



***More Than Half the Sky: Building Human Capacity—
Social Work With Rural Women in China***

A Study Guide for Social Work Educators and Students

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Overview: <i>More Than Half the Sky</i>	5
Topics	
Modernization	6
PRA Method.....	7
The Case: Empathy	8
Capacity Building.....	9
Organizing Women	10

Introduction

This guide has been developed to assist social work educators and students in using films from the CSWE film festivals in their classrooms. It is one in a series of CSWE curriculum resources designed to enhance the teaching and learning of social work concepts.

We welcome your comments as the library of these resources is refined and expanded.

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Overview: *More Than Half the Sky*

Film Information

Title: <i>More Than Half the Sky: Building Human Capacity—Social Work With Rural Women in China</i> Date: 2010	Co-Directors: Tuula Heinonen and Maria Cheung Director: Garry Beitel Producer: Barry Lazar
Running Time: 20 minutes	Distributor: reFrame Films, www.reframe-films.com

Context: Rural social work service in three Chinese provinces is profiled. The film details experiences and challenges of women in China. Collaboration, creativity, and resilience are demonstrated across the project from administrative levels to client support groups.

Themes:

1. Social Entrepreneurship and Social Work
2. Community Development
3. Training of Trainers
4. Gender Inequality
5. Rural Services for Women

Time Code	Topic	Central Quote	Salient Themes
1:25–3:48	Modernization	“People don’t know what to do... They may need help.”	Caregiving, Female Sandwich Generation, Childcare and Eldercare
3:49–6:46	PRA Method	“...Participatory Rural Assessment...”	Assessment, Intervention, Citizen Experts
6:47–9:28	The Case: Empathy	“We should show our love, and life will become easier.”	Social Worker Training, Family Intervention, Caregiver Support, Support Groups
9:29–14:21	Capacity Building	“They start to listen.”	Training and Social Capital, Needs Assessment, Advocacy, Mutual Aid Groups
14:22–19:22	Organizing Women	“There’s a synergy in the sharing.”	Community Organizing, Advocacy, Ecological Systems Theory, Change Process

Topics

Modernization

Time Code: 1:25–3:48

Central Quote: “People don’t know what to do... They may need help.”

Themes: Caregiving, Female Sandwich Generation, Childcare and Eldercare

Abstract: The challenges placed upon women in China's villages are introduced. Concepts of progress and modernization are presented in context. Families continue to require engagement even while men work outside the village.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the challenges of rural village life in China especially for women.
2. Define “sandwich generation” in the context of the daily pressures the term represents.
3. List some results of modernization and city-based employment on rural life.

Discussion Questions

1. List some challenges that may be experienced by a woman raising children and caring for elderly parents. How would you handle the sometimes competing pressures?
2. Compare and contrast two different physical living environments such as rural vs. urban, college campus vs. community, and inner city vs. suburban.
3. Which physical living environment do you like best? Explain your reasons.

Suggested Readings

- Berdes, C. (2012). Portraits of intergenerational caregiving [Review of *The Help*, *Living With Herbie*, and *The Sandwich Generation*]. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, *10*, 440–442. doi: 10.1080/15350770.2012.724315
- Bianchi, S. M. (2011). Family change and time allocation in American families. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *638*, 21–44. doi: 10.1177/0002716211413731
- Mummert, G. (2010). Growing up and growing old in rural Mexico and China: Care-giving for the young and the elderly at the family-state interface. In N. Long, J. Ye, & Y. Wang (Eds.), *Rural transformations and development: China in context—The everyday lives of policies and people* (pp. 215–252). Northampton, MA: Elgar.

PRA Method

Time Code: 3:49–6:46

Central Quote: “...Participatory Rural Assessment...”

Themes: Assessment, Intervention, Citizen Experts

Abstract: The film demonstrates the PRA method. The vastness and complexity of rural life is revealed. Viewers witness the technique in practice along with examples of outcomes.

Learning Objectives

1. Outline the considerations of the Participatory Rural Assessment technique.
2. Identify the complex issues of rural life in China.
3. Review outcomes associated with the PRA technique.

Discussion Questions

1. What would you list as the goals of development research?
2. Do your goals change when considering international development? Why or why not?
3. What do you think the value is in identifying citizen experts?

Suggested Readings

- Daniell, K. A., Máñez Costa, M. A., Ferrand, N., Kingsborough, A. B., Coad, P., & Ribarova, I. S. (2011). Aiding multi-level decision-making processes for climate change mitigation and adaptation. *Regional Environmental Change, 11*, 243–258. doi: 10.1007/s10113-010-0162-0
- Green, M. (2010). Making development agents: Participation as boundary object in international development. *Journal of Development Studies, 46*, 1240–1263. doi: 10.1080/00220388.2010.487099
- Müller-Mahn, D., Rettberg, S., & Getachew, G. (2010). Pathways and dead ends of pastoral development among the Afar and Karrayu in Ethiopia. *European Journal of Development Research, 22*, 660–677. doi: 10.1057/ejdr.2010.37

The Case: Empathy

Time Code: 6:47–9:28

Central Quote: “We should show our love and life will become easier.”

