

Voiceover:

Stitch by stitch, these women are learning the intricate tailoring techniques involved in making the traditional Chinese garment of a cheongsam during a workshop.

Participant Venus Woo (Translation):

I could not have imagined that the process was like this. For instance, using paste to stiffen the fabric. I want to learn more about crafting cheongsams. The skills are different compared to making regular garments as these methods are unique.

Participant Ada Lau (Translation):

The cheongsam making technique is on the list of intangible cultural heritage. There are very few classes like this, so when I heard they organised this activity, I signed up immediately. Women have always been independent and strong. After learning these skills, my confidence has grown.

Cultural Inheritance & Development Foundation Chairman Cammie Chan
(Translation):

Cheongsam making has gradually been disappearing in recent years. It is necessary to promote cheongsam tailoring again in Hong Kong to preserve traditional culture.

This project aims to offer more women opportunities to learn new skills, foster self-development and learn Chinese traditions, especially the crafts of cheongsam making and button knot tying. By mastering these skills, we hope to increase employment opportunities for women, encourage them to pursue their dreams as well as boost productivity in society.

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Established by the Home & Youth Affairs Bureau, the Women Empowerment Fund is allocated annual funding of \$20 million. Since its launch in June 2023, it has approved 145 projects of diverse nature and themes, such as cheongsam making workshops, helping women of different ages and backgrounds to unlock their full potential.

Commissioner for Women Affairs Joyce Chan:

To accommodate the various needs of women, we have five themes under the general projects, such as assisting them to accomplish transformation in the job market, promoting their physical and mental health, and coping with different roles in society and their family.

We have a project which provides training for women on catering services which includes how to manage and operate a restaurant.

Some other projects under the fund use traditional Chinese crafts as the main axle, so that participants could (gain) new knowledge and at the same time promote Chinese culture.

As for the thematic projects, the theme of last year was the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Exchange Programme. Organisations can apply for funding to organise exchange activities in Macau and the other nine cities in the Mainland Greater Bay Area to encourage Hong Kong women to broaden their horizons and learn more about our country's development.

Participant Zoe Tse:

For this visit, we have visited quite a few, very successful women entrepreneurs. And from their experience, they have been extremely focused in their own profession. For example, we met a qipao master {2629 trim 2634} and she has turned qipaos into big business in China and across the world.

Participant Clara Cheong:

We are really honoured to be able to visit all these wonderful companies in Guangzhou which are owned by women entrepreneurs.

It was a great opportunity for us. We not only spent an enjoyable three days but got to know the representatives and all the members from the Guangzhou women associations.

Voiceover:

Following the positive response to the fund's Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Exchange Programme, the bureau announced it would be regularised in 2024-25 and a new dedicated scheme introduced to encourage women to actively plan and take part in community services, providing more opportunities for them to broaden their horizons.