

# Ghana Book News



Mr. Asare Konadu Yamoah, President of the GPA speaking at the AGM

## 45<sup>TH</sup> GPA'S AGM: FAST-TRACK TEXTBOOKS PROCUREMENT

— By Vincent Amenuveve

The Ghana Publishers Association (GPA) has called on the Ghana Education Service (GES) to expedite action on the award of contracts for the procurement of textbooks for pre-tertiary schools. The Association wants the GES to facilitate the contracts before the end of the year.

It explained that the delay in the award of the contracts by the GES, which has been a major buyer of textbooks since 2005, was affecting the work of publishers.

It said some of them had taken credit facilities and loans to commit huge sums of money into the writing, development, assessment and printing of samples of the textbooks, which had been submitted to the GES.

### 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Speaking at the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the GPA in Accra, its president, Mr. Asare Konadu Yamoah, said since the new curricula were developed for basic schools (Primary one to Six) in 2018, the GES had not been able to purchase any textbook, although the procurement processes started early this year.

“However, as publishers, we cannot continue to submit ourselves to the challenges that have plagued us over the past years; we must take responsibility for our operations and continuously work to develop resilient capabilities into the future,” he said.

### Other Challenges

Mr. Yamoah said the other challenges facing the GPA were digital piracy, inconsistency in key policy and regulatory guidelines by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) and the loss of sale in large volumes of books published during the heady days of COVID-19 pandemic.

He said regulatory guidelines meant to provide publishers with tools of

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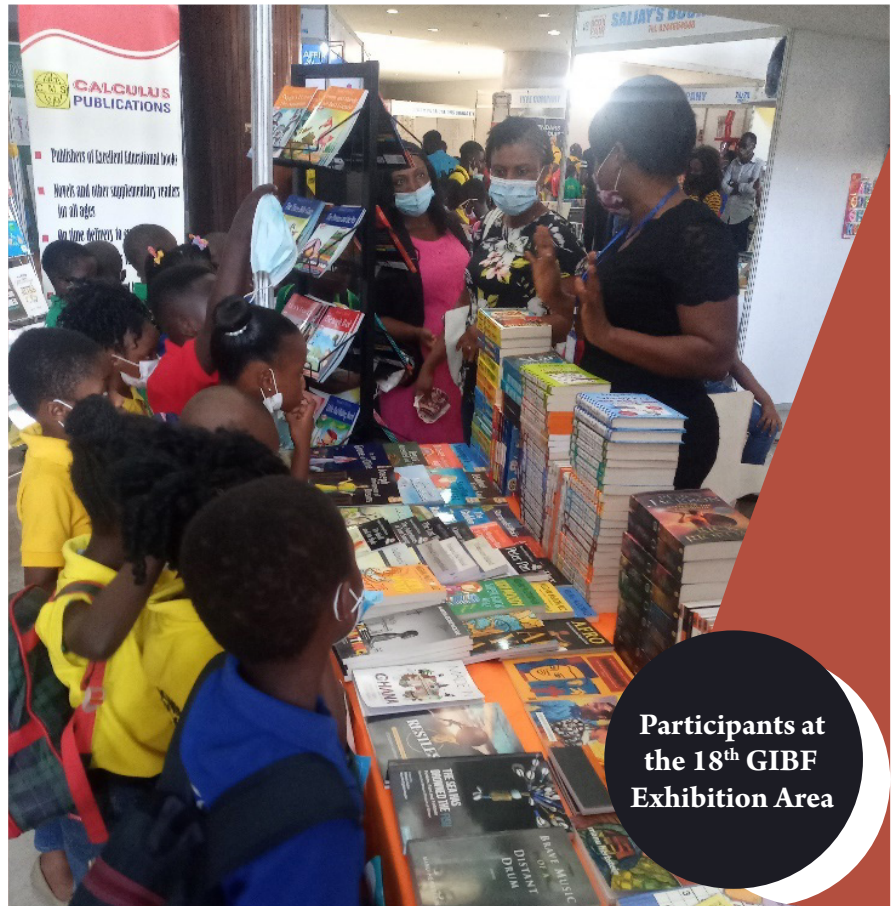
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THE  
18TH  
GHANA  
INTERNATIONAL  
BOOK  
FAIR  
ENDS  
ON  
A  
SUCCESSFUL  
NOTE



The 18th Ghana International Book Fair (GIBF) was held at the National Theatre of Ghana from **Thursday, 26th August to Sunday, 29th August, 2021**, under the theme, “**Ghana: A Nation of Readers for Development**”. The Fair opened from 9am to 6pm daily, with events such as Workshops, Reading with Champions, 18<sup>th</sup> GIBF Personality of the Year, Ghana Publishers Association (GPA) SHS Debate Competitions, Book Launches, Literacy Games and other allied programmes. The 18<sup>th</sup> GIBF was the first Book Fair organised in Ghana in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. It involved a lot of literacy/reading programmes for students from primary to tertiary level, workshops for the book industry players as well as cultural, educational and interesting events for the participants.

This year’s Book Fair had 61 exhibitors and 25 resource persons. The foreign participants came from countries including India, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Botswana. There was a notable decline in the participating countries due to the restrictions of the pandemic. A total attendance of about 14,000 was recorded for the four-day period.

One of the innovations that was implemented to include people who could not physically attend the Book Fair was the live streaming of the events on the GIBF Facebook page by Ezi IT Services. This was the first time most of the GIBF events were streamed live for virtual participation by many Ghanaians and foreigners. The videos of the events are impressive records for the organisers and the viewership of the videos has been increasing gradually with time.



**18<sup>TH</sup> GIBF  
HONOURS  
KOJO YANKAH  
AS THE 2021  
PERSONALITY  
OF THE YEAR**



Mr. Yamoah,  
18<sup>th</sup> GIBF Chairman  
presenting a citation to  
Hon. Kojo Yankah

The Founder and Executive Chairman of the Pan African Heritage World Museum, Kojo Acquah Yankah was awarded the 2021 Ghana International Book Fair Personality of the Year at the National Theatre of Ghana on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2021.

The Ghana International Book Fair Personality of the Year award is a prestigious honour bestowed on distinguished stalwarts of the literary industry in Ghana and beyond, who have contributed to the promotion and preservation of African, especially Ghanaian literature, arts and culture. The founding President of the African University College of Communications (AUCC) was awarded for among other things, his work on popular television series *Inspector Bediako*. Through his authorship of over ten books, he has demonstrated the skills needed to communicate issues of various interests to his readers.

Kojo Yankah wants more attention to be paid to the role of culture in development during his interview at the celebration. “Ghana must not forget the place and importance of culture in our quest to belong to the global village. In my view, we cannot be located anywhere in the so-called global village. There is no reason to

justify this disregard for our culture. Why should we only wear Ghanaian fabric on Fridays?” he quizzed.

