

Workshop on integrating IK in development programs in Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou, January 24-26, 2002.

The general objective of the workshop was to facilitate exchange among all development practitioners including community leaders, members of civil society, private decision-makers, researcher, elected officials, officials from government entities as well as other donors on the importance of the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in development.

Specifically, the workshop sought to:

- Establish/strengthen local and regional network
- Develop a framework for the formulation of a national strategy to integrate IK into development programs
- Facilitate exchange among IK practitioners

Following is an abbreviated summary of the results and recommendations of the workshop.

In general, the debates focused on the following issues:

1. Areas of development in which IK has been recognized and applied;
2. Current experiences of IK and their impact on development;
3. Short and medium-terms actions for enhancing the capacities for dissemination of IK;
4. Short and medium-terms actions for integrating IK in development programs.
5. Recommendations for the Formulation of a National Strategy

I - Areas of development where IK has been recognized

Participants of the workshop unanimously recognized that Burkina Faso, following the example of other countries in Africa, has relied essentially on local knowledge long before and during colonization. And that in today's world, local knowledge is more and more taken into account at all levels, by communities in order to solve problems in their daily lives. The following areas were noted as being areas where IK has been effectively useful and had a proven impact in Burkina Faso.

- socio-cultural (education, system of organization, health);
- economic (agro-pastoral production, craft, system of financing, management of natural resources);
- political (institutional organization, social management, solidarity).

II - Current experiences of IK and their impact on development

In each of the above areas, workshops participants illustrated through examples, not only the existence of IK, but also their applications in areas such as:

- The fight against HIV/AIDS, through the use of traditional communication to demystify certain taboos and demonstrating the importance of protection;
- Improvement in education by the use of national languages, bridging the gap between the school and the social and cultural environment of children, as well as economic and realities;
- Management of natural resources.

III - Short and Medium Terms Actions

3-1 Activities to enhance the capacity to disseminate IK

- (i) Dissemination of the workshop proceedings at the national and local levels
- (ii) Development of a national process for identifying, collecting and use IK
- (iii) Utilization of Mass media to promote and foster more visibility of IK
- (iv) Usage of schools and universities materials ...
- (v) Inventory/ Etat des lieux of organizations and individuals who are owners of IK
- (vi) Usage of owners of IK
- (vii) Organization regional and provincial conferences
- (viii) Promotion of the organization into associations of certain IK practitioners

3-2 Actions to facilitate the integration of IK in development programs

The integration of IK in development programs will be achieved by the rehabilitation through laws or statutory regulations which could establish the conditions and the terms of their integrated into development programs. In this sense, the Health Code of Burkina Faso which officially recognizes traditional medicine as a integral component of the health care system, should be a good example.

In addition,

- (i) Promoting participative approaches which include holders of IK in the design, implementation and M&E of development programs must be pursued.
- (ii) Valuing of holders of IK : through recognition by the community, and by officially appealing for their skills in the face of certain natural disasters
- (iii) Creating a national council for the promotion of IK.

IV - Recommendations for The Formulation of a Strategy

The workshop identified five stages:

A) The workshop

As the fundamental first step that brought together individual around the theme.

B) Context and Identification

The generation of a report, reflecting the issues debated, including recommendations with concrete proposals.

C) Institutional Support

Calling upon authorities and the political authorities of Burkina Faso to take ownership of the results and reflections expressed in this workshop, and to show their commitment in the subject.

D) Committee to Drive the Process

Workshop participants insisted on the creation of a multi-sector committee which will include members of indigenous organizations, private and public institutions, including resource individuals who are holders or keepers of the local knowledge. This committee will be responsible to identify such skills.

E) Organization of a forum

The purpose of the forum will be to widen the debate on the results of the workshop as well as an opportunity to gather input on the proposals.

The workshop wishes to bring to the attention of political authorities the followings:

- 1) That a committee to drive the process and whose mission will be to prepare the proceedings of the present workshop be put in place as soon as possible.
- 2) That a national forum to widen the debates on the issues of integration of culture and indigenous knowledge in development programs in Burkina Faso be convene in the medium term.
- 4) That national authorities take into account the results of this workshop with the aim of promoting of culture and IK for the sustainable development of the country.