



China-Program

2018 EU-China NGO Twinning Program

**Partnerships between
European and Chinese NGOs**

Social and Environmental Justice
Climate Change and Low Carbon Development

Imprint

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Greetings

Over the course of the last 6 years, more than 140 twinningers from more than 20 European countries and China have participated in the EU-China NGO Twinning Program. 2018 marked a special year for these Alumni. During a special 5-year anniversary Alumni Meeting in Hong Kong, 60 former participants of the program came together to officially launch the Twinning Alumni Network, aiming at strengthening and forming new connections, contributing to increased sustainability of the overall program.

Promoting „International Civil Society“ is one of the key themes of the Robert Bosch Stiftung's area of support. We believe that active, engaged citizens committed to the creation of a more equitable world play a vital role for social cohesion and effective governance structures. We further believe that as most of today's challenges are global in nature, transnational knowledge-exchange and cooperation are indispensable. Therefore, we highly stress the importance of cross-border collaboration and dialogue amongst peers. Apart from the EU-China NGO Twinning Program, we do so by bringing together other important stakeholders of society, such as judges, lawyers, journalists and educators from Germany and China.

The overarching goal of Stiftung Mercator in its International Affairs programs is for people to understand in another, learn from one another and jointly overcome global challenges. In practice, this goal is primarily pursued through the “exchange of people and ideas”. In our China program, we work with young people and educators, as well as with decision makers in politics and administration, (civil-) society, science and culture. Cooperation among NGOs and the professionalization of the non-profit sector is a field, which we support in the context of our partnership with the

Ministry of Civil Affairs in Beijing, with which Stiftung Mercator has officially registered a Beijing Representative Office.

The Stiftung Asienhaus in Cologne once again had the lead in coordinating all partners involved. We would like to congratulate the team at Stiftung Asienhaus for another successful year with many varied applications from China and Europe. We would also like to thank the Climate Action Network (CAN-E) in Brussels and the China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO) in Beijing for their hard work. We especially thank CANGO for their renewed support with the registration process. But most of all we want to thank all participants' for their time and passion for the peer to peer sharing of knowledge, experience, and challenges – and the positive societal impact they create through their work every day.

We are looking forward to continuing collaboration between our two foundations and all partners involved.

Christian Hänel
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Editors Note

In 2018, our Twinners surprised us not only with the multitude of topics they worked on, but especially with the amount of side projects and cross-pairing cooperation. Adding into account that the Twinning Alumni Network (TAN) was officially initiated during a meeting in Hong Kong leading to unexpected synergies, we have more evidence than ever for the sustainability of the EU-China NGO Twinning Program. Following the implementation of the rigorous law for the regulation of international NGOs in January 2017, the perseverance of the program shows the high-level efficiency of a multiple-actor run transnational cooperation.

We received nearly thirty applications originating from ten different European countries. We have seen a highly motivated group of participants starting their exchange in China. Their first get-together in Chengdu, Sichuan province, an area, exemplary of people's perseverance and power of empathy was as successful as the workshops in Brussels, Europe's heart and Vienna, Europe's most popular city.

Laws and policies play a major role in global NGO cooperation. Through their regulatory framework, professionalization is fostered and transparency highlighted. Following the development of laws all over the world, another trend often correlates with the abuse of these regulatory frameworks: a shrinking space for civil society activism. By strengthening our internal bonds, we were able to overcome the challenges together and ensured that the EU China Twinning Program continued to support partnerships between NGO staff from China and Europe this year and hopefully in the near future.

In 2018, our Twinners worked in the fields of waste, forest carbon sink, disease & pollution control as well as local community governance, labor rights and HIV prevention. Newspaper articles have been written about participants, lauding the exceptional multi-national approach to global problems, Twinners' exchange results have been published in China Environment and a stunning picture campaign has been run online by an Austrian-Hong Kong twinning pair. This is just to name a few of this year's high profile successes.

The motivation for cross-twinning-generational projects and follow up activities rose to a new high during the TAN kick-off meeting in Hong Kong. Sixty participants, alumni of six years of twinning, board members, funders and local NGOs met and deliberated past as well as future cooperation. Our network now consists of over 130 environmentalists, social activists and educators. An abundant source of creative, cross-national, professional civil society organizations, fully integrated in the Bosch Alumni Network, which counts thousands of change makers.

While globalization causes many actors to focus inwards, our participants continue to reach out to tackle local and global problems together. They foster understanding and trust by overcoming intercultural differences and working side by side for a just sustainable future.

Jointly edited by
Li Xiajie
Mathias Claeys Bouuaert
Joanna Klabisch
Christian Straube



Global NGO Cooperation

Every year the addition of new participants changes the EU-China NGO Twinning Program's network's environment to an even richer one. We saw this very clearly at the Twinning Alumni Network (TAN) kick-off we organized in 2018 in Hong Kong. For the first time alumni from six years of the EU-China NGO Twinning Program met each other and had two days of exchange and formalization of their bonds as a community.

Starting the Twinning Alumni Network was one of the main highlights this year, as it showed us the potential and the result of years of work of the EU-China NGO Twinning Program. Bringing people together in order to facilitate and drive new conversations, contacts, and intercultural understanding. Seeing all these people together, discussing potential new joint projects, was very energizing.

Of course, we also organized our Capacity and Reflection Workshops. This year in Chengdu, Brussels and Vienna. The following chapter will give the reader a bit of an overview of these amazing events.

Twinning Workshop in Chengdu, China

The 2018 exchange in China took place in August and September. The workshop in Chengdu, Sichuan, was organized by the Chinese Association of NGO Cooperation (CANGO), the Climate Action Network (CAN Europe) and Stiftung Asienhaus in cooperation with this year's participating organization Sichuan Green from the 3rd – 5th of September.

On the 3rd of September we began with the opening remarks by Wang Xiangyi, Deputy Executive Director of CANGO; Dr. Nora Sausmikat, former Head of the China Program of Stiftung Asienhaus (till Feb 2019); Mathias Claeys Bouuaert, Network Outreach Coor-

dinator of CAN Europe; Judith Christ, Senior Project Manager of the Robert Bosch Foundation; and Zhang Yan, Project Manager of Stiftung Mercator. We were also greeted by Mr. Tong Wei, Division Director of the Sichuan Forestry Department and Dr. Ling Lin, Secretary General of Sichuan Green Foundation.

After the introductions, we had the pleasure of listening to a topical input from Zhang Xuehua, the Chief Scientist of the Lishui Institute of Ecology and Environment at Nanjing University. She talked to us about decentralized solid waste management. After doing research in Bangalore, India, she is now supporting the set up of a number of waste management projects in Chengdu, together with one of our alumni organizations, namely Roots & Shoots Chengdu. Which led to our alumni Wei Wei also taking part in this year's workshop and fieldtrip. Daniel Hou from China Green Foundation, Louisa Kistemaker from Forum Theater Enschede as well as Yang Hongyan were the other alumni joining us in Chengdu. Later on, all four of them traveled to Hong Kong with us and joined the Twinning Alumni Network kick-off with the freshest Twinning impressions.

After a short break we listened to a talk about practices of Sichuan forestry carbon sequestration to combat climate change by Zhang Wen, Professorate Senior Engineer and Director of the Sichuan Ecosystem Monitoring Center. He talked to us about innovations in the field of carbon sequestration and the role that collaborative partnerships can play in this. Forestry and its role in the climate change debate is an important recurring topic in our exchange program.

Our third input came from Yang Mingming, from the Chengdu Urban Rivers Association who talked to us about the Model Village for Sustainable Peri-Urban



Development. We discussed sustainable urban development and how her organization is trying to realize it.

After lunch our alumni, Huo Yuanqing from China Green Carbon Foundation and Yang Hongyan from Pesticide Eco-Alternatives Center talked about their experiences and gave advice to the current Twinners on how to get the most out of the program.

The rest of the afternoon was spent visiting a pilot project of Roots & Shoots Chengdu on recycling of kitchen waste, as described by this morning's input from Ms. Zhang Xuehua. Their community based cooperative approach initiates behavioral change in peoples' recycling of kitchen waste – a topic which is in an early developing stage in China.

The second day started with a World Café. During this session we tried to bring together the different perspectives of our participants on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and figure out how to interconnect various goals and fields of work.

After the lunch break a number of our current participants from both programs presented their work and what they had been doing so far during the exchange. The topics ranged from marine conservation to climate research to community development.

The following keynote speech of the workshop was given by Mr. Zhao Daxing, Executive Director of CAN-GO. He talked about the opportunities and challenges of civil society developments under the new NGO laws in China. Exemplary of our program's intent his perspective was followed by a Western interpretation of the law for the regulation of international NGOs in China by Dr. Horst Fabian, independent China researcher.

The third day incorporated a field trip to the Dujiangyan Wildlife-Release Research Center, a Chengdu based Giant Panda breeding and research station. This was followed by either a visit to an ancient irrigation system or a Taoist holy mountain and temple.

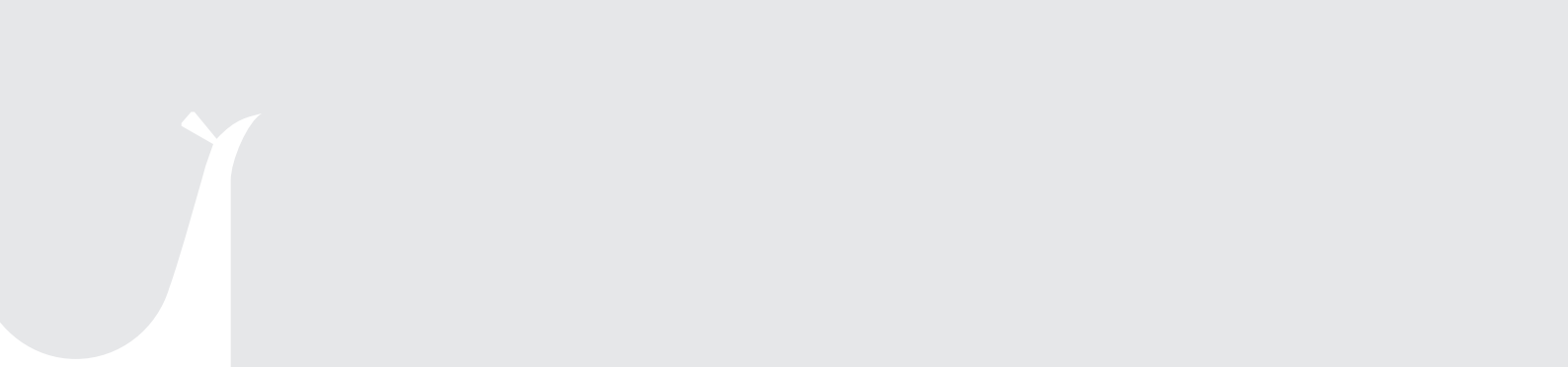
In the evening, as necessitated by the location of our workshop we said goodbye during a spicy hot pot dinner, after which we parted ways.

Hong Kong alumni meeting

After six generations of Twinners we finally took the chance and invited all 120 alumni to join us in an alumni meet-up in Hong Kong from 7th – 9th of September. This gave our alumni the opportunity to come together and meet old as well as new friends and colleagues. The chance to talk to each other about the exchange experience as well as the different fields of work was enthusiastically welcomed by over 60 participants, all sure of one thing: the EU-China NGO Twinning Program having had a huge impact on their lives.

After an enthusiastic ice breaker guided by our alumni Tony and Zhilu – an alumni pair already in their third follow up project – the day's work began with a mapping of the expectations of the participants. This gave the alumni, the organizers, the participating funding representatives as well as Board and Selection Committee members the chance to reflect on the gains one could acquire when actively involved in a transnational NGO network as ours.

Discovering ways of sustainable network building and communication brought forth hurdles as well as creative solutions. Communication between China's WeChat-based users and Europe's WhatsApp or Google-based platforms is never an easy feat. The interconnection with the already existing Bosch Alumni



Network and other umbrella networks like the Climate Action Network brought up a variety and reach among the alumni that all of us had underestimated.

On the second day the moderator Mark Pixley, who is very experienced in leading intercultural groups, created an open space which was used by participants to bring up alumni network strengthening projects and ideas as well as cross-generational cooperation. An alumni-mentoring program, a transnational NGO co-operation-counseling project, online platforms for knowledge exchange on sensitive topics,...these are just a few of the ideas that the alumni came up with.

In the afternoon we benefited from our current Twinner Wan Pak Kin's connections and were able to organize a panel discussion with leading labor activists in Hong Kong. Most of which deal with labor rights issues in mainland China and huge international companies. A highly informative view into one of the most sensitive topics NGOs in Asia can be involved in.

The days in Hong Kong were intense. A field trip to a fishing and marine conservation project brought some much needed outdoor experience to our participants.

All participants were highly motivated to make an effort and ensure that the new and old bonds they had worked on would not go to waste in the future.

Workshop Brussels, Belgium: Climate Change and Low-carbon Development

This year we held separate European workshops for the Climate Change & Low-carbon Development and the Social and Environmental Justice parts of the EU-China NGO Twinning Program.

During the Climate Change & Low-carbon Development Workshop, taking place between the 25th – 27th of October in Brussels, we focused on cooperation synergies.

The first day started with a roundtable discussion on the connections between the participants. We talked about the various theory of change models used by the different organizations. Followed by an exchange on how all those different perspectives and ways of tackling the same problem could come together as parts of one puzzle.

In the afternoon we had a talk with Mathias Eberlen, Advisor to Member of the European Parliament Jo Leinen, who leads the European Parliament delegation to the Chinese Parliament.

As an introduction to this talk we had a short session explaining European politics, a topic which always resonates well with our Chinese participants, especially when focusing on how climate and energy policies are being discussed on a European level. Finally, we toured the visitor center of the European Parliament.

Our second day started with a theatre workshop which was given by Louisa Kistemaker from Forum Theater Enschede and her Twinner Li Qian from Storytellers. During this session, we did several exercises focusing on intercultural communication and how to keep an open mind towards one another.

During the afternoon slot of our program, our participants should learn from each other. We had presentations from Anton Lazarus from the European Environmental Bureau on communication on air pollution. Diao Sitong from SEE gave a presentation on how her organization is tackling desertification in Inner Mon-



golia and Lucy Gilliam from Transport & Environment closed with a presentation on shipping emissions and its effects on climate change.

