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Remembering the 14th ISE Congress in Bhutan

Contributed by Sangay Wangchuk

May 2012, Montpellier-France, the Toka Toka (Darrel Posey walking stick) was handed over to Bhutan by the 13th International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE) congress organizers. It was indeed a great privilege for the Ugyen Wangchuk Institute for Conservation and Environment. Hosting the 14th ISE in Bhutan not only provided a huge opportunity to Bhutanese but also to congress participants to further revive, strengthen and appreciate some of the fading indigenous and cultural practices in the fast changing world. It also played a vital role in fulfilling the Royal Government of Bhutan's policy to empower the community in the use of natural resources and further promote the ethno-biological knowledge for better conservation of the biological resources of the country. The congress also provided ample opportunities for indigenous communities across the country to participate, share and learn about complex inter relationships between human and biological environments that exist worldwide.

Since the time immemorial Bhutanese have lived very closely with their surroundings. They survived depending on the natural resources, living with it and respecting it. Traditions and cultures of Bhutanese revolve around nature and environment, thus, to recognize the important role earth and environment played to the Bhutanese communities and indigenous communities across the globe, the theme **Regenerating biocultural ecosystem resilience and traditional knowledge – Chi Nor Zom Bu Ling** was selected for the 14th ISE congress. Chi Nor Zom Bu Ling means One Earth for All in Dzongkha (The National Language of Bhutan).

The over-arching theme was supported by the following sub-themes :

- I. Living Well: Environment, Sacred Heritage and Livelihood
- II. Protected Areas, Ecotourism and Community Involvement
- III. Intergenerational Learning/ Transmission of Knowledge
- IV. Ethnobiology and Ecosystem Services-Broadening the Conversation
- V. Influencing Governance Policies (Community-based natural resource management, gender, participation, citizen science.)
- VI. Ethnobiology in Mountain Communities
- VII. Mindfulness, Ethics and Mental Ecology).

The opening ceremony of the congress was conducted on one of the auspicious days of the Bhutanese calendar (Fourth day of the Fourth Bhutanese month corresponding to June 1, 2014) after consulting an astrologer. The opening ceremony started with traditional *Marchang* ceremony to appease the local deities for good luck and successful completion of the congress. The organizers and participants were extremely lucky for the opening ceremony of the congress was graced by Her Royal Highness Ashi Chimi

Yangzom Wangchuck. The opening ceremony witnessed address by HRH Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck and the Bhutan declaration on climate change and mountain indigenous people. More than 100 indigenous people and traditional farmers from 25 communities in 10 countries developed the Bhutan declaration during one of the pre-congress activities held in Jangbi-Trongsa and Ura-Bumthang.

The 14th ISE congress saw the participation from 6 continents. Participants included academics, scientists, students, farmers and policy makers, making the diverse group of participants. There were 308 international participants from 56 countries in addition to 90 from Bhutan. The Congress included a wide range of formats for people to share their knowledge, ideas and experiences, ranging from talking circles, to film viewings and discussions, cultural performances, field trips, oral presentations and poster sessions. The Congress was highly interactive and participatory. The congress witnessed 38 scientific sessions with 174 presentations; 8 SUNG (story telling) sessions with 35 presentations and 88 poster presentations. The 14th ISE congress comprised three main events: the pre-congress workshops, the main congress and the post –congress field trips. The two pre-congress meetings were, the emerging ethnobiologist meeting and the mountain community initiative workshop. Towards the final two days of the congress, a biocultural and film festival were organized. During the festival there were 35 stalls displaying various arts and crafts from the various indigenous communities of Bhutan; crafts from Taiwan; and crafts from Makkivok-Canada besides musicians from Bhutan, Brazil and Taiwan interacting and performing. The festival also witnessed the screening of 14 short films.

We believe that by the organization of the 14th ISE congress we achieved the following:

- Promotion and preservation of rich biocultural diversity and indigenous traditional values in realizing the Royal Government of Bhutan's efforts towards achieving the philosophy of gross national happiness.
- Restoration and promotion of vanishing indigenous knowledge and practices of natural resource management.
- Promotion of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) for better management of rapidly degrading environments/ecosystems.

The 14th ISE congress provided an opportunity for the students from Bhutan and France to interact with each other. During the congress seven students and three teachers from Jean Monnet High School, France, interacted with nine students and two teachers from Jakar Higher Secondary School, Bhutan. Their main topic of discussion was *"Does quality of environment affect the happiness of Bhutanese and French People?"* The outcome of their interaction was also presented during the congress. This interaction proved beneficial for both the groups because of which, students and teachers from Jean Monnet High School invited students from Jakar Higher Secondary School to France with the objectives to promote student exchange program; learn about sustainable environmental conservation and to learn about research methodologies. The students and teachers from Jakar School shall be visiting France in January 2015.

One of the pre-congress meetings, the Mountain Community Initiative workshop, was conducted from May 26 to June 1, 2014 wherein there were over hundred indigenous people and traditional farmers from 25 communities in ten countries. They came together with civil society organizations and research institutions and gathered in Jangbi and Ura with an objective to understand the impacts of climate change on the livelihoods and cultures of indigenous people living in the mountain region and to develop responses to tackle this problem. The workshop came up with the Bhutan Declaration on Climate Change and Mountain Indigenous Peoples.

After having been the custodian of Toka Toka for two year, we finally handed over the Toka Toka to the 15th ISE congress organizers. It was handed over to the representative from Uganda, who shall be the organizers of the 15th ISE congress in 2016. Our contribution to Toka Toka was inscribing the names of all the past congress venues and years on the Toka Toka, which shall now become precedence and responsibility of next congress organizers.

While we have no doubt that all our organizing committee members, volunteers and our supporters gave their best to make the 14th ISE congress a success we are sure that we might have not been able to attend to all our participant's needs. We are aware that there have been some logistical issues during the congress and field trips. We would like to thank all our participants for your patience and cooperation rendered to us whenever we were not in the position to attend to your needs right away.

We would like to thank the Royal Government of Bhutan for granting an approval to organize the congress in Bhutan and also ISE for constant support in making the congress happen in Bhutan. We are also highly indebted to Her Royal Highness Ashi Chimi Yangzom Wangchuck for having graced the opening ceremony of the congress. The congress was a grand success because of the generous support we received from our donor agencies. We would like to thank our major supporters, the Christensen Fund and the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation. We are also highly indebted to WWF-Bhutan, GEF, YVES Rocher, SFS and everybody who helped us in one way or the other to make the 14th ISE a success.

