



Plateau Perspectives

Annual Report 2013

**Supporting Mountain Communities
Developing Sustainable Livelihoods**





PLATEAU PERSPECTIVES

Community Development & Conservation

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Linking Society, Culture and the
Environment in Tibetan Highlands

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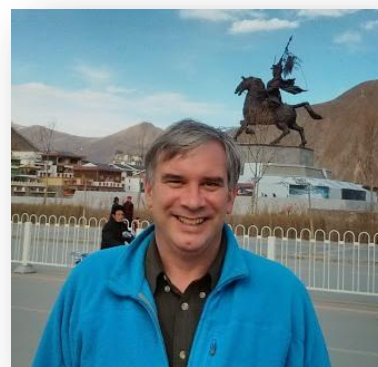
Letter from the International Director

Over 15 years of foundations have been laid – collaborating with herding communities to build their capacity in environmental protection, to help establish health and education services appropriate for pastoral areas, to assist in the development of ecological business ventures, and more. It also has been exciting to see communities develop herders' cooperatives and rural development associations through which they have widened their experiences and opportunities, strategically taking forward new approaches in community governance and income generation.

Plateau Perspectives continues to expand its area of work and its influence. Much of the community co-management approach that it has promoted since 2005 now is adopted within government plans and is being further developed and refined through community partnerships encompassed within a large scale UNDP/GEF-supported sustainable development and conservation project. This work is further supplemented by affiliated projects in the headwaters of the Yangtze and Mekong Rivers and by promoting high level, environment-friendly policy dialogues amongst key stakeholders.

Looking even further into the future and broadening its geographic horizons, Plateau Perspectives' board of directors decided in August 2013 to expand its scope – and to include not only the Tibetan plateau region but also *the surrounding highlands of Central Asia* within its target areas, thus supporting a wider array of mountain communities as they may seek simultaneously to preserve traditions and transition into more global economies. As ever, development of genuine community partnerships and proper consideration of the environment and socio-ecological systems are necessary. In order to assess and direct its own growth, Plateau Perspectives entered in 2013 a deliberate process of self-evaluation and prioritisation – a process that will continue for much of 2014 as well.

Opportunity for further consolidation also presented itself with the renewal of Plateau Perspectives' registration and permission to work in China for the next 5 years. This was followed by further good news, the arrival of **Douglas Henderson** as China Director. Douglas came with his great experience as senior manager in the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) where he served for nearly three decades. As Programme Manager, he managed a team of CIDA officers in co-funding Canadian NGOs for promotion of good governance (e.g., community governance and child protection). He also brings extensive experience working in China including seven years as a diplomat in Beijing managing Canadian aid in the 1980s and 90s. In 2005-09 he was Project Director for an environmental policy and management training project with the Chinese Central Party School and four Provincial Party Schools including Qinghai's. He led a team of international experts in a project that demonstrated Canada's experience in environmental management.



Plateau Perspectives is delighted to welcome Douglas to Qinghai province, China, where he is now Chief Representative in the Xining Office. Douglas and an excellent, energetic team of national staff now work together to assist local communities with projects in environmental management, ecotourism and other income generation initiatives, as well as higher level partnerships and policy dialogue. The field operations team also is supported when needed by other experts including significant contributions made from the Plateau Perspectives Council of Reference.

It is with a good degree of pride that I look back on 2013, despite its surprises and challenges... and with growing confidence that I look forward to 2014 and beyond!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marc Foggia".

Building community leadership, local governance, and agriculture

A key theme of Plateau Perspectives has been to develop field trials on different aspects of local governance in relation to poverty reduction and natural resource (grassland) management. This has included support for the development of revolving funds, herder cooperatives and social enterprises in order to strengthen access and benefit sharing and the sustainable use of grassland resources.

➤ **Community Development Revolving Fund**

This year has brought the successful completion of a second cycle of small loans and repayments for a community development revolving fund model developed in association with colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Ford Foundation. Local herders wrote the agreements and protocols for use of the trust fund (revolving fund) and it is now running well. A full cycle of project submissions, assessments, disbursements, implementation and repayments has been carried out and there is continued enthusiasm and momentum, and a 100% repayment rate to date. The benefits are not only socio-economic in nature, but also pertain to a strengthening of local governance and community cohesion. The collaborative and iterative process of developing the revolving fund has contributed significantly to the achievement of these long-term development outcomes.

