ikmemergent

Local Content Activities 2011

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Introduction

The IKMemergent programme organised a fourth and final Local Content workshop Nairobi during August 2011. Focusing on the role of Local Content in rural livelihoods, particularly agriculture, the workshop aimed to develop proposals on how to take forward the work in the future, either as part of an IKMemergent 2.0 or as standalone activities. The workshop was administered and supported by ALIN.

Participants and workshop dynamic

A small group of people were invited, all of whom had worked with IKM during the programme. Participants were mainly from the NGO sector but also included three farmers from rural areas in Kenya who have been working with ALIN over a long period and had attended the October 2010 AgKnowledge Africa ShareFair in Addis Ababa. As In all IKMemergent workshops, the participants defined the event through what they brought in terms of experience and outlook as well as in their interactions.

Anthony Mugo	Kenya	ALIN (not pictured)
Charles Dhewa	Zimbabwe	Knowledge Transfer Africa
Cleopa Otieno	Kenya	Kentel (not pictured)
Damas Ogwe	Kenya	Seeds for Change
Davide Piga	Italy	UNDP Kenya (not pictured)
Ednah Karamagi	Uganda	Director of Busoga Rural Open Source and Development Initiative (BROSDI)
Flora Nzambuli	Kenya	ALIN community worker and farmer, Ngarua
Francis Kiarahu	Kenya	ALIN community worker and farmer, Mutomo
James Nguo	Kenya	ALIN (not pictured)
Janet Achora	Uganda	Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
Julius Matei	Kenya	ALIN community worker and farmer, Kyoso
Mariya Nakirya	Uganda	BROSDI
Pete Cranston	UK	Facilitator, IKMe
Peter Ballantyne	UK	ILRI (not pictured)
Roselinie Murota	Zimbabwe	Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE)
Susan Mwangi	Kenya	ALIN

The group developed a distinctive dynamic, different to our previous workshops.

1. It was small, and we spent a lot of time introducing ourselves, our work and our experience of local content.
2. The mix was different: Julius Matei, Flora Nzambuli and Francis Kiarahu had worked with ALIN as facilitators and animators within their own communities and had also been exposed to the NGO workshop world. So although they had a clear understanding of the *narrative* about Local Content, around its importance and role in rural livelihoods, as practising farmers it was something with which they worked directly in their own lives. While

all of the other African participants had experience of working with farming and rural communities they approached the topic as practising Development intermediaries rather than as currency within their own lives. That meeting of experience and perception grounded our discussions differently than in previous workshops and meant that ideas and experience were constantly tested against the reality of living and working in resource-poor small communities in marginal lands.

3. We were explicitly looking to develop proposals that built on our knowledge exchange over the past three years, which focused the conversations on outputs.
4. Since the 2010 AgKnowledge Fair two sets of original ideas about ways to approach the promotion and use of Local Content had emerged from our conversations. They were prepared as seeds for proposals to be presented to the workshop.
    a. Ednah Karamagi, working with a small group, had developed her idea of a *Local Content Wikipedia*. This had been developed into a working prototype. Work continued after the workshop and the resulting, stable illustrative platform can be viewed at http://farmafripedia.ikmemergent.net/
    b. Charles Dhewa, building on his learning from the IKMemergent traducture theme had worked on a synthesis of these, ideas from the Knowledge Management literature and his own experience working with rural communities to develop a new perspective on the integration of Local Content into community development. Charles' paper for the workshop is included below.
5. The format of the workshop was varied.
    a. For three days we operated as a write-shop, building from introductions and the presentations from Ednah and Charles towards project proposals. It was particularly important and productive to be able to have detailed discussions exchanges between three practising farmers and the professional development workers.
    b. We travelled to the ILRI campus for a Local Content Knowledge Café with Nairobi based development and research workers (pictured opposite).
    c. We visited the Nairobi iHub for a solutions exchange with a small group of Nairobi based technical specialists.

Proposals

As with all of the Local Content workshops the participants were positive about the experience, the sharing of knowledge, the value of meeting others working in the same fields in similar ways and the resultant energy to continue the work. However on this occasion we focused on developing concrete proposals that could form the basis of bids for funding as part of or parallel to an IKMEemergent 2. We include three proposals below, as well as Charles Dhewa's Sensemaking paper.

a. FarmAfriPedia, one building on the ideas and working prototype of a *Local Content Wikipedia*.
b. A proposal to develop an M&E framework based on the SenseMaking framework
c. A proposal to use the framework as a way to stimulate demand for agricultural knowledge in grassroots communities

Sharing Agricultural Local Content

Mary Nakirya, Davide Piga, Pete Cranston & Ednah Karamagi

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FarmAfriPedia

Introduction

The Title of the project is: **FarmAfriPedia**. It engages stakeholders into "**Sharing Agricultural Local Content**".

From time immemorial, in Africa especially, the aged in society have been the custodians of farming knowledge. With each successive generation, this information is fading away.

Coupled with the growing urbanization and adoption of what is commonly termed as "modern farming methods", the youth increasingly prefer to relocate to the cities; and those that stay in the rural areas, prefer to adopt the usage of modern farming methods. True, there has been an increase in farm output; however the longer term effects have heavily impacted negatively on the environment, climate and the soils as evidenced in several parts of the continent[1] [2].

Purpose

The aim of this project therefore is to develop a growing online platform where different stakeholders in the agricultural sector from the African continent can collectively learn and share from each other on issues pertaining to best farming practices using local content.

We aim at having a platform that is a one-stop-shop for agricultural local content.

Project Description

FarmAfriPedia is a collaborative online platform based on wiki[3] technology. Here, agricultural stakeholders can build, store and share local agricultural content.

