

**CLIMATE CHANGE AND POVERTY** 

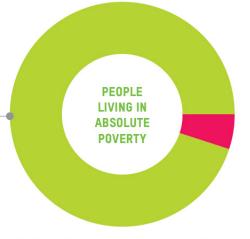


# **CLIMATE CHANGE AND POVERTY**



# 1. CLIMATE CHANGE AND **RURAL POVERTY POPULATION**

In China, 95% of those living in absolute poverty live in areas where the ecological environment is extremely vulnerable .1



In China, impoverished areas, ecologically fragile zones and climate-sensitive zones generally overlap. Extremely impoverished areas have high degrees of climate exposure and sensitivity but their adaptive capacity is low. Communities' vulnerability to climate change in these areas is much higher than the average level across the country2.

# OHK and partners help communities cope with the drought in Lucha Village, Gansu Province

- Source: Environmental Protection Department Statistical Report, 2005
- <sup>2</sup> Source: Oxfam report 'Climate Change and Precision Poverty-Relief'

#### INTRODUCTION

major part of its work. OHK is convinced that climate change has signifi-

promoting public education and advocacy activities in this area. The

strives to explore feasible ways to integrate climate change adaptation and communities achieve sustainable development in the face of the challeng-

#### The Impact of Climate Change



Population affected by the global climate crisis3



Number of climate-related disasters worldwide4

- · Climate change and extreme weather: Since the 1980s, serious climate-related disasters like droughts and floods have frequently affected China, leading to a direct economic loss of over US\$29 billion per year on average<sup>5</sup>. In the future, the risk of disasters and extreme climate phenomena such as high temperatures, droughts and heavy rainfall are expected to increase in China.
- Climate change and human health: The extreme weather caused by climate change increases the incidence of non-communicable diseases, such as elderly cardiovascular diseases. Increases in temperature also lead to the increase of vector-borne diseases
- Climate change and gender: Ecologically vulnerable rural areas are directly affected by climate change. Extreme weather events exacerbate the hardships poor rural women face. These women often suffer from poorer health as they bear increased cost of living and greater burden of housework, such as fetching drinking water, livestock fodder as well as firewood.

Haiging, Oxfam Ambassador and actor in China. visited a number of poor communities affected by climate change and called for public attention.



- 3 Source: Oxfam report 'The Right to Survive, 2009'
- Source: the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- Source: China's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, 2013 and China's National Assessment Report on Extreme Weather and Climate Events and Disaster Risk Management and Adaptation, 2015

#### Problems China Faces in Tackling Climate Change

- 1) Climate Change Coping Strategy Pays Little Attention to Impoverished Areas Before 2013, China's response to climate change focused entirely on mitigation. In 2013, China's first document on National Climate Change Adaptation Plan was released, but it largely disregarded impoverished areas.
- 2) Poverty Alleviation Strategy Does Not Take into Account New Challenges Climate Change Will Bring

China has planned to fully develop into a moderately prosperous society by 2020. While this is most difficult in poor areas, the existing poverty alleviation strategy does not consider the new challenges climate change will bring, as well as the relevant perspectives and measures to cope with it.

3) Low Adaptive Capacity in Poor Rural Areas

Low income, a lack of resources and tools to make a living, poor infrastructure, remote location, poor transportation, inadequate information and a lack of necessary equipment/facilities to tackle disasters contributed to the low adaptive capacity in poor rural areas.

4) Few Feasible Ways for Poor Communities to Adapt to Climate Change There are few innovative case studies and solutions that look at enhancing the adaptive capacity of ecologically fragile and poor communities. Attention to and policies on improving the resilience of and facilitating sustainable development in poor communities is also insufficient.



OHK's partner and a volunteer conducted a pilot research study on pest and disease variations under the impact of climate change in rural areas.

