Organization 1—Green Earth Volunteers

1. What person, group or organization is being profiled, and why are they of interest to this project?

Green Earth Volunteers. This organization has a long history as China’s indigenous environmental NGOs. Founded by a journalist, this organization serves to foster environmental awareness of Chinese citizens and establish professional networks of environmentally concerned journalists. In addition, they regularly hold forums to discuss key environmental issues in China. Given the purpose and functions of this organization, I think useful information and data of environment in Beijing can be obtained which would be helpful to this project.

1. What have they done – through research, or a public health program or education forum, for example-- that illustrates how they have worked to improve air pollution governance and environmental public health?

One research program they have done is to organize hiking trips to observe and record current situation of rivers in Beijing every weekend. Through the trip, people are able to experience the fun with nature, which city people don’t really have a chance to do so in their daily life. Also, they educate people with serious problems about water in China, e.g. water shortage, uneven distribution of water in different geographical areas and seasons, severe water pollution, etc. By holding educational activities like this, they help obtain public attention and educate them about environmental problems.

1. What timeline of events illustrates how this way of addressing environmental public health has developed?

This organization firstly has daily river information update which is available for subscription; Then a new line of business weekly trip to rivers around Beijing. They also have monthly environmental journalists’ salon and yearly report on river protection.

1. Does this person, group or organization claim to have a new or unique way of addressing environmental public health? Does this approach point to or suggest problems with other approaches?

I don’t think this organization has a new approach to address environmental problems. Just like other not innovative approaches, this approach aims to educate general public by involving them in nature and make them realize the beauty of nature. What makes this approach unique is that it has continuous media exposure of their findings through journalists’ summit. However, educating general public may not be an efficient approach to solve the urgent problems.

1. What data have they collected or used to support their approach to environmental public health? What visualizations of this data have been created?

They don’t have data listed on their website which measures their success of this project. But their daily river information feeds have partnered with The Guardian, UK. Besides, they have over 300 blog posts recording their observation of environment on their website. Perhaps it’s because the main purpose of this organization is to educate general public, they don’t really contribute to environmental public health.

1. What research has the organization produce or drawn on in their initiatives – in the last year, and over the last decade?

They had Yellow River Decade Project, River Decade Project, Beijing River Watch, Beiyun Program ongoing last year. And River Decade Project was started almost a decade ago, which every decade a group of volunteers travel to south China and study the hydropower development there.

1. What kinds of technology and infrastructure do they rely on in the production of environmental health care?

Basically, photography technology is used to record what they see and post online.

1. What social ecology does this person, group or organization work within, and how did it shaped their way of conceiving and engaging asthma?

This organization work within general public, schools and other environmental institutions. This group focuses on environmental problems involved with river, so they don’t really conceive and engage asthma problems.

1. What events or data seem to have motivated their ways of thinking about and engaging environmental health?

I think current environment situation has motivated this organization. Being a dedicated reporter, the founder hopes to engage general public to participate in all kinds of events to improve their environmental awareness and improve better transparency of information disclosure.

1. What funding enables their work and possibly shapes their way of thinking about environmental health?

They have partnered up with a variety of organizations such as IPE, Friends of nature, WWF, China Dialog, etc. They can obtain funds from the above sources. Besides, they mainly work with unpaid volunteers, which also reduces their expenses.

1. What in the history of this person, group or organization likely shaped the way they conceived or and engage environmental health?

A lot of similar organizations may impact on this organization. For instance, China’s environmental activist, the oldest registered environmental NGO is Friends of Nature. These organizations serve similar function, which is educating people about the importance of environment.

1. What does this person, group or organization seem to find methodologically challenging or concerning in dealing with environmental health?

Personally, I think their main challenge is that they don’t have enough public attention. As they aim to educate people, their target shouldn’t be limited to the city of Beijing. They should also expand to less developed regions, where those people really need this kind of knowledge. Otherwise, this approach to solve environmental problem wouldn’t be effective.

1. What kinds of governance are (implicitly or explicitly) called for in the way they think about environmental health?

As their main focus is on water issues currently, they would call for supervision on hydropower development, water quality test, etc. Also, they might need assistance from the government on educating citizens.

1. How can The Asthma Files enable or supplement this way of thinking about environmental health, and the work of this person, group or organization?

I think asthma and water issues are two distinctly different topics. But The Asthma Files can use the data if Green Earth Volunteers has some work on air quality research.

1. What person, group or organization is being profiled, and why are they of interest to this project?

Energy Foundation China; They have funded some research related to recent sustainability study in China.

1. What have they done – through research, or a public health program or education forum, for example-- that illustrates how they have worked to improve air pollution governance and environmental public health?

