

AILA Africa ReN Newsletter

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Applied Linguistics and Literacy in Africa and the Diaspora



An AILA Research Network
www.aila.info

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Dear ReN members,

I'm pleased to share with you our latest ReN Africa newsletter in April, the month of World Book Days. UNESCO has made April 23rd International Day of the Book, a day to promote reading, publishing and copyright. It's an excellent excuse to celebrate our collective efforts to better understand literacy and language in African contexts.

Many of us will cross paths over the summer, at one of the many exciting events where researchers can rub shoulders while getting up to speed on the latest findings and theory. Many ReN members can be found at the Reading for All Conference in August (see our website's "Upcoming Events" page for more info) taking place in Dar es Salaam, or at AILA's June international conference on Language Learning and Language Policy, hosted at the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics just after their Executive Board and International Committee meeting. We tell you about a few other opportunities specific to Africa in this issue. As you attend various events over the coming months, remember to tell others about this ReN and invite them to visit our website and sign up.

Our thanks for all of the information you have generously shared to make this issue, and as always, remember to check the website in between newsletters for other notices and opportunities. This is your forum, after all, and we hope you will make the most of it!

We look forward to hearing back from you on what you've found useful and what you would like to see more of in future newsletters.

Best wishes,



Lauryn Oates
Editor



News and Announcements From ReN Members

Malealea Development Trust Seeking Travellers to Assist in Fundraising Project

Will you be traveling to/from Johannesburg (South Africa) or Lesotho to Vancouver (Canada) in April or May of this year? The Malealea Development Trust is a literacy and community development project in the Malealea region of Lesotho, funded by the Stephen Lewis Foundation. For the past few years one of ReN member Susanne Smythe's personal fundraising efforts (and a way to stimulate the local Lesotho economy) has been to sell Leribe mohair shawls in Vancouver. Susanne and her colleagues are looking for someone who may be able to collect the shawls from the Director of the Malealea Development Trust, Gillian Attwood, in either Lesotho or Johannesburg, and bring them to Vancouver. They are very light, roll up well and won't take lots of space in your luggage. The mail is just too slow and unreliable! For more information, please contact Suzanne Smythe at smythe02@shaw.ca



New Book Released by ReN Member

Contributed by: Lone Elizabeth Ketsitlile-Olebile, Doctoral Candidate, Language and Literacy Department University of Georgia

Title: Saving Languages: An Introduction to Language Revitalization

Author: Lone E. Olebile

Publication: Critical Inquiry in Language Studies

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

Date: April 7, 2009



ReN Member Profile: Dr. Ashraf Abdelhay

Dr. Abdelhay has recently joined Drs. Sinfree Makoni and Bonny Norton as a co-convenor of our research network. Dr. Abdelhay is currently a Research Associate at the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge. He holds a BA in Linguistics from the University of Khartoum, and an MSc and PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Edinburgh. He has worked as a part-time lecturer at the Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Department, University of Edinburgh. His research interests lie in the area of language planning and policy, focusing on the

relationship between language planning, ideology and power relations. His current research involves a critical analysis of the Naivasha language policy discourse and its implications for the question of national identity in the Sudan. The following is a sample of one of Dr. Abdelhay's publications:

Abdelhay A. (2006). Naivasha Peace Agreement's Language Policy: Demythologizing the 'old' and constructing of a 'new' linguistic identity in the Sudan. *Respect*, Vol. 3: 1-22.



Book Discount for AILA Members at Multilingual Matters

Multilingual Matters & Channel View Publications are offering a 25% discount on all their books to AILA members. Visit the new members' ordering page to learn more:

www.multilingual-matters.com/members.asp?cid=mmem



Call for Best Practices

Contributed by: Mercè Monjé, Consultant - CORENS

CORENS (Collectif Régional pour la Coopération Nord-Sud) is a French association working on social, cultural and political development in Mali. It is composed of volunteers with experience in decentralized cooperation who offer their professional competencies to the association and to the Kayes' region in Mali. As part of a larger project to support decentralization in the Diema's Cercle (Kayes' region), the association is planning to set up a project called Decentralization and National Languages. The main goal of the DNL is to facilitate the participation of the population in regional public life through improved communication between municipal elements and local citizens. The challenges lies in that the language of the administration is French while just a small portion of the population is able to read, write or speak this language. On the other hand, despite the language heterogeneity in Mali, the Bambara is the most used regional language and also serves as a common language, and all municipal councilors speak at least one local language. Having launched various literacy education efforts, the association is seeking to learn of best practices used in other parts of the world, oriented towards reducing the relegation of regional tongues to oral use. That is to say, activities aimed to legitimate the population's languages and promote their use in written communication, including in bureaucratic documents, newspapers and others. The association is thus seeking help from international organizations, centers of African studies and other associations who can provide information about existing projects with similar objectives. Later, and jointly with the Malian





promoters in charge of decentralization, we would present these experiences in a seminar in Bamako in May, the purpose being to raise ideas and concrete regional actions. We are therefore calling for information about best practices oriented around:

1. Activities oriented to legitimate and give operational support to regional languages;
2. Activities and supporting projects promoting public uses of written regional languages;
3. Activities oriented to legitimate regional languages at a political level in democratic processes;
4. Activities oriented to ease the access of the population to political participation (improve the relation between society and political elites, and increase electoral participation) and access to official administration documents (presently only written in French).

