EMERGING PARADIGMS SERIES | PART 2
Weaving Tradition and Innovation
Merging our biocultural heritage and our innovative ideas to forge a sustainable future for our earth and its peoples.
Langscape is an extension of the voice of Terralingua. It supports our mission by educating the minds and hearts about the importance and value of biocultural diversity. We aim to promote a paradigm shift by illustrating biocultural diversity through scientific and traditional knowledge, within an elegant sensory context of articles, stories and art.

About the Cover: Weaver Or Woven? A Self Portrait By Aly de Groot, 2005. Materials: plant dyes, pandanus, copper wire. Photographer: Fiona Morrisson. Changing paradigms about how people see the world can be expressed through words, but more often a deep shift in behavior occurs through direct experiences and action. Knowledge about biodiverse plants is shared in the language used, along with actions taken, to create traditional Indigenous weaving. This is an art and craft that brings people close to fibers and materials that exist in nature and have been used for thousands of years. Additionally, this traditional weaving style has naturally been adapted and reinterpreted to communicate between Indigenous and non-indigenous people about threats to the environment and the need for conservation in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Langscape is a Terralingua publication.
Editor in Chief: Ortixia Dilts, Terralingua
Guest Editor: Kierin Mackenzie
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Langscape

“we walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors”
~Kari-oca Declaration of the World’s Indigenous Peoples

The challenge we put out in this issue of Langscape is how we can weave tradition and innovation together to actively transform our current global paradigm. Current global paths have led to large-scale destruction of biological and cultural diversity globally, often through processes that are genocidal and ecocidal in nature. These processes are causing the breakdown of the dynamic continuity of tradition—of the ever-evolving intergenerational transmission of the values, beliefs, knowledges, languages, and practices that human communities have developed over centuries and millennia, and through which each community has defined, maintained, and creatively transformed its cultural identity and integrity.

As residents of this world, we are both the children of previous generations, siblings with all that lives, and the parents of the world to come. As the 1992 Kari-oca Declaration of the World’s Indigenous Peoples so aptly puts it, “we walk to the future in the footprints of our ancestors.” That is the very essence of cultural continuity: change that is not disruptive and destructive, but that respects the past in creating the future, seamlessly weaving together tradition and innovation.

How can the linguistic, cultural, and biological treasures handed down to us be utilized in order to ensure their and our continuing existence? How do we draw on ancestral knowledge, practices, and arts to devise new solutions for our global predicament? How do we adapt the gifts, values and teachings of the past to create a brighter future? What new ideas harmonize well with these gifts to reinvigorate their usage where they have declined? How do they strengthen us and the generations to come?

We are entering uncharted waters as a species. No-one really knows what is to come, and how we are to turn the corner. All we can do is shed light on our own corner, share stories of what has worked and has not worked, share ideas, share seeds, and work to leave future generations with the same gifts we were given. This issue is to be a container of seeds for planting. This issue is to highlight new flowers on ancient vines. Join us as we continue to explore Biocultural Diversity as an emerging paradigm in a changing world. We hope you will enjoy journeying with us through this special volume of Langscape, and that you too will share what you learn with others.

Kierin Mackenzie and Ortixia Dilts
“Biocultural heritage” refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples, and their biological resources, from the crops they develop to the landscapes they create. It also includes indigenous customary laws, cultural values and spiritual beliefs. This tangible and intangible heritage has been developed and sustained over hundreds of years, for the food, health, economic needs of current and future generations. Biocultural heritage is a holistic concept, where knowledge, biological diversity, landscapes and culture are interconnected and inter-dependent. Together, these elements form the basis of sustainable and resilient local economies. – Krystyna Swiderska, page 13.

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Australia. This exhibition, Journey into a Toxic Heartland, responded to issues by encompassing traditional and contemporary styles of basketry and weaving. Twelve figures woven from the ceiling. The use of plant materials reflected the connection of Indigenous people to place and the long-standing continuing relationships of biocultural diversity conservation. It is for this reason that we must ensure clean water for all.

Coming from Cyprus, Inanc Tekrug uses the camera to catalyze his passions for photography, traveling, and biocultural diversity conservation. He has an MA in Visual Anthropology from the School of Anthropology and Conservation, University of Kent at Canterbury, UK. After passing the GESA in 2011, he has been a member of the Global Diversity Foundation, as a photographer/videographer for GESA and for other GDF programs, in addition to his freelance work.

Jeanine Pfeiffer is an ethnoecologist based in Mendocino County, Northern California. Known for her work linking traditional ecological knowledge with biodiversity and community development projects of the Pacific Rim, her San Jose State University classes engage students in working collaboratively with tribes and community members on contemporary environmental justice issues.

Julian Galarza, Sr. is a singer, a feather dancer, an expert craftsman, and an enrolled member of the Guadalupe Pomo, one of many tribes and tribal communities whose territory falls within Mendocino County, Northern California. He is from the Yokai – Boka (Pomo), Redwood Band of Hupa Indian and Nomlaki.

Jusquan Amanda Bedard-Edenshaw is a Haida language activist in Masset, Haida Gwaii. She has her M.A. in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria. Jusquan spends her energy learning Xaad Kil (the Haida language) from her mentor Elder Primrose Adams, and in turn teaching it to her three children. Biologist by training and skilled in development cooperation. Katja Heubach’s scientific interest lies in the area of social-ecological systems and nature conservation in West Africa savannas. As a post-doc with the German Network-Forum for Biodiversity (IPBES), she currently focuses on biodiversity-related science-policy interfaces, e.g. IPBES.

Kaylena Bray is a Program and Media Consultant at The Cultural Conservancy. She has a degree in Commerce, Organization, and Entrepreneurship from Brown University, and has consulted for numerous Indigenous-led and social entrepreneurship-focused organizations to strengthen the role of traditional ecological knowledge on climate change mitigation and agricultural food systems.

Dr. Ken Leslie is an Indo-Scottish Canadian artist, scientist, and educator. He started Haidawood in 2007 with K’alts’idaa K’ah Productions, with the goal of creating Haida language animations using a Community Animation approach. You can learn more about Dr. Ken and his adventures at makeyourownfun.org.

Krystyna Swiderska is a senior researcher in the Agroecology Team at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Krystyna coordinated a project on “Protecting community rights over traditional knowledge: Implications of customary laws and practices” with indigenous peoples in Peru, Panama, China, India and Kenya. This project, co-coordinated with Asociación ANDES Peru, developed the concept of collective biocultural heritage. Krystyna

Contributors

Guest Editor

Kierin Mackenzie holds a masters degree in Ethnobotany from the University of Kent and Kew Gardens. Currently he is working on a Doctorate at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. He has worked with Indigenous peoples on several continents, and believes that diversity is the only real treasure.

Editor-in-Chief

Ortixia Dilts works as a Creative Consultant for non-profit organizations, and assists them in developing their potential in media, outreach and creative project development. Her passion for her work stems from her deep connection with nature. Amongst her ‘many hats’ at Terralingua, she currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief and designer, for Langscape, which she has been building from an internal newsletter to an emerging magazine over the past six years. Ortixia aims to educate the minds and hearts of people about the importance and value of biocultural diversity.

Contributors

Ajuwak Kapasheis is working at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. He graduated from Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota with a BA in Linguistics and grew up between Ojibwe and Cree communities in the US and Canada. His interests include language revitalization and documentation.

Alison M. Jones is an award-winning documentary photographer and International League of Conservation Photography Fellow. She is the founding Director of No Water No Life (www.nowater-nolife.org). This long-term project combines the powers of photography and science to raise awareness of watershed degradation and sustainable solutions that can help ensure clean water for all.

Aly de Groot is an Australian fiber artist with Dutch ancestry who draws on her family’s long history of cross-cultural exchange with Australia’s original people. Through her work she extends the conversation about environmental issues by encompassing traditional and contemporary styles of basketry and transferring these skills as an educational and ecological tool with a broad cross-section of the community.

Anna Varga is an Assistant Research Fellow at the Centre for Ecological Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences. She researches ethnobiology and vegetation of the agro-forestry systems. Varga is a leader of the NGO Hungarian Association for Land and People and a student representative on the Hungarian Network-Forum for Biodiversity.

Donna Morton. Ashoka, Ogunte and Unreasonable fellow, Managing Partner, Relationship Development, Principium, an ethical asset management and impact investing company based in Boulder CO and Vancouver, BC. She also co-founded First Power, a B-Corporation with a mission to put clean energy, jobs and equity in the hands of First Nations and other communities. Donna has been a “change maker” and social entrepreneur for decades, focused on the fields and intersections of economics, finance and entrepreneurship to end extreme poverty and climate change.

Emerson Lopez Odango is a PhD student in Linguistics at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa and an East-West Center Student Affiliate. Prior to his graduate studies, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer (Federated States of Micronesia, 2006–9). His research interests include Local Environmental Knowledge, morphophonology, sociolinguistics, and language shift.

Hilary King works to understand how people connect to place and each other through relationships with material things, from coffee to maize to yarn. When she’s not working to promote local food, knitting, or playing Scrabble, she moonlights as a PhD candidate in Cultural Anthropology at Emory University in Atlanta, GA, USA.

Coming from Cyprus, Inanc Tekrug uses the camera to catalyze his passions for photography, traveling, and biocultural diversity conservation. He has an MA in Visual Anthropology from the School of Anthropology and Conservation, University of Kent at Canterbury, UK. After passing the GESA in 2011, he has been a member of the Global Diversity Foundation, as a photographer/videographer for GESA and for other GDF programs, in addition to his freelance work.

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Krystyna Swiderska is a senior researcher in the Agroecology Team at the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Krystyna coordinated a project on “Protecting community rights over traditional knowledge: Implications of customary laws and practices” with indigenous peoples in Peru, Panama, China, India and Kenya. This project, co-coordinated with Asociación ANDES Peru, developed the concept of collective biocultural heritage. Krystyna
is now working with ANDES and partners in China, India and Kenya on a programme of participatory action research called “Smallholder Innovation for Resilience”, which seeks to strengthen indigenous biocultural innovation systems related to crops for adaptation to climate change. She is co-Director of the ISE Global Coalition on Biocultural Diversity.

Maeva Gauthier is a marine ecologist and outreach specialist with Coastal & Ocean Resources in Victoria, BC. She is involved in the ShoreZone mapping program, which consists in collecting coastal aerial imagery by helicopter. Maeva organized film workshops with youth using that aerial imagery to engage communities about their coast.

Marie Acemah is an International Educational Consultant who bridges new technologies and traditional knowledge through digital storytelling workshops. From Uganda to Alaska, Marie supports inter-generational dialogue and film to facilitate indigenous communities to explore stories about topics ranging from climate change to conflict resolution, from discrimination to folklore.

Mark Gauti is a Coast Salish Artist from the T’Sou-ke First Nation. Mark worked as an environmental scientist for many years for his tribe, where he was involved in mapping of endangered species and gathering traditional ecological knowledge on traditional uses of native plants for food and medicine. For the past ten years he has been involved in Coast Salish Culture, participating in drumming, language programs and Tribal Canoe Journeys, as well as researching traditional art and storytelling. Understanding that traditional First Nation’s art and storytelling was the original form of environmental education, Mark started mixing culture with more modern environmental programming with T’Sou-ke and now continues this work with other tribes.

Marques Hanalei Marzan is a Hawaiian fiber artist born and raised in Kane‘ohe, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i. He is a staff member of Bishop Museum’s Cultural Resources Division, where he is able to provide greater opportunities for cultural practitioners to learn from the treasures of our past. He shares his understanding and passion for the fiber arts through presentations, demonstrations, and workshops that restore, in modern culture, the living presence of rare Hawaiian forms, materials, and designs.

Nickson Otieno is a conservation biologist from Kenya and PhD candidate at the University of Quebec, Canada. He has a BSc degree in Wildlife Management and MSc in conservation biology, and is interested in conservation biology, agro-ecology, species conservation and anthropogenic influences on the environment.

An emerging ethnoecologist born and raised in Curitiba, Brazil, Thiago Gomes is interested in applied ethnoecology and ethnobotany, restoration ecology, environmental history and education. He is a PhD student in Ecology at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina and scientific advisor for A Rocha Brazil.

Palma Vizzoni, MBA, is an organizational design professional with 19 years of experience in Sustainability. Palma’s vision is one where humanity’s diverse heritage of wisdom is called upon to approach globally shared issues. She is committed to creating the collaboration required to respond to this call.

Shaun Paul is the President of People & Planet LLC, working with individual and institutional investors and donors to invest in catalyzing environmental and social resilience especially with Indigenous Peoples. He has 25 years of professional and entrepreneurial experience in private finance, philanthropy, and international rural development. He is currently a founding partner with Good Capital in People and Planet LLC, to invest in growth companies accelerating environmental and cultural resilience in the food, forests and energy sectors. He also provides selective advisory services to donors and investors while serving as a Research Fellow at the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University. Shaun serves on the board of International Funders for Indigenous Peoples, as well as a senior advisor to Accelerating Appalachia for nature-based companies and EcoMadera LLC in Ecuador.

Susannah McCandless is a geographer and political ecologist with a PhD from Clark University. Her fieldwork in the U.S. and Latin America focuses on the conservation of privately-held land and its potential function as a commons, and how identity and citizenship affect rights of access and movement. She is interested in the critical intersections between viable landscapes and just human livelihoods.

Yuki Yoshida is interested in the interface of human and ecological wellbeing and currently interns with the Global Diversity Foundation. She has a M$ in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and a BA from Middlebury College in Environmental Studies and Psychology.
Globally, we are facing a sustainability crisis of epidemic proportions, and it is time to take a sober look at our current path of destruction, at how we are going to meet these challenges, so if we truly are falling, we know we have the resources to adapt, survive and sustain.

When the first peoples walked the earth, they had to adapt to their surroundings in order to sustain their families, and not deplete the resources around them. This knowledge was passed through the generations, and encoded within their languages. With all our languages and knowledge systems (currently estimated at 7000), we cover a lot of ground on how to take care of the earth in each unique region, thus how to take care of biocultural diversity.

In modern times this knowledge is being lost at a rapid rate, because of our need to consume beyond our means, and so are our resources. When one is sick, we start to look for solutions. We can begin to understand and learn about the old ways, combined with the new ways, of healing, and about perspectives that we never would have thought of before. In crisis, we need to cut back to what is most essential, and stop the practices that are destructive to ourselves, each other and the earth.

Why not even simplify our lifestyles now, and maybe we will not have to make that fall in the first place? Why not learn to cultivate our hidden gifts and basic skills such as gardening, building, sewing and fishing, and learn about our heritage and languages, now, from our grandmothers and grandfathers within this small dwindling window while they are still alive and with us? By working to sustain biocultural diversity, in whatever way we can, we have a chance to create a sustainable world. And I know this because I have lived it.

I do have a big vision for what we can achieve in this world, and it would take cultivating the unique gifts of each person to succeed. I am grateful everyday for this vision. But it is not always about taking an optimistic stance and ignoring the atrocities that are happening amongst us. Rather it is for us to meet our current challenges in a graceful way, and find the hidden gifts in this fall.

So I can look at this world and see a river of destruction that is epidemic, yet I see at the same time the beautiful vision of creation. I see people speaking out, listening to each other, and being more aware of their actions, Indigenous groups standing up to bring back their cultures, ways and languages, and that being appreciated and recognized by the masses. We have big corporations running the world, but the pressure from the public is beginning to affect their ethics toward the environment and basic human rights. If we are going to fall, then let us soften the blow, be prepared and cultivate what is truly most essential in our lives with compassion, not just for ourselves but for each other and the planet which sustains us.
glaciers melt, the forests burn, and the mountains are ground to stumps, it happens by complete indifference. Not through hate, not through love. Blind indifference as they are left without a voice, despite their roars and their trumpeting and howls in the night.

But this is not how it must be. Many humans have set ourselves apart from the rest of our family, other cultures, other species, and fallen for the narrow understanding that only I here and now matter, and what came before deserves no honour, and what comes after deserves no thought. Perhaps there have always been humans like this, but it is not the curse of our species to live in such a way. We have teachings passed on to us this very day showing us other ways to live. We have seeds and fruits that have been passed down from loving hand to loving hand so that our food is more delicious. We have stories given to us that comfort us in hard times and warn us in comfortable times. We have paintings and weavings and carvings to inspire us. We know how to share. We know how to care for one another. We know how to bring life to areas we have laid to waste.

Here is a treasure of stories and perspectives for you. Here are the works and words of artists and storytellers. Here are those working to pass on that which we have inherited, and those who are finding ways to awaken others to other ways of living here in our only home. Here are those that are reawakening old tongues and letting them live again, as fresh as they ever were. Here are innovators, using new technologies and grafting them onto old branches. It is not easy, but it is also joyous to see the new blooms, and to renew our relations with all that lives. We will need our gifts to make it through the years ahead, and we will be richer for having them.

Our current pathway of destruction is not one we can walk anymore. We can see the obstacles ahead, the sheer cliffs, the deep abyss. When the way is blocked, there is the opportunity to look at what has been left behind and reassert. There is time to band together with others to prepare. There is time for humility, to realize that we don’t know as much as we thought, and that we can learn from others, past and present, human and non-human. We can make things right with the earth, mother of us all.

Kierin Mackenzie

What is “Biocultural Heritage” and “Biocultural Innovation”?

Krystyna Świderska

“Biocultural heritage” refers to the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples, and their biological resources, from the crops they develop to the landscapes they create. It also includes indigenous customary laws, cultural values and spiritual beliefs. This tangible and intangible heritage has been developed and sustained over hundreds of years, for the food, health, economic needs of current and future generations. Biocultural heritage is a holistic concept, where knowledge, biological diversity, landscapes and culture are inter-connected and inter-dependent. Together, these elements form the basis of sustainable and resilient local economies.

The concept of Biocultural Heritage was inspired by the holistic worldview of Quechua people in the Potato Park (Southern Peruvian Andes) and by Darrell Posey’s concept of Traditional Resource Rights. It was developed at a workshop organized by Asociacion ANDES and IIED in Cusco, Peru (2005), in response to laws and policies which separate rights over traditional knowledge, and rights over associated genetic resources, which tend to be vested in the state. Research was then conducted with 11 different ethnic groups in Peru, Panama, India, China and Kenya, on how Traditional Knowledge is maintained, renewed and transmitted, which showed that knowledge, biodiversity, landscapes and culture are indeed highly interdependent in practice.¹

Biocultural heritage can serve as a guiding framework for collective resource management and endogenous development. The Potato Park, an Indigenous Biocultural Heritage Territory, has developed various tools which stem from the biocultural system and serve to strengthen it: biocultural registers, a biocultural protocol for inter-community benefit-sharing, biocultural products, and an agreement for repatriation of native potatoes – all of which are founded on three key customary laws of reciprocity, duality and equilibrium.

Scientists, governments, and agricultural experts often assume that traditional knowledge and crops are old and outdated, so it is important to show that indigenous people are innovators. Innovations are generally defined as ‘new ways of doing things’, developed in the last generation, and are not considered to include traditional practices handed down from generation to generation. Where does this leave the hundreds of different crop varieties developed by indigenous peoples, some of which are strongly resistant to climate change impacts such as drought and pests?

In our new project, Smallholder Innovation for Resilience (SIFOR), we are using the established notion of innovations as something new, but focusing on biocultural heritage-based innovations. We have developed the following working definition of Biocultural Heritage Innovations (BCHIs):

‘BCHIs are new knowledge, resources, skills and practices, or new combinations of these, which serve to: (a) strengthen and sustain the agro-biodiversity, particularly local seed systems, livelihoods and material and spiritual well-being of communities; (b) adapt to and mitigate risks due to global impacts, especially those of climate change. They are practical, sustainable, and are locally and globally relevant. BCHIs have their basis in a people’s or community’s BCH but may incorporate external elements. They integrate daily practices with traditional knowledge, spiritual values and customary norms. As such, they are dynamic, continuous, open, adaptive, and gender-sensitive, integrating the creativity of people and nature’.

For more information see: www.bioculturalheritage.org

¹ For more information see: www.bioculturalheritage.org
Introduction

Haidawood was started in 2007 as a collaboration between Dr. Ken Leslie and K’ált’s’ídaa K’áh (Laughing Crow) Productions. The goal of Haidawood is to support the revitalization of the endangered Haida language using a Community Animation approach. Haidawood makes stop motion animations featuring Xaad Kil (the Haida language) and is designed to assist community Xaad Kil learners as well as help people share and enjoy Haida culture.

K’ált’s’ídaa K’áh Productions is a storytelling collective founded by brothers Gwaai and Jaalen Edenshaw in 2006. K’ált’s’ídaa K’áh aims to achieve the following: to stay true to the old Haida stories while making them accessible to the public; and to bring Haida stories and language back into the common use through art, theatre, and other media, such as Haidawood.

Haidawood is guided by a sense of fun: the animations are fun to make and fun to watch. This spirit of fun and yahgudang, respect, has helped sustain the project as Haidawood continues to develop media that reflects the culture and people of Haida Gwaii.

