

**THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON
INDIGENOUS AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS:
METHODOLOGIES AND EPISTEMOLOGIES FOR
RESEARCH, TEACHING, LEARNING AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**



AFRICAN INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

University of KwaZulu-Natal
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Edited By: Hassan O. Kaya & Yonah N. Seleti



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Some of Keynote Speakers

On Friday, 23 November 2012, the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) hosted a one-day Southern African Regional Colloquium on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) to specifically address the methodologies and epistemologies for IKS research, teaching, learning and community engagement in higher education. The event drew support and partnership from stakeholders such as the National Indigenous knowledge Systems Office in the National Department of Science and Technology, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Institute for African Renaissance Studies. It was well attended by academics and intellectuals from different African institutions and various government sectors.

UKZN has joined many other Southern African research and academic institutions that are designing initiatives to integrate Indigenous African Knowledge Systems(IAKS) into research, teaching and community engagement in line with aspirations of an Africa-led globalization, processes that promote worldwide exchanges of national and cultural resources. A group of professors at the institution are working towards introducing IAKS academic programmes that will cover undergraduate through post-graduate levels. The purpose for this is to make higher education more relevant to the socio-economic developmental challenges of the African continent. The regional colloquium was an integral part of devising strategies and mechanisms to decolonize the higher education systems in Africa by promoting our own indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge production.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor at UKZN, Professor Nelson Ijumba, made the opening remarks on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Malegapuru Makgoba. He applauded IKS and encouraged the group of professors present to ensure it becomes a successful programme.

“IKS is one of the signature projects in UKZN and the University management supports it in terms of finance, infrastructure and human capital,” said Ijumba. “We can view this as our third wave of liberation,” he continued. “The first wave was political freedom, the second wave was economic freedom, and the struggle now is to restore indigenous knowledge to its rightful place in Africa. We should have IKS in health, governance, agriculture, religion – all aspects of daily life.”

Various papers were presented and critically discussed. These included: Indigenous African Knowledge Systems in a Polyepistemic World: The Capabilities Approach and the Translatability of Knowledge Systems by Prof. Muxe Nkondo; IKS Policy Development in South African Higher Education Ecosystem by Prof. Y. Seleti; the issues of Culture, Human Rights and IPR Issues in IKS Research, Teaching and Community Engagement in Higher Education by P.J. Kabudi; African Identity and Sustainable Development Through Kiswahiliby Prof. H. O. Kaya and Dr. L. Rushubirwa; the Repository of Worldviews of Nature UNESCO, which interrogated the Universalism and Ethical Values for the Environment by Dr. Jasdev S. Rai; Gender and Leadership in Indigenous African Communities: A Case Study of the Lamba People of Zambia on the Copperbelt Province by Dr. Chimbala Kalenga Rosemary; Uncovering Indigenous African Knowledge Systems of Justice and Governance: Comparative Cases of Bulwer, Ixopo, Madadeni and New Hanover by Ms W Martins and Dr FA Ruffin; Indigenization as a Liberative Imperative in Postcolonial Worldview by Dr Munyaradzi Felix Murove; and Bridging the Gap in Public Health: The Role Of Education in African Traditional Medicine by Prof. Nceba Gqaleni.

The colloquium came up with a number of recommendations for the way forward:

- Take advantage of low-lying fruits in IKS development by starting with what is achievable to ensure that IKS has socio-economic benefits and is able to change people’s livelihoods, especially the knowledge-holders because most of them are still poor.



- Develop and promote the role of traditional medicine in job creation and income generation: setting up IKS documentation centres for recording, preserving and sharing IKS for development. It was revealed that the traditional medicine sector in South Africa employs more people than the mining sector; need to establish an inter-college team at UKZN and other institutions to promote traditional medicine as a source of income and employment; promotion of traditional medicine and IKS in general. As a source of income generation and job creation this should be a nationwide initiative.
- Government funding is critical for IKS success. The current National Development Plan does not include IKS. There is a need to link IKS with the national job creation strategy.
- The UKZN institutional IKS policy should: establish IKS research priority areas; foster the development and promotion of indigenous African epistemologies; understand and define the politics of knowledge production; set out a history of indigenous African ideas and intellectual influence; create a framework to value of IKS to knowledge holders; further research the ethics of IKS; effect indigenous language policies; focus on low-lying fruits, i.e. indigenous agricultural schools, and create IKS opportunities for job creation and food security.



THE PURPOSE OF THE REGIONAL COLLOQUIUM

By



**Prof. H.O. Kaya, Research Leader, Indigenous African Knowledge Systems (IAKS),
University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Prof. Hassan O. Kaya, the main organiser of the event, welcomed the delegates to the colloquium. He informed them of the main objective of the colloquium: namely to share ideas and experiences on how to promote indigenous African ways of knowing and knowledge production, which have been marginalized by Western knowledge systems over the years. However, Indigenous African Knowledge Systems (IAKS/IKS) will only have a meaning if it improves the lives of the African people, especially the poor.

He indicated that the promotion of IAKS, including indigenous African languages, was an integral part of devising strategies and mechanisms of decolonizing the higher education systems in Africa by promoting Africa's indigenous ways of knowing and knowledge production. This is due to the growing realization that Africa cannot contribute to the global



pool of knowledge using borrowed knowledge and Eurocentric methodologies of knowledge production and knowledge governance.

Prof Kaya outlined the promotional imperatives of IAKS at UKZN at the institutional, national and continental level:

- Institutionally, IAKS is part of implementing the institutional vision of becoming a “Premier University of African Scholarship” and contributing to Africa-led globalization;
- Nationally, IAKS is in line with the National IKS Policy (2004) that higher education should assist South Africa and Africa to enter the global body of knowledge on its own terms rather than those dictated by others; and
- Continentally, it is in line with NEPAD aspirations of using IAKS to promote sustainable development because IKS are by definition community-based.

IAKS is one of the signature projects of UKZN; it is strategically central to the university's goals. This colloquium is part of the institutional implementation plan approved by the Senate to integrate IKS into the core business of the institution, i.e. research, teaching, learning and community engagement. The colloquium took on a regional character in order to share regional ideas about and experiences with devising indigenous African ways of knowing and knowledge production to promote African scholarship in higher education.



OPENING PRESENTATION

By



**Prof. Nelson Ijumba, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
University of KwaZulu-Natal**

Prof. Ijumba welcomed the delegates to the regional colloquium and to UKZN on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. He reminded them that the restoration of IKS to its right place in the global knowledge economy is part of Africa's third liberation. In the 1950s and 1960s the struggle was for political liberation from colonial domination. However, after political independence the new African leaders realized that the economy was still not in their hands. Therefore, the second liberation was economic. Later, with the advent of the knowledge economy, there came the need to restore Africa's indigenous knowledge so that it could contribute to the global knowledge pool. This is due to the fact that African indigenous knowledge systems were marginalized and some were systematically destroyed by colonialism. This happened in various areas of African life and cultures, i.e. health, religion, education, governance.

Therefore, the purpose of the colloquium is to share ideas and experiences on how indigenous African knowledge systems can contribute to the global knowledge economy. University of KwaZulu-Natal recognizes the importance of IKS and this is reflected in its mission and vision to become the "Premier University of African Scholarship". It realizes that it cannot



give prominence to African scholarship without recognizing the role of Indigenous African Knowledge Systems. Therefore, IAKS is a major research focus area at UKZN; it has been identified as a signature project. The institution provides it with financial, infrastructural and human capital support for its development. This is due to the recognition that IAKS as a strategic research area cannot just be a side show. It has to be integrated into the core business of the institution, i.e. research, teaching, learning and community engagement. The institution has appointed Prof. Kaya as the Research Leader in Indigenous African Knowledge Systems to coordinate and facilitate the integration process. He has already appointed an advisory team with both internal and external members, and due to the multi-disciplinary nature of IKS he has also established an IAKS working group to drive the process. It is composed of representatives from different schools and disciplines within the institution. UKZN works with other institutions both within and outside South Africa in the development of IKS. It has also applied to be recognized as an NRF/DST IKS Centre of Excellence.

Therefore, the deliberations of the colloquium will make a great contribution to the integration process by providing ideas and experiences on the way forward. Prof. Ijumba ended his presentation by wishing all the delegations fruitful deliberations.



INDIGENOUS AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS IN A POLYEPISTEMIC WORLD: THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH AND THE TRANSLATABILITY OF KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS



Prof Muxe Nkondo

**Formerly Chairperson of the Technical Team and Reference Group that Drafted the
National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Policy of South Africa**

1. Introduction

The main purpose of this paper is to present a set of interrelated ideas concerning the foundations and the possibilities of Indigenous African Knowledge Systems in a polyepistemic world, and in particular about the assessment of their capacity to advance a person's capability to function in the contemporary world, that is, what a person can do or can be as a direct result of this knowledge system, and argue against the more standard concentration on identity or authenticity (as in prevalent Afrocentric formulations). Insofar as identity and authenticity have roles (and they certainly do), these can be seen in terms of their direct connection with well-being and advantage; in particular, (a) the political importance of identity, and (b) the evidential importance of authenticity (in its various forms, such as self-pride, personal dignity and integrity).



The current discourse on Indigenous African Knowledge Systems is concerned with culture, identity and authenticity. This paper investigates how people, through IAKS, are able to make commodities, how they are able to establish command over commodities, and what they get out of commodities. The determination of whether a person will be better off supplied with all the resources of IAKS is the starting point of the investigation into the political economy of indigenous African Knowledge Systems in our time.

Closely related to this basic question of IAKS is the question as to how the possibilities of these systems may be judged and a person's well-being and advantage assessed as a direct consequence of this knowledge system. Different approaches can be used to assess the possibilities of a particular knowledge system in specific contexts: Is she well off as a result? Is she happy? Did she get what she wanted? Could she compete successfully with others using different knowledge systems? These distinct questions provide an interesting focus on current and future challenges facing advocates of IAKS.

The discourse on indigenous IAKS has tended to eschew the distinctions implied in these questions and make do with a limited assessment of knowledge systems. The assessment is often based on "identity" or "authenticity" or a combination of both. The terms 'well-being' and "advantage" do, of course, have a range of meanings, defined by both neo-liberal and developmental economists. They are used in this paper in the sense in which Amartya Sen uses them, quite rigorously, in his monograph *Commodities and Capabilities*:

“ ‘Well-being’ is concerned with a person's achievement: how ‘well’ is his or her being? ‘Advantage’ refers to the real opportunities that the person has, especially compared with others. The opportunities are not judged only by the results achieved, and therefore not just by the level of well-being achieved. It is possible for a person to have genuine advantage and still to ‘muff’ them. Or to sacrifice one's freedom to achieve a high level of well-being. The notion of advantage deals with a person's real opportunities compared with others. The freedom to achieve well-being is closer to the notion of advantage than well-being itself.”

2. Historical and Policy Context

This paper approaches IAKS in a new way, one centred on a person's capabilities in a polyepistemic and multicultural world in which people differ significantly from one



another. This approach is aptly called "polyepistemic" because of its attention to the opportunities and challenges of different epistemic systems in a world of differences. A polyepistemic conception of knowledge systems poses new questions and employs new concepts to address issues inherent in the study of homosapiens; it also puts older questions and concepts in epistemology in a new light.

Why is there a need for a polyepistemic approach to IAKS? Throughout much of its colonial and post-colonial history the basic question in the discourse on indigenous African Knowledge Systems has been: are IAKS scientific, or can they be? IKS holders and scholars have sought to claim the mantle of science and have modelled their studies on Western science and logic. Consequently, the discourse on IAKS has traditionally consisted of assessment of the success of these systems in this regard, of the ways indigenous knowledge systems are like or unlike Western science and logic. However, although this approach has yielded significant insights into the study of epistemology, it no longer grips social scientists and epistemologists. The capabilities approach, more in line with current pragmatic, democratic, and intellectual concerns, is required.

The question of the scientific standing of Eurocentric epistemology has run out of steam in part because for many, particularly non-Western, scholars, Western science no longer induces the kind of awe it once did. Implicit in much previous assessment of Western scholarship was the presupposition that it was the benchmark against which scholarship and research had to be measured. But in the current post-colonial, postmodern intellectual climate, Western scholarship has lost this privileged position. The reasons for this are complex, as readings of V.G. Mudimbe's *Invention of Africa* and Edward Said's *Orientalism* soon show: they include the treatment of Africa and Asia as means to serve Western political and economic interests; the tendency of Western scholars to reduce Africa and Asia to a career; dismissal of alternative non-Western forms of knowledge; and the depressing image of Africans as being fundamentally incapable of scientific thinking. But in epistemological circles, the demise of Western scholarship as the paradigm of intellectual rigour is tied to the death of positivism and the concomitant emergence of perspectivism, relativism, historicism, constructivism, holism and deconstruction. These approaches to epistemology are to be regarded as a rejection of many, if not most, of the intellectual certainties on which scholarship and research in the West has been based over the past couple of centuries. They call into question the



Enlightenment project, meaning the liberal humanist ideology that has come to dominate Western culture since the eighteenth century: an ideology that promised the emancipation of humanity from economic want and political oppression. In the view of these post-Enlightenment approaches to knowledge, the Enlightenment project, laudable though it may have been at one time, has in turn come to oppress humankind, and to force it into certain ways of thought and action, not always in the best interests of the majority of the world's people. It is therefore to be resisted, and IKS theorists and practitioners must be critical of universalizing theories ("grand narratives" driven by Western political and economic interests, as Jean- Francois Lyotard called them,) as well as being anti-authoritarian in our outlook.

3. Polyepistemism and Challenges of Translation

The upshot of these anti-Enlightenment, anti-authoritarian approaches to knowledge is an inevitable debunking of truth as the ultimate plane of reality. As a result, preoccupation with the issue of polyepistemism has replaced the previous concern with the scientific character of the human sciences. To their adherents, perspectivism is a Good Thing (at least from the Afrocentric perspective). In the first place, it provides a way of speaking about others who are different from us and thereby sensitizes us to epistemic differences. Since we all look at and live in the world from within our own particular epistemic frameworks, others must experience the processes of knowing differently from the way we do. In this way, perspectivism is meant to guard against ethnocentrism (the view that everyone is just like or should be like us). In the second place, because we have no independent basis for criticizing the way others think or act, our attitude should be one of openness and hospitality rather than the judgmentalism that has often marred Western research and scholarship on IAKS. In this way, polyepistemism is meant to guard against domination.

In this way, polyepistemism, in its various forms, encourages accommodation in multicultural world. I hope that polyepistemism will not soon become a trendy buzz word like multiculturalism. This would be unfortunate because polyepistemism refers to something crucial in the contemporary world: that people different from one another in important ways are in contact with, and must deal with, each other. All polyepistemologists focus on understanding and living with social, cultural and epistemic



differences; but beyond this commitment, the possibilities of a polyepistemic world are a hotly debated topic. The most prevalent version is what might be called "the celebration of difference", on this view, that differences among various epistemic systems should be highlighted and honoured. But Derrida, Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, and other deconstructionists warn of the apparent intractability of difference and the untranslatability of language and theoretical frameworks. "Theory," J. Hillis Miller writes in *Topographies*, "may be impossible to translate to another language. *Traduttore traditore*: this (untranslatable) Italian saying may be "true to spades", as they say, for...theory, to use another perhaps untranslatable idiom. To translate theory is to traduce it, to betray it." Nevertheless, something called indigenous African Knowledge Systems is now being translated from its ancient African origins into non-African languages all over the world. How does this happen?

Does a knowledge system participate in the uprooting of culture? Perhaps so. A knowledge system, like theory or any explanatory framework, is inextricably tied to a language system and might seem to be as impersonal and universal as any technological innovation; the fact is, it grows from one particular place, time, culture, and language. It remains tied to that place and language. A knowledge system, when it is translated or transported, when it crosses a border, comes bringing the culture of its originator with it. Quite extraordinary feats of translation are necessary to disentangle a given conceptual formulation from its linguistic and cultural roots, assuming anyone should wish to do that. Those who seek to assimilate a foreign knowledge system and put it to new, indigenous uses may have imported something like one of those computer viruses that turn local programs to their own alien and disruptive uses. But because a knowledge system is not like a piece of technology, it may be more dangerous, not just one more tool of industrialization, but a bringer of an even more profound cultural change.

