

and preservation of the last habitat of Taiwan's native carnivorous plant (*Society of Wilderness*), specific attention must be given on how to avoid unnecessary disturbance of nature by human beings.

Diversify activities. Diversify the types of NGO activities and events to attract the attention of the public and to tap into the interests of different age groups. Those NGOs that focus on environmental education all stressed the need to develop different activities and facilities for different age groups.



Participants enthusiastically jump into an icebreaker activity between panels. From left to right: Jennifer L. Turner (*Wilson Center*), Sun Yanjun, (*Tianjun People's Radio Station*), Roger Chan (*Hong Kong University*), Fang Jing (*Friends of Nature, FON*), Wei-Chieh Lae (*Green Citizen Action Union*), and Liang Congjie (*FON*).

Go to the people. Many of the NGO participants in this forum were grassroots organizations, so maintaining close contact with their local people is the lifeline for these groups. NGOs need to go into communities and introduce environmental activities to impacted communities and local residents. Thus, their goal to promote environmental protection can be carried out through changing people's perceptions and behaviors. Some examples of NGOs attending the forum that work with communities include: (a) *Green Formosa Front* in Taiwan has combined disaster relief work with their green activities by assisting farmers rebuilding after the 1999 earthquake to plant organic crops; (b) *Global Village Beijing* has created green community groups with the cooperation of the district government of Xuanwu, Beijing, to promote green lifestyles among families; (c) *Friends of Nature* sends a Tibetan antelope bus out to rural areas to educate children about wildlife protec-

tion; and (d) project coordinators of the *South-North Institute for Sustainable Development (SNISD)* are sent to stay with farmers in the Baima Snow Mountains of Yunnan Province. The efforts of SNISD to coordinate local governments, financial institutions, and farmers have led to the growing implementation of renewable energy pilot projects in this mountain region.

Solicit feedback. In designing an activity make sure to incorporate a way to solicit feedback from participants in order to improve the planning of future events. Feedback will help to better estimate future participation.

Some quotes from the public participation discussion:

Dr. Yang Jiongli (*Friends of the Earth, Guizhou*): In order to promote tourism and birdwatching in the Guizhou Caohai Nature Reserve, we have worked with the Guizhou provincial government to launch a media campaign to raise awareness of eco-tourism in the nature reserve.

Mr. Simon Liao (*Wild Bird Association, Taiwan*): Even when we work on international environmental issues, it is important that we, environmentalists, "jump into" our own communities and deal with local problems.

Mr. Sun Dehui (*Black-necked Crane Association*): A large numbers of participants can have a negative impact on the environment. Imagine the impact of building up new transportation infrastructure and organizing large groups of crane lovers to visit northwest Yunnan. The hordes of visitors would be a nightmare for the black-necked cranes and scare them away! We must carefully design eco-tourist and birdwatching activities so we do not damage what we are trying to protect!

Mr. Lin Shen Tzung (*Eco-conservation Alliance*): The goal of public participation should be to create environmentalists. The more environmentalists in the world the better.

Group Four: Fundraising

This group wrestled with the tough issue of how to run an NGO on limited funding, which is a major concern of groups in Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. In Mainland China, NGOs tend to depend on volunteers, foreign foundations, and Chinese environmental activists for support of their activities. Mainland Chinese NGOs are concerned about the uncertainty of funding resources and organizational

dependency. Hong Kong and Taiwan NGOs are more reliant on membership fees and government grants. The latter source of funding is often quite sensitive and NGOs disagree if such funds hinder their effectiveness. Some Hong Kong groups (such as *WWF Hong Kong* and *Friends of the Earth, Hong Kong*) have been very successful in obtaining strong corporate sponsorship to do work in Hong Kong and in Mainland China. Closer attention is needed to assess this type of NGO funding. Some ideas drawn from the fundraising discussion included:

- 1) One of the easiest ways to solve the problem of funding shortages is to recruit volunteers to help carry out NGO activities and events.
- 2) An NGO should prioritize projects and not do too many at once and stretch resources too thin.
- 3) Given limited funding, an NGO should focus

on a narrow range of priorities and do these well, which will enable the NGO to prove its effectiveness and be more successful when submitting grant proposals or soliciting funding from the public. In short, be focused and create a niche for your organization.

4) Integrate fundraising activities into regular NGO events.

5) Fundraising on the street can help advertise NGO events and collect money. (*Editor's Note: Greenpeace Hong Kong has been particularly successful with this technique*)

6) Stress motivating members to participate in events, for they could become major financial supporters of NGO activities.

7) NGOs should develop strict standards for accepting corporate donations so the public does not view them as being co-opted by big business.

