

Valley Of Happiness



Bartsham

NEWSLETTER

Student Engagement Program

Field Report

18 students from Sherubtse organic farming society with one staff coordinator participated in community engagement program, initiated collaboratively by JICA partnership program.



On the 14th of October, with the help of college management, 18 students boarded the bus from Sherubtse and headed toward Bartsham. More than the prospect of toiling in the scorching sun, most students were hopeful that their help to the Bartsham community would make a lot of difference, while also getting first-hand experience in the field. Towards the evening, students were received warmly by Bartsham Administrators including Gup, Mangmi, Tshogpa, and the chairperson of the Happy Farmers Group. After the welcome session, and introduction among students and coordinators in Bartsham, students called it a day with a scrumptious dinner. The next day on the 15th of October, unlike many rainy days, it was sunny, warm, and pleasant, as if the whole environment knew the students were ready to help the farmers in Bartsham. Shortly afterward, completing the daily morning routines, students were provided with a healthy breakfast and then briefed about taking personal care while working in the field. Moreover, students were divided into groups of 5. Each group was supposed to go to different chiwogs such as Mugtangkhar, Jamoong Kumoong, and Dzongthong. The seasonal crops such as maize, millet, and vegetables were almost harvested, except for the paddy. Therefore, students went to the paddy field and helped in whatever ways they could. For instance, some helped in harvesting paddy, some carried it to the threshing field, while many threshed the rice to separate it from the hay. Moreover, the farmers at Bartsham were generous and active, not only did they provide us with warm hospitality, but they also taught and guided some students on how to do the task at hand. One thing we learned was that, during the work day at the field, the working environment should be lively, and full of fun and laughter. For that reason, everyone worked without showing any tiredness on their faces. Also, farmers in Bartsham have this belief to tie a bull and hoist a white flag near the paddy field signifying the great work done by the oxen in ploughing the field and helping farmers to reap the harvest. Lunch was served respectively to all the groups who went to different chiwogs. Considering the type of community Bartsham is, the food was considerably well prepared with variety in the menu which made the students even more motivated to work after lunchtime. Late in the evening, after the work was over, students were picked up from their respective places by the college bus, Gewog gup, and Tshopas. The dinner was served in Trashyang Tshogkhang, the place which was the students' home for 3 days. On the 19th of October, students were taken around Bartsham, particularly to Bartsham Chador Lhakhang, and introduced to different cultural history, which included the comprehensive explanation by Bartsham Gewog Gup. Due to time constraints, students could not visit all the historic places. However, all students were grateful to the Gewog administration and Japanese students from Kyoto University for the pleasant hospitality, support, and opportunity to help Happy Farmers at Bartsham.

Authored By :
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 Participant, Sherubtse College
 B.A. Political Science and Sociology



UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our Vision

- Create an outstanding climate of support for rural development to enhance the well-being and happiness of the people

Our Mission

- Establish institutional and community linkages
- Practically implement GNH values at the grass root level
- Conduct social and historical research on agriculture, happiness and rural development
- Preserve National and cultural identity and establish its link in promoting happiness
- Provide support services for the betterment of the rural community
- Strengthening the bottom-up planning approach

Our Objective

- Community engagement enables students to learn, and experience rural lives and work
- To listen and, in turn, demonstrate the impact of community contribution
- Community engagement, then, builds deeper, stronger, and more trusting relationships between public institutions and communities



“Community engagement is a bridge that reconnects a university to the surrounding community. It takes both the university and the community to walk across the bridge.”

-Hlekani Kabiti

OUTLINE OF THE 1ST ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

- Opening Address by Gup Mr. Kelzang Dewa
- Presentation by JICA project Mr. Tadaihiro Ikoma
- Presentation by Sherubtse Organic Farming Society unit.
- Ms. Khara Nanda Dulal, Student Coordinator
- Presentation on Japanese case of rural community activity by university students' group Ms. Yasui Rio
- Briefing about 2-day activity by Happy Farmers
- Group Mr. Jamyang Phuntsho, Chairperson

Hosted by: Mrs Pema Choden, Project Officer

Day One

14TH/ OCT/2022

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE	NOTE
4:00 pm	Students' arrival	TrashyangTshokang	
4:00-6:40 pm	Briefing and introduction	TrashyangTshokang	
6: 40 Pm	Dinner	TrashyangTshokang	

Day Two

15TH/ OCT/2022

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE	NOTE
8:00 am	Breakfast	TrashyangTshokang	
9:00 -5:00	Farming Activity	Farmers' farmland in 5 chiwogs	Students will be divided into 5 groups
6:00	Dinner	Trashyang Tshokang	

