



FINAL REPORT

2020-2022

FOREWORD



BODOUR AL QASIMI

Former President of the International Publishers Association (2021-2022)

In 2019, the International Publishers Association (IPA) and Dubai Cares agreed to collaborate in a search for answers to some of Africa's entrenched literacy, reading and book accessibility challenges.

The resulting partnership, the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund (APIF), was created on the understanding that local challenges need local solutions—a principle to which the APIF has rigorously adhered.

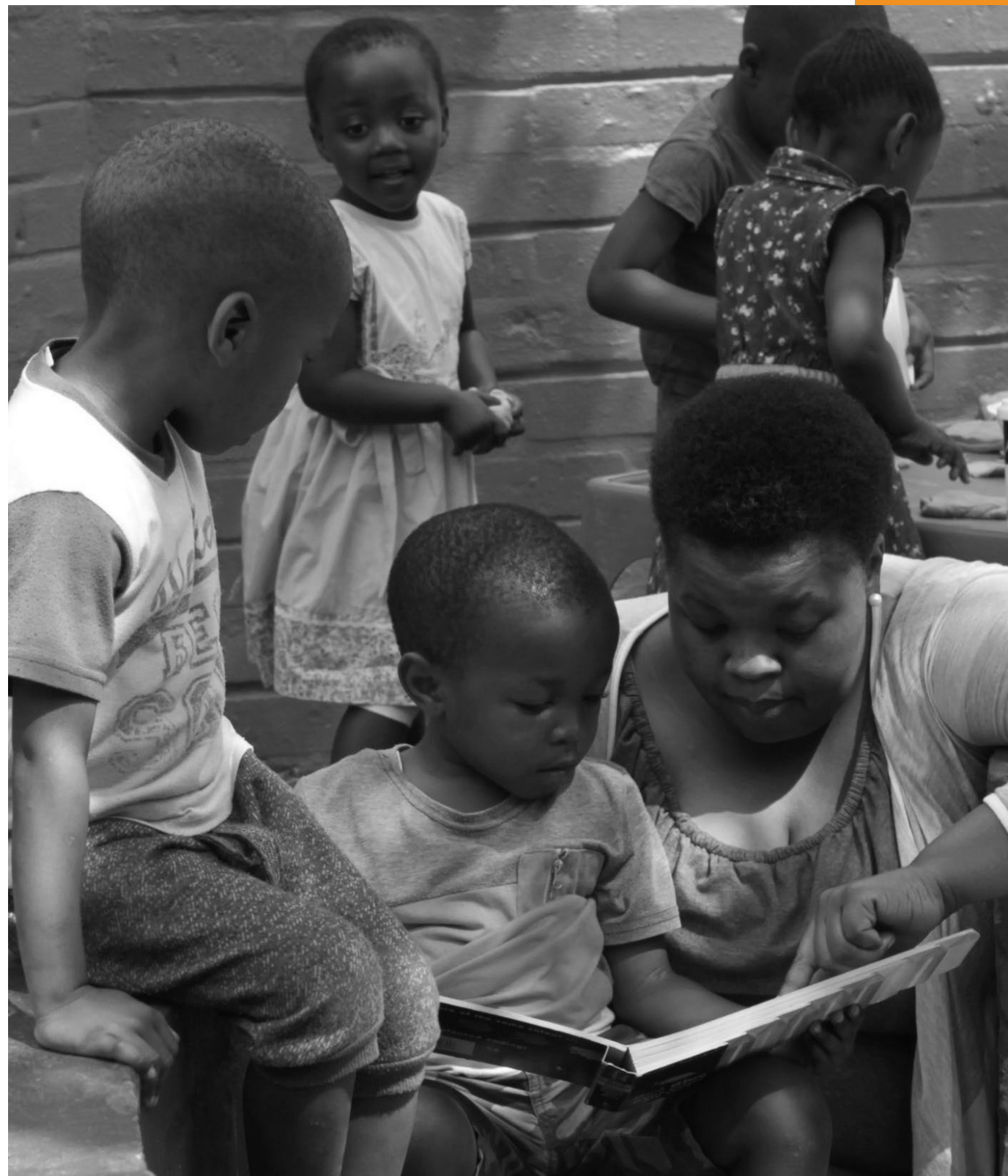
Dubai Cares provided a US \$800,000 fund, which the IPA administered

and distributed from 2019 to 2022. The APIF has financed 18 separate projects, covering indigenous language publishing, literacy, distance learning and library access in remote communities, and accessible book publishing for visually impaired readers. Today, tens of thousands of people in around 20 countries are feeling the benefits of work done by changemakers funded by the APIF.

The objectives of this unprecedented undertaking were remove barriers to reading and learning; to encourage and enable homegrown talent; and to reward the problem-solving spirit that is the hallmark of African innovation and business.

We hope that the pages that follow demonstrate that we succeeded in that endeavour.

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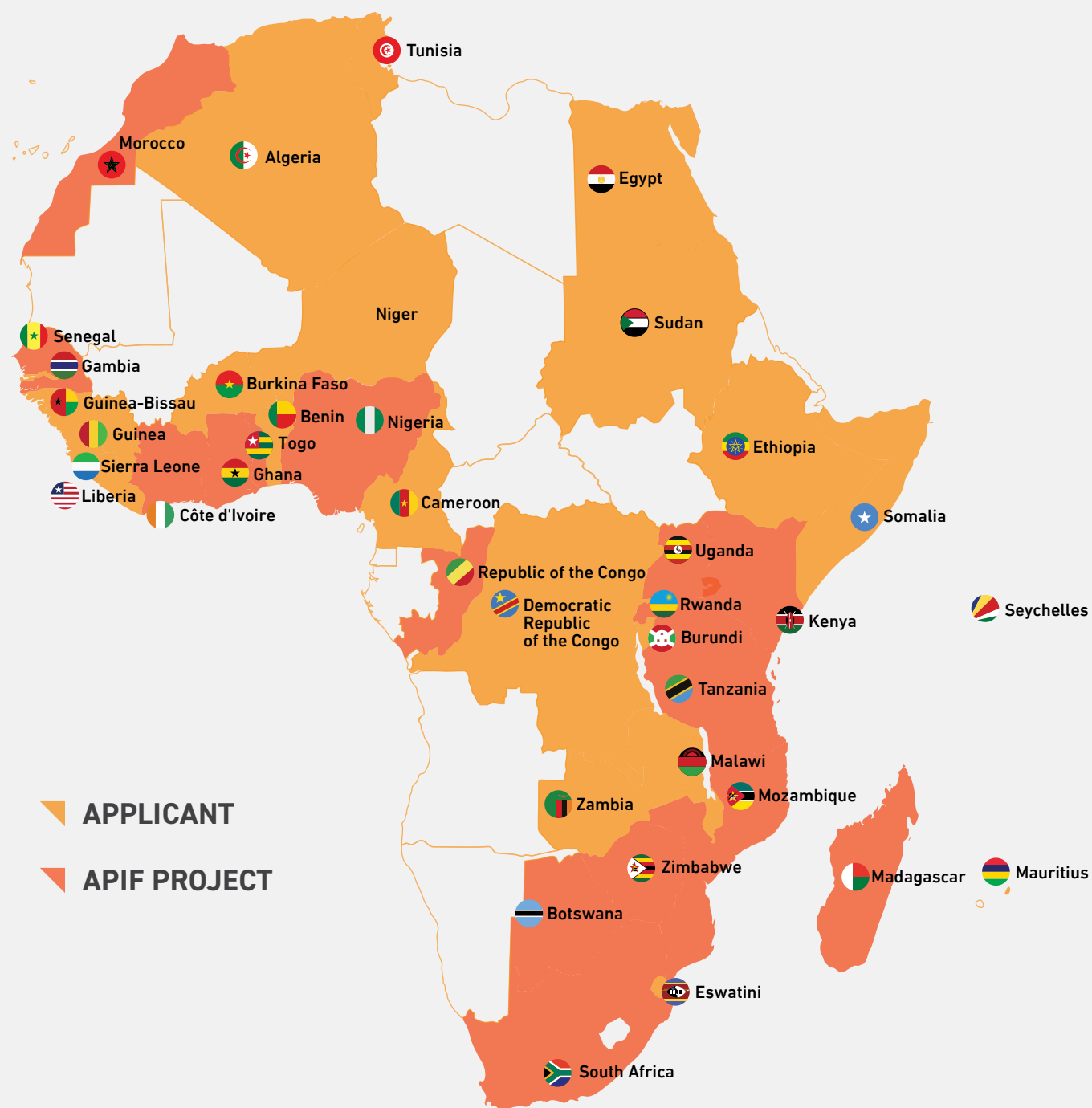
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APIF REACH



