



Literate Environments, Publishing and Multilingualism

The sub-regional dimension in the development of national language publishing

A UNESCO inter-professional and inter-ministerial seminar

Technical note
– draft draft –

Dates: December 13-15, 2005

Place: Dakar, Novotel

Organizers/Organisers : United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in collaboration with the *Agence Intergouvernementale nationale pour de la Francophonie* (AIF)

Context :

If you want to create conditions that are favourable for long-term literacy and to improve the quality and sustainability of training, then it is essential to strengthen literate environments and national publishing in all countries in order to supply publications which are in line with demand in both cultural and especially linguistic terms.

However, the processes of editing, producing and distributing books in national languages are beset by countless difficulties and constraints, from lack of support for national languages to poor participation by the private sector, to lack of appropriate distribution mechanisms and facilities. As was clearly demonstrated during the regional seminar “Books, the key to education for all”, jointly organised by UNESCO between the 26th and 30th November 2004, what is required is joint action with regard to educational programmes and development of the book sector in order to make progress in this area over the coming years.

In order to resolve répondre à (confront, solve) these problems, UNESCO launched a project entitled “Strengthening the literate environment and national language publishing in Senegal, the Gambia and the Republic of Guinea” in January 2005, with a view to supporting all those who at a professional or political level are attempting to strengthen the emergence of a national language publishing arena in the sub-region. The aim of this project is:

- To devise and implement national book strategies capable of coping with the linguistic pluralism of the countries concerned in an integrated manner at sub-regional level.
- To produce teaching tools in order to strengthen the main players in the book chain and to set up training.
- To set up information tools regarding national language publishing (directories, databases) which can be used on a sub-regional scale.

The organisation of this sub-regional seminar, which aims to compare and discuss the results of diagnosis carried out on a national level, is part of the objective of the project "Strengthening the literate environment and publishing in national languages in Senegal, the Gambia and the Republic of Guinea". Indeed the purpose of the seminar is to identify political measures likely to promote linguistic pluralism in the countries concerned on an integrated scale.

Objectives :

- To review and to discuss in depth the state of national language publishing in African countries.
- To share good practices and review experiences of interest in these sectors within Africa.
- To reinforce the understanding of the necessity for specific book policies and laws including all the main players in the book chain, from writers to consumers and readers.
- To underline the importance of respecting copyright, of formal deposit in national libraries, of the ISBN system and of training for writers, publishers and booksellers.
- To make a review of all needs, especially with regard to strengthening institutional capacities and propose strategies for strengthening the capacities of the book chain.

Anticipated results:

- Increased awareness and deeper understanding of the role of national language publishing in the promotion of sustainable literate environments in Africa.
- A strategy and action plan for developing the publishing sector with priorities according to regions and countries.
- Proposals for the regional training of authors, publishers and set up of national and sub-regional networks and information sharing and legal defence tools in the context of LIFE.
- Mechanisms for the sharing of information and ideas with regard to literate environments at a regional level; access to data and documentation.
- Sensitise the LIFE countries to integrate the literate environment and publishing components as part of the implementation of LIFE and to set up partnerships.

Topics :

- Programme for and contents of regional training for publishers,
- Creation of networks and information sharing tools,
- Strategies for the promotions of cross-border languages, sub-regional cooperation,
- Links between linguistic, pedagogic and publishing policies,
- Financing strategy for publishing projects and partnerships (technical and financial) sub-regional, (sub-regional)
- Public awareness campaigns and legal defence strategies.

Methodologies and logistics :

- Representatives of the LIFE countries (Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea -Conakry, Mali, Niger and DR Congo) will be responsible for the presentation of national diagnostics.
- Representatives of Namibia, Cameroon,, South Africa will give presentations sur on their experiences in the world of national language publishing (politics, production, finance).
- Sessions will be held in the following languages: French and English

Follow-up :

- To approve a strategic regional plan for the expansion and financing of “literate environments and publishing to be presented at the African Union Summit Meeting on Culture and Education (Khartoum, JJanuary 2006) to be implemented as part of the AU year for African languages (2006) and as part of the United Nations Literacy Decade.
- To identify possible collaborations between African countries, international organisations and development agencies for the drawing up and setting up of projects focussing on the question of literate environments at national, sub- regionales, and regional levels.

Strategize the planning and conduct of relevant projects on literate environments and publishing in African languages with donors in conjunction with the EFA efforts and UNESCO's LIFE initiative.

Participants :

Profile of participants

- Ministerial staff involved in decision and policy making with regard to Books and Literacy. (Heads of Department, Experts, Ministry of Culture and Education).
- Experts on Western, Central and Southern Africa
- African publishers, NGOs and linguists
- Representatives of technical and financial partners: AIF, INWENT, ADEA Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM), (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).

Partners

- Agence Internationale pour de la Francophonie (AIF)

UNESCO

- UNESCO Office in Dakar Office and Regional Education Office (UNESCO/BREDA)
- UNESCO Office in Bamako Office
- UNESCO Paris, Arts and Cultural Enterprise Division
- UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) Hamburg