Hosting of a congress helped the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment to promote its mission to provide a forum for collaboration among local community, tertiary institutes, universities and other organizations on a topic of importance to national, regional and international significance. The congress serves as a stepping-stone to achieve our long-term vision of understanding the important relationship, which human beings share with their environment and other organisms.

As we begin the New Year, we would like to wish each and everyone a very happy and prosperous year ahead. Our heartiest wishes are also to the next congress organizers, we hope that they shall deliver what we have not been able to achieve. Good luck and god bless you all.

Tashi Delek

Kuzuzangpo la! – Emerging Ethnobiologist Workshop, Bhutan 2014

Contributed by Anna Varga and Jigme Dorji

The third Emerging-Ethnobiologist Workshop was held at the College of Natural Resources, Lobesa, Bhutan from May 27 to 30, 2014. Anna Varga from Hungary and Olivia Sylvester from USA - Canada (student representatives) organized the workshop with the help of local host cum member of ISE Jigme Dorji. There were five International mentors and one local, as well as several guest speakers who facilitated the three day workshop attended by 27 participants from 20 countries (Australia, USA, Canada, Ireland, UK, Hungary, Tajikistan, Bhutan, New Zealand, Japan, France, Nepal, Ethiopia, Caribbean, Taiwan, India, Mexico, Brazil, Zambia, Romania, Mongolia, Guyana...).

The goals of this workshop were to:

1. create a space where participants can enhance their understanding of the methods and ethical approaches used in respectful biocultural diversity research, and
2. establish a sense of global community both among the emerging ethnobiologists as well as between the emerging and mentors.

The four day workshop included three days of in-house lectures and a one-day field trip.

The lectures included: *Ethics and research partnerships* by Kelly Bannister; *Indigenous research methods and protocols* by Verna Miller; *Balancing practical and academic research outcomes* by Jon Corbett; *Ethnobotany break* by Gary Martin; Sharing our experiences as emerging professionals; student presentations and contribution by Om Katel; *Supporting a new generation of ethnobiologists* by Alain Cuerrier; *Gross National Happiness Survey by Center for Bhutan Studies and GNH*, by Karma Wagdi and Pema Thinley; Field trip to the watershed of Wangdue, Lemuteykha villages, lead by Thinley Jamtsho, Principal Engineer from RNR Research Centre and the wonderful Bhutanese dishes by our cook, Yonten

The pre-congress workshop for emerging ethnobiologist was founded in 2010 with the aim to foster international connections amongst young ethnobiology professionals and to establish a support network of mentors. Four years after its founding, the third workshop saw participants from all across the globe (27 participants from 20 countries). This is a huge success for the ISE in terms of meeting the long-term vision.

In Lamai Goempa at the congress venue, the participants from the past two workshops joined the current participants for a get-together dinner at the Swiss Guesthouse. It was like family coming together after years of departure. We found strong networking amongst the emerging ethnobiologists.

The feedback from the participants indicates that the emerging ethnobiologist workshop is a forum beyond networking. It is a platform where social norms and culture can be shared at the individual level.

The common message that many participants left after the workshop was that it has been a better learning place than any class room could provide.

For CNR, hosting the workshop for emerging ethnobiologists was an experience in itself besides bringing economic benefits. The Director General of the College expressed his satisfaction for being able to host such an international workshop, first the first ever of its kind. The college is connected to 20 other countries across the globe.

"The future of ISE is Bright" one of the participants wrote in the feedback. The interpretation of the statement could be many and vary from person to person. But here, for sure it means that potential of emerging ethnobiologists to support the ISE in the future. The success of the ISE as a global, collaborative network of individuals and organizations will depend on successful emergence of ethnobiologists worldwide.

One of the participants felt that the workshop was a relaxed learning environment. For many emerging ethnobiologists, it has been a productive break from the busiest stage of their life. Yet they go back home with satisfaction, knowledge and memory. This is an indication that emerging ethnobiologist workshop makes a difference. The ISE should continue to support this pre-congress event and prepare their future leaders.

We would like to acknowledge the following organizations and people:

- The Director and the staff of the College of Resources, Lobesa, for hosting the workshop and giving us logistic support.
- The Organizer of the Congress – the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment (UWICE) for supporting the logistic arrangement.
- The Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation for funding the workshop.
- The International Development and Research Centre of Canada (IDRC) grant to help fund our workshop.
- Campus Hungary TÁMOP 4.2.4 program for supporting Anna Varga's cost.
- The Planning committee of the student workshop for the guidance and advice.
- All the mentors for their guidance throughout the workshop.
- The Managing Director of the ISE – Mrs. Natasha Duarte for her exceptional interest and support to the workshop right from planning to end.

We would like to thank all the participants for their active participation and lively interaction. We had a wonderful time with you!!!

Tashi delek!

Emerging from the Mist—Reflections on the Emerging Ethnobiologist Workshop

Contributed by Evelyn Roe

The polite rain of south-west England taps on my window. I lift my eyes from the keyboard and soft memories of the ISE Congress arrive like mist over Dartmoor. Bhutan is a far-off place, and the workshop just a dream: a dream of friendship, culture, learning, and un-learning.

But, as I inhale again the tangy, pine-filled air that claimed me as I stumbled out of the coach on that first, dark arrival at the hostel in the mountains, my mind sharpens, and I am back in Lobesa in an instant.

Dawn on our first day in the new hostel at the College of Natural Resources: I turn over in bed to peek at the pale light barely reaching over the mountain-tops, and tiptoe out on to the balcony. My gaze stretches through the cool air, which breathes me in. There is nothing that looks, smells, tastes, or sounds familiar, but my heart feels completely at home. This feeling settles in me throughout the four days of the workshop, kindled by the warmth of my fellow ethnobiologists and enhanced by the graceful hospitality of our Bhutanese hosts.

The International Network of Emerging Ethnobiologists (INEE) was founded in Canada in 2010 at the Tofino ISE Congress, with the aims of fostering international connections between emerging ethnobiologists, and establishing a support network of mentors. In 2012, in Montpellier, the INEE workshop provided a rich and enjoyable experience of how students and mentors can nurture reciprocal learning in an informal setting; the success of this event encouraged the INEE student representatives to plan a third pre-Congress event for Bhutan.

