

EU-CHINA SOCIAL PROTECTION REFORM PROJECT

COMPONENT 3

COORDINATION OF OVERALL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REOURCES

VOLUME ON 2017 RESEARCH

TOPIC 3.2.3



EU-CHINA

Social Protection Reform Project
中国-欧盟社会保障改革项目



COORDINATION OF OVERALL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RECOURCES

VOLUME ON 2017 RESEARCH

TOPIC 3.2.3

Beijing February, 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Building A Fullink Plaza, No. 18 Chaoyangmen Wai Street, Room 2308,

Chaoyang District, Beijing 100020, China

Tel: (86-10) 8530 6520

Project website: <http://www.euchinasprp.eu/>

This publication has been edited by Greg Mctaggart.

This publication has been produced by the EU-China Social Protection Reform Project is co-funded jointly by the European Union and the Government of the People's Republic of China. The content is the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union or Ministry of Civil Affairs, P.R. China.

Table of Contents

1. Zhang Haomiao, Overall Coordination of Social Assistance Resources in China - Assessment report.....	4
2. Heinz-Dietrich Steinmeyer, Coordination of Overall Social Assistance resources - EU best practice report.....	44
3. Zhang Haomiao, Coordination of Overall Social Assistance Resources in China - Policy recommendation report	62
4. Jean-Yves Hocquet, Coordination of Overall Social Assistance Resources - Policy recommendation report.....	74



3.2.3 Overall Coordination of Social Assistance Resources in China

Assessment report

*Zhang Haomiao, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Public Administration,
Sichuan University, P. R. China*

Table of Contents

SUMMARY	7
1. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AND THE THEORETICAL BASIS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESOURCES COORDINATION	7
1.1 Definition and classification of social assistance resources	7
1.1.1 Definition	7
1.1.2 Classification	8
1.2 Relative theoretical basis of social assistance resources coordination	9
1.2.1 Inter-departmental cooperation theory	9
1.2.2 Welfare pluralism theory	10
1.2.3 Social exclusion and inclusion theory	11
1.3 Significance of coordinating social assistance resources in China	12
1.3.1 The practice of the "sharing" concept of development	12
1.3.2 The way to exert joint forces of social assistance.....	12
1.3.3 The way to achieve effective anti-poverty	13
2. EFFECT OF COORDINATION OF CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES	13
2.1 A comparatively complete social assistance program system	13
2.2 A stable funding source or social assistance	18
2.3 The coordination mechanism related to social assistance	20
2.4 The construction of social assistance information systems	22
3. PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION OF CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES	23
3.1 Program resources	23
3.1.1 Dibao "welfare binding"	23
3.1.2 Lack of service assistance	26
3.1.3 The lack of coordination between assistance and other social security programs...	28
3.2 Financial resources	30
3.2.1 The non-standardized mechanism for fund guarantees and financial responsibility sharing.....	30
3.2.2 Unfair financial resource distribution for social assistance programs between urban and rural regions.....	34
3.2.3 The financial expenditure structure is not balanced between the different assistance Programs.....	36
3.3 Organizational and human resources	37
3.3.1 Defective cooperation between the social assistance departments	37
3.3.2 Unclear responsibilities with the different levels of the civil affairs departments ..	38
3.3.3 Non-professionalism of service agencies and personnel at the grassroots levels..	38
3.3.4 Insufficient engagement of charitable organizations and social workers	39
3.4 Information Resources	40
3.4.1 An imperfect information sharing mechanism	40

3.4.2 Urban-rural and regional disparities in information coverage.....	42
REFERENCE.....	42

THE LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: China's social assistance programs.....	14
Table 2: Recipients and expenditure of main social assistance programs in 2015	17
Table 3: Total amount of expenditure on major social assistance programs by the civil affairs department (billion yuan)	18
Table 4: Income and expenditure of the public welfare fund 2013-15 (billion yuan).....	19
Table 5: Binding situation of the assistance benefits of China's urban Dibao families ..	24
Table 6: Trends of disabled and able-bodied people in the urban Dibao recipients 2007-2015.....	25
Table 7: Dibao participants understanding of social assistance policies.....	28
Table 8: Proportion of social assistance expenditure to fiscal expenditure and GDP (2015)	31
Table 9: Proportion of social assistance expenditure to GDP in some developing countries	32
Table 10: Proportion of urban and rural Dibao standard to residents' per capita income 2009-2015	32
Table 11: Objects of different assistance programs and the division of financial responsibilities	34
Table 12: Annual expenditure on Dibao in urban and rural China since 1999.....	35
Table 13: Financial social assistance investment and social assistance recipients structure	36
Figure 1: Situation of Migrant Needy Families in Obtaining Assistance in Current Resident Places	27

ABBREVIATIONS:

Dibao = Minimum Living Standard Guarantee System

Three-nos recipients = People with no working ability, no income and no family support

MoCA = Ministry of Civil Affairs

SUMMARY

Since the 1990s, with the implementation of Dibao, China's social assistance system has entered a new period of institutionalized and standardized development and has achieved outstanding achievements in institutional construction. With the promulgation and implementation of the Social Assistance Interim Measures, China has basically established a social assistance system framework with Dibao, the Threenos recipient program and disaster relief as the basics of the system with housing aid, medical aid, education aid and employment aid as the support benefits and with temporary assistance and charity help as the supplementary benefits. The establishment of the various social assistance programs undoubtedly aims to fulfil the different demands of the urban and the rural needy people. However, the increase in the social assistance programs does not necessarily bring about an increase in the effectiveness of social assistance. Only through the coordination of various social assistance programs can the overall force of social assistance be fully displayed and the effect of social assistance can be really enhanced. From the present to the future is a critical period for the transformation of social assistance from an emphasis on building institutions to the emphasis on resources coordination. Analyzing the connotation and classification of social assistance resources and the theoretical basis and significance of resources coordination from the theoretical perspective, and exploring the current effect and problems of coordinating social assistance resources from the practical perspective, will provide the basis for further coordinating social assistance resources and be beneficial in fulfilling the responsibilities of guaranteeing the minimum living level.

This report includes three sections: Chapter 1 explores the connotation and the classification of social assistance resources, and the theoretical basis and significance of resources coordination. Chapter 2 analyzes the basic effect of the coordination of social assistance resources. Chapter 3 examines the problems of the coordination of social assistance resources from four aspects including program resources, financial resources, organizational and human resources and information resources. This report is the result of the research conducted by EUCSPRP expert. It is not a governmental opinion from the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

1. DEFINITION OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AND THE THEORETICAL BASIS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESOURCES COORDINATION**1.1 Definition and classification of social assistance resources****1.1.1 Definition**

Social assistance is the lowest basic safety net in China's social security system. It is the people's livelihood guarantee policy provided by the nation and by society to provide money and material reliefs and assistances to the socially vulnerable groups composed of the poor and so on. It is usually regarded as the responsibility and obligation of the Government and takes the form of a non-contributory and gratuitous relief. The concept of resources stems from the economic discipline and is put forward as the material basis for production practices' natural conditions. So it is substantive. "Ci Hai" (a Chinese dictionary) explains the resources as "the source of wealth and assets, generally referring to natural financial resources." In Chinese, the word "resource" is composed of two characters, "capital" and "source." The "capital" refers to the properties and expenses, referencing the things of real or potential values; and the "source" refers to the origins or fountains, referencing the basis of all things. In recent years, the term "resource" has been widely

used in various fields of study, and its connotations and extensions have been significantly changed in the different disciplines and fields to reflect what they need. Nowadays, the resources have been extended to include tangible and intangible accumulations from humans and their labor results, such as capitals equipment, technologies, knowledge and so on. Broadly speaking, such "initial inputs" as material, energy, information, labor, capital and technology required by human beings in production, life and spirit can all be called "resources."

Social assistance resources refer to the various factors and conditions that can guarantee the normal operation of social assistance and enable it to play its established role in helping the poor and the disadvantaged groups. These factors and conditions include social assistance programs, financial resources, organizations and manpower, information etc. Thus, social assistance resources can be broadly divided into four categories, namely: social assistance program resources, financial resources, organizational and human resources, and information resources, all of which shall cooperate with each other to make the resources fully integrated and play a role in their combined social assistance forces. The lack, or uncoordination, of social assistance resources will affect the operational and implementational effect of the social assistance system.

1.1.2 Classification

According to the meanings of social assistance resources defined in Section 1.1.1, social assistance resources mainly include program resources, financial resources, organizational and human resources and information resources.

First, the program resources. These refer to all types of assistance programs to help the poor and vulnerable groups. According to China's "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" in 2014, there are eight kinds of programs: Dibao (the minimum living standard guarantee system), the three-nos recipients (people with no working ability, no income, and no family support), disaster relief, medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance and temporary assistance. These eight kinds of assistance programs can be classified into three major categories, namely: long-term living assistance, special classification assistance and temporary emergency assistance. Among them, Dibao and the three-nos people support are the long-term living assistance programs; the medical, education, housing and employment assistance are the special classification assistance programs and disaster relief and temporary assistance are temporary emergency assistance programs.

Second, financial resources. These refer to all the funds and their sources that can be used for social assistance during a certain period of time. China's social assistance funds come mainly from the Government's finances. In addition, a small part comes from the social and market funds. The Government's financial funds can be further divided into Central Government funds and local financial funds. Some social assistance programs are co-financed by the central government and the local governments. These cover the Dibao program, the "three-nos" support program, disaster relief and medical assistance. Some social assistance programs are financed by local governments. These include education assistance, employment assistance, housing assistance and temporary assistance.

Third, organizational and human resources. These refer to the relevant work organizations and their staff required for the smooth implementation of the social assistance programs and achieving their stated goals. China's social assistance organizations and human resources are mainly based on the Civil Affairs Departments and their staff. In addition, the health departments, human resources and social security departments, housing construction departments, education departments and their related staff are also involved in some of the social assistance operations. Grassroots services mainly rely on community neighborhood committees or village committees. Social organizations and social workers participate in the process to assist in handling related activities in a small number of developed areas.

And fourth, information resources. These refer to all the information used to ensure the smooth operation of the social assistance program. The use and development of information resources depends on information technologies. As the new-generation information technologies represented by mobile Internet, cloud computing and big data continue to make breakthroughs and be applied in innovative manners, the social assistance information resources need to be constantly updated to better serve the social assistance tasks and further improve the efficiency and accuracy of the social assistance programs. To this end, all kinds of information resources and systems, including the social assistance management information system and the residents' financial situation information systems, need to be further strengthened in their development and coordination.

1.2 The relative theoretical basis of social assistance resources coordination

1.2.1 Inter-departmental cooperation theory

From an international perspective, since the 1970s the reform of new public administrations has increased the efficiency of public sectors but at the same time has resulted in a fragmentation of public services. Since the 1990s, the second round of reform, which focused on joining up government, creating a holistic government, collaborative public management and collaborative governance, has transcended new public administration. To some extent, the limitation of the bureaucracy in the area of inter-departmental cooperation has become a catalyst for the fast development of inter-departmental cooperation theory since the middle and late 1990s. Social change theory argues that social change requires governance to face a new environment—the emergence of various cross boundary public issues, and an increase in the interdependence among sectors, organizations and even regions. As such there is a great impact on the bureaucracy which has obvious divisions between sectors. It is impossible and inefficient to solve the problem of a lack of coordination between sectors by clarifying functional divisions or by adjusting authority vertically. Furthermore, with the rapid development and wide application of information and communication technologies, people more and more realize that the information monopoly and the specialty barrier should be broken. Therefore, some scholars argue that the public administration methodology based on boundaries is outdated and is giving way to a collaborative network approach.

Among many researches on inter-departmental theory, Peters, a British administrative scholar who commits himself to the study of public administrative issues such as the relationship between organizations and network management proposed the holistic government theory and developed a systematic, theoretical system about inter-departmental cooperation. Peters argued that conventional government organization design is in the nature of a functional model revolving around a special purpose and activity and its defects include: high cost of government operation and low output of service; short-sighted; paying attention to treatment and neglecting prevention; lack of coordination and problems of transfer, etc. After the reform of the new public administration, the bureaucratic organizational system has become more and more fragmented and sector segmented. Holistic government should be the rational form to respond to public demands in a new era. Holistic government places emphasis on the classification of the common people because different people have different demands. Public demand-orientation is one of the theoretical characteristics of holistic government. Besides, holistic government places emphasis on the integration of the budget and information. Key elements of budget integration includes: (1) The budget revolves around the results and ends, not around functions and activities; (2) Achieving these goals through more competition; (3) Requiring the development of organizational relationships across conventional organizational boundaries and conducting effective bidding activities; (4) Improving measurement in real results. On the aspects of information integration, the information system model of a holistic government is a citizen-centered public service information system based on daily service demands. In this system, the public is presented with a one-stop service desk, while the government is the

back office and content provider of the one-stop service shop.¹ From the above it can be seen that a holistic government is a public administration theory that is citizenservice, object oriented and aims to seek solutions through inter-departmental integration of the budget and information to remodel the public service flow beyond the organizational reform. Relative concepts to holistic government include joined-up government and collaborative public management. All these concepts focus on issues of inter-departmental cooperation.

The implications of this theory to social assistance in China are that on the three levels of social assistance programs' design, programs' implementation and cash or service delivery, inter-departmental cooperation is needed to play the role of coordination and thus the overall resources of social assistance can be better used. Specifically, coordination of the program design requires the coordination among different social assistance programs and coordination between social assistance and other social welfare programs. Coordination of program implementation means implementors have to realize the sharing and cooperation of resources from different levels and sectors. Coordination of cash benefits or service provision means that Civil Affairs departments and other associated departments have to provide an integrated and personalized service based on the demands and preferences of the special recipients.

1.2.2 Welfare Pluralism Theory

The concept of welfare pluralism was put forward by Richard Rose in 1986. Rose argued that overall social welfare is an important issue and welfare originates from three sectors including the family, the market and the State. As the provider of welfare, any sector is beneficial to the other two sectors, and the integration of welfare among the three sectors forms the overall welfare in a society. The three sectors become social welfare pluralism. Later, in the period of the welfare state crisis, quite a few scholars established their analytical framework based on the welfare pluralism concept. For example, in 1987 Johnson added the voluntary sector into the welfare pluralism and enriched the theory of welfare pluralism.

He divided the welfare providers into four parts: the state sector provides direct and indirect welfare, the market sector provides employee welfare, the voluntary sector such as self-help organization, mutual organization, non-profit organization and community organization provides related welfare and the informal sector such as relatives, friends and neighbors also provides welfare. Under this pluralistic structure, decentralization and participation are the ways to achieve welfare pluralism. Johnson argues that the role of the state sector is limited in welfare pluralism and criticizes the generous provisions of the welfare state. When the welfare state is faced with an aging population, an increase of nuclear families and the unemployment rate, the affordability of the Government decreases, and hence other sectors have to share the responsibility for welfare provision. Welfare pluralism is one of the outlets for dealing with the crisis of the welfare state. Reducing the effect of the state in welfare provision and introducing different social sectors can transform the welfare state into a welfare society. From above it can be seen that welfare pluralism theory places emphasis on changing comprehensive state welfare to a mixed welfare provision from several sectors and reconstructing the function of the family, the community and other informal organizations through the participation of the different social sectors, and finally transforming the welfare state into a welfare society. In 1998 Evers learned from the welfare pluralism concept of Rose. In contrast to Rose's opinion, which considers welfare pluralism is the overall welfare in a society from either sector of different social system—family, market and state, Evers argues that welfare pluralism consists of the family, the market economy and the State and it should be called the "Welfare

¹Peters, B.G. Managing Horizontal Government: The Politics of Coordination. *Public Administration*, 1998, 76 (2) pp. 295 - 311

Triangle”. Welfare provision in the interactive process of the welfare triangle is pluralistic, and the portion of welfare provision is interactional with a relationship restricting one another.²

The implications of the welfare pluralism theory for social assistance resources coordination in China are that although the State should assume the primary responsibility for social assistance, society and the market should not be excluded. The resources in society and the market should be mobilized to supplement State resources and merged together to increase the whole power of social assistance.

1.2.3 Social exclusion and inclusion theory

The concept of social exclusion was first put forward by the French scholar Lenoir in 1974 and has become popular in Europe since the 1980s. It is a multi-dimensional concept with a wide and blurry range. It can be defined in multiple ways, and its introduction provides a new theory and approach for explaining and solving social problems. Its concept is wider and richer than the concept of poverty. Today social exclusion has attracted more and more attention in the aspects of poverty and social policy research and has become a concept that is used frequently.³ It has attracted attention from the theoretical circles, the authorities and international organizations. A Ministry of Social Exclusion was established in the U.K. in 1997 to deal with issues related to social exclusion. Social exclusion is not a static concept and it should be examined dynamically. In the concept of sociology, previous researchers thought that society was constituted stably with different groups, such as the poor, the unemployed and the rich. It is a misunderstanding to closely match social status with personal destiny. Longitudinal research has demonstrated that people are likely to experience many changes in their social status in their life cycle. Therefore, the interest of sociology is no longer in considering vulnerable social members as victims but paying attention to their subjective initiative and thus the concept of empowerment. In other words, the objective of the welfare state is not only to provide care for vulnerable groups, but also to increase their abilities to participate in social and economic activities. That is to say, social exclusion should pay attention to the potential of the excluded people and take the multi-dimensional aspect of social exclusion into consideration. In the process of anti-exclusion, social inclusion as an objective has attracted attention. In other words, social members can be included by society by receiving education, acquiring basic skills, obtaining housing and medical care, etc. As an important welfare system, social assistance plays a significant role in dealing with social exclusion and helping social members participate in society. Social assistance has two levels of objectives: The first is to provide a minimum standard of living to people with no other resources, though its operational definition varies within as well as between countries. For example, it may refer to the subsistence level of food consumption, or refer to “reasonable” or “adequate” resources. It may also refer to “decent” standards or those “in keeping with human dignity”. The second is to prevent social marginalization and exclusion.⁴

The implications of social exclusion and inclusion theory for social assistance in China is that the minimum living standard guarantee system can only guarantee the basic living needs of the recipients and can hardly provide for development opportunities. Therefore, the recipients are inclined to receive the allowance passively and be excluded by society. Service assistance such as medical aid, employment aid, housing aid and education aid can help the poor to get the opportunities to receive medical care, job training, housing and education. These aids are beneficial for social inclusion and fully play the role of guaranteeing a basic living and preventing social exclusion. That is to say that the various programs in the social assistance system need to be coordinated in order to achieve the objective of social inclusion.

²Peng, H. Etc. *Introduction to Western Social Welfare Theory*, China Society Press, 2012, pp 3-4.

³Qian, Z. & Huang, D. Urban Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Polarization, *Foreign Social Science*, 2004 (1): 54-60.

⁴Eardley, T., Bradshaw, J., Ditch, J., Gough, I., & Whiteford, P. 1996. *Social Assistance in OECD Countries (Volume I): Synthesis Report*. London: HMSO, P. 47.

1.3 Significance of coordinating social assistance resources in China

China has entered a decisive period in the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. Social assistance bears the responsibilities of an important historical mission and responsibility. In order to let the people in need keep up with the pace of walking towards a well-off society, social assistance has to improve policy measures, innovate work mechanisms, increase its service ability, improve assistance efficiency and meet the diverse assistance needs of the needy people. Facing the new norms of economic development, social assistance has to grasp the new characteristics of development and the new requirements of practice, and seek new and practical tactics in the areas of resource coordination, mode innovation and management optimization so as to expand the effective supply of social assistance. The Government has to further firmly establish the consciousness of the bottom line, enhance the sense of hardship, reduce social risks and resolve potential conflicts. Therefore, the coordination of overall social assistance resources is of great significance.

1.3.1 The practice of the "sharing" concept of development

The unique social psychology of the Chinese nation is that "Inequality rather than desire is the cause of trouble" and this is also the Chinese population's primary understanding of sharing. The 13th Five-Year Plan for economic and social development points that: "Sharing is the essential requirement of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must persist in development for the people, relying on the people with a development outcome shared by the people. More effective institutions should be established to make all the people to have a bigger sense of gain in the mutual building and sharing of development, strengthen the momentum of development, enhance people's unity and walk steadily towards the direction of common prosperity." The new concept of development provides a new path for social assistance development. Persisting with shared development requires improving the underpinning function of social assistance. Accessibility to social assistance should be improved and the different categories of people in need who have differing demands should be covered. The scientificity of assistance standards should be improved and the benefit level under social assistance should be adjusted according to the causes of poverty, actual demands and the degree of difficulty of those people in need. It has to put stress on the main points and take targeted measures in respect of social assistance. The aged, the disabled, juveniles and the seriously ill are among the recipients who should be provided with a more personalized and specialized service. In accordance with the requirements of "everyone involved, everyone makes efforts and everyone enjoys", we should stick to the bottom line, stress the main points, improve institutions, guide expectations, put an emphasis on the equality of opportunity, guarantee a basic livelihood, and achieve the common prosperity of all the people. Among the Central Government's arrangements to win the fight against poverty, the method of social assistance should be innovated and the measures should be specified and targeted and underpinning measures should be taken. The realization of all the above objectives calls for the coordination of the overall social assistance resources. This is an important measure in practicing the "sharing" concept of development.

1.3.2 The way to exert joint forces of social assistance

The current social assistance system consists of many programs and its social assistance departments are segmented. The social assistance related departments include civil affairs Department, Education Department, Health and Family Planning Department, Housing and Urban-Rural Development Department, Human Resources and Social Security Department. In addition mass organizations such as the Trade Unions, the Disabled Persons' Federation and the Women's Federation are also involved in the delivery of social assistance by using their resources. This multi-sector segmented management system results in the segmentation of policies and resources. Therefore a tight social assistance safety net can hardly be weaved and can easily be the cause of

inequality of aid and lead to inefficient resource use. Although the Social Assistance Interim Measures issued in 2014 regulate the coordination mechanism under the control of the Civil Affairs Department, the fragmentation of social assistance, caused by policy segmentation, can hardly be avoided. Furthermore, there is a lack of coordination between the Government's assistance and aid provided by charities. In practical terms, the implementation of the minimum living standard guarantee system is conducted by agencies such as the urban street office, the neighborhood committees and the rural grassroots organizations. Education aid is delivered by schools. The nonprofessionalism of agencies leads to disorder in the social assistance process and a lot of deviation in the delivery of social assistance. Coordination of China's social assistance resources needs to solve the problems of the scattered sectors and the weak comprehensive ability of social assistance provision. The Government should drive the integration of social assistance resources from the various departments, and define the social assistance conditions and standards in order to avoid duplicated assistance, multiple assistance and omission of eligible beneficiaries. It also should break the mode of the government "takes on everything", and mobilize the social forces to participate in social assistance. The government should regulate the social organizations' and citizens' obligations under social assistance, organize the volunteer team, promote the socialization of social assistance, further strengthen the regular social donation work, improve the social donation service network and extensively use the various social resources to solve the basic living problems of those people in need, and finally achieve the coordinated development of social assistance for both urban and rural residents.

1.3.3 The way to achieve effective anti-poverty

Anti-poverty is an important institutional guarantee for strengthening social governance and promoting social harmony. Social assistance is the last line of defence in the social security system, the last bastion of anti-poverty and the last safety net in the whole of society.⁵ Since ancient times all the countries and all human communities have attached a great importance to the construction of a social assistance system. This is attributed to the anti-poverty function of social assistance. In recent years, China's social assistance program has made positive progress, especially the promulgation of Social Assistance Interim Measures which regulates that the improvement of the eight social assistance programs including the minimum living standard guarantee system. This measure is of great significance in respect of guaranteeing citizens' basic living, promoting social equity, safeguarding social stability and playing the role of maintaining bottom line and meeting any urgent needs. It can better promote the development and improvement of China's modern social assistance system. At present, there are still many problems in China's social assistance system, especially against the problem of insufficient coordination of social assistance resources. It is necessary to further reform and improve social assistance, to coordinate social assistance resources and enhance effect of social assistance. This is the most important way to achieve effective anti-poverty.

2. THE EFFECT OF COORDINATION OF CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

2.1 A comparatively complete social assistance program

At present, China has established a relatively complete new urban and rural social assistance system. This has not only protected the basic living of urban and rural residents who are in trouble, but it has effectively promoted economic and social progress and maintained social stability. Therefore it has played a good role as the last social safety net. In 2014, the State Council enacted the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance". As China's first administrative regulation to co-ordinate all kinds of social assistance programs, they indicated that China had preliminarily shaped, standardized and systematized the new social assistance system, which covered eight assistance programs (Dibao,

⁵Wang, Y. & Wang, J. To better play the fallback role of the social assistance system in anti-poverty, *Journal of China National School of Administration*, 2015 (6): 67 - 71.

Three-nos recipients' support, disaster relief, medical assistance, education assistance, housing assistance, employment assistance and temporary assistance). The different social assistance programs are for different target groups. The programs work together as a whole. (see Table 1)

Table 1: China's social assistance programs

Program	Target population	Dept. in charge	Assistance method	Assistance procedure
Dibao	Co-living family members whose per capita income is lower than the local minimum living standard, and the family meets the property conditions standard for local Dibao families	Civil Affairs dept.	Unified standards, gap complement, and cash assistance	Means-test and community discussion
Three-nos people support	The "Three-nos" the elderly, the disabled and minors (the traditional "five-guarantees household")	Civil Affairs dept.	(1) Provide basic living conditions; (2) Take care of those who can not take care of themselves; (3) Provide disease treatments; (4) Handle funeral matters	When finding persons who meet the conditions for assistance, the township government or village (neighborhood) committee should inform about them or take the initiative to help them apply for support
Disaster relief	A family with temporary basic living difficulties due to various reasons (fire, traffic accidents, major diseases, sudden increase in necessary living expenses, and others)	Civil Affairs dept.	(1) Emergency relief for living materials and others. (2) Transitional housing resettlement. (3) Assistance for housing recovery and reconstruction.	The Civil Affairs dept. of the disaster impacted local government and other agencies should grant subsidies and materials to the approved residents for housing recovery and reconstruction. The urban and rural housing construction

			(4) Basic living assistance for a certain period.	dept. should provide technical support to the victims for rebuilding or repairing their houses
Medical assistance	(1) Members of the Dibao family. (2) Three-nos support persons. (3) Other persons with special difficulties	Civil Affairs dept.	Focus on severe in-hospital disease assistance. To provide services based on the different medical needs of recipients. The main ways include: funding for medical insurance (or cooperative medical care); relief for in-hospital severe illness treatment; outpatient assistance; waivers of expenses	File an application with the township government or street offices. After an audit and publication, the county civil affairs departments approve the medical application. The medical assistance for a Dibao family as well as the three-nos recipients will be handled directly by county civil affairs departments
Education assistance	Mainly for the level of compulsory education, taking into account the poorer students in high school and in higher education	Education dept.	Subsidy, waiver, reward, loan, work-study and so on	After the student or their guardian file an application, the village (neighborhood) committee will conduct an investigation and verification. Then the township governments (street offices) audit it and the city or county (district) civil affairs departments review and approve it.
Housing assistance	(1) Dibao Families (2) Persons receiving three-nos support	Housing construction dept.	(1) Rental distribution of public rental housing	The head of the household, as the applicant, files an application and provides the related

			(2) Payment of housing rental subsidies (3) Renovation of dilapidated rural buildings	documents to the street office or township government (the accepting agency) of their <i>hukou</i> location.
Employment assistance	The able-bodied but unemployed family members of Dibao recipients	Human Resources and Social Security dept.	Loans with discounted interest, social insurance subsidies, job subsidies, training subsidies, cost waivers, public-welfare work placements and other methods	Applicant files an application with the public employment service agencies of the domicile's street offices. The public employment service agencies will register the application after verifying it and will, at no cost, provide job information, an introduction to employment, career guidance and other employment services
Temporary assistance (including relief to vagabond and beggars)	(1) Families with temporary serious basic living difficulties due to fire, traffic accidents and other accidents or due to a family member's sudden major disease and other reasons; (2) Families with subsistence allowances facing serious difficulties due to the sudden increases in their necessary living	Civil Affairs dept.	Cash subsidy	Applicant files an application with the township government or street office. After an audit and publicity, the county government Civil Affairs dept. will approve it. For small-sum assistance, the county government's civil affairs dept. may entrust the township government or street office to make the approval. In the case of urgent situations, the approval

expenses beyond their affordability; (3) Families experiencing other difficulties			procedures may be simplified in accordance with the regulations
(4) Wanderers and beggars without living support		Temporary accommodation, acute disease treatment, assisted home-return and other reliefs	

Source: The author's summary according to the related regulations in the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance".

