

Development Path Construction of the Community-Based Child Protection

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ABSTRACT

With the continuous development of society, the emergence of new social problems makes children's growth and children's protection work face many new challenges. China's existing child protection mainly emphasizes family, school, social and judicial protection, and ignores an important environment for children to grow up — the community. This article proposes the establishment of a community-based child protection system, and specifically discusses the feasibility and specific methods of this system. It is necessary to establish a community-based, multi-subjective, and cooperative approach to build a friendly environment for children.

Keywords: community, children, protection

I. INTRODUCTION

The UN adopted the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" in November 1989, a legally binding international agreement designed to guarantee children's rights to create a good environment for children to grow up, which has been implemented for 30 years. Although in the past years, people around the world have joined hands to defend children's rights, protect children's childhood, and do a lot of work to make children live happier lives. However, the rights of millions of children every year, due to conflict and poverty deprivation, inequality, discrimination, violence and other factors, have seriously affected children's survival, health and overall development. Globally, half of adolescents have suffered violent injuries in and around schools due to a lack of a safe learning environment. In China, the media also frequently exposed cases of child abuse, cases of child abuse in kindergartens, cases of sexual abuse of teachers by training institutions, cases of students' collective food poisoning in schools, and the penetration of underworld forces by migrant children to minors, which aroused public concern about the protection of children. Children are the future of mankind. But nowadays, children are growing in an increasingly complex social environment, environmental pollution and climate change, large-scale population movements, network information security, and decline in mental health and other factors have made protecting children's rights and promoting children's development face great challenges. [1]

II. CHINA'S CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

A. Child protection

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) defines child protection as preventing or protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse — including commercial exploitation, the sale of children, child labor, and other harmful behaviors. [2] Child protection must not only ensure the basic survival and development needs of children, but also protect children from external harm. Among them, a distinction can be made between normal children and abnormal children. Both should enjoy the basic rights and interests of children, and abnormal children also enjoy special protection from laws and policies, society and their families. At the same time, because children have individual differences in their health, development, and psychology, and their living environments are different in characteristics, child protection needs to be tailored to the characteristics of different children. Therefore, child protection is defined as protecting children from harm and guaranteeing their basic normal lives through various institutional arrangements and specific actions. [3] The concept of child protection in the sense of social work is much smaller. It specifically refers to laws, social policies and services to prevent and respond to neglect and abuse of children. [4]

B. The evolution of China's child protection system

Child protection, as a major component of child welfare policy, is closely related to a country's socio-economic development level. With the rapid development of China's cultural economy after the

reform and opening up, people's values have also changed, and the country and society have paid more attention to children's education and growth. The Chinese government signed the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" in 1990, and passed the "Law on the Protection of Minors of the People's Republic of China" in 1991 to protect the legal rights and interests of minors and promote their physical and mental health. From 2000 to 2009, China's child protection system was initially completed. In 2006, China's first regulatory document specifically related to the safety management of primary and secondary schools was issued — "Measures for the Safety Management of Kindergartens and Primary and Middle Schools". 2010 is the first year of child welfare in China. The "Opinions of the General Office of the State Council on Strengthening the Protection of Orphans" provides that direct cash subsidies should be used to provide protection for orphans inside and outside welfare institutions. The "Outline for the Development of Chinese Children (2011-2020)" issued by the State Council in 2011 pointed out that the scope of child welfare should be expanded, and the transition of child welfare from a vacancy type to a mode of inclusiveness should be promoted. The main goals and strategic measures for child development are put forward from the four areas of children's health, education, legal protection and the environment. At the same time, it is clearly stated to "strengthen child service functions in urban and rural communities and establish community-based child protection work operating mechanisms". In September 2014, the "Administrative Measures on Foster Care for Families" was issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, making the assistance for orphans and disabled children formal. The "Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the People's Republic of China" was promulgated in December 2015. This law has played an important role in protecting children from violence. In June 2016, the State Council issued the "Opinions on Strengthening the Protection of Children in Distress", which for the first time made institutional arrangements for the protection of the rights and benefits of various children in distress. In February 2018, the Supreme People's Procuratorate issued the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening the Judicial Assistance Work for Minors", and the state and the government shall assume the responsibility for the children and family in dilemma due to the judicial process. [5]

C. Problems in China's child protection system

Laws and regulations related to child protection are insufficient. It mainly manifests as that the current legislation is decentralized and in low level. With the exception of a few specialized laws, norms on children's rights are scattered in different legal provisions. At the same time, there is no systematic and special child welfare legislation to provide legal basis for the benefits that children should enjoy. Existing

legislation does not provide effective preventive intervention and custody supervision for children in need, and lacks legislative social assistance to vulnerable families. The country lacks an authoritative organ responsible for child protection. At present, the main specialized agencies for child protection in China are the National and Local Working Committees for Women and Children, the Minor Protection Committee and its offices, and other child-related administrative agencies scattered in other child-related work departments. Local child protection services are lacking, and facilities, manpower, and funds in large cities are better than those in small and medium cities and rural areas.

