

# Ghana Book News



A NEWSLETTER OF THE GHANA BOOK PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

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## GHANA BOOK PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION HOLDS 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- E R N E S T O P P O N G

The Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 2016 under the theme: “The Future of Textbook Publishing in Ghana: Can We Guarantee an Industry for the Next Generation?” at the Accra City Hotel on Tuesday 18th October, 2016. The meeting had two sessions. The plenary session was open to invited organizations and individuals while the second session served as the business forum for members of the Association. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Akunu Dake, the Co-convenor of the Ghana Culture Forum. It was graced by the presence of the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, Hon. Ms. Dzifa Abila Gomashie and Mr. Kenneth Ashigbey, Managing Director of Graphic Communications Group Limited as the Special Guest of Honour and Guest Speaker respectively.

In his welcome address, the President of GBPA, Mr. Elliot Agyare, highlighted on the theme to capture publishers’ anxiety about their ability to guarantee the future of this great industry for the next generation. Fulfilling this cherished desire seems to be elusive. He pointed out Ghana’s Textbook Development and Distribution Policy (TDDP) that was expected to usher the book industry into our “el dorado” or golden age in book publishing has become a mirage. The President hinted that though hundreds of millions of US dollars have been spent in the procurement of books, specifically textbooks, from the book industry over the last 13 years, the industry has little to show for this massive injection.

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## AKUFO-ADDO BEMOANS FOREIGN BOOKS ON GHANA | PROMISES TO PROMOTE LOCAL AUTHORSHIP

President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo has promised to promote local authorship as one of government's many measures to boost the creative industry. He lamented the proliferation of foreign literature on the culture of Ghana, a development he blamed on the absence of a deliberate plan to empower local writers to tell the country's story.

"What define a country are its arts, culture, customs and tradition [and] without acknowledging them we stand unable to face the rest of the world," the President noted. "We intend to support the book industry and promote local authorship."

Some of Ghana's finest composers, painters, film makers, writers, musicians, sculptures, actors and actresses are living a life of hardship and poverty.

They blame their predicament on the non-patronage of their products by Ghanaians as well as the unauthorized use of their works for: Some of them die without having a house to

their names, a development that has demotivated young artistes.

But the President, who has described himself as a lover of the creative arts, said the artistes are undeserving of a pitiful life considering their immense contribution to the country.

"In other parts of the world, creative artists are not just able to make a comfortable living on their works, but they are among the highest earners," he said. He believes Ghana's creative artists deserve the same treatment. "It is time we created the enabling atmosphere for our artistes to enjoy the fruit of their creative enterprise."

President Akufo-Addo said it is to this end that his government is putting in place measures to promote the literary arts by "encouraging our writers and publishers to produce books that portray our rich culture."

He entreated Ghanaians to desist from piracy activities that are robbing the creative artists of benefits due them.



## GBPA & OTHER STAKEHOLDERS PAY THEIR LAST RESPECTS TO THE LATE MR. C.K. SEGBAWU

The leadership and members of the Ghana Book Publishers Association paid their last respects to the late Mr. Courage Kwami Segbawu and commiserated with the bereaved family..

The leadership of CopyGhana and a representative of the Ghana Association of Writers among others were also there to pay their last respects.

The late Mr. Courage Kwami Segbawu was a founding member and the president of the Ghana Book Publishers Association for two terms: 1976 - 1980 and 1998 - 2002. He was the founder of Sedco Publishers and also one of the founding members of CopyGhana.

Source: Ghana | Myjoyonline.com | Austin Brako-Powers | Date: 19-03-2017

# GHANA CULTURE FORUM HOLDS FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Ernest Oppong

The Ghana Culture Forum (GCF) had its first national conference at the National Theatre on Tuesday 29th November, 2016, under the theme "Projecting Our National Culture: The Quest for Creativity, Excellence and Relevance". The Conference comprised two main sessions: the Official Opening Ceremony (plenary) and the Business Session.

The Official Opening Ceremony which was open to the general public started at 9:45am. It was chaired by Ing Kenneth Ashigbey, the Managing Director of Graphic Communications Group Limited. Prof. Kofi Agyekum, the Director of School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana, was the keynote speaker and Hon. Mrs Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare, then Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts was the special guest of honour. The conference was attended by publishers, writers, actors, musicians, fashion designers and other stakeholders of the cultural sector.

