



中国发展简报

Editorial

Not a great decade for women

Ten years ago this August, women from across the world gathered in Beijing for a UN-sponsored, global Women's Conference. This was a significant milestone in China's opening up to the outside world, even if the welcome for international NGO guests, relegated to outlying Huairou, was somewhat grudging. And, as has frequently been remarked, the conference was as an important stimulus for Chinese women activists.

The event served to broaden some receptive minds within a Women's Federation that is firmly wedded to the Communist Party. The Federation had always seen its duty as being to muster women behind a Party line that, for all its twists and turns, was invariably drawn by men. Post-Conference, some Chinese women sought to galvanise the Federation into more vigorous 'defence of women's rights and interests'. Some pondered divorce from the Party. Some embarked on new kinds of advocacy and service delivery, often with international funding, either under the aegis of the Federation or by establishing independent or semi-independent organisations.

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Ten years later, there are some achievements to celebrate. A constellation of telephone 'hotlines', personal counselling and legal advice centres has worked assiduously both to serve women and to expose gross abuses of their rights. Over the last five years, a broad coalition of individuals and groups has organised around the issue of domestic violence, using the Women's Federation's official status to take research, discussion, experimentation and innovation into government systems. (This, notably, is the first time that the Federation has thrown significant weight behind a campaign that was chosen by women activists rather than dictated by the Party.) International links and exchanges have continued to develop, enriching domestic perspectives. Several universities across the country have (thanks, in large measure, to Ford Foundation grants) established centres to research and teach Gender Studies; and this has helped prompt new debate about 'social gender' within a community of women intellectuals and opinion leaders.

But this is by no means a mainstream debate. Environmental activists have managed to attract mass media attention, impacting on public consciousness and, arguably, on policy deliberations. There is widespread public recognition of and significant policy debate about urban-rural economic inequalities and the growing development gaps between coastal, hinterland and western areas; and this has encompassed debate of the plight of laid-off workers and rural migrant labourers. Even AIDS is at last receiving publicity. But gender is not hitting the headlines.

In many respects, this has not been a good decade for women. There have been substantial improvements in access to basic education for girls and in adult women's literacy, and this bodes well for the future; but it is hard to identify other gains.

The crumbling of the public health service has hit women particularly hard. They bear the

main burden of care for infirm family members but are themselves generally last in the queue (especially older women) for household expenditure on health care. Preventive and screening services, which are so essential for women's physical health, have suffered most in the health system's all-out scramble for profit. Mental health services are virtually non-existent and, in their absence, around 150,000 depressed Chinese women kill themselves each year, making suicide the leading cause of death among rural women aged 21-50.

Employment trends are dismal. Women have been first on the scrap-heap in the retrenching state sector, least likely to find re-employment, and increasingly nudged towards low-status service industry jobs. For, although the service sector has long been vaunted by economists as the job-creation panacea for China, for most women jobseekers this translates in real life into low-paid work as maids, cleaners, street sweepers, nannies, geriatric nurses, waitresses, laundresses, seamstresses, shop assistants, karaoke hostesses and, in the informal economy, sex workers. Rural women migrants meanwhile also serve as assembly line factory fodder, preferred above men for their nimble fingers and relative tolerance of long hours, unpaid overtime, and grim working conditions in the export processing zones. Younger sisters, mothers and grandmothers left behind on the farm endure 'the feminisation of agriculture' - meaning, in real life, more and harder work to cover for the men, who have also sallied out of the village in search of better options. And if perchance the men don't come back, the women may be dispossessed of the family's land.

There is no compelling evidence that women-targeted microfinance, business incubator or income generation programmes have made any substantial difference to these broad employment trends. Moreover, rather than contesting the trends, the Women's Federation itself seems torn between endorsing

them and mitigating their pain: through, for example, programmes that train rural women for urban domestic service, or prepare them for migration to factory jobs.

As this staggering social transformation unfolds there is no sign of increased 'political participation' by Chinese women. Indeed, there are indications to the contrary. Glass ceilings in government administration have blocked women from all but a tiny minority of senior posts; and the senior Party leadership remains almost exclusively male. In rural areas, the experiment with village committee elections has not prompted a rush of female candidates: doubtless in part because elected women are so often saddled with the job of enforcing birth control quotas among fellow villagers.

Notoriously, birth controls imposed on a society that prefers male heirs have resulted in a slew of sex-selective abortions and, thereby, an increasingly skewed gender ratio at birth. Market forces have their own way of dealing with this imbalance. It is called 'human trafficking' and all the signs are that in China the trade is developing fast.

Women scholars, activists and cadres have by no means neglected these topics, but they are too frequently treated separately, or in loose aggregate, as a basket of fragmented 'women's issues'.

Often lacking is the determination to join up the dots and reveal the stark, underlying pattern.

Also lacking has been the determination to insist that these are not issues that belong exclusively to women, but that intimately concern the whole of society, including men.

International donor contributions to this field have in the main been underwhelming. True, almost every agency has officially 'mainstreamed' gender in their work, or declared it a 'cross-cutting theme' in the hope that a gender perspective can be incorporated across all project interventions. There is much that is right in this, but it risks degenerating into a box-

checking exercise, where every project claims a 'gender focus' but very few really concentrate on gender.

Although the sun is definitely setting on international official development assistance to China, more than USD 3 billion is still flowing into the country each year from bilateral and multilateral donors and development banks. The fraction of this aimed at progressing debate about gender is almost invisibly small. But that perhaps mainly reflects the fact that it's not been a great decade for women in the rest of the world either.

Postscript

At the recent launch of a UN 'Gender Facility' in the Beijing Poly Plaza (see report in our last issue), the half dozen Chinese women reporters covering the event, including our correspondent, were presented on their arrival with a press pack that included a photocopied, handwritten note listing three questions to be put during the press conference. The press conference took place during a coffee break for the assembled aid industry and Chinese government guests. The women reporters dutifully put the three 'recommended' questions, and were then told there was no time for more. A month ago, China Development Brief wrote privately to the UN representative in China to complain about this insult to the intelligence and integrity of Chinese women journalists. We are still waiting for a reply.

Feature: volunteering

Models of civic virtue

In the 1960s, the apocryphal People's Liberation Army soldier, Lei Feng, was propagandised as an icon of good, socialist citizenship. In reform-era China there is a new and growing discourse of civic virtue, centring on the notion of 'volunteerism'. But, as Tina Qian reports, this idea is understood in various ways. For some, it expresses an individual and personal commitment that comes 'from the heart'. For government agencies, however, mandated volunteering tends still to reflect both the Marxist tradition of mass mobilisation and the older, Chinese tradition of the virtuous public official.

Every other Sunday Li Tao, who is in his thirties, travels for more than an hour by bus from his home near Beijing's 'north third ring road' to the Tian Le Old Persons Welfare Home, which lies outside the 'east fifth ring'. Once there, Li finds and begins to chat with his regular partner, a grandfather in his seventies. When the weather is fine, the pair take a stroll outdoors.

Li works at the Beijing Ferrous Metal Research Institute. Two years ago he got to know the New Path Foundation through the Internet, and registered as a volunteer with this private American foundation, which was founded in 1999 by a Chinese American high-tech businessman, Randy Ye, and his wife Zhou Shisheng.

Li Tao has served since 2003 as a volunteer

on one of New Path's major initiatives - a 'friendship in late life' (*wanyuan* 晚缘) programme that sets out to provide personal and social support for people over 65 years of age. Already, 7.6% of China's total population is in this age group, and the proportion of over-60s is projected to rise to 22% by 2030.

Over the last four years the *wanyuan* programme has mainly served people living in four retirement homes in the capital, but it plans to extend the service to 'empty nest' families - couples or single elderly people living without offspring. One third of Beijing's older people live in 'empty nests.'

New Path Programme Officer, Guo Xiaohua, says the organisation has gradually developed a set of standards for volunteers, including job descriptions and 'codes of conduct'. They ask volunteers to commit for at least one year and to sign a contract. If volunteers cannot keep to the agreed work schedule they are expected to ask in advance for time off from a 'team supervisor' - usually, a longer-serving volunteer - and make up missed time at a later date. Most volunteers, says Guo, have proven able to comply with these demands.

Mixed motives

In her view, "Volunteers vary a lot in terms of educational background, occupation and economic status, but what they all have in common is a sort of 'volunteer complex' (*qingjie* 情结). Generally they once benefited from other people's good deeds and want to give something back in return." Guo herself was recruited on the basis of years of personal experience as a volunteer.

Sixty volunteers have now served in the *wanyuan* programme for more than two years. According to a recent, third-party evaluation, 90% of them say their main inspiration comes 'from within'.

"I want to do something good for others and society" is the typical refrain.

A survey conducted by Professor Ding Yuanzhu, of Beijing University's Research Centre on Volunteering and Welfare, found that apart from 'doing good deeds', 'learning more', 'getting more experience' and 'making new friends'

topped the motivation list.

Chen Jingjing is a case at the point. A fourth-year rural development major at the China Agriculture University, he started volunteering at Tian Le during the SARS epidemic and has carried on ever since. "I am really happy when I feel I have done something helpful to others. Sometimes I go to the home in really low spirits but leave in a much lighter mood." But when talking about the benefits of volunteering he also freely admits the hope that volunteer experience will help him find a job in the non-profit sector, which is his ideal career starting point.

