

For him the scientist is living in another world where only theories count, and does not know anything about real life. Thus everything that comes from the scientists hands is just theoretical nonsense.

It is not difficult to imagine how conservation recommendations coming from scientists alone, as has often been the case in conservation, will be received by the man on the ground, including politicians. "Scepticism" in this context is a mild word (!) and often, such recommendations, no matter how valid they may be, die a silent death due to lack of understanding from the other side. And the same goes for arguments against the scientific recommendations. They are ignored by the scientists with the argument: "They don't understand what this is all about", and the result is that nothing happens.

The only way to overcome this paradox is to make all parties, all the stakeholders, part of the process and thus also part of the final recommendations, provided everyone is heard during the process, and that you go for consensus and no one is allowed to dominate the process. In practice this means that you need to have hunters, farmers and conservationists around the same table together with the relevant decision makers when planning for conservation. That is by far not an easy task, but CBSG does it, and it works very well! By being part of the decision making process you get a much better understanding of the other side, and you feel responsible for the final outcome of the discussions since you have been involved in the development of those decisions. So, the aim for full stakeholder participation has become a natural element in CBSG workshops since many years.

Stakeholder participation also means access to a much bigger group of people. And that brings me to another

important key factor in the CBSG concept, namely the use of networks. CBSG has a global network of people dedicated to the same philosophy and working with the same scientific tools, and these networks again make use of their own local networks with a profound knowledge of the local culture, local systems and not least local languages. CBSG thus reaches far into the local communities all over the world, and we all know how important that is when talking about conservation. Nobody can do conservation alone. But together we can achieve a lot, and by using the local networks CBSG avoids falling into the cultural pitfalls that are so dangerous for global organisations. Moreover it is recognised that different regions have different strengths, and instead of considering them barriers for a global approach these differences are highly respected by CBSG and considered valuable factors that we all can learn from.

There is of course much more to it, but I am sure you will experience at least some of these key factors I have described during the next few days. I will not end this talk without mentioning the significant importance of good personal relationships and humour in all this work. Good humour can help you through many cramped situations, and good friendships will help you find a way forward if you for some reason feel you have ended in a blind alley with no way out – a feeling you easily can get when working with conservation matters. CBSG networks are very closely woven, and both factors – humour and relationships - play an important role in the daily work – thanks to a bunch of visionary people that took a holistic view on conservation, including the human factor, instead of relying on the traditional narrow approach.

THANK YOU all for listening, and enjoy the next couple of days – and remember: together we do make a difference!

Ulrie Seal Award for Innovation - Frances Westley's remarks

This is the last of our "first person" selections of a better interpretation of CBSG to ZOOS' PRINT readers. Frances Westley and her professional colleague, Harry Vredenburg, were brought into CBSG unceremoniously by Ulrie Seal by over-riding a decision by the CBSG Steering Committee to use another professional team to achieve some goal or other. Ulrie met Frances and Harry, declared them "magic people" and brought them on board, first to lead the first of CBSG's famous Strategic Futures Search workshops and later for many other things. Since then Frances, especially, has been a regular at any important CBSG decision-making meeting. Frances has had an enormous impact on CBSG in identifying and encouraging innovation and innovators, reinforcing freshness of approach, and in steering CBSG into new directions. Her remarks on CBSG more or less complete a picture that we wanted to present to you, which might go some way toward explaining why Zoo Outreach Organisation is so very enamoured with CBSG. In the very early days of ZOO I used to hear of CBSG and Ulrie Seal through my association with ISIS, with Nate Fleisness and with Tom Foose, who was CBSG Programme Officer. What I was trying to do in India with Indian zoos seemed to be very compatible with what CBSG was trying to do with the world, and when ZOO met CBSG, it was love and respect at first

sight. Since then CBSG has contributed immensely to ZOO, so anyone who has contributed to CBSG has contributed to ZOO. ZOO, then, is indebted to Frances and congratulates her on being the first female to be awarded the Ulrie Seal Award for Innovation. Eds.

Thank you very much. I'd like to use this moment in the limelight to talk a little bit about what makes CBSG such an innovative organization. For me it is one of its most precious qualities...but it isn't an easy one to understand or grasp. And while it is immensely gratifying to be recognized with such an award, I actually think that individual initiatives are only a small part of the kind of innovation CBSG is known for. Like so many of us working for CBSG, I have always felt that I was part of a larger stream of energy, a stream of energy directed, against all odds at saving the species and spaces we love. And like so many others I was drawn into that stream by Ulrie Seal.

Now Ulrie was an innovator and he fostered innovation in everything he did: of that much I am sure.. But CBSGs capacity to innovate lay not just with Ulrie but with a kind of interaction which he encouraged and which seemed to release enormous energies for change in those that participated in them and continue to radically alter the

relationship between science and conservation action. And what was the nature of the interactions he encouraged? Innovation has been widely studied and some of the most illuminating literature I have read compares innovation processes to those of an art form – specifically that of improvisational theatre. Improvisation is the art of creating drama in real time, in a group, with no script, with nothing more than a theme, a sense of ultimate direction and of course great skill. It isn't easy to create something out of nothing. But there are guidelines about how to do it. And those who have studied innovation processes in many contexts have argued that the guidelines for improvisors and of innovators are very similar. Let me share a few of these.

