July 2016

This issue of the ICSW Global Cooperation Newsletter is being published in the wake of the Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development, held from 27 to 30 June in Seoul, Republic of Korea. The Conference, convened by the three partner organizations -- International Association of the Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) -- brought together 2,581 participants from 83 countries, who in total made 1,540 presentations addressing the priority theme of the Conference, namely, "Promoting the Dignity and Worth of People". Apart from the Conference, the ICSW has also convened its General Assembly and the Board meetings.

The outcome document of the Conference, the Seoul Declaration, prepared by the partner organizations and adopted by acclamation, is published in this edition of the Newsletter.

The present edition of the Newsletter also continues a recently established tradition of highlighting regional activities of ICSW-affiliated national member organizations. This time we are profiling the North-East Asia region, where the Joint World Conference was held. That part of the world is well known for some spectacular economic achievements by several countries and territories located in the region. We deem it important also to bring to the attention of our readership some interesting experiences and practices from the region, as described by some participants of the Conference

The Editor

Seoul Declaration from IASSW, ICSW & IFSW

The three partner organisations dealing with social policy, social work and social work education are committed to the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development in promoting a just and inclusive world and a sustainable environment in harmony with communities.

We started our work together three days ago, sharing the outcome of our second report of the Global Agenda. The priority theme of respect and dignity for all people highlighted that involving the people with whom we work in the initial planning phase, using the principle of co-production, is critical in helping people achieve positive change in their lives.

Social Justice is achieved when the person or the people at the centre of that quest for social justice agree this has been achieved, not when the standard is imposed from outside by politicians, commissions or the media. We have to be clear in answering the question 'whose social justice are we seeking?'

We believe that human dignity is upheld when people have at least the basic income, are well nourished and have decent housing; when education and medical care are available to all and when social policies focus on providing adequate and secure livelihoods. As social workers, social development practitioners and educators we believe that human dignity is upheld when gender equality becomes a reality and the uneven burden of care giving on women and girls is at a minimum reduced.

As we move into the third pillar of the Global Agenda we add another theme to our portfolio of building a more just and inclusive world.

Embedded in human rights and social justice, which includes environmental justice, the three organisations recognise that people and the planet are both important for sustainable development. As stakeholders we should respond to environmental impacts, in its widest definition, in a manner that would promote sustainable communities and save our planet.

There is a need for social work and social development theories and models that respond to disasters by challenging structural injustices, advocating for peoples' socio-economic rights, influencing policies that affect them, and holding multinational corporations and governments accountable for adopting and implementing low-carbon strategies. It requires a political agenda within a human rights-based framework, and a holistic model which is rooted in social, economic and environmental justice.

We acknowledge the role of the global partnership of the three organisations in preparing social workers, their educators and social-development practitioners for promoting harmony between the environment and communities to ensure a sustainable future for both humanity and planet earth.

We express concern about the rising inequalities, rising xenophobia and social exclusion across the world as globalization in its neoliberal guise deprives people of hope, decent paid employment, housing, education and health-care services. This constitutes a violation of people's rights, dignity and worth.

We urge the governments of all countries to work with all of us to ensure that these basic human rights are met.

Approaching a Better World for All: Experience and Challenges in Poverty Alleviation in North-East Asia Region

While the North-East Asia region has witnessed rapid economic development in recent decades, poverty and inequality are imminent problems that many people experience every day. Disadvantaged people lack development opportunities and financial security, while the social protection system is often not well developed. In order to promote exchange and discussions on public policies and strategies for tackling poverty, a "Symposium on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation in Affluent Societies in the Asia-Pacific Region" was organized by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) during the 2016 Joint World Conference in Seoul. This article summarizes key messages of the presentations by following invited speakers (bracketed hyperlinks to their Powerpoint files):

1. Dr. LAW Chi Kwong, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong (http://goo.gl/U6dRvI)
2. Mr. Atsuo SHIBUYA, Executive Director, Japan National Council of Social Welfare (http://goo.gl/KfG5Sp)
3. Dr. Hyeok Chang KWON, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Welfare, Gyeongnam National University of Science and Technology (http://goo.gl/YxTpga)
4. Dr. Hou-Sheng CHAN, Professor, National Chi-nan University & National Taiwan University (http://goo.gl/2evyV6)

