

**Book Donations: Rethinking the System**  
**International Assembly of independent publishers Workshop,**  
**Strengthening and keeping bibliodiversity alive**  
**20 and 21 March 2013 – BULAC, Paris**

## **Background**

In the context of the International Assembly of independent publishers facilitated by the International Alliance of independent publishers, a workshop on book donation was organised, to “review” book donation from the perspective of professionals from the South, which has not been done often to this day. Recommendations on the Book Donation Charter (current reference on book donation) were formulated out by participants to include in the Charter elements of the book chain from the countries of the South, to enrich current practices and propose alternatives to “classical” book donation. These inputs will be formulated as recommendations and addressed to public authorities and international organisations, for the Book Donation Charter to be revised and updated – or at least that it be based on a reciprocity principle.

## **Main ideas “defended” by workshop participants**

- Allow a different perspective on book donation: necessity of envisioning book donation as a global project, including actors of the book chain, for book donation to benefit economic actors in all countries and not constitute a direct competition for local booksellers and publishers;
- Reciprocity in donation mechanisms: for instance, if books from the North are sent to African libraries, it is necessary that French libraries buy books published in Africa;
- Implementation of a tool box supporting book donation structures in acquiring local books (African publishers and booksellers are invited to work together to make their productions known and help book donation organisations to include African productions in the donation process: Afrilivres website, promotion of African productions in African bookshops with rotating funds, Book Caravan, etc.);
- Possibility of monetising donation (via book clearance sales in bookshops from the North, of which profits could contribute to develop publishing projects in Africa);
- Consideration for mother tongues in book donations (for example, in Madagascar only 20% of French speakers – official OIF data): here again, it is better to support local production by allowing publishers to produce books in local mother tongues rather than sending books in French that sometimes remain in boxes forever...
- Lobbying to public authorities of the South for acquisition budgets to be voted, allowing libraries to get books from the North and the South (orders directly placed to local bookshops);

- Mainstreaming a reflection on digital publishing in donation mechanisms;
- Involvement of professional associations (amongst others, AILF, Afrilivres, APNET and the Alliance), who should work in close collaboration to promote new ways of addressing book donation and to propose practical and realistic “alternatives” to “classical” book donation.

### Way forward:

#### 1. Drafting of meeting report:

- Participants verbatim report (for internal use) => June 2013
- “Review” of the Book Donation Charter by professionals (to strengthen reciprocity): formulation of participants’ proposals on the adaptation of the Charter to the realities of professionals from the South => autumn 2013
- Communication document based on quantitative data taking Madagascar as an example => autumn 2013
- Creation of the first elements included in the tool box (concrete proposals based on existing practices, good practices, database, resource websites, professional resources, etc. – the tool box can thereafter be adapted for each language zone by professionals) accompanying the Charter => autumn 2013

#### 2. Proofreading, exchanges between participants and the Alliance and validation of the “reviewed” Charter and of the first elements included in the tool box => autumn 2013

#### 3. List of private structures and public organisations to be contacted to present workshop results and plan a common meeting between these various structures => autumn 2013

#### 4. Translation (in English and Spanish) and diffusion of “reviewed” Charter to professional collectives such as ABC, APNET, Afrilivres, and in the various language networks of the Alliance => autumn 2013

#### 5. Meetings with public authorities through the bibliodiversity ambassadors in Switzerland, Belgium, Quebec and France (OIF, UNESCO, etc.) to promote the adoption by public authorities of the Charter “reviewed” by book professionals => end of 2013 and 2014

#### 6. Compilation of workshop conclusions during the general meeting of the International Assembly of Independent Publishers in Cape Town (South Africa) => spring 2014

#### 7. Outreach activities in collaboration with librarians during the IFLA congress (potential lead) => August 2014