He says there must be a national conversation on the role of local language in Ghana’s globalisation agenda. In an interview with TV3’s Alfred Ocansey, Mr. Yankah proposed the introduction of more Ghanaian languages into the curriculum for basic schools.

Kojo Yankah is a Communication consultant, Journalist and Public relations expert by profession. He is also a Statesman and Pan Africanist, who has served Africa and Ghana in various capacities. Honourable Yankah is the brain behind the Pan African Heritage World Museum (PAHW) at Heritage City, Pomadze, near Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana, which is envisaged to be the biggest museum of its kind and the first in Africa. The PAHW project will have a museum, Palace of African Kingdoms, Herbal Plant Farm, Convention Centre, Hotel and Library, among other facilities.

Honourable Kojo Yankah has been the Editor of the Daily Graphic, Director of the Ghana Institute of Journalism, Member of Parliament for Agona East constituency from 1992 to 2000, Member of the National Media Commission, Member of the Ghana Law Reform Commission, Deputy Minister of Information, Minister of State for Central and Ashanti Regions, respectively, and Founding President of the African University College of Communications (AUCC), among others.

The celebration was interspersed with cultural performances and it was concluded with the presentation of a citation and an illustrated portrait of the celebrant by the 18<sup>th</sup> GIBF Chairman and Director.



**GHANA  
PUBLISHERS  
ASSOCIATION  
LAUNCHES  
ITS 45TH  
ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS**

**By Ernest Oppong**

The Ghana Publishers Association (GPA) on Wednesday 3rd March, 2021, officially launched its 45th anniversary. The Association, established in 1976, is the only collective voice of book publishers in Ghana.

The Chairman of the 45th Anniversary Committee, Mr. Emmanuel Nyarko highlighted the background of the Association, the purposes for the celebration and the activities to be rolled out within the year. The Ghana Publishers Association is one of the vibrant organisations within the publishing industry. It is worthy to note that being the only collective voice of book publishers in Ghana, it serves as a rallying point for all book publishers in the country and provides a forum where publishers come together to deliberate on various issues affecting the industry at large.

According to Mr. Nyarko, the purposes of the anniversary are to extend gratitude to the Almighty God for sustaining the Ghana Publishers Association; to celebrate the developmental stages of publishing and appreciate the contributions of the GPA, veteran publishers and past executives of the Association who have contributed to the development of publishing in Ghana and also to create massive awareness to

the general public of the existence of the Ghana Publishers Association, the publishing industry and its contributions to Ghana's economy as a whole through books. Other purposes include thanking all key industry stakeholders (MoE, GBDC, NaCCA, etc.) and other stakeholder associations (Ghana Association of Writers, Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association, National Booksellers Association etc.) for the enormous support they have given publishers towards the growth of our businesses and bringing all book industry players together to evaluate and take strategic decisions towards the growth and development of businesses.

Addressing stakeholders in an online meeting, the President of Ghana Publishers Association Mr. Asare Konadu Yamoah called on the Government and financial institutions and all lovers of literacy development and books to invest into the publishing industry in Ghana. He spoke on the topic: *"Ghana Publishers Association in Retrospect – History, Contributions and Challenges."*

Mr. Yamoah recounted the historical background and the developmental stages of the Ghana Publishers Association and outlined

some veteran publishers who have contributed to the development of publishing in Ghana. He mentioned the heroes and heroines, great personalities who have made monumental contributions to publishing in Ghana and whose sacrifices and foresight birthed this Association and the formation of an indigenous publishing industry.

Samuel Asare Konadu (1932-1994), was the chairman of the planning committee for the 1969 Ghana international book fair, He later in 1970, set up his private company – Anowuo Educational Publications.

Efua T. Sutherland (1924-1996), member of the 1969 Book Fair planning committee. She later established Afram Publications Ltd in 1973 with other Ghanaians, such as Professor J. H. Nketia (1921-2019), member of the 1969 book fair planning committee. A.G. T Ofori, the first Ghanaian Director of the Ghana Library Board now Ghana Library Authority.

In 1975, another moment of history, was to birth the Ghana Publishers Association and was registered on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1976. With support from UNESCO, the Ministry of Education established the Ghana Book Development Council. An astute writer and educationist, Dr. Amo Djoletto was put in charge of the formation. By that time, an NRC decree in 1976 had enabled Ghanaians to assume ownership of the British publishing companies operating in the country. Sedco Publishing Company for instance took over Longman with other individuals owning the others such as Macmillan.

The Association has had successors who have managed it following in the footsteps of the founding members. The GPA President indicated his personal excitement to have the



opportunity to document the sterling contributions of the following individuals who have ensured that the Ghanaian Publishing Industry has remained relevant and useful.

One person who has been either forgotten or ignored has been Mr. E.C. Tetteh who became the President of GPA from 1980–1986. There are stories of how he together with Mr. Woeli Dekutsey saved the indigenous publishing industry when they worked to frustrate efforts by some foreign agents to take over the Book Industry.

One individual who also has served this industry with dedication is Mr. Woeli Dekutsey who began his publishing career in 1977 at the Ghana Universities Press. He joined other African Publishing Professionals to set up the African Publishers Network (APNET) in 1992 from a publishing conference in Harare, Zimbabwe — a continental publishers' organisation that has brought great transformation to African Publishing. He was part of the few African publishers who were brought together to start the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF). He is also a founding member of the African Book Collective (ABC). It is imperative to note that these sacrifices have been contributory to the elevated profile of the Ghana Publishers Association on the continent of Africa.

Ms. Akoss Ofori-Mensah, owner of Sub-Saharan Publishers, having spent most of her career in publishing, actively promotes the Ghanaian publishing identity with numerous language translations of children's book titles and through active participation in worldwide book fairs. She was once the president of the GPA and has also been instrumental in encouraging women to join the publishing industry.

Mr. Kwesi Sam-Woode was the first Managing Director of Afram Publications. He later resigned to set up his own publishing house known as Sam-Woode Ltd. He remains prominent in the book industry and has contributed to the growth and achievement of the association and publishing in Ghana.

Other names worthy of mention as contributors to the Association and by extension Ghana publishing industry are: — Mr. Eric Ofei, formerly the Managing Director of Afram Publications, Mr. Adams Ahimah of Damas Publishing Company, Dr. Kwaku Mensah Ganu (one time Managing Director of the Ghana Universities Press), Mr. Elliot Agyare of Smartline Publishers, twice president of the Association, Mrs. Hellen Odamten; Mrs. Agatha Akonor-Mills (editor and CEO, Revise and Publish) and not the least Mr. Yaw Owusu Asante (CEO, Black Mask Ltd). This list is by no means exhaustive but when the history of the Association is reviewed, details will reflect contributions of individuals.

