

Names of Partner Organizations

Report on 2016 EU-China NGO Twinning Program

Susanne Fischer, Monika Wirges, Wuppertal Institute, Wuppertal, Germany

Formatiert: Deutsch (Deutschland)

Lingling Zhang, Chunyan Zhao, BlueSky4Children, Shanghai, China

The objective of the Twinning was to discuss the possibility of building a sustainable clothing network and improve the sustainability of clothing across its life cycle, focusing on recycling and different options of reuse in order to find further approaches on how to reduce the carbon, water and material footprints of clothes. Both partners benefited from the cooperation, as an insight to the different approaches towards sustainability in the other country was given. In addition, the connection between Wuppertal Institute research methods and BlueSky4Children's concrete actions in the clothing sector formed a synergy with regard to the question how awareness for the recycling and reuse of clothing can be raised and why the overall environmental impact of clothing should be reduced.

Susanne Fischer, Monika Wirges Wuppertal Institute / Wuppertal (Germany)

Formatiert: Deutsch (Deutschland)

July 9th to September 3rd 2016 in Shanghai

Introduction (Objectives, expectations)

The aim for us was to learn more on textile recycling in China, find out how sustainability is perceived in China and what approaches are already put in action. This exchange also was a good opportunity to learn more about China and processes of coordination planning, such as sustainability grass root initiatives in general.

Challenges (Cultural contrasts)

As we had not come in contact with BlueSky4Children before, we were surprised at the large amount and also variety of activities they were doing although only having a very small number of staff. We also had to face the fact that BlueSky4Children still has been in a pioneering phase with changing emphasis on their business activities. More precisely, while the Twinning project proposal still had focused on the discussion of building a sustainable clothing network, we needed to face the circumstance that they moved away from recycling to the waste management options of reuse and prevention of textile waste generation (e. g. by consuming less in general). Therefore, a challenge and a first task at the beginning of the exchange was to get an overview of what activities BlueSky4Children were doing, as we cannot read chinese following e.g. information on the BlueSky4Children Wechat account was not possible. Working conditions in a shared space were also quite different from those in Germany and took some time to get used to. Communication in English worked well with some staff members, with others and outside the office however sometimes quite heavy

problems due to the language barrier arose.

Activities

In Shanghai, we took part in the daily activities of BlueSky4Children and were introduced into their different business activities, which, we jointly had classified as (a) Collecting used clothes for textile donation, (b) collecting used clothes for mechanical recycling, (c) engaging in communities for textile remake and up-cycling, (d) engaging in online education for a minimalized lifestyle. For example, we took part in different workshops organized by BlueSky4Children to arise school children's awareness for the up-cycling of textiles (regarding activity (c)). Also, we have been included into the washing and packaging of the clothes that were donated to Chinese society later (activity (a))

During our stay in China, we developed a comprehensive report on those four activity streams of Bluesky4Children. The underlying idea was to produce a catchy and understandable overview of BlueSky4Children's core identity and mission in order get potential future investors interested. Therefore, we used the methodology of a "business model canvas" that consists of nine different pillars, that all in all describe what the particular business is about. Furthermore material and carbon footprint calculations considering the clothes recycling process of BlueSky4Children were conducted, as well as the comparison of the resource use of a new bag and a bag made from used textiles. In addition, we organized networking meetings with Shanghai-based sustainability stakeholders, amongst them the Hamburg Liaison Office Shanghai Co. Ltd, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, and the Magazine "Business Ecology" took place. In the box below, we have listed our activities in Shanghai in detail.

