

Gansu Province Bangluo Township Integrated Sustainable Development Project (2020 - 2021)

A. Project Profile

Gansu Province is located in western China with hostile conditions and limited natural resources, where many rural families are still struggling to make ends meet. 63,000 households in Gansu are exposed to the risk of poverty, while another 34,000 just lifted out of poverty are prone to return. In August 2021, the Chinese government announced 160 “key counties for receiving assistance”, and Gansu’s Tongwei county, where Bangluo Township is located, was one of them.

The Bangluo Township Project covers three villages – Jimachuan, Yanjiawan and Sixin Villages. Inhabited by over 800 households, nearly 60% of the villagers consists of smallholder farmers 50-70 years old. Most of them are low-income families earning an annual income of around 4,500 yuan only per capita. Additionally, limited education level among the farmers and outdated farming techniques have also led to bad harvests. With insufficient capital to develop their production, over 50% of these vulnerable families live on loans.

Since 2020, Heifer Hong Kong has been implementing the Bangluo Township Project in these 3 villages to help 800 smallholder farm families improve income through raising cattle and growing traditional Chinese medicinal herbs.

The project aims to assist farm families to develop cattle production through forming self-help groups and farmer cooperatives. To effectively boost productivity and increase income of the smallholder farmers while also improving the environment, we have been training the villagers on circular agricultural techniques that allow waste from animal husbandry and crop planting to be re-used for beneficial purposes, such as making silage from crop residues as animal feed, and use composting techniques to improve the planting of Chinese medicinal herbs.

Moreover, Heifer Hong Kong is also helping cooperatives develop partnership with government and corporations, providing more resources for the rural communities to achieve sustainable development. Lastly, with the needs of the elderly in mind, this project is also constructing a community center to provide services for them and show our care.

B. Project Progress

Objective 1: Increase farmers’ income by introducing circular agriculture which integrates crop cultivation with animal husbandry
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simmental cows have been distributed to 300 households; and medicinal herb seeds to 110 households.• Provided training on calf raising and disease prevention with 439 participant times joining. Technical staff visited 642 households to provide on-site demonstration on animal feed processing. |
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- 30 families in Yanjiawan Village have planted a total of 60 mu of medicinal herbs, earning an average income of 15,000 yuan.

Objective 2: Develop cooperatives to help smallholder farmers establish their production

- Cooperatives have been formed in Sixin Village and Jima Village, enabling farmers to collectively purchase supplies at a lower price and sell their produce in bulk. For example, the cooperative in Jima Village was able to sell 21 tons of soy bean at above market price and helped members pack yellow silage as cattle feed for the winter.
- Key members of the cooperatives attended management and operational training in Guizhou, where they visited local cooperatives and learned about their work.

Objective 3: Protect the environment and care for the elderly

- Farmers were trained to process residues of medicinal herbs and herbs of lower quality as additive in animal feed. This improved immunity among the herd while reducing crop burning and harm to the environment.
- Remodeled cattle barn to provide exercising area and a more spacious environment for the livestock, boosting their health and fertility.
- Project staff organized visits and brought gifts to the elderly, left-behind women and children, single-parent children and the disabled to show care. The cooperatives held a dumpling feast at Chongyang Festival to honor the elderly, attracting over 100 seniors to attend; organized plaza dance classes for 30 village women; and promoted cultural events to over 150 villagers. All these activities strengthened the local communities.

C. Story Sharing



- Che is happy with the good chaihu harvest

Che Junhai, 61, is a resident of Yanjiawan’s Cheping community. His three children having moved elsewhere, Che now lives only with his wife and mother. As finding jobs in the city is not an option, the couple now stays in their hometown to farm and look after Che’s mother. In 2021, they received Heifer HK funding for medicinal herb farming and expanded Che’s 10 mu farm. He now manages a total of 13 mu of huangqin, dangshen, and chaihu. “My kids are all grown-ups now and have their own families. My wife and I are too old to have jobs in the city, but we can still farm at home whilst taking care of our mother.”

This year, the weather was dry which gave a boost to the price of Chinese medicinal herbs. Experienced in the trade, Che was quick to share his know-how with fellow villagers and even organized evening exchange sessions with fellow farmers. Thanks to mutual support, they were able to tackle pest infestation, clearing the way for a good harvest this year. With their 68 mu of medicinal herbs, the 34 farming households earned 504,080 yuan, averaging to 14,826 yuan per household.

During the harvest season, Che’s children working in nearby cities all came home to help and the house was once again filled with happiness. In 2021, the Che’s made 17,000 yuan from medicinal herb sales, and he is looking forward to continuing with the cultivation – it not only earns him more but also gives a chance for his children to come home more often.

D. Photos



Villagers learned to make silage from maize residues as feed for the winter



Project technician explained how to prevent diseases to farmers



Our staff assisted project farmers to purchase good quality Simmental cows



Farmers learned to build high-standard cattle barn with exercise area, providing the animals with a spacious environment



Farmers were trained to grow sweet sorghum for feeding their cattle



Cooperative packed yellow silage for the farmers to use as animal feed in winter



Dumpling feast held at Chongyang Festival to show care to the elderly



“Brilliant Moment” photo-taking activity for the elderly and their families