

**Report on  
Participatory Urban Poverty Analysis  
in Beijing**

**Voice of the Urban Poor**

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**December 2000**

*The view points and findings expressed in this report only represent the author's opinion and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Chinese Government or the Asian Development Bank.*

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## Summary

The urban poverty has been a serious problem since the middle of 1990's in China. The main cause is that there have been many state-owned enterprises being closed, in recession, or being reformed in meeting the challenges of market-oriented economy, which further result in a lot of laid-off or/and unemployment of old and traditional state-owned enterprises' employees. However, there has not been any comprehensive study on urban poverty by using participatory approach in China. It is vital for both policy makers and field workers of urban poverty alleviation to understand the actual situation of the urban poverty. The voice of the urban poor has also to be concerned and integrated into the process of policy making and in practice.

The study was conducted in Beijing by interviewing the identified specific urban poor, namely including the groups of laid-off (*Xiagang*), unemployment (*Shiye*) and jobless (*Wuye*), the group of disabled, the group of released criminals, and the group of women in selected urban communities. By applying the participatory approach with gender sensitization, the study has tried to hear the voice of the urban poor on their life in terms of the perception and causes of the urban poverty, problems/difficulties faced by urban poor, evaluation on the government urban poverty alleviation efforts, and recommendations on the improvement of government poverty alleviation work..

In addition, the group of poor migrants was specifically interviewed. In the official definition, they are not "urban" poor, but rural migrants living in the urban areas only. The core problem for them in living and employment in Beijing is the political discrimination from urban authorities and social discrimination from urban residents. Although they face much more serious problems and difficulties in education, housing, health-care, and employment, most of them would not go back to their rural hometowns where their rural life could even be much more tough and hopeless. The equity in living and employment in Beijing between local residents and them is a dream of the poor migrants. If the urbanization is one strategic policy for China, migrant issue has to be addressed in policy making for urban sustainable development.

The recommendations have been also made by the study, with focus on the improvement of the government urban poverty alleviation work both in policy making and in practice. Specifically, the improvement of the definition of urban poor, the government employment service, the coordination between different government agencies involving in urban poverty alleviation, the institutional set up for achieving better effectiveness and efficiency, and the social insurance system are the main areas of the recommendations. The policy and political options to deal with migrants' affairs are elaborated as well. In principle, all the recommendations are important and form an integrated package. They are prioritized based mostly on the logic time arrangement.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 background

The rural poverty has been much more serious than the urban poverty in PRC since its foundation in 1949. Chinese government has initiated several national poverty alleviation programs since 1986, with focus on rural poverty reduction only. However, since the middle of 1990's, influenced by the Financial Crisis and the implementation of reform policy aiming at a market-oriented economy in cities, more and more urban enterprises, mainly those state-owned enterprises, are bankrupted and closed. Millions of workers in state-owned enterprises have been "laid-off" or jobless, this results in more and more urban poor. The growing disparity of social and economical development between different regions has also contributed to the causes of urban poverty. On the other hand, the social insurance system has also been being reformed and improved in order to meet these new challenges. To have the voice of the poor, to understand their needs, the problem and difficulties they face, and their ideas on urban poverty alleviation, and further incorporate these into the process of policy making is currently significant.

Participatory approach has been widely used in rural development intervention in PRC, especially in poverty alleviation interventions, but limited used in urban development intervention and urban poverty alleviation intervention.

According to the agreement reached between the Foreign Capital Project Management Center (FCPMC) of the Poverty Alleviation Office of the State Council and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD) of PRC Agricultural University (CAU), Mr. ZHOU Xuejun from CIAD was invited to conduct this field study from middle of November to middle of December 2000 in Beijing. During the study, about 20 government officials, 100 urban poor and 20 migrants have been interviewed. The purpose and requirements of the study are in the attached Terms of Reference.

## 1.2 Comments on TOR

Although the TOR was accepted by the CIAD and the field work plan was worked out through several discussions with FCPMC officials, some comments on TOR from the consultant have to be made here in helping the readers of the report to better understand some background of the study.

- Although the urban poverty, mostly caused by the increasing of laid-off and unemployment in recent years, has increasingly drawn attention of both central and local government for reasons of mostly political and social stability, the rural poverty is still much more serious than urban poverty.
- Compared with relatively underdeveloped provinces (for example Inner Mongolia and Sichuan) and old heavy industry centers (such as Shengyang and Benxi), the problem of urban poverty in Beijing and Shanghai is much less serious. As Capital of the country, Beijing is on the way to bid for 2008 Olympic Games, the social and political stability is highly prioritized in government policy tasks. Beijing has much better social insurance for the urban poor than other cities. (For example, the CMLSS in Beijing is 280 RMB in cash +

40 RMB in food and oil per month per capita while it is only 94 RMB/month/capita in Ulanhot in Inner Mongolia.)

- According to the national law on “social survey and statistic”, any such kind of survey must be registered and reported to local authority (the departments of state statistic or/and civil affair). The survey could be too sensitive politically in Beijing—the Capital of the country. Considering this point and the mentioned above, it is hard to say the situation of urban poverty in Beijing can represent the general situation in PRC. Beijing could not be the best place to conduct urban poverty study in terms of access to interviewees and its representation.
- Gender issue is not taken into account in TOR. During the field survey, both FCPMC official and the consultant think the consultant team must have a female consultant for female group interview. However, FCPMC would not make any new contract with the female consultant.
- Based on the signed agreement, time is too limited to allow the consultant to do a comprehensive and systematic data analysis. Much collected data remains to be analyzed.

## 2. Study Strategy and Methodology

The use of participatory approach for selecting interviewees and conducting the field study and the cooperation with local government line agencies that involve in urban poverty alleviation form the basis of the study strategy and methodology. Caused by the limited human resource and time, the study was focused on the selected sample urban communities. It is perceived by the consultant that interviewees from a carefully selected community could represent different situation of urban poor better than any other way (for example interviewees from one enterprise). This is also coming out from the discussion with FCPMC officials.

### 2.1 Selection of to-be-surveyed communities

Overall situation of urban poverty in Beijing in terms of distribution and characteristics of the poor and causes of poverty was introduced through interviewing the officials of the Civil Affair Department and the Labor and Social Security Department of Beijing Municipality. Some data provided by the Departments is confidential for any other document. But it was shown to the study team for selecting to-be-surveyed communities. Through discussion with government officials and ordinary Beijing citizens (such as taxi drivers, small shop holders, and university teachers), Xuanwu District was selected as the to-be-surveyed one representing four inner urban districts (Xuanwu, Chongwen, Dongcheng, and Xicheng), and Mentougou District representing the 4 outer urban districts. Again, 3 streets in Mentougou and 4 streets in Xuanwu were selected for in-depth study through the same procedure.

### 2.2 Selection of interviewees

The interviewees of the study can be clustered into 3 groups. The first is the group of government employees that include **government officials and employees** involving in urban poverty alleviation activities from Beijing Municipality level to District level, Residents' Committee level and Street Office level. Many group interviews with them were undertaken in order to select the interviewees of urban poor excluding the migrants group. This group is not target group (see annex 1).

The second group is the selected interviewees of **government defined urban poor**. Both group interviews (including specific group interviews) and individual interviews were undertaken. This is target group and key group for the study. The interviewees that represent all kinds of urban poor including laid-off(*xiagang*), unemployment(*shiye*), jobless(*wuye*), aged and lonely people, disabled and released prisoners both of men and women. The selection of these interviewees was conducted by the consultants (including one male and one female) through discussion with grassroot cadres. By this way, the presence of all kinds of urban poor was guaranteed.

The third group is the interviewees of **migrants**. These interviewees were selected by random sampling of migrants through the visits of consultants to a typical Beijing migrants' slum privately.

**Table 1 Categories of interviewees**

Group	Sex		Number		Note	
Government defined “urban” poor			<b>81</b>			
	Of which	Male	49			
			Of which	Laid-off ( <i>xiagang</i> )	18	
				Unemployment ( <i>shiye</i> )	21	
				Jobless ( <i>wuye</i> )	10	
				Disabled	7	Included in unemployment or/and jobless groups
				Released prisoners	7	Included in jobless group
				Single parent family	5	Included in laid-off, unemployment and jobless groups.
				Wife is not Beijing Permanent Resident	8	Included in laid-off, unemployment , and jobless group.
				Female	32	
Migrant poor			<b>17</b>			
Of which	Male	9				
	Female	8				

## 2.3 Techniques/tools used for field survey

### 2.3.1 Participatory techniques/tools

Generally the participatory approaches, especially many PRA tools, were basically applied for the field survey.

**Semi-structured interviews** for both group and individual ones with target groups and government employees were used through using prepared checklists and creating an informal atmosphere. **Ranking** was widely used for wealth ranking, problems/difficulties ranking, effectiveness of government supports ranking, and some others. **Pin board and cards** were used for group interviews and brainstorming in order to collect ideas and comments on specific topics. **Scoring, mapping and drawing** were also used for target group interviews such as for core problem analysis and cause-effect analysis. Normally several tools were used jointly for one group or individual interview based on the actual situation.

### 2.3.2 Questionnaires and checklists

Questionnaires and checklists for target group and individual interviews, including government

department interviews, group of women and urban poor interview, migrants' group interviews, and individual household interviews, were designed and used.

### **2.3.3 Gender sensitization**

To achieve a gender sensitive study, the interviewees from the target groups were divided into men's group and women's group. A female gender expert was asked to moderate the women's group discussion. Gender disaggregated data was collected and analyzed.

### **2.3.4 Specific group and individual interviews**

Different groups of urban poor were identified during the field survey. To draw out the specific situation of different groups of urban poor, some specific group and individual interviews were undertaken. The specific group and individual interviews include laid-off group, disabled group, released prisoner group, and migrant group.