We appreciate any information and suggestions. Please contact Mercè Monjé at mercemonje@gmail.com



National University of Lesotho Seeking Associate Professor

The National University of Lesotho's Faculty of Humanities (Dept. of English) is seeking a Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in English Language & Linguistics (Post No. 1605). The successful candidate will be expected to assume duty on 1 July 2009 or as soon after this date as possible. The minimum qualification required for the post is a Master of Arts in English Language Studies/Linguistics, but preferably a PhD in English Language Studies/Linguistics, with at least seven years of relevant teaching experience at tertiary level, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, experience in post-graduate supervision and a strong research record. Areas of specialization could include Morphology of English, Semantics of English and Syntax of English. Ability to teach in the areas of Lexicology and Translation/Interpretation would be strong additional recommendations. The duties of the post will include i. The teaching and assessment of undergraduate and graduate students in English Language and Linguistics, especially Morphology of English, Semantics of English and Syntax of English; ii. Students' research project supervision at undergraduate and all post-graduate levels; iii. Assistance in Departmental, Faculty and University administrative duties as the need arises, and; iv. Student counselling as the need arises. The University offers competitive salaries and benefits. Applicants are to address the stated qualifications and provide other information to assist University to determine their suitability for the position. They should also quote the vacancy number of the post applied for, provide current CVs (including telephone, telefax and e-mail), certified true copies of educational certificates,

transcripts and three typed references. Applicants should submit their applications together with sealed references to the above address before the stipulated closing date to: The Senior Assistant Registrar (Appointments), National University of Lesotho, P.O. Roma, 180, or at lm.phumo@nul.ls or ntahlm@yahoo.com.

The closing date for applications is April 8th, 2009. (Note: Citizens of Lesotho will be appointed on permanent and pensionable terms. Non-citizens will be appointed on a two-year contract, which is renewable.)

Upcoming Conferences

Contributed by: Felix Awung



What: 10th LASU Conference

When: November 25 – 27, 2009

Where: National University of Lesotho

Summary: Conference theme is Language Contact, Identity and Socio-Economic Mobility. Contributions in the form of papers will be particularly welcomed on the following Sub-Themes: Language, Race and Power in

Africa; Language in Contact and Conflict: Implications for Mother-tongue Education; Registers and Genres across Languages and Cultures; Access to (Language) Education – a Gender Issue?; Issues concerning Marginalized Languages. Contributions on other aspects of language and linguistics will also be welcomed, and may report on empirical research or address broad conceptual issues. Abstracts should be 200-300 words and include title, name of presenter/s and institutional affiliation/s, e-mail address of principal presenter or convenor of workshop. Presentations: 20 mins. + 10 mins. discussion.

Contact Information: lasulingua2009@yahoo.com

Organizers: The Linguistics Association of SADC Universities (LASU)

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: April 30, 2009



What: The 7th International Conference on Education and Information Systems, Technologies and Applications: EISTA 2009

When: July 10 – 13, 2009

Where: Orlando, Florida, USA

Summary: Relationships between Education/Training and Information/Communication Technologies (ICT) are increasing acceleratingly, sometimes in unexpected ways, with original ideas and innovative tools, methodologies and synergies. Accordingly the main purpose of EISTA 2009 is to bring together researchers and practitioners from both areas, in order to support the bridging



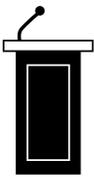


process between education/training and ICT communities.

Contact Information: www.ICTconfer.org/eista

Organizers: Professor Andrés Tremante, EISTA 2009 General Chair

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: March 25th, 2009



What: Mapping Africa in the English Speaking World

When: June 2 – 4, 2009

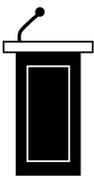
Where: Gaborone, Botswana

Summary: The Department of English at the University of Botswana is hosting a biennial conference on Mapping Africa in the English Speaking World to discuss issues concerning English language and literature in Africa.

Contact Information: Dr. Kemmony Monaka, www.ub.bw/

Organizers: Department of English, University of Botswana

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: March 31, 2009



What: Learning Technologies Africa

When: September 21 – 23, 2009

Where: Abuja, Nigeria

Summary: Learning Technologies Africa (LTA) is a Pan- African Learning Technologies Conference and Exhibition, which is an initiative geared towards building digital competencies in the knowledge society.

Contact Information: Sam Juwe, www.LearnTechAfrica.com

Organizers: Computer & Associated Products/ European Institute for Elearning

Deadline for abstracts/proposals: April 30, 2009



FOCUS on... West Africa

Research Paper: Diffusion of Information Communication Technology in Ghanaian schools

This research paper, written by Mr. Ebenezer Malcolm and Dr. Francis Godwyll from Ohio University, USA, explores the

state of ICT integration in the educational system in Ghana. The emphasis is on how ICTs are currently being used in the education sector in Ghana, what is actually happening on the ground, what are the strategies and policies related to the use of ICTs? What are the common challenges or constraints faced by Ghana schools in the area of ICT integration in schools? Finally the study makes suggestions for possible ways forward in terms of ICT diffusion in schools. For the purpose of this paper, the focus was on Junior and Senior high schools in Ghana. Download it here:

www.icconnect-online.org/News/diffusion-of-information-communication-technology-in-selected-ghanaian-schools



Read it for Free! Revised edition of The African Palimpsest

Zabus, Chantal (2007). *The Africa Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel*. Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V.