Hong Kong: The Importance of Collaboration between Government, Civil Society and Academics in Poverty Alleviation

From Hong Kong experience, the institutional setup is vital in combating poverty. A significant milestone in poverty alleviation was the establishment of the Commission on Poverty (CoP), which indicates that poverty has become one of the priority policy areas of the Government. The first CoP was set up in 2005 but was later abolished in 2007. The second CoP was formed in 2012, which has since then played a major role in reviewing various relevant polities and proposing new public programmes. The two CoPs have launched a range of policy tools, pilot programmes and government funding, including the announcement of the official poverty line in 2013 to keep track of the number and characteristics of the poverty population and monitor the effectiveness of various social and poverty alleviation programmes. There is also a US$2.5B Community Care Fund under the CoP, which is tasked to implement measures on a pilot basis to provide assistance to people facing economic difficulties, with a hope that such measures could eventually be incorporated into the Government's regular and long-term assistance and service programmes. The CoP has just completed a 6-month public consultation on HK's retirement system, in order to identify measures to address the elderly poverty problem and improve the existing retirement and social protection system.

On the other hand, the roles and contributions of civil society and academics cannot be neglected. Civil society organizations and academics started to research into poverty problem in 1990s, when there was massive economic restructuring, people couldn't benefit from the economic growth, and the income gap was widening. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) formulated its own

poverty line in 2000 and announced poverty data annually. Such poverty data were widely quoted in society, including in the Legislature, and consequently the poverty line was adopted by the Government in 2013 as its official poverty line. Related research, public education and advocacy efforts have resulted in higher social awareness and support for poverty alleviation, and public pressure on the government to re-establish the CoP in 2012. More corporate donors and private foundations are also willing to fund and participate in new initiatives to address poverty issues and create employment opportunities for vulnerable groups including people with disabilities.

The collaborative efforts of the government, civil society and academics are most essential for combating poverty and developing new policies and measures for disadvantaged groups in Hong Kong.

Japan: Promotion of Self-Reliance through the new Independence Support System

In the review of its public assistance system, Japan has developed new measures for the needy, in which the Independence Support System has been adopted as a second safety net for providing comprehensive support to needy individuals who are not qualified for public assistance. The System is operated by local governments and entrusted organizations aiming at integrating the needy

into the community with dignity and preventing discouragement and isolation from community and government support.
At the individual level, the System respects the independence and dignity of the needy. The needy will be reached in the early stage with one-stop consultation services encompassing life and employment support. A tailor-made support plan will be devised for each individual covering various aspects such as finance, employment, daily living, social life, etc. according to individual needs, while supportive measures will be provided based on individual desires and decisions. At the community level, the System aims at developing community networks to encourage people to support each other and identify those in needs. Community resources will be mobilized to provide all-round support, seeking to create more job and community-participation opportunities for people.

Yet, the System is still new to local governments and the community. Further promotion of the System is required so as to create synergy and collaborative efforts when implementing the supportive measures. Strengthened collaboration between labor and the welfare sector is required to provide more comprehensive support to people.

Republic of Korea: Seeking Balance in the Pension System for the Ageing Population

The Republic of Korea can be considered as the world's most rapidly ageing country, with a high elderly poverty rate of 48.1%, about 3.3 times higher than the national average in 2013. Various old-age income-security schemes have been adopted to maintain the standard of living of the elderly, including the partially funded social insurance, called the National Pension Scheme (NPS), and the social assistance programme, called the Basic Pension. NPS is supposed to covers the entire workforce between 18 and 59 in age. Contributions are made by both employers

and employees, and the benefits are generally proportionate to the insured period and earnings. The Basic Pension is a non-contributory pension for the elderly, aged 65 and above, to provide supplementary old-age income.

