

Ghana Book News



A Newsletter of the Ghana Book Publishers Association

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CONTACT DETAILS

Ghana Book Publishers Association

Location: Bureau of Ghana Languages Building, Kawukudi Junction, Accra

Address: P.O. Box LT 471, Laterbiakorshie, Accra-Ghana.

Tel: +233 302 912 764 / +233 20 666 2561

www.ghanabookpublishers.org

www.ghanabookfair.com

Editor

Mrs. Agatha Akonor-Mills

COORDINATORS

GBPA Secretariat

Nana M. Kissiedu (GBPA Council member)



ANNIE - FLORA MILLS

The Ghana International Book fair (GIBF) was first organized in 1996 with the aim of creating a platform for industry players to meet, explore business opportunities, share new ideas and also find solutions to problems confronting the industry.

Last year, the 13th edition of the Ghana International Book Fair was organized from the 3rd - 7th November, 2015 at the Ghana International Trade Fair, La, Accra under the theme "Professional Book Publishing and E-services: A Resource for National Development."

The official opening ceremony took place on Tuesday 3rd November, 2015 at the Trade Fair Centre. It was chaired by Hon. Kosi Kedem, Board Chairman of the Ghana Library Authority.

The Guest Speaker was Rev. Dr. Edem Tettey, the immediate past Moderator of Global Evangelical Church. Other dignitaries present included distinguished librarian, Second Lady, Mrs. Matilda Amisah-Arthur, the wife of the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana and the Special Guest of Honour, Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the Deputy Minister of Education representing the Minister of Education, Prof. Naana Jane Opoku Agyemang. In his speech, the guest speaker challenged publishers to venture into e-book publication so they can reach the youth of today who are attracted to electronic platforms. He commended Azaliabooks.com as an online e-book store for indigenous and international publishers.

In his recommendations, Rev. Dr. Edem Tettey advised the Ministry of Education to supply and encourage the use of e-books in all schools.

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NEW COUNCIL TAKES OVER LEADERSHIP OF GBPA



A New Council of the Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA) which was elected in November 2015 was inaugurated into office on 17th February, 2016 after the handing over ceremony. The inauguration took place during an extraordinary general meeting at the conference room of the Bureau of Ghana Languages. The swearing-in was administered by Rev. Canon Anthony Eiwuley. In his inaugural address, the new President and the CEO of Smartline Publishers, Mr. Elliot Agyare, called on all to rally behind the new leadership and support them to effectively steer the affairs of the Association.

The new President thanked members for their overwhelming support during the election. He pledged his commitment to help recapture the good image and relevance of GBPA in the educational sector and in the country as a whole.

Mr. Elliot Agyare, commended the old Council for their work and asked the new Council to work together to make the GBPA achieve its aims. He was happy that most of the members of the old Council were part of the new Council since the institutional memory they have will help make the Council's work less difficult.

The set of core mission of the new council was reiterated as follows:

- Strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of GBPA Secretariat
- Building the capacity of indigenous publishing houses in Ghana.
- Changing the relationship between the GBPA and the Ministry of Education (MoE)

- Enhancing the image of GBPA both locally and internationally.
- Deepening ties with partners and other stakeholders in the Book industry.

Below are the members of the new council:

EXECUTIVES:

- Mr. Elliot Agyare
— President
- Mr. Stephen Brobbey
— Vice-President
- Mr. Kennedy Evans Amankwah
— Honorary Treasurer
- Mrs. Anne Yayra Sakyi
— Honorary Secretary

NON-EXECUTIVES

- Dr. Paul Naah Yemeh
- Mrs. Alberta Asirifi-Udzu
- Mr. Kingsley Mate-Kole
- Nana Manukure Kissiedu
- Ms. Pamela Woode

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

- Dr. Samuel Osafo Acquah
— immediate past president

INSTITUTIONAL CO-OPTED MEMBER

- Prof. Kwasi Opoku-Amankwah —
Head of Department, Publishing
Studies, KNUST, Kumasi

Mrs. Matilda Amissah-Arthur hosts GBPA members to a Soirée



On 17th December 2015, the Second Lady, Mrs. Matilda Amissah-Arthur, wife of the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana, hosted an end-of-year soirée for book publishers and other industry stakeholders — printers, booksellers, librarians, Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) etc. — on the premises of her office at Roman Ridge, Accra. The event afforded the guests the opportunity to wine and dine, socialize and de-stress after a whole year of hard work. It was a joyous time of conviviality where guests were treated to harmonious Christmas carols and hymns.

