



IUCN SSC
Conservation Breeding Specialist Group
Reintroduction Specialist Group
CBSG Annual Meeting has RSG theme
Taipei , Taiwan - 2004



You would think that members of CBSG and RSG would get together very often and discuss problems and issues of mutual interest. Zoos -- at least until relatively recently -- have employed the model or theory of reintroduction of captive wild animals back to their natural habitat as one of their major conservation tools and contributions.

In recent years, this has definitely changed ...at least in western countries. Instead of getting involved in questionable or downright risky reintroduction or release projects, or even of undertaking a captive breeding programme of a species whose chance of reintroduction is shaky, zoos have instead elected to put an ever growing percentage of their funds, energy and staff time into field conservation projects of other types, such as provision of vehicles, tracking equipment, boots, raincoats, etc. for forest agencies in countries with unfavourable currency rates. The cost of a jeep anywhere can be very high but in some countries, it compares with what it would cost to erect a skyscraper in another country. Other field conservation projects that are funded by western zoos are field studies, education, various works with local people to minimise their impact on wildlife while improving their standard of living, research of various kinds, etc. The new World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy stresses the ways that zoos can contribute to conservation other than breeding for reintroduction in its theme "integrated conservation".

Yet reintroduction of wild animals into natural habitats -- in all its forms, supplementation, head-starting, benign introduction translocation, reintroduction -- is still a valid, and sometimes the ONLY conservation solution for extinction. While it is ineluctably true that it would be far better to save the species by saving habitat, and thus prevent the decline of wild populations before they become "small populations", the fact of the matter is that "we" -- meaning the whole conservation community throughout the world -- often have no control at all over the forces which result in habitat reduction, population decline and extinction. Often it happens before we even know there is a problem. And, just as often, it happens in full view - we know and know for a long time, yet simply can't do anything.

A basic concept of biodiversity conservation is that every species and subspecies is intrinsically of inestimable value, either potentially or actually. Saving species, then, is yet a major objective of conservation. The various aspects of reintroduction can sometimes achieve this.

How much do zoos contribute to reintroduction then -- in terms of animals which actually go back to the wild ? Where do the animals in reintroduction projects come from ? These are some of the topics which came up in the first meeting of CBSG and RSG together. What do zoos need to do to contribute more and how can CBSG help them ?

Does reintroduction really work ? How do we know ? Do people follow the Guidelines of the RSG? Why and why not ? How can they be made to do so, if they don't ? The answers to these questions, more questions, and potential solutions for some problems and unwanted situations are all in this issue.

Sally Walker & Sanjay Molur
Representing CBSG in South Asia & RSG in South & East Asia

CBSG Core Values : Innovation, Social Responsibility and Integrity

Linda Malek is a marketing expert who has offered her time and energy to work towards a meaningful, accurate and effective marketing strategy or "branding" scheme for CBSG. CBSG is a unique organisation which has had an enormous positive impact on conservation institutions all over the world, from a small zoo in a tropical country to the United States Forestry Service in-service Training model.

Yet, CBSG has, so far, defied description or "encapsulation". There are many terms and phrases that are true of CBSG, and are liked by members, but so far none of them have been "it" as far as appealing to the general public, or even the general conservation community, to tell precisely what CBSG is and does.

Linda happened to be in Taipei, Taiwan just before the CBSG meeting and agreed to stay a few days and observe the meeting sessions, interview some of the members and other attendees in the conservation community. There was also a special meeting with Linda and members of the Steering Committee and Strategic Associates in which an attempt was made to identify the "core values" of CBSG.

In the Core Values meeting, Linda related the concepts she had identified in her observations, reading and interviews. She has tried to encapsulate the driving force of CBSG in three words : Innovation, Social Responsibility and Integrity. CBSG has sent this around to the "inner circle" to vet and comment.

Although this is undoubtedly an "in house" document at this point, I want to use it to try and better explain CBSG to our readers in South Asia. In another organisation I would be censured or tossed out for this, but I know that CBSG will find a positive value on this transgression and work from there, instead of jumping on me. This peculiar behaviour is indebted to CBSG's "core values" which also include tolerance and transparency. So here is what Linda wrote about her CBSG experience so far. S. Walker, Convenor, CBSG, South Asia

CBSG Journey #1: From Core Values to Mission

I have spent time since my return from Taipei allowing much of the information acquired in the lunch *ad-hoc* focus group and the Core Values session to wash over me. While these sessions were a singularly unique opportunity for me to 'touch and feel' the organization in a way that smaller or individual meetings could never have accomplished, I am a novice in my level of understanding of the organization and its workings, so my notes and thoughts are a reflection from my rather disparate corporate background—and from 30,000 feet....

My first attempt to gain better clarity was to begin to further articulate what the collective group seemed to pull out of the exercise as three preliminary core value concepts: Tools, Processes, Links. The more I tried to drill down and really articulate those values, the more I discovered that I just could not make those three concepts work as benefit-oriented core values. So here, in no particular order, are some of the thoughts that went into my mental exercise.

Core values in general:

Technically speaking there are two types of 'values' implied within value, vision and mission statements. The operational difference is between what is considered by strategists to be "true" or actual values and "preferred" or stated values. True values reflect actions and non-negotiable feelings about the organization, as communicated by those stakeholders within the inner circle of the organization. Preferred values reflect visible and tangible organizational activities as viewed by outside folks. One of

the learnings that I had in sitting in on those discussions was the sense of absolute alignment within your organization: What you do and how you do it within the framework of your organization is conceptually the same is what you do and how you do in the field. Needless to say, I needed to see this alignment reflected in all the articulated core values before I was satisfied with this first draft.

Tools vs. processes:

In mentally drilling down the concepts associated with each of the initial value words, I simply could not logically disengage the two as separate values. As I understand the mechanics of your organization and the services you perform, tools and processes do not function mutually exclusively, but rather in an integrated, tandem manner. Therefore, it became clear that the two must live together, under what I am terming the umbrella of 'innovation'. I chose the term innovation, because it represents a dynamic process and such, the concept speaks to the issue of forward-motion, evolution and change. And I believe it also embraces Sally's notion that CBSG as an organization is stochastic—random, not pre-determined, and thus always moving and changing.

Links and stakeholder inclusion:

The more I examined the process of stakeholder inclusion and linkage, the more they started looking and feeling like social responsibility—in the most global definition of the word 'social'.

Integrity:

What I was not finding at all reflected in the three original concepts was the integrity piece—which I have now included as a separate core concept. From my limited understanding of your organization, I believe this concept to be a true non-negotiable issue within the organization, and as such needed due diligence and appropriately primary presentation.

Bottom line? The pay-off of these core values is **empowerment**. But we will get more into that in the Vision and Mission.

Core Values—Draft #1:

Innovation

- Pioneering technology (science-based)
- Tools
- Processes
- Human resources, personal involvement
- Effective
- Dynamic, passionate

Social Responsibility

- Stakeholder inclusion
- Collaboration
- Partnerships
- Linking (wild-zoo)
- Inspiration
- Achievement
- Culturally sensitive

Integrity

- Respect
- Humanistic
- Openness
- Ethical and moral
- Credibility

Sally's additions

- Transparency
- Tolerance
- Flexibility

**Where do they go ?
Are they the same
as openness and
humanistic ? I think
not quite. What do
you think ?**