Ghana
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Development
Council

GHANA BOOK WORLD

NO. 12 (2024)

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Editor

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GHANA BOOK DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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EDITORIAL

We are pleased to bring you the twelfth issue of Ghana Book World (GBW). The electronic version of this issue has been uploaded to the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) website.

GBW is a journal of the book industry profession and trade. GBW also serves as a newsletter for GBDC, reporting on some programmes and activities embarked on by the Council.

This issue presents topics on copyright and remedies to curb infringements, keynote message at the launch of 21st Ghana International Book Fair (GIBF), which focuses on articifiicial intelligence in the book industry. This issue also features a report on a survey to assess the quality of books on the Ghanaian market, as well as highlights discussions on key programmes, projects and challenges of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) from 2019-2022. Again, the issue features the need to design product operation by leveraging reading psychology.

Contributors may submit manuscripts on issues that cover book development, writing, publishing, book design and illustration, printing, bookselling and distribution, literacy promotion, copyright, and library services.

Submissions should be typed, double-spaced, fully justified, and in Times New Roman, font size 12, on 8.5'' x 11'' as

a Word document. The normal span of submissions is as follows:

i. Feature article: 800-3,000 words
ii. Research article/report: 4,000-10,000 words
iii. Book review: 1,500-2,000 words

Contributors will receive complimentary copies of the issue in which their articles appear. Contributions should be sent as e-mail attachments to editorial@gbdc.gov.gh.

GBW allows advertising spaces for books and services pertaining to the book industry in Ghana.

Copyright and Remedies Against Infringement

by

Sam Kwabena Nyarko-Mensah

Introduction

Over the decades, knowledge has expanded in several facets and disciplines of life. Every institution's method of operation evolves. This transformation is mostly caused by the rapid increase in knowledge in many aspects of life. It is no wonder that the pursuance of knowledge-seeking has become a regular feature in the development of business professionals. Countries and industries have developed over the years as a result of the increase in knowledge. With developments and current trends, education has become common in all communities.

With this increase in knowledge, books have played a critical part in bringing knowledge to such a high pedestal. Books have greatly contributed to academic developments in all fields and subjects. The availability and accessibility of good books guarantee sound knowledge transmission. For books to be available and easily accessible, it largely depends on the publishing industry of the country. The robustness of the book

publishing industry in any country guarantees the delivery and provision of quality education.

Book publishing is a rigorous intellectual and physical activity that runs through four broad stages: editorial, designing, production, and marketing. The publishing business is expected to yield some economic gains to sustain the process. Royalties and income are sources of intrinsic motivation to the stakeholders. Publishing encompasses the conceptualisation of ideas, the manifestation of those ideas into a temporary or semi-permanent written work known as a manuscript, editing, designing, proofreading, printing, and marketing. Editing is the structuring of the document to improve its communication potential, whereas designing is the composition of the manuscript into a semi-permanent page and the conceptualisation of ideas into graphic forms. Proofreading also includes reading the layout pages to ensure that they are error-free, whereas printing requires determining the physical features, appearance, nature, and quality of the book in production. Finally, marketing refers to the distribution, promotion, and sale of printed materials.

As a result of this strenuous process in book publishing, the international community developed legal frameworks to have the creation of literary works protected from exploitation and illegal duplication, and to protect the economic rights of the creator of the intellectual property. The creator of the work reserves the right to duplicate or copy. Therefore, no portion

of the work may be reproduced in any form or by any means, either electronic or mechanical, including photocopies, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system without written permission from the owner.

Nkiko (2012) defined copyright as the exclusive right given by law for a specific term of years to the creator of a literary work, regarding the use, reproduction, and exploitation of the creator's intellectual property for moral and economic gains. The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) (2012) expresses copyright in a simpler term as the right granted to the author or creator of a literary and artistic work to be the sole copier, producer, and distributor of that work.

Amidst the regulation of copyright issues, one of the significant challenges crippling the book publishing industry in Ghana is copyright infringement. Copyright infringement is an illegal and illegitimate reproduction of another person's intellectual property without prior consent or authorisation from the owner. If copyright infringement is prevalent in the publishing industry, it will prevent the enjoyment of any possible economic gains by the creators. This detrimental practice could cripple the industry and derail the creative prowess of individuals, including authors, illustrators, designers, and publishers, who might have invested some resources.

Copyright has been an international issue of concern, and not confined within the borders of one country. It has been compelling to view it globally to facilitate trade and globalisation (Sinha, 2017; Wadehra, 2016). To contribute to the regulation and administration of the national intellectual property laws and regulations on a global front, Ghana joined the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in 1976. This move contributed significantly to ensuring that the rights of creators and owners of intellectual property are protected worldwide, and that inventors and authors are recognised and rewarded accordingly. To ensure that the country reserves its full equity in folklore laws and other aspects of copyright, the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) developed a lengthy document with strong recommendations which influenced the development of the Ghana Copyright Act, 2005 [Act 690].

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has influenced copyright management and administration. It has also facilitated the economic rights of creators of literary works globally. In building the tree of copyright, it is worth noting that copyright is a subset of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). World Trade Organisation (2013) opined that IPRs consist of statutorily recognised rights, which provide incentives for people for the creations of their minds to foster moral and commercial values.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (2005) enumerates literary works such as novels, poems, plays, reference works, newspapers, and computer programmes. It also mentions databases, films, musical compositions, and choreography, in addition to artistic works such as paintings, drawings, photographs, and sculpture. Also included in the list of literary works are architecture, advertisements, maps, and technical drawings as the kind of works covered by copyright. In Ghana, according to The Copyright Act, 2005 [Act 690], works eligible for copyright are similar to that of WIPO. Works eligible for copyright include literary works, artistic works, musical works, sound recordings, audio-visual works, choreographic works, derivative works, and computer software or programmes.

On the global level, Ghana is a member and signatory to some international groups that have helped facilitate copyright and prohibit all kinds of copyright infringement. On 11th July 1991, Ghana became a member of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, 1886. Ghana got access to The Universal Copyright Convention (UCC), adopted in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1952 on 22nd May 1962. On 18th August 2006, Ghana won its instrument of ratification of the WIPO Copyright Treaty, adopted at Geneva on December 20, 1996.

Remedies against copyright infringement

Mahmood & Ilyas (2005) opined that civil remedies include injunction, damages, delivery of infringing copies, and damages for conversion into other formats. Where there are innocent infringements, the remedies may not be applied, but the owner of the copyright has the right to seize the infringing copies. These scholars added that criminal infringement might attract imprisonment, a fine, and seizure of infringing copies. In line with administrative remedies, Mahmood & Ilyas (2005) expressed that the copyright office and other enforcement organisations must ban the import and export of all infringing copies in the country.

Copyright infringement may demand that the owner of the literary work may initiate civil proceedings in the High Court. The civil proceedings may include an injunction and prohibition of the continuation of the infringement. The owner of the literary work can further file for detention by the Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) regarding imported goods, or the recovery of damages for the infringement (Section 47 of The Copyright Act, 2005, Act 690).

Wadehra (2016) also stated that civil remedies include injunction, damages, or account of profit, delivery of infringing copies, and damages for conversion. Criminal remedies include imprisonment of the accused or imposition of fine or both, or seizure of infringing copies. Administrative

remedies consist of moving to the administrative copyright office to ban the reproduction and importation of infringing copies.

Section 43 of the Copyright Act 2005, Act 690 stipulates that:

> A person who infringes a right protected under the Act commits an offense and is liable on summary conviction to a payable amount of not more than one thousand pecuniary penalty units and not less than five hundred pecuniary penalty units or a period of imprisonment not exceeding three years or both; and in the case of a continuing offense to a further fine of not less than twenty-five penalty units and not more than one hundred penalty units for each day during which the offense continues.

The availability of remedies to the infringement of copyright presents an ambiance of sound practice and to deter people from engaging in infringing the rights of the copyright owners.

Significance of copyright

Copyright—when it is efficient and equitable—can help all nations to realise the potential of an intellectual creation as a catalyst for economic and social development in addition to the cultural well-being of citizens. Copyright helps strike a balance between the interests of the owners of the literary work and that of the public by creating an enabling environment that facilitates creativity and innovation for the benefit of all.

WIPO (2016) highlighted that copyright protection is an essential component in fostering human creativity and innovation. Giving authors and creators incentives in the form of recognition and fair economic reward increases their activity and output, and can also enhance the results. Sinha (2017) stated that copyright ensures certain minimum safeguards of the rights of authors over their creations.

These safeguards are relevant in protecting and rewarding creativity. Copyright does not impede the harvest of knowledge. Copyright is intended to inspire the creativity of authors to the benefit of the public.

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Keynote Address at the Launch of the 21st Ghana International Book Fair 2024

by

Emily Fiagbedzi

Introduction

Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed stakeholders of the Ghana International Book Fair, as a lover of books and culture, it is with great honor and enthusiasm that I stand before you today to celebrate the public launch of the 21st Ghana International Book Fair.

As we gather here under the theme "Books and Culture in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI)", we are exploring the convergence of our two industries. Your industry and its enduring impact on our lives and culture, and my industry and its transformative power of technology. Every day the tech entrepreneurs I work with demonstrate and share with me the great power technology has; to solve problems and create meaningful impact. I believe this great power is and can continue to support your industry for good also.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In 2023, artificial intelligence transitioned from being a cutting-edge and somewhat underground tech interest to a

public interest, a buzzword, and digital tools integrating into everyday life.

What really is Artificial Intelligence? In simple terms, it is essentially software and machines (technology) that performs tasks that were once only done by humans, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision making.

Although AI became a buzzword in the past year with the introduction of chatbots like ChatGPT, the reality is, artificial intelligence solutions have been around for years. But the technology has become smarter and more easily integrated into our already tech-powered lives.

Think virtual assistants like Apple's Siri on the iPhone or Google Assistant on android phones. How about recommendation systems like what to watch next on Netflix or YouTube. And, we have all seen those personalized advertisements, a product we looked up somewhere online, now being shown to us on the side bar of several websites. Or those customer support chats, that we sometimes love because they help solve our problem quickly, or we are quite frustrated with because the responses do not match our questions.

These are AI-driven tools, now part of our everyday life. Tools, we do not really consider cutting-edge anymore. Just as many innovations, artificial intelligence tools are evolving, catching interest, being explored, and incorporated across industries.

I am sure you have heard the dystopian visions and stories of a world coming to an end by a machine or robots, and the fears that AI will lead to joblessness, and that everything we do is based on some pre-programmed algorithm. Sure, it sounds scary or intriguing depending on your interests. A sci-fi book comes to life. It captures our emotions—just like any good story.

I do not know about you; I do not fully believe this. I do not think this is where we are headed. Your very industry, the book industry, proves it.

Ghana book industry

Ghana's book industry is a vibrant and unique ecosystem deeply rooted in its rich oral tradition and cultural heritage. Storytelling has long been ingrained in Ghanaian culture, inspiring a diverse array of literary works that draw upon oral storytelling techniques, folklore, and indigenous knowledge. The country's literary scene is thriving, with a growing community of writers, poets, and scholars, producing works that reflect Ghana's complex history, culture, and socio-political landscape.

Ghanaian authors are gaining international recognition for their contributions, enriching the global literary landscape with their unique voices and perspectives. Books play a crucial role in preserving and celebrating Ghanaian culture, serving as vehicles for exploring themes such as identity, tradition, and social change.

Through their works, Ghanaian authors contribute to the preservation and promotion of Ghanaian cultural heritage, both domestically and internationally. The book and culture industry is driven by rich heritage, by a love for creativity, a human yearning for art and beauty, and the desire to tell, share, and hear meaningful stories. It is nuanced and unique, and requires a human touch --- human emotion --- connection. That is, all things that cannot easily be replaced by a machine.

You may remember not long ago when the introduction of the e-book was touted as an end to the book industry. It disrupted, but also gave access to books and literature from around the world, made reading more affordable, made distribution easier, and helped authors gain global recognition.

AI will undoubtedly bring, and has brought some disruption to the industry. Yet, not all disruption is bad. If we understand the impact of AI on the industry, we can leverage its positive contributions.

Ultimately, the true power of AI is not in its ability to replace humans but in its capacity to augment human capabilities, enabling us to solve complex problems, unlock new insights, and achieve greater levels of efficiency and productivity when used wisely and responsibly.

AI tools for book industry

Why does AI matter to writers, publishers, editors, illustrators, readers, and stakeholders?

AI presents new opportunities to enhance creativity, efficiency, and audience engagement in this digital world.