Mrs. Anne Yayra Sakyi, Honorary Secretary of GBPA talked briefly about the hostess's NGO, Read for Life. It aims at promoting reading and writing in basic schools. Periodically, it donates books and other educational materials to basic schools. Over the years, a lot of deprived schools and children's homes have benefited from Mrs. Amissah-Arthur's NGO. The Hon. Secretary made an appeal for support for Read for Life. Guests were happy to support with cash and pledges of book donations.

Mrs. Amissah-Arthur expressed her gratitude to the guests for honouring her invitation and for generously supporting Read for Life.

GPPCA-GBPA BUSAC STAKEHOLDER MEETING



The Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association (GPPCA) in collaboration with the Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA) under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and BUSAC Advocacy Support Services held a one-day stakeholders' workshop at the STEPRI Conference Room, CSIR Head Office, Accra. The aim of the meeting was to seek full compliance of the Ministry's Textbook Development and Distribution Policy of 2002 which has seen some challenges since its inception.

In attendance was Mrs. Ernesticia Asuinura Lartey, the Executive Director of the Ghana Book Development Council and the chairperson for the occasion who also represented the MoE;

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How to get an ISBN in Ghana

An ISBN is an International Standard Book Number. An ISBN is essentially a product identifier used by publishers, booksellers, libraries, internet retailers and other supply chain participants for ordering, listing, sales records and stock control purposes. The ISBN identifies the registrant as well as the specific title, edition and format. ISBNs were 10 digits in length up to the end of December 2006, but since 1 January 2007 they now always consist of 13 digits. ISBNs are calculated using a specific mathematical formula and include a check digit to validate the number.

In Ghana, the George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, opposite Ridge Church, Accra, is the only authorized institution to ISBNs and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). Registering for ISBN involves flexible requirements which are:

- Write an application letter to the Library indicating the title of the book, writer's name, the number of pages of the book(s).
- Submit a copy of your manuscript: printed or soft copy on CD.
- Pay a fee of GH₵ 5.00
- By modern convention, a manuscript to be qualified for ISBN registration should have at least 48 pages.
- It can be issued within 24 hours after assessment. The applicant/ publisher has to use the ISBN within two months. If the publisher is not able to do so, application has to be made to the Library for extension of time.
- After the publishing the book, the publisher is required to submit two copies of the published book to George Padmore Library for referencing and record keeping purposes. Failure on the part of the publisher to submit the said number of copies on each title published with ISBN will automatically disqualify them from getting subsequent ISBNs.

(Source: Padmore Research Library)

GPPCA-GBPA BUSAC STAKEHOLDER MEETING continued

Rev. Dr. Edem Tetey, a consultant, and Mrs. Agnes Vandyck (former Executive Director of GBDC) who first drafted the Textbook Development and Distribution Policy.

Mr Asare Konadu Yamoah delivered a presentation on behalf of The Ghana Book Publishers Association. He commended the Ministry of Education for their efforts in trying to implement the Textbook Policy. He further lauded efforts by the GPPCA and GBPA to form a united front to promote their common interest.

Mr. Asare Konadu Yamoah and Mr. James Appiah-Berko made presentations on behalf of Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA) and Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association (GPPCA) respectively.

Participants deliberated on the recent directive by Government for textbooks to be wholly printed in Ghana for the current tender. Both associations raised concerns about procurement procedures, conferencing of evaluators and capacity of printers in relation to deadlines, quality, among others. It was resolved that representatives from both associations should meet and resolve their issues amicably. It was also resolved that a monitoring team made up of representatives from the various associations and the Ministry should be set up to enforce strict compliance of the Textbook Development and Distribution Policy.





PROFESSIONALISM

A Panacea for Quality Book Production

The Guest Speaker, Rev. Dr. Edem Tetey, the immediate past Moderator of Global Evangelical Church made this presentation as part of his keynote address during the opening ceremony of the 13th Ghana International Book Fair.