About this book: Uniting a sense of the political dimensions of language appropriation with a serious, yet accessible linguistic terminology, *The African Palimpsest* examines the strategies of 'indigenization' whereby West African writers have made their literary English or French distinctively 'African'. Through the apt metaphor of the palimpsest, a surface that has been written on, written over, partially erased and written over again, the book examines such well-known West African writers as Achebe, Armah, Ekwensi, Kourouma, Okara, Saro Wiwa, Soyinka and Tutuola as well as lesser-known writers from francophone and anglophone Africa. Providing a great variety of case-studies in Nigerian Pidgin, Akan, Igbo, Maninka, Yoruba, Wolof and other African languages, the book also clarifies the vital interface between Europhone African writing and the new outlets for African artistic expression in (auto-)translation, broadcast television, radio and film. Hailed as a classic in the 1990s, *The African Palimpsest* is here reprinted in a completely revised edition, with a new Introduction, updated data and bibliography, and with due consideration of more recent theoretical approaches. Read it for free on Google Books:

<http://books.google.com/>



IFAN Digitalizing Its Collection: Glimpses into the Senegalese Past

The African On-Line Digital Library (AODL) has added a new gallery to its collection, featuring a sample of work being digitalized at the L'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN), in Dakar, Senegal. IFAN, founded in 1939, is Africa's largest repository of Francophone West African culture and civilization. A sample of the collection undergoing digitalization, focused on the "urban visual culture of the Mourides, a Senegalese Sufi movement centered upon the life and teachings of a local saint named Sheikh Amadou Bamba", can be viewed on AODL's website. Visit the site to view well-preserved glimpses into the past, of traditional hair styles, funerary rites, tombs, dances, masks and more: www.aodl.org/ifan.php





FOCUS on... Francophone Africa

La formation ouverte et à distance pour soutenir la recherche et l'enseignement en langue française.

Cet article est une réimpression d'un entretien publié dans: Africa E-Learning News

An interview reprinted from: Africa E-Learning News

www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/news161.php

L'AUF est présente en Afrique à travers un large réseau d'établissements. Pierre-Jean Loiret, directeur délégué du Programme Innovation de l'Agence a répondu à nos questions. La palette des actions de l'AUF sur le continent est très large et le volet concernant l'enseignement à distance particulièrement consistant. Monsieur Loiret nous donne les grandes lignes directrices des programmes de l'AUF, et quelques exemples de résultats éloquentes.

eLA: *Quelles sont les activités de l'AUF en Afrique et quelles sont les raisons de ces engagements?*

Pierre-Jean Loiret: Sur les 5 continents l'Agence compte de 685 établissements membres répartis dans 81 pays. 140 des ces établissements se trouvent en Afrique. L'AUF y est présente par l'intermédiaire de ces bureaux régionaux, Afrique Centrale, Afrique de l'Ouest et Océan Indien, dont dépendent des Instituts de formation et les Campus Numériques Francophones au nombre de 23 sur un total de 42 à travers le monde.

L'Afrique est notre terrain d'action prioritaire. Nos actions sont mises en œuvre par les bureaux régionaux et conçues par des directions de programme au nombre de 6: « Langue française, diversité culturelle et linguistique », « Aspects de l'État de droit et démocratie », « Environnement et développement durable solidaire », « Renforcement de l'excellence universitaire, partenariats, relations avec les entreprises », « Innovation par les technologies de l'information et de la communication pour l'éducation », « Appropriation des outils technologiques par l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche ».

L'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie est une association de droit québécois. Depuis 1989, cette association d'universités est un opérateur de la Francophonie institutionnelle. L'AUF est présente sur tous les continents et fédère des établissements d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche qui ont choisi le français comme langue d'enseignement. La vocation de l'Agence est de contribuer à la construction et à la consolidation d'un

espace scientifique en français en favorisant la coopération scientifique, en formant des futurs acteurs du développement, en soutenant la recherche et l'excellence ou encore à travers le partage d'expertise.

Les innovations pédagogiques, la formation ouverte et à distance dépendent du Programme « Innovation », les Campus numérique du Programme « Appropriation », la gouvernance et notamment le déploiement du système Licence-Master-Doctorat du Programme « Excellence universitaire ».

eLA: *Quel sont les moyens déployés par l'AUF pour soutenir les universités africaines afin qu'elles atteignent les standards internationaux et deviennent compétitives?*

Pierre-Jean Loiret: On peut citer entre autres les différentes actions et financements accordés par l'Agence aux universités africaines, l'ensemble concourant à renforcer leur compétitivité et l'adhésion à des standards internationaux:

Le renforcement des échanges, de la mobilité à travers la circulation scientifique des enseignants-chercheurs ex: les bourses de mobilité pour la formation ou la recherche.

