

Piloting SDG Localization at the Village Level

A Women-focused Poverty Reduction
and Sustainable Development Project
in Yunnan Province, China

IMPACT REPORT - PHASE 1 (2017-2021)



MARY KAY

Advancing 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals:





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Cover photo: View of the village of Waipula, Yongren County, Yunnan Province, China.

**“One woman’s growth
can influence the fate
of three generations.”**

Chinese proverb and the origins of the SDG Pilot Village Project

Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Xuefang Xia

“We have set up a cooperative in our village (...) we have a hotel, a youth hostel, and an inn. I am in charge of it. It is something that we had never thought about before. Now we have made an income from it.”



Xuefang Xia is a performer and **Deputy Head of Waipula’s Art Ensemble**, named Huobonuoma, “Daughters of the Moon”, and serves as the **Manager of the local guesthouse**. She is proud of her Yi ancestry and enjoys showcasing the village’s rich history to tourists. When the village’s Ecotourism Cooperative established the Women’s Federation, Xuefang Xia was elected as its **Chairwoman**. Her new role **as the owner of a mango farm** enabled her to double her annual income in 2020 and support her family.

Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Shiqiong Han

“Although it is a small farm as long as I put my heart into it and try to learn bit by bit, anything can be achieved.”



Shiqiong Han grew up in Waipula at a time when the village still did not have running water. As a child she would have to walk to the river and carry water to her home in a bamboo basket. Shortly after realizing her dream of having her own farm, her husband passed away and she was left alone to tend to her pig farm. After experiencing hardship on the farm, she went to veterinary school and was able to learn more about how to care for her animals. Through perseverance, she learned that *“women are capable of providing for themselves.”* Today, Shiqiong Han is **President of the Art Ensemble and a proud farmer**.

Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Yongyan Zhu

“They built a bridge so that we could see the world out there. I also want to build a bridge to let people come here. To see our Waipula ... to drink our water and hear us sing. To dance with us and experience our life here.”



Yongyan Zhu is the youngest **Village Committee member**. She was living in the city but wanted to be closer to her family and decided to return home to Waipula. Today, she is **Vice General Manager of the Ecotourism Cooperative** and her contribution has helped reduce the poverty rate in the village to 0%.

Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CICETE	China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges
CWDF	China Women's Development Foundation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
ITC	International Trade Centre
PMO	Project Management Office
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGC	UN Global Compact
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEA	Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator
YCG	Yongren County Government
YPG	Yunnan Provincial Government

Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

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Executive Summary

Piloting SDG Localization at the Village Level

China has experienced rapid economic development and unprecedented growth over the past 40 years. The country has transformed from an agrarian society into an upper-middle-income country and this progress has brought many improvements to the population's standard of living. Indeed, China's success in reducing poverty at a national level has meant that it has contributed to close to three-quarters of the reduction in the number of people globally living in extreme poverty.¹

The drivers behind China's poverty alleviation achievements have been based on two pillars. First, the broad-based economic transformation to open new economic opportunities and raise average incomes; and second, the recognition that targeted support was needed to alleviate persistent poverty.²

Despite this unprecedented progress, China's economic success has been uneven. With the largest population in the world, and half living in rural areas, a key issue has been the growing disparities between rural and urban, and

developed and underdeveloped regions of the country.

Ensuring the benefits of rapid economic growth are evenly distributed amongst men and women equally has also been a key challenge. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China's growth has been accompanied by widening gender inequality, reflected in gender disparities in labor force participation and in increasing pay disparity between men and women.³

In 2017, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with Mary Kay China, in collaboration with the China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF), the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE), the Women's Federation of Yunnan Province and Yongren County Government (YCG) launched the SDG Pilot Village Project targeting women's poverty and sustainable development in Waipula, Yunnan Province.

1. World Bank. (2022, April 1). *Lifting 800 Million People Out of Poverty – New Report Looks at Lessons from China's Experience*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/01/lifting-800-million-people-out-of-poverty-new-report-looks-at-lessons-from-china-s-experience>

2. World Bank Group & Development Research Center of the State Council, the People's Republic of China. (2022). *Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China: Drivers, Insights for the World, and the Way Ahead*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bdad16a4f5c1c88a839c0f905cde802-0070012022/original/Poverty-Synthesis-Report-final.pdf>

3. Brussevich, M., Dabla-Norris, E., & Grace Li, B. (2021). *China's Rebalancing and Gender Inequality* (Working Paper No. 2021/138). International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/05/11/China-s-Rebalancing-and-Gender-Inequality-50250>

The findings in this report on the achievements of the project are intended to inform efforts of the Chinese government branch responsible for the sustainable development of rural areas, and other relevant government bodies, in their objective to localize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), end rural poverty and achieve inclusive green economic growth.

Secondly, the report offers guidance on lessons and best practice for other countries, with similar development challenges, in their efforts to localize the SDGs, and address social norms that act as barriers to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

The findings also serve to highlight the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in accelerating progress in the implementation of the SDGs in local development processes.

Key topics addressed in this report are:

- What lessons can be learned from China's poverty reduction efforts in ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth?
- What is the potential role of women's entrepreneurship in accelerating implementation of the SDGs at the local level and for poverty reduction in China?
- How can government, the private sector and local community actors work together to harness their comparative strengths to scale up and accelerate the localization of the SDGs?

Background: a Development Challenge

Structural transformation and economic liberalization over the past four decades have meant that China has experienced unprecedented economic growth. The country has transitioned from an economy primarily based on income derived from agriculture to manufacturing, and in 2010 it became the second-largest economy in the world.

