

# **PUBLISHING IN UGANDA: TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS 1989 – 2004**

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## **Abstract**

*The paper analyses the trends and developments in publishing in Uganda. It provides the profile of the country as a basis for understanding the publishing scene. The role of Government in publishing is highlighted, while the state of marketing and the distribution of information products are stated. Associations that promote the publishing industry are mentioned, and it is pointed out that further research, manuscript development and funding is needed to promote publishing in local languages and to stimulate the publication of technical and academic books. Opportunities that need to be exploited are identified while constraints to the Ugandan book publishing industry are discussed.*

## **Introduction**

During the 1970s and 1980s, publishing in Uganda deteriorated to the extent that its state would portray the worst publishing scenario on the African continent. Problems included the closure of local publishing houses; departure of foreign publishers; downscaling of the once viable printing sector into jobbing work centres; closure of bookshops; wholesale importation of books for educational needs, and the irregular publication of newspapers. The root cause of all these, was bad governance that affected all aspects of life. Since the 1990s, however, Uganda's publishing industry has been making significant strides towards recovery and sustainability. This paper narrates developments in the publishing and the book-trade from 1989 to 2004 while highlighting factors that have supported and affected its activities. It serves as an update of literature on publishing in Uganda.

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## **Approach and methodology**

The approach to the study included three elements, namely the collection and analysis of information, and the consolidation of key findings. Methodology included: (i) A review of published and unpublished literature on publishing and any other literature relevant to the study; (ii) Case studies on specific areas of publishing in Uganda between 1990 and 2003; (iii) Discussion with managers of publishing houses; (iv) Observation of publishing activities in the country. This involved visiting publishing houses and using a checklist to establish issues like editorial capacity, printing facilities, marketing infrastructure and marketing outlets to assess their levels of operations.

## **Country Profile**

The publishing industry in a country can only be viable if the infrastructure and resources are sufficiently developed. Typically, size of market, amount of disposable income, literacy, language, reading habits, libraries, bookshops, political environment, education and government policies have an influence on publishing in any nation.

Uganda's population in 2002/2003 was 25.2 million (Uganda Bureau of Standards [UBOS]2003). The actual reading population makes up about 25% of the total population. Uganda is one of the poorest and most highly indebted countries in the world. Book buying is poor, except in specific categories, such as religious reading materials and schoolbooks. The literacy level is estimated at 51.2 percent (UNESCO, 1999). Out of fifty-six spoken languages in Uganda, less than 10 are used for publications.

Public libraries are very important resource for the general public, allowing them access to information they would need. But public libraries in this country are few, small in size and poorly funded. There are only twenty-one public libraries in Uganda and this makes about one public library for every one million people. Academic libraries are equally poor. Rosenberg (1997), as well as Aiyepetu and Komolafe (1998) tell of the woes of libraries in most of Africa. Research libraries suffer the same fate just as other libraries. There are no libraries in most schools and where they do exist, their currently existence is in names only. The Ministry of Education and Sports and the Uganda Library Association are

discussing the school library policy (Magara and Nyumba 2004). The key issues in the policy are that staffing of school libraries should be regularised according to qualifications of individuals running them, library facilities, including buildings, should be provided where they do not exist since students pay library fees and there is a percentage of money government sends to schools that is specifically for library development. The policy seeks to introduce a management structure to the school library system through the creation of School Library Committee, then District Library Committees and the School Library Coordinating Unit at the Ministry of Education and Sports headquarters. It also urges the Ministry to direct Teacher Training Colleges to introduce courses on reading and using the library.

Bookshops are relatively few in Uganda. They were only 214 as in June 2004 and most of these are concentrated in urban areas. They are not well stocked and lose out on the lucrative trade in textbooks for schools, where the government still supplies these directly to schools. Publishers, especially those dealing directly with the Ministry of Education, do not tend to sell through bookshops or have their own bookshops. Since the government is decentralising book distribution, booksellers have been integrated into the selling of textbooks in districts where the book distribution pilot project is being carried out. This arrangement is expected to cover the entire country in the near future. Publishers whose books are vetted and passed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) have their books listed on the approved books list sent to all primary schools to choose from.

School and home environments have an obvious influence in developing reading habits. Most schools do not have libraries and hardly provide free reading lessons in the library room. The few books that are sometimes available are often out of date. The school curriculum is generally too packed to leave any time for reading. Fifteen to eighteen subjects are taught in Senior One and Two and eight or nine in Senior Three and Four. Influences of such entertainment as radio, television, the cinema and theatre discourage reading development. During the period under review there were 71 FM radio stations operating in the country and seven TV stations as well as many theatres in the country. These are "easier" forms

of leisure activities that distract potential readers from reading. Rural Uganda accounts for about 86% of the entire population yet reading facilities are scarce in such locations. Domestic chores, such as tending goats and looking after cattle, take up the free time for boys, while girls do domestic work. All these activities have negative effects on publishing products.