Social work on children has a low degree of specialization and it is difficult to provide children with systematic, professional, and standardized services. Social work on children is an important part of the social welfare system. It is a service delivery system in the children's social welfare system. It connects service resources with children through direct and indirect means, and provides social services to children in need through an organized and professional approach. In recent years, China's social work on children has made great progress, but the current social awareness of social work on children is low. At the same time, because a professional child social work protection team has not yet been established, there is a lack of a relatively standardized and systematic operation process in the specific child protection service process, and the service process and service results are difficult to explain its professionalism.

III. COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL WORK SERVICE MODEL

Social work is a work system that is carried out within the framework of "people in the environment". As a part of the social environment in which people live, changes in any part of the whole will affect individuals. Individuals should reach a state of equilibrium with the external environment. If they lose this state, individuals will be in trouble or have needs. People and the environment are the interactive system that together promotes personal growth and development. Personal dilemma cannot be simply attributed to the individual or the environment. The dilemma should be originated from the inappropriate interaction between the individual and the environment. So, in addition to helping people to improve their ability to meet their needs, get rid of predicaments, and adapt to the environment, social work also helps people to establish and repair connections with resource systems, improve the social environment, and achieve positive interaction between individuals and the social environment, realizing the purpose of repairing social functions and improving service to the quality of life.

This requires the service object to be examined in a specific social system environment, rather than being separated from the social culture and ecological environment. "Community", as one of the important components of the social environment and the most direct platform for interaction between individuals and the environment, often becomes the most basic carrier for social work and services. The daily life of individuals is in the field of community, which makes the community become the interface that links micro-individuals, families and macro-environment: the external macro-environment allows people to gradually form unique personalities and characteristics, values, and behavioral norms through the life platform of the community, and at the same time, the individual's impact on the social environment is manifested in the individual's impact on the environment through actions in the community. When individuals and communities are in harmony, communities can provide individuals with material and spiritual support. When individuals or communities have conflicts or tensions, they will seriously deepen individual dysfunction or morbidity.

Therefore, community-based social work refers to social workers take the entire community as the base, select a community's public issues as a breakthrough in community work, comprehensively use macro, meso and micro levels of various specialties and their localized self-help and capacity building methods to work with the community to solve many problems of community decay such as people's livelihood and ecology, and rebuild a sense of community and sustainable life. [6] Community-based social work is based on the construction of community support networks. While working to improve the self-help and mutual assistance capabilities of community residents, it also promotes the improvement of residents' quality of life through the establishment of environmentally-friendly communities, and places individuals and the environment in a harmonious and balanced state. In the "community-based" work framework, the service goals, service processes, service methods, and service roles of social work are different from other work methods. In terms of service goals, more attention is paid to the realization of process goals, promoting the capacity construction of residents, establishing cooperative relationships between different groups in the community, and enhancing their ability and confidence to solve problems. In terms of service processes and methods, in addition to the three phases of community work of exploration and preparation, programme implementation and evacuation, evaluation and reflection, it also integrates various professional and local methods and technologies from different levels into the process of community practice. In terms of service roles, social workers are no longer a single rescuer role, but a role of integration. The social workers may directly face the service objects and

provide direct services during the work process. At the same time, the social workers may also need to fight for resources on behalf of the service objects or service as a resource linker to guide people to discover and use these resources.

IV. CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM FROM A COMMUNITY-ORIENTED PERSPECTIVE

From the perspective of China's existing child protection system, the main emphasis is on family protection, school protection, judicial protection and social protection. Such a protection system limits the main responsibility of child protection to parents or other guardians, schools and their teaching and administrative staff, the judiciary, and members of society. From the perspective of children's life scenes and possible risks, the four aspects of family, school, social environment and judicial system provide targeted protection for children. Therefore, the framework for child protection includes social and judicial protection at the macro level, community and social service protection at the meso level, and family and school protection at the micro level. However, with the development of society, the kernelization of the family structure and the weakening of the family's original functions, the role of the family in protecting children becomes more and more limited. The large and frequent movement of the population makes it difficult for children to obtain effective protection in fixed institutions such as schools. Social protection and judicial protection should play a more fundamental role and implement the various laws, regulations and policies to protect children. Whether it is a preschooler or a school-aged child, the community is the living area that children staying in for the longest time besides homes and schools. Children living in difficulty such as migrant children, left-behind children, and children with disabilities are more dependent on the community. They need long-term, high-quality attention and support from the community. The community environment plays an important role in the survival, development, and child protection. Therefore, the establishment of a community-based child protection system will effectively create a safe and protective living and development environment for children. That is, relying on the community environment, it is a must to give full play to the responsibilities and roles of community members and community organizations, and create a supportive environment to prevent and reduce child injuries and neglect.

