

**4th IBBY Africa Regional Conference - Hotel Africana, Kampala, Uganda,
22nd - 24th August 2017.**

Theme: Rethinking Contemporary Literature for Children and Young Adults in Africa

Report

Organised by: IBBY (Uganda Chapter) / Uganda Children's Writers and Illustrators Association (UCWIA)

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The IBBY Africa Regional Conference is the largest gathering of writers and publishers with a focus on writing and publishing books for children and young adults on the continent. It is held every two years. The first and second one were held in 2011 and 2013 and both of them were hosted by South Africa. The third was held in 2015 and hosted by Rwanda.

The 4th IBBY Africa Regional Conference was held in Uganda It was organized by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Uganda Chapter-Uganda Children's Writers and Illustrators Association (UCWIA). The conference received financial and moral support from (Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), IBBY, National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU) and Uganda Reproduction Rights Organisation (URRO),

A total of 165 participants drawn from 13 countries including Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda ... attended the conference. These included researchers, writers, publishers, visual artists, academicians, librarians, civil society organisations and students. They came together to discuss a wide range of issues under the general theme *Rethinking Contemporary Literature for Children and Young Adults in Africa*. The general, objective was to improve the literary and artistic standards of children's and young adult's books to attract wider readership and promote literacy.

The 3 day conference attracted papers covering a wide scope of issues which were presented by expert speakers. As part of the conference programme, participants attended the 1st Book Illustrators Exhibition which was organized by Mango Tree at the Design Hub Kampala.

A cultural evening and dinner was organized at the Ndere Centre in Kampala where the resident Ndere troupe provided entertainment to participants. Participants were warmly welcomed to Ndere Centre by Dr. Nsubuga Nsambu who also launched a book, "The Game Park" by 8 year old Ethan Sengoba. Proceeds from the sale of the book that evening were dedicated to supporting literacy activities in Kiryandongo refugee settlement.

Definition of terms:

Contemporary Literature – Generally referred to as literature after the Second World War to the current day. Its opposite is conventional which follows particular rules and is generally acceptable.

Literature for Children – writings for/by children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interests to children. These may be in prose, poetry or drama, fiction or non-fiction. It may take the form of picture books, audio books, art books, songs, cartoons etc.

Time travel – movement of stories from one places, culture, spaces, era and contexts, genre so as to make it accessible for children in different cultures and settings.

Mother tongue – the first language a child speaks. Also known as L1.

Indigenous languages - These are languages spoken by the local communities.

Orthography - the conventional spelling system of a language.

Blooms Software - a program developed by SIL, the winner of the Enabling Writers competition. The software simplifies the process of creating new books in local languages.

SIL – Summer Institute of Linguistics.

2. OFFICIAL OPENING

2.1. Curtain Raiser

As a curtain raiser a poem on reading was presented by Peter Kagayi, a young poet. It was followed by a discussion of a book, titled *Friends* and written by a child writer, Bonita Murungi. It was discussed by the author herself and her friend.

2.2. Key Note highlights by Mr. James Tumusiime, MD Fountain Publishers Ltd.

Mr. James Tumusiime in his key note speech noted that:

- a) The most memorable books are those from/of/about home. We need to have education reforms that entail deliberately making reading a priority because books are the back drop of our civilization. It isn't only about the cost of books but also content. It is critical that publishing homebred stories is prioritized for Africa to inculcate reading for the 60% of Africa's population which is below 15 years. He noted a shortage of reading literature to suit the children's needs.
- b) Taking an example from the deliberate effort by the Asian Tigers to expose children to books through an initiative dubbed *Book floods*. We can learn that it is this exposure that enhanced the economic growth of those countries that is evident today.
- c) Today there is a resurgence of interest in folk stories and we ought to rethink strategies by reinventing storytelling through:
 - clever marketing and creative use of language like it is done in film and music;
 - Focusing on books that capture local content;
 - Standardizing the orthographies of different languages to run the thematic curriculum;
 - Supporting local language dictionaries and other publications;
 - Supporting translation initiatives;
 - Rewarding authors and illustrators to encourage creativity;
 - Publicising award-winning titles;
 - Encouraging partnerships with different institutions to ensure quality and more initiatives;

- Organising reading competitions in schools and rewarding winners

- d) Some policy prescriptions such as liberalization of textbook publishing in Africa, led to an upsurge in indigenous publishing houses which, in Uganda, grew to 40 publishing houses. Decentralised procurement policy for instruction materials, that rolled out in 2002, improved the number of bookshops to 300 by 2008.

