

## What “new” book donation practices can meet the needs of young African readers in libraries?

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### **Abstract:**

*Book donations from North to South are based on international solidarity mechanisms that are at times built on a gloomy picture of developing countries. Every year, French structures send the Southern Francophonie a considerable amount of books donated by individuals, and associations of French libraries (following “weeding” operations). These efforts could benefit from taking into account the entire book donation structure, promoting enhanced coherence between reading support policies and cultural industry development support policies. Besides unfair competition to African publishers and booksellers, mass book donations, when not adapted to readers’ needs, can have adverse consequences. For example, the young reading public educated in Malagasy needs to learn to read with Malagasy books, not French books.*

*The objective of this paper is therefore to shed light on and analyse some current book donation practices in order to propose practical recommendations and tools towards “new” book donation practices; to present to the IFLA’s assembly a first draft of the Book Donation Charter reviewed by book professionals from the South – a text that could serve as a reference in terms of book donations for the next few years.*

**Keywords:** book donations, bibliodiversity, digital publishing, Charter, and Madagascar

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## **1/ Background: independent publishers are reviewing book donation practices. Who are they and why are they doing this?**

### **a/ Presentation of the International Alliance of independent publishers**

The International Alliance of independent publishers is a non-profit association; as an interdependent network – comprising 85 publishing houses and publisher collectives from 45 different countries and 9 publisher collectives – the Alliance directly or indirectly represents some 360 publishing houses, divided into 6 language networks (English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, and Persian-speaking).

#### **The Alliance’s activities are organised around 6 main areas:**

- The implementation of a worldwide international and intercultural network of independent publishers;
- The coordination and support of interdependent co-publishing and translation projects bearing the “Fair Book” logo, guaranteeing a fair and interdependent partnership among publishers and a book selling price adapted to local purchasing power;
- The facilitation of professional meetings focused on the human dimension;
- Support and capacity building provided to a publishers network through an online resource centre proposing thematic documents, analysis, key words definitions; online training and customised tutorials on the production of textbooks in Africa, for example, on the development of digital publishing in developing countries through the Alliance’s Digital Lab, etc.;
- Promotion and visibility of independent publishers’ book releases, mainly books published in the South through the presence of publishers at various book fairs collective stands (more than 10 collective stands in Algiers, Dakar, Paris, Montreuil, Buenos Aires, Guadalajara, etc.); distribution and dissemination in France, Belgium and Switzerland of youth literature books published in Africa, through the Lectures d’Afrique(s) backlist.

### **b/ Presentation of the International Assembly of independent publishers**

“We, 82 independent publishers and 9 collectives – representing more than 360 publishers – from 45 countries in Latin America, North America, Asia, Africa and Europe, are united for professional, philosophical, political, cultural and interdependent motives within an alliance, the International Alliance of independent publishers. We founded this alliance in 2002 to make our voices heard, to get out of beaten tracks, to build a solidarity movement and address all forms of pressure (economic, political, religious, ideological).

In a period of profound transformations, we want to unite to review our practices, listen to other opinion makers and include young generations of publishers who share our concerns. Considering two new factors – the emergence of new digital actors and the global financial crisis – we wish to redefine our role and reassert bibliodiversity related issues.

That is why we have decided to hold the International Assembly of independent publishers, that will consist of a series of preparatory and thematic workshops held between 2012 and 2014, closing with a general meeting from 17 to 22 September 2014 in Cape Town, South Africa. This process will lead to the formulation of:

- Proposals and recommendations supporting bibliodiversity, addressed to public authorities (on issues related to duties, textbook markets, book donations, importations and exportations, support funds for translation and co-publishing projects, support to independent publishers national collectives, etc.);
- Cooperative and innovative practices among independent publishers, based on fair principles (development of digital platform for independent publishers, implantation of new economic models, (re) appropriation of literary spaces by publishers, assessment of zones of cultural silence, potential of digital publishing for the diffusion of ideas, sustainable exchanges of practices and know-how, long-term professionalization, etc.);
- New forms of partnerships with other book chain links and book professionals attuned to bibliodiversity (creation and development of alliances, collectives and cooperatives, exchange of methods and tools, facilitation of inter professional interactions, experimentations with open software, dialogues with new specialised media, establishment of interdependent alternatives, etc.)”.

