

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE HONOURS DEGREE IN PUBLISHING
PART IV SECOND SEMESTER AUGUST 2013 SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS
IPU 4204 STATE PUBLISHING, TRANS-NATIONALS AND INDIGENOUS PUBLISHERS

TIME: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. ANSWER QUESTION 1 AND ANY OTHER THREE (3) QUESTIONS
 2. QUESTION 1 CARRIES 40 MARKS AND EACH OF THE OTHER QUESTIONS CARRY 20 MARKS EACH
 3. IMPORTANCE IS ATTACHED TO ACCURACY, CLARITY OF EXPRESSION AND LEGIBLE HANDWRITING
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1. Read the attached Case Study, *'The Panaceas'* and then answer the following questions.
 - a) In what ways has the continued domination by expatriate publishers made the task of publishing in African languages more difficult? Cite and discuss at least five ways. **(20 marks)**
 - b) *'Are indigenous businesses and their priorities entirely blameless for the current state of indigenous publishing'*? Discuss and give five reasons why you would blame the local publishers, booksellers and authors. **(15 marks)**
 - c) Suggest ways in which the African state can intervene to protect the African book market from the trans-national companies (TNCs). Support your answer fully. **(5 marks)**
 2. *"The scenario for the future of publishing in Africa is easily discernible, African Publishing playing and insignificant role, the source of books and reading materials remaining external and indigenous publishers playing a mediating role between the 'European' publisher/producer and the African book market"*. Comment on this statement giving examples of how the publishing industry has developed in the past two decades. **(20 marks)**
 3. Discuss the obstacles that African publishers encountered the 1970s when faced with the influx of trans-national publishers from the West. Use examples from the East and Central Africa. **(20 marks)**
 4. Alice Saunders once said that 'a balance between private and public sectors is likely to be more beneficial for African societies'. Do you agree? Support your answer fully citing examples from the African publishing industry. **(20 marks)**
 5. Suggest ways in which the establishment of equitable and mutually beneficial joint ventures in publishing in Africa could be the best way to achieve a sound publishing industry. Use examples from the African industry. **(20 marks)**
 6. Discuss the African Books Collective Initiative, the benefits it brought to African publishing including the challenges it faced and those challenges currently faced by many African Publishers today. **(20 marks)**

END OF PAPER

CASE STUDY: Supplementary Exam August 2013

PANACEAS?

Is neo-liberalism therefore the main solution to problems besetting publishing in African languages? A number of factors suggest not. In some countries, such as Guinea, where textbook publishing has been opened to the private sector, many different obstacles continue to impede book development.[10] Moreover, literacy levels so crucial in the chain of writing-publishing-reading have been undermined by Structural Adjustment Programs that require governments to spend less on education.

The weakest link in African publishing is distribution [11] and the state certainly has failed to effectively develop this sector. However, this is only part of the picture. Low incomes, poorly developed infrastructures of local book shops, libraries, and transport links, and continued domination by expatriate publishers have exacerbated foreign dependency and made the task of publishing in African languages still more difficult. Capital requires profit and a market numerically dominated by an impoverished and relatively minuscule reading public offers little attraction to business (whether speaking indigenous or Western languages). Partial Africanization of foreign subsidiaries (for instance of OUP in Nigeria in 1972) provided a stimulus to indigenous publishers but many African governments continue to contract textbooks out to transnational corporations.

The contributors to the book are alert to this domination and endeavour to chart realistic strategies for African countries. However, they present little evidence on such determining factors as ownership or investment patterns. Mulokozi notes that few books were, at the time of his writing, (June 1998) being published due to ongoing privatization of firms such as Tanzanian Publishing House and whilst this may be a temporary aberration he does not consider the wider effects of such a hiatus. Neither do they treat in any detail the options for joint state-private ventures or the possibilities for reform of state publishing houses to make them more viable and better managed. [12]

Are indigenous businesses and their priorities entirely blameless for the current state of indigenous publishing? Do all publishers in fact speak the same 'language' as their authors or are they increasingly speaking another language, that of profit? Clearly, the authors agree, previous systems have failed. They put their faith in privatization. However, they do not consider the effects of possible future failure in this emergent sector in the face of tough competition with transnational corporations that are likely to continue to lack interest in indigenous publishing. Schemes such as affordable book imports linked to aid programs can meet immediate requirements. But they also run the risk of increasing dependency and reliance on 'world' languages and in the end do little to meet the economic and cultural requirements of African societies.

In my opinion, continued domination of the book market by TNCs can only effectively be met by state intervention, massive growth of local capital, or a mixture of both. I agree with Alice Saunders that a balance between private and public sectors is likely to be more beneficial for African societies.[13]

On the other hand, given that 'world' languages continue to have strong appeal to national elites [14] perhaps indigenous language publishing is doomed? Surveys show that many parents still prefer their children to be instructed in English as they see this as a language that gives access to privileges. Phaswane Mpe reminds us that the anticipated expansion of indigenous book markets in South Africa has not occurred.[15] Whilst in the face of Africa's escalating economic and social problems it is difficult to be overly optimistic about the future of publishing in African languages, this is an area where writers and others engaged in the processes of teaching, learning and communication might make a tangible contribution.