



Annual Report 2017

Time flies. 2017 was the beginning of Terralingua's third decade. In 2016 we turned twenty, having come into existence in 1996, with a mission to "sustain the biocultural diversity of life — the world's precious heritage of biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity" and a vision to achieve "a just, equitable, sustainable world in which the biocultural diversity of life is valued, protected, and perpetuated for generations to come."

Over the years, we have pursued these aims through an innovative program of research, policy-relevant work, education, and on-the-ground action. Having played a pioneering role in establishing the idea of biocultural diversity and a new field of knowledge and practice devoted to it, we have been focusing more and more on our wider goal: to bring about a profound shift in human values through a deeper understanding and appreciation of the vital importance of biocultural diversity for the survival of all life on earth. We believe that understanding and that shift in values will motivate individuals and communities worldwide to change course and choose to do what is necessary to sustain the biocultural diversity of life that sustains us all.

To achieve that goal, we are concentrating on a multifaceted awareness-raising program, which includes our flagship publication *Langscape Magazine* and our ongoing projects, *Voices of the Earth* and the *Biocultural Diversity Education Initiative*. With main support from the Kalliopeia Foundation, the Reva and David Logan Foundation, the Swift Foundation, Tides Canada, the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, the Firebird Foundation, and the New England Biolabs Foundation, in 2017 we were active on all three fronts. We moved forward with an integrated effort to educate the general public, create opportunities for the voices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to be heard, and weave a new global narrative of connectedness of people to one another and to the earth.

In the following, we report on Terralingua's 2017 activities and their outcomes. The idea of biocultural diversity continues to gain traction, and many more people are becoming aware of its importance and value. That gives us reason to be proud, but we are also well aware of much remains to be done in these challenging times. We hope you'll continue to come along with us on this journey of awareness and work for positive change. With your support and participation, we know we can do what our motto says: "*Unity in Biocultural Diversity; Together We Can!*"

With heartfelt gratitude and warmest wishes from all of us at Terralingua,

Luisa Maffi

Director and Co-founder, Terralingua

Project Update

Biocultural Diversity Education Initiative (BCDEI) (<http://terralingua.org/our-work/bcd-education/>). The BCDEI aims to develop innovative educational curriculum on biocultural diversity for high schools. With support from the Philip and Muriel Berman Foundation, we have been working on a set of core lessons and case studies. The core lessons, which we expect to complete in 2018, will introduce the concept of biocultural diversity; its three manifestations (biodiversity, cultural diversity, linguistic diversity) and their interdependence; why biocultural diversity matters for people and the planet; why we are experiencing a “biocultural diversity extinction crisis”; and what we can and should do to stop the crisis and ensure that diversity in nature and culture continues to flourish.

The first two case studies, which we have already completed, focus on the Andamanese People in the Andaman Islands (Indian Ocean) and on the Xhosa People in South Africa. The Xhosa case study is complemented by the video “Inkcubeko Nendalo (Culture and Nature)”, which was made in 2013 by Xhosa students as part of our *Voices of the Earth* project, with funding from Lush Charity Pot (see <https://vimeo.com/terralingua>). For additional case studies, we plan to draw from our other *Voices of the Earth* activities as well as from some of the on-the-ground projects from all over the world featured in the pages of *Langscape Magazine*. Prior to making the materials available online for teachers and students everywhere, we intend to work with a few selected schools in the US and Canada to fine-tune our materials and test students’ and teachers’ receptivity to a biocultural approach to education.

Voices of the Earth (VOE) (<http://terralingua.org/our-work/voices-of-the-earth/>). The VOE project saw exciting developments in 2017, following up on activities we carried out in 2016 with the Saanich and Tsilhqot’in First Nations of British Columbia (BC), with whom we have worked since 2010. In collaboration with The Cultural Conservancy and with funding from the Swift Foundation and Tides Canada, in 2016 we had organized a video training workshop for youth from both First Nations, with a focus on filmmaking skills relevant to documentation and revitalization of oral traditions and ancestral knowledge.

Youth from both communities showed great appreciation for this experience and were keen to apply their newly acquired video skills to their own projects. The Saanich went on to focus on creating short language immersion videos relevant to their school’s language revitalization programs. The Tsilhqot’in decided to focus on their ancestral philosophy for caring for the land. In early 2017, they shot a short film titled *Long Jim*, which is in part a documentary, in part a re-enactment of the life of a highly knowledgeable and respected Tsilhqot’in man who was considered exemplary of Tsilhqot’in values and virtues. The film was screened in spring 2017 at the first Chilcotin-Cariboo Film Festival in Williams Lake, BC, where it was greeted with acclaim. It will soon be posted on Terralingua’s Vimeo account. Several youth from both groups have since continued to use video in a variety of other creative endeavors in their respective communities. These positive outcomes inspired us to do more to foster culturally relevant visual storytelling by Indigenous youth—an effort that we intend to pursue in 2018.

