

Elephant in the Room: The Rise of Open Licensing in Early Literacy in Africa

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4th IBBY Africa Regional Conference
22-24 August 2017
Kampala, Uganda



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Abstract

In 2015 Neil Butcher and Associates (NBA) received a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to explore the potential for open licensing to enhance the availability of mother-tongue early literacy reading resources in the global South, as well as its attendant risks. This research was led by Neil Butcher and Lisbeth Levey, in her role as consultant to the Hewlett Foundation.

This research covered the impact of open licensing on the early literacy ecosystem,⁴ emerging innovations, and the implications for the content creation, publishing, and use of reading materials in developing countries, primarily in Africa. We were particularly interested in picture books that children can read for pleasure rather than ‘decodable’ texts that are used for instruction.⁵ In late 2016, NBA received a follow-on grant to continue this work and carry out both desk case studies and action research, which will actively involve participation from key players in Africa and South Asia. We believe that it is essential to ensure that the voices of the global South⁶ are integral to the discourse, planning, and funding of early literacy initiatives, such as the Global Book Alliance and the Global Digital Library. This has not necessarily been the case heretofore.

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⁴ Traditional publishing processes have been thought of in terms of a value chain and/or a supply chain. Early on, we decided that it would be more accurate to think in terms of a value network or ecosystem. Although many of the components delineated in the diagram of an early reader ecosystem that we created are the same as what one would find in traditional publishing chains, our conceptualization is that the process is no longer a linear or end-to-end process. Rather it is an *ecosystem* comprising a more value network. (Go to page 9 of the report cited below.)

⁵ Butcher, N., Hoosen, S., Levey, L., & Moore, D. (2016). The Impact of Open Licensing on the Early Reader Ecosystem. Retrieved February 18, 2017, from <http://www.nba.co.za/impact-open-licensing-early-reader-ecosystem>

⁶ We realize that the ‘global South’ is, in many ways, a problematic descriptor for voices from the developing world because no developing country is alike. Each one represents widely varying contexts and faces very different challenges. However, we decided to use this term as a shorthand way to refer to early literacy organizations that are working primarily in developing countries and have historically struggled to gain sustained equal access to global debates and planning processes in the early literacy sector.

This paper presents the results of our research to date, as well provides a brief overview of future research plans. Most openly licensed early literacy content in the developing world is created by NGOs, such as African Storybook⁷ in Africa and StoryWeaver⁸ in India, which are funded by donors. In some cases, donors impose requirements to license content openly as part of their grant contracts. Consequently, open licences are having a very disruptive effect on early literacy publishing in the developing world. For example, what happens if donor funding is withdrawn? This paper explores whether open licensing can be employed sustainably by content producers in the global South, both commercial and non-commercial. It also examines how the development of new technologies poses disruptive threats to traditional publishing chains and how these developments can potentially be harnessed to create sustainable new business models.

Elephants and the rooms they inhabit

‘Elephant in the room’ is a metaphor for something that is too big to be ignored, sometimes because it is perceived as risky.⁹ Two innovations are upending traditional publishing paradigms, digitization and open licensing. Digitization can complement print and, in certain circumstances, may even replace it entirely. Digitization can also shift the burden to print from the publisher to the reader. With digitization, publishers do not incur printing costs, but users of the resource must if they want to read hard copy. Open licensing does not replace copyright, but it does alter the conditions under which copyright is employed. Open licensing is disruptive when it becomes a funder requirement with little or no understanding or input from publishers. Africa needs a vibrant indigenous publishing industry for economic and cultural reasons, which requires an understanding and willingness to work with open licensing concepts. This elephant should not be ignored. It may be synonymous with large challenges, but equally significant payoffs for both publishers and readers are possible. Our goal for this paper is to lay out and assess the issues clearly to help publishers and others in the book trade make strategically sensible decisions.

Background

In 2015 Neil Butcher and Associates (NBA) received a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to explore the potential for open licensing to enhance the availability of mother-tongue early literacy reading resources in the global South, as well as its attendant risks. This research was led by Neil Butcher and Lisbeth Levey, in her role as consultant to the Hewlett Foundation.

Our research covered the impact of open licensing on the early literacy ecosystem, emerging innovations, and the implications for content creation, publishing, and use of reading materials in developing countries, primarily in Africa.¹⁰ In late 2016, NBA received a follow-on grant to continue this work and carry out both desk case studies and action research, which will actively involve participation from key players in Africa and South Asia. We believe that it is essential to ensure that the voices of the global South are integral to the discourse, planning, and funding of early literacy initiatives, such as the

⁷ <http://www.africanstorybook.org>

⁸ <https://storyweaver.org.in>

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elephant_in_the_room

¹⁰ Butcher, N., Hoosen, S., Levey, L., & Moore, D. (2016). The Impact of Open Licensing on the Early Reader Ecosystem. Retrieved February 18, 2017, from <http://www.nba.co.za/impact-open-licensing-early-reader-ecosystem>

Global Book Alliance¹¹ and the Global Digital Library.¹² This has not necessarily been the case previously. Languages of the global South must also be central to story creation and translation. Research shows that children learn to read more effectively if they learn in their mother tongue.¹³ Translation and other story adaptations can flow seamlessly with open licensing because no special permissions are necessary.