➤ **Kegawa Herders' Cooperatives**

The community cooperative established in 2010 progressed well over the past year and membership in 2013 increased from 48 to more than 80 families. Limits were even set to maintain growth at a manageable rate. Nine different working groups have been established with specific tasks assigned for each team. In this way each cooperative members also gradually develop their own management skills and familiarity with the development and administration of coop companies. The groups are: membership, publicity, financial management, product development, sales and store management, ecotourism, research on Tibetan plateau ecology and pastoral systems, skills training, and party membership. A well-attended, participatory annual general meeting now takes place each year in early December.

In partnership with Plateau Perspectives, Kegawa Herders' Cooperative now also collaborates with kora, a social enterprise that produces quality yak wool thermal clothing made with wool sourced from Kegawa herders. These outstanding garments have better insulating properties even than merino wool – see kora.net for more information!



➤ Quinoa Agricultural Trials (Canada Fund project)

Under the expert guidance of its national manager Prof Gongbo Tashi – with his research experience in the propagation of quinoa spanning over twenty years – Plateau Perspectives also continues to expand its agricultural trials in Tibet. The growing and marketing of quinoa by farming communities may help increase their income. Technical input is provided both through field-based demonstration activities and through training workshops for local farmers and government leaders.

The Canadian Embassy's Canada Fund provided funding for an expanded training project in 2013 in Lhatse, Tibet. 269 farmers were trained to grow nutritious quinoa, five times more than the original plan due to strong demand! Agricultural extension workers were also trained to support quinoa farmers in the future. Quinoa co-operatives have been established and 2500 acres will be under cultivation next year.

Developing community ecotourism & protected area management

After several years of baseline work with local communities during which trainings, workshops, community mobilization and capacity building in protected area management and ecotourism have advanced, this year was the official launch of second phase of work – another 5 year project in which these ideas and plans can be brought to full development, supported by HimalPartner, Digni and the Norwegian Government (NORAD). The project's goal is to support the development of community ecotourism as an alternative livelihood option for local herders, in the context of developing new co-management approaches to environmental conservation in protected areas such as nature reserves. In 2013 our work focused on the following areas:



Community Tourism Plans

Based on a strategic ecotourism meeting and study tour to Nepal that were conducted in 2012, the members of an informal network of ecotourism stakeholders in Yushu prefecture were provided with relevant information and recommendations about the development of community ecotourism in the form of Plateau Perspectives' document 'Destination Yushu.'



Trial ecotour routes in seven areas of Zhiduo County were identified, and community dialogues and logistical planning were conducted for future ecotours. The most detailed work was carried out in Lari village (Kegawa area).

Community level tourism planning included the mapping of specific route options, identification of key sites of environmental or cultural interest, identifying and assisting in the development of

local service suppliers for food and transport, and creating or strengthening partnerships with already existing travel industry stakeholders. During the summer footage also was shot for development of a promotional video on ecotourism in the area, which will be used for public awareness and marketing.

A trial printing of several colourful, informative posters about nature, nomads and ecotourism in the Sanjiangyuan area were published in Tibetan and Chinese. Distributed to local government departments and tourism stakeholders, these will later be refined based on feedback provided.

Specialist Training Workshops

In order to further prepare community members for future job opportunities and service needs related to the tourism sector, several training workshops were offered. Specifically, training was provided in basic engine repair and in welding for Kegawa cooperative members during the summer. Cooking and handicrafts training began in the winter, providing additional building blocks for the development of alternative (complementary) livelihood options for local communities in relation to the emerging 'ecotourism industry' in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture.



Environmental and Wildlife Monitoring

Local community members in Lari village wrote a grassland monitoring and wildlife monitoring plan, within the framework of the Kegawa Herders' Cooperative and this project's goal of environmental



responsibility. Community participation in conservation is clearly demonstrated by such forward-looking initiative. Five Kegawa environment committee members were specifically appointed to undertake four annual structured conservation monitoring tours across their home territory. These repeated assessments will assist local government in establishing baselines and protecting the flora and fauna of the Kegawa area. Basic equipment such as binoculars, cameras and GPS are now being provided by Plateau Perspectives to further assist them in this innovative work.



Additional activities also were carried out in 2013 in relation to wildlife monitoring and the mitigation of human-wildlife conflict. The experimental use of solar-powered electric fencing to protect nomads' homes from destructive bear break-ins has continued.

Ecotourism within a Co-management Framework

The development of community ecotourism products (experiences) and regional trails (routes) that may link communities in a network of products and experiences in the Yangtze River headwaters have been researched by Plateau Perspectives staff and are in the process of being compiled into accessible documentation. Environmental monitoring linked to community tourism in a first model village will assist in the development of co-management frameworks, with the aim to demonstrate the viability of environmentally-friendly development and point toward new options to consider for the disbursement of payments for ecological services (or eco-compensations, as these are better known in China). At higher administrative level, 'community beneficial tourism' has been presented to protected area conservation authorities and to tourism authorities as sustainable alternatives.