2020-2022 IN NUMBERS



US \$800,000 INITIAL FUND



13 COUNTRIES BENEFITING FROM APIF PROGRAMS



14 PUBLISHING AND READING PROJECTS



6 LIBRARY PROJECTS



35 ACCESSIBLE BOOKS PUBLISHED



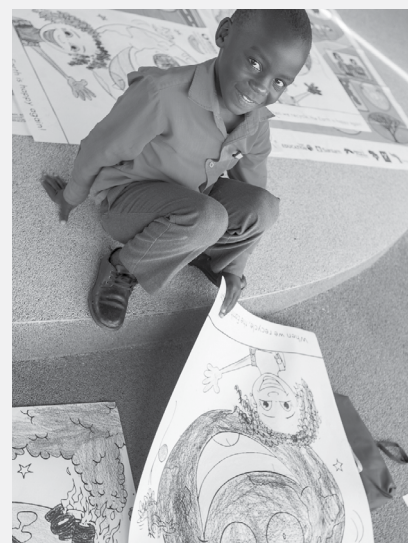
600 APPLICATIONS PROCESSED

2020 KEEPING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES ALIVE



In October 2019 the IPA Africa Publishing Innovation Fund (APIF) Committee, comprising senior publishers from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia, under the leadership of then IPA Vice-President, Bodour Al Qasimi, financed five publishing innovation projects, a library restoration and an established program to build a library at the Kakuma refugee camp, in Kenya.

Here is an overview of those projects and their status halfway through their grant period.



SOUTH AFRICA

PUKU FOUNDATION
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 20,000



South African nonprofit [Puku Foundation](#), which promotes children's literature, education, and literacy in Southern Africa, created a digital portal called 'Pukupedia'. The portal serves as a hub for multilingual expertise in children's literature; for nurturing new local talent through writing workshops, online courses, and mentoring; and developing reading culture among teachers, librarians, writers, literacy activists and young people. The work is part of Puku's ongoing development of a comprehensive network of children's literature reviewers through multilingual writing and review workshops.

Puku also used the grant to continue developing digital platforms and collaborative projects to communicate, advocate, network and participate in book promotion. This provides authors, publishers, and consumers of African children's literature with a structured system for selecting, reviewing, and sharing accurate data on children's books. Boosted by a Presidential Employment Stimulus grant, Puku also organized a series of webinars in nine indigenous languages.

Writer and Puku Executive Director Elinor Sisulu said the Covid-19 pandemic reaffirmed the need for children to become independent readers with access to books in their own languages. Puku's project 'Using digital technologies to promote children's literature in South Africa's indigenous languages' earned the 2021 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize.

More information on Puku's history and achievements can be found [on Puku's YouTube channel](#) and in [the Puku Biennial Report](#).



Elinor Sisulu
Executive Director,
Puku

"The APIF grant was invaluable, not only for the monetary contribution, but for the wise counsel on clarifying our strategic direction, as well as the recognition and affirmation. To get that level of continental recognition boosted our fundraising, partnerships and networking efforts. It also introduced us to the other amazing reading promotion initiatives around the continent and we have no doubt that when we have steadied our ship financially, we will be able to reach out to develop these partnerships. The APIF award was a shot in the arm of a chronically underfunded and struggling organization. It has ensured the survival of Puku. We are truly grateful to Dubai Cares and the International Publishers Association for making this work possible."

GHANA

ACCORD LITERARY
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 20,000



[Accord Literary](#) is a literary agency founded in Ghana whose focus is on mentoring and nurturing new voices writing for young readers from across sub-Saharan Africa. It offers workshops and creative writing training and is currently one-to-one coaching eight authors from five countries.

Working with an international network of rights managers, Accord has secured publishing contracts around the world, from North America to Brazil, Ghana, Italy, Nigeria, Senegal, and the UK.

The agency's first major partner was Norton Publishing, which signed seven contracts for North American rights. Currently there are five books in print, all of which have received starred reviews from international publishing industry media.

Crossing The Stream, by Elizabeth-Irene Baitie, has won a Howard University Honor Award, which the author collected at an award ceremony in Washington, DC, in November 2022. Accord has also sold sub rights to Junior Library Guild and to audio publishers, and retail sales have been strong, with notable support from independent booksellers.

Part of Accord's mission is to bring excellent books to African readers. Having found partners for several of their authors in sub-Saharan Africa, Accord-associated titles will be available in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda.

Accord's founding purpose was to bring new African literary voices to the world, a goal that has been achieved and exceeded. The team continues to build on its success, running workshops, hosting school outreach programs, and issuing callouts for new authors. Accord literary has been positively received by the publishing world and the authors it works with, many of whom were unknown previously, are finding readers and success internationally.



Sarah Odedina

Director,
 Accord Literary

"The APIF Grant was the vital support we needed to get established. Now author's books are being published around the world and are bringing fresh new voices to readers everywhere. Accord is proud to be helping share new and positive narratives that offer an inclusive insight into the world of African story telling for young readers."

NIGERIA

CASSAVA REPUBLIC
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 20,000



Independent Nigerian publishing house [Cassava Republic](#) led a project to create and translate children's books into the underserved Nigerian languages of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba, giving kids access to beautiful, illustrated stories in their native tongues.

To date, Cassava has curated, translated, and published three children's books from the three Nigerian languages into English. The company commissioned three well-known Nigerian writers—Jumoke Verissimo, Chika Ungiwe, and Elnathan John—to write children's books in their mother tongues (Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa) based on themes of their choosing.

The books were then illustrated and each translated into English, resulting in six books. The first, Aduke and the Moon's Hidden Secret, by Jumoke Verissimo, in Yoruba, was released in November 2022, with the remaining books scheduled for release in July and November 2023.

Cassava combined retail, educational, and government purchase channels, and distributed the books to schools, bookshops, Yoruba educational communities, and other institutions. The response to Aduke and the Moon's Hidden Secret was overwhelmingly positive, with parents and educational centres praising its quality.

Several southwestern states in Nigeria, including Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, and Osun, are currently reviewing the Yoruba edition for inclusion into their curriculum. Parents and teachers in Nigeria and elsewhere have reported that the books make Yoruba learning more meaningful, engaging, and enjoyable for their children. The absence of quality and beautifully illustrated children's books in indigenous languages has resulted in greater demand for the Yoruba edition than the English edition.



