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Full Length Research

Diffusion of cultural knowledge and issues of book publishing and practice in central Africa: The case of Cameroon

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Book publishing is an art that consists of the production and distribution of ideas, of individuals / group of persons based on knowledge, experience and research findings. It participates in the expansion and acquisition of knowledge for better understanding of the world and its evolution. This is a profession though universally recognized and promoted receives very little importance in many African countries and as such most readers/scholars/students of countries concerned tend to depend on publications from other countries at the expense of local ideas and values. Publishing books and other documentation participates essentially in the spread of knowledge. It is a domain that most people consider as reserved for academics and intellectuals. With limited facilities in Africa, it is not so much an area of great challenge as many do not know what this business entails and what it takes to become a book publisher. The absence of facility for training in this domain implies that those already in it have acquired the skills informally. The market of books remains significantly problematic in most African countries. Practice has shown that anyone with the financial wherewithal can undertake to operate a publishing house as a private business in Cameroon. Few publishing houses that exist in Cameroon survive on the production of exercise and textbooks for students, which makes it seasonal. Publications out of this field in terms of intellectual debate/stimulation hardly exist, procedure for submission of manuscripts tedious, proofreading /editing almost absent and consequently, quality is poor and perennial production doubtful. With the existence of the new Information and communication technology, will book publishing survive or perish in a continent that gives little meaning to publication and reading?

Key words: Publishing books, Practice, books, Cameroon, Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Cameroon reveals a series of interventions by Europeans, which have contributed to the remarkable diversity of the nation. Germany annexed the territory in 1884 but this was however, ephemeral, consequent to Germany's defeat in the First World War. Under the League of Nations, France gained control of more than two-thirds of the territory while Britain acquired one-third. This arrangement (i.e. League of Nations mandate), was terminated and replaced in 1945, after the Second World War, by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organisation,. Cameroon thus became a Trust Territory of the latter, still under British and French administration. In 1960, French Cameroon gained independence and became known as La République du Cameroun and the following year 1961, British Cameroons, in a United Nations-conducted plebiscite, rejected incorporation into Nigeria in favour of reunion with the Republic of Cameroon and subsequently, became known as West Cameroon. The result was the emergence of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, which a decade later (20th May 1972), was transformed into the United Republic of Cameroon and later (1984), to simply what is today: the Republic of Cameroon (Fonkeng, 2007).

Cameroon is a bilingual nation (French and English); divided into 10 administrative Regions: These regions are each administered by appointed Governors in addition to Divisional and Sub-divisional officers while executive powers are conferred on the President of the Republic.

Table 1. Publication and change.

Country	Total publications 2002	Total publications 2008	Change (%)2002-2008	World share of publications (% 2008)
EU	290184	359991	24.1	36.5
China	38206	104968	174.7	10.6
India	18911	36261	91.7	3.7
Brazil	12573	26482	110.6	2.7
South Africa	3538	5248	48.3	0.5

Source: UNESCO Science Report, 2010

Each ethnic group in Cameroon communicates in a vernacular language (over 200 ethnic languages), which is commonly used in homes and at cultural gatherings. In effect, European languages (German, French and English) as a legacy of imperialism have succeeded each other in schools as well as in common usage. The use of Pidgin English (a deformed variant of English commonly spoken in the English-speaking zone) is spreading very fast to all other parts of the country with serious repercussions on reading, writing and the culture of book.

A book is a vector of knowledge and a cultural instrument. It is a key element in the fabrication of citizenship; an important source of learning and information. It is an important instrument for the conservation and circulation of knowledge as well a tool for social cohesion. In spite of all the favaourable attributes of a book, its publication in Central Africa as a region faces enormous difficulties. Central Africa is the only region in the world which does not yet dispose of a veritable manifestation of interest towards books (Le Financier d'Afrique, special No 089 du decembre, 2008). It is also where the ratio of the number of books per person is the lowest (120 books for 2000 people as against 992 on average for 1000 people in the western world

Book publishing starts with creativeness, initiative and drive on the part of an author and the conceptual skills, risk perception and financial disposition of an individual or a business entity. Important also is the political will of a nation to promote this activity particularly in terms of diffusing culture and knowledge. In Cameroon for example, there is hardly any legislation/policy /government text that promotes and regularizes book publication/publishing. According to Tohnain and Fonkeng (2009), no organization currently exists that co-ordinates scholarly publishing in Cameroon at a national level. Historically, the book is known as an instrument which for many years has contributed to the circulation and preservation of knowledge. Experts on matters of development have even established a relationship between editorial weight and the level of economic development of given country (Table 1). It follows consequently, that a country which publishes few books is equally less developed economically. It becomes trivial that the road to development necessarily passes through a better access to books and in matters of education, remains uncertain.