Professor Kofi Agyekum touched on essential areas of the Ghanaian culture. In his introduction he explained that "Culture is nothing but the sum total of a people's way of life. It constitutes language, food, clothing and chieftaincy. Every culture comes with its own morals. It involves mentality, thinking and cultural norms which relate to the ethics of the society." He dilated on the major characteristics of culture, how to project our culture and the consequences of losing one's culture.

Prof. Agyekum expressed worry that Ghanaians were losing their love for the country's rich culture in terms of names, language, food and clothing. He pointed out that people were given foreign names they did not understand while many others preferred exotic foods to local dishes.

Besides, he said, the local languages used in music by musicians were not rich while the craze for foreign movies was also alarming. Prof. Agyekum said the country's forebears had preserved the country's culture and it was the turn of the current generation "to keep the culture, project it

and leave it in a better shape for posterity."

According to him, "The major characteristic of culture is that culture is transmitted, shared and predictable, symbolic, dynamic and innovative, integrated, learned, ethnocentric and distinctive."

The keynote speaker called for a cultural revolution in which all Ghanaians must join forces to project the country's rich culture. He said the outside world was trying to destroy Ghana's culture because of the influences of foreign cultures, and indicated that it was only Ghanaians who can save their culture from that destruction through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among others.

Prof. Agyekum stated a number of ways to project our culture: transmission which describes relaying composite cultural information to children in the home; among other things emphasizing on proverbs as time tested maxims. "The more proverbs you know determine how you are guided in life." He also explained modern technology, creativity and excellence as ways of projecting our culture. He concluded that, "Culture lost is an alienation of your beingness."

The then Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts (MOTCCA), Mrs. Elizabeth Ofosu-Adjare, officially opened the conference. She said that a careful study of the global and domestic markets gave an indication that tourism, together with cultural products, would play an important role in diversifying and expanding the national economy.

"The implications are that we should, in the next few years, be creating and producing on a large scale and have the business acumen to get our goods onto both domestic and international marketplaces," adding that "Next year Ghana will be on CNN -an opportunity to publicize our art works."

Mrs. Ofosu-Adjare charged artistes to position themselves well in order to cash in on the celebration of 60 years of Ghana's birth in

March, 2017. She lauded the GCF for its effective collaboration with the MOTCCA and judicious use of resources, and asked the forum to project the national culture and continue to strive for excellence and relevance. She proposed that GCF should collaborate with the National Commission on Culture.

The convener of the GCF, Prof. Esi Sutherland-Addy, recounted the history of the Forum and made a point that Ghana's rich culture had the potential to put the country on the world map. She advised local artistes to look for ways to improve themselves, saying: "If you are a star, it does not mean you are on top of the world, you can learn."

Prof. Sutherland-Addy mentioned the push to have the National Film Bill passed into an Act of Parliament and capacity building training for artistes. She also said that one of the achievements of the GCF has the increase in the number of member organizations from 15 to 68.

The Chairman, Mr. Ashigbey, in his closing remarks of the official opening ceremony, urged Ghanaians to put Ghana first in all their dealings and stop self-hatred. He stated that posterity would look at what each one did and judge them accordingly, hence the need for all Ghanaians to encourage one another to contribute towards the development of the country.

Mr. Ashigbey proposed that the country's culture be brought to the centre of the nation's development in the areas of economy, engineering, architecture, among other sectors. He urged Ghanaians to patronize local products, develop the taste in domestic tourism and stop pirating movies, music and other creative works.

Afterwards, the delegates split into three concurrent sessions namely, (i) draft GCF Constitution, Structure, Organization and Outreach; (ii) Programme of the GCF and (iii) GCF Finance and Resource Mobilization. At the plenary session, the interim leadership, constitutive documents and proposals of working committees were constituted. The conference ended at 6:10pm.





## WE'LL CREATE ENFORCEMENT UNIT TO ADDRESS PIRACY

CATHERINE AFEKU

Mrs. Catherine Afeku, the minister for tourism, culture and creative arts, says government will ensure the setting up of an enforcement unit to deal with persons who pirate the creative works of artistes in the country.

She said the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government will in its first term get a division in the fast track high court to create the enforcement unit and also draft a new legislation to protect the intellectual property of persons in the creative arts industry. Speaking before Parliament's Appointments Committee during her vetting on Monday, February 6, 2017, she called on Parliament to support the development of the legislation to ensure that the works of creative artistes are protected. "Piracy is a real threat to the creative arts industry."

