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When social security meets Rural Women

Sept. 27-30, 2009

北京农家女文化发展中心
Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women



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who we are?

- Location: Beijing, China
- Programme sites (latest): Hebei, Henan, Gansu, Jilin and so on.
- Staff: Over 40 People, and most of whom came from rural China.

- Organization value:

If you are given a piece of fruit, you can enjoy it only once.

If you are given a seed, you can benefit from it whole life.

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who we are?

- Initiated the publication of *Rural Women Knowing All* magazine in Jan. 1993
- Set up the Migrant Women's Club in Apr. 1996
- Set up the Practical Skills Training Center for Rural Women in Sept. 1998
- Set up the Beijing Cultural Development Center for Rural Women in Aug. 2001

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Rural Women Knowing All magazine started its publication in 1993 with only three full time staff members.

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In 2007, Rural Women has grown to have over 40 people in total.



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Whom we care the most?

- Rural women in China

Their commons:

Bound by “village”: Hukou and different status

Bound by “household”: Patriarchy and
Dependent

Bound by “earth”: Limited resources and
Marginalized

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What we are good at?

- Understanding the rural women's needs from holistic consideration on rural China
- Cooperating with the government but keeping possible independence
- Supporting women backbones ("seeds") meanwhile facilitating more women to form their groups

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When social security meets rural gender

- Social security in China:

Principle: the lowest standard; but the most people

Covering: health (e.g Care, endowment and so on), livelihood (e.g unemployment)

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When social security meets rural gender

- a. Traditional rural “social security” based on earth and patriarchy, and traditional rural “social security” for rural women mainly based on household
- b. Present social security treats urban and suburban differently, and treats gender indifferently
- c. Both traditional and present social security ignores Chinese rural women’s rights



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When social security meets rural gender

- Less involved into social security, Chinese rural women are facing the higher living cost, and heavier family press.
- Differences of social security treatment between citizens and villagers led to some social problems, which marginalized rural women even more seriously.

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When social security meets rural gender

- The married rural women have few chance and right:
 - a. Less resources (esp. earth; official jobs) are given to them in the name of “women are illiterate/weak-minded/outer”.
 - b. More responsibilities (esp. farm working, families caring) press them since their men have to find cash-paid jobs.
 - c. Narrower social space for them to share their press and unsafe feeling.

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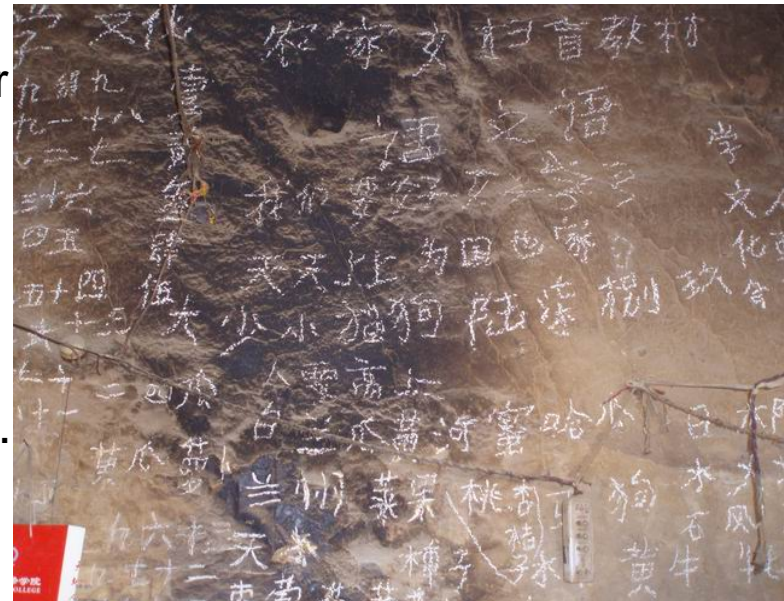


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What we are doing?

- Rural Women's Literacy Classes**

Since 1996, we have undertaken literacy activities in Hubei, Hebei, Shanxi, Gansu, Guizhou and other poor areas. In total we have run over 206 literacy classes, and have helped over 6,000 adult women to know the basic Chinese characters. We have developed an effective literacy training model.



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What we are doing?

- Rural women's reading society

Since 2006, we've launched the Rural Women's Reading Society Programme, which is the first step for us to seek a sustainable programme model. Ideally, the reading society will be managed by the local women groups as a base for their self-learning, communication and participation.

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What we are doing?

- Rural women's political participation
- Since 2006, this programme began in Gudong, Inner Mongolia, Hebei and other provinces. Promoting rural women's awareness and chance to participant into the village public affairs, and share the decision power, which is our purpose.

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What we are doing?

- For the migrant women, we have also implemented projects involving domestic workers' supporting network, migrant children's education, legal awareness and consultation, capacity building (e.g. English and computer), urban support networks and maternal health promotion, so on so forth.

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What we can do next?

- Rural kids became the sexual violence victims
 - a. Many victims were left at home and cared by other relatives, since they can't be involved into urban social security system. (e.g. cheaper and better education)
 - b. The kids' parents migrated to the cities for earning safer future, since they need cash pay for the high medical cost in the future.
 - c. Most of Chinese rural kids have no access to know how to prevent against sexual violence.
 - d. Rural public is inclined to blame sexual violence female victims



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What we can do next?

- Facilitate rural women form a protecting network for the left-behind kids
- Train teachers, guarantors and kids how to protect or self-protect
- Develop a help fund for the victims, and support them based on their needs



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What we can do next?

- The aged women need more attention
 - a. Few earth belong to them, so they may lose house or provider for future if they live longer than their husbands.
 - b. Few chance for them to be involved into the endorsement insurance. (men-prefered)

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What we can do next?

- Support local rural women to set up community beadhouse
- Seek a model for rural beadhouse and introduce it to the government



contact us

- **The Cultural Development Center for Rural Women**
Address: 301, Building 1, Jiali Mansion, 180, Beiyuanlu, Chaoyang District, Beijing (100101)
Telephone: 010-64980082, 010-64980110 (fax)
E-mail: njnbst@263.net
- **The Practical Skills Training Center for Rural Women**
Address: Dadongliu Village, Xiaotangshan, Changping District, Beijing (102211)
Telephone: 010-61711484 010-61714581(fax)
E-mail: njnbgs@sina.com
- **Migrant Women's Club**
Address: 301, Building 1, Jiali Mansion, 180, Beiyuanlu, Chaoyang District, Beijing (100101)
Telephone: 010-64984103, 010-64955204
E-mail: bjdgm7788@163.com

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Thank you all!

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