



BELLAGIO PUBLISHING NETWORK NEWSLETTER

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The Bellagio Publishing Network is an informal association of organizations dedicated to strengthening indigenous publishing and book development in Africa. The group includes publishers, donor organizations from both government and private voluntary sectors, and others who are concerned with books and publishing. This newsletter covers news of the Network and perspectives on publishing and book development.

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Editorial

Katherine Salahi

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This issue, like the lives of all of us who knew him, is achingly overshadowed by the loss of Chief Victor Nwankwo, engineer, writer, publisher, campaigner, visionary and, above all, a remarkable human being imbued with the spirit of *ubuntu*. His brutal death in Nigeria has shocked and enraged a profession that is more accustomed to publishing books about violence and intrigue than experiencing it in real life. As yet we do not know whether the murder was connected in any way to Chief Nwankwo's publishing activities. Whatever the particular motive for this particular crime, whether political intrigue or mindless violence, it comes as a stark reminder of the perilous conditions under which many of our colleagues labour.

Chief Nwankwo was cautiously optimistic about the possibilities for democracy in Nigeria when Abacha's murderous rule finally ended. But it was an angry man who arrived in Oxford this June for the Bellagio Publishing Network meeting, bringing with him a report he had commissioned on our behalf about Nigeria's International Book Fair. It was so openly critical of the Nigerian government, and so scathing about its officials, that we double-checked about publishing it as it stood. 'Every word', replied Victor, 'Don't change anything.' We make no apology for piling on the criticism of Nigeria's government with Niyi Osundare's attack, while his writer's view of publishers should, we hope, provoke illuminating responses.

Book fairs provide intriguing snapshots of the state of publishing at a particular time in a particular place. In the 1980s Africa's only consistently functioning book fairs were in Egypt and Zimbabwe. Today, according to the APNET trade calendar, there are at least 15 regular book fairs on the continent, ranging from book week festivals to national, regional and international fairs. This issue covers three very different fairs that each reflect the specificities of their location – Nigeria, already referred to above; the First Alexandria International Book Fair, linked to the spectacular rebirth of Africa's most famous library of antiquity, and at which not a single African country other than Egypt was represented; and Bookeish!, planned for 2004, an event that aims to address the special needs of post-apartheid South Africa, and which we fervently hope will reach out to the rest of Africa as much as to the north.

It was Moses Samkange of the Zimbabwe International Book Fair who first thought of setting up a network of African book fair directors, in order to address the many issues that they face in a more co-operative fashion than

happens at the moment. APNET and PABA have ably demonstrated the professional value of networking among publishers and booksellers. The nascent network of African book fair directors and the proposed association of African scholarly journal editors reported on in this issue are undoubtedly good news for publishing and book development in Africa.

Book Aid International continues its sterling work in books and library support for development by facilitating the workshop reported on here, fostering co-operation among different players in the book chain. The African Book Collective's agreement with Michigan State University Press for North American distribution is a milestone in the dissemination of African-published books in the north. CODESRIA's important initiative in developing a truly African *Africa Review of Books* is especially welcome as part of the long struggle for African voices to be heard internationally on African terms.

Kwasi Darko-Ampem's policy review of publishing for secondary education in Ghana raises many issues that are pertinent beyond Ghana's borders. His particular focus is the new policy privatizing educational publishing that was announced in December 2001. Significantly, Ghana has no national book policy. Policies that affect indigenous publishing are a primary focus of this network and we look forward to carrying more policy-oriented articles.

On the surface, publishing output in the Democratic Republic of Congo belies all trends. In the teeth of prolonged armed conflict and political turmoil, the number of titles published in the past decade puts the DRC among the most productive countries in Francophone Africa in terms of publishing. But when Cassiau-Haurie dug deeper it was to discover disturbing discrepancies between the number of published works and size of reading public.

The recent meeting of the Bellagio Publishing Network was convened to review our original mission and explore possible ways forward. Several of the organizations within the network, both southern and northern based, now run significant programmes aimed at strengthening indigenous southern publishing. Discussions centred on how to complement and enhance existing work. Information-sharing remains a priority for the participating organizations within the Bellagio Publishing Network, as does the need to define roles more clearly. The resounding message from the meeting was the value in continuing to participate in the forum that the Bellagio Publishing Network provides, helping all of us work more effectively towards the common goal of strengthening indigenous publishing in the south.



Bellagio Publishing Network meets in Oxford, June 2002

Sulaiman Adebawale

Sulaiman Adebawale is Editor, Bellagio Publishing Network

For two days, publishers, book development organizations and other committed individuals gathered in Oxford to discuss the role of the Bellagio Publishing Network as a catalyst for strengthening indigenous publishing and book development in the south. It marked an important occasion in the history of the network, for the debates and discussions which came out of the exchanges during this short period not only highlighted the achievements of the network in its nearly ten years of existence, but also set out the essence of the birth of a new future for the network, with a view to ensuring that it continues to work towards its mission. The network's role, the meeting noted, which has evolved over the last ten years, remains of key relevance to the work of the different individual organizations that make up the Bellagio Publishing Network, and the various communities which they serve.

A key feature of Bellagio meetings has been the opportunity to exchange information on the various activities which publishing development actors and organizations are currently working on. Paul Osborn shared perspectives on Médiateurs and CTA's work in agricultural research dissemination in developing countries. Sara Harrity and Catherine Nicholson discussed Book Aid International's renewed focus on how to work with all elements in the book chain, such as librarians, publishers, booksellers and others, to advocate for promoting reading in Africa. James Gibbs described the role of the Morel Trust, a small family trust, in promoting the work of writers from Africa by ensuring that their works get published and disseminated. Ruth Makotsi explained how the newly formed East African Book Development Association is using the socio-political characteristics of the East African region to devise book development programmes that will impact on the region as a whole.

Victor Nwankwo outlined the African Books Collective new five-year Strategic Plan 2002–2006. The Plan is financially supported by partner donor agencies, and ensures that ABC can plan its work and projects more effectively without being hampered by an unstable financial environment. Akin Fasemore highlighted key pointers in APNET's current activities – a new training programme, a drive for broader continental and international linkages and support in APNET programmes, a broadening of the African

support base, and strengthening the organization through improvement of national publishers associations. Anne Powell presented the recent activities of INASP, which include efforts to find an African base for African Journals Online, a study on the book chain in Africa, and co-ordinating study visits and supporting internships between journal publishers from the north and south. Ian Randle shared news about recent activities of the Caribbean Publishers Network (CAPNET), created to support and promote indigenous publishing in the Caribbean. Dirk Koehler focused on the print-on-demand (POD) technology and the efforts of the World Bank to alleviate some of Africa's publishing problems by helping to form an African POD network.

The Bellagio Publishing Network Secretariat

With limited resources, the Secretariat has ensured that the network remains a forum for committed individuals and organizations concerned with developing indigenous publishing in the countries of the south. This has been achieved through the continued publication of the *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter* and the development of a new website. It is also involved with various projects aimed at fostering a viable environment for indigenous publishing in the south; the most recent is the nascent network of African Book Fair Directors in conjunction with the Zimbabwe International Book Fair. The network is also looking at the emerging comics publishing sector in Africa as the next title in the *Bellagio Studies in Publishing Series*, a series that serves as a base for practical information and knowledge about publishing and book development in the south.

The way forward

The background to the history of the network and the critical elements for its future were set out in Katherine Salahi's paper 'Bellagio Publishing Network: The way forward'. It traced the context that gave birth to the idea of a network to promote indigenous publishing in Africa and how the changes in this context had impacted on the network's activities and, subsequently, its achievements. The paper also raised questions about the network's present role and what it could aspire to be in future. Hans Zell's response to 'What we can do' highlighted key areas with gaps and ways in which the network can fill these gaps; thereby not only assuring itself a continued place among organizations in the sector but, more importantly, also working more effectively to its goal of strengthening indigenous publishing in the south. The discussions were rich and broad, and portend the beginning of further deliberations, given the limited time available.

Below are some of the key questions discussed and the views of the participants.

- What is the relevance of the network? It complements the work of various initiatives supporting indigenous publishing in the south, and in particular is important for linking various actors and initiatives working in publishing and book development not just in Africa, but also in other areas of the south.
- Its mission remains valid, but it has evolved from being a donor-led organization. Now, it should be looking more at a network led by its constituencies. This should have a valuable effect on the future agenda of the network and removes an area that was restrictive during its early period.
- The absence of donors at this year's meeting was noted as something that should be redressed. The meeting also acknowledged the letters of support to its ideals, and apologies for not being able to attend, from various committed organizations and individuals. The donors should be encouraged to recognise the value of continuing dialogue amongst themselves and with their partners.
- On its area of focus, it is important for the network to remain active beyond Africa, given the need for promoting south-south co-operation. However, the diversity of the south also means the network must be realistic in how far it can go. An African and Caribbean focus is accepted as apt given the historical and cultural linkages between the two regions.
- On being part of the network: It will look into the modalities and forms of participation. Its focus on indigenous publishing should remain key as a way of promoting the perspective of people in these regions in the wider scheme of things.
- The name Bellagio Publishing Network should be retained not just because of its familiarity among book development actors, but also in recognition of the pioneering support from the Rockefeller Foundation. Secondly, there should be an understanding that 'publishing' in its activities means the entire book chain – publishers, booksellers, librarians, readers, and every other actor and sector in the creation and provision of books.
- The web site will strive to be a valuable resource for the network by serving as an effective platform to boost its objective of contributing to efforts at developing publishing in the south. The discussion forum should act as a focal point in the exchange of information and is intended to facilitate networking among publishing actors in the south.

African book fair directors meet in Cape Town, 25 July 2002

Ruth Makotsi

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Fourteen delegates from all regions of Africa, representing book fairs and book sector organizations, assembled in Cape Town at a meeting convened jointly by the Bellagio Publishing Network and Zimbabwe International Book Fair. Convenors Moses Samkange of ZIBF and Katherine Salahi of BPN explained the purpose of the gathering. With financial support from the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, directors of major book fairs in Africa and key book organizations that support book fairs were invited to meet together in order to share information on various fairs, and to discuss the possibility of establishing a Pan-African network of African book fair directors.

Given the shared objective of promoting Africa's book sector, the meeting provided an opportunity for directors and organizers of African book fairs to learn more about each other's activities. With the growing number of international book fairs on the continent, collaboration among the various organizers is increasingly desirable in order to avoid duplication and curb unnecessary competition. A pan-African network of African book fair directors would work towards creating niches for the different fairs so that each has a different thrust, and would provide a networking forum for strengthening all fairs on the continent.

All the delegates agreed that book fairs are an indispensable part of book promotion and play an important role in book sector development in Africa. Book fairs provide markets for the book trade and are meeting places for the various stakeholders in the industry (authors, publishers, printers, booksellers, librarians, policy makers, readers, etc).

Akin Fasemore, Executive Secretary of the African Publishers Network (APNET), who was unable to attend due to visa problems, sent a contribution in which he underpinned the importance of book fairs as platforms for business and networking among the practitioners. He highlighted that APNET has helped strengthen many of the fairs through its practical support for publishers' participation, and by organizing skills acquisition seminars and trade events around the fairs. He noted some of the



challenges facing book fairs in Africa, including the need for proper planning and publicity, information sharing, a complementary and well-spaced calendar, marketing and customer service, African ethos and the need to avoid over-commercialization of the fairs at the expense of literacy promotion.

Miriam Bamhare of the Zimbabwe Book Development Council talked about national book development councils (NBDCs), which were first introduced by UNESCO after World War II under the slogan 'Peace Through Education'. UNESCO's primary concern was to ensure access to education in the south. Since the 1990s, NBDCs in Africa have been working towards a collective strategy to support indigenous publishing in Africa.

