

Use of Indigenous Knowledge and Social Networking in Resource Management: A Case Study in Sustainable Development from KwaZulu-Natal*

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ABSTRACT Recognition and application of social networking, based on indigenous systems, requires greater attention, on the part of policy makers, especially in rural areas where it has sustained the livelihoods of people in many developing countries for generations. This paper is an attempt to illustrate how this actually functions in South Africa's north-east province of KwaZulu-Natal, home to people of mainly Zulu background, with smaller populations of European and Indian descent. The information is based on ethnographic data gathered from women who operate as street traders in the city of Durban's train station and a beachfront zone that is a major tourist attraction. By dealing with the profile of the women, the social ethos under which they operate, the effect of the spillover of their knowledge, and the rewards of self-effort, this paper illustrates that local social structures and indigenous knowledge systems are crucial in sustainable development strategies. It argues that exogenously conceptualized development programmes should really have a facilitating role rather than the hegemonic one it enjoyed over the last five decades.