Language Revitalization and Identity

British Columbia is home to 60% of the First Nations languages in Canada, including 32 different languages and 59 dialects. Many of these languages are now in danger of losing fluency due to the devastating effects of introduced disease, such as small pox, which decimated the local indigenous population, and assimilationist Indian Residential Schools, which punished children for speaking their Indigenous language and forced them to speak English (and in some cases French). Today, Indigenous language speakers make up a shrinking minority of the BC Indigenous population and most of them are over 65.

In the case of Xaad Kil, fluent speakers are in the “great-grandparent” generation, in their late 80s to mid 90s. The Haida language is considered “critically endangered” with less than 40 fluent speakers left.

Maintaining one’s language is fundamental to keeping one’s culture alive. The importance of Xaad Kil to the Haida community is expressed in the book, That which makes us Haida – the Haida Language. The Haida language is a keystone to the culture, and helps keep worldview, artistic expression, food gathering, dances, stories, and songs integrated together as a unified whole. Indigenous language also plays a key role in asserting Aboriginal Title: the identification of traditional place names demonstrates use and occupation of lands since time immemorial.

Indigenous languages also contain important information about the environment, including the names of medicinal plants and foods.

Against this backdrop of linguistic calamity, Indigenous communities are adopting a range of strategies, including Master-Apprentice programs, early childhood immersion programs, and digital technology. Technological approaches include the creation of recorded language databases, the development of language apps, and social media projects like Haidawood.

Learning Xaad Kil can be challenging: there are limited resources, and often language learners are overwhelmed with obstacles. Haidawood seeks to assist in the revitalization of the Haida language as well as facilitate inter-cultural understanding. Haidawood makes Haida language learning fun by bringing Haida art to life using the power of animation.
Digital Technology, Media & Language

Technology has profoundly changed how we communicate, and this creates new opportunities to empower communities using digital media. Haidawood provides an antidote to a media landscape dominated by images of Settler society. Haidawood projects Xaad Kil into digital media and creates language animations that can be shared via social networking. The presence of the Xaad Kil in these modern mediums is an expression of power, and helps language learners hear the Haida language spoken in context, and encourages them to pursue Xaad Kil learning through local community programs.

Xaad kil is undergoing incredible pressure with the passing of the last fluent speakers. There is an urgent need for inter-generational language transmission. Haidawood fits in with other efforts that bring the Haida language to a digital and smartphone platform, including the release of a Haida language app by the Skidegate Haida immersion Program (SHIP) and a similar app now in development by the Massett language organization, Xaad Kihlga Hl Suu.u.

Carved Puppets and Stop Motion Animation

The Haida have maintained a strong carving culture. They are famous for carving monumental cedar poles depicting stories and clan crests. These totem poles can be found standing in the Haida communities of Old Massett and Skidegate. The Haida are also known for carving argillite: a black stone found on Haida Gwaii. There is a long standing tradition of using carved puppets in storytelling. The work of notable Haida master carvers such as Bill Reid, Jim Hart, and Robert Davidson has led to the establishment of a sophisticated collectors market for Haida art. The Haida are also known for carving argillite: a black stone found on Haida Gwaii. There is a long standing tradition of using carved puppets in storytelling. The work of notable Haida master carvers such as Bill Reid, Jim Hart, and Robert Davidson has led to the establishment of a sophisticated collectors market for Haida art. Both Jaalen and Gwaai Edenshaw are accomplished carvers: Jaalen recently completed the Gwaii Haanas Legacy Pole that was raised to mark the 20th anniversary of the Gwaii Haanas Agreement. The original inspiration for Haidawood came from the carved avocado seed masks that Gwaai Edenshaw has been carving since he was a youth.

Stop motion animation dates back to the beginning of filmmaking. Puppets and sets are made and the puppets are photographed and moved step by step to create an animated sequence. Stop motion has the ability to create visually stunning cinema using only a digital camera, a computer, puppets and a set. The work of animating can be shared with community volunteers, who can help make puppets and sets, and move puppets during filming. This resilient technique has the power to literally bring Indigenous art to life. In an era dominated by computer graphics, stop motion animation remains visually appealing, and big budget stop motion animations continue to be made. Haidawood embraces an “aesthetic of accessibility” that creates beautiful art out of simple and readily available materials, including carved puppet faces, and sets made from cardboard and natural materials. This look is inspired by DIY maker culture, and is aimed at putting the power of creation back in the hands of the community.

The Haidawood process involves 5 steps: 1) Script: Identify a story that the community is willing to share. Record the story told from a knowledgeable Elder. Translate and transcribe the story into a storyboard that is approved by the community. 2) Pre-production: Work with community members to make puppets and sets. 3) Production: Animate the storyboard scene by scene at 15-24 frames per second. 4) Post-production: Edit sequences together and record soundtrack 5) Distribution: Host a community screening, submit to film festivals, and then share on the internet.

Haidawood animations are especially appealing to children, who enjoy watching them over and over again. This repetition helps children develop an ear for Xaad Kil, and the enjoyment stimulates their interest in learning Xaad Kil.

Haida Raid 2 and the Politics of Oil

The development of an Indigenous cinema on Haida Gwaii creates new opportunities for expressing the Haida worldview. This includes opposing the introduction of oil tanker traffic on the northwest coast of Canada, and opposing the controversial Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline. Haida Raid 2: A Message to Stephen Harper is a 5 minute “puppet activism” video that features the rap protest song Pipe Dreams, written and performed by the Haida Hippies. Haida Raid 2 uses humour to speak truth to power. Haida Raid 2 was featured at the 2012 Bill Reid Gallery exhibit on Humour in Contemporary Northwest Coast Art, Carrying on “Irregardless.” There are plans to produce a Haida Raid 3 to address political developments with respect to the pipeline.
Haidawood’s latest: Tsinii Stephen Brown’s Nuu (Octopus) Story

Nuu is Haidawood’s most ambitious animation to date. The 9 minute animation features a whole language narrative as told by the late Tsinii Stephen Brown. Nuu was one of the last projects Tsinii Stephen Brown worked on before he passed away in December 2012. His likeness was carved into a puppet head made from the medicinal plant Devil’s Club by Haida carver Leo Gagnon and featured in the animation. Tsinii Stephen Brown was a Xaad Kil champion, in fact he was awarded the Language Champion Award by the First Peoples Cultural Council in 2011. He was an incredibly important Haida language advocate in Old Massett. Every fluent Elder Xaad Kil speaker who carries the old stories and shares them with their community deserves acknowledgement and praise. Tsinii Stephen Brown’s whole language narrative acts as the soundtrack for Nuu and provides an uninterrupted account told in Xaad Kil. Whole language narratives preserve the prosody, or “music,” of the language. Nuu contains all the linguistic elements of a complete traditional narrative, while also being understandable to non-speakers and people with limited fluency, because the story is illustrated through the power of animation. Nuu was awarded an Honourable Mention at the 2013 ImagiNATIVE Film Festival and has been selected to go on tour to remote Aboriginal communities in northern Ontario. Nuu has now been subtitled in Xaad Kil, English, French, and Spanish. The Xaad Kil subtitling supports Haida language learning by allowing learners to watch the animation while having the Xaad Kil words spelled out on screen. The subtitling in English makes the story accessible to non-speakers and learners alike. Subtitling in French, Spanish, and other languages is meant to make the story accessible to a global audience.

Haidawood Comics

As a Haidawood partner, K’alts’idaa K’aah has enhanced the educational value of the animations by using the stills to create printed Haida language comics. Additional language elements can be included in the comics, and they help introduce people to Haida language words and phrases, while stimulating interest in Haida language, culture, and art.

Building Reconciliation between Cultures

Reconciliation begins with understanding. Haidawood empowers the Haida community to create media that reflects a Haida perspective. This communication is more important than ever: there is a pressing need for contemporary society to understand Indigenous concepts of stewardship and our inter-connection to the environment. Many “Settlers” are questioning the values and beliefs upon which the entire colonial system is based. Indigenous movements like Idle No More are asserting political power and creating new opportunities for reconciliation between Indigenous and Settler peoples.

Conclusion

Indigenous language revitalization is hampered by numerous obstacles created by colonial powers aimed at suppressing an Indigenous worldview. The most glaring challenge learners face is the low number of fluent speakers still alive. Language is a highly emotive issue within Indigenous communities, and for many, language fluency is seen as synonymous with their identity as Indigenous people.

Haidawood supports the many revitalization efforts of Xaad Kil by bringing Haida stories and art to life using a Community Animation approach. Haidawood shares Haida culture and values with both community members and the world at large. The Haidawood model can be adapted by other Indigenous communities to create their own Indigenous language animations. See Videography on page 86.

Haw’aa (Thank you)

Haidawood would like to say a big Haw’aa to the Haida Elders who continue to keep Xaad Kil alive through their hard work and dedication. Haw’aa also to Kalts’idaa K’ah Productions for their continued partnership, and to Xaad Kihlgaa Hl Suu.u (Everybody Speak Haida Society) for their early support of Haidawood and for their help in producing the Golden Spruce, Yaaniu K’uuka, and the Taaw and Nuu stories. Haw’aa, as well, to the Old Massett Family Centre and the Old Massett Village Council Education Department for their support of the project. Haidawood animations have been funded by the Canada Council for the Arts and the First Peoples Cultural Council.

Haida Language Pronunciation Guide

Kalts’idaa K’ah – pronounced “gul-ji-da kaa” and means “Laughing Crow”
Xaad Kil – pronounced “haad kil” and means “Haida language”
Yahgudang – pronounced “yah-gudang” and means “respect”
Tsinii – pronounce “chin-ee” and is an honorific meaning “grandfather”
Haw’aa – pronounce “how-ah” and means Thank you.

A page from the Nuu comic with Tsinii Stephen Brown as a Haidawood puppet.
Humanity is at a crossroads. We live in complex times where the scale and interdependence of global issues requires an active response from our collective human ingenuity. Today, science has proven that the places most threatened by ecological crisis and species extinction are the same places where languages are going extinct, the same places where we risk the permanent loss of human cultures. Western science now knows, beyond any doubt, that humans are part of the landscape, that we co-evolve our cultures within nature.

Why, then, would we limit ourselves to one culture’s way of thinking and being in approaching global problems that affect all peoples and places?

Wendy Wheeler writes, "Not only has the inheritance of acquired characteristics been shown to be possible, but such epigenetic (non-DNA) inheritance indicates our inseparable lived relation to our environment, including our cultural environment. And if what we feel and experience both biologically and psychobiologically is capable of heritability, this has very far-reaching social, ethical and political implications."  

The correlation established by the field of biocultural diversity has shown an irrefutable link between language and ecological hotspots, between people and place, between culture and home. These invaluable, endangered places of capacity to grow beyond sustainability, as defined by current Western cultural constructs, into behaviors that support the conditions for all life to thrive are wisdom hotspots.

When I began my M.B.A. in Sustainable Management, one of the first assignments was to attempt a definition of sustainability. How could what has become a veritable household term in one form or another, “green” or “social enterprise,” be so difficult to define? Over years of study, combined with many more years on the ground traveling the world, I have come to personally answer what is so elusive about sustainability. The simplest version of that answer is that we, in Western culture, want sustainability to be something it is not. To understand why, we have to take a long, deep look at our own history.

There is a profoundly common attribute amongst most environmentalists and those working towards the social justice of sustainability—despair. We face not only our own collective mortality, but also that of countless other life forms of the biosphere.

Sustainability is often described as "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In October 1987, this definition was set forth by the report Our Common Future of the Brundtland Commission whose sole purpose was to raise international awareness for the collective pursuit of sustainable development.

Wisdom Hotspots
Palma Vizzoni

So, in light of recognizing mortal threats, what is sustainable? One accepted definition of sustainability is, "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
Herein lies a clue. *Sustainability*, which has become a generalized term, is the child of development.

**Why Is this History Important?** This exercise is not just one of semantics. In order to understand the vagueness of the meaning of sustainability in our cultural context, what it signifies and how it functions, we need to witness from where it has come.

The Akan people of Ghana learn from a beautiful Adinkra pictograph for this type of wisdom inquiry. Sankofa arises from a mythic bird flying, carrying an egg in her mouth while craning her long, elegant neck to look backward. The proverb of Sankofa, “Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi.” translates as, “It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten.” The meaning of Sankofa’s proverb can be interpreted as, “Any culture that doesn’t draw from the past to replenish the present and cast a shadow into the future will die.” What is it that we have forgotten about our Western selves? To be clear about my intent in tracking the beginnings of a response to this question, I sense that Western cultural constructs have left gifts behind and have gifts yet to be realized in healed relations with our collective human story.

The great irony of the self-fulfilling prophesy of believing we do not belong to earth is that we are now called to participate fully, reclaiming our natural selves, in order for earth to come into dynamic balance.

In the briefest possible re-contextualizing of *sustainability*, we can track the concept as embedded in an approximately 4,320-year-old ideology of empire. The first recorded empire, according to Western history, originated with Sargon I of Akkad in what is now modern-day Southern Iraq. Following this new cultural construct to organize a society dependent upon the will to plunder, we find the advent of a “chosen people” in the ethical dualism of Zoroastrianism with its doctrine of “the fall.” For the first time there are peoples whose spiritual imperative is to reject nature and self-as-natural, defined by corruptive contact with the duality of good and evil intermingled in existence, and whose life purpose is to transcend these forces as the confines of our mortal smallness. When we honestly track *sustainability*, where it leads us is to this historical imperial drive and loss of meaning for human awe within the unknowable universe.

Let us also ask whether or not *sustainability’s entrance* into our cultural paradigm has had the results we hoped for. Clearly, there is no flawless and calculable answer. Yes, many of us are pleased that these concepts, at the very least, have entered the debates of dominant culture, and we are also grateful for the hard work many are doing. However, neither these accomplishments nor works in progress have assuaged our deepest fears— that it’s not working, or at least not working fast enough— evidenced by realities such as the sixth mass extinction or global climate crisis, both induced by industrial behavior.
Why, then, is sustainability so elusive, so challenged by scaling effective results towards urgent goals? Is it because the problems are socially embedded and systemically complex? I venture to say no to the latter and yes to the former. Often, systems are somewhat counter-intuitive; how could the complex work of untangling, analyzing, and shaping system conditions be less perplexing than changing a social worldview? The renowned systems scientist, Donella Meadows, wrote, “You could say paradigms are harder to change than anything else about a system, and therefore this item should be lowest on the list (of leverage points, places to intervene in a system), not second-to-highest. But there’s nothing physical or expensive or even slow in the process of a paradigm change. In a single individual it can happen in a millisecond. All it takes is a click in the mind, a falling of scales from the eyes, a new way of seeing. Whole societies are another matter- they resist challenges to their paradigms harder than anything else.”

There is something truly despairing about living in a worldview where the scientific method is the instrument of all knowing for popular culture, where what matters is measurable, observable and reportable. What we resist is that we don’t know. We have some tools. We have some responses. But we don’t know how to “fix” these issues of industrial society. To put it mildly, we have moved beyond actively compromising future generations- we are compromising our own generation. How does one culture get to this degree of self-destruction?

The above question, I believe, brings us back to the Sankofa perspective of sustainability, and its next of kin, environmentalism. When I whittle away all the respectable intentions of kind-hearted people, the doctrine of “the fall” looks back at me. It is mirrored in this distorted form: the belief that the world would be better off without humanity. Life would survive; earth would be okay if we humans were not here. This disposition is best summed up by the well-meaning concept of “zero footprint.” The dichotomous rationale is one that keeps environmentalism, the protection of nature, separate from social justice, the protection of people. We create wildlife preserves and tell native peoples to stay out. This painful realization tells us a story about ourselves that offers a most promising experience- the gift in the wound- if we choose it. The great irony of the self-fulfilling prophesy of believing we do not belong to earth is that we are now called to participate fully, reclaiming our natural selves, in order for earth to come into dynamic balance. But we are afraid that we don’t know how, at least not exactly how.

Admitting this defeat of the Western scientific paradigm asks us to reflect and act upon a painful history that demands the efforts of reconciliation, forgiveness and healing that go beyond our individual lifetimes. Perhaps, though, it is not a defeat. Perhaps it is a revelation. Surrendering to not knowing might just lead us somewhere that wouldn’t be culturally possible otherwise. If we don’t know, with all our sophisticated technologies and methodologies, it begs the question, “Who might?”

In Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West, he writes, “The problem is enunciated, and we must dare the effort of getting completely away from our own convictions and seeing before us everything indifferently as equally alien. And how hard it is! He
I ask the reader to consider that sustainability as a field and a profession is a healing vocation that has yet to comprehend its own pledge and purpose.

who undertakes the task must possess the strength not merely to imagine himself in an illusory detachment from truths of his world-understanding- illusory even to one for whom truths are just a set of concepts and methods- but actually to penetrate his own system unnecessarily in denial and fear of what reconciliation of its own Culture, to capture transmissible ideas of truths of other-tongued men?” Picking up the gifts of the West again, beyond the techno-sphere, may be what helps us to relate to the unknown and otherness.

Fundamentally questioning our own Western social truths, as a dominant culture, happens rarely. It’s unusual to break out of one’s own blinders. It’s extraordinary to step into the story of another. We have been “successful.” Our material actions are big, shiny, quick, and far-reaching. How could any other society have better answers? How could we not? Well, maybe it’s not about a framing of “us” and “them.” That would be too easy for the story of Western history- good and bad, right and wrong. That would bring us right back to where we are now. Furthermore, we have long lived unnecessarily in denial and fear of what reconciliation and forgiveness requires of us in facing the clash of cultures that has been perpetrated worldwide.

There is, however, something our science has come to know that may point us in a helpful direction. Resiliency is synonymous with diversity. We are aware that there exists a multitude of other ways of knowing and being human on earth. The dominance of our one way, thankfully, is not the only way. And if it is our Western culture, in its scale and behaviors, that has led to some grave industrial flaws for being part of life on earth, perhaps our culture simply will not have the capacity to transform that way of life by itself.

The time has come to reshape the meaning and intent behind sustainability. In 1972 Ivan Illich coined the term conviviality to mean, “the ability to live within and among one another in relationship to the natural scale and limits of place.” Perhaps we are morphing sustainability into the realm of conviviality.

and worldview and temporarily enter into those of another...And, in so doing we will create alliances...with a much greater spectrum of consciousness...”

If the Western world is to truly leverage its systems, organizations, and power for repairing biophysical damage and engaging in a new culture of sage behaviors, wisdom hotspots are where these mutually cooperative relationships of growing, healing, and innovating begin. I ask the reader to consider that sustainability as a field and a profession is a healing vocation that has yet to comprehend its own pledge and purpose. The time has come to reshape the meaning and intent behind sustainability. In 1972 Ivan Illich coined the term conviviality to mean, “the ability to live within and among one another in relationship to the natural scale and limits of place.” Perhaps we are morphing sustainability into the realm of conviviality.

Indeed, our Western socio-economic systems are in great need of the innovation that could result from collaborations amongst worldviews. It seems that some emergent forms of organizational development are showing themselves to be structurally ready to engage with what was previously thought untenable. In my opinion, the place to start this transformation in organizational design is to redefine diversity, as a term and a learning practice, to include other ways of knowing and being. From this foundation of a broader purview of diversity, its meaning and value, organizational cultures can begin to approach innovating with our collective human ingenuity.

If Western organizational systems engage in relationships with the peoples and places of wisdom hotspots with a self-aware, historically contextualized intent to heal, then our ability to participate in the thriving resiliency of life on earth may emerge more authentically than we ever thought possible. We find humanity gathered at the crossroads, perhaps for the first time in recent history, willing and able to draw upon the best we all have to offer.
The Global Environments Summer Academy (GESA) got its start in 2011 in Munich, Germany at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society (RCC). It was led by Berkeley-trained anthropologist Dr. Gary Martin, founder of the Global Diversity Foundation (GDF), who had traveled to nearly 50 countries in over two decades of teaching ethnobotany and biocultural diversity, and met many inspiring environmental changemakers providing solutions to socio-environmental problems in their locales. He often found them working in relative isolation, without a robust community of peers to support and challenge them.

For the past three years, GESA has brought together 18-20 such innovators for three weeks of intensive peer-to-peer learning, exchange, and focused training: post-graduate students, activists and practitioners whose work promises to catalyze meaningful change. Through GESA, Martin has created a support platform for environmental changemakers: the Global Environmental Network (GEN). GEN sustains communication and collaboration among academy participants and resource people, thereby building the capacities of emerging environmental leaders and their collaborative networks.

We begin with this joint Langscape contribution, featuring seven GESA alumni, young people with a shared interest in protecting our planet’s biocultural diversity by integrating traditional wisdom with cutting-edge innovation. The following essays represent the geographical and disciplinary diversity of GESA. Yet each testifies to the inseparability of culture from ecology in the contributors’ respective field and locale:

In Kenya, conservation biologist Nickson Otieno encountered the threat of biocultural piracy to longstanding forest communities, and makes constructive suggestions to protect the communities. Across the continent, biologist Katja Heubach reports on community-managed botanical gardens that safeguard non-timber forest products that communities of Northern Benin rely on. Ethnobotanist Katie Kamelamela reflects on the cultural revitalization created by the contemporary renewal of traditional Polynesian voyaging. Native American advocate Kaylena Bray points to the intimate connections between food systems, well-being and the environment.

