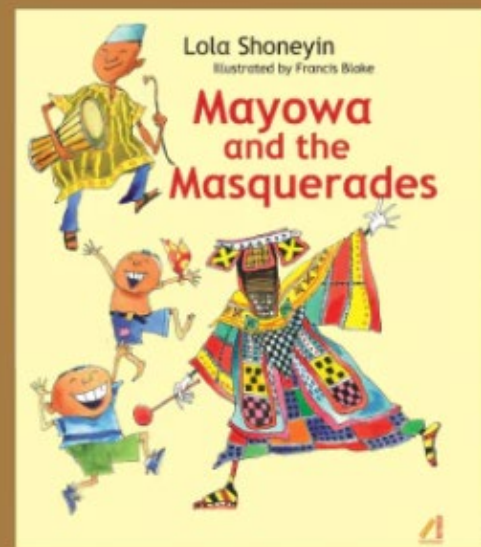
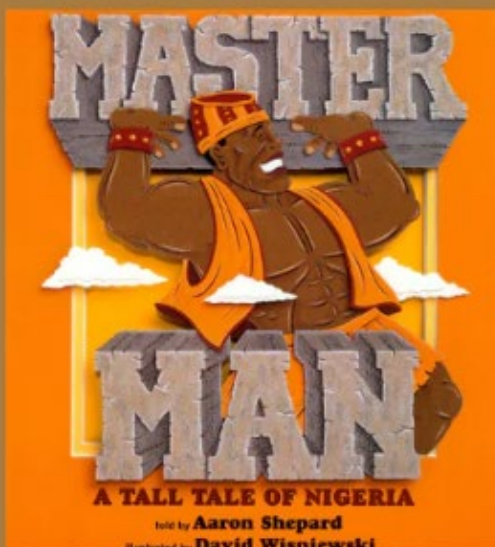
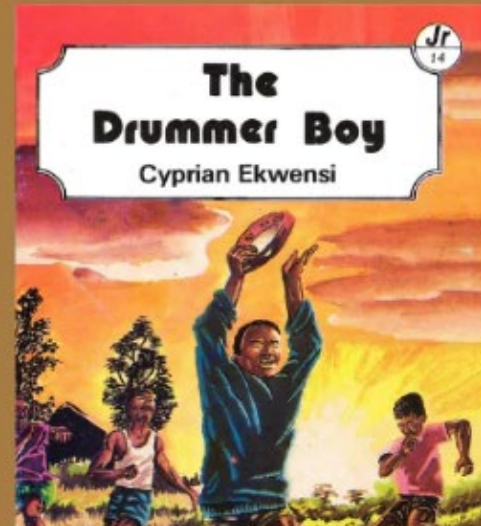
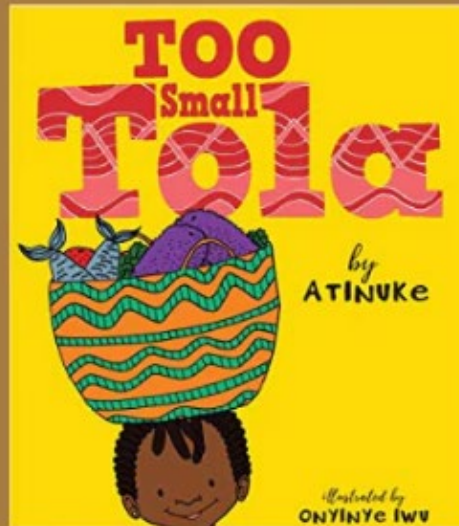
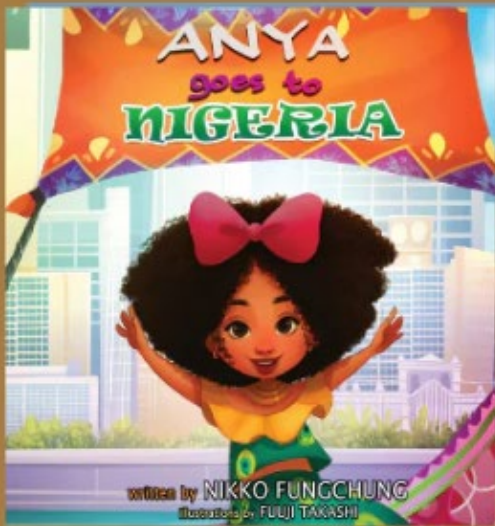


INTRODUCTION TO CHILDREN BOOK INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA



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MUNA KALATI RESEARCH UNIT (MKRU)

MKRU is Muna Kalati's dedicated research department which undertake research projects on issues related to African children literature and children book publishing in order to inform the strategic direction, policies and programmes of Muna Kalati and its partners, shape global debates on child rights and development, and inform the global research and policy agenda for all children, and particularly for the most vulnerable.

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ACRONYMS	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	01
A. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT	03
1. Governance.....	03
2. Policy	04
3. Language	04
4. Culture.....	04
5. Religion	05
6. Poverty	05
7. Cost	05
8. Stability	06
B. HISTORY OF NIGERIAN CHILDREN LITERATURE.....	07
1. Early Years	07
2. Colonial Influence	08
3. Early Nigerian Authors	08
4. Present State: Digital Era and Beyond.....	09
C. THE CHILDREN BOOK'S CHAIN IN NIGERIA	11
1. Creation.....	11
2. Publishing houses	13
3. Distributors and Booksellers	15
4. Consumption (public, private and school libraries)	15
5. Consecration –celebrating literary works for children.....	17
D. RESEARCH FINDINGS	19
1. Key Research Findings.....	20
2. Opportunities for writers and illustrators	22
3. General recommendations for actors in the children's book industry	23
4. Recommendations for authors and illustrators.....	25
5. Recommendations for Publishers, Printers, and other Stakeholders	25
CONCLUSION.....	27
REFERENCES	27

ACRONYMS

APC	All-Progressives Congress
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission
LMIC	Lower-Middle-Income Country
NAL	Nigeria Academy of Letters
NBF	Nigerian Book Foundation
NERDC	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council
NMEC	National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult, and Non-Formal Education
NPA	Nigerian Publishers Association
PDP	People's Democratic Party
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the individuals and organizations whose support and contributions have been invaluable in the development of this report, "Introduction to the Children's Book Industry in Nigeria."

First and foremost, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the authors, illustrators, publishers, and distributors within the Nigerian children's book industry for their commitment to nurturing a culture of reading and learning among young readers.

Our appreciation also goes to the staff members of various public and private libraries, as well as educational institutions, who offered their insights and assistance in understanding the landscape of children's literature in Nigeria.

We are immensely grateful to the parents, teachers, and caregivers who continuously inspire a love for reading in the children of Nigeria, and to the young readers themselves for being the driving force behind the demand for enriching literary content.

Special thanks are also due to Google News Initiative whose financial support has been highly instrumental to this report.

Finally, we express our deep appreciation to the various bookstores, vendors, and online platforms that strive to make diverse and engaging children's books accessible to families and educators across Nigeria. Their dedication and collaboration have been pivotal in shaping this report, and we are profoundly thankful for their involvement and support.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report “Introduction to the Children’s Book Industry in Nigeria” delves into the dynamic landscape of children’s literature within the Nigerian publishing industry. It aims to provide a comprehensive overview, shedding light on key aspects such as the growth of the industry, influential authors and illustrators, distribution networks, and the impact of children’s books on literacy and education in Nigeria.

The Nigerian publishing landscape has witnessed a surge in the production and popularity of children’s literature since the nation’s independence in 1960, showcasing impressive growth and diversity. This growth is further evidenced by the emergence of new authors and publishers specializing in children’s books, contributing to the industry’s vibrancy and appeal.

The report underscored the significant contributions of prominent authors and illustrators in Nigeria, showcasing their pivotal role in shaping the children’s book industry. Notably, it sheds light on the increasing availability and accessibility of diverse children’s books, which contribute to the development of a culturally relevant and engaging literary ecosystem for young readers in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the report delves into the distribution channels and accessibility of

children’s literature in Nigeria. It highlights the key players such as bookstores, libraries, and educational institutions that are instrumental in making children’s books accessible to a wide audience. Additionally, it addresses the influence of children’s literature on educational development and the promotion of a reading culture among Nigerian youth.