In 2021, China's government announced that it had eradicated absolute poverty, measured against a standard equivalent to USD \$2.30 per person per day applied to rural areas. The

country's ability to maintain high economic growth and, at the same time, reduce poverty and address other challenges to development such as illiteracy, and child and maternal mortality has been a remarkable achievement. These achievements are reflected in China's Human Development Index score which in 2019 was 0.761, a considerable difference to 0.407 in 1980.⁴

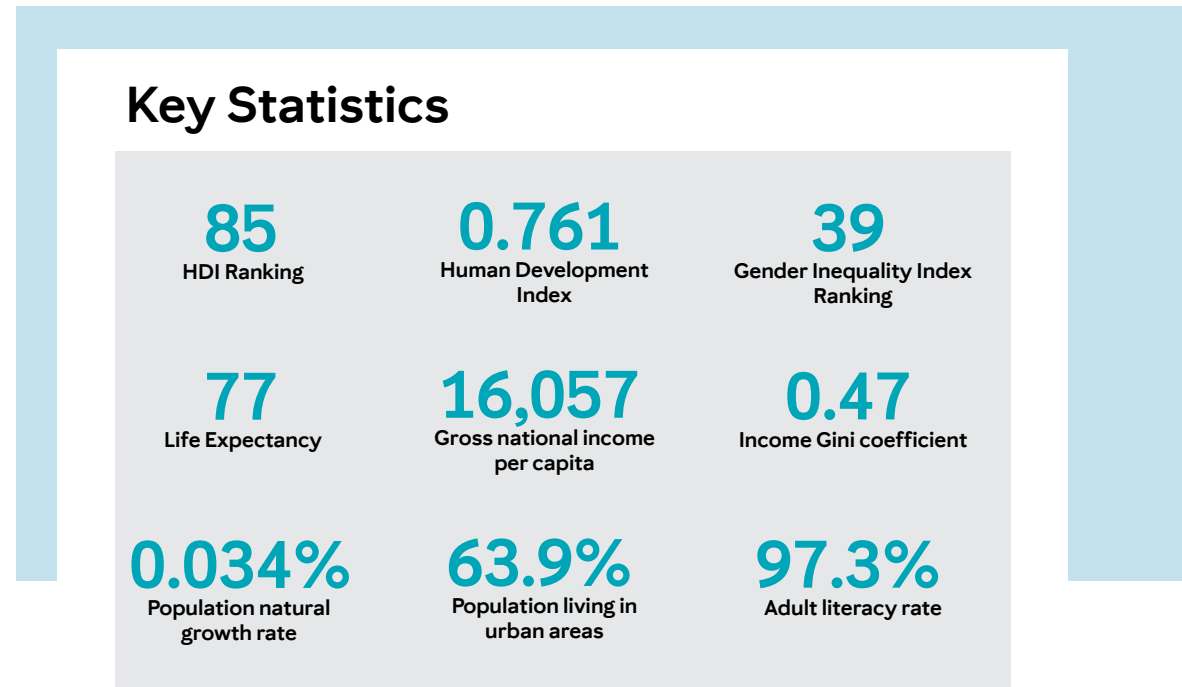


Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers



Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

4. UNDP China. (n.d.). *About us*. <https://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/about-us/about-china/>



More statistics about China are available at: <https://www.undp.org/china/about-china>

Despite China's poverty reduction success and rapid economic growth, the associated social and economic benefits have not been evenly distributed. To meet this challenge, President Xi Jinping put forward *common prosperity* as a guiding development vision establishing critical priorities across economic, environmental and social policy, at both the national and local levels, with a clear objective to provide a decent standard of living to all Chinese citizens.

Focused largely on alleviating systemic inequalities, the *common prosperity* agenda provides a blueprint for a transformational new path for China's socioeconomic development. This entails providing equal access to education, health care, and other social protections, leveraging China's unique capacities and industries to ensure the benefits to the country's economic success are evenly distributed and the risks associated with rapid socioeconomic transformation are managed.

The Untapped Potential of Rural Women's Entrepreneurship: Key Insights

Goal 1 of the SDGs recognizes that ending poverty in all its forms everywhere is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable precondition for sustainable development.

one behind" principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a fundamental human right enshrined in international law, and a precondition for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Gender equality is a standalone goal of the SDGs, an essential aspect of the "leaving no



Demonstrating the multiplying effect of gender equality on the SDGs, gender equality cuts across all 17 SDGs and is reflected in 45 targets and 54 indicators while also a goal in its own right.

The evidence suggests that closing gender gaps by achieving these targets will have multiplier effects across the Goals.⁵

- For instance, investing in women’s economic empowerment creates a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth **since women, studies show, are more likely to spend their income on family needs, including health care and education, thus making a proportionately larger contribution to society.**⁶

Significantly, several of the world’s fastest economies owe their success in part to women’s increased role in production,

trade and entrepreneurship.⁷ Strategies for economic growth in these contexts have included:

- Promoting girls’ education,
- The expansion of women’s access to agricultural extension and credit, and
- Dismantling patriarchal structures and barriers to women’s participation in the public and private spheres.⁸

In addition to its ripple effect across the SDGs, there is also growing evidence of the business case for gender equality in terms of economic growth.

According to The McKinsey Global Institute:

USD \$12 trillion could be added to global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2025 by advancing women’s equality.⁹

A Widening Gender Gap:

- Because of unequal gender norms and laws, less than two-thirds of women aged 25-54 participate in the labor force, compared to more than 90% of men of the same age and this has not improved in 30 years.¹⁰
- The global labor force participation rate for women is just over 50% compared to 80% for men.¹¹
- According to the World Economic Forum, it will take 151 years to close the economic gender gap.¹²

Despite the evidence base, progress in advancing gender equality remains slow, and in recent years the gender gap has, in some instances, widened.

When women do participate in the labor force, they tend to be over-represented in informal, low-paid and vulnerable employment.

- For instance, **740 million women globally work in the informal sector, where job insecurity, low pay and harsh working conditions are prevalent,¹³ and on average women receive 23% less income than men.**¹⁴

Women are also less likely than men to have access to economic or livelihood assets such

as land and socio-economic services, or to financial institutions, or to have access to a bank account to set up their own business due to legal restrictions to enter contracts in their own name, to control property within a marriage or to receive an equal share of assets on divorce or in inheritance. They may also not have the same rights as men to identification documents, often a pre-condition for banking transactions and accessing finance.¹⁵

For rural women, the challenges are particularly acute. Rural women, who comprise a quarter of the world’s population, work as wage earners and entrepreneurs. **Rural women also make up 41% of the world’s agricultural labor force, and this rises to 49% for low-income countries.**¹⁶

5. UN Women. (2018). *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>
 6. UN Women. (2018). *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>
 7. UN General Assembly. (2010). *Report of the Secretary-General. Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding*. UN Doc. A/65/354-S/2010/466. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/508/20/PDF/N1050820.pdf?OpenElement>
 8. UN Women. (2015). *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Security Peace. A Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325*. <https://wps.unwomen.org/>
 9. McKinsey Global Institute. (2015). *Women in the Workplace*. https://wiw-report.s3.amazonaws.com/Women_in_the_Workplace_2015.pdf

