovation of rural sanitary toilets, the treatment of garbage and sewage, and the improvement of the quality of rural housing, and a number of useful and practical research results have been formed, which can deepen school and local government cooperation in rural governance and the construction of rural spiritual civilization, and promote and serve the simultaneous strengthening of software and hardware in villages. Relying on characteristic resources such as pastoral scenery, village architecture and township culture, the university will guide villagers to develop new industries, such as rural tourism, leisure agriculture, cultural experience and health care for the elderly.

3.1.3 To strengthen the training of rural construction personnel

Yan’an University also gives full play to the advantages of its education resources, and special training is conducted every year for members of the rural construction service team at the county, town and village level and the backbones of the rural revitalization business at the county, town and village level, so as to cultivate a group of rural construction management talents who can lead the party. Special training are extensively carried out, the needs of rural revitalization in counties and districts that get assistance are accurately met, and experts are sent to conduct training on health education, culture and art, tourism management, environmental maintenance, innovation and entrepreneurship, so as to enhance the self-development capacity of officials and the masses.

3.1.4 To provide accompanying services for rural construction

The accompanying and immersion service in the village is carried out, and the theoretical advantages and professional expertise of the university get fully play. All these actions help the “two committee”, the village Party branch and the village committee, come up with ideas, introduce measures, and teach methods, improving the fighting force and cohesion of the villages’ “two committee”. Yan’an University will strengthen guidance for farmers, show them how to do and do those work with farmers together, to inspire their enthusiasm, initiative, and awareness to participate in rural development, according to village planning, infrastructure construction, and improvement of the living environment. Focusing on the general requirements of “building rural areas with thriving businesses, pleasant living environment, social etiquette and civility, effective governance, and prosperity”, the university will also help the village committees to accelerate the vitalization of industry, talent, culture, the environment, and organizational structures, and focus on health assistance, consumption assistance and people’s livelihood assistance, promoting the implementation of the demonstration.

3.2 Implementation steps

Based on the seven towns and eleven villages that the paired counties and districts determined, the university will form seven assistance working teams. The working teams are composed of two to three colleges led by an organ department. Each unit specifically identifies one person to participate in the assistance work. The working method is mainly the combination of offering resident services in villages and providing telephone and network guidance. And the resident services in villages will be offered no less than 6 times a year. Each unit of the school should participate in the rural revitalization work as much as possible, and the working teams should make specific arrangements according to the actual situation.

3.3 Supporting measures

3.3.1 To strengthen organizational leadership

The University established a leading group of “Uniting Hundreds Universities and Hundreds Counties to Rejuvenate Thousands Villages” of Yan’an University, whose main responsibilities are to formulate and improve the working plan, coordinate the demonstration construction work with Yanchuan County, and guide and supervise the implementation of the demonstration construction work of various supporting working groups.

3.3.2 Improving the establishment of institutions and mechanisms

A more systematic and standardized operation mechanism will be established. The university will also establish joint meeting system, project inventory system, dynamic monitoring system, monthly report system and special meeting system for demonstration and establishment, and form a demonstration and establishment working mechanism with orderly internal connection and complete external support.

3.3.3 Implying strict assessment and supervision measurement

The demonstration work of each unit involved in the task will be included in the school’s year-end assessment system, and regularly and fixedly accept joint assessment from the school and local government. Members of the working groups should be familiar with the situation of agriculture, rural areas and farmers, and love rural work. They need to carry out targeted demonstration work on the basis of extensive investigation and research. All working groups should put the demonstration work on an important agenda, firmly promote the implementation of the demonstration work, refrain from formalism, highlight actual results and results, and avoid “piling bonsai” and being vanity.

3.3.4 Strengthening funding security

The university set up a special fund for rural revitalization and paired assistance to support the demonstration work. The fund is mainly used for industrial projects, physical assistance and cultural construction at the village level. The living allowance for the staff who go to the village shall be implemented according to the standard of the first secretary of the school in the village, and the travel expenses shall be paid from the funds of the unit.

3.3.5 Vigorously publicity and promotion

Paired assistance groups and publicity department are asked to advertise the demonstration implementation effect of “Uniting Hundreds Universities and Hundreds Counties to Rejuvenate Thousands Villages” of Yan’an University in a timely manner, expanding the demonstration effect and improving the social influence. The university will select a batch of innovative models and typical cases that can be copied, referenced and promoted, and regularly carry out activities such as model release, sample exchange and on-site observation, so as to create a good atmosphere for schools to learn from each other and catch up.

4. Study on the long-term mechanism of local colleges and universities participating in rural construction

4.1 Adhering to the government-led “multi-sphere integrated” paired assistance mechanism

Local governments at all levels should be realistic, improve the leading groups for colleges and universities to participate in the work of rural vitalization, carry out in-depth research on colleges and

universities to help rural development, formulate work plans and assessment standards, and plan the allocation of projects and funds, in accordance with the principle of honesty and effectiveness. In addition, government departments are encouraged to cooperate across regions and learn from the paired assistance experience and countermeasures elsewhere, preferably achieving the complementary resources until strong combination. As the main promoter of educational participation in rural construction, colleges and universities should not only timely report the situation of paired assistance to the government in time, study the government's various support policies, so as to truly serve the people, but also accept the supervision of government departments, listen to the government's rectification suggestions, and work out an effective link between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization. The government and colleges and universities should continue to communicate with some local enterprises, make good use of the resource advantages, and adhere to an assistant model of "Government Plus Colleges Plus Enterprises", to escort the work of rural revitalization.

