

# Langscape

*Unity in Biocultural Diversity*



Biocultural Diversity Conservation in Practice





## Table of Contents

Letter from the Director	3
Biocultural Diversity Conservation- A Global Sourcebook	4
Global Sourcebook- Project Profile	7
Native Languages Supporting Indigenous Knowledge	9
Fundraising Campaign for the Rarámuri Education Curriculum	11
Terralingua Annual Report	12
Call for Expressions of Interest in Serving on Terralingua's Board of Directors	16
Terralingua Members' Forum	17
Become a Member	17

Langscape is Terralingua's quarterly newsletter

Cover photo ©2009 Cristina Mittermeier

Banner montage on current page ©2009 Anna Maffi

Edited by Ortixia Dilts, Web and Graphic Manager, Terralingua

To receive our quarterly newsletter email: [membership@terralingua.org](mailto:membership@terralingua.org)

To enquire about submissions for future issues of Langscape contact [ortixia@terralingua.org](mailto:ortixia@terralingua.org)

To learn more about Terralingua please visit our website at: [www.terralingua.org](http://www.terralingua.org)

## Letter from the Director

Salt Spring Island, British Columbia, Canada, June 2009

Dear Terralingua Members and Supporters,

Spring was late coming to our part of the world, and as if to reflect that, the Spring issue of Langscape is late too! We apologize to you for this, our main excuse being that the early part of the year is always a very busy time for us—what with grant reports, financial reports, annual reports, and all that! We're now past this busy period, and you'll find some of the outcome of it in here. Our 2008 Annual Report is included in this issue along with the related financial report (p. 12). You will see all that Terralingua was up to last year and what we accomplished with our projects, conferences, and other activities we were involved in.

One of our main accomplishments last year was the completion of the manuscript of our Global Source Book on Biocultural Diversity, a review and analysis of 45 projects from all over the world that take an integrative approach to biodiversity conservation and cultural affirmation. The volume is now in press with the UK publishers Earthscan, under the title "Biocultural Diversity Conservation: A Global Source Book", to be out in early 2010. In this issue, you'll find a feature article on the Source Book, including an interview with the volume's co-author Dr. Ellen Woodley. One of the Source Book projects, contributed by Terralingua Advisory Panel member Dr. Anvita Abbi, is also featured.

Native language education remains one of the keys to the maintenance of biocultural diversity, as we are reminded by the other feature article in this issue, contributed by Terralingua's Indigenous Advisory Panel member Dr. Priscilla Settee. In that context, we've started a fundraising campaign for our collaborative project with the Rarámuri people of the Sierra Tarahumara of northern Mexico. Our current goal is to assist the Rarámuri with the development of an alternative education curriculum focusing on Rarámuri language and culture and on practical activities for recovering the health of the landscape and the cultural vitality of their communities. You'll find the ad for this fundraising campaign on p. 11. Please do pitch in to help us reach this goal! Donation instructions appear in the ad.

As you will gather from the Annual Report, Terralingua is in a phase of organizational re-development, and among other things, we're inviting expressions of interest from our members and supporters in serving on our Board of Governors. On p. 16, you'll find the text of our call and the related parameters. The call is also posted on our website. In an initial round for this call, we look forward to hearing from interested parties by June 21st.

Of course, we continue to be interested in hearing from our members and supporters on any and all matters related to Terralingua's mission. As a reminder about our discussion forum, on the last page of this issue we include an interesting posting from new member Kelly Egan. Do join the discussion and let us know what's on your mind! We also continue to invite new members, and if you haven't joined yet, please consider doing so now. Find out how to do so on p. 17.

In the next issue, we'll zero in on the topic of assessing the vitality of linguistic and cultural diversity. In that context, we'll feature our newly minted Index of Linguistic Diversity and Vitality Index of Traditional Environmental Knowledge, as well as other relevant work "out there". Stay tuned!

As you will see from the Annual Report, 2008 was a year in which we began to feel the impact of the global economic downturn. Both grant funding and donations were significantly down. This poses serious questions for the continuation of the efforts we've been carrying out since 1996, which have been critically instrumental in putting biocultural diversity on the international map and eliciting support for the world's cultural and linguistic heritage, along with our biological heritage. Since November of last year, we have been conducting a general fundraising campaign to support our activities. You can find out more about it by going to our website, [www.terralingua.org](http://www.terralingua.org). We need your help! We hope that in 2009 we will be able to count on you, our members and strongest support base, as you obviously are fully supportive of the mission and goals of Terralingua. We do realize that times are difficult for everyone. But we also realize that sustaining biocultural diversity means sustaining life on this planet—without which nothing is possible. We count on you to do your part.

With warmest regards,

Luisa Maffi



"Cascata"  
©2009 Anna Maffi



## BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY CONSERVATION - A GLOBAL SOURCEBOOK

The Philippine crocodile was once revered and protected by local Indigenous communities such as the Agta and Kalinga peoples of the island of Luzon, Philippines. Over-exploitation for the leather industry, large-scale habitat destruction, and the widespread use of destructive fishing methods all have contributed to this species' decline, along with the loss of traditional crocodile-related beliefs and practices. Efforts have been made to revive



Young girl (Bianca Almonte) spearfishing (a method locally called pana) in the Disulap River Philippine crocodile sanctuary in the municipality of San Mariano, Isabela Province, Luzon, Philippines.  
Photo: Jan van der Ploeg ©2007

these traditions while supporting Indigenous communities with land claims and in the development of a community-based conservation strategy. The crocodile has become the flagship of local environmental stewardship, and its numbers have been increasing, showing good recovery in the wild. The crocodile sanctuaries also strengthen socio-economic development. There is growing societal support to stop the use of destructive fishing methods (such as dynamite, electricity and pesticides).

