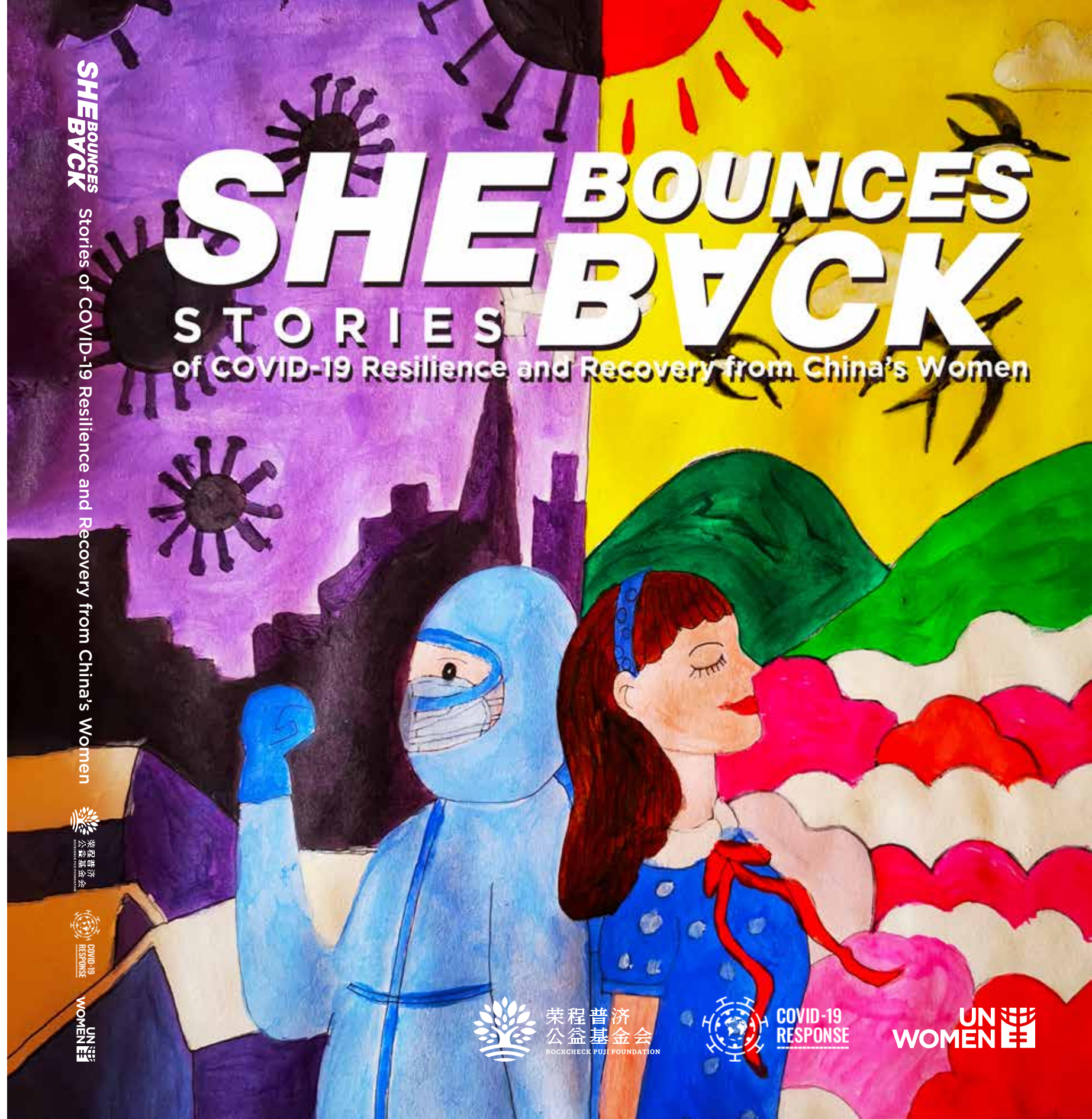


SHEBOUNCES BACK

媞为有你
重启赋能



SHEBOUNCES
BACK

Stories of COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery from China's Women



UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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FORWARD

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world

2020 was like no other year, bringing unprecedented challenges and achievements. Just as in the cover of this book, painted by a child, we saw China's women fighting implacably against the virus on one hand, while working to build a better and more prosperous world on the other as we emerged from the worst of the pandemic. In China's response and its recovery we have witnessed the essential contribution of women at all levels: their leadership and resilience as frontline responders; their tirelessness as community volunteers; their knowledge as innovators; their steadfastness as national leaders – and so much more. We wish to extend our deepest respect and admiration to these women who, from all walks of life, have helped China bounce back.

UN Women and the Rockcheck Puji Foundation are committed to upholding women's rights and their leadership potential in pandemic preparedness, response and recovery. In May 2020 UN Women China, funded by the Rockcheck Puji Foundation, launched Supporting women to recover from the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, a project that focused on women entrepreneurs, workers and women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In doing so we have worked with many women to build their resilience to future shocks, promote their leadership, and build on their capabilities.

Under this project, we present the She Bounces Back photobook to celebrate and document the tremendous contribution of China's women, and reinforce the importance of a more equal future as we emerge from the shadow of COVID-19.

The 76 pictures collected in this coffee table book were submitted by both professionals and amateurs, among them female journalists and photographers, frontline workers, care workers, doctors, entrepreneurs, children with disabilities, transport and logistics managers, and vegetable farmers.

We have aimed to document some of the pandemic's most candid moments and to present history through the lenses of China's women, while establishing their indispensable and often under-acknowledged roles. In our accompanying story telling we have tried to open a window into the lives being lived behind the pictures, and the voices being raised. This book shows that when women are empowered, mobilized and given equal opportunities, they can do almost anything.

UN Women and the Rockcheck Puji Foundation would like to thank the All-China Women's Federation, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the China Women's Association for Science and Technology (CWAST), the Women's General Association of Macau, the Mulan Initiative, and all the organizations and photographers who made this book possible. We would like to give special thanks to the formidable women who have shared their time and their stories with us.

UN Women stands ready to support the Government of China and its national partners, including the All-China Women's Federation and other women's and civil society organizations, in building back to a stronger and more resilient Chinese society. We will continue to help build women's economic resilience in the country, while documenting and sharing valuable lessons and good practices with the rest of the world.



Smriti Aryal
Head of Office
UN Women China



Zhang Junting
Chairwoman
Rockcheck Puji
Foundation

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Responding to COVID-19



Women make up around 70 per cent of the world's global health force.¹ Yet although this contributes around \$3 trillion dollars to the global economy every year, much of this work is under-valued and under- or unpaid.² Female leadership in healthcare also remains scant, while advancing professionally is often more difficult for women compared to men,³ and women continue to take on the lion's share of unpaid care work at home.

These patterns have largely been magnified in the fight against COVID-19, in China and beyond. In one of the country's hardest-hit areas, Hubei province, women make up around 90 per cent of all healthcare workers.⁴ Yet research suggests that female health workers have had limited opportunity to lead or inform national or global responses to the pandemic.⁵ This not only impacts the ability of the healthcare industry to respond effectively, but it has reinforced the very inequalities we should be dismantling.

This is why UN Women advises and partners with governments and other influencers in China in its pursuit of gender equality, to urge actions that promote diverse women's leadership and address the largely female burden of unpaid care work at home, among others.⁶

This chapter showcases some of the tremendous contributions made by women healthcare workers in China – their skill and perseverance. We present the story of a young medical scientist who has been integral to developing the first COVID-19 vaccine in China, having pushed past the taunts and barriers of a male-dominated world; and we also show the diverse efforts of women across the country as they research, report, heal, make and distribute as part of the pandemic response.