### **c/ Workshop on book donations and conclusions to come**

In the context of the International Assembly of independent publishers, a workshop on book donation was held in March 2013, to “review” book donations from the perspective of professionals from the South. Advocacy and recommendations on the Book Donation Charter drafted by the Culture et Développement association in the 1990s, and that has become a reference for UNESCO, was carried out by participants (publishers, booksellers, librarians from the South and the North) to mainstream book chain links from Southern countries in the Charter, to enrich current practices and propose alternatives to “traditional” book donations.

These ideas will be reworded and turned into recommendations and addressed to public authorities and international organisations, for the review and update of the Book Donation Charter – at least for it to be based on a reciprocity principle more than it currently is.

## **2/ Book donations: a pressing issue for book economy and bibliodiversity**

### **a/ Book donations: a practice difficult to assess**

On its website, UNESCO provides this definition, cited from the Book Donation Charter<sup>1</sup>: “The definition of any book donation scheme will be built on the following general principles: understanding and associating the partner organisation in all stages of the programme, preconizing quality over quantity, strengthening knowledge of readerships, encouraging the development of a book culture; in the case of new book donations, collaborating as much as possible with publishers and librarians from relevant countries and contribute to local book production by supporting artisan production of low print-run books”.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/fr/ev.php-URL\\_ID=25480&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/fr/ev.php-URL_ID=25480&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

This theoretical definition, as important as it may be, is not practically implemented in most cases. Many donations are registered across Africa but it is currently difficult to obtain global data given the difficulty of obtaining specific quantitative data on these practices. Indeed, one of the main sources of information is the Customs Services (controlling importation and exportation of merchandise), but in most countries these data are confidential and not available to the public.

### **b/ To which extent are book donations “threatening” bibliodiversity?**

#### **Inappropriate contents**

Although book donation has been a well-established practice in countries of the South for more than forty years, the majority of these books are sent without consultation with beneficiaries. Many books are unsuitable to these countries’ respective contexts, either because their contents are not meeting readers’ expectations or daily lives, or because the language in which they are written is not widely read by readers.

#### **Customs clearance and other cumbersome and costly administrative processes**

Many donors do not follow-up the donation until the end. Thus, beneficiaries sometimes have to pay fees for a parcel once it has arrived. Without prior preparation and follow-up of the entire operation by the donor, the addressee may encounter problems to clear parcels and bring them to the actual address where they are sent. Costs incurred can be high. It sometimes happens that an addressee cannot clear parcels, and these remain unpaid at customs.

#### **Book donations’ storage and display**

Addressees sometimes encounter problems with the storage of donations received and with their display in the beneficiary library, often because there was no prior consultation with the donor in terms of logistics and stock. Some head librarians think about space availability before weighting in content and readers’ needs.

#### **Adverse impacts on local book chain**

In some countries, donations reduce library acquisition budgets: it can happen that local public authorities favour book donations over direct financial support to libraries, thus reducing budget lines allocated to reading material and support.

In countries where libraries do not have a book acquisition budget, donations have a very negative impact on the development of local publishing, as the latter is seldom taken into consideration in the donation. We can also find donation schemes that are carried out in the context of a bilateral cooperation, with language domination priorities that totally overlook local publishing.

### **3/ Madagascar: case study of a school**

#### **a/ Panorama of the book chain in Madagascar**

In Madagascar, importation flux could be studied given that Customs Services have agreed to provide data on “books” in the country. Entities that practice book donations could also be identified.

Madagascar is an Indian Ocean island of 18 000 000 inhabitants, comprising 15% French-speakers and 85% Malagasy-speakers. Malagasy and French are the country's national languages.

The publishing sector is not considered a booming economic sector. In 1982, 1 549 titles were listed. In 2012, only 1 668 were registered, of which 42% were religious books<sup>2</sup>. The legal deposit registers some hundred titles published per year but 90% of these outputs remain first editions. The low print-run, 500 copies per title, is one of the main causes. Covering the island is very difficult in terms of book diffusion. The main actors – authors, publishers, booksellers, and librarians – exist but are not numerous enough and the absence of financial means leaves them to overcome challenges on their own.

In 2013, 12 active publishing houses, 700 operational libraries and 23 bookshops were listed for the whole country. These figures are telling when we know that book donation is practiced since the 1970s in Madagascar.