First, improvisers are taught to see the world in terms of abundance – which is odd because they work without costumes, props, sets or make-up – only with each other. But they believe that everything they need to create a story lies in that interaction. The call it "eating what is on your plate". Now conservation organizations are notoriously short of some kinds of resources...money for example. But Ulie had an amazing capacity to see richness in the people he met and knew how to mine it. He could see potential where people themselves couldn't see it and he knew how to connect that to possibility. The CBSG processes have come to embody this capacity...they encourage everyone to participate and to see others as an enormous resource. This provides them with a wealth of human energy & ideas.

Secondly, improvisers are taught not to say "no". Don't refuse the gift: negation stops action, is their second maxim.. I can't recall how many times I heard Ulie bark out "Go for It" when someone would propose to him an idea for a direction. He believed that people needed to keep experimenting and that they would only do that where their energy was engaged. He risked of course the possibility that their initiatives would not fit neatly into CBSG products and processes, but he saw a far greater risk in not using the energy where he found it.

This makes for messy, emergent processes. It is and was difficult to plan when you are focused on what each person has to offer. New people and new elements keep changing the mix. Yet this was consistent with a third principle of innovation, focusing on coordination of the here and now and not being distracted by memories and anticipation. I remember Ulie listening attentively to complaints about there not being enough information at a workshop and responding "Well that's ancient history; what are we going to do about this now". He never allowed lack of preparation get in his way...or anyone else's way...again an element of improvisation and also of innovation -- & surprise.

Lastly innovation, like improvisation requires great attentiveness to what is happening around you, to people and their ideas and concerns, combined with a confidence that things will move forward. Improvisers must be intense listeners and Ulie, as Phil pointed out in the opening plenary, was one of the best. And they are listening simultaneously to what is offered in the present and to those ideas or offerings that can move things forward. This requires great patience, an attention to process over outcome in the present and a faith and confidence that such attention will bear fruit. And this quality too is now built into the processes that CBSG has developed...they are inclusive, unfolding and

sometimes messy, but as Bengt said, great productivity comes from the chaos...and great innovation.

So, in summary...the improvisor's creed, and that of the innovator is as follows

- Eat what is on your plate – what you need is there in abundance
- Never negate an initiative – build on it
- Focus on coordination here and now
- Be attentive and have confidence that things will move forward.

Of course, this creed is built in to CBSG's philosophy. Someone once said that to foster innovation is to be a farmer and "farmers don't grow crops; they create the conditions for crops to grow" Inventions in conservations are like the plants that grow...they are created by individuals....individuals experimenting in the field in the context of immediate conservation challenges. Ulie was responsible for some of the inventions, so were many others including Nate Fleisness, Bob Lacy, Onnie Byers, Phil Miller, and many many other network participants, vets and curators, field researchers and managers. But mostly CBSG in the past has acted like the farmer of such plants, developing a culture and a context that nurture inventions everywhere...and allow them to grow into innovations. And despite Ulie's departure, these capacities for cultivation are alive and well. In Phil's presentation yesterday, he explored the ways in which the PHVA process is evolving, in response to the needs of the individuals who participate in those processes. Bob Lacy described how CBSG is pushing the forefront of knowledge management by finding ways to integrate the knowledge in multiple disciplines...again, gathering up new knowledge and finding ways to connect it to risk assessment and conservation action. The insistence on openness and participation that Bengt, Phil and Bob mentioned are not just a good philosophy, it is a necessary pre-condition for maintaining a context for innovation. My own passion at the moment is linked to the possibilities of innovation in training...of designing new teaching tools and programs which will capture the best innovations which are happening throughout the CBSG network and allow these innovations to be disseminated across the network as widely as possible and as quickly as possible. Most recently, I spent three chaotic and productive days working with Bob and Phil and Chris Clark and Jamie Copsy from Durrell...brainstorming about what shape a new generation of training programs for conservation agents should look like. We had rich material to work with. At the end of those few days, we all felt excited and hopeful and satisfied. But here is the key. It was impossible to tell who among us had innovated...who had created the innovation. It was like an improvisation...something good had been created out of our interactions with each other, our ability to build on each others ideas, to be attentive, to be patient with chaos, to make good use of each others gifts. That's innovation and that has characterized countless experiences I have had with multiple groups within CBSG over the past 15 years. One might almost say it was the CBSG way.

So while I am very very honoured for this award, I say, without modesty that to the extent that I have contributed to innovation in conservation, I couldn't have done it without you. One doesn't innovate alone. That is the secret Ulie knew....that is the secret of CBSG.