The GPA President highlighted the achievements of the Association and publishers to the development of the publishing industry and Ghana. He also enumerated challenges that the publishing industry has encountered over the years.

“Despite the broad achievement of Ghana to institute its own book publishing industry and a vibrant association of book publishers, we are still threatened by the dumping of used and foreign books with little or no support for the strengthening of the book industry capacity”.

He however expressed his appreciation to the 45th Anniversary Committee for the effort they have made in actualising this objective of

the Council. Mr. Yamoah as part of the history appreciated the contributions of Ministry of Education, Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC), CopyGhana, Copyright Office, Ghana Association of Writers, Ghana Library Authority, Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association (GPPCA) and African Publishers Network.

### **Contributions of the Ghana Publishers Association**

There is no doubt that there has been some progress with respect to Publishing in Ghana. Between 1976 and now, the publishing landscape has been transformed from a foreign dominated one to a largely indigenous publishing industry. It is however admitted that publishers and the country are still lagging relative to tertiary (academic) publishing.

For instance, with an aggressive advocacy, the Association was able to encourage the government through the Ministry of Education to divest from carrying out publishing.

In 1997, the Ministry of Education decided to scrap the publishing wing of the Ministry which was handled by the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD).

This followed the liberalisation of textbook publishing which was successfully introduced for the first time, privately written and published textbooks into the schools based on the guidelines of the stakeholder produced Textbook Development and Distributed Policy (TDDP).

The Association collaborated with the Non-formal Education Divi-

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The 2021 UNESCO World Poetry Day was celebrated from Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March and climaxed on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 which was the actual date for the Poetry Day celebration worldwide. Each day was fully packed with poetry conversations and performances on televisions, physical sessions and webinar/zoom transmitted on several social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram of the partnering organisations.

The celebration was organised under a simple, thought-provoking name and initiative: “**Poets ALOUD**” which enabled the general public to resonate with the celebration. The theme for the celebration was — “*The relevance of poetry, its challenges and steps towards promoting it*”.

“A decision to proclaim 21<sup>st</sup> March as World Poetry Day was adopted during UNESCO’s 30th General Conference session held in Paris in 1999. In celebrating World Poetry Day, March 21, UNESCO recognises the unique ability of poetry to capture the creative spirit of the human mind. One of the main objectives of the Day is to support linguistic diversity through poetic

expression and to offer endangered languages the opportunity to be heard within their communities” (United Nations, 2021).

The partnering organisations — Ghana Publishers Association, Values for Life-Ghana (Organisers of Ghana Poetry Festival), Ghana Commission for UNESCO, Ghana Poetry Foundation and Poetry Association of Ghana with Oswald Okaitei as the coordinator observed the five-day celebration of the World Poetry Day to among other things fulfil the purposes of UNESCO by encouraging a return to the oral tradition of poetry recitals, promoting the writing, reciting and performance of poetry; restoring a dialogue between poets and publishers and creating an attractive image of poetry in the media, so that the art of poetry will no longer be considered an outdated form of art, but one which enables society as a whole to regain and assert its identity. The celebration was very impactful to also acknowledge the contributions of veteran Ghanaian poets and encourage young poets to enhance poetry as part of the cultural heritage of Ghana.

On Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2021, the celebration of the joyful journey to the UNESCO World Poetry Day on 21<sup>st</sup> March was officially launched on Kantaka Television with Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, former President of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) and Ernest Oppong, the Assistant Executive Secretary of Ghana Publishers Association as panellists to discuss the topic: “*Poetry in Ghana: the Beginning; the Present and the Future.*” The conversations were enriched by performances from Fapempong, Psyche, Madina Ibrahim, Prince Chief, Poet Timmy, Josephine Jackson and Oswald Okait-ei & Nene the Flutist. Kwanpa Band put the icing on the cake with some beautiful traditional music.

Ernest talked about the history of the World Poetry Day, the relevance of poetry and its ability to develop the country if it is supported by stakeholders, government and the general public. He also mentioned some of the veteran Ghanaian poets including Prof. Atukwei Okai, Prof. Kofi Anyidoho, Prof. Kofi Awoonor, Prof. Ladé Worsonu, Kwesi Brew, Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo, Kobena Eyi Acquah and Efua T. Sutherland.

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operations were still being revised every now and then, particularly by the NaCCA, which has, by law, been entrusted with curriculum development and the assessment of published books to be used in pre-tertiary schools. We have not been able to have a smooth assessment process due to the overwhelming reality; NaCCA has funding and logistical challenges and this has adversely affected the frequency of assessment of the submission, leading to the disruption of work flow on the part of publishers,” he said. On digital piracy, he called for improved technological protection measures to secure the digital files of publishers.

### COVID-19 Era

Mr. Yamoah drew the government’s attention to the fact that during the COVID-19 period, the hospitality industry; was given some incentives, to the neglect of the publishing business.

“Much as hotels were closed for the most part of 2020 and continued to impact negatively on businesses throughout this year, schools too were closed down for one year, along with bookshops, because of the restrictions, and so critical supply chains were disrupted and continued to be disrupted. All these were brought to the attention of the government, yet no meaningful response has been received up till now,” he lamented.

### World Book Capital

He entreated members of the GPA to patronise the forthcoming World Book Capital for 2023 to be held in Accra by publishing at least 100 books to commemorate the occasion. Mr. Yamoah further observed that publishers all over the world had high expectations of Ghana, hence the need to demonstrate “to

those who pegged their support and confidence to our application that they were not wrong for selecting Ghana to host the event”.

### Foreign Books

The Director, Human Resource Management of the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Mr. Vitus Otto Langmagne, who chaired the event, noted the influx of foreign books on the market, copyright issues and sophisticated digital piracy of books were some of the challenges that had eroded the gains made in the publishing industry over the years.

For that reason, he said, the Ministry of Tourism and the Attorney General’s Department were collaborating to address some of the challenges facing publishers, including issues of copyright protection

### No Support

The General Secretary of the Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), Dr. Wale Okediran, said inadequate government support for Publishers, high taxes on printing materials, competition from foreign publishers, inconsistent government policies in the selection of textbooks for schools were some of the challenges facing publishers in their work. He therefore called for concrete steps to reduce taxes and other overhead costs to make books affordable and provide library facilities in all parts of the country to encourage reading among people.

### GPA’s Contribution to Economic Growth

The 45<sup>th</sup> GPA’s AGM was on the theme: “*Contributions of the publishing industry towards the economic growth of Ghana: Prospect and challenges*”.