The Pan African Booksellers Association (PABA), explained Chairperson Oluronke Orimalade, was formed to strengthen the bookselling sector in order to improve access to books in Africa. The Association encourages booksellers to support local book development, strengthens their capacity through skills training, and fosters new national booksellers associations while strengthening existing ones. PABA's activities frequently centre round book fairs in and outside Africa, hence the organization's support for the meeting and its willingness to establish partnerships with all book fairs on the continent.

Niyi Osundare, representing the Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), commented on the all-to-frequent exclusion of writers from many book development forums, including book fairs. Authors play an important role in the book trade and should not be ignored. While appreciating the contribution of African book fairs to the promotion of Africa's best works, he stressed the need for publishers to involve the authors more actively in their efforts to project the variety and diversity of African writing.

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A number of book fair directors and organizers provided insights into the history and current standing of their fairs. They included Cairo International Book Fair Director Samir Saad Khalil, Chair of the Organising Committee of the Ghana International Book Fair, Woeli Dekutsey, Hasna Reda-Mekdashy on the first Arab Women's Book Fair in

Cairo, Director Rachid Jebbouj of SIEL-Casablanca, Chair of the Organising Committee Jimmi Makotsi on the Nairobi International Book Fair (NIBF), Mariétou Diongue Diop, Director of Book and Reading Activities in the Senegalese Ministry of Education, on FILDAK (Dakar), Graeme Bloch of the forthcoming South African International Festival of Books, *Bookeish!*, and Director of the Zimbabwe International Book Fair, Moses Samkange. Contributions from two unavoidably absent book fair directors came from Dayo Alabi, Nigeria International Book Fair and Corneille Monoko, Kinshasa Book Fair.

Building a Network of African Book Fair Directors

The participants agreed unanimously to work towards the establishment of a network that will:

- solicit for government and donor support in organising African book fairs
- collaborate with book sector NGOs such as APNET, PAWA, PABA and book development councils in the planning of fair programmes
- provide centralized training for organizers of African book fairs
- enhance collaboration among organizers in planning of fairs in order to create a systematic, consistent and complementary African book trade calendar
- increase exposure of book fair directors through inter-fair exchange visits
- Support the promotion of books and reading in Africa by organising Pan-African book awards
- lobby regional economic communities to remove fiscal, physical and legislative barriers to intra-African book trade
- promote African cultural identity in African book fairs
- represent African book fairs at the Confederation of World Book Fair Directors.

The mission of the network will be to establish strong, sustainable and well-co-ordinated book fairs which are effective book markets and forums for enhancing Africa's publishing and information sectors. A taskforce of representatives of APNET, PABA, and selected African international book fairs is working on the next stages, with the Bellagio Publishing Network serving as their secretariat.

This is an abridged version of the meeting report prepared by Ruth Makotsi, consultant to the project - Ed.



The Missing Link*

Views on the Nigerian International Book Fair held in Abuja, May 2002

Niyi Osundare

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When Mary Jay of African Books Collective told me last year that an international book fair was to take place in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2002, my reaction was that of surprise and disbelief. In the first place, so long after the last major one at Ile Ife, after so many years of brutal military dictatorship coupled with the resurgence of illiteracy, the idea of an international book fair in Nigeria had begun to sound so strange, even quixotic. The second puzzle was the proposed venue of the fair: Abuja. Abuja and the book have never collocated in the Nigerian mind, for Abuja and culture sound very much like unlike terms.

In the thinking of most people, Abuja is the city of contractors, businessmen and women, federal bureaucrats, and pugilistic, prodigal politicians. It is the city of Julius Berger and gold-digging foreign construction companies. What space is left for culture in a formerly stunningly beautiful landscape now defaced with ill-executed tabernacles and hurriedly assembled assortments of structures, where the brotherhood of rocks gazes helplessly as bulldozers tear through the belly of tender mountains and the steam shovel scoops the innards of green valleys? Abuja looks very much like a city with little rhyme and littler reason. A book fair there would be like a flower show in a desert, I thought.

When I voiced this scepticism to some of the organizers of the fair, all kinds of rationalization assailed my doubt: it had to be Abuja so as to get the fair closer to the seat of the federal government, whose gracious donation had aided its financing: Abuja it must be so as to enlist the participation of the top brass of Nigeria's political leadership, who would attend in all their majesty and dazzle the guests with the panoply of Nigerian power. The president of Nigeria, the president of Senate, and the speaker of the House of Representatives were all being invited, I was told.

Ah, how the ground would shake under the cavalry of Nigerian power! To as many people as gave me this line, I registered a warning: if you want your function to go well and as planned, don't invite the Nigerian politician because he/she will almost surely dampen your enthusiasm with his/her absence, or disrupt your programme by coming majestically late. Perhaps the fair planners never thought about this; perhaps they thought that the immensity of an

international gathering of this kind would get Nigeria's political leopards to change their spots.

Well, that never happened. None of the invited powers showed up. None sent any apologies. Only the minister of education sent a representative in the person of Peter Okabukola, executive secretary, National Universities Commission, whose presence brightened up two of the sessions.

So, for a whole week, an international book fair took place in Nigeria's capital city, but those in the 'Three Arms Zone' betrayed not the slightest awareness of that important event. Absolutely in character. To the grabbers of political power in Nigeria, the book is still very much a foreign object, strange, mute, and uncannily hostile.

This pervasive bibliophobia notwithstanding, Nigeria's first really international book fair in many years did take place in Abuja in mid-May 2002. Never to be overlooked or underestimated is the dogged courage and tenacity of the organizers who made it happen in spite of Nigeria's daunting infrastructural problems. We saw a fair sense of organization and commitment, a heroic striving to succeed. However, although the fair organizers demonstrated a staunch commitment to the book, alas, they displayed no such virtue towards the writer. If the truth be told, in the book chain of the Abuja fair, the writer was the missing link. All the foreign (and most of the local) participants I spoke with wondered why there were so few Nigerian writers at the fair. They had come not only to see books but also to have the rare chance of interacting with those who wrote the books, ask them questions, obtain their autographs, exchange ideas and addresses with them. Unfortunately this was not to be. The Abuja fair was unfairly dominated by publishers and booksellers in the fervent belief that the books which formed the centre of their business must have dropped from heaven in effortless circumstances.

This is painfully at variance with the spirit of the book fair in other parts of the world where publishers ensure the presence of their authors (especially old, established figures and new ones making a remarkable debut), take care of their welfare, organize autograph and meet-the-author sessions for them, promote them and their works in all kinds of ways. At such book fairs, the most looked-forward

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to, most heavily-attended sessions are those in which authors read from their works and take feed-back questions and comments from the audience – a mutually enriching process for both sides.

There are also author-author dialogues for which the audience serves as both listeners and umpires. I remember with delight one such dialogue between Derek Walcott and the late Joseph Brodsky at the 1993 Gothenburg book fair in Sweden. Both Nobel laureates, poets and writers with remarkable reputations (who also happened to be good friends), these unusual public interlocutors talked about themselves and each other, each about his works and the works of the other, other writers, spicing it all up with crisp humour and literary panache. Two poets, two friends, but also two different personalities: one belletrist, voluble, somewhat aristocratic in his literary idiolect, the other elliptical and somewhat self-effacing. The audience lost no chance in picking up the fallouts from this intriguing battle between friends. Needless to say, the event went beyond the venue.

Why couldn't the organizers of the Abuja book fair think about such author-centred events? Why did the publishers come with a retinue of salesmen and women but not a single author? The answer is as Nigerian as the 'Nigerian Factor' itself. Author-sourcing, author-cultivation, author-promotion, and author-welfare have never had a place in the priority list of most Nigerian publishers, many of whom think they have done the author a lofty favour by publishing his/her work.

As a matter of fact, the majority of Nigerian publishers are in gross violation of the salient aspects of author-publisher relations: they never tell the author how many copies of his/her works they have printed, how many they have sold, and what royalties are due, or when they will be paid. Strange but true: there are publishers in Nigeria who have not issued royalty statements nor paid their authors one kobo for ten years, though their books have been consistently on sale! If this is not criminal, I do not know what else is. The recently published *The African Writers' Handbook* grappled comprehensively with these issues, but even many of the Nigerian publishers who participated in the making of that historic document have flouted every letter of it.

No hyperbole intended, but there is every reason to believe that many Nigerian publishers enjoy seeing their authors in rags.

Without a doubt, our publishers have been acting in tune with the spirit of their age. For, frankly speaking, this is still Nigeria's age of resurgent illiteracy. We live in a country which slams taxes on books and book-related materials, a country that puts every conceivable obstacle in the way of literary creativity, and yet has the immoral

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effrontery of extorting hefty 'withholding taxes' from authors' royalties (in the unlikely event they are paid!). Surely, a country that can put the National Theatre up for sale in the name of some fuzzily defined 'privatization' can hardly lay any credible claim to genuine culture. How many of our rulers read one good book in a year, two years, five years, and ten years? How many of them are literate and knowledgeable enough to personally write the speeches they try to impress us with on every important (or unimportant) occasion? What do they know about culture, genuine culture, not atavistic recrudescences of raffia-clad dancers titillating ogling guests at state banquets? What do they know about the book beyond those ghosted hagiographies which haul in millions of naira at public launches, then vanish into dusty oblivion soon after?

Nigeria has never cared about creativity and the creative person. Consider the billions being squandered on the mindlessly sited Abuja stadium, and ask how many theatres are being built in this unreal city, how many museums, how many studies, how many libraries? Consider the billions spent on soccer jamborees, and ask how much is being spent on the overhaul of crumbling sporting facilities in our educational institutions all over the country?

When Darego Agbani (this is without prejudice to her well-deserved recognition) came back to us as 'Miss World', the National Assembly stood to attention; she was a distinguished guest at the State House where top political rulers jumped over one another to shake her hand. Then ask: when Helon Habila recently came home with the Caine Prize, how many of our rulers spared one moment for that achievement? And yet this is the country of Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and other literary ambassadors whose works and reputations have gone a long way in repairing the damage done to Nigeria's international image by criminal dictators and politicians, 419 scam experts, and drug pushers?

No, Nigeria is not yet a country for the creative person. Nor is it a country that is in a hurry to encourage creativity and benefit from its virtues. We are too busy consuming the products of the creative efforts of other peoples in our proverbial role as 'importers, forwarders and manufacturers'

representatives'. Afflicted with a chronic *tokunbo* pathology, we are too content with squandering our resources on the second-hand, fifth-hand products straight from Europe's technological scrap yard. Those who call Nigeria an 'independent country' have invented the most audacious oxymoron of the 21st century.

And so, for the better part of one week, we were camped in the Berger-built, Babangida-commissioned international conference centre (a futuristic leviathan with its failing power supply and erratic air-conditioning). But there were silver linings in the cloud.

Abosede Emanuel's tremendous book, *Odun Ifà*, and its publisher received the prestigious Noma Award; Heinemann UK marked 40 years of the African Writers Series with Okey Ndibe reading from his new novel; there were wonderful reminiscences by Aig Higo, Cyprian Ekwensi, and Henry Chakava. And every day of the fair, students trooped in from Abuja high schools for writing workshops and other intellectual activities.

I directed five sessions of this workshop, and was struck by the enthusiasm, intelligence, and imaginative faculty of many of the participants. The Book Fair Trust, Wale Okediran, workshop co-ordinator and rallying force, and others in the children's programme committee deserve our gratitude for this initiative, which was for me the most meaningful engagement at the Abuja book fair. By their promise and abundant talent, those young workshop participants left me with the sanguine impression that in the book fair of the future the writer will not be the missing link.

