



## China-Program

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# **Twinning: Partnerships between Chinese and European NGOs**

Green Financing · Right to Clean Water ·  
Human Rights · Urban Youth Culture · Social Inclusion



## Imprint

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Nora Sausmikat and Inga Gebauer

# **Twinning: Partnerships between Chinese and European NGOs**

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Social Inclusion





## Preface

Picture a group of eco-activists marching alongside a river to raise awareness about water pollution, others giving a presentation on the details of green credit policy, or a theater director working with autistic children on a performance, a group of Hip Hoppers spraying graffiti for the promotion of urban youth culture. Envision a group of law experts meeting with officials to win them over with their ideas for human rights safeguards in criminal detention centers.

As different as they may seem, what these have in common is that they all represent aspects of civic engagement, parts of Civil Society. And they are located in both China and Europe as part of the EU-China NGO Twinning.

Water conservation, green credit policy, inclusive theater, urban youth culture and criminal justice projects were the topics that the five Chinese-European pairs of civil society organizations who took part in the 2013 work-and-study exchange focus on in their work. They show the tremendous diversity of civil society topics and action in China and Europe.

But just as fascinating is the fact that citizens in both Europe and China apparently view the same issues as important, take similar actions, and are working toward the same change. Europe and China are both confronted with similar challenges, although on very different levels. Both regions need each other, are dependent on each other, and influence each other. Political, economic, and cultural relations between Europe and China have been growing during recent years, as has the impact of European-Chinese relations on global social and ecological developments.

Nevertheless, in this complex process, civil society still plays only a minor role.

Although multi-faceted collaborations between European and Chinese institutions have advanced, cooperation and exchange between the two major economic players are usually only financially supported when limited to the science, industry, and culture sectors.

At the same time, the number of transnational influences and overlapping citizens' concerns are on the rise – not only climate change issues, but environmental protection in general, sustainable production, food

### Infobox

Chinese banks will get privatized, this is one of the key reform priorities of the new Chinese government. One of the main challenges will be to keep an eye on the environmental degradation caused by investments supported by these Chinese banks. They invest not only in China, but also in Europe (especially in Greece and Eastern Europe). The NGOs Green Watershed and Both ENDS were paired up in the NGO twinning program to work on exactly this issue. They share the mission of calling for and promoting a responsible sustainable role of both international and Chinese investors, especially financial institutions, in the development both in and out of China. For them the exchange was an attempt to explore possibilities for working together in feeding back the realities of local people and the environment into the debates and decision-making processes of Boards of international and Chinese financial institutions.

safety, or social justice are similar important concerns, to name just a few.

This means that civil society organizations from both Europe and China are increasingly addressing similar topics, yet there is still too little cooperation between organizations between the two regions. And their topics are important and timely:

Chinese-European relations are at the center of current debates on the new world order. With China becoming more self-assured, especially in setting its own agenda and standards, managing Chinese-European relations has become more complex than ever – for both sides. The future of our planet depends very much on how the relations between Europe and China are carved out. Beyond that, we are rapidly approaching our planet's limits and a looming global crisis, with trends such

as advancing climate change and the destruction of biological diversity jeopardizing our natural life support systems. It is imperative to intensify the scope of a global cooperation among civil societies and to tackle the current and looming global crises in both an effective and legitimate manner. These issues are too important to be left solely in the hands of politicians and tycoons.

Developments inside China and the attitude towards China will also determine our future. China is increasingly under intense scrutiny from abroad. Complex analysis and nuanced renderings of Chinese society are glaringly absent. We need to know each other better, need to understand each other better to jointly build a peaceful future.

*Nora Sausmikat and Inga Gebauer*



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# 1. Introduction

## The importance of partnerships between Chinese and European NGOs

***The promotion of an NGO exchange program to build long-term partnerships has thus far been neglected. When Stiftung Asienhaus first applied for funding to support an NGO internship exchange program in 2005, no donors appeared interested in the topic of civil society.***

At that time, China was facing heavy criticism, and there were doubts about an emerging “civil society” in China. The headlines of European newspapers, especially those in Germany –had been full of biased China-bashing images. On the EU-level, civil society remained a sensitive term: In 2006, the EU-China Summit decided to set up a *Civil Society Roundtable*. It was established in June 2007 in Beijing but renamed for unknown reasons into *EU-China Roundtable*.<sup>1</sup> The roundtable claimed to act as an advisory body to the EU Commission, the parliament, and the Council of Ministers.

In 2010, the general attitude towards civil society and NGOs changed substantially. With EuropeAid’s new call for proposals on the topic “EU-China Civil Society Dialogue” beginning in February 2010, Brussels suddenly embraced the term civil society and wanted to “support the consolidation of a structured ongoing dialogue between European and Chinese civil societies”.<sup>2</sup> When the EU decided to spend money on civil society dialogue programs, the term civil society had already become a trendy buzzword in EU policy towards China. The development of a healthy civil society was not only seen as being responsible for developing the fundamental element of a democratic culture, but its failures or weaknesses are also held responsible for horrible developments like the German fascism.<sup>3</sup>

The concepts of these dialogue programs were very much mono-directional: Europe being the teacher, China the scholar. The Chinese side supported that idea during the initial process of opening up to NGOs:

Short study trips to Europe or the invitations of individual Chinese activists had been going on since the 1980s. The first seeds of civil society activism started to sprout in the 1980s and thereafter went through different stages.<sup>4</sup> The term civil society was accepted by the political elite after the UN world conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and has developed since then as a top-down controlled NGO civil society. Going forward, the Chinese government was eager to employ the term civil society, adding a specific Chinese connotation. For this purpose, there have also been scholarly exchanges from China to Germany – one of which was documented by the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation in 2005.<sup>5</sup>

While this is not the appropriate platform for a discussion of whether or not it is appropriate to apply the term “civil society” to China, or what the specific meaning of citizen activism in China could be, it should be noted that civil society also seems to have many different connotations within Europe. It should be mentioned here that:

- a) the EU’s usage of the term very much complies with the Chinese one; the normative understanding of the term originally rooted in the work of Gramsci and Habermas (for the new social movements) as a non-state, non-market, public-opinion focused force does not necessarily apply to all European societies, and
- b) the new academic discussion on the “dangerous aspects of a nondemocratic nature of civil society forces” i.e., in Pakistan or India<sup>6</sup> show that there still is quite a bit of leeway in interpreting a term which previously seemed to be tied to a basic understanding of a participatory non-hierarchical and inclusive culture.

Despite fundamental differences in the development of self-organized interest groups and civil society in Europe and China, we can observe that during the last 25 years there have been very dynamic developments of all kinds of self-organized interest in China: from sustainable agriculture advocacy groups to environmental protection and labor rights associations.

### Building EU-China NGO partnerships

Since 2008, Stiftung Asienhaus/China program has been involved in EU-China civil society dialogues.<sup>7</sup> In 2009, when we organized our first field trip to South China, both participants from Europe and China pointed out: “What we really need would be a kind of internship program for NGOs.”



First NGO-exchange trip to China in 2009

Previous civil society projects have shown that the fundamental structures to build partnerships between European and Chinese NGOs have yet to be established:

- Firstly, there are very few European NGOs with China reference, although awareness of how important the “China reference” is for NGOs in Europe is growing.
- Secondly, there are many stereotypes and great skepticism governing the NGO sector in China and Europe. In the European NGO sector, there is little to no knowledge on social change dynamics and NGO development in China. We have to fight

strong resentment and stereotypes concerning the image of Chinese society as a whole. Even if there are issues demanding the integration of China into the topic as part of their work or collaborate with Chinese NGOs, many have the feeling China is “Pandora’s box”<sup>8</sup>: “I can image that for many NGOs it feels like opening Pandora’s box: China is such a complex and big issue. It feels like you have to be such an expert and one needs really good basic knowledge to find one’s way. To put it simply: in smaller countries with fewer language barriers, like Cambodia, it is much easier.”

On the Chinese side, we can find very similar stereotypes and prejudices. In one of our dialogues, a Chinese NGO representative said: “My observation is that the European organizations’ work is often aimed at influencing government policies while the Chinese organizations are more focused on point-to-point charitable support and guidance for public at the community level.”<sup>9</sup>

- Thirdly, there is very little contact between European and Chinese organizations.

During the dialogue programs, it was confirmed that Chinese NGOs and associations not only needed financial advancement, but the development of different skills. These include not only project management skills but also information regarding the work of NGOs in other regions of the world. Their image of European NGOs was often dominated by the appearance of major European aid agencies, foundations, and international organizations that have a local branch in China.

Conversely, the lack of knowledge concerning Chinese civil society organizations and their work in Europe and Germany has created the image of a totally state-controlled Chinese civil society. All the activities and organizations which do not match this image remain hidden to most people. Again, there have been very few personal contacts and the high challenge of a language barrier.

All these facts show the necessity of such an exchange program like that of NGO twinning.



*“Organizing cooperation and exchanges always poses a challenge: language barriers, lack of knowledge of the structures and ways of working in the other country [...]. However, the main obstacle for Sino-European cooperation remains the lack of opportunity to come into contact in the first place [...] In this respect, the Twinning program offered a unique opportunity.”*

*Akim Walta, Berlin Massive*

#### Professional program designed for good results

The six years of dialogue programs not only created rich experiences in the design, challenges and management of such programs but also offered the opportunity to build strong networks among our partners from China Development Brief and China Dialogue. These six years of civil society dialogues helped to lay the groundwork for the start of NGO twinning. They helped to raise interest in China and Europe, identify potential topics for collaboration, and offered the opportunity to build a unique topic-wise structured database consisting of both European and Chinese organizations – the initial steps for NGO twinning.

We learned from these experiences and designed a program that took into account the specific needs and conditions of NGOs in the respective regions.

In 2012, the Robert Bosch Stiftung began its support for the idea of mutual job-shadowing of NGOs from Europe and China with the first pilot program of EU-China NGO twinning. During the pilot phase from September 2012 until March 2013, we had one NGO exchange with the two twinning partners Wang Jian from China Youth Climate Action Network (CYCAN) and Daniel Worings (Eine-Welt-Netz NRW). Both

NGOs work on youth education and climate change issues.

We used this exchange as well as two kick-off meetings in Beijing and Cologne to mobilize, to and evaluate the interest in the program, and to find possible matching partners in both regions while also networking with potential supporters. The exceptional attendance at the kickoff meetings, with 84 participants, and the large number of applicants already during the first year of the twinning (45) has shown how successful the idea is.

All of a sudden, two other donors and institutions (Stiftung Mercator and Engagement Global/Reverse program) have decided to develop very similar programs. The end of one-sided communications has proven to be a very effective way to enhance understanding among the organizations.



*Civil Society Dialogue Industrial Pollution and Environmental Health, Guangzhou 2011  
(Cooperation Stiftung Asienhaus/Sun Yatsen University Guangzhou)*

## Clear aims

With the launch of this first-of-its-kind exchange program, Stiftung Asienhaus and the Robert Bosch Stiftung aim to fill a gap in an important area of social development and build strong relationships and mutual understanding on both sides.

The NGO twinning project is embedded in a long-term program of exchange and partnerships between civil society organizations from Europe and China.

Twinning's explicit aims are to build strong partnerships, surpass the stereotypes mentioned before, and to gain further knowledge of the work of citizens' organizations.

There should be a fundamental knowledge of the different traditions and developments of civil society and NGOs in each society before starting a collaboration. This is necessary to the understanding of and respect for differences. It helps to not only foster trust building but also to avoid misunderstandings and mistakes.

