

# AILA Africa ReN Newsletter

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## Applied Linguistics and Literacy in Africa and the Diaspora



An AILA Research Network  
[www.aila.info](http://www.aila.info)

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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Dear ReN members,

I am pleased to share with you our latest issue of the Africa ReN newsletter. We have a diverse array of information in this issue to share with you, including reports from our members in the field covering all major regions of Africa, and profiles of fascinating projects aiming to enhance linguistic diversity and literacy in Africa: the Canadian organization's CODE's innovative activities across Africa, tools from the Straight Talk Foundation of Uganda, and a new computer literacy in African languages programme at Rhodes University, plus more. We were excited to receive positive feedback on October's inaugural newsletter, and contributions and input to this newsletter from around the world. It is evident that there exists a flourishing and diverse research community committed to furthering our knowledge on literacy and language in African communities. We hope that this Research Network will serve as a valuable forum for connecting together this research community and helping us find synergies in our work across borders.

As always, your feedback and comments are very welcome. We look forward to receiving your submissions for our next issue, not later than August 1st, 2008. Before then, please check our website regularly for updates and news of conference, funding and publishing opportunities.

Yours,

Lauryn Oates





## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM ReN MEMBERS

### Howard University Seeking Applicants for Department of English

*Submitted by: Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu*

The Department of English at Howard University welcomes applications for admission into its Graduate Program in English Studies. Funding is available for outstanding applicants. If you know of students who might be interested in pursuing graduate studies at Howard University please encourage them to apply. Application forms can be downloaded at the University's website at [www.howard.edu](http://www.howard.edu). For specific questions concerning graduate studies in the Department of English, please contact Professor Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu, Director of the Graduate Program (e-mail: [nkamwangamalu@howard.edu](mailto:nkamwangamalu@howard.edu))

### Publishing Opportunity: Current Issues in Language Planning

*Submitted by: Sarah Murray, Rhodes University, South Africa*

The series Current Issues in Language Planning (CILP), which is published by Multilingual Matters, invites proposals on language policy and planning in countries around the globe. Polity studies take about 12-18 months to complete and are based on a set of questions available on the CILP's website at [www.cilp.com](http://www.cilp.com). For Africa, we invite polity studies on the following countries: Burundi and Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Angola, Cameroon, Namibia, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Egypt, Algeria, Congo Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Zambia, Togo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Mauritius, Madagascar, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Morocco, Libya, and Algeria. Sample monographs on other African countries (e.g. Mozambique, South Africa, Tunisia, etc.) can be found on the CILP's website. If you are interested in writing a monograph on language policy and planning on any of the countries listed here please contact editors: Professor Richard Baldauf Jr, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia (e-mail: [rbaldauf@bigpond.com](mailto:rbaldauf@bigpond.com)) and/or Professor Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu, Howard University, Washington, DC, USA (e-mail: [nkamwangamalu@howard.edu](mailto:nkamwangamalu@howard.edu)).

### Has Africa got anything to say? A Look at Africa's Publishing Industry

During the 2007 Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest gathering of publishing professionals, the Nordic Africa Institute organized

in collaboration with the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation and Council for the Development and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), a panel debate with the provocative title, "Has Africa got anything to say? Academic cultural and publishing perspectives." Panel participants included Professor Fantu Cheru, previously of the American University, Washington DC and now Research Director at The Nordic Africa Institute); Mr Svante Weyler, a publisher and author from Sweden, Dr. Henning Melber, Director of the Dag Hammarskjold Foundation in Sweden, Ms Tainie Mundondo, Director of the African Publishers Network (Ghana/ Zimbabwe); and Professor Fred Hendricks of CODESRIA and Rhodes University, from Grahamstown, South Africa. The panel moderator was Dr. Manfred Loimeier, a journalist from Germany. Panelists all agreed that Africa has much to say, but the challenge of access to books and to publishing is a critical barrier for African development. A short analysis of the debate, written by journalist Holger Ehling, can now be found at the Nordic Africa Institute's website [www.nai.uu.se/publications/exhibits/frankfurt\\_panel/](http://www.nai.uu.se/publications/exhibits/frankfurt_panel/)

### The Last Book Project: An Open Call for Collaborations

*The Last Book*, a project initiated by Luis Camnitzer and sponsored by the National Library of Spain will compile written and visual statements in which the authors may leave a legacy for future generations. The premise is that book-based culture is coming to an end. On one hand, new technologies have introduced cultural mutations by transferring information to television and the Internet. On the other, there has been an increasing deterioration in educational systems (in the First World and on the periphery) and a proliferation of religious and anti-intellectual fundamentalisms. The Last Book will serve as a time-capsule and leave a document and testament of our time, as well as a stimulus for a possible reactivation of culture in case of disappearance by negligence, catastrophe or conflagration. Contributions to this project will be limited to one page and may be e-mailed to [lastbook.madrid@gmail.com](mailto:lastbook.madrid@gmail.com) or mailed to Luis Camnitzer, 124 Susquehanna Ave., Great Neck NY 11021, USA. In case of submission of originals, these will not be returned. The book will be exhibited as an installation at the entrance of the Museum of the National Library of Spain in Madrid at some point of 2008.





