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BIO

Theresa Williamson founded Catalytic Communities (CatComm, www.catcomm.org), in 2000, and worked as Executive Director for seven years. Winner of the 2006 Tech Awards from the Tech Museum of Innovation in Silicon Valley, CatComm uses technology to link grassroots community groups in Rio de Janeiro and around the world so they can learn from each other's successes and support one another's work. In this role, she oversees all program strategy, development and activity. She is CatComm's primary fundraiser (responsible for all major gift solicitations, small donor cultivation, and special events), liaison to the Board of Directors, and oversees staff responsible for day-to-day organizational management. Theresa is currently working in a part-time capacity transitioning the organization towards sustainability and a participatory culture.

In May 2004 Theresa received her Ph.D. from the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Pennsylvania. Entitled *Catalytic Communities: The Birth of a Dot Org*, her dissertation won the 2005 Gill-Chin Lim Award for Best Dissertation on International Planning and was one of three finalists for the 2004 Barclay Gibbs Jones Award for the Best Dissertation in Planning. She has published articles from this dissertation and related research in *Progressive Planning*, *The Journal of Urban Technology*, and *Cidadania.org*. Prior to her doctoral research and decision to found CatComm, Theresa had been active in a number of movements for years, since the early age of 12. Theresa's undergraduate degree was in Biological Anthropology, which took her to live a semester in Madagascar studying lemur thermoregulatory behavior. She also received undergraduate concentrations in Environmental Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies, from Swarthmore College. Though raised in the Washington, DC area, Theresa is a dual Brazilian and British citizen and lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with her husband and toddler daughter. They recently spent her husband's sabbatical year (July 2007 – July 31st 2008) in Oxford, UK.

EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia, PA
Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning, May 2004

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, Philadelphia, PA
M.A. in City and Regional Planning, August 2001

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE, Swarthmore, PA
B.A. in Biological Anthropology, June 1997
Concentration in Environmental Studies, June 1997
Concentration in Peace and Conflict Studies, June 1997

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, Pittsburgh, PA Certificate for Completion of Semester at Sea Program, May 1995

BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE HIGH SCHOOL, Bethesda, MD, June 1993

EXPERIENCE

CATALYTIC COMMUNITIES Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (September 9 2000 – present)

Founder and Executive Director of Catalytic Communities, a not-for-profit organization that provides low-income communities around the world with an Internet-based database of creative and innovative grassroots solutions to local problems. As more low-income communities gain access to the Internet, CatComm (www.catcomm.org) offers them a central source of information on solutions and networks they can employ or learn from in their attempts to improve their own quality of life. This Web portal was one of 25 winners of the Silicone Valley Tech Awards in 2006, recognizing "technology benefiting humanity." From 2003-2008 Catalytic Communities also developed a model community technology hub, where 1000 Rio de Janeiro community organizers

from over 215 neighborhoods joined to exchange experiences, solutions, ideas, contacts, and a lot more. In 2006 the "Casa" networking hub was recognized by UN Habitat as one of 10 "Actionable Ideas" for slum improvements worldwide. For all media coverage of Catalytic Communities visit <http://www.comcat.org/english/cgi-bin/mediacoverage.asp>.

GLOBAL CANOPY PROGRAMME Oxford, UK (February 4 – August 4 2008)

Network & Communications Consultant for the Forests Now (www.forestsnow.org) campaign and Global Canopy Programme (www.globalcanopy.org) one-stop-shop Web portal. The focus of the Forests Now campaign is on taking tropical rainforests to center-stage of international climate change negotiations and developing financial mechanisms to value rainforests: to have markets recognize rainforests are worth more alive than dead. The focus of the Global Canopy Programme's new website is on developing a central portal clearinghouse of information on forests and the ecosystem services (ESS) they provide.

FUNDERS NETWORK ON TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION Porto Alegre, Brazil (January 28 – February 6 2002)

Support and translation for FNTG delegation at World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

PHILADELPHIA STREETS DEPARTMENT Philadelphia, PA, USA (June 8 1999 – March 9 2000)

Graduate intern responsible for research and outreach initiatives in the City's Recycling Unit. Research work included the documentation of diverse composting processes, analysis of census data relating to Philadelphia's hispanic community, and planning around a symposium to be held for City businesses interested in implementing large-scale composting operations. Outreach work involved visits to Philadelphia Latino community events, placement of public service announcements on radio and cable networks, public school back-to-school nights, mailings to commercial enterprises, and contests and composting initiatives with local school children. Other projects included the acquisition of corporate partners for Philadelphia's first 8th Grade Recycling Poetry Contest, data formatting for Philadelphia's Recycling Job Creation Survey, and general office support work.