In China, the scope of the social assistance program has been extended from the urban areas to the rural areas, the assistance items have been expanded from single items to multiple ones, and assistance measures have shifted from temporary to institutionalized ones. This is so as to ensure that the poor people can get real relief. The social assistance program has played a significant role in protecting a citizen's basic living, maintaining social fairness and promoting social harmony and stability.

First, the legal framework has been basically shaped. In 2014, the State Council enacted the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" which is China's first administrative regulation to coordinate the various types of social assistance programs, marking the initial formation of the legal framework for the social assistance program. Second, all kinds of social assistance programs are increasingly carried out to protect the basic living of citizens. According to preliminary statistics, as at the end of 2015, China's urban Dibao had helped 17.011 million people in 9.574 million families at an annual expenditure of 71.93 billion Yuan. The rural Dibao had helped 49.036 million people in 28.426 million families at an expenditure of 93.15 billion Yuan. 5.167 million rural three-no recipients have been assisted and supported at an expenditure of 21.0 billion Yuan (see Table 2).

In 2015, temporary assistances were implemented for 6.554 million families and emergency transfers and resettlements were conducted for 6.444 million disaster-hit people, cumulatively assisting more than 60 million victims. In addition, the programs for education, housing and employment assistance have also advanced in an orderly manner and the assistance level and coverage are steadily improving. Finally, social fairness is effectively maintained. The Central Government and other governments at all levels, are the main provider of social assistance programs. They have transferred social wealth to the urban and the rural poor through such methods as materials, capital, services and etc., so ensuring a fair starting-point and process. They have, to some extent, maintained a fair result through income redistribution, thus narrowing the gaps between the rich and the poor and effectively safeguarding social fairness and justice.

Table 2: Recipients and expenditure of main social assistance programs in 2015

Program	Recipients (million)	Expenditure (RMB billion)
Urban Dibao	17.011	71.93

Rural Dibao	49.036	93.15
Rural three-nos recipients	5.167	21.00

Source: Social Services Development Statistics Bulletin of MoCA from 2015

2.2 A stable funding source for social assistance

After many years of development, China's investments in social assistance are increasing year by year. The Central Government's financial investment, in particular, accounts for a higher proportion, while the social funds are used to a certain extent, forming stable sources of funding.

Due to social assistance's role as the last safety net, the Government's financial contribution accounts for the vast majority of the total amount spent on social assistance. Such contributions are increasing. E.g., the social assistance funds (including the urban and rural Dibaos, the three-nos recipients' support, and medical assistance) expended by the Civil Affairs Department have been increasing from 163.38 billion Yuan in 2012, 191.85 billion in 2013 and 200.96 billion in 2014 to 212.67 billion in 2015 and to a further 221.32 billion in 2016 (see Table 3), showing an upward trend year by year.

Table 3: Total Amount of Expenditure on Major Social Assistance Programs by the Civil Affairs Department (billion yuan)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total expenditure on social assistance	163.68	191.85	200.96	212.67	221.32
Expenditure on urban Dibao	63.59	72.45	69.46	68.50	65.56
Expenditure on rural Dibao	69.04	84.19	84.40	91.16	98.43
Expenditure on concentrated support of the three-nos recipients in rural areas	6.18	7.39	7.80	8.12	8.17
Expenditure on scattered support of the three-nos recipients in rural areas	8.29	10.04	11.03	12.65	15.47
Total expenditure on medical assistance	16.58	17.78	18.86	20.28	29.87

Source: Social Services Development Statistics Bulletin of MoCA from 2012 to 2016.

Note: Concentrated support means elderly care institutions provide services for the three-nos recipients who live in these institutions; scattered support means village committees or elderly care institutions provide services for the three-nos recipients who live in their homes.

Increases in China's social assistance expenditures indicate that China's investment in social assistance is continuing to go up, with a stable source of funding. Article 5 in the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" stipulates that it is necessary to improve the guarantee mechanisms for social assistance funds and materials and to incorporate the government's social assistance funds and working funds into the financial budgets. The social assistance benefits are not only funded by the Civil Affairs Departments, but also by other agencies related to the social assistance system with their coordination of funds based on their responsibilities. The social assistance funds are under special management, ledger accounting and have earmarked purposes, guaranteeing the relative stability of the sources of China's social assistance funding. With the relatively stable growth of the financial investments, the standards of social assistances in China have been gradually improving. By the end of 2015, the per capita standards of the urban and rural Dibao had reached 439 Yuan/month and 255 Yuan/month, respectively, an increase of 9.5% and 14.7% respectively year on year. The per capita subsidies had reached 298 Yuan/month and 139 Yuan/month, which was an increase of 12% and 15.8% respectively year on year. The per capita standards for the rural five-guarantee centralized and decentralized supports had reached 5,883 Yuan and 4,388 Yuan. These were an increase of 14% and 14.1% respectively year on year.⁶

While the governments have assumed the primary responsibility for social assistance, China encourages all kinds of social forces to legally participate in the work of social assistance and providing funds, so as to make a contribution to the program. At present, the funds from society have become a supplement to the social assistance funds. On the one hand, such a supplement comes from the welfare lottery, which began to operate in 1987, with a purpose of "helping the old, the disabled, the solitary and the poor." Now, the welfare lottery is an important source of funding for China's social security commitment as well as an important source of social assistance funds, showing a growing trend year upon year. In the whole of 2013, China's welfare lottery operations financed a public welfare fund of 51.07 billion Yuan, of which 19.55 billion was spent by the Civil Affairs departments, with 2.61 billion Yuan for social assistance. In the whole of 2014, such operations raised 58.57 billion Yuan, of which 23.13 billion was spent by the Civil Affairs departments, with 2.91 billion Yuan for social assistance. And in 2015, such operations raised 56.38 billion Yuan, of which 28.89 billion was spent by the Civil Affairs departments, with 3 billion Yuan for social assistance.⁷ (see table 4) On the other hand, such a supplement comes from the commonweal organizations. Social commonweal organizations are a kind of legitimate, non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan, non-membership, self-management and civil voluntary social intermediary organization, whose main activities are to serve the social commonweal undertakings and solve various social problems. In recent years, due to the support of Governments, commonweal organizations and philanthropy undertakings have made great progress, playing a role in the social assistance program. They provide funding for China's social assistance program through establishing various kinds of temporary or non-temporary assistance programs. Among them, the Chinese Social Assistance Foundation spent 93 million Yuan for the commonweal in 2015, showing an increase when compared to 2014.⁸ Both nation-wide commonweal organizations and a variety of local social assistance foundations have played a significant role in social assistance.

Table 4: Income and expenditure of the public welfare fund 2013-15 (billion yuan)

Year	2013	2014	2015
Income of public welfare fund	51.07	58.57	56.38

⁶ According to the data from *Report on the Work of Civil Affairs in 2015*.

⁷ According to the data from *Social Services Development Statistics Bulletin in 2015*. <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/sj/tjgb/201607/20160700001136.shtml>

⁸ According to the data from *Report on the work of the China Social Assistance Foundation in 2015*. <http://www.csaf.org.cn/cn/publish/>

Expenditure of public welfare fund	19.55	23.13	28.89
Expenditure on social assistance	2.61	2.91	3.00

Source: Report on the work of the China social assistance foundation in 2015.

<http://www.csaf.org.cn/cn/publish/>

2.3 The coordination mechanism related to social assistance

In recent years, the coordination mechanism for social assistance has been highly valued by the Governments. Especially since 2012, such coordination mechanism has been gradually established and improved. At present, China has established the basic social assistance work related coordination mechanism including: the checking mechanism for an assistance applicant's family financial situations, the inter-departmental joint conference system for social assistance, the mechanism of "one department accepts applications and other department coordinates the handling", the "emergency relief" mechanism, the joint collaboration mechanism between social assistance supervision and inspection departments, and the social assistance vertical-level coordination mechanism. These mechanisms promote the co-ordination of social assistance resources and facilitate the effective operation of the social assistance system.

First, the check mechanism for an assistance applicant's family financial situations has been established. In 2012, the State Council issued the "Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Dibao Work" (Guo Fa [2012] No. 45), which proposed the establishment of a mechanism for an assistance applicant's family financial situation. On the basis of strengthening the household surveys, neighborhood visits, evidence claims via letters and other investigative means, it establishes a cross-department, multi-level and information-sharing checking mechanism for the financial status of an assistance applicants' family. After being authorized by the assistance applicants and their family members, such departments and agencies of public security, human resources and social security, housing and construction, finance, social insurance, industry and commerce, taxation, housing funds and others should, in accordance with the relevant provisions and on the basis of the need to identify the recipients of Dibao and other social assistances, timely provide the Civil Affairs departments with the information on the household registration, motor vehicles, employment, social insurance, housing, deposits, securities, individual business, tax, housing fund and others. In addition, in accordance with provisions of the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" in 2014 (State Council Decree No. 649), the Civil Affairs departments of governments at or above the county level can, based on the application or the socially-assisted family's request and with their approval, check their family income status and property status through the above-mentioned organizations as well as such financial institutions as banks, insurers, securities agencies and others. The establishment of the checking mechanism for a family's economic situation realizes a more fair and more reasonable identification of social assistance's targets, so that the effectiveness of assistance funds can be utilized more fully and the system can operate more efficiently.

Second, the inter-departmental joint conference system for social assistance has been advanced and established. In 2013, the inter-departmental joint conference system for social assistances, led by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, was established. The joint conference is composed of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Central Publicity Department, the Central Staffing Office, the Central Agricultural Office, the Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Housing Construction, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, the Family Planning Commission, the People's Bank of China, the Audit Commission, the

State Administration of Taxation, the General Administration of Industry and Commerce, the Bureau of Statistics, the Legislative Affairs Office, the China Banking Regulatory Commission, the China Securities Regulatory Commission, the China Insurance Regulatory Commission, the State Bureau for Letters and Calls, the Poverty Alleviation Office, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions and other departments and organizations, with the Ministry of Civil Affairs as the lead agency. Under the leadership of the State Council, the joint conference will study, formulate and improve the major rules, policies, regimes and mechanisms for the social assistance system and make recommendations to the State Council. It will plan the coordination developments and effective interfaces between Dibao and the other social assistance policies on health care, education and housing, as well as the policies on employment promotion and enhancement of poverty alleviation. It will study and solve the problem of cross-department information sharing in checking an assistance applicant's family financial situation. It will supervise and promote the construction of the national social assistance system; and will implement other businesses assigned to it by the State Council.⁹ As a consequence, all provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) have tried to establish their own inter-department coordination mechanisms or leading teams for social assistance, and local governments at or above the county level have also promoted and established a social assistance coordination mechanism led by governments. They are directed by the Civil Affairs departments and cooperate with by the relevant departments including participation by the social forces. This ensures timely information communications and mutual cooperation and improves the overall effectiveness of the social assistance effort.

Third, the mechanism of "one department accepts the applications and other departments coordinate their handling" has been established. In June 2014, the MoCA issued the "The Program for Campaigns to Carry out Special Rectifications on Social Assistance and Improve the Service Level to the People." This was proposed to speed up the establishment and improvement of a mechanism of "one department accepts the applications and other departments coordinate their handling" and required the establishment of a unified "social assistance service window", i.e., to set up unified assistance application desk windows based in the township (street) government's officehalls, service halls and etc. In addition to accepting applications for Dibao, the three-nos support, medical assistance, temporary relief and others, such desk windows are required to expand their service functions. If it is difficult to an applicant's corresponding social assistance management departments, the social assistance service window should actively help handle or refer the applicant to other social assistance management departments. The norms of the social assistance windows' service standards are to be unified. The assistance recipients are to be actively identified. And related agencies shall work together to solve the outstanding difficulties facing citizens. By the end of 2015, the local governments had gradually improved their mechanisms of "one department accepts the applications and other departments coordinate their handling." The governments at street (township) levels had generally set up their service windows for "one department accepts applications" and the sub-handling and referral processes for social assistance applications had been clarified.¹⁰ The establishment of the mechanism of "one department accepts applications and other departments coordinate their handling" further enhances the efficiency of social assistance, facilitating applications by residents for social assistance and dealing with the related procedures.

Fourth, the "emergency relief" mechanism has been established and strengthened. In April 2014, the MoCA issued a "Notice on Carrying out Pilots on 'Emergency Relief'". This means that, when certain people's basic life is in trouble or their survival is in crisis due to a sudden emergency or accident they encounter, the State and society would provide such people with necessary materials and psychological help. The mechanism of "emergency relief" is, within the existing framework of

⁹ Approval on the Establishment of the Inter Ministerial Joint Meeting of the National Social Assistance System, http://www.gov.cn/jzwgk/2013-09/10/content_2485151.htm.

¹⁰ According to the Report on the Work of Civil Affairs in 2015, on the web site of MoCA.

the social assistance system, to strengthen the effective interface between all of the social assistance programs, so that the scattered society assistance resources can form a joint effort to improve the assistance effect. At present, the working mechanism of "emergency relief" is constantly being improved and perfected with certain achievements having been delivered in quick response to relief requests with the active guidance of the social forces' engagement and the implementation of comprehensive assistance. It has effectively protected the basic survival rights and interests and the dignity of troubled people and, to a certain extent, has alleviated the temporary burdens incurred by citizens.

In addition, the joint collaboration mechanism between the social assistance supervision and inspection departments has been established. Local civil affairs departments regard supervision and inspection as their important tasks. They further clarify the duties of all departments, improve the work rules, strengthen coordination and cooperation, form jointwork forces and jointly implement the supervision and inspection responsibilities under social assistance. In conjunction with the supervision, audit, finance and other departments, the Civil Affairs departments strengthen the daily supervision of social assistance and the timely transfer of the violations of the laws and disciplines that they discover concerning social assistance to the discipline inspection, public security, judicial or other departments for their investigation and punishment.¹¹

At the same time, the social assistance vertical-level coordination mechanism has been further clarified. The State Council's departments for civil affairs, health care, family planning, education, urban and rural housing construction, human resources and social security etc. shall, in accordance with their respective functions, take charge of their corresponding social assistance administrations. The county-level or higher local governments' departments for civil affairs, health care, family planning, education, urban and rural housing construction, human resources and social security, etc. shall, in accordance with their respective responsibilities, take charge of social assistance management in their corresponding administrative areas. Township governments and street offices shall accept social assistance applications and make investigations and reviews. Specific tasks are undertaken by the social assistance operating agencies or staffs. The village committees and neighborhood committees shall assist in the work related to social assistance.¹²

2.4 The construction of social assistance information systems

Social assistance informatization is an indispensable part of social assistance work and is also a very urgent task for the current social assistance missions. Social assistance informatization is conducive to further the improvement of the efficiency of the social assistance program and can help enhance social assistance's targeting and its precision.

In recent years, a lot of cities and counties in China have built up preliminary social assistance information systems suitable for their own administrative regions. And some regions have achieved full circulation of the social assistance information elements within their provinces, forming a unified, coordinated and linked operating mode. In 2016, the MoCA began to build the system of the "Jinmin Project". This aims to create an information system with three main features: three-level interconnection of business networks, basically unified application software, and centralized management of data resources,¹³ thus playing an important basic role in promoting the Civil Affairs department's administration efficiencies and public service level. This will establish a nationwide network of social assistance information systems, and to pool them together to form a nation-wide,

¹¹ According to *Notification of Establishment and Improvement of the Supervision and Inspection of Social Assistance Mechanism*, on the web site of MoCA.

¹² According to *Social Assistance Interim Measures*, the web site of MoCA.

¹³ According to *Open Bidding Announcement on First Phase of the Civil Service Project Preliminary Design in Ministry of Civil Affairs*, <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/gk/zfcg/201607/20160700001348.shtml>

comprehensive social assistance information database. By building their information system, many regions in China have initially achieved the online approval process for social assistance, greatly reducing the waiting time of families in need. And some regions can complete the application, review and other processes for social assistance applicants within 24 hours, fully implementing the concept of a service-oriented government. At the same time, with online approval operating processes as its basis, efficient decision-making can be achieved. Under the deployment of the MoCA and under the unified guidance of each province, the civil affairs departments at both city and county (or city and district) levels have extensively carried out the identification of urban low-income families and actively established a check-up information system for their urban residents' economic status. Via the information exchanges between the civil affairs departments and other relevant departments, the applicants' family condition, such as money deposits, incomes, taxes, vehicles, houses, insurances, housing funds, marriages etc., can be checked for comparison and information sharing, thus playing an important role in guaranteeing a fair, open and just social assistance system. In addition, governments in all regions have actively advanced the "one-stop" settlements for medical aids, the new rural cooperative medical insurance and the urban residents' basic medical insurance, thereby achieving the sharing of medical expense information, personnel information and medical information between the different medical insurance systems. In addition to the urban Dibao recipients and the rural five-guarantee households, other regular special inneed citizens, including the Dibao-edge and low-income families who are gradually being covered by the social assistance systems, will all be gradually included in the "one-stop" settlement, thus facilitating those who are inneed, while being able to accurately identify the recipients of medical assistance. This will ensure that the assistance funds are reasonably used.

3. PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION OF CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

3.1 Program resources

3.1.1 Dibao "welfare binding"

The existing social assistances are prone to "welfare binding" i.e automatic entitlement to multiple benefits. The original intention of China's Dibao was to solve the basic livelihood problems of poor people. However, with the implementation of medical, education, housing and other special assistance programs, many other regimes are bundled together to be implemented with Dibao. This results in such a situation whereby if a person enjoys Dibao allowances, then the person can enjoy any assistance benefit, i.e., eligibility for most special assistance programs is conditional upon the receipt of a Dibao allowance. In other words, a Dibao recipient can also get a number of other assistance programs. Similarly they will lose the entitlement to the many other social assistance programs if they lose their entitlement to Dibao. Although the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" in 2014 prescribes unified provisions for all the social assistance systems, the new policy still does not get rid of some special assistance programs' being conditional upon Dibao. E.g., in the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance," the beneficiaries of medical, education, housing and other special assistance programs are still limited to the "Dibao family members" or the "three-no recipients." Although these special assistance programs reflect the Government's final guarantee of the diversified basic needs of the poor, the Dibao-linked targeting mechanism of the special assistance programs leads to a result that, to some extent, means that the Dibao recipients can enjoy the relevant assistance programs whereas other poor families or individuals cannot get their deserved assistance. On the one hand, this case causes a "superposition effect", i.e., the Dibao families can obtain multiple assistance benefits, thus probably "enticing" some able-bodied recipients to stay in the Dibao program to enjoy these benefits, without the willingness to withdraw from it. On the other hand, this situation also causes a "cliff effect", i.e., there is a huge gap between the Dibao recipients and the non-Dibao low-income people in enjoying the assistance policies. This leads to the result whereby the non-Dibao low-income groups find it difficult to obtain the help from the social assistance program even if they are in trouble. This further produces a sense of

injustice and compromises the social assistance programs' relief effects. It can be seen that the increase in social assistance programs does not bring about a simultaneous increase in the effectiveness of the assistance, because the coordination between the internal programs of the existing social assistances is yet to be improved.

According to the data from the survey on the urban and rural poor-family social policy support system by MoCA in 2013, 48.75 percent of Dibao families were simultaneously enjoying two or three assistance benefits, and 33.94 percent were enjoying four or five benefits (see Table 5). That is to say that Dibao families were receiving more supplementary assistance in addition to their Dibao allowances thereby making such families more dependent upon assistance.¹⁴

Table 5: Binding situation of the assistance benefits of China's urban Dibao families

Superposition situation of the social assistance programs	Proportion (%)
Receives Dibao allowance	11.96
Receives two or three assistance benefits simultaneously	48.75
Receives four or five assistance benefits simultaneously	33.94
Receives six or seven assistance benefits simultaneously	4.98
Receives eight or more assistance benefits simultaneously	0.37

Source: Liu, C. & Lin, M. Feed the dawdlers? Study on the welfare dependency of the urban Dibao, *Dongyue Tribune*, 2015 (10): 37-42.

Too many benefits for Dibao families lead to some working-aged and able-bodied Dibao recipients not wanting to be in employment, because once they have a job and get a certain income, their Dibao allowance will be reduced accordingly or they will even exit the Dibao program. It is clear that, if their employment income is lower or only slightly higher than their Dibao allowances, they will certainly choose not to become employed or will try to conceal their income, so as not to exit the Dibao program and thus lead to a poverty trap. Since 2007 the proportion of able-bodied Dibao recipients, including registered and unregistered unemployed persons, employed persons and persons with flexible employment has always been higher than 61 percent. In 2007, 2013, 2014 and 2015, the proportion has been even higher than 62 percent (see Table 6). Of course, a percentage of Dibao recipients who are capable of working may not be employed due to their looking after the elderly and/or children. Even if the number of such person is allowed for, there is still a large number of able-to-work persons receiving Dibao. Clearly, it is not the ultimate goal of a program to put so many people with a complete or partial working ability into Dibao. According to the large-scale sample survey of the nation wide urban and rural poor family social policy support system undertaken by MoCA in 2013, the urban Dibao families enjoy nearly six years' of Dibao allowance on average, with 89 percent never exiting. In the rural Dibao program people participate for 3.4

¹⁴Liu, C. & Lin, M. Feed the dawdlers? Study on welfare dependency of the Urban DiBao, *Dongyue Tribune*, 2015(10): 37-42.

years on average with 92 percent never exiting.¹⁵ If such cases last for long, the fairness and efficiency of China's social assistance program is bound to be impaired. The author's sample survey in Chengdu also shows that the problem receiving long-term assistance is significant. 8.25 percent have received a Dibao allowance for more than 3 years. 31.25 percent have received the benefit % for 5 to 10 years whilst 20 percent have received it for more than 10 years. 67.8 percent of the respondents said that they wanted to receive the assistance benefits for ever. In interviews with the Dibao recipients in Chengdu, such recipients often described themselves as "the person eliminated from the society" or the "always-sick people", who lack the confidence to move away from assistance by taking up employment. They hope to receive the social assistances for a long period.

Interviews with the relevant staff who are in charge of social assistance also show that the issue of long-term assistance is indeed beginning to surface: *"There are some Dibao recipients who are reluctant to exit Dibao even though they are employed. Because their jobs are often informal, their incomes cannot be easily measured. So we have difficulties in management."* (Said Ms. W, a street office leader.) *"We don't know how to deal with those released from prisons and etc. They do not lose the ability to work, but it is not easy to remove the benefits that they enjoy. It is difficult to manage."* (Said Ms. Z1, a street office leader.) *"Nowadays, many young people, even though they have a labor ability, do not want to work, and they only want to stay at home to enjoy the Dibao allowances. Some people obviously have the ability to work but tell us they do not have, and that they cannot provide the documents for inability to work even though we request them to provide them. In fact, they just want get by without any labor."* (Said Ms. Z2, a neighborhood commission staff member). All the cases above show that the problem exists on account of the Dibao recipients tending to enjoy such benefits for a long time. It also shows the reluctance to be employed. So the problem of long-term assistance exists under the situation of very low-level benefit. We need to rethink a lot on the issue of Dibao's bundling design.

Table 6: Trends of disabled and able-bodied people in the urban Dibao recipients 2007-2015

Year	Total urban Dibao	The Disabled		Population With Working Capacity								
				Employed		Registered Unemployed		Flexible-Employed Population		Unregistered Unemployed		Percent
		No	Pct	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.	
2007	22,721	1,610	7.09	0.94	4.13	6,272	27.60	3,438	15.13	3,643	16.03	62.89
2008	23,348	1,691	7.24	0.82	3.52	5,643	24.17	3,817	16.35	4,022	17.23	61.27
2009	23,456	1,810	7.72	0.79	3.37	5,102	21.75	4,322	18.43	4,109	17.52	61.07
2010	23,105	1,807	7.82	0.68	2.95	4,928	21.33	4,324	18.70	4,200	18.18	61.17
2011	22,768	1,841	8.09	0.62	2.70	4,725	20.75	4,297	18.87	4,267	18.74	61.06
2012	21,435	1,745	8.14	0.50	2.31	4,004	18.68	4,593	21.43	4,171	19.46	61.88
2013	20,642	1,692	8.20	0.45	2.18	3,655	17.70	4,598	22.27	4,123	19.97	62.13
2014	18,802	1,579	8.40	0.38	2.00	3,127	16.63	4,262	22.67	3,986	21.20	62.50

¹⁵Liu, C. & Lin, M. Feed the dawdlers? Study on the welfare dependency of the Urban DiBao, *Dongyue Tribune*, 2015(10): 37-42.

2015	17.080	1.526	8.93	0.32	1.85	2.652	15.53	3.792	22.20	3.943	23.09	62.67
------	--------	-------	------	------	------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Source: China Civil Affairs Statistical Yearbook, 2007-2014.

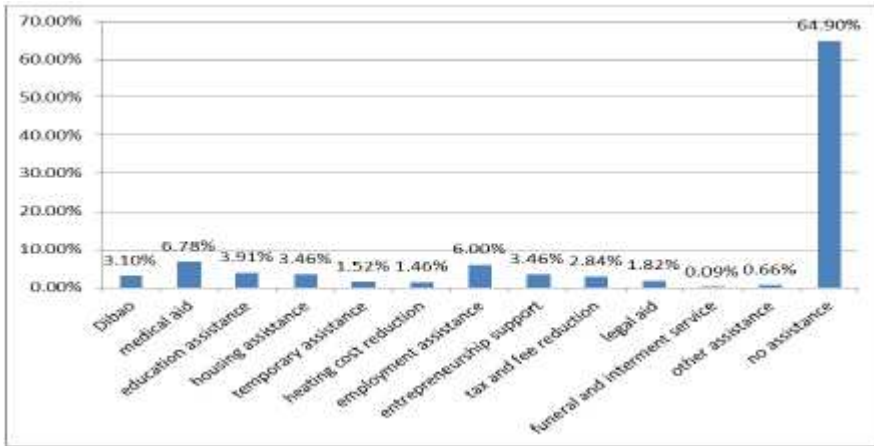
Note: No. is short for number (million) and Pct. is short for percentage (%)

3.1.2 Lack of service assistance

China's social assistance pays more attention to material reliefs by granting cash and in-kind benefits, but there is a serious lack of service assistance. Material relief is aimed to protect the survival of poor groups. As a "blood transfusion" it cannot promote the recipients of social to develop and accumulate human capital. The more public resources that are invested into cash and in-kind social assistance, the more attention will be paid to its fairness by the public. The most stringent scrutiny will be imposed on the economic status of the applicants. Thus, those assistance recipients who have the ability to work will be more unwilling to bear the risk of losing that assistance due to employment, easily leading to a long-term assistance dependence. Service assistance mainly includes medical assistance, education assistance, employment training, home-based care assistance for the poor elderly, etc. It helps to improve the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable groups via services, enhancing human capital and helping to raise abilities, and finally promoting the development of the individual and society. So they are a kind of "blood-producing" assistance method. It should be noted that, in general, the development of China's service assistance lags behind, leading to a serious shortage of supply.

According to the data from the survey on the urban and rural poor-family social policy support system by MoCA in 2013, the social assistance program most frequently enjoyed by the urban and rural hardship groups is Dibao, with a recipient level of 65 percent or higher. This is followed by one-time holiday subsidies, with a percentage of about 50 per cent and then followed by waivers of expenses for water, electricity, gas and heating, at a percentage of about 30 percent. Medical assistance and education assistance account for 25 percent and 10 percent, respectively, which are not high. The poor families of migrant scan acquire very limited social assistance in their current residences and the proportion is even lower. About 64.9 per cent of these families have not received any social assistance and of those who do the most frequently received social assistance program is medical assistance at a percentage of only 6.78 percent. Other assistances are received by a very low proportion (see Figure 1). Although acquiring few reliefs, such poor families have high and diversified demands on social assistance. Of course, different types of families have different priorities in their demands. The top three social assistances most needed by the urban poor families are Dibao, medical assistance and subsidies for water, electricity, gas and heating; the top three by the migrant poor families are the housing assistance, medical assistance and education assistance; and the top three by the rural poor families are Dibao, medical assistance and temporary major accident relief. In addition, there are many groups in need who require employment help, entrepreneurship support, legal aids, psychological services and other relief services.

Figure 1: Situation of migrant needy families in obtaining assistance in current resident places



Source: Survey data conducted by the MoCA on construction of social policy support system for urban and rural needy families. The author's statistics.

