

NZCFS and Projects

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Dave Bromwich, North Island Vice-President

To begin this presentation, I would like to briefly set a background to our project work, and then give an overview of the range of projects we have delivered.

NZCFS projects have focused in areas where we have a historical link, and in rural community development. This is based on Rewi Alley in Shandan, Gansu, and Shaungshipu, Shaanxi; Kathleen Hall in Hebei, and Dr Don McKenzie in Guangxi. Within rural community development, we have also focused in specific sectors that link to these legacies. This is in cooperatives, community health and rural livelihoods. In the regions where we have been active, we have also delivered several post-disaster rehabilitation projects.

To illustrate the range of project activity delivered, I propose to focus on Shuangshipu, of Baoji district, Shaanxi Province. Shuangshipu is the name of the town belonging to Feng county, or Feng xian in Chinese.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s Rewi Alley established a large number of cooperatives to assist in the war effort, and Baoji was an important centre for the Gung Ho movement at that time. Rewi Alley also turned his attention to developing Bailie schools to train young people in the skills needed in the cooperatives. Shuangshipu was the main Bailie school at that time, when Rewi Alley lived in his 'cave' house. This school was relocated to Shandan in 1944 because of the threat to the children from the major upheavals caused by pressure of the Japanese war and Guomindang conscription of young men. The move to Shandan has been romantically depicted in the film "Children of the Silk Road", which, while not historically accurate, has had an effect on the value that Feng xian government place on the history of Rewi Alley and George Hogg in their county.

NZCFS returned to Shuangshipu in 1997 with a "Footsteps of Rewi Alley" 100th birthday tour group, led by Bill Willmott, and was met with great warmth and hospitality. In 2006, following NZCFS exec concern that no follow up had been made to this renewed connection, I was able to represent the society in an informal visit. I found the cave house in a state of disrepair.

On May 12 2008, the "Sichuan" earthquake caused major damage to a number of buildings in Feng County, although there was no loss of life. In August 2008, as part of NZCFS' earthquake response, Sally Russell and I visited Shuangshipu with Shaanxi Provincial Women's Federation (SXWF). The historical connection to Shuangshipu through Rewi Alley was a factor in selecting a project here as one of four NZCFS earthquake rehabilitation projects. This project was a contribution to the rebuilding of a health clinic in Honghuapu Township, and this was completed in September 2009. NZCFS Projects Tour visited this clinic in October 2009.

A second earthquake response project was also delivered through Shaanxi Women's Federation in Lueyang County of Hanzhong District, on the earthquake fault line south-west of Fengxian, and near the border with Sichuan province

Following successful collaboration, NZCFS established a Memorandum of Cooperation with SXWF for future cooperation, and in September 2009 held a joint workshop with Gungho (ICCIC- International Committee for the promotion of Chinese Industrial Cooperatives) in Baoji city, to promote cooperatives to WF personnel from throughout Shaanxi, as well as to discuss future projects.

At this workshop, two key areas of need were identified by the participants. One was for a rural women's health project, and a second was to improve the capacity of cooperatives to assist rural women in their various economic activity.

A major contribution from Auckland Branch made it possible for NZCFS, with Shaanxi Women's Federation, to apply for the "Rural Women's Health and Family Civilisation" project. This was approved in the final

round of the Koha fund before it was rescinded in 2010, with NZCFS contribution from Auckland Branch \$21,818, KOHA funding \$87,273, and Shaanxi WF \$57,457. While the application fund was cut from two years to one year, SXWF have committed to concluding the two year project.

SXWF had identified that various illnesses were affecting the productivity of 90% of rural women and also children's educational opportunities, and that much of this was caused by lack of awareness of primary health and basic household sanitation issues. This project was designed to address this situation in two counties of Baoji district, sixty-three villages in seven townships of two counties, ultimately targeting 100,000 households. One of the counties targeted is Feng Xian, and includes Honghuapu township, where NZCFS' post-earthquake clinic reconstruction project was implemented.

Through a three tiered Trainer of Trainer approach, backbone teams are established in each of the 63 villages. These backbone teams include personnel from the local clinics and Women's Federation, and have a role to educate and inform a threshold of 200 women in their respective villages in primary health care. This core of women then becomes a conduit for assisting and encouraging all households to adopt healthy practices, and develop knowledge of how and when to access medical services available.