The Lobesa workshop was certainly international, not only because of the diverse origins of the participants, but also from the geographical range of our research projects. It was an A-to-Z of ethnobiology: from Australia to Zambia, with nearly 20 other nations in between!

It's worth taking a moment to reflect on the epithet, *Emerging*. It suggests qualities of curiosity, inquisitiveness, and expression of potential; unfolding, exploring one's new world, coming into the light, becoming visible, revealing oneself, entering the picture. These qualities and gestures were much in evidence as we shared our early experiences of academic inquiry and fieldwork, and expressed our hopes for the future.

Alain Cuerrier's session, *'Supporting a new generation of ethnobiologists'*, provided a structure for exploring these hopes. He invited us to examine our individual attitudes towards, and experiences of, different research and work environments. To facilitate this, each of us placed our name on a large chart to represent where we imagine ourselves in the future. In an academic institution? Independent consultant? Working with NGOs, perhaps? Or, the least popular choice, within a commercial environment. This led to lively discussion, with a thought-provoking contribution from Gary Martin who suggested that independence from institutional and governmental funding may allow for a more creative environment for inquiry and well-being.

This session also brought deep reflection about our potential roles in those different environments. Of course, being ethnobiologists, we mostly perched on edges; and some, like Verna Miller, placed ourselves outside all the boxes!

Verna's session on indigenous research methods and protocol was insightful and, as always, she spoke from the heart, and from her personal experience of what it means to be indigenous. She gave us an important reminder that observation and experimentation are found not only in mainstream Western science, but are inherent in indigenous science, too.

Jon Corbett began his presentation dressed untypically in a collar and tie and a rather uncomfortable jacket. To our great relief, as he progressed through his talk he took off the jacket and threw away the tie! Point made: pay attention to how you present yourself in different contexts. The theme of his session was '*Balancing academic and practical research outcomes*' and, after introducing the concept of 'gatekeepers' within societies and institutions, Jon gave us the opportunity to share our own experiences as students and researchers. This was a very valuable activity, as everyone had much to contribute and the quality of listening was high.

Listening was also an important feature of Kelly Bannister's session, '*A relational ethics approach*'. Rejecting the mindset of those who view indigenous communities as sources of knowledge and resources, Kelly, and others who work with the Ethics Committee of the ISE, are raising awareness, codifying ethical guidance, and creating practical tools to address the interests and rights of all research partners. In her session, she helped us feel our way into what an 'ethical space' might mean, bringing awareness of the issues into the heart of our own projects. Kelly believes that ethics is the capacity to know what harms or enhances the well-being of others, and reminded us that mindfulness is at the core of the ISE Code of Ethics. Perhaps, in a future workshop, we could also address the issue of the interests and rights of plants as fellow living beings.

Plants were certainly appreciated – and consumed (gratefully, of course!) – in Gary Martin's delicious '*Ethnobotany Break*', in which we tasted food brought by participants from different countries. We dipped Japanese crackers into chilli pepper sauce from St. Lucia and spooned Gary's Moroccan rose jelly down our hot throats; we crunched manuka honey biscuits from New Zealand and ginger snaps from England; and washed it all down with Hungarian tea!

It was hard to distinguish students from mentors, as the boundary was dynamic. The broad age range, warmth of friendship, and the focus on genuine dialogue, rather than on a one-way flow of information and instruction, all contributed to the sense of a strong support network. Nemgyal, one of the Bhutanese students who joined us on the workshop, commented, "I'm really enjoying the interaction between mentors and students – there is no hierarchy and all are mingling, young and old alike!"

We enjoyed a unique perspective on Bhutan from Om Katel, an enthusiastic lecturer with the Department of Forestry in the College of Natural Resources (CNR), which is part of the Royal University of Bhutan. His research relates to conservation and management of natural resources, of which he has a global view, having travelled to more than 30 countries while doing his PhD in Thailand. He presented his insights from recent visits to Norway and Switzerland.

As I'm writing this, I'm wondering how many more activities to describe: astonishingly, there were also field trips and guided walks, further presentations and group sessions, and a birthday party and wine-sampling, all in four days! Other participants have written about some of these in their blogs [<http://emerging-ethnobiologists.blogspot.co.uk>], but I have just two more experiences I would like to share.

The workshop was framed beautifully by two different 'book-ends'. To open, we had a captivating and inspiring speech by the Director-General of the CNR, Dr. Dorji Wangchuk, who quietly posed the question, 'Why are we always striving for more, and when will we feel that we have enough?' To close, we had a rowdy dancing circle in the hostel kitchen, where we sang our hearts out, and hugged each other and the wonderful Bhutanese people who made us feel so at home. One event was mindful, the other playful...but both created a feeling of abundance, of having more than enough, an appreciation which has stayed with me to this day. Thus, I give my warmest thanks to Jigme Dorji, Anna Varga, and Olivia Sylvester, for making it all possible.

I'll end with an entry from my journal, which I wrote as we travelled together from the workshop to the Congress venue, a full day's drive from Lobesa to Jakar, Bumthang.

Journal Entry

The importance of the journey, the transformational journey, infused with the flavour of Bhutan. We gave up our old selves as we walked through the airport door in Paro, into a new part of our lives. The slow, unknown journey – delays, mud, changing landscapes, mountains, rivers, and the road turning and twisting. The sound of the rain holds us safe, holds us in its ever-filling bowl. The mists are lifting...in the mountains, as in our learning. I'm here, and that's the astonishing and precious thing.

My Experience

Contributed by Alí García Segura, Bribri, University of Costa Rica

This year from June 1-7 in Bhutan a successful event was held and I'd like to share my experience with you. Bhutan is a country nested in the mountains between India, China and Nepal.

The 14th Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology was held in Bumthang, Bhutan. More information can be found at the site of the hosting institute (www.uwice.gov.bt) or at the ISE site (www.ethnobiology.net/). This amazing congress was organized by the ISE and the Ministry of Agriculture of Bhutan.

In my opinion the ISE was wise in choosing this country to host this important event, which was attended by presenters from all over the world, all speaking about a common theme—the appropriate use of natural resources, which we still rely on in our countries. The Congress opened on Sunday, June 1st at 2:30pm with the royalty and Ministers of Bhutan in attendance, as well as artistic presentations of Bhutan's dance and culture. Although the country is mainly a mountainous one, whose streets therefore would seem to present constant danger, paradoxically during my stay I didn't see a single accident. People are very educated in every sense of the word. I was very impressed by the care people took with their natural resources, rivers and mountains. Not to mention the care they took with visitors, the expression of kindness that emanated from their faces and the beauty of their cultural dress.

