

American Study Delegation: Comparative study of urbanization

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Washington D.C., Burlington, Vermont; U.S.A.



Members of the Chinese delegation share a meal with US Experts in Vermont – 2015 GEI

In the wake of China's rapid urbanization, lies forced ecological migration and a number of new problems for livelihood development and resettlement. In fact, the rural population is increasingly at risk for resettlement and for losing jobs and income in this new, developed economy, for which their skills are likely ill-suited.

Looking to support China in achieving sustainable urbanization that actually incorporates rural populations, rather than crowding them out, GEI turned to studying other nations' urbanization processes, namely that of the United States. In fact, the American urbanization model presents an interesting case study of a successful integration of community participation into sustainable development.

In 2015, GEI invited Chinese environmental experts to join our study of the American model, so to assess what elements could aid the Chinese development process.

US STUDY TRIP: With the support of the Ford Foundation, GEI Executive Director, JIN Jiaman and Biodiversity Program Officer, Dr. PENG Kui, led the **Chinese Environmental Agency** on a tour of the US from July 4-11, 2015. Other Chinese environmental institutes participated, namely **Sichuan Shuguang Communities Capacity Building Center and Rural Institute of Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences**.

The group visited **Washington D.C.**, a hub for national policy, and **Burlington, Vermont**, the US mecca for innovative environmentalism.

In both cities, the group met experts whom offered first-hand insight into how US NGOs facilitate community projects and work with enterprises. We also had the chance to introduce Chinese NGOs' experience and achievements. The trip proved to be an exciting and educational journey that has equipped participants with new tools and ideas.

In the future, hope to promote more international exchanges and continue to model **productive methods to incorporate foreign conservation experience into Chinese policy**.

US TOUR – JULY 4-11, 2015; WASHINGTON D.C. & BURLINGTON, VERMONT

Who We Met: Plan International USA, Wilson Center's Center for Environment Forum, Burlington's NonProfit Organization, ARD, Burlington City Planning Director, Pine Island Community Farm, and the Burlington Intervale Community Farm.

Our most significant insight into the American model, useful for China:

- 1) How to effectively incorporate participation into community development and environmental protection.
- 2) New methods to operate and manage ecological agriculture projects.