



## **Announcement on the winner of the “BIE-Cosmos Prize, EXPO Shanghai 2010 for *Better City, Better Life*”**

The jury convened to select the winner of “BIE-Cosmos Prize, EXPO Shanghai 2010 for *Better City, Better Life*” is in unanimous agreement that each of the ten nominated projects is outstanding in terms of its distinct social value and that each represents meaningful and important work in its respective field.

Faced with the difficult task of selecting one winner out of the ten highly qualified projects, the jury has nevertheless voted for the project, “**For Our Daughters,**” submitted by **Professor Zhang Xiaosong** of **Chain Reaction**, to receive this Shanghai edition of the BIE-Cosmos Prize.

### **About the winning project**

The project, “For Our Daughters,” by Chain Reaction, a private non-profit organization for the protection and promotion of local indigenous culture in Guizhou, China, aims to empower ethnic minority women, emigrating from rural villages to urban centers, to successfully design, produce, and market traditional cultural handicrafts as a way to help them achieve better living standards and be better integrated into their new urban lives. These efforts are also meant to help Guizhou’s urban centers to retain their cultural traditions and unique characteristics.

In the background of this project is the growing number of Guizhou’s rural residents emigrating to its urban centers and the problems they face to be fully integrated once in their new urban homes, as they often lack not only the financial means but also the opportunities and skills to improve their economic, social, personal, and family situation. Among these rural emigrants, ethnic minority women, the target audience of this program, suffer particularly from impoverished living standards.

The program is based on the notion that these women’s knowledge of distinctive traditional ethnic handicrafts (such as embroidery, weaving, and batik printing) is one of their richest cultural resources, and the program is designed to help them to tap into this. In Guizhou, ethnic minorities make up 40% of the total population.

“For Our Daughters” thus assists local women at all stages of their traditional handicraft production, with the program encompassing workstation construction, master artisan training, production training, entrepreneurial assistance manager and online skills training, and heritage preservation (training in documentation methods).

Through these efforts, the program also aims to provide Guizhou's minority ethnic women a pathway for sustainable increase in income as well as full participation in the opportunities of modern economic life— and to help them to do this with self-confidence, dignity and cultural heritage intact.

The project is led by Professor Zhang Xiaosong, the Director of Chain Reaction, which has a full-time staff of eight people and a part-time staff of ten.

## **Jury evaluation**

In the context of rapid global urbanization, the jury noted that the integration of rural ethnic minority women in urban centers is not only an issue of local concern but is also globally significant; it is also a problem common to both developing and developed countries.

“For Our Daughters” represents an exemplary practice of how a local community is tackling the issue of promoting harmonious rural-urban relations by empowering rural, ethnic minority women – the most vulnerable community members—to successfully transition into their new urban environments and be fully integrated. Moreover, empowering these women to become full participants in the urban economic life by drawing on their own cultural resources is commendable and constitutes a significant contribution for a more sustainable urban development.

The question of harmonious rural-urban relations, moreover, is also specifically addressed at Expo Shanghai as one of its sub-themes.

The program therefore represents important efforts to address problems of urban migration, gender inequality, and rural poverty, which are issues of global relevance, existing in many other parts of the world. As one example of an effective response to such issues, the jury deems the project of great value.

The inter-generational nature of the project and its investment in future generations is also promising for the preservation of Guizhou's rich cultural heritage and for the long-term, sustainable effects it is expected to have. Given the increasing pressure that urbanization exerts on the maintenance of traditional cultures for ethnic minorities, the jury commends the program's efforts to not only help raise the material living standards of its beneficiaries but also to protect the immaterial cultural heritage for future generations.

Lastly, carried out in Guizhou, one of the most impoverished areas of China with one of the lowest urbanization levels, the jury hopes that the prize will have a significant impact on the development of the project.

## Special mention

The jury members would also like to give special mention to the following nominees for their particularly excellent projects:

- **“Urban Community Empowerment Project”** - Environment Watch Botswana
- **“Waste management in Cuban local community”** - Community sur Isleta, Ciudad Guantanamo, Cuba
- **“The Barefoot Urbanist. Design Guidelines for Progressive Urban Developments”** - DGL, De Pirro and Garcia Lascurain Architects S.C. and Instituto Mexicano de Urbanismo, A.C.

Finally, the jury members would like to express their deep admiration to each nominee for the work they are carrying out in the name of a “Better City, Better Life” and to thank them for their earnest participation in the Shanghai edition of the BIE-Cosmos Prize.

*The **BIE-Cosmos Prize** is an award given to a selected not-for-profit project pertaining to the theme of the Expo at which it is awarded.*

*The **BIE-Cosmos Prize** was created at the collaborative initiative of the BIE and the Expo '90 Foundation. At each Expo, the Prize is awarded in collaboration with the organizers of the Expo.*