In 2015, the author organized a survey of social assistance in Chengdu, finding that the access to Dibao and material supports were the most important forms of helps acquired by the Dibao recipients; only 30 percent and 6 percent of these respondents had received medical assistance and education assistance; and only 1 to 2 percent had accessed employment assistance, care services and psychological comforts. But those surveyed had high demands on these assistance services, especially medical support, because more than 30 per cent of them believed that medical assistance and medical insurance would deliver them significant help. Still some Dibao recipients have demands for being looked-after and care, psychological comforts, employment and legal aid and other services. For example, elderly Dibao recipients mainly focus on the problems of elderly care. Mr. H has asked the community office to help him find a nursing home, only finding that the charges are expensive. *"I am now most concerned about nursing issues for old people. I have asked, and they tell me that a nursing home will charge more than three thousand Yuan each month. I cannot move around by myself. Putting the care expenses and living expenses together, they are expensive, exceeding three thousand Yuan."* (Mr. H, a Dibao recipient). 66-year-old Mr. L1 said that *"I hope to have my own social insurance, and I have no special idea on Dibao."* (Mr. L1, a Dibao recipient). This in fact indicates that he worries about his own elderly care problem. The current Dibao program can only solve their survival issue. It simply cannot cope with needs in their old age. They need assistance in terms of their old-age living and nursing care. When asked whether he was willing to attend psychological assistance, if any, Mr. H clearly expressed that he needed it very much. In fact, some of those surveyed said that the communities should arrange more activities, including psychological counseling and etc., and they would like to participate in them. Mr. G expressly said he was *"eager to get psychological counseling, but the cheapest counseling in the market was 20 Yuan per hour."* He said that *"due to a lack of money, no psychological counseling has been received."* In addition, questionnaire surveys and interviews find that the Dibao recipients have a much limited understanding of education, medical care and other special assistances, as well as the Dibao. Those with not much understanding are around 45.4 per cent (see Table 7). In addition, interviews with Dibao recipients show the ineffectiveness of the various special assistances. Many respondents believe that the medical, employment, education and other special assistance do not give them much help and cannot assist them in moving out of poverty.

Table 7: Dibao participants understanding of social assistance policies

Understanding of social assistance policies	Much understanding	Comparative understanding	General understanding	No understanding
Percentage	7.0%	24.3%	23.2%	45.4%

Source: Dibao family survey data of in Chengdu 2015. The author's statistics.

It is obvious that at present, despite the special assistance that provide service to the recipients, such as education, medical care, housing and employment, the coverage of these services' assistance is narrow, the level of benefit is low and the effectiveness of the assistance is limited. In addition, low-income groups have extra needs that are in addition to the services above. These include care, psychological comfort, business support and other needs. The existing social assistance system does not provide such a service assistance, showing a short coming through the lack of these kinds of service assistance.

3.1.3 The lack of coordination between assistance and other social security programs

China's social security system is predominantly composed of three subsystems, namely, social assistance, social insurance and social welfare. Social assistance is the fundamental subsystem, aimed at ensuring the most basic elements of living to the vulnerable social groups. The social insurance system is the principal subsystem, aimed at solving the various risks faced by the laborers; and the social welfare system is the highest-level subsystem, aimed at improving the quality of life of all citizens. The three subsystems should be developing in a coordinated manner, rather than compromising or favoring one or the other.¹⁶ If not, the overall function of the social security system will be impaired, or even lead to contradictions between the members of society. In addition to coordination among the social assistance programs, social assistance programs and the social welfare programs of social insurance and those of social welfare should be coordinated and integrated. But until now, such coordination has yet to be improved.

On the one hand, the coordination between the social assistance programs and the related social insurance programs is not strong. Firstly, the coordination between medical assistance and medical insurance is not smooth enough. The first issue is that there may be deviations in the actual beneficiaries in the subsidized funds i.e. participating in medical insurance and the medical cooperative care. Some part of the medical assistance funds are used to help the Dibao recipients, three-nos recipients and other social assistance participants to be able to participate in the basic medical insurances. Such expenditure in 2015 reached 6.17 billion Yuan, which is allocated directly from the basic medical assistance account into the basic medical insurance fund account. The basic insurance fund account can be used for all the insured beneficiaries, not only for the poor groups. So it is not correct to say that the funds for subsidizing the poor for participating in medical insurance and the medical cooperative care are fully used to solve the medical burdens of the poor groups. The second issue is the actual reimbursements under the medical assistance vary greatly due to the different settlement methods between the medical assistance, basic medical insurance, serious illness medical insurances and other systems. As to the connection between the medical assistance system and the medical insurance system, a unified method has been achieved basically across the nation, except for the order for timing. However, the nation has not adopted a unified settlement method; e.g., section-wise settlement and accumulation-wise settlement of medical expenses are both being used. Secondly, the coordination between employment assistance and the

¹⁶Zheng, G. *Social Security Study*, Commercial Press, 2000, p. 159.

unemployment insurance needs to be strengthened. Employment assistance is aimed at the able-bodied Dibao recipients. Currently, more than 60 percent of the urban Dibao recipients have a working ability. Obviously, it is not the ultimate goal of the national policy to place so many people with a working ability under the shelter of the social assistance program. Employment assistance is aimed at driving the Dibao recipients to return to the labor market through many employment advancement measures, including job recommendations, training, public service jobs, subsidies for training and social security, etc. Unemployment insurance is a kind of social insurance program which provides a material assistance for a certain period and reemployment services to the laborers who have lost their wages due to their involuntary unemployment. The function of an unemployment insurance program to promote reemployment is widely valued across the world. But in China, generally, such a reemployment promotion function is limited and in practice, the coordination between the employment assistances and the unemployment insurances has not attracted enough attention.

On the other hand, the coordination between social assistance, social welfare and poverty alleviation development is inadequate. Firstly, there is a lack of coordination between the Dibao program and the welfare programs for special groups (disabled persons, elderly persons, women and children). Disabled people, elderly people, children and women are the most vulnerable groups with a poor capacity to fight against risks. If the social welfare program for them does not develop well, they will have to rely on the social assistance program, eventually worsening the financial burden of social assistance system. On the contrary, if the social welfare program is relatively perfect and sound, it can improve the quality of life of all people, reduce the possibility of the poor risk-resistance groups falling into poverty thereby alleviating the pressure on the social assistance program. Additionally, for Dibao families, if their elderly, disabled, children, women and other members can enjoy the benefits of the corresponding social welfare program, the burdens on such families can be reduced, thus helping the assisted families out of poverty. At present, there is a considerable proportion of disabled persons, elderly people, children and women among China's Dibao recipients. Although the welfare system for them in China has been developed over the recent years, there is insufficient coordination between the Dibao program and the other welfare programs, resulting in practice, dilemmas in selection by the Diabo recipients. In order to prevent the loss of benefits, they can only stay in the Dibao program. As discovered in the interviews of Dibao recipients in Chengdu in 2015, five persons enjoyed the welfare subsidy for the disabled, in addition to the Dibao allowance; and another person further enjoyed the old-age welfare subsidy. These benefits have made a some improvement to the lives of Dibao families. However, poor coordination between the various policies results in conflicts, leading to inconvenience for the groups of poor.

Box 1: Comments from a Dibao recipient in Chengdu

Mr. C2, a disabled person in a Dibao family who has lost their only off spring: *"As to our life in old age, we think we can only rely on the nation. Only the nation can promulgate some policies to give us good hope. We wish that the country might consider our situation. In addition, disease treatment is a big problem. Now the community office is driving us to buy social insurance. But if I buy social insurance, they will cancel my Dibao allowance. Access to social insurance means losing the Dibao allowances and the entire program of disabled subsidies. I have consulted a community staff office, who told me that, after buying the old-age insurance, I would be granted more than four hundred Yuan per month, but the Dibao allowances and the disabled people subsidies would all be removed. And only until next December will I receive my social insurance benefit. If I start the procedure now, then the Dibao allowances will be stopped; then I will only get the social insurance benefit next year, I will have no income. How can I make my life? The Family Planning Commission buys us the social insurance at no cost. This policy is very good. But it is the lowest level of the old-age insurances, with slightly higher than four hundred Yuan per month. This is lower than the Dibao*

allowance. And there is no coordination with Federation of Disabled People. You know, we are a family without off spring. So, I would like to participate in the social insurance, but I cannot. If I am not disabled, I will be very happy that the Family Planning Commission buys us the social insurance, but as such I cannot get the disability subsidy. I'm much troubled even with going out. And I cannot work, as uneducated person aged 40 or 50. And my eyes have bad sight. But as a 50-year-old person I am not allowed to learn blind person massage. I'm with multiple cases: disabled people, no-offspring in my family. Two departments' policies are very good: the Federations of Disabled People would help buy us the social insurance by granting us 60 per cent of the cost, and we pay ourselves 40 per cent each month we can receive more than 600 Yuan. The Family Planning Commission would provide us with the social insurance at one standard, i.e., more than 400 Yuan per month, but we do not need to pay any contribution. If I agree to get the social insurance, then the Dibao allowances would all be cancelled." (Mr. C2, a Dibao recipient).

It can be seen from the above narrative that, although separately, the assistance policy and the related welfare policy are both good, they are less well coordinated, especially for a special family like Mr. C2, with disabled members and no off spring receiving a benefit under Dibao. This involves many departments, such as the family planning department, civil affairs department and the federation of disabled persons. The lack of coordination between these policies puts families like Mr. C2 into a dilemma. Although they have the opportunity to get rid of the social assistance via social insurance, they ultimately can only continue to rely on social assistance because of the poor policy coordination. Secondly, the relationship between the rural Dibao and the poverty alleviation and development programs needs to be further coordinated. The poverty alleviation and development program and the rural Dibao program are both important measures to combat poverty in China. And they are also important and basic institutional arrangements to alleviate rural poverty. For a long time, these two systems have operated independently, with differences in goals, work objects, work methods, natures, implementing bodies and work mechanisms. Currently, the MoCA has introduced a guide to promote the effective coordination of the two programs. But in practice, improvements are still needed in terms of connection with recipients, adoption of standards, information sharing, etc. Many counties' rural Dibao standards are lower than the poverty alleviation standards. The two departments do not well together in communication, coordination and information sharing and the two systems need to further strengthen their connection and coordination.

3.2 Financial resources

3.2.1 The non-standardized mechanism for fund guarantees and financial responsibility sharing

Social assistance is an important responsibility of government. The funds are mainly from the State's finance, which shall ensure social assistance as a livelihood protection system. In the practice of China's social assistance program, although the principle of the sharing of the central government's and local governments' responsibilities for funding and liabilities is clear, no strict legal demands are imposed on all levels of governments, especially on local governments. Some local governments' finances list the financial assistance projects but often spend less or even nothing, leading to the situation whereby some people who meet the eligibility for assistance cannot get assistance or effective relief. In addition, the governmental finances have no stable internal growth mechanism for investments in social assistance. Currently, the Chinese governments' financial funding for social assistance is not specified in the form of laws and regulations. Although the relevant laws, regulations and rules mention that the Dibao allowances should be naturally connected to the economic growth and consumer price index increase, there is no clear internal growth mechanism of social assistance expenditures from the perspective of financial investments. In terms of the Chinese governments' funding of social assistance, in the past few years, the central government's and local ones' fiscal expenditure has increased significantly,

but the overall expenditure is still at a very low level, that is to say, an internal growth mechanism of China's financial investments has not yet been fully established, and there is no clear relevance between the governmental financial investments in social assistances and the total amounts. In 2015, for example, across the nation, the urban Dibao expenditure was 71.93 billion Yuan, the rural expenditure was 93.15 billion Yuan, the urban and rural medical assistance expenditure was 29.85 billion Yuan, the rural three-nos recipients' support expenditure was 21 billion Yuan, the temporary relief expenditure was 10.851 billion Yuan, the education assistance expenditure was 105.185 billion Yuan, and the housing assistance expenditure was 65.565 billion Yuan. The total expenditure accounted for 2.26 percent and 0.586 percent of the Government's expenditure and the national GDP in that year, respectively.

Based on an international perspective, China's social assistance expenditure is not only far lower than that of the developed countries, but it is also lower than many developing nations' levels of more than a decade ago. (see Tables 8 and 9). At the same time, China's social assistance fund sources are not enriched, the motivation of the market funds and the social funds does not work well, there are few society- and market-based financing methods and it is difficult to form a diversified funding guarantee mechanism.

Table 8: Proportion of social assistance expenditure to fiscal expenditure and GDP (2015)

social assistance programs	Expenditure (billion yuan)	Proportion in fiscal expenditure %	Proportion in GDP %
Urban Dibao	71.93	0.41%	0.106%
Rural Dibao	93.15	0.53%	0.137%
Urban and rural medical aid	29.85	0.17%	0.044%
Three-nos recipients' support	21.0	0.12%	0.031%
Temporary assistance	10.85	0.06%	0.016%
Housing assistance	65.57	0.37%	0.097%
Educational assistance	105.19	0.59%	0.155%
Total	397.53	2.26%	0.586%

Source: The data of the urban and the rural Dibao, medical assistance and the three-nos recipients' support comes from the Social Services Development Statistics Bulletin. <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/zwgk/mzyw/201607/20160700001136.shtml>;

The data on educational assistance comes from “Chinese Students’ Finance Development Report(2015)”, http://www.moe.edu.cn/s78/A05/moe_702/201609/t20160901_277355.html;

Other data comes from “National General Public Final Account Revenue 2015”, Ministry of Finance; http://yss.mof.gov.cn/2015js/201607/t20160720_2365732.html

Table 9: Proportion of social assistance expenditure to GDP in some developing countries

Country (year)	Social assistance expenditure/GDP %
Argentina 2004	1.5
Brazil 2004	1.4
Chile 2003	0.7
Mexico 2002	1
Mongolia 2000	1.4
Indonesia 2006	1.3
China 2015	0.586

Source: Barrientos, A., Social protection and poverty, International Journal of Social Welfare, 2011(20): 240-249

Low investment in social assistance has led to the low benefit level in the social assistance programs. E.g., in 2009-2015, the subsistence allowance standards for China’s urban and rural residents were just a small proportion of the per capita income of residents (specifically shown in Table 10). In 2015, the average standard of the Dibao allowance for urban residents in China was 5,413.2 Yuan per year, or 17.35 percent of the per capita disposable income of urban residents. The average standard for the rural population was 3,177.6 Yuan per year, or 29.49 percent of the per capita net income of rural residents. Both are very low standards, far below the international standard of 50 percent of per capita income or 60 percent of the median income. This shows that China’s Dibao allowance standards have not grown in parallel with the income of residents and the poor have not fully shared in the economic and social development results.

Table 10: Proportion of urban and rural Dibao standard to residents’ per capita income 2009-2015

Year	Urban Dibao Standard Yuan per year	PCDI of Urban Residents Yuan per year	Proportion of Urban Dibao Standard to PCDI	Rural Dibao Standard Yuan per year	PCNI of Rural Residents Yuan per year	Proportion of Rural Dibao to PCNI
2009	2733.6	17175	15.92%	1210.1	5153	23.48%
2010	3014.4	19109	15.77%	1404.0	5919	23.72%
2011	3451.2	21810	15.82%	1718.2	6977	24.63%
2012	3961.2	24565	16.13%	2067.8	7917	26.12%
2013	4476.0	26467	16.91%	2434.0	9430	25.81%
2014	4932.0	28844	17.10%	2777.0	10489	26.48%
2015	5413.2	31195	17.35%	3177.6	10772	29.49%

Source: MoCA website -Minimum Living Guarantee Allowances Data.

Note: PCDI means per capita disposable income; PCNI means per capita net income

While the social assistance programs receive a low level of investment and the funding mechanism is yet to be standardized, the social assistance programs lack a scientific and reasonable financial responsibility sharing mechanism and the transfer has a low degree of standardization. Currently in China, there are many social assistance programs, which are generally based on public finances as the main source of their financial resources. But for specific social assistance programs, governments at different levels contribute very different shares of the expenditure. For example, Dibao, three-nos recipients' support and medical assistance funds are co-funded by the central government and the local governments. However, Dibao is mainly funded by the central government¹⁷ whilst the three-nos recipients' support and medical assistance are mainly funded by local governments. The funds for disaster relief are undertaken by the central and local governments at different levels. The employment assistance, education assistance, housing assistance and temporary assistance are undertaken by local governments (see Table 11). For the assistance programs that shall be co-funded by the central and local governments, there is low degree of standardization for inter-governmental financial sharing of the social assistances. There is no quantified institutional blueprint for standardized finance sharing principles, measuring methods and sharing ratios between the central and local governments as well as between local governments. In most cases, the division of social assistance expenditures is a benefit game between the different levels of governments, which establish a financial contribution relationship through negotiations. Due to the lack of scientific and statutory proportions, the financial contributions by governments at all levels are not stable. Frequently, claims for financial expenditure pressures by lower level governments force the higher level governments to adjust their share of the transfer payments continuously, and the governments which accept the transfers of payments tend therefore to reduce their own expenditures. In the field of social assistance programs, when some local governments with financial difficulties find it hard to provide their financial support, the central government and the higher level local government would provide the appropriate funding, i.e., the financial transfer payments.¹⁸ From the practice of the social assistance programs in China, an echelon transfer payment system is established and implemented between the central, provincial and city governments. In terms of the total amounts, these financial transfer payments are large. It is important to make up the shortage of social assistance funds in some local authorities. But there are some problems in practice. On the one hand, the transfer payments lack a set of strict and standardized rule designs and implementation standards, and there is no standardized transfer payment rule design and implementation standards generally in either the central or local governments. In many provinces, the transfer payments from provincial levels to city levels still follow the "egalitarianism" principle resulting in the fact that regions with financial difficulties find it difficult to solve their problems related to social assistance funding for massive number of poor in their region. On the other hand, the transfer payments have many processes and the fund connection is not smooth enough. E.g., in the transfer of payments for urban Dibao, there is actually a three-link process: the central government subsidizes the provincial finances, which then subsidize the city finances together with the provincial supporting funds; and finally, the city finance departments make transfer payments to the county (district) finances. The fact that the governments at different levels do not have a consistent schedule for submitting their budgets for the approval of the People's Congress at the same level for the approval, coupled with the multiple procedures in fund allocation, the funding for Dibao from the upper-level governments cannot be in parallel with the actual funds

¹⁷ According to statistics on 2014, the expenditure on DiBao is 159.2 billion Yuan and the central financial contribution is 110.2 billion Yuan which accounts for 69.2 per cent.

¹⁸ Jiang, Z. The Financial Problems and Countermeasures of Social Assistance in China. *Shandong Social Science*, 2008(5): 46-51.

distribution, resulting in the local financial departments being late with dispatches and prepayments. Especially, in the areas with financial difficulties, due to unsuccessful financial funds procurement or waiting for the transfer of funds from superior governments, the social assistance funds may not be released on time.

Table 11: Objects of different assistance programs and the division of financial responsibilities

Project	Object	Financial responsibility
Dibao	Urban and rural poor population	Mainly central government and local ones
Three-nos recipients' support	Urban and rural "three-nos" poor people	Mainly local governments, with subsidy by central one
Disaster relief	People suffering from disasters	Partitioned to central and local governments
Medical assistance	Urban and rural poor and special population	Mainly local governments with subsidy by central government
Education assistance	Children and in-school students of urban and rural poor families	Local governments
Housing assistance	Urban and rural housing for families in difficulty	Local governments
Employment assistance	Beneficiaries of the able-to-work subsistence allowance receivers	Local governments
Temporary assistance	Persons with temporary life difficulties and the wandering beggars	Local governments

Source: relevant social assistance regulations. Summarized by the author.

3.2.2 Unfair financial resource distribution for social assistance programs between urban and rural regions

The unfair financial resource distribution for social assistance programs between urban and rural regions has been directly reflected in the higher investment in urban social assistance programs than the programs for rural social assistance. Take Dibao which is at the core of the social assistance system as an example. Since 1999, the central government has allocated an ever-increasing expenditure for the urban Dibao program. Except in 2002, the proportion of the central government's investment in each year was more than 50 percent. In 2014 it was close to 70%. In some regions with poor financial resources, the subsidies from the central government account for an even higher percentage of the funding for the urban Dibao. The central government's subsidies for areas with financial difficulties have effectively flattened the differences in the funding levels of urban Dibao in the different regions. In contrast, by the end of 2006, the central government had never funded the rural Dibao program. It mainly relied on local governmental finances and socially pooled funds

from the village collectives. But rural local governments often have a poor financial capacity so they can not afford the funds necessary to maintain the requisite level for protecting the poor. Therefore, the efforts of local governments alone make it difficult to achieve horizontal fairness. Such a case of higher urban investment than rural investment had not changed until 2011 (see Table 12). In that year the expenditure on the rural Dibao program reached to 66.8 billion Yuan, the first time it was higher than the 66 billion Yuan expended on the urban Dibao program. However, it should be noted that the higher expenditure in the rural Dibao program than in the urban one does not mean that this is a fair allocation of financial resources. Measurements of the fairness of the financial resource allocation between the urban and the rural areas should be based on the different minimum living cost indexes in the urban and the rural areas. Both the urban and the rural Dibao recipients shall get adequate reliefs regardless of their place of residence. Further, this rationality is also reflected in a demand that the Dibao program should somehow favor the relatively poorer rural recipients, so as to gradually bridge the gap between the urban and rural regions.¹⁹ But in fact, there is a big gap in the per capita assistance benefit between the urban and rural Dibao recipients. In 2015, the national monthly subsidy for the urban Dibao was 316.6 Yuan, but that for the rural Dibao it was only 147.2 Yuan.²⁰ In that year, the rural Dibao allowances accounted for 54 percent of expenditure, but covered more than 74 percent of the population receiving relief. The urban Dibao accounted for 46 percent of the funds, but only assisted 26 percent of the population. So, with the wider coverage of the population and a lower proportion of the social assistance funds, the rural Dibao may not be able to provide sufficient relief. In fact, the gap between the rural and the urban Dibao is bigger than the gap between the basic living standards of the urban and the rural areas.

Table 12: Annual expenditure on Dibao in urban and rural China since 1999

Year	Expenditure on Urban Dibao (billion yuan)			Expenditure on Rural Dibao (billion yuan)		
	Central	Local	Total	Central	Local	Total
1999	0.4	1.6	2.0	/	0.37	0.37
2000	0.8	1.9	2.7	/	0.36	0.36
2001	2.3	1.9	4.2	/	0.47	0.47
2002	4.6	6.3	10.9	/	0.71	0.71
2003	9.2	5.9	15.1	/	0.93	0.93
2004	10.5	6.8	17.3	/	1.62	1.62
2005	11.1	8.1	19.2	/	2.53	2.53
2006	13.4	9.0	22.4	/	4.35	4.35
2007	15.8	11.7	27.5	3.0	7.4	10.4

¹⁹ Li, M. Research on the fairness of the social assistance resource allocation in China, *Fujian Tribune (The Humanities & Social Sciences Monthly)*, 2008 (9): 120 - 124.

²⁰ According to the data from *Social Services Development Statistics*

Bulletin 2015. <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/sj/tjgb/201607/20160700001136.shtml>

2008	26.9	11.6	38.5	9.4	12.8	22.2
2009	32.3	13.8	46.1	21.6	12.9	34.5
2010	36.6	15.9	52.5	26.9	17.6	44.5
2011	50.2	15.8	66.0	50.3	16.5	66.8
2012	43.9	23.5	67.4	43.1	28.7	71.8
2013	54.6	21.1	75.7	61.2	25.5	86.7
2014	51.9	20.3	72.2	58.3	28.7	87.0

Source: China Civil Affairs Statistical Yearbook, various years.

Note: 'Central' and 'local' in this table refers to investment from the central and the local government respectively.

In terms of medical assistance, the allocation of the financial resources also shows an obvious urban and rural disparity. The urban medical assistance program has a wide scope, basically covering the sick groups that need to be assisted. But in the rural areas, with the scarcity of funds, the medical assistance policy is difficult to implement effectively. This can meet the assistance needs of only a small number of poor people. In addition, China's healthcare resources are mainly concentrated in the large hospitals of the big cities, which have complete hardware and software facilities and equipment. The rural medical assistance is lagging behind obviously in the service level and quality. Generally, the designated hospitals are only concentrated in a few township hospitals. Thus, the limited medical services find it difficult to really alleviate the personal burden of those assisted, while affecting the implementation effect of the overall medical assistance program.

3.2.3 The financial expenditure structure is not balanced between the different assistance programs

China's financial investment in social assistance programs continues to increase, basically guaranteeing the overall social assistance effects. However, the allocation structure of the funds is still uneven, a situation reflected in the differentiated and unbalanced financial expenditures between the different social assistance programs. For example, more than 80% of the financial spending for social assistance is invested in the urban and the rural Diabo. The medical assistance, which takes less than 10% of the financial expenditure, provides cover to more than 90 percent of the assisted population (see Table 13). Of course, this is mainly related to the set-up time and the importance of the social assistance programs. The Dibao program was established earlier and lies at the core and the foundation of the social assistance system. Consequently it gets more investment. But the medical assistance program is related to the health of the poor population, so a big gap when compared with the financial investment in Dibao is clearly not conducive to the balanced development and coordination among all the social assistance programs.

Table 13: Financial social assistance investment and social assistance recipients structure

Indicators	2011	2012	2013	2014
number of recipients (million)	82.513	81.702	81.174	79.448
financial investment (billion yuan)	160.44	170.28	197.57	196.89

Dibao	investment	amount/billion	132.76	139.23	162.36	159.20
		Percent%	82.7	81.8	82.2	80.9
	recipients	Number/million	75.825	74.880	74.522	70.842
		Percent%	91.8	91.6	91.8	89.2
Medical Assistance	investment	Amount/billion	15.43	16.58	17.78	18.86
		Percent%	9.6	9.7	9.0	9.6
	recipients	Number/million	80.903	76.588	74.265	74.665
		Percent%	98.0	93.7	91.5	94.0
rural the poorest people support	investment	Amount/billion	12.25	14.47	17.43	18.83
		Percent%	7.6	8.5	8.8	9.6
	recipients	Number/million	5.51	5.456	5.373	5.295
		Percent%	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.7

Source: Jiang, Z. (2015), "Reform of Social Assistance Policy under the Economic of New Normal", Western Forum, 2015 (4): 31-39; and the others from the China Civil Affairs' Statistical Yearbook.

3.3 Organizational and human resources

3.3.1 Defective cooperation between the social assistance departments

At present, in the eight programs of China's social assistance system, the Dibao, the three-nosrecipients' support, the disaster relief, the temporary assistance and the medical assistance programs are administered by the Civil Affairs departments and further by their internal agencies. The education, housing and employment assistances are administrated by the education, housing and construction and human resources and social security departments, respectively. This shows that China's social assistance programs involve a lot of contents, which are a comprehensive system, requiring the cooperation and the joint effort by multiple government departments. However, China's social assistance departments have very different administration systems and management scopes. Because there is no clearly responsible body nor a unified management agency, the various departments render their own respective managements and fragmented administrations, lacking coordination and information sharing between departments. This not only affects the work efficiency and increases the management and operational costs, but it also leads to arbitrary administration and resource wastes, among other issues. In 2014, the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" stipulated that the governments at or above the county level should establish and improve the social assistance coordination mechanism that was led by Governments -dominated by civil affairs departments, cooperated by the relevant departments and participated in by the social organizations. Through this coordination mechanism, it is expected to better implement the different kinds of social assistance programs while facilitating the co-ordination, the development and the mutual coordination of the various programs, so that all departments can cooperate and play their respective roles. At present, at the central government level, China has established the Inter-departmental Joint Conference System for Social Assistance. This is composed of 23 departments and units, including the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Central Publicity Department, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, the Human Resources and Social Security Ministry, the Housing and Urban Construction Ministry, the Agriculture Ministry, the Health and Family Planning Commission and the Poverty Alleviation Office etc. It is led by the Civil Affairs Ministry. This system has achieved some results. At the local levels, however, such a joint conference system has only been fully established in a few areas. The established system is not running efficiently. The Civil Affairs departments, as the department in charge, fail to make timely and effective supervision and management of the entire social assistance program and the inter-departmental coordination and interaction is not enough. This departmental

separation leads to disjointed and poor coordination between the departments and between the policies. Both overlapping and incomplete loopholes co-exist as, do such disordered states as multiple-department assistances, repeated reliefs and omitted assistances. Such cases affect the improvement of the overall effectiveness of the social assistance program and hinder the exertion of the joint force in social assistance. Besides, in the places where the joint conference systems have been established, since the joint conference system is not a formal institution but a coordination medium, there is a great shortage of the legal and the authority effect in the implementation of this system. Although the system demands that the relevant departments have to participate, there is no straitjacket on the participation of the departments. If the position of the responsible person for the joint conference system is not higher than the people who are in charge of some departments, it may affect the true degree of cooperation with the work.

