

Wikipedia ya Kiswahili

Successes and challenges in building an African language wikipedia

Ingo Koll = mtumiaji:kipala on sw.wikipedia.org

Kiswahili as a language

Speakers: 60 – 80+ mio

1rst language for 5 - 15 mio

(strong movement between generations from local languages to Swahili)

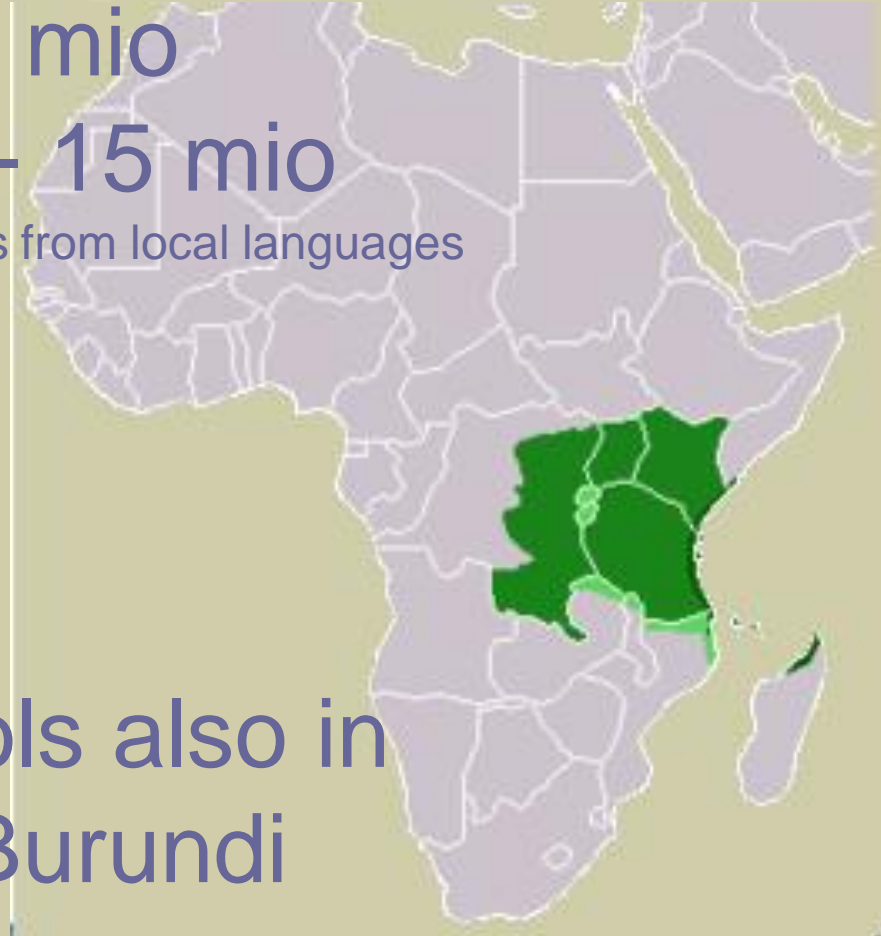
Tanzania, Kenya,

Eastern Kongo,

parts of Uganda,

To be used in schools also in

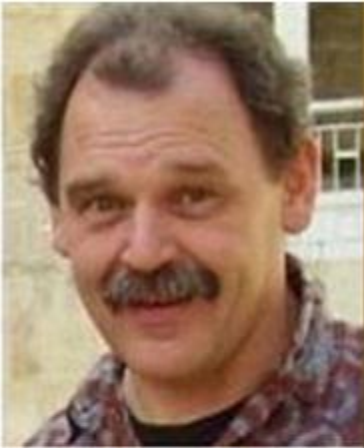
Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi



