



Child Welfare and Protection in China

Never Stand Still

Arts & Social Sciences

Social Policy Research Centre



“In China, domestic violence against children is common. We don’t currently have an effective system to protect our children. Many serious cases are noticed only after the worst tragedies have happened. To solve the problem, China needs to establish an effective child protection system, with the government taking an active role to protect and support abused children.”

TONG LIHUA. 2012 IBA PRO BONO AWARD
WINNER AND DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE
CHINA CHILD PROTECTION NETWORK OF
VOLUNTEER LAWYERS

Executive Summary

The Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) at the University of New South Wales has been approached by the Chinese Government and international and children's rights organisations to advise on the development of an effective child protection system in China. Child neglect and abuse is a significant concern in China, and the establishment of an effective child protection system will have an enormous impact on child welfare.

The SPRC has a strong track record in conducting social policy research in China and is uniquely positioned to contribute to a project of this scale. For over 10 years, SPRC researchers have worked collaboratively with the Chinese government, local authorities and communities, researchers, not-for-profits, civil society and other key organisations to conduct research to inform the development of effective evidence-based social policy. This research has had a direct influence on almost all major reforms to China's child protection policy over the past decade, including the introduction of a national orphans allowance and foster care guidelines. It is estimated that over 750,000 children have directly benefited from these policy changes to date, with millions more children benefiting indirectly.

It is essential that the development of a child protection system in China is informed by relevant, evidence-based research in order to be effective. As a result, this project will be implemented in four main phases: research, policy development, implementation, and advocacy and public awareness.

The SPRC is seeking \$3.3 million in philanthropic funding to enable the first two phases of the project. If the SPRC is successful in securing funding to cover the first two phases, the findings will contribute to phases 3 and 4 that the Chinese government and other stakeholders are planning to implement in conjunction with their current child protection plans.

Supporting the SPRC in contributing to the development of a child protection system in China will have a powerful positive impact on Chinese social policy, and will make a difference to the lives of millions of the most vulnerable children in China.



Background

China has 322 million children, representing one in six children worldwide. Over one million children in China are orphaned or abandoned without any form of parental care, often as a result of the death of a parent or parental incarceration, illness or disability. About 110,000 of these children are in the care of the state, 80 per cent of whom live in institutions and orphanages rather than with an alternative family.

Child neglect is also a significant concern in China, with an estimated 56 million children living separately from their parents. As parents move to cities to find work, they are often forced to leave their children behind resulting in a high prevalence of neglect and abuse.

Research conducted in 2013 has estimated that over 9 per cent of girls and 8 per cent of boys in China – around 30 million children in total – have experienced sexual abuse. One per cent of

child sexual abuse is penetrative sexual abuse, affecting approximately 3 million children; a major problem with no explicit policy solution.

These child welfare and protection problems have been brought to world attention in recent months, with mass media reports attracting heated debate about the need to protect children against the risk of physical and sexual abuse, address the living conditions in informal orphanages and prevent the high rates of child death in fires, traffic and other accidents due to neglect.

In order to protect and support vulnerable children, China needs to develop and implement an effective child protection system. The development of such a system will need to be underpinned by a robust and comprehensive program of research which is relevant to the situation in China, and is informed by lessons from child protection systems around the globe.



A strong track record

The Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales

For more than a decade, the SPRC at UNSW has worked collaboratively with the Chinese government, civil society, researchers, and several other key organisations to build a body of research to inform the development of effective social policy in China.

The SPRC has led 28 research projects focusing on welfare provision to disadvantaged children in China, including abandoned children in the care of the state, children affected by HIV, orphans in rural and urban areas, children with disabilities and children at risk of abuse and neglect. This research has had a significant impact on government social policy development and the programs of civil society organisations.

The SPRC has built a national network of leaders in government, non-government and community social policy research across China. This strong track record of conducting social policy research on sensitive topics with vulnerable groups in China places the SPRC at UNSW in a unique position to effectively bring a project of such importance and scale to fruition.