"The 1995 Copyrights Act is there but needs to be beefed up to support the people in the creative arts industry. These are some of the well-intended thoughts and visions that we can start in our first term," she said. "Getting a division in the

fast track court to create an enforcement unit to ensure that those who break the law by pirating the works and arts of our people are punished," she added.

A former President of the Musicians Union of Ghana (MUSIGA), Alhaji Sidiku Buari, in an address in 2005 said the union lost about GH¢2million the previous year through music piracy. "If piracy is not checked, we could lose billions of cedis to it because they do not pay taxes or royalties to the MUSIGA," he said. But Mrs. Catherine Afeku said the ministry under her leadership will address the challenge. She described as disappointing, the phenomenon of foreigners illegally selling reproduced local programmes and contents on CDs, pledging that the ministry will consider as urgent, the development of the legislation for parliamentary approval to help punish the culprits.

"We'll create a fund for creative arts" she said. She also said she was ready to implement the NPP's manifesto promise

to create a fund to support actors in the industry to serve as a support mechanism for them. 'Marketing Ghana' She noted that, they will seriously consider the creation of a tourism bureau at the country's airport, to serve as the first port of call to foreigners visiting Ghana to get data and information about Ghana and the opportunities available in the country. According to her, the ministry will tap into the opportunity of using social media and foreign missions to also brand the country in a positive light.

She added that, Ghana had secured a slot with the American satellite television channel, CNN to be hosted for an interview as a way of promoting the country to gain worldwide attention.



*Ghana lost about GHC2M in 2004. If piracy is not checked, we could lose billions" -Sidiku Buari*

# 2017 GHANA CULTURE DAY

ERNEST OPPONG



Ghana Culture Forum (GCF) in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture organised 2017 Ghana Culture Day to mark the 60th Anniversary celebration of Ghana's Independence. The programme was held at the National Theatre on Tuesday 14th March, 2017 under the theme: "60th Anniversary of Ghana's Independence: Cultural Reorientation for the Birth of a New Ghanaian."

The celebration was marked by colourful cultural displays and was graced with the presence of a host of dignitaries. Hon. Mrs. Catherine Abelema Afeku, the Minister of Tourism, Creative Arts and Culture was the guest of honour. The Senior Minister, Hon. Mr. Yaw Osafo Maafo, was the special guest of honour. Many cultural organizations and individuals whose contributions have promoted culture in the national interest participated in the celebration.

The co-convenor of the GCF, Mr. Akunu Dake, introduced and acknowledged the presence of invited guests. The Convenor of the Forum, Prof. Esi Sutherland-Addy, presented her welcome address touching on the state of the GCF regarding membership, operation and the disbursement of funds to members.

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts commended the GCF and stated that the theme for the event was apt and called on the public to reflect on the 60-year journey of the country and re-orient their

mindset to be in tune with the national development agenda. She said the way forward to remain culturally relevant in an era of globalization was for more priority to be placed on safeguarding the nation's culture through conscious programmes.

The Senior Minister, Hon. Mr. Yaw Osafo Maafo, pledged that the government would allocate the needed resources and also take key policy decisions to develop the arts and creative industry to make it more viable. "As a country, we cannot do anything without culture because it is our unique culture that sets us apart from other countries." He added that if the government wants to promote Ghana, it must first invest in culture. The focus of the Senior Minister was on how our culture could generate foreign exchange for the country.

Mr. Osafo Maafo promised that they will make sure that performing art theatres would be provided for the seven regions that do not yet have them. He also promised to be the advocate for the cultural sector.

There was an exhibition of cultural products. Where Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA) and the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) exhibited books by their respective members. Other products exhibited included literary and verbal arts, visual arts, film screening and presentation, musical CD's, Ghanaian music and movie videos.

## GHANA BOOK PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION HOLDS 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING cont'd from pg 1

Mr. Agyare therefore called on all stakeholders to relook at the policy document and recapture not only the core objectives of the TDDP but also the soul and spirit.

The Chairman justified and made a strong case for the promotion of our national culture. He also advised publishers to enhance excellence and relevance through book publishing. The special guest of honour, Hon. Ms. Dzifa Gomashie, spoke on the concept of self-hate, stressing that until Ghanaians take away self-hate; it would be difficult for us to develop. She admonished publishers and other players of the book industry to be concerned and support other local industries so that the publishing industry would also develop accordingly.

