

Human Ecology Week Learning Series

Health in Harmony with the Environment

April 7 – 11, 2008
Saskatoon, Canada

Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project

Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre
in collaboration with
Public Health Agency of Canada
the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada
and other partners

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Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan, gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project).

The Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project is a collaborative project between the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, the Indigenous People's Health Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan, The Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, International Women of Saskatoon, Global Gathering Place, and Open Door Society.

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Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project

*Reducing mental health disparities through population health promotion:
translating knowledge into practice – practice into knowledge*

Through knowledge development and translation activities, this project aims to understand and address mental health disparities among vulnerable populations, specifically Indigenous and racialized immigrant women (women who are visible minorities and newcomers to Canada). Building upon projects currently underway at the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, this project mobilizes a trans-disciplinary and multifaceted research program that will create new knowledge in mental health promotion theory, policy and practice, particularly as this is informed through the lens of cultural-power dynamics.

Research Objectives

1. To map the continuum of approaches to mental well-being and culturally-embedded conceptualizations of mental health in mental health promotion processes relevant to the study groups
2. To develop culturally-relevant evaluation frameworks
3. To develop the theory of mental health promotion processes relevant to the study groups
4. To develop innovative and culturally-relevant knowledge translation approaches
5. To build interdisciplinary and long-term research capacity through integrating multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches with university and community-based training opportunities

Hypothesis

Processes of economic, social, and cultural marginalization and vulnerability have some common implications for the ways in which the mental well-being and self-determination of Indigenous and racialized immigrant women are shaped. Understanding these dynamics and theorizing ethno-cultural similarities and differences in mental health promotion processes will contribute to reduced mental health disparities of these vulnerable populations through the development of more robust mental health promotion theory and better informed mental health promotion policy and practice.

Research Plan

The five-year study consists of three research modules:

1. Uncovering and understanding the conceptual frameworks that inform mental health policy and practice
2. Understanding mental health disparities; and
3. Addressing mental health disparities.

Module One (year one) consists of an in-depth literature review and analysis. Modules Two (years two and three) and Three (years four and five) are participatory in nature, drawing primarily on qualitative methods.

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Introduction

The Human Ecology Learning Series, *Health in Harmony with the Environment*, marked a week-long series of dialogues between local Saskatoon-based communities, international and local researchers and human ecology practitioners. Held between April 7 and 11, 2008, this was a collaborative effort between the Reducing Mental Health Disparities (RMHD) project, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada, and other partners. The week had three broad goals:

1. To stimulate thinking and discussion concerning the application of a human ecology paradigm to a range of mental well-being issues and communities;
2. To explore the potential of creating an international human ecology network for those engaged in social activism, teaching, and research; and
3. To introduce relevant human ecology concepts and begin to theoretically integrate this approach into the Reducing Mental Health Disparities project as part of building multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary capacity in this area.

This goal goes some way to addressing Objective Five of the RMHD project: *“to integrate multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches into mental health promotion practice and theory and build research and training capacity.....”* and was focused on the integration of community, academic, cross-cultural, and trans-disciplinary knowledge.

Human ecology is an extremely broad, interdisciplinary field of inquiry and practice. Definitions of human ecology commonly articulate it as “exploring not only the influence of humans on their environment but also the influence of the environment on human behaviour and their adaptive strategies as they come to understand those influences better” (Mumtaz 2007). The conceptualization of human ecology framing the organization of this Week encompasses this definition but also includes metaphysical elements, viewing it as more the study and practice of community – the human community (society), the earth community (soil), and the spirit or divine (soul) (McIntosh 2008). This view subscribes to an ontology of connectivity which emphasizes the profound interconnection between all life forms, views relationships as recursive (Rose and Robin 2004), and points to the metaphysical underpinning of reality.

Initially the links between human ecology and the work of reducing mental health disparities might be hard for some to see. However, it has become apparent to some of us working within the Reducing Mental Health Disparities project that, while our study populations (Aboriginal and racialized immigrant women) have distinct differences and, to the extent that consciousness and perception have not been colonized by Western imperialism, many of these women hold indigenized or holistic perspectives of mental well-being. This means that for many ideas about self, community, or belonging extend well beyond dualistic conceptualizations of self and other to a world view that links well-being to the unification of humans with the natural world and often supernatural worlds in which the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental spheres are inexplicitly linked. For many First Nations peoples, for example:

The development of the individual is interwoven with the well-being of the community and of the nation. Moreover an individual’s identity, status and place in the world are tied not only to the [extended] family, but also to one’s ancestors and community. This leads to a view of mental health that is very different from Western models that focus on individuation, independence and self-reliance. (Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2006 p.24)

More broadly speaking, indigenous perspectives extend this view of well-being as also being inexplicably linked to relationships to the various life forms or intelligences which comprise nature.¹ Various scholars across a number of disciplines now argue that these ontological and epistemological principles have profound relevance for the construction of pedagogies which articulate a more sustainable vision for our global world (Nelson, K. 2008; Stewart-Harawira 2005). Māori scholar Makere Stewart-Harawira has summarized these as follows: the profound interconnectedness of all existence which governs all relationships; the principle that every individual element of the natural world has its own life force; the principle of balance or reciprocity which requires that we acknowledge and honour all beings; and the development of holistic understandings of knowledge that consider everything in relation to the whole (Stewart-Harawira 2005). Potentially, indigenous ontologies could form the basis for the evolving cosmological re-orientation so desperately needed and absent from the psychological, social, and spiritual consciousness of modern societies (Cajete 2000).

For many members of the RMHD study populations and the communities involved in Human Ecology Week more generally – i.e. Aboriginal, racialized immigrant and refugee communities – addressing the root causes of disparities in mental well-being starts to become more about issues of ontological and epistemological sovereignty; the recovery of relationships to land and community (belonging); ensuring the horizontal alignment of cultures and approaches to knowledge (rather than vertical ordering) – i.e., the creation of intercultural and inter-ontological space; the importance of being able to fully articulate identity and aspirations in everyday life; and the right of these populations to be viewed as real and actual contributors to Canadian society. While continuing to address the standard underlying determinants of well-being (such as income, housing, education, early childhood development) remains important, these actions are insufficient on their own to address the inequitable distribution of mental well-being in our societies.²

Rather, we must dig deeper and challenge the epistemological and ontological foundations upon which our societies are based. The predominance of Cartesian and liberal humanistic conceptualizations of reality, for example, is evident in human capital approaches to economic development and migration, which continue to frame Canadian immigration policies and programs. Despite Canada's espoused liberal multiculturalism, immigration policy and programming often subtly promote a view of migrants as commodities first and people second via a narrow focus on economic productivity in conventional terms. As is the case with other public policies, this indirectly serves to perpetuate the hierarchical ordering of peoples (and species) whilst ignoring the ecological perils of this approach.

From an onto-epistemological perspective, the Reducing Mental Health Disparities project aims to recognize the interconnected and recursive nature of relationships between life forms. Working to address the needs and aspirations of one group inevitably extends to working in ways that also enrich all life – albeit in this case from the entry point of protective and risk factors for our study populations as they relate to mental well-being. This means looking beyond existing social, health, and welfare services to protective factors such as ontological sovereignty, holistic forms of literacy, or creating a more enduring sense of belonging which encompasses relationships to natural and social landscapes.

¹ Whilst indigenous cultural knowledges are by no means homogenous, they share many similar ontological roots and principles.

² The Canadian Public Health Agency (Health Canada 1999) has identified twelve social determinants of health. These are related to the economic and social conditions under which people live and are as follows: income and social status, social support networks, education and literacy, employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender and culture.

Population-wise, the Week's human ecology approach was largely focused on the aspirations and well-being needs of Aboriginal and immigrant communities within Saskatoon. The Human Ecology Week Learning Series was attended by a wide range of people that included practitioners and policy people from the health, social services, environmental, and education sectors; academics; community people participating directly in research and development projects; and members of the general public. Overall, a total of 170 people were present throughout the week at different learning events – the largest attendances being at the opening event, *Healthy Communities, Healthy Environments*, and the community gathering and research symposium, *Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being*.

In keeping with a population health promotion approach, the Week's presentations focused on a range of mental health determinants and global/local issues. These included the recovery of indigenous identities and land reform in Scotland; inquiry into the notion of a sustainable human being in the context of Brazil; health literacy and sustainable development in the Dene community of La Loche; the relationship between the state of the land and the psycho-spiritual well-being of the youth of Sturgeon Lake First Nation; the importance of cognitive and linguistic sovereignty for the Busoga people of Uganda; the links between sovereignty over flora, fauna, intellectual property, and well-being for Māori in Aotearoa, New Zealand; the inter-sectionality of race, gender, and class in terms of impacting the mental well-being of racialized immigrant and refugee women; and, finally, the possibilities for ecological differentiation in terms of enhancing quality of life in multicultural societies.

A further highlight of the Week is that it brought a group of international people together to explore the possibility of forming an international human ecology network. These people came together for a three-day retreat during the Week to explore cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary perspectives on the nature of human ecology and the kinds of approaches that might be taken. Conversations continued throughout the entire Week producing much animated discussion and debate, and probably raising more questions than giving answers!

The Public Health Agency of Canada and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada, are among the partner organizations of the Reducing Mental Health Disparities project. Both were collaborators in the PRHPRC's 2005 Summer School *Mental Health Promotion: Identity, Culture and Power* which gave rise to the RMHD project. While the mandate of the Public Health Agency is broad – “to promote and protect the health of Canadians through leadership, partnership, innovation and action in public health” – its health promotion and community development programming components are very linked to human ecology as they entail the “study and practice of community.” Similarly, the mandate of the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch – “to improve the health of First Nation and Inuit communities” – also has a potentially good fit with human ecology as notions of mental well-being very much relate to holistic models of health and the broader notion of community articulated earlier.

A number of University of Saskatchewan partners supported and contributed to the Human Ecology Learning Series. We are grateful for the financial contributions of the Office of the Vice-President, Research, and the College of Arts and Science. Support was also provided by the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, College of Medicine; the Department of Native Studies, College of Arts and Science; and the Schools of Public Health and Environment and Sustainability.

I would also like to draw your attention to Affinity Credit Union who sponsored a dinner for the International Human Ecology Network. The Credit Union's commitment to supporting the communities it serves is closely aligned to many themes central to human ecology.

The Human Ecology Learning Series was made up of the following events:

Healthy Communities, Healthy Environments, a lunch-time speaking event held at White Buffalo Youth Lodge on Monday, April 7

Indigenous Perspectives on Economic Development and Environment, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, 2.30–6.00 pm, Monday, April 7

International Human Ecology Network Retreat, Ancient Spirals Retreat Centre, Saskatoon, April 8–10

Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being, 9.30 am–3 pm, April 11, Mayfair United Church

Scottish Land Reform: Recovering Indigenous Identities, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, 7.30–9.30 pm, April 11

This report is not intended as a precise record of what occurred during the Week in terms of communicating the contents of every session.³ Rather, it is intended to provide readers with a flavour of the central themes, what occurred, who participated, along with possible future directions for the RMHD project and other collaborators in terms of future human ecology-related initiatives.

One of the many things that made the Week so rich was the wide range of partnering organizations and individuals who contributed to the Week:

The Public Health Agency of Canada
The First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada
Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, College of Medicine
Department of Native Studies, College of Arts and Science
School of Public Health, University of Saskatchewan
School of Environment and Sustainability, University of Saskatchewan
College of Arts and Science, University of Saskatchewan
Office of the Vice-President, Research, University of Saskatchewan
Affinity Credit Union
White Buffalo Youth Lodge
Saskatoon City Council
International Women of Saskatoon
Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina

Other organizations represented include:

Global Gathering Place
Saskatoon Open Door Society
Saskatoon Intercultural Society
Saskatoon Social Services
Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour, Government of Saskatchewan
Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, Uganda
Transformative Learning Centre, University of Toronto
Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland
Canterbury University and Sustainable Development Institute, New Zealand

We thank you for your participation and look forward to future work together.

With warm regards,

Lewis Williams, PhD
Principal Investigator, Reducing Mental Health Disparities project
Associate Professor, Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan
Director, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre

³ The only day that was audio-recorded was *Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being*: a research symposium and community gathering

HUMAN ECOLOGY WEEK

April 7–11, 2008

Presented by Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre,
University of Saskatchewan

Health in Harmony with the Environment

Join International and Local Speakers for a Dialogue on
Health, Community, Sustainability and the Environment

OPENING EVENT Monday, April 7

Healthy Communities, Healthy Environment

White Buffalo Youth Lodge, 11:30AM–1:30PM

Lunch is \$10. Please RSVP by April 1 to anne.mease@usask.ca

Community well-being in the context of sustainable development: How do relationships with others and with the environment influence health? How can social activists, health workers, policymakers, educators, and community members make a difference?

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

WILLIE ERMINE, Ethicist and Assistant Professor, First Nations University of Canada

ALASTAIR MCINTOSH, Visiting Professor, Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland
and author of *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power*

CRISTINA MORENO, Human Ecology Consultant, Brazil

LEWIS WILLIAMS, Director, PRHPRC; Associate Professor, Department of
Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan

MORE HUMAN ECOLOGY WEEK EVENTS

Monday, April 7, 2:30–6PM at White Buffalo Youth Lodge
Indigenous Perspectives on Economic Development & Environment

Friday, April 11, 9:30AM–3:00PM at Mayfair United Church
Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being

Friday, April 11, 7:30PM–9:00PM at White Buffalo Youth Lodge
Scottish Land Reform: Recovering Indigenous Identities

INFORMATION: <http://prhprc.usask.ca>

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

Public Health Agency of Canada
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine, College of Arts and Science,
School of Public Health, School of Environment and Sustainability
And other Community Partners



Event One: Healthy Communities, Healthy Environment

Hosted by the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre in collaboration with Public Health Agency of Canada; First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada; White Buffalo Youth Lodge; Schools of Public Health and Environment and Sustainability, University of Saskatchewan

Community well-being in the context of sustainable development:

- How do relationships with others and with the environment influence health?
- How can social activists, health workers, policymakers, educators, and community members make a difference?

The first event of the Human Ecology Week was an opening luncheon held at White Buffalo Youth Lodge on April 7, 2008 from 11:30 am–1:30 pm. In attendance was a diverse representation of community members, health care providers, educators, and students. Approximately eighty people attended the opening luncheon.

Program

11.45	Monica Goulet, City of Saskatoon Race Relations Committee, and Charlie Clarke, City of Saskatoon Councillor, acted as co-chairs and briefly introduced the event
11.50	Elder Maurice, White Buffalo Youth Lodge, welcomed everyone and opened the event with a prayer
12.00	<i>Healthy Communities, Healthy Environment</i> : introduction to the topic, the speakers and acknowledgment of the collaborating organizations
12.15	Lewis Williams, Director, PRHPRC, and Associate Professor, Native Studies
12.25	Alastair McIntosh, Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland
12.40	Cristina Moreno, Human Ecology Consultant, Brazil
12.55	Willie Ermine, Ethicist, Faculty, First Nations University of Canada
1.10pm	Floor opened for questions
1.30pm	Wrap Up

What's Human Ecology? And what's it got to do with Public Health?

*Lewis Williams, Department of Native Studies,
Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan*

Speaking Notes

Greetings

- We're honoured to be beginning Human Ecology Week at White Buffalo Youth Lodge. The work of White Buffalo Youth Lodge –creating extended family and relationship – is very much in tune with the themes of the Week.
- Personally, the buffalo has special significance to me; it is not found in Aotearoa, New Zealand, (my own country of origin) and yet it entered my dreams three years or so before I came to Canada. This shows me that beyond our perceived different identities and cultures there is a universality, we speak a common language, and that in this enormous web of life we are very much interconnected.
- The buffalo also has special significance to the theme of our Week. Symbolically in many First Nations cultures it is about manifesting abundance through right action and right prayer – right action can only be manifested through a deep knowing of reciprocity and our inter-dependence within the entirety of cosmological relationships of which we are part. These are very much human ecology themes.

What is Human Ecology?