- e) We ought to do more advocacy work to totally get rid of taxes on books and find strategies to:
 - Help fight book piracy and photocopying in Education Institutions.
 - Support the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for the blind and visually impaired persons.
 - Encourage governments in Africa to ratify and domesticate the WIPO Internet treaties which set down international norms aimed at preventing unauthorized access to the use of creative works on the internet and other digital platforms.

Conclusively, we need to appreciate the role of books in education, life skills and continuity.

2.3. Welcome remarks by Liz Page, Executive Director of IBBY

Representing the President of IBBY International, Ms Liz Page, the Executive Director of IBBY, said that she was proud of what IBBY Uganda Chapter had become and congratulated Mrs. Evangeline Barongo on hosting this conference. She observed that children are the most vulnerable people all over the world and that stories help them to understand the world from the perspective of the characters. They also learn to respect the experiences of other people. It is therefore important to facilitate children everywhere to access quality literature.

2.4. Welcome Remarks by Evangeline Ledi Barongo, Chairperson UCWIA / IBBY Uganda Chapter.

Mrs Barongo welcomed the over 13 countries that were represented at the conference. She expressed gratitude to the sponsors of the conference including IBBY, NSSF, KCCA, NABOTU, and URRO for the support rendered. She called on the Ministry of Education and Sports to budget and buy children's books more regularly, as this was the most effective way of supporting authors and the local book industry. She decried the homework culture which she said, was affecting the reading culture of the nation. She observed that reading plays a major part in education and we ought to redefine whether education is about passing exams or not. She reiterated the fact that writers were partners with other educationists and government and so there was need to cement the partnership to achieve quality education.

2.5 Address by the Chief Guest.

The Chief Guest was the Minister of Education and Sports and First Lady, Mrs Janet K. Museveni. She was represented by Ms. Lorna Magara the Head Teacher of Vine International Christian Academy.

She noted that increase in the amount of homework, given from school, has frustrated many children yet education ought to encourage knowledge, understanding, creativity and wisdom. She argued that more projects instead of homework is key to providing a holistic education. The Ministry of Education is determined to come up with reforms that encourage children to explore. Reading is the most important reform if deliberately enabled.

She said that the Ministry of Education and sports intends to;

- Encourage reading;
- Increase reading materials of both text and supplementary material;
- Continue putting emphasis on the thematic curriculum that encourages access to books in local languages;
- Encourage the local book industry to learn, unlearn and innovate; and
- Popularise some of the proposals which the 4th IBBY conference would make.

Mrs. Magara lauded Bonita Murungi of Aga Khan Academy and a child writer as an inspiration to her generation. She urged her to be an encourager, and to reach

out and have more book published. She called for the establishment of book clubs in different schools.

The Chief Guest representative finalized with launching a Children's book, **The Hare's reading game**, written by Mrs Barongo, and published to mark the hosting of the IBBY Africa Regional Conference in Uganda.

3. THEMATIC AREA PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Authorship, Illustrations and Publishing Culture

3.1.1. **Title:** Time Travel as an innovative tool for children's books presented by: Virginia Phiri from Zimbabwe

The presenter tried to demonstrate that a reading culture and interest in books by young people can be sustained if the books they read are exciting and relevant. One approach to producing such books is to base them on oral traditions. Such books would assist children appreciate the African idioms, imagery and culture. It is, therefore, necessary to go back in time, capture the cultural stories and their themes. Authors would need to incorporate modern experience to make the stories relevant to the contemporary child. Oral traditions have numerous facets – the talking animals can be used to carry messages to address any topic – ecology, conservation, policy making, child abuse, human relations, humility, career guidance, sex education etc. Plenty of the wise sayings in oral traditions are in indigenous languages, thus highlighting the need to learn one's mother tongue.