The guest speaker for the occasion, Mr. Kenneth Ashigbey, made a comprehensive presentation on the theme. He touched on the high cost of publishing in Ghana, publishers' appetite for foreign printers, and the importance and the hope for the textbook publishing industry. Mr. Ashigbey concluded with the following recommendations:

- Government should provide a clear timetable for procurement, so that publishers can prepare towards it for bidding.
- Publishers should give serious thought to e-books as another marketing avenue to improve book sales.
- The publishing industry should join forces with allied industries to continue pushing, so that government could create enabling environment for the industry to grow.

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## GHANA BOOK PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION HOLDS 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING cont'd from pg5

- Publishers should set up a fund for promoting reading in the country.
- Publishers should keep their printing jobs for local printers to make them expand and create more jobs as indirect employment from publishing so that a case could be made for the economic importance of the publishing industry.

### Fraternal Greetings

Some stakeholders, including Ghana Book Development Council, Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association, Ghana Book Trust, Ghana Library Association and Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), gave solidarity messages to publishers as follows:

#### Ghana Book Development Council

Mrs. Ohui Agbenyega Allotey of the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC), said that the industry can only survive if publishers remain united. Publishers cannot only concentrate on textbooks and leave out supplementary readers which are also suitable materials for learners.

#### Ghana Book Trust

Mrs. Genevieve Eba-Polley of Ghana Book Trust (GBT) made a brief presentation on the Burt Award for African Literature, the writing challenges of

writers and inadequate submission of books for the award at some point. She urged publishers to fully participate in the publishing of supplementary readers and make sure that the content is error-free. She outlined the role of the Trust which constitutes teaching of reading, buying and supplying books to deprived schools in rural areas and promoting literacy for national development. She pledged that GBT will always support publishers.

*If I become a president of Ghana, I will make publishing a security sector*

#### Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA)

The President of PAWA, Prof. Atukwei Okai gave a very intriguing talk when he stressed, "If I become a president of Ghana, I will make publishing a security sector." According to him, publishing is very crucial to the security of the country just like the police and the army. He said, "There can be no leader if the people are not correct because the

majority who are not correct and luckily and miraculously happen to get one among them who is correct, they will kill him. For anybody to succeed as a leader, his own people should be correct."

It is obvious that we need books to make people correct mentally, intellectually to impact positively on the financial, economical, agricultural, political, environmental and the social statuses of the people and the country.

"My university friends are in Russia. In that country, when they are going to work and to school everybody on buses would be reading something – books, newspapers, magazines and plays. They eat literature. They have a society where 5,000 people would fill a stadium and in 4 hours in the cold listening to poetry. This is how literature is over there."

Prof. Atukwei Okai called on government to take away all taxes on materials for publishing to elevate the Ghanaian publishing industry. He said, "Talking about publishing and the book in Ghana, it is a question of the reading habit as determined by the cost of books, the viability of books and the viability of publishing. The role of government in enhancing reading and book publishing is – take away all the taxes on the materials for publishing and give a possible push to the publishing industry in Ghana.

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## CONVERSATION ON BOOK DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA

*Ms. Akoss Ofori-Mensah, CEO, Sub-Saharan Publishers on 24th February, 2017 shared this insightful article on Read African Books website. (Read African Books is formed by African Books Collective [ABC]).*

**African book production has often been criticized as poor quality, what are some of the developments in the area now?**

The days of African published books being of poor quality are over. Henry Chakava of East African Educational Publishers once wrote that, "Books published in Africa do not travel beyond their national borders. A cursory look at most of these will reveal glaring spelling errors and bad grammar even in the preliminary pages and blurb." (1997). At the Bologna Book Fair in 2004, Tainie Mundondo of the African Publishers Network (APNET) put up a beautiful display of African children's books. We went out for lunch and on our return we found that the stand had been stripped bare! Everything was gone, including the APNET banner! We almost fainted! Formerly, nobody would have touched the stand; African children's books in the 1980s were not worth stealing.

