

The Construction Experience and Enlightenment of Taiwan Rural Reconstruction*

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Abstract—The rural revitalization strategy is a major strategy put forward on the Party's 19th National Congress and is the general focus of the work of “agriculture, rural areas and farmers” in the new era. In recent years, Taiwan region has taken the rich and beautiful rural area as the slogan, implemented the rural revitalization strategy, and achieved good results in solving the problems of rural production, living and ecology by letting rural residents participate in planning from bottom to top. This research analyzes the successful experience of Taiwan from the perspective of space theory and shared resources, to provide some experience and enlightenment for the development of the rural revitalization plan in the mainland.

Keywords—rural regeneration; Root Training Program; shared resources

I. INTRODUCTION

Taiwan has had a long-standing rural development dilemma, the main core issue of which is that the rural areas have been separated from given issues in the past, such as farming, arable land and farmers, the food self-sufficiency rate is insufficient, farmers have different occupational backgrounds, and different living needs constitute differences and diversity. Taiwan regional government is aware of the exclusion or destruction of rural industries and environment. In 2010, the rural regeneration regulations were introduced to conduct rural integration for the revitalization of rural areas. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Taiwan, the number of communities participating in rural regeneration has increased year by year: at the end of 2014, there were about 7,839 villages/neighborhoods in Taiwan, including 4,232 agricultural and fishing villages and 2,205 administrative districts implementing Root Training Program through rural regeneration, among which 493 communities put forward and handed in the regeneration plan, and 302 communities approved the annual implementation plans. As of the end of November 2017, 2,520 communities had been trained, of which 780 communities that had completed training submitted rural regeneration plans and entered the implementation phase. According to the official statistics of Taiwan Province, from 2014 to 2017, the number of people participating in the Root Training Program increased from 28,052 to 153,371, of which young people only

accounted for 23%. From 2010 to 2018, 2,584 communities were trained, and 1,131 communities completed training. [1]

The rural regeneration regulations in Taiwan adopt a combination of soft and hard operation methods. In addition to hardware construction, rural development has also implemented manpower training, and retains the “root” in the countryside through the Root Training Program, so as to implement the possibility of rural demand and overall development. So what kind of impact can rural regeneration regulations have on the development work of rural communities? Scholars in Taiwan and mainland that research the policy results over the years have also researched from different perspectives, such as: Qin Yonghui et al. (2009) [2], Zheng Shaohong et al. (2011) [3], Li Alin (2012) [4], Lan Shihui (2013) [5], Zeng Yurong (2017) [6], Zhang Zhanlu, et al. (2014) [7], Yu Kanhua, et al. (2016) [8]. This paper is the community materials accumulated by the researchers from community observation, who refine and collect experience, and analyze from the space theory and shared resources, hoping to provide reference for the implementation of rural revitalization in the mainland.

II. MAIN CONTENTS OF BEAUTIFUL RURAL CONSTRUCTION IN TAIWAN

A. Content and Analysis of Rural Regeneration Regulations

There seems to be no difference between the definitions of “rural area” and “country”, making it difficult to distinguish. There are strict definitions in the rural regeneration regulations. “Rural area” consists of residents who live on agricultural production and their agricultural activity area, in which their daily life and work areas are related to agriculture, and agricultural production and agricultural life are mutually closely combined. “Country” has a broader meaning, referring to the area of low-density living in urban areas, which not only has the characteristics of agricultural production, but also the atmosphere of leisure life.

Taiwan Rural Regeneration Program is a highly professional subsidy program. In 2017, the policy was further adjusted to “Rural Regeneration 2.0”, which shortened the original 92-hour Root Training to 68 hours. The purpose of the program is to integrate industries and introduce scientific research teams, conduct industry-academy cooperation, strengthen multi-participation, and jointly preserve and exert

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local characteristics with the spirit of innovate cooperation, allow outsiders to visually appreciate the "beauty" of the local community's landscape, taste the "authenticity" of local products, and emotionally touch the "goodness" of the people. The specific policy content and analysis are as follows:

First, the first item of the policy content indicates that the use of rural regeneration fund grants is limited to environmental maintenance, facility construction and improvement, industrial development, culture and ecology. The goal of the plan is to establish the rural community residents' awareness of independent development and increase their participation. Therefore, the policy content requires rural communities to accept and complete four stages of Root Training Program before formulating rural regeneration plans, guide the community residents to learn independently through this process, train local talents, and strengthen local organizations, assist residents to understand community resources, discover community characteristics and further formulate plans.