The Kilum-Ijim Forest Project in Cameroon is one of the pioneers of community forestry in Cameroon and is widely regarded as a model of how communities can manage their forests for both biodiversity conservation and to meet their own needs. There are more than 20 community-based Forest Management Institutions along with traditional management institutions that are active in the region directly managing the forests, without project assistance.

In Peru, the NGO PRATEC conducted a program "Children and Biodiversity" in the Andean highlands to explore the possibility of the community nurturing its school. It also aimed at restoring the autonomy granted to children in the traditional system of governance, as in the past children were able to exercise certain forms of control within the community, for instance taking care that animals did not enter the chacras (agricultural fields) and sanctioning those who let their animals trample their neighbours' crops. These initial aims were in accordance with the traditional authorities in the communities who had been unanimously identifying "loss of respect" as the major obstacle for community well-being. This was after 50 years since these same communities had demanded that the educational system help transform their children and equip them with skills so they could migrate to the cities and to a life of "progress".

These are only some examples of a growing number of projects worldwide that focus on biocultural diversity conservation. Throughout 2004-2006, Terralingua researchers, Drs. Luisa Maffi and Ellen Woodley, conducted a global survey of integrated biocultural projects, such as these: that is, research or applied projects and initiatives that would emphasize the close integration of biodiversity conservation with the maintenance and revitalization of cultural and linguistic heritage. In other words, we sought projects that would recognize the fundamental link between local language, ecological knowledge, cultural practices, and the state of the environment, and apply this recognition to the design of sustainable solutions to environmental and social problems. We wanted to find out about as many projects, programs, and initiatives with a biocultural approach as possible, learn from and with them, and ensure that contributors could share lessons among themselves and with a wider audience. We were especially keen on projects initiated and conducted by indigenous and local communities, or else jointly planned, led, and managed by such communities and external agents (such as governments, international organizations, or NGOs). Our survey yielded a representative (although by no means exhaustive) sample of 45 projects, programs, and initiatives from all continents. This material formed the basis of an inventory and classification of these activities and of an analysis aimed at advancing the understanding of what works where, when, and how, and what improvements can be made. The analysis of the projects and discussion of "lessons learned" from them form the core of the Source Book, and are meant to offer guidance for future efforts to sustain and restore biocultural diversity.

These projects well illustrate the remarkable variety of activities undertaken around the world to support and restore biocultural diversity. However, undoubtedly these 45 projects are only the “tip of the iceberg” of the work being done worldwide in this respect. Therefore, we consider the Source Book an ongoing project that will be made available not only in print (the book will be published by Earthscan in early 2010), but also in a web-based electronic format. In this latter format, the Source Book can be regularly expanded and updated, and along with the discussion forum we are in the process of creating, it will hopefully foster a “community of practice” among the contributors and others interested in biocultural diversity conservation. This forum is now under construction with Wiser Earth, under the title “Biocultural Diversity in Conservation – A Community of Practice”. As a result of this effort, we envision the formation of a strong network of like-minded people actively involved in supporting biocultural diversity, who will be in a better position to identify needs and requirements for the promotion of bioculturally-oriented research and action. We also expect that such a “community of practice” will be better able to seek avenues for advancing its shared goals.



A dance of the Bambutu Community of Semliki Forest, Western Uganda. Photo: ©2009 R. Wild

Ellen Woodley graciously set some time aside to answer a few questions about the up and coming publication.

**Editor:** Can you tell me a bit about your own background as it relates to this work, as well, your role in building the Sourcebook?

**Ellen:** I have had the opportunity to live and work with indigenous peoples in places such as Papua New Guinea (PNG), Sulawesi, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands. My time spent in these places taught me firsthand about the extensive ecological knowledge that individuals and community have. This knowledge develops through a long history and ongoing close association with the landscape. In PNG, for example, I worked with small villages where there was a wealth of knowledge of medicinal plants. In Sulawesi, the mobile upland farmers knew so much about agroecology and they were efficient stewards of the local ecosystem. In the Solomon Islands, where I lived and studied with small coastal communities, they shared with me their in-depth knowledge of the forest and the sea – knowledge that wasn’t expressed as ecological facts, as many people know them, based on classroom learning, but rather as a way of engaging with the land and sea in everyday life.

The cultural practices of these people are so intertwined with the local ecology, that culture and nature are not separate entities. It is this way of engaging with the local ecology that we need to maintain and learn from.

**Editor:** Out of the 45 projects surveyed for the Source Book, 11 project contributors stated that “lack of transmission of knowledge of local biodiversity to younger generations (lack of communication between elders and youth, disinterested youth, few opportunities for traditional teachings)” is a major driving force towards loss of biocultural diversity. This issue is more prevalent than any of the others. We are hearing statements such as, “*Our children don’t want to learn about the plants and the environment because they watch TV and go to school. They don’t have time. They want to get jobs in the big towns.*” (Tanzania) “*There is no interest among the youth to conserve biodiversity.*”

*Once the knowledge amongst the community disappears and is no longer transmitted to younger generations, the interest to conserve biodiversity disappears as well.”(Tamil, Nadu), ‘Children no longer greet their elders.’ (Peru)*

**Ellen:** There are also language changes and when youth and others embrace the lingua franca, their ideology shifts away from their own traditions and culture, making it difficult to engage them. In China, for instance, there is a rift that has formed between the older and younger generations in indigenous communities due to changes in the economic situation in China, so they don't see eye to eye and traditions are not respected.

**Editor:** How would the Source Book projects offer model examples of enticing youth to learn or retain their native languages, knowledge and cultures?

**Ellen:** Both the Gwich'in project in the Northwest Territories and Jaru project in Australia have successfully brought elders and youth together on the land to promote and pass on the language and knowledge about the land and the culture. The Gwich'in project has developed language and education programs which include language revitalization initiatives, the development of curriculum materials, a language immersion camp and an annual Gwich'in Science Camp, which is an on-the-land traditional knowledge and western science camp for senior high school students.

