

Section II NGO Networking and Partnering

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Networking and Partnering Strategies of NGOs in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

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Fu Chia Cheih (a.k.a. Joyce) from the Green Formosa Front enlivens the participants before the NGO Networking and Partnering panel

Networking is the lifeblood of non-governmental organizations around the world, for building strong partnerships among various social groups can strengthen the capacity of NGOs and thereby increase their impact. It was apparent from the talks by Plato Yip, Wei Chieh Lae, and Chen Qing that environmental NGOs in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China are aware of the need to create

strong partnerships with government, business, and other NGOs in the society. It can be a challenging task, however, for NGOs to maintain a close relationship with government or businesses without losing their independence. One key point raised in discussion was the importance for NGOs to avoid overstretching their capacity, for if groups overemphasize networking they could waste valuable financial and human resources. Each NGO should carefully evaluate the extent of their networks and make full use of existing partnerships. Below are some observations on the characteristic of networking in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China.

- Hong Kong environmental NGOs are much more likely than their Taiwanese or Mainland counterparts to partner with the business sector. In light of the dominant role of the business community in the Hong Kong

political sphere it is logical that environmental NGO groups work to improve communication with business leaders. Naturally these green groups must be cautious about being viewed by the public as co-opted by the business community. Green groups in Hong Kong have been able to build stronger NGO networks through their participation in government advisory panels.

- Networking among Taiwanese NGOs is very strong. In fact, the environmental movement in Taiwan was borne out of environmental activists joining their groups together for joint campaigns against government policies that protected polluting industries or ignored conservation issues. In his keynote talk, Lin Shen Tzung noted the important role of the Ecological Protection Federation. There are, however, other umbrella organizations active in Taiwan that bring together many NGOs to campaign on island-wide environmental issues. Lae's talk in the networking panel described the broad range of NGOs that joined together in a recent anti-nuclear power plant campaign in Taiwan.

- Networking could play a particularly important role in Mainland China to strengthen the capacity of NGOs, for green groups are in their nascent stages of development. Many Mainland Chinese NGOs have built strong relationships with government agencies, community associations, and/or international NGOs. Jin Jiaman noted in her keynote talk that existing laws on registering civil society organizations do not permit NGOs to create branches outside the area in which they registered. These rules combined with the tendency of the Chinese government to view overly large networks suspiciously lead environmental NGOs in Mainland China to focus predominantly on building partnerships with groups in their own local area. Earth Day celebrations in Beijing in 2000 and 2001 did bring together many Mainland and international environmental NGOs. It also merits mention that student green groups have created some networks among universities.

For example, the *Green Student Network* in Beijing—with the help of the *Environmental Volunteers Association* in Sichuan—has promoted communication among Beijing-based green student groups. Thanks to the rapidly growing attention from the international environmental community, Chinese NGOs have received fi-

ancial and technical support, as well as some inspiration. While today these transnational networks are helping the Mainland NGOs develop, these networks will enable the Chinese environmentalists to educate international environmental groups on how to work effectively in China.

The Green Citizen Action Alliance and the Anti-Nuclear Movement in Taiwan

Wei Chieh Lae, Executive Director of Green Citizen Action Alliance

The *Green Citizen Action Alliance* (established in 1992 under the name *Taiwan Environment Protection Union, Taipei Chapter* and changed to *Green Citizen Action Alliance* in 1999) includes a broad range of in-

dividuals from various social classes who are concerned about environmental issues in Taiwan. The members of this organization believe that the collusion of the Taiwanese government with corporate interests has forced

Table 1.
GCAA Networking, Partnering and Advocating for a Nuclear Free Taiwan, 2001

Type of Partner	Activities and Goals	Partners
Anti-Nuke action organizations	Core partners involved in organizing the campaign	Taiwan Environment Protection Union, Homemakers' Union and Foundation, Green Party
Grassroots organizations	Monitor and collect first-hand information on the impact of power plants on communities and the environment	Aboriginal Culture Alliance, Dawulanyu Association, Wuqiu Public Affairs Association, Jianlao Anti-Nuke Self-Survival Association, Yeliu Anti-Nuke Self-Survival Association
Transparency of information campaign organizations	Campaign for transparency of public policymaking and reporting	Meinung Conservation Association, Eco-Conservation Alliance, Green Formosa Front
Eco-conservation experts	Undertake scientific research and gather evidence of nuclear power plant impacts on ocean and river ecosystems	Eco-conservation Alliance, Society of Wilderness, Scuba-diver Association, Ocean Culture and Education Fund.
Labor rights organizations	Lobby for labor safety, especially to protect workers from radiation	National Industry Labor Union, Workers Legislation Action Committee, Labor Worker Front
Religious organizations	Raise respect for land and life among the public	Catholic Justice and Peace Group, Christian Conservationalist Association
Social movement organizations (including education, women's rights, and social welfare)	Support for civil society, against the propaganda of the nuclear power industry	Humanity Education Fund, National Teacher's Association, Human Rights Association
International NGOs	Provide information on anti-nuke movement in other areas, monitor American/Japanese corporations involved in the nuclear industry in Taiwan	Nuclear Free Asian Forum, European Green Parties, Monitoring Multinational Corporation Alliance
Legal system	Undertake legal confrontation	Lawyers and legal scholars
Industry	Propose alternative energy plans	Renewable energy technology corporations
Legislature	Generate political and legislative support	Sustainable Development Committee
News media	Provide information and communication	Internet and local news media organizations