Writers

Writers should not fear that AI will overtake their career. While AI has advanced in generating text and assisting with certain writing tasks, it still lacks the creativity, emotion, and unique perspective that human writers bring to their work.

AI can be a valuable tool for writers, helping with tasks like generating ideas, improving grammar, or even providing inspiration. However, the human touch, with its depth of understanding, empathy, and storytelling ability, is irreplaceable. Instead of fearing AI, writers can embrace it as a helpful tool and focus on honing their craft and leveraging their unique strengths to create meaningful content that resonates with readers.

Editors

AI-powered editing tools help identify and correct grammar, punctuation, and style errors, streamlining the editing process. The tools can also analyze content metrics to optimize search engines and audience engagement.

AI-based plagiarism detection tools ensure content originality, while workflow management tools automate tasks to improve efficiency and collaboration among editorial teams, freeing editors to focus on higher-level tasks.

Illustrators

AI tools can give you illustration inspiration and starting points for new drawings, images, and art.

Publishers

AI analytics tools analyze audience data, social media trends, and market research to help publishers understand their audience better. This information guides decisions about what content to create and how to reach a targeted audience effectively.

AI-driven content distribution platforms can be used to distribute content strategically, ensuring it reaches the right people at the right time. By using AI effectively, publishers can improve their content quality, engage their audience more effectively, and grow their business in the digital world.

Readers

AI algorithms can analyze how readers like to read and suggest things they might enjoy, introducing them to new content, authors, and even genres. These tools personalize recommendations to fit each reader's interests.

Also, AI translation tools can quickly and accurately change text from one language to another, so readers can access

content in languages they do not know well. This helps people read a wider variety of content from all over the world – sharing rich heritage and culture that would have been inaccessible previously.

AI technologies such as natural language processing and speech recognition make it easier for readers with disabilities to access written content. For example, text-to-speech tools help people who cannot see well, and voice-controlled interfaces help those who cannot move easily.

Conclusion

As we explore the opportunities posed by AI in the book industry, it's important to acknowledge concerns that are often raised about job disruptions and algorithmic bias. These are real challenges that should and can be addressed now to ensure AI tools are more beneficial than detrimental to the industry. Let us not forget that progress is not measured by our resistance to change, but by our ability to adapt and thrive.

As we step into the future, let us embrace optimism and possibility. Let us use AI to amplify the diverse voices and perspectives that define Ghana's cultural heritage. Also, let us reaffirm our commitment to timeless values like creativity, resilience, and the enduring power of the written word.

In the words of Ghanaian author, Ama Ata Aidoo, "The storyteller is the only person who can afford to be generous to everyone." Let us harness AI's transformative potential

with a spirit of generosity, ensuring that Ghana's stories continue to resonate worldwide, enriching the lives of readers everywhere.

Report on a Survey to Assess Books on the Ghanaian Market

by

Kofi Asante Twumasi
and
Emmanuel Appiah Owusu

Introduction

In 2021 the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) embarked on a nationwide survey to assess books on the Ghanaian market. The objective of the survey was to ascertain the extent to which books on the Ghanaian market, or accessible to the public, conform to minimum acceptable standards. The report of the survey was published on the GBDC website.

After that survey in 2021, a series of training workshops were organised for book industry practitioners to expose them to the Ghana Book Standards and other essentials for quality production. To assess the progress of adoption or scope of adherence to the book standards, another survey was undertaken in 2023. Unlike the 2021 survey which included books at libraries, bookshops, roadside and from hawkers, the current survey (2023) focused on only bookshops.

Furthermore, due to staffing and logistical constraints, this survey was restricted to only the Greater Accra Region.

This survey was to assess the impact that the training workshops (at least 4 workshops over the last two years) have had on the responsiveness of practitioners to the adherence to the *Ghana Book Standards*.

Objective

The main objective of the survey was to examine the level of adherence of the books that are on the Ghanaian market to the *Ghana Book Standards,* since the previous survey in 2021.

Methodology

Data Collection and Sampling

The data was collected in the Greater Accra Region since the majority of publishers or publishing houses in Ghana are in the Region, and books published in the Region are distributed to other regions. The focus on the Greater Accra Region was also due to budgetary constraint. Using a purposive sampling technique, twelve (12) popular bookshops with public visibility in Accra, or which have online presence were used for this survey. At the end of the survey, a total of 2,039 books were randomly selected and assessed.

Data collection instrument

A questionnaire was developed for this survey. The criteria for assessing the quality of the books were generated from the *Ghana Book Standards*, published by the Ghana Book

Development Council (GBDC) in 2018. The questionnaire collected data on the publishing information and general characteristics of each book. The questionnaire had both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions were, however, few.

Some questions had rating scales, hence the responses were ranked, ordered or rated. In this case, the data recorded had the ordinal level of measurement or measurement scale. For instance, in assessing a statement like "Grammatical accuracy of the book", the items on the scale (i.e. Very Good, Good, Neutral, Poor and Very Poor) were ranked or ordered.

Questions that required data with ratio level of measurement or measurement scale were few in the questionnaire. Ratio level of measurement or measurement scale is the highest level; as such it is amenable to computations and advanced analysis. For instance, the responses for the "Year of Publication of the book" have a ratio level of measurement or measurement scale.

A training workshop, which spanned three days (June 27 - 30, 2023), was organised for assessors who embarked on the survey. The survey was carried out from July 11 to August 3, 2023.

Data entry and analysis

After the data collection phase, the completed questionnaires were processed using the Statistical Product and Service

Solution (SPSS) software. The data processing was carried out by staff of GBDC.

Data validation, data checks and data cleaning were carried out after the data entry. Data from a total of 2039 completed questionnaire were used for the analysis.

The SPSS was used for the analysis of the data, which also involved the generation of frequency tables (percentages), general descriptive information and charts.

Findings and Discussion

This section discussed the responses and finding in two main parts: general information and technical information.

General Information

This part of the questionnaire required information about items such as target audience of book, genre of the book, place of publication and the year of publication of the book. These items were discussed as follows.

Target audience of the books

A book is usually intended for a specific target user/reader. Hence, the assessors were required to indicate the suitable target/readers of the books they assessed. The target users/ readers were categorized into children, adolescents, and adult. The category "children" considered readers from preschool to primary six, while readers in the age range of 13 years to 19 years were considered as "adolescent", usually those in junior

high school and senior high school. The "adult" category referred to readers from age 20 years and above, such as tertiary student and professionals.

As shown in Figure 1, out of the 2039 books assessed, 791 (38.8%) were for children, whereas 638 (31.3%) targeted the adolescents and 610 (29.9%) targeted adults. The results showed that books which targeted children were more than books for adolescents or adults.

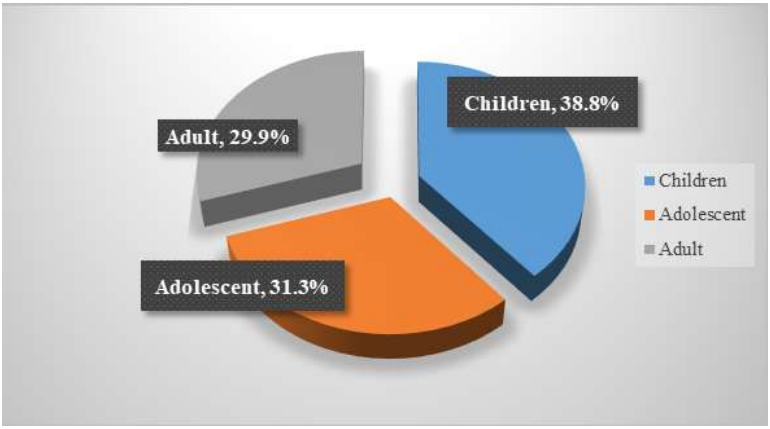

Figure 1: Target user of the books assessed.

Genre of the book

The assessors were required to indicate if the book they assessed is a textbook, storybook, a professional/trade book, or any other genre. For the purpose of the study, a textbook was referred to as a standard work of study for a particular subject at the pre-tertiary level, i.e., from primary to senior high school; and as an instructional material. A storybook was

referred to as a form of prose or a composition of fictions for the reading pleasure of the user. Trade/professional books were considered to be books written for specific trade or profession. The category "others" referred to books that do not fall under textbooks, storybooks, or trade books. The percentage of books assessed for each genre has been shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The genre of the books assessed

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Textbook	472	23.1
	Storybook	1143	56.1
	Trade/Professional	271	13.3
	Others	153	7.5
	Total	2039	100.0

Textbooks used to be dominant on the Ghanaian market. However, from the findings, the dominance of textbooks appear to have been overtaken by storybooks, which comprised more than half of the books sampled, i.e. 56.1%. However, Further studies is needed to confirm this.

Place of publication

The assessors were to indicate the place of publication of the books as required by the questionnaire. This is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Place of publication of books on the market

S/N	**Country**	**No. of Books assessed**	**Percentage (%)**
Africa			
1	Ghana	669	32.81%
2	Nigeria	19	0.93%
3	Kenya	1	0.05%
4	South Africa	6	0.29%
5	Uganda	1	0.05%
Europe			
6	United Kingdom	589	28.89%
7	Germany	14	0.69%
8	Scotland	2	0.10%
9	Italy	42	2.06%
10	Netherland	1	0.05%
11	Portugal	1	0.05%
12	Norway	1	0.05%
North America			
13	USA	383	18.78%
14	Canada	8	0.39%
Asia			
15	China	36	1.77%
16	India	35	1.72%
17	Israel	1	0.05%
18	Korea	2	0.10%
19	Malaysia	5	0.25%
20	Singapore	1	0.05%

Oceania			
21	Australia	3	0.15%
22	New Zealand	22	1.08%
23	Country (Unspecified)	197	9.66%
Total		2039	100%

The study showed that about 32.8% of the books assessed were published in Ghana. The study also revealed that the books sampled and assessed were published in about twenty-two (22) countries. Again, about 197 books (9.7%) did not have information on the place of publication, however, the Ghana Book Standards indicates that the copyright page of a book should include the country in which the publishing house is located.

The results revealed that the sampled books which were published in Ghana were less than the books published in other parts of the world. These findings seemed to suggest that importation of books is regaining some dominance on the Ghanaian book market. However, further research will be needed to confirm this.

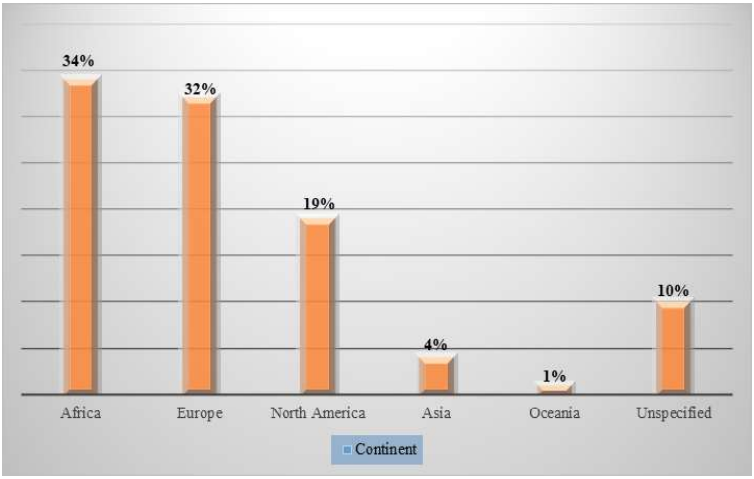

Figure 2: The distribution of the books assessed by the place of publication (Geographical continent)

When categorised into continents, as presented in Figure 2, the majority of the books assessed were published in Africa (34.0%). The African continent was followed by Europe, North America, Asia and Oceania, in that order. There was no record for the South America continent.

Although books published in Africa were dominant in this survey (34.0%), the gap between Africa and Europe was not huge.

Year of publication of books

To determine the correlation between the books assessed and the years since the *Ghana Book Standards* was introduced, the assessors were required to indicate the year of publication

of the books. The year of publications of the assessed books is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of the year the books were published

	Year of publication	Number of books in the sample	Percentage (%)
Valid	Before 2015	1075	52.7
	2015-2017	237	11.6
	2018-2020	358	17.6
	2021-to date	211	10.3
	Unspecified	158	7.7
	Total	2039	100.0

From Table 3, the majority of the books (1075), representing 52.7% were published before the year 2015. A total of 569 books were published from the year the *Ghana Book Standards* was introduced, i.e., 2018 to date, of which 211 books were published from 2021. A total of 158 books representing 7.7% did not have their years of publication. However, the book standards requires that the copyright page of a book should have the year of publication.

