

Consultation Report:
Establishment of Biocultural Territories in Ethiopia

Submitted by:

**Lino Mamani Huarka,
President of Papa Arariwa, Potato Park**

**Ysidora Palomino Ccana,
President of Q'achun Wahachi Gastronomy Collective, Potato Park**

**Alejandro Argumedo
Director, Asociación ANDES**

**Tammy Stenner.
Education Program Coordinator, Asociación ANDES**

January 10, 2012



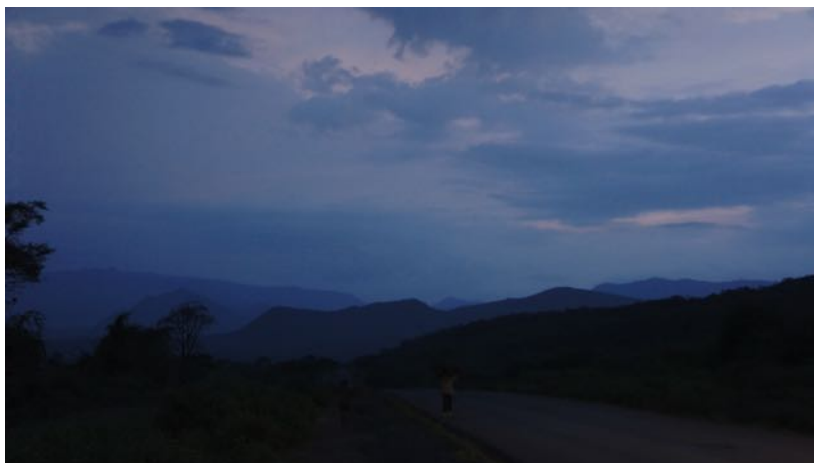
INTRODUCTION

From 15 September to 1 October 2011 a 4-member team from the Potato Park and Asociación ANDES visited Ethiopia within an Exchange program supported by The Christensen Fund. ANDES' exchange program focuses on sharing lessons learned and tools developed through creating and implementing the Potato Park, an Indigenous Biocultural Territory, established by ANDES-IIED and six Quechua communities in Písaq, Cusco, Peru.

The exchange between Ethiopian and Peruvian researchers and farmers was carried out within a "Contact Learning Zone" framework which allows geographically and historically separated peoples to come into contact and establish on-going relations, creating a horizontal and democratic space for intercultural practice. Therefore, our visit to Ethiopia was envisioned as a learning journey through a socio-ecological landscape, where Quechua and various Ethiopian cultures would meet, interact and practice horizontal information sharing and cooperative discovery and learning. Although we were fully aware that we belonged to different contexts, we were conscious that we were united due to our experiences living within societies with highly asymmetrical relations of power, and also through our efforts to preserve biological and cultural diversity in our areas of influence.

Through the exchange, participants from Peru hoped to gain insight into the work of Ethiopian farmers and researchers in implementing Enset and Sorghum Parks, get ideas for improving our work in the Potato Park, collect stories and visual material to share with our communities upon return, strengthen our relationship with our Ethiopian partners for long term cooperation on Biocultural Territories, celebrate biocultural diversity and embrace complexity, while sharing experiences, knowledge and strategies for building new models of biocultural communities.

To achieve these objectives, the ANDES-Potato Park team met with Hawassa university researchers, made a presentation to faculty and students, visited coffee, enset and sorghum growing areas, and met with farmers in those areas. Our guides provided valuable insight into the incredible biocultural diversity of the areas visited, and the complexity of local food systems. The following report provides an overview of the exchange, highlights important learning outcomes, and provides suggestions for future action in Peru and Ethiopia.