In addition to the government's institutional assistance, the social forces' non-institutional assistance also plays an important participatory, supplementary and implementing role in social assistance. In practice, due to little cooperation and little communication between the relevant government departments and the charitable and social organizations, the institutional assistance and the non-institutional assistance operate in separate and fragmental manners. This means that the functions of charitable reliefs operate with difficulty, and the accuracy and the efficiency of the social assistance programs cannot be guaranteed.

3.3.2 Unclear responsibilities with the different levels of the Civil Affairs departments

In order to fully manage the functions of the social assistance programs, the Civil Affairs departments who are in charge of social assistance should not only cooperate with other relevant departments horizontally, but also should clarify its responsibilities and coordinate vertically.

However, currently the responsibilities of the Civil Affairs departments from the central to the provincial, city, county and township (street) level are not clear enough and the responsibilities are not fully performed. The responsibilities of legislation, administration and supervision of the civil affairs departments at the different levels in the various assistance programs should be clarified, or else there will be a vacuum in their administration and supervision. Generally speaking, the Civil Affairs department at the central level should take more responsibility for the legislation, but now legislation relating to social assistance in China is passive and the task is to deal with the problems on an ad hoc basis, lacking the overall and long-term strategic planning. Although the legal norms as they apply to social assistance provision are the main responsibility of the Government, the awareness that receiving social assistance is also the citizen's basic right is insufficient. Grassroots civil affairs departments such as township (street) and village (neighborhood) committees should take greater responsibility in social assistance's implementation. However due to the grassroots social assistance impact being weak and being faced with the problem of downsizing and decentralisation, there are many difficulties with social assistance's implementation. As to the aspect of social assistance programs, taking the management of the minimum living standard as an example, the management level of minimum living standard is low and the calculation method of the standard varies from place to place. Municipalities, municipalities with districts and counties (county-level cities) all have the power to set the minimum living standard which means that China has thousands of minimum living standards. That is to say, the low management level of the minimum living standard results in the issues of too many minimum living standards, too large a gap in the standard and an unscientific calculation method for the standard which ultimately affects the efficiency of social assistance. The above illustrates that in the aspect of management the responsibility of the different levels of government is not clear enough.

3.3.3 Non-professionalism of service agencies and personnel at the grassroots levels

Social assistance program recipients are located at the grassroots level. Social assistance regulations are also implemented at the grassroots level, and complicated social assistance affairs need to rely

on low-level government officials to complete them, especially at the street and township level. Many street offices and task-burdened towns have, as needed, established social assistance agencies and arranged for full-time and part-time staff. Neighborhood committees and village committees also list social assistance activities among their tasks. However, the cadres of street offices, neighborhood committees and rural villages are generally without a very high educational level, have a relatively shallow understanding of the social assistance theories and policies, lack the relevant professional knowledge and skills, and do not enforce the social assistance policies particularly well. And the vast majority of them can only explore and learn through work training and practice. Generally, they have not been trained in the of whole set of course systems, with single work means and methods. It is difficult for them to provide a systematic and diversified service. They lack self-discipline and self-assessment and their psychological skills to provide comfort to clients and their interpersonal communication abilities need to be improved. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the Dibao program, whose daily management and services are directly undertaken by the staff from the street offices and the neighborhood committees as well as rural staff. So the service capacity depends, to a large extent, on the professional levels of these staff or cadres, including their professional knowledge, professional skills, professional ethics and their sense of responsibility as well as their understanding of the Dibao and related policies. And the management level would directly determine the implementation level of Dibao. Because the service providers and their personnel are not professional, their level of understanding of the social assistance programs including Dibao is limited and a result leads to a low level of policy implementation. And some grassroots staff have misunderstandings e.g., they somehow discriminate against the Dibao recipients and regard the approval of Dibao as a gift to the applicants, thus damaging the recipients' social rights and equal dignity. Even a few staff have a weak sense of legal awareness and violate the laws and regulations to grant Dibao allowances to their relatives. The mass media have also reported the issues of nepotism and operational chaos by grassroots cadres in the delivery of social assistance programs. In addition, the cadres at street, neighborhood and rural levels generally have many other tasks, such as the service provision for disabled, care for the elderly and others, while carrying out the other focused key activities of the street offices. As social assistance' coverage becomes wider and wider and other social assistance projects besides Dibao are developed and improved, this kind of multiple-tasking method is becoming more and more difficult to be continued. There are not enough social assistance workers to carry out their workload, thus affecting the implementation of social assistance, restricting the timeliness, dynamics and accuracy of social assistance and resulting in dissatisfaction by the recipients. Further, the non-professionalism of grassroots service providers and their staff leads to the unstable funding of social assistance operations. When carrying out their tasks under the urban and rural Dibao, temporary assistance and medical assistances, they have to conduct household surveys, organize public assessments, improve the records, publicity and audit processes and input the information for comparison. With the expansion of the scope of social assistance and the quickened aid rhythms, the workload is huge. The neighborhood (village) committees should, on the one hand, provide conference subsidies to those who come to participate in public assessments and on the other hand, should provide work and traffic subsidies to the cadres who conduct the household surveys. Due to a lack of funds, the grassroots cadres and the public have made complaints.

3.3.4 Insufficient engagement of charitable organizations and social workers

China's social assistances centered on the Dibao program are subject to the governments' policy making and implementation and other social forces such as charitable organizations and social workers play a very limited role. In the initial implementation of social assistance, the governments lacked the awareness to guide, nurture and develop the social resources of private organisations and did not widely mobilize the social forces to participate in poverty alleviation. From the international point of view, social assistance and social work are in a homology. Social assistance is the origin of

social work; social work has emerged and grown with the development of a modern and contemporary social assistance program and has gradually moved towards professional services. Charitable organizations would, by building up an organizational network and coordinating the related charitable resources, adopt a unified philosophy to coordinate and organize charitable assistance, provide assistance to the poor from the material, educational, employment, psychological and other aspects, and create conditions for the formation of a social work professional system with common values and unified concept domains.

From the outset, China's social assistance program has not actively encouraged charitable organizations and social workers to participate in the social assistance program which has mainly been undertaken by governments via direct cash assistance, neglecting the values and functions of social work's services. Thus, many adverse effects have occurred. First, the lack of services among charitable organizations and social workers makes the governments' assistance only focused on material help with little focus on psychological comfort. Studies show that the poor people are prone to a closed, low self-esteem and no-upward-seeking psychological trend, and then take a non-optimal choice in their values, their work attitudes, their social behaviors and even their family behaviors, among others. The culture of poverty created under this state of mind would not only make no contribution to moving the poor out of poverty, but it also may lead to the transmission of the poverty to the next generation. Another survey conducted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs in 2013 showed that 49.99 percent of the urban Dibao recipients were in a mean or bad mood; 10.8 percent felt obvious social exclusion; and 16.9 percent were not in harmony with their communities. 38.8 percent of the rural Dibao recipients were in a mean or bad mood. 11.9 percent felt obvious social exclusion; and 11.34 percent were not in harmony with their communities.²¹ The above survey shows that, while the poor families continue to want direct cash and other material assistance, they are having stronger and stronger needs for non-cash assistance, such as resources linkage, ability enhancement, psychological comfort, social integration and others. Second, the lack of services provided by charitable organizations and social workers means that the development issues of the recipients are not addressed. The administrative assistance departments are only concerned about the implementation of the social assistance policies and ensuring the timely and full payment of social assistance benefits, without considering the personal development of the recipients or designing differentiated aid strategies or linking related resources. However, the poor people have a natural disadvantage in obtaining information. They urgently need some organizations and persons to help them collect, analyze and judge the information and then, based on their own circumstances, make decisions on whether or not and, if so, how to apply for the social assistance benefit so as to maximize their access to the social assistance resources in accordance with laws and provisions. And third, the lack of services by charitable organizations and social workers makes it difficult to improve the quality of life of the poor families, who have such common features as few assets, little income and limited disposable resources. This results in many problems with marriages, children's education, family conflicts and others. Charitable organizations and social workers can, based on the specific circumstances of the families receiving social assistance, analyze the root causes of their problems and helping them solve their practical problems and improve their quality of life.

3.4 Information resources

3.4.1 An imperfect information sharing mechanism

The pace of developing the information technology associated with China's social assistance programs lags behind that of social insurance ("Golden Insurance Project"). Over the years, many cities and counties have developed their own relatively independent subsistence allowance

²¹ Yang, R. Social Work Intervention in Social Assistance: Strategies and Methods. *Journal of Soochow University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2014 (4): 29 - 34.

information system and some have preliminarily implemented a unified management system across their province. But the current level of informatization is still relatively low, national networking has not been realized and some social assistance services are still in a pilot stage in respect of information technology. The information sharing mechanism needs to be improved and the overall effect is not significant.

On one hand, this case is highlighted by the lack of information sharing between government departments. Without an information sharing mechanism, the Civil Affairs departments will not be able to verify the applicants' deposits, vehicles, housing, social insurance, investments and other information, possibly resulting in errors in their income verification. As another example, the employment assistance project requires that, if the able-bodied Dibao recipients have, "without reasonable reasons, refused to accept on three times in succession the jobs they are introduced to suitable for their health status and working ability, the county governments' Civil Affairs departments should decide on whether to reduce or terminate their Dibao." However, if the civil affairs departments have no adequate sources of information, they cannot know that the Dibao recipients have refused these employment arrangements. As for medical assistance, if the information is inaccessible on the basic medical insurances and the serious illness insurances of the urban and rural residents, then the citizens in need will encounter difficulties in their medical assistance settlements. At present, some areas have already begun to build a social assistance management system, a check-up information system for the urban residents' economic status and the medical assistance "one-stop" settlement system and are gradually advancing in the direction of the "three-systems-in-one." However, in many places, the development of the above information systems is lagging, not to mention the "three-systems-in-one." While the hardware and software development lags, there is a problem of software system information barriers, i.e., the same data between the various systems is difficult to be directly entered, therefore repeat inputs are needed. For example, in the Dibao system, the basic information on the recipients is difficult to be directly checked and difficult to be directly invoked by the medical assistance systems. Therefore, the verification departments and the designated medical institutions cannot carry out the assistance work directly on this basis. In the special assistance programs for student loans and grants, heating and basic medical insurance the results and the checking of reports are also difficult to be directly invoked by the Dibao systems so as to be used in the social assistance departments' supervision and querying. Therefore, there is a lot of duplicated input works which affects the work's efficiency.

On the other hand, the information cannot be shared between governmental assistance and charity organisations, both of which belong to the components of the social assistance system and play an important role in poverty alleviation. At the present, more and more charitable relief resources are collected by enterprises, social organizations and other donor organizations. However, there is a lack of the perfect supply and demand interface mechanism between the recipients' demands and the charity organisation's resource allocations. The governments' formal social assistance systems have their own "empty spaces" and "blind spots." These are to be "filled in" in a timely manner by private charitable organisations with their advantages of low regularity and high flexibility. But in reality, there are information barriers between the government departments and the charitable organizations. Charitable organisations find it difficult to effectively link to the government's social assistance and charitable organizations cannot obtain the relevant information on demand from the government departments. Accordingly the information on social assistance is difficult to share. Thus, charitable organizations can only carry out social assistance by relying on their own limited information, leading to duplications or omissions in this assistance. It is also difficult to achieve precise aid. The charitable organisations and the government's social assistance can not complement their respective advantages.

3.4.2 Urban-rural and regional disparities in information coverage

In the process of the development of information on social assistance, there are big gaps and uneven developments between the different regions, the different provinces, and the urban and rural areas. The information infrastructure support environment differs significantly between the urban and the rural areas and between the different regions. Specifically, the underdeveloped rural areas and the regions which are not as advanced economically see a low level of development. Urban areas and the economically developed areas see a high level of development and rich resources and a high degree of information coverage. In Shanghai, for example, as a developed area, it had set up a resident economic status check center and had launched the resident economic situation check-up systems as early as 2009. An electronic comparison line has been set up between 14 departments and units, including civil affairs, human resources and social security, reserved funds, housing management, taxation, banks and other agencies. This is able to provide a clear and scientific basis for low-rent housing, Dibao, medical assistance, education assistance and other social assistance programs and to improve the accuracy of the assistance. In Sichuan, a western region, the Sichuan Province Low-income Families Identification Guidance Center was established in 2014. It is responsible for the checking of householder's income and property information for such government assistance programs as the urban and rural subsistence allowances and for affordable housing. The Center also establishes and maintains the information database on the province's low-income family economic status and conducts the economic status information query and checks and so on. At present, many less developed cities and counties in Sichuan have not yet implemented this work, so the information technology process is lagging. In addition, there is also a gap between the urban and the rural areas and between the different regions in the talent needed for the development of the information technology system. Professional and technical personnel are concentrated more in the economically developed urban areas, while many civil affairs staff in the economically backward rural areas have not understood nor applied the basic knowledge and cannot skillfully operate and use computers. Their overall quality is not high, so it is difficult to meet the purpose of improving work efficiencies and reducing work costs.

REFERENCES:

- Approval on the Establishment of the Inter Ministerial Joint Meeting of the National Social Assistance System, http://www.gov.cn/jzwgk/2013-09/10/content_2485151.htm.
- Barrientos, A., Social Protection and Poverty, *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 2011 (20): 240 - 249.
- Chinese Students' Finance Development Report (2015), http://www.moe.edu.cn/s78/A05/moe_702/201609/t20160901_277355.html
- Eardley, T., Bradshaw, J., Ditch, J., Gough, I., & Whiteford, P. 1996. Social Assistance in OECD Countries (Volume I): Synthesis Report. London : HMSO.p. 47.
- Jiang, Z. The Financial Problems and Counter measures of Social Assistance in China, *Shandong Social Science*, 2008 (5): 46 - 51.
- Jiang, Z. (2015), "Reform of the Social Assistance Policy Under the Economics of the New Normal", *Western Forum*, 2015 (4): 31 - 39.
- Li, M. Research on the Fairness of Social Assistance Resource Allocation in China, *Fujian Tribune (The Humanities & Social Sciences Monthly)*, 2008 (9): 120 - 124.
- Liu, C. & Lin, M. Feed the Dawdlers? Study on the Welfare Dependency of the Urban Dibao, *Dongyue Tribune*, 2015 (10): 37 - 42.
- Zheng, G. *Social Security Study*, Commercial Press, 2000, p. 159.
- National General Public Final Account Revenue 2015, http://yss.mof.gov.cn/2015js/201607/t20160720_2365732.html

- Open Bidding Announcement on the First Phase of the Civil Service Project Preliminary Design in MoCA, <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/gk/zfcg/201607/20160700001348.shtml>
- Peters, B.G. *Managing Horizontal Government: The Politics of Coordination*. Public Administration, 1998, 76 (2). pp. 295 - 311
- Peng, H. Etc. *Introduction to Western Social Welfare Theory*, China Society Press, 2012, pp 3 - 4.
- Qian, Z. & Huang, D. *Urban Poverty, Social Exclusion and Social Polarization*, Foreign Social Science, 2004 (1): 54 - 60.
- Wang, Y. & Wang, J. *To Better Play the Fallback Role of the Social Assistance System in Anti-poverty*, Journal of China National School of Administration, 2015 (6): 67 - 71.
- *Report on the Work of the China Social Assistance Foundation in 2015*.
<http://www.csaf.org.cn/cn/publish/>
- *Social Services Development Statistics Bulletin in 2015*.
<http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/sj/tjgb/201607/20160700001136.shtml>
- Yang R., *Social Work Intervention in Social Assistance: Strategies and Methods*, Journal of Soochow University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 2014 (4): 29 - 34.

3.2.3 Coordination of Overall Social Assistance Resources

EU best practice report

Heinz-Dietrich Steinmeyer, EU-China SPRP expert

Table of Contents

1. GENERAL REMARKS	46
2. GERMAN EXAMPLE	46
2.1 Constitutional background	46
2.2 Consequences	47
2.2.1 General System.....	47
2.2.2 Special system for people unable to work or who are over age 65	47
2.2.3 Administrative structure for the general scheme and the special system for people unable to work or over the age of 65	48
2.2.4 Figures on the general system.....	48
2.2.5 Social assistance for unemployed job-seekers	49
2.2.6 Special rules for asylum seekers	51
2.3 Areas of coverage	53
2.3.1 A reflection of the general system of social insurance and social protection	53
2.3.2 Health care	53
2.3.3 Long term care.....	53
2.3.4 Maternity and family planning.....	53
2.4 Issues of coordination.....	53
2.4.1 Coordination of administrations.....	53
2.4.1.1 General system.....	53
2.4.1.2 Social assistance for job-seekers	54
2.4.2 Regional differences	54
2.4.3 Coordination for the better functioning of a system	54
2.4.4 Coordination of resources.....	53
2.4.4.1 A system defined by needs.....	54
2.4.4.2 Human and staff resources.....	54
2.4.4.3 Information resources	54
2.4.5 Coordination with NGOs.....	55
2.5 Conclusions on Germany	55
3. OTHER EU COUNTRIES	56
3.1 Charter of fundamental rights	56
3.2 The “New” member states of the EU	56
3.3 Centralization vs. decentralization.....	57
4. CONCLUSIONS ON EUROPE	58

5. LESSONS FOR CHINA..... 59

REFERENCE..... 61

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Net expenditure of public assistance 2016, Statistisches Bundesamt 201748

Table 2: Net Expenditures of the social assistance general scheme49

Table 3: Number of recipients of unemployment benefit II (job-seeker benefits) on average per
Year 2009 - 2017 51

Table 4: Recipients of standards benefits (for asylum seekers) 2005-201652

1. GENERAL REMARKS

The system of social assistance in all countries is the final level of social protection covering generally those who have no other or no sufficient means for subsistence. The system differs from country to country on how this level is defined and what kind of needs have to be met by the system. Such a system also has to take into account the different situations of the people and where and under what circumstances they live. All systems also have a certain history and depend on the political and administrative structure of the country. Last but not least there might be constitutional requirements which have an influence on the construction and functioning of the system.

All this has to be taken into account when comparing systems and taking lessons from the different systems across to China.

The issue of coordination especially comes into being if a system of social assistance consists of a number of different programs. It also comes into being if different programs are administered by different administrations. A problem arises if there are no clear demarcations between the different programs or the systems.

The fact that a number of countries do not have only one social assistance resource or program, but a number of them, may be for a number of different reasons. So, there might be regional reasons which mean that the different regions might provide different kinds of benefits which better fit with the characteristics of a certain region. More importantly is that in countries with different levels of income there might be regional systems or systems varying to a certain extent among the regions. There might also be different forms of delivering the benefits.

A problem of coordination also will arise in cases where different institutions provide (different) benefits.

The resources may deal with the different kinds of risks or needs. The resources may also deal with the different kinds of people and the ways and forms of financing may differ.

Resulting from these differences there is an obvious need for coordination. This is important in order to achieve the goals addressed. It is also important to avoid the doubling of benefits and by this also avoiding the misuse of the benefits.

There is also a need for coordination with the other systems of social assistance – if there are any other – also the coordination between social assistance and social insurance and also between welfare and other systems of social protection. Last but not least there may be interrelations between social assistance and private provisions – for example private pension systems, life insurance etc.

2. GERMAN EXAMPLE

2.1 Constitutional background

In Germany the system of social assistance is governed by constitutional principles. Art. 1 of the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz) – the Federal Constitution – reads as follows:

Article 1

- (1) Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all State authorities.
- (2) The German people therefore acknowledge, inviolably and inalienably, human rights as the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the world.
- (3) The following basic rights shall bind the legislature, the executive and the judiciary as the directly applicable law.

Since the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany this was seen as the basis for social assistance since the Federal Courts viewed this rule as a duty for the State to also guarantee the necessary financial means for a life in human dignity. This Article is – different from others – not limited to Germans – and other EU citizens – but covers everybody who is legally residing in the Federal Republic of Germany. That is also why asylum seekers may claim this benefit as well.

So, the principle is that the guarantee of human dignity under the German constitution also means a State guarantee of sufficient income for a life in human dignity if no other sources are available. This applies to everyone.

Therefore, in the German situation there is a very clear task behind the system of social assistance. This means that the available benefits have to meet the constitutional requirements. Gaps in the protection by social assistance would be unconstitutional. This also has relevance for the level of benefits.

2.2 Consequences

2.2.1 General system

As a result, the system makes no difference whether or not a hardship situation is self-induced. The system only asks if there is a situation of need. Also, as a logic almost all social assistance benefits are legal entitlements and anyone in need receives help which is tailored to his/her needs and takes her/his personal and financial circumstances into account. So, there is a housing allowance, as part of the system, which is tailored to the housing prices in the given area. All other individual needs are in principle also to be fixed individually but for practical reasons are parts of a kind of basket to be defined. This amounts in 2017 to monthly

409 Euro for a Single Adult

409 Euro for an Adult unable to work or disabled

368 Euro for each Adult in the case of a couple

327 Euro in the case of a non-working adult in the household of the parents if they are under 25 years of age

311 Euro for Youth between 15 and 18 years of age

291 Euro for children between 7 and 14 years of age

237 Euro for children up to 6 years of age

Just recently the Federal Constitutional Court (Bundesverfassungsgericht) has declared one of those figures unconstitutional since this did not properly reflect the needs of a specific group of people; in the meantime, this has been corrected in the law. Extra needs will go on top of this.

2.2.2 Special system for people unable to work or who are over age 65

There is a special system for persons unable to work or who are over the age of 65. This is aimed to meet the special needs of these people. It had become clear that in case a public invalidity or old-age pension is not sufficient for a life in human dignity, these people need additional social assistance. In order to help them to ease the access and to improve the take-up, there is a kind of cooperation between the pension insurance administration and the social assistance administration. So, the application for such a benefit can be made via the channel of the pension insurance administration. The pension insurance administration has to inform the beneficiary about the possibility of applying for this additional social assistance and may add an application form for social assistance. In case the beneficiary applies via the pension insurance system they have to send along with the application the information about the pension benefit received.

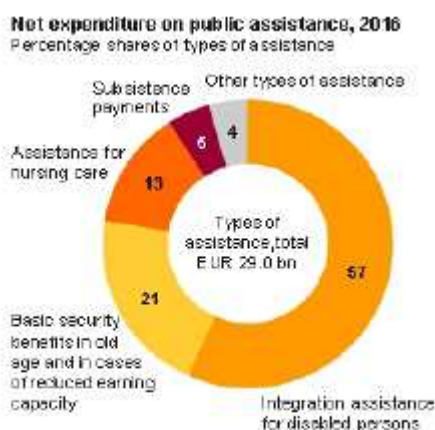
2.2.3 Administrative Structure for the general scheme and the Special system for people unable to work or over the age of 65

In Germany as a federal country there is the Federal Government and there are States which have their own governments and lawmaking Parliaments. The administrative infrastructure is established in a way that Federal Law is usually administered by the States but the legal rules are fixed by the Federal level.

The Social Assistance Law is a Federal Law and the States to a certain extent may decide which part of the state infrastructure will perform the administration. Generally speaking this is done at the level of the counties and in the bigger cities. In some states like Northrhine-Westphalia part of it is done at an intermediate level of regions within the state. In such cases there is a clear state law on the competences and the tasks of the different administrative bodies and levels.

2.2.4 Figures on the general system

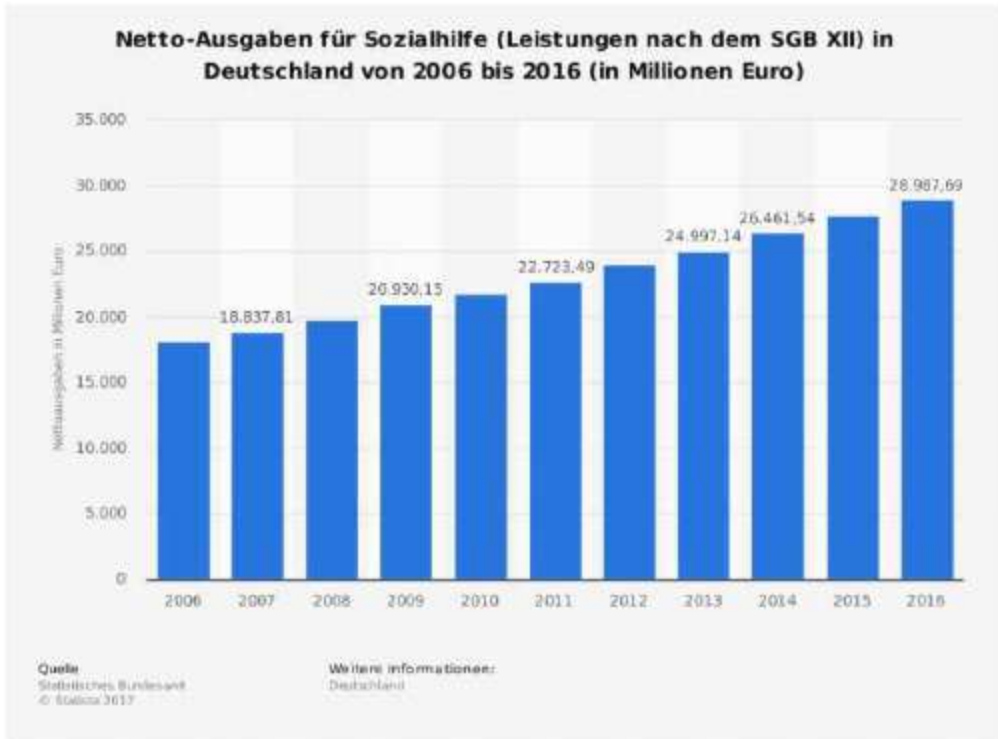
Table 1:



Source: © Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2017

In December 2016, roughly 1,026,000 people aged 18 or over in Germany received social assistance in old age or, if unable to work, the basic security benefits in old age and in cases of reduced earning capacity i.e. from the general scheme. The Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) also reports that the number of people entitled to such benefits was down 1.2 per cent on December 2015. At that time, approximately 1,038,000 people received such benefits.

Table 2: Net expenditures of the social assistance general scheme



2.2.5 Social assistance for unemployed job-seekers

In 2005 the German social assistance system underwent a major reform. Before 2005 there was a special means-tested system within the system of unemployment insurance. The unemployment insurance benefits, based on contributions paid, are limited to a certain period of time depending on the length of the contribution period prior to unemployment and the age of the beneficiary. The benefit (Arbeitslosengeld) is paid as a percentage of last income and is 60 percent per person and 67 percent in cases where the beneficiary is caring for a child.

After this time, and in case of there being no contribution history, there was a means-tested benefit (Arbeitslosenhilfe – Unemployment Assistance) which required a repeated application but could be paid indefinitely in the case where the person was still unemployed. The benefit amounted to 53 percent of the last income per person and 57 percent in case of persons caring for a child. In all these cases the system required that a person receiving these benefits should be willing and able to look for a job and had to accept any job which is reasonable.

Both systems are, or have been administered, by the Federal Employment Agency and its regional branches. This agency also gives job-offers to the unemployed and may sanction the non-acceptance of a job-offer.

As a matter of fact, this system did not work properly. The main reason was that 53 or 57 percent of the last income in a great number of cases did not guarantee an income adequate enough for a life in

human dignity. Therefore, these people also had to apply for general social assistance. A considerable number of them then left the unemployment assistance system and applied for general social assistance only and in doing that they also left the system of the Unemployment Agency. A system of a means-tested benefit, not focused on individual needs but as a percentage of last income, had proved to not be efficient.

As a result, in 2005 a major reform took place by introducing a special social assistance program for job-seekers. These job-seekers are no longer in the general social assistance system plus the unemployment system but are only in the unemployment system. Under the new system which is also – after the promoter of it – in the general public called Hartz IV, the job-seeker will receive a benefit in accordance with his/her individual needs – like in general social assistance - and no longer just a means-tested benefit in relation to their last income.

As a consequence of being in the unemployment system in order to receive payments, a person applying for this has to agree to a contract subject to public law. In this contract it is fixed what a person has to do to improve his/her job situation. In this contract the unemployment system may also provide practical help. An unemployed person is required to accept any kind of legal job. If he does not accept a reasonable job offered to him, the payment of the benefit may be reduced or suspended temporarily. A total and final withdrawal is not possible due to the constitutional guarantee of a life in human dignity.