Day Three

16TH/ OCT/2022

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE	NOTE
8:00 am	Breakfast	Trashiyang Tshokhang	
9:00- 10:00 am	Follow Up Session	Trashiyang Tshokhang	Collect feedback sheets and sharing experiences with participants.
10:00- 12:00	Bartsham tour	Chador Lhakhang and others	All things should be loaded in a school bus. Gup will guide
12:00- 1:00	Lunch	Trashiyang Tshokhang	
1:30 pm-	Departure	Bartsham to Kanglung	End of the Program

Sharing Experiences: A Stepping Stone To Social Learning beyond classroom



We left the college at 2:30 p.m., escorted by Samten Sir and the bus driver, for Bartsham. I was looking forward to what was coming next. It was immensely enjoyable and exciting as expected because it had been a while since the summer holidays. We reached Bartsham, where the locals, as well as Gup and Japanese, were waiting for us. The way they welcomed us with a hearty dinner was such a kind gesture. Even though we had brought a blanket, they gave us an extra one for warmth including the bedding and mattresses.

The following day we were given breakfast that was ready at 8:00 a.m. by the cook. They also made sure to include eggs in all our meals, which was one of my favorite things to eat. After breakfast, we halved ourselves into five groups with a mix of boys and girls and traveled to several Chiwogs that required our assistance with agricultural chores. I was in Gup's vehicle when I was driven to my workplace, and he told us stories about other locations as well as his time spent in Bartsham. Then we finally reached our destination. Upon reaching, we immediately went to work. We were asked to thresh the bundle of paddy on the stone to get rice. The grandmother that we worked for, who was aged around 70, taught us to thresh the paddy bundle on the stone. Moreover, she taught us to collect the paddy. Certainly, I learned to carry paddy using a rope. After a while, we break for lunch, which became an interesting break for sharing our different experiences of working in the paddy field. I was with my other three friends and Sister Pema Choden was with the other three farmers. Furthermore, at 3:00 pm, with the help of a piece of clothing, we started to blow unwanted particles from the rice. After making the rice free from other particles, the offerings were done. Then, rice was packed in sags to store in the house. The packed rice bags were carried by our boys to their respective homes. We went to see other group friends who were working in other fields. But, after a while, we got to the back of the bolero of the chairperson of Happy Farmers Group. Instantly, while returning, we showed our happiness by singing different songs in the vehicle. After reaching back to our residence, we went for a wash. At 7:00 pm, we were served a very delicious dinner, and we called it a day. On Sunday at 8:00 am, we were provided with breakfast, which was fried rice with eggs.

Apparently, after our breakfast, we sat for a short meeting in which students were asked to fill out the feedback sheets. Then, our students were provided an opportunity to share their experiences, and Gup also gave advice on the importance of learning English in the 21st century. In particular, after this gathering, we were guided towards Chador Lhakhang by gups and the chairperson of the Happy Farmers Group. It was the most mesmerizing moment of my life as the Chador Lhakhang was too huge on the hill slope and, from there; I had a clear view of Bartsham, which was a beautiful and amazing experience. Then I was eager to capture our memories on my smartphone. Visiting Chador Lhakhang was significant as, after reaching there, all my pain went off. As its infrastructure was pleasing and beyond the normal art, after a while, we were blessed by the secret and most renowned statue of Chador. Later, Gup narrated to us the history behind the statue, how that statue came to be placed in that Lhakhang and how it became very precious to Bartshampas. Thus, our last event was very precious and memorable, with receiving blessings. The plan was to visit holy water (Drup Chuu), but it was unsuccessful as the bus driver was in a hurry. This brought resentment and unhappiness as I could not fulfill my dream. That was the end of our fun stay at Bartsham, and we then returned to campus while singing various songs and remembering the experience.



Experiences Shared By:

Vhawana Rai
Unit Female Coordinator;
Sherubtse Organic Farming Society
B.Sc. in Environmental Science.
3rd year

“My weekends literally seem productive and worthwhile. I felt more deserving of myself after helping the farmers. For a day, I felt like a hero to farmers. The opportunity was interesting and unforgettable. As we gained familiarity with various people and learned how farmers produced various grains, we felt closer to them. It was an enjoyable and productive weekend experience.”





