

Fundraising and education activities

HER Fund's annual fundraising event "88 Campaign" began on December 10, 2005. A week prior to the launch, HER fund participated in the International Human Right's Carnival 2005, at which HER Fund also raised funds. We were honored to have representatives from Mama Cash (the Netherlands) to officiate the ceremony for us.



Besides, HER Fund also rolled out its street fundraising campaign in December 2006 near Star Ferry in Central, to raise funds, to raise people's awareness of women's situation in Hong Kong and

HER Fund's work.

On January, 2006, We carried out the Red Packet campaign to encourage people during the Chinese New Year to give a red packet containing \$88, -to HER Fund-symbolizing "double wealth and prosperity" (Double 88) to both donors and the beneficiaries of HER Fund's grantee organizations.

On March 8, 2006, Yip Yan Yan gave a talk on "HER Fund and current women's situation in Hong Kong" at St Mary's Canossian College while Linda To spoke to St. Stephen's girls' College on the meaning of International Women's Day. HER Fund's initiatives to outreach to schools in Hong Kong have yielded positive feedback as they are committed to nurturing a better environment for the development of girls and women in Hong Kong.

Sharing with local women groups

On Jan 25, 2006, HER Fund shared the use of Making the Case (an evaluation tool for measuring outcome of funded projects) with our eight grantees. We also shared and exchanged of views and opinions

on ways to improve funding application procedure, reporting work as well as grantees expectations on HER fund.

March 4, 2006, Linda To and Chung Yuen yi attended the symposium of The Women's Foundation on the Survey on the status of women and girls in Hong Kong.

Many Faces of Philanthropy Symposium cum Grant Making Ceremony

March 9, 2006, HER Fund had her third grantmaking ceremony. We made grants to six women groups. Total amount disbursed was HK \$ 119,500. Our Distinguished Friend, Christine Fang was invited to officiate the grantmaking ceremony.



The six grant-receiving projects are:

1. Action for REACH OUT (To conduct a survey and produce a report on the violence faced by female sex workers with clients)
2. AAF (Survey on women health information and medical treatment service in Hong Kong)
3. Lady Maclehole Centre (Environmental protection, health and community economy)
4. Cooperative for United Women Worker (To reinforce productivity)
5. HKWCC (Family violence education in church)
6. Christian Action (To empower foreign domestic helpers' right and economic justice)

On HER Fund's second anniversary, March 9, 2006, we invited Dechen Tsering, GFW's Program Officer for Asia/Oceania, Joyce HO Mei Yee, Program Officer for Oxfam Hong Kong, and Ho Wai Chi, Executive Director for the Sterling Foundation to share their experience in the "Many Faces of Philanthropy Symposium". We had about 50 participants in the meeting.



Below is a summary of the ideas presented by the three guest speakers.

Dechen Tsering, GFW's Program Officer for Asia/Oceania

Tsering said one might ask why donate to a women's fund. It is because one of the most effective strategies for changing the world for the better is to invest in women. She highlighted the four principles underpinning GFW's grantmaking process: trust, respect, humility, and boldness.

In feminist philanthropy, donors trust women themselves know the problems and have the answers. We respect women's leadership in social change. We believe that having money does not mean we have the best answers.

Women's funds are also bold, and willing to question traditional giving. We focus on change, not charity. We are prepared to challenge the status quo to find the root causes of social problem

Joyce Ho Mei-ye, Program Officer of Oxfam Hong Kong

A year ago, Oxfam Hong Kong set up the post of Gender Advisor. The advisor's work consists of two main planks. One is to inject more gender sensitivity into the funder's marketing and communication material, and the other is to research women's situation and channel the information to the funder's grantmaking arm.

For example, since 70 per cent of the world's population living in poverty are women, perhaps more public education needs to be devoted to understanding their plight. Locally, statistics show violence against women is worsening. Hong Kong Program of Oxfam Hong Kong has supported groups and projects that work toward providing a safer environment for women.

Another example is that in the 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami disaster, many more women than men died, and many female survivors were violated in cramped shelters. Mainstream funders could practice more gender sensitivity by better understanding women's situation and needs in crisis.