After two days of being inside, our field trip consisted of visits to a number of environmental organizations in Ghent. Among others, the Milieuadvieswinkel where people get advice on energy efficiency measures by architects. It is also an information hub that guides people to the right subsidies on energy efficiency. Thus ended three intense days in Europe's capital.

Workshop Vienna, Austria: Social and Environmental Justice

Vienna, Europe's favorite city to live in, was the location of this year's Social and Environmental Justice Twinners' Capacity and Reflection Workshop. Supported by Südwind Austria, Stiftung Asienhaus organized three days of learning and networking.

The kick-off was handled by Moritz Meyer from the University of Hamburg. For the third time he trained our participants in interactive and creative presentation methods, a skill needed by NGO staff from all over the world as they often present on a mixed global stage. Especially Werner Bock from the German Aids Hilfe e.V., Andreea Leonte from the Romanian organization Energy Justice Now and her partner He Linghui benefited from the one-on-one consultations as they presented to a mixed audience on the workshop's third day.

The second day started with a highly motivated group setting out to the Austrian parliament, where Member of Parliament Ruth Becher from the Social Democratic Party SPÖ had invited us to an informal get together. Ruth Becher, a specialist on social and ecologically sustainable housing issues in Vienna, surprised our

participants with her in-depth knowledge on Vienna's strategies to tackling urban housing issues, which have become a problem all over the world. Chinese and European urban dwellers were immediately captivated by this topic as Vienna is dealing with over 30.000 new inhabitants yearly, many of the measures taken by the city could be transferred to other countries.

After the lively discussion, 2018 Twiner Mathias Haberl from Südwind Austria gave a historical overview on Austria's history which entertained and informed many a participants in equal parts. The afternoon was open to the interested public and inputs by Austrian environmentalists as well as European NGO campaigning specialists stirred quite the animated discussion. The following Twiner presentations promoted our program in the best manners as the presentation training had perfectly prepared the participants.

The next day our guide, Barbara from Shade Tours, met us in the city center. Shade Tours specializes in guided tours on social issues. Barbara is a former art gallery owner, who due to health issues became homeless. Shade Tours gives homeless people the opportunity to lead tourist groups around the city and point out what locations have which meaning for the homeless as well as the social support system available. Her forthcoming and honest way to deal with all kinds of questions impressed everybody. Even though the rain forced us to stop the tour, the discussion with her continued inside one of Vienna's beautiful coffee houses. The day culminated in a visit with Südwind Austria who explained some of their most successful national and international campaigns on climate change and capacity building. Three days seems like a short time, but the participants of the workshop were motivated as well as exhausted due to the packed itinerary.

Conclusion

Changes are an essential part of life. Nobody can predict whether they will lead to improvements or create new hardships. 2018 was the first time both programs were realized under the new law for the regulation of international NGOs in China. A lot of extra effort had to be made due to this. But we all agreed that the only

way civil society can deal with overarching issues like urbanisation, climate change, social injustice, aids prevention,... is together. We need to keep talking and cooperating. We need to experience each other's legal frameworks and exchange strategies. This is the way forward for us.

Mathias Claeys Bouuaert
Joanna Klabisch



Working on the SDGs in Chengdu © CANGO

EU-China NGO Twinning Participants

In 2018, the following organizations and topics were included in the Twinning Program:

“Social and Environmental Justice” Twinners		
Chinese Organization	European Organization	Focus Topic
LI Qian Chengdu Storyteller Social Work Service Center	Louisa Kistemaker & Els Schutman Forumtheater Enschede	Gender and sexual education, social equity
CHEN Qing Mangrove Wetland Conservation Foundation	Chris Rostron Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust	Wetland conservation, biodiversity
ZHAO Yiren Dinghaigiao Co-operative Society MA Xiaolu AIFEN Environment Organization	Kirsten Reinders Büdchen am Nikolausplatz	Strengthening local communities and waste prevention
WAN Pak Kin Labor Education & Service Network	Matthias Haberl Südwind Austria	Labor rights
HE Linghui Shenzhen Zero Waste	Andreea Leonte Energy Justice Romania	Waste management
GAO Pan Anhui Hefei Qingwei Health Center	Werner Bock Deutsche AIDS Hilfe e. V.	AIDS/HIV prevention and aid, LGBTQI
LUO Yi Laotu	Marco Schlüter Naturland e.V.	Sustainable agriculture, rural and urban sustainable development

“Climate Change” Twinners		
Chinese Organization	European Organization	Focus Topic
ZHANG Qiang Shanghai International Shipping Institute	Faig Abbasov European Federation of Transport & Environment	Shipping emission control, marine environmental protection
ZHAO Lu Chengdu Roots & Shoots	Antal Molnár and László Kiss Green Circle	Waste management, environmental education
DIAO Sitong Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology	Charlotte Vailles The Institute for Climate Economics	Regulatory frameworks on climate change
ZHANG Di EnviroFriends Institute of Environmental Science and Technology	Anton Lazarus European Environmental Bureau	Water and air pollution, waste management
SUN Xuejiao Sichuan Green Foundation	Marija Kekenovska Go Green	Environmental education

European participants resided in China from mid-July until mid-September 2018, while the Chinese participants resided in Europe from October until November 2018.

What follows are the Twinning Program reports by the participating organizations and Twinning fellows.

Social and Environmental Justice Twinning Reports

Forumtheater Enschede, Enschede & Chengdu Storyteller Social Work Service Center, Chengdu

Both Forumtheater Enschede (FE) and Chengdu Storyteller Social Work Service Center (CSSWSC) engage in storytelling in order to motivate social change. Therefore, storytelling techniques were an integral component of their exchange. During the 2018 EU-China NGO Twinning Program, both focused on topics such as gender and family, gender equality and equity exploration. Together they learned about a range of storytelling techniques, such as the Theater of the Oppressed Games or the Bianlian (face changing) Opera, to utilize them to discuss those quite complex and often controversial topics.

Profiting from different storytelling experiences in different cultural contexts

The main objective of the exchange of FE and CSSWSC was to get to know each other's networks and social embedding, each other's cultural and social contexts including family structures, gender equality and equity, and finally each other's respective working approaches. Through this exchange of knowledge and experience, FE and CSSWSC hoped to enhance their toolboxes with new methods and gain new inspirations.

Els Schutman and Louisa Kistemaker from Forumtheater Enschede visiting the Storyteller Social Work Service Center in Chengdu

During their month-long stay in Chengdu, both Els and Louisa were hoping to gain detailed knowledge about the local circumstances in Chengdu. Louisa was expecting to experience the distinct local cultures and their differing ways of storytelling, most importantly the Han Chinese and the Tibetan ways of storytelling, as well as to learn about the daily life in rural communities surrounding Chengdu. Els focused more on the social setting of the locality, the common everyday life of the people in Chengdu, their work life, education and other topics. Moreover, she wanted to learn about the working structures behind CSSWSC.



FE and CSSWSC staff in Chengdu © Louisa Kistemaker

Engaging with AIESEC Chengdu

Els was invited to talk about her perspectives on LGBTQ rights and to introduce basic Theater of the Oppressed exercises to AIESEC Chengdu. The group consisted of students from all over the world. AIESEC students who participated were at university, their age ranged from 19 to 25 years. It was a very rich and exciting experience to work with so many cultures at once, while discussing such a controversial topic such as gender equity. Els later attended a global village activity hosted by AIESEC Chengdu. Again, the cultural diversity of the group was an essential part of the event where different students creatively presented their respective culture through dance, music and food.

Getting to know local forms of theater

Attending the community activity of hand shadow play in a community center was Louisa's and Els's first encounter with one of the traditional forms of theater in Sichuan. Later on, they joined a dinner show with a range of Bianlian Opera elements. They were able to meet some of the artists. Therefore, they had the chance to get to know even more about this very beautiful tradition, which is well kept and still popular in China.

Working with local families in Chengdu

During a workshop on self-protection and consciousness for one's own personal space for kids, Els and Louisa gained their first experience in working with Chinese families. The target group of the workshop were kids that were between 8 and 12 years old. The number of participants and the circumstance that parents or grandparents attended without exceptions, took photographs or even filmed the event, surprised Els and Louisa.

CSSWSC's work with disadvantaged children

Louisa and Els joined a fieldtrip to visit rural girls who were abandoned by their mothers. Together they stayed with the families in their homes, and had the chance to ask some questions about how they live and what is important to them. This was their first insight into how CSSWSC works in cooperation with local governments and how it additionally includes the whole family into the matter of educating girls on gender-related topics, a unique opportunity that they otherwise might not had.

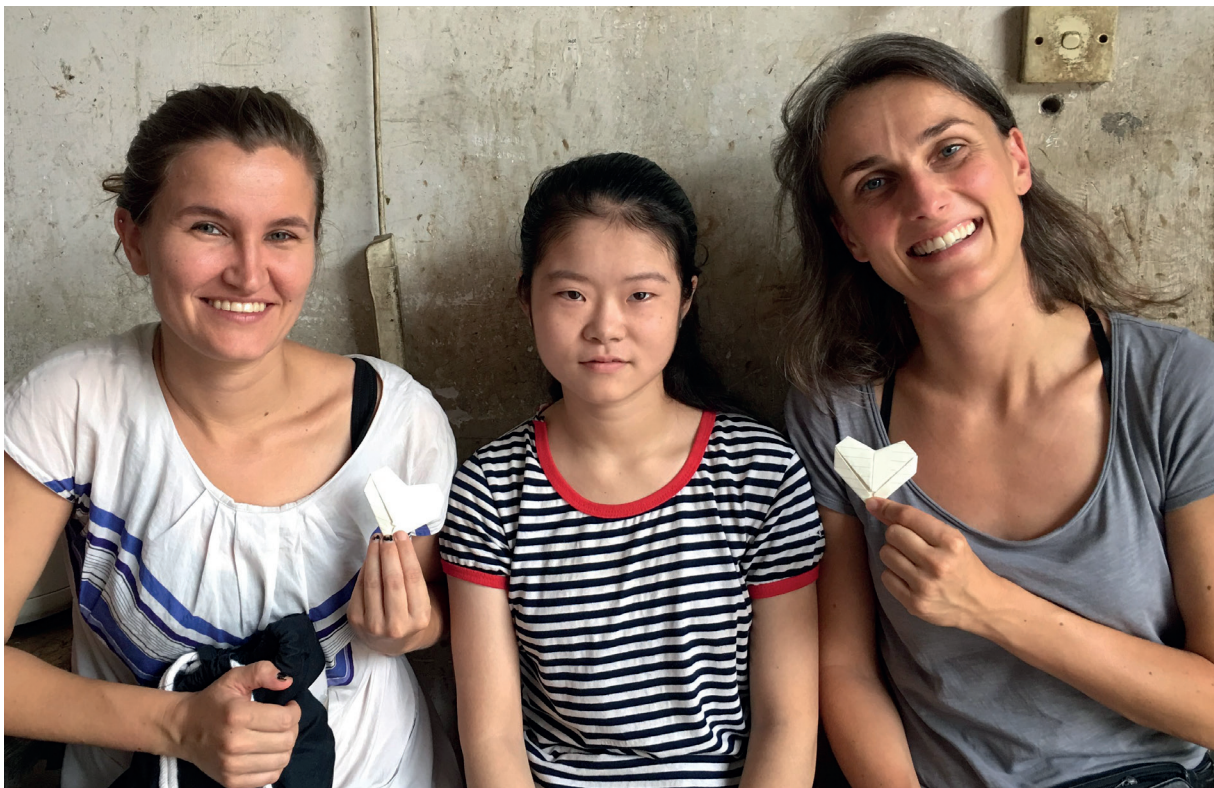
During a fundraising event for underprivileged Tibetan children, Louisa got her chance to learn about the cultural differences between different Chinese minorities.

Outcome and Impact

Through workshops and practice, CSSWSC learned about the method of using theatre games for workshops with children. The Dutch partners in turn gained insights about how CSSWSC is organized, how it functions economically and how it works together with both volunteers as well as with the government. FE learned a lot about working as an NGO in a Chinese context, about the concepts of families and other social structures in the Chinese society.

Forumtheater Enschede hosting Li Qian in the Netherlands

Li Qian's main objective during her stay in the Netherlands was to learn more about the working method of FE, which she then wanted to try to adopt back in Chengdu. Furthermore, she hoped to get to know



Els and Louisa visiting left-behind girls in Jintang © Louisa Kistemaker

more about the social work in schools in the Netherlands as well as widening CSSWSC's network with European NGOs who are working for gender equality and community development.



Dinner in Enschede © Li Qian

Participating in the weekly open space events of FE

Every Monday, Qian participated in the open space events in Beien Enschede. FE uses these weekly open meet-ups to talk to the local people about a range of different topics, often using theatre methods to express their opinions. During Qian's stay interculturality was the most talked about topic and Qian got to experience many new working methods and also gave presentations of her own.

The women's group

The women's group is another weekly event organized by FE, which addressed subjects like gender identity and discrimination using theater play. By joining the women's group activities, Qian additionally learned new methods specifically directed at making participants feel comfortable and included in the discussion of topics not necessarily accepted in society.

Exploring some of Enschede's social meeting points through the treasure box project

Another one of FE's projects is the treasure box (Schatkamer Enschede) the objective of which is to explore subcultural places in Enschede and to reveal their stories and their social impact on the town. The

urban garden is one of the places that Qian got to know and where she could join in on a workshop about composting in urban areas.

Accompanying an FE taught theater class

Els, who works as a theatre teacher in the Het Assink Lyceum (one of the middle schools near Enschede), took Qian along. Here, Qian got her chance to get an insight into school life in the Netherlands when she talked to the students. Moreover, she observed further methods applied by Els for dealing with peer bullying, encouraging the children's creativity and helping them to enjoy their time at school.

Talking about gap years during the social impact day: Right before leaving Enschede, Qian attended the social impact day in Twente. She participated in the preparation of the event. FE used the practice of forum theater to communicate the problems entailed by a gap years in one's CV and encouraged the audience to discuss and change the course of their play.