First week: Susanne from Wuppertal Institute in Shanghai

- First exchange on daily activities of both twinning exchange partners (BlueSky4Children, Wuppertal Institute). Based on that, rough discussion of work plan for the exchange.
- Visit of new office in another part of Shanghai (Sandbox / Co-Working space)
- Visit of the BlueSky4Children warehouse
- Transportation of textiles to the washing area. Washing, drying, putting together, sorting, labeling with size numbers, packing of the clothes
- Discussion of the possibility to share insights into WI/EU-related funding with other interested NGOs. Lingling suggested to organize and to have a little workshop and a meeting / get-together of interested NGOs and partners (finally, we did not realized this due to time constraints)
- Literature research regarding textile recycling

Second week

- Continued literature research regarding textile recycling
- Extended discussion about correct understanding of BlueSky4Children activities
- Agreement on task for the next days and weeks that is using the theoretical framework model of a business

model canvas and apply it to BlueSky4Children. Aim is to develop a convincing and easy to grasp framework of activities in order to (a) convince investors and (b) assess future fields of possible activities

- Visit of the optical department at Shanghai University: Presentation and discussion of results of optical analysis of roughly 100 different textile samples.
- Visit of organic food market, one of the first places in Shanghai that offers urban gardening to the people. It includes education courses, weekend celebrations, people can rent 1 sqm and plant vegetables on those fields (when they are on holidays, the farm takes care of it) and other activities are planned. Project is sponsored by the “Knowledge Innovation Community” (area belongs to them)
- Networking meeting with Mr. Lars Anke (Executive Director at Hamburg Liaison Office Shanghai Co. Ltd.): Discussion of any possibilities for BS4C to get more visible—an announcement in the Hamburg / Shanghai newsletter. Planning to have a meeting with Evangelische Kirche at the end of October in Shanghai.

Third week

- Visit of community workshop: Remaking / up-cycling clothes with children and their parents.
- Beginning of study writing. Introduction of the emergence of BlueSky4Children. Then description of its activities. And then, building on that introduction of several methods from business and sustainability research that help to describe the business model and its mechanisms etc. – in order to make it attractive for investors. Methods used contain business model canvas and functions of innovation system functions.
- Filling out the business model canvas pillars with concrete points
- Networking meeting with Mr. David Merkle (Project Assistant, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Shanghai) and Maximilian Rech (Programme Director & Assistant Professor in International Affairs, ESSCA School of Management Shanghai): Discussion of potential synergies of on-going textile initiatives in Shanghai

Fourth week

- Discussing business model canvas and next steps, mainly related to Monika's work
- Shooting pictures from new (up-cycled) totem bags
- Networking meeting with Mrs. Sun Yang (Editorial Director, Magazine “Business Ecology”): Discussion of potential synergies of on-going textile initiatives in Shanghai

Fifth week: Monika from Wuppertal Institute in Shanghai

- Exchange between Susanne and Monika on work regarding business canvas and further inputs needed
- Participation in remaking/up-cycling workshop with children and their parents in a small community in Shanghai making a carpet from old jeans
- Discussion of Bluesky4childrens activities, introduction to the concept of the Material Footprint and possible examples for which the resource use could be calculated exemplary between LingLing and Monika
- Participation in Remaking and Upcycling Workshop, making teddy bears of old clothes in a community on the outskirts of Shanghai. In the small community young people from the city are encouraged to move back to the country and are taught agricultural skills.

Sixth week

- Reading, continuing working on business model canvas report as well as evaluation of data already given
- Workshop in Changsha

Seventh week

- Adding business canvas figures to report.
- Collecting data for calculations, researching existing data sets for the calculation of the resource use of a bag made from old jeans as well as the activities of BS4C
- Sharing-Workshop with Lingling and Laura from “Netzwerk bewuist verbruken”
- Detailed analysis of logistic processes of clothes collecting, by visiting the warehouse, participating in clothes washing, sorting and packaging
- Estimation of the resource use of a modular bag made from old jeans

Eighth week

- Finishing work on the estimations of resource use for a bag made from reused denim and new denim
- Estimation of the resource use for one kg of donated clothes as done by BS4C
- Visiting of Knowledge & innovation community garden in Shanghai for the discussion of possible future sharing and flea market events
- Exchange and discussion on case studies and calculations between Lingling and Monika
- Networking Meeting with Magali Menant from Constellations International in Shanghai, discussing possible synergies between Constellations and the Wuppertal Institute

