

Teaching in Exchange for Accommodation Increases Momentum in Rural Education and Diversifies Students' Learning Resource

(Courtesy of Wei-Ling Chen at the Division of Junior High and Elementary Education)



In order to enrich the learning resources of elementary and junior high school students in remote areas, the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, continues to promote the Teaching in Exchange for Accommodation program and has commissioned the National Chengchi University to establish the Ruro Platform as a bridge between schools and volunteers with a view to motivating enthusiastic volunteers or retired teachers to conduct collaborative teaching in remote areas, guide school clubs, and lead camp activities. In return, schools provide free accommodations and share local cultural experience. This year, 36 schools and 56 volunteers have participated. So far, this platform has assisted 202 schools in rural areas through recruiting 417 teaching volunteers, achieving fruitful results and increasing educational momentum in rural schools.

The Remote Elementary and Junior High School Teaching in Exchange for Accommodation Program has been launched since the school year of 2015, attracting various schools to participate. For example, the library volunteers recruited by the Laiji Elementary School in Chiayi County not only developed a first aid course for the school based on their expertise in medical care but also guided students to establish a correct concept of hygiene through daily interactions. The school, in return, invited the volunteers to join the Thanksgiving Festival in the

local tribe to increase opportunities for interaction among the volunteers, the community, and students. Furthermore, volunteers recruited by the Ying-Pan Primary School in Nantou County offered a practical course on bicycle repair and maintenance, allowing students to learn the skills of bicycle inspection, tire pressure examination, and tire replacement. In addition, they offered courses on 3D printing and Gigo blocks to diversify the learning resources. In return, the school invited volunteers to participate in its golf courses and sightseeing tours so that the volunteers who come to the school could feel the beauty of the local community.

The Sin-Yi Primary School in Taitung County recruited teaching volunteers for its inline skating club to design level-beating activities for children to experience inline skating, with the difficulty level gradually increases to guide the students to make progress through the challenges and to stimulate their motivation to learn spontaneously. Meanwhile, they trained the children to serve as important leaders in the club to learn team communication, cooperation, and device management. Moreover, the teaching volunteers from the information technology background recruited by the Cheng-Yi Elementary School in Kinmen County not only offered relevant club classes but also taught students how to play Go through a large touch screen in the classroom, based on their expertise in Go, during outside curriculum time to train students' active thinking. In return, the school offered free accommodations so that the volunteers could integrate into local life, maintained positive interaction with the residents in the local community, as well as recorded their own experiences in Kinmen on paper and submitted for publication in the local newspapers.

According to the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, the educational resources have been utilized flexibly through the Teaching in Exchange for Accommodation program, which can balance the educational gap between urban and rural areas and create a win-win outcome. In the future, it will continue to promote and invest resources to increase students' opportunities for diverse learning; as such, education inequality in rural areas can be addressed and alleviated.