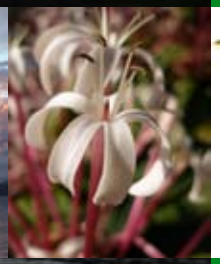
econesian

Guiding Principles


Areas of opportunity for marriages between indigenous and traditional knowledge, culture and wisdom with the best cutting edge scientific knowledge as a foundation for cultural, economic and environmental sustainability of our island and ocean countries in the face of global change.

BASIC UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

1. That much of time-depth indigenous and traditional knowledge and island and ocean culture is under serious threat as the last remaining members of the generation that had this knowledge pass away, or when the current generation, no longer has the interest or motivation to learn this knowledge, due to the changing reward systems of a rapidly urbanizing and globalizing world. This knowledge, ways of thinking and value systems, that have been developed and passed down over millennia are, perhaps, now much more threatened than many of the ecosystems, plants and animals that we are trying to protect, and that if this knowledge and these cultural values are not preserved, recorded, learned, our ability to build resilience against negative global change will be seriously undermined.

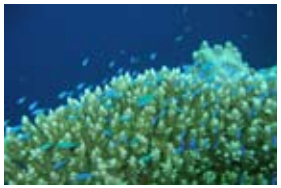
2. Although this knowledge has been a foundation for sustainability to our island and ocean cultures for millennia, changing demographic, economic, social, political, technological and environmental realities of today clearly indicate that, for sustainability in today's rapidly changing world, this knowledge alone will not suffice. It must be married with the very best emerging modern natural and social scientific knowledge about environmental, economic and social sustainability AND unsustainability and done so some by working with local communities who will, in most cases, need to be the implementers, monitors and main beneficiaries of such marriages . If we are to realize the vision of sustainability in a rapidly modernizing and highly threatened world, we must learn from the best and worst practices and science, both indigenous and modern, and marry these with parallel traditional knowledge to achieve a synthesis of the best of both worlds – This is the vision of the Econesian Society and now the Honour Fiji Journey!

1. Conservation, enrichment and sustainable use of forest resources

On land, the richest ecosystems and habitats are forests. Forests, including mountain, lowland, coastal and mangrove forests provide countless products, are the habitats for the widest range of plants, birds, bats, insects and countless other plants and animals and provide many other environmental services that our islands cannot do without, such as the protection of our soils and coastlines, improving soils fertility, providing shade, etc. They are the basis for the rich “wild harvest” of countless wild food and other products that cannot be replaced with overseas substitutes, even if we had the money to do so.

2. Watershed, water and catchment management

Sufficient safe and healthy water is the most essential of all resources for islands. Without enough Water island life will not be sustainable in the long run. There are both traditional and modern water resource management systems that can promote sustainability and equity of water use.



3. Conservation and sustainable use of marine resources

Our marine environment is seriously threatened with many species disappearing from, or becoming ecologically extinct, on our reefs and in our lagoons, bays and oceans. With the best traditional knowledge of what our reefs and marine environments used to be like, coupled with the most up-to-date knowledge on these resources and their management, marine resources offer some of the greatest opportunities for sustainable harvest and management as a basis for island and ocean life.

4. Adaptation to climate and environmental change and extreme events.

Pacific peoples have always had to deal with extreme climatic and oceanographic events and other natural disasters. However, with increased population, widespread environmental degradation and human induced climate change and ocean acidification, addressing and adapting to such extreme events with require a marriage of traditional and modern options.

5.Soilconservation,fertilitymaintenance, fallow systems and fire management

The conservation and sustainable use of our limited and fragile island soils is central to the sustainability of all of or interlinked island, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

6. Conservation, enrichment and sustainable use of traditional polycultural semi-subsistence food and agricultural (agroforestry) systems

This is perhaps the most important foundation for food and productive security, the improvement of food and nutrition-related health, and providing insurance and resilience against natural disasters, climate and environmental change, invasive species and economic downturns.

7. Medicinal plants and traditional health practices

The health and conservation status of the wide range of medicinal plants would be one of the best indicators of the preservation of traditional knowledge and the maintenance of our cultural and horticultural traditions and of engagement with women, who are generally the main repositories and richest sources of traditional medicinal knowledge. There is great scope for the synthesis of traditional folk and modern medicinal technology and practice.

8. Traditional handicraft, art and construction

(e.g., house and boat building, fencing, woodcarving, body ornamentation, etc) .

Central to promoting resilience and self-reliance is the maintenance of traditional handicraft, artistic and constructions systems, employing skills and materials that are locally available to minimize dependency on external economic, cultural and educational systems beyond the control of local communities and governments.

9. Management of invasive alien organism (IAS) and diseases

With globalization and the transportation revolution, one of the most serious emerging obstacles to sustainable island life are IAS. Most of the extinctions of plants and animals, the loss of ancient plant cultivars and animal breeds and the loss of human lives due to disease epidemics have historically been due to mainly to invasive plants, animals and micro-organism. Both traditional polycultural and modern solutions must be employed to deal with the threat of IAS

11. Systems for waste management and environmental restoration.

With rapid urbanization, industrialization and the development of mining and other large extractive enterprises and developments, including luxury tourism elite residential development, pollution, waste management and habitat degradation are among the greatest challenges to the health of both humans and their island, freshwater and marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Marriages of traditional and modern systems of reducing, reusing and recycling waste and restoring polluted and degraded ecosystems can help to address this situation

10. Cultural sustainability, spirituality, aesthetics, social cohesion, education and governance

Social and cultural breakdown and disorientation, corruption, crime (blue- and white- and green-collar crime), conflict (e.g., even war), and indebtedness seriously undermine any attempts to promote conservation and sustainability and, as been shown in the success of the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas Network (FLMMA), adaptive management using a synthesis of traditional and modern management and governance offer, perhaps, the greatest prospects for sustainability.

Charting Our Course Forward

The success of capitalizing on all of these foundation "synthesis priority areas for action" to promote sustainable island life and cultures will depend on the recognition, rebirth and re-embracement of the indigenous and traditional knowledge and cultures that underpinned cultural and productive sustainability in the past and marrying this with the most cutting edge scientific knowledge about new and intensifying obstacles to sustainability and new and emerging models that encourage conservation and sustainability in the face of climate, environmental, social and economic change and breakdown never before experience both globally, in Fiji and the Pacific Islands.

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