The paper surveys and discusses the topic using examples from Zimbabwe.

3.1.2. **Title:** The state of literature for children and young adults; the case for Botswana literature in English, presented by Benjamin M. Mogotsi from Botswana

The paper dealt with the importance of exposing children to works of literature produced by local authors because cultural identity is one of the critical ingredients

for national building and sovereignty, which are necessary tools for human development.

Drawing examples from a study carried out in Botswana, he explained that children in Botswana began learning literature, using works of foreign authors. Teachers cited the need to meet international standards as justification for their preference for foreign authors whereas their body language showed lack of confidence in the works of local authors. As a result, children grow up preferring to read foreign authors and getting the false sense that local traditions are primitive while foreign ones are superior.

The presenter argues that teaching of literature using local authors alongside works of foreign authors would facilitate strong literacy appreciation for children and boost cultural identity and integration. He called upon curriculum designers and teachers of literature to effect the needed change.

3.1.3. **Title:** Problems facing children's authors in Uganda. What should be done? presented by Simpson Muhwezi from Uganda.

Using his experience as children's book author and story teller, and citing views sought from other authors, editors, publishers book sellers, and stakeholder organisations eg The National Library of Uganda, UCWIA, URRO and NABOTU, Simpson Muhwezi discusses problems such as lack of sustainable reading culture and illiteracy, an unpredictable market, lack of unity among authors, widespread poverty, piracy, and lack of government support. The aim of this presentation was to stir progressive discussion about the future of children's literature in Uganda and on the African continent in general.

3.1.4. **Title:** Giving form to words for the sake of children. Presented by Nuwa Wamala Nnyanzi, a visual artist from Uganda.

More children were being introduced to, and made to appreciate art in its art form and take it in their world through their eyes. Different forms of illustrations and art impressions were being used including monochromes. More books for children and young adults were using art for

therapy/expression and healing. When the children interpret and participate in creating the art, the expressive nature helps them heal psychologically.

More introduction to art was enabling children appreciate their identity and colour. The art and colour of the play dolls we buy for the children is representative of the kind of identity the children will know and appreciate.

Children's literature has taken different forms. We ought to explore this development to our advantage.

Recommendations

1. It is good to use the oral traditional stories but the stories should be given a more relevant and appealing touch.
2. Children must be exposed to literature from all over the world and writers may help by translating into, indigeneous languages, classics from other societies, and their own into English and other languages
3. There is need for more collaboration between visual and literary arts to come up with literature for children that is interesting, relevant, engaging and of good quality.
4. Content can be visually presented through performing arts to enable targeted audience understand the message better.
5. There is need for government to provide a budget line for story and fun books at the lower levels; from Nursery to Primary school level.

3.2. Oral traditions and children's literature:

3.2.1 Stories, myths, dramas, histories, songs and proverbs to educate and entertain children

The session took the form of a discussion by a panel of specialists in the various fields relevant to the subject.

Dr. Cornelius Gulere: Lecturer of Literature & Languages: Uganda Christian University, Mukono, Uganda

Mr. Walabyeki Magoba: In charge of Children's Programme – Central Broadcasting Service Radio.-Uganda

Mr. Peter Mugume: University Lecturer, Uganda Christian University, Mukono, Uganda.

The panelists observed as follows:

Oral tradition forms provide more outlets for children's literature to include riddles, role play, poetry etc.

Contemporary literature for children is in more than the conventional forms of storytelling, to include songs and other forms that are didactic in nature for they depict aspects of human nature that can be changed or impacted.

The oral traditional forms of children's literature are inclusive and flow from the environment.

They enable the four language skills that guide literacy, i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. Each child participates in their own language using words and songs.