- What is human ecology? Human ecology emphasizes relationship. Standard dictionary definitions will tell you it's about relations between organisms and their physical surroundings or between humans and the natural environment. It emphasizes our interconnectedness across difference, with our relationship to Mother Earth the common denominator.
- Human ecology is about community, interdependence, and relationship.
- I was profoundly reminded of this at a recent family reunion between common ancestors – John Lees Faulkner of England who married Ruawahine Puihi, Ngai Te Rangi, tribe, Tauranga, Aotearoa, New Zealand, in the 1830s. Our reunion of this ancestral line was a real mixture of class and colours. We spent four days getting to know one another across our differences. And, if I think of our time together, two words come to mind: *whanaungatanga* and (*whaka*) *whanaungatanga*.
- Literally translated as relative, *whanaungatanga* means kinship in its widest sense. It includes our *whanau* (extended human family), our *whakapapa* (ancestry, including our non-human ancestors), and includes our relationships with the natural world. It recognizes that Māori people share a common ancestry with *taonga* (treasures) of the natural world through Tane Mahuta (the deity of man and forests and child of Ranginui, the sky father and Papatuanuku, the earth mother). *Whakawhanaungatanga* refers to the dynamic process of establishing and maintaining links and relationships.
- This was very much what our reunion was about and is also very much what human ecology is about. Human ecology is about a way of seeing the world – kinship in its widest sense – and a way of being in the world – establishing and maintaining relationships and acting in ways that take account of interconnectedness to all beings.
- In many ways the work ahead of us is the recovery of our ancestral inheritance – our indigenous selves (unification of ourselves with the natural world – being part of instead of above or separate from it). We must go beyond post-colonial guilt, shame to truth and reconciliation – the establishment of right relationship to all beings.

- We must remember our connectedness – knowing and living that depth of connection. We are one living breathing organism coming from the same source – many spiritual and cultural traditions have language for this – beyond our egotistical selves into our collective power.

Forgetting Our Way

- However, this is often hard to remember and in many ways is a forgotten way of being. Western science, the dominance of the techno-rational paradigm, neo-liberalism, consumerism, and globalization have colonized our perceptions. Many of us live in a culture of separation and commodification – commodification of the land, of people, and often of our relationships. One only has to look to contemporary colonial relations or to immigration policies to see this.

Being Reminded: How our Relationships Influence Health

- However Gaia is profound in her reminders! While we as human beings continually remind ourselves of our differences, climate change is a potent reminder that we all share one thing in common – planet earth. We all share the same atmosphere; this is a profound reminder of our connectedness. The earth's atmosphere does not differentiate greenhouse gases by country of origin – one country's emissions are another country's problem.
- Poorer countries inevitably pay the price for carbon emissions of wealthier countries. The United Kingdom (population 60 million) emits more CO² than Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Vietnam combined (total population 472 million). These kinds of realities are rooted in the rampant consumerism of wealthier societies. Canada has the second-to-worst record of greenhouse gas emission in the world per capita. In the North we are seeing it - bush fires, climate changes interfering with the feeding and breeding of animals such as the caribou or polar bears for example, with serious impacts on the hunting and cultural and spiritual traditions of Aboriginal communities.
- Human hierarchies – when some people are heard and others are not, some live well and others don't – ultimately serve nobody. It is unsustainable to draw on and exploit each other (human capital framings of migration policies and programming are good examples of this) as in the same way it is unsustainable draw on and exploit the earth.

How Can We Make a Difference?

- Join the dots – between all the issues. The techno-rational paradigm that has joined forces with capitalism is in fact an ontology or world view of disconnection. The answers are not technological solutions; they are human ones.
- Recover the sacred in your lives. Remember spirit, that vital, animating essence of whom we are, that is beyond the material. We need to balance the material and immaterial worlds. We need each other – we can't do this work without each other. Be willing to feel the pain of where we are, the winters of your own soul. But also know that alchemy, transformation, is possible through our collective power and believing in the unique contribution that every living being has to make. In summary, we are being called to be and live an ethic of caring – this ethic of caring extends to 'all our relations.'
- Remember, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland

Alastair McIntosh, Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland

Preface

We do not have speaking notes for Alastair McIntosh. However, much of Alastair's work is about the recovery of land and indigenous identities in Scotland. Politically, spiritually and culturally, this work is very connected to that of Aboriginal communities in Canada who are undertaking various actions around the decolonization of their own peoples. Alastair's sense of profound connection with the philosophical and spiritual traditions of Aboriginal Canada was evident in his role in the 1994 Isle of Harris Superquarry Public Inquiry which led him to elicit the public support of Sulian Stone Eagle Herney, Warrior Chief and Peace Pipe Carrier, Mi'Kmaq First Nations, Nova Scotia. Together with the Rev. Prof. Donald MacLeod of the Free Church College, they presented the government inquiry with an unprecedented theological testimony concerning reverence for the integrity of creation. Alastair later wrote *The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland* at the request of some friends involved in the Isle of Harris Superquarry Inquiry and related ecological and cultural struggles. He sang the final verse *Homecoming* at the conclusion of his presentation here in Saskatoon.

The Gal-Gael Peoples of Scotland

We the Gal-Gael, being a loose association of some native peoples of Scotland, extend our hand to all other indigenous peoples in the world. By invitation of First Nation friends in North America we ask to address you with these words:

Final Verse: *The Homecoming*

Dear fellow creatures
native brothers sisters children
in other heartlands of the real, the reel
We ask from you acceptance
of our peoplehood
We ask you weave our native threads
to fabric of one scintillating cloth
that is the mantle of the world
We pledge to you support
for all work sourced in love
recovering right relation'ship your territories
And ask from you forgiveness
for past injustice, ignorance and spoils of fear or greed
We need your help with Spirit's grace
to find clear paths through tangled modern Waste Land tares
to seed as oaks as Gods each one proclaiming Jubilee
To fly in fair formation as wild geese ...
To hear afresh that deep poetic story
of magic set in time when place began ...
To make a life worth living ...
To save this Earth ...
... And play from down the hollow hill
A hallowed music
Sacred dance
That is our soul ...
... our soil ⁴

⁴ The full version of this poem is available at http://www.alastairmcintosh.com/articles/1998_galgael.htm

Healthy Communities, Healthy Environment

Cristina Moreno, Human Ecology Consultant, Brazil

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure being here with you in this event. What I'd like to do here is share my human ecological perspective, not as a scientist, but as a human being living on our planet.

I'd like to provide you with an overview of a paradoxical scenario from the perspective of a Brazilian. I would also like to talk about the Earth Charter and finally share some examples of how I believe we can improve quality of life.

The core definition of ecology describes it as the science of relationships. So, ecology belongs to each creature, animal, plant, and human. The question that remains is: how to develop good relationships? If we are looking for a healthy planet, we must look for human health from a holistic perspective – well balanced physically, mentally, and spiritually. Modern life offers so many aspects, opportunities, and illusions which often blind us from the simple, the integrated, and even reality.

Paradoxical Scenario

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in its *Human Development Report 2007/2008* classified Brazil as a High Human Development Country. We would be pleased with this if we looked at it only as an improvement in the economic development of the country, but nations like Brazil, with large populations – there are almost 186 million people – and large territories, live in contradiction. Our biggest problem is distribution of wealth. We have well-developed regions and very poor ones. You can see in the slides some Brazilian figures. Differences between North and South are more important than the numbers themselves. Figures related to poverty are disturbing. Almost 50% of the people living in the North and Northeast receive a monthly income of less than half of the minimum wage (approximately US\$120/month). Unfortunately, in these regions we do have the worst socio-economic index. With the lack of basic sanitation, treated water, and landfills, the physical health of these communities is very fragile, with low self esteem and little hope for the future. Each day, 10 to 15 children below the age of five die because of the effect of insufficient sanitation.

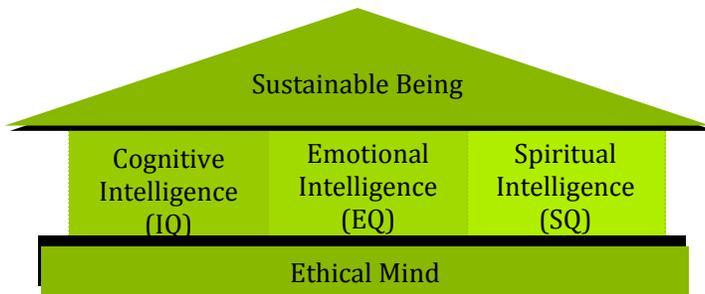
Apart from that, there are other diseases stimulated by deforestation, like Yellow Fever and Dengue Fever, whose viruses are transmitted by the mosquito *Aedes Aegypti*. Because of the imbalance of the forest system, this mosquito has migrated to villages and large cities. In summary, if there is poverty and lack of safe water, sanitation, and landfill, the environmental practices will be very poor and in consequence will cause disease. How responsible are we, who live on the other side of this paradox? Certainly we are responsible. We produce tons of garbage, and there is not enough space for landfill; we waste water; and our crops are demanding more and more land.

UNDP chose 2008 to be the International Year of Sanitation. A wise decision because now there are more than two and a half billion people living without access to basic sanitation, which means almost 41% of the world's population. Each day, 5,000 children under the age of five die as a result of the lack of sanitation. And each year more than 200 million tons of human waste and vast quantities of waste water and solid waste go uncollected and untreated around the world, polluting the environment and exposing millions of people to disease. One of the Millennium Development Goals is to halve the number of people without sanitation by 2015. In order to achieve that, UNDP estimates an investment of US \$10 billion/year. This sum is less than 1% of the world military spending in 2005, as much as Europeans spend on ice cream each year!

The Earth Charter

Metaphorically speaking, if we understand society as a living being, we will have a healthy society when its entire organism is healthy. So healthy people develop healthy societies, sustainable people create sustainable communities, and, of course, the processes of change only occur through people.

What supports us as human beings? Making a parallel with business' Triple Bottom Line, we can identify three major pillars:



Our Intelligence – allows us logical thought and makes us unique among the other living beings;

Our Emotions – allow us our relationships, our feelings, and to differ from each other;

Our Soul – allows us to have a goal in life, a meaning to our existence, and leads us to fight for our ideals, beliefs, and values.

This is just a symbolic and didactic way to associate people and sustainability. As in business, the first pillar – relating economic aspects with cognitive intelligence – is easy to understand and value since it is very well quantified. Emotional intelligence, because of its associative characteristics leads to a parallel with environmental issues, the need to understand impacts and consequences. We compare spiritual intelligence with social responsibility which requires a constant understanding of the environment, strong empathy, and a deep desire to transform reality. As the basis for sustainability in enterprises is transparency, we believe that the sustainable being is founded on an ethical mind.

If we want to reinvent our world as a better place to live, with happy people and a beautiful environment, first we need to understand ourselves and be balanced in all aspects, physically, mentally, and spiritually. We cannot leave this job to others, and we don't need to wait for new ideas or inspirations. Of course we need some guidelines, issues to reflect on, as a checklist with a holistic view. For me, I have selected the Earth Charter as my bible, because of its sense of global responsibility.

Besides the fact that the Earth Charter was created through an outstanding process involving thousands of people from almost all nations of the planet, it defines a global ethic for a global society. The Earth Charter represents an important contribution for a holistic and integrated vision of the social and environmental problems of humanity as a health treaty for the planet.

Structured into four main topics, it proclaims an alliance for solutions to global issues through sustainability – when using, with respect and rationality, the natural resources, keeping in mind future generations and care – which is benevolent behaviour, with respect and nonviolence towards nature, remembering that we are part of it.

Probably you are guessing that the Earth Charter is lyrical wishful thinking, misunderstanding the contradictions of life and the necessary energy to sustain development in order to eradicate poverty and assure the planet's transformation. It would be a utopia, but I believe that if we use it as a guide, we are starting the process, a process of compassion, understanding, freedom and love for the construction of the common good.

The preamble of the document says:

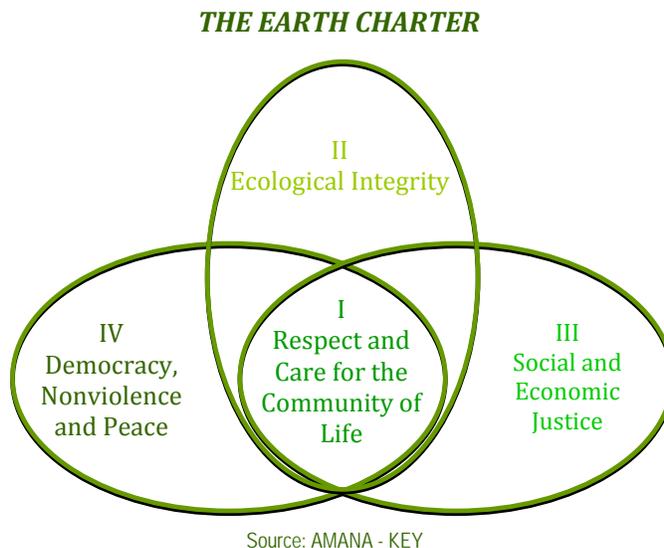
We must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities....

The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

This Earth Charter invitation evokes a greater responsibility for society, sharing experiences, and building a common dream. It is a call to all kinds of organization, but mainly an invitation to each of us, sustainable and healthy beings. I think that Dr Williams' initiative to build an International Human Ecology Network is one more brick in this construction.

Awakening

Of course there is hope. There are thousands of initiatives all around the world, small and simple actions that do make a difference. I'd like to share three Brazilian stories related to health ecology:



The Agua Branca (White Water) Community – The mayor of a village in the middle of the Northeast region with a population of 20,000 is introducing an interacting management, very similar to what Roy Madron called Gaian Democracy. The important point is that this small town is a very poor one with enormous economic challenges. Mayor Reginaldo, during a seminar about leadership and spirituality, said that he is taking simple actions based on ongoing dialogue with the community and he looks at the community's needs as a whole – agriculture, tourism, education, health, employment, etc. including their impacts and consequences. The importance is that he is looking at environment, social needs, and development growth on the same level and is engaging and promoting community participation, which is unusual in Brazil.

Centro de Ecologia Médica Florescer na Mata (Blooming in the Woods – Ecological Health Centre) – Just outside São Paulo, this Centre is using fragments of the Atlantic rainforest to teach people the importance of nature to health and emphasize the need to treat the patient holistically. Dr. Fernando Bignardi and agronomist Edmilson Jose Ambrosano, with the support of the Ecology Department of the University of São Paulo, are in charge of a program that links health and human ecology, looking for an integrated being – physical, mental, and spiritual. The presence of the forest, phytotherapy, organic food, and the respect for nature in all its aspects are the medications they are using. The results are fantastic!

Vila Esperança (Hope Village) – Working as a perfect team, a community of 15,000 is transforming a swamp area into a better place to live. Without waiting for external help they built a school, installed water pipelines, and opened roads. Zumbi, their leader, who was illiterate until the age of 13, says that the secret for accomplishing all that is a shared vision, teamwork, and participation. They named the community Hope Village because that is their vision. He also said, "...we are living on top of a gold mine. Gold is something – a precious metal that is found deep in the earth. To find it, you have to go through clay, rocks, and stones. But you can find gold. But how are we going to profit from this gold?" In other words, Zumbi's question reflects a true concern as to how the community can apply this new-found wealth to the improvement of their community. This community is mentally and spiritually very healthy.

Conclusion

If we desire a healthy and sustainable planet, we need healthy communities and we have to take care of each individual. We belong to this universe, and we have to express our gratefulness for the life we have. Let's pursue happiness with respect to all the other beings. The recipe for that is putting together understanding, compassion, and love.

The Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela expressed marvellously our responsibility for the earth when they wrote:

The world we all see is not **the** world, but **one** world that we create together with others. This human world has, as a central element, our inner world, with abstract thoughts, concepts, beliefs, mental images, intentions and self consciousness.

It is our responsibility to take care, with affection, of this world and of the creatures that share it! In my interpretation of Bob Dylan's song, "The answer, my friends, is blowing in the wind."

