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The News Journal of the ADEA Working Group on Communication for Education and Development

Theme:

Books and Learning Materials for Education in Africa

Conversation with Commissioner Martial De Paul Ikounga, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology



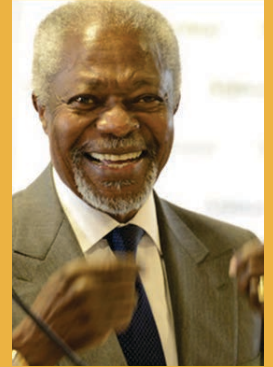
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## Editorial

Books and Learning Materials for Education in Africa



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# Editorial

## Editorial: Books and Learning Materials for Education in Africa

By Lawalley Cole



AFRICA is a continent of vast resources, arable land, minerals, oil, lakes and rivers yet its people and countries are among the poorest in the world. The African Union has developed Agenda 2063 and a 50-year vision for the Africa it wants and re-dedicating it to the pan-African vision of a reintegrated Africa driven by its citizens and representing the dynamic force in the international arena.

Agenda 2063 is rooted in pan-Africanism and African renaissance and provides a robust framework for addressing past injustices and the realization of the 21st Century as the African Century. Agenda 2063 demands that Africa invests in skills, in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics so that the men and women of the continent can drive the continent's development agenda. In this respect, the programme has established milestones for the priority areas that will make this vision a reality. Among these priorities is the need to invest in the peoples of Africa as its most precious resource. African people's resources, according to Agenda 2063, include their health, nutrition, access to shelter, sanitation, and water, as well as expanding quality education and strengthening science, technology, innovation and research.

If implemented correctly on all fronts, Agenda 2063 will represent a paradigm shift for the continent. Once we develop the proposed framework that will harmonize the execution of Agenda 2063 with the global Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030), the implementation of both agendas will be coherent, and will surely make a meaningful impact.

In this eleventh edition of the NewsJournal, we focus on the theme "Books and learning materials for education in African schools". African countries together with their development partners have been investing considerably in education and training since the 1960s when many of

them attained political independence. However, the quality of educational provision remains a problem, partly due to a severe lack of relevant learning materials in many of our schools. Many have contended that Africa is still not on course to achieving universal primary education which was the last Millennium Development Goal 2, despite all the interventions by African governments and their partners. Increases in the initial intake and enrolment rates have been significant and remarkable given

the low national incomes, high population growth rates, and high levels of conflict and illness, on the continent. The impact of these achievements has been reduced by a continuing high rate of pupils dropping out of primary education compounded by a low quality of provision. There are also enormous disparities linked to disability, location, and income. The 2009 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) that focused on the problem of inequality indicated that "too many children are receiving an education of such poor quality that they leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills". This situation persists today.

We note that, to be competitive and have a chance of finding gainful employment at a national, regional or global level, African young people need to acquire knowledge and skills through primary and higher education, inclu-

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ding technical and vocational training. A critical analysis of the current education situation in the region has led stakeholders to believe that there seems to be an overemphasis on enrollment numbers rather than attendance and the relevance of education.

The provision of textbooks in our educational institutions must be a mandatory requirement. In developing countries, with untrained teachers, the book becomes the most important, if not the only vehicle for the curriculum. Without the textbook, skills, concepts and content required by the curriculum cannot be taught. In the absence of any other widely available sources of information, the textbook also becomes the most important and often the only source of content and pedagogic information for the teacher.

Since textbooks and other instructional materials have a direct impact on what learners learn in schools and how they learn, curriculum development and curriculum materials are sensitive matters which are of a considerable political importance. It is for this reason that 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 used in classrooms for relevance, content, educational approach and efficacy, as well as to ensure that the provision of teaching and learning materials reflects the country's policies. The implementation of policies regarding the content and quality of education, equity and the adoption of low-cost strategies for the development and production of instructional materials starts here.

While there is no single way of improving the provision of basic learning materials, there are many possible solutions, according to the different level of development reached. The delivery of basic teaching and learning materials differs from one country to another, and with the use of various approaches. While some countries struggle to establish mechanisms for the production of relevant

curriculum materials, others focus on issues of institutional sustainability and the role of the government. While some development partners recommend the withdrawal of the public sector from the production of basic learning materials, others supply gifts of books or support the establishment or expansion of government presses.

The strategies and policies adopted by a government to meet the demand for textbooks and other instructional materials should be determined by a national policy for the provision of instructional materials for schools as well as non-formal programs. This policy is an integral part of a wider national book policy.

This diversity shows how complex the issue is and indicates the difficulties which face planners of basic education programs. The problems are of two kinds: those which are related to content, presentation, use and provision, and those which are related to the technical and financial aspects of production, distribution and funding.

The strategies and policies adopted by a government to meet the demand for textbooks and other instructional materials should be determined

by a national policy for the provision of instructional materials for schools as well as non-formal programs. This policy is an integral part of a wider national book policy. If we are to address quality in education in the medium and long-term to meet the Agenda 2063 goals, our educational planners must consider the following aspects of book provision separately as well as how they affect each other:

- (a) The goals, both medium- and long-term, for the delivery of learning materials at various levels of education;
- (b) The policy issues: language(s) of instruction, curricula, access, the provision standards at different levels of education, economy and involvement of the private sector;
- (c) The educational issues: curricula and text development (issues of content, relevance, educational approach, media, and presentation), teacher training, needs assessment and integration of examination requirements;
- (d) The planning, management and monitoring of the process: who and how, and modalities and delegation of responsibility;

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(f) Economic sustainability: means of funding and cost recovery, the role of the private sector, affordability and economic viability; industrial/technical issues: development, production, and distribution (sale) of learning materials;

(g) Professional sustainability: research, renewal, information, training and needs assessment;

(h) Skills development: curriculum developers, writers, illustrators, designers, typesetters, printers, teachers, and distributors;

(i) The reading environment: availability of supplement-

tary reading materials in libraries and the market, and the general economy, purchase ability, and affordability;

(j) The legal aspects: copyright and other international instruments, such as the Florence Agreement and its Protocol, as well as local legislation concerning educational publishing.

Lawalley Cole is the Coordinator of the ADEA Working Group on Communication for Education and Development (COMED) and Editor of this News Journal



# The Interview

## The Interview: Conversation with Commissioner Martial De Paul Ikounga, AU Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology



Martial De-Paul Ikounga

The commissioner in charge of human resources, science and technology of the African Union, His Excellency Martial De-Paul Ikounga conversed with the Acting Director of the Division of Communication of the African Union, Mrs. Esther Azaa Tankou about some of his department's achievements as well as some enlightenment on the activities undertaken by the African Union on the continent during his current term of office – 2012 - 2016. Excellency, hello!

*Ester Azaa Tankou*

*Excellency, Good day!*

Martial De Paul Ikounga

My greetings to you!

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Excellency, can you tell us what the missions of the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology are?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

I think that the mission is contained in the very title of our department, that is, Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology. The only thing that must be stressed is that as concerns human resources, this has nothing to do with personnel management. It concerns human development, that is, in simple terms, the entire field of training and education.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*How is your department organized, Excellency?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

Like all the other departments, we of course have a commissioner. There is a director. Here, at headquarters, we have the commissioner, a director and three divisions: the Science and Technology Division, the Education Division and a Youth Division, because we also have youth in our mandate. So we have a division devoted to youth, but to which the question of technical and vocational education

and training is also attached, since it is through this grouping that we consider young people's employment problem. That is why technical and vocational education and training are attached to our Youth Division. Alongside of this, externally, we have two important elements. We have, so to speak, our two grandparents. At the period of the OUA, the Organization of African Unity, we took care of these education problems. There was a Scientific Research Commission, which has remained and that still bears the same name, which is in Abuja, and the IPED, the Institute of Education for Development, which is now our Observatory for Education. In addition, for science, we have the Observatory for Science and Technology, which is in Malabo, and the CIEFFA, the Center for Girls and Women's Education, in Ouagadougou. We are going to have other very important elements in the development group especially attached to the Science and Technology Division. But I of course can't forget to mention the Pan-African University, which also comes under our department.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Commissioner, what was your real role as commissioner in charge of human resources, science and technology and what are your achievements?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

You already know that the Constitutive Act of the African Union states that the Commission is comprised of members who are elected. There are 10 of us, as you know, and we have personnel to support our action that is naturally part of the global policy of the entire Commission. Therefore, the commissioner is the policy person of his depart-

ment; and as is said, a policy person is also a technical person, since when we are elected, when we present ourselves, we do not only do so in terms of a policy person, as a government staff member. Here, the qualifications on the subject that we wish to examine are also considered and I think as for myself, I acted not only as a policy person, but also because I knew the technical files quite well, as my personal itinerary is totally connected to what we had to do. And then you'll see, I also had to strengthen my department, since very early on the director I had left the African Union and we had to call on someone who was a division head, the head of the Science and Technology Division, who became the director of my department, a position that he held at the same time as his role in science and technology. So it was a situation that we were very much affected by, but we were able to remedy it and I think that it is certainly due to my own itinerary.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Excellency, what are the outputs you are proud of since your election to this position?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

You know, we risk making a great deal of time so I will proceed by theme, taking one division at a time. I will then give you the main lines because if we go into too much detail, take much time will be needed to talk about them.

We will begin with science and technology. I think that a very very important element is that we were able to have the continental strategy for science, technology and innovation adopted. When I arrived, people were talking about what was called the consolidated plan for science and technology because the NEPAD's mandate and that of the Commission were different. We had to fuse them and when this was accomplished, we consolidated the mandate of what NEPAD had done in science and technology and what was done here. When I arrived, we considered that a strategy really had to be proposed. In addition, with the position we hold and the number of personnel that we have here, we couldn't directly implement the strategy in the field and this was a problem, what I could call a problem of "birth." We are not a territory as such. We define a policy that the heads of states adopted and then we work with the states, the regions to implement the policy. So we adopted the continental strategy for science and technology to basically show, firstly, what science and technology are used for. We wanted to show that it is an instrument, a tool. What permits others to develop is that they understood that science and technology were important, essential tools. But having the tool is not enough. But you know it quite well, we're talking with you, you exercise a profession. But if I want to become a

butcher or if I take hold of a beautiful knife, that I put down here and if I don't know how to be a butcher, the knife will be of no use. So training is needed. You can have the tool, but you have to have training to know how to use your tool. And when you know how to use it, you have to know how to share it. That is why in the case of science and in this framework, it is a very important tool. If we said, "science and technology is the most efficient tool in the most expert hands," it is to make a connection not only to the research problem but also to that of training. That is why this strategy has been built, is based on what we called pillars. You cannot do research (1) if you don't have the infrastructure; it isn't possible, research isn't done under a baobab; and (2) if you don't have a critical mass. And the critical mass is training and behind it there must be a real political determination because basically – I haven't mentioned it – but we have very very important elements for it. In 1980, in which we called the Lagos strategic action plan, we had already asked the states to devote 1% of their GDP to science and technology. Unfortunately, at this very moment when I am going to leave the African Union, only three African countries have reached this level, we won't hide this fact. Not necessarily in order, these countries are South Africa, Egypt and Kenya. So we built in this way. You mentioned programs and we have them, and to implement them, we've requested the creation of a certain number of entities. I mentioned earlier that there are already entities and one of them is the African Council on Scientific Research and Innovation. It has a congress of men and women scientists to give the floor directly to African scientists, engineers and academicians so that they can participate. We have the Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization (OPAPI). It is not that intellectual property doesn't exist in Africa – there are two entities, one that is based in Cameroon and the other in Zimbabwe – but we created this institution that will be Tunisia-based to cover the entire continent. And the Pan-African University is also an element.

Since we are talking about universities, there is equally research. Next, still in the case of this division, we also have African strategy and policy on space. People really don't understand what space is. When they talk about space, they only think that it's a telephone problem; will satellites be sent up? No! When people talk today about climate change, about the blue economy, territories have to be monitored. We therefore need to develop this science. There are African countries that don't make cars but that however have cars. You can therefore also buy your satellite because you can need one. These are important points. And then there is the implementation of all these elements.

As for education, I'm going to discuss two levels, in order. We also have a strategy. We have changed, and it is the technical and vocation education and training strategy that we equally adopted during my mandate at the June 2014 Malabo Summit. In fact, I simply ended the strategy that existed because it was not necessarily relevant and was not really adapted to needs. Unemployment problems are very frequently raised. This new strategy is based on something simple. First, we made an observation: what is technical and vocational education and training in member countries of the African Union? It is truly considered, as is said, the low man on the totem pole. People think that it is children who have failed in everything who go into technical training. No! We have said that the paradigm must be changed by showing that when you go to school, when you take any type of training whatsoever, it is because you ultimately want to find a profession, a job, at the end of it. And if I take your case, you are a professional. And if I take the case of a lawyer, an engineer or a doctor, they are professionals who had technical training, who had professional training and they didn't have it in primary or secondary school. So it's the same thing. You can't say that technical and professional/vocational training is only good when it is on the higher level. You have to give it value. You can't do exercise your profession without technical and professional/vocational training. When you exercise your profession here, you have cameramen and after, there is a whole scale of professions and trades. So, we have said that the paradigm has to be changed, showing that technical and vocational training were totally important. Another thing also consists in saying that when a child goes to a college, a technical school, he should feel the same pride, because it is a viewpoint of our own culture. You know, training for us concerns a journeyman. You take a child who wants to become a couturier, you take him to a master couturier. If he or she wants to become a hairdresser, you take he to a master hairdresser. But when the child goes to the couturier, in his mind he knows that he isn't going to remain a student, he knows that he has to become a master couturier. So the child who has to go to a technical school has to tell himself: when I leave here, tomorrow, I want to become my own boss. And that is his pride and his motivation. Because when you entered journalism school, you told yourself: "I'm entering journalism school because I'm going to leave her and be a journalist at a given level. The student has to feel his same pride. So it is an extremely important element that we have incorporated in the strategy, we can of course include other things in the implementation of these elements.

I now want to discuss education itself. We have also put together a synthesis in education. We were lucky, because when I arrived, the second Decade of Education had just finished – this was in 2015. And that same year was the end of the MDGs. So we adopted sustainable development objectives. We participated in that and we said that a continental strategy on education had to be built. We also changed the perception of things. In general, when you talk about education, you only see the programs: are the programs good? Are the...? I said yes, we'll look at the programs, but there is also the school environment. I'm going to take the case of girls. One notices that in general in primary school, the number of girls is sometimes even greater than that of boys. The higher they go, the more the number of girls diminishes. I'll take a simple case. When girls start to reach a certain age, not they one in which they become women but the one in which they need to have proper toilets to change themselves. If these toilets don't exist at the school, the girl will stop going. So you clearly see that she drops out of school for reasons that are not academic. We have looked at questions such as school feeding in the continental strategy on education and we just formulated the paradigm by saying "Famished stomach, no ears." You can't ask a child who hasn't eaten to follow the teacher who is speaking in class. No, you absolutely can't! We were lucky because during this year, March 1 was instituted as the African Day of School Feeding, based on local production. It is not only a school problem. It is one that affects the agricultural world and since we are talking about this world, I'd like to turn back to the problem of technical and vocational education and training, because we also said that these are the professions that can produce food.

In our approach, we said: "You take a vegetable that comes from a kitchen garden, it's a small vegetable. But this small vegetable can be found on the table of the president of the republic. You follow the path that it takes. It can go to the market, but to do so, you have refrigerators, you can process it, etc. So there are all these professions that can develop behind it. In our continental strategy for education we have also seen problems like infrastructures. Our dream is that tomorrow, no African child can say to himself that he is going to school and sitting on the ground. I went to a country whose name I won't mention. It was the first time that I saw that. There are countries where people say that there are part-time classes: they go to school in the morning or the afternoon. But in the country, there are three sessions: the children go to school at 5 a.m. or finish at 6 p.m. because time is needed for everyone to change shifts. Three waves and the children sit on the ground. I considered this an absolute shame for

our continent and that is why we talked about infrastructures. So we asked each country to create a law to protect school infrastructures. Because in our countries, on our continent, there are many conflicts and when you look at them, the school always suffers because as soon as there is a conflict, the people flee and take refuge in the schools. They break up the school because they have to live in them and it is not only the buildings that are broken up – all the equipment is demolished. So the school should be protected.

One of the elements of the continental strategy concerns the teachers because this is also an African Union decision. You see, I've spoken to you about infrastructures, programs, but there are no functional schools without teachers. I'm the son of a teacher – my father was one. When I went to school, the ones who were called Monsieur and Madame were the teachers. Monsieur and Madame were titles like "Doctor" for the physician. And today, this has totally disappeared! Once I saw a woman, a mother tell me: "Why don't you hire my child, you can even make him a teacher." I was unhappy to see a mother say: "Put my child in the school because he has to work, even as a teacher," because this would downgrade the position, which is an essential position. You know, you are a lady and one of the primary roles of the mother, of course, after having given birth to a child, is to raise him. When someone says to a child: "You're badly brought up, you don't insult the child, you insult his parents. So we have succeeded in such a way that, and I think that this is a particularly important element, the heads of state and government of the African Union decided to ask the African Union to do a study on training and living and work conditions. In general, only working conditions are looked at, but the teachers' living conditions are very important! And I'm very very happy because – we haven't had to occasion to speak about yet – a part of our programs don't have the funding, but very fortunately we found one of our partners who agreed to finance this study and they in fact only finished it yesterday. Next month we're going to have it [the study???] here [in the African Union???], with the help of UNESCO, because they did a job in this framework to find out about the training conditions of good teachers but those who live well, that is, that we can say: "Yes, the teacher's work feeds the man, the woman who wants to be a teacher." I think that this is an absolutely important point. So that is what I can say about education. Of course, as I already mentioned, we have centers inside that?????. Of course, we have many encouragement elements for teachers and we focused more on the underlying question of teachers' salaries.

We have harmonization problems and I think that the

harmonization of education systems is also a very important point. We are now fighting so that African countries, members of the African Union ratify the Addis Ababa Convention because not a single country has ratified it yet whereas it is the agreement through which diplomas are recognized. You can't talk about mobility if you can't recognize diplomas. And then, when you talk about mobility, the free circulation of people and goods, the first box that you move, the first thing you take with you when you change locations is your brain, your head. You can't move without it! And it is in your brain, your head, that the largest merchandise you have is found! And it's your training and if this isn't recognized in the country to which you go, there's no point in moving. So we are also working on this harmonization question not only for higher education, but also, technical and vocational education and training and other elements.

I rapidly spoke about education. I'm now going to focus on young people, on youth. You know, we have a large-scale project for young people since we have the African Youth Charter, which guides our policy. Here too, we are asking the African countries to ratify it, but it has already gone into effect. We are going to Banjul soon to celebrate the 10th anniversary of this charter. The problem is to raise the awareness of our young people and make them more responsible, have them take part in the decision-making of the city. I could say: prepare them to take up the baton and realize the vision of the African Union because we say when we talk about the Agenda 2063 that perhaps we will no longer be around. So we have to prepare the ones who will carry this baton. We have projects on this. We have a volunteer corps. What is its purpose? In general, people come here to fill positions. We are going to give more value to the volunteer corps and also show that it is an integration tool. You take a young person from East Africa and you send him to West Africa, to other countries. And we are also working on this. I did this without notes, but very quickly here are the salient points, the highlights on which we can of course develop many things.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*To listen to your Excellency, we are very hopeful, but I'm going to return to a question. One of the major initiatives on which your department is working was instituted by the Pan-African University that you talked about earlier. Can you give us a little more information on this flagship project of the African Union?*



M.D-P. Ikounga

Yes. I must admit something: we haven't set up the whole system, but we've made considerable progress. First of all, the Pan-African University is composed of five institutes. One that is based in Algeria in Tlemcen, one in Cameroon, in Yaoundé, one in Ibadan in Nigeria, one in Nairobi in Kenya and one that will be located in South Africa. And this is one of our weak points: we still haven't designated the university that will house this institute. For each of these institutes, we have a thematic partner, but each institute must be connected to 10 centers, so overall, there is a network of 50 or 55 attached universities. Without counting that in the case of Cameroon, two universities are involved. They are the University of Yaoundé and the University of Buéa because they have a language section dedicated to translation, but also other areas. The project aims at forming excellence as these are excellent schools. We have stammered quite a bit, but I think the concept is more credible now. We better understand what it is. We've already had our first graduates, among whom moreover there was one who filed a patent. This was in Kenya. We also obtained from the Commission – let's hope that it will also be adopted by the entire Executive Council, since it is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063 – the Virtual University. We are in the process of working so that the African Virtual University, in this framework, will be directly attached to the Pan-African University and housed in its headquarters during this year so that this will no longer be the rectorate's problem at the start of the academic year. The decision of the university that these headquarters will be in Yaoundé has already been adopted. I don't want to overlook the fact that we had this problem, but we set up the board, therefore the president and vice-president have been elected. Moreover, we modified the bylaws of the Pan-African University so that it does not give the impressions that it is a totally political entity attached to the Commission of the African Union. We modified it through the work carried out by academics so that it is really a university. This is also a very very important element that we were able to achieve and I think that the Pan-African University is on a pedestal and it will be able to go forward without any problem.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Excellency, what are the principal challenges you face concerning the effective implementation of your programs and projects in this area?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

The major challenge is the implementation of these projects in the countries. The decisions made by the African Union Summit are not as binding as laws and they are

not internal laws. It is a little like the Agenda 2063. The countries are asked to align their own plans on the Agenda 2063 for coherence reasons. Our greatest challenge is organizing the relay between the decision made by the heads of state, the regional economic communities and then the countries in which it must be implemented, and for us of course, to have measurement instruments. One of the challenges we unfortunately face, and which we have not totally met, is the problem of statistics. You can't govern if you don't have statistics and the statistics tool, in a general fashion, is faulty in all the systems of African countries. We don't have a tool to order, to say: "Alright, how many children are going to school now. What are the conditions of..." Let's simply mention the problem of school statistics: they are not totally developed. We are also working in this area. We have a center that is associated with Kinshasa, but that still hasn't gathered momentum. In short, the principal challenge is in implementation, in the fact that implementation takes place in the countries. Second, the budgets we have, the budgets of the African Union, don't permit us to say: "Alright, at our level, we're going to choose two or three countries as guinea pigs to do this." We are succeeding, however, in doing this when it concerns programs that are part of the framework of the relationship we have with a few of our partners. That is what we are trying to do now with a government of a European country in order to study how best to handle the question of technical and vocational education and training in our countries to create more jobs.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Can we talk, Excellency, now about the Agenda 2063? One of its flagship projects in the framework of the 10-year action plan to implement the Agenda is the development of skills in Africa. Can you enlighten us on this subject?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

Yes, I can talk to you about it. When you examine the Agenda 2063, I could say that we're talking about the African Union's vision. The important elements are this vision and the joint African position, which is when we went to defend a position at the UN in the framework of adopting the MDGs. The essence of the African Union's vision consists in saying: "We want an Africa that is directed, that is governed by its own sons." And we additionally want Africa to reach a level where it counts on the global chessboard. To do so, we must have an elite and it is the responsibility of my department. You asked me at the beginning of this interview what the mission of our department was, and here is my answer: "to contribute the resources that will enable Africa to realize this vision. The Agenda 2063 is simply the expression, the imple-

mentation of this vision. When you look at the strategies that I talked to you about, whether they are the STISA (Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa – that moreover was the first strategy that we launched in this framework – or the TVET (technical and vocational education and training) strategy, the real goal, as I said, is to build human development and contribute the human resources needed to do so. In the framework of STISA – I would like to go back to this subject – we have priorities. One of them should be called wealth creation. Wealth must be created and it is not limited to natural resources. Moreover, what do natural resources serve, if they are only for the mining industry? Creating wealth is having human resources as well as natural resources, but the former is the most important. So it is a responsibility and that is why we did a breakdown. When you look at the strategies I've talked to you about, when the Agenda 2063 was launched, we first decided to review the first 10 years. That is why the STISA is called STISA 20-24. It is the first decade. We called the Continental Education Strategy for Africa CESA 16-25. We stopped there intentionally, even if for us it is a response to goal 4 of the MDGs that talk about the Agenda 2030 because on a worldwide level, we decided on 15 years. We intentionally stopped at 2025 thinking about the experience we had already had with the MDGs, which had been poorly evaluated. So, we told ourselves that we would stop at 2025, do an evaluation and look at what had to be corrected, in such a way that Africa, when we reach 2030, will have results that are better than those it obtained for the MDGs.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Excellency, in your opinion, what strategy should the African Union adopt to ensure that everything that you've just said becomes a reality?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

The first thing is the states' determination. Nothing can be done without it because the African Union is not like a certain number of other unions. We are not the Union's 55th state. There are 54 member states and we are not the 55th. We don't make decisions that are coercive, so to speak. We re asked and that is why the states' determination is so important. The states must understand that they are the ones that finance the African Union. You know our budget – it isn't a secret – of the programs we have here. You could said that I am going to reveal a secret, but it isn't one. Most of our budget is financed by the partners. So the African countries must work to better take ownership of the African Union and also ensure that everyone reflects on how to apply what is adopted here.

