Xinyan Lin

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Summary

Dr. Lin is a conservation social scientist with 10+ years of specialized expertise in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) frameworks, environmental grantmaking, and strategic programmatic design. With a proven track record of implementing robust MEL systems across complex conservation initiatives, Dr. Lin excels at developing data-driven evaluation methodologies that measure impact, foster organizational learning, and inform strategic decision-making. Her work centers on optimizing the equity and effectiveness of conservation interventions by establishing clear metrics, implementing adaptive management processes, and translating evaluation insights into actionable strategies. Dr. Lin has provided MEL services for major foundations and NGOs including Oak Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Oceans Five, Pew Charitable Trust, Environmental Defense Fund, and WWF. Her collaborative leadership approach has strengthened MEL capacity across global networks including the Climateworks Funders Table, Oak Foundation Marine Programme, China Marine Funders Alliance, and Duke World Food Policy Centre, driving evidence-based improvements in climate change mitigation, marine conservation, and food security initiatives.

Professional Experience

Duke University Nicholas School of the Environment, PhD Researcher　　　2018 - 2024

- Developed advanced MEL strategies for evaluating social equity in global ocean governance for Oceans Five, demonstrating expertise in:
  - Systematic data collection and analysis of international policy processes
  - Developing innovative monitoring approaches for complex social-ecological systems
  - Creating evidence-based strategies to enhance social impact of different conservation projects
- Conducted comprehensive funding landscape research on global funding flow for the fisheries sector for a Duke-EDF collaboration, resulting in a peer-reviewed paper, showcasing skills in:
  - Quantitative and qualitative research methodologies
  - Performance tracking of global funding flows
  - Strategic impact assessment for international development initiatives

Oak Foundation Marine Programme, Associate　　　2016-2017

- Managed the routine responsibilities of three grant portfolios (marine plastic pollution, IUU fishing, small-scale fisheries) totalling over 20 million USD under the supervision of three Programme Officers
- Led MEL system development for marine conservation portfolios:
  - Supported the Environment Programme Director in designing a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system
  - Managed grant portfolios in Asia, South America, Europe and North America totaling over 20 million USD with rigorous performance tracking
- Conducted strategic research to evaluate capacity-building initiatives in marine conservation

China Marine Funders Alliance, Founding Director　　　2017-2020

- Established and managed the China Marine Funders Alliance for SEE Foundation and David and Lucile Packard Foundation to lead the network of funders investing in China's coastal and ocean conservation with more than 30 Chinese and international grantmaking foundations, their annual investments tripled from 2017 to 2020.
- Designed and implemented monitoring and evaluation systems for WWF China Ocean Program to strengthen its leadership in the China Marine Funders Alliance:
  - Created program strategy and evaluation framework for WWF China Ocean Program
  - Tracked and reported on network performance
  - Developed stakeholder engagement metrics for marine conservation initiatives

Oak Foundation Climate Change Programme, Grants Management Trainee　　　2014-2015

- Refined MEL skills for grantmaking in Asia and South America through:
  - Preparing comprehensive grant application summaries

o   Supporting due diligence processes
  o   Writing detailed progress reports
  o   Conducting strategic research for capacity-building evaluations

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Consultant   2012-2013

- Conducted a comprehensive systematic review of air pollution mitigation interventions in China and Japan:
  o   Designed and executed multi-site qualitative research methodology involving expert interviews and policy analysis
  o   Developed a structured evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of national and local air pollution policies
  o   Produced a rigorous 90-page research report documenting policy interventions, implementation challenges, and comparative policy effectiveness

Monitoring Evaluation Learning Specific Skills

- Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis
- Performance tracking and impact assessment
- Results-based management
- Utilization-focused evaluation
- Knowledgement management
- Cross-cultural program communication
- Participatory monitoring evaluation and learning
- Collaborative ethnography

Education

Ph.D. in Marine Science and Conservation, Duke University   2018-2024

- Thesis: Mobilizing Ocean Equity: Global and Chinese Assemblages, Onto-Epistemological Possibilities, and Gongyi Agency
- Focus on systemic research methodologies and impact evaluation

Master in International Affairs, Graduate Institute Geneva   2013-2015

- Thesis: Deconstructing Resource Curse in Western China, the Case of Coal Industry in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

Bachelor of Business Administration, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan   2008-2012

- Thesis: Forest Certification for China's Bamboo Industry: Pathway, Problem, and Prospect (Best Thesis Award)

Publications:

- **Lin, X,** Campbell, LM, Basurto, XG, Cohen P., under review, How Committed are We to Ocean Equity? Equity Mobilization at UN Ocean Conference 2022. Journal of Earth System Governance
- **Lin, X**, Basurto, XG, Campbell, LM. under review, The Role of Philanthropic Foundations in China's Marine Conservation Governance. Journal of   bbConservation Science and Practice
- **Lin, X**, Basurto, XG, Cao L, Zou S, (2021) Past, Present, and Prospect of Small-Scale Fishery Commons in China. conference paper to the International Association of Study of Commons (IASC) Fisheries and Aquaculture Virtual Conference.
- Bennett, A., Basurto, X., Virdin, J., **Lin, X**., Betances, S., Smith, M., Allison, E., et al. (2021) Recognize Fish as Food in Policy Discourse and Development Funding. Ambio. https://d07/s13280-020-01451-4oi.org/10.10
- **Lin, X.** (2019) China Marine Grantmaking Bluebook: An Overview of Support from Philanthropy to Marine Conservation in China – report presented at the 3rd China Ocean NGO Forum.
- **Lin, X.,** and Elder, M. (2014). Major Developments in China's National Air Pollution Policy during the Early 12th Five-Year Plan Period. IGES Policy/Research Report. Hayama, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep00721.1

Language Proficiency

Chinese: Native • English: C2 • Japanese: C1 • French: B2