Second, in order to improve and preserve local characteristics, improve the living landscape and living environment, formulate construction subsidy principle and industrial activation subsidy principle for individual houses, encourage the communities to plant green forests to revitalize the space, form a green ecology in the rural areas, improve the living conditions of villagers, encourage to lend abandoned or idle public places to the villagers as activity centers, and carry out various study courses to revitalize the idle space.

Third, consider the outflow of most young people in current rural areas. Many houses are uninhabited, and lands are abandoned. The policy content considers residential safety, environmental sanitation and residents' health, and the content of regulations requires to green and beautify the messy abandoned space, unmanned land, or areas where wastes are dumped, implement recycling or regulation. At the same time, strengthen the planning and management of rural communities, actively cultivate talents, and provide training courses at different stages. Through the training process, guide the community residents to participate in planning and community vision development, and establish root training personnel for the community.

Fourth, with the change of consumption patterns, the tourism pattern of the people has changed. For rural areas with distinctive culture, inject more rural economic activities into the policy. First of all, prepare for the inheritance of rural history and culture, the preservation of cultural assets and the sightseeing of local industries, encourage the preservation of space or historical cultural assets with historical value, and actively promote and apply. Secondly, in order to facilitate the promotion of agricultural special products, encourage to use rural areas for special resources. Reuse and revitalize the idle space of industry and schools, and strengthen the promotion of leisure agriculture or education and urban-rural exchange experience activities. Finally, link the urban consumer market, conduct marketing activities from the three levels of production, consumption and education; at the same time, unite schools, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and enterprises.

From the above analysis, we can conclude that the content of rural regeneration plans that can be applied by rural areas can be more specifically classified into four types: overall environmental improvement and public facilities of rural communities, industrial activation, cultural preservation and activation, and ecological conservation. The basic subject of rural regeneration is "people". The people-centered development gives play to people in the centripetal force and sense of identity to organizations, so that residents jointly form an imagination of the community and build a dream home together. Only the regeneration of people can unite the power of people and regenerate the community.

B. The Main Practice of the Root Training Program for Rural Regeneration

The beginning of the Root Training Program derived from the "Country Construction Manpower Training" of the Water and Soil Conservation Bureau of Taiwan Executive Yuan in 2004. In the same year, the "public participation in the hillside management and rural construction manpower training program" was launched, the pilot projects of the Root Training Program was carried out in 4 rural areas including Zhenshan, Yuanshan, Yilan, and it was officially named as the "Root Training Program" in 2007. In 2008, the Soil and Water Conservation Bureau set four stages for the rural regeneration Root Training Program, namely "caring class", "advanced class", "core class", and "regeneration class", each with different learning hours and purposes, as shown in "Fig. 1", described as follows:

The training hours for the caring class is 6 hours, with main purposes to establish the villagers' understanding of policies, communicate ideas, establish the concept of farmers' initial participation in rural regeneration, and warm up for community participation. It is also known as "Shibao" class.

The training hour of the advanced class is 26 hours. The course content of 21 hours is around community resource survey, exploration of local issues, community map production, observation and learning of rural construction experience, community disaster prevention learning, community operation practice and discussion, government resource search and application. The observation and internships of the 5 hours focus on learning from the experience of other communities. It mainly aims to let farmers understand the rural environmental resources and geographical features of the rural areas they live in, and to enumerate the resource characteristics of the rural areas they live in, as well as what can be improved. It is also known as "Zhuabao" class.

The training hours of the core class is 24 hours. The class content of 18 hours is deepening the creation of local issues, centered on community vision analysis and specific action plan planning, community planning practice discussion and counseling, formulation of rural regeneration community convention, rural aesthetics, industrial activation, disaster prevention planning and low carbon community practices. The other six hours focus on the initial writing of the rural regeneration program and discussions and related courses of other rural regeneration sub-projects. The purpose of this stage is to bring together the community consensus, complete the

rural development vision for the next five to ten years, and propose plans and methods for different years. It is also known as the "Zhanbao" class.

