

New actors on disabled people housing policy support field

---Primary case studies in Beijing

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Abstract:

This is a primary research on housing support for disabled people in Beijing, which was directed by Karen Fisher and Jing LI during Dec.2005- Feb.2006. From social inclusion and exclusion perspectives, we describe on the disabled housing support issue, who is actors which take responsibility to care this venerable group, and who are the freshmen in this field and the complicated relationship among different actors, then we analyze its running system and institutes. Chinese government deduce its public responsibility during market oriented reform, with "socializing social welfare" movement. That is thought a good example on "small government, big society". But authors here argue such government vacancy on public service is maybe wrong.

Key words: disabled people housing support, new actors

China has impressive legislation on disabled people right protection (NPC 1990), and central government is the main actor to protect disabled people right. According the first sample survey of person with disabilities, which was directed in 1987, over 5% population in China is disabled¹, so it means about 65 million people, with all kind of conditions, like visual, hearing, speech, physical, intellectual and mental illness disabilities in mainland China.

Although China is a total society which the government would make every decision before its market oriented reform started in 1980s(Sun 2003), all different level governments would prefer to ask family to take the social welfare responsibility for disabled people.² "The Chinese welfare system for vulnerable and marginalized members of society is a residual system. The state only assumes direct responsibility when other institutional arrangements have failed." (Lu,2003) Since the government would not let any other social actors to share its authority and power, it is difficult to find any service provider expect that current authorities.

While its changes a lot during the market oriented reform and opening policy period after culture revolution, Chinese government realize its could not control everything, and for interest driving, it prefer to give up some formal areas and focus its full energy on economic development and GDP myth. The welfare system on disabled people housing issue is one to be left behind.³

¹ The second sample survey is on the way now.

² Before 1980s, state-owned enterprise could provide some welfare, like housing, healthcare insurance, and pension to its employees in urban cities, and rural government also provide some security for its villagers by commune economics. But the family is the basic unit for all services' delivery and acceptance.

³ Public housing reform is not included in this paper; we only focused on disabled people condition.

So here this paper will exam the implications of this culture and policy position for disabled people's access to housing support. As from our social participation and social inclusion perspective, we don't think housing issue is only for shelters, but also care on providing enough chance for disabled people to learn about normal society and increase their social experience. I.e. housing support for disability is not only on housing issue; it also cares social policy changing and new actors involving in the past 20 year. From analyzing what we can make a map on decentralization approach and civil society establishment in current situation.

In UN convention the protection and promotion of rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in which China has participated (UN Enable 2005) The Convention aims to ensure promote the ability of people with disabilities to live independently and to participate fully in all aspects of life. In relation to housing this includes adequate shelter, physical access, support and skill development to live independently. So under such international background with china internal situation, Chinese government has to fade back from some area and permit individual, cooperation, social organization, charity organization, and foundation to participate this field. "The development of NGO sector in China is rudimentary. Few local NGO agencies exist in the disability sector. International NGO agencies are active in China, generally relying on a charity model, rather than local initiative and self –advocacy."⁴ The reason for such judgment is at one hand, governmental support moves out quickly from some areas which is its formal field, and at the other hand, since it still follow the old governance approach to control civil society so it is unwilling to release its power.⁵

In China, Chinese disabled persons federation (CDPF) is main former actor who charge service issue for the disabled on the behalf of central government. In state council, there is a National Coordination committee of disability whose responsibility to coordinate all different ministries for disabled, and its secretariat is located in CDPF. In local authorities level (province, city, township), there are the similar system and institutes like central government. Governmental channel also include welfare institutes and hospitals for homeless and poorest people disabled. i.e., governmental channel mixed with GONGO channel.

Then there are some social organizations whose mission and task related with the disabled. Now since the governmental channel and resource is limited, the disabled people sometime would choose access to social organizations which profit or non-profit orientation. But as such social organizations always have no clear line for profit or non-profit, the normal would not easily to distinguish.

Here are some cases to show.

⁴ From draft was written by Karen Fisher and Li Jing Feb,2006

⁵ Currently rare NGO for disabilities would get financial support from local authorities, even if it were quite difficult to them to get a legal status as we still stick to dual-management system for NGO registration issue. Most NGO we reviewed this time registered whether in bureau of civil affair or bureau of Administration and Commerce, register in the second kind would not enjoy any tax waiver.