Thank you very much.⁵

⁵ References

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HUMAN ECOLOGY WEEK

Presented by Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre,
University of Saskatchewan

Monday, April 7, 2008

Indigenous Perspectives on Economic Development & Environment

Hosted by the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan

White Buffalo Youth Lodge, 2:30–6:00 PM

602 20th Street West, Saskatoon Reception to follow

Explore and examine the tensions surrounding sustainable development for indigenous peoples and the difficult decisions facing their communities. Help unravel some of these tensions with the help of local and international speakers, including:

WILLIE ERMINE, Ethicist & Assistant Professor, First Nations University of Canada

ROGER MAAKA, Professor and Head of Department of Native Studies,
University of Saskatchewan

ALASTAIR MCINTOSH, Visiting Professor, Centre for Human Ecology, University of Strathclyde, Scotland and author of *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power*

KEITH MORRISON, Coordinator, Sustainable Community Development Forum,
New Zealand

PRISCILLA SETTEE, Associate Professor, Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan, received a 2008 Saskatchewan Global Citizens Award

HOLLY TOULEJOUR, La Loche Village Councillor and Social Worker, Victims Services Branch

PAULO WANGOOLA, Nabyama (Founder-President) of the Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, Uganda: dedicated to the advancement of indigenous knowledge for community renewal and enrichment

LEWIS WILLIAMS, Director, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, and Associate Professor, Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan

INFORMATION: <http://prhprc.usask.ca>



This event is presented by the Department of Native Studies, College of Arts and Science, University of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch and the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre

Event Two: Indigenous Perspectives on Economic Development and Environment

Hosted by the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre in collaboration with the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan, and the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada

The afternoon symposium explored Indigenous Perspectives on Economic Development and Environment through a series of presentations and case studies which included local Aboriginal perspectives and projects as well as international ones.

The purpose of these sessions was to explore tensions surrounding sustainable development for indigenous peoples. For example, the need for local economic development opportunities which are in harmony with traditional relationships to land and sustain indigenous well-being in a holistic sense (for example, this includes issues such as traditional knowledge and approaches to healing, native flora and fauna, and intellectual and cultural property rights).

Accordingly, in Saskatchewan alone, many Aboriginal communities are faced with difficult decisions – for example should they open up their lands to corporate mining or logging interests if this will provide immediate employment opportunities for local populations? Moves towards cultural, spiritual, and linguistic revitalization for many Aboriginal and indigenous communities around the world together with the need to nurture 'belonging to the land' are being put to the test as the pervasive economic development paradigm which runs counter to this (read corporatization of the land) often appears to be the easiest short-term option.

Program

- 2.30 pm Introduction and welcome by Roger Maaka, Head, Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan
- 2.40 pm *Indigenous Perspectives on Economic Development and Environment: Overview of the Current Situation* by Willie Ermine
- 3.20 pm Responses and questions
- 3.30 pm *Mobilizing Language, Literacy, and Culture as Resources for Well-Being: The Village of La Loche* by Holly Toulejour and Lewis Williams
- 4.00 pm Responses and Questions
- 4.10 pm Break
- 4.25 pm *Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development* by Priscilla Settee
- 4.45 pm Response from international guests Paulo Wangoola (Uganda), Alastair McIntosh (Scotland), and Keith Morrison (New Zealand)
- 5.30 pm *Wai 262, A Treaty Claim to Indigenous Flora and Fauna and Intellectual Property Rights* by Roger Maaka
- 6.00 pm Reception

Mobilizing Language, Literacy, and Culture as Resources for Well-Being: A Dene Approach to Sustainable Development

Holly Toulejour, Councillor, La Loche, and Lewis Williams, University of Saskatchewan

“To create an economically, culturally, politically, socially, spiritually strong community and to work towards a future so that the community feel good about who they are.”⁶

Preface

La Loche is a Dene village of around 4,000 people in Northern Saskatchewan. Today it is dealing with a number of challenges which relate both to the history of colonialism in Canada as well as to a number of economic and cultural transitions which touch on the interrelations between literacy, language, cultural traditions, and sustainable development. The community of La Loche and the University of Saskatchewan, represented in this presentation by Councillor Holly Toulejour and Lewis Williams respectively, are undertaking an applied literacy research project to address issues of this kind.⁷ In recent years the La Loche Village Council has developed a Sustainable Development Plan – some of its key ideas are linked to the aims of this project and as such it forms an important contextual element. What follows is not a verbatim account of this presentation but rather a selection of slides that were shown along with a commentary that follows its main points drawn from a selection of writings by Lewis Williams.

La Loche in the Wider Context: Globalization, Sustainable Development, and Literacy

There is widespread acknowledgement that contemporary and neo-liberalist forms of economic globalization are leading to social, ecological, political, and economic non-sustainability. Destruction of entire environmental systems, extinctions of species and pollutions of waters and the atmosphere is occurring throughout the world at unprecedented rates (Shiva 2003, United Nations Development Program 2004, 2007). Perhaps one of the most far-reaching effects of Western capitalist expansion has been the near extinction of many indigenous peoples throughout the world, accompanied by loss of bio-diversity, cultural diversity and, ultimately, ontological diversity (diverse ways of experiencing and viewing the world). For many of these communities, economic, social, and health disparities have increased with most finding themselves on the sidelines of economic development initiatives.

Community economic development is “a community-based and community-directed process that combines social and economic development and fosters the economic, social, ecological, and cultural well-being of communities.”

Until relatively recently this has also been the case with Saskatchewan’s northern and remote communities, including La Loche. With ‘development’ having moved to them, particularly the ‘natural resource industry,’ such communities are now often faced with difficult decisions concerning the provision of immediate employment and revenue for their communities through engagement with mainstream development initiatives or the more risky route of attempting to incorporate traditional world views and sustainable development practices into economic development.

The people of La Loche are taking the courageous path of meeting local corporate development initiatives on their own terms. As part of this the community has developed a Sustainable Development Strategy that draws on community-based action to enhance social, economic, and environmental conditions. Community economic development is “a community-based and community-directed process that combines social and economic development and fosters the economic, social, ecological, and cultural well-being of communities” (La Loche Village Council 2005).

⁶ Georgina Jolibois, Mayor of La Loche, 2005

⁷ This project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Paralleling such developments, the United Nations Environment Program continues to note the serious social, economic, and ecological costs of bio-diversity loss as genes, species, ecosystems, and human knowledge – which potentially represent a living library of options available for preventing and/or adapting to local and global change – are continually being eradicated. Furthermore bio-diversity cannot be disconnected from human diversity as different cultures and people from different walks of life perceive and apprehend bio-diversity in different ways (United Nations Development Program 2007). Any one ecological system in which peoples are embedded both shapes their distinct heritages, experiences, and ways of being in the world (including linguistic and culturally-based understandings) and is shaped by them.

Despite having much to offer this impasse, indigenous world views and ways of being remain at the periphery of global public health policy. Indigenous health concerns remain marginalized within Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and priorities to the extent that there is concern that their implementation “may lead to accelerated loss of land and natural resources, and accelerated assimilation” on the part of indigenous peoples (Addison Posey 1999; Stephens, Porter, Nettleson and Willis 2006). A further example of this marginality lies in the continued emphasis on functional forms of literacy (reading, writing, and numeracy) on the part of public health-related institutions throughout the world, (Canadian Public Health Association 2008; Institute of Medicine 2004) and the continuing disconnect between the potential of indigenous and holistic approaches to literacy and MDGs such as the eradication of poverty, universal education, and sustainable development.⁸

Given the profound ecological inter-dependence of all life forms, the overarching vision of development offered here is the “ability to understand, respond to, and work towards what will benefit all human beings and will support and enrich all life on this planet” (Spariosu 2006). An alternative conceptualization of this same goal might be framed as the promotion of human diversity in ways that support bio-diversity – an area of enquiry which is becoming increasingly relevant in the human ecology and sustainable development⁹ fields (Addison Posey 1999, United Nations Development Program 2007). In essence, both speak to the restoration of ecological relationship in ways that both give life to an ‘ecology of being’ – perceiving and acting in ways that realize our profound interconnectedness with other beings – and require healing the relationships between each other and the earth.

Aboriginal and other indigenous approaches to literacy are potentially important methodologies in terms of realizing such a vision. Unfortunately however, narrower and implicitly deterministic conceptualizations of literacy, at least in an economic and social sense, have tended to persist in Canada and throughout the world. For example, progenitors of recent moves to develop a Pan Canadian Strategy open their argument by citing increases in national GDP – up to \$13 billion per year – as being a key outcome of raising literacy rates by just one percent (MCL 2006), whilst the New Zealand literacy strategy recognizes that “high levels of adult literacy are critical for the transformation and modernization of the New Zealand economy, and the transition to a knowledge society, leading to economic and social benefits for all New Zealanders” (Ministry of Education 2001 p.4).

Underlying statements of this nature are inevitably a number of implicit assumptions pertaining to which knowledge and whose knowledge makes up a knowledge society as well as ontological and ethical assumptions about human development paradigms. As commonly reflected in widely and

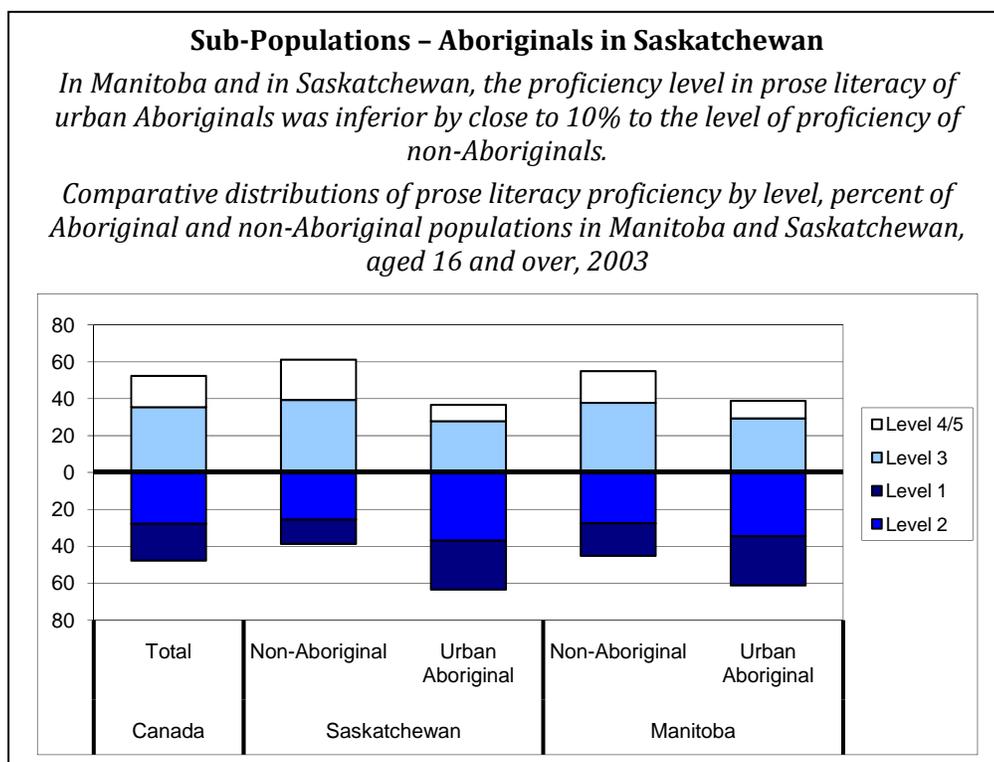
⁸ Whilst WHO and particularly UNESCO (2003) have moved towards more plural and culture-based forms of literacy, the potential of indigenous approaches to literacy as a key strategy in addressing three of the seven MDGs appears to have escaped notice.

⁹ As used here, human ecology refers to a way of thinking about underlying determinants of public health that takes into account the relationships between people, their natural, social, and created environments, whilst sustainable development may be thought of more as methodology within this human ecology paradigm.

officially used definitions and measurements of literacy, such assumptions are commonly based on Western, positivist, and techno-rational paradigms which are underscored by neo-liberal discourses of economic development and consumerist ideologies.¹⁰

Aboriginal Literacy in Canada

Canada has significant problems with low levels of literacy, particularly its Aboriginal populations. In Saskatchewan alone, urban Aboriginal peoples have significantly lower levels of literacy across every age group than non-Aboriginal peoples with over 60 percent scoring below a level of literacy considered adequate for functioning in everyday Canadian society, compared with 40 percent for the remainder of the population (Statistics Canada 2003).



Unsurprisingly, paralleling the dominance of Western models of literacy programming throughout Canada’s education systems coupled with the historic legacy of colonial relations in Canada, there has been an overwhelming loss of Aboriginal language and culture. 50 out of 53 of Canada’s First Nation languages are declining, endangered, or face extinction (Assembly of First Nations 2000, Battiste 2004). Of 151 First Nation communities surveyed, 30 percent were endangered (only the older populations are fluent with few or no speakers in younger age groups) and just over 10 percent were in critical condition (less than 10 speakers remain in the community). In any society, “language is the basis of sovereignty as well as the vessel of culture” (Assembly of First Nations 2000 p.11), and in contemporary Canada First Nation languages represent an irreplaceable cultural knowledge and a cornerstone of First Nation communities and family values.

¹⁰ For example, the International Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, which has historically been used to measure literacy levels in 20 countries, including New Zealand and Canada, examines peoples’ ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities across three domains of literacy skills – prose, document, and quantitative literacy (numeracy). It defines literacy as “using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (Statistics Canada 2003). While one would not deny the values of these skills, these domains of measurement and corresponding definition assume the primacy of western cultural norms of perception, communication, and agency or ways of being in the world.

In part as a response to issues of language loss, cultural alienation, low levels of functional literacy and general well-being, recent years have seen the emergence of Aboriginal approaches to literacy. Such conceptualizations are considerably different from Western mainstream approaches and are

“When viewed in these terms literacy is not [just] a skill to be learned but an approach to life that includes healthy relationships, healthy nutrition, language instruction, ceremonial practices and family literacy.”

invariably based on the idea of multiple literacies, are holistic, and build the connections between Aboriginal literacy, healing, community development, and self-determination (Antone, Gamblin, and Sinclair 2001). In particular, the need to draw the connections between Aboriginal literacy, language, and culture as key means to self-determination is increasingly being highlighted (Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network 2006).

One prominent model among others is the Rainbow approach to literacy which proposes several forms of Aboriginal literacy, each of which can be characterized by a colour (George 2003). For example, red is mother tongue literacy, while green is English and/or French literacy; yellow is the literacy of symbolism and blue the literacy of technology; indigo is spiritual literacy; and violet is holistic literacy, an appreciation of the interconnections between mind, body, spirit, and family for a healthy life. “When viewed in these terms literacy is not [just] a skill to be learned but an approach to life that includes healthy relationships, healthy nutrition, language instruction, ceremonial practices and family literacy” (Hauser and Edwards 2006 p.25). Being literate is about visioning a future in which an Aboriginal way of being will continue to thrive (Antone, Gamblin, and Provost-Turchetti, 2003). While such approaches are promising and many valuable Aboriginal literacy initiatives are now underway within Canada, these tend to be poorly funded and recognized within public policy and generally underdeveloped, particularly with respect to measurement, when contrasted with mainstream literacy approaches.

Epistemologically, these holistic perspectives of literacy are based on an Aboriginal world view in which all things are interconnected by virtue of shared origins; they therefore place primary importance on the interrelationships between all forms of life (Antone and Imai 2006; Stewart-Harawira 2005).¹¹ Within this world view every element of the natural world has its own life force or intelligence. For Aboriginal peoples this leads to the principle of guardianship which delineates their relationships with the natural world and the deep obligation to sustain and nurture the earth and all life. Interestingly, while Aboriginal communities within Saskatchewan and throughout the world are beginning to recognize the need for sustainable economic development, emergent Aboriginal literacy programs have not yet begun to make the links in real terms to ideas about sustainability and economic development.

La Loche

La Loche is a Northern Saskatchewan village of Dene Aboriginal peoples currently attempting an ethic of health literacy through the development of culturally relevant literacy programming in ways that will eventually support community sustainable development initiatives. Initially a nomadic fishing, hunting, and gathering people, colonial relations have left their mark



¹¹ See page two for Makere Stewart-Harawira’s articulation of indigenous epistemological and ontological principles outlined earlier.

in terms of erosion of mother tongue, cultural and spiritual traditions, low (functional) literacy levels,¹² high rates of poverty and health disparities relative to other populations (Population Health Unit 2004). Today this community is dealing with a number of challenging economic and cultural transitions, including low workforce capacity, as well as some difficult choices between traditional and extractive forms of economic development (which would provide immediate jobs for many impoverished residents) and more culturally and economically sustainable practices that would initially yield less immediate results in terms of poverty alleviation when measured in purely economic terms.

