

Role of Women in the “Water Cellars for Mothers” Project

1. Background

- Serious water shortages and lacking of safe drinking water in particular in the western regions of China;
- UN setting the millennium development goals(MDGs);
- Chinese government putting forth the Western Development Strategy.

2 . Justification & Defining

- Building a platform for public welfare and public participation;
- As a pilot, proposing the project of “Water cellar for Mothers” addressing the drinking water supply particularly in the rural areas;
- “Operation 1+5 ”, centering on the supply of safe drinking water, with consideration to other problems such as poverty-alleviation, environment, hygiene and sanitation and health education.

3. Implementation

- Depending on the local conditions to build a rainwater-collecting cellar for each family or a small centralized water supply works for every village;
- Getting support from the governments and all sectors of the society and the NGOs taking a leading role;
- Taking advantages of Women Federations at all levels and women in rural areas playing an important role including participation of construction and management of water cellars;
- Having close collaboration with the governmental organizations
- All-round supervision, strict auditing and on-the-spot inspection by donors.

4. Benefits

- Ensuring that the benefited women and families enjoy equal access to drinking water;
- Having effectively liberated workforce and markedly improved the local people’s income and quality of life;
- Having enhanced the status of women at home and in society ;
- Having brought about better hygiene, sanitation and health conditions for the benefited people;
- Having helped to improve the local living standard.

5 . Social impacts

- As of end of year 2008, over 370 million RMB of public donations

has been allocated to poverty-stricken arid and remote areas in 23 provinces (autonomous regions / municipalities), mostly in western regions, with which more than 115,000 water cellars and more than 1,300 small-scale centralized water-supply works were constructed, benefiting nearly 1.5 million people.

— “Water Cellar for Mothers” Project was written into “White Paper on Poverty Alleviation in China’s Rural Areas” in October 2001, listed as one of the “top ten news items about Chinese women” at the end of the year 2001, included in the “White Paper on Gender Equality and Women’s Development in China” and awarded with the first “China Charity Prize” in October 2005.