Data was collected through interview and field connections, focusing on the children’s book database that we developed on Nigeria. The report is part of a broader research initiative aimed at collecting and analyzing data on children’s books in eight African countries: Ghana, Liberia, The Gambia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Benin, Senegal and Guinea Conakry. The research is supported by Google News Initiative and seeks to provide a comprehensive view of the state of children’s literature across the continent.

Overall, this report serves as a valuable resource for scholars, publishers, educators, and stakeholders interested in the Nigerian children’s book industry. It presents a holistic view of the industry’s evolution, challenges, and potentials, reflecting the growing importance of children’s literature in Nigeria’s broader cultural and educational context.

INTRODUCTION

The landscape of children's literature in Nigeria reflects a rich and diverse history of storytelling, creativity, and educational value. Nigerian children's literature refers to the body of literature that is written about children, for children or those that are within the interest range of children in Africa (Ngwuchukwu (2010). It can also be referred to as the genre of literature that encompasses a wide range of works including acknowledged classics of world literature, picture books and easy-to-read stories written exclusively for children and fairy tales, lullabies, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials. Children in this regard refer to those between the ages of 0-17 which cover babies, toddlers, pre-teens, teenagers and generally young adults.

The exploration and understanding of the children's book industry in Nigeria are integral not only to the promotion of literacy and education but also to the preservation of cultural heritage and the nurturing of young imaginations.

Commissioned by Muna Kalati and with the financial support of Google News Initiative, this report embarks on a comprehensive journey to unravel the nuanced facets of the Nigerian children's book industry. It seeks to shed light on the growth, challenges, and potential of this vibrant sector, tapping into the creativity and talent of authors, illustrators, publishers, and various stakeholders who contribute to its thriving presence.

As we delve into this exploration, it is essential to recognize the pivotal role that children's literature plays in shaping the minds and hearts of the next generation. The ability of stories and illustrations to inspire, educate, and entertain holds immense significance, not only for individual children but also for the broader societal fabric and the future of Nigeria.

Moreover, through the generous financial support from Google News Initiative, this report endeavors to provide an informed and insightful perspective on the current state of the children's book industry in Nigeria. The aim is to identify and highlight the key influencers, innovative approaches, and promising initiatives that are propelling the industry forward, while also addressing the complex challenges it faces.

By focusing on this vital aspect of literary and educational development, we aspire to contribute to the larger conversation around cultural enrichment, literacy promotion, and the nurturing of a generation of readers poised to embrace the multifaceted world of literature.

The following sections of this report will delve into the historical context, contemporary trends, notable figures, distribution networks, and the impact of children's books on education and literacy in Nigeria. This journey seeks to encapsulate the intricate web of narratives, knowledge, and creativity that form the bedrock of the Nigerian children's book industry.

This report is a testament to the commitment of Muna Kalati and the support of Google News Initiative towards fostering a deep understanding of the Nigerian children's book industry, heralding awareness, and harnessing the transformative potential of children's literature on the shores of Nigeria.

Through this comprehensive endeavor, we aim to enlighten, inspire, and ignite curiosity about the boundless horizons of children's literature in Nigeria. With gratitude to all those who have contributed to this endeavor, we embark on this exploration with the collective hope of uplifting the future of Nigerian children through the magic of storytelling and the world of books.



Source : Bridge Nigeria

A. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The children's book industry in Nigeria has undergone [significant transformation](#) since the second half of the nineteenth century. This report pursues an overview of the historical advancement of the children's book industry in the country, from when creative writing started to the present day. It explores the factors that have influenced the growth and development of the industry, the challenges faced, and the present state of the children's book market in Nigeria.

The promotion and teaching of reading for children in Nigeria [are influenced](#) by various sociocultural, economic, and political factors. The sociocultural factors include the diversity of languages, cultures, and religions in the country, which affect the availability and acceptability of books for different groups of children. The economic factors include the poverty level, the income distribution, and the cost of books, which affect the affordability and accessibility of books for many families and schools. The political factors include the stability of the government, the policy framework, and the governance structure, which affect the accountability and effectiveness of the education system and the reading programs.

The goal of this section is to share highlights that are useful in understanding the children book industry in Nigeria. It covers various aspects of the country, such as governance, the policy environment, language and other sociocultural, economic and educational variables.

1. Governance

Nigeria is a federal republic with a three-tier system of government: federal, state, and local. The federal government has the most significant authority and is headed by the President, who is both the head of state and government. Nigeria's current constitution is the 1999 Constitution, which was adopted after the country's transition to civilian rule following years of military rule. Nigeria has a multi-party system, but the dominant ones have historically been the All-Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Nigeria faces a range of governance challenges, including corruption, insecurity, ethnic and religious tensions, inadequate infrastructure, and economic inequality. Corruption has been a significant issue in Nigerian politics and governance. However, several administrations in Nigeria have made efforts to combat corruption, agencies like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) have been established to that effect.



2. Policy

The country recognizes the importance of education in national development and has policies aimed at making education more accessible to citizens. This includes support for affordable educational materials. The Nigerian government, at various levels (federal, state, and local), has initiated programs to subsidize the cost of educational materials. These programs aim to make textbooks and other materials more affordable and accessible to students and schools.

3. Language

The country has [over 515 languages and over 373 dialects](#) spoken by different ethnic groups. This poses a challenge for producing and distributing books that cater to the linguistic needs and preferences of all children. However, it also offers an opportunity for promoting multilingualism and cultural diversity among children through bilingual or multilingual books that expose them to different cultures.

4. Culture

Nigeria has a rich, diverse cultural heritage that includes oral traditions, folklore, music, art, festivals, and customs. These are sources of inspiration and content for creating engaging and relevant books for children, which reflect their identity. However, they also constitute barriers for accessing and accepting books that contradict or challenge their cultural norms and values.

5. Religion

The country is a secular state that respects the freedom of religion for all citizens. Most Nigerians are Muslims (50%), followed by Christians (45%), traditionalists (5%). Religion shapes children's worldview and morality, as well as influencing their choice of books. Some religious groups [discourage](#) their children from reading certain types of books that they deem inappropriate or offensive.

6. Poverty

Nigeria is classified as a [lower-middle-income country](#) (LMIC) by the World Bank, with a GDP per capita of \$2,074.61 in 2020. However, it also has a high level of inequality, with a Gini coefficient of 39 in 2017. In Nigeria, 40.1% of people are poor according to the [2018/19 national monetary poverty line](#), and 63% are multidimensionally poor according to the National MPI 2022. Poverty affects children's access to education and books, as well as their health, nutrition, safety, and well-being.

7. Cost

The cost of books in Nigeria varies, with textbooks and educational materials being relatively affordable due to local publishing. Prices also differ depending on the region within Nigeria. However, imported books can be more expensive. Imported children's books are often more expensive due to import duties, shipping costs, and foreign exchange rates. On average, a locally published children's book in Nigeria can cost between ₦500 (\$0.63) to ₦3,000 (\$3.80) or more. Imported children's books can range from ₦2,000 (\$2.54) to ₦10,000 (\$12.68) or more. The competition among numerous local publishers in the market encourages price competition. Then there is economies of scale, which means that as more copies of books are produced, the cost per unit decreases.

In addition, the Nigerian government, at various levels (federal, state, and local), has initiated programs to subsidize the cost of educational materials. Some of them are:

- **School Feeding Program :** Provides free meals to students, improving nutrition and increasing enrollment/attendance, especially for girls. Over 9 million children benefit daily. Studies show it improved academic performance.
- **Education Tax Fund :** Federal and state governments collect 2% of assessable company profits to fund education projects. This includes grants for infrastructure, teaching materials, scholarships etc. It increased budget allocation for primary education.
- **Conditional Cash Transfer Program :** Gives cash to extremely poor parents if they send their children, especially girls, to school 80% of the time. It reduced dropout rates and improved enrollment significantly compared to non-beneficiary communities.
- **EdoBEST Program (Edo State):** Provided free digital devices, textbooks and teaching/learning materials to all primary school students and teachers. Early results show it improved literacy,

numeracy and access to learning during school closures.

- **Osun State School Feeding and Transportation Program :** Offers free meals, transport and instructional materials. Attendance rose 24% in beneficiary schools. Communities also benefited from job creation through the program.
- **Universal Basic Education Commission Interventions:** Distributes free/subsidized textbooks nationally. Studies found it improved learning outcomes and helped achieve the goal of universal primary education.