Technical information

This section presented and discussed the findings on the technical aspects or features of the books assessed; such as type of book cover, the items required on a book cover, items required at the preliminary pages, among others.

The type of book cover

There are two main types of covers in book production: namely soft cover and hard cover. As presented in Table 4, the majority of the books which were assessed had soft covers (86.8%), while the books with hard covers were relatively few.

Table 4: Type of book cover

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Hard cover	269	13.2
	Soft cover	1770	86.8
	Total	2039	100

Hard cover books are more durable but increases the cost of production. Hence, books with hard covers are relatively expensive than books with soft covers. Majority of Ghanaian publishers often go in for soft covers since the cost of production is relatively low. Therefore, there are more soft cover books on the market compared to books with hard covers.

The book cover

A book cover must have certain elements, as stipulated in the *Ghana Book Standards*. The book standards requires that the front cover of a book should have elements such as the title (main and sub-title) of the book and the name of the author (or editor). Also, the back cover should have a blurb, extracts or commendation (optional), ISBN and barcode/scan code and publisher's logo.

Furthermore, the spine of a book, particularly a book with a hardcover, or a soft cover with perfect binding, must also have the main title of the book, the author's name, and publisher's name or logo. In view of this, assessors examined these elements on the front cover, back cover, and spine (if applicable).

Main title of the book

The assessors were required to indicate if the front covers of the books had main titles. The result of the study showed that all the assessed books had main titles.

Name of author/editor

The assessors indicated if the front cover of the book had the name of the author/editor. As presented in Table 5, 96.5% of the books had the name of the author/editor on the front cover.

Table 5: Number of books with names of authors/editors

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Yes	1969	96.6
	No	70	3.4
	Total	2039	100

Blurb

A blurb is the information on the back of a book, written to attract a buyer or a reader. The *Ghana Book Standards* recommends that a back cover of a book should consist of a

blurb, hence, the assessors determined if the back covers of the books had blurbs. The results indicated that, 1960 books, representing 96.1% had blurbs, while 3.6% of the books did not have.

ISBN

The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) comprises numbers separated by a space or a hyphen. Each version of a book must have its unique ISBN. The back cover of a book should have the ISBN, (in addition to the ISBN on the copyright page), as prescribed by the *Ghana Book Standards*. Therefore, the assessors were to verify if the back covers had ISBNs. The result, as presented in Table 6, showed that 96.6% of the books had an ISBN at the back cover.

Table 6: Books with ISBN at the back cover

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Yes	1969	96.6
	No	70	3.4
	Total	2039	100

Barcode/scan code

The assessors also indicated if barcodes/scan codes were at the back cover of the books since the *Ghana Book Standards* prescribes that the back cover of a book should include a barcode/scan code. The result showed that 94.7% of the books assessed had barcodes/scan codes. This result has been presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Number of books with barcodes/scan codes

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Yes	1930	94.7
	No	109	5.3
	Total	2039	100

Publisher name/logo

The assessors indicated if the back cover of the books had the names or logos of publishers since it is a requirement by the *Ghana Book Standards*. The result revealed that 1887 books, representing 92.5%, had the publishers' names or logos at the back cover, as presented in Figure 3.

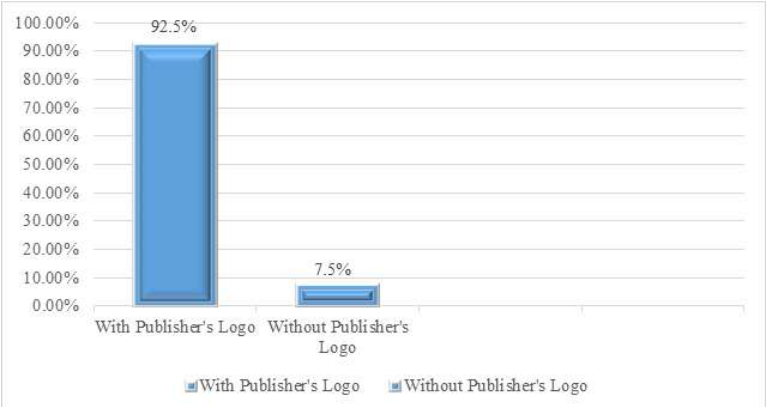

Figure 3: Books with publisher's name/logo at the back cover

Style of binding of the books

The assessors indicated the type of binding used for the books. The results revealed that 1414 were perfect bound books

while 221 books were case bound, as shown in Table 8. Other styles of binding identified were spiral and wire binding.

Table 8: Style of binding of the books

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	Saddle Stitch	393	19.3
	Perfect Bound	1414	69.3
	Case Bound	221	10.8
	Other (specify)	11	.5
	Total	2039	100

The spine of the book

The spine is the edge of a book where all the pages are bound together. Limp/soft and case bound books have a spine. The recommended elements, according to the Ghana Book Standards, which must appear on the spine are the main title, name of author and publisher's name or logo. Table 9 presents the number of books that had spines.

Out of the 2039 books assessed, 1635 books representing 80.2% had a spine. Of that, as shown in Table 9, a majority, that is 1231 books representing 75.3%, had all the recommended elements.

Table 9: Books with spine that have all spine elements

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	1231	75.3
No	404	24.7
Total	1635	100

Half title page

The assessors were required to indicate if a book had a half title page, although it is not mandatory. However, should a book have a half title page, the *Ghana Book Standards* requires the page should have a specific element, which is, only the main title of the book. The results showed that 665 books of the 2039 books had half title pages. Out of this, 91.9% of the books had the required element (only the title of the book).

Full title page

A full title page should have elements such as the main title, sub-title (if any), author or translator, editor, illustrator and publisher's name or logo.

Assessors were required to indicate whether a book has a full title page, and if so whether the page has all the required elements. As presented in Figure 4, the results showed that 87.9% of the 2039 books had a full title page.

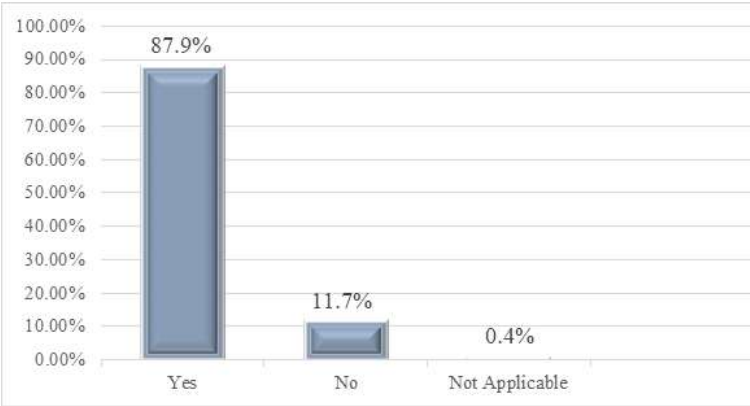

Figure 4: Books with full title page

Of the 1793 (87.9%) books that had a full title page, the majority (83.1%) met all the requirements of a full title page.

Copyright page

A copyright page should have the following element: the copyright symbol, year of first publication, copyright owner, the term "All Rights Reserved", year of subsequent editions, printing history, publisher's details, name of the publishing house and supporting agencies, postal address, ISBN/ISSN and country of publication.

As shown in Table 10, the results revealed that 1947 books, representing 95.5%, had a copyright page.

Table 10: Number of books with copyright page

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	1947	95.5
No	90	4.4
Not Applicable	2	0.1
Total	2039	100

A total of 227 books (11.7%) out of the 1947 books with the copyright page did not meet the recommended requirement of a copyright page.

The assessment of quality concept

Three (3) main criteria were used to assess the quality of each book. Two of the criteria are objective in nature, while the other one is subjective, which requires value judgment. In order to meet quality and standard, a book must pass all the three criteria used for the assessment. This section discussed the three criteria used for assessing the quality of books the satisfy the book standards.

Assessment criteria 1

This was one of the objective criteria among the set of criteria used for assessing a book. With this criterion, an attempt was made to put together the quality statements which were assessed objectively. There are certain rudimentary or basic features which every book must have. For example, every book must have a title, name of the author or editor, a blurb, and identification codes like ISBN, barcode or scan code.

Again, the name of the publisher (logo) must be provided on every book, and every book must have a copyright page.

This criterion, therefore, sought to determine if these required elements or features existed in the book or not. The assessors were required to evaluate each book based on the aforementioned characteristics in this criterion.

Assessment criteria 2

The second criterion was also objective. The assessors determined the durability, suitability, and appropriateness of various features of the book by providing 'Yes' or "No" answers; which indicated suitability and appropriateness or otherwise. Specifically, this criterion focused on some technical features of the book, such as durability and strength of binding, suitability of paper for cover and book block, as well as appropriateness of font style and size for target user.

Assessment criteria 3

The third criterion, which was subjective, required the assessors to evaluate each book, based on some statements pertaining to various aspects of quality, on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good).

The assessors evaluated the appropriateness, suitability, effectiveness or efficiency of various characteristics, features and aspects of the books, such as formatting, leading, margins, pagination, placement of front matters, legibility and readability of text, consistency in use of British or American

English, balance of text and illustrations, crowdedness of elements on a page, labelling and captioning, and among others. The rating for each statement was used as a basis to determine if the required standard was met or not. This subjective criterion was based on value judgments.

Results of the assessment

As noted earlier, in order to meet the quality standard, a book ought pass all the three (3) criteria set for the book assessment. The number of assessed books which passed none, only one, only two or all the three criteria for book assessment have been presented in Table 11.

Table 11: Number of books that passed any of the sub-criteria

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid	None	339	16.6
	Only 1	837	41.0
	Only 2	684	33.5
	All 3	179	8.8
Total		2039	100

From the above, it is evident that 1,700 books, representing 83.3% of the books assessed met at least one (1) criterion, while 42.1% of the total books assessed met at least two criteria. This implies that a majority of books on the market adhere to some level or aspect of the prescribed standards in book production.

Books that satisfied the assessment criteria according to year of publication

To focus on the number of books that satisfied the quality assessment criteria for books published in 2021 to date, the results of the books that satisfied the assessment criteria were expanded to the various categories of the years of publications. Table 12 presents the number of books that did not satisfy any of the criteria, passed only one criterion, passed only two criteria, or all the three criteria used to assess the quality of books according to the years the books were published.

Table 12: Crosstabulation of Year of Publication (group) and books that satisfied the assessment criteria

			Number of Criteria Passed				
			Passes None	I Pass Only	2 Passes Only	All 3 Passes	Total
Year	Before 2015	Number of books	152	441	394	88	1075
		% within Year of Publication (group)	14.1%	41.0%	36.7%	8.2%	100%
	2015-2017	Number of books	42	102	75	18	237
		% within Year of Publication (group)	17.7%	43.0%	31.6%	7.6%	100%
	2018-2020	Number of books	59	147	113	39	358
		% within Year of Publication (group)	16.5%	41.1%	31.6%	10.9%	100%
	2021-2023	Number of books	28	82	71	30	211
		% within Year of Publication (group)	13.3%	38.9%	33.6%	14.2%	100%
	Unspecified	Number of books	58	65	31	4	158
		% within Year of Publication (group)	36.7%	41.1%	19.6%	2.5%	100%
	Total	Number of books	339	837	684	179	2039
		% within Year of Publication	16.6%	41.0%	33.5%	8.8%	100%

From the Table, indicated that of the total 1075 books that were published before 2015, 152 books did not satisfy any of the three assessment criteria. However, 88 books that were published before 2015 satisfied all the criteria. For books that were published from 2018 to 2021, 39 books satisfied all the criteria set for the assessment of the quality of the books.

Focusing on the books that were published in 2021 to date, i.e., 211 books, a total of 30 books met all three assessment criteria, which represented 16.8% of the total books (179) that satisfied the three assessment criteria.

Conclusion

This report provided findings on a survey to assess books on the Ghanaian market. The scope of this survey was bookshops in the Greater Accra Region. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain if the books met internationally accepted standards, as well as compared if there has been improvement in the standards of books after the 2021 book survey. A total of 2039 books, comprising textbooks, storybooks, trade or professional books, religious books, among others, were assessed.

The books were assessed under three (3) main criteria. One of the criteria looked at basic features or characteristics that every book must have, such as title of the book, name of author/ editor, blurb, ISBN, publisher name/logo and barcode/scan code. The other two criteria looked at durability, suitability, clarity, effectiveness or efficiency of various characteristics, and appropriateness of various features of the book.

Of the 2039 books assessed, it was revealed that 179 books, representing 8.8%, met all the three (3) criteria for the book assessment. However, 684 books representing 33.5% passed only two (2) out of the three (3) book assessment criteria. Also, the majority of the books (83.3%) met at least one of the criteria used for the assessment. The results also indicated that only 30 books that were published in 2021 to date satisfied the three quality assessment criteria.

