



# **PLATEAU PERSPECTIVES**

Building community resilience through development of new opportunities in the Tibetan plateau region

ANNUAL REPORT 2012



# PLATEAU PERSPECTIVES

*Community Development & Conservation*

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Building community resilience in the face of rapid  
socio-cultural and environmental changes,  
developing new opportunities and partnerships  
for a more sustainable and equitable future  
in the Tibetan plateau region

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# Plateau Perspectives' Annual Report 2012

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

An exciting year it has been in 2012, with a continuation of long-term development programmes as well as the launch of new ventures and an up-scaling of past successes.

From our early years working with local herding communities, grassroots NGOs and government in the late 1990s up to the present, it has been a real privilege to participate with colleagues and friends as the land and livelihoods have undergone transformations unprecedented in the region's history. Tibetan nomadic pastoralism is still practiced, and socio-cultural norms still support a conservation ethic—but now there are also additional layers of national development plans and nature reserves to consider... together with the challenges and opportunities associated with a new town-dwelling population, a variety of development opportunities, and the continuing social aftershocks of the 2010 earthquake.

Plateau Perspectives has been engaging in creative and synergistic ways with all these elements since its establishment in 1998. From medical and community health work with training courses for village doctors and women's health workers, construction of clinics and



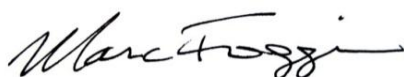
immunization campaigns, to the establishment of accessible village tent schools for nomad children, environmental education and conservation projects — in all these areas of work we have sought to work alongside Tibetan communities and government as genuine partners. Through this process a new model of conservation and sustainable development has emerged, now known as co-management.

In 2012 we have seen an up-scaling (expansion) of such collaborative approaches to conservation through the launch of UNDP/GEF-supported project undertaken by Qinghai Forestry Department. Plateau Perspectives also received a new Ford Foundation grant with the aim to reduce poverty in rural grassland areas, and a new five-year development project supported by the Government of Norway (by way of HimalPartner) was approved with the aim to build local capacities for development of community ecotourism and protected area management in the region. The development of rehabilitation services in post-earthquake Yushu also has continued and indeed expanded.

On a personal level, our family has seen major changes over the years, too. Having moved to Zhiduo when Alistair was but an infant... he is now 10 years old, and a great member of our field team! It has been an exceptional decade for us – and we thank everyone who has contributed to this memorable journey!



Sincerely,



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## COMMUNITY TOURISM IN QINGHAI PROVINCE

### Development of Community Ecotourism in the Sanjiangyuan Region

Plateau Perspectives began a new project in 2012, focused on developing local capacities and creating an enabling environment for *community-beneficial tourism* in Qinghai Province. Four Tibetan herding communities are supported initially, with the aim that their experiences may beneficially inform the development of tourism across the region. Community members and grassroots organizations (viz. herders' cooperatives) are keen to expand such tourism-based opportunities, which can help support local livelihood as well as wildlife conservation.

Local tourism committees were developed in the villages we assisted in 2012, to provide an institutional framework in which community decisions could be made. Business plans have also been drafted including needs assessments, tour itineraries, a list of key attractions and activities, operational budgets, etc., and baseline marketing research has been carried out. Training also was provided in tourism business management, guiding services, handicrafts, and basic vehicle mechanics.

Wildlife monitoring continues in the selected community areas as well. Such conservation fieldwork not only serves as basis for genuine partnerships with environmental authorities under the umbrella of 'community co-management', it also provides a verifiable means for communities to engage in the 'eco' of ecotourism – and to market their local areas. The



**Come and experience:**

- Kegawa Mountain
- Horseback Excursion
- Tibetan Home-Stays
- Nomadic Lifestyle
- Tibetan Culture
- Wildlife Viewing
- and much much more!

**LARI**

In southwest Qinghai Province the headwaters of the Yangtze, Mekong, and Yellow rivers can be found among towering mountains, abundant wildlife, and Tibetan culture. Wonders abound for adventurous traveler as they explore the Tibetan Plateau region. Six hours from Yushu, in the county of Zhiduo, Lari awaits. Come to this remote area to experience the magnificent Kegawa mountain region. Explore its glacier, high altitude lake, numerous wildlife viewing opportunities, and be treated to a get-away beyond your imagination.









documented presence of rare and endangered wildlife species such as elusive snow leopard and black-necked crane is a key element that will appeal to guests. Additionally, an active network of wardens with a camera trapping programme and other wildlife conservation activities will contribute to a sense of adventure and the development of ecotourism with positive community change.

