

Sub-Saharan African Veterinary Health Recipes and Peace Traditions in Dialog with the Western Countries

Michel Ansay

*Institut de la Vie (Sciences, sociétés et co-développement), BP 196, Avenue F. Roosevelt, 50,
1050 Bruxelles, Belgium
Telephone: 32. 4. 257 64 50, E-mail: mansay@ulg.ac.be*

KEYWORDS African peace traditions; traditional medicine; dialog of knowledge systems; traditions and development; traditions and best practices

ABSTRACT The encounters between the North and the South have been marked by the “tabula rasa” philosophy. Indigenous knowledge was considered as an impediment on the road of progress. Currently, it appears that the Western way is fraught with problems of sustainability, unable to become a universal standard way of life. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are revisited not only on the basis of a will of identification (“What they know? What do they know? How do they do things?”) but in terms of exploring their fundamental unity or coherence and the values which underlie them. Indigenous knowledge in Veterinary Medicine from Sub-Saharan Africa has been gathered by Baerts and Lehmann in their data bank (12 500 records) which is stored at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium (<http://www.metafro.be/prelude/authors>). Kasonia Kakule, working on a sub-sample of the bank, has tried to select the best recipes on the basis of a coherent research. The best ones in the domain of cough or asthma proved to be good by a standard pharmacological test. But health and disease are not looked at in the same way in the North and in the South. African knowledge in the peace domain is of an extreme diversity. It is rooted in a system of values (views on the power, the ownership, the alliances) and embodied in institutions or practices such as the Bashingantahe (Burundi), the Kyaghandanda (North-Kivu, RDC), the Kagala (South-Kivu, RDC), the Gacaca (Rwanda).

A reappraisal of the North-South relations must aim not only at “recognizing” the right of the South to develop according to its own path but also to consider the fact that challenges of globalisation, the “best practices” and values of the different cultures have to be summoned.