



China, People's Republic of: Strategies for Involving Social Workers in Social Assistance

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| Project Name | Strategies for Involving Social Workers in Social Assistance | |
| Project Number | 47033-001 | |
| Country | China, People's Republic of | |
| Project Status | Closed | |
| Project Type / Modality of Assistance | Technical Assistance | |
| Source of Funding / Amount | TA 8447-PRC: Strategies for Involving Social Workers in Social Assistance | |
| | Technical Assistance Special Fund | US\$ 400,000.00 |
| Strategic Agendas | Inclusive economic growth | |
| Drivers of Change | Governance and capacity development Knowledge solutions | |
| Sector / Subsector | Health - Health insurance and subsidized health programs | |
| Gender Equity and Mainstreaming | Some gender elements | |
| Description | The TA aims to contribute to the improvement of social assistance through the introduction of social work services into social assistance. Specifically, the TA is intended to achieve the following goals: (i) identify areas for involving social workers in social assistance through the assessment of gaps in the needs of poor households and creation of services to support of the transition from welfare to work; and (ii) develop strategies and instruments for introducing social work services and accredited social worker skills into social assistance. | |

Project Rationale and Linkage to Country/Regional Strategy

The social assistance systems established in the People's Republic of China (PRC), including the minimum living standard guarantee scheme (dibao), aim to protect the fundamental living rights and interests of vulnerable groups by focusing on areas such as family care, childhood education and health, family livelihood strategy, and mental health of family members. While common in social assistance programs in many countries, the concept of "social workers" is relatively new in the PRC, which currently covers a very broad area of activities ranging from payments specialists, community workers, and counselors, among others. Growing areas are medical social workers who facilitate patients' access to, and use of medical facilities, as well as follow-up. Unlike the medical patients, beneficiaries of dibao have no such case workers helping them to access other services, benefits, nor work programs. This lack of personalized assistance from social workers has been identified by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MOCA) as one of the inhibiting factors for graduation from dibao for beneficiaries who are able to work. To bridge this gap between welfare and work, and ensure better care for vulnerable groups unable to work, MOCA intends to introduce and expand the role for social workers in social assistance. Defining the role and qualifications necessary for social workers in social assistance for MOCA is the focus of the proposed TA activities.

Based on international and domestic experience, introducing professional social work services into social assistance is of great value in enhancing the employment awareness of assistance beneficiaries, increasing their social inclusion, protecting them from being rejected by the society, and improving assistance service quality. The goal of building a cadre of professional social workers in social assistance is supported by the National Development Plan for Social Work, which calls for an increase in the number of social workers in the PRC to 2 million by 2015 and 3 million by 2020. At present, approximately 80,000 people have passed the accreditation test for professional social workers in the PRC. Despite the major efforts at increasing the numbers of social workers undertaken to date, challenges remain in enhancing social work services into social assistance, including:

(i) The field of social work in the People's Republic of China remains poorly defined. The job area is poorly defined due to a wide range of activities that are undertaken by social workers, and the varying levels of professional training available for each of those roles (professional social workers, para-professional social workers, etc.). This TA provides an opportunity to help define the role of social workers for MOCA in social assistance and more broadly.

(ii) Gap between academic training and practice. There is a significant gap between the academic training and practice of social work in the PRC. There are currently more than 220 university majors in the PRC dedicated to social work, and this number is growing. Despite this, the majority of program graduates do not pursue work in the field, and those that do face many challenges due to lack of practical training, internships, and occupational and social recognition. Considering the growing demand for social workers within government, other service providers, and community-based groups, this TA comes at an opportune moment to engage with academia on applied research on qualifications, practical training, and emerging models (i.e. Chinese Academy of Social Sciences).

(iii) Lack of social workers trained to provide services for work promotion and related services for dibao recipients and their families. Although social workers in many countries support the transition from welfare to work, social workers in the PRC have limited training in social assistance tasks, such as services to recipients to find jobs and transition off from welfare. Institutionally, the role of social workers in this area is yet to be defined by MOCA and the TA findings will play a significant role in providing the evidence and experience through pilot studies to fill this gap.