WEEKEND; WELL SPENT

On behalf of Sherubtse Organic Farming Society (SOFS), I Khara Nanda Dulal, would like to share my personal experience during the three days of my stay in Bartsham. On the 14th of October afternoon, eighteen members of SOFS moved towards Bartsham escorted by Samten Sir. We reached Bartsham by 5.30 pm and we were graciously welcomed by Gewog Gup, Japanese Faculties, and Happy Farmers community members. We had an interactive session as we introduced ourselves and Hiro San introduced us to the JICA Partnership Programme. I was given the opportunity to speak about the Sherubtse Organic Farming Society, which provided an opportunity to share what we are doing at the college. On the next day, we divided ourselves into five groups and went to five different households guided by Japanese Faculties, Gup, Mangmi, and Community Tshogpa to render our help. By 9.30 am, we reached the field and we started to work. For me, it was the most memorable moment in my life because I got the chance to work in the paddy field for the first time. It was an exciting moment for me to practically learn how to harvest the paddy and segregate rice from hay. It was a great time together with Farmers of Bartsham as we could interact with each other, and they were happy because we were able to render our help. Although I was having trouble talking in Tshangla, my friend translated and convinced me that it was a chance for me to learn some of the Tshangla terms as well. We helped them to carry the hay, thresh the hay, segregate the rice, and carry the rice to the storeroom. I got a chance to explore their culture as well, they tie a bull while harvesting the paddy, and they hoist a flag and do an offering before eating the rice, to the local duties as an appreciation for the bountiful harvest. The program also made me realize how hard it is to harvest a grain of rice, and I now understand the precious grain of rice after working in the scorching sun. It also made me think that being a farmer, we can understand the value of a grain of rice, but we do not bother to throw a plateful of rice during our boarding school time.



On the third day, we moved to Chador Lhaxhang, guided by Gup and three Japanese faculties, and the Happy Farmers Chairperson. We were blessed to visit Chador Lhaxhang, which was the most historic moment in my life. We are guided by Bartsham Gup to better understand the history of the Lhaxhang and the community as a whole. We went inside the Lhaxhang and got Wang from Kaynyer, which was a blessing for all of us. I am deeply thankful for the team's kind heart and generosity for their utmost support and for giving us insights into Bartsham community. We took half a day to visit Chador Lhaxhang, and we came down to our residence and had our lunch. Finally, after having lunch, we departed with smiles on everyone's faces by waving our hands at each other.

“As a Unit Coordinator, I felt deeply satisfied because it was our first-time performing community service in collaboration with the JICA Partnership Program. I believe that our team was successful enough to lend helping hands to the Happy Farmers of Bartsham and I hope our presence made some difference in the community. Lastly, not to forget, I would like to wholeheartedly thank the JICA Partnership Programme for initiating such a programme and giving us the opportunity to help the farmers of Bartsham and explore. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the College President, the Dean of Student Affairs, and all the members of Happy Farmers of Bartsham for your generous help and kind support to make this programme successful. I will never forget the helping hands of our members who made all of us proud.”

Experiences Shared By:

Khara Nanda Dulal
Unit Male Coordinator
Sherubtse Organic Farming Society
B.A in Political Science and Sociology
3rd year





A PLEASANT WEEKEND AT BARTSHAM

I was very excited when I heard that the members of Sherubtse Organic Farming Society are going to Bartsham to do fieldwork with the JICA project. On Friday, around 18 of us started our journey to Bartsham. It was my first visit to Bartsham despite my two and half years stay here at the Sherubtse College. While traveling to Bartsham, I have seen many new views across the giant mountain. The journey was not so long and it was not tiring. By the evening we reached Bartsham and we were warmly welcomed by the Gup of Bartsham Gewog and the JICA project members. Despite the cold weather at Bartsham, I was filled with full of excitement to explore and learn new things.

The next day, we went to different Chiwogs to help the farmers to harvest the rice. While working, I came to know many people from Bartsham and I enjoyed their company. The people of Bartsham are really hard working and they mainly focus on agriculture. Their life is simple but full of fun and joy. After helping them to harvest the rice, I realized the value of food and I decided not to waste food henceforth. It was such a great experience for me as I have not taken much interest in agriculture before. It was also a great moment for me to reflect on the potential of young minds or the youth to practice agriculture. At the end of the day, I learned many new things such as harvesting the rice in their traditional way and I also came to know about their culture in harvesting the rice.



“ I was restless after work and my body was tired but the joy of working with people and learning new things made me happier and freer. It is a great moment to be cherished in my life. I am happy to meet the people of Bartsham and the members of the JICA project. I am grateful to be a part of this project and I am very much thankful for giving us such an opportunity I look forward to getting such opportunities in the coming days.”

Experiences Shared By:

Pema Dorji
Participant
B.A in History 3rd year,



Feedback Sheet from Sherubtse Students

PARTICIPANT 1

Q1. Which chiwog did you go for farm work? / Who of the local farmers did you work with?

-Dzongthung chiwog- Dongmae
We worked with 32 laborers. We worked with Mr. Tenzin Wangchuk.

Q2. What kind of farm work did you help and experience?