In response to these challenges the community has recently developed a sustainable development plan and, in tandem with this initiative, a small team of applied community researchers together with community members are deliberately attempting to develop holistic literacy programming to support its implementation. While incorporating functional and critical approaches to literacy, the ontological bedrock of this approach will be indigenous, with linguistic and cultural revitalization principles (Smylie, Williams, and Cooper 2006).



It is planned that La Loche residents will participate in focus groups for the purpose of discussing questions such as ‘What is Dene literacy?’, ‘In what ways are we already literate?’, ‘Which elements of culture, spirituality, and literacy are vital to our well-being and future?’ and ‘How do community-based conceptualizations of literacy compare and contrast to current literacy categories, programs and policies?’ An important component of this work will be dialogue between community members to build a common understanding around contemporary notions of Dene health literacy. This will undoubtedly include the re-introduction of Dene world views by the traditional knowledge keepers of La Loche along the lines of indigenous health literacies discussed earlier. Although still in early days of development, answers to these questions will inform literacy programming from a Dene perspective, which, through re-grounding La Loche residents in their localized culturally-based knowledges alongside navigating Western systems (bi-literacy), should ideally lead to community sustainable development.

Approaches to Health Literacy: Some Critical Differences

In recent years, health literacy has begun to creep into public health discourse potentially bridging the literacy and health fields, both conceptually and in practice (Nutbeam 2001, Canadian Public Health Association 2008, Hauser and Edwards 2006). Both the direct and indirect effects of low (functional) literacy levels are well documented. Indirect effects such as unemployment, low income, low self esteem, social isolation, and substance abuse are particularly pervasive in terms of impact and are associated with other determinants of health including income and social status, culture, gender, quality of housing, food security, personal health practices, and coping skills and child development (Ronsman and Rootman 2004, Hauser and Edwards 2006). Indigenous peoples are

¹² At present, literacy statistics remain largely unavailable for Saskatchewan’s rural and northern Aboriginal populations such as La Loche due to the remoteness of these communities and historical lack of infrastructure, services, and resourcing. It is however thought that literacy rates as measured according to conventional and western functional models of literacy are likely to be even lower than for the provinces’ urban Aboriginal communities (Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network 2002, Vandale 2007).

prone to experiencing compromised health status through low literacy levels, even when based purely on Eurocentric (functional) measurements of literacy.

Broadly speaking, conceptualizations of health literacy fall into two groups:

1. Those based on functional literacy and focused on clinical settings – i.e. patient’s ability to comprehend and act on treatment-orientated information; and
2. Approaches more orientated to public health settings, which are broader including functional, communicative/interactive, and critical forms of literacy and having their basis in adult education and health promotion (Institute of Medicine 2004, Nutbeam 2000, 2008).

While this second approach to health literacy is more hopeful, particularly its critical forms which articulate goals of community and personal empowerment, its historical roots lie in western bio-medical approaches to health, and it remains implicitly grounded in Cartesian and western-style science.

Emergent Canadian Aboriginal and other indigenous definitions of literacy and health are, on the other hand, considerably different. For example, in Canada Aboriginal conceptualizations of health place emphasis on wholeness, connection, balance, harmony, and growth:

The development of the individual is interwoven with the well-being of the community and of the nation. Moreover an individual’s identity, status and place in the world are tied not only to the [extended] family, but also to one’s ancestors and community. This leads to a view of mental health that is very different from Western models that focus on individualism, independence and self-reliance. (Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2006)

Indigenous models of literacy build on and are consistent with critical approaches assuming literacy to be a form of power – either maintaining dominant systems or challenging them (Cherland and Harper 2007). Likewise, literacy is perceived as an active phenomenon that is strongly tied to cultural and political outcomes and self-determination. However, indigenous approaches to literacy are distinguished by their epistemological and ontological orientations and are consistent with those outlined by Stewart-Harawira earlier. Ontologically, indigenous health literacies emphasize the profound interconnectedness of all existence, are based on a very broad idea of kinship wherein being literate potentially includes the process of listening and attuning to the intelligences of the human and non-human presences that surround and influence daily life. Indigenous health literacies recognize that the well-being of individuals lies in moderating the reciprocal and complex relations “between human communities and the larger animate environment” (Abram 1995 pp. 305). Their distinctiveness from Western functional models is critical as both have profoundly different implications for approaches to health and development (Huriwai, T., Robertson, P., Armstrong, D., Kingi, T., and Huata, P. 2001, New Zealand Qualifications Authority 2007).

Within this paradigm, literacy is perhaps an act of perception, communion, and expression wherein one is embedded within relationship. In its fullest sense perhaps, to be health literate entails the ethic of ‘being in and caring for the world’ in ways that are primarily concerned with the quality of relationship between human beings, and between human beings and the other intelligences that are part of the natural world.

The table below highlights the respective differences between different types of health literacy:

Types of Health Literacy: from the bare bones to holistic approaches
(adapted from Nutbeam 2008)

Health Literacy Type and Goal	Ontological & Epistemological Orientation	Assumptions about Knowledge, Power, and Agency	Outcome
Functional Health Literacy	Cartesian ontology Transmission of information on factual health risk and health services utilization	Knowledge is politically neutral and scientific Neo-liberalist notions of agency and (self) responsibility The individual is a rational actor/free agent	Improved knowledge of health risks and health services Compliance with prescribed actions
Critical Health Literacy	Cartesian ontology Provision of information on social and economic determinants of health, assessment of opportunities to achieve change	Power – knowledge Dominant groups define literacy – reassertion of culture-based literacy Environmental conditions prescribe agency Collective responsibility for well-being – state	Improved individual and community capacity to act on social and economic determinants of health Community empowerment
Indigenous Forms of Health Literacy	Ontologies of connectivity Traditional knowledge and mother tongue alongside critical and functional forms of literacy Holistic and participatory literacies based on kinship with human and non-human realm	Power/knowledge analysis. Knowing through participatory and perceptual phenomenology alongside western science Agency is collective – interdependence is emphasized Well-being is contingent upon extended family and community partnerships as well as mediating relationships between human and non-human intelligences	Bi-literacy Traditional knowledge informing sustainable development Increased cultural and political power Re-indigenization

Treaty Claim Wai 262: Indigenous Flora and Fauna and Māori Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights

Roger Maaka, Head, Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan, and member of the Waitangi Tribunal

Preface

The Wai 262 claim is a claim by six tribes throughout New Zealand (Ngati Kuri, Ngati Wai, Te Rarawa, Ngati Kahungunu, Ngati Porou, and Ngati Koata) to the Waitangi Tribunal for recognition and protection of the cultural and intellectual heritage rights in relation to indigenous flora and fauna and their Maturanga, or traditional knowledge, customs and practices related to that flora and fauna. The Waitangi Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body that was established in New Zealand in 1975 and given the mandate to investigate claims by Māori, under the Treaty of Waitangi, as to whether or not and to what extent the Crown or the New Zealand government had honoured the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi signed between chiefs and tribes and her Majesty Queen Victoria in 1842. Roger Maaka, Ngati Kahungunu, is a member of the Waitangi Tribunal and of the Indigenous Flora, Fauna, and Intellectual Property Claim (Wai 262).¹³

Speaking Notes

Wai 262 is a claim to rights in respect of Māori traditional knowledge, indigenous flora and fauna, and intellectual property rights.

- The claimants say these rights are guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi.
- The claim raises issues in respect of intellectual property rights that have not been addressed before.

The Treaty Claims

1. **Claims** – Under the 1985 Treaty of Waitangi Act, a Māori or group of Māori may make a claim against the Crown for an alleged breach of the Treaty. Each claim is given a ‘Wai’ number, hence Wai 262. For a claim to be upheld the claimant/s must show that the Crown did indeed breach the Treaty and that they or their ancestors suffered as a result of the breach.
2. **Settlements** – For claims that are upheld, the Crown and claimants negotiate a settlement. It is a protracted process that may take several years to complete. Where the claims have been subject to a Waitangi Tribunal enquiry, the settlement negotiations are centred on the Tribunal report.
3. **Settlement Implementation** – The third phase and probably the most important, which is the ongoing social and economic development of the claimant group.
4. The **Waitangi Tribunal** has the powers of a Commission of Inquiry, the tribunal investigates treaty claims and produces a report, including recommendations and sometimes remedies for the Minister of Treaty Settlements. This report forms the basis of any settlement between the claimants and the Crown.
5. **Wai 262** is a claim lodged by six iwi (regional tribes), three from the north of North Land, two from the eastern coast of the North Island, and one from the top of the South Island.

The claim concerns the protection of Māori traditional knowledge and intellectual property and indigenous flora and fauna. The claimants say these rights are guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi. The claim raises issues in respect of intellectual property rights that have not been addressed before.

¹³Further information is available online at: http://www.med.govt.nz/templates/Page_1207.aspx and at <http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/nztrip/ms1.html>.

Sequence of Events

1. The **enquiry** into the claim began in 1998.
2. **Claimants' evidence** was presented at hearings in their various tribal regions and in some cases site visits to areas in question were undertaken.
3. **Expert witnesses**, including both New Zealand and international experts, presented evidence at special hearings.
4. **Commissioned research** – The issues raised by the claimants were diverse and in many cases very complex so the Tribunal commissioned a number of in-depth studies of certain issues.
5. **Third parties** – The Act allows for people and organizations who feel that they may be adversely affected by the claim to present their respective cases to the Tribunal.
6. **Crown** – Once all of the evidence had been presented, the Crown had the opportunity to present its case.
7. **Closing submissions** – The final stage was when the lawyers for the claimants and the Crown offered their closing submissions to the Tribunal. This occurred in 2007.
8. **Report writing** is still in progress.

Statement of Issues (SOIs)

The claim was broken down into the following focal points:

1. Intellectual property aspects
 - Patent, trademarks, copyright laws – Do they provide the appropriate protection of Māori cultural possessions?
2. Biological or genetic material of indigenous species
 - International agreements – must not upset trade
 - Protection of scientific and commercial interests
 - Protection of Māori rights and intellectual property
3. Māori customs, knowledge, and language
 - The interrelationships between language, knowledge, and customs and the environment and indigenous flora and fauna
 - Place names and the protection of iwi dialects
4. Relationship between Māori and the environment
 - The concept of kaitiakitanga (stewardship)
 - Government policies and practices
 - The actions of the government departments in management, policy-making, and in the field.
 - Taonga (totem) species
 - Rongoa (traditional medicines and healing)
 - Legal recognition
 - The right to practice
 - Protection of traditional knowledge
 - Rights and protection of the intellectual property
 - Access to the bush

Concluding Remarks

1. Report is in progress.
2. Challenge is to wade through mountains of evidence, come to a set of findings, and then make a set of recommendations and possibly remedies.
3. Unlike historical land claims, Wai 262 looks to future protection of the Māori world.
4. Wai 262 is considered by many as one of the most important treaty claims that has implications way beyond New Zealand as it may well set the international standard for the rights of indigenous peoples and the natural world.

**Inaugural Meeting of the
International Human Ecology Network**



**April 8 – 10, 2008
Ancient Spirals Retreat Centre
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**



Executive Summary¹⁴

From April 8 to 10, 2008, a group of local and international researchers and practitioners met to discuss the possibility of forming an International Human Ecology Network. In part, the basis of this invitation was a paper, *International Human Ecology Network: Concept Paper* (pages 30-33), written by the initiator of the retreat, Dr. Lewis Williams, Director, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan. The paper proposed that the overall aim of the network “be to increase capacity to undertake research and action towards sustainable development” with intercultural and trans-disciplinary analysis forming an important basis for this work. This paper was circulated along with an invitation to prospective participants to attend the retreat in Saskatoon and as such acted as a catalyst for bringing the group together via participants’ resonance with some of its ideas.

In practice, the retreat was run in conjunction with the Human Ecology Week Learning Series, April 6–11, hosted by the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan. Retreat participants took part in these learning events through speaking engagements and learning from local initiatives and communities through discussion. The week was thought provoking, rich, and challenging. Intense discussion continued throughout the week outside of the Retreat as participants debated various philosophical positions and generally grappled with what the formation of the Network might look like in practice.

In summary, a lot of time within the retreat was devoted to the relationship-building aspects of the Network along with traditional Aboriginal teachings and, to a lesser extent, time devoted to the development of the Network itself. This is largely because the deliberate decision on Dr. Williams’ part to invite participants from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and geographical locations meant that considerable time needed to be spent by the group in overcoming barriers of difference in order to work towards developing a common understanding of what it means to be human as a member of community in its broadest sense (i.e. human and non-human forms of intelligence).

The following things were achieved within the retreat:

1. Getting to know one another better, discovering areas of commonality along with our differences in terms of philosophies and approaches
2. Discussion around what human ecology meant to each of us
3. Discussion around our respective areas of work and its possible fit with the Network
4. Discussion around possible Network activities and joint collaborations
5. Discussion around Network principles – this began to coalesce towards some sort of agreement
6. Discussion and agreement that a local steering committee be formed to work with Dr. Williams in further developing the Network in consultation with the wider group



The original goals for the retreat included the objective of relationship-building among participants but also included other objectives such as building the philosophical foundations of the network and developing the vision and mission, long-term and short-term objectives and key activities of the Network. Given that the retreat did not achieve all of these objectives and left many questions

¹⁴ This executive summary has been adapted from the report of the retreat’s proceedings. These proceedings are currently an ‘in-house document’ whilst members of the network discuss how to take this work forward.

unanswered, Network members proposed the formation of a local steering committee to work with Dr. Williams in developing the Network further.

A retreat outline was developed along with a theme for each of the three days:

Day One: Building Relationships

Day Two: Building Network Foundations

Day Three: Developing the Strategy

A.J. Felix, an Elder and traditional knowledge keeper, Sturgeon Lake First Nation, was hired as a retreat facilitator and co-facilitated with Lewis.

The retreat participants were:

Dr. Anne Goodman, Transformative Learning Centre, University of Toronto

Dr. Cristina Moreno, Human Ecology Consultant, Brazil

Dr. Rose Roberts, College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan

Dr. Alastair McIntosh, Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland

Dr. Rev. Keith Morrison, Canterbury University, Aotearoa New Zealand

Dr. Judith Martin, Sociologist, Saskatoon

Hon. Paulo Wangoola, Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, Uganda

Dr. Judy White, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina

Dr. Lewis Williams, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan

Ms. Jennifer Keane (retreat assistant/PRHPRC employee)

Mr. A.J. Felix (retreat facilitator)

The other outcomes of the retreat include a proposal for an edited book with Ashgate Publishers, UK. As well as providing a critical analysis of state of the art human ecology research, this book will serve as a basis for developing and deepening the human ecology dialogue further between members of the International Network and others engaged in the field of human ecology throughout the world. A number of ideas are under discussion by Network members including the development of an intercultural and inter-disciplinary teaching, research, and development program and a possible participatory action research project as means of developing the network.

Two other outcomes of the Network's time together are television footage¹⁵ of two of its members (Paulo Wangoola and Lewis Williams) talking about the work of human ecology and a newspaper article by Alastair McIntosh in the Scotland *Sunday Herald* (pages 37-38) discussing some of the parallels between ecological/well-being issues in Saskatchewan and those currently facing Western Scotland.

In essence, the retreat represented the coming together of diverse cultural, theoretical, and disciplinary perspectives. This yielded some very rich dialogue between participants. This served to be both frustrating and controversial at times as well as surfacing some very exciting areas of creative tension which may potentially lead the group to some cutting-edge work in the future. The work of building a network across diverse perspectives is challenging and can only develop over time.

¹⁵ <http://prhprc.usask.ca>

Draft Outline of the International Human Ecology Network Retreat

April 8 – 10, 2008

Day One: Building Relationships

The purpose of this day is to build the authenticity of relationships, our understanding of each other as people, and an understanding of our various areas of work.

