

CEERD

Traditional Knowledge Projects

Report June 13, 2003, by Mara DelliPriscoli, Sibylle Schlatter, and Coenraad Visser

The Traditional Knowledge Projects Working Group met to chart a course for the development of four traditional knowledge projects (or *cultural creatives*, as the Group prefers this wording in recognition of their commonalities of knowledge and creativity). The cultural creatives are: music, artisanal products, community-based tourism, and ethnobotanicals.

To take stock of the current situation and plans for the immediate future:

Music: the first project to advance the music industry in Africa is already well advanced. In Senegal, the first country of implementation, a loan of \$5 million has been negotiated between the World Bank and the Government of Senegal, legislation is being revised and the collecting society restructured, and investment in SMEs (such as bands, and studios) promoted. The project is in various stages of rollout to Ghana, Mali, and Cape Verde.

Ethnobotanicals: in Venezuela, a community foundation, Kuyujani Originario Association, has been incorporated with a board of directors drawn from the twelve Dhekuana tribes to hold their intellectual property rights. (This foundation is the first of its kind worldwide (as noted in *The Economist* of June 23, 2001) as has been adopted as a template by other institutions in similar contexts.) The project is now at the licensing stage – negotiations are under way to license the biogenetic resources and traditional technical knowledge of the Dhekuana. It is significant that the license relates not only to the biogenetic resources of the Dhekuana but also to their traditional technical knowledge relating to such resources. This has a significant impact on potential royalty income: the probability of finding an active patentable ingredient in plants increases from 1 in 10,000 to 1 in 25 when traditional technical knowledge is combined with the biogenetic resources in question. One candidate for such a license is Yale University, through six faculties and schools, including the professional schools of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Medicine, and Law. Significantly, the Dhekuana will receive not only substantial monetary compensation (initially through annual milestone payments of between \$10,000 and \$30,000, and ultimately 50 percent of all sublicensing revenue), but also health care, training of members of the tribes as paramedics, advice on the sale of ethnobotanicals as food supplements, and so on. Licenses may also be granted to food supplement companies, and to a publisher for the traditional literary cultural expressions of the Dhekuana (such as their myths, stories, legends, and poetry).

If funding becomes available, a pilot project can be established for the Peten women, the poorest in Guatemala, to protect their ethnobotanicals.

Artisanal products: in India, a successful pilot of direct marketing of traditional artistic cultural expressions has already been scaled up by three times by the Government for three states. A fourth state in India is in discussions with the World Bank for a \$5.3

million DPIP loan. Task Managers in Mongolia and Mali have already indicated that they want to adapt the Indian pilot, so the rollout process is under way here, too.

Community-based tourism: The convergence of learning and innovation is creating a renaissance in civic engagement, arts, tourism, and culture, full of promise for humanity. One of the best grassroots mechanisms for cultural understanding is community-based tourism. The educational emphasis on lifelong learning may open up new markets for soft adventure, cultural, and ecological tourism. Pilot and loan activities are under way in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Mali. We have to look at different ways of measuring outcomes – using urban technology to track rural tourism does not work. We need to identify appropriate economic indicators to evaluate rural tourism. Also, community-based tourism will remain small if all funding is accessed through foundations or grants. A number of public investments are important for community-based tourism to grow.

An interesting feature to emerge from the discussions in this group is what we called *resonance*. This feature manifests itself in a number of ways:

- Whatever investment or work is done in any of the four cultural creatives resonates in the other creatives. For example, strengthening the traditional musical or artistic creatives resonates in community-based tourism by making those destinations more attractive to the cultural tourism market. But there is also resonance of a possibly adverse kind: community-based tourism may facilitate the misappropriation of the intellectual property of local and indigenous communities. To address this concern the Working Group also explored possible solutions that can be the subject of separate funding, such as compiling and marketing authorized visual and sound recordings of traditional cultural expressions.
- Certain concerns resonated in all four cultural creatives. Accordingly the Working Group formulated the following general recommendations:
 - Greater use should be made of loan preconditions and conditions to compel countries to create the necessary enabling legal environment.
 - Education is crucial on all sides of the social transaction. Beneficiaries should be educated about their intellectual property rights and expectations, and obligations, just as the users of such intellectual property should be educated. So any lending activity in these cultural creatives should provide for education of this kind. Where possible, provision for skills development and training should be built into project proposals (as was done in the case of the African music industry project) or licensing agreements (as is proposed to be done in respect of the Dekhuana ethnobotanical project).
 - The representation of beneficiaries should be structured, or restructured, to ensure that the channel of responsibility and accountability to beneficiaries is as direct and immediate as possible. For example, the Working Group clearly prefers private collecting societies to represent rightsholders rather than public bodies. Also, the Group supports the principle of “co-pilotage” – the loan spending in the recipient country is monitored by both the beneficiaries (through their representatives) and the national government.

- Given the scarce human resources and the increasing scarcity of economic resources in these creatives the Working Group believes that synergies need to be explored to a far greater extent. In particular:
 - During the identification stage of lending activity, for example, potential recipients of funding should be required to disclose whether they receive funding or technical assistance for similar purposes from other sources.
 - Partnerships should be forged with other institutions to avoid the duplication of work. In these cultural creatives, obvious potential partners are UNESCO, WIPO, universities (ethnomusicology, for example), foundations, scientific and research institutions, and national depositories or collections of traditional cultural expressions.
 - Within the World Bank there should be mechanisms (such as websites or bulletin boards) for sharing information about planned projects, ongoing projects, reports on completed projects, terms of reference, studies, checklists, toolkits, templates, and so on. In this way the limited resources can alleviate the poverty of larger numbers of people.
 - The World Bank should prepare model agreements for the licensing of cultural creatives, and train and sensitize task team leaders.
- During the initial loan preparations for possible projects, it is our experience that local and indigenous communities often express great enthusiasm for cultural projects that would alleviate their poverty. This enthusiasm then dissipates and sometimes turns to cynicism when the implementation of the projects is slowed down by the need to complete extended loan procedures. It is cold comfort to the poor to be told that one day there will be food on their table. So World Bank loan procedures should be streamlined to take this urgency into account, without prejudice participatory planning. In particular, the Bank should shift to more cost-effective and speedy ways of gaining market intelligence and feasibility, by drawing on expert opinion from relevant trade associations and participatory meetings with stakeholders to get feedback on this expert opinion and planning of complementary steps that the project would support. This approach contrasts with the Bank's normal reliance on feasibility studies that are costly, usually do not reflect up-to-date market intelligence, and do not engage stakeholders in jointly developing the project activities.