### **Borderless Classroom Looks at the Global Spread of English**

With the help of a faculty development grant and the interest of colleagues at a Moroccan university, Jane Zuengler, the Nancy C. Hoefs Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been collaborating on the development of an undergraduate course that Jane Zuengler has been teaching, The Global Spread of English, with Dr. Hassan Belhiah of Al Akhawayn University. The two classes meet simultaneously at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. The two classes will study, discuss, and do projects together via videoconferencing, a course website, and other online means. The piloted course, with a goal of offering the two-site course, representing the new borderless classroom in the 2008-2009 academic year. To learn more, visit:

[www.wisc.edu/english/zuengler](http://www.wisc.edu/english/zuengler) or contact Jane Zuenler at: [zuengler@wisc.edu](mailto:zuengler@wisc.edu)

### **Member Tidbits**

#### **New African Language Website Launched: Benin**

Professor Toussaint Yaovi Tchitchi, of Université d'Abomey-Calavi, a new ReN member from Benin, has shared his website in exclusively African languages: [www.ablode.bj.refer.org](http://www.ablode.bj.refer.org)

*Professor Toussaint Yaovi Tchitchi, de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi, nouveau member de Bénin a notre réseau de recherches, souhaite partager son site web en langues africaines: [www.ablode.bj.refer.org](http://www.ablode.bj.refer.org)*

#### **ReN Member Joins TOEFL Board**

Professor Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu of Howard University in Washington, DC has recently joined the TOEFL Board for the next four years.

## **UPCOMING CONFERENCES**

### **What: The Contextuality of Language and Culture**

**When:** 30 May 2008

**Where:** Krakow, Poland

**Summary:** The conference is devoted to the notion of contextuality in linguistics, literature, literary theory and philosophy. For more details please visit the conference website.

**Contact Information:**

[www.wseh.pl/pl/index.php?nzw=konferencja/konferencja](http://www.wseh.pl/pl/index.php?nzw=konferencja/konferencja)

**Organizers:** The College of Humanities in Bielsko-Bala, Poland

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** passed

### **What: International Conference on the Humanities: Language, the Creative Arts and the Media**

**When:** 22 to 25 June 2008

**Where:** Pretoria, South Africa

**Summary:** This conference, to be held at the University of Pretoria Conference Centre, aims to establish a forum for serious debate and exchange on, within and across a triangular thematic thrust.

**Contact name:** Professor Rosemary Gray

**Website:** [www.englishacademy.co.za](http://www.englishacademy.co.za)

**Organizers:** The English Academy of Southern Africa

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** passed

### **What: International Conference on Literature, Languages & Linguistics**

**When:** 28 to 31 July 2008

**Where:** Athens, Greece

**Contact Information:** Dr. Gilda Socarras

**Website:** [www.atiner.gr/docs/Literature.htm](http://www.atiner.gr/docs/Literature.htm)

**Organizers:** The Athens Institute for Education and Research (AT.IN.E.R.)

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** passed

### **What: 1st International Online Language Conference (IOLC 2008)**

**When:** 15 to 16 September 2008

**Where:** On-line

**Summary:** The first International Online Language Conference (IOLC 2008) invites professors, master and PhD students, and all academicians around the world to submit papers to this International event in the areas related to the conference theme, which is language Teaching, Learning and Research: Initiating Change and Shaping the Future

**Contact Information:** Azadeh Shafaei [iolc2008@ioksp.com](mailto:iolc2008@ioksp.com)

**Website:** <http://iolc2008.ioksp.com>

**Organizers:** IOKSP

**Deadline for abstracts/proposals:** 5 May 2008;

**Registration Deadline:** August 28, 2008





## FOCUS ON...EASTERN AFRICA

Regional Coordinators: *Jacinta Ndambuki, Willy Ngaka and Juliet Tembe*

### A Brief Report on the First Regional Conference on Intergenerational Learning and Indigenous Education, Organized by Uganda Rural Literacy

**and Community Development Association (URLCODA) in Agobia Village, Aroi Sub County, Arua District, Uganda (Jan. 16 – 18, 2008)**

*By Willy Ngaka, East Africa Coordinator*



A Ugandan NGO, the Uganda Rural Literacy and Community Development Association (URLCODA) that promotes Intergenerational Literacy education made history in the Arua district of Uganda with the first ever Intergenerational Learning Conference, under the theme, "Total Education in

Total Environment," chosen to depict the theme of reviewing the theories and practices of indigenous education with a view to laying strategies of applying the knowledge gained to enhance reading and writing skills of Ugandan Children. Most of the discussions during the two and half days revolved around indigenous versus formal education; marriage, moral and leisure practices (the past versus the present); dress codes (the past versus the present and the implications for future generations); traditional religion versus contemporary religions, among others topics. This conference was unique in that: (i) it initially focused on very elderly people aged 70 and over and children aged 9 – 14 years old; (ii) it was intended for 60 participants, but ended up including 302 people; (iii) it took place in a completely natural environment (see figures 1(a) – (c)); and (iv) participants chose to start the event earlier than planned, due to the high levels of enthusiasm and excitement. The convenor is grateful to Onesmus Dralega, Bosco Ezangu and other volunteers whose time and energy made this initiative possible.



