

meridianews

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Please direct inquiries or comments to Shawn Walker at shawnwalker@merid.org.

To learn more about the work we do and how we can add value to your organization, please visit the Meridian website, www.merid.org.

Meridian's Washington, DC, office is moving in January 2005 to a new downtown location:

**1920 L Street, NW, Ste. 500
Washington, DC 20036**

Our phone numbers will not change.

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Dear Colleague,

Welcome to *Meridianews*, Meridian Institute's online newsletter. We appreciate the opportunity to share our work with you on a range of public policy issues.

We have long observed that collaborative problem-solving processes—whether at the local, regional, national, or international level—create long-term spillover effects. In our experience, participants readily build upon the relationships they develop and the collaborative problem-solving skills they acquire in one process and apply them to new, emerging challenges.

At the recent annual conference of the Association for Conflict Resolution (www.acrnet.org), we collaborated with other colleagues on a panel session that explored whether involvement in collaborative problem-solving processes can serve as a catalyst for building stronger communities. The panelists shared a variety of experiences, including: building collaborative capacity in community-based watersheds in New Mexico; working with Israeli and Palestinian stakeholders to resolve trans-boundary water issues; and examining how a psychological framework for adapting to change might be applied to conflicts over natural resources.

Although the spillover effects of collaborative processes can be difficult to document, the panel agreed that we as facilitators provide participants with a model of effective collaborative practice and a set of tools that they can apply, and that collaborative processes offer opportunities to build relationships that often open doors to solving problems in other areas. The individual and organizational tools developed in collaborative processes are readily transferable and can be used in a number of different settings.

The spillover effects and lasting change created by collaborative processes do need to be better documented, so that the full impact of such processes can be understood. In the "*Project Updates*" section, we are taking one small step in this direction by reconnecting with old projects and partners to see how organizations and issues have advanced as the result of undertaking a collaborative process.

Best wishes for 2005!

The Meridian Team

In the Spotlight

Genetic Resources – Improving Access in Eastern and Central Africa

Genetic resources are the building blocks of life. The biodiversity in crop plants (e.g., rice and maize) can be developed to better resist pests and adapt to changing environmental conditions. The importance of genetic resources has been recognized and codified in the Convention on Biodiversity and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA). Developed and developing countries are now struggling to craft national policies to put these treaties into place and to establish mechanisms to conserve and use genetic resources to benefit their citizens.

Given the importance of this issue, Meridian facilitated a meeting to identify specific actions that can protect and enhance the ability of public-sector scientists in national and international agricultural institutions to access and exchange plant genetic material for use in crop improvement activities directed toward the poor. To ensure that participants could identify meaningful actions, the geographic scope of the discussions was focused on Eastern and Central Africa, specifically the Kenya Agriculture Research Institute (KARI) and the National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) in Uganda. The meeting was held at the Rockefeller Foundation's Bellagio Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy.

The scientific, practical, and legal complexities of improving access to genetic materials necessitated that we invite people from a variety of experiences and areas of expertise, including: Kenyan and Ugandan plant breeders, KARI and NARO senior management, African policymakers, such as representatives from the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), as well as international stakeholders representing donor agencies and international institutions, such as the United Nations University.

The meeting resulted in more than a dozen highly targeted and practical recommendations aimed at the national, regional, and international levels that will help to ensure continued access to the genetic materials needed by public-sector institutions in Kenya and Uganda. One of the most significant general conclusions from the meeting was that most restrictions of plant

genetic material flows in the region can be attributed to reluctance among plant breeders to share material under their control. Recognizing the important role that breeders play, the group recommended that a regional breeders' platform be established and strengthened. To address broad policy challenges, the group also recommended that NEPAD establish an African Working Group on Genetic Resources, which would concentrate initially on the material transfer negotiations under the ITPGRFA.

While the meeting was focused on two countries, participants believe the recommendations will be widely applicable and beneficial to numerous institutions throughout the world that are working on crop improvement for the benefit of poor people in developing countries.

The meeting report will be posted on the Meridian website in early 2005. For more information, contact Todd Barker at tbarker@merid.org.

Military Training and Endangered Species – Resolving Conflicting Land Uses

In partnership with the Osprey Group of Boulder, Colorado, and on behalf of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, Meridian is facilitating the Barry M. Goldwater Range Task Force. The Task Force was created by Congress to determine and assess various means of resolving the potential conflict between military training exercises and endangered species protection on the range. The Task Force consists of high-ranking military officials from the U.S. Department of Defense, the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Director of the Arizona Game & Fish Department, the Manager of the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, and representatives of regional environmental and wildlife organizations.



