

# Mission Report

**Date:** 13-15.03.2019

**Location:** Jiangsu Province, Zhangjiagang City

**EU-CHINA SPRP:**

Ms. Marzena Breza, EU RE Comp 3

Ms. Iwona Rogacka-Hu, C3 Assistant, EU-CHINA SPRP

**Accompanying EU experts**

Ms. Kim Schryvers, EU Expert

**Accompanying Persons from Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA):**

Mr. Mao Lipo, Deputy Director of the Administration Division, Department of Social Assistance

Ms. Bi Ying, Department of International Cooperation

Ms. Xue Qiuji, Officer, Center of Monitoring and Verification for Low Income Families

Mr. Wang Guan, Officer, Center of Monitoring and Verification for Low Income Families,

Ms. Ge Weihong, Interpreter

**Accompanying Persons from Department of Civil Affairs of Jiangsu Province**

Ms. Hui Hong, Deputy Director of Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau

Mr. Zhou Jianming, Director of SA Division, Suzhou Civil Affairs Bureau

Mr. Liu Fei, Director of Pension Care Unit, Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau

Mr. Chen Ting, Director of Grassroots Government and Community Building Unit, Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau

Mr. Chen Min, Director of Social Work and Social Organization Management Unit, Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau

Ms. Jin Yuan, Deputy Director of Publicity and Education Unit, Zhangjiagang New Citizen Affairs Center

Ms. Liu Ying, Vice-President of Zhangjiagang City Children's Welfare Institute

Ms. Zhu Luzhen, Director of SA Unit, Zhangjiagang Civil Affairs Bureau

Ms. Zhang Wanxiang, Director of Civil Affairs Office of Yangshe Town People's Government

Ms. Yang Pin, Director of Care Center for Children in distressed, Zhangjiagang City

**MAIN GOAL:** recognize arrangements of social assistance policy at provincial; prefectural, township and city levels as well practical organization of social assistance institutions (benefits and service delivery) for most vulnerable group;

\*

*Information presented below is based on the materials shared and discussion holds during the 2 days local study visit.*

In May 2018, Zhangjiagang City was listed as a pilot site for the EU-China SPRP. Zhangjiagang conducted a social assistance reform under the four principles of “a combination of basic living with capacity building, government-led mechanism supported by social participation, tailor-made services add on to universal assistance, and cash benefits in complementary to service provision”. The reform puts efforts on supporting the elderly, the children and the disabled via introducing commercial insurances, developed technologies and strengthening institutional set-up. Moreover, due to the majority of Zhangjiagang's population is migrant workers or other non-original residents, the City puts efforts in piloting inclusive social assistance that features an extension to cover new residents by innovative measures.

**Detailed Report:**

Zhangjiagang City, situated on the lower south bank of Yangtze River, is an emerging industrial city with developed economy. Covering an area of 999 km<sup>2</sup>, the City has 8 towns, 2 districts and 153 administrative villages with 1.63 million people. In recent years, Zhangjiagang's population is increasing rapidly, migrant population, which is referred to as the "new citizen" by local authority, takes up 2/3 of the City's total population.

In May 2018, Zhangjiagang City became a pilot site for the EU-China SPRP. Zhangjiagang conducted a comprehensive social assistance reform titled "Supporting the Disadvantaged". The reform has been focused on the following aspects: a) optimizing social assistance process b) highlight equal treatment to new citizens and local residents b) designing tailor-made programs to improve targeted assistance d) encouraging social forces to participate in social assistance.

