



A Study on the Practice and Effectiveness Evaluation of Community Early Development Education Programs for Migrant Children: A Case Study on Agency F in Guangzhou

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Abstract. With the transformation and development of China's economy, the migrant population has increased dramatically, and the needs and problems of migrant children have become particularly prominent. The education of migrant workers' children in urban areas is also drawing increasing attention from various circles. China's attention to migrant children is mainly focused on school-age children, but little attention has been paid to those aged 0-3. Early childhood education for children aged 0-3 concerns the development of the country and society. It is not only the responsibility of individuals and families, but also requires participation from all sectors of society. Relevant community education service programs for migrant children have sprung up in recent years. This paper takes a community service program of Agency F in Guangzhou focusing on early childhood education for migrant children as an example, and specifically explores the practice and overall effectiveness of community service programs, shortcomings, and makes relevant suggestions.

Keywords: migrant children; early development education; social work services; effectiveness evaluation.

1 Introduction

As of 2020, according to data from the 7th National Population Census, the size of China's migrant population is 376 million. Compared with data in the past, the proportion of migrant children in 2020 was 23.9% of all children, 71.09 million, of which 1 out of every 3 children in urban areas was a migrant child. The number of migrant pre-school age (0-5 years) children nationwide has also reached 8.08 million [1]. The survey also found that the migrant population's stability of residence has increased, and their desire to integrate into the city is strong. Migrant workers in the community are most interested in the provision of parent-child education support to solve their children's difficulties in enrolling in daycare centers and having parent-child communication.

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The “Outline for the Development of Chinese Children (2021-2030)” promulgated and implemented by the government in 2021[2]sets out the goal of further consolidating and increasing the coverage rate of children's homes in urban and rural communities and continuously improving service capacity. However, in reality, discussions are more about providing adult care and safe places of activity for migrant children, especially young children. Communities can provide accompaniment for children by providing community education services, start with services, and gradually develop education programs for migrant children into one of the development paths of community services, increase the effective supply of community services for early childhood development programs for migrant children, and respond to the large-scale actual needs of migrant children in terms of community services.

2 Background and Significance of the Research

Migrant children in urban areas are a particularly vulnerable group that has emerged in the process of urbanization. Professional social work institutions have great potential in providing education services for these children. However, since community services for the education of migrant children are still in the stage of exploration, although Agency F in Guangzhou studied here has achieved certain results in the service process over the past few years, there remain many problems.

With the transformation of government functions in China, community service programs are gradually becoming a way for the government to purchase programs. In 2003, the Shanghai Anti-Drug Administration and other departments purchased social work services from three social work institutions, including the Shanghai Ziqiang Social Service Corporation, and thus began the government's experiment in purchasing social work services[3]. Since then, Guangzhou and other places have also gradually begun exploring the mode of government purchasing social work services. While government procurement of social work services is in full swing, academia is conducting research on the topic of social work services to consider how to promote and regulate the development of government procurement of social work services. All sectors of society have begun to pay attention to the necessity and effectiveness of social work services. Social workers and social work agencies mainly use governmental public resources and social resources to provide services. In this way, whether facing the government or society, social workers and social work institutions must demonstrate the effectiveness of their services. Effective service is the foundation of the legitimacy of the profession of social work. The evaluation of social work thus began to draw academic attention[4].

The evaluation of social work in China started late. There are few relevant studies, and there are some shortcomings in terms of evaluation. Although social work in Guangzhou has developed rapidly in the past few years, programs with certain local characteristics have also been explored. However, since no unified evaluation system for community service programs has been implemented in the past few years, a widely recognized evaluation system for community service programs has not yet been formed. The evaluation of community service programs lacks a clear purpose, the

system design of evaluation indicators is unscientific, the evaluation results do not promote effective application and improvement, and evaluation standards are not uniform. This paper studies the early childhood education service provided by Agency F in Guangzhou for migrant children in the community. Through an evaluation of the implementation methods of program evaluation, this study shows the current difficulties in evaluating the overall effectiveness of social work, and on this basis, this study discusses and makes suggestions.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Research on the education of migrant children

Research on the education of migrant children in China mainly focuses on the compulsory education stage, and little attention has been paid to the education of preschool children aged 0-3. Some scholars believe that at the family level, many parents are concerned about their children's early education but lack scientific knowledge and guidance[5]. From a policy perspective, some scholars believe that the education policy for children aged 0-3 has begun to follow its own path of development and has made some progress, but overall, there remain quite a few problems, such as the government's inability to consider this part of education, the government's lack of policy guidance and regulation for social forces running schools, and the lack of in-depth analysis of practice when formulating early education policies [6]. Some scholars pointed out that the government should establish education department heads in the community, with different organizations in the community participating in multi-party cooperative management, so that more migrant children can receive appropriate early education opportunities provided by the community^[7].

