
Public Welfare NGOs and Governance -- The Case of "Project Hope"

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The "Project Hope" is a civil undertaking of public welfare, sponsored and carried out by China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF). By raising civil funds, this public welfare project aims at aiding those children who are unable to go to school because their families are poor. In present-day China, the "Project Hope" has been a most important civil undertaking of public welfare in terms of scale and influence. China Youth Development Foundation which sponsors the activity has become the largest civil public welfare organization in China. The process of the implementation of the project has been involving interactions and cooperation (including conflicts) among public welfare NGOs, the related departments of the Central government, local governments, the Communist Youth League organizations, and enterprise legal persons. Through the description and analysis of the "Project Hope", we can gain a deep understanding of the foundation for the development of the Chinese NGOs (especially those civil foundations), the ways of conducting their activities, external circumstances, usable resources, the possible prospect for their future development and especially its relation to social governance.

I. "Project Hope" and Civil Undertakings of Public Welfare

1. Chinese Civil Undertakings of Public Welfare after the Reform

The Chinese society before the reform can be called as a redistributive society featuring the overall monopoly on scarce resources by the state. The various kinds of social products would be first mobilized by the central planning departments. Then, governments at all levels would distribute these goods or services among city residents (a quasi-redistributive system was practiced in rural areas). At that time, social members could only get their daily necessities through this redistributive system. With regard to aid to poor residents or disaster relief, the governments should assume the whole responsibility and departments of civil affairs carry out the concrete agenda. Therefore, under the old institutional arrangement, it was impossible for civil undertakings of public welfare to operate.

Since the reform and opening, the state has got out of some areas of social activities in a planned way or abandoned its monopoly on them. Moreover, some civil-controlled resources emerge and are accumulated. Then, the space for civil undertakings of public welfare appears step by step. Before the "Project Hope" was launched, namely, the late 1980's, non-official foundations had developed for about ten years in China. So far, there have been over sixty social public welfare foundations on the mainland of China. Among them, there are mainly two organizations, that is, China Welfare Fund for the Handicapped, and Soong Ching Ling Foundation for Children, which are most influential, operate on a nationwide scale and can represent the current level of development of Chinese social undertakings of public welfare. Their objects for raising funds and aiding vary, but they have some similar ways in operation. In raising funds, for example, they follow the way of the CPC's traditional mobilization, depending on organizations or administrations at corresponding levels and on the

power of system. These foundations carry out their public welfare activities within a definite arena, with the support of related administrative departments or mass organizations for workers, youth and women.

Frankly speaking, public welfare organizations like China Welfare Fund for the Handicapped and Soong Ching Ling Foundation for Children are initiators of Chinese public welfare undertakings following the reform. The emergence of these organizations helps change the old conditions under which the state handles all social problems and controls and distributes all resources). Meanwhile, it must be noted that the limitations of these public welfare organizations are also very obvious. Organizational mobilization which relies on related administrative systems would keep the activities of these organizations within those particular systems, because this kind of operation involves administrative orders, although the efficiency of mobilization is guaranteed. In other words, these organizations do not realize the socialization of public welfare projects.

2. The Reform of Chinese Youth League and the Founding of the CYDF

The CYDF, the sponsor and organizer of the "Project Hope", was founded in the late 1980's. In a sense, it was a product of the restructuring of the Youth League. During the 1980's, under the impact of China's economic restructuring, the Youth League organization found itself in an awkward position in the whole social activities. Over the past years, the Youth League acted as the "assistant" to the Party in the various political activities of the latter. But when the whole society focused on economic development, the status and role of the Youth League organizations in social activities became obviously less important. State appropriations to the Youth League organizations increased so slowly that they were often short of funds. At the same time, the identity of young people with the Youth League organizations was also lowering. Those organizations in some areas began to be slack or even paralyze.

Against this background, there was the need to require the reform of the Youth League organizations. The Twelfth Congress of the Youth League held in 1988 adopted the Basic Programme for the Restructuring of the Youth League, which pointed out that the undertakings of youth and children can be developed by raising some social funds, including soliciting contributions from those organizations and persons at home and abroad concerned about the growth of youth and children. The Programme also mentioned the need to found a fund for the growth of youth and children. Thereafter, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League began to do the following two things: first, to establish China Huaqing Company (which was not established because the government cleared up and reorganized companies soon afterwards); second, to prepare for the establishment of the CYDF. Therefore, this resulted in the "Project Hope". In August 1988, in the name of the Office of Enterprise Development Committee of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Youth League, the Report on Establishing Preparatory Office of the CYDF was submitted to the Secretariat of Central Committee of the League. With the approval of the latter, the founding of the CYDF was put on the agenda. In October 1988, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC gave a formal reply, agreeing in principle that the CYDF is established jointly by the Central Committee of the League, the All-China Youth's Federation, the All-China Students' Federation and the National Children's Work Coordination Committee. On November 17, the Central Committee of the

League appropriated 100,000 yuan from the fund for youth and children activity as the registered capital of the CYDF. On January 9, 1989, the People's Bank of China approved the establishment of the CYDF. On March 8, the Ministry of Civil Affairs approved the registration of the CYDF. The CYDF had been formally established.

From this process, we can know several points. First, the founding of the CYDF (including the implementation of the “Project Hope”) was a measure to save the League when its existence was menaced. Second, the thought of saving the League through the establishment of a company and a foundation obviously originated from the situation under which the whole society focused on economic development. As Xu Yongguang, Secretary-General of the CYDF, said, if Huaqing Company had been established, there would not have been the current “Project Hope”. Third, against this background, the CYDF and the “Project Hope” inevitably had strong official nature from the beginning. This is because the League is actually an official organization, although it is a mass organization in name^N (the following is the detail discussion of the process of the independence and civil nature of the “Project Hope” during its establishment).