the public to protect the environment through street demonstrations and lobbying in the Legislative Yuan. *Green Citizen Action Alliance's (GCAA)* activities focus on social activism in order to: (1) organize people at the grassroots level; (2) educate the public on becoming "green" consumers; and (3) spread conservation ideas and knowledge. In the future *GCAA* will devote more time and energy to expanding their international links and sharing resources and information with green groups in other countries. The Alliance believes that only through cooperation across boundaries will they be able to understand the world's ecosystem and work to preserve it for the benefit of all humanity. This NGO supports itself through membership fees, donations, and sales from publications.

Mr. Wei Chieh Lae used the most recent wave of anti-nuclear protests in Taiwan to illustrate the techniques used by the *GCAA* to mobilize local communities and build diverse networks (See Table 1). The anti-nuclear power plant movement is the oldest and most broad-based environmental movement in the history of modern Taiwan. This anti-nuclear movement began in the 1980s and today involves more environmental NGOs than any other green campaign in Taiwan. During the fourth wave of anti-nuclear power plant campaigns in 2001, the *GCAA* (as one of the core players) cooperated with and helped organize a variety of social organizations to take up different duties (according to their own expertise) such as campaigning, information

collecting, policy monitoring, legal efforts, and legislative confrontation.

Mr. Lae and his colleagues believe that the anti-nuclear power plant movement is very comprehensive throughout Taiwan, for it is an issue that potentially impacts many sectors and people. For example, to campaign for the closure of a nuclear power plant, NGOs are responsible for providing alternative energy options, which requires communication and cooperation between NGOs and renewable energy corporations. It merits mention that maintaining such a wide and loose anti-nuclear network is challenging. Mr. Lae pointed out that internal communication among all the organizations involved is crucial to achieving the goal of the movement. Moreover, all of the participants in this network must be tolerant of each other's missions. Environmental NGOs also need to be flexible to work with each other to realize the general goals, instead of striving for their own interests.

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Building Local Partnerships: the South-North Institute for Sustainable Development Chen Qing, Director of the South-North Institute for Sustainable Development

The *South-North Institute for Sustainable Development (SNISD)* was founded in 1998 with the aim of producing environmental and energy policy studies, as well as promoting the application of new energy efficiency technologies. *SNISD* currently has six full-time staff, all first-tier college graduates, half of whom have studied abroad. Their work at *SNISD* is challenging, but Chen Qing stated that they are a "hard-working and happy group."

SNISD's small-scale biogas projects have been successful due to the creation of strong partnerships among farmers, local banks, researchers, schools, and other NGOs. In cooperation with The Nature Conservancy, *SNISD* has helped farmers in two villages within the Baima Snow Mountain Nature Reserve construct small-scale biogas generating systems to provide biogas for daily energy use and winter greenhouses. As a result, in

each village the consumption of firewood has been reduced considerably. Moreover the families now are able to grow profitable greenhouse vegetables to supplement their income. The total investment for the installation of the biogas systems is a combination of family contributions, local bank loans, and subsidies by *SNISD*. Beyond installing the technology, *SNISD* has conducted several follow-up activities. For example, *SNISD* invited experts and technicians to Baima Snow Mountain Nature Reserve to demonstrate to farmers how to grow vegetables in greenhouses. To spread the knowledge of this clean and sustainable technology in the region, *SNISD* is helping a local school implement the four-in-one model biogas system, and turning the school into a training center for biogas technology.

As demonstrated by the above example, *SNISD* works closely with local governments, agricultural banks,

and research institutes. Mr. Chen emphasized three key issues to strengthen the effectiveness of NGOs that aspire to introduce new technology and change public policy. These NGOs should: (1) create feasible policy recommendations; (2) develop or identify new technologies that can be easily applied; and (3) undertake or identify cutting edge scientific research. In their work, *SNISD* aims to disseminate information on their successful pilot projects so other institutions and local governments can replicate these energy efficiency projects in the vast rural areas of China.

