



Final Project External Evaluation

**Project Title: Promoting Disability Inclusive
Development in China through Encouraging
Collaboration between Disability Field and Development**

**Humanity Inclusion / Handicap International
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Executive Summary

This study, commissioned by Handicap International (HI), is a comprehensive evaluation of the *Promote Disability Inclusive Development in China through Encouraging Collaboration Between Disability Field and Development Field Project* (referred to as “the DID Project” hereinafter). The DID Project is a three-year initiative, for the purpose of addressing some critical issues that currently obstacle DID actions to be fully developed in China. The total investment of the DID Project amounts to USD 945,549, of which, USD 900,000 financed by United State Department of State, and USD 45,549 by HI. The implementation period is from August 4, 2017 to August 31, 2020. It is jointly implemented by HI, Youren and Peer.

The objective of the DID Project is: to improve the inclusion of disability into the key development and human rights fields of women’s empowerment, children’s rights, poverty alleviation, gender and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) through the empowerment of Disabled People’s Organizations (DPOs) and Disability Focused Civil Society Organizations (DCSOs), and through building the capacity of Non Disability Focused Civil Society Organizations (NDCSOs). In order to achieve this goal, the project would foster relationships between DPOs, DCSOs and NDCSOs engaging in the field of women’s empowerment, children’s rights, poverty alleviation, gender and SRHR.

Given the nature of the project under evaluation, the overall approach adopted by the evaluator, to answer the questions outlined above, was to use a mixed-methods approach to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. This evaluation used information and data from the following two broad sources: (i) project documents and data given by HI, (ii) views and perceptions of different stakeholders to be approached during the evaluation process. Random sampling was applied to select stakeholders to be interviewed. In total, 3 PwDs, staff and management from 4 NDCSOs, Youren, Peer and HI’s project officer were interviewed. Due to travel restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, all the interviews were carried out virtually.

Main Findings

1. Physical progress

The DID Project was scheduled to be implemented from August 4, 2017 and August 31, 2020. Unfortunately, the implementation was delayed because of the newly enacted NGO Law requiring INGOs to officially register in order to operate in the nation. Therefore, the DID project was not officially kicked off till June 2018, but since then, without restructuring of the project, HI and its implementing partners have made all efforts to roll out planned activities. In the early 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 took place. Fortunately, as the project approaching the end, the outbreak only has limited effects on the project.

According to HI’s project documents, by the time of this evaluation, the vast majority of project activities have been completed, and the remaining activities are expected to be completed in August, 2020 – only one activity was partially cancelled due to COVID-19. Delay of a few activities was also noted. It is also noted that some extra activities were planned as a result of positive feedback from participants, e.g., training workshops under Activity 1.1 – 2 extra workshops were carried out, and another 2 would be organized in July.

2. Financial progress

The total investment of the DID Project amounts to USD945,549. By June 30, 2020, the total actual investment reached USD816,237 (86.32% of the total investment). The actual expense incurred under each broad budget line – except Fringe benefits and other direct costs -- was less than budgeted figures, however, over-spending was noted within all budget lines except travel, supply and equipment. It means that mild-moderate adjustments are necessary to complete the outstanding activities. Despite these, HI expressed that the outstanding resources were sufficient to complete the remaining activities.

3. Project management

Project management is rated as satisfactory. To ensure smooth project management and implementation, HI organized two workshops for Youren and Peer to clarify not only project concept (e.g., CRPD, SDGs, etc.), but also its project management requirements, e.g., procurement and reimbursement procedures, reporting requirements, and relevant deadlines. Both HI and its two partners expressed that HI's management requirements were followed during the whole process of project implementation, and communications and collaborations were effective and efficient. Youren and Peer reported project progress to HI in each quarter, who compiled quarterly progress report. Youren and Peer followed their respective approach to evaluate activities they implemented and reported the results to HI. HI's project manager attended all training programs to monitor the quality of such activities. In HI's financial reports and quarterly progress reports, no major management issues were reported. Donor was also made aware of major activity adjustments.

4. Relevance

The DID Project is rated as highly relevant. The development objectives and key activities of the Project focused on enormous difficulties and challenges needed to be tackled imminently. Moreover, the project is strongly committed to empowering PwDs, PDOs and NDCSOs in an innovative way, and creating opportunities for them to proactively, effectively promote and engage in inclusive development, which is highly consistent with HI's mission and reflecting sustainable development goals (SDGs). The project also aimed at creating changes at both grassroots level and national policy-making level.