Problem statement

In as much as publication is important in development and the spread of knowledge in Cameroon and most of Central African countries, little publication goes on because of a lack of promotion of a national culture or heritage important in the establishment of an African identity. A people can possess a culture/knowledge but if it is not diffused publicized/published it will never be recognized, appreciated or valorised. Very few African countries participate in the spread of their culture and if little is known about the African Continent and sometimes, falsely, it is principally thanks to western authors and their publications or books. It is true that to publish one needs a certain means but of course, people must write or reflect for publication to occur and a nation as the guarantor of social cohesion and diffusion must be at the base to push forward this initiative.

The absence of a national policy that promotes/ encourages local publication is at the base of less publishing in Cameroon. When reference is made to scientific publications in Cameroon, one is inclined to affirm the existence of national publishing institutions. This is not the case because few indigenous publishing institutions exist and of poor quality because of financial and material means. Generally, most researchers prefer renowned publishing houses for scholarly works/ publications. Their importance is derived partly, from their popularity in terms of the usage of the books by the general public for leisure, culture or in schools and colleges. In the context of Cameroon this is a serious problem with immense repercussion at the economic and cultural levels.

A divorce also exists between the public and culture of reading in Cameroon. Many individuals have lost the desire to read books. It is quite possible today to find students who complete secondary school and university without owning a published textbook. There is even this funny and deplorable attitude amongst youths who immediately crossing a class decide to sell all text books

at incredible derisory rates. The socio-economic context is usually accused as the principal reason for the lack of a reading culture in Cameroon amongst youths. As it is often declared "*a book is not a principal preoccupation for Cameroonians as they think of reading only after they have eaten and drunk to their fill"* (Vincent de Paul Lele, Le financier d'Afrique, 2008). There are many explanations to this attitude; the high cost of books for a population that is generally poor; inadequate distribution of documentation in places usually visited by the population and contents considered too scholarly (lack of illustrations and inaccessible language) without any appetite for reading.

Today, most youths prefer watching television or attend to other electronic devices for information and leisure. According to Gaouda (Journalist):

"*The book constitutes a certain source of learning but it is rivaled these days by other media sources such as the radio, television, internet etc. This plurality of sources of information/communication renders the book a poor parent. The book in addition is constraining contrary to other media; when reading concentration is required and one can hardly do anything else"*.

Most editing and publishing houses target the school-going population and often exercise books are published where text books are required they are mainly published by foreign publishing houses such as Harmattan , Edition Clé, Karthala, Presses Universitaires de France, Presses Universitaires d'afrique ,MacMillan, Evans etc. Furthermore at the level of the Higher education it is very common for students to look make photocopies of books and other research materials instead of buying. The rate of this practice is scandalous to the extent that universities do not have bookshops.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this paper is to show that the absence or inadequate promotion of a cultural heritage/ culture of books has led to a decline in the publishing industry in Central Africa in general and Cameroon in particular.

Specific Objectives includes:

1. To study the relationship that exists between policy and publication in Cameroon;
2. To analyze the relationship between a culture of reading and publication in Cameroon;
3. To find out the link between alternative media sources and publication in Cameroon;
4. To study the relationship between the target population and publication in Cameroon.

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Diffusion

Diffusion, in current language makes allusion to the "*distribution*" or "*putting at the disposal*" a product or an information (Imriskoval *et al*., 1968). Although Information is essential for knowledge, its spread is as well crucial in understanding the concept of diffusion. In the context of this paper diffusion refers to the spread of knowledge which is cultural and relevant to a people's opinions or ideas. Diffusion theories are focused in research and the spread of knowledge, skills, innovation and technology change (what, why, intensity). These have been defined in basic terms by Rogers and Shoemaker (2009) in area of diffusion theory and they describe the procedure of innovation as spread in time through communications channel and the adaptation model. Nelson (2009), states that access to information is crucial to improving a country's performance and overall economic growth; The table below shows the relationship between publication and development.

