



Terralingua Annual Report, 2001-2002

In 2001, Terralingua (TL) received its first grant, in the amount of \$250,000, from the Ford Foundation to develop Phase 1 of its **Global Biocultural Diversity Assessment (GBCDA)**, a multi-year project that aims to provide the first integrated assessment of global biological and cultural/linguistic diversity (“biocultural diversity”). Prior to the Ford Foundation grant, TL pursued its goals on an entirely volunteer basis. Through a program of research, information, education, and advocacy, TL’s work attracted increasing attention to the biocultural perspective. This led to invitations to collaborate with various major organizations (including UNESCO, UNEP, and the Smithsonian Institution). In particular, in 1998-2000 Terralingua worked with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to cross-map the world’s ecoregions and ethnolinguistic groups and to develop policy recommendations and guidelines for biocultural conservation in partnership with indigenous and traditional peoples. Following up on this project, TL conceived the GBCDA as a way to further advance the biocultural diversity perspective and elucidate its implications for the integrated conservation of biological and cultural diversity. The Ford Foundation grant enabled TL to develop the framework and conduct the initial stages of the Assessment. This report covers work carried out under the Ford Foundation Grant through the end of 2002. (Ford Foundation support continued through the first half of 2003 through a no-cost extension.) As detailed later in this report, other financial support in 2001-2 came mostly from members’ donations and fee income, including a fee from UNESCO for the preparation of the Terralingua-UNESCO-WWF booklet “Sharing a World of Difference: The Earth’s Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity” and companion map. Significant in-kind contributions were also obtained.

The Global Biocultural Diversity Assessment. Phase 1 of the GBCDA consisted of three components (items 1-3 below). Additional related activities were carried out during the period under review (item 4 below).

1. **Creation of a geographic information systems (GIS) database of the world’s ecoregions and ethnolinguistic groups**, as a basis for cross-mappings of biological and cultural diversity and analysis of observed global correlations. This unique database builds on, updates, and expands the work TL conducted with WWF. Its building blocks are a series of GIS layers depicting the distribution and state of the world’s ecoregions and biodiversity, and a layer representing the distribution and state of the world’s ethnolinguistic groups. These layers can be overlaid to show the geographical overlap of diversities, biological and ethnolinguistic. Also included is

information on threatened ecoregions and languages, whose overlap can be highlighted. Overlapping distribution patterns can be analyzed, yielding data that can inform policy recommendations for both environmental conservation and sustainable development. As of the end of 2002, the GIS database had been established, quality control performed, and a map produced. This map formed the basis for a poster produced for UNESCO (see item 4.). Peer review of the GIS work was being conducted and additional layers and data were being gathered.

2. **Creation of a framework for an Index of Biocultural Diversity (IBCD)** measuring trends in biocultural diversity. The IBCD is modeled after indexes used in the environmental field to gauge current conditions and trends in the state of the environment. Its purpose is to serve as a benchmark for changes in global biocultural diversity. Using a small number of indicators (variables thought to be representative of current conditions and trends), the IBCD aims to point toward a general understanding of what is happening to biocultural diversity, as well as toward the gaps in knowledge. This first-of-its-kind index is itself meant to fill an often lamented lack of meaningful sociocultural indicators in global environmental assessments, which has significantly hampered the deployment of a “humans-in-environment” perspective in policy and on-the-ground action. As of the end of 2002, A draft framework of the IBCD had been completed. This 385-page document, including over 50 tables and nearly 75 figures, outlines the theory and methodology behind the IBCD and presents several integrated measures of the ethnolinguistic and biological diversity of each of the world’s countries, with initial analyses of the results.
3. **Production of a subglobal assessment of biocultural diversity in the Colorado Plateau.** The purpose of this assessment was to “zoom in” on a specific region to assess the state of biocultural diversity, identify threats to and trends in this diversity, and outline response options to counter negative trends through integrated ecological, cultural, and linguistic maintenance and restoration. The Colorado Plateau ecoregion in the southwestern U.S. was chosen as one of the most bioculturally diverse among North America’s ecoregions. The assessment was carried out in partnership with Northern Arizona University (NAU)’s Center for Sustainable Environments (CSE) and the Grand Canyon Wildlands Council (GCWC). It assembled for the first time existing information on the Colorado Plateau from many different fields, as well as data from original fieldwork and interviews with a wide range of stakeholders in the region, and presented recommendations for conservation of both natural and cultural resources in the Plateau. As of the end of 2002, The TL and CSE had jointly held a retreat for researchers, practitioners, and members of the Colorado Plateau’s Native American tribes, “Bridging Ethnolinguistic Revitalization and Ecological Restoration in Native American Communities” (Flagstaff, Arizona, June 17-18, 2001). Subsequent work with CSE and GCWC had yielded the multi-authored report, “Safeguarding the Uniqueness of the Colorado Plateau: An Ecoregional Assessment of Biocultural Diversity”, launched at the annual meeting of the Ecological Society of America in August of 2002 and later widely distributed in both the U.S. and internationally in a variety of research- and policy-relevant venues.

