

---

## Report Supplement

### Mapping AIDS Agencies in China

A range of agencies play a role in getting treatment to children in China: the Chinese government, international nongovernmental organizations, and Chinese civil society. This briefing paper, a supplement to the report *“I Will Fight to My Last Breath”: Barriers to AIDS Treatment for Children in China*, outlines key agencies and their programs.

#### *Government Bodies and Policies*

In response to the urgent need for and high cost of pediatric medications, after a high-profile visit to China by President Bill Clinton in 2003, the Clinton HIV/AIDS Initiative established a relationship with the Chinese government.<sup>1</sup> In 2005, the Clinton Foundation began to assist the government in obtaining donations of pediatric drugs, and the state began providing them to children in Henan, and later gradually to other regions as well.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to pin down how many children are currently receiving this treatment. Like many countries, the Chinese government does not publish an official estimate of the number of children living with HIV/AIDS, though government figures indicated that there were 9,000 cases of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in 2005 alone.<sup>3</sup> This would not include children who became HIV-positive through hospital blood transfusions or other causes, nor does it include the number of cases of mother-to-child transmission in other years. Connie Osborne, a senior advisor on HIV/AIDS at the WHO in Beijing, estimates that there may be 10,000 children living with HIV in China today, and this number appears to be conservative.<sup>4</sup>

The number of children receiving ARV treatment is far less. In 2007, the Chinese government reported that a total of 805 children were receiving ARV treatment.<sup>5</sup> There are no reports from the Clinton Foundation of the number of children receiving treatment through its program.<sup>6</sup> Sources who had attended conference presentations by the Ministry of Health told Asia Catalyst that they had heard in the presentation that the Chinese government and Clinton Foundation are

---

1 “Clinton Foundation to Aid China with AIDS,” *China Daily*, April 30, 2004, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-04/30/content\\_327674.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-04/30/content_327674.htm).

2 “Bill Clinton visits AIDS Orphans in China,” *China Daily*, September 9, 2005, [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-09/09/content\\_476390.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-09/09/content_476390.htm).

3 Ministry of Health, Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, and World Health Organization, “2005 Update on the HIV/AIDS Epidemic and Response in China,” January 24, 2006, [http://data.unaids.org/publications/External-Documents/rp\\_2005chinaestimation\\_25jan06\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/publications/External-Documents/rp_2005chinaestimation_25jan06_en.pdf).

4 Connie Osborne (real name), senior advisor to the World Health Organization’s on HIV/AIDS in China, Asia Catalyst interview, Beijing, China, August 2008.

5 State Council AIDS Working Committee Office and the United Nations Theme Group on AIDS, “UNGASS Country Progress Report P.R. China: Reporting Period January 2006-December 2007,” January, 2008, p.i, [http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/china\\_2008\\_country\\_progress\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/china_2008_country_progress_report_en.pdf).

6 The Clinton Foundation declined to speak on the record for this report, stating that the foundation’s policy is not to participate in research projects.

---

currently providing ARV treatment to 1,100 children.<sup>7</sup> If this number is correct, it implies that at least 8,000 children in China may not be receiving the ARV treatment they need to survive.

The leading central government body in charge of prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in China is the National Center for AIDS/STD Prevention and Control (NCAIDS). NCAIDS assists the Ministry of Health with all HIV/AIDS related programs, and is responsible for organizing and implementing AIDS programs at both the national and international level. NCAIDS also conducts research, providing the data and scientific evidence that inform the development of policies on HIV/AIDS in China. NCAIDS organizes the surveillance and reporting systems for AIDS in China and is responsible for analyzing this information and making projections of future trends.<sup>8</sup>

It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health (MoH) to draft health regulations and policies and to coordinate the allocation of health resources throughout the country, and the MoH also manages local public hospitals in China.<sup>9</sup>

In 2004, the State Council AIDS Working Committee Office (SCAWCO) was established to formulate annual plans for national prevention and treatment programs.<sup>10</sup> There are two State Council national strategic plans currently in effect: the *Mid-Long Term Plan of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in China (1998-2010)*, and the *Action Plan for Reducing and Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS (2006-2010)*.<sup>11</sup>