Impact of SPRC Research to Date

From 2000–2010, SPRC research projects contributed significantly to policy developments and government reforms in China. This research, along with collaborative research projects led by other key organisations, has had significant direct and indirect impact on child welfare.

2001-2003

Research Project

The first national research project on alternative care for orphans, “Children in Institutional and Other Forms of Alternative Care,” commissioned by UNICEF and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The research demonstrated significant improvements for children when they live with foster families rather than in an institution.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government issued Temporary Regulation Over Foster Care and accepted foster care as one of the main forms of alternative care for orphans.

Impact

20,000 orphans nationwide were moved from institutions and placed in foster care families.

2000

Research Project

“A Rethink of Social Welfare and Social Security” project commissioned by the Bureau of Social Welfare and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Civil Affairs. This project proposed an alternative framework for welfare, based on an early intervention and prevention model.

Contributed to Government Action

The theoretical framework of the research was accepted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Impact

The goal of progressing towards a moderate universal welfare system in China was set.

2000

2001

Research Project

“Social Security Reform in the People’s Republic of China” commissioned by the Asian Development Bank and the Department for International Development, UK. This research proposed the introduction of a social security system, starting with minimum income support, for people who are the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government expanded coverage of minimum income support.

Impact

22 million people living in poverty were supported by the new reforms.

2000

2002

Research Project

“Social Development Consultancy to Assess the Development of Foster Care Policy in Shanghai,” commissioned by the Department for International Development, UK. The Shanghai Model proved to be an effective, well integrated and resourced model that demonstrated quality foster care with good outcomes for children and families.

Contributed to Government Action

The Ministry of Civil Affairs replicated the Shanghai Model in other parts of China.

Impact

Guidelines for quality foster care in China improved outcomes for orphans across the country.

2001

2004-2006

Research Project

“Defining the Adequate Role of the State and Family in Child Protection: Estimating Costs of Relative Foster Care in Rural China”, funded partly by the Australian Research Council. The first national census of orphans in China in order to determine the true magnitude of the problem. It was discovered that 400,000 orphans lived in kinship care and 100,000 orphans lived in orphanages. Of this half a million orphans, most received no social assistance.

Contributed to Government Action

President Hu Jintao took action; 15 Ministries and National Committees jointly issued the new recommended policy and established the first Department of Child Welfare.

Impact

Provinces started to provide social assistance to over 150,000 orphans.

2006

Research Project

“Education for Migrant Children in China”, commissioned by the Asian Foundation. Over 200 million migrant workers moved from the country to the city seeking work to survive. Children of these migrant families were not able to access education in the city, which also meant that many were left behind in rural villages in the care of extended family.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government changed policy to enable migrant children to access education.

Impact

20 million children are able to stay with their families and access education in the city.

2004

2005

2006

CONTINUED OVER PAGE

Research Project

“Creating an Inclusive Social Environment for Vulnerable Children: child protection in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region,” commissioned by the Australia-China Council.

Contributed to Government Action

Chinese government implemented policy to financially support Muslim extended families to care for orphaned children.

Impact

Children were transferred from institutional care to foster care, enabling them to stay in their cultural communities.

2003

Research Project

“The Needs of AIDS Infected and Affected Children in China”, commissioned by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and UNICEF. Whole villages are affected by HIV due to poor blood collection practices, with many children also at risk of infection and no family care. It highlighted the benefit of community based interventions that supported the specific needs of these vulnerable children.

Contributed to Government Action

Local governments provided social assistance to HIV affected children. In 2012, the Ministry of Finance extended the orphan allowance to children affected by HIV.

Impact

HIV infected children received support from the government and civil society organisations.

2005

Research Project

“Developing An Effective System Of Child Protection In China”, funded by the Australian Research Council and Save the Children UK. This research hallmarks a major transition point and the start of the development of an evidence base to inform effective child protection policy. Guided by culturally appropriate social policy, the research analysed questions of what is the real need and the context in which a child protection system is to be established.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government and civil society saw this research as the start of an evidence base, a foundation for discussion and policy development.