In the work that we've done and that I mentioned, we've contributed a very important element, what we've called the annual continental activity report. We launched it last year. We didn't have a great deal of time, but we worked in such a way that it is being published in 2016. What are we asking? In this document, we give each country a page and we ask it what it has done in the framework of education, science, technology, innovation and youth during a year. It isn't coercive, but we put all the countries' flags and all the elements on it. If tomorrow a country, a head of state comes here, if he looks at the page where his country is supposed to be and it's blank, he'll start to say no to himself. When he returns to his country, he'll ask his minister: "What is going on?" That is the coercive element that we have. So I think that one of the important points is the countries' political determination. Ensuring that we implement in our states the common policy that we decide on.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Excellency, are you optimistic or pessimistic about the evolution of science and technology in Africa in the years to come?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

When you started your question, I was frightened, but I admit that the world is evolution. We are obliged to do whatever we can so that science and technology are developed in our countries, if not, our society will die. You're aware of the divide, people talked before about the digital divide, but in fact, evolution is serious. We have to do it quickly... We can take big steps, giant steps. We don't need to reconstruct history as the others have done. So there's no reason why we can't succeed. I'm talking about political determination. There are a certain number of countries, which I won't mention, not necessarily the largest ones, that show a certain determination, a certain capacity to want to maintain themselves at a certain level. For example, I'm talking about this question, but can you imagine? In 1980, Scotland's Action Plan for the Second Half of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development said that if a country doesn't give a dominant place to science and technology, it can't move forward. President Kwame Nkrumah, that's why moreover I didn't mention this in what we are doing, in his first speech at the founding of the OUA, said that science and technology have the same capacity to transform the Sahara desert into an enormous green field. Do you realize this! Today, 53 years later, we are talking about climate change. This is because it wasn't paid attention to. We look with dread on the drying up of Lake Chad because we didn't give all

the place that was needed to science and technology and certainly to innovation

*E.A. Tankoo*

*So are we going to say that you are optimistic?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

I am totally optimistic because we have to be.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Do you have the satisfaction, Excellency, of work accomplished? What is the impact in the field?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

Oh yes! We have a four-year term of office. What I mentioned to you we did in three quarters of the time, because the first term of office of the African Union's president is four years. I arrived a year later than the others, so what I said was done during a three-year term of office. I'm satisfied with what we've done. I'm satisfied because a growing number of member countries understand the role they must play, what the points on which we worked represent, for example, the importance of education. We could have developed problems of immigration, all these questions, all these children whom we lose through emigration. A good education can solve these problems and I think that we are becoming increasingly aware of this. I think that there is a very very important point that has not been taken up. I would like to respond to this conclusion by saying that I am totally content, because we have set up a group of "hats" that we call the Committee of Ten. This doesn't seem like many, but it is very very important, that is, that 10 heads of state, two per region, are going to comprise this committee that promotes education, science and technology. Each year, they will meet, even outside the summits, to see if the problems of education, science, technology and innovation are really being taken into account in our countries. It's a revolution! And it will be up to them to give an account at the summit. Nothing but that, you see, and I could say on top of all this architecture, this creation, these 10 heads of state, is an incredibly important responsibility. A responsibility for their own country but also for and on behalf of the African continent on questions about education, science, technology and innovation. I think that it is an element that gives us hope.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Let's discuss now, Excellency, the subject of partnerships. The African Union has relations with international organizations and friendly countries. What is the partners' role in helping Africa to achieve its objectives?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

I am obliged to put it as follows: all the partnerships are based on the interests of each party. I already said it at the very beginning, whatever the nature of our partners, and God alone knows that there are already a lot of them, Africa can't rest on the laurels that are called partnerships. Because the partnership can't build, a friend can't build; he is not the one who builds your house. So, no matter who Africa's friends are, she must do the work herself.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Can I ask you Excellency if you have any regrets to express on this level?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

Yes.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*I'm listening.*

M.D-P. Ikounga

I wasn't expecting this question. My greatest regret has nothing to do with me or my department and it is not a question of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It is not having seen the first thing that I requested when I arrived at the African Union accomplished. I believe that the voice of the African Union is not heard in our countries – it isn't audible. I very much liked, moreover, when you gave me a little smile when I evoked this regret. You said: Dear listeners. We might wonder which listeners. My greatest regret is that during this term of office we were not able to ask the African states – and I want you to relay this and herein lies the question – to devote 30 minutes a week, which isn't very much, on their national media to the African Union so that it can transmit your program, in the language of these countries. This half hour can be 10 minutes three times a week with a specific jingle. People will say: "Oh, the African Union really exists." I recently

went to talk to the legislators of the Pan-African Parliament and I observed that even the legislators were not aware of a good part of what we were saying. But if we had radio, if our activities were broadcast three times a week, just for 10 minutes, these people would learn to get to know the African Union and this is certainly my greatest regret. As for the others, as I've said too, it isn't necessarily something that we've had here, it's an internal regret at the Union. We must improve our Union's management, so that the work is better shared, so that competence on questions is real and so that everyone really feels involved. We can't wait a year, two years to see a director appointed. You spoke about the Pan-African University. After three years in office, we haven't succeeded in appointing the university's rector.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*It's very regrettable, Excellency.*

M.D-P. Ikounga

That is why I say it, and it must be said, because it is a regret. And it isn't because competencies are lacking, but because our procedures are much too long and what I am saying here isn't only in my department. I have stayed, I gave you the example of my department, which didn't have a director during my entire term of office. I've remained a commissioner without a director. It's no longer a regret because the term of office is ending, but we can't continue like this. And we have to have efficient personnel, because I don't think that we really have remuneration problems as such, but efficiency problems. Another element of regret perhaps is that I would have really wanted the idea of sanction, that is, that we have the possibility of directly saying goodbye to someone who comes here without doing anything, saying to him: "Well, do whatever you want, but go home!" But here too, this is a point on which we must improve working conditions.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*I'm sure that our audience is listening to us and the member countries are also listening to you, Excellency. As this interview is drawing to an end, do you have any closing thoughts, a message for the listeners who are following us at this moment?*

M.D-P. Ikounga

My only point is to say that there is a certain advantage. When you talk to people who are outside our continent, they say: Africa. They think that Africa is a single country. Sometimes we get angry because we think that this isn't good. But I believe that it is also an advantage. This shows that Africa is one. I've traveled through African countries

and observed that Africa is truly one. It's a tremendous asset that all the African heads of state should better integrate. And when they will have done so, they'll better understand the place that the African Union can occupy. It is an organization, I think, that is unique in its genre in the world, and at this time, we will give a greater place to the African Union and the problem of integration and African unity of the founding fathers, because African unity was their dream and can be realized.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Excellency, thank you for having agreed to do this interview with the Information and Communication Department of the African Union.*

M.D-P. Ikounga

You are one of the most important departments, not only at the African Union but in all our countries. We haven't said it enough, but in the strategies we've formulated, we have always put particular stress on communication. If there is no popularization, what we do has no value. It rests in your house, it sleeps there. When you have a brand that sells well, it is because it advertises. Even good products do advertising and you can't do advertising without communication.

*E.A. Tankoo*

*Thank you very much Excellency. Dear listeners, we have reached the end of this interview with his Excellency Martial De-Paul Ikounga, commissioner for human resources, science and technology at the African Union. We will provide you with more information on the African Union's activities in our next broadcast of Know Your African Union. Thank you.*



## Interview with Kofi Annan at Tana Forum: armed conflict now a smaller risk to most Africans than traffic accidents



Mr Kofi Annan

By

Lee Mwiti du Mail & Guardian

In Harare, Annan's address elicited gasps of disbelief from his aides, deathly silence from the heads of state and applause from African civil society

Former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan was last week in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia for the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa. Mail & Guardian Africa deputy editor Lee Mwiti caught up with him on the sidelines for an interview ranging from Africa's current state to its prospects for the future.

FOR a man universally acknowledged as the consummate diplomat, debonair both in speech and tact, the blunt-talking side of Kofi Annan is rare—and well worth the wait.

Nowhere is it as impassioned as when he is speaking about Africa, a continent that inspires deeply, but also frustrates for the slow pace of delivering on its potential. He leaves no doubt about the causes of this—inadequate leadership - and in keeping with his 'Mr Fixit' image, what the path forward could be.

"We have problems with governance, we have problems with leadership. Leaders often try to hang on for too long; in fact I was the first to go to the African Union and urge them not to accept coup leaders in their midst, and that military leaders should stay in their barracks," he says.

### The 1997 speech

He is referring to his ground-breaking—many would say seminal—June 2, 1997 address to African heads of state attending an Organisation for African Unity (precursor to the African Union) meeting in Zimbabwe, where he caused a huge stir.

"Africa can no longer tolerate, and accept as faits accomplis, coups against elected governments, and the illegal seizure of power by military leaders who sometimes act for sectional interests, sometimes simply their own," he told the audience, which included several leaders who were in office through the use of force.

"Let us dedicate ourselves to a new doctrine for African politics. Where democracy has been usurped, let us do whatever is in our power to restore it to its rightful owners: the people."

It was a speech that set a new tone for both the UN's and the developed world's engagement with Africa with the new UN chief, and the first black African to hold the seat, he was shortly commissioned by the Security Council to develop a blueprint to tackle conflicts in the continent—the result of which was described as "almost un-UN".

But in Harare, the address elicited gasps of disbelief from his aides, deathly silence from the heads of state and applause from representatives of African civil society.

"You are the only one who could have said that and gotten away without being lynched! No other African would

dare, and we wouldn't have taken it from anyone else," Salim A. Salim, the then secretary general of the OAU would tell him.

"Someone had to," Annan replied, in a conversation captured in his book, *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace*. Five years later, the newly-launched AU in its charter for the first time prescribed sanctions for unconstitutional take-overs of power.

## Déjà vu of sorts

Perhaps there is a déjà vu of sorts—at the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, which he was attending for the first time, he was back among Africans; both good friends and targets of criticism—such as Sudan's Omar al-Bashir, about whom he wrote not so flatteringly of his role in the Darfur conflict, for which the Sudanese president has been indicted by the International Criminal Court.

But there was also a key difference: now in its fifth year, the increasingly prestigious invite-only meeting prides and sells itself on blunt and frank talk about the causes of African conflicts, and innovative ways to tackle them.

Burundi's successful pushback at the African Union is for example described by a top leader as showing up the bloc, and making the continent "a laughing stock".

At the Tana Forum, CLOCKWISE: Ethiopia's prime minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Somalia president Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud with economist Eleni Gabre-Madhin, the much-heralded founder of the Ethiopian Commodities Exchange, and former Botswana president Festus Mogae. (Photo/Tana Forum/FB).

Annan puts down the resilience of the threats to regional security to a lack of political leadership, as he has consistently done.

"Leaders who hang on to power indefinitely by gaming elections and suppressing criticism and opposition are sowing the seeds of violence and instability," he said in his speech to the high-profile audience in the north-western Ethiopian city of Bahir Dar.

He expounded on this in the interview. "The tendency may be the only way to get [such leaders] out is through a coup or people taking to the streets. Neither approach can be seen as an alternative to democracy, to elections or to parliamentary rule."

## Kenya post-election violence

He said the zero-sum approach to politics in African countries is a cause of tension and conflict, as the winner takes all the spoils and election losers feel they are out in the cold. He made reference to the fall-out over the Kenya presidential election in 2007, in which he had to step in as a mediator following the country's worst electoral violence on record.

To this he says the agency of the Kenyan people was the game-changer. "If we were able to bring them from the brink, it's because of the attitude of the people and the support we got from them."

The resolution of the Kenya case was widely referred to in conversations at the two-day forum, where it was celebrated as proof that conflicts on the continent can be resolved without resorting to militaries.

The African Union struggled to insert itself into the mediation effort, and it was the overwhelming pressure exerted on the country's leadership by global powers that brought the rival sides to the table—and kept them there.

A large part of this is due a lack of wherewithal by the 54-member bloc, a situation that came in for much criticism including by host Hailemariam Desalegn, the prime minister of Ethiopia, who said the organisation should take a share of the blame.

The AU's budget is largely funded by non-African donors, with African countries meeting about 9% of its needs, according to its own data. This informed the recurrent theme at the Tana forum for the bloc to wean itself off external money—a conversation that has been going on for nearly a decade now.

Annan had his take on this. "As you heard, budgetary issues are extremely importance for the African Union, and when you don't have the resources, you have to be creative in meeting the challenges you meet, and stretching the resources you have.

"Often it means working with others, establishing linkages and partnerships and through that you are sometimes able to expand your capacity without necessarily needing additional dollars.

"I was happy to hear them [African leaders] say, 'we must be prepared to pay for what we want; we must be prepared to put our own money on the table and fund issues that are of great importance to us.'"

## Some tough love

But he again reserves tough love for the AU, which while accepting donor money, is defensive when its benefactors naturally seek to further their interests.

"I think first of all governments must pay their assessment. I mean, if you have a club and you are a proud member and you want it to be effective you start by paying your dues in full and on time."

"Once we commit our own pockets and do it in a consistent and serious manner we can [then] reach out to others for support and that support will be much more forthcoming when they see how serious and committed we are."

"We cannot always pass a hat around and insist we want to be sovereign, we want to be independent. We should lead get others to support us, the solutions to issues have come from here."

He says creativity is needed in developing other sources of funding (a proposal to levy hotel stays and air tickets was railroaded by African finance ministers in 2013, with little other initiatives under consideration).

The forum's theme this year was about helping the continent grow its position in the global security architecture, where it is said to be on the periphery despite most decisions by powerful organs such as the UN Security Council affecting the region.

(Rwanda foreign minister Louise Mushikiwabo described this as "sitting on the edge of the chair when we should be in the middle"—to which convenor Olusegun Obasanjo said the continent must demand, not ask, and create more space for itself.)

Annan in his keynote speech said that there is good news around regional threats. "Africa is actually doing better than many people may realise in terms of the security of the citizenry. Today, and despite a few egregious exceptions, armed conflict is actually a smaller risk to most Africans than traffic accidents."

This, he says, helped set the stage for the rapid economic growth of the last 15 years. "In general, our continent is generally heading in the right direction."

But he had a warning. This is "very cold comfort for those millions of people who are still living every day in the shadow of violent conflict and abject poverty."

The continent's well documented growth has not been inclusive or fair, creating grievances exploited by those who feel left out, from rebel groups and transnational terrorists to millions of young people out of work.

"As I constantly repeat, you cannot have peace and security without inclusive development, the rule of law and the respect for human rights. These are the three pillars of all successful societies."

Towards this, he urged citizens to constantly keep leaders and governments under pressure to deliver on their promises—"put fire under them".

There is a surefire tool. "We have to use our vote responsibly to check leaders who are not doing what we expect of them."

"We as individuals have power but we often don't realise it or use it well; if we do we will get action on the ground."

# QUOTABLE QUOTES ABOUT BOOKS AND READING

Books are the legacies that a great genius leaves to mankind, which are delivered down from generation to generation as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn.

- Addison, Joseph

Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.

- Adler, Mortimer J.

After all manner of professors have done their best for us, the place we are to get

Knowledge is in books. The true university of these days is a collection of books.

- Carlyle, Thomas

The man who is fond of books is usually a man of lofty thought, and of elevated opinions.

- Dawson, Christopher

Books are those faithful mirrors that reflect to our mind the minds of sages and heroes.

- Gibbon, Edward

It is from books that wise people derive consolation in the troubles of life.

- Hugo, Victor

For books are more than books, they are the life, the very heart and core of ages past, the reason why men lived and worked and died, the essence and quintessence of their lives.

- Lowell, Amy

## QUOTABLE QUOTES ABOUT BOOKS AND READING FROM DHLK

A house without books is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is a wrong to his family. Children learn to read by being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge comes with reading and grows upon it. And the love of knowledge, in a young mind, is almost always a warrant against the inferior excitement of passions and vices.

- Mann, Horace



Miss a meal if you have to, but don't miss a book.

- Rohn, Jim

Everything you need for better future and success has already been written. And guess what? All you have to do is go to the library.

- Rohn, Jim

Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body. It is wholesome and bracing for the mind to have its faculties kept on the stretch.

- Steele, Sir Richard

To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise, and one that will task the reader more than any other exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires training such as the athletes underwent the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object.

- Thoreau, Henry David

No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance.

- Townsend, Atwood H.

The man who does not read books has no advantage over the man that cannot read them.

- Twain, Mark



# Ten reasons why children should read

1. Kids who read often and widely get better at it. This is pretty much just common sense. After all, practice makes perfect in almost everything we humans do and reading is no different.

2. Reading exercises our brains. Reading is a much more complex task for the human brain than, say, watching TV is. Reading strengthens brain connections and actually builds new connections.

3. Reading improves concentration. Again, this is a bit of a no-brainer. Children have to sit still and quietly so they can focus on the story when they're reading. If they read regularly as they grow up, they develop the ability to do this for longer and longer periods.

4. Reading teaches children about the world around them. Through reading, they learn about people, places and events outside their own experience. They are exposed to ways of life, ideas and beliefs about the world which may be different from those which surround them. This learning is important for its own sake however it also builds a store of background knowledge which helps younger children learn to read confidently and well.

5. Reading improves a child's vocabulary, leads to more highly-developed language skills and improves the child's ability to write well. This is because children learn new words as they read but also because they unconsciously absorb information as they read about things like how to structure sentences and how to use words and language effectively.

6. Reading develops a child's imagination. This is because when we read our brains translate the descriptions we read of people, places and things into pictures. When we're engaged in a story, we're also imagining how the characters are feeling. We use our own experiences to imagine how we would feel in the same situation.

7. Reading helps kids develop empathy. This is something I've only recently realised but it makes sense. As my fifteen-year-old son said to me when we were discussing it, 'Of course it does because you're identifying with the character in the story so you're feeling what he's feeling.'



8. Because reading does all the things I've mentioned above, children who read do better at school. And they don't just do better at subjects like reading, English and history. They do better at all subjects and they do better all the way through school.

9. Reading is a great form of entertainment! A paperback book doesn't take up much space so you can take it anywhere and you'll never be lonely or bored if you have a book in your bag. You can read while waiting in a queue, while waiting for a friend who's running late or during a flight delay at an airport.

10. Reading relaxes the body and calms the mind. This is an important point because these days we seem to have forgotten how to relax and especially how to be silent.

The constant movement, flashing lights and noise which bombard our senses when we're watching TV, looking at a computer or playing an electronic game are actually quite stressful for our brains. When we read, we read in silence and the black print on a white page is much less stressful for our eyes and brains.

All the more reason you should visit and buy from your favorite bookshop near you.



## THE CHALLENGES OF BOOK DISTRIBUTION IN AFRICA

A PAPER PRESENTED AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCHOLARLY PUBLISHING IN AFRICA: OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPEDIMENTS, ORGANIZED BY THE AFRICA INSTITUTE OF SOUTH AFRICA (AISA) 28TH – 29TH MAY 2009.

by Dr. Henry Chakava

Chairperson, East African Educational Publishers Ltd.  
Kenya.

### INTRODUCTION

In my book, *Publishing in Africa: One Man's Perspective* (1996), I observed that marketing and distribution were the Achilles heel of African publishing. Although there have been many new and exciting developments in the global arena affecting the traditional book chain, some of which have found their way into Africa, my statement of more than ten years ago is still valid.

In the developed world, there are fears that the traditional book chain, as we know it, will disappear. A total paradigm shift in the creation and distribution of knowledge products is in the making. Bookshops may become small book photocopying centres, and libraries bookless spaces dotted with computer screens. What form the nascent African book distribution network will take in future is a matter of speculation.

This paper will tackle the challenges currently facing book distribution in Africa and will discuss the causes and effects of some key issues such as underdevelopment; lack of national, regional and continental book policy development and regulatory frameworks; a weak book development superstructure/infrastructure; and a lack of professionalism. We shall conclude by looking at the new and emerging technologies to

see if Africa can make a technological leap, and take advantage of them to improve access and distribution of knowledge.

### The Challenges of Underdevelopment

Most African countries have an undeveloped book production and distribution chain, and this is due in large part to their underdeveloped and mismanaged national economies. Whether owned by the state, multinational or local private enterprises, their publishing industries have not been able to attract sufficient investment to bring them to the required standards. The quality of their products remains low, and lack of training and equipment pervades the entire chain, from authorship, publishing, printing, book-selling and use. The number of titles published, and the quantities printed do not provide the throughput necessary to create the critical mass needed to achieve economies of scale for the industry.

The reasons for this are simple enough: poverty, massive illiteracy, misguided curricula and wastage in the formal education system, poor and underdeveloped book reading and buying habits, as well as a hostile living environment characterized by crowded housing with no electricity in rural homes. All these challenges mean that the African book industry is a 'minority' activity limited to the production of school instructional materials, and the elite. Relative to people's incomes, the books published are priced

# Analysis

beyond the reach of the majority, and therefore do not find buyers.

The African book industry is caught in a vicious quirk; the entire chain is too financially starved to grow. African governments do not recognize it as a strategic industry necessary to spur other forms of development, and international development agencies such as the World Bank are more interested in book provision than the more sustainable alternative to developing a publishing industry. Let us now see if a legislative framework exists that recognizes, guides, regulates and protects African publishing industries.

## A Policy Vacuum

There is a need for African countries to evolve national, regional, and continental frameworks on book policy development to deal with the myriad problems the industry faces. As pointed out above, many have failed to recognize the strategic nature of this industry. At best, some of the policy statements and decisions made have been to the detriment of local industries, such as creating state publishing monopolies, or issuing directives that reverse the gains made. Because African governments have no policies of their own to guide them in negotiations, donors, and international development partners manipulate them into signing agreements that continue to keep the industry in perpetual confusion. Multinational publishers have abetted this process and taken advantage of the policy vacuum to continue their market domination.

Policies are the key to creating and defining the boundaries of national identity. Who would imagine, for example, that more than 40 years after the independence of African countries, few of them have policies that govern book development? We may note issues revolving around language, culture, publishing, information, libraries, copyright and patents, literacy and reading, taxation, tariffs to govern internal and cross-border trade, customs duties and importation of books – the list is endless! The conclusion is that ineptitude, poor governance, corruption and lack of foresight on the part of African governments are the reason for the continent's publishing woes. The 1st All Africa Conference on Curriculum, Literacy and Book Sector Development, which was recently held

in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, came up with proposals for an African Charter of the Book and a Continental Book Policy. This milestone, though belated, is clearly a move in the right direction.

We need home-made solutions to our publishing problems. If our governments, private sector, and donors were to work in partnership, avoid unnecessary controls and state monopolies, and work towards removing barriers to the intra-African book trade, the African book industries would begin to grow. Laws encouraging partnership with multinational publishers would be necessary to help stem the tide of globalization.

## A Weak Infrastructure/Supers-structure

The African book industry is built on a fragile infrastructure, and supported by a nascent superstructure of young authors and researchers, grossly under-funded publishers, printers, booksellers, and readers. As if this were not enough, communication problems abound at all levels, slowing down an already burdened process.



By infrastructure, we are here thinking of all the ground and air communication networks, such as roads, railways, sea, and air. Also included is housing, rural electrification, schools and other institutions of higher learning, and libraries. Although the African publisher can do nothing about these infrastructural challenges, they constitute the environment in which



he works, and are responsible for some of his distribution headaches. It is easy enough to demonstrate the concomitance that even here in Africa, a country with a developed infrastructure has a more advanced publishing industry.

Communication problems are caused by inefficient postal systems, telephone and fax lines that do not work most of the time, even within the same country, let alone neighbouring countries. Poor communication, slow and expensive, is the reason why cross-border and regional, even continental trade within Africa remains challenging. A parcel posted in West Africa takes a minimum of 2 weeks to reach East Africa, and the rate of pilferage is high. As long as postal rates remain high, with no customs and trade tariffs among countries and regions, and African currencies remain inconvertible, the possibility of intra-African trade in books will remain a pipe dream.

One may ask why it is possible to import books from Europe, America, and Asia with such ease. The potential for increasing book traffic within Africa, as with other commodities, is high if necessary legislation, especially at regional levels is put in place, and priority was given to developing communication links and building the much-needed infrastructure.

## Challenges of Professionalism

In the previous section, we observed that book distribution has recorded some progress over the last ten years or so. However, it must be noted that there is a lack of training and professionalism in the entire distribution process. Most bookshops are poorly stocked, with only a limited range of titles. Displays are chaotic, and it is hard for customers to identify the books they want, as the arrangement of stocks is not in any order, and catalogues and stock lists are not produced. Bookshop attendants are not always helpful due to lack of training for the job they are doing. Lack of training and poverty have combined to reduce the effectiveness of bookshops as meaningful distribution outlets in Africa. Pan-African Booksellers Association (PABA) and national stakeholder associations are aware of these weaknesses, and in spite of training workshops and conferences held here and there, these challenges persist.

The story with libraries is slightly different. Training for librarians is available at polytechnics and universities, locally and overseas. These cadres manage the few libraries that may be there in urban centres, in local towns, communities, and even schools. However, most of these libraries are poorly stocked and have no budgets for regular stock replenishment. Except for those in search of narrow academic pursuits, ordinary citizens in search of functional knowledge hardly patronize these libraries. We have already pointed out that the concept of a library remains alien amongst the majority of Africans who do not yet perceive it as a positive source of life-long information, or education.

It is important to emphasize that publishers' over-reliance on textbook publishing, poor quality products, poor publicity and promotion, the absence of catalogues and bibliographies and other communication bottlenecks referred to earlier, all continue to undermine the effectiveness of these traditional book distribution outlets.

## The State of Book Distribution in Africa Today

As mentioned earlier, there has not been a marked improvement in book distribution in Africa since my essay of 1996. True, the number of titles published per year has increased, and quality issues are constantly being addressed. However, the preponderance of textbooks remains evident, leaving little room for the rather more general publications. Government policy shifts continue to cause alarm and confusion in the industry. In some countries, direct interventions are not uncommon with the state controlling the entire publishing process from authorship to distribution. Africa imports over two-thirds of its book needs across all levels, from nursery rhymes to scholarly publications. The multinational publishing influence has abetted the situation as the imported books referred to above are either directly imported from the metropolis or are published and distributed by their local branches dotted all over the continent.

In spite of the rather gloomy performance, African publishers have improved their profile in this intervening period, even though they are not yet robust



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enough to compete with their multinational counterparts. This has been largely through their advocacy programmes, supported by international development agencies that have enabled them to set up professional trades associations at national, regional and even continental level. National stakeholder associations, national book development councils in some countries, regional consultative bodies such as the East African Book Development Association (EABDA), and Continental organs such as the African Publishers Network (APNET), PABA, the Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), have given a unique voice to African publishing. They have also enabled them to tackle not only their governments, and Regional Economic Communities (REC's), but also international institutions such as the World Bank and UNESCO. However, of late, the influence of these organizations, especially APNET and PABA, seems to be waning as support from donors continues to diminish. The challenge now is how to sustain and grow these institutions that have served the industry so well in the last ten years or so.

The traditional channels of book distribution are still relevant, and their fortunes rise and fall with constantly changing government directives about school textbook procurement methods. It is important to mention here that without the school business, most bookshops in Africa would close, especially those in rural areas. Although trade discounts have risen from around 20% to approximately 40% in the last twenty years, African booksellers continue to complain about poor margins, while publishers have continued to accuse them of not doing enough to promote sales.

The concept of the library as a knowledge distribution centre has been slow to take root in Africa. This is largely due to people's attitude towards the book, still considered a colonial relic forced on them and laced with foreign culture and religion. Suspicion of the book and its contents persists in Africa today, and efforts to integrate it into communities are slow. Hence, the lack of reading habits referred to above. However, many countries do have national library boards at various levels of development, operating at provincial, district and even community level. Kenya,

for example, has grown its library network from 16 centres to 48 in the last ten years, supplemented by a mobile service network. Religious denominations, which introduced reading and writing in the first place, still operate reading rooms for their followers at their various centres in urban and rural areas.

A discussion of book distribution in Africa today cannot end without mention of the African Books Collective (ABC), a company set up by a group of African publishers with the aim of promoting and distributing their books in Europe, North America and in Commonwealth countries outside Africa. The company, which is based in Oxford, U.K., started operations in 1990. Originally donor supported, the company has, over the last year or so, restructured itself as a commercial entity, and is currently employing cutting edge production and distribution technologies to market and distribute books to individual buyers, libraries and academic institutions which, hitherto, had been facing chronic problems in acquiring African publications. Currently, it has more than 1,300 titles digitized and uploaded on the Lightning Source website for retail and wholesale distribution and is growing this list at an average rate of 150 new titles per year. The current model, slightly modified from the original vision of making African published materials available outside the continent, works well with high-priced academic, scholarly and literary works.

## Way Forward

To achieve maturity, the African publisher must move away from over-reliance on textbooks and school markets, diversify his product mix, and combine traditional publishing approach and new technologies to invest in areas of publishing such as tertiary, general and scholarly. He will also need to enter into a partnership with other publishers, at the regional, continental and international level to optimize his costs, extend market reach and gain international recognition.

In Way Forward, we shall point out publishing areas and opportunities that currently exist but are ignored by African publishers. These include licensing and co-publication, publishing in African lan-

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guages, and exploiting the medium of translation. We shall then briefly consider new technologies such as digital publishing, print on demand, e-books and open access platforms, to see if these technologies can be developed side by side with the traditional publishing model. A brief look at old and modern methods of marketing and promotion will enable us to conclude whether, without perfecting the traditional publishing model, the African publisher can make a leap into the 21st century.

