

Heidi Dumreicher, A sustainable future for Chinese settlements
Oikodrom – The Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability
Brunhildengasse 1/3, A – 1150 Vienna, Austria, corresponding author: Heidi
Dumreicher Heidi.Dumreicher@oikodrom.org

Abstract 387

The paper presents results from the interdisciplinary 5- year- research project SUCCESS. This EU-China cooperation project carried out seven case studies in six Chinese provinces, asking the questions "What to maintain? What to change?". It generated future scenarios for these settlements under the premises of sustainability, from renewable energy scenarios to social patterns and urban design. The researchers included governmental agencies, architects, economists, agronomists, urbanists and participation specialists.

The research is an example for a double-intentioned work: on the one hand, it generated knowledge about possible sustainable scenarios for the villages, on the other it generated small projects in the villages and led to a sustainability Charta in Chinese. It can also be seen as contribution to the dramatically changing urbanisation process in China, finding a balance process between rural and urban environment, between the need for ecology and for societal sustainability.

The approach developed tools for new, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary negotiation processes whereby the local knowledge and the expert knowledge find common results. The coordinator has developed a set of new tools and technologies for such processes, facilitating the face to face interchange between experts of very different disciplines. A concept of strong sustainability was the guiding principle for these future images.

It is based on the principle that only comprehensive concepts and living spaces for rural live should be recognized and esteemed in future as complement to urban lifestyles by the Chinese society. The SUCCESS study was initiated by the author and co-ordinated by Oikodrom The Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability. It delivered recommendations for the villages and for governmental agencies. In the new five years plan in China, some of these findings have found their place.

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Introduction

China has 800.000 villages – one person out of seven on the globe is living in a Chinese rural settlement. Yet the global discussions about the situation in China is currently characterised by a disproportionate focus on development in towns and cities and, until now, circumstances have been generally neglected in the rural areas, where 70 % of the Chinese population are still living. The urbanization process attracts millions of farmers towards the towns and cities; but within a sustainability approach, this process needs a counter-force: showing the potential of life in the rural areas. This needs

complex measures that China has started to develop, like raising the living standards in the rural areas, reducing the agricultural taxes, improving the infrastructure, creating new jobs, promoting a health system and providing education. But most of the conversations with the farmers also showed that they want, expect and need more respect for their present and future role in China.

The Chinese farmers have carried the economy, shaped the landscape and formed the Chinese world view, in addition to Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Today, they live under uncertainty due to rapid societal change, urbanisation, falling prices for agricultural products, reduced health care provision or increasing income disparity – but with renewed perception of self-worth. Future images of sustainability have a stake in China, as environmental and societal damage are discussed openly and daily. Even the forthcoming 2008 Olympic Games that will take place in China are often put in a context of necessary environmental policies, and the actual 5-years-plan (2006-2010) sets sustainability as one of the official goals.

Massive political encouragement and economic opportunities lead villagers in China to give up their rural occupations and to look for work in towns and cities, especially in the building and industrial sectors. The SUCCESS project has established models in 7 Chinese villages that show an alternative: through a participatory process between researchers and villagers, future images and scenarios have emerged, giving rural areas and their inhabitants a new and sustainable role for China in the new millennium. The SUCCESS project developed the “deep sustainability” approach and showed the “spaces of possibilities” that can be opened with a future image of sustainability, leading to recommendations for governmental agencies as well as for local cadres and activists.

The SUCCESS project

Scenarios of a sustainable future for Chinese villages were the objective of the SUCCESS project. The first condition for this future is the question whether they can persist into the future in the coming decades of rapid development, and to picture the importance of the rural environment and living space as a relevant element of Chinese life that needs to get a better image and more attention from the authorities and from the public opinion.

Therefore, the final sentence that the whole research consortium, composed of 17 scientific institutions from Europe and China, agreed upon as a common result for the SUCCESS project, is as follows: “China is composed of a rich diversity of villages with many attractive qualities and essential resources for the future growth of the whole country; we recommend that policy makers cherish the human and natural potential of the rural economy and environment so that villages provide the foundation for sustainable development of this progressive nation” (Dumreicher 2006). This sentence was used in papers that were sent to different Chinese authorities and found its way, as a sort of “unofficial Charta”, towards governmental agencies at national and provincial levels.

On the grass root level, this work made an important impact on community thinking within these villages. However, it can also be seen as contributing to the dramatically changing development process in China, by finding a balance between traditional and contemporary approaches.

