

Local services and facilities and elderly friendly residential neighbourhoods

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This project is funded by ASSA-CASS Joint Action Program. The purpose of the research was to establish the status quo for making communities friendly to older people in China and Australia, and identify future directions for research collaboration between the researchers from ANU and CASS.

Research activities

The central part of this research was for the three researchers Bingqin Li, Yi Pan and Wenbo Zhang to visit stakeholders in China and Australia who are working directly in the field of facilitating active aging. The funding of the research covered site trips to four Chinese cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu and Hangzhou) and two Australian cities (Melbourne and Canberra).

- In China, our site trips focused on how services were set up at community level through various forms of collaboration between local governments and other stakeholders. In Beijing, we interviewed officers from National Elderly Association under the Office of the National Committee on Ageing. This helped us to understand China's policy framework and the history of China's engagement with the international community on protecting the rights and interests of older people. The three cities have distinctive governing features:
 - Shanghai has a longer history (since the late 1990s) of engaging with non-government sectors for providing community based services. The local government works closely together with social organisations to improve capacity.
 - Hangzhou highlights the role of the private sector and at the same time have a strong top-down approach for local governments to meet clearly defined targets. Social organisations play a marginal role.
 - Chengdu is a late comer in terms of community service provision for older people and there are limited pilot schemes. However, the communities take advantage of the legacy of giant state enterprise-based residential neighbourhood setups, and have arranged neighbour support to older people which would be difficult to achieve in cities like Shanghai and Hangzhou.
- In Australia, the discussions during our visits focused on the understanding of older people friendly communities and cities and their governing structure at local level as there is only a weak framework at the federal government level and variable commitment from State to State. We visited community centres and different forms of seniors' homes in Canberra and Melbourne run by local government and not-for-profit organisations funded through State governments or the federal Home Support Program (previously the Home and Community Care Program). We also participated in the Aged Friendly Communities Conference organised by the Victorian Local Government Association and had the opportunity to listen to stakeholders presenting their roles and experience in developing age friendly communities. This was a very useful event which allowed us to meet many local actors and gained understanding of the range of activities and planning initiatives involved.

Research findings:

1. To do this research, we have reviewed a large number of reports and papers published in Australia and in China to understand the status quo of research in both countries. Throughout the research period, we had consulted our advisers from Australia and other researchers in China. We decided not to focus on defining old age friendly communities and what types of services should be provided, as these would involve technical understanding of older people's needs which were beyond the expertise of the researchers. After all, there had been rich studies by researchers in other disciplinary areas. Instead, our focus was on the governance of age friendly community and the governance of social services for older people as these fields have been poorly covered in research. This is the key area to which public policy and social policy researchers can effectively contribute. As our field trips revealed that the knowledge transfer of old-age friendly products, designs and planning ideas had been widely exchanged outside the academic circle between practitioners in the two countries. In particular, Australia has hosted many Chinese visitors. These visitors are working at different levels of decision makings in China. However, as they are from individual sectors or professions, their interests of learning are primarily sector-specific or profession-specific. The missing link is quite clear. As we repeatedly came across during our field trip, an idea considered to be good in another country may not function well in China, or an abandoned practice in another country became well received in China. This is often attributed to differences in the stage of development in the existing literature. However, this is difficult to explain why similar practices work differently in different cities in China either. The answer as we see it lies in the much less studied governance structure (nature of the networks and the ways stakeholders interact with each other: coordinate, compete or collaborate). Academic researchers would be particularly well positioned to carry out system analysis like this which would be able to stand beyond organisational interests and capture the inter-relationship between stake-holders.
2. Identification of four major themes and similarities and differences between Australia and China
 - a. In the Chinese context, the key governance issue is **how to build up and run a social service system**, including public facilities, to allow older people to live an independent life. There was only a limited care and support system for older people in the Central Planning era, , and this collapsed as the housing allocation based on work units was ended in the late 1990s. Now the government is building a new social service system in residential neighbourhoods. The service centres would not only be easily accessible as day cares or activity centres for older residents, but also a centre for bridging resources from different sources, in which the state is only one of them. So far, the policies are only at the pilot stage in 13 cities in China. The pilot cities are encouraged to adopt different models for the sake of identifying best practices. This means the Central Government is not yet certain which way to go and is keen to discover innovative approaches. Local governments consider community-based service delivery and partnership with social organisations "hot spots" for policy innovation and cost reduction. It may also help to alleviate the tension between governments and the general public. Therefore, they are particularly active in developing local finance and governance practices that would outshine other local governments in the country. However, this means that the practices vary greatly across the country. While the Australian system is now more embedded in the existing practices which try to combine resources and expertise to build on what is already available, and basic services are available to a larger proportion of the population, the early period of the Home and Community Care Program promoted similar experimentation to advance on the rudimentary services that existed in the early 1980s. The service system is now more established and stable, but innovation is still encouraged, and a major change currently being implemented is the adoption of Consumer Directed Care models.
 - b. The main difficulty in the Chinese system as we have observed is capacity building in the **non-state sector**. There is severe shortage of qualified social workers, and shortage of experienced social organisations that can offer quality professional services. Many services for older people are new to China. Social organisations are good at identifying needs but not necessarily good at meeting the needs. They are not yet able to win trusts of the local residents. As a result, the government fund-holders started to function as "nannies" to monitor the service providers

