



## 2016 Annual Report

December 2016

Dear friends,

This year was a special one for us at Terralingua: we turned 20! Hard to believe, yet true. It's been two decades since we came into existence as a non-profit organization with a unique (back then, some might have said "quaint") mission: to sustain biocultural diversity—the interconnected and interdependent diversity of life in nature and culture.

The idea of "biocultural diversity" may not be mainstream yet, but by now it has permeated the way in which many of us think and act and is helping transform how we see our place in the world. We are part of nature, not separate from it, and our cultural and linguistic diversity is as crucial to Earth's vitality and resilience as is our planet's diversity of plant and animal species and its variety of ecosystems.

Biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity are mutually supportive and act together to sustain the life systems that sustain us and all other forms of life. When the biocultural bond is strong, the Earth is healthy, and so are we. When we lose that bond, the Earth is weakened, and we are weakened with her.



That also gives all of us a profoundly different and inescapable view of our responsibilities toward the web of life of which we are a part: if we do care for our future and the future of all life, we must radically rethink our activities, which have become so destructive of biocultural diversity, and redirect them toward supporting and enhancing our life-giving systems, in both nature and culture. That belief has motivated Terralingua's work for two decades and continues to give us the energy and resolve to move forward. Even at a time when the tide seems to be pushing in the opposite direction from all that advocates of diversity in nature and culture stand for, we recognize the need to take the longer view and to continue to work hard to nurture and affirm the life-sustaining power of biocultural diversity.

Over the past 20 years, more and more people like you have joined the effort to bring about a truly sustainable future for humanity and for all life on Earth. I want to thank you for valuing the diversity of life in nature and culture and for doing your part to protect it and pass it on to the next generation.

Below, you'll find a brief summary of Terralingua's activities in this special anniversary year. We are proud of what we were able to accomplish. Yet, much more remains to be done. I hope you may choose to support our continuing work with a [donation](#), and/or by subscribing to Terralingua's flagship publication, [Langscape Magazine](#).

With heartfelt gratitude and warmest wishes for the new year from us at Terralingua,

Luisa Maffi  
Director and Co-founder, Terralingua

## 2016 – The Year in Review

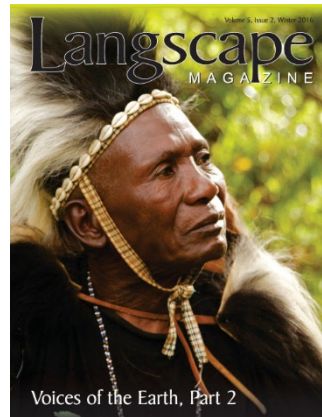
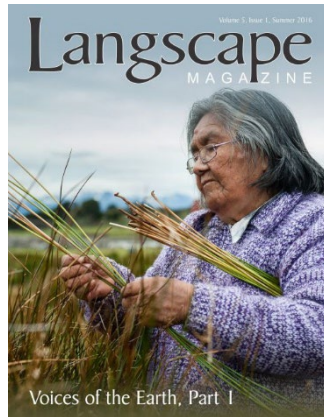
### Celebrating Terralingua's Twentieth

We couldn't think of a better way to mark our twentieth anniversary than to ask two of the key actors in Terralingua's story to write retrospective articles on the rise and motivation of the biocultural diversity "movement." The result: a two-part "Biocultural Diversity at Twenty" Special Feature that appeared in Volume 5 (2016) of our *Langscape Magazine*. David Harmon, co-founder of Terralingua in 1996, mused on "Biocultural Diversity: Reason, Ethics, and Emotion" in the summer issue of the magazine. Ken Wilson, former Director of The Christensen Fund and a long-time Terralingua friend and supporter, reflected on "Flourishing at Twenty: On Context and Foundations in the Rise of the Concept of Biocultural Diversity" in the winter issue. Both of these outstanding articles are available on Terralingua's website for everyone to read.

For another take on biocultural diversity and the origins of Terralingua, you may also want to take a look at the "On the job" interview with Luisa Maffi, co-founder and Director of Terralingua, that appeared in the Ramsar Culture Network Update in July 2016.