These plans include benchmark goals for providing trained healthcare professionals, diagnosis, and treatment. Among the goals listed in *China's Action Plan for Reducing and Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS (2006-2010)* are: properly training seventy percent of village doctors and health staff in treating HIV/AIDS; providing mother-child prevention treatment to 85 percent of mothers living in counties where such treatment is available, and 90 percent of all AIDS patients with a need receiving treatment for opportunistic infections.<sup>12</sup>

#### *The United Nations*

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) serves as a coordinating body for all UN agencies' HIV/AIDS work in China, as well as that of international and domestic HIV/AIDS-related nongovernmental organizations.<sup>13</sup> In 2005, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNAIDS, and other United Nations organizations launched the "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS Global Campaign," while SCAWCO enacted its own "Campaign on Children and AIDS in China."<sup>14</sup> The five priorities of the SCAWCO campaign were pediatric

---

7 Connie Osborne interview, August 2008.

8 NCAIDS Website. "A Brief Introduction to the National Center for AIDS Prevention and Control, China CDC." <http://www.chinaids.org.cn/n443289/n443290/n447111/index.html>.

9 "Ministry of Health." October 9, 2005. [http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content\\_75326.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2005-10/09/content_75326.htm).

10 "State Council to fight AIDS Working Committee Office" Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China, <http://www.moh.gov.cn/publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/mohyzs/pzzjs/200804/32002.htm>.

11 The Mid-Long Term Plan of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in China (1998-2010) Accessed at <http://www.youandaids.org/unfiles/chinaplan.pdf>; China's Action Plan for Reducing and Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS (2006-2010). Accessed at <http://www.unaids.org.cn/uploadfiles/20081022171654.pdf>.

12 China's Action Plan for Reducing and Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS (2006-2010). Accessed at <http://www.unaids.org.cn/uploadfiles/20081022171654.pdf>.

13 UNAIDS is a joint venture of ten UN agencies that works in 80 countries worldwide. The new UNAIDS executive director, Mr. Michel Sidibé, recently set universal access to treatment and prevention in all member countries as UNAIDS highest priority. He also cited the promotion of human rights of people living with AIDS as essential in achieving that goal. ("New executive director sets universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support as top priority for UNAIDS." February 10, 2009.

[http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/PressCentre/PressReleases/2009/20090210\\_pr\\_southafrica.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/PressCentre/PressReleases/2009/20090210_pr_southafrica.asp).)

14 UNICEF China Website. "Children and AIDS Campaign at a Glance."

---

care, prevention of mother-to-child transmission, prevention among young people, fighting stigma and discrimination, and providing care for orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS.<sup>15</sup> The campaign emphasized the reduction of stigma and discrimination through programs such as “youth ambassadors” teaching their peers about HIV/AIDS, but also committed to organizing China’s government agencies to reach the goals of its national plans such as the *Mid-Long Term Plan of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in China (1998-2010)*.<sup>16</sup> UNICEF pledged to work with the Chinese government to help scale up treatment for children, provide access to pediatric drugs, and to develop better practices, testing, and care to prevent mother-to-child transmission.

*The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria*

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria one of the largest international donors operating in China, does not implement activities, but provides financing through grants to a Country Coordinating Mechanism. All applicants to the Global Fund establish a country coordinating mechanism, made up of representatives from government, donor groups, and civil society. The principal recipient of Global Fund money for all four grants to date is the Centre for Disease Control, which then distributes the money to implementing government agencies or civil society groups.<sup>17</sup>

The Global Fund made its first grant to China in 2004 to support treatment for victims of the blood scandal in the central provinces.<sup>18</sup> There have been three subsequent grants from the Global Fund: in 2005, to give treatment to members of vulnerable populations such as intravenous drug users and sex workers; in 2006, for stigma reduction and education programs; and in 2008, to mobilize and create a more “supportive infrastructure” for Chinese civil society.<sup>19</sup>

The Global Fund has steadily decreased the amount of funding given with each grant to China, from one hundred million dollars in 2004<sup>20</sup> to less than fifteen million dollars in 2008.<sup>21</sup>

The CCM has been an important mechanism for mobilizing of Chinese grassroots AIDS NGOs, but the process has often been marked by controversy. Domestic non-governmental organizations were to elect a civil society representative for the first time in 2006. However, the process was plagued with infighting, suspicion of inappropriate government involvement, and mutual recrimination among many of China’s leading AIDS activists.<sup>22</sup> Also at issue was whether the

---

[http://www.unicef.org/china/children\\_hiv\\_aids.html](http://www.unicef.org/china/children_hiv_aids.html).

