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A Service Package Model of Social Work Intervention in Early Childhood Education for Relocation Communities: Practice Evidence from S Organization in T County, Guangxi

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ABSTRACT
Conducting early childhood education in poverty alleviation relocation communities is a crucial measure to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty and to promote children's social integration and cognitive development. Although the current landscape of early childhood education in relocation communities has evolved into a collaborative supply system involving the market, community, and social organizations, practical challenges persist, including inadequate coverage of vulnerable groups, insufficient service professionalism, and weak long-term mechanisms. In view of this, this article takes S Social Work Organization in T County, Baise City, Guangxi as a case study to summarize its "Early Childhood Education Service Package" model for intervening in relocation communities. This model integrates a professional curriculum system, localized talent development, safety-net services for vulnerable groups, and government–social organization collaboration, thereby supporting the sustainable implementation of the model and offering a replicable template for the field.

KEYWORDS
Service package; Poverty alleviation relocation communities; Early childhood education; Social work

1 Introduction

In 2023, the National Development and Reform Commission, together with 18 departments including the Ministry of Finance and the People's Bank of China, issued the Guidance on Promoting the Integration of Large Poverty Alleviation Relocation Resettlement Areas into New Urbanization for High-Quality Development, which outlines the overall direction and basic requirements for further integrating large relocation resettlement areas into new urbanization and achieving high-quality development. Education serves as a crucial means to facilitate the integration of residents in relocation resettlement areas into new urbanization, and it even plays a significant role in breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Currently, early childhood education services in the market generally follow three models: the market-supply model, the community-direct-service model, and the social-organization-direct-service model—each of which exhibits notable drawbacks. The market-supply model suffers from insufficient coverage of vulnerable groups. Scholar Liao Sisi points out that the service marketing of the early education training industry is excessively commercialized, with most early education centers still operating primarily for commercial profit, resulting in exclusivity [1]. Deng Jinhong and Tang Guangquan argue that early education training centers should focus their funds and attention on teaching quality, striving to minimize compromises in educational standards due to profit motives [2]. Early education services delivered directly by communities face issues of inadequate professionalism. Scholar Li Wenjing notes that the early childhood education services provided by communities across China lack a hierarchical structure. Moreover, the mechanisms for community-based early childhood education services are imperfect, and collaborative relationships between communities and various social actors have not yet been formed, leading to fragmented efforts [3]. Scholar Yang Xiaoling observes that the development of early childhood education services in China varies considerably between urban and rural areas, with rural regions facing a shortage of qualified early education teachers, scarce resources, and serious delays in implementing early childhood education [4]. In light of this, this article takes S Organization in T County, Baise City, Guangxi as a case study to explore its innovative pathway and emerging model for intervening in community-based early childhood education, thereby providing a referential basis for the development of early childhood education in relocation communities.

2 Analytical Framework and Case Selection

2.1 Analytical Framework

A service package is defined as a bundled offering of products and services delivered within a specific context, comprising supporting facilities, auxiliary goods, information, explicit services, and implicit services. Currently, the application and scholarly investigation of the service package model remain limited both in China and internationally, with its utilization predominantly confined to a narrow scope. The model is most commonly applied within the commercial sector. A notable case is Beijing, where it has been formalized as an institutional tool for optimizing the local business environment and assisting enterprise development. Applications in the healthcare sector also exist. For instance,

scholars constructed a foundational care service package for seniors with dementia as early as 2019, structured across five dimensions: rehabilitation, daily living, psychological support, functional care, and behavior management [5]. More recently, the model has been adapted for hospice care, with researchers Gong Xiuquan and Wang Zhongling developing a basic hospice care service package suited to local conditions [6]. Regarding pricing, significant regional disparities persist in China concerning the methods and rationales for pricing service packages, hindering the formation of a unified framework. Scholars such as Ren Yiyang, Yin Yue, and Tang Wenxi have consequently advocated for a dual-structure model consisting of a "basic package + customized package," effectively categorizing services into free and fee-based tiers according to the nature of payment [7].

This study adopts the "service package model" framework to synthesize the practical experience of Organization S in T County, Guangxi, regarding its early childhood education intervention within relocation communities. The primary implementing agents of this model are the social work organization and the community itself. The structure encompasses a Basic Service Package—comprising resource, content, operational, and guarantee layers—and an Adaptive Service Package, which includes strategies for precise human-resource matching, localized curriculum integration, and differentiated communication and incentives. By integrating professional and localized resources, this model ensures both the foundational quality of professional early childhood education and responsiveness to the specific contextual needs of the community.