Shan Sisi:

At the forefront of China's COVID-19 research



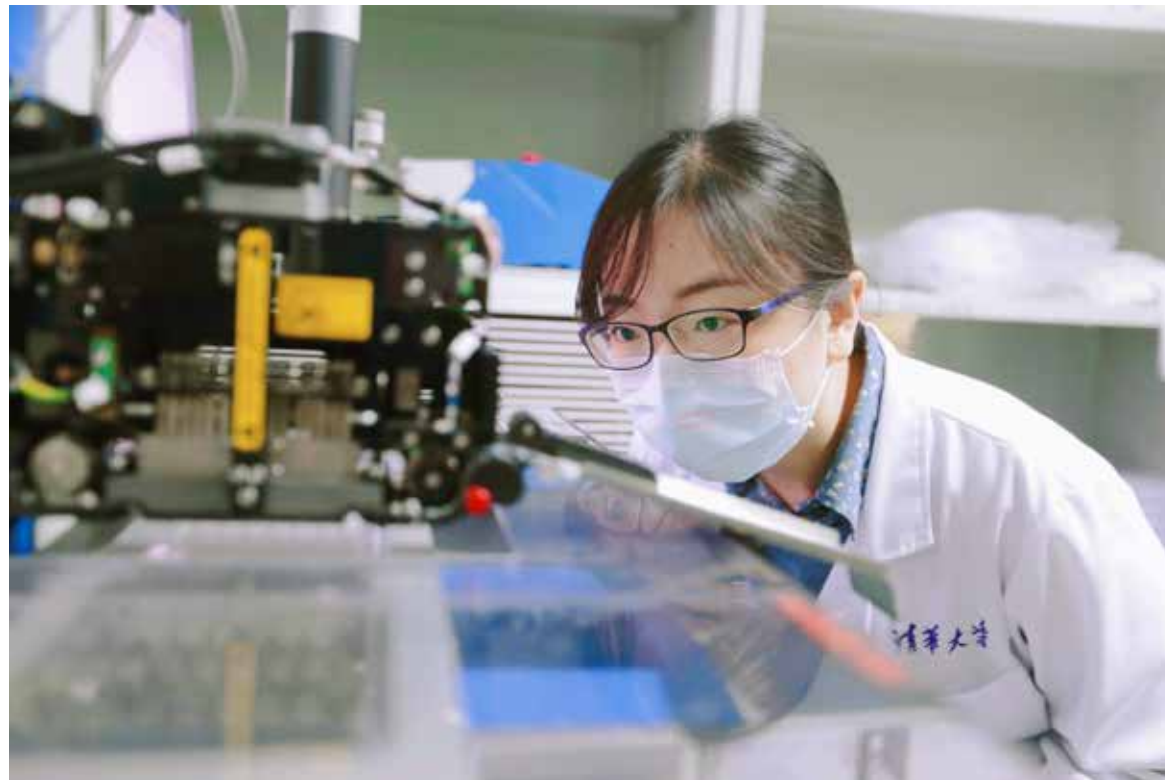
Photo: Shan Sisi

Shan Sisi is a PhD student at the Tsinghua University Medical School and specializes in infectious diseases and immunity. Early during the pandemic she volunteered to support coronavirus research efforts and, after intense work, her small team managed to map the virus protein and isolate more than 200 monoclonal antibodies, making it possible to produce a vaccine. Here she reflects on the work that went into this success, and the stereotypes that she has battled on her way to the laboratory.

“ I’d compare decoding viruses to running a marathon. For me it started in 2019 when I heard that Professor Zhang Linqi was forming a research team to study COVID-19. I believed that I had the skills that they needed, and so although I’d only been at home for a day during our winter vacation, I volunteered, changed my ticket and set off for Beijing.

From the moment I arrived, a period of intense scientific research began. Firstly, we needed to solve structural questions about the way that the virus binds to a cell and then uses the cell’s genetic tools to copy and assemble more virus proteins. What we needed to do was to find the right immunity weapons — antibodies. Once we’d found antibodies that could block the virus from entering the cells, we would be able to develop components for a vaccine.

At the start there was only me and another colleague in the laboratory because Prof. Zhang was quarantined outside of school and other



Shan Sisi conducts research on COVID-19 in the laboratory.

Photo: Shan Sisi



Shan Sisi (front, centre), Professor Zhang Linqi (rear, centre) and other students in a laboratory.

Photo: Shan Sisi

members were unable to return. The combination of an unknown new virus with our small team and intense workload and timeline meant that I’d never faced such a difficult research process! We often stayed up all night, transmitting cells and producing antibodies. Even my new year’s eve was spent in the laboratory. But my colleague sent me some homemade dumplings as a Lunar New Year treat, and when I held that warm bowl of dumplings my heart felt full of gratitude and determination – the support of my colleagues kept me going.

By February, other colleagues had joined and we had finally worked out the binding structure. By the beginning of March, we had successfully sorted and identified hundreds of antibodies against COVID-19, working with samples from convalescent patients. Then we began to verify their functions, work with the pharmaceutical industry and test the drug in clinical trials. After several rounds of clinical experiments, we found that the final antibody extracted by our laboratory was effective, even on mutant strains. Of course we’re still working on this, particularly on antibodies for variant strains. This experience has strengthened my determination to serve the public and continue studying infectious diseases.

Women are generally underrepresented in scientific research. I have come to realize that stereotypes about

women and their behaviour not only have a great impact on their career choices, but create challenges in their work and relationships. For example, men have told me that I’m ‘too aggressive’ for walking too fast and for focusing on my scientific work.

Boys and girls are assigned roles by society early. I remember that when I was in middle school my class needed to elect two representatives, a president and league secretary. I wanted to run for class president, but school practice at the time was for the boys to be presidents and the girls to be secretaries, so I reluctantly only ran for the league secretary position. When I entered scientific research I knew that women faced more prejudice and pressure. I was able to persevere because of the support and encouragement from family, teachers and classmates.

I want to tell all girls and young women that they should walk the path they choose and try not to be swayed by mainstream gender views, as difficult as that might be! As we grow up, we may witness gender inequality or be treated unequally, and we should learn to try and express our views at this time to make a difference. I also hope to see more and more women joining scientific research teams in the future. This can only create more value for society.



Staff at Changsha Centre Hospital tend to newborn babies during the pandemic.

The pandemic is placing significant stress on health systems the world over, while disruptions to routine health services are likely to limit women's access to sexual and reproductive health care. Despite the ambitious sustainable development goal to end preventable maternal deaths by 2030, the current rate of progress will likely see the world fall short of this target by more than one million lives. Previous pandemics such as Zika and Ebola have resulted in exacerbated maternal mortality and morbidity, and more adolescent pregnancies, HIV infections and sexually transmitted diseases.⁷ According to one source, for example, an estimated additional 18 million women will lose regular access to modern contraceptives in Latin America and the Caribbean during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in millions more unintended pregnancies and life altering consequences for women.⁸

Photo: Changsha Centre Hospital/Chen Ying





Staff with disabilities make masks at the Xingtang County Disabled Double Creation Park in Shijiazhuang City.

Ensuring a disability-inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery involves building more inclusive and accessible societies in partnership with those with lived experience of disability. Such people are often more vulnerable during pandemics because of assistive devices that reduce social distancing, and underlying health problems. Added to this, available data suggest that women with disabilities are three times more likely than men to have unmet needs for health care, three times more likely to be illiterate, two times less likely to be employed and two times less likely to use the Internet. Women with disabilities are also at heightened risk of suffering sexual violence compared to those without disabilities. Realizing the rights of persons with disabilities is central to the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – to leave no one behind.

Photo: China Disabled Persons' Federation



Staff from the Women's General Association of Macau distribute epidemic prevention items to local people.

Established in 1950, the Women's General Association of Macau is the largest and oldest women's organization in the special administrative region of Macau. During the COVID-19 pandemic it has played a critical role in distributing essential supplies to frontline workers, underprivileged families, people with reduced mobility, and the elderly.

Photo: The Women's General Association of Macau, China

An employee from China's Rockcheck Puji Foundation prepares anti-epidemic emergency materials for shipping to Italy, where they are in dire shortage.

Photo: Rockcheck Puji Foundation





Medical staff show their determination in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic.

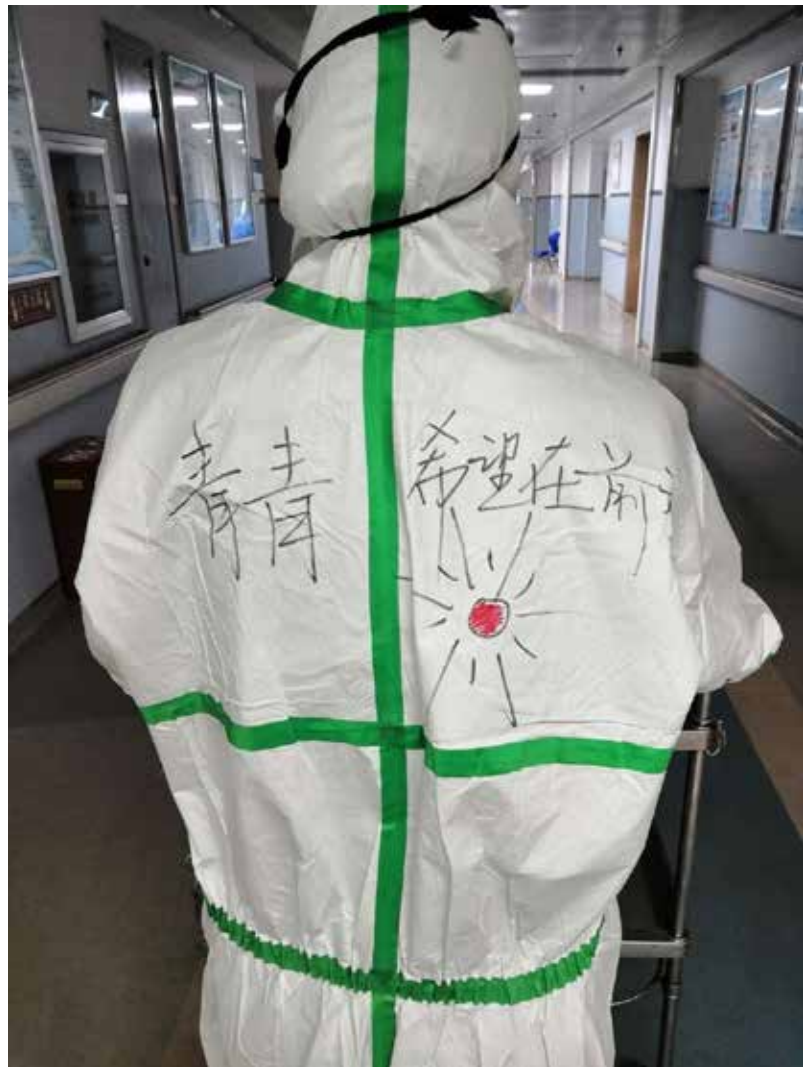
Photo: Xiaogan First People's Hospital in Hubei Province

Huang Xia is an attending doctor at Chongqing's Three Gorges Central Hospital, where the first COVID-19 patient in Chongqing recovered.

