

GINKS SOUTHERN NODE MEETING 2009

Theme: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN PROJECTS

September 24th 2009

The meeting started with a brief welcome address by Mr. Ibrahim Inusah (the Co-ordinator of the GINKS secretariat). He spoke on the importance of the meeting and especially of the theme for the discussion(s) in the meeting. Reminding the members that a similar meeting is going on in the North, he said that it is the hope of the secretariat that the participants will be able to be on the same page in terms of information gathering, processing/repackaging and the communication of the same information to the target. He introduced the resource person Prof. Absalom Mutere, after which the participants introduced themselves.

Prof Mutere (who started by introducing himself and his works in Ghana up to the day of the meeting), said that most of the discussion will very likely fall within the realm of development communication and management. He said the theme for discussion can actually be discussed as a course for a whole year. Organisations must learn to approach communication as a **management function** and not merely as an output of their deliberations-communication must be a daily routine. Once communication and information become a management function, it becomes

- Deliberate
- Planned
- Sustained
- Performance based
- Public interest oriented



Communication must be designed so that they address issues on time, and not by default.

Mutere went to discuss the crux of communicating information as involving THE RACE (an acronym for Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation) CYCLE. To these, he gave the following explanations.

- Research – You must know your target and their interest in the community
- Action – Relating to policy and planning options; people must be allowed to participate in the policy making framework. This way, you will give them what they actually want

- Communication – How well did the message get across
- Evaluation – This becomes very important in justifying why things are done the way they are.

Q, A AND OBSERVATIONS

- Mr. Koblavie – asked who should manage information in projects... a specialised person who is skilled in the area or any person involved in the project as long as he can do that. Mutere responded that it is a debate that has been going on for a while. The best we can do is provide a logic as to why a specialist is needed at this level, but opines that it must be someone who is able to apply information as a management function whereby activities pertaining to information must greatly consider the target.
- When and how do you bridge a gap between when information is relevant and when it is correct? Mutere said that this is the emerging reality that we must contend with – accuracy is a dilemma, plus the issue of where the whole thing is taking us to. So we must find a way of making sure most of the truth is talked about. Information must be properly sieved and properly communicated, but most times what we usually deal with is some else’s version of reality.
- How do we manage information flow among project partners? – Mutere – a middle man is needed who will pull information from one and transmit it to the other, without waiting for the next board meeting. He proposed that set ups like African Centre for Development Communication in the AUCC could be used to facilitate information flow. He also said that having a site in the centre where information is deposited and then disseminated is a good option as long as the members of the project deliver information on time. The commitment of the member-projects is very important. He also recommended that events always give people a reason for talking, so more events should be created with content of appropriate quality.
- How do you make sure that communication becomes a management function? – Mutere - it could be a political issue but an officer who had autonomy is necessary, and he should be given the right to participate in project activities, not merely having reports thrown at his table. Ibrahim observed that the issue of political control affects the job of the information officer
- How can you do information management today without ICT – Mutere – it is not possible. ICT tools are available and can help to make it easy.

The meeting was also used to offer technical support to the ministry of information who wanted to know whether the instability of the ministry website was due to the inefficiency of the ministry IT officers or due to challenges experienced by the hosts/site managers.

Mr. Inusah thanked prof Mutere for his attendance and presentation, and encouraged that the discussion should continue online, and pass the project node address through the secretariat.

Photos



A female participant asking question



Section of the participants seated



Prof. Mutere taking participants through the meeting



Participant listening to the resource person at the meeting



A male participant taking notes



A participant listening to the resource person's analysis