This is what the Enlightenment, through incorporation couched in various European languages, has done to African societies. By "incorporation" I mean a more general process of change, the reorganization of perceptions as well as of enterprise and institutions. I mean not only the expansion of an industrial capitalist system across the continent, not only tightening systems of transport and communication, the spread of a market economy into all regions of African societies, but also, and even predominantly, the remaking of cultural perceptions that this process entailed. By the incorporation of



Africa I mean, then, the emergence of a changed, more tightly structured society with new hierarchies of control, and also changed conceptions of society, of Africa itself.

I have said that a knowledge system may be untranslatable, at a certain level, because it cannot be detached from the local topographies of its source. The following African proverbs translated into English make my point:

a) A sheep cannot bleat in two different places at the same time (Tanzania)

b) Even an ant may harm an elephant (Zulu Kingdom)

c) In a court of fowls, the cockroach never wins his case (Rwanda/ Burundi)

d) The monkey does not see his own hind parts; he sees his neighbour's (Zimbabwe).

e) Wisdom is like mushrooms that come after you have finished eating (too late) (Malawi)

f) He who runs from the white ant may stumble upon the stinging ant. (Nigeria)

g) A wise man who knows his proverbs can reconcile difficulties. (Niger)

h) A man who has once been tossed by a buffalo, when he sees a black ox, thinks it's another buffalo (Kenya).

Each of these proverbs has a long history within African culture and cannot easily be detached from that history. That history is the history of chief primary uses of the words. Every aspect of IAKS turns on such complex conceptual worlds, worlds that carry with them a silent history.

Indigenous African Knowledge Systems are tied to their cultural and linguistic origins in another quite different and apparently opposite way. There is no work of IAKS without examples. The examples are essential to the knowledge system. The knowledge system cannot be fully understood without the examples. These examples tie the knowledge system not just to a specific language or culture, but to particular practices or forms of life within the culture. These practices are themselves rooted in a particular time and place. To put this in another way, indigenous African knowledge's are always a reflection of some specific event or practice. The relation of a knowledge system to reflection or representation is itself a difficult epistemological question. To understand these African



proverbs, for instance, you must have an intimate understanding of the language in which they were originally couched and the culture within which they are defined.

Does this mean that knowledge systems cannot be translated, cannot be transported across the borders into a new country and a new language to be effective there? On the contrary, I think such translation is to an extent possible. It happens every day. I certainly hope that IAKS will be translated into various languages. But the difficulty of understanding just what is at stake in such translation should not be underestimated. The fact that border crossings and translations happen so rapidly nowadays may mislead us about what happens in translation. This is particularly the case when what is in question is translation from languages so rich, so different from English, and with such splendid philosophical, cultural, and rhetorical traditions.

How does this translation happen? How do African proverbs, for instance, get a new start in a new European language and within a new culture? Just how does this transfer "take place". How does a proverb, an integral part of a knowledge system, change its nuanced meaning in the new language. Not what it means but how it means. In a new country a proverb or knowledge system is put to new uses that cannot be foreseen. These uses are an alienation of the proverb or a knowledge system, its translation into a new idiom or system, and appropriation for new, indigenous purposes. The African proverbs are here uttered from an English point of view. However, what matters to those in the African Diaspora or in the metropolis is the continuity and vitality of their own cultural heritage. They assimilate the alien, making the different into the same, but at the same time changing that same, in order to ensure that vitality, just as works of travelling knowledge systems are transformed in the new country. In the new place, a proverb or a knowledge system is made use of in ways the proverb or the knowledge system was never intended or allowed for, though it also transforms the knowledge and cultural system it enters. When a proverb or a knowledge system crosses borders, it is translated in the sense that it is disfigured, deformed, translated.



The relative openness of proverbs or knowledge systems to translation is a result of the fact that a proverb or a knowledge system, in spite of appearances, is a performative, not a cognitive, use of language. Proverbs or knowledge statements are potent speech acts. A knowledge system is a way of doing things with words, namely facilitating acts of understanding. By framing the central question of epistemology in this way, certain old topics in the field – such as the nature of meaning; the character of interpretation and its relation to causal explanation; the role of social scientific laws; human agency and the possibility of objectivity – assume a new urgency. But more importantly, new questions and new ways to deal with them come to the fore. In particular, questions about what it means to know something or someone else; about the self and its relation to others; about society; about perspectivism and intelligibility; about the complexities of cross-cultural understanding; about the role of the past in the present and about how words mean, not what they mean; and understanding the present – all these move to centre stage in investigating knowledge systems.

In addition, to understand a knowledge system and to evaluate its cogency, it is necessary to understand the questions and the existential challenges which such a knowledge system proposes to answer. To understand these challenges and questions, in turn, it is necessary to reconstruct those social, historical, and conceptual contexts which form the horizons of the knowledge system. To translate Gadamer into a different context, a reconstruction of context and knowledge systems always involves a "fusion of horizons". Understanding a different proverb or knowledge system always involves understanding from within an epistemic, linguistic and cultural framework that makes sense for us. In this sense, learning the contexts of foreign proverbs or knowledge systems involves posing questions to the proverbs and knowledge systems in light of the conceptual, epistemic and cultural preoccupations of our place and moment. The reconstruction of the history of knowledge systems should proceed like a dialogue in which one asks a question, seeks to comprehend whether this question is meaningful to the other, listens and reformulates the answer of the other, and in light of this answer, rearticulates one's original position. It is in this spirit that we should approach the interaction of IAKS with other knowledge systems.



4. Ethics, Politics and the Task of Translating Knowledge Systems

The turn to translation raises two different kinds of questions. On the one hand, one might assume that translation is an assimilation of original meanings into other conceptual frames. On the other hand, one might assume that translation is an effort to find a common language that transcends particular discourses. But if and when translation is a scene in which the limits of a given episteme are exposed and forced to become rearticulated in ways that do not re-contain alterity, then we have opened onto a terrain that presumes neither the superiority of any discourse nor affirms the self-sufficiency of any discourse. And if we accept that translation difficulties emerge from sources, linguistic or otherwise, that are never fully overcome in the course of its emergence, the inherent limits of translation point to issues that continue to elude the human intelligence.

My efforts to think about the place of translation in a polyepistemic world are derived from ethical Ubuntu principles, but they are also adapted and reformulated for the politics of knowledge systems in a multicultural world. In this way, my own trajectory marks two senses of departure: the first takes the Ubuntu philosophy as the starting point for my own investigation; the second is understood as a break with an epistemological discourse that cannot furnish sufficient grounds for difference or establish a basis for complete translatability across cultural difference. For an Ubuntu-oriented epistemology, the ultimate value is not truth but virtue, and language does not represent, it performs.

Consider, for instance, Africa's topographies. The contours of all places cannot be separated from the naming of places, which performs, all over Africa, a complex rhetorical operation of performative projection on the basis of various contingencies. The assumption is the place-names or a cluster of place-names enact a particular history to which the names give access. From Zulu Kingdom to Natal to KwaZulu-Natal, Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, South West Africa to Namibia, Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan to South Sudan, Gold Coast to Ghana, and so on: these examples illustrate a salient idea. Topography – combining the Greek word *topos* or place with the Greek word *graphien*, to write – means the writing of a place. The performative power of topography is so great that we see Africa's landscapes as though they are maps, complete with place names and the names of geographical features such as valley, mountain, river, hill.



Now the place names seem to be intrinsic to the places they name. The names are motivated. The places are carried into the names, translated or transported as it were, and become available to us that way. We can get to these places by the way of their names. These place names make sites already products or inventions or creations of a virtual writing, a topography. They demonstrate the initiating efficacy of speech acts, Adamic responsibility if you are a Christian; political or legislative power; the translation of theory or ideology or a knowledge system from one topographical location to another; the way topographical delineations can function as a parable or allegory; and the relation of personification to landscape. In a sense, the history of Africa is the history of changing "figures in the landscape". This is related, in part, to the politics of nationalism as they involve border demarcations and territorial appropriations. Deciding whether to have place names in a European or indigenous African language is a complex creative process, a real act of making. The question of transporting or translating a place from one language to another, from one country to another, raises the question of the degree to which language, though rooted in a particular culture, can be used to make, unmake and remake creative maps of different kinds.

Place names do not refer to places; they make places in the long history of human interactions. They are performative speech acts bringing the terrain into existence. About this curious feature of speech acts, that they create that in the name of which they speak, though it is impossible to be absolutely sure about that, and in spite of the urgent need to know, must preoccupy knowledge holders and scholars of indigenous African Knowledge Systems.

If you pursue the history of the naming of any place, in Africa and other parts of the world for that matter, you will find yourself encountering, in different ways within each topography, the atypical. This is a place that is everywhere and nowhere, a place you cannot get to from here. Sooner or later, whether in KwaZulu-Natal or Lusaka or Dar-es-Salam or Addis Ababa, in a different way in each case the effort of naming or mapping runs into a culdesac, is interrupted by an encounter with the unnameable or unmappable. The topography in each of these examples, in a different way in each example, hides an unplaceable place. The encounter with the unplaceable, unnameable place engenders awe and, depending on your theological orientation or lack of it, trepidation. In that final encounter (with what?), the human being engages in an incredible array of performative



acts: some invoke ancestors in a ceremony of charms and chants; some take off their shoes and pray; some conspire with Bacchus to set the penny-snatching world at defiance in a carnival of song and dance; some break into a hermeneutics of silence and nearness hoping to see a trace or hear an echo of the Ungraspable Immanence. This "place" baffles cognition and translation. But of all the performative acts only Ubuntu has the genius for human solidarity.

As an effort to overcome the sharp divide between ethics, politics and epistemology, my paper aims to show how the overlapping of these three spheres recurs. Once epistemology is no longer understood exclusively as a disposition or action grounded in a knowing subject, but rather as a relational practice that responds to an ethical obligation that is always oriented towards the other, then epistemology contests sovereign notions of the subject, ontological claims of self-identity, and the representational or referential value of language. Indeed, epistemology comes to signify the act by which an ethical relationship is established with those who are "not-me", comporting me beyond a sovereign claim in the direction of an assertion of selfhood so central to the Enlightenment. The question of how, whether and in what way to "give ground" to the other becomes an essential part of epistemological reflection; in other words, epistemology does not return the subject to himself or herself, but is to be understood as an ethical relationality, a way of being transported beyond oneself, not just to understand knowledge processes, but how to understand them in the present wherever we are and how best to cross the historical and geographical divides that characterize the conditions of their origin and their present applicability.

5. The Capabilities Approach to Indigenous African Knowledge Systems

Having begun with the argument in favour of the capability to function as the basis for assessing IAKS, that is, what a person can do or can be as a direct result of applying this knowledge in certain real life situations, I want to explore what is not right and what is right about various approaches, focusing on the question of capabilities. In general, analyses show that the various approaches aren't so much false as one-sided, that a fuller view needs to take into account both each approach and its criticism, and that when this is done the presuppositions lying behind the approach are problematic. The result is to undermine these approaches and the assumptions which support them.



In all of this, the paper argues that polyepistemism and multiculturalism understood as the celebration of difference are limited, though not entirely wrong. Their failure to explain the relative translatability and untranslatability of language, proverbs and knowledge systems points to the need for re-examination. Part of the work of this paper, therefore, is the problematization of both polyepistemism and multiculturalism.

Having spent some time on the intellectual, social, cultural and linguistic dimensions of knowledge systems, let me end with a comment on the problems of valuation of different knowledge systems which I raised at the very beginning. It raises a number of different questions, ranging from the foundational to the tactical. There are social scientists who see the entire exercise of valuation of knowledge systems in terms of well-being and advantage as a purely subjective one. A good number of welfare economists hold this view. This view, according to Amartya Sen, is not easy to sustain, and indeed the purely subjective position is unacceptable. One aspect, often discussed, has to do with interpersonal variations of the ranking of well-being. Furthermore, the objective judgments themselves are position-dependent.

The approach to well-being and advantage holds great promise, but it is exceedingly complex. It needs to be pursued a great deal more rigorously than I have time for here. However, these complex facets need not distract attention from other issues we can handle with greater confidence. These include the need to focus on capabilities (as opposed to logic) and the centrality of the challenge of valuation on which much of the investigation will rest.



IKS POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM



**Prof. Y. Seleti, National IKS Office, Department of Science and Technology,
South Africa**

Introduction

Prof. N. Yonah Seleti started by providing the structure of his presentation follows: the various approaches to knowledge production including knowledge governance, epistemological shifts, innovation value chain and the benefits of IKS into the 21st century, and the way forward. He went on to interrogate the African challenge in knowledge production and governance: the marginalization of IKS globally due to the expansion of Europe and conquest of other knowledge's. This has led full circle to the resurgence of suppressed knowledge's. He then outlined the historical genesis of IKS in South Africa by looking at both the political and the higher education landscapes. He later discussed the Quest for IKS and the country's democratic politics, i.e. cognitive justice and the transformative potential of IKS.



The African Challenge

Prof. Seleti interrogated the various challenges facing Africa in knowledge production and knowledge governance:

- Narrow definition of knowledge in a polyepistemic world, i.e. the concentration of the knowledge sector on distribution and coordination at the expense of production of relevant knowledge products perpetuates intellectual dependency;
- Weak linkages between the creators of knowledge products and the consumers, which speak to issues of relevance and inclusion;
- Failure to address the role of governments, private higher education and civil sectors, in the innovation value chain and creating appropriate knowledge governance models;
- Failure to analyze and evaluate existing policies in the context of IKS and the propensity to start *de novo* all the time, so addressing authenticity and continuity; and
- The failure to link knowledge policies to other policies such as education, industrialization and commerce, science and technology, in other words, a silo mentality.

He cited Professor Odora Hoppers views on the consequences of modern western science in Africa:

- Epistemological disenfranchisement;
- Imposition of a Western paradigm that is cruel, blind and has no place for defeated knowledge's or alternative theories of knowledge;
- Absence of cognizance and moral sensitivity to local conditions;
- Cognitive injustice;
- Condescending and paternalist;
- Production of paradigmatic opposites, for example, traditional vs modern; oral vs written and printed; literate vs illiterate; rural and agrarian vs urban and industrialized; and
- Trivialisation of the entire mode of life and the spiritual framework of millions of people.

He stated that an epistemology of hope is an open epistemology –a complexity theory of knowledge and IKS. This involves:



- A recognition of the trappings of simple theories of knowledge on which higher education is premised;
- Transcending disciplinary boundaries;
- Going beyond over-implications and over-regularization of knowledge;
- Going from generic schema retrieval to a situation-specific knowledge assembly;
- Going beyond empiricism, reductionism and positivism;
- The use of multiple mental and pedagogical representations;
- Acceptance of multiple truths and knowledge's;
- The promotion of multiple alternative systems of linkage among knowledge elements or multiple interconnectedness; and
- An approach that implements and promotes cognitive flexibility.

IKS in the Higher Education Ecosystem

In his discussion of IKS in the higher education ecosystem, Prof. Seleti pointed out that 90% of the world's products and services are designed for 10% of the world's population. It is on the basis of this that he argued that IKS should focus on delivering game-changing solutions and that initiatives not just be business as usual. It should focus on setting ambitious targets; i.e. how can IKS promote access to equality despite widening income inequality. IKS should seek to do more (performance) for less (costs) for more (people). He pointed to the subtle difference between "doing well and good" and "doing well by doing good". And he emphasized that IKS should align with the government's National Development Policy, i.e. Vision 2030, which defines the government's targeted outcomes. These include a long and healthy life; decent employment; a skilled and capable workforce; rural development; protected and enhanced natural resources; and creating a better South Africa.

