

Plateau Perspectives Newsletter

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This year has seen further extension in the work of PP in Qinghai Province. Health work was continued with additional training and the development of rural health services, village schools have been extended, and conservation work has developed with the training of local wildlife monitors and the forging of good relationship with a national-level nature reserve. *Read more below...*

Community Health

Women's Health Worker Training In response to a request from the health bureau, young women were gathered from every village to come for training in women's health work. The training was given by a paediatrician and a midwife. The students enjoyed themselves, participated well (writing health songs, role-playing patients, etc) and made considerable progress in the time. Further training has been requested.



Village Clinics This year a community-initiated project to build a clinic was completed. The doctor who is now practising there is one of those trained by PP last year. The village leaders buy the medicines and record their use. As so many patients are coming to the clinic, they are able to pay the doctor's salary and the running costs of the clinic from a very small surcharge on the cost of the medicines. This means the health bureau can continue to give salaries to the doctors in the even more remote areas, which they had planned to stop for lack of money.

PP has received funding to build a further three clinics and we are in the process of identifying communities and hope to build in the summer of 2006.

Immunisations After the immunisations last year, the community of the remote western township requested further immunisations and two further immunisation campaigns have taken place, this time with triple vaccine and hepatitis vaccine. Leaders of other communities are now requesting assistance with immunisations in the new year.



Education

Yaqu Village School is a primary school, which was set up by the community 6 years ago. However, there had been many difficulties and student numbers were dropping. A previous leader was brought out of retirement to revive the school and he approached us for help. We advised him to go to the Education Bureau and ask them to mend the dormitory roofs, which were leaking. We agreed to fund the building of a kitchen and dining hall as the lack of good food was felt to be the main reason that many parents were not sending their children to school. Now the kitchen and dining hall are in use, student numbers have risen with students attending from each village.



On a monitoring visit it was found that the children's quilts were worn and thin so over 40 new quilts were purchased to supplement the children's bedding.

Muqu Village School is continuing to run well. Materials have been bought to build a new kitchen and dining hall, but due to a very wet summer it was not possible to build this year so the plans are to build early next year.

Send a Yak to School Recent tax system changes mean the village schools now need to be self-sufficient. In order to be sustainable in the long-term, they need to increase the size of their herds of yak and sheep. PP has recently launched a fund-raising campaign to assist the schools. For more information, please visit the website at www.plateauperspectives.org.

County Middle School Natalie Yeoman has been teaching in the school for the last term. She has been able to take lessons with all the students in the school, many on a regular basis, as well as assisting staff with their professional development.

Environmental Protection

One of PP's main goals for 2005-06 was to launch its conservation work in the Sanjiangyuan region. Environmental protection includes both the protection of biodiversity and the sustainable utilisation of the region's natural resources. The main ecosystem in the area is alpine grassland, which:



1. supports a wide array of wildlife species (e.g., Tibetan antelope, wild ass, wild yak, argali, snow leopard, black-necked crane, etc)

2. provides critical ecological services for millions of people downstream
3. is home to Tibetan herders whose traditional livelihood has been adapted over millennia to the harsh environmental conditions of the plateau.

In pursuance of its goal to develop a regional development project with joint emphasis on natural resource management and community development, PP worked together with several local partners to organise a *Biodiversity Conservation Planning Meeting* in October.

The following conservation action priorities agreed at the planning meeting will form the basis for future conservation work in Zhiduo and neighbouring counties:

1. Responding to training needs in environment conservation
2. Identification of biodiversity hotspots
3. Assistance given to monitor wildlife and ecosystems and train herders
4. Organisation of a cross-sectoral meeting on grassland management
5. Assistance given to develop a Community Co-Management Plan
6. Establishment of a *Tibetan Conservation and Development Centre*



Main project partners in this conservation work will be the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve together with local communities, the government and local organisations. Together, these agencies plan to collaborate and develop a practical "community co-management plan" that integrates sustainable community development with long-term regional biodiversity conservation.

Staff and Visiting Experts

For work in 2005, we extend a huge *thank you* to the following:

Peter Foggin, who worked on the health project and various monitoring trips

John Sale who was the trainer on the Wildlife Research Training Workshop and is helping to design our co-operative work with the Nature Reserve

Walter Willms and Chris Wood, who together with John Sale participated in the *Biodiversity Conservation Planning Meeting*

Jenni Wilson, who taught on the Women's Health Worker Training

Selwyn and Natalie Yeoman, who were with us for six months. Selwyn was involved in project management in Zhiduo County while Natalie taught at the County Middle School. We said farewell to them at the beginning of this month as they returned to New Zealand

Monica Yeoman, who visited for 6 weeks and generally assisted in the work and to our local staff, **Larry, Hudson and Tarxin** who have been excellent colleagues and friends throughout the year.

We would also like to thank **Bernard Arsenault, Marjorie Bergen and Jane Torrance**, who have run the offices in the UK and Canada and provided much needed support.



For 2006

Marc and Marion Foggin continue to work this year in Zhiduo County.

We are pleased to welcome **Colin and Sarah Wilcock** who joined us in October from the UK. Colin is an accountant and has already taken over our accounting here in China. Sarah has an MA in Development and will be involved in community development together with Colin in Zhiduo County.

Fiona Worthy, an environmental biologist from the UK, who has just completed her PhD, will join the team in February/March.

New Website

The website has just been updated and relaunched. Please visit it at www.platauperspectives.org for further details about our work.