3. Establishment and Implementation of the “Project Hope”

After its founding, the CYDF did not clarify priorities of its work at the very beginning. At that time, the only thing which it knew was that what things should not be done. “We should do our own work, neither ideological education nor those faddish things for everyone” (Interview B with Xu Yongguang). However, one clear thing is that the activity conducted by it should be of concern to the whole country. After some discussions, it gradually focused on education on poor areas. This choice was directly related to the work experience of those leading cadres of the CYDF. Xu Yongguang once worked in some poor rural areas of south China. With the responsibility to reorganize the League organizations in those areas, he gained a deep understanding of the poverty and education there. Xi Jieying and Yang Xiaoyu, Deputy Secretaries-General of the CYDF, joined the teacher-training group and taught in poor areas for one year. “This choice is related to my investigation in Guangxi. In 1986, I had conducted an investigation in Jinxiu and Sanjiang counties, Guangxi, for two months. From that I had direct and thorough knowledge about the social and economic conditions of rural impoverished areas and especially the extremely backward rural basic education. During my investigation, I found that there were so many children who were unable to go to school in rural areas, impoverished areas, and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. In Gonghe Village at which I stayed, 90% of pupils would not study till 4 or 5 grade, 60% of pupils could not afford even a pencil or exercise book, and the quality of instruction was very poor.” (Interview B with Xu Yongguang).

During the ten-year implementation of the “Project Hope”, the CYDF organized a number of large-scale donations to education in the whole society. For example, since 1990 it has initiated an activity called “hand-in-hand -- urban and rural children all over the country join hands to aid children in impoverished areas who cannot go to school”, establishing the friendly and aid relations between schools and students in developed and poor areas. From 1992, it began to mobilize an activity named “Love from One million Hearts”, establishing direct aiding relationship between donators and beneficiaries, to aid those children who are unable to go to school till they graduate from primary schools. From 1993, the CYDF practiced “Love from One Million Hearts Once More”, which extended the activity. In 1994, the CYDF initiated “One Family

Aid (Add) One Pupil” in coordination with the “International Family Year” plan sponsored by the UN, organizing families to aid children who are unable to go to school. In the same year, the “Hope Library” project started, which means donating various specially edited readings to children in impoverished areas. In 1997, the CYDF conducted “The Last Round of Domestic Donation”. Besides these activities, the CYDF also carries out a lot of campaigns, “Chinese Ten Outstanding Youth Appraisal”, “Youth Rhythm Plan”, “Project Hope Gardener Award”, “Prospect Plan”, “Chinese Outstanding Young Scientists Appraisal”, “Project Hope Star Appraisal”, Training Hope School teachers, and “Sanchen Film Library”, etc. Aiding the construction of Hope School is a running-through agenda. By the end of 1998, the donation at home and abroad accepted by the “Project Hope” had added to 1.611 billion yuan, 2.09876 million children who were unable to go to school had received aid to continue their education, and 7,111 Hope Schools had been set up.

II. Legitimacy: Civil Undertaking of Public Welfare and Current Institution

In principle, a cause like the “Project Hope” that benefits both country and people would not face the problem of legitimacy. In practice, however, it took a good deal of bother to establish the legitimacy of the “Project Hope”. The reasons lie not only in the institutional problems met by a civil undertaking of public welfare, but also in ideological shackles in handling poverty and education.

1. The Context of Law in the Development of Social Societies

Just one year after the founding of the PRC in 1949, the Government Administration Council promulgated the Provisional Regulations on Registration of Social Organizations in September 1950. The Ministry of Internal Affairs issued the rules for the implementations of this document in 1951. The main aim of promulgating the two laws was to clear up various social organizations left from old society, banning those which did not meet the requirements of new society, and retaining others after transformation. Having achieved the task, these two laws were gradually abandoned. The examination, approval and governance of social organizations were entrusted to respective administrative agencies. No institution of unified registration was carried out. However, the fundamental policy orientation was still to restrain or even forbid the development of civil social groups, because according to the concept, the organized force was the most dangerous one.

After reform and opening up, civil society accumulated its own resources. On the basis of this, the number of social organizations increased considerably. With regard to management system, the administrative institution allowed the respective departments to examine and approve independently. Even companies and societies had the right to approve other groups. Furthermore, some societies declared establishment without approval. Therefore, with the rapidly increasing number of social organizations, various kinds of problems (especially political problems) arose and caused the government’s worry. In 1989, the State Council issued the Regulations on Registration of Social Organizations. The old administrative system for managing civil organizations was formally transformed into registration and management by the departments of civil affairs. But each society should be managed by its related responsible department at the same time. This kind of pattern could be called as

“registration at different levels and dual management”. Consequently, according to the functions and powers defined by the Regulations, the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued a lot of administrative regulations and provisions. Other ministries and committees, as responsible departments for related social groups, also issued relevant provisions respectively. Those administrative regulations by the State Council and rules by the Ministry of Civil Affairs and other ministries and commissions constitute the main body of Chinese current legal system for social organizations. The State Council issued the new Regulations on Registration of Social Organizations in October 1998, which is the most important law for social organizations. Because the main legislation for civil organization is administrative legislation, its content involves mostly administration other than other aspects (see Zhu Suli and others, 1999). Moreover, the old Regulations of 1989 still focused on too rigid examination, approval and management for the development of civil societies against a peculiar background (June Disturbance).

By the way, the whole process of examination and approval for the CYDF was rather smooth, for it was established and submitted by the Central Committee of the League.

2. Establishment of Organizational Network of the “Project Hope” and Its Legitimacy

The establishment of the CYDF was rather smooth, but its organizational institution encountered a difficult problem. As a national social activity, the “Project Hope” needs a national organizational system or network to carry out its activities successfully. Nevertheless, the establishment of national subsidiary institutions is restricted rigidly in the Regulations. According to Article 19 of the Regulations, a social organization can set up subsidiary or representative institutions, but this should be examined and approved by responsible departments and should be subject to registration with related registration administrations. The subsidiary institution of social organization has no right to set up its own subsidiary units or regional subsidiary institution. According to the official explanation, if a social organization established its regional subsidiary agencies, it would be easy to overlap or even contradict with other social organizations founded in that region, and the very social organization could not manage its subsidiary units. With regard to representative institutions, however, the Regulations contain no definite restrictions. However, the role of those representative offices is very limited, because they serve as an agency responsible for those tasks assigned by the social organization to which they belong, having no right to practice independent work. Furthermore, according to several old regulations issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the establishment of representative agencies should also be controlled rigidly. In principle, it could not set up any agencies out of the site of the very social society. The provision constitutes a basic restriction for such a national undertaking of public welfare as the “Project Hope”. Because the project has abandoned the original organizational institution within the established system as a fundamental integration framework and its activities should be carried out all over the country, it requires related agencies at all levels to cooperate closely and harmoniously.