Strengthening the effectiveness of protected area management for biodiversity conservation

Lessons learned from Plateau Perspectives work with community co-management over the last 12 years have been incorporated into a visionary project run by the provincial Forestry Department. It aims to improve the effectiveness of conservation efforts within the protected area system, particularly taking to scale the trialling of community co-management practice across the province. This United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) / Global Environment Facility (GEF) supported project allows further refinement of co-management and also enables local experiences of this innovative approach to be extended to a broader scale. Plateau Perspectives' director gave substantial direction to the project, and as regional organisational stakeholder Plateau Perspectives has welcomed to participate in several important planning and expert workshops through the year.



Development of rural rehabilitation services in Yushu Prefecture

In response to the April 2010 earthquake in Yushu, Plateau Perspectives assisted in the establishment of a rehabilitation centre in Longbao, a town that was destroyed by the earthquake and had left thousands injured. Local health care staff received training in physiotherapy and occupational therapy. The prefecture government then requested that Plateau Perspectives replicate this work at a larger scale, in the regional centre.

In 2013 Plateau Perspectives provided furniture and equipment for the regional centre, which was built by the government. This contribution will enhance the accommodation and classroom setting for up to 30 trainees. Some of the most useful basic medical equipment was provided to demonstrate what is required for good rehabilitation work.



The aim is to provide training for doctors and health care workers from across the region in rehabilitation medicine so that a service may be provided close to people's homes and hence accessible to those they are designed to serve.

New Initiatives in the Region

Community-based conservation in the Mekong headwaters

Plateau Perspectives recently was awarded a three-year grant from the MacArthur Foundation to develop market-based incentives for community conservation in the source area of the Mekong river. Field-based development of local community cooperatives and ecotourism initiatives will be complemented by policy oriented dialogue with higher level administration.

Beginnings in the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan

Plateau Perspectives affiliate Jesse Montes relocated from Xining, China, to Thimpu, Bhutan, in June 2013. He now teaches environmental sciences at Royal Thimpu College and is also exploring a variety of project opportunities. The development of bee keeping for income generation (as well as serving as a tool for education) is currently under consideration, in collaboration with a national colleague.

Plateau Perspectives: An expanded mission statement

Taking a step back, Plateau Perspectives also reviewed its organisational policy documents in 2013 – and unanimously agreed to extend the geographic scope of its mission, now encompassing not only the Tibetan plateau but also surrounding highlands and mountain areas including the Himalayas and Central Asia. Plateau Perspectives' experience of collaborating with nomad (pastoral) communities and of integrating community development with environmental conservation will be primary focal areas for an expanded scope of work. A strategic 'vision meeting' for board members, field directors and members of Plateau Perspectives' council of reference is scheduled for August 2014, with the aim of reviewing the past decade as well as further refining organisational priorities for the future.

High mountain ecosystems and pastoral communities in Central Asia

In light of its newly extended scope of potential work, a review by Plateau Perspectives staff focused on highlighting geographic areas with overlap between high mountain regions, pastoralist livelihoods and environmental conservation needs and opportunities led to the initial prioritisation of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan as two countries of particular interest. Further research and enquiry in late 2013 about potential opportunities and contributions that could be made by non-profit organisations led Plateau Perspectives to focus even more on Kyrgyzstan as a location in which to develop a new hub of community development and conservation operations.



Regional Maps



Who's who?

COUNCIL OF REFERENCE

Dr Calvin DeWitt, Professor of Environmental Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Sir Brian Heap CBE ScD FRS, former Master of St Edmunds College, Cambridge University
Dr John Hodges, Consultant, formerly with United Nation's Food & Agriculture Organization
Sir John Polkinghorne KBE FRS, former President of Queens College, Cambridge University
Sir Ghilleen Prance FRS VMH, former Director of Kew Royal Botanic Gardens
Dr John Sale, former senior consultant for UNDP as biodiversity specialist
Mr Matthias Stiefel, Executive Director, WSP International
Mr David Taylor, Executive Advisor in Humanitarian Assistance, World Vision International
Dr Normal Wirzba, Professor of Theology and Ecology, Duke University

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORS

Dr Marc Foggin, Founder & International Director
Dr Marion Torrance-Foggin, Development and Health Programme Director

FIELD STAFF (CHINA)