Outcome and Impact

At the closing of her time in Enschede, Qian had accumulated quite the insight into the wide range of projects organized and methods applied by FE. By participating in the preparation and execution of these projects, she also obtained the practical knowledge to replicate these methods in Chengdu. Through getting to know another education system, she also developed many new ideas of her own that could help find Sichuan to make the best of their time in school. Qian shared those ideas via multiple social platforms and in her immediate social surroundings.

Her time in the urban gardens was another very important experience that may very well impact CSSWSC's work regarding broader community-based projects. And finally, since FE works at the Ceespoot, a working space in Enschede for all kinds of small organizations and companies, and through also visiting multiple other twinner organizations, Qian definitely succeeded to widen CSSWSC's social network with European organizations.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

There are two ideas about for joint future projects of FE and CSSWSC:

The Storytelling Festival

They want to jointly organize a storytelling festival in Chengdu to explore and document social change processes – hopefully in collaboration with many other social organizations. Together they want to further broaden their practices and for instance include film making, the concept of combining Chinese tea ceremonies and storytelling, Tibetan storytelling and the Bianlian opera into the festival.

Translation of An Ke's books

An Ke met with Els and Louisa during their time in Chengdu and inspired the idea of including the combination of tea ceremonies and storytelling into the co-operation of FE and CSSWSC. An Ke has a small shop in Chengdu where she exchanges tea for stories of her customers. She has already published two books about the stories that she has collected this way: first *Yi cha huan gushi*, English: *A Tea for a Story*, and more recently *Wu shi cha*, English: *No Worries-Tea*. FE and CSSWSC want to work out English translations to make these books internationally accessible.

INFOBOX

Forumtheater Enschede (FE)

is an organization and initiative that wants to address issues from their own environment to provoke social change. FE use theatre techniques and other tools to play games, tell stories and stimulate debate about subjects that matter to its members and might not be acceptable topics in public fora. They include a women's group which deals with gender identity and discrimination as well as with the specific problems of single mothers.

Louisa Kistemaker

is one of the co-founders of FE. Apart from her voluntary activity she is the communication manager of the MEDUWA project of the Institute for Environmental System Analysis at the University of Osnabrück. In her PhD project, she successfully combined her passions for ecological and social sustainability with her passion for the arts by choosing knowledge co-production, social cohesion and sustainability using arts-based methods as her topic.

Els Schutman

With university education in both dramatherapy and musical education, Els Schutman has been teaching drama at the Het Assink Lyceum since 2008. In recent years she broadened her professional career to include freelancing as a music and drama teacher, while also becoming the second co-founder of FE in 2017, making her one of the main organizers of FE's activities.

Chengdu Storyteller Social Work Service Center (CSSWSC)

is an NGO which works mainly with girls and youth groups in Southwest China. There is no or little physiological hygiene and sexual education in Chinese schools yet. With their projects CSSWSC want to address this lack of educational programs and work around cultural taboos in rural and Tibetan areas of Sichuan province but also career and study planning projects, self-protection projects or picture book reading.

Li Qian

In her studies Li Qian has always been preoccupied with rural development, eventually examining this issue not only in a Chinese, but also in an international context when she chose to pursue an international master's degree in rural development through Erasmus Mundus. After her time as a student, she has worked for different humanitarian organizations, her position as Senior Project Officer at CSSWSC since

Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge & Mangrove Wetland Conservation Foundation, Shenzhen

The Mangrove Wetland Conservation Foundation (MCF) and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) had already met and worked with each other before the 2018 EU-China NGO Twinning Program. The program however gave both organizations a great chance to look deeper into how wetland centers operate in the Chinese and the British context, to do more networking, and to further strengthen the ties between MCF and WWT staff.



Chris and Qing at the London Wetland Center © Chris Rostron

Chris Rostron visiting the Mangrove Wetland Conservation Foundation in Shenzhen

Since WWT had already conducted consulting work in China, the main objectives to participate in the exchange were to gain experience of how wetland centers are run in China, particularly those run by other NGOs, how this links to local communities and education programs, and how we can support the development of the wetland center network in China.

Staying at the Futian Mangrove Eco-Park Nature Center

On arrival we spent time visiting the MCF HQ office, as well as the Futian Ecopark, in which I was then mostly based whilst in Shenzhen and gave advice on the

park's interpretation plan, as well as giving some training on Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) activities at the Park. I also took part in activities such as the citizen science sessions and events such as the onsite festival.

Supporting the development of MCF and China's wetland protection networks

Week two included a trip to Hainan, giving some training to local eco guides based at the local government offices. This was followed by a site visit to a mangrove education center which MCF may work on in the future. Week three we prepared for the launch of the Coastal Wetland Centers network in Beijing. Representatives from the Chinese government's State Forestry and Grasslands Administration, and from wetland centers across the country, as well from the Paulson Institute, an influential policy group based in Beijing, attended the launch.

Returning to Shenzhen before my departure

In the final week, we took part in the Shenzhen Green Schools conference, leading a session on how wetland centers can support schools and deliver environmental education. We did an interactive approach, inviting the audience to draw what they thought a wetland included, then continue to analyze their own drawings, and compare their conclusions with each other.

Outcome and Impact

Overall my time in China was extremely rewarding personally, giving me a much better understanding of how things work in China, particularly from the perspective of the emerging non-governmental sector, and Shenzhen's approach of philanthropy working to deliver environment benefits. Being based much of the time onsite at the Futian Ecopark helped me to learn how my Chinese counterparts deliver work on the ground with local people and schools, and identify their strengths and needs for training to create good mechanism to deliver CEPA activities.



Launching of the Coastal Wetland Protection Network and Wetland Education Center in Beijing © Chris Rostron

Networking was by far the most important part of my stay in Shenzhen. Putting MCF in closer contact with colleagues of mine in Hong Kong, strengthening the interprovincial network of the Beijing Coastal Wetland Centre and also strengthening its link to the global wetland center network are probably the most important outcomes of this exchange in the long-run. Both MCF and WWT profited greatly from my time here and our work together is sure to continue.

Chen Qing's stay with the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge, UK

WWT is a leading charity organization on wetland and wildlife conservation and has expertise in managing wetland centers and water bird conservation. We share some common interests in the monitoring and conservation of endangered species. Therefore, it is a great opportunity to exchange experiences with the management of wetland centers and to learn about coastal wetland conservation through the flyway/ecosystem approach, so that both humans and nature can benefit from our efforts.

Visiting wetland, water protection and management sites together with WWT

Working with the WWT Consulting team and visiting various sites constituted the main activities during my stay in England. The visited sides and contents included:

- Slimbridge Wetland Center: habitat management, visitor service, volunteer involvement, school education sessions, monitoring
- London Wetland Center: water treatment system, habitat management
- Steart Marshes: wetland creation and management, monitoring, local community involvement and ecosystem service, administrative mechanism
- Woodberry Wetlands: administrative mechanism, interpretation system
- Walthamstow Wetlands: administrative mechanism
- Severn Valley: interpretation system, volunteer involvement
- Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: guiding tour, school education session
- Natural History Museum, London: interpretation system

Outcome and Impact

Working with the WWT Consulting team at so many different wetland sites helped me gain experience in wetland center management, particularly concerning visitor experience management, habitat management, volunteer management, interpretation systems, communication within and among organizations, and monitoring systems.

Another important lesson learned was to prioritize further the fact that wetland centers should serve as a link between nature and people. Carrying out regular CEPA activities and deepening the involvement of stakeholders is therefore a vital part to them. This exchange was a great opportunity to explore and learn about all kinds of CEPA activities and to discuss the promotion of nature education centers in China and different approaches of launching or improving them.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

MCF, WWT and the Wetland Link International (WLI) initiative that WWT is hosting plan to maintain a close relationship, particularly around future developments at the Futian Ecopark. We will work closely between WLI Global and the Coastal Wetland Centre network. WLI can provide good opportunities for sharing best practices, developing new resources, and showcasing the good work that Chinese wetland parks are delivering, and MCF can – and already has – help to further promote WLI in China. Jointly raising the awareness of the endangered wetlands in China through education centers is another future goal.

MCF is planning to develop a big project on conservation of the spoon-billed sandpiper, a bird that has been listed as a critically endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). WWT is sharing its experience and expertise on the conservation and monitoring of these emblematic birds, having worked on them in the region for several years now. We will work closely together to support MCF in order to deliver an effective project that will benefit both spoon-bill sandpipers and wetlands along the East Asian Australasian Flyway.



Visiting the Steart Marshes with Alice Connor © Chen Qing

A final future cooperation project is to support the new coastal wetland centers network in its efforts to build capacity of wetland centers and their staff in China. One of the strengths of Chinese wetland parks is the incredible infrastructure and nicely designed buildings. However, there is still a lack of well-trained staff capable of delivering good CEPA activities and of resources to support them. Therefore, we would like to provide resources needed to support the delivery of good CEPA activities on site. This CEPA guidance would be based on practical examples from across China, pulling out examples of how to design, deliver and monitor wetland CEPA activities on site. WWT will work with MCF and the Paulson Institute, as the leaders of the coastal network, to produce something that will be easy to update, accessible to staff and managers of wetland parks, and firmly target the Chinese system of wetland CEPA activities.

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)

is an organization committed to protecting wetlands and wildlife and runs ten wetland centers all over the UK. Their first site was already set up in 1946 in Gloucestershire at the banks of the river Severn. Today the organization welcomes up to one million visitors a year. Their centers are different in size and character but they all carry out similar work, focusing on conservation, recreation, education and research of the wetlands. WWT hosts the Wetland Link International (WLI) initiative, a support network for wetland centers globally, and also includes a consultancy, that carried out a lot of work in China on wetland centers and habitat management.

Chris Rostron

Environmental management, water protection and educating, and involving the public in these activities have been the three key points visible throughout all of Chris Rostron's education and professional career. He has been working on WWT's WLI network for 10 years now already, and as head of the WLI initiative has also been responsible for overseeing the work with the WLI Asia program.

Mangrove Wetland Conservation Foundation

was established in 2012, is located in Shenzhen and focuses on coastal wetland protection in the area. Until today, the MCF operates a wetland park and six education centers in Shenzhen, where its staff informs up to 40,000 people a year and promotes coastal wetland protection and public awareness. The MCF has done work related to site-based water birds habitat restoration and maintenance on the East Asian Australasian Flyway. The MCF is closely linked to several international partners – like WWT – who also engage in coastal protection.

Chen Qing

After finishing her master's degree in Ecology at the Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of the Chinese Academy of Science in 2014, Chen Qing started to work at the MCF as a conservation manager. Her activities at the MCF include habitat managing for water birds, managing and implementing ecological monitoring at the Futian Ecopark, as well as conducting biodiversity baseline investigation of the Futian Reserve.

Büdchen am Nikolausplatz, Cologne & Dinghaiqiao Mutual Aid Society and AIFEN, Shanghai

The exchange topic of Dinghaiqiao Mutual Aid Society (DHQ), AIFEN Environment Organization (AIFEN) and Büdchen am Nikolausplatz (Büdchen) is to increase and reinforce the public dialogue and participation about social justice and environmental protection. They aim to make these vital issues more talked and thought about.

Expectations

Through this program, all three organizations hoped to gain new insights and inspirations from each other regarding the question of how to trigger a public dialogue on social justice and environmental protection. All organizations were interested in how to create new spaces for a public dialogue, how to involve new people and how to ensure a public dialogue continues.

Kirsten Reinders from Büdchen staying with DHQ and AIFEN in Shanghai

Film screening of “Where the streets had my name”

As a first input about how to start a public discussion, we watched the documentary “Where the streets had my name”. Two film students made this documentary about the performance artist Ge Yulu from Hubei. Ge works and lives in Beijing and Wuhan. Most of his artwork is preoccupied with individual resistance in public space in China. He intends to motivate discussions on related topics by practicing extreme performance, and to evoke the public’s participation by creating interference. After the screening, we exchanged thoughts and impressions and thoroughly discussed them.

Open table discussions about our exchange’s working topic

Open table discussions are a vital part of DHQ’s work, so I naturally took part in several. The first one was about the general topics of community building, involvement of the public, the creation of spaces where people can meet and the designing of a forum for a dialogue about global and local issues in different frameworks. The discussion took place at The Distance



Film screening at DHQ © Kirsten Reinders

Bookstore. The program included presentations of myself talking about Büdchen, Ma Xiaolu introducing AIFEN, Zhao Yiren sharing DHQ’s working experience and finally Joy, The Distance Bookstore’s owner and founder. The presentations and following discussions were aimed at getting to know each other’s working approaches.

Film screening of “Monolith, Bipeds and Tetrapods” and open table discussion

Another open table discussion followed the film screening of “Monolith, Bipeds and Tetrapods” at the McaM in Shanghai. DHQ had organized and moderated the event. The film essay by Feng Junyuan in collaboration with Zeng Jiahui takes the 1960s Non-Aligned Movement, the radical formation of the “Third World”, the colonial aftermath, ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka in the second half of 20th century and the revisionist impact of China’s Belt and Road Initiative on contemporary South Asian geopolitical order as its subjects. The open table discussion at the DHQ included a talk with the cinematographers about the cinematic tools utilized in the movie.

Talking about issues of the wider Chinese public and meeting Shanghai locals

A final open table discussion and knowledge building event revolved around the topic of workers’ rights in

in China's economic powerhouses like the city of Shanghai. The event included a film screening and a discussion with a professor of the Fudan University.

My activities during my stay also included a visit to the 'Dinghai Road Subdistrict Community Neighborhood Center' with members of the DHQ and an urban planner in order to share thoughts on the design of communal areas. I learned more about their best practices and got insights into the immediate local context that DHQ has to work with.

Activities planned with Ma Xiaolu and the AIFEN Environment Organization, Shanghai

At first, I met up with AIFEN's president Mr. Jiang Feng who interviewed me about waste management

systems in Germany. After the interview, I met the rest of AIFEN, gave a presentation about our work at Büdchen, particularly our waste reduction efforts and the involvement of locals.

We visited a neighborhood, which represents a success story of introducing waste sorting in China. We met with a team of volunteers and they shared the difficulties of implementing the waste sorting at their neighborhood. My visit to the neighborhood was concluded with a meeting with Dr. Marie Harder at Fu-

dan University. She told us about her latest research results on "food waste recycling pilots in Shanghai" and talked about her ideas for implementing a broad system of volunteers to overcome the huge waste problems of Shanghai.