An important innovation of the “Project Hope” is to establish a network between the CYDF and local foundations or Funds for the “Project Hope” through such non-administrative ways as trademark registration and authorized use. After the CYDF began to carry out its own activities, some provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions were also setting up the “Project Hope” foundations or Funds successively.

However, because of the above-mentioned reasons, these local or regional foundations do not belong to the CYDF, no direct subsidiary relationship exists between them and the CYDF. The first national working meeting of the “Project Hope”, for example, was held only together with another meeting of the Young Peasant Department of the Central Committee of the League. To solve this problem, the CYDF tried to use an unofficial way, to set up an effective and efficient network between the CYDF and local foundations or Funds for the “Project Hope”. For instance, the “Project Hope” has been registered as a “trademark” in related institutions. Thus, the exclusive right to use the “Project Hope” as a term for any activity and the lawful protection of this right can be guaranteed. Then, based on voluntariness, local foundations would be authorized to use this “trademark”, while “to receive some authorization just means assuming some responsibility”. Therefore, through the authorization of the “trademark” and with the use of the contract, a typical means of the market economy, the CYDF’s control of local foundations or Funds for the “Project Hope” would be realized. We can regard this as a way of integrating organizational resources in various areas through a dexterous social way.

3. Legitimacy of the Undertaking

At the beginning of the establishment of the “Project Hope”, two problems should be solved for legalizing such an undertaking as aiding children in impoverished areas who are unable to go to school: to acknowledge poverty and to open education.

To discuss explicitly the existence of poverty has been a taboo in China for a long time. Before the 1980's, the Chinese government did not admit publicly and formally the existence of poverty in China. The reform started once again after Deng Xiaoping inspected South China in 1992. A rather good social background for acknowledging poverty was thus formed. Meanwhile, in particular practice, the CYDF took flexible strategy to create a “poverty argumentation” that can be accepted by the government and the Party: we cannot and would not deny the fact that poverty does exist. However, the reason for this poverty is due to the constraint of natural conditions; and we cannot and would not deny the fact that education is rather underdeveloped. However, the government has made many efforts to develop education. However, the backward economy limits the government investment in education. Then a social aid like the “Project Hope” is needed to help the government to develop education. More importantly, no matter how splendid achievement in the “Project Hope” has been made, it remains a subsidiary means. Education mainly relies on the government. In such an argumentation, the display of “poverty” becomes an emphasis on government’s effort at the same time, with no hue to belittle the importance of the latter. Therefore, this kind of argumentation or discourse on “poverty” avoids the ideological limitation on the discussion of poverty.

Another problem is the monopoly on education. Before the reform, education was designed to “train qualified successors for the cause of socialism”. For this reason, the state undertakes everything about education. For example, it bears all educational expenditures, defining explicitly the content of education -- what the school should teach and what the students should learn. Any force outside the state which wants to intervene or participate in education would be viewed as a menace. Even now, since the reform has proceeded for more than 20 years, the state control over education has not changed fundamentally. Under this condition, it is rather difficult for social forces to engage in education-related affairs, still less to participate directly in state-run

education. Therefore, the “Project Hope” definitely located itself from the beginning, to establish its legitimacy, to coordinate the governments’ social and economic plans, mobilizing social forces, to use civil donation to aid education. In such a location, emphasis lies in the auxiliary role of the “Project Hope”. We can regard it as an attempt to maintain a relatively harmonious relationship with education departments.

III. Acquiring Resources for the “Project Hope”: Mobilization and Participation

1. Abandoning Advantages of Official Organizational System

The establishment of the CYDF involved an obvious official character. However, from the beginning of the implementation of the “Project Hope”, the CYDF declared that it should not rely on the traditional institution and organizational system. The aim was to establish social operation, “directly facing the society”. Reviewing related documents of the CYDF and its leading cadres’ speeches, we can grasp a lot of emphasis on “social operation”.

In fact, as soon as the CYDF decided to abandon “that old way”, it was abandoning various advantages of “that old way”. Undoubtedly, it was a very difficult choice for this undertaking without any basis. Moreover, in a certain society, whose social members have so little practice and consciousness on participating in civil undertaking of public welfare, and in which the undertaking had been disappeared from the public scene for dozens of years, if it does not rely on established official organizational system, it would then be certain that the collection and acquisition of funds be much difficult. As far as the CYDF is concerned, from the beginning, certainly it does not depend on closed League organizations. However, there was no established pattern on how to achieve effectively “facing directly the society”.

In fact, the CYDF firstly adopted a market-oriented operation method. The first measure was to hand out letters to nationwide industrial enterprises. It printed about five hundred thousand leaflets. Then, it mobilized young workers to help it write those envelopes. Every night, all members of the CYDF would take a large number of envelopes home to write. Gu Xiaojin, Deputy Secretary-General of the CYDF recalled that “at that time, everybody should write near 120 envelopes per day. Each letter of inviting-donation should be stamped. But the staff available just us several personnel, in the last, our hands all sore. Then we took it as a game. Every noon we play poker, who lose the game should stamp all those letters independently. She can take the unfinished quota to home, let her daughter to continue. We everybody had such an experience. From October 1989, we have delivered 130,000 letters or so.” (Interview with Gu Xiaojin). It is by this means that they had mailed 137,000 letters to the industrial enterprises and mines in 28 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions all over the country by October 1989. Then, in January 1990, 400,000 enterprises all over the nation received their publicity materials and letters for donation inviting. In order to attract more donators, the CYDF even adopted various commitments to give service such as helping those donators who visit Beijing buy the tickets and arrange accommodation, etc. The “Project Hope” had solicited mere 200,000 or 300,000 yuan through this original market-oriented attempt. However, the problem resulted from this operation was also obvious. Above all, this cost so high and produced little effect. In addition, more importantly, people could be hard to identify with this kind of inviting donation.