The oral story has left the fireplace and is now on radio as represented on Mr. Magoba's children's programme on Central Broadcasting Services (Uganda) in which children are used to disseminate and preserve oral literature by active participation.

Oral stories could be put in other forms like plays where children tell the story, develop it for stage production as a way of exploring the history.

Other more interesting forms like folk cartoons are expensive.

Recommendations

1. The family is integral in making and motivating children to appreciate reading. It is important for parents to encourage children to write and read.
2. It is important to find family story telling time because folklore is a form of parenting

3. Literature for children should be about what children like because books are meant to be enjoyed.
4. Deliberate effort should be made to cover the gap between technology and oral tradition e.g. taking advantage of platforms such as www.storyweaver.com and www.africanstorybook.com where stories have been uploaded in 12 local languages through an initiative headed by Dr. Gulere and the students of Uganda Christian University.
5. There should be more researched responses to the question:
 - What makes a children's book- is it the message?
 - What happens to children who enjoy adult books?

3.3. **Language and Children's Literature.**

3.3.1. **Title:** Why Emmanuel cannot read by Paul H. Sutherland from Uganda.

The presenter noted that children were finding reading difficult because the books were difficult, of poor quality and uninteresting. There were no stories that appealed to children; that are fun and tailored to the children's interest.

There were no example of encouraging children to read because most parents neither read nor encourage reading.

The schools' emphasis on books is for academic and memorizing purposes not for enjoyment.

3.3.2. **Title:** Translating children's literature in Africa: African culture conveyance through intercultural adaption: by Eric Dusabimana from Rwanda

In some countries more translations were being encouraged so that children could get a variety of stories in their local languages. The translated stories can be moved to different places so it encourages cultural exchange and preservation of cultures. In this way children are able to harness time travel as an innovation in literature for children.

The challenge, however is not just about translation but translating whole situations (social categories and cultural context) Knowing how to keep foreign elements of the text and domesticating others.

3.3.3. **Title:** Writing for children in indigeneous languages: A survey of primary schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province, Zimbabwe: by Sifundo Nkomo from Zimbabwe.

The presentation was on a research carried out to show the importance of writing for children in indigeneous languages.

This survey established that:

Foreign literature dominates most libraries in the schools within the scope of the survey; foreign literature is considered modernized, more advanced, interesting, accessible and widening global knowledge. Few children are interested in local literature. Romance and comics are considered most preferred by the girls and boys respectively.

Ms. Mkombo observed that learning their indigeneous languages allows children to participate and grow within their culture and to develop a positive sense of cultural identity. “Our language is like a pearl inside a shell. The shell is the people that carry the language. If our language is taken away, then that would be like a pearl that is gone. We would be like an empty shell,” she argued.

It is vital for children to be enabled to read in their indigeneous languages so that these languages are protected and preserved, otherwise indigeneous languages would become endeangered or replaced by the so called dominant / international languages.

Recommendations of the survey:

- Encourage social media advocacy for reading and purchasing local content;
- Write local literature in interesting genres;
- Provide and make available grants to publishers so that they can produce quality literature in indigenous languages;
- Make literature accessible in schools;

- Be innovative like charging a small fee for romance books to stock up on quality books in the indigenous languages.

3.3.4. **Title:** First draw them in – How innovative library competitions in local languages introduce libraries and reading for pleasure to children in a rural African environment : by Christina J. Nel from South Africa.

Most children in rural South Africa have little or no experience of children's books, and view libraries as formal institutions only to be visited for school/academic information. It is crucial that libraries are seen to be friendly and accessible and have readily available, fun children's books, in the local languages, and relevant in terms of subject matter.

The presenter recommended that some innovations that promote libraries and reading for fun should be explored. She reported on some of the ideas tried by the Great Tzanea Library service in Limpopo Province, South Africa, which focus on creativity and fun. They start with light hearted competitions that encourage children break the ice and visit the library as a first step. There the librarian makes sure that the experience in the library is so much fun that the child becomes a regular visitor and eventually a reader.

3.3.5. **Title:** Language and children's literature: lessons from Uganda by Deus Monday from Uganda.