NPS aims to provide financial security for people by offering a monthly pension after retirement. However, a good portion of the active population aged 18 to 59 (over 30%) is categorized as economically inactive or ineligible. They are excluded from the scheme and cannot be supported when they get old. As the NPS was only set up in 1988 and is immature, there are over 60% of the elderly population that are not being covered by the NPS at present. The low level of payments to current NPS beneficiaries is also a result of the short contribution period.

The Basic Pension was introduced in 2014, and currently about 70% of the elderly are covered. However, the low benefit level of Basic Pension cannot provide sufficient financial support to the elderly, and the elderly poverty was only slightly reduced from 48% to 44%.

In order to promote better old-age income security in Korea, further revisions have been suggested, seeking a better complement between NPS and Basic Pension, as well as a better balance between the adequacy of pension benefits, coverage and financial sustainability of pension schemes, in order to respond to the rapid ageing of the population.

Taiwan: Significance of Continuous Improvement in the Legal Framework

Continuous improvement in the legal framework is significant in tackling poverty in Taiwan. The Public Assistance Act plays a key role in defining the responsibilities of all levels of the government in providing short-term, long-term and emergency financial and practical assistance to disadvantaged households. The Senior Citizens Welfare Act seeks to strengthen the financial security of the elderly by safeguarding their standard of living. The Act of Assistance for Families in Hardship, on the other hand, aims at assisting families suffering from hardship, especially those with emergency care needs. The three pillars were recently revised to better meet the changing needs of the disadvantaged. The former two Acts were revised in 2015 and the Act of Assistance for Families in Hardship was revised in 2014.

The revision of the Public Assistance Act in 2010 was crucial for poverty alleviation in Taiwan. First, the measurement of the poverty line was adopted in the Act with a clear definition of monthly "minimum living expenses", which is important for the identification of deprived groups. Secondly, the Public Assistance Act has redefined the disadvantaged households to be protected by introducing "middle-low income households" as a new beneficiary group under the social protection system. The expansion of household coverage means more disadvantaged households are protected by the legal framework with essential support from the government.

The beneficiaries of and expenditures for public assistance in Taiwan have grown sharply since the year 2000, reflecting the increasing responsibility and determination on the part of the government towards poverty reduction.

Still a long way to go…

In the recent two decades, North-East Asian countries have strived to enhance the social protection system so as to tackle poverty. The region is still looking for more innovative initiatives and better solutions for helping the needy. By emphasizing collaborative efforts in poverty reduction, the region endeavors to create an equal and caring world for all.

An NPO Alliance Model of Disaster Management – Taiwan Red Cross for Typhoon Morakot

By Joyce Yen Feng, Pei-Yuen Tsai, Taipei

Background

Typhoon Morakot was a typhoon that struck Taiwan on August 8th in 2009 and brought a tremendous pouring of rain and led to flooding and landslide disasters in the southern and central part of Taiwan. It resulted in 619 deaths and 76 people missing. It is the most severe disaster caused by water in the last 50 years in Taiwan.

When the typhoon struck the south part of the island, the Taiwan Red Cross (TRC) immediately started rescue and relief actions, and setting up emergency shelters. And then, it offered follow-up services, including building permanent houses, reconstructing schools, bridges and rebuilding communities (Huang & Tsai, 2016).

The TRC's reconstruction project has been implemented over the past 6 years, including emergency disaster rescue, temporary placements, transitional placements, construction of permanent housing, rebuilding schools, setting community-life service stations, living assistance services, sustainable environment conservation, providing stipends for students, developing supplementary education in affected areas, strengthening the community capacity to prevent and deal with future disaster, and so on. It is the largest reconstruction project of the TRC so far.

Emergency Disaster Rescue and Relief Stage

During the emergency disaster rescue and relief stage, the TRC headquarters and its local branches and chapters collaborated to dispatch relief supplies, rescue teams, disaster relief specialists and also volunteers to affected areas.