It was aimed at reviewing the developmental stages of publishing, appreciate the contribution of the GPA to the development of the country, as well as the contribution of veteran publishers and past executives to the development of the industry.

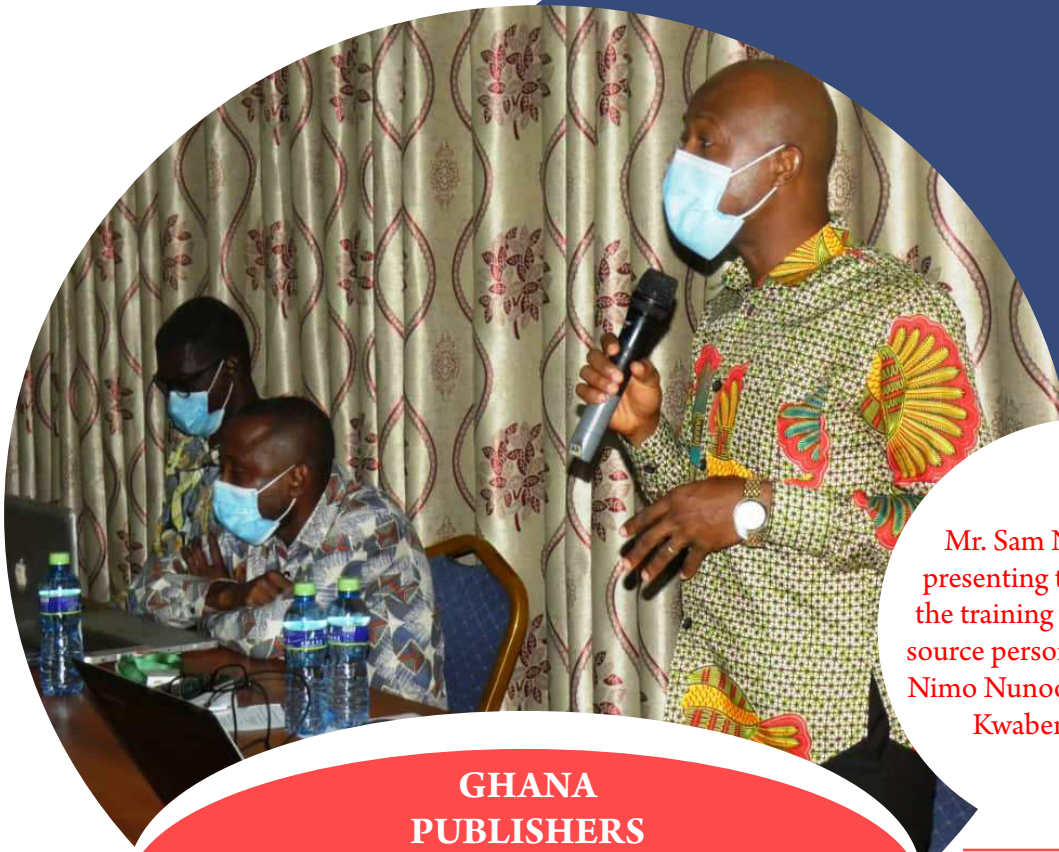
### Background

Members of the GPA have been saddled with many challenges since last year, especially after the outbreak of the COVID-19.

With the closure of schools dampening the sale of books, the government also revised its syllabus for primary schools and suspended the old one with which members of the GPA had invested in publishing textbooks.

The new curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education came with its own debilitating consequences: Mr. Yamoah had said at last year’s AGM.

He noted that the plight of publishers was worsened by directives from NaCCA and the GES that existing textbooks and other learning materials based on the old syllabus and all other books already assessed by NaCCA were no longer useful and should be withdrawn, leading to the refusal of schools to purchase the books. The members also said their applications for the stimulus package administered by the National Board for Small-Scale industries (NBSSI) were largely unsuccessful.



Mr. Sam Nyarko-Mensah presenting the first session of the training with two other resource persons Mr. Francis Kofi Nimo Nunoo (middle) and Mr. Kwabena Agyepong.

## GHANA PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION ORGANISES HANDS-ON TRAINING FOR E-BOOK PUBLISHING

The Ghana Publishers Association (GPA), organised Hands-on Training for E-book Publishing at CSIR (STEPRI), Accra. The workshop involved 27 participants from publishing firms mainly designers, publishing managers and assistants, marketers and ICT Officers. The training was facilitated by Mr. Francis Kofi Nimo Nunoo and Mr. Sam Nyarko-Mensah.

Mr. Nunoo is a senior lecturer of the Department of Publishing Studies, KNUST. He has been a publication designer with over 15-years' experience in book layout and typesetting. He has worked with and served as a consultant for local and international organisations such as Unimax Macmillan, Winmat Publishers, Sub-Saharan Publishers, Education Logistics, Tropenbos, ITTO, etc.

Mr. Nunoo's has an expertise in e-book conversion and publishing; and his areas of specialisation include:

- Typography and Book Design
- ICT and Education
- Print Production and
- Reading Analytics

Mr. Nyarko-Mensah is the head of publications at Step Publishers. He has been a publisher by training and profession for the past nine years. With great passion for continuous improvement, he has offered training in digital publishing, publication development, book layout and cover design in Ghana and Uganda. Mr. Nyarko-Mensah is an expert in converting content into digitised format for publishing online. He was a workshop facilitator for LittAfrica 2019, an international Christian publishers conference and a

resource person for the Worldreader Digital Reading Summit in 2017. He is a graduate of the Department of Publishing Studies (KNUST) and a holder of MBA in Strategic Management.

The training focused on the following:

- » Introducing software that would enable the participants to create e-books.
- » How to create e-books.
- » How to get e-books to digital platforms like Amazon and others.

The E-book Publishing Training had three sections. The first and third sessions were facilitated by Mr. Nyarko-Mensah. In the first and third session, he made descriptive presentation on e-books which covered the following areas:

- » What digital publishing is,
- » What e-book publishing is,
- » Some publishing/authoring tools and software that enable you to create e-books and,
- » Techniques involved in convert-



ing text into various e-book formats (Practical session),

- » E-book aggregators and retailers,
- » Marketing and promotion of e-books.

Mr. Nyarko-Mensah made a comprehensive presentation on what digital and e-book publishing are. The facilitator also introduced the participants to some publishing/authoring tools and software to help create e-books. The participants also learnt from some e-book aggregators and retailers; how to market and promote e-books and why a publisher should consider e-books.

