



This project is funded by  
the European Union



橙雨伞公益  
跨界联合·终止性别暴力



April 2018- September 2020

## Summary Report

Justice4her 2.0: Strengthening Rule of Law  
to Reduce Gender-based Violence

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## WHO WE ARE

RNW Media builds digital communities for social change. We envision a world where young people in restrictive settings confidently claim their human rights, assume their place in society, and shape a better future. We operate at the intersection of media, Internet technology and international development. Our programmes focus on inclusive governance and social cohesion, sexual and reproductive health and rights and economic inclusion of young people between 15-30 years of age.

We develop large-scale digital communities across a range of platforms—websites, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other channels. Through our platforms young people access information that enables them to make informed decisions, connect to relevant services and influence decision-makers.

Qianqian law firm is an independent civil society actor in China. Qianqian is led by the highly respected human rights lawyer GUO Jianmei, who is an outspoken activist for women’s rights and equality. Over the past 20 years, Qianqian has provided legal aid to more than 100,000 women in China, particularly in rural areas.

## WHERE WE WORK

RNW Media’s management office is in Hilversum, The Netherlands.

We work with local teams and partners in 12 countries including Burundi, China, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Uganda, Yemen, India and Mexico. Our reach extends beyond borders, with young people accessing our channels in high numbers from many other countries. Qianqian Law Firm is located in Beijing and works in China.



## INTRODUCTION

Justice4Her is a cross-sector, multi-stakeholder project of RNW Media and Qianqian Law Firm that seeks to strengthen the rule of law and reduce gender-based violence (GBV) towards women migrant workers in China. The project launched in 2016 and targets women migrant workers in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong Province and was scaled further with co-funding from the European Commission in 2018.

Justice4Her provides legal support through a digital interactive platform and disseminates information on GBV to millions through online channels (social media platforms, blogs, email, WeChat groups) and integrates this online work with offline activities. The project has increased mainstream media coverage in China of how GBV affects young women migrants and carried out viral online campaigns to raise public awareness and to challenge tolerance and acceptance of GBV.

While advocating for the improvement of anti-domestic violence laws in China, Justice4Her provides pro bono legal aid to victims of GBV in partnership with Beijing Qianqian law firm, a local law firm, both in the form of consultations via mail and support in bringing their cases to court and representing them. The project has also trained pro bono lawyers to better represent victims, media professionals to encourage more gender sensitive reporting on cases of GBV and NGOs on how to conduct successful anti-GBV media campaigns and effectively counter negative stereotypes and shift public discourse from a victim blaming narrative to a survivor narrative.

<b>Location</b>	China (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong provinces)
<b>Objective</b>	To strengthen the rule of law on gender- based violence amongst women migrant workers in China
<b>Target group</b>	1) Chinese women, predominately Chinese women migrant workers, both blue and white-collar workers, aged 18-30 in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong Provinces 2) Chinese pro-bono lawyers 3) Chinese media professionals; including new media (innovative and social media) and traditional media (newspaper, television etc.) professionals. 4) Chinese NGO workers
<b>Project timeline</b>	April 2018- September 2020
<b>Partner organisations</b>	Qianqian Law Firm
<b>Interventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Producing easy-to-understand visual content for online platforms</li> <li>• Organising legal workshops in community centres for blue-collar FMWs</li> <li>• Expanding the legal aid network of pro bono lawyers for victims of GBV, where free online consultations are provided</li> <li>• Representing GBV cases in local courts by pro bono lawyers</li> <li>• Training lawyers on litigation skills</li> <li>• Training media on how to report on GBV and counter victim blaming culture and negative gender stereotypes</li> <li>• Training NGOs on how to campaign against GBV and strengthen their work with media</li> </ul>

## THE CONTEXT

**Gender-based violence among women migrant workers (WMW)** – According to China’s National Bureau of Statistics, in 2017 there were 287 million rural migrant workers with approximately 66% of those working in large or medium cities. WMW are particularly vulnerable to violence. In 2018, together with the Beijing Normal University, RNW Media conducted a survey with 1,530 young WMW in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong on domestic violence. The survey found that 42% of respondent experienced domestic violence (DV) in the past 12 months, 37.2% of them had been sexually harassed in the workplace, but only 25.2% had sought help. Nearly 70% of respondents said that they had never heard of the ‘China Anti-domestic Violence law’ or they did not have enough knowledge about the law’s application to real life situations.<sup>1</sup> FMW are also vulnerable to exploitation by employers and local officials and many of them are unaware of their rights and how to exercise them. Law enforcement and legal protection of FMW is lagging behind.