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Nigerian International Book Fair 2002 in Abuja

Chinyere Nwoga

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The Nigerian International Book Fair (NIBF) was held in Abuja from 14 to 19 May 2002. It was the first serious international book fair since the demise of the Ife Book Fair 20 years ago. It was therefore a statement of claim announcing the resurrection of Africa's most vibrant publishing industry after 20 years of military misrule. Several concurrent events were organized around the Fair. The key events were the International Conference with the catchy theme 'Publishing for Peace'; the Noma Award for 2001; and the World Bank Workshop on Information Technology and Publishing in Africa. Other events were the 5th APNET General Council and Award Night; the Heinemann 40th Anniversary celebration of the African Writers Series (AWS); the Buyers and Sellers meeting; the Children's Literature programme; the Writers Workshop; and the Marketing Workshop organized by the Pan African Booksellers Association (PABA) in collaboration with the Nigerian Book Foundation (NBF).

Publishing for Peace

The International Conference on Publishing for Peace was the premiere event and had Nigeria's Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, as the keynote speaker. Its late take-off, however, brought into stark relief the teething problems of organizing a brand new fair after a hiatus of two decades. Unconfirmed reports had it that staff of Julius Berger, a construction company that runs the Conference Centre, had withdrawn their services the previous day over an undisclosed dispute with the government. Guests arrived to find a hall that was not yet arranged. Added to this confusion was the heat. The air-conditioning units were turned off and the control room locked up. This left the master of ceremonies with the arduous task of apologizing profusely and frequently. It was not until midway into the conference that the air conditioning units were eventually switched on.

The spectacular indifference of the government and its functionaries to the Fair did not escape the attention of the organizers, exhibitors and other stakeholders in the book industry. The chairman of the conference, Chukwuemeka Ike and Wole Soyinka expressed great disappointment. As is the tradition in other countries, the President usually

performs the opening and/or closing ceremonies. That was not to be in Abuja. Functionaries such as the Senate President, the Speaker Federal House of Representatives and ministers conveniently reneged on their previously accepted and confirmed roles at the fair. Even more embarrassing is the information that the Nigerian government sent a huge contingent, led by the minister of education, to the Lisbon Book Fair immediately after the Abuja Fair. The logical conclusion is that travelling to Lisbon, Portugal was a more attractive option. This, more than anything else, underscored the great divide between the aspirations of Nigerians and the priorities of their political leadership.

The Exhibition

The fair was relatively well attended by those in the book industry from Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States. Setting-up day was slated for May 15. The stands were brand new and of world class but exhibitors arrived to find them without shelves. The blame was laid on the suppliers. Exhibitors had to find what shelves were available and even displayed their wares on the floor.

A daily tour of the stands revealed that attendance by the local population was reasonable but not as high as one would expect. Unlike other countries like Ghana, where a school free day is declared so that children in particular can visit the fair ground, no such declaration was made. In his welcome address, the chairman of the Nigerian Book Fair Trust, Dayo Alabi, reiterated that the fair was the contribution of the book industry to the development of human capital and tourism. The fair, he said, was an effort to attract foreign investors and technology. However, foreign exchange was obviously not a consideration for the government functionaries and political invitees who chose to go about their more important business of a book launch for a governor here and a reception for a political ally there. The theme of the fair, rightly called Publishing for Peace, resonates with the prevalent call for global peace. Given the level of restiveness in Nigeria and indeed in Africa, it would have been appropriate that the government lend their voice and support to this cause, knowing full well that they are the primary beneficiaries of a stable and peaceful society.

Noma Award

The 2001 Noma Award went to Dr Abosede Emanuel for his book *Odun Ifa* (Ifa Festival), published by West African Book Publishers, Lagos. Abosede Emanuel is the third Nigerian to win this Award, after Felix Adi (1981) and Niyi Osundare (1991). As Mary Jay, Secretary of the Noma Award Managing Committee, noted, the winning titles present a remarkable picture of the intellectual vigour of the African continent, and strengthen the vitality of

publishing in Africa despite the adverse conditions with which writers and publishers are confronted. Wole Soyinka presented the prize of US\$ 10,000 to the Award winner, and Walter Bgoya, Chairman of the Noma Award Managing Committee, presented a special commemorative plaque to the publisher.

Information Technology and Publishing in Africa

The session on Information Technology and Publishing in Africa organized by The World Bank left participants asking for more. The World Bank Publisher, Dirk Koehler, extolled the virtues of digital printing and electronic commerce, not disregarding the overwhelming difficulties facing those in the book chain in Africa. Difficulties that include erratic and low public power supply, inadequate and virtually non-existent telecommunication services; low purchasing power, poor reading culture, and frustrating government policies on books and education.

In answering questions from participants, Dirk Koehler and his colleagues encouraged publishers to seek collaboration with the World Bank in areas of common interest and suggest ways that could lead to a better understanding between the book industry in Africa and the World Bank. Participants were also advised to work through their Publishers Association. Chief Victor Nwankwo, Managing Director, Fourth Dimension Publishing Company Nigeria, broke down the otherwise abstract technology into a do-able venture in his rich and exciting paper 'Digital Print-on-Demand: An African Publisher's Experience'. POD provides, he said, opportunities for African publishers to by-pass the limitations of lack of investment capital and inadequate physical infrastructure ordinarily essential for getting their books to the market place. As one of the pioneers of this technology in Africa, his knowledge in the field was manifested clearly in his presentation, which was further enhanced by the presentation of the samples of books printed using POD. At the end of the session, participants confessed that Chief Victor Nwankwo's paper shed more light on the subject than any other information that they were presented with.

APNET's 5th General Council

The African Publishers Network (APNET) held its fifth General Council during the fair. The first APNET meeting was held in 1992 in Harare, Zimbabwe. Fourteen founding members were at that gathering. Since then, it has held biennial General Councils: 1993 in Accra, 1995 in Nairobi, 1997 in Bamako and 1999 in Kampala. Outgoing Chairman, Richard Crabbe, chaired the 2002 Council, organized to coincide with its 10th Anniversary.

Richard Crabbe presented a report which covered the period October 1999 to May 2002. He said the approval by

the previous General Council of the five-year (1999 to 2004) strategic plan was the catalyst for the signing of the plan with APNET's funding partners. The board and secretariat, he said, had focused on the targets defined by the plan. He had words of appreciation for Sida, the Rockefeller Foundation, DANIDA, NORAD, the Ford Foundation and DfID for their support. He also thanked his colleagues for their confidence in him to serve and for their support during his tenure.

While thanking Crabbe for a job well done, Chief Nwankwo, the immediate past chair, reminded the new board that managing the success of APNET is even more challenging than succeeding. In the elections that followed, Mamadou Aliou Sow of Guinea emerged as Chairman and Janet Njoroge of Kenya as Treasurer. In its first meeting the new board elected Ayo Ojeniyi as Vice Chairman. Sow thanked his colleagues and pledged to continue in APNET's tradition of transparent and inclusive leadership.

APNET Award Night

The anniversary celebration was marked by an Award Night Dinner, attended by Dr Kema Chikwe, Minister of Aviation and herself a publisher. Among the recipients of awards were Walter Bgoya, Henry Chakava, Chief Victor Nwankwo, Roger Stringer, and the outgoing chairman, Richard Crabbe. Most touching was the posthumous award to the late Djibril Faye of Senegal, who was a pivotal instrument in the link-up with Francophone publishers, a connection which established APNET as a truly continental network. Dr Chikwe's long speech bemoaned the lack of reading culture in Africa. Her cries for the need to encourage the industry, however, did not really proffer any plan to effect a rescue.

Buyers/Sellers Meeting

APNET also organized its 6th Buyers/Sellers meeting, which primarily aims at developing a regional African market for books and other printed matter. It is the rallying point for African enterprises active in the publishing and printing sector.

40th Anniversary of African Writers Series (AWS)

Heinemann Educational Books at the Fair celebrated the 40th Anniversary of African Writers Series (AWS). Present were Henry Chakava (Chairman East African Educational Publishers, formerly Heinemann Kenya), Becky Clarke (Commissioning Editor AWS), Cyprian Ekwensi, Aig Higo, (Chairman, Heinemann Nigeria), and Okey Ndibe (Heinemann guest writer). Cyprian Ekwensi elated the audience with his background history of the series that was pioneered by Chinua Achebe. His gentle and humorous

approach served to draw powerful nostalgic memories of the early beginnings of the series. Okey Ndibe, author of *Arrows of Rain*, further entertained the audience by giving a delightful performance that had the audience applauding feverishly. Others in attendance included Niyi Osundare, whose book *Waiting Laughter* won the 1991 Noma Award, Otunba Yinka Lawal-Solarin of Literamed Publications and past chair of the Nigerian Publishers Association, Mrs Ronke Orimalade, President of the Pan-African Booksellers Association (PABA), and Ian Taylor, the International Director of the Publishers Association.

The absence of the Nigerian Government

A major sticking point was the N30 million (US\$25,000) support promised by President Obasanjo in June 2001. Despite the enormous cost to the organizers in following up on the pledge, only N10 million (US\$8,000) was released in April 2002. This leaves the Book Fair Trust with reason to be grateful, but what remains to be clarified is whether a) the President changed his mind after the promise and decided on one third of the pledge, b) the N10 million was an initial deposit, or c) the entire sum of N30 million has been disbursed by the Presidency, leaving the sum of N20 million to be accounted for by an individual or a group of individuals in government. That the third option is untenable in this country is an understatement, given the level of corruption in the country. If the second option is the case, then the Book Fair Trust are wondering when the balance will be released, particularly given that the fair has come and gone, and what the cost of procuring this balance will amount to. The first option is a remote one, but if it were indeed the explanation, then the office of the Presidency would have lost any shreds of credibility. The only authentic voice acceptable in this case would be that of the President. A similar furore surrounds the letter from the Presidency dated May 17, 2002 (but received two weeks later). This letter was in response to one from the Nigerian Publishers Association dated January 20, 2002 seeking audience for the members of APNET Board with President Obasanjo as the President of the host country of the General Council and Book Fair. The reply announced that Mr President would see the APNET board on July 19! This demonstrates a lack of understanding and appreciation of the role and contribution of the book industry to development.

Conclusion

Despite the difficulties, the stakeholders in the industry have a responsibility to see that the NIBF builds on the grounds gained at this first outing, having learned from the mistakes of the 2002 Fair. The efforts of the Nigerian Book Fair Trust and its partners should not be devalued or discounted. In the communiqué released at the end of the

fair, the organizers committed themselves to pursue the resolution to save the Nigerian book industry by working towards its growth. That the exclusion of government in book matters would only make the industry weaker should not serve as a deterrent. One can only hope that the NIBF would apply its resourcefulness and dynamism in the face of insensitivity on the part of government.

The next Nigerian International Book Fair on the theme Women Empowerment Through Publishing is slated for 8 –12 May 2003 in Lagos. For further information contact Kunle Oyediran, Executive Secretary, Nigerian International Book Fair, Literamed Publications Ltd (Lantern House), Plot 45, Oregun Industrial Estate, Alausa Bus stop, Ikeja, PMB 21068, Ikeja Lagos, Nigeria. Email info@nibf.org; web site: www.nibf.org



Bookeish! South Africa's first international book festival

Graeme Bloch

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A national initiative to promote a culture of reading among South Africans, called Bookeish! was launched in Cape Town on August 20, 2002. The launch will culminate in an international book festival, the first in the country's history, in February 2004.

This major exhibition for the global book trade is designed to bring together top local and international writers of adult and children's fiction and non-fiction with some of the world's heavyweight publishers, authors' agents and book media. The four-day event will provide the platform for the international unveiling of a significant number of new book titles from all over the world and will also be open to the public. The festival is expected to draw a significant contingent of international visitors to the city.

A range of activities to run alongside the festival includes street parades, musical and library events, as well as performances involving community and school groups. These will take place in and around Cape Town including the V&A Waterfront, Kirstenbosch, the Baxter Theatre and Spier near Stellenbosch.

Although the festival hopes to make its mark on the international book calendar in the way that the renowned annual book events of Frankfurt and London have succeeded in doing, it will have a distinctly local flavour. Nevertheless, it will draw substantially on the expertise of international luminaries such as film director Lord Richard Attenborough,

actor and writer Sir Antony Sher and British Minister for Africa Baroness Valerie Amos. They have all undertaken to serve on the advisory council for the initiative.