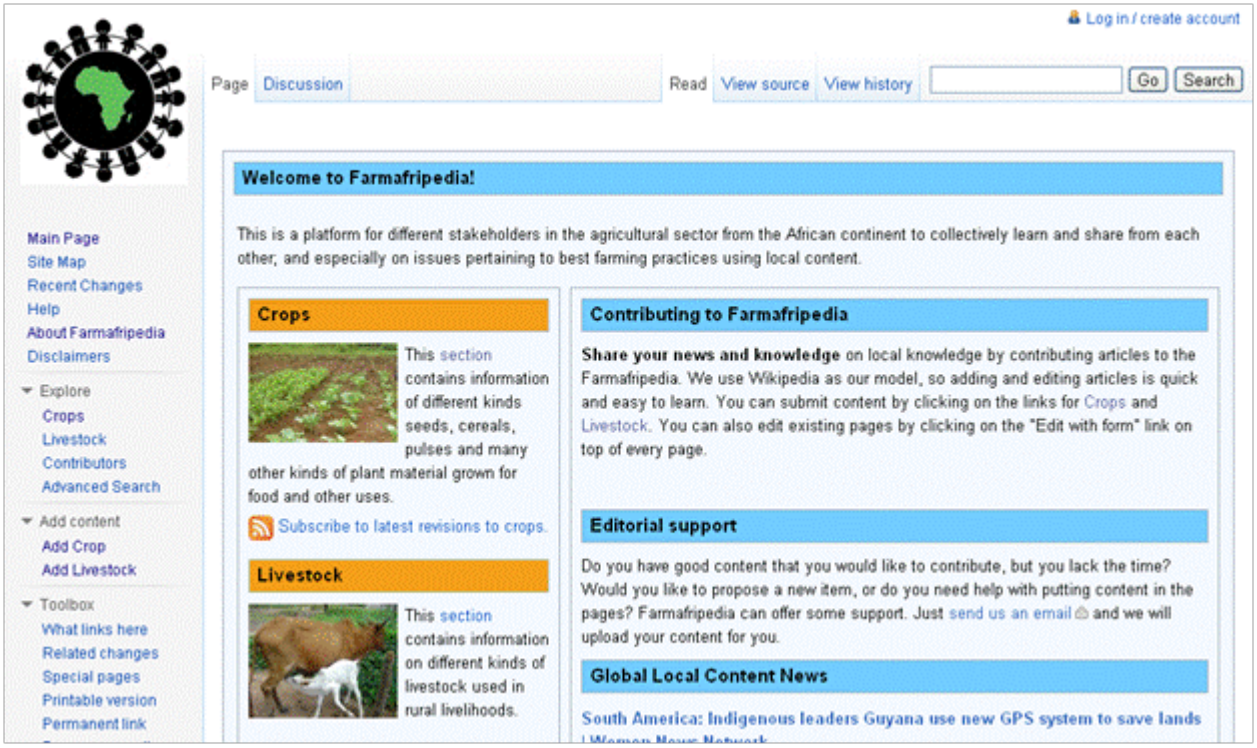
Working Prototype

The URL is: http://farmafripedia.ikmemergent.net/ . The prototype is a key part of this proposal. Copies of the main features are included in Appendix One

[1] **Modern farming practices: a short term solution to soil erosion:**
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/95na5.pdf

[2] **Eight Doable Agricultural Practices to Mitigate the Impacts of Global Climate Change:**
http://factoidz.com/eight-doable-agricultural-practices-to-mitigate-the-impacts-of-global-climate-change/

[3] A wiki is a website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG text editor. It is a Web site that allows anyone to add, delete, or revise content by using a Web browser.



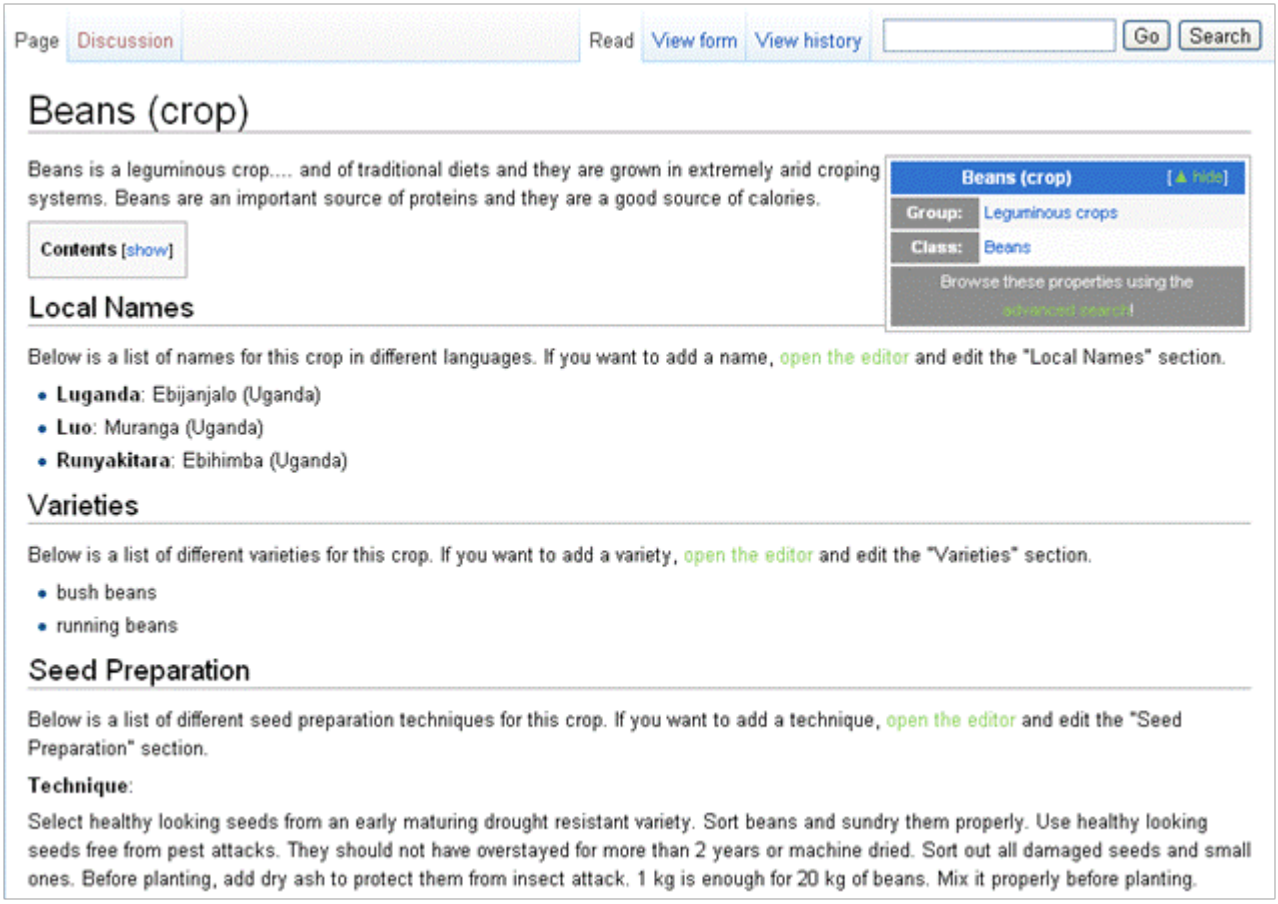
Main Features on The Wiki

- User-friendly forms allowing users to add, edit and query data using forms
- Semantic categorization that helps to search, organize, tag, browse, evaluate, and share the content in the wiki
- Basic simple text and visible content for limited internet connectivity linked to richer media on external platform for better connection
- Intuitive "*what you see is what you get*" (WYSIWYG) editor for easy editing of pages
- Offline Edition that allows users access the content of the wiki from DVD / USB key or any computer without the need of Internet access.
- Database of crop and livestock pages depicting the farming cycle, as well as additional farming practices. Attached to each of these pages is a “Discussion Area”
- Recent *Changes feature* that provides a list of recent edits to the wiki.
- The page history contains a list of the page's previous revisions, including the date and time of each edit
- Donate/call for proposals

