



Monitoring Report

Monitoring reference MR-137344.01
Report date 18/11/2010
Project title Promoting Older People s Participation in Development in Rural China

I. Intervention data

Status	FINAL
Monitoring Report Type	Ongoing
Aid Modality	Project approach
Project	Single Country / National Project
Project Management	Project managed by the Delegation (devolved)
Financed via a thematic budget line	No
CRIS Number	C-149087
Project Title according to Financing Agreement/Financing Decision	Promoting Older People s Participation in Development in Rural China
Domain	Development - Non state actors and local authorities Co-financing (PVI)
DAC - CRS Sector	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society
Additional DAC - CRS code	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society
Geographical zone	China
Keyword (for innovative interventions)	Poverty Reduction
Date Financing Agreement/Financing Decision/Contract signed	10/11/2008
Person responsible at HQ	
Person responsible at Delegation	CICCOMARTINO Francesca
Monitor	Geoff Graves
Project Authority	HelpAge International
Type of implementing partner	International NGO/CSOs/Universities (at EU and international level)
Start date - planned	16/02/2009
End date - planned	15/02/2012
Start date - actual	16/02/2009
End date - likely	15/02/2012
Monitoring visit date	from 18/10/2010 to 29/10/2010

II. Financial data

Primary commitment (EC funding)	610,934
Budget allocated for TA	Not Available
Secondary commitment (funds contracted of EC contribution)	610,934
Other funding (government and/or other donors)	203,645
Total budget of operation	814,579
Total EC funds disbursed	340,766
Financial data on	31/08/2010

III. Grading

Relevance and quality of design	A
Efficiency of Implementation to date	B
Effectiveness to date	B
Impact prospects	A
Potential sustainability	B

IV. Summary of conclusions

Relevance and quality of design

The project builds on a previous EC programme, “Poverty Alleviation for Older People and Their Communities in Western China” (ONG-PVD/2002/019-913) and the experiences and relationships developed therein. It was developed by Help Aged International (HAI) in consultation with Ageing Policy Makers and practitioners at Chinese National Committee on Ageing (CNCA), Shaanxi Province Committee on Ageing (SPCA), and County Committees on Ageing [CCA] with participation from the Health and Poverty Reduction Committees. The Overall Objective of the Pilot Project is to “Reduce poverty and improve health in rural China through partnerships between Local Authorities and Non State Actors” with the Specific Objective of “Strengthening the capacity of older people-led associations and Local Authorities to reduce poverty and improve health care provision in 16 villages of Shaanxi Province, and enhance partner capacity to replicate”. The strategy, which is well articulated in the Log frame, works to develop capacities of Old People’s Associations at village level through establishing capacities at the interlocutory (CCA/SPCA) institution level. The project design slightly under estimated the difficulties of identifying resources and establishing capacities to address these substantive areas in an appropriately participatory manner but this has been reviewed and is not causing any difficulties. The project demonstrates one innovative set of approaches and techniques that address the ageing, gender and poverty issues that have resulted, in part, from the confluence of the One Child Policy and rural impoverishment/urban migration. This is a major policy concern for the Chinese Government, hence their central role in project governance. It is also a deeply personal challenge for the growing population of old people who find themselves guardians of their grand children, dependent on varying remittance payments from their children, and facing all the medical issues associated with ageing. HAI is bringing in its experience with ageing populations in other countries around the region and working with the government agencies such that new capacities are established- thus addressing the other key issue of expansion and sustainability.

Efficiency of Implementation to date

The project is well run, and supported both by the Regional management of the implementing NGO, Help Aged International (HAI) and by the project management committee which includes representation from CNCA, SPCA, and CCA’s. Extensive support (offices, cars, and letters of authority) is also provided and the close coordination between HelpAged and staff at all levels enables effective implementation of critical resources. Notwithstanding this support, finding suitably skilled HR resources took more time than expected, but a good cadre is now in place. The Chinese programme manager is a definite asset and he has a central role in navigating the institutional and community sensibilities and ensuring progress with the various tasks however the dependence of the program on one key player is a definite risk.