In May 1991, there appeared a new social mobilizing way, which was later called “revolutionary breakthrough”. CYDF's public welfare advertisement of donation inviting, which was entitled “Project Hope-soliciting donation for those children in impoverished areas who cannot go to school” was published not only in People's Daily, but also in many other national newspapers, such as the Overseas Edition of it, Guangming Daily, China Youth News, Economic Daily, Workers' Daily, Chinese Pioneers, Huasheng News, etc. The first advertisement for soliciting donation after the Liberation of Chinese mainland arose huge repercussion and profound influence on the whole project. Reviewing the ten years of the “Project Hope”, we can find that its way of inviting donation is unlike both the western societies, in which the civil undertakings for public welfare usually rely mainly on routine donations, and our experience of depending on official organizational system to solicit donation in past years. Its donation-soliciting is chiefly based on some certain large-scaled and innovative social activities, whose operation are mainly socially.

2. Basing on Society and Confronting with System

Advertising in newspapers to invite donation was an important turning point during the whole development of the “Project Hope”. Thereafter, the activities of the “Project Hope” are formally carried out to a large extent. However, if we study it more carefully, we can find that the meaning of advertising for donation inviting in newspapers, especially in People's Daily, is not limited in enlarging greatly the amount of funds collected, as the audience increased by numerous times overnight. More significantly, this decision made an important beginning for the later pattern to mobilize organizational resources socially. Advertising is a major factor or even a principle symbol of market economy. It is a obvious confirmation that the advertisement had been annulled during tens of years when practicing planned economy and recovered after the reform. However, in the current Chinese society, Using advertising to soliciting donation has a strong symbolic meaning, which involves both institutional and social characters.

The reason of these situations lies firstly in the particular role of newspapers in Chinese social life. In Chinese society, newspapers do not simply equal to the “mass media” in Western societies. Many newspapers are organs of Party and government organizations at various levels. Largely, the contents published in these official newspapers would be regarded as the representation of Party and government's will. The most peculiar example is People's Daily, which is the organ of the Party Central Committee. This situation has been lasting even after ten years and more since market-oriented reform began. This feature of newspapers must not be neglected, because people at that time lacked conception of social charities; and under the universally informal social life, common trust structure had been seriously ruined.² Therefore, publishing the donation inviting advertisement in the pivotal Party organ such as People's Daily would undoubtedly endue this activity legitimacy and authority, which would in turn promote the identity of social members with it. To the effect men who planned these schemes all had tacit understanding. “Publishing in the Party organ would make people to feel the advertisement have powerful backing. Usually people would read it.” (Interview with Xu Yongguang). Thus, to practice resource mobilization through advertising in those newspapers as Party organs represents to a large extent the essence of “socially mobilizing resources” or a kind of “quasi-organizational mobilization”: Basing on the Society and Confronting with the System.

3. Quasi-organizational Mobilization

At least several factors as follows should be included in so-called quasi-organizational mobilization. First, not depending wholly on the established League organizational system. The “Project Hope” did not follow the administrative routine that the Central Committee of the League dispatches to demand all over the country engaging in the “Project Hope”, but to set up gradually cooperative relationship (called fraternal and not father-son relation) with local governments, which, after six years’ working by authorizing through signing the contracts, resulted in constructing successfully a national network of “Project Hope” operating agencies. This way eschewed the traditional administrative operation, and, at the same time, utilize efficiently the established system’s organizational networks, resources and powerful mobilizing capability. It must be noted that the Central Committee of League has not sent out a single formal document, except two notes on strengthening management and liquidating the project, during the whole donation-soliciting of the “Project Hope”.

Second, linking directly with common masses, to mobilize extensively. The reason of choosing socially operation is based on various considerations. The key point among them is the judgment to the question of “whether can the Project Hope do well if relying wholly on the League’s system”. The CYDF made its basic judgment in 1989 that, if relying wholly on the League’s organizations to propel to the project’s donation-soliciting, it would be guaranteed that no big failure be met by the Project and the CYDF itself, however, it also would not be guaranteed that the Project achieve unprecedented success, nor could the Project be made a truly social public welfare project. Therefore, when the CYDF promoted its social mobilization for the “Project Hope”, it emphasized particularly the plan of propaganda. According to the explanation of the Propaganda Department of the CYDF, the aim of this continuous propaganda is just this term always remains in people’s minds, to alert public concern and participate in the Project.

Third, use resources within established institution sufficiently. Studying those means of mobilization for the “Project Hope” to use frequently in these ten years, we can find readily the similarity of them. Reviewing the development of the “Project Hope” of these years, a considerable phenomenon would be easily touched. Many “symbolic activities” of government agencies and their officials, such as calling, playing a leading role in donation, or making an inscription, had been often used in the whole mobilization agenda of the “Project Hope”. From Chronicle of Events of the CYDF, we can find so many inscriptions by leaders of the Party and the state. This kind of routine rather typical of the Chinese was also handed down since the very beginning of the “Project Hope” in 1989. Similar patterns would be practiced over and over again in the local mobilization: Leaders would again make inscriptions, write a encouraging or appreciating articles, attend mass meeting, set an exemplar to donate, etc.

Fourth, the localized role of organization. A chief cadre of the Youth Development Foundation in a province told us a funny and annoying anecdote. Once upon a time, she went to a well-known national factory, which produces white spirits, to solicit donation. When she asked donation to the leader of that enterprise, he directly ask back the condition as exchange: how many index of members of the Central Committee of the League she could arrange for them? Through this apparently rather funny story, however, we can find a very profound content. To a large extent, this story can reflect the orientation of enterprise, its leaders’ pursuit, and their close relation with

political capital, in the so-called “post-totalized society”. We also find in our research that, even those foreign-invested enterprises take much emphasis on the officials attending on their donation rituals. It explains that “official” and “institutional” factors still play a rather important role in current social life. Therefore, socially operation does not mean to totally abandon these factors to choose purely market factors. In fact, the more local and concrete the activities we consider are, the more important and obvious the role of these institutional and organizational factors is. However, it should also be noted that, in the mobilization of the “Project Hope”, the use of organizational resources remains in the larger framework of socially operation. Thus, in the whole mobilization of the Project, organizational resources take a “localized role”.