The sw – team for last 5 years



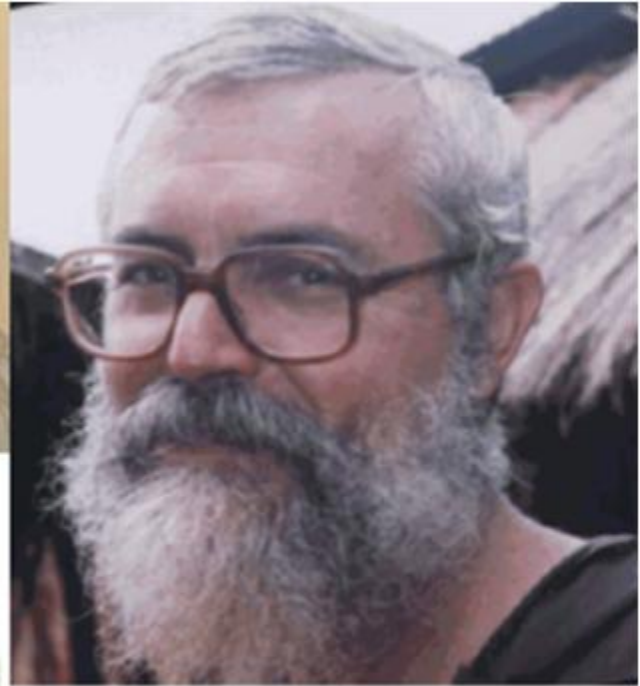
Baba Tabita (2006)
(living in Kenya)



kipala (2005)
(now living in Iran)



Muddy B (2007)
(living in Tanzania)



Riccardo Riccioni (2007)
(living in Tanzania)



ChriKo (2006) (now living in Morocco)

and all the others !!!!! (These 5 have been constantly on sw)

Challenge: how to start ?

When entering sw-wikipedia:
There were 149 articles

What to write about?

Make a plan !

e.g.: all countries, all capitals
(leading to geography topics)

Challenge: why do I do this?

Editing nearly alone for months on end ... What is it good for ?

2 more came on board, asking themselves the same

Success: we managed to convince each other that it is meaningful to build Swahili encyclopedia even if we only have very few readers for the time being – they will come.

Challenge: tolerating each other in a small community

- * Keep new editors on board!
- * Talk kindly to each other
- * Guide newcomers carefully
- * Rather accept a (not tooooo) faulty article (for a while) than discouraging a newcomer

Challenge: which words?

*Example: Starting with countries, you come to continents and **tectonic plates**.

*You find nobody who ever wrote about this in Swahili

*What to do? Keep quiet? Leave it?

*“Pecca fortiter” (Luther) – “dare to sin!”

*We try by using the “test”-template

Challenge: which words?

This template works on top of the articles works like the “if symptoms persist, see a doctor ...” on pill boxes

Makala hiyo kuhusu “**Jaribio**” inatumia neno ambalo si kawaida na matumizi yake ni jaribio kwa jambo linalotajwa.



Wasomaji wanaombwa kuchangia mawazo yao.

Kamusi za Kiswahili ama zinatofautiana kuhusu matumizi ya neno hili au hazieleweki au hazina neno kwa jambo linalojadiliwa.

"This article about "XXXXXXX" is using words which are not usual and using them is an attempt to write about this matter. Readers are invited to share their ideas.

Swahili dictionaries either differ about the use of these words, or they are not clear, or they have no word for this matter.

Challenge: which words?

What if Good dictionaries for Swahili , but . .

the
dictionary
is wrong?

What if
really nobody
uses this
word?

a problem of developing
languages . . .