Mr. Chen believes there is a great need for more environmental NGOs in Mainland China that focus on creating practical methods and policies for solving China's environmental problems. At this phase of NGO

development in Mainland China, NGOs can be more effective both in their work and in promoting the development of green groups by assisting, rather than criticizing the government. For example, NGOs can carry out grassroots conservation projects and issue policy reports that can help shape better environmental policies.

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The Changing Style of Environmental NGOs in Hong Kong

Plato K.T. Yip, Assistant Director of Friends of the Earth, Hong Kong

Mr. Plato K.T. Yip drew on his experience as an environmentalist active in academia, government, and the NGO spheres to paint a picture of the changing style of environmental NGOs in Hong Kong from the late 1970s to today. Political, economic, and social changes in Hong Kong have prompted the gradual, yet distinctive shift of environmental NGOs away from idealistic and confrontational working styles. Today, many green NGOs in Hong Kong have a more cooperative relationship with the government than in the past. These changes stem in part from the political reforms launched by the Hong Kong government in the

1980s. These reforms began to incorporate more grassroots organizations into the government's consultation system. Additionally, as Hong Kong's economy has rapidly expanded so have pollution problems and public demand for cleanup, which created opportunities for environmental groups to expand their activities. Gaining more power to shape environmental policy and more public support are the key factors that have changed the role and character of Hong Kong green groups. Additionally, the evolving character of Hong Kong environmental groups also stems from the success of early environmental campaigning and lobby-

Table 2. Evolution of Environmental NGOs in Hong Kong

	Late 1970s - Late 1980s	1990s - Present
Public Function of NGOs	Watchdogs	Solution Providers
Working Style of NGOs	Idealistic Mission-Oriented Heroic/Charismatic Leaders	Pragmatic Action-Oriented Teamwork
NGO Relationship with Government	Confrontational	Legalistic and Consensual
NGO Relationship with Other Groups	Leadership	Partnership
Public Image of NGOs	Generalists Bourgeois Advocates Doers/Protestors Fringe Groups	Specialists Grassroots Strategists Networkers/Facilitators Mainstream Political Groups

ing. Green NGOs no longer need to be confrontational to change government and public behavior and attitudes towards environmental protection.

Having summarized the major trends in the operation of environmental NGOs, Mr. Yip explained those changes in more detail (See Table 2). Environmental NGOs in Hong Kong initially arose to protest against the colonial government's apathy regarding pollution and conservation problems. Since NGOs have become a part of the government advisory system the past confrontational practices have been replaced by more consensual work styles. While NGOs used to play the role of watchdogs or pressure groups, today their function has shifted to becoming solution providers and consultants for the government and the public. Over time many of the groups in Hong Kong have become more professional institutions with activists maturing into strategists, networkers, and government partners. As the organizations have become more professional and institutionalized they are run more as businesses and teams as opposed to simply a group of protesters or followers of a heroic/charismatic leader.

In the past, environmentalists in Hong Kong viewed themselves as the leaders of the public and private sectors, but today most groups want to build up sustainable partnerships with the public, corporations, and the news media. The new character of environmental NGOs working with government does not mean that they still do not pressure the government. Today, environmentalists use the law more often than street protests to force the government to comply with their own laws.

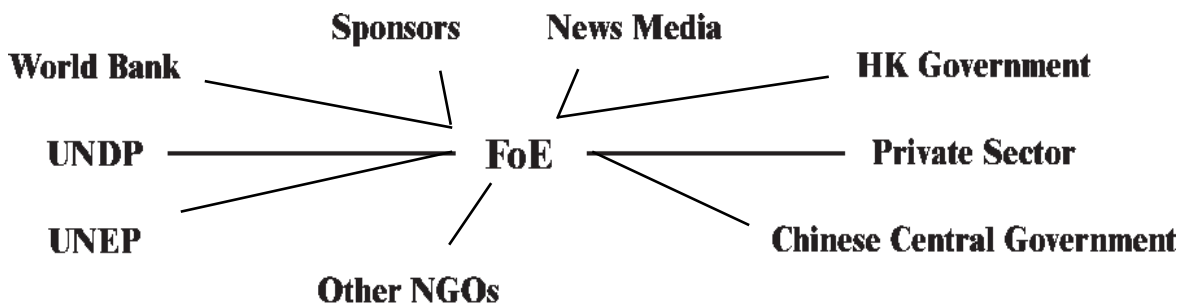
The public and the news media also have shifted their attitudes about the function of environmental NGOs. Specifically, NGOs are no longer viewed as nature lovers who promote general environmental awareness; instead NGOs are seen as specialists to turn to for

advice. Another distinctive change has been that in the past expatriate members dominated many of the environmental NGOs, but today Hong Kong Chinese make up the majority of the membership. This has led the public to view green NGOs as local and accessible groups rather than elite clubs.

