

The Ministry of Education provides 1,522 schools with a 3-year subsidy of NT\$2.5 billion to improve school environment in remote areas

(Courtesy of Po-An Lin at the Division of Academic Senior High Education)



To balance educational resources in urban and rural areas, the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, has formulated the Guidelines for the Ministry of Education's Education Subsidies to Schools in Remote Areas or Schools Not Classified as Mountainous or Urban Areas to adhere to the principle of equal educational opportunities and ensure balanced education development across Taiwan in alignment with the spirit of the Act for Education Development of Schools in Remote Areas. Schools in remote areas or those not classified as mountainous or urban areas are mostly limited by insufficient education funds and therefore could not improve their software and hardware facilities and equipment in a timely manner. To provide a better learning environment, the K-12 Education Administration has launched a three-year subsidy program since 2019 to provide schools in remote areas and those not classified as mountainous or urban areas with a special fund to purchase facilities, equipment, and teaching aids. It has fully subsidized 1,522 schools over the past three years in the total amount of NT\$2.5 billion. In the future, it will continue to invest resources to create a more equal and high-quality educational environment.

Shimen Elementary School in New Taipei City is located in a remote area with a total of 64 students. Through a subsidy from this program, this school was able to renovate its music classrooms, English classrooms, and other classrooms, re-pave the floors, installed cabinets, and purchase trapezoidal tables for group discussion; as such, the classrooms have become more spacious and well-lit. Teachers can also adjust the table combination for differentiated grouping, flexible grouping, or teaching as per students' levels, to increase the opportunities for interaction among students, thereby enhancing their learning motivation and unleashing their learning potential.

Tainan Municipal Dongshan District Shengsian Elementary School, located in a remote area, has witnessed a decline in number of students due to emigration with only 35 students in total. To connect with a local industry, this school has developed a school-based course "Dongshan Coffee" in alignment with the characteristics of the community farming and led students to roast beans with a hand net, make drip bag coffee, experience how to brew pour over coffee, and promote Dongshan coffee, thereby revitalizing the community's industry and facilitating placemaking. Through a subsidy from this program in 2020, this school was able to renovate its old library space and transformed it into a practical experience classroom with the problems of inadequate and insufficient storage space resolved. As a result, students can learn by making coffee in this classroom to unleash their diverse potential and enhance their aptitude in different fields.

Xibei Elementary School, located in Nanzhou Township, Pingtung County, is a school not in mountainous or urban areas. It has 12 classes and 240 students in total. To cultivate a learning atmosphere, this school has actively promoted reading activities. Due to insufficiency of funds, its library has never been renovated since it was launched in 1991, and most of the bookcases are unusable. As such, it has applied for a subsidy from this program to improve the reading environment in the library by creating featured and playful functional book collection and reading areas. After the renovation, the book collection space has increased through the design

of a "themed wall" with enhanced diversity of publications, while reading seats are added by the window to allow school students to read in natural light, making this library one of the most popular places for students after class.

Waishe Elementary School, Taoyuan City, is a school not classified in mountainous or urban areas. Due to the lack of a large indoor space at the school, this school's students have no space to exercise during the rainy season. With a subsidy from this program, this school set up an outdoor covered playground to serve as a simple basketball court or a venue for large gatherings or sports day events. As such, teachers and students no longer need to worry that weather factors may affect their physical education classes or other events.

The K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, stated that it will continue to provide funds to assist schools in remote areas in optimizing their teaching facilities and improving teaching equipment and teaching aids, to ensure a safer and more friendly and comfortable school environment, in which students can enjoy learning at school.