Bibi Bakare-Yusuf

Publishing Director,
 Cassava Republic

"Thanks to the APIF, we were able to pilot a long-term vision of publishing books in indigenous Nigerian languages, creating reading materials that facilitate language learning, making it more inclusive and accessible, while advocating for universal education, gender balance and representation, and promoting a love of reading in local languages. The success of this project has provided us with a replicable and scalable model for publishing books in local languages. The APIF provided us with the opportunity to experiment with originating and publishing books in three Nigerian languages, demonstrating the active interest and future market for books in local languages. We're inspired to continue publishing and translating more books in local languages, confident in the knowledge that there is a market for these books, and we're excited about the future of indigenous publishing in Africa."

KENYA

POSITIVELY AFRICAN
GRANT AMOUNT: **US\$ 20,000**

[Positively African](#) is a Kenyan content-creation and literary events company that seeks to make African literature accessible, encourage lifelong learning and help connect communities. Its goal is to distribute audio stories Africa-wide via digital platforms and on the streets through partnerships with universities and centres for the visually impaired.

Through the APIF grant, Positively African produced a 90-minute three-part audio drama called Tales of the Accidental City, adapted from short stories by Kenyan writers. The podcast tells the story of four residents of Nairobi, stuck together in an online anger management class, who must explain what got them there and attempt to heal the wounds of the past.

After issuing an open call for voice artists, Positively African received more than 250 applications from which it selected five for main roles and five extras. After a rigorous two-week rehearsal period, including individual sessions with each voice actor, the drama was recorded at TransWorld studios, Nairobi, and edited in London.

Kenyan musicians provided the music for the podcast and a Kenyan illustrator who created the covers for each episode for the website. The audio drama was launched at one of Africa's biggest literary festivals, Ake Arts and Books Festival, in Nigeria, and is available on several platforms, including Spotify, Anchor, Google Podcasts and Apple Podcasts. It has also been used by several universities in the literary studies classes.

The project also led to spin-off content, notably a feature-length homonymous [experimental film](#) with additional funding from the African Culture Fund; and [real life stories](#) of ordinary Nairobians (inspired by Humans of New York) published on the Positively African website and the leading news and lifestyle platform, This is Africa.

The film has been screened at 25 festivals globally and has won several awards, including the Audience Award and Special Mention for Best Film Directed by a Woman at Cine Invisible in Bilbao, Spain, and Best Experimental Film at the Silicon Valley African Film Festival, USA. The film has been subtitled into Spanish, Portuguese and French and continues to be shown at festivals worldwide.



Maimouna Jallow

Director,
Positively African

"Producing the show mid-pandemic was a challenge, but also a lifeline for the cast, many of whom had been out of work since the Covid 19 outbreak. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that what started off as a project to create African audio content would grow into a web series and a film that has won awards and been watched by audiences worldwide. The APIF grant meant that we could turn our ideas into words, our words into audio stories, and our audio stories into a film. It was truly a burst of creativity. And it is having real impact! All this content has spurred critical conversations around mental health and social justice."

NIGERIA

OKADABOOKS
GRANT AMOUNT: **US\$ 20,000**

Through its [Write the Future](#) project, Nigerian e-publishing start-up [OkadaBooks](#) is driving literacy by giving teachers, students, and parents free mobile phone access to books that children in Nigeria's rural, low-income communities can relate to.

By identifying new talent through writing competitions, OkadaBooks engaged eight children's authors and an editor to create and distribute [eight new titles](#) that address issues of gender equality, ethnic unity, and environmental awareness.

OkadaBooks partnered with [Teach for Nigeria](#) (TFN), a non-profit organization that's passionate about connecting millions of Nigerian children to excellent education for a better future, to help reach school children in our target demographic.

Through the TFN network, OkadaBooks managed to get the print, digital and audio books directly to schoolchildren, as well as their teachers and parents.

More than 250 kids received physical copies of the books, over 1,000 teachers received the digital stories and shared them with their pupils, numbering over 20,000 across Nigeria, and 2,000 people have read eBook versions of the stories via the [OkadaBooks store](#). In addition, more than 10,000 visitors have access to either a version of the book (eBook or audiobook) via the dedicated project webpage.

The target grade were learners in primary 1 – 4 and ages 3 – 8. The stories are written in simple English, with emphasis on local and cultural terms unique to Nigerian students.

Houses in the Sand, Elnathan John.

Kemi & Khadijat, Aduke Gomez.

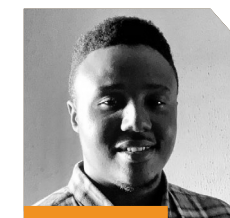
Onome's Cooking Disaster, Sope Martins.

Ugo Gets Her Wish, Chika Unigwe.

I Want a Pig, Ugo Anidi. What the Eyes See, Yejide Kilanko.

The Girl with the Magic Spanner, Abubakar Ibrahim.

Just One Bite, Olusayo Ajetunmobi.



Arinze 'Talius'
EbeleDike

Program Coordinator,
OkadaBooks

"We've received reports of students who've previously struggled with reading, naturally gravitate and enjoy reading the stories in the Write The Future project, which has helped improve their general reading proficiency. We've also garnered many positive reviews and feedback from parents and teachers on how these stories have positively influenced their kids."

KENYA

BOOK BUNK

GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 50,000

Book Bunk is a Nairobi organization that has led a project to restore the Kenyan capital's McMillan Memorial Library. It won \$60,000 towards work on the library's Kaloleni branch and children's books to stock it.

This gazetted heritage site is now a dedicated children's library injecting new life into the Kaloleni neighbourhood with new collections, free public programming and the provision of amenities.

Key highlights include upgraded facilities such as solar panels, garden furniture, perimeter wall, new toilets, WiFi access, TV screen and desktop computers, a water pump and a wayfinder screen exhibiting upcoming programming. In addition, there are now 3,181 books in circulation serving 10,834 individual users from June 2020 (opening date) to December 2022.

A Facilities Team of eight community residents oversees wellness and the security of library communities and the building, circulating between this library and Eastlands Library, another Book Bunk-run facility. Team members were involved in the restoration process and in many cases, have used this library in the past, have children that do, or both.

This library now offers enriching **public programming** including:

Play Bunk: Dedicated playtime at the library. For a couple of hours every day, library users are encouraged to step away from their textbooks/ academic work and interact with the different built-for-play activities across the libraries. Featuring chess, draughts, LEGO, Scrabble, and more.

Dance Bunk: Dance programme whose curriculum uses a social-emotional learning framework incorporating meditation, mindfulness, and movement-based exercises from dance movement therapy to engage children in a playful learning framework. This is a 6-week programme that serves over 60 children aged 6 to 16 years old.

Jamhuri Day at The Library: An annual party held on Kenya's Independence Day (Jamhuri) featuring film screenings, storytelling, arts and craft, music and dance performances, lunch and goody bags! The 2022 edition attracted an audience of 735 children.

Hepa Jam: A programme that encourages use of the library as a refuge from Nairobi's infamous traffic jam! We offer extended library opening hours (16 additional hours per week) and additional activities and support during these hours, including the provision of qualified academic tutors to assist learners with their homework.



Angela Wachuka

Publisher and
Cofounder, Book Bunk

"This grant kickstarted our library restoration project, crystallizing our mission in deeply enriching ways. The feat of delivering an upgraded children's library during the pandemic lockdown in collaboration with the Kaloleni community was a major highlight for all of us. This space now delivers all sorts of magical offerings including play time for children, homework clubs and a collection of books that takes children on journeys around the world. For this, we are deeply grateful for your support!"