The Government had hoped that this will reduce unemployment considerably but in the long-run a considerable part of the population is permanently dependent on this and will not find a job under this system. The figure shows the number of recipients of Hartz IV on average during a year. Germany has a population of slightly more than 80 million. The expenditures for the system run up to more than 40 billion Euro per year.

Table 3: Number of recipients of unemployment benefit II (job-seeker benefits) on average per year 2009 - 2017



The administration of this system may be divided between the employment agency and the local social assistance authorities at the county and city level. This has a kind of historical reason but also financial reasons since before 2005 the administration had been split between two administrative bodies due to social assistance being on the one side and unemployment assistance being on the other side. Now the employment agencies are in charge of the general cash benefits and everything which is associated with the labor market whereas the local authorities (county and city level) may deal with the rest – to be described further below. There is also an option of establishing a joint administration but this has run into constitutional problems.

Generally, it has to be seen that this cooperation does not work really well since administrations with different cultures and even different interests have to work together. In this case it is less of a problem of the rules which may be complicated but of an information exchange between the different administrations. So, it may happen that one of those institutions is not well informed about the activities of the other administration on the same case. The consequence would be to have case management just only in one hand which is obviously not necessarily and usually the case.

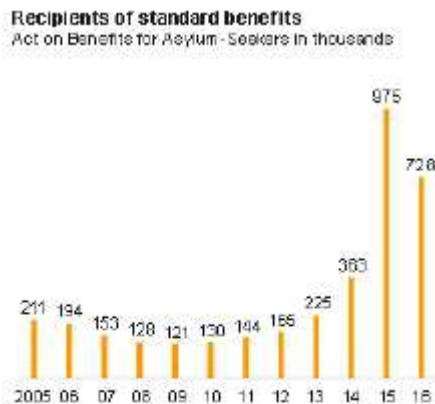
In a way this lesson shows that it is better if just one administration is in charge of a program or system and not two or more. This turns out to be the case even if there are clear rules.

2.2.6 Special rules for asylum seekers

As mentioned above the constitutional guarantee also applies to asylum seekers. Therefore, the rules of general social assistance generally apply to them. But as a matter of fact, there are some special rules taking into account on the one hand that the constitutional guarantee is also applicable in these cases and on the other hand that there are special circumstances for this group of people.

So, in this case there is an option to provide the benefits in kind which means that they are receiving housing as such and coupons for certain needs which can only be used for obtaining them. In addition, they receive a kind of pocket money which is roughly 40 per cent of the total amount. The background of this, is among others things, to fight human trafficking.

Table 4: Recipients of standard benefits (for asylum seekers) 2005-2016



Source: © Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2017

2.3 Areas of coverage

2.3.1 A reflection of the general system of social insurance and social protection

The German system does not only consist of cash benefits to finance daily life but also covers other risks and on account of this reflects, in a way, the general system of social protection and insurance.

So, in the Act on Social Assistance (Social Code Twelfth Book) besides there being rules on providing income there are rules on the specifics of housing but also on health care, long term care, health prevention, maternity and family planning and also others.

2.3.2 Health care

This for example means that a person in need of social assistance may not have any protection by the public health insurance. This can be the case with refugees but also people having lost their basic economic existence. In such a case, social assistance will provide a list of benefits and services almost identical with those of the social health insurance. There is a certain need for coordination with the social health insurance which generally works in a way that generally social assistance, including health care, is provided and organized by the counties/municipalities and if there is a chance to cover it by social/public health insurance this chance will be taken.

In the case of health care there is an exception for asylum seekers. There it is not the list of benefits and services of public health insurance for them but for the first 15 months of their stay in Germany there is a limited list focused on basic health care.

2.3.3 Long term care

Another aspect can be found when it comes to long term care. Originally, before Germany established its system of long term care insurance, there was no special social protection for this risk and the population had to finance it by themselves and out of their own pocket. If this was beyond their financial means, the social assistance system had to step in. On account of this, in a way, the need for long term care drove people very often into poverty.

The introduction of long term care insurance in 1995 changed the situation to a certain extent. The long-term care insurance in Germany does not provide full benefits covering the total cost but only provides a certain grant which covers the cost, in a lot of cases, only in part. As result these people might still need additional protection by the social assistance system. So still there is a special provision in the social assistance law on long term care covering the financial gap that remains.

These rules have only minor importance in cases when a person is not covered by the long-term care insurance since the system is covering almost the entire population.

This also means that there is a need for coordination with the long-term care insurance system. So, in practice, for example, in a long-term care facility they will charge the person to be cared for the total amount of the costs. This, in part, will be covered by the long-term care insurance and if they find out that this amount is not sufficient to cover all costs, the person will have to cover the difference him or herself. These people may apply for social assistance but only after the income of the person has been checked and his/her assets have been exhausted. They will also refer to certain relatives – parents and children of the person since they might have to make maintenance payments which have to be taken into account – as generally is the case in social assistance.

2.3.4 Maternity and family planning

On maternity and family planning these provisions reflect what is to be found in the law on public health insurance.

2.4 Issues of coordination

There may be a number of different issues relating to coordination.

2.4.1 Coordination of administrations

One is that of the coordination of the different administrations.

2.4.1.1 General system

In the German system the general social assistance system is administered in the field by the local governments – counties and cities. The States supervise the administration done at this local level and may set some general rules. This seems to work but on the other hand it might not always lead to avoiding the situation where people apply simultaneously in different regions. But due to the general registration system, the registration requirement and the holding ID cards and passports these cases happen only to a limited extent.

2.4.1.2 Social assistance for job-seekers

In the case of social assistance for job-seekers there are different administrations from the Federal and the State and local levels involved. It has been shown above that situation task does not always work well.

2.4.2 Regional differences

Like in China, but to a far lesser extent, there are regional differences in Germany which have to be taken into account when administering and developing social assistance. This has to be the case when it comes to determining the basket of living expenses which might be higher in some regions but generally they should only differ slightly in order to avoid moving between the regions on grounds that another has a higher payment.

The benefits covering housing expenses have to be specific for certain regions since prices for renting differ considerably between the regions.

These “regional” differences are also reflected on the European level. Generally social insurance benefits are exportable under Regulation 883/2004/EC which means that you may receive your benefit from the Member State of origin in any other Member State where you are residing. This is different in case of social assistance which is linked to the situation in a particular Member State. So, you cannot receive the social assistance payment from one Member State when residing in another. As a result, in the Member States which have low average wages, the level of social assistance might be low.

2.4.3 Coordination for the better functioning of a system

In China there is a system of inter-departmental joint conferences consisting of different ministries and administrations dealing with coordination. In Germany and in the other EU countries there are also joint groups and committees of those administrations in charge of social assistance on different levels.

But there seems to be a major difference between the joint conferences in China and joint committees in Germany and a number of other European countries. In Germany those committees discuss the day-to-day problems of the administration and try to smooth the efficiency of the system. The same seems to be the case in Belgium. In China on the other hand these conferences seem to set binding rules and by that are at least, to a certain extent, part of the law-making process. This is also because in China there are no exact fixed rules on the amounts a person should receive which limits the discretionary powers under the European systems. In China this is an issue of what budget and what part of the budget should be spent on social assistance. Here more clear rules on entitlements for benefits should help. This will not only make the administration more simple but would also help with the correct targeting of benefits.

If there are clear rules the cooperation between the different institutions is easier to deal with. The German example has shown that even coordination without the need to set binding rules on benefits

and their delivery leads to problems of coordination and might not always work perfectly. This then is even more the case if the rules of cooperation still have to be fixed in detail by the participating Ministries and administrations.

As far as those clear rules are concerned, it is also very important to fix the financial responsibility beforehand. All participating Ministries and administrations should have rules for their budgets and for the share to be spent on social assistance in advance. The total amount of the budget spent on social assistance should be defined from the needs of the people and not so much on the availability of budget money.

2.4.4 Coordination of resources

2.4.4.1 A System defined by needs

It is also important to have clear rules for the different programs and resources. In Germany the system is constructed in way that it is not defined by programs but by the need. The basic philosophy is that people in need should receive what they need and how much they need. This therefore is done by a system which is divided in three subsystems

- the general social assistance scheme applicable generally for any case
- the system for the old and the disabled – linked with the pension insurance system
- the system of social assistance for jobseekers

In all these cases it is clear that people should receive what they need. This is also connected with programs and the requirement to move out of poverty – especially by looking for a job in the case of the job-seeker's social assistance. As a consequence, the resources – organizational as well as financial - are used to achieve just this. It is not necessary to be qualified for one of the subsystems in order to get the benefits also from another system.

2.4.4.2 Human and staff resources

Persons charged with the administration of the system are generally trained as administrators and need a special qualification of administrator in the first instance. People responsible for the departments within an administration need to be qualified by a special academic study and those in the social area also – depending on the special nature of their task – should be qualified as a social worker – which requires academic studies.

In the level of qualification there is no difference between the social assistance administration and the other parts of public administration.

2.4.4.3 Information resources

In the case of information resources two aspects have to be considered. One is that the persons who are eligible for benefits are usually informed about their rights. If a person is in a situation of needing social assistance, the institutions he is approaching will inform him/her about the rights and the benefits that they might expect. Everybody showing up at such an administration will receive – even in a number of languages other than German - the necessary information. The information is also available via the web. So, a person can inform himself/herself about the entitlement before visiting the institution.

On the other side the information and data about the applicant is not collected in a central database. Germany has a very strong data protection law which does limit, to a large extent, the collection of personal information in a central database. Administrations are allowed only to collect information for their specific need and may exchange that information with other public institutions only in special cases addressed specifically by the law. This is also being addressed by a decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court of 1985 on the Census Act (Decisions of the Federal

Constitutional Court (Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts - BVerfGE) 65, 1. This decision is pointed out in the headnotes:

- 1. Given the context of modern data processing, the protection of individuals against unlimited collection, storage, use and transfer of their personal data is subsumed under the general right of personality governed by Article 2.1 in conjunction with Article 1.1 of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz - GG). In that regard, this fundamental right guarantee, in principle, the power of individuals to make their own decisions as regards the disclosure and use of their personal data.*
- 2. Restrictions of this right to "informational self-determination" are permissible only in the case of an overriding general public interest. Such restrictions must have a constitutional basis that satisfies the requirement of legal certainty in keeping with the rule of law. The legislature must ensure that its statutory regulations respect the principle of proportionality. The legislature must also make provision for the organizational and procedural precautions that preclude the threat of violation of the right of personality.*
- 3. As regards the Constitutional requirements to be satisfied by such restrictions, it is necessary to distinguish between personal data that are collected and processed in a personalized, non-anonymous form and data intended for statistical purposes.*

This may lead to some problems of coordination but that seems to be unavoidable due to constitutional requirement. In general, there are nevertheless means to control a claimant's eligibility due to the registration requirements.

2.4.5 Coordination with NGOs

In Germany the social assistance system is solely administered by public institutions/administrations. NGO's take part in the total operation of the system but do not have any administrative power in the system. This means that they play no role in deciding on benefits. The relevant NGOs are here the Christian churches and their caritative institutions but also Arbeiterwohlfahrt – which is linked to the Social Democratic Party – but also the German Red Cross and others. They might provide facilities to help and also might organize street work.

In any where they nevertheless make payments to people in need these payments will be taken into account and deducted from the amount paid by the public institution.

2.5 Conclusions on Germany

So in respect of Germany it can be concluded that the system is characterized by a clear constitutional requirement which also defines the scope of the system. Based on this there are almost clear rules on the competences of the different institutions and administrations involved and also clear rules on the benefits, the payment of benefits etc.

Nevertheless there are areas of the system where there are certain overlapping competences. Though the rules here are relatively clear there are still certain practical problems of coordination.

There is a clear definition on the financial resources available and what institution/administration has to cover which needs.

3. OTHER EU COUNTRIES

3.1 Charter of fundamental rights

The Charter on Fundamental Rights of the European Union in Article 34 states:

- 1. The Union recognizes and respects the entitlement to social security benefits and social services providing protection in cases such as maternity, illness, industrial accidents, dependency or old age, and in the case of loss of employment, in accordance with the rules laid down by Community law and national laws and practices.*
- 2. Everyone residing and moving legally within the European Union is entitled to social security benefits and social advantages in accordance with Community law and national laws and practices.*
- 3. In order to combat social exclusion and poverty, the Union recognizes and respects the right to social and housing assistance so as to ensure a decent existence for all those who lack sufficient resources, in accordance with the rules laid down by Community law and national laws and practices.*

This means that all EU citizen have a fixed right under EU law for all cases of need including social assistance. This is to a considerable extent a matter of the laws of the Member States but also subject to standards by EU law. So, it can be expected that in any of the Member States of the EU there is a basic social assistance system providing generally the minimum means for a life with human dignity.

As far as the standards as well as the functioning of systems are concerned it has to be seen that in the EU, like in China, the economic situation is very much different between the Member States.

So, for example the Member States in the East and Southeast are still in a different situation from those in the “old EU”.

In the “old EU”, i.e. the countries of Western, Southwestern and Northern Europe are, to a certain extent similar, at least in their goals achieved and their general policy approach.

3.2 The “New” Member States of the EU

The “New” Member States have been challenged with other issues and problems (see Ringold/Kasek 2007).

These countries in the last years have placed much attention on improving targeting and reducing the administrative costs. They also focus on well-designed information systems, that might link social assistance to the other databases on social protection and taxation – as far as it is possible with regards to the constitutional requirements. They also emphasize better information on beneficiary eligibility and point out the importance of public information. It is seen as essential to inform potential beneficiaries about the programs, as well as reducing the stigma connected with social assistance among the general public. Depending on the specific country it is difficult to reach minorities and geographically isolated communities; in those cases, specific and specially targeted information campaigns are essential.

In those countries there also has been a discussion on the decentralization of social assistance. This may – according to the experience – improve targeting since it is very likely that local officials have better information on eligibility and the specifics of the local situation. But on the other hand, poorer municipalities are less able to finance social assistance. So local authorities in richer regions may have more funds available than those in poorer regions. This might lead to social imbalance; this is the experience from Latvia but also other countries.

Especially in countries with considerable unemployment it is essential to connect social assistance with labor market incentives and also to avoid poverty traps. All of the new Member States

therefore require the beneficiaries of social assistance to register with the employment offices and thus be in the process of looking for a new job. This is similar to the job-seekers assistance in Germany. There are a number of programs on active labor market policy.

3.3 Centralization vs. decentralization

The general policy towards social assistance in Europe can be described and structured in several ways. Kazepov and Barberis in 2013 describe it as:

1. countries with a strong local autonomy which is centrally framed;
2. countries with a strong national/central frame;
3. countries with a strong regional (or federal) frame;
4. countries with mixed frames in transition from one frame to another (Kazepov, 2010).

They admit that vertical configurations intersect with the horizontal dimension of subsidiarity providing a quite complex picture.

In “Local Autonomy Centrally Framed” countries the rules are made by the central state and administration and the funding of social assistance benefits is done by the municipalities which have a considerable degree of flexibility in implementing the benefit. There is a general control and structuring by the central state.

Another approach is to be found in the “Centrally Framed” countries. The rules are fixed by the central state and the freedom of decision at the local level is very limited. It is all strictly regulated by the central state. As a consequence, the variation of benefits and benefit levels within a country are very limited.

In other countries the system is “regionally framed” which means that the rules are fixed on a regional – subnational – level. Administrative procedures and arrangements are made at the regional level. These countries vary in detail. For example, Italy is characterized by a system where the municipalities play the major role. These countries also may include to a greater extent local networks and local NGOs.

Countries with “Mixed frames in transition” regime changes are just changing their system and approach.

Nordic countries have a two-tier system, in which management and delivery are local, while design is national. In France – relating to its centralized system – the local level has only limited autonomy since the Departments and Prefectures responsible are parts of the centralized administrative and political system of that country.

In other countries again like Switzerland, Spain and Italy there is a political and administrative system with a certain kind of regionalism or federalism. In such countries in which the regions have legislative powers the central level may only provide some general rules and the lower - regional - level is strong. This may lead to greater diversity and fragmentation.

Reviewing these approaches there can be seen some disadvantages with all of these approaches. A system with a lot of actors at different levels needs coordination to a considerable extent. This also might lead to inability to take decision and by this even to stagnation.

Allowing disparities among sub-national territories may lead to uneven treatment if not very sophisticatedly institutionalized.

The more actors that are involved then the more the accountability of the decision-making process may be at stake.

When reviewing in general the different approaches a certain kind of convergence can be identified. In the cases of more decentralization this is usually accompanied by a stronger control by the central institutions.

These criticalities are related to one another and tend to be distributed differently in different European countries. In fact, the converging trends we identified have highly fragmented and divergent impacts due to the varying institutional contexts within which they are taking place. In particular their unequal distribution depends on the interplay between the intra-national structural socio-economic divides and the socio-political specificities and reforms, which grant different degrees of freedom to different territorial sub-national levels and actors in a given country.

The converging trend towards decentralization is accompanied in some countries also by an increasing degree of control exerted by the higher bodies. There is a certain tendency towards focusing on the regional level and a certain autonomy of this level and its institutions – but they are controlled by the central institutions.

So, in a way the European countries show a variety of approaches and experiences. Generally speaking they deal with similar problems from different perspectives. A very centralized system has to deal with the fact that it cannot take care of regional and local differences whereas decentralized systems require intensive coordination and might lead to unequal treatment. So centralized systems have to introduce mechanisms which take regional aspects into account and therefore need to have a sensitivity for local characteristics. Decentralized systems may need clear rules in order to function properly.

4. CONCLUSIONS ON EUROPE

All this has shown that in Germany there is a system which is based on its constitutional background and which requires clear rules and standards. Germany has seen the issue and challenge of bringing the poor back into work and thereby has established a system of job-seeker social assistance. It is also important to note that, due to its constitutional background, the system and its expenditures, and therefore the level of benefit, is based on the principle of life in human dignity and on account of this on the needs of the people rather than the budget available.

In Germany the rules concerning social assistance are defined at the central level by the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament. As a result, there are the same rules all over the country but regional differences are possible to a certain extent. But unlike in China the regional differences within Germany are limited.

The administration is done in the general system by the municipalities since they are the closest to the people in need. But nevertheless, they have to follow the Federal rules. There is not a fixed budget to be distributed but the budget is defined by the need. This means that some cities and municipalities have to pay much more than others due to the different economic situation of its population. So, for example the city of Berlin has high social assistance expenditures per capita in relation to the other cities and places.

In some areas, like job-seeker social assistance, there are different administrations involved. Despite detailed rules certain problems of coordination arise.

In Europe generally, a lot of different approaches can be found. There are systems that deal with regional differences and have problems in administering them. Others do it in a very centralized way which may not account for regional differences as it should. It can be seen that generally the structure of the administration of social assistance is connected with the general structure of a country. So, for example, Germany is a federal state with strong legislative power in a lot of areas – including social assistance – at the federal level. France is a very centralized country in which the prefectures and departments are a kind of branch of the central government. Here the regions have

only limited influence. Countries like Spain and Italy have stronger regional governments but also a greater disparity between the regions than, for example, Germany has. This has consequences concerning the construction of the system. All European countries try to integrate or reintegrate the poor into the labor market and by this provide specific measures to achieve this.

Generally European countries have to deal with the stigma associated with the receiving of, or applying for, social assistance and therefore help the people with general information and other measures to get them into the system. This seems to be different for China.

In general, it also has to be mentioned that the European countries do not have special disaster programs. If a natural disaster happens the usual systems of social protection – including social assistance – will step in. In case the disaster cannot be managed and covered by these programs the governments of the EU Member States usually establish ad-hoc programs and measures financed by the State Budget.

5. LESSONS FOR CHINA

Article 2 of the Interim Measures for Social Assistance of May 1, 2014 (Order of the State Council of the People's Republic of China No. 649) states

The social assistance system shall adhere to the principle of holding the baseline, responding to emergencies and difficulties, and being sustainable, be integrated with other social security systems, and be adaptable with the social assistance level and the economic and social development level.

The work of social assistance shall follow the principles of openness, fairness, justness and timeliness.

If this is to be applied then the approaches of the systems in Europe may work as an example since this is also the challenge of any system in countries in different stages of their development. The major difference between China and the EU countries is that in China there are still great differences between the different parts of the country. Whereas parts of the country definitely belong to the industrialized world others are still in an earlier stage of development. China also has a large agricultural sector which most European countries do not have. Nevertheless, there are also differences between the Member States.

The main issues these days in China are finding out the real needs of the people and using the information available, avoiding gaps between the different programs and budgets, fixing responsibilities of social insurance as opposed to social assistance and managing the regional differences. A severe problem seems to be the professional education of the staff responsible for administering the programs.

A general lesson from Europe is that rules on clear responsibilities are essential. How they are done is a matter of the organization and the general structure of a country. But the lesson is that the clearer the rules the better. The systems should not be defined from the budget point of view but from the point of view of the real need; this may lead to higher expenditures but does meet the requirements better. The Joint Conferences should not set the rules but exchange experiences.

The different programs should be brought together under one basic idea and principle so that there is no longer the requirement to qualify for Dibao in order to receive certain benefits. If a system is constructed on the basis of need, these differences prove to be artificial barriers which have to be removed.

The financial and budget responsibilities should be defined clearly so that negotiations between the different administrations and Ministries are no longer necessary.

The difference between regions should not be a matter of the budget of a certain region or municipality but should reflect the social and economic situation of a region. Here again it has to be a matter of need rather than that of an available budget. So, for example the level of the benefits should not be an issue of a budget available but of the cost of living in a certain region of China.

As far as the quality of administration is concerned, education and training should be improved. In the medium and long term most of the personnel should have a special qualification depending on the level of their work within the administration. Already mid-level staff should have some kind of academic qualification. This also may be done by in-house training and education which, for example, is the case to a certain extent in Germany. Better education and training may increase the program's effectiveness and improve its targeting. Coordination will become easier and more effective.

Last but not least the supervision of the system should be improved.

REFERENCES:

- Dean Ringold and Leszek Kasek, *Social Assistance in the New EU Member States - Strengthening Performance and Labor Market Incentives*, The World Bank Working Paper No 117, Washington DC 2007
- Yuri Kazepov and Eduardo Barberis, *Social assistance governance in Europe Towards a multi-level perspective*, in Marx and Nelson (Ed.), *Minimum Income Protection in Flux*, London 2013, pp. 217 - 248.

3.2.3 Overall Coordination of Social Assistance Resources in China

Policy recommendation report

*Zhang Haomiao, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Public Administration,
Sichuan University, P. R. China*

Table of contents

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION.....	64
2. THE PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION OF CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES.....	64
2.1 Problems of program's resources	64
2.2 Problems of financial resources	65
2.3 Problems of organizational and human resources	66
2.4 Problems of information resources	67
3. PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER COORDINATING CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES	67
3.1 Basic principles of strengthening social assistance's resource coordination	67
3.2 Policy recommendations of strengthening social assistance resources' coordination	69
REFERENCE.....	73
LIST OF TABLES	
Table 1: Social assistance service programs needed to be introduced	70

ABBREVIATIONS:

Dibao = Minimum Living Guarantee System

Three-nos recipients = People with no working ability, no income and no family support

MoCA = Ministry of Civil Affairs

1. BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, with the implementation of Dibao, China's social assistance system has entered a new period of institutionalized and standardized development. Currently, achievements have been made in the aspect of the coordination of social assistance resources including a relatively complete social assistance program system being established, a stable source of funding for social assistance has been formed, a coordination mechanism related to social assistance has been set up and the development of a social assistance information system has been promoted. However, while achieving these results, there are still some problems and shortcomings in the overall coordination of social assistance resources which means that the overall force of social assistance can not be fully displayed. These problems include program resources, financial resources, organizational and human resources and information resources. To overcome this situation, there is a need to further coordinate social assistance resources in order to display the overall force and increase the effectiveness of social assistance so as to fulfil the responsibilities of guaranteeing a minimum standard of living.

From the present to the future is a critical period for the transformation of social assistance with the need to emphasise institutional development and to emphasise resource coordination. In this critical period, it is necessary to consolidate the current achievements of social assistance resource coordination and whilst making efforts to solve the problems existing in the coordination of social assistance resources, so as to make social assistance able to achieve its goals of providing basic protection, guaranteeing a minimum standard of living, providing emergency relief and promoting poverty alleviation and become the basic and livelihood guarantee project which ensures there is a safety net in place for those most in need.

2. PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION OF CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES**2.1 Problems of program's resources**

First, automatic entitlements for those receiving Dibao. With the implementation of the medical, education, housing and other special assistance programs, many other regimes are bundled together to be implemented with Dibao, resulting in such a situation that the Dibao recipients can also automatically get a number of other assistance programs. Vice versa they will lose the entitlement to many other assistance programs if they are removed from Dibao. On the one hand, this case causes a "superposition effect", i.e., the Dibao families can obtain multiple assistance benefits, thus probably "enticing" some able-bodied recipients to stay in the Dibao program to enjoy these benefits, without any willingness to withdraw from Dibao. On the other hand, this case also causes a "cliff effect", i.e., there is a huge gap between the Dibao recipients and the non-Dibao low-income people in enjoying the social assistance policies. This leads to the result that the non-Dibao low-income groups find it difficult to obtain the help from social assistance even if they are in trouble thus further producing a sense of injustice and compromising social assistance's relief effects.

Second, a lack of service assistance. China's social assistance pays more attention on material reliefs by granting cash and in-kind benefits, but there is a serious lack of service assistance. Material relief is aimed at protecting the survival of the poor groups as a "blood transfusion" means. It cannot promote the social assistance recipients to develop and accumulate human capital. The more public resources that are invested into cash and in-kind social assistance, the more attention is paid to the fairness of the system by the public and a more stringent scrutiny will be imposed on

economic status of the applicants. Thus, those social assistance recipients who have the ability to work will be more unwilling to bear the risk of losing their social assistance due to employment, easily leading to the provision of long-term assistance. Service assistance mainly includes medical assistance, education assistance, employment training, home-based care assistance for the poor elderly etc. They help to improve the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable groups via services, enhance human capital and help raise abilities and ultimately promote the development of the people and society. So they are a kind of "blood-producing" assistance means. It should be noted that, in general, China's service assistance's development is lagging behind leading to a serious shortage of supply.

Third, the coordination between social assistance and other social security programs needs to be strengthened. On one hand, the coordination between the social assistance programs and the related social insurance ones is not strong. The coordination between the medical assistance and medical insurance is not smooth enough and the coordination between the employment assistance and unemployment insurance needs to be strengthened. On the other hand, the coordination between social assistance and social welfare and poverty alleviation development is also not enough. There is a lack of coordination between the Dibao program and the special groups' welfare programs (disabled persons, elderly persons, women and children). The relationship between the rural Dibao program and poverty alleviation and development needs to be further coordinated. The two systems do not work well together in respect of communication, coordination and information sharing.

2.2 Problems of financial resources

First, the mechanism for the funding guarantee and the sharing of financial responsibility is not standardized. In China's social assistance practice, although the principle of the sharing of the Central Government's and local governments' responsibilities for funding and liabilities is clear, no strict legal demands are imposed on all levels of government, especially on local government. Some local governments' finances list their financial assistance projects but often spend less or even nothing on social assistance. In addition, the governmental finances have no stable internal growth mechanism for investing in social assistance. Currently, the Chinese governments' financial funding for social assistance is not specified in the form of laws and regulations. While the investment on social assistance is low and the funding mechanism is yet to be standardized, social assistance programs lack a scientific and reasonable, financially responsible sharing mechanism and the transfer has a low degree of standardization. Currently in China, there are many social assistance programs which are generally based on public finances as the main channel of financial resources. But for specific assistance programs, governments at different levels provide widely varying shares of expenditure. For the social assistance programs that should be co-funded by the Central and local governments, there is a low degree of standardization for inter-governmental financial sharing of the social assistances. There is no quantified institutional blueprint for the standardized finance sharing principles, the measuring methods and the sharing ratios between the central and local governments as well as between local governments. In many cases, the division of social assistance expenditures is a benefit game between the different levels of governments, which establish a financial contribution relationship through negotiations. Due to the lack of scientific and statutory proportions, the financial contributions by Governments at all levels are not stable.

Second, unfair financial resource distribution for social assistance between the urban and rural regions. The unfair financial resource distribution for social assistances between the urban and the rural regions has been directly reflected in the higher investment on urban social assistance than that on rural social assistance. Take Dibao which is at the core of social assistance system as an example. By the end of 2006, the Central Government had never funded the rural Dibao. It mainly relied on local government finances and socially pooled funds from the village collectives. Such a case of higher urban investment than that for rural areas had not changed until 2011. In terms of medical assistance, the allocation of financial resources also shows an obvious urban and rural disparity. The

urban medical assistance program has a wide scope, basically covering the sick groups that need to be assisted. But in the rural areas with scarce funds, the medical assistance policy is difficult to be implemented effectively. This can only meet the assistance needs of a small number of poor people.

