



**BOLOGNA
CHILDREN'S
BOOK
FAIR**



59th edition

Children's Content Rocks!
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THE 59th BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR — 21-24 MARCH 2022

SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICA

A packed programme of panel discussions and the best editorial offerings from the African continent

Africa is an extraordinary reservoir of potential new readers, ideas and creativity in the publishing industry, in particular concerning publishing for children and young people. It has half of the world's twenty fastest growing economies, the world's youngest population and one of the highest growth rates of internet penetration.

With this in mind, the **Spotlight on Africa** programme has been developed in collaboration with the **International Publishers Association (IPA)**, which manages the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund, and with the support of ITA- the Italian Trade Agency and the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI)**. They bring to the 59th edition of the Bologna Children's Book Fair this year publishers, authors, illustrators and leading figures from the African publishing scene from Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Benin, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, all hosted in a dedicated exhibition area at BolognaFiere.

While the state of African publishing is as diverse in challenges and opportunities as the number of nations on the continent – and characterized by differences in culture, religion, language, socio-economic development, literacy levels and relationships with former colonial powers – there are also many difficulties common to publishers in other regions. These include: high illiteracy rates; poor reading habits; underdeveloped digital economies; a reliance on financial aid; a lack of bookshops; inadequate book services, and a publishing industry that, even where well developed, is often focused on the educational sector. Faced with this scenario, increasing the interaction with potential global partners is fundamental, and Bologna Children's Book Fair is now serving as both the stage and the promoter. Spotlight on Africa offers a rich programme of panel discussions, where experiences, visions and ideas are shared, showcasing to the international publishing community the current production and potential of one of the world's fastest growing publishing markets.

The scheduled events at the Fair include: the **Innovators of African publishing** panel, chaired by **Angela Wachuka**, co-founder of Book Bunk (Kenya), featuring **Will Clurman**, co-founder and CEO of eKitabu (Kenya) and **Bibi Bakare-Yusuf**, publisher and founder of Cassava Republic Press (Nigeria), which will analyse the ways in which, through new approaches and technologies, the beneficiaries of the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund are finding possible solutions to the complex and systemic difficulties of African publishing, including new programmes, policies and investments. Also, **In their own words: storytelling to protect vanishing African languages** will investigate the role of governments, publishers and authors in preserving and promoting vanishing indigenous languages – indispensable for safeguarding the cultural roots of populations – given the primary role played by children's and young adult publishing in coping with this loss. The meeting will be chaired by Nathalie Carré (Inalco - *Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales*,

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France) and features Sandra Tamele, publisher and founder of Editora Trinta Zero Nove (Mozambique), Mkuki Bgoya publisher, Mkuki na Nyota Publishers (Tanzania) and Maureen Masamba, president of the Malawi Book Publishers Association and publisher (Malawi).

A final mention goes to *Developing African reading culture beyond the classroom*, chaired by **Alison Tweed**, CEO of BookAid (UK), in dialogue with **Ama Dadson**, CEO of AkooBooks Audio (Ghana), **Chirikure Chirikure**, poet, author and songwriter (Zimbabwe), **Catherine Uwimana**, Book Development Expert (Rwanda) and with **Kumuriwor Alira Bushiratu**, co-founder of Learners Girls Foundation (Ghana). The event highlights the role of governments, booksellers, teachers, publishers and families in teaching and spreading the culture of reading to new generations who, despite numerous programmes, find themselves reading less and less and “watching” more and more: a theme that concerns institutional figures and professionals from all latitudes.

Alongside the discussions and debates is a selection of 100 books published recently by African publishers, the *Africa Books Showcase*, on display at the Fair presenting the excellence of African publishing to the international publishing community.

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