THE ROAD TO ETHIOPIA

Travel of the Peru team to Ethiopia was a continuum of a highly innovative exchange and horizontal learning process promoted by The Christiansen Fund and partners, which seeks to stimulate the revitalization and creation of horizontal networks of information sharing and cooperative learning. Such exchanges are building cohesive approaches and methodologies for the sharing of existing community experiences of self-determined development, which can harness policy architectures for achieving social change for biocultural diversity by aligning/reinforcing interventions from local to global levels. The Potato Park communities had hosted Ethiopian visitors in Cusco, and in this context the visit of a team of Quechua members to Ethiopia was a reciprocal visit that closed the circle.

Planning for this trip began with communications between TCF, IIE, and ANDES. With the assistance of Jeff Campbell, TCF provided funding for the 4-person team to travel to Ethiopia, and food and accommodation expenses during our stay in Ethiopia. Dario Vasquez, Helene Mantell, and Cheryl Francisconi of IIE provided valuable logistical support in the planning stages. The Association of the Potato Park carried out a selection process to determine who would travel to Ethiopia. Lino Mamani Huarka and Ysidora Palomino Ccana were selected as participants based on their knowledge about Andean biocultural diversity and actions taken to preserve this diversity in the Potato Park. Lino is the curator of the Park's potato collection and highly respected farmer who grows an incredible diversity of potatoes. Ysidora Palomino Ccana is president of the Q'achun Wahachi Gastronomy Collective. Alejandro Argumedo, Director of ANDES and a leader in the establishment of Biocultural Territories was requested to attend by our Ethiopian partners. Tammy Stenner attended in her capacity as Coordinator of the Exchange Program for ANDES, and she was also chosen to facilitate communications and translation between the Peruvian and Ethiopian participants of the exchange.

For Lino and Ysidora, travel to Ethiopia represented a number of firsts. Since they had never traveled in a plane or out of the country, they needed to apply for passports, involving several trips to Cusco for that process. The flights to Lima and Addis Ababa were a very new and exciting part of the exchange for both of them. Arriving in Addis Ababa, Lino shared "I have long dreamt that I would travel somewhere, and I am happy it has been to Ethiopia!!"

Upon arrival in Addis Ababa, the ANDES-Potato Park team was met by representatives of IIE and TCF, and was taken immediately to Hawassa to the University Hotel where the group stayed for much of the time in Ethiopia. Over the next ten days, the group visited nearby coffee growing areas, the Gamo highlands and Konso. Kelsa Kena accompanied the group



on these trips and provided useful and insightful explanations of the landscape, climate, culture and diversity of crops and animals in the agro-forestry system.

COFFEE TIME

One of the group's first activities was a trip to coffee growing areas near Hawassa. We traveled by car through a spectacular landscape of a beautiful mountain range with volcanic cores and stunning diversity. We enjoyed the spectacular scenery of rich biocultural diversity, a wonderful climate, and the friendliness and hospitality of the people, which only cemented what we have read about Ethiopia: a gem in the Horn of Africa. Kelsa provided the interpretation of the region's rich biocultural heritage and history. We learned that Ethiopia is the only African country never to be colonized, and it is also the birthplace of coffee. Kelsa explained that indigenous nomadic mountain people were the first to recognize coffee's stimulating effect, and the mystic Sufi pilgrims of Islam spread coffee throughout the Middle East. From there, coffee spread to Europe and then throughout the world. We also learned that the coffee highlands area is home to a variety of endemic plants and animals which are very important for the overall economy and livelihoods of its people; however, the pressure on the mountains is already high and it will only increase in the future with current efforts to increase agricultural production to feed the growing population.



Stops in restaurants for our meals allowed the group to try a variety of local foods and reflect on the commonalities among Ethiopian and Andean mountains. Both are sources of rich biocultural diversity, with many endemic species and a wide array of crop genetic diversity. Apart from this, the Ethiopian and Andean highlands hold significant historical/cultural sites and monuments from many thousands of years of human activity. Though these resources are under heavy external and internal threats including climate change, land degradation and poverty, we believe that biocultural heritage principles and practice can ensure the sustainability of land and the resources therein (water, biodiversity and their link to traditional knowledge and culture) and human rights, the right to food and the sustainable livelihoods of the poor.