Language Preference

The main language on this platform will be English. However, automated language tools such as *Google Translate* will be used. This is because of the difficulty in keeping up with the foreseen growing number of content uploads. Also, the wiki allows for postings in local language. An English version will then be availed.

Content Generation

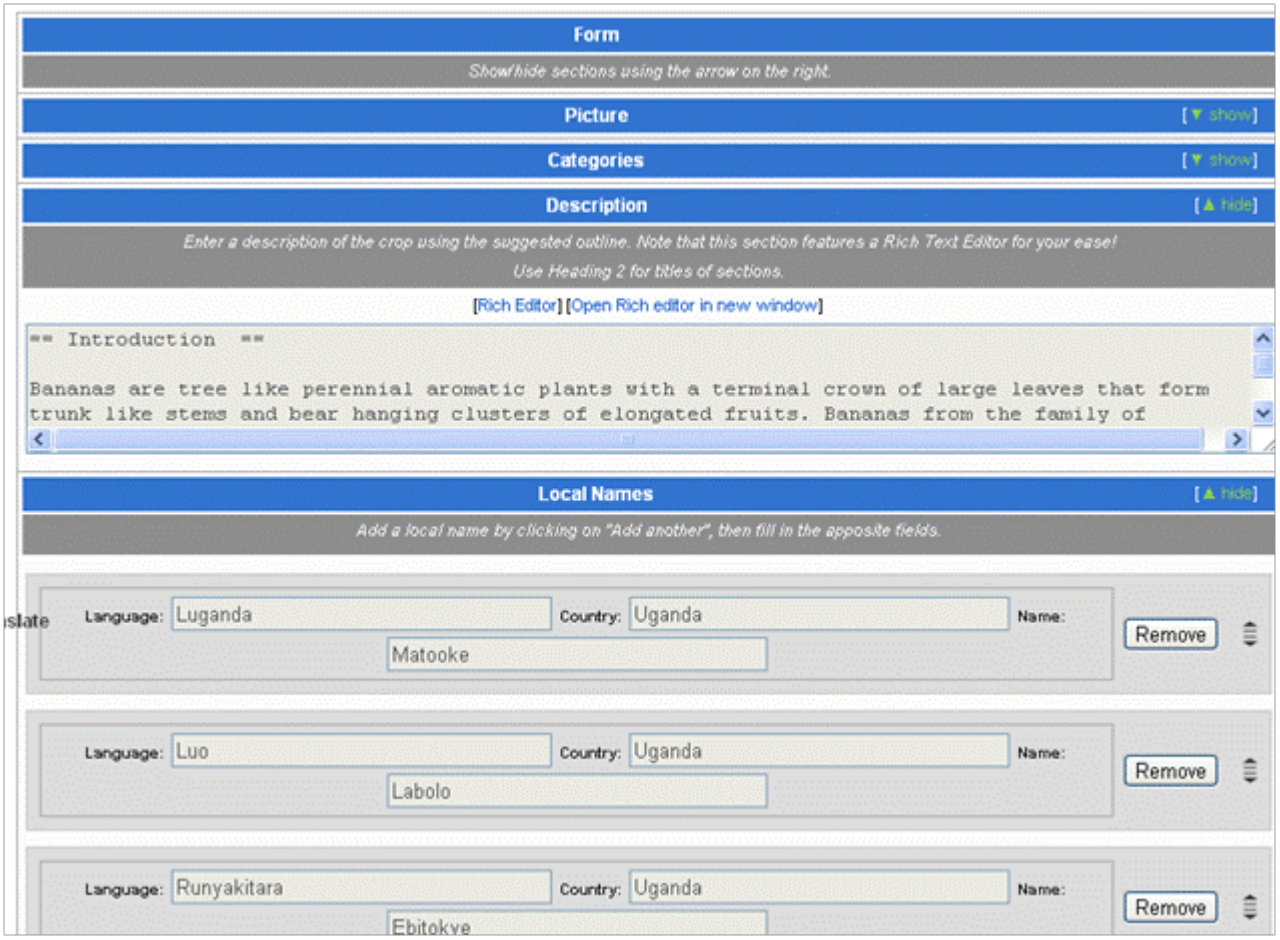


On the onset, the platform will have content developed over a period of seven years (7) by CELAC[4], a project of BROSDI[5]. This will provide a starting point onto which other agricultural local content practitioners will build and expand. To date, with funding from Hivos, the project continues to maintain a growing database of best farming practices. So far, the project has content for 52 crops and 11 livestock types. This is content collected by the farmers, repackaged, verified and redistributed by BROSDI using ICT methodologies.

Process of Content Generation

FarmAfriPedia is modeled on Wikipedia. The aim is therefore to build an open platform to which content can be added. Accordingly a simple data entry form is available for adding new content. As with Wikipedia, it is envisaged that content editors will operate behind the scene, moderating and, if necessary, editing content.

[4] http://www.celac.or.ug and http://celac.wordpress.com. This is one of the agricultural projects at BROSDI and is fully sponsored by Hivos, a Dutch NGO.
[5] http://www.brosdi.or.ug and http://successstories.wordpress.com



However, in this first phase, as the database of content is built up, the proposal is for a more controlled way of working, as follows:

1. Organisations such as BROSDI, WOUGNET and SAFIRE will operate as custodians of the data. They will either moderate content entered by others or enter data sent to them by others (by email or other means)
2. All new content will therefore be validated by those organisations, who will form the Governing structure. They will therefore address such issues as Intellectual Property rights, plagiarism and validation of content.
3. Other organisations will be invited to join the project, adding their own data and operating in a similar way with their own audience and stakeholders.