Action research now getting underway includes an activity focusing on the impact of open licensing on African children's publishing and one on the role of community libraries in Uganda focused on encouraging a love of reading by children. We are also in discussion with Room to Read,¹⁴ a US NGO that works in Africa and South Asia, on supporting the research component of a project on business models it will implement with local publishers to produce openly licensed early childhood educational resources in South Africa. Simultaneously, desk research includes a study of childhood picture-book publishing costs and a comparison of two online openly licensed storybook Web platforms.

This paper will present the results of our research to date, with a focus on open licensing.

Open licensing

Licensing is critical to both open and closed publishing systems. Until recently, all-rights reserved copyright has been the preferred option for educational, scholarly, and popular publications. But some publishers are now adopting open licences, for reasons that will be discussed in more detail below.

Open licensing permits users to share, translate, and otherwise adapt the work of others. In almost all cases, the original work, author, and publisher must be acknowledged. Open licensing does not replace copyright, but it does replace 'all rights protected' with 'some rights protected.' Creative Commons licences¹⁵ are most frequently used for open licensing.¹⁶ In addition, even if openly licensed resources are free to the user, they are not free to the entity that produces the content. There are production costs involved, including staff time and organizational overhead costs, which must be covered.

Creative Commons licences permit the copyright owner to determine the extent to which others are legally allowed to reuse material. Creative Commons licences run the gamut—from the most permissive, allowing copying and modification (CC-BY), to those that are more restrictive, permitting distribution of a work in its original form, but no modification (CC-ND).¹⁷ In 2006, there were 140 million resources with Creative Commons licences; that number rose to 1.2 billion in 2016.¹⁸

Creative Commons licences are used widely for educational resources. Institutions from kindergarten to the tertiary level are creating and using Open Educational Resources (OER), the term used for curricula

¹¹ The Global Book Alliance works to ensure that all children have access to books. Go to <http://globalbookalliance.org>.

¹² The Global Digital Library plans to expand access to openly licensed and downloadable mother-tongue reading resources. Go to <http://digitallibrary.io>.

¹³ *If You Don't Understand, How Can You Learn*, Unesco, 2016, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002437/243713E.pdf> (downloaded July 9, 2017)

¹⁴ <https://www.roomtoread.org>

¹⁵ Creative Commons licences are described in detail in appendix one.

¹⁶ <https://creativecommons.org>

¹⁷ Go to <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/> for an explanation of the different licences.

¹⁸ <https://stateof.creativecommons.org/low-bandwidth>

and textbook resources. Although Africa lags other geographic regions,¹⁹ there are some good examples of OER use on the Continent, particularly at African universities that wish to create, adapt, and use relevant and timely materials cost effectively.²⁰

Most openly licensed early literacy content in the developing world is created by NGOs, such as African Storybook (ASb)²¹ in Africa and Pratham Books' StoryWeaver²² in India, both of which are funded by donors. Established in 2013, ASb has mounted almost 4,000 stories on its website in 100 African languages. These books have been downloaded collectively more than a half million times.²³ ASb's goal is to make African stories in mother-tongue languages available and easily accessible to readers across the Continent and worldwide. It prides itself on being 'an African initiative with an African identity – storybooks are developed by and with the communities that use the storybooks.'²⁴ Both African Storybook and StoryWeaver are free to readers and authors alike.

What about protecting intellectual property rights (IPR) in an open environment? All open licences require full attribution of authors and publishers in the same way that all-rights reserved copyright does. Plagiarism is easier with digital content, but it is also easier to detect through Google searches and plagiarism checkers.

But the problem is less about attribution and plagiarism than it is about theft and piracy. No copyrighted or openly licensed resource is entirely safe from theft and misuse. Books are reproduced, translated, and sold without permission everywhere. Kenyan publishers have lost millions of shillings because of counterfeit textbooks.²⁵ Pirated software, movies, and music are ubiquitous. In Lagos, some musicians pay for their work to be on pirated CDs because they want the exposure to boost their careers.²⁶

Some scholarly publishers have another business model. The US National Academies Press (NAP), for example, makes its books available in three ways—they can be downloaded as a free PDF file or read online; sold in ebook format; and sold in print. NAP PDF is free, but not openly licensed. The World Bank, however, now uses a CC-BY licence for online and PDF, but sells the e-book and print through Amazon. NAP believes that ebooks are preferable to PDF files because they provide a better search and digital reading experience. And some readers prefer print over any kind of digital. Basically, NAP is using 'free' to market 'paid.' Rather than concentrate on book theft and piracy for both copyrighted and openly

¹⁹ See Cat Johnson, New Report Details the Incredible Growth of Creative Commons, November 25, 2014 <http://www.shareable.net/blog/new-report-details-the-incredible-growth-of-creative-commons> (downloaded July 18, 2017)

²⁰ Go to <http://www.oerafrica.org> for more information on OER implementation in Africa.

²¹ <http://www.africanstorybook.org>

²² <https://storyweaver.org.in>

²³ John Gultig, *African Storybook External Accountability Evaluation: 2013-2016*, page 5, <http://www.saide.org.za/sites/default/files/2017%2003%2029%20ASb%20accountability%20evaluation.pdf>

²⁴ Email to Lisbeth Levey from Tessa Walsh, 4 July 2017

²⁵ Protus Onyango, 'Raid reveals how publishers are losing millions to book pirates,' *The Standard Digital*, March 27, 2017, <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001234126/raid-reveals-how-publishers-are-losing-millions-to-book-pirates> (downloaded July 7, 2017)

²⁶ Dionne Searcey, 'Nigeria's Afrobeats Music Scene Is Booming, but Profits Go to Pirates,' *The New York Times*, June 3, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/03/world/africa/nigeria-lagos-afrobeats-music-piracy-seyi-shay.html> (downloaded July 7, 2017)

licensed resources, should we be looking at ways to monetize them? Akoss Ofori-Mensah of Sub-Saharan Publishers²⁷ is going to do just that.