### Ecotourism Meeting in Xining

A 3-day workshop concerning the development of community ecotourism was organized and hosted by Plateau Perspectives in Xining, the capital of Qinghai province, in November 2012. Participants included government tourism bureau leaders, tour operators, academics, community members, and social enterprises including Shokay and AmdoCraft. The goal was to gather and share experiences and expert knowledge in the tourism industry and to lay further groundwork for key partnerships to develop within the provincial tourism industry.

A major theme of the meeting was to promote tourism that can help meet environmental and socio-development goals simultaneously, even synergistically. Ecotourism seeks not only to protect the environment and wildlife species but also to promote development in the area. It may also include a strong educational component. As far as possible, it should be carried out *with* the community, not only *in* the area – that is, ecotourism may be used as a tool for poverty reduction (run as a community business) and bring long-term benefit to the region, including both its people and the natural environment.



### Study Tour to Nepal

In December 2012, Plateau Perspectives led a team of 10 people from Qinghai Province to learn from Nepal's experience of tourism development in the Himalayan region in relation to



community development including employment and poverty reduction, environmental conservation and management of 'protected areas' (national parks). Invited guests came from provincial government, the private sector, and academia. Nepal has a long history of tourism, and such experience is invaluable – both the positive lessons learned and the challenges and problems encountered. The main purpose of

this activity was to gain strategic insights that could be applied to the Qinghai context. Tourism has been relied upon heavily in Nepal for regional socio-economic development and social stability. However, it has not always been used in a sustainable manner. The development of responsible tourism (including ecotourism) that benefits ecosystems and local communities is a worthwhile goal – but a goal that requires clear direction and support.



Numerous briefings were provided throughout the tour from organizations including the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF-Nepal), The Mountain Institute (TMI), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal Tourism Board, Department of National Parks & Wildlife, Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), etc. In addition, facilities ranging from traditional teahouses and homestay lodges to high-end

ecolodges such as Tiger Tops near the Chitwan National Park were explored, to gain a better understanding about how such establishments can be adapted to local environmental and cultural contexts and bring benefit to local communities. Lessons learned will be used as a basis for developing tourism activities and local ventures in the high grassland areas of Qinghai Province in the future.



## **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND POVERTY REDUCTION: DEVELOPING TRUST FUNDS & HERDERS COOPERATIVES**

The trial development of a 'community trust fund' was begun in 2012, led by experienced colleagues from Sichuan and Beijing, in order to provide an accessible financing option for local herders to engage in diversified economic activities. The capital for the trust fund was provided by the Ford Foundation. At ground level, a committee was created comprised of local community members who manage the fund and distribute small loans on the basis of verified business plans with agreed timetables for repayment and guarantors.



In parallel, the Kegawa Herders Cooperative continues to grow, now with 46 member families. Business activities undertaken by the cooperative include a small shop in town, handicrafts, and tourism operations based on the local culture, scenery, wildlife and horse riding. The cooperative also has opened a small library in town to help increase access to information for community members. Relationship with a Hong Kong-based fabric and garment (outdoor

clothing) company also was established in 2012 (see [www.kora.net](http://www.kora.net)), leading to the sale of several tonnes of yak wool by coop members to the company at fair market value. This partnership includes guaranteed purchase and additional financial contributions to the cooperative fund, which provides seed monies for further development in the high grasslands of the Tibetan plateau.

Planning meetings also were held at a provincial university regarding post-graduate training opportunities seeking to localize teaching content to the regional situation – to help train a new cadre of leaders that better understand the multi-sectoral nature of 'sustainability' as well as the unique features of the Tibetan plateau environment and local cultures. At the same time, the importance of community governance structures is recognized as critical for long-lasting sustainable development (and conservation) in the area. All these elements also have been integrated into several other projects currently in development, in order to further support and strengthen community-based financing mechanisms and governance structures that can simultaneously encourage sustainable development and reduce poverty.