In the debate over what is 'genuine' volunteering, some people tend to judge from a strict motivation perspective, seeing only pure altruism as being the real thing. Others, like Professor Ding, have a more relaxed view of what constitutes volunteering, so long as three basic criteria are met: that the work is unpaid, that it is undertaken voluntarily, and that it is for the public good. Guo Xiaohua argues from an NGO practitioner's point of view that motivation is usually too complicated and deep below the surface to assess or apply as a necessary requirement.

Zhao Huiqin is a full-time volunteer with the Huizeren Counselling Service Center. She wasn't aware of the existence of civic volunteer groups until she got to know Huizeren through chance Googling. Before, she always associated volunteering with physical labour like tree-planting. "I was really happy to find myself assigned professional counselling work here, and my capacity grew a great deal after a series of comprehensive trainings," she says.

Three years ago, Zhao quit her job in a company after she gave birth to a child and wanted to spend time at home with the baby. Later, she started to volunteer with Huizeren. Over the last two years she has tried her hand at several different responsibilities, ranging from organizing events to training disabled volunteers. "I benefit a lot from it, making some really nice friends here; I feel contented and above all I am doing what I am interested in."

Another core member from the same group, retired schoolteacher Ms. He, says that the largest benefit she gets as a volunteer lies in her

own improved understanding of life and relationships. "It's no exaggeration to say that what we harvest as volunteers greatly exceeds what we have contributed," she says.

Volunteer platforms

Ms. He recalls being "too excited to go to sleep" when she heard that Ms. Zhai Yan and two other partners were going to set up Huizeren, because she had long wanted to see a volunteer platform established. "I was born fond of doing good deeds," she says, "And in my opinion it is sacred (*shenshengde* 神圣的) to be a volunteer."

This young organisation is pioneering a system whereby volunteers have to pay CNY 10 per day for training, from basic to advanced level. This is possible, says Director Zhai Yan, "Because 95% of our 152 registered volunteers are well-educated, middle-class professionals with a decent income." Registered members are also expected to pay an annual membership fee of CNY 60, with exceptions for a few students who do not yet have a stable income. In this way, trainees are encouraged to complain or even demand a refund if they feel dissatisfied with the quality of trainings. "The point of charging is to nurture a sense of commitment and citizenship awareness," says Zhai. "Chinese people usually are inclined to claim their rights."

New Path's style is somewhat softer. "We would not like to exert too much pressure on volunteers." Guo Xiaohua said. They even discourage volunteers from committing much time beyond the one-year minimum. The Foundation's mission is to cultivate fulfilling (*xile* 喜乐), long-term volunteerism and develop outstanding voluntary services in China and some African countries. Accordingly, there is a broad consensus among New Path staff that people cannot help others if they are not themselves self-reliant, and cannot bring happiness to others unless they are themselves happy.

Asked about the advantage of encouraging volunteer groups as compared to individual volunteering, Guo Xiaohua responds that "We are building a platform for individual volunteers to continue their practice with mutual support from each other, as well as the opportunity to

share experiences. In this way they may serve for longer. In addition, we try to protect individual volunteers from being taken advantage of by unscrupulous employers.”

The Beijing Maple Women Counselling and Service Centre, established in 1988, has been running a telephone hotline since 1992, mobilising professional women to answer calls made by other women with various problems. To date, Maple has answered over 80,000 calls. Volunteers do not themselves take calls alone until they have undergone a selection procedure, then worked alongside more experienced colleagues and attended week-end training courses. In a recent presentation to a public forum in Beijing, Maple founder Ms. Wang Xingjuan announced that 213 volunteers have received systematic training, and nearly half of them still work for the hotline. Sixty people have served for more than five years, and 16 have served for more than ten.

Such commitment and dedication belies the common image of reform-era China as being a place where people are only interested in material wealth for themselves and their families. Indeed, Ms. Jia Xijin, a post-doctoral researcher at the Tsinghua University NGO Research Centre, observes that it is not the lack of a ‘volunteer spirit’ in China that has prevented the healthy development of volunteerism. What’s missing, rather, is a proper social mechanism to channel that volunteer spirit and to sustain volunteers who have been mobilised.

State-led volunteering

The government of China is itself keen to promote and channel the volunteer spirit of citizens. There are two main streams of government-led volunteering. One is a community volunteer system affiliated to the Ministry of Civil Affairs and mobilised through street and neighbourhood committees. These volunteers are deployed in their own communities in tasks such as assisting older people, the disabled or children of migrants, or simply keeping the neighbourhood’s streets and public places tidy. Most of these volunteers are people who are retired, unemployed or employed part-time.

The second main stream of state-led volunteering is the China Youth Volunteers Association system established by the Communist Youth League in 1994.

Professor Ding Yuanzhu estimates that there are nearly 4 million ‘community volunteers’ and as many as 15-20 million ‘youth volunteers.’ Together these account for around 2% of China’s total population of 1.3 billion.

A Beijing Youth Volunteers Association, founded in 1993 and registered with the municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, often cooperates with Youth League committees and volunteer clubs in universities and colleges across Beijing to mobilise students to participate in various kinds of government-mandated service. These include teaching English, helping the disabled and even working in the office that receives petitions and complaints from disgruntled citizens. In a telephone interview, one of the Association staff said that for several years tens of thousands of volunteers have been registered in a database, and several thousand more have registered online, but that it is common practice for the Association to mobilise volunteers through its college network, as the need arises.

The Association’s flagship project dispatches recent college graduates to township level government agencies and schools in rural areas. The graduates work for a year in return for a modest, monthly subsistence allowance. The Association’s website (www.beijingvolunteer.org) emphasises that volunteer service help keep down unemployment among a rapidly growing pool of college graduates, and eases the tendency for them to flock to major cities. It notes that 36% of the one thousand volunteers recruited in the first year have since found jobs — the implication being that the period of volunteering was a kind of internship or work training placement.

The 2008 Olympic Games will offer another opportunity to observe government mobilisation of volunteers. On June 5, the Beijing Olympic Committee formally launched a volunteer programme. Guan Chenghua, director of the new Volunteer Coordination Group told the press that at least 100,000 volunteers would be needed, and many will be drawn from the 600,000 university and college students in Beijing.

Many youngsters show strong interest in the programme, but the formal registration won't start until August 2006. Huizeren volunteer, Ms. He, notes ironically that her 17-year-old son is keen to be a volunteer for the Games, although he has 'turned a cold shoulder' to his mother's voluntary activities at community level, believing this to be 'old ladies work.'

Across the country, local governments have been using administrative and regulatory means to both promote and control volunteer activities. In Shenzhen, where there are 60,000 officially registered volunteers, Regulations on Volunteer Service came into effect on July 1. These state that only non-profit organisations can mobilise volunteers and that they must be properly protected in the workplace. On the other hand, volunteers will be legally liable for any harm they cause to the beneficiaries of their services. The regulations also urge employers and educational institutions to give preferential consideration to applicants with a record of volunteer service.

Other cities such as Chengdu and Nanjing are following suit. In Nanjing, the local government also sets out to make it a regulation that civil servants should engage in voluntary public service. Shanghai's Putuo District government has gone even further, adopting 40 hours voluntary service per year as a performance indicator for civil servant's work. Officials who do not comply are barred from promotion or other privileges.

Some officials appear to reason that, since civil servants and volunteers are both working for the public interest, civil servants should take a lead as volunteers. On the one hand, this reflects the traditional Chinese view that officials should be paragons of public virtue. On the other, it also reflects the tradition of government using its administrative power to mobilise human resources.

Volunteer resources for NGOs

Volunteers are amongst the most important resources for China's young NGO sector. For some groups, like Maple and Huizeren, volunteers are the only affordable means of delivering new kinds of service on a significant

scale. But even environmental NGO activists in China are inclined to think of and refer to themselves as 'volunteers.'

This year in Sichuan Province, Hong Kong-based Partnership for Community Development (PCD) launched a 'young volunteer intern programme' that aims to provide opportunities for young people to learn about social and rural problems - and to be part of the solution by serving a stint as a development volunteer.

In its first round, the programme plans to recruit ten committed young people across Sichuan and place screened applicants in rural development or environment protection NGOs for one year. During the internship, PCD expects to cover the costs of accommodation, insurance, round-trip transport and a monthly living allowance of CNY 600 (USD 73). Interns are also supposed to receive a series of trainings and individual mentoring.

The idea grew out of an NGO volunteer management conference held last year, drawing together local and international NGOs. There was broad consensus that NGOs should make more efforts to draw in and develop young talent. Organisations that participated in the conference, including Conservation International, Green River, Heifer Project International and WWF International, have agreed to host interns. "They will become a human resource pool for the NGO sector and also extend contacts between the NGOs through their peer relationships" says PCD Project Officer, Ms. Yin Chuntao.

The model draws on the practice of the Thai Volunteer Service, created in 1980s by a group of Thai activists. In more than two decades, over 700 Thai graduates have joined the volunteer programme, and many of them are still engaged in social and community development work.

Some Chinese students are also making efforts to raise the profile of NGOs on university campuses, as a possible volunteer or career option. In April of this year, the 'Youth Elevation Association' of Beijing University organised an NGO 'volunteer fair' at the University, with some funding support from the UK agency, Voluntary Service Overseas. Forty NGOs were represented and around 1,000 students attended from universities all over Beijing. New Path founder,

Randy Yeh, made a presentation on 'the volunteer spirit' and three founders of local NGOs shared their experience of starting up organisations. Younger NGO staff also talked about their work and what they get out of it.