Third, the financial expenditure structure is not balanced between the different assistance programs. China's financial investment in social assistance continues to increase, basically guaranteeing the overall social assistance effect. But the allocation structure of the funds is still uneven, a situation reflected in the differentiated and unbalanced financial expenditures between the different social assistance programs. For example, more than 80 percent of the financial spending for social assistance is invested in the urban and rural Dibao programs whilst medical assistance, which takes less than 10% of the financial expenditure covers more than 90 percent of the assisted population.

2.3 Problems of organizational and human resources

First cooperation between the social assistance departments needs to be strengthened. China's social assistance programs involve a lot of elements which require a comprehensive system, needing cooperation and joint activity by multiple government departments to implement. However, China's social assistance departments have very different administration systems and management scopes. Because there is no clarity in the responsible bodies nor a unified management agency, the various departments render their own respective managements and fragmented administrations, lacking coordination and the sharing of information between departments. At present, at the Central Government level, China has established the inter-departmental joint conference system for social assistance. This system has achieved some results. At the local levels, however, such a joint conference system has not yet been fully established in a few areas. In the places where the joint conference systems have been established, due to joint conference system not being a formal institution but a coordination medium, there is a great shortage of the legal effect and the authority effect in the implementation of this system. In addition to the government's institutional assistance, the non-institutional assistance provided by the social forces also plays an important participatory, supplementary and implementation role in social assistance. In practice, due to little cooperation and communication between the relevant government departments and the charitable and social organizations, the institutional assistance and the non-institutional assistances operate in separate and fragmental manners. So the functions of charitable reliefs work with difficulty and the accuracy and efficiency of social assistance cannot be guaranteed.

Second, the responsibilities of the different levels of the civil affairs departments need to be clarified. Currently the responsibilities of the civil affairs departments from the central to the provincial, city, county and township (street) are not clear enough and the responsibilities are not fully performed. The responsibility for legislation, administration and the supervision of the civil affairs departments at the different levels in the various social assistance programs should be clarified. If not there will be inconsistencies and a vacuum in the administration and supervision.

Third, the non-professionalization of the service agencies and their personnel at the grassroots levels. Because the service providers and their personnel are not professional, their level of understanding of social assistance including Dibao is limited. This results in a low level of policy implementation. And some grassroots staff don't have a full understanding of the program thereby damaging the recipients' social rights and their right to equality. In addition, the cadres at street, neighborhood and rural levels generally have many other tasks, such as the service provision for the disabled, care for the elderly and others, whilst at the same time carrying out the other focused key work of the street offices. As the social assistance coverage becomes wider and wider and other assistance projects besides Dibao are developed and improved, this kind of multiple-tasking method is becoming more and more difficult to maintain. There are not enough social assistance workers to manage the workload, thus affecting the implementation of social assistance, restricting its timeliness, dynamics and accuracy.

Fourth, insufficient engagement by charitable organizations and social workers. China's social assistance is centered on Dibao which is subject to Government policy making and implementation.

The other social forces such as charitable organizations and social workers play a very limited role. Thus, there are many adverse effects including only focusing on the help with materials with little psychological comfort. The psychological development issues of recipients are not attended to and the quality of life of the poor families is neglected.

2.4 Problems of information resources

First, the information sharing mechanism is not perfect. The speed of information technology development in China's social assistance programs lags behind that of social insurance ("the Golden Insurance Project"). The current level of informatization is still relatively low, national networking has not been realized and some social assistance services are still in a pilot stage in respect of information technology. The information sharing mechanism is in need of improvement and the overall effect is not significant. On the one hand, this case is reflected in the lack of information sharing between government departments. There are duplicated inputs affecting work efficiency. On the other hand, there are information barriers between governmental departments and charitable organizations. It is difficult to achieve precision in aid provided. The charity relief and the government assistance are not able to complement their respective advantages.

Second, there are urban-rural and regional disparities in information coverage. In the process of social assistance information development, there are big gaps and uneven developments between the different regions, the different provinces and the urban and rural areas. And the information infrastructure supporting environment is significantly different between the urban and rural areas and between the different regions. Specifically, the underdeveloped rural areas and the economically less advanced regions see a low level of development. The urban areas and the more economically developed areas see a high level of development with rich resources and a high degree of information coverage.

3. PRINCIPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER COORDINATING CHINA'S SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

3.1 Basic principles of strengthening social assistance's resources' coordination

First, the coordination of equity and efficiency. Equity is the basic goal of the social assistance system and it is the embodiment of the nature of this system. The evaluation of an objective measure of social assistance is whether or not the system can guarantee the basic life of the poor and disadvantaged groups and help to create the conditions of getting rid of poverty. Social assistance is the most direct system for coping with poverty. It reduces the inequality of social members' development results by income redistribution. It is because social assistance has the function of safeguarding social equity that it becomes the basic rights and interests of all countries and attracts great attention from Governments and all sectors of society. But at the same time, in the management and the implementation of social assistance, it is necessary to strive to improve its efficiency, such as the specialization of the organization and its staff, informatization in management and verification, construction of a coordination mechanism, etc. The above will allow social assistance to play a bigger role with better function and effect. With the establishment of social assistance programs and their related mechanisms, social assistance not only guarantees a basic life but also considers the poor and disadvantaged groups for housing, health care, the demand for education and employment etc., and provides the appropriate assistance. This helps to minimise anti-social exclusion and to promote social integration. The equity of social assistance is improving, but the lack of coordination of social assistance resources leads to the welfare binding issue and departmental coordination and communication problems. There is still a large development space for improving the efficiency of the management and the operation. Inter-departmental cooperation

theory reveals the importance of inter-departmental coordination for improving efficiency. Therefore, in the process of further coordinating social assistance resources, we should focus on improving efficiency based on the adherence to equity orientation, and strive to achieve the integration of equity and efficiency.

Second, the coordination of government, society and the market. The theory of welfare pluralism shows that welfare in society cannot be dependent on government alone, but it should be provided by government, society (including the family) and market together. For social assistance, although governments bear the primary responsibility, but it should not reject the social and market forces but should fully mobilize them and use all kinds of resources in the market and society as a complement to the government's own resources. The resources from the market and from society should reasonably coordinate with resources from the government. A government-led social assistance program is the inherent requirement of it as public goods, but it is also an important source of legitimizing modern government as well as the embodiment of the government performing its public responsibilities. The leading responsibility of the government in social assistance mainly includes the promotion of legislation, financial support and management. However the government is not omnipotent. International experience of social assistance development and reform indicates that highlighting the government's leading role is the fundamental guarantee of the sustainable and healthy development of social assistance. The rational use of the market mechanism and the mobilization of social forces is an important pre-condition for making this system play a better role in the minimum living standard guarantee.

Therefore, the social forces and the market mechanisms should be mobilized to jointly promote the coordination of social assistance resources without compromising the equity of social assistance. This would lead to social assistance achieving a better development. It needs to be pointed out that the use of social forces and the market mechanism is to make up for the short comings in the government's function, not to replace it. In the process of social assistance resources we should reasonably deal with the relationship between government, society and the market.

Third, the coordination of the urban/rural areas and the different regions. With its economic and social transformation and the profound adjustment of its benefit distribution structure, China is in a critical stage of its reform, development and conflict. People's living standards have reached a relatively comfortable standard, but the gap between the urban and the rural areas and between the regions has not been fundamentally reversed. There are still a considerable number of the urban and rural poor and the low-income population. There is an urgent need to further coordinate the overall social assistance, in order to make it fulfill its role of guaranteeing a minimum living standard for the poor and the low-income people and to narrow the gap between the urban and the rural populations as well as the regional disparities. In a society, adopting different poverty lines in different regions or among different population groups tends to split the relationship between them in an ideological sense. It is also easy to produce a misleading concept, that poverty is the concept of an area, rather than the concept of a whole society. The discussion of the territoriality of civil rights actually involves the definition and understanding of civil rights. Civil rights mean that in a politically organized society or nation state, citizenship makes a person entitled to ask the society or country responsible for him, and make him enjoy all kinds of benefits of social progress.²² An individual is endowed with legitimate reasons to the State for the same status and treatment like all other social members, being free from restrictions such as gender, nationality and age. Regional differences in the place of residence obviously cannot be a reason for different civil rights. Social assistance is different from social insurance. It is more embodied in the rights of the citizens and the pursuit of social equity. In this sense, pursuing the coordination of the urban/rural areas and the

²²Ci Q. and Zhang, J. Central Government, Local Government and Civil Rights, Jianghai Academic Journal, 2007 (5) : 107-112.

different regions in the process of social assistance coordination is necessary and urgent. The existence of social assistance between the urban and rural areas and the regional differences is an ethical flaw. It is also contrary to the core connotation of social justice – the guarantee of a citizen's basic rights.²³

3.2 Policy recommendations for strengthening social assistance resources' coordination

First, the recipients of the various kinds of social assistance programs should be regulated and automatic entitlements to welfare should be avoided. There is a need to regulate the recipients of all kinds of social assistance programs. All kinds of special assistance should be brought into the unified social assistance management system, and the recipients, standards, payment methods and benefit levels as well as management should be designed uniformly in order to enhance the coordination among the programs. Meanwhile, there is a need to get rid of the special assistance programs' automatic entitlement for a Dibao recipient.

The eligibility for special assistance can be extended to the low income groups beyond the Dibao recipients, or narrowed to some special families among the Dibao recipients, or it can be crossed with the Dibao coverage. In summary it needs to determine the recipients of special assistance through their need tested according to the actual situation of the family's difficulties, rather than determining the recipients according to whether or not the applicants are Dibao recipients. In that way the superposition effect can be avoided and sustainable development can be achieved.²⁴

In this regard, the latest social assistance reform in South Korea can provide a reference and information. In 1999 South Korea established the national basic living standard guarantee system, similar to the Chinese Dibao, providing living assistance for the poor who live under the absolute poverty line. In addition, these living assistance recipients can also get education, health care, housing and other assistance. Those who are not the recipients of living assistance can not get any assistance. On the one hand, this leads to welfare dependency of the recipients and on the other hand it also causes superposition effect similar to China. Therefore, South Korea implemented a reform in 2015, and after the reform the basic living standard guarantee system and the special assistance programs including medical aid, education assistance and housing assistance are run separately. The basic living standard guarantee system provides living assistance for the absolute poor group whilst medical aid, education aid, housing aid and other special assistance aim at people in absolute and relative poverty who have a demand for the special assistance.²⁵ In this way the needs of the poor families can be met and assistance can be provided more equitably and more effectively.

Second, the existing special assistances should be strengthened and other services assistance should be introduced. Poverty not only means a low income and difficulties in the basics of living. It also means being trapped in a social dilemma. In China's social assistance system, Dibao can deal with the problem of no or low income. Special assistances such as medical aid, housing aid, education aid and employment aid can deal with the social dilemma. Therefore, on the one hand the design of special assistance should be optimized and the benefit level should be increased. At present, special assistance programs including medical aid, housing aid, education aid and employment aid are still imperfect and the benefit level is too low to meet the actual needs of the poor families. It needs to be improved and to optimize the existing special assistance, there should be a moderate improvement in the benefit level and a strengthening of the contact with employment promotion, so as to play the special assistance's role in dealing with social dilemma. On the other

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Guan, X. Study on the Urban DiBao in China, in Mi, Y.(eds.) Social Assistance and Poverty Governance, China Society Press, 2012, pp 3-19.

²⁵ Li, X.: Two Sides of Income Poverty: Experimental Measures for Poverty Measurement, Proceedings of the 11th International Forum on Social Security, Seoul, 2015.

hand, other services assistance should be introduced to meet the various needs of the disadvantaged people. At present, besides the need for cash assistance, recipients also have demands for service assistance. In addition to their needs for "instrumental" assistance, the recipients also have demands for "emotional" assistance. This diversification of needs reflects that the recipients claim their rights and more and more they put forward their demand from the perspective of maintaining their rights and interests. Therefore, the establishment of assistance programs should consider the diversified needs of the recipients and provide various kinds of service assistance.

Based on the existing service assistance programs, social assistance service should also give priority to the following programs: rehabilitation and nursing assistance, care and custodial assistance, psychological assistance and so on (see table 1). These service assistance programs can be used to explore and accumulate experience in a local pilot. The programs that are widely available, easy to assess and controllable in quality should be gradually fixed to become policies. In addition, there needs to be measures taken to strengthen the coordination between social assistance and social insurance, poverty alleviation and development and social welfare, so as to reduce the recipients' vulnerability through providing insurance treatment, development and welfare support services.

Table 1: Social assistance service programs needed to be introduced

Service assistance	Target groups
rehabilitation and nursing	Poor disabled, sick and elderly, etc.
care and custodial	Poor elderly, children, orphans and street children, etc.
psychological counseling	Poor people with mental problems, community correction criminals (drug addicts, released prisoners)

Third, the investment in social assistance should be increased and the relationship between social assistance administrative power and fiscal expenditure should be rationalized. Compared with foreign countries, there is a gap in the spending on social assistance and the total expenditure on Dibao. The proportion of China's fiscal spending on social assistance to that on social security and the proportion of social assistance expenditure to GDP is obviously low. Therefore, in terms of funding, financial support responsibilities of governments at all levels should be further defined, the scale of social assistance expenditure should be adjusted, and the benefit level should be increased gradually. In the interim there is a need to actively mobilize the social and market forces to raise funds as a complement to the Government's financing. When increasing the investment on social assistance, the social assistance administrative power and expenditure responsibilities of the central and local governments should be clearly defined. Regulation on the responsibilities of the different levels of government is not clear in the Social Assistance Interim Measures issued in 2014. There is also lack of clear delineation of fiscal expenditure responsibilities. For this, the system of local responsibility, territorial management and multi-level financial burdens should be further clarified. The administrative responsibilities and financial responsibilities should be unified. On the basis of clarifying the basic management system, the Government levels deciding upon social assistance standards should be raised and the main financial spending responsibility of a provincial government should be highlighted. Transfer payments from the central government for Dibao and medical aid should be integrated and a unified social assistance transfer payment project from the central government should be established. Within the overall social assistance system, funds should be allowed to be moved among the different social assistance programs and funds also should be tilted into the rural areas and the poor areas in the central and western parts of the country. The

fiscal expenditure structure should be optimized, and the expenditure on medical aid, education aid, housing aid, and temporary assistance should be increased. Financial funding should give priority to the key livelihood issues which demand urgent solutions.

Fourth, inter-departmental cooperation and assistance capabilities across the departments should be enhanced. Social assistance is complex and is managed by different government departments. The coordination and cooperation between departments is crucial. Social assistance management should adhere to a moderately centralized management principle which means that the civil affairs departments should be in charge and the other related departments should be cooperative. That is to say, that the civil affairs department as the department in charge is fully responsible for the management of the various social assistance affairs. The departments of education, urban and rural housing construction, judicial, human resources and social security should be cooperative in the implementation of social assistance implementation and bear their own responsibilities. This requires that the special assistance programs which are scattered in the various departments should be gradually unified into the department in charge so as to improve the cooperative capability.

At present, China has established the inter-departmental joint conference system for social assistance. To some extent, the cooperation between departments has been improved, but the actual efficiency of the social assistance program should be improved and the joint conference system needs to be improved. Firstly the efficiency of the joint conference system should be enhanced. It needs to make a specific regulation on the content of, and the time limit for the conference's coordination, improve its efficiency and take advantage of today's convenient network conditions to transfer files, report problems and release departmental cooperation requirements, etc., with the fastest speed possible to convey the various tasks related the cooperation department. Second, the legal binding force in the coordination system should be increased. On the one hand, in addition to joint conference coordination, it can also provide administrative coordination within the department, which stipulates the departments' own rights in respect of coordination.

After all, the joint conferences are not often held. On the other hand, specific regulations on conference coordination and administrative coordination should be formulated, and issues such as specific measures and the time limit should be stipulated in coordination with the government or in coordination with the non-governmental organizations. When the time has come, the various social assistance affairs should be integrated into the civil affairs departments and special social assistance bureaus in the civil affairs departments should be set up to absorb the special assistance management responsibilities including Dibao, disaster relief, temporary assistance and medical aid. It should fully assume the management responsibilities of social assistance. Of course, any institution must be placed under the legal framework of the "rule is imperative", so as to realize the legalization of the management institutions and the system transformations. That is the ultimate ideal management state.

Fifth, professional service agencies should be established and the existing delivery methods should be changed. It is necessary to establish professional service agencies according to the guiding principle of separation of management and operation. It can be considered to establish professional social assistance agencies at the central and provincial level. These agencies are responsible for guiding the social assistance agencies at the lower levels. Then they need to set up offices in the streets and in the townships to undertake social assistance's operations. The number of staff in the professional agencies can be determined according to a ratio between recipients and staff members.

Setting up social relief agencies and the integration of social assistance managed by the civil affairs departments and special assistance such as medical aid and housing aid being managed by other departments can make the grass-roots decentralized social assistance system work together and make the recipients of social assistance integrate into a unified social assistance management system. This will be beneficial for the optimal allocation of resources and the overall effectiveness

and coordination among the programs. This will allow the achievement of a comprehensive and integrated system of grassroots social assistance work.²⁶ In addition, the experience of the EU shows that one-stop service is an effective way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social assistance coordination.

Therefore, the mechanisms for "one department accepts applications and other departments coordinate their handling " should be improved in order to avoid repetition and omission, facilitate applicants, reduce costs and enhance efficiency. The social assistance resource delivery system is divided into government organizations and non-government organizations (NGO's or social organizations). Government organizations are the main channels for social assistance work. No other organization can be a substitute but NGO's, including community networks and related social workers are also necessary and effective. With the involvement of NGO's and social workers in social assistance, a change in the existing delivery method should be considered. A demand oriented delivery method should be established. That is to say, social assistance should be based on the poor and their families' needs, and the actual needs of poor households should be understood through the household survey conducted by NGO's and social workers. Then a specific assistance and support plan should be designed and implemented. The plan developed has to make full use of, and integrate with, the existing social assistance programs and meet the poor families' needs. Civil affairs department should change the delivery way from "providing whatever they have" to "trying to provide whatever the poor need", so as to form a targeted and comprehensive "assistance package".

Sixth, information sharing should be strengthened and the development of informatized social assistance should be promoted. The 21st century is the age of big data. The improvement in social assistance's operations needs support of the data, and to realize the coordination of all kinds of resources in the various departments, information sharing is the key. On the one hand, the departments of civil affairs, human resources and social security, urban and rural housing construction, industry and commerce need to unite. The information linkage between the departments should be realized through the signing of information sharing agreements. It can not only improve the informatization development but also can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of recipient identification.

In addition, the scientificness of decision making can be improved through large data analysis. On the other hand, the information barriers among the civil affairs department, the anti-poverty department and the charity organizations should be broken. A docking mechanism for supply and demand should be established. The anti-poverty department or the civil affairs department should make the recipients' demands known to the public in time according to appropriate authorizations. Charity organizations can get the related demand information through information sharing, so as to avoid working in the dark and disorder.

The informationization of social assistance agencies at all levels should be promoted and the informationization and convenience of the management and servicing of social assistance should be realized in order to display the fundamental role of improving administrative efficiency and the level of public service. In the process of informatization development, relevant departments should organize their social assistance staff to receive regular training, establish and implement a licensing system, gradually improve the professional ability of the social assistance workers, and pay attention to the informatization construction in the rural and under-developed areas so as to avoid the information gap.

²⁶Zheng, G. & Yang, L. Reform and Development of China's Social Assistance: from Subsistence Assistance to Comprehensive Assistance in Zheng, G. (Eds.) China's Social Security Reform and Development Strategy (Social Assistance and Social Welfare) , People's Publishing House, 2011, pp. 21 - 22.

REFERENCES:

- Ci Q., and Zhang, J.: Central government, local government and civil rights, *Jianghai Academic Journal*, 2007 (5): 107 - 112.
- Guan, X. Study on the Urban DiBao in China in Mi, Y. (eds.) *Social assistance and poverty governance*, China Society Press, 2012, pp 3 - 19.
- Li, X. Two sides of income poverty: experimental measures for poverty measurement, *Proceedings of the 11th International Forum on Social Security*, Seoul, 2015.
- Zheng, G. & Yang, L. Reform and development of China's social assistance: from subsistence assistance to comprehensive assistance in Zheng, G.(eds.) *China's social security reform and development strategy (social assistance and social welfare)*, People's Publishing House, 2011, 21 - 22.

3.2.3 Coordination of Overall Social Assistance Resources

Policy Recommendation Report

Jean-Yves Hocquet, EU-China SPRP expert

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	76
1. PRESENTATION OF THE FRENCH SITUATION: AN UNAVOIDABLE COMPLEXITY	77
1.1 General overview	77
1.2 Management in question	78
1.3 A division of labor permanently moving.....	80
1.4 Governance of social expenditures	83
2. COORDINATION AS A MULTI-LEVEL CHALLENGE	84
2.1 Information as the basis for clarity	84
2.2 Implementing a network of one stop shops	86
2.3 Personal support	88
2.3.1 Aims of personal support	88
2.3.2 Conditions for the success of personal support	88
2.4 Information Technologies as tools for coordination: exchanging information	89
3. RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION	90
3.1 Coordination at the national level.....	90
3.2 Implementing a national framework intended to measure the outcomes while respecting local management	91
3.3 Local planning.....	91
3.4 Streamlining the benefits system.....	92
3.5 Mid-term recommendations.....	92
4. CONCLUSION	93
REFERENCE	93
Appendix 1	94
Appendix 2	95
Appendix 3	97
Appendix 4	99
Appendix 5	101
Appendix 6	102
Appendix 7	103
Appendix 8	105
Appendix 9	107
Appendix 10	108

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication” Leonardo da Vinci.

INTRODUCTION

The question of coordination of overall social assistance resources raises the question of the efficiency of social assistance. If the budgetary issue is one of the main concerns of such policies the question is first of all a policy matter. Because of the rich exchanges with the Chinese colleagues and academics, policy recommendations must be differentiated following the term.

In the medium term social assistance in China will converge with the European countries. Social assistance will have a more qualitative dimension, be more oriented to the promotion of social inclusion and not only in the fight against poverty. In its management, the State authorities will try to provide assistance to vulnerable people e.g. old people, disabled people, minors to have access to the same rights to those of the other people and not only of the poorest people. In this case incomes are taken into account for the calculation of the amount of the benefits but are not a condition of eligibility.²⁷

For this reason, the policy recommendations will include medium term objectives which could be elaborated and be integrated into the five-year plan reflections. Anyway in the exchanges it appeared that the immediate need for MoCA was to achieve better efficiency in the management of DiBao. For France the comparison with the post war period until the eighties is also more accurate. At the time when the pay as you go system for the pensions was introduced a large number of workers, and their families, did not meet the criteria to get a full pension till the 1980's. So the poor people were mostly retirees. That is the reason why a special minimum allowance was introduced to reach a level of income for those had just a small or a non-existent pension.

Today the situation has changed. Pensioners enjoy an average income higher than the average income of people in activity. The main allowance is now for people of working age who have not the capacity or the opportunity to work.

The question of coordination will be addressed in different ways following the recipients. For old people the situation does not change a lot- especially means - except for the need for long term care. In most of the cases, the assessment of the allowance could be done once even if regular rendezvous are useful in order to have a review of the other needs of the person (health, loneliness). For younger people the objective is to help them to find a way into work or to help them find the various services in relation to health or social difficulties. Normally most of the people are in flux and their situation is temporary. Coordination will then require dealing with many institutions to solve their changing situations.

It is important to remember that the outcomes of coordination should be principally assessed at the local level. Whatever the administrative complexity is, coordination must transform complexity into simplicity. In France social assistance and non-compulsory insurance plans which were destined to disappear with the big Social Security project (the compulsory social insurance), have actually expanded and ramified, even within Social Security. Social Security itself is the subject, in its branches and schemes, of an extreme sophistication. Faced with all these movements, operators and managers experience a serious embarrassment.

Social policies are daily modified by a permanent revision of their normative parameters, with more and more sophisticated information systems and tensions on benefits, financing, rights of individuals and households.

This continuous complexification no longer allows managers to correctly apply the legal provisions. But, more seriously still, the misunderstanding and criticism by the recipients of these social

²⁷ In France more than social assistance the expression frequently used is social action which covers a part of welfare policy. The provisions of article 3 of the draft law mirror the future scope of social assistance

policies (all of us) is increasing. Users do not understand the rights that advisors or technicians can not explain. Simplification through coordination is essential therefore to overcome the doctrinal impasses, management failures and individual hassle. Basically, coordination is to contribute to two legitimacies:

- An economic legitimacy to do better, with, if not less, at least probably no more; and
- A democratic legitimacy to ensure eligibility, visibility and efficiency of social policies.

The complexity is fueled by demographics and by individual aspirations. Especially, the expectations of individualization and of customizing the service relationship weigh on the managers. The request for adaptation to a particular case is infinite, and the means limited. What can be done about the coordination of social policies? Three issues are identified: benefits, organization and management.

In the foreground, that of benefits, services, everything is on the one hand in the regulation. Refinements are always more and more elaborate: modulations of the amounts and rates; diversification of targets; incessant innovations (with a long-term political desire to invent a magic universal measure). If we push to the extremes, large scale projects as universal income would bring a tremendous simplification. There is little to hope in this field. In terms of organizations, on the other hand, there are more possibilities. France presents a "variegated" governance of its social policies: State, social partners, different levels of local authorities (departments then municipalities), associations and companies get involved.

However, it is mainly on the side of the management and the service relationship that possible sources of simplification must be sought. Internalize the complexity and outsource the simplicity. Simplifying the service relationship means reducing all the complexities of the law, made invisible to the user, in an integration of information systems. Since the different institutions will not merge overnight, the essential thing is to make them more compatible, inter-operable and totally connected with their information systems. The complexity must be internalized in the system of social protection with a better coordination symmetrically, and always relying on information systems and a better networking.

It is possible to outsource the simplicity, with a demanding principle, that of uniqueness in a changing context:

Multiplication and diversification of stakeholders (itself induced by increased specialization);

- The various levels (care, income, schooling, employment, etc.);
- Deinstitutionalization and the growing use of mainstreaming services;
- The progress of inclusion and the evolution of people's expectations (towards independent living);
- The relevance of targeting responses and "tailoring";
- The need to reduce the additional costs imposed by "benefit packages" sometimes exceeding the actual expectations of beneficiaries and by the operating costs of traditional institutions.

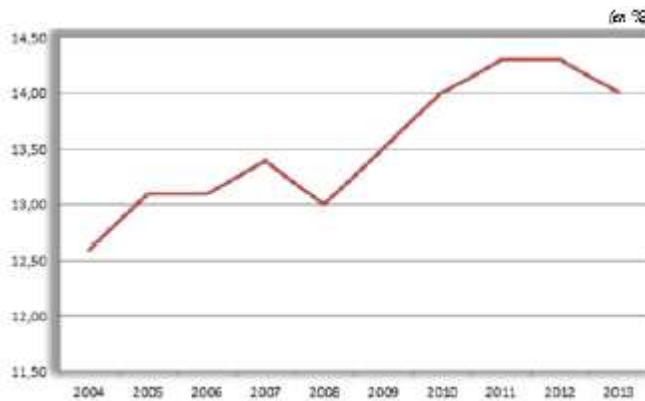
"Sharing is the essential requirement" (13th Five –Year Plan). The French returns of experience and recommendations tend to the implementation of this principle and especially to the article 3 of the "Interim Measures for Social Assistance" which imposes upon MoCA a special role in coordination.

1. PRESENTATION OF THE FRENCH SITUATION: AN UNAVOIDABLE COMPLEXITY

1.1 General overview

In 2013, according to the national statistics body INSEE, 8.6 million people, the equivalent of 14 per cent of the population, lived below the poverty line, set at 60 percent of the median standard of living, i.e. 1,000 Euros per month.

Table 1: Evolution of the percentage of people under the poverty line 60 percent of the median standard



Source: INSEE28

France stands out by the fact that its social protection system is divided up among a large number of different institutions. The general national social security system, created in 1945, is at the heart of the current system, providing sickness, old age, industrial accident and family cover for the majority of private sector employees. However, with the exception of the family branch, the general social security system has never had the universality that its designers desired, due to the fact that State employees, the self-employed and employees of large public sector organisations kept their own schemes from the outset. Moreover, important components of social protection were left out of the social security system and taken care of by other institutions (e.g. unemployment insurance, complementary pension scheme for managerial staff)²⁹.

