



## **Annual Report, 2009**

Terralingua had another very productive year in 2009, in spite of the continuing challenges posed by the global economic downturn. Like most non-profit organizations, we experienced significant difficulties in garnering new funding to support our work. However, a grant from The Christensen Fund (TCF) for various outreach and educational activities, several fundraising efforts and donation campaigns, and careful husbanding of our existing resources allowed us to continue to pursue our program of work, advancing ongoing projects as well as initiating new ones.

### **Program Activities**

Work continued on our existing projects: the Sourcebook on Biocultural Diversity, the Indicators of Biocultural Diversity, and the Sierra Tarahumara project in Mexico. In addition, we began activities under our Biocultural Diversity Education and Outreach project, supported by TCF, and further pursued opportunities for promoting biocultural diversity policy.

**Sourcebook on Biocultural Diversity.** One of the year's highlights was the acceptance for publication of the manuscript of the book *Biocultural Diversity Conservation: A Global Sourcebook*, co-authored by Luisa Maffi and Ellen Woodley. The book is the outcome of a long-term Terralingua project, which was supported by TCF. We submitted the manuscript to the major UK environmental publisher Earthscan, and it was accepted after very positive reviews. Publication is expected in February 2010, and through the end of the year we worked intensively to finalize the manuscript and prepare it for publication. The book provides background on the concept and field of biocultural diversity, outlines the relevance of a biocultural approach to conservation, and presents and analyzes 45 projects from all over the world that take this integrative approach. The book also offers lessons learned and recommendations for supporting and strengthening biocultural diversity, and considers the importance of biocultural diversity for sustainability. It will have a foreword by Gonzalo Oviedo, Senior Social Science Policy Advisor for IUCN, and will be distributed through IUCN channels in addition to Earthscan channels.

We are very proud of this accomplishment, which will significantly advance our efforts to promote the biocultural paradigm in international conservation and policy circles. With the same goal, thanks to the new TCF grant we began developing an *interactive companion portal for the book*, to be hosted on our website. The portal will feature the 45 Sourcebook projects, as well as a discussion forum and other resources on biocultural diversity conservation. We plan to launch the portal in conjunction with the publication of the Sourcebook early next year.

**Indicators of Biocultural Diversity.** Throughout the year, we continued working on our *Index of Linguistic Diversity* (ILD). The ILD is the very first quantitative tool designed to monitor trends in the vitality of the world's languages (particularly indigenous languages) over time. Up to now, we only had anecdotal evidence about the status and trends of the world's languages, a key aspect of biocultural

diversity. The ILD fills a major gap in our knowledge. Through a rigorous methodology, it shows what is happening with global linguistic diversity. ILD developers David Harmon and Jonathan Loh finalized their technical report after receiving positive peer reviews and useful comments, and started preparing a research paper on the ILD for submission to the online peer-reviewed journal *Language Documentation and Conservation*. We hope for acceptance and publication in 2010, after which we intend to put the ILD database on our website, as an interactive, searchable tool for researchers, policy makers, and activists.

The database is the largest existing compendium on the status and trends in the vitality of the world's languages, going back at least 50 years, and for some languages even 100 years. We can definitely be proud of this accomplishment, although the trends are not encouraging: over the past 50 years, the global trend in linguistic vitality has gone down 20%—a trend that closely mirrors that in the loss of global biodiversity (as measured by WWF's Living Planet Index). A key goal we have with the ILD is to call public attention to the extinction crisis of the world's languages, and to promote favorable policies by governments as well as by international organizations concerned with the conservation of nature and culture, such as the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO), and others.

This year, we also advanced our work on the *Vitality Index of Traditional Environmental Knowledge* (VITEK), which measures the permanence or loss of traditional environmental knowledge (TEK), another key component of biocultural diversity. The VITEK tells us in quantitative terms whether TEK in a given locale is being maintained or eroded over time, and which factors account for the observed trends. Dr. Stanford Zent, the VITEK developer, continued pilot testing of this indicator in several indigenous and local communities in Venezuela, following which he will produce peer-reviewed papers on this indicator.