Expected Project Product

The project expects its beneficiaries to: -

- Use the information to increase their knowledge base
- Share widely
- Store content that is quickly fading away with each passing generation.

Core Team

The team building this platform is composed of four people, passionate about using ICT to address the concerns of the rural poor in our communities: -

1. Ednah Karamagi – Executive Director of BROSDI. Lead the team in designing the CELAC Project and now heavily involved in its monitoring and evaluation. Also involved in mainstreaming ICT into program development, web 2.0 usage and community training.
2. Mary Nakirya – Program Manager & Program Coordinator of the CELAC Program, BROSDI. Also heavily involved in content collection, repackaging and distribution to the farmers
3. Davide Piga – involved in Online Facilitation, Social Web/Web 2.0, Collaborative Technologies, Social Network Analysis, Communities of Practice, Knowledge Capture, Knowledge Mapping, Information Management, Intranet/Enterprise Portal/Information Systems, Thematic/Knowledge Networks
4. Pete Cranston – an experienced facilitator and trainer, and has provided strategic and operational IS&T (Information Services and Technology) and ICT (Information Communication and Technology) advice and consultancy services over the past five years to a range of organizations.

HOW WILL THE STAKEHOLDERS GET TO KNOW ABOUT THE WIKI?

PROPOSED SCALING OUT SITES

To cover the continent more efficiently, it is proposed that there be one Sensitization Workshop in each region. Refer to Figure 1 below. Proposed sites are: -

1. Northern Africa (Egypt and/or Morocco)
2. Eastern Africa (Uganda & Kenya)
3. Western Africa (Ghana)
4. Southern Africa (Zimbabwe)
5. Central Africa (Zambia)
6. Sahara belt region (Mali)

[6]

Figure 1: AFRICAN REGIONAL DIVISIONS AND COUNTRIES

[6] SOURCE: http://www.tombouctou.net/images/Africa-Regions.jpg

INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS

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COMMUNICATION TOOLS BEING USED

TO BUILD THE WIKI

The Core Team is doing this using a: -

- Group wiki
- A project Discussion Group (localcontentpedia@)
- Monthly Skype Conferencing meetings
- Phone Calls using Skype and mobile phones
- Google docs

Also a mailing list will be developed. The members will be a combination of the Core Team and selected members that helped further panel build the platform in the initial stages. These are: -

Pete Cranston	:	ICT Trainer & Consultant	Britain
Davide Piga	:	UN Fellow	Italy
Julius	:	Farmer	Kenya
Florence	:	Farmer	Kenya
Francis	:	Farmer	Kenya
Damascus	:		Kenya
Susan	:	ALIN	Kenya
Mary Nakirya	:	BROSDI	Uganda
Janet	:	WOUGNET	Uganda
Ednah Karamagi	:	BROSDI	Uganda
Roseline	:	SAFFIRE	Zimbabwe
Charles Dhewa	:		Zimbabwe

All these have been very appropriate in the building of the online platform.

TO DISSEMINATE THE CONTENT ON THE WIKI

The information can be repackaged for usage as: -

- Pictures
- Video
- Online radio
- Audio
- CDs
- SMS
- Print media
- Through agricultural officers and extension workers
- Freedom Phone and/or Frontline SMS application
- One computer allocated for farmers at farmer centers

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

- Increased learning and sharing of vital fading information
- A one stop platform where one can access information provided one has access to the internet
- Networking especially since a peer group will be joined by a single platform

- The platform provides alternative and more affordable farming methods for even the poorer in the community
- Reduced degradation on our environment, climate and the soils and resultant improvement in the livelihoods of the rural poor
- The sensitization sessions will allow face to face meetings between farmers and other stake holders of local content

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This will be done using available webstats.

TIME LINES

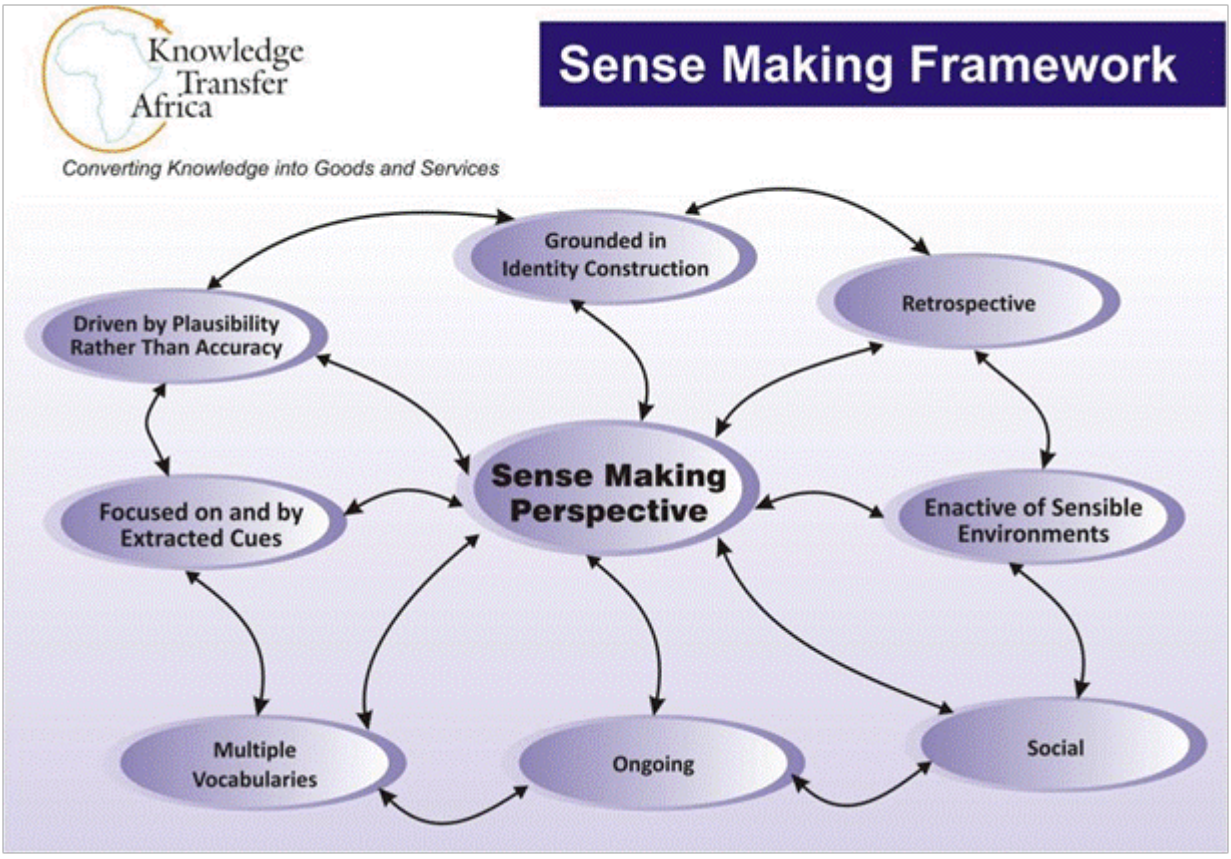
ACTIVITIES		2011												2012									
		j	*f*	*m*	*a*	*m*	*j*	*j*	*a*	*s*	*o*	*n*	*d*	*j*	*f*	*m*	*a*	*m*	*j*	*j*	*a*	*s*	*o*
Development of the wiki by the core team																							
Selected farmers and development workers congregate to panel beat the platform.																							
Selected farmers and district agricultural officers test and add content to the platform																							
Donor involvement	Identification of possible donors																						
	Contacting proposed donors																						
Regionally selected farmers, government officers and NGOs add content to the wiki																							
Hold regional sensitization forums	East																						
	Sahara																						
	West																						
	Central																						
	North																						
	South																						
Wiki is open to the wider public																							
Monitoring																							
Evaluation																							
Commence devt of the health local content wiki																							