Several streams converge

Altogether, then, it seems that several streams of volunteering, variously promoted by independent non-profit organisations and NGOs and by the state, are developing independently in China, with subtly different conceptions of volunteering. But there are several ways in which they may begin to overlap and converge.

The comparatively higher standard of independent NPO and NGO volunteers groups may engage with and influence state-led community volunteerism. One example of this in practice was a Global Village of Beijing programme to 'green' volunteering efforts among local districts in Beijing.

The government is also under pressure to meet international standards of volunteer management, and agencies like Professor Ding's Research Centre on Volunteering and Welfare are providing a window both on international standards and on local NGO practice. The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games may prove to be a test case of whether, and how much, government attitudes to mass mobilisation are changing.

A note on language

Chinese has three expressions that are equivalent to the English word 'volunteer.' In Northern China, *zhiyuanzhe* 志愿者 is most common. Hong Kong and Cantonese-speaking Guangdong prefer to use *yigong* 义工, whereas in Taiwan the usual expression is *zhigong* 志工. There is no substantive difference in meaning between these regional variations; but *zhiyuanzhe* is the standard term in mainland government usage, whilst *yigong* carries a slight tinge of spirituality.

Feature: Energy

Efficiency gains needed to curb growth

Already the world's second largest energy consumer, China needs to develop new energy sources to fuel future economic growth and urbanisation while minimising environmental impacts. The national leadership has set an ambitious target of quadrupling per capita incomes by 2020 while only doubling energy consumption. Is that really possible? Matt Perrement reports.

China's economic rise over the last two decades was achieved with relatively low energy intensity. Close to 10% annual GDP growth has been matched by only 4.6% average annual increase in energy consumption. But "Since 2002 growth in energy consumption has outstripped economic growth" according to Wang Wanxing, Program Officer with the Energy Foundation's China Sustainable Energy Program.

Over the last year, 24 provinces suffered temporary electricity 'brownouts' at periods of peak demand. These shortfalls in existing capacity point to a future in which China is no longer be self sufficient in energy. (table 1)

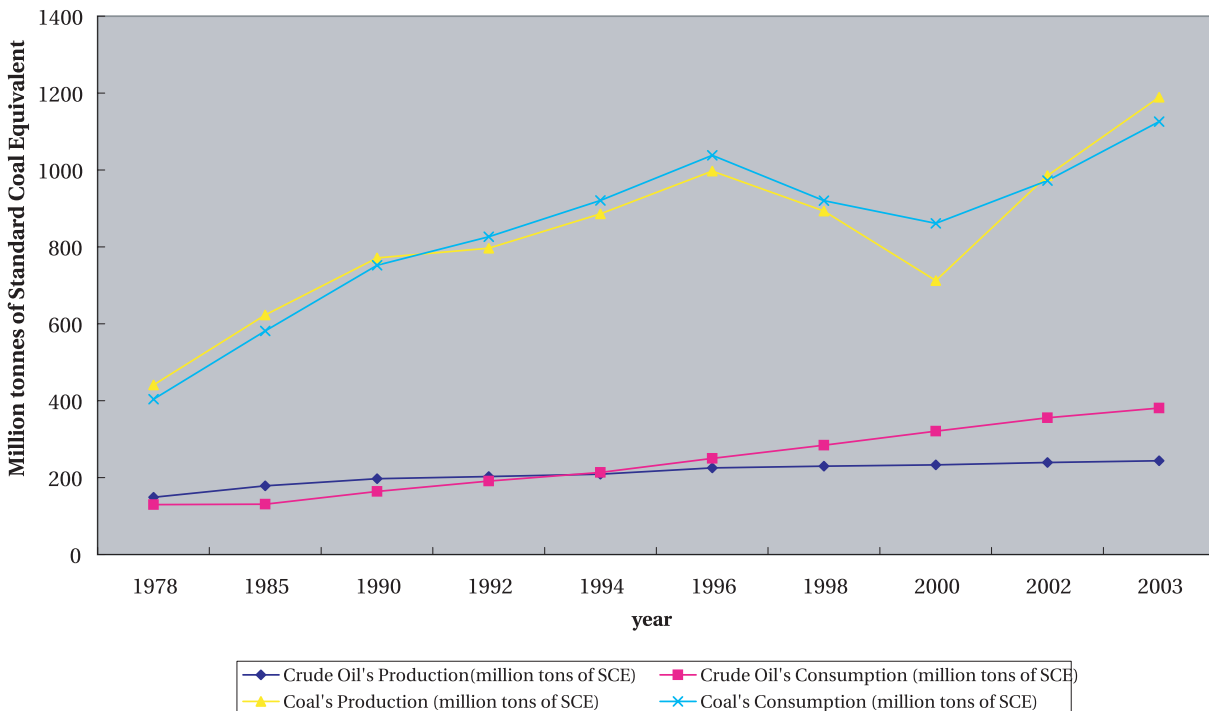
Increased demand has been caused by the pressures of urbanisation and industrial growth. The industrial sector accounts for a much higher proportion of total energy demand than in more developed economies - two-thirds, as against around one third in OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. But an energy-thirsty industrial sector is only part of the story. As more Chinese

Figure I: China's Total Energy Production & Consumption, 1978-2003



consumers become able to afford electrical appliances, travel, and a wider range of services, demand is rising steeply in the residential and service (especially transport and telecommunications) sectors. Proportionally their combined consumption of oil has grown from 17.5% in 1990 to 31% in 2002, whilst industry, by contrast, has trimmed its share from 64% to 50% over the same period. Moreover, China is the fastest-growing, major automobile market in the world, but is producing only two-thirds of its crude oil needs. (table 2)

Figure II: Disaggregated Oil & Coal Production & Consumption, 1978-2003



The scramble for oil

In the 1990s, the government still hoped to see China become a major oil producer but subsequent exploration has been disappointing. According to a 2003 assessment by World Oil, China ranks number ten in a world league of proven oil reserves, with only 23.7 billion barrels available. BP's Statistical Review of World Energy for 2005 also ranks China tenth in the world - with enough reserves for just thirteen more years of production at current rates.

In the short term, Xinjiang is expected to overtake Heilongjiang and become China's most important oil producing area. Ismail Tiliwaldi, Chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, said in June that Xinjiang plans to more than double production to 50 million tonnes per year, building up to annual output of 100 million tonnes. But the faster the oil is pumped out of the Tarim basin, the sooner the wells will run dry.

This leaves China, like much of the rest of the world, engaged in oil diplomacy and trade with the oil-rich nations. The government has been active in securing deals in Russia, Iran, Central Asia and Canada, as well as concessions in Africa and Burma. A proposed pipeline linking Angarsk in Russia with Daqing in Heilongjiang could yet be scuppered by a rival bid from Japan, but work has already begun on a USD 3.5 billion pipeline that will see black gold flowing from Kazakhstan to refineries now under construction in Xinjiang's Karamay region. Billion dollar deals with Canada, which include the Chinese oil giant, Sinopec, acquiring a 40% stake in a project to suck bitumen out of the sands of northern Alberta, could see 200,000 barrels of crude arriving each day from Canada as early as 2009.

Coal is the backbone

China still has abundant coal reserves and these are likely to remain the main source of electricity generation for decades to come, but at

high environmental cost. A substantial amount of international aid over the last twenty years — notably from Japan, which has suffered acid rain emanating from China's sulphur dioxide emissions — was aimed at upgrading coal-fired power stations to improve their environmental performance.

The safety record of China's mines remains extremely poor. Mining accidents claimed 1,113 lives in the first quarter of 2005, an increase of 21% on the previous year, prompting the recent announcement of new safety regulations.

The mining industry is likely to have a long future, with demand coming not only from thermal power plants, but also from the application of new, energy technologies.

'Integrated gasification combined-cycle' (IGCC) is a clean, efficient technology that can operate on all grades of coal according to the latest US studies. China is monitoring developments, and the energy multinational, Shell, is reportedly considering investments options in IGCC in China.

BP is more likely to invest in 'liquefaction' technologies to produce oil from coal. One of China's largest energy companies, Shenhua, is already experimenting with a liquefaction plant in Shaanxi. However, unlike gasification the liquefaction process relies on geologically young, low-carbon coal or lignite, which accounts for a relatively small proportion of global coal reserves and only 16% of China's, according to the World Energy Council. China's reserves are not inconsiderable, but way below US and German levels, which account for the bulk of world deposits.

Liquefaction is also "dirty and expensive" according to Wang Wanxing. The high-heat, high-pressure paralysis process generates carbon dioxide as a major by-product, and this has to be sealed in underground waste dumps. "Based on current oil prices this process is competitive," says Wang. But, he argues, oil prices are currently artificially high because of

distortion by futures markets, and could drop again below the USD 35 per barrel threshold that makes liquefaction competitive. “Five years ago prices were below USD 15,” Wang recalls.

Nukes, dams and renewables

China also plans further investments in nuclear energy, recently announcing that it will build 40 new nuclear plants. By 2020, this will double the proportion of China’s power produced from electricity, but nuclear power will still only account for a modest 4% of the total.