There are 6.5 million children attending about 12,250 primary schools in 2003. The Government brought books for them. About five hundred thousand students were attending secondary schools (MoES, 2001:68) and slightly over six thousand in primary teacher training colleges and a similar number in technical institutes (MoES, 2001:109). Government occasionally, provided them with books, but in most cases students had to buy their own textbooks – a prerequisite in enrolling in secondary school. Currently there are about eighty thousand students in tertiary institutions, including universities. Most of these institutions obtain their books through donations and purchases from fees levied to students for library development.

The Government of Uganda implements different policies which in turn support the publishing industry. The policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) which started in 1997 has increased enrolment in primary schools and thereby increasing the demand for books. The National Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Programme which started in 1993 under the Community Development Directorate of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Services as a pilot project in eight districts has been extended to more districts aimed at increasing adult literacy. Districts not included in the pilot districts started work on the programme on their own initiative and are getting official support. Over 60% of the successful participants have been women (MoGLSD 1997, Okech et al 1999 in Kwesiga 2002). The project uses an integrated method, which relates to the readers' environment. The NGO sector also carries out extensive work in literacy training. In many cases this forms part of other activities, especially amongst community based organizations (CBOs). Examples of national level actors include Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE), The National Association of Adult Education, and Kiira Adult Education Association. One of the

outstanding successes is the application of the Regenerated Freirean Literacy Through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) by Action Aid (Kwesiga, 2002:97).

The policy of liberalisation of the economy has eased the importation of printing inputs by opening up for suppliers from abroad to invest in Uganda. It has also made it easier for Ugandans to access foreign currency through forex bureaux with limited restrictions. An enabling political environment and freedom of expression have, to a large extent, created high demand for publishing products.

### **Publishing scene**

A reliable indication of a recovering publishing industry is the range of its products. It is dynamic in the sense that many papers are being published. Some appear for sometimes and disappear and new ones keep coming up. Journalists also keep switching from newspapers, etc. It is encouraging to note that the Ugandan publishing industry is displaying evidence of a wide range of information products that are distinctly associated with different types of publishing – these are books, newspapers, journals and magazines.

### **Book Publishing**

Books remain the mainstream of the publishing industry in Uganda. Before 1992, there were no statistics available to indicate Uganda's output. This, seemingly, indicates that nothing was actually published within the country before this date.

Year	Total	General	Philosophy	Religion	S.Sc	Philology	Pure Sc.	Technology	Arts	Lit
1992	162	4	2	-	77	-	-	78	-	1
1996	288	-	-	7	-	45	41	7	4	9

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbooks 1995, 1998

Available data does not include pamphlets and government publications, but does include titles of school textbooks (99) and children's books (50), as well as 26 unspecified books, for which a class breakdown is not available.

## ***Newspaper publishing***

This is perhaps the most dynamic area of publishing in Uganda at present. It is dynamic because many papers are being published; some appear for only a short time before they wind up and new ones come up. Over 20 newspapers are published weekly. Major papers running at 40-plus pages are *The Monitor* and *The New Vision* – both dailies. Print runs for each is 35,000 copies and sometimes more. These papers are printed in colour and reflect high standards of publishing. *The New Vision* is published in 4 other regional local languages, namely Ateso, Orumuri, Rupiny and Bukedde, with a print-run of 5,000 copies each. Other papers on the market include *The Red Pepper*, *Weekly Observer*, *The East African*, *Procurement News*, *The Sun Rise*, *Mirror*, *Farmers Voice*, *Weekly Message*, *Prim*, *The West Niler*, *Entatsi*, *The Trade*, *Entango*, *The New Times*. Every part of the country receives papers within 12 hours after publication.

## ***Journal Publishing***

Journal publishing has not taken a strong root in Uganda although the publish or perish syndrome plays a role in encouraging this category of publishing. Success in publishing in international journals, or difficulties in publishing research results internationally are crucial factors. Other important factors such as sustainable financing of journals, distribution and international vetting are quite often overlooked. Publishing of journals in Uganda appears to have been trapped along these lines. Although about 10 journals are published, the major concern is regularity. Journals operate on a very insecure financial base. Sendikadiwa (1999) expresses concern that even the established ones such as *Uganda Journal* (1923-), *Makerere Medical Journal* [MMJ] (1964-) and *Mawazo* (1968-), went into limbo in 1986 and reappeared in 1996. Some others, including *Makerere Law Journal* (1975-), have been restarted and new ones such as *African Crop Science Journal* (1993-), *Dialogue* (1994-), *Uganda Environmental and Natural Research Management Policy and Law* (1992-), *African Journal of Peace and Human Rights* (1995-), *PIC News* (1998-), *Journal of African Religion and Philosophy* (1989-), *Education Journal* (1998-), – are being published irregularly. And, as they are not even cited in international databases or abstracts, their future seems bleak.

Continuity in the publication of these journals cannot be guaranteed unless they are somehow subsidised. Most of these publications are locally funded, an arrangement that is indeed problematic. Faculties or institutions publishing them are in many times cash strapped, therefore getting a good editorial team to evaluate and edit articles becomes a problem. Quality of articles is also a problem sometimes.