Traducture and Sensemaking: Experiences from Southern Africa

Charles Dhewa

Abstract

Translation improves the way people make sense of the world, leading to better decision making. Experiences in Southern Africa have shown that translation and the related notion of traducture have a significant role to play in development. Our interventions have used sensemaking theory as a torch in exploring translation and traducture with communities and other stakeholders. Sensemaking involves placing stimuli into frames and our work has shown that when people put stimuli into frames they are able to comprehend, understand, explain, attribute, extrapolate, and predict. Frames enable people to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences in their lives and world. To a large extent, sensemaking can be viewed as a process in which individuals develop cognitive maps in their environment. Since people develop cognitive maps through their languages, translation has an important role in understanding how people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds make sense of the world. Through translation, the diversity of African languages enriches sensemaking. These languages have vivid words that draw attention to new possibilities through metaphors, idiom, poetry, etc. Access to these varied images enable Africans to engage in more adaptive sensemaking than organizations or cultures with limited vocabularies. This is critical for development practitioners who engage with people based on many assumptions about language and understanding of issues.



Sensemaking and traducture in African communities

In African communities, as elsewhere in the world, sensemaking is about the ways people generate what they interpret and this has a huge bearing on traducture. To engage in sensemaking is to construct, filter, frame, create facticity and render the subjective into something more tangible. Engaging communities through traducture can reveal that sensemaking has the following features: it is grounded in identity construction; retrospective; social; enactive of sensible environments; on going; focused on and extracted by cues; and, driven by plausibility rather than accuracy.

a. **Grounded in Identity Construction:** Sensemaking begins with a self-conscious sensemaker and the need within individuals to have a sense of identity – a general orientation to situations that maintain esteem and consistency of one's self-conceptions. Through Community Knowledge Centres and use of local languages to generate knowledge through stories, communities have started reviving and appreciating the value of their totems and clan names. Totems and clan names are the basis on which people dig into the history of their families. Family is important because it is the place in which you initially experience all the ingredients of self-belief and identity. There is no crisis in a human being that is bigger than the crisis of loss of identity. In many African communities, families start first with blood relatives, followed by relatives of blood-relatives, who may not be your own blood – relatives. Then we get to in-laws, friends and neighbours and all of these form and bond into clans and, or communities. In Africa, my father's brother is my father not my uncle. My uncle is my mother's brother. An understanding of relationships is very important in translation.
b. **Retrospective:** People can know what they are doing only after they have done it. They do so by connecting dots looking backwards. Clarity on values clarifies what is important in elapsed experience, which finally gives some sense of what that elapsed experience means. Translation and use of local languages is helping shape indigenous knowledge into a coherent set of ideas, enabling people to benefit from the wisdom of their ancestors. Communities are now able to retrieve their collective cultural memory and use this as a way forward to development. They have realized that unless they rediscover themselves, their roots and heritage, they will not have the self-confidence to create a new modern African society.
c. **Enactive of Sensible Environments:** People produce part of the environment they face. They receive stimuli as a result of their own activity and find what they expect to find. Growing up in the philosophy of Ubuntu has made many Africans adjust to the fact that you are a human being because of other human beings.
d. **Social:** An individual creates novel thoughts in the context of interactions with others, and then communicates them to the large community. The larger community generalizes these ideas such that they become part of the culture. Through their heritage of Unhu or Ubuntu, African communities have embraced the supremacy of a strong sense of belonging and sense of connectedness with others through various social activities.
e. **Ongoing:** Sensemaking, interpretation and translation builds on sensitivity to various ways in which people chop moments out of continuous flows and extract cues from those moments. For example, smallholder farmers are always in the middle of complex situations which they try to disentangle by making and then revising provisional assumptions. While the world is continuous and dynamic, most development organizations working with farmers keep resorting to absolute categories

that ignore large pieces of continuity, thereby entrapping themselves in misconceptions. Traducture can help in getting to the bottom of these dynamics and inform development interventions.

f. **Focused on and by Extracted Cues:** Extracted cues are simple, familiar structures that are seeds from which people develop a larger sense of what may be occurring. Context affects what is extracted as a cue. African languages have a lot of cues on which they rely on for making sense of the world.

g. **Driven by Plausibility Rather Than Accuracy:** Sensemaking is about coherence, reasonableness, creation, invention, and instrumentality. The criterion of accuracy is secondary in sensemaking because people need to distort and filter, to separate signal from noise if they are not to be overwhelmed with data. All this is crucial for translation because what is translated has to make sense. What is necessary in sensemaking is a good story which holds disparate elements together long enough to energize and guide action, plausible enough to allow people to make retrospective sense of whatever happens, and engagingly enough that others will contribute their own inputs in the interest of sensemaking. African stories from the Bantu are good examples of sensemaking templates as shall be demonstrated below.

A thorough grasp on sensemaking processes enhances the impact of translation. In many African communities, people pull threads from several different vocabularies to focus their sensemaking. They pull words from vocabularies of society and make sense using ideology. They pull words from vocabularies of their ancestors and make sense using tradition. They also pull words from vocabularies of sequence and experience and make sense using narratives. This is why stories are an integral part of sensemaking and decision making in Africa.