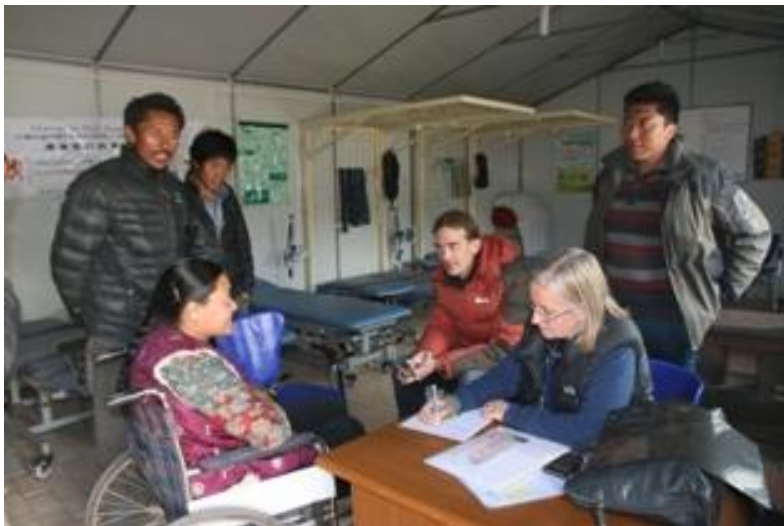




## ***YUSHU HEALTH AND REHABILITATION PROJECT***

Following the large earthquake that struck Yushu town in April 2010, Plateau Perspectives responded to the request by prefecture level government to assist with the development of rehabilitation services in the region. These services, to be administered by the Disabilities Association under the civil affairs bureau, will support several thousand people in the area who were injured by the earthquake or other people young and old with physical disability.

Arrangements are currently underway to provide training for 80 staff workers, to be trained as therapists to work in around a dozen rehabilitation centers or clinics in the prefecture, most in remote locations. Experiences and results from previous training courses, and the range of health needs met through prior clinical work undertaken by Plateau Perspectives staff, will guide the development of relevant, practical curriculum. The aim is to improve the health and independence of the people to be assisted by the service, building their capacity to reintegrate in their communities and to increase their opportunities for income generation.



## **PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY BY KIERAN DODDS**

The aim of this work was to document in photographs the extraordinary Sanjiangyuan area, including the National Nature Reserve, which encompasses the sources of China's 3 great rivers: the Mekong, Yangtze and Yellow Rivers. For eight weeks in the summer of 2012, a long-standing Plateau Perspectives supporter – Mr Kieran Dodds – traveled with our field team in the development of community ecotourism ventures; and through this process he had opportunity to photograph the region, providing us with exceptional photographs that help to raise awareness and understanding of the region and the changes taking place. More information about this work can be found on the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust website (see [http://www.wcmt.org.uk/reports/1019\\_1.pdf](http://www.wcmt.org.uk/reports/1019_1.pdf)).



Also see <http://www.panos.co.uk/stories/2-13-1542-2036/Kieran-Dodds/Third-Pole/>.



## **BIODIVERSITY AND WETLAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS**

A new project entitled '*Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China, to conserve globally important biodiversity*' began in 2012. The 5-year project is financed by the provincial government and UNDP/GEF and seeks to catalyze the management effectiveness of the protected area system with a focus on mainstreaming biodiversity and protected area concerns into other government sectors and development planning processes, on building both institutional and staff capacities within the provincial Forestry Department (and other related agencies) and individual nature reserves, and on promoting and expanding collaborative management (co-management) with local resource user groups. The project will be executed by the provincial Forestry Department, supported by the United Nations Development Programme. The community co-management part of this UNDP supported project is based, to a significant degree, on the prior work undertaken by Plateau Perspectives since 1998 with Tibetan herding communities in the headwaters of the Yangtze River in southwest Qinghai Province.

Another similar project also was developed through 2013, under the supervision of Plateau Perspectives' director (as independent consultant), focused on protecting biodiversity and ecological services in the Altai Mountains in northern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region through development and expansion of the protected area system including adoption of a more community-friendly approach to conservation. Kazakh herders regularly graze their livestock in the alpine grasslands and wetlands of the Altai Mountains each summer, and thus are central stakeholders in the region – as they will be impacted directly by policy decisions for the area, much like Tibetan pastoralists in southwest Qinghai province.