The TRC dispatched 730 people from the rescue team to assist in rescue operations. Lifeboats and relief supply trucks were sent to distribute materials like jackets, blankets, sleeping bags and stuff donated by other countries. Over 12 thousand volunteers took part in the disaster relief operations. At the same time, the TRC worked with the media and television corporations to host 2 television-marathon donation events with entertainers from Taiwan and Hong Kong, even the former first lady participated in answering donation phone calls. It also connected with the international rescue network, for instance, the United Nations and the European Union also sent rescue teams to Taiwan to help. Many representative offices in Taiwan, from the United States, Korea, and Canada, also made donations. The Australian and Canadian governments donated disinfection facilities. The Red Cross of Japan, China, Hong Kong, Macau also made donations to deal with the damage. For those who have to leave their home and stay in temporary shelters, the TRC immediately provided relief allowance to each person for their own dispense.

In order to further the services provided to all walks of lives in the many affected areas, the TRC invited NGOs to form an NPO Alliance working together to share the experience and resources. They were NGOs in the medical, educational, information, social welfare and many other professional fields. The TRC collaborated with other NGOs in setting up emergency shelters in Chiayi, Kaohsiung and Pingtung. During this period, the TRC established 5 communities and set up 398 prefab structures, including 335 temporary housing, 55 temporary school buildings and 8 temporary office buildings, where about

2,700 people were benefited. The TRC also established several temporary camps that provide temporary housing, meals, social welfare services, psychological consultation, daycare services and livelihood assistance for those who had to be away from their damaged homes. In those prefabs, social workers and volunteers made needed visits to the residents, also lunched after-school care services to promote the care and education of children. Condolence ceremonies and condolence payments were provided to support for victims' financial security as well. In order to bring local community residents together, the TRC also held some sport competitions and cultural events (Huang & Tsai, 2016).

Infrastructure Reconstruction

Infrastructure reconstruction was one of the TRC's major strengths in disaster rescue and reconstruction aimed at supplementing governmental efforts. The TRC built 1,476 permanent housing units and assisted in the reconstruction process of 15 schools and rebuilt 3 public facilities. It also established 13 community reconstruction work stations and support centers, and 21 disaster preparedness warehouses.

In honoring and respecting local traditions and cultural practices, TRC helped to build the Xiaolin Plains Aborigines Museum. In addition, the TRC also built a preschool in that area, where aboriginal traditional culture is taught.

Schools usually play an important role in activating the participation of community residents. In order to promote community reconstruction and ensure the education rights of children, the TRC built many school buildings and teachers' accommodations to keep good teachers in those communities.

In addition to schools, the reconstruction of bridges was helpful not only to restore

transportation, but also to promote tourism and create economic benefits for the locals (Huang & Tsai, 2016).

Intangible Reconstruction

The TRC funded scholarships for 8,843 students in 425 schools so that they could complete their education. It also helped local residents on livelihood development, and set up digital learning classes and CPR classes in the permanent houses. Some of the services were provided by local volunteers mobilized by the Alliance with a view to empowering community people. The communities were engaged for ecological restoration, in collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture to implement the forestation development program, which created a number of jobs for the locals and aboriginal tribal folks.

The 'Water Lotus Program' was created one year after the disaster to develop extra-curriculum education in 6 areas, including humanities, foreign languages, sports, sustainable environment, information technology and special demands in many schools in the affected areas.

Several local communities' disaster prevention and preparedness programs were set up two years later. Those centers conducted disaster-rescue training, stored materials for disasters, and built large refuges for placement in response to future disasters (Huang & Tsai, 2016).

Formation of a NPO coalition (88 Alliance) to better serve and monitor the reconstruction

The unique efforts of the TRC in response to Typhoon Morakot were able to serve as a platform for forming of a coalition of NPOs to provide services for disaster victims as well as to oversee reconstruction work. The coalition was named the "88 Alliance for

Reconstruction of the Flooding Areas" (or the 88-Alliance) and was officially formed two days after the typhoon disaster. The 88-Alliance comprised NPO leaders, professionals and academic experts across different sectors. A total of 103 NPOs and five commercial corporations joined together. The inclusion of commercial corporations in a third-sector alliance was unprecedented, and represented a novel form of cross-sector collaboration in the local context.

