

Promoting Women's Equal Rights and Participation in Local Governance

The Challenge

China has demonstrated its political will to implement its commitment to gender equality through the adoption of a number of national plans and programmes on the advancement of women, as well as through following the reporting requirements under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, despite China's formal commitments and efforts at central and local level, gender inequalities persist. While China has been successful in attaining most of the MDGs in the past few years, China's National MDG Report indicates that progress in achieving the Goal 3 on gender equality and empowerment of women has been mixed. In August 2006, the UN CEDAW Committee reviewed China's combined 5th and 6th reports. In the CEDAW recommendations, rural women's access to leadership positions has been emphasized as one of the areas of concern that need further improvement.

Women in China experience low political participation at all levels, especially at the village and township level. Statistics indicate that only 1% of village committee chairs are women. There is also concern over the fact that this level of participation seems to be declining at the village level.

The Response

Making gender equality a reality is a core commitment of UNDP as it lies at the heart of human development and human rights. Gender equality is inextricably linked to good governance, since women make up half of the population but have historically been under-represented and discriminated against. Equality of political participation is important to ensure that both men's and women's interests are represented in governance processes and institutions.

This project, supported by the UNDP Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund, promotes good governance and gender equality by strengthening the role of women in the decision-making processes, and engaging stakeholders in policy dialogues with key government institutions on the issues related to more balanced participation in local governing structures, justice and human development.

Achievements

At the local pilot level, this project supports local women CSOs to build the capacities of women elected to village committees. Training will strengthen their leadership and management skills, and support their networks by bringing them together with local women's organizations, activists and experts. The project will also work to increase gender awareness amongst local leaders and decision makers to create an enabling environment for women's participation in local governance. At the policy level this project will support women activists, gender experts and CSOs to engage the government in policy dialogue on good governance, gender equity, and how to follow up on the CEDAW Committee recommendations. All project activities will be carried out by civil society organizations, thereby strengthening their capacity in this area and bringing them into close cooperation with government ministries like the All China Women's Federation and the National Working Commission Women and Children.

At A Glance

Start Date: March 2007
 End Date: December 2008
 Implementing Partner(s): China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE)
 Project ID: 00054242

UNDAF Goal: Social and economic policies are developed and improved to be more scientifically-based and human-centered for sustainable and equitable growth

MDG Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

CPAP output: 5.1: Capacity for gender responsive analysis created, and 3.2: Increased participation of civil society in the design and implementation of development policies/programmes

Total Budget:	US\$	150,000
UNDP:	US\$	150,000

Project location(s): Beijing and Shaanxi

To contribute to this initiative, or to find out more about the programme, please visit our website or contact Ms Merethe Borge, Programme Manager, at (86-10) 8532 0764 or mereths.borge@undp.org

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