As groups have expanded their level of activities, they have needed to improve fundraising, attract more volunteers, and create a niche for themselves. Therefore, many groups have changed from being a small group of "doers" or protesters to "networkers" who can obtain sufficient funding and support and as act as information facilitators for the public and the government. Overall, environmental NGOs in Hong Kong are now accepted as one of the mainstream political actors.

In addition to talking about the shifting character of environmental NGOs in Hong Kong, Mr. Yip used his own knowledge of the *Friends of the Earth, Hong Kong* (FoE) to illustrate how Hong Kong environmental NGOs are using extensive networking to fulfill their missions (See Figure 1). Besides sponsors and the news media, FoE (through a variety of projects) has established working relations with the Hong Kong and Chinese central governments, corporations, and other NGO groups. For example, FoE built partnerships with the private sector, the Hong Kong government, and other NGOs to implement a Plastic Recycling Project. FoE obtained support from the World Bank and United Nations agencies to set up a series of workshops and training classes on environmental issues. Together with the Chinese State Environmental Protection Administration FoE is sponsoring an annual Earth Award in China for Mainland Chinese organizations or individuals who have achieved extraordinary success in the environmental research or activist spheres.

Figure 1. The Network of Friends of the Earth, Hong Kong (FoE)



Section III NGO Environmental Education Methods

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Editor Commentary:

The Environmental Education Priorities in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

Jennifer L. Turner and Fengshi Wu, Woodrow Wilson Center

The three talks by Liang Congjie, Sannie Chan Lit Fong, and Chung Ming-kuang revealed that despite differences in the political environs and the divergence in how nongovernmental groups have developed, many of the NGOs from Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Taiwan have prioritized environmental education. In the 1980s as the economies in Hong Kong and Taiwan boomed, these “little dragons” became high consumption, high-waste producing societies. Mainland China has followed this path of rapid economic development and explosive consumerism. All of the participants at the April Hong Kong forum believed that NGOs could play a key role in educating the public about worsening ecological problems caused by rapid economic growth, industrialization, and wasteful consumption. In discussions at the forum, attendees were able to swap many stories of successful environmental education activities and strategies encouraging people to adopt “greener” lifestyles. The discussions highlighted the strategies and skills that enable NGOs to achieve their public education goals most effectively. Some key points raised in the discussions stated that NGOs should:

- Work to get to know and build trust in the community the NGO aims to serve and educate, which

in turn will help the NGOs become more effective and sustainable;

- Be creative in mobilization and organizing environmental activities; and,
- Do not overextend the NGO’s capacity, for one group cannot educate everyone.

In Mainland China environmental education has been an area in which the government has strongly encouraged NGO activity. Mainland NGOs have taken advantage of this political space and have been particularly active and strong in undertaking environmental education work. Since 1949, the concept of nongovernmental organizations has been left out of the public discourse and it is striking how quickly Mainland Chinese environmental NGOs have started to gain recognition and respect from the public through their educational activities. In Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Taiwan there are NGOs and university student groups that work with schools to raise the environmental education among children. Because this is a particularly non-sensitive area of NGO activity, environmental education is a topic in which NGOs in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Taiwan can have fruitful communication with their counterparts.

Friends of Nature and the Tibetan Antelope Bus

Liang Congjie, Founder and Director of the Friends of Nature

Ever since the first Chinese environmental nongovernmental organization (NGO) *Friends of Nature* (FON) was granted official legal status in 1994, its founder, history professor Liang Congjie has been pondering what a green NGO in China can do in terms of protecting the environment. Without further political reforms regarding social organizations, it remains impossible and inappropriate for NGOs to lobby the gov-

ernment in China. In light of the fact that Professor Liang and many of his NGO colleagues lack technical expertise, they are not able to conduct scientific research. Therefore, instead of lobbying or doing scientific research, members of FON devote their energy to environmental education activities. They have two foci: 1) to improve the public’s environmental awareness; and 2) to enhance environment education among elemen-

tary and middle school students.