- Spiritual opening – blessing and opening ritual
- Storytelling – how we got to here
- Tell each other about our individual areas of work, goals and priorities as individuals, and what we're looking for from the Network
- Areas of common knowledge



Day Two: Foundations – Building the Group/Network

The purpose of this day is to continue our journeys in getting to know one another better and to develop the vision, philosophy, values, long-term purpose and goals of the Network and the work we want to do together

- Start with something personal that links us into the day before
- Brief presentation by Lewis as the initiator and as the person playing the coordinating role of the group/network re the vision and outline of her original invitation to people to be a part of this group
- Values, philosophy
- Vision
- Long-term purpose and goals

Day Three: Developing the Strategy

The purpose of this day is to continue to deepen our journey together as a group and to develop the strategy for the international network/research group

- Again, start with something personal
- Review of long-term goals for the group
- Set shorter-term objectives
- Structure and roles
- Funding sources
- Agreement on ways forward
- Spiritual closing and blessing



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN ECOLOGY NETWORK: CONCEPT PAPER¹⁶

Dr. Lewis Williams, University of Saskatchewan, Canada, October 2007

E-mail: lewis.williams@usask.ca (edited version of original paper)

For social action researchers and practitioners effecting changes in consciousness and social structures through knowledge development and mobilization

1.0 Aim

Overall Aim: To increase capacity to undertake research and action towards sustainable development (referred to later as global intelligence and harmonious human development). This will be achieved through:

1. Knowledge development and synthesis and the development of social transformation methodologies in support of this goal;
2. Mentoring and training of students and practitioners;
3. The development of a knowledge mobilization network consisting of students, practitioners, NGOs, government and private sectors; and
4. The development of self-funding institutes of praxis as a result of network activities.

Two key outcomes will be a robust international human ecology network that is self sustaining and part of an international human ecology centre which will emerge from network activities.

2.0 Background

The Problem Arguably the biggest issues today are climate change, environmental degradation, economic stratification and corporate imperialism, the suppression of indigenous people's rights and epistemologies, and mono-multiculturalism. In themselves, these symptoms represent a profound illiteracy or inability to read our world and act in ways that acknowledge the truth of our interconnectedness and the deep ecology of relations within which we are embedded. Their roots lie in economic globalization and colonization, the domination of western science and related modes of perception throughout major institutions (e.g., individuality, separatism, and rationality) and the proliferation of consumer culture. Together these influences form a powerful triage in shaping everyday consciousness and agency. We are at a critical juncture in our developmental trajectory and our ability to choose consciousness and act accordingly is time limited. Ultimately, our crisis is one of ecological relationship.

Our Approach One way forward through this impasse might be to undertake collective work towards global intelligence and harmonious human development, defined here as the "ability to understand, respond to, and work towards what will benefit all human beings and will support and enrich all life on this planet" (Spariosu 2006). An alternative conceptualization of this same goal might be framed as the promotion of human diversity in ways that support bio-diversity (Addison Posey 1999). Through knowledge synthesis, development, and mobilization we aim to create an ecology of global learning and transformation orientated towards global intelligence and harmonious human development (hereafter referred to as sustainable development). This will encompass intercultural, onto-epistemological, and trans-disciplinary forms of analysis to inform a praxis of sustainable development – i.e., emergent theory and practice will mutually inform the other.

¹⁶ The Concept Paper does not represent the views of the Network but rather acted as a catalyst for bringing the members of the group together.

Developments informing our approach Our proposal draws on several broad fields of paradigmatic development: Human Ecology, Ontologies of Connectivity, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and Holistic Forms of Literacy and Social Transformation.

Human ecology Human ecology is foremost recognized as an academic discipline that “deals with the relationships between humans and their natural, social and created environments” (Wikipedia 2007). Secondly, it is sometimes recognized as a methodology and a “way of thinking about the world, and a context in which we define our questions and ways to answer those questions” (University of Alberta 2007). Initially grounded in the physical sciences and focused on natural, non-human systems, human ecology has more recently begun to conceptualize the environment/human interface as worthy of study in its own right. However, the predominant and implicit conceptualization of this relationship remains grounded in Cartesian ontology in which people exist as discrete entities apart from the environment. The underlying problematic of this assumption is our failure as human beings to correctly perceive ourselves as an implicit part of bio-diversity, embedded in a vast web of mutual and symbiotic interrelations. This misperception, as evidenced by the amount of human ecology discourse currently orientated towards scientific prediction and technological human adaptation to issues rather than deeper cultural shifts more concerned with subjectivity and behaviour, is in part responsible for our continuing emphasis on human-centred and materialist forms of development.

Ontologies of connectivity A more promising onto-epistemological way forward in a collective undertaking towards ‘global intelligence and harmonious human development,’ might be through the exploration and adoption of ‘ontologies of connectivity’ (Rose and Robin 2004). An ontology of connectivity emphasizes the profound interconnectedness between all forms of life, entails mutual causality between organism and environment and views such relationships as recursive – events continually enter into, become entangled with, and then re-enter the universe they describe (Rose and Robin). Acts to displace consequences in contemporary global societies are really just consequences deferred.

While there are various ontologies of connectivity, for example Buddhist or Taoist thought, a key focus, at least initially, will be indigenous¹⁷ world views. In North America, indigenous approaches to validating ways of knowing have emerged under a terminology of Native Science whose defining element is its participatory and perceptual phenomenology. It is based upon the perception gained of using the entire body of our senses in direct participation with the natural world and encompasses subjective elements such as sensation, perception, emotion, and spirit alongside western scientific notions of logic and rational empiricism (Cajete 2000). Potentially, ontologies of connectivity would not replace western styles of paradigmatic thinking but rather western-style science would inform (not define) our analysis within an overarching ontology of connectivity.

Traditional ecological knowledge Alongside the study of ontologies of connectivity and their related cultural and ethnic systems, indigenous cultural knowledge or traditional ecological knowledge is also vitally important to the development of pedagogies in support of sustainable development. Traditional ecological knowledge is based on an ontology of Native Science, is locally created, and arises out of living closely and interdependently with nature. We note this as an important area in its own right alongside other ontologies of connectivity (including native science) for two reasons:

¹⁷ Note, the term indigenous refers to those peoples whose cultures and world views place special significance on the idea of unification of humans with the natural world. It includes recently and historically colonized peoples and recognizes that many contemporary western cultures have elements of indigeneity within them. Importantly, it also recognizes that sovereignty over traditional indigenous knowledge belongs to indigenous peoples and the direct descendants of indigenous peoples.

1. Traditional ecological knowledge arises directly from a direct and symbiotic relationship with the natural world and may have important implications in terms of making the theoretical links between human diversity and bio-diversity, and
2. Indigenous peoples living in traditional, land-based ways may well offer important knowledge regarding the development of human adaptation methodologies (beyond those of technological adaptations) developed by indigenous peoples in response to environmental changes.

Drawing on this paradigm, however, in ways that support sustainable development requires closer examination of tensions between emergent and potentially conflicting areas of development and efforts to resolve these. These include claims to intellectual property rights and the rights of indigenous peoples and their direct descendents as the first beneficiaries of traditional ecological knowledge; indigeneity as a practice of social transformation and the perceived strategic need to maintain political and cultural boundaries; our lived experience of hybridity which destabilizes notions of pure, authentic races and cultures; and the importance of traditional ecological knowledge for everybody regardless of an indigenous identity.

Holistic literacy and social transformation Holistic models of literacy and social transformation may potentially be drawn on as key methodologies for sustainable development. Social transformation has also been aligned with literacy, particularly its critical forms (Shore and Friere 1987); although in more recent times functional forms of literacy (reading, writing, numeracy) have been wrongfully equated with social transformation in terms of the alleviation of poverty and related social and cultural inequities (MLC 2006, United Nations Development Program 2007).¹⁸

Probably more hopeful models of social transformation, at least from the perspective of a human ecology based on ontologies of connectivity, are holistic and indigenous models of literacy which may include critical forms of literacy and build the connections between literacy, healing, community development, and self-determination. Such models are closely tied to subjectivity, identity and culture, and the access to structural and material forms of power in order to assert these. It may be that indigenous and holistic models of literacy offer the potential to realize social transformation in ways that locate humans as an implicit part of natural systems.

3.0 International Human Ecology Network

Each of the four developmental areas outlined offer potential in terms of informing the collective undertaking of sustainable development. Each also challenges us to resolve various tensions within the particular field as well as exploring potential synergies between them. They offer the basis from which an ecology of learning could be developed through intercultural, onto-epistemological, and methodological research and analysis. Accordingly, we propose to form an international, interdisciplinary, and inter-cultural human ecology network for the purpose of knowledge development and mobilization. In particular this will explore the tensions and synergies within and between the four identified areas above in the form of several knowledge development clusters identified by the network. There will be two levels of network participation:

Level One – key members (co-investigators)

- Annual basis with other key members (and possibly students) for the purpose of networking, knowledge development and possible collaborative projects. This would be in-depth, could also

¹⁸ Such statements, however, are often underscored by materialist views of development which imply literacy's prime benefits to be the transformation and modernization of the economy and unprecedented rises in National Gross Domestic Product (MCL 2006).

involve transformative learning methods, and be for about a week. Different members of the network would take responsibility each year for hosting these.

- Key members could also take responsibility for the development of knowledge development clusters, each of which would be responsible for developing knowledge in specific areas.
- The provision of student learning opportunities at key sites.

Level Two – collaborators (private sector, government, NGOs)

- We would work out some systems, virtual and in person, for engaging this wider group for the general purpose of capacity building in human ecology activism (i.e. knowledge mobilization), research, and teaching.
- An outcome of developing knowledge mobilization synergies at this broader level could also possibility be the development of a sustainable funding base for the network and for evolving institutes or centres.

3.1 Knowledge Cluster Themes

Our constituent disciplines have varied methods and concerns. Drawing on those strengths we have identified five interrelated and inter-disciplinary themes to be explored under the auspices of the network, with specific leaders responsible for each theme. Development of the first four themes will occur through knowledge synthesis of projects undertaken by collaborators into hybrid or new forms of knowledge and theory. These four thematic areas will subsequently inform Knowledge Theme Five, which is more aimed at the praxis of human ecology. While overall responsibility for these latter themes will rest with individual knowledge nodes, all will form the underpinning themes of yearly workshops between node members. Possible knowledge development themes are as follows:

1. Cultural hybrids, borders, and diasporas;
2. Human agency and well-being within paradigms of connectivity;
3. Interaction between human and living systems;
4. Intercultural and onto-epistemological analysis towards an ecology of learning; and
5. Development of social transformation methodology within a human ecology paradigm.

3.2 Knowledge Cluster Structure

Management Structure The structure could be a hub and spoke arrangement with different regional centres or strengths (knowledge nodes). The structure of the knowledge cluster could consist of:

1. Two co-directors (on the application form we have to name one, but in practice we can work things a little differently);
2. A management team consisting of the investigators named on the application;
3. An advisory committee drawn from the wider networks developed as a result of this proposal;
4. A hub or two hubs (co-director in each); and
5. Several research nodes or knowledge nodes at the universities with which each co-applicant is based.

Director's roles

Management team The management team will be collectively responsible for budgeting, record keeping, and all administrative duties in which they will be assisted by an administrator and liaison person hired for this purpose. The management team will conduct bi-annual meetings, once in conjunction with a cluster research event.

Book Proposal: Ashgate Research Companion to Human Ecology

Editors

Dr. Lewis Williams (Associate Professor, and Director, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Canada)

Dr. Alastair McIntosh (Visiting Professor, University of Strathclyde, Scotland)

Synopsis of Project

Human ecology, as the study and practice of relationships between human societies and the environment, has gained increasing prominence over the past few years. While in part due to the emergence of large-scale global issues such as environmental degradation and climate change and the pressing need to address these, people are increasingly drawn to the field because they intuit something beyond this. Rather, they also sense the field's potential to perceive and heal the deep-seated schisms both within and between peoples and between peoples and the earth that at a fundamental level threaten our existence and are so pervasive in this neo-colonial era.

Initially grounded in the physical sciences and focused on natural systems and more latterly on technological adaptations to the human-environment predicament, mainstream human ecology remains predominantly grounded in the western, scientific, Cartesian paradigm which views people as discrete entities apart from the environment. The underlying problematic of this assumption is our failure as human beings to correctly perceive ourselves as an implicit part of bio-diversity and of a metaphysical framework of reality embedded in a vast web of mutual and symbiotic interrelations that include but go beyond the material world.

human ecology is conceived as the study and practice of community with others (society), community with the earth (soil,) and community with the ground of being in the divine (soul)

Rather than continuing to be bound by the limits of Western scientific prediction and techno-rational solutions (which are in themselves subordinated to network capitalism), human ecology must now insist that such efforts be integrated with deeper cultural shifts more concerned with human consciousness, subjectivity, and behaviour. In essence, the field of human ecology is called to develop spiritual epistemologies that transcend the bounds of rational empiricism and ego-state consciousness and engages with the much deeper connectivity that is the domain of the immaterial and an inherent part of community. In short, human ecology has a part to play in re-examining and perhaps rehabilitating the place of metaphysics in western thought and practice.

The aim of the companion is to provide scholars and graduate students with a comprehensive and authoritative state of the art review of the current research in human ecology where human ecology is conceived as the study and practice of community with others (society), community with the earth (soil), and community with the ground of being in the divine (soul).

Aimed at an international readership, the underlying tenet of this research companion is that this approach to human ecology, through its epistemological position of interconnectivity, has much to offer our current and global predicaments which cannot be solved by any one person alone, but require inter-cultural and inter-disciplinary solutions.

A further tenet is that this requires the development of a holistic body of knowledge through the integration of diverse ways of knowing and knowledge systems – a field that is far from developed and lacking in methodological refinement.

Accordingly this collection comprises four main thematic sections, each with chapters ranging across a variety of topics of crucial significance to the world today. The principle themes to be addressed are:

Theories of Human Ecology (Part One)

Uncovering the Eco-Spiritual Values of Wisdom Traditions (Part Two)

Practices of Human Ecology (Part Three)

Human Ecology Dialogues (Part Four)

More specifically Part One will provide a critical introduction to the various ontological and epistemological dilemmas underlying the field. It will explore the relations of power and culture that give rise to the hierarchal ordering of world views while making the link between human inequities and environmental violence.

Essays in Part Two will explore the core insights of four key spiritual practices or wisdom traditions: Indigenous, Buddhist, Semitic, and Goddess spiritualities, providing a critical analysis of their respective applications to human ecology.

Part Three concerns itself with the practice of human ecology drawing on various approaches across a diverse range of populations and issues. Its interdisciplinary approach demonstrates the breadth and complexity of the field.

Part Four, Human Ecology Dialogues, brings the contributors together for inter-cultural, inter-ontological and trans-disciplinary conversations across two key cutting edge human ecology themes: the practice of indigeneity as a social transformation movement and the limitations of an identity politic; and western science and indigenous science – complementary or irreconcilable differences? These chapters will be preceded by a discussion on the methodological approach underpinning these cross-disciplinary conversations.

Rather than attempting to draw definitive conclusions about a field which is complex and very much evolving, the final chapter will raise a series of questions intended to stimulate further critical reflection on the part of the reader.

Ashgate Research Companion to Human Ecology

Editors: Dr. Lewis Williams and Dr. Alastair McIntosh

Part One: Theories of Human Ecology¹⁹

Human ecology: a critical introduction

Unfolding a vision of re-cultural diversity

New wine in old skins: issues in research methodology

Part Two: The Wisdom Traditions: Recovery and Re-integration

A Canadian indigenous perspective

Buddhist perspectives

Sufism

An Eastern Orthodox perspective

A Celtic indigenous view

Part Three: Human Ecology in Practice

Elders' perspectives on climate change in Northern Saskatchewan

Scottish land reform and the recovery of indigenous identities

Engagement with government and corporations

Human ecology as peace-building

Recovering community after the Khmer Rouge: a Cambodian story

Land, belonging, and nomadic identities: bringing an ecological perspective to the displacement of Aboriginal, immigrant, and refugee women in Canada

Engaging indigenous wisdoms: Multiversity, a peoples' university in action

Training for transformation

The council of all beings: Shamanistic perspectives on human ecology

Part Four: Human Ecology Dialogues

Research in action: a methodology for human ecology dialogues

The practice of indigeneity as a social transformation movement and the limitations of an identity politic

Western Science and Indigenous Science – complementary or irreconcilable differences? (potentially all contributing authors distributed between these two chapters according to interest and expertise)

Conclusion

Some critical reflections toward a holistic praxis

¹⁹ While the authors represent a diverse range of affiliated organizations and countries, we have omitted all details of these until all authors are confirmed.