From a case study in Japan, environmental sociologist Yuki Yoshida reports on the land-based livelihood and revitalization efforts of rural and aging communities. Ethnecologist Thiago Gomes, working in western Canada and Brazil, describes the common theme of the mutual dependence of community culture and ecological integrity through a restoration ecologist’s eyes. Last but not least, ethnobiologist Anna Varga shares the story of her NGO’s progress in promoting traditional ecological knowledge in the wooded pastures of rural Hungary.

Together, this portfolio of alumni entries makes a powerful case for the protection of biocultural diversity and inclusive approaches to that process that heed both tradition and innovation.
The Isukha community of the Baluhya tribe in western Kenya derive nearly 60% of their needs from Kenya’s only tropical rainforest, Kakamega. Medicinal plants are among their most important needs, and the community possesses generations of indigenous knowledge concerning them.

Using publishing to champion community indigenous knowledge

Recently, rising costs of formal healthcare has sparked an increase in global demand for alternative medicine. As a result, a considerable wave of commercial prospectors is taking advantage of the Isukha people’s ethno-botanical knowledge for pharmaceutical production. Without involvement or acknowledgement to the community in the value-chaining process, drugs are quietly patented and sold to treat various illnesses.

This exploitation is made possible by the community’s economic disempowerment, absence of formal grassroot structures to champion collective social capital interests, and collusion with a few gullible individuals who secretly provide the information in exchange for token one-off compensation.

In 2011, I collaborated with the community to conduct an ethnological survey. I interviewed a number of Isukha elders and documented their knowledge on medicinal plants. The results were eventually published in the online journal Faculty of 1000 Research. Such publications not only highlight the community’s social capital, but also consolidate existing knowledge. More importantly, widely circulated, peer-reviewed publications help to preempt commercial patenting. Under the rule of “prior art” in international law, many countries are already party to, existence of previous knowledge on such cultural assets bars patenting of it or any related derivative product for private or other commercial use.

Any use, application, development or circulation of it or its derivatives is essentially expected to both acknowledge and compensate original owners or “users” of the knowledge. The good news is that a scientific publication in a journal qualifies as prior knowledge or “prior art”. Although the breadth of circulation and impact factor of the journal or book are important, key elements are: peer-review of the publication and proof of origination of the skill or knowledge from the community. The concept presents communities a novel opportunity for confronting the long-standing challenge of prospectors for by producing evidence of “ownership”.

In this Kenyan case is but an illustration; there are many parallels across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Prior art legislation is one of a raft of international regulations regarding Intellectual Property rights claims and disputes under World Intellectual Property Organization of the United Nations.

But establishing prior art is only the first step because not all countries are party to this law yet. Further, patent hunters can still exploit loopholes like demanding unequivocal proof of “community” ownership. Therefore, to strengthen communities’ bargaining power against biocultural piracy using prior art, I suggest the following logical steps:

1) Lobby more countries to ascribe to the decency of prior art in their jurisprudence;
2) Help communities establish basic institutional structures for championing recognition of their collective natural/social capital;
3) Put in place legal and policy instruments at the local and national level to compel biocultural prospectors to engage with and share benefits with the knowledge owners (profits, patents, due acknowledgements);
4) Empower communities by actively involving them in documentation, filing and dissemination of their indigenous knowledge, including incorporating them as main co-authors; and
5) Deposit copies of documents on indigenous knowledge in recognized national archives for back-up and evidence of communal knowledge ownership.

Thus, thanks to “prior art,” professional researchers can begin to play their part in eliminating global biocultural piracy.
Papatia making mats and brushes out of palm leaves, © Katja Heubach, 2009

From science to practice: Designing a plant reservation in the savanna areas of Northern Benin, West Africa, to help safeguard local livelihoods

Katja Heubach

Wild plants significantly support rural communities’ household income in Northern Benin

On average, 39 percent of annual household income in rural Northern Benin is constituted by non-timber forest products (NTFPs) from woody plant species. Of a total of 90 species collected in the region, 61% were used medicinally, 41% as firewood, 39% for construction, and 32% in people’s daily diet. The key species are Vitellaria paradoxa (Shea Tree), Parkia biglobosa (African Locust Bean Tree) and Adansonia digitata (Baobab). However, the five ethnic groups I investigated (the Bariba, the Fulani, the Ditammarie, the Kabiye, and the Yom) show very distinct preferences for particular species, which originate from their different cultural traditions, spiritual beliefs, and histories of migration, as well as social differentiation.

Plant diversity under threat

However, this diversity of plant species and the availability of their products is severely threatened by climate and land use change. Our models predicted up to a 50% decrease in occurrence of - and economic flows from - the key species, due to hunger for land for cash crops and subsistence needs, as well as inappropriate environmental and economic policies. Since labour markets in the region are thin and the purchasing power to substitute for natural products is weak, households face very little elasticity with regard to lost NTFPs.

Creating a community-managed plant reserve to safeguard the provision of NTFPs

How can we tackle this problem of declining supply and simultaneously maintain current plant diversity levels? One feasible approach would be to actively cultivate these plants in a community-based fashion. Given robust governance, clear terms of use, balanced interests and power relations, a plant reserve could help to ensure traditional uses and secure ecosystem-based livelihoods. Furthermore, it could reduce the effort and risks of collecting in wild areas, particularly for women, and support them in their diet planning. Simultaneously, plantations would lessen the current pressure on key species in the wild. Installing them on degraded land would contribute to restoration in terms of soil fertility, inter alia. A survey I conducted among 200 households in the region showed the viability of such an approach: all respondents approved of the project, and were even willing to financially contribute to it.

Building on existing structures: the Botanical Garden of Papatia

Supervised by the local environmental NGO, Development Network of Community Nature Reserves (Réseau de Développement de Réerves Naturelles Communautaires; REDERC), researchers from the University of Frankfurt, Germany, and local traditional healers, a botanical garden was established in Papatia in 2001 to conserve species richness and traditional knowledge. The garden covers a 12-hectare strictly protected core zone containing more than 100 different woody species, and is endowed with a tree nursery. In its entirety, it serves environmental education and knowledge transfer. A community-governed plant reserve would seamlessly tie in with the existing botanical garden. REDERC has identified an appropriate plantation site in the village area. At present, the Network is investigating possible ways to transfer existing use rights to communal use. The plan to complement the existing garden area with a plant reserve, offers the promise to secure both biodiversity and the well-being of the local human community.
Ka ikaika o ka mana'o me ke kino. Be strong in mind and body.
Katie Kamelamela

Ma ka hana ka 'ike, ma ka hana ka mana.
In the work is the knowledge, in the work is the power.

One must be strong in mind and body (and spirit) to 'auamo, or carry the kuleana, rights and responsibilities of the time. To weave tradition and innovation is a tricky business. Individuals who “blaze a trail” are constantly questioned about their internal motivations and the validity of the chants, dances, and dreams, they draw on. Inspired by our “living dreams,” we can envision and navigate our present and future.

He wa’a he moku, he moku he wa’a.
The canoe is our island, the island is our canoe.

A canoe is an island and provides finite resources for safe landing. In the same sense, Earth is our canoe with finite resources. Lessons from the canoe are effortlessly transferable to creating a better island Earth. These ancestral ideals will inspire us for years to come.

Ka ikaika o ka mana'o me ke kino. Be strong in mind and body.
Katie Kamelamela

The Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) has inspired multiple generations to embrace traditional Polynesian seafaring since convening in 1973. A double-hulled canoe, wa’a kaulua, was envisioned and completed by PVS founders with a passion for Hawaiian sailing canoes. In 1976, Micronesian Satawelese Pius “Mau” Piailug navigated the wa’a kaulua named Hōkūle’a (“Star of Gladness”) to Tahiti using only the stars, wind, waves and intuition. This was the first time such a voyage was completed in over 500 years. Since these inaugural voyages, families, traditions and culture have been reconnected throughout Hawai’i and greater Oceania.

The construction of Hawai’i Loa is a clear example that we not only have to rebuild community, but restore and maintain a healthy natural environment to perpetuate Hawaiian culture. PVS had been unable to find native woods that could be used to make a voyaging canoe, and so the hulls were made of two giant Sitka spruce trees gifted by the Tlingit, Haida, and Tshimsian tribes of Alaska (according to records, large driftwood from the Pacific Northwest had been used in Hawai’i). Nainoa Thompson, executive director of PVS and first Hawaiian to navigate a reconstructed canoe, led this relationship. He also initiated planting native woods in Hawai’i. Nainoa continues to be strong in mind and body, ever building upon experience and his skills with intuition on the canoe. His visions will continue to inspire and navigate us to take care of our “island earth.”

Mālama Honua.
Take care of Earth.

Today, there are 25 voyaging canoes, 21 organizations and 1,000 active voyagers throughout more than 11 Pacific Island nations. Over the next four years, Hōkūle’a will journey over 47,000 miles, visiting 26 countries, touching 1,500 educators and training 260 crew members from over 16 countries and diverse backgrounds. Master Pwo navigators will lead the journey in the beginning, but Hōkūle’a will return home with a new generation navigating the way.

Ho‘i hou ka piko.
Return to the source.

The strongest recommendation I can make as a family member of the PVS, Hōkūle’a and ‘ohana wa’a, the canoe family, is for us all to return to our source, our genealogy. To weave this genealogy with contemporary resources (human, material and spiritual) through experience. To dream, and most importantly, to support others in their dreams. As our ‘ōlelo no'eau, or wise sayings, teach us, “a'ohe hana nui ka alu 'ia, no task is too big when done together.”
The work to come will take many more hands. In our world of ever-changing technology, communication and paradigms, we must remember to return to the source, our elders and children. In the work is the knowledge, in the work is the power. The canoe is our island, our island is the canoe. Through our actions, we take care of the earth, our relationships and ourselves.

For more on PVS’ Worldwide Voyage see Videography on page 86.

Photo: Partaking of ‘awa (Piper methysticum) in a coconut (Cocos nucifera) shell with a gardenia (Gardenia jasminoides) flower in preparation for ceremony. © Katie Kamelamela 2012

For more on PVS’ Worldwide Voyage see Videography on page 86.
Emerging Paradigms of Food Sovereignty in Native America

Kaylena Bray

Culture of Food

Winona LaDuke articulates, “The recovery of the people is tied to the recovery of the food, since food itself is medicine; not only for the body, but for the soul, it is the spiritual connection to history, ancestors and the land.” Food systems inherited and passed down over millennia form part of an interconnected network of cultural, spiritual, and economic elements, which can be found in many Indigenous and Native conceptions of wellbeing, coexistence, and reciprocity: sumak kawsay (Quechua), himdag (Tohono O’odham) or johehgoh (Haudenosaunee.) Since its inception nearly 20 years ago, the concept of food sovereignty has evolved as a transnational movement to include many of these concepts as pivotal points in building resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural revitalization.

Well-being Initiative

Given the common threads linking food and wellbeing in once traditional societies, alternative paradigms are emerging (and re-emerging) that hark back to Ancestral food knowledge to re-define how we measure ‘living well.’ Through case studies carried out with Tribal communities in California, Arizona, Canada, and Hawaii, I will seek to understand these links as part of a broader picture along with case studies taking place in Japan, UK, Italy, and India, and conducted by my colleagues from the Global Environments Student Academy (GES) 2013. The initiative, titled ‘The Wellbeing Initiative,’ seeks to examine the inherent connections between wellbeing and food sovereignty in diverse regions and landscapes, and in the process create networks, connections, and resources for individuals and communities. On a larger scale, The Wellbeing Initiative contributes to a broader alternative notion of meeting human needs focused on direct, or radical ecological democracy, and the idea of creating a hybrid system of localization and globalization that emphasizes production and consumption on a local scale, and mutual exchange and intercultural learning on a global scale.

North American Community Environmental Leadership Exchange (NACELE)

With the North American Community Environmental Leadership Exchange (NACELE), I began to connect with Native North American environmental leaders to explore food sovereignty initiatives taking place on Tribal lands. In practice, Native communities tribally and inter-tribally are working to bring back Ancestral food systems and practices as part of large scale environmental, cultural, and socio-economic planning. In the Karuk Tribe in northern California, Tribal environmental leader Ron Reed is working on a pilot program developed in partnership with UC Berkeley to establish important traditional land management and community-based food practices, and reestablish traditional forms of trade and barter that were once central to creating diverse food systems along the California coast. Tony Skrelunas, Navajo (Diné) in Arizona, has created entrepreneurial youth programs centered on food systems and is working to establish Indigenous marketplaces and systems of exchange as part of a coalition of 15 tribes he helped bring together as part of the Grand Canyon Trust. The Cultural Conservancy is focused on Native food systems revitalization within the intertribal community, and creating access and learning models through the development of ethnobotany and native foods garden, Native science curricula, and Native CSA.

‘Food as Medicine’

I remember reading John Mohawk’s words about the power of food as medicine, and of the foods derived from Iroquois White Corn. In his teachings, he spoke of our ancestors, namely the 3 sisters, johehgoh, who provide life and represent strength of survival, and reminds us of the importance and interconnectedness we must have with our food. Emerging food sovereignty movements in Native America represent important movement toward what I hope will become a greater paradigm shift toward self-sustaining food systems rooted in cultural and spiritual values, and tightly integrated within the complex nature of culture, environment, health, and human wellbeing.
North of Kyoto, where Japan’s main island bends in a reverse “L” shape, the lone peninsula of Ishikawa prefecture juts out like a hand pointing east. In 2011, the Noto Peninsula’s Satoyama and Satoumi was recognized by the FAO as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS). “Satoyama Satoumi” literally translates as “home-mountain home-sea,” and embodies communities’ longstanding relationship of belonging to their surroundings seen throughout rural Japan. Noto’s way of life exemplifies a rich tradition of physical and spiritual mutual dependence with a diversity of natural life. As part of the Wellbeing Initiative to study such alternative ways of being, I was able to visit the area and learn about active efforts to conserve cultural and biological heritage.

Persevering: Noto’s Satoyama and Satoumi
Yuki Yoshida

The Challenge
Noto is no exception to the drastic aging and decline of rural populations in Japan. Many residents have had to migrate seasonally for supplementary income, and the youth are understandably drawn to alluring city jobs. “We know to persevere,” explained the elders I met. At 64 years old, hamashi (saltmaker) Yutaka Kadohana continues to carry 80kg loads of seawater in his daily routine. The steep terrain, severe winters, rough ocean and remoteness do not make for an easy lifestyle. Continuation of Noto’s unique traditions is seriously threatened.

Efforts towards revitalization: Reflection and Innovation
At the scenic Senmaida (literally, “thousand rice fields”), 1004 fields are packed into a steep seaside slope of 4 hectares. The smallest field, not much bigger than a kitchen sink, testifies to generations of hard work to produce a living on challenging terrain. Recently, the iconic scenery has been highlighted as a tourist destination. An Ownership Program enables non-residents to work in the fields or enjoy the prized harvest as shareholders. Thanks to media coverage of the mounting struggle to maintain the fields, elementary schools travel hours for annual service-learning trips.

In the city of Nanao, the Yamada family has been cultivating rice to offer to Shinto gods. Shigetaka Yamada’s switch to heirloom varieties was first motivated by logistical practicality, but has since evolved into an artistic display featuring colorful varieties of heirloom rice. When Yamada heard about the children who were so distanced from nature that they believed tomatoes grew in supermarkets, he decided to engage local preschoolers in traditional farming methods. The fruits were manifold. The children became enthralled, and parents astounded at their emotional development. Traditional methods brought back to life neighborly relationships that had stagnated since modern machinery eliminated the need for collaboration. Waterways repopulated with fish and amphibians. Although the labor-intensive methods are not without their challenges, Yamada was clearly enjoying the rewards.

The future
Noto’s residents face an unrelenting challenge of the ticking clock. 15 years into the initiative, Yamada is approaching the physical limitations of himself and his team. Though the Senmaida seemed to be gaining momentum as a destination, less accessible fields are increasingly deserted, and Satoyamas falling out of maintenance.

Is the Satoyama Satoumi lifestyle becoming obsolete in the face of modernized methods of agriculture, fisheries, forestry, and land use? The communities’ strong interpersonal bonds, scenic beauty, biodiversity, and potential self-sufficiency are wanting in the metropolis. Their affection for the land and ocean, as well as sense of responsibility towards past and future generations is inspiring. While continuing to promote the touristic resources in his community for immediate survival, Eijun Ishizaki observed, “there needs to be a fundamental change in values.” Though still few, urban youth are trickling out into the countryside in search of an alternative lifestyle. This spring, Ishizaki’s “marginal” village celebrated its first newcomer family. Community efforts for perseverance in spite of the impending threats of aging inspire hope and admiration.

The renovated Senmaida “pocket park” offers visitors food, regional products, a lookout and entranceway to the paved foot-paths through the rice fields. © Yuki Yoshida
Restoring cultural landscapes in a rapidly changing world

Thiago C Gomes

How to best respond to rapid and drastic changes that affect ecological pattern, processes and function, as well as social and cultural ways of living, well-being and local economies in places with long-standing relationship between peoples and their natural environments? Most of the time, these changes result in significant loss of biodiversity, social distress and cultural erosion around the world.

A telling story emerges from the Araucaria forests of Mata Atlântica in southern Brazil, where I began my academic work studying traditional ecological knowledge about plants and the relationship between a local rural community and natural resources in the surroundings of a protected area. Clearly, local farmers were very aware of resources and services provided by adjacent forests for their livelihoods and well-being. As a result of the region’s long and ongoing history of logging, the farmers were especially concerned about maintaining forest remnants and recovering degraded areas. Surprisingly, these small farmers identified restoration as a priority for improving their quality of life and also for complying with environmental law. Knowledge about reforestation using native species, ecological succession, and restoration emerged spontaneously during investigations.

Ecological restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged or destroyed with respect to its health, integrity and sustainability, towards its historical trajectory. Human agency, therefore, is a fundamental element of restoration as a deliberate action, particularly in landscapes created or maintained by cultural practices.

After recognizing linkages between traditional ecological knowledge and restoration practice, I moved on to investigating the actual processes of restoration in a cultural landscape on the West Coast of Canada. Working closely with Songhees First Nations’ elders and youth returning to their home islands that had lain untouched for more than 50 years, we were able to identify the role of history and culture in informing restoration planning and activities, as well as the role of restoration as a tool for social engagement and cultural rekindling in their territory. In my research, I explored the framework of ethnoecological restoration, merging the multidisciplinary field of ethnobiology and the science of restoration ecology in an attempt to address social-ecological changes through a holistic and objective approach for restoration in cultural landscapes.

On one hand, local culture can generate adaptive responses to pressures of change towards ecological restoration in the form of detailed knowledge about ecological processes, natural resources, and plant uses, for example. Furthermore, traditional ecological knowledge can contribute to the practice of restoration by offering a cosmology that includes human responsibilities towards ecosystems and other living beings, as well as by identifying reference systems and defining scales for restoration interventions. On the other hand, healthy ecosystems are essential for the maintenance and perpetuation of cultural practices, often associated with natural environments.

Presently, I am working alongside the remaining Xokleng Indigenous People of southern Brazil on patterns of plant biodiversity and historical land use change within their territory and surroundings. Once again, an ethnoecological restoration approach may prove itself valuable for bringing back local culture, restoring degraded ecosystems and supporting local livelihoods.

Ethnobiology emerging, at home in Hungary and further away...

Anna Varga

Ten years ago, the phrase “traditional ecological knowledge” or “ethnobiology” was not well-known among Hungarian ecologists and nature conservationists, despite the fact that botanical traditions have long constituted a part of everyday life in Hungary. Our community, the Hungarian Association for Land and People (Táj és Ember Népfőiskolai Közhasznú Egyesület), plays a major role in promoting the importance of the human and cultural aspects in nature conservation. Both competency I acquired in GESA 2011 and the fact that some of our team could attend international ethnobiology conferences contributes extensively to our work.

The HALAP started in a self-organized school for biologists, which had been active from 2003 to 2005 under the leadership of Zsolt Molnár and Biró Mariana, ecologists at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The aim of this school was to promote and emphasize the importance of history and traditional knowledge in ecology and nature conservation. It was held bimonthly for 3 days in a village called Báránd. The school was based on 3 main tiers: 1. a presentation followed by a discussion; 2. discussion of excerpts; 3. traditional customs of the season. In 2007, we decided to re-start this self-organized school. The school is an itinerant event organized in multiple locations, and the periodicity of the occasions is not determined. We look for someone skilled and experienced in a given issue in the native environment where he/she lives and works, in order to understand them better and get even closer to the relationship between people and the land.