"I have joined the fight against the epidemic and we will work through the difficulties together," she wrote in one diary entry.

Hand-Painted Portrait: Fan Jue





A medical worker wears protective clothing, with 'Hope is waiting ahead of us' written on the back.

Photo: Xiaogan First People's Hospital in Hubei Province



A medical worker cleans up medical wastes.

Photo: Xiaogan First People's Hospital in Hubei Province



A medical worker conducts the nucleic acid testing.

Photo: The Fourth People's Hospital of Nanning in Guangxi Province/Huang Shaoren



(Left) Journalist Zhang Siran broadcasts live from the Dongxihu Mobile Cabin Hospital in Wuhan.

(Right) Newspaper journalists pose with medical worker Xu Ying (centre) at Wuhan's Zhongnan Hospital's intensive care unit.

Photo: Zhao Siwei



Medical workers form the shape of a zero with their arms on 28 March, 2020, to celebrate the fact that Xiaogan City had no reported COVID-19 cases on that day.

Photo: Xiaogan Central Hospital in Hubei Province

Members of the national medical pandemic team in Hubei finish work.

Photo: Global Times/Cui Meng



Leading the Fight



SHE BOUNCES
BACK

The women leaders of today are tenacious, effective and diverse. They are mobilizing the global climate movement, pushing for social protections, leading corporations out of difficulty and dismantling systemic racial discrimination. They are also tackling the COVID-19 crisis well, with recent studies highlighting that many countries led by women have seen lower infection rates.⁹ Analysis has defined these leadership styles as frequently clear, decisive and empathetic: more likely to prioritize collective over individual interest, collaboration over competition, coaching over commanding.¹⁰ Yet support for and confidence in women leaders remains unjustifiably low in many countries.

This is why standards such as the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), launched by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, are important: they provide a holistic and human rights-based framework that companies can use to support the empowerment of women in their workplaces, marketplaces and communities. It is also why UN Women calls on governments to promote and ensure the leadership of women and girls, including those who suffer multiple forms of discrimination, such as disabled, gay or trans women.

Promoting the achievements of good women leaders can also help showcase the true value of diverse leadership. In this section we present the stories of inspirational leaders who, as the pandemic hit and the world around them changed rapidly, responded with tenacity, creativity and strength.

Wang Yaling:

The rise of a community guardian



Wang Yaling is the chair and secretary of the Bairuijing Women's Federation, in Wuhan, Hubei province.

Photo: Wang Yaling

Wang Yaling is the chair and secretary of the Bairuijing Women's Federation in Wuhan, Hubei province, which was badly hit by COVID-19. In 2020 she won many accolades for her leadership. Confronted with an unprecedented crisis, the community leader mobilized more than 400 volunteers and developed a structure to assign and manage them, to make sure that each residential area was cared for. Working ceaselessly for 120 consecutive days, she was dubbed by the government as a 'National Pace-Setter in the Fight Against COVID-19'.

“Our residents often call me the Leader of the Ten Thousand Residents because my community has the most households in Wuhan's Wuchang district. It was 20 January when we were given our first assignment by the local government: to announce to our area that we were in a state of war, and then to monitor and manage the movements of those infected by COVID-19. We initially felt overwhelmed by the information and all the issues that came our way, but our fear was forgotten once we started focusing on our task. As the leader of our women's federation, I was charged with leading our community service team.

We fought the virus for more than 120 consecutive days. We shut down the local winter childcare center and entertainment facilities, and managed the regular disinfecting of public areas. We regularly broadcasted information to help inform residents and relieve their anxiety during quarantine; this was mostly about the pandemic control measures, using online platforms and community messaging groups. During the initial lockdown my colleagues and I helped to send 307 confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases to the hospital.

One of the biggest management challenges that I faced was a lack of staff: there were only 23 community



Wang Yaling helps to source and deliver vegetables for local residents.

Photo: Wang Yaling

workers, incidentally, 80 per cent women. Each colleague had to serve nearly 1,000 residents, so the workload was overwhelming. I began to mobilize all kinds of people and groups, including cadres, youth football teams, real estate companies and ordinary residents, and within just 20 days more than 400 volunteers had joined us. To effectively manage them I assigned them into grids that corresponded to our residential areas. We also formed service squads to lead different activities: calming residents down on the phone for example, disinfecting surfaces, purchasing food and medicine for residents, and so on. All of us coordinated well.

Women have played a huge role in the fight against the pandemic. They've made up the majority of workers,

whether among medical personnel, community workers, or volunteers, especially on the frontlines. I still feel huge responsibility for the health and safety of the community, even now that the emergency has reduced.

The pandemic has brought us community workers closer to the residents. Many have recognized our work and committed to continue working with us, even when the pandemic is no longer a threat. I think this experience has brought our team more credibility and cohesiveness. I'm glad that more people have been able to witness women's leadership in action.”

Special thanks to the All-China Women's Federation and China Women's Daily for their contributions to this story.

Xia Hua:

Bringing fashion to the fight



Xia Hua is president of the Eve Group.
Photo: Xia Hua

Xia Hua founded the Eve Group, a Chinese clothing brand for men, in 1994 in a bid to change her and her family's fortunes. Nine years later she set up her second business to do the same for 8,000 rural craftswomen living in mountainous areas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Xia Hua found that she could not only pivot her first business to carry out a critical public service and help other small and micro enterprises, but that lessons from doing so would help take her work with craftswomen in promising new directions.

“ If anything can push a company to produce a miracle, it's a pandemic! It was on the third day of our Lunar New Year that I first heard about the outbreak of COVID-19. As a signatory to the Women's Empowerment Principles and with a strong corporate social responsibility (CSR) mandate, I always ask myself 'how can I bring more value to society under the current circumstances?' So, hearing that protective clothing was in scarce supply, it occurred to me that as a clothing company it would be relatively easy for us to switch from men's fashion to protective clothing.

This wasn't entirely the case! We faced many initial challenges in our race to apply for relevant qualifications, find the right raw materials, adjust our working procedures and work out transportation. Everything was unknown, and you had no idea what would happen from one moment to the next – but our team and mission gave me strength.

Despite their own worries and problems, all my employees worked hard to ensure that we could start production as soon as possible. It took us ten days to switch our six production lines, and we then worked around the clock to train workers, adjust our equipment, and start delivering the clothing to the front lines on time and in the quality and quantity



Xia Hua speaks with a factory worker as her staff produce protective clothing.
Photo: Mulan Initiative

Xia Hua discusses embroidery patterns with the craftswomen who work with her.
Photo: Xia Hua



A craftswoman and Xia Hua embrace.
Photo: Xia Hua

needed. Gradually, we got to the point where we were meeting domestic demand, and were even able to export globally.