These programs show education subsidies can play a key role in boosting access, affordability, participation, and academic performance, especially for disadvantaged groups. Targeted social spending on learning materials and school necessities encourages enrollment.

8. Stability

Nigeria has experienced multiple democratic transitions of power, which is a positive sign of political stability. However, the country has faced security challenges, particularly in the form of insurgencies and terrorism. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast and conflicts in the Niger Delta which have posed security risks and contributed to regional instability. Efforts have been made by the government and international partners to address these security challenges, but they remain a significant concern.

B. HISTORY OF NIGERIAN CHILDREN LITERATURE

Key highlights

- *Nigeria has a rich cultural heritage, including traditional storytelling and oral traditions. Leveraging and integrating these cultural elements in children's books can enhance their appeal and relevance to Nigerian children.*
- *Economic disparities may affect access to books, with low-income families and communities facing greater challenges. Implementing initiatives such as book rental programs or mobile libraries can help overcome economic barriers.*
- *Government policies and funding allocations play a critical role in determining the emphasis placed on literacy and education. Prioritizing investments in libraries, educational institutions, and local publishing industries can have a positive impact on the promotion and teaching of children's books*

1. Early Years

Before the advent of written literature, Nigerian cultures had a strong oral tradition of storytelling. This oral tradition includes fairy tales, fantasy, ballads, games, chants, customs, beliefs, arts including songs, dances, games, chants etc.

Figure 1: An elder narrating a story to children



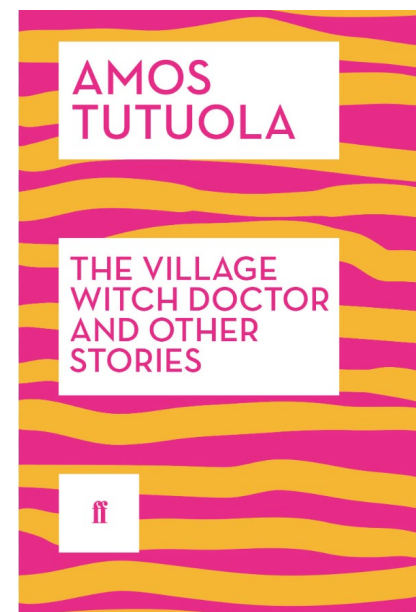
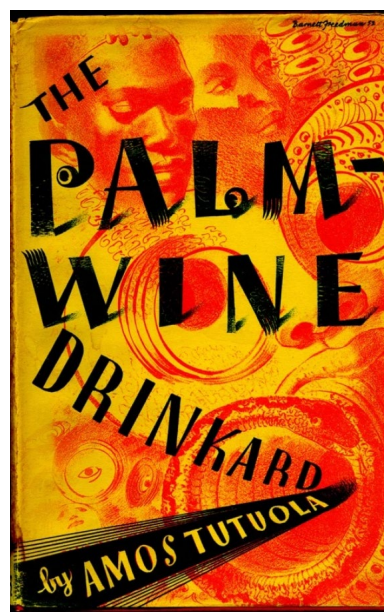
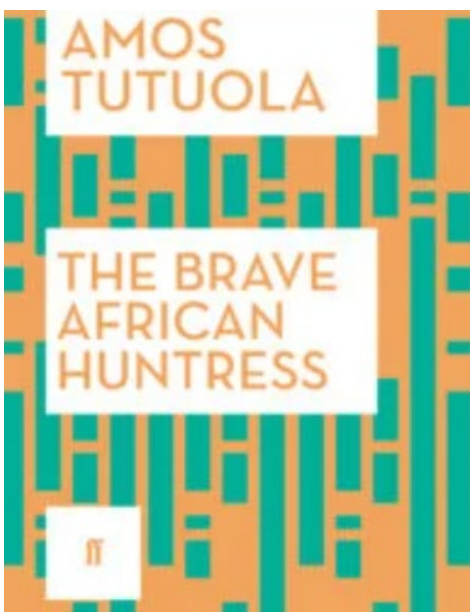
Elders, parents, and storytellers passed down folktales, myths, legends, and moral stories to children through oral means. Telling of stories in Nigeria is and was used by professional narrators, educators, and parents to teach respect, moral instruction, norms, societal values, and preservation of the historical, cultural customs. As Oduolowu and Oluwakemi [stated](#), in the traditional African environment, specifically Nigeria, young children were told stories in the form of oral narratives by parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts. This way, the younger offspring were able to learn how to obey instructions from their elders by practicing listening skills and learning about their heritage. For adult listeners, stories were used to depict the wisdom, knowledge, and power of elders.

2. Colonial Influence

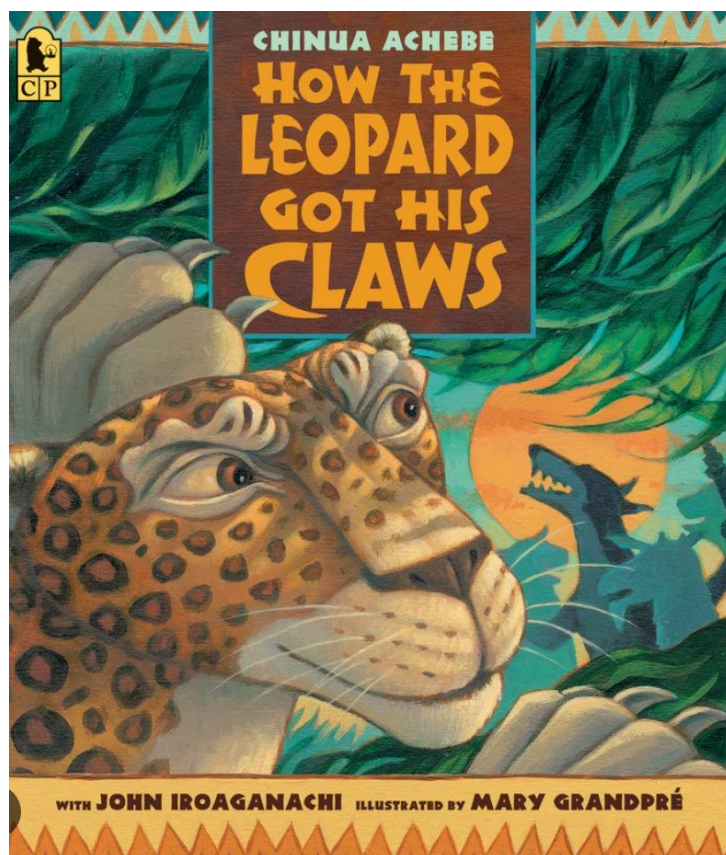
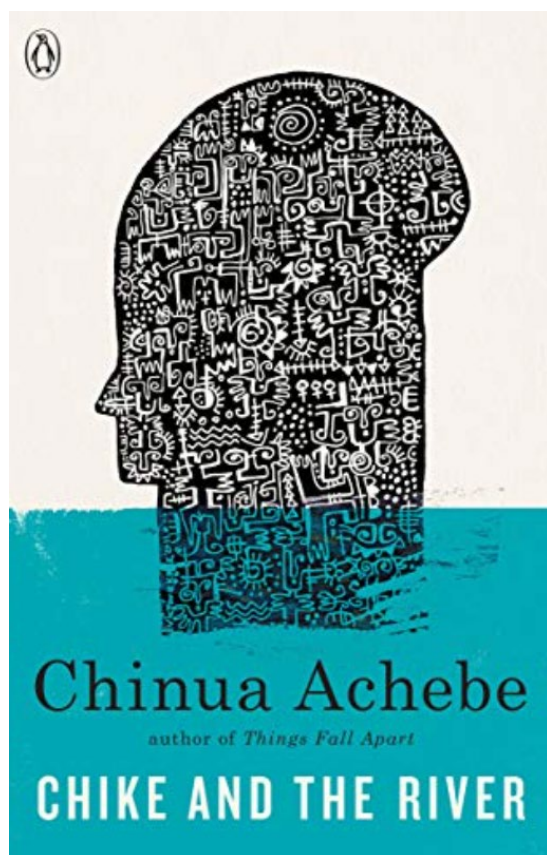
The arrival of British colonial rule in Nigeria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had a significant impact on the development of children's literature. The colonial education system introduced Western-style schools and literacy, which led to the gradual introduction of Western literature into Nigeria. European explorers that visited Africa continent told and wrote stories about Africa to justify colonialization and exploitation of African territories. Many of the stories depicted Africans as people without culture and civilization. Nduka [pointed out](#) that although few Western writers had visited Africa, they wrote with a colonizer's perspective that "paint[ed] Africa black". Those stories negatively informed many in the west about life in Africa, and to this day it is difficult to erase the Eurocentric view about Africa.