Finally, Xiaolu organized a Zero Waste Day in Shanghai in which I got the chance to be involved. Yiren, Xiaolu, myself and a team leader of the volunteers from the neighborhood we visited the other day held speeches.

Outcome

I learned a lot about how DHQ cooperates with local community and witnessed how they and AIFEN actively involve local citizens into their projects. Through the film screenings and open table discussions, I got into touch with a wide range of people and topics, allowing me to gain many new inspirations and inputs. I also recorded interviews I conducted with individual members of DHQ, further helping me to understand why they do what they do and how each one of them likes to contribute to the organization.

We, the DHQ team and myself, reflected my impressions and experiences together. I gave them a feedback and input about my experiences with their group dynamics and the importance of the involvement of all



Film screening at DHQ © Kirsten Reinders

group members in discussions in order to enhance everyone's motivation and participation in the work of the society.

Büdchen am Nikolausplatz in Cologne hosting MA Xiaolu from AIFEN

Celebrating the Harvest Festival

My first activity in Cologne was celebrating the Harvest Festival at the Büdchen with neighbors and friends. We used the public space around the Büdchen to cook outside using vegetables that would have normally been thrown away, because they did not confirm to supermarket "beauty standards". The event took place in cooperation with 'The Good Food – Liebe auf den zweiten Blick' initiative from Cologne-Ehrenfeld.

Exploring the local context of Cologne

During my stay in Cologne, I spent some time discovering the urban gardens of the city. I met with visiting exchange fellows from other Chinese organizations at an event that Gabi Linde from Agora Köln, another civil society organization preoccupied with social and environmental change, had organized. We made an excursion to an organic farm where we collected left over vegetables on the field.

Getting to know the German side of waste management

After introducing Kirsten to our waste reduction efforts in Shanghai, I got the chance to get to know the waste situation of Cologne. We had an excursion to the waste management company Abfallwirtschaftsbetriebe Köln, met its public relations manager and had a Q&A session. On another day, I interviewed a representative of the Zero Waste Store Cologne and attended a zero waste workshop at the University of Cologne.

Events at the Büdchen

Kirsten and I also prepared a public meeting to present the work of the two groups, AIFEN and Büdchen, and to share our intercultural experiences with neighbors and friends. Other events at the Büdchen that I attended included a photo exhibition about the city with a group of German and Turkish teenagers,



Xiaolu attending the harvest festival organized by Büdchen © Ma Xiaolu

and the national Reading Aloud Day, an initiative of the Reading Foundation, Germany. During the regular opening hours of the Büdchen, I got to know the neighbors and neighborhood while the monthly get together gave me a chance to meet the whole Büdchen team.

Outcome and Impact

During my stay, both sides learned a lot about different working contexts and the consequently different working approaches, team structures and dynamics of the two twinning organizations. Kirsten and I shared our experiences with the position of the chairwoman, the responsibilities it entails and the way one has to conduct oneself in this role. We shared our different methods of communications.

Intercultural differences in societal norms, as reflected in the different modes of involvement of volunteers, e.g. at what stage of life do people become volunteers, what is the extent of their engagement, were also a fascinating aspect of the exchange. Exploring the different impacts that waste has in the two different countries and how society perceives it was another aspect of the intercultural learning.

Like Kirsten did in Shanghai, I also gave a feedback and inputs to Büdchen. After this exchange of thoughts and opinions, the topic of zero waste, waste prevention and recycling moved up on the agenda of the Büdchen activities in 2019. This was also thanks to the excursions that had been planned for my visit, which opened up new contacts for the Büdchen.

Future outlook

In the near future, we want to prepare a word press website together to make the learnings from the exchange accessible to a wider audience. We are also

keeping in touch, especially with regard to zero waste projects, which has become a vital part of our exchange work. Due to different internal restructurings at our organizations, no concrete plans have been set for the future. However, we are sure they will definitely follow.

INFOBOX

Büdchen am Nikolausplatz

is a kiosk based in the neighborhood of Sülz in the city of Cologne. On weekends, it organizes cultural and civic activities, such as planting flowers, music concerts, painting and cultural activities for neighbors, kids, families, and the elderly. While it addresses local issues and interests of the neighbors, it is also open for everyone who is interested in visiting the Büdchen, contributing to its activities and taking part in them. The Büdchen connects people and creates a space for exchange, thereby breaking the anonymity of a big city.

Kirsten Reinders

is the first chairwoman and co-founder of the Büdchen. As a trainer of management, she has a background in economics. She finds it highly interesting to observe voluntary work and group constellations that are not based on economic or monetary advantages. Kirsten also works as a leadership developer. Flat hierarchy projects, joint decisions and a constant adaptation to surrounding impulses and needs are very important to her. Her additional education in arts and culture are the basis for her activities in cultural education at Büdchen.

Dinghaiqiao Mutual Aid Society

Dinghaiqiao Mutual Aid Society, located in a historical working-class neighborhood with a new and vibrant migrant population in Shanghai, is a self-organized group and physical place for learning, proposing, inviting, reflecting, organizing and creatively working together. By exploring ways of gathering and producing art/knowledge, it pursues interaction, assistance, and cooperation with neighbors and comrades under the principle of reciprocity. Its programs include talks, guided tours, publications, locally cooked dinners, knowledge residencies, screenings, and inter-city exchanges. Zhao Yiren was the main person of contact for the exchange with Büdchen and AIFEN.

AIFEN Environment Organization

was established in 2012 and focuses on community waste management and waste reduction. It aims to promote waste reduction and forms of recycling in Chinese communities. The organization envisions building a zero-waste society by promoting community practices, training and consultation, community education and public advocacy.

Ma Xiaolu

majored marketing at Shanghai University of Physical Education. She has been working as a project supervisor at AIFEN since 2012. Xiaolu has been in charge of many garbage classification projects in several districts of Shanghai. Her tasks include managing training programs, lecturing about environmental protection and directing AIFEN's public relations.

Südwind Verein für Entwicklungspolitik und globale Gerechtigkeit, Vienna & Labor Education and Service Network, Hong Kong

While Südwind Verein für Entwicklungspolitik und globale Gerechtigkeit (Südwind) is focused on the more general goal of supporting the creation of a world and an economy where everybody is treated justly and equal, Labor Education & Service Network (LESN) picked one specific issue under this big umbrella topic to work on: workers' initiatives, labor rights and capacity building. Therefore, the main topic of the exchange of LESN and Südwind was labor rights in China in the field of the electronics industry.

Matthias Haberl from Südwind visiting LESN in Hong Kong

LESN and Südwind agreed that the aim was to collect more information about labor rights and working conditions in the electronics industry in Mainland China. LESN has very close contacts to the relevant people and organizations so we could easily work on this together. Secondly, we agreed that this was also a cultural exchange. It was important to us to understand how our partners in Mainland China and Hong Kong work, since Südwind works closely with other Asian

organizations, too. Our main objective was to get to know the different cultural contexts, resulting working structures and approaches of the organizations.

Travelling to China and expanding Südwind's network in Hong Kong

One of the main activities during my stay with LESN was a trip to Mainland China where we talked to different people working in the field of the electronics industry. We had the chance to explore many different facets of the Chinese culture. I talked to various stakeholders who work on labor rights. Some of these stakeholders were academics, some were partner organizations of LESN and one was from a trade union. I learned about many different perspectives on this topic.

In Hong Kong, I did a lot of networking since there are many organizations based there working on labor and human rights in China and South East Asia. I joined the daily work done by LESN and could even work with partners of LESN in Mainland China. Finally, I had the chance to participate in a demonstration. I gained a lot of new contacts and insights into how these organizations work on the ground.



Matthias and Kin attending the panel discussion at the Alumni Meeting, Hong Kong © Joanna Klabisch

My colleague Kin and I were also on the panel of a discussion organized by Stiftung Asienhaus at the Alumni Meeting in Hong Kong.

Outcome and Impact

My newly gained information on the working structures of NGOs in Hong Kong and all the new contacts I made will ideally enhance Südwind's future collaborations with civil society organizations abroad. This exchange was very enriching for me on a personal level. To get to know Hong Kong and Mainland China was definitely important for my personal development.

Pak Kin Wan staying with Südwind in Vienna

Activities

I worked a lot in Südwind's bureau in Vienna and joined meetings with their colleagues in Innsbruck, Graz and Linz. In Linz, we attended a public event called "Fair Wear". I was invited to join a discussing section, which was about fair production. Moreover, we attended a regional meeting on fair-trade and had the chance to promote Electronics Watch, an organization monitoring the working conditions in the electronics industries.

Since my expertise lies with labor rights, I was most eager to share this knowledge with our twinning organization in Austria. Organizations and activists in Europe such as Südwind need first-hand information that they can communicate to the public and the consumers. Only then, do they care about the hidden cost behind commercial products and start to strive for change. LESN has local networks in the biggest producing country and can therefore provide these kinds of information for them to use and create impact. LESN hopes a network can be built through the twinning, and that this network can be a platform of international solidarity on the issue of labor rights and environmental protection. We hope to understand how our European partners work, what is important to them and what their needs are.



Attending the regional fair trade meeting with Südwind © Pak Kin Wan

Networking was the most important part of my stay with Südwind. As the issue of labor rights has become a truly international one due to globalization, we decided to visit organizations in the Netherlands, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Switzerland and Spain. Additionally, we gained quite a bit of media coverage and I was interviewed by national television broadcasting stations, several national radios, big newspapers such as the Wiener Zeitung among others. We gained public attention by joining in on discussion forums in many places.

Two of the highlights of my stay were when Matthias and I went to Geneva to join the fourth session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights (OEIGWG), and our participation in the EcoProcura conference on procurement that took place in Nijmegen.

The impact of my stay

The impact is hard to measure, but a wide public was reached also thanks to the media's interest in my visit. The Austrian Alliance of Sustainable Universities now supports the idea of sustainable public procurement of information and communication technologies after a meeting with Matthias and myself. Finally, the topic of labor rights became a center of attention because of my presence at Südwind. It was addressed in many meetings, raising the awareness of participants about China and labor rights.

The future collaboration of LESN and Südwind

Together we developed a picture campaign, which was already shared with Stiftung Asienhaus. A briefing paper for NGOs about the situation of labor rights in China and the amazing Chinese cultures is in progress. We are currently trying to set up regular updates between LESN and Südwind. A follow up project is in planning.



Matthias and Kin at the fourth session of the UN OEIGWG © Pak Kin Wan

INFOBOX

Südwind Verein für Entwicklungspolitik und globale Gerechtigkeit

Südwind is an independent NGO, which collects and distributes information about development topics in order to shape politics and economic structures for a more just global system. Besides their bulletin "Südwind Magazin" they have two main departments, one about education focusing on global education and one about campaigning with partners in Europe and all over the globe. Südwind closely cooperates with international partners to share information in Austria and Europe with various stakeholders, students, teachers, politicians and the wider public.

Matthias Haberl

After his two master degrees in Political Science and Interdisciplinary Balkan Studies, Matthias Haberl started working as an Educational Trainer and Project manager at Südwind in 2006 where he coordinated the EU DEAR Project "Global Action Schools". He is a trainer in the trainer pool of the German UNESCO and for the Theodor-Heuss-Kolleg of the Robert Bosch Foundation. In 2008 Matthias Haberl founded the NGO "Balkans, let's get up", which received the Youth Democracy Award of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education.

Labor Education & Service Network (LESN)

was established in 2001 and is among the earliest Hong Kong labor NGOs setting up programs and labor centers in mainland China. Their focus lies on right-based services and capacity building, as well as on supporting workers' initiatives of self-organization. LESN facilitated the establishment of several labor centers in Pearl River Delta while conducting extensive direct programs to workers in factories and communities. In order to explore and broaden their work in mainland China, they have established a broad network of working partners ranging from local labor organizations, lawyers, academics to the international labor movement.

Wan Pak Kin

has been an activist since his college years. After graduating in 2015, he joined the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions as an organizer, his daily tasks including handling cases of labor disputes and advocate for improvement in labor law. 2017 Pak Kin Wan joined LESN as program coordinator. His main duty is to work with organizers in mainland China to support workers' initiatives of self-organization, including community worker groups and campaigns for social insurances. To fulfil this objective, his tasks include topic researches, program coordination and supervision and capacity building for grassroots NGOs and activists. Networking locally and internationally is also part of his job.

Energy Justice Romania, Bucharest & Shenzhen Zero Waste, Shenzhen

The twinning of Energy Justice Romania and Shenzhen Zero Waste Environmental Public Interest Development Centre (Shenzhen Zero Waste) focused the impact of waste incineration on communities and municipal waste separation promotion and practice. They exchanged information on pollution cases, application for information disclosure, online public education and many other topics so as to help both organizations to promote pollution prevention and zero waste strategies in China and Romania.

Andreea Leonte staying with Shenzhen Zero Waste

The goal of my visit was to learn more about the incinerators in Chinese cities, to meet with local NGOs and environmental activists and to start a dialogue with them. Hearing about Shenzhen Zero Waste's and other stakeholders' experiences was especially interesting to me since they have been working with incineration for a few years now, while there currently aren't any in Romania. This information is crucial for us to raise anti-incineration awareness in Romania with the gained first-hand information about the problems entailed by it.

During this exchange I visited five cities. I paid careful attention to how the waste was being managed at a local level in each of them.

Chengdu

In Chengdu we started by attending the workshop of the EU-China NGO Twinning Program, which was a great icebreaker and opportunity to learn more about the fellow twinning organizations. Although I was familiar to some extent with the work of other European NGOs, my knowledge regarding Chinese NGOs was scarce. Not only did I learn that the number of Chinese NGO's is quite impressive, but their portfolio includes activities from which European NGO could also draw some lessons.



Andreea and Linghui in Romania © He Linghui

During the workshop we spent a lot of time with Chengdu Roots & Shoots who also work with waste management. After investing a lot of time and effort they proved that turning kitchen waste into compost is a realistic alternative for China. Now they hope to convince city authorities of this project, which might be quite a hard job.

