

## We all lose from loss of diversity

As our wasteful lifestyle takes its toll on the planet, we are urgently searching for different strategies. Shouldn't we take some lessons from local peoples, who have proven themselves masters of innovation? Over thousands of years, communities in different parts of the world have developed tried-and-tested solutions ranging from the use of plants as medicines to sustainable forms of water use and survival techniques in extreme environments.

By nurturing these skills we can help people restore their environment, earn a living in their homeland and cope with the demands of globalisation. And we can confront the common challenges humanity faces, now and in the future.

This approach calls for humility. In the last decades, we have exported western values with missionary zeal. Yet each culture has its own specific wisdom, born of its individual struggle to deal with nature and circumstance. Who are we to say that our western, market-based model of how to live is the right one for all people and every corner of the world?

## The work of the Global Diversity Foundation

Since 2000 the Global Diversity Foundation has promoted agricultural, biological and cultural diversity around the world.

In rural areas we create opportunities for local people to develop their sense of place, enhance their livelihoods and revive their cultural traditions in their homelands. For those who have already moved to the city, we offer the possibility of rediscovering elements of their former lifestyles and maintaining access to key biological resources.

Globalisation can go hand-in-hand with diversity if there is a dialogue of cultures that respects different values and lifestyles. But it requires education, research and sheer hard work in the form of long-term, community-based projects.

Our research and education programmes target critical contemporary issues such as wildlife trade, people-park conflicts and community-based natural resource management. We always work in collaboration with local partners.

We also support grassroots projects that use innovative approaches to achieve quantifiable results. With an emphasis on feasibility and sustainability, we focus on small-scale initiatives that can be replicated elsewhere.



# Global Diversity Foundation

A world of difference

## Help us make a world of difference

We greatly appreciate your financial contributions. But just as importantly, we need help in spreading the word about the impact of globalisation and homogenisation on biocultural diversity. With your support we can promote the value of diverse ways of living. After all, who wants to live in a world with only one culture?

GDF has been registered (No. 1080731) with the Charity Commission for England and Wales since 2000.

[www.globaldiversity.org.uk](http://www.globaldiversity.org.uk)



# Global Diversity Foundation

A world of difference

What gives a group of people their identity? What distinguishes them from the rest of humanity? The answer lies in the intricate blend of knowledge, customs and resources that connects them with their environment and with each other.

These relationships take hundreds, even thousands of years to evolve.

They can disappear overnight.

**We live in a world of increasing sameness**

We drive the same cars, wear the same jeans, use the same mobile phones. From California to Kuala Lumpur, a patchwork of local cultures is giving way to a globalised monoculture where one size fits all. This encroaching homogenisation, propelled by rural exodus, is having a devastating impact on biological and cultural diversity.

As people abandon their fields, forests and villages, their identity – and the unique combination of skills, resources and landscapes which they use to survive and express themselves – start to disappear forever.

**What is happening to biocultural diversity?**

Our world is made up of a variety of languages, cultures and natural environments that have evolved together over many generations: the earth's biocultural diversity. It is diminishing fast.

Humanity's demand for resources is now outstripping supply by about 25%.

We have converted about 30% of our planet's land area for cropland, pasture and urban areas.

Populations of vertebrate species have declined by about one-third in less than 35 years. Over 13% of flowering plants face extinction in the near future.

Half of the 6500 languages spoken in the world may disappear in the next 50 years, putting at risk the unique world view, local wisdom and rich traditions of diverse cultures.

If biocultural diversity was just a matter of obscure species, quaint folklore and tribal customs we could place a few objects in museums and nod sagely about the inevitable march of progress.

However, it is much more than that. Every time local people are uprooted they lose a vital reservoir of experience and understanding that has helped them manage their resources and maintain their environments over thousands of years.



Our projects around the world

1. Mesoamerica (2008 onwards)



- helping Chinantec people establish community conservation areas in the cloud forest of Oaxaca, Mexico
- returning results of scientific research on biocultural diversity to rural communities and local institutions
- supporting indigenous researchers who are exploring the cultural history and biological diversity of their homelands

2. North Africa (2000 onwards)



- encouraging responsible commerce of 80 species of animals and 300 species of plants traded in southern Morocco
- cultivating a school garden to regreen the Marrakech medina and provide nutritional lunches for 150 students
- providing opportunities for 250 Amazight girls to document the plant knowledge of their elders in the Ourika Valley

3. Southern Africa (2006 onwards)



- documenting livelihood strategies to support community-based conservation in the Central Kalahari, Botswana
- creating 60 home and school gardens for 800 San Bushmen in Omaheke south, Namibia
- promoting San use of wild food and medicinal plants in order to promote healthy lifestyles in sedentary settlements

4. Southeast Asia (2003 onwards)



- establishing zones for community use for 500 local people near Crocker Range Park in Sabah, Malaysia
- assisting Dusun people in four villages to record their knowledge of landscapes and biological resources
- creating a village cultural heritage resource centre and useful plant garden for Kiau, a village near Kinabalu Park