Ho Wai-chi, Executive Director for the Sterling Foundation

HO analyzed Inland Revenue Department's data and found that from 2001/2 to 2002/3, the middle-income group exhibited a consistent donation pattern. The low-income group had increased their donations. The high-income group's donations, in contrast, had gone down.

Ho also looked at the donation patterns of publicly listed companies in Hong Kong. He found that the ratio of corporate donation to before-tax revenue ranged from 0.03 per cent to 0.3 per cent. This is below the 1-2 per cent average in the US. Furthermore, the ratio of corporate donation to total asset had declined. It appears that not many companies in Hong Kong have strong corporate social responsibility charter and commitment.

Join HKCSS as agency member

In March 2006, HER Fund became an agency member of Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

On March 24, Linda To attended the first agency members meeting in HKCSS. It was a fruitful opportunity to share with other new NGO member agencies.

International Conference

The Women's Funding Network's 22nd Annual Conference was held in Pittsburgh between May 4 and May 6, 2006. Catherine Ng and Yip Yan Yan attended the conference on HER Fund's behalf. They took part in various workshops, in which they shared ideas with other conference participants and gained some valuable insights. Yan Yan also introduced HER Fund's "\$88 Campaign" at a plenary session, which showcased how this fundraising idea had been adopted by other women's funds in the world.



On May 7, Catherine Ng joined the INWF Conference at the same place. Catherine reported the good practice of HER fund in the meeting.

Please read Catherine Ng's travelog in Pittsburgh.

Personnel change

Shirley Wong, Executive Director has left HER Fund at the end of May. Thank you for her contribution in HER Fund.

Moving office

We have moved to our new office on June 1, 2006 : Rm C01, Hang Cheong Factory Building, 1 Wing Ming Street, Cheung Sha Wan, KLN, Hong Kong. The new office is much spacious and brighter than before.

Article in Media

On June 22, 2006, Catherine Ng wrote an article for SCMP to comment the Commercial Radio's Poll on "the female celebrity they most wanted to indecently assault". Please see the attached article.

Pittsburgh delight

Catherine Ng

I lived in Canada in the mid 1980s. I used to say “I shall never fly again” after each flight between Hong Kong and Toronto. I had only visited North America twice since I left Canada 20 years ago.

The long flight to Pittsburgh on May 1, 2006 was every bit as tough as I had worried it would be. After 13 hours on the plane, the security checks at the San Francisco airport were, to say the least, tedious.

At one check point, I was instructed by the customs officer to put personal belongings into the plastic bins for scanning. I dutifully placed my carry-on luggage and handbag into the bins. He said, “Your coat please, Ma’am.” So I took off my coat and put it into the third bin. While I was about to walk past the detector, he called me back, “Your shoes, Ma’am.”

This being my first time into the US in 20 years, I had no idea how tight securities had gotten since September 11, 2001. I was a bit taken aback by the last request. “My shoes?!!!” I blurted out. I must have exhibited a pained expression when I said that. The officer eyeballed me for several seconds, relented and waved me through, while muttering, “Okay okay, you can leave your shoes on.” He probably thought I was quite traumatized by the many-layered security checking experience.

All was not lost, though. I spent the next five days at Hilton Pittsburgh, and felt so delighted that I had flown in for the WFN 2006 Annual Conference. It was an eye-opener. I learned a lot.

The conference was attended by over 400 participants and very well-organized. Most of the participants came from women’s funds in the US. At the beginning of one afternoon workshop, we began by introducing ourselves. One participant gave her name, and then said, ‘I’m from Georgia ... [pause] ... the Republic of Georgia.’ She was worried that we took her as from the state of Georgia in the United States.

The main purpose of the workshops was for women’s funds to learn from each other’s experiences. The WFN provides a wealth of tools and resources that member funds can tap into. But when putting models into practice, funds might encounter difficulties. Through workshops, trainers, speakers

and participants shared insights and tips about how to tackle practical issues.

In one workshop I attended, we talked about board structure and staff management. It is perhaps consoling to see that some of the problems that HER Fund is facing are quite universal: How does a women’s fund balance activism and the core task of fund raising? How hands-on should the board be in working with the Executive Director? It seems that most organizations go through these struggles. We will pull through like the other funds have because our conviction about women’s rights is as solid as theirs.