Knowledge Governance

Prof. Seleti started by posing the question: What is knowledge governance? According to him, knowledge governance is about goal setting, law making and regulation setting, to institutionalize patterns of interaction which become fixed rules of the games between different actors in the knowledge generation, exploitation, distribution and dissemination system. He argued that the way knowledge is governed – or how it ought to be governed – is related to how knowledge is created and valued in society. The concept of knowledge governance, therefore, speaks to establishing



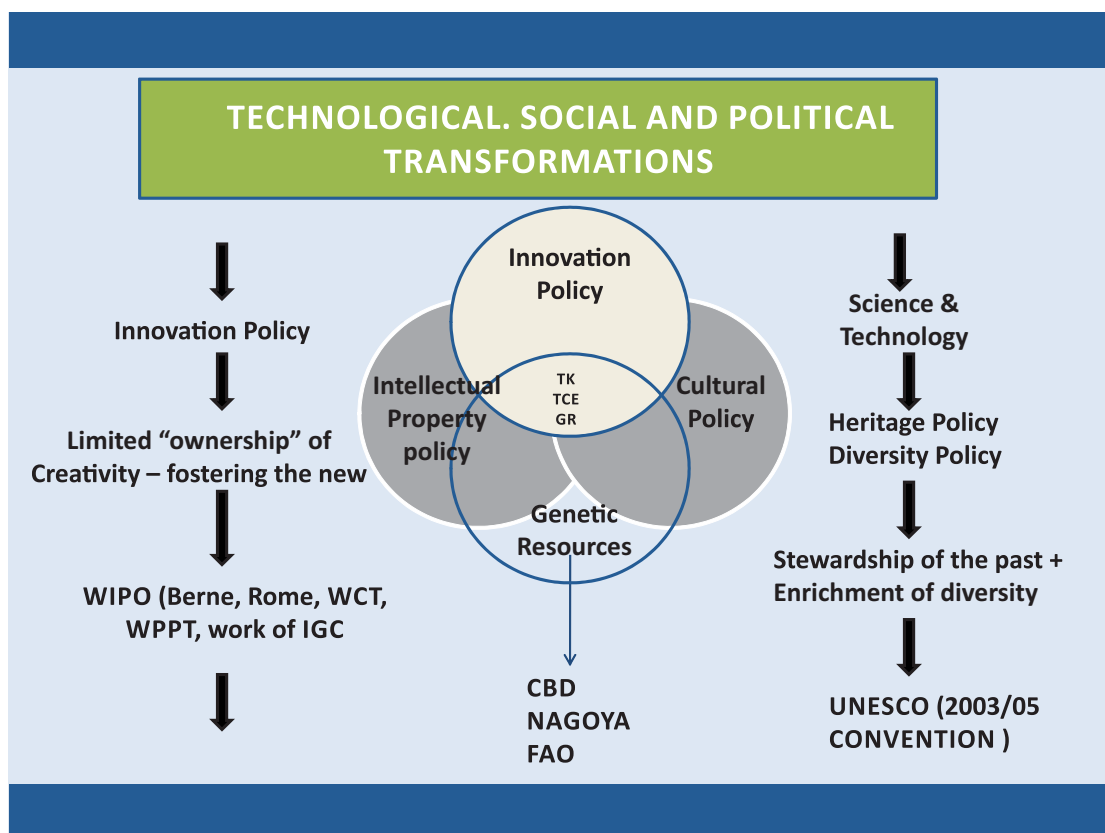
oversight over the processes of knowledge production, exploitation, distribution and access. So the activities of knowledge governance should entail the development of policies and strategies for managing a national system of innovation. In this case, knowledge governance speaks to the *politics* of knowledge production, exploitation, distribution and the strategic management of the national innovation system in an integrated way for sustainable competitive advantage.

Intellectual Property (IP) Governance of the Protection of Traditional Knowledge

According to Prof. Seleti, the protecting traditional knowledge involves the following:

- Policy – to set overall goals and directions;
- Law – to articulate policy through legal principles and rights and duties;
- Practical tools – to take full advantage of and supplement the law; and
- Consultation and capacity building – to strengthen policy formulation and enable effective use of law and practical tools.

In Figure 1 illustrates the Technological, Social and Political Transformations



Intellectual Property (IP) & Knowledge Governance Framework for the NSI

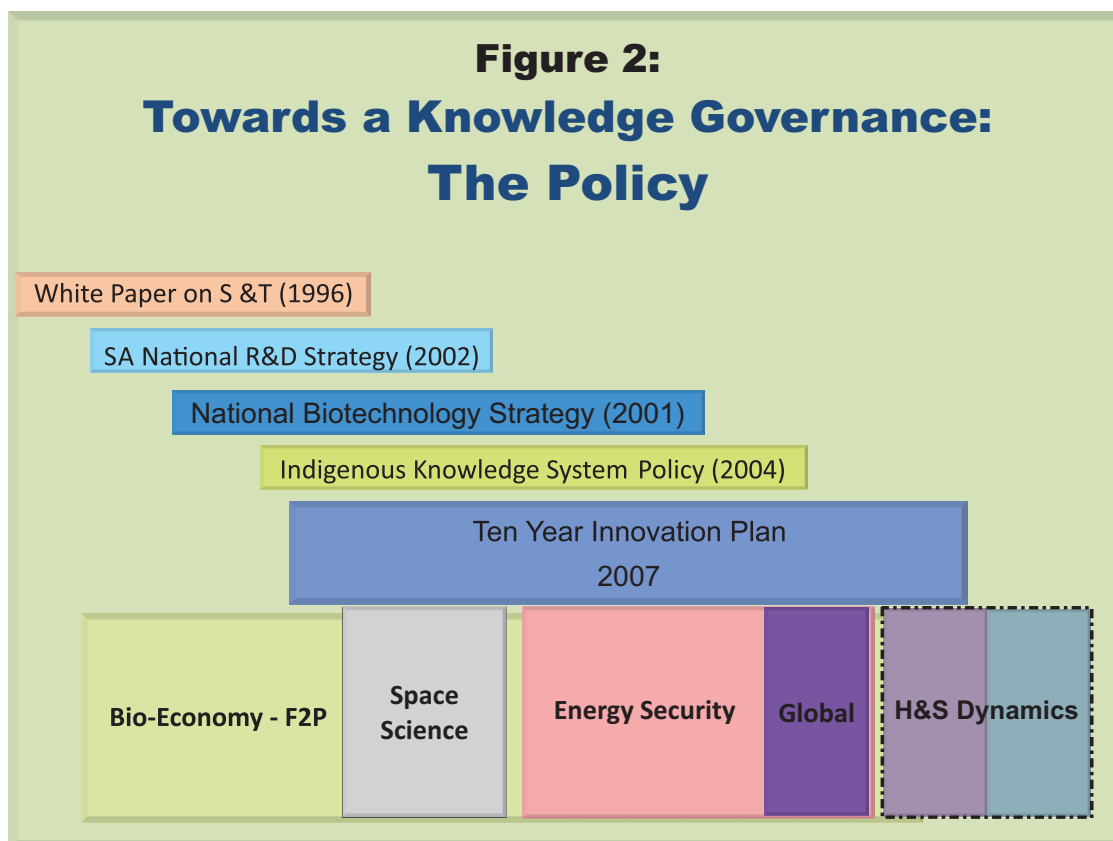
In his discussion of the IP & Knowledge governance framework for the National System of Innovation (NSI), Prof. Seleti stipulates the following:

Create legislative mandates that are clear for the key role players;

- Make provision for a legislated and ministerial-level organization with responsibility for policy, resource allocation, M&E and the introduction and administration of relevant laws;
- Clarify institutional arrangements, roles and governance models;
- Create a professional body or bodies legislated to promote good practices and standards;
- Enact of a full range of intellectual property laws; and
- Create knowledge management legislation that establishes information management systems for the NSI.

In Figure 2 Prof. Seleti provides the following framework toward a knowledge governance policy landscape.





Policy Mandate for National IKS Office (NIKSO)

Prof. Seleti stipulated the policy mandate of NIKSO as follows:

- NIKSO was established to nurture national IKS priorities through proactive engagement in the field of science and technology;
- Through an interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach, the activities of NIKSO are aimed at opening new vistas for academic practices for greater scientific understanding, promotion and protection through intellectual property rights of communities. Recognition, affirmation and development of IKS will ensure fair and equitable benefit sharing of IK resources with indigenous communities;
- The initiative aims at fostering better understanding of the interface of IKS with culture and science and culture and technology in a manner that gives recognition to traditional customs and practices. In essence, it will provide the bedrock for the generation of new knowledge and new consciousness.



Enabling Policies for the Protection of IKS

RESEARCH ETHICS

- The research ethics policy is in response to the continued exploitation of communities' indigenous knowledge and resources.
- The IKS research ethics policy reinforce the protection of indigenous knowledge by emphasizing that research involving communities is associated with a process of meaningful engagement and mutual exchange between the researcher(s) and the IK community concerned.
- The principles stipulated in the policy accentuate amongst others the following key elements: - community consultation, informed consent, intellectual property, respect for indigenous/local community's protocol and cultural practices.

DATABASE POLICY

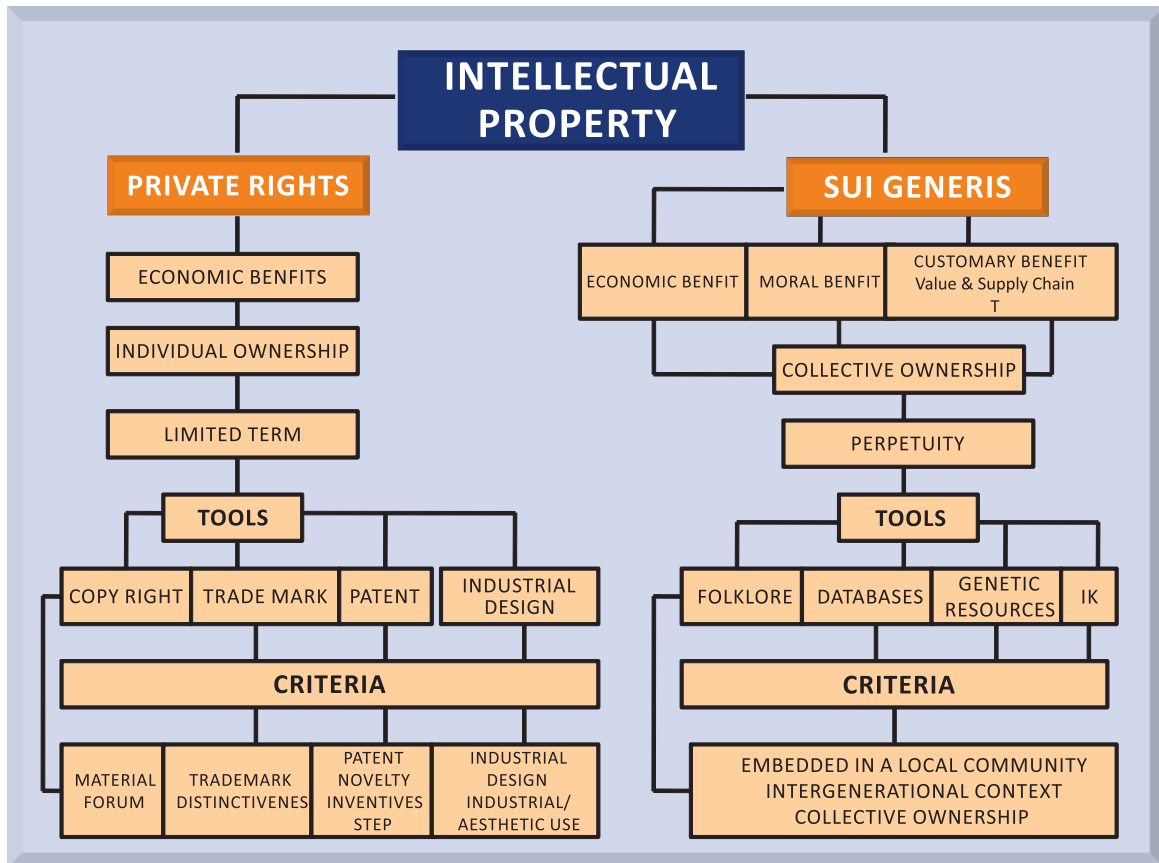
- The preservation, protection and promotion of Indigenous Knowledge (IK), innovations and practices of local and indigenous communities are of key importance for developing countries specifically in South Africa.
- The overall purpose of the IK database policy is to protect IK resources from unfair commercial exploitation and to ensure recognition of the source of the material is documented when IK resources are used towards new innovation.
- The policy aims to ensure that the IK material is retained, treasured by the appropriate communities and used in accordance with their concerns/wishes; and to generate new knowledge to assist with innovation.

1

Why Sui Generis Legislation – Why Legislation of a Special Kind?

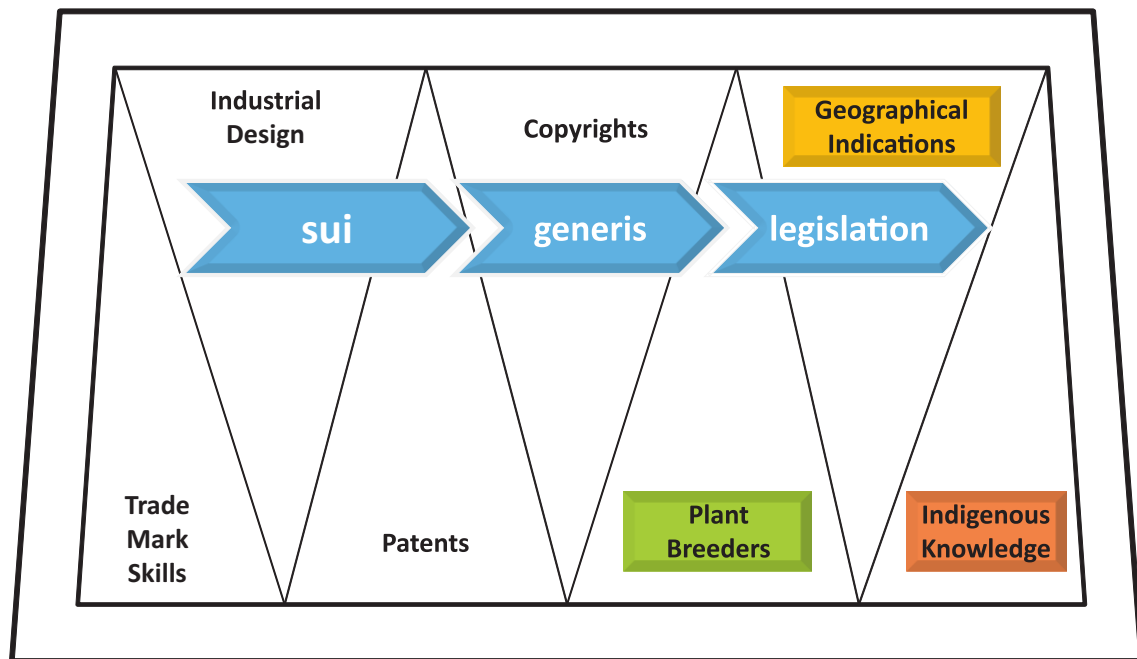
- South Africa's current legislation and its concomitant amendments by the Department of Trade and Industry on intellectual property rights (which include provisions on ownership and authorship, material form, originality, beneficiaries, duration of protection and rights in derivative works) cannot accommodate and adequately protect IK.
- While there is robust consensus that indeed indigenous knowledge is worthy of protection, there appears to be some disagreement on how best to protect indigenous knowledge, with two main options being put forward:
 - 1. Using the existing IP rights system; and
 - 2. Developing a *sui generis* system of IP rights.





