

Making Gender Equality a Reality:

UNDP **AND** Gender



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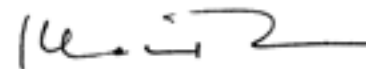
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Foreword

Among Millennium Development Goals, gender equality is not only an end in itself, but integral for the achievement of the other MDGs, and thus is a continuing priority for UNDP globally and in China. Over the last decades, China has made remarkable progress towards achieving gender equality. Women's political participation has seen a steady improvement; the overall gender disparities in education have been reduced; and women have more equal rights with respect to employment and social security. Despite these important gains made for women and by women in China in past decades, the 2008 Millennium Development Goals Progress Report reminds us that gender inequality remains to be a challenge. In general, the political participation of women in decision-making and administration still lags behind that of men. Stereotyped working and living patterns are preventing women from realizing their full potential as equal partners. Moreover, gender imbalances at birth due to preference for boys can potentially hinder the harmonious development of society, over the long-term.

The United Nations Development Programme in China has been supporting efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals, and to advance gender equality and women's empowerment as a cross-cutting theme in all UNDP's work, such as Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction, Climate Change, HIV/AIDS, and Crisis Prevention and Recovery. *Making Gender Equality a Reality: UNDP and Gender* illustrates how UNDP China is working for the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides an overview of UNDP China's comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy and provides a snapshot on the practices and experiences on gender mainstreaming and empowerment in UNDP China programmes. The pamphlet shows how UNDP China engages in specific interventions that address the most pressing issues that lead to the empowerment of women, reduction of their vulnerabilities, building their leadership potential, and protecting their human rights.

Realizing gender equality is a continuing and challenging task and we still have a long way to go. We pledge to enhance our efforts with the Chinese government, civil society and all stakeholders for gender equality and women's empowerment, and for improving lives of both the women and men.



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Content

3 Gender and UNDP

3 Gender in Practice

UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan

4 Gender as Participation

Promoting Women's Equal Rights and Participation in Local Governance

Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in China

7 Gender from Partnerships

Post-Disaster Early Recovery and Disaster Risk Management

Developing Innovative Partnerships for the Prevention and Control of HIV among MSM and Promoting Community Ownership in Achieving Universal Access

9 Gender for Policy

Preventing and Responding to Domestic Violence in China through a Multi-sectoral Approach

Supporting an All-Around Xiaokang Society

Gender and UNDP

China is one of the world's most dynamic and complex societies undergoing rapid transformation. But despite such economic growth and reform, social development has not kept pace, and critical challenges remain. The 2008 Millennium Development Goals progress reports highlight gender equity and equality as a key deficit for the country. Growing gender gaps are evident across areas of economic development, political representation and societal attitudes. Although formal commitments have been made at the central and local levels, gender disparities persist.

Gender equality often refers primarily to the rights and empowerment of women, but sometimes neglects the complex relationship between women and men that influence their disparate experiences and needs. UNDP recognizes gender equality to mean that women and men have different

priorities, face different constraints, and contribute to development in different ways, but that each are accorded equal social value, rights and responsibilities, and access to resources. It is an irreducible condition for inclusive, democratic and sustainable development, and as such, an integral part of UNDP's mission towards fostering human development.

UNDP is strongly committed to gender equality, and affirms this approach throughout its development interventions. The country office adopts a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy that prioritizes gender as a cross-cutting theme, and employs a mutually complementary approach that focuses on mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes to redress inequalities and improve the lives of women and men; and investing resources in specific interventions that address

the most pressing issues and lead to the empowerment of women, reduction of their vulnerabilities, building their leadership, and protecting their human rights.

Gender equality is not just a product, it is also a process, one of attending to the context of relationships, identifying existing or potential differences between women and men, and articulating hidden or overlooked disparities with the aim of ensuring development benefits are accessible to both. But more than that, it is a practice, in recognizing that achieving gender equality effects positive change, and makes tangible impacts on the lives of both women and men. It is this practice that marks the core mission of UNDP and to which it strives; it is the recognition that without gender equality, there can be no just human development.

Gender in Practice

In order to practice gender equality, it is first necessary to understand it. UNDP is committed to ensuring this not only as a core mission of its programmes, but also as a key practice among those responsible for implementing activities and in leadership and/or decision-

making roles. The country office provides opportunities for its own staff and partners to enhance and develop their capacity to effectively mainstream gender into development interventions. This speaks not only to the practice of gender equality, but a

deeper understanding of its role in sustaining equitable development. In doing so, the practice of gender equality ensures a more positive impact on the lives of both women and men.

