CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: COMMUNITIES & CONSERVATION

PART 2. WORKSHOP: STIMULATE DIALOGUE
MODULE 5 EXERCISE. CULTURAL MODELS APPROACH

LEARNING GOAL: To stimulate dialogue about how (1) to recognize diverse perspectives (analogous to cultural lenses) within a conservation community, (2) to understand flash points and (3) practice resiliency by discovering commonalities despite deep-seated differences.

STEP 1. Place this exercise in the context of a community you know (or expect to know)
      1.1 Think about the communities you have worked with on conservation projects *(OPTION: this might be a community that you plan, or want, to work with in the future)*
      1.2 Write the name of one community on a post-it paper *(TIP: Write with a marker, large enough so your group can read it on the sticky wall while sitting)*
      1.3 Place your post-it on the sticky wall; discuss if it is more "wild", "rural", or "urban"
      1.4 Discuss all the examples of conservation communities on the sticky-wall. Explain what you do, and do not, know about the stakeholders in "your" community.

STEP 2. Before working with your community, what color is your own personal "lens on conservation"?
      2.1 Open "your" envelope and take out the cards inside
      2.2 Place two "boxes" in front of you, marked "AGREE" and "DISAGREE"
      2.3 Read each card, decide if you agree or disagree with the statement and place it in a box *(TIP: ignore the colors; if you can't decide on a card, place it between the boxes, decide later)*
      2.4 Discuss as a group: Did some of you find it easier to sort the cards than others? Why? Does it have anything to do with a tendency to "see black or white" versus "shades of grey"?
      2.5 Take the cards out of your "AGREE" box and sort them by color (*TIP: Match them to the colored boxes on the page provided in this handout*)
      2.6 Discuss the "color" of your primary lens (*OPTION: If your pile of cards is multi-colored, discuss why this might be, i.e. whether you added lenses with age and experience*)

STEP 3. What might be "flash points" for members of your community who "see" with different lenses?
      3.1 From your "AGREE" box, pick out the white cards; these are likely "flash points"
      3.2 Discuss your flashpoints with your neighbor; pick one where you two disagreed; compare around the table so there are a variety of cards to discuss (*TIP: avoid duplication of effort*)
      3.3 Place one "flashpoint" on the page provided in this handout;   discuss how it would be viewed from three different "lenses"; jot your ideas down in the boxes *(TIP: think of people in your community or in your previous lives who "wore a lens" different than your own)*
      3.4 Within your group, discuss several "flashpoints" and why perspectives might differ
      3.5 Jot down your ideas of where you could find commonality between two lenses that reflect diverse views on this "flashpoint". Is the commonality more than "agree to disagree"?

STEP 4. What aspects of your beliefs are so deeply rooted, you would be resistant to change?
      4.1 From your "DISAGREE" box, pick up your pile of cards
      4.2 Sort these cards in three piles:

Resistant to change	Depends on the context	Open to change

      4.3 Discuss with your neighbor the cards in each pile
      4.4 Discuss within your group how this exercise has helped you understand what the cognitive anthropologists describe as a "cultural models approach"

1. People should use the land to meet their livelihood needs as long as it does not adversely affect the environment. (C1)

2. We should conserve lands that most people would agree are beautiful, uplifting, or unique. (C1)

3. It is important to conserve lands for recreation. (C1)

4. Conserving land helps to maintain healthy ecosystems. (C1)

5. Land conservation helps to preserve rural identity and character. (C1)

6. Land conservation helps to sustain native plants and local wildlife. (C1)

7. Land conservation provides environmental benefits such as clean air and water. (C1)

8. Land conservation can preserve a landowner's equity and open spaces for environmental purposes. (C1)

9. Development should occur in areas designated for growth. (C1)

10. Local governments are integral to the success of land conservation efforts. (C1)

11. Land conservation helps preserve the continuity of local communities. (C1)

12. Land conservation is important to maintain quality of life. (C1)

14. Land conservation can stem unwanted growth. (C1)

15. Land conservation is about using resources wisely so that they will be available to meet the varying future needs of diverse landowners & communities. (C1)

19. Land conservation should preserve working lands (i.e., lands used to produce grain, livestock, timber, etc.) & open spaces. (C1)