Besides the practical usage of the implemented projects, the process leading there showed the stakeholders their own fields of action. Another impact is the potential for replicating results of sustainability oriented patterns throughout China, specially as three of the villages have been nominated official model villages.

A concept of deep sustainability as guiding principle

“Sustainability is a local, informed, participatory, balance-seeking process, operating within a Sustainable Area Budget, exporting no harmful imbalances beyond its territory or into the future, thus opening the spaces of opportunity and possibility” (Dumreicher, Levine, Yanarella, 1999). This was the commonly agreed definition that all researchers considered as guiding principle. The social scientists in the SUCCESS study developed more precise explanations to this operational definition:

Local: The local qualities become significant under specific conditions, especially when the past is still alive in a place. People have developed social strategies to explain their past in order to come to terms with it. These strategies still have an impact on changing social situations concerning the present but even more on the capacity of imagining a future.

Informed: Getting information is part of communication which needs societal skills that start at an early stage of individual development. The villages have a sophisticated mix of formal and informal information systems (neighbours, markets, television, lessons, etc.) and an expressed need for input from the scientific field which served as a basis for the lively engagement with the SUCCESS scientists.

Participatory: This definition is a targeting approach – it does not describe a state but a movement. The sustainability negotiation process needs knowledge and also creates knowledge; it needs participation and also enhances participation. This “learning by doing” approach has several levels of intensity: individual learning (personal skills), community level (village organisation and governance), regional to national level (administrative policy).

A balance-seeking process: While the task of the natural scientists and systems analysts should be to develop tools for mirroring the material flow consequences of specific future choices, the social point of view on this balance seeking process takes into account the social balances and social justice in a village during a time of transition and change.

Sustainability is exporting no harmful imbalances beyond its territory or into the future: Sustainability deals with a future that has a quality not yet found in present models. The future is often seen as a continuity of existing patterns, a sort of surrogate future. In the sustainability discourse, the future stands for a new quality of thinking and goes beyond the usual planning horizon.

Spaces of possibilities: sustainability considers the future as an open space where socio cultural quality of life, economic equity and ecological needs to converge towards a balance: From the social point of view, spaces of possibilities are opportunities for new human activities within the society. Imagining spaces of possibilities is in itself a social action that shows the participants in the process what their possibilities are. The social group that is undertaking this sustainability process defines its own potential and its own field of action, and can experiment with their own power of transformation – at first in thought, then in practical terms. (Dumreicher, Kolb 2005)

Generation of Knowledge in the SUCCESS project: the Case Study Approach

Following the definition of the Austrian research programme “Austrian Landscape Research”, trans-disciplinarity means co-operation between researchers and non-researchers (Dumreicher 2005). The first such co-operation took place by integrating governmental agencies into the SUCCESS project; they took part in the field research as well as in the regular face-to-face-meetings between the 17 participants.

After participating in field visits and taking part in integration meetings throughout the SUCCESS project, participants from LCRC (the Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Centre) referred to Chinese Rural Policies in the following way:

“Despite drastic economic development, Chinese government is increasingly aware that sustainable development is the key issue for the whole country and it would be a big mistake if economic development was at the cost of environmental degradation.”

Just as important as collaboration with governmental agencies (the “top-down approach”) was co-operation with the villagers (the “bottom-up approach”), whereby the local team leaders initiated a participatory process in each of the case study villages, conducting a sustainability negotiation process between experts on the one hand, villagers on the other. Several innovative tools were used to assure the effective application of the participatory approach – which nearly all researchers saw as a major feature in the SUCCESS project. Besides the methods of PRA and the photo interview (see chapter Dumreicher/Kolb in this volume), the participatory video film was found to have unexpectedly good results. By providing special skills, such as the use of a video camera in a Chinese village to marginalized people or people who are at the lower ranks of society, such as young women or people from highly impoverished households, the participatory video film activity helped to strengthen their position within the village community and allowed people to cross boundaries of age, gender and income. At the same time, it made sure that their voices, their inherent knowledge and their visions made their way into the whole SUCCESS project.

From present to future: village future sentences

One method that was equally applicable between the scientists as well as among the village dwellers was the development of “future sentences” that would reverberate the villagers’ future views. These sentences are the result of experts meetings as well as “sitting under the tree” in the villagers under the guidance of SUCCESS experts.