In Keszthely, at the Georgikon Faculty of the University of Pannonia, the Keszthely Land and People Club was established in 2011 with a target audience of nature conservation and agricultural engineering students. The club aims to help students think holistically and understand the organic ties between land and people and the importance of biocultural diversity, hoping that students will carry on this approach in their future work. Club events are very popular among students and not only disseminate information but also provide opportunities to get to know students who are willing to conduct ethnobiological research under BSc, MSc or PhD training. Thanks also to club contributions, we are among the organizers of ethnobiology research camps. In September 2013, the Szeged Land and People Club was launched in cooperation with the Ecology Department of the University of Szeged.

Our community also operates and conducts emerging work in virtual space. One form this takes is a mailing list that shares news about community programs and interesting information on various topics in ethnobiology. The last seven years of shared information can be searched in the knowledge database created on our website. Facebook provides an opportunity to reach out to lay people. The members are not just from Hungary, but live and work with Hungarian communities throughout the Carpathian Basin (Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Serbia).

Our work resulted in enhanced respect for traditional ecological knowledge among professionals, but more importantly, the interest of the local communities in this topic is growing. Because all this is studied with a scientific methodology, the findings can be transferred to academia, and, through them, current decision-makers. Members of the people’s college often make efforts to implement the practices studied and learnt in their own lives. Many of us have turned partly or wholly to traditional folk crafts, or farming.

Image: Logo of HALAP, derived from a symbol of tree of life
The dance of white clouds across the indigo vault of heaven, illuminated by the splendor of the full moon, the captivating song of verdant mountain canopies carried upon whirls aloft, the deep blue sea set ablaze at the horizon with the breaking of dawn, the caress of a mother's breath, lulling her child in cradled arms, are moments of awe that bind us to this world, if we choose to honor them. Experiences like these, that fill our lives, build foundations unique to each individual, the means in which we make sense of our surroundings.

Aho, the Hawaiian word for cord, also meaning breath and to breathe, is an eloquent juxtaposition of tangible and intangible concepts of the same essence. A cord is the physical manifestation of multiple elements coming together to form a stronger whole. Each breath we take connects us to our past, the present, the world that we draw life and inspiration, and the future, the world we create with each decision. With each breath, the cord of our life is braided, becoming stronger with every element that is incorporated. The world of inspiration and innovation only exists in the present, making our moments on this planet precious to behold. The traditional practices of our ancestors tell us how to access this world, the place where we can touch the divine.

Tradition, the act of passing on customs and beliefs from one generation to the next, is a system that has its challenges today in modern lifeways. Global priorities, viewpoints, and constantly changing technologies influence the perception of what is important to the youth of today. The practice of making cordage metaphorically binds us to each other, intertwining our families together into a great rope. This network of distinct fibers, dynamic and organic, grows with every new relationship. The skills that aho is built upon reminds us of a time when patience, humility, perseverance, and excellence was a part of everyday values, a time when perpetuation of one's practices was a priority. But with the passage of time, these priorities ebb and flow and continually conform to the fashions of the present. Those who choose to go against the current and holdfast to the values of a different time maintain the ancestral ties to our past, the link that is passed from generation to generation. Through this practice, innovation and creativity have a doorway into our world. Observation and understanding our surroundings and what it offers are fundamental to survival but, are also key to resilience, longevity, and continuity of ideas and ways of being. As a visual artist and cultural practitioner, this concept grounds my lifestyle and contemporary visual expression. My environment manifests itself through my hands, as I allow the material, setting, and energy the opportunity to reveal themselves to me, without preconceived thoughts on what my work will look like in the end, allowing the process freedom to realize itself in the context of today. If we remember that we are the living manifestation of all the decisions of our ancestors, we not only have the responsibility of singing the vibrant song encoded in our veins but also the duty of honing the tools left to us and being one with our world.

The practice of perpetuating one’s tradition is often perceived from only one perspective. But if we look at the kaona, the Hawaiian understanding of layered and deeper meaning, of this practice, we realize that tradition is the innovation of the past and the innovation of the present will become the tradition of the future. This constant cycle of exploration engages the needs of the present and encourages growth while reflecting on the path already travelled. During these times of exploration, the knowledge of the past is sometimes left behind for the new, making those moments the points where disconnect occur. Today, my responsibility is to be a bridge to the past, as this disconnect from...
tradition happened within my family. Like many cultures around the world, the suppression of culture in Hawai'i by the Westerner world occurred, forcing many families to abandon their traditional ways. The knowledge of fishing and plaiting was remembered by my family, but only in story and not in practice. My eagerness to learn these skills and practices flowed through me, since my earliest memory, and when the opportunities of reclaiming those skills presented themselves to me, that familial knowledge that had long been slumbering awoke. The familiarity and ease I experience today through my hands and body as I breathe life back into these practices makes me a believer of ancestral memory. All that was needed was a means to reconnect to that part of the great rope of life, a gap now filled.

*Kuleana*, one's right, privilege, concern, and responsibility, is the basis of understanding *aho*. The privilege of embracing a legacy that has spun itself through the generations is a great honor few today accept, for it is also a burden. Bearers who assume stewardship of this cord become pillars of light within the community, celebrated for lighting the path into the future, all the while charged with the sacred duty of ensuring its transmission to the next generation. As a cord bearer, my goal is to entrust this fascia of life to all who step forward and show an interest and passion in continuing this work. In sharing this knowledge, my emphasis is focused on the diversity of perspectives in the practice and that it is not to be kept for oneself but shared.

Elders in Hawai'i understood that family traditions were fading away because of a lack of interest in perpetuating them within the family, subsequently many chose to share their knowledge outside the home. The belief that the knowledge should be cared for was more important than keeping it only in the family. Looking at this decision from another perspective, one can see it as a means of keeping familial knowledge alive long enough for future generations of a family to reconnect to their birthright. This perspective honors both the knowledge and stories as well as the familial link, but shows that they can live on separately with the ability to come together also being present.

Life is an endless cycle of creation and transformation of our world. We experience these transitions between moments and carry them in our memories and practices. Our practices link us to our ancestors and the longer the rope is that connects us only magnifies its strength exponentially in the present. This truth encourages excellence, and stokes the fires within each of us to follow our dreams. The great sea of stars that envelop us every night is but a glimpse into the possibilities that we possess.

My cord of truth glows bright, constantly looking for the quiet and calm, the window into the realm of reflection. The moments that allow the glory of our world and the culmination of our actions the opportunity to meld into one can be found in unexpected places.

The world knows how to be, moving with its surroundings, binding and unraveling itself, finding balance in the storm, and creating realms anew. All we must do is be prepared and willing to allow those moments to take hold of us. The strands that bind us together are always reaching out, looking to find new ties and connections.

Remembering that our choices determine the growth and stability of our rope is vital. We must all choose.

Will we stand by and let our cords be broken? Do we sit back and forget the song of our ancestors? Do we deprive the voices yet unheard this gift?

My hope is that we realize the power we possess, that we can embrace the divine everlasting, or destroy ourselves and our future if not careful. The ancestral rope, the link to our past, is our guide to understanding the mysteries of our world. Who amongst you will don this mantle of ancestral memory?

All we must do is accept the responsibility.

Do you accept?
As a Coast Salish artist, photographer and environmental scientist, bringing together tradition and innovation is part of my everyday life. Here on the west coast of Canada I have often heard elders talk about how young people have to walk between two different worlds – the modern technological and the traditional Coast Salish culture. The modern world is often seen as a negative thing that prevents people from connecting to their traditional roots, but many years ago I decided to inverse this attitude and see how I could use modern technology to connect our people and to enhance our culture.

I grew up knowing nothing about my Coast Salish roots, and then in my early twenties I discovered my culture through Tribal Journeys. Tribal Journeys is an annual event where one tribe hosts and many of the coastal First Nations from British Columbia, Washington and Alaska travel there by canoe. It is a modern-day take on the old traditional potlatch system. Traveling by canoe and learning traditional drumming helped to teach me about my people’s traditions, and inspired me to eventually become an artist. All my life I was taught that my first nations heritage was something to be ashamed of and that the many stereotypes Canadians use against my people where true; but the journeys gave me an entirely different perspective on Coast Salish people. It woke up something deep within me that would drive me to learn as much as I could about the traditional ways. Within Tribal Journeys there are examples of technological innovation which have enhanced our culture aspects – for example, the water quality project from Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey, as well as the use of the internet for broadcasting events over the years.

I was in college studying chemistry when I took my first journey. Soon after graduation I landed a job working for my tribe, T’Sou-ke, as their environmental coordinator. I started collecting scientific data as well as traditional ecological knowledge from the elders. I began to paint a picture of what my people’s traditional territory looked like historically and what it eventually became. I learned that the forest landscape was devastated by large forestry companies with over ninety-five percent of the land logged; and that this contributed to many species becoming extinct, as well as placing dozens of others on the extinction “at risk” listings. After a few years I figured out that all I was doing was documenting the destruction of my people’s land and that I needed to come up with projects that would both raise awareness about the issues as well as bring back the old traditional ways of respecting the environment. This is when I decided to shift my career toward environmental education in order to try to bring back how we used to view the environment.

When I first started researching environmental education programs, I found that there was not much material created for First Nations people and that most of the programs were tailored for the white middle-class – which would not work to create change within my community. From conducting several elder interviews and from considerable research, I knew that the Coast Salish people always had a form of environmental education using art and storytelling to teach people about living within, and protecting the environment. So I started to set up programs that would combine modern social marketing with ancient Coast Salish traditions using art and storytelling. Although there was not much data recorded on the programs, I could feel the change within my community and knew I was on to something. When my tribe started a large solar project, I joined as an artist, incorporating Coast Salish art with the renewable energy which included painting a mural between panels as well as acid etching a design onto a solar hot water panel. Using Coast Salish designs on the technology was a modern take on the traditional ways of

Illustration above: Coast Salish Coyote © Mark Gauti, 2014; Photo left: Tribal Journeys on the Sooke River, © Mark Gauti.
making everything art. It also gave the community a sense of ownership over the technology, turning this into a great example of weaving traditions with innovation. I would later take what I learned from combining art and technology and work with other British Columbia tribes to make their own solar panel art installations.

Another example of using of modern technology is with the youth work – teaching the youth about culture. Here on the west coast of Canada there seems to be a common theme of First Nations people using technology to teach youth about traditional culture. Years ago I started teaching youth photography skills as a way to learn about the environment around them as well as their traditional culture. While using this technology, I took young people to cultural events and hikes in nature. The technology increased their interest levels in learning, inspired them, and allowed them to express how they saw the world around them. Because of this use of photography, it is most interesting that now an entire generation of T’Sou-ke will be documented like it never has been before. Another innovative cultural-tech project for youth is the First Voices website done by The First Peoples’ Cultural Council. This website is used to learn our traditional language over the internet.

It may be true what the elders say – that a young person must walk between the modern world and traditional world; however, I see an opportunity to dance between the worlds and intertwine cultural practices with technology to get the best out of both worlds. The history of this country and of the modern world may have taken away aspects of traditional life; yet there are new innovative ways that we can use to enhance and bring back some Coast Salish culture. Tribal Journeys has done a lot to help bring back our traditions to a new generation and I look forward to seeing how we will continue to use modern technology to help enhance and educate people about our culture.

Illustration above: Coast Salish environmental education art © Mark Gauti, 2014;

Mermaid -too caught up
Artist: Aly de Groot
Materials -Recycled fishing line, fish hook
Photo credit – Fiona Morrison, 2013

As an experimental basketry artist I have been given the honor of being invited to remote coastal Indigenous homelands in Arnhem Land, Northern Australia where I have worked with Indigenous rangers, teachers and weavers to remove marine debris which travels with the tides from across the world. We use basketry techniques that they already understand as traditional knowledge that their relatives may do or have done in the past, along with the nets we collected to make baskets, bags and sculpture so as to responsibly and creatively dispose of the marine detritus. When we are weaving and yarning, I have heard many a story of mermaids, freshwater and salt water, whom are sometimes nasty, sometimes nice.

The mythology of the seductive ‘Ladyfish’ that can be charming or devour you is universal, found in fairytales as well as Indigenous Australian Dreaming stories and European folklore. A thorough investigation of contemporary basketry processes has lead into my figurative experimentation with marine debris to weave a visual narrative, which is Mermaid -Too Caught Up. She embodies the human attraction to consumer deceptions that allure us, like the siren hiding beneath the oceans sparkling surface, enticing and seducing but essentially drowning us.

As a contemporary non-indigenous fibre artist, I will continue to explore basket-making techniques along with plant fibres and man-made materials to reflect my continuing relationship with this land. Through working, teaching and learning from Indigenous people I am continuing a tradition where Indigenous and non-indigenous people have exchanged knowledge, resulting in dynamic responses and developments in fibre art. I passionately believe that this is the nature of the art form to be shared and transformed, with each fibre artist developing his or her own narrative and approach.
Interview with Julian Galarza, Sr. (Yokaia Boka), by Jeanine Pfeiffer

Julian Galarza, Sr. is a singer, a feather dancer, an expert craftsman, and an enrolled member of the Guideville Pomo – one of many tribes and tribal communities whose territory falls within Mendocino County, Northern California. Over the years that I’ve known him, Julian has impressed me by his commitment to do what it takes to live his culture, and his willingness to support other Natives in living their cultures. Julian is a cultural “nexus” for tribal members in an over 300-mile radius, helping to supply traditional materials (feathers, furs, abalone necklaces, clapper sticks) for regalia and ritual.

This interview took place on January 9th, 2014, on the Guideville Pomo Reservation outside of Ukiah, California.

Jeanine: When did you wake up, in the sense of becoming more of who you are, as a Guideville Pomo?

Julian: It’s kind of hard to say, because growing up as a kid, I knew there were two worlds; there were two different ways. We had to be raised in two worlds all the time, which was kind of confusing. It was hard at elementary school because we felt out of place – because that’s the other world. You come back home and you are where you belong… and then you have to go back to school again.

What really woke me up was after I was a teenager – and teenage years were hard because you go through a lot. To become cool you want to do what everyone else is doing and you want to belong. What I did, personally, I abandoned myself. After what everyone else is doing and you want to belong. What I did, personally, I abandoned myself. After

I went to a Brush Dance, in Requa (Yurok territory) at the mouth of the Klamath River. I was watching it [and] was kind of in awe. My wife brought me there to show me her culture because I took her down here and showed her mine – and they are so different. I was impressed. When we left – right when we were sitting down – there was a black bear that came and sat down, right where I had been sitting down. It was a big black bear, sitting there and playing with its feet. Kinda cool. There were people sitting right in front of it, not even knowing that there was a black bear playing with its feet, right behind them. The Brush Dance is going on right there; they are dancing and singing. [There] are the dancers lined up ready to go in and as we walked down people are tapping me and they’re saying “Hey, check it out, there’s a bear right there, right where you are sitting.” I turn around and look, and there it was. It was just like, “what the heck?” in disbelief, and the bear turned around and walked right up the hill – walked into the brush. That was kind of when I started to wake up, and really got into my culture. It made me think. Because that bear to me, it is significant because that’s how my family line survived. Down here in my Pomo territory, it’s from the bears.

When the 7th Calvary came in – and they did the massacre – one of our uncles was what they called a Bear Doctor. He never lived with the tribe, he lived on the outside of the tribe all the time. He saw when they came, and he took one of his nieces – which would be our great-great-great-grandmother, I believe, I’m not sure how many generations back – but during the time that happened he threw her on his shoulders and he hid in the water. That was the only place you could hide – by swimming down rivers and creeks. So that’s what they did. He taught her everything that he knew – how he was taught to do his practices – so that stayed in my family.

And so, when I saw the black bear, I thought there’s a connection for me, seeing that bear. I mean, it could have come down and ate people or gone all crazy, but it didn’t. It was just playing with its feet while we were singing and dancing. It was watching, and it took off. Like it was comfortable. So when I saw that bear, I woke up.

Jeanine: So what did you start with, after you woke up?

Julian: Basket gathering – stuff for baskets, because in that time she [my wife] was in [a] Yurok tribal program and they needed volunteers for gathering the materials for a women’s basket class. So we went up to … Hoopa territory… and when we showed up there was a Hoopa woman, a basket gatherer. I thought it was cool because she was praying. She had [someone] who was probably her granddaughter, maybe her daughter, and she was smudging her down; and I was like, “oh that’s so cool,” because I know there are old family areas [taken care of by specific families]. She was praying down, so I did the same thing after they left.

Jeanette Proctor, she was my teacher. She’s a Yurok tribal elder, 80-something now. Really tough, strong lady. She was gathering and took a tumble three times. Then she told us [that this was] the last year she was going to do it because she was turning 80. So I’m very grateful, I got to learn a lot from her – like the back brush and all the little tricks on how to pull the skin off the plants fast – things like that. That’s when I really started getting back into it, when I helped out the Yurok tribe.

Jeanine: What was your first basket?

Julian: Oh, I don’t remember. My first basket? I was a kid. My first basket was from a Balderamo woman, from the Hopland reservation. She was teaching us a culture camp. We used to have culture camps for kids; that’s how we kept our youth involved – through culture camps.

Jeanine: How would you describe your journey between waking up, gathering basketry materials for other folks, and when we were out at the Pinoleville Big Time together? Because by that time, you’re singing, you’re dancing, you’re doing the fish – the salmons… some milestones or some highlights along the way where you
Julian: Well, we moved back here and that's around the time I started going the fish cooking. I just noticed a lot of my peers abandoned [the culture], and I just took it upon myself to make sure that our culture wasn't wiped out in two hundred years. It's dwindling, but it's not gone. So I just took it upon myself to find out everything that I possibly [could] about anything I had questions about because the only dumb question is the one you don't ask.

So I met Lucky (a Kashaya Pomo elder who devoted the latter part of his life to reviving and mentoring dance groups throughout the region, who passed in 2013 there) and we had to make a dance grounds — he asked me for my help. I was helping Lucky before the dancers got there. We were cleaning up the area, preparing it for them, and Lucky was praying by the tree. He asked me to make a fire spot for the fire, so I was setting it up. I put tobacco down, said a prayer for the dancers and everybody there.

Lucky gave me a lot of strength. He was comfortable in his skin. So I was real comfortable in mine. It was contagious, you know, the way he was like that. That's when I really started getting comfortable with who I was. That was a turning point in my life — meeting him, made me stronger. And it wasn't like a journey to find my culture, I'm actually it, this is it.

There's a lot that I didn't learn that I wanted to learn from Lucky. He had so much to teach. A lot more. A lot of stuff went with him, a lot of stuff.

Jeanine: I remember, one time when I came here, around the time of the first fawn, the one I did with Uncle Stewart up at Sherwood, and then I brought you the hooves and the hide; and I remember you saying that you were going to put your dance gear down because, although you knew the right number of songs, you didn't know what the words to the songs meant.

Julian: The meanings, yeah. That's still being learned — it's very hard to learn these things. The thing is, a lot of people don't ask questions, and I'm always questioning (I don't know why). I want to know, I want to be sure one hundred percent. And I've learned a lot since then. I could go out and sing and dance, but I'm in the process of making new regalia.

Jeanine: So what would you say to a young man, who comes to you and says, I want to walk a good path. I want to embody my culture more. What kind of advice would you give, or have you given?

Julian: I would more than likely tell them, be comfortable with who you are. You're not anything but what you are. You're Native. This is who you are. Go do your thing, get out there, don't be shy, don't be ashamed, be proud of who you are, let your culture thrive through you.

Jeanine: Would you be able to hook them up with folks?

Julian: Yeah. Easily! We're all pretty much family, really, from the different [reservations]. One of my cousins, he's really into the stuff, and I think it's awesome. He gives me a lot...it adds a lot of fuel to my fire. I like that. I have a cousin raised in Fresno, not from up here, and he has no idea of what it's like. He just knows his Fresno culture and it's non-Native. He asks questions whenever he's up here. He's confused because it's in his heart — it's this feeling that's there. I always try to influence him in a good way when he's up here. I explain things to him. He's kind of wary of it, nervous because he's raised Catholic — so he's thinking maybe that it might be evil or something. [He's] just misinformed, and not taught exactly why we do things a certain way. I run into that a lot with our people today.

Jeanine: With folks who have been very church-trained?

Julian: Yeah, and their kids. Their youth wants to chuck out the culture, but they're not sure — they don't want to give in one hundred percent because they're taught something else, you know?

Clarence Corrillo says, you gotta teach them when they're young. He's right. I'd say like a 4-year-old age range is really good because they're just starting to develop everything. They're learning and they're watching. They're like a sponge. So get them at four years' old and you have them dancing for a year — that's going to be in their heart forever. They're never going to turn away from it. It'll really bring out who they are, they'll be comfortable with it. I think that's important. As long as they're not too confused starting school. It's hard to explain to a kid - that there's two worlds, growing up in it... For me, I couldn't understand it. It's hard, it's different. It's just something you have to deal with, you have to do it. So you do it. No matter how hard or difficult or confusing it is, you do it.