In the evening, and against the backdrop of the incredible journey of the day, reflection among the Peruvian group focused on the exceptional opportunity for Ethiopian coffee growing communities to take advantage of its unique quality as center of origin of coffee and an example of a dynamic, rich and diverse productive cultural landscape. We concluded that those amazing landscapes should be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The farming landscapes we visited are by all means of outstanding universal value and would easily meet the UNESCO selection criteria for a World Heritage site.

THE BEAUTY OF ENSET

Traveling to the Gamo highlands was a highlight of our visit. A stunning plateau - where the sun emits a unique light that made the colors in the sky similar to those of the land- with a collection of birds flying in the sky welcomed us. We were amazed to see how the landscape and friendliness of the local people were so similar to the Andes. The Enset gardens impressed us the most; we were stunned at the 20' superb Enset plants whose leafs can reach gigantic proportions of about 10' long and were particularly taken aback by the great diversity of cultivated crops under the green and burgundy-red flushed Enset foliage.



In the afternoon, we drove through villages with spectacular views and saw other landscapes, crops, and different types of home construction. We were able to visit a craft market to see spinning, weaving, and local textile designs, as well as a lodge using traditional home building materials and methods with an amazing view of the mountainous landscape and lake. The views of mountains, lakes and forests were beautiful, and since it was nearing the end of the rainy season, the lush green landscapes were spectacular.



At the home of a community leader and enset farmer, we were introduced to the culture and uses of the plant and learned how locals extract the starches for their traditional bread, Kotcho, and much more. We discussed enset diversity, production, uses, preparation, and threats to the diversity. There was also discussion about the TCF funded program to support the maintenance of enset diversity in the area, and possible future actions to be taken in that context.

Back at the hotel we reflected on the day's visit and discussed how a Biocultural Territory approach such as the Potato Park could be implemented in the visited area as a strategy that can bring Enset conservation and development together. We concluded that for such strategy to be successful, the process has to be embedded in the local communities, focusing on the

strengthening of local cultural and institutional processes, particularly the socioecological capital and knowledge base of the communities. We believe that implementing an Enset Park would help to restore and enhance indigenous communities' resilience and adaptive capabilities in the face of today's constant and unpredictable socioecological, economic and climate changes. It would reinforce social resilience, the biodiversity-rich and diverse Enset landscapes upon which local communities directly depend will consequently suffer less erosion.

TERRACES AND SORGHUM



Traveling through the Omo Valley by the villages of the Konso people, we found beautiful and fascinating landscapes dominated by agricultural terracing and stone walls. We were able to see part of the Konso cultural landscape which features stone walled terraces and fortified settlements, a spectacular example of a living cultural tradition adapted to a seemingly dry hostile environment. In the words of Ysidora, "the landscape represents shared values, and rich traditional knowledge of the communities". The principal crop we saw was sorghum; Kelsa told us that at least twenty-four varieties are grown in the lower side and maize on higher ground. We also saw cotton, which the Konso weave into cloth, and that tradition was evident in the colorful clothing worn by women. Konso towns made a strong impression on us, as the russet walls forced out of the soil on which they stand resonated with our Andean towns. Another

landscape feature, which impressed us, were the extensive sorghum fields dotted with trees; we learned that these were shiferaw trees, which are planted because they are leafy and the foliage is used for food.



We stopped at one village and again the ANDES-Potato Park team was able to meet and converse with farmers at their home. The intensive agricultural system which combines intercropping with soil and water conservation practices was a topic of discussion, as well as

sorghum cultivation, diversity, uses, and preparation; and sorghum beer was offered to the group. There was also a visit to fields planted with sorghum. In addition the group visited restaurants to sample dishes based on locally produced meats, fish, spices and grains. This trip also included a visit to a crocodile farm where the group also saw baboons.



