

Yunnan Environment Development Institute & GRÜNE LIGA e.V.

Report on EU-China NGO Twinning program

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GRÜNE LIGA e.V and the Yunnan Environment Development Institute's partnership is a newly established one. Their exchange aims at a better understanding of each other's working environment, but also at fostering a better understanding and application of safe water utilization and application of holistic technologies and methods in China and Europe.

Liu Yun, Yunnan Environment Development Institute

Between the 20th September and 20th October 2013, I was working with GRÜNE LIGA e.V., water policy office in Berlin as part of the EU-China NGO-Twinning-Program.

I came with the **objective** to learn how the European NGOs cooperate with the private sector, government departments and the on the water issues. Moreover I wanted to get to know European NGO project development approaches and understand European civil society development status.

Achievements of exchange and collaboration

During my time in Germany I had the opportunity to attend to several interesting specialists' meetings and networking events.

The German Forum on Environment and Development hosted a "water group" session. There I met people from GTO (German toilet organization) and obtained a basic understanding how German NGO networks function. Furthermore I was able to establish a direct link with Misereor.

At the GRÜNE LIGA-Workshop on the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive in Germany I met different stakeholders of river protection from NGO's, administration and research in Magdeburg. Through this experience I was introduced how the NGO work with different stakeholders for complimentary issues.

Another great experience was the studying tour to Bremen. I was able to restrengthen contact with Bremen overseas development & Research Association (BORDA). I learned how the government works with NGOs and got to know the fundraising approach and development strategy of BORDA. In addition I could confirm a future cooperation with another NGO called Econtur for their "weltwärts" volunteer program.

At a studying tour to Munich I met some charity organizations and a church community. It was interesting to see the relationship between the church and their community.

A highlight was the capacity building workshop in Berlin. There I met social media/NGO/political people who helped me obtain a comprehensive picture about German civil society development progress and status. Also participating Chinese NGOs presented nicely among German antipolitics, NGOs and supporting donors.

Better mutual understanding and networking possibilities

This exchange program fulfilled all my purposes.

Through the exchange, I got a better understanding of German NGOs networking and some innovative working methodologies and public advocacy. It will be a great help for our future project design and organization development.

Also, through the exchange program, we strengthened our relationship with German factorizations we knew before, also explored some new links, like Misereor. Our organization will benefit for these relationships in the long term.

We published news about this program on our micro-blogging and website, and established some new links via this promotion, also attract more attention from outsiders.

Outlook on continued cooperation/partnership of the participating organizations

We will not only upkeep our partnership with Grüne Liga but I also managed to leverage new partnerships with other European NGOs and foundations. The Misereor foundation representative I met during my visiting introduced their liaison office in Beijing to us and we visited them in November, a cooperation concept was confirmed, a new proposal to Misereor liaison office is under preparation already.

The Medihima I met in Munich confirmed our cooperation on water & sanitation consultancy work for 2014.

And with Chinese participating NGOs in other fields, we also established a good link through this program. It seems to me the vision and understanding of civil society both in China and Germany are rapidly expanding and increasing. Future cross-fields cooperation and learning is under discussion.

Michael Bender, GRÜNE LIGA e.V.

Between 1st November and 30th November 2013, I was working with the Yunnan Environment Development Institute in Kunming as part of the EU-China NGO-Twinning-Program.

My objective for participating in the twinning program and going to China was twofold, with a learning, and a more active introducing focus. I wanted to learn how YEDI cooperates with Chinese NGOs and other partners, government departments and the public on water issues. I also wanted to get to know YEDI's project experience on site and to find out about possibilities of further cooperation, esp. work on a joint project proposal to SwissRe foundation with a water topic. Secondly, I wanted to introduce innovative and local adaptable approaches for water public awareness arising and policy lobbying to YEDI and be a bridge from YEDI and YEDI's water Program to potential donors in German or Europe.

Work at the YEDI office

At the beginning of my first week I gave a little introduction of GRÜNE LIGA activities and got an overview of the ongoing YEDI-projects right from the start.

The following weeks I worked at YEDI office. At first we drafted project proposals and brainstormed about possible joint projects for the future. My work tasks were included in YEDI's monthly workplan.

NGO activities

In China, I participated in several NGO activities like the '1000 People march' along Panlong Jiang River in Kunming. During that march they tested the water quality like Nitrogen, Oxygen, Phosphorous and pH. The march continued until it reached the Dianchi Lake which still is very heavily polluted as YEDI official Liu Yun stated. Nevertheless some macrophytes can be found in the river and the place it enters the lake. On the 3rd of November 2013 I participated in the Panlong Jiang River march in Yunnan province capital Kunming together with YEDI-Staff Member Zhang Lu. The march along the river was organized by the local NGO "AA Joy Excursion" Activists, NGOs and University students. We marched with a number of school environment groups to raise awareness on the water quality of the river and the heavily polluted Dianchi Lake.

Furthermore the Opening Meeting of the ADB funded Project on the development of a 5-year action plan on the Yunnan Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020 provided for a direct insight in ongoing nature protection policy implementation in Yunnan.

I also attended to the USDO annual meeting. USDO stands for the Union of Self-Disciplinary Organizations. This is a national NGO-network for self-disciplinary initiated by one foundation in 2009. On the meeting a transparency NGO-ranking according to a 56 criteria catalogue was presented.

During my time in Kunming I had the chance to visit YEDI's on-site project as well as projects of other NGOs working in the province of Yunnan, such as a NGO-organized market for organic food and the Cultural heritage program of the organization "Green Kunming".

Conclusion and Plans for Future Cooperation

This exchange program fulfilled all my expectations.

It also provided for quite a number of meetings with NGO-representatives and foundations either through taking part in workshops/conferences or through direct arranged meetings by the Chinese staff of Stiftung Asienhaus.

Due to language barriers (no Chinese vs. no or very little English) possibilities are limited for continued direct cooperation between GRÜNE LIGA Water Policy Office and Chinese NGO's. Nevertheless, further exchange might develop on the topic of sanitation and drinking water supply (YEDI), river and lake protection (Green Kunming) and dams issues (Liu Yun). With the outline of the draft project proposal a basis for possible future cooperation is established. The project outline is to be submitted to the SwissRe foundation soon. Depending on the outcome of SwissRe evaluation a full project proposal will have to be elaborated.

Let me say a big "THANK YOU" for all your engagement and for making this wonderful exchange program possible. Another big "THANK YOU" goes to Yu Yin (staff of Stiftung Asienhaus) providing for some more exciting events in Kunming. Last but not least, a great "THANK YOU" for Liu Yun and the whole YEDI office that provided such a warm welcome to me.

More detailed information is given in the long reports of the twinner. Anyone interested can contact the Stiftung Asienhaus staff/China program to receive more information.