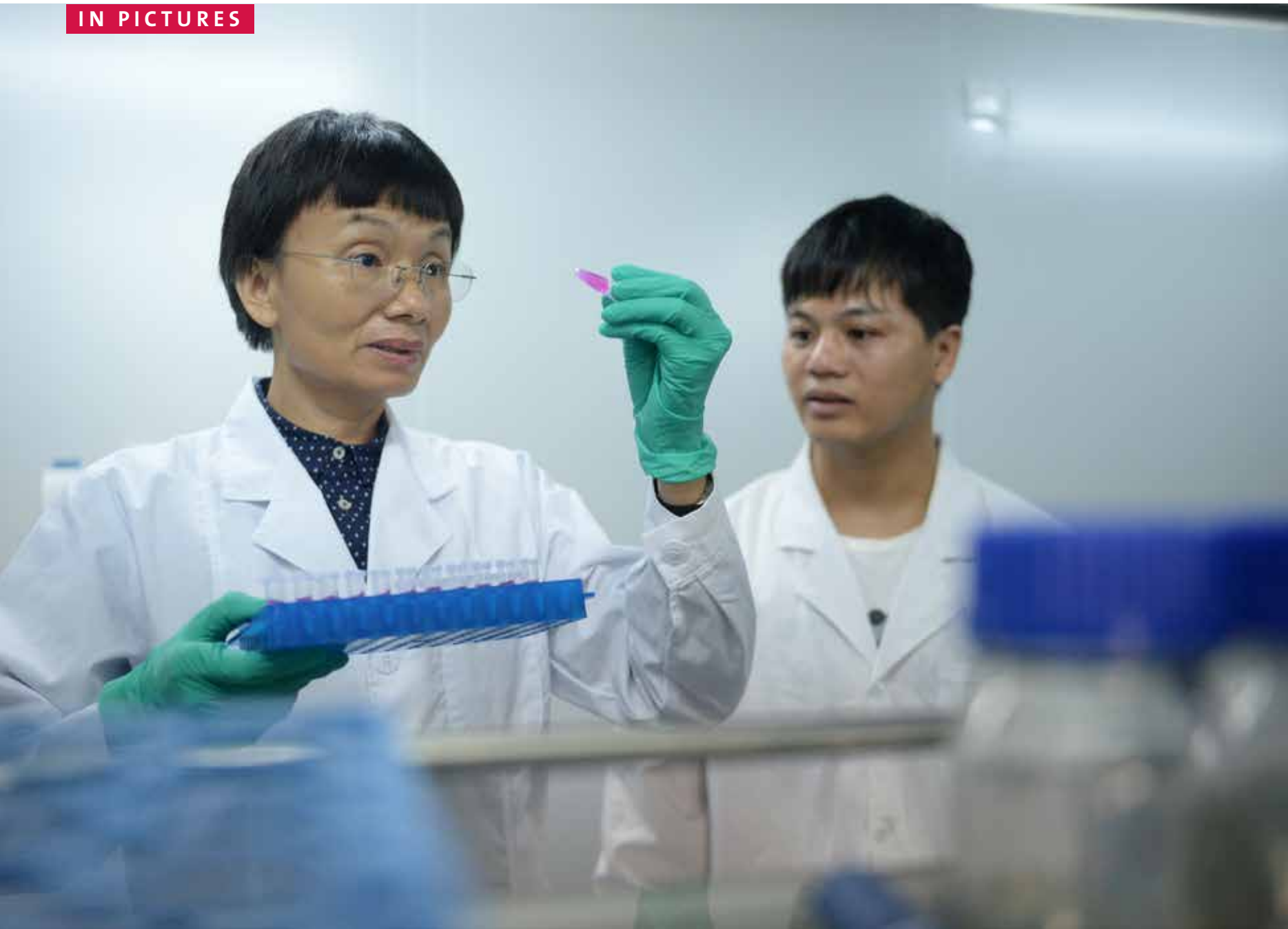
Along with our CSR values, I'd say that it was our digital platform that allowed us to respond so quickly when the pandemic struck. The Gathering Intelligence project, which we started building years ago, connects consumers, designers and factories on a digital platform. During the pandemic and recovery phase, tens of thousands of small and micro garment enterprises used the platform to connect and live broadcast, which helped them to resume production.

The impact of COVID-19 made me realize the power of the digital age. One of my businesses utilizes the talents of rural women embroiderers, many of whom had started to give up their craft because they hadn't been able to make a living. We established a database of patterns and embroiderers, and set up regular sales events called Deep Mountain Markets in shopping malls where embroiderers can craft and sell onsite. I realized that we could also sell these products well online and train embroiderers to livestream.

Nowadays, more and more embroiderers have their own live broadcast channels and have built a good follower base. This not only brings them stable income but also helps Chinese traditional handicrafts move beyond the mountains and enter the international market. My aim is to help more craftswomen and grow the Eve Group by promoting women's economic empowerment alongside Chinese cultural inheritance and innovation. This commercial approach with a public spirit is what motivates me and makes us who we are.”



As the CEO of Eve Group, Xia Hua signed and committed to UN Women's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).
Photo: UN Women



Scientist Chen Rui'ai works with colleagues during the recovery period, contributing to the sustainable development of modern agricultural technology in China.

Photo: China Women's Association for Science and Technology (CWAST)



Chen Rui'ai (left)



Chen Rui'ai (right)



Bluesail Medical, a signatory of the UN Women Women's Empowerment Principles, launches a global supply chain to import medical and protective materials from abroad, following the outbreak of COVID-19.

Photo: The Mulan Initiative





Pan Xiaohong, a disabled woman from Sunan village in Gansu province, uses livestreaming to offer handicraft classes, helping many left-behind women and disabled people to learn skills and increase their income from home during the lockdown.

Photo: China Disabled Persons' Federation

Recovery & Resilience



COVID-19 has had a big impact on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which, with their more limited inventories, client bases, cash reserves and credit options, find it harder than larger businesses to absorb shocks. For women-run SMEs these risks are amplified by their poorer access to financial services and assets, information, communication technologies and business networks, which are more readily available to men. Many women-led SMEs are in sectors that were directly hit by social distancing measures, while research has also found that the kinds of goods and services typically provided by women-run SMEs are often less suitable for e-commerce, and with target customers that are also less likely to use e-commerce.¹¹

Women globally are meanwhile much more likely to work in lower-paid, part-time and informal employment, with little or no income security and social protection, such as health insurance. This is magnified for women who face intersecting discrimination, relating to their age, ethnicity or disability, for example. Women tend to therefore be much less protected from economic shocks in times of crisis, compared to men.¹²

This is why UN Women works with governments to make sure that, among other priorities, the particular needs of women employees and workers are at the heart of pandemic response plans; that women-owned and led businesses are supported with measures like grants and subsidies; and that informal workers are fully recognized and supported, along with groups that face magnified discrimination. It is particularly important for the care economy to be made fairer, and founded on measures like paid leave, flexible working arrangements, and attitude changes around gender and care work.

In this chapter we present the recovery journeys of diverse women entrepreneurs, each of whom has faced down disaster with resilience and skill, from the mountains of Tibet to the warehouses of Shenzhen.



After receiving a business management degree from a French university, Sonam Chodron used her new knowledge to start working with under-employed female highland herders and craftspeople from the region of her forest-clad Tibetan hometown. Her company, Kadhak, turns natural materials such as yak milk, honeycomb and wild herbs into sustainable organic products. Sonam Chodron, now in her late twenties, describes how she has used the pandemic as an opportunity to learn, reassess, innovate – and ultimately grow her business.

STORY

Sonam Chodron:

Supporting natural livelihoods and healthy handwashing



A highland herder prepares butter for sale under the Kadhak brand, in Jiawa. Photo: Sonam Chodron

“Kadhak is a Tibetan word meaning ‘primordially pure’. It also symbolizes the beginning of all things and the goodness of nature. There are more than 2,000 villagers in Jiawa township but there are few local jobs; I wanted to help provide a more stable income for the women here. When I looked for a project, I found that people in the Tibetan areas have many skills that I could make use of as an entrepreneur, while the natural environment was also a rich source of opportunity. Yet I knew that care and innovation would be needed to ensure that local raw materials were shaped to meet the needs of a modern lifestyle, without destroying the local ecology.

During the epidemic, our work was suspended for about three months and I was quarantined away from the Tibetan highlands in the city of Chengdu – nature had pressed the pause button on our lives. After the initial panic and anxiety I started to get used to such a slow life, and I began to enjoy the time to think.

Our company is still very young, and it’s helpful to be able to stop and think about its development from time to time. There are currently 16 people on the team, 12 of whom are local

women and all relatively young. Taking advantage of this time window, I reassessed the company’s business and consumer needs, and considered how I should change our marketing approach now that people would be going outside less. I discussed ideas with peers and friends in my network, mainly online, and we shared experiences and technologies, which was very inspiring. I realized that the pandemic control measures would likely become a ‘new normal’, and that our company could only survive by meeting these new needs and changing our marketing approach.

We started by enhancing the sterilizing and disinfecting qualities of our products. We developed our own rinse-free hand disinfectant, and products to help young children develop handwashing habits.

Kadhak’s organic sheep’s milk soap was developed to encourage hand washing among young children during the coronavirus pandemic.

Photo: Sonam Chodron



Kadhak’s store in Litang has become a trusted place for passersby to wash their hands.

Photo: Kasey Kinsella



A highland herder (left) in Jiawa shows Sonam Chodron how the herders make butter from milk.

Photo: Sonam Chodron

Following these adjustments, sales of our yak milk handmade soaps continued to rise, in and outside of China, and the company’s revenue almost doubled. We made the bold decision to open a new store on a popular shopping street in Litang county, although we didn’t have much hope for its near-term performance; we just thought it was something we should do in order to grow. Yet surprisingly, our sales performance has not been at all bad and our store quickly became a hub for people to stop by and wash their hands. We’ve also started looking to supply our care products to hotel partners.

Our company and I are recovering from the pandemic crisis step by step and I feel like we’ve moved onto a newer, better track. I know that there are challenges ahead, but as our saying goes, ‘everything that changes will find a way forward.’ During this crisis I’ve learned that new opportunities present themselves if we just keep thinking outside of the box.”