**Lack of access to justice and remedies against GBV** – in 2015 China passed the "Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the People's Republic of China", (anti-DV law) its first national law against domestic violence, and the law came into effect in 2016. The anti-DV law has not been effectively implemented in its first years and the number of survivors accessing the judicial system has been low. As the national DV law came into effect, local regulations in different provinces were gradually drafted and promulgated. Since 2018, ten provinces have issued local anti-DV regulations. The number of victims who access justice using the law is low<sup>2</sup>. The number of people who report domestic violence to the police and the number of restraining orders issued by Chinese courts<sup>3</sup> is low. There is a lack of awareness and capacity among legal professionals, law enforcement and judiciary personnel to effectively and appropriately deal with cases involving GBV. In addition, WMW are faced with barriers when they seek remedies against GBV, as they often cannot afford to hire a lawyer and lack information about their rights and how to exercise them. Some lawyers, police and judges still lack knowledge on how to handle to GBV cases and are affected by lack of gender sensitivity and the prevalent victim blaming culture in China.

**Lack of capacity among media and NGOs to address GBV and raise awareness** – China has approximately 1.2 million media professionals working in newspaper, radio, television and news agencies<sup>4</sup> and 3 million media professionals working in new media industry<sup>5</sup>. According to the “Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of Anti-DV law 2017”, the media coverage on GBV is often judgemental, marred by gender stereotypes and victim blaming. The lack of media reporting on the anti-DV Law means the broader public have little knowledge or understanding of the law.

**Lack of public awareness about GBV** – GBV continues to occur when the abuser believes that abuse is acceptable, justified or unlikely to be reported. Domestic violence or intimate partner violence has long been deemed a private matter in China. The common understanding and recognition of women’s rights and awareness about GBV is lagging. Negative and harmful stereotypes about women subjected to GBV are common and belief in the inferiority and vulnerability of women is deeply rooted. Research by the Chinese General Social Survey shows that young people in China tends to have traditional and conservative views about gender roles, and their gender equality awareness is lacking.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rnw.org/news/survivors-chinas-1st-vr-on-domestic-violence-to-launch-on-international-womens-day/>

<sup>2</sup> According to Big Data Report on Divorce Disputes by Supreme Court, 14.86% of couples filed for divorce on account of domestic violence.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Supreme Court by November 2018, courts in all level have handled 5632 applications for the order for protection and 3560 (63%) of them have been approved. According to Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Anti-DV law 2017, low rate of victims applied for Order of Protection.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jiemian.com/article/5439807.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://media.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0327/c40606-29890186.html>

<sup>6</sup> China youth study Journal, 2017, April: <Gender Role, Family Concept and Modelling of Contemporary Youth: Data Analysis from CGSS>

## RESULTS AND ACHIVEMENTS

### 1. Increasing access to justice for young WMW in China regarding GBV

#### Advocating for change in China

The project was able achieve significant advocacy results within a short period of time thanks to mobilising lawyers to respond to brief policy influencing windows in a timely way. Justice4Her seized the opportunity of provincial congresses' invitations for public and legal experts and other relevant civil society actors to give feedback on their regulations on how to implement anti-DV law in their provinces. The trained lawyers, who are part of expanded pro-bono legal aid network, and Qianqian law firm formulated three legislative proposals for the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Hubei and Guizhou provinces and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. When the anti-DV regulations came into affect in these provinces, Justice4Her confirmed that in total 17 legislative suggestions were accepted and adopted by the policy makers; five of them were a direct copy-paste from the legislative proposals.

*Justice4Her 2.0 is a well-rounded project that has covered every quadrant of the Advocacy Coordinate Plane<sup>7</sup>, influencing all targeted groups along the spectrum of awareness to will to action. The operation of the project is strongly supported by the comprehensive advocacy strategy since the project is cross-industrial and diversified. By working collaboratively with its cross-sector partners, Justice4Her 2.0 is able to make full use of its strengths.*

*-Evaluation report by external independent evaluation agency Beijing Yesiin Consulting Co., LTD*

#### Providing legal support to WMW through an expanded network of 300 pro bono lawyers

Pro bono legal aid services were provided to WMW 3,011 times, both in the form of consultations via mail and support in bringing their cases to court and representing them. 28 GBV cases were represented in Chinese courts with a 54% rate of positive verdicts, which is well above the national average<sup>8</sup>. In addition, 2,800 legal consultations were given via online and offline channels by the expanded pro-bono legal service network. 183 blue-collar WMW participated the legal workshops. Based on a post training survey conducted among WMW, 91% of the participants stated that their awareness and knowledge of the anti-DV law and their rights had increased.

Some GBV cases attracted national and international headlines. The Ministry of Education of Chinese government issued an official statement responding to one case, urging local government and universities to set up anti-sexual harassment mechanisms in Chinese schools. Another influential case on child sexual abuse led to a joint investigation by the Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Public Security of China, which we believe contributed to a change in the amendment to the China Criminal Code in 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Julia, C. (2015). The Advocacy Strategy Framework: A tool for articulating an advocacy theory of change. Center for Evaluation Innovation.