Due to the disappointing picture of journal publishing in the country, most academics publish abroad. However, even there, the possibility of getting a paper published is slim, nor can libraries subscribe to the isolated journals in which Ugandan papers appear.

### **Magazine Publishing**

This is an area that is proving popular in Uganda today. More than twenty magazines of a very high standard are being published. They are well designed and printed abroad on glossy paper. The readership is diverse: for instance, *Secrets*, *Chics*, *Spice*, and *Parents* serve the youth. *Agrinews*, *NAADS News*, *Enviroconserve*, *NAPE LOBBY*, *The Community Health News*, *Donor News*, *Leadership* magazines serve focused groups. *Leadership* magazine is a historical publication aimed at a general readership, while *The Link* magazine covers political events in the Great Lakes Region. *Success*, on the other hand, is a business-oriented magazine, while *The Architect* is a specialised magazine for architects, and *Safe Motherhood* is for women. *New Era* and *Ateker* are general magazines published by the Uganda Women Writers Association. *Insight* is a social and business magazine while *Tarehe Sita* is a general magazine of the Uganda Peoples' Defence Force (Nagendo, 1999). NGOs like DENIVA, Foundation for Human Rights and Human Rights Focus Uganda are active in publishing magazines, newsletters, commissioned research output, debates for their membership and wider section of society.

### **Scholarly Publishing**

A review of literature and observation of what is happening reveals that very little is going on in this aspect of publishing in Uganda and that it is niche to venture into. Scholarly publishing has, however, taken off in earnest. It is mostly centred at Makerere University where the University Press was

launched in 1995 and at Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi. The Presses aim at publishing scholarly monographs and academic texts, and encourage academic staff and students to publish worthy academic works in form of books and journals. They also aim at obtaining copyright from authors and publishers so as to reproduce essential reading materials. Analysis of their performance however yields certain problems. While their intentions are good, their products are hardly seen in bookshops. These publishing Presses sell their books mostly through their offices. The potential market does not seem to know what these Presses do and yet they publish books. The quality of their products is improving despite of bottlenecks which include a lack of a policy to guide the selection of what is needed most, and low print runs of about 500 copies, coupled with voluminous text which makes the sale prices to be too high. There are also no full-time staff to run the presses on commercial basis.

### ***Publishing in Local Languages***

Publishing in local languages is an important means of communicating culture. This area of publishing is currently restricted to only a few languages. Uganda is a country with more than fifty languages representing different ethnic groupings. Languages in which books and newspapers are mainly published are: *Ateso, Luo, Luganda, Lunyankole/Ruchiga, and Lunyoro/Lutoro*. Much of what has been published in local languages constitutes religious literature and fiction rooted in local history (Namukasa 1999). Low consumption of books and newspapers in local languages is attributed to a low literacy rate, scarcity of published materials, a preponderance of oral culture, and poor reading habits. In urban areas, competition from Television, video entertainment, and local theatres are limiting what could be a reading population. School children are hit most.

Government policy with regard to local languages is contained in the *Government White Paper on Education 1992*. It recommends teaching through the medium of local languages from primary grades one to four in rural areas and English in urban areas, which are multilingual. When this policy is implemented in future, writing in local languages might improve thereby improving the viability of publishing in them. So far there are very few grammar or story books, in local



language. Most of the writing in local languages is based on isolated individuals.

### ***Co-publishing***

Eminent writers on book publishing (P.G Albatch 1996, Victor Nwanko 1996, Ian Montagnes 1996, and Chakava 1995) have expressed ideas on the subject of co-publishing. In summary, their ideas boil down to the fact that co-publishing is actually beneficial if well understood and exploited. Co-publishing exists in Uganda and is continuing to expand in some instances and closing in others. James Currey/Fountain Publishers is an example in recent times. Areas of collaboration are wide. They range from production to distribution. For example, Ugandan publishers find it cheaper to print abroad while their counterparts enter the market. Local publishers know that quality is not easy to obtain in Uganda. Meeting deadlines is also a problem, and even the cost of inputs and printing make local products more expensive. This arrangement has however remained a north – south affair. I am yet to see south-to-south efforts.

### ***Rise of Informal Publishing***

The history of Informal Publishing in Uganda dates back to the 1970s when there was a critical shortage of reading materials. Right from the primary school through university, typewritten texts on stencils, duplicated and bound together, is a hallmark of Ugandan publishing. Is this fraudulent or impure publishing? Under normal circumstances this is grey literature that is not available through established book-selling channels. Such materials are characterised by limited distribution, poor bibliographic control, small press runs and non-standard formats. Besides, these materials are not vetted, edited and typeset. They are merely typewritten and mimeographed. Regardless of the problems connected with their nature, Ugandan publishers agree that these publications destroy the market for published books. However, there is less doubt that children and teachers find them useful, valuable and cheap. The popularity of mimeographs is a lesson for mainstream publishers to take things seriously.