Action research on the impact of open licensing and early childhood publishing in Africa

Ofori-Mensah has agreed to carry out action research on the impact of open licensing on her business. She will digitize four stories based on tales from Northern Ghana—*Fati and the Honey Tree*, *Fati and the Old Man*, *Fati and the Green Snake*, and *Fati and the Soup Pot*. The *Fati* books will be mounted on African Storybook and StoryWeaver in English and three Northern Ghanaian languages, using a CC-BY licence. Print will continue to be sold. These books were selected for several reasons, including the fact that the author agreed and the illustrator had already been paid for his work. There were no IPR issues to block digitization and open licensing.

Experience and research have shown that open access can bring greater visibility and a wider audience to research literature.²⁸ One goal is to ascertain whether this is also the case for the children's stories included in this action research. StoryWeaver will make Sub-Saharan Publishers a 'featured' publisher on its website with a link to the publisher home page.²⁹ The stories will also be widely publicized through social media (including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and StoryWeaver news story alerts). Enhanced discoverability of Sub-Saharan Publishers should hopefully drive more visitors to its site. StoryWeaver will also provide usage data: number of times the stories are viewed and downloaded; countries visitors are coming from; languages to which the stories are translated; and emails about the stories from the StoryWeaver community, amongst others. We will also compile usage data from African Storybook. Tracking this data is essential because our overarching goal is to increase the number of culturally relevant picture books in the hands of children in their mother tongue.

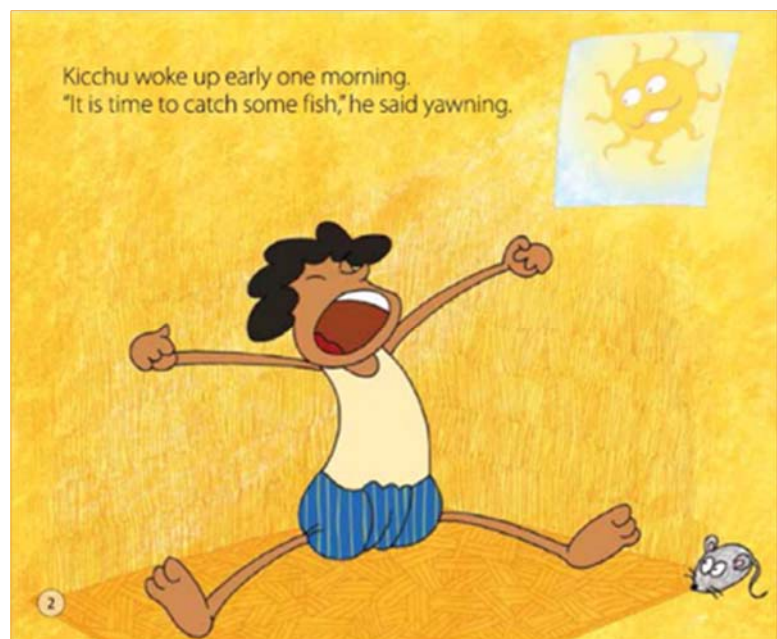
Two additional components of this research involve a cost-benefit analysis. What are the costs involved in translating the stories, scanning images to the required resolution, preparing the ePub and PDF formats, etc.? Offsetting costs, what are the benefits? Did this effort lead to better discoverability on Google and other search mechanisms, enhanced visibility, and increased sales of any of the *Fati* books and other children's books produced by Sub-Saharan Publishers? In this and other research, we will also document and compare African Storybook and StoryWeaver for ease of use.

²⁷ The Sub-Saharan Publishers website is undergoing revisions. Books may still be ordered through the African Books Collective. Go to: <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/publishers/sub-saharan-publishers>

²⁸ The Open Citation Project maintains a bibliography on the effect of open access for research publications. Go to: <http://opcit.eprints.org/oacitation-biblio.html>.

²⁹ StoryWeaver has already made Uganda Christian University a featured publisher for the stories the students of Cornelius Gulere translate. See the section on digitizing content for more information on this work.

Print and digital are not the same



Digitization does not necessarily mean diminution of demand for print. As shown in the figure above, print and digital are not the same. The digital version (above left) reflects various design limitations because text and images must be separated and placed in a pre-defined template.³⁰ Liz Levey asked Suzanne Singh of StoryWeaver and the non-profit, Pratham Books, about the impact of open licensing on sales. In reply, Singh wrote:

Our print sales have not suffered even when the digital version has been made available for free on StoryWeaver. An added advantage for the publisher is when the book gets translated into a new language on the platform, there could be a print order for that book in a new language. An example on StoryWeaver are books in Santhali and Kora that were translated by Suchana, an organisation that works with children who speak these tribal languages. They have ordered 10,000 copies of these books from us for use in their programs. In this case, even though the translations were done by Suchana, they approached Pratham Books to do the print design and print 10,000 copies, which they will buy.

