



IUCN-CEC China Mission Report 4-10 December 2013

Introduction

As part of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication's mandate to strengthen its membership, especially in East Asia, three CEC members embarked upon a 7 day working visit to Beijing China. Upon the invitation of IUCN China office, the Center for Environmental Education & Communications of Ministry of Environmental Protection China and the Beijing Forest Society, the CEC aimed to advise, guide and develop working relationship with these organizations.

Delegation

1. Frits Hesselink, CEC Chair Emeritus and Advisor to Current CEC Chair
2. Nelao Haimbodi, Communication Support to CEC Chair
3. Hanying Li, CEC Steering Committee Member

Communication Campaign for Nature Based Solution Initiative

The delegation started off with the first meeting at IUCN China to offer guidelines as to the development of a Communication campaign for the Megacities and Watersheds Initiative.

In welcoming the team Dr Zhang Yan, the IUCN Programme Coordinator outlined the need to conceptualise a communications framework for the growing watershed management project and expressed his appreciation for CEC to support offer of valuable input. After the Programme Officer offered an overview of the project, Jing Lui, stated that there is high demand for drinking water in megacities. Due to Urbanisation there has been a reduction of drinkable water in these cities and the project has as its main aim to create a coalition of megacities embarking upon nature-based solutions for conserving crucial water resources.

It was clear on the onset that a project of this magnitude would include quite a number of stakeholders and target audiences, to whom communication is key. CEC offered a clear outline of the necessary steps to take in order to clearly define what the communication campaign should encompass.

Key considerations of identifying relevant target audience, communication objectives, message development, communication

means and marketing conceptualisation were taken up. The IUCN team expressed its gratitude for the advice provided.

The Role of Nature Education and Best Practises

Upon invitation from the Beijing Forest Society (BFS) in partnership with Friends of Nature, Frits Hesselink provided an overview of some of the best practices with regards to [Nature Education](#) and how psychology offers a deeper insight into the values which people attach to nature and which in turn influences their behaviour and attitudes. The presentation took place at a Nature Education workshop for forest workers organised by the two organisations and as keynote speaker, Frits offered a contextual background to put into perspective this human centred approach.

Over 100 attendants were present and actively participated in an engaging question and answer session after the presentation. "People living in the city have higher awareness of nature, but people in remote areas depend on nature for their livelihoods as they dig for roots and even shoot birds. These people are the most challenging for conservation campaigns. What is the best approach?" asked one participant. Other questions revolved around offering practical solutions to nature education challenges and the role it plays. The participants had a deep interest in case studies of best practices internationally. In thanking Mr Hesselink, on behalf of BFS, Zou Dalin expressed gratitude and appreciation for the informative session. She also went on to pin point the importance of these new perspectives for forest workers at large.

Creating an Experience of Nature

BFS hosted the CEC delegation on two very informative and enjoyable field trips. The first one being to the [Ciu Hu Wetland Park](#), where BFS has recently started to provide nature education experiences for the public and is looking to offer a more interactive experience to visitors. The delegation noted the interesting display of information on flora and fauna of the area and the abundant opportunities for very engaging nature education trails.



Tour of the environmental education



The group visit to the Ciu Wu Wetland Park

The second field trip was to the [Shi Chang Yu Hills](#) which is the demonstration site for which BFS seeks to develop into a fully fledged nature education centre and nature trails.

