

## Remediation classes fell short of expectation: An investigation into the right to education<sup>1</sup>

*Education is the cornerstone of prosperity. Multiple attempts have been made to maximize learning effect for all. Remediation class is one of such attempts. Unfortunately, these government funded classes have not been very effective. In 2010, 980,582 out of the 2,439,258 students enrolled in the nine-year compulsory education (elementary through junior high school) were in need of remediation classes for three important skills, namely reading (40%), mathematics (28%), and science (32%). Control Yuan Members initiated an own-motion investigation to identify the factors behind the laggard performance.*

Despite efforts in launching educational priority areas and special afterschool classes to assist disadvantaged children and reduce the gap between high and low achievers, problems remain with assessment mechanism, resource allocation, remedial courses, faculty shortage and qualification and dysfunctional families.

**Assessment mechanism** - The nine-year compulsory education system in Taiwan aims to provide students with Ten Core Competences, including the ability to realize one's potential and the ability to respect others, etc. However, no assessment is in place to ensure effective learning and identify students in need of remedial classes. Without a threshold or remedial measures, students often graduate without the prerequisite skills in reading, writing and arithmetic, making the nine-year compulsory education a waste of time and resources.

**Resource allocation** –Fails to benefit all students in need of remedial classes

**Remedial courses** – Run on a project-by-project basis or as mere extension programs. In this way the classes are unable to address student's individual needs or provide a long-term plan for assisting the disadvantaged and low-achieving students.

**Faculty shortage and qualification** – For now, there is not enough qualified teachers to teach remedial courses. Training programs should place greater focus on individualized teaching in order to address different needs.

**Dysfunctional families** – More than 60% of poor academic performance can be attributed to inadequate family support or lack of financial resources.

Problems aside, the Control Yuan has identified Miao Li and Lianjiang County Government as role models with their effective remedial programs for local elementary and secondary schools.

---

<sup>1</sup> Case no. 0990800261

Students in these schools have seen significant improvements in their test scores. The Control Yuan has also proposed corrective measures to the Ministry of Education and requested the Ministry of the Interior to make the necessary improvements.

In response to Control Yuan's redress, the Ministry of Education has proceeded with reviewing and modifying assessment mechanism for primary and secondary schools with a particular focus on establishing a nationwide graduation standard. The Ministry has also defined the requisite skills for Mandarin, English and Math to be covered by remedial classes, along with corresponding assessment methods. Schools are mandated to provide remedial courses to students enrolled in 2011 and who have been categorized as low achievers. Going forward, the Ministry of Education will broaden the scope of the remedial program to ensure that no child is left behind.