Some projects try to instill an appreciation of culture in youth by using new technologies in areas that interest them. Responding to calls by the Ngäbe in Costa Rica, for the recovery of oral history and the teaching of it in indigenous schools, a team of youths and elders became involved in the production of a book. Inspired by this effort, the Ngäbe youth continued with the production of a more ambitious project - a CD and tape of traditional songs. This involved coordination between elders and the youth who taped and transcribed stories.

**Editor:** A survey is still circulating to solicit additional projects, not necessarily to be published in the book, but for use in the companion portal. What criteria are you looking for, and how would one apply?



Boys in their chacra. Matara, Cajamarca, Peru.

©2007 Jorge Ishizawa.

**Ellen:** Mostly the same as previously: 1) Being integrated and synergistic. The projects of special interest were those that emphasize the integration of cultural (including linguistic) and biological diversity conservation: projects that recognize the essential links between the environment and local languages, cultural values, beliefs, knowledge, and practices in the design of sustainable solutions to environmental and social problems. 2) Recognizing the importance of intergenerational transmission of local languages, cultural values, beliefs, knowledge, and practices. 3) Being endogenous or strongly participatory, emphasizing that they are developed and led by Indigenous peoples or based on equitable partnerships between local participants and other groups such as NGOs or outside researchers;

**Editor:** What meaningful experiences have you encountered during the course of this project?

**Ellen:** Communicating with the project contributors has been very meaningful and gratifying for me. I see so many dedicated people who are working so hard for something they believe in which combined indigenous rights to culture and territory with the conservation of biodiversity – what could be more satisfying than to work with people to highlight and bring to public consciousness these interrelated goals?



## ✿ GLOBAL SOURCEBOOK - PROJECT PROFILE ✿

### Vanishing Voices of the Great Andamanese

*"I think the dictionary that we have prepared is a document of biocultural diversity of one of the oldest civilizations on the earth. Not only it has information about ecological, biological, botanical information, it also documents legends and tales associated with some flora and fauna, depicting how well these tribes amalgamate their lives with nature. There is no separation between themselves and other beings as if all make a whole in a composite manner. Our dictionary also has noted phonetic variation with sound files truly recording the linguistic diversity."*

- Anvita Abbi

The Andamanese represent the last survivors of the pre-Neolithic population of Southeast Asia.

Genetic research indicates that the Andamanese

tribes are the remnants of the first migration from Africa that took place 70,000 years ago. Of the 50 remaining Great Andamanese people who live in the Strait Island and in the city of Port Blair, in the Union Territory of the Andaman Islands of India, there are only 7 terminal speakers of the Great Andamanese language.

The project highlights the need for policy to assist in the revitalization of threatened languages and cultures. Its primary objective was to obtain first-hand knowledge of the linguistic situation of the aboriginal communities, as a basis for developing an interactive tri-lingual dictionary (Hindi-English-Great Andamanese). Another important reason for undertaking this project was to confirm the hypothesis that the Great Andamanese seemed to be a language distinct from the rest of the tribal languages of the islands, implying that this could have been the sixth language family of India. This has now been confirmed and corroborated by geneticists.

The trilingual and triscriptal dictionary in Great Andamanese-English-Hindi has now been completed. It has a total number of 4100 words with 400 multicolored pictures. The dictionary is interactive and has more than 900 sound files. It is rich in detailed ethnographic information and ecological knowledge that these tribes still possess. When a demonstration of the dictionary was made to the Great Andamanese tribes, there was a great sense of happiness and pride among the tribes. *"Our own children do not understand us. We should tell them what we are and what do we speak"* Nao Jr. 2006 (A Great Andamanese speaker).

*Editor's Note:* For more information please visit the project's website at [www.andamanese.net](http://www.andamanese.net). This website is quite fascinating, with samples of the interactive dictionary, indigenous knowledge, and additional works associated with this project.



Anvita Abbi with Reya and Renge at Adi Basera Jan. 2006. Dr. Abbi is a also member of Terralingua's Advisory Panel.

*"The Great Andamanese honey calendar is based on the name of blooming flowers of that particular time. This naming process is related not only with seasonal change but also with flowers' inherent relation with availability of honey."*

[www.andamanese.net](http://www.andamanese.net)

## How did the Andamanese save themselves from the Tsunami of 2004?

### The Great Andamanese

Three different tribes living in the Andaman Islands saved themselves in three different ways the day Tsunami struck them on December 26, 2004. While Great Andamanese were taken by surprise as they were sleeping in their huts, they were agile enough to run to the nearby hill to reach the top where they spent three days without food or water. Some of the children and an adult male by the name of Nao Jr. were by the side of the sea when the huge waves came galloping and immediately Nao Jr. made the children climb a specific tree and he himself kept swimming for six-seven hours near the tree keeping an eye on the children. As the water would recede, children were asked to climb down a bit so that the tree did not collapse by the weight and as soon as the water swelled they were made to climb as far up as possible. Nao Jr. himself did not climb the tree as he thought it would not be able to take the load. He knew exactly which tree would hold out.

Inundation of the sea and destruction caused to mangroves and other vegetation along the sea-side were testimony to the lethality of the earthquake in the Indian Ocean. Survival of the Great Andamanese community bears proof of some indigenous knowledge our modern science can only envy.