FIGURE 1A



FIGURE 1B



Fig. 1 a. participants arriving

Fig 1 b. a cross section of the participants shortly after arrival

Fig 1 c. (left) a cross section of the participants listen attentively to one of the elders at night

Amongst other outcomes, participants resolved to:

- adopt participatory intergenerational learning as a tool for complementing UPE in Uganda;
- hold such conferences annually, and where possible, at the county or sub-county levels;
- organize an intentional conference for January 2009 to give the opportunity to the local population to learn from scholars from outside of Africa and people of other cultures;
- institute a convening body to coordinate the next international conference;
- review and organize the findings coming out of this conference in a manner that can be shared with the broader international community working in this area.



Above left: Willy Ngaka, the Convenor with the host participants at the conference site



Above right: An elderly learner reads to Mr. Kasiita Ismail, one of guests in the conference

### TNMundi in Project in Madagascar: Diaspora as Social and Cultural Practice: A Study of Transnational Networks across Europe and Africa

*Contributed by Dr Marie Gibert and Ulrike Meinhof, University of Southampton*

The TNMundi research project is funded by the UK-based AHRC research programme *Diasporas, Migration, Identities*. The team includes Prof. Ulrike Meinhof, director (University of Southampton, UK); Dr. Nadia Kiwan, co-director (University of Aberdeen, UK); Dr. Marie-Pierre Gibert, Research Fellow (University of Southampton, UK); Prof. Taieb Belghazi (Université Mohamed V, Morocco) and Zafimahaleo Rasolofondraosolo (Dama), respectively Moroccan and Malagasy consultants; and Natacha Borrel, Project Administrator (University of Southampton, UK).



Some of the participants during group work

This project focuses on the ways in which (post-)migrant artists and cultural practitioners originating from North-Africa and Madagascar are able to use complex networks across African, European and wider global spaces. It suggests that artists who

create or enter such networks make use of, but go far beyond the traditional 'bi-focal', ethnically and spatially defined communities that link originating and sending countries, as studied in much Diaspora research. They follow a different logic of translocal/transnational networking. Whilst recently there has been a plethora of research which theorizes networks and flows of people, little empirical research has yet emerged which studies these in closer detail, by throwing light on the motivations, personal narratives



A participant guards bicycles during the conference

and cultural practices of migrants involved. In relation to cultural practitioners, musicians, and audio-visual artists whose livelihood depend to a considerable extent on their success in going beyond their immediate localities to perform and publicize their art, even less is known about the constituency and impact of networks. Our proposed case studies of Francophone artists in countries of origin, and across selected European spaces build on our own and other researchers' prior work in diasporic metropolitan centres but follow the complexities of transnational networks beyond these clustered links.



From l. to r.: Taieb, Dama, Ulrike, Nadia and Marie

The project is funded for a period of three years, during which in-depth ethnographic research is undertaken mainly in the UK and in France, but also wherever the musicians' networks will take us: Madagascar, Morocco, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium,

etc. Three conferences and cultural events will arise from this project, bringing together artists, cultural promoters and activists, academics, members from civil society associations, politicians and government officials, media professionals and cultural policy makers to share their ideas, experiences, visions as well as their artistic creativities and practices. The first of these events was

held in Antananarivo in November 2007 (*"Musics of Madagascar: South < > North Crossroads?"*). Two other events will follow on similar themes: in Rabat (Morocco) in November 2008 (*"Music and Migration: North African Artists' Networks across Europe and Africa"*), and in Southampton (UK) in October 2009.

***"Musics of Madagascar : South < > North Crossroads?"***  
**International Conference and Cultural Event. Cercle Germano-Malagasy, Antananarivo, November 15-17, 2007.**

This two-day event offered a new perspective on the relations between North and South, or more particularly between Madagascar and Europe, by focusing on the role of artists and their music within transnational networks.



