

DAILY Times, Thursday April 7, 2005

Experts say these emigrants are three to ten times more... an increasing threat to both... mothers and their children... The WHO says govern... to reduce the number of child deaths by two-thirds... in the statistics, a... the scribe is a survivor. But life is a tangle when it comes to adaptation to real survival tactics in his backyard. This is because, contrary to the ideal situation (hali halisi), the community in which he lives takes him for a real "cash-earner" who should be "standing from the rest of Wajalaho" (hallo polloi) in his neighbourhood. But poor Uswahilinite wishes that these ignorant people would know his predicament and his unpredictable kismet as far as his profession is concerned. His is a life of hide-and-peek in the Uswahilini. This is especially during month-end when virtually everyone in whom he has financial relation would be breathing down his throat. The worst among them is the landlord who brags of

IK for MDGs essential for community building, sustainable development

IK is commonly held by communities rather than individuals. It is tacit knowledge and therefore difficult to codify. It is embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships and rituals. Probably that is why it's called Indigenous Knowledge.

To make it more popular now, the World Bank has embarked on pioneering it through its various organized courses in collaboration with the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN). GDLN video conference facilities involved in this program include those at the Tanzania Global Development Learning Centre (TGDLN) in Dar es Salaam. Others are found at GDLCs in Kampala, Delhi, Colombo for participants and Video Conference centres in Geneva, Washington DC, New York, Cape Town and Bangkok for presenters.

In his brief interview with GL media, TGDLN director says that the multimedia distance learning lecture series would, for the first time, address development challenges through the unique perspective of IK.

"The lectures demonstrate the role of IK in helping achieve the Millennium Development Goals," says Mr. Senkondo. "The focus is on success stories in using IK to help increase food security and agricultural productivity, reduce maternal mortality and treat the opportunistic diseases associated with HIV/AIDS."

Such course content provides development practitioners with an Ohands on' guide on the use of IK in development processes. This will be done through lectures by IK experts and practitioners such as experts from the scientific community and UN agencies will share experiences as well as address critical challenges related to the

efficiency, validation, protection, dissemination and conservation aspects of IK.

One of the most significant lessons in this course is the combination of presentations by experts, case studies, interactive group and cross-regional discussions. These lectures are complemented by multi-media IK learning tools that include project documents, videos, interviews and web links that provide information to assist development practitioners to achieve the MDGs. These will draw on success stories from East Africa and South Asia.

"Each participant is provided with a hard copy of the book entitled *Indigenous Knowledge: Local Pathways to Global Development*," says Mr. Senkondo. The publication contains the core learning materials for the course, including case studies from India, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda. It gives voice to over 60 development practitioners who present powerful cases to demonstrate how local communities empower themselves to manage their own development processes.

The indigenous knowledge is significant in a sense that it provides problem-solving strategies for local communities, especially the poor. It represents an important contribution to global development knowledge. It is relevant for the development processes as well as under utilized resources.

Learning from IK, by investigating first what local communities know and have, can improve understanding of local conditions and provide a productive context for activities designed to help targeted communities.

Most importantly, investing in the exchange of IK and its integration into the assistance programs of the World Bank and its development

INDIGENOUS Knowledge (IK) is simply local knowledge. It's a unique knowledge to every culture or society. IK is the basis for local-level decision making in various disciplines such as agriculture, health care, food preparation, education, resource management and a host of other activities in communities. It therefore involves problem-solving strategies for communities. Special Correspondent of The Great Lakes Media reports more on IK:

partners can help to reduce poverty.

There are various practical examples drawn from the developing world. These include traditional birth attendants using some information technologies proven to contribute in the reduction of maternal mortality.

According to Maria Musoke of the Challenge and opportunities of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the health sector prepared for the African Development Forum (ADF) 1999 Makerere University, Uganda, the Rural Extended Services and Care for Ultimate Emergency Relief (RESCUER) pilot project launched in March 1996, in Iganga District, Uganda, addresses the problem of high maternal mortality can pose a good example.

The project helped empower a network of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and the public health service centers (PHC) to deliver health care to pregnant women.