4.2 Optimizing training methods and models to train high-quality talents for rural revitalization

Talent is the key to rural revitalization. But at present, the rural population continues to flow to cities and towns, and the primary dilemma in dealing with the rural revitalization work is the problem of rural talent depletion. Rural industries in remote areas lag behind, the absorption capacity of labor is poor, and young and middle-aged work forces flow to urban areas for work. In the aspect of cultural education, the serious shortage of students and teachers makes rural education have no prospect of development. In the aspect of skill education, agricultural technical stations are generally small in scale, and few in personnel, and low in professional level, and the worker here know little about new agriculture. In terms of cultural edification and value education, although most rural areas have achieved radio and television networks and broadband Internet coverage, as internet audiovisual cultural products are mainly targeted at urban groups and young groups, and many middle-aged and elderly rural residents still have big barriers to use network equipment, it is difficult for internet products to achieve effective benefits in rural areas. Providing talent support is "the most direct and basic way for local universities to serve regional economic and social development"^[1]. Colleges and universities can adopt a series of methods, such as systematic and scientific culture and art talents training plan, professional teaching staff, modern teaching environment, targeted professional practice, rigorous graduation design, etc. , to train and transfer professional talents who can devote themselves to the cause of promoting rural culture, to construct the training mode of "Classroom Education Plus Practical Education Plus Voluntary Service", and to set up the characteristic curriculum group of agriculture and forestry, to organize students to practice in the countryside through various means, such as literary collecting, rural education, agricultural service, etc. , to train a large number of high-quality talents who care about the "issues of agriculture, farmer and rural areas", devote themselves to the "issues of agriculture, farmer and rural areas" and serve the "issues of agriculture, farmer and rural areas".

4.3 Building a legal guarantee system for colleges and universities to participate in rural construction

"China's current rural education poverty alleviation mechanism has not yet been clearly legislated, but is only scattered in some outlines, opinions, plans, and policies, which is not conducive to effective verification when problems occur."^[2] In the process of effectively linking the poverty alleviation with rural revitalization, the central and local governments have still not issued detailed laws to clarify the rights and obligations of the assisted areas, which makes the assistance unit pay less attention to the dynamics of the assistance object, making it difficult to effectively track the development status of the assistance target. In addition to local government departments, members of democratic parties and non-party understandings in colleges and universities rarely involve the development of the areas they help in the process of making suggestions and suggestions. This shows that college teachers do not pay enough attention to the areas they help, and also shows that some colleges and universities do not sufficiently guide and encourage democratic parties and non-party figures to participate in rural construction. Colleges and universities should encourage teachers to have an in-depth understanding of the school's assistance work, from the small logic of teaching and research to the big logic of participating in social services in combination with their own professional expertise, so as to provide suggestions and contribute to the national rural revitalization development strategy. In addition to clarifying the rights and obligations of the beneficiaries in laws and regulations, colleges and universities should also pay attention to the distribution of assistance funds, the responsibilities of the assistance workers, regulations on the supervision and evaluation of the first-level assistance results,

and other issues. Only by establishing a perfect legal guarantee system, can each subject have clear rights and responsibilities, truly make good use of all kinds of assistance resources, and effectively participate in the rural construction work.

4.4 Continuing to strengthen ideological assistance

Education assistance has played a prominent and important role in winning the battle against poverty, but the ideological assistance of colleges and universities still needs to be strengthened in the stage of effective connection between poverty alleviation and rural revitalization. In A Plan on Rural Revitalization Strategy (2018-2022), issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, it is required that rural culture should be prosperously developed, and “the rural cultural ecology should also be consolidated”, which puts forward clear requirements for colleges and universities to participate in rural construction in the future. In order to continue to deeply implement the policy of “supporting the ambition” and “supporting the wisdom”, colleges and universities should make overall plans, continue to send professional and technical personnel to the assistance villages to carry out educational work, not only providing necessary technical training for young and middle-aged people, but also cultivating the interests and hobbies of local farmers and improving their cultural literacy. In addition, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of book house in difficult areas, cultivate students’ reading habits, let parents and students get rid of the concept of “reading is useless”, and regularly carry out psychological tests and investigation research, keep abreast of the various difficulties of parents and students, encourage students to be aspirational, and strengthen determination to lead villagers to live a good life. Colleges and universities should also make good use of rural masters and talents, correctly identify leaders, and enhance the cultural atmosphere in rural areas from various aspects.

5. Conclusion

Social service is an important function of universities. Colleges and universities should combine their own intellectual advantages, form different education service systems in training of talents, and establish a long-term mechanism to serve rural revitalization, so as to meet the diverse needs of rural revitalization and development.

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