Langscape Magazine (<http://www.terralinguaubuntu.org/Langscape/home.htm>). Creating a meaningful venue for storytelling and nurturing the emergence of a new narrative about how to live on earth is the key purpose of *Langscape Magazine*. Since 2012, when we turned it from an

organizational newsletter into a full-fledged 80-page illustrated magazine with invited contributors, *Langscape* has been our main vehicle for disseminating biocultural ideas among the general public as well as among students and researchers. As such, it supports our mission by educating minds and hearts about the importance and value of biocultural diversity. Described by readers as “*the heart of the movement*” and “*a feast for the mind and for the eyes*”, *Langscape* illustrates biocultural diversity through scientific and traditional knowledge, within a thoughtful and appealing context of articles, stories, photo essays, and other visual art contributed by people from all over the world. The magazine continues to gain readers and followers, and the consistently enthusiastic reactions it garners attest to the unique value of this publication. While supporters can still obtain *Langscape* through subscription, in 2017 we began to “go public” with part of its content, in order to increase general awareness of and support for the ideas we believe in. Selected *Langscape* articles are now available for free through the online reading platform *Medium*, where they can be read at <https://medium.com/langscape-magazine>.

In our quest to illuminate the many facets and far-reaching implications of biocultural diversity, we devoted the two *Langscape* issues of 2017 to cutting-edge themes. Vol. 6.1 (Summer 2017, http://www.terralinguaubuntu.org/Langscape/Volume_6/Langscape-6-1-overview), titled “Through a Different Lens: The Art and Science of Biocultural Diversity”, bridged the gap between science and the arts by exploring the power of visual and verbal art to convey the idea and practice of biocultural diversity beyond what science can achieve: not just intellectually but also intuitively, in a way that appeals to our emotional intelligence. The contributors to this issue—whether scientists or artists, sometimes both—all looked at biocultural diversity “through a different lens”, bringing in a wealth of creativity and beauty that resulted in a thought-provoking and visually stunning collection.

For Vol. 6.2 (Winter 2017, http://www.terralinguaubuntu.org/Langscape/Volume_6/Langscape-6-2-overview) we chose another provocative theme: “Resilience and Resistance: Why the World Needs Biocultural Diversity”. In this case contributors explored, through words and images, why biocultural diversity matters for the future of our species and that of all species on this planet we call home, and what we need to do ensure that the diversity of life in all its forms continues to flourish. Several common threads emerged: the value of language and oral traditions, the importance of traditional knowledge and sense of place, and the need to (re)connect to biocultural heritage, other people, and the land to heal ourselves, each other, and the earth.

Some of the most meaningful and moving contributions to these two (as well as previous) issues of the magazine have been penned by Indigenous writers, several of them young. That has given shape to our plans to increase outreach to Indigenous youth, by inviting them to tell their stories of connection and reconnection to their cultural identities and their communities’ ancestral knowledge systems, values, and practices. We intend to do this in 2018, in conjunction with our effort to promote visual storytelling among Indigenous youth, as mentioned above. Youth will be encouraged to submit stories, poetry, photo essays, videos, and artwork for upcoming issues of *Langscape*, some of which may be specifically devoted to themes relevant to intergenerational transmission. By valuing and highlighting youth creativity, we hope to offer a positive contribution to the emerging cultural affirmation movement that is already transforming the lives of many Indigenous youth.

Working at many levels, as we always have, we are also aware that *Langscape Magazine*, along with other Terralingua publications (such as our *Biocultural Diversity Sourcebook* <http://terralingua.org/our-work/bcd-conservation/the-book-2/> and *Biocultural Diversity Toolkit*

<http://terralingua.org/our-work/bcd-conservation/biocultural-diversity-toolkit/>) and project materials, are increasingly used in academic contexts. In 2017, we noticed an increase of institutional subscriptions to *Langscape* acquired by University libraries, giving student and faculty access to content that constitutes important teaching and learning resources. We do know that both *Langscape* and other materials have been extensively and effectively used in university courses, research, and practice. We aim to further increase the availability of these materials through libraries and other educational platforms, expanding the educational efforts we have undertaken with the BCDEI (see above).

Going Forward

We look ahead at 2018 as a productive year: a year in which we'll both bring together many strands of our work into a more meaningful whole and push our current projects in new and exciting directions.

As another significant contribution to our awareness-raising and educational efforts, we plan to redevelop our website with a contemporary look and a greatly increased capability to make the vast array of materials on biocultural diversity that we have produced over the years more easily accessible and more usefully organized. We expect our site to emerge from this make-over as a prime resource for anyone interested in learning, reading, and researching about biocultural diversity and in applying that knowledge to real-world issues and on-the-ground work.

We'll also step up dissemination through social media, via our Facebook (www.facebook.com/Terralingua/), Twitter (<https://twitter.com/terralinguabcd?lang=en>), Medium (<https://medium.com/langscape-magazine>), and Vimeo (<https://vimeo.com/terralingua>) pages. And we'll engage in relevant online conversations to call attention to the idea of biocultural diversity and to the vital importance of hearing the greatest possible diversity of voices expressing the greatest possible diversity of worldviews.

As always, we are deeply grateful to the many individuals and organizations that have believed in and encouraged our work, and who continue to support us in the pursuit of our life-affirming mission. Knowing that the movement is growing, even against the challenging odds the world is facing, renews and strengthens our sense of purpose and determination to continue to work for an ecologically sustainable, culturally diverse, and socially just future.