The training hours of the regeneration class is 12 hours. The overall content is centered on the discussion and revision of the rural regeneration plan, the community meeting gives regeneration related courses such as skill and practical operations, community employee purchase or activation activities, and establishes close interaction and dialogue skills with professionals or teams. The purpose of this stage is to be able to supervise or promote the implementation of the rural regeneration plan by the community and propose amendments in a rolling manner. It is also known as "Xiangbao" class.

In the Root Training Program, the rural regeneration root training team, based on the needs of each community and the time available, arranges professionals to be lecturers and conducts local root training in various communities. The basic number of people completing the four-stage training is divided into three levels according to the local population and the number of households. Level A is more than 400 households or more than 1,600 people, and the number of people completing the basic is 40. Level B is more than 200 - 400 households or more than 800 households and less than 1,600 people, and the number of people completing the basic training is 30. Level C is less than 200 households or less than 800 people, or the number of people completing the basic training in the outlying islands (Golden Gate Mazu Lake) is 20.

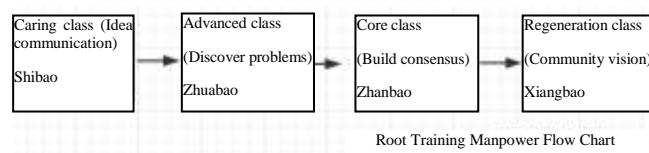


Fig. 1. Rural regeneration root training manpower flow chart.

From the advancing process of the above four classes (as shown in "Fig.1"), we can see that from the shallower to the deeper, the caring class is policy propaganda and idea communication; the advanced class is to understand the community and discover problems; the core class is to build consensus and community autonomy; the regeneration class is the community vision and sustainable development. The rural root training process is not only a class but a long-term counseling and companionship to the communities. The core of the concentric circle shown in "Fig. 2" indicates that young people inject live water into the communities, cultivate local talents, unite the consensus of the people, and customize to regeneration programs suitable for local conditions; the second circle indicates that rural regeneration commissioners accompany and assist in the formulation of the plan; the third circle strictly selects rural regeneration consultants to provide consultation at any time; the outermost circle is the overall rural regeneration root training team that cultivates root training commissioners to achieve sustainable rural development based on overall planning effect and manpower training.

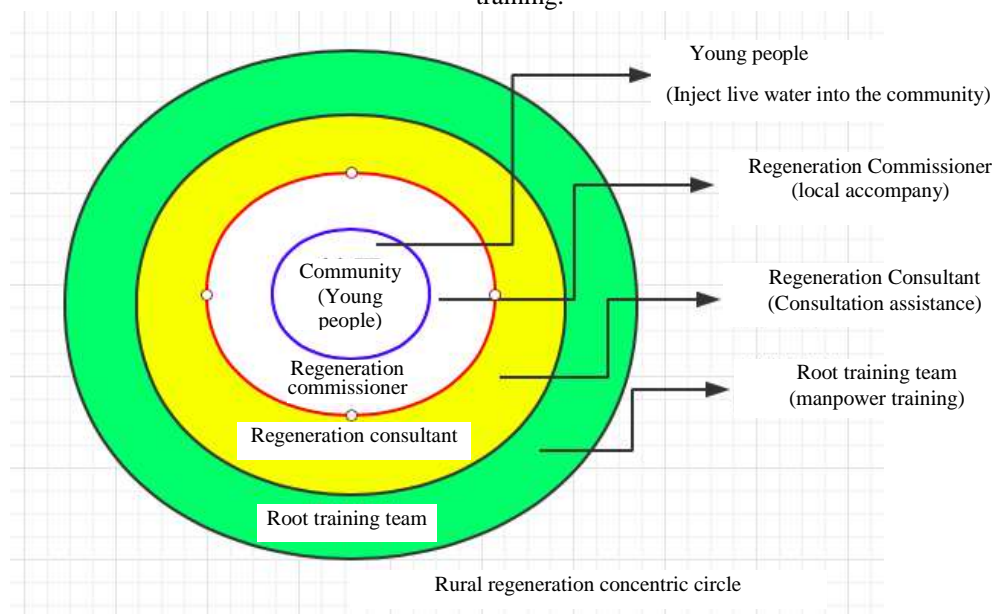


Fig. 2. Rural regeneration concentric circle.