The book festival will be preceded by an 18-month long programme of book-related events in the country's major centres to focus on the value of recreational reading, targeted at all ages, stages and income groups.

The second part of the name *Bookeish!* comes from the township term for positive surprise or exclamation ('eish' means 'wow'). The name emphasizes the aim to make books relevant and accessible to a wide range of people.

This is not a literacy drive but one that invites South Africans to acquire the pleasures and benefits of recreational reading in whatever areas excite their interest.

It also provides an excellent platform from which to showcase South Africa's story-telling talents in a world-class way. While local writers such as Nadine Gordimer, André P Brink, Zeke Mphahlele and Gcina Mhlope all enjoy international prominence, they are known to only a relatively small number of South Africans. We want to change that. At the same time there are countless other novelists, poets and essayists who are yet to be discovered in their home country and elsewhere.

Our primary focus is to grow a reading public and assert that books are a crucial part of the country's future. But we are addressing all communities, from grassroots level to those from the highest-income groups.

Seed funding for the multi-million rand initiative has been provided by an American-Irish NGO, Atlantic Philanthropy. The Ford Foundation has also indicated a willingness to become involved, while the British Council will co-present cultural events that enhance a UK/SA collaboration and exchange. In addition, the local publishing fraternity has donated funds and several booksellers will provide promotional support. Bookeish! is in the process of securing funding from other sources, including the private and public sectors.

The scale of the initiative will obviously be determined by the extent of funding obtained but the first project will be to highlight the books on the Africa's 100 Best Books list published in 2002 by the Zimbabwe International Book Fair.

Plans include festivals in Cape Town and Johannesburg for films, dance/drama in the Eastern Cape and a Latin American writers' festival.

Bookeish! also intends to collaborate with South African publishing and educational NGO, READ, the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees, and several government departments.

Patrons-in-chief of Bookeish! are Albertina and Walter Sisulu. Other patrons are Minister of Education Kader Asmal, Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Brigitte Mabandla, novelist Nadine Gordimer and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.



Books for development – a workshop to link stakeholders in the book chain

Kampala, 27th–29th September 2002

Sara Harrity

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Before the workshop began, warm tributes were paid to Chief Victor Nwankwo and a minute's silence was observed.

The goal of the workshop was to increase mutual understanding and collaboration between booksellers, librarians and publishers in order to develop the book chain and to give books and access to information greater prominence on the policy agenda at national level.

The workshop was facilitated by Sara Harrity and Cath Nicholson of Book Aid International (BAI), Akin Fasemore and Alice Mouko of the African Publishers Network (APNET) and Oluronke Orimalade of the Pan African Booksellers' Association (PABA). It was hosted by the National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU) and funded by ADEA and the Rockefeller Foundation. There were over 20 participants representing library organizations and the booksellers and publishers associations of Ghana, Uganda and Zambia. The methodology of the workshop was participatory, and everyone played a full and lively part in group work and discussions.

The opening speeches emphasized the importance of books to life-long education, literacy and overall development, and drew attention to the challenges posed by the rapid increase in educational provision through Universal Primary Education (UPE). There is great pressure to maintain quality, and supplementary reading materials and libraries have a crucial role to play.

On the first day, common objectives were identified, as well as challenges and problems. The three professional groups had much that they agreed on, including the need to inculcate a reading culture; make relevant and affordable books available and accessible; lobby government for positive book policies; and develop effective working relationships. It was agreed that it was necessary to adopt a common approach.

The second day was devoted to planning BAI's local purchase project, which will operate in the three countries represented in 2003. Grants will be provided to four library organizations to purchase books, ideally in local languages, through booksellers. The project aims specifically to target the needs of poor and disadvantaged groups, e.g., women, in ways that improve collaboration across the book chain.

This session gave participants a chance to consider some of the problems and challenges they had identified on the first day in a concrete practical context and work together on how to overcome them. Group feedback included the importance of transparency in procurement processes; the need to involve users in book selection; gender considerations in selection and in access; and the need for practical and collaborative steps to take forward reading promotion and advocacy work.

These last two themes were taken up on the third and final day. Case studies were presented by participants from Uganda on their experience of successful collaboration and by the Ghana Book Trust on their work to promote reading. Librarians, publishers and booksellers in each country came up with a range of ideas they could work on together to promote reading. Finally, the group considered key areas they could advocate on collectively. These included changing the attitude of policy makers by creating awareness of the importance of access to supplementary reading materials to support government goals for quality education; making books available, accessible and affordable to advance the cause of literacy; the need for local language publications; and capacity building across the book chain. The workshop helped to build personal and professional relationships which will be further cemented as the three groups continue to work together in-country.

The three professional groups had much that they agreed on, including the need to inculcate a reading culture; make relevant and affordable books available and accessible; lobby government for positive book policies; and develop effective working relationships.

The workshop immediately preceded the Uganda National Book Week Festival (30th September–6th October 2002). In order to link the two events and to share experience further, an Open Forum was held on Monday, 30th September on the subject of 'Working together to advocate for the role of books and information for development', and other visitors to the Book Week were invited. Oluronke Orimalade (PABA), Chris Chirwa (Booksellers and Publishers Association of Zambia) and Phenny Birungi (Public Library Board of Uganda) gave a bookseller's, publisher's and librarian's perspective on the workshop and discussion followed on the link between access to information and poverty alleviation, the role of indigenous tertiary publishing and local languages in development.

African Association of Editors of Scholarly Journals in the making

Janet Hussein

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Journals are the backbone of scholarly work, providing a medium through which scholars can exchange information, be educated and stimulate debate. African scholarly journals have expanded in number and scope over the past twenty years and are increasingly providing local, regional and international exposure for the research and development done on the continent. There have been a number of initiatives to improve quality, output, usage and management of scholarly journals in Africa, especially in the field of electronic publishing, but there is scope for a great deal of improvement.

In July 2002, I attended a seminar in Zanzibar on 'Strengthening Scholarly Publishing in Africa' (Arusha IV)¹ and presented a paper on the challenges facing African journals.² The seminar was funded and organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the African Books Collective. Participants included African and international publishers, editors, writers, booksellers, scholars and resource persons. At this seminar, I put forward a proposal for the creation of an African Association of Editors of Scholarly Journals. It was envisaged that this Association would assist editors in meeting the challenges facing journal publication in Africa, particularly through capacity building, and would work towards improving the quality, quantity and usage of the journals. There was also a proposal to form an African Scholarly Network Press, and the Editors' Association could work in conjunction with this Network or possibly apply to work under the African Publishers Network (APNET).

There have been several initiatives to form editors'/ publishers' organizations in Africa. These include the Consortium of African Scholarly Publishers (CASP), formed in 1993 under the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS) in Kenya, and the African Association of Science Editors (AASE) started in Addis Ababa. Both these organizations folded within about a year of starting. An association of editors is, however, clearly needed if Africa's journals are to take pride of place on the continent and project a positive image of our scholarship on the world stage. The association would provide a regionally and internationally recognizable body working to promote journals in Africa, much like the African Publishers Network

which has played a crucial role in promoting book publishing on the continent. The association would also provide training for editors, would lobby universities and research institutions for improved recognition for publishing in African journals, and help to increase the quality and impact factors/citation indices of African publications. If a new association is to be formed, however, it will need to have clearly defined goals, committed members and access to funding for identified projects, in order to thrive. Several international organizations have indicated interest in providing support and/or funding for the above kinds of activities, if initiatives are made by editors in Africa.

A proposal to form the association was then sent out to all the journals on the African Journals Online (AJOL) list with the assistance of Pippa Smart and Carol Priestley in INASP. To date, about fifty enthusiastic responses have been received from the original 124 emails sent out to editors/publishers of scholarly journals in Africa. The responses have come from all over Africa, covering a wide spectrum of journal types. So the proposed association will truly represent the interests of African scholarly editors. INASP have also placed news about the proposal on their website.

Some editors have offered their services to get the Association going. A formal working group comprising Ruth Oniang'o (*African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition & Development*), Felicia Oyekanmi from CODESRIA, T. Assefa from OSSREA, O. Omoregie (*Journal of Aquatic Science*), Elizabeth le Roux (*African Insight*), A. Omigbodun (*Tropical Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*), Udu Yakubu (*Journal of Cultural Studies*), M. Horsfall Jnr (*Journal of Applied Science & Environmental Management*), Dr Ngowi (*Botswana Journal of Technology*) and Janice Limson (*Science in Africa*) has therefore been formed to lay the foundation for the association.

As a first step, the working group are putting together a questionnaire to send out to interested persons, to gather ideas for a formal proposal to be put to potential members and donors. We then hope to organize an inaugural meeting, perhaps combined with some training. INASP have also suggested other activities, including the setting up of an email discussion group; website; newsletter; workshops and training/development resources linkage with other editorial associations (e.g. the European Association of Science Editors – EASE).

Those interested in obtaining further information should access news on INASP's website or contact Pippa Smart psmart@inasp.info

Notes

1. <http://www.inasp.info/psi/arusha/index.html>
2. <http://www.inasp.info/psi/arusha/papers.html>



First Alexandria International Book Fair

Mrs Suzanne Mubarak, Head of the Board of Trustees and Dr Ismail Serageldin, Director General of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina opened the First Alexandria International Book Fair, which ran from 24 July to 6 August 2002 in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Book Fair was attended by over 200 publishing and printing houses, from Italy, France, Kuwait, Britain, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Libya, as well as Egypt. The celebrations of the Book Fair started with the honouring of Dr Samir Sarhan, Head of the Egyptian General Book Authority, in recognition of his role in enriching the cultural and publishing sector in Egypt and the Arab world, as well as of the efforts he has exerted over the past years in various book development activities. Engineer Ibrahim El Moalem, a renowned publisher in the Arab world and Head of the Arab Publishers Union, was also honoured for his support to the Book Fair, and in recognition of his contributions in activating the Egyptian Publishers Union and the Arab Publishers Union.

Several exhibitions were held during fair. The best works of Sayed Darweesh, the famous Egyptian musician who lived during the first quarter of the 20th century, were presented by Khaled Shams. Rare documents, papyrus and manuscripts from the National Libraries and Archives were also showcased to the public. Other activities of the fair, which emphasized electronic publishing, included poetry readings centred around the theme of the nine muses, book signings, and tours around the newly reconstructed Alexandria Library.



African published books in the US

African Books Collective

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African Books Collective (ABC) and Michigan State University Press (MSUP) have signed an agreement to enter into a partnership designed to raise the profile of African-published books and disseminate them more widely. The agreement was signed at a special ceremony on 4 July 2002 during the Arusha IV Seminar in Zanzibar on 'Strengthening Scholarly Publishing in Africa' co-organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and ABC.

Walter Bgoya, Director of the Seminar and Chairman of ABC, commended the agreement as a very important step forward for both parties, opening up new opportunities for African books, which had been disadvantaged in the North American market due to the lack of a US marketing and distribution point. He and other colleagues from the ABC Council of Management welcomed the opportunity for the agreement to be signed in conjunction with the seminar, and in the presence of some of ABC's key partners.

From 1 January 2003, ABC books will be exclusively marketed and distributed in North America by MSUP.

ABC is the non-profit, Oxford-based, worldwide marketing and distribution outlet for over 1,000 titles from Africa – scholarly, literature and children's books. Founded, owned and governed by a group of African publishers, ABC's mission is to strengthen indigenous African publishing through collective action and to increase the visibility and accessibility of the wealth of African scholarship and culture.

MSUP has a university press mission. The scholarly publishing arm of Michigan State University, it helps to carry out the institution's land-grant mission through the publication of research and intellectual inquiry that makes significant contributions to scholarship in the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences. MSUP markets and distributes a growing number of distinguished foreign and domestic publishers.

