

## Book Piracy in Nigeria

This year, resource-rich Nigeria overtook South Africa to become Africa's biggest economy. The country has a dynamic creative sector: Nigeria's film industry, known as Nollywood, produces more films per year than any other nation except India. Its population is entrepreneurial and tech-savvy: there are over 120 million mobile phone subscribers in a country of 174 million people.

Nigeria's rich literary heritage has produced great writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri and Chimamanda Adichie. Yet its creative economy is crippled by chronic and rampant piracy - it's estimated that illegal sales account for 75% of the book market. We spoke to **Lawrence Aladesuyi**, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Publishers Association about what can be done to fight back.

### IPA: What are the main forms which book piracy takes in Nigeria?



**Lawrence Aladesuyi:** They are many and varied. Firstly, we have local pirates who get hold of any fast selling book and take it to a willing printer to produce illegal copies. The pirate could be a printer himself, a bookseller or anyone who knows about books.

We also have high tech reproductions entering Nigeria from abroad. Pirates are printing the works overseas, particularly in the Far East and shipping to Nigeria for sale. Other forms of piracy include translations without the copyright owner's permission, illegal e-book versions, unauthorized photocopying of academic materials and the abuse of publication rights.

#### Fast Facts

Population: **174 million**  
2014 GDP growth: **6.7%**  
GDP per capita: **\$3010**  
Literacy rate: **57%**

### IPA: How is the piracy problem changing? How does the international piracy network operate?

AL: Piracy is now more international and more sophisticated than ever. The big pirates print overseas then import the books to be sold in Nigeria: only the small pirates print locally. Former drug barons and money launderers have moved into book piracy from overseas countries because it is low risk.

Advances in printing technology have meant that for everyone, publishers included, it can be very difficult to distinguish between pirated and original copies. Book pirates now re-plan and re-size pirated books to suit their purpose!



## IPA COUNTRY REPORT

The international piracy network works as follows: a Nigerian gets hold of a physical copy of the book he wants to pirate. He sends this either electronically or physically to the printer in China or India and negotiates the terms of the contract. After printing, the printer in China/India/any other country ships the pirated books to Nigeria, sometimes disguised as school bags or any other sorts of materials. After clearing the ports, the pirate distributes and starts selling the pirated copies.

### IPA: Given the scale of Nigeria's piracy problem, what should be done to combat it?

AL: The most effective ways to curb piracy will be:

- (i) Control at the point of printing – this could take the form of requiring an authorization to print from the Nigerian Publishers Association or whoever owns the copyright in Nigeria. If this authorization is not obtained, the printer could be sanctioned if he prints the work and shipping authorities could decline shipping.
- (ii) Stricter control at Nigeria's ports and customs outposts. Any shipping company carrying unauthorized intellectual materials should be treated as if they were carrying drugs or any other contraband products.
- (iii) Stricter enforcement of the Nigerian Copyright Commission's laws
- (iv) At Government levels, piracy issues should attract the same level of attention as money laundering, drug abuse and trafficking, resulting in increased surveillance (at both international and local levels), more raids and seizures and greater numbers of prosecutions.
- (v) We also need more public education campaigns, more effective inter-agency cooperation and anti-piracy devices like holograms or watermarks for books.



At the international level, countries where pirated books are printed should be licensing and certifying printers, to control the problem. In Nigeria, for example, any press found printing unauthorized books is shut down and the machines can be impounded. We'd like to see stricter customs control and inspection in these countries, notably at the point where books are loaded onto ships.



At national level, the Nigerian Copyright Commission should be strengthened through increased funding increased personnel. At the prosecution level, cases involving piracy should be given accelerated hearings and should deliver effective sentencing.

At the Nigerian Publishers Association, we have formed an anti-piracy desk with dedicated personnel at the Secretariat, increasing our funding for anti-piracy activities and carrying out more raids on pirates' stores.

## IPA COUNTRY REPORT

### **IPA: What can the international publishing industry do to help?**

With a fast-growing population and a buoyant economy, the opportunities within Nigeria for international publishers are huge. They will only be realized, however, if we all work together to fight piracy. The international community can play its part by:

- (i) Informing the Nigerian Publishers Association who the authentic agents of international publishers are in Nigeria
- (ii) Monitoring illegal printing within their countries and notifying us of any illegal shipments
- (iii) Strengthening our capacity to protect their works and increase their sales by contributing to the Nigerian Publishers Association's anti-piracy fund and efforts

We invite all interested parties to contact us via **[nigerianpublishers@ymail.com](mailto:nigerianpublishers@ymail.com)**.

#### **FIND OUT MORE**

The IPA's Anti-Piracy Working Group holds regular teleconferences to discuss evolving piracy threats to publishers. For more details, please contact IPA Policy Director José Borghino at **[borghino@internationalpublishers.org](mailto:borghino@internationalpublishers.org)**.

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