Li Xia founded Shenzhen Power-Solution to make affordable, safe and environmentally-friendly lighting for those at the bottom of the economic pyramid. Her customer base reaches across Asia, Africa and Latin America, where many people still rely on kerosene lamps or candles, at a high cost to the environment. When the low purchasing power of their customers dropped even further during the pandemic, a heavily pregnant Li and her team knew that they would need to innovate to keep their business and mission on track.

STORY

Li Xia: Lighting up lives around the world



Li Xia (middle) and her team strategize on how to improve and expand the business.

Photo: Li Yili

“**A**t the beginning of the pandemic my main worry as a business owner was that a staff member would get infected and that the whole factory would be put in quarantine. At the same time I was pregnant and almost forty years old. I’d only been sleeping for a few hours each day and I was scared that my baby’s health might be affected by my stress levels or exposure to the virus at work.

The reopening of the factory was repeatedly delayed because we couldn’t get hold of sufficient anti-pandemic supplies: we would hear that disinfectant or masks were available somewhere, but by the time we arrived they were already sold out. Yet working together, we were one of the first companies to reopen.

On our first day back I told my employees that the company had been in business for 15 years and that they, and the trust of our

long-term customers, were our most valuable assets. I told them that together we could overcome any difficulty – but I was worried. Only nine of our 60 workers had initially returned to work but we had 28 orders waiting. The price of our raw materials had risen as production was suspended. Worse yet, some of our foreign customers then cancelled their orders or asked for delayed shipping. This meant that we had a backlog of goods worth 400,000 yuan in the company’s warehouse. Shortly after that, several more customers cancelled their orders and this cut off our cash flow.

I was worried that we wouldn’t be able to pay our staff their wages on time and we all went through a lot of stress. Even our customers were telling me to take more rest. We started to search for good domestic material suppliers to replace the original ones and applied unsuccessfully for loans from banks, which felt that our customer-based in developing countries was too high risk during the pandemic. This meant that we needed to rely entirely on self-funding.

The Canton Fair was a turning point for us. It had been moved online, and through it we managed to become suppliers for several big multinational companies, delivering goods worth millions of CNY. This hugely boosted our confidence, so that when there was a shortage of anti-pandemic supplies we even contracted a mask production line to work for us, increasing the

supply of masks to the market and somewhat alleviating our cash flow issue.

The crisis made us aware of underlying problems in the company, so after reopening we looked at how we could improve; we then began to develop new antibacterial products, and to move much of our operation online. This was unimaginable before for a traditional manufacturing enterprise like us!

I saw that working women faced much greater challenges during the pandemic compared to working men, but their resilience was truly inspiring. Many female employees were also mothers, with kids attending school online from home. At lot of them were forced to leave their jobs because of this, and those who didn’t were exhausted every day because they were essentially doing two full-time jobs. As the head of a company I was under even greater pressure.

Despite everything, we have thrived. There were no layoffs, no pay cuts, and we didn’t suspend production; we even took on new employees and new customers. I gave birth to a healthy baby, and am now a tired but happy, breastfeeding working mother.

I strongly believe that this era should better support women’s ambitions. As our case shows, if given a fair chance, women can make outstanding achievements.”



Products pile up in the warehouse.

Photo: Li Yili

IN PICTURES



Sun Weina runs a craft session for parents and children, before the outbreak.

Sun Weina's startup, Energy Mom, focuses on developing innovative parent-child education. Although the original business model relied on in-person classes run by education and training institutions, the pandemic saw her reinvent Energy Mom as an online course provider. This has led her to think bigger, and she soon plans to join the 5G era with a live broadcast model. "In modern society women often have multiple roles to play, and sometimes women have to choose between having a family or a career," she says. "In promoting gender equality, I call on the whole of society to support women and their achievements, in and out of the workplace!"

Photo: Sun Weina



Road construction workers in Zhuozhou, Hebei province, strive to ensure a smooth return to work for people after the initial outbreak.

Photo: Lu Yang

COVID-19 lockdown measures imposed severe mobility restrictions on those who depended on public transport, which particularly affected people working in healthcare and the informal sectors. Studies show that these measures played an important role in containing the virus. Most buses were suspended during this time, and special vehicles were arranged for the point-to-point transport of medical staff and community workers.

Zhang Yaping turns and dyes fertilizer with fellow cooperative members.

Zhang Yaping runs an agricultural cooperative called Fengyu in Gansu province, which recruits and trains 'left behind' villagers for pastoral and agricultural work, including women with disabilities, who haven't been able to migrate to cities for work. Despite the challenges of living with polio and COVID-19 restrictions, her leadership has led the cooperative to lucratively refine its model as well as join the local pandemic response. During the initial stages of the outbreak, Zhang Yaping led Fengyu's drive to help nearby villages disinfect their public and domestic spaces and donate CNY 8,000 to the local pandemic response. In the recovery phase, she led reforms involving new breeds of sheep. This combination of breeding and planting has created new jobs, employed more poor and disabled villagers, and driven the development of local agriculture, while increasing members' incomes. "I want to make a humble contribution to helping those in need," she says. "And to do this as a leader I push myself to keep learning, as well as others."

Photo: Zhang Yaping



Medics on duty at a train station take travellers' temperatures.

Photo: Changsha Centre Hospital/ Chen Ying



China's initial lockdown had an adverse impact on SMEs, which generate 80 per cent of the country's employment and 60 per cent of its GDP.¹³ Many couldn't absorb their losses and had to pause operations, or close. A high proportion of closures were likely women-led SMEs, which are often smaller and lower-margin businesses in the service and trade sectors compared to the average enterprise. Many women-led SMEs are in sectors that were directly hit by social distancing measures such as tourism, education, childcare, hospitality, health and beauty. Women business owners also have a harder time accessing the support that they need. UN Women's guidance note, Supporting SMEs to Ensure the Economic COVID-19 Recovery is Gender-Responsive and Inclusive, calls for measures such as financial support services for women entrepreneurs, including debt relief, cash inflow and support related to care and domestic work.



After the initial outbreak, a vendor who sells clothing and other everyday necessities returns to work despite the cold.

Photo: Lu Yang



Hairdressers are able to welcome customers again.

Photo: Anonymous



A caterer helps carry goods and deliver fresh ingredients during the pandemic.

Photo: Anonymous

The catering industry has seen a massive growth in takeaway and delivery orders during the pandemic. A contactless delivery approach allowed food to be safely delivered by China's 1.7 million or so couriers. Contactless lockers were also installed at hospitals so that meals could be delivered securely to medical staff and unlocked with a QR code.

During the pandemic the cooperative started to plant a greater variety of vegetables in smaller batches so that they could sell locally and avoid shipping and delivery problems. They also began to rear pigs, sheep and chickens. This combination of planting and breeding allowed the cooperative to set up a fully organic, zero-waste circular system: their animal waste now becomes fertilizer while unused produce becomes animal feed.



Photo: UN Women

Members of the Guanglin Cooperative, a women-led agricultural cooperative in Qinghai province, showcase their produce, while their leader Tie Lingmei distributes food to residents who live under the poverty line.



Photo: Tie Lingmei



Parents adjust their child's mask during the pandemic.

Globally, women and girls do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work as men and boys. According to the UN Women report, *Whose time to care: Unpaid care and domestic work during COVID-19*, this has magnified during the pandemic. Worryingly, more women than men are also leaving the workforce, which some research suggests is due to these increased workloads. It is high time that this work be recognized, reduced and redistributed with concrete policy actions, including broad investments in the care economy.

Photo: Lu Yang



Ballerina Fang Zhengjing dances in a special public performance, gracefully expressing the human will to struggle and survive, but also to revive and thrive.

The pandemic has profoundly affected the art and culture industry in China, which is valued at 4.2 per cent of its GDP. Over 8,000 live performances were canceled, with an estimated loss of over 1 billion dollars. While artists and institutions have struggled, they have also been driven to innovate and engage new audiences online.

Photo: Shi Yingxi



Yang Shuting, a disabled rural woman from Xiaping Village in Hunan Province, 'bounces back' after the initial stages of the pandemic. Yang Shuting, who is paralyzed from the chest down, runs her own handicraft business.

Photo: The China Disabled Persons' Federation



Women learn a trade at Disabled Service Aixin Qilou Cheongsam Culture Co., Ltd. The company, based in Hainan province, has provided entrepreneurship and employment training to almost 40 people with disabilities, helping them to find jobs or start businesses.

Photo: The China Disabled Persons' Federation

Serving Community Needs



SHE BOUNCES
BACK

Throughout the pandemic millions of care workers have continued to keep the lights on and support those in need, risking their and their families' health and safety for low wages. The majority of them are women, working as nurses, in community health, in nursing homes, sanitation, social services, laundering or domestic work.¹⁴ Social services have experienced particularly acute pressure during the pandemic. Data suggests for example that COVID-19 and related lockdown measures led to an increase in violence against women globally, particularly domestic violence, while also diverting resources from services set up to help survivors.¹⁵ Meanwhile, people with disabilities have been hit hard and needed additional support around the greater risks to their health as well as the multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion that they face. The latter are particularly acute for women with disabilities.