The congress took place in a comfortable facility at UWICE, in Bumthang, surrounded by pine forests, about 15 minutes in small buses from the city centre. ISE members and congress organizers ensured that all the participants were able to get the most out of the congress, and all the country had to offer. All this without losing sight of what goal of the congress, and that's how it went! As an Indigenous participant from the other side of the world, I managed to share not only with the presenters from other regions, but also with the local people. Which I think shows that the organizers understood very well the need to overlap traditional local knowledge with current science to bring together two worlds for a single purpose.

ISE scheduled various activities during the week—some presented their research, others presented project results, or made poster presentations on new methods of agriculture among other things. There were also indigenous people who presented dances and their traditional arts; while for me, I gave a conference on the worldview of the Bribri of Costa Rica.

For us Indigenous people this congress represented a basket full of opportunities to learn and share our way of seeing and explaining the world that we and our ancestors dream of having. I think we must find a way to have a larger presence and more members from our lands. More than 57 countries were represented at the congress, but I don't remember seeing anyone else from Central America, except from Costa Rica. I was really flattered to represent our region, I will always be grateful to do so, but I think that it would be greatly beneficial to involve other Indigenous people from the region.

I urge my colleagues, both from Costa Rica and other countries, to learn more about the ISE and find opportunities to contribute to this organization so it can grow even more. I am convinced that through the ISE, the world will hear the voice of Indigenous people, which in other instances has been silent.

As a member of the ancient Bribri people of Costa Rica, we wish to thank all ISE members for undertaking this huge task which has, without a doubt, strengthened the Indigenous worldview

We should not think about what we need to do to leave a better world for our children, but rather how to educate our children to leave better children for our world!

Keep in touch.

(Translated from Spanish by Elizabeth Thompson, original available online)

My Experience

Contributed by Linda McDonald

In June of this year I had the wonderful opportunity to be invited as a participant and speaker to the 14th Congress for the International Society of Ethnobiology in Bumthang, Bhutan. I was honoured to have been asked to speak on behalf of my First Nation, the Liard First Nation in Watson Lake, Yukon, Canada.

From the moment I stepped on the DrukAir airplane, with the Thunder Dragon on the tail, and the fact that I was flying to the Kingdom of Bhutan (as it is officially known), I knew this would be a special experience. Upon landing in Paro, one is enthralled by the buildings, with their colorful flowers and designs bordering the windows, doors and edges of the roofs. From the special architectural designs to the national dress worn by people in the service industry, as well as all public officers, one has an appreciation for the value of cultural pride put on display.

Most of us traveled from Paro to Bumthang by bus. The 12 hour bus trip turned into a 14 – 15 hour journey as we travelled through valleys and high mountain passes with raging rivers. Along the way we encountered small villages and towns, and sometimes monasteries as well as Dzongs.

The opening ceremonies the next day at the Ugyen Wangchuk Stadium, were very much Bhutan in character. The security guards and police checking our packs and bags, and the colorful flags, flanking the entrance and walk-way added to the excitement while we waited for her Royal Highness, Princess Ashi Chimi Yangzom, sister of the King of Bhutan. Her Royal Highness gave opening remarks to the congress. Her Royal Highness warmly welcomed all of us and spoke of environmental issues and concern for the wellbeing of her country. It was an inspiring start to our week. The dancers and men in masks, as well as the lyrical singing, echoing off the surrounding mountains, and the bonfires, with sparks flying to the heavens, lent itself to a mystical feel to the festivities.

The congress was held at UWICE. All of the Bumthang valley and most of Bhutan is forested and rural. UWICE is located four miles up into the hills above the Bumthang valley, which made for a very peaceful environment for the gathering of hundreds of people from dozens of countries. The venue was more than adequate with five different session rooms. The meals were served outside under a tent. Everyone found a place to sit and eat throughout the campus. The food was another superb experience at the Congress. Everyone quickly discovered one of Bhutan's national dishes—Chillie Cheese. A variety of vegetables, meats and fruit deliciously made up the lunch-time meals. Being in the outdoors for the

breaks and lunches allowed people to breath fresh air, refresh themselves, and to socialize while enjoying the greenery of the forests and the clear air. It was a wonderful aspect of the choice of venue.

In addition to experiencing this unique country with its strong display of its Buddhist faith, the idea of values and traditions underlay our entire experience. This was a commonality encouraging the Congress' diverse participants, academics, community people, activists, artists and scientists, to share information and learn from each other. One of the strengths, and a unique quality of the ISE, is the variety of people it brings together. As a community person who works to revitalize indigenous languages and traditional knowledge, I have been made to feel very welcome.

The Congress' topics included pure quantitative long-term research, as well as qualitative work considered by some to be more in the realms of mysticism and art. All of it allowed for animated discussion and sharing of ideas. One of the many highlights for me was being in the company of such a range of learned people. I enjoyed talking and sharing our respective work and our lives with the many people I was able to meet.

My topics at the Congress were on the connection of land to preservation of language and culture as well as the connections of land to wellbeing of First Nations people. I consider myself a story teller, and with the aid of my powerpoint and photos I was able to convey a bit of the life of my people, the Kaska of northern Canada. This enabled me to share our historical and contemporary struggles to maintain our culture and language in the face of massive resource development, the impacts of western policies, laws and cultures, as well as the modern challenges of addictions and new lifestyles.

It was heartwarming to see the participants in the Community Initiatives Discussion on Thursday afternoon, co-chaired by Gary Martin and Octaviano Trujillo, who openly wept upon watching the short video I shared. It was touching to see everyone, including myself, able to be vulnerable and to feel free to allow tears to flow. How refreshing to be open, not only to everyone's story, but to go beyond empathy and feel deeply.

The congress topics and presentations were exemplary to say the least. The perennial problem of conferences such as this is the difficulty in choosing which sessions to attend. There was such a broad range of excellent topics and speakers. It made choosing challenging, however, no matter which session you selected there was something of interest. At the end of the week we all had difficulty saying good-bye, and many of us did at the closing ceremonies.