Malagasy publishing must overcome several obstacles both at the level of production and diffusion, including:

- a low literacy rate of 64% (declining because of the 2009-2013 crisis);
- a low purchasing power, with a minimum wage of 33 €
- a high book input cost because they are subject to taxation;
- the absence of a book distribution network;
- a weak distribution network: 25 bookshops for all 22 regions, of which half are in the capital. Moreover, half of these sell more imported books than local books;
- many schools without libraries, and when there are libraries, we note a limited clientele and out-dated services;
- high communication costs;
- a population who does not have reading habits anymore and no support from the State to popularise books;
- textbooks published by the Ministry of National Education and distributed freely, denying Malagasy publishers this market;
- difficult access to rural areas because of high costs of transport, although 83% of the population lives there and is monolingual;
- too many book donations that do not meet the readers' needs in libraries;
- associations or projects are funded by donors who publish their own books and do not participate in the development of the publishing profession in the country;
- public reading projects that are implanted through bilateral cooperation but with limited participation in the popularisation of local publishing.

#### **b/ Donors in Madagascar**

They come from various entities and backgrounds: foreign embassies, mainly French associations, religious congregations, international organisations and individuals – impossible to list as books transit in their suitcases.

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<sup>2</sup> Figures from a survey carried out by the Madagascar publishers association (AEdiM).

### c/ Types of donations and books donated

Donations can be books collected from libraries, schools, individuals or associations abroad. They can be new books, recuperated book pulps or second-hand books, mainly religious books, textbooks, literature, and some academic and professional books. It can also be books bought or published by international organisations and freely redistributed as part of their education programme.

Donations can also be acquisitions of local books through purchases in a bookshop or the allocation of a budget to an associative structure towards acquiring books published locally.

### d/ Book importation figures in Madagascar in 2011 and 2012<sup>3</sup>

Summary of book importations in Madagascar

ENTITY	2011		2012		%/ Sector
	Weight Kg	Monetary value	Weight Kg	Monetary value	
Bookshops	21 276	823 889 733	17 594	697 831 697	17,5%
Publishers	82 263	1 182 564 169	101 979	1 416 680 350	30,0%
Retailers	76 395	1 276 715 747	49 019	1 129 344 360	27,7%
Embassies	23 120	1 064 977 551	34 585	1 080 911 253	24,7%

Total monetary value:	<b>203 055</b>	<b>4 348 147 200</b>	<b>203 177</b>	<b>4 324 767 660</b>	
in €		<b>1 525 665,68 €</b>		<b>1 466 022,94 €</b>	

<b>Book donations (associations, NGOs) Monetary value</b>	<b>632 722</b>	<b>3 930 561 401</b>	<b>524 059</b>	<b>3 866 472 313</b>	35,4%
<b>Donations and merchandises' expedition fees in € (estimated):</b>	<b>730 302,00</b>	<b>1 379 144,35 €</b>	<b>662 546,00</b>	<b>1 356 656,95 €</b>	

Book donations' value is very high compared to the value of importations made by bookshops.

### e/ Inadequate and unused donations

As per surveys carried out in some twenty libraries benefiting from book donations between 2003 and 2012<sup>4</sup>, we observe that books are often not used and that many of them remain in boxes. When books are new, they often stay in locked cupboards, as head librarians do not want to damage them. Others do not have storage units... In some villages, many children only read books available at the library. And this does not seem to improve their reading and

<sup>3</sup> Source: Malagasy Customs Services

<sup>4</sup> These surveys were carried out between 2003 and 2012 by Marie Michèle RAZAFINTSALAMA in Madagascar

level of education, as books are not adequate for their level of language. Children surveyed confirmed not understanding texts in French, only looking at images. School results in these villages are generally low, despite the availability of a library well stocked with French books. It is relevant to note that in a library mainly keeping Malagasy books – as is the case in the Morarano communal library, established with the support of the Saint-Georges-de-Reintembault en Ille-et-Vilaine commune (Brittany, France) – children’s school results are improving.

#### **f/ Limited changes in practices despite awareness campaigns**

During a meeting carried out by Marie Michèle RAZAFINTSALAMA in Madagascar in 2007, it was observed that the majority of donations come from abroad. An awareness campaign was held to sensitise associations and entities who engage in book donations in Madagascar, focusing on the imperative of giving books published locally to the population, by the same token supporting local economy and reading, instilling local “consumption” habits in readers. Many have responded positively; however given the economic and political crisis, the number of associations practicing donations from abroad went up between 2009 and 2012. Moreover, and after surveying the Customs Services and Censorship Services, it appears that book parcels arriving by boat are not always checked – meaning that some donations were unrecorded.

The situation of libraries has not evolved much between 2007 and 2012 because they still do not have book acquisition budgets. They must therefore continue to support foreign donation structures.