The first Sub-Saharan books were printed in the UK and Belgium; but when I met Book Printing Press from Mauritius in Harare, I changed to them. Their prices were far lower than what I used to get from the UK. A few years later the company broke up, so I found new printers in Eastern Europe. The Far East and

Eastern Europe have excelled as the places for cheap and high quality printing. Many African publishers print in India, Turkey, Dubai, China, Malaysia etc. The only problem with the Far East is that the shipment takes too long to arrive in Africa. In fact, even the big time publishers of Europe and America print in the Far East."

Books are difficult commodities to sell and if the production quality is not up to international standards they become impossible to sell: even if the content is top-class material. People do not look at this if it is shoddily produced.

The Ghanaian government has put some measures in place to protect local industry hasn't it?

Several factors make it cheaper to print outside Ghana than internally. First of all, Ghana does not produce paper and other printing inputs, such as ink, films and plates. Secondly, there are import duties on paper and print materials, whereas the printed book comes into the country without any duty because Ghana is a signatory to the Berne Convention/Florence Agreement.

When the Ministry of Education in Ghana divested itself of textbook publishing and invited local publishers to develop the books in 2004, one of the conditions stipulated in the contracts was that 20% of the work must be printed in Ghana. Only the teachers' guides were printed locally: the successful publishers printed their books outside. In 2007, all textbooks

were still printed outside. The printers in Ghana were extremely bitter. To boost the local printing industry in Ghana, the government passed a law in 2015 making the printing of Ghanaian school textbooks outside Ghana a criminal offence. To make it easier and cheaper for the printers, the government has removed the VAT on paper and printing materials meant for textbooks.

**There has been a myriad of donor and government supported literary and educational initiatives in West Africa. Who do you think have been the key players in the area?**

The measures put in place by local governments, such as that of Ghana's Education Service, in collaboration with outside agencies over the last ten years provide an example of how inside and outside players can interact to bring about beneficial change.

Education in Africa has been supported by donors for quite some time and in the 1980s the World Bank insisted that governments/ministries of education should divest themselves of book publishing and allow private publishers to take over. Immediately, all foreign publishers nationalized as local publishers. Other new players came on the scene and book publishing started to develop.

There has been a concern to improve literacy among children in Ghana over the last two decades. Between 2000-2017

there have been some major projects in Ghana supported by USAID and UNICEF to promote early literacy among children ... the first, called EQUALL (Education Quality for All) and the second, NALAP (National Literacy Acceleration Programme). These projects were based on the belief that if a child learns to read and write in his/ her mother tongue he/ she can learn other languages much more easily. Ghanaian published books were translated into local languages for use in the projects for the primary schools. The officers in charge talked to the publishers whose books were selected and negotiated a flat fee for all. The project paid about US\$100 per title. The publishers involved did not make a fuss because it was a national project (a kind of corporate social responsibility). These local language readers were distributed to the primary schools.

Earlier, in 2006-2010, a similar project was undertaken to produce early learning Teaching & Learning Materials (TLMS), again supported by the USAID-Barbara Bush Project. The materials were developed by the Ghana Education Service and staff from Chicago University. The materials developed were based on the Ghana Education Service curriculum.

In late 2015, USAID, through an organization called Fhi360 and the Ghana Education Service again purchased early reading materials in both local languages and English for distribution to kindergartens and lower primary schools in the country. Over 3,500,000 books in English were purchased for kindergarten and lower primary schools together with over 750,000 books in local languages.

Currently, UNICEF has ordered more copies of the same books to supplement what USAID bought. All these books were written and published in Ghana

by Ghanaians. Publishers had to distribute the books to their assigned schools and produce evidence of delivery before they were paid.

Some NGOs also produce such readers to support their programmes: for example Biblionef has produced the CAT AND DOG series and Kathy Knowles, of the Osu Library Fund, often produces readers for her libraries.

It is well-known that the many years of civil wars destroyed practically everything in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Once peace was restored, the country had to start again from scratch. When the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) started their reading programme in the region they were buying readers from Sub-Saharan Publishers (SSP). Then they had locals to write and illustrate stories. SSP organized the design and layout for them. Once the print files were ready we sent them to a printer of CODE's choice in the Far East to print the books. We advised CODE to get them an Apple computer and the Indesign software: our designer then used to go to Monrovia for short, 10-day breaks to teach young people there book design.