This is the literal translation of one of the tales a tribal told us:

*“As the water rose from the sea in the early morning that day, everywhere was flooded in seconds. We were strongly pulled by the ferocious currents, as we tried to run away. Trees were also uprooted by the rising water. We ran away from the sea and put the children on trees, from where their feet hung as they could not sit over the tree. After the water receded we got the children down and ran away to the high hills and forest. When the Earth shook and water rose, we all gathered and as the water receded we moved high up in the mountain. We were then brought to Port Blair by boat three-four days later.”*

### The Jarawas

On the day of the 26th December 2004, some Jarawas were fishing by the sea-shore. When the first set of waves came one of the elder Jarawa recognized these were the killer waves. He reported to us that when the next wave came almost sucking the earth so that one could see the sea-bed he was sure that this would bring havoc and then he went in to the woods and informed everyone to seek shelter on a hill, which finally saved the Jarawas from drowning. He reported to us that he could identify the wave as a killer wave as he was taught by his father in his childhood to recognize the pattern of these waves. On checking the historical record I realized that he spoke the truth, as a Tsunami was reported in the Andaman Sea in 1941.

### The Onges

None of my team members were in Little Andaman, the home of the Onges, on the frightful morning; however, the tales reported by Visvajit Pandya on the web ([www.andaman.org](http://www.andaman.org)) inform us that Onges were also fishing in the morning and they too knew the first set of waves as not friendly ones. Onges moved deep into the forest for many months as they were scared to come near the shore again.

submitted by Prof. Anvita Abbi  
Chairperson, Centre For Linguistics, Jawaharlal Nehru University  
New Delhi, India

## NATIVE LANGUAGES SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

by: Dr. Priscilla Settee

Language is at the heart of First Nations culture and knowledge retention. Indigenous peoples, especially elders, believe that without language we have lost our culture and the essence of who we are.

Language is the most fundamental way that cultural information is communicated and preserved, especially in those that until recently did not use written expressions. Language's important relationship to knowledge and the survival of a culture requires that any discussion of Indigenous Knowledge Systems must include language retention. The deliberate and state-imposed destruction of Indigenous languages has caused the loss of traditional knowledge systems. It is estimated that only 3 out of fifty-two Canadian Indigenous languages will survive this century. Today many Indigenous youth are not speaking their native languages. Historically, children were taken out of their homes to attend schools for 10 months of the year. Many of these children received corporal punishment when they spoke their language in boarding schools. As a direct result of historical processes, but also the hegemony and racialization that pervades present education, both formal and informal Indian languages have been slowly disintegrating. This language disappearance trend is happening in other Indigenous communities throughout the world. The loss of language means the loss of human diversity and all the knowledge contained therein. It is important that both community-based and higher learning institutes, with the support of communities and governments, work together to preserve the cultural diversity of Indigenous communities through the support of Indigenous languages. This can be achieved by valuing Indigenous languages enough to offer them at mainstream universities. Indigenous languages should be recognized as official national languages and



resources identified to make that statement a reality. Recognizing that all learning does not happen within four walls and that Universities must consider some new pedagogical shifts can save languages. Individuals and communities deciding to strengthen traditional forms of learning can revitalize languages.

A group of educators organized a Cree language immersion summer camp at the Sturgeon Lake First Nation, which I attended. For 5 days we sang, exercised, cooked, performed skits, and learned in the outdoors without formal classrooms. The learning lent itself to much laughter and room for discussion about visioning future language strategies. We had the opportunity to pick sweetgrass and sage and participate in a sweatlodge that was led by a highly regarded Indigenous Knowledge holder who used the ceremony as an opportunity to explain Cree teachings. At the camp, many activities were presented that did not involve lectures and note-taking. There are many ways to learn languages. Activities as simple as turning off the television and returning to visit each other using Native language are excellent examples. This is one aspect of Indigenous sovereignty that no one can take away. It means that as Indigenous people we have to walk our talk.

Verna Kirkness (1998), an Indigenous Language proponent who has been highly recognized for her work, states that the question in Canada should not be whether we should have only 1 or 2 official languages of English or English and French. Kirkness maintains that language is key to identity, and Aboriginal people are more likely to maintain their identity if governments give the same support to Indigenous languages as they have to French language retention:

*Language is the principal means whereby culture is accumulated, shared and transmitted from one generation to another. Language expresses the uniqueness of a group's world view. (Kirkness, 1998, p.4)*

In order to quell the disappearance of Indigenous Knowledge and languages, Kirkness advises her communities that they must establish banks of knowledge to preserve the language and the stories of elders. Storage is of utmost importance and storage, according to Kirkness, does not have to be fancy or complicated. A tape and tape recorder is a good beginning.

Just as the devaluing of Indigenous languages has been structural, so too must the revitalization. For example, the early Christian churches, with the support of the state, were brutal in their language extermination policies. Children were beaten and humiliated if they spoke their language. Some religious order members stuck pins in the tongues of students who spoke their language. The governments and agencies in the position to support languages must be as intent on reinstating these same languages and ensure that resources match that commitment. The document Policy Options for Aboriginal Peoples of Canada (1976) recommends full government support for languages:

*“Governments, with international cooperation, should provide the necessary financial resources and institutional support to ensure that every indigenous child has the opportunity to achieve both fluency and literacy in his/her own traditional language”* (p.5).



Rainbow at the Tsawout Native Reserve, Salt Spring Island, Canada.

There is no one magic formula to support language strategies. The Canadian government has committed to support French language acquisition. This same support should be extended for the founding languages of pre-confederation Canada, such as Cree, Inuit, Siksika, Ojibway, Sto'lo, Dakota, Okanogan, Dene, and more. The demand for language preservation is another means of challenging the cultural hegemony that exists within higher learning. When we ask for space to teach our languages, it is a means of ensuring our cultural continuation as First Nations and Métis peoples.