The clear aims of our NGO twinning program are therefore to:

1. train ambassadors for a peaceful civil society based on the mutual understanding of each respective society to work towards a peaceful future;
2. establish cross-regional EU-China civil society networks;
3. conduct capacity building by knowledge transfer, the professionalization and dissemination of information about the work of and different working methods of the NGOs in each region;
4. foster greater mutual understanding to overcome stereotypes and respect differences; and
5. organize long-term exchanges to lay the groundwork for long-term exchanges and sustainable partnerships between two organizations.

## Ambassadors for a peaceful future

The participants will become multipliers, ambassadors of participation concepts and more effective ways of getting involved in social, ecological and political developments in both regions.

Chinese and European NGOs will get important insights into general concepts of civil society development and public participation. They will be provided with important information on environmental and social topics in each respective country.

## Cross-regional EU-China civil society networks

The twinning program establishes the initial contacts between NGOs of both societies and strengthens network building and alliances between Chinese and European organizations. With China's growing international importance, a long list of global issues cannot be tackled without the involvement of the world's largest nation. From climate change, environmental protection, fair trade and production to sustainable tourism, European and Chinese civil society organizations have a lot of common core work themes, but European NGOs often lack access to information on engagement in Chinese civil society. The exchange fellows will be able to establish broad networks with people working on similar issues.

## Capacity building

Chinese and European NGOs will get important insights into each others' working methods – the different working styles, development of the organizations, project design, public relations, and best practices. They will be provided with important information on environmental and social topics in each respective country. The program includes six seminars for capacity building and knowledge transfer. Here, the participants will also have the opportunity to get involved in discussions or exchange opinions concerning sustainability questions, questions of social and ecological justice, good governance, participation of civil society groups, or global debates on a sustainable and just future. The exchange program supports professionalization and internationalization and enables organizations from both regions to develop joint visions for a better future.

### Better mutual understanding

Through the exchange, mutual prejudices and stereotypes will be weakened and substituted by a more balanced assessment of realities. European exchange participants will gain a better understanding of the opportunities and problems in China's civil society. Chinese exchange fellows will obtain a better understanding of civil society structures in Europe and of the role and functions of non-profit organizations in the region.

Participants from both regions may also develop new perspectives regarding their own country. The NGO exchange will enable the missing information on Chinese developments to channel directly into important multiplier organizations in Europe.

### Create long-term partnerships

The exchange enables the organization to establish new partnerships or continue and deepen already established partnerships. They gain first-hand experience about the partner organization, establish personal contacts with the staff in the partner organization and can thus establish sustainable long-term partnerships.

*“European NGOs are a bit afraid of China or do not know how to deal with China, you say. This already shows how necessary your program is.”*

*Li Bo, Friends of Nature*

- The program foresees that each twinning partnership designs a joint project for concrete collaboration.
- Before traveling to the partner organization, each twinner was asked to write a workplan with the objectives and goals for the exchange. After the exchange period, they were asked to submit a report.
- Key aspects of the program involve preparatory seminars for the stay in the foreign region, capacity building and training workshops on each region's civil society as well as a reflection seminar at the end of the exchange stay.

- The exchange program is conducted in English.
- The program is supported by partners who are either well-established experts in exchange programs or have gained deep insights into civil society developments in both regions.

## 2013–14 Twinning program – The program structure in a nutshell

- The EU-China NGO Twinning program is an exchange program for the staff of European and Chinese NGOs. It is aimed at establishing sustainable partnerships and cooperation between non-governmental or non-profit organizations.
- In the context of the EU-China NGO Twinning program, 10 European and Chinese NGOs working on similar thematic focuses were paired up as “twinning-partners.” In 2013, five exchange fellows working for European NGOs and five fellows from Chinese NGOs were given the opportunity to work and study for four to eight weeks in their partner organization in the other respective region.

Infobox

### Advisory Board

An important part of the program's setup is the board, functioning as an advisory body for the organizers and the selection committee. Based on their practical and/or scientific experience in international civil society dialogue, Board members formulate best practices or future procedure recommendations for the exchange. In 2013, the board consisted of the following members:

1. Shawn Shieh (China Development Brief, Beijing)
2. Sam Geall (China Dialogue, London)
3. Ilka Schmidt (Projectmanager Asia, AFS, Hamburg)
4. Li Bo (Friends of Nature, Beijing)
5. Zhao Daxing (CANGO, Beijing)
6. Gisa Dang (Asia Catalyst, Beijing)

## Seminars and workshops

The exchange program provides for three workshops for each group of exchange fellows: A preparatory workshop for the stay in the respective foreign country, an on-site training/capacity building workshop on each region's civil society as well as a reflection seminar at the end of the exchange period.



*Capacity Building Workshop for Chinese NGO Twinners in the newspaper "taz" meeting room*

The capacity building and reflection seminar for the Chinese participants took place in Berlin on October 15–16, 2013. The thematic workshop on Chinese civil society for the European participants was organized in Kunming on November 8, 2013 and the reflection seminar in Cologne on February 24, 2014.

The workshops additionally functioned as an opportunity for all exchange fellows to get to know each other, share their experiences among themselves and with a broader audience, and position their working areas in a broader perspective.

### Preparation

Prior to the stay with the partner organization, the participants took part in workshops on intercultural competence as well as on living and working conditions in the respective other region. In addition, they were provided with a detailed manual on the destination country and on civil society in the respective other region.

## Capacity building workshop week in Berlin, Germany (October 2013) <sup>10</sup>

From October 15–17, 2013, the Chinese twinnings enjoyed a full week of seminars and meetings, including a capacity building seminar. Civil society activists and media personnel were invited as speakers. On the basis of case studies, the Chinese Twinners learned which elements were crucial and decisive for the specific development of German social movements. In Berlin, they met with experts who have been engaged in social movements for almost 30 years, learned about the role of the media for the work of NGOs and on agricultural campaigns in Europe. They listened to a lecture on the German energy transformation as an example of a social movement transformed into governmental policy.

After the workshop, the Chinese participants and some of their European counterparts had the chance to present on their organizations' cooperation to a European audience and share their personal exchange experiences with each other.

*"The capacity building workshop in Berlin was one of the exchange's highlights. There I met social media/NGO/political experts who helped me obtain a comprehensive picture about German civil society development progress and status."*

*Liu Yun, YEDI*



*Twinners at the German Parliament*

They also took part in networking events on current topics in European civil society, visited the German parliament, and met with politicians and the media. The cultural program included a visit to the Robert Bosch Stiftung's Berlin office, as well as the tour of various historical sites and museums.

#### Workshop in China/Kunming (November 2013)<sup>11</sup>

On November 8, 2013, the European participants met with local NGO workers in Kunming for a capacity building workshop on advocacy work in China. The workshop aimed at informing them about the historical development of civil society in China, and to discuss differences and commonalities among the concepts and developments in the two regions.

The European twinning received an overview on the development of Chinese advocacy work over the last 20 years, learned about the role of the media for NGOs in China, listened to several case studies by Chinese NGOs, watched the environmental documentary presented by Sun Ming

*“This workshop organized by Asienhaus was intensive but very informative and thought-provoking. It was a precious chance for me to get to know how civil society functions in Germany in different fields, and also a great time to share with other Chinese and European participants about our harvests and difficulties working in different environment and with different teammates.”*

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Chen Yu, Green Watershed

from Green Watershed, and learned how Chinese citizen organizations work, their understanding of advocacy work, and how different or similar problems are dealt with in both Europe and in China.

A full program of meeting different NGOs in Kunming, participating in a city-memory guided tour and several cultural activities made this seminar week an unforgettable experience.

*“(The workshop) in Kunming was an excellent platform to explore issues that sit outside my normal work. This was particularly useful to see the links between related fields – such as environmental protection and systems of public consultation (or rather the lack of such systems). This may lead to future and previously unforeseen cooperation(s).”*

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Tim Millar, The Rights Practice



Exchange fellows, board members, speakers and NGO audience at the workshop on advocacy in Kunming

The European participants themselves were amazed by the interesting projects the different NGOs have organized in China. Moreover, they showed themselves very much impressed by the highly motivated and devoted Chinese NGO workers. The workshop program was completed by a visit to various local environment conservation projects.

The participants valued their capacity building workshops in Berlin and Kunming as a big help in providing them with useful information on the use of media, communication, and campaigning strategies which should be enhanced for Chinese NGOs.

### Concluding Workshop

The first round of EU-China NGO Twinning was concluded with a reflection seminar in Cologne on February 24, 2014. During the event, the European exchange fellows introduced their organizations' work and reflected on the impact of the exchange with their Chinese partner organization. Theirs as well as their Chinese counterparts' feedback along with input papers from different civil society experts was welcomed as a means to further refine the exchange program and put it into a broader perspective. All participants agreed that an even more intensive exchange between the Chinese



*Pieter Jansen (BothEnds) at the Reflection Seminar February 2014*

and European civil societies should be established, of which the EU-China NGO Twinning program would be an essential element.

### Notes

1. The EU is represented by 15 members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and China by 15 members of the China Economic and Social Council (CESC). The EESC has 344 members divided into three groups: employers, trade unions and "various interests" drawn from farmers' organizations, small businesses, the craft sector, consumer and environmental organizations, the academic community, family-related associations, people with disabilities and other NGOs. Christa Wichterich, *Participation without influence*, in Sausmikat, Fritsche (eds.), *Civil society in European-Chinese relations*, Essen 2010, p. 46.
2. EU-China Civil Society Dialogue, Guidelines for grant applicants, 2010, [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/work/procedures/implementation/index_en.htm).
3. Annette Zimmer, *Civil societies compared: Germany and the Netherlands*, Nomos 2013, p. 8–9.
4. For a reflection on the last 30 years of environmental movement in China see Nora Sausmikat, "Chinese environmental movements: civil society discourse on climate change and environmental protection," in Carmen Meinert (ed.), *Nature, environment and culture in East Asia*, Brill 2013, pp. 197–231, Sam Geall (ed.), *China and the environment*, London: Zed Books, 2013.
5. Wang Ming, Li Yong, Huang Haoming (eds.), *NGOs in Germany 德国非营利组织*, Beijing: Qinghua University 2006.
6. Recently again discussed at the conference "Zivilgesellschaft in Asien (Civil society in Asia)", Weingarten 8.–10.11.2013. See ASIEN, *German Journal of contemporary Asia*, No. 131, 2014, pp. 70–73.
7. For the documentation of all dialogue programs please visit [www.eu-china.net](http://www.eu-china.net). In the first program called "EU-China Civil Society Forum" (2008–2010), Stiftung Asienhaus was one of the leading organizations; at the second, the "EU-China Civil Society Dialogue on Participatory Public Policy" (2010–2013), which was led by the University of Nottingham, the Stiftung Asienhaus was member of consortium. The latter program was aiming at strengthening the role of citizens in public policy-making and implementation and consisted of eight dialogue forums.
8. Nora Sausmikat, *Partnerschaften zwischen NRW und China-Die Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft stärken (Partnerships between North Rhine-Westphalia and China-Strengthening the role of civil society)*, Köln 2013, p. 42.
9. An Xin in Sausmikat (ed.), *Global Concerns – Global Cooperation. How European and Chinese NGOs Can Learn from Each Other*, March 2010, p. 168.
10. All workshop papers and more information can be found at: <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2013/11/capacity-building-workshop-for-chinese-participants-of-the-eu-china-ngo-twinning-how-do-civil-societies-in-europe-and-china-organize/>
11. See more at: <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2013/12/chinese-civil-society-advocacy-strategies-successful-capacity-building-workshop-for-european-twinners-in-kunming-provides-important-insights/>

## 2. Participants, Reports, Achievements

In 2013 the first round of Twinning involved the following partner organizations and focus topics:

Chinese Organization	European Organization	Focus Topic
Ms. Chen Yu/Green Watershed, Yunnan Province	Mr. Pieter Jansen/ Both ENDS, Netherlands	<b>Green Credit Policies</b>
Ms. Liu Yun/Yunnan Environmental Development Institute, Yunnan Province	Mr. Michael Bender/ Grüne Liga, Germany	<b>Methods and Solutions for Water Policy</b>
Mr. Ding Peng/Public Interest and Development Law Institute, Hubei Province	Mr. Tim Millar/ The Rights Practice, United Kingdom	<b>Piloting Criminal Justice Projects</b>
Mr. Zhang, Zhiqi/CHEE Productions, Guangdong Province	Mr. Akim Walta/ Berlin Massive, Germany	<b>Urban Youth Culture and Intercultural Work</b>
Ms. Chen Jiexia/Hunan Aimier, Hunan Province	Mr. Dave Carey/ Chickenshed, United Kingdom	<b>Inclusive Theatre</b>

The period of stay for the Chinese exchange fellows in Europe was set for September and October, the reverse exchange took place in November and December.