L'appui aux pôles d'excellence régionaux ex: financer un laboratoire de recherche pour lui donner un rayonnement régional et international.

L'appui au renforcement de la gouvernance universitaire avec des formations et des expertises sur la mise en œuvre du système LMD, l'appui aux conférences régionales de recteurs ou de présidents d'universités, pour favoriser la coordination de leurs actions.

Le développement de la formation ouverte et à distance qui permet de travailler sur la rénovation des curriculums, l'acquisition de nouvelles méthodes pédagogiques, la structuration des formations, l'amélioration de la qualité des cours, le développement de l'usage des technologies de l'information, mais aussi le renforcement des capacités financières des institutions en diversifiant leurs sources de revenus.

eLA: *Quels sont les mesures prises par l'AUF pour favoriser l'échange d'étudiants et de scientifiques avec l'Afrique? Existe-il un échange dans les deux sens? Existe-il une coopération, dans la recherche par exemple, avec des scientifiques en Afrique?*

Pierre-Jean Loiret: L'AUF lance chaque année un appel d'offres pour la mobilité scientifique, cela concerne la formation (masters) comme la recherche (bourses pour les doctorats et les post-docs). Les mobilités Sud-Sud sont favorisées. En 2007-2008, 420 étudiants africains ou chercheurs africains ont bénéficié d'une bourse doctorale ou de perfectionnement à la recherche.





Nous finançons également des missions d'enseignement qui permettent par exemple à un professeur camerounais d'aller enseigner deux semaines en Centrafrique. Plus d'une centaine de ces missions d'enseignement ont été financées en Afrique en 2007 – 2008. En 2007 – 2008 nous avons reçu exactement 8608 candidatures aux 51 diplômes à distance, licences et masters émanant d'universités reconnues membres de l'AUF, que nous soutenons. 82,5% de ces candidatures sont issues d'Afrique subsaharienne et de l'Océan Indien. Après les sélections effectuées par les universités diplômantes nous avons pu accorder des allocations d'études à distance (bourses pour suivre une FOAD couvrant en moyenne les 2/3 du coût de la formation) ou faire bénéficier d'un tarif préférentiel à 676 jeunes africains, c'est à dire 88% du total des 801 aides accordées cette année là. L'appel à candidatures pour les formations proposées à la rentrée 2009 – 2010 est lancé au début du mois de mars 2009.

eLA: *Pouvez-vous dire quelques mots sur le concept du eLearning tel qu'il est conçu par l'AUF?*

Pierre-Jean Loiret: A l'Agence universitaire de la Francophonie on parle de FOAD (formation ouverte et à distance), parce que c'est un terme francophone mais aussi et surtout pour faire la différence entre les programmes de e-learning qui peuvent aussi bien comprendre l'usage des TIC en classe que des formations en entreprise et les diplômes proposés à distance par les universités membres de l'Agence.

En 2007 – 2008 nous avons soutenu 51 diplômes à distance, dont 11 issus d'établissements du Maghreb et d'Afrique subsaharienne. Ces diplômes du Sud ont bénéficié de l'expertise en ingénierie de formation de l'AUF pour leur conception et leur développement ainsi que du financement d'allocations pour leurs étudiants.

L'Agence a investi le champ de la formation des enseignants aux TICE et à la FOAD depuis une dizaine d'années maintenant. Nous avons commencé par favoriser la conception et la production de contenus scientifiques sous format numérique avant d'orienter nos efforts vers la création de diplômes à distance.

eLA: *L'avenir de la FOAD, comment le voyez-vous?*

Pierre-Jean Loiret: En 2008, à l'issue d'un appel d'offres nous avons sélectionnés 15 nouveaux projets de diplômes. Ils sont en développement et 8 d'entre eux devraient être disponibles dès la rentrée d'octobre 2009 ; les autres à la rentrée académique suivante. L'AUF prend en charge l'ensemble des formations nécessaires pour les équipes pédagogiques, administratives et techniques qui doivent travailler à la création, au suivi et à la maintenance d'une FOAD. Cette démarche nous paraît plus efficace qu'un programme de formation détachée de la création

d'un diplôme. Trop souvent dans ce dernier cas les stagiaires une fois le programme de formation achevé se dépêchent de s'inscrire... à un nouveau programme ou un nouvel atelier. En revanche, impliquer des équipes sur la création directe d'un diplôme permet à l'Université de pouvoir proposer rapidement de nouvelles formations, ayant une visibilité internationale grâce à Internet.