A leading official from the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense nevertheless recently declared that “Nuclear power will become the pillar of energy supply in coastal areas of east China.” According to a source in the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the longer term hope is to derive 16% of China’s energy needs from nuclear power. But, the same source suggests, this may just be political wishful thinking — because 16% of power generated from nuclear is the average proportion for OECD economies.

China’s increasingly confident anti-dam movement may dampen official enthusiasm for hydroelectric growth, despite this being an area where China has clear comparative advantage. Hydroelectric output could triple to 300 GIGOWatts according to Wang, who favours case-by-case assessments of social and environmental impacts, rather than a blanket ban.

Meanwhile, the renewable energy industry (including small-scale hydropower, wind and solar energies) was boosted by the approval in February of a Law on Renewable Energy Resources. Renewables are expected to provide around 10% of China’s energy needs by 2020, much to the delight of Wang, who co-manages a program, within the China Sustainable Energy Program, to support accelerated commercialisation of renewable energy in China.

Efficiency is the first priority

But “Efficiency savings are the number one priority,” says Wang, who was also involved in the design of an End-Use Energy Efficiency Programme recently launched by UNDP and National Development Reform Commission. Upon the programme’s launch, UN Chief Representative, Khalid Malik, noted that “China’s energy consumption per unit of output value in 2000 was 2.4 times more than the world average.”

Vaclav Smil, a longstanding observer of China’s energy sector, has written extensively about its inefficiencies. Smil singles out coal for poor extraction methods that result in recovery rates 30%-40% below Western levels and a final product that burns poorly and is impure, and therefore highly polluting.

There is as yet little public participation in debate about energy efficiency. ‘It is needed,’ concedes Wang, ‘but we are not directly engaged with the public.’ The Foundation has supported energy efficiency labelling on refrigerators and air-conditioners and this, says Wang, is helping to raise consumer awareness. With compulsory labelling set to expand to other products, public awareness and debate may follow.

The Foundation also made a grant to Global Village of Beijing for a ‘media club’ that brings print and broadcast journalists and government representatives together in open forums four or five times each year, to discuss themes such as fuel efficiency. This may take some of the credit for a spate of recent media articles looking into China’s energy sector.

The existing inefficiencies in China’s production and use of energy do at least mean that there is plenty of scope for efficiency gains. Does Wan Wanxing believe, then, that it is feasible to quadruple GDP while only doubling energy consumption? ‘Using the last three years as a baseline the government’s target is in jeopardy,’ he says, and pauses before adding ‘But with the correct policies in place it can be met.’

The Energy Foundation is a grant-making non-profit organization created, in 1999, as a result of Sino-US dialogue amongst scientists, policy-makers and business leaders from both sides of the Pacific. It has received financial backing from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and more recently The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The foundation states its principal aim as 'To assist in China's transition to a sustainable energy future by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy' and operates a grant programme under five headings: Low-Carbon Development Paths, Transportation, Buildings, Industry, Electric Utilities and Renewable Energy. Most grants are currently awarded to think-tanks that help provide policy solutions and options, with a particular focus on efficiency and renewables.

The UN-NDRC End-Use Energy Efficiency Programme is a twelve-year, multi-million dollar project that will seek to increase efficiency in industry and remove barriers to the widespread application of energy conservation and efficiency among China's major energy users - industry and buildings.

Vaclav Smil is a Professor at the University of Manitoba and one of the world's leading authorities on China's environment. His latest book, **China's Past, China's Future - Energy, Food, Environment** (Routledge Curzon, 2004) summarises and updates his many previous publications on China. Two of the three chapters offer a rigorous audit of the food and energy sectors, and the results are then pieced together to demonstrate trends likely to shape China by the end of the first quarter of the 21st century.

Feature: Rural Education

Citizen idealists go to school

As China nears its goal of universalising nine years of compulsory schooling, the stage is set for a debate about the quality and relevance of education, especially for rural children who are disadvantaged by the present system. The debate may not be entirely dominated by government and professional educationalists, for, as Diane Geng reports, a sprinkling of citizen-initiated educational alternatives is beginning to appear.

Travelling through the Chinese countryside, it is common to see schools with the word 'hope' in the name, signifying that they were built with funds from the Chinese government charity, Project Hope, or boasting a plaque that acknowledges donations from overseas foundations or individuals. Giving scholarships to needy students, donating libraries or upgrading classrooms all lie in the traditional domain of efforts to improve rural education. The central government has also recently pledged that the nine years of compulsory education will be completely free for all impoverished children by 2007 through a 'Two Exemptions and One Subsidy' policy (两免一补).

As financial barriers to education fall in more and more rural areas, questions about educational content, quality, and the goals of schooling rise to the fore. Some international agencies like the UK's Department for International Development, Plan and Save the

Children have piloted comprehensive, quality education projects in partnership with the government in Gansu, Shaanxi, Yunnan and Tibet. Yet very few small organisations - especially domestic ones - have progressed from providing material aid to considering what happens inside the classroom once the children are seated and the lesson begins.

The basic education system reinforces the two-tier, rural-urban social divide by focusing entirely on 'changing one's destiny' from rural to urban by testing into college. Educational content contains little that relates to rural lives or life skills. Yet only 30% of undergraduates nationwide come from rural areas: most rural youngsters drop off the education system's pre-defined path to success long before they see any of its promised benefits. Faced with this reality, one wonders how possible is it to try out new teaching content and methods in rural schools so that education can contribute to the healthy growth of the vast majority of children who do not succeed by the present system's criteria.

In search of answers, I travelled to Anhui, Guizhou and Sichuan to visit a few clusters of individuals who are pioneering grassroots, non-traditional basic educational models in rural China. These experiments - all fairly recent and small-scale - rely heavily on volunteer effort and outside funding. They welcome help from people of all walks of life, recognising that the 'teachers' are learning as much as the students from the experience; and these sites have thus become platforms for ordinary Chinese to wrestle first hand with the shortcomings of the existing system.

Anhui Fuxin Middle School

The Fuxin School (复新新校) in northern Anhui's Woyang County (涡阳县) is famed as the first, and still only, private school in China that is run entirely by volunteers. Its triumphs and difficulties over the past three years illustrate how complex the business of direct citizen participation in education can be.

Housed in an unfinished, three-storey, whitewashed building surrounded by wheat

fields, it was founded in 2002 by a group of people in their 20s who took over the facilities of a bankrupt local school hoping to 'alleviate poverty through education'. With no government funding or official registration, Fuxin (www.fuxin.org) only recently installed glass in the classroom windows and its desks and stools - a jumble of different sizes and heights - are brought by students from home. Though it is in worse physical condition than most nearby schools, Fuxin has a high-minded motto for its 221 middle-schoolers: 'First learn how to be an upright person, book learning comes second' (做人第一, 学习第二).

As volunteers receive no formal training, methods for cultivating upright students vary greatly. Some teachers have the habit of writing classical or inspirational quotes on the blackboard and allotting class time for response and discussion. Some students have accumulated thick notebooks full of these thoughts, and choose one to recite at the beginning of each class to greet the teacher.

Equality and mutual respect between students and teachers is emphasised. During weekly class meetings, teachers discuss the meaning of education or how to be a good person by reading essays and inviting students to give their opinions.

I saw one homeroom teacher encouraging his 9th grade class to reflect on their motivations for learning, telling them that even if they don't test into college or high school that they shouldn't be resigned to mediocrity but instead maintain a hardworking, determined attitude to succeed, whether as a farmer, scholar, or worker. The youthfulness of the volunteers combined with their obvious love for children makes them more like older brothers and sisters, able to counsel the students in matters of the heart as well as academics. Most teachers pay frequent home visits, and since teachers also live at the school, students have ample chance to interact freely and informally with them after class, often receiving individual tutoring long into the night.

To encourage enjoyment of school and natural learning, teachers sometimes take their classes outside. When I visited during the first

days of spring, some classes took a hike to a nearby river, identifying local plants along the way, discussing life, and bonding over barbecued yams. Funds from outside supporters and NGOs made it possible for the whole school to go to the county town to watch a movie in a big-screen theatre, a first for most of the children. Last summer, a Shanghai NGO also sponsored a group of students to tour Shanghai and its university campuses, matching them with mentors who accompanied them for a week.

While such activities, attention and support from the outside are rare for a typical rural school, they also depend highly on the initiative and energy of the individual volunteers. There are currently sixteen volunteer teachers ranging from 25 to nearly 50 years of age. New volunteers receive CNY 300 per month - less than even the lowest salary at surrounding middle schools - though this rises to around CNY 1,000 per month for those who have stayed for four years. Most are college or junior college graduates but few have attended teacher training college.

New volunteers are usually given little or no training and thrust into teaching subjects loosely related to their college major or personal interests. Sometimes they sit in on more experienced teachers' lessons and other teachers observe theirs, giving feedback afterwards; but everyone is usually too busy with their own full load of classes to maintain a structured support process. After a period with a new teacher, students do a written evaluation and if they have criticism of the teacher's methods, the Principal may switch teachers around.

The wealth of outside perspectives, higher education and general life experiences that volunteers bring cannot be matched by the staff of any of the surrounding local schools; but the sheer diversity of educational philosophy and methods among volunteers has resulted in uneven quality of instruction and caused internal conflicts that are sometimes bitter. As one volunteer said, "This is a good place to see a cross-section of contemporary young Chinese idealism because there aren't two of us who

come with the same views." Volunteer turnover is high with teachers sometimes changing in mid-semester.