Mr. Monday observed that today's young people are increasingly reading adult books without any control. There is a lot of printed materials for children that cannot be disseminated due to policy changes in government; and there is a lot of uncensored literature on the streets in print media and on the Internet.

Today's writers must rise to the occasion and write appropriate materials for children, and government should come in and dictate the limits in terms of appropriate language and content. It is important to use appropriate medium so as to be well understood. First language should be prioritized when considering production of children's literature.

3.3.6. **Title:** The importance of children's language in children's literature: by Lydia Teera and Kathryn Asiku, from Uganda.

The transition from English (used at school) to mother tongue (used at home) is frustrating because children are expected to just keep switching from one language to the other.

It must be appreciated that mother tongue is the languages through which children acquire language skills and understanding of the world around them. There is need for more advocacy for mother tongue literature, literacy and multi-lingual education.

Orthographic development has been progressively improving the quality of education.

SIL, with other partners like National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), has mapped the indigenous languages to get orthographic development right. Getting into multilingual spaces requires one to have a strong foundation/grounding in mother tongue.

Currently 32 languages in Uganda have orthographies. The introduction of Bloom software to support Mother tongue materials is an encouraging development.

3.3.7. **Title:** What goes into creation of local language books for beginning reading: By Gorette Nabakijje, James Odongo, Davis Bamwine and Dr. Marianna Ross from Mango Tree, Uganda

The presenters observed as follows:

- Children love fun and interacting with their environment
- Illustrations have to be culturally sensitive and children should be able to relate to them.
- Books could follow a bilingual production series –eg.- English and the local language.
- Consistency has to be observed in fonts/design. It has to be legible, clear and clean.
- Some letters that can't be recognized using the current software have to be drawn by hand.

- Choice of words is key- hard words should be translated, using words that children commonly use and the natural tone in the translation must be maintained.
- Translations have to be accurate and spelling errors must be avoided.
- More translations are being encouraged so that children can get stories in their local dialects.

Recommendations

1. Attitude change towards mother tongue and literature in the mother tongue should be encouraged
2. Translators need to translate for some specific audience and for some specific purpose. Focus should be on *translating for children* not *children's literature*. This deliberate effort will ensure that.
 - The text is adapted to the level of understanding of the targeted child, his/her beliefs, knowledge and culture.
 - The character of children as dynamic, experimental, imaginative and unstable is appreciated and maintained during the designing of their literature.
 - 'Extra-linguistic aspects' such as illustrations, orthography etc. are taken care of.
3. Publishers need to consider publishing translated works.
4. Government needs to give more support to the publishing of translated works by increasing the SRM budget.
5. Awareness of approved orthography should be promoted.
6. More orthography software should be developed because some sounds cannot be transcribed the normal way.
7. More works need to be made accessible and affordable.
8. There is need to train writers of the indigenous languages.

9. Language boards set up in different parts of the country need to be more visible.
10. Stories in indigenous languages could be shared via social and other media.
11. Creative writing and self-expression should be encouraged in schools.
12. It is good to engage oral tradition.
13. Partnership with public libraries should be explored.
14. Approved orthographies should be promoted so that everybody is made to be aware of them.
15. Awareness of sites that support mother tongue, such as <http://bloomlibrary.org> , www.Africanstorybook.org , www.footsquirrel.com should be promoted.
16. Local publishers need to work together with other stake holders in the book industry.

3.4. Book Trade in Africa and Beyond

- 3.4.1. **Title:** One market, different regulations: an experience of selling books in Uganda, Ethiopia, Zambia and West Africa. By MK Publishers and Fountain Publishers
- 3.4.2. **Title:** Book distribution and trade in Uganda and East Africa: by Abel Barigye, Fountain Publis Uganda.

It was noted that most African publishers were concentrating on set books because they provide higher profit margins. Supplementary reading materials were being phased out because of lack of funding.

Conversion to e-books and print on demand is an option that is getting more and more convenient.

