

MISSION REPORT

Date: 24-25 January 2019

Location: Dachuan District, Dazhou City, Sichuan Province

EU-CHINA SPRP: Marzena Breza, EU RE Comp 3

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Main Goal:

Recognize arrangements of social assistance policy from provincial to prefectural levels as well as social assistance institutions (benefits and service delivery) for vulnerable groups.

Dachuan District is the one of the place where SPRP C3 is running pilot sites.

The Social Security Research Center of Nanjing University and the prof. Lin Mingang as a director of the Research Center is a third party responsible for the pilot project.

The third party during that time has provided two documents concerning pilot site:

1. "The evaluation of social assistance in the comprehensive reform experimental area of Dachuan, Sichuan province" – baseline report;
2. "Comprehensive reforms – 'Targeted social assistance – integrated approach' – work program for Dachuan Pilot area, Dachuan District, Dazhou City, Sichuan Province" – social assistance comprehensive reform program of Dachuan.

In Dazhou City, each administrative level has their own Service Assistance Center(s). The most basic level, the town/street center, covers neighborhood of several streets or villages. Town /street center receives citizen's application, register them on the new IT platform, and is responsible to conduct means testing and democratic investigation (basic condition checking and public opinion soliciting). Then it submits the information to district's service center. The district center runs the request through database and send all information to authorities for deciding whether the citizen is eligible for the allowances and/or services he/she applied (e.g., in regards to social assistance for the disabled, the decision maker is district MoCA). During the field visit, staff from center used basic living allowance (in Chinese term *Dibao*) as demo case for the center's processing procedure.

The system reform initiated in 2017 mainly refers to the new IT platform and streamlined procedure at the one-stop set-up of the service center. The new IT platform allows citizen to access and submits application online or in nearby service center, to be informed on what benefits they can apply, and to follow-up the process of their cases. The service center integrates various government agencies and organizations, which allows the citizen to process all requests at one place without having to travel in far distance or in-between various local authorities. The service center at district level also coordinates various agencies for information checking of the applicant.

Identified problems: Firstly, due to the reform is still ongoing, the new system now runs in parallel with the old system, so applications before 2017 still applying to the old system, but the integration is expected to be completed in March 2019. In addition, the 27 agencies and offices withhold individual's information on various areas run their own database, so the information checking of the applicant in various

fields are conducted by different agencies respectively and still needs to be manually summed up by district center. Therefore, the database checking usually needs 3 days. However, the local authorities expressed they have been inspired by the EU model on running database and a plan of integration of the databases is on the table. Secondly, due to Chinese unique Hukou policy (a local household registration /residence permit), out-coming resident, such as migrant workers, needs to either apply social assistance from its hometown, or transfer their registration to current district, or get certificates from hometown on not having assistance before they are qualified for applying. Thirdly, huge population consequently result to massive amount of people in need of services, therefore, the district's staff number is limited, social work organizations is not enough, service range and allocated fund are insufficient.

Detailed Reports:

The new IT platform officially kicked off in 2018, aimed to provide one-stop service. Various authorities and agencies (i.e. MHRoSS, MoCA, Communist League, Women Federation, Federation for the Disabled, Red Cross, Trade Union, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Justice) have staff posted in the center to manage 40 programs. Among the 40 programs, there are also services provided by Dazhou City, such as family consultation, legal assistance, public housing, employment support, care for senior citizens, assistance to beggars etc. Benefits are classified into 7 categories and 6 categories are under the management of local MoCA. Specifically, there are 7 programs related to the disabled. Center of such basic level process application for financial and material benefits, but not offer services.

ID card is used as a e-token to access basic information that registered on the IT system, such as which benefits one has applied and for what reasons, as well as the decision-making for why one gets the benefit.

Dachuan District has 52 villages/townships and 2 streets, each town or street has its own service center. The new platform allows people to apply from home online or go to assistance center that closest to them to apply all allowance or social assistance they need at once, without having to go to various agencies or authorities, or travel far away.

One of the most commonly seen applications is applying for basic living allowance (*Dibao*). MoCA has two sections dealing with *Dibao*. Assistance Center performs the function of MoCA locally. It takes the center 20 working days to handle one case. The allowance is issued on monthly basis, for urban area it is 520 RMB (69 Euro), for rural 330 RMB (44 Euro), which amount is calculated in respond to the district's minimum living cost. Eligibility of applicant is checked annually. Branches of the assistance center conducts means testing and neighborhood evaluation and public opinion soliciting, after which basic information is feedback to assistance center, assistance center integrates all basic information for relevant authority to make decision. In Sichuan Province, over 50% of the beneficiaries of the basic living allowance (*Dibao*) program are people with disabilities, especially those with serious disabilities.

For the disabled, the central and provincial governments allocate approximately 630,000 RMB (about 82,700 Euro) on annual basis for disability assistance including hospital treatments, rehabilitation instruments, adaptation and movement facilitation service etc. Collective training courses are provided to increase employment rate of the disabled. There are special schools for disabled children to receive special education. In practice, government provides funds to purchase 5 kinds of home services (food assistance, bathing assistance, medical assistance, cleaning assistance and emergency assistance) from third parties such as social organizations.

For senior citizen, people aged above 60 can receive free physical tests in the hospital, and over 80 can receive monthly allowance. More precisely, people aged 80-90 get 60RMB/month (7.9 Euro), aged 90-100 get 120RMB (15.8 Euro), over 100 receive 600/month (78.9 Euro). Such special support is also provided for children and for adults living single. In Dachuan, there are public and private elderly service institute provide services to disabled elderly people. Big institutes have full-time professional doctors.

At county or township level, joint conference with related agency's representation, have ad hoc meetings based on actual requirements. Before the new mechanism of Social Assistance, the joint meeting was held every month, now quarterly. As the conference is under the leadership of party and government, it serves as a coordinator in guiding works and promoting practices.

EU-CHINA SPRP Ms. Marzena Breza introduced European practices in related topics, such as pension system in Poland, unemployment benefit, integration center and so on. Present Chinese officials

acknowledged in the introduced cases EU countries have done better, while they also pointed out the problem that the China is trying to streamline its government but there is huge amount of citizens need services. The field visit presents the delegation a first-hand understanding on the “Comprehensive Reform of Social Assistance in the Social Security Reform Project in the Dachuan District”.

*** Note:**

Report bases on materials presented by and discussions conducted with local government during the 2-day field visit to one street center (Sanliping Street Service Center of Dachuan District), one town center (Heshi Town Service Assistance Center) and one district center (Social Assistance Service Center of the Dachuan District).

Information collected and drafted by Marzena Breza/Iwona Rogacka-Hu, C3 RE; January 30, 2019.