Photo: USFWS

The Barry M. Goldwater Range is located in an extremely arid portion of the Sonoran Desert along the Mexican border. It includes more than 2.7 million acres of restricted airspace and 1.7 million acres of land managed jointly by the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Air Force. The range, which was featured in the movie "Top Gun," is a training ground for more than 1,000 fighter pilots who each year complete 64,000

flights. The range is also home to three endangered or potentially endangered species: the Sonoran Pronghorn, the Lesser Long-Nosed Bat, and the Flat-Tailed Horned Lizard. For the pronghorn, the situation is especially dire; estimates for the U.S. population are as low as 20 to 40 animals. An additional challenge is the thousands of illegal immigrants that cross the range each year from Mexico, halting military training and impacting critical habitat.

The Task Force has begun to assess the effects of the training missions and explore legislative and administrative options for protecting the endangered species and addressing the border issues. The Task Force has also been asked to evaluate whether the task force model is an effective tool to resolve conflicts between military training objectives and the protection of endangered species on other U.S. military installations. The Task Force's consensus recommendations will be delivered to Congress in February 2005. For more information, contact Dennis Ellis at dellis@merid.org.

Pollution Prevention and Toxics – Tackling Complex Policy Issues

Meridian is working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (OPPT) to convene and facilitate the National Pollution Prevention and Toxics Advisory Committee (NPPTAC). The OPPT is responsible for the registration and management of more than 80,000 industrial chemicals under the Toxic Substances Control Act. It is also charged with carrying out the mandates of the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990, which calls for the EPA to reduce pollution at its source and integrate pollution prevention (P2) efforts across the agency. The NPPTAC is developing policy recommendations on the OPPT's wide range of chemical management programs.

We currently facilitate four NPPTAC work groups that are addressing a number of the OPPT's programmatic efforts and drafting recommendations for Committee review and deliberation. One group is developing policy recommendations on the OPPT's High Production Volume Challenge Program, a voluntary chemical right-to-know initiative that provides basic hazard data on chemicals produced or imported in excess of one million pounds per year. Another group is exploring the OPPT's P2 programs, including its Design for Environment Program, partnerships with industrial supply chains via the Green Suppliers Network, and efforts to integrate P2 across the EPA. Additional work groups are focused on

the OPPT's work with Tribes and broader policy issues. The NPPTAC was first convened in late 2003 and met quarterly throughout 2004. The Committee began to provide consensus recommendations to the OPPT in 2004. More information on the NPPTAC is available at www.epa.gov/oppt/npptac/ or from Heather Lair at hlair@merid.org.

Agriculture, Trade, and International Development – Using Issue Mapping to Understand Difficult Issues

Meridian recently initiated an issue mapping process with the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). We are conducting extensive interviews with targeted individuals to support a new GMF program area designed to strengthen transatlantic cooperation on trade issues and to enhance opportunities for economic development and poverty alleviation in developing countries. The issue mapping process will help the GMF to better understand the views of key players at the nexus of the agriculture, trade, and international development arenas and identify opportunities to make these generally uncoordinated national and international policy efforts more coherent and supportive of poverty alleviation. This analysis will help the GMF structure an interdisciplinary program that builds upon the collective wisdom of leaders in the three fields and creatively addresses the gaps that are impeding progress.

Issue mapping is a natural extension of the convening assessments (interviews, fact finding, research, etc.) that we conduct to determine whether an issue is "ripe" for a collaborative process and, if so, how to design a process in which participants can make progress on the issue. Issue mapping efforts are not tied to convening a specific process; rather, they provide strategic insights from a diverse set of stakeholders affected by the programs and policies of interest.

Other examples of our issue mapping work include:

- For the Rockefeller Foundation's Global Inclusion and Food Security Programs, we provided a detailed picture of the issues that need to be addressed globally and regionally to help people make decisions on the appropriate role of agricultural biotechnology in enhancing food security. The Foundation, based on the issue mapping, launched several global and Africa-focused dialogues on biosafety, liability and redress, and new approaches to intellectual property rights to enhance agricultural

research and food security programs for resource-poor farmers. An executive summary of the report can be viewed at

www.merid.org/MappingSummaryFinal001116.pdf.

- For the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), we helped the staff and Board of Directors better understand the global trends affecting CIMMYT's ability to develop and deliver sustainable crop technologies to resource-poor farmers. For more information on the outcome of this issue mapping, please see *CIMMYT Strategic Planning Process Continues to Drive Change* in the Project Updates section below, or visit www.merid.org/showproject.php?ProjectID=9207.0 for a project description.

Unlike traditional statistical surveying tools, issue mapping is dynamic. It probes key issues as they arise throughout the interview and analysis process. Its strength lies in the depth of substance and focus. The results help achieve an understanding of not just what people believe, but also why. Meridian's issue mapping service provides organizations with a roadmap to help them adapt and thrive in the face of uncertainty, conflict, and change. For more information, contact Molly Mayo at mmayo@merid.org.

Project Updates

As part of an effort to document how our work is making a difference, we have checked back with several organizations to see how they have matured and grown since the completion of our work together.