It challenged the more common focus on artistic and cultural flows from the South to the North and on cosmopolitan European cities as centres of creativity, by redirecting our attention to the pivotal role which the South itself plays as magnet, inspiration and melting pot for social and cultural influences and flows. Framing our enquiry through our title question suggested a multiplicity of interconnections, with Antananarivo positioned as a hub for movements of musicians and cultural expressions between south and south, south and



Above left: Volunteers' team in the Cercle Germano-Malagasy. (Students from the University of Antananarivo). Above right: Conference Opening. From l. to r.: Dama (Artist-TNMundi), Ulrike Meinhof (University of Southampton-TNMundi), Patrick Ramiaramananana (Ministre des Sports, de la Culture et des Loisirs), Eckehart Olszowski (Cercle Germano-Malagasy).



north, north and south. It also suggested an agenda for exploring a whole range of interconnecting themes across the spectrum of political, social, legal, economic and environmental concerns in the relationship between Madagascar and Malagasy people living in Europe. [www.tnmundi.com](http://www.tnmundi.com)





### Cultural Event – Concerts in the Télévision Nationale Malagasy (TVM), Antananarivo

In addition, privileging practice-oriented research, this symposium was also viewed as an opportunity to strengthen networks of all constituencies involved and act as a catalyst for further activities. Therefore, in collaboration with Vazimba Produktion, the event also gave rise to two original concerts on the night of the 15th and 16th November at the Auditorium de la Télévision Nationale



from r. to l.: Reinhard (keyboard), Dama (chorus), Rachel (chorus), Mfa Kera (chorus), Olivier (guitar), Marius (kabosy & lead singer), Donné (percussion), Mony (chorus et karataka), Tina (chorus).

Malagasy (TVM) in Antananarivo, with celebrated artists of Malagasy origin from within Madagascar and from Europe: Justin Vali, Edgard Ravahatra, Mfa Kera & Reinhard Katemann, Marius Fontaine, Rachel Ratsizafy, Dama, Ricky, Jaojaoby, Donné Randrimanantena, Hajazz, Baba

de Madagascar, Masy & Mony Bertin Mahatsinjy, Tiana, accompanied by Berra and Tina.

To submit a short article, event announcement, or others news for the East African Region, please contact Willy Ngaka [wngaka@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wngaka@yahoo.co.uk); Jacinta Ndambuki ([njacintah@yahoo.com](mailto:njacintah@yahoo.com)) or Juliet Tembe ([juliet\\_tembe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:juliet_tembe@yahoo.co.uk)) by August 1st, 2008. We welcome submissions from the region and around the world, and hope to hear from you soon.



from r. to l.: Reinhard (keyboard), Dama (chorus), Rachel (chorus), Mfa Kera (chorus), Olivier (guitar), Marius (kabosy & lead singer), Donné (percussion), Mony (chorus et karataka), Tina (chorus).

### FOCUS ON...WESTERN AFRICA



Regional Coordinators: Dipo Salami and JeDene Reeder



#### Writing in Africa in French

By Véronique Tadjó



Reproduced from the Mail & Guardian On-Line  
Senegalese writer Aminata Sow Fall

Recently, French studies at Wits University invited Aminata Sow Fall, a leading woman writer from Senegal, to talk about African literature, the issue of language and the state of French-speaking Africa. When asked why she wrote in French rather than in Wolof, her mother tongue, she replied that when she began her literary career back in 1963, Wolof, the most widely spoken language in Senegal, had not yet been properly codified in the Roman alphabet. So she had no choice, she said. But she was quick to add that if she had not felt at ease in French, she would not have written a book.

Sow Fall's response prompted me to revisit this burning issue as it is my belief that, to some extent, this debate also applies to English in Africa. When most of the former French colonies became independent in the 1960s, it was a time of euphoria and great hope for the future of Africa. Less than a decade later, things were not going that well in francophone Africa. Neo-colonialism took hold of the economy and the political elites proved too greedy to honour the promises they had made at independence. A period of disillusionment followed.

The saga of *Les soleils des indépendances* (The Suns of Independence), a novel by Ahmadou Kourouma from Côte d'Ivoire, best illustrates this post-independence disenchantment. When Kourouma submitted his manuscript, it was refused by publishers in France and in Africa on the grounds that it was written in "incorrect" French. The manuscript was passed around until it was finally published in Canada in 1968. It became an instant bestseller and was subsequently bought by a prestigious French publisher in 1970.

Cheaper editions were produced for the African market and the book was read by millions of school children and is still being taught today. What was revolutionary in Kourouma's novel was the fact that for the first time a writer attempted to recreate the way common people in Africa really speak. Kourouma fused French with his Malinke mother tongue -- French syntax and grammar were twisted and some words took on a whole new meaning. His language ignored basic rules. The style was exuberant and full of a raw sensuality.

Kourouma's book showed that French wasn't just the language of the former oppressors, that it was also possible to use it to serve





our purpose and render our African experience. He demonstrated that the language belonged to us, too, and that we were free to use it how we wanted in order to communicate our reality.