10. United Nations. (n.d.). *Women and Girls – Closing the Gender Gap*. https://www.un.org/en/un75/women_girls_closing_gender_gap
 11. The World Bank. (2022). *Gender Data Portal*. <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/>
 12. World Economic Forum. (2022). *Global Gender Gap Report 2022*. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2022.pdf
 13. Generation Equality. (2021). *Economic Justice and Rights Action Coalition*. https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/EJR_FINAL_VISUAL_EN.pdf
 14. UN Women. (2018). *Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/2/gender-equality-in-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development-2018>
 15. International Finance Corporation. (2011). *Strengthening Access to Finance for Women-Owned SMEs in Developing Countries*. https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/2a9123b3-d369-4115-8cbf-19083218ce64/G20_Women_Report.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=jqel-xk
 16. International Labour Organization. (2018, March 15). *Rural Women Need Equality Now*. https://www.ilo.org/moscow/news/WCMS_621364/lang-en/index.htm

Indigenous and ethnic minority women have a particularly important role as custodians of traditional knowledge and practices which are key for their communities' livelihoods, resilience and culture. In addition, these women make a unique contribution to natural resource management and climate change mitigation.

Rural women entrepreneurs have a crucial role in local economic development through employment generation and boosting innovation and growth. They provide income for their families and employment for their communities.

- Studies show, for instance, that **women entrepreneurs tend to reinvest up to 90% of their earnings in their families and communities, thus linking inclusive economic growth directly to development.**¹⁷

Despite their critical contribution to the rural economy and their significant impact on productivity and agriculture-led growth, **rural women face constraints in engaging in economic activities and their work often remains unseen, unrecognized and undervalued because of gender-based discrimination and harmful social norms.**¹⁸

The challenges outlined above limit women's participation in shaping economic and social policies and have a profound impact not only on women's poverty and marginalization, but also on their ability to improve their communities and shape the future of their societies.

Promoting gender equality and women's agency is central to achieving more sustainable outcomes across the spectrum of development. This requires dismantling the barriers to gender equality and designing policies and strategies such that both women and men can equally benefit from poverty reduction efforts.

Since no single sector is able to deliver on the SDGs alone, including on gender equality, the private sector has a unique role to play and shares many of the same goals as governments in terms of creating more resilient and prosperous societies and markets.

The SDG Pilot Village Project is a strong example of the type of effective multi-stakeholder partnerships needed to advance and accelerate the SDGs at the local level - enabled through a gender-responsive poverty reduction lens.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization:

- If women farmers had the same access to financial capital as men, agricultural output in 34 developing countries would rise by an estimated average of up to 4%.
- This figure corresponds to a reduction in the number of undernourished people in those countries by as much as 17%, or up to **150 million fewer hungry people.**¹⁹

17. VanderBrug, J. (2013, September 4). The Global Rise of Female Entrepreneurs. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2013/09/global-rise-of-female-entrepreneurs>

18. International Labour Organization. (2018, March 15). *Rural Women Need Equality Now*. https://www.ilo.org/moscow/news/NCMS_621364/lang-en/index.htm

19. Food and Agriculture Organization. (2011). *The State of Food and Agriculture. Women in Agriculture. Closing the gender gap for development. 2020-2011*. <https://www.fao.org/3/i2050e/i2050e.pdf>

Mary Kay and Gender Lens Impact Investing in China

Mary Kay's mission is to enrich the lives of women and their families around the world. With a presence in nearly 40 countries, Mary Kay has established itself as a global leading advocate of women's empowerment and entrepreneurship.

Mary Kay Ash, the founder of the company, believed in gender equality and advancing women's economic rights - well before women were broadly accepted in the business world. In 1963, with her life savings of USD \$5,000, she founded "Mary Kay Cosmetics" to offer women a pathway to financial independence through entrepreneurship.

In 1995, Mary Kay was launched in China to provide business opportunities for women. Today, thousands of independent beauty consultants all over China enjoy financial flexibility and access to a wealth of resources and support - such as entrepreneurial skills training, networking, and mentoring - through their Mary Kay independent business.

True to its mission, Mary Kay engaged over the years in a series of targeted initiatives and partnerships aimed at advancing women's economic empowerment:

- **In 2001, Mary Kay China joined forces with the China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF) to establish the Mary Kay Women Entrepreneurship Fund.** The Foundation established a microfinance project for women entrepreneurs by providing RMB 10 million in interest-free revolving loans. **These efforts have successfully helped more than 80,000 women in 23 provinces achieve their entrepreneurial dreams.**
- **In 2011, Mary Kay China and UNDP entered a formal partnership with CWDF.** From 2012 to 2016, the partners carried out a community development project in Chuxiong, Yunnan Province, to empower ethnic minority women by harnessing their unique cultural asset: **Yi Embroidery.** The project created a pilot for an embroidery cultural industry, which **ultimately resulted in Yi Embroidery becoming the leading industry for Yi women to increase their income.** These projects elevated women's socioeconomic status and their leadership in their community. They also provided an opportunity for Mary Kay to become a key figure amongst the private sector in supporting gender-responsive poverty alleviation efforts in China.

Leveraging its unique business model of promoting women's entrepreneurship and gender equality, as well as its knowledge and commitment to creating a positive community

impact, Mary Kay China quickly realized how its business resources and past history of working closely with CWDF and UNDP could contribute to the advancement of the SDGs in China.

Fast Facts About the Yi People

- There are approximately 9.5 million members of the Yi ethnic group, also referred to as the Nuosuo or Lolo People.
- They are the 7th largest ethnic minority group in China.
- They primarily live in mountainous parts of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces.
- They follow a 10-Month Solar Calendar (36 days/month, 5 seasons and 10 festivals/holidays).
- Yi people have a rich tradition of festivals featuring dancing and musical instruments, enjoy traditional spicy and sour dishes, and practice Yi embroidery showcasing bright colors and finely stitched images.



Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

The SDG Pilot Village Project (2017-2021)

In September 2016, the Chinese government launched **China's National Plan on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda on the Sustainable Development Goals**. The first national strategy which integrated the SDGs with national development priorities, the Plan is guided by the following priorities: a) innovation; b) coordinated development; c) green development; d) openness, and e) inclusive development. It includes seven strategic policies, establishes an institutional governance structure, including interministerial coordination systems, and has a monitoring

and evaluation mechanism to inform progress and gaps.