(iv) Need for greater integration between government and civil-society-led social work activities. While there is a wide range of activities in the PRC, which are supported by social workers through civil society organizations (CSOs) such as migrant worker services, disaster relief, youth development, elderly care, and health, current legislation and funding modalities can prevent CSOs from playing a greater role in government-led or contracted social work initiatives. This gap prevents CSOs from providing this service to government in social assistance, and also contributes to a lack of institutional support for social workers in the field.

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| Impact | Improved service delivery of social workers in government social assistance programs. |
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Project Outcome

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| Description of Outcome | Better knowledge and information with MOCA for enhancement of the service delivery of social workers in social assistance and adoption of professional guidelines. |
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| Progress Toward Outcome | Consultant recruitment has been completed for the project. |
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Implementation Progress

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| Description of Project Outputs | Gap analysis/ needs assessment of social workers involvement in social assistance. International study tour exploring institutional arrangements and work flows at professional social work institutions. Pilot studies on the introduction of social workers into social assistance. |
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| Status of Implementation Progress (Outputs, Activities, and Issues) | Six officials from MOCA, MOF, and provincial MOCA offices joined the study tour to the Philippines and Australia from 22-27 November 2015. The delegation learned about the social assistance systems and involvement of professional social work in social assistance services in these countries. The delegation met government officials, representatives of social service organizations and social organizations, experts and scholars to gain information as well as exchange ideas and experiences. |
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| Geographical Location | |
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Summary of Environmental and Social Aspects

Environmental Aspects

Involuntary Resettlement

Indigenous Peoples

Stakeholder Communication, Participation, and Consultation

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| During Project Design | The proposed TA is included in the 2013- 2015 pipeline in the country operations business plan and has been identified and conceptualized through the domestic processing procedure of the PRC Government and through direct discussions with MOCA and relevant stakeholders. During the pre-reconnaissance mission, the following stakeholders were consulted for their advice regarding the conceptualization of this TA concept: China Youth Development Foundation, World Bank, UNICEF, Beijing Social Work Development Center for Facilitators, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. |
| During Project Implementation | Participatory consultation, through a TA working group will be incorporated during TA implementation. |

Business Opportunities

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| Consulting Services | total of 25 person-months of consulting services (two international consultants totaling 2 person-months and two national consultants for a total of 23 person-months) will be required. Consultants will have expertise in (i) the design of social work programs and policies, particularly in support of the transition of welfare to work; (ii) in-depth knowledge of existing social assistance and social work programs in the PRC, institutional frameworks, and monitoring and evaluation systems; and (iii) human resources in social assistance and social work programs in the PRC. A national consultant will serve as the team leader. The consultants will be responsible for producing the TA's outputs and deliverables effectively and on time, as well as organizing and carrying out all TA activities, including the analyses, study tour, pilots, symposiums and workshops, and policy note and knowledge product. |
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Responsible Staff

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| Responsible ADB Officer | Katich, Kristina N. |
| Responsible ADB Department | East Asia Department |
| Responsible ADB Division | Urban and Social Sectors Division, EARD |
| Executing Agencies | <i>Ministry of Civil Affairs Mr. Liu Xitang, Deputy General Director, Department of Social Assistance xitang@263.net 147 Beiheyuan Dajie Dongcheng District, Beijing 100721</i> |

Timetable

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| Concept Clearance | 21 Jun 2013 |
| Fact Finding | 22 Apr 2013 to 23 Apr 2013 |
| MRM | - |
| Approval | 05 Sep 2013 |
| Last Review Mission | - |
| Last PDS Update | 31 Mar 2016 |

TA 8447-PRC

| Milestones | | | | | |
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| Approval | Signing Date | Effectivity Date | Closing | | |
| | | | Original | Revised | Actual |
| 05 Sep 2013 | 08 Oct 2013 | 08 Oct 2013 | 15 Nov 2015 | 15 May 2016 | - |

| Financing Plan/TA Utilization | | | | | | | Cumulative Disbursements | |
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| ADB | Cofinancing | Counterpart | | | | Total | Date | Amount |
| | | Gov | Beneficiaries | Project Sponsor | Others | | | |
| 400,000.00 | 0.00 | 50,000.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 450,000.00 | 05 Sep 2013 | 279,477.72 |

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| Project Page | https://www.adb.org/projects/47033-001/main |
| Request for Information | http://www.adb.org/forms/request-information-form?subject=47033-001 |
| Date Generated | 28 April 2017 |

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