## Publishing

The African publisher has been slow in negotiating Licences and Co-publication deals for books that may be needed in his market. It is not necessary to re-invent the wheel by commissioning new books when the content exists elsewhere. Some of the books may be in the public domain, i.e. they do not fall under any copyright restriction. However, some Northern publishers may be reluctant to grant permission in the case of copyrightable material, in which case negotiation skills would be necessary. If negotiations fail, international copyright conventions do provide for compulsory acquisition in exceptional circumstances.

The area of co-publication remains largely unexploited, yet it is a most effective way of sharing costs, technical expertise, and distribution. Because of the many distribution bottlenecks, African publishers need to engage in co-publication amongst themselves at the regional and international level, and with international publishers as well, especially concerning short-run general and scholarly books. The James Currey model, presented in *African Scholarly Publishing: Essays*, edited by Alois Mlambo, shows how co-publication can help increase the output and quality of publications from African university presses.

African Scholarship, which attracted renowned Western scholars in the pre-colonial and colonial days, has not been given prominence in the post-independence era. Research opportunities are rare in African universities and African scholars in Africa do not appear to have an appetite for research beyond

their PhDs. We continue to rely on foreign scholars for references in such subjects as anthropology, sociology, political systems and even linguistics. Admittedly, we have the African Writers Series to thank in creative fiction, while history, oral traditions, and children's books have received some attention.

The issue of African scholarship always calls into question the use of African languages. How 'African' is scholarship carried out in foreign languages? Africa has a rich language resource, and its scholars must research into ways of putting these languages into productive use. There is a lot of traditional knowledge encrypted in these languages. Each contains its complete body of knowledge from astrology to zoology; indeed, African scholarship will only come of age when it has learnt to harness these languages for instruction and research.

Translation is another under-used medium as far as knowledge creation and distribution is concerned. We are told that Africa has more than 1,000 languages. Imagine if books were published in these languages and the knowledge shared out among other African language communities through translation. And imagine if some of these books, whether in original or translated form, were further translated into foreign languages. Africa would, in the process, gain the capacity to translate into its languages foreign published material needed to enrich its scholarship. Until and unless Africa can contribute to world knowledge in this way, what we now call African publishing is but the tip of an iceberg.

One of the new technologies that African publishers have not yet taken full advantage of is Digital Publishing. It is possible, nowadays, through digital publishing, to print books within possibility in quantities as small as 300. This model is particularly suited to scholarly and journal publishing where the catchment market may be small and specialized. If required, large quantities of the title can be printed using traditional printing methods, thus bringing about a convergence of the old and the new.

E-books is another new technology that enables a 'bookless' transfer of knowledge through web-based

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technology. A book may be written, even peer-reviewed and edited to camera-ready copy. However, instead of being sent to a conventional printer, the text is converted into a PDF file and uploaded onto the publisher's website and other wholesale and retail channels such as Amazon or Google books. It can also be distributed in form of CDs or DVDs. Some quarters claim that e-books, also known as virtual books, will replace the traditional book chain of printers, bookshops, and libraries.

Print-On-Demand (P.O.D.) is the latest in a series of printing and publishing innovations benefiting the industry. It has created an electronic book machine (Espresso) that can print one book at a time at more or less the same cost. It is ideal for printing low quantities of 100 copies and below, and once perfected, could become a virtual bookshop. However, it is unlikely that this technology can replace traditional printing where print-runs may run into hundreds of thousands of copies. African scholarly publishers acting individually or as a group would do well to consider investing in a book machine currently priced at less than US\$ 100,000.

There are many Open Access Platforms where knowledge in the public domain can be accessed easier and faster than has ever been possible. Some on-line journals and specialized academic publications are available at a small fee or free of charge on the internet. African users should take advantage of this and access this knowledge through such websites as JSTOR, Wikipedia, Google Books, blogs, etc.

## Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and Promotional activities help to energize the publishing and distribution process. Traditionally they involve the publication and distribution of catalogues and other bibliographic information, personal visits to trade outlets including book fairs, direct mail, book reviews and launches, advertising, and whatever else is needed to stay ahead of the competition.

Northern publishers spend 10-15% of their revenue in marketing and promotion compared to African publishers with an average of 1%, according to

UNESCO statistics. However, we can report that there has been an increase in reviews in journals, newspapers and magazines and these have been more accessible and reader-friendly than previously. The



number of book fairs has grown to include Nairobi, Cape Town, Ghana and Dakar to complement earlier ones in Nigeria and Harare. National book fairs now proliferate the continent and important days such as International Literacy Day, the World Book and Copyright Day, the World Culture Day, etc. are celebrated. Clearly, there has been a rise in the level of awareness amongst the myriad of industry players which, if properly harnessed, can improve book distribution within the continent. But the African publisher need not wait until he has mastered the traditional models of distribution before he can make a leap to the new technologies.

African publishers must take full advantage of recent technological developments in communication within and without Africa to better distribute their products. The computer and fax machine have been around for some time and have played their part although a lack of electricity has somewhat hampered their effectiveness in rural areas.

Mobile telephony whose inception in Africa was slow at first has been much more efficient to the point of superseding the impact that computers have had. Due to its affordability, ease of use and maintenance, it has been able to reach even the remotest areas of Africa to become the standard mode of communi-

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cation.

Email is replacing letters, also referred to as snail mail, to become the norm Internet tool of communication in the corporate world and continues to play its role in facilitating faster, easier and more reliable means of communication. The Internet which has been around since its invention in the early 1960s was earlier restricted to sharing information and research developments in scientific and military fields. The World Wide Web has since become a primary resource for information, communication, knowledge distribution, and even commerce. With sufficient Internet bandwidth, Voice Over Internet Protocol



(VOIP) offers the ability to place calls over the Internet using various providers such as Google Talk, Yahoo Voice Chat, and Skype. VOIP offers more affordable means of international communication, and with Skype services, one can make local or international calls or hold video conferences at no cost within the Skype network, and at affordable rates to other telecommunication networks. The Internet is currently undergoing yet another revolution. Social Networks such as My Space, Facebook, Blogs and most recently, Twitter, are changing how we communicate. Indeed, these new technological developments have opened up new knowledge distribution channels hitherto unavailable to man.

The Google Book Search service is a marketing tool available to all book users on the internet and which makes every word in a book a key word. Using the Google search engine, one can locate a book contain-

ing the phrase for the item one is researching. The book search service enables one to sample a few pages of the book before being linked to a website where one can then purchase the book online. Publishers who sell their books online are given the priority to channel the order to their shopping page. E-books and audiobooks are downloadable versions of books that publishers can sell online, thus opening up alternative sales outlets and avoiding the shipping problems that many African publishers face when servicing orders outside their immediate reach.

Today, one can order a book online from retailers such as Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, or wholesale channels such as Lightning Source, or even an African publisher such as Wits University Press in South Africa, EAEP in Kenya or Kachifo in Nigeria, and the book will be delivered to your doorstep. All these new developments have widened the frontiers of knowledge and commerce. They have created a wide variety and flexible access and opened up untapped markets. In the process, they have raised serious copyright issues that are currently preoccupying the industry. One example is the ongoing copyright infringement case between the American publishing industry and Google Company.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we will now go back to the questions we posed at the beginning of this paper. What is the future of book publishing and distribution as we know it today? Will the book survive? What has become apparent in recent debates is that there should be a distinction between content and the channels of delivery or distribution. For example, when we talk about e-learning, we are not seeking to change content, only the channel of delivery. Africa has a lot of potentials as far as content is concerned. As pointed out above, its traditional knowledge remains untapped. The question is, can Africa make a technological 'leap' by harnessing the new technologies to exploit its knowledge potential?

As far as the issues of traditional channels of distribution vs. the new technologies are concerned, it is our view that these modes of distribution will continue to exist side by side for quite a while in Africa. The new technologies, while flooding the user with unprocessed information, are unlikely to replace the



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book and its traditional channels of distribution. The jury is still out on issues of copyright. While some quarters argue that knowledge and its distribution should be free, there is another lobby which strongly feels that rights holders should be rewarded for their work. What do you say?

The nature and scope of this paper have not allowed us to delve deeply into the particular challenges encountered by African publishers operating in specific categories, as these tend to be different. For example, the challenges faced in publishing and distributing textbooks are different from children's books, or scholarly publications. However, the broad challenges highlighted in the first part of this paper apply to all categories. The dilemma of African scholarship and African languages cannot be wished away. As much as we have not attempted to provide solutions to the issues raised, we have recommended that the African publisher needs to diversify his product base if he has to find his place in this complex and fast-evolving industry. There is a lot that needs to be done.



The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Clearly, political will, a detailed policy framework in all aspects of knowledge development and management, supported by adequate funding and good governance at all levels, would go a long way.





## Bio Data

Name: Henry Chakava  
Title: Chairman of East African Educational Publishers Ltd

Dr. Henry Chakava is one of the most courageous publishers in Africa or anywhere else in the world. He is the Chairman of East African Educational Publishers Ltd in Nairobi, Kenya.

He is also the founding member of the African Books Collective Ltd based in London, UK.

## African languages and publishing books for children

By Mamadou Aliou Sow

□ Publishing books for children in African languages, a prospect being questioned

The situation of African publishing for young people in national languages is both closely tied to the current fate of general publishing and that of national languages. As a reminder, the state of affairs can be summed up in the following salient points: (1) very few publishers publish in African languages; (2) the number of people who know how to read and write in these languages is limited; (3) the availability of books and other reading materials in African languages is low; (4) the works published in these languages, generally of lesser quality, are not taken into account by the traditional distribution and reading networks; (5) there is no real reading culture in these languages.

That said, a few important facts on the strategic level should be recalled: the resolutions of the different international conferences on African languages, the agreements signed by the state on the intangible cultural heritage, the declaration of the African Union on the potential of African linguistic diversity, the international programs for the support of partner languages in Africa (e.g., the OIF/UEMOA project), offer new political and legal bases for the publication of educational and recreational books for children in their mother tongues.

Publishing books for children in national languages is theoretically a major cultural, economic and technical challenge for publishers if we consider, among others, the fact that Africa has the world's youngest population, with over 130 million children under the age of 6 and enormous illiteracy rates.

The problem of economic profitability is of course



mentioned as an obstacle but it must also be observed that several strategies are offered to the publisher to make their productions profitable by creating economies of scale on the major cross-border working languages (Hausa, Kiswahili, Manding, Pular, etc.), but also by doing co-publications and co-distributions in languages with a lower potential. We should also remember the strategy of many small publishers that, despite a hostile political and economic environment, made a commitment to publishing in local languages by reinvesting the products of publishing in French and English.

Even if a feverishness of publishers to get involved in the children's book market in national languages

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persists, we can no longer deny that consciousness-raising and commitment have greatly changed over the last decade in particular. This impetus was motivated by the development of the production of textbooks in these languages (South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Tanzania, Senegal, etc.) as well as the intensification of literacy training programs.

Regional professional organizations like APNET and Afrilivres are increasingly interested in putting publishing in national languages in their institutional lobbying programs and building the capacities of members, a path forward for the future. As notably shown by the organization in Bamako (Mali) from January 20-23, 2016 of the first session of the African Languages Book and Writing Fair (SAELLA) whose resonance with the various actors in the production and distribution chain for books in national languages will have been unequivocal.

□ Reference point: The Regional Conference of Nairobi on the Development of Books in Africa

There was no better opportunity to talk about publishing children's books in national languages than the pan-African conference organized by the Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM) of the ADEA, held on October 3-5, 2011 in Nairobi, Kenya. Organized around the general theme of developing African books, this meeting brought together about 60 French and English-speaking participants representing the various stakeholders in the book sector: writers, publishers, printers, bookstore owners, librarians, ministers of education, regional professional associations, technical and financial partners, etc.

Book production remains weak in Africa and does not meet consumers' needs. Textbooks and other reading materials are rare and not generally affordable by those who need them, when they exist. That is why the conference aimed at finding new ideas to nourish the political dialogue in Africa to attract the attention of decision-makers, actors and development partners on the issues of developing books, a major challenge of quality in education in Africa.

In terms of results, the observation has been made on the persistence of constraints of various types whose effective handling should make it possible to better

mark the path leading to a better performance of the local book industries.

## □ On the question of teaching languages and policies

The introduction of the conference's work by a theme concerning "Reading materials in African languages in the process of acquiring critical lifelong skills" was certainly not fortuitous. This choice shows the importance given to the role of these languages in the continent's sustainable cultural and social development. This is also why the subjects on the place and educational role of these languages, textbooks and other printed educational materials and digital resources were treated throughout the conference's work in a cross-cutting manner.

The majority of African children do not read in their own languages because they are not taught in school. However, we know that a child who reads, writes and learns in his or her mother tongue from the first years of school acquires solid bases for his or her future intellectual and social development. How then can we not question the relationship of political decision-makers to national languages, from the time the countries achieved independence until today, as it has remained both ambiguous and inconsistent, whereas the relationship with European languages has not been put in doubt? The gist of the question is in the fact that no one can doubt that a language develops and only imposes itself if it is currently practiced in the administration and business.

Of course, several countries have introduced national languages as vectors of basic education, under different names: experimental schools, bilingual schools, satellite schools, bilingual pilot schools, etc., but all of this is also to "politically" say that these languages are still not used in the regular school.

□ A few prospects for the short and medium term

## - On the creation level

If initiatives have been noted in Burkina Faso and Niger, for example, to train the authors of textbooks



in national languages to improve their capacity to produce contents as good as those in French in didactic texts and complementary reading, what still remains to be done is to help the authors who try their hand at texts for children in national languages to perfect their art. For this category of writers, whether they are newly literate, textbook authors who are translators or others, it is appropriate to train them in terms of the standards of the languages so that this has affects the quality of the contents of books for children, in addition to the introduction of promising incentive measures, such as literary competitions, the standardization of alphabets and copyright protection in national languages.

The transcription of the rich potential of oral traditions through stories, legends, riddles, epics and historical narratives comprises an immense pool of inspiration for these writers who wish to lead young people to take a greater interest in their culture and acquire and maintain the habit of reading in their languages.

### - On the level of editorial production and distribution

Editorial production is no longer the prerogative of publishers alone in that quality publications are done by literacy NGOs like ARED (Senegal), Tin Tua (Burkina Faso) and ANACLAC (Cameroon), to mention just a few. As for collaborative synergies, proof has already been shown by English language publishers through book sharing practices in cross-border languages between Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Similar possibilities are available to French language publishers in cross-border languages such as Pular, Manding, Hausa, Kiswahili, etc., with a view to a larger market opening.

A major challenge lies in the capacity of publisher to use digital resources, the e-book and others, even

as far as the cell phone whose tremendous development on the continent can serve as a powerful reading tool in national languages, at affordable costs. Promising technologies exist, combining solar energy, the Internet and the cell phone, to reach a broad public, both urban and rural. The existence of adaptations in African languages of supports like Wikipedia and the ease of converting keyboards are equally favorable factors.

### - On the level of reading networks

The family, the school, libraries, literacy training centers and all other community opportunities should be used to institute a literate environment favoring reading and a taste for books.

What can we say as a conclusion, except that all hopes are permitted, even if the considerable efforts of private publishers to support the education-oriented NGOs and linguistic researchers should be strengthened in order to achieve a better mastery of alphabets and writing rules in local languages, paired with the capacity-building of authors, the availability of funding, as well as the need for a favorable political and economic environment based on good national book policies and a solid public/private partnership. With the end result of the creation of a solid literate environment favoring reading and writing for more African children.

Enhancing and dynamizing collective instruments such as GRAPELA (Action Group for the Promotion of Publications in African Languages) is critical in order to mobilize publishers, literacy NGOs, ministers of education and the technical and financial partners for a more coordinated synergetic approach that better meets the needs of professional and the aspirations of the target populations.



## Bio Data

Name: Mamadou Aliou Sow  
Title: Learning materials development specialist

As a teacher by training, Aliou Sow have more than twenty years of experience working in the National Pedagogical Institute (INRAP) in Guinea. In particular, he worked as learning materials development specialist, educational communication specialist and trainer of trainers.

Later on, he started educational publishing by dealing with children books, textbooks and supplementary reading materials, both in French and in Guinean local languages with Éditions Gandal.

Mamadou Aliou Sow served as Chairman of the African Publishers Network (APNET).

He also is a member of the UNESCO textbooks experts committee and a leading member of the ADEA Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM) and member of many other professional organizations through Africa and in the world.

Mamadou Aliou Sow provides technical support to the World Bank and other international Organizations as Consultant in education, especially as textbooks specialist.

## ADEA 2017 Triennale in Morocco

The ADEA Triennale (formerly Biennale) is one of the most important global events on education and training in Africa, not only for the content of the discussions but also for the quality of the analytical work and high level participants invited. It brings together heads of state, a significant number of African government ministers of education and training (and ministers in charge of other sectors like youth, labour and SMEs), representatives of development cooperation agencies supporting education in Africa and practitioners and researchers. Representatives of civil society, youth, private sector and other stakeholders such as diaspora are also invited.

ADEA has organized nine (9) Biennales on different themes since 1991, and held its first Triennale in 2012 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on the theme "Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: How to design and implement an effective response by education and training systems".

Building on previous Biennales and the last Triennale, the 2017 Triennale, to be held in the Kingdom of Morocco in March 2017, incorporates new continental and global education initiatives. Although Africa has made significant progress with regard to Education for All (EFA) and MDGs, many African countries are ranked among those that are far from achieving the global education targets. This is precisely the reason why human capital development remains critical in the pursuit of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the need for a holistic and interactive approach to development.

Africa's Agenda 2063, which is integral to the 2030 SDGs, seeks to meet seven aspirations of African countries. Two of the six pillars in the strategy for achieving the aspirations are: (i) science, technology and innovation; and (ii) human-centred development. Evidently, education is critical to both the 2030 SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063 as an instrument for sustainable development and transformation of the continent.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda prioritises education as a vital tool for enhancing knowledge and skills for employment and entrepreneurship in order to promote sustainable development. In a similar vein, Africa's Agenda 2063 conceives human capital as a key driver in catalysing the continent's development, and calls for sustained investments in higher education, science, technology, research and innovation, and the elimination of gender disparities at all levels of education. Howe-



ver, in its present form, the African education sector cannot effectively play the role set for it by the global and continental development agendas due to a number of challenges. Therefore, it is imperative for the continent to develop a comprehensive long-term Education Framework for Action to realise both the global and continental agendas. This is the main enterprise of the 2017 Triennale.

The theme of the Triennale is: **Revitalizing education towards the 2030 Global Agenda and Africa's Agenda 2063.**

# ADEA Special

Its general objective is to provide the opportunity for the various stakeholders to share experiences and to collectively design strategies, modalities, conditions and factors for the operationalization and implementation of the Education Framework for Action under the global and continental frameworks.



The sub-themes are:

1. Implementing education and lifelong learning for sustainable development;
2. Promoting science, mathematics, and information and communication technology;
3. Implementing education for African cultural renaissance and pan-African ideals; and
4. Building Peace and Global Citizenship through education.

In preparing for the Triennale, ADEA seeks to ensure the ownership of the process by African countries and education stakeholders through active involvement in the diagnosis, design, implementation, evaluation and review phases.

## Past ADEA Biennales & Triennial

Date	Theme	Venue
2012	Promoting critical knowledge, skills and qualifications for sustainable development in Africa: how to design and implement an effective response by education and training systems?	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
2008	Beyond Primary Education: Challenges of and Approaches to Expanding Learning Opportunities in Africa	Maputo, Mozambique
2006	More and Better Education. What Makes Effective Learning in Schools and in Literacy and Early Childhood Development Programs?	Libreville, Gabon
2003	2003 The Quest for Quality: Learning from the African Experience	Grand Baie, Mauritius
2001	Reaching Out, Reaching All-Sustaining Effective Policy and Practice for Education in Africa	Arusha, Tanzania
1999	What works and What is new in Education: Africa Speaks!	Johannesburg, South Africa
1997	Partnerships for Capacity Building and Quality Improvement in Education in Africa	Dakar, Senegal
1995	Formulating Educational Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa	Tours, France
1993	Improving the Implementation of Education Projects in Africa through Ownership	Angers, France



# ADEA Special

Date	Theme	Venue
1991	Textbook provision and library development in Africa	Manchester, United Kingdom

## Partnership

In addition to the traditional partners - development agencies and African Ministries of Education - the private sector, civil society, youth and women's organisations, African Diaspora and Foundations are encouraged to contribute intellectually and financially to the 2017 Triennale.

Milestone preparatory events for the Triennale will include:

- Organising national and regional consultations;
- Conducting analytical studies; and
- Producing synthesis reports.

## Who we are & what we do

Founded in 1988 and based within the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) since 2008, ADEA is recognized today as a major actor in the processes of dialogue for transformative education and training aimed at promoting Africa's sustainable development agenda.

ADEA is therefore all of the following:

- A forum for policy dialogue on education in Africa;
- A network of policy-makers, practitioners and researchers;
- A partnership between ministries of education and development agencies;



- A catalyst for accelerated educational and institutional reform;
- A platform for the promotion of critical knowledge, skills and qualifications.

## Vision

High quality African education and training geared towards the promotion of critical knowledge and skills for accelerated and sustainable development in Africa.

# ADEA Special



- a Task Force on ICT Integration in education and training in Africa.

The working groups are based on key thematic areas of education. ICQNs are led by a Member State; their creation is facilitated by ADEA and is based on common challenges faced by a group of countries.

For more information, please contact the ADEA secretariat: [partners-adeatriennale2017@afdb.org](mailto:partners-adeatriennale2017@afdb.org)

## Mission

To serve as an open and flexible pan-African organization that informs and facilitates the transformation of education and training to drive Africa's accelerated and sustainable development.

A Secretariat coordinates ADEA's work, which is implemented through:

- five Working Groups: Books and Learning Material (WGBLM), Communication for Education and Development (WGCOMED), Education Management and Policy Support (WGEMPS), Higher Education (WGHE), Non Formal Education (WGNFE);
- a graduated group: Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE);
- six Inter-Country Quality Nodes (ICQNs): Education Early Childhood Development (ICQN-ECD) - Mauritius; Literacy and National Languages (ICQN-LNL) - Burkina Faso; Mathematics and Science Education (ICQN-MSE) - Kenya; Peace Education (ICQN-PE) - Kenya; Teaching and Learning (ICQN-TL) - Rwanda; and Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN-TVSD) - Côte d'Ivoire; and

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL IN AFRICA SOUTH OF THE SAHARA: ASPECTS, CHALLENGES, AND PROSPECTS.

In this paper, Lily Nyariki discusses the critical role that Bibliographic control plays and calls for the establishment of a serious effort to ensure the achievement of bibliographic control that would ensure Africa's publishing output on the world map. Lily Nyariki further seeks to bring to the fore the importance of this activity with the hope to sensitize all and sundry on its present state, the challenges it faces and prospects for the future. An attempt is made to argue for the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to salvage bibliographic control to make published information from each country more accessible to users all over the world and thus maximize on business and academic opportunities that abound.

"If one nation or class has the knowledge which enables it to achieve higher productivity why are not the others acquiring that information."

### Introduction

As contained in the various formats Information has not been fully harnessed to make maximum use of it. There is a saying that in the world today that, there is all the information required to solve all man's problems. Sadly, the right information is not always available at the right time to the right user at the right place. The reason for this has been the lack of a systematic and successful method to ensure that all information, all over the world is brought together in some form, for example in a Data Base, where when required, it could be quickly retrieved. To be able to achieve this is a Librarians dream.

World bodies like UNESCO and IFLA have made efforts to ensure that each member country harnesses all



information about the needs of that nation. A program like the Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC) aims at achieving maximum control of materials produced within countries and ultimately universally. Likewise, the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) program complements the latter, and its main aim is to ensure that once the materials are documented, then, the actual copies should be readily available to users wherever they may be. However, even with such noble programs not much has been done actually to ensure that all the information produced globally is available where there is the need.

In some developed countries, there is a measure of success in Bibliographic control as there are viable efforts to ensure that information produced within their borders is immediately documented for easy access, use, and publicity. A country can, therefore, achieve Bibliographic control which in turn will gua-



rantee the availability of information for its developmental programs and general well-being of its citizens. This paper seeks to highlight the current situation on Bibliographic Control in four countries south of the Sahara, against the background of the rest of the world. Points of views, observations, suggestions and recommendations for improvements are given to address future efforts on this critical activity.

### What is Bibliographic Control?

Bibliographic Control is "the mastery over written and published records which are provided by and for bibliography". The term is synonymous with "effective access through bibliographies." According to Ramjaun (2009), a simple definition of Bibliographic Control is "the systematic identification of recorded information and the mechanism for gaining subsequent access to such information" (cited in Synman 2000).

However, according to Bibliographic Standards Working Group of IFLA, this process is more comprehensive. It "requires the development and maintenance of a system. Bibliographic Control entails formats in a country, indeed the world, by recording such details as the author, publisher, place of publication, edition, series note, the number of volumes, parts or supplements, price and ISBN/ISSN; editor, the translator may also be included. These particulars are pertinent for identification of documents and ensures that "nothing that is published can escape being recorded, located and made accessible for users" (Lor 1996).

Bibliographic Control of a subject requires that there should be a whole range of bibliographies consisting of comprehensive, selective, current and retrospective ones. These different bibliographies should complement each other so that they can satisfy various points of view and approaches. The sum of all these bibliographies will help in the compilation of a country's National Bibliography, which is what I will concern myself with in this paper.

### Why Bibliographic control?

The aim of Bibliographic Control is to list all information sources in a systematic manner to enable infor-

mation seekers to become aware of what is available. The *raison d'être* is to ensure a cumulative reservoir of information sources in a country, necessary for knowledge acquisition, teaching, study, learning, research and scholarship, without which there is no meaningful national development through edu-



cation. Mcharazo (2009) says "the success of good scholarship depends so much on the availability of scholarly reading materials and literature and that scholars at all levels require information in all sorts of formats to make their work a success. Also, books and other published materials are produced at an exponentially increasing rate and in different locations and not knowing what has been published deprive scholars of valuable information".

We may agree with the sentiments above and recognize that other than land, water, natural resources and the human resource, information should be regarded as another important "ingredient" in achieving development and must, therefore, be harnessed and made readily available and affordable for all to use.

Bibliographic Control is not an end in itself. Rather, it is a means "to facilitate access to the information contained in them" (Reitz 2004).

Ramjaun (2009) underscores National Bibliographic Control saying, it is a *sine qua non* for achieving Universal Bibliographic Control as advocated by the International Conference on National Bibliographic Services (1998). We can ultimately attain the goal



of the bibliographic community if every country painstakingly collects records and makes them readily available to current and future users, the widest possible range of documents produced within its territory. Universal Bibliographic Control can become a reality if the National Bibliographic Control is active. We will need a systematic and pro-active acquisitions policy comprising, among other things, legal deposit, purchase, donation and exchange of all relevant materials. The compilation of the National Bibliography, which is a listing of all the literary production of the country for a given period, arranged in a useful way (subject, title, author) and various formats, ensures the recording and preservation of the nation's documentary heritage.