Back at the Hotel, sorghum and the Konso cultural landscape were the main topics of discussion and reflection. Ideas floated around making a bid to UNESCO for the Potato Park recognition as a World Heritage Site. Like the Coffee landscapes we saw or Konso, the Potato Park has outstanding universal value and can easily meet at least one out of ten selection criteria. For this we think we ought to develop a strong biocultural narrative and proof of criteria and feasibility, but also make sure that the rights to communal/collective land and the resources therein are not lost. For this we think that a follow-up participatory action research on indigenous peoples and cultural landscapes is needed; one that combines capacity development, deliberative processes on active citizenship for shared governance and biocultural rights, particularly land rights. Capacity development needed includes the development of people's mapping skills and land use plans, free prior informed consent, data gathering and documentation, campaigning strategy and consensus building. Lino and Ysidora concluded that in order to learn more about the Konso process, we should talk to the elders and learn about their strategies and tactics, only then we will be able to identify, examine and compare compatibilities and gaps on land rights regimes; customary rights and laws, hard and soft rules: in other words, we should network on Traditional Resource Rights and apply it to World Heritage sites.

OTHER ACTIVITIES



The ANDES-Potato Park team made a presentation to Hawassa University faculty and students on the biocultural territory model and the Potato Park. The team shared an oral and visual presentation on biodiversity of native potatoes, conservation and promotion of diversity, sustainable use, the agro-ecotourism program, gastronomy, guides, medicinal plants, botanical gardens, and the Papa Arariwa collective. They also discussed the ayllu system upon which the model is based in Peru. Although there were some technical difficulties, the group successfully shared an overview of the

model, and highlighted some ways in which it may be usefully adapted to the Ethiopian context. Some print materials on Biocultural Territories and the Potato Park were also distributed to the audience members.

The final days of the ANDES-Potato Park team visit to Ethiopia were spent in Addis Ababa. Our gracious host, Professor Zarhoum accompanied the group to the oldest restaurant in the city, and on a visit to the National Museum. The museum contains some of the oldest human remains on earth and represents the evolution of humans and other species in the Great Rift Valley. It also has an exhibit depicting a number of cultural groups still found in the country. The group also visited a zoo with African cats and other animals, including the unique Ethiopian black mane lion. Finally the group spent an evening at the home of our host, sharing a meal, roasting coffee, and listening to Ethiopian music.



On the return trip, one day was spent in London, England. There, Lino and Ysidora experienced a number of other firsts, including riding a subway for the first time. The group also visited a couple of London's parks, saw Buckingham Palace, and tried British pub fare. It was an eventful and interesting for them.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE POTATO PARK COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The exchange with Ethiopian researchers and farmers provided a great deal of food for thought for the Peru team. Some reflections from the Potato Park team on what they saw in Ethiopia follow.

The social context in both rural and urban areas reflects many differences with the situation in Peru, although there are also quite a few similarities. The population density appears to be much higher in Ethiopia, especially in rural areas. Regardless of the time of day or night, or the

weather, or location, there were endless streams of people walking along the roadsides. There were few vehicles, and many of those we did see were donkey carts rather than motorized vehicles.

Women and girls in particular appeared to suffer great hardships, and they were often seen carrying huge loads of food, water or fuel on their backs. Although men were sometimes seen carrying loads like that, they were much more likely to be using donkey carts, and traveling by bicycle, motorcycle or car.

We were told that unemployment rates are very high, and that may in part explain the poverty we saw. Children were often poorly dressed, and many begged for money and other things. One of the biggest issues seemed to be access to safe drinking water. We often saw people lined up for water from community wells, but others were drawing water from rivers that did not look particularly clean. The burden of carrying water appeared to fall disproportionately on women and girls.

In rural areas, housing was often in distinctive traditional designs of round mud houses with straw roofs. These houses have great potential for agroecotourism. In the Gamo highlands the group visited a lodge made up of a number of such houses, with an incredible view of the landscape, including a large lake. In the future, homestay initiatives could be considered for local farming communities.

