SCIENCE AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES

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Category: Languages in Africa

I've just come across a fascinating report about the impact of African languages on scientific progress on the continent.

> *Africans have a rich cultural heritage and a wealth of traditional knowledge on topics ranging from agricultureand forestry to medicines and medical practices â€" all of which could make valuable contributions to modern science.*
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> *For example, traditional knowledge of drought-resistant crop varieties could prove crucial in helping small farmers across the continent adapt to climate change.*
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> *Much of this type of knowledge is embedded in the diverse local languages and cultures found in Africa.*
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> *Yet despite centuries of scientific undertakings on the continent, there is still no vernacular word for 'science'. In Southern Africa, science remains a minority, English-language based, pursuit that reinforces the domination of English at the expense of local languages such as Ndebele, Swahili and many others.*
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> *This marginalisation of African languages and practices means much local knowledge is lost. Many innovations by farmers and rural communities are excluded from modern science and technology (S&T) because there are no local terms or expressions to capture them. (Read more.)*