UNDP Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan

Gender equality is a global priority for UNDP; as such, each country office has implemented a system to ensure that staff and partners have the skills and knowledge to effectively mainstream gender into development interventions. In China, the country office has initiated a range of activities, including the establishment of a Gender Task Force, in order to provide guidance and enhance gender equality throughout both programming and operations.

The task force is comprised of members of the UNDP staff, and maintains both programmatic and operational oversight in the office. It serves as a resource clearinghouse, offering support to the staff to ensure that gender is not only mainstreamed throughout country

programmes, but also integrated into key operations such as human resources guidelines, accounting and budgeting, and management policies. A series of gender training workshops have also been carried out within the office to provide a more comprehensive understanding of both gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming. These trainings cover basic concepts, causes and factors of gender discrimination, gender stereotypes and sexual harassment. Further training has been conducted in sector specific thematic areas with a regional gender advisor, covering gender mainstreaming in governance, poverty alleviation and environmental issues.

These initiatives are designed to ensure that members of UNDP staff are able to develop their own capacity on gender mainstreaming and have a clear understanding of gender sensitivity. More importantly,

these trainings are extended to counterparts and partners to further effective programming. A joint training on gender responsive budgeting was carried out with UNDP staff members and key government counterparts, helping to foster enhanced cooperation and collaboration on country programmes.

These steps are important towards ensuring that gender equality is not just a concept, but also a practice; this means that both UNDP and counterparts are able to mainstream gender into development interventions, and apply gender sensitivity to the design and implementation of programmes. But more than that, it is the understanding that gender equality is an integral part of sustainable development, and practice makes perfect.

Gender as Participation

UNDP is committed to safeguarding the equal participation of both women and men in development interventions, and to ensuring their inclusion in leadership roles and decision-making processes. In its programmes, UNDP attends to the different needs and challenges that affect women and men, and tailor the interventions to effectively ensure gender equality within the local context. This means that

women and men are not only empowered to effect change in their own lives, but of those in their communities.

Promoting Women's Equal Rights and Participation in Local Governance

There is an old saying in China that asserts, "women hold up half the sky." Yet women remain under-

represented if not invisible in many sectors of the political process in the country. Recent studies show that women occupy only 8.1 percent of ministerial positions and 12.6 percent of director general positions; at the village levels, the participation is even lower, declining from 16.1 to 15.1 percent in 2004. The marginalization of women's political participation not only impedes the promotion of good



Gender equality isn't just a process, it's a practice; it is understanding that by integrating gender sensitivity into every aspect of development makes tangible impacts on the lives of both women and men.

governance, but also precludes the equal representation of both women and men's interests in the political process and institutions.

Drawing upon its network of experts and experience, UNDP works in concert with state institutions, civil society organisations and research centers to strengthen the role of women in decision-making processes by ensuring access to participation in political systems as well as developing a more enabling environment from which to do so. As part of this programme, training workshops were carried out in two pilot counties using specially developed training curriculums. The courses included topics such as leadership and management skills, electoral and organic laws and regulations and gender empowerment on microfinance. Trainings specifically targeted local women's organisations and

community members, and were designed to build up the capacity of female village leader heads as well as train up potential female leaders.

At the national level, UNDP facilitates important policy dialogue between government institutions and civil society, bringing together

women activists, gender experts and non-governmental organisations in high-level workshops to discuss good governance and gender equity. These workshops were organised by Peking University to establish a solid platform with which to advocate for the equal representation of both women and men's interest in the political process, and as a prerequisite towards enabling good governance.

Through this programme and the support of UNDP, a system has been implemented that ensures the increased political participation of women and their interests in the pilots. In addition, local networks among women's groups, activists and leaders have been established in order to promote experience sharing and resource exchanges. The pilot projects serve as a productive model with which to expand to other regions for the inclusion of women into local politics,



Although tradition recognizes men as the breadwinners, research shows us that women are responsible for making it last.