Similar to the opening ceremonies, the closing ceremonies were poignant with the knowing that our time in Bumthang was over. Some of us stayed for the field trips afterwards. My choice of Owl trek, and visiting Tiger's Nest were both excellent experiences. During these field trips we were able to carry on the conversations started during the conference, as well as getting to know each other a little better. Many new friends were made, some we will never see again. However, we all cherished our time together. Participating in this congress felt very much like going back in time, with a feudal feel to some aspects of life in Bhutan. We found new thoughts in the old, like the profound appreciation for a culture that measures its wellbeing, in large part, through a regular assessment of its citizen's happiness.

Bhutan offers so much, and we were able to share some of that in our short time. No matter where the Congress is held in the future, this one will stand out in everyone's minds, for so many reasons.

Thank you to all the organizers who spent countless days and time putting this together. Thank you to all who were there. We each, in our way, met the Thunder Dragon.

My Experience

Contributed by Ssekimpi M. Ssemambo, 2nd Deputy Prime Minister – Buganda Kingdom

I attended the congress as a travel awardee; but also as an elder from Uganda the next (ISE Congress) host country in 2016.

Here below are my general remarks briefly on the above congress:

I didn't have any knowledge about the ISE and its activities.

My participation was pleasurable but also a big blessing to me in my capacity as a community/traditional leader in the Buganda Kingdom (my work revolves around the preservation, Protection & Promotion of our culture and indigenous rights and practices).

The 3 days Journey to Bumthang, Bhutan including the 12 hours bus drive through the Himalayans was a unique experience to me. The beautiful scenery of Rocky very steep mountains and deep narrow valleys, at times looking out of the bus window would leave me breathless!!

VENUE:

UWICE, Bumthang in Bhutan a perfect site venue as it brought together the ancient mode of living together with the modern in the same village. We had opportunity to see the natural adaptation of the people, flora and fauna to the natural environment that has been preserved. What an experience !!

ORGANISERS:

salute the UWICE institute and the Executive council of ISE for putting up a very well organized flawless congress I special recognition go to Natasha Duarte the ISE Managing Director for her indefatigable and total commitment in attending to all of us (participants).

PARTICIPANTS & PRESENTATIONS: The congress was attended by over 500 participants from over 56 countries from all continents of the world.

Presentations ranging from lectures, films & documentaries, story-telling, posters etc. on various topics but very rich in content.

MY PRESENTATIONS:

I had two presentations.

1. A documentary about “*Maintaining Culture and Heritage*” the case of Buganda Kingdom. This was shown in the film festival and attracted and impressed many participants despite poor visibility inside the tents.

2. Under Community-led initiatives for well-being in a changing world; I presented with power point: “*Nurturing Well-being in Buganda*” This was hurried through but had similar messages to those by other presenters.

LESSONS LEARNT:

- I was impressed and amazed by the various presentations about knowledge possessed by indigenous people on their day-to-day survival. I enjoyed every session but never had chance to attend many others!
- I realized that we come from different backgrounds but have much in common.
- I was delighted to be interacting with people from different communities and wide ranging professions. (Professors, Scholars, Researchers, community leaders, indigenous leader from Africa, Amazon, Jamaica, Vanuatu islands etc. etc.).

In conclusion, I am grateful for the sponsorship from ISE. Again, thanks to Dr. Christine Kabuye who invited to join the ISE. I strongly believe ISE is doing a good job of defending the indigenous people, flora and fauna and probably their cause read squires collective efforts and deserves global support.

My Experience

Contributed by Viktor Ulicsni

On my first international congress ever, in May 2010, in Tofino, Canada, as a new member of the International Society of Ethnobiology I was also among those who voted for the host of the 2014 ISE Congress. Then, as I was quite beginner in my ethnobiological work I haven't even dare to dream that I will have the chance to participate as an oral presenter on the so prominent event in such an interesting country as the mysterious Bhutan. However greatly thanks to the ISE travel award this unrealistic possibility was fulfilled finally.

As a member of the Hungarian Bhutan Friendship Society, I learnt a lot about the Bhutanese people's lifestyle and found surprisingly big rate of similarity with the stories about the disappearing lifestyle of my ancestors and my elder teachers. In our big work of preserving and vitalizing the cultural diversity, thinking together with people in a similar field can greatly help in being really effective. We maybe can truly say that this kind of thinking is in the highest (state) level in Bhutan, so it's an especially adequate place for supporting this part of our efforts. And though I arrived with these high expectations, fortunately my experiences definitely met with it. My actual presented work on the bigger but less well-known part of biodiversity (Folk taxonomy, salient features, traditional usage and beliefs of invertebrate species in Central Europe) is from a field which is examined only by a very few people, but also complex

enough to find the junctions with most of the ethnobiological themes. This extensive examination and data collecting is an absolute necessity to assure possibility and to support regenerating biocultural ecosystem service and traditional ecological knowledge. Fortunately I did find these contacts, and certainly it was very rousing when great authorities gave advice and encouraged me to continue specifying and developing my work. These constructive scholarly conversations can really improve in profession, especially the younger participants like me, but besides this the experienced community spirit, the new and old friendships made this conference to that kind of “real” event, what we all consider important thanks to our common knowledge about the bases of ethnobiology: the connection of science, social science, people and environment.

The Use of Live Songbirds in Mexico

Contributed by Blanca Roldán-Clarà

Last summer, I participated in the 14th Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE) that took place in Bhutan with my PhD research.

I had an excellent overall impression of the congress and really felt that I belong to ethnobiologist group. I presented a poster entitled: *Perceptions of the traditional Mexican wild bird grabbers and dealers for the pet market*. In Mexico, the use of songbirds is a tradition that is still in use. *Pajareros* are people of low-income who have inherited this profession and for whom this job means much more than an income, because it is a lifestyle. This is a family business where each member has a role and where their traditional ecological knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation. The organization of the *Pajareros* is complex because there are different specializations in the activity. I identified special functions of the bird catchers, who have a complete understanding of the biology of the species, acclimatization specialists that have precise knowledge about the early care of a wild bird, the cages builders who are true artisans, the sellers who are experts in sales and love to travel to different places around the country, the bird keepers who are usually women who care, feed and daily clean birds and cages essentially for their survival, wholesalers who are the middlemen, *pajareros* leaders who are a connection with governmental authority and finally we cannot forget the buyers. When buyers are women they are sometimes canary and budgerigar breeders, exchanging house birds for wild birds with *pajareros*. I must include that songbirds have a strong cultural, religious and symbolic value for *pajareros* through religious ceremonies. *Pajareros* organize various pilgrimages with birds to different parts of the country that unite them as a group. Unfortunately, this job has faced struggles in recent years: The populations of some species have declined, new rules have tightened dramatically, and *pajareros* have stated economic problems and a series of difficulties with the capture process, the newly captured birds, weather conditions, buyers and other people that discriminate and criminalize them, and also mentioned several troubles with government officials. To solve these problems is a priority for *pajareros* because they want the continuity of the work that they love and depend on. I believe my research will help in strengthening such intention.