Key challenges noted include; limited distribution, network that discourages investment in publishing books, poor reading culture, little government funding, different schools curricula, poor infrastructure, delayed payment due to the unstable dollar rate and the different currencies. The cheapest publisher wins the tenders to supply books – that policy tends to

compromise quality. Different copyright policies in the different countries encourage piracy and affect the sales immensely.

Recommendations

1. Lobby government to enact friendly book procurement policies that stimulate the growth of local publishers.
2. Publishers should establish information networks for strengthening their bargaining power.
3. Publishers associations across the region could publish a newsletter to share publishing knowledge from different countries.
4. National governments and regional bodies should put in place frameworks that enable licensing of publishing from other countries.
5. Publishers Associations need to be strengthened /or revived for better and effective lobbying.

3.5. ICTs, Publishing Innovations and new value chain

3.5.1. **Title:** Online publishing platforms for Africa.: by Nasser Kakumba from Uganda

Online publishing intends to avail more outlets for works to be made accessible to the target audience. It reaches a larger audience, access is cheaper, makes literature comparative and varied, no printing costs are involved.

Open licensing specifies what can and cannot be done with a work (whether sound, text, image or multi media) It grants permission to access, re-use and redistribute a work with few or no restrictions. It would ensure wider access of works, and new revenue streams.

Title: Elephant in the room: the rise of open licensing in early literacy in Africa.
By Neil Butcher, from South Africa; Lisbeth Levey, from Israel and Kirsty von Gogh, from Uganda.

The paper presented a study carried out on enhancement of the availability of mother tongue early literacy reading resources as well as its attendant risks. It also looked at the impact of open licensing on early literacy ecosystems – the emerging innovations and how they impact on content creation, publishing and use of the materials in developing countries, especially Africa eg. picture books read for pleasure not for instruction.

It is essential that the voices / opinions of the targeted communities are consulted when planning and funding the new initiatives.

3.5.2. **Title:** Literacy teachers online (LITOC) by Rachel Nalumosu and Joyce Nairuba, from LABE, Uganda.

In this initiative, Stories are developed based on the sub themes of the thematic curriculum. Teachers are trained to plan, write, design/draw, illustrate and scan according to one's ability to do what best. It is simple, affordable and interesting to children. Teachers are implementers, and they make learning simpler. Collaborative learning is emphasized and a reading scheme developed according to levels:

Level	No of words
Level 1	One word
Level 2	5 words
Level 3	10 words
Level 4	20 words

The focus is to increase and enable access to information and its utilisation among women and children in local communities. It is currently working in Acoli, Kakwa, Madi, Lugbarati and Aringati in Uganda.

Recommendations:

1. Publishers and writers should embrace online publishing platforms as a new book distribution model to overcome some of the current challenges.
2. Publishers should explore how best to involve teachers in materials development using online platforms.
3. Publishers and writers are encouraged to experiment with open licensing to enable more access to their publications, and perhaps more revenue.

3.6. Intellectual Property and Business Models

This was a discussion by a panel of representatives from:

Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB),

Uganda Women Writers Association (FEMRITE)

and Uganda Reproduction Rights Organisation (URRO)

The panelists defined and explained Copyright as the exclusive legal right that grants one ownership of a work. The moral right to be recognized as an author of a work as long as work is there, and can be asserted in courts of law on the way it has been used. An economic right gives one a right to exploit or authorize exploitation of their works for gain. The term of copyright is 50 years after death of author and after death of last co-author.

Advantages of Copyright include: Encouraging creativity; enabling many people earn a living; promoting economic development to a nation through taxes and ensuring that writers get the best contracts out of their creativity.

A few countries in Africa including Uganda are not signatories to the Berne convention for the protection of literary and artistic works.

There is a need for African countries to ratify WIPO treaties including the Marakesh Treaty for the visually impaired to which not more than 5 countries have signed the WIPO Internet Treaties

In addition, countries need to be signed up and to domesticate the WIPO treaties into their national law. In Uganda, the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act of 2006 provides for Collective Management Organizations (CMO) meant to protect authors. Lots of countries don't have collecting organizations.