4. Donators and the Pattern of Their Participation

In the ten years’ development, a crucial cause and index for the “Project Hope” to achieve great success is the extensive social participation.

According to the source of donation, we can classify the donators as three main categories: individuals, cooperates, and collective. Individual donation refers to those donations to the “Project Hope” in the name of individual, which come from donators’ personal properties. Cooperate donation refers to those donation to the “Project Hope” by the Party and government administrations, enterprises and institutions, and other social organizations, which are transformed form cooperate properties. Collective donation refers to that those above units hold soliciting-donation activities, handing over the received donation to “Project Hope” in the name of collective. However, in the case of the third category, many donations belong originally to the property of the individual member of the very collective attending donation. In the Database of the Project, we can distinguish clearly those donations in the name of individual. However, we have some difficulty in distinguishing collective donation and cooperate donation from those in the name of collective, which includes the latter two kinds of sources. Until August 22, 1997, the Database of the CYDF has recorded the sum of donation as much as 163.55 million yuan. Among them, 74.59 million yuan come from individual donation, which accounts for 45.6% of the sum. The total man-time adds up to 106,905 and the average sum per person is 698 yuan. Non-individual donation accounts for 54.4% of the sum, which means about 88.95 million yuan. The total recorded-time for this part adds up to 7,648, and the average sum per recording is 11,632 yuan. As indicated in the result of questionnaire, collective and cooperative donation account respectively for 49.5% and 50.5% of the whole non-individual donation. In other words, the truly cooperate donation just accounts for 27.5% in the whole donation for the “Project Hope” (Kang Xiaoguang and others, 1997B). We need to consider these different donators respectively to explain the characteristics of participators.

Individual and cooperate donators exist universally in every countries. It is the collective donator that needs to be considered especially here. Collective donators refer to those public who have donated to the “Project Hope” in various ways, including those donators in the name of individual. More importantly, the category of public donator includes those donators who donate in various organized soliciting-donation, i.e. the above-mentioned participators of collective donation. In fact, either the participators in collective donation or donators in the name of individuals, without any difference in quality, all donate their own personal properties. As regards to operating way, however, there is considerable difference between them. We can call this way of participation as “administrative participation”. Its basic institutional background is

Danwei (work unit) system. Although the characteristics of Danwei system have softened relatively since the beginning of the reform, it remains important influence in social life.

The special point that needs to be emphasized here is that, the study on the condition of the "Project Hope" participation should not be limited in donators; it should be extended to study those participant in more extensive sense. Furthermore, many donators themselves are engaged in the "Project Hope" in various areas. We can classify different participants according to their "extent of involvement" in the development of the "Project Hope". The lesser participation is just to donate, not care for the donation's whereabouts. Frankly speaking, this kind of participation is uncommon in all participants of the "Project Hope". The participants of the Project usually learn relatively actively about their donation's use, give their own opinions and views on the "Project Hope" and its various activities. The participation of this kind is reflected mainly through their letters, and the more intense reflection is in direct participation on practicing the Project, even the major works on the level of management and organization. Furthermore, we can find some participants engage in decision of the Project. In the development of the Project, common participants' counseling on the "Project Hope" often play a very important role in propel the Project develop continuously.³ Here, we call the participation as "integrated participation", which means that these participants of "Project Hope" participate in all directions and not stay in single level.

IV. Interaction with Related Government Departments

1. Relationship with the League's Organizations

A certain social operation has been consciously advocated since the CYDF was founded, especially since the "Project Hope" was practiced. However, the rapid development of the CYDF is related continuously and closely with its background of the League. In June 1989, the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the League commented formally on a report submitted by the CYDF, demanding clearly "Every department of and directly under the Central Committee of the League should support the activities of the CYDF." Before establishing a national YDF system, the Central Committee of the League fixed on the Young Peasant Department, a department in the League's organizations at every levels which responsible for young peasants, as a responsible department for carrying out the "Project Hope" in respective areas.

In another aspect, the "Project Hope" has brought "benefits" to the League organizations. As we have indicated above, after the reform, the role of the League was somewhat awkward, and its location in the whole social life was marginalizing gradually. However, engaging in a social undertaking of public welfare with extensive influence like the "Project Hope" would undoubtedly help promote the social status of the League. The League had been very emphasizing "supported by the Party and government, upheld by the masses, and acclaimed by the whole society" when it carried out activities in the past years. The "Project Hope" precisely meets those demands. On the teleconference of the "Project Hope" volunteers' donation-soliciting in 998, Jiang Daming, a member of the Secretariat of Central Committee of the League, and the chairman of the executive council of the CYDF, pointed out that the "Project Hope" is a undertaking for the League to serve the overall planning of the Party, a work which should be carried out focusing on this planning. The "Project

Hope” is a main task for the League, which should be grasped firmly. If we abandoned these projects even as the “Project Hope”, the development of the League’s work would be difficult and problematic. The “Project Hope” is an organic part of the whole work of the League -- Now, that the League’s organizations have accumulated certain material power should owe largely to the Project. Yesterday, as reporting by China Youth News, when Huang Ju, secretary of the Shanghai CPC committee, investigated the work of aiding impoverished areas in Yunnan Province, which is the matched assistance object of Shanghai, he demanded that the “Project Hope” take 300,000 yuan to support Yunnan. “The Party asks for money for the League. This did not occur before.” As indicated in the investigation on Chinese Children and Youth’s Development, practiced by a team from Research Center for Chinese Youngsters in 1996, the mass of youth have taken the “Project Hope” as the best activity for ideological education, whose acceptance exceeds even “learning about theory on socialism with Chinese characteristics” and “one hundred patriotic films”.⁴