Vous avez vu maintenant quelques réimpressions dans cet espace par manqué de contributions de nos membres francophones. J'en suis sûr que quelques-uns parmi vous ont publié des articles, ou bien que vous avez participé aux conférences. Veuillez partager vos expériences avec nous tous: c'est le but d'un réseau ! Nous cherchons aussi les personnes qui peuvent faire les critiques des œuvres françaises afin de bien représenter la communauté francophone dans ces pages. -- Votre coordinatrice régionale



FOCUS on... Southern Africa

A Model for Adult Literacy: Asifunde! Literacy Resources

When then South African Minister for Education, Kader Asmal, called for a literacy campaign in 2000, a group of organizations came together to respond. The Centre for Adult Education, members of the KwaZulu-Natal ABET Consortium and the South African Institute for Distance Education joined forces with the United Kingdom's Department for International Development to launch the Asifunde! Literacy Resources. The initiative, which has created and disseminated basic literacy materials for adults, trained educators, and evaluated the course and materials' efficacy in groups of adult learners, aims to produce beginner literacy courses for adults who cannot read and write in South Africa's main official languages. There are currently two courses, one in Zulu and one in Sesutho Sa Lebowa (Pedi / Northern Sotho), in practical reading, writing and numeracy skills, as well as giving learners the chance to practice speaking English. Each course consists of a Learner Workbook, an Educator Guide and back up testing and administrative materials. Two training courses, one for educators and one for coordinators are also available in English. The initiative also provides a set of ten easy readers in each language. All the Asifunde! Literacy Resources are available for download here: www.ukzn.ac.za/cae/alr/alrdown.htm

Blog Scan: Literacy in Zimbabwe, a personal experience

Found in Translation is an open blog for and by students and teachers at the University of California at Berkeley, and open to





anyone else who wants to join in and who shares a fascination with language. On the blog, students have the opportunity to write about language in their lives. Zimbabwean student at UC Berkeley, Anthony Maparara, shares his views and concerns with the disconnect of the Zimbabwean education system to local people's language and culture. Read his and an eclectic collection of other blog posts at Found in Translation:

<http://foundintranslation.berkeley.edu/?p=144>



Quick Profile: The South African Institute for Distance Education

The South African Institute for Distance Education was formed as an educational trust in July 1992. It aims to assist in the reconstruction of education and training in South Africa. It promotes open learning principles, the use of quality distance education methods, and the appropriate use of technology. SAIDE works closely with policy makers and providers of educational programs to translate these approaches into practice. The SAIDE website hosts numerous interesting features including a "Reading Room", research reports, a digital library, introductory material to distance education in South Africa, and adds new resources regularly. Read their most recent newsletter here: www.saide.org.za/resources/newsletters/vol_15_no.1_2009/1_2009web.htm



FOCUS on.... East Africa

Tidbits: Tanzania's Primary Education Development Program

The Government of Tanzania has always seen investment in human capital as central to the quality of lives of Tanzanians. Despite a focus on education, the country's development

strategies and the support of donors, universal primary education has not yet been achieved. Therefore, together with donors, the Government launched the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) in 2001. Its aim is to ensure that all children have equitable access to a good quality primary education. European Commission funding aims to strengthen the PEDP by focusing on district programs and the construction of schools, as well as activities which aim at improving the quality of education. Objective Promoting access to quality education for all children

- To increase levels of enrolment
- To improve the quality of teaching and learning

- To promote capacity building within the education system
- To strengthen institutional arrangements that support the planning and the delivery of education services

Learn more here: ec.europa.eu/europeaid/case-studies/documents/pdf/tanzania_pedp_en.pdf



Highlights of the 1st National Intergenerational Literacy Learners' Conference in Arua District

By Willy Ngaka

The first national intergenerational literacy learners' conference successfully took place at Agobia Church of Uganda, Nyai Village, Aroi Sub-County, in the Arua District of the North western region of Uganda. It was organized by URCODA in conjunction with the Arua District Local Government and Makerere University Department of Community Education and Extra-Mural Studies. Willy Ngaka and Dr. Rogers Ayiko were the conveners of the conference.

The weeklong conference, the first of its kind in the region, created a platform for ordinary people to interact freely with scholars as they actively engaged in discussing issues regarding the challenges they experience in attaining sustainable rural livelihoods. Conceived along lines of indigenous/traditional, non-formal and lifelong learning principles, the conference was located in a rural area where "poverty can be smelt, felt and seen to be directly interacting with people" as Rev. Dr. Joel Obetia, the Bishop of Madi & West Nile Diocese, described it. The conference was cross-cultural, inter-disciplinary and intergenerational. The event offered a rare opportunity for ordinary people from all walks of life and diverse geographical, demographical, socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds in Uganda and the neighbouring countries to mix and learn from each other.



Photos: Multi/interdisciplinary, Cross-cultural and Intergenerational Nature of the conference participants





The nature of the participants and the venue used for the conference can be seen in the following photographs. The village that served as the venue is one of the few places in which emphasis has been placed on conserving the environment.



Some Photographs depicting the conference Venue and Participants at Agobia church of Uganda in Nyai Village, Arua District.

Pre-conference activities focused on community health literacy and ICT training for the youth, and 1,400 people turned up for the community health literacy day, while 45 youth took part in the ICT training. The actual conference, January 27 – 30, registered 811 participants. In all, the conference drew in representatives from 32 organizations, 20 districts of Uganda, and seven countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Kenya, the U.S. and Denmark. Key speakers included: Rev. Dr. Joel Obetia, Prof. Kate Parry, Dr. Gorretie Nabanoga, Dr. George, L. Openjuru, Hon. Margaret Angufiru-MP for Ayivu Constituency, and Hon. Rukia Nakadam – the State Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development who officially closed the conference.

