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One Community's Orientation to Resiliency

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Resiliency describes the quality to survive extreme conditions yet retain the ability to find a way back to expressing the defining quality of being and the essence of purpose.

Introduction

The Chunka Manitou Tanka Luta (Red Wolf Band of Indigenous People, RWB) is an organic assembly of indigenous and people of color in the greater Albuquerque area of New Mexico. Our orientation is centered on ceremonial practices. As a community, we have mutually agreed to emulate traditional indigenous society. This orientation is based on oral tradition, spiritual teaching and traditional leaders. The RWB's collective leadership is bringing into and is sharing with the Te'os'piye (extended family) stories, ceremonies, songs, rituals, indigenous cosmology, epistemology and ontology.

Key ideas in Dr. Gross' paper

Although I cannot state all the key ideas in Dr. Gross' paper, I believe that some of the main ideas are the following

1. Ability to absorb new voice and ideas
2. No longer based on a monolithic –one size fits all–
3. Environmental protection, economic growth and social equity
4. Systematic loss of flexibility
5. Help communities develop capabilities to respond to unanticipated changes

Given these realities, it is necessary to develop the RWB's orientation to community development, growth and sustainability.

Is sustainability compatible with resilience?

Dr. Gross poses the above question for the discussants. As an initial response, resiliency works in our community only after we have addressed our ability to be sustainable.

Primarily, the RWB returns to its core, the *sacred fire*. The RWB maintains and practices indigenous ceremonies and does its best to translate our current situation and the modern context we live in into an indigenous traditional governance of society. As a result, the RWB sees sustainability as an essential and supporting position in order for any community to become resilient.

For example, some traditional stories tell us that when tribes moved from a hunting, and wintering area to another, each location/place was based on the position of a star constellation. In addition, these hunting and wintering areas were completely sustainable i.e. each location had pure water, wood for heating, fires, shelter, food, medicinal plants, recreational and ceremonial areas to name a few. Nonetheless, this indicates to me that tribes were already applying the Precautionary Principle before there was a need to do so.

Orientation for the education of urban communities

In order to understand how the RWB developed its ideas of sustainability to resiliency, we have incorporated Dr. Greg Cajete's ideas of an orientation for the education of American Indian Students in modern day school and combine that orientation with my own conception of *Eight Components of Survive-ability to Sustain-ability*. With these orientations, we can address several key ideas stated above. Additionally, this will give this short paper some direction. Moreover, it will also demonstrate how I, as a stakeholder in my community, have applied the "lessons learned" p. 2.

According to Dr. Cajete there is a distinct difference between "being prepared and preparing for something." The Red Wolf is not prepared for a disaster of any great magnitude, such as a nuclear war; however, we are preparing to survive a collapse of the interdependency created by globalization.

Seven orientations

1. Preparing
2. Asking
3. Seeking
4. Making
5. Understanding
6. Sharing
7. Celebrating

As noted, these orientations are constantly in a state of adaptation to a "loss of flexibility and unanticipated changes."

Eight components of survive-ability to sustain-ability

In addition to the RWB’S orientation to globalization, and in a direct response to the economic downturn, my contribution is the Eight Components of Survive-ability to Sustain-ability. I believe all urban communities need a gyroscope/directional guide to sustainability in order to conceptualize a particular direction needed or anticipated. The eight components move from the simple form to the complex form in order to adapt to changes in our society.

Eight components

<u>Simple</u>	<u>Complex</u>
1. Health	Medicine
2. Talk	Communication
3. Home	Location/Place
4. Protection	Security
5. Food	Agriculture
6. Family	Te’os’piye/Extended Family
7. Natural energy	Alternative energy
8. Movement	Transportation

Resiliency without sustainability

If we accept the idea that resiliency is “a quality to survive extreme conditions yet retain the ability to find a way back to expressing the defining quality,” what happens when a community does not have a fundamental core and defining quality to return to? I believe that the community will reflect a non-sustainable and destructive quality. However, a sustainable community as its defining quality will lead to a resilient community that includes all its members, and “adapt to changing agendas” p.11.