Our belief is that commerce will continue to exist for publishers, either in the traditional way or in new ways. It is possible that the *Fati* books will get seen by a wider audience and it could open up newer revenue opportunities for Sub-Saharan Publishers.

What role do donors play in open licensing?

Donors are responsible for funding most educational publishing in sub-Saharan Africa, except in South Africa and a few other countries. In addition, textbooks constitute a major percentage of many African publishers' revenue stream.

³⁰ Email to Lisbeth Levey, March 22, 2017

To give an idea of the importance of external support for textbook provision, in their report, *Getting Textbooks to Every Child in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Fredriksen, Brar, and Trucano, write that:³¹

Donors have played a major role in funding textbooks. However, it is difficult to quantify this role. Based on data for 27 SSA countries, UNESCO...estimates the median share of aid in total government and donor spending on education for the period 2004–10 at about 22 percent. Given donors' extensive support for textbooks over decades, and the poor progress in establishing sustainable and predictable national funding, it is likely that aid accounts for much more than 22 percent of the median country's textbook budget. In many countries, external aid has been the only nonparental textbook funding.

Many international donors now require that the research and, increasingly, other kinds of resources that they fund be made publicly available within a 12-month period, which has upended the commercial publishing industry. Journal publishers have been forced to confront the need for open access and sometimes Creative Commons licences. As a result, some have adapted their business models in recognition of new realities on the ground. These same donors, such as USAID, are beginning to require their contractors to publish textbooks and other learning materials under Creative Commons licences. African educational publishers will need to find new business models of their own if they are to remain sustainable.³²

However, donors also understand that openly licensed resources may be free to the user, but still cost money to produce. They are usually willing to pay these expenses because publishing cost components are recognized and understood. The same may not be the case for storybook publishing in Africa. The real costs associated with producing high-quality children's picture books are not always clearly laid out. NGO figures can appear lower than those of a commercial publisher because some expenses, such as organizational salaries, are not always included when they tell donors how much it costs to produce content. If governments or donors want to commission openly licensed books, publishers and other content producers must be able to state exactly how much money is required to fulfil a commission. In addition, the same cost information should be required of both commercial and non-commercial content providers. Because we believe that maintaining the vitality of the indigenous content creation industry is a key priority, we are circulating a questionnaire to document costs. If this shift in funding is to be sustainable, book commissions should be sufficiently large and frequent to ensure that publishers and other content creators are able to retain the internal capacity needed to create high-quality content.

How much does it cost to publish a picture book in Africa?

Although the cost of producing a high-quality picture book has dropped because of technological innovations, it remains expensive. Writing a 1,000-word story at the correct reading level and sentence

³¹ Fredriksen, Birger; Brar, Sukhdeep; Trucano, Michael. 2015. *Getting Textbooks to Every Child in Sub-Saharan Africa : Strategies for Addressing the High Cost and Low Availability Problem*. Directions in Development--Human Development;. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21876>, page 53 (downloaded July 8, 2017). The 2012 Unesco report, Financing of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa referred to in the quote will be found at http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/financing-education-in-sub-saharan-africameeting-the-challenges-of-expansion-equity-and-quality-en_0.pdf.

³² In 2010, the International Development Centre for Research (IDRC) supported a case study on alternative licensing models for Africa. There were two case studies, one for Uganda and one for South Africa. The report by Gray, Rens, and Bruns will be found at <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/45649/132110.pdf?sequence=1>. The Uganda case study by Batambuze and Ikon-Ondongo will be found at <https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/bitstream/handle/10625/46275/132770.pdf> (both reports downloaded July 8, 2017).

length, which will capture a young child's attention is complex, even though the story may not contain a great deal of text. Picture books typically have one illustration on each page, which adds to the cost; creating a layout that flows with both text and illustration requires special skill; and paper sizes are frequently not standard. We decided to survey NGOs and commercial publishers because the cost of publishing a picture book is not the same as that for a textbook.³³ Survey results will be published, shared with respondents, international donors, relevant agencies, and mounted online. We hope that this research will assist content producers make informed arguments about real costs and help those that fund early childhood reading resources understand what is entailed in producing a high-quality children's book.

We have received 12 responses to date, from organizations in Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, and the United States (an NGO that publishes in Asia and a social entrepreneur who self-publishes in Africa). We continue to receive completed questionnaires. Some respondents publish in print only, others focus on digital production, and still others do both. They also run the gamut in terms of production objectives. Commercial publishers want to publish books with high-quality paper and illustrations, whereas some content producers are interested in content production at the lowest cost possible. But each has its own standards for content quality, translation accuracy, and cultural appropriateness.

We are a young publisher...working towards promoting children's literature. Many of our youth titles are created and co-published with partners across the sub-region...the majority are in French. Our catalogue only has 2 titles in local languages (Ewe and Temba) as well as one trilingual album. Local languages were introduced to the school program but outside of the school curriculum, learners have no complementary material to consolidate their knowledge. We welcome this initiative all the while highlighting that the decision-makers should support the creation of local literature and allocate aid to the translation of works forming part of the national heritage, to buy books for school libraries, and support training for linguists with the objective to codify national languages.