As a precursor to the Hands-on Training for E-book Publishing, the Ghana Publishers Association (GPA) held a webinar training in Digital Publishing on Tuesday 16th June, 2020. The training involved sixty (60) participants from the publishing firms which included designers, ICT Officers and publishing managers. The training was facilitated by two highly-experienced experts in electronic publishing: Mr. Sam Nyarko-Mensah, Head of the Publications Team at Step Publishers (lead facilitator) and Mr. Kwabena Agyepong, CEO of Education Logistics (GH) Ltd and Honorary Treasurer, Ghana Publishers Association.

Electronic publishing still remains a contemporary challenge for publishers not only in Ghana but in Africa as a whole. Lack of training and direction, technical expertise and misconceptions of some publishers have been some factors hindering the expansion and development of electronic publishing in Ghana. It was also not surprising for digital publishing to emerge as the topmost training area on the survey conducted by GPA. Publishing is dynamic and the paradigm shift in publishing is inevitably embracing the digital sphere. Publishers and other players have a role to play to unearth and discover key areas of digital publishing in this fast-growing 21st Century. Today, e-book publishing has become a key aspect of publishing. It has turned many publishing houses into global organisations as we publish and trade across borders.

Mr. Agyepong demonstrated the conversion of text into e-book format using InDesign software and also introduced to the participants the techniques involved.

Digital Rights Management System is integrated into the file to discourage piracy.

The issue of localising the online retailers to curtail the payment method difficulties especially for Amazon and other retailers was extensively discussed. It was decided that there should be further engagement between the Association and Azalia Books on how to revive the online bookstore with contents. At the end of the training, it became clear that e-books are not tools for piracy unlike pdf files and other books in open access.



sion from 1997 to 2010 to produce Ghanaian language readers for their teaching and learning programmes.

The Association has over the years, contributed to reading and literacy promotions in Ghana having collaborations with UNESCO and the Ghana Library Authority.

One test that the Association and its members duly succeeded was the collaboration with the Department for International Development, an organisation in United Kingdom to procure Ghanaian readers for schools for reading promotion in 1999. It was an opportunity that improved the quality of the content and style of readers which has been evidenced by the number of titles in circulation.

Our flagship programme, the Ghana International Book Fair (GIBF), has been a faithful advocate for the promotion of our books and image of the Ghana Publishers Association and the Ghanaian book industry.

It has been a great experience for the players in the book industry space especially fostering a strong stakeholder relationship. Since 2005, the GIBF have been organising yearly events.

Publishers have been holding series of meetings and discussions with the Ghana Book Development Council on the development of industry guidelines and procedures known as a National Book Development and Reading Policy.

There is also an ongoing consultation with the GBDC on the Ghana Book Development Agency Bill. This is to increase the GBDC's authority and enable it to play a meaningful role in the book industry space.

The Association through its advoca-

cy has been able to increase membership and by extension the number indigenous publishers. From an initial number of about eleven (11), to one hundred and twenty (120) indigenous publishers as members and other pending applications to join soon.

This has created a lot of job opportunities for Ghanaians especially graduates from the Department of Publishing Studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

The publishing industry thrives where there are enabling opportunities, laws and regulations. One important law that anchors the industry is the Copyright Law. The Association was very much involved in the consultations, drafting and passage of the Copyright Law 2005, (Act 690) and has supported the office in various ways in its implementation.

CopyGhana, the reprographic rights organisation of Ghana, was officially set up in 2011 although its process of formation started in 2000 with the help of GPA together with other book industry associations. CopyGhana operates under the Copyright Law 2005 (Act 690).

Today, CopyGhana is actively working to license tertiary institutions to collect reprographic fees as compensation for the loss of revenue to writers and publishers whose works are photocopied at these institutions.

Further to these collaborations among book industry players, there is a new working group that has been set up called Coalition of Book Industry Stakeholders (COBIS). This working group brings togeth-

er the main stakeholders to facilitate discussions and initiatives that are common to the interest of the stakeholders. It is an initiative that promises to consolidate the unity and purpose among players in the industry.

Mr. Abdourahamane Diallo, the Country Director UNESCO Ghana Office was the keynote speaker officially launched the 45th anniversary and commended the Association for its contributions over the years. He expressed UNESCO's support to the activities of the GPA and the industry.

Other stakeholder organisations which include Ghana Book Development Council, Ghana Association of Writers, Pan African Writers Association, Ghana Library Authority and Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association were present to share their solidarity messages which were essentially to commend the Ghana Publishers Association for achieving this impressive milestone and to also pledge their availability and readiness to collaborate with the Association.

The Ghana Publishers Association as part of the 45th Anniversary has outlined a set of activities including JHS Short Story Competition, SHS Debate Competition, Industry Symposium and Awards Night, Book Donations and Regional Book Fairs to mark their annual event which will start from 3rd March to August 28th, 2021. Most of these activities would be held under the auspices of the 18th Ghana International Book Fair scheduled to take place from 26th to 28th August, 2021 at the National Theatre of Ghana.





**IPA  
PRESIDENT  
VISITS  
APNET  
AND GPA IN  
ACCRA**

**I**n a meeting with Mr. Asare Konadu Yamoah (APNET Board Member and GPA President) and Ernest Oppong (Acting Executive Director), the IPA President, Bodour Al Qasimi expressed the readiness of her leadership and IPA to collaborate with APNET to maximise the outcomes of the MoU signed in 2019. Mr. Yamoah reiterated the assurance of APNET to work with IPA to build the capacity of African publishers through training, seminars and conferences.

Afterwards, she made a presentation to the leaders of the Ghana Publishers Association (GPA) on the operations and some key projects of IPA which include the IPA Academy and International Sustainable Publishing and Industry Resilience (InSPIRe) Plan. The participating members had the opportunity to ask questions for answers by Bodour.

The meeting was held at Kempinski Hotel, Accra, 9th April, 2021; 9:30 GMT. The participants were happy for her visit.

**• World Poetry Day, Continued from page 6**

Ernest stated that among the three main genre of literature: Prose, Poetry and Drama; poetry is unique because of its heightened ability to take hostage the emotions of the audience through recitals. However, many readers are not interested in the written poems because it is difficult to understand.

Nana Gyan-Apenteng highlighted the need to honour Ghanaian poets; support poetry in Ghana which is also a very important aspect of the Ghanaian culture.

There was congregation of students to be educated and inspired about poetry. It also offered them the opportunity to read some poems.



Oswald Okaitei in a poetry reading and writing session with some JHS students at the Korle Gonno community Library, Accra.

## THE UNESCO FUNDED TRAINING WORKSHOP TO BUILD CAPACITY OF MEMBER STATES TO DEVELOP AND SUBMIT IFCD PROPOSALS

Source: Ghana Culture Forum



Having ratified it in 2016, Ghana became party to UNESCO's 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This means that Ghana is eligible to access funding support from International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD). The IFCD is the funding mechanism responsible for advancing the goals of the 2005 Convention. Over the years, the member states within the West Africa region have not been successful with sourcing funds from the IFCD.