In Canada, the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI) was established in 1999 with few resources and lots of commitment from its partners, including the Indigenous Peoples Program at the Extension Division at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Alberta and the host communities. The CILLDI's vision comes from recognizing the shortage of teachers, curriculum developers, researchers, and community linguists prepared to work in Indigenous language education. Despite the existence of teacher education in Saskatchewan, limited attention has been paid to the development of bilingual and biliterate teachers. In many universities and public schools, more attention is given to the romance languages than Indigenous languages. The CILLDI recognized the need to address this aspect of linguistic hegemony and to work to preserve Canada's Indigenous languages. CILLDI was first hosted at Onion Lake in 2000 with one course offering in the Cree language. In subsequent years, CILLDI took place at Blue Quills School near Saddle Lake First Nations in 2001 and at LaRonge, Saskatchewan in 2002.

Indigenous language retention work will ensure that diverse cultures can continue to exist in the future. When languages die Indigenous cultures lose their unique essence and the world loses cultural diversity. The work of Terralingua and the CILLDI ensure that academic institutes support Indigenous world views, philosophies, biodiversities and knowledge through the preservation of Indigenous languages and literacy development.

*Editor's Note:* Dr. Priscilla Settee is an Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies of the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. She is a founding member and has served as a faculty member of CILLDI. Dr. Settee is also a member of Terralingua's Indigenous Advisory Panel.

Teach me to speak to you so that I may know you...your culture the bones of you. So that I may experience the uniqueness of your song, your spirit.

Teach me to speak to you so that You can listen too...to me, who has a language all my own....who has a culture, a song...a spirit. Make us one in heart, but

let us speak our own language so that the ones who wish to listen, may learn too.

— Red Flower, Cree Nation.

# Fundraising Campaign for Rarámuri Alternative Education Curriculum

To all Terralingua Members and supporters of Biocultural Diversity:

**We are seeking to fundraise \$15,000 throughout the next four months** to assist the Rarámuri people of the Sierra Tarahumara of Northern Mexico in developing an alternative education curriculum for their children. The curriculum will focus on their language and culture and on practical activities for recovering the health of the landscape and the cultural vitality of their communities.



photo: ©2009 David Rapport

**The Facts:** Terralingua has been working with the Rarámuri for the past several years. On the Raramuri's request, initial activities concentrated on potable water, landscape restoration, home gardens, health and sanitation. Now the Rarámuri are ready to take the next step, in order to develop and implement an educational curriculum that will ensure the intergenerational transmission of Rarámuri language and culture to their children, and provide them with vital hands-on skills.

**The Goal:** Terralingua seeks to support a group of Rarámuri people to work with us on the curriculum. One of them, Carlos Palma, has already spent several years gathering relevant curriculum materials, which need to be completed and systematized. Starting this fall, we wish to assist him and other community members, including the respected elder Erasmo Palma, with curriculum development and in devising hands-on educational activities that will bring together children and elders in an outdoor classroom setting. The project will also provide opportunities for adults to continue capacity building on eco-cultural health and landscape restoration.

**We need your support to accomplish this!  
Please contribute to this effort with your donations.**

Use the 'Donate Now' button on our website  
[www.terralingua.org](http://www.terralingua.org) for a secure donation  
or send a check payable to:  
Terralingua, 217 Baker Rd, SSI, V8K 2N6

For further information about the project, go to:  
[www.terralingua.org/projects/Sierra/sierra.htm](http://www.terralingua.org/projects/Sierra/sierra.htm)  
or call +1.250.538 0939



photo: ©2009 David Rapport



## Terralingua Annual Report, 2008

In 2008, Terralingua worked as hard as ever on our ongoing projects, as well as on our participation in two major conferences related to biocultural diversity, our publications, and our outreach activities, as detailed below. Through these activities, we made a lot of progress in advancing the cause of biocultural diversity. In this sense, it was a very positive year. At the same time, it was also a year in which Terralingua began to feel the consequences of the global economic crisis. The non-profit sector has been suffering from a marked decrease in funding sources, and Terralingua was not exempt. Our challenges on this front are also detailed below. This report concludes with an update on Terralingua's organizational development in 2008, followed by our annual financial report.

### Program Activities

**Global Source Book on Biocultural Diversity:** Co-authors Luisa Maffi and Ellen Woodley finalized the manuscript of our Global Source Book on Biocultural Diversity (300 pp.), the outcome of a 4-year Terralingua project supported by The Christensen Fund. In this project, we surveyed and analyzed 45 projects from all over the world that take an integrated approach to conserving biodiversity and sustaining cultural vitality. We explored various opportunities for publication, and the UK publishers Earthscan invited us to submit the manuscript in early 2009. We secured a sponsorship for this book by IUCN and a foreword by IUCN Senior Policy Advisor Mr. Gonzalo Oviedo. We also presented a pre-publication version of the Source Book at the World Conservation Congress in October 2008 (see below), and distributed CDs of the Source Book to the audience and throughout the congress. In addition, we began to look into various possibilities for disseminating the Source Book project results and creating an online discussion group on biocultural diversity conservation, in collaboration with WiserEarth, the online network of environment and social justice organizations. These activities will be pursued in 2009, in conjunction with the publication of the book.

**Eco-cultural Health in the Sierra Tarahumara:** Following up on the activities we had undertaken since 2006, we continued our on-the-ground collaboration with two indigenous Rarámuri communities in the Sierra Tarahumara of northern Mexico, with support from The Christensen Fund. The goal