This organization aims to assist in China’s transition to a sustainable energy future by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy. They provide funds for over 440 grantees who are currently researching advanced energy technologies. Also, the number of projects they have funded has reached 1560.

1. What timeline of events illustrates how this way of addressing environmental public health has developed?

Policy Origins (1980-2002)[[1]](#footnote-1): Some domestically-developed policies have encouraged investment in energy efficiency. According to China FAQs, energy efficiency investments accounted for more than 10% of total energy investments in 1981 and investment later increased to 12%. These investments helped establishment of new institutions.

Renewed Policy Priority (2005-present): The 11th Five-Year Plan has stated that unchecked energy demand growth will impede economic development. More investments have been put in renewable energy research programs. And in 2007 and 2008, energy intensity decreased by 4.0% and 4.6% respectively, which show that some progress have been achieved.

1. Does this person, group or organization claim to have a new or unique way of addressing environmental public health? Does this approach point to or suggest problems with other approaches?

I don’t think this organization has a new technique to address the problem of environmental public health. From my personal understanding, this organization helps raise funds to support new energy research, which is not an innovative way to address this problem. Similar approaches like this can have some problems such as inappropriate use of funds if there is not enough transparent disclosure.

1. What data have they collected or used to support their approach to environmental public health? What visualizations of this data have been created?

The data they collected have shown that China is taking considerable steps to shift to green economy. The annual growth rate of additional wind power capacity has been more than 100% from 2005 to 2009. In addition, the domestic solar power market has started to develop with about 160 MW solar PV installed and connected to grid in 2009. Also, more jobs have been created in the energy sector.[[2]](#footnote-2)

1. What research has the organization produce or drawn on in their initiatives – in the last year, and over the last decade?

Key projects supported by Energy Foundation China including Re-inventing Fire China Study, Green Fiscal and Tax Policies Program, National Green Building Action Plan, Low-carbon City Plan of Chenggong, etc.

1. What kinds of technology and infrastructure do they rely on in the production of environmental health care?

In my opinion, this organization is not directly related to the production of environmental health care. But promoting a better energy structure like using more renewable energy, the air quality in China is going to improve and thus, resulting in better environmental health care. To do so, they rely on advanced research on renewable energy, which they establish the grant programs.

1. What social ecology does this person, group or organization work within, and how did it shaped their way of conceiving and engaging asthma?

Mostly this organization works with research institutes and organizations which it provides grants for. Like I mentioned above, this organization doesn’t directly relate to asthma problem, but with the better improvement of technology, positive impacts will be posed on asthma.

1. What events or data seem to have motivated their ways of thinking about and engaging environmental health?

China has real energy crisis, which seem to have motivated more investments in renewable energy. Energy demand in China has increased over the past few decades and currently with the heavy dependence on hydroelectric power, which only supplies about 20% of total energy demand, there is still a huge shortage of energy supply. [[3]](#footnote-3)

1. What funding enables their work and possibly shapes their way of thinking about environmental health?

The key funders of this organization include The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, ClimateWorks Foundation, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, Oak Foundation and Stiftung Mercator Foundation.

1. What in the history of this person, group or organization likely shaped the way they conceived or and engage environmental health?

Other similar organizations like Global Village of Beijing, Zhongguancun China Academy of New Supply-side Economics, and The Wind Coalition may have affected the way this organization engaged environmental health. Energy Foundation China provides a broader range of grants to different energy research.

1. What does this person, group or organization seem to find methodologically challenging or concerning in dealing with environmental health?

A challenge in this organization may be misappropriation of assets and funds. If this happens, less funds can be put into energy research, and it is a waste of funds.

1. What kinds of governance are (implicitly or explicitly) called for in the way they think about environmental health?

Based on the purpose of this organization, I think regular disclosure of financial reports, projects that they are funding, and progress of funded projects should be made to public, which people and supervise their operation to ensure funds are appropriately used.

1. How can The Asthma Files enable or supplement this way of thinking about environmental health, and the work of this person, group or organization?

The Asthma Files and Energy Foundation China are two different organizations and I don’t think it would be helpful for The Asthma Files to supplement this approach. However, The Asthma Files can research into the correlation of traditional energy and asthma.

1. "Timeline of China's Energy Efficiency Policies." *ChinaFAQs*. 7 Oct. 2009. Web. <http://www.chinafaqs.org/library/timeline-chinas-energy-efficiency-policies>. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Renewable Energy in China. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/SuccessStories/RenewableEnergyinChina/tabid/29865/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Piper, David. "China Facing Worst Energy Crisis in Years." *Fox News*. 17 May 2011. Web. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2011/05/17/chinas-energy-crisis/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)