2006-2009



Impact of SPRC Research to Date

CONTINUED

2007-2009

Research Project

“Social Assistance for Orphans in China: Situation Analysis on Children without Caregivers, Children with Disabilities, and Street Children in China”, commissioned by UNICEF and Ministry of Civil Affairs. This research focused on the financial implications and considerations for implementation of an accessible and culturally appropriate social assistance system across China.

Contributed to Government Action

Recommendations were accepted by the President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to implement orphan allowances nationwide.

Impact

Provinces received funding from the government. 250,000 children received the orphan allowance in the first year, and half a million orphans in the following year.

2010

Research Project

“Multi-dimensional Child Welfare Survey in Five Provinces”, commissioned by UNICEF and Ministry of Civil Affairs. A pilot study evaluating the outcomes of vulnerable children receiving welfare services in conjunction with financial assistance.

Contributed to Government Action

The government is currently considering policy reform.

Impact

80,000 children in the pilot areas in these five provinces have had significantly better outcomes.

CONTINUED

2007

Research Project

“Experiences of families of children with disabilities in China”, commissioned by Plan International and funded partially by the Australian Research Council. The research demonstrated that children with disabilities were not eligible for social or financial assistance, which aggravated the rate of abandoned children.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government moved to a children’s rights framework for policy development for children with disabilities.

Impact

Some provinces implemented financial support and services based on rights based policies.

2007

2008

2009

2010

2011

Research Project

“Situation Analysis on Children Without Caregivers, Children with Disabilities and Street Children”, commissioned by UNICEF. This research informed the broader social policy proposal, which provided evidence to define the scope of the problem in China.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government considered this research as critical in building the evidence base for informed future policy decisions.

Impact

Ministry commitment to address the needs of vulnerable children.

2008

2011

Research Project

“The Living Conditions of Children Without Care Givers and Policy Suggestions”, commissioned by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. This research evaluated the living conditions and outcomes of other groups of vulnerable children across China. The primary recommendation was to extend the orphan allowance implemented in 2007 to other vulnerable children.

Contributed to Government Action

Recommendations have been accepted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and are currently under consideration by the Ministry of Finance.

Impact

If the policy is implemented, 710,000 vulnerable children will benefit across China.



Developing a child protection system in China

The SPRC will work collaboratively with the Chinese government and various international and children's rights organisations to contribute research to facilitate the development of a 10 year strategy that will establish an effective child protection system in China. There is much work to be done in engaging the public in this process as there is a significant reluctance by professionals and the greater public to identify or report child abuse and neglect.

The primary policy outcomes of the 10 year research strategy will include informing:

1. The establishment of a Child Welfare and Protection Bureau at the central level, a Child Welfare and Protection Centre in each county (approximately 2,000 new centres and 200 existing centres to be reformed) and engagement of at least one child welfare worker within each community (600,000-700,000 in total)
2. The introduction of legal mechanisms to protect abused children
3. The implementation of an effective reporting system

This project will require significant organisational, human, and financial resources to achieve its outcome and will be divided into four main phases. Throughout the project the researchers will contribute to evidence for policy change and academic advancement.

Phase 1



Research (2014–2016)

It is critical that the development of a child protection system in China is evidence-based to enable the design and implementation of effective and culturally appropriate policies and programs. Comprehensive research will be conducted to inform the design of a national child protection system, guide policy development and support advocacy activities.

Research questions to provide an evidence based foundation for informing policy will include:

- What is the prevalence of the main forms of violence and neglect against children in China?
- How can the effectiveness of current child protection functions and structures be improved?
- What systems and resources are available in Chinese society on which the government could draw to develop a comprehensive child protection system?
- What are the main challenges to improving the system in China? How can policy and best practice from Australia and the international community be adapted to the Chinese context given the changing nature of Chinese society and the constraints and challenges facing policy makers?
- How can China develop a child protection system which is effective and efficient and avoids the pitfalls faced by systems in other countries?