## **Electronic Publishing**

A new era of publishing has dawned on the horizon of the Ugandan publishing industry. Individuals and organisations are creating personal pages or websites on the Internet. Ugandan newspapers, especially *The Monitor and The New Vision* and proceedings of parliament of Uganda are now read on computer screens. This is in keeping with advances on the communication technology front. Unfortunately no progress towards some electronic publishing has made a headway in Uganda. In addition, there has been an unprecedented liberalisation of the airwaves over the past four years, giving birth to numerous private radio and TV stations. Most of these are FM stations operating side by side with public or government stations. These stations depend on advertisements and programmes sponsorship. The *Electronic Media Statute of 1996* is the law providing for the licensing and regulation of radio and TV stations. This law amends the Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Act, repeals the Cinematography Act and Television Licensing Act and consolidates them into the electronic media law.

## **The law and publishing in Uganda**

There are several laws concerning information management in Uganda. Some have already been mentioned above. Others include: the Copyright Act, the Press and Journalists' Statute, the Currency Act, Legal Deposit Act, etc. There is a new Bill about Access to Information as required in the 1995 Uganda Constitution. This paper will only deal with the Copyright and Penal Code Acts.

### *Copyright Act 1991*

Uganda upholds the Universal Copyright Conventions (UCC) and is not a member to the Berne Convention. As an example, it can be quoted that a person appeared some years ago before a Ugandan Court of Law for pirating a foreign title, *Tropical Biology* by McKean. This Act 1964 with its revised version of 1991 is still inadequate in the present state in so far as it deals only with artists. Though the new law is not yet out, new items are being introduced to the Act. These include: extensive sections on rights of authors, performers, phonogram producers; contracts relating to audio visual works, programme carrying signals, ephemeral recordings, compulsory translation licence, compulsory reproduction

licence, authorisation and rights relating to broadcast and broadcasting organisations, registration of works, copyright office, society of authors, infringement and legal remedies. In effect this draft bill attempts to address most of the issues that literary producers have been complaining about.

### *The Penal Code and The Media in Uganda*

In recent years there have been many cases in the courts of law regarding falsehoods, defamation and sedition. This is despite self-censorship practised by publishers of information (Kemigisha 1998). The Penal Code Act lays down the bulk of offences recognised by the Ugandan law as well as sentences prescribed for them. Sections 41, 42 and 43 deal with the offence of sedition, and section 50 deals with publication of false news or misdemeanour. Cases of violation of this section received a landmark judgement in courts of law when the Supreme Court of Uganda overturned the High Court ruling affecting journalists from the *Monitor Newspaper*. Section 51 prohibits defamation of foreign dignitaries. This section has also been violated. Chapter xviii or sections 174 – 181 deal with criminal defamation. So far, a few cases on music dubbing and piracy of school textbooks have brought wrongdoers to court. The worry though is the menace of photocopying.

### *Publishing and Government*

The Government of Uganda is following a consistent policy that competition in an open market place, combined with deregulation of telecommunication is sufficient to provide the environment for information production and dissemination. But it remains that the government is probably the biggest collector and distributor of information in the country. There is a close relationship between the publishing industry and government. The Ugandan Government's involvement in publishing is visible in four areas, i.e. government as publisher, as regulator, as human resource developer and as a distributor.

### *State as Publisher*

The role of the state in publishing is limited to materials emanating from its departments. Since 1900 when the Government Printer was established, the state has continued to publish Government information materials. This state of

affair was modified in 1992 when the status of the Government Printer was changed into a parastatal- the Uganda Printing and Publishing Corporation (UPPC). The move was aimed at making UPPC a self-sustaining organisation providing printing and publishing facilities to government, private individuals and organisations, whilst acting as an in-service training school for its staff and other organisations

By Decree 7 of 1973, Government created the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). At that time, publishing in Uganda was not yet badly affected, but signs of volatile political upheaval threatened supply of books to schools. The NCDC was created, among other reasons, to investigate and evaluate the need for syllabus revision and curriculum reform at primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions and to initiate new syllabuses, draft teaching aids and instructional materials, and to publish information for propaganda purposes. For most of its operations, the NCDC had been engaged in writing manuscripts for a foreign publisher, thereby creating animosity with local publishers. This has so far been rectified.

In the field of newspaper publishing, the government of Uganda has always maintained a newspaper house. Since independence, names of papers that succeeded one another were that of *Uganda Argus*, *Voice of Uganda*, *Uganda Times* and *The New Vision*. *New Vision* was a creation of law (Uganda Parliament 1987). Its mission includes the publishing of government newspapers in English and local languages in Uganda. It is also responsible for any other duties that may be carried on by a printing press or publishing house. In line with current developments, government has ventured into e-governance. Most of its ministries and organizations are operating websites to promote openness in government.

#### *State as Regulator*

The State has a role to play in regulating what is read in Uganda. In the education sector, it has a textbook and instructional materials policy. This policy, announced in 1993, removes the monopoly of the NCDC in writing books for schools, liberalises the supply of instructional materials to schools, and introduces vetting of all books and other

materials distributed to primary and secondary schools. The policy decentralises selection of materials to school level. Local publishers have welcomed the policy as it levels the playing ground that hitherto favoured only the foreign publishers.