What follows are the reports on the exchange by the participating organizations and exchange fellows.



# Green Watershed & Both ENDS

*Green Watershed and Both ENDS share the mission of calling for and promoting a responsible sustainable role of both international and Chinese investors, especially financial institutions, in the development both in and out of China. For them the exchange of two members of staff was an attempt to explore possibilities for working together in feeding back the realities of local people and the environment into the debates and decision-making processes of boards of international and Chinese financial institutions.*

## Exchange Topic – green credit policy

China has witnessed a rapid economic growth, which comes along with extremely high environmental and social costs at home and abroad. The Chinese government in 2007 declared a Green Credit Policy to regulate lending activities of Chinese banks, and introduced Guidelines for Environmental and Social Impact Assessments of its loan projects. However, Chinese banks in most cases do not yet implement Green credit policies (effectively), domestically or abroad.

In the end the social and environmental impact of investments on local communities is a test for the safeguards effectiveness. Therefore the exchange of two members of staff was also an attempt to explore possibilities for working together in feeding back the realities of local people and the environment into the debates and decision-making processes of Boards of international and Chinese financial institutions.

In Europe, a huge knowledge gap exists where Chinese investment policies is concerned. The overall thought

is that Chinese investments abroad do not adhere to any rules. There is no awareness of the existence of Chinese regulations for investments. Both ENDS made use of this Stiftung Asienhaus exchange program to successfully take up the role as a knowledge broker for European civil society on Chinese banking policies related matters.

Infobox

## Green Watershed, Yunnan Province

Founded in 2002, Green Watershed is devoted to the protection of China's rivers and watersheds. It conducts and promotes participatory watershed management, disaster management, and green credit advocacy. In the past it has established participatory watershed management and community-based disaster management projects at Lashi lake and conducted a number of social impact assessments, e.g. on the planned hydroelectric power plants on the Nu, Lancang, and Jinsha River. It further established a green credit advocacy program in 2006 aiming at making Chinese banks more environmentally and socially responsible.

## Profile Chen Yu

Chen Yu was the green credit project manager of Green Watershed in charge of the implementation of the project. Now she works for Green Watershed as a freelance volunteer and consultant based in Amsterdam, maintaining and promoting the connection of Green Watershed with international civil society with a common concern about environmental and social accountability of Chinese overseas investment.



## Both ENDS hosting Chen Yu in Amsterdam (8 weeks)

Chen Yu visited Both ENDS in Amsterdam for 8 weeks in September and October 2013.

### Objectives

I had several objectives for my time at Both ENDS. First, I wanted to improve communication and cooperation between Green Watershed and its European counterparts. I am also personally interested in knowing more about how European civil society organizations work and achieve their mission, especially on the matter of sustainable finance which falls into my current research field. Moreover, I wanted to further introduce Green Watershed's Green Credit Advocacy Project and the ongoing dynamics of China's Green Finance devel-



*Pieter Jansen (Both ENDS) and Chen Yu (Green Watershed) visit one of the two power plants outside Pristina financed by the World Bank and a nearby affected village*

## Both ENDS, Netherlands

Infobox

Created in 1986, Both ENDS serves as a broker in support of NGOs, particularly in the global South, working on environmental and societal equity challenges. It supports organizations with fundraising, capacity building, information, networking, campaigning and advocacy. Land rights and sustainable production, participatory and integrated river basin management and resource extraction are just some examples of the wide range of topics the organization is working on.

## Profile Pieter Jansen

For eleven years now, Pieter Jansen has been working on the topic of International financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. In the last six years his work was mainly focused on the safeguards of the Banks and the experiences of project-affected communities in the Mekong region. His regular work at Both ENDS consists of highlighting the importance of social- and environmental requirements, which investments of the World Bank (European Investment Bank and Asian Development Bank), the so-called 'safeguards', should meet.

opment to Both ENDS and facilitate its future work on China and/or Chinese banking.

During these eight productive weeks I was able to contribute to Both ENDS on its work related to Chinese overseas investment and China's environment and green credit policy, and, on the other hand, learned a lot from the wonderful people I worked with.

### At the Both ENDS office

Most of the time, I worked at Both ENDS office with colleagues. I enjoyed very much the professional and friendly environment. Both ENDS seems to me both institutionally organized and flexible operationally, with clear rules, procedures, tasks and responsibility set for different positions on one hand, combined with freedom and space for staff's creative thinking on the other. This impressed me from the first day I joined, which I believe can be learnt by Green Watershed.

As twinning partners, Pieter and I worked very closely and kept real-time communication, which allowed us a clear picture of where we were and where we were going. Another impressive routine activity in Both ENDS office is the weekly staff presentation. Every week, a

staff member is broadcast via email; the staff member then presents stories about his/her work and receives comments and written feedback from colleagues who attend.

I also worked with other Both ENDS colleagues in my capacity to support their China-related work. For instance we visited the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to present our argument in favor of the integration of human rights assessment into the World Bank Safeguards. Moreover, I assisted another colleague with his work on EU-China bilateral trade agreement.

#### **The EuroIFI Network Annual Meeting 2013 – Pristina, Kosovo**

The second week I worked with Both ENDS, Pieter and I travelled to Pristina, Kosovo, to attend the EuroIFI Network Annual meeting hosted by KOSID (the Civil Society Consortium for Sustainable Development).

I was the first person from Chinese civil society appearing in this team. Bringing an introduction to China's legal framework of green credit and overseas investment regulations, Pieter and I made a comparison between China's laws and regulations for banks and World Bank policies. I also gave a picture of China's Green Choice Alliance, China's NGO network working on green supply chain, green stock and green credit, and briefed the dynamics of Chinese NGOs efforts towards better green credit policy-making and policy implementation in China, using Green Watershed as an example.

My Kosovo trip ended at one of the two power plants outside Pristina financed by the World Bank and an affected village. The World Bank is considering funding a third plant, which is why we were invited by KOSID to hold the meeting in Kosovo.

My gain in Kosovo was the effective networking within EuroIFI Network, which I believe can be very helpful for Green Watershed's networking in China. In addition, Kosovo trip became a great chance for me to extend Green Watershed's contact and cooperation with European NGOs beyond Both ENDS. Since that meeting, Green Watershed has been working together with CEE Bank Watch on Chinese overseas investment in central and Eastern Europe and helping it to develop an action tool for NGOs targeting Chinese investors.

#### **The World Bank Annual Meeting 2013 – Washington D. C., USA**

My other precious opportunity of contributing and learning was the World Bank Annual Meeting in Washington. Our main purpose was to highlight the importance of social and environmental requirements that the investments of the World Bank should meet, the so-called 'safeguards'.

In that meeting, our team visited the World Bank Executive Director's offices to try to make our voice in favor of stronger rule-based safeguards heard by the Bank's decision makers; we also attended the Bank's Safeguards session to get updated by the Bank about its review process, where I was impressed by the active involvement of civil society from all around the world and was also touched by the story-telling of representatives from affected communities where the Bank-supported projects are located.

As the first person from Chinese civil society formally presenting in the World Bank Annual Meeting, I gave a presentation on China's laws and regulations governing environmental and social issues in its overseas investment, delivering Chinese civil society's voice in favor of stronger safeguards based on concrete rules for the World Bank to avoid duplicating China's failure in environmental protection partly due to its hollow principles. I received quite a few questions and comments from both the Bank officials and members of NGOs, and the Q&A triggered further discussion between Bank staff and NGO audience about the World Bank Country System. Afterwards, some audience members came to me to express their interest in future collaborations.

#### **Conclusion – Learning and Contributing**

In short, during these eight weeks, I was trying my best to contribute and I did find that knowledge of Chinese regulations and experience of Chinese civil society can be beneficial to European groups working on China-related issues; I also learned a lot: policy analysis, networking, fund raising, and approaching targeted groups, lobbying, strategy planning, approaches to designing and networking.

The exchange strengthened Green Watershed mainly in the way of extended connection with international civil society working on similar topics. In the support

*“This learning experience also included learning from the European side about China, not only because some stories were hidden from us inside our country, but also because different perspectives from the outside helped me to gain different angle and new depth to reflect on the situation that I had easily taken for granted at home.”*

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*Chen Yu, Green Watershed*

of Both ENDS, Green Watershed and its Green Credit Advocacy project got known by more international NGOs and NGO networks, including Bank Watch, Bank Information Center, EuroIFInet, and some NGOs based in developing countries where Chinese investors are active, as well as funder organizations interested in China-related green finance issue. This is very helpful because it builds a good basis for future information exchange, resource sharing, and joint action.

## Green Watershed hosting Pieter Jansen in Kunming

Pieter Jansen visited Green Watershed for 7 weeks from November 2013 to January 2014.

### Objectives

My objectives for the program were to learn more about the working methods and the working environment of Green Watershed, Chinese Green Credit and investment policies and about local farming strategies. Moreover, my aim was to explore possibilities for future cooperation between Both ENDS and Green Watershed in working on development banks.

### At Green Watershed's office

Green Watershed and me agreed on three main topics to work on. First, I participated in several meetings with bankers, government officials and commercial advisers. The meetings were mostly about international commitments of corporate social responsibility that bankers agreed upon among themselves. Second, was the work on the Chinese civil society. Third, I worked with Green Watershed as an advisor and contributed my expertise about safeguards and about international networking.

Just a day before the Beijing conference Green Watershed released its newest report: the Green credit footprints of Chinese Banks. The report makes an assessment on sixteen Chinese Banks their social and environmental responsibilities. I helped with the English editing and with the dissemination of this

important publication among international bankers and media. One hard copy we offered Achim Steiner, director general of the United Nations Environmental Program.

### Green credit related campaign work

Together, Both ENDS and Green Watershed participated in several meetings with bankers, government officials and commercial advisers in Beijing. The meetings were mostly about the international commitments of corporate social responsibility (CSR) that bankers agreed upon among themselves.

There seems to be a general demand for multi-stakeholder collaboration between banks and civil society. It was interesting to learn that there exists an informal network of international bankers in Beijing. They introduce CSR policies to their Chinese counterparts. By connecting to this informal network, Green Watershed could share its knowledge and expertise. Both ENDS could use its contacts within the World Bank to get an entrance into the network.



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*Twinning participant Pieter Jansen with Green Watershed founder Yu Xiaogang (left) and colleague*

China hosted the United Nations conference about financial responsibility, which coincided with our visit in Beijing. In an international finance conference as the one in Beijing, you see consultancy firms try to sell technical financial market incentives to integrate corporate social responsibility into risk management, and a non-profit organization, like BSR, which has big multinational companies in its client base, that is trying to advise and serve as liaison between participants. Most interesting was a lunch in an informal setting I was invited to organized by BSR which brought Green Watershed in contact with some Chinese bank staffers, who were in charge of CSR.