### 3. Findings of the study

Since the interviewees include government officials and employees, government perceived “urban” poor, and migrant poor, the ideas and other findings of these different interviewees are integrated into this section with emphasis on different issues. Specifically, the parts of 3.1 and 3.2 in this section takes into account both the results of interview with government departments and “urban” poor. The parts of 3.3 to 3.6 reflect “voice of the urban poor” only. The part of 3.7 reflects the “voice of poor migrants”.

#### 3.1 Definitions of urban poverty

##### 3.1.1 Income poverty—government’s criteria to select the CMLSSU beneficiaries

There is no official urban poverty line in Beijing, as well as in PRC. However, there is a “Citizen Minimum Living Security Standard (CMLSS)”. It varies from province to province, from city to city. This CMLSS could be seen as “urban poverty line”. In Beijing, the Government enacted and implemented the first Beijing CMLSS on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1996. It was 170 RMB/person/month. Due to the economic growth and inflation, the CMLSS has been changed accordingly and annually. Since the July 1<sup>st</sup> 2000, the Beijing CMLSS is 280 RMB/person/month in cash and a food and oil card which equals to 40 RMB/person/month. Only the official permanent Beijing citizens, whose net income per capita per month is less than 280 RMB, are qualified to apply for and get the “Citizen Minimum Living Security Subsidy” (CMLSSU), which is up to 280 RMB in cash and 40 RMB in food and oil (which is called “Food and Oil Card”).

The basic criteria to select CMLSSU beneficiaries are:

- a) official Beijing permanent citizenship (BPC) (*Beijing Changzhu Chengshi Hukou*) or spouse and children of official Beijing permanent citizen; and
- b) Per capita net income per month of a household perceived by local government is less than 280 RMB.

According to the policy of Beijing Municipality, the CMLSSU doesn’t cover migrants, university students and Beijing farmers (*Nongye Huhou*). Those who are in the working age (16-54 for women and 16-59 for men) are perceived as having 296 RMB minimum net income per month, no matter whether they have income or not.

It is reasonable to assume the CMLSS as the urban poverty line, since there is no official urban poverty line in Beijing as well as in PRC on one hand, the CMLSS, as it is called, is the “Minimum Living Standard” and the CMLSSU is “the last mean” to support the urban poor on the other. Obviously, the CMLSSU only takes into account the **household income** to define its beneficiaries. We may presume that the definition of urban poverty by government is actually a kind of income poverty.

**Box 1 About Citizen Minimum Living Security Standard (CMLSS)**

1. The CMLSS is defined on the basis of the essential needs, basically including clothing, food security, and housing, of Beijing citizens. The basic expense for water, electricity, coal or/and gas, and compulsory education for nonage, is taken into account.
2. The CMLSS is adjusted on the basis of local economical development, financial capacity, the fluctuation of market price, and improvement of average living standard timely.
3. The CMLSS is prepared by the Department of Civil Affairs in cooperation with the Departments of Finance, Statistic, Pricing, Labor and Social Security, Human Resource Administration, and the Workers' Association of Beijing Municipality, on the basis of investigation and comprehensive study. It has to get approval of Beijing Municipality. The Department of Civil Affairs is responsible for publishing the CMLSS and announcing in public.

--Excerpt from <Guideline for Implementation of CMLSS system>, which is delivered by the Departments of Civil Affairs, Finance, Human Resource Administration, Labor and Social Security, and General Workers' Association of Beijing Municipality.

**Box 2 Definition of laid-off (Xiagang), unemployment (Shiye) and jobless (Wuye)**

**Laid-off (Xiagang):** The term occurred in recent years. Which describes the people who were employees in state-owned enterprises in last years (mostly since 1997) and lost their jobs now. They can normally get some special supports from local governments or original enterprises.

According to the Division of Shiye (Unemployment) under the Department of Labor and Social Security in Beijing Municipality, there is no difference between Shiye and Wuye. Both of them are called Shiye. But in the Department of Civil Affairs, they are different. The difference could be described as:

**Shiye (unemployment):** the people who had employment contracts with employers and bought unemployment insurance. Now they lost jobs and now new jobs. They are qualified to have Shiye (unemployment) insurance for maximum of two years. They are called Shiye (unemployment).

**Wuye (jobless):** people who never have employment contracts and never bought unemployment insurance. They are just jobless. They are not qualified to have unemployment insurance.

**3.1.2 Definition of urban poverty by poor interviewees (see “rank 4” of table 2)**

The column of Rank 4 in table 2 shows that in view of target interviewees, some other criteria, mainly housing, health and health care, education and qualification, and very

### **Box 3 The procedure of application and approval of CMLSSU in Beijing**

The following steps have to be followed by applicants and management of CMLSSU to apply for and get approval of CMLSSU.

1. A household submits application to the Residents' Committee or Villagers' Committee where the household is registered as permanent residents, with the following documents attached:
  - Filled application form;
  - Registration book and ID card (or its copies);
  - Attestations of household income; and
  - Relevant others.
2. The Residents' Committee or Villagers' Committee is authorized by the District or County Government to be responsible for acceptance of applications, daily administration and services. Specifically,
  - Registration of applications and put the name list of applicants in public for supervision;
  - Checking the household's economical situation of applicants and filling out the <Approval form of CMLSSU>. After making clear comments on the applications, submitting them to the relevant Street Administration Office or Township Government.
  - Preparing documents for extraordinary cases.
3. The Street Administration Office or Township Government checks the submitted documents. The civil affair officials assess the economical situation and living level of the applicants' households through visiting the applicants' houses, interviewing the neighbors of the applicants, and asking for more attestations by letters. After this, they fill the <Assessment Form of field investigation on the applicants' households of the CMLSSU>. Then, the main responsible leaders writes his/her comments on it. All documents are forwarded to the District or County Civil Affairs Bureau.
4. The final decision is made by County or District Civil Affairs Bureau. If a household is qualified, the County or District Civil Affairs Bureau will approve it officially. The approved CMLSSU beneficiaries will register in the beneficiaries name list and get a special certificate for CMLSSU.
5. The specific cases for aged, mental disabled, retired and disabled former soldiery and others living in public welfare houses, should be managed by the Civil Affairs Departments directly and collectively.
6. If a household is qualified to get CMLSSU, the Civil Affairs Departments should pass all procedure and formalities in 30 days since the official application and all required documents are submitted to the Civil Affairs Departments. If an applicant is not qualified, the official announcement, in which the reasons of rejection should be given clearly, should be sent to the applicant also in 30 days.

--Excerpt from <Guideline for Implementation of CMLSS system, 2000>,  
which is delivered by the Departments of Civil Affairs, Finance, Human Resource  
Administration, Labor and Social Security, and General Workers' Association of  
Beijing Municipality.

important the situation of employment, have to be taken into account to define the urban poor. The poor are those who are laid-off (*xiagang*), unemployed (*shiye*), jobless (*wuye*), released prisoners, unhealthy, aged, disabled, and wives are still non Beijing official residents.

### 3.2 Who are the urban poor?

The result of participatory wealth ranking by poor shows that the urban poor mostly are those who are laid-off (*xiagang*), unemployed (*shiye*), jobless (*wuye*), released prisoners, unhealthy, aged, and disabled. (see table 2)

**Table 2 Participatory wealth ranking of Beijing residents in Taoyuanting Street, Xuanwu District.**

Categories	Characteristics	Who are they	Life condition
Rank 1 (rich)	Powerful and well-educated.	Lawyers, officials, managers, employees in financial and banking sectors, pioneer private economy businessmen, and illegal economy businessmen.	good house and car, good food, drink, entertainment and leisure.
Rank 2 (middle)	Well-educated.	Government employees, employees in telecommunication and banking, lawyers, doctors, and teachers.	No problem for food and house.
Rank 3 (middle)	Healthy.	Employees, no jobless and no laid-off, taxi drivers.	Have sense of insecurity, have house, but not rich and instability.
<b>Rank 4 (Poor)</b>	<b>Low-education, unhealthy, aged, no relationship with “someone”, and dedicated most of their lives to country’s development already.</b>	<b>Laid-off, unemployment, joblessness, released prisoners, unhealthy and aged, disabled, and wives are non Beijing official residents.</b>	<b>Poor and have nothing (<i>yiqiongerbai</i>). Live on government relief.</b>

The makeup of CMLSSU beneficiaries also reflects roughly who the urban poor are nowadays in Beijing in the point of view of government. The CMLSSU beneficiaries consist of three main types of poor as be showed in table 3

**Table 3 structure of CMLSSU beneficiaries in October 2000 in Beijing**

Type	Main characteristics	No. of beneficiaries	% of total	No. of beneficiary households	% of total
<b>I</b>	Special type. No. is reducing.	2929	4.5	2869	9.0
<b>II</b>	Laid-off. No. is growing.	32020	49.2	12140	38.3
<b>III</b>	Unemployed and jobless. No. is growing.	30075	46.3	16706	52.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>65024</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>31715</b>	<b>100</b>

*Data source: the Department of Civil Affair of Beijing Municipality.*

Note: Specifically, the CMLSSU beneficiaries are:

Type I. including the following individuals:

- a) “three no” people: no income source, no labor and old men without children;
- b) city poor households: no permanent work or/and disabled or/and heavy illness;
- c) the old state-owned enterprise workers were retrenched according to government policy in early 1960’s;
- d) the old low-level Guomindang members;
- e) the old “ intellectual youth” who went to rural area during the “Cultural Revolution” and came back to Beijing caused by illness and wounded on business; and
- f) the old returned oversea Chinese.

Type II. The households that have **laid-off** people (mostly) or/and namely employed actually laid-off people (*Daigang*) and tally with the basic criteria.

Type III. The households that have **unemployed and jobless** people and tally with the basic criteria (accounting for 30075 people in 16706 households).

The delivered CMLSSU amounts to about 8.51 millions RMB in October 2000 in Beijing. The number of CMLSSU beneficiaries is regularly updated monthly.