5. Efficiency

The evaluator instead assessed the project efficiency by examining: (1) whether or not inputs are secured in a cost efficient way; and (2) whether or not outputs were produced efficiently. It was found that: (1) HI's established procurement procedures and policies have been applied across the project to ensure the cost-effectiveness of inputs; and (2) comparative advantages and inhouse expertise of HI, Youren and PEER have been extensively used, which could reduce project cost. Given these, it is safe to conclude that action plans implemented by Youren, Peer and HI are efficient in terms of cost effectiveness of using the project money. Hence, the efficiency of the DID project is rated as satisfactory.

6. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the DID Project is rated as moderately satisfactory. The project aimed to produce impacts on both grassroots and legislative levels. According to project documents and interviews, the DID Project has succeeded in producing expected impacts at the grassroots level to some extent, specifically, empowering PwDs, PDOs and NDCSOs, and carrying out DID actions. The project also

resulted in impacts on the public and governments to some extent. However, given the nature of the project activities and the fact that little concrete action was taken to engage policy makers and legislators and enable them to have ownership and control over such actions, the impacts on the public and governments are very limited and not long-lasting.

7. Sustainability

The sustainability of the DID project is rated as moderately satisfactory. This is because: (1) the project has laid out a foundation for promoting CRPD and DID;(2) Furthermore, international knowledge and good practice has been localized. To make its DID knowledge and experience more acceptable and useful for targeted Chinese audience, HI invested heavily in adapting them to the Chinese context. Its experts prepared training materials and guidelines in a participatory way, i.e., by seeking consultation with local partners; and (3) a DID knowledge base has been created, including the DID Guideline and Indicators; Good Practice Cases, DID Training Guide, and several publications (i.e., two Youren's research reports, a UNFPA report, and a rehabilitation report).

The weakness is mainly due to two factors: (1) project beneficiaries -- PwDs, DPOs and NDCSOs at grassroots level – tend to follow the rules and align with the priorities of the next donor project, due to their lack of resources thus high reliance on external funds, and incompetence in coordinating activities and build own alliance to engage in more sophisticated activities, in particular, joint advocacy and policy dialogue; and (2) absence of initiatives to institutionalize facilitators as a network and knowledge base. If working as individuals and on their own, it can be imagined that most facilitators cannot continue to carry out DID activities by themselves.

Impacts of COVID-19

Overall, the unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 has mild impacts on the DID Project as the vast majority of activities have been completed before the outbreak (especially Activities 1, 2 and 3.1), and the spread has been effectively contained since the end of April 2020 in the nation. However, Activities 3.4 and 3.5 have been seriously affected, due to the worldwide travel restrictions triggered by the outbreak.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The DID project is rated as very relevant, efficient, moderately effective and moderately sustainable. To replicate and extend the DID project experience to other areas in China, based on observations and findings during the evaluation, following recommendations were proposed:

a. Strengthen stakeholder mapping

When preparing and design a project, stakeholder mapping should be carried out to better understand who are the stakeholders, what are they doing, what are their needs, what are their gaps, what are their capacities, what are the gaps, and who can be potential partners, etc. National organizations with commitment to DID will be the most appropriate partners to incorporate DID into the key development areas, because they own resources, capacity and network necessary to take actions. Once they make such decisions, they can translate the DID concept into their actions with their own resource, and influence a wider range of audience.

b. Engage Policy Makers in A More Proactive Way

China is a centralized country, and the national government has formidable power. The project did not have any explicit plans to engage in the national government body and/or legislation body. If the project and HI want to stay relevant and make changes, interventions and results from project's/HI's inputs (in terms of staff time and capacity building activities) shall be traceable to their outputs and outcome. Some concrete actions should be taken to influence the national level policy making and/or pace and process of it include engaging in national prestigious members of policy communities. For example, inviting think tanks, research institutes, relevant government bodies and legislation bodies to jointly carry out policy studies to examine the gaps in mainstreaming DID and work out policy recommendations, and to disseminate findings and results of such policy studies through workshops and forums. Another example is to carry out a policy dialogue with national institutions. Otherwise, even though the project supports policy studies and materials, it is hard for them to reach the targeted policy community members.

c. Pilot in Designated Geographic Areas

China is a big country, with differing development trends in different areas. Thus, to better use project resources, it is important to first pilot DID in one or several designated areas and then replicate the successful experience across the country.