During several feed back loops between these two groups, the stakeholders agreed upon the following future sentences as a result of the “sustainability negotiation process” – and as a basis for a common sustainability process in the village that can have a life after the experts have left:

Xia Futou, Henan: “Xia Futou has a balanced, happy, satisfied life for everybody by integration of all parts.”

Jiang Jiazhai, Shaanxi: “Jiang Jiazhai is a balanced system changing actively. It has increased public community space with manufacturing capacity.”

Chi Qiao, Shanxi: “Chi Qiao is a prosperous adventure park of the Jinci temple with eco-agriculture and historical heritage as resources.”

Xiao Qi, Jiangxi: “Xiao Qi is a paradise landscape with classical architecture and eco-tourism without pollution giving benefit for all villagers.”

Bei Suzha, Hebei: “Bei Suzha is a tourist resort with biological production, having a variety of small industries, working places and services. It has good governance for extending yin and yang into its future.”

Du Jia, Yunnan: “Du Jia is a sustainable village based on agriculture. It has regional and local identity with good education to improve the quality of life.”

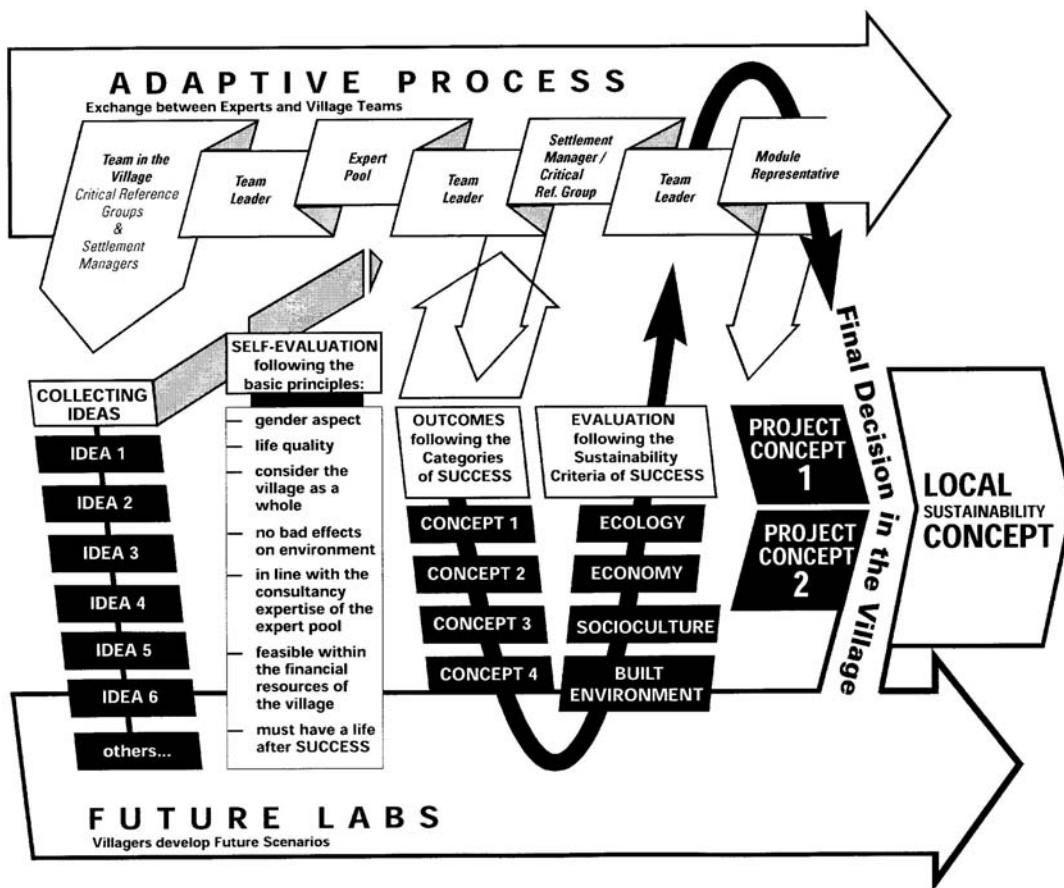
San Yuan, Yunnan: “San Yuan is a village with harmony between nature and material, between persons and spirit, between built environment, society and natural

environment. It is rich, convenient and comfortable with balance seeking soft tourism and organic farming, it is wealthy in the material life with bright hope.” These sentences show the overall future concepts that have emerged through the expert discussion on the one hand and through the numerous village “future laboratories” on the other, thereby serving the sustainability negotiation process.