UNESCO's Abuja Regional Office in their quest improve the quality of applications from its region to the fund organised a two-day physical-hybrid workshop for stakeholders within the Ghanaian and Nigerian cultural fraternity on the 2005 Convention, the IFCD and how to craft winning proposals. The workshop was led by Ojoma Ochai, UNESCO facilitator and Reiko Yoshida, UNESCO's Programme Specialist. The workshop took place on October 11-12, 2021. Ghana Culture Forum together with the Ghana National Commission of

UNESCO and Ghana's Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture helped to put together Ghana's 25-member team for the workshop at the Ghana – India Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence in ICT, Accra.

Day one of the workshop started with opening statements from Dimitri Sanga (Director of UNESCO's Abuja Regional Office), Toussaint Tiendrebeogo (UNESCO's Head of Diversity of Cultural Expressions) and the Honourable Minister for the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture. Ghana's Deputy Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Honourable Mark Okraku Mantey, delivered a support statement at the closing session on day two.

Although technical hitches marred the proceeding of day 1 making the Ghanaian team lose out, Ojoma Ochai, the main facilitator made time on day 2 to re-run her presentation for day 1, for the benefit of the Ghanaian team.

### About the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD)

The IFCD is a unique multi-donor, voluntary fund established under the

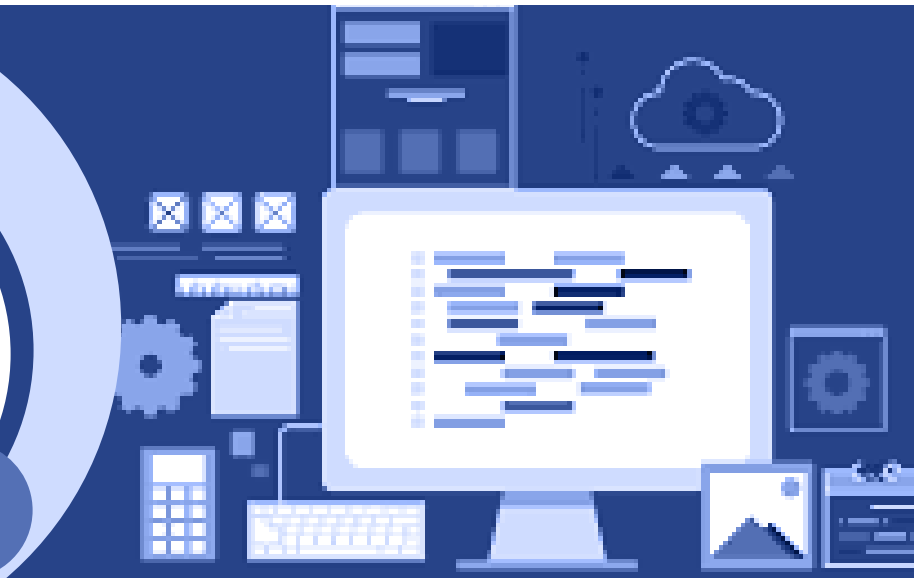
Convention that fosters the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries that are Parties to the Convention. It became operational in 2010. It invests in projects that lead to structural change through:

- \* the introduction and/or development of policies
- \* the reinforcement of human and institutional capacities of public sector and civil society organisations.

Three main classes of applicants are eligible to apply for IFCD funding. They are:

- Public authorities and institutions from developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention.
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and professional associations from developing countries that are Parties to the 2005 Convention.
- International NGOs (INGOs).





## FUNCTIONAL LITERACY THROUGH THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

### GPA's Statement for the 2021 World Literacy Day

The Ghana Publishers Association celebrated World Literacy Day on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2021 under the theme: *“Functional Literacy through the Digital Experience.”* This year's theme crafted by the Association invites all practitioners in the book industry and stakeholder organisations to reflect on two key concepts: Functional Literacy and Digital Experience. How do we as a nation use the digital technology to advance functional literacy among children, young adults and even adults?

Reading over the years has offered us the incentives of mental and analytical development. We have been privileged to have thoughts of great writers and thinkers still with us through books. The boundaries of information and communication accessibility have been broadened by the introduction of the computer and internet. Today, on a bright screen you can access thousands of literary materials, developmental designs and concepts by which you learn from and progress.

Literacy continues to be a challenge in Africa. We are witnessing the declining quality of our education and culture. UNESCO (2019) studies state that “Despite progress made, literacy challenges persist with at least 773 million adults worldwide lacking basic literacy skills today”. According to the 2018 World Development Report, nearly 80 percent of Ghana's working-age population have just level 1 literacy or below—that is, their literacy proficiency is limited to understanding basic texts, but they are not able to integrate, evaluate, or interpret information from a variety of text materials. This and many researches do not reveal satisfactory results on Ghanaian literacy. It is, therefore, a priority that we develop appropriate strategies to change the situation.

Governments are elected to serve one purpose: to improve the lives of the people! Governments are by the democratic contract enjoined to accelerate the transformation of the lives of the people through appropriate policies. The fundamental policy is to empower the people to be functionally literate.

The old definition of literacy where the mere ability to read and write was the qualification for being lit-

erate is no more. Today, literacy is about life. It is the embodiment of human dignity and right.

The ability to transform your environment to suit your lifestyle and contribute to the progress of society is the new definition.

Therefore, our educational policies and directions must be couched to ensure that the population has enlightenment to continue the improvement of their lives and status after formal education.

The missing link is the commitment by governments to the objective of providing teaching and learning materials to support the agenda of providing quality education and improvement of the lives of the population.

Reading is important, it is the very foundation of life. In today's world no one can live without the ability to read, write and apply the knowledge acquired.

As an individual, you are confronted with the reality as you grow. You must notice your environment and find innovative ways to adapt.

One of the tested and most potent ways is your ability to read what you

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## GHANA PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION ORGANISES SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE COMPETITION



THE PANEL OF  
JUDGES: Mr. Woeli  
Dekutsey, Chair (in the  
middle), Mr. Francis  
Gbormittah and Dr.  
Rebecca A. Nartey

As part of the 45th Anniversary of the Ghana Publishers Association, Senior High School (SHS) Debate Competition was successfully organised as planned on August 27, 2021. It was held under the auspices of the 18<sup>th</sup> Ghana International Book Fair at the National Theatre of Ghana. The four schools invited were all present namely Teshie Presby SHS, Ebenezer SHS, St. John's SHS and Accra Girls' SHS. The event attracted over 200 SHS students.