In view of the above observation, it is very important to intensify the awareness creation of the book standards and enforce the use of the standards in the production of books in Ghana.

For the detailed survey report, kindly visit:
https://www.gbdc.gov.gh/book-assessment-report-2023

What Dreams, What Projects, What Challenges, for a Writers' Association?

by

Francis Gbormittah[1]

Abstract

The value of writers to the development of a nation cannot be overstated. The writers of both pre- and post-independence viewed themselves as agents of social change. They used their writing abilities to effectively address the public and those in positions of authority. Even though that level of activism is not as much as there once was in Ghana, writers continue to be important contributors to the advancement of society and country. This paper interrogates the pursuits of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) from 2019 to 2022 and, if necessary, from 2011 to 2019, by means of key programmes and projects, and the challenges. The paper is significant in respect of a Ghanaian adage which states that "One who has forgotten the past will not grasp the present and cannot plan for the future." Likewise, Mosiah Marcus Garvey counsels that "If we as a people realised the greatness from which we came we would be less likely to disrespect ourselves." This adage and statement serve as the inspiration for the conceptual framework of this paper. Data has been collected from administrative texts (memos, correspondence, event programmes and brochures, minutes of meetings, the Constitution of GAW) and media texts (press releases, newspapers, online sources, audio-visuals). The work has, essentially, been presented using a report presentation structure, with very little issue-analysis. The findings show that GAW has progressed over the period because all of its members have collaborated and pulled in the

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same direction. Additionally, sound judgment has been demonstrated in a variety of significant decisions during the period under consideration.

Keywords: Writers, Association, Dreams, Projects, Challenges.

Introduction

Without a doubt, writers' associations would have dreams and pursue these dreams. They, too, will face obstacles in carrying out their dreams. The Ghana Association of Writers (GAW), the main writers' body in Ghana, is not devoid of dreams of its own, nor the challenges that accompany realising them. The Association is committed to bringing out the best in writers and provide a forum for the study of Ghana's literary legacy and thought exchange, and encouraging writers to produce greater works in support of Ghana's and Africa's continued development. The writer has, in fact, spoken in many different voices: as a critic of repressive governments, of violence and crime, as a source of knowledge, entertainment, and wisdom, as a preserver of oral histories, as a creator and a propagator of information, and as a bridge between different societies. For many years, several writers, like the griot, were considered the social memory of oral knowledge. In particular, throughout the 1960s and 1980s, they were seen as having reclaimed oral legacies that had been partially destroyed by colonialism and neo-colonialism in their attempt to create a specific literary language for Africa. Nnamdi Azikiwe was motivated by the liberated and self-sustaining roles that writers play in the lives

of the people to claim that "there is no better means to arouse African peoples than that of the power of the pen and of the tongue" (1966, p. 34).

At the 4th GAW Literary Awards held on November 16, 2019, Kwame Pianim, the Guest of Honour, reminds Ghanaian writers of their role as "the conscience of society," adding that "Through your writings you lift us ordinary people to peek into extraordinary lives and to visit amazing worlds, if even only for brief interludes in our otherwise boring lives!" (p. 3). Undoubtedly, books give people the power to change their lives. In the pages of a book, there is an awakening to be found, which can make life beautiful and meaningful for every reader. The role of writers and writers' associations such as GAW is crucial to society's advancement. Therefore, it is important to occasionally scrutinise the role of writers, especially, the associations through the activities they are engaged in and the challenges they encounter.

Objective

The goal of this paper is to discover and examine what writers' associations may consider as their dreams, projects, programmes and challenges, using the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) as a working example. Therefore, I ask the questions; what dreams, what challenges, what projects for a writers' association? What is GAW's mandate as contained in its constitution, regarding dreams, projects and programmes? These questions formed the theme for the 9th National

Congress of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) held at PAWA House, Roman Ridge in Accra, on July 30, 2022. The keynote speaker was Ambassador Kabral Blay-Amihere.[2]

Given that some people only consider GAW as an event (any event) organising entity, the subject was important in 2022, is relevant now, and will likely continue to be relevant in the years to come. These individuals focus less on GAW's primary goals to enhance the fortunes of the association and its members. However, as a writers' association in Africa, GAW's roles go beyond writing "for the sake of it". The African writer has a function to use literature as a testimony of Africa's creativity that has a manipulating influence on national conscience and development for the political and socio-economic liberation of Africa, for that matter Ghana. The "Preamble" of GAW's Constitution underscores this point: "We, the Writers of Ghana, with due regard to our role in society and our responsibility to our people, […]" (p.1).[3] This implies that GAW should have a determining responsibility to influence policy, engage in advocacy, pursue programmes and projects that reflect its roles, and be able to measure the impact of its operations on targeted groups and Ghanaians as a whole.

[2] Ambassador Kabral Blay-Amihere is a journalist, writer, and diplomat. He was the Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC) and Ghana's High Commissioner to Sierra Leone from 2001 to 2005. He also served as Ghana's Ambassador to Côte d'Ivoire from 2006 to 2009. Most of all, he is a member of GAW.

[3] The Constitution of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW), May 26, 2012.

Scope of the study

The paper discusses key programmes and projects of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) from 2019 to 2022. It has considered 2011 to 2019, where necessary. These periods have been selected because they witnessed consolidation of structures and re-organisation of the association, respectively. It is also because I played significant roles in the operations of the association, starting as a treasurer, co-opted member of NEC, vice president and president, therefore firmly knowledgeable about the happenings, and in deed, took active part in them.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study is hinged on a Ghanaian maxim that the "One who has forgotten the past will not grasp the present and cannot plan for the future." Similarly, it is based on Mosiah Marcus Garvey's advice that "If we as a people realised the greatness from which we came we would be less likely to disrespect ourselves." In essence, looking back and ahead at the same time. This traditional knowledge connotes that a person may not progress if he/she is not deeply rooted in traditions, and at the same time ready to accept change. In the context of this paper, GAW may face challenges if it does not learn from its past. Shapiro and Humphreys' (2012) conclusion on examination of historical communication systems is applicable in this case to the extent that it dilates on time-honoured values. Both scholars assert that knowing about the past "can help identify

nuances, tensions, and motivations in contemporary […] practices" (p. 1152). This paper seeks to augment literature on this traditional knowledge and deepen the understanding of the subject of change and continuity, especially in managing writers' associations.

Method

Data was collected from administrative texts (memos, letters, event programmes and brochures, minutes of meetings, the Constitution of GAW) and media texts (press releases, newspapers, online sources, audio-visuals). Essentially, the paper has been presented, using report presentation model with few analyses of the issues where needed. The primary goal of a report is to present, succinctly and clearly, facts about a certain subject, circumstance, or incident (Schneider et al, 2018). The major sub-headings are: The GAW Genesis Story; Presentation and Analysis of Dreams, Projects, Programmes and the Challenges; What Dreams? What Projects and Programmes? Bolstering GAW's Existing Flagship Programmes; New Initiatives Executed; What Challenges, Solutions and Opportunities? and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Responses of NEC.

The GAW genesis story

In the run-up to the 2nd GAW Literary Awards in 2017, which coincided with Ghana's 60th anniversary of independence, I had the honuor of being assigned by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of that time to collaborate with a few

trailblazers to write the history of GAW. As a result, we conducted research by speaking with people (former presidents and their families, foundation members, friends, etc.) and looking through records (files, letters, reports, brochures, etc.), some of which were disorganised. This is understandable, given the association's challenging years in the 1980s and 1990s. However, we progressed and understood these texts. It is important to note that Anumnyam[4] and Ebo Assan Donkoh[5] made significant contributions to the version of GAW's story that I am sharing with you here. In this historical account, I also discuss and analyse a few of the main issues that each president and their NECs had to deal with. This will give the reader a firm grasp of the GAW genesis tale, so they can evaluate it as it stands now and envision the future.

The writers' front movement got its start when the *Young Men's Literary Club* was established in the Gold Coast on March 29, 1920. The Club's name was changed to *Young People's Literary Club* to better represent the gender diversity of its membership. On May 29, 1937, at the Club's 17th anniversary celebration, Miss Comfort Aryee was selected to serve as its first female president. In 1957, the *Young People's Literary Club* was replaced by the *Society of Writers*. Michael Dei-Anang, J.H. Kwabena Nketia, Efua Sutherland, Crakye Denteh, Kwesi Brew, Geombeeyi Adali-Mortty, Cameron Duodu, and John Okai (later known as Professor Atukwei

[4] Anumnyam is one of the young writers who worked closely with Prof. Atukwei Okai at the time.

[5] Ebo Assan Donkoh is the Administrator of GAW. He has worked with the association from the mid-1990s to date. In the 1990s, he worked as a volunteer to manage the Secretariat.

Okai), the youngest of these literary giants, were among the well-known members of the Society at the time. *Okyeame* was a literary periodical that was run by the Society. Later on, the *Society of Writers* changed its name to the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW), and Professor Atukwei Okai became its first general secretary in 1960.[6]

Following the First Republic's collapse and the ensuing political turmoil in Ghana, GAW ceased operations in 1967. *The Pen and Paper Circle* was established later in the late 1960s. *The Pen and Paper Circle* was connected to the Arts Council of Ghana. Since the Arts Council of Ghana is a publicly funded organisation, it is assumed that the *Pen and Paper Circle* teamed up with the council to secure funding. *The Pen and Paper Circle* was reorganised in 1970 and was formerly known as the Ghana Association of Writers. Kojo Gyinaye Kyei (later known as Nana Ankoana Apomah Kyekyeku III), served as President of the newly resurrected GAW, along with Professor Okai as Vice-President, Larweh Therson-Cofie as Secretary, Scipio Akpablah as Assistant Secretary, Selby Ashong-Katai as Organising Secretary, and Rex Quartey as Treasurer. In 1971, Professor Okai was chosen to serve as the Association's president. This marked the beginning of the Association's resuscitation after a protracted hiatus. However, Ghana had difficulties in its political, economic, and social spheres during the late 1970s and early 1980s. There was internal unrest inside the Association as well. The

[6] An informal conversation with Anumnyam, May 2017, and personal interview with Ebo Assan Donkoh, Aug. 2017.

National Association of Writers (NAW) was founded in 1973 as GAW's rival group. NAW operated from the Centre for National Culture (CNC) and supposedly received government subsidies. Meanwhile, GAW continued its operations, occasionally resorting to non-traditional means of ensuring its continued existence. It is believed that all of the GAW files had no place to be kept than in Atukwei Okai's Volkswagen boot.[7]

From the above accounts, it is clear that "[…] the fortunes of the Association have ebbed and flowed with the fortunes of the nation" (GAW Brochure, 2018).[8] Despite the national and internal challenges of GAW, the Association planned and executed several noteworthy literary events. The Association's perseverance is demonstrated by the approximately forty literary readings it hosted between 1972 and 1976.[9] The 1987 Literary Awards was one of the major occasions.

> The Awards was created and was first held in August 1987 at the Banquet Hall, The State House, under the leadership of Professor Atukwei Okai. In 1987, thirteen writers were awarded cash prizes and citations. The following writers were the first five winners: E. Lamte Lawson (then at 91 years) won *The Kwame Nkrumah Award for the Creator in the Clearing*, the highest of the

[7] An informal conversation with Anumnyam, May 2017.
[8] Contributions were from Gheysika Agambila, Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, Ebo Assan Donkoh, Francis Gbormittah and Camynta Baezie.
[9] Personal interview with J.E. Allotey-Pappoe, Jun. 2017.

> awards (not contestable), established by Ghana Oil Co. Ltd.; Crakye Denteh was the winner of *The Kwegyir Aggrey Award for Creator in the Clearing*, also established by Ghana Oil Co. Ltd.; Kojo Laing won *The Kwame Nkrumah Award for Ghanaian Literature*, established by BP Ghana Ltd.; F.K. Nyarku was the winner of *The W.E.B. Du Bois Award for Ghanaian Literature*, established by Shell Ghana Ltd. for the best collection of short stories; and Ama Ata Aidoo won *The Nelson Mandela Award for Ghanaian Literature*, established by the Ghana Commercial Bank for the best collection of Poetry.[10]

Kobina Eyi Acquah and Vincent Okunor were writers intimately associated with Atukwei Okai and had a significant role in the Association's operations during that period. The others that joined later were Asiedu Yirenkyi, Fred Agbobli, Kofi Anyidoho, Rex Quartey, Jawa Apronti, Setheli Ashong Katai, Bill Marshall, Kojo Yankah, J.E. Allotey-Pappoe, and Kwesi Annoh. Additionally, the Association received assistance in various forms from a few well-known persons. For example, the following individuals were listed as patrons of the Association: William Ofori-Atta, Minister of Education, Culture and Sports; Nana Otumfuo Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, Asantehene; Nene Azu-Mate Korle, Konor of Manya-Krobo; Oku Ampofo, Chairman of the

[10] From Professor Atukwei Okai's records, Jun. 2017.