Civil Society





Other Measures

Prof. Seleti Looked at other national measures such as:

- National Environmental Management Act 1998:
 - Access and benefit sharing provisions
 - Granting of Access to GR through a permit system
- Pharmacopeia;
 - Fragmentation
 - Technical challenges
- NRS;
- Administrative options
 - Accreditation and certification framework for IKS holders
 - Education/public awareness
- The Accreditation and Certification of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and Practitioners:
 - To affirm Indigenous Knowledge as a knowledge domain on its own merit;
 - To recognize and acknowledge the professional status of the Indigenous Knowledge holders and practitioners;



- To recognize the institutions, governance structures, approaches to quality assurance, rules and codes of practice inherent in this system;
- To provide guidelines for the development of the accreditation and certification approach which complies with the SAQA and NQF prescripts;
- To establish a regulatory body to oversee the operation, functionality, administration and governance of the newly established system for the accreditation and certification of IK holders and practitioners;
- To promote social justice by facilitating access to, as well as mobility and progression within, education and training career paths; and
- To provide for the protection of the public through the establishment of competency standards and quality assured practices.

DST- IKS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Prof. Seleti stipulated a number of areas with regard to Department of Science and Technology

(DST) public engagement:

- Institutional and systemic promotion;
- Intellectual property promotion;
- Natural justice bio-cultural protocols workshops in communities;
- Distributing materials that promote the Bachelor of Indigenous Knowledge Systems;
- Rand Easter Show to the general public;
- Through engagement with communities on bio-prospecting;
- Regional promotion through the biannual Southern African Development Community IKS Policy Conference;
- Participation and hosting of conferences;
- Annual IKS expos; and
- National Science Week.



Innovations Systems Perspective

Prof. Seleti stipulated a number of areas with regard to Department of Science and Technology (DST) public engagement:

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- National Science Week.

Innovations Systems Perspective

- Components of a National System of Innovation(NSI);
- Innovations Systems Perspective; and
- South African Innovation Value Chain.

Components of a National System of Innovation(NSI)

NSI is defined (World Bank 2008) as a set of functional institutions, organizations and policies that interact constructively in pursuit of a common set of social and economic goals and objectives, and that uses the introduction of innovation as the key promoter of change.

The key features of Innovations Systems Perspective

Prof. Seleti defined the Innovation Systems Perspectives (ISP) as the use of the innovation lens in the design, implementation and evaluation of the activities of the various actor"s involved in the innovation process. Its main features are:

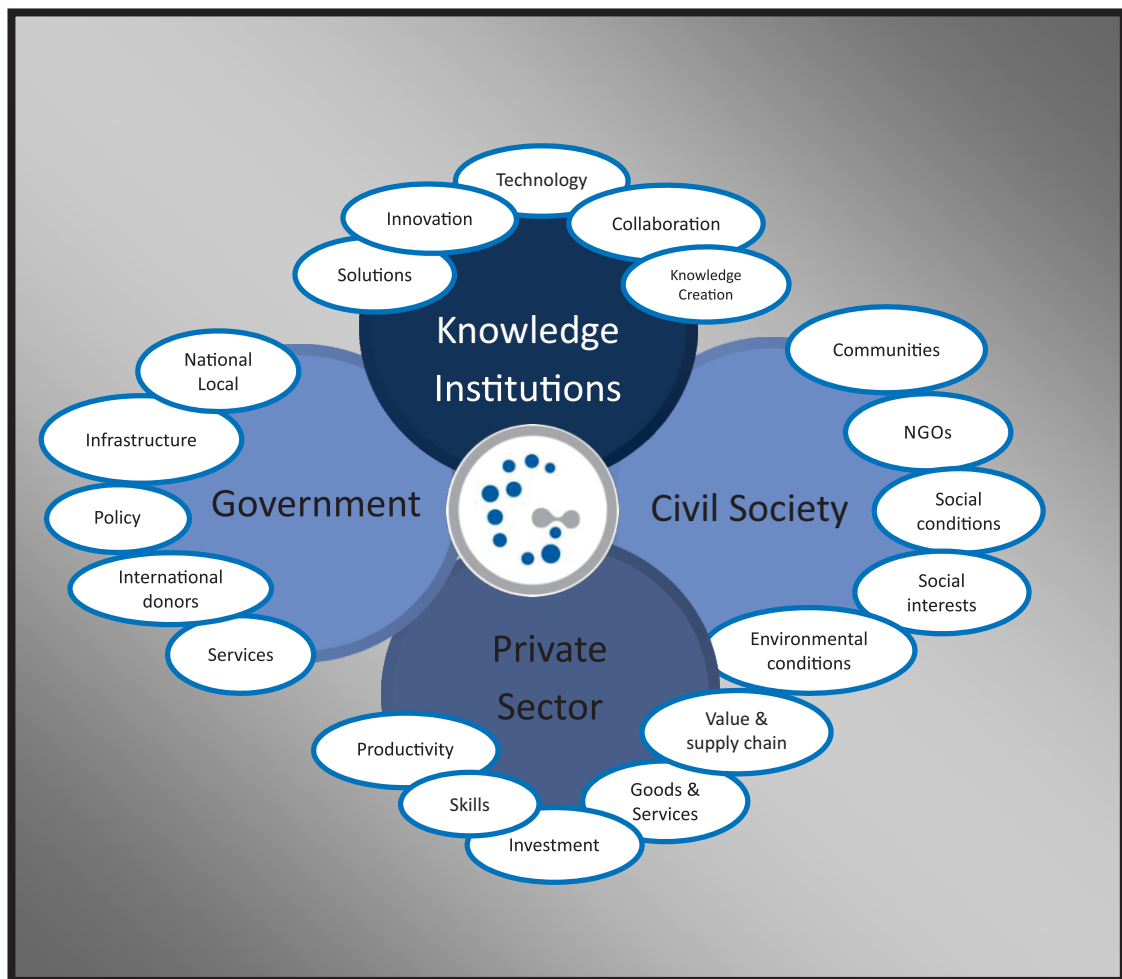


- Focuses on innovation (rather than research/technology/ knowledge) as its organizing principle;
- Helps to identify the scope of the actors involved and the wider set of relationships in which innovation is embedded;
- Recognizes that innovation systems are social systems, focusing on connectivity and learning as well as the dynamic nature of the process;
- Leads us to new and more flexible organizations of research and to a new type of policymaking for science, technology and innovation;
- Emphasizes that partnerships and linkages are an integral part of the innovation system; and
- Recognizes that innovation is not linear and there are many types of innovations.

In his discussion of the shift to inclusive innovation, he defined it as follows:

"Inclusive innovation is any innovation that leads to affordable access of quality goods and services, creating livelihood opportunities for the excluded population, primarily at the base of the pyramid and on a long-term sustainable basis with a significant outreach."





Institutionalization of IKS in SA

The institutionalization of IKS in South Africa involves the following:

- National Recordal System (knowledge management);
- Interfacing IKS in with the education systems;
- Research development and human capital development;
- Applied research and technology transfer; and
- Commercialization.

Research Development and Human Capital Development

- Ring-fenced research fund;
 - R10-million (inadequate to support old and new projects)
 - 19 Projects
 - 52 post-graduate students

2 IKS research chairs, at UKZN and Walter Sisulu University



- 24 post-graduate students
- IKS Centre of Excellence (CoE) to be finalised;
 - B.IKS approved and to be launched
- Policy development;
- Interfacing of IKS in the NSI;
 - Interdepartmental committee
 - Intra-DST coordination of IKS activities
- Development and management of IKS bilateral and multilateral agreements
 - Regional
 - Continental
 - International

Knowledge Management

- Knowledge Infrastructure for IKS;
 - National Recordal System
 - Pharmacopeia
 - Museums, archives and libraries IKS resources
- Performance assessment and quality assurance of IKS;
 - Accreditation certification as quality assurance
 - Performance assessment for improved efficiencies
 - Performance assessment for compliance

(RDI) IKS Innovation

- IKS-based inclusive innovation;
- Commercialisation;
- Institutionalisation of innovation in IKS;
 - Centres of Competence
 - Institutes
 - Innovation skills



IKS Alignment with other DST Programmes

Programme / Entity	Activity	Outcomes
Programme 1 Legal Unit	Drafting the sui generis bil	Driving the Bill
Programme 2 (Res, Dev & Innovation) NIPMO Health and Biotechnology	Management of IP Portfolios from IKS Bioeconomy	IP Management Knowledge Exploitation/ innovation
Programme 3 (International Cooperation)	SADC IKS Workshops Bilaterals and multilaterals	Policy development & institutional development
Programme 4 (Human Capital and Knowledge Systems)	Funding of NRS infrastructure Knowledge Generation i.e. SARCHi chairs & CoE	Knowledge Generation, Human Capital and infrastructure
Programme 5 (Socio-Economic Partnerships)	Innovation for poverty alleviation Sustainable livelihoods	Technology transfer Enterprise development



Some of the Colloquium Participants



CULTURE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND IPR ISSUES IN IKS RESEARCH, TEACHING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

By



P.J. Kabudi

Faculty of Law, University of Dar es Salaam

Introduction

Professor Kabudi's presentation was structured as follows: first he posed a problematique with regard to the issues of culture, human rights and intellectual property rights (IPR) in Indigenous Knowledge Systems research, teaching, learning and community engagement in Africa's higher education. Second: he looked at the issue of contextualizing and conceptualizing culture, human rights and intellectual property rights (IPR) in IKS. Third: is an analysis of the conquest, alienation and domination of the African peoples by Western cultures and educational systems including the imposition of Western legal systems. Fourth: the appropriation and criminalization of the colonized people in using their own resources, knowledge systems and cultures. Fifth: the liberation and empowering of the African peoples, their cultures and knowledge systems and the associated challenges.



Problematic

In his discussion of the problematic, he raised a number of issues: First, “indigenous cultural knowledge has always been an open treasure box for the unfettered appropriation of items of value to Western civilisation. He argued that while the West and African governments assiduously protect rights to valuable knowledge for themselves, indigenous people have never been accorded similar rights over their cultural knowledge. Second, existing Western intellectual property laws support, promote and excuse the wholesale, uninvited appropriation of whatever indigenous item strike Western fancy and promises profit, with no obligation or expectation to allow the originators of the knowledge a say or a share in the proceeds.

Contextualisation and Conceptualisation

He interrogated the above issues by posing the following questions: What is the context in which we are studying culture, human rights and intellectual property rights relating to IKS? How should we conceptualise IKS and develop, adopt or adapt research and teaching of IKS and community engagement in higher education?

Conquest, Alienation and Domination

Prof. Kabudi argued that the conquest of the African people by colonial powers led to their alienation from their culture and domination by Western culture and education system. He stated further that the imposition of colonial laws and legal systems led to the subordination and marginalization of African customary laws and traditional dispute settlement mechanisms.

Appropriation and Criminalisation

Prof. Kabudi stated that colonizers declared conquered countries as *terra nullius* in order to justify the appropriation of all property of the conquered and colonised people. This led to the criminalisation of the colonised people from using what were their own indigenous resources, cultures and knowledge systems.



Liberation and Empowerment

The promotion of indigenous African ways of knowing and knowledge production will lead to the liberation of the peoples, their culture and their knowledge systems from domination and control of colonial and imperial powers. However, this process of empowerment of the people in IKS is confronted by legal and other challenges: First, classical intellectual property rights (IPR) is much influenced by capitalist development and attendant individualism as opposed to the socio-economic setting of rural African communities, where IKS is considered as a communal/common property. Second, existing national and international IPRs regimes do not acknowledge and recognise customary laws and systems developed and used by the people to protect, safeguard and perpetuate their heritage and IKS. Third, the IPR/IKS discourse is dominated by the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and World Intellectual Property Organisation debates. The challenge is how do we participate, influence and impact it?

Recommendations and Conclusion

On the basis of the above discussion, Prof. Kabudi came up with a number of suggestions on the way forward:

1. On IPR and IKS, he suggested the need to go beyond the classical IPR approach in our research and teaching of IKS, i.e. to explore other legal options for the protection of IKS and explore the possibility of a different articulation of IKS and IPR, which embedded aspects of customary laws and systems; and
2. With regard to community engagement in IKS research and teaching, he had the opinion that since theory informs practice and practice enriches theory, we have to go beyond viewing communities as mere sources of IKS to be documented by researchers and scholars. Communities have to be actively involved in planning and implementing IKS research and teaching agendas. There should be genuine and mutual partnership between communities and institutions of higher learning.

He concluded by stating that African institutions of higher learning and research need to position IKS as a priority in their research and teaching activities. They have to explore new approaches, i.e. *sui generis* systems for protecting IK, innovations and practices beyond the current IPR system that exclusively protects individual rights and whose objectives are exclusively commercial.





Prof Franco Frescura
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University of KwaZulu-Natal

Discussant

We have been presented with a number of ideas and ponderings on our subject today. Prof Nkondo has spoken about the nature of the spoken and written word and how, essentially, language is not only culture, but it is also a custodian of indigenous philosophy and thought. He quoted a number of examples where traditional wisdom has reflected a deeper understanding of the social condition, thus highlighting the value of traditional knowledge to the individual.

Two local proverbs come to mind.

- If you sit by the river for long enough, you will see the bodies come floating by: consolation at a time of strife; and



- To reach the mountain you must follow a zig-zag path, which laid open to me the whole structure of my Ph.D.

Prof. Seleti spent much of his paper discussing not only the social role of IKS, but also the ethics surrounding the research and exploitation of IKS. In many ways IKS is the glue that binds many communities and one must take care that in research, we do not also destroy. Much debate surrounds the touchy issue of pharmacological exploitation but other areas also exist. Some areas of traditional culture have become the plundering ground of tourism organizers and commercial artefact manufacturers, none of which have ever made a return investment in the areas they have sought inspiration and knowledge from.

Researchers need to be wary of the reputations they have been developing, that of people climbing onto the backs of the poor in their quest for higher academic and financial awards, and then forgetting about them and moving on to higher rewards.

Prof Kabudi took the bull by the horns and effectively, and rightly, accused Western entrepreneurs of grand larceny, seeing the appropriation of IKS as part of a continuing process of past colonial domination. The colonial imposition of foreign legal systems has contributed to such post-colonial behaviours.

The process of IKS appropriation is strangely similar to those experienced in the colonial expropriation of land, which survives to the present day in the form of some racist attitudes. Right-wing whites in this country still uphold the opinion that blacks have no knowledge of how to look after land, whites do, and therefore whites have the right to retain ownership of the land. Obviously the West continues to uphold such values in its plunderings of our intellectual resources. And just by the way, it is my experience that Arabian sheiks and Chinese business suits are just as guilty of this practice.

Prof Kabudi also proposed a three-way partnership involving communities, business and academia. This cannot take place without the correct legal systems being in place.

We have a prayer here, *Mayebuye iAfrica*. This conference is about returning Africa to its indigenous owners.



I come from a country which underwent 350 years of colonial oppression, where our art works were exported to populate the museums of our conquerors, where our language was suppressed, where my people were denied a voice in our own government, and where, for a long time, government was entirely in the hands of foreigners, where we only obtained our freedom after we conducted a struggle of liberation and military uprising, which made the country ungovernable, where we were subjected to blatant racism and ethnic discrimination that survives to the present day, where our colonial past has left us with a legacy of a foreign legal system, of post-colonial crime and of post-colonial corruption.

I am, of course, referring to the country of my birth, Italy.



Some of the Colloquium Participants



AFRICAN IDENTITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH KISWAHILI

By



**H .O. Kaya & L. Rushubirwa, Indigenous African Knowledge Systems
University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa)**

Introduction

The presentation is structured as follows: first, a critical discussion of Kiswahili as an indigenous African language by interrogating the various paradigms (Eurocentric & Afrocentric) on Kiswahili. Second: a discussion of the role of Kiswahili in promoting African identity. Third: Kiswahili and Africa-led globalization. Fourth: the role of Kiswahili in promoting sustainable development. Fifth: an examination of challenges facing Kiswahili. Finally: recommendations on the future of Kiswahili.