In December 2016, the government set up a pilot to implement the SDGs, which marked the country's first step to operationalize its National Plan on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Under the direct supervision of the State Council of China, the pilot was set up in different parts of the country to explore a range of approaches to local implementation. This approach was designed to build a model for successful implementation of the SDGs nationwide.

- To support the integration of the SDGs across China, **in 2017 UNDP, together with the Chinese government, local partners, and Mary Kay China launched the SDG Pilot Village Project targeting women's poverty and sustainable development in Waipula, Yunnan Province.**
- Directly contributing to 12 of the 17 SDGs, the pilot demonstrated how the SDGs can be successfully implemented in rural China. Aligned with national development priorities, **the pilot was selected by UNDP and partners as a test pilot to localize the SDGs and complementary to President Xi Jinping's goal to eradicate rural poverty by 2020 outlined in the National 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020).**
- The village of Waipula was identified for its high poverty rate, particularly

amongst women from the Yi ethnic group. **The overall objective was to promote women's entrepreneurship by supporting the conditions for green business development as a vehicle to reduce poverty and advance socio-economic development.**

Outcomes:

- **Through stimulating a vibrant Yi Embroidery craftsmanship, the project established the foundations for a sustainable ecotourism initiative driven by women of the Yi ethnic group.**
- **With the project contributing to China's poverty alleviation campaign, the proportion of villagers living below the national poverty line fell from 28% in 2017 to 0.77% in 2019, and by October 2020, the poverty rate had dropped to 0%.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by UN Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

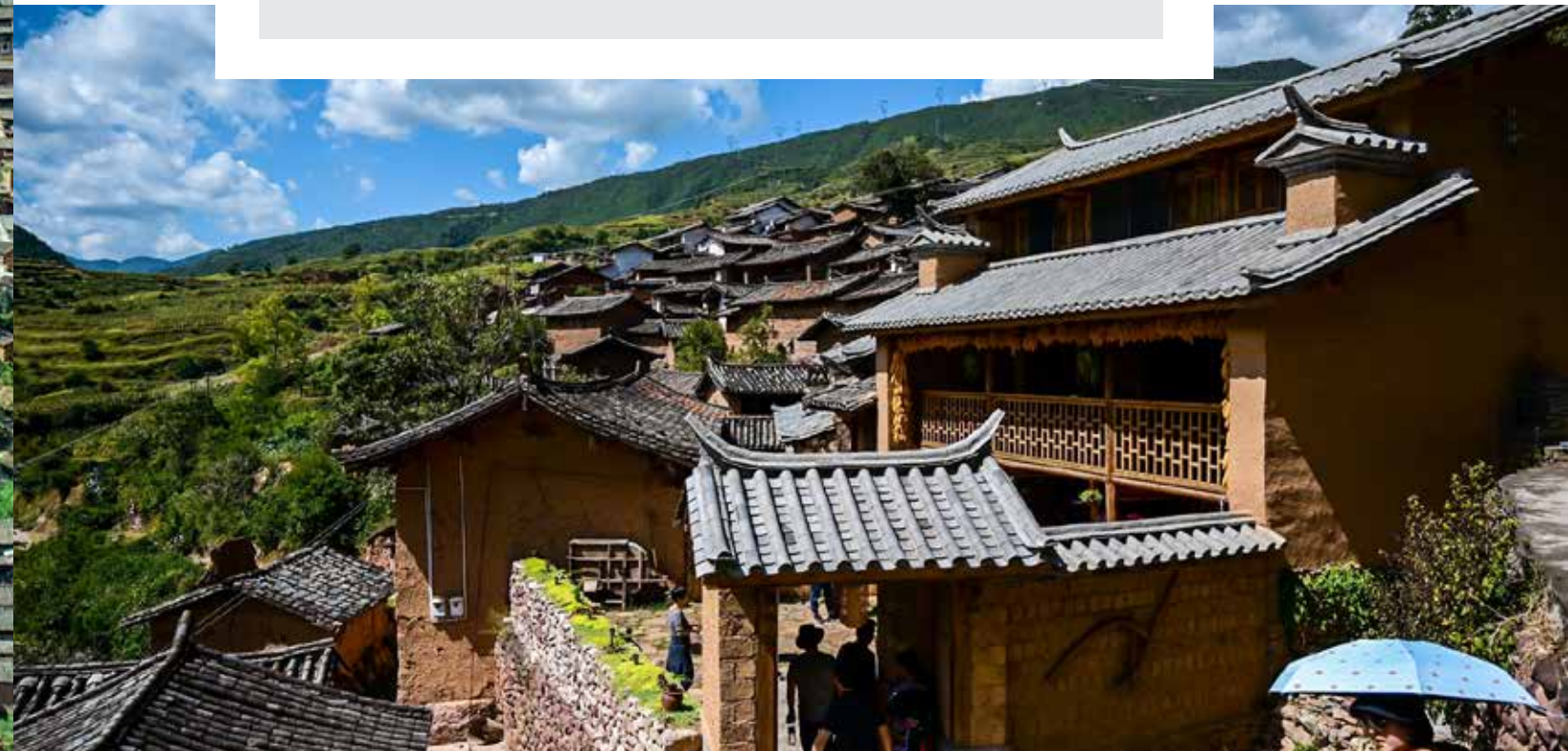


At a Glance: Mary Kay's 7 Impact Investments in the Pilot Project

1. Advanced a public-private partnership to achieve social and economic benefit to the community.
2. Supported minority women to become future leaders and decision-makers in their community.
3. Enhanced business development opportunities for ethnic minority women from lower income households.
4. Provided training and institutional support to create sustainable conditions for green entrepreneurship.
5. Strengthened women's organizations through workforce management and entrepreneurship skills development.
6. Monitored overall project coordination and implementation.
7. Facilitated project promotion and advocacy amongst diverse stakeholders.