Amongst other things, the days were characterized by celebrations, entertainment, presentations with group discussions, exhibition of participants' products and technologies, the launch of URLCODA's rural community library, and girl-child education support scheme. There were also recognition opportunities for the highly motivated adult learners in URLCODA.

In the following photographs, a participant (left photo) was presenting what their group discussed and Minister (centre) – in the right photo, appreciates a traditional technology used by people of Mingoro to make sauce pans



Amongst other things, the conference revealed the following:

- The rural, poor and the 'illiterate' have the interest to learn about and participate in making decisions on matters that directly affect their livelihoods, but lack opportunities for accessing fora in which such decisions are made.
- Illiteracy is a significant factor that impedes people's active and meaningful participation in the different development interventions they are involved in and those that the Government is trying to introduce with a view to reducing rural poverty.
- Illiteracy among parents significantly contributes towards perpetuating poor performance among primary school children and worsens dropout rates among pupils in rural areas.
- There is a serious problem with our current curriculum which has tended to completely ignore traditional and indigenous forms of learning and education used to form responsible and productive citizens.
- Our education system now promotes the attitude of 'learning to leave', but not of learning to fit within the community, since we now educate our children to go away instead of returning to contribute towards the transformation and development of the rural area that produced them.

Among others, the participants in conference resolved to: take and develop Agobia as a model village for other communities to emulate; consider the conference as a national event that should rotate in all the districts of Uganda; publish and share the conference reports with the relevant stake holders; adopt URLCODA's initiative to take academics to rural people and bring rural people to academics as a model to involve the poor themselves in discussing issues affecting their livelihoods; ask literacy providers to lay emphasis on promoting multiple literacies for improving livelihoods; shift attention of the future conferences on livelihoods related skills training; encourage other organizations to emulate URLCODA's concept of virtual voluntarism in promoting intergenerational literacy; urge academics and researchers to carry out research in traditional literacies to improve development of those who depend on them especially in areas of medicine, agriculture, leadership, governance etc; and asked URLCODA and other Agencies to design and promote a family saving scheme which will enable individuals to have decent shelter and educate their children.

The organizers wish to acknowledge the contributions all the volunteers, the various organizations and individuals made towards the success of the event. They specifically wish to extend their sincere thanks to: the US Embassy in Kampala, Uganda;





Volunteer Efforts for Development (VEDCO); Gaagaa Enterprises Ltd; Radio Voice of Life (VOL); Radio Parcís; National Community of Women Living with AIDS (NACWOLA) – Arua Branch; Adult Literacy and Basic Education Centre (ALBEC); National Libraries of Uganda; Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) Arua Branch; AIDS Information Centre – Arua Branch; St. Joseph’s College Ombaci; Arua Public Secondary School; Mingoro Primary School; Eng. Patrick Okuni; Mr. Milton Anguyo; Dr. Rogers Ayiko; Mr. Joseph Mobutu; Ms. Diana Ondoga; and Mr. Jimmy Ondoma for all that they did to make the conference a great success.

Research Corner

Barcelona Summer School on Bi- and Multilingualism

Dates: September 7, 2009 – September 10, 2009

Location: Barcelona, Spain

Contact: Carmen Perez at bilingualism.school@upf.edu

URL: www.upf.edu/dtf/recerca/summer/index.html

Location: Campus de la Comunicació (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Roc Boronat, 138 - 08005 (Barcelona)

Price: 440.- Euro (Tuition and 5 nights’ accommodation included)

Description: The aim of the summer school is to bring together prominent experts on bilingualism and multilingualism who represent different disciplinary approaches and will discuss state-of-the-art research on the topics. The school is intended for post-graduate students and researchers interested in an updated overview of the field in an international academic context. The summer school includes the following courses:

- Michel Paradis (McGill University, Montreal) Neurolinguistic Perspective
- Antonella Sorace (University of Edinburgh) Linguistic Perspective
- Judith Kroll (Pennsylvania State University) Cognitive Perspective
- Li Wei (University of London) Socio-cultural Perspective
- Istvan Kecskes (State University of New York, Albany) Discourse Perspective

Workshops will be held on Thursday afternoon (September 10): Albert Costa (Universitat Pompeu Fabra) Workshop Chair. Barcelona Summer School directors: Prof. Istvan Kecskes (State University of New York, Albany) and Prof. Carmen Pérez Vidal (Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona)

Please go to the website of the summer school where you will find a Registration Form, payment information and details about the program: www.upf.edu/dtf/recerca/summer/index.html



Call for Applications: 2009 UPeace-IDRC PhD Fellowships

The UPEACE Africa Programme has secured funding from The Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC) to offer a limited number of scholarships to African students in PhD programs focused in peace and conflict studies. The scholarship will cover tuition, living expenses, communications, access to scholarly materials, and disseminate research findings through publications and conference presentations. In addition, part of the award may be used to cover expenses related to a semester abroad at a Canadian university. The maximum award is US \$15,000 per eligible candidate per year. The programme is seeking applications from candidates who are currently enrolled in a PhD program or who can offer proof of acceptance into a PhD Program at a University in Sub Saharan Africa for the 2009-2010 Academic Year. The application period is March 1st – May 31st, 2009. Visit: www.africa.upeace.org/ for the full list of requirements to apply.