This situation is more obvious in grass-roots level. A staff in County Committee of the League told us, “I have been working at the League’s Committee for several years, feeling the Project Hope is the most famous product of our departments of the League. Ordinary people usually know the Project, but it is uncertain that he knows the County Committee of the League if being asked.” A chief cadre of the YDF said that the access point of our League’s work is just to accompany the government. The government would support you if you do what it needs you do, and the whole society would also respond you with all harmony. We cannot always repeat such routine works of League organizations as emulating Lei Feng. You must manifest your role in creating economic values if you want to get the government’s omnifaceted support. If your work reflects no other than mere ideological political education, the government’s officials would not be glad to attend your activities, feeling that your juvenile just make horseplay and have no such capability as to engage in economic activities. What achievement the League has made in the view of our secretary of Provincial Party Committee? The only thing he can tell about is the “Project Hope”, no more activities he can say something. The so-called League just equals to the “Project Hope”! Any review of any secretary of Party committee at any level would full of the “Project Hope”, any related theme of any meeting would be the “Project Hope”. In the information reflected by cadres at various level to the secretary of the provincial Party committee, that how many Hope Schools have been set up is an actual achievement. Anywhere the vice-governor of our province inspects Hope Schools are all the best school in that area. The actual achievements just show you that we do help governments. At present, the money is the most important and effective thing. If you carry out some activities in grass roots, the local government would have no interest. Who care your activity? However, the League’s social status arises rapidly because of the “Project Hope”. Every time the secretary of provincial Party Committee said the Project with appreciation, oh, your “Project Hope” does do a so good thing!

The CYDF and the “Project Hope” not only promote greatly the League’s social status and prestige, but also cohere a number of elites in the League. The peculiar aspects of the League make the high fluidity of cadres in the League system. Every cadre would be transferred to other trade sooner or later. Xu Yongguang once characterized vividly the cultural idiosyncrasy of the League’s Central Committee as “springboard culture” within the grand culture context that put the official position above everything else. In the League as a system which organizes and practices “Project”, a number of able persons who have great enterprise and creativity remain in

the League, enduing the League's organizations at every level with vigor and vitality. On the other hand, achievements in one's official career through successfully practicing the "Project Hope" also pave the way for many League cadres' promotion. In our investigation on some areas, almost all League cadres at every level we contacted who engaged in the "Project Hope" are able man. Many of them have been accompanying continuously with the Project in the whole ten years, and for this reason they did not transfer to other position outside the League. Furthermore, a number of League cadres who have been annealed by the "Project Hope", a cause that can cultivate and promote all-sidedly the quality of related cadres, have taken up key leading posts, becoming cadres of Party and government departments. A roll of those men in each province, municipality or region, who were once received "Award for Constructing the Project Hope" and then transferred to other positions outside the League, records those able men who have this or that relationship with the "Project Hope": A former secretary-general of provincial League Committee now takes as vice-chairman of finance and economic committee of this province; A former vice-secretary of League Committee of an chemical industrial firm now takes as vice-head of the material and power factory of this firm; A former secretary of a provincial League Committee now takes as director of provincial physical culture and sports commission; A secretary-general of the YDF now takes as a vice-secretary of municipal Party Committee in a city belong to this province; A former secretary of provincial League Committee now takes as a secretary of municipal Party Committee; A former secretary-general of the YDF now takes as vice-director of provincial radio and television department; A former secretary of regional League Committee in an autonomous region now serves as a prefectural commissioner of this province; A former secretary of municipal League Committee now serves as secretary of town Party Committee of this city, etc. As far as this point concerned, no wonder someone regards that the "Project Hope" would give the League boundless political capital.

2. Relationship with Education Departments

Either in the links of mobilizing resources, or in the links of carrying out aiding, there should be a lot of interaction between the "Project Hope" and government education departments. In the links of mobilization, the main reflection of that relationship is the followed fact: in order to explain the necessity of aiding those education-deprived children in impoverished areas, the "Project Hope" must account clearly how many children in this area can not go to school. However, the concrete number would to a certain extent "bring shame on" education department. In the links of aiding, both the setting up of Hope School and the arranging of aiding object need the assist of education department. It is impossible for the "Project Hope" to carry out smoothly without the accompanying and assisting of education department.

We find in field research that the relationship between the "Project Hope" and governmental education departments is rather susceptible and complex. Moreover, this relationship would vary greatly in various levels and links. In the links of mobilization, many aspects of the relation are not harmonious; while in the links of practicing, two parts' cooperation is good. Sooner after the "Project Hope" began to practice, the State Education Commission issued a formal document, demanding to support the Project, giving an appraisal highly on the Project and running school by mobilizing social forces' participation. Thereafter, however, inharmoniousness often happened between two parts on how to consider and evaluate the current condition and actual number of

children in impoverished areas who cannot go to school. The rate of enrolling and consolidating counted by education departments are usually very high, while the statistics used by the "Project Hope" in its propaganda is rather poor (in fact it is also based on the figures from some leading cadres of education commission's internal report). Another example is that, in a Teacher's Day one year, CCTV broadcast a telefilm taken jointly by CCTV and CYDF. Presently a leading cadre of National Education Commission phoned to CCTV, to give his view that how the things can be that, for teachers full of grievance and students with no hope. Then he let some related departments of the Commission watch through this film, attempting to select out some defects. Shortly, National Education Commission delivered a speech by a leader to The People's Daily, the theme of which is that it is the government that responsible chiefly for education, the "Project Hope" should play a subsidiary role, and the main and the subsidiary should not be interchanged. In a period after that, the propaganda in The People's Daily decreased obviously. The links of mobilization and practicing contradict each other explicitly. In the links of actual aiding, all Hope schools established by the "Project Hope" all over the country are handed over to the local education departments with no reservation. Thus, the education departments become the final beneficiaries. A report of "Project Hope" evaluating team indicated that, the responsible cadres of education departments in counties and townships all affirmed fully the contributions by "Project Hope" on Three Rates' (promoting the enrollment of children of school-age and consolidating of pupils, and decreasing dropout). 93.5% of directors of county's education commissions and 96.7% of directors of township education offices consider that the Project Hope have played an important or a certain role in improving their county and township Three Rates. 56.0% of directors of county's education commissions and 58.3% of directors of township's education offices regarded that the aid of the "Project Hope" help many children who formerly could or would not go to school because of their families' poverty continue their education, raise directly the county and township's rates of enrollment and consolidating, and decrease that of dropout. This direct effect is the most important. While 40.8% of directors of county's education commissions and 38.3% of directors of township's education offices considered that the more important influence of the "Project Hope" reflects in the fact that, under its inspiration, parents would actively take their children to school.