ABC and MSUP will work together to increase the visibility and sales of books representing the best cultural product from Africa - the wealth of its scholarship, fine literary writing, and children's books emanating from within the African culture. Such books have been disadvantaged by not having a North American distributor; and MSUP will become the first US stockist of a critical mass of African-published books.

The partnership will be launched at the (US) African Studies Association in Washington in December 2002.

For further details:

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Africa Review of Books

The Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) has announced arrangements for the publication of the *Africa Review of Books*. For CODESRIA, the project dates back more than a decade and grew out of a felt need, expressed by members of the African academic community, to produce a publication of high scholarly standing that would be a useful resource for all those who are actively engaged in research in and on Africa.

The *Review* is designed to:

- serve, in a broad sense, as a multi-disciplinary forum for critical analyses, discussion and debate about Africa, both historically and contemporaneously;
- bring to the attention of the scholarly community works of significance which are published within Africa and which might otherwise be lost for lack of proper dissemination;
- undertake a regular assessment of major works published on Africa outside the continent;
- produce short state-of-the-art commentaries on concepts, methodology and trends in the study of Africa and African affairs; and
- take regular stock of the evolution of the various disciplines and what this implies for the study of Africa.

The *Review* will be a bi-annual publication in English and French with an initial print run of 2500 copies per edition. The Council is currently looking at proposals from African social science research institutions willing to host the editorial office of the publication.

In line with CODESRIA's Charter-mandate of strengthening the institutional basis of knowledge production in Africa, the *Review* will be located within an African institution actively involved in social research. In this connection, institutions which are interested in hosting the *Review* on behalf of the Council and the African social research community have been invited to submit proposals on the modalities they would employ for the management and production of the publication. The proposals were due on 1st November 2002.

For more information about the project and the selection procedure, contact

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Reference work on history of the Arabic novel wins 2002 Noma Award

The *Arabic Novel: Bibliography and Critical Introduction 1865-1995* (6 vols.) by Hamdi Sakkut has won the 23rd Noma Award for Publishing in Africa. Published by The American University in Cairo Press, this is the first time that a university press has received the award.

The Jury citation reads:

This comprehensive bibliography of the Arabic-language novel is a monumental reference work that fills a gaping hole in the history of Arabic literature. Covering the most mature novels from Africa and across the Arab world, it presents a spectacular amount of bibliographic information, unsurpassed in its scope. The scholarship is both rigorous and daring, opening new research agendas in the field.

Two South African titles received special commendation: *Regions of Floristic Endemism in Southern Africa* by Abraham van Wyk and Gideon Smith (Gauteng, SA: Umdaus Press (Pty) Ltd) and *Rock Paintings of South Africa: Revealing a Legacy* by Stephen Townley Bassett (Claremont: David Philip Publishers).

Three first novels were cited for honourable mention: *Parched Earth* by Elieshi Lema (Dar es Salaam: E&D Ltd), *Slagoffers* by Dine van Zyl (Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers), and *Welcome to our Hillbrow* by Phaswane Mpe (University of Natal Press).

Ninety-four titles were submitted by 56 African publishers, covering 18 countries and six languages. The jury was chaired by Tanzanian publisher Walter Bgoya, and included Luli Callinicos, South African scholar and historian, Dr Ato Quayson, Director of Cambridge University's African Studies Centre, and Mary Jay, Secretary to the Noma Award. The award is sponsored by Kodansha Ltd, Japan.

For further information contact Mary Jay, Secretary to the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa, PO Box 128, Witney, Oxon OX8 5XU, UK. Email: maryljay@aol.com.
www.nomaaward.org



Publishing in hard times: DR Congo 1990–2000

Christophe Cassiau-Haurie

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Translated from the French by Sulaiman Adebowale

The 1990s were a turning point in the history of the relationship between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the West. Following the tragic events of 1990–1991, western countries ceased structural aid co-operation with the then Zaire. The country was deserted rapidly by aid workers who used to occupy all areas of civilian life.¹ An embargo was imposed on Congo until 2000, when aid workers resumed operations in the country. The decade was a period of considerable decline: a second looting in 1993, the overthrow of Mobutu's regime in 1997, a civil war which started in 1997 and continues to divide the country, and the assassination of President Kabila in 2001. The socio-economic consequences of this series of events have been dramatic for the population: increasing poverty, investment freeze, galloping inflation, brain drain; the list is quite long.

It is, however, useful to go beyond this negative report and look into the events of the period, devoid of all forms of external technical assistance, and try to glean something from how Congolese went about their lives amidst the turbulence. In this respect, the book is an interesting aspect to study. Writing, with its label of 'colonial importation', is very susceptible to the vagaries of western aid. If the book in Africa is largely imported, what was written, published and printed in the DRC between 1990 and 2000, when we, the westerners were virtually absent? When people were desperately trying to survive in a very tumultuous period that touched every area of their lives?

The book from Kongo to Congo

The book in Congo predates the colonial era. Portuguese missionaries were using printed books from 1483, at the beginning of the Kingdom of Kongo, the first Christian kingdom in sub-Saharan Africa. The first writings in the Congolese language appeared in 1624,² the first Kikongo-Latin-Spanish dictionary was printed in 1651, following the first grammar book on the Kikongo language, *Structures grammaticales de la langue kikongo*, published in 1650. These books were used in the interactions between the Kingdom of Kongo and Portugal, its protector during this period.

The colonial era clearly intensified book development in the Congo. The first writings from a Congolese author date back to 1887 for religious writings, and 1898 for the first non-confessional/ religious book. Later, Belgian colonialists built libraries, primarily for the European administrators.³ Thus the book had a vibrant tradition dating back long before that of most countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

It is difficult to know how many books are published annually in the DRC. In fact, the only way to study Congolese publishing is to use the list compiled from the legal deposits of the national library, the Bibliothèque Nationale du Congo (BNC). But the BNC does not collect all the works published each year. Inaccessible roads and bad communication linkages between provinces limit the efforts of the BNC to Kinshasa and from time to time to its environs.⁴ For the cities in the east of the country (Goma, Kisangani, Bukavu, Mbandaka), as well as those in the centre (Mbuji-Mai, Kananga), covering 80 per cent of the territory, their published works are ignored by the BNC. Moreover, the charges levied by the BNC (equivalent to 85 euros) dissuade authors and publishers from depositing their works there. As a result, a lot of books are distributed illegally, without the required ISBN number. Lastly, the internal management of the BNC does not ensure that all the books deposited are registered and classified.

Although the entries at the BNC are limited, they constitute the only means at our disposal to analyse publishing output from the DRC. We can deduce several pointers from analysing the holdings of the BNC.

- The number of titles received during this period (1990–2000) is 1492. This is surprising. It puts the DRC among the most productive countries in Francophone Africa in terms of publishing. Studies by *Culture et développement* show that the whole of sub-Saharan Francophone Africa publishes about 300 to 500 books a year.⁵
- The 1974 law regarding legal deposits mandates only first editions; revised editions (rare nonetheless) are not required.
- The rate of published works does not show a significant decline during the 11 years under review. If 1995 constitutes a record year, with 179 titles registered, the 'least productive years' (1992 and 1993) still registered 99 titles each. The tragic events of Congo-Zaire seem to have had few repercussions on publishing in Kinshasa.
- Titles supported by development aid projects are insignificant: the rare publications of *Journal Officiel*, and the title by Isidore N'daywel, *Histoire de la RDC*⁶ constituting the exceptions. All other titles are either published with local resources or co-published.⁷
- The market for these works is mainly the Kinshasa public, coupled with some sales in Matadi and exports to Brazzaville, in Congo-Brazzaville – exports which

are difficult because most of the books have no ISBN number. There are very few bookshops: five in Kinshasa, two in Lubumbashi, one in Matadi. Besides, most of the bookshops make money through stationery, with the exception of Afrique Editions and the bookshop Filles de Saint Paul. Therefore, titles are intended for a limited public, except for scholarly books, which are sold all over the country, including in the rebel-controlled territories.

- The majority of published works in Kinshasa are Francophone. Ninety per cent of the titles deposited and registered are in French. The remaining ten per cent are mostly in Lingala and cover religious books. Indigenous languages rarely touch other areas; for example, published academic books in DRC are all in French.
- It is difficult to know if the figure is an increase on the preceding decades. The BNC in its present form was created in 1989 and archives only a few material from past years. Paul Tete Wersey reveals, however, that 1320 works were published between 1974 and 1984, of which 72 per cent were from Kinshasa. The author also highlights the difficulty in putting the 1974 law on legal deposits into practice in the provincial towns.⁸

Religious knowledge and seasonal publishing

In spite of its apparent productivity, Congolese publishing contains a lot of disparities worth highlighting.

Firstly, in 1990 there were 102 publishing houses in the then Zaire, out of which 83 were located in Kinshasa.⁹ Of these 83 publishers, only 15 were still publishing in 1999 and 2000; all the others had disappeared. Of the 15 'decennial' publishers from Kinshasa, 13 are products of Christian denomination institutions,¹⁰ of which two existed before independence. Although, several publishers were established during this decade, the majority were short lived. Of the nearly 1500 published works, 195 are from publishers with just one title and 351 titles are from publishers with a maximum of five titles in their list, often by the same author. In fact, these 'occasional publishers' publish on behalf of an author, who often writes the preface, publishes, distributes and disseminates the book. Inevitably the result,

Of the nearly 1500 published works, 195 are from publishers with just one title and 351 titles are from publishers with a maximum of five titles in their list, often by the same author.

in spite of their efforts, demonstrates a level of amateurishness.

Furthermore, the abundance of published works disguises a reality where only publishers with solid external assistance can survive and sell. The National Association of Publishers and Distributors of Books (Association Nationale des Editeurs et Diffuseurs du livres - ANEDIL), the main professional body, has only 30 members. This suggests that the volume of work produced does not actually reflect the level of capacity in the publishing sector, and/or the level of commitment to developing the sector. One explanation can be found in the specific context of the DRC, where all public figures with the desire to pursue a political career must have published a work on a 'serious' subject, even if such a book remains unread. Editions Safari, founded by a former Minister of Transport, Henri Mova Sakanyi, exemplifies this phenomenon. This outfit has 21 titles on various subjects from poetry, drama, and economics to international law, all written by Henri Mova Sakanyi, who also sells the books from home and from door to door.

Secondly, sadly, there is no reliable figure on print runs in the DRC. Data provided by Afrique Editions gives an idea:

- The largest print runs are for textbooks. For primary level education, from 10,000 to 6,000 for each educational year. That is, the higher the level, the lower the print run. For secondary level schooling, around 3,000 for each level, except for classic textbooks such as *Grammaire Grevisse*, for example, where the runs are around 20,000 copies. The figures do not take into consideration donor-led projects.
- Other works are printed at around 1,000 copies, except for some successful titles such as *Histoire du Congo* and *Terre de la chanson*, with 7,000 and 4,000 copies respectively. Editions du Centre Etude Pour L'Action Sociale (CEPAS) provides relatively similar figures for their publications, which are exclusively non-textbooks. The print runs of nine titles are between 200 and 2,000 copies for the year 2001, but these runs also include reprints.
- Other unofficial figures from booksellers suggest that books financed by authors rarely go beyond 200 copies.
- We do not have the total sales figures for the entire country. Only Editions CEPAS, one of the oldest publishers, announced that it has distributed around 56,800 copies of books since January 1997.¹¹

Thirdly, the deposits at the national archive, classified according to the decimal classification system, provide a brief overview of subject areas covered by Congolese authors during this decade.

[N]early 44 per cent of the authors (642) are from monasteries or religious institutions, further corroborating the overwhelming dominance of 'religious knowledge' in publishing in Congo.