Fuxin has attracted widespread media coverage in China, most of it focusing until recently on the noble sacrifice of the volunteers and the way that the rural children's lives have been transformed by the love and concern of their teachers. This built up tremendous goodwill and admiration from the general public.

Recently, however, the school has been struck by scandal, centring on its (now resigned) founder and Principal, Yin Yongchun (殷永纯), a 28-year-old Beijing University graduate whose frequent public speeches and media appearances have done much to invoke public sympathy and interest. He has now left the school in the wake of allegations that he sexually abused several students. The case raises major issues about government capacity to create and enforce child protection standards across both the state and the emerging non-profit sector. In this particular case it remains to be seen how much the publicity will affect the Fuxin standing with outside supporters, the villagers it serves, and the local education authorities.

The local government has allowed the school to exist for three years without a permit and with almost no supervision, but it has now said that it will decide in the next few months whether to close Fuxin down. Aside from the recent scandal, local officials aren't pleased that Fuxin competes with public schools for an ever-shrinking pool of local students.

The school management is meanwhile being overhauled. A board of directors is being established to make decisions and monitor finances. The school also hopes to professionalise and stabilise its volunteer model by drawing up clear job descriptions, creating a clearer division of labour, and enforcing standards such as a minimum time commitment from teachers. Unless it can obtain an operating permit and complete management reforms, Fuxin will find it increasingly difficult to apply for grants and resources from NGOs.

But the biggest inherent challenge of the

Fuxin model remains outside its control. The desire to foster students' natural interest in learning and to promote 'quality education' competes against the need to help students succeed in the education system at large. In order to get into college, the students must take the same tests as their counterparts in traditional schools; but Fuxin students may be disadvantaged, given that their teachers have no formal training and change frequently.

Poor elementary schooling means that most Fuxin students are already below grade level. This increases pressure on volunteers to spend time on remedial academic work and test drills. Most parents still measure a middle school's success by test scores and advancement to key high schools, so Fuxin's continued existence depends to some extent on fulfilling parents' expectations.

The students have mixed feelings. "This school is special because our teachers are volunteers and have good relationships with the students. I've learned a lot about what it means to be a good person here," said one eighth grader. "However, I wish the academic environment were more serious! We've changed English teachers three times this semester and at this rate, I don't know how I'm ever going to test into a good high school!"

Many argue that Fuxin succeeds neither at quality education nor at mainstream, test-based education. The school's current leadership itself recognises that, if they survive the present controversy, the reforms they are implementing will improve the chances of creating a model of quality education (素质教育) that can push forward rural development. Still, it remains the only open platform where individuals can come, try their best, and understand how hard that really is.

Western Fuxin School

Li Guangdui (李光对), a former volunteer from the Anhui Fuxin school, last year opened a Western Fuxin School in Yongli Township (雍里乡), Congjiang County (从江县), Guizhou. He wanted to bring the volunteer school model

from Anhui to even more impoverished, isolated places in western China and was fortunate to find a local government and Education Bureau willing to work with him. For the past year, local officials have given him and three volunteers much support and freedom to try out new educational approaches in the township's key primary school, working alongside local teachers.

Li's educational vision is based on the ideas of Tao Xingzhi (陶行知), China's most famous educationalist, who believed that school should be closely linked to real-life experiences so that education can promote social reform.¹ Tao looked at "society as school" and promoted "unity of teaching, learning, and reflective acting."

Accordingly, Li organises sixth graders into small groups to tutor illiterate adults in the surrounding village, developing leadership and teamwork skills while also cultivating a sense of social responsibility. He also puts into practice the idea that "the world is our classroom" by sending students to record the oral histories of elderly people in the community. Since most of the villagers are minorities, this engages students in exploring and preserving minority culture and history. While his methods have not yet caught on with the other local teachers in the school, he has organised teaching demonstration classes to keep them informed of new ideas and approaches to rural education.

Next school year, the school district will likely allow Li and his volunteers to manage a 'teaching point' (grades 1-5) in a nearby village.² Li hopes to train a committed team of volunteers in the theories of Tao Xingzhi and action research, testing out concrete ways to link children's learning to community and rural development. As in Anhui, Li cannot simply forget about his students' academic progress as measured by standardized testing; but experimenting in the mountains of Guizhou has its advantages. There, compulsory nine-year education is only just beginning to be universalised and most parents do not have high expectations for their children's advancement beyond what the state requires. Further,

academic pressure in elementary schools is not yet as strong as in middle schools, giving teachers more leeway to try out their own ideas. The school's website where Li posts many of his educational writings and the schools' needs is at: www.njw.cn/zhidian/default.asp

Chengdu Waldorf School

On the outskirts of Chengdu, where the city meets the countryside, lies the first Waldorf School in China (www.waldorfchina.org). Waldorf (also known as Rudolf Steiner) education is a unique form of teaching based on the view that education should nurture the body, soul and spirit.³ Steiner, an early twentieth century philosopher, designed a curriculum responsive to the developmental phases in childhood with an emphasis on nurturing children's creativity, free-thinking and imaginations.

The school's four Chinese founders studied the Waldorf education model in England and the USA, and returned in the summer of 2004 to found their own school on the grounds of an abandoned country resort. Currently, there are about a dozen kindergartners and six grade-schoolers, most of whom are children of the teachers or volunteers at the school, but those numbers are likely to at least double next school year. The cosy, cheerful classrooms have pink walls and desks arranged in a semi-circle, but during class-time, students are just as often found outside helping to construct wooden play structures in the garden, learning to bake whole wheat bread, or rehearsing skits as a creative way to learn about Chinese literature. There are no tests or textbooks and as the children only have one main teacher for core subjects, the lessons are carefully tailored to foster their individual strengths.

Bio-dynamic gardening, a strict form of organic farming also inspired by Rudolf Steiner's philosophy, is practiced on the land attached to the property, giving students the chance to learn about their connection to the land and agriculture. The school has also taught several nearby farmers how to grow organically, and

buys the resulting fruits and vegetables in what amounts to a small-scale, community supported agriculture project.

The school draws people from all over China who are interested in Waldorf's educational methods as well as new agricultural techniques. A group of young people, mostly college graduates, live and volunteer at the school, serving as teaching assistants, running the gardens, and learning about Waldorf theories. The school also hosts workshops about biodynamic farming and Waldorf education, inviting experts from the Australia, the US, and India.

For the time being, this school can only cater for urban citizens who can afford to leave the mainstream system and pay the tuition of around CNY 1,000 per month (USD 120). Yet some parents have actually moved with their children from other provinces to enrol in the school, and are willing to bear any difficulties that may arise in the future when their child graduates and must re-enter the mainstream system or find yet more alternatives. The school's founders have published books about their experiences using the Waldorf method and these have influenced a group of parents from as far away as Shenzhen to invest their own time and money to start a home-based Waldorf kindergarten for their children.

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- 1 Tao Xingzhi (1891-1946) graduated from the Jinling University in Nanjing and then went to study education at Columbia University in the USA. His most famous experiment was Morning Village Normal School (*Xiaozhuang*) in rural Nanjing, founded shortly after the May Fourth Movement. Influenced by John Dewey's education philosophy, Tao advocated a "life as education" approach, and sought to extend education to ordinary working people. His name is linked to the 'Rural Reconstruction' movement of the early Republican period.
 - 2 A 'teaching point' is a small, rural primary school where two or three (often poorly qualified) teachers usually take classes that include several grades. The teaching points are currently found in remote areas of (mainly) western China. Current government policy in most areas is to phase out the teaching points, transferring the students to 'integrated' primary schools based in large administrative villages or townships, where children from outlying areas board at the school during the week.
 - 3 Waldorf education was founded in 1919 by Austrian scientist and philosopher Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) at the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory. There are now around 870 administratively independent Waldorf or Rudolf Steiner schools worldwide, offering educational opportunities from early childhood through high school.

Although for the present this remains a strictly urban option, it is worth considering how Waldorf techniques and theory might be useful to poor, rural children. The attention paid to developing children's natural gifts and helping them to explore their connection to the environment and society contrasts with drills and tests on subject matter unrelated to rural children's lives.

Eckart Lowe, a German Waldorf graduate, experimented with using Waldorf principles to teach rural children in Guangxi for five years. A documentary and a book he wrote, 'Working with the Child's Nature' (与孩子的天性合作, 2003) describe how he used participatory activities to develop children's natural creativity. For example, he let his students identify a need in the community - a place to bathe - and helped them design and build a small dam to create a bathing pool. This hands-on activity required them to gauge the strength of the water flow in a nearby stream, draw designs, and participate and direct the dam building, from beginning to end. Though the other local teachers did not understand the theory behind this unusual exercise, they were supportive because they could see the children's liveliness and engagement. Lowe even helped the children compose their own song about the experience, with lyrics taken from the students' reflective essays. This was just one of many ways Lowe experimented with Waldorf methods in rural education but he felt that the long-term impact on the elementary and junior high children were difficult to gauge as his classes changed every year and his efforts were a lonely influence in their lives.

Lowe recently finished a second book in Chinese. Many of his writings can be found on his website, www.jiaoyu.org.