### *Langscape Magazine*

Our flagship publication continues to thrive and expand. In this twentieth anniversary year, we decided to "go back to our roots" with a two-part "Voices of the Earth" theme. In 1996, we chose the name Terralingua to suggest two things at once: the language of the Earth—the voice of Mother Nature; and the languages of the Earth—the many voices of the world's diverse peoples, which have evolved through intimate interaction with the Earth in each specific place. We wanted to hear from and about the Voices of the Earth, and so we did! The two Volume 5 issues brim with fascinating stories and images of biocultural diversity from all over the globe. The Table of Contents, Editorial, and other free content for each issue are found on our [Past Issues](#) page.



As an attractive and thoughtful vehicle for the dissemination of biocultural ideas, *Langscape* continues to gain readership, and has begun reaching University libraries, giving access to vast student and faculty bodies. Subscriptions to PDF + Print or PDF only are available on [our website](#). Please recommend the magazine to potentially interested readers and institutions!

### Voices of the Earth Project

This year, we continued our collaboration with the Saanich and Tsilhqot'in First Nations in British Columbia (BC), Canada—two of the Indigenous communities with whom we have worked in this project, which focuses on the documentation and revitalization of Indigenous oral traditions and traditional knowledge.





During the summer, in collaboration with our sister organization [The Cultural Conservancy](#) of San Francisco, California, we organized a video training workshop for youth from both First Nations, held on the Saanich Tribal School campus near Victoria, BC. The workshop provided the youth with video documentation skills relevant to recording oral traditions and to language and culture revitalization. It included storytelling, a behind-the-scenes visit to Saanich and Tsilhqot'in artifacts at the Royal BC Museum, a field trip to a wetland restoration project on Saanich traditional territory, and a rare opportunity for an inter-cultural exchange between the two communities.

Youth from both communities showed great appreciation for this experience and growing commitment to working on language and culture documentation and revitalization. The two groups are now able to apply their video skills to their respective documentary projects. For the Saanich, the focus is on filming relevant to their school's language and culture revitalization programs. The Tsilhqot'in filmed an Elders' gathering that took place in their territory in late summer, whose aim was to explore their ancestral philosophy for caring for the land. Planning is now underway for a second video training workshop in Tsilhqot'in country, to take place in January, which will focus on learning actual film production and editing. We look forward to continuing these and other partnerships with Indigenous communities on the vital task of reawakening their languages, cultures, and land-based traditional knowledge. Please consider donating in support of this project! If you wish, you can earmark your donation for "Voices of the Earth."

### Biocultural Diversity Education Initiative (BCDEI)

We are nearing completion of the first phase of this project, which aims to develop an innovative educational curriculum on biocultural diversity for high schools, centered on a set of core lessons complemented by a variety of case studies from all over the world.



Upon completion early next year, we plan to develop a robust online platform to make these educational materials, and many others we have developed over the years, readily available to schools and other educational institutions. We see this phase of the project, which will be a major focus of our work next year, as a major step in our effort to promote understanding of and support for the biocultural diversity of life, particularly among youth. If you wish to support this effort, please [consider donating](#) to Terralingua, earmarking your donation for the “BCDEI.”

### Looking Ahead

In the past two decades, Terralingua has had a major role in establishing and promoting the concept of biocultural diversity in research, practice, and policy. In recent years, we have increasingly focused on education and outreach, through our three current projects, which complement and enhance one another. *Voices of the Earth* connects us to the on-the-ground realities of Indigenous communities and their efforts to maintain and revitalize their languages, cultures, and links to the land. *Langscape Magazine* and the BCDEI allow us to bring our educational message to an increasingly broader audience around the world.

We are deeply grateful to the many individuals, organizations, and foundations that have believed in and supported our work, and who continue to encourage us in the pursuit of the life-affirming mission we gave ourselves in 1996. Our sense of purpose and determination are no less strong now than when we moved our first steps twenty years ago.

## Unity in Biocultural Diversity

217 Baker Road, Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2N6, Canada  
phone 250.538.0939 fax 250.538.0940  
website: [www.terralingua.org](http://www.terralingua.org) email: [members@terralingua.org](mailto:members@terralingua.org)

*Terralingua is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization under US tax law (#38-3291259) and a registered charitable organization in Canada (#85590 3266 RR0001)*