Jeanine: Well, I think if the process is working, you get a lot of joy and validation and strength.

Julian: It feels good just to help out — for things to keep going. You see people passing away and there are all these new people; and it's nice to be a part of keeping it alive. It's nice. It feels good. And to teach somebody, it feels even better. You know? When you're teaching stuff, you're like, "yes! Cool, now he can teach this", or "she can teach this," and it keeps going. It's nice to be a teacher, to help people understand things. That's what I get out of it, the joy, when I see somebody who learned. It feels good to me.
Ray Gardner is the elected Chairman of the five tribes of the Chinook Nation. His lineage descends from Huckswelt, the last full chief of the Willapa tribe and signer of the 1851 Tansy Point Treaty. Ray worked at a mill, in oyster beds and on a crab boat before his 21 years of employment by the Washington State government and his role as Liaison for the Native American Tribes and Law Enforcement Agencies. He has served on the Marine Resource Committee, The Board of American Rivers (2007–2013), as Chair of the Natural Resources/Fisheries and Transportation Committees and as Vice-Chair of the Health Board. A recipient of the State of Washington Historical Society’s “Peace and Friendship Award,” Ray has promoted a greater awareness of the cultural diversity of Washington and of the contemporary issues of the Chinook Nation. He and his wife Jill live in his ancestral homeland in Washington State near the cove where this interview occurred.

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NWNL: Thank you, Ray, for bringing us to this protected Columbia River cove, so imbued with the spirit of the Chinook Nation. As we sit here on this Pacific Northwest river, could you describe the historic ties Chinook Nation has had with the Columbia River?

RAY GARDNER: The best way to start with that is from our story of creation. We were created on the Columbia River. The Creator and Mother Earth gave us the honor to be a people that lived on this river. This river was a means of transportation. It was a means of communicating with other tribes up and down the river in our canoes. It provided us with the salmon that Coyote taught us how to fish. Historically, our range was from south of Grays Harbor down through Willapa River and down south of the Columbia to what would be modern day Seaside. Then we went up [along the coast] to right about where Vancouver is today.

We were among the biggest traders of the Pacific Coast up Northern Canada to the border of Alaska. Our average ocean-going canoes were 70 feet long. We traveled from the Columbia River north to Canada and south to mid- and a little bit of southern California. That was our normal trade area. From the mouth of the river up to Celilo Falls [flooded by the Dalles Dam in 1957], we used canoes that on average were 50 feet long and carried a crew of 20, plus cargo. In fact, we had trade goods from China long before the Euro Americans got here.

NWNL: How do you maintain traditional Chinook values for yourself and how do you instill them in your children?

RG: For me to find the energy and wisdom and strength from the ancestors, it’s places like this where I can get that. You have to come where they lived, where they existed.

From a tribal side, it’s really an immersion into culture. It’s letting children know from “Day One” that this is who you are; this is where you came from; this is your Story of Creation; this is what the Creator taught us; this is how Coyote taught us to fish. It’s all of those things. It’s taking the time and being willing to sit down with the children. It’s talking to the children when they’re at a young age – before society as a whole grabs them and starts to get them into modern technology and everything else – because then it’s harder to get their attention and hold it.

NWNL: What practices have Native Americans traditionally followed to keep our rivers healthy?

RAY GARDNER: It’s really hard to put into words not only how important this river system was, but still is. We have always known that if the people here do not protect Mother Earth, she can’t exist. So, it’s very important to keep all elements of Mother Nature pure and safe.

It’s very important to the Chinook people to preserve this river, as we were only allowed to be here by the Creator. With that came the honor of being the people to protect this part of the river. And to protect that, we had to be careful to not pollute the river. The cleanliness of the river and the purity of the river are very important because, obviously, for salmon to survive, they have to have a good water system. Even when our canoes are taken in and out of the water, they are cleansed.

The Creator always told us only take what you need – do not waste. And what you take, you use all of it. In the same respect, you have to do that same thing with the river. Again, it really goes back to the story of creation. It goes back to when we were brought here, why were we brought here, what were we honored to be part of and what were we tasked to take care of. And if we go back to those things, then culture – in and of itself – tells us we have to do whatever we can to protect these rivers.

Photo: Destiny, granddaughter of Sam Robinson, Washington, Columbia River Basin Expedition’11, Clark-Chinook Canoe Reparation Ceremony, © Alison M. Jones for www.nowater-nolife.org

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NWNL: How does the Chinook Nation extend its stewardship values beyond its own tribes?

RG: I think about how our tribe has survived, how we have existed, and how we co-mingle with our surrounding and the people that we deal with today. The tribes of today are not the tribes of our forefathers. We’re a group of people that are educated in every aspect of what goes on. We’re educated in marine biology, we’re educated in forestry and we’re educated in law. We see the importance of getting our people educated in all those fields. Doing that will help the entire planet when it’s all done, because there are literally thousands of years of the spirits of our ancestors that are here.

Along the entire river system there has been a history of neglect, so we have to be able to figure out ways to partner with our communities, and to help communities as a whole thrive. I have pushed government agencies to show them how letting the river do what it needs to do will help communities as a whole thrive. We’re a group of people that are educated in every aspect of what goes on. We’re educated in marine biology, we’re educated in forestry and we’re educated in law. We see the importance of getting our people educated in all those fields. Doing that will help the entire planet when it’s all done, because there are literally thousands of years of the spirits of our ancestors that are here.

NWNL: What do think about dams and other infrastructure placed along our rivers?

RG: Dams have affected the spawning rituals of the fish and diverted them; they’ve held fish up so predators can get them. Any numbers of things have happened, just from the fish side, with the dams. They do need to provide better passage for the fish. There is no question that entire fish runs are being lost and decimated. You just look at the numbers of fish that go through the dams and, except for a few peaks, they are continually dwindling and getting smaller.

The dams – and altering the flow of the water – have totally devastated certain areas of the river on both sides. They’re doing the river no good. They’re heating the water up, they’re doing different things that this river was not meant to have happen. As you get further up the river, there used to be natural flow irrigation systems and very lush fields with vegetation and crops that were very substantial for the plateau tribes. Once the dams were put in, all of that was put under water. You go up there now and those areas are just dead. The crop structures are gone; the vegetation is gone.

Anytime you alter or make any deviation in the river – even in the flow of the water – the impacts are huge. I don’t think people really take the time to stop and look at impacts. Even if you’ve made a slight deviation of water flow, you’re eroding a bank over time and with that bank erosion are you now putting silt into the water that goes into the spawning bed. The fish then can’t spawn anymore because the gravel surface is now buried in silt. So any type of industry that is going to do anything in or around the water is a concern. I say that because the smallest of things can have the biggest of impact.

NWNL: How do you think we build a healthy and sustainable relationship between Mother Earth, people, industry and government?

RG: Mother Nature, Mother Earth has a very distinct way of healing herself if we let her. There are solutions. They may be costly to industries, but they will protect the environment.

Change will never happen because people sit back and say nothing. People have to be willing to stand up and say this isn’t right; this is why it’s not right; and you need to change it. Now, they can do that at a city level and they can do that at a county, state or federal level. In a democracy, if enough of the people want something done, it’s the government’s job to make that change. But government will not make a change unless people tell them it needs to be made.

NWNL: Are U.S. governmental agencies receptive to tribal opinions and proposed solutions?

RG: They have realized what a tremendous voice the tribes have – because we’re the only people that can say what was it like before. We know what this region was like before colonization, what was it like before industries and what was it like before all of these things. And when it was like that, we did not have these problems.

The tribes are starting to realize that with that knowledge they’re unique. Now tribes are using modern technology of e-mail and everything else. We do adapt. Also, if the tribes combine their voices, they’re a very large group of people. In the State of Washington, there are 29 recognized tribes and there are 12 non-recognized tribes. So given all of those people just in the state of Washington on a statewide ballot, together they can change an election. And that has happened.

NWNL: How do you think we build a healthy and sustainable relationship between Mother Earth, people, industry and government?

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NWNL: Traveling along the Columbia from its British Columbia source down to its Pacific Ocean terminus, our NWNL expedition has recorded many voices from tribal nations in this watershed. It seems that the Pacific Northwest tribes are strong leaders in the push to protecting this great river.

RG: They really are. It’s been nice to see; and it goes beyond protection of just the river because the rivers actually have everything to do with Mother Earth. As the tribes are gaining in education, they’re getting into all aspects of cleaning up the river’s systems and keeping them healthy. They’re looking at forestland practices and how to get yields of timber out of the forest without destroying the land, aquifers or small forest streams. They’re looking at how they can better keep vegetation in places where it needs to be and make sure it’s not being taken out. They’re looking at how vegetation can enhance not only the quality of the river, but also the runs of the fish.

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Along the entire river system there has been a history of neglect, so we have to be able to figure out ways to partner with our communities, and to help communities as a whole thrive. I have pushed very hard with local cities, towns, counties and state government agencies to show them how letting the tribes work with them can help teach them how to preserve what’s here. I have also worked on how to bring an economy into an area that won’t affect the environment but will provide jobs for the people.

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Sense of Place: Using New Media to Share Traditional Stories

Maeva Gauthier and Marie Acemah

All truth contains a contradiction. Contradiction is the point of the pyramid.
-Simone Weil, Gravity and Grace

We land in Kaktovik on Barter Island on the North Coast of Alaska and emerge from a small plane that resembles a pop can traversing the ethereal arctic skies. We are humbled by a whale boneyard and polar bears, already visible on the horizon. Kaktovik is a village of 300, uniquely situated on the north slope of Alaskan, the only village in the vast swath of land known as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; about 85% of the residents are Inupiaq. Subsistence hunting still plays a vital role in the culture and economy of locals. Yet this small village has much in common with other rural Alaskan villages that experience the sometimes-painful sense of dichotomy so poignant in our times. Elders versus youth. Whale-hunting versus video games. Inupiaq versus English. Living off the land versus rising ocean toxicity levels. Traditional ways versus Western ways.

Our purpose in coming here is to help youth make documentary films about the changing shoreline. We are all too aware of the socio-cultural-ecological tensions between the old days and modern times. Yet we come to Kaktovik to support the unique ways that youth are able to take the best elements of all worlds and weave them together. Youth in Kaktovik enjoy movies and computers alongside the splendid Silence of the whale. We will spend the coming week working with youth to interview elders to make short documentary films that relate to the core of life on the island: stories of changing coastlines and water, stories conveyed by using innovative technologies.

The stories of Kaktovik elders are informed by an early upbringing largely without white people and Western influences. Additionally, they have watched global warming eat away at their land, which is changing before their very eyes. ~300 Miles Southeast of Barrow, Kaktovik is far closer to Cutana (~100 miles). The international border seems artificial as families, villages, and languages are in common over the divide. While Inupiaq have lived in the region for ~10,000 years, the land has been highly politicized in the past 150 years as federal policies and oil companies contend over their own interests in this tragically rich and stark landscape. As the only village within the highly contested Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), Kaktovik elders and community members have been forced to become savvy in navigating between their culture and Western interests in their land and resources. During our week in Kaktovik, we were to see a U.S. Senator and two nature channel film crews pass through, making us sympathetic with the “visitor-weary” attitude that many locals legitimately adopt.

As newcomers in a contested landscape, we emphasized in our conversations before, during, and after our visit our agenda for education, nothing more and nothing less. The community chose to collaborate with us after we presented our ideas that focused on their youth, elders, and stories, rather than profit. Maeva Gauthier, involved in the ShoreZone program (ShoreZone.org), had participated in an inter-agency collaboration to map the coast of Alaska by helicopter using high-resolution imagery. In the process, she had been struck by power of imagery to triggers comments and stories from villagers throughout coastal Alaska about the footage. She realized what an amazing opportunity it was to combine the innovative, interactive website footage of coastlines with the linguistic and story-telling wisdom of elders and to engage youth in the process. Marie Acemah, working for Media Action, specialized in leading film workshops in rural Alaska to connect youth and elders through living stories and new technology. The Arctic Slope Community Foundation, composed of community members from the Arctic Slope, chose to provide the cost-share for the project Sense of Place as they identified the importance of using new technologies to engage youth with traditional stories and wisdom.

We spoke with the City of Kaktovik and the Tribal Council about what the project would actually look like: meeting with their kids, interviewing elders and addressing their landscape, having youth film the coastline from a helicopter, using their footage in films, and showing those films at a community screening. The urgency of this storytelling process comes directly from the context of global warming’s rapid and dramatic impact on Alaska’s changing coastlines.

Two sisters and aspiring filmmakers raised in Kaktovik — Tracy and Brittany Burns — dove into a film topic that was as natural as breathing for them: stories about the changing coastline. Their grandparents’ underground freezer, a storage unit dug into the permafrost to store meat and berries through the summer, was in the process of plummeting into the ocean with the melting landscape. Polar bears wandered the village as the polar ice had melted too far back for them to swim; during one of the interviews, an elder told us that a polar bear had broken into her entryway looking for food the night before, an unusual and even unthinkable event before the ice melt.
The community responded well to her work. Tracy shared a local tragedy that ensued due to polar ice melt: “Now that the ice is melting, the waves are getting bigger, which our people aren’t used to. One family was camping on the beach, and the father and son were swept away trying to save their boat from the waves. They weren’t used to waves like that. It shows how serious climate change is here, that it is a matter of life and death.”

Alongside a sense of the gravity of the effects of climate change on her community, Tracy has a profound respect for elders: “It is very important to talk to Elders. The Elders in Kaktovik who watched it gave positive feedback and said that it was really accurate. Elders here don’t know how to express it or talk about it sometimes, but when they saw the movie they started to share their own stories and open up. For the young kids, they grew up without seeing the change, so they were shocked and wanted to learn more.” For us as facilitators, the film showing was the culmination of Sense of Place; friends and families watched with pride and emotion the product of a week of intensive intergenerational work.

While the conversation between Tracy and the elders, culminating in her film, was simultaneously cathartic and educational for the youth and the elders, Tracy continues to foster this dialogue as she serves as a Special Education Teacher’s Aide at the Harold Kavoolook School in Kaktovik. “I work as a special education teacher’s aide at the school and was teaching 2nd and 3rd graders about erosion and climate change. I showed them my film and it turned out they didn’t know about those changes, and I loved watching them get so concerned and passionate about it. They know that our culture centers around ice and water and we talk about the food chain and how everything will be affected. One little boy wanted to solve it by putting some of our permafrost land in the water to make new ice. They really cared.”

After screening in Kaktovik, Tracy’s film premiered at the Anchorage International Film Festival (AIFF) for the state to celebrate in her work and perspective. It also was shown in NYC at the Polar Film Festival. I called her to ask how it felt, and she answered her cell phone from the beach where the second whale of the season had just been harvested. With excitement in her voice, she took a moment to tell me a little about her story and her feelings: “Growing up, my parents ran a store and they also rented videos, so in my spare time I watched movies and thought they were so cool. I could escape into the movie, or play games with my friend and enter the roles of the movie. When I saw my own movie on a big screen [at AIFF], and not just on a TV, with an actual audience, I felt so amazing. My Dad was next to me and I held his hand, feeling dizzy and excited and happy all at the same time. It was just the most amazing feeling.”

Whether Tracy is practicing subsistence, talking to an elder, teaching a child, or making a film, she is continuously and gracefully weaving the contradictory threads of life together. For her, film is an opportunity to continue the storytelling tradition of her community in a new and innovative way. For her community, it is a chance to voice and discuss their concerns about climate change, a dialogue vital to finding solutions to one of the most pressing issues of our time.

Almost two years after facilitating the Sense of Place Project in Kaktovik and Point Lay on the North Slope, we are now in discussion with the North Slope Borough School District to expand Sense of Place by developing curricula in conjunction with the Iñupiaq Learning Framework initiative currently underway in schools. We believe that coastal imagery is a powerful way to trigger stories and knowledge from Elders and helps to connect generations in the process. Integrating this intergenerational dialogue, film, and ShoreZone imagery at a broader structured scale in the school context provides a sustainable way to continue this process and ensure that films are shared and mentorship continues after the film workshops take place. The use of video as a tool helps youth to document, preserve, and share crucial knowledge to promote reflection on history, culture, and landscape while moving forward and integrating new ways of life. ☺

See Videography on page 86.

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Strategies of Poverty to Strategies of Richness:

Old and New Traditions through the Collective Mujeres y Maíz Criollo in Chiapas, Mexico

Hilary King

I met Salomé Espinoza in August 2012 at the organic market in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. She was almost hidden by an array of circular stacks in varied colors, bright fuchsia, brilliant green, off white flecked with red, and coffee with cream. The stacks are tostadas, tortillas toasted until they are firm and crispy. These tostadas looked to be from a Dr. Seuss story, stacked on top of each other like warped frisbees.

I asked if I could sit and help Salomé sell tostadas. I asked Salomé about her tostadas, her sales, how long she has been a tostadera. Rapidly, she began asking me questions. Where did I come from? “The United States.” I added the customary (and meant), “Allí tienes su casa (you have a home there).” Salomé thanked me for the offer. I asked if she had visited the US, she told me she hadn’t. I prepared to steer the conversation in another direction. But after about ten seconds, Salomé piped up, “I have not been to the US, but I have been to Italy.”

I looked at her surprised. A smile spread across her face. She explained that in 2010, she exhibited her tostadas at the Slow Food Salone del Gusto in Turin, Italy. I asked her what she had learned there, and Salomé responded, “I don’t know how to read or write, so I can only tell you what I did. I ate so many things, and met so many people, and everyone loved my tostadas. No one had seen them like this, made with beets or cilantro or chocolate or beans. It was so hard to get the permission to take them there, and unbroken! But they were a big hit.”

Salomé is a member of the collective Mujeres y Maíz Criollo (Women and Heirloom Corn, MyMC). This group was founded in 2007 with the goal of promoting the local consumption of handmade tortillas and tostadas made from local heirloom corn. The group currently has 53 members in three towns, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Teopisca, and Amatenango del Valle, Chiapas. Through innovating on traditional women’s work the project has three goals: the advancement of the economic capacities of its members through trainings and new opportunities, the promotion of the rescue and maintenance of heirloom maize varieties in southern Mexico, and the honoring of work that has historically been culturally significant but marginalized.

Expanding Economic Horizons

MyMC seeks to expand the opportunities and income of women who have migrated to urban locations and who maintain their families through the production of maize-based foods including tortillas, tostadadas, and tamales. By organizing as an informal collective, the women have gained recognition locally, and have benefited through partnerships with local universities, NGOs, and other organizations that wish to highlight and support local projects.

One of these projects has been La Milpa Comedor Comunitario, a restaurant that is managed and run by the 12 MyMC members who live in San Cristóbal de las Casas. Milpa refers to the integrated crop growing system used in much of Latin America, in which corn, beans and squash are combined in the field. Beans and squash grow up the cornstalks and replace nitrogen in the soil, thereby enhancing the environment and overall food yields. This restaurant, which is open Monday to Friday, serves home-style Mexican meals with fresh tortillas and locally grown organic and natural products. Running the restaurant has required that many of the women develop new skills. These include serving, accounting, designing menus, learning about nutrition, public speaking about their project, and working collectively.

The collective organization of La Milpa allows its members stable employment while also providing much needed flexibility. Typically, each woman, ranging in age from 20 to 70, only works one or two days every two weeks. This schedule allows them to meet their other commitments, which include getting small children to school and managing their households or other work. For instance, Gladis is sometimes able to switch her shifts with her sister-in-law Mari in order to make a child’s parent-teacher conference or to visit a sick relative without fear of losing her job.

Rescuing Heirloom Maize

A critical element of MyMC is expanding the production and consumption of heirloom maize varieties. Heirloom plants are populations that have been adapted over time to specific conditions, and have cultural, economic, and ecological value (Nazarea 2005). Since the passage of NAFTA in 1994, the influx of subsidized commodity corn from the United States and the restructuring of Mexico’s...
Amatenango del Valle. The MyMC tortillas are made with yellow and blue maize that may otherwise be lost. Lucelva often makes a soup with local herb chipilin and corn masa. Her mother taught her the recipe (her father loved it, she explains), but such dishes are not typically served in restaurants. For Reyna, being a part of MyMC has altered her work and her opinion of it: “Selling to the organic market has been a great help to me. Unlike when I was 23, I no longer have to go out and sell tostadas door to door, carrying baby on my front, bags of tostadas on my back, and buckets with masa in each arm, hoping always to sell a bit more in order to lighten my load. Organizations like this one for me are so important. We’re very proud of the value that is placed on our work. I’m thankful to God, they’ve changed my life.”

Remaking Strategies of Poverty into Strategies of Richness

The work of MyMC honors and revalues the work of making tortillas. Historically, hand grinding maize for tortillas required hours of women’s labor. During the 20th century, there was a successful push to industrialize tortilla production, thereby removing this responsibility from many women (Pilcher 1998). Making tortillas by hand was negatively equated with rural and indigenous Mexico, and became something to be avoided in favor of modern forms of production (Pilcher 1998).