The presentation is divided into six parts. Part one contains a critical discussion of Kiswahili as an indigenous African language by interrogating the various paradigms known as Eurocentric and Afrocentric. Part two discusses the role of Kiswahili in promoting African identity, and part three describes Kiswahili and Africa-led globalization status. Part four presents the role of Kiswahili in promoting sustainable development while part five examines the challenges facing Kiswahili as a language of African identity and sustainable development. A conclusion is then drawn and recommendations made on the future of Kiswahili.



Kiswahili as an Indigenous African Language: A Critique of Eurocentricism

The presenters started by defining the major concepts covered in the papers: They defined Indigenous Knowledge as the long-standing traditions and practices of specific local communities which encompass the skills, innovations and belief systems of people in their respective environments and communities, accumulated over the years and applied to maintain and/or improve their livelihoods. This knowledge is usually transmitted orally, using the local language, from one generation to the other. Indigenous African languages were defined in the context of the presentation as those languages that are aboriginal to the people of Africa.

The presenters made a critique of the various Eurocentric views on Kiswahili, such as the view that Kiswahili is not an indigenous African language due to its “dual nature” (African and Arab). The implication of this view is that the development of Kiswahili would not have been possible without the Arabic language. They argued that this denies Africa the credit for one of its own achievements. Other Eurocentric perceptions are that Kiswahili and other African languages have little role in the sustainable development of Africa because development is language-neutral, i.e. any language could be used effectively to promote development. Moreover, Kiswahili, like other indigenous African languages, has not developed enough to meet the challenges of globalization and to express modern science and technology.

The presenters revealed the irony that Swahili has a longer written tradition, compared to most “indigenous European languages”, i.e. extinct and never written European languages such as Pict, Vandal, Gallic, Saxon, etc. The vast majority of these indigenous European languages are now extinct and have left no identifiable trace. The modern European languages such as English, French, Portuguese and Spanish that were imposed on Africa during colonialism are in reality hybrid languages, heavily influenced by the equally hybrid languages of Latin and Greek. The local languages of most European societies were constrained to borrow heavily from Latin and Greek in order to express abstract and theoretical ideas. In this regard, it is ironic how Eurocentric linguists of colonial times sought to contrast Europe's languages with those of Africa on the basis of capacity for abstract thought of the former, a quality the latter supposedly lacked.



Kiswahili and its current achievements in its development are the products of the collective genius of the African people themselves who just borrowed words from Arabic and other languages as English, French and other European languages borrowed from Latin and Greek to meet certain functional needs in the growing global pool of knowledge. Therefore, Kiswahili is no more hybrid than English or French. Kiswahili has some Arabic and other loan words due to the fact that the language was developed in a geographical area where individuals and communities of different ethnic backgrounds engaged extensively in trade. In this regard the origins of Kiswahili are no different from those of several other extant languages. The influence of Arabic on Kiswahili reflects the capability of Kiswahili to interface with other knowledge systems from within and outside Africa. If the loan words in Kiswahili were from some language regarded as Bantu there would be little discussion from Eurocentric linguistic sources. Moreover, if, according to European classification, Arabic is regarded as belonging to some distinct Afro-Asiatic language family, this language group has its origins in East Africa.

The linguistic classification “Afro-Asiatic” was coined mainly on the basis that Arabic was developed in Arabia, a region of West Asia. Yet there are more logically compelling reasons to regard Arabia as Africa Minor (Eurocentric discourse speaks of Asia Minor with regard to places like Turkey) than as part of Asia. Therefore, one can question the existing boundaries of the African continent by stating that there is no reason why Africa should end at the Red Sea and not at the Arabian Gulf, given that the Arabian Peninsula itself formed part of a common land mass with Africa before the great rift. The decision to make Africa end at the Red Sea rather than at the Arabian/ Persian Gulf was made neither by Africans nor by Arabs but by Europeans. The presenters went on to argue that Arabic itself is an African language because it is the mother tongue of many Africans, i.e. the Egyptians, Berbers, Nubians, Tuaregs and Sudanese, therefore, it embodies one important credential that defines an African language.

The above discussion demonstrates critical implications (linguistic, sociological, etc.) that flow from the arbitrary assumptions of Eurocentric discourse influenced by Eurocentric assumptions and values.



Kiswahili and African Identity

Kiswahili has contributed to African national and regional identity by its ability to develop from a minority language in the eighteenth century to a regional language that brings together people of diverse cultural and linguistic origin in East and Central Africa and beyond. Kiswahili is now recognized as a language of African Union (AU) and is spoken by more than 100 million people globally, across ethnic, national and racial boundaries. In this context the presenters defined national and regional identity as a person's sense of belonging to a country or an African region. They defined a national and regional language as a language that is widely spoken, understood and accepted by a given national community as constituting their common heritage, serving as their collective cultural and political symbols and identity, and expressing their common ideals and aspirations.

In both the colonial and post-colonial periods the secularization of Kiswahili has encompassed its use for cultural, administrative, economic and political purposes, i.e. as a means of expressing and sharing knowledge, skills, experiences and cross-cultural values among diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Different racial and ethnic groups in Africa use Kiswahili to share their cultural values; the governments of the different countries in the region have used Kiswahili as a national and regional language to explain and articulate to the people their various development policies in agriculture, education, environmental protection, culture, etc. This has enabled governments to reduce the cost of administration and governance, and create national harmony among diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

The presenters gave the example of Tanzania, where Kiswahili has been used to promote cultural self-reliance and self-development. Various governmental policies, e.g. in education (Education for Self-Reliance), in agriculture (*Siasa ni Kilimo*, i.e. Politics is Agriculture); in natural resources conservation (*Mali Asili na Wanyama Pori*, i.e. Natural Resources and Wildlife) etc. have been articulated in Kiswahili. In order to enable more citizens to have access to the legal and justice system, law courts have increasingly used Kiswahili, and specialist committees have been appointed to work out and develop an adequate legal vocabulary. Tanzania has utilized Kiswahili not only as an expression of the African identity but also as an expression of the people being Tanzanians. It has become part of Tanzania's patriotism. In a cultural-nationalist context, Tanzania has viewed Kiswahili as a national resource and given it educational roles as a medium of instruction in schools.



In the case of regional identity and unity for sustainable development, Kiswahili has become one of East and Central Africa's most important socialization instruments among different ethnic groups. In the process, it has promoted a comprehensive culture of its own that transcends language as a mere communication tool. The Swahili culture perpetuates not only a single heritage but multiple heritages encompassing a variety of cultures symbolized by food, architecture, greeting and eating habits and dress that brings Africans, Arabs and Indians together. It enhances social interaction between different social groups, breaking down ethnic and racial loyalties and identities. People from different social, ethnic and racial groups intermingle with ease, marking a decline in ethnic and racial divisions. This, however, does not mean that these social and racial groups abandon their core cultures. Members of different ethnic group organize themselves to meet their ethnic socialization needs, which include wedding rituals, burial rituals and other community festivities, using their ethnic languages and Kiswahili interchangeably.

The presenters also gave the example of Uganda, where Kiswahili played a uniting role in the armed forces during the colonial and post-colonial period. The language helped to ease the tensions between the Baganda and Nilotes in the military. This tension necessitated the use of a common language for communication between them, and Kiswahili became the language of choice across ethnic boundaries. When Idi Amin came to power and eliminated many of the Acholi and Langi members of the armed forces, Kiswahili remained the lingua franca of the army. Outside the army, Amin used Kiswahili to build his political base and national identity. Kiswahili gained more of the national identity and grew in importance after Milton Obote's return from exile to Uganda and the formation of the National Resistance Army in the south under Yoweri Museveni. It was adopted later in 1986 as the official language of the army. The increasing functional role of Kiswahili in Kenya and Tanzania as neighbouring states served to assure the Ugandans that Kiswahili was not just a military language but a part of the regional heritage.

The presenters went further to look at the status of Kiswahili as the national language in Kenya. They indicated that in Kenya Kiswahili has been gaining strength since the mid-1980s due to a deliberate push by the government. It was made a compulsory subject in all secondary schools. The expansion of university education in the 1980s and '90s has produced a substantial number of Kiswahili scholars and teachers. This has created a cadre of well-trained Kiswahili teachers to promote the language. Book publishing has expanded considerably in Kenya,



which produces more Kiswahili textbooks than the other East and Central African countries, including Tanzania. The broadcasting media (radio and TV) in Kenya are also thriving. Kiswahili programmes dominate the main radio and television channels. Kenyan Kiswahili soaps and dramas are very popular in East and Central Africa. This has had the effect of popularising Kenyan Kiswahili in the regions. The recent revival of the East African Community has brought East African countries and peoples closer together and Kiswahili is cemented as the language of the East African community and the regional identity.

The presenters then addressed the importance of Kiswahili as a language of African identity and unity in the Francophone countries of Central Africa, i.e. the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, and Burundi. In the DRC Kiswahili is one of the most important and popular languages, together with Lingala and Kikongo. However, Kiswahili is the most widespread of the three, especially in the economically rich Shaba Province (formally Katanga). The current President of the DRC, Joseph Kabila, grew up in Tanzania and tends to be inclined to promote Kiswahili as a unifying language in the country.

In Rwanda and Burundi the genocide of the early 1990s and the subsequent upheavals have paradoxically increased the knowledge and use of Kiswahili. This is partly due to the millions of refugees who fled to the neighbouring countries of Tanzania, Kenya and the DRC. These people acquired knowledge of Kiswahili in the process because the language is widely used in the refugee camps. They returned to their respective countries and took Kiswahili with them. In Rwanda, the new regime and its army is made up largely of former refugees. These are people who grew up in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and the DRC, and are therefore fluent Kiswahili speakers. They are thus well disposed towards the promotion of Kiswahili in Rwanda. Moreover, a substantial number of the DRC Tutsi had for a long time emphasized their use of Kiswahili rather than Kinyarwanda to reduce the chances of their being mistaken for Rwandan immigrants. Kiswahili became a kind of linguistic asylum for them to reduce their ethnic vulnerability as speakers of Kinyarwanda, the language of Rwanda.

The above discussion implies that Kiswahili is increasingly playing a unifying role in the two African regions. The peoples of these regions are increasingly realizing that they need Kiswahili to be able to survive and operate effectively in the sub-region and beyond. For instance, a person visiting refugee and other communities in South Africa inhabited by people



from the two regions will be amazed to hear them communicating easily in Kiswahili as one people. This is in spite of the variety of dialects of the Kiswahili spoken. Other Africans, including South Africans, who associate with these Kiswahili-speaking immigrant communities are interested and are increasing making the effort to learn the language. This demonstrates that Kiswahili is in practice growing into the cause of promoting pan-Africanism. The sustainability of this growth of pan-Africanism through Kiswahili is demonstrated by the fact that most of the speakers are young people. The presenters stated that apart from its contribution to the mental liberation of Africans, Kiswahili is contributing to the reduction of the European linguistic dominance on the continent and elevating the role of African languages to a more central position. The increasing attempts by African intellectuals to write in Kiswahili and other indigenous African languages is not only an exercise in reaffirming the dignity of these African indigenous languages, but is also a courageous attempt to counteract the influence of European languages on African minds.

Kiswahili and Africa-led Globalization

In the context of this discussion the presenters defined globalization as processes that promote worldwide exchanges of national and cultural resources. This is served by advances in transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, including the rise of the internet. This process generates further interdependence of economic and cultural activities. The presenters stated that Kiswahili provides the world with a language that fits linguistic and cultural globalization. This is due to the fact that compared to English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, its spread and use is not associated with the establishment of colonies. Kiswahili has grown as a language of choice by millions of people in East and Central Africa. It is penetrating different parts of Africa and the West through its speakers' migration, both voluntary and as a consequence of ethnic wars, including the fight against colonialism and apartheid. Refugees from East Africa's neighbours learn Kiswahili during their short stay in Kenya or Tanzania, and those who immigrate to Europe and North America keep the language alive. There is also an increase in demand for Kiswahili translators by various global agencies that offer services to law enforcement, hospitals, legal services, the rural and urban development sectors, immigration services, airline companies and schools. The number of people learning Kiswahili in institutions of higher education all over the world over is increasing and the language is currently taught as an international African language in more than 100 universities and higher education institutions in North America, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. Within Africa, Kiswahili is taught at around a dozen universities in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, DRC, Madagascar, Ghana, Sudan, Nigeria and Libya.



Another area that promotes Kiswahili's contribution to Africa-led globalization is in the global performing arts. The presenters indicated that hip-hop is no longer confined to the West, where it has strong roots. In East and Central Africa, Swahili hip-hop is gaining much popularity among the youth. The global dimension of hip-hop plays a role in attracting non-Swahili speakers to the lyrics and the associated performances even when the language used is not fully understood. Hip-hop offers a new avenue for learning Kiswahili through soft emersion and is away to share indigenous knowledge and cultural values that are not easily accessible through print media. The attraction of Kiswahili hip-hop music to non-native speakers of Kiswahili is evident in the number of foreigners, particularly students and tourists, who buy hip-hop CDs of this music, and their keen interest in learning both the lyrics and the accompanying dance moves. The poetic nature of the lyrics makes it relatively easy for Kiswahili learners to pick up the language and the dance moves. Interest in attaining fluency and high proficiency levels of the language is also on the rise, both at institutions in the West and at language centres in Kenya and Tanzania. A good example is the MS-training Centre for Development in Tanzania that, for many years, attracted only a handful of learners from Europe. Currently, they register thousands of students from Europe, the Americas, and non-Kiswahili speaking countries in Africa. These examples demonstrate that Kiswahili is attaining a global prominence. It has and continues to be used to shape the understandings of the world about Africa. This development is facilitated by the growing use of Kiswahili in world media such as the Voice of America, Radio Deutsche Welle, BBC radio and television, and Asian radio and TV programmes. Kiswahili has been identified by Microsoft for the development of scanner OCR that would identify Kiswahili text. It was selected due to its status as a strong and widely spoken and understood indigenous African language that can stand a global test in business and communication.

The presenters indicated that various scholars within and outside Africa are developing manuals in Kiswahili that are intended to facilitate the understanding of how the computer works and how other writing programs such as Word Perfect could be utilized in Kiswahili by Microsoft (MS Word Journal 2002). Kiswahili is one of the prime African languages listed by Microsoft, together with Amharic, Berber, Edo, Ffulfulde, Hausa, Igbo, Kanuri, Oromo, Somali, Sesotho, Setswana, Tigrigna, Tsonga, Venda, Xhosa, Yoruba and isiZulu.



The growing interest in promoting Kiswahili within technology is also demonstrated by the initiative by Vodacom and Celtel phone companies to regularly place advertisements in newspapers in both English and Kiswahili to advertise their services. Both companies have seen the importance of reaching all sectors of the public since buying power and usage does not reside with only the affluent.

Kiswahili and Sustainable Development and Livelihood

The presenters argued that in spite its political, socio-economic and cultural integrative nature in Africa, Kiswahili as an indigenous African language has not been given much attention in Africa's development discourse. This is based on the observation that most of the developmental discourse on Africa has not taken the role of indigenous knowledge and linguistic challenges and prospects seriously. Development is often conceived in a rather narrow sense based on quantitative terms such as the levels GDP, income per capita, etc. There is also the perception among Western scholars and development planners that any language could be used effectively to express African culture, and that development is a language-neutral process. It is further argued that Africa's economic indicators could be improved by sheer hard work by Africans speaking any language, be it English or French. These scholars go on to state that it may be even more appropriate to use “scientific” languages such as English and French as most of the indigenous African languages, including Kiswahili, are incapable of expressing certain scientific and technological concepts and perspectives that are inherent in many academic and scientific fields. However, the presenters used a holistic approach to development as the political, socio-economic and cultural transformation of society, to demonstrate the way Kiswahili promotes sustainable development in East and Central Africa through enhancing cross-border trade and peoples' harmonious interaction.

