Empowering rural women by digitization

——A practice case of Cyber Mulan Initiative by Ant Group and Ant Foundation to support rural women in China.

The Cyber Mulan Initiative, initiated by Ant Group and Ant Foundation, aims to empower rural women with fundamental health and education insurance and diverse digital employment opportunities through its platform's digital capabilities and technological innovation.

Cyber Mulan seeks to provide rural women with more equal opportunities, enhancing their sense of security and achievement. It fully capitalizes on the opportunities presented by the digital age for the development of rural women, overcoming the restrictions imposed by the limited resources and transportation in underdeveloped areas.

There are two core projects of Cyber Mulan Initiative:

1. Go Mulan Project

"Go Mulan" women's public welfare insurance project was jointly initiated by China Women's Development Foundation and Ant Foundation precisely target the beneficiary population as impoverished women (registered women from former national-level poverty counties). It provides education and critical illness coverage to impoverished women aged 0-100 in key rural revitalization areas. The Education Insurance support students from Senior High School, Vocational High School, Technical School with a standard of 5000 CNY per semester, 1,000 CNY per academic year. The Critical illness Insurance provided for the first diagnosed malignant tumor (cancer) with a payout of 20,000 CNY. The "Go Mulan" Project conducts social fundraising through internet platform, and uses front-end image recognition, AI intelligence, and blockchain technology in the insurance and claim process, which improves implementation efficiency and enables the project to expand coverage to more counties and benefit groups. This allows more impoverished women in key rural revitalization areas to enjoy public welfare insurance. Since the implementation of the project, over 1.82 million CNY in project funds have been allocated, covering 57 counties in 17 provinces (regions, cities) across the country. It has provided insurance protection for more than 4.609 million impoverished women.

2. A-Idol Project

A-Idol Project leverages the vast employment opportunities created by digital industry to train young returnees and stay-at-home mothers, particularly women, in underdeveloped rural areas in professional skills such as AI labeling and customer service specialists.

By supporting orders, the project incubates local social enterprises and assists counties in establishing a sustainable digital industry. In collaboration with local government, the
project explores a new public welfare model that combines "Artificial Intelligence + Rural Revitalization."

A-Idol Project established incubation spaces in underdeveloped areas, and provided Comprehensive Job & Tech Training so far for over 6000 people in underdeveloped areas. Together with local government, it facilitated social Enterprise Incubation in 17 underdeveloped areas in China.

By utilizing digital employment, digital literacy, and digital platforms, the project has brought forth numerous new possibilities for rural women’s employment and further development. Enabling women to balance both career and family responsibilities in their hometowns satisfies their dual needs for economic income and family caregiving. This approach offers a new direction for solving the current gender divide and digital divide in the country's population and for contributing to the country's pursuit of high-quality economic growth.