- The social sciences dominate, with about 35 per cent of titles registered.
- About 33 per cent are on religion and spirituality, further buttressing the importance of Christian bodies and institutions. Nearly a thousand titles are in these subject areas.
- The most analysed concepts are law and legislation (111 titles), politics (100 titles), ecumenism (88) and spirituality (82).
- The remaining eight categories in the classification system cover the remaining 465 titles. Some subjects are not treated, particularly the fine arts: art history, architecture, sculpture, photography and cinema. The fine art category registered only seven titles in eleven years.
- The category of 'writing and literature' is slightly more, with 85 titles registered during the period, although with some noticeable gaps: it does not include any critical essays on literature or literature history, and children's literature accounts for only seven titles.
- 'Biography, geography and history' covers around 80 titles, which may be explained by the fact that they are actually under other categories.
- 'Applied sciences' is relatively important, with 151 titles registered, in particular, agriculture techniques (39 titles), management (22 titles), health information (19 titles).
- Publishing in Congo covers themes relating to the social, political, economic and cultural dynamics of the Congolese society. The considerable religious output is a response to the current religious fervour and proliferation of sects and churches in the country. The output is actually more significant than the figure represented in the category under which it appears. Almost all titles grouped under 'biographies' describe the lives of saints, the beatified, or the religious dignitary. A significant part of the works under the rubric 'sociology and statistics' are around religious themes.¹² The output in politics and law is equally strong, in line with the wave of democratization from 1990 onwards, which heralded a freedom of expression never before witnessed, and the proliferation of human rights NGOs and works and publications in this area.

- The 39 titles on agricultural techniques are explained by the priority given to agriculture by successive regimes. Seventeen of the nineteen titles on health information are due to the work of Bureau d'Etude, de Recherche, et de Promotion de la Santé (BERPS), a Belgian NGO based in the lower Congo basin which has been publishing remarkable titles for the last 25 years.
- Titles from the category 'history and civilization' are more historical propaganda than real academic publications motivated by the worry to oppose the invading Rwandans (since 1998), the desire to describe all the ills of Mobutu's regime (after 1991), or to demonstrate all the benefits of Laurent Desiré Kabila's regime.

Fourthly, the professional background of the 1468 authors, of whom 404 are co-authors, is revealing: nearly 44 per cent of the authors (642) are from monasteries or religious institutions, further corroborating the overwhelming dominance of 'religious knowledge' in publishing in Congo. Monks, both foreign and Congolese, write on all areas of daily life: literature, education, politics, history, ethnology etc. Furthermore, 151 of these authors do not write on religious matters. Moreover, 76 of them have published several titles; for example, Father de Quirini, who writes only legal and judicial works, and is probably the most widely read author in Congo.¹³ The influence of churches goes beyond the religious sphere and highlights a certain intellectual hegemony in the DRC during the 1990s.

Conclusion

For the upholders of French language and culture, this literary explosion seems exciting and places the DRC as the second most published Francophone nation in the world – save for the fact that this study does not look at the content of the works. Nevertheless, courage and determination were needed both to write and be published during this critical period in the Congo. Attendance at school fell drastically, and the level of written and spoken French (the medium of teaching) of young Congolese is without doubt weaker than their elders, educated in the 1960s and 1970s.

Based on the most optimistic estimates, the number of school children is 65 per cent in Kinshasa, but lower than 50 per cent in the interior provinces, and about 20 per cent in the rebel-controlled areas. The number of schools¹⁴ has not increased with the birth rate. The number of pupils in classrooms has exploded and undermined the quality and capacity of underpaid and demoralized teachers, trained from the under-funded Institut Pédagogique National in Kinshasa and Instituts Supérieurs Pédagogique in each province. Lastly, the complete absence in the country of books for children and school libraries ensures that newly

educated pupils return quickly to being illiterate. Coupled with these impediments are the obstacles to distributing reading material widespread throughout Africa: very weak purchasing power, lack of power supply in most of the country, the continuing significance of oral traditions, absence of calm conditions necessary for reading etc. There is a marked distinction between the output of published works and the lack of an active reading public. It is here that we should situate the history of this tragic period, and underline it as one of the main challenges facing the DRC in the future.

Notes

1. For example, 185 French aid workers were present in Zaire in 1989.
2. A book of catechism, *Doutina Christaâ*, translated into Kikongo by Portuguese monks.
3. The first library for Europeans opened in 1895 in Matadi, the first library for the indigenous newly 'évolués' in 1943 in Lusanga.
4. To name three, Matadi (six titles in legal deposits in 2001), Lubumbashi (15 titles), Kikwit (one title in each year under review, as a result of the work of Institut Supérieur Pédagogique, Kikwit).
5. *Culture et développement*, January 2002.
6. The Italian Co-operation for the first and Communauté française de Belgique for the second.
7. CEDI works with CLE (Cameroon), Afrique Edition with De Boeck (Belgium).
8. Wersey, Paul Tete 'Le dépôt légal zaïrois, bilan d'une décennie : 1974-1984' in *Les cahiers du Cresa*, Lubumbashi, I.S.E.S, n°10, 1992
9. Masimango, O. Muhabwa, 'Contribution des éditions du C.E.P.A.S à l'épanouissement de l'élite intellectuelle zaïroise'. 1994. Mém.sc. et téch. Info.: ISTI.: Kinshasa. p.35.
10. For example, Edition Loyola: Compagnie de Jésus; Edition Médiaspaul: Congrégation des missionnaires d'Afrique; Edition CEDI: Eglise protestante du Congo, etc.
11. Figure for 15 titles
12. For example, the position of the Catholic Church on democracy, Third World debts, acts from the different synods of the decade, etc.
13. For example, since 1970, *Les droits des citoyens congolais*, 112,141 copies; *Comment fonctionne la justice?*, 8,5304 copies; *Petit dictionnaire des infractions*, 76,675 copies. All published by CEPAS.
14. Estimated at 3,000 in Kinshasa.

Publishing for secondary education in Ghana: a policy review*

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The main theme of this paper is the new government of Ghana policy aimed at private sector participation in the growth and development of the country, and the recent announcement that the Ministry of Education (MoE) has ceased to publish textbooks, leaving this to the publishing industry. The context of this change and its effect on the local publishing scene are discussed. The paper recommends a holistic approach to the development of the local publishing industry beyond the provision of school textbooks.

Book publishing policy

Pernille Askerud defines a national book policy as 'a coherent set of regulations and development indicators formulated and supported by a national authority to govern the development, printing and dissemination of books and other printed materials with the aim of promoting a culture of reading'.¹ By implication, the highest authority in the country must support the formulation of a book policy in order for the policy to gain national recognition and acceptance. In another sense, a national book policy is a plan or course of action directed at a sound approach towards the development of books and the promotion of a healthy national book industry.

A national book policy therefore helps to define the confines within which book development can take place, and should be able to address such areas as language and educational policies, access to books by all segments of the society, and provide the framework for the creation, production, distribution and promotion of books of all categories. A national book policy aims at removing the constraints which impede the development of endogenous authorship and publishing, especially in national languages; identifying book gaps in the country and stating intentions in this regard; and developing a strong library network.

Publishing in Ghana

State involvement in publishing in Ghana followed the activities of European missionaries and traders and the



colonial government. A key element in the development of publishing in post-independence Ghana includes the Free Textbook Scheme passed by the Government in 1961 which attempted to supply every school pupil with basic textbooks. This policy, however, eroded any book-buying culture that was left with Ghanaians after independence, resulting in the near collapse of bookshops.² The cumulative effect of the 1951 Accelerated Development Plan of Education and the Government Free Textbook Scheme was publishing responsibilities, which could not be carried out by the missionary presses and the Government printer. Hence, in 1965, the Ghana Publishing Corporation (GPC) was established with the objective of publishing educational and scholarly works, while promoting and interpreting Ghanaian culture.

Writing on the GPC, Brown argued that ‘the picture in Ghana before 1965 showed an entire absence of foreign or indigenous publishing houses, and a heavy dependence on the importation of books and educational materials’.³ The GPC is reputed to be one of the largest state publishing enterprises in Africa, comprising publishing, printing and distribution divisions. By 1973 it had published 119 titles out of the 298 manuscripts it had received since 1968. While some commentators saw the establishment of the GPC as stifling the local publishing industry, Cabutey-Adoadji saw it had many great benefits and that ‘it opened up avenues for indigenous publishers through training opportunities and contacts with foreign publishing companies’.⁴ Brown admitted, however, that most agreements with foreign companies were skewed in favour of the latter and that the local press house was always worse off.⁵

Most of the local publishing houses, if not all, evolved around seasoned author-publishers and former personnel of multinational publishing firms. Among them were Anowuo and Moxon, which folded after a brief success. Well-established local firms include Afram, Sedco, Halco’s Educational Press, Adwinsa, and Illen, all of which have been in business for more than 15 years. Both Educational Press and Sedco won the coveted Noma Award for African publishing in 1981 and 1983 respectively.

The Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA), founded in 1976, was strengthened in 1991 with institutional support from CODE (the Canadian Organization for Development through Education). Today it has 56 members. Among its successes are the negotiated waiver of 15 per cent sales tax on imported printing goods, and the participation of its members in a programme for the publication of post-literacy materials in 15 local languages co-ordinated by the Non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education and funded by the World Bank. It has also negotiated the printing of about 40 titles of senior secondary school textbooks, and the purchase of books by

[Q]uestions were raised as to why the government preached privatization and divestiture of its share in parastatals as a whole, but increased its involvement in book publishing. Books must be allowed to compete amongst themselves so that high standards of production and content relevance may be attained.

The Ghana Book Trust (a CODE-funded NGO) from its registered members for distribution to district libraries.

The continued involvement of the Curriculum Research and Development Division of the Ministry of Education in the writing of school textbooks is a bone of contention between the GBPA and the Ministry. The simple reason is that government involvement in book publishing stifles the local publishing industry and reduces its professionalism. The country does not have an official book policy, even though the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) and the GBPA are reviving attempts to establish one.

Hasan reported that, after co-organizing two successful workshops just after its establishment in 1977, the GBDC initiated the process for the establishment of the book industry degree course at the University of Science & Technology, Kumasi.⁶ The course has been running since October 1984.

The context of the new policy

A recent report on the standard of education at basic school level emphasizes the link between publishing and education. Serious concerns have been raised over the written and spoken English of students who leave the junior and senior secondary schools in Ghana. Tracing the cause to primary level, the Ministry of Education decided in 1998 to purchase supplementary readers for all primary schools in the country. Some four million books were bought, including one million local language books. Sixty per cent of these books came from foreign publishers and 40 per cent from local publishers. Although this ratio is a significant improvement on past purchases, it shows that publishing is still dominated by foreign commercial publishers, and there is room for growth in the local industry.

Since textbooks and other instruction materials have direct impact on what is taught in schools and how it is taught, curriculum development and curriculum materials are sensitive matters which are of great political importance.

This is why the book sector in industrialized countries receives both direct and indirect subsidies. There is always a need for a mechanism to review and control the quality of learning materials with regard to relevance, content, educational approach and efficacy, as well as to ensure that the provision of learning materials reflects government policies. Textbooks form the largest single market in any developing country; in Ghana, for instance, they are virtually the only viable part of the publishing industry because this sector is the lucrative one for the publisher and bookseller. The situation is compounded when only the government's textbook is prescribed and all others get only the 'recommended textbook' tag, even though the prescribed textbook may not necessarily be the best.

In the absence of a national book policy, certain developments continue to take place which affect the book industry. Ofei reported that: 'Quite recently the government inaugurated the Educational Reform Committee, which sadly had no representative from the GBPA. The MoE was informed about the omission but when the invitation finally came, the committee had finished its report.'⁷

Free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE), which seeks free and compulsory schooling from basic stage 1 through 9 for all school-age children by 2005, is now a constitutional requirement. It is a publishing-oriented activity, yet policy makers only consult the GBPA for their input when there is a problem. Before the new textbook policy initiative, the MoE was to strengthen its Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) to undertake certain key roles such as curriculum review and development, and the writing of syllabuses, teachers' handbooks and textbooks. The MoE used to assemble teachers to undertake textbook writing and pay them an honorarium. Apart from lacking training and experience in course writing, the authors might have been dissatisfied with not receiving royalties and would not have been likely to give of their best.