15 UNICEF China Website. “Children and AIDS Campaign at a Glance.”

16 “Putting young people to the fore of the AIDS Response—Government Launches Campaign on Children and AIDS” UNICEF Website, [http://www.unicef.org/china/media\\_4742.html](http://www.unicef.org/china/media_4742.html); Lei, Zhang. “China launches youth AIDS campaign with a global impact.” UNICEF Website, September 21, 2006, [http://www.uniteforchildren.org/press/press\\_35983.htm](http://www.uniteforchildren.org/press/press_35983.htm).

17 “China and the Global Fund.” The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Website. <http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/country/?countryid=CHN&lang=en> (Accessed on February 25, 2009)

18 China and the Global Fund Website. “GRANT:HIV/AIDS-Round 3” <http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/grantdetails.aspx?compid=616&grantid=271&lang=en&CountryId=CHN>

19 The Global Fund, “China and the Global Fund; GRANT:HIV/AIDS-Round 4,”

<http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/grantdetails.aspx?compid=781&grantid=388&lang=en&CountryId=CHN> “GRANT:HIV/AIDS-Round 5,”

<http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/grantdetails.aspx?compid=986&grantid=480&lang=en&CountryId=CHN> “GRANT:HIV/AIDS-Round 6”

<http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/grantdetails.aspx?compid=1291&grantid=622&lang=en&CountryId=CHN>

20 The Global Fund, “China and the Global Fund; GRANT:HIV/AIDS-Round 3”

<http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/grantdetails.aspx?compid=616&grantid=271&lang=en&CountryId=CHN>

21 The Global Fund, “China and the Global Fund; GRANT:HIV/AIDS-Round 6”

<http://www.theglobalfund.org/programs/grantdetails.aspx?compid=1291&grantid=622&lang=en&CountryId=CHN>

22 Nick Young and Qian, Tina. “Governance spat plagues coordinating board of Global Fund, divides NGOs.” China Development Brief, May 31, 2006. <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/node/631>.

---

many “unregistered” grassroots AIDS groups should be included in the process. Chinese NGOs held new elections in 2007, in which the number of participating non-governmental organizations increased from seventeen in 2006 to 124.<sup>23</sup> At various times, NGOs have raised concern about the government’s role in the CCM.<sup>24</sup>

### *International Civil Society*

There are numerous international NGOs in China that work on the issue of AIDS care for children; this only provides summaries of a few key actors.

#### Save the Children

Save the Children UK is active in several provinces throughout China, and has program offices located in Kunming, Yunnan Province, as well as in Beijing. Save the Children offers direct assistance to communities, individuals, local authorities, and other civil society groups. It also acts as an advocacy organization, advising policy makers and disseminating information through its publications. In addition, it sometimes offers aid and reconstruction assistance after emergencies or other disasters.<sup>25</sup> In the area of HIV/AIDS, Save the Children works with both children affected by HIV/AIDS and the larger communities. They work with local health authorities in several provinces, including Yunnan, in carrying out such tasks as peer education and STD prevention training.<sup>26</sup> Their work in Yunnan also includes training workshops regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, village doctor training workshops, financial support for orphans, and other social services for children affected by HIV/AIDS. In addition to these direct services, Save the Children has also published many useful educational works and advocacy documents concerning children and HIV/AIDS in China.<sup>27</sup>

#### Médecins Sans Frontières

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is a humanitarian aid organization that provides emergency medical assistance and works to fill gaps where domestic health structures are insufficient. They also do advocacy and awareness raising work.<sup>28</sup> MSF’s HIV/AIDS related work in China aims to address gaps in the government’s treatment programs.<sup>29</sup> In 2003 in Hubei Province, MSF opened their first free clinic to provide services for people living with HIV/AIDS. This clinic provided training to local hospitals, voluntary counseling and testing, and opportunistic infection treatment.

---

<sup>23</sup> Amy Gadsden, “Earthquake Rocks China’s Civil Society.” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 2008, <http://www.feer.com/essays/2008/june/earthquake-rocks-chinas-civil-society>.