#### **4/ Similarities in Southern hemisphere countries<sup>5</sup>**

##### **a/ In Guiney Conakry**

Guiney Conakry has more than 11 176 000 inhabitants, including 21% French-speaking and 42% partially fluent in French. The Ministry of Culture implemented library coordination and a public reading policy, but we note that many book donations are made without prior consultation with local actors. These donations mainly come from France, through decentralised cooperation or town twinning agreements. Libraries are often involved once decisions are made and are constrained to accepting donations: for example, a small town unexpectedly received 6 000 books, without being warned and able to prepare in advance, not receiving training or support in the medium term.

##### **b/ In Lebanon**

Book donations are numerous, and often carried out by embassies. According to a local bookseller interviewed, and as an example, a Beirut library received 70 000 books (in the context of a twinning agreement with a French library): on these 70 000 books, 60 000 books

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<sup>5</sup> These testimonies are from the book donation workshop facilitated by the International Alliance of independent publishers in March 2013, and from email correspondence with publisher members of the Alliance between March 2013 and March 2014.

were not meeting the expectations and needs of the Lebanese readership. This principle has negative effects: indeed, when libraries request acquisition budgets from the municipality, they are told: “But you already have books!”.

### **c/ In Brazil**

In Brazil, book donation is an internal problem found at national level only. The country does not receive external book donations but corporate businesses such as banks and corporate groups sometimes use book donations for marketing purposes. Boxes with corporate logos are placed in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, for people to drop books in them. These boxes are subsequently donated to readers in the favelas. In practice, people only put old books in these boxes, as well as trash and old magazines. Corporate entities, even if not collecting relevant reading material, benefit from positive free publicity.

## **5/ And now, digital donations?**

### **a/ Identical mechanisms...**

These past few years, many NGOs and organisations from the North try to address the issue of illiteracy by distributing technological tools in developing countries. Important international initiatives such as Worldreader or OLPC (One Laptop per Child), supported by major sponsors and generally well-known, thus launched experimental projects in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia. Despite their willingness to make reading accessible to children in developing countries, these various experiments are problematic. We hereby present some elements that can contribute to a better understanding of what can the limitations of such initiatives be, both for local populations and publishers.

By providing technological devices and thousands of eBooks in unfamiliar contexts, OLPC and Worldreader quickly faced the problem of inadequacy between contents and local users. Looking for books that could interest teachers and learners (including in national languages) recently encouraged these organisations to work more closely with African publishers. While we can rejoice about the will to include contents better adapted to local realities, what about partnerships proposed by African publishers and authors? Surprisingly, while these associations are ready to spend huge amounts on equipment, material, marketing and communication, they systematically request creators (African authors and publishers) to make their work available at no cost.

Two arguments are generally proposed to convince publishers of the benefits of providing their work for free: the free digitalisation of books thus offered and the enhanced marketing and exposure of their work.

The creation of digital files only costs some dozens of dollars to the organisation, which is a very small retribution for the author and publisher’s work. As for the marketing argument, it is not much more convincing. It is indeed not very likely that these experiments in classrooms yield positive commercial or publicity benefits for publishers involved, even more so given that a publisher takes a huge risk in giving an author’s work when he is rather expected to protect and promote it.



On a more disconcerting note, no economic model is proposed to local actors (authors, publishers, readers) to support the emergence of a sustainable ecosystem, thus entertaining a continuous dependency towards organisations from the North. Because nothing is planned to economically mainstream local actors, it is indeed not likely that digital reading habits become sustainable once organisations pull out.

As long as local publishers are not active stakeholders and that no provisions are included in these programmes to pay creators, it is not beneficial for them to associate with these organisations.

## **b/ For what results?**

As a practical example, a Malagasy publishing house experimented with this device in 2010 with OLPC France and G du Coeur association, who implemented a pilot project in a small island north of Madagascar, called Nosy Komba. Some 137 XO computers were made available to primary school children, with possibility for these children to bring these computers home. OLPC had planned to rely on a voluntary team to translate the Malagasy content but very few translators responded to the call: applications in the computers are therefore mainly in French. OLPC contacted the Malagasy publishing house to set up a digital library. The publishing house accepted to transfer at no costs the rights of many titles in the list, in exchange of OLPC paying copyrights. In the end, OLPC bought only one title from the publishing house and many titles in French free of copyrights were downloaded in the XO. Project leaders recognised that children only read the Malagasy title. Meanwhile, OLPC France obtained funding from the United States head office for computer maintenance and the installation of solar panels (to feed computers). Two other Malagasy titles were bought under the same conditions in 2013. The Malagasy translation of the applications did not materialise. The website was subsequently supported by local operator Telma to secure a permanent and free Internet connection. It is however impossible to figure out what is in the computers because during a visit from the Malagasy publishing house in the school, computers were not charged.