Table 3 shows that over 90% of CMLSSU beneficiaries or urban poor in other word are the households that have laid-off, unemployed and jobless people. The number of the type I and the type II is still growing monthly. According to new regulation to be implemented in near future, type II is going to be integrated into type III in order to regularize the management of urban poor. This could mean the term “laid-off” will be a historical one.

### **3.3 Causes of urban poverty (see table 4)**

The causes of urban poverty are complex with some difference from one group to another group. The table 4 presents the causes of urban poverty of different groups clearly.

Obviously, “**no job**” is the key cause of urban poverty. “**Poor education, poor qualification and lack of special skills**” is a common and one of main obstacles for all interviewees in target group

to find jobs in a more competitive urban labor market. No interviewee has university diploma (see table 5). **Aged and poor health** is one of other causes for some interviewees. All interviewed laid-off and unemployed were ordinary workers in their original enterprises. They lack special relationship with any powerful people to help them to find a job.

The “widely existing **discrimination** to released prisoners in social and economical activities including employment” is the first cause for **released prisoners** being difficult to find jobs. This will influence the amalgamation of this group back into normal society negatively. Invisible and visible discrimination also exists to **disabled and unhealthy** group, and quite common to **women** in employment as well.

**Table 4 summary of participatory cause analysis of urban poverty in Beijing**

Type of groups	Laid-off ( <i>xiagang</i> )	Unemployed ( <i>shiye</i> )	Jobless ( <i>wuye</i> )	Released prisoners	Disabled and unhealthy	Women
Direct, common, and main causes	No job and growing price of essential needs (including food, health-care, education, and housing) for living in Beijing.					
Specification of “no job” with ranking of importance.	<p>-laid-off of original job, since original enterprises are in recession or closed, which is caused by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corruption of leadership of the enterprises;</li> <li>2. poor management; and</li> <li>3. Fierce market competition.</li> </ol> <p>-difficult to find new job, because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor education, poor qualification and lack of special skills;</li> <li>2. Too many poor, healthy, young, low payment required, and hard working rural migrants in urban labor market;</li> <li>3. More and more laid-off, unemployed and jobless in labor market;</li> <li>4. Aged or/and poor health situation;</li> <li>5. Lack of relationship with “some one” or “big potato”; and</li> <li>6. Living in the communities which are poor and far from new economical center. (Mentougou and Xuanwu).</li> </ol>	<p>-difficult to find new job, because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor education and poor qualification;</li> <li>2. Too many poor, healthy, young, low payment required, and hard working rural migrants in urban labor market;</li> <li>3. More and more laid-off, unemployed and jobless in labor market;</li> <li>4. Aged or/and poor health situation; and</li> <li>5. Living in the communities which are poor and far from new economical center. (Mentougou and Xuanwu).</li> </ol>	<p>-difficult to find job, because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poor education and poor qualification;</li> <li>2. Too many poor, healthy, young, low payment required, and hard working rural migrants in urban labor market;</li> <li>3. More and more laid-off, unemployed and jobless in labor market;</li> <li>4. Aged or poor health situation; and</li> <li>5. Living in the communities which are poor and far from new economical center. (Mentougou and Xuanwu).</li> </ol>	<p>-difficult to find job, because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Widely existing discrimination to released prisoners in social and economical activities including employment;</li> <li>2. More and more laid-off, unemployed and jobless in labor market;</li> <li>3. Too many rural migrants in urban labor market; and</li> <li>4. Poor education and poor qualification.</li> </ol>	<p>-difficult to find job, because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discrimination to disabled in employment;</li> <li>2. Aged and poor health situation;</li> <li>3. Too many rural migrants in urban labor market;</li> <li>4. More and more laid-off, unemployed and jobless in labor market; and</li> <li>5. Poor education and poor qualification.</li> </ol>	<p>-difficult to find job, because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discrimination to women in employment;</li> <li>2. Lack of special skills and poor qualification;</li> <li>3. Aged or/and unhealthy;</li> <li>4. No relationship with “some one”; and</li> <li>5. Too many poor, healthy, young, low payment required, and hard working rural migrants in urban labor market.</li> </ol>

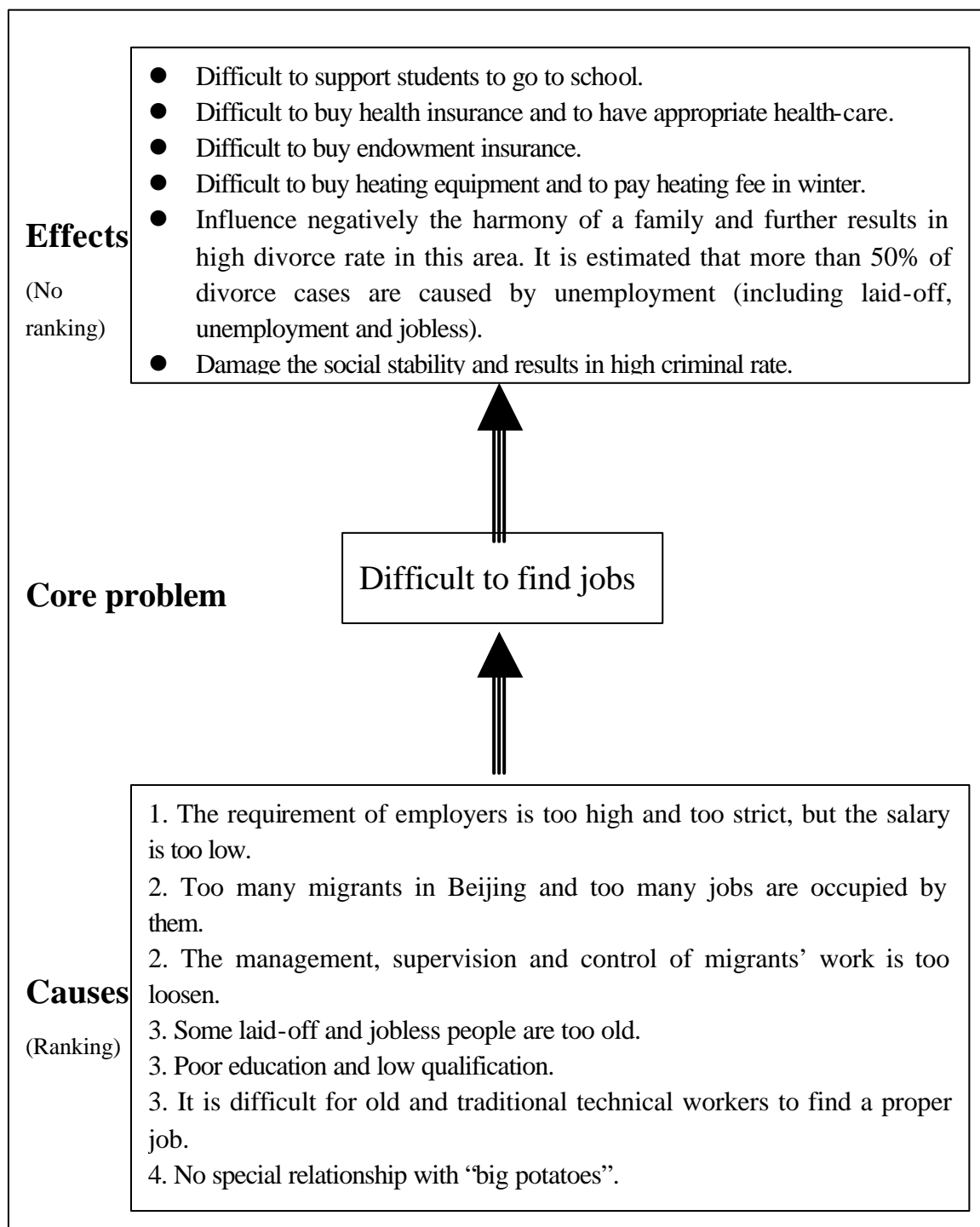
**Table 5 Education profile of interviewees in target groups.**

Group	Sex	High school		Middle school		Primary school and less		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Government defined “urban” poor</b>	M	18	36.7	27	55.1	4	8.2	49	100
	F	12	37.5	16	50.0	4	12.5	32	100
<b>Migrant poor</b>	M	4	44.4	3	33.3	2	22.2	9	100
	F	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5	8	100

It has to be noted that more and more rural migrants rush into Beijing has been straining the

problem of unemployment of Beijing residents. The rural migrants are much more competent than local people in finding jobs in those areas that do not need any special skills and qualification, because they are normally young and healthy, work harder and require less payment than Beijing residents. Nearly all interviewees attribute the causes of difficulty of finding jobs partly to too many rural migrants in Beijing. (see table 6)

**Table 6 participatory core problem analysis in male laid-off group interview in Baizhifang Street, Xuanwu District.**



### **3.4 Who are supporting the urban poor? How to do it? What are the effects? (see table 7)**

It was found during the field survey that the urban poor are helped mainly by government departments, which include civil affair department, labor and social security department, disabled association, women federation, education department, and local governments (district, street administrative office, and residents' committee). Of which, the Department of Civil Affair plays the most important role and the Department of Labor and Social Security plays the second important role. The former focuses its activities on relief and the latter focuses on improving employment and social security. Both of them are the main government departments involving in urban poverty alleviation.

It is hardly found any NGO or private individual involves in urban poverty alleviation. Some urban poor could have some support from relatives.

The support covers two fields: living security and employment. Specifically, living security support are: CMLSSU, special subsidy to the laid-off from state-owned enterprises (minimum 296 RMB/month/capita), special aid to poorest families, festival subsidy, refunding of health-care fee, reduction of schooling fee, housing fee and some other fees. Employment supports are: vocational training, job introduction, and subsidy to self-employment.

In the point of view of interviewees, the support of government department can only secure their food and clothes. It doesn't work well in improving the quality of life of the poor radically. Although some counter-measures address the core problem of unemployment, the result is not satisfied. This is mainly caused by inappropriate methodology applied by the government department.