The Adaptive Sustainability Negotiation Process and Small Project Concepts

Through the intense participatory approach in the village, most village communities have actually started future activities: Some villages were declared model villages, some have managed to establish biogas for heating and cooking for every household (financed by regional offices), some realised concepts for public service utilities or cultural facilities for supporting village integrity that differ from the “normal” infrastructure demands like cultural centres and basketball playgrounds. One village even managed to build a public bathhouse (with the financial and material support from all party members in the village) that will serve hygiene needs as well as the conviviality in the village, thereby raising the quality of life as a whole.

Sustainability Negotiation Process / Researchers and Village Teams



Besides participatory research methods, the possibility for villagers to generate concepts for sustainability-oriented projects in their villages, supporting them by seeking financial support from regional, provincial or governmental agencies was an innovative action within the SUCCESS project. By the end of the three year study period of SUCCESS project, each of the 7 case study villages had investigated and realised small project concepts. In all villages, the concept for a small project at village scale that can represent the basic features of sustainability has become a vehicle for the communication between experts and villagers. This participatory procedure produced very diverse local results.

Bei Suzha, Hebei: The local team developed a tool for educating farmers, involving a package for the transition to a rural sustainability farming concept for a village very near to a big town. They have established a soft ware centre in the village.

Xia Futou, Henan: During the “future laboratories” in the village, the hope of the villagers to maintain their village’s integrity became more and more clear.

As a symbolical action, the women, especially, pleaded to develop the concept for a public bathhouse. This exercise became an example for a scenario building process in architecture, including the expert knowledge on solar energy, community organisation, economic management and agriculture. By means of interactive work or “research loops”, this scenario was built up. The effect of this common discussion has greatly influenced the atmosphere in the village and the official opening ceremony took place in April 2006. All the party members in the village dedicated several working days each in order to complete the necessary work on infrastructure (road and water supply). A management concept for the future was also put in place, allowing for a system that gives access even to the very poor, at the same time generating some economic revenue for the managers.

Jiang Jiazhai, Shaanxi: The main concern in this village is to find its own local identity after the whole village has recently been displaced from its original dwelling place. The discussions turned around the need for economic wealth on the one hand and the search for cultural identity on the other. During the SUCCESS project, the local Chinese team leaders carried out a focused co-operation with the adjacent university and managed to find financial support that allowed for building a paved village road instead of the former mud road. Through the “future laboratories” in the village, this road has a local character that allows for “village life on the street” – a place for working, but also for cultural activities like weddings or funerals that can now be held in a good village environment.

Chi Qiao, Shanxi: This village with its connection to the famous Jin Ci temple gets much impact from the past. Yet, in the present, it is looking for its possible future image. The village is the nearest of all SUCCESS villages to an urban area (the provincial capital of Taiyuan) and, therefore, it shows best the rapid societal change in China. However, it is also very aware of the past. The small project concept “hands-in-hands” has led to a partnership between the local school and the University of Taiyuan. Through the vivid discussions and learning in this process, the village has gained attractiveness and could overcome the extremely depressed overall atmosphere that reigned at the beginning of the study. The small old village temple, nearly destroyed, found a group of female Buddhist nuns who have reconstructed the temple by means of local donations as well as from other provinces. Local centres for economic activities have emerged – such as a co-operative for women making clothes that are sold in the city of Taiyuan.

Xiao Qi, Jiangxi: In terms of combining old and new qualities, this settlement has a lesson to teach. Over more than a century, it has lived with migration to the outside world, but is also has an experience with people who have left the village but are still in connection with it, partly by giving donations to the schools, partly by coming back from time-to-time, partly by maintaining contact with the rest of the family that has remained in the village with financial support and partly by coming back during the old age and serving the community as teachers or in other professional capacities. For a sustainable future, this village gives important answers. Suggestions from the architects and urbanists led to the construction of a new parking place for visitors’ buses that respects the “genius loci” of this tourist village. The SUCCESS project also led to changes in the village organisation, adding to the transparency of the appointment and operation of local management.

San Yuan, Yunnan: The visit of the SUCCESS experts in itself gave an input to the village. The fact that this poor and remote minority village could attract Chinese and foreign experts was a sign for the villagers that even they, notwithstanding their modest

status, might have a good future. One big step was also accomplished in relation to the gender discussion. Whereas at the beginning, men would state “women outside no”, the team leader has established a women’s course for Dongba culture in the village, teaching traditional local dancing as well as Naxi writing. A concept for a better shape for the village washing place has been devised by the SUCCESS architects as a basis for further discussion with local dwellers, regional authorities or donor agencies.