Innovation diffusion theory

This is a broad social psychological/sociological theory referred to as the Diffusion of Innovations (DoI) Theory which purports to describe the patterns of adoption, explain the mechanism, and assist in predicting whether and how a new invention will be successful. The theory which has potential application to information technology ideas, artifacts and techniques, is concerned with the manner in which a new technological idea, artifact or technique, or a new use of an old one, migrates from creation to use. According to DoI theory, technological innovation is communicated through particular channels, over time, among the members of a social system**.**

In this study its relevance may not be direct but it is however, useful in terms of understanding knowledge as a change agent and/or innovation. The definition of National Innovation Systems (NIS) as: *The network of institutions in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify and diffuse new knowledge* (Freeman, 1995), tends to give meaning to writing and publication as innovation. Publication endeavours should therefore, focus on the innovation process with emphasis on writing efforts and the promotion of a reading culture and capabilities which are also imperative in social change.

Publishing

To publish is to make generally known or to announce formally; to promulgate (edict); issue copies of books, journals, articles, magazines etc (Coulson and Carr,

1981). Publishing constitutes a major aspect of the functioning of all scientific communities as it provides the means for the measurement of scientific productivity (The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research 1985);. Beyond scientific productivity, it promotes scientific awareness and the dissemination of ideas. When it comes to expressing our thoughts as vividly as we can, not only do we dare to dream, we move ahead, turning our dreams into reality by combining software, text, images, video, and sound to create dynamic expressions of our thoughts and knowledge through the art of publishing.

Publishing has evolved as a veritable weapon in the hands of a people to conserve perennially a culture, knowledge or ideas. In spite of the evolution and developments that have taken place in this industry there is a tendency for most people to still consider publishing as an intellectual and academic activity with a mitigated impact on the desire for books and other publications. In this circumstance, purchasing books becomes a luxury that many Africans or Cameroonians in particular cannot afford. By the same token, scholarly books are somehow difficult to be distributed in Africa; most readers are particularly, interested or prefer photocopying books and other texts which they find interesting or relevant; almost all university campuses are rife with photocopying machines and other reprographic instruments.

The book market

The book market is difficult in Africa because of many socio-cultural realities; in fact Africa is a continent that is notorious as far as knowledge dependency is concerned due to its colonial past in terms of colonial domination which has eventually led to economic dependency. Book publishing and marketing in Africa is problematic when we take into consideration many of the infrastructural difficulties and poverty that characterizes life in this continent. That notwithstanding, there are significant and prosperous publishing activities in the Maghreb (especially Algeria and Morocco) but unfortunately, most of what is published is in Arabic. In Africa south of the Sahara, French publication tend to dominate in this business where small autonomous indigenous publishers are unable to compete.

"Literary Publishing is considered by many educated people to be if not the, fundamental source for what is commonly considered as knowledge and culture. The initial phase of widespread literary publishing in America, from 1790 (the year of the first American copyright law) through 1850 (the establishment of a transnational railroad) is significant, in that it shows the link between logistical and economic potentials in the promotion of an arena for a truly reading and publishing tradition to flourish (Pena, 2001). For the centers of publishing, New York and Philadelphia's access and control of major waterways in the decades before the transnational railroad meant that publishers in these two cities were responsible for gauging, responding to, and even setting the standards for literary taste and acceptability. This implies that transportation, personnel, finance, machines and other raw materials must be available for this activity to exist and impact.

Indeed, book publishing is an immense industry in many parts of the western world. More than 411,000 new titles were published in America in 2007, and more than 3 billion books sold there (Henry, 2008). With headquarters in 14 countries and operations that span the globe, the world's 45 largest book publishers generated revenue of approximately $73 billion in 2006. Sitting atop the ranking is Reed Elsevier, with revenue of $7.60 billion, followed closely by Pearson, which had sales of $7.30 billion (Milliot, 2007).

The reading culture

Book reading all over the world is on a decline as students become more inclined to reading only in connection to passing examinations. Parents fight for livelihood and consequently; tend to engage more in many physical and mental activities that can be considered incompatible with reading. On the whole, the existing order between the public and reading is fragile in the entire public in Cameroon; not only few libraries exist in schools, public libraries are a thing of the past; bookshops are vibrant when it comes to going back to school or for school children and their needs and parents consider them as a nightmare. Reading in America, as in many rich countries, is down. A study by the National Endowment for the Arts, an independent federal agency, says leisure reading is declining, especially among the young. Since 1985, books' share of entertainment spending has fallen tremendously with more and more people turning to electronics and the so-called new information and communication technology.