2.2 Case Selection

2.2.1 Profile of S Organization in T County, Guangxi

The predecessor of S Organization was a volunteer team that, prior to its official registration, focused on improving the quality of preschool education and safeguarding the development of left-behind children across the county. Guided by the Civil Affairs Bureau of T County, it registered as a private non-enterprise unit in 2017. In terms of long-term staffing, the organization employs six full-time social workers, all of whom are female, with a 100% certification rate. The team includes two Intermediate Social Workers and four Junior Social Workers. Its primary service area is T County. To date, S Organization has accumulated over a decade of experience in the field of early childhood education.

2.2.2 Profiles of the Three Communities

Communities A, B, and C have all engaged in public-interest early childhood education initiatives through collaboration with Organization S, either in the past or currently. Their basic profiles are outlined below.

Community A is situated east of the county seat. Operational since November 2018, it was developed as a centralized urban resettlement project, integrating registered poverty-alleviation households relocated from ten townships across the county. The community comprises 685 such households, with a total population of 2,748. It is characterized by a high proportion of single-person households, a low birth rate, and a prevalence of intergenerational care where children are primarily raised by grandparents. Prior to the introduction of early education services, residents' awareness and understanding of early childhood education were very limited.

Community B is located approximately two kilometers from the county town. It houses 1,547 relocated households (5, 352 individuals) from ten townships across the county, distributed across 20 residential buildings organized into 35 resident groups. Basic public service facilities are well-established, including a Party-mass service center, a casual labor market service center, and a cultural stage, meeting various needs of the residents. Several schools are located near the community, most children are cared for by their parents, and Mandarin Chinese is widely spoken. Before the launch of early education services, residents possessed some preliminary knowledge of early childhood education, primarily acquired through short-form video platforms.

Community C represents Guangxi's only entire-village relocation project for poverty alleviation, with its first phase completed in late 2017. The neighborhood is equipped with comprehensive public facilities, including a primary school, kindergarten, property management center, charity supermarket, and clinic, meeting residents' essential daily needs. It has a substantial child population. The overall educational attainment of residents is relatively low, proficiency in Mandarin is not widespread, and the community's remote location results in limited transportation access. Awareness of early childhood education among residents was low before services were initiated.

3 Service Package Design

Moving beyond the conventional approach of providing standardized services, Organization S has developed a structured and comprehensive service system based on its practical experience in highly heterogeneous relocation communities. The core of this system lies in deconstructing the "early childhood education service package" into two components: a basic service package and an adaptive service package. This design ensures professionalism and replicability while also endowing the service with strong contextual adaptability, thereby enhancing its sustainability. Together, these components form an integrated solution for delivering early childhood education services in complex community settings.

3.1 Basic Service Package

3.1.1 Resource Layer

The resource layer1 forms the foundational component of the basic service package, encompassing two core elements: material resources and human resources. Sustained project operations depend on stable financial backing, primarily secured through foundation projects awarded to Organization S via competitive bidding. Under rigorous budget management, the funds are directed toward three key areas. First, they are used for the centralized procurement of teaching materials—such as picture books, building blocks, and sensory integration equipment—based on the number of participating communities and their actual engagement levels, ensuring standardized teaching hardware. Second, a portion of the funds is allocated to provide stipends for community-based early childhood education instructors, effectively incentivizing service delivery. Third, resources are also designated for purchasing participation incentives—such as daily necessities and eggs—to encourage consistent family involvement in early education programs.

3.1.2 Content Layer

The content layer forms the professional core of the basic service package and is central to maintaining the intervention's scientific rigor and developmental appropriateness. Its construction rests on two pillars: a standardized, age-stratified curriculum system organized by month-specific developmental stages, with clearly defined behavioral objectives for each session across cognitive, linguistic, motor, and social-emotional domains; and a parental education knowledge base covering child nutrition, common illness prevention, and positive discipline principles. This integrated, systematic design ensures the inherent professionalism of the service and, at the structural level, minimizes potential quality variations that could arise from differences in individual implementers.

3.1.3 Operational Layer

The operational layer functions as the critical execution framework that transforms static program designs into high-quality, replicable practices, serving as the actionable blueprint for standardized service delivery. To this end, Organization S has instituted a clear, standardized operational procedure that defines key parameters, including service frequency and session duration. Service implementation is further delineated into a trackable sequence of phases: pre-class environment preparation and setup, in-session coordinated instruction by lead and assistant teachers, and post-class caregiver communication and outcome feedback. This structured approach enables precise management of the service process. Furthermore, Organization S has established a systematic pre-service training protocol. All newly recruited community instructors are required to complete training encompassing the entire core curriculum of the basic service package, thereby consolidating a professional foundation and ensuring operational consistency at the personnel level.

