

# **Developing a Curriculum on Civil Society and Nonprofit Organizations in China**

**Proposal Submitted to the Harvard China Faculty Grants Program FY 2011**

**By**

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## Abstract

The nonprofit sector in China is at an unprecedented historical juncture. The year 2008 has been called the "first year of philanthropic China." Over 400, 000 nonprofit organizations are currently registered in China, reflecting an average annual increase of 40% over the past decade. With the promulgation of the Regulation on Foundations in 2004, private citizens in China began to be allowed to set up their own foundations. Since then the country has seen an average annual increase of 50% in numbers of such foundations. Students of Chinese studies, public policy or social sciences cannot afford to lose sight of the social, political, cultural and career implications of the rising nonprofit sector in China. Currently, Harvard lacks a course dedicated to learning about this sector for its own merits.

We propose building a cross-discipline curriculum about the development of the citizen sector in China, focusing on understanding the uniqueness of China's nonprofits against the special political, economic and cultural backgrounds of China. Since there is currently no known Harvard faculty focused on researching or teaching this subject, we plan to use three semesters, one summer and one winter break to build the curriculum through five steps:

1. We will start with a series of non-credit seminars in fall 2010, through which we will convene existing expertise at Harvard and beyond to jointly build a systematic understanding of this sector, from the perspectives of history, public policy, political science, sociology, anthropology and law. At the guidance and supervision of the PI group, a project manager will coordinate pre-selected panels of speakers, to examine the definition of civil society in the Chinese context, probe the historical and cultural roots of philanthropy in China, account for the evolution of relevant policies, explore the roles of nonprofits in different fields of life in China, and project the development of the sector against the international trends and interactions. This seminar will help nurture faculty interest in this subject, gauge student interest and needs, and build the foundation for the curriculum development.
2. The faculty member Interested to establish the curriculum (Tony Saich) will take the following spring semester to gather course materials, develop case studies, and build a systematic curriculum.
3. In order to help nurturing students' interest and expanding their interactions with the field, we will provide information and orientation sessions for students to have internship with nonprofits in China during the summer of 2011.
4. A for-credit course will open in fall 2011 for registration across the university.
5. In Jan 2012, we will organize a one-week field trip and workshops in China for students to exchange with nonprofit leaders, policy makers and scholars in China. We will provide fellowship to 10 top students from the earlier class.

The Nonprofits in China Domain of Practice at the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations will provide programmatic and administrative support in building the team of speakers, supporting teaching faculty and organizing field trips and workshops in China. A number of Harvard faculty members from different schools and leading practitioners have been contacted or identified as potential seminar speakers. We have also lined up a list of partners in China, including nonprofit organizations, foundations, universities and government agencies, to host workshops and field trips in China.

The estimated budget needs from the Harvard China Fund are \$155,982 from July 2010 to January 2012.