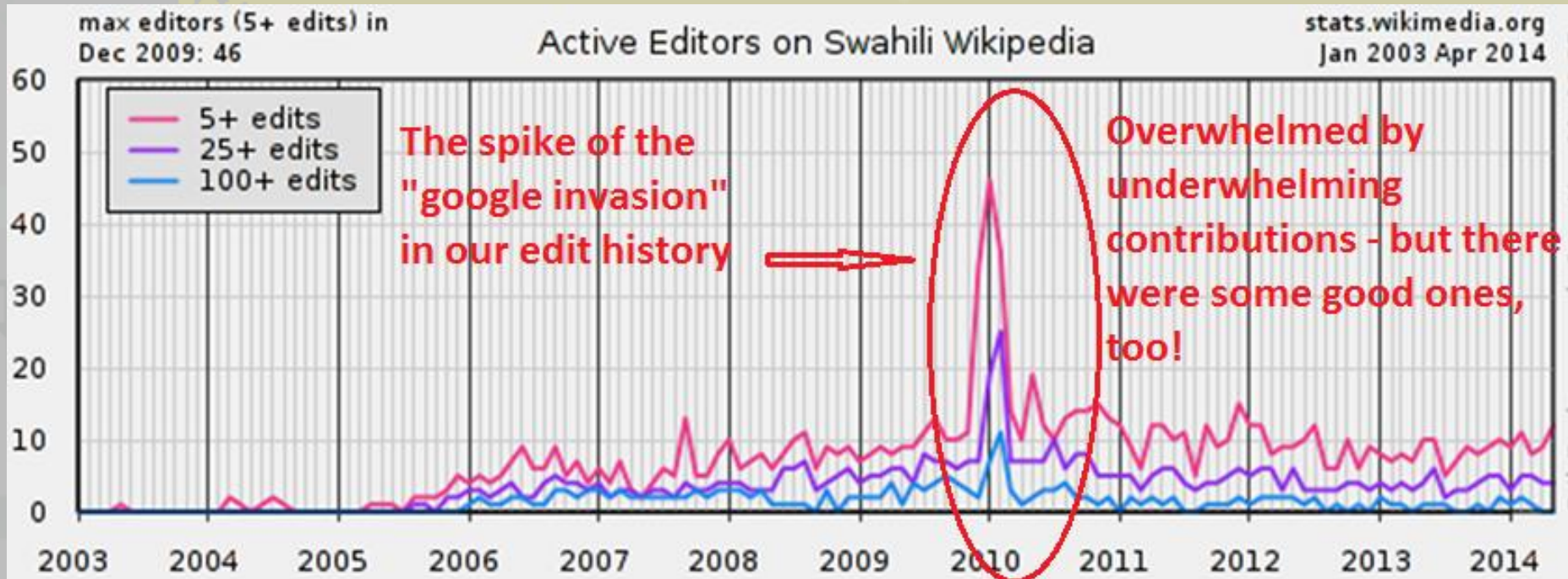
What if
nobody
understand
s what this
word
means?

Challenge: too many contributions !

2009: we are informed that Wikimedia Foundation decided with Google to have a article competition in Swahili (Kwanzaa collateral damage?)

Students could win a laptop computer in the competition

Challenge: managing a spike



Google-challenge: Too many bad articles

- Several hundred articles were translated from English
- Unfortunately most followed the recommendation to use “google translation”
- We received some very good articles (carefully redacted translations)
- * but also many extremely bad articles , just google-translate uploaded - no way to be reviewed by our small team.

Challenge: example of google-translate from Swahili

Google translate: Nyerere is blamed for his politics Kujamaa be ilichelewesha economic development of Tanzania. His socialist politicians failed to significantly after 1976 because various foreign and locally.

Meaning: Nyerere is criticized that his socialist politics held back the economic development of Tanzania. His politics of Ujamaa failed largely after 1976 because of various external and internal factors.

It is even worse the other way round!

The example above is just a demonstration of google translate between Swahili and English, not a contribution from the 2009 competition.

Challenge: responsibility

Starting “rare topics” which have not yet been written about:

Can I take this to a wrong direction ?

What if I introduce wrong terminology?

If I do, it will be all over the internet and more read than most (any?) Swahili book!

Challenge: responsibility

- * Example “Solar system and planet names”
- * “Mercury”: Utaridi or Zebaki ?
- Dictionary choice “Zebaki” looks wrong, obviously mixup with English language use for the metal + planet.
- All “old” planet names in Swahili are of Arabic origin, it should be “Utaridi”
- I find 1 literature source for “Utaridi”
- the only Tanzanian astronomer using (sometimes) Swahili cannot help
- I use “Utaridi” with footnote.