Idealism in action

These three cases seem to be the best-known grassroots examples of ordinary people engaging hands-on in basic education experiments in rural China. As pioneers in a field with great need for reform, the idealism and

passion of these school founders is engaging, and they are adept at publicising their values and work through websites and online forums, to attract a network of outside financial and human resource support. Besides the volunteers who come to help out at the schools, many more external supporters live in the cities, giving their time to organise fundraisers or liaise with outside organizations and raise awareness. For example, over the May holiday, about a dozen supporters from all over China organized a study-tour to the Western Fuxin school, and Shanghai supporters have in the past sold saplings in the city to raise funds for the Anhui Fuxin school.

Financial constraints and a sincere appreciation for like-minded individuals mean that volunteers are generally welcomed and have played an important role in these schools. However, in light of the controversy now surrounding 'celebrity educational volunteer' Yin Yongchun, willingness to serve may no longer be a sufficient criterion of suitability. It remains to be seen what effect this scandal will have on the schools' volunteer policies.

The essential challenge remains adapting idealistic goals and values, and the methods to achieve them, to address local educational needs. It is too soon to say whether these schools will survive, much less serve as replicable models. Yet the move from passive sympathy to personal action and participation has already been made - showing that civil society may yet have a significant role in reforming rural education in China.

Diane Geng spent the last year as a Fulbright Scholar attached to the Rural Development Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, researching rural education and volunteerism. She has previously written in *China Development Brief* about university student 'rural reconstruction' volunteers.

Shorter news items

Traffickers cash in on the perilous path to 'freedom'

Unscrupulous agents lying in wait on both sides of the North Korean border are cashing in on a lucrative human trade that preys on North Korean women fleeing poverty, according to a report published this week by Anti-Slavery International.

Entitled 'An Absence of Choice', the report includes first-hand accounts from women who are fetching sums between CNY 400 - CNY 10,000 (USD 50 - USD 1,250) in a trade that leads the majority into coerced marriage, with others ending up in the sex industry.

China's widely-publicized gender imbalance in the population, estimated by the report to amount to a male:female ratio of 13:10 in some rural areas, is thought to be partially to blame for a massive influx of North Korean women entering China over the last decade. Wedlock with Chinese farmers who fail to attract local marriage partners also provides a relative step up the ladder for North Korean women who have fled conditions of starvation.

The possibility of finding safer working conditions, hidden from the eyes of the authorities, as domestic workers, nannies, wives or sex workers, also creates a flow of women across the infamous Tumen River which forms the border between the two countries.

Estimates suggest that at least 50,000 North Koreans are living illegally in China, mainly in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin Province, which is also home to around one million ethnic Chinese-Koreans (*Chosun Jok*.) More than half of those crossing the border are thought to be women whose primary motive is basic survival — securing food and a means of income to support relatives back in the North — rather than escaping persecution.

North Korea, whose doctrine of self-sufficiency (*juche*) has left it increasingly isolated in the international community, was struck by food-rationing and famine throughout the 1990s, leaving 2 million dead according to

the United Nations, and prompting an exodus, especially from those living in the economically-deprived north-eastern provinces.

Once in China, isolation becomes a feature of daily life for many Koreans owing to their illegal migrant status which opens the door to abusive relationships within their arranged (yet undocumented and illegal) marriages. Testimonies from North Korean women recount tales of being kept under lock and key and subjected to physical beatings, including being shackled and raped.

Yet despite the abuse and stories of those fleeing prisoner-like existences many claim that life is better in China and tolerate marriages that are often loveless. Consensual marriage is also acknowledged as a growing phenomenon that provides relative security as well as income to some North Korean families who, in some cases, are now initiating human trade.

But, happy or otherwise in their new homes, all North Koreans face deportation if uncovered by Chinese authorities who the report regards as the principal culprit in repatriating North Koreans, adhering over the last decade to a strict policy of arrest and deportation.

Leaving North Korea without permission is a criminal offence that can carry the death penalty, although repatriation typically leads to a period of detention with labour. Those coming out of detention talk of a gruelling regime of 15-hour shifts tilling the land, paltry rationing and bouts of physical abuse, especially of pregnant women who are sometimes subjected to forced abortions.

Anti-Slavery International, a UK-based charity founded in 1839, describes itself as the world's oldest international human rights organization. It works to expose all forms of slavery through research, and campaigns for elimination of slavery through advocacy to governments, NGOs and the public.

'We want to urge the Chinese Government to address the most urgent aspect of the North Korean (men, women and children) plight and that is, forcible repatriation,' Norma Kang Muico, author of the report, told *China Development Brief*.

Copies of 'An Absence of Choice' have been

sent to ambassadors of the DPRK and China in London, and a submission was also made to the UN Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Geneva last week, highlighting the case of North Korea. A joint lobby is also being organized in collaboration with a group of UK-based NGOs to lobby the UK government on the issue.

Change 'will undoubtedly be an uphill struggle but I am hopeful that continued exposure and lobbying will bring about some form of alleviation for the North Korean people,' Ms. Muico said of the task ahead.

MP, June 16, 2005

Government, GONGO, 'grassroots' troika to steer philanthropy forward

A three person steering committee, comprising one senior government official, one well known 'GONGO' leader and one leading representative of the 'grassroots' NGO community will coordinate plans for a major, national conference on philanthropy this Autumn, it was revealed during a forum hosted by the China NPO Network on June 8.

The troika comprises Deputy Director of the Ministry of Civil Affairs' Department of Disaster Relief, Wang Zhenyao, China Charities Federation Vice-Director Xu Yongguang, and veteran third sector advocate, Professor Shang Yusheng.

In relaxed and relatively informal speeches to the forum, the three men used the notion of 'harmonious development' (*hexie fazhan*) to emphasise the need for cooperation between government and non government actors.

The initiative may represent a strategic effort to re-focus debate on NPO development, centring discussion on the need for an enabling environment for philanthropy as opposed to sensitive issues of associational freedom.

Xu Yongguang served for fifteen years as General Secretary of the China Youth Development Foundation, whose flagship 'Project Hope' has raised over USD 250 million for school building and basic education

sponsorship programmes since its founding in 1989, making it the biggest and best known charitable organisation in China. Mr. Xu remains on the Foundation's board, but moved earlier this year to join the China Charities Federation, which grew rapidly in the late 1990s under the dynamic leadership of former Civil Affairs Vice Minister, Yan Mingfu, who has since retired.

Professor Shang is a China Academy of Sciences physicist who has had a long term interest in the non profit sector. He has served as head of the National Association of Natural Science Foundations and is the legal representative of a small foundation in memory Wu Zuoren, a famous painter who was the Professor's father in law. Professor Shang is better known, however, as the founder of the China NPO Network, which began as a loose coalition of non profit organisations and registered in 2001 as an NGO capacity building organisation. The Network has demonstrated a consistently inclusive approach, offering training services to many 'grassroots' organisations.

The June 8 forum was followed by a two-day fundraising training workshop for local organisations, as part of a series of NPO Network funded by the US-based Maclellan Foundation.

NY, June 10 2005

Directory charts rapid growth of HIV/AIDS organisations

A 'Directory of HIV/AIDS NGOs in China' profiling 101 civil society organisations and projects working in the field of AIDS prevention, treatment, advocacy and care was published at the end of June by the ZhiAiXing Health Information and Consultancy Centre (formerly the AiZhiXing Health Education Institute), led by renowned AIDS activist, Wan Yanhai.

The profiled organisations range from well-established, national-level professional groups such as the China Association of STD/AIDS Prevention and Control to village-level self-help groups in rural areas affected by AIDS, gay and lesbian information services and telephone

hotlines and a number of nascent service providers fostered by international aid projects and embedded in agencies such as the local Red Cross societies. ZhiAiXing itself appears as main sponsor of a network of small, young organisations.

Entries are divided into eleven categories: 'help and care for children' (six groups); 'small groups of people living with HIV/AIDS' (22); 'haemophiliac groups' (10); 'same sex love groups' (28); 'religious organisations' (4); 'women's organisations' (2); 'drug users' and sex workers' organisations' (3); 'migrant workers' organisations' (2); 'reproductive health' (1); 'students' organisations' (17) and 'GONGOs' (6).

Each entry includes contact details, the date of establishment, number of staff, annual budget, main funding sources, registration status, mission statement, and short statements giving a brief history and describing the main areas of work and activities.

Chinese is the main language of the directory, but the great majority of entries have at least some information in English, with occasional orthographical infelicities, such as 'Red Ribbon' being transposed to 'Red Robbin'.

The directory was edited by Ms. Cai Lingping, who previously worked as a staff writer on the Chinese language edition of *China Development Brief*.

NY, July 5 2005

Vaccine death media probe alleges local authority complicity in 'corruption'

The death of a six year old girl from Anhui Province shortly after she was immunised against Hepatitis A at her primary school has raised a national media storm, with the state-run New China News Agency highlighting 'corruption' as the likeliest cause of the misfortune.

Li Wei, from Si County in Anhui, died on June 23 six days after her immunisation, according to local news reports collected on the sina.com

web portal. The reports say that 300 other children have been hospitalised after being immunised from the same vaccine batch, which has been administered to around 25,000 people in Anhui and others in Shanghai.