Wanjiru Koinange

Author and Cofounder,
Book Bunk

"When we set out to work on restoring some of Kenya's oldest libraries, we didn't really have a template or blueprint to guide us. What we did have was a whole lot of data and a strong gut feeling that libraries could really shift things for our communities and the city at large. The rehabilitation of the Kaloleni library allowed us to convert this gut feeling into a lovely, community-led proof of concept. We have since restored another, much larger library and are poised to begin our third restoration project in the coming months. However, as we grow and scale our vision for public libraries, we'll always regard the Kaloleni Library as the one that showed us it's all possible."



KENYA

EXPOSING HOPE

GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 10,000



The [Exposing Hope](#) project has built a library for one of many schools in the world's largest refugee settlement, the Kakuma camp, in Kenya. Kakuma is home to refugees from DRC Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, and Uganda among others, and the APIF has provided funds to buy hundreds of textbooks listed in the Kenyan national curriculum to underpin the pupils' studies.

The Exposing Hope Library is an innovative and impactful initiative that's providing education and literacy resources to the students, young adults, and children living in the camp.

With refugee populations growing, schools have been unable to keep up with children's demand for education. The Vision Secondary School moved to a 'two schools in one' concept, doubling the number of students it was able to accommodate by having two sittings, one from 6:30am-12:30pm, the second from 1pm-5pm. This allows for the classrooms to be used at maximum capacity during daylight hours although it limits the space for students to undertake personal studying time.

The library is making a significant difference as a space for students to sit for exams, hold study groups, access thousands of books, and countless hours of individual study time. It has become a hub of learning and a sanctuary for those seeking knowledge and personal development. The books and educational materials in the library are carefully selected to meet the needs of the community and are being well-used and appreciated by the camp's residents.



Alissa Everett

Founder,
Exposing Hope

"As well as access to books and educational materials, the library also offers a quiet, safe, and well-lit place to gather, read, study and do homework. This is enabling young people with goals of higher education and professional careers to pursue extracurricular time dedicated to study. This is particularly important as many refugee children and young adults have had their educations disrupted or halted by war or displacement. The Exposing Hope Library is not only providing access to education and resources, but it's also empowering individuals and building a brighter future for the camp's residents."



2021

REMOTE LEARNING SOLUTIONS SO NO ONE GETS LEFT BEHIND



In its second year, the APIF received more than 300 applications from innovators in 26 African countries, a major uptick in interest. School closures and the subsequent transition to online learning amid the COVID-19 emergency turned the APIF's focus to digital learning innovations to help the millions of African students in under-resourced rural communities. Many of them were beyond the reach of national efforts to transition to remote learning and had no access to libraries.

After a rigorous process between June and November 2020, the Committee chose five projects estimated to impact the lives of 11 million young Africans in five countries.

GHANA

LEARNERS GIRLS FOUNDATION
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 6,500



Learners Girls Foundation (LGF) is a small, ambitious NGO committed to keeping girls in Ghana's rural Upper East Region in school despite cultural pressure to leave. Led by Bushiratu Kumuriwor Alira, LGF invested in a mentorship and e-library initiative for girls aged six to 18, where trained volunteers will mentor and tutor them, and cultivate their skills and interests.

In 2020 school closures amid the Covid-19 pandemic affected the education of many in Paga, making a better future through education even more remote. In response, the LGF team gave free tuition and mentorship in the shade of trees.

In the Paga community, where most people live through small hold farming or petty trading, most families use their farm produce to cater to their children's education. As a border town to Burkina Faso, young people—but especially girls—are vulnerable to sexual abuse and teenage pregnancy. Many of them work as head porters 'kayaye' along the border, while others travel south to serve as house staff or to sell on the streets to avoid forced early marriages to older men.

Winning the APIF grant allowed LGF to construct a robust library and stock it with more than 2,000 books with locally published content. The inventory includes an e-learning component for accessible digital content, to enable the marginalized people of Paga to learn, create and belong.

Other initiatives under the Girls' Education and Empowerment through Mentorship and E-Learning project include:

Mentorship Program: LGF's STEM mentorship support initiative has touched the lives of about 500 young girls, many of whom went on to enrol in STEM programs at university.

Learner Guide Initiative: This initiative has promoted literacy in five schools in the district and two educational empowerment camps to facilitate reading and writing.



**Kumuriwor Alira
Bushiratu**

Founder and CEO,
Learners Girls
Foundation

"The APIF has made a transformative impact that has ignited a powerful and lasting positive change for the marginalized people of Paga and its environs and has inspired the minds of 500 young girls to be empowered through STEM education. We say APIF 'AYEKOO'."

KENYA

EKITABU
GRANT AMOUNT: **US\$ 60,000**



eKitabu is a Kenyan, Rwandan, and American company that seeks to increase accessibility and lower the cost of content for quality education. Headquartered in Nairobi, eKitabu creates innovative learning materials with users and partners from the public and private sectors.

Since 2012, eKitabu has brought accessible digital content, data collection, and programs to engage, recognize and build evidence with learners and teachers in over 1,500 schools across 47 counties of Kenya and 13 countries of Africa.

In March 2021, Kenyan publishers, eKitabu and the APIF, began working together to solve Africa's remote learning challenges and build a more inclusive and equitable learning ecosystem that leaves no one behind.

The project, called Making Accessible Digital Content Work for Children, included:

- Training Kenyan 19 publishing houses on creating accessible digital content;
- Generating 52 accessible titles in a Content Development Challenge, with cash prizes for four publishers to support their accessibility work;
- Delivering over 56,500 accessible curriculum materials installed in 394 digital devices in six pilot schools and reaching 1,261 learners;
- Training and supporting 79 teachers to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the pilot schools and help them utilize accessible digital content in reading activities.

Teachers

eKitabu developed a three-level learning pathway for continuous professional development with teachers. This involved in-person and virtual training and support, and assessments with 25 teachers. Tumaini Kombo, a teacher at the Likoni School for the Visually Impaired, Mombasa, said his students could now navigate computers and the eKitabu app to read books. Learners with visual impairments use headphones to listen to storybooks and those with low vision can use the large fonts.

Learners

The learners were very curious about digital devices, which make learning more engaging and promote sharing and reading together for an inclusive classroom. UDL approaches to teaching also made learning more accessible and engaging and eased the lesson delivery process for teachers. eKitabu piloted internet provision to boost the use of accessible digital content.

Publishers

In collaboration with Kenya Publishers Association (KPA), eKitabu participated in Nairobi International Book Fair 2022 and worked with publishers and authors through 11 'Book Talk' events, where authors and artists read to and interacted with children. The Book Talks led to new collaborations with authors, artists and publishers, and eKitabu joined musical artists, illustrator-authors and the publisher Sol Kids in [Sol Kids Fest](#).

APIF multiplier effect

Through APIF, eKitabu has engaged with fellow APIF alumni, Learners Girls Foundation in Ghana and Nemashakwe Community Library and Information Resource Centre, in Zimbabwe. eKitabu provided accessible digital content to the two libraries; gave training on how to utilize the accessible digital resources; and supported the launch of the two libraries in Zimbabwe and Ghana. This relationship continues, with ongoing work to co-promote literacy and use of accessible digital books.



Mercy Kirui

Senior Manager,
Content, eKitabu

"APIF has contributed to a more cohesive ecosystem and brought teachers, learners, and publishers into the journey of Africa's remote learning challenges to improve learning for all. We have seen the impact of the project in widening access to engaging digital content and promoting utilization in classrooms by teachers, learners, and even new development of inclusive content by publishers. The work to promote inclusion, increase accessibility and improve engagement and learning continues in 2023—eKitabu is grateful to Dubai Cares and the APIF for partnering with us during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond."



