



FORUM REPORT : WORKSHOP REPORT

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EVENT NUMBER	396	DATE	October 7 2008	TIME	9:30 – 11:00
ROOM	114/9				
TITLE	Diverse Planet, Healthy Planet : Biological and Cultural Diversity as Cornerstones of Eco-cultural health – Implications for Assessment, Policy, and Implementation				
ORGANIZER INSTITUTION	Terralingua				

MODERATOR	David Rapport
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WHAT WERE THE OBJECTIVES FOR THIS EVENT ?

To increase familiarity with the concept of eco-cultural health. how it is implemented and how it relates to the conservation of biological and cultural diversity. Participants will acquire practical tools to take a more inclusive and synthetic approach to sustainability, become familiar with the key indicators of ecological and cultural health and learn how they have been applied, from the community to the global level.

HOW WERE THESE OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED?

The event, with 20 people present, was designed to be a free-flowing discussion, with contributions from everyone present: a knowledge sharing event.
Luisa first gave an introduction about the meaning of eco-cultural health, her connection to David Rapport's work.
David, as the moderator, provided six questions designed to be provocative, and these questions were discussed in turn.

WHAT NEW IDEAS AND MAIN MESSAGES WERE RAISED AT THE EVENT?

Notes were taken, almost verbatim, of the discussion that ensued. Below is a synthesis of the main points:

Question 1: What constitutes eco-cultural health?

- We need to embrace the concept of biodiversity as having intrinsic value and not only utilitarian value;
- We need to remember that linguistic diversity is a part of cultural diversity;
- We need to re-define and change our understanding of “poverty”, which is a label given to many indigenous peoples and thus they seem themselves this way. We tend to value people for what they possess
- The terminology “ecosystem services” is not adequate terminology and sends the wrong message about the utilitarian values of biodiversity;
- Using the health metaphor, we can easily understand ill health in both cultures and ecosystems, but can we recognize healthy cultures and ecosystems? Can we identify the source of dysfunction or “disease”?
- Ecos means “home” which is a place of relationships: when we regard ourselves as dominators, then there is no relationship - it is domination. Fragmentation is a disease. Hope and wholeness are maintained by humility – humans suffer from arrogance.
- The value of whole ecosystems is changing: if we think about who holds tenure of these ecosystems (indigenous people) and when the international community recognizes the value of these ecosystems, then indigenous peoples will be recognized in their role as stewards.
- health may not be the best metaphor, since in health, an external force can be applied that can remedy the situation – but not so with cultures and ecosystems. We need a different language; something more holistic.
- Is cultural diversity essential to life? There is increasing evidence in the literature, that loss of cultural identity and practices have a detrimental effect on physical health.

Question 2: How does one measure and monitor trends in eco-cultural health?

- What can't be measured, can't be managed
- However, the contrasting view is that we need more harmony and measuring treats our ecosystems as a subject, something that can be reduced and compartmentalized for reductionist measurement. To rectify this, measurements should not be made in isolation and we need to recognize that we are a part of and not separate from the system that we are measuring.
- In order to represent cultural diversity other than in an anecdotal way, we need indicators of what is really happening on the ground; what measure organization, vitality and resilience of socio-cultural systems.

Question 3: What have local communities done to restore the health of their ecosystems and the vitality of their cultures?

- urban and rural populations in Mexico are comparing their access to food and relating that to health and finding that the diversity of food is critical for health;
- multi-cultural communities in southern Spain are engaging in “enlightened self interest” and collectively determining what they can give up to be a better society;
- we need to reduce our global consumption of meat;
- ideas of land ownership need to be challenged – where this breaks the connection with the land, but in some cases, ownership works. In marine systems, a locally managed marine network is seen as positive and for management decisions and for cultural resilience;
- people a change to manage their own resources and not be managed by NGOs and government agricultural extension agents. There is a saying in southern Ethiopia: “our land has become an orphan” – it has no parents – there is nobody to teach you things about he

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<p>land anymore. This can be viewed as a family metaphor which implies the importance of relationships and responsibility;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can people still be stewards of the environment when they have become so disconnected from the land? Is there a fundamental right to eco-cultural health and how can we enact that? <p><u>Question 4: Are there policy initiatives in support of eco-cultural health, and how effective have they been? How might conservation policy at all scales focus more effectively on restoring and enhancing eco-cultural health?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We require earth jurisprudence • Governments need to take greater responsibility • The poverty agenda is foremost in Ethiopia as this is how Ethiopia is viewed by the outside world; so this crowds out the conservation agenda. This raises the question: What is the agenda of the government and who defines that? • The agenda of “development” based on economic models dominates governments so this crowds out other agendas. Latin for development is “dominacion” – to control or subdue. • However, is it government, which is really just people, or is it ideology that is the problem?
<p>WHAT CONCRETE ACHIEVEMENTS WERE REPORTED? (PARTNERSHIPS, PROJECTS, SUCCESS STORIES, ETC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN has taken more steps to integrate culture into policy; but more needs to be done to place this more centrally • In a project in the Sierra Terrahumara of Mexico, people did not want to participate because they devalued what they knew: once they realized that their knowledge and contributions were valued, they shared and the project moved forward. • Ecuador has just enacted legislation that recognizes the rights of nature
<p>WHAT FOLLOW-UP IS EXPECTED?</p> <p>Some ideas of what should be done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 8j in the CBD should be amended to elevate the primacy of culture in conservation; • We need to emphasize the importance of diversity for health • A change in values is needed and we need to and reconnect to our ecological and spiritual roots • Education curriculum needs to integrate the importance of culture and TEK; • Knowledge in education needs to be accompanied with wisdom and experience included in the curriculum • “It is not what you know about the place you live in what how you live in a place you know”
<p>LINKS; URLS; PAPERS, ETC</p>

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