closely or set rigid targets for them to achieve. This practice however changes the nature of “partnership”. So far, what we can see is that some social organisations can hardly survive without government support. The prospective of them taking over the services and function as independent service providers when they are supposed to “graduate” from the government run incubators is grim. In Australia, service providers either state run or run by NPOs, are clearly better qualified. They maintained much higher quality of services and enjoyed a lot more freedom than the Chinese NPOs. There are also formal structures governing funding and reporting relationships between providers and all levels of government. It has to be emphasised that virtually no service providers in the ‘non-state’ sector operate without financial and administrative support from government.

3. Despite the increasing service provision in China, there is a concern that increased social services would reduce **children’s sense of responsibility** towards their elder parents. Therefore, we can observe various initiatives to engage parent-children relationship within the social work system. For example, electing best households in which adult children are taking good care of their older parents, or in some Shanghai neighbourhoods, children are expected to pick up their disabled parents from the day care centres. Some services such as community kitchens seem to have become less popular in Australia these days largely due to higher standards of living, household equipment and food technology. However, in China it is one of the most important services provided by the community centres. The food was heavily subsidised. Older people were encouraged to have meals in these communal kitchens. The main concern was not about taking over house chores or lowering living costs for the older people, but rather about encouraging them to socialise with other people on a daily basis which are considered important to prevent development of dementia. After all, the Chinese urban neighbourhoods have very high density which makes it possible for these kitchens to sell good quality food at low price and still break even. A key difference that needs to be recognised here is the much higher living standards of older Australians and that the majority do not live with adult children.
4. Issues related to aging society in China are against the backdrop of some **major social and political transitions occurring in China** at this time.
 - a. The major institutional transition to develop community based services is part of the intention to change the role of the grass-roots government agencies from social controller to service providers. In Australia, the role of local government has varied over time and between States, but it continues to have a strong role.
 - b. The introduction of social organisations to provide social services and encourage the local governments to be managers. This change has several considerations: to limit local governments’ direct provision of professional services, to encourage non-government sectors and to encourage participation; and change the way local services are funded. In Australia, the non-government sector is long established and operates in a dynamic partnership with all levels of government that has undergone many changes over the last four decades and longer.
 - c. The search for new growth strategies. After the financial crises, China is in serious need for a new “growth engine” that can inspire technological and service innovations and sustain growth and high employment. Industries that can help to cope with the pressure of aging society are identified as one of these sectors. The policy makers so far do not treat aging society as a threat. On the contrary, it is largely considered a new opportunity for developing new technologies and products, for producing new housing market arrangements, and for generating new service sector jobs. Therefore, a series of new policies were introduced in the last several months to push for further developments in the fields of home-based retirement, community-based service provision and real-estate developments for older population. There are a lot of visible actions in the field. However, as we have established in our research, governance is still a serious issue. Failing to establish a governance structure that will help long term capacity building, the current changes would be no more than a short lived political

campaign, and the government's intention to develop an "industry" would be difficult to realise. As a result, how to deal with the challenges of aging society, how to establish a sustainable service system and understand the impact of different modes of governance would be crucial for the policy changes in the near future. In Australia, the better economic climate means that the potential of 'ageing industries' has not received sustained attention.

