



HIGHLIGHTS FROM FORUM '97
19 NOVEMBER 1997

Forum '97 participants attended a Plenary workshop on Engaging Communities Through Theater, Dance and Song, and participated in several simultaneous workshops in the morning and afternoon. Participants also enjoyed a film and video series and a theater/dance presentation, "The Spirits are Now Happy," performed by Programa de Activistas Culturais (Mozambique).

PLENARY WORKSHOP

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH THEATER, DANCE AND SONG

Ken Wilson, Ford Foundation (Mozambique), said he was delighted by the attention to performances given by the organizers of Forum '97. He said that an outside observer might notice that governments and institutions do not always represent a broad spectrum of values, and art is a means to fill this gap.

Fiore Zulli, Teatro del Ogro (Bolivia), emphasized the character of theater as a communication tool and noted how it helped other disciplines to enhance their impact. He raised the question of what theater is, and indicated that it is meant to stimulate imagination and to establish a link between actors and spectators.

David Simpson and Jane Lapiner, Human Nature (US), spoke of theater as a means to bring a community together and bridge differences among its members. They gave an example of how a musical comedy had served to bring together community members with diverging interests around a common cause: the conservation of King salmon in a community in northern California. Ana Paula Ruis of the Provincial Wildlife and Forestry Service, Alexandre Lourenço of the Programa de Activistas Culturais and David Abilio of the Companhia Nacional de Canto e Dança (Mozambique) informed the participants of a program through which artists engage local communities with conservation. This is particularly important in Mozambique where a large portion of the population is illiterate and does not speak Portuguese. Dance is a medium with which the people are comfortable and through which they are able to communicate. The dance theater approach has been used in a campaign to encourage voting after the end of the civil war and is now used to educate the people about the need to conserve resources for sustainable development. The actors go out in the country to talk to local people and learn from their experience, and this research is then integrated in the ballet. The dance is also based on traditional dance forms.

WORKSHOPS

Marine Conservation Issues in the Mediterranean and Black Sea: Panelists indicated that pollution in the Black Sea is a local, national and international issue. The most crucial issues in

this area are marine pollution, overfishing and the introduction of alien species. Local NGOs have begun addressing these problems, and the six states that border the Black Sea have simultaneously joined in an international cooperative effort. One participant said that it was particularly important that all the sectors come together at this Forum to find the right balance between conservation and development. A dialogue was initiated with representatives of NGOs from Ukraine, Georgia and Romania. It was highlighted that NGOs must work together if they want to achieve significant results. Participants also discussed oil and detergent pollution, currents and endangered species of the Turkish straits system. The panelists said that more data collection was needed before decisive action could be taken. One panelist then gave a presentation on the effects of an oil spill in the Marmara Sea and highlighted the absence of adequate infrastructure to respond to such disasters. In the concluding discussion, a participant remarked that science is not enough and that NGOs have already been successful in participating in the Black Sea Environment Programme and must now engage in more practical actions.

Evaluating Eden: The workshop moderator recalled that IIED project on community wildlife management (CWM) being implemented in different regions of the world. Participants discussed factors that had been identified by the regional review teams of the "Evaluating Eden" project as being crucial to CWM, including: institutional capacity; the cost-benefit ratio; impacts on biodiversity; definition and identification of the concerned "community;" incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge; intra-community differences and inequalities; donor influence; land rights; human population density; geographical location; and buffer zones.

In considering how to evaluate whether CWM is effective, participants agreed that the initial step was to identify the goals that had been set for a given project. The ensuing discussion focused on the type of criteria used to set and implement those goals. Some participants suggested that CWM goals could be considered on two planes: biodiversity conservation and the resulting community benefits and well-being. Other participants pointed out the need to disaggregate the goals of a given project to determine whether they are compatible or contradictory. The definition of baselines was also identified as key to evaluation. Some noted the importance of community involvement throughout the life of the project, from setting its goals to evaluating its outcomes.

The issue of indicators as a tool for evaluation was also addressed. Some participants were of the view that indicators should be measurable in the field, either qualitatively or quantitatively. There was agreement that indicators should serve to measure the success of a given project. It was noted that the second phase of the "Evaluating Eden" project involved case studies in different regions as a means of evaluation. In this regard, participants pointed to the need to identify a common set of indicators to allow

comparison between case studies. After extensive discussion, participants agreed on a list of quantitative and qualitative indicators that regional project coordinators could use when assessing case studies, including: is the community satisfied with and/or supportive of wildlife conservation; who in the community is satisfied and/or supportive and who is not; are wildlife populations increasing, and which species specifically; is habitat conservation being enhanced; are underprivileged people receiving benefits and being empowered; are culturally important goals being met; are financial benefits greater than costs; is livelihood security increasing; and what is the degree of community ownership and participation in the project? Criteria for case study selection were also addressed, including geographical location, ecological, social and ethnic representation, availability of information and local contacts.