MyMC provides a space in which the work of Manuela, Salomé, and other participants is recognized by outside sources and the women themselves. Manuela explained that when she first began to provide tortillas to the organic market in San Cristóbal, she had never thought of her work as valuable. Rather, making tortillas was something that she did because she did not know how to do anything else. For her, it was “a strategy of poverty.” Manuela now affirms that tortilla-making is also a strategy of richness, of knowledge and skills that are unique and valuable. MyMC members now teach workshops and travel to talk about their work as a collective. Several have been invited to teach university students about the processes of nixtamalization, through which lime and maize are combined to release nutrients from the maize kernels. Some have given speeches as part of the campaign “Sin Maíz No Hay País” (No corn, no country), which promotes small-scale farming and biodiversity conservation.

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Beyond Innovation, Inspiring New Traditions

In November 2013, MyMC was invited to an exchange in Tapachula, on the coast of Chiapas. In addition to exchanges with a cooperatively run ecotourism project and a discussion with other local market producers, this trip included a free afternoon.

The participants voted to visit the ocean. We piled into the 15-passenger van, 9-year-olds Lily and Leslie squished between their mothers and grandmothers. As we moved along the 45-minute ride, I asked the MyMC members who had been to the ocean before. Not a single hand went up. “Nadie!” I asked again. “No, Hilary. I only know the route from my bedroom to my kitchen, and from Teopisca to San Cristóbal,” said Silvia.

When we pulled up at the beach, it was already late afternoon. The sun was low in the sky, making the sand and the water reflective of yellows. A concrete curb separated the sand from the parking lot. Lucelva did not want her daughter Lily to take off her shoes as we walked toward the water. “There might be glass!” she cried. We walked the hundred meters to the shoreline. The beach slanted down to the surf, the sand clearly wet from the waves. At first, no one wanted to get in. The women sat at the cusp of the shore, nervous to proceed any further. The young girls, after some minutes were allowed to approach the water holding the hands of the trip coordinators, who had been to the ocean before. As the waves came closer, the women inched further in, jumping back when the white foam approached their toes. Suddenly, a wave soaked them, too quickly for them to jump out of the way. Lucelva grabbed Lily’s hand. Shrieks and laughter emanated from the group, as long skirts soaked up seawater. As the sun descended, Lucelva stood in the water with tears in her eyes. “What is it, Lucy?” I asked. “God makes such beautiful things,” she replied.

In the ocean, as in this collective, these women have ventured into new experiences. Their collective changes the way that they do the traditional work of making food from maize. Unexpected results and openings occur, in addition to those that were hoped for from the outset. The particular stories of people whose lives are changed through their joint effort and innovation, provide a fount of inspiration. These traditions are full of richness. The commitment that these women demonstrate to innovating on and maintaining these traditions is the realization of work as nurture and self-expression. May such realities lead us to an even more sustainable, and delicious, future.

Photo right: Lucelva, Marta, Marta, and Maria Elena preparing tamales by hand for the second anniversary of La Milpa, the restaurant run by women of Mujeres y Maíz. © Hilary King
Cultural mythologies are ‘self-organizing systems’ (Meadows, n.d.), designed to adapt to changes over time and ‘evolve’ based on what they encounter. In the words of Donella Meadows, “the ability to self-organize is the strongest form of system resilience. A system that can evolve can survive almost any change, by changing itself.” (n.d.) Just as we do, these systems, based on years of observation and experimentation, evolve and adapt out of necessity. They grow with our understanding of the world that we inhabit in an identical manner to our currently accepted scientific fields of knowledge.

Instead of ‘traditional’ schooling practices, educating students through stories keeps them entertained while, in many cases, maintaining strong ties to their cultures. This is especially important for students who often cannot find culturally relevant curriculum to connect with during their studies, such as many American Indian students (Hermes, 2000). The utilization of traditional stories in the classroom may just be the spark these students need to take an interest in their education while reaffirming their identities, a combination often perceived at opposite ends of a spectrum (Hermes, 2000). Furthermore, such an approach may spark the interest of other students who may also desire to learn through means other than those they are accustomed to and, accepting, other cultures.

Among the Ojibwe people who live predominantly in the Great Lakes region of the United States and Canada, the main character in many traditional stories is Nanaboozhoo. Nanaboozhoo fits the archetype of a Cultural Hero, as well as that of a Trickster, which are explained in The Mythology of Native North America (Hermes, 1998). The range of plots and characters within Nanaboozhoo stories is diverse and even the moral standing of the main character is often questionable. Nonetheless, through him, we learn much about the natural world as well as the Ojibwe outlook on life. There are many published Nanaboozhoo stories; several can be found in the works of authors like Edward Benton-Banai (1988) and Anton Treuer (2001). These stories range from those fundamental to Ojibwe history and culture, such as the Great Flood (one of the creation myths, a strikingly common motif in mythological narratives), to the comparatively minor ones such as the first time Nanaboozhoo plays baseball.

The Ojibwe, having listened to these stories for generations, have used this character not just to entertain but also to educate. The utilization of traditional stories in the classroom may just be the spark these students need to take an interest in their education while reaffirming their identities, a combination often perceived at opposite ends of a spectrum (Hermes, 2000). Furthermore, such an approach may spark the interest of other students who may also desire to learn through means other than those they are accustomed to while simultaneously learning about, and accepting, other cultures.

As soon as the water had calmed itself; Nanaboozhoo climbed upon the log and straddled it. “What are we do?” He asked the others. ‘Turtle came up with the solution to their problem: “If one of you can swim down and collect some of the old earth, we can spread it on my shell to create new earth!” Nanaboozhoo, always so sure of himself, was the first to dive in. After a few minutes he returned gasping for breath. “Too deep!” he explained. “I’ll try!” Muskrat squeaked. “Don’t waste our time, you’re too small, you won’t make it”, said Otter. “I’ll go next.” Otter dove down deep; deeper than Nanaboozhoo, but still he was unable to reach the bottom. One-by-one the remaining animals tried to reach the bottom, each taking longer and going deeper than the last, and one-by-one they failed until the only one who had not tried was Muskrat. As the others resigned themselves to a watery doom, Muskrat, with a hardened look of determination, took one great gulp of air before diving down. The others waited and waited, most almost didn’t notice the disappearance of Muskrat; but as the minutes continued to grow, they became more and more anxious. Eventually, the lifeless body of Muskrat floated to the surface. The others gasped in surprise as they looked upon their drowned compatriot. It was then, as they grieved for Muskrat, that Nanaboozhoo noticed his little front paws were closed tightly upon his chest. They slowly pulled his hands apart to find a small handful of soft, muddy earth. They took the soil and began to spread it upon Turtle’s back, which grew and grew, creating a new landscape called Turtle Island. To this day, the sacrifice of Muskrat is remembered; as is the lesson of never underestimating another, regardless of their size they are not insignificant, and what they are capable of may surprise you.

We can learn from this today. Our current methods of educating students, through western styles of education are powerful and in many cases quite effective, but we should not forget about our traditional knowledge and traditional ways of teaching. To some they may be works of fiction, but they may be the key to unlocking old knowledge for us all to learn from. Much like Muskrat, they should not be underestimated. By continuing this practice, we can ensure the vitality of our species’ ingenuity for knowledge collection and dissemination while successfully educating the next generation of storytellers to contribute to our world. We have been creating these resources for countless years; we must continue to use what our ancestors have given us.
While living in multi-cultural settings in the US in which Filipinos remain an overall minority, my parents and their cohort are able to grow their own crops, share the harvest with family and friends, tell stories in their native languages of how a certain vegetable reminds them of something in the Philippines, and so forth; in effect, they are able to maintain social-ecological resilience as a diasporic group far from their homeland through food that they plant themselves.

We define our identities in a variety of ways, perhaps most visibly through our language use and our cultural practices; another parameter in defining our identities is our relationship with the living world around us, which is inextricably intertwined with not only our cultural values and beliefs about that relationship and the world, but also the language we use to talk about them. The “cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and their environment” (Berkes, 1999, p. 8) is often referred to as “local environmental knowledge” (LEK) in the ethnobiological literature (cf. Berkes, 1999; Charles, 2001; Davis and Wagner, 2003; inter alia). It was not until a few years into my PhD studies in Linguistics at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa that I learned about LEK and its relevance not only to my professional research, but also—and more importantly—to my personal perspectives of my Filipino heritage.

As is common for many diasporic immigrant groups who move from their homelands and establish new homes in new environments, the members of my parents’ generation—Filipinos who moved to the US East Coast in the 1960s–1980s—brought with them the ability to maintain food security and cultural identity through the LEK associated with important crops of the Philippines. They were able to plant the seeds—literal and metaphorical—that sustain their existence in their new homes. They have found ways to acclimate gabi ‘taro’ to temperate climates to allow the tubers to survive the winters and return in the spring. They grow ampalaya ‘bitter melon’ in their backyards, and later on while living in the US, they learn that the plant they have been eating their entire lives has properties that control blood sugar, thus serving an important medicinal purpose for countering diabetes. They grow sitaw during the summers and set aside some of the harvest to make binhi ‘dried seeds’ chosen for the next season’s planting and share them with family who ask for their own seeds. While living in multi-cultural settings in the US in which Filipinos remain an overall minority, my parents and their cohort are able to grow their own crops, share the harvest—and the delicious prepared dishes made with the harvest—with family and friends, tell stories in their native languages of how a certain vegetable reminds them of something in the Philippines, and so forth; in effect, they are able to maintain social-ecological resilience as a diasporic group far from their homeland through food that they plant themselves. Of course, for most of them, they would not think of their maintenance of Filipino LEK—and, in the process, the maintenance of their linguistic, culinary, and cultural identity—as anything singular; we must remember that for many people, LEK is everyday life, after all.

One aspect of my research on LEK is understanding how such knowledge is shared among community members in everyday speech. Through the use of tools such as discourse analysis and ethnography, my sociolinguistic perspective on LEK provides an academic lens that nevertheless has personal implications. Consider the following brief extract, taken from a conversation between my mother, Mrs. Shirley L. Odango, and one of my aunts, Mrs. Conchita Pabustan, as well as myself as a listener/interviewer; they were talking about growing gabi in the context of the important food crops they have in their gardens. (The initials to the left of the extract are taken from the first letter of the names of the interlocutors, viz. “Shirley,” “Conchita,” and “Emerson.”)

Ang halaman doon ay sari-sari
‘the plants there are many different kinds’

Emerson Lopez Odango

One of the first songs that a Filipino child learns is Bahay Kubo, a song that on the surface seems to serve as a convenient way to teach the youth generation the names of commons plants that produce important vegetables, plants that are grown around a typical house in the Philippines. That has been my perception of the song for most of my life, even for someone like me as a first-generation Filipino born and raised in the US. I am familiar with most of the vegetables named in the song from either the gardens that my parents grew in our backyard (such as sitaw ‘string beans’, kalabasa ‘squash’, and kamatis ‘tomato’), from what we are able to buy in grocery stores (such as singkamas ‘jícama’ and luya ‘ginger’), or what was shared with us from our relatives’ gardens (such as kundol ‘winter melon’ and upo ‘white gourd’). It is not until recently that I have come to appreciate Bahay Kubo as an instantiation of the local ecological knowledge that makes up a part of my Filipino identity. The song is indeed a learning tool, and the students who benefit from it are children and adults alike, both those living in the in situ homeland and those in the diaspora. In particular, Bahay Kubo has given me another perspective of what it means to reclaim aspects of my Filipino identity even while living in a diaspora away from my family’s homeland.

Photo: Some binhi ‘dried seeds’ from my family’s garden. (clockwise from left: sitaw na mahaba ‘long string beans’ held in Shirley L. Odango’s hand, sitaw na maigsi ‘short string beans’, kalabasa ‘squash’, malunggay ‘moringa’, and patola ‘spoon gourd’). ©Emerson Odango

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with innovations of suburban America. As a youth, though, I raise questions that have difficult answers. Are teachings about the transformed agricultural and culinary practices that mix traditions from the Philippines the end is that you always have vegetables, particularly those you grow yourself. This “importance” is not just iyong mga expected elements of narratives in general (Labov 1972), such as the background orientation (iyong mga ibang gabi diyan ‘the other taro over there’), the complicating action (hinila ko iyong ano may mga laman ‘I plucked them up the ones with tubers, you know?’) and an evaluation (‘as long as you’re hard-working, you won’t ever run out of vegetables.’) I co-construct this evaluation with her by offering the realization that what is important in this conversation. Another evaluation—a lesson, really—comes in the form of my aunt’s reminder that features various kinds of speech genres. My mother begins with describing her knowledge about the ‘the other taro over there,’ they’re still small, that you have the um, you always have vegetables. Mm hm. This brief extract illustrates how certain kinds of knowledge about growing gabi emerge in a conversation about the unique language that describes those practices and that environment. Some pieces of LEK do the children—who are almost all young adults by now, some entering into marriage and parenthood themselves—choose not to learn LEK from their parents? What are the benefits of making the effort? While the first two questions require extensive sociological and ethnographic research that is perhaps slipping from our fingers without us realizing it. Readers from other communities may find similarities in my observations, reflections, and aspirations; it is my earnest hope that my discussion will also do the adults choose not to share their LEK with their children? Why do the children—who are almost all young adults by now, some entering into marriage and parenthood themselves—choose not to learn LEK from their parents? What are the benefits of making the effort? While the first two questions require extensive sociological and ethnographic research that is beyond the scope of this article, the latter I can answer. The pools of LEK developed by my Filipino ancestors are keys to the treasures of my generation’s continued existence. A song like Bahay Kubo, then, takes on a new meaning as one type of key to hold on to. Such kinds of LEK provide answers to questions of food security, cultural grounding, and linguistic identity—not all the answers to all the questions, of course, but many of them. And as my aunt reminds me, being a part of the answers of reclaiming LEK require us to be masipag ‘hard-working.’ I am emboldened to incite my cohort and my elders to action, to reclaim the knowledge that is perhaps slipping from our fingers without us realizing it. Readers from other communities may find similarities in my observations, reflections, and aspirations; it is my earnest hope that my discussion will also inspire them to action, such that we all learn from each other, to create new binhi that do not just wither away in the drawer, but take root in the soil of our new homes, wherever they may be. 

Bahay Kubo
Square house (traditional Tagalog children’s song)

Bahay Kubo, kahit munti,
Square house, however small it may be,
ang balanaw doon ay sari-sari.
the plants there are many different kinds.
Singkamas at talong,
jicama and eggplants,
sigarilas at mani,
winged seguidillas beans and peanuts,
sitaw, batuan, patani,
string beans, hyacinth beans, lima beans,
kundol, patola, upo’t kalabasa,
winter melons, sponge gourds, white gourds, squash,
at saka mayroon pang
and there are also
labanos, mustasa,
radishes, mustard,
sibuyas, kamatis,
onions, tomatoes,
bawang at luya,
garlic and ginger,
sa paligid-liquid
and in the surroundings
ay maraming lima.
are a lot of sesame seeds.

Bahay kubo, kahit munti,
Square house, however small it may be,
ang balanaw doon ay sari-sari.
The plants there are many different kinds.
Singkamas at talong,
jicama and eggplants,
sigarilas at mani,
winged seguidillas beans and peanuts,
sitaw, batuan, patani,
string beans, hyacinth beans, lima beans,
kundol, patola, upo’t kalabasa,
winter melons, sponge gourds, white gourds, squash,
A group discussion with Palma Vizzoni, Shaun Paul, Donna Morton and Ortixia Dilts
Discussant: Kierin Mackenzie

In the past issue of LS (Vol. 2:12), we held a panel discussion about Economic Paradigms and Transitions with a distinguished group of forward thinkers. We wanted to know how the dominant economic paradigm needs to change in order to come into alignment with the sustainability of our planet’s biocultural diversity. In this issue, we follow up on that thread by asking questions of an equally outstanding group of innovators in the realms of business and finance. In turn, we wanted to know what changes are needed in these engines of the global economy to re-align them with the goal of sustaining the biocultural diversity of life.

1. In your personal opinion, is it relevant to business to ensure the sustainability of life systems in nature and culture (“biocultural diversity”)? If yes, why? If no, why?

Palma Vizzoni: It is entirely relevant that organizational practices in business as well as other institutional structures consider the sustainability of life systems through the lens of biocultural diversity (BCD). We, in a globalized socio-political environment, are well beyond the seeming luxury of ignoring what sustains life on earth. In an updated introduction to Beyond the Limits, the sequel to the famous book that shared the results of World3, a systems dynamics computer model, the authors Donella Meadows, Dennis Meadows, and Jorgen Randers write, “The future, to be viable at all, must be one of drawing back, easing down, healing… It requires more than productivity and more than technology; it also requires maturity, compassion and wisdom. These conclusions constitute a conditional warning, not a dire prediction. They offer a living choice, not a death sentence… The idea of limits, sustainability, sufficiency, equity and efficiency are not barriers, not obstacles, not threats. They are guides to a new world… We see ‘easing down’ from unsustainability not as a sacrifice, but as an opportunity to stop battering against the earth’s limits and to start transcending self-imposed and unnecessary limits in human institutions, mindsets, beliefs, and ethics.” It is of multifaceted benefit for all organizational structures to re-contextualize their cultures and come into relationships of thrivability with both the local and the global.

We no longer live in a world where governing nation-states hold the highest level of power, in either scale or capital assets, “…The age of globalization has now superseded the age of development. This is mainly because nation-states can no longer contain economic and cultural forces… Development, in short, became denationalized; indeed, globalization can be aptly understood as development without nation-states.” Economic systems are dominated by the sheer size of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) as they lead the Global Corporate Capitalist System (GCCS). The presence of gargantuan monopolistic entities in the global market cannot be ignored. The leading trends towards the elimination of human value in the workforce cannot be dismissed. Countering these huge forces will take immense ingenuity in order to influence system conditions towards different ends. Therefore, it is no longer the sole responsibility of governments to forge this socioeconomic effort of transformation. Some even argue that business structures have more capacity and agility to leverage their power for innovating change than slow, bureaucratic institutions.

Solar panel mural at Seton Lake featuring art by Raymond Alexander. © Mark Gauti

Sustainability is a complex effort with no right answers. It is unnecessarily limiting and difficult to source the level of innovation required to address sustainability exclusively from the dominant industrial paradigm whose behaviors created the dilemma in the first place. A driver for innovation is diversity, particularly access to diverse ways of knowing and being – an ability to “think outside the box.” In ecology, it is observed that edge dynamics occur when two different ecosystems meet and their encounter creates a heightened level of biodiversity. What happens when cultural edges meet? BCD and the rich biocultural heritage of humanity are highly relevant in helping business, and others on the world stage, create sociocultural encounters to gain insights required to address the purposeful work at hand. Engaging in relationships of reciprocity with wisdom hotspots (See Palma’s article “Wisdom Hotspots” on page 20 in this issue) could greatly advance an organization’s capacity for innovation.

We see an idea called “collective impact” emerging in ethical business leadership. “This notion of businesses, governments, NGOs and others coming together to join forces for major impact is a term making a lot of traction in the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) space. ‘Collective Impact.’ It’s how leaders (or “change agents”) come together to create change and amplify at the scale and pace necessary to meet the needs of people beyond 2050… Thus, the Action2020 program has begun, led by business leaders keen to deliver on the goals set in the Vision 2050 report. According to the WBCSD (World Business Council on Sustainable Development), the effort ‘symbolize[s] the WBCSD’s move from developing thought leadership to driving action.’ This effort is collective impact at its finest. Companies breaking down silos, sharing information and ideas, and initiating joint efforts for larger global benefit economically, environmentally and socially.”

What is missing from the conversation is BCD – most of the focus of these efforts is in connecting and collaborating across sectors for action, which is certainly important. However, because most organizations have not understood how to open up their definition of diversity and broadly value diversity internally, they
do not envision a process that brings truly diverse “change agents” to the table to act externally. Essentially, they are missing out on the ingenuity of the majority of the world’s cultural perspectives because they have not yet learned how to interact with that breadth and depth of diversity. The CSR space is in desperate need of education and training that guides genuine relationship building with wisdom hotspots, with bioculturally diverse worldviews and possibilities for authentic stakeholder engagement.

Shaun Paul: There is a growing trend in business to adopt values and practices that enhance environmental sustainability and social equity. Companies that depend upon natural resources such as food and farming have a growing interest in sustaining life systems due, in part, to a clear and growing consumer demand for related considerations. Many ‘social brands’ (that is organic and fair trade certified consumer food brands) are positioning to appeal to ‘aspirational consumers’ who seek products and services that affirm consumer values centered broadly on sustainability. This approach typically includes consideration for social equity, Regenerative Finance, and Regenerative Design, which has arisen in part out of the green building movement and offers clear and growing precedent for business that identifies value in building regenerative life systems.