3.2 Research on the evaluation of social service programs

3.2.1 Related concepts.

Schalock and Thornton believed that program evaluation was a kind of “structured comparison” because few programs could be evaluated without a relatively long period of time. Program evaluation is with the purpose to help all parties discover or create a basis for evaluation to help implement the evaluation[8]. There are also scholars who believe that evaluation should be used not only as a mechanism for service evaluation, but also as a mechanism for identifying program design issues and strengthening programs based on the latest data. It is not a simple description of the effectiveness of a program, but rather a continuous improvement process of evaluation and feedback on the program, leading to a better and more effective way of delivering services [9]. Scholar Gu Donghui believed that program evaluation was a process where evaluators systematically collect, organize, analyze, and compare the basic data of a program to evaluate and determine the value of a program's existence or areas that need to be improved[10].

3.2.2. The role and practical significance of program evaluation.

Royce believed that an excellent social welfare service program had the following characteristics: a certain scale of staff to complete this activity, a definite program budget, stable program funding, high social credibility, a research foundation based on empirical materials, following scientific principles of service, definition of core concepts and theoretical support, and a scientific empirical evaluation system[11]. Chen Jintang defined the importance of evaluating social work programs. The assessment is “a systematic and independent review aimed at examining whether the relevant activities have been carried out according to the original plan, whether the relevant activities have been carried out effectively, and whether the review has achieved its purpose”[12].

3.3 Research on the evaluation of the effectiveness of social work service programs

3.3.1 Related Concepts.

Effectiveness evaluation is a comparison between the expected costs and effects of different options invested in a program. It is also a comparison of the cost effectiveness of several programs with the same conditions and the same final goal. Scholar Zhang Donghai believed that service effectiveness evaluation was a kind of judgment of service results[13]. The evaluation of the effectiveness of social work service programs is a review of the effectiveness of services. It is a comparison of expected costs.

3.3.2 The theory and application of effectiveness evaluation.

Scholar Zhu Jingjun believed that the evaluation of effectiveness in the evaluation process of social work services was a very important and difficult issue, involving service supervision, service process and service effectiveness in the evaluation of social work services [14]. Scholar Li Haiqiang believed that in addition to the satisfaction of clients and employers, the evaluation of the effectiveness of social work services included several other parts of the service effectiveness evaluation mechanism, the first part being the evaluation practice, the second part being the subject of the evaluation, and the third part being the content of the evaluation. This is a very important part of the service effectiveness evaluation mechanism, including procedural evaluation and physical evaluation. The final section is the assessment tool[15].

4 Introduction to community early development education programs for migrant children

This study takes Agency F's Community Early Development Education Program for Migrant Children as an example. “Nurturing by virtue of merit is also a merit.” The real concern for migrant children is to give them early development with science and love in the most critical golden days of 1,000 days of their development. In response

to their needs, Agency F in Guangzhou launched the “Magic Parent-Child Home” early childhood development community charity program for migrant children in March 2014. The program aims to solve the problem of early childhood education most urgently needed by the migrant population, reduce the inter-generational transmission of poverty among the lower classes, and enable every migrant child to develop sufficiently in early childhood.

5 Overall effectiveness of the community early development education program for migrant children

5.1 The program focuses on migrant children aged 0-3

After Agency F of Guangzhou entered the community, it first assessed the needs of the migrant population within the community. According to a survey by the Center for Child Behavior Development at Sun Yat-sen University, with the exception of large movements and fine motor skills, migrant children are superior to local children, and migrant children have lower language, social adaptability, and overall developmental indicators than local ones. 10.8% of migrant children had poor language development. The migrant population has strong residency stability and a strong desire to integrate into the city. Migrant workers in the community are most interested in the provision of parent-child education support to solve their children's difficulties in enrolling in daycare centers and having parent-child communication. Agency F began experimenting in 2014 to create community early development education programs for migrant children in communities with concentrated migrant populations to solve this problem.

Based on the physical and mental development characteristics of young children, the Community Early Development Education Program for Migrant Children provides parent-child classes for 4-5 days a week to promote the balanced development of the five major fields of early childhood, namely health, language, cognition, society, and art, and integrate parent-child interaction activities throughout the process to enhance parents' enthusiasm for participation and enhance parent-child relationships; regular weekly “micro” classes for parents hire senior education experts and teachers with extensive experience in the field of early childhood development to help parents enhance scientific educational concepts and parenting methods; the agency makes full use of community resources to strengthen students' sense of community belonging and expanding community residents' understanding of early childhood development to create a child-friendly community environment.

