

IKNotes

<http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik/default.htm>

No. 97
October 2006



IK Notes Survey Results

In early 2006, the program asked for feedback on the IK Notes series and to assess whether they have made a contribution to your work. The focus of the survey was on readers' perceptions of the role of indigenous knowledge in development and the World Bank's work in terms of integrating indigenous knowledge and practices into World Bank-supported programs and projects. This report is based on responses to both the web-based and the paper survey; with 213 responses (144 to the web-based and 69 to the paper-based questionnaire)¹, this should be considered more of a poll than a statistically reliable survey.

There are quite a number of consistent statements on the role of indigenous knowledge in development and the usefulness of the IK Notes series. In summary of the findings, readers generally think indigenous knowledge is very important in development and indicated that the IK Notes series is a useful source of information. A majority of respondents also indicated that indigenous knowledge and practices, and the IK Notes publication are each highly relevant to their work. The following summarizes the findings of the survey, and provides our assessment of its results.

Approximately three quarter of the responses were from developing countries, most of them (60%) from Africa, Nigeria being the country of residence of most respondents. Approximately 33% of responses were from industrial countries, most of them from the USA, followed by different European countries.² The vast majority of respondents (84%) is male and older than 36 years (80%), a very high percentage (29%) is older than 55. Most respondents identified themselves as experts/consultants and policy makers or directors, working predominantly with national NGOs, governmental organizations and research institutes. A relatively high

number (11%) work in the private sector. The majority of respondents specialized in Social Development, Education or Natural Resource Management.

Responses related to indigenous knowledge

Most respondents consider indigenous knowledge very relevant and important for development. The majority uses indigenous or community-based practices in their work and has achieved better results by doing so. The majority evaluates the World Bank's efforts to build on indigenous knowledge positively. However, there were some critical remarks regarding the Bank's work and its use of indigenous knowledge, such as its ability to use local people's knowledge to adapt practices to local conditions.

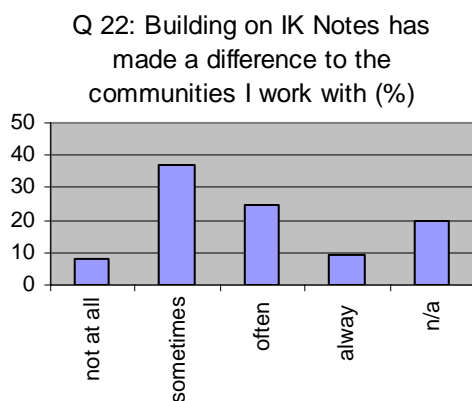
¹ The response rate to the survey is approximately 1.5%. Most readers in developing countries received the paper questionnaire too late and could not participate, which is probably the main reason for the low response rate. We apologize to those readers.

² This distribution may be due to Internet access and mailing times.

IK Notes reports periodically on Indigenous Knowledge (IK) initiatives in Sub-Saharan Africa and occasionally on such initiatives outside the region. It is published by the Africa region's Results and Learning Unit as part of an evolving K partnership between the World Bank, communities, NGOs, development institutions, and multilateral organizations. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the World Bank Group or its partners in this initiative. A webpage on IK is available at:
[//www.worldbank.org/afr/ik](http://www.worldbank.org/afr/ik)

As the majority of respondents work in national non-governmental and governmental organizations or research institutes, it is not surprising that this work often involves working with or about indigenous and community-based practices. Almost 90% of respondents say that indigenous knowledge plays sometimes, often or always an important role in their work (see figure for question 18 below) Hence, almost all respondents consider indigenous knowledge a very important development resource (see question 14 in table 1), also to be used as a source of local innovation. Respectively, three quarters of the respondents have promoted innovations based on indigenous practices in their work. There is slightly less agreement regarding the importance of indigenous knowledge when introducing new practices (see question 15 in table 1). Although a majority of the respondents emphasize that understanding indigenous knowledge is a precondition for adapting new practices, there is a relatively large percentage of respondents (20%) who do not agree that indigenous knowledge is necessary to adapt new practices to the local conditions.

The high relevance of indigenous knowledge to the respondents' work is also reflected in the percentage (75%) indicating that indigenous knowledge has made a difference in their work. Almost the same percentage (71%) say that building on indigenous knowledge has also made a difference to the communities they work with (see figure on question 22).



With regard to the role of the World Bank, most respondents rated its work on and with indigenous knowledge positively (see ratings for 23a to 23d in table 1). The majority agrees that : (a) the Bank makes an effort to understand indigenous knowledge; and (b) builds on indigenous knowledge as a resource for development. However, one quarter of respondents to (a) and almost every third respondent to (b) sees scope for improvement for the Bank. Two thirds of respondents evaluate positively the Bank's ability to understand indigenous knowledge in order to better adapt its new practices to the local conditions (c). The other third, however, is not satisfied with the Bank's work in this respect.