GENERAL OMBUDSMAN'S OFFICE Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil (March 9 - June 5 1998)

Translator and English instructor to group of 16 Ombudsman office staff. Responsibilities included translating official Office documents, ranging from speeches and conference papers to videocassette covers, from Portuguese to English, in addition to designing and conducting two English lessons per week to two groups of 8 coworkers. The "Ouvidor Geral," as the state's ombudsman is referred to, and his office, are responsible for addressing complaints against government from the general population, in addition to administering various programs. Among these are the Little Ombudsman program, which teaches schoolchildren about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and the I Want My Parents program, which places long lost relatives in touch with one another. The Office is also responsible for administering projects dictated by law, such as the Political Prisoners committee which set forth to analyze the cases of and compensate financially victims of political persecution during the country's military years.

SCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS HIGH SCHOOL Washington, D.C., USA (September 24 1997 - January 28 1998)

Teacher of "Peace Studies: Alternatives to Violence" course at School Without Walls, a Washington, D.C. public school. Responsible for educating 25 9th and 10th graders about the philosophies of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, Thich Nhat Hanh, and other peace activists. Also organized regular field trips to meet with such leaders as Nydia Velaquez, U.S. Representative from New York, David Liederman, Executive Director of the Child Welfare League of America, and other present-day models of peaceful activism. Course topics included immigration, conflict resolution strategies, the Civil Rights Movement, sweatshops and consumerism, human rights, the war in El Salvador, juvenile justice, community degradation, and violence against animals.

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA (CWLA) Washington, D.C., USA (September 8 1997 - December 12 1997)

Public policy intern responsible for cataloging involvement of 900 CWLA member agencies in public policy. Tracked juvenile justice bill S. 10, the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, and U.S. ratification process for the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Attended Congressional hearings, conference calls, and "Advancing Children's Futures" conference in Indianapolis.

CO-OP AMERICA Washington, D.C., USA (June 9 - August 15 1997)

Consumer Programs Fellow sponsored by the Everett Foundation in Co-op America's marketing department. Worked with mailing list development, psychographic survey creation, distribution, analysis, and membership demographics research. Co-op America is a non-profit dedicated to building an economy comprised of businesses concerned with the well-being of their workers, communities, and environment by providing resources to such existing companies, encouraging irresponsible ones to move in this direction, and mobilizing consumers to vote with their dollars.

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE Berenty Reserve, Southern Madagascar (August 4 - November 21 1995)

Research on lemur thermoregulatory behavior under Dr. Alison Jolly (Princeton University) at Madagascar's Berenty Reserve. Recorded relevant *Eulemur fulvus rufus* and *Lemur catta* behaviors during an eight-week study; participated in the organization of an Earthwatch expedition. Presented research as a senior thesis at Swarthmore College.

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE Swarthmore, PA, EUA (September 1993 - June 1997)

Student recycling team member and driver. Duties involved weekly collection of appropriate materials throughout college campus and subsequent distribution of materials to various recycling facilities.

CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN Minas Gerais, Brazil (May - August 1994, follow-up May - July 1995)

Data entry, outreach, campaign strategy assistance for Denise de Souza, candidate to Brazil's National Congress from the state of Minas Gerais. Outreach involved speaking with college students and in public areas regarding de Souza's pursuit of a revitalized Congress with new, legitimate members interested in bettering the plight of the people through Constitutional Reform, improved public schools, job promotion, and select privatization.

FOUNDATION ON ECONOMIC TRENDS (Greenhouse Crisis Foundation) (January - May 1993)

Intern and Campaign Organizer for the Beyond Beef Campaign; D.C. coordinator
Networked with environmental, animal rights, vegetarian, and hunger-related organization leaders across the United States planning for the April 17, 1993 Adopt-A-McDonald's Campaign. Planned and headed the Washington, D.C. leafleting of over 30 McDonald's. Spoke at National Press Conference with organization president Jeremy Rifkin, campaign executive director Howard Lyman, and ex-Ronald McDonald Geoffrey Guiliano.

HOWARD HUGHES FOUNDATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (June 1992 - June 1993)

Research Intern at the National Institutes of Health, Clinical Chemistry Department, Bethesda, MD
Worked under Dr. Martin Kroll with dicarboxylic acids in a long-term study intended to help treat heart attack victims.
Responsible for presenting the information in a talk at the county science fair.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

CENTRO INTEGRADO DE APOIO A CRIANÇAS E ADOLESCENTES DE COMUNIDADES (CIACAC) (July 2004 – present)

Board Chair to NGO based in Parada de Lucas *favela* in Rio de Janeiro.