Article for Scotland *Sunday Herald*

Dr Alastair McIntosh, Visiting Professor of Human Ecology, University of Strathclyde

I'm writing this from the Great Plains. I'm over here teaching and learning with the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

The day that I arrived I read last week's *Sunday Herald* article about health in the West of Scotland. What hit me was the line, "Higher mortality rates were driven by an increase in deaths involving suicide, alcohol, drugs and violence among men in the 15 to 44 age group, and higher rates of cancer, heart disease, stroke and liver disease in women aged 45 to 64."

Here in Canada I've quoted that all week long. The native elders nod knowingly.

For 26 years my father was the North Lochs doctor on the Isle of Lewis. He used to say, "Medicine is both a science and an art. We've become good at the science, but we've forgotten the art. That's a problem, because illness is only partly in the body. It's also in the mind."

When I tell this to the Cree elders, they say, "we know that's true."

It's why we won't solve Scotland's health problems only by urging life style change and more hospitals. In addition, we need to tackle issues at the bedrock of the psyche.

I live in Greater Govan where I'm on the board of a community organisation, the GalGael Trust.

Hard-pressed young people come to our Ibrox workshop. They're given a piece of locally-sourced wood, a hammer and a chisel. Our trainers help them to make something beautiful.

They go down the Clyde on boats built in our yard, and discover the nature of ... Scotland!

They reconnect with the elemental – fire, air, earth and water – and their creativity comes alive in context of community.

I asked Billy, "What made you a heroin addict?"

"I'll tell you, Alastair," he replied. "Heroin took away my pain. But it also took away my soul."

Twenty-something Kelly Anne was moved to tears by her first sighting of Loch Lomond. Despite living all her years in Glasgow, a trip with GalGael was her first ever sighting of the 'bonnie banks' and she was breath-taken by the natural beauty confronting her.

Let me cut to the quick. The West of Scotland is full of people descended from those once uprooted from the land.

The trauma has never been dealt with. I believe it passes on intergenerationally.

When your only window on nature becomes a TV up a hi-rise, something withers from within.

If the soul's denied nourishment, virtual reality fills the emptiness - drugs, alcohol, computer pornography, consumerism.

As John Lennon said, "the pain is so big you feel nothing at all."

And when the empathy's gone, that's when violence kicks in towards self and others.

What's the evidence for this? For me, the evidence is the way I've seen people come alive when given an alternative.

I saw it on Eigg after land reform. I see it most times I drop in to the GalGael. Battered faces start to shine again. Dependence on antidepressants and methadone falls.

On Monday I listened to Professor Willie Ermine of the First Nations University. He said, "Whatever happens to the land is going to happen to the children. Disengagement from the land has injured the people."

That's the challenge to Scotland – to call back the soul of the most broken of our people. That's the deepest importance of Scotland's land reform programme.

This is an agenda that needs a new and creative integration of policies for health, education, economics, environment and culture.

It's a tall order, but it offers back life.²⁰

²⁰ <http://www.sundayherald.com/display.var2192954.0.0.php?utag'076>

HUMAN ECOLOGY WEEK

*Presented by Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre,
University of Saskatchewan*

Friday, April 11, 2008

Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being

**Mayfair United Church, 9:30AM–3:00PM
902 33rd Street West, Saskatoon**

A community gathering to share stories and hopes for the future, with presentations by local and international speakers. Program includes lunch, music, storytelling, and discussion groups.

SPEAKERS:

ANNE GOODMAN, Co-Director of the Transformative Learning Centre, University of Toronto, and founding member and President of InterChange: International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding.

NAYYAR JAVED is a psychologist who has spent years researching, writing and speaking about immigration, racism, violence against women and children and health issues.

KEITH MORRISON, Coordinator, Sustainable Community Development Forum, New Zealand.

PAULO WANGOOLA, Nabyama (Founder-President) of the Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, Uganda: an institution dedicated to the advancement of indigenous knowledge for community renewal and enrichment.

JUDY WHITE, Assistant Professor of Social Work, University of Regina, and International Women of Saskatoon, and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.

LEWIS WILLIAMS, Director, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, and Associate Professor, Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan.

INFORMATION: <http://prhprc.usask.ca>



This event is presented by the Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan, in collaboration with International Women of Saskatoon, Open Door Society, Global Gathering, Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre, Indian and Metis Friendship Centre and Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Event Three: Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being²¹

Hosted by the Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre, in collaboration with International Women of Saskatoon, Open Door Society, Global Gathering, Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre, Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, and Canadian Institutes of Health

Program

9.30 am Presentations and Audience Dialogue

- Welcome and introduction to the day (Dr. Judy White)
- *Daring to dream: Honoring the realities of racialized immigrant and refugee women* (Dr. Lewis Williams)
- *Racialized identities: Dislocated and disconnected – immigrant women's quest for belonging* (Ms. Nayyar Javed)
- *Land, identity and belonging* (Dr. Keith Morrison)
- *Unfolding a vision of re-cultural diversity: What's in a name?* (Hon. Paulo Wangoola)
- *Summation* (Dr. Anne Goodman)

11.45-12.30 pm Lunch

12.30 pm Discussion / Focus Groups

- Cultural Knowledge
- Experiences of the Journey
- Dreaming: Envisioning a Multicultural Future
- Land, Identity, and Belonging

2.30 pm Summation

- Feedback from discussion groups to other participants

2.50 pm Closing

²¹ The following section contains only some of the presentations and information collected during the Symposium. A full report on the event is available online at www.prhprc.usask.ca or by request.

*“Human ecology is about being different.
It’s not about being whoever you were back home but about being a new person here
and in the process bringing about the change of the larger dimension.....new life forms evolving, new
human races evolving.....We’re still creating new human forms, new cultural forms.....”²²*

Executive Summary

On April 11, 2008, around seventy people came together at Mayfair United Church in Saskatoon to talk about the lives and everyday realities of racialized immigrant women and their communities living in Canada, and the expression of human potential that might be possible if we allowed ourselves to entertain the dream of living in a world that is sustainable – socially, culturally, economically, environmentally, and spiritually. Thus our twin themes for the day – honouring the lives of racialized immigrant and refugee women and daring to dream how rich life might be for both these and mainstream Canadian communities if we lived in a truly sustainable way – formed the basis of our conversations.

This day marked the largest gathering for the Reducing Mental Health Disparities (RMHD) project to date and in doing so deliberately brought a human ecology perspective to the research. Bringing a human ecology lens to migration is particularly significant in that it directly challenges status quo policy approaches which tend to assume traditional models of economic development, viewing migrants primarily as potential sources of human capital.²³ Just as approaches to sustainable development argue that our ecosystem cannot withstand the ravaging of our natural resources by global corporations, neither can we as human beings afford to allow these same interests to endlessly extract human, social, and cultural capital from entire, and often displaced, populations. Rather the key notes with which we must now work become those of reciprocity, intercultural space, and horizontality of peoples along with the recognition that the support of human linguistic, cultural, and epistemological diversity is crucial to arresting the assault on our bio-diversity. Indeed, as one symposium participant put it:

The existence of a multiplicity of knowledges is as important for the state and health of the individual knowledges and human knowledge as a whole as bio-diversity is important for the environment.²⁴

The overall goal of the RMHD project is to increase the self-determination and mental well-being of Aboriginal and racialized immigrant women in Saskatoon and, secondarily, Canada. The human ecology approach brought to this symposium, and increasingly to the RMHD project, is based on an ontology of ‘interconnectivity’ (Rose and Robins 2004, Mumtaz and Williams 2007) recognizing the mutual and recursive relationships between all life forms. Therefore, the intent becomes one of working to address the needs and aspirations of racialized immigrant women and their communities in ways that will also enrich all life.

“I have a dream that my kids will get a good education and in the future get a better and a good, honour[able] life – that is my dream.” (Symposium participant)

It is concerned with the question of “What will enable racialized immigrant and refugee women to flourish in Canada?” and begins to probe at deeper issues pertaining to self-determination such as ontological sovereignty, the recovery of relationships to land and community (belonging), the actual horizontality of cultures and approaches to knowledge, the place of intercultural and inter-

²² Dr. Anne Goodman

²³ Accordingly, selection processes have by and large placed emphasis on skills, knowledge, self-sufficiency, and potential contribution to the Canadian economy with immigrant health and social services mostly focused on goals of economic productivity.

²⁴ Hon. Paulo Wangoola

ontological space, the importance of being able to fully articulate identity and aspirations in everyday life, and the right to be viewed as real and actual contributors to Canadian society.

This community gathering was significant in terms of generating dialogue around these issues, building community, and shaping the directions of the RMHD project. It was also particularly unique in that it brought local racialized immigrant and refugee women together with related policy people and practitioners, as well as with a number of human ecologists from different parts of the world, whose work is the study and practice of community.

This kaleidoscope of perspectives, disciplines, and life experiences proved to be fertile ground in terms of laying the foundations for an ecological approach to migration that challenges not only the predominant human capital approach but our assumptions about ways of knowing and knowledge itself. In summary, the day proved to be a powerful one, not only in terms of educating our international guests about the lives and realities of racialized immigrant and refugee women here in Saskatoon, Canada, but also in terms of beginning to shift predominant programming and policy perspectives of those attending as well as calling forth the nascent knowledge of many immigrant women about land, belonging and identity, and the culturally-based ways of knowing the world that they have to offer Canadian society – in other words offering the possibility of ‘dreaming’ and a vision of ‘re-cultural diversity.’

“We have to ask ourselves, where do we go from here? And I would say, really, interventions. Those interventions must be shaped – the policy interventions, the program interventions – must be shaped by what we want. Our voice has to be there.” (Nayyar Javed)

We look forward to the many fruits from this day which we believe are yet to come and hope you will enjoy reading this report.

Yours truly,

Lewis Williams, PhD
Principle Investigator, Reducing Mental Health Disparities Project
Director, Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre
Associate Professor, Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan

Racialized Identity – Dislocated and Disconnected, Immigrant Women’s Quest for Belonging

Ms. Nayyar Javed

Thank you so much for the introduction, which I don’t think I deserve. As to me doing social activism as a child – I was a bad girl and an embarrassment to my mother because I always challenged my elders, including her, and made her life miserable. I try to remain silent, but it’s a struggle. Things happen and, despite my conscious effort not to respond, lo and behold I see myself standing behind the mike and nobody else does. Recently I was at a conference in Australia, the International Conference on Women’s Mental Health, a very exciting one. But it was psychiatry dominated. So guess where I was standing all the time? It came to the point that one day I was walking in the hallway, and two women were saying, “There she goes,” because I really challenged them.

Anyway, challenging is good, but challenging can be very tiring work. And that’s the story of our life. I have to admit something. When I went to Australia I took transparencies, and I found out that there were no overhead projectors in our stadium. They had gone far beyond us. So they converted my presentation into PowerPoint, and I was just terrified.

This presentation was put on overheads by a wonderful woman on whom I rely a lot. I have relied on all of you over the years to help me to know my own reality, a reality you all are living in this very racist, sexist, classist, homophobic country. Thank you so much for being there, educating me. Really teaching me what it is to be a woman.

The title of my presentation is, *Racialized Identity – Dislocated and Disconnected, Immigrant Women’s Quest for Belonging*. Since 1983, with the establishment of this wonderful organization we used to call Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan and now very proudly, being more inclusive, call International Women of Saskatchewan, immigrant women have opened my eyes by telling me over and over again that they have a very strong longing. Our dream, as Lewis mentioned in her wonderful presentation, is to develop a sense of belonging, but there are many, many obstacles in our way.

Global Financial Capital

Before I talk about the obstacles, I stand very proudly before you as an immigrant woman in this globalized world, where the WTO, which is the World Trade Organization, and other people are engaged in promoting free trade and the power of the market to solve all the world’s problems, where the driver behind globalization is the cheap exploitative work of migrant and immigrant women all across the globe – from Saudi Arabia as a nanny to Canada as a cleaning woman.

The global financial capital is the immigrant women who are really, really contributing towards the economic growth, which is really not that positive in the long run, but we are the ones who are running the world. We are their drivers. Our own countries, countries like the Philippines, will not last without the remittance sent by migrant Philippine workers right here in Saskatchewan and all over the world. This prosperity is only accumulated in 20% of the world population; the rest of us are experiencing extreme disparity. And migrant women and immigrant women are at the bottom of that level. We are not getting our share of the hard work put into running the economy all over the world.

Struggles and Isolation

My quest for really getting to know what we go through begins in my own life. I’ll tell you the story. I came to this country in 1979 and have been struggling on many levels to develop a sense of belonging. In the 1980s I wrote this poem (see side bar). I apologize for the lack of sophistication; it’s raw, raw emotion. Thank you.

Dislocation and Otherness

I wasn't sure, but I thought I was alone feeling that way, that isolation that I feel, until I started to build this community, to become part of this community for immigrant women, and we started to talk to each other. Then I started to read post-colonial literature, and it opened my eyes and really confirmed or reaffirmed my pains of being in Canada and my struggle to develop a sense of belonging. Our society has a very conflicted relationship with us. On the one hand, we are supposed to give up everything that's worth it to adapt, and, on another level, we feel unwanted, artificial, and really not as good as others.

So the otherness imposed on us goes back to the colonial times, and by the way, colonialism is not ended. I really wish it were; we experience it all over the world. There are colonial rules, where language is used to define the colonized population, barbaric others, of the civilized colonizers.

That reminds me to draw your attention to the beautiful pieces of art the women of my country have produced. But in the mainstream language nobody is ever going to define it as art. It will always be seen as craft. So the differentiation between art and craft. Craft was always associated with not so sophisticated thinking and creative expression up until very recently when feminists started to really challenge it. And I am very proud to be one of them. Look at it: it's a piece of creativity, of very sophisticated thinking.

Ask Us

Language is used to present us as other, and we become nameless, faceless, the other of the whole civilized people. And that is the problem that creates our dislocation on so many different levels.

Thus Lewis made her point when she said, "Are we allowed to dream?" Nobody asked what immigrant women want. They're always told, right? What to do to adapt to the Canadian culture and to fit into the Canadian society. People who are in the position of power telling us what to do rather than asking us what we really need and how could we come up with our own solutions to the problem of so-called integration – learning the language, finding a job, taking care of our children. Nobody ever, ever asked us.

I have been consulted many times, and I'm sure you have been too. At the end of the day, I go through the documents; my voice is always missing; it's not there. We recently had an organizing event to really discuss what we need to integrate in Saskatoon and to bring more people to Saskatoon, and we had been talking about child care. It's a basic need Indian women have. We cannot go out and work. We cannot go out and learn the language and break the isolation, because we are solely responsible for child care. So unless there is child care integrated into integration programs, there is no way for us to participate. It is an indirect way of keeping us locked in a place from which we cannot move. Child care is just common sense, and it was such a struggle, and I don't think it became part of the outcome document of that event. So nobody asks us what we really want.

On a Racist Terrain by Nayyar Javed

*Facing blocks
Struggling to walk
On a racist terrain
On a sexist terrain*

*Aching with pain of
disdain
Is my only gain
On this terrain*

*Groping in the dark
Path unknown
I lost what was my
own*

*My name and sense
of who I am*

*Bewildered and
alone*

*I struggle on my own
Facing blocks
On the racist terrain
On the sexist terrain*

*Feeling defeat
Yearning to retreat
To the home I owned
And the comfort of
knowing my name
and what I owned*

*Yearning in my heart
Is a thought
Which is locked
Under a rock
And the blocks
On the racist terrain*

*I ache but can't
scream*

*Because I lost
The voice I owned
In my home
On the racist terrain
On the sexist terrain
I forgot who I am*

Totally Invisible

I'm talking about isometric social relations and multiple dislocations. By isometric I mean, imagine a balance. And that balance is power balanced in all relationships. In your case, your relationship in your home, in your country and community, in your faith community, as well as society at large. We are down here, and everybody is up here, right? So, because of this power asymmetry, the definition which is imposed on us – the social identity as women of colour, visible minority women, South Asian women – really, really concedes our lived reality, being the opposite of visible minority, because our needs are totally invisible. We are the opposite of women of colour; we are not women of just one colour. By the way, that is the language from the project and should be eradicated from common discourse.