Tchotcho Christiane Ekué, Éditions Graines de Pensées, Togo

What are we learning? Content producers understand the need for mother-tongue languages and cultural relevance, although Sub-Saharan Publishers publishes picture books in English to maximize distribution and sales, and others do the same. At Sub-Saharan Publishers, stories are translated on demand. *Fati and the Honey Tree* was translated into French in 2002 with funding from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was also translated into Dagaare with support from USAID, which also commissioned a print run of 9,600 copies.

Generalizations are difficult because of the variations amongst commercial and NGO publishers in different countries. But reading through the questionnaires, we can report the following: Authors are typically paid through royalties;³⁴ illustrators with flat fees. Some NGOs, such as Book Dash in South Africa, rely on volunteers for writing, pictures, and editing, but pay for translation.³⁵ Illustrators earn

³³ For a comprehensive study into the costs involved in textbook publishing, see Read, Tony. 2015. *Where Have All the Textbooks Gone? Toward Sustainable Provision of Teaching and Learning Materials in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Directions in Development--Human Development. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22123> (downloaded July 11, 2017). On page 62 of the same report, Read writes that that for four out of eleven surveyed countries, funding for readers was adequate, regular, and predictable. **However, there is widespread agreement that funding for school and classroom libraries and other supplementary TLMs is completely inadequate.** (emphasis ours)

³⁴ When Pratham Books pays authors, however, it does it with a flat fee. Questionnaire completed by Suzanne Singh, Pratham Books

³⁵ Questionnaire completed by Julia Norrish, Bookdash

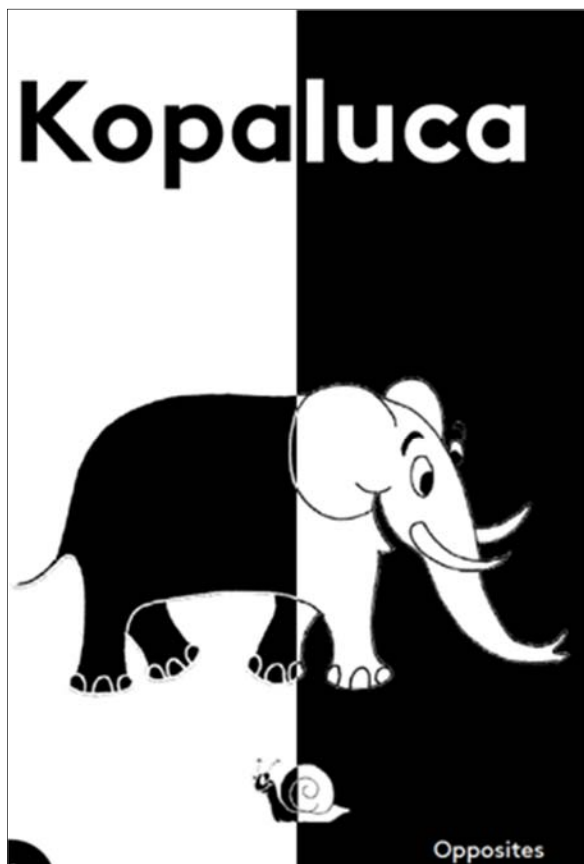
more than authors everywhere. Smartline Publishing in Ghana, for example, pays its artists between \$70 and \$150 per page for full-colour illustrations, which can entail color retouching and image manipulation. Black and white illustrations cost less, between \$40 and \$80 per page. In addition, depending on the complexity of the book, design and layout can cost as much as \$1,000.³⁶ Translation is another important cost driver, now that governments require that children learn to read in their mother tongue. Neither translation nor translation review are expensive, but they are important and must be in the hands of experts. In addition, a few organizations mention overhead costs of between nine and 16 percent.

The economics of printing also vary from country to country. CODE Ethiopia can print in-country, but commercial publishers in Ghana and Kenya tend not to do so. In Ghana, although government regulations require publishers to use Ghanaian printers for the textbooks it commissions, costs have not gone down at all in terms of paper and other inputs. Kenyan commercial publishers face numerous printing cost issues. Not only is there a 25 percent duty on imported paper and inks, local printers are also at a disadvantage vis-à-vis Indian printers because the Indian government provides Indian printers a 10 percent rebate for exports. As a result, Kenyan publishers tend to use Kenyan printers only for small quantities or urgent jobs, which places the local printing industry under great pressure. It operates at half capacity, with resulting loss of jobs and income.³⁷

³⁶ Questionnaire completed by Elliot Agyare, Smartline Publishing Limited

³⁷ Lawrence Njagi, Chair, Kenya Publishers Association, email to Lisbeth Levey, June 20, 2017

Mango Tree's book of opposites



At the opposite end of the cost spectrum, a Ugandan literacy NGO called Mango Tree aims for high quality in terms of content, but the cheapest possible printing output in order to maximize the number of books in the hands of young children. Mango Tree works at the P1-3 levels in Lira in the North of the country. Mango Tree found a local printer who charges US\$.19 per book. Illustrations are in black and white, while book length is between 20 and 32 pages. Books are printed in A5 format and have a manila cover.

