

Shanghai Migrant Worker Training Program

Implemented May - November 2008

Project Description

A project conducted in cooperation between the Rotary Club of Shanghai and the Shanghai Charity Foundation to provide vocational training for 1000 migrant workers' (guest workers from other provinces) spouses to qualify them to provide home healthcare support for poor elderly residents of Shanghai.

Origins / Need

The project was introduced by our partner for the project, the Shanghai Charity Foundation. The project is a priority for the Shanghai Municipal Government for two reasons. One, the government is responsible for seeing that the elderly residents of Shanghai are receiving good medical attention. Two, the city government has to make sure that migrant families can survive in the city where they play a major role in the economy.

There are millions of migrant workers in Shanghai that are doing work the local people do not want to do, or are not skilled at doing. With the migrant worker, comes that person's family. Many of the spouses are not finding work and this really impacts the family's ability to sustain itself.

With painful, though perhaps necessary, government measures, like the one child policy, there are many side effects. One major issue for Shanghai and all of China is the growing imbalance between the percentage of Elderly and the percentage of the population still able to work to take care of that generation. This problem weighs heavy on many developing and developed countries.

China has a long tradition of Feudalism. The Chinese government has worked very hard to create a homogenous culture where Chinese nationals, especially the Han, think of themselves as one people. This is a very large task, given it has to knock down thousands of years of cultural and linguistic separation. There are many deeply rooted prejudices between the people of one area and another in China. This is a very big obstacle to the development of migrant workers in the big cities. The government is not only taking away restrictions on the free movement of migrant workers, but they are supporting it with measures like the cancellation of restrictive "Hu Kou" (local residency identification records).

But the government is having a very difficult time fighting against the prejudice and the lack of macro economic understanding from the local people who are not able immediately to see the real benefit of having migrant workers in their town. There is a serious need to have advocacy projects in Shanghai where migrant workers not only become needed, but also become accepted.

The skills of the migrant workers, in terms of taking care of the elderly, are non-existent. This care giving was originally thought to be an easy task for unemployed migrant spouses, but it proved to be flawed logic. There were numerous conflicts that resulted and the families of the elderly were very upset and non-trusting of the entire system. The government needed their elderly support arm to be well trained and received by the families to make the project go forward.

Many migrant care givers were very frustrated by the lack of respect and support from the families. The untrained workers, even though they were very diligent and caring, were thinking of leaving Shanghai because they just could not get their patients satisfied with the services they were providing.

Something needed to be done to push the system forward....

Grassroots / Cooperation

Given that we were doing a project with the Shanghai Charity Foundation, which is a body of the Shanghai municipal government, we were working closely with many grassroots levels of the government. We worked with the hospitals, elderly care workers and training supervisors, city district officials, and many more very supportive people. This is very much a local project. We will be able to build upon this program and create numerous champions for Rotary from our cooperation with the Shanghai Charity Foundation and the local government. We are also out in the community with our partner learning so much about other projects and opportunities to help on a grass roots level.

Goals of all contributing organizations to the project

The **Goals for the Rotary Club of Shanghai** were as follows:

- Do a project that was local.
For a long time we have been trying to find a Shanghai project that would have the same big impact as helping very remote areas of China.
- Make the project get the biggest bang for the buck!
We wanted to impact the largest group of people possible with the funds we raised.
- To use the project to advocate the ideals and significance of Rotary to as many local people and organizations as possible.
Rotary has been back in Shanghai for more than a decade, but it is still a very small operation here with one club - and only two clubs in the entire country. The small size of Rotary in China (less than 150 members), the most populated country in the world, is an issue that needs to be addressed.
- Take care of a need that was very important to the local people and the local government.
- To build the reputation of the club locally in a synergistic fashion.
This gives us a generation of thousands of Rotary advocates that will continue to grow outward.

- To initiate a project that could be continued locally with a deeper impact the longer we maintained the project.

The **Goals for the Shanghai Charity Foundation** were as follows:

- Help the elderly of Shanghai get home nursing care which is proven to be the most cost effective and socially effective means to meet elderly needs.
- To address the problem that there is a serious lack of trained workers.
- To train migrant workers so they would have sustainable careers in Shanghai for the long term.
- To create a project which will be a model project for the nation regarding elderly care and the migrant labor force.
- To further the macroeconomic urbanization by increased migration from rural areas where the modern world has less opportunity for sustainable family units.
- Show that international organizations like Rotary do want to help on the local level and are willing to help with the elderly.
- To build a model of cooperation with the Rotary Club for future cooperation.

Funds required / raised for the project

The goal was to train 1000 migrant workers in elderly care giving. Each student required 350 RMB for the one month intensive training seminar that would lead to formal certification as a home healthcare provider. Total funding requirement was RMB 350,000. (about USD 51,470 at current exchange rate of 1 USD = 6.8 RMB)

We held a charity golf tournament where the proceeds went to this project. We raised in total 540,000 RMB with which we were able to fully fund the pilot project and allocate the difference to additional disaster relief projects in the earthquake-stricken zones of western China.

Rotary Foundation involvement

This project did not have make use of any Foundation resources - it was entirely locally funded.

Positive results of the cooperation

The impact of the project is enormous! The best way to describe it would be to go through a mathematical equation that can extrapolate exponential growth. Because I do not have one handy, let me focus on the immediate impact.

- One Trainee + 2 Family Members = (3 persons) x 1000 = 3000
- One Elderly Resident (sometimes 2) + 2 Family Members = 3 persons/family x 6 families weekly per caregiver x 1000 caregivers = 18000
- Total impact = 21,000 needy people.

- The people who are trained will have a career ahead of them where they will each effect many future families.
- The Trainees have a much better sense of their own worth to the people they serve and how they fit into a community that used to shun them because they were not from the local area.
- It builds a more clear vision for the trainees on how vocational education can bring a huge impact to their children and spouses.
- There is a destruction of the us/them dichotomy that is actually very prevalent in China between various regional groups, even if they are the same ethnicity. A positive result could be seen in the families that have the trainee to defend migrant workers and push for better conditions for the people who come to China with very little. There are very poorly funded schools for the children of migrant workers in Shanghai. The schools may become more in focus when the lives of the Children effect their care givers.
- The local city district government leaders have applauded our efforts and want the program and our participation to go forward. This is a tremendous benefit given the precarious nature of how the Chinese government allows Rotary to operate. In other words we are building local city government goodwill with the people who will be running China in the not too distant future. (Many city leaders in Shanghai move on to be leaders of the country like Jiang Ze Min)
- The smiles and the tears of joy! All the trainees we met were so thankful and said that the training has dramatically changed their lives.
- An enormous sense of self importance and commitment to helping society. The trainees hope to continue their training to better themselves and the country.
- Thousands of elderly people who were being poorly cared for are receiving gentle and competent care in their final years.
- The children of the elderly can rest easier that their parents are being well taken care of and that they can pursue their own careers to better their family's situation and the situation in the country.
- A country/city is always better off when people are gainfully employed and are enjoying a career in something they enjoy. Putting these people to work where there was a need and no one volunteering to do the work has been a huge success for the government to try new programs for training the unemployed in other areas.
- Charity in general is also given a leg up with this project because the trainees and the families they care for are aware of the purpose of our club and Rotary.

Attachments

Migrant Worker Training Program - Presentation

Press Clipping - Migrants to become carers for the elderly

Press Clipping - Rotary good deeds bring Christmas cheer - and help all year round