The VITEK, as well, is an absolute first, and peer reviewers much lauded its development. Like the ILD, the VITEK should be highly relevant to international agencies and conservation organizations, given the importance of traditional environmental knowledge for the conservation of biodiversity. Once it has been tested and refined, it too will be very useful in research, policy and practice. At that point, we will start promoting widespread use of the VITEK, so that over time it can become a global index with data points from around the world. It will then become an invaluable source of information about what is happening worldwide with the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge about the environment.

Work on both indicators has been supported since 2006 by a grant from TCF. Pilot testing of the VITEK in Venezuela is supported by Venezuelan sources.

**Eco-cultural Health in the Sierra Tarahumara, Mexico.** Since 2004, we have been working with the indigenous Rarámuri people in the Sierra Tarahumara of northern Mexico, under grants from TCF and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada. The project, "*Eco-cultural Health in the Sierra Tarahumara*", co-directed by Drs. David Rapport and Luisa Maffi, aimed to support the Rarámuri's efforts to recover the eco-cultural health of the local landscape and communities. In 2008, we had to make the difficult decision of interrupting field travel to the Sierra Tarahumara, due to an exponential increase in drug-related violence in the region, which exposed our field team to potentially significant risks. However, throughout 2009 we closely followed progress made by the Rarámuri in advancing the activities we had initiated in the communities in the previous years, which had focused

on basic conditions for sustainability: water supply, ecological restoration, and food production. In particular, we were pleased to learn that, with the financial support we had provided, community members completed a major project to bring drinking water to their settlements from a mountain spring, by laying an 8-km pipeline down the valley and connecting households to the pipeline. People were tending the trees in the tree nurseries we had helped create, and harvesting vegetables in the home gardens we had established, using permaculture principles germane to traditional Rarámuri agricultural practices.

We also continued phone discussions with our main Rarámuri counterparts about next steps in assisting Rarámuri efforts. The Rarámuri are interested in further capacity building on permaculture and ecological restoration, and in developing alternative education curriculum for youth, with a focus on Rarámuri language and culture. Because of the lack of security in the region and our consequent inability to continue field activities, we decided to focus on bringing a Rarámuri delegation to Canada in 2010, for an intercultural exchange and to jointly plan collaborative work on the alternative curriculum and training. As our TCF grant was drawing to a close this year, we concentrated on a specific fundraising campaign for this purpose. This effort culminated toward the end of the year with a successful fundraiser on Salt Spring Island, which helped us reach our goal and allowed us to start planning for the Rarámuri's visit.

**Biocultural Diversity Education and Outreach.** Under the new grant from TCF, we began carrying out education and outreach activities. In the earlier part of the year, we held an internal *workshop on biocultural diversity education* on Salt Spring Island, with the participation of our education expert Prof. Carla Paciotto (Western Illinois University). The goal was to identify strategies and approaches for the development of educational materials on biocultural diversity for schools at various levels, as well as of educational publications for the general public. Based on initial contacts with both primary and secondary schools in Canada and the USA, we outlined ideas for innovative curriculum modules that will allow students to discover and explore the concept of biocultural diversity and learn about it through a variety of activities and by drawing from a variety of resources. We also discussed the production of a "biocultural diversity primer": an introduction to biocultural diversity for the general public, which will update and improve upon our very popular 2003 *Sharing a World of Difference* booklet, which was published by UNESCO.

In addition, part of the workshop was dedicated to discussing prospects for our work with the Rarámuri on alternative education curriculum for their youth. All members of our Sierra Tarahumara team (Drs. David Rapport, Luisa Maffi, Carla Paciotto, and Victoria Lee, as well as Michael Nickels) participated in the discussion.

These educational activities will be further pursued in 2010. In the second part of the year, activities under the TCF grant concentrated on the development of our biocultural diversity conservation portal, described above, as well as on the *expansion and re-design of our website*. In particular, we created new pages for each of our projects, making extensive project materials available to the public.

