



Plateau Perspectives

Annual Report 2016

Yagnob Valley, Tajikistan

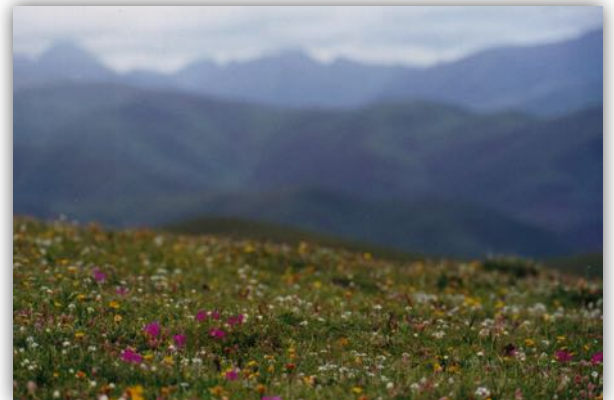
Plateau Perspectives continues to develop and innovate in community-based conservation and development in the Tibetan Plateau region of China. It also is initiating new, creative lines of work for the benefit of mountain regions and people in Central Asia, starting in the Kyrgyz Republic.

China Programme

Directed by China Director Dr Gongbo Tashi, Plateau Perspectives continues to work closely with Tibetan herding communities, government authorities and university colleagues to help protect the environment and to improve the livelihoods of people who live close to the land.

➤ Caterpillar Fungus

A training workshop for local resource users, government departments and participants from Tibet University was organized on the use and the conservation of a unique, valuable medicinal plant known locally as the 'caterpillar fungus' (*Cordyceps sinensis*). Topics included resource management, land degradation, and the governance and conservation of this unique plant resource. This workshop helped catalyse opportunities for community outreach as well as influence government authorities and assist in the development of this resource collection industry.



Participants included government workers, specialists, and members of the Caterpillar Fungus Association of Tibet Autonomous Region. The workshop team talked directly with herders and farmers who are collectors and other primary beneficiaries of this resource. Through field research, they learned that natural resources are the main source of income for most local people. They also learned that because of the high financial benefit accrued from this industry, most users tend to rely too heavily on the collection of caterpillar fungus, which can only provide income for short duration each year – and they may ignore others traditional industries such as animal husbandry and crop production. Additionally, the growth of the caterpillar fungus depends on climatic conditions and others factors that cannot be controlled by the resource users. Local communities are thus particularly vulnerable to resource production failure and their living situations could quickly deteriorate. These findings should be introduced into sustainable development plans for relevant geographic regions.



➤ Quinoa Development

Plateau Perspectives continues to work with the poverty alleviation bureaus of two counties in Tibet Autonomous Region, adopting a targeted approach to assist poor families with the production of quinoa. Training in planting and harvest of quinoa and in the development and management of local community coops have been provided. Community outreach in the target area also includes environmental issues.

➤ Study Tours for Village Leaders

A team of village leaders from a remote area of the Tibet Autonomous Region travelled to Sichuan Province, where the economic situation is better and where they could learn new ideas and a range of useful techniques and approaches that could be introduced back in their home towns. Such study tours are often a good way



to provide learning opportunities for rural communities. In 2016, Plateau Perspectives organized for a team of 8 village leaders to visit a Tibetan area in a neighbouring province to learn from successful projects implemented by a national organisation. The development options presented to the participants included micro-credit systems, participatory grassland management, village environmental sanitation... However, according to several of the village leaders, the most important lessons learned on this tour were about how to start a business and how to organize village level cooperatives. The village leaders also learned how to better manage and use natural resources, including the development of more systematic and comprehensive management plans.

The study tour also allowed further dissemination of learnings about the development and use of trust funds (i.e. revolving funds) and community level cooperatives (such as Kegawa Herders Cooperative).

Following the study tour to Sichuan Province, new ideas learned by participants translated into the launch of at least two new community-based, tourism-related cooperatives in Tibet Autonomous Region.

➤ Hong Kong TV Documentary

A 'stock-taking' of Plateau Perspectives' work over the past couple decades was made through field visits and numerous interviews made by a documentary film production team from Hong Kong. They noted the influence of Plateau Perspectives in the heartland of the Tibetan Plateau, both for people's wellbeing and for conservation. Their findings will be presented in the near future in a film that is anticipated to be aired globally, online. The key messages of partnership, hope, and the value of nature and culture will be highlighted in the short film, as well as opportunities offered by purposeful collaboration amongst a wide range of partners.

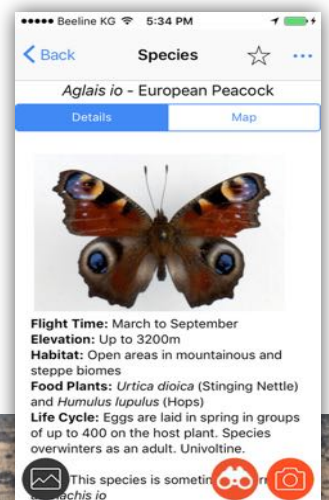


NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Over the past year, new relationships have been developed and desk reviews undertaken to learn more about the Central Asian region, especially conservation and development with mountain societies resident in the Tianshan and Pamir ranges. One area of great human need is the health situation of the Kyrgyz herders in the Pamirs, with extremely high maternal and child mortality.

Currently, relationships are being forged to make exploratory trips into, and carry out 'action research' within, these geographically and politically remote regions.

In order to advance biodiversity conservation, a smartphone application also has been conceived and is presently in development. Although externally funded, the app has the potential to benefit many conservation projects. The adaptable digital field guide will support and strengthen environmental projects across the region.



Council of Reference

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Executive Director, WSP International

Mr David Taylor

Retired executive with 46 years of experience in humanitarian work

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