Significance of Stories as Vocabularies of Sequence and Experience

In Africa, many people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically. The importance of this insight is that most models of organization promoted by policy makers, NGOs and development organisations are based on argumentation rather than narration, yet reality is based on narration. This is why communities are often handicapped when they try to make sense of development interventions, because their skills at using narratives for interpretation are not tapped by structures designed for argumentation. Telling stories about remarkable experiences is one of the ways in which people try to make the unexpected expectable, hence manageable. The fact that stories serve as guides to conduct means they facilitate the interpretation of cues turned up by that conduct.

When people put their lives into narrative form, the resulting stories do not duplicate the experience. The experience is filtered. Personal narratives are a product of severe editing because people who build narratives of their own lives use hindsight. The requirements necessary to produce a good narrative provide a plausible frame for sensemaking. Stories gather strands of experience into a plot that produces an outcome. Sequencing is the source of sense and a powerful heuristic for sensemaking. Because the essence of storytelling is sequencing, it is not surprising that stories are powerful stand-alone contents for sensemaking. Stories allow the clarity achieved in one small area to be extended to and imposed on an adjacent area that is less orderly. They enable people to build a database of experience from which they can infer how things work. The following section explores narratives among the Bantu people of Sub Saharan Africa.

Sensemaking and traducture in Bantu oral literature

The Bantu are a linguistic group comprising people who speak over 600 different languages in many African countries, all derived from a common proto-Bantu language. There are more

than 250 million speakers of Bantu languages in Africa. In Bantu language, mu-ntu means "a person" or "human being, and its plural is ba-ntu meaning "people" or "human beings". For Africans, the term Bantu, is a reminder of their common history, oneness, and greatness, as a people, the Bantu. U-buntu, in Bantu thought stands for "the best way for a human being to be a human being", the ideal way to be a human being, the ultimate truth, and the end- quest for man.

All the Bantu share a common view or vision of the universe, in addition to sharing the common proto-language. In Bantu thought and cosmovision, all reality, all existence, is NTU, which in English approximately translates as BEING. NTU is constituted by three elements which are nature, man, and spirit. By encountering and comprehending the universe through a Bantu language, and experiencing Bantu-life-styles, all Bantu inculcate in themselves, almost involuntarily, a specific sense of "NTU". This sense of NTU is in the music of the Bantu, in their language, their dance, their drama, their religiosity and their faith. It determines and dominates all their indigenous knowledge systems, all their "sciences", all their ways of negotiating nature and the universe, and all their ways of cognizing reality.

One of the more prominent Bantu indigenous knowledge systems, or “sciences”, is its oral narrative performance system, referred to in contemporary literature as stories and story-telling, or myths and myth-making. In a survey of the oral narratives of the Ndebele, Shona and Tonga Bantu groups in Zimbabwe and Zambia, we found that any member of the community can perform a narrative. Story-telling sessions do not take place on set occasions but spontaneously from informal groups gathered together in leisure in the evenings. Various units of Bantu narratives become, in the performance, symbolic elements in whose relationships, they metaphorically express, and at the same time, constitute UBUNTU.

All participants in any given Bantu narrative performance already know the story being told. However each narrative is a unique experience for all involved. Several factors vary with every performance of a story. These variations are determined by the talent and past experiences of the performer, past experiences and identities of members of the audience, and how participants are related to one another in the real social world. No matter how faithfully a performer tries to stick to the story as they heard it before, they always end up with their own version. Different versions vary in detail and emphasis, and substitute different but equivalent symbols. Thus, while sticking to the basic story as it is known in the tradition, performers can shift emphasis, and cut out details, in order to exploit to the fullest their own performing talent and the composition of their audience.

The Bantu experience each and every narrative within the context of their community’s whole repertory of stories. For them, therefore, the symbolization and metaphorical transformations actually takes place within the context of all the narratives they have experienced in the past. It is therefore easy to imagine the intense and high level of abstraction at play in this context. The following are synopses of three narratives from three different Bantu groups in Southern Africa. The Nsenga, the Shona, and the Xhosa, of Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, respectively. These stories were translated into English from their respective languages.

Narrative 1

Once upon a time there lived an old couple that had no children. They were very miserable because they had to do all the house chores by themselves. They had no one to fetch firewood

or water for them. No one came to help them clean their house and wash their dishes. They had to do everything themselves.

One day the goats got together and decided to do all the house chores for this old couple, whilst they were out working in the fields. The goats made sure that they cleaned up the whole place and left no trace of their visit. When the old couple came from working in the fields, they were pleasantly surprised to find that all the house chores had been taken care of. They attributed the good work to the kindness of the people of the village. Little did they know that it was goats, and not people, who were doing the chores for them!

This happened over several days. One day after doing all the work, including brewing beer for the old couple, the goats decided to taste the very beer they had brewed. They drank the beer and found it very sweet. They liked it! They drank and drank, till they were all drunk. The chief goat got so drunk that he decided to climb up to the roof of the house. He started singing and dancing from there. Everyone, including the women, got drunk. They were all singing and dancing. The chief goat defecated there on the roof, and the women goats did the same on the ground, all over the courtyard. The place was a proper mess!

The old couple returned home in the midst of all this chaos. They were shocked to find that it was not people but goats, which had done the house chores for them. They were furious. They were not going to drink beer that had been brewed by goats. They threw away the beer, and chased away the goats. The chief goat came tumbling down the roof in a drunken stupor. All the goats ran away into the forest.

Narrative 2

One day a woman went hoeing in the field. Before she started hoeing she put her baby under the shade of a tree. Whilst she was working in the field some baboons came and stole her baby. When she finished hoeing she looked for her baby everywhere but could not find it. So she had to go home without her baby. She waited for a long time expecting whoever had taken her baby to return it to her, but nobody did. The baboons that had taken the baby decided to look after it. They fed the human baby on their own baboon-food.

Years later the baboons decided to bring back the baby. The woman was very grateful. The woman then lived with her baby who became a fully-grown beautiful girl. The woman however was never happy because her daughter did not like the cooked food she gave her. Instead the girl preferred uncooked food, baboon food! Eventually, the child had to leave. She went and joined the baboons permanently.

Narrative 3

Once upon a time there was a woman who lived with her daughter. The daughter got married and went to live at her husband's homestead. At one time the girl came to visit her mother. After her visit she traveled back to her husband's home. On the way she stopped by a river to take a bath. Whilst she was bathing a mbulu (a human-like but hideous creature with a tail) came by and took away her clothes. It insisted that she wore the mbulu's own dirty rags. The girl did that and the two traveled together to the girl's in-laws' home. They lived together at the mother-in-law's house, with the mbulu insisting that it was the girl and the girl was somebody she had met on the way and decided to bring home as a servant.