Themes: Social Worker Training, Family Intervention, Caregiver Support, Support Groups

Abstract: A case is presented. The case illustrates both the challenges of a female sandwich generation and the approach of caseworkers. Administrative recognition of the need for new training models also is discussed.

Learning Objectives

1. Identify new ways of interacting and case management implemented after social worker training.
2. Evaluate the application of empathy in the case study.
3. Explore the evidence that supports new social work training models.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree with the approach to intervention described by the social worker? Why or Why not?
2. What additional resources or options would you suggest for the woman described in the case?
3. Identify resources in your community that may assist women in the sandwich generation. What gaps in services can you identify?

Suggested Readings

- Chien, L.-Y., Chu, H., Guo, J.-L., Liao, Y.-M., Chang, L.-I., Chen, C.-H., & Chou, K.-R. (2011). Caregiver support groups in patients with dementia: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, 26*, 1089–1098. doi: 10.1002/gps.2660
- Ducharme, F. C., Lévesque, L. L., Lachance, L. M., Kergoat, M.-J., Legault, A. J., Beaudet, L. M., & Zarit, S. H. (2011). “Learning to become a family caregiver”: Efficacy of an intervention program for caregivers following diagnosis of dementia in a relative. *The Gerontologist, 51*, 484–494.
- Grant, J. S. (2012). Social problem-solving partnerships with family caregivers. *Rehabilitation Nursing, 24*, 254–260. doi: 10.1002/j.2048-7940.1999.tb02192.x

Capacity Building

Time Code: 9:29–14:21

Central Quote: “They start to listen.”

Themes: Training and Social Capital, Needs Assessment, Advocacy, Mutual Aid Groups

Abstract: Once a new empathy-based training is implemented, the clients themselves begin to implement a more empathetic approach to each other. Caseworkers bring their own creativity and match that with the tendency toward mutual aid within the villages. The result is a cultural deepening as well as social capital with financial gains.

Learning Objectives

1. Define mutual aid.
2. Articulate how casework methods and values transfer to client behavior.
3. Identify methods that case worker creativity can be used to support client outcomes.

Discussion Questions

1. What would you say was the origin of the new approach to casework in the rural areas: women, villages, government, researchers, etc.? Explain your answer.
2. What role do you think empathy plays in the process of casework?
3. To what do you attribute the increased empathy expressed in action by clients in their mutual aid groups?
4. How can you use your knowledge or interests creatively to improve the opportunities for your clients?

Suggested Readings

Adams, A. (2011). Between modernization and mutual aid: The changing perceptions of voluntary sports clubs in England. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 3, 23–43.

Pelletier, D. L., Kraak, V, McCullum, C., Uusitalo, U., & Rich, R. (2000). Values, public policy and community food security. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 17, 75–93.

Rose, R. (2010). Building on ideas and maintaining a dialogue for change. In R. Rose (Ed.), *Confronting obstacles to inclusion: International responses to developing inclusive education* (pp. 293–296). New York: Routledge.

Organizing Women

Time Code: 14:22–19:22

Central Quote: “There’s a synergy in the sharing.”

Themes: Community Organizing, Advocacy, Ecological Systems Theory, Change Process

Abstract: Principal investigators discuss the outcomes and future of the project. The results are undeniable, and government entities have taken note. An opportunity to explore the ecology of advocacy and social work practice exists.

Learning Objectives

1. Outline the ecological impacts of participatory research in rural areas.
2. Articulate the benefits of replicable research and responsible evaluation of interventions.
3. Explore the synergistic effects of multiple social work practice contexts and application of multiple competencies.

Discussion Questions

1. After watching this film, has your appreciation of the role of research in social work practice changed? Why or why not?
2. Consider the individual change and social change that is occurring in the rural communities in China. What parallel example could you create in your community?
3. Identify a problem and an area in which you would like to intervene. What would be your step-by-step approach to the intervention informed by this film?

Suggested Readings

Peeters, J. (2012). The place of social work in sustainable development: Towards ecosocial practice. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 21, 287–298. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2397.2011.00856.x

Santiago, E., Ferrara, J., & Quinn, J. (2012). *Whole child, whole school: Applying theory to practice in community school*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Seidman, E., & Tseng, V. (2010). Changing social settings: A framework for action. In M. S. Aber, K. I. Maton, and E. Seidman (Eds.), *Empowering settings and voices for social change* (pp. 12–37). New York: Oxford University Press.