In an interview with *Asiaweek* after being awarded the Magsaysay Public Service Prize in August 2000, Professor Liang explained FON's flexible tactics. He stated that his "strategy is to first support the government since it has the regulations to help improve the environment, but as an NGO, it is also our mission to act as watchdog." He also commented at the *Green NGO and Environmental Journalist Forum* in Hong Kong that Mainland Chinese NGOs should start with small activities, not big propaganda campaigns (*Chang Gao Diao*). Moreover, even if they focus on environmental



Professor Liang Congjie, founder of China's first environmental NGO the *Friends of Nature*, provided an eloquent talk on greening people's hearts during the Environmental Education panel.

education, green NGOs in Mainland China today need to be aware of the balance between cooperation with the government and independence.

Friends of Nature has helped Xi Zhinong (co-founder of *Green Plateau*) protect natural forests in Yunnan Province, and Yang Xin (Founder of *Green River*, a Chinese NGO working on the Tibetan Plateau) to conserve

the sources of Yangtze River. In 1996, when Xi Zhinong first began photographing and reporting on the endan-

gered golden snub-nosed monkey in northeast Yunnan, he was practically fighting a war against logging industries all by himself. Fortunately, he got in touch with Liang Congjie who took advantage of FON's networks among journalists in Beijing and brought the story of the golden snub-nosed monkey to major newspapers in China. This reporting led to demands from the public to protect the monkeys. High-level officials in Beijing subsequently ordered that logging in Northeast Yunnan stop.

Professor Liang thinks environmental education in elementary and middle schools is especially important for the future of environmental protection in China. "We hope to turn the kids' hearts green," he said. The Tibetan antelope bus is the most popular and effective children's educational project FON has undertaken. Funds from a German organization have paid for a van, which tours schools, raising green consciousness among pupils with environmental games and videos. To date, the Tibetan antelope bus has traveled around Beijing city and many neighboring provinces. Together with the China Youth Foundation (a government organized NGO), FON has been training volunteers to advance environmental education in Project Hope Schools in rural and remote areas. Another *Friends of Nature* project that merits mention has been their yearly surveys on the quantity and quality of environmental reporting major Chinese newspapers.

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Meinung: Starting from a Small Village

Chung Ming-kuang, Secretary General of *Meinung Conservation Association*

The *Meinung Conservation Association* is a grassroots environmental and community organization in Taiwan. The group began as a loose protest movement in 1992 and was transformed into a formal organization in 1994. In the early 1990s, the Taiwan water conservation administration's water resource committee quietly approved the construction plans for a 147-meter high dam in Meinung County without the agreement of the local citizens. The completed dam sparked fierce opposition from the local community. These protests also in-

directly spurred Taiwanese intellectuals to begin to support rural citizen-based environmental movements. Initially, citizens in Meinung County opposing the dam organized themselves into a core group of activists called "seven small working teams." These small groups of activists eventually joined together to create the *Meinung Conservation Association*, as it exists today.

The *Meinung Conservation Association* hopes that through ceaseless environmental education and community cultural activities their movement can become

strongly rooted into the Meinung community. A strong movement will empower the community to deal effectively with the environmental problems stemming from the Meinung Dam and face the challenges created by the Taiwanese government's longtime prioritization of the industrial sector over agricultural and rural areas. This movement will give new hopes to this old rural community in Meinung.

The association's experience in developing environmental education has led them to identify two important lessons for strengthening the effectiveness of local environmental activism:

1) Environmental education needs to be multifaceted, for no single style of environmental campaigning can be effective in every situation (See Table 3 for the scope of *Meinung Conservation Association's* environmental educational activities); and,

2) Local community groups need to set up or use their own news media organizations for their environmental activism.

Within Meinung County (population 35,000), the *Meinung Conservation Association* has used community newspapers, magazines, music tapes, the Internet and other kinds of communication media to develop a variety of environmental education activities to target people of different ages. Members of the association believe it is very important for a grassroots environmental group to fully utilize existing news media resources in the area,

not only because it is a practical strategy, but also because the community will be more receptive to the message.

One of the best examples of using local news media was when the *Meinung Conservation Association* helped to support *Moonbeam Mountain (Yue Kuan Shan)* magazine, which is a community publication. This magazine has a 20-year history of uninterrupted publication, but prior to their cooperation with the *Meinung Conservation Association* the magazine had never taken a stand on environmental issues. However, today the magazine has broadened and deepened its environmental education coverage, which in turn has helped to strengthen local environmental volunteer networks and solidify the local green activist foundation. The Internet has become another strategy for publicizing the unique qualities of Meinung County and building networks of people who support protecting the environment and culture in this rural community. Continually updated Internet Web sites and periodic listserv reports have become low-cost, fast methods for the association to disseminate information on the environment and grassroots campaigns in Meinung County. While Internet use is particularly widespread among young people, many of the rural people in Taiwan do not use it. Therefore, environmental groups interested in reaching rural communities should use a variety of communication strategies and not be overly dependent on the Internet.