RWANDA

SAVE THE CHILDREN
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 50,000



Save the Children Rwanda's project, called African Digital Reading and eBook Solutions, targeted children aged three to nine, to improve their access to stories in the Kinyarwanda language through the adoption of digital solutions.

Save the Children worked with partners to digitize reading materials and give children access to Kinyarwanda books. The organization also equipped eight community libraries across five districts—Burera, Gasabo, Kirehe, Ngororero and Ruhango—and trained 270 librarians from eight community libraries.

Key activities included:

1. Promoting children's digital literacy through the distribution of tablets and projectors.
2. Capacity building and coaching of Community Librarians and Community Library Management Committee Members to ensure they fully support children and provide them with quality digital reading skills.
3. Airing read-aloud audio stories on local radio stations to target children countrywide.
4. Staging children's reading competitions to foster a culture of digital reading among children.
5. Distribution of hand sanitizers as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19.
6. Monitoring and evaluation to assess impacts, challenges, and feasible mitigations.

To date, each of the eight libraries has a projector and at least four accessible tablets containing 100 stories in audio and PDF formats. The number of children joining the libraries has increased, their school performance has improved with their newfound digital skills, and parents have responded positively to the initiative.



Paulin Ndahayo

Education Program Manager,
 Save the Children Rwanda

"The APIF supported Save the Children to improve children's literacy by providing the digital reading materials to eight community libraries across five districts in Rwanda. We have observed amazing, positive changes in the children, who have been filling the libraries."

The digital materials have not only offered the opportunity to easily keep many books in one place, but also availed books in various formats such as audio, and PDF formats. However, challenges remain, such as the scarcity of digital reading materials and printed books in libraries, lack of internet in community libraries, and demotivated, underpaid library and many more."

TANZANIA

BOOK AID INTERNATIONAL
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 38,500



The APIF funded Book Aid International's Voyager Container Library project in Zanzibar in 2021 and a second scheme, the African Story Box, in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe in 2022. Both projects are giving access to books and create encouraging and supportive environments for children to discover the joy of reading. They have also supported the purchase of locally published books and partners working to promote reading and local publishing.

The Voyager Container Library project transformed three shipping containers into a fully-equipped, vibrant new library in rural Dunga in Zanzibar. The library is filled with 5,000 brand new UK published books for children and adults and 1,192 locally purchased books in local languages. Children have access to books for study and enjoyment as well as a variety of activities that entertain and encourage them to develop a love of reading. Adult users have access to books for leisure reading and personal development.

The Zanzibar Library Service are delighted to have been able to establish a branch library in Dunga, which is frequently visited by officials from mainland Tanzania as an example of good practice for creating libraries in rural areas.

The library is staffed by three trained librarians who enjoy good relations with the local community and run a range of activities to engage users. These include storytelling, 'fill the blanks', questions and answers, drawing, and letter and sound reading. Other activities include group reading, individual reading, counting and book reviews.

The community have embraced the library, with girls in particular making full use of the range of services. It has become a significant educational and learning resource for the local community in Dunga. Primary pupils have improved their English, gained confidence in participating in class and are able to read more proficiently. Girls especially are developing a love of reading with many using the library daily. There is high local awareness of the library, and parents are happy to let their children attend, in the knowledge they are safe there.



Alison Tweed

Chief Executive,
 Book Aid International

"Thanks to support from the APIF thousands of children now have access to a rich and diverse collection of books through innovative projects like the African Story Box and the Voyager Container Library. Girls in Zanzibar especially are enjoying the library, enabling them to benefit from a resource closer to home meanwhile reading periods in schools in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe are revived with books that inspire and encourage the joy of reading."

ZIMBABWE

CHIRIKURE CHIRIKURE
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 15,500



Celebrated Zimbabwean poet Chirikure Chirikure has developed the Nemashakwe Community Library and Resource Centre in rural Zimbabwe by converting an old shop building belonging to his family.

Chirikure's objective was to give students, school leavers, and young adults in the rural Gutu district, where learning resources are minimal, access to knowledge and information to support their studies, broaden their horizons, and improve their prospects. In addition, he also wanted to give local community members access to knowledge and information that could help in their work and career development.

The key steps were:

1. Drilling a borehole for the supply of water to the centre and the community
2. Shipping books from the UK
3. Installing solar power at the centre
4. Buying computers for the centre
5. Creating a management committee for the centre with a caretaker / librarian reporting to it.

As well as the APIF grant, the project got further support from fellow APIF grant winner eKitabu, whose staff trained volunteers and provided the library with eBooks, which complemented the digital educational materials that had been preloaded onto the computers. In addition, eKitabu paid for construction of a security fence around the library.

Furthermore, Book Aid International supplied the library with more than 2,000 books, ranging from primary and secondary school text books, to general reading materials for students and adults, as well as professional books.

After some delays and logistical challenges, chiefly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the library officially opened on 5 October 2022, offering more than 3,500 books, four desk-top computers, educational videos and audio books.

Library attendance grows daily as word spreads and more people appreciate its function. For most members of the Nemashakwe community, this is the first time they have seen a library and information centre. As such, the project has brought a developmental aspect that extends far beyond the provision of books and computers.



Chirikure Chirikure

Founder,
 Nemashakwe Community
 Library and Resource
 Centre

"This project has done much more than making books available to our community. It has introduced a new world of a library which is accessible for free to the community. It has enabled a big percentage of the community to interact with computers for the first time in their lives. The provision of clean, running water does not only help with issues of hygiene and health, but also helps bring the community together, and also draw more people to the library."



2022

SPARKING A LOVE OF READING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



In 2022, the APIF received scores of applications from aspiring changemakers in 18 African nations, with ideas to nurture the love of reading among young Africans.

Publishing in African markets tends to lean steeply towards textbooks, which represent up to 90% of sales in some countries. In most African markets, reading is largely associated with education, religion, or self-improvement, rather than pleasure.

Publishers in these markets are heavily dependent on selling printed textbooks to governments, a business model whose precarity was laid bare when Covid-19 closed schools and drove classroom learning online.

Here we detail the five winning projects, which together seek to reach children and young readers across the African continent.

BOTSWANA, IVORY COAST, KENYA, NIGERIA, RWANDA, SENEGAL

ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA (ADEA)
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 50,000

The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) is a policy dialogue forum that encourages policy and practice reform through data, experiences, and ideas. Founded in 1988 by the World Bank, ADEA seeks to encourage exchange among ministries of education and development agencies.

In its Read with a Star project, ADEA sought to encourage parental involvement in reading at home while inspiring teachers and children to read for pleasure in and out of school. The goal was to increase the number of children reading quality books in Africa and improve overall literacy rates among African children.

ADEA's campaign primary schools children, Ministries of Education reading programs, and parents of children with reading difficulties.

Key activities include:

- Shooting and sharing clips of celebrities reading to children and vice versa. Promotion across digital platforms encouraging reassign together.
- Running a competition where parents send in videos of them reading to their children and vice versa. Winners will receive a cash prize and be part of ongoing promotion;
- ADEA has identified three potential influencers and celebrities to work with, as well as a videographer.

ADEA is planning video shoots at typical peri-urban schools. Working with the African Development Bank (AfDB), ADEA is approaching sports, media, and entertainment influencers to promote a reading culture in schools and homes.

ADEA is also working with Côte d'Ivoire's Minister of National Education as their literacy and numeracy champion in francophone countries. The minister will arrange a French language campaign video shoot at an Abidjan primary school. ADEA has also issued a call to hire a video production company to develop the campaign video, photography, and graphics in English. This video will be produced with Ghanaian digital influencers.