Tell us about your research! Send us a short profile (one paragraph) of the research you are undertaking on language or literacy education in Africa by September 1st, 2009 for inclusion in our next issue.

In the Field

UNESCO Awards Its 2008 Literacy Prizes: Three out of Four Winners from Africa

The UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2008, valued at USD \$20,000 each, are awarded annually in recognition of excellence and innovation in literacy throughout the world. Complying with the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) thematic calendar, the theme for this year’s Prizes was “Literacy and Health”, with a strong emphasis on epidemics and communicable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. In September 2008 in Paris, the following winning literacy projects from Brazil, Ethiopia, South Africa and Zambia received their prizes in a special ceremony. The winners were announced by UNESCO Director-General, Koïchiro Matsuura, on the recommendation of an international jury. A programme in Morocco and another from the British Broadcasting Corporation received an Honourable Mention.

The UNESCO **King Sejong Literacy Prize** goes to the People’s Action Forum programme “Reflect and HIV/AIDS” (Zambia). Recognizing the potential of women’s literacy in the prevention and treatment of diseases, particularly HIV and AIDS, the “Reflect





and HIV/AIDS” programme is remarkable for its innovative cultural programmes in mother tongue languages used to reach rural women. One of the two **UNESCO Confucius Prizes for Literacy** is attributed to Operation Upgrade (South Africa), for the “Kwanibela Project”, continuing the Operation’s 40-year history of commitment and change. Its focus on rural women, HIV/AIDS awareness, family nutrition and income, as well as its promising results and innovative elements, provide a true model for other countries. The other **UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy** is awarded to the Adult and Non-Formal Education Association in Ethiopia (ANFEAE) programme, “Literacy Plus” (Ethiopia), which exceeds simple literacy for rural women. Outstanding in its community-based approach to teaching business, conflict resolution and disease prevention, and for its writing workshops for the newly literate, it provides a model of innovation and self-sustainability.



Organizational Profile: REL Afrique

La mission de REL Afrique est de créer un réseau actif de praticiens des REL. En connectant les universités qui sont dans la même mouvance à travers le Continent, l’objectif est de développer de partager et d’adapter les REL pour qu’elles répondent aux standards et aux besoins de hautes études dans les sociétés Africaines. En créant et en développant un réseau de collaboration – grâce à des rencontres ou via internet- REL Afrique permet aux universités africaines d’exploiter le pouvoir des REL, de développer le potentiel des individus et des institutions et de devenir partie prenante de du réseau des global des REL, en tant que producteurs de ressources et non plus simplement en tant que consommateurs passifs. Pour en savoir plus: www.oerafrica.org

En quelques mots: « tant que les méthodes de création, d’utilisation et de partage des REL ne seront pas ancrées dans les esprits et ne feront pas partie intégrante de la politique des institutions, les projets pilotes ne se transformeront jamais en programmes dignes de ce nom. »

Blibionef Celebrates Ten Years of Bringing Out the Books

Blibionef was founded on the premise of research findings which demonstrated how children who learned basic reading and writing skills in their mother tongue tended to perform better in school. The organization, based in Cape Town, “promotes the development of children by allowing them to read for themselves

for pleasure and by doing so they also help their own community.” Blibionef’s vision is to give new and appropriate books to children and teenagers in under-resourced communities in their mother tongue, stimulating their curiosity and desire to learn and laying a solid foundation of knowledge for their future. Children’s organizations and schools can apply on-line for donated books from Blibionef. Blibionef welcomes support: you can donate on-line, or inquire about volunteer opportunities. They are also seeking used, functioning computers, and teacher and librarian volunteers. Visit them here: www.blibionefsa.org.za

What’s New in Technology

Recommended Resource: Impact Assessment of ICT-for-Development Projects - A Compendium of Approaches

Billions of dollars are invested each year by the public, NGO and private sectors in information-and-communication-technologies-for-development (ICT4D) projects. Yet we have very little sense of the effect of that investment. This Compendium, prepared by Richard Heeks & Alemayehu Molla, aims to address that lack of knowledge. It presents a set of frameworks that can be used by ICT4D practitioners, policymakers and consultants to understand the impact of informatics initiatives in developing countries. Download it here: www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/idpm/research/publications/wp/di/di_wp36.htm

Profile: The Panafrican Research Agenda on the Pedagogical Integration of ICT

The purpose of the proposed Panafrican Research Agenda on the Pedagogical Integration of ICT is to contribute to this broadening process and to participate in the access, construction, and production of knowledge in the information era. The objective of this research project is to better understand how the pedagogical integration of ICT can improve the quality of teaching and learning in Africa. The main project partners are the education faculties in eleven countries across Northern, West, Central, East and Southern Africa. Learn more on-line here: www.ernwaca.org/panaf/