<sup>8</sup> According to research conducted by Qianqian law firm in 2015, the rate of positive verdicts of Chinese courts regarding cases related to domestic violence is less than 5%: <https://3g.163.com/lady/article/B975MOQ9002649P6.html>; Another big data research revealed that only 3.96% of legal cases on domestic violence were recognized as domestic violence by Chinese courts between 2014 to 2016: [https://www.guancha.cn/society/2017\\_05\\_08\\_407155.shtml](https://www.guancha.cn/society/2017_05_08_407155.shtml); Another research conducted by Guoshuang Data Centre concluded that the rate of positive verdict on domestic violence cases in Shangdong province is 28% between 2013 to 2015: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-03/08/c\\_128784245.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-03/08/c_128784245.htm)

## 2. Strengthening the capacity and awareness of lawyers, the media, NGOs and the general public on issues around GBV

### Expanding a network of pro bono lawyers with improved litigation skills on how to present GBV survivors in court

Stigma around GBV can deter FMW from seeking legal redress and they often face secondary victimization due to victim blaming. Thus the project also focused on developing the quality of gender sensitive legal support against GBV. 84 Pro bono lawyers from different part of China connected with each other through legal trainings to learn and share existing good practices in securing effective remedies for WMW who have been subjected to GBV, reflect on their response strategies within a gender equality framework and engage in actual practice in a moot court. This further strengthened the network of pro bono lawyers, building their capacity to effectively represent victims of GBV while also disseminating the knowledge and skills through the lessons learned from the trainings. 84% of the lawyers who completed the training reported that they increased their knowledge and skills on how to better represent GBV survivors and support them seeking remedies.

In addition, lessons learned from the trainings were developed into a comprehensive handbook outlining best practice for lawyers in GBV cases.

"When representing a case, if you encounter a difficult situation, you can seek advice and help through the lawyers' network to improve your skills. The perspective of looking at the problem will be different."

—HUANG Simin, full-time lawyer, member of the network

**25 media professionals trained on reporting on GBV in a non-judgmental, unbiased and factual manner and understanding how to avoid "Secondary Trauma"**. The lessons learned and best practices from the trainings were collected in a comprehensive handbook for journalists and editors on how to cover GBV cases. The handbook is published online on Justice4Her's platforms and free to download. The handbook, one of the first guidelines developed for journalists and editors, garnered a lot of attention from media partners.

"I was very impressed. This workshop is the first offline sharing meeting I participated in this year. The participants are all familiar media peers in various fields. They are relatively influential. Women's issues are very concerning, the discussion is enthusiastic, and the participants think deeply and have a strong sense of responsibility for social change." —Tianhong Liu from China Women's News

**25 NGO professionals trained on how to set up successful anti-GBV media campaigns for development and social change.** NGOs working in GBV related fields benefitted from strengthened capacity in new media usage, communication advocacy and innovative campaigning interventions. In a post-training survey, 96% of the participants described it as 'inspiring'.

### Carrying out innovative campaigns to raise public awareness on GBV

Justice4Her has generated 633 million page-views and interactions (including likes, reposts and comments) via its digital platforms and social media platforms, based on the reach of content production, public service announcement campaigns (PSAs) and social media events. The action has conducted 12 social media events to improve public awareness on anti-GBV, including 10 online broadcasts and 2 online campaigns.

“The Note”, a public service announcement (PSA) film produced by Justice4Her, focuses on the situation women face when locked down with their abusers due to Covid-19 restrictions. As well as leaving a note asking for help, the central character communicates secretly with colleagues during a video meeting. This video is a follow up to an earlier PSA ‘Survivors’, released in 2019, which was also the first time Virtual Reality technique was used to address domestic violence in China. Using VR technology offers viewers a powerful experience, involving them in the subject matter and stimulating their empathy on a different level.

Justice4Her’s short public service announcement (PSA) film [“Silence Hurts”](#) won two prestigious prizes: the best video of Shanghai PSA issued by Shanghai Advertisement Association and the Silver Prize for Best Video at the 8th STDecaux Public Service Awards of JCDecaux. *‘The Note’ produced in 2020 was selected for screening at the China’s Annual International Philanthropic Movie Festival.*

### **10 high-level government officials, senior Chinese lawyers and change makers joined a China-Europe Dialogue (Exchange visit) to exchange knowledge and share best practices on GBV**

The visit took place in November 2019, the delegation visited the EU and The Netherlands Foreign Ministry and Dutch INGOs to exchange knowledge and best practices on rule of law and GBV. The Chinese delegation members included high-level representatives from National People’s Congress and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. The delegation stated that they would integrate their learnings from the visit into their work.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

1. Adjust the activities based on the capacity of grassroots migrant worker organisations and ensure co-creation of interventions
2. Have a strong international communication and relationship building strategy to expand a network of lawyers to enhance the member’s sense of belonging to the network and cover more provinces in China. And further enhance the alignment between the legal aid network, legal consultation service and offline trainings for pro bono lawyers to stimulate online and offline interactions and integration.
3. Ensure effective supervision of how the pro bono lawyers are representing cases and introduce safety and security protocols to be followed by pro bono lawyers, especially how they can protect themselves online from perpetrators connected to the cases they are representing.
4. Continue to focus on the promulgation of local anti-domestic violence regulations and generate evidence on the gaps in the current implementation of anti-DV law and the coordination among different public agencies that deal with GBV
5. Maintain the relationship among legal and media sector to continue to inform the public and influence policy makers about GBV
6. Continue to invest in strengthening the relationship between NGOs, the legal sector and media

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