The border trade in the two regions is conducted in Kiswahili, the African language commonly understood by the majority of the ordinary people, and not in English or French. The cross-border trade is both formal and informal. Most of the informal trade in food and textile items is dominated by women and youth. The presenters also discussed the role played by Kiswahili music as a conduit for regional unity and social cohesion. East and Central African lyrics, melodies and tunes find expression in Kiswahili. They showed that both gospel and secular music is sung by people in the two regions and they provide a wide market for it. Secular music is composed and sung using contemporary themes as experienced by local communities.



It is in this context that they argued that the African music legacy expressed in Kiswahili and originating in East and Central Africa is giving Africa a unique heritage. It reinforces the bond of unity and sense of belonging necessary for the sustainable development of the two regions and the continent as a whole.

The presenters added that in spite of the fact that East Africa as region has many literary works in English, the bulk of literary output, i.e. poetry, drama, prose and essays, is currently written in Kiswahili. Through this literary body of work the people of the region share indigenous knowledge and experiences. In the area of political development, Kiswahili has been the language of political mobilization by African leaders in the region against colonialism and for communicating government policies in the post-colonial period. It is now one of the optimal languages of the East African community and has been declared the lingua franca of the region. Political activities are inspired by the need to develop a common East African market and hence an economic understanding. Therefore, Kiswahili, as the regional language, will facilitate the process.

Kiswahili as a regional common language is also a language of the workplace. It is used in industries, farms, shops, construction sites and for working negotiations. Different workplaces usually have people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; hence the need a common language of communication. Kiswahili provides this opportunity. In Tanzania, where the level of English among the common people is very low, people interact mostly in Kiswahili within the office environment. There is also a substantial amount of evangelical work taking place in East and Central Africa using Kiswahili as the medium of communication and interaction. Even in situations where evangelization is done in English or any other language by the preachers, in most cases it is interpreted into Kiswahili for wide comprehension and audience.

The presenters demonstrated the way the Kiswahili media, both electronic and print, have been a strong cord for uniting the region for sustainable development and regional identity. In Tanzania many newspapers, both private and government-owned, use Kiswahili as the language of expression. The papers are also read in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. They facilitate the sharing of political, economic and social experiences among the people of the respective countries. Radio and television networks also contribute through Kiswahili to promote one culture and regional identity among diverse communities.



On the issue of Kiswahili and gender in sustainable development, the presenters indicated that over half the Africa's population are women, whose roles and contribution to their families and local communities in terms of food security, health, natural resource management, etc. place them at the centre of locallymanageable, cost-effective and sustainable development and livelihood. The gendered nature and role of indigenous African knowledge systems, including indigenous African languages, in sustainable development and community livelihoods often tend to be overlooked by development scholars and agencies. The presenters argued that gender is embedded in all institutions, actions, beliefs and desires that go along with the mapping of language use through communication, interaction and establishment of the social order. They showed that in East and Central Africa, where Kiswahili is widely used in socio-economic, political and cultural communication, women, who are mostly responsible for the food and nutritional needs of their families, possess a detailed awareness of the species and ecosystems which surround them. In traditional agriculture, women are involved in almost all aspects of farming, from seed selection and planting to harvesting, weeding, winnowing and storing grain. They are often the local educators, passing on traditional knowledge and technologies, and acting as traditional birth attendants in many rural societies, where there is no access to imported medical facilities. They are also instrumental in developing and sustaining techniques and designs for textiles, clothing and other valuable forms of traditional cultural expression.

As a result of this gender differentiation and specialization, the indigenous knowledge and skills held by women often differ from those held by men, affecting patterns of access, use, and control, while resulting in different perceptions and priorities for the innovation and use of IKS. This impacts the way in which IKS is disseminated, documented and passed on to future generations. The presenters revealed that most of the rural communities in East and Central Africa are increasingly becoming multi-ethnic. The largest part of the population is composed of women and the youth, who communicate in Kiswahili in production, commerce, entertainment and other social interactions. Knowledge and experiences in these activities are exchanged in Kiswahili.



The Challenges of Kiswahili

The presenters argued that Kiswahili as an indigenous African language faces the same challenges affecting the promotion of Indigenous African Knowledge Systems including other indigenous African languages such as isiZulu, Hausa, etc. for sustainable development and community livelihood. They are perceived as unscientific and not capable of meeting the challenges of globalization, especially in modern science and technology.

As other scholars have argued, the presenters hold the view that the development and growth of Kiswahili as a national and international language has been dictated by demand, both economic and social. Therefore, as long as this demand exists, Kiswahili will continue to develop and expand. In this process, Kiswahili will encounter obstacles both from within and without. Within, its success may arouse narrow nationalism among certain groups or nations, and these could be manipulated by unscrupulous politicians to hamper the adoption of Kiswahili as a national or pan-African language in some of African countries. Within the Kiswahili-speaking communities, there might also arise similar chauvinistic sentiments seeking to reconfine Kiswahili to its “original” coastal shell. These sentiments are already being seen, but being a historical, they will probably not have a great effect over the long term.

Recommendations

On the basis of the above discussion, the presenters recommended that Kiswahili and indigenous African languages in general need to be taken seriously in the development discourse and policy development in Africa. The current continental and global position of Kiswahili provides Africa with an important opportunity for promoting IAKS and explaining Africa's position in the global developmental discourse. It is the most fundamental tool by which African indigenous cultural information and knowledge systems could be easily preserved and communicated within and across cultures and races. However, the presenters realize that since active participation and contribution in the global knowledge economy is not possible without information and communication technology, Kiswahili speakers, promoters and stakeholders have to be proactive in the areas of ICT development. This should involve the development of IKAS research and teaching programmes in Kiswahili that take into account the current global trends



and needs, especially in the areas of general ICT, IAKS in Kiswahili-based computer programs, software, etc. Translating relevant and current information in various fields of IKS available in foreign languages into Kiswahili is paramount. For sustainability, there is need to develop a critical mass of young experts grounded in IAKS Kiswahili and ICT.

The presenters emphasized that the success of these endeavours requires that the different stakeholders of Kiswahili development in all parts of the world work together by cooperating and coordinating their activities, and sharing resources and experiences to avoid duplication and reduce costs. This can be done through joint projects, fellowships, scholarships, external examining, conferences and electronic interaction.



REPOSITORY OF WORLDVIEWS OF NATURE
UNESCO
By



S. Rai
Universalism and Ethical Values for the Environment
Working Group 1

Introduction

Mr. Rai argued that the environment is too important to be left to international bodies to find solutions and inspirations, or to be part of hegemonic politics. This is based on the recognition that most civilisations, religions, cultures and belief systems have concepts, positions or views on humanity's relation to the earth environment and the cosmos. They do not view and conceptualize the environment in the same way. Their relation to the environment and aspiration to protect it is culturally determined, although the intentions may be the same.



Ethics

In his discussion of environmental ethics, he stated that ethical principles derive from theories, revelations or inspirations. Ethical principles give rise to values and practices. Consequently, our behaviour towards the environment and sustainability is very much influenced by our civilisations or belief systems.

Universalism

Mr. Rai made a critique on the universalism of environmental ethical values by arguing against the tendency towards universalising ethical values and attempting to form conventions, treaties and agreements assuming universal values. The failure of compliance and implementation is usually attributed to insufficient information, dissemination and education or politics. On the issue of priority he indicated that we most urgently need action and realistic compliance in the field of environment because scientific evidence suggests life on earth faces a cataclysmic future. He argued for the need to question universalism as a phenomenon. Is it an ideological obstacle to encouraging a plural approach to ethics?

He pointed out that in the 20th century different linguistic, religious and cultural groups successfully negotiated recognition, protection and even promotion against tendencies of conformity and assimilation. However, the philosophies, ethical concepts and value systems of different civilisations and communities have not been recognised, let alone accommodated coherently in international conventions and declarations. Mr. Rai defined universalism as a belief that one set of principles, value system, explanations and justification is universally applicable across communities, cultures and religions.

Views on the Environment

Mr Rai stipulated the different types of worldviews on the environment:

- **Anthropocentric:** Either Abrahamic or an intrinsic part of post-Enlightenment;
- **Abrahamic:** Human beings are the reason for all existence and everything on earth is at our disposal;
- **Post-Enlightenment:** Descarte's I think, therefore, I am. Emphasis on the human being or individual I;
- **Language:** Custodianship, trusteeship and responsibility to look after the world;
- **Theocentric (same?):** It is fashionable to attack Western anthropocentricism without articulating alternatives;



- **Biocentric:** Humans are just one among millions of species. This has been part of many cultures. It is the traditional reason for vegetarianism and cultural reasons for sanctions on certain activities, i.e. don't pick flowers at night;
- **Ecocentric:** The ecosphere, organic and inorganic, is the source of existence and holistic. It is reverent and is the basis for idolising different inorganic items and organic life in many indigenous as well as traditional Hindu societies, i.e. reverence for certain trees, plants, mountains etc; and
- **Cosmocentric:** Earth is just another part of the cosmos. Universes and solar systems go through cycles. Creator and creation are one, perpetually evolving but also returning to a static state. Sikh and Vedanta offer this view. Sikh life offers the opportunity to come out of cycles and emerge into the static state.

On the basis of the different worldviews on the environment are different approaches to the problems. These include:

- **Apathy:** Science can find solutions. It is too big a problem to think about. My little bit of life won't cause damage etc. End-of-world cults;
- **Apocalyptic:** Fear and doom. Abrahamic, end-of-world mentality and hermeneutic of conventional Western thought. Very effective in westernised societies but meaningless in people whose core belief is cosmocentric. The average European reacts positively, seeking action, whereas the average Indian relates to karma, Kaliyug/Satyayug;
- **Symbiotic:** Not based on fear or doom. Human beings are dependent on their environment, other living beings and natural systems, and vice-versa. Imbalance in the relationship upsets the prospects of healthy interaction. It is a give-and-take view and many traditional cultures cherish these beliefs; and
- **Integrationist:** Human beings are an integral part of the universe/cosmos but are not the essential element. This displaces the focus from human to cosmos. Sikh and some Indic traditions place emphasis on fragmenting the 'I' and integrating it into the whole.

UN Conventions on Environment

The different views and approaches on the environment have also influenced UN Conventions on the environment:



- Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 1972, Stockholm;
- Anthropocentric, concentrates on man. Fear runs as a thread throughout;
- Preamble – Both aspects of man's environment, the natural and the man-made, are essential to his well-being and to the enjoyment of basic human rights and the right to life itself;
- The protection and improvement of the human environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world. It is the urgent desire of the peoples of the whole world and the duty of all governments;
- Principle 2 – The natural resources of the earth, including the air, water, land, flora and fauna, and especially those samples that are of representative of natural ecosystems, (ie. to restore ecosystems for humanity), must be safeguarded for the benefit of present and future generations through careful planning or management, as appropriate;
- United Nation's Framework Convention On Climate Change – UNFCCC (1992);
 - State sovereignty: *“States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies”* (Preamble).
 - Calls for action by State and not global community. *“Acknowledging that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation....* Therefore, not universal but inter-State convention.
 - Anthropocentric: 1 – The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind.
 - But willing to ascribe blame – Noting that the largest share of historical and current global emissions of greenhouse gases has originated in developed countries.

Accepts restoring ecosystems but as an add-on. The ultimate objective of this Convention is a stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change; (but restores anthropocentrism) to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.



- THE EARTH CHARTER 1987, the hermeneutic structure of a sermon;
“We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future (turning point). As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril (sin) and great promise (repentance). To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms (opportunity) we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace (community). Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.” (Redemption).
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992);
 - Principle 2 – States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national State sovereignty superior.
 - Principle 3– The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. Anthropocentric; development is important.
- Convention on Biodiversity (1992);
 - *“Aware of the general lack of information and knowledge regarding biological diversity and of the urgent need to develop scientific, technical and institutional capacities to provide the basic understanding upon which to plan and implement appropriate measures.”* It fails to recognise that many civilisations were and still are cognisant of biological diversity; 8.4 million cycles in Indian reincarnation theory.
 - Reference to indigenous lifestyles is an add-on and not intrinsic.
- The Kyoto Protocol (1997); and
 - The Kyoto protocol is quite technical and to some extent scientifically orientated, imploring State parties to commit to some sort of targets, initiatives



- and policies that will meet the overall targets of emissions as well as specific country targets.
 - Not judgmental or value laden.
- The Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights – UDBHR (2005)
 1. *Human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms are to be fully respected.*
 2. *The interests and welfare of the individual should have priority over the sole interest of science or society.”*
 - This focuses on rights as opposed to duties, and establishes a hierarchy of cultural preference at UN.
 - Awareness that human beings are an integral part of the biosphere, with an important role in protecting one another and other forms of life, in particular animals.
 - Very interesting biocentric view.

Policy Options on Environment

Mr. Rai indicated the various policy options for environment:

1. Concentrate on common goals and not *universalising* values.
2. Endorse multiple ethical value systems and not a universal one. Repository of multiple ethical systems.
3. Proactively engage stakeholders, that is, civil society, and encourage commitment to Agenda 21.

Important Rio Statement:

“With the goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of societies and people.”

Repository of Worldviews

The Repository of Worldviews on Environment propagates the following:

- Let different civilisations, religions, cultures and belief systems rediscover their concepts and start framing their own set of ethical norms;
- Let the different practices be acknowledged; and
- Not just traditional knowledge of indigenous people but the many diverse cultures and religions of the world as well as traditional knowledge of societies.



Mr Rai provided example worldviews on the environment:

- The general view is that the world is going to end;
- Many people are inspired to act; and
- Many Indians believe that there are many universes and souls transmigrate. So they wonder what the fuss is all about.

Mr. Rai stated that this repository is not about recovering lost wisdoms but about the plurality of human genius and concepts. Perhaps there might be a common theme in all the various systems, but if there isn't we should try to encourage a plurality of systems as preambles.

Framework for the Repository of Worldviews

The following aspects/questions need to be considered for the contribution to the repository:

1. What is the broader category or framework that the paper is discussing?

- Dharma: It is a generic word for Indian traditions, philosophies and ways of life. They tend to be holistic and can mean anything from the nature of a substance or a life form to the place of humanity within the entire cosmos and even scientific rules;
- Religion / evolved traditions: These may or may not have any religious or theoretical explanation, for instance many tribal practices;
- Secular theories: Most of the ideas inherent within international conventions; Utilitarian, altruistic, instrumentalist, etc;
- Traditional cultural norms: In Africa, much of the traditional knowledge was based on tribal perspectives of the world but there are common principles. Much closer to nature than many other systems; and
- Democracy: Whether democratic consensus determines a worldview or policy, irrespective of its benefits or threats to environment.

2. What is the broader outlook of the environmental concepts within the tradition? Is it one of the ones listed below or a combination of them or others? (refer to ECCAP WG1 for details)

- Anthropocentrism;
- Biocentrism;
- Ecocentrism;
- Cosmocentrism; or
- Other.



3: What are the human /environmental relationships? Are they... (ref. ECCAP WG1)

- Apathetic;
- Apocalyptic;
- Symbiotic;
- Integrationist; or
- Managerial.

Issues to address on the environment

Mr. Rai pointed to a number of issues which need to be addressed on environment, especially with regard to applications of worldviews to modern technology/globalization, and the questions that arise:

- Is the worldview compatible with modern technological advances?
- Does it already have some position and ethical guidance on human relation to technological advances?
- Are there principles that can be developed? Do the main practitioners or proponents of the worldview think about modern advances and their impact on resources, human relations, society and other species?
- For instance, what are the effects of increasing dependence on technological mobility (cars, planes etc.) or transplant surgery and the possibilities of cloning? What about increased age expediency, larger populations in cities, reduced agricultural land, and the impact on climate change of energy emissions and consumption?
- What is the impact of globalisation on smaller communities, on traditional ethical values, on interaction with the larger world? And are there already are ideas of interacting and coping with globalisation trends?