3. Early Nigerian Authors

By the 1930s several African writers (i.e., Mohammed Bello and Pita Nwana) began writing stories and novels to debunk Eurocentric narratives. Other writers began reflecting on the power and influence of native stories in their work. The literary style was [predominately fantasy-based](#) until the late 1940s when a shift to realism occurred. The newer work included human characters and dealt with universal themes such as justice, corruption, religion, love, and marriage. If these themes are well emphasized through various methods of learning which include instructions from parents, teachers, guardians and authors, they could go a long way to help in the formation of a child's attitude even from a tender age. This will in the long run produce better citizens and help to shape society to the benefit of all.



Some of the earliest Nigerian authors who contributed to children's literature include [Amos Tutuola](#), who wrote "The Palm-Wine Drinkard" and other stories that were accessible and engaging for young readers. Another notable author is **Chinua Achebe**, who wrote "*Chike and the River*," specifically for children.



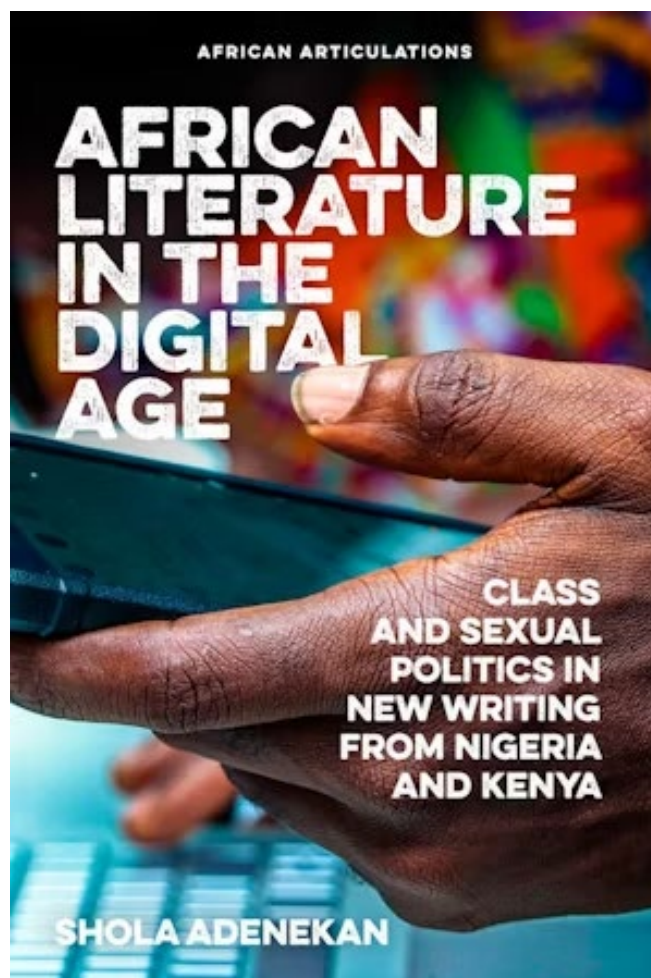
4. Present State: Digital Era and Beyond

Today, the publishing and production of children books in Nigeria is shaped by various sociocultural, economic, and political factors, such as language diversity, cultural values, educational needs, market forces, government regulations and international relations. These factors create both opportunities and challenges for the industry and its stakeholders.

More Nigerian authors, both established and emerging, have been contributing to children's literature. There has been a focus on creating visually engaging books, which appeal to children and enhance their reading experience. The Nigerian government, NGOs, and educational institutions have continued to promote reading and literacy among children. Initiatives such as schoolbook fairs, reading clubs, and the distribution of books in schools aim to improve access to children's literature.

The digital age has also seen an **increase in digital publishing of children's books**, which allows for wider distribution and accessibility. E-books and interactive multimedia content are becoming more common in the Nigerian children's literature space.

There are still challenges in the Nigerian children's literature publishing industry, including limited distribution networks, piracy, and the high cost of quality production. The country's large youth population, [over 222 million](#), needs quality education and constitute a challenge for curriculum alignment or affordability. Its dynamic market that responds to consumer preferences is also a challenge for competitiveness. Its democratic system that allows freedom of expression is also a challenge for censorship or accountability. Its strong ties with other African countries and the world are also a challenge for differentiation or integration, especially across the West African region and beyond. Its active environment for civil society groups that advocate for social change could also constitute [a challenge for representation](#) or inclusion.



In conclusion, the history of the children's book industry in Nigeria from colonial era to date reveals a story of growth, development, and resilience; from its humble beginnings in the post-independence era to the vibrant digital market of today, the industry has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of its audience. While challenges remain, the Nigerian children's book industry is poised for continued growth in the future.

C. THE CHILDREN BOOK'S CHAIN IN NIGERIA

The children's book chain refers to the interconnected ecosystem of industries and processes involved in bringing children's books from creation to consumption. The key stages in a typical children's book chain include:

1. Creation

Figure 2 : Cover pages of books from Atinuke and Attard



Many talented authors and illustrators have emerged, contributing to a diverse range of stories and artwork for children. They write stories, create illustrations, and design books that cater to the interests and needs of young readers. Furthermore, many writers and illustrators struggle to make a living from their work, as they receive low royalties and face piracy and plagiarism issues. Additionally, some writers and illustrators face censorship and criticism for addressing sensitive or controversial topics in their books, such as gender equality, human rights, or environmental issues. Below are some notable figures along with their well-known books and what makes them unique:

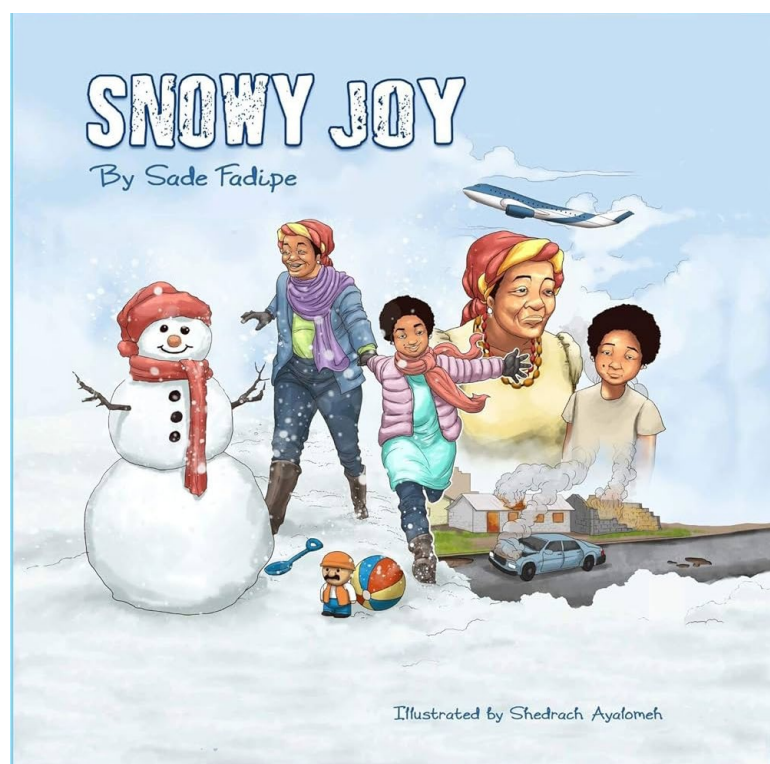
- 1. Atinuke Olumide :** Known for her “Anna Hibiscus” series, Atinuke’s stories are admired for their cultural authenticity and the way they explore universal themes through the eyes of a relatable young protagonist.
- 2. Enebor Attard :** Author of “Melancholic Melinda,” a story that addresses mental health topics in a thoughtful and sensitive manner, providing children with a valuable perspective on emotional well-being.

3. **Ifeoma Onyefulu:** Renowned for books like “A Is for Africa” and “Emeka’s Gift,” Onyefulu is celebrated for her captivating photography and eloquent storytelling, which bring to life the vibrant culture and daily experiences of African children.