This resulted in increased and timely patient referrals as well as the delivery of health care to a larger number of pregnant women. Modern technology is used to enable the TBAs to refer patients to the PHCs. This involved the installation of a solar powered VHF radio communication system.

Due to this program, in Senegal traditional leaders support women to end harmful

customs. In June 1997 the women of Malicounda attended a non-formal education program led by TOSTAN, a local Ngn. Inspired by the training, they decided to abandon the practice of female genital cutting. They convinced the village council to abolish the practice officially. Not satisfied with this result, they launched a locally based movement. Traditional leaders and women groups working together are efficient ways to end harmful cultural practices.

They created a team (including some of their husbands) to visit neighboring villages. They spoke to women there and helped them win the support of their communities. The women also convinced the traditional leaders, including the Imam of Malicounda, to support their agenda and became involved actively as change agents.

In January 1998, in the "Declaration of Malicounda" a congress of 18 village leaders from the region committed to abandon the practice. Soon after, President Abdou Diouf of Senegal endorsed the "Oath of Malicounda" as a model for a national adoption. As of March 2001, this grass-roots movement had spread to more than 200 communities nationwide and several other communities in other countries as well.

The same had happened

in post maternal and child health care rites and observances among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria. During a four-week period after birth called 'Omugwo' the mother and child are secluded and relieved from all other chores they are cared for by the grandmother of the newborn.

The new mother is given

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of allowance that goes by the name of salary. But alas, his hopes are dashed, month in, month out.

So the Uswahilinite wakes up before dawn to dodge the landlord and comes back in the thick of night when presumably, the landlord would be asleep. He is still not out of the woods yet for the Mama Lishes are already baying for his blood.

In a bid to evade most of the Mama Lishes, the Uswahilinite has visited virtually all of them in his neighbourhood and now he has nowhere else to go. Worst still, the *Mpenba* who owns the kiosk next-door is swearing by the name of Abunuwasi that the Uswahilinite will see "Cha Mioma Kuni" when he finally lands his claws onto him. It is with all those tribu-

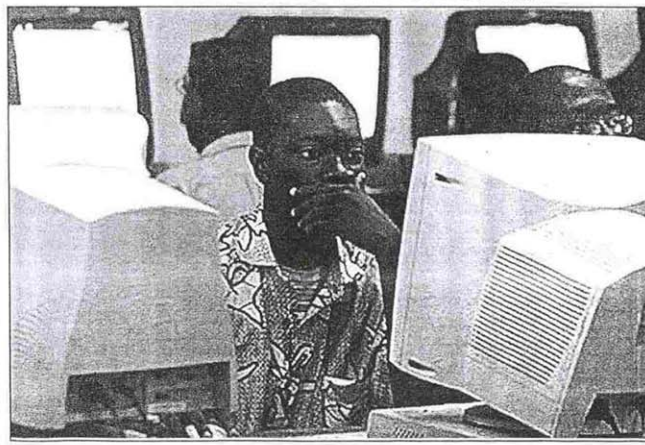
comes first, then the *Mpenba* and, by the time he thinks about the *Mama Lishes*, his miserably frail wallet is already yawning. He has however to placate them with as little as he can-if only to ensure another *Mkopo* of *Mchicha* and *Dagaa* the following day.

To wind up the exhaustive and uneventful day, his legs carry him reluctantly to the nearest "Oasis" and without much ado, orders a bottle of Serengeti Lager to drown his sorrows. As the Muezzin from the nearest Mosque calls the faithful to prayer, the Uswahilinite too bows in supplication to thank his Maker and with the faithful, joins in the intonation of the familiar, sacred, religious words, "Allahu Akbar!" (brinsdad@37.com)

a stimulating hot soup made with dried fish meat yams plenty of pepper and a special herbal seasoning called *Oudali* which makes the uterus contract and thus helps

in expelling of blood clots. The diet helps to restore blood lost during childbirth to restore energy and facilitates the healing of wounds and restores normal body

functions and promotes lactation. For a first-time mother this period is meant for learning parental and house keeping practices from her mother.



Access to the global development learning network and good use of GDLN video conference facilities will enable Tanzanians to learn and know more about new developments in information technologies. (File Photo)

MR. LwINGA April 7, 2005