



LI KA SHING FOUNDATION

李嘉誠基金會

About Project Define

A. Background

The project aims to empower women village officers in China's rural areas. By infusing these women with knowledge-based capabilities and by consolidating the strength of small communities, the project brings benefits to the entire rural area.

Pilot Projects Implemented in 2010–2012:

The Li Ka Shing Foundation and the All-China Women's Federation jointly launched a pilot training program under Project Define (*Qi Pu*) in 2010. The Foundation donated a total of RMB22.5 million to provide higher education training for over 4,300 women village officers in Anhui Province, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the Chaoshan region of Guangdong Province, and northern Guangdong. Using Seed Grants, the project also financed approximately 350 rural development programs conceived and implemented by the women village officers themselves. The entire project benefited 650,000 people living in rural areas.

B. The Project

Given the success of the pilot projects, the Foundation will provide an additional RMB20 million to jointly launch a new phase of Project Define (*Zhan Pu*) with China's Ministry of Civil Affairs. The new project aims to empower the popularly elected women village officers, who, on the frontlines, have a thorough understanding of fundamental needs, and grassroots-level civil administration staff. The project will also cover a larger geographic area to benefit more villages.

Areas Covered:

The new project will be implemented in Hunan, Shaanxi, Xinjiang, Guangdong and Guangxi.

About the training:

- Through a five-day training program in a university and a distance learning platform, the project aims to boost the capabilities of 3,800 elected women village officers and improve the service standards of 500 grassroots-level civil administration staff, as well as promote a culture of mutual learning;

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- The project is supported by Shantou University as well as Hunan Normal University, Northwest University, Xinjiang University and Guangxi University, with training courses offered on campus.

Seed Grants:

The Foundation will provide 800 women village officers with RMB5,000 each as a Seed Grant to implement their village seed projects that will improve people's livelihood, education, environmental well-being and poverty alleviation.

The new phase of Project Define will contribute to innovation and development in village community management by providing effective training to women village officers to perform leadership roles in village administration and socio-economic development. It aims to transform the development of rural areas by boosting the power of women.

The Concept

1. The project name

The Chinese name of the first phase of Project Define “*Qi Pu*”, literally ‘priming the un-carved jade’. The Chinese name “*Zhan Pu*” of the new phase of Project Define, which follows from the first phase, means that the abilities of the women village officers and grassroots-level civil administration staff will now be demonstrated; they will apply what they have learned to serve their village communities. The name encapsulates both the meaning of breakthroughs and continuity.

2. Why focus on training women to lead the development of rural areas?

Women account for more than 60 per cent of China's rural working population; they are fully capable of supporting and sustaining rural economic development. However, due to the traditional cultural norms and varying levels of socio-economic developments, the percentage of women involved in village administration is low, and their leadership capabilities can be further improved. The Foundation hopes that the project will empower the women in the villages to leverage their abilities, bringing in more government and social resources to their villages.

More Details

3. How will the course materials and curriculum help women village officers develop their rural communities?



The course materials for short-term trainings are designed for rural developmental needs. Participatory training will be provided in universities and covers mediation skills, rural economic development, gender and the law, and the planning and management of service programs. Video courses will also be provided through a web-based distance training platform that will be made available to women village officers for sharing experiences and insights in village administration and supporting interactive learning based on real-life case studies.

4. How is distance learning implemented given the rather backward facilities in rural areas?

In the two years when Project Define (*Qi Pu*) was implemented on a trial basis, the Foundation commissioned Shantou University to develop a specialized application software. Piloted in 20 villages, the program helped women village officers equipped with tablet PCs to continue learning through websites and online lessons after they returned home.

About the Seed Projects

5. Under Project Define (*Zhan Pu*), 800 women village officers will be given a Seed Grant of RMB5,000 each. What is the aim and desired outcome of this measure?

Under the project, the women village officers will go to the universities for their training. They will be taught how to design and execute village programs in a systematic way. In every training course, the instructors and students will vote for and select the best seed projects, and give Seed Grants to the students who conceive them for project implementation. To leverage further on the Seed Grants, women village officers can also apply for funding from their local government. This will stimulate greater input of social resources. Therefore, seed projects and Seed Grants can help promote mutual learning and sharing.