About Waipula Village

- Minority groups, particularly women living in mountainous regions, were identified by UNDP as being disproportionately affected by poverty. Yunnan Province, home to China's largest number of people living in chronic poverty had 5.74 million poor in 2015, most of whom were members of minority groups.
- The site selected by UNDP and partners was Waipula, a historic village in Yongren County, Chuxiong Prefecture, in Southwest China, Yunnan Province.
- Waipula is an ethnic Yi village that was built during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). It was listed as a national traditional village protection project in 2014.
- Surrounded by three mountains and two rivers, the village is known for its beautiful scenery and cultural heritage, such as the ethnic Yi embroidery and many folk festivals. Houses are colorful and built into the landscape and characteristic of Yi architecture.



Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Project Outputs and Results Framework

OUTPUTS CORRESPONDING SDGS AND TARGETS

OUTPUT 1:

Based on the relevant targets and indicators of the SDGs, support Waipula Village to develop an ecotourism based sustainable livelihood system to increase the income of poor villagers to reduce poverty in a sustained and environmentally friendly way.



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.
 1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including jobs and entrepreneurship.
 4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous people and children in vulnerable situations.

CONT. OUTPUT 1:

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors.
 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.
 8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.
 8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

9.3 Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.

The provision of social protection as a key enabler for poverty alleviation

Reflecting the key role which social protection plays in alleviating poverty and in advancing progress towards achieving the SDGs, the project addressed social protection gaps. A baseline survey was conducted which set out a number of recommendations to tackle the barriers to poverty reduction in the village. A key recommendation from the baseline survey was the need to improve the living conditions of poor households, including single headed households and the elderly.

OUTPUT 2:

Based on the relevant targets and indicators of the SDGs, support Yongren County Government to deliver public goods in Waipula Village to provide full coverage of a minimum living allowance for the poor and full coverage of the New Rural Cooperative Health Care Insurance and rural pension. Deliver all measures to ensure full coverage of compulsory education and other activities envisaged.



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.7 By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

OUTPUT 3:

Based on the relevant targets and indicators of the SDGs, assist Yongren County Government to improve its cultural heritage preservation plan while developing an ecotourism-based development model to promote sustainable development and develop Waipula as an eco-health village.



OUTPUT 4:

Share and disseminate project results.



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.3 By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

6.6 By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

15.3 By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

Six Key Project Components

1

Formation of an Ecotourism Cooperative

In 2019, the **Waipula Rural Ecotourism Professional Cooperative** was formed. Villagers, mostly women, received training in tourism and information services, laying the foundation for the development of an ecotourism industry in the village. The Cooperative has begun receiving foreign tourists, generating an income of nearly RMB 300,000 for locals. A **Tourist Training and Information Services Center** was established, and the Center serves as the Waipula Yi Traditional Cultural Center.



Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

2

Infrastructure and Landscape Improvements

Improvements to the infrastructure, including **road works, the installation of solar street lighting, a water conservation project, ecological toilets and garbage collection points** were introduced. Locals received training in cultural preservation techniques and the renovations were then undertaken in a sustainable manner using on-site materials and in keeping with the architectural style of the Yi heritage. **The former tobacco station in the village was transformed into an educational training center** and a showroom to present the infrastructural changes to the village. With a guesthouse, a hostel and other accommodation amenities led and managed by women, the village has capacity to receive 300 tourists for overnight stays.



Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

3 Training, Nurturing and Elevating the Yi Culture: Embroidery, Crafts, Song, Dance, and Music

The Yongren County Women's Federation organized a series of trainings on the Yi ethnic culture focusing on traditional musical instruments, songs and dance performances, as well as embroidery unique to the Yi culture. **An art group of 30 women, the Huobonuoma, "Daughters of the Moon", was established in the village.** The group performed at various festivals, enhancing the recognition and awareness of Yi culture. Women were supported to develop their Yi embroidery business and, through this training, 607 women in Waipula have secured employment and have increased their source of income. For instance, the **per capita income in 2017 was RMB 11,080 and grew to RMB 14,128 in 2021.** Women's literacy about their rights has also improved, and in creating their own businesses, they have become change makers and have assumed leadership positions in their community.



4 Establishment of Waipula as an Ecotourism Destination

With support from the project, the **Waipula Village Education and Training Center and the Waipula Village Exhibition Center** were established and through trainings and technical support, locals hosted a number of cultural events attracting visitors from different part of the country. For example, the Waipula Village Tourism **Bazaar attracted over 3,000 tourists** and the event showcased and promoted the colorful and diverse culture of Waipula elevating the village as a unique tourist destination.



Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

5 Development of Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Based on the concept of permaculture sustainable design, **a farm of more than 15 acres was created and the villagers were trained in sustainable farming practices.** Divided into four areas and reflecting the natural ecosystem, the farm includes a vegetable and flower garden, as well as a space for composting. It also has a small animal area for roaming in addition to a feeding area. Tree planting and rice cultivation are also included in the farm. Reflecting the natural design of the surrounding area, **women were involved in developing the farm applying their knowledge of local sustainable agricultural practices.** Households and village officials received training on ecological planting techniques and cooperative organization methods. The aim of the training was to increase awareness amongst farmers of the significance and methods in how to cultivate organic rice as an income generating source. Waipula organic rice and dried mangoes are now being sold on an e-commerce platform providing an important revenue of income for the villagers.



With UNDP's strong suggestion to replace tobacco, Waipula's organic rice is being sold on e-commerce platforms with sales reaching RMB 220,000 in 2021.



Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

6 Preservation of Culture and History and Creation of a Digital Museum

A digital library was established for the residents of Waipula. Activities to preserve the culture and history of the village were carried out, including field surveys and the oral documentation of history. A series of communication products were developed, including "the Waipula Village Annals", a Waipula folk documentary and a promotional film and song, titled "A tale of Waipula." **A digital museum of Waipula as a National Traditional Village was created.**



Waipula Digital Museum

The Waipula official website features information about Waipula as a Traditional Village of China. Contents include: panoramic pictures of the village site, information on its history and culture, traditional architecture, gourmet products, touristic information and many videos.

Learn more: <http://main.dmctv.com.cn/villages/53232710201/Index.html>

Pictures: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

Phase 1 Results

Findings and results from phase 1 (2017-2021) highlight how the SDGs, when working in synergy with national priorities and adapted to the local context, can be most impactful.

From 2017 to 2021, 12 of the 17 SDGs were integrated in the development of the village as an ecotourism destination driven by women entrepreneurs from the Yi ethnic group.