The *Meinung Conservation Association* also has

Table 3. Meinung Conservation Association (MCA) Environmental Education Activities

	MCA Periodical	<i>Yue Kuang Shan Quarterly Journal</i>	Documentary Films, Music Recordings	Internet, e-newsletters
Targeted Audience	Meinung citizens, scholars and environmentalists throughout Taiwan	Meinung citizens and environmentalists throughout Taiwan	Varies	Students and enthusiastic supporters of MCA
Content	Theory, Analysis	Stories of MCA events and campaigns	Music and films of environmental events, and campaigns	Information on events, campaigns and environmental quality
Distribution Methods	Regular mail	Regular mail	Varies	Internet
Goals	Promote discussion of theoretical ideas	Increase environmental education	Increase environmental education	Motivate members, build networks, and increase environmental education

worked with traditional musicians in Meinung to record several music CDs. The songs on these CDs not only highlight the unique local music and cultural connections with nature, but also include anti-dam songs.

Meinung has attracted an endless stream of news media attention due to the fact that this community is nestled in a scenic area with a distinctive cultural history. The area is also infamous for its enthusiastic community of people who have diligently worked to protect their county from destructive development. Although news media reports have promoted positive information on Meinung's environmental campaigns and cultural events, outsiders who come to report (especially Taiwanese mainstream news media organizations) often bring their own preconceptions and expect to be treated royally by the community. If, for example, the reporter encounters some difficulties in making arrangements to visit Meinung, the subsequent article may have a negative impact on Meinung. In light of some past negative experiences with outside news media organizations, the *Meinung Conservation Association* has stressed the importance of creating a community-based news media.

In addition to conventional news media methods, the *Meinung Conservation Association* also has organized

special ecological campaigns and activities. Once a year the association organizes a monarch butterfly watch in order to assess how the dam has destroyed some of the natural habitat in the monarch butterfly emerald valley. The *Meinung Conservation Association* uses the arrival of the butterflies in the valley each year to organize both anti-dam events and ecological education activities. After six years of tireless work, these butterfly watches have become an important environmental campaign in southern Taiwan. The *Meinung Conservation Association's* junior partner organization the *Meinung Youth Committee* also organizes an ecological camp every winter holiday. This camp helps to teach children and adults about their own traditional rural community and why they need to be concerned about their local environment.

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Preserving Tradition and Promoting Environmental Education

Sannie Chan Lit Fong, Founder Green Peng Chau Association

The *Green Peng Chau Association (GPCA)* is a nonprofit grassroots environmental group set up in 1991 on a one-square kilometer island, called Peng Chau (flat island), which is located seven kilometers east of Hong Kong Island. Before the 1980s, Peng Chau Island was free of auto and industrial pollution and 70 percent of the land was unspoiled nature and rural areas. Local residents had long maintained island traditions and community ties. In 1990, one woman—who became one of the founders of *GPCA*—returned to the island of her birth after ten years of studying abroad only to discover that the natural environment and local culture on the island had undergone marked changes. The beautiful beach had vanished and people no longer appeared to value what nature had given them. This woman joined some other women on the island (who also were discouraged about the environmental degradation) to create the *GPCA*. This grassroots group aims to promote environmental awareness among island residents. The *GPCA* members also wish to do everything in their power to conserve the remaining beauty of the

island.

The women running this NGO work to meet their objectives by: (1) monitoring development planning on the island, and (2) organizing activities to promote environmental awareness and education. Over the past nine years, *GPCA* has tried to persuade the local government to address the pollution dangers facing the island, such as untreated sewage dumped into the sea and construction debris deposited in open spaces. Indirectly, *GPCA* lobbying influenced a local government decision to halt the planning of a new container terminal because of the pollution it would have created. The *GPCA* also has organized educational workshops at local primary schools and kindergartens in order to ignite the minds of the young people of Peng Chau to protect their island's environment. By organizing green outings (e.g., tree planting and beach clean ups), seminars, and exhibitions, *GPCA* is actively educating the local people about greener lifestyles and eco-tourism. In light of this broad range of activities, it is not surprising that this nonprofit grassroots organization

staffed completely by volunteers often faces many financial pressures and staff shortages.