4. **Nnedi Okorafor:** Internationally acclaimed for her science fiction and fantasy novels, Okorafor has also written empowering children’s books such as “Chicken in the Kitchen” and “Ikenga,” blending Nigerian culture with imaginative storytelling and strong characters.

5. **Sade Fadipe:** She is a culturally diverse children’s author, whose [work is shaped](#) by her dual heritage, as well as her background in teaching. She is a strong new voice in children’s literature, with a unique and authentic style that explores cultural identity, integration and migration stories. [Sade](#) has written three books so far, with plans for more in the pipeline. Her first published work was written as an education specialist, Teaching Young Children to Read, and this was closely followed by **A Fun ABC**, a picture book for 0–5 year olds that has been published in Nigeria, the UK and USA, retitled as **A Visit to Grandad** for the American market. She then went on to publish **Snowy Joy** in 2019, a Christmas immigration story for 8–12-year-olds, which was spurred by her children’s reaction to stories in the news about the Syrian war, and their own experience of a bomb explosion close to their school in Abuja, Nigeria.

Her motivation was to help her children and other young people talk about trauma, and to nurture hope within new experiences.



Each of these authors and illustrators brings a unique perspective to children’s literature, incorporating Nigerian culture, tradition, and values into their storytelling. Through their works, they offer diverse representations of African childhood experiences, promote inclusivity, and inspire young readers with imaginative narratives and vibrant illustrations. Despite the growth in talent, the publishing infrastructure in Nigeria still faces challenges. Limited resources and distribution networks can make it difficult for authors and illustrators to get their work published and widely distributed. Most of them use new digital working platforms, [like Upwork](#), to promote and market their writing and illustration services to the public. This is understandable, especially

when remuneration from intellectual rights is generally known as not been enough to cover the basic living expenses of authors. By blending traditional and new working forms, they all contribute to the development of engaging and culturally relevant content for children.

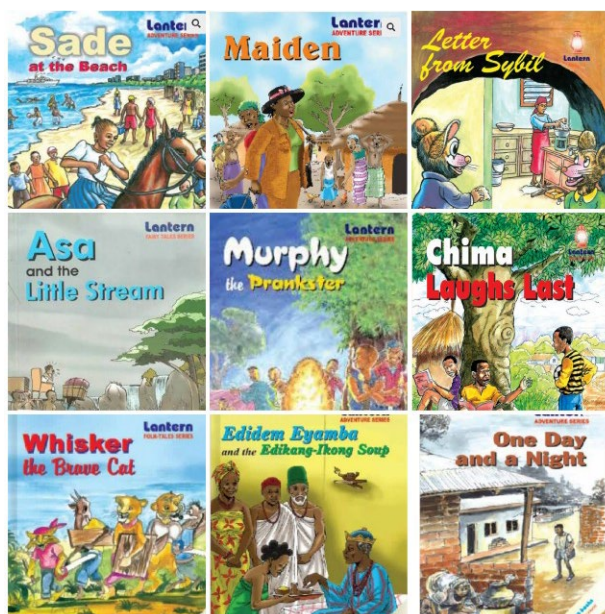
Finally, most authors and illustrators struggle to access the necessary resources and training to refine their craft. Intellectual property rights are a concern because piracy negatively affects the income of authors and illustrators.

2. Publishing houses

In Nigeria, like in the other countries covered by this study (Liberia, Ghana), publishers and printers face a set of challenges and opportunities at the level of market demand, distribution channels, quality standards and technology. Several Nigerian publishing companies, both large and small, are responsible for producing and publishing children's books. They work with authors, illustrators, and designers to bring books to life. Some of the best publishers of children's books include:

1. Lantern Books

- **Notable Books** : They produced a wide range of educational and entertaining children's books, including "The Macmillan Primary English Course" and "My Book of Bible Stories."
- **Uniqueness** : Established in 1969, Lantern has become a leading children's book publisher in Nigeria, known for its commitment to providing educational materials that contribute to the development of children's literacy and knowledge.



2. Cassava Republic Press

- **Notable Books :** Cassava Republic Press focuses on African literature, including children's books such as "A is for Ananse: A Ghanaian Alphabet" and "The Great Plane Robbery."
- **Uniqueness :** Known for its dedication to promoting African stories and voices, Cassava Republic Press has made significant strides in representing diverse cultural narratives and voices, including those of children, in their publications.



3. Parrésia Publishers Ltd

- **Notable Books:** Parrésia has ventured into children's literature with its "Omode Meta" imprint, which is focused on publishing children's books and young adult fiction.
- **Uniqueness:** The publisher is recognized for its commitment to expanding the availability of quality children's literature in Nigeria and contributing to the development of young readers through engaging and culturally relevant stories.



4. Evans Publishers Limited

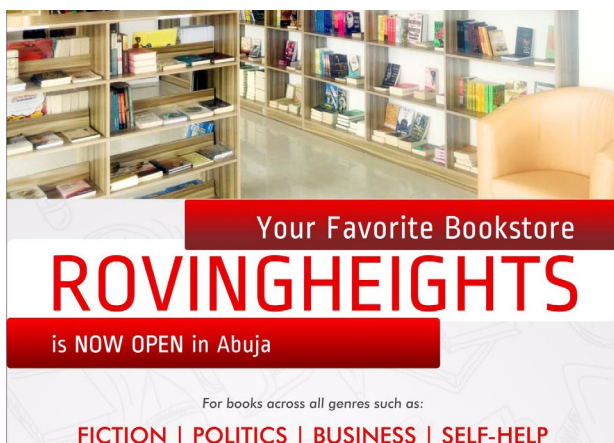
- **Notable Books:** They stand as one of Nigeria's leading educational publishers, offering a range of educational materials for children, such as textbooks and readers. Their longstanding presence in the educational publishing sector has enabled them to play a significant role in providing valuable learning materials to children across Nigeria.

5. Showers Publishers

Showers Publishers are focused on providing quality education accessible to African children, with a particular emphasis on educational materials. They contributed to enhancing access to educational materials, thereby supporting children's learning and growth.

Other notable Nigerian publishers involved in children's literature include [Farafina](#), and **Macmillan Nigeria**. These publishers have enriched the landscape of children's literature in Nigeria, offering a diverse range of educational and entertaining books that cater to the developmental needs and cultural experiences of Nigerian children.

3. Distributors and Booksellers



Distributors and booksellers are essential for making children's books available to the public. They distribute books to schools, libraries, bookstores, and other outlets. In Nigeria, there are bookstores and vendors specializing in children's literature. Some of them include:

1. [Rovingheights bookstore](#) specializes in providing children's books.
2. [Laterna Books](#), a leading literature importation, distribution, and marketing organization in Nigeria. They offer a variety of children's books, including activity books.
3. [Chelis Bookazine](#) and [Mashad Bookshop](#) provide a wide range of nice and graded books for children.
4. [Iwemi](#) and [Booksie](#) are online bookstores offering a diverse collection of books, including children's literature.
5. [Okadabooks](#), Nigeria's leading digital content provider of over 40000 original books, with 400000+ registered readers [closed recently](#) in November 2023 after 10 years of impact.

These bookstores and vendors play a crucial role in making children's literature accessible to young readers in Nigeria, offering a range of educational and entertaining books tailored to their developmental needs and cultural experiences.

4. Consumption (public, private and school libraries)

Here we have public, public and school libraries where children can access books. They provide access to books for young readers, support literacy programs, and [encourage a reading culture](#) among children. The average Nigerian [reads less than one book per year](#), and only one percent of successful men and women in Nigeria read one non-fiction book per month. It further showed that [30 million Nigerians](#) have graduated from high school with poor reading skills.

Public libraries are [stepping up](#) to assist out-of-school children in the country to become literate, highlighting their commitment to promoting reading culture among children and adolescents.

Furthermore, there is an emphasis on the importance of [child-friendly school libraries](#) and media centers for sustainable reading development among Nigerian pupils. The role of school libraries in the education of Nigerian children is underlined as [a vital component](#) in providing lifelong learning that instills reading, writing, and numeracy skills. Below are few [well-known](#) public, private, and school libraries that are conducive for children.