Children's picture books: breaking even, but perhaps not much more. Approximate price per book:

- Sub-Saharan Publishers: \$2.60
- Fountain Publishers, Uganda: \$2.00
- Mkuki na Nyota, Tanzania: \$2.00

How does the publishing cost structure impact on book prices? The answer is that it depends. In our 2016 research, Akoss Ofori-Mensah at Sub-Saharan Publishers noted that pricing should be six times the production cost, but this would result in books that are too expensive for Ghana. Sub-Saharan Publishers therefore has a sliding scale, depending on where books are purchased. *Fati and the Honey Tree* costs \$10 internationally (US or

Canadian), but Ghanaians only pay ten Cedi (\$2.60). The hope is that large orders will make up for local discounts.³⁸ However, this kind of pricing is detrimental to the long-term sustainability of African publishers. It is one thing to pass on cheaper prices to parents and cash-strapped libraries but quite another to suffer potential loss through too large a discount to governments and donors. A middle ground that allows financial viability still needs to be found.

Action research on community libraries and open licences

Making stories available serves no purpose if they are not read and enjoyed. We are currently undertaking research on the role of community libraries in promoting good reading habits and a love of

³⁸ Akoss Ofori-Mensah, Sub-Saharan Publishers, email to Lisbeth Levey, January 19, 2016

reading by young children. Parents, librarians, and teachers will be involved in this effort, which also includes writing and translating stories into Ugandan languages. Uganda has been selected for this research because the community library movement is well established throughout the country and because of the enthusiasm of the Principal Investigator, Cornelius Gulere,³⁹ a senior lecturer in literature at Uganda Christian University.⁴⁰

There are almost no public libraries for children in Uganda, nor are there many in schools. The community library system, working under the aegis of the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA),⁴¹ attempts to fill the gap. There are 100 throughout the country, primarily in free-standing buildings, but there are also a few in public and private rural schools. In addition to affiliation with UgCLA, these libraries receive support from the Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL).⁴² Government responsibility for public libraries is complicated. Those few located in public schools fall under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Sports.⁴³ The remaining public libraries are the responsibility of the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development.⁴⁴

Children have available to them books primarily in English, sometimes purchased from local publishers, most often contributed by Book Aid International⁴⁵ through the National Library of Uganda.⁴⁶ There are few picture books in local languages. According to Cornelius Gulere, 'the few that exist are in schools and even these are inadequate as they are used only during class time.'⁴⁷

Gulere plans to work with ten community libraries where Luganda, Dhopadhoola, Lugwere, Samya, Lumasaaba, Ateso, Aga Karamojong, Rutooro, Runyoro, Rukhonzu, Runyankore, Rukiga, Lango, Acholi, Alur, and Madi are spoken. These languages constitute 25 percent of the languages spoken in Uganda. Work includes: writing and translating stories in the above languages; forming reading, writing, and translation clubs; modelling library reading camps for instilling a love of reading in children and their families; training; and promoting the sharing of resources between libraries. Stories will be mounted online using a Creative Commons BY licence. The data collected from this work will enable Gulere and his colleagues to analyse challenges and opportunities for Ugandan community libraries in creating and using openly licensed children's resources in mother-tongue languages.

The importance of books in a child's own image

The paucity of children's books produced in Africa is a well-known problem. In her book, *Comparative Children's Literature*, first published in 2000, Emer O'Sullivan cited figures from the Baobab Children's Book Foundation indicating that 70 to 90 percent of books available to reading children in the global South are published in the United States and Europe and 80 percent of the books written for children

³⁹ <https://ucu-ug.academia.edu/CorneliusGulere> (downloaded on July 12, 2017)

⁴⁰ <http://www.ucu.ac.ug> (downloaded on July 12, 2017)

⁴¹ <https://espensj.wordpress.com/>

⁴² <http://www.favl.org/>

⁴³ <http://www.education.go.ug/>

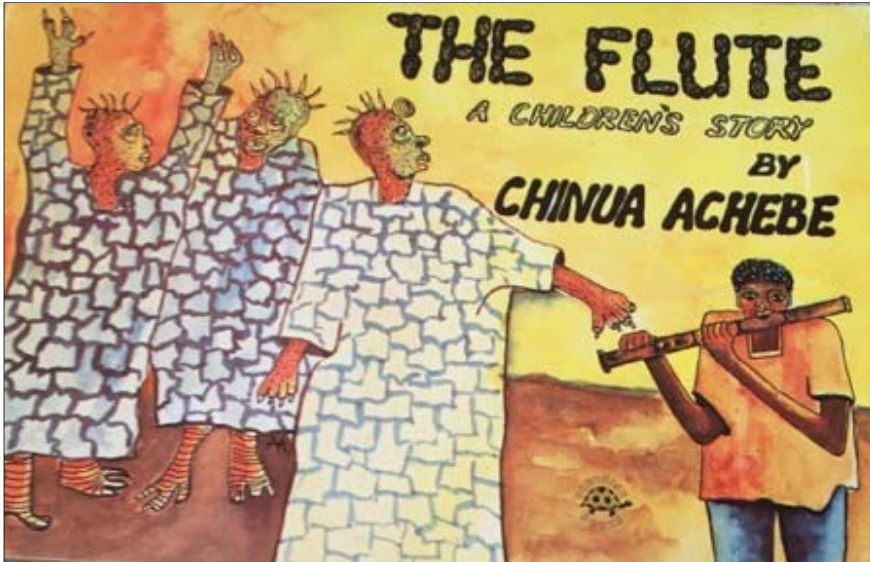
⁴⁴ <http://www.education.go.ug/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.bookaid.org/>

⁴⁶ <http://www.nlu.go.ug/>

⁴⁷ Cornelius Gulere, proposal to Neil Butcher and Associates, revised July 4, 2017.

set in the global South are written by North American or Europeans who may not understand the cultures or people about whom they are writing.⁴⁸



Chinua Achebe was so angry about the import of European children's books into Africa that when he gave the keynote address at the 1987 Zimbabwe International Book Fair, he called them 'beautifully packaged poison'⁴⁹ and wrote four of his own based on Igbo folk tales, which were published by Fourth Dimension Publishers in Nigeria. He wanted his children and other African children to have books in their own image. Sadly, his children's stories have almost disappeared from view.