"I used to think playing with children was simple; now I understand that behind every simple game lies a profound knowledge of child development." (Early Childhood Teacher, Community C)

3.1.4 Guarantee Layer

The guarantee layer serves as the core support system for sustaining the long-term efficacy of services and enabling continuous quality improvement. Its primary function is to institutionalize monitoring and feedback mechanisms, thereby preventing service delivery from becoming short-term or fragmented. This layer is built upon two key mechanisms. First, a structured quality assessment cycle requires each community service site to periodically submit comprehensive evaluation reports. These reports systematically cover multiple dimensions, such as attendance analysis, parent satisfaction surveys, records of observed child development, and teacher reflections on instruction. Organization S utilizes these reports to conduct quality monitoring through a combination of document review and on-site supervision. Second, a foundational incentive framework establishes universal principles, such as awards for full attendance, while allowing individual communities the autonomy to determine specific reward forms, levels.

The integrated four-layer structure—resource, content, operation, and guarantee—forms a logically coherent and operationally stable professional service cycle. This structure provides a solid systemic foundation for the standardized rollout and scalable replication of the service model.

3.2 Adaptive Service Package

3.2.1 Precise Matching of Human Resources

Organization S does not directly deliver early childhood education services in communities but rather cultivates localized early education personnel, selecting the most suitable candidates for teaching roles.

"We are both employment assistants and the chairperson of the community's Women's Federation. We have a lot of contact with children and are familiar with community practices "(Early education teacher from Community A).

"The secretary of the Youth League Committee and the chairperson of the Women's Federation in our community are young and have ideas. Let them do it "(Community B's secretary).

"At that time, the secretary asked me if I wanted to do it. I am the family planning commissioner. I have a lot of contact with the people. I am also a local person. Everyone here speaks the dialect, and I can understand it "(Early education

teacher from Community C).

3.2.2 Deep Localized Integration and Adaptation of the Curriculum

Early childhood educators in the communities adapt and refine standardized lesson plans based on local contexts rather than implementing them rigidly. In Community A, where participating children span a wide age range, teachers proactively learned and applied tiered instructional methods to redesign classroom activities accordingly. In Community B, which possesses rich ethnic cultural resources, teachers integrated ethnic cultural elements into the curriculum, serving both to preserve cultural heritage and increase student engagement. For outreach and participation mobilization, teachers and community staff in Community A conducted door-to-door visits due to initially low resident interest, while Communities B and C, with higher baseline participation, primarily utilized WeChat group announcements and event-based promotion. Regarding instructional language, early education classes in Community C employed a bilingual approach, combining the local dialect with Mandarin, in response to the community's lower prevalence of Mandarin usage.

3.2.3 Differentiated Communication and Incentive Operations

When delivering early childhood education services, communities employ tailored and differentiated communication strategies aligned with their specific characteristics. In Community A, where grandparents are the primary caregivers, teachers have created dedicated online communication groups for parents. This strategy aims to facilitate parent-child interaction and gradually shift caregiving perceptions through intergenerational guidance. In Communities B and C, where parents are the main caregivers, teachers prefer direct, face-to-face communication with parents after class or during pick-up and drop-off times. Incentive strategies are similarly differentiated. In Communities B and C, where resident participation is relatively high, motivation is fostered primarily through non-material incentives such as public recognition and perfect attendance certificates. In contrast, Community A, which experiences lower participation engagement, utilizes material incentives like eggs and daily necessities to encourage involvement.

4 Conclusion

In contrast to typical communities, relocated communities face dual challenges in early childhood education: inadequate resources and low parental awareness. Existing approaches—including market-driven provision, community-led operation, and direct service delivery by social organizations—often struggle to simultaneously ensure professionalism, sustainability, and contextual relevance. Drawing on a practice-based investigation of Organization S in T County, Guangxi, this study introduces and validates a two-tiered intervention model. This framework combines a "basic service package" to uphold professional standards with an "adaptive service package" designed to activate community-based initiative. The model not only offers a replicable strategy for addressing early education service gaps in relocated communities but also provides a practical template for leveraging community empowerment to disrupt the intergenerational cycle of poverty and foster children's social integration.

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