Arts Council of Ghana; Danso-Manu, Executive Secretary of the Arts Council of Ghana; Ephraim Amu, University of Ghana; A.A.Y. Kyeremanteng, Vice-Chairman, Arts Council of Ghana; Daniel Chapman Nyaho, one-time Chairman, Arts Council of Ghana; Peter Ala Adjetey, an Accra Legal Practitioner; J.K. Rockson, an Accra Businessman; and B.K. Edusei, an Accra Businessman.[11]

The following luminaries in literature were appointed to the Association's Advisory Board: Efua Sutherland, Jawa Apronti, K.A.B. Jones-Quartey, G. Adali Mortty, Kofi Sey, all from the University of Ghana, and Saka Acquaye, Arts Council of Ghana, Cameron Duodu, guest editor of the Daily Graphic, architect Kojo Gyinaye Kyei, Public Works Department (PWD), and Frank Parks, Ministry of Information, are among the academic community in Ghana.[12] It is noteworthy to mention that J.B. Danquah and Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, himself were among the well-known Ghanaians that joined the association. Both of them were prolific writers, therefore even though they were not involved in association affairs directly, they were quite interested in the writers' group.[13]

I provided you with a pertinent history of the association in the paragraphs above. As I previously stated, this information was assembled from randomly-dispersed documents. People who are well-versed in the GAW's genesis story may be

[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.

able to fill in the blanks, providing us with a comprehensive narrative to lead us forward. Now, I will outline and evaluate some of the top priorities of the presidents and their NECs, not from a comparative perspective because the exigencies of each period were distinct.

Kojo Gyinaye Kyei served as GAW's first president in the late 1960s to early 1970s. Regarding his presidential priorities, not much has been discovered. It should be evident, though, that holding the office of president of the newly revived GAW had its share of difficulties. Based on my assumption, Kojo Gyinaye Kyei was mainly focused on GAW's membership drive, enhanced financial position, and increased visibility to further establish the association's credibility.

Despite challenges, Professor Atukwei Okai's presidency from 1971 to 1991 was characterised by innovative literary undertakings that showcased the noteworthy influence of GAW as a leading literary association in Ghana. When GAW was acknowledged by the government, it was a result of Atukwei Okai's hard work and dedication, as well as the backing of other passionate and dedicated young men and women writers, the majority of whom were students. In addition to receiving financial and logistical assistance from the government, GAW served on the Consultative Assembly in 1979 and 1992, and became a member of the National Media Commission (NMC).[14]

[14] Informal conversation with Anumnyam, May 2017, and personal interview with J.E. Allotey-Pappoe, Jun. 2017.

Following the 1991 GAW Congress and elections, in which Professor Okai was elected Secretary-General of the Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), Dr. Kobina Ayi Acquah was elected President of GAW. During his leadership, the Association faced internal upheavals that hindered its progress. His two terms ended in 1995 amid controversy and unsolved concerns, leaving GAW divided. The National Secretariat was closed at this point because Ebo Assan Donkoh, the lone volunteer, had left.[15]

Dr. Selby Ashong-Katai was appointed as the interim president in 1996 by a committee led by Vincent Okunor, who was also tasked with organising Congress and elections. Ebo Assan Donkoh was called back to the Secretariat upon Dr. Ashong-Katai's appointment. But it was not until 2009 that members were organised to hold a congress in 2010 and selected Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng (later known as Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng) to lead a one-year interim administration. Unlike in the past, National Service Personnel helped Ebo Assan Donkoh to support the Association's operations and growth. The 2010 Congress tasked the interim leadership with bringing the moribund Association back into order and launching a membership campaign.[16]

The organisation started to take shape. In an effort to promote members' works and encourage social harmony, the first GAW Book Festival was held in 2011 and GAW Sunday, a

[15] Ibid.

[16] Personal interview with Ebo Assan Donkoh, Aug. 2017.

monthly literary event, was created. As required by popular demand at the 2012 GAW Congress, the Interim Executive Committee was entrusted with implementing the restructuring under a revised constitution with three-year tenure terms. Some regional branches and tertiary chapters were formed, workshops were arranged for members and schools, and GAW literary clubs were started in a few senior high schools. The Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) provided GAW with a bus to help with the membership drive and literary activities. Both nationally and in Accra, GAW membership grew. Relationships started by Professor Okai with cultural institutions, diplomatic missions, and literary groups were re-established. It was clear that GAW was present and growing among cultural organisations. In the second term of Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng's presidency, the annual GAW Literary Awards was reinstated. He completed his two terms in 2019.

Francis Gbormittah took over as president of the association after being elected at the 2019 Congress. He had previously served as a treasurer, a co-opted member of NEC and vice president under Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng. This has most likely been the simplest power transfer for the association. Under Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng's leadership, the association's membership increased after a prolonged period of relative lethargy. Therefore, Gbormittah's top priorities were to create a resourceful secretariat and streamline the association's administrative framework. He had a lot on his

plate, including preserving and/or improving the programmes and activities that were already in place, starting new ones that would meet the demands of the moment and keep GAW afloat, and looking to expand local and global partnerships. Gbormittah established the Secretariat's corporate structural setup and turned it into a key hub for the Association. This enhanced ability to oversee the organisation as a whole. However, some members of NEC strongly objected to the initiative. Apart from the aforementioned objective, the structures functioned to limit the authority and influence that certain NEC members possessed over the Secretariat. Not only did he rigorously adhere to the association's constitution, but he also established all of its required committees, such as the publications and membership committees, and the advisory board.

During Gbormittah's one-term presidency, the association's finances were managed prudently and with responsibility. This relates to the fact that when internal efforts at recovery were exhausted, a debt collection firm was hired to collect money owed to the association by certain members and former and incumbent members of NEC. Gbormittah's reluctance to lend the association's funds, particularly to some NEC members under his administration, caused him to have a poor working relationship with them. As part of his responsibility to members for financial management, he engaged independent external auditors to prepare the association's financial statements for Congress in 2022.

The quote from Professor Atukei Okai regarding the importance of writers is a suitable way to conclude this section on the history of the Association. The participants throughout the association's past made "[…] difficult but noble efforts in helping to spiritually and intellectually support their people through time and trials into the unending bosom of history and destiny […] (Okai, 1987)."

Throughout the history described above, there are elements of continuity and change as well as dealing with nuances, disputes, and individual or group motivations. The accomplishments of the presidents and the NECs demonstrate this. Every administration appears to have taken inspiration from the pioneering tales of GAW, while also being ready to introduce fresh programmes to keep up with the times. I now enumerate and evaluate the dreams, projects and challenges of the association.

Presentation and analysis of dreams, projects, programmes and the challenges

The paper set out to address two main questions: "What is the constitutional mandate of GAW with regard to its dreams, programmes, and projects?" and "What dreams, projects, and challenges, does a writers' association have?" The first question deals directly with GAW's functions and will, arguably, set the tone by clarifying the pertinent constitutional provisions. Clause 2 of Article IV, "Objectives," of the GAW Constitution is helpful.

> Without prejudice to the generality of Clause I, hereof, the Association may organize, support or participate in such literary events, workshops, seminars, festivals, meetings, publications and other activities as it shall determine suitable for the promotion of its Aims (pp. 2-3).

Although Article IV gives a, somewhat, free hands to NEC to institute programmes and projects to enhance the fortunes of the association, they must be within a policy decision or promote same. The "Preamble," of the Constitution affirms this statement:

> IN sober reflection upon the history of writers and writers' movements in the nation,
> IN full conviction of the benefits of coming together for the safeguarding and advancement of the interests of writers and the development of good literature, […] (p. 1).

So, whatever dreams, projects and programmes GAW pursues must provide a supportive environment and be of benefit to its members. The matter of enabling advancement of good literature dovetails with Ohene's (2019) advice at the 2019 Literary Awards of GAW.

> So, we are gathered here to celebrate literary works, in other words, writing that goes beyond

> the ordinary. Those who follow these things would remember that a few years ago, our cousins in Nigeria called off a planned awards ceremony because they decided there weren't enough entries that would merit the awards. In other words, there were lots of writings, but not enough to which they could ascribe literary excellence (p. 3).

I now present the dreams, projects, programmes and challenges of GAW within the period under examination to ascertain how these ventures have progressed or regressed the course of the association, the Constitution serving as the reference point.

What dreams?

The dreams or visions of any writers' association, particularly GAW, can be summarised in three points, to:

i Promote the association to the larger community as writers' association of distinction to show the way in Ghana and African's literary efforts.

ii Engender literary activities throughout the year in the country to ensure its visibility.

iii Give recognition to writers, stimulate as well as reward their labour.

What projects and programmes?

Writers' groups, like many institutions, would have permanent or rolling and one-off or ad hoc projects and programmes. At the first National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting held on May 21, 2019, after the newly elected NEC was sworn into office on May 11, 2019, the campaign manifesto of President Francis Gbormittah was adopted for implementation. The manifesto came in two major parts: first, to bolster GAW's existing flagship programmes such as Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) Book Festival (GAWBOFEST), GAW Schools Outreach Porgramme (GAWSOP), GAW Sunday & GAW Annual Literary Awards; and second, to execute new projects like Writers Enterprise Fund (WEF), GAW Newsletter and GAW Anthology, frequent writers' workshops, seminars and mentorship, fully participate in writers' advocacy campaigns, et cetera. It would serve to highlight the accomplishments by providing some specifics, which I am obligated to do in the ensuing paragraphs.

Bolstering GAW's existing flagship programmes

GAWBOFEST – September has been the month of GAWBOFEST since 2011. It is a festival that brings together various book business players. The theme of the festival is "Empowering Ghana through Reading" (GAW Brochure, 2019). To strengthen the event and optimise its advantages, a Standing Committee was formed during the period under review to function all year round. The workshop component of GAWBOFEST was retained with pertinent topics to writers.

For example, the Association organised particularly engaging virtual and in-person workshops and panel discussions as the 2021 GAWBOFEST such as "Creating the/a conducive ecosystem for creative writing in Ghana," "Publishing perspectives in a disrupted World: Self or independent publishing vs. traditional publishing" and "E-book dynamics and Apps in Ghana," and a forum to engage with young writers by very eminent writers, copyright experts, ethnographers, philosophers and people well-versed in Ghanaian traditions and customs. The activities list (book readings, poetry, story-telling, book signings, quizzes, brass band music, face painting, instant portrait drawing and graphics design) and composition of participants (writers: GAW & non-GAW; schools & colleges, writers' clubs, writers' clubs, diplomatic missions, members of parliament, personalities in the arts & creative industry, "Country of Focus,") were all maintained.

GAWSOP – Established in 2012 in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service (GES), GAWSOP's main aim was to set-up literary clubs in all public senior high schools to encourage students to take interest in reading and writing (GAW Brochure, 2019). Soon after it took off, it was bedeviled with concerns regarding collaboration agreement. A new GES director-general could not fathom how his predecessor undertook to bill students with *GAWSOP Filla*, the first edition of a literary magazine developed by GAW with contribution of works from students, thus, students writing for students. These first copies were prefinanced by

GAW, therefore became a financial loss to GAW. In spite of this challenge, the NEC under President Gbormittah saw to the sustenance of existing literary clubs by supplying them with books and regular visits. They were also supported to attend the association's events.

GAW Sunday – GAW Sunday started as a monthly variety literary event. It was created "to bring members and their friends together in a literary celebration" (GAW Brochure, 2019). As a means to rebrand and monetise the event, the "Author of the Month" component was introduced. It was then decided to produce the event for television and to upload it on YouTube and stream on Facebook. In both cases to derive money from TV ads and sponsorship, and for YouTube, ad views and ad clicks, which is also referred to as cost per mile (CPM) or cost per click (CPC). Although we were not successful with the TV pilot and the general cost involved, and we could not hit a minimum threshold of 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 watch hours in 12 months with YouTube, the "Author of the Month" component worked well with the featuring of a number of renowned authors and groups. These included, Ama Atta Aidoo, Prof. Ladé Wosornu, Elizabeth Irene Baitie, Manu Herbstein, Dr. Gheysika Agambila, Cornelia Rowena Amoah, Kofi Otutu Adu Labi, Ekow Franklin Nana Asmah, Odolina Roussinov, contributors to *The Lockdown: Creative non-fiction about living with COVID-19*[17] edited by Nana Achampong of the Ama Ata Aidoo Centre for Creative Writing of AUCC,

[17] Relevant detailed information about COVID-19 vis-à-vis the GAW narrative is provided later in the paper.

contributors to *Mother*, an anthology of stories edited by Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, and pupils and students of KOANS International School. GAW Sunday also featured individual and group guest performers, including Cecilia Amoafowaa Sefa (Mum C), Kwame Akyea, Samuel Kwesi Bissue, Native Girl, Raymond Tuvi, Kofi Marrah, Gameli Tordzro, Efo Losu the Poet, Nana Asaase, Evelyn Asare, Nii Otukunor Attoh, Fapempong, and Apiorkor Seyiram Ashong-Abbey.

