

Title: Do Most Things With Least Money——Ningbo Try to Resolve the Problem of “Getting Old Before Getting Rich”

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Abstract:

For the problem of “getting old before getting rich” occurring in Chinese-style aging society, the great hope or expectation is placed on the “aged at home” pattern of Haishu district of Ningbo, and its cost is only one quarter of traditional old-age institutions.

The so-called aged at home refers to that old people live at home and the society provides them old-age services in the form of door-to-door service and day care of community, including life care and routine nursing etc., and it has integrated the aged at home with social old-age service.

The government of Haishu district as a pilot has started providing one-hour free door-to-door service to more than 600 poor and lonely old people above 80 years old in this district, following the standard of 2000 Yuan per person a year since March 2004. This kind of service is purchased from Starlight Old-age Association of Haishu district, which is an unprofitable organization, and Haishu district annually invests 1.5 million Yuan in services for the aged at home, of which 1.2 million Yuan is used to purchase service and 0.3 million Yuan is used for daily expenditure of Starlight Old-age Association.

After the government budget is appropriated to the old-age association, the latter can rely on the community to organize and operate —— the old-age association transfers the wages of social workers of the aged at home to the community before two months in advance, and after having provided the old people services, the social workers can go to the community to draw their wages monthly. If the old-age association responsible for training and supervision of the social workers finds out a service not fully provided, the corresponding part would be deducted from the wages by the old-age association. If the old people eat meals in the community, volunteers of the community will take care of them.

Most volunteers are just retired at home, they are responsible for food purchase and cooking, the working time can be deposited through “volunteer bank”, and they can apply for the equivalent service to the community when they are aged. The old people eating meals in the “Day Care Center” is required to pay 200 Yuan for meal cost monthly.

This attempt of Ningbo makes Wang Shizong who is a professor of Governmental Management Department of Zhejiang University very excited, “the government authorities ‘unrelated to numerous social influences in a wide scope’ and ‘alone’ has disappeared forever”, he wrote in May this year.

For the new system of Haishu district, there are many well-meaning comments. “Its NGO is still not very pure.” Dr. Wu Yuxia of Zhejiang University says, “Only this one, so the government has no

other choice". Xu Yiping, the deputy director of Haishu district in charge of civil administration, also admits that "the system still exists many reflections of government", although which are being weakened.

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