As far as the healthcare branch is concerned, complementary health insurance was developed in order to cover the remaining payable healthcare costs not covered by the general social security system. Today, this remains outside of the field of public expenditure, although it plays an important role in health coverage in France.

1.2 Management in question

The division between contributory and non-contributory financing remains incomplete. The social security system was originally based on the social insurance model. A close relationship between contributions and benefits was established and the affiliation was connected with the exercise of a professional activity (although coverage was automatically extended to the family of the insured person). The universalization of health insurance benefits and family benefits, the policy of reductions in employers' social security contributions for persons on low wages and the introduction of solidarity mechanisms (social minima, housing benefits, etc.) led the State to take on an increasingly larger share of the financing of social protection. These long-term developments tended towards a distinction between social security schemes paying essentially contributory benefits, aimed at providing a substitute for earned income in case of loss of wages, and a system of social assistance aimed at all citizens offering benefits according to needs, and without conditions regarding past contributions. However, this distinction has not been fully completed. Each scheme

²⁸ <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3137028>

²⁹ <http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/cae-note028-en.pdf> Governance of Social Protection:

Transparency and Effectiveness Antoine Bozio and Brigitte Dormont Notes du conseil d'analyse économique 2016/1 (n° 28), p. 1 - 12. DOI 10.3917/ncae.028.0001

continues to be financed by a mixture of contributions and taxes. This contributes to the lack of transparency in the compulsory deductions for the financing of social protection.

The following table presents schematically the division of revenue and items of expenditure according to their contributory or non-contributory character. Apart from the complexity of the financing of social protection, there is little difference in the division between contributory and non-contributory financing regarding receipts and expenditure.

Table 2: Social protection spending according to contributory or non-contributory criteria

Risks covered	Nature of the social protection	Current modes of financing	Cost in billions of euros	Usable resources in billions of euros
Contributory				
Retirement pensions, unemployment, workplace accidents, daily allowances, of sickness benefit	Contributory social insurance	Social contributions, taxes and other public contributions	327.2	Social contributions 396.2
Non-contributory				
Health, family	Non-contributory social protection	Social contributions, taxes and other public contributions	282.3	Taxes and other public contributions 240.0
Housing, poverty and social exclusion (including for old age and unemployment)	Assistance: means tested benefits			
Financial Costs			29.6	

Field: Expenditure of general government and compulsory levies.
Interpretation: Non-contributory old age and unemployment (items of expenditure: social minima, family and pensions entitlements) are included under the fight against poverty and social exclusion or the family.

Source: Data from Comptes de la protection sociale 2015, 2013 data.

So, the design of the French social protection leads to a blurred border between social security and social assistance. The complexity of the coordination is complicated further by the multiplicity of the various actors even at the national level.

In France, this framework for social assistance is defined by the Social Action and Family Code: “Social and medico-social action aims to promote the autonomy, and the protection, of individuals, social cohesion and citizenship, and to prevent exclusion and to correct the effect of exclusion in an inter-ministerial context. This Code is based on the continuous assessment of the requirements and the expectations of the members of all social groups, particularly the disabled and the elderly, vulnerable people and families, those facing poverty or a precarious existence, and the provision of services for the former in cash or kind. This Code is implemented by the State and the territorial authorities and their public establishments, social security bodies, associations and social and medico-social institutions.”

The aims and the actors in charge of their implementation are quite numerous. In terms of social action, the French system is characterized both by multiple players and by a strong standardization of the regulation. Three main levels exist for the implementation of social action. The number of the charities in our country, coupled with the flexibility of the law mentioned above, makes possible the existence of a large array of diverse territorial organizations in the field of access to social rights.

National bodies: social action is managed and defined at the national level. With the exception of “extralegal” services – in the sense that they complement “legal” services – social action and social benefits are defined in the law and the regulations and are managed by the national institutions, including when they are financed and implemented in full at the local level.

In addition to the Government and the Parliament, this level also combines the national agencies of the different social protection systems, as well as the leading national associations managing or federating networks, some of which are extensive, of establishments and social and medico-social services.

Local bodies: social action is currently mainly implemented at the local level. The decentralization laws of the 1980s and the 2000s effectively transferred most responsibilities for the implementation of social action to the territorial authorities. In addition to the public authorities, social protection bodies also oversee a network of local bodies at departmental or regional level.

Facilities and services³⁰: social and medico-social services and establishments are specialized in their specific fields (children, the elderly or the disabled, the fight against exclusion, etc.), and implement the different facets of social action.

1.3 A division of labor permanently moving

The State

The State ceased almost all direct social action with the decentralization laws of 1982-1983 and of 2003-2004. It currently employs a few social workers (except for its own staff). The State still plays a key role in two respects. To begin with, the Government and the Parliament define - in the form of law and regulations (enforcement orders) – all social action initiatives, even the implementation procedures, sometimes in a highly detailed manner. The Social Action and Family Code is a unique 1500-page document that combines all the applicable provisions. In order to guarantee equal treatment for users, these initiatives will apply in the same manner throughout France, even if they are managed and financed in full at the local level.

The State finances subsequently some social assistance benefits directly. Examples are:

- Most of the active solidarity income RSA (managed by local family funds under the control of the departmental councils),
- Disabled adults allowance, or AAH (managed by local family funds),
- The “minimum pension” or “solidarity allowance for the elderly” (Asp), paid by retirement funds to those who have not acquired their pension rights independently,
- Allowances paid to the unemployed who are no longer entitled to unemployment benefits (specific solidarity allowance and equivalent pension allowance) paid by the National Labour Agency (Pole Emploi),
- Housing of the homeless,
- State medical assistance (AME), which covers the health costs of illegal aliens (managed by the health insurance scheme).

Territorial authorities

Decentralization has considerably reinforced the role of the territorial authorities. Their involvement in social action does however vary depending on the type of authority.

- **Regions (17 in metropolitan France)**

The regions in charge of vocational training provide training for social workers and participate in the reintegration of people in difficulty via professional training courses.

- **Departments (departmental councils 101 in metropolitan France)**

³⁰ Providers could be public or private and for private nonprofit (NGOs) or for profit companies (especially for the housing of older people)

Article L. 121-1 provides: "The department defines and implements the social action policy; taking into account the powers entrusted by law to the State, other local authorities and the social security organizations. It coordinates the actions carried out on its territory which contribute to it." It is also the department that finances (by being able to decide to be more generous, cf. Article L. 121-4) the legal benefits of social assistance, except for those that are the responsibility of the State (listed in Article L. 121-7). According to Article L. 121-6, "By agreement with the department, a municipality may directly exercise all or part of the competences which, in the field of social action, are attributed to the department".

Departments have become pivots for local social action under the decentralization laws. Departments are involved in practically all fields of social action:

- Social assistance for children: protecting children in danger, adoption, providing support for those children and families in difficulty, placing children in homes or with foster families, etc.;
- Social assistance for the elderly: payment of the personal autonomy allowance (APA), home help, retirement home accommodation costs, etc.;
- Social assistance for disabled adults: payment of the compensatory disability benefits (PCH), home help, home accommodation costs, etc.;
- Integration: the allocation and financing of the active solidarity income (RSA), the financing of integration actions, etc.

- **Town councils (Municipalities and inter-municipalities - about 35000)**

Municipalities and inter-municipalities are historically the number one local contributors to social action, and intervene in many fields:

- The creation of collective childcare structures (crèches, nurseries, etc.),
- Home help for the elderly and helping to reduce isolation,
- Accommodation for the elderly (managing retirement homes, collective housing, etc.).

Municipalities take action either directly or via a specific structure: the municipal (or intermunicipal) centre for social action (CCAS).

Social security bodies

Social security organizations are also competent to exercise activities under health and social action. Articles L. 121-11 and L. 121-12 of the Code of Social Action and Families refer respectively to the security code (articles L. 262-1 for CPAM general health scheme and L. 263-1 for CAF family scheme) and the Code of agriculture and maritime fisheries (Article L. 726-1) for the MSA (peasant scheme)

These bodies are based on insurance (payment of allowances in consideration of the contributions paid by employers and beneficiaries). However each of the three main social security branches has also developed their own large-scale social actions.

- **The family branch**

This branch manages several forms of social action:

- The financing of collective (investment and operation) and individual childcare,
- Support for extra-curricular activities and free time (leisure centers),
- Support for social centers,
- Support for parents and family mediation,

- Individual assistance for low-income families,
- The processing and payment of several social minima such as the active solidarity income (RSA) and the disabled adult's allowance (AAH).

- **The retirement branch**

Retirement funds play a growing role in preventing the loss of autonomy:

- Information and awareness programs and prevention workshops,
- Home help.

- **The health branch**

The health branch finances the investment in, and the operation of, social and medico-social services and establishments hosting the elderly and the disabled via the allowance paid to the National autonomy solidarity fund (CNSA).

This branch also finances complementary health services for people on a low income.

Hospitals

In addition to providing care, public hospitals play a key social role by promoting access to healthcare, particularly via 24/7 healthcare access services (Pass).

They also employ social assistants, who attempt to find solutions (home help or retirement home) for elderly people after a period of hospitalization.

Social and medico-social services and establishments

These services and establishments assist foster children, the elderly, disabled children and adults, and people facing integration difficulties.

Charities

Charities are highly active in the social sector in France and particularly in managing most services and establishments (non-profit private bodies) in all the fields of social action. The largest associations lead networks of several hundred establishments, helping tens of thousands of people and employing thousands.

Social centres

Social centres are local structures and are open to all members of the population of any age. They particularly provide care and lead activities and services with a social purpose. They are supported by participating inhabitants in order to develop projects at district or municipality level.

Article L. 115-1 makes the fight against poverty and exclusion "a national imperative [...] and a priority of all the public policies of the nation", the role of knowledge, of prevention and suppression (sic) of these phenomena being assumed by "the State, local authorities and public establishments whose Centers Communal and Inter-municipal Social Action Organizations, Security Agencies as well as the social and medico-social institutions" must take "the provisions necessary to inform every one of the nature and extent of their rights and to help them, possibly to carry out the administrative or social steps necessary for their implementation in the fastest time. But the text does not forget the many entities that are supposed to help: "companies, professional or inter-professional organizations, unions of employees, the provident societies, the groups governed by the Code of Mutuality, the associations that work particularly in the field of integration and the fight against exclusion, citizens as well as all the players in the solidarity economy and the social economy.

- To supplement the resources of people engaged in activities to reduce the prevalence of poverty within the employed population;
- To improve the care of people who are deprived of employment, through monitoring and personalized support towards employment.

The implementation of the RSA thus aims to make work the major lever to get people out of poverty: providing on the one hand, financial support, and on the other hand, a mobilization to remove the various personal or cyclical obstacles to employment. This supports the gradual return to employment of the beneficiaries and the reduction of the threshold effects.

The universal medical coverage program allows all people on a low income to benefit from the basic protection if they are not already covered by the basic CMU or the complementary health protection (complementary CMU). The assistance for the acquisition of complementary health insurance (ACS) has the same target for people not entitled to the complementary CMU, for low income people and for the not exactly poor people.

The outcome of social assistance should be that everybody could be a full included citizen. The challenge is to deliver the proper services and benefits for those who actually need them. The criteria of the policy are:

- Fairness to allow the right benefits and services to those who are entitled to them
- Clarity to secure equality of treatment among the recipients
- Public support to insure the sustainability of the system

From this starting point, the question of coordination will be addressed through three aspects:

- Information
- Personal support
- Control

2. COORDINATION AS A MULTI-LEVEL CHALLENGE

2.1 Information as the basis for clarity

Information prevents the double entitlement or non take-up of benefits. We can distinguish three situations:

- The primary non-recourse, corresponding to cases where the user does not request the benefits;
- The secondary non-take up, when the demand does not succeed;
- The partial non-recourse for those receiving benefits of less than the amount that could be obtained.

The non-take could be total if the benefit is not paid. It could be temporary (a delay between when the person is eligible and when the person actually applies), permanent or frictional during the period between the request and the reception of the aid.

Coordination must firstly address these kinds of difficulties related to non-knowledge, when the offer is not known, for a lack of information or misunderstanding, when known, requested but not obtained (by difficulty in carrying out an administrative procedure or because of even agent practices), non-demand, when it is known but not requested (by a lack of interest in the offer, weariness with the administrative procedures as a result of the presence of alternatives, self-restraint or sometimes even the loss of the idea to have a right).

Another cause of non-take up has been highlighted by sociological investigations: the service is not proposed by the agents who handle the files, on account of a lack of knowledge or because they consider the benefit to be inappropriate for that particular case.

The General Secretariat for the Modernization of Public Action (SGMAP), mobilized in the framework of the poverty reduction plan, has identified eight causes of falling into a "non-take up trap" at RSA, ASPA, CMU-c and the ACS. These include the bad image of the service, the lack of information, the lack of pro-activity on the part of the user, not knowing about eligibility, a lack of mediation and support, the complexity of the provision, the disruption of the training process and finally, a low interest in the provision or its competition with others.

By focusing on users, the SGMAP distinguishes several types of non-take up:

- Non-take up by choice, in particular, by the refusal of assistance;
- The traumatized non-take, following a previous unfinished experience;
- The one who gives up in the process of applying for a benefit on account of the complexity of the process and on the other, who does not renew his request for help because of his life's direction;
- The non-recourse for a lack of information;
- The non-appellant is not concerned. He puts himself in withdrawal from the aid.

The various assessments lead to a plan for "Access to Rights" with three main headings

- First to improve the knowledge of the phenomena of the non-take up of social rights. It is at the level of the department that this plan must be implemented. Emphasis is placed on the evaluation mechanism that must go hand in hand with the monitoring of governance.
- Measures favoring the detection, and the information, on the beneficiaries' social rights are the subject of the second part. "Rendezvous of rights", conceived as a meeting between the organization and the user to take stock of his individual situation in order to propose all the services which he/she can claim.
- Finally, the third part focuses on the reforms of the calculation methods or the granting of benefits intended to widen, simplify or even automate access.

This included the profiling of non-applicants to better target the households that are penalized. The investigation showed that the non-recourse was more common among couples and childless households. The RSA toughens the eligibility requirements for a couple who, in addition, thinks they will come out better than an isolated person. As individuals, women hesitate least to ask for help since they are four in ten to be "non-taking" up, against opposed to men where it is one man out of two. In addition, the responsibility for children also encourages social assistance, particularly for single mothers who represent 85% of the single-parent families. Another issue is what kind of benefit, for example whether it is the base RSA or the RSA activity, and finally the non-take up rate increases with age and degree level.

Other socio-economic factors affect non-use. Those whose eligibility fluctuates are more subject to non-recourse. This is furthermore higher as the eligibility criteria is recent. Investigators of the National Audit Court advance the difficulty in appreciating the eligibility and the complexity of the approach as an explanation of such a finding. However, the alternation of periods of employment and inactivity seems not to push for asking less frequently for RSA. Similarly, and in a fairly logical and predictable approach, non-recourse is more frequent among the least poor and those who do not consider themselves poor. It comes out also that the rate of non-recourse is inversely proportional to the amount of the RSA to which the household could claim, even if in a delicate financial situation.

The analysis very thoroughly highlighted both the non-current profiles (the young active living of expedients and who reject the idea of asking for assistance, whether it is the refusal of "assistantship" or an optimistic perception of their situation; the precarious young worker and it is very often a woman, with or without children and finally, the isolated pensioner perceiving a very

low pension); and the risk of a breach of their rights arising from the rules on the allocation of aid and the attitude of the social agencies themselves.

The first lies in the lack of knowledge of the performance, or the bad perception of the conditions for eligibility. The second is when a user experiences a change of position, the end of unemployment benefits, or a health accident. To prevent partial non-take up, it is essential to propose to everyone an appointment at each event of life: birth in the family, long-term sick leave, widowhood or separation, when it is known. This meeting must provide the social worker, the opportunity to indicate the most appropriate body to provide help.

There is a lack of information on ASPA. There can thus be an ignorance of rights. When the pension benefits are settled, one can carry out the calculation of eligibility for the minimum old age pension. However, people often become eligible a few years later (the minimum age being 65 years old and changing situations – such as widowhood – are frequent). In order to combat this, the law of 20 January 2014 provides in article 40 a requirement for the pension plan which is in charge of this allowance to provide more regular information to the people at risk. The benefit is largely recoverable on inheritance as long as the property of the beneficiary is more than 39 000 euros. This recovery plays strongly in the non-take up decision because parents prefer to bequeath something to their children.

There is also a risk of contradiction in the information provided to potential beneficiaries of their social rights by their interlocutors, according to their degree of professionalism and their knowledge of the services or administrative channels in place. There is also a risk in the form of competition, sometimes unconsciously maintained, between the different players by their status and purpose. Each has its own legitimacy. Social protection operators feel themselves as the only holders of the "real" information and with both decision-making and control powers, community services, territorial structures highlighting their proximity and accessibility to the users, associations availing themselves of their values, their selflessness and their know-how widespread discarding movement of the actors on each other. If everyone is responsible for the fight against poverty and exclusion, then nobody is really in charge.

2.2 Implementing a network of one stop shops

This first observation proves that a stable name is a guarantee of visibility for these one stop shops. The scheme, which could include the private providers (private or public, profit or non-profit) which deliver services to the population, is developed by the department council and the State in close collaboration with the institutions of intercommunal cooperation (EPCI). This scheme establishes a six-year action program to strengthen the supply of services in areas with a lack of accessibility to information, especially in rural areas and in sensitive urban areas. The National Council against Exclusion recommends the development of public service windows defined in article 100 of the NOTRe³¹ law. They offer versatile windows, where all the services are available to the citizen, to all kinds of citizens. The presence of representatives of the well-off appears as a pledge of quality because when they are dissatisfied, they make it known. Such places mix all kinds of inhabitants and trivialize the procedures, including the requests for assistance. To apply for a social benefit is also a part of the exercise of citizenship and must not induce stigmatization. The initiative is accompanied by a special effort at the level of the social advisors, and the hiring of public writers to help people complete the forms and to write the administrative letters. Another way is to rely on other tools that are likely to attract people who do not come spontaneously to ask for help:

Phone

³¹ Law on the new territorial organization of the Republic

Letter

Information campaign

Rendez vous

The multi-channels of reception - counter, website, telephone - must be a reality and the reception at the counter is now the second channel for contact after the phone.

We have two main categories:

- Generalist ones to facilitate people's access to public services and social rights. With a generalist on its territory, PIMMS develops a multi-service activity. Thus, the PIMMS³² work towards the accessibility to the services necessary for the daily life for the inhabitants. It relays by facilitating comprehension, by completing the service offered by its partners and by proposing services of the generalist type (information of the first level, connection with the right person):

- It informs on the functioning, and the offers, of the services of the operators of public services (schedules of the buses, water quality, schedules of opening of the agencies etc.);

-It explains on how to pay a bill, how to use a money order etc.;

- It advises on the management of the family budget, on the control of the consumption of energy,

- It orients to the right interlocutor (social workers, job advisers ...);

- It accompanies all the steps of the daily life;

- It helps to resolve conflicts related to daily life;

- It offers access to the Internet and supports the public in the use of remote public services via the digital portals of the service operators;

- It can offer the sale of basic products of the partner companies: stamps, public transport tickets, train tickets etc.;

- There are specialized activities for the elderly people: resource centers, information and coordination centers or community service providers, implementing assessment, assistance, support, training or information, advice, expertise or coordination for the benefit of users or other institutions and services including the local centers for information and coordination (CLIC LINC), which have a coordinating role in providing support for the home care of elderly people.

Information Technologies are being used more. Since 2017, applications for the active solidarity income (RSA) have been able to be lodged via the Internet. Already since January, a new simulator is available (www.caf.fr). It allows everyone to check his or her rights to RSA and calculate the amount of his or her benefit. Since the end of the first half of 2017, a new service has allowed RSA beneficiaries to apply for complementary universal health coverage (CMU-C) online to facilitate their access to the health care system. Once the RSA is open, the rights to the CMU-C will be open as well.

Finally, since the opening of the simulator "My Benefits" at the beginning of 2017 (www.mes-aides.gouv.fr) the inhabitants of France can have access to the portal relating to social rights (www.mesdroitssociaux.gouv.fr). This new unique site offers everyone personalized information on their social protection and employment rights. It allows the simulations of rights, for example to calculate a benefit. This portal also allows the user to take steps online. Its content will be progressively enriched and strengthened. A better informed user will contribute to better social coordination.

³² Points information_mediation-multiservices Information_mediation ,multiservices windows

2.3 Personal support

2.3.1 Aims of personal support

Coming in addition to the identification of a one-step window, the concept of a pathway referent is borrowed from the Action Plan for Social Work and Social Development adopted by the Council of Ministers on October 21, 2015, culminating with the General Convention on Social Work.

The function of a "pathway referent" implies a first reception which must allow everyone to have access to a first appropriate orientation. In some cases, it may be an orientation or an opening of rights to benefits. In other cases, it will be useful to offer overall support, so that sustainable coordination between the various mechanisms can be put in place. Such is the challenge of the designation of a pathway referent. The referent of the pathway has a vocation to have a global vision of the various social interventions that it coordinates, on the mandate of the person.

To develop widely the pathway referent function, it is necessary to specify the mission and that the referent be trained and equipped to ensure coordination with other stakeholders, including volunteers or peers. This will promote coherence of the actions carried out with the other institutions in a multi-disciplinary and inter-institutional approach. An experiment is therefore necessary to specify the conditions of such an intervention and to define the regulatory adjustments that are necessary for its development at the local level. The referent could be picked from among the various interlocutors whom the beneficiary is in contact with, especially social workers whichever institution they belong to. The ideal one is the one who knows the most about the beneficiary.

Several elements will have to be specified: the modalities of the designation of the referent, the duration of his mandate, the scope of his intervention (limited to the social work professionals or extended to the network of the person, whether it is part of the family or a volunteer), the conditions for continuity of the support and the information sharing with other partners.

For example the "rights and duties" inscribed in a kind of contract for the beneficiaries of the RSA include the obligation to look for a job, to take the necessary steps to create their own activity or to take the necessary actions for a better social or professional integration. This obligation is imposed on the recipient of the RSA when he is unemployed or when, on average, his professional income is less than 500 euros per month.

The role of single point of reference for the integration path is provided 43 percent by Pôle Emploi officers, 34 percent by departmental councils 11 percent by NGOs, 7 percent by town councils and 5 per cent by public employment service organization other than Pôle Emploi.

On average 74% of the RSA recipients are in a pathway (among them 68 percent are in an employment pathway and 32 percent in a social pathway with great differences following the department council policies and the age of the recipients).

2.3.2 Conditions for the success of personal support

Due to the variability of the local situations priority must be put not on the organization but on the references which must be shared by the stakeholders.

Repositories must identify:

- The skills to be mobilized,
- The tools and methods to be adapted by the professional specialty,
- The support for the formalization of the evaluation,
- Information instruments, such as a logbook, to avoid redundant assessments and facilitate confidential access in case of emergency.

Great flexibility must be left in the organization, depending upon the available local resources: who is the social worker or the social welfare counsellor or how will be the referent be chosen in a contractual relationship between the customer and the provider must be left to local regulation.

- Insertion in the MoCA local branches or other administrative body
- Assignment to one of the professionals specifically designated, trained and remunerated for this activity.

It seems essential to avoid that the production of the personal project outweighs its implementation and that the coordinator function be disconnected from it.

The question of neutrality in relation to the structure, to which the coordinator is attached, is relevant. However, disadvantages seem more limited with some rules:

- Specific training that really enables the understanding of vulnerable people,
- Payment of the time devoted to the function,
- A sufficiently detailed individual road map,
- A sufficiently clear personalized project,
- Supervision of the coordinators by the administrative authorities (MoCA)

Whoever the public employer is, the social worker would have a portfolio of cases, "customers", which he would be responsible for.

The notion of the pathway must also be understood in a dynamic way, namely that the needs and the expectations of the person evolve over time and that the satisfactions to provided are also variable in time. It must not crystallize in sequential organizations or in standardized protocols. Ready-to-wear is no longer adapted to the needs of the recipients. The temptation is strong, and often expressed, to import the model of sanitary protocols. The medical triad -pathology, protocol, pricing to activity does not seem suitable for social assistance. The system of health is efficient for treating diseases especially in the acute period. The area of social assistance must innovate because it is, most of the times, inscribed in a minimal duration in the service to people.

It is important to define the right level of coordination of the individual's implementation. There is logic to see many policies, territorialized or not, to recompose themselves in areas of life where education, employment, housing and various aids should be connected. It supposes the mobilization of a collective action (typical of social intervention) in favour of nearby people concerned (local services or at home, support activities, integration, etc.). In addition, there is a strong need to make more transversal, by unification and integration, the social policies themselves: connection employment assistance, disability school system, assistance training, and health prevention policies.

The definition through consensus conferences of a base of flexible services according to different profiles could provide the means to answer the question of identification and the valuation of these services. In no case should there be implemented a kind of profiling mechanism leading to stereotyped performances such as sometimes experienced in the employment sector with limited success. Each accompaniment is an adventure.

2.4 Information technologies as tools for coordination: exchanging information

All this evolution of simplification will not be easy. It is legitimate in the name of the user. It breaks with habits. Its aim is apply a high technological content and high added value. Such orientations allow a strong personalization of the service relationship leading to substantial gains in time and resources.

All this logic of coordination by unification and service integration is first and foremost a technical architecture, including the intermediation of relations between the institutions and the systems. It goes through the data and not through the normalization of institutions, organizations and benefits. Single entry points do not arise from an idea of the transformation of benefits, but from the possibility of improving their administration. The aim is to decrease management costs for the organization, but especially for the person.

Whatever the topic of an application (fall in income, problem of housing, but also birth, accident, retirement), there should be no more different folders. The principle is that the person must be recognized as soon as they are encountered, that is to say as soon as he/she is individually connected.

Each person may have a file which constitutes a single access point for viewing and updating his personal information about insurance, employment, retirement, taxation, social benefits etc. There are such projects in France. The prospect of a single point of entry for a comprehensive and integrated approach seems to be a desirable target, even an indispensable one. The program “Tell Us Once”, was developed by the French administration and intended for businesses. It consists of lightening the administrative tasks by reducing the solicitations and by pooling the data.

Uniqueness embodies the fact that coordination really helps to move forward, nationally, but, especially, locally. One point of entry (or unique wicket) in the social protection system and only one responsible for the care is wishful. Concretely, it is a question of putting an end to the implausible accumulation of competing devices and clearly assigning the responsibility for taking charge to a person (usually a worker social). Anyway, we must be able to more easily create a Personal Social Folder. It would contain all the information. It would not be necessary to repeat it again at each contact with a social service provider. This unique social record is as indispensable as is feasible, with the power of information systems. All must be able to manage unique folders.

Two main data bases could help in France:

- The Social Nominative Declaration cf. appendix
- The National Common Register of Social Protection cf. appendix

But it is important to highlight once more that the model of the Belgian crossroad bank of social security which could be implemented in a step by step process.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION

Since MoCA, as does the French Ministry for Social Affairs, has rather comparable responsibilities in the inclusion of policy some experiences could be shared.

The extent of the definition of inclusion and the scope of the various actions goes far beyond the social field. If it is desirable to streamline organizations by merging the overlapping bodies or benefits, it would be energy consuming to devote most of the efforts to unifying the administrative structure. Transition measures are a necessary step.

3.1 Coordination at the national level

Since MoCA was acknowledged as the pivot contributor to social assistance policy, it enjoys a political basis. It would be possible to design two institutions whose secretariat could be managed by MoCA:

- A commission with all the government departments which could contribute to the fight against exclusion. This commission will have to examine all the projects which could contribute to better inclusion (schooling, housing etc.) beside those actions directly managed by MoCA;

- Another commission could associate the same partners with the other stakeholders, local authorities and national NGO's.

Both commissions could be associated with the preparation of a document about the implementation of the 5 year plan. MoCA would facilitate its legitimacy by piloting the work of these two bodies.

At the local level it would be interesting to devise a local application of the national plan. The joint conferences, even if they don't reach the expected achievements, could be the basis of this collaboration.

For the parts that MoCA does not manage directly some tools could be used to provide better visibility for the policy³³.