-Threshing/beating of paddy.
I learned the skill of threshing paddy and I realized that doing agriculture work is tiring and also interesting.

Q3. From farming-related activity and conversations with local farmers, what did you find interesting?

-Harvesting season is one of the seasons when all the farmers are happy and busy as they could finally harvest their year-round hard-worked fruits/success. The interesting part is that they had a culture of shouting Bab shay- Bab shay while threshing the rice. It means wishing for a good and more harvest.

Q4. What unique points or problems of agriculture in Bartsham did you find?

-Labor shortage (maximum of the labor are elder people)
We can rarely see the younger generation working
Human-wildlife conflict-wild boars
Lack of modern machines.

Q5. What do you expect next time if you have a similar opportunity to this time?

-If I get a similar opportunity like this for the next time, I would like to expect the replacement of human labor with modern machines and expect more younger generations to work in agriculture activities.

Q6. Feel free to drop any comments to people in Bartsham and Project members.

-The people and project members were welcoming and it was very funny and interesting to help and contribute something to the project. I would like to thank all the members for welcoming us and giving us such a good opportunity.

PARTICIPANT 2

Q1. Which chiwog did you go for farm work? / Who of the local farmers did you work with?

-Our group went to Jamung Kumung chiwog to work with Mr. Chador Wangdi.

Q2. What kind of farm work did you help and experience?

-We have beaten the harvested paddy and after completing it, we carried the collected rice in sag and took it to Mr. Chador's storage room which was in the attic and I have learned a lot of new works (Beating and carrying)

Q3. From farming-related activity and conversations with local farmers, what did you find interesting?

-The most interesting thing that I have experienced was that the local farmers are very kind, sufficient, energetic
And most interestingly, the farmers are happy and satisfied with their way of living.

Q4. What unique points or problems of agriculture in Bartsham did you find?

-The unique points or problems of agriculture in Bartsham:
1. Labor shortage. 2. Inadequate water supply for agriculture.
3. Old age people working rather than the young energetic youth and adults.

Q5. What do you expect next time if you have a similar opportunity to this time?

-If project members could add some programs after work, it would be very interesting and fun.

Q6. Feel free to drop any comments to people in Bartsham and Project members.

-The joint activity organized by the project members went successful because of the full support of the Gup and people of Bartsham.

PARTICIPANT 3

Q1. Which chiwog did you go for farm work? / Who of the local farmers did you work with?

-Muktangkhar, Mr. Depola

Q2. What kind of farm work did you help and experience?

-Rice harvesting and threshing

Q3. From farming-related activity and conversations with local farmers, what did you find interesting?

-It was fun interacting with the people and they were quite welcoming. They produce rice which is self-sufficient and do not use it for commercial purposes. They had small pieces of paddy fields and small families to feed. Interestingly, they have access to roads and modern facilities.

Q4. What unique points or problems of agriculture in Bartsham did you find?

-The farmland was located on a slope. Less number of people do farming, and migration of people from rural to urban areas.

Q5. What do you expect next time if you have a similar opportunity to this time?

-To have the same experience, help, and provide service as much as I can. Include as many people to have effective work.

Q6. Feel free to drop any comments to people in Bartsham and Project members.

-Use of more modern technologies and it would be beneficial if they could commercialize their products.

PARTICIPANT 4

Q1. Which chiwog did you go for farm work? / Who of the local farmers did you work with?

-Dzongthung chiwog- dongmae

Q2. What kind of farm work did you help and experience?

-It was mainly to do with collecting the paddy and threshing the paddy.

Q3. From farming-related activity and conversations with local farmers, what did you find interesting?

-They have a unique culture, where they take the eyebrows from the new visitor or helpers and put in the grain.
Bapsuiba-meaning let the harvest be more this time. All people work hard and were found to be friendly and there were problem-related with wildlife attacks on the vegetables and farmland.

Q4. What unique points or problems of agriculture in Bartsham did you find?

Wildlife conflict.
-Moreover, the workers were found to be of old age and no active participation was found from the youth.

Q5. What do you expect next time if you have a similar opportunity to this time?

-If we could get to work together because it was hard for us to cope with the expectations of people since we were divided and most of us has not been in the fieldwork. On a good note, it was very productive and worth learning.

Q6. Feel free to drop any comments to people in Bartsham and Project members.

-Bartsham people were found to be friendly and welcoming. Hope this kind of project is always there so that we get an opportunity to help Each other and also get experience.

Valley of Happiness

THIRD ISSUE

Designed By: Abi Chandra Acharya ,aka AB Panda; Project Officer

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JICA Partnership Program
Human Resource Development toward Community Building by
University - Community Engagement in Trashigang, Bhutan

