



IPA international
publishers
association

Educational Publishers Forum

case
study

Building a Local Publishing Ecosystem

A case study on the vital role of educational publishers for governments to achieve their education policy objectives while developing the local economy.



GHANA - Country Profile

Population: 28,833,629 (2017)

Languages: English (official), about 80 local languages (including Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe)

GDP: 58.997 billion USD (2017)

Education expenditures: 4.51% of GDP, 20.1% of government expenditure

Literacy: 76.6% (2015)

GDP Per Capita: 4,492 USD (2017)



Book publishing in Ghana for quality educational resources has undergone significant changes following a series of policy changes over the last 50 years. Before 1976, the book industry was dominated by foreign publishing multinationals with few local publishers. That year all foreign publishing and printing houses were required to be headed by Ghanaians. The Ghana Book Publishers Association (GBPA) was officially formed to bring together local publishers to build their capacity and to undertake advocacy programmes.

These changes attracted Ghanaian entrepreneurs to the book industry taking the GBPA from 23 members in 1984 to 120 in 2019 with a further 130 non-member publishers across the country. Textbook publishing dominates the Ghanaian book industry with about 85% of publishers being textbook publishers.

THE SITUATION IN GHANA

Compulsory Basic Education in Ghana, the free textbook scheme, became a statutory educational policy in 1962 and current government policy (from 2017) is to make senior high school (SHS) education free for

parents who enroll their children in public schools. Government procures books for students for Basic and SHS education. The Ghana Book Development Council, a government agency, through collaboration with the GBPA and other stakeholders has formulated a national book policy and a Textbook Development and Distribution Policy (TDDP). Currently before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Education, the resulting Ghana Book Development Agency (GBDA) Bill, if adopted, would make Ghana the first country in Africa to have a law on book development.

“Over decades, the Ghanaian authorities have demonstrated their commitment to education opportunities for all and recognised the vital roles that publishers can play in achieving their objectives.”

Ernest Oppong, Acting Executive Director, African Publishers Network (APNET)

On a more practical level, the government introduced new syllabi for primary education in April, 2019. This gives publishers 5 months to develop new textbooks, have them evaluated and approved by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) under the Ministry of Education (MoE) so that the new primary textbooks to be procured and distributed to public schools in September 2019.

The government is the biggest textbook buyer in Ghana. The MoE will buy three different textbooks per subject this year, an improvement of some of the previous procurements of one textbook per subject. The Ministry of Education will also soon be purchasing supplementary readers for schools as soon as funds are available.

RESULTS



Locally relevant content

Government policies have led to a boom in local publishing houses developing locally adapted materials for pupils.



Collaboration

Collaboration between government agencies and publishing stakeholders ensures the most effective development and distribution of textbooks.



Choice

In September 2019 the government will invest in 3 textbooks per subject at primary level giving teachers real choice in terms of materials to help their pupils.

CONCLUSION

There is a clear understanding that the Ministry of Education cannot achieve quality education in Ghana without involving publishers. The Ministry has already demonstrated this collaboration with publishers over the years through procurement of books under competitive tendering processes. One way to develop this further would be to place the collaboration in a clearer, legally binding framework by adopting a functional national book policy.