Donna Morton: We need to bring the skills of business and the awesome force of the finance system into alignment with what John Fullerton and Hunter Lovins describe as the “regenerative economy”. Sustainability is a mid-way step along a continuum from harm to healing or regeneration. We must move beyond sustainability – so much of our world is beyond sustaining levels. We do not want to sustain poverty, sustain leaving billions of women out of the economy, leaving millions of girls out of education, the poisoning of our bodies through petrochemicals. The natural world, our cultures, the way we harness or leave stranded the creativity of every life on earth needs regeneration.

It is essential that business works in service to life; improving key systems it has harmed, especially restoring biodiversity, the nitrogen and carbon cycles. Johan Rockström, in his work on nine planetary boundaries, identifies that biodiversity, nitrogen, and carbon are the most off-balance and essential systems to life on earth. Businesses need now to be more than sustainable: they need to contribute to regeneration.

Business has additional responsibility to support culture and the highest aspirations of humans. In the past, business ignored culture or worse sought to replace culture with consumption. Advertising and the media taught us that “stuff” would make us happier than culture, community and the sacred. This is a moment in time where we are waking up and seeking to remember who we are as humans, what our place is in the larger systems. Businesses that understand and support this change will be relevant and will grow. Older models of business focused on single bottom-lines, high through-put of materials and selling stuff are losing their foothold. Systems are stronger when diverse, so are places and economies. Globally, social entrepreneurs and impact investors are disrupting and changing our relationship to business and finance; this is essential. The most innovatively disruptive people globally are those left out of the current economy – they see, hold, and represent great promise for integration. The most innovatively disruptive people globally are women, Indigenous and the poor.

Ortixia Dilts: I would like to take a moment to redefine the concept of BCD in the way that I see it, for I am feeling limited in its use as a key word, without the true and deep understanding on what it means, and I think it can be easily misread or misunderstood, particularly by people on the ground. To me, BCD represents heart, compassion, reverence and respect for all life, and our symbiotic connection to all things. It is organic, and adapts to place. It is about nourishing these core values in place and culture, human rights, and that these collective actions grow into BCD, like how healthy plants grow best in healthy soil. If anything... if I could, I would redefine BCD as common sense! The very basic values and logic - respect one another, use your resources with care, simple.

When we apply care to the welfare of people, of our employees, listen to their innovations, apply practices that allow room for culture to thrive, they are happier, healthier and more productive. When we integrate local languages into the mix, our ideas become more accessible to each other, communication is enhanced, and innovative local knowledge and viewpoints have the opportunity to surface. When we pay attention to caring for the environment within our practices, we create sustainable systems that will last. When we nourish systems at the local level, rather than using a blanket top-down approach, our seeds have a better chance of growth. A heritage seed, grown in its home region, with the local cultural practices, is the precursor for abundance. Likewise in business, respect and compassion for all life create abundance for all, and the multitude of businesses each nourishing their deep values of respect and compassion for life creates the bigger picture of BCD.

2. In the world of business today, how much consideration do you think is given to sustaining biocultural diversity when making business and investment decisions? Please explain the situation as you see it.

Donna: BCD is rarely considered in business and finance. We are only starting to understand that what we do to the world we do to our own families, to our very own bodies. We are only beginning to understand that culture connects us to place, ties us to each other and has for human history made everything we are and do mean more. Modernity was reductionist; we were units of production and units of consumption.

Our world is losing biological and cultural diversity at insane rates because we have lost sight of their value. What is external to profit is called “externalities” to business, economics and finance and therefore worthless. As we see their value again we have the opportunity to restore them and make them internal to business. We can measure businesses that have grown because they integrate BCD and tell stories that help us protect living systems and make meaning again.

Popinjay, based in Pakistan and led by Saba Gul, ties the education of girls to the culture of women and embroidery to the economics of making and selling purses globally. Saba solves poverty issues, education barriers but celebrates culture through Popinjay.

Moses Sanga at Eco-Fuel Africa watched his sister carry fuelwood, which was denuding rural Uganda and was preventing her from getting an education; his solution, “biochar”, creates a climate change solution, a biodiversity solution, a gender improvement and a new wave of entrepreneurship. See Videoagraph on page 869.

Shaun: I represent an investment fund that is specifically interested in catalyzing investment and business practices that build value from the regenerative power of BCD. Value can be harnessed by (1) reducing investment and business risk by reframing the value of BCD and (2) increasing value by more clearly articulating the economic benefit of BCD. For example, good community governance of natural landscapes mitigates climate change risk to agricultural production. While the consumer boom for chia is driven mostly by the health benefits attributed to consuming chia, an ancestral staple crop of the Aztecs and Mayans, companies can build brand identity and consumer loyalty by telling their story about their ethical supply chain which more clearly benefits source communities.

Increasingly, consumers want to know where their stuff comes from. Direct trade and ethical sourcing practices can build ethical consumer brands and reduce supply chain risk. However, investment perspectives that value biocultural diversity remain a minority view, and we are somewhat unique in our interests; however, we are not alone. More broadly, business and investment decisions are increasingly informed by climate change risk, which in many cases presupposes the well-being of biodiversity. They are also informed by expanding practices to adopt good Environmental and Social Governance policies and practices. In recent years even the largest food conglomerates are realizing they didn’t know what they don’t know. They realize that they have a very poor understanding of their supply chain risk.

Large food conglomerates are increasingly valuing ecosystems services that affect their supply chains. Extractive industries are increasingly heightening their sensitivity to social equity, especially as it affects Indigenous peoples, as witnessed by the emergence of First Peoples Worldwide, which gets extractive industries to pay to figure out how to mitigate their impact and improve benefits sharing with affected Indigenous peoples. While I do find this approach offers a bit of a moral quandary, it reflects an important trend in the right direction. The scale and velocity of change remains woefully inadequate.
These are positive but very small advances in comparison to the scale and scope of practices negatively impacting BCD. And dominant investment and business practices have yet to even ask the right questions to begin to ascertain their positive and negative roles with regard to BCD. But I clearly see a glimmer of hope, as demonstrated by first movers and innovators coupled with fundamental shifts in our global consciousness that is manifesting in consumer behavior and social movements.

Palma: In the world of business today, there is no consideration given to BCD. At best, sociological and environmental concerns are considered in parallel and seen as related, but their study and application are most often treated as distinct arenas. This separatist reductionism is reflected in the business terminology of social entrepreneurship, social capital markets, green economy, natural capital, human capital, etc. No term integrates the depth of understanding that BCD demands. I believe BCD is harder to metabolize for the mindset of Western culture because BCD challenges a foundational tenet of our worldview, with its imperialist roots, that is challenged neither by environmentalism nor social activism: humans are natural beings that not only belong to, but are a vital part of, their environs.

The information of BCD is complex – it represents multiple worldviews that reflect the diverse spectrum of being human within our earthly homes. Business and the market perspective have traditionally viewed complexity as a barrier to adoption, as understood in Everett M. Rogers’s book, The Diffusion of Innovations (1962). But perhaps complexity is another change horizon. In the sense that discrete innovations that gain rapid adoption in the market have to be user-friendly and understandable to the members of a society, Rogers’s work remains unchallenged. However, the computing age has exposed us to a different relationship with complexity. Also, we see the growing demand for enriched knowledge and contact with meaningful lifeways: as quoted from the above, “It (the economy) should grow in the sense of complexity, offering richer and more fulfilling ways to be and live, and not just in things.” It is possible that, in response to complexity, our market attitudes are evolving from dismissal and confusion to dispositions of curiosity that value the robust offerings complexity brings through diversity.

3. If you think that business models and practices don’t give enough consideration to sustaining biocultural diversity, what factors do you feel hinder a change of attitudes and approaches?

Shaun: I think we need to do a better job of streamlining business and investor consideration for:

- A shift in values. Slavery in the US was considered an acceptable part of capitalism. We had a crisis in values that led to a civil war where our national values ultimately rejected slavery as an acceptable practice in business and investment. While people in all segments of society, including the titans of industry, recognize that something is deeply wrong with our current system, the emerging experiments and demonstrations of alternatives, which include the New Economy Movement, need to better highlight and promote values that honor legacy and the wisdom of nature. These are evident in the design of life systems that are often elegantly translated into the human experience through traditional ecological knowledge.

- Reducing business risk by better valuing BCD. Farming needs to better value pollinators. Erosion of genetic diversity in food is a huge and poorly recognized business and political risk, leading to exposure to the inevitable epidemics faced by large-scale monocultures of genetically homogenous crops.

- Enhancing value through innovation and productivity and gains that might be achieved in better valuing BCD. Biomimicry, which uses nature’s designs to inform new products and innovations, has been around for a while and is currently being rediscovered. I am hopeful biomimicry may offer an onramp to valuing BCD and not just extracting value from nature’s abundant wisdom.

- Connecting a growing consumer demand for ethically and sustainably sourced products is a window of opportunity for BCD. Lotus Rice offers niche rice products from ‘heirloom’ varietals for which they have adopted production standards much more environmentally sustainable than organic. The rice tastes better, it’s healthier, and yes, it is much more expensive than conventional rice. Their sourcing practices enhance BCD. But, they don’t sell BCD; they sell healthy, nutritious, tasty ‘local’ rice.

Donna: Conventionally, governments count jobs and dollars, investors count profits. There is a power in counting; what we measure gets done. If we count biodiversity, if we count culture rising, count languages being restored and brought back to life, count meaningful work, count the closing of the gap between rich and poor, we will make change. We cannot count everything that has meaning, but we can tell the stories that weave meaning; we can ask programs and investors to share those stories. Ethical investors want those metrics and those stories. A high net worth man who made money in the old economy wants to tell his grandchildren that the family money now is being moved from harm to healing. He wants to tell of the medical technology in India, that is saving women’s lives in childbirth.8

When an Indigenous tribe “owns” its own clean energy, and as a leader to the world installs the systems by itself, marking it with its art that honors its ancestors, there is transformation. The transformation happens even if the government agencies who paid for the project only count kilowatts and jobs [see Videography on page 86].

Palma: I believe a core hindrance to integrating the wisdom of BCD for organizational models and practices is the unhealed cultural legacy of the West in relationship to ourselves and all “others” of the world. There is a history that shapes the character of the present and goes largely unremembered in the daily consciousness of dominant culture and its activities. This amnesia allows us to socially function in a denial that perpetuates more of the very behaviors we are keeping in our cultural blind spot.

“Breaking with ‘development’ as a habit of thought is part and parcel of an overdue decolonization of minds… Cleansing the mind from development certainties, however, requires a conscious effort… In particular, it will not be possible to re-conceptualize equity without recovering the diversity of prosperity. Linking the desire for equity to economic growth has been the conceptual cornerstone of the development age. Delinking the desire for equity from economic growth and re-linking it to community and culture-based notions of well-being will be the cornerstone of the post-development age… decentralization and diversity will be guiding principles.

human well-being has many sources beyond money; drawing on them not only provides a base for different styles of prosperity, but makes people and communities more resilient against resource crises and economic shock. In such a perspective, however, the conventional politics of justice is turned upside down. In the development age the rich world was able to sidestep the hard issues of justice, because economic growth was seen as the main tool to bring greater equity into the world. Growth was a substitute for justice, and inequality was no problem as long as the have-nots were able to improve their position along the way. Indeed, for decades development experts defined equity primarily as a problem of the poor… At any rate, the quest for fairness in a finite world means in the first place, changing the rich, not the poor. Poverty alleviation, in other words, cannot be separated from wealth alleviation.”7

Globalized development carries an intensive history that touches every corner of our socioeconomic system. In this system there are patterns of relating, to ourselves and to one another, that require healing attention. While these patterns may also include very personal origins, they are common to the human experience and show up in cultural forms in the workplace and the external efforts of an organization. Our organizations often reflect the habitual dysfunction of our societies. Attending to these patterns of relationship in the larger societal context is what I have come to call organizational healing. [Ed.: For more on organizational healing, see Palma’s article on Wisdom Hotspots in this same issue.]

Ortixia: Most businesses and consumers are caught in the debt trap. Small businesses have the greater chance of creating the soil of BCD, but they are not making it. Businesses in my home town are initiating and going bankrupt like wildfire. I went to Vancouver last summer, and was so saddened to see street block after street block of boarded up buildings, where my favourite restaurants and stores used to be. Chinatown, what was left of it, for example, was no longer carrying the varied traditional quality products but mass produced dollar store items, and tourist souvenirs, such as post-Olympics Canada T-shirts. The more the locals are unable to sustain themselves, the more they need to buy the cheaper, dollar store products, supporting capitalist and slave labor systems. Supply and Demand. Consumers are forced to purchase from big companies rather than say the local butcher, because they cannot afford otherwise. Businesses have to focus on cheap rather than quality in their products. So ultimately the trail of debt has precedence in business decisions and we are caught in this awful Catch-22 situation.
I think public pressure can make a difference, for instance, through social media and through our buying choices as a start. It's too bad that it is just not common sense to respect one another and the environment, so we don't have to fight for social and environmental justice in the first place, but the attitudes are working their way slowly into the mainstream, due to the efforts of organizations like Greenpeace, Amnesty International, Survival International. Secondly, we need models of successful businesses that demonstrate that compassion and cooperation in business work better than competition and greed.

4. If you think that business models and practices should give more consideration to sustaining biocultural diversity, what attitudinal and institutional changes do you feel are needed to make this a primary goal?

What changes in values, ethics, and attitudes is required?

Donna: We must make attitudinal and institutional changes. Governments, foundations and investors can play a huge role, as can new companies and certification standards like B-Corporations and new business indexes like GameChangers500.

We need to understand our place in the living world and the role of culture in making us human. It will be the artists and storytellers that drive this change. Métis (Indigenous and European heritage) and Canadian philosopher/leader Louis Riel said that: “My people will sleep for 100 years, when they awake it will be the artists who give them their spirit back”. In this time artists, storytellers, film makers and the like will play a critical role in helping us remember who we are, who we have been for all of human history, human animals, creatures who make meaning, culture-shaped beings seeking the sacred beyond the material. We have only been on a path of destructive and imbalanced behavior for a short time in our history.

We need to re-conceive the role of business, and governments can do a great deal to shape, incentivize, and penalize businesses and sectors that harm life and culture. There is a role for governments, and it is time for elected officials to step up. Businesses can be built differently from the ground up, and GIIRS (Global Impact Investing Ratings System) and the B-Corporation movement are key to creating businesses that have values baked into the model. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has happened on the margins, with trickles of profit and public relations geared to channeling attention away from harmful practices at the centre of a business towards something pretty and media-genic at the margins. CSR must be made relevant by transforming the core of business operation or it will disappear. GameChangers500 is a new venture designed to celebrate the most sustainable businesses in the world, businesses that build the new world that protects BCD.

Ultimately, finance holds the most powerful tools to overhaul our natural and human-created world. Finance is the fastest moving, most global, biggest channel to align values with the creation of value. If we finance meaningful, serving businesses, they will grow; if we remove finance from harming businesses they will disappear. The flow of capital is the lifeblood of big business and the growth fuel of small businesses. If investors back clean energy and leave fossil fuels, our energy system will transform suddenly. If we invest in small-scale community-owned clean energy, it will thrive. If we move money to permaculture, small-scale farms, they will multiply; if we divert from industrial and polluting agro-business, it will contract. Through people's investments and people's control of institutional capital (pensions, mortgages, and other investments) we can turn on a dime. Ultimately we have the power to change almost everything through finance and we only need to realize, realign and finance the regenerative world.

Palma: Our organizations need to learn that embracing BCD is part of a long-term transformation of predict and control methodologies upon which most organizations currently base their daily operations. Entering into this new relationship with diversity is disruptive—especially to the "predict and control" model.

“When you understand the power of system self-organization, you begin to understand why biologists and economists worship biodiversity even more than they understand the preciousness of every genetic variation in the world’s ground squirrels… Insistence on a single culture shuts down learning and cuts back resilience. Any system, biological, economic, or social, that gets so encrusted that it cannot self-evolve, a system that systematically scorns experimentation and wipes out the raw material of innovation, is doomed over the long term on this highly variable planet. The intervention point here is obvious, but unpopular. Encouraging variability and experimentation and diversity means ‘losing control.’ Let a thousand flowers bloom and anything could happen!”

The practice of Biomimicry as a design approach is increasing in its adoption, both conceptually and in application. Janine Benyus, the founder of Biomimicry, says, “It’s about looking to nature for inspiration for new inventions… It’s learning to live gracefully on this planet by consciously emulating life’s genius. It’s not really technology or biology; it’s the technology of culture.” Perhaps there is a technology of culture we have not yet allowed into our Western imagination. Perhaps “emulating life’s genius” also means emulating diverse cultures as part of life. We must be careful here – I am not suggesting an extractive act of co-opting what belongs to others, but a consideration of the beauty and bounty of the immense contributions all cultures have to make to our collective human experience. A “Biomimicry” of sorts for sociocultural systems based on learnings from BCD could be a very powerful lens for sharing and shaping worldviews as well as informing practices among cultures.

Bringing diversity to the table, at the breadth and depth that causes disruptive innovation, may not be easy. It may annihilate the “predict and control” model (which is largely illusory anyway). However, the results of losing control to diversity may yield what we could not intentionally craft with all of our cleverness and good intentions. In this way, and many others, I believe BCD will support the improvement and transformation of organizational models and practices at significant cultural levels for global society.

Shaun: I am not clear we can ever get the world to make BCD a primary goal. I believe we are in the middle of a revolution we cannot see clearly which is as significant as the industrial revolution. We have leaped off the precipice into ecological crisis; we now need to adapt to climate change, and the question remains the magnitude of the crisis. Given the order of magnitude of global economic and social inequity, it is the pre-text to an inevitable revolution, which could be violent but will likely be non-violent. Crisis begets the collapse of a dominant paradigm and the rise of experimentation and innovation leading to alternatives. And the range and pace of innovation today is unprecedented, while offering many glimmers of hope.

A shift in values needs to be driven by social movements first and foremost. I am hopeful for a convergence of values to reset our expectations for what is acceptable social equity and respect for mother earth. I am hopeful, and believe in the Mayan view that the Maya together with all indigenous traditions are headed for a resurgence to be revalued politically, economically and socially. And, with that resurgence, traditional ecological knowledge can be affirmed and disseminated.

Business built to last does not focus on profit maximization (a model of our failing paradigm) but rather building long-term value. This approach encourages and can require valuing all stakeholders, and allows companies to better internalize what too often is considered a market externality (e.g., producers don’t reflect the price of pollution in the price of their products). Building long-term value empowers long-term planning – we need to move away from 3-5 year strategic plans to 100-year business plans, which will enhance our ability to value BCD.

Polycentric governance is a concept that gained traction through the work of Nobel Laureate Elinor Ostrom. I believe it offers a powerful alternative to the tragedy of the commons (Garrett Hardin). It points to data- and science-backed approaches to cooperation that offer superior value to the individual and the collective than individualism centered on maximizing self-interest. “What’s in it for us” in contrast to our dominant ethic of “What’s in it for me” is a traditional value embedded in the world’s indigenous cultures that offers an ethical pillar to better value and support BCD.
I do think it’s possible to adopt a new dominant global economic paradigm in my grandchildren’s lifetime that will prioritize enhancing regenerative life systems. It will take the form easy-to-understand concepts like:

- Eliminate the idea and creation of waste
- Eliminate our use of fossils
- Honor legacy (and value the shoulders on which we stand today, including the wisdom of our ancestors and our connection to our indigeneity)
- Value relationships to one another and to nature as analogous to a basic human need. [take out period]

Ortixia: I am reading this remarkable book called Business and the Buddha, by Lloyd Field, and would like to share the essence of his suggestions:

“ A ‘Better Society’ is manifest in the following seven domains:
- Philosophy: [...] the focus is on enhancing the quality of life rather than having. [...] 
- Values: Based on the principles of reverence for all sentient beings, compassion and non-violence promote harmony within and between societies as well with the natural world.
- Individuals: Self-Awareness and self-responsibility are hallmarks. The practices of Skillful Concentration and Skillful Mindfulness are encouraged and supported.
- Economy: Cooperative rather than competitive practices change the direction of free enterprise.
- Resources: Used relative to availability and sustainability. By mutual consent, the manufacturing of goods is limited to satisfying the society’s fundamental needs and requirements.
- Environment: Society would practice a holistic stewardship over nature, so that human activities would have limited environmental impact.
- Population: Size based on the availability of renewable natural and human resources [and] diversity.

5. What sorts of practical measures should be put in place to attain a business system that favors creation and maintenance of diversity in nature and culture over short-term returns?

Palma: To transform the approach towards short-term returns there is a significant amount of work that needs to be done at a structural level. In essence, we have to invest in some long-term changes in order to affect short-term measures at a practical level. Specifically, we have to look at changing methods of governance, adopting other approaches to organizational design, applying different tactics for raising capital, promoting new economic architectures of investment and ownership, and developing a system of values that is fully integrated into the laws governing business structure and practice. The good news is, this seed of change has been building momentum over the past decade! Some emergent examples of these transformative forces are Holacracy, Cutting Edge Capital, and B-Corporations, to name a few.