My research can fit into the overarching congress themes because it belongs to ethnozoology, a subdiscipline of ethnobiology that studies the relationship between human cultures and fauna in

general. It has also been essential for me to share my study because, as it was mentioned in the congress, the environmental governance can solve common problems as *pajareros* claim, through bottom-up design of environmental policies. Like ISE, my concern is about the loss of the traditional knowledge of the *pajareros*, as well as the loss of biocultural diversity that would entail the loss of this trade. Like ISE policy, I think that a creation of new spaces for dialogue, cooperation and actions across *pajareros* and Mexican environmental authorities is crucial to solve the problems associated to this traditional activity.

Gendered Ethnomedicinal Knowledge and Health Sovereignty in Bolivian Amazonia

Contributed by Isabel Díaz Reviriego

In June 2014, along with other colleges from the Ethnoecology Lab at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), I had the fortune to attend the ISE congress in Bhutan. Bhutan, the country of Gross National Happiness, warmly welcomed us. We learned, we danced, and we enjoyed spicy Bhutanese food and its amazing culture and landscapes, thanks to all of the organizers and local people. The outstanding conference venue and program, which combined academic debates and poster presentations with storytelling, walks in the woods, meditation, and a biocultural fair and film festival, made the event a very inspiring and stimulating experience both personally and professionally.

My poster contribution was just a small attempt to design and implement a more gender-balanced approach to research. My research, among the Tsimane' people from lowland Bolivian Amazonia, aims at studying gendered ethnomedicinal plant knowledge, recognizing the diversity and plurality of knowledge present within communities. Results suggest that, among the Tsimane', women hold more ethnomedicinal knowledge than men, which is associated with their specialized reproductive and pediatric roles that reflect their prominent involvement in caregiving and custodians of health in Tsimane' society.

Gender blindness has often led researchers to neglect the gendered nature of knowledge in ethnobiological research. Furthermore, ethnobiological research should recognize that the study of gendered knowledge and relations also includes the multiplicity and intersection of gender identities with other identities (e.g. caste, class, religion) and how these shape the acquisition, transmission, and distribution of ethnobiological knowledge.

Results from my research are also relevant for informing policy-makers at local and national levels in Bolivia, in order to promote the participation of indigenous women in the design and implementation of policies regarding women's health and indigenous health sovereignty. For example, since 2002, the "Universal Mother and Child Insurance Scheme" (Seguro Universal Materno Infantil, SUMI) has focused on improving maternal and child health to reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality. It is a package of free services intended to improve equality in the access to obstetric care, recognizing diversity in intercultural sexual and reproductive health among indigenous and peasant peoples in Bolivia. The

intercultural health component of this program considers the adaptation of services to include the use of traditional medicine and healing practices.

In this context, the knowledge, practices, and beliefs of Tsimane' women with regard to reproductive health should be taken into account at a local level. As traditional medicinal specialists with midwifing expertise, their active participation in the design and delivery of intercultural health services should be encouraged. Recognizing women's knowledge and expertise can help to promote equity and social justice from a biocultural perspective.

Exploring People's Relationship to Food in the Aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Disaster

Contributed by Karly Burch

On June 1, 2014, I found myself sitting before a Bhutanese royal princess, thoroughly enjoying my serving of *suja* (butter tea) and *dresi* (sweet saffron rice). In that moment, I was surrounded by the new friends I had made at the Pre-Conference Workshop and a diverse array of ISE Congress participants, all with our spirits high, sinking into this once in a lifetime experience in Bhutan.

I had found my way to the ISE Congress through a network of inspirational colleagues from the Global Environments Summer Academy. Upon hearing about the 2014 Congress, I checked the call for papers to see if my research interests fit within the Congress themes. An agroecologist by training, my MSc fieldwork took place in the Kansai region of Japan where I explored people's perceptions and behaviors related to food safety following the onset of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant (FD1-NPP) disaster in March 2011.

I was pleased that my participation in the ISE poster exhibition gave me the chance to examine my research topic from the angle of bio-cultural diversity. Through my poster, I used the data collected in my MSc research to see whether concerned citizen's behaviors and perceptions of food safety could be used as a way to explore the FD1-NPP disaster's possible impacts on bio-cultural diversity.

Ultimately, I feel extremely honored and grateful that the voices of the concerned citizens surveyed in my research were heard by congress participants, and that the exploration of this often taboo topic was granted an award in the poster competition. With plans to continue focusing on this issue through my PhD studies, I hope to engage further with the ISE and its members in finding ways to protect the integrity of our food systems (and all of the bio-cultural diversity connected to these systems) for present and future generations.

(See Karly's poster on the online version of the newsletter.)

My Congress Experience

Contributed by Michelle Baumflek

Sitting in the light rain at the opening ceremony of my first ISE Congress in Bumthang, Bhutan, I knew that the week to come was going to be exceptional. The excitement and positive energy had been palpable as participants from all over the world entered the grounds, through a walkway flanked by tall, colorful flags, and were reunited with friends and colleagues. When the ceremony formally began, witnessing the entrance of so many diverse people proudly representing their communities was incredibly powerful and moving. It also signaled that this was not a typical academic meeting, and I immediately knew that I was at home here.

I had the privilege of attending my first ISE Congress in Bhutan, including the Emerging Ethnobiologists Pre-Congress Workshop held in Lobesa. These experiences were transformative for me, and helped to strengthen my identity as an engaged ethnobiologist as I transition from completing my PhD into the next phase of my career. I have been to many professional conferences before, but I have never felt more aligned with the goals, ethics and interests of a professional society and its members. Therefore, it was such an honor to receive validation and support from this community by winning second prize at the student poster competition.