5.2 The early childhood development education program for migrant children adopts a model of multi-party cooperation

The Community Early Development Education Program for Migrant Children has also received guidance from the Early Childhood Development Science Expert Committee of the China Working Committee for the Care of the Next Generation, hired

famous early childhood education experts, professors to serve as general professional guides for early childhood development classes, and formed an authoritative team of experts. Agency F's Community Early Development Education Program for Migrant Children is rooted in the community. It brings together a number of well-known domestic scholars in South China and first-line experts of education practice to explore the most grounded scientific early education service system in the community by combining the practical experience of front-line community child development centers.

5.3 Process effectiveness control of community early development education programs for migrant children

5.3.1 Regular teacher training courses at program sites throughout the country.

Agency F focuses on teacher training and hopes to enhance the comprehensive theoretical and practical abilities of early childhood education teachers at various program sites, and better carry out parental work and effective cooperation and support for public welfare early education programs. Up to now, Agency F has held 22 early childhood development teacher training sessions, directly serving 109 people, and has served more than 1,093 people cumulatively. While continuously optimizing the teacher training system, it has provided teachers with more and better learning opportunities and platforms, nurtured 290 community mothers to enter the early childhood development industry, and built a warm, positive, professional and dedicated team of early childhood education teachers.

5.3.2 Parental micro-classrooms help parents raise children scientifically.

The program invited a number of senior experts in early childhood development, such as Sun Yat-sen University's Center for Child Development and Behavior, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Shenzhen Hospital, to conduct regular weekly online micro-classes on parents' most important concerns. By the end of 2020, the program had created a total of 65 micro-classroom groups across the country, serving more than 640,000 people.

5.3.3 Organizing experts for professional assessment of young children in the program.

In order to better help parents understand the growth of young children in the program and carry out scientific parent-child early education curriculum research and development, a team of experts from Sun Yat-sen University's Child and Adolescent Psychological and Behavioral Development Research Center was invited to conduct professional growth and development assessments for young children. The early childhood growth and development assessments include pre- and post-evaluation, and are divided into early childhood teachers' self-assessments and experts' third-party evaluations. For example, in 2021, early childhood teachers conducted a self-assessment of all children in parent-child classes. The number of people directly served in the spring and autumn classes reached 1,570, with a cumulative total of

3,140 people served. Third-party experts assessed nine communities across the country to carry out professional evaluations. A total of 181 children were assessed, and 362 people were served cumulatively.

6 Evaluation of the effectiveness of community early development education program for migrant children

6.1 Effectiveness evaluation tool

Each community charity program site will conduct demand research and program site reports for the community before entering the community. The contents of the program site report include site environment and classroom conditions considerations, safety management; the basic situation of the program site, personnel, and funding arrangements for the program. When registering at the early stage, children in the community are required to fill out a registration form for student information. Admissions seminars and opening activities, offline activities, and graduation ceremonies require planning activities and feedback forms, student attendance and event registration forms. Early childhood teachers have teachers' work management and requirements, purchase and acceptance management of program materials, etc. In early development classes, teachers need to form a written teaching journal after each class, regularly fill in monthly course review reports, and study feedback after teacher training. All of the above steps are closely linked, and a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the program is carried out. By setting program goals and investing human, material, and resources, early childhood teachers can solve problems through actions, and ultimately measure the effectiveness of their work.

6.2 Quantitative comprehensive dimensional evaluation of the program

According to the self-evaluation of various program points and third-party evaluations, it was learned that according to the pre- and post-intervention tests, the young children who participated in the training developed to varying degrees in all five major fields. For example, in the spring of 2021, more than 90% of the children at Guangzhou Sanyuanli Center received comprehensive development assessment in the five major fields of language, cognition, society, health, and art. The specific data were: health 85.6%, language 91.0%, cognition 80.0%, society 88.0%, and art 73.3%. The parents of the above students have also mastered scientific parenting knowledge and enhanced their abilities in parent-child communication and self-emotional management. At the same time, community mothers were trained and empowered to act as early childhood teachers, and 98% of the mothers in the community who participated in the training were re-employed.

All early childhood education courses have been developed uniformly, and teachers have also gone through unified training and employment. The courses mainly cover the five aspects of language, cognition, health, social networking, and art, and are taught in a combination of online and offline methods. The course is provided in

four months, consisting of 16 online micro-lessons, 64 offline basic lessons, and 16 social studies sessions. Among them, social classes are parent-child activity classes. Parents and children are regularly organized every day of the week to play games and make friends in the outdoor community to increase their understanding and integration into the local community.

