

Project Title: A Study on the Re-emergence of Social Work and Social Work Education in the Chinese Mainland Amidst Tensions and Opportunities

Project Summary:

The project aims to realize and explain the inner logic, process and path of the social work development in Mainland China. Through different channels, such as archives searching, historical sites visiting and oral history of old social workers and social work educators, this three-year study has collected and preserved many valued data and files to help understanding broadly the history of social work in China. Moreover, the project explored why and how the profession of social work and the social work education varied in different historical era in Mainland China. For example, what had triggered the profession of social work and social work education was established in 1920's; what were the social and political factors that had facilitated a blossoming period in the 1940's; why did the social work profession and all social work education programmes vanished in PRC in the 1950's; and what had triggered the re-emergence of the social work profession in the 1980's. Through the extensive interviews conducted and the documents studied, it was found that there is a strong relationship between the impact of the numerous significant social work leaders that emerged during the different historical periods and the development of social work profession in Mainland China. The study is the first of its kind that has been undertaken in the Chinese mainland and has captured a rich repertoire of historical documents related to the development of the social work profession in China since 1920s. The project is highly significant and will provide important data upon which future generations of researchers and scholars will draw upon in their studies on social work in China. Besides the papers that have already been written or are being prepared, it is intended that a book will also be written on the historical development of social work in China based on the data collected from this study.