The mother-in-law suspected that something was wrong and sent her son to go and tell the girl's mother what she suspected had happened. The girl's mother traveled and came to this household. She brought two chickens with her and gave one to each of the "two" girls.

The girl who was her real child boiled some water, plucked the chicken, cut it into pieces, and cooked it. The girl who was in fact the mbulu simply took the chicken, put it into to a pot, whole and unplucked as it was, and cooked it. The two women immediately knew which one of the two was the real human girl. They chased away the mbulu.

Any non-Bantu person reading or even listening to these stories and seeking to interpret them could give them various "meanings". The first narrative could, on the surface of it, be said to be cautioning people against taking "windfalls" for granted, because they could turn out to be something quite different from what they seemed at first. The old childless couple thought that someone in the village had taken pity on them and decided to help them, only to find that it was not people but goats helping them. Some interpreters might even hazard that it is all to do with the relationship between the Bantu and their goats.

The Shona narrative about the baboons could be taken as a warning to mothers about where they leave their children. They risk losing them to wild animals if they do not take enough care. The Xhosa story could be said to be about the dangers that lurk in the bush and the inadvisability of young solitary girls stripping and taking a river-bath in the middle of nowhere.

All these would, at various levels, be seen as plausible "explanations" or "interpretations" of the stories. However the stories have much greater and substantive import within the narrative system, but even more so within the Bantu tradition as a thought. This is at the level where the surface event images all transform into, and function as, symbolic units, within specific logical structures. In fact the three narratives are equivalents within the Bantu narrative system. They all share the same logical structure. Their ultimate impact or affectivity on the Bantu participants is identical.

For the Bantu, all the above narratives address a deep philosophical question of human nature. What is it that distinguishes humans from non human beings? And one of the answers provided by the narrative system is ***that it is culture and cultured behaviour that distinguishes humans from non-humans. This "truth" is thereby hammered home into the psyche of all Bantu from a tender age. It is a truth they affectively inculcate into themselves without having to go to school to "learn" it.***

In the second and third event-images of the first narrative the goats behave in a cultured way. So when these beings, the goats, behave in a cultured way people see them as human. Their ***humanity is in their behaviour***. As long as they behave in a certain way there is no problem with their assumed humanity. However as soon as these "kind-hearted" people behave in an unspeakably uncultured manner, they are immediately recognized as non-humans. The goats are no longer merely goats but ***symbolic elements***. Their non-human beingness, indeed the goatiness, is not simply in their being four-legged animals, it is in ***their actions, their lack of culture.*** The chief goat sits on top of the roof and sings drunkenly. The other goats dance and defecate all over the courtyard. Even the "women" also do the same right there.

The same point about ***culture being the defining feature of human beings*** is also made in the narrative about the girl brought up by baboons. For all her human physical features, the fact that she could only appreciate uncooked food, was not cultured, immediately made her "non-human", as physically human as she was. So she had to go and live permanently with the baboons.

We see three different narratives from three different Bantu language groups, with totally different event-images sharing the same structure and having equivalent symbols. The diversity of materials that go into the narratives of this group illustrates the fact that the narratives embody ***certain cardinal ideas of Bantu thought, rules and laws. Through the narrative performance system, the Bantu come to appreciate and "know" nature and the universe in a way that cannot be expressed through ordinary language***. ***There***

arises from the structures and the symbols together with a whole host of transformational processes, a new language which requires translation and traducture for other people to understand.

At the foundation and core of this language are the notions of **"structure", "symbol"** and **"metaphor",** all greatly akin to those to be found in the language of the laws of the physical sciences and in abstract mathematical structures. The difference between the two is that the construction of the literary structures and symbolization processes bear a certain subjective, emotional, if not spiritual quality, which is totally lacking in the construction of mathematical structures. Thus there is a teleological dimension to indigenous knowledge systems and epistemologies (and associated pedagogies) that cannot be found in the conventional physical sciences.

At the epistemological level, a greater understanding of Bantu indigenous knowledge systems, as exemplified by the Bantu oral narrative system, would contribute to the new paradigm unifying all sciences and demonstrating the ultimate meaningfulness of the universe. This is where translation becomes very important in promoting multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary collaborative research.

Another critical issue from the above narratives is that in Bantu mythology there is no separation between animals and people. In fact, animals can house a human spirit and vice – versa: a human can host an animal spirit. It is not surprising therefore, that the bulk of the totems and clan names in Africa are based on animals. In Bantu folklore, human beings, trees and animals are closely inter-related to the extent that animals and people speak the same language. There are many stories around how human beings have a lot to learn from animals in all spheres of life, from power, politics, human relations, but above all character and behaviour. ***Traducture has an important role in surfacing the power of this folklore for the benefit of all humanity. Understanding and translating the language spoken by animals and trees requires a certain skill which is embedded in Ubuntu.***

Another emerging role for traducture

Traducture can be a viable model in reclaiming African education systems. Millions of youth who at home speak African languages and learn many social skills through their mother tongues, leave this knowledge behind to go to school where they learn a completely new way of life. Right from pre-school, African children are faced with a major clash between what they see, hear and learn at home and what they see, hear and learn at school. Although some of the knowledge acquired at school is very helpful, the ongoing tension between the two forms of knowledge (indigenous and western) creates conflict. Instead of learning that they should select the best from both worlds and build on their own culture, youth are taught that African indigenous culture is 'backward' and that only the Western way of life is useful. Traditional and indigenous knowledge has been relegated to an inferior position compared to Western forms of knowledge. Both Africans and non-Africans tend to assume that if knowledge has not been written in a Western-style book, or if knowledge is not taught in a formal school, college or university, therefore it is not knowledge at all.

Domesticating science and technology is another role for traducture. At the moment, educated Africans can only connect with their relatives using African languages at a limited level***. If they want to delve deeper into conversations about technology, they cannot connect with everyone else through mother tongues. Because technology is very important in the modern world, languages in which people talk about this technology is***

the medium of power. In Africa, as in the majority of countries across the world, English – the language of Western capitalism – is really the language of power. ***The majority of people who cannot command English have no space in science and technology. Translation/traducture should help Africans add cultural value to technological knowledge so that it can be interpreted through African languages.***

While African culture is very dynamic, over the years, it has lost some of its dynamism because it was swept aside as being an inferior knowledge system. As a result it is not used in the running of modern states. However, it is still used in a limited sense in rural and other urban settings, where Africans realise that it is the only source of knowledge that they have in order to function. For example traditional medical knowledge. Africans'capacity to borrow knowledge from others intelligently has also been greatly reduced. One needs to have confidence, self-belief, and a dynamic culture and society in order to selectively and intelligently borrow knowledge from elsewhere, then bring it home and make it suitable and relevant to one's people and society. Traducture is important for this to happen.

