



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

Xiangzhou District Community Parks Program

Region	Asia and the Pacific
Award Scheme	Dubai International Award
Start Year	2017
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Xiangzhou authorities worked out the Community Parks Program in 2012 to provide for sports, exercise, and leisure activities, with priority given to low income, dilapidated residential areas. The Program stipulates that community parks be within 500 to 1,000 meters, or 10 to 15 minutes walking, of any home in five years. As a result, 132 community parks with usage classified as district, subdistrict, and community levels have been planned for construction.

Background and Objective

Haotang Village, located in the southern part of Xinyang City, Henan Province, is a typical mountainous village. It has a population of 2385, an area of 20 square kilometers and 1900 acres of arable land. It used to be backward, dirty and poor with land abandoned, young people going out to make money, the children left behind and the elderly helpless.

Actions and Implementation

The local government, experts and villager representatives had full discussion first and then worked out a comprehensive and detailed project plan to improve the living environment and construct a beautiful village with sustainable development. Next, the villagers were guided to participate in the implementation of the plan in the following ways: grassroots officials held meetings to explain to the villagers about the significance of protecting the environment and traditional culture. They even argued with those who did not understand them. The local government has organized and taken villagers to visit some advanced areas on several occasions. The government has also paid to some professional social organizations to ask them for helping mobilize the villagers from the perspectives of art, religion and science, which has achieved very good results. In order to encourage the villagers to cherish their environment and architectural culture, the district government has formulated incentive measures. The township government reconstructed two dilapidated houses as a demonstration without asking for compensation from their owners. The village committee (the villagers' autonomous organization) solicited the support of the villagers on road building, land transfer, large-scale cultivation and maintenance of public facilities. The infrastructure was not constructed until the consent of the vast majority of people. The evaluation of the project performance is undertaken by the District Agricultural Office and the Bureau of Statistics. Their evaluation is based on per capita income of farmers, the number of visitors during holidays, the number of people returning to the village, the number of primary school students in the village, village forest coverage and the number of daily treated effluents. The evaluation is carried out every three months. Some teachers and students studying rural construction and foundation supporters also visit the village to do research and evaluation.

Outcomes and Impacts

The major infrastructure in Haotang is invested by the district government once and for all. Its operation and maintenance costs are undertaken collectively by the village organization. The income of the village organization comes from the village collectively-owned forest farms and real estate rental. The income is employed to build new property and enterprises to increase the accumulation of village collective capital. These accumulations can ensure the maintenance of public facilities in the village to keep the village clean. The villagers discussed on how to use and supervise the funds and a supervision committee was elected to safeguard the spending. The occurrence of leisure tourism industry has increased employment opportunities and the actual income of the villagers, which in turn has inspired the villagers to open up more creative projects for profits. The service sector is generally run by young women in the village while young men run businesses and also undertake part of the field work. The increase of villagers' income and the improvement of village facilities ensure the villagers to find cultural activities on their own. In addition to participating in the wedding and funeral ceremonies of their neighbors, they also set up their own art troupe, hold annual Spring Festival gala and temple fairs. Different teams and associations often utilize the beautiful scenery and the gathering of people to hold various sports activities.



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Gender and Social Inclusivity

The construction project of beautifying Haotang is carried out in accordance with the requirements of China's sustainable development. The relevant approaches of the system and the organization of the masses were borrowed from Anji County, Zhejiang Province and Wushan Town, Gucheng County, Hubei Province. In 2013 "the People's Daily" had a report about the construction project of Haotang in its first issue of the series of reports on "China's most beautiful villages". Since then, Haotang has been reported by "Henan Daily", "Fenghuang News", "Voice of America", CCTV, Central Chinese International Channel and dozens of other large media. Haotang village has won a number of awards: one of the 12 most "Beautiful Livable Village Models" in the first batch, China's Most Beautiful Rural Leisure Village, and the award of China's Living Environment, etc. Haotang has received more than 5,000 officials and representatives of village-level organizations from over 130 cities and counties in 16 provinces of China. More and more experts, scholars and government officials hold that the construction mode of Haotang village is a constructive exploration for the future development of rural areas and it has a strong demonstrative and leading role in the vast rural areas of China. Since 2014 its example has been followed by a set of villages in Henan Province like Foshan Village and Qiqiao village in Pingqiao District, Xihewang village in Xin County, Mogou Village in Jiaozuo as well as Taoyuan Village, Guangshui City, Hubei Province. The construction of the villages are guided by different levels of government, or promoted by the experts who have participated in the project construction of Haotang village. In their practices they have made great and influential progress with their own characteristics.

Innovative Initiative

Haotang model mainly consists of four aspects: 1. Respecting the dominant position of the villagers guarantees the implementation of the project, which results in a lasting result. The villagers are fully respected in land transfer, housing reform, the change of their bad habits in life and their wishes are realized, which make them enthusiastically and creatively participate in the construction. 2. The maintenance of local environmental characteristics ensures the vitality of the project. Focus on the protection of the original and traditional culture and the revival of village culture creates a natural cultural landscape with geographical characteristics. 3. The use of different social organizations can solve many professional problems. To develop China's remote and backward rural areas requires the strong support of the government. On the other hand, the coordination between different organizations can focus on developmental goals more clearly, extract local characteristics more accurately, and obtain villagers' trust more effectively. 4. The roles of administrative management and villagers' autonomy shall be equally guaranteed. Administrative management can provide good and standardized external conditions for the village development. On the other hand, the autonomy function of the villager committee is constructive to mobilize the enthusiasm of the villagers and to protect rural interests. In the process of environmental improvement, land appreciation, and the appreciation of Haotang Brand, the collective accumulation of the village is increased, its self-management is realized, which in turn has resulted in a sustainable development.

Resources devoted to delivery

No. Title Source Author Publication Title Volume Number Date Page Number 1 Haotang Retain Nostalgia:Gong jinxing,Yu Weiliang,Wang Hanchao; vol.24639 December 25, 2015 16 Edit 2 The painter draw the village:Qu Changrong,Wang Hanchao People's Daily vol.23554 January 4, 2013 2 Edit 3 The beautiful village of HaoTang:Liu Xianqin,Xia Sha Guangming Daily vol.23922 July 31, 2015 4 Edit 4 Customers prefer to retain nostalgia:Xia Xianqin,Xia Sha Economic Daily vol.11816 November 23, 2015 15 Edit 5 Return to Hometown:Li Haitao Economic Daily vol.9804 December 24, 2013, 2015 4

Conclusion

Haotang project has aroused widespread concern in China. Pingqiao District government set up a special institution to guide and support the village so as to maintain a lasting influence. Haotang villagers have also developed a "Villager Convention". "Haotang Village Development Plan" was made and funded by Pingqiao District government after being discussed by the villagers. The plan has been approved by Xinyang municipal government after legal procedures, which has achieved a binding power. "The Traditional Village Protection Regulations" have been made by Henan Provincial People's Congress to solve the problems of Haotang. The regulations are legally applicable to all cases in Henan Province.