



CHINA: FIGHT AGAINST EARLY MARRIAGES

DURATION: APRIL 2014 - MARCH 2017

BUDGET: €373,475

INTERVENTION ZONE: YUNNAN PROVINCE (SOUTH-WEST CHINA)
NIUJIAOZHAI AND SHALATUO CANTONS OF THE YUANYANG COUNTY.



OBJECTIVE:

Contributing to the promotion of the right to education and the protection of adolescents from ethnic minority, mostly girls, in order to protect them against child marriage.

67%

OF THE WOMEN IN YUNNAN HAVE HAD THEIR FIRST CHILDREN BETWEEN 15 AND 19 YEARS OLD.

CHINA - GENERAL INFORMATION

Capital: Beijing

Surface: 9 561 000 km²

Population: 1,375 billion inhabitants

Density: 144 inhabitants / km²

Official languages: Chinese (Mandarin or Putonghua)

Government: republic

GNI per capita/year: \$7,820 (France: \$42,250 in 2008)

Population leaving with less than \$1,25 per day: 12% (2010)

Source: France Diplomatie, World Bank.

Plan International has been operating in China since 1995

CONTEXT:

In China, the legal age of marriage is 22 years old for men and 20 years old for women.

However, in the Yunnan province, where a lot of ethnic minorities live, it is still usual for teenagers to get married before the legal age, because of the traditions and a weak law-enforcement.

A study carried out by Plan International China in several villages of the province showed that the average age of marriage among women was 18,6 years old and that 67.26% of these women have had their first baby between 15 and 19 years old.

Early marriages often lead to:

- early pregnancies,
- serious health issues both for the mothers and the babies,
- education issues because of early school leaving.

This situation perpetuates the circle of poverty, by preventing girls and women from empowerment and from a decent level of income.

APPROACH:

The program is guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that campaigns for the abandonment of harmful traditional practice, such as child marriage.

It also follows the Child-Centered Community Development inclusive approach of Plan International, based on children's rights. It focuses on involving children in the decision-making process and make them beneficiate from the program.

Thus, the team of the program will make sure that girls' and boys' voices will be heard all along the program. All the people working on its implementation (local partners, experts, key participants) will be trained on children participation thanks to Roger Hart's participation ladder.

This ladder was created to foster adults and children's understanding on how children can be involved in matters that affect them. It helps identifying the way children and young people are currently involved, and give them some goals to pursue.

SPECIFIC GOALS:

The programme aims to make adolescents, especially girls, and the whole community, aware of their responsibilities, in order to delay the age of getting married.



TESTIMONY:

« Like a lot of girls in my village, I was promised to a boy since primary school. Thanks to the pilot intervention programme of Plan International against early marriage, school helped me to keep on studying. »

Qiao, 12 years old, region of Yunnan.

BENEFICIARIES:

- Around 2,000 pupils aged 10-16 years old, mostly with an ethnic minority background, from 4 schools of the Yuangang county.
- Around 160 young people, essentially girls, part of children clubs, created by the programme within schools.
- Around 60 teachers from the 4 schools of the programme.
- Around 60 local representatives of the government.
- Around 20 community health workers.
- The communities within the villages of intervention.

PARTNERS:

- Yuanyang's Education Office. It will be responsible for most of the activities of the program in collaboration with Plan International China.
- The government of the county and the two cantons.
- The Bureau of Health.
- The village committees of the cantons of Niujiaozhai and Shalatuo, which will involve all the members of the communities in awareness activities.

EXPECTED RESULTS:

Creating an environment favourable to the abandonment of child marriage:

The programme seeks to create an environment conducive to the abandonment of child marriage. It aims to make adolescents, especially girls, aware of their responsibilities, so that they can reach their full potential and enjoy their rights. The objective is to raise awareness among parents, communities, teachers, government authorities and medical staff.

Training and raising awareness:

A training programme will be offered to teachers in order to raise awareness among the pupils of the 4 schools of the project. Parents, communities and governmental agents will also benefit from trainings on the harmful consequences of early marriages. They will learn about their protection duties, laws, children's rights, gender equality, etc.

Plan International China will also organise several meetings with the local representatives of the government in order to share experiences.

Community health workers will be trained on reproductive and sexual health in order to provide valuable advice, for young boys and girls, especially those "at risk" or already married.

Creating children clubs:

The programme also plans to create 8 children clubs within schools. Children will regularly receive a training on their rights, early marriage and on life skills (communication and negotiation with parents, ways to protect themselves, people, etc.). Around 20 teachers will manage these clubs and will organise, along with the children, sensitization activities to raise awareness among other pupils and parents.

Granting scholarships:

Finally, the programme plans to grant conditional scholarships to adolescents, in order to encourage them to keep going to school, delaying the age of getting married.

2,000

**PUPILS BETWEEN 10 AND 16 YEARS OLD BENEFICIATE
FROM OUR PROGRAMME**