### The Significance of Bibliographic control

A good example can be given in the area of business. According to the African Business Guide, Africa's vast potential in the global emerging market can no longer be ignored. With more than 12 percent of the World's population, the 48 nations of Sub-Saharan Africa have a rapidly growing market of over 800 million consumers offering an enormous commercial potential for world business owners. The continent also offers investors significant untapped raw materials and natural resources. According to the Department of Commerce, in 2000, the U.S. exported more to the sub-Saharan African countries than to all the states of the former Soviet Union combined, (Russia included). In 2001 for example, foreign direct investment by the U.S. in Africa more than quadrupled to \$3.8 billion. It is also noteworthy to point out that the sub-Saharan African countries supply 18% of American oil needs.

Also, in May 2000, President Clinton signed the historic African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), an unprecedented trade bill for Africa designed to open the U.S. market to products made in Africa. The bill is the first ever trade and investment legislation on Africa to be considered by members of the U.S. Congress. It introduces a new era of U.S. foreign policy in Africa and establishes a new paradigm shift for the development of closer economic ties and constructive U.S. engagement with the African region. At the same time, African government and private sector leaders, regional organizations, and multilateral development institutions, such as

the African Development Bank Group and the World Bank Group, are establishing policies and multilateral agreements to facilitate sustainable private sector economic growth and development in the African nations.

With these kinds of statistics and prospects, it is imperative that all available information on the African continent be controlled in such a way that all interested users around the world can access vital information to enable them to make critical business decisions. A case can be made in every development sector, such as in Education, Medicine, Law, Agriculture, Economics, History, Geography, Research and Scholarship to name but a few.

### Comparative efforts in Bibliographic Control in selected countries

It has been argued severally by Librarians and Information Workers all over the world, that, information is a crucial ingredient in decision making and general operations of any Government or organization. And this is true. It is also true that to achieve full success in any research project, background information is a must. If one has to travel to a new country, for example, they will be well advised to walk say to a Library, travel agent or a bookshop to look for information about that country. They will be better placed if they got advance information on what to expect. This example is simple and shows the usefulness of information.

If we agree that information is a necessary ingredient for achieving a purpose, then we must see that Bibliographic Control in any given country is of paramount importance. In some developed countries, Bibliographic Control has been carried out with a lot of diligence. The British Library, which regularly produces the British National Bibliography (BNB) and the Library of Congress (LC) – represented by various units, are good examples of successful efforts in Bibliographic Control. These libraries have ensured that they document what they produce internally and to an extent outside of their borders. The information is made available through regular issues of their quarterly and annual accessions lists.

For purposes of this paper, I will briefly discuss the efforts currently going on in Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Mauritius. The choice of these countries

does not in any way reflect success or failure, but purely based on an availability of literature on Bibliographic Control to the author at the time of writing. I expect that the situations in these countries will provide a "feel" of the state of the art on Bibliographic Control in Africa South of the Sahara.

## Kenya

Kenya is fortunate in that efforts were initiated in the early 70s and the establishment of the National Reference and Bibliographic Department (NR & BD) took place in 1980, within the Kenya National Library Service Board. This department by law was given the mandate to function as the National Library. The NR&BD was therefore charged with the responsibility of compiling the Kenya National Bibliography (KNB) among other duties.

A commendable effort was made by the department which started off by identifying all publishers in Kenya. There is a directory of publishers which was compiled in 1980. Between 1983 and 1985, the Department published the first ever editions of the cherished KNB's covering the period 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1983, complete with Author title indexes. In addition, a Periodicals Directory was published in 1984, covering the period 1984/85. The directory had an Author/Title Index. Unfortunately, since then only the 1996 editions came off the press. It is important to note that the time lag of 15 is not acceptable, and the implication is both disappointing and severe.

The NR & BD has had to compete with two other centers which were accorded Legal depository status by the law, namely the University of Nairobi Library and the Kenya National Archives. This situation created a problem in that whereas the NR & BD had the official mandate to compile the KNB, it did not have the full mandate to be the legal depository for those materials which were to make up the comprehensive listing. Co-ordination of materials collections published Countrywide became complicated and, the department has had to fight hard to change the law. Not until September 1987, did the KNLS manage to have the Books and Newspaper Act revised to accord it the Legal Depository Status. Since then a number of publishers have responded positively, but still a number have not done so.

The legal deposit requirement ensures two important

things. First, it guarantees the preservation of Kenya's entire publications output and secondly, it will make the compilation and publication of the KNB whose aim is to publicize Kenya's intellectual output both nationally and internationally much easier and efficient. The Budget for the NR & BD is tied with the rest of the KNLS Board operations. Given the importance of such a department, it warrants a separate budget. The department has suffered the lack of meaningful development due to a constant shortage of finance and staff turnover.

## South Africa

Fourier/Burger (2007, state that in South Africa legal deposit, in some form or another, dates back to 1842. Currently, it is regulated by the Legal Deposit Act, No 54 of 1997. All publishers in the country must deposit copies of each document with the following agencies:

1. National Library of South Africa (NLSA) (Pretoria and Cape Town Campuses)
2. City Library Services, Bloemfontein, (new name: Mangaung Library Services)
3. Library of Parliament in Cape Town (new name: Msunduzi Municipal Library)
4. Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg

It is also required that The National Film, Video and Sound Archives in Pretoria receive certain categories of documents. Unfortunately, in spite of a Legal Deposit Committee and the creation of Official Publications Deposits (OPDs) to ensure availability of government publications, there are concerns that not all South African publications are adequately covered – especially legal publications.

The NLSA's responsibilities include:

1. Receiving legal deposits as stipulated by the Legal Deposit Act (No 54 of 1997) and keeping statistics of the production of published documents.
2. Creating bibliographic records, compiling catalogues, bibliographies, indexes and bibliographic databases.
3. Attempting to build a complete collection of national documents by adding legal deposits to its collection, cataloguing and listing these with refe-

rence to holdings and preserving the documents for current and future use.

4. Allocating International Standard Numbers to publishers in South Africa.
5. Acting as a centre for inter-lending – for Southern African countries.
6. Coordinating the compilation of a national periodical index – an Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP). (Discussed in Section 4.2.4)

According to the author quoted above, a variety of Bibliographic Control tools and supporting services has been developed since South Africa's earliest attempts at national bibliographic control. To date efforts at producing a regular issue of the National Bibliography continues to progress well.

#### Tanzania

According to Mcharazo (2008), Tanzania Library Service Board (TLSB) acts as the national copyright library of Tanzania. It is duty-bound to acquire and store national literary output for future use. The TLSB Act 1975 (United Republic of Tanzania 1975) states:

"It shall be the duty of every person who prints or produces or causes to be printed or produced in Tanganyika any book or other literary work intended for sale or public distribution or exhibition ... to supply the Board, free of charge, not less than two copies of such book or other literary work ..."

The materials deposited as a result of the above law form a basis for compiling the Tanzania National Bibliography (TNB) by the National Bibliographic Agency (NBA). It is estimated that the NBA holds about 28,008 volumes (14,004 titles) of books and other literary materials, and 159,349 volumes (734 titles) of periodicals used by scholars and the general public.

The NBA is a division of TLSB under the Department of Library Services Management. Its primary objective has been and still is the procurement of the national imprint. It lists and describes procured publications and publishes bibliographic records for these publications so that they become known nationally and internationally. The agency is also the

National Centre for International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). It operates under five main sections: Document Procurement, National Standard Serial and Book Numbering, Document Processing and Production of National Bibliography, Dissemination of Information, and Documentation Services. The division offers customer services, which include staff attending to client needs promptly, accurately assessing and meeting their information needs. It also provides bibliographic records of the literature available in the country. These bibliographic records are prepared out of the literature and other reading materials received under the legal deposit law. NBA is a National Legal Depository Library.

#### Mauritius

According to Ramjaun in Mauritius, it was during the British reign in April 1889 that the first draft Ordinance was prepared and submitted to the Governor for approval. It stipulated that three copies must be deposited free of charge with the Colonial Secretary. The first copy went to the British Museum, the second one to the Archives Office while the third one would go to a public library. A penalty not exceeding 50 Rupees (MUR) was also prescribed for non-compliance with this Ordinance. Ever since the enactment of this law, the Archives Department has been closely associated with the legal deposit system due to the non-existence of a National Library.

Section 5 of this legislation, gives a responsibility of the Archives Office to compile and print in the Government Gazette on a quarterly basis. A bibliography or 'Memorandum of Books' were published in Mauritius with complete details. Such features included the title, content, language, author, translator, editor, subject, place of publication, the name of the publisher, and the name of the printer. Other details were the date of issue, pagination, size, edition number of copies of any edition, price, and the name and address of the copyright holder. Nearly 60 years later, the Archives Ordinance No. 71 of 1952 replaced the Books Preservation and Registration Ordinance of 1893.

Henceforth, the printer was bound to deposit with the Chief Archivist four copies of the whole of every

book produced in the colony of Mauritius instead of three. One copy was sent to each of these institutions: the Archives Department, the British Museum, the Library of Congress and the Bibliothèque Nationale of France.

However, it not until 1956 that a significant milestone was achieved when the first ever Bibliography of Mauritius, covering the period 1502–1954 was compiled by a team led by Dr. August Toussaint, Chief Archivist and Harold Adolphe, Assistant Archivist. Foreign collaborators from England, South Africa, France, India, the Netherlands and the United States of America were also involved in this ambitious project. The total number of entries recorded therein amounted to 8,865 (Toussaint and Adolphe 1956). This work was considered a feat. Today, this bibliography remains a valuable tool not only for the historians and history students for whom it was initially intended but also for retrospective searches of all types of individuals. Regrettably, no further volume of this bibliography was published after that. Instead, a supplement to this first edition is regularly published in the successive annual reports of the Archives Department under the title Bibliography of Mauritius.

The National Library Act No. 32 of 1996 was proclaimed in 1999, with the primary objectives spelled out in section 4 (g) of the National Library Act, as-

"To act as the national bibliographic centre and maintain the national bibliography and other bibliographies".

In pursuance of this objective, the National Library started to receive as legal deposit six copies of every print and non-print library material printed and produced in Mauritius. It thus began to assume its legitimate role, previously vested in the Archives Department, by embarking on the challenging task of compiling and publishing a standard national bibliography on a more or less regular basis. There were publications of two retrospective editions covering the period 1996–2000 and 2001–2003 respectively.

#### The role of National Libraries

By definition, a National Library is one that Government funds maintain and serving the nation as a whole. They are usually Copyright Libraries whose prime role is to collect and preserve for posterity the books, periodicals, gray literature, and Newspapers published in a country. Law compels publishers to

deposit copies of all their publications, and others who purchase books and other materials published in other countries which are of relevance to the country. The primary concern of a National Library is Bibliographic Control, and it is therefore expected to perform the following functions:-

- Copyright registration of all forms of information materials issued within the territory served.
- Formation of union catalogs of such materials.
- Provision of catalog entries for these materials.
- Provision of various forms of centralized cataloging
- Creation of union records of foreign materials in the stock of libraries and collections within the territory.
- International exchange and inter-loan of materials and cooperation.
- International coordination of bibliographic work and standardization of documentation.
- Reproduction of information materials as a substitute for the national or international loan.
- Publication of guides to libraries and special collections and their resources within the territory.
- Coordination of bibliographic information and records.
- Provision of access (mainly by copying) to unpublished theses and dissertations.
- Compilation of specialized bibliographies: author, subject and special interest areas.
- Publication of bibliographic reference works, standard catalogs and subject lists
- Identification of published and unpublished materials.
- Studies of the applications of automation to the library and bibliographic work and documentation.
- The location of information materials.
- Compilation of current territorial bibliographies of all or some of the information materials issued within the territory. In some cases the center adds those published in the language of the country, even though issued abroad; and it may also include those



in other languages relating to the territory served.

- Compilation of retrospective national/regional bibliographies.
- Forwarding of requests to the appropriate individual libraries and collections.
- Dissemination of bibliographic information on materials published either in or about the territory.
- Provision of advice, direction, and supervision of local bibliographic activity; its stimulation, coordination, and recording, as well as reporting such activity to international organizations (e.g. UNESCO, International Federation for Documentation, and the business/academic community).
- Compilation of cumulative indexes to the contents of serials.
- In the case of regional centers, supplying national centers with information, catalog entries for local materials, thus ensuring wide publicity and accessibility

However, to the best of my knowledge no one single country has so far managed to perform all of them, all at the same time. We expect that at the least, a comprehensive listing commonly referred to as National Bibliography be made regularly available preferably annually. This bibliography can then be widely circulated and made accessible to all users.

#### Prospects for Future Development

In recognition of the problems facing African countries South of the Sahara, which hamper the progress on Bibliographic Control within their borders, UNESCO supported the creation of a continental body namely African Standing Conference on Bibliographic Control (ASCOBIC). The aims of ASCOBIC are:-

1. To establish and maintain a close relationship among African Librarians.
2. To promote the dissemination of information among African National Bibliographic agencies on the one hand and between African National Bibliographic Agencies and the rest of the world on the other.
3. To encourage and promote in every African country:-

- the establishment of a National Bibliographic Centre
- the enactment of a legal deposit law
- the adoption of International Standards for Bibliographic description in use throughout the world.
- the introduction of new ideas and techniques on bibliographic control and information transfer
- the establishment to each National Bibliographic Agency an ISDS Centre for the registration of serials among others. (7)

The state of Bibliographic Control presented from the four countries above leaves a lot of room for improvement. Africa needs to catch up with the rest of the developed world and harness one of its most critical resources. It is worthy to underscore the fact that National Libraries are not only of interest to Library and Information workers; they should also be of concern to Politicians as a national significance". (9) This premise leads to the accepted view that no country is complete without a National Library. A state may opt to tackle the most pressing concerns such as education, industry, agriculture or even defense while giving lip service to the importance of information in the economy, unfortunately, ignoring information in decision making in these so-called priority areas result in shoddy performance

It is our considered view that our politicians and indeed the governments begin to see the crucial need for harnessing and managing information as one of the vital resources now and in the future. We are saying this because information produced in any country is a mirror to that country. We agree with the argument that current bibliographies reflect the culture, character and present interests of a nation. Not only does it serve as a historical recorder, as is the case with retrospective compilations, but when distributed to other countries it acts as a window to that country. Through the current National Bibliographies, Librarians, bibliographers, scholars and other officials become aware of titles published within or about a country. For Librarians and Bibliographers, in particular, it serves as a reference source, a verification tool or an acquisitions tool for collection development. For scholars, a current bibliography can identify new publications in their subject field; and for Government officials and the general public, it helps to define changes in policies, politics, and

current trends.

If a current National Bibliography is to convey effectively a nation's publications it is important to communicate information in a clear and timely fashion, a lag in a publication or distribution to other countries or users within its borders means that it cannot serve as an active acquisitions tool. The time delay may mean that many titles listed in the bibliography are no longer available for purchase. Within the country, when not released in real time, it will not serve the crucial purpose as an authority tool for catalogs in other nations.

### Challenges of Bibliographic Control

During the 1986 African Standing Conference on Bibliographic Control (ASCOBIC), held in Nairobi, the participating countries raised the following as the major drawbacks to the progress of the timely production of their National Bibliographies.

- (a) Lack of legal deposit privileges in some countries
- (b) Failure to gain access to the materials filed with the concerned government ministries in countries where such law exists.
- (c) Inadequate manpower resources in Libraries to cope with such added responsibilities
- (d) Paucity of published materials

However, these arguments were counteracted in a statement by the editor of *Afrbiblios*, who stated that all the above excuses can be dealt with if only those concerned understood the significance of having an up to date and a regularly produced National Bibliography. The view that has been presented by ASCOBIC is that each member country should provide their bibliographies on a quarterly basis, that failing, at least on an annual basis. The editor further states that "members of ASCOBIC owe an obligation to "Mother Africa" to produce Africa's current National Bibliographies, anything less than the attainment of this objective will not be acceptable.

Looking back to the earlier argument regarding opportunities from the global business community, and who may be considering trade and investment in the sub-Saharan African countries, their primary concern is access to credible and timely analytical information to make knowledgeable, definitive business decisions. The growing demand for current

macro- and microeconomic information on industry trends, business opportunities, and private sector economies in the African countries is increasing at a prolific rate. Apparently, data and information on trade and investment opportunities, planned privatization initiatives, tax and investment incentives, and economic development policy issues in the African economies is scattered in multiple data sources, and often inaccessible. Reliable bibliographic and indexing tools which provide access to information on the African business and financial sectors are far from complete. Now this is alarming and a cause for immediate action by all concerned.

Moreover, a great variety of "non-conventional" literature typically of a short-term, such as unpublished technical reports, working papers, feasibility studies, and discussion papers, seldom come under Bibliographic Control. Therefore, their acquisition and identification remain problematic. Besides, official publications about the African private sector and business and industry trends issued by African governmental bodies and corporate-based research centers, regional organizations, and international institutions such as the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Africa Development Bank (ADB) can be very difficult to obtain.

According to the Africa Business Guide quoted above, the growing body of African business information resources remains scattered and mostly invisible, and researchers may spend countless frustrating and often unproductive hours. For instance, finding out what exists and then trying to retrieve it typically requires not only a series of research avenues but a substantial investment of time.

To fill the void that exists where African business and economic information and analytical data is concerned, and to provide more substantial services to researchers, there is a need to improve Bibliographic Control and access to existing African business-related information resources available in electronic formats. For purposes of this paper, electronic information sources include Internet sites, World Wide Web products, and other sources of information that users may directly access in an electronic format.

The prospect for the future of National Bibliographies in Africa is, therefore, dependent on the efforts to at least ensure that production is comprehensively and carefully documented, with speed and efficiency.

It is worth noting here that before one can accomplish this, it will be difficult for many other services to be rendered by a National Library.

#### ICT and Bibliographic Control

The advent and rapid developments in ICT especially the world wide web (WWW) provide an opportunity for exposure to a wealth of information available across Africa, and especially in the exploration of gray literature which is a major publication output of Sub-Saharan Africa.

National Bibliographic Control is a means of contributing to communications which are unique and have the potential not only to enrich local communities, but also to add unique African content to the global information base via the Internet, and thus encourage global sharing of information experiences and resources which address common problems. We can do this through the organization and development of comprehensive databases on local materials complete with author/title indexes, subject/special bibliographies, subject headings and keyword listings to make them more accessible through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Apart from indexing, abstracting and digitization of content, there are other viable options for broad accessibility. African countries should consider the use of CD-ROM versions of the National Bibliographies and online editions with a direct link to the National Library's website and indexed by major search engines such as Google and Yahoo for better promotion and marketing. Such options applied in places like Canada, France, and Sweden. With this, the time span can reduce thus ensuring quicker and more efficient distribution as recommended by the IFLA Working Group on Guidelines for National Bibliographies (Zumer 2008).

A call is being made here to African governments to fund ICT acquisitions by National Libraries for purposes of Bibliographic Control and hopefully "leap frog" the whole process. The accelerated adoption and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have resulted in the globalization of information and knowledge resources. Bibliographic databases, full-text documents, and digital library collections are always available to users through the WWW.

#### General observations

In the case of South Africa, the greatest concern is the dearth of "expertise in Bibliographic Control and concerns about the dwindling of South African expertise on Bibliographic Control, evidenced in an aging staff corps, inadequate undergraduate training, decreased "visibility" of academics in the field." In the case of Kenya, lack of expertise aside, the ambiguity of the status of the NR&BD and the time lag in producing the National Bibliography is of greatest concern. Presently, it has not been possible for this author to get any information regarding the most recent edition. Mauritius offers the best hope as at least the 2008 edition is already off the press. Tanzania's story is quite similar to that of Kenya and issues of standards, accessibility, and inadequate resources to fully discharge the duties of Bibliographic Control are a major drawback common to both countries.

We are sure these observations are typical of all Africa countries albeit, in varying degrees. The common thread, however, is that not much has been achieved in Bibliographic Control. Africa has to wake up and begin to determine the priority actions in pursuit of its socio-economic and cultural development endeavors. May we add here that without relevant information for decision making, African governments will not achieve much? We are afraid; it will be an ever ending cycle of half successes at all our policies because as it is, most African countries do not even have National Information and Communication Systems, whose sole purpose is to feed into all the other plans with relevant information for competent decision making.

#### Specific Observations

As indicated above UNESCO gave rise to the Africa Standing Conference on Bibliographic Control (ASCOBIC) in the early 1980's. From available sources, this conference last took place in 1988. The reasons for supporting this initiative were clearly stipulated and so it is disheartening to note that even on the Internet there is no mention whatsoever of ASCOBIC nor any activities sponsored by UNESCO regarding this important event. Whatever the reasons, we wish to call for the reactivation of this initial interest by the UN body albeit to provide a forum for African information workers to meet and discuss matters of mutual interest. We are appealing to African member countries of UNESCO to initiate support to have this noble undertaking gain support once more. Our considered view is that UNESCO ought to collaborate

with the Africa Union (AU) and other relevant regional organizations to salvage Bibliographic Control in Africa. Ideally, there ought to be established a Book Promotion Centre for Africa that specifically deals with book development issues under a Culture and Education section of the AU. This center can look after all interests of those in the book world as well as those in the Library and Information fields.

### Recommendations

Bibliographic control has many demands and concerns which will ensure its success. We make the following recommendations:-

1. Every country in Africa South of the Sahara must set up a National Library/Agency that will professionally manage bibliographic control.
2. International Standards as provided by IFLA ought to be fully utilized to enable networking and sharing of resources.
3. Full advantage of ICT's must allow the publicizing of Africa's intellectual property to the world and thus enhance wealth creation for the authors.
4. UNESCO should consider supporting the establishment of a Book promotion center for African member countries in collaboration with the AU; along the same lines that it supports a similar initiative for the Asian and Pacific countries.
5. Training of staff must be prioritized to enable professional work and efficiency
6. The issuing of ISBN's and ISSN's must be seen as a priority activity to allow for easy identification of all published works.
7. A regular forum must be established to enable sharing of experiences among African countries.
8. A study should be conducted to determine the state of the art to enable all the above recommendations, and thus, give a way forward for this important function.

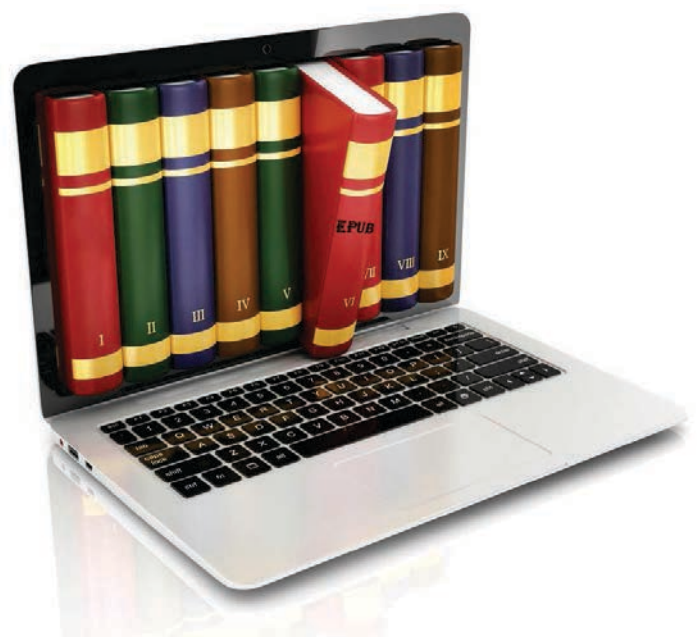
### Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to state that information is a universal commodity and that information regardless of its origin is crucial for achieving certain results. Hence the preamble above "if one nation or class has the knowledge which enables it to achieve higher productivity why are not the other acquiring

that information"? I quite agree with the following sentiment that "only when there is effective National Bibliographic Control of which current National bibliographies are a key element, are there enough links to establish an effective UBC network".

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## Edited THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS IN THE PROMOTION OF READING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

By Gertrude Kayaga Mulindwa

### Introduction

Reading is what occurs between two parties through words or written symbols. One party communicates ideas, and the other is the recipient of that communication. Unlike other forms of communication, reading takes information from what is written down. It is not the reception of a brief conversation or a sweet tune to be quickly forgotten once heard, but rather of something that you can refer to again and again because it is written down. There is a saying attributed to the Chinese that goes;

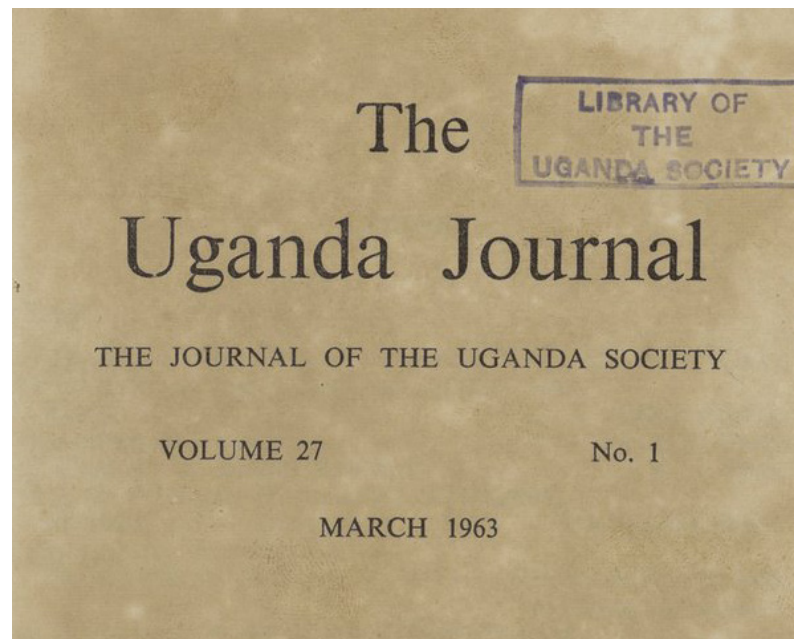
'To read a book for the first time is to make acquaintance with a new friend; to read for the second time is to meet an old one.'

This saying captures the essence of reading in that the more one carries out the activity, the more likely it will become entrenched into a person's life. In the privacy of one's mind, reading takes one to places that they have never been to and makes one meet people that they never expected to meet. Reading contributes to one's self-development which in turn contributes to the economic and social development of the community and society.

### The purpose of reading

Reading is carried out for different reasons, and these include:

- To get information – Something that is written down does not get distorted easily and therefore in most instances if one wishes to get reliable information, the best place to look is in a book or some other printed matter.



- To develop oneself intellectually and expand on one's view of the world – If one wishes to learn more about the world, to develop their language skills and vocabulary as well as develop their self-confidence, then one needs to read regularly.
- For leisure – People who perceive reading as a leisure activity derive great satisfaction out of the act of reading, and they lose themselves into the text that they are reading.

Of the three reasons mentioned above, reading for leisure may be the most difficult to convince a person. Such is the case as many other activities are carried out and from which an individual may choose to derive pleasure. However, if a person is aware that reading for leisure also leads to a person receiving information and ultimately developing him/herself intellectually, then the argument for reading for pleasure becomes more convincing.



## What influences reading?

Different factors affect the existence or absence of reading among a group of people. They individually or collectively determine whether a person is a reader or not. These factors are:

### Literacy and interest

To be able to read and understand a text, one must be literate, in other words, be able to make sense out of a string of letters and words. According to UNESCO, 84% of the world's adult population (age 15+) is literate, but in Sub-Saharan Africa, the figure is 62% (UNESCO, 2011). Therefore, 84% of the world's adult population are potential readers. We can divide non-readers into two groups, namely those who are illiterate and therefore are unable to read, and those who are literate but do not care to know. Figures of those who are literate but do not read are not easily obtainable, but the use of television and other forms of entertainment would suggest that those who have very little or no interest in reading form a good percentage of the population.