Guangzhou

After this, we headed to Guangzhou. We visited a Flea Market where we met volunteers from local NGOs including GO Green, Street Veg, Friends of Animals and Eco Canton. Each had a stand with flyers and presentation brochures, recycled, handmade or 2nd hand products, and Eco Canton even brought some containers for selective waste collection. I learned a lot from them during a little exchange, especially from Eco Canton who are pursuing many of the same goals as we. Finally, we also visited an incinerator in Guangzhou, observed it from the outside and explored its surroundings.

Shenzhen

A trip to Shenzhen was next. I visited the Shenzhen Mangrove Conservation Foundation; they showed me around and talked about their work. We also explored the waste incinerator situation of Shenzhen, although we could not visit one that I found most interesting, the new East Waste-to-Energy facility, which was still under construction.

Wuhu

Another city that I visited was Wuhu, a “small” town with its 4 million inhabitants judging by Chinese standards. The Wuhu Eco Center accompanied us when Linghui and I went to visit one of Wuhu’s two waste incinerators. I was told that one of the biggest problems deriving from using incinerators as a waste management solution is the so called fly ash, which results from the waste-burning process and is considered very hazardous.

Beijing

My last destination was Beijing. In Beijing I attended a forum on plastic use and met up with other members of Shenzhen Zero Waste. Finally, I wrote a series of articles about my experiences and newly gained information for our headquarters in Romania.

Outcome and future plans

I learned about the current situation and trends in waste incineration industry in China and shared this information not only with Energy Justice Romania but also wrote a follow-up article for Foreign Policy to reach a wider audience. Linghui told me about some tests Shenzhen Zero Waste did on dioxin in pine needles and cadmium in crabs. This inspired us at Energy Justice Romania to think about doing testing on our own environment to explore the scope of the pollution and use this information in our fight against incinerators and promotion of zero waste system. We hope to cooperate with Shenzhen Zero Waste on this.

He Linghui staying with Energy Justice Romania

Up until now Energy Justice Romania has been very successful in battling waste incinerators. Currently there are no municipal waste incinerators in Romania, although some projects have been moved to different locations. In China, the number of incinerators are increased rapidly, which is why we are eager to learn the secret to Energy Justice Romania’s success and maybe replicate some of their best practices at Shenzhen Zero Waste.

The question of who to blame

For me, the most surprising thing that I encountered in Romania was the answer to the question of whom to



Enjoying Sichuan hotpot during the Twinning workshop in Chengdu © Andreea Leonte

blame when it comes to the problem of poor situations of waste sorting systems. In China, people would say that the main reason is that the public is not well-cultured. In Romania, people blame the government for not taking actions. This influences the different work approaches of Energy Justice Romania a lot.

During my time in Europe, Energy Justice Romania was busy preparing for a lawsuit against a new incinerator and the office in Cluj was under refurbishing, so I could not visit the team personally. However, I got a chance to interview the coordinator of Energy Justice Romania via WhatsApp and still learned about their experiences and working structure this way.

Visiting recycling organizations in Romania

Recicleta is an organization that collects paper and plastics in enterprises as well as residential blocks. Recicleta drives around with tricycles and collects recyclable paper and plastic. One of the main issues they have to face is that people don’t sort their waste correctly. Apart from that it’s hard for them to grow their business because the government is outsourcing more and more of the waste management to private companies.

The “Oil Man” is another recycler we visited. He collects up to 1,000 liters of the used cooking oil of households a month and sells it to agencies who then process it and resell it as bio-diesel in Western Europe. The Green Group is the largest recycling company in southeastern Europe. For a long time, the Green Group had to import plastic bottles from western Europe since the government has not promoted waste sorting system and there is rarely any waste pickers. By 2013 they were working to their full capacity and

had become so big they had to open a new sister company called Siguresc to set up collecting centers for domestic recyclable waste and keep up with their workload.

Waste management and upcycling

We visited One United Property, which is a waste separation program launched by the local district government and Zero Waste Romania. The district residents separate paper, glass, plastics, metal and residual waste before a waste management company comes here to take away the waste separately – which is not a given in Romania. According to one staff member from Zero Waste Romania, they are planning to include a composter for kitchen waste into their program soon.

The Social Shop is another organization that wants to reduce the amount of waste by offering soon-to-expire-food and out-of-season or second-hand daily goods to those in need. They have two shops in Bucharest that have been visited by roughly 450 of the 700 people in Bucharest who have a so called “Poor Man Card” and therefore qualify to receive the help of this combination of social service and campaign to raise awareness of our throwaway society.

We also attended a workshop of Zero Waste Romania later on. The workshop’s purpose was to raise the awareness of problems of single-use plastic and how we can counter them by upcycling this “garbage” instead of throwing it away. I also held a speech about the problems entailed by plastic. I think this workshop was quite inspirational and thought-provoking for all participants.

Outcome and future plans

I already gave an online lecture about the experience of anti-incineration campaigns in Romania in February 2019, sharing the results of our exchange with other people. In the future we would like to learn more from Energy Justice Romania regarding how they fight against incineration projects and exchange ideas of how to promote zero waste. Also, we plan to do some research on the current situations of waste management in countries related to the One Belt One Road Initiative.

Energy Justice Romania Association

coordinates a network of non-governmental organizations, informal groups and individuals who support communities threatened by polluting and destructive waste management practices such as incineration, Waste to Energy and landfills. They are actively involved in promoting and encouraging alternative long-term solutions. Energy Justice Association presents the holistic image of the energy and waste management sector with a focus on combating “dirty” technologies promoted by industry as “clean” and upholds the principle of environmental justice through their work.

Andreea Leonte

holds a master's degree in Chinese Business and Commercial Law from the Beijing Foreign Studies University. Since her graduation she has been working as a researcher and project manager for the Romanian Institute for the Study of the Asia-Pacific. Since February 2018 she additionally does an internship at Energy Justice Romania and started to work as a project specialist for the Romania Green Building Council in 2019.

Shenzhen Zero Waste Environmental Public Interest Development Center

focuses on chemicals management and rural municipal waste separation promotion and practice. Their daily work includes intervening in pollution cases, applying for information disclosure, online public education, policy advocating, practicing and studying rural municipal waste separation and preventing open burning and small furnaces – especially in rural areas.

He Linghui

After graduating from university in 2012, He Linghui spent some years working for the China office of the Finnish Company Biolan Oy, which produces and sells composters, dry toilets, and water purifiers among other things. She joined Shenzhen Zero Waste right after that and is now in charge of incineration case intervention, incineration information disclosure application and online public education at Shenzhen Zero Waste.

Deutsche Aidshilfe e.V., Berlin & Anhui Hefei Qingwei Health Center, Hefei

The main goal of the exchange between Anhui Hefei Qingwei Health Center (Qingwei) and Deutsche Aidshilfe e.V. was to learn from each other about HIV/AIDS prevention and LGBT* services through promoting communication between China and Germany. We wanted to learn about each other's work, experiences, and approaches, and discuss specific activities and services in the area of HIV/AIDS-prevention.

Werner Bock staying with Anhui Hefei Qingwei Health Centre

Although the Deutsche Aidshilfe has already been working internationally, we had no contacts with China up until now and no knowledge about the situation regarding HIV/AIDS and the situation of LGBT* there. Thus, a very important goal was simply to learn about the Chinese situation.

Challenges faced during my time with Qingwei

The first thing I was dealing with was getting accustomed to the new context. The language barrier and cultural contrast were ever-present hurdles during my time in China while the invisibility of gay life in Hefei and the tiptoeing around certain taboos were the most challenging aspects to me. Gay life is an immensely delicate topic in China with many gay men still being married, having kids, fulfilling their filial duties and being torn between two sides of their life.

The different sizes of our organizations required some rethinking. The Deutsche Aidshilfe is quite big while Qingwei is working with only two employees and very limited resources since there is no state funding available to organizations like them in China. Additionally, in Germany we have 120 HIV-organizations who do prevention work and offer support to a population of 83 million while Qingwei is the primary point of contact for the 70 million people living in Anhui and Hefei. This is even more problematic since the rate of new infections in China is rising rapidly. Educational work and awareness campaigns are direly needed.

Learning about Qingwei's work

In addition to an incredible amount of HIV testing, Pan and his colleague are doing a lot of counselling over the phone and on the internet, dealing with all the paperwork, training new volunteers and many other tasks. During one of the volunteer trainings that I attended, I talked about HIV in Germany and answered questions of the participants. Another activity I participated in was distributing lube and condoms in local meeting points of the gay scene. It is an important task for Qingwei to meet its target group, establish relationships with them and recruit them to pass on information about prevention and protection.

A visit at Anhui Medical University

Together with Pan and a volunteer of Qingwei we went to a meeting at Anhui Medical University, where we met Zhang Hongbo, a professor of public health, one of her assistants and some of her students. We talked about a potential new internet-based project, which promotes HIV-testing and prevention and includes target groups into the process of developing counter-measures. After the meeting, there was more time for further talks about the differences and similarities in HIV-prevention work in China and Germany.



Werner meeting Prof. Zhang, Anhui Medical University © Werner Bock

Meeting Qingwei's partners

While I was in Hefei, I had the opportunity to visit the Hefei Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Yao Hui, the director of the Hefei CDC informed me about the prevalence of HIV and the groups most affected in the city. We had a very friendly and interesting conversation.

In order to get to know more organizations that are working in the field of HIV I travelled to Shanghai, where I met Robert Bu from the Shanghai Youth AIDS Health Promotion Centre. It is a comparably big organization with a staff of 15 people. They offer services for LGBT*, e. g. education, trainings and consulting. My last trip in China brought me to Beijing, where I visited the Beijing LGBT-Center. I was really amazed by the energy and what people do there. The center offers counselling and it holds group meetings for LGBT* every night. What is more, they train psychologists on LGBT*-issues. The belief in conversion therapy is still quite widespread in China. The trainings try to work against this approach and promote an LGBT* affirmative approach instead. They set up China's first comprehensive survey of the country's transgender population.

Outcome and Impact

During my time in China, I learned a lot about the situation of gay men. I got an overview of HIV in China. The meetings with other organizations and stakeholders, experts and long talks with Pan contributed greatly to this experience. I was deeply impressed with Qingwei's work. It is amazing how only two people manage to accomplish so much. And since we now know quite a bit more about the situation in China, about the encouraging and positive aspects as well as the frustrating and discouraging ones, we hope that we can support Qingwei in the future.



Visiting the LGBT Centre in Beijing © Werner Bock

Deutsche Aidshilfe e.V. hosting Gao Pan

My main objective in Germany was to observe the HIV/AIDS prevention work and projects of Deutsche Aidshilfe e. V. and its members, as well as other services for gay people first hand in order to learn from their experience. Getting to know the culture and living conditions of the German LGBT* community was another important goal for Qingwei.

Introduction to Deutsche Aidshilfe e. V. and their work

After showing me around the city and taking me to various places of the gay community in Berlin, Werner took me with him to his office. I met his colleagues and learned about their jobs and their organization. Attending meetings of the organization also gave me a better idea of how it works. I had the chance to introduce Qingwei and answer questions about HIV/AIDS and gay life in China in return. Observing Deutsche Aidshilfe's telephone and live-chat consultation services was another aspect that was very relevant to me since consultation is also a big part of Qingwei's efforts.

In the gay service department of the Deutsche Aidshilfe, I learned about their public work to promote the health of gay men through cultural activities. They make maps of local testing services, make videos or posters, post them to websites or social media, promote the health awareness of gay men, and organize more than 250 activities annually in cities all over the country.

Visiting Mann-O-Meter testing point

Deutsche Aidshilfe e. V. is an umbrella organization that does not engage in personal services and does not provide testing. However, since HIV testing is an important part of Qingwei's work, I visited a testing organization called Mann-O-Meter and talked with its director. Although testing costs 15€ at Mann-O-Meter while HIV testing is free in German hospitals, many gay men are still more willing to come here than to go to a hospital because they feel more respected and understood here.

Learning about PLWHA service

I had a discussion with the head of the HIV-positive Services Department and the staff of the Buddy-Projekt to learn about their People Living With HIV/AIDS



Pan at Mann-O-Meter in Berlin © Gao Pan

(PLWHA) services. I learned that HIV infection can be recognized as a disability in Germany. Although the rights of PLWHA are protected, issues such as employment discrimination remain. In some cases, if people refuse to accept HIV testing, they may lose employment. Buddy-Projekt is a psychological support program for HIV-positive people. It recruits and trains people who have already been diagnosed as HIV-positive for a while to serve as Buddies to people who just discovered that they are infected. This project gave me a great inspiration and could be replicated at Qingwei.

Outcome and Impact

My time in Berlin was very enriching and filled with interesting people and discussions. However, as Werner already elaborated above, the differences in size and organization between Deutsche Aidshilfe e.V. and Qingwei are considerable. Although I have learned so much through this exchange, there were still many aspects like government funding or the working conditions for example that I grew to envy very much. They just cannot be replicated at Qingwei. The inspirations regarding counselling, publicity work or the Buddy-Projekt are still invaluable to me and very much relevant to my work at Qingwei.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

Due to the very different situations, we have difficulties to propose any specific and implementable future projects yet. We are looking forward to staying in contact and to continuing the exchange of experiences and knowledge. We will most definitely stay in touch and strive to design a common project.

Deutsche Aidshilfe e.V.

is an umbrella organization for about 20 regional AIDS organizations in Germany. Their goal is to ensure that society as a whole as well as each individual is able to handle the risks of HIV/AIDS, hepatitis and other sexually transmitted and drug-related infections in an informed, self-determined and responsible way. Offering primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention forms one unit in its work: preventing HIV transmission, promoting the health of people infected so that they do not become ill, and sustaining the quality of life for people who are ill.

Werner Bock

is a social worker who has worked in AIDS organizations for more than 15 years. He is the head of a German wide HIV-telephone hotline where more than 130 counsellors are engaged and also heads an internet-counselling-platform. He additionally has experiences as a counsellor in a „Checkpoint“ for gay and bisexual men, where HIV and STI-testing are offered.

Anhui Hefei Qingwei Health Center

is a community organization based on LGBT individuals. It is the oldest and the only officially registered social welfare organization for the LGBT community in Anhui province. Qingwei devotes to the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and AIDS via carrying out preventive education, promoting HIV testing and training volunteers for gay people. Besides, it has carried out multiple scientific research projects cooperating with other scientific research institutions.