Through years of exploration, the program has evolved from blind exploration to systematization, specialization and standardization, and a network of community cooperation and support has gradually been formed. As of January 2020, through cooperation with hub-type community social organizations across the country, Magic Parent-Child Home has expanded 30 amazing parent-child homes and 65 parent online micro-classes in Beijing, Hebei, Anhui, Hunan, Guangdong, Hubei, Jiangsu, Yunnan, Shandong, etc., directly serving 10,780 people, cumulatively serving 600,000 people, forming a model of community charity service program that can be replicated and promoted.

6.3 Qualitative evaluation of the program

Early childhood education teachers at each program site are also required to fill out a regular completion report. The contents of the report include: The first item is the program output, that is, the implementation status of the program. It covers the program goals for this semester, whether and why the goals have been completed, the content of the program cycle and program activities, the degree of parent participation, etc. The second item is the program results, that is, the main results achieved in this semester's program. It mainly includes feedback from clients and partners, the results achieved by program activities, and the focus on the changes and impact the program has brought to beneficiaries. Through questionnaires, interviews, and pre- and post-testing of participants, client satisfaction with the program is counted. The third item is the challenge and solution, covering the main problems encountered during program execution and solutions. The fourth item is future plans, including program goals for the next semester and future expectations, and areas for improvement. The fifth item is the budget usage report, which includes a financial overview, that is, the number of people served, the total usage amount, etc., as well as details of financial expenses.

6.4 The influence of the program

On the 2018 Tencent Double-nine Charity Day, the Agency F Community Charity Foundation joined hands with national program partners to raise a total of 37,80,324.51 yuan in donations for the "Protect Children in Distress with Love: Community Early Development Education Program for Migrant Children". 23,881 caring people participated in donations and gave their love. All of the donated money has been spent to operate program sites and parent micro-classrooms across the country, and are regularly posted on the Tencent Music Donation Center and its WeChat account in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Law. At the "China Education Festival" hosted by the Sina Education Channel, Agency F's "Classroom of the

Community Early Development Education Program for Migrant Children” won the “2018 Outstanding Public Welfare Program in Education” award at the “2018 Outstanding Public Welfare Program in Education” and entered the China Education Public Welfare Map. Furthermore, the program has also received great attention from government departments at all levels, as well as major mainstream media coverage such as China Central People's Radio and Television, Guangdong TV, and Southern Weekend, and has received high recognition from aided families and the public.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Gradual establishment of a system for evaluating the overall effectiveness of community early development education programs for migrant children

The effective operation of social service programs is inseparable from professional comprehensive evaluation. The gradual establishment of an overall effectiveness evaluation system for community service programs can not only help community service programs achieve standardized management, but also promote the development of programs in a multi-dimensional and specialized direction. Judging from the actual operation of Agency F's “Early Development of Migrant Children” community public welfare service program in this study, the evaluation process and tool contributed to the healthy development of community service programs.

7.2 Localization of the overall effectiveness evaluation of community early development education programs for migrant children

Localization is also referred to as indigenization. In the past, the evaluation of the effectiveness of social service programs was mainly based on foreign evaluation indicators and systems, but the future development direction of early childhood development education for migrant children will be a set of overall effectiveness evaluation systems and evaluation models for social service programs suited to China's national conditions. In the process of improving the overall effectiveness evaluation system, it is necessary to differentiate it from foreign evaluation systems and methods and distinguish the differences between the two.

7.3 The combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation in the effectiveness evaluation of community early development education programs for migrant children

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in social science can promote the scientific nature of evaluating the effectiveness of early development education programs in migrant children's communities. It is possible to avoid incomplete statistics due to the initial lack of preliminary testing of community service programs. Evaluating the effectiveness of social service programs is essentially a scientific re-

search process. Trying to apply social research methods to evaluating the effectiveness of community programs is also a tentative method that can be used to test the causal relationship between program goals and program service results.

7.4 Participatory evaluation of community early development education programs for migrant children

Evaluating the effectiveness of social service programs is often influenced by many parties. Participatory evaluation may be the new direction. Participatory evaluations of social service programs emphasize mutual dialogue and collaboration, improving unequal relationships between program partners and clients. Each social service program site has its own situation, the composition of service clients is different, and the diversity of needs is obvious. In this model, when evidence-based evaluation methods are insufficient to meet the effectiveness of testing programs, participatory evaluation is a new option for evaluating the overall effectiveness of social service programs. However, at present, there is obviously still a lot of room for development.

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