of the project is to assist the Rarámuri in recovering the health of their landscape, their public health, and their social and cultural well-being. On the request of the Rarámuri, initial projects included securing potable water access for one of the communities, and the creation of tree nurseries and home gardens for the purposes of revegetation and improved nutrition. The Rarámuri also invited us to explore with them their health and education needs, particularly the need for alternative educational curriculum focused on Rarámuri language and culture and eco-cultural health. Project coordinator David Rapport (ecosystem health) and team members Michael Nickels (revegetation, permaculture), Carla Paciotto (education), and Victoria Lee (public health and sanitation) carried out a field trip to the Sierra Tarahumara in April 2008 to establish the tree nurseries and home gardens and to conduct health and education surveys. Community members continued to work on the potable water project, which involved laying down an 8-km pipeline from a mountain spring they had previously identified for this purpose. The community teams worked throughout the year as weather and farming activities allowed, and the project had neared completion by the end of the year, with water having reached every household, a large holding tank having been built, and the pipeline being buried for better protection. A new field trip was planned for August 2008, but our plans were halted by the sudden surge of drug-trafficking-related violence in the region, which posed serious risks for both our team and the communities we work with. In consultation with our Rarámuri counterparts, we decided to refocus the project primarily on the educational activities, which we aim to conduct at Terralingua's home base on Salt Spring Island, Canada, with visiting Rarámuri collaborators. With further foundation support for this project being uncertain (see Fundraising below), we began a fundraising campaign aiming to bring a group of Rarámuri to Canada to work with us on the alternative education curriculum. The campaign will be ongoing until we reach our goal. (See fundraising campaign ad on p. 13.)

**Global Indicators of the Status and Trends of Linguistic Diversity and Traditional Knowledge:** In 2006-2008, we carried out another project funded by The Christensen Fund, to develop an Index of Linguistic Diversity (ILD), authored

by David Harmon and Jonathan Loh, and a Vitality Index of Traditional Environmental Knowledge (VITEK), authored by Dr. Stanford Zent. These two indicators are meant to be used for the assessment and monitoring of the status and trends of linguistic diversity and traditional environmental knowledge (TEK)—two vital components of biocultural diversity—at global, regional, and local scales. A 103-page technical report on the VITEK was prepared by Dr. Zent and sent out for external review. We received two very positive reviews and by the end of the year we were awaiting a third one. Meanwhile, Dr. Zent began piloting the field application of the VITEK with several indigenous and rural communities in Venezuela, with completion expected by the summer of 2009. A number of other researchers expressed an interest in piloting the VITEK elsewhere, and Dr. Zent provided them with “quick reference” guidelines for this purpose. After testing of the VITEK and publication of the results in peer-reviewed journals, we plan to promote wide use of this indicator in research, community, and policy contexts. Harmon and Loh continued the development of the database and methodology for the ILD, with the technical report expected to be ready in the spring of 2009. The ILD will show trends in the number of mother-tongue speakers of an initial sample of 1500 languages from all continents, spanning back over at least 50 years. Future plans for the ILD include expansion of the database, hosting the database as an interactive tool on Terralingua’s website, and options for promoting the ILD as a research, community, and policy tool. We successfully presented both indicators, along with Terralingua Board member Dr. Margaret Florey’s Linguistic Vitality Test, at the World Conservation Congress (see below). The session attracted press attention, and an article on it was published in the congress magazine *Terraviva*. Due to the uncertainties about further foundation support for the project (see Fundraising below), we started exploring other funding options and possible partnerships to continue carrying out this project, including a fundraising campaign among our members.

#### **“Sustaining Cultural and Biological Diversity” Symposium:**

On April 2-5, 2008, the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York, USA, hosted the international symposium “Sustaining Cultural and Biological Diversity in a Rapidly Changing World: Lessons for Global Policy”, co-organized by AMNH, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy/Theme on Culture and Conservation (IUCN/CEESP/TCC), and Terralingua. The symposium saw the participation of over 350 people from 22 countries and all continents, including social and natural scientists, conservationists, Indigenous researchers and activists, funders, and members of NGOs and international organizations. We were involved in the overall symposium organization; organized or co-organized and participated in 5 sessions/events related to Terralingua’s work; contributed to two of the symposium background papers (see Publications)

and reviewed all other background papers; participated in a working group to prepare a draft resolution on cultural and biological diversity for submission at the World Conservation Congress (WCC) in October 2008 (see below); liaised with participants, funders, and media. Terralingua Director Dr. Luisa Maffi delivered one of symposium’s opening speeches. Results from the symposium were meant to feed directly into the “Biocultural Diversity Journey” to be held at the WCC and into the WCC policy-making process. A post-symposium volume is to be published by Earthscan (see Publications). For a full report on the symposium, see *Langscape* 2.1. on our website.

**World Conservation Congress:** The fourth quadriennial World Conservation Congress (WCC), the largest international gathering of conservationists, organized by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), was held in Barcelona, Spain on October 5-14, 2008, with over 6,600 leaders from government, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, business, UN agencies and social organizations in attendance. For the first time in the history of the WCC, an entire set of events during the Congress Forum (the NGO “showcase” part of the WCC) was devoted to biocultural diversity and Indigenous Peoples, under the banner “Biocultural Diversity and Indigenous Peoples Journey”. In that context, Terralingua organized or co-organized four events (the workshops “The World’s Cultural Diversity: New Measurements Show What’s Happening and Why It’s Important to Conservationists” and “Integrating and Sustaining Cultural and Biological Diversity: The Difficult Questions”; the knowledge café “Diverse Planet, Healthy Planet: Biological and Cultural Diversity as Cornerstones of Eco-cultural Health—Implications for Assessment, Policy, and Implementation”; and the pre-publication launch of our *Global Source Book on Biocultural Diversity*). In addition, we had a Terralingua exhibit at the Biocultural Diversity booth in the Congress exhibition area. Further, we co-sponsored three draft resolutions for the approval of the IUCN Members’ Assembly: “Integrating Culture and Cultural Diversity into IUCN’s Policy and Programme”; “Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”; and “Recognition and Conservation of Sacred Natural Sites in Protected Areas”. All three resolutions were passed by the Assembly, and following the WCC we began to engage with IUCN in the process of prioritization of resolutions for implementation. For a full report on the WCC, see *Langscape* 2.3. on our website.

#### **Publications and Media**

##### **Our publications in 2008 included:**

- Luisa Maffi’s article “Talking Diversity”, published in *World Conservation: The Magazine of the World Conservation Union*, January 2008.