### Availability of reading material

The dire need for reading material of relevance to Africans came to the forefront of those in the book sector as far back as the 1980s. A conference entitled "Nothing to read" was held in Birmingham, the UK in 1988 and it discussed in detail the lack of reading materials in Africa both in the quantity of reading material and in the local African languages. There has been a continuous discourse on the issue of the availability of reading matter and how it impacts on education over the past three decades. Progress seems to be minimal as witnessed by the fact that the same conversation is still taking place in the second decade of the 21st century. Libraries and schools often depend on donated books which are not necessarily relevant to the African situation. In many African homes, reading materials are not available because families cannot afford them.

### The need to read

One has to have a need for them to read. This need could be to enjoy a work of fiction, to find out a fact or to pass an exam and get on in life or to gain more knowledge that will assist self-development and income generation. Many children in Africa

read because their school work requires them to do so and because they have to pass their exams and get promoted to the next level. Sadly, once they get into adulthood, their reading days come to an abrupt end. However, reading is very much needed throughout one's lifetime. A former Ugandan Minister of Education and Sports noted that,

'When individuals have finished their formal education, they still need to be able to access new information. The higher a person goes within the education system, the more essential the information conveyed through books, and those who can access the books for themselves and can read them without help, enjoy the greatest advantage.' (Nsibambi, 2000).

What starts as a need to read to acquire a qualification or gain knowledge to achieve an immediate goal eventually gives a person an extra advantage in self-development.

### The relevance of the reading matter

Regarding reading for pleasure, one must enjoy what they are reading. This enjoyment is partly possible because someone relates it to and becomes part of the story. In Africa, the issue of relevancy in association with reading is high on the list of reasons why many Africans who are literate opt not to read.

### The cooperation between different stakeholders

There are many players in the field, all of whom must apply their unique skills to bring about a synergy required to ensure that reading becomes part of everyone's life. These players include parents, teachers at all levels, librarians, publishers, and booksellers, among others. The readers would benefit from a well-packaged product that is available in large quantities, is relevant to their situation, is affordable and is accessible. This situation is only possible if there are coordination and cooperation between these stakeholders. The aggregated reading and knowledge acquisition are assumed to lead ultimately to societal development.

### Libraries and Librarians promoting reading

Whenever I mention that I am a librarian, possible questions are whether I have read all the books in the library. Such questions arise because many people see libraries as synonymous with books and reading. Librarians are therefore the principal stakeholders in the promotion of reading. They do this by making



reading part of their library strategy. It is set in their everyday work. A study of reading by the Reading Section of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions revealed that libraries and librarians perceive promotion of reading as an integral part of their work (Train, 2003). They do it in the following ways:

#### Working with Children

Children are perhaps the easiest and most captive audience for librarians. One often hears the phrase, 'catch them young' in reference to the need to ensure that reading starts as early as possible in a person's life. In libraries, children aged three to thirteen years are encouraged to acquaint themselves with books so that they grow up with a love for books and for reading. In East Africa, for example, under the umbrella of the East African Book Development Association and with funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), librarians and other book sector players have organized over 40 reading tents annually for children during the period 1997 to 2010. These reading tents in some cases led to the establishment of school libraries and in other situations, children's libraries. When organizing these events, librarians ensured that they held fun activities that could be emulated in other settings. The testimony of children that participated in reading tents in Mpigi District in Uganda in 2009 shows that the informal setting of the event was very attractive to children and would probably influence their future reading habits (National Book Trust of Uganda, 2010).

#### Encouraging teenagers to read

Adolescents or secondary school students in Africa more often than not use the library when they are in school. They read their textbooks and will request the library to get them those that they do not have. Some of them may read fiction. Whatever their needs and requirements, this group of readers is one that the librarians need to encourage to read as most often, they are involved in other activities such as sports and television. They can be persuaded to add reading to their list of 'trendy' things to do by introducing activities such as book clubs and debating clubs in the library as well as tagging reading to another enjoyable activity. In Uganda, for example, newspapers have included pull-outs that discuss matters that affect a teenager's daily life. 'Straight talk' a pullout of one of the leading daily newspa-

pers deals with adolescence health matters and has become so popular that a big part of it is now made up of contributions by the readers themselves. It has also led to spin-off publications that tackle issues of the environment and sanitation. Librarians need to recognize that reading by teenagers need not be in the form of a conventional book but can start with other types of reading materials, and this can lead to the reading of the most traditional.

#### Support for adult literacy

Very often, adult literacy learners and those who have graduated from adult literacy classes and are ready and eager to face the brave new world of literacy find themselves unable to continue practicing their newly acquired skills because of lack of opportunity to do so. Many times, there are no suitable materials and no person to take over their cause. Librarians are best placed to assist this category of users to continue with their reading. Librarians can encourage the holding of literacy classes in the library where this is possible. They can also ensure that suitable materials for neo-literates are available in the library. In some countries, such as Botswana, the library service works in close collaboration with the Department of Non-Formal Education to ensure that adult learners and neo-literates are availed reading materials. Such materials may be in the form of fiction books at the right reading level and with suitable content. Newspapers especially in the local language should be made available in the library as these are popular with adult patrons.

#### Other interest groups

The potential readers could be groups other than those mentioned above. These include farmers groups, women's groups, market vendors groups, etc. Librarians need to provide reading material to these groups making them aware that by reading about their particular activities, they will be able to better their work and improve their livelihoods.

#### Forming Partnerships

The promotion of reading involves many different players, and it would be amiss of librarians or any other group to ignore the other stakeholders in the field. These include:

#### Writers

Librarians need to work closely with writers to pro-

mote reading. Writers know what they wish to communicate, and librarians need to work with them to ensure that the intended audience gains from the writing. The librarian can do this by requesting authors to read to library users from their writings. Such audiences can be children, adult learners, groups of adults with special interests and others.

#### Publishers

Publishers are very prominent players in the book sector. Librarians need to work with publishers to ensure that more books are available in the right quantities and relevance. The publishing of textbooks, for example, should be done side by side with the publication of supplementary reading materials for schools.

#### Teachers and other education authorities

The Librarian-Teacher partnership in reading promotion has perhaps been the most profitable of all businesses that the librarian has ever entered into in reading development. The activities carried out include training teachers in reading promotion. After the training, teachers have often gone back to set up classroom libraries in their schools and also set aside reading times for their classes. Librarians are also known to have invited teachers to take regularly groups of children to the library during certain days of the week. School children across Africa visit libraries regularly.

#### Parents

Without the parents' consent and interest, it would be tough to get children to read or even visit the library. Librarians who are part of the community and easily get involved in community activities are better placed to persuade parents to let their children use the library. Librarians need to work closely with parents to ensure that the culture of reading is inculcated in the children at an early age.

#### Media houses

Librarians and their partners could approach media houses to assist in the promotion of reading. These promotions could be in the form of story hours for children or book clubs for the adult on radio or any other form that reaches a broad audience.

#### Reading Associations/Organisations

Several organisations promote reading. Librarians

could cooperate with them to promote reading. Under the umbrella of the International Reading Association, many countries have national reading associations. These are excellent partners that can work with librarians.

#### Reading Advocacy

There is a need for all the book sector stakeholders to carry out reading advocacy work. Librarians need to do it with policy makers, with school authorities, with parents and with others whose influence will make a difference regarding book provision to the community and reading by the community. This advocacy could aim at reducing taxes levied on books, or the inclusion of reading on the school timetable or the establishment of public library services within various communities.

#### Skills needed by librarians to promote reading

In a world with so many competing demands on a person's time, librarians need some special skills to support reading and keep the audience captive. This include:

##### Outreach skills

The existence of a library does not automatically translate into its use. It is important for librarians to reach out to those who are not in the habit of reading. Reaching out requires librarian to go out of the library and promote reading to the non-users of the library who may not know that the facility exists.

##### Knowledge of the reading matter

Librarians need to be aware of the books that they are promoting. It would make their reading promotion work more credible if they can, for example, be able to recommend certain books for certain readers. It also means that funds available for purchases are not wasted on books that the community considers irrelevant to their interests.

##### Communications skills

Librarians need to be able to communicate their message effectively and clearly. They need to convince their potential audience about the value of reading.

##### Providing a conducive environment for reading

The library should be an inviting place to persuade the community to visit it to read. There would be no point in convincing people to visit the library and

once there, they find a dimly lit room with uninteresting books and staff that is not helpful.

#### Keeping up with the new technology

Reading is increasingly being done on mobile electronic devices such as e-readers and cell phones. Librarians are increasingly adopting these devices in their libraries to encourage reading, especially for the young generation that are more adept at using them. In Kenya, for example, e-readers have been adopted for use in most public and community libraries. Using these devices has not only encouraged users to read but has also created an attraction for those who have not been regular users of these libraries.

#### Reading for a sustainable future

A regular reader builds a future for himself/herself and the community. What may start as a simple leisurely exercise will over time create a person capable of critical thinking and informed decision making. This person requires being encouraged as much as possible to find reading attractive and part of his/her life. The need to present reading as one package which has had input from all various stakeholders cannot, therefore, be over-emphasised. Many players in the book sector, including librarians, are required to take action, not only to continue this discourse on book provision in Africa but to also find solutions to the bottlenecks that exist. The use of new technologies to attract even those who would otherwise not

read and to make a very wide range of titles available on one single device also needs further exploration by all those in the book sector. Librarians, with their already existing space and structures, need to ensure that they adapt the new technologies in their work.

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## Edited WRITING FOR AFRICAN CHILDREN: A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

By Mrs. Elieshi Lema

### 1. INTRODUCTION

A writer's perspective of the process of creating literature is as complex as the human mind from which creative work evolves as it takes shape and finally expresses a particular point of view. The process itself which engages the emotions, the spirit, and the intellect is both a conscious exercise- involving the choice of language, vocabulary, approach, and subject. That is, the craft of writing and the subconscious force at play, which mirrors the writer's beliefs about life, her/his position (imagined or real) in it, and which in turn colors her/his opinion regarding the issues put on the table for discussion.

In light of this, I am inclined to say, yes, there is a woman's perspective in writing, not only for children but in writing for adults as well. But there is a man's perspective too. The fact that a writer, like anyone else, is a human being and a product of her/his culture, upbringing, time and education put her/him at a point of advantage regarding issues closer to social life. Further, a writer is also influenced by social division of labor within a definite historical time, which in the course of growing up creates her/ his reservoir of experience, gained from social interaction and the interaction with the environment. During the creative process, writers project themselves and their expertise in the characters they portray, in the way the characters talk, think, act and react and deal with the challenges they face. Sometimes, as a result of strong influences in life, some characters may emerge contrary to the writer's conscious decision, forcing themselves, so to speak, into the story in their own fashion.

On the other hand, one can argue that a socially conscious writer- female or male, struggles to rise above her/his social conditioning to project the ideal



worldview, an alternative world from the one in which she/he lives. In this case, I would say there is a gender perspective, which would interrogate gender constructs and relations in a certain place and time. A vulnerability perspective which would analyze or project aspects of poverty, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancies, FGM, engagement of children in war, child labor, etc. and an empowerment perspective which would aim to give voice and power to characters in the story, to challenge and interrogate an absolute position of vulnerability.

According to Dr. Andindilile, a lecturer in literature at the University of Dar es Salaam, the difference in the two positions is brought about by the writer's social consciousness and education. Education enlightens the way an author looks and analyses issues, but does not remove the advantages that a woman writer would have due to her proximity to children's lives. Women tend to be more sensitive to children's needs- emotional, social and economic- than men. It is particularly the case in patriarchal societies in Africa where mothers are closer to children than fathers. The importance of understanding women's responses to development issues is what led to studies of gender in literature, and it has become necessary



that students study women's writings in their third year to highlight their perspectives on the social issues they write about.

This paper will focus on Tanzania, with the expectation that a Tanzanian picture will reflect some aspects of the African situation, which, hopefully, the discussion will bring to light.

## 2. THE ISSUES

What are the issues in African children's lives and how are they reflected by women writers writing for them today? Do the issues appeal to women writers more than they do for men? To answer these questions, I will examine some female and male writers who have participated in Children's Book Project for the last ten years. The Children's Book Project was started in the early 1990s to promote the writing and publication of children's books in Kiswahili.

Issues in children's lives and the children's book writer

### The status of children

Africa is witnessing a period of extreme cruelty to children and a time when their rights are flaunted with impunity. Children are being recruited to fight in civil wars and taught to kill without mercy. They work under the earth in mines in extremely dangerous conditions. They are recruited to engage in the sex business and forced to marry at a young age to men that are much older than them. They are orphaned young and left to fend for themselves. They rape young girls, and others made pregnant at an early age. Others are living with HIV and AIDS and lacking care and support and with all kinds of other difficult circumstances.

There are other more complex issues in their lives, such as the lack of a welfare policy that protects them from abuse and neglect; lack of access to quality education which denies them opportunities for a future with hope and lack of stable and safe environment for them to grow, survive and develop.

However, one can argue that should children's literature be about their life condition or should it be fantasy, something to make them dream and bring

light into their complicated lives? Asked about what books children love to read, Pili Dumea, the Executive Secretary of Children's Book Project for Tanzania said children enjoy fantasy in animal stories, humor, and stories which resonate or touch on their life experiences. That confirms what is often said of children everywhere that they read what fascinates them and holds their attention firmly, no matter what their social condition is. They have to be motivated to read. I think books provide an escape to children. Naturally, they want an ideal life, where they are respected, happy and safe, and books that offer them that alternative life are the books they relate to

So, what issues do women writers address when they write for children? Namtulli Mpembulles, one of CBP children's book writer said that she gets her motivation from public discourse about children, girls, and women; from the reportage of children's issues in newspapers. Asked about how much she draws from her experience as a mother, she said that sometimes motherhood is a challenge more than motivation, and so child rearing does not always motivate her writing. For her, it is more the issues which put the child's life at stake rather than the actual rearing experience. That is one perspective. I have read books projecting the simplest things like a child not wanting to eat vegetables, or wanting too much ice cream, not wanting to take a bath, or the first day of school. These are child rearing experiences that fascinate children.

I have read more than twenty children's books by women. The contents covered topics such as environment, days of the week, adventure, WWI, the five senses, the right to education and selfishness. Other topics are ; albinism and stigma, HIV/AIDS, poverty, folktales, coloring and picture books, coming of age, life skills, identity, work ethics, sexual abuse, friendship and cooperation, child labor and ill-treatment, friendship, and the girl child. Although the selection was random, it says something about the choice of topics. It goes further than social constructs experience etc., to show how women's writing is also influenced by the changing social economic and political dynamics. That is good, because whatever they write becomes relevant to children at that particular time.

## 3. PERSPECTIVES

### Gender and Abuse

From the books I read, women writers are writing mostly about girl children. Their concerns focus on sexual abuse, (Nani wa Kumwamini (No one to Trust) by Namtulli Mpembulle). The girl struggles out of the clutches of her uncle, escaping from one situation only to fall into another until finally she wins to loosen herself from the chains of exploitation. Tuokoeni (Save Us) by Amina Mohamed is about child abuse and maltreatment in the family by a drunken father. The mother finally leaves the children to the father and disappears. The girl becomes a maid and the boy ends up in the streets and gets involved in drugs and crime. They get rescued by good Samaritans and one day the media helps in the reunion with their mother. In Mnyama Mwenye Huruma (A Kind Animal) by Rebecca Nandwa, a mother gets twins and abandons baby girl in the forest because her husband, the king, does not want girls. The baby is picked up by a creature which is half animal, half human (woman) and raises her in the forest. Time passes, the mother is unhappy, and the king ails. The twin brother meets his twin sister, lets the mother know, and both go searching for her in the forest. Finally, she finds the medicine to heal her father; the magical mother dies, and they all live in the king's palace. Madhila ya Faidha (The Plight of Faidha) by Faraja Ngakwira is about stigma shown to an Albino child. Fellow pupils refuse to sit with him, at same time Albino body parts are being sought to be sold. One day, his school participates in a competition in the district where he wins first prize in drawing. People hunt him down in the night, but he is saved by his father and his teacher.

A common perspective in these four stories is that all children overcome the challenges they are confronted with, and there is a happy ending. Their allies are adults and so are their foes. I think women are struggling, as adults, to speak for children on these injustices. They are critical to fellow adults by making the statement that what is being done to children is not right. Are the happy endings a solution? Can writers provide solutions to such entrenched social issues? I pose the questions for discussion.

However, the gender perspective leaves something to be desired. There is an issue that can perhaps be addressed through a training intervention. Balance is quantitative rather than qualitative whereby in two stories, male parents are cruel, and the good Samaritans are both female; in one, a woman abuses the maid and in Plight of Faidha, both male and female parents and the teachers are united in protecting the child against harm. One notes some remnants of belief in the strength and superiority of the male when a mother leaves her twin daughter in the forest fearing the wrath of her husband. The fear of male authority by the mother and unjustified bias of the king against girls are issues that could have been interrogated to show a sense of justice for the children's benefit. One way of guiding is showing what is wrong and what is right. The risk of leaving injustices un-corrected is that children may think it is okay to do wrong to others, to mistreat and beat, to be drunkards and irresponsible. They may also think it is okay for women to be weak and defenseless against male cruelty and maltreatment. In Save Us, male behavior is also glossed over and so is child labor and abuse caused by the woman employer.

### Rights and voice

All the evil happening to children amount to a denial of fundamental rights. Who is the Ombudsman of children and their rights? Is it writers, including those of children's books, mothers, adults or children themselves? I propose that it is all these groups and others too. The perspective of women writers as mothers is clearly evident in the cases mentioned above where mothers feel for the children; they see the injustice. The writer interviewed above said that she uses her experience of motherhood in characterization because of her proximity to the child's life. She knows what makes them happy, sad, and angry. She knows how she may respond to certain situations. That said, one still notes the influence of African tradition on the writers that children often put their trust on adults who, traditionally, are responsible for their upbringing. That perspective shows that children are not strong enough to deal with challenges on their own with adults taking the supportive role but assuming responsibility for their

safety and wellbeing. Pili Dumea, CBP executive, says that her experience with women writers show that most of them are not adequately knowledgeable on the complexity of gender issues and how to deal with such issues in writing for children. That could explain the reason that children are portrayed as being defenseless against adult weakness (of mothers) or cruelty (of fathers), so they run away only to meet another adult who saves them or continues the retinue of abuse. The perspective which is influenced by patriarchy is, therefore, unlikely to give children any voice, or independent power to question their parent's actions and stand up to injustice done to them.

Mwendo (Footsteps); Ndoto ya Upendo (Upendo's Dream); Safari ya Prospa (Prospa's Journey) by Elieshi Lema, address the issue of rights and attempts to give voice and power of action to children. In Footsteps, the aunt questions the lack of counseling services in school for pupils to get educated about their bodies, as a right. Most of them confront body changes while in school. The girl character takes over the narration to tell her story and seek the knowledge she needs from her relatives. She needs to know about life, about a woman's struggle in society, how to become strong and about initiation as a ritual of change. In Upendo's Dream, Upendo dream to know the magic of letters. She is denied the right to go to school. Her parents send her younger brother instead, with the excuse that they are poor. She gets furious, stays home, but demands to know why it is her who has to wash, cook, clean and care for her baby while her brother goes to school. One day she goes to school and tells a teacher that she looking for the secret of letters and the teachers take it upon themselves to plead for her case. In Prospa's Journey, the characters, Prospa, and Sara travel on their own to Dar es Salaam city and on to Zanzibar and back to Dar again. They survive in the city, joining a band of street children, who show them the geography of survival. Building on logic, common sense, experience on the street, they find the child who is returned to his mother. This perspective is also experiential. As a mother, I have observed children's incredible capacity to do things out of the sight of parents and their

high level of creativity in problem solving.

## Identity, history, and environment

This perspective of providing knowledge on certain aspects takes note of the writer as guide, a view which is particularly important in the context of changing societies and the fluidity in cultural integration. Questions are: Who are we? How did we do things? Why did they do that to us? These questions may not be asked by children, but they will register in their minds as they acquire knowledge in school, through play or as they interact with their environment in different ways.

Mwanasesere wa Mosi (Mosi's Doll) ; Lupompo and the Baby Monkey by Demere Kitunga; Usiku wa Balaa (The Night of Peril) by Pili Dumea, all these stories in a way attempt to show the child that reality is complex and there is more than what the child can see and perceive. Mosi's Doll is about being black among other races and being proud of it. The power of selling in global business can bring white dolls from anywhere in the world and place them on a child's lap as she plays in the backyard of a village home. The doll may be one with white, long and silky hair and fair skin. And the girl child will most likely love the doll and play mother with it. In the story, mother brings home a doll looking just like her child. She holds a mirror in front of her to show just how similar to her skin the black doll is. The doll is resisted, because the child has not heard it being depicted as beautiful, so mother explains that beauty is also in the black doll which looks like all of them. The writer here tries the arduous task of imbuing in a child, an attitude of self-respect and self-love, that is so basic to self-empowerment. Lupompo and the Baby Monkey and Maji Msituni (Water in the Forest) by Helen Elinawinga show the importance of forest ecosystem in which animals live happily, and water is plenty until the destruction of trees and fauna begin and pollution set-in. Lupompo gives a comparative view of the traditional ways of conservation with more modern ways. Water in the Forest is a straightforward exposition for younger children. The Night of Peril shows the destruction to people and societies which happened during the First World War and how

# Perspective

it could never be the same again for a little girl who lost her family.

## Ethics

In oral story-telling which happened by the fire-side, or outside under a shining moon, the narrators performed stories at the end of which was a moral teaching. The issue of ethics has been at the center of social order and cohesion and therefore of importance throughout history. Oral story-telling was a socializing agent, integrating children into society as acceptable social beings. In telling, the narrator became a character and an attraction to an enraptured audience. The telling was then a prerogative of grandmothers and grandfathers, because they had lived long, and had witnessed the outcomes of certain behaviors considered unsuitable for the wellbeing of society. In the context of changing social structure, norms and traditions, children's book writers take their place in telling/guiding children on what is acceptable and what is not. In this respect, women writers' perspective on ethics is drawn from the accumulated knowledge of being caretakers. Women have always been and still are the propagators of culture and in many ways shape the way children think from a young age. They continue to be the propagators of culture through their writing, using both the folk narration of animal stories and the creative narration of current social situations.

Nataka Keki Yangu (I want My Cake) by Teddy Chacha; Urafiki wa Ngedere na Mamba (Friendship Between Monkey and Crocodile) by Namtulli Mpembules and Kuku na Marafiki Zake (Chicken and Her Friends) by Irene Minja & Lina Gerson, all give a moral lesson at the end. The stories are constructed to end in action which delivers the moral. Being selfish is not good, (I want My Cake); Being faithful and true to friends or people that are close to us (Monkey and Crocodile) working in unison yields better results than working alone on a problem (Chicken and Her Friends). The story of Monkey and Crocodile stands out alone in giving the perspective that children are innocent of evil but are influenced by parents to accept it. The child Crocodile questions the logic of taking the heart of his friend to heal the king when that action kills the friend. You will get another friend, the pa-

rents say, but innocently, the Crocodile divulges the secret and Monkey escapes by trickery. This perspective projects children as active setters of their moral standards, where money is less important than friendship and loyalty are more valuable than betrayal.

Moral stories are few in new creations compared to folk literature which is awash with them. Even this area is changing so that what was considered ethical is no longer thought so. With rising corruption, including sexual corruption, which has become entry points to success and fame, moralizing has become ineffective and redundant. Still, I believe that the moral story is still very relevant today, especially for children who are expected to construct a future society with alternative moral standards. There is a role here for all of us.

## Life Skills

Why are life skills so important for children today?

My perspective as writer is that the most basic social unit- the family- in which children are reared and given values, has been slowly disintegrating. Now children have to be guided, through writing, on how to negotiate their way into becoming responsible and successful adults, since the social structures which used to do that are no longer functioning. Grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, and uncles are professional people with no time to spare for children, even their own. In the context of change, the child belongs to the nuclear family and not to the clan or society.

The books, MKate Mtamu (Sweet Bread), Jipende (Love Yourself), Jilinde (Protect Yourself), Jijue (Know Yourself), Jithamini (Value Yourself) by Elieshi Lema, are life skills books focusing on empowerment of the individual child to meet the challenges of life. They take the perspective that children do have great capacities for survival, and the role of the writer is to build on them and strengthen them. Sweet Bread takes the perspective that every experience, especially women's experience as caretakers and social food providers can be turned to gold and used for their development. The phenomenon of women food ven-



dors, throughout Africa, which is almost becoming an industry, is a good illustration. The other four books were motivated by the challenge of explaining and guiding children through the HIV and AIDS pandemic. It takes one character, Maisha and her spirit friend Fresh, throughout the series, tracking her growth from a young girl till she completes primary school, ready to enter secondary school.

## Men writers' perspectives

I will state the obvious and say that there are far more men writers in Africa than women. This situation is the same in individual countries. Unfortunately, I could not come across up to date data that showed the number of men and female writers by continent or by country.

I read five books by different authors to see if their perspectives differ from those of women. *Tamaa ya Chura* (Frog's Conceit) by W.E. Mkufya; *Vipaji vya Helena* (Helena's Gifts) by Onge Mnyaka; *Kigari Chake na Changu* (His Toy Car and Mine) by Said Mohammed; *Swala Swali* (Impala the Questioner) by Richard Mabala; *Fikiri Kabla* (Think First) by Jumaa Msuzi.

Of the five titles, two- *Helena's Gifts* and *Think First* are about girls. The others are about conceit (*Frog's Conceit*), class selfishness (*Your Toy Car and Mine*), inquisitiveness (*Impala the Questioner*). *Helena's Gifts* is about a girl who escaped the Rwandan genocide, goes to Congo and later to Tanzania and is adopted by a British couple. She is clever and gifted as an artist; this makes her famous. *Think First* is about a girl who becomes pregnant at a young age, is thrown out of home by her father, delivers the child and throws her away. The child is picked up by an old woman who cares for her until she becomes a nurse. Later, she is reunited with her parents.

*Frog's Conceit* and *Impala the Questioner* could be classified as moral stories. The Frog wants to be as big as the Cow, at any cost. But a Frog cannot be a Cow. In trying to be big, the Frog bursts into pieces. The moral- do not try to be what you are not. The Impalas are twins, one polite and un-questioning and the other very inquisitive, constantly asking questions. When they meet a lion disguised as another animal, it is the polite Impala who is almost eaten but is

rescued by the tricks of the inquisitive one, showing that asking questions is a good habit. *Your Toy Car and Mine* brings face to face the urban sophistication and materialism and rural simplicity and poverty. In the end, the boy from town takes away even the simple toy car of the poor village boy, because he wants to have both cars- his, driven by remote control and the other one he can move around.

The stories have appeal to children of both genders because conceit, inquisitiveness or lack of it, are vices and virtues found in children of both genders, and it is important to address them in literature. The major difference in the stories about girls by women and men writers is that in men's writing, the depth which highlights the challenges the girls face is not very evident. On the other hand, the *Impala* twins are actors and problem solvers and demonstrate a basic life skill. *Your Toy Car and Mine* reflects the typical curiosity and love of cars that boys and men have. The urban/rural dynamic may not offer any new information, but it may motivate rural children who always aspire to leave the village and go to towns and cities. Except for the boys fighting over one toy car, the story does not offer conflict or interrogate the class exploitation issue.