Limitation to the research

It is important to note that the sites we have visited in China are all parts of the national pilot schemes, which means that these are all good examples one way or another. They offer rich information and can offer some controls over our analyses. However, we do not feel confident that we fully understand the more serious problems and challenge the non-piloting cities or communities are facing. The experience of these places would have important implications as they may be crucial to understand the critical features in the governing structure to make things work. Improvements can be made in our future studies.

Research output:

We have so far two papers written:

1. Li, B. "The network transition of human services for older people in China." This paper has been presented at The International Sino-Nordic Seminar on Ageing Welfare and Social policy jointly hosted by CASS and Sino-Nordic Welfare Research Network (SNoW), Beijing 20th-21st June, 2015; and the Annual conference of Social Welfare Association of Taiwan, 17-18 May 2015.
2. Pan, Y. and Zhang, W. "Comparisons of the old age service system in Australia and China". This paper was presented at The International Sino-Nordic Seminar on Ageing Welfare and Social policy jointly hosted by CASS and Sino-Nordic Welfare Research Network (SNoW) , Beijing 20th-21st June, 2015

Because the conferences required us to present the papers in Chinese, the two papers are all written in Chinese. We have produced PPT in English. We received some useful feedbacks from the referees and we are going to translate the papers into English and submit them for publication in good quality international journals.

Future development:

This research helped us to establish a very clear direction for our future research. We will continue to carry out research in this field. We have secured further funding from UNRISD and CASS to carry out fieldwork in another three cities in China (Guiyang, Taicang and Xiamen) in which community-based service provision for older people is an important part. Our research collaborator in Taiwan is also trying to explore funding opportunities from Taiwan to collaborate with us for this research in the future.

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Appendices: Site visit schedules

1. Shanghai

Time	Location	Work Content
16 Oct, 2014	Arrival	Pick up at the airport Simple dinner
17 Oct, 2014	Communities	Morning: Jiangning Lejing Jiayuan Older People Dining Service Station Address: No. 43, 545 Lane, Changde Road Contact person: Xiaohua Li Focus group with staff members from the Civil Affairs Bureau, Jiangning Community Office, and the Director of Leling Jiayuan Service Station
		Lunch at the dining hall
		Afternoon: Site visit to Daycare Centre for Older People in Xinhua Street, Changning District Address: 480 Lane, Fahuazhen Road, Shanghai Contact person: Yin Hui Dinner: Simple dinner with Shanghai Old Age Commission, interview the Director
18 Oct, 2014		Morning and afternoon: Pudong Weifang Community, Aizhaohu Care Home and Community Service Centre and Older Care Technology Social Enterprise Incubator Dinner and interview with Officer from Shanghai Civil Affairs Bureau Bingqin Li visited New Shanghai Garden Villa and interviewed local residents
10 Oct, 2014		Bingqin Li met with Travel Representative for Government Training programs on age friendly city, Ms Li Depart for Hangzhou in the afternoon

2. Hangzhou

Time	Meeting Location	Activities
22-Oct-14	Zhejiang Province Civil Affairs Bureau Old Age Task Department, Mr. Zhou Shipping; officers from District Civil Affairs Bureau	
9:15-10:10	Yanganxiang Older Care Service Centre, Yanshanhe Community, Beishan Street	Focus group discussion

10:10-11:10	Gudang Street Elder Care Comprehensive Service Centre (Service Centre, Older people friendly street, Older people day care centre)	Field trip
11:30-12:30	District social welfare centre	Focus group discussion
14:30-15:30	Waiwutong Village, Home Care Service Centre, Zhuantang Street	Field trip
15:45-17:00	Xioashufang Village, Shuangpu Town Older Care Service Centre	Field trip
23-Oct-14		
9:30-10:00	Gudang Street Da'ai Home (Jinyue Lane) Community Social Organisation Service Centre— Alzheimer's disease Awareness Service	Field trip
10:10-12:30	Jiangcun Street Jingdu Community Older Care Service Centre	Focus group and field trip