- Prior to the project, **30% of residents in Waipula were living under USD \$800 per year.** Their income derived mainly from tobacco farming and livestock, and their livelihoods had been limited by the lack of sustainable and diverse income sources. Developing alternative sources of income, while preserving local natural resources, was found to be critical to reducing poverty in a sustainable way.

To meet this need, the Yongren County Government developed a plan to explore an ecotourism business model to generate alternative sources of income while preserving local natural resources. This investment generated new income sources especially for local Yi women.

- The village underwent critical changes while preserving and protecting its unique environment and traditional culture. The project made significant improvements to address infrastructural gaps and weaknesses, including to the village's water supply, electrification system, and garbage and waste disposal. The community developed catering services, accommodation amenities and established the village as an ecotourism destination. In addition to revitalizing the Yi Embroidery craftsmanship and cultural industry, farming practices have diversified, and production now includes a variety of sustainable crops.

- One of the key outcomes of this project, and which was the critical factor in achieving such a remarkable drop in the poverty rate, was **the empowerment of the Yi ethnic minority women.** The socio-cultural and related economic challenges faced by these women in this small mountainous village were many. Because of social norms and structural barriers, these women worked long hours under difficult conditions. **With the training and opportunities offered by this project, Yi women assumed control of their futures and led the way in revitalizing their community and in developing their own sustainable businesses.**

Acceleration of 12 SDGs



IMPACT NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

0%

Poverty rate dropped to 0% in October 2020 down from 28% in 2017

120

long-term migrant workers returned home for employment and entrepreneurship

60

households and 193 individuals living under the poverty line were lifted out of poverty by 2020

210

seasonal migrant workers returned home for employment and entrepreneurship

607

local women obtained employment & income promotion

220,000

in 2021

Sales of ecologically grown rice on online and offline channels reached RMB

14,128

in 2021

People's per capita income grew to be RMB



“This project shows how entrepreneurship can be a powerful tool in addressing the income gap between men and women, and fighting poverty in rural areas. Yi women have gained the right skills and resources to leverage their cultural heritage, built solid economic foundations for themselves, and become leaders in their communities, paving the way for future generations of women.”

- Beate Trankmann, Resident Representative, UNDP China

“The SDG Pilot Village Project demonstrates how the private sector can play a critical role in helping achieve the SDGs with a strong focus on women’s economic empowerment and provides a blueprint on how companies can leverage their unique strengths and accelerate development results through public-private partnerships.”

- Deborah Gibbins, Chief Operating Officer, Mary Kay Inc.



As part of the pilot, a training on the SDGs was held in Waipula in 2020. In recognition of the achievements of the pilot and the advancement of the SDGs, members of the village created postcards to showcase the village’s socio-economic transformation, its scenic location and rich culture.



A Multi-Stakeholder Development Process

The goal of this partnership was to explore how the SDGs could be implemented at the local level to inform evidence and best practice to scale up implementation of the SDGs in other rural parts of China. **According to UNDP China, the ideas and methods developed and implemented by the project in localizing the SDGs can be viewed as a best practice for reducing poverty at the local level, driving women's empowerment and gender equality, while building a green, sustainable, and inclusive local economy.**

The approach adopted by the project, while tailored to the specific context of Waipula, could inform other development contexts that share similar challenges.

Reflecting the objective of SDG 17, cross-sector partnerships, when executed well, can have profound social and economic benefit. Indeed, the success of the SDG Pilot Village Project has been cited in a comparative analysis of social partnerships between multinational companies and nonprofits in China.²⁰

Mary Kay China's strategic vision and experience in driving women's entrepreneurship as well as its financial support and close partnership in the implementation of the project was recognized by UNDP as

a key factor to the overall success of the project. Furthermore, Mary Kay China's efforts in bringing about cross-sector collaboration in helping link China's poverty alleviation strategy with the SDGs, while simultaneously contributing to innovative templates and targeted approaches to poverty alleviation through China's rural renewal national policy has also been commended by global experts.²¹



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multilateral Organization

UNDP is the United Nations' global development network. It advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build better lives for themselves. It provides expert advice, training and grants to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on the least developed countries. UNDP promotes technical and investment cooperation among nations.

In China, it assists the government with the integration of the SDGs into development

decisions, promotes the transition to a low-carbon economy and a sustainable society, protects biodiversity and helps China further grow into its role as a leading development partner. It also helps the government ensure that the benefits of China's rapid advances of the recent years are distributed equally among society. UNDP's approach emphasizes tackling the causes of poverty, rather than merely alleviating its symptoms, and influencing attitudes among stakeholders accordingly.



China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE) Chinese Government

Operating directly under the Ministry of Commerce, CICETE was founded on March 12, 1983 with the approval of the State Council. CICETE's main function, delegated by the Ministry, is to coordinate the cooperation between China, UNDP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) including executing their assisted programs in China, and to manage projects of general goods supply, South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund projects, and capacity building projects under the China-Aid program to other developing countries.

After nearly 40 years of growth, CICETE has become an important bridge and platform for multi-bilateral economic and technical exchanges and international development cooperation. It has built up a wide cooperation network with more than 150 UN agencies, international nongovernmental organizations, and academic research institutions as well as 30 ministries and local government agencies.



中国妇女发展基金会
China Women's Development Foundation

China Women's Development Foundation (CWDF) Non-Governmental Organization

China Women's Development Foundation is an AAAAA foundation set up by the All-China Women's Federation in 1988. It is a national public foundation which raises funds in China and other countries and regions. The mission of CWDF is to safeguard women's rights and interests, improve women's quality of life, and promote the development of women and women's causes in China to contribute to efforts to build a harmonious society.

MARY KAY

Private Sector

In 1995, Mary Kay was launched in China to provide business opportunities for women. To fulfill its mission of "enriching women's lives," Mary Kay is committed to creating independent business opportunities for women so they may achieve entrepreneurial success. Over the years, Mary Kay has implemented programs enabling women entrepreneurs in China to access resources, established the Women's Small Business Fund, in collaboration with CWDF, to provide interest-free revolving loans of RMB 10 million to help more than 80,000 women in 23 provinces start their own businesses. In 2011, UNDP joined this partnership with Mary Kay and CWDF to provide international expertise on women's empowerment and sustainable development.