## 4. CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD

"We cannot escape the study of women's perspectives in literature and in all development issues which they tackle in their writing." Michael Andindilile, Literature Department, University of Dar es Salaam

### Challenges

The complex knot of issues that surround women writers, women as social beings, women and their relationship with children's lives and interaction of women in a world which continues to oppress, abuse and deny the rights of women and children is going to require multi-pronged, short, medium and long-term interventions to solve them. It touches on education, social welfare, publishing and writing, access to books, empowerment and training.

The University of Dar es Salaam started to offer creative writing classes two years ago. Of the twenty-two

# Perspective

students, only two are female. Of the twenty male students, seven of them show potential to become good writers. Unfortunately, the female students did not join the course to become writers, and one needed to fill a slot in her courses and the other thought creative writing was a lot easier than the other subjects. The Literature Department is looking for ways to motivate female students to join creative writing course. This picture alone brings two obvious tidings: one; that our education system is not instilling values for love of knowledge and pursuit of it for continuous learning and two, writing, as a discipline is not motivating or inspiring young women to engage in it.

## But why is this so?

Readership stands out as a critical challenge for most of Africa because reading is so entwined with education development, which in most African countries continues to suffer for lack of serious investment in the elements which promote quality, such as access to variety of books, well-stocked libraries, quality education delivery, etc. Current education systems in Africa (Tanzania particularly) are not creating readers, and without readers, how do we get writers? Then there is the issue of culture and cultural values in relation to gender. What are we telling our girl children to be? What values are we showing/giving/projecting regarding the search for knowledge and continuous learning? What transformative values are we transmitting to boy and girl children?

In a recent survey on reading capacities, covering the East African region and done by an NGO called UWEZO; there were cases in Tanzania where a primary seven pupil could not read a Kiswahili text for standard three fluently. Reading proficiency for the English language was not any better. Further to this, writing as a language skill is not given the importance it deserves in the curriculum. What results from this grim situation is marginalization of literary related skills and professions and lack of appreciation and recognition for writers, publishers, librarians, teachers, etc.

The struggle of women to maintain professions and home, juggling the two fronts, is known the world over. In my case as a woman writer, I am constantly

confronted with choices that I have to make about my profession, social and family responsibilities, which item to spend money and time on, etc. Perhaps the young women referred to above were asking themselves what they should study so that they could earn enough money quickly, to enable them to live alone and maintain an independent life away from their parents. Perhaps they have just found themselves into the poverty vulnerability because they are expected to shoulder responsibilities like paying for their school needs. Exploring ways to interest women students to join creative writing classes would help to nurture emerging competencies, so that they do not get lost into the daily pushes and shovels of life.

In the short talk with Namtuli Mpembulles, she mentioned, among the challenges that hold back her writing, to include her lack of resources like money to travel and research for a story; and as a single mother who also has a demanding job, she hardly finds time to write. Her writing has to be spongy, easily squeezable in a thin place between more urgent and important chores. The Executive Secretary of Children's Book Project mentioned major constraints for women writers as being lack of writing skills; insecurity about the quality of what they have written; a lack of guidance and feedback; and fear of rejection from publishers. And when they have a publishable manuscript, they lack the negotiating power to make the best of their writing achievement.

As a woman writer and publisher, I feel particularly challenged by women writers. Some of them need a bit more attention than male writers, and fortunately, they do demand the attention. Often, they need more feedback and guidance; they have greater expectations from a woman publisher, expectations which I sometimes cannot meet because publishing is a tough business.

On a happier note, the Children's Book Project has been running training courses for young female writers since 2008. Twelve names were recommended from the Zonal Writers Associations from Arusha, Tabora, Dodoma, Southern Highlands and Zanzibar. The project started the training program because women writers were not visible in CBP. Why? The CBP found out that women were writing, but pro-

ducing unpublishable manuscripts due to lack of skills. The Project also learned that one off training course did not help, because they still did not assert their presence in the Project. So, CBP ran the course using the same students every year twelve in number, from 2008 to 2010. They are facilitated on the core competencies of writing and then taken through the process of story development from idea to a manuscript, interspersed with extensive discussions about each other's ideas among themselves. In this way, by end of 2010, they were able to get three publishable manuscripts and in 2011, they received two, clearly demonstrating that writing has to be looked at as an investment if it has to bear fruit.

The Children's Book Project plans to run courses on short story writing in 2012 with the aim of getting an anthology of young Tanzanian women writers. That will be a commendable achievement and a good influence and inspiration for others.

## Way Forward

This paper tries to show that women do have and can contribute an interesting perspective in a body of children's literature in Africa. It also highlights the constraints and challenges that are facing African women writers today. Given their proximity to child-

ren's lives and the challenges that face the African child today, women children's book writers have a possibility to bring to light a more positive image of an African childhood for children to read and be inspired. They are better placed than male writers to deal with the difficult issues that afflict the wellbeing of children in Africa today. However, more focused attention will have to be paid to capacities development in the areas of writing, gender and development. Investment can be vested in:

- Training, in the form of writing retreats
- Creative writing classes which will not require full-time attendance
- Writing competitions followed up with feedback sessions
- The strengthening of, and establishing women writers associations in Africa.
- Support to purchase women's writings and distribution of the books to school libraries.



## Bio Data

Name: Elieshi Lema  
Title: Author, Editor and Publisher

Elieshi Lema, author, editor and publisher, has authored two novels -Parched Earth and In the Belly of Dar es Salaam- and several titles of children's books. Her short story appeared in in Women Writing Africa: The Eastern Region, published by Feminist Press in 2007. In her writing for children and youth, she advocates for children's rights and tries to give voice to children to express themselves.



## Toward a sustainable advocacy for national book policies and policies on the library and public reading in Africa

**"A nation that reads is a nation that wins."  
Nelson Mandela**

by Mamadou Aliou Sow

An overview of a few reading promotion strategies in French-speaking Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali and Senegal

### I- Context of the review

In the framework of the Triennale follow-up activities, and to promote knowledge development and lifelong learning, as well as to foster the development of a society of readers, and encouraging the emergence of sustainable social and economic development, ADEA endeavors to promote reading in Africa. Given that books and reading are drivers of knowledge know how and life skills. Investment in the development of reading skills and reading habits should thus be a key concern for African governments.

In its work programme for 2015, the Working Group on Books and Learning Material (WGBLM) has undertaken to develop an advocacy campaign to promote reading for all, with strands to encourage publications in national languages and promote the use of new information technologies.

However, the general observation on public reading libraries is rather preoccupying: they are for the most part underequipped, poorly installed and documen-

tary collections are often little adapted to local realities, poorly maintained and rarely renewed. The budgets allocated by the federal governments and local administrations for literature purchases are low, even inexistent. The personnel and other activity organizers of these libraries are little or not at all trained.

This document, the product of a documentary review concerning reading promotion strategies, considers itself a consulting tool for the actors who participate in development public reading support projects and programs.

The report focused not on institutional approaches such as the reading and cultural activity centers (CLAC) backed by French-speaking countries or those of public reading projects supported by various bilateral cooperation organizations but on more endogenous initiatives. International cooperation and local authorities helped these and were also more focused on the actions of NGOs, associations or decentralized public officials. The efforts cited are only indicative, each country having its realities and specificities. We cannot talk about the standardization or automatic duplication of approaches because no method exists that is a priori true everywhere, and for everyone.

## II- Introduction

The last few decades have been marked by a substantial increase in school registration rates everywhere on the continent, often enough above 85%. However, quality aspects have not followed, generally due to a lack of qualified teachers, textbooks and complimentary reading materials in schools and the neighboring communities.

There is today, reading networks and systems in each country, whether on the initiative of the ministries of education or culture or various other structures (religious, associative, charitable, private, etc.). Library networks nonetheless remain inadequate and most often do not address the particular needs of the populations that are supposed to serve.

Literary productions in national languages are manifestly absent from the collections proposed, consequently depriving a large part of the population access to reading. However, making books and reading materials in national languages available is a necessity for creating societies of readers, given that a population that is literate in its language can better participate in civic life and development actions.

Back in 1971, in its report on teaching in the countries of the South, the Commonwealth correctly noted that "books are a fundamental element and a vital one in the education process. The lack of books creates a disastrous vicious circle, because mediocre quality teaching hinders development, insufficient development, in turn, brings about an insufficiency of educational resources, and this inadequacy, in turn, creates new obstacles to development."

Has the situation significantly changed? Not really, for many countries, despite the progress recorded here and there, because an observation widely shared in French-speaking Africa is that the students do not know how to read until advanced levels of secondary education. The causes are teaching methods that are not adapted to reading, the low skill level of teachers, the poor quality of educational materials, the high cost of books and, generally, the absence of a literate environment.

The library plays a dominant role in the development

of reading, especially in rural milieus that, for many reasons, are more affected by the inaccessibility of books and reading. It is a space that above all allows children to familiarize themselves with books, by discovering the content by themselves to satisfy their curiosity and consequently develop a taste for discovery. That is why it must have a variety of reading materials adapted to the users' needs.

In the school, where the presence of books is the most visible, we must not settle for the presence of textbooks, because, alone, they do not permit the development of reading habits and capacities. The existence of a diversity of materials, complementary to reading enables teachers to show the students that there are other types of books that equally take part in their intellectual and cultural development.

The family's role is essential because there is a close link between the school and the family culture in reading. Let us recall what Emilie Buchwald rightfully said, namely, that "children learn to become readers in their parents' lap." This means that if the parents become involved alongside the school, the book becomes a familiar object whose content the children discover with adults to subsequently take ownership of it as soon as the children establish reading skills. For children to learn, they must grow up in a literate environment.

Reading to a child improves his or her capacity to succeed better in school and later in life. That is why literacy training of adults is a necessary prerequisite for the guarantee of a quality education for children, as the objectives of the Dakar forum recalled (AFD/AFD/UNESCO report, 2015). And the goal of education for all presupposes the development of educated societies, which cannot be reached if "populations, in their majority and their diversity, cannot have written documents and do not succeed in cultivating lifelong reading habits."

## Reading policies

As for reading promotion policies and strategies, most French-speaking countries do not have a library and public reading systems. Of course, proximity programs (community libraries, reading corners,

book and reading caravans, literature competitions, and other book-based promotional events) are encountered here and there as well as various official measures, but these are periodic actions that do not benefit from substantial and long-lasting political and financial support.

What is needed is a mobilization of all the forces present so that reading becomes part of priority actions. There are many development challenges: economic, cultural, democratic, etc., and each country must acquire an explicit policy on the library and public reading so that it can efficaciously meet them. This policy should also be multi-sectorial and include publications in local languages and available and accessible digital resources. In the latter case, with its extremely high penetration rate in Africa (nearly 700 million people possess one), the cell phone will certainly play a significant role in promoting the dissemination of resources that are adapted and readily available to communities.

The use of ICTs cannot be ignored today, although Internet access remains a critical problem in sub-Saharan Africa. The digital can certainly not replace the paper book for a good number of years on the continent, but will be an extension of it, able to help the reader better to apprehend the diversity and richness of the surrounding environment, through varied sources and supports (mini-computers, tablets, cell phones, etc.).

The review of certain good practices in promoting reading in French-speaking Africa concerned seven countries that do not have a national library and public reading policies: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali, and Senegal, through the initiatives presented below.

## A- BENIN

In Benin, there have been many reading promotion support initiatives, in particular on the local level, in French as well as in national languages. We have selected three of them:

### A-1 The SeLiBÉJ Association initiative

The SeLiBÉJ ("Benin Children's Book Week") Asso-

ciation is a group of publishers, authors, illustrators, bookstore owners and children's book distributors created with the goal of fostering a taste for reading in children and young people in Benin.

Based on the observation that there are thousands of children and adolescents who need to read but do not have the resources to acquire works due to weak purchasing power and illiteracy, SeLiBÉJ has organized, each year since 1998, a week to celebrate books throughout Benin. The goal is to create an event around children's books and organize cultural games in libraries, cultural centers, reading centers and schools, distribute books to the prizewinners and create encounters between children and young people and writers and illustrators.

By making the book accessible to children and youths, SeLiBÉJ aspires to share the taste for books and the pleasures of reading to transmit and perpetuate the Benin heritage that carries cultural, human and universal values. How can books be placed within the reach of children who want to read and who do not have the means to do so? The question warrants asking in a country context in which the public reading network is not very dense and lacks equipment.

The initiative was launched by the "Chèque-livre" ("book-check") operation based on the principle of solidarity between those who know the importance of reading and have some means and those who do not have the means. Consequently, partners and sponsors are called on, well before Book Week (embassy cultural services, ministries of culture, private firms, physical persons or legal entities, etc.) to ask that they pre-purchase books in the form of book-checks. These books are pre-purchased, marked with their donors' seals and shipped to reading centers and libraries with delivery slips showing the retail price of each book.

Starting at that moment, a "book-check" competition is launched on the local radios of the communes that have reading centers and libraries by billboards, and in the La Nation newspaper. By answering a short questionnaire based on culture or by doing a drawing (for the youngest children), the children show their desire to have a book and at the same time deserve this book. The book checks are then issued.

Although of limited scope due to limited means, the Children's Book Week of Benin has continued by in-

creasing its field of action and its scale from one year to the next.

## A-2 Book battle initiative

A group of teachers from French-speaking Switzerland launched its "Book Battle" project with the objective of stimulating and developing the pleasure of reading in children 8 to 12 years old. As interest has been growing, the structure turned toward other French-speaking countries to currently reach, through the new communication techniques, a public of over 20,000 young people, notably in Quebec, Senegal, Haiti, Benin, France and Belgium. This international diversification has contributed an interesting pedagogic added value, as the students discover, through reading novels and illustrated albums, sociological universes that are very different from their own.

The group of texts reflects very different social realities, depending on the authors' country of origin. The themes treated are humor, racism, disabilities, ecology, discrimination, love, daily life, fantasy, sports, etc.

The teachers who get involved in this project must convince themselves of the benefit of reading and cultivate the desire to have their students read, by the contents of 30 or so young people's novels, read during the school year. The school must be able to organize encounters via the Internet to participate in national or intercontinental quizzes and games.

There is no question that the participation of young people in Benin in this "book battle" gave them additional educational achievements in diversified reading as well as a high motivation to read and go to libraries.

## A3- Mobile library initiatives

The National Library of Benin and association networks are conducting innovative initiatives that are appropriate for local conditions through mobile libraries in the interior of the country, the most original of which are :

- the biblio- Rouse ["bush library"] of the Djougou community that uses a vehicle equipped with books

to crisscross the surrounding villages every two weeks to bring books to local populations deprived of documentary infrastructures;

- the biblio- pirogue ["piroque library"], used by the Aurore association in a lakeside village near Cotonou to bring books to interested populations, using a motorized or non-motorized pirogue;

- the bibliome ["motorcycle library] that promotes books and reading in certain disadvantaged neighborhoods, via motorcycles.

## A4- The Zinsou Foundation mini-library initiative

The Zinsou Foundation is a cultural NGO dedicated to promoting the artistic heritage. Faced with the absence of public libraries and the reading crisis among young people in Benin, it initiated an open reading promotion project by creating mini-libraries in particular working-class neighborhoods in the city of Cotonou.

The first objective of this initiative was to provide free access to reading, especially for young people since the creation in 2009 of the first library among the four that this mini-network has opened. The goals of all these libraries are identical: promoting culture, giving the young public taste for reading, improving accessibility to places of knowledge that are free.

Even if these mini-libraries are not of a pedagogic nature, the foundation decided to install them in primary schools to bring them closer to education and training centers for children, their principal target. Several activities and innovations of an educational and entertaining nature are constantly being developed to most efficiently meet the great diversity of reading motivations, tastes and needs of the different kinds of readers who visit them (Sewlan S. Sonon, 2014).

In addition to these traditional book-related events and activities, a creation workshop is held every Wednesday evening and is one of the main activities in the foundation's libraries. Children aged 5 to 13 are introduced to different artistic techniques: drawing, coloring, decoupage, weaving, modeling, dance. It



has been attracted a great deal of interest and has been a resounding success with children, as the attendance rates, showing the interest of the young public (3-20 years old) bears witness to, with an initial presence of 1,610 primary school students and then 1,689 in 2014.

It is moreover in recognition of this interest in and the relevance of this initiative that the city administration of Cotonou provided the foundation with a space to house one of its libraries. In addition, the interest the project has aroused was equally recognized by foreign sponsors and aid to development agencies like the European Development Fund. The Libraries without Borders (BSF) and Biblionef associations have also helped the foundation to acquire a large collection of works.

## B- BURKINA FASO

The overview derived from several studies on reading in Burkina Faso clearly shows the existence of a public that wants to read but is hindered by the lack of availability and accessibility of books.

The "FAVL Burkina" NGO initiative

Despite the absence of a reading promotion policy in the country, certain NGOs are particularly active in creating village libraries. It is in this framework that the activities of the Association of Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL), working in Burkina Faso since 2007, are carried out. It is devoted to improving access to reading and information in disadvantaged villages by opening libraries that serve the entire village community: schoolchildren, adults and all those who are interested in reading.

The FAVL NGO is convinced that genuine development will only occur when the population has access to information and integrates the habit of reading and expressing its critical spirit. It supplies books that are prized by local readers: African novels, children's books, books on subjects of rural life and books in local languages for beginners. The principle of choice is that children, adolescents, farmers, weavers and all the other villagers should have the same access to information, through books and other media.

A concrete example is the Boni village library, which is the pride of all this rural locality's children. Located

in the center of the village, it is where the population converges on nonworking days. Children and young people go there to acquire knowledge. In addition to reading, there is the board game that creates a desire to visit the library. Intended for the youngest children, these games help attract children to the library – they go there to appreciate the images, read a little and especially finish their favorite games.

We can summarize the main achievements of FAVL as follows: the creation of 13 community libraries in six provinces in the country, seven of them in the Tuy region. There is also the publication of over 80 books for children and young people at the multimedia center of Houndé, and the release of a book on the impact of reading in Burkina Faso.

This network benefits in particular from the technical and financial support of the American NGO Friends of African Village Libraries, whose emanation and extension it is in Burkina Faso.

## C- CAMEROON

Cameroon does not have a national policy on reading and public libraries. However, many official texts have been formulated by the government to favor book and reading promotion programs. These measures have opened the way to many private and association initiatives directed at the population that has little or no direct access to books.

### The Yaoundé CLAC initiative

It is in a context of a shortage of structures dedicated to public reading that the CLAC of Yaoundé was created in 2007, on the initiative of its founder Charles Kamdem Poeghela, and managed by the Youth, Culture and Development Association. Its core objective is to interest the young readership in the book, as an information and communication support, and in reading, consequently creating a generation of adults who will "naturally" go to the book. The CLAC (Reading and Cultural Activities Center) of Yaoundé, not to be confused with the CLAC of the OIF, is a cultural establishment whose epicenter is an associative library located in Yaoundé, the country's capital.

The center functions by a bimonthly cultural pro-

gram, with activities focused on books and reading. Project organizers (librarians and external participants) propose reading sessions on novels, comic books and "early childhood books" to children (5 to 12 years old). However, for adolescents and adults, the flagship activity is the "reading club" during which one or more users present a book they found intriguing during the week, followed by a discussion.

The targets are especially children under the age of 13 and adolescents under 20. If a little over 200 permanent subscribers are registered at the library, the center can welcome more than 300 students at nearby primary schools for other activities.

On the technical level, the center has a public multimedia space with a dozen computers connected to the Internet, a professional bookbinding workshop, a cafeteria, a game library and an all-purpose room with a seating capacity of 75. More recently, it opened a "self-learning" room with 23 new laptops all connected to the Internet.

The center has had a media library since 2007. The works were provided through the support of organizations such as Libraries without Borders, the Institut Français of Cameroon, the American embassy, and acquisitions from authors, publishers, and local libraries. In total, the CLAC has three distinct libraries: one for children, one for adolescents and one for adults, with attendance of about 20,000 users a year.

In its modernization and diversification policy, it promotes pedagogic resources and contents that complement the traditional tools used, as well as e-learning, which makes it a center resolutely focused on the hybridization of resources. It is in this framework that the CLAC launched, in partnership with schools, a tool appreciated worldwide and adapted in French: the educational resources of the Khan Academy, an interactive and entertaining e-learning platform, accompanied by a tutorial system. The methodology proposed by the Khan Academy was successfully experimented on at the CLAC.

Given the CLAC's good results, the Cameroon Ministry of Culture and the district mayoralities of Yaoundé support its activities, in addition to other external partners.

## D- IVORY COAST

Ivory Coast still does not have a national policy on public reading or one on books. However, many primary texts have been adopted including a bill on the book industry, which was approved by the government in May 2015. The bill was sent to the National Assembly which examined it in July 2015. Once the law on the book industry has been voted on, application decree proposals concerning the different links in the book chain, including public reading will follow.

How many times have we heard it said that "Ivoirians don't like reading" whereas there are public and private libraries (municipal and school libraries) open to readers at affordable subscription costs? The recurring question of the high price of books is certainly very often brought up. However, the answer goes far beyond this point.

## D- the Children's Library initiative

The mission of the Ivory Coast National Library (BNCI) is to promote public reading. When it launched its rehabilitation program in 2008, after the crisis years, it was toward the young public that it turned as a priority by opening its new Children's Library (BE).

Structured to meet the needs and interests of the targeted population, in November 2008, the BE welcomed its readers in handsomely remodeled premises, the result of support from the Japanese Mitsubishi Corporation. It offers a reading room but also a story space, workshops on an introduction to mother tongues, a workshop for various activities (illustration, educational games, etc.), a computer room with computers connected to the Internet and a film projection room.

Various activities are proposed to youngsters, as well as parents, such as national book days for Ivoirian children, which have aroused the interest and excitement of the young public.

Moreover, in 2012, the BNCI initiated another program called "Women and Reading" with results appreciated in the field. This program consists of locating micro-libraries in hairdressing salons for women so that while their hair is being styled, they can use

their time to read.

## D-2 The Bibliobus initiative of the Fondation de la Première Dame

This foundation, whose president is Mme. Dominique Ouattara, the First Lady of Ivory Coast, has put bibliobuses [library buses] into circulation since 2008 with the collaboration of the Biblionef association. These buses crisscross the capital's disadvantaged neighborhoods as well as rural zones in the north to offer a first contact with books to thousands of children. Their arrival in the localities visit are often waiting for lots of impatience. Since late 2014, four of these vehicles have served this reading support initiative of the Fondation de la Première Dame. For example, in four months of activities in the Adzopé (Abidjan) district, the foundation's fourth bibliobus visited 45 schools, and 8,000 children were able to discover the pleasure of reading during these visits.

Moreover, the foundation is implementing a program called "Children's Hut" that welcomes dozens of boys and girls who mostly live in the street, who attend classes there and are cared for on a daily basis. This center has an excellent library, enriched by Biblionef.

Lastly, we can mention another initiative – the "One School, One Library" program – that the association of women secondary school principals has been conducting since 2012. The organization's president, Mme. Brou Lydi, a French teacher, launched this program to bring students closer to books. Sponsored by the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Culture, this association creates libraries in schools or provides them with books.

## E- MADAGASCAR

The public reading sector mobilizes very few actors in the country, taking into account both the sector's weak development and the low level of education and literacy of most of the Malagasy population. These include the limited production of books in Malagasy, the financial insufficiency of bookstores and libraries and the low purchasing power of the population.

As for public reading, about 330 reading or information and culture centers function in the country through different structures. These include nation-

nal and municipal libraries, reading centers in rural zones, school and university libraries, and the library of the National Academy of Art and Literature. Nonetheless, the majority of these reading centers do not function correctly due to a lack of adequate human and financial resources.

In a general fashion, dynamic actions favoring the promotion of the book culture are carried out by private entities, given that the country still does not have an adequate continuous support program or policy on books and reading. Among the actions undertaken by the private sector, we can note:

- The organization of encounters with authors in public primary schools;
- Awareness-raising for the development of publishing in Malagasy, especially for textbooks and young people's books;
- The organization of book fairs;
- The organization of reading and writing workshops.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are gradually helping to change the country's culture sector. However, despite the progress of these new technologies and the speed at which children become familiar with them, many parents first encourage their children to read paper books. The same is true for schools and teachers who could not envisage teaching and education without traditional books.

Not only are they rare, but the few books in Malagasy for children and young people are limited to certain genres: stories, a book that deals with tradition regarding childhood, poetry, novels and a few comic books and illustrated albums, either in one language or bilingual (French/Malagasy).

In the area of promoting reading in the national language to children, the first young people's digital book in Malagasy, *Maria Vakansy any Alaotra*, for OLPC XO laptops was published by Éditions Jeunes Malgaches supported by Francophone partners. The first distribution was carried out by students at the Antitorona school on Nosy Komba island, north of the main island.

The Malagasy government introduced books in the Malagasy language in schools, such as novels and poetry books to develop national languages and

cultural values. This helped promote a taste for books and reading with children and young people.

## The Inter Aide NGO initiative

The education NGO Inter Aide supervises about 15 school centers located in disadvantaged neighborhoods in the Madagascar capital to make available 15 "book boxes" that serve as a rotating library, to encourage young students to take an interest in books and reading. Each box stays in a center for two months before moving to another one. There are 20 books in each box, which are usually in French. The children are attracted by the illustrations, even if the images are often very different from their world and their reality because they come from book donation operations. But the activity organizers are trained to help them better appreciate the books available.

## F- MALI

The ALED NGO initiative and the "Mali Reads" project

Each year, many book-oriented events are held in Mali, including the Book and Reading Caravan, the Amazing Traveler Festival, the New Literary Season, the Reading Fête, etc. During these events, various games or literary cafés, reading games and competitions, activities, book sales and so on are organized.

The activities carried out by the ALED (Association for Reading, Education, and Development), founded in 1997, take part in this effervescent promotion of books and reading. Its mission is to help improve the quality of teaching and education through reading activities and the broader and more efficient use of written materials. It works in partnership with local communities, the ministries' decentralized structures: National Education, Literacy and National Languages, Culture, Communication, the New Information Technologies, etc.

For over a decade, the ALED has been equipping the basic schools of some parts in Mali with school and community libraries. Thus, with the support of its partners, it has opened 83 school and community libraries in the Kayes, Koulikoro, Sikasso and Ségou regions. It handles the follow-up of over 40 of these structures in the Ségou region alone.

Its libraries are both school and community libraries, first of all, accessible to students and teachers and

next to the local population. Their creation has created an excitement for reading everywhere as well as curiosity in young readers. In several schools, reading clubs have been initiated and reading competitions launched by them.

In each locality, the library's operation is supported by a management committee put in place by the community, bringing together the representatives of all the social groups. Its role consists in solving any of the library's operating and management problems, raising awareness in the population as to its attendance and mobilizing the resources needed to ensure autonomy and sustainability.

The strategy used to bring students to the library, to read and borrow books based on the teacher who is the first reader of the library's documentary collection or the reading corner. Through this process, the teacher discovers the best books and stories and the contents best adapted to illustrate a given lesson and the best exercises to enable the child to overcome any difficulties encountered.