According to Feng and Huang (2009), coordination between NPOs and the government was more effective than it had been earlier, such as with the NPO Alliance during the 1999 Chi-Chi earthquake. Interactions between the government and the 88 Alliance were more intensive, leading to more effective allocation and coordination of resources. For instance, while the military forces provided temporary shelters for disaster victims, local NPOs were immediately enlisted to provide services and emergency goods for temporary residents. Meanwhile, the local governments provided NPOs with background information on families, and channeled financial resources to support those efforts (Feng & Huang, 2009).

The 88 Alliance carried out 5 years of reconstruction work after Typhoon Morakot wreaked havoc in Taiwan, as was originally planned in the Morakot Reconstruction Act. It also worked with all levels of government to devise reconstruction plans. The Morakot Reconstruction Act emphasized local resource mobilization, stipulating that local residents should be empowered and that local cultural and community needs must be taken into account. It also stated that communities must be strengthened, for example through public education and information campaigns, so as to enhance their resilience.

Although the Disaster Prevention and Protection Act was promulgated earlier, after the 1999 Chi-Chi earthquake, the 88 Alliance

sought further revision of that Act after Typhoon Morakot, mostly related to environmental protection and conservation. After finding, for example, that at least part of the reason for the huge landslides experienced during Typhoon Morakot was deforestation, the 88 Alliance had realized that environmental protection was intricately linked to disaster prevention. Hence, it advocated for the need to protect the environment, and promote proper land use as a longer-term prevention strategy.

The immediate disaster management subsystem was dominated by the central government, though the 88-Alliance entities were able to participate in the decision-making process and influence policies to address community reconstruction owing to the special status of the TRC, which played a leading role in the Alliance. Since Alliance members, including the social work members, had expertise in providing community-based services and responding to crisis situations and included diverse members such as lawyers, accountants, social workers, and technicians, the Alliance was able to effectively coordinate relief efforts, monitor public donations and allocations, and influence the policy process.

Community development and social capital building

Thanks to the involvement of the 88 Alliance, community development was prioritized during the reconstruction phase. The Alliance advocated for the right of local communities to develop and enhance their own capacity to respond to natural disasters. That was done so by mobilizing local resources (i.e. human resources), such as equipping local NPOs and governments with the skill and knowledge to meet the specific needs of their respective communities. Indeed, it is generally agreed that long-term community development approaches to disaster prevention, response and recovery are far more effective than

reactive or asset replacement approaches (Bell & Blashki, 2013; Mulligan & Nadarajah, 2011). NPOs play a critical role in empowering local communities, so that they themselves can develop sustainable capacities to respond to future crises. As evidenced by the 88 Reconstruction Act, community development was further institutionalized as part of policy change during the reconstruction phase of Typhoon Morakot (Chui, Feng & Jordon, 2014).

Social capital was an important characteristic of the 88 Alliance, which assisted in their efforts to affect political change. Social capital refers to the cumulative advantages gained by individuals who belong to a particular social network (Hean, Cowley, Forbes, Griffiths, & Maben, 2003; Putman, 1995). Being part of the Alliance, smaller NPOs were able to access the skills and knowledge of other NPOs within the Alliance, thus improving their quality of services in the long run. In turn, those NPOs' capacities to respond to natural disasters and to provide members of their communities with adequate social support and services were very much enhanced.

Conclusion

All the reconstruction programs were finished by the end of 2015, but the services and local engagement will continue.

Like all Red Cross organizations worldwide, the TRC performed as a major civil rescue team upon the onset of natural disasters under its global SOP, but it also carried out its own characteristic actions based on its local context. The immediate summit of an NPO Alliance platform is one such action, providing spiritual condolence and following the cultural ritual system to comfort the survivors is another. Furthermore, the TRC and the NPO Alliance played an important role in collaborating with the public, private, and civil sectors to carry out a more effective and efficient rescue/reconstruction/preparedness task for the huge natural disaster. The trans-sector collaboration not only helped with the integration of materials and human resources in the chaos of the disaster, but also helped building a rapport/relationship for the future discussion of the related policies for post-disaster reconstruction, and rational movements toward sustainable environments as well.

References

Bell, E., & Blashki, G. (2013). A Method for Assessing Community Flood Management Knowledge for Vulnerable Groups: Australia's 2010-2011 Floods. *Community Development Journal,* 48, 1-26.