GAW Annual Literary Awards – The GAW Annual Literary Awards was established to encourage adherence to standards and literary excellence among members of the association. It is held in November of each year (GAW Brochure, 2019). It was intended by the Gbormittah administration to expand funding to include brand sponsorship or direct corporate sponsorship for a specific period, for example, five years. The Stanbic Bank, which already supported the awards financially, also showed interest in becoming a sole sponsor. Science and mathematics textbook writers were included in the awards in 2019. Professors Jophus Anamuah-Mensah and Francis Kofi Ampenyin Allotey are the title-bearers in this category of prizes. Mini-awards were supposed to be staged across the regions to kick off the national celebration in Accra and establish the awards as a major event on the national calendar, but this never happened. At the time, it seemed like an ambitious endeavour to get the winners of the first and second places from the regions to the national honours. The notion of choosing one manuscript for publication assistance from

each category was also suggested, however it was hampered by funding issues.

Read-A-Ghana-Book Month is one of the many projects GAW continues to pursue to promote reading among Ghanaians, especially children. Every year, March is designated for reading works by Ghanaian authors. March is a noteworthy month because it is Ghana National Month and the month of Ghana's independence. GAW believes that reading Ghanaian literature, would make readers learn the foundations of Ghanaian cultural values. During the month of March, GAW's focus is directed toward, as Anderson (2022) puts it, "reading for pleasure and accessibility, both being priorities with the power to unlock the literary landscape to everyone, regardless of level of education or ability" (Anderson, 2022).

New initiatives executed

Some new projects and programmes were introduced and executed. Others were envisioned but did not materialise for various reasons, which I will make attempts to explain in the next few paragraphs.

Writers' workshops, seminars – Frequent writers' workshops, seminars, clinics and mentorship sessions were organised to build capacity of members in various aspects of writing. Elizabeth Ohene reminded us at the 4th GAW Literary Awards in November 2019 to develop as writers, stressing on language-use. She states that

> […] in talking about writing, we cannot avoid the unresolved issue of language. Since most of the writing we do is in the English language, it seems to me we should worry about the current state of the spoken and written English in our country. You only need to spend some time in a chief's palace in this country to appreciate the fact that to be effective, you must have total control over the language you seek to communicate in (Ohene, 2019).

Writing workshops, seminars, clinics and mentorship sessions took place in various forms. A total of eight workshops and seminars were held including, Book Illustration Workshop, Memoir Writing Workshop, Screen Writing Workshop, Workshop on Narrative Drive, Workshop on Writing in Indigenous Languages, Creative writing for social change: Re-dream a just World, organised under the auspices of the International Women Writers Guild (IWWG) base in New York, USA.

Monthly conversations with well-known Ghanaian writers were organised under the "Author of the Month" initiative as part of GAW Sunday. The "Distinguished Authors and Personalities Series," which was intended to feature prominent figures in education, the arts, literature, culture, and other related disciplines, was held once and featured Ms. Elizabeth Ohene. The mentorship programme featured *Ehalakasa* in

GHANATA SHS and Kwabenya Community SHS. This programme afforded emerging writers with life-changing experiences with mentors. This fits together with Ismaila's (2023) assertion that "Mentorship provides the platform for a professionally intimate relationship that fosters interest, a sense of direction and guidance towards achieving a career goal (p. 2)."

Strengthening nation and regional branches – The National Secretariat, and some regional branches were strengthened during the period in review. The National Secretariat operated on a number of key ideas, including ensuring optimal delivery of responsibilities that will improve internal controls, especially around the segregation of duties; improving efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of duties; streamlining workflow and processes that reflect best practices; maintaining an open-door management policy; and accommodating adaptability in line with global standards. In order to triumph on these ideas, the Secretariat was facelifted and new office furniture acquired through donation from a member, and the working environment was reorganised. An accounts officer was engaged, who prepared annual budgets, regular quarterly accounts and financial statements. NEC believed that to seek more local and international collaborations the association should put its administrative and financial structures in place. Staff were placed on Tier 1 (SSNIT) and Tier 2 (Pension) schemes as required by law. HR Manual for staff was in the process of being completed as at July 2022. NEC initiated

certain innovations and best practices, which included appropriate documentation and backup systems, eco-friendly strategies (less paper use), association-wide emailing system, staff performance appraisal system, dedicated mobile lines to attend to members' needs promptly, online registration/ membership forms, electronic membership dues payment system, and online information portal. The staff were also resourced to prepare annual and monthly schedules of activities to keep members abreast with the association's programmes. Additionally, they planned and supervised a number of book launches by members, and worked closely and productively with statutory board and committees established by NEC such as Advisory Board, Publications Committee, and Membership Committee. Working together with staff of the Secretariat, NEC enforced internal control systems to make the Secretariat operate efficiently and effectively to prevent or mitigate adverse outcomes or risks. Operationalising internal controls also ensured high productivity, accurate records keeping, compliance with rules and regulations, maintenance and protection of assets, and commitment to competence, integrity and ethical values.

Reorganisation of regional, tertiary chapters and local branches was key on the agenda of NEC. This means putting in place substantive executives and operational administrative structures. Election of substantive executives at the regional levels, to be supervised by the National Secretariat, could not materialise due to financial constraint and poor membership

drive in the regions. Therefore, it was decided to maintain the interim executives and galvanise the base by providing the regions with offices and furniture to entice potential writers. To this end, GAW appealed to Centre for National Culture (CNC) to provide office spaces in its buildings across the country to GAW regional branches. The Volta and Eastern regions benefited from these arrangements. Other regional branches faced numerous challenges, ranging from non-compliance by some regional heads of CNC to failure to pay utility bills. Workshops on fundraising and project management were organised for regional chairpersons and secretaries at the Secretariat in Accra to enable them raise funds and manage projects in their jurisdictions. The workshops also provided the executives skills to effectively promote membership drive, organise programmes and host some national events in the regions. Although the workshop was to provide human and financial resources to the branches, these intentions could not be achieved. Instead, the National Secretariat offered annually, Gh₵1,000.00 to regions that presented budget for their activities.

Greater-Accra Region never had a regional branch. Therefore, a committee was formed to come up with modalities of creating a branch. So that NEC and the National Secretariat can play their umbrella-body/oversight roles effectively by focusing on policy matters than combining national and regional works at the Secretariat. Though the committee was vibrant at the onset, it slacked afterwards and never produced the expected result.

Tertiary and local branch outreach activities were initiated, but were not as successful as expected. Remarkably, most of the tertiary institutions were unamenable to formation of new clubs and societies on their campuses. The chapters in Central University College and University of Ghana were the most thriving; thanks to the patrons of both chapters. The GAW-UG Chapter was issued with a certificate of registration to operate as a recognised student's literary body on campus in 2022. The GAW-Central University Chapter actively participated in Drama Club activities of the association. The only local branch located at the REDCO Flats in Madina, comprising between 9-15-year-olds was supervised by a university student who later left to pursue further studies, leading to its collapse in November 2021.

Vigorous resource mobilisation – An initiative to mobilise and prudently manage resources was started in the latter half of 2019. The Association's main revenue sources were membership dues and registration fees. A concerted campaign was launched to collect dues from every member. The membership register was updated for this purpose. Direct deductions of dues from payments made to CopyGhana literary rights holders proved effective. In addition, MTN MoMo merchant account was registered to facilitate payment of membership dues. A mechanism for online membership registration was developed. Members could now complete the registration form online and pay using MoMo, eliminating the inconveniences and expenses of physically visiting the Secretariat.

Secondary resource mobilisation directly targeted corporate entities and yielded roughly Gh¢90,000 by November 2019. These donations went toward organising that year's literary awards. Although special fundraising events, theatrical plays, workshop fees, radio and television ads, consulting services, and other revenue streams were all planned, none of them materialised. Through its finance committee, NEC ensured that any funds received were prudently used and did not inure to the benefit of any member, officer, or without limitation, any private individual.

Newsletter and GAW Anthology – During the period under review, GAW was involved in some publications, which were meant to facilitate effective information flow, raising of funds, and creating avenue for publication of members' works. The e-newsletter, *GAW News*, was to be published quarterly. The content of the newsletter was envisaged to include, general official news, calendar of events, news of book launches, short stories, poems, book reviews, profiles/ interviews, essays, illustrations, et cetera. The maiden *GAW News* contained news on book donations, GAW Sunday, International Mother Language Day celebration, marking of World Poetry Day and funeral observance of a member. *Giving to GAW: The Fundraising Magazine* is another creative way of approaching the difficult task of raising funds to prosecute GAW's activities. Also, the magazine was intended to help with an organised and accountable fundraising.

The anthology project, christened *An Anthology of Ghanaian Creative Writing*, started in 2021 and was completed in 2022. It featured collections of poetry, short stories and drama. It was envisioned to be a twice-a-year, electronic and hard-copy publication, and an avenue for young/early-stage writers to publish their works. Both *GAW News* and *Giving to GAW* were out-doored together with the GAW cloth at the GAW 65th Anniversary Lauch on March 30, 2022, at PAWA House in Roman Ridge.

The branded *GAW cloth* was procured to give a befitting commemoration of the association on its 65th Anniversary. Additionally, it was stated that the cloth is appropriate to be worn at GAW events like book launches, school outreach programmes, et cetera, and even funerals, to foster a sense of devotion and solidarity among members.

During the period under consideration, the association operated in accordance with Article III-Aims of the Association's Constitution, notably Clause 6, which says:

> To establish and maintain suitable relationships with other writers and writers' organizations and allied institutions, or groups, as well as local and foreign publishers and the book world generally (p. 2).

Partnerships and affiliations – To this end, the Association deepened partnerships and affiliations with the following

domestic and international institutions, among others: CopyGhana, Ghana Publishers Association (GPA), Ghana Culture Forum (GCF), National Commission on Culture (NCC), Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC), Ghana Book Trust (GBT), Association of Teachers of Ghanaian Languages (ATGL), Ghana Library Authority (GhLA), Ama Atta Aidoo Center for Creative Writing, the Dr. Ephraim Amu Foundation, Ghana Association of Teachers of English, the Copyright Office, Ghana Education Service (GES), Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL), Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), Nuclear Power, Ghana, and the Department of English and the School of Performing Arts, both of the University of Ghana, Legon. The rest are the Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), International Authors Forum (IAF), International Women Writers Guild (IWWG), Italian Writers Union, Academic and Non-Fiction Authors' Association of South Africa (ANFASA), COSMOS Publishers and AdinkraLinks.

I would like to focus on and go into more detail about GAW's relationship with PAWA for a very obvious historical reason. Professor Atukwei Okai was President of GAW in 1991 when he was elected to PAWA. He was the founding secretary-general of PAWA and the doyen of pan-African literary pursuits. Thus, GAW contributed its priceless quota to the Pan-African literary front. No president or NEC who understands PAWA-formation history adequately can maintain delusions about PAWA or promote its regression. Similarly, no member of GAW can fathom a decision to jettison PAWA when it

was at its wits' end. The passing of Professor Okai in 2018 presented GAW[18] and PAWA with huge challenges. It marked a defining moment in PAWA's history. Professor Okai's death had left a colossal vacuum that needed to be filled urgently.

On September 14, 2018, while in Accra to attend his funeral, a joint meeting of PAWA Council and some leaders of PAWA member-associations was convened. It was decided at this meeting to establish a steering committee to oversee PAWA's operations until a permanent secretary-general was elected. Like Professor Okai in 1991, GAW presented four of its illustrious members[19] to the continental body's steering committee, which Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng chaired. The Committee also received expert assistance from a few other GAW members. The following terms of reference were adopted by the PAWA Council and the PAWA Steering Committee, to:

i. Take an urgent critical look at the PAWA Secretariat and recommend how to keep it running, both in the interim and the long term.