As part of this programme, a pilot project was carried out in eight ethnic minority villages to establish small micro-projects to generate income for households and the community. In particular, women were targeted in this

demonstration site was established to develop the tourism industry through eco-tourism, developing such sectors as cultural handicrafts, homestays and hiking/trekking guides. There were training workshops that targeted the different skills of women and men, but brought them together to develop a community of ethnic artisans. As a complement to skills development, women were integrated into the creation of village level enterprises and community businesses, serving in decision-making roles to create synergies between the community and the market.

and local trainings directed to both women and men at the village level have emphasized the importance of equal representation and good governance. Such activities take care to ensure that women, indeed, hold up half the sky.

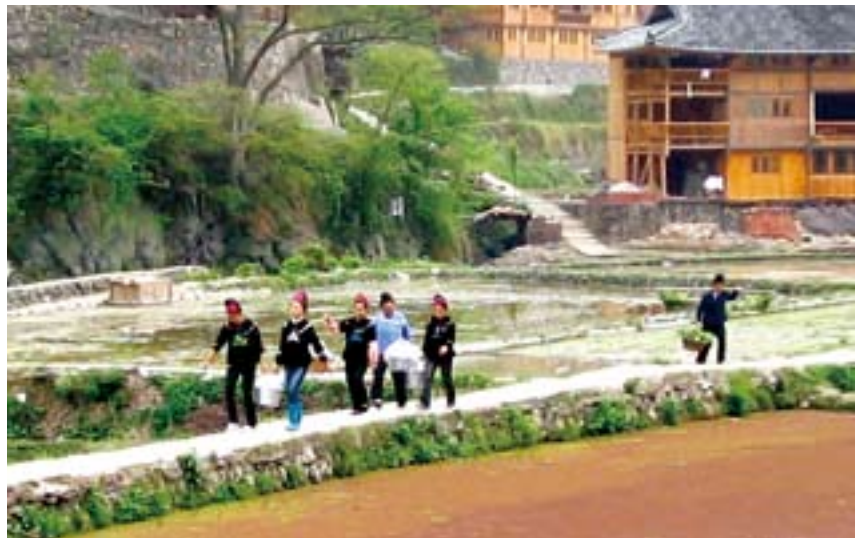
Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in China

In China, ethnic minority populations rank amongst the poorest in the country, with more than half of the designated poor counties located in these regions. In particular, women are systematically excluded from social and economic opportunities, leading them to bear the greatest burden of poverty. There is no doubt that the participation of both women and men is critical to empowering communities and enabling families to sustain their own livelihoods. Despite prolific literature highlighting the critical contributions women make to human development, there continues to be severe gender disparities within these regions, and poverty continues to disproportionately affect women.

initiative to pursue projects such as diversifying agricultural and/or animal husbandry, handicraft and/or artisan development, community based tourism facilities, and health and social service delivery improvements; moreover, their participation ensured not only increased income, but were able to support their children, especially girls, to receive an education.

Similarly, in Yunnan and Xinjiang, a

At the crux of this programme is the value placed on the equal participation of both women and men in poverty-reducing interventions; as an integral part of the family and of the larger community, it is important that the



A woman once joked that, "women may hold up half the sky but men get paid for it;" in fact, women's salaries in China are only 74 percent of that of men. Gender equality means that the different contributions of both men and women are recognized, and that they are attributed equal social value, equal rights and responsibilities, and equal access to resources.

role and contributions of women are not neglected, nor are they excluded from such opportunities.

An old Chinese proverb teaches, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and

you feed him for a lifetime.” Perhaps a wiser practice would be to extend this right to women.

Gender from Partnerships

UNDP has developed an extensive and substantive network of global partners from which to leverage human and financial support towards fostering human development. In China, it is through such strategic partnerships with government institutions, bilateral/multilateral donors, international and civil society organizations and the private sector that have helped to emphasize gender equality as not just a priority for development, but that as a practice that can effect change in people’s lives. In the recognition that gender is a multi-sectoral issue, cutting across all genres, it is these partnerships that are integral towards safeguarding the participation and equal representation of both women and men in all sectors of society. As such, the commitment of UNDP towards gender equality is not only reflected in its partnerships, but in its practice.

Post-Disaster Early Recovery and Disaster Risk Management

Each year, the incidence of disasters has devastating effects on the lives of millions of people. More often than not, women are among the most vulnerable populations following a disaster, and it is critical

to attend to the different needs that face women and men in both the preparation and recovery phases of such adversity. UNDP is strongly committed towards ensuring that gender considerations are mainstreamed into all phases of disaster management. This means that not only are women and men equally prepared for disasters, but also are able to recover in their wake.