The second area of regulation covers the Press. There is the Press and Journalists Statute, No.6 of 1995, which aims at ensuring the freedom of the press. It provides for the media council, establishes a National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (NIJU) and repeals the Newspaper Publication and the Press Censorship Act. The Statute sets minimum qualification for a journalist to be a Bachelor's degree, but practitioners do not seem to be happy about this high academic qualification required for journalists as it locks out those with diplomas in the same field. Secondly they are not happy because the minister has a bigger say in selecting more members to the Media Council. It is their feeling that this act gags them.

Government buys books and distributes them partly directly to primary schools and partly through decentralisation arrangement and provides money for textbooks to its universities. The major recipient is primary education, and to some extent, secondary schools. Over the last ten years, the Ministry of Education has been implementing the Support Uganda Primary Education Reform (SUPER) Programme.

**Table 2: Book Procurement**

Year	Programme	Money involved	Books and others	Classes	Remarks
1993	SUPER I	N.A	53,344	5 - 7	Local pub supplied 7.5%
1995	SUPER II	N.A	62,160	2 - 4	Local pub supplied 8.6%
1997	SUPER III	US\$8million	2.1m	5 - 7	Local pub supplied 10.4%
1998	SUPER IV	US\$7.3million	1.5m	1 - 7	Local pub supplied 17.5%
1999	CYCLE V		Supplementary	ReadingBooks	
2000	CYCLE VI	16Bn		1 - 7	
2001	CYCLE VII	16Bn	N.A	1 - 2non bk mts+story bks	
2002	CYCLE VIII	11Bn (US\$5.8m)	N.A	1 - 4	
2003	CYCLE IX	12.5Bn (US\$8.5)	N.A	5 - 7	
2004	CYCLE X	18Bn		3-7 + teachers guides	

SUPER I was implemented in 1993. It catered for primary school levels 5 to 7. Local publishers supplied 53,344 books or 7.5 percent of the total book stock. SUPER II was implemented in 1995. It covered primary levels 2 – 4. Local publishers supplied 62,160 books, or 8.6 percent of the total. SUPER III was implemented in 1997. Local publishers supplied 217,459 out of a total of 2.1 million books. This accounted for 10.4 percent. Under SUPER IV in 1998, the local publishers supplied 260,540 books out of 1.5 million books thereby contributing 17.5 percent. Cycle VI saw the procurement of 2,085,439 books at a cost of 16 billion shillings. Cycle VII spent over 16 billion shillings to procure various quantities of assorted non-book materials and storybooks for primary one and two. US\$ 5.8 (11 billion Uganda shillings) was spent for Cycle VIII whereas US\$ 8.5 million (over shs 12.5 billion) was spent on the procurement of

textbooks under Cycle IX. Under cycle X shillings 18 billion is being spent on pupils textbooks and teachers guides for primary three to primary seven.

The main government body for this work since 1993 has been the Instructional Materials Unit (IMU) of the Ministry of Education and Sports. As a procurement agency formed in 1993, IMU is required to support and develop a fully competitive, market oriented, textbook system in Uganda based on the provision of school based purchasing power (consumer funding) to every primary school in the country and the introduction of school responsibility for the selection of their textbooks (Matovu & Read 2001:112). IMU plays a big role in procurement and distribution of textbooks, supplementary reading materials and teaching aids to all primary schools in the country. Book ratios for primary schools differ. For primary One to Three it is 4.9 and from primary Four to Seven 2.6 according to government statistics (MoES, 2001). And teacher pupil ration is 1:50.

From its inception in 1993 to 2000, IMU purchased approximately US\$ 30 million, worth of textbooks from locally established publishers (Matovu & Read 2001). Between 1995 and 1999, the IMU undertook five major material procurements and four of these were solely for core textbooks and teachers guides.

Funding for Uganda primary school textbooks come from two main sources; the textbook procurement budget of the IMU and the Universal Primary Education (UPE) funds provided under capitation grants directly to schools for school based spending on other teaching and learning materials (Matovu & Read 2001:107). For example during the period 2000-2003, US\$ 60 million was allocated for teaching and learning materials.

Procurement of primary school textbooks has been supported with donor funding. World Bank provided funds for IDA III and IDA IV projects to purchase consolidate and transport books from Hong Kong to Uganda. Since 1998, The World Bank, The European Union, DFID, USAID, DGIS and Irish Government have together, via the Education Strategy Investment Plan (ESIP) provided budgetary support for

education, which includes support for material provision (Matovu & Read 2001:112).

Analysis of performance indicates that:

- The pattern of book trade to primary and secondary school has not changed significantly. The traditional players – Longman and Macmillan continue to dominate the school market.
- Co-publishing is a slowly growing reality as shown by Longman/Kamalu, and Fountain and others in relationship. The relationship between Heinemann and Rorash closed in 2001. Despite the US\$55.00 vetting fee per title, some local publishers are increasingly taking a position in the book market. KM Publishers and Fountain Publishers are emerging as serious local contenders
- Publishers supply directly to Government, thereby cutting out the booksellers – a factor that explains why bookshops are not progressing well.