We are colourful, dynamic, diverse women. South Asian women, and many other women (Chinese women) are seen as meek, not meek in a good sense, but really stupid. We have Indira Ghandi; we have Benazir Bhutto; we have many others. And yet we are seen that way. So this homogenized, derogatory definition really puts us down and makes us good human capital. It imposes modernization on us, not only us but the knowledge we brought of a spirituality and everything else we can ever identify with.

I remember a psychology class which I was taking. One day the professor brought lots of books and said, "Has anyone read one of these books?" You know how it is on the university campuses, really making the students feel nothing. So I looked at all those books, and I didn't see Ben Hooks or Rumi or many other great authors. So I said, "I haven't read any one of those books, but I have read . . ." I still remember that. So the knowledge system we bring here, the medicines we bring, other healing practices we bring, are usually modernized and seen as complementary, not as good.

Women's Experience

The experiences of immigrant women and racialized women are not the same as the experiences of men. We are trapped in the intersectionality of race, gender, class. Not all immigrant women go through what I'm talking about. The immigrant women who come from a certain class – with language skills and well off – they experience racism, but it's a very different experience. They experience sexism, but it is very different. I am talking of women who are right at the bottom of the heap, women who end up cleaning in hotels, women who end up in home care, women who end up in jobs which nobody else wants. I'm talking about that group of women, okay? So, as Lewis said, we are valued as instruments, as a commodity – cheap labour and unpaid labour. That is our relationship in the society.

Nobody asked what immigrant women want. They're always told, right? . . . People who are in the position of power telling us what to do rather than asking us what we really need

What happens to us in the home scene? Home has very problematic implications for women. Home is a place where we work like slaves. Home is sometimes a place where we are abused, not only by our husbands and male relatives but sometimes our female relatives. Home is a place where we don't have any rest. Not in all our cases but in many cases. So I can't give you home as Mecca for women. Because Mecca is a place in my language; it's a mother's and father's home, and a woman is really tired of being exploited in her home, in the last place where she comes to rest.

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Our relationship as a community, as a faith community, is also very interesting. I see that relationship as bonded, bound, betrayed, and battered. We are like all of you; we are very deeply bonded with our culture and with our faith. But in our faith community, in our cultural community, we are expected to totally conform to our cultural identity and to our culture. In general, we are not supposed to see this much change. The degree of conformity that is expected of us in these communities, in return for providing us with a space, with a sense of belonging there, is incredible. Those are the communities which really undermine, invisibilize the abuse we go through by our many relatives. And that is a fact of our life. Our faith communities are often not the places where we can really experiment with our

spirituality. It is very constrictive ideology and doctrines. We really need to be careful; we are not supposed to ask any questions.

And I'll say it over and over again. I do not want to misrepresent the reality of many, many women who are really treated like a piece of nothing in their cultural communities, in their faith communities. Our unpaid labour is used to build these communities. We are the ones who cook and clean and all that, and never ever take a position of power. On top of that, it is men who define what our culture is and what our religion is. We don't have the power to do that. So it's as simple as that.

we are valued as instruments, as a commodity – cheap labour and unpaid labour. That is our relationship in the society.

Where Do We Go From Here?

So having said this, we have to ask ourselves, where do we go from here? And I would say, really, interventions. Those interventions must be shaped – the policy interventions, the program interventions – must be shaped by what we want. Our voice has to be there.

And, using Judy's dissertation, the interventions need to be multidimensional. You cannot offer services to immigrant women and say, "That's good enough," as has been the case in the past, offloading the problems on the immigrant women's association while we don't even have the resources. You cannot offer services, especially health services, in the hospitals and the clinics alone. They have to be where immigrant women are. Child care is another very important need. Breaking the isolation is another very, very important need.

In the end, I will draw your attention to the most recent research in the earth sciences which provides that relationship, sense of belonging, sense of feeling at home, sense of connectedness, is absolutely critical, not only for mental health, but all areas of well-being. It is as important as good nutrition and exercise. But is it really seen that way in the case of a group of women who are forever doomed to be ghettoized?

And that is where we are. We are sitting in the ghettos, looking at the society at large, scared of dreaming. And I dare you to keep dreaming, not only for your children as you obviously would be here for your children, but dream for yourselves. You have brought wonderful wealth to this country and wonderful resources. And you are the resources of this country. Thank you very much.

Unfolding a Vision of Re-Cultural Diversity: What is in a Name?

Hon. Paulo Wangoola

I come from a land of kings. All our kings are crowned with their official sister to rule with their official sister. Once one becomes a king in my country, the mother of the king sets up her palace. And there must be a river, a sacred river, between her and the king. And the king cannot cross that river to go to his mother's palace; it is taboo! Any person persecuted or pursued by the King who manages to escape to the Queen Mother's palace and finds favour with her, becomes immune from the king's authority. The Queen Mother's palace is outside the king's jurisdiction. There are decisions which the sister makes, and others which are subject for negotiation with the sister. In the exercise of his powers, in indigenous governance, the king is sandwiched between, and his powers counter balanced and checked by two women.

I also come from a culture where every boy/man, has an official sister. And the official sister has a big say in who I marry. It is because I use her dowry to get myself a wife. So I'm happy to be in the company of so many women, because even in my house I have an official sister, an active official sister. I also live with my mother, whom I talk to twice a day. Of course I have a wife. In my family I've learned also, once you look after the daughters, you become a family member in good standing. So whenever I travel, I make every effort to buy presents for my daughters and my daughters-in-law. I want you to know therefore that surrounded by so many women as I am before you, I really feel at home.

My name is Wangoola, son of Wangoola who is interned at Isegero; son of Kabbaya, interned at Bukonte; son of Waikova, interned at Bukonte; son of Bavunaineki interned at Bulange; son of Misango, son of Muwembe, interned at Bulange. My Guardian Spirit is Ndawula and my sacred colour is green; I belong to the Kiranda clan; and my totem is the Bushbuck. Our ancestral shrine is at Namago, on the shores of Nalubaale.

My mother is of the Nyange Clan; and I am a proud Musoga of the Busoga Nation and Kingdom, at The Source of The Nile, in the Afrikan Great Lakes Region, Cradle of Humanity, and source of human knowledge and civilization.

Like any other self-determined and unconquered culture, a name gives you identity; it gives you land, language, culture, clan, and totem. A name separates you from other people and clans; as a basis for uniting you with all clans, through exogamous marriage, and the sharing of land, history, the present and future.

In a nutshell, the key to a people's integrity and progress is community cognitive autonomy and security.

My People

For thousands of years, maybe from the beginning of human time, the people who constitute the Busoga Nation have been living in a land dominated by Lake Victoria and the River Nile. Lake Victoria is named after some old, tired English queen whose name litters the world as part of the trail of British imperialism and colonialism.

On our part, we know this lake by a name infinitely more meaningful and beautiful. It is Nalubaale; which means 'Lake of Goddesses.' And the River Nile we call Kiira; which means the river which tumbles and bubbles out of Nalubaale (on its way to a land whose inhabitants called it Kemet, that is Black Nation, today popularly known as ancient Egypt).

Today we know that the people who currently inhabit the shores of Nalubaale, at the Source of the Nile, have lived in this space for a very long time. We know this because they speak a language similar to the one spoken in Pharaonic Egypt some 5000 years ago, and more. The two languages are similar

in structure and roots of words. Indeed, some words in the Lusoga language today are very close to those spoken in ancient Egypt and still carry the same meaning, for example:

Ancient Egypt	Lusoga Today	English
Ryn	Liina	Name
Taa	Itaka	Land, soil, earth
Kobo	Koba	Say, talk
Ma	Mazima	Truth, justice, balance reciprocity

All this means several things; but one which prominently stands out is that the peoples of the Afrikan Great Lakes Region in general, but, in particular those of Busoga, were part of, and as subjects participated in, the authoring of the classical Kemetic or Egyptian civilization.

Child of the Village

Such is the land and people into whom I was born. I was raised by dozens and dozens of brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers – for every man in the village in my father’s age bracket was my father; every woman the age of my mother was my mother; and the rest were my brothers, sisters, and grandparents. They still are to this day! All together literally in the hundreds. It was a community of boundless love for and responsibility to one another. Some of the most intelligent, wisest, and most talented people I ever met were folks in my village. They continue to shape my own life as my heroes and role models. In fact, they are not my heroes and role models; they are the heroes and role models of the community.

Different but Equal!

In my socialization in my family, village, community, and community primary school, I was taught to respect my seniors, peers and juniors. I was, therefore, taken aback when I was taken to a boarding missionary school where I spent eight years. The school was located on a hill forty miles from my village and some three miles from the nearest settlement. All children were Black Afrikan. The majority of the teachers were white. The few Afrikan teachers were visibly junior to their white counterparts. For example, Afrikan staff houses were smaller and of a lower grade.

All this seems to have set the scene for counter education. In a variety of ways, forms and nuances white teachers taught us to despise who we were and what we have: knowledge, language, food, and cultural mores. In time this ideological assault polarized the students into those who tolerated, acquiesced, or went along with the denigration on the one hand; and, on the other, those who objected. At the time I joined the elite all-boys boarding school of 260 students, the most vocal and visible group consisted of those who sided with the white teachers. But by the time I left the school some eight years later, the lobby which asserted the notion that difference is not inequality (and for that reason therefore, while Afrikan knowledge, language and culture may be different from their European counterpart, they are equal) was by far the largest and most vocal.

I was forced at a very early stage in my innocent life into inter-racial struggles for cultural equality; that was some 48 years ago, and there has been no turning back.

Conquest, Survival, Decay, and Resurgence

Following the colonial military conquest of my people, a consensus emerged on how to handle the new situation. It snowballed to be something like this:

- Self-preservation as a people around land, language, culture, king, clans system, rituals, family and communal village governance
- Preservation and the guarding of specialized technical and professional knowledge and skills, particularly in the area of health

- Preservation and the guarding of community spirituality
- Protection of the best children from exposure to and corruption by the Western education system. For that reason, do not send the brightest children to school
- Continue to study the situation, evaluate and, when opportune, fight back to regain sovereignty.

Indeed it did not take long before the struggle for independence intensified all across Afrika until independence was attained in the 1950s and 1960s. For a decade it looked like Afrikan peoples could regain their sovereignty and development initiative for democracy, pan-Afrikan unity, and social progress.

When it looked like progress was slow or impossible, some Afrikan leaders belatedly came to the conclusion that the colonial capitalist system the master used to control and dispossess could not be employed by the oppressed for their liberation.

But because the Afrikan Western-trained leadership was wedded to the European modernization theory, an alternative to the master's capitalist system was still sought in Europe. It turned out to be socialism. And this squarely placed Afrika in the magnetic field of the cold war, whereby Afrikan countries were defined in relation to the European project of capitalism or socialism, to be pro-West or pro-East. Either way you had to be pro-European. Even when they tried to define themselves, it was still in relation to the two European projects – when they called themselves Non-Aligned. Whichever way, Afrikans were expected to be aligned to some foreign interest rather than to be internally coherent and aligned to their own interest; that is to be Pro-Afrikan.

Yet by the 1980s, it did not matter what path an Afrikan country had taken; all of them found themselves in dire circumstances of poverty and oppression. Then in 1989 the Soviet Empire started to crumble, disintegrate and disappear. The new leaders of the former Soviet Empire, like some Afrikan leaders before, openly longed for the sugar candy mountain in the West, particularly the USA.

The collapse and disintegration of the Soviet Empire caused an intellectual stampede in Afrika. Afrikan intellectuals who had embraced socialism and the Soviet Union as the leader of the socialist path, found themselves doubly lost, after their political mentors became admirers and followers of the West (capitalism).

no community can be a self-determined community, and therefore achieve sustainable and internally self-propelling levels of economic development, science and technology, and cultural enlightenment, unless and until they have their own home-grown knowledge base, rooted in their history, culture, language and epistemology, as well as the means to maintain, deepen and renew that knowledge.

Although the West, led by the USA and Britain, exuded with the triumphalism of capitalism, and even declared there is no alternative (TINA) to capitalism, Afrikan intellectuals could not bask in the glory of the West prevailing over the East. They generally understood that these were developments in which they had no hand. Thus Afrikan intellectuals who supported the capitalist path were uncertain and confused.

For the first time in decades Afrikan intellectuals worth some salt found themselves on their own, forced to think for themselves.

Citizen Strategic Reflections

The confusion among Afrikan intellectuals was also reflected in government. Afrikan governments failed to take the decisive initiative to study the new and unfolding global realities with the view to reposition themselves with advantage.

Against this background, a group of concerned citizens organized a series of think tanks to interrogate the new and unfolding global situation: how Afrika could survive in the belly of the beast

while working on how to break out of the belly. During the reflections, three intertwined questions took centre stage:

1. Why is it that Afrikans are probably the only people in the world who, in whatever land they find themselves, are the most oppressed lot; even in their Motherland Ancestral Continent, Afrika?
2. Moreover, why is it that whatever they try to do to liberate themselves does not seem to sustainably add up?
3. What is the missing link in Afrika's endeavours for self-determination and progress?

The Findings

1. There is no knowledge without language, no language without knowledge, and no knowledge outside culture. The mastering of one's own people's language and knowledge is the master key to understanding and reading the world, and to access and make strategic sense of other people's languages and knowledges. In fact, knowledge is culture in motion and in action.
2. Development or modernization is about accessing and unleashing a people's and their community's inner energies and genius. The principal resource for modernization, then, is a people's social capital, that is time-tested knowledge, skills, philosophy, values, wisdom, work ethic, and the relations they have built over thousand of years among themselves, with nature and with the gods, for their collective survival.
3. The genius of Afrikan peoples, like that of other peoples, is grounded and locked in their mother tongues. This genius cannot be accessed, let alone unlocked, in the English language, French, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Hindi or Arabic. For that reason, therefore, mother tongue education has been the missing link in all development endeavours on the Afrikan continent. It is the enabling factor in the search for a workable paradigm for Afrikan development.
4. Indeed, it must be for this reason that history has no examples of a people who achieved internally self-propelling and sustainable levels of development in science, technology and literature while using a foreign language as the medium of education, research, literature, and official government communication.

The Mother of All Findings was that no community can be a self-determined community, and therefore achieve sustainable and internally self-propelling levels of economic development, science and technology, and cultural enlightenment, unless and until they have their own home-grown knowledge base, rooted in their history, culture, language and epistemology, as well as the means to maintain, deepen, and renew that knowledge.

The Spiritual Basis of Knowledge

In a nutshell, the key to a people's integrity and progress is community cognitive autonomy and security.

While this may sound to be mere politics, it is actually buttressed by the spirituality I am part of: Afrikan spirituality. For example, we view the Creator as the concentration and epitome of knowledge. In fact, knowledge is the Creator in motion and in action.

It is only when we deviate from our spirituality that we start thinking vertical and invent the fiction of a vertical order of living things, of peoples, their knowledge, language, culture, rights, etc.

Afrikan spirituality teaches us further that the first asset the Creator gave every living thing was knowledge; this being the basis for each organism, in competition, rivalry, and cooperation with others, to preserve itself, survive, and thrive.

We are spiritually guided further that as humans we evolved out of waves of living things which preceded us, namely: plants (ebimera), insects (ebiwuka), flying living things (ebibuuka mu bbanga n'ebipapala), reptiles (ebyewalula), and animals (ebisolo). In emerging out of the above, all peoples of

the world, in their different nationalities, in equal measure, received knowledge from their predecessor plants, insects, flying living things, and animals.