A further element was added to NZCFS' inputs into health care in Feng xian through the selection of NZCFS' 4th Kathleen Hall scholar from this county. SXWF, through the local Feng County Women's Federation, selected a candidate for NZCFS' approval, and Wang Shuizhen is now completing her first year of a four year nursing degree at NW China Nationalities University in Lanzhou. In September 2010, when I attended one of the training sessions for the health project, Feng Xian Women's Federation took me to meet Wang Shuizhen's parents in their small village shop.

In mid 2010, a project was designed to address the second area of need identified in the 2009 SXWF workshop- to build capacity of cooperatives with a focus on rural women's livelihoods. Subsequently, a two year project titled **Establish model cooperatives in two districts of Shaanxi province, China** was approved under the new NZ MFAT Sustainable Development Fund, with funding total from SDF of NZ\$146,596: Year one \$108,137; Year Two \$38,459; and inputs from SXWF of \$52,174. (The new SDF provides 100% of project financing, with no monetary input required from NZCFS.) Implementation began after Spring Festival 2011.

This project identifies the value of cooperatives in rural communities to act as democratic grassroots organisations. These can assist households to effectively engage in the economy leading to improved income, and facilitate community development. Effective cooperatives are sustainable because they encourage self-realisation and ownership of economic and social improvement.

This project will establish eight model cooperatives in counties of Baoji and Hanzhong districts. By project end, it is expected that the model cooperatives and the local trainers will further enhance the capacity of another 16 cooperatives, and this extension will continue in the future, post-project. An end of project workshop will demonstrate the effective cooperative model to people from other districts.

The initial eight model cooperatives selected include both agricultural producer cooperatives and women's handicraft cooperatives. Included is the "Feng Xian Forest Musk Deer Breeding Association" in Feng County. This industry is being developed in Feng xian, where the numbers of forest musk deer are the highest in all of NW china. The Association currently has 153 members in 12 townships, and more than 1750 musk deer.

The project will train local trainers selected from the local Economic Management Station and Women's Federation, as well as cooperative leaders, for each of the eight model cooperatives. Training will be delivered in cooperative management, financial planning, marketing and contract law, and in participatory approaches to enhance membership. Trainers for this programme come mainly from Gung Ho trainers in Shandan, where we have already delivered 3 cooperative development projects. Shandan is now established as a model county for cooperative promotion, with a cooperative training programme based at Shandan Bailie School. The new project in Shaanxi will include a field study visit to Shandan later this year for Shaanxi trainee participants to meet and share experiences with NZCFS' project cooperatives there.

This fits NZCFS overall programme for establishing a training programme for cooperative promotion based at SBS, and to expand the programme in the north-west of China. Shaanxi is the first province outside Gansu that NZCFS has targeted, but there are already some other international cooperative promotion projects that have used Shandan and the SBS facilities for field study visits, with training workshops delivered at SBS.

If we return to the background for projects, and consider NZCFS' legacy and the base for our project work, it is fitting that the first area to expand cooperative promotion outside Shandan and Gansu includes Baoji district, which was an important base for Gung Ho and Rewi Alley in the late 1930s and 1940s. The project delivered in Feng xian described here is interconnected to an NZCFS programme of development for NW China. In particular, strong links exist between Rewi Alley in Shuangshipu and Shandan, and to NZCFS cooperative development projects in contemporary China.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly address a frequently asked question: "Why does NZCFS, and NZ government fund projects in China, when the Chinese government is wealthy?" The immediate answer is because our project outcomes make a difference to the lives of our project beneficiaries. In the three Shandan/ Zhangye projects alone, we can claim that we have improved the lives of 4,000 to 5,000 people.

But this alone is not enough. NZCFS project strategies aim to demonstrate models and approaches that can encourage project duplication downstream that is funded by local governments. SXWF want a successful health project outcome that can leverage local government funds to use this model project throughout rural Shaanxi in the future. The SXWF cooperative project is designed to assist other cooperatives beyond the initial eight models, and to encourage local government in other districts of Shaanxi Province to adopt the model. In this way, the NZCFS project can develop the initial training inputs required to facilitate improvements to cooperative management in Shaanxi Province.

In the future, NZCFS' project approach needs to continue to be flexible, and respond to the way we can have the best impact. This requires working closely with our partners, with our funders, and within opportunities available through Chinese policy direction.