Conclusions

1. There should be an indication on whether:
 - The worldview is a living set of concepts;
 - A set of values can be developed from it;
 - It is largely reflected in the current conventions; and
 - Whether a distinct document for that particular worldview would benefit greater compliance with goals to achieve better sustainable environment.



1. This could suggest:

- Whether more work is needed;
- The degree of diversity within the view; and
- Whether communities can be encouraged to develop perspectives that can stand on their own and help the larger population in that community to take ownership of environmental concerns through the prism of their worldview.

In the contributions to the Repository of Worldviews the following aspects need to be considered, and how they are expressed in the respective/specific cultures:

- Equity;
- Participation;
- Precautionary principle;
- Vulnerability;
- Sustainability;
- Peace; and
- Human rights.

Some leading questions that can also be addressed in the contribution to the repository:

- Human beings and evolution;
What is the status of the human in the complexities of evolution? Is it as the ultimate perfection of divine creation, a sudden and independent emergence upon earth, a gradual evolution through species or another theory/hypothesis/revelation?
- Human beings and other life forms;
What is the status of the human with regards to other life forms? Are we the master of all other species or simply another species in the scheme of life, the only species with a conscience or simply another transient species in evolution?
- Human relations to environment – guardian, symbiotic, custodian;
What forms the basis of human relations to the environment? For instance, is it one of a guardian, a custodian, a symbiotic dependence, a dependent on the earth and environment, a species for which all has been created, a species with a right to exploit all that exists for its own advantage, an instrumentalist relation, or a species without any significance in the many life forms?



- Interaction with environment; Is the interaction of humans with the environment one of fear, love, and awe or without any emotion?
- Is earth living?
Are the earth and the environment living “entities” and does earth have a conscious ability to protect itself against human-led destruction, or is the earth an inert entity without an ability to survive destruction?
- Doomsday, living and punishing earth theories; and
Is there a language of doomsday (end of world, scorched-earth theories) or a theory, for instance, that earth will punish humans, or a rationalist argument, e.g. the environment will become unsustainable and therefore humans will die of needs, scarcity etc? Does this sentiment have a place in the tradition?
- End-of-world theory.
What does the tradition say about end of world? Will life forms somewhere else in the cosmos get reborn on earth, or will a doomsday scenario be the end of the human species altogether?

Practical Aspects

The following practical aspects need attention:

- Ritual, practices, worship, etc. of environment;
Are there any practical rituals, practices or forms of worship within the tradition that inspire the follower to build a deeper relationship with the environment, for instance Bishnoi or animal worship?
- How can tradition inspire more responsibility towards environment?
In the current concern about the environment such as desertification, fuel scarcity, pollution, etc., how can the tradition inspire its adherents to become more responsible with the environment?
- Human reason; and
What importance does the tradition have on human reason? Does this insight have significance?
- Similarities or differences with Western environmental theories.
Does the tradition simply endorse conventional western position or does it offer a radically different approach to environmental issues?



African Perspectives

- These are not same across the continent, i.e. North different from Sub-Saharan, etc.;
- Examples include conciliatory skills and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;
- Are the perspectives instrumentalist rather than ideological?, and
- Similarly in the environmental sphere, can we articulate the different African systems, approaches and ideas that will encourage mass participation?



GENDER AND LEADERSHIP IN INDIGENOUS AFRICAN COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE LAMBA PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA ON THE COPPERBELT PROVINCE

By



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Dr. Kalenga started by stating that as early as 1931, writers such as Doke (1931:9) had the following confession to make about the Lambas:

...understand better the people and their point of view...this is a record of the thoughts and lives of the people as far I can observe them, unaffected by Christianizing and the influence of Western civilization...I can only say that I wish I had more knowledge of the significance of the native customs when I first went to work among the Lambas. I should have been saved from many grievous mistakes and many misjudgments. The ability to see through the Bantu eyes will give the missionary and the officials better understanding and more sympathy with the people, and a greater ability to gain their confidence.

She revealed various concepts which characterised the Lamba leadership:



Servant leadership

The notion of servant leadership is coming across quite prominently as the mainstay of such leadership. We are thus persuaded to position the theory of servant leadership as the theoretical lens through which we seek to understand gender and leadership in indigenous African communities. She stated that Spears and Lourens (2001: 5) identified ten characteristics of servant leadership:

- Listening;
- Empathy;
- Healing;
- Foresight;
- Conceptualisation;
- Persuasiveness;
- Awareness;
- Stewardship;
- Commitment to the growth of people;
- The valuing of people, and
- Community building.

According to her, servant leadership is therefore not only willingness but also action for the benefit of others. It is concerned with deep respect for what it means to be human (Wheatley 2002).

Methodology

On the issue of methodology she indicated that the study made among the Lamba adopted the snowball approach (Baker 1988) to select participants. The process started with the researchers approaching one elderly member of the target community we were acquainted with. We asked him to suggest an information-rich nuclear family who would be willing to be interviewed by us. The family was to also have in its proximity, extended family members who would be equally accessible. After collecting data from this family, the researchers requested that they suggest village elders who would be information-rich about gender and leadership in indigenous African communities. After gathering data from the latter participants, the researchers asked them to suggest headmen accordingly. The researchers used the same process to select chiefs' councillors and finally the chiefs themselves.



This process was not only logical but also layered such that we would be able to triangulate data starting from the lowest to the highest echelons of this community.

Data Analysis

The following themes emerged from the data analysis:

Succession purely on servant-hood merit

In the focus group discussions, a headman said:

“Every grand-child and niece and nephew of the chief is an eligible candidate to the throne, they all have an equal chance. The best candidate in terms of upholding the values of the society wins. It is Lambanistic democracy within the royal family, the chosen candidate must have a servant spirit, a chief is chosen to serve the people.”

Support structure at all levels

The Lamba's leadership at all levels has a support structure of adviser. The support structure is composed of the closest family members of the leader who are interested in seeing that all goes well, and who make sure their leader stays in power until he/she dies.

Chief Mpengula stated:

“When we [witness] bad behaviour of anyone, boy, girl, wife, husband, etc... We ask a simple question of who is advising this individual. We do not go directly to the individual, we find out from the advisers what the story is with the individual, then we [determine] how to support the adviser by dealing directly with the person portraying bad behavior.”

Equality of men and women

With support at every level, everyone can lead. There is no one who should be without support. With a support system exemplifying the values seen in the person selected for leadership, the leader chosen can become a successful leader. Chief Mpengula (male) had the following confession to make:

“Women in the Lamba communities are seen as equals to men in leadership and governance. We strongly believe that what a man can do, a woman can too. In the world seen to be dominated by men in patriarchal societies, we find the Lamba nation having a balance of Matriarch and Patriarch.”



Mothers are custodians of their children

Chilolo added:

“Umwalalume nimukolwe wakwashima, (a man is borrowed cock), I could be in my marriage thinking the children are mine, when in actual fact, they could be anybody's' children, so we do not want to be fooled by putting on the throne, children whose father we might never know, but everybody knows the mother of children. This to us is the reason why they are to be respected. The children take the clan of the mother too, that is considered as the simplest genetics.”

Women having an advantage over men

Ichilolo (counsellor) of Chief Malembeka added:

“To a large extent, women have a greater advantage than men in the sense that, a woman chief's child has a chance of having her own children being enthroned as chief when she dies but men chiefs' children never have a chance to the throne. His sisters' children (Ingalamwe: children born of the chief's sisters – king-makers) will. The next chief will be observed from all his sisters' children equally and only the person that shows values that pertain to servant leadership gets selected as chief.”



UNCOVERING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS OF JUSTICE AND GOVERNANCE: COMPARATIVE CASES OF BULWER, IXOPO, MADADENI AND NEW HANOVER

By



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Introduction

The presentation looked at the role of community-based paralegals in rural Kwazulu-Natal. The authors would focus on a Centre for Community Justice and Development in rural Kwazulu-Natal whose emphasis is on restorative justice and other forms of justice entitlements. The presenters outlined the types of cases handled by the 15 support centres and the relationship of paralegals and support centres to the criminal justice system. The socio-legal mixed methods research design used by the authors has multiple units of analysis: the support centres as organisations; groups of individuals who use the support centres; and individual paralegals who manage the support centres.

The Role of the Community-Based Paralegals (CBP) in Restorative Justice

The presenters demonstrated the role of the CBP Theoretical Framework in capturing and analysing data, comparing problems and benefits of CBPs, as shown in Table 1.



Table 1 : Community-based Paralegals Theoretical Framework	
Problems	Benefits
Second class justice	Capacity to straddle plural legal system
Lack the guarantees of independence and consistency	Have a wider and more flexible set of tools to their work
Divert pressure to improve training of lawyers	Need not limit themselves to adversarial approach
Cheap alternative to justice	Cost effectiveness and availability
Cappelletti, Mauro (1992) / Noone (1991)	VivekMaru (2006)

Using the theoretical framework that emerged from the literature survey, the presenters made a cross-case comparative analysis of the problems with CBPs with actual experiences of paralegals in rural KZN (See Table 2).

Table 2: Cross-case Comparative Analysis of Problems with CBPs				
Support Centre	Problems with CBPs according to literature vs CBP actual experience			
	Second class justice	Lack the guarantees of independence and consistency	Divert pressure to improve training of lawyers	Cheap alternative to justice
New Hanover	Holistic approach to problem/solve dv and maintenance at the same time	Well respected because do not take sides/ understand community dynamics	Follow up /empowerment with problem solving skills	They speak our Language / culture
Bulwer	Free service, but good service tailored to address individual need	Closer to the people/ simple explanation of the law	Delays/ legalistic procedures/ no follow ups /counselling	Language consideration/tradition/ control and take own decision
Madadeni	Better outcome without going to court, reconciliation, free service	Paralegals are closer to the people and accessible	Resolution of the problem fast	Process in own language/ promote harmonious relationship
Ixopo	Role of paralegal is important, service is free but outcome better than lawyers	Accessible /paralegals understand community dynamics	The service is comprehensive/accompanied to institutions	Comprehensive understanding of culture and traditional custom



Table 3 shows a Cross-case Comparative Analysis in the different support centres in terms of benefits identified in the literature those experienced by CBP in rural KZN.

Table 3: Cross-case Comparative Analysis of benefits of CBPs				
Support Centre	Benefits of CBPs according to literature vs. CBP responses			
	Capacity to straddle plural legal system	Have a wider and more flexible tools	Not limited to adversarial approach	Cost effectiveness and availability
New Hanover	Based at the court an advantage/ knowledge of culture and customs/ knowledge of the law	Mediation, protection orders, peace orders, and educate	Dual system of justice at play, due to location	Agreements hold, men afraid of court
Bulwer	Work well with traditional authority	Mediation, negotiation, protection orders	Courts take decision we do not agree with	Mediation quick
Madadeni	Partnership with the traditional authority/ offer advice that covers both the law and customary law	wide networks to solve clients case/ educate, mediate and law as a back up	“ went to court several times, instead I was humiliated”	Problem are solved quick
Ixopo	Based at the court, clients benefit from our knowledge of the law, and tradition	Benefits of mediation, networking skills, educate	Platform to talk freely without any fear / mediation process is inclusive.	Mediation is quick

In uncovering Indigenous African Knowledge Systems (IAKS) of governance and justice, the following are lessons for governance:

- Restorative justice is inherent in indigenous African legal systems yet contemporary conceptions of restorative justice – in theory and practice –have gained acclaim as if developed in the global North; and



- Governance determined by one's own will is not just governance but a culturally inspired lifestyle of African origin – to be researched and lived.

The following are lessons for justice:

- Retributive colonial system of justice was inherited in SA and elsewhere;
- Retributive justice is in crisis worldwide;
- SA is ripe for re-creation of restorative justice systems operated by community members – especially in rural areas; and
- Restorative justice parallels participative democracy.

Epistemological and Methodological Lessons for (Re)discovering IAKS

Finally, the presenters stipulated epistemological and methodological lessons for re-discovering IAKS. These include:

- Open to capturing unexpected cues of knowing;
- Understanding how meanings are attached;
- Usefulness of mixed methods and pragmatic worldview;
- Breakout of small groups from focus groups; and

Articulate and preserve context and voice of participants.



Participants



INDIGENIZATION AS A LIBERATIVE IMPERATIVE IN POST-COLONIAL WORLDVIEW

By



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Introduction

Dr. Murove started by interrogating imperial epistemologies in post-colonial Africa. He cited from Theodore von Laue's book titled *The World Revolution of Westernisation* (1987). Von Laues' main argument is that all peoples of the world are aiming at westernizing – politically, economically and culturally. What is revolutionary and evolutionary is Westernization. Emulation of the Western ways of knowing and doing is integral to Westernisation. He explained that Eurocentric diffusionism is a theory based on the idea that all knowledge is diffused from Europe to all parts of the world. It is a remnant of colonial thinking, which is an outpost of imperialism. In this regard, thinking is divorced from culture. This claim to scientificity in Western knowledge systems became the basis for the denigration of African Knowledge Systems as oases of primitivism. This meant that all knowledge that was African



by origin was to be abandoned. Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo* advanced the thesis that there was some resemblance of mentality between the African mind and European neurotics.

He further argued that the authenticity of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems is admissible subject to verification by Western science. Eurocentricism emphasizes ethno-monolithic towards human experience and existence. There is a denial of the fact that there are many ways of living and experiencing the world. For example, Jan Smuts said that the African “has remained a child psychology in outlook...The African easily forgets past troubles and does not anticipate future troubles” (1940: 37-38). According to Dr. Murove, this is a perpetuation of the dehumanisation of Africana. For example, the Polish sociologist Stanslava Andreski expressed the same ethnocentric evolutionary outlook when he said “Africans have not yet evolved any moral bonds beyond the confines of the clan and the tribe” (1968: 81). Dr. Morove indicates that imperial epistemologies distorted indigenous realities. Thus indignity was equated to primitivism and perpetuation of the culture of conformism. This distortion served the interests of the colonisers and emphasized the denial of the fact that knowledge must be contextual. Colonialism explained indigenous knowledge outside indigenous experiences.

Indigenisation and the Post-Colonial Discourse on Knowledge

Dr. Morove made a critique of the ideological underpinnings of modernity and the motif of ancientisation of Africa's present and the glorification of Africa's past. He looked at the revolt against modernisation as synonymous with Westernisation. He argued that indignity serves emancipatory ideals against servitude and domination. There is, therefore, need for a critique of the preserved knowledge in Africa. He was against universalism of knowledge because knowledge is space- and place related. He reiterated that the debate on orality and literacy is vital, including a call for a comparative study of knowledge. This is due to the fact that the meaning of phenomena can differ from language to language. Hence a particular experience should not be universalised.

Dr. Murove stated that underdevelopment of Africa has contributed the problem of emulation of Western knowledge systems and excessive dependence on the West. This is reflected by the fact that most of Africa's developmental programmes are conceived from the West; hence they failed to address the needs of the people they purported to address. Therefore, the promotion of indigenous languages is a corrective measure against false representation and



misinterpretation of African knowledge and meanings. He cited Ngugi Wa'Thiong's *Decolonising the Mind* as standing out against the use of foreign languages in post-colonial Africa. African languages convey meanings that are usually misunderstood within the colonial languages. It is through their indigenous languages that people come to express themselves and their worldviews. Under colonial experience, language was used as a means of control.

Indigenisation as an Ethical Imperative

Dr. Murove is opposed to the argument that genuine knowledge should not be ethnic, i.e. knowledge must be common to all that are involved in its quest. According to him, this argument consciously or unconsciously ends up supporting Eurocentricism, i.e. the idea that genuine knowledge is that which originated from Europe and transmitted in a European language (Hamblet, 2008). He emphasized that a commitment to Eurocentric theory of knowledge implies a disrespect of other cultures, and a denial of the authentic existence of the other. We need to accept globalisation and the reality of multiculturalism because culture remains the determinant factor in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. The advent of colonialism was not the beginning of African cognitive awareness. The relativity of knowledge affirms the need to put our focus on contextuality. Indignity is an experience among many experiences of existence. Africa is a world laboratory where Western scholars have untrammelled liberty to monopolise knowledge about the continent. Indigenisation discourse is, therefore, a quest for world recognition. This is due to the fact that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others (Taylor 1994).