III. SUMMARY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF BEAUTIFUL RURAL CONSTRUCTION IN TAIWAN

As far as the overall rural regeneration program is concerned, we can explain it as the possibility for creating shared resources between cities and countryside. Ostroms proves the problem of solving shared resources in his book Governing the Commons [9]. His research case involves a

population maximum of 15,000, and he finds that if there is too much population, it is impossible to negotiate directly with everyone, so a "honeycomb"-type decision-making system is required. This also means that urban issues need to be solved hierarchically. In this way, the rural regeneration Root Training Program in Taiwan Province organizes villager groups for consultation and joint planning in a staged manner

according to the number of people and households, which is in line with Ostroms's honeycomb concept.

From the observation cases of five villages in Tainan City, Taiwan Province in 2018, we use 160 questionnaires to investigate the impact of the rural regeneration root training program on community cohesion, organizational capacity and community capacity, and collect 152 valid questionnaires. Through one-way ANOVA, it is found that the Pearson correlation coefficients of community cohesion to organizational ability and community ability are 0.594 and 0.484, both of which have reached significant criteria. The Pearson correlation coefficient of organizational capacity to community capacity is 0.754, reaching the significant standard. It shows that the rural regeneration root training program has a significant impact on community cohesion, organizational capacity and community capacity, among which community cohesion has a moderate positive correlation between organizational capacity and community capacity, and the organizational capacity has a high positive correlation with community capacity. This also shows that in the rural areas, villagers have a good interaction, so they have certain cohesiveness to community affairs, but they are weaker in terms of community autonomy.

Therefore, through the empowerment of rural communities, a local organization or group is organized voluntarily to propose a concept and implementation target for rural regeneration. The government plays a role of mentor, and the residents spontaneously organize a top-down structure. From planning to execution, they are arranged locally and in a step-by-step manner. This social relationship exists in self-defining social groups, or and the groups are preparing or have actually existed, and between environments that are vital to their survival and life. Through root training, the local conditions are integrated with the need for village repair and land remediation. In fact, this is the shared resources created in the process of social practice, which establishes a social relationship of shared resources between each other. Under the development of co-prosperity community, not only the household income is increased, but also the number of young farmers joining public affairs will be increased.

In terms of collective interests, many different interest groups in the past created shared resources for different reasons, but that was a commercialization process of "commodity sales". If rural residents are also regarded as a group, when they create, organize, use and possess these resources in rural areas, they exclude environmental issues out of market transactions and initiate the enthusiasm of individuals or private groups to grasp the external effects that may arise. At this time, the local government is in a passive role, and participates in through laws or norms, and other participants include formal and informal organizations such as community development associations and resident groups. Then the group is trying to protect the shared resources of their living environment, and they are more powerful in creating and protecting this shared resource. Therefore, the key to revitalizing rural areas is to find collective labor, strive for a common interest creating method, and retain the value of produced in the hands of producers, so as to improve the

shared resources for non-commodity regeneration or shared resources for environment.

IV. ENLIGHTENMENT FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF TAIWAN'S BEAUTIFUL RURAL CONSTRUCTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL REVITALIZATION STRATEGY IN THE MAINLAND

Whether in Taiwan or mainland China, the fundamental work of the rural (country) development is to let the residents in rural areas (countryside) consciously participate in the environment, and transform the spontaneous and voluntary mobilization power of the residents into the development of society, economy and environment, creating a beautiful new rural area (countryside) full of vigor. In Taiwan, rural regeneration conducts resource redistribution by letting villagers voluntarily participate in the planning. Through the consultation and interaction between the villagers, the villagers abandon the advantages they have accumulated and produce resources with different purposes in different ways and using area. Rural resources are redistribution and shared in a democratic way such as assistance or subsidy within the group. Finally the improvement of environment can attract people from cities or other areas for leisure and travel, which activates the local economy, properly solves poverty, and attracts young people to return to their hometowns to start business due to local development.

V. CONCLUSION

In general, the implementation process of rural regeneration in Taiwan, through the course operation of the Root Training Program, allows farmers to have the "right" and "ability" to their living environment. After discrimination and reflection, the farmers build, organize and mobilize themselves, and gradually affect the rural community life, ecology, production and culture. The introduction of the root training courses also creates different community development styles due to differences in humanities quality in different communities, shortens the gap between urban and rural areas, solves the problem of left-behind elderly and children in rural areas, and at the same time, it also effectively solves the difficulties of government land acquisition and rectification, and further achieves the goal of sustainable development in rural areas. Therefore, Taiwan's rural revitalization and construction process can be used as a reference for rural revitalization in the mainland.

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