Roughly 10 years later, Sony Labou Tansi, a Congolese novelist, poet and dramatist, came onto the literary scene to continue this linguistic revolution. His writing dealt with the rampant corruption and entrenchment of a decadent leadership. His weapon was political satire and his irreverence was also directed at the French language, whose conventions he deliberately broke, inventing his own literary aesthetics.

Labou Tansi had learnt French in a Congolese school where using his mother tongue was forbidden. He used to say that French was the language in which he was “raped”.

If it is true that the colonisers wanted to use French in the school system to make sure that they could impose a French linguistic and cultural model that would ultimately lead to assimilation, things did not go quite as planned. The French language has become a language in which Africans can express their own aspirations and fight for freedom. A language is at the service of whoever wants to use it, as long as it is seen not as an imposition but as something to be conquered.

Daniel Maximin, a writer and poet from Guadeloupe, says it is important not to confuse language and citizenship, to understand that the French language is not confined within the geographical borders of France. The French language is used to express many identities, from the Congolese to the Vietnamese, to the Canadian. There are more than 20 African countries in which French is the official language. Therefore, the question that remains is not why we write in French, but how we write in French.

*Véronique Tadjó is a writer from Côte d'Ivoire and Head of French Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.*

*Informez-nous de votre recherche ! Envoyez-nous deux paragraphes de votre recherche sur l'éducation langagière ou sur l'alphabétisation en Afrique, avant le 1<sup>er</sup> août, 2008, pour l'inclusion au prochain numéro. Contactez les éditeurs : Dipo Salami (diposalami@yahoo.com) et JeDene Reeder (jedene\_reeder@sil.org) pour l'Afrique francophone (les régions de l'ouest et centrale).*

*To submit a short article, event announcement, or others news for the West African Region, please contact Dipo Salami (diposalami@yahoo.com) and JeDene Reeder*

*(jedene\_reeder@sil.org) for Francophone West and Central Africa by August 1st, 2008. We welcome submissions from the region and around the world, and hope to hear from you soon.*

## FOCUS ON...SOUTHERN AFRICA



*Regional Coordinators: Gregory Kamwendo and Violet Lunga*

### **Computer Literacy in an African Language at Rhodes**

*By Lorenzo Dalvit*

The association between a modern technology such as computers and African languages, which are often associated with tradition and (sometimes) backwardness might raise some eyebrows. This is particularly true at Rhodes University, a historically “White” institution in South Africa. Rhodes is situated in Grahamstown, at the heart of the predominantly isiXhosa-speaking Eastern Cape Province. In spite of this, the institution has traditionally made of its historical and cultural links with Britain and of the use of English as a medium of instruction its trademark. As part of a nation-wide drive towards addressing the inequalities of the past, in recent years Rhodes has become increasingly sensitive to the local context and the needs of its surrounding community.

Together with literacy and numeracy, computer literacy is becoming an important skill for a growing section of the population. In one way or the other, computers affect everybody's life, and a new divide is emerging between those who can confidently use them as tools and those who are excluded from this empowering technology. As with the other two types of literacy mentioned above, universities can make a considerable contribution in improving access to computers. This means physical access (e.g. supporting community-based telecentres and ICT infrastructure in schools) as well as epistemological access (e.g. providing basic computer training).

In terms of epistemological access, language is often a barrier. In a multilingual country like South Africa, this is common to education at all levels and in all fields. Generally low English proficiency among speakers of an African language prevents the vast majority of the population from accessing Information Communication Technology (ICT). This is a high-status, but largely English-dominated field. Interventions to promote the use of





African languages in this domain can therefore make a significant contribution to improving their own and their speakers' status, and counter global English hegemony.

Translate.org.za is an NGO committed to the localisation (i.e. translation of software interfaces) of open-source software into all 11 official South African languages. Their work makes it possible to run a computer entirely in a language such as isiXhosa, for instance. The Telkom Centre of Excellence at Rhodes University, though primarily interested in telecommunication, has long realised the importance of local languages in promoting access. Besides hosting some servers for Translate.org.za, it has sponsored research in the Education Department around this topic. The ideas thus generated were implemented in full scale thanks to funding received from the South African-Norwegian Tertiary Education Development (SANTED) programme.

At Rhodes, the programme is hosted by the African Studies Section of the School of Languages, and its goal is the promotion of the status and use of isiXhosa within the institution. It includes an ICT unit for the development of computer-related teaching material and terminology in isiXhosa. Last year the Unit developed a mini-computer glossary of 150 terms translated, explained and exemplified in isiXhosa. The booklet is available both in print and on-line ([www.moodle.coe.ru.ac.za](http://www.moodle.coe.ru.ac.za)). It has been pilot-tested with a group of first-year computer literacy students and is growing, thanks to their feedback. Together with translated handouts, it will soon support a pilot computer literacy workshop for first-year isiXhosa-mother tongue students in the department of African languages. The workshop will be run in the SANTED-sponsored computer multimedia laboratory in the School of Languages, which features software in isiXhosa developed by Translate.org.za as well as SANTED's ICT Unit.