One important difference between Peru and Ethiopia involves land tenure. In Peru, indigenous communities have communal ownership over their lands, whereas in Ethiopia, all land is property of the state. In terms of implementation of Biocultural Territories, this will involve a very different approach from that taken in Peru. The researchers involved in the implementation of the TCF project are necessarily working with different levels of government to obtain relevant support and permission to carry out their action research projects.

In terms of agriculture and food systems, the diversity within enset and sorghum systems in Ethiopia is very impressive, as is the local knowledge of the varieties, their qualities, uses, cultivation and preparation. It was fascinating to hear about and witness the complexity of the agro-forestry system within which these crops are grown. Ethiopia is a centre of origin of coffee, a fact that has the potential to be exploited to promote agro-ecotourism activities, and the idea of declaring the area a UNESCO world heritage site was discussed during the exchange.

The Peru team saw much potential for local conservation and development initiatives in the areas visited. Farms, sacred mountains, local food and craft markets, historical sites, hiking trails, and cultural practices/celebrations have the potential to attract tourists in these areas. Of course there are many challenges as well. The large number of people in any given area presents a challenge in terms of identifying participants and managing distribution of benefits of any development activities.

Climate change is causing changes to the rainfall patterns, so that the rainy season may begin earlier, continue longer, or the season may be shorter than usual. This creates difficult conditions for farmers, and makes it nearly impossible to predict climate conditions based on traditional knowledge. This challenge is not specifically related to Biocultural Territories, but will impact every aspect of agriculture. This makes it important to recognize and protect the resilient traditional agricultural systems and promote and preserve diversity in agricultural systems.

CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW UP RECOMMENDATIONS

We believe that the Peru-Ethiopia Exchange proved how rewarding horizontal networking can be, and has created a solid foundation for future collaboration. We saw and learned many things during this short trip, and we were amazed by the incredible biocultural diversity of the places we visited. The smiles of the men, women and children we saw also left a big impression. Talking to researchers and farmers involved in conservation of biocultural diversity in rural areas strengthened our resolve and belief in the importance of our own commitment to biocultural diversity. The preservation of this diversity has potential to go far beyond what is called sustainable development to improve lives in Peru, Ethiopia and elsewhere.

Some ideas discussed during the visit have been elaborated as recommendations below:

1. Organize an International conference on biocultural territories: This activity would be oriented to launch the Enset Park and bring together practitioners engaged in a variety of academic and practical activities for designing, planning and implementing biocultural territories. Objectives can include among others the systematization of tools, which can be used to implement biocultural territories, based on the particular characteristics of their own regions and communities.
2. Make a bid to UNESCO for Ethiopian coffee growing and the Potato Park communities in Peru to take advantage of their unique quality as center of origin of coffee and potatoes and a living example of a dynamic, rich and diverse productive cultural landscape, and jointly apply for their landscapes to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.
3. A joint participatory action research on indigenous peoples and cultural landscapes that can be collaboratively carried out between our colleagues at Hawassa University and partner communities and the Potato Park and ANDES. Research could focus among others on the triple relationship between biocultural heritage, education and creative/solidarity economy. Developing a strong biocultural narrative and proof of the concept (principles and feasibility of biocultural territories) is needed and a providing communities with appropriate tools for creating sustainable and holistic communities and critical consciousness about agricultural landscapes, rights to land and the resources therein (water, biodiversity and their link to intellectual property and traditional knowledge and culture) and human rights.
4. IPCCA site in the Enset area: Climate change is a growing challenge in the area but it is impacting every aspect of the agricultural and food system. This makes it critical to assess the conditions and trends of climate change as it relates to Enset, and other culturally important crops, and water availability. An IPCCA assessment would ensure that communities develop local responses that protect the resilient traditional agricultural systems and promote and preserve diversity in agricultural systems.