At some point, questions were raised as to why the government preached privatization and divestiture of its share in parastatals as a whole, but increased its involvement

in book publishing. Books must be allowed to compete amongst themselves so that high standards of production and content relevance may be attained. The GBPA considers that the CRDD's role should be limited to the writing of syllabuses and to facilitating the involvement of publishers in the writing and production of textbooks and teachers' handbooks. Employees of the CRDD are not publishing professionals, and that is why the GBPA would like to be involved in the decision-making, implementation and review process of the FCUBE programme.

In the mid-1970s, Ghana had one of the best public library networks in Africa but, due to under-funding and neglect, services of this network have deteriorated completely. Ghana's 110 districts do not all have libraries. Recent efforts at revamping the service have been through funding by the Carnegie Year 2000 Public Library Revitalization Programme which covered seven African countries, including Ghana. The case for school libraries is more deplorable. In some countries, eg. Botswana, school library provision is part of the educational policy, and by law must be provided in all schools;⁸ in addition, school library services have been put under the management of the country's public library service. These provisions do not exist in Ghana.

The new policy to privatize educational publishing was announced in December 2001, at the 25th Annual Ghana Book Awards ceremony in Accra organized by GBDC to honour deserving members of the industry for their contributions. It was sponsored by six local publishers: Afram Publications, Buck Press, Compuprint, EPP Books Services, Minerva Books and Stationary Supplies and Unimax Macmillan. With this policy change, the Ministry of Education has ceased to be publisher and distributor of its own textbooks in consonance with the policy of the government to make the private sector the engine of growth of the economy. The policy is expected to be the Ministry's blueprint for streamlining the procurement of textbooks and accompanying guides and manuals for the basic schools, to be implemented in collaboration with publishers as producers of the textbooks, and the Ministry as the purchasers.

Secondary education and book provision

The state education administrative body of today is a large and increasingly decentralized structure. The Ministry of Education is responsible for formulating educational policy, while the Ghana Education Service (GES) is responsible for its implementation at the pre-tertiary level (including secondary schools). The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) implements policies at the tertiary level, and the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) implements non-formal education policy. The GES is

Economic liberalization and decreasing government involvement in book publishing have created opportunities for publishers, especially the local industry in Africa. [In] Ghana, trends in education policies and management in recent years also raise new issues and areas that can be tapped by publishers and book development actors.

represented in all ten regions and in all 110 districts of Ghana. Current priority issues in secondary education are to:

- de-emphasize pure academic courses in the curriculum and to promote the acquisition of vocational and technical skills
- promote the establishment of community secondary schools based in rural communities. The purpose of this is to create a shift from boarding schools to day schools. This will eventually make it unnecessary for people to send their children to boarding schools far away from home
- emphasize the importance of science and technology. The establishment of Science Resource Centres in every district is in fulfilment of this policy. Almost all the districts in the country now have resource centres
- review the curriculum and link it up with courses and subjects in tertiary institutions and other institutions of higher learning.

Conditions under which secondary school education has been organized include the use of textbooks, which in most cases are not available, and libraries that are not well stocked or contain outdated material. Acquisition of books for libraries is erratic, and if the need arises for budget cuts to be made, library funds are the first to go. Unfortunately, the four priorities do not include a review of the textbook situation, which is said to be inadequate, neither is there any mention of school libraries, two of the most important pillars on which all the priorities must be based.

The mechanism for achieving the desired pupil/textbook ratio has been grossly overlooked. This is where the GBPA cries foul when they are left out of the plans of MoE's FCUBE programme. If targets are to be achieved for the secondary school student population of almost 600,000, the MoE will need approximately 1,800,000 volumes for English, mathematics and science. At the rate of 2:1 in the 'other subject' areas, this translates to 1,500,000 volumes, assuming there are five other subjects chosen by each student. These figures are significant for the publishing industry, especially when the requirements for additional reading books and textbooks for primary pupils are added. One only hopes that the US\$70 million textbook project will be used to recapitalize the private sector industry to produce the needed books, rather than import them. The results may not be that fast, but at least the grounds for a strong local industry would have been consolidated.

Conclusion

Economic liberalization and decreasing government involvement in book publishing have created opportunities for publishers, especially the local industry in Africa. As

we have seen in Ghana, trends in education policies and management in recent years also raise new issues and areas that can be tapped by publishers and book development actors. On the one hand, policies emerging from a liberalized set-up have allowed local publishers to participate in, for instance, the World Bank's new policy of competitive bidding in the provision of textbooks in its projects. On the other hand, the continued inability of local publishers to access credit financing, and the high rates of interest on borrowing have combined to frustrate attempts at fully exploiting these opportunities. As Crabbe points out: 'What could catalyze the success of local publishing would be the clear articulation and implementation of national book policies that would address some of these problems?''⁹

One only hopes that the US\$70 million textbook project will be used to recapitalize the private sector industry to produce the needed books, rather than import them. The results may not be that fast, but at least the grounds for a strong local industry would have been consolidated.

Adequate book provision at an affordable and sustainable price will depend on a proper sectorial analysis that will precede project plans. The sectorial analysis should cover textbooks, library books, and supplementary materials at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels including technical and vocational, and adult literacy. Questions such as authorship capacity, publishing, production control and techniques, finance and managerial skills, manufacturing and binding, raw materials, copyright, and trade policy (including protectionism) remain vital for study.

Equally important are government policies that promote the culture of reading for pleasure, and that expand and improve public library networks. For instance, the Ghana Library Board, which is responsible for the provision of public library services, is heavily centralized (in the name of management of resources and staff) in Accra. This calls for some element of decentralization and autonomy in the regions and further in the districts, alongside increased funding to ensure improvement of services. Conventional or traditional public libraries should be supplemented by community information services as proposed by Stilwell: 'services that really change the lives of their users through the provision of survival information such as those related to health, housing, income, legal protection, economic

opportunity, and political rights'.¹⁰ Integrated into library support programmes, the buy-back model of Tanzania would ensure that part of the publisher's print run is bought for libraries, thus guaranteeing partial or even full recovery of the printing costs.¹¹

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In memoriam Chief Victor Nwankwo

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One of Africa's leading publishers, Chief Victor Nwankwo, was brutally murdered on 29 August 2002, outside his home in Enugu, Nigeria, apparently the victim of a political assassination.

Educated at Okrika Grammar School, Government Secondary School in Afikpo, and Yaba College of Technology, Victor Nwankwo graduated as a civil engineer at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in 1971. His time at the University of Nigeria was dramatically interrupted when, in 1967, part of Eastern Nigeria, inhabited chiefly by the Igbo people, was proclaimed the independent state of Biafra, and the ensuing civil war put Nwankwo's academic career on hold. He joined the Biafran army as a script writer for its publication *Biafran*, and also served on the Biafran frontline as a combat officer in the Engineers Squadron attached to 'S' Brigade. The civil war ended in 1970, and Biafra ceased to exist. After initial fears of reprisals and a period in hiding, Nwankwo returned home and, following graduation, rejoined civil life as a design engineer at Ove Arup and Partners from 1971 to 1974. Later he became a design engineer at Brunelli Construction Company, followed by appointments as Assistant Project Manager for the Maiduguri Airport project and head of design at Cubitts Nigeria, and thereafter director of production at Joart United Construction and Engineering Ltd.

In 1977, with his older brother Arthur and younger brother Ejiofor, he set up Fourth Dimension Publishing Company (FDP) in Enugu. Arthur Nwankwo, a prolific writer and commentator on political and social issues, had earlier entered the publishing field through a stake in Nwamife Publishers Ltd., in partnership with Alex Ekwueme, also based in Enugu. Arthur was the driving force in the early years of FDP's development, while Victor continued his work as an engineer, only working for the publishing house on a part-time basis. Fourth Dimension first exhibited at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1980, attracting a considerable amount of international attention at the time. While Arthur remained as (and still is) Chairman of the firm, he and Ejiofor were increasingly involved in the political life of Nigeria, and Victor took over the reins at the publishing house in 1984 as its Managing Director. Meanwhile the business had grown rapidly over a period of just a few years, with a list of almost 700 titles, including

many scholarly works, school textbooks, books in Nigerian languages, fiction and poetry by many prominent Nigerian writers, as well as children's books—including two children's books by the celebrated Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe. By the year 1989 the number of FDP books in print amounted to over a thousand titles, and the firm employed a staff of 88. However that number was about to be sharply reduced, as rapidly deteriorating economic conditions in Nigeria began to bite and demanded adjustments to cope with increasingly difficult trading conditions.

Victor Nwankwo quickly adapted to the book publishing business. As a bookish person and an avid reader, a former editor of his school magazine, and someone who also dabbled in poetry in his youth, books and writing were not new to him; and he did not find it difficult to switch from an engineering environment to the world of books, and the business of publishing. He was also a writer himself, who used to write a daily newspaper column, and was the co-editor, with Chinua Achebe, of a collection of African short stories. He had also published a novel, which had a very unusual publishing history: based on a manuscript written in English, it attracted the attention of a German journalist, was translated into German by Ruth Bowert, and published as *Der Weg nach Udima* by the Afrika-Press-Dienst in Bonn in 1969. The original manuscript was subsequently lost, and it was not until 1985 that the English version appeared, having been translated back from the German into English, and published as *The Road to Udima* by Fourth Dimension. The novel captures the fears and emotions of Biafran society during the civil war, and tackles corruption and other issues not normally mentioned by the Biafran propaganda machine.

In 1989 Fourth Dimension Publishers became a founder member of the Oxford-based African Books Collective (ABC), a major self-help initiative by a group of African publishers to promote their books in Europe, North America and in Commonwealth countries outside Africa, and collectively owned by its founder publishers. Victor Nwankwo has served on the ABC Council of Management

[Victor Nwankwo] wrote eloquently on the many issues and problems confronting the indigenous African book industries continent-wide, and soon became widely respected as one of Africa's foremost publishers and spokesperson for the cause of African autonomous publishing.

since its inception, and also became a member of the editorial advisory board of *The African Book Publishing Record*.

Victor Nwankwo always seemed to be one step ahead of most of his African colleagues when it came to technology; and he and his firm were usually the first to take advantage of the opportunities offered by new technology, and the recent revolutionary changes in printing and book manufacture, which he regarded as a kind of liberation for African publishers.

Victor Nwankwo has written extensively, and passionately, about his country's book needs; he was President of the Nigerian Publishers Association from 1989-1991, and was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Nigerian Book Foundation. He also wrote eloquently on the many issues and problems confronting the indigenous African book industries continent-wide, and soon became widely respected as one of Africa's foremost publishers and spokesperson for the cause of African autonomous publishing. And so it was not surprising that, in 1993, he was elected as the first Chairperson of the African Publishers' Network (APNET), the Harare-based organization committed to strengthening publishing and the book trade throughout the continent.

Perhaps by virtue of the fact that he was an engineer by training, Victor Nwankwo always seemed to be one step ahead of most of his African colleagues when it came to technology; and he and his firm were usually the first to take advantage of the opportunities offered by new technology, and the recent revolutionary changes in printing and book manufacture, which he regarded as a kind of liberation for African publishers. Despite facing huge infrastructural problems, the lack of skilled staff and adequate technical support services, he was the first Nigerian publisher to introduce in-house originated computerized typesetting in the early 1980s, although he always pointed out that while it was important to take advantage of the new technologies it had to go hand in hand with more traditional methods of book production. More recently he became much involved with print-on-demand publishing and digital printing, and, through articles, workshops, and a joint initiative with African Books Collective, was busy trying to convince other African publishers of the very significant benefits print-on-demand technology can bring to the African book industries.