- Multiple contributions to two background papers for the AMNH symposium: “How Do Biodiversity and Culture Intersect?” (lead author: Jules Pretty) and “Measuring and Monitoring State and Trends in Biodiversity and Culture” (lead authors: Dave Harmon & Jonathan Loh).
- Revised versions of the two above papers, as well as a new paper on biocultural diversity and eco-cultural health by David Rapport and Luisa Maffi, to appear in a post-symposium edited volume to be published by Earthscan (Jules Pretty and Sarah Pilgrim, eds.).
- Articles “Cultural Vitality” (Luisa Maffi) and “How Are We Doing?” (David Rapport), published in the special October 2008 “Indigenous Intelligence” issue of Resurgence Magazine, which was distributed free at the WCC.

In addition, we were invited by Earthscan to submit the manuscript of our Global Source Book on Biocultural Diversity for publication.

#### Our media presence included:

- Interviews with Luisa Maffi and David Rapport on biocultural diversity and eco-cultural health, conducted by journalist Mark Sommer of the radio program series “World of Possibilities” during the AMNH symposium. The interviews are available on Mainstream Media Project website [www.aworldofpossibilities.com/action/info235.html](http://www.aworldofpossibilities.com/action/info235.html).
- Interview with Luisa Maffi on Terralingua and biocultural diversity, conducted by journalist/author Terry Glavin. The article “In Defence of Difference” was published in *Seed*, October 7 2008, at [http://www.seedmagazine.com/news/2008/10/in\\_defense\\_of\\_difference\\_1.php](http://www.seedmagazine.com/news/2008/10/in_defense_of_difference_1.php).
- Interview with Luisa Maffi on biocultural and linguistic diversity, conducted by Frank Aragona of Agroinnovations. The interview is available at [http://agroinnovations.com/component/option,com\\_mojo/Itemid,182/p,37/lang,en/](http://agroinnovations.com/component/option,com_mojo/Itemid,182/p,37/lang,en/).
- Interview with Luisa Maffi on biocultural diversity and sacred sites, conducted by filmmaker Toby McLeod of the Sacred Lands Project during the WCC, for an upcoming television series on sacred sites.

#### Outreach

In 2008, we completely overhauled our website and worked to make it more streamlined, appealing, and informative, and to begin to turn it into a full-fledged educational tool on biocultural diversity. We also launched Volume 2 of our handsomely redesigned electronic newsletter *Langscape*, which is sent out to all of Terralingua’s members.

In anticipation of the activities we expect to conduct in 2009 on biocultural diversity education (see Fundraising below), we worked to establish several strategic partnerships with other relevant organizations (such as WiserEarth, the International Society of Ethnobiology, and World of Possibilities). These will be further pursued in 2009.

In late October-early November 2008, we were hosted at the Chinese Institute of Applied Ecology (Shenyang) and Inner Mongolia University (Hohhot) for lectures on biocultural diversity and eco-cultural health and meetings with Chinese researchers, academics, and students. This visit led to exploring prospects for collaborative research on the ecological and cultural restoration of the Inner Mongolian grasslands.

#### Fundraising

The effects of the global economic crisis on the non-profit sectors translated into diminishing funding for Terralingua in 2008. We received two small contracts (from the United Nations Environment Program and the American Museum of Natural History), as well as the remainder of the AI Roat bequest that we had been given in 2007. We were also invited to submit a grant proposal to The Christensen Fund (TCF) for biocultural diversity education for 2009. On the other hand we were not, at least for the time being, able to secure further support for our Biocultural Indicators and Sierra Tarahumara projects, or new funding for the development of our planned Atlas of Biocultural Diversity. A fundraising event we held in the fall brought in a small amount of funding for the continuation of the Sierra Tarahumara project. Overall, however, individual donations were also significantly down from previous years.

As the financial report included below shows, this means our 2008 income was not sufficient to cover our expenses for both projects and general operations. In spite of prudent financial management, we started using our reserves: that is, the unrestricted funds coming from the Roat bequest and the undesignated donations of our other members and supporters. A careful review of possible alternative funding sources suggested that the prospects for foundation grants related to biocultural diversity remain very limited. Most foundations and other funding agencies are not yet “on board” with the integrative idea of biocultural diversity, and thus our objectives and projects still “fall through the cracks” of the agencies’ funding guidelines. Nevertheless, in the later part of the year we geared up for an extended fundraising campaign, directed to both foundations and our membership. We developed a database of funding sources and began drafting letters of inquiry to foundations. We also launched a members’ donation drive that will continue through 2009,

with the aim to gather funding for our specific projects as well as to support general operations. The long-term future of Terralingua and our ability to continue to pursue our mission of sustaining biocultural diversity depend crucially on our ability to generate a steady stream of income to match our expenses, without cutting significantly into our reserves. This will be our main challenge for the foreseeable future.

### Organizational Development

Early in the year, we were able to hire two outstanding part-time helpers: Tania Aguila (administrative assistant, membership secretary) and Ortixia Dilts (web developer/manager, newsletter editor). Administrative help was crucial for overhauling and upgrading our accounting and budgeting system; updating our membership database and stepping up member relations through an ongoing membership drive and contact with existing members; and developing an updated database of funding sources and initial fundraising efforts with foundations and our membership. The hiring of an in-house designer/editor allowed us to revamp our website and re-launch our newsletter (see Outreach above).