These two components (teaching material and localised software) combined with the unique expertise of the SANTED team, which combines knowledge of ICT with linguistics training, will make it possible to run the workshop entirely in isiXhosa. This will allow students to approach an unfamiliar technology (i.e. computers) in the language they are most comfortable with. To our knowledge, this is a first-of-its-kind attempt and we hope it will inform research and practice into the acquisition of computer literacy. A more theoretical discussion of the relationship between African languages and ICT will form part of the curriculum for the first year course in isiXhosa as a first language,

If proven successful, the model could be applied to different

subjects and in different countries. All parties involved, i.e. Translate.org.za, Telkom Centre of Excellence and SANTED (Rhodes), are interested in establishing international relationships with other African countries to develop joint projects. Translate.org.za and SANTED (Rhodes) recently won awards from the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) in different categories – Translate.org.za as Multilingualism & Nation Building eBusiness Institution of the Decade while, SANTED Rhodes won, on behalf of the University, Multilingualism and Nation Building Institution of the Decade. This signifies the interest of the South African Government for the innovative and exciting association between computers and African languages.

For more information, contact Lorenzo Dalvit, Lecturer in ICT Education, Rhodes University, South Africa [l.dalvit@ru.ac.za](mailto:l.dalvit@ru.ac.za)

*To submit a short article, event announcement, or others news for the southern African Region, please contact Gregory Kamwendo ([kamwendog@mopipi.ub.bw](mailto:kamwendog@mopipi.ub.bw)) and Violet Lunga ([sibongile59@yaoo.co.uk](mailto:sibongile59@yaoo.co.uk)) by August 1st, 2008. We welcome submissions from the region and around the world, and hope to hear from you soon.*

*Informez-nous de votre recherche ! Envoyez-nous deux paragraphes de votre recherche sur l'éducation langagière ou sur l'alphabétisation en Afrique, avant le 1er août, 2008, pour l'inclusion au prochain numéro. Contactez les éditeurs :*

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et Violet Lunga ([sibongile59@yaoo.co.uk](mailto:sibongile59@yaoo.co.uk))*

## RESEARCH CORNER

### African Studies Centre: Research Projects Database

The African Studies Centre at Michigan State University features a database on their website of all of their faculty's current research projects in Africa. The projects are diverse and include, for example, food security in Southern and West Africa, malaria research in East and Central Africa, HIV/AIDS research in Zambia, teacher training in Egypt, health and development in Nigeria, cultural heritage and gender issues in higher education in South Africa, democracy and civil society in 18 countries, and Islamic societies in North and West Africa. Search the database by category, faculty, country, department or African partner:

<http://africa.msu.edu/research.php>

**April Research Institute Profile: Fafunwa Educational Foundation**







The Fafunwa Educational Foundation, in Lagos (Nigeria), was founded in 1995 to promote and fund educational research in Nigeria's higher education sector, to promote a forum for dialogue between education practitioners and policy, to raise awareness among the public of education issues, to encourage educational innovation, and publish research findings. The Foundation also awards prizes and scholarships to Education students in Nigerian Universities, education colleges and other institutions. The foundation publishes its own journal on education in Nigeria. The Foundation's website includes sections on Language Education In Africa, Language Education In Nigeria, Languages And The National Policy On Education, and Using Nigerian Languages *Learn more here:* <http://fafunwafoundation.tripod.com/>

*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 August 1st, 2008 for inclusion in our next issue. Contact the Editor: [Lauryn.oates@gmail.com](mailto:Lauryn.oates@gmail.com)*

## IN THE FIELD

### Using Radio to Help Communities Talk

By Stephen Kasoma

*Published by the Straight Talk Foundation in Uganda, this manual describes how to use radio for encouraging community dialogue. Consisting of six parts, the manual is designed to be easily understood, and includes photographs. Download it at:*

[www.comminit.com/en/node/266028](http://www.comminit.com/en/node/266028)

*or contact [skasoma@straighttalkuganda.org](mailto:skasoma@straighttalkuganda.org)*

### CODE Works for Literacy in Africa

By Jon Shapiro

"To support a sustainable literate environment in the developing world" is the vision of CODE, a Canadian NGO that has been working with partners to achieve this vision for almost 50 years. CODE works with its various African partners in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, Malawi, and Mozambique designing, delivering and evaluating programs. Through working with established partners in each country, CODE's funding assists in various ways such as: the provision of new books to libraries and schools; encouraging local language publishing; supporting existing libraries and resource centres and assisting partners in setting up new ones; strengthening children's magazine production; providing skills development for librarians and teachers, and; assisting partners increase their capacities by providing technical assistance. Specific information on the

programs and activities in each country can be found at <http://codecan.org>.