What does digitizing content entail?

Cornelius Gulere is working with his students at Uganda Christian University to translate stories into Ugandan languages. Thus far, they have translated and mounted online 82 stories in ten Ugandan languages. Gulere's students are documenting their experience with the African Storybook and StoryWeaver platforms regarding ease of use, helpfulness of the tutorials, and challenges experienced. In addition, similar to what Sub-Saharan Publishers will receive, StoryWeaver and African Storybook will provide analytical data.

As shown in the screen captures below, UCU as publisher has a logo on the cover page of its stories. There is a contribution page, with on the translator and publisher as well as a recommended tag on the UCU stories high up on the platform for increased visibility. As of July 18, 2017, less than a month after they were mounted, UCU stories had been read 550 times and downloaded 80 times on StoryWeaver.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Emer O'Sullivan, *Comparative Children's Literature*, Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, page 61. This book won the Children's Literature Association (CHLA) Award in 2007.

⁴⁹ Achebe's statement is widely quoted everywhere, but I have been unable to find his keynote. Instead, I am citing him in a 1988 journal article by Henry Chakava, who recently retired as head of East African Educational Publishers. Chakava was a friend of Achebe and likely to have been present at his speech. (See Henry Chakava, 'Publishing in Kenya', *Africa Bibliography*, 1989, page xi, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/africa-bibliography/article/publishing-in-kenya/07187008E624CBBA2BAE11CD9F398AA7> (downloaded July 11, 2017))

⁵⁰ *Comprehensive data report on Uganda Christian University collaboration with StoryWeaver*, July 18, 2017



RECOMMEND

Bambi Mweenha!

Translation by **Cornelius Wambi Gulere**

Language **Lusoga**

Reading **Level 1**

Publisher **Uganda Christian University**



Okumweenha no okuseka bighonia obulamu. Lumuka na akapuuli webonere mweene.

This story has been translated as part of the curriculum for the
Creative Writing Course

of
Uganda Christian University

Course Instructor & Chief Editor: Cornelius Wambi Gulere, Ph.D.

Quality assurance of translations is of paramount importance, and there will be multiple layers. In addition to quality control, Cornelius Gulere pointed to the need to ensure that authority figures in the community (such as teachers, parents, and librarians) recognize the content producers and those responsible for the peer review process. He wrote: 'The issue of quality translation is paramount and along with this is acceptability of the books by the targeted community. If the little-known student translator is backed by an experienced writer, translator and Course Instructor and a University with a big local following and a track record of interest in local languages, the readership or audience will receive the books as home grown.'⁵¹

⁵¹ Cornelius Gulere, email to Lisbeth Levey, July 6, 2017



Gulere also wrote that this translation work should not be seen as a ‘one off’ activity and has created a generic UCU email address for the project. The university leadership stands behind the effort. At a meeting to demonstrate progress, the Vice Chancellor, Rev Canon Dr John Ssenyonyi, volunteered to participate in reviewing stories in the Luganda language. In the photograph above, he is telling two faculty members: ‘I will peer review two books next week. You know I studied Luganda.’⁵²

This work has been rewarding for the students, but also challenging. In notes that Cornelius Gulere compiled from student report, he made the following points:⁵³ The overburdened Internet system at UCU slows down the process. African Storybook is ‘friendlier’ in bandwidth constrained environments because it permits offline writing, whereas StoryWeaver does not. Thus, although students said that StoryWeaver is easier to use, it is more expensive because it requires longer periods of connectivity. But one student noted that StoryWeaver seems to load more quickly than African Storybook and asked whether the problem is the UCU network or website configurations.

To mitigate bandwidth problems, Gulere helped one of his students use her smart phone as a hot spot, suggested that she share this technology fix with her classmates. He also provided money for Internet bundles, printing, and transport to meet reviewers. But not all the students own smart devices (phones, tablets or computers), which is yet another problem. Because the libraries where these stories will be used do not have sufficient connectivity, hardware, and sometimes electricity, Gulere would also like to investigate the use of print to supplement digital access.

⁵² Cornelius Gulere, email to Lisbeth Levey, July 13, 2017

⁵³ Cornelius Gulere, email to Lisbeth Levey, July 15, 2017

Towards business models that incorporate open licensing

In conclusion, given what we are beginning to learn, what kind of business models can publishers employ that use open licensing and ensure the continuation of a vibrant indigenous content production industry, both commercial and non-profit? The most promising of these appears to involve a shift from 'content-as-a-product', where costs of content creation are incurred at risk with a view to achieving business sustainability through book sales, to 'content-as-a-service', in which a government or donor pays a once-off amount for content development and translation services. The challenge with the latter is that business sustainability depends on ongoing spending by customers for those services and the primary sources of funding for those services has historically not been reliable or consistent. Nevertheless, as has often been pointed out, sale of early readers in local languages itself has not created sustainable business markets in most Africa countries anyway, so this does not necessarily represent a regression. Equally importantly, even where individual businesses might fail, the advantage of openly licensed materials is that they can remain accessible even after the business failure, while there has been a long history of excellent, all-rights reserved educational materials being lost to the world when a business or NGO closes its doors.