The following problems existing in government poverty alleviation activities are identified by the poor:

- Government officials don't listen to the poor and don't understand the needs of the poor. This could be the main problem in government poverty alleviation work.
- Lack of coordination and cooperation between different government departments results in low efficiency and low effectiveness in helping the poor. In a typical case, one family got two quilts from different departments in one year, but actually they need house heating equipment.
- The real delivered amount of retirement pension and special subsidy to the laid-off of state-owned enterprises is only about 60% of the government standard in the surveyed districts. The situation in Mentougou District is more serious than that in Xuanwu District.
- Underestimation of the number of urban poor and amount of funds needed for CMLSSU by local government. Since each district has to raise funds for CMLSSU (Beijing Municipality government provides only a given amount of financial support to each district government. For instance, Mentougou has only 3 millions from Beijing Municipality Government), the poorer the district is, the more CMLSSU beneficiaries it has, and thus the heavier financial burden the district has. So from point of view of local government, they would underestimate the number of CMLSSU beneficiaries and amount of CMLSSU.
- Too simple support means which always focus on providing quilts, clothes, and food.

- Job introduction doesn't take into account the personal background and condition of applicants.
- Training content doesn't meet the needs of market.
- Lack of special support to disadvantaged group, i.e. women, disabled, aged people and children.

All these result in the waste of poverty alleviation resource and low efficiency of poverty alleviation work.

The government statistic shows that the number of CMLSSU applicants is growing, more and more CMLSSU funds is required, and the CMLSS is becoming higher. The difficulties or/and problems identified by government officials and field workers are: 1) difficult to calculate the grey income and investigate the bank savings of some applicants; 2) sometimes difficult to judge whether a person is able to work or not; 3) the CMLSS is too high. This sometimes encourage lazy people become lazier and would not work or require high work condition.

However, from the point of view of interviewees, many urban poor (more than one fourth of registered CMLSSU beneficiaries, estimated by interviewees) are excluded in the list of beneficiaries of government poverty alleviation policy, and some poor can only get much less than government standard. The main reasons are many urban poor are too shameful to be put in the beneficiary list of government relief, and local government underestimates the number of urban poor and ignores the difference between what the poor real got and government standard intentionally. Some other reasons are: 1) there are some to-be-laid-off (daigang) who's salary could be as low as 100RMB/month, but it is perceived by government that they have minimum salary (some 410 RMB/month); 2) some healthy people in working age can not find job, but it is perceived by government they have income with 296 RMB/month/labor, no matter whether they have income or not; and 3) some laid-off from state-owned enterprises can have only less subsidy than 296 RMB/month which is government standard.

**Table 7 Summary of the participatory analysis of urban poverty alleviation activities**

<b>Institutes and individuals that offer supports</b>	<b>Ranking of importance</b>	<b>Main support activities</b>	<b>Main beneficiaries</b>	<b>Evaluation of the activities</b>
Department of Civil Affairs	1	-Identifying the CMLSSU beneficiaries and managing and delivering the CMLSSU. -Management of social endowment (including receiving and delivering the endowment).	CMLSSU beneficiaries, including laid-off, unemployed, jobless, and other poorest of the poor.	-Secure food and clothes. -Underestimation of urban poor.
Department of Labor and Social Security	2	-Social insurance management (including medical insurance, dole, endowment insurance) for laid-off and employed. -Employee's minimum salary. -Organizing vocational training. -Job introduction. -Subsidizing the self-employment of laid-off and unemployed. -Subsidizing the employers who employ laid-off and unemployment.	-Laid-off. -Unemployed.	-Secure basic need. -The real payment of retirement pension and special subsidy to the laid-off of state-owned enterprises is less than government standards. -Training and job introduction don't work well.
Relatives	3	-Economical support. -Help to find job. -Psychological help.	All kinds of poor households.	Psychological backstop.
Department of Health-care	4	-Refunding of medical expense.	-Poor households.	-The most important thing the poor need.
Local governments (mainly District and Street)	5	-Reducing housing rate. -Special subsidies to the poorest. -Holidays and seasonal subsidies to the poorest. -Urgent aids to the poor (such as burying fee, electricity equipment fee, waste processing fee..etc.).	-All kind of poor households.	-Limited support and to be improved.
Education department	6	-Reducing schooling fee for the students in compulsory education.	Poor households that have students being in the compulsory education.	-High school and university education is much more expensive than compulsory education. The support to the students in poor households should extend to high school and university education.
Disabled association	7	-Job introduction. -Protection of disabled right based on relevant national and local laws, government policies and regulations.	Disabled.	Very limited in action.
Women Federation	8	-Vocational training. -Job introduction. -Protection of women and children's right.	Women and children in poor households.	Very limited in action.
District endowment station	9	-Clothes and limited funds	Aged and live alone.	Meeting urgent needs only.

#### **Box 4 Case study on a poor household**

Mr. Zhang Baocai, living together with his wife and a daughter in a rented house located in a piece of slope waste land, is 37 years old. Administratively, the household registers in Dongxinfang Street Office of Mentougou District. This community they live in is a typical and traditional farming and coal mining area. The dead-alive mining industry that has been going down for years results in too many laid-off from both state-owned and private mining enterprises. Many coal miners married rural women and some of those were not and are still not official Beijing residents.

Mr. Zhang was a coal miner in a private enterprise before 1987 when his neck was wounded by accident. He has not been able to work anymore since 1987. His wife, Ms. Luo Yimei, is 35 years old and was a farmer before 1995. Although she got 8 years of formal schooling education, she can't find a job. However, since she is in working age, she is perceived as having 296 Yuan minimum income per month by government. His daughter is a primary school student with age of 12 years old. Accordingly, the household has a CMLSSU which amounts to:  $280\text{Yuan/month/person} \times 3\text{persons} - 296\text{ yuan/month}$  (perceived household income by government) = 544 Yuan/month. They have also 3 Food and Oil Cards valuing 120 Yuan/month.

The main expense for the household includes normal daily expense, health-care for Mr. Zhang, and schooling fee for the daughter. They can only afford the minimum daily expense, but can't afford the health-care and schooling. Lack of proper treatment for Mr. Zhang and lack of money for the future schooling fee of his daughter. The house has not heating and cooling system with a house rate of 100 Yuan/month only. A simple coal stove is for cooking as well as for heating in winter. The most expensive household properties are one very old refrigerator and an old black and white TV set, which are even the gifts of their relatives.

The difficulty the household faces is very obvious. Ms. Luo tried to find a job, but failed. Since she has to take care of her husband on one hand, and she has too poor qualification and lack of special skills on the other. She wants to learn weaving sweaters by machine, but she was refused by bank to get a loan for weaving machine caused by lack of collateral and guarantor. "even if I am able to access to a loan, I would not take it. Because I am afraid that I can't repay it." She said when she was being asked whether she would have a loan.

### **3.5 Difficulties and problems faced by the urban poor (see table 8)**

The difficulties and problems faced by the urban poor are partly and briefly presented in the table 6. Different kinds of urban poor may face different difficulties and problems. Specifically in the group of women, the ranking of the problems faced by them is:

1. Laid-off. Especially for those women who are elder than 35 years old, no special skills and poor qualification.
2. Can't afford the schooling fee for children.
3. Psychological pressure to children in poor households.
4. Conflicts between family members.
5. Illness and can't afford medical treatment.

6. Poor housing.

In general, the difficulties and problems can be clustered into “physical” ones, “social and psychological” ones, and “unemployment”. The three kinds of difficulties and problems are interrelated. The key problem or difficulty all kinds of urban poor face is the “unemployment” or “difficult to find job”.

**Table 8 Summary of participatory poverty impact analysis**

<b>Key problem</b>	<b>Physical difficulties (with ranking of importance)</b>	<b>Social and psychological problems/difficulties</b>
<u>Unemployment and very difficult to find jobs.</u> These are caused by: -Poor education and qualification of urban poor. -Lack of proper training. -Poor health situation. -High employment cost in terms of location, (tough) work conditions, and payment.	1. No money to buy medical insurance, which is the most important for the poor. No money to pay medical treatment for illness and disabled. 2. Lack of money to pay children’s schooling fee, especially for university education. 3. No money to pay endowment insurance. 4. Can not afford proper housing. 5. No holiday gift for children and parents.	-Social stability—criminal rate is growing. -Family harmony—divorce is growing. -There are visible and invisible discrimination to different kinds of urban poor, especially to released prisoners, disabled, and women. -Children suffer from psychological pressure both in school and out of school. -Some relief recipients suffer from external social pressure and internal psychological pressure. -Lack of sense of security in life in general.

The most difficult time for the urban poor are: 1) when family member has health problem and has to go to see doctor; 2) registration time for schooling children; 3) holidays and festivals; and 4) the change of weather follows the change of season requires the change of clothes.

**3.6 Voice of the urban poor on alleviating the urban poverty**

In accordance with the participatory analysis of causes of urban poverty and of the problems/difficulties faced by urban poor, different specific groups have their own specific suggestions on supporting them. Accordingly, women focus more on family issues (such as members health, family harmony, and children’s development, disabled, unhealthy and aged people focus on funding of medical treatment, released prisoners, women and the wives who are non Beijing residents focus on the elimination of relevant discriminations in employment.

Conclusively, the suggestions of the interviewed urban poor on supporting urban poor, which were raised for government and government departments, can be summarized with prioritization as follows:

1. Improving the **employment of urban poor**, through:
  - a. **Job introduction.** The current job introduction, which is undertaken by different government departments (Labor and Social Security Department, Disabled Association, Women Federation, and some others), is not so effective and reliable. Because normally employers would go to free labor market to hire cheaper migrants or it depends very much on personal relationship between employers, staff working in job introduction units, and the people who are looking for jobs. The introduced jobs are normally those no one would take. Job introduction should be

more regular, transparent, and monitored.

