



African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights



Brandeis University



WEST AFRICAN RESEARCH CENTER (WARC)

Workshop Know Your Rights!/Connais Tes Droits!

JUNE 26 – 27, 2007

DAKAR, SENEGAL

Final Report

Reporters:

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I. INTRODUCTION

From June 26 to June 27, 2007, a workshop entitled “**Know Your Rights**,” organized by the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, the West African Research Center and

Brandeis University of Boston (USA), took place in the premises of the West African Research Center (WARC).

As part of a national and even a sub-regional synergy in relation to Senegambia, the primary objective the workshop was to reflect on and reach *a consensus on the characteristics of a desirable model for the translation/adaptation, presentation and dissemination of legal human rights documents in African languages.*

Adoption of this objective grew out of a remark made at the level of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), expressing that African populations mostly illiterate in the official foreign languages of their governments do not have access to the content of documents which express and rule their rights.

Many stakeholders (NGOs, services, journalists, magistrates, legal experts, linguistic experts, in addition to the WARC "Know Your Rights!" team) participated actively in these brainstorming sessions. (See the appendix for the list of participants).

At the end of the two days work (See the appendix for the agenda), the workshop reached the following conclusions:

II. FINAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

2.1. Establishment of a network of Stakeholders/Actors for the Management and Validation of translation/adaptation and dissemination in African languages of legal instruments related to human rights in general and instruments of the ACHPR in particular. This network specifically has the following tasks and responsibilities:

- to inventory and collect all the existing documents on the issue of human rights, in all the languages of Senegal and the Gambia;
- to keep an inventory of available human resources (people, structures, services and partners)
- to facilitate the synergy of the relevant stakeholders: NGOs, target populations, journalists, language experts, native speakers, legal experts, etc.
- to develop, manage and update on a regular basis a Database on legal terminology in the languages of the sub-region;
- to monitor the translation/adaptation process;
- to implement a process of validation of documents that have been translated or adapted;
- to collaborate with some of the structures working in the same field such as the Senegalese Academy of National languages (SANL), the Department of National Language Literacy (DNLL), etc.

2.2. Implementation of a national Database of Legal Terminology

To this end, the participants agreed on the following:

- The database will initially be housed at the headquarters of WARC;

- The networking software of the stakeholders is currently WIKI. It is recommended that a suitable software for database management be identified and acquired as soon as possible;
- The process of drafting terminology entries will be carried out in the following stages:
 - Sorting/screening of existing texts, in all languages to inventory the needed terminology;
 - Establishment of an alphabetical nomenclature, unique in this field;
 - Collection of words already proposed in the documents that have been already translated;
 - Drafting of terminology entries using this nomenclature;
 - Standardized entry of the terminology into the database.

2.3 Roles and responsibilities of WARC

- WARC initially will house the collection of legal documents
- WARC at least initially will provide technical advice as well as a technician who will principally be responsible for managing the Database of Legal Terminology.

2.4. Components of a translation/adaptation model

The following represent the desirable components of a good translation/adaptation. Regarding the process of translation/adaptation, the workshop agreed on the following:

- The importance of a multidisciplinary group work;
- The need to work with bilingual, monolingual and multilingual people;
- The need to avoid all approaches that involve the demeaning of the target population and their language (such as dumbing down);

With regard to the materials to be produced (texts translated), the workshop made the following recommendations:

- to adopt a multi-faceted approach with a range of possible products;
- to have as one of the products a complete translation of each document that is not overly literal;
- to adjust the form and format of each product to its pedagogical purposes according to the needs of the population (information, training, awareness, reading, self-training, etc.);
- to produce, as necessary, relevant monolingual glossaries and lexicons which explain the concepts and terms adopted in the translation/adaptation document.

III. WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Tuesday, June 26 2007 was devoted to the search for *a consensus on the features of a desirable model for the translation/adaptation, presentation and dissemination of the concepts of human rights in general and the contents of the instruments of the ACHPR in particular, in African languages.*

Rationale: This grew out of the remark relating to the absence of texts on human rights in African languages and thus the decision of the African Commission on Humans and Peoples’

Rights, in collaboration with the West African Research Center and Brandeis University of Boston (USA), to hold this workshop to focus on this issue. The ACHPR is based in Banjul, the Gambia.

Objective: What translation/adaptation strategy should be adopted for these instruments on human rights in African languages?

Methodology: Following the participants' arrival, the welcome addresses and the presentations, seven (07) presenters delivered their institutional experiences in order to serve as the basis for the subsequent brainstorming sessions and collaborative drafting of proposals.