There are obvious differences in the attitudes towards the "Project Hope" between the central and local departments which responsible for education. At local level, the practicing agencies of the "Project Hope" often accompany well with departments which responsible for education. Basing on his working experience, a staff of the county League Committee in Northeast China who took charge of carrying out the Project pointed out to us that there are contradictions between education commission's "Pujiu" (Universalizing Nine-year Compulsory Education) and "Project Hope". "As regards Pujiu, the rate of dropout in our county should not exceed a certain index; while on the part of our county League Committee, one hundred quota (of the Project) is given this year, we should fulfill this quota."⁵ He was rather aware that it is impossible in fact that every child of school-age could go to school, in other word, that the goal of Pujiu was virtually somewhat impractical. However, when they submitted the figure of education-deprived children to the higher authorities, they still consulted actively with the local education commission, made creatively the number of children who can not go to school into that who are going to drop out, according to the standard of Pujiu's goal that "no child of school-age drop out".

From the beginning, CYDF have tried to locate definitely the aim of the "Project

Hope” as accompanying the government’s social and economic plan, mobilizing social forces with civil means to donate education, in order to handle this complex relationship. The leading cadres of the CYDF like Xu Yongguang emphasized repeatedly in various context that, the “Project Hope” has raised funds over one billion yuan, however, the percentage of this in the total investment on education is less than 0.1%, i. e. a drop in the ocean. Therefore, the efficiency of the “Project Hope” does not lie firstly in the increase of education investment, but in a kind of integrative social effect, in promoting in the whole society the consciousness of stressing and supporting education. This kind of location corresponds to the very character and nature of the “Project Hope”; however, it is also an attempt to establish a relative harmonious relationship with education department.

3. Squeezing by the State on Space of Civil soliciting Donation

The success of the “Project Hope” is the result of joint participation of the whole society, including the government’s participation. However, when we investigated in grass-roots, we find an universal effect that, the donate-soliciting of the Project has been more and more difficult in recent years, while that in the middle of the 1990’s was considerable easier than now. A key reason for this situation is that, more and more donation-soliciting activities launched by the governments appeared in recent years. Moreover, many of them apply the means of deducting from payments in working units. According to our investigation, many units should donate about five to eight per year, and many office workers had to submit one-tenth of total payment a year to meet these donation. Both the organizers and the donators are all very antipathy to such frequent donation (while are rather put up with those in the name of the “Project Hope”). According to some respondents’ saying, this tendency was more and more obvious since 1995. A staff in a provincial YDF explained that, “Why the donation-soliciting was so unsuccessful, and their effect were so unanticipated? As regards objective factors, flood in this year, bad economic situation, lay-off, austere problem of recruitment; As regards subjective factors, everybody has been war-weary, so many years and so many rounds have been experienced in such activities that everybody involved in a war-weariness. The response of the society to the Project is no longer so intense as hearing firstly that lots of children cannot afford to go to school, everybody has wearied. There had few donation-soliciting before the Project Hope, so everybody felt so new, with benevolent nature, felt it is a responsibility to donate more or less. After you carry out the Project some time, this donation-soliciting and that assistance-asking, so many similar activities affected certainly the Project Hope”. Behind this kind of phenomenon is in fact a problem of uncertainty about the relation between the state and society. Many tasks should have been the function of the state. It should not raise resources through social soliciting donation. However, because the state lacks of this capability or the governments are derelict in their duties, those functions that should have been taken by the state are often transferred on society through social soliciting donation. Therefore, the problem arises gradually that the space of normal social charities be squeezed out that the circumstance of donation-soliciting is worsening. Thus, it is necessary to define the limit in social donation-soliciting between the state and civil organizations for public welfare, in order to promote the healthy development of the latter, and to prevent the space for them to raise funds from being squeezed by the state.

Thus the problem raises that how to normalize the donation-soliciting of civil

organizations for public welfare. It is a fact that the “Project Hope” has developed rapidly during the past ten years. However, This develop is a non-routine one on a non-routine basis, which is reflected in two character: the first is that at that time there are little similar activities in society, and the second is its large-scale mobilization. Under such conditions, the “Project Hope” can mobilize rapidly social resources in a very short time. However, the current situation has changed largely. First, the activities of soliciting donation are too frequent; Second, the sum of donation is so high (as to some staff in certain institutions would donate as many as one-tenth of their payments a year); and third, the apportionment by administrative force is so often be applied that be called as a kind of spiritual contamination. Almost all of those who engage in practical affairs of the “Project Hope” reflected that it is increasingly difficult in donation-soliciting since 1995. A problem that should be faced under this situation is that the advantages on which the “Project Hope” relies to have been developed during the past time are losing. Therefore, it is necessary to base the social enterprise for public welfare on the normalization.

Under this situation, some YDF organizations are exploring normalized developmental pattern that connects charities and services. We consider these followed factors as the necessary conditions for the third sector or charities in current China to develop: first, market becomes increasingly a chief means for society to allocate its resources; second, the current level of economic development and people's life is not high enough to cultivate a social condition for universalizing voluntary donation; and third, the scale and frequency of social donation-soliciting are so high to squeeze out the space of normal such activities. From the factors we can say, the development of third sector and market economy should be connected as much as possible. The pattern of connecting charities and services may be a possible one for normalized development. For example, that the YDF in Liaoning province solicited to and consigned with Dingxin Group which product a famous “Master Kang” instant noodles is a new attempt. In fact, the pattern of connecting charities and services equals to reward directly to charities of enterprises. This reward may be both the direct economic return and other rewards which could promote enterprise's management, such as raising the popularity of its product, establishing its particular image, etc.