- b. Providing and improving **training**. The current training program should be improved in terms of contents, funding arrangement, and methodology.
  - Contents are too narrow and always focused on computer ABC, hair-cut and makeup, cooking, and so on. After training, it is still difficult to find jobs in the relevant fields.
  - Training should cover wider poor groups and government should provide more funds for providing training for urban poor.
  - Training should consider education and age background of trainees, the needs of employment market, and personal expectation.
- c. Encouraging **self-employment** of urban poor through providing micro-credit, reducing tax, providing small initiating grants, and other possible preferential policy.
- d. Limiting and reducing the **employment of migrants** especially in those areas that local people are able to work well.
- e. Working out **preferential policy** to reduce **discriminations** to and support those disadvantaged groups who are disabled, women, and released prisoners in employment.

2. Providing **medical insurance, endowment insurance**, and appropriate free medical services for urban poor.

3. Providing special **scholarship** and/or special **credit** to the **students** from urban poor households in pursuing high school and university education.

4. Minimum Living Standard should increase **housing quality and area** per capita as one of criteria. For example, working out a minimum housing area as a standard to define those who need support as well.

5. The **coordination** between different government departments in helping urban poor should be set up and improved.

### **3.7 Participatory poverty analysis for Migrant poor**

#### **3.7.1 About migrants, migrant poor, and interviewed migrant poor**

Very few migrants and Beijing residents think the migrants working in Beijing are also Beijing residents. The migrant affairs are specially managed by Beijing Public Security Departments. There are official regulations and rules published by Beijing Municipality government to define migrant's employment in Beijing. In which only a certain areas/positions/jobs are open to migrants. These areas/positions/jobs are characterized with: 1) very tough work physically, low payment, and tough work conditions that normally official Beijing citizens would not take (such as cleaner, construction worker, small dealers, and so on); 2) high tech areas that Beijing needs well-educated, qualified, and professional labors; and 3) investors and specific areas that Beijing needs more labors.

According to the regulations, Beijing Municipality works out plan for migrant employment based on its need and capacity annually. In 2000, Beijing has planned to accept about 950,000 migrants

and there are about 915,000 registered “legal” migrants. Actually, there are thousands of migrants mostly coming from rural area working in Beijing “illegally”.

The interviewed migrants live (excluding one male driver and one female secretary) in a “slum” located in a border area between urban area and suburban area. It’s their first time to have “someone” to listen to them about their living in Beijing. They all are come from rural area. No one got higher education than high school. Most of them are in the age of 20-35 years old. They are young and healthy. Their occupations require much more physical input than mental input, less skill and qualifications, and normally are those Beijing residents would not do or can’t do. They found their jobs through themselves or introduction of relatives and friends who come from same area. (see table 9 and table 10).

**Table 9 Key characteristics of interviewed migrants (I)**

Sex	No.	Distribution of age			Occupations	Home provinces	Average working years in Beijing	Ways to find jobs
		20-35	Oldest	Youngest				
<b>Male</b>	9	7	38	22	Small dealers (4), small food producers(4), driver (1).	Henan (5), Jiangsu (2), Heilongjiang (2).	4.75 years.	Self-finding (5), relatives and friends introducing (3), advertisement (1).
<b>Female</b>	8	7	48	18	Small food producers (4), nurse (1), worker (1), small dealer (1), secretary (1).	Henan (6), Heilongjiang (1), Jiangsu (1).	3 years.	Self-finding (5), relatives and friends introducing (3).

**Table 10 Key characteristics of interviewed migrants (II)—education**

Sex	High school		Middle school		Primary school and less		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>M</b>	4	44.4	3	33.3	2	22.2	9	100
<b>F</b>	3	37.5	4	50.0	1	12.5	8	100

### 3.7.2 Who are the migrant poor?

The migrant poor are characterized by poor education, poor qualification, no special skills, and lack of money for investment, both for men and women. They are small dealers, physical workers, to work in hard condition with low payment, and come from rural area (see table 11 and table 12).

**Table 11 Participatory wealth ranking of migrants by male migrant group.**

Categories	Who	Income	Characteristics of life	Why
Rank 1 (rich)	Businessmen, owners of factories and restaurants, contractors of engineering and supermarket.	>5000 RMB/month	Good housing and good car, good life and good entertainment/leisure.	Have special relationship with "someone", have funds for investment, experienced working in Beijing, "clever", well educated.
Rank 2 (better-off)	Employees of big companies, white collar class.	1500-3000 RMB/Month	Afford to live in an apartment.	Well educated and have diploma.
Rank 3 (middle)	Small businessmen, small shop owners, retail dealers, breakfast sellers, enterprise guards.	500-1000 RMB/month	Live in shanty, risky and unstable income, highly influenced by local government policy.	Limited funds available for investment, young and strong, and master some skills.
Rank 4 (poor)	Physical workers, such as retail coal sellers, brick carrying workers, retail sand sellers, construction workers, waste collectors, cleaners.	400-500 RMB/month	Low income, no security for income and work, live in slum and live on other people.	No special work skill, living on selling labor.

**Table 12 Participatory wealth ranking of migrants by female migrant group.**

Categories	How is their life	Who and why
Rank 1 (rich)	Good housing and good car, make big business, have "sweet secretary".	Access to loan, have investment, experienced working in Beijing, living on rich (for some young women), prostitute.
Rank 2 (better-off)		Stable work, master some special techniques/skills.
Rank 3 (middle)	No big problem for housing and clothing, simple food, small savings.	Small retail dealers, amahs, waitresses.
Rank 4 (poor)	Living in slum, have simple food, tough life.	Urban waste collectors, jobless.

### 3.7.3 Difficulties/problems faced by the migrant poor (see table 13 and 14)

The difficulties/problems faced by the migrant poor in living in Beijing are partly different from those faced by the Beijing local urban poor. The main difference is that the migrant poor do not only suffer from the poverty, but also suffer from the visible and invisible social, economical, and political discrimination or inequity of Beijing local authorities and residents in living (including education, housing, and participation of local social life) and employment. Their expectation is to make money out of their hometown (including Beijing), and one day go back to hometown. Their root is always in their rural hometown. Some of them, especially the youth, would also escape from the very tough life in their rural hometown and spend their life in city forever.

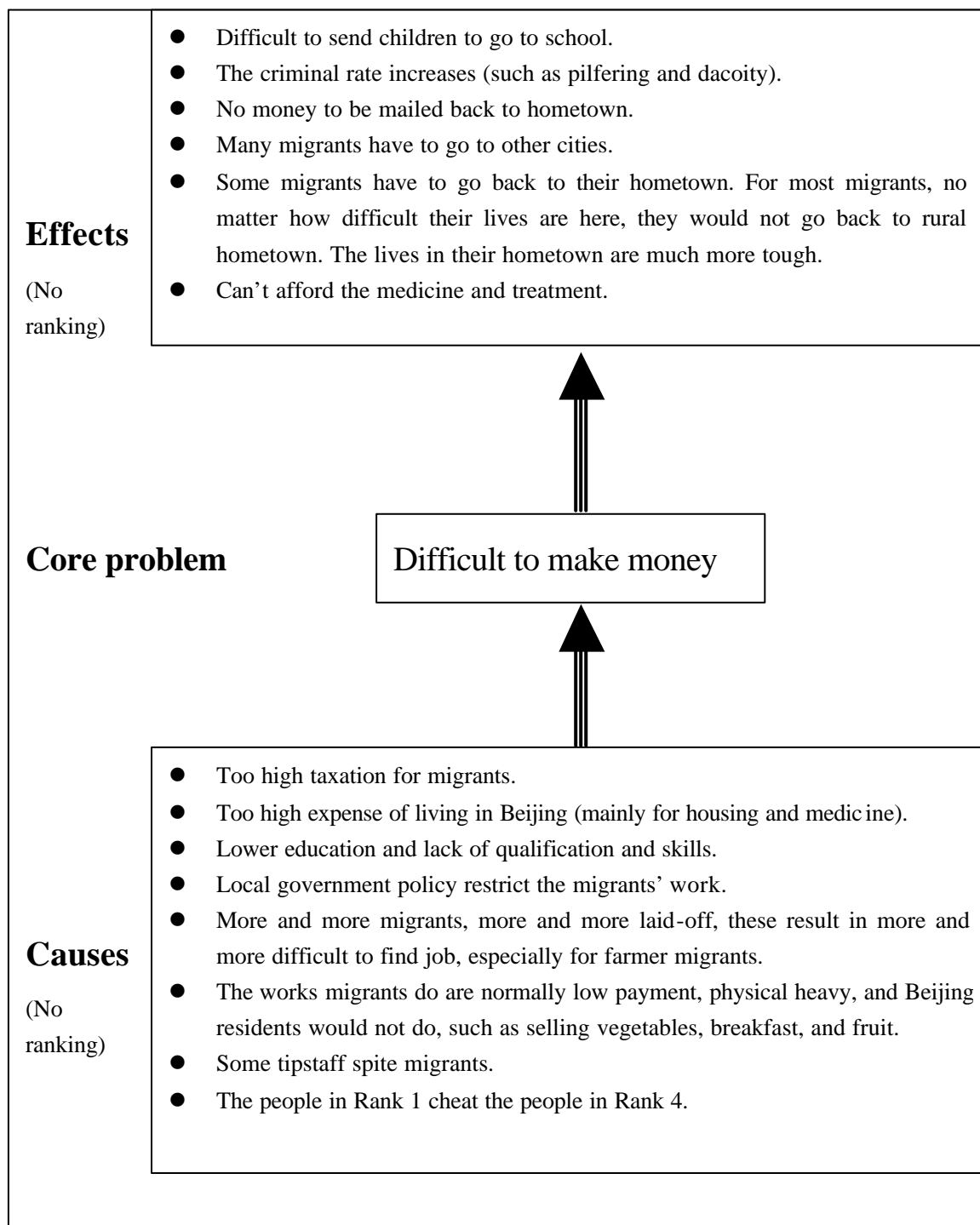
The interviewed migrant poor men and women face the same key problem, which is "too difficult to make money in Beijing". The reasons and problems are ranked according to their impacts on the key problem. The difference between male and female group interview is that men look more at the equal opportunities between migrants and Beijing residents, meanwhile women concern

more family members' health and their health, and children's education. Both men and women complain the discrimination politically and socially to migrants, especially the poor rural migrants.