## PLATEAU PERSPECTIVES IN THE NEWS

- WCMT      *Conserving the headwaters | Photographs from the Tibetan Plateau | Fellow's Report*  
(Kieran Dodds, for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust)  
[http://www.wcmt.org.uk/reports/1019\\_1.pdf](http://www.wcmt.org.uk/reports/1019_1.pdf)
- SCMP      *Promised Land* (Kieran Dodds, South China Morning Post)  
<http://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/article/1118988/promised-land>
- Panos      *Third Pole* (Kieran Dodds, Panos)  
<http://www.panos.co.uk/stories/2-13-1542-2036/Kieran-Dodds/Third-Pole/>
- Pulitzer      *China's Three Rivers, Asia's Threatened Headwaters* (Sean Gallagher, Pulitzer Center)  
<http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/china-glaciers-global-warming-ecosystem-tibetan-plateau-rivers-headwaters-grasslands>
- TrekWorld      *kora: Adventure Wear Inspired by Yaks* (Larry Closs, TrekWorld)  
<http://www.trekworld.com/2013/02/04/kora-adventure-gear-inspired-by-yaks/>

## PUBLICATIONS

Foggin, J.M. 2012. Pastoralists and wildlife conservation in western China: collaborative management within protected areas on the Tibetan Plateau. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 2:17. <http://www.pastoralismjournal.com/content/2/1/17>

Foggin, J.M., and Gongbu Zhaxi. In press. 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*. The White Horse Press, United Kingdom. <http://www.whpress.co.uk/PAS.html>

## WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Plateau Perspectives      <http://www.plateauperspectives.org>
- Qinghai Ecotourism      <http://www.qinghaiecotourism.org>
- PP Facebook      <https://www.facebook.com/tibetplateau>
- PP LinkedIn      <https://www.linkedin.com/company/plateau-perspectives>
- PP Twitter      <https://twitter.com/tibetplateau>





## PARTNERS AND SPONSORS



Digni



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FORDFOUNDATION



Also:

*Qinghai Forestry Department (QFD)*

*Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve*

*Yushu Prefecture Disabilities Association*

*Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*

*Sichuan Shuguang Research Centre*

*Qinghai Normal University*

## FIELD STAFF

Dr J Marc Foggin, Executive Director

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Mr Dundrup, Project Officer & Translator

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Mr Jesse Montes, Technical Advisor / Environment

Dr Thomas Hoejberg, Technical Advisor / Rehab Project

Ms Lydia David, Technical Advisor / Occupational Therapist



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*We extend a very special thank you to **Mr Jigme Rabden**, who has been a core member of the Plateau Perspectives team for many years – but is now pursuing further medical education. He is much missed!*

*Two families from abroad also joined our team in 2012 – the **Montes family** from Canada and **Hoejberg family** from Denmark; involved in environmental and medical work, respectively.*

***Elsbeth and Charles Jaine** from New Zealand contributed to the rehab work in May 2012.*

*We equally want to express our debt of gratitude to **Mr Huting**, who has worked well beyond the call of duty in 2012 – thank you!*

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## **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

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**Dr John Sale**, former senior consultant for UNDP as biodiversity specialist

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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)



## FINANCIAL MATTERS

Plateau Perspectives' main financial support in 2012 was designated for the following projects:  
(approximate figures only)

Ford Foundation	Poverty alleviation, development of herders cooperatives	\$ 62,000 USD
HimalPartner	Community ecotourism and protected area management	\$ 126,000 USD
Varied donors	Development of rehabilitation services in the Yushu area	\$ 30,000 USD

The capacity building project focused on community ecotourism and protected area management is audited annually by an independent examiner in China. The rehabilitation work is scheduled for an independent audit in 2013. All other project incomes and expenses that come through Canada and Scotland also are reviewed each year, overseen by the respective country offices.





Canadian charity no. 88353 511 RR0001

Canadian BN # 83622 7678 RC0001

Scottish charity no. SC036202

China BN # 78144734-9



*Many thanks are hereby extended to Kieran Dodds for his kind permission to use several of his extraordinary photographs (cover pages, also pp. 9, 11, 14). Jesse Montes provided the photographs on pages 4, 5 and 6. Other photographs are by Du Fachun, Marc Foggin, Thomas Hoejberg, and other Plateau Perspectives staff.*