Du Jia, Yunnan: with less than 100 dwellers, this was the smallest and most remote of all villages. At the beginning of the SUCCESS project, the local scientific team leader described the village as “proto-sustainability without development” as opposed to other Chinese regions that are characterised by “development without sustainability”. This was the case study for establishing a systems model of material flows through the village as a means for supporting the sustainability negotiation process. The local team has managed to get the attention of the provincial administration which gave financial support for providing biogas installations for every household. The village has also built a social meeting place for basketball and dancing. Encouraged by these successes, the village has decided to become an ecological model village.

The outcomes of this participatory process are many and diverse according to the applied definition that sees sustainability always as a local process with local features. One major impact of the small project concepts is the visibility of results which is crucial for the villagers’ awareness and confidence and their successful participation in decision-making processes. Another impact is the replicability of the results. Evaluation of the small project concepts enables correlation with the outcomes of these disciplinary analyses and the village typologies worked out by the SUCCESS consortium. The regular feedback loops from the villages enhanced and strengthened the research results, increasing the likelihood of greater acceptance and applicability. In terms of “life after the project”, greater self-organisation and competence in problem-solving in the villages has been identified and there was a growing interest of local authorities during formal and non-formal meetings (equally essential). From most villages, information is emerging about ongoing activities based on the research and events during the SUCCESS project.

All villages have a better understanding of a life in harmony between men and nature, they experimented with their own field of action and got some confidence in tackling with their own future.

Inter-disciplinarity

The research architecture supported not only multi-disciplinary co-operation but also developed multiple methodological tools for the inter-disciplinary generation of knowledge. The consortium was considered as a sort of “learning organisation” where the generation of knowledge is a common endeavour. Therefore, the co-ordinator assembled a set of techniques that can be used in similar circumstances. The project’s communication architecture with its Sino-European character established tools that help to recognise systemic and recursive coherence within the villages, like the future sentences for each village described above, the innovative concept of future images, mind mapping, inter-disciplinary poster-making, a systemic structure constellation approach or matrix methods for future mapping.

Such concentration of results based on the needs for face to face communication is a useful tool in order for the researchers, with their diverse backgrounds, to come up with integrated results. These methods also served as vehicles for the exchange of ideas, concepts and input from the researchers to the villagers and vice versa.

The Sustainability Approach: Future Scenarios for the Village

In the rapidly changing Chinese context, the SUCCESS project developed future scenarios for sustainability oriented rural settlements. From proto-sustainable to

contemporaneous sustainable village systems – the SUCCESS process supported an emerging future, respecting human needs combined with the needs of nature. The concept of sustainability can be traced back to Chinese tradition. In ancient Chinese texts on ethical attitudes of human to natural resources and to the future of both, nature and humans - as part of nature – can be integrated into the contemporary discourse on “sustainability”, with focus on Confucians and Taoist texts as well as pre-Han period “environmental laws”. Therefore, the persuasive moral dimension of historical experience and ancient good governance practice should have a certain impact on the evaluation of contemporary and possible future scenario building for a “sustainability oriented” treatment of natural resources and the application in techniques and methods in the context of a growing interdependent globalising economic and political environment.

Both Chinese and European researchers found a common knowledge base in the definition of sustainability proposed by the SUCCESS scientists Heidi Dumreicher and Richard S. Levine and made their sustainability analysis according to this operational definition. In this way, the definition served as a final cross-disciplinary analysis tool (see above).

This approach opened the discourse to the emergence of sustainable city-regions that use as components, tools, disciplines and methods, those sustainability-oriented means that can be implemented as the building blocks of sustainability for an integrated development of human settlements. This can be a major step in developing the theoretical framework for the forthcoming global sustainability discussion where Europe as well as China will be important players.

Project Management Design: results from the interdisciplinary case studies

Ecology

The central question for sustainable development in rural areas of China is how to organise the transition from the existing situation to a country that is part of a global economy. Sustainable solutions have to be adapted to the particular regional characteristics and with harmonised development of small- and medium-sized urban centres. Migrations from villages to regional urban centres will empower regions to support the transition processes and to prepare themselves for the necessary framework conditions. A strategy of “diverse regional flowers” will also enhance the capacities of China to solve future challenges. Key challenges are the participation of people and the interactions between “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches for governing the processes.