Reports say that the vaccine was manufactured by the Universal Health Company in Hangzhou and distributed by an unlicensed pharmaceutical merchant, Zhang Peng, who sold it on to schools and health stations that were charging CNY 25 per dose at point of delivery, rather than the recommended CNY 6 per dose.

According to the *Beijing Times* (京华时报), 19 schools in 17 villages received a commission of one yuan for each dose that they administered to children in their care, and village doctors were also paid on a commission basis.

The *Eastern Morning Post* (东方早报) alleges that schools continued to administer the vaccines after some students had shown unusual, adverse side effects. Several newspapers allege that government officials offered Li Wei's family CNY 90,000 to hush them up. The *Beijing Youth Daily* (北京青年报) claims the family signed a contract with local health authorities, in which they agreed that the cause of death was 'diarrhoea' aggravated by respiratory difficulties.

World Health Organisation Representative in China, Dr. Henk Bekedam, told *China Development Brief* that "It is too early to tell" the cause of the adverse reactions. If properly manufactured and administered the vaccine is safe and effective, he said, but there could have been problems with "the product, the tools or injection practices." The vaccine, he suggested, might be a "fake" copy; the vials in which it is stored may have been contaminated; the vaccine may not have been stored at the right temperature; or safe injection practices might not have been observed. However, the vaccine is relatively simply to administer, so a flawed or contaminated product might be a likelier explanation.

"The government is taking this very seriously," Dr. Bekedam added. "The health minister has already been down there and they are investigating."

China's last major immunisation upset was in 1998, when investigation of a polio case in Qinghai Province revealed that child immunisation rates were much lower than officially reported. The Anhui case appears to turn on the quality of a particular vaccine batch rather than on systemic failure of immunisation coverage.

WHO, said Dr Bekedam, is "Very much involved in making assessments of [immunisation] systems" rather than approving individual vaccines, much less vaccine batches. China, he says, is regarded by WHO as "Near the threshold of having a capable [immunisation] system."

NY, June 29, 2005

Integrating environment and development an uphill process in Yunnan

A British government funded GBP 6.67 million (USD 12.16 million) programme to strengthen integration of environment protection and development planning in Yunnan Province has been extended by nine months in order to finish pilot projects and also to assist in the formulation of Yunnan's eleventh Five Year Plan.

The UK Department for International Development (DfID) describes this as an important opportunity to bring project experiences of participatory planning and community development into policy processes in the Province.

Some of the benefits of the integrated approach were highlighted in a 'dissemination review' in June, but this also revealed that the project has so far completed only three of six planned pilots. The review was tempered by concerns that cost may prove a barrier to wider uptake of the approach.

Reasons for the delay in the programme implementation remain unclear. The principal partners - DfID, the international consulting firm, Scott Wilson, which won the technical

assistance contract, and the Yunnan Environmental Protection Bureau - give conflicting accounts that variously blame SARS, a design flaw, the late arrival of consultants, and a clash in working styles.

DfID Senior Environment Adviser, John Warburton, told *China Development Brief* that there were "legitimate criticisms of all three institutions," referring to the partnership as a "complex institutional arrangement," that was hampered by DfID's limited representation in China at the time of the project design, and also by horizontal integration issues.

Dr. Jeremy Richardson, International Team Leader for Scott Wilson, emphasized China's vertical working culture, saying that the situation was exacerbated by a design flaw whereby budget control was handed to the Environmental Protection Bureau. According to Richardson, the project was delayed by negotiations over resource allocation between local partners - the Yunnan Environmental Protection Bureau, Yunnan Poverty Alleviation Office and Yunnan Development Reform Commission.

Warburton acknowledged that budget control issues had limited the effectiveness of the project, but also suggested that shared budget management would not necessarily be a solution, adding that "It is important to have a consultancy team that understands China."

Meanwhile, suggestions of squabbling between Yunnan Province government agencies were flatly dismissed by Yunnan Environment Protection Bureau senior official, Zhou Bo, who claimed that SARS and the late arrival of technical experts were the principal causes of the delay.

Despite these set-backs all parties remain optimistic about the value of the work. "There have been big changes in how [the local partner agencies] go about their work," commented Richardson. Zhou Bo also pointed to improved relations between the Environment Protection and Poverty Alleviation Bureaus as one of the main achievements of the multi-million pound intervention. Regular cross-agency consultation on project design does take place between the bureaus according to Zhou.

A further review has now been scheduled for November this year.

MP, June 24 2005

Tibetan women's group challenges traditional attitudes

"Shem," meaning charity and compassion in Tibetan, is the chosen name of a women's group that was established in Qinghai in March and is setting out to improve the status of rural women by giving them a leading role in the development of their communities.

People think "Women are secondary and do not have as much ability as men," says Drolma, a core member, summing up the traditional perceptions of women in her community. Disadvantaged by limited access to basic education and health care, and also by responsibility for domestic work, very few Tibetan women have the chance to progress beyond middle-school.

Shem grew out of an after-hours course in gender studies taught at Qinghai Normal University Nationalities Department in 2003 by Michelle Kleisath, an English teacher and gender studies specialist. The course was warmly received, with some 60 women students participating, and it included practical components on project design, proposal writing and project management. By the end of 2004, women on the course had proposed twelve small projects in their communities of origin.

"I was very happy to hear the news from the British Embassy" said a surprised Tashitso whose project - a solar energy project in Garima Village - was one of the first to secure funding.

Funding for other projects came from the German and Canadian Embassy small grant facilities, prompting a move to formally establish the Shem group, which now has a total of three active projects in the Golok and Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures of Qinghai.

The ten or so core members are providing "evidence that women can reach their potential if given the chance" added a confident Drolma.

Their awareness of discriminatory attitudes towards women is also growing, leading them to actively question what another member, Tseg'yangmtso, describes as the "'important work is done by men' attitude."

With the first generation of Shem members graduating this winter and possibly moving on to new pastures, Ms. Kleisath is now focusing on issues of sustainability. "We are investigating options," she says.

More information on the group, which also posts personal stories from Tibetan women on their website, is available at www.shemgroup.org

MP June 24, 2005

World Bank goes for fundraising gold in China 'Development Marketplace'

June 2 saw the launch of a 'Development Marketplace' that the World Bank has already created in 70 countries and is now promoting in China in partnership with the State Council Leading Group Office for Poverty Reduction and Development (LGOP) and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA).

The Marketplace aims to bring together 'visionaries and entrepreneurs' in a competition where they 'sell' new ideas to groups that can provide financing or technical assistance. As well as stimulating networking and exchange of ideas, the Marketplace involves a competitive, small grant making process in which applications are considered by an expert panel. Since 1998 nearly USD 40 million has been awarded to more than a thousand projects worldwide.

Chinese NGOs are invited to submit project concept notes during June and July. The independent panel of experts will select 100 finalists, who will mount a public exhibition of their projects in Beijing on December 7-8, and be interviewed by a 'jury'. Fifty winners will be selected for funding awards of up to USD 30,000, to be conferred at a ceremony in the Great Hall

of the People on December 8.

World Bank Country Director for China, David Dollar, told the press during the launching ceremony that he hopes this will develop into an annual event held in different cities across China.

The World Bank has committed USD 250,000 for the China Development Marketplace and hopes to raise additional funds from other local and international corporate, individual and official development assistance donors. To date, USD 1 million is the most that has been raised in any one country for the Development Marketplace concept. "We hope to raise more than that [in China]," said Mr. Dollar. "I'm confident that China will win the gold medal for fundraising."

Director-General of the Department of International Cooperation and Social Mobilization of the LGOP, Wu Zhong highlighted the Chinese government's commitment to poverty reduction and said he hoped the Development Marketplace would prove an efficient way to reach the 26 million people in China still living in abject poverty and a further 56 million with very low incomes.

Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Civil Affairs Department of NGO Administration, Li Yong, emphasised government encouragement for private philanthropy and the growth of citizen-run non-profit groups (*minjian zuzhi*). The number of such groups registered with Civil Affairs agencies has been rising by an annual rate of 10 percent over the last few years, reaching 290,000 by last year, Mr. Li said. He also revealed that the Ministry of Civil Affairs is preparing to host, later this year, the first ever national conference devoted to philanthropy.

A Chinese language website (www.developmentmarketplace.org.cn) has been established to disseminate information to local organisations. The World Bank also hopes that related information can be channeled to target groups, especially those at grassroots level through local partners' own network. The China NPO Network, China Association for NGO Cooperation, China Association of Ethnic Economy, Beijing Cultural Communication

Center for Facilitators and Tsinghua University NGO Research Center are all listed as partners in the venture.

TQ, June 2, 2005

Skilled emigrants benefit China, says expert

Around half of all legal emigrants from China to OECD countries are university graduates but, far from amounting to a 'brain drain,' the emigration benefits China by boosting international trade and stimulating higher education in China, according to a World Bank study by a leading economist.

Alan Winters, Professor of Economics at the University of Sussex and also Director of World Bank's Development Research Group presented his findings at a Beijing seminar in June.

The overall flow of emigrants from China is low relative to the total population, he said, with around 1.5 million people legally departing the country each year. This is comparable to the flows from Turkey, India and the Philippines but substantially less than Mexico, the world's current leading exporter of labour, with 6.5 million people leaving each year.

Yet while only 15% of Mexican émigrés have tertiary qualifications, more than half of Chinese émigrés do. The USA, Canada and Australia, whose selective immigration policies give preference to highly skilled emigrants, top the list of destinations for the Chinese.