Although there are many local publishers on register for the supply of books to the Ministry of Education, only a few are doing so. This is because only a few of the publishers are able to publish a book in a year.

Communication has been liberalised in Uganda. The Uganda Communication Act, No.8 of 1997, setting for the formation of Uganda Communication Commission provides for restructuring, liberalisation and introduction of competition in the communication industry. Through this Act, Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Ltd have been separated. Other courier companies such as EMS, TNT and DHL have been incorporated. E-mail services have expanded. 17 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have been licensed to do business in Uganda (Uganda Communication Commission Website: <http://www.ucc.org>), 67 private FM radio stations and seven private TV stations are currently operational in Uganda.

### *Capacity Building*

The state is developing human resource for the publishing industry and related organisations. Makerere University offers degree courses in Mass Communication and Library and Information Science, which have a module on book publishing



and related aspects. UPPC has a school for printers. NIJU undertakes training of journalists on short course basis. Uganda Management Institute (UMI) offers courses in Journalism; United Media Consultants and Trainers, a private organisation, offers diploma and certificates in Journalism, Mass Communication and Public Relations; Uganda Institute of Business and Media Studies offers diploma courses in journalism and media studies; International Institute of Business and Media Studies have diploma and certificate courses in journalism, radio, TV stations and public relations, while the Institute of Mass Communication offers diplomas in Journalism. All these, partly, explain why there are so many radio and TV stations as well as newspapers in Uganda. The human resource base is growing.

Various media houses and book publishing houses have internal training programmes for their staff. African Publishing Network (APNET), through Uganda Publishers Association, has regular programmes for training publishers. All these are the result of an enabling political environment.

#### *State as Distributor*

Centralised procurement and distribution has been a feature of Uganda's book industry. This is linked to the political upheavals and subsequent direct involvement of government in publishing and distributing books through the poorly equipped network of distribution outlets countrywide and supporting a decentralised system of procurement and distribution. Government's intention was to fill the gap. Even with the establishment of IMU in 1993, centralised procurement continued. This aspect is declining in terms of Government involvement. Because the Ministry of Education which had been the sole distributor of books that it purchased for schools, is considering liberalising this sector in the near future. Some efforts towards revitalisation of decentralised procurement have started. In 1999 the decentralised system was initiated. The IMU in 1999 and 2002 put textbook consolidation to a local tender but the winners were found to be agents of multinational publishers. To build capacity required for the decentralised distribution, 4 districts were chosen as pilot districts for decentralised procurement during Cycle VIII and IX. The pilot project aimed at creating an opportunity for local booksellers to be involved and assisted in

improving standards (Matovu & Read 2001). This expanded to 10 districts as a result of the success of the pilot district. Thirty (30) districts are now slated to receive textbooks through the decentralised procurement.

### **Publishing scene from the 1990s to the present**

Commercial Institutional Publishing in Uganda continues to attract more players. In the public sector, UPPC, The New Vision, Ministries, NCDC, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Makerere University, Law Development Centre (LDC), and the Inspector General of Government (IGG) are the major Public Sector Publishers. The UPPC, and The New Vision are commercial establishments.

NGOs, local and international, are publishing different types of materials like monographs, newsletters, brochures, reports etc. The UNDP and World Bank are major examples in the international group while other NGOs basically publish newsletters to promote their activities. Use of ISBN and ISSN is a new feature in Uganda's publishing efforts. Uganda is now a member of the International Publishers Association (IPA). The National Library of Uganda Act 2003 vests the responsibility of issuing ISBN numbers to the National Library.

### **Marketing and distribution**

During the last ten years, publishers in Uganda have been hosting launches, sending out review copies, printing semi-annual catalogues, advertising in the printed media, staging book exhibitions in big events and in major libraries, making school visits and sending inspection copy mail shots. A trend is growing in which book publishers give away tokens such as company pens, diaries, calendars and year planners. Billboards advertising book and newspaper companies can be seen on all major roads into and out of the capital city. All carry captions encouraging people to read particular paper or books from particular publishers.

Publishers, especially those that are well established, have facilities for the trade that include well-equipped warehouses with display racks, trolleys, delivery vans with clearly marked company names and catch-words for their products.

Publishers move around the country promoting and distributing books, newspapers and magazines, while carrying out market surveys as well. The biggest buyer of books is the Ministry of Education. Newspapers have ready markets, mostly in urban areas. Bookshops are becoming a feature in virtually every town in Uganda. Kampala City is the hub of both book publishing and selling businesses.

Hawkers in published books are clearly visible and those of mimeographed school pamphlets are popular within school precincts. Newspaper vending, hawking books and pamphlets is clearly one of the most active day-to-day activities in all towns of Uganda. Ugandan newspapers are reaching the neighbouring countries. Books are slowly making an entry into Kenya as Kenya book publishers are coming to the Ugandan market, Southern Sudan and abroad through African Book Collective and International Fairs such as the Zimbabwe International Book Fair and also through private initiatives. Uganda is also maturing in hosting International Book Fairs.