Enforcement through CMOs is done on a bilateral reciprocal arrangement so it is important for there to be CMOs in all countries in Africa

Recommendations

1. Countries without Collective Management Organisations should be encouraged to provide for them in their legislation and to facilitate copyright holders to establish them.
2. Collective Management Organisations in Africa should be encouraged to cooperate through bilateral agreements.
3. National governments should be lobbied to ratify and domesticate international copyright treaties to make their copyright system more effective.
4. National governments should be lobbied to support authors' and publishers'

3.7. Research on literature for children and young people

3.7.1. **Title:** Pushing the boundaries of interpretive frameworks and research in African children's literature by Nard Choi from University of Cambridge, U.K.

This research questions why children never have a say in many of the things relating to them. Adults tend to discuss, write, select, purchase and read to the children without giving them an opportunity to make own choices.

Lola, a nine year old is taken from London and plunged into rural Nigeria to stay with her grandmother. As Lola is plunged in this new world, she explores the possibilities and resistance around her, pushing the boundaries of the conventional expectations of a child and to have the legitimacy of her opinion (as a representative of children in this case) recognized. This explores the need for new paradigms and calls for more purposes of African Children's literature.

This lends to the question – is this kind of complexity included in research on children's literature?

3.7.2. **Title:** New directions in Kenyan children's literature: an analysis of selected biographical narratives for children and young adults by Prof. Colomba Kaburi Muriungi from Kenya

This was a report on a study based on a project reviewing biographies written for young readers. The project was started in Kenya at the turn of the 21st century by Sasa Sema Publications. It is about famous historical and hero figures from the African continent – politicians, entrepreneurs, journalists, freedom fighters and other prominent personalities from Africa.

This paper focussed on the lives of Dedan Kimathi, Jomo Kenyatta and Jaramogi Odinga where the narrative of the struggle for independence is laid bare in a literary way. Both Marxism and the post-colonial theory are important in narratives like these because they supplement the back drop of imagination. Space serves as a construct of history among other literary aspects like vivid descriptions, use of dialogue, heroic motives as well as courageous and rebellious characters.

The argument is that making such stories available is an important occurrence in African children's literature, because such biographies help children understand the makers of their history.

Authors of such biographies reinvent the country's history; not through historical projects but through a literary intervention. Contemporary literature is an important literary stand through which some ideologies could be disseminated and better understood.

Findings of the study:

- History could be made literary to encourage interest in politics.

- The fight against colonialism is important to children because it is part of their identity, culture and history.
- Literature can compete with and can supplement other discourses.
- Literature can go beyond basic moralizing to issues relating to history and politics.

3.7.3. **Title:** Cultural relevancy, language acquisition and critical thinking: fostering a reading culture through teaching and professional development in Arua, Uganda by Lindsey Allene Hall from Uganda

‘Iyere iyere okuku mu re’ – slowly, slowly, the tortoise goes far.

The paper considered the following issues: the teacher as a learner; the learner as a teacher; stories as mentors; the teacher as an active participant sharing her story and participating in the role play; writing and creating books.

Every contribution is valid. Every contribution is valued.

3.7.4. **Title:** Literacy teaching and learning in the pre- school context using mother tongue stories and resources: findings from a collaborative action research project in South Central Uganda; by Safina Mutumba from Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda and Shelley Jones from Royal Roads University, Victoria, Canada.

This was a presentation of findings from a collaborative action research project in South Central Uganda, which explored the pedagogical possibilities and learning opportunities through mother tongue resources development and story based instruction.

Findings of the research:

- Mother tongue stories are engaging because there is free use of language and language skills are developed.
- High participation of children can be achieved through role play, drawing pictures and retelling stories.

- More children participation, in turn, aids teachers to identify individual abilities and weaknesses for follow up.
- Teachers are willing to use Mother tongue when supported.
- Mother tongue can be effective across pre-primary school curriculum.