**Table 13 Participatory Prioritization of problems faced by the migrant poor.**

<p><b>Result of male group interview</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Generally too difficult to make money.</li> <li>2) Lack of sense of physical security caused by that both of local executing agencies of laws and local government would not help the migrant poor. Then they lack of legal protection of their legal rights. Some field staff of executing agencies of laws, regulations and policies even break them intentionally and support local gangster to bully migrants. This disappoints migrants to work and live in Beijing very much.</li> <li>3) Too difficult to find jobs in Beijing, because:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--More and more migrants rush into Beijing, more and more laid-off, unemployed, and jobless are looking for jobs in Beijing;</li> <li>--Too complicated procedure and too many certificates required to be allowed working and living in Beijing;</li> <li>--Too high taxation to small dealers, which is one of main jobs for rural migrants;</li> <li>--Some local people spite migrants and are exclusionism to rural migrants;</li> <li>--Local government policy restricts migrants working and living in Beijing strictly; and</li> <li>--The City Environment Management Team, point constables, and police trouble rural migrants too much.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4) The common discrimination policy to migrants' children. Either the parents have to pay much higher schooling fee than local people, or the children are refused to register in local school.</li> <li>5) Some other difficulties include poor housing, no medicine insurance, and no social welfare.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Result of female group interview</b></p> <p>The key problem is that too difficult to make money in Beijing for rural migrants. The followings are some reasons and problems as well:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Too much and too high tax for small business (fruit and vegetable retail dealers).</li> <li>2)             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Low salary and the payment of salary is often defaulted by employers.</li> <li>b. Local residents spite migrants.</li> <li>c. Local discrimination policy in employment of migrants.</li> <li>d. <i>Migrants have to pay very high taxes and levies in their rural hometown.</i></li> </ol> </li> <li>3)             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The cost of doing business is too high in Beijing. The management regulations and rules are too strict to migrants.</li> <li>b. The local schooling fee for migrant's children is too high.</li> <li>c. House rate is too high.</li> <li>d. Medical fee is too high.</li> <li>e. Very bad house and food.</li> <li>f. The big economical burden is from hometown.</li> <li>g. Pregnancy checking fee is too high and the checking of migrant women is too frequent.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Poor education and non Beijing citizenship result in difficult to find job.</li> </ol>

**Table 14 Core Problem analysis by male migrant group.**



### **3.7.4 Voice of interviewed migrant poor on improving their living in Beijing**

The most important desire for all migrant poor (including men and women) in living in Beijing is the equity in employment and social and economical activities between migrants and Beijing resident. In other word, compared with a Beijing resident, a migrant can work and live in Beijing equally in terms of opportunity, payment, work conditions, fair competition in labor market, and social welfare, as both of them are equal subjects of P.R.PRC.

What they are expecting is also the most difficult in PRC's circumstances nowadays. The growing disparity between rich urban PRC and poor rural PRC motivate so many rural people rush to cities for surviving or making money that both national government and local government have to control (or plan) the number of migrants.

Specifically, some others include reducing the price for medical service, schooling of their children, business tax, housing, bureaucratic procedure for business licenses, and even the heavy levies and tax in their rural home village.

#### **Box 5 Certificates required for a migrant to work in Beijing**

A legal employment of a migrant in Beijing could require 8 certificates or licenses. The certificates or licenses are ID Card, temporary living license, employment permission card (jiuyezheng), employment card (wugongzheng), business license, health certificate, migrant card, and certificate of marriage situation and reproduction situation for women.

## 4. Conclusions

The study was conducted in the selected urban communities—perceived here as Street Office or sometimes Residents’ Committee and migrant “slum”—in Mentougou District, Xuanwu District, and Haidian District. The interviewees include about 20 government officials working in urban poverty alleviation, more than 100 all kinds of urban poor (including laid-off (*xiagang*), unemployed (*shiye*), jobless (*wuye*), disabled, released prisoners, women, and the other CMLSSU beneficiaries), and about 20 rural migrants (including small retail dealers and physical workers). The specific groups of laid-off and unemployed, disabled, released prisoners, and migrants were interviewed. The participatory approach with gender sensitization was basically used. Gender differentiated groups were interviewed and gender disaggregated data were collected and analyzed. The main conclusion of the study is summarized as follows.

1. There is no official poverty line in Beijing. There is a “Citizen Minimum Living Security Standard (CMLSS)” and accordingly “Citizen Minimum Living Security Standard Subsidy (CMLSSU)”. The CMLSS is perceived as urban poverty line in government practice as well as for the study. The CMLSS only takes into account the net income per capita per month of an urban household. Comparatively, the definition of urban poverty perceived by the interviewed urban poor reflects the different dimensions of their life. They are: 1) income and expense for essential needs of a household (**income poverty** or poverty in economical dimension); 2) education, health situation and age (**human poverty**); 3) social status (including discriminations in employment and daily life to disabled, released prisoners, jobless, women, and other CMLSSU beneficiaries) and social relations (relationship with “someone” and relatives) (**social poverty**); and 4) housing (area, quality, and location--living in the communities, which is poor and far from new economical center, has much less opportunities) (**environment poverty**).
2. The urban poor in Beijing are mostly laid-off (*xiagang*), unemployment (*shiye*), jobless (*wuye*), disabled and unhealthy people, old lonely dependents, released prisoners, and households that have non-Beijing official resident(s).
3. The main and common cause of urban poverty for all kinds of poor groups is “no job”. In detail, this is further caused by different reasons for different groups: 1) the close, recession, and reform of enterprises resulting in many laid-off and unemployment; 2) poor personal competence in labor market (education and qualification, health and age); 3) more and more laid-off, unemployment, jobless, and migrants in labor market; 4) discriminations in employment to the disadvantaged groups which are disabled, relative aged and unhealthy, released prisoners, and women; and 5) living in poor and far from new growing economical center communities. Besides of this, the high expense for medical treatment and high schooling fee are also to contribute to the causes of urban poverty.
4. The urban poor face three kind of problems/difficulties i.e. “physical” ones, “social and psychological” ones, and the key problem “very difficult to find jobs”. The three kinds of

problems/difficulties are interrelated. The “very difficult to find jobs” is the key one. The most difficult time for a poor household is that when they have to pay medical treatment and schooling fee, and to buy new clothes when the weather changes and gifts for parents and children during holidays and festivals. Different groups face also different specific difficulties/problems. The main support the urban poor need from government are 1) promoting employment through different measures; 2) providing medical insurance or any other help; and 3) providing financial support to the students who are over compulsory education.

5. The urban poor are helped mainly by government departments and their relatives. It is hardly found any NGO or private individual involves in urban poverty alleviation. The civil affair department and the labor and social security department are the main government departments involving in urban poverty work. The work covers two fields in general: living security and employment. Specifically, living security support are: CMLSSU, special aid to poorest families, festival subsidy, refunding of health-care fee, reduction of schooling fee, housing subsidy and some other limited subsidies. Employment supports are: vocational training, job introduction, subsidy to self-employment, and subsidy to employers.
6. In view of the urban poor, the government supports can only secure the poor from hunger and coldness. The support doesn't work well in improving the living quality and increasing the employment. Although both of the number of CMLSSU beneficiaries and the amount of CMLSSU are growing, the main problems in government poverty alleviation policy and activities are identified as follows: 1) underestimation of poor population and overestimation of poor household income; 2) food and oil cards can only be used in the government contracted shops or supermarkets where the price is much higher than market price; 3) no training need assessment is taken before conducting a training, specifically the (vocational) training doesn't take into account the need and background of trainees, and need of employment market; 4) lack of coordination between different government departments in urban poverty alleviation; 5) lack of preferential policy and measures to support the specific disadvantaged groups (including women, released prisoners, and disabled); and 6) lack of communication between the urban poor and government departments, specifically, the need and voice of urban poor is ignored.
7. In view of government department, the following difficulties/problems are identified in urban poverty alleviation work: 1) difficult to calculate the grey income and investigate the bank savings of some applicants; 2) sometimes difficult to judge whether a person is able to work or not; and 3) the CMLSS is too high to encourage lazy people to work.
8. The migrants are a very special community or social group in Beijing. Compared with the Beijing official residents, they face much more difficulties and problems in their living in Beijing. The most severe difficulty or problem they face is the discrimination of local government policy and non policy factors (such as the discrimination and spiting of local residents) in their employment (such as they need 8 certificates/licenses to work in Beijing, many jobs only are given to local residents, they suffer from quite high taxes) and daily life

(health-care, schooling, and housing). Therefore they are eager to have equal right and opportunity with Beijing residents to employment. There is no government support, no social welfare, and no social insurance for them. They face so many problems: health-care, housing, schooling for their children, legal assistance, and fierce competition of more and more laid-off, jobless and migrants in employment. However, they would not go back to their rural hometown where they think life is much more tough and difficult than in Beijing.

9. Women in poor households concern more the impacts of poverty on family harmony, education and psychological health and development of their children than men. They are main victims of divorce and family conflicts. They also suffer from sex discrimination in employment.

## 5. Recommendations

Based on the analysis on the findings of the study, mainly on the difficulties/problems faced by the urban poor and migrant poor, and on the problems/shortcomings of government supports identified, the recommendations have been raised. Logically, they look at raising options to cope with the problems accordingly and aim at the improvement of urban poverty alleviation both in long term and short term for the urban poor and migrant poor. Generally, they include both policy ones and practical ones.

In principle, all the following recommended activities are important and should be an integrated package. To some extent, most of them can be adopted by government in the same time. However, to have the recommendations adopted easier by policy makers and field workers, the prioritization of the recommended activities is made roughly based mostly on logic time arrangement and slightly on importance, and showed in relevant number as follows.