At the UN conference Both ENDS liaised between Green Watershed and the secretariat of the Equator Principles banks. These commercial banks respect jointly agreed upon social and environmental standards. In fact, Chinese NGOs that are monitoring Chinese banks and banks that agree on the international Equator Principles to a certain extent share a common interest in making Chinese banks (and banks everywhere else) adapt social and environmental standards

While in Beijing, I also participated in several NGO seminars, among them the ISEAL seminar, Sustainability Standards as a Tool for ESG Risk Management: Leaders Dialogue, the Annual Meeting of China's Environmental Civil Society Organizations on Sustainable Development and the national gathering of China's Green Choice Alliance together with Friends of Nature and the Institute of Public and Environmental affairs.

According to my own opinion in the end the architecture of the financial sector is created by politicians and can be reversed by politicians. Civil Society Organizations can contribute to the societal transition into a sustainable direction through publicly questioning the irresponsible behaviour of creditors that invest their money in polluting industries and by making the constituency of concern among citizens visible.

#### **Learning about the role of NGOs in China**

Currently, the Chinese leaders in the newest five year plan are considering a deregulation of the banking sector. According to Green Watershed, it is increasingly important that NGOs in China monitor the social- and environmental policies of banks. Green Watershed's

monitoring of banks is not an easy job since banks are often reluctant to share information.

I took part in a talk between Yu Xiaogang of Green Watershed and Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental affairs (IPE), about the possible change of tactics to make banks more receptive to the outcome of the green credit footprint assessment. China's green credit policies originally aimed at diverting bank investments in China away from heavy polluting sectors and projects in to a more green direction. Environmental polluters are liable to prosecution. Banks investing in the same polluters are never prosecuted, and remain invisible most of the time.

IPE earlier developed the China Water Pollution Map, the first public database of water pollution information in China and was quite successful in exposing polluting companies to the public. It might be an option to expose the banks behind the polluting companies as well. It therefore can make use of existing public disclosure policies in place where it concerns environmental risk and hazard. This might be more effective than straight forwardly referring at banking regulations for disclosure.

What I felt most impressive of my stay was the high level of expertise my Chinese friends and colleagues had concerning the environmental problems that China is confronted with. Also I got impressed by the courageous counter-acting by quite some environmentalists in reaction to a not always politically friendly surrounding. I was likewise impressed by the way that people like Yu Xiaogang and Ma Jun, proclaimed heroes of the environmentalist movement in China by international prize awarding organizations, treated me as their equal. Yu Xiaogang told me once about it that he simply is taking the steps that seem obvious for him to take.

## **Achievements**

Green Watershed introduced Both ENDS to Chinese green credit policies

and to the functioning of the Chinese banking sector in general, and Both ENDS can now successfully take up the role as a knowledge broker for European civil

*„It’s amazing what kind of people you have gathered here. Why didn’t we think about exchange with China earlier? I cannot understand why there isn’t more exchange with European NGOs.“*

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*Pieter Jansen, Both ENDS*

society on Chinese banking policies related matters. Both ENDS on the other hand offered a window for Green Watershed to the world of international financing institutions.

At the same time at an international level we continued to plead for strong internationally binding rules and an upward harmonization of the existing different standards in the world. For the promotion of safeguards

tional banks in Beijing.

The twinning was an opportunity to reflect on the effectiveness of safeguards and green credit policies and how they might be improved. The twinning period also offered an opportunity to increase mutual understanding of the different policies’ effectiveness and implications of monitoring of their development project.

it could be strategically wise to form an occasional cooperation between Chinese civil society and international financing institutions. So far we have achieved an initial willingness to talk and listen to each other. Appointments are in the making for face-to-face meetings at the offices of interna-

# GRÜNE LIGA e.V. & Yunnan Environmental Development Institute

***GRÜNE LIGA e.V. and the Yunnan Environmental 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.***

## Topic of Exchange: Water Policy

YEDI and Grüne Liga's objective during the exchange was to learn from each other about more innovative approaches for project implementation and smart technologies for better solutions. Moreover they wanted to foster a better understanding and application of holistic and sustainable solutions in the con-



*Liu Yun and Michael Bender presenting the results of their exchange at a workshop in Kunming*

text of a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Liu Yun also planned to gather insight into European NGOs' different cooperation approaches with the private sector on water issues and their project planning ways, and thus how to improve the parallel situation in China.

## GRÜNE LIGA e.V hosting Liu Yun

Liu Yun visited Grüne Liga e.V in Berlin for 4 weeks in September and October 2013.

Infobox

### Yunnan Environmental Development Institute (YEDI), Yunnan Province

YEDI, founded in 2003, focuses at supporting activities aimed at improving the environment in Yunnan province, with the goal of driving more sustainable development in the region. Their work includes providing clean drinking water and basic sanitation to people in rural Yunnan. It has developed and implemented a wide range of rural development projects, demonstrating new approaches and using innovative methods in the planning and implementation with a strong emphasis on participatory approaches for replication by other actors in Yunnan and beyond.

### Profile Liu Yun

Liu Yun works as an executive manager at the YEDI. She has been working in the NGO sector for more than 8 years and has been awarded several domestic and international environmental prizes.

## Objectives

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

### Study tours and NGO workshops for a better mutual understanding

During the exchange period in Germany I attended the water group session of the German Forum on Environment and Development, helped organize the GRÜNE LIGA-Workshop on the implementation of the EU Flood Risk Directive, took a study tour to Bremen and Munich and attended the capacity building workshop in Berlin.

#### Infobox

## Grüne Liga e. V.

Grüne Liga is a network of several NPOs founded in the 1990s. It tackles ecological as well as social challenges and develops visions for the advancement of society. Its activities cover a broad range, including seminars, protests activities and environmental protection activities as well as flash mobs and festivals. The Water Policy Office has been part of the Water Working Group of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) for years and participated in the EU-wide drafting process for the EU Water Framework Directive and other European water legislation processes and has coordinated the intentions of German environmental organizations nationwide.

## Profile Michael Bender

Michael Bender manages the GRÜNE LIGA's Water Policy Office with a focus on the protection of aquatic ecosystems. He has been coordinating water related positions of German NGOs regarding the EU-Water Framework Directive including respective daughter directives and their implementation into German law. Michael Bender coordinates the water working group of the Forum on Environment and Development.

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

Another great experience was the research trip to Bremen. I was able to restrengthen contact with Bremen Overseas Development & Research Association (BORDA). I learned how local governments cooperate with NGOs and got to know BORDA's fundraising approach and development strategy. In addition I could confirm a future cooperation with another NGO called Econtur for their "weltwärts" volunteer program.

At a research trip to Munich I met several 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 experts who helped me obtain a comprehensive picture about German civil society development progress and status.

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.

### Networking opportunities

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

One example: 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 of how German NGO networks function. Also, I was able to establish a direct link with Misereor.

Through the exchange program, we strengthened our relationship with German factorizations we knew before, but also explored some new links. Our organization will benefit from these relationships in the long term.

YEDI is now listed in the German Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) group mailing list, so we will be provided with all their newsletters and information. And through this platform, most experts in this group will be accessible to us for future cooperation.

### Achievements

We will not only continue 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 visit introduced their liaison office in Beijing to us and we visited them in November. A cooperation concept was confirmed and a new proposal to Misereor liaison office is already being prepared.

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

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

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

*Liu Yun, YEDI*

## YEDI hosting Michael Bender

Michael Bender visited YEDI in Kunming in November 2013 for 4 weeks.

### Objectives

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



*Michael Bender joining the river walking event outside Kunming*

of further cooperation, esp. work on a joint project proposal to SwissRe foundation with a water topic. Secondly, I wanted to introduce innovative and locally 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 Germany or Europe.

### 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 mostly 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 Yunnan, I participated in several NGO activities such as the '1000 People march' along Panlong Jiang River in Kunming. The event 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. During that march they tested the water



for Nitrogen, Oxygen, Phosphorous and pH. The march continued until it reached the Dianchi Lake which still is heavily polluted as YEDI official Liu Yun stated. Nevertheless some macrophytes can be found in the river and its delta.

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 in Beijing. USDO stands for the Union of Self-Disciplinary Organizations. This is a national NGO network for self-disciplinary organizations that was initiated by one foundation in 2009. At the meeting a transpar-

ency 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".

The exchange 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.

*"Let me say a big 'THANK YOU' for all your engagement and for making this wonderful exchange program possible."*

# Public Interest and Development Law Institute & The Rights Practice

*The Public Interest and Development Law Institute Wuhan and The Rights Practice' cooperation on public interest law and legal development is already well established. However, the several week long work-and-study stages gave members of their staff the opportunity for personal encounter, a better understanding of each other's working environment as well as the opportunity for joint work on common projects.*

## Topic of exchange: Piloting Criminal Justice Projects

The Rights Practice has worked with the Public Interest and Development Law Institute since 2005, starting with a DFID supported Access to Justice project. The project focused on training rural providers of legal assistance and resulted in greater rights awareness among target rural residents in Hubei; a training module for legal workers; and a tested and viable model for legal advice and service delivery. Also, the project trained more than 700 rural paralegals, and it was during the early part of this project that The Rights Practice advised PIDLI on setting up their NGO. TRP and PIDLI are nearing the end of a three-year project designed to strengthen human rights safeguards in China's criminal detention centers. As part of this project, TRP has been working with PIDLI to pilot a duty lawyers system for detainees in two detention centers in Hubei. As a next step, The Rights Practice and PIDLI will soon begin a follow-on three-year project to build on what they learned in Hubei and develop and strengthen the provision of legal aid for detainees in pre-trial detention in other select locations in China.

Both partners wished to explore NPO management in the area of criminal justice. They wanted to understand

operations and practical functioning of the others' NPO as well as concrete operations of the criminal justice system in the others' area. They also aimed to use the exchange as a valuable networking opportunity and enable the participants to train in legal and cultural matters

## The Rights Practice hosting Ding Peng

Ding Peng visited The Rights Practice in London for 5 weeks in September and November 2013.

Infobox

### Public Interest and Development Law Institute Wuhan, Hunan Province

The PIDLI, established in 2007, is a university-affiliated humanities and social science research institute. It draws its inspiration from the public interest law movement, the "law and development" movement, and the "development law" campaign in Southeast Asian countries. They carry out legal research and organise lectures and training on human rights.

### Profile Ding Peng

Ding Peng has been working in the academic and NGO sector for many years. Currently, he is working as programme coordinator and researcher at the Wuhan University Public Interest and Development Institute. His research and work focuses on the rights of socially disadvantaged groups as well as legal empowerment and access to justice.



Tim Millar and Ding Peng at the PIDLI office in Wuhan

I came with the objective of deepening my understanding of how a European NGO operates in terms of its governance, staff development, and human resources. Moreover I wanted to better understand the British legal system particularly in regard to legal aid, govern-

ment legal publications and the influence of the ECHR on domestic law and to network with European organizations working on rule of law.

During my stay I not only worked at The Rights Practice office and got to know their daily work and working environment, but also had the chance for numerous on-site court observations, discussions with lawyers, judges, solicitors and paralegals and attended several conferences on the topic of human rights.

Infobox

## The Rights Practice, United Kingdom

The Rights Practice works to advance the respect and protection of human rights in practice. They focus at working in environments where human rights are most at risk. They try to improve the access to justice, to strengthen the public participation in decision making, and to promote the adherence of Human Rights in the Criminal Justice system.

### Profile Tim Millar

Tim Millar has worked for human rights NGOs for some 10 years, and in China for The Rights Practice for more than two years. His recent focus of work is on human rights in China and the criminal justice system in particular.

### Getting to know NGO management, methods and networking in Europe

In the TRP office I helped with research on pre-trial detention in China. Also, we jointly drafted a new three-year project proposal on legal aid and discussed the work plan for a coming new project on duty lawyers in China.