4.1. Public Libraries

- i. **National Library of Nigeria, Abuja** : The National Library of Nigeria serves as a [valuable resource](#) for promoting reading culture and providing access to a wide range of literature, including children's books.
- ii. **Lagos State Central Library** : this library offers a conducive environment for children to explore literature and learning resources, with dedicated sections for young readers.
- iii. **Federal and State Libraries** : at both the federal and state levels, often organizes reading programs, workshops, and events for children and young adults.
- iv. **National Library for the Blind** : specifically focused on promoting literacy among visually impaired individuals, including young readers.

4.2. Private Libraries

- i. **Terra Kulture Library, Lagos** : Terra Kulture is a cultural hub in Lagos with a library that provides an enriching space for children to discover a diverse collection of books and engage in cultural and literary activities.
- ii. **Patabah Bookstores, Lagos** : Patabah Bookstores is known for its curated selection of books, including a dedicated children's section, creating a conducive environment for young readers to explore literature.

4.3. School Libraries

- i. **British International School, Lagos** : The British International School in Lagos houses a well-equipped library that offers a conducive learning environment for students, with a diverse collection of books catering to children's literary needs.

- ii. **Greensprings School, Lagos** : Greensprings School features a modern library facility that provides a conducive space for children to cultivate a love for reading through a rich selection of age-appropriate books.

4.4. Institutions promoting reading.

- i. **National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult, and Non-Formal Education (NMEC)**: involved in literacy and non-formal education, including initiatives that target children and young adults who are out of school.
- ii. **Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC)**: They play a role in shaping the educational materials that students, including children and young adults, use.
- iii. **Nigerian Book Foundation**: dedicated to promoting a reading culture in Nigeria.
- iv. **Nigeria Academy of Letters (NAL)**: promotes the study and development of the language and literature of Nigeria.
- v. **Nigerian Publishers Association** : plays a vital role in the publishing industry and supports the creation of books and educational materials for children and young adults.
- vi. **Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC)**: focuses on improving access to quality education in Nigeria, including for young readers at the basic education level.

These libraries play a vital role in promoting literacy and providing children with access to an array of educational and recreational reading materials. And despite the current challenges facing school libraries in Nigeria, the dedication to promoting reading habits and the recognition of libraries as vital edu-

cational tools for students remains steadfast.

5. Consecration – celebrating literary works for children.

Nigerian children's literature has been [gaining international recognition](#). Authors and illustrators from Nigeria have been receiving awards and accolades, and their works are [being appreciated](#) by readers worldwide. Some of them include:

1. Olubunmi Aboderin Talabi: She is a prominent children's book author and [influential figure](#) in the Nigerian publishing industry. Her event, Akada Children's Book Festival, [was recognized](#) for championing children's literature and won the literary platform of the year in 2023.

Figure 3: 2023 edition of the Akada Children's Book Festival



2. Dapo Adeola: a British-Nigerian illustrator, received an award for Best Illustrated Children's Book for his work on "Hey You!"

3. Chigozie Anuli Mbadugha: Not only a multiple award-winning author, but also a poet, playwright, artist, and songwriter excelling in creating exceptional children's literature.

4. Ekiuwa Aire: An award-winning Nigerian Canadian children's author with a passion for sharing stories about legendary African figures and history.

5. Arinze Ifeakandu: Recognized as a breakout author for "God's Children Are Little Broken Things," his debut collection exploring themes of identity and family.

6. Chidera Okolie: A celebrated author of children's novels, her outstanding work has earned her multiple awards and nominations, including the 2016 Nigerian Writers Award.

7. Uzo Dinma: An influential Nigerian children's book illustrator and author, acknowledged for her significant contributions to the world of storytelling and illustration for young readers.

8. Nnedi Okorafor: A highly acclaimed Nigerian American author whose children's books have garnered international recognition and numerous prestigious awards for their imaginative storytelling.

9. Kehinde Togun: An esteemed children's book author and illustrator known for creating captivating stories and vibrant illustrations that have captivated young readers and earned critical acclaim.

These individuals have made significant contributions to children's literature in Nigeria and have been acknowledged for their outstanding work in writing and illustrating children's books. A more complete list of writers of children's books in [available here](#).

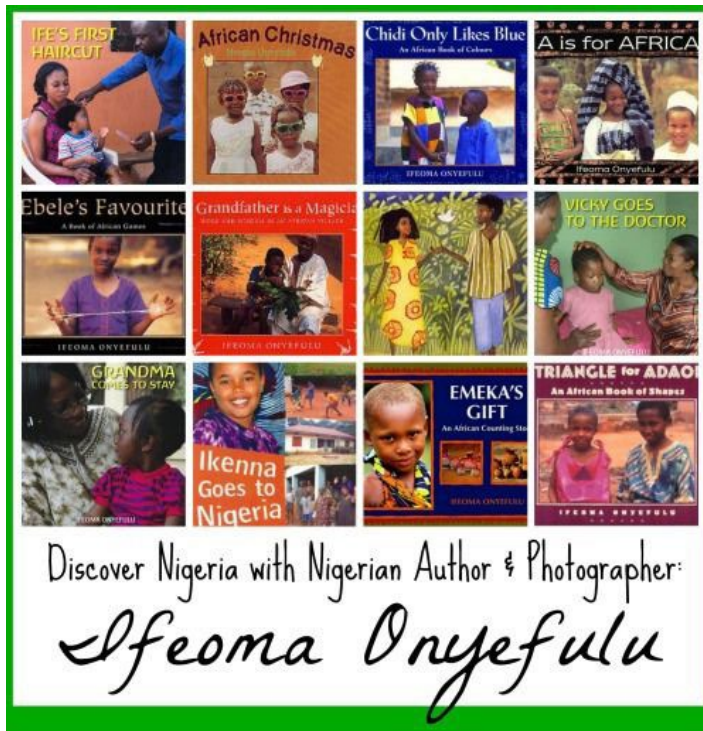
In conclusion, these key elements of the chain were used to structure the presentation of findings in this country report. Other segments can include agencies representing authors, licensing for merchandise, audiobook/eBook conversions, industry events and review media. The chain involves many specialists collaborating to drive a book from concept to reader. A strong chain benefits the child, supports creative industry and promotes literacy. Ensuring smooth collaboration between segments is crucial for the children's book ecosystem to thrive. Emerging technologies also continue to change how the chain operates.



Source : Bridge Nigeria

D. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Figure 4: Discover Nigeria with Nigerian author Ifeoma Onyefulu

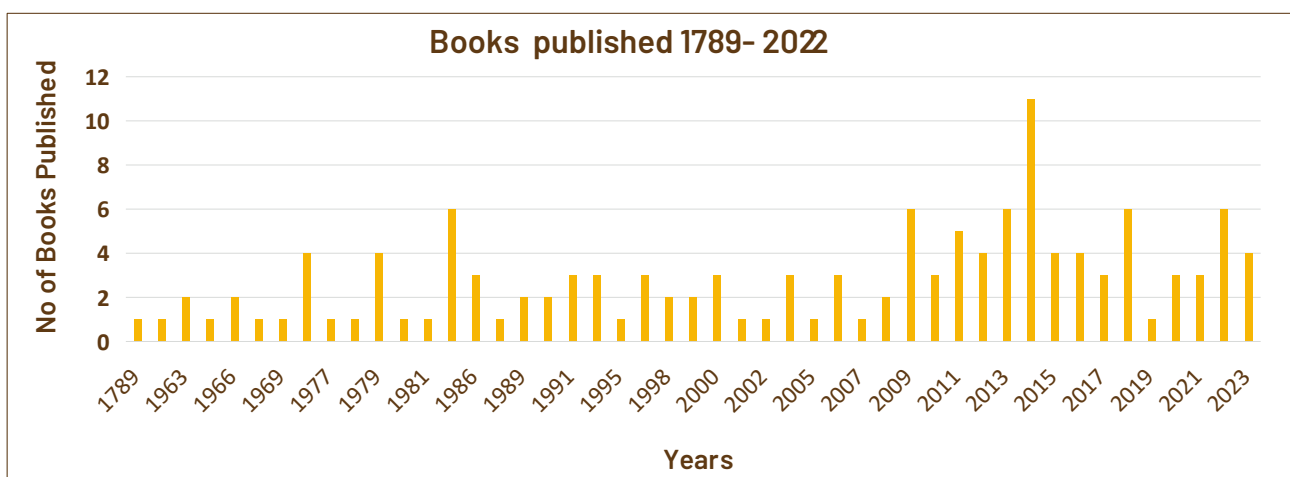


30 Writers 138 Books

Muna Kalati developed a database of children's books on Nigeria, and it contains information on **30 unique writers** and **138 books** and the books are written by Nigerian authors. The data is categorized based on the number of books written by each writer, revealing the most prolific writers in the database.