Publishing in Africa

The book and publishing industries are at the root of education and literacy in any country. In the case of Africa it is generally known that publishing and distributing books and other reading or literary materials suffer from severe problems such as in adaptation of materials to African realities, census, plagiarism, poverty and the lack of a reading culture (Dekutsey, 1995). To fight against these shortcomings and enable those in the publishing industries to communicate effectively, the African Publisher’s Network (APNET) was formed. Prior to the foundation of APNET in 1992, there was no easy way for those involved in publishing in Africa to share information and learn from one another’s experiences.

After several conferences and seminars focused on solving the problems within the African publishing and book trade industry, it was concluded that:

"*The need for networking as a means of information-sharing became paramount. It was necessary to set up an umbrella body which would be a network of publishers in Africa*" (Dekutsey, 1995).

The vision of APNET "*the transformation of African peoples through access to books*", and the mission, "*strengthen African publishers through networking, training and trade promotion in order to fully meet African's need for quality books relevant to African social, political, economic and cultural reality*" are of great importance to all African countries without which the phenomenon of knowledge dependency will persist and of course indigenous cultures and values will eventually disappear. Both APNET and UNESCO have worked together to promote and express the belief that only culturally relevant materials and a home-grown curriculum can improve learning opportunities and halt the reliance on imported educational materials. In Cameroon, the organizational skills of Serge Dontchueng Kouam in the book industry and participation in book fairs in many African countries have been useful to the book trade.

There is no gainsaying that many African publishers are working with printing facilities that are not as efficient as in developed countries. Most African universities lack programmes and classes for creating professional publishers: university training in this field is sometimes available in Kenya, Uganda and South Africa, and these courses fall short of what is required. This and many other issues discussed earlier constitute a major setback in this industry in Africa and, policy makers need to give their attention to this as well the promotion of indigenous publishers and other African publishing houses. According to Makotsi (2000):

"Barriers to book trade can be addressed only through changes in policy at international, regional, and national levels. For this reason a program has been initiated to lobby governments and trade organizations to consider the book sector when formulating trade and development policies".

As a result of these setbacks; approximately seventy percent of Africa's book needs and exports account for less than five percent of its local materials. In addition, "Africa is responsible for only two percent of the world's books (Makotsi, 2000; UNESCO, 2010). Financial struggles have made it difficult for African consumers to buy local books; prices of books are high compared to what people can afford (Eloit, 2007). In general, economic difficulties are at the centre of the problems publishers, authors and their works face to get to the general public. This involves not only such basic determinants as whether the author himself is fiscally capable of funding the publication of his own works, but the ways in which works were physically published (the quality of paper, printing, binding, etc), in addition to how African authors are forced to deal with cheap quality materials and exposure to exploitation by many publishing houses that exist in Europe and the United States of America. They publish African sometimes for free or little or no cost but at the end of the day authors get no financial gains and their works end up becoming the property publishing houses.

Online publishing

Publishing online is becoming trendy in most academic milieus particularly; where publishing and access to journals is difficult and expensive. The world of on-line publishing is becoming both interesting and fascinating as it gives many scholars to see their works immediately or promptly published. Nevertheless, many academic associations tend to doubt the validity or scientific contributions of such publications. Famous in their accusation is the absence of an editorial board or a scientific body that gives testifies to the credibility of articles published. Credit must be given to this new addition to the facilities of publishing because of its rapidity in the spread of knowledge at little or no cost. Traditional approaches to book publishing and authors must take into consideration the expediency of this new development which can seriously impact on book publishing particularly in the domain of research and academics.

With the Web, however, authors can publish their findings immediately, with their peers weighing in just as immediately on the legitimacy of the new knowledge. The widespread dissemination afforded by the Internet subjects this knowledge to the scrutiny of many more experts who can confirm or deny the claims of the author. The rapidity and wide dissemination of information found in the internet is perceived as a serious threat to the publishing world because it means publishers cannot control remunerative compensation for those bits that are traveling to all parts of the globe. Now that most information is digital, it is easier to share it

METHODOLOGY

Research design and procedure

The survey research design was used for this study with a qualitative approach. The population consisted of a cross-section of the public of the centre region in the main capital of Cameroon, Yaounde. The target population for this study included respondents made up of students, journalists, teachers and businessmen.