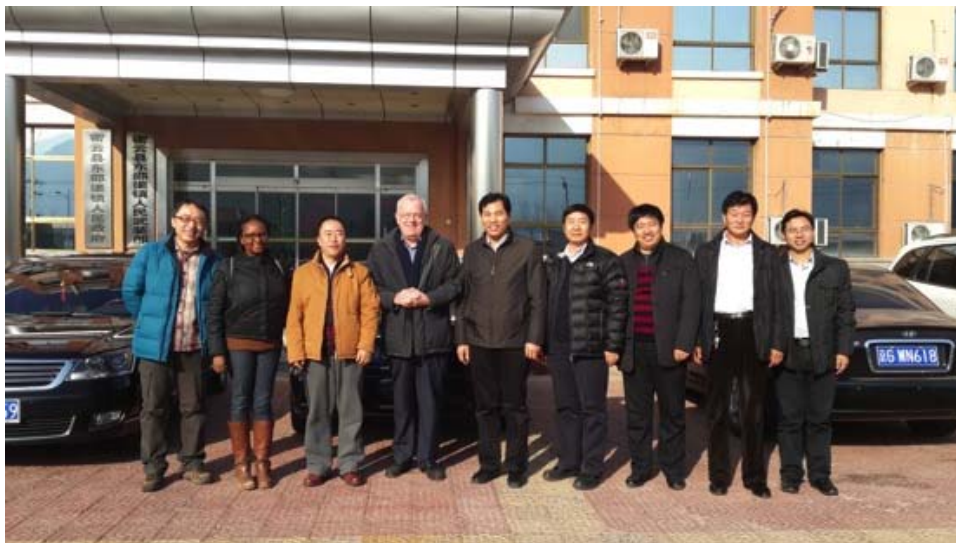
Located in vast undulating hills, part of a landscape that comprises low valleys, rich vegetation and meandering walking trails. Mixed with the remnants of ancient mud houses, the site not only offers a view into the type of livelihood that sustained previous inhabitants, but also brings into mind questions about co-existence with nature.

Under the guide of Li Hao, from the BFS Project Department, the delegation toured the area and could take time to assess the potential for nature education project and further development of the area to be conducive to any such initiative.



Site visit to the Western Hills

The delegation had the opportunity to pay a courtesy call to the governor of the township Dong Shao Qu, under which the village belongs. He expressed his gratitude at the assistance that CEC has been offering and expressed his hope that CEC would continue to further advise on the development of the BFS nature education project at Shi Chang Yu.



Courtesy visit to the Governor of Dong Shao Qu township

Developing a Framework for the Implementation of Participatory Nature Education

As part of the consultative process, the CEC delegation was offered the opportunity to give feedback and further recommendations with regards to how BFS could look into expanding the nature education program. As part of the assessment and recommendation, Frits Hesselink suggested a participatory approach to nature education in

allowing people to experience nature for themselves and learn in the process, as opposed to bombarding them with facts and information to take in. He also provided a step by step roadmap for setting up a nature education program for a specific site that could be the basis for a construction program and business plan. These suggestions were part of a general overview for both sites and were presented to members of the BFS management team who had requested for such feedback.



Consultation with Beijing Forest Service

"Nature Education is very new in China, People have now more time and money to go to nature parks and there is not enough people to provide guided tours. BFS believes that its staff are key in involving the public in nature. Training is key to building capacity."

BFS Deputy Director and Senior Engineer Zhou Caixan, expressed gratitude and willingness to collaborate further with CEC with regards to training in communication for nature interpreters/ tour guides. She explained that there was hardly any training available for these expert staff in China and that there is a need to address this. A high interest for CEC membership was also relayed, with the BFS expressing a need to be part of the global network of nature communicators and the possibility of exchanging learning and best practises.



The delegation with BFS management for lunch

Resolutions and Actions

- An MoU to be drafted outlining further collaboration on training for BFS nature interpreters/tour guides.

Exploring Eco Civilisation and Behaviour Communication

IUCN President Minister Zhang received the CEC delegation for informal talks about further cooperation between CEC and the Eco Forum Global. A variety of suggestions were provided by the IUCN President, i.e. to have a CEC driven Deep Dive workshop during the 2014 Eco Forum Global; to integrate a Chinese component into the WPC stream Engaging the Next Generation, to introduce the concept of Ecological Civilization during the WPC, to work together where possible on International Student Exchange.

Revisiting IUCN China and Communication Campaigns

With a final visit to the IUCN China Office to speak with Dr Chunquan Zhu, Frits Hesselink started with an overview of what the delegation had been involved and briefed the head of the office on current progress. Dr Zhu expressed his gratitude to the team, and most specifically for the support that they would be offering to the development of a communication campaign for the Megacities and Watershed Campaign.

The meeting spoke on the key focus of awareness creation and the need to call for some tangible sort of action which can accentuate public participation in water conservation initiatives.

An idea, which was tabled, was to use local university students and their creative conceptualisation skills to develop a campaign that spoke to all levels of key target audience.

