

Progress Report of Integrated Sustainable Development Project in Jishishan County, Gansu Province (2024 – 2025)

1. Project Overview

Jishishan County, a remote mountainous area in Gansu, lacks water for irrigation and arable land, making it a poor region home to ethnic minorities. Heifer Hong Kong's Project spans **8 villages** -- Guanji, Shaojia, Zhangxiejia, Zhaojiawan, Hejia, Ningjia, Xietao and Yuanjia -- supporting the vulnerable rural families rebuild their livelihoods after the recent earthquake. In the past, villagers relied on outside work, but older villagers now face job loss. **Outdated farming and livestock techniques leave farmers with little bargaining power.** About half of the families recently **lifted out of poverty risk falling back.**

Additionally, farmers' lack of environmental awareness leads to the **overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, causing low production efficiency and pollution** that harms the sustainability of agriculture.

In 2024, Heifer Hong Kong launched the project to help **1000 struggling farm families recover from the earthquake by promoting eco-friendly cattle and sheep production**, aiming to establish a sustainable livelihood and improve the environment.

The project established **7 farmer cooperatives** with strong management and operational systems to foster mutual support among farmers. Farmers are encouraged to **use silage as cattle feed and plant high-yielding forage grass to support eco-friendly cattle farming.** Experts were brought in to **train farmers in scientific farming and animal husbandry techniques.** Additionally, the cooperatives streamlined the purchase of feed and tools, and coordinate the sale of agricultural products, effectively **reducing production cost, boosting farmer's income and driving sustainable development.**

2. Project Progress

Objective 1: Increase farmers' income by developing circular agriculture which integrates crop cultivation with animal husbandry

- Distributed livestock to **500 farming households**, with each receiving either a **high-quality Simmental cattle or 10 Hu sheep ewes.**
- Trained farmers to **raise livestock in pens** so as to improve cattle health and sanitation of the animal barn.
- Set up a **technical team** by selecting 16 farmers to **receive expert training** on animal husbandry from the Gansu Agricultural University. They learned advanced techniques such as **feed formulation, cattle breeding and disease prevention** and **provide technical services** to other project farmers.
- Provided 40 days of **on-site technical support**, assisting approximately 350 farming households.

- By June 2025, 338 cattle-raising households have produced 102 calves while 162 sheep-raising households produced 1,151 lambs, **generating significant income** for the farmers.

Objective 2: Set up farmer cooperatives and cultivate a sense of mutual help among villagers

- **Established 7 farmer cooperatives** with robust management and operational systems. Cooperative leaders received training in **management and financial knowledge**, and learned to pool resources together for the development of the villages.
- **Purchased agricultural machinery for loan to farmers** during the spring plowing season and **provided operational training**, with 2,800 acres of land serviced so far.

Objective 3: Improve awareness on environment protection and public hygiene; organize activities to care for those in need

- **Rebuilt and repaired the animal pens** to significantly improve the livestock-raising conditions.
- **Rallied villagers to organize community activities** and holiday celebrations as a way to care for the elderly and those in need while promoting a culture of share and care in the village.

3. Project Story



Gan Gaman is one of the project farmers who comes from the **Hui ethnic group**. He thought that working outside was difficult for ethnic minorities like himself; so he chose to stay in his village and farm. But **without proper animal husbandry training**, he could only rely on his own experience to raise his livestock, which often caused his cattle and sheep to get sick and hurt his income. During the earthquake at the end of 2023, his house was destroyed. He struggled to manage his farm while rebuilding his house, resulting in even more income loss for him.

Recognizing his challenges, our project helped rebuild his animal pen and storage barn for feed. Gan Gaman was **selected to join the technical team** on animal husbandry and **received training in advanced techniques like feed formulation, breeding, and disease prevention**. Technicians visited his farm to provide hands-on lessons, teaching him on how to turn corn straw and forage into silage. These practices **reduced Gan's farming costs and boosted efficiency**. With these new skills, Gan now has a strong foundation to grow his family's income.

Gan Gaman is also committed to **"Pass on the Gift"** in a few years by returning the equivalent value of his gifted livestock and sharing the knowledge he has learned with other families in need. This act will multiply the impact of our donations and help the community **achieve sustainability**.

Photos



Training for the technical team on animal husbandry



Farmer cooperatives helped farmers purchase Hu sheep ewes



Farmers learned to feed cattle and sheep with newly formulated animal feed



Technicians showed farmers how to raise animals in pens



Project farmers' cattle gave birth to calves



Farmers learned breeding and disease prevention techniques on site



Agricultural machinery was purchased and lent to farmers to save cost



Community activities were organized to foster a sense of mutual support among farmers