Albert Nsengiyumva

Executive Secretary,
Association for the
Development of
Education in Africa
(ADEA)

"At the ADEA 2022 organized Triennale in Mauritius, Ministers of Education in Africa committed to increasing investment and efforts to address the literacy and numeracy issues as well as foundational learning poverty in Africa. The 'Read with a Star' campaign aligns itself perfectly to the commitments of the Ministers. ADEA is excited to work with the IPA and various personalities and stakeholders to encourage parents to read and contribute to helping their children to read."

GHANA, UGANDA, ZIMBABWE

BOOK AID INTERNATIONAL
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 40,750



Book Aid International is the UK's leading book donation and library development charity, every year sending a million new books to disadvantaged children and adults worldwide. BAI's vision is a world where everyone has access to books that will enrich, improve, and change their lives.

The African Story Box project provides primary age children with access to an exciting range of African, UK and international story books suitable for six to 12 year olds.

The project created rich and diverse book collections in 36 primary schools in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe (12 schools per country). More than 7,000 new books have been provided: 4,000 bought locally and 3,700 from the UK. Each school has received a box filled with 100 local African titles and 100 UK titles.

The story books will engage children by reflecting their own culture and surroundings and by showing stories from other cultures. The books are being used to encourage regular reading for pleasure both inside and outside of school.

Book Aid International has partnered with local reading promotion organisations and local publishers will allow a wider promotion of reading. Reading promotion events will take place in each country in February and March 2023 and will bring together local publishers, head teachers, teachers, children, parents, education ministers and other stakeholders to showcase the benefits of reading for pleasure and the wide range of story books available locally.



Alison Tweed

Chief Executive,
Book Aid International

"Thanks to support from the APIF, thousands of children now have access to a rich and diverse collection of books through innovative projects like the African Story Box and the Voyager Container Library. Girls in Zanzibar especially are enjoying the library, enabling them to benefit from a resource closer to home meanwhile reading periods in schools in Ghana, Uganda and Zimbabwe are revived with books that inspire and encourage the joy of reading."

KENYA

OLIVESEED
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 25,000



Oliveseed Kenya Trust is a community-based Kenyan organization working to nurture a culture of reading and learning in the rural communities living alongside the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

The APIF grant enabled Oliveseed to expand its program, called Igniting a Culture of Reading in the Rural Maasai Mara, to another primary school this year and create the first public library in the rural Maasai Mara.

Following an assessment, Oliveseed chose Enturoto Primary School, in the Mara North community of Aitong. Enturoto is a new school strongly supported by its community, which enthusiastically constructed a building for their new library.

Key activities included:

- A capacity-building workshop for teachers and students on how to manage a library and run reading challenges;
- Development of a library with 2,000 books, laptops preloaded with eKitabu East African content, art supplies for visual storytelling, and a play corner.

The teachers have assigned two students from each class to be junior librarians, giving them ownership and responsibility. In the words of the headmaster, 'This investment is a seed that will grow to bear fruits for this generation and has the potential to forever transform this community for the better.'

The library will directly benefit 1,000 students each year and allow them to participate in writing projects organized with 3,000 students from other schools.

We embrace the APIF goal of 'reading beyond the classroom', nearly half the materials are extra-curricular stories in English and Kiswahili to make reading fun. When students read one of the books, they give a presentation or write a review to encourage others.

In addition, the Maasai Mara's first public library is enabling Oliveseed to expand literacy and knowledge resources to the broader community of 10,000 people around Aitong. Land was donated by the community in January 2023, and funds for the building, and the APIF grant will fill it with books and digital resources for children and adults. This will also be home base for Oliveseed's Indigenous Story Project, with young people interviewing their elders and committing their tales to writing. Oliveseed Kenya will publish the stories in printed and digital books.



Amos Kipeen

Co-founder and Director,
Oliveseed Kenya Trust

"Growing up in the rural community of Aitong, we were never privileged to have books in school. We even struggled to get school assignments done, due to limited resources. APIF funds boosted literacy by enabling us to provide books along with reading lights for very needy communities, and we have created a state-of-the-art public library and community education centre, filling the gap that otherwise could have never been plugged. We are so grateful to APIF and the entire team for giving us this opportunity, including attending the Frankfurt Book Fair. Ashe Olenq."

SOUTH AFRICA

PRAESA
GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 5,850



Non-profit organization [PRAESA](#) focuses on multilingual language and literacy development. Founded in 1992, PRAESA has long been involved in multilingual education and early literacy, winning both the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award (2014) and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (2015). PRAESA aims to ensure that children from all languages, classes, and cultural backgrounds have opportunities to become imaginative and critical readers and writers.

This project, called Deepening the Impact of Reading Aloud to Children, seeks to positively impact the way adults across Africa read aloud to children by sharing appropriate information and techniques with adults who engage with children in home, school, and community settings.

PRAESA has developed a new course with six free online live webinars, called Learning to Love Literacy: The power and potential of informal book-sharing for children's language and literacy development.

It's aimed at adults in Sub-Saharan Africa who engage with children—directly or indirectly—at home, in school, and in community settings, such as caregivers, librarians, literacy trainers, ECD trainers, preschool and primary school teachers, and community workers.

This impactful intervention gives demonstrations and guidance on how to:

- select books suited to reading aloud ;
- read aloud to children in an engaging way ;
- use stories as a stimulus for children's imaginative and critical thinking.

Because it has been designed specifically for a Sub-Sharan African audience, its focus is:

- reading aloud in multilingual settings ;
- where and how to access suitable material that's affordable or free ;
- making the most of your available resources.

The course, which ran between 1 March and 5 April 2023, was presented by PRAESA's Executive Director, Professor Carole Bloch, an international early literacy expert.

To capture key elements and messages of the webinars, PRAESA is developing and providing eight free printable handouts that will be given to participants on completion of the course. And from 15 May 2023, the webinar recordings and handouts will be freely available to all on PRAESA's website.



Carole Bloch

Executive Director,
PRAESA

"Unfortunately, too many young children find learning to read tedious. One reason is too few wonderful experiences with books and stories to stir their imaginations. The informal learning and teaching that happens during story sharing often goes unrecognized, yet it's crucial. Adults don't have to be teachers to engage in and enhance children's learning. By supporting this book-sharing course, the APIF is showing the way to make learning to read something children will find desirable and interesting."



MOROCCO

YANBOW AL KITAB

GRANT AMOUNT: US\$ 50,000



Moroccan children's publisher [Yanbow Al Kitab](#) is giving mini libraries to 300 low-income Moroccan families with young children, through the One Family One Library project. They each contain 22 books, access to clips of readings by storytellers, and tips for parents on how to optimize read-aloud time with children.