I learned from TRP' s networking with lawyers, academics, law societies, and NGOs, their inter-time zone coordination within the staff and management of part time human resources and internship. On the other hand I was able to introduce Basecamp to TRP as a useful online tool for projects management and also



*Ding Peng in the TRP office with colleague Sophie Cornford*

shared the experience of my study tour on legal aid and human rights to Indonesia in 2012 to help TRP draft another similar plan.

One interesting observation on the role and strength of European NGOs in the legal field: As a registered charity with independent resources, UK NGOs have many opportunities to monitor the police power, or give witness to the committee of the parliament on draft of laws and regulations.

In general, I found that sharing of perspectives across different groups proved influential and could be used in similar China programs. This was most evident in a program involving juvenile offenders, police officers, magistrate judges and lawyers in role plays. In this process juvenile ex-offenders learn about the perspective of victims, but also the police gained a better understanding of the significance of improving their disclosure to the lawyers as they for the first time observe the lawyer's consultation performed by real lawyers and actors as suspects.

I was also impressed by the way organizations and persons could be reached and networked through the information on their websites and other forums, whereas we still rely mostly on introductions provided by people who have strong relationships to both sides in order to facilitate cooperations in China. Publicity

strategies among pro bono centers, police monitoring organizations, victim support organizations seemed also quite effective, such as online campaigns through the sites of the network, posters in schools, pubs and other places people use to gather.

Regarding working methods of NGOs/networks I found the Criminal Justice Alliance was a good example of how members of the network benefited from a quarterly half day meeting. The meeting consists of a short keynote speech, updates of new activities, reports, problems, and getting familiar with new faces. The challenge to replicate it in China would be the distance for participants working on the same topic to travel from other cities to meet, so maybe video conferences would prove more promising for the network meetings in China.

#### **Court case observations, exchange with legal practitioners and researchers**

During my stay I also had the chance to observe several court cases and discuss with lawyers, judges and solicitors. Moreover I attended major conferences on the topic of human rights.

This provided me with important insights into the UK judicial and legal aid system, which will again help me and my organization to carry out future projects on legal aid and human rights in China. As a lawyer trained in the Chinese system, it was very interesting and inspiring for me to observe practice in UK courts – for example the procedures of plea guilty/probation in magistrate courts, but also the police custody record system which is almost detailed to minutes, kept in computers and disclosed to the defense. I also observed that in magistrate and crown courts interpreters frequently help defendants who do not speak English, which is essential of the oral principles and for the participation of defendants into the procedure and effective defense.

Another interesting observation was the concept of community sentence and that its influence can only be effective when there is a comprehensive support system. Suspended sentence is not just about the release of the suspects, but about further tracing, community training and support.

To assure the quality of legal aid, there is a detailed checklist and advanced peer review system in the UK,

of which the forms could be easily replicated to China. However, one important condition for this system to function is the independence of lawyers and the autonomy of the Bar Association and Law Society.

During two major conferences on human rights and several talks with lawyers I learned about HR issues in UK and the EU, including the impact of media reporting and the essential role of the framework of public international law and general comments.

*“I consider myself very lucky having had the interesting and impressive stay in London and Berlin. Thanks for your support. It is definitely a good start for our further collaboration and reunion. Let us keep each other informed about what is new. We are from diverse background but may obtain mutual understanding and inspiration for the growth of the civil society.”*

#### **Extending networks and diversifying cooperation opportunities**

Apart from our continued partnership with TRP I was also able to discuss opportunities of EU-China cooperation with other organizations. For example, the human rights law program at Essex University will be introduced to China law students, which would encourage more future lawyers to join the career of public interest law. The BPP Pro Bono Center has similar legal clinics as the PIDLI, which is involved in courses in Law School, Wuhan University. Some China and Chinese-speaking students are interested in a possible internship provided by domestic China NGOs, which could help to enhance international visibility. Those NGOs and PIDLI will share this information with domestic partners. Also, I found out that A4ID had established a worldwide lawyers’ team to provide pro bono consultations for local NGOs which would also benefit the international comparative legal study carried out by PIDLI.

## **PIDLI hosting Tim Millar**

Tim Millar visited PIDLI in Wuhan for 4 weeks in November 2013.

## **Objectives**

During my stay I wanted to learn more about China’s pre-trial detention system plan and pre-trial detention centers (看守所). Our work is looking to provide duty lawyers who would be present in them. Also, we wanted to prepare for the next three years of cooperation between TRP and PIDLI and meet new NGOs and NGOs working on public interest/human rights issues with a view to forming new partnerships. Last but not least I hoped to improve my legal Chinese.

#### **First-hand experience in the work of Chinese public interest organisations**

Overall my exchange met all the original goals we set for it. The most useful aspect was the fact that I was able to sit and discuss the substantive legal issues around pre-trial detention (and related legal issues) on an almost daily basis for one month. Not only has this improved my Chinese, increased my knowledge of the legal and political issues involved in legal reform in China, but also deepened and strengthened my working relationship with PIDLI – one of our key partners in China. Being in Wuhan for an extended period of time also gave me the opportunity to meet many other groups and NGOs working in related fields, which helped me to better understand the issues upon which they work. This will enable me and my organization to more effectively carry out projects in China.

Some of these meetings were as a result of the routine work of PIDLI but I also had the good fortune to attend a ‘job fair’ where some 19 NGOs working on public interest law and related areas presented themselves and their work ostensibly in order to recruit law students but in reality to present their work to a large audience. Moreover, reading and speaking Chinese are increasingly important in my work as I work more directly with our Chinese partners. Improving my Chinese thus makes me a more effective actor on behalf of my organization.

### Better understanding of laws, systems and impacts

I also attended detailed workshops on the law and operation of China's pre-trial legal system, which improved my understanding of the operations of the pre-trial detention system in China and will hopefully drive forwards the work of The Rights Practice in understanding legal impacts. This will also improve our understanding and ability to explain to donors and diplomats the importance of reform of China's pre-trial detention system.

*“The most useful aspect was the fact that I was able to sit and discuss the substantive legal issues around pre-trial detention on an almost daily basis for one month. Not only has this improved my Chinese, increased my knowledge of the legal and political issues involved in legal reform in China, but also deepened and strengthened my working relationship with PIDLI.”*

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*Tim Millar, The Rights Practice*

The exchange was mainly focused on building my understanding of the current legal and political situation regarding pre-trial detention in China. It was therefore something of a one-month training for me in the substantive legal issues surrounding pre-trial detention. The reason for all the training is that over the next three years we will conduct a series of pilot initiatives in five locations across two provinces to try and show ways in which the pre-trial detention process can better protect the rights of detainees and conform more closely with China's new Criminal Procedure Law.

Moreover, the exchange has provided me with a wealth of information that I will be disseminating to numerous target groups over the next three years.

### Enhancing cooperation, strengthening NGO partnership

My exchange also helped strengthen the relationship between TRP and PIDLI. We began planning the next three years of our cooperation and also discussed detailed plans for a new project to further cement our partnership. Over the next three years we will conduct a series of pilot initiatives in five locations across two provinces to try and show ways in which the pre-trial detention process can better protect the rights of detainees and conform more closely with China's new Criminal Procedure Law.

I obtained useful materials on the legal situation in China as well as a better understanding of the direction that reforms may follow in the coming few years.

PIDLI and TRP discussed the work plan for our new project on duty lawyers in China; we now have an overview of the timeline of this project and have done further mapping of the major questions,

issues, and problems the project may face. We also jointly prepared for the official project inception that will take place in January 2014.

PIDLI and TRP also drafted a new 3-year project proposal on legal aid. This will be further refined in the future.

### Networking across civil society topics

In addition to the achievements mentioned above the meetings and workshops in Kunming (*Workshop for EU-China NGO Exchange participants*) was an excellent platform to explore issues that sit outside my normal work. This was particularly useful to see the links between related fields – such as environmental protection and systems of public consultation (or rather the lack of such systems). This may lead to future and previously unforeseen cooperation(s).

# Chee Productions & Berlin Massive e.V.

*Chee Productions and Berlin Massive both are non-profit organizations operating in the field of urban youth cultures and already have successfully implemented several projects in the past. Despite their joint activities, long-term cooperation still proves to be a recurring challenge, mostly due to the lack of understanding of each others' working environment and logistic problems. The Twinning program gave the two organizations the unique opportunity to better understand each others' working background and working procedures – without the usual pressure of time.*

## Topic of exchange

The two organizations aimed to exchange on structures, local conditions, ways of working and funding opportunities in the field of cultural youth education, cultural exchanges and intercultural work in Germany and China. They were interested primarily in social and cultural initiatives, neighborhood initiatives, and grass-root activities. The commitment to the social environment and the possibilities of cooperation and mutual learning were in the focus of the exchange.

## Berlin Massive hosting Dickid

Dickid visited Berlin Massive in Berlin for 4 weeks in September 2013.

### Objectives

Dickid came to Berlin with the objectives to learn more about hip hop culture and cultural youth education in Germany and especially how organizations are embed-

ded in the German administration and what role they play in social participation

### At Berlin Massive

Berlin Massive is part of a network of urban artists, designers and volunteers in the field of urban culture since 2006. It offers artistic workshops and cultural youth education, all with an intercultural perspective. It puts high emphasis on the mutual learning opportunities that arise through artistic dialogue.

Infobox

## CHEE Productions, Guangdong Province

CHEE Production is a NPO focusing on urban culture and art and was founded in 2008. It emerged from the urban art group "Dumdue", the China Streets Network and several local street culture activists. It supports a number of social projects and cultural activities, mainly in Guangzhou.

## Profile Yang Zhiqi, aka Dickid

Yang Zhiqi (artist name: Dickid) was one of the first graffiti artists in Guangzhou. In 1998, he founded "China Streets Network (CSN)", a collective of young people supporting street culture activities such as skateboarding, BMX, hip hop, and graffiti. After co-founding CHEE Productions in 2008, Dickid has continued to be a Guangzhou Street Culture supporter and makes his living as a multimedia producer. He has initiated and documented social and cultural projects, as well as discussions about social and cultural developments.



Dickid at the Berlin office of Hip Hop Stützpunkt networking

During his time with Berlin Massive Dickid was able to gain a better understanding of how cultural youth education is defined in Germany, of our networking, fundraising and how our work is affected by an enormous amount of administrative rules and regulations. He was surprised how much qualification is demanded of employees and their methods. Terms like inclusion, gender mainstreaming or participation in planning and decision-making processes have rather low importance in China.

He learned from us how financial support programs are structured in Germany and which administrative guidelines have to be followed. Bureaucratic preparations for youth cultural events and workshops were new to him. He also gathered insights into accounting for associations, the role of protection of children and young adults and got a deep impression of the diversity of methods in the work with young people.

Especially our use of hip hop as a method for non-verbal learning as integral part of school teaching took his interest.

#### Learning by experience

We find learning by experience very important. That is why we took Dickid to see a variety of projects so he could get to know a great range of different working methods. He learned how youth culture work is defined in Germany, what kind of funding opportunities there

exists, how the actors are networked and how, in his view, the enormous regulatory and administrative rules and regulations guide the work of German NGOs in the cultural area.

We visited projects in Minden, Wiesbaden and Frankfurt a. M., met up with music projects, artists and decision makers at the Berlin Musik Week, set up a network meeting at Hip Hop Stützpunkt and began the planning for a German-Chinese hip hop exchange in 2014.

Dickid also participated in a meeting of the *Graffiti Lobby Berlin* during which artists, protagonists of the creative economy and youth culture supported the idea to fight for legalizing graffiti and create legal walls in Berlin. He got an impression on how the civil society works in Germany and how participants are integrated in the planning and decision-making processes.

#### Achievements

Dickid thinks his stay in Germany, his newly acquired knowledge and new contacts will be a big help for future projects with countries from the EU region.