Women have meanwhile shouldered the vast majority of unpaid care work at home, which has increased significantly during the pandemic.¹⁶

Unpaid and underpaid care work are key drivers of inequality, ensuring that women throughout history have earned less, saved less and held much less secure jobs, with no social safety net. This is why UN Women calls on stakeholders to ensure that as we rebuild our economies and societies, we take this rare opportunity to truly reduce, redistribute and represent care work as a critical step towards gender equality; that we prioritize addressing violence against women; and that we ensure the leadership of all women and girls, including those with disabilities, and those who identify as gay, non-binary, trans or gender non-conforming, through active consultation.

In this chapter we present and celebrate the stories of women in China who have played critical and often courageous roles in their communities, from a pioneering rural pig farmer and mentor, to a woman providing urgent support to domestic violence survivors.

Yan Shenglian:

Farming and fortitude at the home front



Yan Shenglian works at a village check point during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Photo: UN Women/Feng Xinlin

When the COVID-19 epidemic began spreading across China in early 2020, all eyes were on the medical workers dispatched to its epicenter, two-thirds of whom were women. Yet back at the 'home fronts', women without medical backgrounds were also joining the fight in droves, often moving well outside of their comfort zones to do so. In the village of Xiaruoyao in China's northwestern Qinghai Province, 45-year-old pig farmer Yan Shenglian remembers signing up for her village's COVID-19 management team with a newfound confidence. A few years earlier, she had thought that participating in public affairs was a man's job, like many people in her village. Yet standing in the bitter cold at village checkpoints, she found herself comfortably taking on tasks to keep the new virus in check, whether monitoring and advising those who entered and left Xiaruoyao, or helping to enforce social distancing.



Yan Shenglian and her team members work at a village check point.

Photo: UN Women/Feng Xinlin

Yan Shenglian attributes her change of mindset to a series of trainings she took in 2019. Sponsored by UN Women, the programme provided rural women entrepreneurs with business and leadership training, as well as gender awareness sessions and networking opportunities. It sponsored her trip to Beijing to attend a seminar for women entrepreneurs – the first time she had left her province or traveled by air – and on her return she started encouraging and mentoring other women to take up farming.

"Although some men in the village do not want to admit it, they are silently imitating and learning my methods," she says, with a broad smile. "I feel that my voice can be heard now, and I get a lot of support." No one questions her abilities these days, she says, and no one doubts that women cannot get involved in public affairs.

The training also helped Yan Shenglian weather the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on small businesses. Indeed she thrived, using online platforms to sell 46 pigs during the initial lockdown phase.

Whether as farmers, doctors, nurses, scientists, construction workers, journalists or volunteers, among countless other critical roles, women have been foundational to China's resilience and recovery – yet more often than not, public celebrations of strength and professionalism still have a solely male face. To counter this, UN Women China's #AMessageToHer campaign celebrated China's unsung heroes in the lead up to International Women's Day 2020, seeding 37,000 online discussions and many millions of views on social media. While we will continue to support and champion China's Yan Shenglians, we also look forward to the day that their work is able to speak for itself.



Yan Shenglian promotes agricultural products from her community at a UN Women event in 2019.

Photo: IGSNRR

Zhang Junru:

Giving wings to disabled children – and their careers



Zhang Junru (middle) chats with a student and their parent at Golden Wings.

Photo: Zhang Junru

There are about 14 million people on the autism spectrum in China, and around one in every 68 is a child under the age of 14.¹⁷ The high cost of medical treatment and rehabilitation means that families with children on the spectrum can bear a heavy financial burden. Zhang Junru founded the Golden Wings Art Rehabilitation Service Center for Disabled Children 11 years ago with a self-raised startup fund of RMB 100,000. Through her company she provides an affordable education for mostly neurologically diverse children, based around sports and art. While the pandemic was a chance to expand Golden Wings' student base, says Zhang, it also importantly helped her staff connect with their students' exhausted primary carers, most of them women.



A Golden Wings student works on a COVID-19 related painting.
Photo: Zhang Junru

“I believe that every child is unique, with irreplaceable potential. I named our centre ‘Golden Wings’ because I hoped to give disabled children wings through art and sports, stimulating their cognitive development in a fun and relaxed setting. We have more than 200 students, mainly those on the autism spectrum, but also those with Down’s Syndrome, mild cerebral palsy, mental impairments and hearing impairments.

When the school season was first disrupted by the outbreak, I remember feeling very helpless, as if everything had stopped. We and the parents had to explain to the children over and over again why they couldn’t come to class and why they should wear masks. We arranged ‘homework’ for them as much as possible, so that they could keep focusing on fine hand-eye and body coordination and enrich their home lives.



Zhang Junru showcases her students' art.

Photo: Zhang Junru

We showed them online how they could record their impressions of frontline workers with paintbrushes. This led to various exhibitions and even selling re-created versions of our students' work, with profits going to the families and our centre. A mask or a painting may be thin and small, but it builds a bridge between the children and the world. I am always looking for ways to help these children be more visible and accepted by broader society. As part of the Star Arts Alliance we also work with more than 20 compassionate enterprises to help neurologically diverse young adults get involved in social employment.

During the most difficult periods, parents, and especially the mothers who mostly took care of their children, suffered the most. They would spend 24 hours taking care of their daily needs, while constantly explaining and persuading them to stay safe. I think many were on the verge of breakdowns. I asked our teachers to call these mothers once a week for at least half an hour to ease their anxiety by talking. I asked an essential oil manufacturer to send them soothing oils. On the eve of our national Mother's Day, our teachers recorded a short video to teach children a 'love mommy' gesture dance – it moved

many mothers to tears.

Now Golden Wings has ushered in the 2021 school season. Most of the children are brought to class by their mothers and we create an atmosphere where parents can support each other too, share the difficulties they and their children face as they grow up, and also just have fun.

Working online during the pandemic opened a new window for us and broke geographical restrictions. Children who are based farther away signed up for our online sessions and we grew by 16 students. In the future I hope to connect disabled children across the country with online courses, although I also want to help our children get out of the art studio and more in touch with the outside world.

A lot of effort is needed to provide disabled and neurologically diverse children and their families with the care that they need, and the support of all sectors of society. The children particularly need us. They are sweet and clingy, and their smiles can reach the softest spot in your heart. If you meet them in public places, please don't make a fuss, just give them a big smile.”



'Received and understood!'

Artwork: Yang Xudong (15 years old).
Provided by the Beijing Golden Wings Art
Rehabilitation Service Center for Disabled
Children



'Spring is ahead'

Artwork: Zhang Shuwei (18 years old).
Provided by the Beijing Golden Wings Art Reha-
bilitation Service Center for Disabled Children



'Fight against the pandemic together'

Artwork: Liu Muqi (11 years old).
Provided by the Beijing Golden Wings Art
Rehabilitation Service Center for Disabled
Children



'Present a bouquet'

Artwork: Zhang Shuwei (18 years old).
Provided by the Beijing Golden Wings
Art Rehabilitation Service Center for
Disabled Children

Hongyan:

Raising the voices of Beijing's domestic workers

Scattered throughout households across China are a large group of hardworking women, affectionately dubbed 'aunties' one on hand, and considered outsiders and employees on the other. They are China's domestic workers. According to the International Labour Organization, 80 per cent of the world's 63 million domestic workers are women, and in China this figure jumps to 95 per cent.¹⁸ Despite the value of their labour, domestic workers face low wages and high levels of insecurity and risk. The Beijing Hongyan Community Service Center serves and advocates for this group in Beijing, and when the pandemic hit it took swift action to safeguard the welfare of their members. Their founder and director, Mei Ruo, looks back at the actions they took to keep spirits up and domestic workers firmly in the public eye.



Women domestic workers waiting to go on stage at an arts festival held by Hongyan.

Photo: Hongyan/San Jin Rou

“Hongyan is a civil society organization dedicated to grassroots working women, mainly domestic workers. Most of those we meet come from remote rural areas. They are older and less educated, and are usually struggling to survive in a sector that doesn't offer social security or job stability.

Our organization provides them with a cozy hub called Hongyan Home where they can access drinking water, heat meals, and socialize on their rest days; they often have nowhere else to go. We organize activities to help enrich their lives and provide basic advisory services, too.

When the pandemic struck our first act was to reach out to women domestic workers in Beijing by phone and an online survey to learn how they had been affected. By February 2020 we had released the Survey report on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on women domestic workers in Beijing, which identify their common needs and made recommendations. Based on the

report we began to provide targeted assistance to those who were stranded in Beijing during the pandemic, and later those who returned during the recovery phase.