The local government on Peng Chau Island does not have a bold plan to improve the local economy, which is a predominantly residential area, possessing limited agricultural areas and few valuable natural resources. The GPCA volunteers have, however, proposed a comprehensive “Green Cultural Island Plan” to develop the island into an eco-tourist area and create an eco-education center. This sustainable development plan includes the following activities and projects:

A green market during the Xu Festival. The Xu Festival is seen as an important tradition for local residents, businessmen, farmers, and fishers to exchange products and goods during the Xu Festival (this holiday also is celebrated in many places in China). Recently, however, the Peng Chau local government made a plan to construct a modern new downtown district to replace the old traditional markets. The GPCA countered this plan by proposing that the government maintain the 200-year Xu Festival tradition and use the existing markets to hold a green market for local people to sell and buy organic agriculture products during and after the Xu Festival.

Community organic farming. This is a plan to fully use fallow and wasteland on the island to create small organic farms. The GPCA will invite experts to introduce local farmers to the advantages and methods of growing organic products, and encourage them to sell their products through the green market during the Xu Festival. Another component of this plan is to divide wasteland into small pieces and rent small plots to local residents, who are interested in being organic “vacation farmers.” Some currently unused land also can be given to local schools for environmental education purposes. This latter plan aims to provide a live classroom for local residents to learn about nature, and give them an opportunity to work together outdoors with their families. Overall, this organic farming plan will fully utilize the soil resources on the island and help reconnect people to their island’s environment.

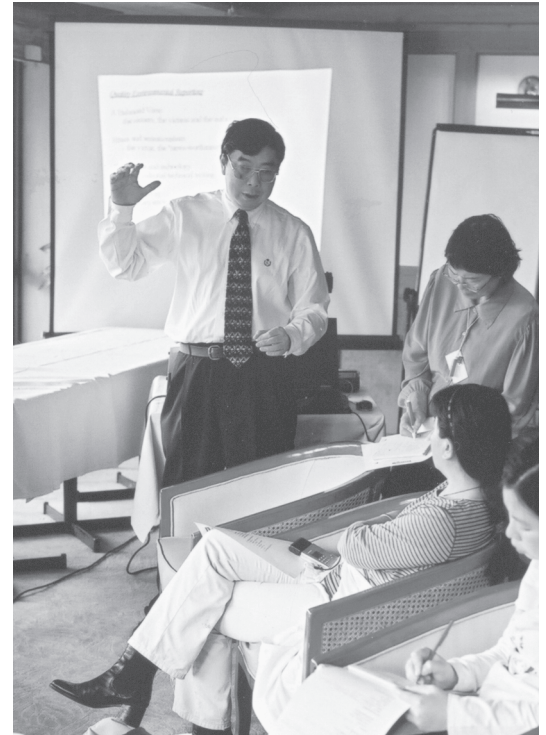
A traditional Chinese culture and ecology research center. This center would combine traditional culture and

eco-education to promote the study of how traditional culture has influenced human behavior. This center would also promote a new green lifestyle through textbooks and exhibitions.

An eco-tourism and eco-educational center. Because the Peng Chau Island is rich in cultural traditions and contains a beautiful natural environment, it is an ideal destination for eco-tourism and the island could develop an eco-tourist education center for Hong Kong.

Despite its small size, Peng Chau Island contains a diverse population, including businessmen, fishers, and local residents.

While many have lived on the island for generations, there are also migrants from Greater China and overseas. GPCA volunteers hope that their sustainable development plans can help bring together this diverse population to protect the island’s resources. According to GPCA volunteers, it is very important to consider both nature-ecological and history-cultural factors in order to design and implement successful environmental education plans for the island.



During the Air Quality Reporting Workshop, Dr. Sai S. Chan (standing) gave a brief tour of intriguing topics in current international research on environmental health. He urged reporters to dig beneath the surface on environmental stories and not stop at the episodic level of reporting.

Section IV Green NGO Capacity Building

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Overview of Day Two at the Green NGO and Environmental Journalist Forum

Jennifer L. Turner and Fengshi Wu, Woodrow Wilson Center

On the second day of the *Green NGO and Environmental Journalist Forum*, the participants focused on NGO capacity building and NGO-journalist communication. The morning session began with Simon Liao from the *Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan* (See essay in this section) and Wong Kai Yi from the *Tai-O Culture Work-*

sessions, each small group reported their insights to all of the NGO participants to evaluate. The lively moderators for this session were Chang Hunglin (*Society of Wilderness*) and Lu Hongyan (*Environmental Volunteers Association*). The highlights of these discussions are provided on the following page.

While the NGO participants discussed capacity building, the environmental journalists simultaneously held a workshop on air quality reporting. The afternoon session brought together the NGO and journalist participants for an activity to promote discussion on how to improve communication between the two professional groups. In this session, environmental NGO participants were split into groups and they had to imagine they were an NGO trying to pitch a story to a journalist. The journalists critiqued each group in turn. Insights into the journalist sessions are highlighted in the essays contained in Section V. of these proceedings.