### RESULTS – SCHOOL

No.	School	Position	Award
1	Ebenezer SHS	First	Desktop computer, five boxes of books
2	St. John's SHS	Second	Desktop computer, five boxes of books
3	Accra Girls SHS	Third	Desktop computer, five boxes of books
4	Teshie Presby SHS	Fourth	Desktop computer, five boxes of books

### RESULTS – INDIVIDUAL

No.	Name	School	Position	Award
1	Afua Appiah	Accra Girls SHS	1st	Reading tablet, Books & Certificate
2	Clara Tetteh	Ebenezer SHS	2nd	Reading tablet, Books & Certificate
3	Richard Oppong	St. John's SHS	3rd	Books & Certificate
4	Sandra Agbo	Ebenezer SHS.	4th	Books & Certificate
5	Gifty Ebirim	Teshie Presby SHS	5th	Books & Certificate
6	Samuela Afari	Accra Girls SHS	6th	Books & Certificate
7	Mary Adjetye	St. John's SHS	7th	Books & Certificate
8	Linda Apau	Teshie Presby SHS	8th	Books & Certificate



The following was the panel of judges:

- Mr. Woeli Dekutsey - CEO, Woeli Publishing Services
- Mr. Francis Gbormittah - President, Ghana Association of Writers
- Dr. Rebecca A. Nartey - Lecturer, University of Education, Winneba

At the end of the competition, all the teachers and students present were very excited.



Hon. Kojo Yankah presenting desktop computer and five boxes of books to the participating schools



GPA President presenting a Certificate and Books to Gifty Ebirim (Teshie Presby SHS)

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see, write effectively, and translate them into functional activities.

Reading is an exciting adventure. It is a journey of openness and empowerment. When you can read you feel empowered and emboldened through life. You have control of your thoughts and can blend different cultures and situations for change in your life.

There is no alternative to reading. There are so many ways that one can change his or environment or situation but not without reading. Today, it has become a part of us. In fact, it is no more a privilege but a natural right. In our world of interconnectivity and literacy, we read for life, for health, for food and in fact for a good life.

This is what must be intended for our young ones. We must encourage them and inculcate reading and analytical skills in their life.

We admonish parents and educational authorities to make reading materials available for the children to access. They must be enabled to enjoy every right there is.

After the Second World War, it became evident to accelerate literacy across the globe. A global strategy was therefore needed to approach the challenge.

This brought about the launch of the World Literacy Day in 1965 by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The first global celebration was in 1966 and since then, it has been an annual celebration.

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**STATEMENT BY THE  
GHANA PUBLISHERS  
ASSOCIATION ON THE  
SELECTION OF ACCRA,  
GHANA AS THE VENUE  
FOR THE CELEBRATION  
OF THE WORLD BOOK  
CAPITAL (WBC) IN 2023.**

Accra City  
Landscape

Every year on 23 April, World Book Day is celebrated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as a symbolic date for world literature. The celebration of the world book capital is admired worldwide by all book loving countries that are in the business of promoting literacy. The idea is carrying out activities with the aim of encouraging a culture of reading and diffusing its values in all ages and population groups in and out of the national borders.

It all began in 1995, when UNESCO decided to celebrate 23<sup>rd</sup> April as World Book Day and since then, the date has been marked in the history of literature. A special effort has been made to involve all regions of the world in turn, in conformity with the principle of geograph-

ic balance, and following different quality criteria.

Going down memory lane, some countries that have hosted the programme included Antwerp (Belgium) in 2004, Montreal (Canada) in 2005, Turin (Italy) in 2006, Bogota (Colombia) in 2007 and Amsterdam (The Netherlands) in 2008.

The 2022 edition will be hosted by Guadalajara (Mexico). It is worth noting and jubilating as Accra (Ghana) has been selected to host the 2023 World Book Capital Day.

Accra, Ghana has been chosen based on its proactiveness at promoting books as a tool for literacy and economic development. This is worth celebrating not only by the book industry players but also all well-meaning Ghanaians. There will be a rich and varied array of programmes for a wide reach and max-

imum impact. There shall be programmes for children and youth, arts and culture, library and community development and deliberate plans for sustainability beyond the World Book Capital year.

Furthermore, Ghana has a track record of strong human rights dimension, which aims to raise public awareness about freedom of information and expression, building on its own promotion of these rights as well as its involvement in World Press Freedom Day celebrations.

The city of Accra has been identified as a place of high marginal groups with high levels of illiteracy including women, youth, migrants, street children and persons with disabilities hence selecting it for the 2023 World Book Capital is not out of place. Measures to be implemented during the period will include reinforcing school and community infrastructure and institutional support for lifelong learning, in order



to foster the culture of reading. By championing the publishing sector and other creative industries, the programme will also aim at encouraging professional skills development to stimulate the country's socio-economic transformation. This agenda will involve not only the book industry players but also non-stakeholders including the media, industry and commerce.

Cities designated as UNESCO World Book Capital undertake to promote books and reading for all ages and population groups, within and across national borders, and to organise a programme of activities for the year. The activities will include the following:

- the introduction of mobile libraries to reach marginalised groups,
- the holding of workshops to promote reading and writing of books in different Ghanaian languages,
- the establishment of skills and training centres for unemployed youth,
- the organisation of competitions to showcase Ghanaian arts and culture, and
- the promotion of inclusivity.

The success of the celebration will largely depend on the degree of participation of all key players in the industry which include Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture, Ghana Book Development Council, Ghana Education Service, Ghana Publishers Association, Ghana Association of Writers and Ghana Library Authority with support from the Government. Besides, the scope and quality of the activities proposed and the extent to which they involve writers, publishers, booksellers and libraries and the extent to which the programme respects the principles of freedom of expression.

All efforts must be made to stamp

out any challenge that will emerge against the smooth celebration of this noble idea and to continue to work to rescue our society from the grip of those who stand against the progress and liberty that literacy brings.

Today, books have brought the world together as a family, united by a shared thirst for knowledge, linked by the common desire to advance the written word for benefit of the individual and the society.

Ghana book development efforts will receive a major boost in 2023 with the celebration of the World Book Capital in Ghana. It will bring education to the forefront of our national consciousness and triggered off more attention to the books in our personal and national life. It also puts Ghana on the world map for achievement related to books – an area where we have unparalleled laurels with authors such as Nobel Laureate, Prof. Atukwei Okai, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ayi Kwei Armah, Prof. Kofi Awoonor and Prof. Kofi Anyidoho.

It is believed that the WBC project will promote Ghanaian and African writers by featuring a book of the month in the 12 months of our tenure, and will nurture artistic talent by collaborating with the Universities to adapt and promote use of Ghanaian books in the tertiary institutions.