**Biocultural Diversity Policy.** As a part of our ongoing campaign to put biocultural diversity on the international policy agenda, we promoted the *implementation of three resolutions we had co-sponsored at IUCN's 2008 World Conservation Congress* (WCC), which were passed with a strong majority vote by the IUCN membership. Because of the large number of resolutions approved at the congress, however, only the resolutions subsequently prioritized by IUCN would become actively implemented in IUCN's program of work. In particular, we spearheaded a petition to IUCN's Resolutions Committee and Secretariat for the prioritization of one of the three resolutions, Resolution 4.055, "Integrating culture and cultural diversity into IUCN's policy and

programme”. The petition had 19 signatories, including representatives of academic institutions, conservation organizations, and foundations. Although our petition did not succeed in ensuring prioritization of this resolution, biocultural diversity concepts did get significantly included in IUCN’s 2009-12 program of work. Other international organizations such as UNESCO, the CBD, and UNEP are also increasingly adopting and using these concepts. This strongly suggests that our efforts over the years have been instrumental in producing this level of recognition of the biocultural diversity idea. The idea is making its way into policy statements, which gives us leverage to further promote its actual application in policy and practice.

**Other program work.** We continued our efforts to garner funding for the development of an online *portal on biocultural diversity mapping*, in collaboration with Prof. Rick Stepp (University of Florida). The goal of this project is to make available to the public the maps of biocultural diversity produced by Rick Stepp, following up on initial work done by Terralingua. The portal is meant to be an interactive research and education tool to foster understanding of the geospatial patterns of biocultural diversity, and of the factors that affect its distribution and its permanence or loss. It is also intended as a guide to policy and on-the-ground work to protect and conserve biocultural diversity, by providing evidence of where it is threatened. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain support for this project, which as a consequence remains on hold. Fundraising efforts will resume in 2010.

## **Publications and Media**

In addition to securing publication of our Sourcebook with Earthscan, we contributed to another biocultural-diversity-related book to be issued by the same publisher in 2010. The book, *Nature and Culture: Rebuilding Lost Connections*, edited by Sarah Pilgrim and Jules Pretty, is an outcome of the 2008 symposium “Sustaining Cultural and Biological Diversity in a Rapidly Changing World”, which was co-sponsored by Terralingua and held at the American Museum of Natural History. The book will contain two chapters by Terralingua authors: one by David Rapport and Luisa Maffi on biocultural diversity and eco-cultural health; the other by David Harmon, Ellen Woodley, and Jonathan Loh on biocultural diversity indicators. Both of these chapters were based on presentations given at the symposium. The willingness of a major publisher like Earthscan to produce several books on the links between biological and cultural diversity is another indication of the growing general interest in this topic.

Another presentation from the 2008 symposium was published as a journal article:

J. Pretty, W. Adams, F. Berkes, S. Ferreira de Athayde, N. Dudley, E. Hunn, L. Maffi, K. Milton, D. Rapport, P. Robbins, E. Sterling, S. Stolton, A. Tsing, E. Vintinner, S. Pilgrim 2009. The intersections of biological diversity and cultural diversity: Towards integration. *Conservation and Society* 7(2): 100-112.

As well, Luisa Maffi and David Rapport submitted a paper on eco-cultural health, global health, and sustainability to the journal *Ecological Research*. Luisa Maffi also completed preparation of an entry on biocultural diversity for the multi-volume encyclopedia *Il Futuro della Terra* [The Future of Earth], to be published in Italy by UTET. Further, we were invited to write an entry on Terralingua for the *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*, to be published by Wiley & Sons.

Luisa Maffi was interviewed on language maintenance for the article “The need to keep languages alive”, by Craig and Mark Kielburger, which appeared on *Thestar.com* on September 21, 2009 ([www.thestar.com/printarticle/698453](http://www.thestar.com/printarticle/698453)).