It is hard to find a perfect book printed and published in Ghana. Take a Ghana-made book and if the problem is not with cover and text design, it will be with editing, preliminaries and end-matter or with printing.

I consider that for quality books to be produced in Ghana, the book industry must consciously introduce professional training and certification for all who are supposed to be practising in the industry.

WHAT IS PERCEIVED TO BE PROFESSIONALISM?

Hanks and Schmidt (1980) provide the following requirements to be satisfied in order for a body to be recognized as a profession:

- It must have its own body of knowledge and techniques.
- It must have recognized professional training for its members
- Its members should belong to the professional association which aims to develop and control the profession.
- It must be service-oriented to society
- It must generate its own literature to ensure intellectual development of its field.
- It must have a code of ethics to regulate the conduct of its members.

When these criteria are considered in the light of the Ghanaian situation, it becomes very clear that the GBPA and other book industry associations still have a long way to go in their efforts to achieve professionalism.

- We can also therefore consider professionalism from the viewpoint of consumers. Thakur and Kumar (2000) suggest that: ***continues on pg 6***

**Professionalism continued
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“Service providers are more likely to be viewed by consumers as professional if:

1. The service requires large amount of expertise;
2. The quality of the service cannot easily be evaluated by the layperson;
3. The service is perceived to be of critical importance;
4. The recommendations of others play an important role in selecting the service providers; and
5. The exact nature of the service needed from the provider is unclear.”

It is clear from these that publishing and practitioners qualify to be accorded the status of professionals, but are they really, when it comes to practice?

In Ghana, the Professional Bodies Registration Decree, 1973 (NRCD 143) gives explicit directions about the formation and conduct of professional bodies. Under Section 6 – Bodies which may be registered, etc., it is required of a professional association that:

1. Pursuing research and other activities concerned with the progress of knowledge in the profession.
2. Maintaining and advancing a code of ethics and conduct among members.
3. Maintenance of the highest ideals of the profession.

The law requires of a registered association the provision of education and training for the purpose of enabling persons to qualify to become members of a profession.

**13th Ghana International Bookfair in Retrospect
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The main highlights of the fair were workshops on Editing, E-book marketing and online payment systems. Seminars and reading competitions were held and six desktop computers, four laptops and books were given to excelling participants.

Sixty-nine exhibitors participated in the book fair: 13 were foreign companies from India and 2 from Nigeria. There was a trade visitor from United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Participants were mainly pupils and students from various schools in Accra and its environs. Teachers, parents, educationists and individuals also participated to either buy books and other educational materials or to find out more about the new trends in teaching and learning through publishing.

At the end of the 5-day fair, exhibitors and visitor alike commended the organizers for a good fair; it was an improvement on the previous year's book fair.



LINCOLN MICHEL | BUZZFEED CONTRIBUTOR

The Future of Books

Thoughts on Amazon, e-books, & the future of how we read words

EVERYTHING IS ABOUT TO CHANGE (FOR REAL THIS TIME)

The year I graduated high school, the media was overrun with speculation about a new technology set to shake the foundation of the world. What was it? We weren't told, exactly. All we knew was that code name "IT" was so revolutionary that we would have to rebuild our cities from scratch. Techie god Steve Jobs declared it "as big a deal as the PC."

At the end of the year, the product that was about to blow our minds to the future was revealed: the Segway.

A DORKY SCOOTER.

Instead of forcing us to rebuild our major metropolises, the Segway managed to be a prop for blowhards on TV sitcoms. I think I've seen one twice in real life.

I was thinking about the Segway again as I've fallen into a hole of reading about Amazon versus Hachette, e-books, self-publishing, and Kindle Unlimited. Most articles and nearly every comment thread are filled with declarations that e-book dominance is already here. The publishers are "dinosaurs" who don't see the "paradigm-shifting" "sea change" and aren't creating "proactive" new "business models" in the wake of this "disruptive" "revolution." Anyone who reads print is a "luddite" propping up a "dying industry." If they don't get on board soon, they're doomed!

Strangely, you can read those same comments in articles from last year. Or five years ago. Or 10.

It's been over 15 years since the first dedicated e-readers were released, and over seven since the first Kindle. Today, about 15% of consumer spending on books is electronic and about 30%

of books sold are e-books. The majority of book readers still only read in print, and only 6% of readers read e-books exclusively. It's clear that e-books are here to stay, but it's less clear that the complete dismantling of the publishing industry is around the corner.