<sup>24</sup> For some examples, see “Request to the Secretariat of the Global Fund and the China Center for Disease Control to Disclose Information about the 6th Round Global Fund Contract Signing” , November 2, 2007, <http://www.yirenping.org/english/request.htm>; “China to Receive AIDS Grants Despite Dispute Over Advisory Board,” July 11, 2006, <http://www.thebody.com/content/news/art23806.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Save the Children China, “Who We Are,”

[http://www.savethechildren.org.cn/savethechildren/table/view/base/view.php?base\\_id=166](http://www.savethechildren.org.cn/savethechildren/table/view/base/view.php?base_id=166).

<sup>26</sup> Save the Children China, “What We Do-Health.”

<sup>27</sup> See: Save the Children, “HIV/AIDS, Children, and the Framework in China”

[http://www.savethechildren.org.cn/savethechildren/table/up\\_images/20070410103805826.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.cn/savethechildren/table/up_images/20070410103805826.pdf); Save the Children, The Difficulties We Face, <http://www.savethechildren.org.cn/publications/The%20Difficulties%20We%20Face.pdf>. The Difficulties We Face is a book of “words and pictures written, drawn and photographed by children, and about children in a place in China that is badly affected by HIV/AIDS.”

<sup>28</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “About MSF: The MSF role in emergency medical aid,” May 25, 2005,

[http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectId=130CB2BA-E018-0C72-097046C7C42A8573&component=toolkit.indexArticle&method=full\\_html](http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectId=130CB2BA-E018-0C72-097046C7C42A8573&component=toolkit.indexArticle&method=full_html).

<sup>29</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières, “IAR 2007: China: Why we are Here,” August 11, 2008,

[http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectId=B1C36957-15C5-F00A-25E39C9FA824F2BD&component=toolkit.article&method=full\\_html](http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectId=B1C36957-15C5-F00A-25E39C9FA824F2BD&component=toolkit.article&method=full_html).

---

Later that year, they opened a second clinic in Guangxi Province.<sup>30</sup> The aim of MSF is to turn the control of its clinics over to local health authorities once they are fully established. MSF also advocates to the Chinese government concerning the need for better access to treatment, especially the need for quality generic drugs and second-line ARV treatment.<sup>31</sup>

#### AIDS Healthcare Foundation

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) is a U.S.-based organization that provides medicinal services and advocacy in more than twenty countries worldwide, and claims to be the largest provider of HIV/AIDS medical care in the United States.<sup>32</sup> AHF's work in China began in 2006 with the opening of the "Green Harbor AIDS Treatment Center" in Shanxi province. This clinic provides voluntary counseling and testing services, as well as opportunistic infection treatment, free of charge. AHF also now works in Xinjiang and Guangxi provinces, and they report that they are currently providing treatment for 800 patients, seventy of which are children.<sup>33</sup> AHF claims that theirs are the only projects, with the exception of MSF, that provide all necessary services and treatments to AIDS patients free of charge.<sup>34</sup> In addition to their direct services, AHF does advocacy work in China on the need for increased access to necessary treatment.<sup>35</sup>

#### Family Health International

Formed in 1971, Family Health International (FHI) is a nonprofit organization active in international public health with a mission to improve lives worldwide through research, education, and services in family health. The organization manages research and field activities in more than 70 countries, including China. FHI aims to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, increase access to reproductive health services, and improve the health of women and children. FHI's China projects include a joint project with USAID in Yunnan to combat the spread of HIV in migrant populations, and a technical capacity-building project with injection drug users and sex workers.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Chinese Civil Society*

In the past ten years, the number of grassroots nonprofits in China has exploded, in part as a result of attention to and funding for work on HIV/AIDS. Senior Chinese government officials have acknowledged that domestic civil society plays an important role in China's AIDS response. In 2006, Vice Minister of Health Wang Longde remarked that government efforts alone would not be enough to fight AIDS in China. He pointed out that NGOs even had advantages over government in some areas, such as prevention.<sup>37</sup> Civil society groups can also have an impact through education, support, and care, by building community among those affected, through providing better knowledge at the local level, by advocating for the rights of infected and affected

---

30 Médecins Sans Frontières, "China: Providing AIDS care and helping street children," December 6, 2004, [http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=AE50003F-73D4-483C-9F8E9B7904126E57&component=toolkit.article&method=full\\_html](http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=AE50003F-73D4-483C-9F8E9B7904126E57&component=toolkit.article&method=full_html).

31 Médecins Sans Frontières, "China International Activity Report, 2007," December 13, 2007, [http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=C9617A28-15C5-F00A-25463F477033AC65&component=toolkit.article&method=full\\_html](http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?objectid=C9617A28-15C5-F00A-25463F477033AC65&component=toolkit.article&method=full_html).