Expected outcomes: That the workshop yield a *strategic and consensual plan* of action for the synergy of efforts by the interested stakeholders in this important process. Taking steps to enhance the status and the role of African national languages as official languages of the Commission and as languages with legal authority is also extremely important.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is recognized that a lot of work has already been done in national languages, in terms of translation/adaptation of human rights texts for the purposes of informing, training and sensitizing of populations. But the results of these efforts are not always known to the greater public.

There seems to be a lack of political will somewhere to standardize and disseminate the content of these documents. Yet, today the African Commission on Human and Peoples' rights, based in the Gambia, does not have the means to enact policy in this regard. Thus, there is a need for a sub-regional and inter-institutional synergy to disseminate these important documents.

The main problem remains the dissemination at the grassroots level of the content documents that have already been translated/adapted.

EXPERIENCES OF STAKEHOLDERS

The experiences that were presented are mainly those of NGOs or other organizations of goodwill in collaboration with donors or foundations. The following are the highlights:

- Thanks to the work of Lamine Kane, who conducted research in preparation for the workshop, it was realized that some of the legal instruments of the Commission (The Charter and the Protocol on the Rights of Women) had already been translated into six West African languages by ANAFA—and this over ten years ago. Unfortunately, it was also realized that these documents, which have existed for more than a decade, are generally unknown—all of which underlines the importance of dissemination. The workshop recognized the efforts of ANAFA as a real pioneer in the translation of such documents.
- Gather all those who work in the areas of translation of legal documents on human rights (ARED, TOSTAN, OSAD, etc.) and work towards the establishment of a database of texts and resource people;

- According to the users, it appears that different methods have been implemented to facilitate the public's access to legal texts. However, in light of the analysis which emerged from the presentations, genuine problems have yet to be addressed, such as:
 - Problem with the quality of the translation (accuracy of words; length of sentences, level of languages, register of languages, etc.)
 - Problem of harmonization: spelling and dialect.
 - Problem of terminology: terminological references usually lacking; the way to bridge this gap also varies based on experience (enclosed glossaries, integrated lexicons, dictionaries, electronic database)
- Quality and expertise of the translators may constitute a problem since not everyone can be a good translator.
- There is also an **issue of methodology**: translation or adaptation? Or useful combination? It appears that translation is necessary as one product, but beyond the translation, how should access to human rights texts be made easier for the public?
- It appears, at any rate, that it is extremely important to interview native speakers of the languages to gather feedback from the field on these questions (examples are ARED, the Gambia, etc.)
- **Accompanying activities**: It is important to allow for supporting steps to be taken such as: training, literate environment, lexicon creation, standardized and adapted terminology. It is useless to translate and publish texts if the readers in national languages do not exist or are not sufficiently trained (both in the formal and nonformal sectors) to read texts and use them in an appropriate manner.
- **Dissemination supports** vary: there is the drama approach (dance and theater, tales and fiction), radio support (with committees and listening groups) and images (posters, graphics, etc.); everything is to be used in an appropriate manner.
- **Other supporting measures**:
 - Accept public use of the national languages (problem of official language and national languages);
 - Teach in national languages in formal schools;
 - Assess the issue of linguistic policy and its application at the level of states;
 - Rely also on information, technology and communication systems by posting the languages on the net

AGREED-UPON CONCLUSIONS

The following important points have been agreed upon in order to advance the goals of the workshop:

- All the participants congratulate the organizers for initiating this workshop. All of them recognize the reality of the problems being identified with relation to the topic discussed, inter alia *translation/adaptation then dissemination* of texts and documents on human rights;
- A unanimous wish was expressed to have the database set up: texts, resource-people, users, etc.;
- The importance of there being one complete translation of each document was agreed on, for reference, evaluation and/or information purposes;

- A need to organize the stakeholders in order to undertake this work and the follow-up: a light and operational structure was proposed with a supervisory network or management committee.

The day of June 27, 2007 was devoted to general conclusions to be drawn from the workshop and to the establishment of a working management structure.

The beginning of the sessions was preceded by a welcoming remarks from Her Excellency Ambassador Salamata SAWADOGO, President of the ACHPR, represented by Chafi Bakari (from the Gambia).

Mr. Bakari mainly insisted on, on behalf of the Ambassador, the importance of the “**Know Your Rights**” project to inform our African populations of the legal instruments securing their rights and the subsequent need to develop a culture of human rights in our countries. He also pointed out that this project was a *joint venture* between ACHPR, WARC and Brandeis University of Boston.

In response to his remark, Pr. Ousmane SENE, Director of WARC, underlined the fact that African populations had better take ownership of human rights in the national languages they know best. Then, he applauded the commitment of all the stakeholders – with a particular emphasis on the journalists, many of whom came not only to report on the event but also to contribute – in order for human rights to be translated into local languages and to become relevant to the everyday lives of the public.