In last session of the forum, the participants were able to explore how the use of visual images can strengthen the impact an NGO. In that session, three photographers who run environmental NGOs treated the forum participants to slideshows and presentations explaining how they use nature



In breakout sessions, workshop participants explore issues on how to improve environmental NGO capacity in areas of financing, membership, and public participation. From left to right: Lin Shen Tzung (*Eco-Conservation Association*), Sun Dehui (*Black-necked Crane Association*), Ng Cho Nam (*Conservancy Association*), Huang Ming Hsuan (*Wildbird Federation, Taiwan*)

shop in Hong Kong (See feature box section) giving brief talks on their respective organizations. Following these talks the participants were split into small groups to discuss the challenges of building the capacity of green groups. They focused on membership management, public participation, and fundraising. After breakout

photography to promote their environmental education work. The three photographers were: Sun Dehui (*Black-necked Crane Association*), Xi Zhinong (*Green Plateau*), and Hsu Jen-Shiu (*Society of Wilderness*) Descriptions of their activities can be found in the feature box section of this publication.

Small-Group Discussions: Member Management, Public Mobilization, and Fundraising

Below are the highlights from the small group discussions on NGO capacity building.

Groups One and Two: Membership Management

Two groups discussed how best to attract and keep members in an NGO. Not all of the NGOs in the forum were interested in signing up and managing members, for they viewed membership organizations as somewhat elitist and too cumbersome to manage. Others argued that building up a membership base does not mean an NGO is pursuing an elite approach, rather more effectively expanding and sustaining its reach into the community. A devoted membership also can offer valuable skills and knowledge to an NGO. Some of the central points drawn from the discussions are outlined below:

- 1) Do not rely on an individual leader to sustain the NGO. Sometimes a charismatic leader attracts a large membership, but when he or she leaves the membership disappears! Therefore, in order for an NGO to become a sustainable institution with a membership devoted to the environmental cause, the organization must downplay the individual and develop a system for regularly changing the leadership.
- 2) NGOs need to make all members and volunteers feel like part of the team.
- 3) Discover the expertise of the members and organize activities to enable members to exchange ideas.
- 4) Take advantage of information technology (such as e-mail, list-servers, Web sites) to improve the communication among members and NGO staff.
- 5) An NGO should produce a high-quality journal or newsletter to update members on the organization's activities.
- 6) Frequent communication via email, phone and at events is crucial to maintain personal contact with members. Members need a sense of belonging to remain committed to the NGO's work.
- 7) If an NGO does highly visible and effective activities and campaigns the organization will improve its reputation and thereby attract more members.
- 8) The success of an NGO should not be based on simply having a huge membership. An excessive number of members can be expensive for an NGO to maintain and satisfy.
- 9) In addition to overstretching the NGO's capacity, too many members could turn an NGO into

an impersonal bureaucracy. A large membership does not necessarily lead to bureaucratization in all NGOs.

10) Training members and volunteers can be an attractive benefit to keep them interested and active in the NGO. Among the conference participants some member-training activities include: (a) running classes on wildlife understanding and birdwatching (*Society of Wilderness; Hong Kong Birdwatching Association, Conservancy Association, Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan, Green Earth Volunteers*); (b) teaching members to measure pollution levels in local streams and monitor environmental index (*GreenRiver*); (c) training on how to organize their community to monitor local industries (*Meinung Conservation Association*); (d) training on the knowledge and technology of recycling, how to turn used cooking oil into soap, and how to compost kitchen wastes (*Homemakers' Union and Foundation, Global Village of Beijing*); (e) train journalists about environmental issues (*Green Earth Volunteers, Global Village Beijing*); and (f) seminars for nature interpreters, environmental teachers, and conservationists (*Environmental Volunteers Association at Sichuan University, Friends of the Earth-Guizhou, Black-necked Crane Association, Society of Wilderness*).

Group Three: Public Participation

All of the NGOs attending the forum struggle with stimulating and maintaining public participation in their activities and events. Some of the main points from this discussion are outlined below:

More is not necessarily better! In other words, an NGO should not simply gauge success by having lots of people at events. Certain activities and events may be more effective with smaller groups. It is important to decide on the scope of public participation according to the specific aim of a project. For example, birdwatching and trash pickup are activities that do not require a high skill level from the participants. While participation in scientific investigation of the source of Yangtze River and work to prevent the slaughtering of Tibetan antelope (*GreenRiver*) require more specialized skills and knowledge. Such specialized activities often do not lend themselves well to campaigns to promote public participation. Moreover, in cases such as the protection of black-necked cranes (*Black-necked Crane Association*)