4. **Related activities and outreach.** In addition to these components of the GBCDA, during the period under review TL accomplished the following activities that amplified and built upon GBCDA efforts.

1. *Educational publication for UNESCO.* In the fall of 2001, UNESCO (Education Sector) offered a small grant to TL for the production of an educational booklet presenting the concept of biocultural diversity and its implications for sustainable development, with companion map of biocultural diversity. The booklet *Sharing a World of Diversity: The Earth's Linguistic, Cultural, and Biological Diversity* and map *The World's Biocultural Diversity: People, Languages, and Ecosystems* were prepared in view of being launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, in September 2002. They were premiered at a panel on education for sustainable development organized by UNESCO and the South African government. Dr. Skutnabb-Kangas (TL vice president) was one of the featured speakers on the panel. As of the end of 2002, the booklet-map set was to be printed by UNESCO, for world-wide distribution through UNESCO Publishing.

2. *Participation in the WSSD process.* With additional financial support from the Ford Foundation through the Institute for International Education (IIE), TL president Dr. Luisa Maffi took part in PrepCom 3 in New York, and TL representatives Dr. Margaret Florey and Dr. Chris Healey participated in PrepCom 4 in Bali. Dr. Skutnabb-Kangas, along with Dr. Florey, took part in the WSSD in Johannesburg, representing TL concerns. At all these events, TL representatives were involved in working groups and other activities coordinated by the Ford Foundation as well as in intensive networking and lobbying for greater visibility of relevant concerns, such as protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge, and inclusion of such concerns in the official WSSD documents.

3. *Participation in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment process.* TL was invited to participate in another international process, the UN-sponsored Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA). With travel support from the MEA, Dr. Maffi attended the MEA's Second Technical Design Workshop, in Cape Town, South Africa, in October 2001. This event was a useful learning experience regarding recent thinking about other global assessments, while at the same time confirming the need for the biocultural perspective provided by TL. Opportunities for further collaboration with the MEA were opened by participation in this meeting.

4. *Links with the field of ecosystem health.* In 2002, TL began to establish links with the field of ecosystem health, which extends the notion of "health" from ecosystems to the biophysical, social, and cultural health of human communities. Integration of this field with the biocultural perspective will greatly advance the understanding of the "human-environment" system and enhance the effectiveness of action to protect and restore the vitality and resilience of such systems. TL's perspective was represented at two ecosystem health meetings in 2002: the International Conference on Ecosystem Health (Quetico Centre, Ontario, Canada, May 2002), and the international congress "Healthy Ecosystems, Healthy People" (Washington, DC, June 2002). In both these cases, TL's participation led to the identification of biocultural perspectives as key to the full

deployment of the concept of ecosystem health and to the success of community-based projects.

5. *Contacts with other organizations and institutions.* Numerous contacts and explorations of possible partnerships were made during the period under review. These included among others WWF, Conservation International, IUCN, Smithsonian Institution, NASA, World Bank, National Geographic, Georgetown University, George Washington University, and World Parks Congress.

Organizational Development. The receipt of the Ford Foundation grant, TL's first grant, both enabled and required an overhaul of the organization's structure. During the period under review, TL revised its by-laws and articles of incorporation to enable more effective and efficient pursuit of the organization's mission, with the help of pro bono legal services from the Washington law firm of Steptoe & Johnson. A new Board was elected at the end of 2001 and met in April 2002 to approve a multi-year strategy and work program. TL's first office was opened in Washington, DC, in June 2002, within the U.S. offices of IUCN-The World Conservation Union. The grant also allowed for staff salaries, including the President and an Executive Director. In addition, TL thoroughly reviewed its internal financial management system, with volunteer assistance from the Director of Finance and Administration at the Center for International Environmental Law, and reviewed all documentation and filings relating to tax and regulatory matters under federal and District of Columbia law. In addition, Terralingua was able to secure and utilize the pro bono assistance of revenue development and organizational development specialists, consultants, and colleagues to improve the institutional strength and sustainability of the organization, its Board and activities.

Other Funding. During the period under review, TL obtained additional funding from fees, member donations, as well as significant in-kind contributions and donations of services. The fee from UNESCO amounted to \$5,000. Member donations amounted to nearly \$8000. In-kind contributions came from UNESCO (printing and distribution of booklet and map) and the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University (NAU-CSE) (co-funding for workshop, office space, staff time, printing and distribution of report). Several organizations provided funds to cover travel, including NAU CSE, Quetico Centre, the Institute for International Education (IIE), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and IUCN. TL also benefited from substantial volunteer contributions, including legal services provided by the law firm of Steptoe & Johnson and financial advice from the Director of Finance and Administration at the Center for International Environmental Law.