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Discussant

In my assigned five-minute comments triggered by the excellent and thought-provoking presentations which my colleagues just made in this the second Section of our Colloquium, I am driven to gravitate towards two key terms which are embedded within the titles of two of the presentations themselves as printed in our programme, to wit, “postcolonial” (Dr. M. Murove) and “Afrocentric” (Prof. J. Teffo). In some ways, these two terms, in my considered opinion, capture the pith and substance of all the other presentations in this Section exceptionally well.

And of the two terms, I would wish to comment briefly on the second term, namely, “Afrocentric”. I do so as one who hails from the African Diaspora; from the former British colony commonly known as St. Kitts-Nevis – although the official name of my country of birth is really St. Christopher-Nevis, named after Christopher Columbus, that (in)famous Italian navigator who, while sailing under the Spanish flag in search of a shorter maritime route to India where he wished to procure gold and other “goodies” for the Spanish Crown,



drifted way out west instead and accidentally “discovered” the Americas in 1492. It is this fortuitous contact with the Americas which later precipitated the wanton decimation, displacement and/or land dispossession of the indigenous peoples of the region and the eventual European-led carting, by the boat-load, of millions of Africans as slaves to work, as hewers of wood and drawers of water, on the various sugar, cotton and other plantations in the Americas.

It is against the backdrop of that historic and (for some) horrendous “crime against humanity” that I would wish to see the whole IAKS programme here at UKZN continue to make allowance for the possible and constructive contribution which the globally dispersed and multilingual African Diaspora can and should make. This is so because it is well known that, in spite of the tremendously adverse de-Africanization impact which the centuries-old West African trans-Atlantic slave trade has had on us, the displaced, dispersed and dispossessed descendants of the slave trade, there are still some clearly discernible Afro-religio-cultural and other retentions throughout the African Diaspora. This resilient retention expresses itself not only in the general religio-spiritual *weltanschauung* (worldview) which characterizes us but also in the supreme value which is still attached to traditions associated with IAKS in terms, for example, of bush and herbal medicines – especially in the rural sectors of the Diaspora.

In addition, this call for greater collaboration between the IAKS programme here at UKZN and the African Diaspora as a whole is entirely consistent with the 2003 Amendment to the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) in which the African Diaspora is now regarded as the 6th Region of the AU.

It is in that spirit, then, that I share with you briefly some excerpts having to do with the term “Afrocentric” since, in my view, the term helps to illustrate quite vividly how we are still very much tied to Africa, the Motherland and the continent of our ancestors.

The first excerpt comes from the Francophone African Diaspora (France) and is found in the journal, *African and Black Diaspora: An International Journal*, 2011, volume 4, Number 2, pages 115-130. This peer-reviewed journal is published by DePaul University in the USA and in an article entitled, “Building up French Blackness through an Afrocentric Lens”, Esther Fila-Bakabadio writes: “Whether calling for an 'African-centered' perspective or knowledge,



some now define their approach as Afrocentric. Though the ideas and concepts carried out by Afrocentrism are not new in France, they now gain popularity among people of African descent as a means to challenge black people's outsider/insider status in [white] French society” (page 115).

The second excerpt comes to us from Ngugi- wa Thiong'o, the outstanding and influential Kenyan writer, now in exile himself in the USA. He writes: “I was horrified when I returned [from the University of Leeds, England] to Kenya in 1967, to find that the Department of English [at the university of Nairobi] was still organized on the basis that Europe was the centre of the universe. Europe, the centre of our imagination? Ezekiel Mphahhele from South Africa, who was there before me, had fought hard to have some African texts introduced into the syllabus. Otherwise the department was still largely oblivious to the rise of the new literatures in European languages in Africa let alone the long existing tradition of African-American literature and that of Caribbean peoples. The basic question was: from what base did African people look at the world? Eurocentrism or Afriocentrism?” (See Ngugi- wa Thiong'o, 1993. *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*. Nairobi, Kenya: East Africa Educational Publishers, page 8 – and quoted in G. Yorke, 2012. “Bible Translation in Africa: An Afrocentric Interrogation of the Task”, in *Postcolonial Perspectives on African Biblical Interpretations*. Edited by Prof. Musa Dube (Botswana), Dr. Andrew Muvi (Kenya) and Dr. Dora Mbuwayesango (Zimbabwe). Atlanta: GA: Scholars Press, page 164).

The third and final excerpt comes from Cain Hope Felder, the African-American Biblical scholar at Howard University, Washington, DC. He writes: “An examination of the term Afrocentricity [used interchangeably with Afrocentrism] will make clear what I and other Black biblical scholars have found helpful in correcting the effects of the cultural ideological conditioning to which we have all been subjected. Afrocentricity is the idea that the land mass that the ancient Romans routinely called Africa and the peoples of African descent must be understood as having made significant contributions to world civilization as prospective subjects within history rather than being regarded as merely passive objects of historical distortions. Afrocentrism means re-establishing Africa as a center of value and source of pride, without in any way demeaning other people and their historic contributions to human achievement.”



(See Felder, Cain Hope 1993. “Cultural Ideology, Afrocentrism and Biblical Interpretation,” in *Black Theology: A Documentary History*. Volume 2. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, page 188 – as quoted in G. Yorke 1995. “Biblical Hermeneutics: An Afrocentric Perspective,” in *Journal of Religious Thought*, Volume 52, Number 1, page 7).

And with those few “Afro-centric” remarks, colleagues, let me now step aside so that the general discussion can now begin.



BRIDGING THE GAP IN PUBLIC HEALTH: THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

By



Dr Nceba Gqaleni

Director: African Indigenous Knowledge Innovations

Introduction

Dr Gqaleni started by examining the national, continental and international policy imperatives of traditional medicine in the context of public health as stipulated in South Africa's Vision 2030. Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa (The Bill of Rights) states that every citizen has a right to participate in the cultural life of their choice. He indicated that according to the National Development Plan, (2030) “The Traditional Health Practitioners Act No. 22 of 2007 provides for a national policy on traditional medicine, but actual integration of traditional medicine into the national health-care system and structured relationships with the pharmaceutical industry has been limited.”

The World Health Organization (WHO) Traditional Medicine Strategy outlines four objectives:



- Policy: To integrate traditional medicine into national health-care systems, where appropriate, by developing and implementing national traditional medicine policies and programmes;
- Safety, efficacy and quality: To promote the safety, efficacy and quality of traditional medicine by expanding the knowledge base of these remedies and by providing guidance on regulatory and quality assurance standards;
- Access: To increase the availability and affordability of traditional medicine where appropriate, focusing on poorer populations; and
- Rational use: To promote therapeutically sound use of appropriate traditional medicine by providers and consumers.

The Africa Union (AU) Plan of Action: Decade of African Traditional Medicine states that the main objective of the plan of Action of African Traditional Medicine(ATM) is the recognition, acceptance, development and integration of traditional medicine by all member states into the public care system on the continent by 2010. It is now extended to 2020.

Integration of Traditional Health Practitioners in Public Health: A New Dispensation



Participation of Traditional Healers



Dr Gqaleni emphasized that this process requires: capacity development of knowledge holders to prepare them; capacity development of health-care and workers and students; and capacity development of researchers. It is on the basis of this consideration that education becomes the most appropriate vehicle to drive the process. According to him, in its general sense, education is a form of learning in which knowledge, skills and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, research, or simply through self-direction. In his discussion of philosophical principles, Dr. Gqaleni indicated that the doors of University of KwaZulu-Natal have been opened and traditional health practitioners (THPs) are partners in research, teaching and health services. This partnership is based on humility, honesty, respect and advocacy.



Participation of Traditional Healers

Capacity Building Programmes

He stipulated the various related capacity-building programmes at UKZN:

- Piloted WHO module for training health-care workers and health science students;
- Undergraduate medical students modules;
- Postgraduate research students;
- Training of THPs on biomedical approaches to palliative care; HIV and AIDS, TB and STIs, and on documenting their knowledge themselves; and
- Establishment of two-way referrals.



Publication of Literature

He revealed that UKZN Traditional Medicine Programme has been assisting knowledge holders to write and publish their work in their own language as sole authors to break piracy by researchers and to become familiar with copyright and related legislation. The first book published is entitled *Inhlakanipho yamathongo*, by Mr. Machi, and was launched in 2011 at Ukhozi FM.

Capacity Development of Students and Health-care Workers

The following initiatives were stipulated and whenever practical, it was the THPs who taught:

- African Traditional Concepts of Health and Disease (3rd year MBChB Module on Lifestyle);
- Undergraduate Research Selectives; and
- Postgraduate Diploma in the Clinical Management of HIV and AIDS (Palliative Care Module).

Dr. Gqaleni provided the following important principle of IKS to researchers and research students:

1. Once you have earned the right to access information it is expected of you by IKS holders who share or disclose information which is regarded sacred or confidential, that you will treat it as such and protect it;
2. Engage the THP in research such that they will become co-authors and share in the benefits; and
3. Respect the culture, and learn the language, of traditional medicine.



Traditional Healers



He stipulated the imperatives of researchers' and students' engagement with Indigenous Knowledge holders: The IKS knowledge holders are the custodians and giants of traditional medicine, not the professors. In many instances researchers and students are not aware and knowledgeable of this way of working and thinking. Dr. Gqaleni urged researchers to be patient with student researchers in guiding them in their engagement with indigenous knowledge holders. They should allow them to make mistakes a few times but draw a line, when they have now to manage their work with the knowledge holders in the appropriate ways.

Outcomes of Partnership with Traditional Health Practitioners

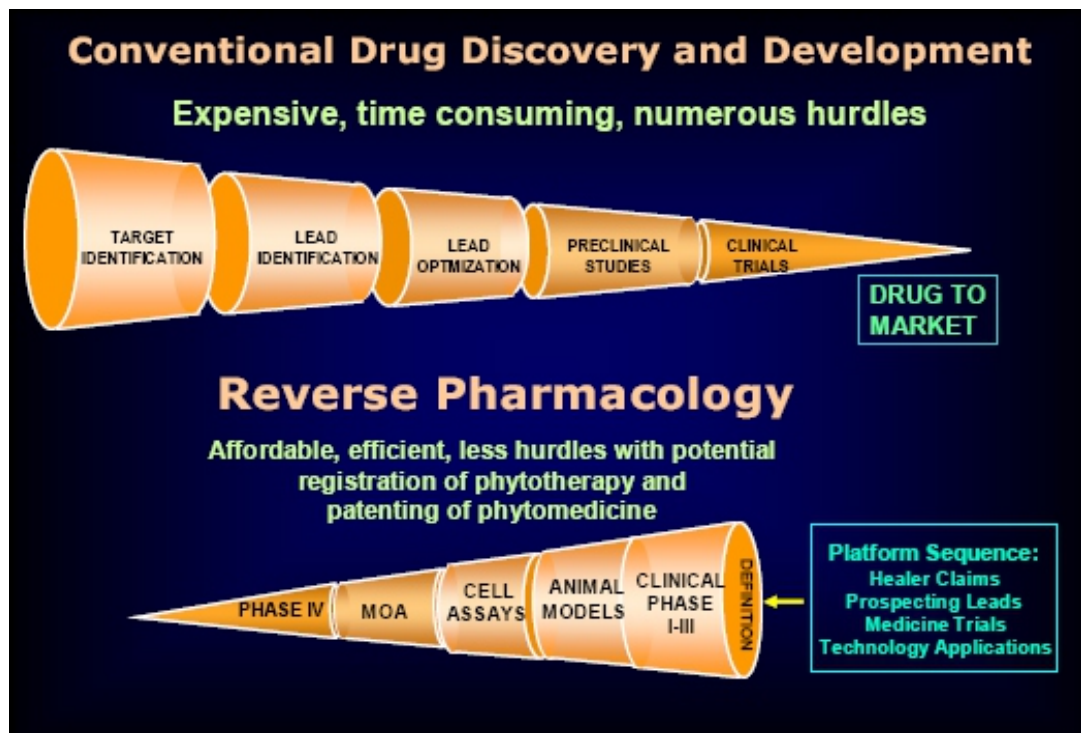
- THPs contribute as equal partners in the knowledge development agenda;
- They are co-authors of publications;
- Students have learned to communicate complex science in a language that is understood by healers; and
- Health-care workers are improving their understanding of, and relationship with, THPs.

The following student achievements were revealed:

- Dr Renee Street, MRC Career Award;
- Ms. Nonhlanhla Dlamini, (UNESCO L'Oreal Women in Science Fellow);
- Mr. Mlungisi Ngcobo, R1.3-million NRF IKS grant;
- Ms. Nompumelelo Mbatha, a THP is completing a Master's degree; and
- Ms. Mashika Seepe and Nonhlanhla Dlamini, (DST Women in Science Fellows).



Methodological challenges to research and development



THE WAY FORWARD

After a lengthy discussion of the various presentations and contributions, the regional colloquium ended with a number of valuable suggestions for the way forward, including a programme of action.

For instance, Prof. Nkondo suggested that IKS should be viewed as an integral part of a comprehensive anti-power movement against neo-liberalism and globalization. It should be linked with other continental and worldwide movements. A large proportion of the world population depends on IKS for its livelihood. He also called for the need to acknowledge that in their endeavours of social practice and knowledge production, IK holders theorize like any other theorists. This is due to the fact in the process of creating knowledge and products there is a theory and philosophy behind that product. Prof. Nkondo had the opinion that we need to create a movement of friends of IKS worldwide, starting with the Southern African region and the continent, to continue the conversation on IKS which has already started. We have to take advantage of modern technology, i.e. ICT, to promote the initiative.

Prof. Franco Frescura, put forward the idea of creating a regular voice for IKS through refereed journals, regular workshops, conferences, etc.; the establishment of an IKS visiting lecturer system; developing and promoting Africa's own ideas through open communication and critical discussion; training Africa's next generation of IKS cadres; exchanging research papers on critical issues of African developmental challenges; creating a dedicated website; and encouraging existing IKS journals to work together. There was a need to create a list of areas of IKS expertise and start training graduates in those areas for sustainability.

However, Dr. Fayth Ruffin argued that in the promotion of IKS we need to use positive terminologies and avoid terms such as anti-power, anti-poverty, etc. She emphasized the significance of togetherness in IKS development, i.e.all IKS initiatives should work together to avoid duplication of efforts.



On the Programme of Action, the following recommendations were given:

- Take advantage of low-lying fruits in IKS development by starting with what is achievable to ensure that IKS has socio-economic benefits and is able to change people's livelihoods, especially the knowledge holders, because most of them are still poor;
- Develop and promote the role of traditional medicine in job creation and income generation: setting up IKS documentation centres for recording, preserving and sharing IKS for development. It was revealed that the traditional medicine sector in South Africa employs more people than the mining sector, highlighting the importance of establishing an inter-college team at UKZN and other institutions to promote traditional medicine as a source of income and employment and the promotion of traditional medicine and IKS in general. As a source of income generation and job creation, this should be a nationwide initiative;
- Government funding is critical for IKS success. The current National Development Plan does not include IKS. There is a need to link IKS with the national job-creation strategy; and
- The UKZN institutional IKS policy should: establish IKS research priority areas; foster the development and promotion of indigenous African epistemologies; take the politics of knowledge production into account; carefully catalogue the history of indigenous African ideas and intellectual influence; value IKS for knowledge holders; take a rigorously ethical approach to IKS; establish indigenous language policies; and target low-lying fruits, i.e. indigenous agricultural schools, and create IKS opportunities for job creation and food security.





Colloquium Participants in Discussion



Colloquium Participants in Discussion





Colloquium Participants



Colloquium Participants