20. Yin, J. & Jamali, D. (2020). Collide or Collaborate: The Interplay of Competing Logics and Institutional Work in Cross-Sector Social Partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 169(12). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04548-8>

21. Yin, J. & Jamali, D. (2020). Collide or Collaborate: The Interplay of Competing Logics and Institutional Work in Cross-Sector Social Partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 169(12). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04548-8>

Local Community

The Waipula Village of Yijiu Township, Yongren County Government and the Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province served as the project village. The Project Management Office (PMO) was located at the Yunnan Provincial Women's Federation and was responsible for daily coordination and reporting. The Executive Vice President of the Women's Federation served as the local project manager. The PMO led the implementation of the project with close coordination of all partners under the strong support of the Yongren County Government.

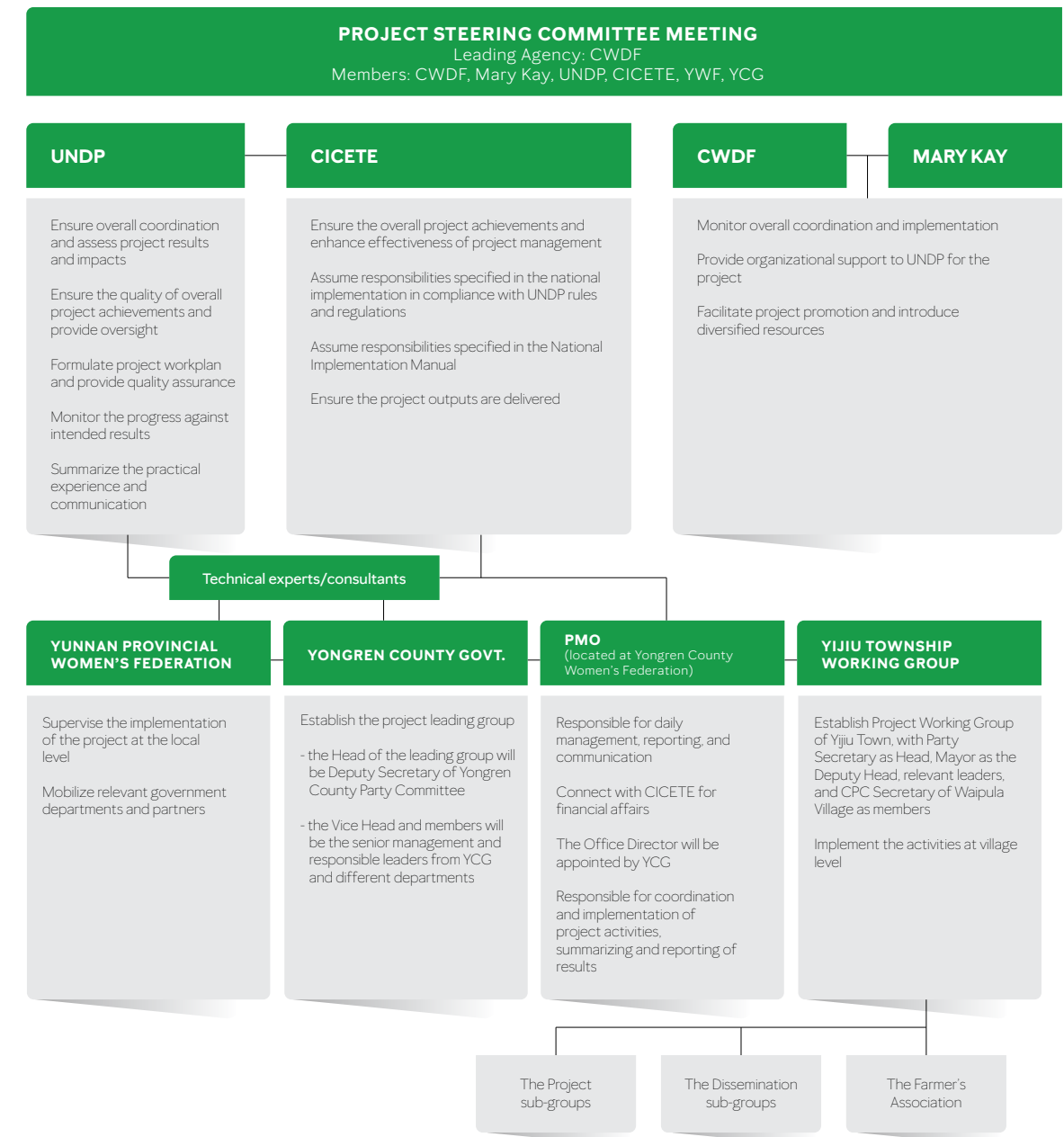
From 2018 to early 2021, Ms. Wu Tao was deployed by the government as the Deputy Secretary of the Yongren County Party Committee to combat poverty and she played a critical role in ensuring the achievements of the project.



