



“The Future of Migrant Children”

The complementary relationship between the government and NGO

Inspired by the news on *Workers* in July

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Recent Educational Problems of Migrant Children in China

China always prefers the government to solve issues instead of the NGO's power due to its special political system. However, in some situations, NGOs also play important roles in the issues, and helping migrant children in education is one of the issues. The fact reveals the complementary relationship between the government and NGO.

The education of migrant children is a unique social problem in China, and this problem was caused by the tangle between China's reform and the household registration system.

“Because we do not have a local registered residence, the requirement of standard is much higher than normal. However, studying in a low teaching quality school does not help me to get in a high school”, one of our interviewees says.

The problem of migrant children is urgent because they do not have equal quality in education compared to local students. The reason is that the household registration hopes to keep people in one region. As the matter of fact, out of 35.81 million migrant children in China, only 69% migrant children are able to go to public schools (New Citizen Program). During another interview with a migrant worker, he frowned and said, “I only went to primary school, it is difficult for me to read the entrance examination requirement. I don't know what my son can do when he finishes secondary school. I really hope he can go to high school, but I cannot do anything helpful.”

Guangzhou was one of the earliest regions in China to implement the reform and opening-up policy. It also becomes the second-largest city with the migrant population ----- four out of nine children are migrants in Guangzhou. Due to the situation, problems of the migrant children in Guangzhou are serious and exigent. (Guangzhou Report 2018).

This essay will explore how the problems of migrant children are coped, and the contents will be explained in three parts: public policies about migrant children, the NGO's service about migrant children in private school, and the relationship between government and NGO while dealing with migrant children's problems.

Public Policies about Migrant Children

Firstly, people need to know why and how government establishes the policies to help migrant children.

The Five-Year Plan plays an important role in China's public policies. Since the Eleven Five-Year Plan, equal opportunity of education for migrant children has become an important issue. Throughout the recent Five-Year Plan, the basic coping strategy is to increase the number of schools, implementing and improving the quality of vocational education. The purposes of these policies are 1) to allow more migrant children to receive education in either public or private schools. 2) to help migrant children to receive quality education legally. 3) to ensure that the migrant children who cannot go to high school are able to learn a professional skill in vocational schools so that they can afford their lives after graduation.

In the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan, the government highlighted the improvement of vocational education. The government decided to strengthen the connection between schools and enterprises, which means to enhance students' skills to adjoin the requirements of companies. The plan helped them to find a suitable job immediately after they graduated from school.

To conclude, the government sets some policies to improve the quality of education for migrant children, and the most effective policies were to expand supply of education and apply the same requirement for migrant children to go to public schools.

The NGO 's Service for Migrant Children in Private School

As what is mentioned previously, even though the government invested many resources in improving the migrant children's problems, NGOs are also significant in addressing these issues.

Government and NGOs are complementary to each other, and two organizations together contribute to address the issue. Taking an NGO in Guangzhou as an example, the organization is one of the few NGOs which aims at junior high school students in Guangzhou, and the goal is to build the confidence and skills. The founder of NGO said: "They shouldn't be disqualified before they start their lives and have fought in the city."

This NGO has two programs, which are City Tour and Career Exploration. The main form is to hold activities at weekends and launch summer camps on holiday.



From the NGO activity about career planing. Ma Ningning 2018-12-05

The strategy of NGOs is primarily to work with private schools. The organization and schools cooperation, and they encourage students to participate in activities.

There are three main reasons why the NGO can run these projects. To begin, the NGO is established by two capable individuals with reputation, and they can attract students to be volunteers. They can help migrant children to use the charged public or private facilities for free. Secondly, with the development in the economy, more and more kindhearted people in China want to help migrant children. Last but not least, the NGO is legal, which can also increase credibility for the NGO. Therefore, both schools and parents are more probable to believe in the NGO.