*I believe that  
the book as we  
know it will stay  
with us for many  
generations to  
come.*

Africa's writers, illustrators and publishers are busily working to produce books which meet their respective national syllabus requirements. Textbooks need to be culturally relevant for the

students. The Ghana Education Textbook Policy, for example, stipulates that at least 70% of the content of a textbook must be written by Ghanaians. Thus textbook curricula are mostly country specific.

**You are well-known for your rights selling and buying your children's list these days is not even restricted to stories written in Ghana. What have been some of your recent successes?**

I have personally published a reader written by an Ethiopian, and illustrated by a Ghanaian. The book was launched by the Ethiopian embassy in Accra. I just sold the rights for that book to Rwanda and it has been published in Kinyarwanda. I have also bought the rights for books from South Africa and published them in Ghana. In fact, I dare say that I have sold more copies of Niki Daly's Jamela's Dress in Ghana than Tafelberg has done in South Africa.

Gizi Gizo is an example of a reader written by an American intern working with the Zongo Community in Cape Coast. The story is based on the desire to use water as a means to improve the quality of life for the Zongo people. Zongo settlements are areas in West African towns and cities, inhabited predominantly by settlers from the northern Sahel region formerly dominated by Hausas from Northern Nigeria. The language in these Zongos is predominantly Hausa.

The Stories Spread Across the World is another example from afar which has come back to Ghana. It is a typical Ghanaian folk tale taken to the Americas during the transatlantic slave trade. I first saw the book in Guadalajara, flipped through and guessed the tale. I have had it translated into English and published it. The story was originally written in Portuguese and illustrated by a Brazilian.

Sosu's Call has been published in Castillian and Catalan in



Spain; in English in North America, South Africa and the UK; in Portuguese in Brazil; in German, Danish, Italian, French, Czech and Kiswahili; in Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan and Simplified Chinese in Mainland China. In fact, I sold six of Meshack Asare titles to Rainbird Educational Publishers ten years ago at the first Cape Town Book Fair in 2006.

Irrespective of where a book is written or the language, once people know it and get interested in it, it will travel.

Donors are pushing for change in Africa, particularly around the provision of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs). What are some of your thoughts about some of the initiatives proposed from where you sit as an African publisher publishing in Ghana?

Often there is a belief that those who fail to embrace the digital TLMs now will become obsolete or fall behind. Some content might interest learners and teachers; other content may not. Although digital books and TLMs may eventually replace printed books, it is likely to be a gradual process. In fact, from the experience of African Books Collective, the rush for e-books has plateaued and the demand for the printed book has grown.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) cannot behave like the proverbial ostrich so far as digital TLMs are concerned; the development in new technologies vis-à-vis teaching and learning materials in SSA cannot be overlooked. However, the choices are neither simple nor cost efficient, and there is perhaps no viable substitute for the traditional book, at least for the moment. Over the next decade or two, the most cost-effective approach may be a combination of printed

materials and digital TLMs, especially for the teaching of science.

For NGO's operating on donor funding this is quite feasible, but for commercial publishers it might be difficult. A meeting with commercial publishers to discuss the issue and find mutually acceptable ways is necessary.

The expense involved in the digital migration vis-à-vis the traditional book must also be considered. The cost of computers, tablets, phones, etc. In addition to the cost of set-up, should be compared with the cost of funding print runs and distribution to decide which is more cost effective.

It may be that the cost of computers, tablets, phones, etc., plus the cost of set-up, is the more expensive option. Besides, the issue of electric power is a real problem in Africa. Nigeria is the biggest producer of oil in Africa, but it might interest you to know that people are always queueing for petrol while practically everybody in Nigeria owns a generator. In some parts of Lagos it is difficult to sleep at night due to the cacophony of noise from generators. At the same time the cost of replacement of spoilt computers might be more costly than that of printed books.

There are large numbers of children in rural communities. In Ghana electricity is expensive, and the supply is so irregular that even industry cannot support it, while the domestic users cannot afford to pay for it. If a family cannot buy electricity for the home how is a child going to read on his/her computer, or tablet, or charge her phone? How does he/she get the money for the internet café?

Then the cost of replacement of spoilt computers/tablets, phones, etc., must be taken

into account as against reprints. Elementary school teachers will also have to be ICT literate to be able to teach digital TLMs. That is another huge investment required in teacher training.

I believe that the book as we know it will stay with us for many generations to come. You can go to bed with your book: when you fall asleep it falls down on the bed or on the floor. When you wake up it is still there, intact. You cannot do that with your computer.