“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a woman to fish and you feed the family for a lifetime,” perhaps is a more appropriate saying to highlight the need for gender equality in development and the impacts it can have on the community.

In order to ensure a comprehensive approach to disaster risk management, this programme promotes an integrated, holistic and complementary approach by leveraging the strengths of different partners to maximize the benefits to the communities. A key component of the post-Wenchuan earthquake

early recovery programme is the introduction of participatory vulnerability analysis (PVA) used to help local communities identify the needs and challenges of vulnerable social groups, including women, and how to most effectively respond to and mitigate future risks towards rebuilding and strengthening their homes.

As a tripartite partnership between UNDP, All China Women’s Federation (ACWF) and ActionAid International, this programme launched a series of workshops to train village level officials and local ACWF branches to apply PVA methodologies

to identify risk and vulnerabilities in their communities. The focus was on understanding the context of gender relations, how this influences the needs and challenges of women and men, and how to effectively account for this. These concerns were integrated into a disaster management framework

developed by the participants, tailored to local conditions with an infrastructure in place for execution and implementation.



These participatory activities helped to draw linkages between vulnerability and poverty, articulating how women and men have different needs and challenges both prior to and how to deal with. This innovative partnership underscores the value of cooperation in order to meet the overwhelming challenges of disasters. By engaging across sectors and across themes, this programme ensures a more resilient community that is not only equipped to deal with future disasters, but is able to do so in a gender sensitive way, ensuring that the needs of vulnerable women are not left in the wake, but are strongly embedded in the infrastructure. In this way, partnerships not only catalyze change, but also stimulate progress.

Developing Innovative Partnerships for the Prevention and Control of HIV among MSM and Promoting Community Ownership in Achieving Universal Access

In its commitment towards gender equality in China, UNDP is not only

concerned with attention to the needs of both women and men, but also to the needs of marginalized populations that struggle with issues of gender identity. More often than not, groups such as men who have sex with men (MSM) are neglected in both society and in development interventions; however, gender identity is also a crucial component that has serious implications for human development, such as HIV/AIDS. In China, UNDP has developed innovative partnerships in order to both highlight the need for cooperation and collaboration to combat HIV/AIDS, and to signify the importance of gender identity to such interventions.

In Suzhou, UNDP brought together over 50 small business owners to discuss their roles and areas of support in responding to AIDS; in addition, three condom companies and four MSM community groups attended to discuss how to most effectively work together to increase

awareness. These meetings enjoyed the participation of public health institutions as well as care and support groups to further address some of the key concerns for this population. As a result, the China MSM Business Owner Cooperation Network was established, with a task force of 10 volunteers from different sectors formed in order to ensure the sustainability of this initiative.

The subsequent meetings that were held brought together over 100 participants from different levels of the Centers for Disease Control (CDCs), international organizations such as the Gates Foundation and International AIDS Alliance, the UN Technical Working Group on MSM and HIV, and community MSM groups. To date, these have been the largest MSM meetings in China thus far. A key achievement from this conference was the creation of the China Tongzhi Health Forum, which provides an advocacy and resource



platform for MSM communities to network and support each other. More importantly, it acts as a stage for which traditionally marginalized communities are given a voice.

The innovation of these partnerships is that for the first time, MSM

communities are able to not only engage and dialogue with government institutions, small business owners and international donors, but also to be heard. These actions reflect a recognition of the needs of the MSM community, and the role that unlikely yet

complementary partnerships can make in the AIDS fight. But more importantly, it underscores the importance that gender, in its many forms, has towards building community empowerment and the impact this can have on people's lives.

Gender for Policy

UNDP ensures that its commitment to gender equality makes an impact at all levels, from effecting change at the community level to enacting policy recommendations at the national level. This means that not only are individual women and men able to participate in development interventions, but that they are equipped with the necessary tools and environment with which to do so. It is critical that those in leadership and decision making positions understand the different challenges that face women and men in order to make effective policy recommendations so that the challenges of both are equally addressed.

Preventing and Responding to Domestic Violence in China through a Multi-sectoral Approach

Domestic violence against women remains one of the most persistent violations of human rights in the world. In many countries, it remains an under-reported phenomenon, and often women accept it as a part of their everyday lives. In

China, studies have found that violence occurs in 35 percent of marriages, yet only 5 percent of the women reported an unhappy marriage. Despite recognition by the government of the adverse impacts this has on both individual lives and social development, there remains a critical need for a comprehensive national law against domestic violence in the country. As part of a cooperative effort to enact such a policy shift, UNDP has teamed up with other UN agencies on a joint programme to safeguard the prevention and protection of women against violence through the improvement of relevant policies and laws.