3. Canberra, Tuesday October 28th, 2014.

Time	Meeting Location	Attending
9.00-10.00	Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, Seminar Room 1 Please come to Foyer, Crawford School, Lennox Crossing. Parking: some spaces may be available in parking area opposite Crawford School (near Child Care Centre)	Crawford School: Assoc Prof Bingqin Li, Prof Adrian Kay; Dr Alison Oakleigh, Dr Anna Howe Invited: ACT Community Services Directorate: Jancye Winter, Nic Manakis, Anne Moroney, Anna Chikali-Westcott , Fiona Muir. Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing: TBA ACT Environment and Planning Directorate: Kristin Blume, Tim Wyatt, Jessica Lintern, Sonya Moser, Catherine Keirnan.
10.00-10.30	Morning tea	Territory and Municipal Services Directorate: Ben McHugh, Michael Jollon. Heart Foundation ACT: Anthony Burton
	15 min travel to Dickson 10.30-10.45	
10.45-12.00	Northside Community Care 2 Rosevear Place (off Antill St)	Kate Cvetanovski, Executive Director Ken Horsham, Chair of Board

	Dickson	Other staff from community programs including Men's Shed.
	15 min travel to Ainslie 12.00-12.15	
12.15 -1.15	Goodwin Homes, Ainslie 35 Bonney St, Ainslie Lunch at Lifestyle Club Café	Jim Purcell, Manager
	30 min travel to Harrison 1.15-1.45	
1.30-2.30	Gungaderra Homestead CHC (Creating Housing and Communities) Affordable Housing Project Mapleton Ave, Harrison.	Craig Brennan, CEO, CHC Affordable Housing
	30 min travel time to Belconnen 2.30-3.00	
3.00-4.00	Illawarra Retirement Trust Kangara Waters Retirement Village Aikmann Drive, Belconnen. Return to ANU.	Margaret Thornton, Director Other staff involved in Age Friendly projects

4. Melbourne

MELBOURNE		Travel to Melbourne late Tues or early Wed		
1. 29, Oct	All day	Age Friendly Communities Conference	Arts Centre, St Kilda Road, Melbourne	We give lunch time presentation— contact person: Jan Bruce
2.	4.30 – 5.30 pm	Melbourne University Centre for Public Policy /Brotherhood of St Laurence Brotherhood Office in Fitzroy	Prof Simon Biggs	To discuss possible research partnership and roles in further development of proposal
3. 30, Oct	9.00 –	Age Friendly	Arts Centre, St Kilda Road,	Talk to local government officials, NGOs and Volunteer groups—re the

	3.30	Communities Conference	Melbourne	governance of age-friendly communities
4. 31, Oct	10.00-11.00	Victorian Department of Health 12.01Conference (R18) 50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne	Jeannine Jacobson	To discuss the Positive Ageing and Age Friendly initiatives and Home and Community Care Program, including role of Local Government in development and delivery of these initiatives
	11.30 – 1.30	City of Manningham Manningham Centre 699 Doncaster Rd, Doncaster (03) 9840 9333 (to include light lunch)	Keri Keneally	Manningham is an Age Friendly City Focus on governance and development of age friendly initiatives, especially role of Seniors Reference Group
	1.30-2.30	Site visit: Manningham Activity Centre for older people	Keri Keneally	

5. Chendu

Time	Location	Activities
9-Dec-14		
13:00-14:00	Longzhoulu Neighbourhood Care Centre for Older and Disabled People, Jinjiang District—government owned in old neighbourhood	Discuss community service reform—focus group
14:30-16:30	Xiangshuhui Older People Care Centre (zhangzhe zhuangu zhongxin)—State subsidised private run in private ownership community	Discuss funding forms and service provision—fieldtrip and interview with manager
17:00	Nuanchao Renjia Care Centre (Care home for seriously disabled old people)—state subsidised private run	Discuss funding forms and service provision—fieldtrip and interview with manager
10-Dec-14		
10:00-12:00	Wuhou District Government Office	Discuss community service reform—focus group discussion
12:30-14:30	Yulin Neighbourhood Yulin East Road Community Centre—government –in state owned enterprise old residential neighbourhoods for employees	Discuss home-based elderly support and activities Interviewed residents and neighbourhood officials