The meeting ended on a high note with IUCN China Office aiming to act as the convener for some of the planned activities with BFS, and possibly CEEC.

Action Points

- Frits to look further into the possibility of a MoU with Beijing Forest Service
- IUCN China office to look into the possibility of offering support and collaborating for the proposed Deep Dive event in 2014

Strengthening the Role of Environmental Education

Upon the invitation of the Center for Environmental Education & Communications of Ministry of Environmental Protection China (CEEC), Frits Hesselink provided an informative lecture on [Greening Campuses](#), to a group of more than 50 staff members at the CEEC headquarters. The presentation not only gave a snapshot of specific green campus case study but also an overview of the policy and stakeholder involvement for establishing green campuses. “What is the relationship between ecological civilization and environmental protection?” and “International organisations which promote university sustainability, which international policies can help promote these?” were some of the questions posed by the attendants.



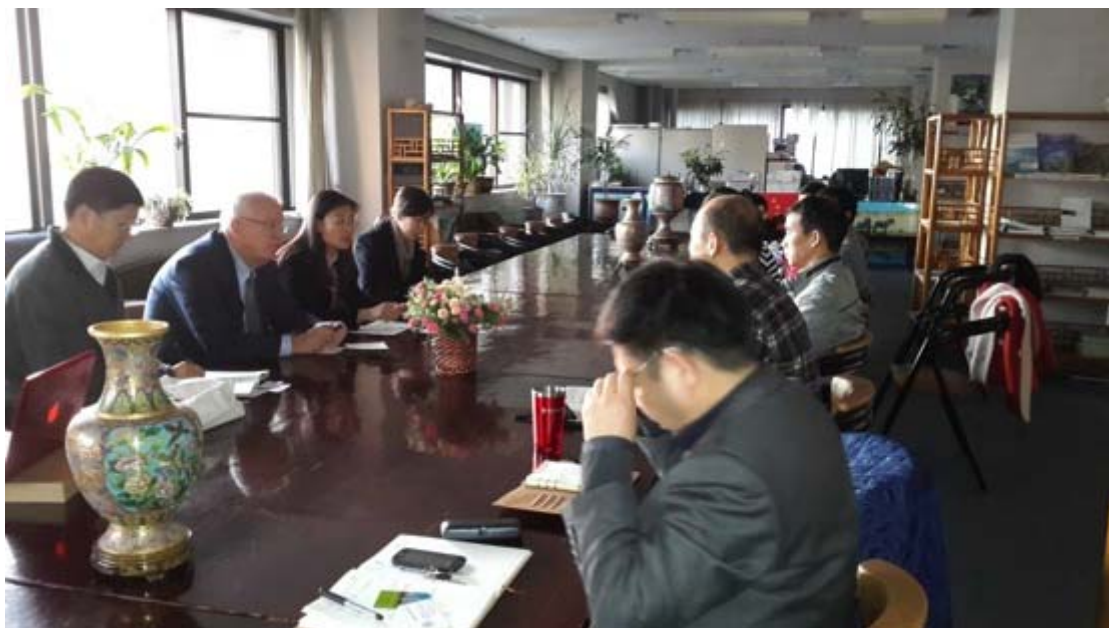
Frits speaking on Green Campuses to CEEC staff

The delegation then entered into a meeting session with CEEC management which comprised of five managers in various divisions pertaining to the organizations key roles.

Mr Jia Feng, the Director of CEEC shared with the delegation the various environmental education activities the organisation is carrying out since its formation. It became apparent that CEEC is has been spearheading capacity building initiatives which include training of government officials on environmental management system both in China and also extending it to the Middle East recently.

The organisation also produces informative and environmental educational programmes from its audio-visual department and has a long standing relationship with Xinhua News Agency.

An interesting initiative Jia Feng pointed out is the 1000 Environmental Friendly Ambassador programme which also has a youth component to provide youth engagement through volunteer initiatives.

