

New Compas partners

In the Mantaro valley, Central Peru, two new Compas partners have joined Talpuy since April 1999. This will enable a concerted effort to be made, in the form of 'the Platform for Andean Cosmovision' to understand the importance of cosmovision in rural peoples' lives and to compare participatory methodologies. In Sri Lanka too, five organisations have joined the former Compas partner ECO and will be exchanging their views and activities on cosmovision and endogenous development.

Andean culture dates back some 8000 years and this is still manifest in indigenous knowledge and technologies. Ritual expressions, ceremonies, rites and production are interdependent and reveal themselves in daily activities. This festive, productive and ritual character of Andean culture is being lost due to imposed non-Andean technologies. Fortunately much of the Andean spirituality remains in the collective memory of the people and can be revitalised. With this objective the three organisations in the Platform for Andean Cosmovision, Talpuy, Giarec and Cear, will meet regularly to exchange views and experiences and also arrange visits between the different rural communities.

Giarec

Giarec stands for the Collaborative Working Group on Agroecological Research in the central region of Peru. This organisation consists of 3 NGOs and 2 research institutes that have been co-ordinating

participatory technology development (PTD) activities in the Montaro Valley. Since its establishment in 1995, its main aim has been to strengthen farmer experimentation in the field of animal health and nutrition. Specific themes include forage storage methods, organic pesticides and control of liverfluke with a local plant, named 'Chepita'. The challenge is now to include farmers' cosmovision in this participatory research. The long-standing relation of trust between Giarec partner organisations and the communities will undoubtedly facilitate this process.

Cear

The Centro de Apoyo Rural is a NGO that has been working with Andean cosmovision among the Tayacaxas and Wankas, two ethnic groups in the Mantaro Valley since 1989. Cear works with the peasants on sustainable agriculture, reforestation and animal health. Several experiments have been carried out with sustainable



Marina Porraz from Viques, farmer and traditional healer

agriculture, like fertilisation with foliar sprays using organic liquid manure and the use of green manures. Now the aim is to explore their cultural identity with the farmers and to give it reality in a process of endogenous development. Farmers as well as spiritual leaders and other knowledgeable persons will take part in this process to understand the importance of cosmovision in productive, social and spiritual life.

Six new partners

In Sri Lanka the work of Compas is gaining considerable momentum. In July 1999 the Compas partner ECO, together with the University of Peradeniya, organised a national conference on traditional knowledge, spirituality and agricultural development. More than 400 participants attended including government officers, NGOs, farmers, scientists and Buddhist monks. During the meeting the participants exchanged their experiences with rural development and the different ways for building on traditional knowledge and spirituality. The meeting received national press and television coverage.

After this meeting ECO made a contract with the University to support field research to test the effectiveness of traditional ecological and spiritual practices. Moreover, 6 new organisations will officially become partners in the Compas programme: Negampaha Govi Sanvidhanaya, Future in Our Hands, Helabima Saubhagya Sanvidhanaya, Janodaya, Samastha Lanka Govi Sammelanaya and Damulla Community Resources Centre. ETC Lanka will be co-ordinating the activities of this 'network for endogenous development' in Sri Lanka.



Meeting of the Compas partners in Sri Lanka

For your information

Conference: Participating in Development: Approaches to Indigenous Knowledge, 2-5 April 2000, London, UK

The conference will explore and challenge the 'local' and 'global' polarity, and question knowledge making processes that separate technology from power and politics. Anthropology has a wealth of experience and much to offer to the indigenous knowledge movement. We wish the conference to assess how it can do so more effectively by exploring a number of related issues.