Board composition at the beginning of 2008 was as follows:

#### Officers

Sheri Tatsch, Chair (2007-9)  
E. Annamalai, Vice-Chair (2007-8)  
Alan Hedley, Secretary & Treasurer (2006-8)

#### Governors-at-Large

Susan Fassberg, Director (2006-8)  
Margaret Florey, Director (2007-9)  
Eugene Hunn, Director (2007-9)  
Rauna Kuokkanen, Director (2008-10)

In August 2008, Terralingua received the resignation of then Chair of the Board Sheri Tatsch. In October, Alan Hedley indicated his intention not to run for another term on the Board at the end of his term, and Rauna Kuokkanen her intention to step down at the end of the year. Annamalai ended his 1-year term as Vice-Chair and was elected to a 3-year term as Governor-at-Large (2009-11). Susan Fassberg was elected to the position of Vice-Chair for 2009. The Board decided to postpone the filling of other vacancies, contingent to discussions planned for a face-to-face Board meeting to be held in January 2009.

### Terralingua Financial Report, 2008

<b>Revenue</b>	
Contributions, gifts, grants & contracts	\$156,916
Interest	\$11,545
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$168,461</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Consultants (Project and Other)	\$96,881
Salaries & benefits	\$94,826
Administrative Services	\$19,041
Legal	\$6,846
Accounting	\$5,021
Rent & Utilities	\$3,879
Office	\$5,453
Business Meals	\$99
Licenses and Fees	\$353
Advertisement & Promotion	\$327
Travel (Project and Other)	\$22,830
Insurance	\$1,440
Bank & payroll fees	\$549
Education and Outreach	\$6,119
Board of Directors	\$3,254
Depreciation	\$1,504
Field Materials	\$1,031
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$269,453</b>
Change in net assets, 2008	\$(100,992)
<b>Net assets of 1 January 2008</b>	<b>\$724,064</b>
Change in net assests, 2008	\$(100,992)
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liability	\$4,107
<b>Net assets as of 31 December 2008</b>	<b>\$627,179</b>



## Call for Expressions of Interest in Serving on Terralingua's Board of Governors

**Terralingua** is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1996 <[www.terralingua.org](http://www.terralingua.org)>. Terralingua's **Mission** is to support the integrated protection, maintenance and restoration of the biocultural diversity of life - the world's biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity - through an innovative program of research, education, policy-relevant work, and on-the-ground action. Our **Vision** is of a just, equitable, sustainable world in which the biocultural diversity of life is valued, protected, and perpetuated for generations to come. Our **Goal** is 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, so that individual and collective action is taken to care for it and sustain it in this rapidly changing world.

Terralingua is governed by a Board of Governors who serve three-year terms of office (see <http://www.terralingua.org/about/Board.html>). Board membership is a voluntary, unremunerated position. Terralingua's Board and Director meet four times a year (usually by conference call) to discuss Terralingua business, including the program of work, publications, policy, outreach, and financial matters.

We are now soliciting expressions of interest to fill several Board vacancies. The Board is seeking people with significant expertise in the non-profit sector who are committed to Terralingua's mission. In order to diversify our supporter base and expand Terralingua's program, familiarity with fundraising, grantmakers and donors is particularly relevant at this time. We are also keen to increase indigenous representation on the Board.

Expressions of interest in Board membership should be addressed to Terralingua's Chair, Prof. E. Annalamai, and emailed to [info@terralingua.org](mailto:info@terralingua.org). Please send a brief (one-two page) description of relevant background, achievements, and strengths, outlining your interest in serving Terralingua and specific contributions you feel you would make to the organization. Include your contact details (email, phone, and skype if available). We will consider a first round of expressions of interest before the end of June 2009, so interested parties are invited to write by June 21st.

Kindly note that this call for expressions of interest is not a request for formal applications and implies no obligation on the part of Terralingua to accept any candidatures. However, all expressions of interest will be properly acknowledged and given due consideration, and we may follow up with respondents as appropriate.

# Terralingua Members' Forum



© 2009 Hans Silvester

*Join the discussion at [www.terralingua.org/tldyn/index.php](http://www.terralingua.org/tldyn/index.php)*

Hello Everyone,

I am new to this forum and am happy to have found a source of interested and knowledgeable people surrounding this crucial and fascinating topic. I would like to toss out the idea of integrating the arts into the conservation/awareness efforts. I myself am a writer and poet who finds myself particularly unnerved by the loss of indigenous languages. I am reverent of all the work that has been done toward this cause in the fields of anthropology, linguistics, education and policy change; however I continue to brainstorm ways in which I and other artists can apply our skill sets to it. Personally, I believe that an artistic undertaking in the BCD efforts could be quite rewarding and invigorating by inspiring toward and bringing people into communion with the cause. Artists may also be of help in cataloguing literary and dramatic works, or, more interestingly, attempting to translate them. An expose of translation efforts, for example, I imagine could be quite compelling for an interested audience, because in the process of translation something cultural is always danced around, felt for, and often lost--therein I think that the struggle of translation embodies and demonstrates the very spirit of cultural conservation efforts. Therefore, I am tossing out the idea of on-site artists in residence for field projects; and, perhaps upon completing these assignments, visits to schools as an extracurricular feature of education efforts that are already being implemented. I would like to continue to flesh out these ideas further and would appreciate any comments or suggestions.

Kelly Egan

## Become a Terralingua Member!

Our Membership campaign continues, and we are very enthusiastic about the ongoing communication with this great network. If you would like to become a member of Terralingua, please complete the membership form on our website <http://www.terralingua.org/html/member.html>. Terralingua members receive our quarterly newsletter *Langscape*, are entitled to discounts on our publications and other special offers, and get occasional updates on "hot off the press" news. Members have exclusive access to the Members' Discussion Forum, which is devoted to how Terralingua and its members can work together to achieve our shared goals.

If you want to know more about how to become a member, send an email to: [membership@terralingua.org](mailto:membership@terralingua.org).  
For information about Terralingua's work, please send an email to [info@terralingua.org](mailto:info@terralingua.org).

Next Issue of *Langscape*:

Assessing the Vitality  
of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

If you would like to submit an article for this issue,  
please email your request to:  
[ortixia@terralingua.org](mailto:ortixia@terralingua.org)