Outcome and Impact

The “business model canvas” has been applied to BlueSky4Children business operations. Furthermore calculations of the resource use of the clothes recycling activities of Bluesky4Children and a comparison of a new bag with a bag made of used textiles was conducted, which can be used for further awareness building by Bluesky4Children. Both, business model canvas and footprint calculations are the basis of a report written by Wuppertal Institute based Twinners. The underlying idea was to give BlueSky4Children assistance to attract interest of potential investors and other interested stakeholders. Networking meetings arranged by Wuppertal Institute have led to visibility of BlueSky4Children in the newsletter of Hamburg Liaison Office Shanghai and to a collaboration on innovative textile recycling technologies with the Magazine “Business Ecology”.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

The exchange has brought us insights to the sustainability community in China and the work that is done there at the moment. No concrete follow up project with BlueSky4Children has been planned yet in detail, but we will keep in touch and envisage to enrich the started report on BlueSky4Children activities with more specific data regarding textile production, consumption and waste generation in China and embed it into a wider context of sustainability initiatives in China. Except for BlueSky4Children, further networking meetings took place in Wuppertal e.g. with Jeanne Cao from ISEE, where we hope further

cooperations will arise.

Please add your 3 favourite pictures/media coverage of your work





Lingling Zhang and Chunyan Zhao, BlueSky4Children, Shanghai, China

2016.10.26-2016.11.22 Lingling Zhang & Chunyan Zhao

Lingling Zhang and Chunyan Zhao from BlueSky4Children visited Wuppertal Institute (WI) for about one month from 2016. 10. 26 to 2016.11.22. The one-month schedule is quite compact as we visited quite a few inspiring places and also joined one project of WI's. The exchange month gave us a good overview of the working method and environment of different NGOs, textile recycling company and the government/academic involvement.

Challenges (Cultural contrasts)

Lingling has 10 years of working experience in the UK therefore for her there was little surprise in terms of working in Europe. With regard to challenges, we found the level of environmental awareness is quite different between EU and China, we needed to adjust to this different base point to think about and compare our working methodology. In short, the environmental NGO work (for the sites we visited) are at a more advanced level in terms of organization and planning. All these experiences were very refreshing and inspiring, although we needed to make notes in our mind that if we would like to adopt their business models in China, we would need to make adjustments in order to make it work.

Activities

[Lingling Zhang and Chunyan Zhao: twinning period 26 Oct 2016-22 Nov 2016](#)

First week: Lingling and Chunyan from BlueSky4Children in Europe

- Arrival in Wuppertal;
- Visit Wuppertal institute, coffee briefing and tour of the office, Susanne and Monika helped arrange working place, keys etc;
- Visit Susanne's photography exhibition, located in an up-cycling cafe, with furniture's all made from recycled material. The products were made in Congo by the locals and exported to Germany. The up-cycling café also organizes up-cycling workshops from time to time.

Second week

- Berlin presentation workshop and meeting

third week

- Met Henning (Susanne's boss), discussing the topic of circular economy in Germany with Henning, Susanne, Jeanne and Chun.
- Discussion of a the proposed structure of a comparison between Chinese and German textile recycling industry. The comparison is designed to have an overview and comparison of different size (quantity), legal and policy aspect, recycling behavior, recycling channels etc between the two countries.
- Using the Wuppertal Institute's calculation of the ecological backpack carbon emissions, Chunyan designed advertisements for BlueSky4Children up-cycling exhibition project in the new year of 2017.
- Discussion of visit plan with Monika, Susanne and Chunyan during the stay.
- A briefing on the Irish recycling project that Susanne is working on currently. Lingling joined working on this project and performed data extraction (eg. ROI) for this project when working in Wuppertal.
- Chunyan started to research and fill in data on the Chinese textile recycling industry.
- Lingling visited Re:Newcell board member Henrik Norlin and had an comprehensive interview about the cotton recycling business. Re:newcell is developing.
- Lingling and Chunyan drew an agreement with Business Ecology (an ecological magazine which Susanne and Lingling visited together during the Shanghai twinning program) that an article will be written by Lingling and Chunyan on this interview.