Chui, C.; Feng, J.Y.; Jordan, L. 2014 From Good Practice to Policy Formation- The Impact of Third Sector on Disaster Management in Taiwan. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction,* 10, A, 28–37.

Feng, J. Y., & Huang, C. (2009). Taiwan's Third Sector Response to Natural Disasters - Lessons Learned from the 1999 Chi-Chi Earthquake to Typhoon Morakot. *Community Development Journal,* 131, 296-306.

Huang, H.L. & Tsai, P.Y. (2016). Disaster Relief and Recovery for Typhoon Morakot. 2016 Joint World Conference on Social Work, Education and Social Development: Promoting the Dignity and Worth of People, June 27-30, 2016, Seoul Korea.

Mulligan, M., & Nadarajah, Y. (2011). Rebuildng Community in the Wake of Disaster: Lesson from the Recovery from the 2004 Tsunami in Sri Lanka and India. *Community Development Journal,* 47, 353-369.

Welcome new member in ICSW family: United Association of Social Welfare Organizations (Mongolia)

United Association of Social Welfare Organizations (the "United Association") joined the ICSW family in 2016 as a new national member organization in North-East Asia Region. It strives to make contribution in increasing engagement and cooperation of civil societies in social welfare, develop comprehensive system and change the public attitude in Mongolia,

Nowadays, there are over 5,000 NGOs in Mongolia, among which 3,000 NGOs are in the social welfare sector. The United Association was established in July 2015 to strengthen the networking among local welfare NGOs and with overseas counterparts. It contributes to:

1. ensuring the rights and needs of those who are working in the field of social welfare;
2. holding campaigns based on the participation of individuals, families, groups, organizations and the public;
3. organizing courses;
4. conducting surveys;
5. increasing the efficiency of NGOs in the social-welfare sector; and
6. maintaining close cooperation with domestic and overseas organization.

The United Association works with its member organizations, which focus on children, seniors, people with disabilities, women, social health, education, as well as social work and social welfare, to advocate for better welfare policies and collaboration. Last year, it organized conference and trainings to enhance the social-welfare service and engagement of NGOs. It also conducted a survey to identify the needs of member organizations and formed a working board that is responsible for fundraising.
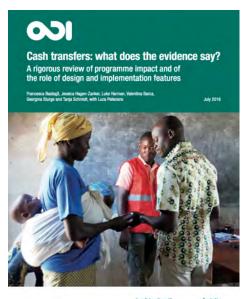
Images from SWSD 2016

The useful resources and links – the find of the month

Cash transfers: what does the evidence say? A rigorous review of impacts and the role of design and implementation features.

Overseas Development Institute, London, July 2016

by Francesca Bastagli, Jessica Hagen-Zanker Luke Harman, Georgina Sturge, Valentina Barca, Tanja Schmidt, Luca Pellerano

Cash transfers have been increasingly adopted by low- and middle-income countries as central elements of their poverty reduction and social protection strategies. This ODI study focuses on non-contributory monetary transfers, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, social pensions and enterprise grants. Close attention has been paid to programme design and implementation details that influence the ways in which cash transfers work. This
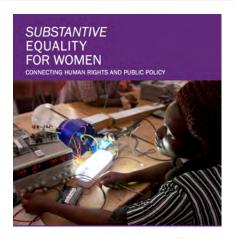
review retrieves and assesses the evidence on the effects of cash transfers on individuals and households through a rigorous review of the literature over the past 15 years, from 2000 to 2015.

For more details:

https://www.odi.org/publications/10505-cash-transfers-what-does-evidence-say-rigorous-review-impacts-and-role-design-and-implementation

Substantive Equality for Women: Connecting Human Rights and Public Policy, UNRISD, Geneva, 2016

The publication is a report on the above topic from the research-advocacy-policy workshop jointly organized by UNRISD, UN Women and the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). It stresses that the advancement of women's rights requires bridging the gaps between progress at the legal and normative levels and the realities on the ground.

For additional details:

http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BCCF9/(httpPublications)/0F62ED2433269407C1257FFC004EB2A7?OpenDocument