Recommendations:

1. Publishers and authors should invest in social media advocacy for promoting reading and purchasing of local content.
2. Publishers and authors should be encouraged to write and publish more local literature in interesting genres.
3. Government should be lobbied to provide and make available grants to publishers so that they can produce quality literature in indigeneous languages.
4. Schools should be encouraged to make literature accessible and keep good collections of the same in school libraries.
5. Writers and publishers should write history in a literary style to encourage interest in politics.
6. Literary bodies must promote the complementing and supplementing role of literature to other discourses.
7. Reading materials previously were giving foreign examples, now there has to be an increase in localization of material for children.
8. The book is a social artifact that informs and educates society. The most critical goal is to make sure products are accessed by the target audience.

4. IBBY CHAPTER REPORTS

1. Ghana

Achievements

- A Reading festival was organised with UNAB Ghana

- A partnership was established with USAID/UNICEF to publish children's books in local languages 2015/2016
- A 25km walk parade was organized.

Challenges

- Ashanti reading still lacks funds

Future Plans

- Hosting the 2019 IBBY Conference

2. Zimbabwe IBBY Chapter

It is the newest and counting on the support of other chapters. Ms. Akoss of Ghana IBBY Chapter and Liz Page have been supportive. The chapter intends to focus on reading programmes, fundraising, sourcing of books through Book Aid International, have membership drives to recruit authors of children's works, holding a vulnerable communities programme in the squatter/farm communities, and surveying the publishers role in children's literature.

Achievements

- 5000 children have benefitted from the reading activities carried out so far.
- Book Aid International have come on board as partners.
- More partnership to be established with Zimbabwe women Writers Association.
- Children have acted as volunteers in the different reading spaces organized.

Challenges

- Three 3 board members resigned from office for lack of a sitting allowance.
- Lack of time for IBBY activities in schools considering the 'tight' timetable of most schools.

Future Plans

- Arrangements have been made for carrying out some book donations and extending reading to rural/squatter/farm communities

- An IBBY competition is to be organized in and out of school annually.
- We hope to host the IBBY Regional Conference in 2021.

3. Uganda

Achievements

- We are hosting this IBBY African Regional Conference this year.

Challenges

- Shortage of Funding
- Lack of government support

Future Plans

- To recruit more members, e.g. SIL.
- To establish more partnerships.
- We plan to participate in more activities
- We shall write and publish more books
- We plan to organise more training programmes

4. Rwanda

Achievements

- Local publishers got together under RCBO
- Some new publishers and editors were trained
- A children's library was inaugurated in western province – 'Isomero Urohongore'
- Literary campaigns were held where children interact with books. Authors and teachers were invited to participate.
- Children's stories were adopted into different art forms
- Exhibitions and book fairs were held
- Research about children's reading preferences was carried out with Save the Children, Rwanda

Findings of the research:

1. Children are curious and interested in books no matter the age and extent of exposure.
2. Children are Interested in quality books.
3. Children are eager to read, hear and learn. Don't be limiting in theme, expose them to several topics.
4. The majority who live in rural areas need books that resonate with their experience.
5. Children are keen on stories in Kinyarwanda.
6. There is need to use every opportunity to depict characters that are familiar to children.
7. There is more need for parent/teacher engagement.
8. There is need to set aside time for reading.
9. Nothing is definitive. Children are open to content and all stakeholders need to be involved.
10. Parents need to understand the importance of reading to their children.

Future Plans

- We are to hold Rwanda month - September
- Umuganda Literacy day is scheduled for 11th-18th Book Fair
- Training programme for parents on how to interact with children using books is being organized.
- A tour of 'Isaro rya Gatatu' Campus is planned. *Isaro rya Gatatu* is the newest title targeting youth.

5. 5TH IBBY AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Ghana was nominated and selected to host the next Africa regional conference in year 2019.

6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

From the discussions, rethinking contemporary literature for children and young adults in Africa requires us to think innovation, accessibility using indigenous languages, simpler language and forms that reach a wider audience, team work and sharing knowledge as well as strengthening publisher and collective management organizations.