[18] For instance, GAW had to completely take over maintenance of PAWA House facility and expend money from its already meagre membership dues. GAW also sponsored the 2018 International African Writers Day in Dakar, Senegal, and the 2018 PAWA Annual Lecture to mark African Writers' Day in Accra. Professor Okai was an enormous pillar GAW leaned on in terms of payment of utilities bills (security, water, electricity) and services such as lawn maintenance, renovation and facelifting of PAWA House, and dislodging of septic tank, which became so frequent due to a fault in the system. He also procured air-conditioners and some furniture for GAW Secretariat in 2017.

[19] Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng, President of GAW/Chairman; Professor Kofi Anyidoho, member of GAW/Member;
Nii Addokwei Moffatt, executive member of GAW/Member; and Francis Gbormittah, Vice President of GAW/Member-Secretary. It must be mentioned that J.E. Allotey-Pappoe, Interim Administrator of PAWA, served as an ex-officio member of the committee until June 2019.

ii. Review the PAWA Constitution and make recommendations on the process of choosing the organisation's officers, especially with regard to their individual responsibilities, their tenure of office, the order of replacement and succession, and how to avoid the prolongation in office of any particular officer.
iii. Make recommendations on how to get all the PAWA members more involved in running the organisation, and especially, in its financing.
iv. Hold discussions with the Government of Ghana on the future of the PAWA Headquarters building and outstanding contributions of the Government to PAWA.
v. Look at any other related issues with regard to the survival of the organisation
vi. (Minutes of the First Steering Committee Meeting, 2018).

The Steering Committee in collaboration with the PAWA Council appointed an interim secretary-general in 2020. The Committee operated for two years. With this feat, GAW and Ghana have once again taken the lead in pan-African initiatives (Minutes of the Joint Meeting).

Writers Enterprise Fund (WEF) – WEF was meant to be a revolving fund aimed at providing grants to members of GAW (individuals and teams) to further their desires and abilities to write or publish, and venture into other literary activities such as theatre performances. Funding was to be sourced

from government, corporate membership dues, foundations, et cetera. To promote the national membership drive, the sum that would be awarded to a team or an individual was contingent on membership strength in the local, regional, or tertiary branches that the team or individual belonged to.

GAW Young Writers Forum – The youth membership base of the association accounts for over half of a population of 1,237 in 2022. The goals of the *GAW Young Writers Forum* are to nurture young writers, inculcate in them writing skills and bridge the gap between the old and young writers towards achieving literary excellence. This project was birthed out of the realisation that a huge gap exists between the old and new generation of writers. This gap exists in the areas of general linguistics or language-use, cultural memory, identity construction vis-à-vis general worldview. This forum created a platform for renowned African writers to pass on their intellect, share their experiences and mentor/train young and upcoming writers to excel both locally and internationally to join renowned writers such as Ayi Kwei Armah, Ama Ata Aidoo, Kofi Awoonor, Atukwei Okai, Kofi Anyidoho, Efua Sutherland, Mabel Dove Danquah, J.E. Casely Hayford, and Francis Kobina Parker, to name a few. About the attributes of cultural memory, identity construction and general worldview, Ohene (2019) contends that these must be vital aspects of Ghanaian and African writers, the lack of which may lead to cultural alienation. She implores writers to concern themselves with:

> Who are we? What do we believe in and what distinguishes us from other people? Every once in a while, something comes up and there is a great outburst and we are told of something or the other being un-Ghanaian. I hear about things being un-Ghanaian, but I hardly ever hear of any definition of what IS Ghanaian. May I suggest that it is up to you as the writers, as the literary people to go behind the façade and into our souls and define who and what is a Ghanaian. It is only the writer, the honest and sensitive words craftsman that will bring out this Ghanaian with which we can all identify (Ohene, 2019).

The forum was first held at the 10th GAW Book Festival and facilitated by Nana Kwasi Gyan-Apenteng (former president of GAW), Dr. Sarah Dorgbadzi (former Head of Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ghana), Sheila Djangmah (Copyright Office), Dr. Gameli Tordzro (University of Glasgow) and Ohui Agbenyega Allotey (GBDC).

Permanent office accommodation – The matter of getting a permanent office accommodation for GAW came up during the campaign for 2019 NEC elections. This was when the PAWA House facility was under threat of being taken. However, going through the documents after taken over office the NEC discovered that the facility has been in the name of GAW since 1989. Efforts to approach government to provide

GAW with an accommodation was discontinued and rather directed at settling the issue about the Hse. No. P146, Roman Ridge, Accra. The matter has been amply litigated at various levels for settlement from 2020 to 2022.

The idea of a hall and/or wall of fame, social facilities such as snacks bar, sitting areas, for writers was mooted for implementation. However, these did not materialise in the three years under review due to uncertainties about Hse. No. P146 to warrant investment.

Annual Schools Short Stories Competition – Schools Short Stories Competition to be produced annually to involve senior high schools was envisaged to start at the regional levels and climaxed at the national level. Funding was to be sought by GAW to publish the stories. Members of GAW were to serve as judges for these competitions. The young writers were to be honoured with cash, laptops, books and scholarships. It was hoped that award-winning young writers would be enthused to take to writing as a life-long venture. Due to budgetary difficulties, this initiative was never launched.

Meetings and statutory writers' days – Constitutionally mandated and ad-hoc meetings were dutifully held, and statutory writers' days were devotedly observed. These included monthly NEC meetings, quarterly meetings of the association and of the Advisory Board, semi-yearly NEC and Regional Branches Executives meetings, and NEC-sub-

committee meetings. Statutory writers' days marked each year comprised International Mother Language Day, International Children's Book Day, World Book and Copyright Day, International Literacy Day, and International African Writers Day.

Policy and Advocacy – On policy and advocacy front, GAW was positioned during the period to play major roles in national issues. The Association provided unflinching backing to the efforts of CopyGhana to bring some public tertiary educational institutions in Ghana to the reprographic levies bracket to enhance compensation to authors and rights holders. The Coalition of Book Industry Stakeholders (COBIS) served as a collective agent for GAW, Ghana Publishers Association (GPA), Printers and Paper Converters Association (PPCA), and the Ghana Book Sellers Association (GBSA). Through COBIS, GAW participated in shaping the Ghana Book Development Agency Bill, 2018. The Association engaged with the then Acting CEO/Executive Director of the Ghana Library Authority (GhLA), Hayford Siaw, to persuade him to ensure mandatory book purchases from members of GAW for public libraries and schools' libraries by government through the GhLA. During the period, GAW also worked closely with the Ghana Book Development Council (GBDC) to promote standards of books of members of GAW so as to attract international literary competitions. For instance, this led to selection of a book each of three authors to be translated and published into Spanish by the Mexican Writers Association.

Again, GBDC invited GAW to participate in the bidding team of the UNESCO World Book Capital 2023 to prepare a proposal and implementation documents.

Writers' Retreats and Residencies – In 2018, GAW conceived the idea of a writers' residency project. Retreats and residencies offer writers a quiet space to write. When these opportunities are arranged with other writers, writers can hone their craft, expand their networks within the literary community, and establish their own presence. Therefore, collaborating with Mr. John Wilberforce Essiah, a member of GAW, to establish a writers' residency was mooted. This partnership was dubbed the "Ajumako-Kromaim Residency Project." Mr. Essiah offered GAW a four-bedroom, roughly 70% finished house to use for five years until acquiring its own.[20] This facility is located in Kromaim, close to Ajumako in the Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam District of the Central Region. After negotiations with Mr. Essiah had stalled in 2018, it resumed later in 2019. But when the MOU was about to be signed, GAW lacked the funds to finish the facility's renovations. Another place designated for a writers' residency in 2020 is the Akrofo Human and Environmental Resource Development site in the Oti Region, which is situated in Akrofo, Jasikan-Buem. The establishment, which occupies 10 hectares of land, has 4 bedrooms and 3 round huts. It was offered to GAW by association member Rev. Dr. Elias Asiama. Along with the GAW Legal Advisor,

[20] An elder of Kromaim also offered to GAW an acre of land (four plots) to build its own facility since Mr. Essiah's offer will be for a specified period. However, the plots were not released because it was based on GAW establishing a writers' residency in the town.

I visited Akrofo to inspect the facilities in order to prepare us for signing the MOU. This was not accomplished before NEC's term expired in 2022.

As both facilities would have a nominal cost charged to member-patrons, they were designed to be "self-supporting." The facilities are close to University of Education, Winneba, campus at Ajumako and Jasikan College of Education, in Jasikan, respectively. As a result, these educational facilities serve as a one-stop place for a variety of services to GAW, including cultural renewal and restoration as well as writing and reading evaluation laboratories.

Prisons Outreach Programme – GAW's intended prisons outreach programme with the Senior Correctional Centre of the Ghana Prisons Service in Roman Ridge would have extended the association's leadership role in reviving the culture of reading and writing, even in non-traditional spaces in addition to helping to put inclusivity at the centre of our agenda. The association was to provide resources to inmates who wanted to write and publish their stories, as well as reading and writing instruction to the prisoners through high-quality creative writing seminars, a one-to-one skilled mentor programme, and related programming. This will aid in many of the prisoners' rehabilitation, preparing them better for their eventual reintegration into society and providing them with a source of income. It also relates to GAW's conviction that writing has the power to heal, rehabilitate, and transform.

Drama Club – It is worth mentioning the 20-member GAW Drama Club, comprising staff of the Secretariat, some members of GAW in Accra and Ashanti Region Branch, and the GAW-Central University Chapter. The Drama Club was formed to enrich the literary exploits of GAW and to offer a ready platform for playwrights in the association to test their plays before publication. The club was invited to perform, *The Prince and the Slave*, a play written and directed by Kofi Akpabli, at the Pan African Historical Festival, also known as, the Pan African Festival (PANAFEST), at the Centre for National Culture (CNC) auditorium, Cape Coast, in 2019. Again, the club featured in the 17th Ghana International Book Fair under the auspices of the Ghana Publishers Association (GPA) held at the Ghana International Trade Fair Centre, Accra, also in 2019.

Welfare Fund – A welfare fund was created to provide support and relief to members during, both, good and challenging times in life. The *GAW Welfare Fund* was to augment what GAW itself provided to members in the circumstances mentioned above.

What challenges, solutions and opportunities?

A few of the challenges are mentioned in the presentations above. Nonetheless, there are specific ones that can be examined in this context. Finding money for several of our initiatives was obviously difficult during the time period under review. Examples abound:

1. It was not possible to increase GAWBOFEST's finances to include direct corporate sponsorship or brand sponsorship for a certain amount of time. This would have made it possible to host small-scale events in the regions to herald the national celebration in Accra, enhancing the impact of the festival and the Association's visibility.
2. Fruitless efforts to secure business sponsorship for *GAWSOP Filla* magazine in order to guarantee that students in SHSs receive a free copy of it. This would have made strong and viable the GAWSOP initiative. The MoU between GAW and GES was deemed invalid, which is when everything became terrible. Similar to this, formation of literary clubs in SHSs was hampered due to lack of a common front on the matter.
3. Publishers' lack of commitment to publishing fiction and other creative works because they are not frequently used in classrooms or acquired by libraries. They preferred to invest in textbooks. Ghanaian creative writers are losing their position in the global literary scene and creative writing is dying as a result of this phenomenon. The few that dabble in creative writing sometimes produce subpar works through self-publishing. Even though the Publications Committee evaluated some members' works, both jointly and individually, to

> ensure they met GAW's standards at no cost, this was not enough to curtail this situation. Thanks to those who volunteered their time and expertise to this course.

Self-seeking individuals who join the ranks of well-meaning people presented challenges. That is, those who desired to benefit personally from the association's resources and goodwill. This is not unusual or unique to GAW. It is present in all human endeavours. The risk was that these people stopped caring about their duties and instead used their free time to disparage others who had committed to the course. They also instill fear in others by disseminating lies. But as Tillotson (1742) say, "Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out; it is always near at hand and sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware; whereas a lie is troublesome, and sets a man's invention on the rack, and one trick needs a great many more of the same to make it good" (p. 33).

The solutions proffered here are not exhaustive. There should be application of contemporary methods and resources in the writing, publishing, and distribution of books to ensure they reach the intended audience. These include audio books, e-books, etc. Pianim (2019) suggests a radical approach:

> […], try and stay relevant. Move from writing books to making some of your books into movies. The habit of reading is dying. We are

> now becoming viewers of movies, tweets and YouTube on social media! My grandson listens more to talking books! This, to the exasperation of my son who because of the speed reading courses we took, can read a book faster than he can listen to it being read! (p. 4).