Through a stratified random sampling technique, 30 persons were selected to participate in this study. Since a research design is a plan or blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed, a sample of the opinions of the aforementioned population on the promotion of cultural heritage and book publication was collected. through the use of interview guides.

After construction of interview guides, it was administered to some five respondents who read through, made some remarks and necessary corrections undertaken to adjust questions that were not well understood for better quality and validity. The Direct Delivery Technique (DDT) was used in administering the questionnaire for this study. This means that face to face questioning was used .with the help of a tape recorder to complement notes taking in the interview process. The results were presented in the form of summarized speeches and percentages, to show the characteristics of the sample and their various answers; and the analysis was through content analysis technique.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Absence of policy

An analysis of the interview results showed that more than 95% of persons interviewed have no knowledge of any existing law that regulates the publishing of books or the promotion of our cultural heritage. Probing and discussions with main actors indicate that there is no existing law on publication in Cameroon except what regulates the news media and other information sources. Legislation presents generally challenges to the world of publication; law attributes the right to profit to business enterprises; this is to recognize right of ownership of a published work to its author, with all of the inalienable rights that accompany such laws. What constitutes ownership in the world of publication today is however not clear. In most circumstances, ownership suggests that authors have the right to make decisions about how their works can be used. This causes concern for publishers and third party institutions; how can they assure financial and authoritative credits if someone else owns the resources? To protect their investments and credibility, publishers and third party institutions alike presently demand that authors hand over their copyright, precluding original authors from disseminating their works as freely and widely as they may like. In the name of "protection," authors have become little more than necessary resources to keep publishers and associated institutions alive and in business.

Furthermore, many publishers and institutions are increasingly demanding that authors assign them their copyright so they can ensure the "protection" of the knowledge the author desires to share widely. It's interesting that the easier it gets to share knowledge (from printing press, to photocopies, to bits), the longer the copyright terms become and the greater the demands of publishers and institutions to hold the copyright rather than allow the author to retain it. Publishers and third party institutions want to stay in business but they must not forget that the intellectual capital that keeps them afloat resides with individuals and collaborators, not within their own entity. Publishers want or are pretending to be the gatekeepers of knowledge as they decide what the public will know and how widely it will be disseminated

A declining reading culture

There is a general decline or divorce between the public and reading in the Cameroonian society. Results from this study show that more than 85% of the population in the main city, Yaounde has little interest in reading. According to Kogne Jules, a biochemistry student, *"The reading that I do is really occasional except my course work*". There are several reasons for this attitude amongst which are: Unavailability of books, high cost, highly charged school programme and laziness. A history doctorate student, Adoum Jean Marie, explains further: "*Apart from documentation linked to my research work, I hardly read; the few and rare journals that I read come my way occasionally on a monthly basis. Indeed, I am not a fan of reading."*

Many people these days find reading books, journals or magazines boring as it requires almost an undivided attention compared to modern sources such as the television, the internet and other audio-visual gadgets. As declared Francois Bakoba, "*it is almost five (5) years since I lost the habit of reading and I cannot say why"; I can hardly remember the last time I read a book even though I am conscious of the fact the reading is a means if not the only, for instruction with less pressure"*. Many intellectuals, parents, teachers and educational stake holders complain that quality and intellectual levels are falling and there exist statistics to justify such assertions.

Alternative media sources

Most youths these days are seduced by the television and the internet. Almost 80% of people interviewed are of the opinion that few youths visit libraries; they pass most of their time inform of the computer or the television series such as *friends* or *star academy* and at the same time, the walkman in the ear. According to a study published in, *le financier d'Afrique., 2008,: on primary and secondary school students, aged between 7 and 16 years, there is a high penchant for magazines and articles on line as well as video games. As a matter of fact, music is top in their leisure wish. 86% of youths*

between 14 and 18years put music as top priority in their activities, followed by cinema, outings to night clubs (63%), sports (56%) and television (48%). 90% of youths above 24 years, prefer the radio which they listen everyday without exception.