Gao Pan

has been occupied with LGBT* services and AIDS prevention at the Anhui Hefei Qingwei Health Center for over 12 years now. Starting out as a volunteer for education and consultation of male homosexuals, he quickly became project supervisor for the volunteer training program, and has been supervising and managing various projects regarding HIV-testing, prevention and education since then. He has been working as the principal administrator of the organization's work, while simultaneously leading projects and launching LGBT* cultural activities.

Naturland e.V., München & Laotu, Shenzhen

Both Naturland and Laotu work on advancing sustainable agriculture, through supporting farmers and bringing consumers closer to the idea of sustainable agriculture. Therefore, the exchange focused on getting to know each other's work, exchanging best practices and creating a network for further cooperation.

Laotu hosting Marco Schlüter

Touring China, Hong Kong and Taiwan to explore organic agriculture projects

The first days of my trip with Laotu were spent in Hong Kong where we visited a range of rooftop gardening initiatives and discussed the management of organic certification before we moved on to Taiwan where I got my first chance to visit local marketplaces.



Rooftop gardening initiatives in Hong Kong © Luo Yi

Sichuan was our next destination. Here we visited farmers cooperatives in Wolong nature reserve, Community Supported Agriculture farms and tea farms. A presentation and discussion event gave us a chance to reflect on the topic with other non-profit organizations and consumers.

From here on Steffen Reese, another member of Naturland Gräfeling, joined Laotu and myself for a couple of days. Together we attended a discussion event in Shanghai organized by Dinghaiqiao before visiting Alibaba's new food market "Hemma" in Hangzhou. Before leaving for northern China, we made a second stop in Shanghai to visit local shops and market and met the deputy director of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements Asia.

Our stay with the companies „Beyond Organic“ and „Distributer Double Line“ in Beijing was our longest stay at one destination during our trip. Here we gained deeper insights on the food market and organic initiatives. We visited farmers shops, farmers markets and ecological farm initiatives in Beijing's proximity.

More visits to ecological farms, initiatives and additionally also a discussion event with organic practitioners and peer nonprofits awaited us in Guangzhou. After this stop I finally got to visit Shenzhen, the city where Laotu is based. The main event here was a meal at the organic restaurant Amo and another discussion event with consumers and organic practitioners.

A last stop in Hong Kong on my way back to Germany to meet the leader of the rooftop gardening initiative and discuss future cooperation possibilities marked the end of my travels.

Results of my time with Laotu

The exchange was a great opportunity to get to know each other's work. I got to know the reality and the wide variety of organic farming and ecological initiatives all over greater China. Naturland got a better understanding about ecological farming initiatives in China, about the organic market and about the different stakeholders active in rural areas and in organic and ecological farming.

Naturland Gräfeling hosting Luo Yi

Touring Austria, Germany, Hungary and Switzerland to get acquainted with the European sustainability scene

We attended the twinning workshop in Vienna before travelling to Hungary to visit Green Circle together. A few visits of organic farms and businesses in Switzerland rounded up my time outside of Germany.

After this I got into contact with the organization of Naturland for the first time when we visited the Naturland Advisory Services and a few Naturland farms in Bavaria. I also got the chance to meet the Naturland Gräfeling team later on. They introduced me to their



Yi and Marco at Naturland © Luo Yi

activities and to some more organic farms and businesses before we returned to their office to prepare a presentation about the twinning.

We continued to go to Tübingen where I held a lecture at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen and to Stuttgart where we met with the Robert-Bosch-Stiftung. A short trip to Berlin and Hamburg and visiting more organic businesses and farms there was the last one on one time for Naturland and myself before we completed my stay with a few visits of fellow twinners to do some networking around Germany.

Recapitulating my stay with Naturland

The many visits to different farms and businesses enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of organic agriculture in Germany. I visited many different types of initiatives such as the a horticultural farm or a farm that is practicing Community Supported Agriculture, as well as an organic bakery and an organic brewery, which allowed me to capture many different approaches to organic agriculture practiced here.

During my time at Naturland, I also got the chance to do quite a bit of networking and to introduce and promote Laotu's own initiatives and projects. I gained an insight into different working areas of Naturland like the international work, quality management, accreditation, work with control bodies, fair trade, aquaculture and market access. Together we also discussed how German experiences could be applied successfully in China.

Finally, both sides also discussed how to make policy advocacy and social media become more powerful tools for sustainable farming and lifestyles now that everybody could relate better to the challenges facing the other.

Discussing the future of Laotu's and Naturland's collaboration

Continued work is planned; concretely on developing supply chains, market access and technical support for farmers in Wolong and on the Emeishan tea farm. Naturland can support Laotu in developing these areas. However, external funding will be needed to implement the planned activities. To this end, Naturland and Laotu will be working on an application strategy and common applications to be shared with potential funders. Work on this has already started and will continue throughout 2019.

We have also made tentative action plans about a program of empowering farmers who intend to transfer to organic farming in China's panda habitats. These plans are already under the final review of a national environmental non-profit prize. The program on panda habitats will support farmers on supply chain and techniques on sustainable farming. It will start from Wolong and then expand to Emeishan and Pingwu, where are all the key panda habitats lie.

Naturland e.V.

is a farmers' association based in Germany that develops and implements ecological farming methods on a regional, national and global scale together with its partner organizations and farmers. Founded in 1982 in Bavaria, it established a strong basis in the region before it extended its work to also include the rest of Germany, then the EU and even regions beyond the European borders. With a total of 3,448 farms on more than 181,000 hectares, and 434 enterprises in other EU countries, it is one of the major international associations for organic agriculture worldwide.

Marco Schlüter

is Naturland's Project and International Development Manager. He is responsible for the international strategic development of Naturland. Before joining Naturland, he was the Director of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements EU Group for more than twelve years. He studied agriculture and completed a post-graduate degree and further courses in management from the University of Heidelberg and with Malik Management.

Laotu

is a social enterprise that was founded at the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University of Chicago and is now based in Shenzhen. Laotu promotes responsible consumption and a new sustainable development schemes for China and the world. Based on storytelling, it provides a platform for ecologically produced agricultural products to reach urban customers, and helps to connect rural and urban residents via ecotourism and educational programs.

Luo Yi

grew up in China and lived in the US for five years while obtaining a Master of Arts in Social Sciences at the University of Chicago and Bachelor of Arts Dual Major in History and Environmental Analysis from Claremont McKenna College. She worked for the Worldwatch Institute, Sierra Club and Friends of Nature among others and has led various research projects on China's rural sustainable development, American and Chinese national parks and nature preserves. Since 2016, Luo Yi has been initiating the social enterprise Laotu in rural China

Climate Change and Low Carbon Development Reports

Transport and Environment, Brussels & Shanghai International Shipping Institute, Shanghai

This exchange aimed to enhance the mutual understanding of European and Chinese shipping emission control policies and other related marine environmental issues between European and Chinese NGOs. Both Transport & Environment (T&E) and Shanghai International Shipping Institute (SISI) are leading organizations in the shipping domain with good reputations and strong research capacities all over the world.

Transport & Environment hosting Zhang Qiang in Brussels



Qiang and Faig in Brussels © Zhang Qiang

My motivation to engage in this exchange

I was interested in participating in the EU-China NGO Twinning Program to learn more about the existing EU shipping emissions control policies and their future development trends. This exchange was also an opportunity for me to introduce the Chinese government's efforts to control shipping emissions in recent years. My main objective was to build relationships with European organizations in the shipping field and to promote potential collaborations.

Making the best of a short period of time

The most challenging thing I faced during my stay in Brussels was to – given the short time period of the exchange – quickly get accustomed with the work of the twinning organization. What was most surprising to me was the international environment of T&E. I was impressed that most colleagues had a very global vision and point of view. Thanks to the continuous support from my twinner Faig Abbasov, and other members of T&E's shipping team, most notably Bill Hemmings and Lucy Gilliam, I rapidly got over this challenge and was able to adapt and get fully involved in the daily life at the office.

Activities in Europe

Firstly, I participated in the EU-China NGO Twinning Program workshop. From the workshop, I learned a lot about intercultural communication, shipping, its effect on climate change and much more. I had the chance to take a trip to Ghent where we visited several climate/sustainable urbanization initiatives together with other twinningers.

At the T&E office, I participated in meetings with colleagues from the aviation and shipping sector teams. We exchanged our opinions on the air pollutants control systems in the field and the main actions that the EU and China have taken respectively.

Moreover, I attended several external events. My exchange partner Faig invited me to attend a conference about the development trends and bottlenecks of European shortsea shipping industry held in the European Parliament. This conference was very insightful. The head of the aviation and shipping sector of T&E invited me to the 10th European Sea Ports Organization (ESPO) Award Ceremony. It was a very impressive event. During the dinner, I met a lot of European port officials and had nice conversations with them.

Later, I travelled to Rotterdam, Netherlands. During my stay in Rotterdam, I visited its port area and learned more about the history and future development plan of Rotterdam port. I had a meeting with one of the

famous Dutch seaport experts: Prof. Geerlings of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). We exchanged our views on the environmental protection issues in port areas.

I visited the ESPO office in Brussels and had a meeting with Sotiris Raptis, a senior policy advisor for port environment and safety, and EcoPort's coordinator. During the meeting, we discussed many interesting issues in the domain of port environmental protection. Furthermore, I participated in a decarbonizing transport workshop on maritime transport via Webex. The workshop was held by the International Transport Forum (ITF) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Many experts delivered impressive speeches and we discussed the greenhouse gas emissions control in the shipping field.



Qiang with the shipping team of T&E © Zhang Qiang

I made a trip to Germany, where I was invited by the China Centre of the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen (CCT). I gave a presentation on the development of green shipping industry in China for students and citizens.

At the end of my exchange period, my exchange partner and me had a meeting with Rosa Antidormi, a senior policy officer in the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment's Clean Air unit. The unit is in charge of maritime transport sustainability and international developments. We had a lunch together and talked a lot about shipping emission control policies in EU.

Finally, I had a meeting with the shipping research team in T&E where we reviewed the joint work we did during my stay in Brussels. We were all pleased with the outcomes of the EU-China NGO Twinning Program and were looking forward to further collaborations. The shipping research team invited me to a farewell dinner in a typical Belgium restaurant.

Outcomes of my time with T&E

During the exchange period, we conducted a joint study on shipping black carbon emissions control in Arctic waters. Dwindling sea ice is opening up the Arctic Ocean to more shipping activities. Among the air pollutants emitted from Arctic shipping, black carbon (BC) accounts for a relative small proportion of emission amounts, but as a type of carbonaceous material with a unique combination of physical properties. BC has been proven to have significant climate changing effects in addition to its effects on snow and ice albedo, accelerating the melting of Arctic sea ice. Our focus was on technical and operational abatement solutions to ships' BC emissions.

We plan to submit our joint study to an international journal in the maritime transport or marine environment protection domain. By doing so, we believe that our research could attract more people – especially more scholars – to express concerns about environmental issues in the Arctic region.

Future Plans and Sustainability of our Partnership

For the future, both T&E and SISl expressed intentions to further enhance their cooperation. In the near future, we need to further work on our joint study on shipping black carbon emissions control in Arctic waters. In the medium term, we would like to participate again in the EU-China NGO Twinning Program and conduct other joint research on shipping issues. In the long term, an official cooperative relationship is expected to be built between our two organizations. Together we can promote the cooperation in data sharing and industry information sharing.

Transport & Environment (T&E), Belgium

Transport & Environment's vision is a zero-emission mobility system that is affordable and has minimal impacts on our health, climate and environment. It was founded around 30 years ago and its work is focused on areas where European and global policies have the potential to achieve the greatest environmental benefits. These include transport pricing so that polluters, not society, pay for pollution, setting standards for the cleanest possible vehicles and fuels, and greening EU investment in transport. T&E coordinates the International Coalition for Sustainable Aviation and is a member of the Clean Shipping Coalition. T&E is non-profit and politically independent.

Faig Abbasov

holds a PhD in EU energy governance from the University of Sheffield and has more than 5 years working experience in EU policies on the topics of energy and environment with a focus on shipping. He joined T&E in 2016 and took over the leadership of key campaigns in shipping. Before that he had been working in the European Parliament, the natural gas industry and has been cooperating with European as well as global partners in all these occupations.

Shanghai International Shipping Institute (SISI), Shanghai

Founded in 2008, SISI is an independent international non-profit maritime institute, which is affiliated to Shanghai Maritime University and a key think tank in its field. It endeavors to contribute its share to China's maritime industry and Shanghai's rise as a maritime center by establishing extensive ties with international maritime organizations, companies and colleges. It facilitates a network of top experts via its research platform which tracks fresh concepts, technologies and trends on the global maritime scene. SISI provides government agencies and industry players with decision-making information and consultation service.

Zhang Qiang

has been a lecturer at the College of Transport & Communications of the Shanghai Maritime University since 2012. He worked as a visiting scholar at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam from 2016 to 2017, before joining SISI as a researcher upon his return from the Netherlands. His focus in this position lies with studying port governance and ship emission control in China.

Green Circle, Hajdúböszörmény & Roots & Shoots, Chengdu

The exchange between Green Circle and Chengdu Roots & Shoots focused on the topic of waste management in China and Hungary.

Roots & Shoots Chengdu hosting László Kiss and Antal Molnár in Chengdu

Green Circle's objectives

We knew that China's situation is very complex, with highly developed technologies on the one hand and serious environmental issues that threaten that very development on the other hand. This exchange was an opportunity for us to experience for ourselves one of the approaches to mitigating the problem – namely the development of a waste management system in China. Our objective was to share best practices and learn from each other.

Accompanying Chengdu Roots & Shoots in their daily work

Although we prepared before the program, we experienced a great cultural shock. However, our Chinese partner helped us to get over it. We were able to spend a productive four weeks in China. We started our stay in Chengdu with a three-day workshop, which was deeply interesting. The rest of the time, we were participating in the daily activities of the Roots & Shoots office. We participated in the preparation of lectures given in schools and even had the opportunity to give our own lectures to students about our experiences.



School visit with László in Chengdu © László Kiss

Furthermore, we attended a few conferences on waste management, and had the chance to visit and work on a community compost site and with bio farms.

