

The Use of Indigenous Knowledge for Nutrition Communication

An Example of Pastoralists in Turkana County

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Background & Objectives

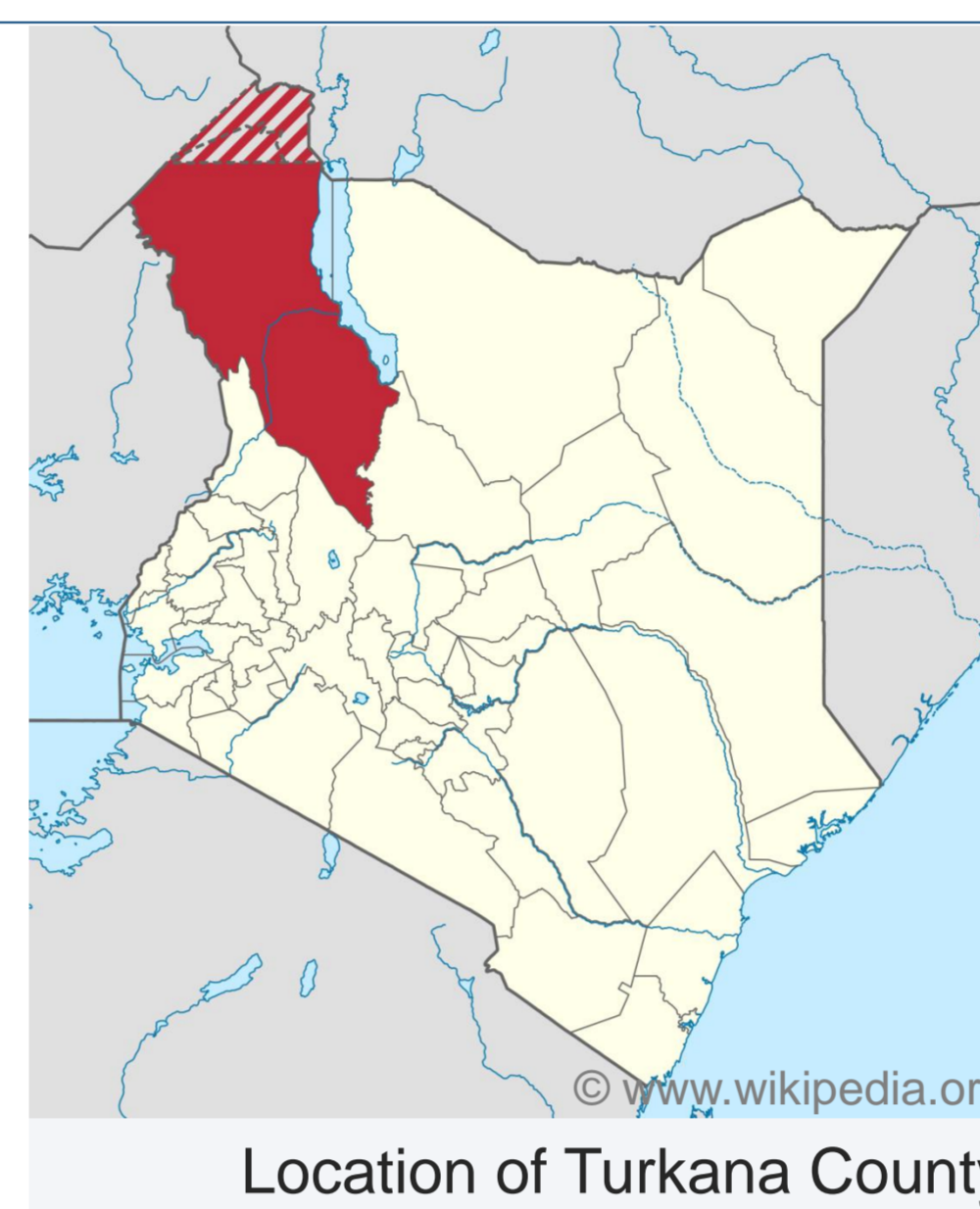
Bioversity International and the University of Hohenheim jointly conducted a study in Kenya to investigate the potential utilization of indigenous knowledge for nutrition communication, focusing on local narratives and local institutions that store and transmit knowledge.

The objectives were:

- Detect certain educative messages in local narratives
- Assess what positive aspects of the local knowledge system can be utilized in nutrition communication
- Explore local populations' as well as external administrative stakeholders attitudes and perceptions towards indigenous knowledge

Turkana County

- Population: 1,427,000 (projection for 2017) ¹⁾
- Mainly pastoral livelihoods ¹⁾
- Few rainfall occurrences with high intensity¹⁾
- Prone to drought ¹⁾
- Constant situation of food insecurity¹⁾



Location of Turkana County

Turkana's landscape & vegetation



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Participant telling local narratives during a Focus Group Discussion



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Research Design

Focus Group Discussions

- 12 discussions within 6 Sub-Locations in Loima District
- Male/Female separated
- Age of 15 years and older
- Different socio-economic status





Expert Interviews

with 11 administrative stakeholders

Selection criteria:

- Working for the government or an NGO
- Involved in interventions concerning nutrition

Elements of Communication (Lasswell 1948)

		Findings	Discussion
Source	Who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elders main source of stories • Health Centre and the radio most important source of knowledge from outside • Information from within the community is most trusted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elders and members of the community are most trusted → They can be useful "change agents" • Connection of traditional and modern institutions • Gender is an important issue
Message	Says What 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages delivered within local narratives can be understood clearly • Additional skills are requested • Perceived contradictions between knowledge from outside and inside sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages are understood by the local population → They have a certain "Cultural Embeddedness" • Combination of nutritional knowledge and skills • Possible contradictions in knowledge must be considered in the design of interventions
Medium	In Which Channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Illiteracy rate • Local people enjoy listening to narratives • Administrative stakeholders have positive as well as negative attitudes towards the use of indigenous knowledge systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion of any writing → Oral & visual methods are required • Narratives are an accepted & enjoyed medium → Transportation into the story & identification with characters • The use of indigenous knowledge systems must be included in the education of administrative stakeholders
Audience	To Whom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important nutritional knowledge is present at a community level • Communities want to be included as a whole • There is a clear division in decision making based on gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community mobilization targets whole community and could therefore be a good way to assure that knowledge also reaches the individual level • Information should not be restricted to certain groups • Inclusion of men is important due to their role in decision making

Conclusion

Indigenous knowledge systems offer new potential for nutrition communication due to their high acceptance in local communities and the openness of local administrative stakeholders towards them. Further research is needed on methodological and epistemological aspects of indigenous knowledge and its effects in nutrition communication.

¹⁾ Turkana County Government (Ed.) (2013) First County Integrated Development Plan 2013/14- 2017/18

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