Holacracy is an agnostic tool, in the sense that it is an approach that can be applied to any corporate structure. Sociocracy, a unique structuring, governance and decision-making method that has been organizationally implemented in Europe since the mid 1970s, has influenced Holacracy. “In its emphasis on iterative governance, adaptive processes, and self-organization, Holacracy draws inspiration from Agile software development principles and the Lean Manufacturing process. Holacracy is highly compatible with stakeholder theory as its board structure allows for multiple stakeholders to be represented in the governance of an organization and for multiple organizations with shared interests to be linked at the governance level.”

Holacracy has become a game-changer in the U.S.A. and abroad for the traditional hierarchical structure of top-down management. Besides supporting a high degree of creativity and agility through methods of how meetings are run, Holacracy creates a “double-linking” structure of team “circle” relationships throughout the hierarchical model that promotes communication and collaboration across all roles and levels of leadership. Thus, the top-down style of leadership is transformed to become more democratic, or rather “holocratic,” coming from the Greek word holon which means a whole that is part of a greater whole. One of the distinguishing features of Holacracy is that there are no job titles and no managers. As founder of Holacracy, Brian Robertson, says, “the most radical transition is for the CEO, whose role as they have known it becomes obsolete. Taking on other ways of governance is key to innovating for transparency, as well as embodying new types of distributed leadership and operational methods in corporate structures.

Most recently, the company Zappos adopted Holacracy. Alexis Gonzales-Black, who is leading the transition to Holacracy at Zappos, says, “One of the core principles is people taking personal accountability for their work. It’s not leaderless. There are certainly people who hold a bigger scope of purpose for the organization than others. What it does do is distribute leadership into each role. Everybody is expected to lead and be an entrepreneur in their own roles, and Holacracy empowers them to do so.” In its highest-functioning form, he says, the system is “politics-free, quickly evolving to define and operate the purpose of the organization, responding to market and real-world conditions in real time. It’s creating a structure in which people have flexibility to pursue what they’re passionate about.”

I believe governance systems like Holacracy have the capacity to hold wider, more diverse input for creating business strategy, services and products that will serve the global whole. New governance methods like this one may allow business to hear previously silenced voices, internally and externally, that hold the key contributions for insights and innovations that support the well being of global stakeholders.

Cutting Edge Capital is an organization that champions the ability of non-accredited investors to participate in investing in their local and non-local economies. “In general, crowdfunding involves soliciting a large number of people to contribute to your funding campaign. While each person may give a small amount, when there are lots of contributions, the total can be quite large. Any solicitation of the public to make an investment falls under securities law and requires filings with securities regulators before the offering can be made. There are many crowdfunding platforms like IndieGogo and Kickstarter that avoid this requirement by only allowing donations. No return on investment can be offered on these sites (other than small perks of nominal value). It is possible to crowdfund investments as long as the required legal filings are done first. This process is often called a Direct Public Offering (DPO) (also known as Investment Crowdfunding). DPO is a generic term that includes any offer and sale of an investment opportunity to the public in which anyone (both wealthy and non-wealthy) can invest. Also, the entity that is raising the funds offers the investment directly, without a middleman like an investment bank.”

Cutting Edge Capital is another example of how values can be honored in the business system. It represents the ability to source from investors that are like-minded and supportive of motives for business in addition to making money, and thus alleviates some of the pressures on business to submit to hostile take-overs or venture capital that does not necessarily uphold the founding values of an enterprise.

B-Corporations, or benefit corporations, are an emergent legal structure that enables a corporation to act as beholden to their stakeholders, and not exclusively to their shareholders. This is a fundamental change in the legal obligations of a corporation beginning to take place! “The major characteristics of the benefit corporation form are: 1) a requirement that a benefit corporation must have a corporate purpose to create a material positive impact on society and the environment; 2) an expansion of the duties of directors to require consideration of non-financial stakeholders as well as the financial interests of shareholders; and 3) an obligation to report on its overall social and environmental performance using a comprehensive, credible, independent and transparent third-party standard. The B-Corp certification is to sustainable business what Fair Trade certification is to coffee or USDA Organic certification is to milk. B-Corps are certified by the nonprofit B-Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. Today, there is a growing community of more than 910 Certified B-Corps from 29 countries and 60 industries working together toward 1 unifying goal: to redefine success in business.”

When corporations choose not to be bound by “shareholder primacy”, which mandates that they maximize shareholder profit, a new world of business opens up. While B-Corporations and other approaches to legal entity innovations, such as a low-profit limited liability companies (L3Cs), flexible purpose corporations and various state constituency statutes, are still finding their way to become user-friendly for entrepreneurs and already
If we finance meaningful, serving businesses, they will grow; if we remove finance from harming businesses they will disappear. The flow of capital is the lifeblood of big business and the growth fuel of small businesses. If investees back clean energy and leave fossil fuels, our energy system will transform suddenly. If we invest in small-scale community-owned clean energy, it will thrive.

If we move money to permaculture, small-scale farms, they will multiply; if we divest from industrial and polluting agro-business, it will contract. Through people's investments and people's control of institutional capital (pensions, mortgages, and other investments) we can turn on a dime. Ultimately we have the power to change almost everything through finance and we only need to realize, realign and finance the regenerative world. –Donna Morton

established businesses, they represent an important part of transforming the economic landscape. B-Corps in particular allow the articles of incorporation to be re-written (normally, a boiler-plate version is adopted) to include specific concerns and values of stakeholders.

These new entities are contributing to a key leverage point in transforming the capitalist system: an enduring continuum of values. They create the capacity for an intergenerational legacy of values and behaviors that can legally follow a business through changes in leadership, a merger, or a sales event.

Donna: Specific measures include:

- Governments need to align taxation with global best practices and drive innovation and reduced throughput and energy use (carbon taxes etc.).
- Governments need to create investment and load loss guarantees [please ask Donna to clarify what "load loss guarantees" are—it's technical jargon that people won't understand] to stimulate the most disruptive innovations in agriculture, clean tech and cultural entrepreneurship and finance.
- Foundations need to further fund the development of measurable, pragmatic, intuitive metrics that lead to the regenerative economy and tell a compelling story that mobilizes action.
- Finance needs to align with regeneration and move money from harm to healing.

Ortixia: I feel that more consideration should be given to small businesses. Small businesses are close to home, and tend to have an understanding of what is needed in the community and local environment. They are able to pay closer attention to the needs of the individuals, and funds return to the community.

Consider business practices that take into consideration the cultural identity and customs of the people. For example, in King’s article (see page 62), the women’s Maize Collective, focused on rescuing heirloom corn, takes into consideration that the women have families to care for, and the women are flexible in their work schedules to accommodate for that. Consideration must be given for cultural holidays. Also, consideration and understanding must be given to the different ways in which different cultures run their businesses. Paperwork, for example, is a difficulty in many native cultures; but if there are written contracts and agreements, they should be in the employees’ native language. Bartering, reciprocity, and bargaining should be considered as a part of the business process, and Customary Law should be taken into account.

We, as consumers, need to change our values, to appreciate the home-spun, the local, quality products. And there could be a “bioculturally friendly” product certification and logo, that people can put on their products provided they meet specified cultural and environmental requirements. Perhaps people may be encouraged to buy these more bioculturally sustainable products.

6. How can we best transition from where we are now to a business system that rewards and enhances biocultural diversity? Can you mention any examples of business or community initiatives where such a transition is already happening, and/or any thinkers who are pointing the way in this direction?

Shaun: We have arrived at the dawn of a new era – profit and doing good can no longer be separated. Profit can sustain and grow organizations and communities. When profit is earned in a way that relies on creating good, in a way the affirms regenerative life systems, we can then have social constructs of communities, organizations and companies that build social good.

Any product that relies on trees, water, food, or energy needs to build regenerative life systems. My work as an investor in biocultural resilience affords me exposure to hundreds of companies that aspire to do just that. A few examples:

- Ecomadera in on track to profitably restore and protect one of the most biodiverse forests on earth in Ecuador.
- Native American Natural Foods, working out of the Lakota Pine Ridge Reservation, has an anchor product, the Tanka Bar, building an economic pillar to bring back buffalo to the prairies of the Black Hills of South Dakota.
- The Cooper River Wild Salmon Company based in Cordoba, Alaska is building a disruptive innovation practice to accelerate sustainable management of salmon fisheries, championed by a visionary Eyak leader, Dune Lankard.
- And farmer coops offer a distributed economic and social system. Coops are more prevalent than most people understand, and there are many examples of indigenous farmer coops that value the protection and restoration of nature along with cultural resilience. One inspiring example is La Voz que Clama en el Desierto (“The Voice that Cries in the Wilderness”) on the shores of Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, whose self-identified survival and well-being depend upon no chemical inputs in farming, tending to sustaining genetic diversity, and expansion of cultural identity and practices.

We can best structure to this new approach by creating an ecosystem of economic, political and social structures that value innovation, our connection to nature, and honoring legacy. This can mean:

- More programs that offer training and mentoring to indigenous social entrepreneurs
- Greater attention to supporting women in entrepreneurial leadership
- More favorable public policy for: indigenous entrepreneurs
  nature-based companies, and
  collective resource rights and local governance on appropriate scales for nature
- More philanthropy for innovative risk takers
- Support to local financial institutions to lend and invest in practices that may initially appear more “risky”, with governmental and philanthropic interventions to “de-risk” investment with new practices and strategies
- Investment in solutions that reduce and eliminate external threats to biocultural landscapes, like the elimination of plastic through companies like Teracycle.

Finally, regarding some great thinkers whose work inspires and guides me in considering how business and investment can become a powerful force in support of biocultural resilience:

- Hunter Lovins offers a powerful approach to sustainability
- John Fullerton is becoming a champion of regenerative finance
- Winona LaDuke is powerful visionary and doer
- Alejandro Argumedo is a biocultural pioneer and international coordinator of the Indigenous People’s Biodiversity Network (IPBN)
- Hazel Henderson is a futurist and visionary New Economy iconoclast
- Elinor Ostrom revealed some new truths and we have yet to reap the full benefits of her powerful insights
Per Olsson at the Stockholm Resilience Centre is churning out contemporary research on socio-ecological systems dynamics.

**Palma:** The greatest opportunities for transition are anywhere culture, diversity and values currently apply in our organizational designs, as well as in looking for new pathways to include BCD in organizational strategy. For example, there exist low-hanging fruit in redefining diversity policies, augmenting the meaning of cultural intelligence for organizational behavior, influencing leadership training, shaping stakeholder management processes, and significantly strengthening sustainability initiatives. In parallel with affecting these already existing aspects of organizational operations, what is also vital to systemic transformation is leveraging new tools that are emerging (as mentioned in my answer to question #5) for governance, capitalization, and legal incorporation to support the inclusion of BCD in organizational tools like the examples I cited above (#5), if wielded for the benefit of BCD, could become very powerful forces in changing the market from within. The main questions on my mind are, "How do we put the wisdom of BCD in leadership of innovation instead of trying to fit BCD into innovative ideas? How do we avoid extracting and consuming the knowledge of BCD and instead enter authentic relationships with the holders of biocultural wisdoms? How does Western culture embrace the humility necessary to be accountable for its own limits to knowledge (i.e., the scientific method does not answer everything for humanity) in the context of a bioculturally rich global community of diverse worldviews while simultaneously being adaptive enough to engage otherwise in ways previously thought impossible?"

**Donna:** Other places to look more deeply at the themes and practices I mentioned:

- SOCAP: http://socialcapitalmarkets.net/
- Unreasonable Institute: http://unreasonableinstitute.org/what-we-do/
- Capital Institute: http://www.capitalinstitute.org/
- Principium: www.principium.co

**Ortixia:** The transition: What kind of support is there for small businesses, and how effective is it? On Salt Spring Island, we encourage the “shop local” idea, but it is very hard for me to buy my cheese locally, because we make local products, made with care and equity, more affordable for all, without running the risk that the diversity and knowledge, the local farmers, the farmers are raising their animals with care, and the process is more time-consuming as it is closer to hand-made. How do we make local products, made with care and equity, more affordable for all, without running the risk that the small farm or company will be bought out by a larger corporation to meet demand at a cheaper price? Perhaps we need a subsidized local discount, or some other sort of hybrid agreement that allows for the autonomy of the small business to sustain BCD practices, while making products affordable locally.

The best example I can see of a beautiful business initiative is the Cusco Weavers project in Peru, which we featured in Langscape 9. You can read about it at http://www.textilescusco.org/index.html.

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**DISCUSSANT COMMENTS**

**Kierin Mackenzie:** There are major cracks in the dominant models of business as usual. Many of these cracks are the strongest drivers of reductions in diverse systems globally, wiping out forests and mountains and fisheries as the rocks and trees and fish are converted into raw commodities for the global system, and displacing the peoples living there, driving them into cities, spreading disease, and bringing to bear state power and other forms of coercion to keep the path for business as smooth as possible. Wages and fines are seen as costs to be reduced, and there has been an active assault on environmental laws, worker’s rights and human rights in general in order to maximize profit at the expense of every other living being.

In some very real ways, ecology and economy are one. An economy based on winner-take-all linear thinking and the concept of survival of the fittest and valuing short-term cycling over long-term productivity seems to reproduce across the landscape on all scales. We are selecting for fast-breeding organisms that are generalists, adapted to surviving the adversity of a rapid disturbance regime, and we are killing off the specialized and the ancient. New vs. old, fast vs. slow, now vs. later.

Many people have realized that business as usual cannot continue on a finite planet, bumping against constraints that affect the habitability of the planet for many species—ourselves included—and that the costs to the global heritage of biodiversity and cultural diversity is unacceptable.

What are some of the problems? Donna Morton points out that systems reward that which is measured, that our choice of metrics has a significant effect on how the system will evolve, and thereby suggests that we keep track of metrics reflecting biodiversity and cultural diversity. Palma Vizzoni associates the current ways of doing business with the colonial mindset, the "othering" of everything and everyone else under the sun except for a core community, the problems associated with the current globalized narratives of “development”, and sees organizational thought as in need of healing. Shaun Paul also discusses a need for a shift in values, and a more general mimicry of natural patterns. Ortixa Dilts discusses the debt trap that keeps people committed to systems they don’t believe in. These are not always easy problems to grasp, let alone face and resolve, especially when those in positions of power tend to be loath to change a system that clearly has worked for them up until now. The profit-at-all-costs model works for many at the top, and people who are comfortable prefer cosmetic changes to deeper changes.

The panelists have a wealth of experience and knowledge at their fingertips, and holacracy, B-corporations, the role foundations can play and have played, the continuing vitality of small businesses, and companies linking the protection of the environment to their profits all are looked at in one regard or another. They all reflect an understanding that there are better ways to do business, and that it is possible for diversity to be valued and encouraged.

My question is this. Ecosystems, species, cultures, and languages evolve on a time scale that dwarfs the lifespan of your average business, or your average person, or even your average nation-state. Yet, with the current power held in the hands of Homo sapiens, they can be wiped out in a relative blink for reasons as passing as, for example, a cheaper fat for processed foods and a way of satisfying a bureaucratic requirement for biofuels. If we are to truly live with diversity, we must have ways of planning for the long term on a scale that dwarfs the quarterly cycle or even the Stalinesque five-year business plan. What would that look like? What stories do we need to tell ourselves and share with each other and the generations to come?

We are not the first humans to struggle with questions of how to respect the earth and each other. Some answers are encoded in song, in story, in ritual, and in the recognition of special times, special places, and special beings. We are losing these understandings right when we need them most. Humans when entering a new area often end up trashing the local biota at first, and then over time find ways to model the local intricacies of place and behavior. This re-visioning of our place in the cosmos, our place with each other and with the world around us is constantly adapting. Palma Vizzoni quotes Donella Meadows in her discussion, and I believe Meadows realized something vital for the long-term vitality of all. “Encouraging variability and experimentation and diversity means ‘losing control.’ Let a thousand flowers bloom and anything could happen!” This is the ultimate value of diversity in all forms. Let us grow gardens physical and metaphorical, lush and beautiful. Let’s experiment. Let’s keep asking questions, and remaining wary of single answers.
**Videography**

Videos to accompany the Langscape articles in this issue.
Watch Videos at: [http://www.terralinguaboutonu.org/Langscape/video/video](http://www.terralinguaboutonu.org/Langscape/video/video)

**Haidawood**: Page 14. Haidawood animations have been screened at film and cultural festivals in Canada, the United States, South Africa, and Finland. Haidawood just released a DVD entitled *Haidawood: Our Stories Animated* (2013).

**Haida Raid (30 sec, 2007)**: This was the original proof-of-concept animation. The puppets were made from Bionicles (a LEGO toy) and feature heads carved from avocado pits by Gwaai Edenshaw.

**Hoopla (5 minutes, 2007)**: An original story about a basketball game between Massett and Skidegate. The animation uses English and Haida phrases, and references hip-hop and basketball culture.

**Golden Spruce (2008)**: The legend of how the Golden Spruce came to be. A boy and his grandfather leave their dying village and a fateful encounter with a salmon leads to a magical transformation.

**Yaanii K’uuka (2008)**: A naughty little girl won’t eat her food. Her mother warns her to be nice or Yaanii K’uuka will get her. Sure enough, she is kidnapped by Yaanii K’uuka and must find her own way to escape.

**Haida Raid 2 (5 minutes, 2012)**: What happens if Prime Minister Stephen Harper decides to go ahead with building the Northern Gateway pipeline? This viral video has had over 20,000 views and is the perfect storm of edgy art, political protest, and internet satire.

**Taaw story (7 minutes, 2013)**: The traditional story of how Tow Hill moved from the centre of Haida Gwaii to his current location on North Beach.

**Nuu story (9 minutes, 2013)**: Told by the late Tsinii Stephen Brown before he passed away. Fishermen are mysteriously disappearing off the West Coast of Haida Gwaii and two heroes decide to find out why.

Katie Kameleonela, GESA, from article page 34.

**Hokulea World Wide Voyage (6 minutes, 2013)**

Maeva Gauthier & Maria Acemah, from article page 58.

**Weather or Not (4:04 minutes, 2013)** is about observations of coastal change around Kaktovik, a village located at the edge of Alaska in the Arctic.

Business and Economics Panel from page 72

**Unreasonables - Clean Fuel To Save Africa’s Forests** (2:38 minutes, 2012) Moses Sanga has been witness to the aggressive deforestation of his home in Africa. He’s trying to create a new economy (and save the forests) by empowering locals to make charcoal from something other than wood, and then teaching them how to sell it.

**Heretics Wanted: Donna Morton at TEDxVictoria** (16:36 minutes, 2013)
UNITY IN BIOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

Share your voice for biocultural diversity!

www.terralinguaubuntu.org

Introducing Terralingua Ubuntu: a space for Terralingua members and friends to come together as a community, connect, and work together to sustain the biocultural diversity of life. From the word ubuntu in the isiXhosa and isiZulu languages of South Africa: 1. humanity or personhood, achieved through interconnectedness with other people and community; 2. an African philosophy of humanism, grounded in the notion that human identity and dignity arise out of respect, concern, compassion, generosity, and reciprocity toward others—family, neighbors, ancestors, community, and the human race at large.

Become a Terralingua member, and join a vibrant worldwide network of biocultural diversity supporters and champions. Our new membership system offers several options, so that all can join and share their voice. Members receive our news, can enjoy our elegant magazine Langscape, participate in our discussion forum, receive discounts on our publications, and more.

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Our goal is to explore the idea on what a biocultural approach to education would look like through contributions from global educators and others. We welcome articles, interviews, case studies, poetry, expressions of art and photographs. Please submit your idea in a one page word doc format to the editor.

DEADLINE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST: March 1, 2014

To access the Langscape Contributors’ Guidelines, please visit (http://www.terralinguaubuntu.org/Langscape/contribute-an-article).

Contact the Editor: Ortixia Dilts, ortixia@terralingua.org

Langscape is an extension of the voice of Terralingua. It supports our mission by educating the minds and hearts about the importance and value of biocultural diversity. We aim to promote a paradigm shift by illustrating biocultural diversity through scientific and traditional knowledge, within an elegant sensory context of articles, stories and art.
Whether or not humankind is going to succeed in transitioning into the Ecozoic Age depends ultimately on our individual and collective courage to commit to a more holistic worldview that is based on valuing biocultural diversity for our own and our planet’s well-being. For such a transformation to occur, a few key elements must be present. We must accept the fact that change as an inalienable part of life, and we should not always be trying to avert it at any cost. We must be realistic about the scope and scale of what should be done to correct the course, as well as what each of us is capable of doing. We must also expand our notion of community from a group of people united by their geographic or genetic proximity, to a broader global community inclusive of other like-minded individuals and groups united by their recognition of the value of biocultural diversity as the very “pulsating heart” of Nature. Ultimately, we must move toward a biologically and culturally rich world not only through our work, but more importantly by changing our own thinking and actions to be guided by principles of reciprocity, respect and reverence toward each other and the planet. Only through such comprehensive transformation of our own nature could we hope to ensure that Nature remains bioculturally resilient for generations to come.

~Gleb Raygorodetsky, The World We Want (LS 2:12)