- See more at: <http://www.readafricanbooks.com/opinions/conversations-on-book-development-in-west-africa#sthash.SF569ZE2.dpuf>

## GHANA BOOK PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION HOLDS 2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING cont'd frm pg6

Publishers would then be able to publish books that would be viable for the people. The people will be able to buy more books and read. In the end it will not only increase employment but the country would have people that are correct."

## Ghana Library Association

The message from the Ghana Library Association's President, Dr. Mrs. Perpetua Dadzie, was read on her behalf by Mr. Samuel Bentil Aggrey. She congratulated GBPA for the successful organization of the 14th Ghana International Book Fair. She pledged GLA's readiness to collaborate with publishers and to promote books and libraries in Ghana. She assured GBPA of their support.

## Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association (GPPCA)

Mr. William Turkson, the Executive Secretary of the Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association (GPCCA) gave a message on behalf the president of the GPPCA. He touched on challenges of indigenous printing and invited publishers and other stakeholders to build printing and the book industry at large.

# Highlights of the Meeting with the Minister of Education

24<sup>th</sup> March 2017 | At Ministry of Education Conference Room

The meeting started at 9:10 am with about 60 publishers in attendance.

The issues discussed were as follows:

## The Status of the Textbook Development and Distribution Policy (TDDP)

The GBPA President enquired about the status of the TDDP. He stated that since 2003 when a stakeholder conference was convened to formulate the policy and subsequently its implementation in 2005, several changes have been made on the policy by the Ministry without the involvement of all stakeholders. He cited the following as the major challenges with the implementation of the policy that needs to be addressed:

- Irregular procurement regime (Books mostly procured during election years)
- Delays in payments
- Lack of confidence in the evaluation process
- Quality and sustainability of books produced

The GBPA President also spoke about the book policy being put together by the GBDC. He indicated that under normal circumstances, a book policy should have preceded the

Textbook Development and Distribution Policy, so that we derive the latter from the former. He concluded by saying that the publishing industry is critical to the development of our country hence it needs the necessary attention from policy makers to thrive.

The Director of CRDD affirmed all concerns raised by the GBPA on the TDDP, after she was asked to comment on the issue by the Minister. She added that the TDDP document available is only a draft copy yet to be signed.

Mr Darmani of Step Publishers proposed that for the policy to achieve its objectives, it needs to be passed into law to give its implementation the full legal backing.

The Minister asked that the draft copy of the policy be made available to all stakeholders. He further asked that a committee should be set to review the policy for it to be presented to parliament to be passed into law.

## Negotiation of Rights between the Ministry of Education & Publishers

The Minister enquired from publishers the possibility of MoE dealing with printers directly and not through publishers. He cited a case made by the Ghana Printers and Paper Converters Association during

his meeting with them, to reduce the cost of purchasing books for schools drastically through buying outright rights from publishers, so the MoE decides who to print the books.

The GBPA President indicated that print buying is a natural part of the publishing process and could not be decoupled from roles of the publisher, especially when the publisher holds the right in trust for the authors/ writers.

Mr Eddie Addo of Winmat publishers and Mr Asamoah of Sam-Woode Limited both drew the Minister's attention to the huge cost involved in the publishing process before one can bid for a contract. They were of the view that printing is only a small aspect of the entire publishing process.

The Minister stated that once the syllabus and the curriculum are developed by Government he feels there should be some shared rights with publishers. He informed the meeting that the MoE is far advanced with plans to go into E-books and since the books are going to be on the Ministry's E-Platform there should be further negotiation of rights with publishers.

The President of GBPA lauded the move by the MoE to go E-Book and intimated that it would clear a lot of hurdles in the publishing process.

**Continued on pg 12**





## 15th GHANA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR 2017 IN FOCUS

Ever since the first book fair was held in 1996, Ghana international book fair (GIBF) has been part of the national events calendar. Subsequent fairs were held every two years from 1998 until 2008, when the book fair became an annual event. The GBPA has been the lead organizer. The 15th edition of the GIBF will be held this year, 2017.