GLOBAL CANOPY PROGRAMME (October 2007 – December 2007)

Support in redesign of www.forestsnow.org website and in outreach for the Forests Now Declaration.

WIRELESS COMMONS (December 2002 – 2004)

Advisory Board member.

WORLD MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY NETWORKING YOUNG DEMOCRACY ACTIVISTS WORKING GROUP (March 2001 – 2002)

Working Group member.

EARTHLUST (1993-1997): Chief organizer of many Swarthmore campus environmental events.

STUDENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION (S.E.A.) (1990-1993): Leader and co-organizer of dozens of awareness events in Montgomery County, MD; represented S.E.A. at the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development** in Rio, 1992.

PUBLICATIONS

Williamson, Theresa D. 2004. "Another World Is Possible: The World Social Forum in Mumbai." *Progressive Planning*. Spring 2004. 159: 26-28.

Williamson, Theresa D. 2004. "Aprendendo com a globalização: Fórum Social Mundial vai à Mumbai." *Portal da Cidadania*. April 3, 2004.

Williamson, Theresa D. 2003. "Catalytic Communities in Rio: Virtual and Face-to-face Communities in Developing Countries." *Journal of Urban Technology* 10: 85-109.

Williamson, Theresa D. 2003. "For a More Social World Forum." *Planner's Network*. Spring 2003. 155: 26-28.

Williamson, Theresa D. 2003. "Pobreza, Realidade Universal." *Portal da Cidadania*. April 9, 2003.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

2008 Wood Music Festival (Oxford, UK)

2007 Swarthmore College Lax Conference on Entrepreneurship Conference speaker and roundtable coordinator (Swarthmore, PA)

2007 Rotary Club of Rio de Janeiro – Laranjeiras presentation on Catalytic Communities (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

2006 Tech Museum Awards Showcase presentation (San Jose, CA)

2006 National Community Reinvestment Coalition lecture “A Peak at an Unassisted Community” (Washington, DC)

2006 Rotary Clubs of Clinton, Normal, and Sunset: multiple presentations on Catalytic Communities (Bloomington, IL)

2006 International Honors Program class visiting lecture (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

2005 PlaNetwork presentation on Catalytic Communities (Washington, DC)

2005 Swarthmore College Political Science Department daytime and evening talks: “The Power of Grassroots Communities in Brazil and Around the World: The Potential of Connecting Them through New Technologies”

2005 Virginia Tech City and Regional Planning Department daytime and evening talks: “Poverty, Development and the Internet”

2005 Rotary Club of Rio de Janeiro – Saúde presentation on Catalytic Communities (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

2005 American Collegiate Schools of Planning talk “Catalytic Communities: The Birth of a Dot Org” (Kansas City, MO)

2004 Community Technology Centers Network (CTCNet) Conference “Connecting across Borders” roundtable presenter (Seattle, WA)

2004 World Social Forum Workshop presenter (Mumbai, India)

2004 American Collegiate Schools of Planning talk “Introducing Protagonist Action Research” (Portland, OR)

2003 Association of European Schools of Planning presentation “Virtual vs. Face-to-Face Relationships with Communities in Developing Countries” (Leuven, Belgium)

2002 American School of Rio de Janeiro Economics class visiting lecture (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

2002 American Collegiate Schools of Planning talk “Good Intentions Gone Bad: Unforeseen Consequences of Community Capacity-Building Programs in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil” (Baltimore, MD)

2001, 2002 and 2003 World Social Forum Workshop presenter (Porto Alegre, Brazil)

2001 Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) Conference lecture “The Internet as a Community Catalyst” (Mexico City, Mexico)

2001 University of Maryland Graduate WebShop participant and graduate research presenter (College Park, MD)

AWARDS

Fall 2006: Catalytic Communities receives **Tech Award** in the Equality category from the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, one of 25 winners from 900+ nominated.

Fall 2005: Gill-Chin Lim Award for **the Best Dissertation on International Planning** from the American Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP).

May 2005: Catalytic Communities receives **"honorable mention"** in the "Digital Communities" category from the Austrian organization, Prix Ars Eletrônica.

Fall 2004: **Finalist** for the Barclay Gibbs Jones Award for the **Best Dissertation** in Planning.