# 2. THEORY OF CHANGE (APRIL 2014 - MARCH 2019)

FIVE-YEAR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES **STRATEGIES ACTIVITIES** STRATEGIC GOALS Climate change perspective \*Climate dissemination is integrated into the Raise decision makers and \* Public education national poverty alleviation the public's awareness. Promote rural \* Policy research and recommendations climate Poverty alleviation resilience \* Community pilot projects perspective is better and formu-Channel the flow of \* Adoption of international good practices integrated into the national late related non-state and state funds. climate policy. policies at national Support social welfare finance and level. establishment of social innovation Establish mechanism for platform. climate fund in the country; 1. Engage in international monitor and channel the climate negotiations and flow of climate funds to ensure that countries ensure investment goes hold up their end of the \* Multilateral lobbying and advocacy towards poor and bargain in climate with financial institutes. vulnerable communities. \* Policy research and recommendations. 2. Facilitate and support \* Hold side meetings and publish South-South cooperation on climate change. Flow of international \* Speak up at international platforms. Encourage 3. Facilitate and support climate funds is effectively \* Support platform of green leadership. climate areen construction of monitored and channelled. \* Establish diversified support platform. finance 'One Belt One Road'. commitments that go towards \* Promote and support platform for poor and global and regional partnerships. 1. Provide platforms and vulnerable Strengthen the voice, \* Support Chinese NGOs' climate policy opportunities for local communities. participation and NGOs to participate in group. influence of local NGOs international governance. \* Capacity building (including in climate justice organisational operation, project issues on international 2. Increase the capacity of and national platforms. management, research on climate local NGOs. change and advocacy capacity).

Help poor and

able development.

## 3. MILESTONES OF OHK'S CLIMATE CHANGE **AND POVERTY PROGRAMME**

Introduced the concepts of 'climate justice' and 'climate poverty' to mainland China, and helped public shift its mindset from climate change being merely an environmental concern to looking at it from a sustainable development

Encouraged the establishment of the UN-China Sustainable Consumption Partnership and facilitated public participation to help mitigate climate change



Launched a report titled 'Climate Change and Precision Poverty-Relief' and a book titled 'Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation'

Launched the Low-carbon Adaptation and Poverty Alleviation Plan (LAPA) to promote the incorporation of climate change perspectives into poverty alleviation and development efforts

A project in Yujiashan Village of Shaanxi Province was selected as one of the 21 Best Global Practices in 'Pioneers of Change -Sustainable Low Carbon Development in Developing Countries', and was the only project in China selected

OHK was invited by the Central Government to join an official press conference held for domestic and foreign media. It was the first time an NGO attended such a high-level press conference in China

2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008

2009

2013

2014

2015

Incorporated climate change perspectives into its poverty alleviation work in rural areas to help poor people adapt to climate change

Sent staff from mainland China to join UN negotiations on climate change for the first



Launched the 'I Do' countrywide public campaign to promote awareness of climate change and poverty; over 60,000 people participated

Set up the Climate Change and Poverty Programme Ťeam

proposals related to climate change adaptation, funding and resilience to the National People's



Participated in UN negotiations on climate change and worked with over 20 NGOs to respond to the Paris Agreement

Facilitated the organisation of a side event on 'Climate Change and Rural Development' for the first time at the China Pavilion at COP21 in Paris

2016

Oxfam became the founding partner of The Southern Climate Partnership Incubator initiated by the UN



### 4. MAJOR OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Established 4 partner networking platforms

#### SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT **OF LOCAL NGOS**

Supported 10 local partner NGOs

Supported the China Climate Policy Group formed by NGOs for 3 years in a row

As of 2013: OHK has participated in 5 international side events, launched 2 research reports on public awareness and held 3 thematic seminars. Over 500 articles reported on these, and over 100,000 people were

2010: OHK partnered with the Research Centre of Journalism and Social Development at Renmin University of China to set up the China Center for Climate Change Communication, which is a platform for dialogue among governments, NGOs and the media. In 2013, the Center received the 'Beautiful China Award'

influenced

2012: Research findings on public awareness were cited in the white paper entitled 'China's Policies and Actions for Addressing Climate Change'

**CLIMATE** COMMUNICATION

OHK's China Climate **Communication Project** was awarded the 'Charity Brand Project of Media Attention' by ministries and commissions such as the Ministry of Civil

2010: At the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancún, a side event on climate communication was held for its first time, and the book 'Theory and Practice of Climate Communication' was released and was the first of its kind in China

#### **EMISSIONS** REDUCTION

The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from everyday life is equivalent to an income of USD102 per year per capita

#### **DISSEMINATION** MODEL

'China's New Rural Development Guide' provided a set of more comprehensive tools and case studies for the incorporation of climate change perspectives into countrywide rural development

