The International Hydrological Programme IHP-UNESCO is pleased to announce the creation of its...
El Programa Hidrologico Internacional « PHI-UNESCO » anuncia la creacion de su red global sobre la antropologia del agua: el « netwa »
Global Network of Water Anthropology for Local Action
Mexico, 16-22 March 2006
4th WORLD WATER FORUM

Empowering local communities through a better understanding of the cultural dimension of water through the internet-based Network of Water Anthropology (IHP-NETWA)

Partner institutions:
- UNESCO Montevideo Office, Uruguay
- National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, and the Japan Consortium for Areas Studies, Japan
- Museum of Ethnomedicine “Scarpa”, Chair of Anthropology, University of Genoa, Italy – European Union
NETWA? a two-way of communication aimed at empowering local communities, a global link for sharing information, and stimulating communication between water users and water professionals.
The IHP network of water anthropology – "NETWA" – can help to

- Collect resources related to water, including water engineering and policy in order to reach the Millennium Goals
- Promote IHP’s paradigm shift toward the integration of the cultural dimension of water, as well as UNESCO’s policy in education, human rights, ethics and governance
- Encourage interaction between communities and water professionals: hydrologists, geologists, engineers, policy-makers...
Anthropology?

its comprehensive understanding of human essential needs (tangible and intangible) based on participant observation over long periods of time in the field can help humanize modern technology and harmonize modern engineering with the cultural dimension of water
Netwa addresses the special needs of the least developed countries. It recognises that traditions, wisdom and ethical values based on ancestral respect of Nature and inter-generational solidarity can also inspire industrialized countries.
Decision-making for the practical applications of water development programmes requires a deep awareness of the cultural, technological and human resources of each area.

Hydrological regions usually coincide with ancient cultural areas to eventually constitute what is referred to as a "bioregion" or an "ecoregion": a "life-place" where living and cultural processes are interdependent and interactive…
NETWA proposes to integrate the complex interaction between:

- Hydrology and biodiversity
- Linguistic and cultural diversity

"The map is not the territory"
- Korzybski
An example: Subsaharan Africa

Water & biodiversity

Linguistic & cultural diversity
"Culture" involves

- the social and spiritual dimensions of human life;
- the learned patterns of behaviour, thought and values;
- in short, the way of life transmitted from generation to generation and shared by the members of a community.

"Culture" includes

knowledge, technology, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs or habits acquired by each human being as a member of society.
Cultural diversity is a factor of development

Intercultural dialogue can help water professionals meet local needs more easily, find more adequate solutions and thus improve the local quality of life.

Traditional cosmologies enable humans to feel a part of the universe.
Since prehistory:

- civilizations emerged alongside of water
- water is related to a healthy and wealthy living
- belief in the sacredness of water means reverence for Life.
The NETWA website of the International Hydrological Programme – UNESCO is a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence, and to encourage the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.

Stimulate gender equity!
From theory to the living reality: sharing knowledge!

The network of water anthropology of the International Water Programme – UNESCO

- allows water professionals to study indigenous technologies from simple material lifestyles to extensive complex urban/rural systems such as the Aztec and Egyptian irrigation systems;
- helps to bring modern scientific knowledge into harmony with the capabilities and hopes of local communities;
- integrates traditional technologies and ecological knowledge with the tribal/community decision-making process;
- helps adapting, adopting and updating indigenous technologies in the light of contemporary science without disturbing the social fabric or the cultural and spiritual values of communities...

*Indigenous peoples have developed social ties that allow them to adjust according to the seasonal availability of resources.*
integrates both the analytic and the synthetic methods
stimulates the systems approach
ranges from ancient and traditional technologies to the application of spatial and spectral technologies for communities planning of their cultural and natural resources
includes the community decision-making process
Macro/micro approaches

IHP-NETWA is organized region by region in 9 basic modules:

- Basic anthropological methods, including an educational glossary;
- Hydrological and cultural areas;
- International conventions and documents on cultural diversity;
- Water and cosmology;
- Gender issues;
- Traditional and appropriate technologies;
- Recommendations for water professionals;
- General and regional bibliographies;
- Directory, news and contacts.

Indigenous Declaration on Water
The International Hydrological Programme / IHP is UNESCO's intergovernmental scientific co-operative programme in water resources – a vector through which Member States can upgrade their knowledge of the water cycle and thereby increase their capacity to better manage water resources.

IHP-NETWA takes fully into account the social challenges and interactions and develops appropriate approaches for sound water management.

Electronic networks involve people from every possible level, allowing them to quickly select the information they need in a cross-disciplinary manner.

The exchange of such information stimulates the way management is conceived to integrate communities' participation.
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