In addition to the content, I found the interactive format and structure of Congress events to be engaging and effective ways to share ideas among such a diverse group of people. For instance, I co-facilitated a workshop in which participants from 20 countries brought their own experiences, perspectives and skills together to co-generate new knowledge and lines of inquiry about food sovereignty. I also appreciated the Congress focus on indigenous knowledge and multiple ways of knowing, embodied by the Sung stream.

My research on health sovereignty was well-aligned with the Congress theme of regenerating biocultural ecosystem resilience. In a northeastern North American context, increasing indigenous access to culturally-important plants is one important way to promote such resilience. Working with Maliseet communities in Maine, USA and New Brunswick Canada, I created a habitat model for the important medicinal plant gighaswes, *Acorus americanus*, which identified ecologically suitable locations that would be most accessible for community members, particularly elders. Increasing access to important medicinal plants strengthens people's ability to use medicines of their choice. It also contributes to biocultural ecosystem resilience through creating spaces for intergenerational knowledge exchange about the stewardship of plants. This work is one component of my PhD, which more broadly examines ways to incorporate biocultural diversity into the management and stewardship of forests.

Importance of Environmental and Cultural Preservation: Perspectives of Young People on a Distant Country, its Culture and Traditions

Contributed by Dominique Chirpaz

Our project, born in 2012 in Montpellier, has been a long and precarious adventure . . .

But finally, we don't regret anything: the long months passed to prepare our common presentation, the stress linked to the various administrative problems to solve, as well as the financial support research!

This travel was a wonderful experience for the students and for ourselves, on each point of view:

Educational: it allowed the group of participants to complete a complex project requiring many skills to develop: command of two written and oral languages (French and English), science and digital technology, adaptability and flexibility, listening to others, initiative, spirit . . .

Cultural: the week spent in the Bumthang Jakar high school allowed us to get closer to the lives of young Bhutanese and their teachers. A "city show" was given in our honor by the Bhutanese students, with traditional songs and dances. Further meetings were possible, particularly on a tourist day during which we met Kunzang Choden, a writer who translated into English and French: she told us about the history of her country during our visit in her family's home, which became the Ugencholing Museum. She also signed various books for us.

We also visited the Jakar Dzong, White Bird Fortress, Jampa Lhamkhang, the oldest temple in Bhutan, Jampa Lhakhang Market, and were received by the Director of the Wangchuk Centennial Park. Not to mention a memorable picnic at the Wangchuk Centennial Park! Finally, the opening and closing ceremonies of the congress were an opportunity to approach other cultures too, through songs and dances presented.

Human: perhaps the image that we keep is the meeting with people with altruistic values . . .

We were very pleased that the ISE offered us the opportunity to present our work in the plenary session: the students were very proud!

The ISE congress of 2014 has been an incredible experience to me, as it was the first congress I've ever done. I did not think that there would be so many various subjects studied, but they actually were numerous. This congress should be more recognized: the thing that people teach to people from other cultures would maybe be more applied. The subjects that those people are teaching are extremely useful in a sustainable development plan. This kind of congress is really interesting and should be an example of how to make the future better, starting from a melting-pot.

~Lola

The 14th International Congress of Ethnobiology which took place in Bhutan was an amazing moment in my life. Indeed, it was an impressive scientific gathering. The work

done by us was rewarded thanks to the listening of others participants. This congress changed my way of thinking about biology, ethnology and about the environment.

~Elsa

Initially, an unimaginable project for us students, which turned out to be, after many hours of involvement, a memorable project both by its scientific content and its environmentally friendly framework and human relations.

~Matthieu

My participation in this congress was for me a wonderful experience for my young age (17). I'm actually in a scientific class in my high school and my work to participate in this congress helped me. I will never forget this moment of international sharing and meeting. I think this project brought a lot to me: I have now Bhutanese teenager friends and that is very cool!

~Marine

For my taste, the 14th Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology was much more than a simple project in which we had the chance to participate. In fact, I think that it was a veritable human project which took place, organized with a real modesty, and I think too that nobody stayed indifferent. We made a scientific presentation on a topical subject, which concerns every of us: the preservation of environment.

With a purpose of blending ideas, of different points of view, and with a magnificent listening of all the participants. Nationality wasn't a fence in spite of the fifty-six countries represented. On the contrary, it was the strength of the congress. All together for the same purpose, linked with a common language, English, with our different accents: it's for me, the charm of the congress!

We learnt dances from all around the world, we ate traditional food at the congress and in Jakar High School, we spoke with the others members right from the start (in the airplane, in the bus...) ... A real world opening, with veritable emotions, in a wonderful place! I think it was a real blessing to participate in this congress!

I'm more than grateful towards all the organization, and towards all the people who allowed us to participate in this fabulous project. It's for me an experience which had a lot of meaning. I was at the same time fascinated by this human gathering, and truly moved by the country itself, the Bhutanese's kindness. An irreplaceable country, with a unique culture arousing a lot of emotions. Furthermore, for our part, we were directly welcomed at Jakar High School, with an obvious curiosity. It was a real scenery, with, for sure, a real face to reality. An experience that obviously I will remember all my life!

So, I take advantage of the opportunity to thank another time all the people involved for the smooth proceeding of this memorable project!

~Julia

Now we are in the process of organizing the arrival of Bhutanese in Montpellier, which really give full meaning to this exchange between young people of two countries so far away geographically and culturally.

They will come to France from January 23rd to February 3rd 2015: their joint presentation made at the congress will be extended to high school students, parents and teachers, but they will also present us traditional Bhutanese songs and dances.

Various activities will be organized to help them discover some particularities of our region: garrigue, Mediterranean Sea, history of the city of Montpellier,...

So, from each person in our group, thank you for having made possible this extraordinary experience.

In the hope that other young people will be involved in future congresses...

Members of the Jean Monnet high school group: Dominique Chirpaz, Cécile Raynal, Guillaume Bouguet, Marine Armangau, Elsa Fraysse, Julia Bertossi, Zoé Terrapon, Lola Werquin, Matthieu Armangau, Akim Pavageau.

Hawai‘i Beyond the Wave, Hawai‘i Beyond the Postcard travels to the Kingdom of the Dragon

Contributed by Mascha Gugganig

After a day long journey from Vancouver via China and Nepal, my accompanying traveling exhibit had mastered what many others experienced that attended the 14th conference of the ISE in Bhutan. A small airplane released a number of conference attendants finally reaching their destination. Their awe and wonder spoke through a hesitant taking of pictures, turning and turning around to take in the landscape. Due to the adventurous up and down, right and left of our 12-hour bus ride to Bumthang, I had downsized the exhibit by leaving the large prints in Kathmandu – a wise decision, as they would not have shown the same resistance as my stomach.