Phase 2



Policy Development (2017–2018)

Research findings of Phase 1 will be used to inform the development of appropriate, evidence-based policy. This includes expert research advice to:

- Draft the Child Welfare Acts of the People's Republic of China
- Amend the Law of Protection Minors of the People's Republic of China
- Draft the Functions, Duties and Working Procedure of Chinese Statutory Child Protection Agency
- Identify design characteristics and financial implications of the new child protection system
- Prepare working plans and legislation of child protection in emergencies, accidents and natural disasters
- Prepare working plans and legislation of child protection to sexually abused children and guidelines for after event support
- Prepare child protection guidelines for mass media from a child rights perspective
- Prepare a Biannual Chinese Child Protection Report to inform the Chinese government and society the problems and challenges facing Chinese child protection system, and the necessity of policy change.

Evaluate key components of the developing system to inform further policy and program development.

Phase 3



Staged Implementation and Training

The Chinese Government is beginning pilots to implement and fund the child protection system in four provinces (Henan, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Jiangsu provinces). UBS Foundation and Right to Play, an international humanitarian organization will provide financial and human support to the pilot practice and advocacy activities.

The large scale delivery of new services will require training and capacity building in the future. The SPRC will be involved in coordinating technical and training resources, including:

- 2000 child care directors of child welfare and protection centres at county level and 600,000 to 700,000 child welfare workers at community level will be trained during the implementation of the project. Most of them must be trained in China. About 5% of technical staff will be trained overseas for capacity building.
- UBS Foundation have committed to funding a project to determine the best model to deliver the training and implement it within China.
- Chinese Government has announced social work training to support the implementation.

Phase 4



Advocacy and Public Awareness

The SPRC will consolidate the evidence about child welfare for policy development and impact. It will advise on methods for raising national public awareness about child protection to achieve the necessary political census to implement the project goals.

In addition, the SPRC will work with other stakeholders to develop a strategy to raise awareness of the project with international audiences, in order to provide a model that can be replicated in other countries that are developing child protection systems.

The project will also have significant academic impact, developing academic understanding of child protection systems in transition countries and the role of evidence-based policy in system development.

The research team



**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
XIAOYUAN SHANG**

Associate Professor Xiaoyuan Shang has played a central role in conducting important large-scale investigations in China since 2001. Xiaoyuan Shang will provide leadership in the development of a child protection system in China, bringing her significant expertise in Chinese social policy and child protection to the project.

Her work has brought a great deal of attention to the situation of Chinese orphans and children in difficult situations, and directly led to important policy changes in China, including a shift from institutional care to foster care for orphaned children in state children's welfare institutions, and the establishment a new basic living security system for Chinese orphans. In 2003, Xiaoyuan Shang was awarded the Alice Tay Human Rights Award by the Australia-China Council for her important contribution to improving the understanding of child rights

in China. Xiaoyuan Shang also has a visiting appointment in the School of Social Development and Public Policy at Beijing Normal University.

Significant research projects include: Children in Institutions and Other Forms of Alternative Care, the Needs of HIV/AIDS Affected Children, and the First National Census of Chinese Orphans. She has been frequently consulted by Chinese and international organisations, including UNICEF, Save the Children (UK), Department for International Development (UK), Asian Development Bank, UNDP, The Asia Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs.



**ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR
KAREN FISHER**

Karen R. Fisher is an Associate Professor at the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales. Her research interests include the organisation of social services in Australia and China, including disability and mental health services and community care, inclusive research methodology, and social policy process. Karen first studied in China for two years from 1985 through a China/New Zealand Exchange Scholarship from Nanjing University and People's University, and has since lived there twice with her family on Endeavour Australia Cheung Kong Fellowships (Visiting Fellow, Shanghai Jiaotong University 2009; Chinese Academy of Social Science 2005). She has conducted research with Xiaoyuan Shang in China on disability, children and non-government organisations.