V. Civil Society: Forming from Above to Below

1. From Above to Below: Civic Organization's Forming

Researches by foreign students on civil society often consider kinds of non-governmental social associations, especially kinds of social organizations, as results of dissociating from the state. The existence of public sphere contrasting to the state, relative developed market economy, and rather perfect system of private ownership, all these are the basic prerequisites for the growth of civil society.

However, in the present-day China, there is a long way for civil society to develop according to its basic condition and milieu. Generally speaking, various kinds of social organizations should develop in pace with the reform of its economic body. “Chinese reform in 1980’s endues the development of civil social organizations with new motives. The relation between enterprises and government has been changed, with the former have not been subordinated to the later so thoroughly. Enterprises have begun to have a certain amount of autonomous rights and interests. They need to set up

cooperation among themselves. Therefore, some professional or trade organizations emerge as times demand. At the same time, the relation between persons and their working-units has also been changing. Ordinary persons began to enjoy rather considerable liberty in his economic and social activities. Especially as the new economic factors cannot be assimilated into the old organizational system, the need of inventing own social organization arises. Family management emerged after the system of people's commune disintegrated, which comes to the need that set up new forms of organizations to link these production units having so small scale. More importantly, the increasingly loosing political milieu makes it possible to realize gradually the liberty of association, which is regulated in Constitution, to promote those demands from enterprises and individuals to set up social organizations to be sympathized by government." (Wang Yin & Sun Binyao, 1998).

Yet, on the development of these civil organizations, another problem should be paid attention to, i.e., so many social organizations are endued with strong official color or background. The most typical exterior sign is that many such civil organizations have background of belonging to some trade or administration. Some are matched with a certain government department, some are simply attached a formal administrative department (for example, CYDF and the League's Central Committee, All China Society of Charity and Ministry of Civil Affairs, etc.). Some retired officials turn to the leader of the social organization that match or attach his old administration. Even some social organizations are established directly by those officials just before his retire, to leave himself leeway to "continue working" after retiring. Some social organizations remain playing some administrative functions, and then act as a certain quasi-governmental organizations. This condition would be more exact for those professional or trade associations and federations that were set up after state organization reform. Some civil organizations can receive a certain amount of funds appropriated from government, although its amount is very little.

Those social organizations with such condition are often called as abnormal ones. Their civil nature is played down. In fact, it is worth studying more carefully. Here, at least two suggestions as follows should be pointed out. Firstly, in current China, maybe it is the most realistic road for civil society to develop. Secondly, it is possible for this kind of original "embryo", no matter how abnormal it is, to get independence in its further development.

2. Independence and its Development of the CYDF

From the very beginning of its establishment, the CYDF has been "a non-profit social body with independent corporate status" in the sense of law, while it was in fact a subsidiary institution of the League's Central Committee. Conversely, the League's Central Committee is the unit which founded the CYDF and responsible for the latter's operation. Therefore, all previous and current presidents and chairmen of executing council are all incumbent leading cadres of the League's Central Committee. Meanwhile, there are special staffs in secretariat of the League's Central Committee who are in charge of CYDF's related affairs. However, an item in Constitution of Chinese Youth Development Foundation says "CYDF would exercise the secretary-general responsibility system under the leadership of executing council." Such an item endues with a kind of possibility for the CYDF to strive for its own independence. Because the executing council is an institution having no virtual influence, the actual power of the CYDF is in the hand of secretary-general.

To establish a relative independent organizational network. As mentioned above, in the early period of practicing the “Project Hope”, the Young Peasant department of local League organization is responsible for the Project’s organization and practice. However, soon after the “Project Hope” began, with the increase and expansion of work, the CYDF consciously put the operations of local agencies of funding management into its own direct control by consigning. The secretary-general of the CYDF, Xu Yongguang, called this process as “setting up the independent institution”. In this process, about one-third heads of Young Peasant department of the provincial League Committee transferred to the posts of YDFs. Having achieved the control on the operations of local agencies of funding management, the CYDF took gradually hold of the control on personnel of local YDFs’ organizations. Xu Yongguang has suggested in 1994 that the CYDF should have the right to make decision on appointments and removals of leading cadres of provincial funding management agencies. A set of relative independent operative system is thus formed step by step.

However, another point should be noted that the independence of the CYDF and its growth relate directly to the personal role of Xu Yongguang, secretary-general of the CYDF. Xu, as a former head of the Organization Department of the League’s Central Committee, have examined and elevated many later secretaries of the League’s Central Committee when he was in the post, and some of them were his former subordinates. Such a historical relationship makes the League’s Central Committee hard to negate Xu’s opinion. As a civil society separating from the governments, however, the CYDF cannot serve as a typical example to show how to achieve its own independence through institutionalization.

Notes

¹ The more concrete manifestations of CYDF's official background are: first, the envisagement of establishing CYDF was originally put forward on the League Representative Meeting, in the form of the league's document; second, all operations during the preparation of CYDF were done within the League system, not only the Enterprise Developing Committee of League's Central Committee, which executed the preparatory works, is a subsidiary institution of central Committee of the League, but also the various kinds of submittals for establishing CYDF were all in name of the Central Committee of the League; third, every major decision about the preparation and establishment of the CYDF were ratified by Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPC.

² At the beginning of launching the "Project Hope", someone took the donation-inviting letter sent by the CYDF to ask police to investigate if it was some kind of swindle. (Interview with Li Yadong).

³ The division of the extent of the Project's participation is based on the discussion by Mo Taiji on the level, area and extent of public participation. For this see Mo Taiji 1995, Public Participation-the Footstone of Social Policy.

⁴ See the Report on Chinese Children and Youth's Development, pp. 147-148, "Report on Chinese Youth's Development on thought, morality and culture", one of a special report: as regards the relative successful activities on ideological education in recent years in China, 76.44% of respondents choose "Project Hope", Learning about theory on socialism with Chinese characteristics alternative receives 25.37% agreements, and 23.20% answer on "one hundred patriotic films". Chinese Youth Press, 1997.

⁵ See the Interview numbered JC by the research group.