Mr Douglas Henderson, China Director
Mr Gongbo Tashi, Senior National Advisor
Mr Huting, Accountant and Office Manager
Ms He Jifang, Liaison with Qinghai Normal Univ.
Mr Jesse Montes, Technical Advisor (Environment)
Mr Jigme Rabden, Project Officer
Mr Dundrup, Project Officer
Mr Dorje Jyal, Project Officer
Ms Xu Haiying, Office Assistant
Mr Xu Xinan, Vehicle Maintenance & Driver
Dr Thomas Hoejberg, Rehab Project Manager
Mr John Friberg, Technical Advisor (Civil Engineer)



DIRECTORS (CANADA)

Mrs Marjorie Bergen CPA CGA (Treasurer), Manager, SSQ Insurance Company Inc.
Mr Robert E Reynolds BCL, private law practice in Montreal, Quebec
Dr Peter Foggin, emeritus professor, Department of Geography, University of Montreal
Mr Wilbur A Kent (Chair), development expert, Latin America and Caribbean
Dr Walter Willms, Rangeland Ecologist, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Dr Harry Spaling, Professor of Geography & Environmental Studies, The King's University College

TRUSTEES (SCOTLAND)

Ms Tricia Anderson, Project Coordinator, Basic Caring Communities project
Rev Prof Jeremy Begbie, Thomas A Langford Research Professor, School of Divinity, Duke University
Mrs Rachel Begbie, music teacher, Cambridge
Dr Alistair Emslie-Smith, Lead Clinician, Tayside Diabetes Clinical Network
Dr Katherine Emslie-Smith, General Practitioner, Arthurstone Medical Centre
Dr Darren Evans, Lecturer in Conservation Biology, Dept. of Biological Sciences, University of Hull
Mrs Sharon Evans, avian ecologist
Rev Prof Alan Torrance (Chair), Chair of Systematic Theology, St Mary's College, Univ. of St Andrews
Dr Charles Warren, Senior Lecturer, School of Geography & Geosciences, St Andrews University
Mrs Sarah Warren, Art Therapist, Fife Christian Counseling Centre

Publications in 2013

Foggin J.M. and Phillips J. 2013. Horizontal Policy Analysis: A tool to promote sustainable livelihoods development; with implications for Ecological Resettlement and other major development programs in the Tibetan Plateau region. Pp. 3-30 in: Å. Kolås and Zhaluo (eds), Pastoralism in Contemporary China: Policy and Practice. Beijing, China: Social Science Academic Press. [In Chinese]

Foggin, J.M., and Gongbu Zhaxi. 2013. Can Ecological Migration policy in the Tibetan plateau region achieve both conservation goals and human development goals? A review of the Canadian experience of relocation and settlement. In Troy Sternberg and Dawn Chatty (eds), Modern Pastoralism and Conservation: Old Problems, New Challenges. Isle of Harris, UK: White Horse Press.

Foggin, J.M. 2013. 'Destination Yushu' – Development framework and recommendations for the promotion of tourism in rural Qinghai Province, with a focus on Ecotourism and Community Tourism in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Plateau Perspectives: Xining, China.

Financial Summary

Plateau Perspectives' main financial support in 2013 was designated for the following projects:

Main Donor	Development Project	Amount
Government of Norway	Capacity Building for Community Ecotourism and Protected Area Management	CDN \$140,000
Ford Foundation	Natural Resource Management and the Development of Herder Cooperatives	CDN \$25,000
CEDAR Hong Kong Barbour Trust Scotland	Development of Rehabilitation Services in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	CDN \$14,000

The capacity building project focused on community ecotourism and protected area management is audited annually by independent examiner in China. The other project incomes and expenses that come through Canada and Scotland also are reviewed annually by the respective Plateau Perspectives country offices.



Partners and Sponsors

We thank the following organizations and institutions for their assistance over the past year.



Norad



Digni



HimalPartner
Tidl. Tibetmisjonen



FORDFOUNDATION



CFLI - FCIL

Canada Fund for
Local Initiatives



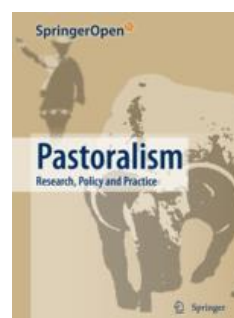
kora.



CEDAR FUND

施達基金會

MacArthur
Foundation



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中国科学院
CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



...and we also would like to thank

- Qinghai Forestry Department
- Sichuan Shuguang Research Centre
- Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve
- Yushu Prefecture Disabilities Association

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Scottish Charity no. SC036202