Green Circle hosting Zhao Lu in Hajdúböszörmény, Hungary

Observing Green Circle's working approach

I had the opportunity to take part in many projects with Green Circle. I first participated in the activities they had organized for a job fair, where they were presenting the possible professional careers in the environmental field to students. The creativity of their booth and of the activities they had planned to engage with the students inspired me to re-design the posters and banners of my own organization.

I joined the team building activities organized by Green Circle at their camp base in October. Furthermore, as part of their school program about healthy diets, I gave two classes at Hungarian primary schools to educate the kids on how not to waste their food. Moreover, I participated in an event organized by Green Circle to present to and share with the participants its experience from the exchange with my organization in Chengdu. More than ten local people joined this session. The local TV station also invited us to introduce the EU-China NGO Twinning Program and to share our experiences. Finally yet importantly, we visited the waste management companies of Hajdúböszörmény and Budapest, with the waste management company in Budapest being the biggest and oldest non-profit company in Hungary.

Getting used to a completely new context

Hajdúböszörmény with its 30,000 inhabitants is a much smaller town than the city of Chengdu. However, I enjoyed the peacefulness of this place. During my stay, my Hungarian exchange partner and his wife hosted me. They were really welcoming hosts and made me feel like being at home. The biggest challenge of my exchange was the language barrier. I do not speak Hungarian and I needed László to translate everything for me.



At the Green Circle office © Zhao Lu

Reflecting my stay in Hungary

My stay in Hajdúböszörmény with Green Circle allowed me to learn a lot more about waste management in Europe, especially in Hungary. I also had the opportunity to go to Helsinki for a few days where I visited a recycling center and the LOOP restaurant where they recuperate and cook the food that would otherwise be thrown away by the local markets.

After these inspiring experiences, I decided to write a report about European waste management and the recycling program in Finland. I plan to hold a team meeting in China to share my expertise and experiences gained in Europe. My reports will be posted on the Roots & Shoots website and on WeChat.

I discovered that, as a member of the European Union Hungary needs to follow the European Union's waste management guiding rules: reusing should be the first principle, followed by reducing and recycling. Hungary's waste management system is more complete and efficient than that in China. What strikes me is that even in a small town like Hajdúböszörmény, they are equipped with a waste management system, and a recycling and composting program. There is nonetheless still a lot to do in the city to educate the local people to reduce and recycle their waste.

Establishing the foundation for a productive partnership

Our feeling is that despite the distance and our cultural differences, we were able to achieve great teamwork. We are confident that we will be able to continue working closely together in the future. The shared work we jointly carried out in Chengdu caught the attention of local media and we were invited to more schools and communities in order to exchange and share our work, acting as a great promotion for our organizations.

We built an excellent personal relationship with each other and we are planning to work on a joint follow-up project. We already discussed several ideas, such as translating each other's articles, helping each other with applications for tenders and with lecture preparations, and organizing joint workshops and conferences.

We have also planned a joint follow-up project with Laotu to promote organic farming and eco-tourism. Green Circle, Roots & Shoots and Laotu want to target Chinese students and their parent with this planned project.

Zöld Kör (Green Circle)

is a Hungarian environmental NGO whose goal it is to provide the foundations for a livable and sustainable future through awareness raising, strengthening public participation and partnership building. When the NGO first started in 1991, it mainly worked on environmental education campaigns and conservation activities around their town Hajdúböszörmény. Nowadays, Zöld Kör is well connected beyond the Hungarian borders and part of the international network "Friends of the Earth."

Antal Molnár

has a university degree in social policy and regional development. He is the manager and one of the initiators of Green Circle organization. Antal has been working for Green Circle for twenty years. His duties as a full-time associate include managing and overseeing projects related to rural and regional development, tourism and nature conservation.

László Kiss

is an electrical engineer with a wide range of working experience in environmental management and peacekeeping. He is a longtime professional colleague of Green Circle and worked with the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the DRC, his working areas included power supply, waste management, wastewater treatment, oil recycling and the education of locals on environmental issues. László Kiss has experience with heavy industries and worked at a shipyard, where he dealt with environmental issues, renewable energy, research and development.

Chengdu Roots & Shoots

is a global environmental organization initiated by Dr. Jane Goodall, an internationally famous scientist. Its goal is to encourage and nurture the youth to take action in the care for the environment, animals and communities. Since entering Chengdu in 2003, Roots & Shoots has organized a wide range of activities in Sichuan to encourage more people to care about and to take actions for the improvement of the environment. Chengdu Roots & Shoots cooperates with local schools, enterprises, universities, government departments, as well as individuals.

Zhao Lu

has an educational background in journalism and public administration. She has been working at Chengdu Roots & Shoots since 2012. Lu started out as an administration assistant, became the Deputy Executive Director after four years, and has finally become the Executive Director since 2018. Her responsibilities include organizational tasks like monitoring and planning projects, as well as supervising team management and funding. Her focus has been on Chengdu Roots & Shoots' waste management as well as public education programs.

Institute for Climate Economics, Paris & Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology, Beijing

The aim of the exchange between the Institute for Climate Economics (I4CE) and the Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology (SEE Foundation) was to understand how companies are taking action on climate-related issues both in Europe and in China. The objective was to share knowledge and expertise on the climate regulatory framework for companies in the EU and in China and to learn about climate-related initiatives that go beyond regulations. The exchange built upon I4CE's experience in policy, economic and financial instruments to support the transition towards a low-carbon economy and SEE's wide network among Chinese entrepreneurs and NGOs.

SEE Foundation hosting Charlotte Vailles in Beijing



Charlotte and Sitong in Beijing © Diao Sitong

Gaining deeper knowledge about the Chinese context

I4CE's motivation to engage in a formal partnership with the SEE Foundation was the opportunity for I4CE to share its expertise on climate policies while gaining an understanding of the Chinese context, which is highly complex and rapidly evolving.

For one thing, China officially approved plans for its national emission-trading scheme (ETS) in December 2017, and is adopting policies to support the deployment of renewable sources of energy, notably through a reform of its power system. Secondly, China is moving ahead on the greening of finance, with notably a

quick growth in the domestic green bond market and an introduction of environmental disclosure requirements for companies.

My main expectation about this program was to get an understanding of the key features of China's approach to climate change mitigation, and to make contacts with stakeholders in China working on climate-related issues.

Jointly overcoming language and cultural challenges

One of the main challenges that I encountered when I came to work in China was that very few legislative documents were translated into English. Furthermore, beyond the issue of language, it was very difficult to infer the legal value of different sorts of official documents, e.g. administrative notices, guidelines, etc., and to understand the role and responsibility of different entities in the climate change policymaking. The institutional landscape is very different from the European context. Fortunately, some colleagues from the SEE Foundation helped me in translating some documents and decrypting the policy-making process. One of my main activities in Beijing was therefore to read, analyze and understand relevant official documents together with the SEE Foundation.

I noticed that it was very difficult to get in touch with people without being introduced by someone else, which is maybe not that much the case in France. Therefore, only with the backing of the SEE Foundation did I have the opportunity to meet so many stakeholders working on climate-related issues in China, that is NGOs, research centers, think tanks and consulting companies. These meetings were a great chance to understand the role of different stakeholders, the landscape of climate policies, and the advances in the implementation of some policies such as the ETS better.

Outcome and Impact

This exchange gave my organization and me a better understanding of the context of climate mitigation in China. The program introduced us to the stakeholders working on the topic as well as direct contacts with whom we hope to stay in touch.

The Institute for Climate Economics hosting Diao Sitong in Paris

Strengthening the SEE Foundation's ties to the EU

A formal partnership with I4CE would enable the SEE Foundation to share our experience of the Chinese context and our knowledge of actions taken by Chinese companies in favor of climate mitigation, while gaining an understanding of what companies do in the EU. The US decision to withdraw from the international accord on climate change has caused us to be more interested in seeking further collaboration with European partners. The exchange with I4CE is therefore a great opportunity for the SEE Foundation.

During the exchange program, my main expectation was to identify areas for future partnerships, especially for further collaboration on the issue of the commitment of businesses and NGOs to take on climate change-related issues.

Challenges

During my exchange, the main challenges were the issue of language and cultural differences. Since English was my only language of communication in France, it was not always easy to find discussion partners for talks on environmental and climate issues. Especially when it came to seeking potential partnerships, communicating with relevant stakeholders, additionally reading the moods and understanding the context became very important. My colleagues and European exchange partner were very kind and helpful in introducing me to people, who might be interested in forming a relationship with Chinese NGOs. They helped me to understand the landscape and key players. Apart from the language barrier, the EU regulatory framework is very different from China. This fact makes the adaptation of European experiences into a Chinese context more challenging.

Getting to know I4CE

In Paris, with the help of I4CE colleagues, I was able to gain a better idea of their working areas comparable and relevant to the SEE Foundation's work. We had regular lunch talks where we freely discussed the work and specific projects that were interesting to both parties. In September, they helped me to arrange a presentation session to give a thorough introduction

of the current Chinese environmental NGO landscape and my foundation's projects. Charlotte helped me to arrange meetings with several stakeholders from other French NGOs, who were interested in forming relationships with Chinese NGOs.



Sitong meeting the I4CE team © Diao Sitong

Outcome and Impact

This exchange gave the SEE Foundation and me an opportunity to understand the context and key stakeholders of European environmental conservation and related climate change issues. It was also an opportunity to make contact with other organizations the SEE Foundation would like to collaborate with in the future.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

We will definitely stay in touch with each other, and additionally have ambitions to keep in contact with other organizations we met during our respective trips to China and France. In particular, we will keep on sharing updates on the evolution of the climate regulatory framework in China and in the EU, and on the progress of climate-related initiatives by companies. As 2019 is the Franco-Chinese Year of the Environment, it will be a good opportunity to deepen the exchange. The year represents a good occasion to contact the French embassy in order to discuss further activities we might be able to arrange in 2019.

Institute for Climate Economics, France

is a think-tank that provides public and private decision makers with expertise on economic and financial issues related to the energy and ecological transition. I4CE strives to implement the Paris Agreement and to make global financial flows compatible with a low-carbon development that is resilient to climate change. I4CE works through three action modes: providing expertise through research projects, capacity building and contribution to public debates.

Charlotte Vailles

graduated with a minor in Energy from the Mines ParisTech. During her studies, she got into contact with NGOs and organizations working with those affected most by climate change and with those working towards energy transition. After graduating, she briefly worked for the International Energy Agency before joining I4CE as a Project Manager in 2016. In this position, she has been managing research projects on climate change and energy, analyzed energy policies, political frameworks and the EU emission trade among others. More recently she has started working on a project defining climate change related risks and opportunities for businesses.

Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology, Beijing

The Society of Entrepreneurs and Ecology (SEE Foundation) is the first environmental NGO in China with a membership comprised mainly of entrepreneurs who are dedicated to advance enterprises' social responsibility. Their members strive to promote the green transformation of China's economy in pursuit of a better environment with business wisdom. The SEE Foundation was established with the mission of supporting and nurturing Chinese environmental civil society organizations and acting as a learning platform for entrepreneurs.

Diao Sitong

During her time majoring in economics and finance at the University of Melbourne, Diao Sitong developed a strong interest for the aspect of social and environmental issues in economics. She therefore started to work as a research officer at the Wildlife Conservation Society China after graduation. In 2016, Diao Sitong started to work at the SEE Foundation as Senior Major Gifts Project Manager, overseeing the management of major donors, overseas cooperation and corporate relationships of the foundation.

European Environmental Bureau, Brussels & EnviroFriends, Beijing

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) and the EnviroFriends Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (EnviroFriends) both work on a number of important environmental issues, including climate change, air and water pollution, and waste and resource use. Through this project we aimed to learn about each other's cultures and work practices, meet other organizations we cooperate with and visit projects relevant to our work. Our objective was to find new ways to cooperate across borders and help improve environmental protection in China, the EU and around the world.

Anton Lazarus hosted by EnviroFriends in Beijing

I was mostly looking forward to learning about how environmental groups work in China, what we have in common and what is different. I wanted to learn about how the Chinese government is dealing with pollution and what Europe could learn from how it work and what techniques it applies.

Experiencing the Chinese context first hand

It was quite a culture shock to arrive in China. I realized how big and busy everything was! Finding a place to stay was more difficult than I expected because of the rules for foreign guests in Beijing. I did not really understand Chinese culture when I arrived. However, I soon learned that there is much more we have in common than what is different. Zhang Di was a great guide and helped me to understand a lot more – both culturally and linguistically – than I would have on my own.

Activities during my time in China

I attended activities all over China during my time with EnviroFriends. First, we visited a waste water treatment facility in Hubei Province, where EnviroFriends started a project to improve their environmental performance.



Anton and Di taking water samples near the factory in Hubei © Zhang Di

We also attended the EU-China NGO Twinning Programme Workshop in Chengdu. There, we met all the other participants, had interesting presentations and discussions, and learned quite a bit about each other and our organizations.

In Beijing we met up with BlueTech Clean Air Alliance, the Delegation of the European Union to China and other environmental NGOs working in Beijing.

Immediate outcome of my stay

During my stay in China, we exchanged information about air quality monitoring technology with Clean Air Alliance, and opened a communication channel with the Delegation of the European Union to China. This might become very important for potential cooperation on industrial permitting projects in the future.

EEB hosting Zhang Di in Brussels

Before my stay with EEB

Of course I had to face some challenges and concerns before coming to Brussels. First and foremost, I was very worried about the language barrier. Moreover, I lacked experience abroad. Certainly, everybody would have lots of work to do and I was concerned whether my trip would upset EEB's as well as my own

working schedule. In the end, we all profited from our time together and made valuable experiences.

Activities in Brussels

First, I attended the EEB Clean Air Working Group, a meeting of NGOs from across Europe organized by EEB. All NGOs worked together to improve the air quality. I also participated in the EEB Law Working Group, where European NGOs exchange on fighting legal cases and on using the law to protect nature. Last but not least, I attended the EEB Annual Conference 2018 with more than 200 environmental NGO representatives from across Europe coming together to discuss different environmental issues.

Outcome of my time in Belgium

Networking was the most important part of my time with EEB. We made contact with a German tree-planting NGO and agreed to cooperate. We also began discussion with EEB waste experts about starting a cooperation with the city of Shishou. Both projects are elaborated below.