Challenge: more editors

*Actually we have no real hitting idea

*Some “can try”:

- contacting teachers or lecturers for putting students on (supervised!!) edit tasks
- trying Swahili dept. abroad for same
- produce a dvd-version and test it on teachers for usability

Until then: keep on editing + build quality

Challenge: neocolonial wiki structures

*Vote on sw in 2012: restrict article creation to registered users

1) checking workload in small team

2) en:wikipedia has it too

*Tried 3 months to get someone on Meta to listen

*Lots of contradicting advice

*Gave up: English is big + gets it, not us

*Feeling like minor tribal chief in the Empire trying to appeal to London

Wishlist to “Baba na Mama” (“those above”)

Navigating thru wikimedia jungle is difficult for small team

Give us a “consul” or facilitator to channel our requests thru to “higher levels”

Editing is more important than losing time in wikimedia jungle finding the “right contacts”

Can we please get the restricted article creation?

We are read ...

auto filter

(Jun 21, 2014 12:00:00 PM UTC)

Swahili wikipedia most read articles on 21. June 2014 at noon (more to come!)

RANK	HITS	★	👁	🚩	🌐	STATS	PAGE TITLE
41598.	335	n.c.	44	SW		stats	Mwanzo sw-start page
0.	71	n.c.		SW		stats	Kombe la Dunia la FIFA FIFA world cup
0.	62	n.c.		SW		stats	Ufahamu wa uwezo wa kushika mimba Fertility awareness
0.	48	n.c.		SW		stats	Tanzania
0.	45	n.c.		SW		stats	Nyasa (ziwa) Lake Nyassa
0.	33	n.c.		SW		stats	Maradhi ya zinaa Sexually transmitted diseases
0.	32	n.c.		SW		stats	Mboo Penis
0.	31	n.c.		SW		stats	Utamaduni culture
0.	29	n.c.		SW		stats	Steven Kanumba (Tanzanian opposition politician)
0.	26	n.c.		SW		stats	Ukomunisti communism
0.	26	n.c.		SW		stats	Wachagga Chagga (TZ community)
0.	24	n.c.		SW		stats	Utoaji mimba abortion

- Not bad at all for Swahili!

.. and opening minds

0.	22	n.c.	SW	stats 	Brazil	
0.	22	n.c.	SW	stats 	Hifadhi ya Serengeti	Serengeti National Parc
0.	21	n.c.	SW	stats 	Mapenzi	Love
0.	21	n.c.	SW	stats 	Wilaya za Tanzania	Districts of Tanzania
0.	20	Help:How to start an article	SW	stats 	Wikipedia:Msaada wa kuanzisha makala	
0.	18	n.c.	SW	stats 	Kenya	
0.	16	n.c.	SW	stats 	Adolf Hitler	Why??? permanently top 20
0.	16	n.c.	SW	stats 	Julius Nyerere	
0.	16	n.c.	SW	stats 	Wema Sepetu	(singer)
0.	16	n.c.	SW	stats 	Wikipedia	
0.	14	n.c.	SW	stats 	Wikipedia Zero	uploaded same day!!!
0.	13	n.c.	SW	stats 	Msalaba	cross
0.	13	n.c.	SW	stats 	Tanga (mji)	Tanga town
0.	13	n.c.	SW	stats 	Zohali	Planet Saturn
0.	12	n.c.	SW	stats 	Azam F.C.	

Wow! - 13 views on “my” Zohali by noon today!

Successes?

- We are still there and growing (though moderately)
- We reached a size (26.400 articles) which makes an offline dvd-test version worthwhile
- We have a quality level (not throughout!!) that puts us at the (moderate) top of African language views
- We have confidence that our work is worthwhile. Our readers are waiting to discover us – and some will edit