3.2 Implementing a national framework intended to measure the outcomes while respecting local management

Since the responsibility of MoCA has two dimensions, the first being direct management of the various benefits under its direct responsibility and the second being the coordination of programs which are under the responsibility of other Ministries, it is important to design a general framework. This budgetary framework will include all the spending related to social assistance by MoCA and by the other Ministries. This synthesis of the global budgetary effort could be completed with targets and indicators to allow a global piloting by MoCA and to assess whether the achievements are really heading in the right direction. Under the Constitutional By law on Budget Acts (LOLF) in France, the budget is no longer presented by the type of expenditure (operating, capital, intervention, etc.), but by public policies (security, culture, health, justice, etc.). These are now called "missions". This presentation gives Parliament and the general public a clear picture of all the resources deployed to implement each government policy through the various Ministries.

The missions correspond to the main government policies. Parliament votes on the budget by mission. A mission is created at the Government's initiative and may be Ministerial or Interdepartmental. A mission covers a number of programs which are or aren't dependent upon the Ministry for Social Affairs. It includes a transverse principle to the plan: that of accompaniment, in logic of accounting for the needs of individuals which is promoted by the Ministry for Social Affairs. Whether it concerns access to employment, rights, health, housing, schooling, all the partners must deliver services in support of the recipient's inclusion and these services should be monitored in a global framework.

3.3 Local planning

At a level appropriate to China's size, this planning could be jointly realized by the different administrative partners who could be interested in the implementation of social assistance under the coordination of MoCA. The work could be based on the outputs of local commissions (in coordination with the national ones which are proposed supra). Till now there has been no general local planning in France due to the multiplicity of actors. Anyway, the experience of planning for the disabled and for the ageing population could be duplicated.

The law n 2009-879 of 21st July 2009, on the reform of hospitals and relating to patients, health and territories includes the medico social sector (disability, aging) - even if the health services are not a major provider of the delivered services - and it coordinates the State's policy with those policies managed by the local authorities which are in charge of welfare policies. State and departmental councils share a joint detailed plan.

³³ Jean-Yves Hocquet No of Topic: 3-1-4 title: monitoring and evaluation of Social Assistance Scheme Policy recommendation report

A detailed local plan is a way to develop soft power in the implementation of social assistance. There is a clear added value in the investment in local coordination in a very simple sense. As said before most of the local actors are not prone to speaking with other organizations although the individual needs will be more and more satisfied by the picking of services from all kinds of local services. So, a good and mutual knowledge of all the resources which are available at the local level is a major challenge. Secondly the shared experience at local level could give MoCA the base for relaying general concerns to the policymakers. In a very interesting report from the General Inspectorate for Social Affairs and the General Inspectorate for Financing Social Policies it was recorded that social policies managed by the local authorities in the field of disability were more in convergence than the ones directly managed by the State. Comparison of practices and exchanges of good practices seem to be a better way of implementing social policy than via top down management. MoCA could be the professional go-between, and complete its legitimacy, by speeding up the circulation of local information and results at a national level.

3.4 Streamlining the benefits system

The HCFi-PS, French High Council for the Funding of Social Protection) explores several scenarios for transferring social security contributions from the “universal” branches (such as the family branch) to the “contributory” branches (the old age branch) and, conversely, the financing of “universal” branches through taxation. The objective is to direct social security contributions principally to the contributory schemes. The scenarios which were put forward all have technical difficulties, although they don't appear to be overwhelming. MoCA should invest in the forecasting of the social landscape and especially in the split between social assistance and social security.

3.5 Mid-term recommendations

As stated in the report of Professor Zhang Haomiao, the field of social assistance will change a lot in the future. The scope of services will go beyond benefits to securing a minimum income to benefits in cash, benefits in kind or services dedicated to the fight against exclusion. MoCA could exercise its role of coordination by coordinating the forecast on the needs of the Chinese population and the services which would be required even if the implementation would not be immediate. This would be the way to play the role of leader in social policy development.

- Anticipating the needs of a trained workforce which will be needed in the future for coordination and the increase in services in the field of social assistance. Human resources will play a major role. The definition of the various curricula is an important question. Common references among the institutions and the people in charge of social assistance should lead to better understanding and better cooperation;

- Defining the regulations in regard to the quality of social assistance. Besides regulations and the administrative framework, the definition of recommendations could be a very potent tool of coordination. Based on good practices collected from the provinces, even non-compulsorily is a good way to reach the convergence of the various actors.

Even if it is wishful to streamline the system of social assistance (benefits, organization) to improve the local management (information, accompanying) under one administration, the multi-dimensional aspect of poverty implies the mobilization of the various public authorities. As the acknowledged body in charge of the coordination of social assistance, MoCA would extend its role beyond its administrative perimeter more by soft law than by classical administrative management. It means that beyond the management of benefits MoCA invests in very sensitive fields:

- forecasts of the needs
- training of the human resources
- evaluation

4. CONCLUSION

The question of coordination of social assistance must be addressed at various levels:

- coordination of the various providers contributing to the individual support at the local level to improve the efficiency of the services delivered to the recipients;
- coordination of the various stakeholder through the co-construction of a local plan to organize the cooperation of the institutions and to raise the awareness about social assistance at the relevant levels;
- coordination of the national administrations through global detailed planning and an inventory of national resources.

To be effective, coordination must encompass these three levels which combine the overall objectives with an implementation in relation to local and regional resources and needs. Efficient coordination will stem from this tripod.

REFERENCES:

- Code de l'action sociale et des familles
<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074069>
- Contribution du CNLE au suivi du Plan pluriannuel contre la pauvreté et pour l'inclusion sociale sur l'année 2016
- <http://cnle.gouv.fr/contribution-du-cnle-au-suivi-du-1461.html>
- Governance of Social Protection: Transparency and Effectiveness Antoine Bozioa and Brigitte Dormont Notes du conseil d'analyse économique 2016/1 (n 28), p. 1-12. DOI 10.3917/ncae.028.0001 <http://www.cae-eco.fr/IMG/pdf/cae-note028-en.pdf>
- from case management to service coordination
- <http://outreach.msu.edu/bpbriefs/issues/brief13.pdf> b e s t practice b r i e f s No. 13, 1999 - 2000
- Contribution à la réflexion sur l'apport des organismes du secteur médico- social à l'inclusion des personnes handicapées Jean-Yves Hocquet http://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/rapport_Hoquet.pdf
- Minima sociaux et prestations sociales - Ménages aux revenus modestes et redistribution
- <http://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques/publications/panoramas-de-la-drees/article/minima-sociaux-et-prestations-sociales-menages-aux-revenus-modestes-et-11747>
- L'aide et l'action sociales en France - édition 2017 <http://drees.solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques/publications/panoramas-de-la-drees/article/l-aide-et-l-action-sociales-en-france-edition-2017>
- Jean-Yves Hocquet Et si la réforme de l'Etat commençait par le social, Revue administrative, 2004

Appendix 1

Versailles example: Coordination between the administrations and an NGO with an information support³⁴

In addition to the existing legal measures, most City Centers for Social Action (CCAS) provide help to support families and individuals to help them overcome some difficulties. Depending on the situation, the age and the conditions of resources, special and optional help may be requested (exceptional relief, financial, food, transportation, housing, holidays etc.). They are requested by the social workers and granted by the weekly local commission of optional aids.

There is also the help which is given by NGOs. In this area the Departmental Union of Family Associations (UDAF 78) is the local branch of the umbrella Union of Family Associations which promotes a personal microcredit scheme.

Personal (social) micro-credit can be a suitable tool for families and people with low incomes or those who are in a situation of exclusion and need one-off assistance to realize a personal project, by facilitating their access to bank credit while providing them with an empowering social support.

So, besides the legal benefits there is quite a large scope of optional benefits which are managed by the various partners. So it was interesting to collect all the information on a unique site.

PARADS of Versailles: access to social rights

The Solidarity and Health section of the Versailles.fr website has been designed and supplied by the local partners of the Communal Center for Social Action in a PARADS (Network Access to Social Rights) program.

It aims to improve access to social rights and to provide guidance to the right people.

It provides information on legal remedies and legal support for conflict and mediation to help resolve professional, family, social or educational disputes.

It responds to the issue of citizenship and social cohesion.

It answers questions from users with: "Ask a question"

³⁴ <https://www.versailles.fr/ma-ville/droits-sociaux-a-versailles/>

Appendix 2

Open method of coordination³⁵ (OMC)

As a method based on cooperation, the OMC is very potent way to assert cooperation among the bodies (States, local authorities, Ministries) which are spontaneously reluctant to share their powers. The open method of coordination (OMC) in the European Union may be described as a form of 'soft' law. It is a form of inter-governmental policy making that does not result in binding EU legislative measures and it does not require the EU countries to introduce or amend their laws.

The OMC, originally created in the 1990s as part of the employment policy and the Luxembourg process, was defined as an instrument of the Lisbon strategy (2000). This was a time when EU economic integration was advancing quickly but EU countries were reticent to give more powers to the European institutions.

The OMC has provided a new framework for cooperation between the EU countries, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Under this inter-governmental method, the EU countries are evaluated by one another (peer pressure), with the Commission's role being limited to surveillance. The European Parliament and the Court of Justice play virtually no part in the OMC process.

The OMC takes place in areas which fall exclusively within the competence of EU countries, such as employment, social protection, education, youth and vocational training but which seem important to secure the development of EU.

This cooperative method could be productive to entice various levels of governance to share goals, results and experiences.

The open method of coordination is a way of management of the decentralized social policies. One of the challenges of the European Economic Community was to achieve freedom of mobility for goods, services and workers. Workers mobility was one milestone towards European citizenship but also a way to open opportunities for work due to differences in growth rates, demographic trends or the labour market situation in those years. Free movement of workers is still a fundamental principle of the founding Treaty enshrined today in Articles 39 and 42. A single labour market could only be achieved if national social protection systems were not an obstacle to mobility.

Because social protection systems were, and still are, a major dimension of national identity "it was and it is not possible to speak about harmonization but about coordination." It is necessary to respect the special characteristics of national social security legislations and to draw up only a system of coordination as confirmed in Recital 4 of Regulation 883-04. For the other part of social protection e.g. social assistance, the subject was totally out the scope of the EU except in the case law of the EU Justice Court in its relation with citizenship: under what conditions a European citizen moving to another Member State (MS) could be denied social assistance benefits?

As said before the founding fathers of Europe rapidly gave up the idea of a harmonizing social security. There is not even a European definition of social security but with more ambitious objectives as such the Lisbon strategy, it was more and more difficult to keep to a limited conception of social affairs. The OMC introduces the possibility of deepening the cooperation in social protection at large and introducing a better coupling between social and employment policies.

OMC does not result in EU legislation, but it is a method. So soft governance aims to spread best practices and achieve convergence towards EU goals in those policy areas which fall under the partial or full competence of Member States. The OMC is principally based on:

- jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council);

³⁵ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/open_method_coordination.html

- jointly established measuring instruments quantitative and qualitative indicators (statistics, indicators, guidelines);
- benchmarking, i.e. comparison of EU countries' performance of national and regional targets and the exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission) backed by periodic evaluations and peer reviews.

Three overarching objectives are complemented by specific objectives for each "strand" of the OMC in the field of inclusion, calling for a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion; adequate and sustainable pensions; and accessible, high-quality and sustainable healthcare and long-term care.

The Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM) provides about 20 key indicators that mirror the overall social situation in Member States. Employment Performance Monitor (EPM) provides a wide range of labour market indicators. The Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) synthesizes the two information sources.

The main SPPM indicator on the effectiveness of social protection systems is based on the comparison of poverty rates before and after social transfers (using data from the EU statistics on income and living conditions, abbreviated as EU-SILC).

Appendix 3

The Belgian Social Crossroad Bank (data warehouse)³⁶

- The lack of well-coordinated service delivery processes among the 3,000 public and private institutions at several levels (federal, regional, local) dealing with social issues and the lack of well-coordinated information management led to diverse failures:

At the same moment there was a clear political will to solve those problems:

- effective social protection
- integrated services:
 - attuned to their concrete situation, and personalized when possible
 - delivered at the occasion of events that occur during their life cycle (birth, going to school, starting to work, moving, illness, retirement, starting up a company, ...)
 - across government levels, public services and private bodies
- attuned to their own processes
- with minimal costs and minimal administrative burden
- if possible, granted automatically
- with the active participation of the user (self service)
- well performing and user-friendly
- reliable, secure and permanently available
- accessible via a channel chosen by the user (direct contact, phone, PC)
- having sufficient privacy protection

The Federal Minister of Social Affairs as a political sponsor was sustained by the gradual implication of the general managers of all public social security institutions, the social partners managing the public social security institutions, the general managers of the private social security institutions with successive formal approvals of the vision and the initiative by the main political and social institutions.

Description of the social crossroad bank.

It is a network between all social sector actors with a secure connection to the internet, the federal network with a unique identification key for every citizen, for every company, for every facility of a company.

The result is an integrated portal site containing electronic transactions for citizens, employers and professionals, simulation environments, information about the entire social security system, harmonized instructions, an information model relating to all electronic transactions, a personal page for each citizen, each company and each professional and an integrated multimodal contact center supported by a customer relationship management tool.

- In terms of quantity: more services are delivered:
 - ▶ Services are available at any time, from anywhere and from several devices
 - ▶ Services are delivered in an integrated way according to the logic of the customer
- In terms of speed: the services are delivered in less time

³⁶ <https://www.ksz-bcss.fgov.be/en>

- ▶ Benefits can be allocated quicker because information is available faster
- ▶ Waiting and travel time is reduced
- ▶ Companies and citizens can directly interact with the competent actors in the social sector with real time feedback

Altogether the gains in effectiveness contribute to a better social protection system:

-In terms of quality: the same services at the same total cost in the same time, but to a higher quality standard

-In terms of type of services: new types of services, e.g.

- ▶ push system: automated granting of benefits
- ▶ active search of non-take-up using data warehousing techniques
- ▶ controlled management of own personal information
- ▶ personalized simulation environments
- ▶ better support of social policy
- ▶ more efficient combating of fraud
- ▶ information is being modeled in such a way that the model fits in as closely as possible with the real world, in order to allow a multi-functional use of information
- ▶ Information is collected from citizens and companies only once by the social sector as a whole, via a channel chosen by the citizens and the companies, preferably from application to application, and with the possibility of quality control by the supplier before the transmission of the information
- ▶ The collected information is validated once according to established task sharing criteria, by the actor that is most entitled to it or by the actor which has the greatest interest in correctly validating it
- ▶ A task sharing model is established indicating which actor stores which information as an authentic source, manages the information and maintains it at the disposal of the authorized users
- ▶ A task sharing model is established indicating which actor stores which information as an authentic source, manages the information and maintains it at the disposal of the authorized users
- ▶ Information can be flexibly assembled according to ever changing legal concepts
- ▶ Every actor has to report probable errors of information to the actor that is designated to validate the information
- ▶ Every actor that has to validate information according to the agreed task sharing model, has to examine the reported probable errors, to correct them when necessary and to communicate the correct information to every known interested actor
- ▶ Once collected and validated, information is stored, managed and exchanged electronically to avoid transcribing and re-entering it manually
- ▶ Electronic information exchange can be initiated by
 - The actor that disposes of information
 - The actor that needs information
 - The CBSS that manages the interoperability of the framework

Appendix 4

National Common Directory of Social Protection (RNCPS)³⁷

Created by the Law 2006-1640 of 21 December 2006 (Article L. 114-12-1 of the Social Security Code), the National Common Directory of Social Protection (RNCPS) based on the NIR (individual registry number) is intended to bring together, data on:

- identification of beneficiaries,
- affiliation (administrative attachment to organizations),
- the risks covered, the benefits provided and the addresses declared to collect them.

1. Simplify the procedures for beneficiaries of rights and benefits by the pooling, between agencies, of information whose reliability is guaranteed by the organizations providing them;
2. Improve the assessment of the conditions of opening, the management and the control of the rights and benefits of beneficiaries of social protection [...] and [...] the detection of missing rights and services as well as anomalies and fraud;
3. Rationalize and make reliable [...] the exchanges of data between the social protection [...] organizations and the tax authorities provided for by the present code;
4. Produce anonymous statistics for the purpose of controlling the quality of procedures or counts for all information contained in the RNCPS.

So the main objectives of this directory are:

- enhanced quality of service, including the simplification of processes and procedures;
- increased productivity for the different schemes;
- increased efficiency in controlling benefit payments and fighting fraud.

This directory is:

- Common to the organizations responsible for a basic compulsory scheme, the funds providing paid leave services, the bodies responsible for the management of a supplementary or additional compulsory pension plan and the organizations providing unemployment benefits, altogether 140 national organizations and more than 1,000 with local responsibility;
- Open to agencies in charge of the collection of taxes and social contributions in the exercise of their duties, particularly those relating to the fight against illegal work, as well as to the European and International Social Security Liaison Center;
- Open to local authorities and municipal social action centers in the exercise of their social assistance competences.

The RNCPS authorized agents to enter or to consult the registered data in the RNCPS are, on the one hand, agents acting within the framework of their missions, bodies responsible for the management of a compulsory social security, institutions providing the service of paid holidays, Pôle Emploi, of the URSSAF, and secondly, authorized agents acting within the framework of their missions, for the procedures for awarding a social assistance benefit by a local authority or a CCAS, and for the sole purpose of verifying the conditions of access to social assistance. About 60,000 agents are authorized to consult the RNCPS.

The directory does not include information on household income, essential information to assess their eligibility for a majority of social security and social assistance benefits. The RNCPS identifies beneficiaries of social benefits and all benefits that have been provided to them over the

³⁷ <http://www.securite-sociale.fr/Repertoire-National-Commun-de-la-Protection-Sociale-RNCPS>

past five years. The information transmitted is under the responsibility of contributors (data providers) and under the supervisory of control bodies.

The data provided fall into three categories:

- Common identification data including the names and first names, sex, date and place of birth, where appropriate deaths, and the NIR. These data are not stored directly in the heart of the directory;
- The centralized data of attachment including the identifiers of the organisms to which an individual is attached or has been attached in the past five previous years, and the risk areas related to the services managed by these organizations, as well as the dates of beginning and end of attachment;
- The additional data comprising for each rights or benefits, on the one hand, the nature of the rights or benefits and their effective dates, the quality of the beneficiary, the status of each of the rights or benefits, the reason for that status, and secondly, the declared address for the opening of the right or the payment of the benefit, the mention of incidents if the organization is aware of it, and if they have been provided by the beneficiary, his telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Complementary data remains localized in the contributor system and is transmitted in real time to the RNCPS at each consultation.

The system signals an anomaly, such as double payment of the same benefit or two incompatible benefits. It also highlights the non take up of rights the insured should normally claim. The RNCPS is a simple instrument of decision-making aid, without any specific legal effect, the decision to suspend a right (or to open a right) cannot automatically follow from consultation with the RNCPS, this consultation combined with an analysis of the benefits may nevertheless lead an agent to make a decision with legal effects on a beneficiary on the basis of information.

Appendix 5

Nominative Social Declaration (DSN)³⁸

As an outcome of the monthly payroll and focused on the most important aspects of the employer-employee relationship (entry and exit of the company, location and duration of work, absence from sickness, maternity or accident, remunerations), the DSN is an immediate reflection of individual situations and the ease of the granting of social rights to employees or former employees.

This single flow of information is common to all the organizations that ensure the social protection of employees: basic and complementary pension organizations, insurance or mutual insurance institutions. Cloudless stream, issued directly from payroll processing, without re-entry, sent in one monthly deadline for all organizations, the DSN consists of standardized and shared social data.

The monthly declaration shall be accompanied, where appropriate, by very simplified events, informing the institutions concerned of the suspensions of the employment contract, in particular for sick leave or an accident at work, or for his break. This information made available without waiting for the monthly declaration to enable the calculation of rights to replacement income without delay.

The DSN is mandatory.

³⁸ <http://www.dsn-info.fr/>

Appendix 6

National indicators

Indicators common to all measurement packages

National cross-cutting indicators

1 - 60% relative income poverty rate

2 - Poverty rate in living conditions

3 - European indicator of risk of poverty or of exclusion: meeting the three poverty indicators

(Low work intensity or income poverty or poverty in terms of severe material deprivation)

Impact indicators per package of measures

Package "improvement and effectiveness of rights"

4 - Intensity of poverty of minimum beneficiary's social services

5 - Poverty rate of workers

Health package

12 - Rate of renunciation of care for financial reasons

13 - Dependent health care according to the decile of standard of living

14 - Children's Oral Health Indicator

Performance indicators by priority measure

Improvement and effectiveness of rights

21 - Rates of recourse to the health benefit ACS and the CMU-c

22- Number of department councils meeting the objective of reduction of the non take-up

Appendix 7

Coordination at the EU level

Provisions

Due to the mobility of the European workers and today of the European citizen (student, retiree...), coordination of social assistance is a growing concern. Regulation 883-4 guarantees that persons moving within the Community and their dependents and survivors retain the rights and the advantages acquired and in the course of being acquired and to avoid overlapping of the applicable provisions of national legislation.

The coordination applies to special non-contributory cash benefits which are provided under legislation which, because of its personal scope, objectives and/or conditions for entitlement, has characteristics both of the social security legislation referred to in Article 3(1) and of social assistance.

Special non-contributory cash benefits' means those which:

(a) are intended to provide either:

(i) supplementary, substitute or ancillary cover against the risks covered by the branches of social security referred to in Article 3 (1), and which guarantee the persons concerned a minimum subsistence income having regard to the economic and social situation in the Member State concerned;

or

ii) solely specific protection for the disabled, closely linked to the said person's social environment in the Member State concerned,

and

(b) where the financing exclusively derives from compulsory taxation intended to cover general public expenditure and the conditions for providing and for calculating the benefits are not dependent on any contribution in respect of the beneficiary. However, benefits provided to supplement a contributory benefit shall not be considered to be contributory benefits for this reason alone,

and

(c) are listed in Annex X.

The use of data-processing services for exchanging data between the institutions of Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI).³⁹

EESSI is an IT system that helps social security institutions across the EU exchange information more rapidly and securely, as required by the EU rules on social security coordination.

At the moment most exchanges are paper-based: these are going to be replaced by electronic exchanges in the coming years, as Member States progress with connecting to EESSI.

How does EESSI work?

All communication between national institutions on cross-border social security files will take place through EESSI: social security institutions will exchange structured electronic documents and follow commonly agreed procedures. These documents will be routed through EESSI to the correct destination in another Member State.

³⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=869>

Staff in social security institutions will be able to find the correct destination in another EU country using a repository of national institutions.

The central EESSI system was made available by the Commission in July 2017. What benefits will EESSI bring?

Faster and more efficient message exchange between the social security institutions:

EESSI will speed up exchanges between national authorities. It will allow them to handle individual cases more quickly, and facilitate a faster calculation and payment of benefits.

More accurate data exchange between national authorities:

Social security institutions across the EU will use standardized electronic documents translated into their own language, improving multilingual communication.

EESSI will introduce safeguards to ensure that the data exchanged is correct and complete, helping institutions to combat fraud and error.

EESSI will optimize case handling, introducing standard electronic procedures to be followed by institutions; this will further enhance the correct application of social security coordination rules.

Secure handling of personal data:

EESSI will introduce the use of a common secure infrastructure for cross-border data exchange between social security institutions.

It will enable message exchange between national institutions, but the system will not create a database to store such messages and personal data centrally. The content of the messages will only be available to the relevant institutions, and Member States will remain responsible for ensuring a high standard of data protection, in line with EU rules.

EESSI will follow the latest standards in IT security.

Appendix 8

Examples of coordination for vulnerable people in France ⁴⁰

The trend to a global, medical, psychological, social, but also environmental approach, based on the multidisciplinary nature of the actors and involving a cross ministerial approach taking into account the different fields concerned implies a diversification of the offer:

- facilities and services for the elderly, in particular residential accommodation for dependent and non-dependent elderly people (EHPAD, EHPA/shelter units ...) to have a comprehensive range of providers following the needs of the elderly with especially different levels of health services
- services to help the recipients to stay at home ; Home Nursing Services (NSIAD), Home Assistance and Accompaniment Services (SAAD), Multi-purpose Home Care and Assistance Services (SPASAD) which social services in relation with the daily life
- services implementing measures for the protection of adults ordered by the judicial authority, safeguarding of justice, curatorship, guardianship or judicial accompaniment to allow ageing people to keep their say on the decisions related to their life
- resource centers, information and coordination centers or community service providers, implementing screening, assistance, support, training or information, advice, expertise or coordination for the benefit of users or other institutions and services including local centers for information and coordination (CLIC LINC), which have a coordinating role in support for home care.

The public authorities try to diversify the offer by adding new categories of facilities and services. The list of the various services is not crystal clear for the user and for the public manager .That the reason the new service offerings take more and more the form of platforms bringing together several types of support, and easing the mobilization of multiple fundings to take account of the distribution of competences between the various institutional players and the constraint on public expenditure institutions.

To mobilize for the person the useful aids (doctor, nursing, aid to caregivers, services at home, etc.) and to follow up the proposed aid plans there is no coordinator of the aid. It is for this reason that, in special complex cases some coordination centers are set up as houses for the autonomy and integration (MAIA) for Alzheimer's patients or in the form of "case managers". Since 1982 at least, the subject of territorial coordination has been stacked with initiatives (coordinators in 1982, gerontological networks in 1999, local information and coordination centers -CLIC - from 2000, then finally MAIA, experimented since 2009 within the framework of the Alzheimer plan and generalized in 2011 to all people with loss of autonomy). These different structures are not everywhere and they operate very differently from one place to another, so that the landscape is illegible for dependent persons and their families. The other level of coordination is at the regional and national levels and to organize coordination at the "lower" levels. The necessary institutional coordination for the planning of preventive actions, sanitary and medical-social equipment and services is still flawed. Today, no actor or procedure really allows national coordination.

Even if the project to merge into a unique concept of dependency disability and ageing questions has failed there is a progressive convergence of certain issues of care for the elderly and the disabled. The rise of home-care services linked to the "life-project" approach already used by people with disabilities. Long-term care path of chronic elderly patients highlights similar situations, with disabled people and similar difficulties in the advanced ages.

⁴⁰ Jean-Yves Hocquet Long term care in France In search for a balanced policy



If the funding ,the methodology ,the needs and the benefits are not the same, this common approach is illustrated by the creation of local maison départementale de l'autonomie (MDA), "Departmental House of Autonomy" (MDA) one step shop for information, assessment and benefits granting for both categories without regard to the age limits. MDA implementation could pool the reception function, bring together evaluation teams (professional cultures but not merger of tools that are regulatory: GEVA for disabled and AGGIR grid for elderly people).

Appendix 9

Departmental Conference of Funders

As a body for institutional coordination, the Departmental Conference of Funders is responsible for defining a coordinated program for financing individual and collective prevention actions, in addition to legal or regulatory services. To this end, it establishes a diagnosis of the needs of people aged 60 and over residing in the departmental council area and identifies local initiatives. The funders' conference is chaired by the president of the departmental council. The director general of the regional health agency or his representative acts as vice-chairman. Representatives of the basic pension insurance and health insurance schemes, the National Housing Agency (ANAH), through its local delegations, federations of institutions for supplementary pensions and bodies regulated by the Mutuality Code. Furthermore, the composition of the conference can be extended, depending on local partnerships, to any other natural or legal person concerned by policies to prevent the loss of autonomy.

It brings together actors in the sector on shared actions and strategies to help build more readable and coherent responses for people. The program defined by the conference, which is aimed at people aged 60 years and over, deals with:

- Improved access to equipment and individual technical aids;

- Granting of a self-sufficiency package awarded through a multi-annual contract for objectives and resources (CPOM) by the departmental council for autonomous residences;

- Coordination and support of preventive measures implemented by home support and assistance services and multi-purpose home care and support services;

- Support for caregivers included voluntary ones;

- Development of other collective prevention actions.

Appendix 10

List of social assistance benefits in the field of income

Universal benefits of common law Income of active solidarity

(RSA) Single person 536,78 € / month

Solidarity allowance for the elderly (ASPA) 803,20 € /month

Employment-related allowance Specific solidarity allowance

(ASS) 494.88 € /month

Allowances for transitional care of certain situations

Transitional solidarity allowance (PTS) 300 € /month

Temporary waiting allowance (ATA) 343.80 € /month

Widowhood allowance (AV) 602.73 € /month

Solidarity Income Overseas

(RSO) 512,22 € /month

Asylum seeker allowance (ADA) 206,83 € /month

Allowances related to disability or disability Disabled adult allowance

(AAH) € 810.89 /month

Additional disability allowance (ASI) 405,38 € /month