The loss of some 750,000 Chinese graduates a year is not necessarily a problem for China, argues Professor Winters. Apart from the foreign remittances they send home, he said, a 'diaspora effect'

is associated with 32-60% increases in trade volumes between China and countries where ethnic Chinese account for more than 1% of the total population. Relationship networks and trust are thought to be pivotal to this trade growth.

Less tangible advantages of emigration included incentives for education, whereby the prospect of higher wages and overseas training

stimulate educational attainment. However, the cost of failing to secure more lucrative overseas contracts can also bring about unplanned consequences. Findings also show that increased skill pools can have the effect of bringing down domestic wages.

Data generated by the report suggest that the chance of Chinese emigrants finding a skilled job has increased significantly over the 1990s from around 40% to 50%.

MP, June 20 2005

Animal welfare group lobbies China to vote against Japanese whaling

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) has been lobbying the

government of China to oppose Japanese proposals, put to the International Whaling Commission (IWC), to increase “scientific” whaling and to resume commercial whaling.

Both proposals were rejected at the 57th annual meeting of the IWC, which closed in Korea on June 24. The Chinese government delegation voted for the first proposal and abstained from the latter.

“The Chinese government’s attitude on this issue is still ambiguous,” according to IFAW press officer, He Yong.

In mid- June, a week before the Chinese delegation was dispatched to the IWC meeting, IFAW sent an open letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, urging them to adopt a conservation stance and oppose Japan’s proposals.

IFAW also held an anti-whaling event at Beijing University on June 14. Professor Zhu Qian, a marine mammal biologist from Shandong University, said in a public lecture that Japanese whaling is one of the major threats to global whale populations, alongside marine pollution, ship collisions and accidental damage caused by fishing fleets.

The event was attended by Chinese officials responsible for enforcing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, along with diplomats from anti-whaling

countries such as the UK, Germany and Brazil, and Chinese NGO representatives and activists.

“China as a non-whaling country has a moral obligation to protect marine resources in its oceans and seas,” Grace Ge Gabriel, deputy director of IFAW’s Wildlife and Habitat Protection Department told the attendees. “As China is playing an increasingly important role in the region and around the world politically and economically, China should also take a leadership role in protecting marine wildlife.”

However, China and Russia were among the few big nations to side with Japan in this year’s vote. Since 2000, according to IFAW, the Chinese delegation to the IWC has voted with Japan in 59 out of a total of 60 cases, giving support on key issues such as increased killing of ‘J’ stock minke whales in the East China Sea, and opposing, with Japan, the establishment of a Conservation Committee.

Japan recently proposed to double its whaling quotas, expand its whaling to include other whale species, and conduct whaling in internationally established whale sanctuaries. The country has a long tradition of eating whale meat, of which it is the world’s leading consumer. According to IFAW, over 20,000 tons of whale meat is sold in Japan each year.

Japan halted commercial whaling in 1986 under the International Whaling Commission moratorium but resumed whaling under the guise of a scientific research programme from 1987. Since then, Japan has progressively raised its catch, killing more than 8,000 whales ever since. The humpbacks and fin whales, which are on Japan’s whaling target, have been listed as the most endangered species by the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

TQ June 24, 2005

Conference notebook

Deliberative polling experiment produces lively debate on local democracy

A seminar on public hearing procedures, held in Beijing on July 1, also embraced discussion of recent experiments in 'deliberative democracy,' generating lively discussion among a score of social and political science scholars, researchers from leading Communist Party think tanks, and local Party officials.

After an opening address by a Ministry of Civil Affairs official in charge of rural elections, the seminar turned to discussion of the trend in China towards public hearings for some policy decisions. Public hearings (*tingzheng*) are encouraged by the 2000 Legislation Law to stimulate public participation in policy making and have become "faddish" - in the words of one scholar attending the seminar - among some government agencies. Strikingly, hearings are often used to justify price rises in some public services, and are often referred to sardonically as *zhangjia hui* (price hike meetings).

Some of the assembled experts called for hearings to be better institutionalised - by, for example, making them mandatory rather than merely recommended, and/or by making their findings binding, rather than merely advisory. Others argued for inclusion of a wider range of participants, for greater impartiality of the moderator, greater transparency, and for more information to be disseminated in advance of the hearings.

During the rest of the day, discussion turned to deliberative democracy and its experiments in Wenling Municipality of Zhejiang province. 'Democratic deliberation meetings' (*minzhu kentanhui*) began as early as 1999 in this county-level municipality. These meetings are held with varying degrees of regularity in different townships. Each meeting has a different theme. The objective is for officials to meet members of local communities and discuss problems that the local people raise. This mechanism was

awarded a National Prize for Innovation and Excellence in Local Chinese Governance, conferred by the China Centre for Comparative Politics and Economics (CCCPE), a Beijing-based Communist Party think-tank.

In one township, Zeguo, a more refined system was introduced in April 2005, with technical assistance from Professors James Fishkin of Stanford University and He Baogang of the University of Tasmania, who made presentations at the seminar. They used a 'deliberative polling' scheme devised by Fishkin. A total of 275 people were chosen to select a dozen infrastructure projects, from a shortlist of 30 provided by the local government, which could not afford to fund them all. The representatives were divided into sixteen teams to deliberate over the proposals, then each team elected one spokesperson to present the team's opinion. After a second round of team and plenary discussions, all representatives were asked to individually rank the list of proposals. The resulting list was passed to the township People's Congress for ratification.

He and Fishkin stressed the experiment's flexibility in adapting hearing procedures, its active involvement of participants and the wider representation of the general public than hearings achieve. Officials from Wenling and Zeguo enthusiastically contrasted the eloquence of some of the chosen 'deliberators' - such as an illiterate and normally timid woman - with the typical 'tepidness' of local People's Congress sessions.

The Wenling *minzhu kentanhui* have attracted widespread and positive Chinese media coverage (Ironically, having featured in *Time* magazine and the *New York Times*, Zeguo's novelty is still in obscurity domestically.) Favourable coverage in official media is thought to have helped the *kentanhui* to survive over time, with the experiment enduring through two successive changes in the local administrative leadership. This has added to the confidence of the local advocates for the *kentanhui*, despite residual wariness of potential obstruction from higher levels.

The invited Chinese experts, many of whom are well-known scholars in public policy, were

not easily satisfied. Some pointed out that 130,000 migrant workers in Zeguo (more than the local registered population) were excluded from the deliberative polling process, and so questioned whether the results really reflected the opinion of the whole community. Others noted that the cost of the process was not modest, and so questioned the sustainability of the process and its potential for scaling up. Some participants also cast doubt on the political accuracy of 'polling' as it may cause the "tyranny of the majority," especially when there is a dominant clan (*zongzu*) or ethnic group in the area. The fiercest attack, echoed by many others, came from a specialist on the People's Congress system, who argued that the experiment should be integrated into Chinese political system, in which the People's Congress theoretically represents popular opinion.

Fishkin responded to these criticisms by saying that he has done 'deliberative polling' work at both regional and national levels in several countries, and thus that the mechanism does have potential for scaling up. But he appeared bemused by the criticism vis-à-vis the People's Congress. "We actually strengthened the People's Congress because we presented the results of the process to the People's Congress for approval," he said. But some participants felt that the Zeguo experiment was not sufficiently grounded in the China context and, moreover, added to the tendency for the Peoples Congress to serve as a rubber stamp, rather than strengthening it.

Some participants argued that the local People's Congress is a 'special interest group' of people with power, influence and/or money (*youquan, youshi, youqian*). Acknowledging this charge, one official from Wenling Communist Party Publicity Department was remarkably direct: "We do indeed want to activate the People's Congress because it has collapsed, like a computer," he said.

Following the lead, the People's Congress expert who had led the earlier attack responded that it would have been better to replace the People's Congress deputies with the selected 'deliberators' rather than setting them up in a parallel universe. "Were you going to fire the

People's Congress if they rejected the *kentan* proposals?" he asked rhetorically.

Despite these imponderables, Wenling cadres still felt that their *kentanhui* served better than public hearings as a model of public participation in decision making, because it gave members of the community the initiative in setting the agenda for discussion. Furthermore, they have incorporated the *kentanhui* into the performance evaluation of cadres, who are now expected to hold a certain number of *kentanhui* each year. The system, they say, is intended to create a "balance of power" between the local government and citizens.

Why would they want their power to be balanced? "Power means more trouble [*mafan*] and we have enough," said one cadre. However, both in the heat of public debate and in private conversations, officials from Wenling admitted they had encountered resistance from mid-ranking municipal cadres, and Zeguo officials said other township leaders had frowned on their experiment.

The four officials from Wenling and Zeguo who attended the seminar were acting in their capacity as Communist Party cadres and appeared not even to hold local government posts. Their interventions were exceptionally articulate and candid.

Also notable was the fact that several of the Chinese scholars did not shy away from talking about the practicability of institutionalizing democracy in China, whilst Professor Fishkin spoke exclusively in terms of public participation in decision making processes.

The seminar sponsors were the Unirule Institute, China-Review.com, the University of Tasmania and Deakin University in Australia, and the Stanford University in the USA. A previous meeting on deliberative democracy was held in Hangzhou in 2004 with funding from Ford Foundation.

Report by James Yang, Jul. 5, 2005