According to the data, **Ifeoma Onyefulu** is the most prolific writer in the database, with 30 books to her credit. **Cyprian Ekwensi** and **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** come in second, with 15 books each. Other prolific writers in the database include Amos Tutuola with 12 books, Remi Adediji with 11 books, and Nnedi Okorafor with 13 books.

Figure 5: Distribution of Books Across the years



The database spans from 1789 to 2023. The majority of the books were published in the 21st century, with 63% of all books being published between 2000 and 2023. The year with the highest number of publications was 2014, with 11 books published in that year. Other notable years with high publication numbers include 1983 with six books published, and 2009 with six books published as well. Overall, the database shows a diverse range of publication years, indicating the continuing growth and evolution of children's literature in Nigeria.

1. Key Research Findings

The main findings of the report are:

- i. *Economic conditions, including income levels and purchasing power, play a significant role in the distribution and sales of children's books. A strong economy can lead to increased sales, while economic challenges may reduce consumer spending on books.*
- ii. *Government policies related to education and literacy can influence the demand for children's books. Policies that promote reading in schools and libraries can boost sales.*
- iii. *The state of infrastructure and distribution networks affects the physical availability of books. Poor transportation and distribution infrastructure can limit the reach of books to various regions.*
- iv. *The prevalence of a reading culture among families and in schools has a direct impact on the sales of children's books. Initiatives to promote a reading culture can influence sales.*
- v. *Effective marketing and promotion strategies are critical for the success of children's books. Publishers need to use various channels to create awareness about their books, including social media, book fairs, and school partnerships.*
- vi. *Intellectual property protection and copyright enforcement are essential to protect the interests of authors and publishers. Piracy and copyright infringement can impact sales.*
- vii. *Schools and Libraries serve as important channels for introducing books to young readers.*
- viii. *Parental preferences heavily influence the choice of children's books.*
- ix. *The availability of alternative forms of entertainment, such as television, video games, and digital content, competes for a child's attention and affect book sales.*
- x. *Socio-cultural trends, including changing family structures and urbanization, can impact the types of children's books in demand and where they are purchased.*
- xi. *Literacy rates and the quality of education are key factors influencing the demand for children's books. High literacy rates often lead to greater interest in reading.*
- xii. *The influence of international trends and foreign publishers can also impact the types of children's books available in Nigeria.*
- xiii. *The publishing and printing of children's books in Nigeria is an industry that serves as a cornerstone for education, culture, and societal development.*

The Nigerian industry produces books in various languages, genres and formats, catering to different segments of the market and readership. Some publishers as Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc, University Press Plc. (UPPLC), Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers) Limited, Parrésia Publishers Ltd, and Onyoma Research Publications specialize in producing books in different Nigerian languages, while others focus on books in English or French and other languages. Here are a few notable Nigerian publishing houses that have been recognized for their contributions to literature:

- **Cassava Republic Press** has received acclaim for its commitment to promoting contemporary African literature. Many of the authors published by Cassava Republic have received prestigious awards, including the Caine Prize for African Writing and the Orange Prize for Fiction (now the Women's Prize for Fiction).

authors, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Teju Cole, have received numerous awards, including the Caine Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award.

- **Bookcraft Publishers:** produces a variety of books, including children's literature. They have [published books](#) that aim to educate and entertain children.

Through high-quality local stories, these publishers stand to inspire generations of African youth while reaping international credit for their impact on stimulating African literature and cultural uniqueness.

Publishers and printers face various challenges that affect their operations and the publishing industry. Some of the significant challenges include copyright infringement and book piracy. This illegal reproduction and distribution of books have significant economic implications for publishers and authors. Inadequate enforcement of copyright laws makes it difficult for publishers and authors to protect their intellectual property. This hampers the growth of the national publishing industry.

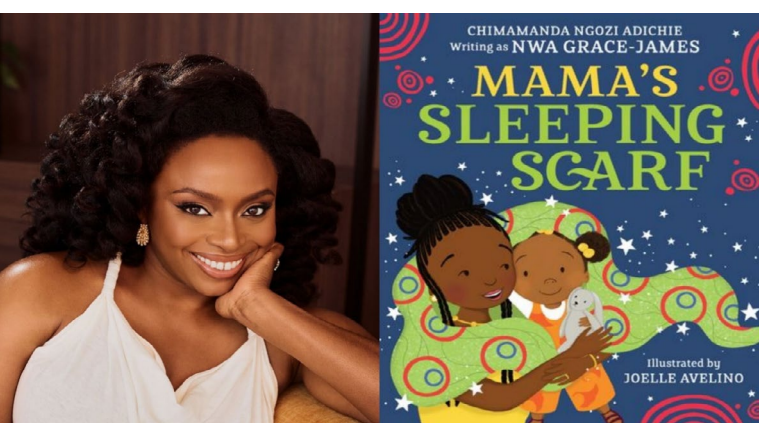
Additionally, production costs of paper, printing, and other production materials can be high in Nigeria. This affects the affordability and accessibility of books for both publishers and consumers. A lack of efficient distribution channels can hinder the reach of books to a wider audience, particularly in remote or rural areas. Infrastructural challenges, such as erratic power supply, can disrupt the production and operation of printing presses and publishing houses.



2. Opportunities for writers and illustrators

Some of the opportunities for writers, illustrators, and creators of content for children include the growing demand for local and authentic stories that celebrate the Nigerian identity and culture. The potential for collaboration and networking among different stakeholders in the book industry, the availability of new technologies and platforms that enable digital publishing and dissemination, and the increasing recognition and appreciation of children books as a form of art and education.

Figure 6 : Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author of *Mama's sleeping scarf*

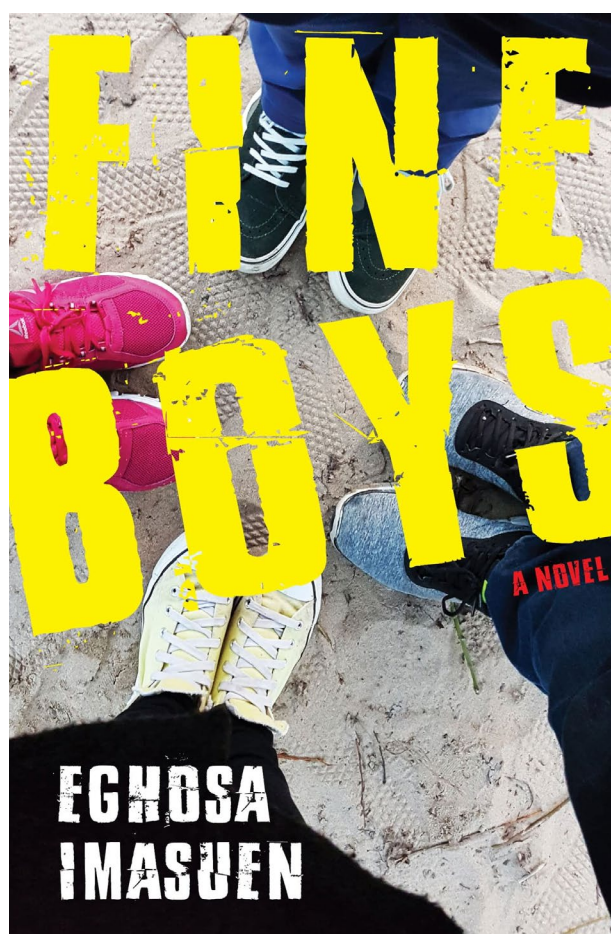


For instance, some writers and illustrators have successfully used social media, blogs, podcasts, or online platforms to reach a wider audience and showcase their work. For example, **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, a globally renowned author, maintains a strong online presence sharing her thoughts on literature, feminism, and social issues through social media, her website, and TED Talks.