The highest percentage of agreement was with regard to the strong role the Bank should play in advocating indigenous knowledge with governments and other clients in developing countries in order to mainstream the use of indigenous knowledge in development (d).

Table 1: Readers were asked to rate the statements on a progressive scale of 1 to 4,

1 meaning strongly disagree and 4 meaning strongly agree.

Statement	Average rating from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree)
Q 14 Indigenous knowledge is an important development resource	3,4
Q 15 Without understanding indigenous knowledge, new practices cannot be adapted to local conditions	3,1
Q 23a The World Bank makes an effort to understand indigenous knowledge	2,5
Q 23b The World Bank builds on indigenous knowledge as a resource for development	2,6
Q 23c The World Bank uses indigenous knowledge to adapt to local conditions	2,4
Q 23d The World Bank should advise its clients to build on indigenous knowledge in development	3,2

Responses related to IK Notes

Many hard copy readers who are able to receive IK Notes electronically prefer to receive the hard copy, because of unreliable Internet connections. Surprisingly, many readers from industrial countries also prefer the hard copy version. Some readers indicated that this allows for easier display and sharing.

All readers expect that they can continue to receive IK Notes free of charge, although 27% of respondents would be willing to pay for the Notes. Three quarter of the respondents stated that they read the IK Notes always or usually. Additionally, in 63% of the cases, an IK Note is read by more than one person. Forty percent of respondents indicated that

up to five additional people read the IK Notes issues they receive and for 23% the publication is read by up to 15 or even more than 15 other people.

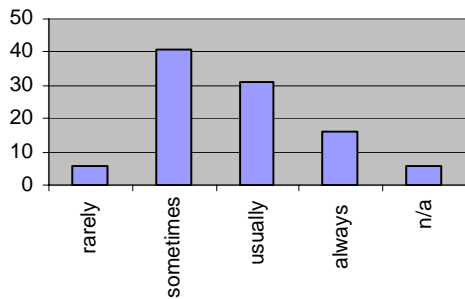
Almost 90% of the respondents indicated that the topics covered are relevant to their work. Three quarters of them have applied information from the IK Notes series and 92% of these respondents think that it often improved the outcome of their work (see figures below).

that IK Notes is on the right track. The feedback on both the usefulness and impact of IK Notes as well as the importance of indigenous practices in development processes is an encouragement to continue to work towards the dissemination and application of indigenous and community-based practices in development.

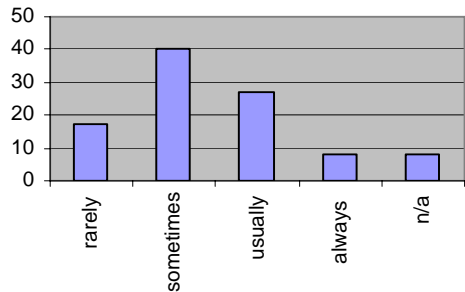
There is a call for action, though, regarding the composition of the readership. If the gender and age of the respondents accurately reflect the larger composition of IK Notes readership, the number of female and young readers is very low. Women and youth are important drivers for economic, social and environmental improvements in developing countries and an awareness of the importance of indigenous practices and the knowledge of local solutions is critical to this constituency. Following the suggestions from respondents to the survey, more gender-related articles and young people’s concerns will be covered. But readers are also encouraged to disseminate IK Notes among young people and women and provide or point towards pertinent stories that could be covered in the IK Notes series.

Nevertheless, the feedback and the overall results are positive. A great majority of respondents signal approval with IK Notes and its topics. The critical voices regarding the World Bank’s willingness and ability to mainstream indigenous knowledge on the one hand and the positive and encouraging feedback on the other are a call for continued awareness raising and dissemination of relevant community-based practices within the World Bank and its development partners.

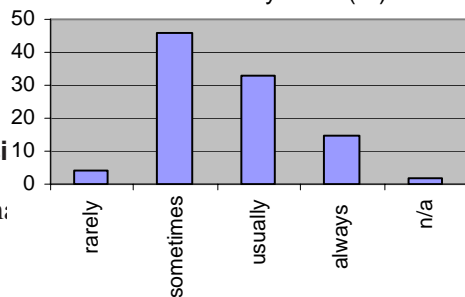
Q 7: IK Notes cover topics relevant to my work (%)



Q 8: I have applied information from IK Notes in my work (%)



Q 9: The use of information from IK Notes has improved the outcome of my work (%)



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