Our research is also documenting other interesting strategies to fund content creation and translation, some of which is documented above and some in our 2016 report. Almost all depend on donor funding, while some also rely to a lesser extent on some degree of voluntarism. Some of these models show promise, including those that combine 'content-as-a-service' with other income streams, such as sale of printed, openly licensed books (that can still be profitable even though the margins are much lower, because there is no corresponding requirement to recover content creation costs), teacher training services, and research and evaluation services. Diversification of funding in this way may enable specialized teams of early literacy and publishing experts to remain sustainable. However, all business models based on open licensing are in their infancy, so it is simply too soon to determine what will work most successfully. However, given that the concept of openness, facilitated by the digitization of content, is expanding exponentially over time, there can be no doubt of the urgent need for ongoing action research to find suitable, sustainable new organizational forms to replace those that have become redundant.

Professional Profile of Speakers

Neil Butcher is Director of Neil Butcher & Associates in South Africa. He provides policy, technical advice, and support on educational planning and the use of educational technology, particularly for distance education. His work focuses on the developing world. Neil consults for a range of national and international clients, including the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE); the World Bank, on a range of project activities in India, including a large-scale Teacher Effectiveness Programme in Bihar; and South Africa's Council for Higher Education in supporting revision of its organizational processes and structures. Educational organizations with which Neil has collaborated on transformation efforts to harness the potential of distance educational methods, educational technology, and OER include OER Africa, Unesco and the Commonwealth of Learning, as well as many universities and governments around the world.

Lisbeth Levey is a consultant, who works on issues pertaining to information and communications technologies (ICT) in Africa, particularly on improving information access and on enhancing dissemination of African information through technology. Liz is currently an advisor to the Hewlett Foundation education program, where she helps program staff in their international grant making,

primarily in Africa. She has consulted for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, served as facilitator for the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, and directed an all Africa project for the Ford and Rockefeller foundations, which was based in Nairobi, Kenya. Liz has worked with the African publishing community since the founding of the African Publishers' Network (APNET) and spoke at several *Indabas* organized by APNET at the Zimbabwe International Book Fair. She is particularly interested in promoting African children's publishing—both on the Continent and overseas.

Kirsty von Gogh is a Project Manager at Neil Butcher & Associates. Before joining Neil Butcher & Associates, Kirsty worked in educational publishing for twelve years, producing titles for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. She has extensive experience publishing print textbooks and resource materials for the schools' curricula across all grades and subjects. Kirsty has worked on the commissioning and project management of titles for the South African Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) since its implementation. Kirsty has also commissioned and produced digital assessment materials and interactive content for the South African schools' market.






Appendix One: Creative Commons Licences


Licensing is central to the issue of openness. Legal frameworks (such as Creative Commons⁵⁴) help to govern how open a resource really is. They provide legal mechanisms to ensure that authors of materials can receive acknowledgement for their work while allowing it to be shared. They can also restrict commercial activity and prevent people from adapting a resource if they so wish.

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization 'that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools'.⁵⁵ To do this, Creative Commons has developed a series of licences that work alongside copyright to make it possible for authors to modify standard copyright terms and provide open access privileges to users. Each Creative Commons licence provides a different degree of freedom to users, but all require full attribution. Creative Commons licences are the ones typically used for Open Access, Open Educational Resources, and other forms of openly licensed materials. The table below provides an overview of the different types of Creative Commons licences and how their permissions work.

⁵⁴ Creative Commons. Retrieved from www.creativecommons.org

⁵⁵ Creative Commons. About Creative Commons. Retrieved March 4, 2016 from <http://creativecommons.org/about>

Licence Name	Acronym	Icon	Description
Attribution	BY		This licence lets others distribute, remix, tweak and build upon your work, even commercially, as long as they credit you for the original creation. This is the most accommodating of licences offered, in terms of what others can do with your works licensed under Attribution.
Attribution Share Alike	BY-SA		This licence lets others remix, tweak and build upon your work even for commercial reasons, as long as they credit you and licence their new creations under the identical terms. This licence is often compared to open source software licences. All new works based on yours will carry the same licence, so any derivatives will also allow commercial use.
Attribution No Derivative	BY-ND		This licence allows for redistribution, commercial and non-commercial, with credit to the author. The work may not be altered, transformed or built on.
Attribution Non-commercial	BY-NC		This licence lets others remix, tweak and build upon your work non-commercially, and although their new works must also acknowledge you and be non-commercial, they don't have to license their derivative works on the same terms.
Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike	BY-NC-SA		This licence lets others remix, tweak and build upon your work non-commercially, as long as they credit you and license their new creations under the identical terms. Others can download and redistribute your work just like the BY-NC-ND licence, but they can also translate, make remixes and produce new stories based on your work. All new work based on yours will carry the same licence, so any derivatives will also be non-commercial in nature.

Licence Name	Acronym	Icon	Description
Attribution Non-commercial No Derivatives	BY-NC-ND		<p>This licence is the most restrictive of the six main CC licences, allowing redistribution only. This licence is often called the 'free advertising' licence because it allows others to download your works and share them with others as long as they mention you and link back to you, but they cannot change them in any way or use them commercially.</p>