Economy

A “better-off life” for farmers and the rural population needs state intervention in the form of agricultural subsidies, price regulation or production quotas, through larger farm sizes and through the promotion of high-quality labour-intensive agricultural products. The respect for the farmer’s work should become manifest in fair prices for organic food and financial support for farmers in terms of subsidies, subventions and state-aided credits.

The future could be a multi-functional agriculture. Food safety should be the major ambition in Chinese agriculture delivering healthy food (not burdened with chemicals) and, at the same time, leaving an intact natural environment. The cultural landscape should become a value in Chinese society and farmers operating an agriculture that preserves natural structures could become the keepers and “architects” of an attractive landscape. Agriculture with gentle tourism, based on good practice in Europe and on similar programmes in China like “Nung jia le”, can be a fruitful combination even for remote villages. Attractive regions and a diverse landscape with rich vegetation, typical regional products and a vital socio-cultural rural life will be in great demand in the future, as the Chinese urban population will also look for places outside the cities for relaxation.

“Future village” means that it is a place which can support people’s life within sustainability, which not only includes the material sphere, such as natural resource utilisation, environmental improvement and landscape protection but also the non-material sphere, such as folk arts, traditional dancing and socio-cultural integrity supported by the built environment. The experience of the SUCCES study showed that there is a manifest potential for such a development, provided these future perspectives get the support not only from the village and its political entities, but also from high level administration.

Concerning the future for economic regional development, a number of important recommendations can be made. In particular, support for stronger communication and organisation between villages in a regional context can encourage the development of new ideas and innovation as well as strengthening of power relations from the small villages vis-a-vis the big conurbations or big enterprises. Such a regional network will encourage villagers to get economically active in a pro-active way taking responsibility for the social and natural environment of their villages. The well introduced monthly and yearly regional markets can serve a first basis for these networks.

Socio-cultural Patterns

This module generated a differentiated picture to the following the essential questions:
How does the local and neighbouring urban population want to live in the future?
What is the perception of the quality of life in the Chinese villages?
Can the answers to these questions be brought in line with a sustainability approach?

In the theoretical results, a link was found between social and spatial aspects of sustainability. The village is not a static entity but a dynamic one that undergoes constant rapid changes in housing, working conditions and modernisation, in general. In this module, 7 fields of spatial and social conditions were considered as a societal basis for future action towards sustainability:

1. “Me” - the human body: Individual safety and integrity, self respect, health and medical care.
2. “This is my house” – the house with the inner courtyard: right to have a family and a social network supporting the human being and infrastructure of the house.
3. “This is my street” – the village with its streets, shops, public spaces, school, temples, meeting squares and family trees; positioning and living in a given community; challenge for education, information and cultural identity as well as assuming responsibilities for other people; neighbourhood-mobility.
4. “The Village border” – the edge of the village, the spatial “in-between”: the challenge to test new activities within a community , osmotic space of possibilities between inside and outside.
5. “The village and the region”: the village as a part of the broader regional community with chances for urban-rural partnership and mobility into the region with public transport systems.
6. “The National Chinese territory”: visibility and traceability of national rules and regulations, negotiation process between the traditional Yin-Yang rules into modernity and the shared world view.
7. “The Globe”: accepted place and role in the world community, raising uncertainty.

Built Environment

Urban design: A modelling process

The systems model investigated the village metabolism. One of the contributions and findings of the sustainability-oriented urbanistic research was the development and implementation of a systems dynamics modelling programme through which the villagers could come to understand the metabolism of their individual family’s lifestyle and economy as well as the village’s sustainability-oriented metabolism and the relationships between the two. Through such a multiple scenario negotiation and modelling process, villagers would be able to ask many “what if” questions about the future of their village and determine, with relatively little outside assistance, how to both work with their families and village on a sustainable basis and at the same time increase their living conditions and life possibilities.