Mediation as a Tool for Natural Resource Use: Facilitators distinguished mediation from litigation and arbitration as a means to resolve conflicts. It was noted that mediation offers room for creativity and flexibility whereas legal processes are more restrictive. Participants discussed how to reach equitable solutions when mediating between parties with differing degrees of power, noting that a primary function of an intermediary is to attempt to equalize these imbalances of power in finding solutions. The importance of access to information in negotiating resolutions was highlighted. Participants engaged in a game where they divided into groups and were provided with a bag of Tinker toys, which represented a limited resource. They were to develop a plan to build the highest structure possible with the toys, and then were given a limited time to carry out their plan. Participants discussed ways that the game mirrored the mediation process, highlighting the use of information-gathering, learning and innovation, unwillingness by some parties to participate, a lack of cooperation between groups, and time pressure to reach a solution.

National Environmental Funds as an Option to Finance Conservation and Development Activities: The panelist presented a framework for successful national environmental funds, outlined their benefits and highlighted models of existing funds in several countries. Workshop participants described experiences with establishing and governing environmental funds in Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, Bolivia and Indonesia. Several topics were touched upon in the ensuing discussion, including: private sector funds; alliances between international institutions, governments, private donors and environmental organizations for establishing and managing funds; the need for civil society representation in fund management; and fund-governing structures including government agencies, NGOs, and a combination of NGOs and governments.

New Directions in Community-based Conservation: Approaches and Tools: Representatives from the World Wildlife Fund, the Nature Conservancy and Southern Africa Network presented lessons learned from their respective conservation initiatives. Common lessons included the importance of: balancing organizational objectives with partners' objectives; maintaining the perspective of the project in the "larger picture;" realistic planning and clarification of responsibilities; linking international policy work with project level work; connections between national and international policies and local actions; institutional and local capacity-building; applying lessons from the field to policy creation; and effectively linking policy analysis and advocacy work.

Drawing on these lessons, recommendations were made for future program design, including: development of conservation initiatives appropriate for mitigating local area threats; incorporation of monitoring and evaluation elements in programs; establishment of mechanisms to avoid exacerbating conservation threats; improvement of communication and collaboration between donors and implementers; employment of a holistic approach to project

design and implementation; adoption of an adaptive management style; and development of approaches that address multiple issues. In the discussion that followed, participants explored: how realistic and attainable program goals are; the importance of local participation; the need to extend donor time horizons; the importance of addressing public policy issues such as land tenure; the validity of the protected area model for conservation; linkages between environmental services for local communities and biodiversity conservation; the question of what comes first, biodiversity or development; and the need for institutional and organizational collaboration to meet communities' multiple development needs.

Ethics and the Environment: Workshop participants identified ways through which moral and ethical issues intersect their work. They discussed different scales of environmental ethics, at personal, community, institutional, national and international levels. It was noted that while the Earth Charter represents one avenue through which to establish an environmental ethic at an international level, concrete solutions about what communities can do to address the environmental realities that confront them cannot be found within such a general conceptual ethic. Participants debated whether there is a need for a universal environmental ethic or many different ethics that reflect different local histories and cultural and spiritual values. Participants underscored that, with regard to resource use, many individuals and communities face a dilemma between short-term survival needs and long-term security. It was agreed that basic needs must take precedence, but capitalist and socialist modes of production should not be replicated, and so the question becomes how to incorporate environmental ethics into economic models to make them more sustainable. The time it takes to cultivate and integrate such ethics was also noted as problematic given the pressing nature of environmental issues.

Interdisciplinary Training for Conservation and Development: Participants discussed interdisciplinary programs they are involved with and stressed the need for and importance of training natural resource managers, economists, policy makers and scientists in an interdisciplinary manner to understand the cross-sectoral nature of environmental problems and the need for multi-faceted solutions to these problems. Participants considered how to connect and integrate academic training with fieldwork, emphasizing the need for fieldwork to be politically informed and socially relevant and for social science to be scientifically informed so that the two are symbiotic. They discussed means of assessing whether interdisciplinary programs are successful and how to incorporate such assessments for continual program improvement. Participants agreed to communicate electronically to exchange information on evaluation methods.

IISD's *Sustainable Developments* will produce a summary issue of Forum '97, which will be available on Sunday, 23 November 1997. For the summary, as well as daily issues and photos, please visit our World Wide Web site for the conference:

<<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/sd/forum97.html>>

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