In Afrikan spirituality the Creator, Kyetonda Ttonda Namugereka, is ONE who simultaneously broadens out in seven spirits, which together constitute Kyetonda Ttonda as the source of all knowledge. By opening up in seven Spirits, with equal responsibility, the Creator lays the foundation of equality between and among all His/Her creations. For in and out of equality the seven Spirits constitute the Creator. The seven component spirits of the creator are testified to by the seven colours of the rainbow, God's own flag.

In spiritual understanding, equality translates as complementarity: parts of a whole which only exist in abundant and vibrant energy together. In turn, therefore, complementarity can only imply the horizontal ordering of the creations of God.

It is only when we deviate from our spirituality that we start thinking vertical and invent the fiction of a vertical order of living things, of peoples, their knowledge, language, culture, rights, etc.

Indeed as Kyetonda Ttonda Namugereka opens out into seven component Spirits, by the same logic the earth bears different climates and environments, for example the tropics, savannah, temperate regions, tundra, etc.

The Creator decreed difference and differentiations to be the basis of justice, and justice to be the basis of oneness and unity, awareness, and understanding.

Different peoples in different and differentiated environments organize themselves with rules in harmony with Nature so as to be able to optimize their life in their respective spaces. Central to a people's survival plan, and therefore culture, is land and language.

Inter-Cultural Space

People's existence is derived from the seven Spirits which together constitute and consolidate Kyetonda Ttonda. The same way the peoples of the world are sub-divided as the basis for them to come together in unity of purpose, like the seven Spirits. No nation, no people were created to oppress other peoples or nations. To deviate from the principle of the horizontal ordering of things and complementarity is the Mother of All Oppression and Wars.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was against this background that we came up with a concept and organization to promote and advance community cognitive autonomy and security. It is Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, an institutional space for mother tongue higher education.

the existence of a multiplicity of knowledges is as important for the state and health of the individual knowledges and human knowledge as a whole, as biodiversity is important for the environment. . . . multiple knowledges provide the basis and hope for inter-civilizational succession and therefore vaccinate humanity against the possibility of total collapse.

Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity is based on the proposition that the peoples of the world, their languages, cultures, knowledges, and epistemologies, are horizontally ordered. No one people's knowledge is superior to another. Instead each knowledge is coherent and valid unto itself. The same way, no language is superior to another. Any language can rise to the challenge of discharging the responsibilities imposed on it by the historical endeavours, aspirations, and attainments of its speakers.

As a matter of fact, the existence of a multiplicity of knowledges is as important for the state and health of the individual knowledges and human knowledge as a whole, as biodiversity is important for the environment. Cross-fertilization and synergies between and among a broad spectrum of epistemologies increase the health and vitality of each of the knowledges and enrich the total basket of human knowledge. Moreover, multiple knowledges provide the basis and hope for inter-civilizational succession and therefore vaccinate humanity against the possibility of total collapse.

HUMAN ECOLOGY WEEK

Presented by Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre,
University of Saskatchewan

Friday, April 11, 2008

Scottish Land Reform: Recovering Indigenous Identities

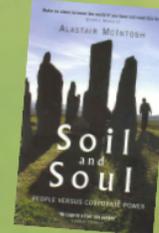
**White Buffalo Youth Lodge, 7:30–9:00PM
602 20th Street West, Saskatoon**

Join **Alastair McIntosh** for a powerful presentation on how the indigenous people of Scotland are healing their identities through land reform.



ALASTAIR MCINTOSH, writer, lecturer, social activist and broadcaster, is a Visiting Professor of Human Ecology at the Centre for Human Ecology, University of Strathclyde, Scotland. He is also a Visiting Fellow of the Academy of Irish Cultural Heritages, University of Ulster. In the 1990s, McIntosh helped defeat plans to turn a majestic Hebridean mountain into a superquarry and was a key figure behind the islanders' buyout of Eigg. He is the author of *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power*, which delves into

Scottish history, the British empire, global economics, philosophy and poetry. In it, he explores notions of community and calls for nothing less than a "right relationship" with one another, with the earth's resources and with spirituality.



INFORMATION: <http://prhprc.usask.ca>



This event is presented in collaboration with Public Health Agency of Canada and First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada.

Photograph of Alastair McIntosh by Murdo McIntosh (*The Guardian*). More information on Mr. McIntosh may be found at www.alastairmcintosh.com.

Event Four: Scottish Land Reform: Recovering Indigenous Identities

Alastair McIntosh, Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland

*Hosted by the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Centre in collaboration with
the Public Health Agency of Canada and
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada*

Overview²⁵

The peoples on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean are native to their place, but too often we in the East Atlantic have forgotten this. We were colonized internally by our own elites then colluded with the colonization of others. Oppressed became oppressor. But in Scotland today this is radically changing. Scottish people have had their eyes opened through solidarity with native peoples elsewhere in the world – in Australia, Africa, and the Americas. This has led us to reflect on our own alienation from the land and the consequent sickening of our own culture.

Modern Scotland's land reform program now covers 2% of the country's land mass. It understands that the value of land is not just economic or agricultural; it is also cultural and spiritual. In this way, the peoples we once helped to colonize became our teachers.

This talk will show how and in so doing express gratitude to the First Nations of North America.

Land Reform: Lessons from Eigg

The Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust was set up in 1997 to secure the island's future and to provide its small population with the opportunity to grow under their own initiatives and efforts.

The Cycle of Belonging

1. Sense of Place (grounding)
2. Sense of Identity (ego)
3. Sense of Values (soul)
4. Sense of Responsibility (action)

Community, Vision and Power

1. Re-membering
2. Re-visioning
3. Re-claiming
4. Naming the Powers
5. Unmasking the Powers
6. Engaging the Powers

Growing Community Assets

"Our experience through the Scottish Land Fund is that community ownership and control of assets can have a critical role in making those communities stronger and more sustainable. We will commit £50 million to fund communities to acquire assets and will provide that funding across both urban and rural Scotland."

Investing in Communities, The National Lottery, Nov. 2005

"No highlander ever once thought of himself as an individual. Amongst these people, even the meanest mind was in a manner enlarged by association, by anticipation and by retrospect. In the most minute, as well as the most serious concerns, he felt himself one of the many connected together by ties the most lasting and endearing. He considered himself merely with reference to those who had gone before, and those who were to come after him; to these immortals who lived in deathless song and heroic narrative; and to these distinguished beings who were born to be heirs of their fame, and to whom their honours, and, perhaps, their virtues, were to be transmitted." (Mrs. Anne Grant of Laggan, 1811)

²⁵ Further information about the Isle of Eigg and Dr. McIntosh's work is available online at www.alastairmcintosh.com.

Conclusion

The Human Ecology Week brought together a rich variety of people, cultural, and disciplinary perspectives to explore the what's and how's of human ecology. What has been begun here in Saskatoon is very much a work in progress. Certainly most of those participating would say they were touched or transformed in some way by the Week. The work begun by the International Human Ecology Network will potentially progress in a number of directions that include deepening the international dialogue concerning the study and practice of community, as well as some members possibly embarking on joint teaching, research, and development activities.

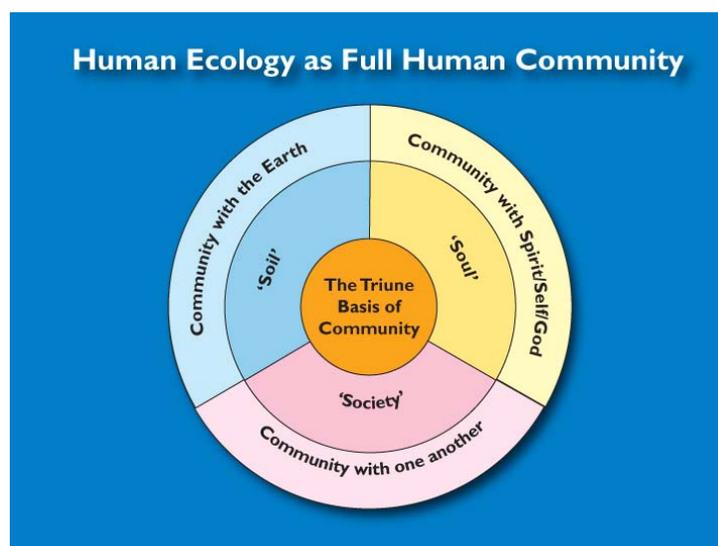
Certainly for the Reducing Mental Health Disparities (RMHD) project, the application of a human ecology framework, both theoretically and perhaps in the eventual development of mental health promotion interventions, is imminent. The research symposium and community gathering, *Land, Belonging & Nomadic Identities: Women, Migration & Well-Being*, was exciting in that this was the first time many from the immigrant and refugee women's communities and practitioners, policy and programming people began to grapple with the links between mental or psycho-spiritual well-being and the deeper dimensions of community articulated throughout the Week and in this report.

Whilst the International Human Ecology Network is quite distinct from the RMHD project, it will likely lend considerable strength to the project's theory-building aims as well as more specifically its fifth objective:

To integrate multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches into mental health promotion practice and theory and build research and training capacity critical to mental health promotion healthcare systems improvement.

Some of the work carried out by members of the Network closely resonates with RMHD. The Centre for Human Ecology's work with migrant and refugee communities in Scotland, or its work on the revitalization of Scottish indigenous identities and knowledge systems, or Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity's work regarding indigenous cognitive autonomy and security in Uganda, for example, are very much aligned with what we are attempting to achieve with the RMHD project. We look forward to future and continued links between the Network and the RMHD project in this area.

Finally we wish to leave you with this conceptualization of Full Human Community below – community with society, community with the earth, and community with spirit. Perhaps, it is the application of this conceptualization of community that will be key to realizing reduced mental health disparities.



Biographies of Human Ecology Week Speakers

Willie Ermine is from the Sturgeon Lake First Nation in the north-central part of Saskatchewan, faculty with the First Nations University of Canada and the Indigenous People's Health Research Centre. His continued residence and participation in the community provides him with the grounding and perspective in his duties and approach to work in the mainstream. He has published numerous academic articles including a widely-read academic paper entitled *Aboriginal Epistemology* through UBC Press and a paper on indigenous knowledge in a European publication entitled *Sea Change: Orkney and Northern Europe in the Later Iron Age 300 – 800*. His primary duty as an Ethicist/Researcher is to promote ethical practices of research involving indigenous peoples with particular interest in the conceptual development of the ethical space – a theoretical space between cultures and world views.

Anne Goodman is an Assistant Professor at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, University of Toronto, where she teaches in adult education, transformative learning, and peacebuilding, and is currently developing a new area of focus in community healing and peacebuilding. She is Co-Director of the Transformative Learning Centre of OISE and Coordinator of Peace and Human Rights Education. She taught peace studies through McMaster University's Centre for Peace Studies for several years and in 2002-3 was Distinguished Visiting Professor at Menno Simons College, University of Winnipeg. Anne is a co-founder and President of InterChange: International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding, a global network that had its founding symposium in June 2005 in Toronto and its second international symposium in Kigali, Rwanda, in November 2007. Anne has also developed and run workshops both in the local community and internationally and is a founder and active member of a project called Voice of Somali Women for Peace, Reconciliation and Political Rights.

Holly Toulejour is a Village Councillor in La Loche, Saskatchewan, and a Social Worker with the Victims Services Branch, Saskatchewan Department of Justice.

Nayyar Javed, counselling psychologist with Saskatoon Adult Community Mental Health, was born and raised in Pakistan where she was involved in development work. She has attended numerous international conferences and workshops on gender and development. As Chair of the National Action Committee's International Solidarity Committee from 1990-93, she had the opportunity of networking with women's NGOs all across the globe. In 1995, Nayyar Javed attended the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China.

Roger Maaka is Professor and Head of the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan. Prior to his current appointment, he was the Head of the Māori Studies department at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand. As a member of the Waitangi Tribunal, he participated in several enquiries including the first casebook (comprehensive regional land claims), the Mohaka ki Ahuriri enquiry. Maaka's research interests include: urban Māori and Aboriginal development, Native Studies evolution as an academic discipline, post treaty-claims development, and theoretical issues encompassing the construction of contemporary indigenous identities and indigeneity as a global social movement. As an indigenous person as well as a Native Studies scholar, Roger Maaka has a vested interest in the social advancement of indigenous peoples.

Alastair McIntosh is a writer, lecturer, social activist and broadcaster, and a campaigning academic from the Isle of Lewis. He is also a Fellow of the Centre for Human Ecology, Scotland, a Director of the GalGael Trust, a Visiting Fellow of the Academy for Irish Cultural Heritages at the University of Ulster, and Visiting Professor of Human Ecology at the University of Strathclyde. In the 1990s, McIntosh helped defeat plans to turn a majestic Hebridean mountain into a super-quarry and was a key figure behind the islanders' buyout of Eigg. He is the author of *Soil and Soul: People versus Corporate Power*, which delves into Scottish history, the British Empire, global economics, philosophy, and poetry. In it, he explores notions of community and calls for nothing less than a 'right relationship' with one another, with the earth's resources, and with spirituality. He is also the author of a soon-to-be released book on climate change *Hell and High Water*, which argues that politics alone is not enough to tackle climate change; rather, we must recover the spiritual dimension in our lives.

Cristina Moreno is a human ecology consultant from Brazil. She has a degree in Engineering and has worked extensively in the natural resources sector. She has a particular interest in the Earth Charter, a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society for the 21st century and in developing an industrial sustainability index.

Keith Morrison is a human ecologist from New Zealand. His PhD developed a human ecological approach to environmental management: *A postmodern reconstruction of floodplain management methodologies*. Morrison comes from the direction of Continental Philosophy, including its openness to theology, literature, and indigenous and Eastern philosophy. He is an ordained clergyman of the Antiochian Syrian Orthodox Christian Church and embedded in the Polynesian communities in New Zealand and Samoa. Morrison focuses on praxis, assisting people to grow through experiential learning for sustainable community development, and specializes in facilitation of wilderness/meditation retreats as a spiritual director. Presently, the South Pacific network, the Sustainable Community Development Forum, is developing an independent research institute which engages with and for communities as a "creative edge of deep cultural change for sustainable development."

Priscilla Settee is a Saskatchewan educator, intellectual, activist, and writer. She is an Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan, and has been a trailblazer in developing global solidarity within and between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal communities. She received a 2008 Saskatchewan Global Citizens Award. Priscilla has worked with indigenous communities in Central and South America, been involved in the Canadian anti-apartheid movement and the Indigenous Women's Network of Saskatchewan. Priscilla's teaching and research interests include intellectual property rights, indigenous rights, and understanding and documenting indigenous knowledge systems globally.

Paulo Wangoola is Founder and President of the Uganda-based Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, a community-based centre for mother tongue higher education and research. He is, as well, Special Advisor to the Clans Council of the Kingdom of Busoga. His current special assignments, as part of specialized teams, include community-based social enterprise initiatives to internally generate a financial resource base to support community strategic initiatives for the highest common social good, the construction of The House of Indigenous Cultures and Spirituality, and drafting a Manifesto of Afrikan Spirituality.

Judy White is a Commissioner for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina. She was born and raised in Trinidad and has studied at the University of the West Indies, Institut de Travail Social et de Recherches Sociales in Montrouge, France, and the Universities of Regina and Manitoba, Canada. She is a member of the Board of Governors of the Prairie Centre of Excellence of Research on Immigration and Integration, a past board member of International Women of Saskatoon, and is much respected for her longstanding community work with immigrant and refugee communities.

Lewis Williams is a social scientist and community developer. She is Director of the Prairie Region Health Promotion Research Center and Associate Professor with the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. From Aotearoa, New Zealand, Lewis has lived in Saskatoon for the past four years and enjoys building friendships and community. She is of Scottish and Ngai Te Rangi descent and, whilst she misses the bush, sea, and mountains of New Zealand, she has a growing love for the prairies, lakes, and woodlands here. She received her PhD (community development) from the School of Social and Cultural Studies, Massey University, New Zealand and for some years before that practiced as a social worker, community developer, and counsellor in New Zealand and internationally. One of Lewis's most formative experiences was at the age of 16 when as an American Field Service Scholar she got to live for a year in Kansas where she became close friends with other Field Scholars from all around the world. For Lewis this formed the basis of her belief in the importance of inter-cultural and interfaith work.

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