



FACTOR-INWENTASH
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Sichuan Earthquake Disaster Response Round Table

Professor A. Ka Tat Tsang
Director, China Project

Thursday, June 12, 2008



Current Faculty Initiatives in Response to Sichuan Earthquake

- Direct response to requests for consultation and training (e.g. from Tsinghua University Medical School)
- Facilitates knowledge transfer by collecting, organizing, and circulating manuals and protocols for various forms of emergency and/or crisis intervention
- Liaises with colleagues involved in disaster relief in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Toronto
- Develops long-term strategy not only for emergency relief but also the re-development of community capacity, through extensive consultation with researchers and practitioners



Updates from Sichuan – From Mr. Dao Yu Pei, Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs (information provided by Professor Joe Leung, Former Head of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong)

- The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) has been overwhelmed with offers to help from across the nation and internationally
- Some local Civil Affairs Departments are in urgent need of coordination
- The MCA needs to rationally plan ahead rather than reacting to offers to help emotionally
- The Central government is match-making provinces providing help and local regions in Sichuan



Updates from Sichuan – From Mr. Dao Yu Pei, Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs (information provided by Professor Joe Leung, Former Head of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong) (cont'd)

State-led relief work in Sichuan

- Is currently conducting a needs assessment (confirmed 300 – 400 children without relatives, lack of offers to help older and disabled people)
- Focuses on providing essential materials to victims (e.g. food, water, medical care)
- Needs professional, experienced volunteers
- Needs to train up community cadres to handle community rebuilding



Sharing of Experiences

“將捐款引導向長期重建是災後一個月應該要趕快進行的規劃。因為救災團體很快就會撤離，災民生計問題沒有解決，住屋重建沒有著落，自殺潮很快會湧現。民間團體會開始認養災區，但沒有被報導的災區會被遺忘，資源分配的不平均會造成災民的二度創傷。中央規劃的重建政策常常無法落實到社區，因此建立執行政策的在地服務網絡是很重要的規劃，民間組織在這部分很可以補足政府官僚的運作，這也是我在九二一地震幫地方政府作的最主要的規劃。我認為支持國內民間組織投入重建，我們提供經驗分享或者財務支持，是我們可以作的事情。外來的力量介入過多反而適得其反。”

-- Professor Frank T.Y. Wang, Ph.D. (Toronto), Assistant Professor at the National Yang Ming University, Taiwan and a leading Taiwanese scholar/practitioner involved in the post-9/21 Taiwan earthquake re-building



Sharing of Experiences

“心理界的口号就是“汶川地震心理干预20年”，所以各界在努力策划 整个中国心理干预现在蛮混乱，中央没有牵头人，多数是和教委、各部委下去。还有很多没有受训的心理咨询员自发去了灾区，成为灾区的‘次生灾害’。” – *From the China Psychology Sector Crisis and Disaster Psychological Assistance Project, Beijing*

- A call for long-term commitment to the psychological well-being of earthquake survivors
- Current psychological intervention initiatives in China are in need of coordination and leadership



Future Challenges – A Capacity Building Perspective

- Building community capacity as a key direction, in order to create local infrastructure for
 1. Contingent and responsive services with regard to changing local needs
 2. Development of community capacity:
 - Local economy
 - Community infrastructure (i.e. school, transportation, stores, health clinics)
 - Coping strategies and skills, volunteer training, and indigenous leadership development



Future Challenges – A Capacity Building Perspective (Cont'd)

3. To create local infrastructure (e.g. community resource centre) for
 - (i) Mobilization of material resources
 - investment in re-development and community capacity-building
 - reliable and effective use of donated funds and supplies
 - (ii) Development of professional service capacity through training and consultation
 - (iii) Facilitation of government responsiveness to community needs, including consultation and advocacy



Resources

- Resources available at FIFSW: Manuals and practice protocols (in Chinese) on children's mental health, community re-building, disaster medicine, group work in crisis intervention, bereavement, intervention for older adults
- Contact Information
The China Project
Email: chinaproject.fsw@utoronto.ca
Website: www.chinaprojectsite.com
- <http://www.512jiuyuan.cn/>
<http://sc512.sw.hku.hk>
<http://www.careforsichuan.org>



Discussion



Photo courtesy of Steve Shi