KTA is working with communities in assisting them to solve their problems through gathering and writing up African sources of knowledge, wisdom and stories, as well as folklore in local languages. African communities should be encouraged to leverage their knowledge based on the solid foundation of Ubuntu, which our ancestors crafted over centuries. They also have to aggressively and intelligently borrow technological knowledge and translate it into local languages for the purpose of education. It is through African stories, folklore, mythology, praise poetry, proverbs and art, among many other ways, that the world can tap into the wealth of African wisdom. Africans should understand that being modern is not a question of sacrificing the past in favor of the new, but of maintaining, comparing, and remembering values created by their ancestors, making them modern so as not to lose the value of the modern. ***Should we sacrifice the past in favor of the new?*** Traducture can be one of the suitable conceptual frameworks for achieving all these ambitions.

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Title: Sense Making as a Model for stimulating the demand for agricultural knowledge in grassroots communities

Background

Most development organisations push knowledge or information to farmers without sufficient consideration for how farmers engage, co-create and make sense of their knowledge and that from outside. Since sometimes knowledge from outside often does not have durable relevance, farmers ignore it and resort to their habits, intuitions and routines.

Our project intends to deploy a sense making model for stimulating the demand for agricultural knowledge from farmers. Sense making refers to how farmers produce cognitive maps of their own environment. It is about how they filter and invent meaning. There are eight core ideas of the sense making process and these include the fact sense making is: (1) about identity construction; (2) retrospective; (3) social; (4) ongoing or continuous; (5) enacts a sensible environment; (6) multiple vocabularies (7) focuses on extracted cues; and, (8) plausibility than about accuracy.

An application of these pillars of the sense making model will enable us to identify local knowledge systems or pathways and how farmers use these shape farmers' cognitive maps of their own environment. Understanding this cognitive mapping enables organisations not only to produce relevant content, but also foster co-creation of knowledge with farmers using their full human capacities (reason, intuition and artistic expressions). English and local languages will be key tools as well as translation.

Purpose

To structure, capture and disseminate local knowledge through building the confidence and capacity of grassroots farmers to share and demand knowledge. This will increase farm productivity and stimulate the demand for more local agricultural knowledge.

Expected Outputs

1. Improved quality, quantity and access to local knowledge.
2. Increased capacity and confidence of grassroots farmers to generate and source knowledge.
3. Establish on-line and off-line agricultural knowledge repositories.

Methodology

Since knowledge resides in diverse organisations and people, a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort will be used through consultations and interviews. ICTs will also be used against each of the pillars to reveal how these technologies can strengthen sharing of local content among farmers. We will also use an action research to map existing knowledge sharing pathways and barriers. There will also be capacity building of farmers in the use of ICTs and other methods through which they can demand and share knowledge. Another critical component will be community exchanges through visiting other communities to learn how they share knowledge. The project will initially focus on two sites (one in East Africa and another in Southern Africa).

Improving the quality of Agricultural knowledge exchange through developing an evaluation framework based on theories of farmer sense-making.

An action research resulting from collaborative efforts of Charles Dhewa, Damus Ogwe, Janet Achora, Roselinie Murota and Pete Cranston

Aim

To improve the quality of agricultural knowledge exchange between farmers and with other stakeholders

Problem

Most development organisations push knowledge or information to farmers without sufficient consideration for how farmers engage, co-create and make sense of their knowledge and that from outside. Since sometimes knowledge from outside often does not have durable relevance, farmers ignore it and resort to their habits, intuitions and routines

Expected outputs

1. An evaluation framework for agricultural knowledge exchange at community level
2. Guidelines for quality control in agricultural knowledge exchange at community level
3. How to document and share good practice, including in the use of ICT

Methodology

The action research approach will be used to conduct this evaluation in three countries in Eastern and Southern Africa, namely Uganda, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The evaluation will focus on one community in each country whose standard agricultural practices represent the collective knowledge/perspective of a defined ethnic group. Various tools will be used to capture this information including video, photography and storytelling as well as print in both English and vernacular specific to the country. The project will include a review of how knowledge is shared through MDD, especially during seasonal ceremonies. The evaluation will be conducted by five organisations in partnership (Zimbabwe: Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources and Knowledge Transfer Africa Trust), Women of Uganda Network - Wougnet (Uganda) and Seeds of Peace Africa International and Kenya Telecentres Link (Kenya).

Problem

Background

"There are over 140 different Bantu languages with different knowledge sharing practices. The Bantu expansion in Africa was a long series of physical migrations, a diffusion of language and knowledge out into and in from neighboring populations, and a creation of new societal groups involving inter-

marriage among communities and small groups moving to communities and small groups moving to new areas. Bantu-speakers developed novel methods of agriculture and metalworking in both iron and copper which allowed people to colonize new areas with widely varying ecologies in greater densities than hunting and foraging permitted. The Bantu diffused food producing techniques, of high-yield crops."

Dervin (1983, 1992, 1996) has investigated individual sense-making, developing theories underlying the "cognitive gap" that individuals experience when attempting to make sense of observed data. Accordingly, sense-making and situational awareness are viewed as working concepts that enable us to investigate and improve the interaction between people and information technology. Within this perspective, it is recognized that humans play a significant role in adapting and responding to unexpected or unknown situations, as well as recognized situations. Klein et al. (2006) have presented a theory of sense-making as a set of processes that is initiated when an individual or organization recognizes the inadequacy of their current understanding of events. Sense-making is an active two-way process of fitting data into a frame (mental model) and fitting a frame around the data.

Development Problem

Most times development workers assume the way they disseminate information will directly benefit or be acceptable by farmers, yet they have different perspectives of how the methods used by the different organisations have impacted on farmer take up. Is there sense made in the methods currently used, if not how can these indigenous communities make the dissemination methods more acceptable or practical?

Conclusion

Tapping into these various sense making processes for knowledge uptake will enable the team and the communities to co-create an evaluative framework and a Quality Enhancement guide for agricultural knowledge sharing in the three countries which can be replicated in other communities in Africa

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