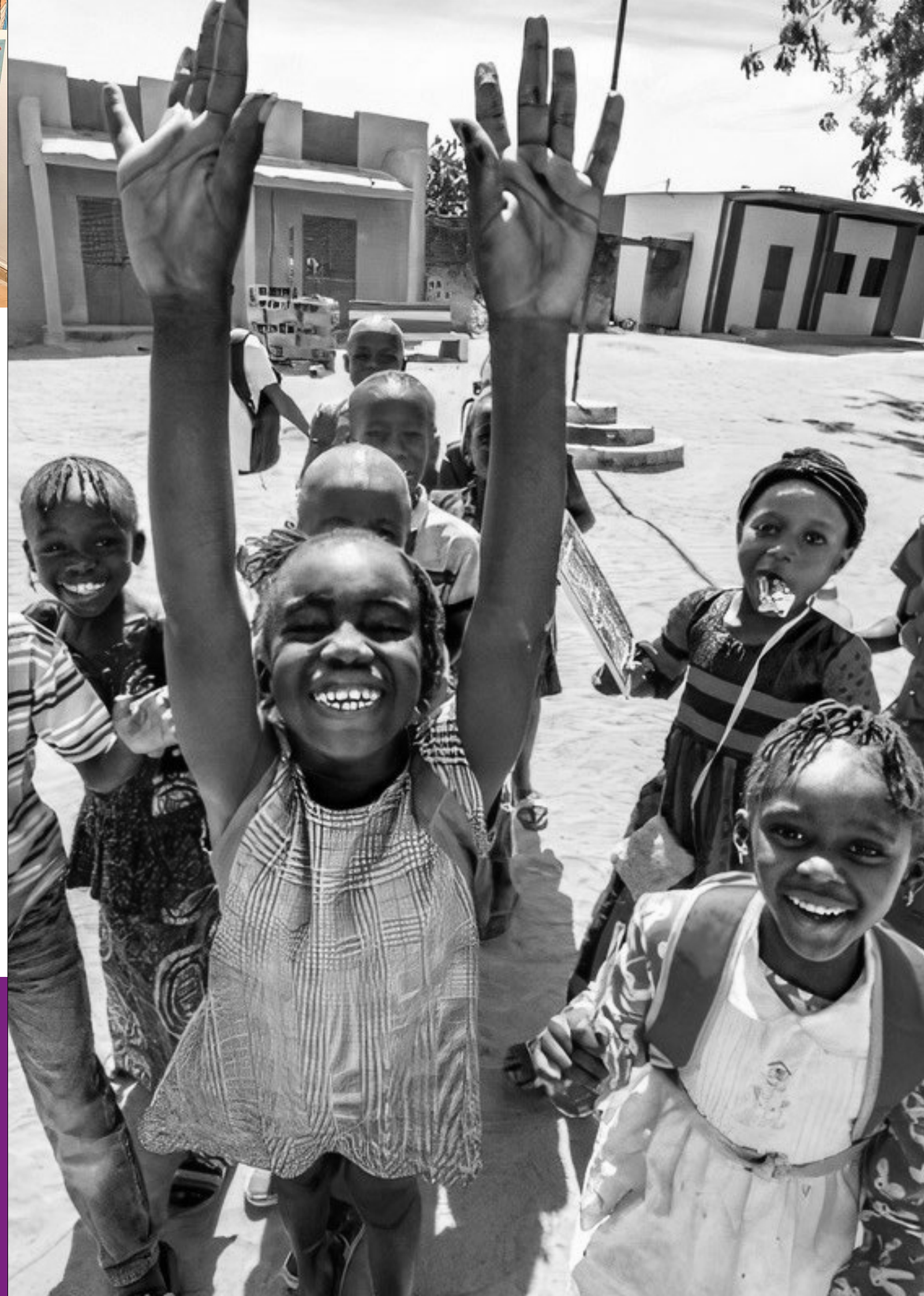
Each story has an accompanying video where the book is read by an adult, with sound effects and music to lend compulsion and drama to the narrative. Practical advice will enable and encourage families to make reading together a routine activity in their lives.

Each box of books is a convenient, mobile home library, which means children can share among their siblings, cousins, and friends. In addition, the complementary YouTube channel provides helpful guidance for the many parents who may have left school young and are less at ease with literature.

The project has recorded six books, with educational support materials in Arabic and French, including a simplified booklet and a card game that's integrated into the box.

So successful has the initiative been that the Moroccan Ministry of Culture has bought 200 boxes for nationwide distribution, the humanitarian [Ajial Association](#) has bought 100 for families in Sidi Hajjaj, and Yanbow Al Kitab has printed 100 additional boxes to give to child carers and teachers. In total, Yanbow will produce 700 boxes, rather than the originally planned 300.

This project's goal is to create an out-of-school reading environment at the heart of families with human values, gender equality and respect for the environment at its core.



Amina Alaoui Hachimi

CEO,
Yanbow Al Kitab

"Thanks to the APIF and Dubai Cares, this project is attracting attention, respect and praise. This will encourage other organizations to follow us and reproduce this experience."

As we continue this project and seek the support of senior decision-makers, we are confident it can be an engine to drive reading in Morocco."

ACCESSIBLE PUBLISHING WITH DAISY CONSORTIUM



Accessible Publishing with DAISY Consortium

In the second half of 2022 the APIF began working with the international DAISY Consortium, a world leader in accessible book publishing, in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The DAISY team, under CEO Richard Orme, has trained many publishers and officials in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, and Uganda. And as a founder member of the WIPO-hosted Accessible Books Consortium (ABC), DAISY has also developed online courses for publishers.

Webinars

Over the second half of 2022, DAISY's experts trained hundreds of African publishers in accessible publishing for readers with visual impairments and reading disabilities.

The first step was to run three free webinars in July, in English, French and Arabic, called *Accessible Publishing Fundamentals*. Close to 200 publishers from 35 countries signed up for the sessions, where DAISY's trainers introduced accessible publishing basics, whom it's for, and why producing 'born accessible' works makes business sense for publishers.

Online training

The DAISY Consortium developed an online course called *Accessible Publishing Concepts*, which was adapted and offered via DAISY's learning platform.

Publishers who completed the course were invited to advanced, workflow-specific training, and to benefit from complementary technical support throughout the autumn of 2022.

In-person workshop, Nairobi

On 13 December, the APIF and DAISY Consortium held a one-day accessible publishing workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, for a select group of engaged publishers who had completed every step of the training in 2022.

The workshop, split between technical and policy-based learning, was led by Prashant Verma, an international accessible publishing expert, for publishers from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Tanzania.

Taking place at the *Makadara* branch of the McMillan Library, which was restored by *Book Bunk* with APIF funding in 2019-2020, it focused on tools and techniques for creating market-ready EPUB publications and strategies to promote inclusive publishing in Africa.

Mini grants for accessible works

The publishers who attended the Nairobi workshop were encouraged to produce new accessible works for African readers in 2023, and to apply for small APIF grants to achieve this.

These ten publishers took up the offer:

1. Uptyke (Kenya)

Produced an inclusive digital storybook for children, called *Coding is Cool*, promoting digital literacy and creativity.

2. Editora Trinta Zero Nove (Mozambique)

Produced a Braille version of a children's book called 'Sabes o que eu vejo?' ('Do you know what I can see?'), by Amina Hachimi Alawi, which it donated to the Mozambican Association for the Blind.

3. ReadIt Books (Tanzania)

Produced the title *Gili na Mwita: Juu Angani* (Gili and Caller: Up In The Sky), by Halima Geuya as a born accessible book ePub.

4. Dzuka Publishing Company (Malawi)

Produced two digitally accessible grammar schoolbooks in English and Chachewa.

- English Grammar for Schools, by M.A Banda
- Galamala wa Chichewa, by I.J.A Namkwenya

5. Evans Brothers (Nigeria)

Five titles readable in Thorium reader, for six- to eight-year-olds, by Modupe T. Oyetade.