Eighteen months from the projected end of the 3 year project, a coherent flow of inputs is effectively delivering sustainable outputs across a range of substantive issues. Trained facilitators from key bodies are engaging with the Aged Population, and assisting targeted Old People’s Associations (OPAs) to complete their own village assessments and poverty ranking processes-enabling the OPA to distribute livelihoods assets to 491 (of the intended 1080) objectively identified poorest members of the OPA and their households who benefit from the provision of livelihoods assets. 76 (of the intended 96) OPA leaders have been trained in 12 (of the intended 16) villages originally targeted. On the Health front, Village “doctors” (community health workers) have received 2 trainings in ageing specific clinical issues and health seeking behaviours (diet, exercise, etc) and are now equipped and enabled to address the needs of this population through village meetings and screenings. The project directly paid for medical check-ups for all 943 members of the tranche of the aged population not covered by Local Govt support (ie aged 60-64). The balance was checked out but not from this program. While there are opportunities for the livelihoods component of the program (asset provision, inter alia) to enable sustainable poverty reduction/economic development measures and thus enable the target population to pay for their own health checkups and bridge the cost barrier to Healthcare on their own, this

connection is not formally recognised. Replication (Result 5) is happening in a relatively organic, unstructured way with lessons shared at the grassroots level. Improving this will be the focus of the second half of the program. At this juncture, the project management is reasonably confident of reaching the targets set and is shifting consideration to the extension and sustainability aspects.

Effectiveness to date

This project pilots some possible policy and practical methods of addressing issues resulting from the confluence of the consequences of the One Child Policy, migration and poverty. The strengthening of the OPAs – through the increased capacities at local (and regional, and national) level has shown the potential benefits of poverty reduction measures amongst this section of society and the positive clinical and psychosocial impacts of mobilisation of this population into empowered Associations. The connections and passage of valuable information to policy maker level provides another layer of added value, and indicates some, if not all, of the lessons learned will carry over to into the policy debate and wider implementation.

Impact prospects

This project pilots some possible policy and practical methods of addressing critical issues facing the Chinese government and people. To that end it is providing valuable information at policy maker level, and delivering solid impacts to the targeted sections of the poor and vulnerable population of China.

The OVs and targets are sound, and are expected to be met or exceeded in most cases. What will remain challenging is the extension of lessons learned into the wider policy arena at the national level - and the sustainable expansion of programmatic initiatives at the local level. The health benefits are valuable at both a clinical and psycho-social level; similarly the project's poverty reduction measures are also felt beyond the immediate economic aspects.

As a thematic programme, this project is not considered by the usual Central Government department directing external donor participation but is controlled by the External Affairs department of the Chinese National Committee on Ageing - which is represented on the Project Advisory Committee.

Potential sustainability

The inverted demographic distribution of population caused by the One Child Policy has huge ramifications throughout the social and economic fabric of China. While this project is a pilot and is demonstrating one set of policy and practical alternatives that has minimal external resource requirements (except, perhaps for the paying for the health screenings), there are some costs, and multiplying them by the ever increasing ageing population may have enormous budgetary impact. Other potential policy changes may have minimal or positive budgetary costs- e.g. the mobilisation of the peasant class into rural small holders, with access to local savings and loans programs.

The programming of the expansion/replication and phase out strategy is not well articulated but is generally understood by stakeholders and will be a focus of the second half of the project. However the project is well embedded with the Village, County, Provincial and National organisations, many of which are committees with membership of other critical structures (e.g. Health and Poverty committees) so there is every expectation that this will be effectively designed and managed. The relatively low levels of literacy of final beneficiaries, and the absolute novelty of engaging peasants in the design and implementation of a project to meet their needs, indicates the size of the “developmental challenge” before all partners can be said to be fully competent to deliver all of the projects benefits and services. HAI is committed and funded to support and follow up activities in the project area. It is thus able to maintain its engagement and support of partners at all levels beyond the life of the program.

Key observations and recommendations

This is a well designed and implemented initiative appreciated by the beneficiaries and responding well to the social issues facing China at the moment.

It is recommended:

HelpAged: (i) Review the future needs and budget/redesign the program and reassign available funds for the second half of the program, specifically with regard to the need for staff addressing replicability and sustainability. This may remain within the 15% budget parameter and not need an addendum but should be discussed in advance with the ECDEL (ii) Re-cast the asset provision programme as a holistic poverty reduction/economic development program and incorporate a wider range of Economic Development strategies

(micro savings and loans, entrepreneurial training, etc) to enable broader success and impact (iii) Strengthen the engagement with the government committees associated with Ageing and Health, Poverty, inter alia (iv) Develop a strategy to formally bring the lessons learned from these committees into the programme- e.g. a) enable the inclusion of the strategies developed by the provincial Poverty Reduction Committees that enables the establishment of community level savings and loans programs whilst remaining within the banking regulatory framework and b) enable the lessons learned about the value of psycho-social programs (as well as the clinical programs) to be spread from village doctor to village doctor through peer to peer extension programs).

EC delegation: Should an Addendum be required, to consider such a variation favourably.