CIMMYT Strategic Planning Process Continues to Drive Change

Reflections from a CIMMYT staff member:

"From August 2002 to October 2003, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) engaged in the most extensive and participatory strategic planning process in its history.... Meridian staff helped design the overall planning exercise and keep it on track, and conducted the external stakeholder consultation process. Meridian also provided crucial facilitation of the two 'summit planning meetings' where all the background inputs were discussed, leading to the emergence of the strategy...."

The tangible product of all this effort is CIMMYT's Strategic Plan, which is intended to serve as a compass to guide the Center's work for the next decade and beyond.... The process itself seems to have strengthened CIMMYT's relationships with stakeholders and reaffirmed its credibility as a premier agricultural research organization.



Photo: Gene Alexander, USDA

And significant learning occurred for CIMMYT staff. There is a broader awareness of the complexity and shifting nature of multiple dimensions of the external environment, which implies a continuing need to monitor and adjust to changing circumstances. A year's worth of strategic conversations led to challenging some long-held assumptions about CIMMYT's role and approach to research and technology development, as reflected most notably in the Strategic Plan's new emphasis on a livelihoods approach instead of the historical commodity improvement approach."

Cimarron Watershed Alliance Receives Grant

The Cimarron Watershed Alliance, one of the eight collaborative community watershed groups in northern New Mexico that we facilitate, received a second grant from the New Mexico Environment Department. The grant will support Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation and compliance with Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. The grant of \$650,000—requiring matching funds of \$350,000—is the largest of its kind issued to one watershed group by the state for TMDL implementation. Over the next several years, the grant will support the transition of the group to local leadership and the implementation of a series of projects to improve surface water quality in the watershed's impaired rivers and creeks.

Coal Bed Methane Best Management Practices Handbook Receives “4 Cs Award”

Meridian facilitated a stakeholder advisory committee convened by the Western Governors’ Association (WGA) to share information that promotes the sound, efficient, and environmentally responsible development of coal bed methane (CBM). The group produced a *CBM Best Management Practices Handbook* that was released in April 2004. The *CBM Handbook* describes best management practices in four areas: planning, water, landowner relations, and infrastructure. The WGA notes that the *Handbook* is the most requested document on its website. In June 2004, Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton presented the WGA with a “4Cs Award” for the *Handbook*. The award derives from Norton’s philosophy of “Communication, Consultation, and Cooperation in the service of Conservation.” The *Handbook* can be found online at www.westgov.org/wga/initiatives/coalbed/.

Meridian Team Welcomes New Members

Meridian has added five new team members since we published our last newsletter. For a complete profile of the Meridian team, visit www.merid.org/team.php.

Kevin Bryan is a *Mediator* in Meridian’s Washington, DC, office. He comes to Meridian from RESOLVE, where he was a facilitator and senior coordinator for the National Wind Coordinating Committee. Originally from North Carolina, Kevin is a graduate of Howard University. In his free time, he serves on the Board of the Community Toolbox for Children’s Environmental Health, a California-based NGO that provides capacity-building support and technical assistance to more than 60 organizations around the country devoted to children’s health. He is also a fellow in the Environmental Leadership Program.

Laura Cantral became Meridian’s newest staff member in November 2004, and is serving as a *Senior Mediator* in the Washington, DC, office. Prior to joining Meridian, Laura was the Associate Director for Governance for the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, a presidential commission appointed in 2001 to develop recommendations to the President and Congress on improving the use and management of ocean resources. With a background in marine law, Laura has extensive experience working on ocean and coastal policy issues at

the state, regional, and national levels. In her spare time, she enjoys running, reading, and studying violin.

Dennis Ellis is a *Mediator* in the Dillon, Colorado, office. Dennis is a licensed attorney in both Wyoming and Colorado, and just finished four years with the U.S. House of Representatives as Legislative Director for a member of Congress. While on Capitol Hill, he spent significant time on public lands and energy development issues in the West. He is from a third-generation ranching family in central Wyoming, but he and his wife currently make their home in Denver, Colorado. Dennis enjoys movies, the outdoors, and good green chili.

Jerilyn Sadler joined Meridian Institute as an *Office Assistant* in the Dillon, Colorado, office. She has a background in education and has worked at the elementary level as a substitute teacher and teacher’s aide and also in the private sector. She has a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of North Texas. She claims a husband, 8-year-old son, two dogs, and a cat as her immediate family. Her hobbies include hiking, biking, cross-stitch, and leading Cub Scouts.

Shannon Spickard is a *Project Coordinator* in Meridian’s Washington, DC, office. Shannon’s background is in conference and event planning. Prior to joining Meridian, she was a conference manager for Georgetown University. She is originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but now calls Arlington, Virginia, home. Shannon enjoys traveling, horseback riding, and spending time with family and friends.

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