- Ivana and Friends
- Ivana saves Christmas Day
- Ivana begins again
- Ivana goes to farm
- Ivana catches a cold

6. Edirar (Madagascar)

Produced three titles as accessible and audio books:

- *Boky miteny / mon livre qui parle*, by Rakemba
- *Ariela sy Ariely (deux Hippocampes)*, by Olifaniry
- *Fara sy ny amboadia (bilingual)*, by Rakemba

7. Tumpale (Malawi)

Two children's titles called The Last Pangolin and The Little Ostrich, by Lindsay Katchika-Jere

8. Book Bunk (Kenya)

Produced Braille versions of 10 popular fiction titles by African authors:

- *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*, by Ayi Kwei Armah
- *One Day I Will Write About This Place*, by Binyavanga Wainaina
- *Freshwater*, by Akwaeke Emezi
- *Love in Colour*, by Bolu Babalola
- *Purple Hibiscus*, by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Dust*, by Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor
- *So Long a Letter*, by Mariama Ba
- *The Havoc of Choice*, by Wanjiru Koinange
- *Sulwe*, by Lupita Nyong'o
- *Going Down River Road*, by Meja Mwangi

9. Babcock (Nigeria)

Produced four titles in accessible formats:

- *Max and the Statutes of Benin City*, by Liora Bigon
- *The Wise Old Man and Other Stories*, by Samuel Okere
- *Our Father Abraham*, by Justina Sam-Okere
- *The Good Woman of Joppa*, by Justina Sam-Okere

10. NIDNET (Nigeria)

Produced five titles on business, the internet, gender violence, and human rights in MP3, accessible EPUB and accessible PDFs.

- *Ahu Gi Bu Nke Gi: Muta Ka Esi Ewulite Ikike Nke Onwe Megide Ndi Ga-Acho Iwakpo Ahu Gi*, by Odoziaku Peace Anakam (Igbo)
- *Your Body Is Yours: Learn to Protect and Defend Yourself Against Harassment and Assaults*, by NIDNET (English)
- *What is the Internet and What Are Its Benefits?* by Chris Prince Udochukwu Njoku
- *Gini Bu Intaneti Na Urù Di Na Ya?* by Chris Prince Udochukwu Njoku (Igbo)
- *Nkà Di Ichè Ichè Onye Choro Ime Nke Oma na Biuzinesi Ga-Enwe (The Skills You Need to Succeed In Business)* by Roseline Nneoma Okeke and Chris Prince Udochukwu Njoku (Igbo)



FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR 2022: PUTTING AFRICAN PUBLISHING IN THE SPOTLIGHT



The APIF and African publishing were front and centre at the world's biggest book fair in October 2022 as APIF grantees and partners gathered for a special Spotlight on Africa programme.

A collective stand and half-day seminar at Frankfurt Book Fair took its cue from a first edition at Bologna Children's Book Fair, in March 2022.

Ten APIF grant winners and the DAISY Consortium—which was training African publishers in the arts of accessible publishing under the APIF's final iteration—co-exhibited their work on a large collective stand in Hall 4.1.

On Thursday 20 October we held three public discussions covering promotion of accessible publishing in Africa; education and reading on the African continent; and transforming libraries to better serve contemporary communities.

APIF Chair Bodour Al Qasimi opened the seminar, thanking the Frankfurt management for their support. In a keynote speech, German Foreign Office cultural relations head Carsten Wilms paid tribute to African creativity and efforts to raise its international profile.

'We're grateful to the many actors in the publishing industry as well as in civil society, academia and the broader society who share and advance this goal of putting the spotlight on Africa,' he said.

Frankfurt Book Fair President and CEO Juergen Boos then told the packed seminar he was determined to deepen his fair's engagement with African publishers, and that the Spotlight programme was an encouraging first step towards that goal.

Closing the session, APIF programme manager Ben Steward saluted the remarkable character of the grantees.

'These are real changemakers who live according to a set of values, and who make it their purpose in life to leave the world brighter today than it was yesterday,' he said.



THE AFRICA PUBLISHING INNOVATION FUND

Since May 2019 the International Publishers Association (IPA) and the UAE-based philanthropic organization [Dubai Cares](#) have been collaborating to improve literacy rates, book access, and inclusive publishing, and to increase the availability of library services in Africa.

Under the agreement, the IPA created the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund, to administer Dubai Cares' \$800,000 donation at a rate of \$200,000 per year from 2019 to 2023, with a view to yielding the greatest possible impact on the ground.

Oversight of the important task falls to the Africa Publishing Innovation Fund Committee, which is chaired by IPA Vice-President, Bodour Al Qasimi, and comprises senior publishers from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tunisia.

Since its inception, the APIF has focused on promotion of indigenous languages (2019); tackling Africa's digital and remote learning challenges, which were exacerbated by the pandemic (2020); developing reading culture beyond the classroom (2021); and raising the profile and availability of accessible materials for people with visual impairments and other print disabilities (2022).

At the end of 2022 the APIF project will reach its conclusion, but we hope the benefits of this unique partnership will be in place for at least a generation.

APIF COMMITTEE

Since 2019, the Africa Publishing Innovation Committee has filtered hundreds of applications to find projects and initiatives to receive APIF grants. It is the Committee members who decide which areas to focus on each year, guided by prevailing book-related priorities at a given time.

The Committee members are publishing leaders from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tunisia, and they are convened under the leadership of IPA President, Bodour Al Qasimi, the CEO and founder of the Kalimat Publishing Group.



Bodour Al Qasimi

Bodour Al Qasimi is the former President of the International Publishers Association (IPA), the CEO and Founder of UAE-based Kalimat Publishing Group, and the Chair of the Africa Publishing Innovation Committee.



Akoss Ofori-Mensah

Managing Director, Sub-Saharan Publishers; Member of the Council of Management of African Books Collective, Oxford, UK.



Brian Wafawarowa

Chief Content and Product Officer at Juta and Company (Pty) Ltd, Chair of the IPA Inclusive Publishing and Literacy Committee



Gbadega Adedapo

Chairman of Nigeria Book Fair Trust; CEO Rasmed Publications Limited.



Lawrence Njagi

Chairman, Kenya Publishers Association; Founder and Managing Director, Mountain Top Publishers (Kenya); Treasurer and board member, African Publishers Network (APNET).



Mohamed Salah Maalej

General coordinator of Tunisia's International Book Fair; President of the Arab and International Exhibitions Committee in the Arab Publishers Association; CEO of Kounouz Publishing.

FINANCIALS

SUMMARY OF APIF DISBURSALS AND COSTS JANUARY 2020 - MAY 2023

Activity		H1	H2
Direct Costs			
DISBURSALS 2020	Book Bunk	25,000	25,000
	Accord Literary	10,000	10,000
	Cassava Republic	10,000	10,000
	Okada Books	10,000	10,000
	Postively African	10,000	10,000
	Puku Foundation	10,000	10,000
	Exposing Hope		10,000
	TOTALS	75,000	85,000
SUM TOTAL 2020			160,000
DISBURSALS 2021	Book Aid International	19,250	19,250
	Chirikure Chirikure	7,750	7,750
	eKitabu	30,000	30,000
	Learners Girls Foundation	3,250	12,750
	Save the Children	25,000	25,000
	TOTALS	85,250	94,750
SUM TOTAL 2021			180,000
DISBURSALS 2022a	ADEA	25,000	25,000
	Book Aid International	20,375	20,375
	Oliveseed	12,500	12,500
	PRAESA	5,850	
	Yanbow Al Kitab	25,000	25,000
TOTALS 2022a		88,725	82,875
SUM TOTAL 2022a			171,600
DISBURSALS 2022b	DAISY Consortium consulting		37,579
	Nairobi workshop		42,205
	Accessible publishing grants		20,000
	Frankfurt Book Fair program		59,794
	TOTALS 2022b		159,579
SUM TOTAL 2022b			159,579
Total Direct Costs			671,179
Indirect Costs Jan 2020-May 2023			
Indirect Costs Jan 2020-May 2023	Web		38,570
	Admin		6,250
	Comms and PR		31,000
Total Indirect Costs			72,750
Total Costs			746,999

www.apinnovation.fund

www.internationalpublishers.org



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