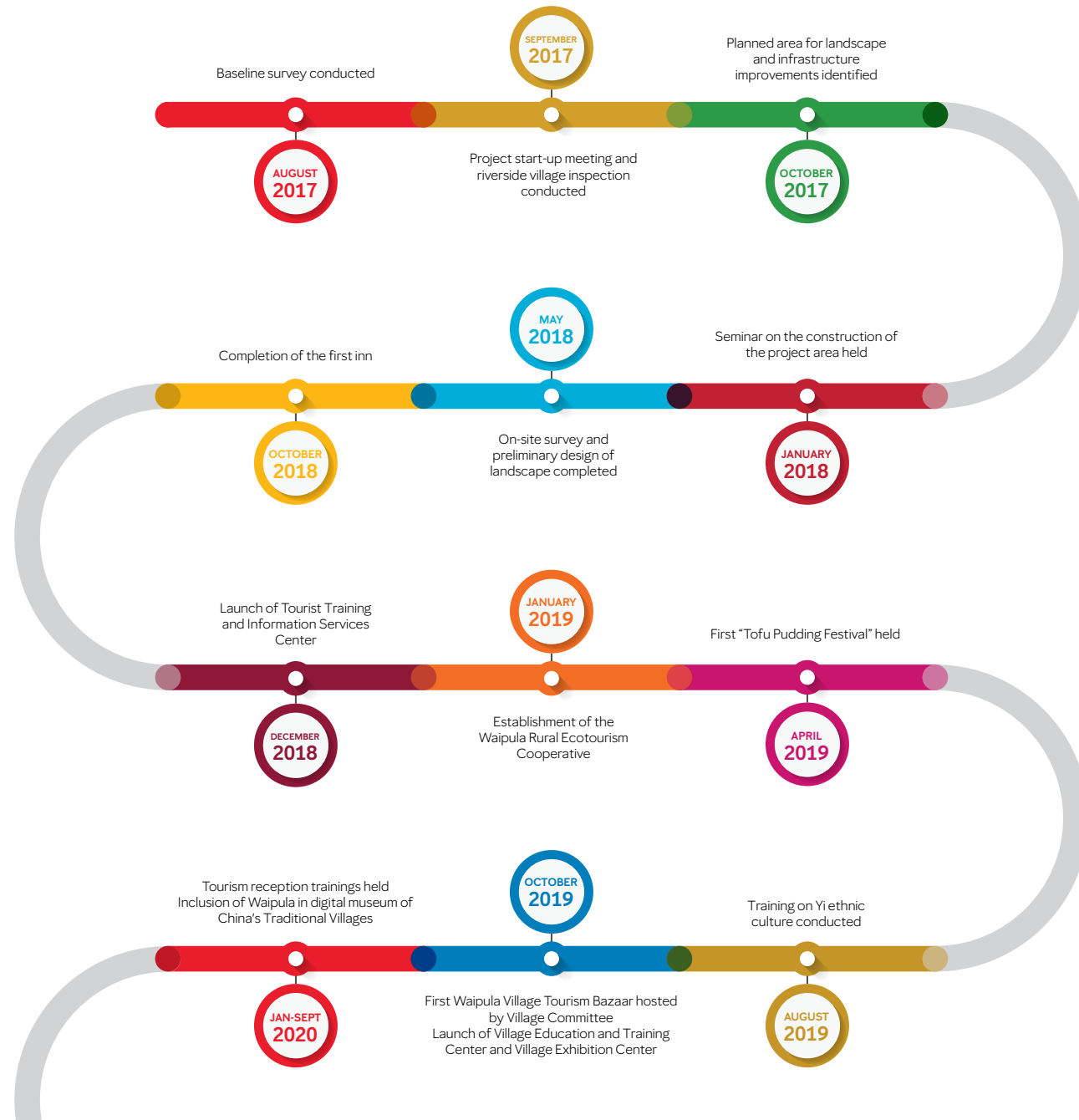
A Multi-Stakeholder Supported Development Process



Project Steering Committee



Project Timeline (2017-2021)



Phase 1 Findings

Gender discrimination continues to be a key driver of poverty. Women and men experience poverty in different ways. They experience different levels of poverty and face distinct barriers to poverty reduction efforts.²²

Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, as articulated in SDG 1, is a key challenge for the global community. The threat that poverty presents the private sector is also increasingly being recognized.

Companies coexist with the society in which they operate and depend on its stability, progress and prosperity. Ensuring inclusive economic growth and development offer tangible benefits for businesses, and a company that designs and acts upon a clear goal to build an inclusive economy benefits from creating a stable socio-economic business environment.

The engagement of Mary Kay as the private sector representative in the project exemplifies the critical role that companies can play in the advancement of social and economic development.

This multi-stakeholder partnership brought about impressive results and offers the following key findings to inform future collaborations amongst different stakeholders:

- **The project demonstrates the multiplier effect of women's entrepreneurship in advancing the SDGs contributing to the eradication of absolute poverty in Waipula and the acceleration of 12 of the 17 SDGs.**
- Women entrepreneurs became the drivers of local green economic growth and poverty reduction through targeted interventions that advanced an inclusive local green economy and the preservation of their cultural heritage.
- The outcomes provide compelling evidence of the transformational effect that a gender-responsive approach can make to localizing the SDGs and in the design of policy and programmatic responses for a green and inclusive economy.
- The pilot also highlights that while governments, international organizations and civil society can do much to address global challenges, including poverty and

gender inequality, they cannot do it alone. Partnerships, as articulated in SDG 17, are needed now more than ever amongst diverse stakeholders and sectors to maximize comparative strengths.

- The SDGs offer the private sector a clear blueprint for how to channel their corporate sustainability priorities and deliver real economic and social value through

partnering with government and civil society in devising solutions for systemic change

- The results of this pilot demonstrate the potential impact of the private sector to multi-stakeholder projects that seek to localize the SDGs and create ecosystem change by leveraging the unique knowledge and innovative practices they can offer to accelerate development results.



Picture: Courtesy of Waipula Villagers

22. Boudet, A. M. M., Buitrago, P., de la Briere, B. L., Newhouse, D., Matulevich, E., R., Scott, K. & Suarez-Becerra, P. (2018). *Gender Differences in Poverty and Household Composition through the Life-cycle* (Working Paper 8360). World Bank Policy Research. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/135731520343670750/pdf/WPS8360.pdf>

The Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator

Inspired by the SDG Pilot Village Project in China

The success of the SDG Pilot Village Project has built a strong evidence base that advancing women's economic empowerment is a powerful lever in the fight against poverty.

Taking stock of Waipula's transformational journey and recognizing the multiplier effect of women's entrepreneurship on the SDGs, Mary Kay Inc., in collaboration with the United Nations, incepted the Women's Entrepreneurship Accelerator (WEA) at the UN General Assembly in 2019.

WEA is a multi-stakeholder initiative on women's entrepreneurship convening six UN agencies: the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the International Trade Centre (ITC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Global Compact (UNGC), UN Women and Mary Kay as representative of the private sector.

The goal of the initiative is to maximize the development impact of women's entrepreneurship in achieving the SDGs by creating an enabling ecosystem for women's entrepreneurship around the world.

WEA offers an online Entrepreneurship Certificate Program available in 6 languages, supplemented by on-the-ground training and mentorship. Furthermore, WEA serves as an advocacy platform to eliminate entrepreneurial roadblocks for women, ranging from digital literacy to legal reform – enabling women to

fully participate in the growth of their local and national economies. Finally, WEA supports global efforts to encourage businesses to establish and expand relationships with women-owned businesses, including gender-responsive procurement.

Through this multi-stakeholder partnership WEA has committed to empower 5 million women entrepreneurs by 2030.

Learn more: we-accelerate.com

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACCELERATOR

IN SUPPORT OF







MARY KAY

August 2022