### 5.1 Introduction and application of participatory approaches for urban poverty policy making and practices.

The participatory approaches have to be introduced and applied in the urban poverty alleviation work. The voice of the urban poor has to be taken into account by government department in their urban poverty alleviation efforts. The urban poor must participate in the whole process of policy making, project/program formulating and planning, implementation and M&E of urban poverty interventions. Thus, a training workshop on the introduction and application of participatory approaches in urban poverty alleviation intervention for policy makers, officials, and field workers is needed. Some field case studies or practices could be part of the training package.

### 5.2 Redefinition of urban poverty and urban poor.

The CMLSS is perceived as urban poverty line in practice by both government and residents. The CMLSS only considers the net income per capita in an urban household. But the real living situation of a household is depending also on the necessary expense, housing, health, and even education. It is suggested that the government should consider these factors in defining a poverty line and urban poor. One option is that using the **available per capita household income (APCHI)** to replace the household income that is being used as the indicator to define the urban poverty and urban poor. It takes into account the health-care, education, and housing.

#### Box 6 Definition of Available Per Capita Household Income (APCHI)

*Available per capita household income = (total household net income – household urgent and necessary expense (mainly health-care fee and schooling fee) – (minimum housing standard – current housing situation) X market price)/no. of family members.*

*When (minimum housing standard – current housing situation) = 0, its value is zero.*

$$\text{CMLSSU} = \text{CMLSS} - \text{APCHI}$$

Another option is to provide special support to those poor who are facing difficulties in paying necessary medical service, education, housing and any possible urgent needs (see 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6).

### **5.3 Improvement of employment.**

Since “no job” is a main cause of urban poverty and “difficult to find jobs” is a main problem/difficulty faced by the urban poor, the promotion of employment for urban poor has to be highly prioritized in government poverty alleviation program. The efforts in the following areas are still needed or to be improved.

- a. **Job introduction.** The involvement of different government departments lacks the necessary coordination in between. Quite often that a job seeker has to spend much time to visit different job introduction agencies of different departments. He/she may also miss some chances. A common **data base** for job introduction is needed. This data base has to be monitored and updated in time when there is a change. Since many employers prefer to employ cheaper migrants in (mostly illegal) free labor markets or, employment depends very much on personal relationship between employers, staff working in job introduction agencies, and the people who are looking for jobs, some competent people lose chances to find jobs. Job introduction should be more regular, transparent, and monitored.
- b. **Self-employment.** Government should work out a policy of **reducing tax or tax free** in a certain period (such as 3 years) for the enterprises run by self-employers. A special fund is needed to provide financial support, including **credit and subsidy**, to urban poor to initiate self-employed business.
- c. **Preferential policy** is needed to encourage **employers** to employ “laid-off”, “unemployed”, and “jobless” as many as possible. Some main policy components might be those that include reducing tax or exemption, financial support (credit and subsidy), and possible technical support.
- d. **Training.** Training need assessment must be done before conducting a training. The training needs are mainly depending on the labor market need, personal education and professional background of trainees, and employment intention of trainees. Participatory approach has to be used for programming a training package, which includes training contents, materials, methodology, venue, trainers, monitoring and evaluation, and budgeting. Training should be free for CMLSSU beneficiaries until they find jobs. A certain training budget, which should be allocated by government, is needed.

**5.4 A basic and common social insurance system has to be set up.** The beneficiaries will include all residents (including the urban poor) in the system. In which, the medical insurance must be prioritized. The expense of necessary medical service can be refunded in time through this system rather than through different channels.

**5.5 An unified institute for managing urban poverty alleviation affairs needs to be set up.** The institutionalized coordination, communication and cooperation between different

organizations or different government departments, which are involved in urban poverty alleviation work, is urgently needed in order to improve the work efficiency and effectiveness. Any government planning and implementation of poverty alleviation program has to be undertaken jointly by all involved departments and coordinated and organized by a common organization or an office.

**5.6 Unification of poverty standards and subsidies.** Different government departments provide various supports to different urban poor by using different standards currently (such as CMLSSU and special subsidy to laid-off). It is suggested that the municipal government should have a unified and common standard for identifying the poor and subsidies. This will help to solve the problem of underestimation of population and over estimation of poor household income and, make the management of poverty alleviation intervention much easier and more effective and more efficient.

**5.7 Providing scholarship and/or credit for both compulsory and non-compulsory education.** Government has to provide enough scholarship to support poor students to finish the compulsory education. For the continuing education after compulsory one, scholarship or/and credit with low or without interest has to be provided.

**5.8 Working out per capita minimum housing standard for poor residents or households.** This standard must include area, quality, and necessary matching equipment (including electricity, tap water, and/or gas). The government subsidy is needed to compensate those poor who are living in the house which is lower or worse than this standard. The amount of the subsidy or compensation should be able to cover the gap between the housing standard and real housing situation of urban poor.

**5.9 The employment service to the disadvantaged group has to be improved.** The job introduction and training must be market-oriented and special groups' needs and background oriented. The elimination of discrimination to women and released prisoners in employment should be legislated or legalized. A monitoring set up is needed in order to supervise the implementation of policy, in which any discrimination in employment to those disadvantaged people (including women, aged, disabled, and released prisoners) is illegal. More special aid to the disadvantaged group i.e. women, children, aged and unhealthy people, and disabled is necessary.

**5.10 Reforming the contribution of poverty alleviation resources between municipal government and district government** based on a regular poverty assessment in each district. The richer districts should contribute more to urban poverty alleviation by financial means.

**5.11 Improvement of migrant affairs management.**

In view of long term development and social justice, the limitation of employment in urban area to migrants has to be cancelled in order to give equal opportunity in employment and development to people who have different social, cultural, and economical background. But it will take a quite long time to come. Considering the current reality that the big disparity in development between

rural PRC and urban PRC, between the West of PRC and the East of PRC, urban PRC would be too over-populated to get well urban management and development if there is no planned limitation for employment of migrants in cities. The recommendations on migrant affair management made here are based on the current circumstances

- a. Beijing Municipality should work out an **annual employment plan** of migrants based on the analysis on local labor market, economical development, and the current capacity of hosting and managing migrants. This plan must be detailed in number of positions, number of employment, and qualification required of candidates, in order to provide a clear guideline of employment and avoid the rushing into Beijing blindly for migrants.
- b. **Elimination of discrimination policies.** Local government must register the migrants who are employed and/or work and/or live in Beijing legally. The policy and any other discriminations to migrants in salary, work condition, taxation, charging, and education must be eliminated. The migrants' children have equal right to local children in access to local schools. The local government has to be worked out a policy in which it is forbidden for local schools to refuse to accept migrants' children or charge more schooling fee than local students.
- c. **Set up an independent office or department being responsible for managing the migrant affairs.** Some main tasks of the office or department are assumed as:
  - Provide information and practical services in registration, employment, housing, education, law and policy consultation, and other services.
  - Protect the legal right and interest of migrants. Specifically, it includes managing the migrant's accusations and the conflicts between migrants and employers, between migrants and local management, and promoting the communication between migrants and local government.
  - Monitor and evaluate the implementation of government policy and laws (including the Labor Protection Law), assess any specific issue of migrant affairs, and provide recommendations on improving migrant affair management for government.
- d. **Set up a compulsory medical insurance system** in which both employers of migrants and migrant employees have to share the payment of medical insurance.

### **5.12 Set-up of participatory M&E system.**

The reason for establishing a M&E system is for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of poverty alleviation policies, programs and activities, and its impacts in time. And the necessary adjustment based on the recommendations made from the M&E will be undertaken timely.

The M&E must be conducted by target group, field workers, and government officials jointly with the participatory approaches applied. By this way, the voice of the poor can be reflected in policy making and it will further guarantee the effectiveness, efficiency, and target group need oriented of the poverty alleviation intervention.

### **5.13 Conduct a comprehensive and systematic participatory study on urban poverty and rural migrant in cities**

This study is limited by its resources and its spatial location (only in Beijing). In order to take a general picture of urban poverty in whole PRC, a comprehensive and systematic participatory study on urban poverty and rural migrants in cities is needed. The spatial location of the recommended study should cover more cities that should represent all or most of cities with different socio-economic background in PRC.

## Annex 1

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

*(Urban PPA expert, 15 working days)*

1. Under the requirements of FCPMC, in accordance to Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) approach, design and conduct PPA study in the selected areas (urban communities in Beijing), including designing and filling out questionnaires, selecting interviewees and conducting household interviews, organizing and conducting group discussions, consultations with local relevant government departments, and information recording and documentation;
2. Interviewees should comprise poor groups including migrant workers, unemployed workers and other special groups such as the disabled.
3. The subjects for the interviews and meetings may include but are not limited to:
  - Ask the poor to articulate their main problems and perceptions of why they are trapped in poverty;
  - Introduce the poor to the Government's expected plans under the LGOP 2000-2020 Poverty Strategy as well as programs expected under the Tenth Five Year Plan; introduce the poor to poverty strategy and plans under Asian Development Bank (ADB) Country Program; and solicit the views of the urban poor on what the focus of Government and donor poverty strategies and programs should be;
  - Ask the urban poor to articulate what would be most useful to them to tackle the poverty situation of their family and the best methods and approaches to use.
  - Ask the urban poor to articulate what would be most useful to them to tackle the poverty situation of their community and the larger society and the best methods and approaches to use.
  - Ask the urban poor to articulate the appropriate roles and responsibilities of national government, local government, donors, NGOs, private sector groups, enterprises, businesses, and individuals in fighting poverty reduction.
4. Collect and analyze the data obtained through the field interviews and draw up analysis report;
5. Identify appropriate representatives of the poor and NGOs to participate in Policy Workshop.
6. Design, prepare and conduct a Policy Workshop participated by the selected poor groups, national and provincial government representatives, NGOs and Asian Development Bank Officers. Regarding the National Policy Workshop, the following points are suggested:
  - Organize a meeting among the poor, national and local government officials (including finance, planning, poverty reduction, civil affairs, and labor and social security officials), local NGOs, and the local private sector in Beijing using participatory approach techniques and summarize the conclusions of the rural and urban poverty workshops with the poor.
  - Discuss (i) the Government's expected plans under the LGOP 2000-2020 Poverty Strategy as well as programs expected under the Tenth Five Year Plan; (ii) ADB's poverty strategy and

plans under its Country Program; and solicit the views of the group on how to improve the focus of Government and donor poverty strategies and programs.