Besides securing an 8% plus annual growth rate for the basic living allowance, Zhangjiagang optimizes its social assistance process by improving the "one-stop service" mechanism. The City realized a full coverage of "one stop" service stations at three administrative levels by establishing a municipal social assistance service centre with subordinate offices outreached to all towns and villages. In parallel with the institutional set up, the City also optimizes its social assistance works by making a large share of its service accessible online. For example, Zhangjiagang developed a special website for collecting the information of migrant population, and the website has an APP portal for mobile installation, which significantly increase the efficiency of relevant social workers to collect and manage data. In addition, the government has built a social assistance management platform. The platform realizes data interoperability among the human resources department, health and family planning commission and other 20 departments. By connecting to the city's big data center, the City is able to set up an early warning mechanism through which local authority can initiate precautions and active assistance in a timely manner. Relying on the city's cloud service platform, Zhangjiagang sets up a "Virtual Nursing Home" management system integrating functions of push-to-talk call, emergency call, service dispatch, supervision, and elderly health file management. The virtual nursing home management system can provide 90 services in four categories covering humanistic care, rehabilitation therapy, daily care-taking and housekeeping services (for Dibao and other 8 types of social assistance beneficiaries, monthly cash benefits are provided to access the aforementioned services). The City equipped the empty nesters who are demented and disabled with smart devices (i.e. smart watches and wireless pagers) with functions such as GPS positioning, emergency call and fall alarm etc.

Due to the special composition of Zhangjiagang's population, which over two third are "new citizens" who move to the city in recent years, the City invests efforts in making its social assistance works more inclusive. In 2016, Zhangjiagang issued "Implementation Rules for Temporary Relief" to include "non-local permanent residents who have been living here for over 6 months" into the temporary assistance scope. This pioneering practice in China solves the long-standing problem for migrant workers to obtain social assistance. In addition, the City establishes 212 new citizens' affairs centres / service stations that distributed in almost every town and village throughout Zhangjiagang City, with nearly 1000 staff offering services for the migrants and new citizens in need. The City sets up social assistance insurance for new citizens with exceptional poverty. Zhangjiagang introduces commercial insurances into new citizen's assistance and launches a new citizen accident insurance program. The municipal government invests more than 2 million Yuan annually to purchase the insurance for new citizens aged 16 to 60. The introducing of commercial insurance as a supplement to the existing social security policies is widely used measures in Zhangjiagang for supporting vulnerable groups, such as government purchasing comprehensive insurances for children in distress, commercial accident insurance for the elderly aged 60 and above and so on.

Zhangjiagang designed tailor-made programs to improve targeted assistance. For example, the City sets up child welfare guidance centre from children's welfare institute and expand its service scope to providing child protection hotline, individual case evaluation, asylum and other social services. Another example is that, based on the social assistance management platform, and through analysing and evaluating the database on beneficiaries' information, the government designed 42 assistance programs to help beneficiaries solve their psychological issues, promote employment rates, developed their capabilities etc. Currently, 26 projects are up and running. During the field visit, the delegation spotted another example that is the Station for Migrant Workers. Since Zhangjiagang hosts around 45,000 construction workers who are often without good educational and moving frequently, so in order to offer better service to these construction workers, in 2012 construction workers' service centre were established in the City's five major construction sites. The station, adopts a movable building modular, provides construction workers with one-stop services such as policy interpretation, legal briefing, cultural entertainment, health-care, skills training and so on. In addition, some local communities are experimenting to offer free lunch in the neighbourhood facilities for the elderly aged over 80 with home delivering services.

Besides improving targeted assistance, Zhangjiagang is committed to encouraging social forces to participate in social assistance as well. For instance, the government sets up charity projects and encourages all sectors of society to participate in the philanthropic undertakings through title sponsorship and specialized donations. The City's Charity Federation (Foundation) designed 488 charity projects in 2019. Also, the Virtual Nursing Home mentioned above that commissioned in January 2013, is operated based on the participation of social organizations and enterprises to provide home-based care for senior citizens. Another example is the launch of village-level medical mutual assistance. Operated on village basis, it raises funds through joint investment of the villagers, village committee and social sponsorship. Operated by third-party platform, it can offers extra subsidies for sick villagers.

Based the field visits, EU experts and the representatives of Civil Affairs of Social Assistance of the Zhangjiagang City conducted a profound discussions the following day, where both sides fully exchanged practices, experiences, challenges and possible solutions over the social assistance programs. The discussion also deepened the understanding of the EU experts over the "Comprehensive Reform of Social Assistance in the Social Security Reform Project in the Zhangjiagang".

*Information collected and drafted by Marzena Breza/Iwona Rogacka-Hu, C3 RE; March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019.*