Semi-Public Space: The Chinese Courtyard as a Living Space and its Vernacular Architectural Form

The Chinese courtyards play a vital role for co-living and for socio-economic activities. It is an architectural framework for day-to-day-life that combines living and working. Diverse semi-public space is good at using local materials and realising the ideal solution in terms of local resources, social life, rural economy and local architecture pattern. Semi-public space is a long-term developing process relating to the social pattern of the community in the village which links the public and private life of farmers. Because of the special social structure of Chinese villages, semi-public space provides the basis for public communications among the farmers, especially in old villages. Semi-public space as a transition space from “public to private” creates a

relaxed and lively atmosphere in the village “space structure”. Moreover, with changes in the social pattern of the villages, some new functions are being created for public activities which leads to a more open and vivid communication atmosphere. Compared to most old villages, newly-built villages lack of rich semi-public space because of the function-oriented designing process. Therefore, the challenge for urbanistic development of villages is how to preserve the current diverse semi-public space system and adopt it to the modern life in the villages with the participation of villagers.

Upgrading Chinese Traditional Rural Housing

The SUCCESS team was impressed by the diversity of local buildings in rural areas. Choosing convenient local material, further developing local technology and local building tradition are the three important steps for localising a process at the scale of the village, at the same time providing examples for replicability. Building a house is a social activity in China: usually, all the family members and many neighbours or friends and relatives will be involved in the building process in a village. So, it is not only a building activity but also a social and non-monetary economic activity, exchanging working hours without money. Moreover, the designers and builders are the users of the house, so it is a well-informed process throughout the whole duration of the building work.

Based on this understanding, it was realised that, in order to keep up a long-term sustainable building process, the architects should follow a participatory way to explore various and complex factors and seek to balance the conflicts between urbanisation and preservation. When facing the big influence of the Chinese urbanisation process to the rural building process, it is necessary to discuss with the villagers how to upgrade their local houses to a modern life with respect to the current cultural landscape in the village and to re-animate the local housing system.

Replicability and Life after the Project

- An understanding that simple changes in lifestyle offer massive potential for the improvement of the quality of life of the residents and the wider environment.
- A realisation that many aspects of the "traditional" Chinese lifestyles are sustainable and "modern" in their desires and effects with regards to sustainability and environmental impact.
- Improved awareness of how energy consumption affects the lives of the villagers.
- Villagers were given the knowledge that, in many cases, the movement towards what is seen as a "modern" lifestyle has implications which may reduce rather than enhance the sustainability of village life.

Dissemination is important for the potential replicability of the SUCCESS project approach. Key dissemination activities were facilitated by the “exhibition on the move” and the video films produced during the course of the SUCCESS project. Articles on the villages were published in the local Chinese media (both in print and on television). There were also visits from local and regional officials. At the research level, results have been presented at numerous international conferences (see annex list of international presentations).

The Project inspired a professional documentary film „Jeder Siebte Mensch“ by Ina Ivanceanu and Elke Groen which was selected by the prestigious Film Festival Viennale presented on October 24, 2006. It had very good press echo when presented in Viennese Cinemas in November 2007.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings from the field surveys and results of data analysis, the research team formulated “Recommendations for achieving Sustainable Development in China’s

Rural Communities” (Beijing 2005), which were presented on the final SUCCESS conference in Beijing 2005. These recommendations emphasize the importance of focussing on the rural communities in the future and include concrete integrated recommendations. The SUCCESS project adopted the concept that involving people from governmental agencies in the whole research agenda was the best way to have subsequent results “go up the ladder” of hierarchies within the formal organisational structure of China. At the end of the work, some final comments proved this approach had been successful. In their final papers with semi public character, the participants from the China Centre for Town Reform and Development (CCTRD, a governmental agency dealing with the New Town Strategy) referred to the question of “Learning from SUCCESS” as follows:

“The participatory approach learnt from the SUCCESS project has been introduced to the research staff in CCTRD, which have and will improve field visits and investigations in the future when CCTRD is drafting official documents for rural development. The idea of how to improve the capacity of villagers over the management of public goods had been recognised by more and more researchers and officials. The mechanism innovated from the SUCCESS project could be replicated to more villages to enhance the social development in rural areas.”

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China: Lu Hongyi, architect; Dai Xingzhao, ecologist; He Limin, Anthropologist; Huang Jian Shang, anthropologist; Liao Rong, politologist; Liu Yonggong, economist; Qiu Aijun, politologist; Zhao Jimin, philosopher; Zhou Qiong, ecologist; Zhou Xue Jun, social scientist

Europe:

Bouillot Jean, architect; Dalkmann Holger, mobility expert; Kolb Bettina, sociologist; Levine Richard S., architect and urbanist; Marschalek Ilse, sociologist; Mortimer Nigel, energy consultant; Prändl-Zika Veronika, agronomist; Wagner Dieter, economist