**PROFESSOR
ILAN KATZ**

Professor Katz joined the Social Policy Research Centre in January 2005, becoming Director from 2007 to 2011. After graduating in South Africa he started his career as a social worker in the UK. He was for several years Head of Practice Development and Research at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. After spending some time as a civil servant he returned to research before migrating to Australia. His research interests include evidence based policy, evaluation of complex programs, child protection, parenting, youth justice, disability and mental health, early intervention, social inclusion, comparative child welfare systems, Indigenous social policy, migration, and multiculturalism. He is a member of the NSW Ombudsman Child Death Review Team.



**PROFESSOR
PETER
SAUNDERS**

Peter Saunders was the Director of the Social Policy Research Centre from February 1987 until July 2007, and now holds a Research Chair in Social Policy within the Centre. His research interests include poverty and income distribution, household needs and living standards, social security reform, comparative social policy and ageing and social protection in China. He was elected a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 1995, and has worked as a consultant for the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Asian Development Bank, the International Social Security Association, and the Royal Commission on Social Policy in New Zealand. He was appointed a Sciential Professor by UNSW in 2006, in recognition of his research contribution and eminence. He is currently the President of the Foundation for International Studies on Social Security and was the first elected the first President of the Australian Social Policy Association between 2009 and 2013.

GOVERNANCE

An external advisory committee, including former UNSW Chancellor John Yu, 2012 IBA Pro Bono Award Winner Tong Lihua, former diplomat and ambassador to China Stephen FitzGerald, and other international members, will advise on the priorities of the project to maximise the social and academic impact in China, Australia and internationally.



Why UNSW?

UNSW is Australia's first international university with global recognition for research excellence, innovation and social justice. UNSW is renowned for engaging in academic and practical ways with key contemporary social issues.

UNSW was acknowledged as a national leader in the 2010 and 2012 Excellence in Research for Australia reports and is in the top 100 Universities in The Times 2012 world ranking. In Australia, the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences received top rankings across many disciplines, with recognition above world standard across the board.

Arts & Social Sciences has an impressive record of research, teaching and informing policy in global human rights, health, well-being and international development, including the work of the Social Policy Research Centre, Centre for Refugee Research, the Centre for Social Research in Health and the Gender-Related Violence

Research Network. These Centres have significant social impact, from informing social policy which addresses child poverty and inequality in the Asia Pacific, to the development of new protection tools for at risk populations used by the UNHCR.

Situated within a hub of excellence at Arts & Social Sciences, SPRC has over 30 years of experience in social policy research, with particular expertise investigating the impact of policies and programs and the needs of vulnerable people. With a team of 36 staff, SPRC researchers boast a range of disciplinary and research skills, including economics, political science, sociology, law, development and international studies.



Proposal for Funding

The SPRC is seeking \$3.3 million in philanthropic funding to enable the implementation of this project. The Chinese Government and other stakeholders have agreed to fund Phases 3 and 4 of the project if UNSW can secure funding to cover Phases 1 and 2. The funding will cover:

- A “Named” Chair in Chinese Social Policy
- Research team of two “Named” Post-Doctoral Fellowships
- Administrative and research support

Naming Rights

In supporting this research you will secure exclusive naming rights to the Chair for a five year term, in addition to naming rights for the two Post-Doctoral Fellowships. The name of the Chair will be displayed on public occasions when the Chair holder speaks, included as a reference in all published work of the Chair holder, in all media releases and any other public references to the Chair.

Recognition & Engagement

It is important that our donors and supporters have the opportunity to engage and develop a meaningful relationship with the Faculty, becoming involved so as to experience the profound impact your gift will make. We will provide regular feedback to you and work with you to devise ways in which you are able to engage with both members of the research team, the Chair and the Faculty.

Making a Difference

China is in critical need of a national child protection system to prevent child abuse and neglect, protect children who are being abused and support victims of child abuse. Supporting the SPRC in conducting this important research and contributing to the establishment of an effective child welfare and protection system in China will make a difference to the lives of millions of the most vulnerable children in China.



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