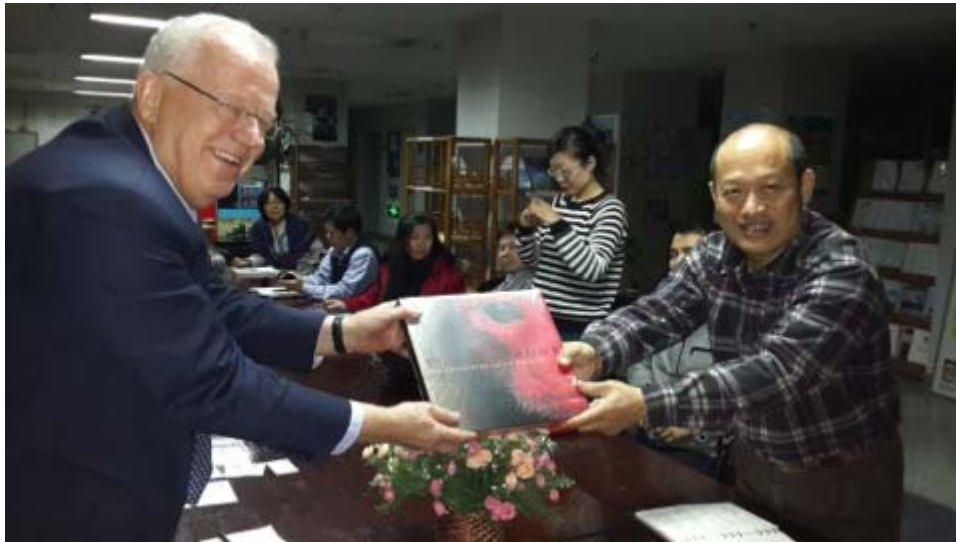


CEC delegation meeting with CEEC management

From the CEC side Frits Hesselink shared the scope of activities which are key to nurturing behaviour change in terms of how environmental information is communicated.

The two parties spoke on various entry points for collaboration including the possibility of CEC offering training to CEEC staff on the NBSAP Toolkit, for next year, participation at the World Parks Congress and the hosting of a session at the 2014 Eco Forum Global conference.

The discussions ended on a high note with agreements to further work on a Memorandum of Understanding, which would be the framework for all planned collaboration.



Frits Hesselink presenting a token of appreciation to Jia Feng

Action Points and Resolutions

- CEC to look into the possibility of offering CEPA Toolkit training to CEEC staff by January next year, with Hanying to coordinate the dates and confirm availability of key expert
 - CEC informational material to be forwarded to the CEEC Resource Centre for display at the corner designated for CEC information, for use of staff members
 - Ying Ying (CEEC) and Nelao (CEC) to compare notes on the minutes of the meeting and finalise for distribution and circulation
 - Further discussions on how CEEC can cover local costs for CEC to provide CEPA trainer for January 2014 and for the latter to fundraise for international travel costs
 - CEEC to receive information brochures and material from CEC to be displayed in the designated area within the Information Resource Centre
 - A MoU between CEC and CEEC to be drafted outlining all areas for collaboration
- Look at organisation of a special event at 2014 WPC with the 1000 Environmental Friendly Ambassadors

Conclusion

The Commission's 2013-2016 Strategic Plan looks into growing the CEC membership and further developing a globally active CEC network to support IUCN programme implementation.

The mission not only accomplished key objectives of establishing and solidifying working relationship with key environmental organisations within China, but also demonstrated an approach to global collaboration, which is consultative and progressive. Two Memorandums of Understanding have been agreed upon with the BFS and the CEEC, which will provide a framework for further collaboration with IUCN CEC.

These meetings also offered a much-needed platform for discourse on the challenges of communicating and environmental education at a national level. The insights shared during the meetings are key to further exploring solutions to tailored communication campaigns to support global Aichi Target 1 and successful implementation of further programmes.

With regards to bringing forth the agenda, support and commitment to facilitating a Thought leaders Deep Dive event in China was given. This will be the first ever of its kind and following on the last two events will aim at bringing together key local and international experts who will delve into "Behavioral psychology and ecological civilization: Lessons to be learned for communication"

Another highlight was meeting a variety of environmental education specialist who had much to share and inquire about best practises around the world in terms of nature education campaigns. The CEC had the opportunity of sharing an international snapshot of various approaches, which added value to participants who were candid about their need to access more information.

This success is a big step in the right direction, for all parties in aligning their vision for further global environmental communication.

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