

**African Youth Literature: What Visibility of the International Market**  
**International Assembly of independent publishers Workshop**  
**Strengthening and keeping bibliodiversity alive**

**23 and 24 March 2013 – Bologna International Book Fair, Italy**

**Background:**

This workshop, which was made possible through partnerships with the Bologna Book Fair, the *Centre National du Livre* and the *Fondation the France*, convened eight African publishers who shared their international experiences and reviewed the publishing standards for the creation and production of youth literature (how can publishers develop on a twofold level, targeting both a local readership and a potential international one?).

A literary agent also did a presentation, to support publishers in their questioning and to reflect with them on the editorial and commercial strategies that could be developed to achieve a greater visibility on international markets.

One of issues raised at the workshop was the formulation of recommendations and advocacy strategy to enable the presence of publishers from the South in book fairs.

**Way forward:**

- **Verbatim** report of the meeting (for internal use) => autumn 2013.
- **“Instructions” and recommendations** on the way to participate to fairs such as Bologna’s, from workshop discussions and training session => autumn 2013
- **Advocacy “towards a greater bibliodiversity: how can we promote the place of publishers from the South in the northern book fairs”** => autumn 2013
- **Work with African publisher collectives** (Afrilivres, APNET, etc.), to get the advocacy strategy validated by public authorities, fairs and professional associations to insure a greater visibility for productions from the South in fairs => autumn 2013
- **Diffusion of advocacy** => autumn 2013
- **Dialogue with book fairs** on possible partnerships with professional collectives => before the end of 2013
- **Compilation of workshop conclusions during the general meeting of the International Assembly of Independent Publishers in Cape Town** (South Africa) => spring 2014
- Monitoring and support, as far as possible, of co-publishing, translation, copyrights transfers and purchases projects amongst the Alliance’s publishers, following the Bologna meeting => years ahead
- Adaptation of the “Lecture d’Afrique(s)” (“Readings from Africa”) catalogue in English – depending on resources available – allowing publishers to have a bilingual communication tool that could be distributed ahead of fairs, but also after fairs => years ahead

## **Main issues for advocacy activities:**

### **1. Raise awareness of African public authorities to enable professional meetings and strengthen the presence of publishers from the South in the North**

*Examples:*

- The invitation programme of the Bologna fair targeting publishers from developing countries is a great opportunity. To facilitate publishers' access to this programme, promotion activities could be developed by professional collectives, targeting the African Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs (to whom these invitations are generally sent), so they can better understand the issues and the importance of promoting publishing creation in their respective countries.
- African public authorities could support the traveling of publishers to fairs in the North, and the creation of promotion tools that would insure a better knowledge of productions published in Africa (bilingual collective catalogue, for example).

### **2. Enable the collective organisation of African publishers in international fairs in the North and South**

*Examples:*

- Fairs in the North could develop a preferential price system ("fair price") for African publisher members of professional collectives, to increase the visibility of African productions on the international market.
- Training and exchanges between publishers, illustrators and graphic artists could be organised ahead of book fairs in partnership with fair organisers and professional associations.
- Events and activities to promote African youth literature would be necessary to create a sustainable dynamic on the "Africa" collective stands at fairs. In order to do this, a work group focusing on youth literature within a collective such as Afrilivres could be created.

### **3. Develop "South-South" copyrights exchanges in the African book fairs**

*Examples:*

- It would be useful that one or several important African book fairs (Dakar, Ouagadougou, Abidjan, Harare, etc.) develop a professional hub focusing on sales and purchases of rights. This would facilitate exchanges between African publishers, which are necessary for a better circulation of texts in Africa and for the consolidation of African publishing.
- Some African fairs could facilitate meetings between publishers via invitation programmes, and training workshops (technical workshops on issues of graphic design, for instance) – organised jointly with professional collectives. These training workshops would be very useful in the margins of fairs in the North as well.

- It would also be useful to formalise experience and practical knowledge sharing, and capacity building based on reciprocity, between fairs such as Bologna's and African book fairs, for a better knowledge on the markets in the North and the South, and to implement complementary and sustainable programmes for publishers.



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