The Organizational Model of the Wild Bird Federation Taiwan

Simon Liao, President, Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan

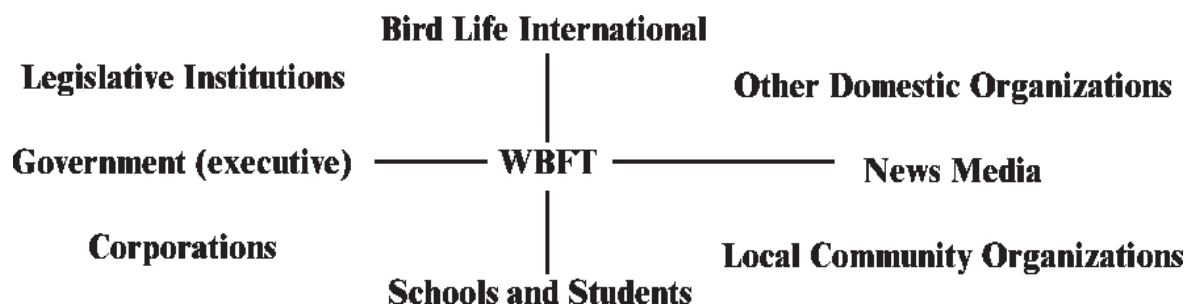
Ever since its establishment in 1988, the Wild Bird Federation Taiwan (WBFT) has developed 19 regional Wild Bird Societies, and attracted approximately 5,000 members (10,000 including family members). As of the year 2000, WBFT organized over 640 bird watching activities, with more than 685,000 participants. Over the past 13 years, the WBFT has expanded their general activities beyond educational bird watching to include: 1) activities to promote the conservation of wetlands; 2) assessments of important bird habitats in Taiwan; and (3) work to save exotic birds. Island-wide their bird watching activities have been diversified to include topics related to environmental protection, as well as bird appreciation.

In 1994, with the goal of contributing to regional and international bird conservation, the WBFT joined

Bird Life International, the largest wild bird conservation NGO in the world. In 1995, WBFT initiated a series of international conferences on conservation of the black-faced spoonbill. Since 2000, the WBFT has supported the *Bird Life International* in a number of activities, including: (1) publishing *Threatened Birds in the World*; (2) sponsoring emergency relief of South Pole penguins suffering from oil spill pollution; and (3) participating in the protection of tropical forestry in Paraguay.

Under the leadership of Mr. Simon Liao, the WBFT has put more energy into developing international activities in recent years. He believes that pursuing financial assistance and strategic advice from the international community is a very effective means to improve and support local conservation work. In his talk

Figure 2. Networking by the Wild Bird Federation, Taiwan



Mr. Liao also pointed out that in order to ensure better cooperation with both domestic and international groups, it is important for NGOs to understand the needs of the local people, businesses, and government. Mr. Liao used WBFT's experiences in carrying out an Important Bird Area (IBA) project to illustrate how his group has strengthened its organizational capacity through building strong networks (See Figure 2).

WBFT interacts with numerous groups as it works to assess and mark wild bird habitats and undertake

tional NGO partners.

Similarly, corporations wish to build up a pro-environmental protection public image and the WBFT needs their financial support, so choosing carefully (not wishing to "green wash" unworthy businesses) the Federation has found partners in the business sector. The Federation also needs students to participate in volunteering activities. Conversely, students need training and want fun volunteer activities, which the WBFT can provide. Local community organizers in Taiwan seek campaigns and issues that pull the community together and the WBFT can meet this desire through its public awareness campaigns and participation in endangered bird activities. The news media hungers for information on important issues and WBFT works to provide them the necessary data, for the news organizations can help promote the Federation in their bird conservation work. Using this strategy of mutual understanding and assistance, in the IBA project the WBFT has created partnerships with 29 organizations in the governmental, corporate, academic, and grassroots community sectors.

In summary, Mr. Liao did not merely wish to describe the reciprocal relationships between the WBFT and other governmental and societal groups, rather he wanted to stress the necessity for NGOs to explore what government, corporations, the news media, and local people expect from them, for all of these groups are invaluable constituents. In short, to develop a stronger organization, environmental NGOs need to meet the diverse demands from their constituents in society.

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A group of environmentalists who have devoted themselves to the protection of wildlife (from left to right): Xi Zhinong, Lin Mawan, Lin Ju Sen, Simon Liao, Huang Ming Hsuan, and Sun Dehui

other activities. Mr. Liao believes that before partnering with other organizations it is crucial that WBFT first prioritize its own goals and then try to understand the goals of potential partner organizations. With this clarity of needs and goals, WBFT can use its expertise and services to meet the needs of partner organizations without losing sight of the Federation's own priorities. For example, when WBFT deals with the Taiwanese government, the Federation needs governmental support in policy promotion, disseminating information, and financing. Conversely, the government wishes to promote its own reputation among people within and beyond Taiwan's borders. In light of the mutual benefits of cooperation, WBFT has succeeded in recruiting more than 1,000 volunteers and has been able to provide the government with a wide network of local and interna-