During the pandemic many domestic workers were quarantined in rented apartments or at their employers' homes, with nowhere to go and nothing to do. We decided to move our activities online and provide more entertainment and socials to help them feel connected. Between February and April we held a writing contest called Quarantine and Migration, and offered writing and storytelling workshops. We not only received a huge number of interesting and touching stories, but also discovered the strong desire of our members to express themselves. To build on this, we followed up with an arts festival for domestic workers, inviting them to tell their own stories during a live stream; then we printed and published the stories. I feel that these activities not only helped improve the women's skills, but also helped them recognize their own value and convey this to the public.

During the pandemic I think the most neglected and

marginalized group of women were frontline women cleaners, who lacked protective equipment and faced a high risk of infection. Our organization started an emergency campaign and raised RMB 80,000 to purchase masks, shoe covers and other personal protective equipment, sending the supplies directly to cleaners in some Hubei hospitals, including Wuhan and Huanggang. We encouraged our members to help us, hoping that if they participated in public service activities, they might feel that people on the margins, like themselves, can also help those in need, and that empowering others can be self-empowering at the same time.

Domestic workers may seem like an 'invisible' group, but their stories and contributions are very precious. During the pandemic and the recovery phase, although the pressure on them has increased dramatically, they are still contributing steadfastly to families, communities and broader society. They have been intensely affected by the pandemic and they are also one of the most vulnerable of all affected groups. It is our duty to protect and empower the vulnerable and leave no one behind.”



A domestic worker stands in front of a sign that says 'During the pandemic, the supply of domestic workers exceeds demand.'

Photo: Hongyan/Yin Li



Hongyan staff and volunteers help to source masks and other personal protective equipment for frontline cleaners

Photo: Hongyan



He Shengyang, a domestic violence hotline receptionist in Guangzhou, gives a presentation. She helps connect survivors quickly with support, usually local women's federations or police. She and her peers have also proactively developed a manual for survivors about their options during the pandemic. "We hoped it would help victims to understand their rights and interests," He Shengyang explains. "We also attached a proposal to the manual that we developed, which calls on the government to coordinate a grid-based screening management system, connecting local governments departments civil society organizations."

Globally, research suggests that nearly one in five women experienced violence in 2019/2020 at the hands of an intimate male partner.¹⁹ During COVID-19 lockdowns and control measures, emerging evidence points at an increase in violence, particularly domestic violence, as women and girls have been trapped at home with abusers and support services have been less accessible. While the responsibility for addressing this 'second pandemic' lies with governments, it is often poorly funded women-run civil and social organizations that step in to meet the needs of survivors.

Photo: He Shengyang



A medic from the Beijing Sanlitun community clinic answers questions about vaccinations from local residents

Photo: Liu Zhu

Li Chengcheng, a disabled coordinator from Qingshan district in Wuhan, manages the sourcing and distribution of daily necessities during the pandemic. Grassroots community workers have played an essential role in keeping life as normal as possible for residents in Wuhan.

Photo: China Disabled Persons' Federation/
Li Tao





A cleaner helps to ensure road safety by clearing the snow.

Women are more likely to be employed as support service staff such as cleaners, launderers and caterers, and as such are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19. Cleaners are some of the most unsung heroes of the pandemic, keeping public spaces clean, sanitized and safe.

Photo: Photographer, Ganwurensheg



Busy scenes at the Beijing Farmers' Market, which takes place twice each week. During the pandemic and related travel restrictions, farmers delivered fresh and organic agricultural produce to the city for residents to buy online and then collect.

Photo: Beijing Farmers' Market



About UN Women China and Its Work

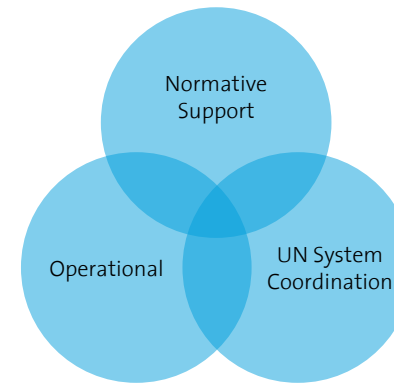
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About UN Women

UN Women is a global champion for gender equality. We work to create a world in which every woman and girl can exercise her rights and live up to her full potential. We are trusted partners for advocates and decision-makers from all walks of life, and a leader in the effort to achieve gender equality.

As the only UN entity dedicated entirely to gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women has a special role to play in advancing the global development agenda. Our ability to partner with and engage a range of actors across governments, civil society, the private sector, and media, truly sets us apart. Our triple mandate uniquely positions us to:



- promote a coherent and coordinated approach across the UN system to enhance accountability and results for gender equality and women's empowerment;
- support UN Member States to strengthen global norms and standards for gender equality and women's empowerment, and to include a gender perspective when advancing other issues; and
- undertake operational activities at the country and regional levels, including supporting Member States in developing and implementing gender-responsive laws, policies, and strategies.

Developed in the midst of a global pandemic, UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022-2025 guides the organization for the next four years – with an eye toward the 2030 deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN Women will leverage its unique triple mandate to mobilize urgent and sustained action to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

UN Women's Work in China

UN Women China's programmes are aligned to the 2021-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for China to support China's development priorities in the next five years. It is also in line with China's 14th Five Year Plan (2021-2025), China's National Human Rights Action Plan (2021-2025), and the Outline of Women's Development in China (2021-2030). Having been active in China since 1998, UN Women primarily works on the following thematic impact areas in the country till date: (i) governance and participation in public life, (ii) women's economic empowerment; and (iii) ending violence against women. Our programmes in these impact areas are further supported and catalyzed through our work on (iv) communications and advocacy as well as (v) strategic partnerships and resource mobilization. As a co-chair of the UN Gender Theme Group, UN Women also leads technical and coordination support to ensure gender mainstreaming across all areas, through the interagency results group mechanism within the wider UN system.



(i) Governance and participation in public life

We work with key partners so that all women are able to fully and equally participate in decision-making, and women and girls can benefit from gender-responsive laws, policies, budgets, services, and accountable institutions.

Our work in this thematic impact area is channeled through the China Gender Fund for Research and Advocacy (CGF), a rolling trust fund modality that awards periodic

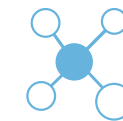
grants through an open and competitive process. CGF responds to China's existing and emerging needs in gender equality and governance systems by supporting projects across China with financial and technical support

to use evidence-based research for capacity development on CEDAW compliance and the development and implementation of gender-responsive laws, policies, and standards. Among others, one key highlight of CGF has been a 2019 Provincial Order in Gansu to protect women's employment, which provides an entitlement to three-month maternity leave and guaranteed job security to return to their posts.



(iv) Communications and Advocacy

As a core element of UN Women's activities in China, the office's communications and advocacy is focused on two key objectives: (i) advocating for women's empowerment and gender equality; (ii) increasing UN Women's visibility in China in support of UN Women's mandate and promotion of gender equality. Despite disruptions due to COVID-19, the office has managed to continuously make great strides in establishing and enhancing UN Women's brand value and strengthened advocacy through active media outreach, flagship campaigns and events, strong partnership visibility support, and documenting powerful human success stories from UN Women programmes. So far, the number of followers of UN Women China on Weibo and WeChat platforms has reached over 600,000 in total. Through our annual #OrangeTheWorld 16 days campaign amplifying the global call for ending violence against women, we have creatively engaged different partners including major media in the country to increase the public awareness on the topic and to bridge funding gaps and ensure essential services for survivors of violence, among other actions. The campaign has also attracted over 93.9 million views and 55,000 discussions online. As a member of the UN Communications Group, the office also works actively to lead or deliver support on UN wide initiatives in the country.



(v) Partnerships and Resource Mobilization

UN Women works with partners on strategic, high-value, and innovative partnerships that increase investment in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and enhance our programmatic impact in China. This is done by: (i) working with key private and public sector partners to develop innovative programmes that advance GEWE; (ii) establishing partnerships to implement transformative programmes to promote GEWE ; (iii) developing partnerships for mass communication campaigns and cause-related marketing; (iv) convening industry leaders to promote knowledge sharing, innovation, and peer learning; and (v) supporting the Chinese government, CSOs, and the private sector in aligning China's overseas aid, investment, and development financing with the SDGs, with a particular focus on SDG 5.



(ii) Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

We work to advance the economic empowerment of women so that they have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy. To achieve this, we partner with a range of allies, from UN agencies to government ministries, to regional bodies and international financial institutions, to women's entrepreneurship organizations. Together, we work to transform the care economy by pushing for women to be recognized and paid for their work. We also advocate for equal pay, support women as leaders and entrepreneurs, and work to close the digital divide to ensure women and girls have equal access to opportunities, including through capacity building and reskilling in the context of rural revitalization in China. Moreover, we also work with companies and industry associations to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community via the women's empowerment principles (WEPs), which has been signed by over 260 Chinese companies till date. Key highlights in this thematic impact area include: (i) building the capacity and increasing market-access of over 69,000 rural women and 6 business networks in a climate-smart economic empowerment programme in Qinghai; and (ii) empowering over 600 women entrepreneurs, and especially women-owned SMEs, through capacity development and enhanced access to market and finance and sharing the inspirational stories of women-owned businesses' COVID-19 resilience to almost 1 million people.