Nominations Needed for Tech Awards

The Tech Awards program inspires global engagement in applying technology to humanity’s most pressing problems by recognizing the best of those who are utilizing innovative





technology solutions to address the most urgent critical issues facing our planet. People all over the world are profoundly improving the human condition in the areas of education, equality, environment, health, and economic development through the use of technology. It is the goal of The Tech Awards to showcase their compelling stories and reward their brilliant accomplishments. Learn how to nominate a project:

www.techawards.org/nominate/

Publications, Resources and Tools

Spotlight on: The REFLECT Methodology

The REFLECT approach to literacy is a technique which combines principles of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and the learning theory of Paulo Freire. REFLECT stands for REgenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques. Key features of the approach include that literacy is a process more so than a skill, adult learners are active participants rather than passive recipients, and people need tools which will allow them to assess their own needs. The approach uses learner-generated materials rather than prepared materials, an emphasizes writing. The approach requires a skilled facilitator, who can help integrate literacy events into the learners' broader environment. REFLECT was first developed by Action Aid. Learn more here: www.sil.org/lingualinks/literacy/ReferenceMaterials/GlossaryOfLiteracyTerms/WhatIsREFLECT.htm



SIL Publication: Why Languages Matter

Published in the International Year of Languages, 2008 by faith-based organization SIL International, "Why Languages Matter" provides readers with stories about how literacy programs in local languages are intending to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The 16-page brochure also highlights how partnerships can revitalize local languages. According to the brochure: "The MDGs focus the work of advocates, aid workers, governments, and non-governmental organizations, as they partner with local communities. Language-based development plays a significant role in giving communities the tools to work out steps to meet these goals. Many of the [economically] poorest people speak mother tongues that are not national or international languages. Poverty, lack of access to primary education, inequality, and disease are daily challenges for them."

Download it here: www.comminit.com/en/node/278103



UNESCO Publication: Mother Tongue for Secondary Learning in Botswana

UNESCO's report from Botswana, "Improving the Quality of Literacy Learning in the Content Areas – Situational Analysis of Secondary Level Education in Botswana", presented by the International Reading Association notes that approximately 20% of Botswana's total national budget is for education. Most teachers are responsive to student needs and interested in developing student-centred approaches to learning. However, the report finds that planners and policymakers could do more to support using mother tongue languages as well as English to encourage learning, link educational and community development and promote life-long learning. The 2005 report is authored by Arua Eke Arua, Penny G. Moanakwa, Theresa Rogers, Robert Tierney, and Kimberly Lenters and can be downloaded from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001422/142225e.pdf>

April Book Reviews

If you have recently had a book review published and would like to include a link to it in an upcoming issue of the Africa ReN newsletter, please contact the Editor.



Reading Across Divides: Girls Finding a Place in Children's Literature

In the International Reading Association's on-line journal, Reading On-Line, reviewers Michelle Commeyras and Miri Park share reviews of children's literature that offers various perspectives on the lives of girls and women, noting "reading across divides, whether of gender or of culture, is an important path toward the goal of educational equity." The following is their review of Joel Eboueme Bognomo's book, "A Story from West Africa: Madoulina, a Girl Who Wanted to Go to School" (Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills, 1999. ISBN 1-56397-769-9. 22 pp. Recommended for ages 4 to 8) In this story, author Joel Eboueme Bognomo also shows us the importance of a young person meeting someone who can help. This easy-to-read book with artful drawings is dedicated to all young African women and to the author's little sisters. Madoulina lives with her younger brother and mother in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Her brother's teacher, Mr. Garba, meets Madoulina and wants her to come to school, too. But because Madoulina's family is poor, her mother depends on her for help selling fritters. Madoulina explains to Mr. Garba: "My father abandoned us, and my mother is raising us all alone. She would rather Babo went to school. As





for me, I'm a girl, and when I grow up I'll get married. I'll take care of my husband and children." Mr. Garba can see that Madoulina wants to go to school, and he goes to meet with her mother. A solution is found that allows Madoulina to pursue her dream of one day becoming a doctor.

Reproduced from:

www.readingonline.org/past/past_index.asp?HREF=../reviews/literature/girls/index.html



**Newly Released: African Women and ICTs
- Investigating Technology, Gender and
Empowerment**

*Edited by Ineke Buskens and Anne Webb, Zed/IDRC
2009, ISBN 978-1-84813-192-7, e-ISBN 978-1-55250-
399-7, 320 pp.*

www.idrc.ca/books/ev-135944-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

The revolution in information and communication technologies (ICTs) has vast implications for the developing world, but what tangible benefits has it brought when issues of social inclusion and exclusion, particularly in the developing world, remain at large? In addition, the gender digital divide is growing in the developing world, particularly in Africa. So what do ICTs mean to African women?

African Women and ICTs explores the ways in which women in Africa utilize ICTs to facilitate their empowerment; whether through the mobile village phone business, through internet use, or through new career and ICT employment opportunities. Based on the outcome of an extensive research project, this timely book features chapters based on original primary field research undertaken by academics and activists who have investigated situations within their own communities and countries. The discussion includes such issues as the notion of ICTs for empowerment and as agents of change, ICTs in the fight against gender-based violence, and how ICTs could be used to reconceptualize public and private spaces.

By providing a deeply researched investigation of the role of African women in the society and in the specific sphere of information technologies, the authors of this study have substantially enriched our understanding of development problems in general and African development in particular. We have reason to be grateful. — **Amartya Sen**