- Reach conclusions on the types of poverty interventions appropriate for the rural and urban poor, differentiating between the absolute poor and relative poor.
  - Reach conclusions on the appropriate roles and responsibilities of national government, local government, donors, NGOs, private sector groups, enterprises, businesses, and individuals in fighting poverty reduction which should be reflected in both the Government and ADB strategies and poverty partnership agreement.
7. Reflect the results of Policy Workshop in the final report.
8. Regarding the report preparation, the following is to be observed:
- Prepare a succinct and focused report of no more than 15 pages of main text (that can be easily used and digested by Government and ADB leaders) plus any relevant appendices in both English and Chinese which (i) summarizes the urban poverty investigations, meetings, interviews, and conclusions derived from these activities; (ii) summarizes the national poverty workshop discussions and conclusions; and (iii) recommends pro-poor policies and interventions that should be reflected in the Government's future development strategies, ADB's future development assistance strategy, and the 2001 poverty partnership agreement between the Government and ADB.

Annex 2

Personal data of some interviewees (urban poor)

Name	Sex	Age	Educa-tion	(old) occupa-tion	Nation-ality	Health situa-tion	Aids received	Reasons of having aids	Other family members
<b>Laid-off and unemployment group in Baizhifang Street of Xuanwu District (male group)</b>									
ZHAO Guomin	male	34	9	Worker	Man	Good	CMLSSU132+laid-off subsidy360+1Food and Oil Card	Laid-off	Wife + son
Jia Hong	Male	35	8	Driver	Han	Good	CMLSSU+unemployment insurance	unemploy-ment	wife+Daughter+mother
Ren Qingkang	Male	42	11	Worker	Han	Good	Unemployment insurance	unemploy-ment	Wife+Daughter
Duan Jansheng	Male	40	10	Miner	Han	Good	Unemployment insurance	unemploy-ment	Wife+Daughter
Guo Xiquan	Male	38	11	Worker	Han	Good	Unemployment insurance300+CMLSSU120+1Food and Oil Card	unemploy-ment	Wife ( non Beijing resident ) +Daughter
Zhang Binxin	Male	36	8	Worker	Han	Good	Unemployment insurance300	unemploy-ment	Wife ( non Beijing resident ) +Son
Wang Jiaoxzhong	Male	19	9	Jobless	Han	Good	CMLSSU	jobless	Parents
Yan Youjun	Male	42	11	Worker	Han	Good	Unemployment insurance300+CMLSSU110+1Food and Oil Card+laid-off370	unemploy-ment	Wife+Daughter
Gu Jinfeng ( Female ) , Ji Wenjun ( Female ) , Zhong Hua ( Male ) participated in the discussing, but no personal data.									
<b>Male group in Taoyuanting Street of Xuanwu District</b>									
Yin Jinling	Male	53	9	Worker	Han	Diabetes	laid-off320+CMLSSU220+1Food and Oil Card	laid-off	Son
Zhao Guofeng	Male	28	9	Worker	Han	Good	CMLSSU+1Food and Oil Card	Temporary unemploy-ment	Wife ( non Beijing resident ) +Son
Liu Feucai	Male	52	6	Jobless(released prisoner)	Han	Unhealthy	CMLSSU280+1Food and Oil Card	Jobless	No
Dou Jinghui	Male	41	8	Jobless ( released prisoner )	Man	Heart disease	CMLSSU220+1Food and Oil Card	Jobless	Wife+Son

Du Jianzhu	Male	45	9	worker	Han	Good	CMLSSU248+1Food and Oil Card	Unemployment	wife+Son
Zhang Qingsheng	Male	41	11	worker	Han	Psoatic strain	laid-off270+CMLSSU190+1Food and Oil Card	laid-off	Divorce. Daughter
Lu Shaozhong	Male	34	8	Jobless	Han	Jobless	CMLSSU240+1Food and Oil Card	Jobless	Mother+wife+Daughter
Zhang Changhai	Male	45	8	Cadre	Han	Lumbago	Unemployment insurance 385+CMLSSU175+1Food and Oil Card	Unemployment	Son

**Male group in Dongxingfang Street of Mentougou District**

Yuan Guomin、 Liu Changquan、 Dai Shenghe、 Liu Baoqing、 Bian Jie、 Li Peng、 Xu Fuli、 Li Zhiyong、 Liu Chunsheng、 Mo Jiandong、 Di Tieling、 Wang Chunlin、 Luo Yumei ( Female )

**Female groups in Mentougou District and Xuanwu District**

Yang Fengxi	Female	45		Worker	Han	Nephritis	CMLSSU248+1Food and Oil Card	Unemployment	Parents+Husband+Son
Liu Qiuxia	Female	38	Middle school	Worker	Han		laid-off200+CMLSSU214	Unemployment	Husband+Son
Dong Fengying	Female	52		Retired	Han	Unhealthy	CMLSSU	Poorest	Two sons
Du Lanhua	Female			retired	Han		CMLSSU		Husband+Son
An Huifen	Female				Han		CMLSSU	Unemployment	Two sons
Fu Yongqing	Female				Han	disabled	CMLSSU	Unemployment	Husband+Son
Ju Qihua	Female	52	Middle school	retired	Han	Good	CMLSSU218+special aid160	Jobless	Husband+Son
Li Ying	Female	38	high school	worker	Man	Good	CMLSSU193	laid-off	Husband+Daughter
Yu Xiaoli	Female	40	high school	jobless	Han	High blood pressure	CMLSSU173	Jobless	Husband+Daughter
Liu Xiuyan	Female	37	high school	worker	Han	Diabetes	CMLSSU	laid-off	Husband
Guo Yanqi	Female	44	Middle school	worker	Han	Good	CMLSSU	laid-off	Husband+Daughter
An Yilan	Female	42	high school	worker	Han	Good	CMLSSU	laid-off	Husband+Son
Ren Jing	Female	29	Middle school	worker	Han	hyperthyroidism	CMLSSU	Unemployment	Husband+Daughter

Cui Wenzheng 、 Wang Limei、 Hu Xiuting、 Liu Hongyan、 Yang YuFen、 Guo Aiqing、 Xue Yinghua、 Wang Suqin、 Li Jianying、 Ma Meiyun、  
Ma Moyun etc.

## Annex 3

## Personal data of migrant interviewees

Name	Sex	Age	education	occupation	Health situation	nationality	hometown	When come to Beijing	Marital status	Family members in Beijing	Skill(s) mastered	Way to find job	Residency
<b>Female group</b>													
WANG Xiuping	Female	48	Primary school	Breakfast cook	Good	Han	Luoshan, Henan	1991	Married	No	Bread and noodles producing	Self finding	Long term
Qi Li	Female	25	Special high school	Small food maker	Good	Han	Luoshan, Henan	2000 . 8	Married	Husband + daughter	Kindergarten teacher	Self-employment	Long term
Wu Jing	Female	27	Middle school	Small food maker	Good	Han	Huaibin, Henan	2000 . 7	married	Husband+ Son		friends or/and relatives introduced	long term
Jing Ruixia	Female	18	Middle school	Nurse	Good	Han	Shangqiu, Henan	2000 . 5	Single	Father	Computer	Friends or/and relatives introduced	long term
Liang Jianying	Female	30	high school	Physical worker	Good	korean	Gannan, Heilongjiang	1996	married	Husband+ Daughter	Koreandishes preparing	Self finding	long term
Hou Xiaoling	Female	30	Middle school	Fruit seller	Good	Han	Yongcheng, Henan	1996	married	Husband+ Son	Small business	Self finding	long term
Cai Juan	Female	25	Middle school	Small food maker	Good	Han	Fangcheng, Henan	1996	married	Husband+ Son		Self finding	
Guo Chunqin	Female	23	high school	Secretary	Good	Han	Jiangsu	96 . 7	single		Computer	Friends or/and relatives introduced	long term
<b>Male group</b>													

HAN Yongjun	Male	26	High school	Small food maker	Good	Han	Luoshan, Henan	2000 . 8	Married	Mother + wife daughter	Plumber	Self finding	Seasonal migrant
Yu Ying	Male	22	high school	Whole dealer of stuff	Good	Han	Gannan, Heilongjiang	1996	single	Parents and brothers	Driver	Friends or/and relatives introduced	Seasonal migrant
Du Feng	Male	30	Middle school	Fruit dealer	Good	Han	Henan	1997	married	wife+Son	Retail dealer of fruit	Folk introduced	long term
Qi Meng	Male	28	Middle school	Small food maker	Good	Han	Luoyang, Henan	1996	married	wife+Son	Bread and noodle maker	Self finding	long term
Ma Zhixiang	Male	30	Primary school	Soybean sprout producer	Good	Han	Jiangsu	1999 . 7	married	wife+Son		Self finding	long term
Ma Zhipu	Male	38	Middle school	Doufu producer	Good	Han	Tongshan, Jiangsu	2 years	married	Parents and brothers	Doufu producer	Self finding	Short term
Li Shun li	Male	35	4 years	Coal retail seller	Good	Hui	Zhoukou, Henan	2000 . 4	married	wife	Lather operator	Self finding	Long term
Zhai Fengji	Male	37	High school	Fruit seller	Good	Han	Lingbao, Henan	2000	married	Brothers	Carpenter	Friends or/and relatives introduced	Long term
Gao Xinyu	Male	25	High school	Driver	Good	Han	Shuangyashan, Heilongjiang	1995 . 8	single	no	Driver, computer	Advertisement	Long term