The Ghana Library Authority could take advantage to set up “seed” libraries in indigent communities such as orphanages, prison, home for street children and home for handicapped children. They could also run book clubs in selected schools in the metropolis and with a strong collaboration with the Ghana Publishers Association.

The yearlong celebration will help build human capacity by training teachers and volunteers to run the

book clubs for sustainability even after the year. The volunteers could also be trained in several other skills, which would remain with them. By this the organisers will depict the history of books in Ghana through an epic dance drama and collaboration with some prominent Ghanaian musicians to come up with a WBC theme song. By this, we will take the reading campaign into the domain of popular music culture for wider appeal.

The WBC will showcase Ghana's rich literary heritage – our authors and literature and boost the tourism sector in the sense that as a result of this nomination, Ghana will hold several new visitors. We will collaborate with several international partners and as a result of the various programmes they will come to Ghana.

The celebration will groom writers through the running of writers' workshops and writing exercises that involved secondary school students and organisation, a national essay competition for students in tertiary institutions.

We must state that with an endeavour of this nature, the true level of success may not be immediately apparent. This programme would have a long-term effect. Its true benefits may be felt more in the years to come.

The Ghana Publishers Association believes that change has begun in our society, through books. There is a renewing of the mind that should result in better values and character building, particularly amongst our young people that would ultimately change society for the better.

We are grateful to UNESCO for this opportunity.

## EMIRATES PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION SENDS TEAM TO GHANA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

by Porter Anderson

The UAE's Emirates Publishers Association met with publishers and stakeholder organisations from across Africa at the Ghana International Book Fair.

### Talks with the Ghana Publishers Association

The Emirates Publishers Association (EPA)—at 12 years old, a comparatively young player among international publishers' organisations—sent several representatives to Accra to meet with their counterparts the Ghana Publishers Association during the 18th Ghana International Book Fair.

Many of the Emirates association's efforts to date have focused on training and professionalising the United Arab Emirates' and Arab region's book business, one key goal being the establishment of a sorely needed distribution company. But outreach to international markets is another element of what the UAE's programme needs, and the Ghana trip was led by Rashid Al Kous and Mariam Al Obaidli—respectively the CEO and corporate communications director of the Emirates Publishers Association—in a bid to set up new links into African markets.

While in Accra, Kous and Al Obaidli met at the embassy with Khalifa Yousif Alzaabi, the UAE's ambassador to Ghana, discussing ways to initiate cultural exchanges between the UAE and Ghana and future plans to introduce UAE's literature through Ghanaian libraries.

To that end, there were also talks between Kous and Al Obaidli and the Ghana association's Asare Konadu Yamoah, Edward Yaw Udzu, Benjamin Tawiah Klu, and Ernest Opong (who also is the acting Executive Director for the African Publishers Network (APNET)).

From left, Emirates Publishers Association CEO Rashid Al Kous, and EPA corporate communications director Mariam Al Obaidli at the Opening Ceremony of the 2021 Ghana International Book Fair.

Members of the international publishing community are accustomed to seeing the Emirates Publishers Association's stand at trade shows and book fairs, as the organisation works to generate ties with more markets.

### Kous: 'Growing Trade and Economic Relations'

In a prepared statement about the trip, Kous is quoted, saying, "The Ghana International Book Fair is one of the largest book fairs in the African continent. Our participation in this event highlights our close relationship with Africa's publishing sector, which has developed phenomenally.



In Accra, a meeting at the United Arab Emirates' Embassy from left, Emirates Publishers Association CEO Rashid Al Kous, UAE ambassador to Ghana Khalifa Yousif Alzaabi, and EPA corporate communications director Mariam Al Obaidli. Image: Emirates News Agency.



“It’s one more step forward in bolstering mutual coordination between the publishing markets in the UAE and Ghana, in view of the growing trade and economic relations between the two countries.”

Local reports indicate that at least 60 publishers and vendors were represented at the Ghana International Book Fair, most events of which were held in open-air settings with masking. The fair, like many, is public-facing and strongly aimed at the educational sector. Central events were focused on literacy programs, readings, and workshops for members of the publishing industry.

The fair is produced under the auspices of the Ghana Publishers Association, and Yamoah, the association’s chair, told local press outlets that in the course of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the market has seen the digital acceleration toward ebooks.

• **World Literacy Day, continued from page 15**

The objective of this special day is to bring to the fore, the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and nations.

UNESCO anchors the celebration on achieving faculties to develop economic status and general well-being and inculcating values of national integration, conservation of surroundings, fairer gender equality, observance of standard family traditions, etc.

It is, therefore, appropriate to consider literacy as a strategy for development and acceleration of human initiatives and creativity. More at-

tention should be focused on the development of the child to enable them to acquire the skills of writing, reading and analytical skills development at an early age.

Since independence, Ghana has exhibited the national and political desire to promote educational and cultural development.

Almost every forum on education has emphasised the important role an educated citizenry could play in the national developmental effort. Governmental organisations and private enterprises do acknowledge reading and literacy as the foundation for national development. This is evident in the number of private educational institutions and international organisations participating in reading and literacy programmes in Ghana, complementing government’s efforts to attain a high level of functionally literate citizens.

One phrase that has been echoed many times by experts, government functionaries, social leaders and groups is “Education is the key to national development”. It is an acceptance by all, of the strategic role education and literacy, with the right motivation, could play in our quest for an accelerated national development.

Since independence, political authority has made it a national desire to raise the standards of Ghanaians to ultimately assume the lead role in the development of our nation politically, economically and socially. Education as the key to national development has therefore been an attempt to psychologically motivate the citizenry to embrace the concept of compulsory education.

The measurement of the level of the Ghanaian to appreciate the formal learning of subjects and English

were termed Literacy. It was, therefore, very convenient for educationists and political leaders to refer to those who have gained formal education as literate. However, the achievement of formal education cannot be equated to literacy. Even though we admit that formal education is part of functional literacy.

The current social challenges of filth, ignorance, intolerance etc. are all products of an illiterate society. We have not been able to transform ourselves into the desired citizens that education had envisaged. This is all because we have left reading and literacy out of the various education reforms so far.

At present, we have an opportunity to escalate the improvement of the citizenry of their functional literacy skills. The digital experience will help us deepen the process of creating an environment that allows the use of the digital technology and other supporting innovations to enhance knowledge and livelihood improvement of the citizens.

We encourage government to review its literacy promotion activities including, institutions that are supposed to facilitate the reading and literacy experience through the introduction of appropriate digital innovations for optimum effect. Government must also consider a comprehensive sensitisation programme for all ministries and departments to promote literacy through their activities.

God bless our efforts.

Asare Konadu Yamoah  
*President, Ghana Publishers Association.*

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