### **Book Trade Associations**

Associations exist to bring together people with similar interests. They encourage professional exchange of ideas, and forge unity among members. There are associations connected with literary activities. In the book sector there are: Uganda Writers Association, Uganda Women Writers Association, Uganda Printers Association, Uganda Publishers Association, Uganda Booksellers Association and Uganda Library Association.

In the newspaper sector, there is the Uganda Journalist Association (UJA) whose objectives are to bring together a cross-sections of journalists in the country and to advance their interests, while the Uganda Journalists Union strives to defend Press Freedom in Uganda. There is the Uganda Newspaper Editors' and Proprietors' Association (UNEPA) formed in 1990 to promote the growth of newspapers in Uganda and to co-ordinate media training programmes; Uganda Sports Press Association (USPA) formed in 1972 to inform and educate the public on political and economic conditions of the sports fraternity in the country; Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) formed in 1983 to carry

out activities/programmes aimed at advancing women's interests in journalism. Other Associations include Media Training Network, Uganda Journalists Safety Committee, and the Free Press East Africa Media Institute.

### **National Book Trust of Uganda**

The National Book Trust of Uganda (NABOTU) was formed in 1997 to promote unity among publishers and booksellers. NABOTU is a civil society initiative set up to promote reading books. It brings together all stakeholders in the book industry, government, non-governmental organisations, and the International Development support Organisations. It aims at working with similar organisations in the region to create a literary society. During 1997 and 1999 it organised successful book weeks.

### **Book Development Council**

Uganda has made progress towards the formation of a Book Development Council. In a national book sector workshop held in May 1997, Interim Book Development Council was formed. It comprises of associations of publishers, booksellers, writers, printers, librarians and users of books; the government ministries whose activities are related to books; UNESCO Uganda, and NGOs. The Council, though not very active, is expected to co-ordinate; inter alia, book sector activities such as book promotions, book sector surveys, training and regulations.

### **Opportunities**

A summary of findings indicates that the Uganda publishing industry offers wide-ranging opportunities. Education in Uganda is an area of concern to African publishers, because book publishing is textbook dominated. It is estimated that around 80 – 90% of all books published in Uganda are textbooks. This does not leave much room for books in other fields such as culture, religion etc. Publishing for distant education, university-level texts, books for technical education, and other categories in local languages provide new challenges and opportunities for investment in Uganda.

From the 1990s to the present time, the publishing environment in Uganda has seen a number of improvements. Ugandans are enjoying an enabling political environment.

Ease, with which to access foreign exchange as well as improvements in communication technology have contributed to an environment that is more conducive to publishing. Liberalisation of the economy has lessened difficulties in accessing printing materials and equipment. UPE has created a demand for more books and there is evidence of general improvements in terms of school enrolments at all levels.

### *Economic Opportunities*

There are two criteria that may be used to measure the viability of a country (or that of a sector within it), namely the so-called PEST and SWOT methods of analysis.

Politically, Uganda's economy has been transforming with the putting in place of an enabling atmosphere as well as the rule of law. Security improvement there is some press freedom, and liberalisation of the economy have provided opportunities for enterprising publishers to compete. The establishment of a textbook policy, which ensures uniform vetting of textbooks for schools, has levelled the ground for the book trade and has also encouraged competition. The state monopoly in the field of publishing has so far been scrapped. Private companies, both local and international, now compete freely. Tendering procedures have become more transparent. The former Uganda Publishers' and Booksellers' Association (UPABA) as well as local publishers, have lobbied the government to reach this goal. The Ministry of Education and Sports approves syllabi and lists of books for primary, secondary, and teacher training institutions. It also allows schools to select their own books and pays directly for books aimed at primary education. Books for tertiary institutions remain an area that is open for potential investors.

Ugandan publishers are bracing themselves for entry into the regional market especially the Kenyan, Rwanda, and the Southern Sudan markets. For Rwanda, those who left Uganda are studying using English while those who were there before use French. In the southern Sudan, English and Arabic are spoken including indigenous languages some of which transcend to northern Uganda.

### *Institutional Opportunities*

There is a close relationship between the development of human resources and publishing. Publishers, printers, designers, photographers, editors, proofreaders and traders are required. To develop capacity in this area, Makerere University and other institutions, both public and private, run different courses for servicing the publishing industry.

### *Cultural Opportunities*

Uganda's political climate is fairly stable and enables local and international publishers to participate in book related activities. Increasing enrolment at all levels of education is an opportunity for a larger market. Expansion of syllabi and the introduction of new subjects to the schools curricula are expanding opportunities at various levels of education. Increased output of mass communication graduates is accelerating the number of newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations. New technology, especially in the field of communications such as fax and e-mail, is helping publishers to exchange ideas with colleagues, both at local and international levels. Manuscripts, complete with illustrations, can now be sent for editing via e-mail and be returned the same way. These are new opportunities. The usage of Desk Top Publishing (DTP) has more than doubled within the decade. Availability of Internet services/facilities has promoted the reading of local literature abroad. Publishers and organisations alike have created websites for promoting local information.