He was also vociferous in calling for more equitable policies in the World Bank's 'International Competitive Bidding' procurement policies for textbook production, which have been the subject of intense criticism by publishers in developing countries, as the policies favoured multinational publishers, rather than the local book industry. (It should be added that there has now been a considerable shift from these policies, and African publishers have welcomed recent changes in World Bank textbook provision policies.) However, while championing the cause of autonomous African publishing, Victor Nwankwo always recognized that books and publishing were international in every respect, and he actively encouraged partnerships with publishers in the West, as well as developing publishing partnerships, and co-publishing ventures, on a South-South basis.

Although Victor Nwankwo came from a family that remains politically very active, he was not a political firebrand, and while he cared deeply about Nigeria he was less actively involved in politics than his two brothers. His commitment involved him in community leadership and support for his home area; amongst his many contributions, he organized and raised the finance for a hospital and school built in his home village. His immediate and extended family were central to his life and brought him much happiness. His life-long commitment to his country and people was recognized when an Igbo chieftaincy title was bestowed upon him, an honour of which he was justly proud.

Victor was a quiet, good-natured, fair-minded, and exceptionally level-headed man, and it is therefore particularly shocking that he should meet such a violent death, and that his life was so abruptly and so cruelly terminated by the bullets of assassins.

Victor Nwankwo was a man of wisdom and vision, who will be sorely missed.

Victor Uzoma Nwankwo, civil engineer and publisher; born Ajalli, Aguata, Anambra State, Nigeria, 12 December 1944; died 29 August 2002; married Theodora Ndigwe 1979; one son, three daughters.



REVIEW

African Publishing Companion: A Resource Guide. Researched and compiled by Hans Zell

ISBN 0-9541029-0-8 xii+246 pp. 297x210mm (A4) wire bound £80.00/\$130.00 combined print and online version (not available separately), 2002. Hans Zell Publishing Consultants, Locharron, Scotland.

www.africanpublishingcompanion.com

February 2002 marked the release of another invaluable reference from Hans Zell Publishing Consultants. Aptly described as a resource guide, this volume is densely packed with comprehensive information on the contemporary African publishing industry. Eighteen distinct chapters cover everything related to the book industry, from directories of writer, publisher, and bookseller associations, to publishing statistics and an annotated literature bibliography. Available in compatible electronic and print versions, this guide provides updated information on a vital sector of development.

The web-based online version demonstrates the extensive capabilities of the internet by facilitating links to relevant sites and allowing access to the full text of many articles and reviews of books listed in the bibliographic guide. The publishers' directory is extensive and the electronic format enhances the potential for communication by listing the email addresses of hundreds of publishers. While the author acknowledges the ephemeral nature of email and website addresses, he also arranges updates of the electronic version, a much more expedient process in the electronic format.

If the online version marks the advantages of contemporary technology, the print format affirms the permanence of the traditional book. The spiral binding enhances its convenient use as a desktop reference. The index, available in print version only, helps identify the search item without requiring correct spelling or terminology. It allows for much less restricted search of the entire volume. Whether one is forced to use the print version because of limited internet access, or only the electronic version is available while the print copy is circulating among other patrons, each format provides vital information and can be used independently.

Increased access to information is frequently cited as one of the ways to enhance the viability of African publishers. This content-rich tool allows users to employ the data to their own advantage. Publishers seeking co-publishing opportunities can easily access potential business

partners in the directory. Also, publishers can identify book promotion schemes with compatible goals and activities by using the annotated listings of existing projects. Students researching a specific topic will appreciate the bibliographic literature guide identifying main issues and topics in contemporary African publishing. By assembling sections on book development councils, donor agencies, booksellers, and book fairs into one volume, this 'publishing companion' fosters the development of the industry.

The introductory chapter and the preliminary information in subsequent chapters clarify the scope and identify the best way to use the guide. They also signpost the limitations. The volume is only available in English and presents a heavy focus on publishing activity in Anglophone Africa, which the author concedes in the introduction. The emphasis on electronic listings excludes publishers without email addresses or a web site. The choice to exclude short articles like those appearing in the African Publishing Review supports the argument to publish online versions of these extremely relevant articles.

In this substantial volume, Hans Zell documents the expanding industry of book publishing on the African continent. Such detailed information presented in an accessible format exemplifies the standard established by the veteran publishing consultant. The duplicate online and print versions facilitate the inevitable transition to increasingly electronic formats. Industry professionals, student researchers, governments, and international organizations can all explore unique applications for this valuable resource.

Review by Dafina Blacksher Diabate

Dafina Blacksher Diabate is at the Africana Studies and Research Center, Cornell University, 310 Triphammer Road, Ithaca, New York 14850, USA. +1 607 272 9249 (tel), email: db227@cornell.edu



NEW PUBLICATIONS

compiled by Sulaiman Adebawale

Readers are welcome to review any of the publications, and are also encouraged to send us reviews of publications covering publishing and book development issues.

The Book Chain in Anglophone Africa: A survey and directory, Roger Stringer (ed) ISBN 1 902928 11 3, xii + 258 pp 2002 INASP, Oxford, £30.00. 27 Park End Street, Oxford, UK. +44 (0) 1865 249909 (tel), +44 (0)1865 251 060 (fax), email: info@inasp.info; www.inasp.info

This book looks at the book chain in English-speaking African countries. Four introductory articles review the overall situation on the continent and 17 studies explore the book chain within each Anglophone country. It also provides a bibliography of the book chain and a directory with a listing of the major players in the book chain in each country within Africa. These include professional associations, publishers, printers, booksellers, libraries, and regional and international bodies supporting book development on the continent.

Contributors include Anne Powell, Diana Rosenberg, Mamadou Aliou Sow, Roger Stringer, and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza.



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These two comics books attempt to make the debates and issues around copyright and trademarks clearer to the general public. Drawing on common examples and everyday situations, the publications simplify the complexities in issues such as the various forms of copyright and trademarks, authorship, employer and employee rights, literary and artistic creativity, piracy, remuneration, fair use, etc. The publications address both the creator and consumer of artistic works.



Textbook and Learning Materials 1990-99: Thematic Studies Series, ED.2001/WS/25, 72 pp 2001. UNESCO, 7, place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France. +33 1 45 68 10 00 (tel), +33 1 45 68 56 29 (fax), email: efa@unesco.org; www.unesco.org

This is the fourteenth study in the Thematic Studies Series. It is a re-issued version of the original study published by UNESCO for the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, as part of the Education for All 2000 Assessment prepared for the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000. The study was co-ordinated by the UK Department for International Development and UNESCO, and led by Ian Montagnes.

Six chapters, 13 tables and a list of bibliography and references look at various aspects of book provision between 1990 and 1999. Issues explored include global trends, regional developments in the South, and Central and Eastern Europe, the experiences gained from previous eras, and a projection on the possibilities for future trends and scenarios.



The African Book Publishing Record vol. XXVII no. 1 2002, ISSN 0306-0322. Annual subscription: £185/\$295 / DM578. K.G. Saur Verlag GmbH, Orlestrasse 8, 81373 Munchen, Germany. +49 89 769020 (tel), + 49 89 76902150 (fax), email: info@saur.de; www.saur.de

The *ABPR* compiles bibliographic listings of book publishers or subsidiary companies in Africa. It covers books, pamphlets, reports and series titles in English, French and some African languages. It serves as a supplement and update of the African Books in Print (fifth edition, London: Bowker-Saur, September 2000).



La Revue des Livres pour Enfants 203, 2002. La Joie par les Livres, ISSN 0398-8384, 184pp, February 2002. 43 euro (Europe), 50 euro (overseas). av. Générale de Gaulle, 92147 Clamart Cedex, France. +33 1 40831462 (tel), +33 1 40940404 (fax), email: interculturel@lajoieparleslivres.com www.lajoieparleslivres.com

Issue no. 203 of the journal covers articles, reviews and analyses on children's literature in the world. In a new design and publication format, *La Revue des Livres Pour Enfants* is now structured around three main areas: critique, dossier, and actualité. This issue contains a focus on children's literature in Italy, the theme country at the Salon du Livre de Paris 2002.

Issue no. 204b includes a report of a study on the usage of the children's section in libraries and multimedia centres, and articles on writers such as Paul Auster (Auggie Wren's Christmas Story) and the recently deceased renowned children's literature writer, Astrid Lindgren.

Issue no. 205 covers an interesting collection of articles on memory and transmission. It deals with mechanisms influencing how individual and personal memories are formed and their implications for collective memory. It looks at the writers and librarians, archivist and other chroniclers of events and history, and the role of children's literature and education in forming perceptions of reality, the present, the past and the future. It also includes a series of homages to the late French publisher Pierre Marchand who died earlier in the year.

Issue no. 206 analyses issues around the new prominence on the construction of a literary culture based on children's literature, by questioning the very concept of the 'literary': its message and subject, and the place and value of children's literature within the wider literature.



African Publishing Review, ISSN 10297618 1998 APNET, Harare. Annual subscription inside Africa \$30/£20 (airmail \$35/£25), outside Africa \$50/£35 (airmail \$60/£40) from APNET, PO Box 3773, Harare, Zimbabwe. +263 4 706196/7 (tel), +263 4 705106 (fax), e-mail: apnet@harare.iafrica.com

Vol. 10 no. 4, 2001. The issue explores copyright piracy in Nigeria, developments in Ethiopian publishing, small language group publishing, and interviews with two renowned writers, Ahmadou Kourouma and Aminata Sow Fall.

Vol. 10 no. 5, 2001 focuses on using print on demand, how to embark on electronic journal publishing, and how to effectively manage pricing in book production. It also contains the APNET training and trade events calendar for 2002 and news on awards for African writing.

Vol. 10 no. 6, 2001 looks at the reading campaign and efforts at promoting children's books in South Africa. An invaluable piece by S. Rhandika Meno looks at taboo and subject matter in children's books and how publishers promote censorship and intolerance by basing their views on what the writer regards as a warped concept of multiculturalism based solely on westernized morality. Other articles cover electronic journals and subscription agents, resources for editors and a report on the book fair in Zambia.

Vol. 11 nos. 1 and 2, 2002 focus on issues around copyright and piracy and the 5th IPA Copyright Conference held in Accra, Ghana, 20-22 February 2002. The conference with the theme, 'encouraging creativity through copyright protection', was organized by the African Publisher Network and the International Publishers Association. These issues also include reports on APNET's training initiatives and participation in book fairs in Cairo, Egypt and New Delhi, India.



NATNET LANKA NEWSLETTER Vol. 5 No. 2 December, 2001 and Vol 6 No 1 ISSN 1391-2658. National Library and Documentation Centre, 14 Independence Avenue, Colombo 7, Sri Lanka. +94 1 685203 (tel), +94 1 685201 (fax), email: nldc@mail.natlib.lk; www.natlib.lk

This is a bi-annual newsletter on library and information networks in Sri Lanka published by the National Library and Documentation Centre. It commenced publishing in 1997. The newsletter covers events and seminars around library and book provision in the region.



Bellagio Network Online

Check out the new web resource for publishing and book development in the south at

www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.org

Key features include:

- Publishing and book development news
- Calendar of book fairs, seminars, workshops and other publishing fora for the south
- Archives of the *Bellagio Publishing Network Newsletter*
 - i) complete full text of articles from Issue 20, 1997 to date
 - ii) PDF versions from Issue 26, 2000 to date
 - iii) tables of contents (TOCs) for Issue 11, 1994 to 19, 1997
 - iv) both subject and author index for Issue 1-30
- Bellagio Studies in Publishing Series
- The Bellagio Publishing Network Discussion Forum (Bellpubnet)...

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<http://www.bellagiopublishingnetwork.org>

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