COMMUNITY **DEVELOPMENT** YUJIASHAN VILLAGE PILOT **PROJECT IN SHAANXI** 

#### **LIVELIHOODS IMPROVEMENT**

Villagers' average income increased by 30%

#### **REPORTS**

3 thematic reports and 2 research reports

**ADVOCACY** 

Over 90% of OHK's recommendations have been adopted in new village development planning



2009: The Oxfam report, 'Climate Change and Poverty: A Case Study of China', was released. It was the first study on climate change and poverty in mainland China, and was taken as a reference by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

#### **POLICY ADVOCACY**

2010: The Chinese Government Delegation and NGOs began to regularly communicate about climate change

2013: China's National Development and Reform Commission promulgated the National Strategy of Climate Change Adaptation

2015: OHK released the report, 'Climate Change and Precision Poverty-Relief', which received recognition from The State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development

2015: The concept of 'climate justice' was written into the Paris Agreement

2016: Oxfam became the founding partner of The Southern Climate Partnership Incubator and was invited to witness the signing ceremony of the Paris Agreement in New York

Climate Change and Poverty | 9

#### **GOOD PRACTICES**

Emphasis on Community Actions and Case Collection to Support Policy Advocacy

In 2014, OHK initiated the Low Carbon Adaptation and Poverty Alleviation (LAPA) to explore the integration of rural communities' adaptation to climate change and low carbon development into poverty alleviation; this was done by partnering with governments, research institutes, NGOs, the private sector and the media.

Throughout the Yujiashan Village Pilot Project, OHK used participatory approach that emphasised gender sensitivity. OHK gathered villagers' opinions through activities such as seminars and household interviews, communicated with government departments, and sought experts to advise the planning of the new village. Numerous recommendations on poverty alleviation and tackling climate change were proposed; these focused on three aspects: enhancing economic effectiveness of agriculture, improving rural living environments, encouraging farmers' participation and enhancing their knowledge and skills. Over 90% of OHK's recommendations were adopted; These serve as good future reference on how to promote the integrated approach.

Following Up on International Climate Change Negotiations and Advocating Climate Justice

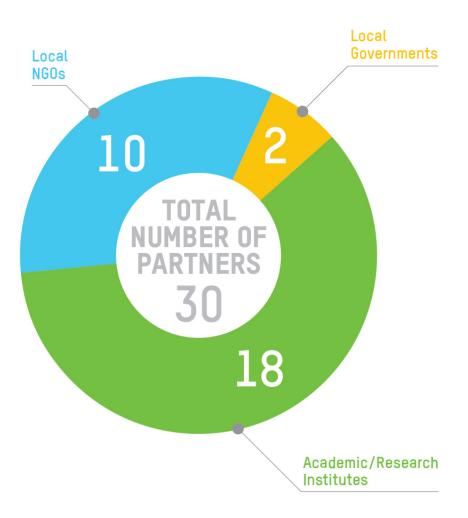
OHK has continued to follow up on the UN negotiations on climate change, and promote the implementation of climate change adaptation work and funds. It has also coordinated and created a communication platform between Winnie Byanyima, the Executive Director of Oxfam International, and Xie Zhenhua, the head of China's delegation and the country's Special Representative for Climate Change Affairs. In 2015, COP21 in Paris adopted the Paris Agreement, in which the concept of 'climate justice' was endorsed for the first time. This prompted a new and more comprehensive understanding of the international society on climate change issues. After COP21, OHK became the founding partner of The Southern Climate Partnership Incubator.

Supporting Local NGOs to Take Part in Climate Agenda, Making Civil Society's Voices Heard, Building NGOs' Capacity and Establishing Partnerships

In response to the lack of local organisations focusing on policy advocacy, OHK helped establish 'Greenovation Hub'. It conducted research on climate equity and countries' differentiation in the Paris climate deal, which was released nationally and internationally to enhance civil awareness of climate justice and the capacity of participating in global climate governance. Through Greenovation Hub, OHK also set up climate policy groups to conduct regular thematic seminars to encourage active participation in policy making; helped Greenovation Hub participate in the UN's climate negotiations, dialogue with international counterparts and conduct side meetings; and encouraged green leadership to facilitate China's active participation in global climate governance.



# 5. ABOUT OHK'S PARTNERS (APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016)



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