The objective of the fair is to create a marketplace for publishers, writers, printers, booksellers, librarians and other stakeholders in the book industry to interact and foster strong links, trade rights and negotiate deals. Details of this year's fair are as follows:



**Accra International  
Conference Centre**



**Thurs. 24th – Sun.  
27th August, 2017  
9am – 6pm Daily**



**Theme | “Books  
and Culture in the  
Digital Age.”**

Books impact positively and serve as the foundation for all sectors of the economy. They are the most suitable media to transmit knowledge which breeds wisdom for personal and national development.

Books are also cultural tools which preserve the cultural history of a people and transmit cultural values and ways of doing things from one generation to another. The world has embraced the digital age where people spend most of their time on phones, tablets, computers and other electronic devices. These electronic devices educate, inform and entertain people.

This presupposes that publishers and other creators of knowledge are losing out if they do not publish electronically or engage in adequate e-publishing.

The theme for this year's 15th GIBF invites all book industry players and stakeholders to redefine, examine and enhance the state of books and culture in this modern technological period. Relevant workshops, conferences and seminars are being organised to actualize the theme.

**Registration is still ongoing!**

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# COMMA CHAMELEON

He further remarked that rights are always negotiable in contracts.

The Minister asked that the Committee to be set to review the TDDP, should as part of its mandate, define going forward on rights negotiation between the MoE and publishers.

## The Core SHS Textbook Tenders Contract

The Minister informed the meeting of challenges government is having in finding money to pay publishers who won the recent MoE textbook tender. He also spoke about the numerous complaints he is receiving on the corrupt nature of the entire tender process. He intimated that going forward the evaluation process could be simplified if the Ministry selects books with prior approval from CRDD.

The Minister called for discussions on how best to solve issues resulting from the Core SHS Textbook Tender and the following resolutions were made:

- A Committee to be set up to investigate the evaluation process.
- Publishers who won the contract and have started printing their books with local printers to be invited for renegotiation.
- Publisher who won the contract and are yet to print their books to be written to by the Ministry.

The meeting came to a close at 10:30 am.

**Joseph Gyamfi**  
(Acting Executive Secretary,  
GBPA)

I realize that on the grand scale of interesting things, punctuation is pretty far down the list. *Punctuation* is a dying art. I'm not sure whether this is the writers' or the readers' fault, but I mostly blame the writers. It's as if chefs got careless about seasoning.

*Periods* can present problems, but they're fairly low-maintenance, because most people know when to stop. Not so with semicolons. Many abuse them; few can even explain how they differ from colons. Apostrophes are increasingly misused or ignored. I'm no fan of McDonald's, but at least the company wears its apostrophe proudly (unlike apostates such as Walgreens).

*Hyphens* have become a mind-numbing mystery, rarely used where they're needed—and often wrongly placed where a long dash should be. Parentheses confuse a lot of people (do periods go inside or outside?). Question marks seem easy, but let me ask if you think the one at the end of this sentence is correct? Because it's not.

But today I want to home in on the *comma*. Lately I've noticed a tendency in newspapers and magazines to reflexively inject a comma when a noun is described by two adjectives—something we do in English all the time. Trouble is, you don't always want a comma in a two-adjectives-plus-noun construction. For example: a shiny, antique Rolls. I just can't buy that comma. Here's one I do buy: an honest, hard-working man.

It's a subtle distinction: Are both adjectives equally focused on the noun (he's an honest man and a hard-working man), or does the first adjective describe a cohesive adjective-noun unit (antique Rolls). I reject a comma because shiny applies to

antique Rolls as if that phrase were a single word. How silly would it be to write a shiny, thing?

To get technical, we're talking here about coordinate adjectives. A useful guideline: the comma is likely if it's a comfortable substitute for *and*. You'd call a man "honest and hard-working," but it sounds clunky to call a car "shiny and antique."

Here are some recent ill-advised print-media commas: "Modest, working-class suburb" (the working-class suburb is modest; the comma is superfluous). "A slim, 30-year-old bartender" (no comma: "slim" further describes the 30-year-old mixologist). "The original, 1879 site" (that comma is too bizarre for comment).

Admittedly, there's a lot of grey area here. The writer's intent must be analysed, and in some cases interpretations will vary. Here's a two-in-one-sentence example: "from a confused drug-riddled adolescence to a final, eye-catching impression of her." I'd put a comma after "confused" and no comma after "final."

I'm glad when journalists promote traditional punctuation, but comma overcompensation is as inadvisable as any other kind.— *Tom Stern*

Source: Adapted from Grammar-Book.com E-newsletter