If you made it to the poster session, you probably saw one frame that featured anything but a poster. About 40 postcards displayed people’s reflections on land use, food production, and agricultural biotechnology. The 12 original postcards presented voices of interviewees from fieldwork on Kaua‘i where I explored links between education and activism on land-related issues, particularly the locally operating biotech industry. The other roughly 30 postcards were from places around the world where the exhibit has been shown, and visitors shared their thoughts on postcards themselves. These I would then send to the next location. So, in Bumthang 13 postcards already waited for me that I had previously sent from Vancouver. They were joined by about 20 people, who wrote postcards at the conference. Unfortunately, when I came back to take down the exhibit, these postcards got lost, possibly tossed away, mistaken as trash.

After my initial sorrow and anger, I reminded myself that the chance of postcards getting lost on these global postal trajectories has always been part of the project. Such 'loss' speaks to a deeper issue in our respective works; as scholars, filmmakers, activists, etc. we aim to elicit voices we find worthwhile. When such voices get 'lost' – be it an interview that mistakenly got deleted, a consent form not signed, etc. – we tend to forget the frailness, fragility of our research. Indeed, we are constantly aware of the many stories that for whatever reasons will not make it into our books, articles or films.

I decided to include the missing postcards into the next exhibit display by hanging a string with no postcards to account for that unpredictability, uncertainty in our works. This unpredictability may even be that those of you who gratefully took the time to write their thoughts on postcards back in Bumthang would do so again; on other postcards from wherever you reside, perhaps with different reflections. Cambridge, MA, is where the exhibit will be shown next, and you can find more info on the website of the exhibit: <https://hawaiiBeyond.wordpress.com/the-pieces/> Until then, I hope to make it to Uganda, and to report on the final journey of the exhibit back to Kaua'i!

Research Reports from the Field

Impacts of Climate Change on the Livelihoods of Loita Maasai Pastoral Community and Related Indigenous Knowledge on Adaptation and Mitigation

Contributed by Henri ole Saitabau

Since time immemorial, the Loita Maasai have had rich indigenous knowledge about their environment and how to monitor and predict climate and seasonal cycles through observation of behavioral characteristics of biological components, cosmology and other traditional, socio-cultural methods. They still use the same knowledge to model weather events and livelihood management. However unpredictable weather variations has become so phenomenal that drought that used to occur every ten years is now occurring every two years or less and the trend continues to worsen. Annual rainfall is more erratic and figures continue to decline while people experience warmer dry months.

Climate change is severely affecting the weather patterns thus raising concerns for livelihoods, socio-economic and environmental sustainability. Owing to changes in seasonal cycles, the Loita Maasai pastoralists in recent years have experienced the full impact of prolonged droughts leading to drying of water sources, poor crop yields and livestock losses, all resulting in food insecurity. This increased vulnerability has thus put the community to high risks of natural disasters. The use of traditional warning systems to monitor weather variations is becoming difficult, owing to unprecedented environmental changes, although this can also partly be blamed on erosion of indigenous knowledge.

Work carried out in Loita in 2010 has shown that during drought (as was the case 2007-2009), community adaptation strategies and mitigation measures are suspended, resulting in increased environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. This paper seeks to identify the various forms of

pastoral livelihoods that are now vulnerable as a result of climate change. It also seeks to identify some of the community-derived priority strategies that the Loita Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania can use to improve resilience and adaptations, citing various mitigation measures that use local indigenous knowledge. The paper also shows how climate change has impacted on the cultural heritage especially ceremonial cycles as well as cultural sites where such cultural ceremonies are undertaken and also includes adaptive measures proposed by the community.

(Read the full article online.)

Update on the 2016 ISE Congress

The 15th Congress of the International Society of Ethnobiology will be held at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, 1-7 August 2016.

We are glad to welcome all to the 2016 congress to be hosted by Makerere University in collaboration with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, and Buganda Kingdom.

The tagline for the congress which is *“Together keeping continuity from our roots”* emphasizes the need for special efforts that have to be taken to learn from our cultural heritage and knowledge to improve livelihoods now and in the future.

The main theme for the congress will be ‘Ethnobiological knowledge for improved human wellbeing and development’. Under this there will be various subthemes from Indigenous knowledge systems in food security, medicine, and practices in resource use and management, tied to education, scientific research, and their blending for wellbeing and development options, inevitably touching on some policy implications.

Some of the subthemes are:

- Culture and education
- Ethnobiology and economic development
- The science behind traditional practices
- Traditional medicine, spirituality and the law
- Traditional medicine and modern medicine (bridging the gap between the two)
- Culture at the crossroads: threatened cultural institutions
- Gender roles and issues in resource management
- Ethnobiological knowledge and intellectual property issues
- Ethnobiological knowledge transmission and survival of indigenous languages

- Indigenous Knowledge systems and food security
- Policy evolution and natural resource management
- Bioprospecting and international law

Other subjects will be encouraged from other members of the ISE as it is believed that through interactions, learning and sharing experiences, ethnobiological knowledge and relationships among various peoples will be expanded.

The congress will be interactive with the usual oral papers, and poster sessions as well as a range of other formats in form of films, performances, exhibitions and hands-on experiences such as making articles or playing traditional instruments.

Uganda, apart from being biologically rich, is one of the most ethnically diverse countries. Congress participants will witness this richness in diversity during the congress and on post-congress tours.

It is hoped that the usual pre-congress workshop for INEE and the congress stream of the Indigenous Forum will be part of the congress.

The International Society of Ethnobiology (ISE) is a global network of individuals and organizations working to preserve vital links between human societies and the natural world. For over two decades we have brought together people interested in preserving the planet's biocultural diversity by providing a unique platform for meaningful and respectful dialogue. The ISE community includes researchers, academics, students, lawyers, policy makers, community leaders and others who come together to share their diverse perspectives on the fields of ethnobiology, biocultural diversity, conservation, resilience, resource rights and applied ethics.

As a (USA) 501(c)3 scientific and educational association [we rely on your support](#) to remain a thriving resource for biocultural diversity.

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