Infobox

## Berlin Massive e.V.

Berlin Massive is part of a network of urban artists, designers and volunteers in the field of urban culture since 2006. It offers artistic workshops and cultural youth education, all with an intercultural perspective. It puts high emphasis on the mutual learning opportunities that arise through artistic dialogue

## Profile Akim Walta

Akim Walta got involved in Hip Hop culture in the early '80s, and shortly afterwards started to organize early Hip Hop jams, festivals, and rap tours in Germany and Europe. In 2007 he founded the "HipHop Stützpunkt", a re-constructed factory building that now serves as a head office for cultural activities, including offices, gallery, artists room and a music & video studio. He also co-organized the open non-profit project "The Campus of Urban Youth Cultures" which was presented World Expo 2010 in Shanghai.



Moreover, all the experiences encouraged him to approach institutions and authorities in China to ask for support for future projects. He already managed to arrange a Chinese-German meeting between young hip hop artists in 2014 in cooperation with the Guangzhou Youth Culture Department.

## CHEE Productions hosting Akim Walta

Akim visited CHEE Productions in Guangzhou for 6 weeks from September to November 2013.

### Objectives

Akim's objectives were to learn more about hip hop culture in China and how Chinese NGOs work. He also wanted to get in touch with new organizations and arrange meetings for future cooperation.

### Networking in the field of cultural youth education

Akim Walta has been involved in Hip Hop and Urban Art for almost three decades. He has gathered plenty of experience on projects both with and on China. The exchange, however, was a unique possibility for him to gain a better understanding of Chinese NGO's working methods without the usual lack of time.

In addition to working with CHEE productions on their projects he was also able to meet potential new partners.

His trip to China began in Beijing, where he participated in a Graffiti productions with various international artists and visited the Beijing Design Week. He was able to take part in discussions with an art collective to discuss graffiti events as integral part of the annual festival in the 798 art district. Moreover, there were meetings with the cultural deputy of Beijing city visits and the art director of 798 art district.

In Guangzhou he was involved in talks with the department for youth culture on future German-Chinese cooperations and preparations for a youth exchange in 2014.



*Dickid and Akim painting the main wall of Guangzhou Youth Palace*

### At Chee Productions

Apart from several new encounters in different cities, workshops and youth cultural events Akim Walta had the opportunity to get to know a Chinese NGO's working conditions at Chee Productions.

From his point of view their work is a lot less planned and organized than in Germany. There seems also a lot less paper work involved, since they mainly communicate via social networks. A lot of things appeared not to be regulated and were planned on short notice and spontaneously with partners and in the networks.

In contrast there seems to be a lot more social engagement by volunteers than in Germany. Many projects have been successfully realized on low budget and with much improvisation.

### Different and similar approaches to urban and youth culture

Akim found that urban and youth cultures are not in the focus of the large state-associated Youth Federations urban and youth cultures – yet. They rather focus on services and support for young people, such as assisting young job-seekers or protecting childrens' rights. The Youth Federations' so called "Youth Palaces"

*“The Twinning provided us with a unique chance to explore each others’ working environment and methods without the usual pressure of time. It meant a very welcome opportunity to leverage our cooperation to a more professional level, share experiences and learn from each other. A kind of internship that is rarely enabled by conventional support programmes.”*

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*Akim Walta, Berlin Massive*

offer young people a large variety of activities: from music to sports and arts & crafts.

But he discovered that the Youth Federation delegates were very much interested in the work of Chee productions and Berlin Massive as well as in joint future projects – especially with regard to equal opportunities for young people with different backgrounds.

As a concrete cooperation project Akim was nominated senior consultant for the youth palace in Guangzhou. Supported by the Provincial Youth federation, the building is planned to be transformed into a real culture place with a focus on urban and youth culture.

In contrast to the state-run federations, independent organizations working in the field of cultural youth education have very little funding but work with highly motivated volunteers. One’s own initiative is absolutely crucial, but these initiatives often lead to very creative activities and fundraising solutions. Independent organizations are generally well connected with each other, and in their work they experience surprisingly little interference by state actors.

# Hunan Aimier & Chickenshed

*The two organizations started working together in 2012. With the exchange they aimed at improving their cooperation in providing inclusive theatre workshops in China. They worked on train-the-trainer programs and used the exchange to deepen ties and transfer of Know-how.*

## Topic of exchange: Inclusive Theatre

Chickenshed and Hunan Aimier are both non-profit organizations with the main aim of integrating previously excluded groups into mainstream activities. Chickenshed specializes in using theatre and the performing arts to integrate disabled children, young people at risk of offending or children within lower socio-economic backgrounds. Aimier is committed to the rehabilitation, education and vocational training of people with intellectual disabilities and children with autistic disorder. Aimier saw the potential and value of performing arts for their organization and they both started working together in 2012, in order to bring inclusive theatre to the city of Changsha. With this recent exchange they not only had the possibility to develop professional workshop models for different age groups, but also to develop plans for a sustainable partnership.

## Hunan Aimier hosting Dave Carey and Charlie Kemp

Dave Carey and Charlie Kemp visited Hunan Aimier in Changsha for 2 weeks in January 2014.



*Dave and Charlie's arrival at their twinning partner organization Hunan Aimier*

### Objectives

Dave and Charlie came to Hunan with the objectives to share, train and help build sustainability in the practise

Infobox

## Hunan Aimier, Hunan Province<sup>1</sup>

Founded in 1999, Hunan Aimier is the first NPO in Hunan that has committed to the rehabilitation, education and vocational training of people with intellectual disabilities and children with autistic disorder. It provides services for these people using the vast resources of volunteers under the guide of the idea for social work that help people to help themselves.



*Dave and Charlie giving a train-the-trainer workshop in Changsha*

of inclusive theatre in China. This can mean bringing some disabled children into a group of mainstream children and creating a performance piece that helps to unlock their creativity and gain a wider understanding of the society within which they live. The aim of this particular project was to help support Aimier in the development of this provision within Changsha initially and then disseminate to a wider population

### Supporting inclusive theatre in China

The main thrust of the partnership has been to train practitioners and through this process produce a theatre show involving an inclusive group of children from the Changsha area.

- A script and songs were developed during October – January.
- In January a 20 minute version of the show was performed by 30 children, aged 8–12. (This included 5 children with autism who attend care within Aimier’s existing framework). The performance was watched by an audience of nearly 100 parents, teachers and social workers.
- Script developments are being under taken ahead of final performances in a theatre (August).
- 20 practitioners from across China have undertaken certificated training.
- Aimier now has a team of 3 workshop leaders/directors and a support/volunteer team of 6.
- Local authorities, media and key stakeholders are taking a keen interest in the project.

### Achievements

This twinning, although beset with problems in achieving an each way visit has been an unqualified success.

Throughout the 6 month period there has been an excellent exchange of training and information via regular Skype meetings and ‘we chat’ conversations. The visit to Changsha resulted in a performance by 30 children to parents, caregivers, and interested parties. There were many successful meetings aimed at identifying future partners, funders and creative collaborators.

Infobox

## Chickenshed, United Kingdom

Chickenshed specialises in using theatre and the performing arts to access previously excluded groups like disabled children or children within lower socio-economic backgrounds into mainstream activities. It uses performing arts to foster a higher understanding and tolerance between individuals and and a sense of self-empowerment across a diverse range of individuals.

### Profile Dave Carey

Dave Carey is creative director of Chicken Shed Theatre Company. Educated in London and America, he has worked around the world bringing Chickenshed’s inclusive approach to theatre to a wider audience. He has co-written many shows with Chickenshed including the award winning ‘Crime of the Century’ which has toured inner-city schools for over five years, engaging young people in the issues of gang culture, youth violence and knife crime.

A week's training with 20 participants from all over South-East China allowed Chickenshed to demonstrate its 'train the trainer' approach which will go a long way to strengthening the sustainability of such a project.

An excellent relationship with Hunan TV which was cemented during the visit to Changsha will result in a mass market documentary which will be an excellent and compelling tool in forming public opinion on these issues.

Hunan-Aimier now allocates several hours a week to a staff member to manage the project as well various hours to staff members to be involved in the project. They are also now running weekly performing arts workshops for 30 young people every week.

There are on-going discussions about the development of workshops for extended age groups creating a second workshop aimed at teenagers and a third workshop aimed at younger children – (6–8).

*“What does Chickenshed get out of it?” I am often asked. Well the truth is that in deconstructing what we as a company and NGO do in order to accurately and succinctly describe it and share it with an organisation in China we have learnt more about what we do, how we do it and the outcomes. Why? Because we believe that as an organisation we must continue to grow (ethically and philosophically) and push the boundaries and reach of our work. It is only by engaging with people such as Pan Yu and Hunan-Aimier that we can continue our journey.”*

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*Dave Carey, Chickenshed*

#### **Anmerkung**

1. Remark: Due to visa difficulties, none of Aimier's staff was able to visit Chickenshed in the UK before the editorial deadline of this publication

## 3. Highlights of the Twinning 2013/14

### Tangible results and global networks

*The most astonishing result of the twinning is the speed with which the bilateral partnerships developed into a catalyst for transnational or international information exchange and networking. In many of the issues, it became clear that national boundaries do not follow the concerns of civil societies.*

Above all, the snowball effect created by linking the networks of the European twinner with the network of the Chinese twinner produced welcome byproducts (as listed below). Information sharing often led to insights which made more global perspectives necessary or useful.

Besides the effect of building sustainable partnerships, the exchange has also produced “real” tangible products and events. To document at least a few of these “highlights,” we’ve included them here.

#### Green Credit Policy

- The Chinese NGO Green Watershed and the Dutch NGO Both ENDS participated in the EuroIFI Watchnet Network Annual Meeting (European International Financial Institutions Watchers) in Kosovo. For the very first time, the EuroIFI had a Chinese colleague introducing China’s legal framework of green credit and overseas investment regulations.
- Since that meeting, Green Watershed has been working together with Both ENDS partner CEE Bank Watch on Chinese overseas investment in Central and Eastern Europe. Both twinners contributed to CEE Bank Watch’s development of an action toolkit for citizens and NGOs targeting harmful investments of Chinese investors, specifically that of Chinese Investment Banks (which went online shortly after the exchange and can be found at: <http://kingsofcoal.org/>).
- For the first time, the Dutch NGO Both ENDS met with activists from the Chinese Green Choice Alliance, an alliance of more than 40 environmental organizations formed in 2007, which monitors enterprises and encourages consumers to take into account the environmental performance of the companies whose products they purchase.
- For the first time, a representative from Chinese civil society formally presented a paper at the World Bank’s Annual meeting in Washington. Yu Chen highlighted the necessity of developing stronger safeguards and regulations based on concrete rules in order for the World Bank to avoid duplicating China’s failure in environmental protection partly due to its hollow principles (see reports).
- For the first time, Green Watershed actively participated in a consultation meeting of the World Bank in Brussels about the Bank’s safeguards review.



*Pieter Jansen with NGO colleagues and air filter masks*

- Networking: For the first time, the Dutch NGO Both ENDS met with activists from the Chinese Green Choice Alliance, an alliance of more than 40 environmental organizations. Formed in 2007, they monitor enterprises and encourage consumers to take into account the environmental performance of the companies whose products they purchase. To promote a responsible sustainable role by both international and Chinese investors, especially financial institutions, the twinning also networked with other Chinese and European activists.
- Green Watershed visited the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to present their argument in favor of the integration of human rights assessments into the World Bank safeguards.
- The twinning produced a translation of the executive summary of a research paper by Green Watershed from 10th of November 2013 with the title "Green Credit Footprint of Chinese Banks (2008–2012)." The report is an assessment of 16 Chinese Banks and their social and environmental performances. The release gave both organizations the opportunity to approach the international bank-

*"For the promotion of safeguards it could be strategically wise to form an occasional cooperation between Chinese civil society and international financing institutions. So far we have achieved an initial willingness to talk and listen to each other."*

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*Pieter Jansen, Both ENDS*

ers' community at the United Nations conference on sustainable finance in Beijing in November 2013. Both used the time of the twinning to disseminate the report among international bankers, media and international conferences.

