

Balancing Conservation and Livelihood: The Sustainable Rice Project in Jilin Province

Mr Yuan Jiakai, Founder of Shanghai Ethno Philanthropy Fund

In my keynote speech, I will discuss the Sustainable Rice Project in Jilin Province, where diverse ethnic groups coexist with valuable natural resources and critical conservation areas. This initiative aimed to address conflicts between local livelihoods and conservation goals, particularly concerning cultural heritage.

Jilin Province boasts significant ecosystems that serve as vital habitats for migratory birds and tigers. However, the activities of local communities sometimes jeopardize conservation efforts. To combat this issue, we implemented a sustainable rice cultivation project, advocating for pesticide- and fertilizer-free practices to safeguard the environment and wildlife.

However, ensuring sufficient income for farmers while promoting environmental conservation posed a challenge. To overcome this hurdle, we collaborated with social media platforms and brand agencies. Leveraging the project's conservation nature, we connected sustainability-conscious consumers with the produce cultivated by these farmers. This resulted in increased market demand and improved economic prospects for the farmers involved.

This case study exemplifies innovative collaborations' potential in achieving both conservation objectives and enhanced rural livelihoods. By striking a balance between environmental sustainability and socio-economic development, we can foster resilient and thriving rural communities while preserving their natural heritage.