Conference Administrator: Jennifer Law, School of Oriental & African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, United Kingdom. J14@soas.ac.uk or paul.sillitoe@durham.ac.uk or <http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/ASA/asa2000.html>

Conference: Cultures and Biodiversity Congress 2000 June 2000, Kunming, P.R. China

During the ten days, we will attempt to deal theoretically and practically with the following topics: the state of the art of indigenous cultures and bio-diversity; the cultural differences and particularities of indigenous uses of space and resources; main dilemmas of the impact of modernisation on indigenous ways of dealing with and nurturing nature; the intercultural communication between knowledge of indigenous people and of the scientific community; the Yunnan Agenda 2000 on Ethno- and Biodiversity.

Information: Therese Grinter, e-mail: <xujc97@public.km.yn.cn> or cbik@public.km.yn.cn

People and plants website

<http://www.kew.org.uk/peopleplants>

For information on local knowledge and management of biological resources, conservation and community development, the website and services of People and Plants is interesting. People and Plants also produces the P&P Handbook, which is especially designed for people working in the field like park managers, foresters, cultural promoters and members of non-governmental, governmental or indigenous organisations. The first three issues are available in English on this website. Issue 4 deals with 'Measuring Diversity', methods of assessing biological resources and local knowledge.

The Kogi - The Elder Brothers - website

<http://www.lamp.ac.uk/tairona>

The Kogi, living in the north of Colombia on the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, were almost unknown until they agreed to make a television documentary in 1990. Faced with a deteriorating environment, they decided to point the Westerners, their 'Younger Brothers', at their responsibility. The Kogi consider themselves as the 'Elder Brothers'. The Tairona Heritage Studies Centre (THSC) aims at studying the indigenous groups in the Sierra Nevada and co-operates with the Gonaivindua Tairona, the political organisation of the Kogi tribes. The centre has a very interesting website, with information on the struggle of the Kogis and the other tribes, historical information, graphics. It also includes newsletters, links to other websites related to indigenous peoples.

Conference: From the sources of knowledge to the medicines of the future, 11-13 May, Metz, France

The symposium will cover some new aspects of ethnopharmacology. It will try to establish the modes of transmission and the access to therapeutic knowledge in different cultures and civilisations. Topics will deal with the Origins of traditional pharmacopoeias, the Development of scholarly pharmacopoeias and Medicines of the XXIth century.

Contact: French Society of Ethnopharmacology, 1, rue des Recollets, F-57000 Metz, France.
sfe-see@wanadoo.fr

Conference: Medicinal Plants, Traditional Medicine and Local Communities in Africa, 16-19 May 2000, Nairobi, Kenya

The aims of this conference are to assess the current situation and status of the activities, experiences and research initiatives relating to medicinal plants and traditional medicine in Africa; to identify the key challenges, experiences, opportunities and perspectives involved in promoting medicinal plants and traditional medicine in Africa; to contribute to the knowledge base of medicinal plants and traditional medicine in healing systems; and to provide interested parties with updated information as well as project and action-oriented recommendations.

Please contact: Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI), P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya or Barbara Gemmill at herren@africaonline.co.ke or Ernest Rukangira erukangira@iconnect.co.ke

Best practices website

<http://www.unesco.org/most/welcome.htm>

UNESCO's site 'MOST' - Management of Social Transformations - deals with various events like education opportunities, publications and conferences related to topics like multiculturalism, linguistic rights and religious rights. Ciran, the Centre of International Research and Advisory Networks, that publishes the Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor, has made a selection of 'Best practices in Indigenous Knowledge' available on this website.

ILEIA Newsletter - Biodiversity Issue

<http://www.oneworld.org/ileia>

The next issue of ILEIA's LEISA Newsletter will focus on biodiversity in agriculture. The issue focuses on the importance of biodiversity for subsistence and market farmers and for indigenous people. Articles highlight how to design effective strategies to prevent the further decline of biodiversity and to improve its management, trying to understand the processes that lead to its erosion. The newsletter addresses the strategies to protect local farmers, consumers and indigenous biodiversity from unfair competition and the dumping of genetically modified products.
P.O. Box 64, 3830 AB Leusden, Netherlands.