A. Clarifying the rights and responsibilities of the child protection subject

The state is the main supporter of child protection and an important guiding and supporting force for the community-based child protection system. It is of great significance to improve the child protection legislation

and policy system, and clearly define the responsibilities of various government departments and social organizations in child protection, so as to enhance the applicability and operability of child protection. The community residents committees are the basic support of the child protection system. The community managers should change from managers to service providers, establish child protection files, and actively feedback and communicate the child protection information in the community under the jurisdiction with the government's social organizations. They should also promptly identify the causes of child injury in the community, and intervene and control in a timely manner. Social organizations are an important force for child protection. The non-profit, public welfare and professional characteristics of social organizations determine that they play an incomparable role of government departments in child protection and services. The government purchases services to allow social organizations to provide individualized and professionalized services to children and their families. Community residents are a supplementary force for child protection. Community residents are more aware of issues within the community. Community members care and take care of each other to provide support and protection for children. Community families and children are the foundation of child protection. The families are the children's natural umbrellas, and the families should take responsibility for child protection. Children in the community include not only resident children, but also migrant children. They play a dual role in protection work. They are both the child protection service target and the participant. In the process of protection, children start from their own feelings and experiences, participate in the construction of a child protection system, and change from other protection to self-protection.

B. Strengthening the promotion of child-oriented ideas and improving awareness of child protection at the community level

To achieve the priority of children, in addition to clarifying the government's main responsibility, it also requires the participation of the entire society. The protection and development of children requires the support and participation of the whole society, so the child-oriented concept and morals can be formed in the whole society. Children's rights and needs should be given priority in the formulation of laws and regulations, policy planning and allocation of public resources. The public facilities, cultural environment and public opinion atmosphere of the society must provide a safe and healthy child-friendly social environment for children's growth. At the same time, the public's awareness of the seriousness of child abuse and the importance of child protection shall be enhanced, and a good atmosphere of caring for and

protecting children shall be created to promote the healthy growth of children. At the same time, community members are most aware of the issues and needs of child protection in the community. It is necessary to emphasize self-help participation of community members in child protection work. It will also be important to carry out the value construction of child protection in the community, promote children's awareness of child protection through publicity and training on children's rights and child growth and protection, understand that child protection is the responsibility of all residents in the community, and at the same time, strengthen the control of community residents on risk factors for child harm and reduce the harm to children.

C. Establishing information and service platforms for community child protection

Children's homes in urban and rural communities promoted by the government have begun to bear fruit. Children's homes are community-based and equipped with full-time and part-time staff to provide effective protection services to children. The children's homes service teams are able to interact extensively with children and their families on a daily basis, so they should give full play to the role of children's homes in child protection. The first is the establishment of an information platform. It is quite necessary to establish and improve the collection and feedback mechanism of children's information in the community, including children's family information, school information and the characteristics of the children's own situation, so that relevant national policies and regulations and the provision of services and other information are timely transmitted to children and their families in need. The second is the establishment of a service platform. The service platform is the community's comprehensive service system that provides non-formal education, recreational games, sports activities, temporary care, health care, emotional and psychological support, family education guidance, etc. to the children in the community, and at the same time, staff can identify warning signs, according to children's development and special needs, transfer children to specialized service agencies for help, and help children stay away from services such as violence and exploitation. The platform links various resources and provides individualized and professional child protection services for children in the community in a variety of services and in various forms.

D. Integrating resources and coordinating cooperation between different departments

To provide systematic and professional protection for children, the principle of government-led, sectoral cooperation, and the participation of all sectors of society should be followed to establish a multi-sectoral

cooperative child protection mechanism. It is a must to rationally allocate existing public resources and various professional services so that schools, communities, families, medical and health institutions, social welfare institutions, social organizations, etc., can be integrated through the community platform. Children face different problems and needs at different growth stages, and the protection that children needs in different growth environments in their growth is different. Therefore, child protection services can effectively meet the needs of children through the rational distribution of social service agencies, systems, resources and plans. It will be a necessity to continuously link children with appropriate services to provide continuous services for individuals or families, organize related factors in a systematic way, and coordinate these services to meet the needs of children's survival, development and protection. The Community Child Protection Office, as the core hub of child protection in the community, is responsible for managing the daily child protection affairs in the community, harmonizing different agencies to cooperate with each other to avoid the absence, duplication and conflict of child protection work to provide integrated services, and organize and coordinate various services to meet the needs of children.

V. CONCLUSION

With the emphasis on child rights and child protection, various forces have been devoted to child protection. However, the continuous development of society and the emergence of new social problems have brought new challenges to the growth and the protection of children. Child protection in China has its particularity and complexity. It establishes a community-based child protection system, relies on the community, coordinates multi-sectoral resources, and builds a comprehensive and multi-dimensional service system to build a friendly survival and development environment for children, which is of great benefit for children's growth. However, the establishment of a community-based child protection work system is a complex task and requires a series of theoretical and practical amendments and developments.

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