Kommentar [1]: Is developing what?

fourth week

- Lingling worked from Wuppertal Institute on the Irish recycling project, Chunyan worked on finding data on the Chinese textile recycling industry the comparative brochure and the new year advertisement on up-cycling project mentioned above using rucksack data of the ecological backpack.
- Susanne and Lingling interviewed James Hogan (National Waste Prevention Program, Ireland). Had an overview of the Green Business Initiative & hospitality project in Ireland.
- Chunyan and Lingling visited the Red Cross Kleiderkammer in Wuppertal with Monika. The place collects used clothes from the residents and distribute it to the needy as well as a hospital nearby. We exchanged experience in terms of clothes classification, processing and donation.
- Monika, Susanne, Chunyan and Lingling visited Utopian City Wuppertal together, which is a grass-root not-profitable co-working space. The place integrates co-working space, food sharing station, urban

gardening, toy sharing, repairing cafe etc, and has become a landmark visiting place of Wuppertal.

- Chunyan and Lingling met Monika's colleague and shared experience about what BlueSky4Children do and gain more insight into the business of Wuppertal Institute.
- Chunyan and Lingling work on NWPP project, catch up and handover work.

Outcome and Impact

We have several major outcome from this exchange program:

- Organised an international campaign for simple life workshop in Shanghai with Laura, Monika, Chunyan and Lingling as hostess;
- A BlueSky4Children business model proposed by Wuppertal Institute in order to optimize the operation of BlueSky4Children in future;
- An overview of the Chinese textile recycling industry;
- Participating in a research study of one of the Wuppertal Insitute circular economy projects;
- Learning from the EU experience in sustainable consumption and textile recycling and put into practice locally;
- An interview of Swedish textile recycling company and their innovative technologies in this industry, which will be turned into an article published in a Shanghai based magazine called Business Ecology.
- A resource impact card made from the calculation/research result by Wuppertal Institute, which will be used for promoting upcycling products in China.
- This exchange also helped us raise a few points to the EU-China sustainable trading high profile meeting held in Beijing between 28 Nov 2016 and 29 Nov 2016.

Future Plans and Sustainability of the Partnership

From the benefit BlueSky4Children obtained from the help of Wuppertal Insitute especially for the environmental data (the ecological backpack) that is very useful to promoting our up-cycling products, we sincerely wish to keep close touch with Wuppertal Institute and we will keep close eyes on their publications 😊

It has also been agreed with Susanne and Monika to try to do a comparison between the German and Chinese textile recycling industry in order to give some insight into the current situation.

Please add your 3 favorite pictures/media coverage of your work

Our favorite visits including one to the Red Cross Wuppertal and one to the Utopian city in Wuppertal. The Red Cross team and we had a close and warm chat about both of our work over coffee time. The Utopian city is very impressivd with regard to how they work and the effort they made over years to bring it to the current status.



Pic 1: an exchange of experience over a coffee table with used clothes surrounded.



Pic 2: Utopian city

We also had a very insightful interview with re:newcell in Stockholm, an innovative clothes recycling technology company. The interview article is being written at the moment and will be sent to Business Ecology (an environmental magazine), BlueSky4Children Wechat public account and some other newspapers.



Pic 3: Henrik from the re:newcell board.

For more information, please refer to the manual's Guidelines for documentation and evaluation

In case of further questions please contact Stiftung Asienhaus-China Program and request access to in-depth twinning reports.