Future collaboration of EEB and EnviroFriends

During the time of our exchange we developed an idea for a potential future project of EEB and EnviroFriends. In collaboration with the municipality of Shishou (Hubei Province), we want to start a joint waste project. EEB has some leading European experts in



Networking with environmental experts at the EEB annual conference © Zhang Di

waste reduction and recycling. The organization has been looking forward to launching an international co-operation in order to share best practices and build up capacity outside of Europe. Our idea would create great opportunity.

In 2019 we want to launch a joint project with a tree planting NGO in Germany. We would like to educate 500 students as PLANT FOR THE PLANET JUSTICE AMBASSDORS. Five of them will then go to the COP25 in Chile.

Apart from these specific plans, we will stay in close contact and look out for other opportunities to work together on projects in the future.

European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Belgium

is a network of around 150 European NGOs, which tackles Europe's most pressing environmental problems by agenda setting, monitoring, advising on and influencing the way the EU deals with these issues. The EEB is also active on overarching issues such as sustainable development, good governance, participatory democracy and the rule of law in Europe and beyond. While the focus of its work is on the EU and its decision-making processes, the EEB also works on wider regional and global processes at the level of the UN and the OECD.

Anton Lazarus

joined EEB as a Communications Officer responsible for Industrial Production in 2016. His responsibilities include but are not limited to maintaining network and media relations for the Industrial Production Team. Before his time with EEB, he worked at the Union of European Federalists and as a Freelance Communications Consultant. Anton Lazarus holds a master's degree in Interactive Media, Critical Theory and Practice of the Goldsmiths College, University of London.

EnviroFriends Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, Beijing

EnviroFriends was established in 2005. It mainly provides accommodation, information, internships, counseling, and training to newly established NGOs, NGOs from remote or poor areas. EnviroFriends is one of the initiators of the East Asian Climate Network, a platform for exchange between Chinese, Japanese and South Korean environmental NGOs. EnviroFriends has arranged countless trainings and environmental science lessons and hundreds of international as well as domestic environmental protection conferences and forums.

Zhang Di

holds a master's degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo, Canada. From 2011 to 2012 he worked for the Household Solar Promotion at the „Go-Green“ company for the government of Ontario. He joined EnviroFriends in 2012 and has submitted policy recommendations to the Chinese government, worked with schools and local communities on sustainability projects and conducted research on national climate change all over China. He is a core member of the „Green Choice Alliance“ and responsible for supervising the ecological and social sustainability of the supply chains of international brands. At EnviroFriends, he is also responsible for international exchanges, public education programs.

Go Green, Skopje & Sichuan Green Foundation, Chengdu

Go Green and Sichuan Green Foundation (SGF) collaborated on climate change. The two organizations focused on two main topics: national carbon markets and environmental education.

Sichuan Green Foundation hosting Marija Kekenovska



Marija and Xuejiao at a Go Green team meeting © Sun Xuejiao

I was looking forward to encounter and understand how a country as big as China copes with environmental issues, what measures it takes when approaching and handling them, as well as to find a way for a potential future collaboration between my organization and the one of my twinning partner.

Challenges

As it was my first time to travel alone and the furthest I have ever been from home, I felt both challenged and excited. It was a step that I eventually had to make and I am very glad that it was in the course of this program.

When talking about challenges, as the youngest twinner that has ever participated in the EU-China NGO Twinning Program, I felt a lot of insecurity at the beginning of the exchange. As time passed by, I realized that there was nothing to be scared of. Quite the contrary: I had the honor to meet, collaborate with and learn from experts, professors and activists that I met during my stay in China.

Activities

One of the first activities I participated in was to go to a mushroom exhibition organized by the social enterprise Mu Yun Po together with my twinning partner Xuejiao. We had the chance to learn more about the social enterprise's education program of recruiting and educating local people on how to properly grow mushrooms, how to prepare them and on how to later market them successfully.

In the beginning of my stay with SGF in Chengdu, I gave a presentation in front of my SGF colleagues in order to introduce Go Green and myself. Another activity during my time at SGF was to prepare the Chengdu capacity workshop that SGF co-organized.

A very important part of my stay were my visits to various points of interest with SGF and the Nature Conservancy (TNC). Together we went to the Longxi-Hongkou National Nature Reserve. We had the opportunity to visit and observe the building of a brand-new visitor center and attended a conference for the announcement of a new wildlife patrol activity. Later we headed to Wolong National Nature Reserve where I had the chance to be a panda volunteer for a day. The last activity before my departure was the visit to the Yunqiao Wetland, where we learned about its flora and fauna as well as its role as drinking water provider for Chengdu.

Attending the COP24 after my stay with SGF

One of the most important outcomes of the exchange was that in coordination with CANGO I had the honor to attend the COP24 in December that same year. I took part in the side event on Global Climate Governance and NGO's contribution. I had the chance to give a speech about "Best Practice Sharing on Policy Advocacy of NGOs in Macedonia". I shared Go Green's advocacy and campaigning best practices and also emphasized that we, as a youth environmental organization, believe that young people have to be involved in the decision-making processes.



Marija at China Pavilion, COP24 © Marija Kekenovska

Furthermore, while I was staying in Chengdu, I had several conversations on a potential collaboration between Go Green and Green Circle from Hungary. We developed an idea to do a short exchange project. A few members from Green Circle could come to Skopje and would have the chance to get to learn more about Go Green and our activities through a set of workshops, presentations and outdoor activities. In return, Go Green members would go to Debrecen, Hungary, and learn about Green Circle's mission, vision, goals and activities.

Go Green hosting Sun Xuejiao in Skopje, Macedonia

The twinning program was my first chance to stay and work with European NGOs for such a long time. One of the main objectives was to take a glance at how other NGOs are functioning and how similar or different they are from Chinese organizations. Since Go Green's and SGF's size and age are pretty similar, I was positive that we could profit from each other's experiences and that we could learn from Go Green's youth volunteer system.

Getting accustomed to the place and way of thinking. It was my first time to travel to another continent by myself. I felt anxious at the beginning. My twinning part-

ner's home country, the Republic of Macedonia, was not the most stable of regions in my eyes. But after two weeks staying there and working with colleagues from Go Green, I learned that it is important to choose not to live in fear. No matter what the outside environment looks like, the important choice falls to each individual and one can always make a difference.

I also felt that most European NGOs were more casual than Chinese organizations. The working atmosphere was more relaxed and pressure-free for employees, which actually made self-discipline and responsibility a much bigger necessity to get things done properly.

Activities

In Brussels, we attended the October's general assembly of CAN Europe together. We participated in the youth organizations' talk and sharing of experiences in raising youth awareness about climate change. We then attended the twinning program workshop in the course of which we visited climate and sustainable urbanization initiatives in Ghent.

During my first weekend in Macedonia, we went to the Ohrid-Prespa Transboundary Reserve for a field trip on water conservancy and protection of unique species in lakes. Marija also gave me some information on previous campaigns to stop development projects

near the lake region without proper environmental impact assessment.

During my stay with Go Green in Skopje, I introduced SGF's mission, vision and ongoing projects to Go Green colleagues. We shared insights and brainstormed a bit. The idea of inviting the European Environmental Bureau team, which had organized a big project of citizen science before, in order to try and apply this method to solve air pollution issues in Skopje was brought up. We also talked about the preparation of the European Week for Waste Reduction and had much information exchange on how Go Green's high school volunteer system functions.



Working with Go Green volunteers in Skopje © Sun Xuejiao

One time Marija and I went to Matka Canyon where Go Green organized a clean-up activity with high schoolers. I very much enjoyed this activity and I think that it would be great if such environmental education trips could be replicated in Sichuan where we have very similar mountainous areas.

Additionally to the clean-up activity, we also got together with ten of the participating volunteers and had a workshop on “play and learn”, adapting a theater method that we had learned from Forumtheater Enschede and Storyteller Chengdu in Brussels to explore “your motivation and expectation as a volunteer”. The workshop was quite lively, interesting and successful.

Methodologies from the Twinning Program applied to SGF's work

Replicating experiences from the CAN-E Assembly, the SGF team found a way of arranging an assembly and collect decision-maker's opinions after the twinning program had ended. The methodology of the “Theory of Change” that we heard about during the Brussels workshop is also being implemented in SGF's project planning and discussing. The information on media communication shared by Anton Lazarus gave me some hints on improvements of SGF's rulebook of publicity and communication.

Expanding SGF's network in Chengdu

Among the twinning organizations of this year, there were three organizations based in Chengdu. SGF had the opportunity to build new networks in Chengdu through this program. Together with Chengdu Roots & Shoots and Storyteller we want to set up follow-up sharing events with other NGOs based in Chengdu. We could also apply for grants from the local government and community together, which would combine the different backgrounds and knowledge of our organizations, leading to better implementation of projects.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

After the end of the program, we decided that the first step to continue our collaboration would be for Go Green's and SGF's head office members to have a Skype meeting to get to know each other and discuss potential fields of collaboration.

As SGF and Go Green's exchange on improving volunteer systems went well, our next step would be to first build a youth activism structure for SGF using Go Green's experience for reference. For example, we can collaborate on translating Go Green's Youth Guidebooks into English. Joint application for grants and further expertise exchange are other promising future activities.

Go Green

Go Green's vision is to establish a world of peace, where people and nature live together in harmony. The NGO was founded in 2010 in the capital of Macedonia, Skopje. Since then the organization has provided educational (youth) programs but also actively engaged in finding practical solutions to solve environmental protection issues.

Marija Kekenovska

has been a member of Go Green since 2014. She started as an active member attending weekly meetings, workshops and activities. Since then, she has been an organizer and part of the logistics teams for almost all events, as well as a promoter for them. Marija has been the initiator and organizer of many of Go Green's school activities. Currently, Marija is a student at the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering in Skopje. She continues to take part in projects and campaigns related to waste, air pollution, energy and sustainability. She has recently become a full time member of the executive office at Go Green and now works as a project manager in the areas of climate change and sustainable development.

Sichuan Green Foundation

Sichuan Green Foundation was founded with the intention to make non-government resources converge for ecological public welfare. It focuses on increasing greening area and improving forest quality to face climate change and to improve ecosystem service functions by scientifically planned programs and innovative mechanisms. It supports green infrastructure and advocates human-environment interactions.

Sun Xuejiao

After finishing her bachelor's degree in E-commerce, Sun Xuejiao started to work as an Assistant Engineer at the Sichuan Academy of Forestry where she worked on projects about horticulture, sustainable forestry and orchards, often in collaboration with international experts. In 2017 she joined SGF as Fundraising and Communication Manager. She is responsible for the communication with donors, SGF's publicity work and the design of projects, campaigns and seminars.

About the Organizers

Climate Action Network Europe

Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe is Europe's largest coalition working on climate and energy issues. With over 130 member organizations in more than 30 European countries - representing over 44 million citizens - CAN Europe works to prevent dangerous climate change and promote sustainable climate and energy policy in Europe.



The China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO)

China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO) is a non-profit membership organization operating nationwide. By the end of 2018, CANGO had 155 members. Since its foundation 26 years ago, CANGO has developed project cooperation with 186 foreign NGOs and bilateral and multilateral organizations. By the end of 2015, CANGO had raised a total of 975 million RMB from 103 donor agencies from 21 countries or regions for project implementation. The total match funds amounted to 537 million RMB that were used on realizing projects all over China on the topics of poverty alleviation, women's development, environmental protection and health care among others.



Stiftung Asienhaus

Stiftung Asienhaus is committed to the implementation of human rights, the strengthening of social and political participation, as well as the protection of social justice and the environment. The organization was founded in 1992 under the name „Asienstiftung“. Its founder, Prof. Dr. Günter Freudenberg, and several other associations working on Asia joined in 1995 in Essen and founded the Asia House. In October 2012, the Asia House moved its headquarters to Cologne. The China Program of Stiftung Asienhaus sees itself as a platform of Chinese-European exchange and wants to contribute to a peaceful and sustainable development in both regions. Its aim is to provide informed knowledge on social, environmental and political developments.





Notes



The Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH is one of Europe's largest foundations associated with a private company. In its charitable work, it addresses social issues at an early stage and develops exemplary solutions. For this purpose, it plans and implements its own projects. Additionally, it supports third-party initiatives that have similar goals. The Robert Bosch Stiftung is active in the areas of health, science, society, education, and international relations. Since it was established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has invested around 1.8 billion euros in charitable work.

Since 2006, the foundation is focusing its funding in China on the fields of media, governance, civil society, education, and culture. With our "Media Round Table China – Germany – USA" we are bringing together high-ranking media representatives from three countries to discuss global challenges and enhance cross-border cooperation. With its exchange programs for judges and lawyers, the foundation wants to aid China in its judicial reform process, to promote legal certainty and to foster the German-Chinese (legal) dialogue. With its Lectureship Program in Asia, the foundation sends German university graduates to Chinese universities for one to two years to not only teach German but to run educational projects that link academia and society. With "Grenzgänger Asien" the foundation is also offering literary research fellowships for German-and Chinese-speaking authors and filmmakers. Since January 1 2012, the only official Chinese social media account of a German foundation is online at www.weibo.com/robertboschstiftung with almost 11.000 followers.



Stiftung Mercator is a private and independent foundation. Through its work, it strives for a society characterized by openness to the world, solidarity and equal opportunities. In this context, it concentrates on strengthening Europe; increasing the educational success of disadvantaged children and young people, especially those of migrant origin; driving forward climate change mitigation and promoting science and the humanities. Stiftung Mercator symbolizes the connection between academic expertise and practical project experience. Stiftung Mercator feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Ruhr region, the home of the founding family and the foundation's headquarters.

At Stiftung Mercator, China plays a key role. It is a country of significant global standing with which Germany can and must cooperate for the benefit of both countries and with a view to resolving global issues. Nonetheless, misperceptions and prejudices often play a major role, and Stiftung Mercator believes that deeper mutual understanding is the key to successful cooperation.

One central element of the China activities is "Mercator Exchange", which serves as the umbrella organization for all exchange programs. The idea behind this is that international relations can only be forged through personal encounters. The aim is to give young people in particular the opportunity to acquire international experience and thereby to enhance their intercultural skills.

Our guiding philosophy in this context is for people to understand one another, learn from one another and jointly overcome international challenges.

<https://www.stiftung-mercator.de>