(iii) Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW)

We promote integrated approaches to ensure that all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence. UN Women China has been working with other UN agencies to promote social norm change for domestic violence prevention and response by providing input to national legislation and policies and capacity development of antidomestic violence service providers in close collaboration with national and local government counterparts and civil society organizations. Key highlights include (i) the collaboration with UN agencies to coordinate the drafting of the country's first national antidomestic violence law in 2016 and (ii) consistently promoting social norms change and engaging youth and broader society through campaigns and social media.



Supporting Women to Recover from Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19

As this book has showcased, women are playing an indispensable role in the fight against the outbreak. Investing in women's specific priorities as well as unlocking their potential fully and equally with men will promote more sustainable, inclusive growth, and ensure that we build back better beyond COVID-19.

In 2020, UN Women started an initiative, funded by the Rockcheck Puji Foundation, that aims to help women-owned SMEs and women workers recover from economic losses caused by COVID-19, to build the resilience of women-led SMEs to future shocks, and to promote women's leadership and capabilities related to preventive measures and recovery.

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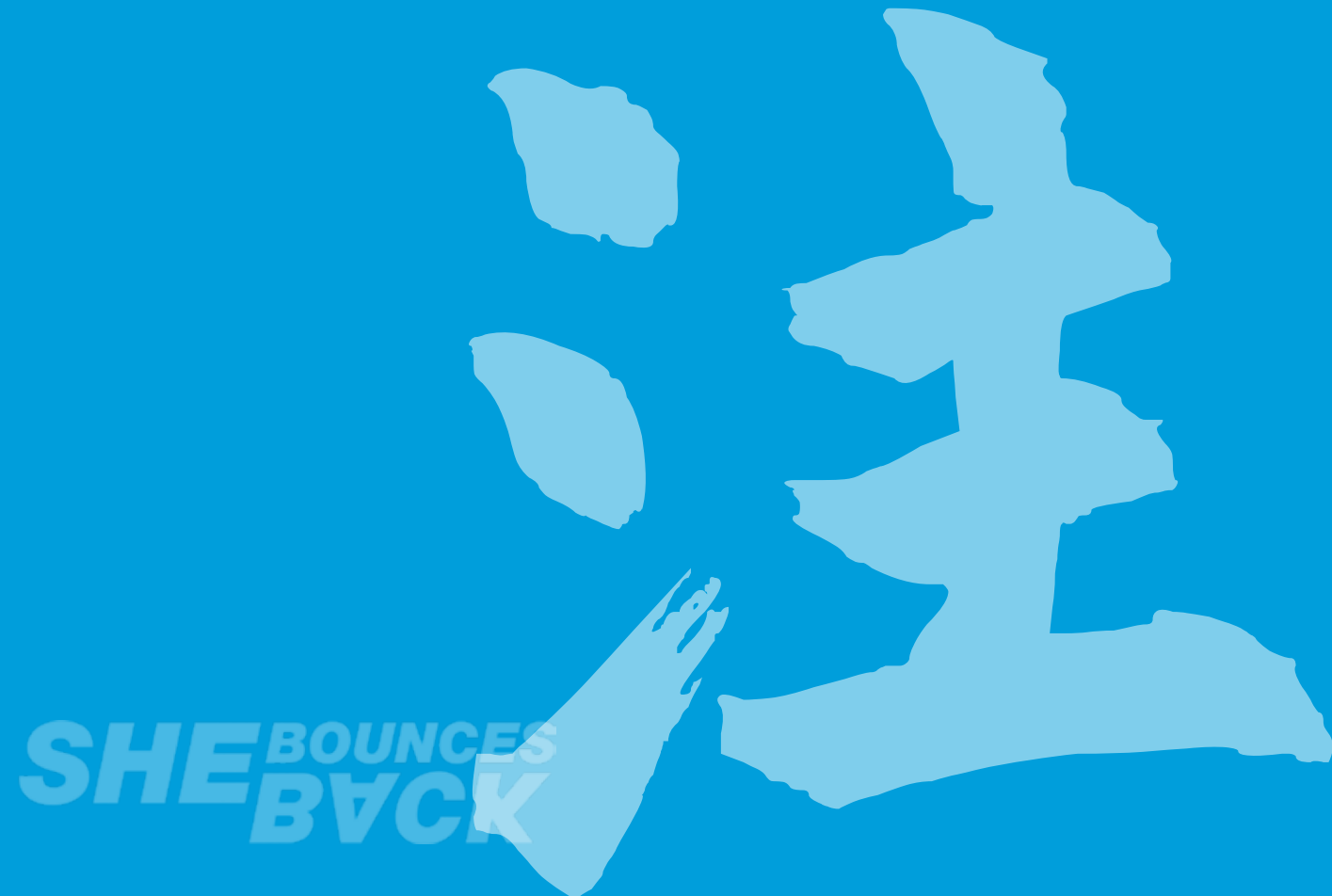
Sun Weina

Tie Lingmei

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Zhang Min

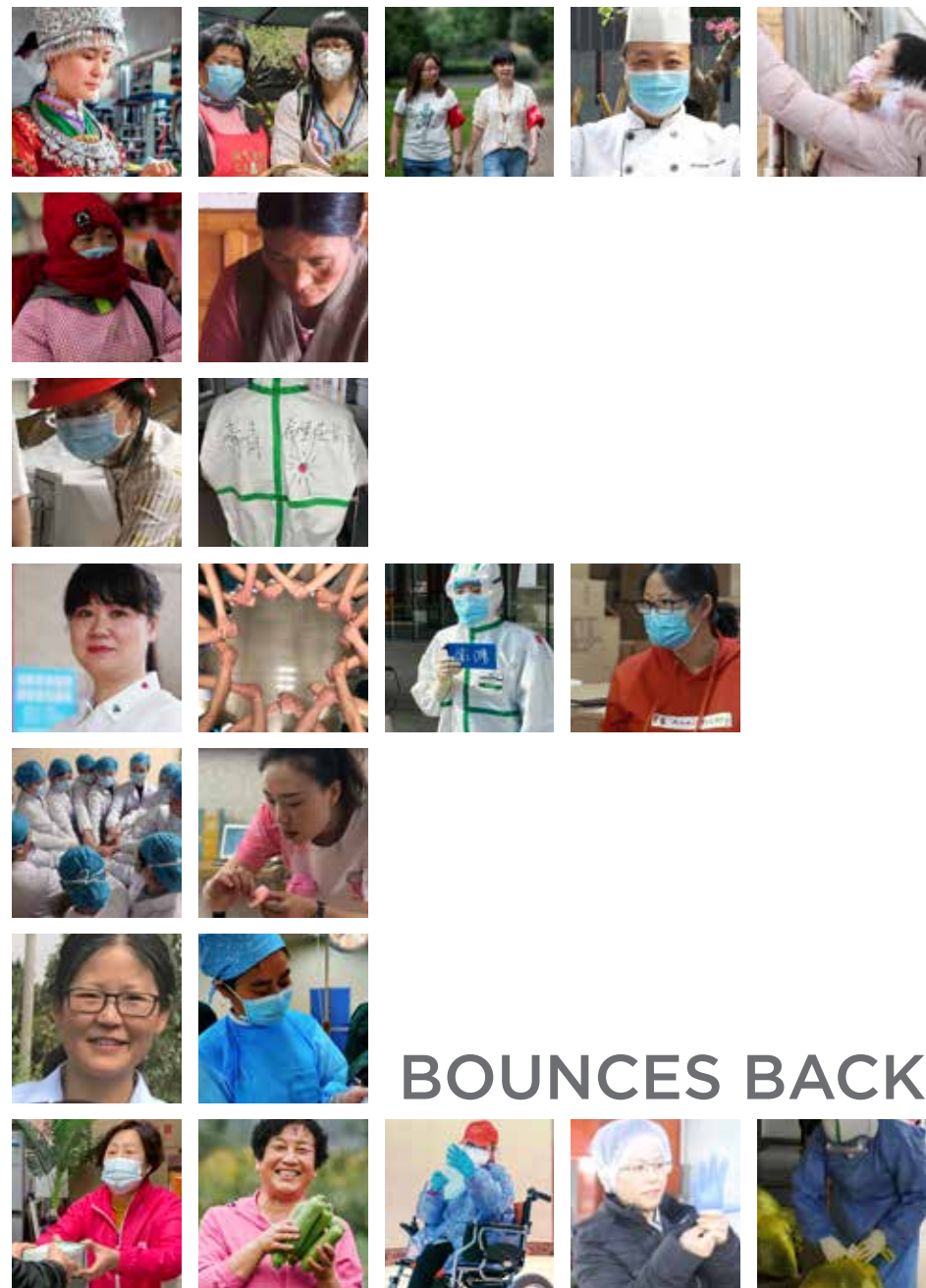
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