TECHNOLOGY IS ONLY A STRAIGHT LINE IN RETROSPECT

I'm the online editor for Electric Literature, an organization dedicated to new literary models and technologies. I'm active on social media, I've crowdfunded a book, and I've published e-only works. I'm hardly a luddite who hates the internet, and indeed I get excited about the new possibilities for reading and literature out there.

Still, I roll my eyes at the constant declarations that the future is here all over again. Every new product is a revolution, every app will completely change how we communicate. A pair of "smart boxers" that monitors your farts per day is the future of underwear. An e-toothpick that tweets your gum health is a paradigm shift in dentistry. It's true that there are always people who resist change, and industries that collapse because of it. It is also true that new "revolutions" fail to occur on a monthly basis. Even the most forward-thinking writers get their predications way off.

Technological progression always looks like a straight line in retrospect, but only because we ignore the supposed sea changes that fail. Movies were black and white without sound, then black and white with sound, then color with sound. But what happened to Smell-O-Vision? And five years after Avatar, why hasn't 3D completely taken over the way we watch movies instead of being a declining sideshow? On the one hand, it's easy to see the progress from early cell phones to

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modern smartphones. And yet, the fact that it was phones that progressed that quickly instead of, say, consumer vehicles (still no flying cars?) would shock time travelers from as recently as 1994.

The Future of Books Is Hypertext! No. It's POD! No. It's Enhanced E-Books! Apps! Netflix for Books! None of Those? Wait. It's Cloud Storage!

In Bloomberg, Leonid Bershidsky recently declared that the Amazon-Hachette dispute is silly because both companies "fail to recognize is that in the world of digital literature, book ownership will soon be an anachronism." The actual future of books, according to Bershidsky, is "an enormous digital library in the cloud, where any book could be borrowed."

I could see a cloud service working, but it's another amusingly confident prediction that contradicts previous confident predictions. Is the future cloud borrowing instead of Netflix model? Is it "an interactive novel read on a Google Glass"? Is it apps? Social writing networks like Wattpad? Print on demand (POD) machines on every corner? Nano-narrative book bots plugged directly into your eyeball?

Likely all of those things will have some role, however small, in 10 years' time. But one thing that all of these predictions miss is that people actually like physical books. They like holding them. They like putting them on bookshelves and coffee tables. Hotels and retail stores buy bulk used books for decoration. Many people who buy exclusively e-books still like to browse in physical bookstores and look at physical books.

The printed book is far from dead.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION COMMENDS GBPA

The Special Guest of Honour of the 13th GIBF Opening Ceremony was Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the Deputy Minister of Education (who represented the Minister of Education, Prof. Naana Jane Opoku Agyeman). In his address, Hon. Ablakwa said that the Ministry of Education (MoE) would like to commend the Ghana Book Publishers Association and also renew its assurances to the Association and the book fraternity. He emphasized that the Ministry cherishes the relationship which they have built with these organizations over the years. He also said the Ministry is proud of the efforts of the Ghana Book Publishing Association (GBPA) and is excited about the theme of the book fair.

"Publishing should be seen as a foundation for development," he said. He went on to call on the GBPA to support the Ministry in its efforts to change the negative attitude towards publishing and reading in the country. He said in about forty years, there should be an educational system that is fully Ghanaian, where the libraries of schools in Ghana will be filled with

books of Ghanaian authors and publishers, though there would be collaborations with international publishers. "Our educational system must have a strong Ghanaian identity," he said.

He indicated that, a strong publishing industry cannot be promoted without promoting the culture of reading; recent studies revealed that reading at the primary school level is poor. So to improve this situation, the MoE has introduced the Ghana Reading Action Plan (in 2015); a radical programme to change the reading and writing statistics of children in Ghana. By 2017, about 60% of children in primary schools should be able to read and write. He said the MoE is not only interested in doing business with the GBPA but is also interested in the long term development of Ghanaian children. He added that the Ministry has begun the implementation of the President's directive that from the 2015/2016 academic year, books that are purchased by the Ministry of Education should be those printed locally to support the local printing industry.