- Both ENDS liaised between Green Watershed and the secretariat of the Equator Principles Banks at the United Nations conference in Beijing.
- March 15, the 18th One-World-Conference of North-rhine-Westphalia took place in Bonn. The event was attended by more than 300 international guests, mainly from the civil society sector. The Stiftung Asienhaus contributed with a workshop




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*Yu Xiaogang (Green Watershed) offering Achim Steiner (Director General of the UN Environmental Program) the Green Credit Report*

on China's resource policy. During the workshop "China's resource policies: Africa, Burma and us", Pieter Jansen gave his input on Chinese civil society actions concerning the Chinese resource policies.

- Mutual benefit: In Europe there is a huge knowledge gap concerning Chinese investment policies. Green Watershed introduced Both ENDS to Chinese Green Credit policies and to the functioning of the Chinese banking sector in general. Both ENDS introduced Green Watershed's staff and a broader audience to the "ins and outs" of the functioning of World Bank's financial safeguards system.

## Water policies

- For the first time, the European Transboundary River Policy was introduced to a network of Chinese NGOs working on transboundary water issues in Asia.
- A Chinese civil society representative was able to attend the water group session of the German Forum on Environment and Development.
- YEDI re-strengthened its relationship to some German NGOs they knew before and also explored some new links.



Liu Yun (YEDI) and Michael Bender (Grüne Liga) at the Flood Protection Seminar

- YEDI Through this platform, most experts in this group will be made accessible to them for future cooperation.
- For the first time, a Chinese NGO in Yunnan/Southwest China working on water policies is now listed in the German Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) group mailing list.
- Both organizations drafted a joint project proposal for the SwissRe foundation to apply for funding for YEDI- water-supply-project.
- Participation in the opening session of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020 for Yunnan Province on the development of a five-year action plan provided Grüne Liga with direct insight into the ongoing nature protection policy implementation in Yunnan.
- Networking with many environmental activists in Kunming either by taking part in workshops/conferences or through individual meetings.
- Joint participation in the Beijing meetings of the 5th Private Foundation Forum Annual Conference and Union of Self-Disciplinary Organizations.
- GRÜNE LIGA e.V. introduced YEDI's water program to potential donors in Germany and Europe.

*“The exchange program helped me to get a better understanding of networking within German NGOs and some innovative working methodologies and public advocacy.”*

Liu Yun, YEDI



Ding Peng with a magistrate judge and a solicitor



*“NGO workers and lawyers would benefit from their peers in the UK as they learn about the role of lawyers in influencing public awareness and the discourse on human rights, NGO campaigns and lobbying on laws and policy, and the NGO monitoring of police power.”*

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*Ding Peng, PIDLI 2013*

## Right of detainees – pre-trial detention processes

- The UK-based Human Rights NGO The Rights Practice and the Chinese NGO PIDLI used the twinning program to prepare for their next three years of cooperation.
- The Rights Practice enhanced their knowledge on legal and political issues involving current legal reforms in China.
- The Rights Practice enabled PIDLI to learn about the UK judicial and legal aid system through court observation, discussion with British lawyers and judges, and job-shadowing in the British policy office. The treatment of detainees and the respect for their humanity impressed the Chinese participant most, as in his report he highlighted the custody record of the police: “As a lawyer trained in the Chinese legal system, it was very interesting and inspiring to observe practice in UK courts, for example the plea procedures and probation in magistrate courts, but also the police custody record system which is nearly detailed to the minute, kept in computers and disclosed to the defense.”
- PIDLI learned that there is also a list of detainees’ personal belongings and that there are guidelines for sentencing that is shared and followed by both judges and lawyers. He also learned that the duty of solicitors in police stations is not only to tell their clients to remain silent, but also one of obtaining information from the police, and there is a detailed checklist and advanced peer review system in the UK to assure the quality of legal aid, which could be easily replicated in China. These insights will help PIDLI to carry out future projects on legal aid and human rights in China.



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*Dickid and Akim meeting several youth department officials of the city of Guangzhou*

- The Chinese participant learned about the important condition necessary for this system to function, namely the independence of lawyers and the autonomy of the Bar Association and Law Society, which is unusual in China.
- PIDLI participated in two conferences on human rights issues.

## Urban Youth Culture

- For the first time, German Hip Hop culture presented their cooperation with Chinese Urban Youth activists in the Philippines and Jakarta and prepared jointly for the Asean Urban Culture Network in Singapore.
- The Chinese social enterprise “Chee production” met the *Graffiti Lobby Berlin* which supports the legalization of street art and the creation of legal graffiti walls in Berlin.
- Chinese Hip Hop urban youth culture was presented at Berlin Music Week and different festivals all over Germany. Dickid visited projects in Minden, Wiesbaden and Frankfurt a.M., met up with music projects, artists and decision-makers at Berlin Music

Week and set up a network meeting at Hip Hop Stützpunkt.

- Akim Walta from Berlin Massive e.V. met with several high ranking decision makers in China such as the cultural deputy of the city of Beijing, the Department for Youth Culture in Guangzhou, and met the manager of Art District 798 in order to prepare for joint projects and a youth exchange in 2014.
- Together with the Guangzhou Youth Culture Department, Akim managed to arrange a Chinese-German meeting between young Hip Hop artists in 2014.
- Akim Walta became senior consultant for the Youth Palace in the southern city of Guangzhou. The Guangzhou Youth Palace has been transformed into an urban youth culture center. The Guangzhou Urban Youth Culture community’s new ideas, like comic art youth culture workshops, “lowrider” workshops<sup>1</sup>, individual music studios, tattoo studios, the integration of local handicrafts into music, skate and BMX-culture were transferred to Germany.

## Inclusive Theater

- Chickenshed delivered certified training to 20 practitioners from across China, and Aimier now has a team of three workshop leaders/directors and a support/volunteer team of six.
- As a result of Chickenshed’s workshop, a show was performed by 30 children, five of whom are autistic. The performance was watched by an audience of nearly 100 parents, teachers and social workers.
- Local authorities, media and key stakeholders have taken a keen interest in the project.

### Notes

1. A special art form based on graffiti art: <http://www.lowriderarte.com>



*Theatre workshop jointly organized by Chickenshed and Aimier*

## 4. Sustainability – Future of Partnerships

***It is not easy to evaluate and measure the sustainability of the links between organizations and activists from Europe and China. If the people involved use the time to prepare for their coming projects, it evidences their commitment to future joint collaboration. Some used the twinning to deepen their existing relationships while others started from scratch. Whether these connections prove stable or not can only be evaluated in the long run. Therefore the continued program foresees a meeting of exchange alumni, tentatively scheduled for October 2014. What follows here, however, is a look at what we already know concerning the future of the partnerships. Although the issue of funding more or less concerns all NGOs, most of them do very well in finding alternative sources for continuing their collaborations.***

### Green Watershed & Both ENDS

Both ENDS and Green Watershed keep in contact and regularly exchange information regarding events in the area of financial regulation and monitoring Chinese investments. CEE Bank Watch, which partners with both organizations, is participating in the 2014 round of the twinning program and therefore can connect and continue the exchange with Green Watershed and Both ENDS.

In future, Green Watershed and Both ENDS are planning to share among themselves information concerning Chinese overseas investments, China's Green Credit Policy, international civil society action targeting Chinese investors as well as the dynamics of Chinese NGOs in the field of sustainable finance.

Green Watershed will also offer support to Both ENDS' work on environmental issues along the Mekong River upon request of Both ENDS and in Green Watershed's possible capacity.

Both ENDS and Green Watershed moreover plan to continue their cooperation by giving presentations internationally. The purpose of giving international presentations about Chinese banking regulations to an international audience is threefold: to build the mutual trust between Chinese and international stakeholders necessary for an upward harmonization of social and environmental standards in the world; to stop the hide and blame game that now and then appears in discussions around banking regulations, as the World Bank wants to avoid companies switching to banks like those in China that now have softer regulations and therefore tend to weaken World Bank standards; and finally to make Chinese civil society part of international NGO efforts to advocate for stronger environmental and social policies.

Chen Yu will continue to work with Both ENDS as a volunteer (tentatively scheduled between June and December 2014) and will participate in Both ENDS' China and green finance related activities.

### YEDI & Grüne Liga

Further exchange between YEDI and Grüne Liga on the topic of sanitation and drinking water supply, river and lake protection or/and dams issues might come to fruition in the near future as the two organizations drafted a project proposal which was sent to possible donors.

YEDI and Grüne Liga were not able to continue their collaboration immediately after completion of the twinning due to a lack of funding for the Chinese NGO, which has temporarily forced the closure of that office. Nevertheless, fundraising activities with international and Chinese donors continue.

## PIDLI & The Rights Practice

The UK-based human rights NGO The Rights Practice and the Chinese NGO PIDLI used the twinning program to prepare for their next three years of cooperation. Starting from October 2013 they will conduct a series of pilot initiatives in five Chinese locations to show ways in which the pre-trial detention process can better protect the rights of detainees and conform more closely to China's new Criminal Procedure Law. They will also have a new project on duty lawyers and a third on legal aid.

## Chee Productions & Berlin Massive e.V

Both organizations were very appreciative of the twinning exchange, viewing it as the opportunity to leverage their cooperation, bringing it to a more professional level as they shared experiences and learned from each other.

Berlin Massive and Chee Production have continued their collaboration in 2014 with several youth exchange and music cooperation projects. Both support each other in mobilizing support and funding from third parties in Germany and China and beyond.

## Hunan Aimier & Chickenshed

Chickenshed is going to participate in a conference organized by Hunan Aimier in July 2014 and will use this opportunity to stage a performance with the children with autistic disorder together with Hunan Aimier.

The outlook for their future collaboration and partnership looks very strong indeed. A proposed trip to Changsha in July has been funded in part by an organization based in Hong Kong. This will result in a full theater production to which many officials, local government officers, and potential donors will be invited. Additional funding is expected to be obtained from Hunan TV and further expressions of interest have come from Hunan University.

Various creative collaborations are under discussion and Chickenshed are investing time in the development of a 'distance learning facility' using Skype and video.

## 5. Synergies with partners and other exchange programs

***The EU-China NGO twinning program is embedded in a strong network of partners of Stiftung Asienhaus. The participating organizations will have the chance to use these networks and benefit from synergies. They will provide the opportunity to link up with partners in Europe and Asia more effectively and make use of different facilities.***

One example is the partnership with the bilingual platform China Dialogue (CD)/Third Pole. CD will accompany the twinning program through a special feature in their online news platform, exchanging information especially on environmental issues and new laws, and cooperating in arranging events for European and Chinese activists.

The board of the exchange program also offers the opportunity to benefit from the experience of other exchange programs. The AFS exchange program can rely on more than 30 years of experience in student



*Isabel Hilton, China Dialogue, on our civil society conference*



*Green Watershed, Asia Catalyst, Friends of Nature collaborating with the NGO-Twinning team*

and teacher exchange programs. The Chinese NGO umbrella organization CANGO is likewise an experienced partner in international exchange programs.

Other board members like China Development Brief or former head of Friend of Nature Li Bo regularly offer help and advice for fine-tuning and upgrading the program. They support the program in various ways, be it by posting Calls for Applications, identifying partners or helping arranging events and visits for the twinning.

Sam Geall, member of the board of the twinning program and working for China Dialogue, recently published a report for ECRAN (Europe-China Research and Advice Network) on the topic of “Chinese environmental governance” with a target group of European decision-makers, in which he mentioned the Twinning Program as one example of successful cooperation.

A further example is the cooperation with the University of Nottingham, China Policy Institute (CPI).