In the publications in national languages area, for the needs of the newly literate, each library has reading materials in local languages, helping to consolidate literacy achievements and favoring assimilation, especially of new production, management and marketing techniques. This availability enables the newly literate to access directly documents concerning their daily practices and general culture.

## Promotion of reading

To support the development of reading, each year, the ALED organizes a Reading Week in the Ségou region, a cultural activity mobilizing thousands of people, notably teachers, cultural personalities and students. On this occasion, a reading corner is set up for students for lively reading and storytelling sessions.

Artistic and cultural productions for awareness-raising purposes are also envisaged. Two sketches on reading have been produced and are periodically shown on the national television channel, depending on the occasion. The first door to the practice of reading is the school and family milieu and the second library visits by girls very often occupied by household chores. To raise the populations' awareness on the importance of reading, the ALED holds or takes



part in roundtables on FM radio stations and the national television channel. These promotion activities are reinforced by discussion-debate sessions and storytelling in the libraries.

The ALED is currently implementing a new five-year program called "Mali Reading" with the financing of Canadian cooperation organizations. This program mainly stresses learning to read and write and aims at building the capacities of trainers at teacher training colleges. Also, it envisages creating nearly 900 reading corners in the 1st cycle (ages 6-8) of basic education schools in the Ségou, Sikasso and Mopti regions, while continuing support for the creation of libraries and for the publishing of children's books, in French as well as in Malian languages.

## G- SENEGAL

For both historical and cultural reasons, Senegal can be distinguished from many French-speaking countries in the evolution of the book and reading sector. It has the densest fabric of public reading spaces, despite the global observation of this subsector's weakness. In addition to a more favorable political and legal environment, the country has support structures, including a national professional association of librarians (ASBAD) and a librarian, archivist and documentalist training school (EBAD), all backed by an apparent political determination.

## G- The "Reading in Africa" initiative

The "Reading in Africa" project is a network of volunteer-based libraries located in small towns and villages in Senegal. In 1990, an association of residents from the town of Yoff (a Dakar suburb) created the Ousmane Sembène library with the support of French goodwill. Since that year, this project's partners have helped create 50 public libraries, 19 of them in the Dakar region and 31 elsewhere in the country. This has resulted in over 300,000 works they were made available to hundreds of thousands of readers, with the support of a hundred or so librarians.

Each time that a secondary school opens in a commune, the inhabitants try to create a library, because they understand its importance in their children's academic success. To do this, they turn to "Reading

in Africa." The core initiative is up to them, and they must make available space that is adapted, equipped with shelves and manage the library on a volunteer basis, without any involvement of the public authorities. The documentary collections are comprised as follows: half are young people's literature, a third pedagogic works (textbooks, reference works, books on extracurricular activities, from primary school through the university), but also works of African and universal literature, comic books, and a game library.

About 90% of this network's readers are students and teachers. However, it is principally youngsters (8-to-12-year-olds) who visit these libraries to read for pleasure and, starting at the age of 12, the readers favor "useful" reading (novels in the school program, reference works, books on extracurricular activities). The hours are tailored to the users: the libraries are open outside of class time. Moreover, a major reading promotion campaign called "I read" was launched by the project with different promotional tools and thematic collections accompanied by illustrated brochures: Senegalese and African literature, young people's literature from African publishers, the panoply of a middle-level student, etc.

## G-2 Jokko Initiative with Tostan

The Jokko Initiative is an excellent example of the use of ICTs in non-formal education to teach village communities to read and write. It has two phases: during the first, the participants learn to use the cell phone and, during the second, they use it to communicate, notably by SMS.

Jokko or "communication" in Wolof, the most widely spoken regional language in Senegal, expresses the program's desire to encourage the principle of collective decision-making in rural communities. Jokko's collective messaging service consequently opens the village to new means of communication while strengthening the links between its members. Implemented by the NGO Tostan in partnership with UNICEF Innovation, and CEGA (Center for Effective Global Action), the program's purpose is to "use the cell phone's potential first as a pedagogic tool to teach and strengthen literacy, and management organization and skills. It is also a social mobilization tool making it possible to create a consensus on local

development initiatives" (Debar and Jensen, 2013).

The Jokko Initiative was created not to replace traditional literacy training, but rather to complete Tostan's community empowerment program, notably by strengthening literacy and post-literacy activities. It aims at developing communication and collaboration within communities, with particular stress on the empowerment of women through a collective cell phone messaging system.

After a final pilot phase in 10 villages of the Vélingara department (in southern Senegal), the program was extended to 200 villages in the Kolda, Ziguinchor, Tambacounda, Kaolack and Fouta regions between September 2007 and December 2008.

Traditional participatory learning and communication methods are used to help the participants become familiar with the tool and the methodology. This includes presenting the device's functions using concrete examples, with semi-concrete and abstract models. For instance, the phone's menu is shown by analogy with a mango tree, each element being represented as a part of the tree.

Each class has on average 50 learners who are trained in the practical use of an ordinary cell phone's functions, with a particular stress on sending and receiving messages and texts, entering and recovering contacts. These applications are particularly useful for improving the literacy levels of the beneficiaries who read and write messages. Before the start of the program, the cell phone used for the training sessions are presented to the chief of the village and the local imam who are asked to approve publicly the rules defined by Tostan to use the devices. To conclude, the trainers explain to the community how the phones will be utilized at the end of the sessions.

## H- RECOMMENDATIONS

The review of these good reading promotion strategies permits us to make the following recommendations (for the formulation of advocacy messages) to the Ministries of Education and those in charge of culture:

- National policies on the library and public reading
- Launching the formulation process on national policies on the library and public reading, or national policies on books including national languages and

the ICTs;

- The teaching of reading in schools, family reading, and the family's role

□ Ensuring the dynamic and lively teaching of reading at school to inculcate the student's love of books and a taste for reading;

□ Inviting parents into schools during book-focused reading sessions or events to show them how teachers, writers, and activity organizers t libraries read to children;

□ Raising parents' awareness about encouraging children to visit libraries and practicing reading at home;

□ Promoting an environment favorable to reading by diversifying the means of access to books through the creation of school libraries and reading corners.

- Reading clubs, text competitions, literacy training for adults

□ Intensifying non-formal education programs for every group (young people, women, adults) to give them reading and writing skills in their language;

□ Initiating appropriate spaces (classroom, library, reading or documentation center) for listening to tales, interesting stories, reading aloud by using means that stimulate visual and auditory faculties: ICTs;

□ Favoring through every available means, and with the involvement of all the actors in the book sector, varied reading communication and promotion campaigns within the community.

- School and community libraries and public reading

□ Continuing to create school libraries to support learning and improve reading performances by increasing the desire and ability to read;

□ Giving libraries premises, equipment, and financial resources so that they can offer a pleasant, user-friendly and attractive setting for the various groups of readers;

□ Helping libraries to be capable partners of all the components of society to develop reading habits in the populations;

□ Creating favorable conditions so that libraries endeavor actually to meet information needs in the communities that house them;

□ Favoring alternative solutions when nearby reading sectors are lacking, by means of "mobile libraries," of the bibliobus, bibliomoto and bibliopirogue type, for example.

- Outdoor reading, reading tents, book caravans, bibliobus, etc.

□ Reinforcing events and activities through books to stimulate the taste for reading in children;

□ Supporting traveling book and reading promotion events like a book and reading weeks, book caravans, traveling trunks, reading tents, etc.;

□ Intensifying education and communication programs for the populations using new technologies such as the cell phone.

- Support for publishing and the promotion of the literate environment

□ Setting up book assistance funds to support local book publishing and distribution, in French and national languages;

□ Supporting literary creation by organizing and protecting national copyrights;

□ Ensuring tax exemptions for new local book production companies to ensure increased documentary production;

□ Increasing the acquisition of books in national languages by library networks;

□ Ensuring that publishing houses can follow technological progress and create interesting contents for young people that are wealthy and interactive to respond to the constant evolution of children's requests, and that attract their attention to printed books.

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## The pleasure of writing about and for a distant partner: the educational e-twinning of Apréli@.

Convinced that the digital approach can revitalize learning a language and increase students' appetite for reading and writing, the Apréli@ association (1) has been mobilizing, since 2009, its inter-African network of trainers and teachers to produce free African educational resources tailored to African educational needs. Its international workshop held in 2011 in Dakar produced the model and the first resources of educational e-twinning (2). These permitted distant classes to hold exchanges and collaborate on joint pedagogic and educational activities, each class making a digital travel log at its partner classes by asking the other class to collect information. To best respond, the partner class uses various resource people in the community.

To create the travel log, the student therefore take part in two types of activities: on one hand, they look for, organize and format information on their environment, including cultural context elements, then send it to their partners; on the other, they have to understand, organize and format the information received from their partners, and, if need be, ask for additional information. While "getting to know" their partners, they produce knowledge and take ownership of the other's knowledge. The children are therefore placed in the position of actors, knowledge-producers and ambassadors of their school and the surrounding community.

So a class in Dakar, e-twinning with a class in Kariola (Ivory Coast) will draw up a list of questions and information requests for its Ivorian partners with a view to creating the different chapters of its digital travel log in Kariola, such as "Our partners' parties," "Our partners' favorite dishes," "Those little pests that annoy our partners so much." As the Ivorian class

is doing the same thing to produce its digital travel log in Dakar, the two partners are undertaking a continuous dialogue, in both a synchronous and asynchronous mode, punctuated by the back-and-forth requests/transmissions of information, needed to achieve their objective. As each class needs the partner class to reach its goal, the two classes are implementing a cooperative work pact in order to produce texts that must be validated by their partners, as "critic-friends." This work method makes it possible to have a real public to evaluate the work that they normally carry out in class, whether it is in French, science, history and geography or in most of the other subjects. The school programs therefore don't change, but are put into a motivating context that permit the student, in a dual centering/decentering movement, to (re)discover his or her world so that the partner class discovers it, discovers the world of the partner class and perhaps revisits his or her own world through the eyes of the partner class.

As the successive stages of writing the texts are done in groups, validated by the group, then by the entire class, the students organize themselves within the group, help each other and divide up the various tasks linked to the activity, before agreeing on the writing of their text and its illustrations.

The results of the observation of the pilot phase, conducted in 2011-2012 by the TESSA researchers (3), were presented at the DETA conference (4) in 2013. As the e-twinning activities took place during the sequences devoted to French, the teachers stressed how the children had learned differently and better, in an atmosphere of confidence and mutual aid. They noticed that the students who, until that point didn't dare speak in class, had blossomed and hence-



# Special report

forth actively participated. (One teacher recounts: "The students are very relaxed when they take part in e-twinning activities. It's like a game, they don't show any apprehension. It's really amazing! If only all learning could be done in an atmosphere like that!")

As for language learning, they noted considerable progress in oral and written expression, especially for the appropriate use of new lexical terms. The students very much wanted to send their partners well-written texts, without any spelling mistakes, meeting the requests made by the partners.

They identified the acquisition of many new skills and attitudes which they documented, carried out research on and presented its results, organized, worked in groups, listened, presented and justified their viewpoint, showed creativity, self-confidence and assurance. They noticed that these new skills and attitudes had spread to the entire school and activity time.

Moreover, they observed how the students had developed their curiosity and open-mindedness, by showing a growing interest in school conditions, the environment, their partners' life-style and culture, especially in terms of intercultural activities such as preparing dishes from recipes written by their partners or taking part in games using the descriptions provided by the partners. They also liked the students' development of enthusiasm and a healthy emulation.

As for the students, they liked these new ways of working in class, pointing out that they felt much freer to express themselves. They liked the collaborative work carried out to produce documents sent to their partners. "By sharing our knowledge, we all know more."

The first results of the African initiative that the educational e-twinning constitutes (5) therefore opened convincing tracks for pedagogic uses of endogenous digital resources. They showed that in updating the practices of reading and writing, in developing active

and collaborative practices based on a project that makes sense for the students and brings them together, the digital offers the African school the opportunity to do writing, reading, literature, times when each student, beyond the acquisition of knowledge and school skills, constructs himself as an active subject of a global world and has his or her singular voice heard in the concert of intercultural exchanges

It is now up to the decision-makers in education to broaden these promising paths and to support African production of teaching-learning digital resources that are the most appropriate to contexts and needs, in line with the continent's sustainable development issues, making use of the rich potential of free educational resources. (6)

(1) Association for the Promotion of free African educational resources, <http://aprelia.org/>

(2) <http://wiki.aprelia.org/>; the resources are available in French and English.

(3) Teacher Education in Sub Saharan Africa: <http://www.tessafrica.net/>

(4) Distance Education and Teacher Education in Africa: <http://www.deta.up.ac.za/>

(5) Apréli@ coordinates the development of the first West African community of innovative schools linked by educational e-twinning: <http://aprelia.org/index.php/fr/activites/e-jumelages>

(6) Free educational resources: <http://www.unesco.org/new/fr/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-in-focus-articles/in-focus-articles/2012/open-educational-resources-congress-passes-historic-declaration/>

# Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope.

## Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General

The International Children's Literacy Corps (ICLC) is a non-profit organization founded in 1999 that has as its mission to increase literacy among pre-school children in the developing world, starting with sub-Saharan Africa.

In the developed world most of us take reading for granted. We read the paper over breakfast, reports at work, books in school, magazines on the train, and a story before bedtime. We rarely lack for the written word. When we do, there is always the library. In much of the developing world, however, things are quite different. Globally, almost one billion people cannot read. Many others can, but have nothing to read.

The traditional approach to endemic illiteracy in the developing world has been on the supply side, with efforts going to shipping books and housing them in newly-built libraries. The ICLC, too, initially took this approach. Its costliness, however, led us to come at the problem in a new way, one that seeks to influence not just the supply but also the demand for reading materials. Called «Reading for Life,» ICLC's initiative takes advantage of existing institutions, resources, and infrastructures to develop and distribute age-appropriate, locally relevant, and fun reading materials on a mass scale to future young readers and their families, and does so with negligible costs. This distribution works in tandem with a role model-driven public service campaign that disseminates the crucial message that reading is a family activity and that those who can read must read with those who can not. We are implementing our pilot program in Senegal.

[Click here to read about the latest developments in](#)



Senegal.

- In Douala, the commercial center of Cameroon, the ICLC has funded and continues to support the country's first private library that is open to the public. It is now the focal point of a knowledge-hungry community of all ages. This project was the catalyst for the inception of the ICLC and continues to serve as a model of how like-minded groups can, even with limited means, create lasting, positive change with wide-ranging impact over great distances.

- Working with AJPB, our local partner in Senegal's capital, Dakar, the ICLC delivered toys, books, pre-school equipment and supplies to establish two pre-schools, which are connected to nutritional centers for young mothers. This is a perfect venue for young children, their mothers and books to come together and start building a lasting relationship.

## Why sub-Saharan Africa?

According to recent UNESCO estimates, of the top 20 nations with the lowest literacy rates, 10 are in sub-Saharan Africa. There, more than half the population over 15 years of age is illiterate. And women are particularly hard hit: more than 70% are illiterate (close to 90% of women in Niger can not read). But the desperate situation in Sub-Saharan Africa does have a few bright spots, places with a legacy of education, and the use of French and English as important secondary and sometimes primary languages. It is in these areas that the ICLC is focusing its first efforts. In Senegal, where we are starting the Reading for Life initiative, only about one half of the population can read.

## Why Reading?

Illiteracy is just one of an array of social, medical, and economic problems plaguing sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS, famine, civil and clan warfare, and chronic economic underdevelopment vie for attention in a region that generally receives very little. In this context, the issue of literacy is often overlooked due to its relatively «benign» nature. The ICLC addresses the fact that illiteracy is not benign at all ? it is directly linked to under education, overpopulation, and economic stagnation. While there is no single solution to these interconnected problems, there is one common denominator to any such effort: to improve education and access to knowledge at all levels of society, especially the lowest. Literacy is the fundamental lynchpin in this effort.

## Why Children?

Short life expectancies are a tragic reality in the region (fifty-three in Senegal and forty-five in Burkina Faso, as opposed to seventy-nine in France). This makes it imperative that children ? ideally, of pre-school age -- be the focus of literacy efforts. By focusing on young children and preparing them for school, our goal is to pre-empt dropouts and stimulate a life-long love of reading. In turn this will help to develop a deeper reading culture, to narrow

the literacy gap between boys and girls, and to build generations of readers who will enrich their communities even as reading enriches their own lives.

## How: Reading for Life

The program is simple: to harness three pre-existing resources and use them together to power a fun, effective, and low-cost family-based attack on illiteracy from the bottom up. The pre-schools and primary schools will be among the distribution vehicles for locally created, richly illustrated, quality reading material aimed at young children ages two through six. At the same time, outdoor billboard and radio will be used as media calling on all those who can read to read aloud to others, early and often. Existing readers (parents, older siblings, uncles, aunts) will be the catalyst to match demand with supply in the home, and ensure that everyone gets a story before bedtime.

This new approach is revolutionary in its simplicity. As it makes use of existing infrastructure, it is relatively cheap, involves few long-term agreements and mandates local participation and action in all aspects of the initiative. Equally important, it will complement (rather than duplicate) other development efforts aimed at children, families, and education. Reading for Life will sow the seeds of a sustainable reading culture and prepare children for school by helping them develop a comfortable and confident relationship with the written word. [Click here for some sample images.](#)

## The Role of the ICLC

The ICLC has three significant roles: the first is to raise funds to enable the implementation of Reading for Life, the second to implement the program at the local level together with its partner in Senegal, and the third to evaluate and improve upon the program for subsequent execution in other sub-Saharan nations. As the center point of alliance among authors, illustrators, educators, corporate partners and other NGOs, the ICLC will exercise editorial supervision over content to ensure a robust and exciting pipeline of appropriate materials. We will develop innovative

# Profile: The International Children's Literacy Corps

delivery methods, explore channels of distribution.

Your help will make this happen.

Please contribute by sending a check payable to The International Children's Literacy Corps and mail it to:

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Mamaroneck, NY 10543

The ICLC is recognized by the IRS as a non-profit organization (501c3) and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

For more information or to find out how you can support us, please contact us at:

[info@readingforlife.org](mailto:info@readingforlife.org) or by mail at the above address, or by phone at: 914-834-2615





## Algerie Presse Service (Algiers)

### Algeria: Training and information forum in Tamazight for communication managers

*A training and information forum in the Tamazight language was held Monday in Algiers by the Caisse nationale des assurances sociales (CNAS) In coordination with the High Council for Amazighity (HCA) for managers of the welcome and orientation cells of the agencies and structures of the CNAS.*

With the slogan "Tamazight, a communication bridge," this two-day forum that took place in the form of workshops, was intended for the managers of the welcome and orientation cells of the 49 provincial agencies of the CNAS throughout the country.

During this symposium, two agents per wilaya or province were trained so that they could give training sessions, in their turn, in their respective agencies to introduce the employees in charge of welcome and orientation to a specific vocabulary in Tamazight.

The goal of this forum, which had 120 participants, was to concretize the action program of the CNAS, notably in its communication and information section through the promotion of communication of proximity with the fringes of society, which was explained at the forum.

It also concerned informing communication managers and agents about the best behavioral methods to be used with citizens who speak the Tamazight language, with the objective of bringing the administration closer to its citizens.

The forum was led by teachers, academics and researchers from the departments of Amazigh language and culture at the universities of Tizi Ouzou, Batna, Bejaia and Bouira.

In his opening speech, Seif El Hak Chorafa, representing the prime minister, pointed out that this forum was situated in the context of making Tamazight an official language, indicating that it expressed the government's political determination to effectively introduce Tamazight and to consolidate it in society

and institutions.

As for the president of the CNAS, Hassan Tidjani Heddam, he noted that this training and exchange session was a first founding initiative of a continuous support process for one of the aspects of the exercise of public services by the employees of the CNAS vis-à-vis users, stressing that it was a question of "optimizing communication and mutual comprehension in this framework."

For Mr. Heddam, Tamazight, which is present in the media, is "necessarily" called on to develop in a "considerable" manner in communication with the citizens by raising awareness in the employees and managers about taking the linguistic context in which they work into account.

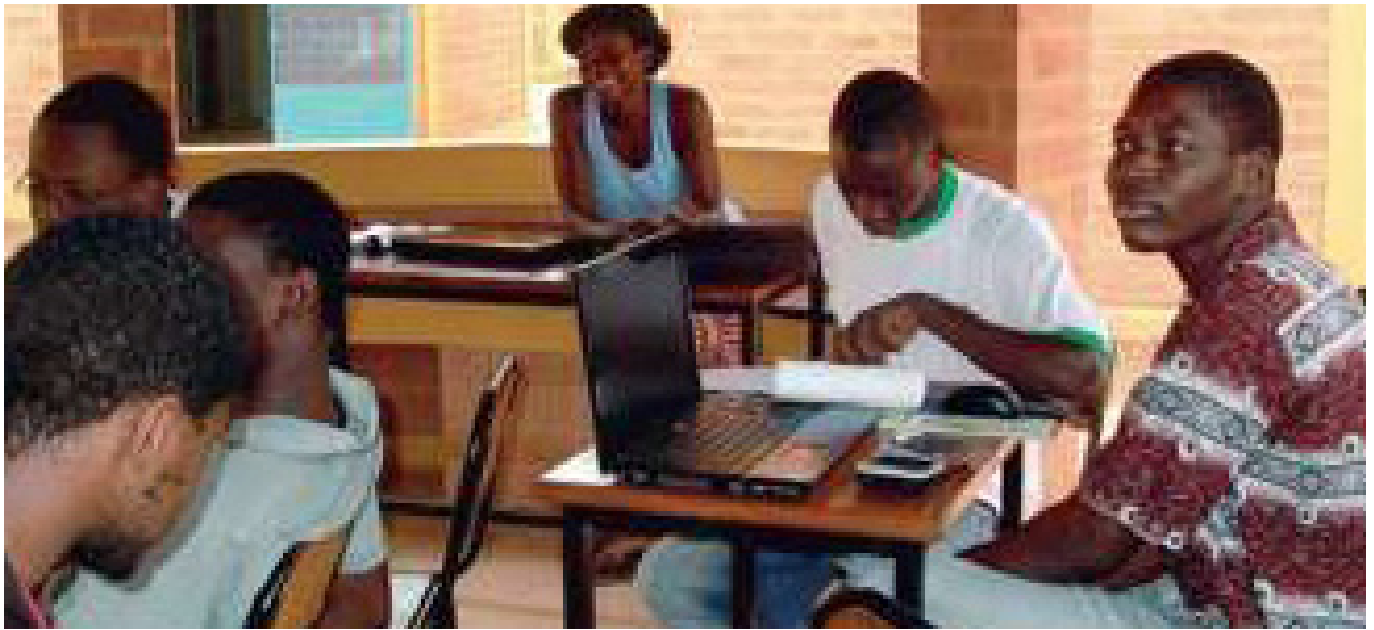
"The objective is the qualitative improvement of welcome and orientation working conditions by putting forward linguistic knowledge and exchange experiences," Mr. Heddam added.

As for the secretary general of the HCA, Si El Hachemi Assad, he explained that the mission of the institution that he heads is to "get more involved in the affirmation of Tamazight as a modern tool contributing to social cohesion, development and scientific, literary and cultural innovation.

«The amended Constitution improves the place of Tamazight on the national institutional chessboard and aims at anchoring this language in the field of research, its promotion and influence on the entire country," he said, also considering that this forum was "the beginning of a more arduous and subtle phase that requires an intelligent, cautious and well-thought-out approach."

## Angola Press

### Angola: Lunda Sul – Training must be increasingly spread, says Pitra Neto



Saurimo (Angola) – The Angolan minister of public administration, work and social security, Pitra Neto, said Tuesday in this city that the vocational training offer should be increasingly extended in a constant and qualified manner.

The governor put forward this topic at the closing of a seminar on entrepreneurship directed at 276 young entrepreneurs who benefited from microcredit granted by the financial institution "Banco Sol" in the framework of his ministry's policies.

The expansion of vocational training will enable young people and adults to have the opportunity to be trained on their own premises instead of going to the municipal headquarters.

In his opinion, the state gave the responsibility to private operators to serve as a growth and investment springboard in the country.

## Raising the teaching-learning bar: Could the Finnish way help Nigeria?

LE 26 MAI 2016

The learning workload for children in Nigeria seems to be high. Children spend upwards of seven hours in school. After normal school hours, they start lessons. Most get home around 6.00pm, worn out and still have homework to do before going to bed. They wake up early the next day and the cycle continues. Weekends and holidays are not left out so children have no time to rest, play and be children. Despite all these, many perform woefully in external examinations.

A paradox indeed! On the other hand, Finland, a Northern European nation, is adjudged the best in the world educationally and they do the exact opposite of what obtains in Nigeria. In a documentary on Finnish educational system, American documentary filmmaker, Michael Moore, said: "Children spend comparatively little time at school, don't get homework and yet receive one of the best educations in the world." In this report, Vanguard Learning looks at what makes Finland's education system tick and what Nigeria can learn from it.

### Excerpts: By Ebele Orakpo

BACK in the days, Finland schools sucked. When they tested the kids among world kids, both Finland and Austria were down the list of nations. Finland didn't like that so they tried some new ideas and in no time, Finland shot to the top of the world, their students were number one!

Finland students have the shortest school days and the shortest school year in the entire western world. They do better by going to school less," said Moore.

How they did it: Finland's former Minister of Education, Ms. Krista Kiuru said: "They do not have homework! We reduced the homework we give to



students. They should have more time to be youngsters, to enjoy life." Playing is part of education: Kiuru told Wise Education Conference in Qatar in 2014 that "the most important thing in early childhood education is making sure kids have enough time to play. Children do not play to learn, they learn while playing.

In early education, we teach kids to be life-long learners because they learn to learn." Anna Hart, a first grade teacher said "the kids could climb a tree; but while climbing, they find out things about different insects so they come to school the next day and tell me about it. Mrs Jennifer Che, Manager of Sustainability Outreach Programs, American University of Nigeria said the Finish system is unique . "It has not even been contemplated in Nigeria. However, in Spain, we have Montessori and the Waldorf Schools, both of which follow the Finish example."

Worrisome: Prof. (Mrs) Joanne Umolu, professor of Special Education and Director, Open Doors for Spe-

cial Learners, Jos, described what obtains in Nigeria as disturbing. "Finnish schools don't start teaching reading until the children are around seven years.

## Concept development

Here, they start at age two and three! I am very worried about how schools are pushing children too fast. Why must a Primary One child use Primary 2 books? The system doesn't reflect the fact that primary education is for skills building and concept development – not just cramming 'knowledge.' Children need time to mature and the opportunity to be creative – not just copy notes. I'm very, very disturbed about this," she said.

Secret to success: In her contribution, Mrs Jane Olatunji-Hughes, consummate educationist, who holds a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology, said: "From what I know of Scandinavian schools, the children start school at around 7 years of age and learn to read within three months.

"They learn in their mother tongue. That is their first secret of success. The second is that they have many pre-school years in nurseries that emphasize skills development so that by the time they go to formal school, they have social skills, emotional stability, physical coordination and strength, well established concepts of number, volume, space and time; ability to sit still, listen and concentrate.

"Nursery staff are facilitators rather than teachers. They observe their pupils and provide the stimulus needed for each individual child at the precise level needed." Striking a balance: In Finland, children don't spend more than 20 hours a week in school, including lunch hours. The younger children spend three hours on Mondays, four on Tuesdays, it varies," said Hart.