Remark: The Director stressed the commitment to African languages by asking the participants to submit names in national languages for WARC. In Pulaar, he suggested the name *Galle Widto mo Afrik Hirnaange (GAWAHI)*. Suggestions in the other languages are expected.

Following this remark, and after renewed discussion of the practical conclusions relating to the objectives of the workshop, it was agreed that in light of the important work of NGOs in the area of translation of legal documents, there is a need to encourage a process of synergy of stakeholders in the sense of a larger work of standardization, for a good cause.

Following a last broad overview which allowed the participants to review and clarify their conclusions, some major guidelines were highlighted:

- The need for networking and collaboration;
- The need to put in place a Terminology Database;
- The importance of collecting and gathering all the existing legal documents on human rights;
- The need for field-oriented approach resulting in a widespread and permanent consensus;
- Training needs (raised by journalists and those who wish to work in terminology, mainly);
- The need to conduct monitoring and evaluation of dissemination work of targeted legal texts.

Lastly, a WARC technician presented the WIKI software for the permanent contact among the stakeholders involved and the beginning of the terminology database development.

Then, the organizers of the workshop expressed special thanks to Lamine Kane, a consultant with ANAFA, for his contributions to the success of the workshop.

CONCLUSION

It was agreed to set up a pilot project which will start on a voluntary basis while possibilities of future funding are being reviewed. WARC will temporarily host the start-up activities with the assistance of a Coordinating Committee for the purposes of an initial pilot project.

APPENDICES

I. WORKSHOP AGENDA

DAY 1

Participants: KYR (Know Your Rights) team, representatives of the African Commission, resource people, experts, participants.

Objective: To reach an agreement on the components of a desirable model for the adaptation, presentation and dissemination of human rights concepts in African languages.

8:30: Arrival of the participants at the WARC offices and welcome by the organizers.

8:30 - 9:00: Welcome remarks by the organizers

9:00 - 9:45: Chafi Bakari, Principal legal advisor, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Presentation by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on its linguistic policy, objectives and activities to promote human rights, and the role of African languages as official languages of the Commission and languages with legal authority.

9:45 - 10:30: M. Lamine Kane - ANAFA

Background of human rights translation and of similar documents in Senegal and in the Gambia, and presentation of a model of translation of an instrument of the Commission.

10:30 - 11:00: Coffee break

11:00 - 11:45: Mme Awa Dia Ka – ARED

Possible adaptation/presentation models and dissemination of human rights documents.

11:45 - 12:30: Mme Molly Melching - TOSTAN

Possible adaptation/presentation models and dissemination of human rights documents

12:30 - 13:30: Lunch

13:30 - 14:15: Pr. Mamadou Ndiaye – SAFEFOD

Possible adaptation/presentation models and dissemination of human rights documents

14:15 - 15:00: Pr. Fatou Kiné Camara FSJP/UCAD et M. Moustapha Diop - Consultant

Presentation of a nascent partnership between a legal advisor and a Senegalese linguistic expert on the drafting of legal texts in Wolof for law practitioners and the greater public.

15:00 - 16:00: M. Matarr Baldeh - EFA Company Network - The Gambia

Broadcasting of a literacy session based on human rights in the Gambia, and discussion.

16:00 - 16:30: Coffee break

16:30 - 18:00: Plenary session
Discussion and end-of-the-day summary.

DAY 2

Participants : Participants from the first day in addition to representatives of three relevant sectors : 1) Adult literacy and basic education organizations ; 2) organizations promoting human rights, and rights of women and children; 3) journalists of the print media, radio and television in national languages.

Objective: Sensitize future extension agents on information related to human rights.

8:30: Arrival of participants at WARC.

9:00 - 10:00

Welcome remarks by Her Excellency, Ambassador Salamata Sawadogo, President of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

10:00 - 10:30: Coffee break

10:30 - 12:30:

Pr. Fary Ka, Linguistic Laboratory, UCAD; and Pr. John Hutchison, Boston University
Summary of discussions and conclusions of day one.
Questions/Discussion

12:30 - 14:00: Lunch

14:00 - 16:00: Plenary Session

- Plenary discussion on the conclusions from the workshop sessions
- Floor to the different stakeholders, in particular journalists

16:00 - 17:00: Plenary session

- Discussions on the implementation of the conclusions (network, Terminology Database, perspectives).

17:00 - 18:00

M. Abdoulaye Niang, WARC

Use of the new information technology systems (WIKI and blogs) and possible application within the Know Your Rights project.

18:00: Closing reception

II. List of participants

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- Amadou Abdoul SY, (ANAFSA)
- Awa KA DIA, (ARED)
- Ahmeth DIOUF, magistrate
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- Mamadou THIOR, journalist (RTS)