Intertwined since our jointly organized EU-China Civil Society Forum on Participatory Public Policy (eu-china.net, 2010–13), we have shared our passion for intensifying and upgrading civil society dialogue with CPI. As a result, Andreas Fulda organized a series on the NGO twinning for the CPI Blog which offered tremendous publicity for the activities of the participating organizations. Through this, the twinning activities and partnerships were presented to a community of 15,000 users (see the link at the end of this document).

There are other Asian and European exchange networks which usually do not work with NGOs or do not include China in their work. As mentioned in the introduction, 2013 was the year when several south-north exchange programs emerged. We are now in the process of merging and informing these networks. Especially in the field of south-south networking, synergies could develop between traditional development aid programs which have now started their reverse program, inviting their traditional partners from the south to Germany.

The screenshot shows the University of Nottingham website's China Policy Institute Blog. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'UK Campus', 'China Campus', and 'Malaysia Campus'. Below this is a search bar and a navigation menu with links like 'Home', 'Current Students', 'Study with us', etc. The main content area displays three blog posts:

- Increasing Respect for Human Rights in China's Criminal Justice System** (May 25, 2014): Written by Tim Millar, discussing the New Criminal Procedure Law (New CPL) in China.
- Supporting inclusive theatre in China – Act 1** (May 22, 2014): Written by Dave Carey, describing a conference on EU-China Civil Society Dialogue.
- Green private banks in communist China?** (May 21, 2014): Written by Pieter Jansen, discussing a pilot program for private-sector banks in China.

The right sidebar includes a 'Subscribe by email' form, a 'Links' section with categories like 'Asia elections', 'Malaysia GE 2013', and 'China', and a 'Categories' list with items such as 'China & Development Aid', 'Chinese internet', and 'Culture and Media'.

Screenshot CPI Blog

## 6. Connecting civil societies is a key goal of the Robert Bosch Stiftung

*Given the increasingly close cultural and economic relationship between China and Germany, assuring political stability in East Asia and strengthening relations with China in the fields of good governance and civil society are of growing importance to Germany and Europe. Since 2005, the Robert Bosch Stiftung has been supporting German-Chinese relations with a variety of programs and projects. We are focusing our activities on media, good governance/civil society, education and culture. The development of this focus relies on collaborations with trustworthy partners with extensive experience in the country – Chinese partners as well as German ones, such as the Stiftung Asienhaus in Cologne.*

Strengthening and connecting civil societies internationally are key goals of the Robert Bosch Stiftung's program activities. China's high-speed economic development combined with the state's retreat from social services created many new challenges but also opportunities for a fledgling civil society. What initiatives in the fields of social justice, environmental protection

and others are lacking is often not so much the financial means, but leadership expertise, management skills and experience in international collaboration. The EU-China NGO Twinning Program, the first of its kind between China and Europe, therefore is a very timely initiative. The program is supporting civil society organizations through a carefully selected training and exchange program. We are very happy to say that this program is truly a European one, including more than a dozen countries. We are impressed by the quality and the broad range of applications ranging from environmental protection to waste management and social innovation.

China's overall reform process is a long-term project that needs strong and reliable partners who are willing to engage *yi bu yi bu* – one step at a time. The Robert Bosch Stiftung, celebrating 50 years of shaping the future this year, is certainly looking forward to walking this road.

*Christian Hänel*  
Head of Department International Relations  
America and Asia  
Robert Bosch Stiftung

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*Twinnings at the Berlin office of the Robert Bosch Stiftung with program officer Oliver Radtke and program assistant Nicola Hesse.*



## 7. Conclusion

*We view this first round of EU-China NGO Twinning as a tremendous success in terms of the benefits for the individual participating organizations as well as regarding strengthened or newly established partnerships and the general cooperation between civil societies in Europe and China.*

Without exception, the exchange fellows went into their work-study experiences enthusiastically and got to know different working environments, structures and methods in the respective civil society sector. In addition, all exchange participants took part in self-organized capacity building workshops, networking events, and thematic conferences.

Next to the highlights mentioned above, all participants learned a lot about CSO management, governance, fundraising, and human resources in China, the Netherlands, UK, and Germany. They observed and better understood the British, Dutch, German, and Chinese legal and political framework for civil society actions. They also learned about the strengths and limits of CSOs in China, UK, Germany, and the Netherlands.

*“It’s amazing what kind of people you gathered here. I really do not understand why there is not more exchange with NGOs from Europe.”*

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*Pieter Jansen, Both ENDS*

In addition, all organizations were able to extend their networks, but could also explore issues that sit outside their usual work foci and discover links between related topics.

One more indicator for the efficacy and outreach of the program needs to be pointed out: For us as organizers it has proven difficult to mobilize European interest in



*NGO Twinning Graffiti produced by the twinnings Akim Walta and Dickid*

China. However, one of the most positive impacts of the Twinning came in that all participating European organizations are currently considering the intensification of their China-related work. They have also shared their enthusiasm about the exchange as well as information with other European organizations in their networks. This has further led to a considerable increase in interest and applications from European organizations for the following round of exchange in 2014.

Due to the positive feedback the initial launch received, the program will continue. It has been established as an annual

exchange, and the number of participating organizations has been increased from 10 to 14. The selected participants for 2014 continue to broaden the diversity of civil society topics. They will be exchanging on the topics of chemical and heavy metal pollution, agrarian certificate policies and small-scale farming, waste management, bank investment monitoring, carbon markets, and pro bono models.



# Bonus Material

- Video on the Urban Youth culture twinning: <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2014/02/video-hip-hopper-aus-berlin-und-guangzhou-im-eu-china-ngo-twinning/>
- Video: Twinning Participant Michael Bender (Grüne Liga e.V.) on His Exchange Experience with the Kunming NGO YEDI: <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2014/01/video-twinning-participant-michael-bender-gruene-liga-e-v-on-his-exchange-experience-with-the-kunming-ngo-yedi/#sthash.Wb03aTHq.dpuf>
- Video: Akim Walta and dickid talk about their experiences and present some of the Chinese-German Hip-Hop experiments: <https://www.youtube.com/user/asienhaus>, and <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2014/02/video-hip-hopper-aus-berlin-und-guangzhou-im-eu-china-ngo-twinning/>
- Report on the capacity building seminars: <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2013/12/chinese-civil-society-advocacy-strategies-successful-capacity-building-workshop-for-european-twinners-in-kunming-provides-important-insights/>
- Report on the reflection seminar: <http://www.eu-china-twinning.org/2014/02/2014-2-24-eu-china-reflection-workshop-provided-the-interested-public-with-discussion-on-eu-china-relationship-and-deep-insights-into-the-twinning-cologne-germany/>
- Nottingham University China Policy Institute Blog Special Issue “Chinese Civil Society in Transition: Views from Europe”: <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/2014/05/18/chinese-civil-society-in-transition-views-from-europe/>
- Chinese Civil Society in Transition: Views from Europe, Andreas Fulda: <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/?p=35572>
- Citizen diplomacy as the bedrock of EU-China relations, Horst Fabian: <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/?p=35592>
- Releasing the full potential of EU-China civil society collaboration, Nora Sausmikat <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/?p=35662>
- Green private banks in communist China?, Pierer Jansen <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/?p=35682>
- Supporting inclusive theatre in China – Act, Dave Carrey: <http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/chinapolicyinstitute/?p=35622>

# About the Autors

## Nora Sausmikat

Dr Nora Sausmikat is the head of the China program at Stiftung Asienhaus, and is currently also responsible for the EU-China NGO twinning program. Sausmikat holds a post-PhD degree in sinology. She studied sinology, political sciences, anthropology, Tibetan language and drama at the Sichuan University in Chengdu/China and the Free University of Berlin. Her thesis analyzed the interplay between public discourse and individual memory of the Cultural Revolution (Peter Lang 2002). She works as university lecturer for contemporary China, author and consultant for civil society projects and China-related media reports or programs. In her research, she specialized on the topics of political reform and political memory as well as civil society developments in China. From 2004–06, she was the program director of the German-Chinese fellowship program “Beijing Case” (Beijing/Berlin) at the Federal Cultural Foundation of Germany and Goethe Institute Beijing. Her latest publications include “Habermas aus indigener Perspektive – Die Rezeption der Frankfurter Schule innerhalb der Diskussion um politische Reform (交往理性之中国探索, 本土化视角下的哈贝马斯——从中国政治改革论争看法兰克福学派的影响)”, In Iwo Amelung, Anett Dippner (Eds.), *Kritische Verhältnisse*, Frankfurt: Campus 2009, pp. 263–286 (German/Chinese) and “Chinese environmental movements: civil society discourses on climate change and environmental protection”, in Carmen Meinert (Ed.), *Nature, Environment, and Culture in East Asia: The Challenge of Climate Change*, Leiden: Brill 2013.

## Inga Gebauer

Inga Gebauer is the Project Assistant of the Stiftung Asienhaus’ China Program. Her role involves supporting the implementation of the EU-China NGO Twinning as well as managing the project’s communications. Before joining the Stiftung Asienhaus in 2013 she has been employed by different media in Germany and China and continues to work as a freelance journalist. Inga holds a Master degree in Chinese Area Studies and Political Science from the University of Cologne, Germany and wrote her thesis on Chinese women’s political participation.

## German-Chinese relations at the Robert Bosch Stiftung

In 2006 German-Chinese relations were established as a funding area at the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The foundation is focusing its funding on the fields of media, good governance/civil society, education, and culture. The exchange program for journalists “Media Ambassadors China – Germany”, for example, is organized in cooperation with the International Media Center Hamburg and Tsinghua University in Beijing. Every year, sixteen fellows spend three months abroad. With its “German-Chinese Judge Exchange Program” 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 the foundation sends German university graduates to Chinese universities for one to two years. With “Grenzgänger China – Deutschland” the foundation is also offering literary research fellowships for German- and Chinese-speaking authors and film makers. Since January 1st 2012, the only official Chinese social media account of a German foundation is online at [www.weibo.com/robertboschstiftung](http://www.weibo.com/robertboschstiftung) with about 8.000 followers.

<http://www.bosch-stiftung.de>

## Stiftung Asienhaus China Program

The China program of Stiftung Asienhaus focuses on civil society initiatives in China and Europe as well as on analysis and background information on China. Our impressions of China are as conflicting and contradictory as the developments in China itself. The future of our world will depend on how the relations between Europe and China will develop. Therefore, proficient complex information, political dialogues and personal encounters can contribute to social and ecological justice.

Since 2008 the China Program engages in several exchange projects and dialogues. In 2010, the blog project “Voices from China” (SAC, [www.stimmen-of-china.de](http://www.stimmen-of-china.de)) was launched. It translates Chinese online debates and blog posts for the German public. The latest projects are the “EU-China NGO Twinning Program” and the “EU-China Civil Society Portal”. The twinning project offers NGOs the opportunity of several weeks of job-shadowing in Europe and China. The Civil Society Portal ([eu-china.net](http://eu-china.net)) provides expertise on China for European NGOs.

Furthermore, the China program organizes workshops, publications, study tours for Chinese and European NGOs and foundations, exhibitions, lectures, and open forums.

<http://www.asienhaus.de/china/>

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## About Robert Bosch **Stiftung**

The Robert Bosch Stiftung is one of the major German foundations associated with a private company and has managed the philanthropic bequest of company founder Robert Bosch for 50 years. Indeed it was his entrepreneurial vision, political farsightedness, moral fortitude and charitable initiatives that set the standards for the work of the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

人本 Humane

公正 Socially just

环保 Environmentally sound



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## About the Stiftung Asienhaus

The 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 “(German) Asia Foundation”. Its founder, Prof. Dr. Günter Freudenberg, and several other associations working on Asia joined together in 1995 in Essen and founded the Asia House. In October 2012, the Asia House moved its headquarters to Cologne.