We produced and distributed three new issues of our electronic newsletter *Langscape* (nos. 2.3, 2.4, 2.5).

## **Outreach**

Throughout the year, we continued networking and exploring collaborations with various other germane organizations. In particular, we contributed to the internal review and visioning process of the *International Society of Ethnobiology* (ISE), and to the planning of ISE’s 2010 *International Congress of Ethnobiology*

(ICE), to be held in Tofino, British Columbia, Canada. Three sessions proposed by Terralingua (on our Sourcebook, Indicators, and Mapping projects) were accepted for inclusion in the ICE program. Along with ISE and the Global Diversity Foundation, we will also be co-organizers of an ICE plenary session, “Where to, Biocultural Diversity?”. Therefore, we will have a strong presence at the congress and multiple opportunities to disseminate our ideas and the results of our work.

In March, Luisa Maffi and David Rapport traveled to Japan, to give an invited talk at the United Nations University in Yokohama and an invited workshop at the Research Institute on Humanity and Nature in Kyoto, both on the topic of eco-cultural health.

Maffi and Rapport also gave an invited presentation about Terralingua’s Sierra Tarahumara project at a meeting of the Explorers Club that was held on Salt Spring Island in September. The Explorers Club is a time-honored institution devoted to geographical exploration and research. This opportunity to expose club members to the work of Terralingua led to sponsored membership applications for Maffi and Rapport, with outcome expected in early 2010.

As well, in October Maffi and Rapport were invited panelists at the Resilient People + Climate Change conference organized by journalist and writer Sanjay Khanna in Vancouver. This was an opportunity to highlight the relevance of biocultural diversity and eco-cultural health for resilience to climate change. Results from this conference were later brought to the climate change conference in Copenhagen.

## **Fundraising**

As we already mentioned, 2009 was a difficult year for fundraising. We were especially affected by TCF’s decision to cut back its global issues program, which had been our main source of support for the past several years. We were unable to obtain new funding for our Indicators, Sierra Tarahumara, and Mapping projects. On the other hand, the grant we did receive from TCF allowed us to work on the dissemination of our Sourcebook results through our new online portal, and to undertake the various biocultural diversity education initiatives outlined above. To address this situation, we developed a fundraising strategy and a variety of fundraising tools, and conducted several donation campaigns. In particular, through donations and a fundraiser, we were able to garner the funding needed to bring a group of Rarámuri people to Salt Spring Island in 2010. A systematic fundraising campaign aimed at foundations, major donors, and our members and supporters will be launched in 2010.

## **Organizational Development**

In addition to program work, a major task we undertook in 2009 was a comprehensive organizational review, to assess our governance structure and make any necessary improvements. At a meeting in January, the Board agreed to engage an organizational consultant to facilitate this review. A highly experienced consultant, Andre Carothers, was chosen for this task. With his help, in the course of the year we clarified various key aspects of governance and developed a governance manual that sets out the relevant principles and processes. We also reviewed our existing policies and added to them, in particular as required to get into compliance with the new regulations introduced by the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS). As well, we examined our financial management practices and developed a financial management policy and policies on sources of income and gift acceptance.

To further strengthen our governance, with the assistance of our consultant we also worked on Board development. Taking stock of several vacancies, we reviewed our needs in terms of Board composition. On that basis, we identified a number of prospective candidates for the Board, among whom we would seek to elect additional Board members. The search was initiated toward the end of the year, with a view to elect chosen candidates early in 2010. At the end of the year, the Board voted on the following slate:

E. Annamalai for Interim Chair for 2010  
Eugene Hunn for Vice-Chair for 2010  
Susan Fassberg for Secretary-Treasurer for  
2010-2012.

Another aspect of organizational development was our registration in Canada as a non-profit society. This was in addition to our existing status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the USA. This was the first step toward gaining status as a charity in Canada, which will expand our fundraising capabilities by giving us access to Canadian funding sources that are reserved to charities.