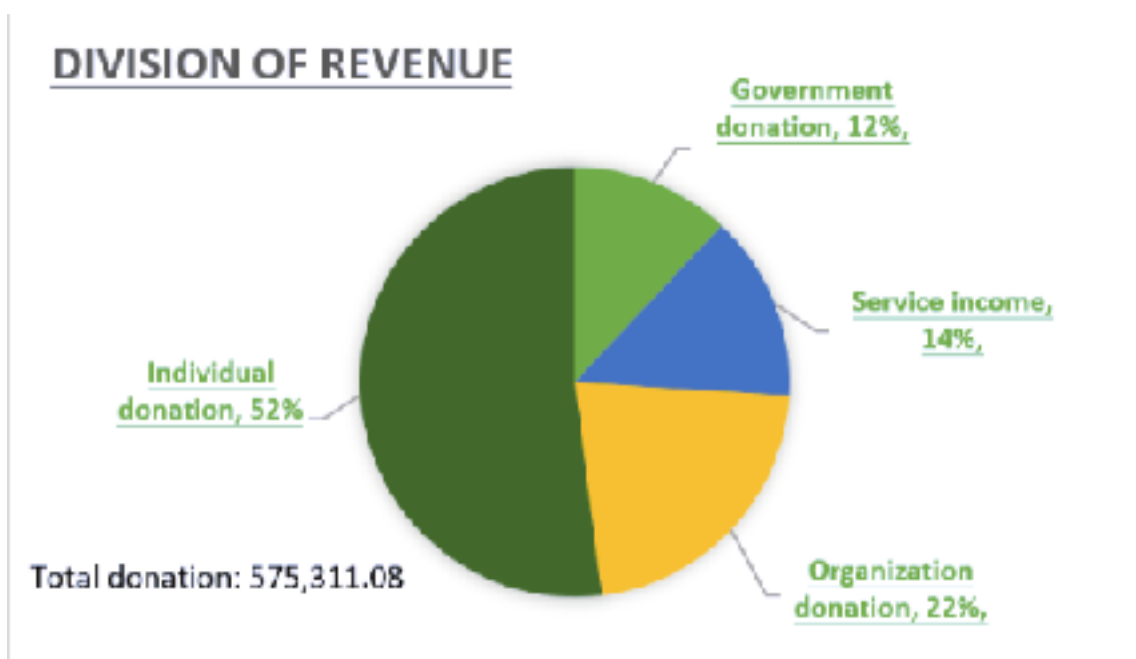
We did the questionnaires for 30 students in Grade 8 at a migrant worker children's school. Though the questionnaires collected regarding their future development, the result shows that 82% migrant children want to attend high school, and some of them want to get employment.

After one semester of vocational courses, we investigated the same group of students again.

The result reveals that about 74% students who are clear about the information of different types and the related professionals of technical schools. Twenty percents of the students can distinguish different technical schools, and all students understand how to distinct admission requirement of different technical schools.

To improve the course, 72% children think that un-examined subjects are also important, and almost half population indicates that they need more NGO classes. Twenty-one percent children think that the activities should include more diverse contents and majors.

Over the past decade, the NGOs have served nearly 5,000 migrant children and mobilized nearly 2,000 school volunteers, covering 15% of Guangzhou's migrant population. One of the NGO founders stated in an interview : “the service model has certain limitations. Owing to several factors, many students only participate in one-day activities, and the results of the activities are limited. Long-lasting and more courses will significantly increase the effectiveness of the intervention.”



The relationship between government and NGO while dealing with migrant children problems

In dealing with the migrant children, the Chinese government and NGOs have been acting differently. For most migrant children, they are not treated equally as their peers, such as the lack of education, health care, and other forms of support. So far, the government has put policies in place to enlarge the number of migrant children for access to education, such as the “Interim Measures for Schooling of Migrant Children in 1985”. Compared to the government, non-government organizations focus more on respect and awareness for migrant children. They support to integrate migrants into the school and to satisfy the needs of extracurricular activities.

Therefore, the relationship between government and NGOs is complementary. Government revises policies for migrant children about allowing them to go to public schools. NGOs provide activities for migrant children about exploring cities and future paths.

After knowing the efforts that the government and the NGO have been making, we can figure out three differences and some trends.

Firstly, from our observation, government tends to work on allowing students to attend public school, while NGOs focus on enrolling private schools.

Secondly, as the government do not fund NGOs, NGOs design activities independently.

Speaking of donations, government revenue from the tax, but NGO revenue the most from the public. Only 12% of NGO fund is from the government.

About the origin of cash support

From the NGO Year report 2019-01-30

Technically, according to their action, they have the same target, which is to help migrant children to become better people, including academic performance and social skills.

Thirdly, the NGO also has several operations with the local government. Through communicating with a trainee in the NGO, she said: “the government seems to care more about finishing required tasks and taking some photos. They did not pay too much attention to the effects of the activities.” So maybe the NGO will be a proper choice to provide extra curriculums for migrant children. When they do the activities, they reflect the student-oriented approach.

In future, the government can invest in NGO, which now 52% of income of NGO comes from the individual donation (the NGO 2018). The government will give the NGO some advice to improve the quality of the NGO service. Because government and NGO focus on the same group of people although the solutions may vary, they can communicate with each other to reduce the possibility of repeated work. The NGO, in this case, do much deeper research about the individual migrant child, so they can through a specific case to the general group need. President Xi also indicates that, “To succeed, it is necessary to cooperate” (Ming, 2018).

Eventually, all migrant children can go to public school to get a high-quality education, and we do not need NGOs anymore.

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