20. Land conservation helps preserve a "sense of place." (C1)

24. It is a moral imperative to conserve land. (C1)

28. Land conservation efforts should prioritize land that is threatened by development. (C1)

PRINT ON ROSE PAPER

47. Land is an economic resource, like other financial assets, that can be used to meet the short- and long-term financial needs of its owners.(C2)

13. The purpose of conserving some lands is to provide income from food, fiber, and timber production.(C2)

26. Land conservation efforts should prioritize activities that help people make a living off of the land. (C2)

32. More land could be conserved if land conservation programs did not require land to be preserved in perpetuity. (C2)

45. It is unfair to take away a landowner's development rights without adequate compensation.(C2)

17. Land is a source of income in times of family crisis. (C2)

31. If land conservation efforts are to be successful, voluntary approaches should be pursued over regulatory ones. (C2)

33. The purpose of land conservation is to maintain the land's ability to provide a secure livelihood for communities now and in the future. (C2)

38. The profitable production of natural resources (food, fiber, timber) is the best way to conserve land. (C2)

39. Natural resource producers of food, fiber, and timber are the best land conservationists. (C2)

41. Mother Nature is pretty tough and if we let her alone, she will come back even after disturbances such as clear cutting, over grazing, or hurricanes. (C2)

44. More land would be preserved through profitable farming than through the purchase and donation of land conservation easements. (C2)

PRINT ON AMBER/YELLOW PAPER

29. Conservation is managing land for its highest and best use and that can change according to economic/social needs.(C3)

30. Wise use of land requires us to balance human needs and nature's needs. (C3)

18. Land is a resource to allow communities to grow to meet economic and housing needs. (C3)

23. Successful land conservation efforts cannot be accomplished unless all interested stakeholder groups are able to play an active role and participate in the decision (C3)

34. Development can be a net positive for the environment, if planning is adequate and appropriate technologies are used. (C3)

21. Land conservation could be integrated into growth and development if political, social, and economic systems worked the way they were supposed to. (C3)

22. Successful land conservation efforts start with building trust and good working relationships among stakeholder groups. (C3)

25. Land conservation should be integrated into growth and development. (C3)

27. Land conservation efforts should prioritize activities that conserve ecologically unique or special areas. (+C1 | -C2)	16. Some land needs to be conserved where nature can be allowed to flourish with little or no contact from humans. (+C1 | -C2)
35. Conservation at all costs is unreasonable. Some costs cannot be tolerated. (-C1 | +C2 | +C3)	36. Humans are the dominant species and meeting our needs should be a priority.(-C1 | +C2)
40. Land is finite and damage to it can be irreversible, therefore we must protect it from over-use and abuse. (+C1 | -C2)	42. We do not have the right to negatively impact other species. (+C1 | -C2)
43. Preserving environ- mental resources is more important than preserving working lands (i.e., lands used to produce grain, livestock, timber, etc.).(+C1 | -C2)	46. Land use decisions should be primarily governed by landowners (-C1 | +C2).
48. Land conservation limits land values.(-C1 | +C2)	49. Land conservation may limit a landowner's ability to use his/her land in a way that is necessary to meet his/her short- and long-term needs. (-C1 | +C2)

AGREE

DISAGREE

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What color is my lens? *"lenses both filter and focus the light"*

C1. Green - "nature first"

Land conservation is important and a moral imperative because it maintains the quality of life (in terms of clean air and water, continuity in local communities, landowner equity, open spaces, a sense of place, rural identity, native species in healthy ecosystems) by protecting esthetically valuable sites from irreversible damage.

C3. Amber - "balance of nature and people"

A balance of humans' and nature's needs should guide land conservation such that it is integrated into community growth, by using adequate planning and appropriate technology to allow communities to meet economic and housing needs through active inclusion of all interested stakeholder groups in the decision making process.

C2. Rosy - "people first"

Land conservation is best accomplished through voluntary actions by landowners who are engaged in profitable production of natural resources (food, fiber, timber), thereby protecting economic assets for their families and communities, now and in the future.

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What if I talk with someone wearing a different color lens?   *"flash points"*

This is one "flash point" statement where we are likely to disagree:

What would be the green perspective on this "flash point" statement?

What would be the amber perspective on this "flash point" statement?

What would be the rosy perspective on this "flash point" statement?

Practicing resiliency, how might I agree to disagree with this person?