In Canada CODE sponsors two programs, Project Love and Butterfly 208 ([www.bp208.ca](http://www.bp208.ca)), whose goals are to encourage Canadian youth to become more familiar with global issues and with Canada's role in global development, and to become active in assisting their peers in developing nations through assembling school kits with note pads, rulers, pencils, etc. Project Love has just been adopted in the United States through a collaboration of the John Dau Sudan Foundation, the International Book Bank, and the International Reading Association. CODE has been making a real difference in the literacy lives of many children and has won numerous awards for its valuable work. Most notably, CODE and its partners received the UNESCO International Prize for Literacy for its Children's Book Project in Tanzania for its work in producing Kiswahili children's books and work with writers, illustrators, publishers and teachers.

## WHAT'S NEW IN TECHNOLOGY

### April's Innovative e-Project Profile: The Chawama Youth Project in Zambia

For the last eight years, the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) has been helping local organizations in Zambia, Tanzania, Ghana, Mali, Burkina Faso, Jamaica, Uganda and Bolivia use a broad range of information and communication technologies (ICTs) inexpensively and effectively to improve various aspects of the education sector in their countries. So far, IICD has helped to launch 32 ICT4E projects, many of which are now self-supporting. In the following, IICD presents the "Chawama Youth Project" in Zambia. Read the full article at the e-Learning Africa news portal:

[www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/news113.php](http://www.elearning-africa.com/newsportal/english/news113.php)

### Straight Talk Project – Uganda: Making Change through ICT & Communication

The Ugandan non-governmental organisation (NGO) STF has been implementing mass media communication programmes in Uganda since 1993 in an effort to bring information about sexual and reproductive health to young people. This initiative draws on person-to-person contact, radio, and printed materials to share information among, and foster communication between, young people and influential adults (e.g., parents and teachers) about adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH), including





issues related to HIV/AIDS. Specifically, core communication components include: a number of newspapers - for primary and secondary school students, for parents, and for teachers; entertainment-education radio programmes for in- and out-of-school youth; and youth clubs, parent clubs, health fairs, and teacher training. STF's media components include:

- Straight Talk Newsletter: For secondary school adolescents and youth aged 15-24. Print run, in English, is 260,000 copies per issue, 10 issues a year. Key messages include: know your body, understand your emotions, wait or use condoms, and a focus on life skills and health care.
- Young Talk Newsletter: For adolescents, aged 10-14, in primary school. Print run, in English, is 430,000 copies per issue, 10 issues a year. Key messages include: abstain know your rights, stay in school.
- Local Language Newsletters: For out-of-school youth. Print run, in 5 languages (Ateso, Luganda, Runyankore, Runyoro/Rutoro, and Lugbara), is between 80,000 and 150,000, depending on the language, 2 issues each per year. Key messages include: use condoms, seek STD treatment, and prevention of early pregnancy.
- Parent Talk Newsletters: For parents. In 2006, print run: English - 100,000 per issue, 3 issues per year; 4 local languages - 50,000 per issue, 3 issues per year. Example topics addressed: develop your child's literacy, empower the girl child. Identified challenge: low literacy levels in parents.
- Youth Radio Shows: A weekly, 30-minute "entertainment-education" radio programme, also called "Straight Talk", is broadcast in 11 languages across Uganda. The objectives are: to reach in- and out-of-school adolescents with Straight Talk messages; to reach adolescents who cannot read or write; and to reach adolescents who have no access to Straight Talk newspapers.
- Parent Radio Shows: A weekly, 30-minute radio programme, also called "Parent Talk", airs in 6 languages: Luganda, 4Rs, Lukonzo, Lugbara, Lwo and Lumasaba. This is a relatively new development; an evaluation has not yet been implemented for this component.
- Outreach and Training: STF's outreach and training initiatives include: training and sensitisation workshops for both primary and secondary school teachers on ASRH; training in peer education and club management for secondary school students; youth and parent clubs; health fairs for out-of-school youth; and parent dialogues within various communities across Uganda.

The Communications Initiative's newsletter, the Drumbeat,

recently published a newsletter dedicated to reports, evaluations and profiles of Straight Talk in Uganda. Download it here:

[www.comminit.com/en/drum\\_beat\\_435.html](http://www.comminit.com/en/drum_beat_435.html)

## PUBLICATIONS, RESOURCES AND TOOLS

### Reading Women Writers and African Literatures

This site proposes an overview of African women writers writing in French, South of the Sahara. It provides an opportunity to find out more about the authors' life and interests and to get acquainted with their novels, short stories, plays and poetry.