## Striking a balance

Comparing school calendar from different countries, Mrs Peju Okungbowa of the American Christian Academy, Ibadan noted that "Nigerian students are not going through anything peculiar. The only challenge with some schools is striking a balance between play and academics or being skilled at inculcating play into learning."

Crowded curriculum: In Nigeria, children are in

school for upwards of seven hours and then there is after-school, holiday and weekend lessons, leaving them little or no time to rest, play and be children. Umolu says parents are partly to blame because they want to rush their kids into secondary school at age 8 and 9 and so, the schools feel under pressure to push them. There is no Primary 6 in private schools in Nigeria.

Such nonsense! It is not just too much workload on the kids, but it is the type of workload. We get kids in our reading clinic who are bright but have been failing because they never had the opportunity to learn to read at the time they were developmentally ready." It is believed that if basic education is gotten right, all other things will fall into place. According to Kiura, "reforming early years was a priority for the Finnish government. The Finnish system draws teacher candidates from the top 10% of graduates, trains teachers well, and lets them design the curriculum around very lean national standards."

Way to go: Mrs Okungbowa believes that the after-school classes or holiday lesson is not the problem but what is done in after-school. "The typical Nigerian school needs to understand that play is a framework for learning. It doesn't always have to be about learning Math or other subjects.

After-school classes can be geared towards raising a total child. Sporting activities, music, arts, structured and free play can be the thrust of our after-school programs. "The objective of homework is to reinforce what was taught at school; therefore it need not be an overload on the child. Just some few practice questions will suffice.

## Frustration and failure

There should also be room for inquiry-based learning, where students are in charge of their own learning." Effects on children: Okungbowa said the overall effect of this lack of balance in school's scheduling "is that the students become bored and weary of learning because it's like they are being hit on every side. They are not able to internalize and apply what they have learnt before they are faced with another task so we produce students who only know the theoretical but deficient in the practical facet. "

Said Olatunji-Hughes: "Giving work that is too dif-



difficult leads to frustration and failure to learn. Work that is too easy leads to lack of interest and failure to fulfill the child's potential. In Nigeria, I was head of three separate nursery and primary schools in Lagos, Bukuru and Jos. Providing a suitable pre-school environment was difficult. Educational toys were not readily available. Books suitable for younger children were usually imported and culturally inappropriate. Local books were mostly written by people who had no idea about how young children develop and used both language and content that was too adult.

"Creative teachers could improvise materials if they were given enough time and money. Most of the teachers that we were able to recruit lacked adequate training in the needs of young children. The education colleges mostly laid emphasis on training teachers for higher classes. Authoritarian and top down methods were not good for our young children. Money was a big problem for us.

The ideal pre-school class should have a ratio of one adult to 10 children. We often had to have classes of 50 children in order to meet costs when parents could not afford to pay high fees. I believe that Finland invests a lot of money into its educational system, to provide the best training of nursery staff and to develop suitable learning materials."

In Nigeria, we are saddled with what is in essence

still the colonial English system. Currently in Britain, the politicians are trying to interfere in schools to make them more rigid and formal but they are being countered by a well-trained and committed force of teachers. The trouble is that too many people believe that by pushing children harder, they will get better results, and education is becoming highly competitive. It's like the arms race. And it's just as counter-productive.





## The Sunday Post – Zambia

### Corruption causing more damage on nations with scanty resources – ACBF

By Chambwa Moonga

AFRICAN Capacity Building Foundation executive secretary Professor Emmanuel Nnadozie says failure by governments to invest in human capital development is a warranty for non-development.

And Prof Nnadozie says while corruption is not uniquely an African phenomenon, the scourge causes more damage on nations with scanty resources.

In an interview in Lusaka, Prof Nnadozie explained that the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), which is based in Harare, Zimbabwe, was in the business of enhancing the capability of people and institutions through provision of technical assistance.

"If you do not invest in capacity building, it's definite that you have signed your own warranty for non-development, that's exactly what it is. Investing in capacity building is a major issue for every country and they have to really put in their resources, otherwise they will not be able to achieve their goals," Prof Nnadozie noted.

"We are in the business of building capacity of people and institutions. As an organisation, we provide grants for capacity projects and programmes such as training and we also provide technical assistance. We have some programmes that we are financing, including here at the University of Zambia...ACBF was created 25 years ago to address the capacity challenges facing Africa. It was created by African countries and their partners. Every country that has developed has invested in human capital. What is investment in human capital? It can be through education – if you train people in primary school to secondary and to tertiary education, [it means] you have improved their capacity."

He also highlighted that the formation of the ACBF followed the realisation by African governments between 1970 and 1980 that one of the greatest challenge among public workers was lack of expertise

and skills to deliver or design policies or development strategies.

Prof Nnadozie added that with continued service provision by ACBF over the years, African governments now make evidence-based policies.

"Policy making has improved significantly across the continent in ministries of finance, in central banks and you can see that this is the reason African countries were able to withstand the global economic crisis because they now have more capacity to be able to make sound economic policies," he observed.

On governments that are still riddled with non-functioning staff, Prof Nnadozie advised that budgetary allocations have to be made towards staff retraining.

"They (governments and private sector institutions) have to make budgetary allowance and provide for human capital development or professional development because everywhere in the world, people who work in organisations need to improve themselves regularly, they need to build their capacity. It is not because someone who has a degree comes in...They have to be exposed to professional things and so on," he said.

And asked about how corruption impacts on African economies, Prof Nnadozie pointed out that the vice perpetuates poverty, especially among those who do not have a voice.

"I will tell you that corruption is not uniquely an African problem; it's everywhere in the world but of course, if you have limited resources, corruption tends to have greater impact on you and your society than for those who have larger amounts of resources. But for ACBF, we believe that it's important to fight corruption because it can lead to many bad things not just for the state but also the citizens, especially for the poor and those who do not have a voice," said Prof Nnadozie.

## SENEGAL

### THE SENEGALESE SCHOOL FROM YESTERDAY TO TODAY: FROM GRANDEUR TO DECADENCE

by MODY NIANG

The Senegalese public school has been going through a long period of turbulence, expressed by repeated strikes and many other forms of struggles deployed by the teachers unions: holding back marks, boycotting exams, sit-ins, etc. The result of this instability, this crisis – it is really one – that is going through the Senegalese school is that it no longer attracts, no longer inspires confidence. It is doing badly, very badly. That is, at least, what one hears said on every street corner by different actors: teachers, parents, students, authorities, etc. Many of them bitterly regret the golden era of the Senegalese school, the school of the 1960s whose influence went beyond Senegal's borders. What therefore happened so that, in 60 or so years, our school arrived at a situation that we all deplore today?

To answer this question, a rapid background is necessary. This background will certainly not take us back as far as Jean Dard. That would be too far in the past. We will therefore take as a starting point Senegal's independence. From this period until the 1980s, perhaps even until the 1990s, the Senegalese public school was considered a good school, even a prestigious school. The private school was practically inexistent or, if it existed, was relegated to the background and only received, in general, what was called at the time the "waste products" of the public school. What factors explained this success of the public school?

The first primary schools, in any case those that had six classes or more, generally had as principals graduates of the prestigious teachers school École Normale William Ponty, who had under their responsibility assistants mostly trained at permanent pedagogic training centers. There was one in Saint-



Louis, in Thiès, Kaolack and Dakar with, as directors, brilliant teachers who also graduated from the École Normale William Ponty. These training structures had well-stocked documentation centers and ran from October to June. The interns came out of them with the theoretical part of the Elementary Certificate of Pedagogic Aptitude (CEAP) and were sent all over the country. Before the end of the school year, they received the inspector of primary education who had them pass the practical and oral part to obtain the definitive CEAP. Those who succeeded in obtaining this first professional diploma were licensed in the corps of assistant schoolteachers. To access the corps of licensed schoolteachers, they had to take, seven years later, the written exam of the Certificate of Pedagogic Aptitude (CAP). If they were admitted to the written exam and obtained definitive admission after having taken the practical and oral part, they became licensed schoolteachers.

In seven years, they largely had the time to learn their profession, with the supervision of inspectors, principals and colleagues. Seven years was a long time and the authorities were aware of it. To encourage the most enterprising assistant schoolteachers, the Higher Diploma of Aptitude (BSC) was created. It was comprised of two parts (BSC 1 and BSC 2). The holders of the BSC were exempt from the written part of the CAP and directly took the practical and oral exams. In this way, a young assistant schoolteacher could have the CAP four or five years after the CEAP.

Another quality factor was the creation, in 1972, of the regional teachers colleges that trained, in four years, excellent schoolteachers. They finished school with the Higher Diploma of Teachers Studies (BSEN) and obtained the CAP after having passed the practical and oral exam during the following school year. Many of these alumni would become inspectors, secondary school and university teachers, civil administrators, etc.

Let us also note that at the beginning of independence, young people who had a National Diploma (BEPC) and even the Certificate of Elementary Primary Studies (CEPE) and had spent a few years in lower secondary school (especially private) were recruited and sent directly to the schools, without any prior pedagogic training. Thanks to efficient supervision, they were inserted without too many obstacles, in any case, for most of them.

These good teachers worked under favorable conditions: pleasant school environment, availability of pedagogic materials, efficient and regular pedagogic supervision, reasonable class sizes, stability of the school space, etc. The best students who came out of this environment were admitted to excellent secondary schools (Lycée Faidherbe, Lycée Van Vollenhoven, Lycée des jeunes filles de Rufisque, later Lycée Charles de Gaulle, Gaston Berger, Blaise Diagne, Malick Sy de Thiès, etc.). These schools, at the period prestigious, were excellent study settings, with competent teachers, the best of them holding a Secondary School Teaching Certificate (CAPES).

To broaden access, complementary courses were created. They would later become general teaching colleges, with teachers trained at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) of Dakar. The first trainers were "CAPESIENS" who carried out their task brilliantly. The author of these lines is well-placed to bear witness to this, being an ENS alumnus.

Thus, well-trained students in primary as well as secondary school got very good results on the baccalaureate exam and were admitted to a prestigious university, that of Dakar. The students who graduated from it with a bachelor's degree in literature, math or science made good teachers if they chose education as a career. Our high school graduates were also received with open arms at major universities in Europe and North America.

Other factors, that we are undoubtedly not going to review here, helped make, in times gone by, the Senegalese school a quality school. Unfortunately, over time, and for reasons that we are going to explain, these different factors would gradually contribute to the deterioration of the schools. Thus, toward the end of the 1970s, the school would be extremely politicized, with the attribution of the management of most of the schools solely to members of so-called pro-government teachers unions (SYNELS, SYPROS, etc.). In addition, there was mass recruitment of teachers sent directly into the classrooms or, without having taken any competitive exams, to pedagogic training centers where they were crowded in. Centers received cohorts until May. Three well-known ministers stand out in this practice that deteriorated teaching quality. People thus ironically spoke of the 400 "turkey wings" of one of them. This was in 1990. Another was celebrated for his famous "security quota."

It is also appropriate to point out the elimination of the boarding school, which was a badly inspired recommendation of the General Assembly of Education and Training in January 1981. There is no need to stress the many benefits of this system for the students. It notably contributed to the wonderful school successes of this period. We will not spend



any time either on explaining the gradual deterioration of the system, the instability of the schools due to the recurring teacher and student strikes, which resulted in the sometimes drastic reduction in classroom time.

The gradual decrease in the budgets allocated to education because of structural adjustment policies did not help matters at all. On the contrary! As education was no longer considered a production sector, public expenditures were directed elsewhere. We would understand later the lack of relevance of this choice and, in March 1990, the World Conference on Education For All (held in Jomtien in Thailand) rectified the situation. It recommended to the member states "a quality education for all by the year 2000." This was obviously a very difficult challenge but at least it was a sign. It was, in fact, easier to launch the concept than to meet the gigantic objective. With the imposed structural adjustment policies, the country lacked money. Yet, schools had to be built and a large number of teachers recruited to keep up with the times. The government threw itself in, without really having the means and not taking into account school mapping in the construction of so-called schools of proximity. They proliferated, in the form of temporary shelters or even, if they were built, lacking almost everything: no administrative blocs, sanitation blocs, libraries, laboratories, often without fences and open to animals and strong winds.

This proliferation was unfortunately not accompanied by a sizable recruitment of quality teachers, trained at good schools. Instead, education volunteers and contract employees without any professional qualifications were hired, with precarious living and teaching conditions. The authorities of Alternance proudly brandished the number of schools that were built in record time, compared to the low number (according to them) of schools built by the socialists during 40 years. In their haste to lengthen their lists, they transformed without warning lower secondary schools into upper secondary schools, leaving the same teaching personnel in place, the flagrant shortage of teachers of subjects like science, math, philosophy, etc. not making it possible to replace them by secondary education teachers. They did not

understand, the poor things, that education was not a sprint.

Such practices therefore continued to deteriorate the system and have repercussions on the level of teachers and students. The weakness of pedagogic supervision and the gradual deterioration of the value of diplomas added to this situation. To obtain diplomas like the CAPES and the CAP, the teachers were forced to learn their profession. Student teachers graduated from the Faculty of Education and Training Sciences and Techniques (FASTEF) with a distinction – the Certificate of Aptitude in Secondary Education (CAES), which replaced the CAPES. The same was true for schoolteachers who, after training that lasted a few months in the Regional Centers of Training for Education Personnel (CRFPE), obtained their CAP. As the corps of assistant schoolteachers had disappeared for no apparent reason, the stock of several tens of thousands of teachers of this level who were still working were offered the CAP after a few short months of training at the CRFPEs.

The ease in obtaining diplomas or in accessing higher levels did not spare the university, which also underwent a serious deterioration of study conditions. It admitted increasingly mediocre secondary school graduates, in ever greater numbers, supervised by increasingly less trained teachers. This situation was further aggravated by the rise to power of Alternance on March 19, 2000. The new president of the republic easily made a serious decision that had heavy consequences: the orientation of all secondary school graduates to the university, with scholarships or generalized financial aid. For a dozen years, there was this rush of secondary school graduates, whereas admission capacity barely increased at all. In the law and literature schools, students were packed in like sardines in lecture halls bursting at the seams. As a reaction, the authorities created universities that were only universities in name. The University of Thiès, for example, created in 2005, still only exists on paper. The first stone was only laid last August. Students and teachers remained "homeless" for over 10 years.

To these problems were added the recurring strikes

of students and teachers and a drastic reduction in classroom time, with disastrous consequences. It is understandable that under these conditions the student level increasingly declines and their diplomas are increasingly downgraded.

Given the developments discussed above, and that are far from being exhaustive, the Senegalese school is doing badly. All the actors are aware of it today, including the governmental authorities that are taking measures to stop, or at least, slow down the descent into hell. They have therefore organized forums, dialogues, assemblies. They have developed programs such as the Ten-Year Program for Education and Train-

ing (PDEF), the Program for the Improvement of Access, Quality, Fairness and Transparency (PAQUET), etc. They are injecting increasingly large amounts of money into the sector. Despite all these efforts that are real and must be praised, the Senegalese public school remains less and less attractive. It is losing a growing amount of terrain to the benefit of the private school which is enjoying great success and which seems to be taking its revenge on history.

## African journalists join AfDB to explore the path to a green and powered Africa

In Lusaka during the African Development Bank (AfDB) 2016 Annual Meetings, held from May to .... 2016, the Bank and the Earth Journalism Network (EJN), environmental program of the media development NGO Internews, hosted a Journalist Training Program for a selected group of African journalists. With the Annual Meetings focused on the theme Energy and Climate Change, the training program was designed to help participating reporters deepen their understanding of the issues Africa faces in achieving climate-smart development, and make use of contemporary tools and techniques for enhancing reporting on these complex issues. The training program was a multi-partner effort of AfDB's Energy, Environment and Climate Change Department, its Climate Investment Funds (CIF) and water and sanitation offices, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), together with EJN.

In his welcoming remarks to the group, AfDB Energy and Climate Change Director Alex Rugamba noted that, "This year's Meetings are particularly significant for us, and will serve as a game-changer in the way we do business in Africa." The Meetings were the first gathering of the Bank's governing body and member countries since Bank President Adesina announced a revolutionary New Deal on Energy in Africa to provide universal energy access in Africa by 2025, encompassing on-grid generation, transmission and distribution and distributed solutions (mini-grid and off-grid), along with clean cooking and energy efficiency. In the face of these transformative aspirations for Africa, Rugamba expressed the Bank's "strong commitment to the value of communications – for transparency, education, knowledge



sharing, and allowing the fruits of our learning to blossom throughout the continent. We must come to understand and share both our accomplishments and our challenges."

To select reporters for the training, EJN ran a competitive process in consultation with the Bank, using criteria related to applicants' knowledge of climate change, reporting experience, media affiliation and country base. Ultimately, 11 journalists from nine AfDB member countries were selected from 144 applicants to take part in the training program as EJN Fellows. During the training, the 11 reporters took part in workshops on identifying priority issues and using open data and visualization for effective reporting on energy and climate change, a round-table with experts on climate finance, and a panel on challenges African countries face to balance their urgent development needs with their commitments under the global climate change treaty and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

"We decided to organize this training with EJN be-

cause of its obvious value to our work with African countries," said Kurt Lonsway, AfDB Division Manager for Environment and Climate Change. "We understand that the evolving landscape of development and climate change, particularly now in the post-COP21 environment, is complex and requires careful and thorough analysis and access to well-documented data. African citizens can benefit from a well-aired discourse on the emerging changes in their countries, and as the premier development institution in Africa, we feel a strong commitment to ensure that we contribute to that airing."

In the Meetings, the reporters had access to high-level events with African heads of state and thought-leaders, including The Path to Universal Access to Energy by 2025, an Africa Leaders Roundtable on climate change and energy access, and panels on Africa's Energy, Financing Renewable Energy in Africa and Advancing Africa's Solar Revolution. In addition, they had an opportunity to interview some of the high-level participants in the Meetings. In an interview with Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO, Ms. Ishii pointed out that African countries must be supported to ensure that their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to constrain emissions under the climate change convention remain in line with their development goals, and she urged the press to help keep this urgent effort alive in the public discourse.

Maureen Odiwuor, a 30-year old reporter covering the climate change beat for the Kenyan newspaper The Standard, was one of the chosen EJM Fellows.

At the program's conclusion she said, "The training helped enhance my capabilities to cover climate change," and indicated that she applied to the program because she is eager to improve her knowledge about adaptation to the impacts of extreme events in Africa.

During the week, the journalists were exposed to considerations of the full range of issues at the nexus of energy and climate change, from renewables to adaptation. In his presentation on climate finance, for instance, AfDB's Division Manager for Water and Sanitation (East and Southern Africa) Oswald Chanda pointed out that adaptation funding is especially relevant to Africa, where many regions already face substantial variability in rainfall patterns and hydrological conditions, and where most climate scenarios project that climatic variability is likely to increase.

The training program was led by EJM's Gustavo Faleiros and Michael Simire, Editor-in-Chief of Environment Nigeria. «EJM is committed to improving the quantity and quality of environmental journalism all around the world. The urgency for Africa to achieve a low carbon future makes our work on this continent even more urgent, and the partnership with AfDB a strategic alliance," said Faleiros, «and this training has helped contribute to advancing that goal.» "It was a gathering of highly resourceful journalists, who seemed willing to learn," added trainer Michael Simire.

Journalists attending the Program included:



Name	Media House / Organisation
Albert Baudouin Twizeyimana	PAX PRESS
Uwaegbulam Chinedum Emmanuel	The Guardian Nigeria
Friday Phiri	IPS
Hope Mafaranga	New Vision
Israel Bionyi Nyoh	Fair Planet
Louise Mathilde Sarah Sarant	Mada Masr
Maureen Akinyi Odiwuor	STANDARD GROUP LTD
Mercy Chaluma	Malawi Broadcast Corporation
Munyaradzi Makoni	Thomson Reuters Foundation
Posent Ndovi	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC)
Violet Nakamba	Zambia Daily Mail

## About Internews' Earth Journalism Network

Internews developed the Earth Journalism Network (EJN) to empower and enable journalists from developing countries to cover the environment more effectively. With a mission to improve the quantity and quality of environmental coverage and over 8,000 members from 120 countries, EJN trains journalists to cover a wide variety of topics, develops ground-breaking digital media sties, establishes networks of environmental journalists in countries where they don't exist, and builds their capacity where they do, through workshops and development of training materials, Fellowship programs, support for story production and distribution, and dispersing small grants.

## Patriot

### Ivory Coast: 2016–2017 school year – 14 lower secondary schools and 3,932 classrooms opened as of the next school year

By Anzoumana Cissé

The Ivorian government has given itself the means so that all children from 6 to 16 years of age have a basic education of quality. At least, so that the mandatory school policy, which went into effect at the start of the 2015–2016 school year, reaches the hoped-for objectives. That is why 3,932 preschool to primary school classrooms and 14 lower secondary schools will be available at the start of the school year in September 2016.

The announcement was made yesterday by the director of the Strategies, Planning and Statistics Department, Mamadou Fofana, at the conference of the 2016 session of the National School Mapping Commission of the Economic and Social Council at Le Plateau, in the presence of the minister of national education, Kandia Camara. He indicated that well before the start of the next school year, a control committee will go to the localities to make sure that the construction of these school infrastructures is in compliance before the minister signs the opening decrees. Mr. Fofana pointed out that the school map is a micro-planning tool for the school offering.

That is why, he said, prepared at the local level, on the basis of an in-depth diagnostic, the educational requests make it possible to better take into account the populations' aspirations. "[...] By taking



ownership of the school map, the regions will thus have control over the development of their education policy," Mr. Fofana pointed out, specifying that the multiplication of school infrastructures near the students' homes helps improve the school registration rate. The head supervisor of the Ivorian school, Mme. Kandia Camara, was very happy that the school mapping conference was held.

School mapping, she stressed, ensures the rationalization of the siting of school infrastructures. She however regretted the fact that these last few years, the school map has undergone increasingly strong pressure from the beneficiaries of the national education system. And this, under the effect of the so-

cial demand for education. "[...] Certain actors do not respect the school mapping criteria to meet the requests of the populations in order to have primary schools and lower secondary schools in the villages or sub-prefectures.

"Primary schools and lower secondary schools are initiated, their work started before the developers have informed the local school mapping authorities about it, these authorities being put before a fait accompli," regretted the minister Kandia Camara. For her, if such practices were to continue, they would risk seriously impeding the mandatory school attendance policy.

Moreover, the minister of national education urged the different actors to be firm so that the school mapping criteria would be scrupulously followed. She consequently instructed the Strategies, Planning and Statistics Department to conduct the necessary actions on the reform of the institutional framework of this map.





## Radio Okapi (Kinshasa)

Congo-Kinshasa: State exam – the success rate is 54% in 50 years



*Fifty years after the institution of the state exam in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the success rate is 54%, the minister of primary, secondary education and introduction to new citizenship, Maker Mwangu, asserted on Tuesday May 24.*

At the launch in Kinshasa of the 50th session of the state exam, the minister considers that this success rate is low after three generations have taken these tests.

"Three generations have already taken the tests of the state exam since its creation. We cannot organize the exam to have a 54% success rate. We cannot rejoice about these statistics either. We must ask ourselves questions in order to improve, because, in theory, we should approach an 80 or 90% success

rate," Maker Mwangu pointed out.

According to the evaluation the minister delivered, over 8 million candidates have participated in the state exam since its creation in 1967.

Going back to the background of the publication of the results of all the preceding sessions, Mr. Mwangu informed the audience that over 4 million successes had been recorded.

For the country, the state exam is an instrument that sanctions the end of secondary studies in the DRC and opens the path to the world of work as well as higher studies.



## Sidwaya Quotidien

### Burkina Faso: School infrastructures – the mutation of classrooms in thatched huts is underway

By Moussa Congo

*The head of government, Paul Kaba Thiéba, presided, on Thursday May 26, 2016, in Fada N'Gourma, over the launch of the construction work of education infrastructures during the current year. To mark the beginning of the presidential program, 160 schools will be built by the next start of the school year.*

The commitment of the head of state, Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, to put an end to schools in thatched huts in the cities and rural areas has entered its execution phase.

The prime minister, Paul Kaba Thiéba, launched the construction of 160 education infrastructures on Thursday May 26, 2016 in Yendabli.

The authorities of Fada N'Gourma and the actors in education hailed the government's commitment to offering teachers and students an appropriate work setting.

For the prefect, the president of the special delegation of Fada N'Gourma, Lamine Traoré, the education situation of his commune leaves a great deal to be desired.

"There are 82 schools in thatched huts in Fada alone. Behind these huts, problems of all kinds that harm the efficacy of our schools are hidden," maintained Mr. Traoré.

Having come to express his gratitude for this initiative that will bring relief to the students and their teachers, the president of the parents association of the Baapougni school, Mandobiga Yentéma, noted that the classrooms that will be built will make people happy.

"This year, the 267 students in our school started their courses under the trees and in the cold.

"It was in the month of December that we were



able to build hangars. I am thinking of thousands of schools like Baapougni, where our children and their teachers are exposed during the school year to sun, dust, cold, wind and rain," deplored Mr. Yentéma.

Standardizing classrooms in thatched huts in 5 years

With this launch, it is an ambitious program of President Kaboré, who is aiming at upgrading thatched hut education infrastructures, that is taking form.

"The government made a commitment to start the reabsorption of thatched hut schools this year. Starting in 2016, we are already going to regularize 160 classrooms in thatched huts out of the 4,300 in the country.

"This marks the start-up of a major school infrastructure building program for our children.

"The government's policy is based on three pillars, namely, governance, economic growth and the qua-

lity of human resources. You can't build a nation without quality human resources," the prime minister asserted.

"That is why," he said, "the government has made the education question a priority." According to the minister of national education and literacy, Jean Martin Coulibaly, 310 new lower secondary schools, 45 technical and vocation training centers, 20 vocational upper secondary schools, 286 general upper secondary schools and 13 scientific upper secondary schools in the administrative centers of the regions will be built before the end of the five-year term.

For him, the choice of the Est region is not fortuitous. He indicated that this region has the most classrooms in thatched huts among the 13 regions of the "country of men of integrity."

In 2014-2015, the head of the department in charge of national education continued, the Est region alone had 724 classrooms in thatched huts out of the 4,353 in Burkina Faso, amounting to over 16%.

"Only a few months ago, President Roch Marc Christian Kaboré took on the commitment to definitively settle the question of classrooms in thatched huts. This ceremony marks the priority given to education by the president of Burkina Faso.

"It is the expression of the respect for the word given in the framework of the contract of trust that links him to the Burkina Faso people," stressed the minister Mr. Coulibaly. He also described the 2016 infrastructure construction program.

"Apart from the 160 complexes scheduled for the reabsorption of classrooms in thatched huts, 200 general lower secondary schools (CEG), 9 new upper secondary schools, 79 classrooms to insert 33 CEGs in upper secondary schools and four technical and vocational training centers will be built.

"To this must be added two scientific upper secondary schools, two vocational upper secondary schools, 40 laboratory facilities and 20 wells for upper secondary schools," detailed the minister.

He also stressed that faced with the problems that private agencies have had in the past, the decision was made to turn over the delegated project management to a public agency, notably the Construction Consulting Agency for Delegated Project Management (ACOMOD) to do the work.



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