32 AIDS Healthcare Foundation, "About Us." 2008 <http://www.aidshealth.org/about-us/>.

33 Adam Zhang, AIDS Healthcare Foundation staff person, Asia Catalyst interview, held in Beijing, China, July 2008.

34 Adam Zhang, Asia Catalyst interview, July 2008.

35 AIDS Healthcare Foundation, "AHF's activities in China," <http://www.aidshealth.org/patients/outside-the-us/countries/china/>.

36 "Family Health International," Profile on China Development Brief, <http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com/dingo/Province/Yunnan/1-45-0-62-0-0.html>.

37 "China encourages NGO's participation in fight against AIDS," Xinhua News Agency, March, 2006, <http://www.china-aids.org/english/News/News468.htm>.

---

people, and, as noted by UNAIDS, by generally “increas[ing] the impact – and cost effectiveness – of AIDS strategies.”<sup>38</sup>

As one example, Loving Source, a Henan-based organization, provides direct support to families with HIV, and helps roughly 800 Henan children to gain access to pediatric treatment. Organizations such as Ark of Love and Mangrove Support Group, both founded by people living with HIV/AIDS in China, have formed support groups for people with HIV/AIDS, and do advocacy and education to combat discrimination and stigma. Aizhixing Health Education Institute conducts research and policy advocacy on HIV/AIDS and the needs of vulnerable groups around the country. The Korekata AIDS Law Center in Beijing advocates for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS and provides legal services to them. More information on these and other groups is available at China Development Brief, [www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com](http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.com) and <http://www.cdb.org.cn>, and at China AIDS Information Network (Chinese language), [www.chain.net.cn](http://www.chain.net.cn).

Unfortunately, even as the number of civil society groups working on HIV/AIDS in China has increased in recent years, many obstacles remain. Onerous laws and regulations limit the registration of new non-governmental organizations, so that many must register as commercial enterprises and pay taxes to the government. Restrictions on expression and information limit their ability to mobilize and inform communities at risk of HIV infection.<sup>39</sup> The work of grassroots groups is also consistently hindered by systematic harassment, surveillance, censorship, threats, and arbitrary detention of activists.<sup>40</sup>

These problems have been particularly severe in Henan Province, where activists attempting to help children affected by HIV/AIDS or demanding ARVs treatment have been consistently harassed.<sup>41</sup> In 2007-08, as a result of both the international attention surrounding the Olympics and the increased need for second-line drugs, both activism and the resulting government crackdowns increased.<sup>42</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In the last decade, the Chinese government has given an increased amount of attention to its HIV/AIDS epidemic. The new laws, programs, and benchmark goals are all positive steps, as is the increased presence of international organizations working to address the issue. The increased number of domestic civil society organizations operating in China is also a positive trend. However, domestic civil society continues to be handcuffed by unnecessary regulations and restrictions, as well as outright harassment. If the Chinese government is to meet the goals it has set in its fight against AIDS, it must unleash this vital component to an effective HIV/AIDS response.

---

38 UNAIDS, “Focus on China’s AIDS Response,” September 19, 2008 [http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/FeatureStories/archive/2008/20080918\\_Focus\\_on\\_China\\_AID\\_S\\_response.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/FeatureStories/archive/2008/20080918_Focus_on_China_AID_S_response.asp).

39 Human Rights Watch, *Locked Doors: The Human Rights of People Living with HIV/AIDS in China* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003), available at: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/china0803/>

40 Human Rights Watch, *Restrictions on AIDS Activists in China*, June 2005, <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/china0605.pdf>.

41 Human Rights Watch, *Restrictions on AIDS Activists in China*, p.4.

42 See: Human Rights Watch, “China: Hosting Olympics a Catalyst for Human Rights Abuses,” August 21, 2008, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/08/21/china-hosting-olympics-catalyst-human-rights-abuses>; Asia Catalyst, “China: Expanding Crackdown on Health Websites,” March 6, 2008, [http://www.asiacatalyst.org/news/crackdown/website\\_crackdown\\_english.html](http://www.asiacatalyst.org/news/crackdown/website_crackdown_english.html); Jim Yardley, “Chinese Rights Activist is Jailed,” *The New York Times*, April 4, 2008.