<http://aflit.arts.uwa.edu.au/FEMChomeEN.html>

### Featured Website: The Centre for the Book

The Centre for the Book is the unit of the National Library of South Africa. Its mission is to promote a South African culture of reading, writing and publishing in all local languages, and easy access to books for all South Africans. The core functions of the Centre for the Book include information and advice, advocacy, and book development. The Centre advocates through its programmes the importance of reading for the nation and is involved in coordinating, promoting and encouraging book related activities in South Africa in all local languages. The Centre also coordinates various events and functions such as poetry readings, conferences, book launches, writing groups and writing workshops for teachers, youth and children. The Centre for the Book website, the Small Publisher's Blog, the Writer's Network Blog and E-groups and newsgroups provide daily sites for gathering and dissemination of information on books, reading, writing, publishing, libraries, book-selling and related issues. The Centre for the Book manages a number of fascinating, creative projects, such as First Words in Print. First Words in Print is "a pioneering and innovative project of the Centre for the Book which aims to ensure that all very young South African children have access to the stimulation of picture books and story books in their own languages." Check it out today: [www.nlsa.ac.za/NLSA/centreforthebook](http://www.nlsa.ac.za/NLSA/centreforthebook)

### Oxford Bilingual School Dictionary: Northern Sotho and English

Oxford University Press has just published the first edition of bilingual Sotho/English dictionary for all school levels. Designed to enable learners to write and speak effectively and competently in their second language. The dictionary includes 56 extra pages of additional resources, including a mini-grammar, activities with





answers, model letters, illustrations, SMS language and more.

To order, visit:

[www.oxford.co.za/pls/cms/oup.show\\_pub?p\\_isbn=0195765559](http://www.oxford.co.za/pls/cms/oup.show_pub?p_isbn=0195765559)

E rulaganyeditšwe go kgontšha baithuti go ngwala le go bolela leleme la bona la tlatlaetšo, pukuntšu ye ya sebjalebja le ya go dirišega gabonolo e beile šedi godimo ga go fenya mathata a tlwaelo a baithuti. E fa thekgo dintlheng tše nne tše bohlokwa.

### **Building a Digital Library of Scholarly Resources from and About Africa**

Aluka is an international, collaborative initiative building an online digital library of scholarly resources from and about Africa. Our name, 'Aluka', is derived from a Zulu word meaning 'to weave', reflecting Aluka's mission to connect resources and scholars from around the world. Aluka seeks to attract high-quality scholarly content about Africa from institutions and individuals across the globe. By contributing their collections to the Aluka platform, content owners will have a means of offering access to their collections to an international audience—without having to develop and support their own technology platforms. Aluka's web-based platform provides powerful tools for research, teaching, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. The Aluka website includes a wide variety of high-quality scholarly materials contributed by Aluka's partners, ranging from archival documents, periodicals, books, reports, manuscripts, and reference works, to three-dimensional models, maps, oral histories, plant specimens, photographs, and slides. By aggregating these materials online, the Aluka collections link materials that are widely dispersed and difficult to access, opening up new opportunities for research, teaching, and broader public discussion. One of Aluka's primary objectives is to provide African scholars and students with access to scholarly materials originally from Africa, but now out of their reach. Aluka also works closely with partner organisations in Africa to build capacity in digitisation and the use of online materials for teaching and research. In some cases this includes setting up digital labs and providing technical training in scanning and creating metadata records; in others, Aluka convenes training workshops for librarians, archivists, faculty, and heritage professionals on topics related to digital imaging, preservation, and the use of online tools in the classroom.

To demonstrate the potential of Aluka as a scholarly resource, three content areas are currently under development: *African Cultural Heritage Sites and Landscapes*, *African Plants*, and *Struggles*

*for Freedom in Southern Africa*. New materials are added to the collections on an ongoing basis. In the longer run, our hope is that Aluka's work in Africa will be a model for expanding the initiative to other regions of the developing world.

For more information, please visit: [www.aluka.org/](http://www.aluka.org/)

## **APRIL BOOK REVIEW**

### **African Languages: An Introduction, by Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 406. hardback \$80.00, paper \$27.00. ISBN 0521661781 (hardback), 0521666295 (paper).

Reproduced SIL International:

[www.sil.org:8090/silebr/2004/silebr2004-002](http://www.sil.org:8090/silebr/2004/silebr2004-002)

Reviewed by John E. Stark, SIL International

#### **1. Introduction**

"Our primary target 'undergraduates worldwide' is an amorphous bunch of readers" (p. 3). The editors have indeed captured the nature of their target. To aim at a group that "is lacking definite form, shapeless" (as the editors of the American Heritage Dictionary define it) is an ambitious task. I have taught undergraduate linguistics in the United States, trained mother tongue translators with widely varying education, and completed my post-graduate work in a Nigerian University. As I read the work, I was able to say, "Would Rachel understand this? Would Danladi follow the thought here? Is the vocabulary accessible to Jen, or to Basuna?" I will reserve my answer to those questions for the end of this review. Before that, you need to know about the contents of the book. Continued... Read the full review here:

[www.sil.org:8090/silebr/2004/silebr2004-002](http://www.sil.org:8090/silebr/2004/silebr2004-002)

***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.***