Before and after the WFN Conference proper, HER Fund joined two INWF meetings. I met about 20 member funds from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Compared to the WFN Conference, these meetings were more international in orientation and more intimate due to the smaller size. Besides sharing member funds’ development and success stories, we discussed the network’s organizational matters, such as board structure and strategic direction. I had a front-row seat to an international network’s decision-making processes, which are complex but nurturing. We have a common vision, yet are culturally sensitive. While we recognize no two funds operate in the same social context (and therefore each has to chart its own path), we collectively celebrate individual triumphs.

One very useful outcome of attending the WFN conference and the INWF meetings is putting faces to names and personalities. It is such an internet age that many of the people whom I frequently exchange e-mails with, and with whom I have communicated via various faceless media, I have yet to meet in person. I always get a kick out of finally meeting my virtual friends and associates.

I would like to end on a nostalgic note. One day, while I was wandering in the city center, I suddenly realized that I had visited Pittsburgh before! When I was in Toronto, my friends and I sometimes drove down to the US for whirlwind visits. When I was standing in a city square in Pittsburgh on the morning of May 3, 2006, it dawned on me that I had once been there feeding pigeons and surveying the surrounding black-glass office towers. I had thought the square was big then. Twenty years on, I do not think so anymore. Who says that reminiscing is a sign of aging? It’s true!

South China Morning Post

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HONG KONG'S GENDER DIVIDE

Catherine Ng

Our shameful attitude towards women

There was an uproar from women's groups - and reprimands from government officials - after radio hosts Sammy Leung Chi-kin and Kitty Yuen Siu-yee asked the teenage listeners of their programme, *So Fab*, to vote for the female celebrity they most wanted to indecently assault. Commercial Radio was subsequently fined \$140,000 by the Broadcasting Authority.

What most upset people was the poll's poor taste, which was an insult to women and entertainers, and the casual attitude towards violence against women. In Hong Kong, 95 per cent of sexual crimes are against women, and there was a 22 per cent jump in domestic violence from 2004 to last year. Leung and Yuen's poll did not help to curb that trend.

The general manager of Commercial Radio, Rita Chan Ching-han, apologized and promised that the company would organise a series of training sessions to improve its employees' broadcasting ethics, professionalism and sense of social responsibility. Maybe every organisation, both public and private, needs to do the same. Leung taught journalism part-time at a university, but that job has since been terminated.

Some have speculated that the two radio hosts were aware of the controversy their poll was bound to cause - but that they pushed ahead with it to maintain their programme's high ratings. Such thinking implies that teenagers in Hong Kong are so attracted to the idea of "having a bit of fun" that they cannot stop themselves from listening to a radio programme - or from participating in a poll - that blatantly degrades women.

Are teenagers here really that gullible and unsophisticated? Have they not learned basic concepts

of decency and respect for women? Or is the survey more a reflection of the marketers' attitudes?

It may be difficult to comprehend how such crass and irresponsible attitudes towards women could be exhibited in a city that aspires to be "world class". That seems to reflect a general lack of respect for women and their rights.

When women's groups protested, the poll was changed to "the sexiest female celebrity". While voting for sexiness seems less offensive than the original poll question, it conforms to the notion that women should be celebrated by their looks, not their brains.

The gender divide in the public and private spheres persists in Hong Kong despite the city's economic successes. Less than 50 per cent of women are in the workforce, in contrast to over 70 per cent of men. Only about a quarter of managers and administrators are female. The median monthly income for women is \$8,000; for men, \$11,000.

In the Executive Council, two of the 14 official members, and two of the 15 unofficial members, are women. In the Legislative Council, 11 out of the 60 lawmakers are women. Of the 527 district council seats, only 90 are held by women.

Women in Hong Kong continue to be regarded and treated as subordinate and subservient to men. It is not just Commercial Radio that needs to review its attitudes towards women, every citizen and organisation needs to do the same.

Catherine Ng Wah-hung is vice-chairwoman of the HER Fund www.herfund.org

This newsletter is published by HER Fund to promote the organization's activities, to further public education, and to encourage discussion on women's rights and issues in Hong Kong.

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