But books should be available. It is necessary to have a policy that ensures books and other reading materials are broadly accessible in all settings and formats. This policy should be explicit and unambiguous. Materials ought to be distributed in a way that communicates the national priority of access to books. Finance from both business and governmental entities is required for this endeavour.

In all this, the driving force for us as executives of the association was the observations that people/Ghanaians still value the place of literature in their personal development, so the future is promising. We were also encouraged by the fact that majority of new members during the period were quite young, thus the probability of them writing a good number of pieces in their life time is high. But they need orientation and mentorship as stated earlier. There are writers churning out literary pieces very often in Ghana. If the quality is as good as the volumes they produce, then the future is truly bright.

Permit me at this point to dilate on COVID-19 a little more in the paragraphs that follow to paint a vivid picture of how

detrimental it had been to the association's operations, and how it stirred ingenuity in NEC.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and responses of NEC

The COVID-19 pandemic had taken a toll on the world across races, religions and other divides. It tested science and medicine to their limits and also ruptured economic, socio-cultural and political inclinations. The pandemic also altered the world and made humanity appear helpless in the near global lockdown that followed. Nevertheless, the pandemic opened up new possibilities, too (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). Perhaps, responding to the following two pertinent questions will provide an appropriate context of the GAW: How have the National Secretariat and GAW's activities been influenced by the pandemic, and the future? How has the period affected the literary scene in Ghana and the writing of members of GAW?

How have the National Secretariat and GAW's activities been influenced by the pandemic, and the future?

While NEC acknowledged that times had changed, it also recognised that our core values about writing should not change; that the quality of our works should always take precedence over quantity, and that the success of individual authors determines the success of our association. These principles sustained NEC throughout the pandemic, and it is because of their continual reinforcement that our publications have improved people's lives and their state of knowledge.

NEC's strategy in 2020 also had a simple message: working in teams and building on each other's ideas. Our ideas make a difference by advancing knowledge and transforming society for the better (Chambers, 2013). In the 2021 New Year's address, President Gbormittah gave the membership a concise update on the status of COVID-19 vis-à-vis the association's operations.

> Best wishes of 2021 from me and the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) to you. We hope that 2021 will be kinder to us than 2020. […] Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of our programmes will be offered on digital spaces or virtually. Others will be available in a hybrid or a blended form (virtual and in-person). Virtual programmes will, normally, be accessible via the Zoom Online Chat Platform. The Association is evolving as our digital lives change and we are adapting to new knowledge and experiences. We have made some investments in new technologies and know-hows in order to continue to make the Association relevant and ready for the things you have come to expect (President's 2021 New Year Message).

Even though GAW began holding some events online in June 2020, things really picked up after the President's statement in January 2021. The association moved its programmes straight to online multi-platforms, some to Zoom, others

such as bookselling (bookshop) to specially created online platform, *AdinkraScrolls*; thinking outside the Box. One of the greatest pleasures of the time was to engage the staff and writers who persevered in the face of COVID-19 and found ways to keep writing, publishing and selling in schools and public places. Perhaps because we were all cut off from our normal interactions, it was especially rewarding to find myself with writers I had never met before, over Zoom, in a series of conversations and events that proved absolutely essential. Writers whose livelihoods were most seriously imperiled, led the way beyond nostalgia and despair with their commitment to socialise and brainstorm on ideas, however dire the circumstances. Gradually, what had at first seemed like a quick fix became instead of hugely enabling, not just a raft but a flotilla of rapidly proliferating possibilities. As hosting of programmes on Zoom multiplied and it became clear that patronising digital events of the association meant watching anywhere, anytime; those possibilities became both inspiring and overwhelming. Relating hosting of events on Zoom or online to shutdown of theatres during the pandemic, Fuchs (2023) provides both a record of the changes and a framework for thinking through theatre's transformation, which is helpful in understanding GAW's situation:

> There is no perceptual immersion when watching a play on one's laptop at home, with the sound of sirens periodically punctuating the evening. However, much we may want to see the computer

> screen as proscenium, we are operating with a new, and hardly naturalized, set of conventions. The walls between Zoom boxes, and the interactions between different platforms, multiply the fourth wall and the opportunities to break it, adding new dimensions of reflexiveness (Fuchs, 2023).

In the wake of COVID-19 and its uncertainties, the Secretariat swiftly adjusted to new working practices. Soon after Zoom was introduced for GAW Sunday, NEC, committees, and other events, the GAW Secretariat and some members started experimenting with the new format more daringly and questioning its presumptions. The Secretariat and Publications Committee, led by Mr. Woeli Dekutsey, along with Mr. Isaac Kyei Baffour, the GAW information technologist, and a few other individuals began looking into digital platforms, their disadvantages, and their unique affordances. Following their discoveries, the GAW website and its associated platform, *AdinkraScrolls*, were created. Mr. Baffuor arranged a digital media training to strengthen the Secretariat staff's capacity to improve work outcomes to GAW's growth and advancement through online innovative management techniques and initiatives. President Gbormittah remarked at the launch of *AdinkraScrolls* on February 15, 2021, that

> We at the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) are proud to have made another headway in the book industry in Ghana. The evolution of technological and regulatory factors now offers

> new opportunities for accessibility in the reading of books and other publications (President's Welcome Address at the launch of *AdinkraScrolls*, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic showed the transformative power of literature and the capacity of writers' associations like GAW to organise resources at a never-before-seen pace in response to public health emergency. For instance, the association supported the Ayawso West Municipal Assembly Health Directorate in their efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic by providing a mini-bus for contact tracing within the municipality. This was done in order to fulfill some of the many responsibilities we have to our communities and country.

How has the period affected the literary scene in Ghana and the writing of members of the Association?

It is significant to place in paradoxical context how the pandemic had impacted writing of members of GAW and its activities. A report by Dcode's Economic and Financial Consulting shows that potential losers of money during this period are construction and real estate, financial services, education, amongst others. Oil and gas, E-Commerce, ICT and medical, and security services were listed among the potential winners (https://dcodeefc.com/infographics). GAW has members from the different professional backgrounds listed above who write as a hobby. Therefore, with the

corona virus affecting their primary source of income, the motivation to write had been affected, as their key concern was to find alternative sources of income. However, for other members, the two-week lockdown although was traumatic and, repressed movement and activities, it afforded them the chance to complete manuscripts and clear up work they had to do for the association. Also, during the two-week lockdown and thereafter, the reading culture of Ghanaians improved. Even though there are no studies to prove this assertion, this deduction is being made from the social media discussions that went on about what books people were reading, how they had not read in a while before the pandemic, amongst others. This improvement was good for the literary scene as a whole. The role of writers includes documentation of occurrences. The corona virus and its associated experiences have provided some members with the inspiration to write, and this is a positive influence.

Formal experimentation was combined with an almost absurd feeling of realism in works created during the most horrifying initial months of the pandemic, while persistent themes of our fallible resilience under COVID-19 were explored. Aspects of GAWBOFEST 2020 and Zoomed GAW Sundays, examined those loosely connected realities while reflecting on new viewing and communication habits. By doing so, writers confronted audiences with how quickly and passively we had adapted to the demands of digital platforms as we present ourselves on our endless Zoom galleries. Meanwhile, other

members found varied strategies to cope with their sorrow and alienation, from in-depth discussions with other writers to total seclusion. The peculiarities of the circumstance make it hard to tell what is real and what is just engagements. If voyeurism is the unsettling twin to audience participation in any performance, it is possibly much more so on Zoom, which is so ruthless in providing not just a frontal view of the performers or presenters, but also access to domestic spaces that are typically off-limits to the public eye (Fuchs, 2023).

I was glad that during the GAWBOFEST 2020, we could re-establish connection between writers, authors, publishers, and the public through a hybrid programming that took place both online and in-person at the GAW Secretariat in PAWA House.

We obviously were set back by the pandemic, but thanks to NEC's ingenuity as well as that of some members of the association, we succeeded together. We produced programmes, virtual programmes, that can attempt to create an intimate relationship between the writers, authors and audience, as we would have in normal times. This is my chronicle of an intense period of trial and transformation for GAW and devotees of its eve

Conclusion

This essay uses the Ghana Association of Writers as a working example to explore and analyse the dreams, projects, programmes, and difficulties faced by writers' associations.

It talks about the importance of writers for the growth of a country, mentioning the perceptive and thought-provoking roles played by Ghanaian writers both before and after independence. The need to critically examine one's own writing abilities in order to improve one's ability to empower others has been emphasised. Historical accounts of the association, which includes the priorities of each president and their NECs during their terms in office have been presented and analysed to let the reader have a clear understanding of the GAW story. The initiatives and the challenges are discussed and assessed, starting with an examination of the association's constitutional mandate to determine whether these endeavours have advanced or regressed the association's trajectory. Insufficient funding has been noted as one of impediments to the association's agenda. It has been questioned if publishers are genuinely interested in pursuing fiction and other creative works. Using modern techniques and resources while producing, publishing, and distributing books is one of the suggested strategies for making sure the target readership is reached. The COVID-19 epidemic has been analysed with respect to the association's operations and the ways in which it inspired creativity within NEC.

It was discovered that NEC's approach throughout the period under review involved working in groups and expanding on one another's ideas because they were certain that by working together, their ideas and others' could address important problems. The association has progressed thanks to NEC's

display of sound judgment in a wide variety of significant decisions.

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Leveraging Reading Psychology to Design Product Operations in the Book Industry in Ghana

by

Michael Kwakye

Introduction

"Think like a customer" (TLC), is a phrase that some companies promote when creating customer encounters. Some companies miss opportunities to become exceptional because they do not have a strong understanding of how clients think or the psychology of clients. Most prosperous organizations consider the apparent factors that influence clients' psychological attitudes toward their services; such as staff politeness and responsiveness. However, such organizations could accomplish much if they had a deeper understanding of the psychology of people. The above observation is not different with the book industry in Ghana. One of the key factors contributing to the low book promotion in Ghana is that the book industry players have not leveraged on the psychology of readers to design operations that promote reading among the Ghanaian populace.

The economies of developed countries are dominated by a population who can read. This has come about not because of their excellence, but rather through a combination of

market demand and leveraging on the reading psychology of the population. Typical approaches to improving the reading experience include analyzing reading satisfaction surveys, engaging in mystery shopping, and conducting focus group feedback sessions, especially for children.

All of these are admirable; but regrettably, readers are able to clearly express the factors that influence their opinions and impressions. The end effect is frequently unsatisfactory reading levels, particularly among children.

Considering implicit outcomes for readers

The first step in raising a reader's level of experience is recognizing the importance of implicit outcomes from the reading experience. It is through this process that readers engage with texts, experience sensations, passions, and transformations, and construct their understanding of concepts. It involves affective and imaginative engagement with literary texts that are crucial for piquing an interest in reading among children. Reading experience plays a vital role in the process of deriving meaning from texts. It involves making decisions, exploring topics, selecting literature, determining reading purposes, and deriving ideas from the reading process. This ownership of the reading experience enhances reading comprehension and fosters a holistic understanding of language and its functions. The focus of book industry players is often on *explicit outcomes*, such as how many books has one read or the time allotted to reading a

book. However, *subjective* or *implicit outcomes*, like emotions and feelings generated by the reading encounter, are rarely considered. Did the reader read the book happily? Did the reader trust the conclusion drawn by the author of the book? Does the reader feel *motivated* enough to comply with the author's recommendation? A common assumption is that as long as the explicit outcomes are well managed, the readers experience will be great.

Types of knowledge needed for delivering implicit reading outcomes

There are numerous reasons reading experience has not moved beyond explicit outcomes. The most common reason is that, reading encounters are intangible and that people-intensive processes are inherently unpredictable, and hence uncontrollable. That is, by extension, they are "undesignable". This has mainly accounted for the low product design operations from publishers and other practitioners in the book industry.

Findings from behavioral decision making, cognitive psychology, and social psychology can point book industry players to ideas for redesigning the psychological or implicit aspects of reading encounters (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Importance of understanding readers psychology

Some of the importance publishers and other players in the book industry could gain by understanding readers psychology are enlisted as follows.

- It helps book industry players to understand what shapes readers' perceptions and how readers summarize and recall experiences.
- The feelings and emotions that drive a reader's perceptions might be obvious if practitioners have processes in place to detect them.
- It helps book industry players to deliver better service.
- It helps book industry players to manage readers interactions, especially when dealing with a large number of people, as in the case of group reading.

Conclusion

All in all, practitioners in the book industry could leverage on reading psychology of readers to publish books that will help manage readers interactions and deliver improved and quality books for readers.

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