Broadly speaking, the new world of information exchange is complex; its possibilities are exciting. To understand where publishing is heading to, we must not only consider the existing environment defining the roles of authors, consumers, publishers and third-party institutions in the publication process, we must also consider the far reaching possibilities of what can be achieved with new technologies that enable the exchange of knowledge and information in unprecedented ways. Understanding these possibilities is important to authors and the publishing industry as it will enlighten the complexities facing the present generation in this transition to new models of publishing.

Any discussion regarding new publishing models will inevitably lead to the very important question of cost. Regardless of the medium, regardless of legislation, regardless the reading culture, there are costs. No publishing model (traditional or online) is free. Online publications require financial resources to sustain an infrastructure of equipment, software and basic services and to ensure that intellectual resources will be available well into the future. The traditional publication models have always had the cost issue all worked out and they may challenge the new approaches that are emerging in this domain. No matter the challenge it will be difficult to stop the rapidly evolving behavior of those wishing to advance knowledge and learning by freely sharing their knowledge.

Emphasis on the marketing of school books

Many Cameroonians are conscious of the emphasis placed on the commercialization of books particularly at the beginning of each academic year. If the marketing of books is a problem in Africa it has never been a problem in the area of text and exercise books for primary and secondary schools. It is claimed by a majority of respondents (78%) that there is an invasion of the book market with particular interest in primary and secondary school books. According to one student; "*the market that exist as far as publishing is concerned, is for school books and journals; it rather unfortunate that this market attracts a lot of foreign publishing houses at the expense of local initiative in this domain- Macmillan, Edition Cle, Evans etc, to name a few".* Also annoying in this business is the campaign by many of these publishers to include their books in the official booklist of the country with constant changes by ministerial book commissions in the booklist to favour some publishers to the disappointment of parents and the public at large because of increasing costs and scarcity of jobs.

Conclusion

Policy and regulating measures are usually important in safeguarding cultural heritage/acquisitions as well as protecting national values. Changes in policies and laws are necessary particularly with regard to the best means of managing publications and intellectual capital. A very high involvement by public authorities, the media and businessmen may be important in the raising of awareness of the decline in the valorisation on African national cultures as a result of a poor reading culture is necessary to seal the link between readers, authors and editors. The departure point is the media which needs to give a particular place to culture and especially, books. Books and reading have been sacrificed by the present generation in favour of current events and trends which they consider more profitable and exciting. Businessmen and the public in general will profit by not forgetting that a book is a product for everyday consumption in a modern society.

Today, there is a rich mixing of entertainment and scholarship, with the sharing and collaborative development of new, interesting works for which concepts of ownership and control are no longer well-defined. Today's stakeholders in the publishing world must look to the future, acknowledging *new* methods for exchanging ideas and creative works belonging to the culture of individuals and society over the Internet, if they want to remain players in the evolving on-line publishing movement. Invariably, enormous potentials and secrets still lie unexploited in African culture in general and the Cameroonian environment in particular in terms of scientific and literary works. Mankind as a whole definitely has something to gain by promoting an understanding of existing cultural and social infrastructure particularly from the eyes of the beholder.

Recommendations

From the results and proceeding discussions, it is imperative to stand up to the challenges posed by the multi media and the new information technology with respect to the promotion of a culture of reading.

There is need to produce bilingual documentation and also reading materials in local languages

The Creation of public libraries (in prisons and hospitals especially) as well as the reinforcement of those already existing in educational institutions as reading books complements teaching should given consideration

University bookshops need to be created and the fight against high cost of imported books be combated through the reduction of taxes.

The University press as a publishing institution should specialize in the publication of manuscripts based on primary research and also as a means of encouraging a reading culture, promote cultural understanding amongst people in different countries, disseminating ideas and

practices that have policy implications

Government institutions should promote the recognition of authors and copy rights as it is the case with the music industry and other creative arts.

Schools for the training of publishers and documentalists need to be created as well as fostering initiative in the creation of original works of quality and the diffusion of these products through libraries.

A Definition of rules in competition and partnership between public and private institutions is also an important measure in this fight including the development of policies on the exportation of books and other publications of African origin.

Finally, the organization of book expositions and reading campaigns particularly, in youth centres and the support of projects on young reader's tribune in the written and audiovisual press cannot be overemphasized.

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