### *Gender-Specific Opportunities*

Women are becoming prominent in middle management positions in Uganda publishing and broadcasting. There is a women's journalist association, the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) that caters for their needs. It was formed in 1983 and has a full-fledged secretariat. UMWA seeks to influence policy change in the interest of women and other marginalized groups. Femrite is the Uganda Women Writers' Association that publishes *New Era* magazine and is publishing a growing list of fiction titles. This Association plays an active role in promoting female writers, especially through seminars. The Department of Gender and Women Studies at Makerere University prepares women for senior managerial positions. Enrolment of female children in schools

is gaining ground. Gender responsive programmes, also in the field of publishing, are taking shape. For example, awarding young women 1.5 extra points for enrolling at university is an affirmative action initiative that has proved successful. There are more women involved at work with personal computers than males, probably because of their training as secretaries.

## **Threats to publishing**

### *Small Market*

Overall findings of the study indicate that almost 50% of Ugandans have little to do with publishing due to illiteracy. For both sexes, literacy levels are higher in urban areas than in rural areas. The gap between men and women is wide, particularly in rural areas where about 60%-63% of the men are literate compared to 42% percent of the women (UBOS & ORC Micro, Dec. 2001). The gap is also significant across regions. In the Northern region, for example, literacy level of men is 69%, compared to 24% for women. In other regions, the gap is less pronounced; in the Central and Western regions, it is 7percentage points, and in the Eastern Region, the gap between male and female literacy level is 21 percentage points. Twenty percent of those who are literate have limited access to published materials due to poverty. The problem is exacerbated by absence of suitable published material in familiar languages as well as poor distribution systems. In fact, these problems lead to a reduction of the local market.

### *Economic Problems*

The constraints of the publishing industry in Uganda are, most significantly, of an economic nature. Uganda is one of the poorest countries in the world. Per capita average income stood at \$100 in 1999 (Sendaula, 1999). Those living below poverty line in 2002/2003 were 38% (UBOS, 2003:48). Buying of newspapers, books and magazines is concentrated only in urban areas and among a few financially able people. Indigenous publishing houses are under-capitalised. Taxes on printing inputs remain a problem. Taxes and poor costing of products, especially books, make it difficult to compete with imported goods. At the same time, competition with multinational publishers such as Longman, Macmillan and

Oxford University Press provides a tough business environment for local publishers. Book publishing is skewed in favour of publishers from the north who have sufficient capital and very high quality standards. Domination of foreign companies is a historical fact and remains a problem in the development of indigenous publishing. Prices of books are rather high in relation to real incomes. Markets are small because of low literacy rates, especially in foreign languages. Publishing is basically done in English – the second language – and in a few other (local) languages. The cost of education, especially secondary education up to university level leaves little money for books. The culture of buying information products needs cultivation. Trading with partners is very limited indeed.

#### *Institutional Constraints*

There is no overall government policy in place to promote publishing. Instead government has put in place laws within which every sector must compete. That is the guiding principle. Only one sector, namely education, has a textbook policy. Although there are managers with experience at the top level, mid-level staff is still scarce. There is a general lack of good editors/translators in local languages, as well as designers and illustrators. A large number of locally published books are of low physical quality and yet they are, at the same time, expensive. Publishers suffer acute shortages of capital, while banks respond very slowly to the needs of local publishers.

#### *Cultural Constraints*

The main cultural problem in Ugandan publishing is the multiplicity of languages. Publishing is mainly done in English and in a few local languages. English is the official language for administration and education. Although Kiswahili is the national language, it is without significant roots and scope, and is not used for published material. There are 56 Local languages but less than ten are published. The challenge to publishing therefore remains to be the multiplicity of local languages, and the lack of skilled editors in these languages exacerbates the problem. The majority of people in Uganda do not have access to appropriate reading material due to one or more of the following factors: the dominant position of foreign languages; poor reading habits; poorly-funded libraries;



poverty; low literacy levels; problems experienced in trade infrastructure, especially in rural areas; and the inability to imagine any immediate benefits of reading.

Uganda is pursuing a policy of primary education in the medium of local languages. Publications in local languages are largely government initiatives that publish newspapers in regional languages but not books for schools. Religious institutions do publish some papers in local languages. However these are published in only few local languages.

Continued book donations in the name of cultural relations undermine the writing and buying of books. Writing of tailor-made pamphlets and binding them locally, is also killing the sales of locally published books. Copyright abuse through unwarranted photocopying is a worrying problem, especially at tertiary or university level.

#### *Gender Specific Constraints*

Gender inequality within the publishing industry remains a problem of historical as well as cultural nature. Ugandan rural families, like most African countries, have in the past preferred the education of males to that of females. School enrolment depicts this imbalance throughout the educational structure. Perceived obstacles to women's education in Uganda are parental attitudes, distribution of labour, customary practices, availability of educational institutions and teacher attitudes (Kwesiga, 2002:167). The development of a generation of female writers, editors and publishers remains an uphill task. There is currently only one woman Managing Director heading a publishing house.

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