Abiola Akinbiyi is also a children's book author and illustrator known for using Instagram to display her colorful and

imaginative illustrations, often accompanied by inspiring messages. She has written and illustrated several popular children's books, including "The Silent Book," "The Red-Kneed Tarantula," "The Land of Many Colours," and "The Great Taiwo Tale." These books are known for their vivid illustrations, catchy narratives, and positive messages about Africa and its diverse cultures. They are popular with children and have gained recognition both locally and internationally.

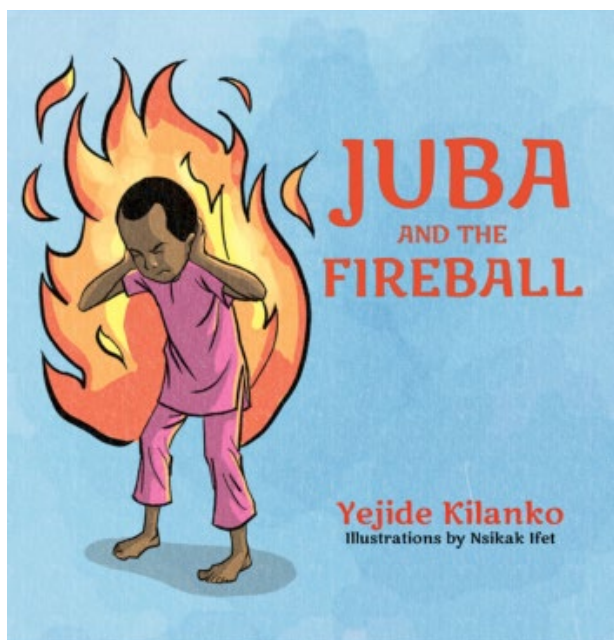
[Eghosa Imasuen](#) is an author, a medical doctor, and the co-host of "Stroll Podcast." Through this platform, he discusses literature, writing, and various aspects of Nigerian culture.



[Yejide Kilanko](#), a poet and novelist maintains a blog where she shares her poetry, short stories, and reflections on writing

and motherhood.

Figure 7: Some of the children books from Yejide Kilanko



Tomi Adeyemi, author of the “Children of Blood and Bone” series, has a strong presence on social media, particularly Twitter and Instagram, where she engages with her readers and discusses her writing process.

Figure 8: Tomi Adeyemi, author of the “Children of Blood and Bone



3. General recommendations for actors in the children's book industry

- **Government Support :** This could include grants, subsidies, or tax incentives for publishers and printers focusing on children's literature. Such support can help reduce production costs and promote the creation of high-quality children's books.
- **Invest in training programs :** for writers, illustrators, editors, and publishers specializing in children's books to help improve the quality of content and illustrations in children's literature. Continuous practice and improvement are key to becoming a successful illustrator or writer of children books. Ayo Oyeku, a Nigerian children book writer, [encouraged](#) his peers to work on their skills, experiment with different styles, and create a strong portfolio:

“it's also important for authors to understand that children are smarter than Nigerian authors think – hence they shouldn't make their stories didactic all the time. Don't write to/ at children, rather use your story to show them multiple paths to amazing thoughts. It's also quite disturbing to see an individual, any individual, announcing their new children's book – which they claimed they had written because they were idle and had to tick it off their bucket list. This motive is not acceptable. Children literature is delicate and requires a lot of skills too. Authors need to take professional writing classes, read voraciously, understand the genres of

children's literature, join literary groups, and do everything necessary to hone their writing skills. Writing for children is like breathing life into them. You wouldn't want to kill a child with your inexperience."

- **Support the publication of children's books in indigenous languages** to help preserve and promote local languages and cultures, making books more accessible and relatable to children.
- **Increase collaboration with Schools and Libraries** to facilitate easier access to children's books for students and encourage a culture of reading.
- **Develop and enforce quality standards for children's books** to ensure that they are age-appropriate, well-written, and well-illustrated. This will build trust in the quality of locally produced children's books.
- **Strengthen copyright protection** to safeguard the intellectual property of authors and illustrators, which will encourage more creativity and investment in the industry.
- **Conduct market research** to understand the preferences and needs of young readers. This will help publishers create books that are more appealing and engaging for children.
- **Embrace digital publishing and e-books** to reach a broader audience. Digital platforms can provide access to children's books for those who may not have access to physical books.
- **Invest in marketing and promotional efforts** to make children's books more

visible and attractive to parents, teachers, and caregivers.

- **Organize or participate in book fairs, reading festivals and literary events** that focus on children's literature to showcase your work and connect with potential clients and collaborators. Nigeria hosts various literary festivals, such as the Ake Arts and Book Festival and the Lagos International Poetry Festival. Attending these events can connect you with fellow writers and industry professionals. Websites like Fiverr and Upwork can be useful for offering your illustration services to a global clientele.
- **Foster partnerships between authors and illustrators** to create visually appealing and captivating children's books. High-quality illustrations can significantly enhance the appeal of the books.
- **Encourage the inclusion of local themes, stories,** and cultural elements in children's books. This can help children relate to the content and learn about their own culture.
- **Ensure that children's books are affordable and accessible** to a wide range of children, regardless of their socioeconomic background.
- **Support and participate in reading promotion programs** in schools, communities, and libraries to encourage a love of reading from a young age.
- **Promote parental involvement in reading to children.** Encourage parents and caregivers to read with their children and make books a part of family life.

4. Recommendations for authors and illustrators

- Reading a diverse range of books, including those by other African and international children's book authors, can broaden your perspective and improve your writing skills.
- Participate in writing workshops and local writing groups. They offer opportunities for feedback, networking, and learning from other writers.
- Join online communities and social media platforms where children book professionals share their work. The largest community of children book professionals, with writers, illustrators, publishers, and promoters of children books is managed by Muna Kalati, with an online forum on [LinkedIn](#) (**over 300 members**), [Facebook](#) (**over 475 members**) and [WhatsApp](#) (**about 100 members**). In these platforms, it is possible to engage with fellows for business, learning or collaboration purposes, or simply to receive feedback on your work.
- Create a website or blog to highlight your work, share your insights, and engage with readers. Active social media profiles can also help you build a readership.
- Keep up with industry news and trends. Understanding the publishing landscape can help you make informed decisions about your writing, publishing or illustration career.
- Digital illustration is becoming increasingly popular. Familiarize yourself with digital tools and software to expand your capabilities.

5. Recommendations for Publishers, Printers, and other Stakeholders

Despite the challenges facing the publishing and printing industry in Nigeria, there are several opportunities for publishers, printers, and other stakeholders to thrive and contribute to the growth of the sector.

- With the increasing use of smartphones and tablets, digital publishing can expand the reach of your publications, especially among tech-savvy readers. Thus, publishing actors should embrace digital publishing by producing e-books, audiobooks, and interactive content.
- Again, publishers can tap into the rich tapestry of local Nigerian languages to produce books that cater to different regions and cultures. This can help promote literacy in local languages and

preserve cultural heritage.

- Partner with educational institutions and libraries to provide textbooks, educational resources, and reading materials. These collaborations can lead to bulk sales and long-term relationships with institutions.
- Engage with government initiatives and programs that promote reading, literacy, and education. These programs can provide financial support or incentives to publishers and printers.
- Explore international markets. Nigerian children's literature has gained recognition globally, and there is potential to export books to other countries.
- Utilize e-commerce platforms for book sales and distribution. This can expand your reach and make it easier for readers to access your publications.
- Consider producing books in multiple formats, such as print, e-books, and audiobooks, to cater to diverse reader preferences.
- Stay informed about changing consumer preferences and adapt your offerings accordingly. Keep an eye on trends in genres, formats, and content.

For school leaders and administrators

- **Inclusion of story hour in schools**
- **Teaching of literature-based subjects should be encouraged in schools.**
- **Children should be given the opportunity to present children literature they learn about in special events.**
- **Children should be encouraged with gifts and award of recognition for proper participation in activities related to children's literature.**

All the above opportunities offer possibilities for innovation, expansion, and improvement of children's books in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the children's book database in Nigeria provides insights into the trends and characteristics of children's books in the country. The report highlights the need for more local publishing opportunities and the potential to incorporate more illustrations in books to make them more engaging. The findings of this report can help the publishing industry in Nigeria to grow and improve, promoting diverse and inclusive children's books that reflect the lived experiences of children in Nigeria and the broader African region. Our decisions today will decide tomorrow's outcome. If we therefore embrace children's literature as a viable solution with all hands-on deck to make it work, we will have the future we desire.



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