

Grassland Agreement - Research, Report and Policy Recommendations

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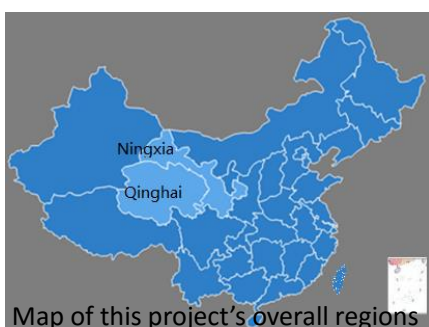
China; Qinghai, Ningxia



A father and son tend to the grasslands in Ningxia – 2015 GEI

Western China, namely the Himalayan mountain range-bound Qinghai province, and grassland-covered Ningxia province, are inhabited by a local people who depend on the environment for shelter and sustenance for both themselves and their livestock.

GEI officers have been working in this region for several years as they researched and created a **Community-Conservation Concession Agreement (CCA)**, which advocated for villagers and officials to cooperate on zoning and other environmental protection issues. GEI also worked to establish community development funds that would support herders in conducting animal raising and grassland protection.



Map of this project's overall regions

RESEARCH STUDY: In 2015, the team conducted a thorough research study of their CCA model to analyze what elements needed to be emphasized or amended given China's rapid development and climate change impacts in this region.

Establishing trust with locals has been of critical to this project as the Biodiversity Team must deeply understand the villager needs so to advocate the best policy solutions.

Even though language and cultural barriers exist, during the 2015 survey process the GEI team successfully **collected feedback from nearly 400 herders** across four counties.

FINDINGS: Villagers explained that the **subsidy awarded was insufficient** to cover the costs associated with livestock raising – in fact, they admitted that the subsidy covered only basic livelihood and did not even address livestock management.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS: GEI took this honest feedback seriously and submitted the following policy recommendations:

1. Increase the awarded subsidy
2. Address specific needs, especially for animal raising supplies
3. Establish new cooperatives to increase the villager's market development capabilities.

GEI also suggested establishing mechanisms to evaluate environmental benefits and to verify the project. They also suggested establishing social services and training organization.

THE NEW CCA: As government officials consider these recommendations, the GEI team also amended its own CCA model to further incorporate ways for villagers to develop their economy; this next generation of the model, called the **Eco-System Services Based Economy**, is currently being implemented across the grasslands and Sanjiangyuan region.