



Impact of SPRC Research to Date

From 2000–2015, SPRC research projects contributed significantly to policy developments and government reforms in China. This research, along with collaborative research projects led by other key organisations, has had significant direct and indirect impact on child welfare.

2001–2003

Research Project

The first national research project on alternative care for orphans, “Children in Institutional and Other Forms of Alternative Care,” commissioned by UNICEF and the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The research demonstrated significant improvements for children when they live with foster families rather than in an institution.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government issued Temporary Regulation Over Foster Care and accepted foster care as one of the main forms of alternative care for orphans.

Impact

20,000 orphans nationwide were moved from institutions and placed in foster care families.

2000

Research Project

“A Rethink of Social Welfare and Social Security” project commissioned by the Bureau of Social Welfare and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Civil Affairs. This project proposed an alternative framework for welfare, based on an early intervention and prevention model.

Contributed to Government Action

The theoretical framework of the research was accepted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Impact

The goal of progressing towards a moderate universal welfare system in China was set.

2000

2001

Research Project

“Social Security Reform in the People’s Republic of China” commissioned by the Asian Development Bank and the Department for International Development, UK. This research proposed the introduction of a social security system, starting with minimum income support, for people who are the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government expanded coverage of minimum income support.

Impact

22 million people living in poverty were supported by the new reforms.

2000

2002

Research Project

“Social Development Consultancy to Assess the Development of Foster Care Policy in Shanghai,” commissioned by the Department for International Development, UK. The Shanghai Model proved to be an effective, well integrated and resourced model that demonstrated quality foster care with good outcomes for children and families.

Contributed to Government Action

The Ministry of Civil Affairs replicated the Shanghai Model in other parts of China.

Impact

Guidelines for quality foster care in China improved outcomes for orphans across the country.

2001

2003

2004-2006

Research Project

“Defining the Adequate Role of the State and Family in Child Protection: Estimating Costs of Relative Foster Care in Rural China”, funded partly by the Australian Research Council. The first national census of orphans in China in order to determine the true magnitude of the problem. It was discovered that 400,000 orphans lived in kinship care and 100,000 orphans lived in orphanages. Of this half a million orphans, most received no social assistance.

Contributed to Government Action

President Hu Jintao took action; 15 Ministries and National Committees jointly issued the new recommended policy and established the first Department of Child Welfare.

Impact

Provinces started to provide social assistance to over 150,000 orphans.

2006

Research Project

“Education for Migrant Children in China”, commissioned by the Asian Foundation. Over 200 million migrant workers moved from the country to the city seeking work to survive. Children of these migrant families were not able to access education in the city, which also meant that many were left behind in rural villages in the care of extended family.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government changed policy to enable migrant children to access education.

Impact

20 million children are able to stay with their families and access education in the city.

2004

2005

2006

Research Project

“Creating an Inclusive Social Environment for Vulnerable Children: Child Protection in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region,” commissioned by the Australia-China Council.

Contributed to Government Action

Chinese government implemented policy to financially support Muslim extended families to care for orphaned children.

Impact

Children were transferred from institutional care to foster care, enabling them to stay in their cultural communities.

2003

2005

Research Project

“The Needs of AIDS Infected and Affected Children in China”, commissioned by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and UNICEF. Whole villages are affected by HIV due to poor blood collection practices, with many children also at risk of infection and no family care. It highlighted the benefit of community based interventions that supported the specific needs of these vulnerable children.

Contributed to Government Action

Local governments provided social assistance to HIV affected children. In 2012, the Ministry of Finance extended the orphan allowance to children affected by HIV.

Impact

HIV infected children received support from the government and civil society organisations.

2006-2009

Research Project

“Developing An Effective System Of Child Protection In China”, funded by the Australian Research Council and Save the Children UK. This research hallmarks a major transition point and the start of the development of an evidence base to inform effective child protection policy. Guided by culturally appropriate social policy, the research analysed questions of what is the real need and the context in which a child protection system is to be established.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government and civil society saw this research as the start of an evidence base, a foundation for discussion and policy development.

2007-2009

Research Project

“Social Assistance for Orphans in China: Situation Analysis on Children without Caregivers, Children with Disabilities, and Street Children in China”, commissioned by UNICEF and Ministry of Civil Affairs. This research focused on the financial implications and considerations for implementation of an accessible and culturally appropriate social assistance system across China.

Contributed to Government Action

Recommendations were accepted by the President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to implement orphan allowances nationwide.

Impact

Provinces received funding from the government. 250,000 children received the orphan allowance in the first year, and half a million orphans in the following year.

2010

Research Project

“Multi-dimensional Child Welfare Survey in Five Provinces”, commissioned by UNICEF and Ministry of Civil Affairs. A pilot study evaluating the outcomes of vulnerable children receiving welfare services in conjunction with financial assistance.

Contributed to Government Action

The government is currently considering policy reform.

Impact

80,000 children in the pilot areas in these five provinces have had significantly better outcomes.

2007

2008

2009

2010

Research Project

“Experiences of families of children with disabilities in China”, commissioned by Plan International and funded partially by the Australian Research Council. The research demonstrated that children with disabilities were not eligible for social or financial assistance, which aggravated the rate of abandoned children.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government moved to a children’s rights framework for policy development for children with disabilities.

Impact

Some provinces implemented financial support and services based on rights based policies.

2008

Research Project

“Situation Analysis on Children Without Caregivers, Children with Disabilities and Street Children”, commissioned by UNICEF. This research informed the broader social policy proposal, which provided evidence to define the scope of the problem in China.

Contributed to Government Action

The Chinese government considered this research as critical in building the evidence base for informed future policy decisions.

Impact

Ministry commitment to address the needs of vulnerable children.

2007

2012

Research Project

"Transition of young people with disability from institutional care in China" commissioned by the Australia Research Council and Le Yi Hui Consulting. The research tested whether socioeconomic outcomes are different for young people who had foster care compared to institutional care.

Contributed to Government Action

The results changed institutionalisation practices to preference for foster care.

Impact

Vocation, education and housing transition practices for the 50,000 children leaving care.

2014

Research Project

"Protecting sexually abused children in China" is funded by the Australia Research Council and Beijing Children's Legal Aid and Research.

Contributed to Government Action

Chinese government drafted new regulations and new legal practice to deal with cases of child sexual abuse, such as the first case of removing parents' guardianship from a girl sexually abused by her father. A research project investigator was directly involved in these changes.

Impact

Will inform government child protection legislation.

2011

2012

2013

2014

Research Project

"The Living Conditions of Children Without Care Givers and Policy Suggestions", commissioned by the Ministry of Civil Affairs. This research evaluated the living conditions and outcomes of other groups of vulnerable children across China. The primary recommendation was to extend the orphan allowance implemented in 2007 to other vulnerable children.

Contributed to Government Action

Recommendations have been accepted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and are currently under consideration by the Ministry of Finance.

Impact

If the policy is implemented, 710,000 vulnerable children will benefit across China.

2013

Research Project

"How to finance child welfare system in China" in partnership with UNICEF, Ministry of Finance in China.

Contributed to Government Action

Four Chinese provinces have commenced the vulnerable children's allowance, for children without parents as bread earners and main care givers. Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs is taking initiative to apply the new policy nationwide.

Impact

Over 100,000 children have already benefited in four provinces, with potentially over 600,000 children to benefit in future.

2011