This programme aims to develop a 'domestic violence prevention and response model' that establishes a functioning system to effectively respond to domestic violence cases, and ensures the legal protection of women under such conditions. UNDP will conduct training workshops with the Ministry of Justice of China to ensure key legal players not only have a clear understanding of legal regulations,

but are also able to effectively implement them and monitor judicial outcomes.

Efforts will also target local communities to raise awareness about the incidence of violence against women, especially men and male youths. As part of this initiative, UNDP will assist in launching public awareness campaigns and the development of information, education, and communication materials (IEC) to change men's attitudes regarding domestic violence and act as agents of positive change. A joint communications kit will be developed by this joint program as an advocacy tool to lobby for the passing of domestic violence legislation, and will be presented to leading policymakers.

Through this initiative, not only will policymakers at all levels of government have a deeper understanding of the adverse impacts of violence against women, but also be in positions to enact legislation against it. The implementation of such policies

will help to provide a safe and enabling environment for women to seek support. This is a critical step towards ensuring the prevention and protection of women against violence; more importantly, it is a step towards a more equitable development that respects the rights of both women and men.

Supporting an All-Around Xiaokang Society

Although China has made tremendous progress in meeting many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there still remains continuing challenges towards ensuring that economic and social development is not only balanced, but also equitable around the country. As part of the national development plans to build a Xiaokang society, which aims to enhance an all around harmonious and well-off environment, UNDP is working with the government to develop an indicator system that will help to monitor the country's continuing progress as well as identify key challenges. Given that gender disparity is recognized as one of the key gaps in China's development, this program has incorporated gender specific indicators and the collection of disaggregated data to help with gender analysis. In doing so, UNDP is working in partnership with the government to build a more effective policy development and implementation system.

The Xiaokang indicators have been

developed in alignment to the UN Millennium Development Goals to implement a more people centered approach to human development. As such, this program has mainstreamed gender concerns throughout the framework and developed gender specific indicators to measure its progress. For example, goal 3 of the MDGs to promote gender equality and empower women works in tandem with the Xiaokang goal that measures the proposal of seats in key political positions, such as the People's Congress and the Political Consultative Committee. There are also gender specific indicators to improve women's health in terms of maternal mortality and impact of epidemics among women, particularly in the HIV/AIDS epidemic; this indicator is aligned to goal 5 of the MDGs that aims to improve maternal health. The complementarity of the Xiaokang indicators and the Millennium Development Goals not only builds a solid infrastructure to monitor China's progress in developing a well-off society, but also provides the tangible objectives for reaching it.

In addition to gender specific indicators, this program also uses disaggregated data between women and men in order to ensure that the interests and impacts on both are recognized, and that policies are developed to address the different challenges they both face. For example, in education, these indicators differentiate between women and men in terms of average length of education

received and enrollment rates of compulsory education to identify gender disparities. In social welfare, disaggregated data is collected on insurance coverage and minimum living insurance to understand how women and men are impacted by economic disparities. And in labor and employment, the indicators assess trends in employment between women and men and unemployment rates to determine how best to create policies to extend opportunities to both. These tools help the government to recognize what some of their key challenges to addressing gender disparities are, and how best to respond through policy and practice.

The vision of a Xiaokang society is the recognition that sustainable human development is not just economic and social growth, but that it is balanced and equitable growth that extends to all members of society, women and men alike. In this way, UNDP supports the government to develop these indicators in order to promote a more responsive policy environment from which to meet these challenges. In doing so, gender disparity is not only addressed, but it is recognized as a necessary and integral component towards the achievement of a harmonious society. By ensuring that women and men are able to participate equally in the process of growth and development, in time, Xiaokang will not only simply be a vision, it will be a reality.

“Empowering women is not only a goal in itself. It is a condition for building better lives for everyone on the planet.”

– Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General

“Equality is a right, equality promotes democracy, and equality is good economics... Promoting gender equality and empowering women underpins global efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger. We have barely five years left to achieve the globally agreed Millennium Development Goals, so using this time for effective action on gender equality is critical.”

– Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator



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