American companies also implanted another 115 XO in two other remote regions of Madagascar, but to this date there is no feedback on their usage by learners.

## **6/ Towards the monetization of donations? Some examples of “good practices” to promote!**

The Touraine Madagascar association works towards book and reading development in Madagascar since 2007. It pre-purchases a publishing project proposed by two Malagasy publishing houses, Jeunes Malgaches and Tsipika publishing houses. Some books are sent to France for reselling by the Touraine association to its members. Other books make up a mobile library that circulates in five public primary schools in the capital city. The mobile library is made up of 20 copies of six titles (six different authors). One Malagasy publishing house organises meetings with authors in schools when the mobile library passes by, and the Touraine association funds the six authors’ fees for these meetings.

With the Saint-Georges-de-Reintembault commune (Ille-et-Vilaine region in France), funding was based on the building of a communal library in 2010. The library’s fund was acquired through a local bookseller for local purchases and the purchase of books on Madagascar

published in France. The commune also bought furniture for its library. A foreign company who collects plants for essential oils extraction funded the construction of the library. The following year, six mobile libraries were circulated in 24 schools around the commune. These are schools located some ten kilometres away and children therefore cannot visit the communal library regularly. In 2012, to activate the communal library, a youth literature author from the capital also came once a month to meet children in the communal library. An early childhood literature mobile library was set up containing books in Malagasy to encourage mothers to expose their children to books from a young age.

Moreover, some donors did book donations according to the expertise of local professionals and to replenish library stocks. Librarian training sessions in national language are also offered by a Malagasy publishing house, which received training through La joie par les livres (Bibliothèque nationale de France). These training sessions, focused on in-library book activities, were organised complementary to the creation of libraries.

## **7/ Towards a new conceptualisation of book donations: a step-by-step guide**

### **a/ Recommendations towards “another” book donation supporting bibliodiversity**

To put book donations into perspective, as an integral part of book economy in countries of the South, it is necessary to consider book donations within a global project, including all actors of the book chain. Any book donation operation should benefit to economic actors in a given country and should not enter in direct competition with local booksellers and publishers. In order to do this, book donations must inscribe themselves within a broader international partnership project, promoting the strengthening of public reading policies of the beneficiary country, and also participating to the book chain economy.

In light of testimonies discussed in this paper, and working towards a review of the Book Donation Charter, professionals from the South consulted by the International Alliance of independent publishers support the following recommendations:

- **Support, understanding and fair relations as working principles:** book donation schemes but be complemented by capacity sharing in terms of management and in-library activities. It is therefore essential to implement training sessions aimed at librarians, to make them less isolated and train them on the various book acquisition methods, to carry out reference work, to implement in-library activities. These training sessions will enable librarians to better express their needs in terms of funds for their library. It is also important for librarians to be in a position to judge a donation’s relevance, say “no”, and to refuse a book donation.
- **Empowerment of libraries from the South in terms of donation structures in the North:** when public acquisition budgets are insufficient for local libraries, it is important for librarians to plan the implementation of income generating activities (for example, a cultural tea time, renting out of venue, etc.), making them less dependent towards structures from the North. Discussions on library economics and experiences carried out by the Libraries without Borders association could be transposed and adapted to some countries.
- **Need for reciprocity between North and South in book donation mechanisms:** any donation operation should first and foremost seek to strengthen the country’s local

economy. Donation organisations can stock locally published books from local booksellers, thus participating to the development of local publishing and activating bookshops circuits.

Moreover, if books from the North are sent to African libraries, it is necessary that libraries from the North purchase books published in Africa in exchange, to promote their stock's diversification and plurality. The acquisition of books published in the South could be a supplementary criterion, considered in public call for tenders in the North.

- **Need to implement a toolkit enabling the support of donation structures to acquire local books:** African publishers and booksellers are requested to work in collaboration in order to make their outputs known and assist donation organisations to include African outputs in the donation process. There are indeed several database listing books published in the South: Sudplanète developed by Africultures (<http://www.spla.pro/fr/>), Takam Tikou website by La Joie par les livres/ BNF (<http://takamtikou.bnf.fr/>), the pan African association Afrilivres website, showcasing the output of 30 publishers from sub-Saharan Africa ([www.afrilivres.net](http://www.afrilivres.net)), the French database Electre for bilingual books or books in French published in Africa (<http://www.electre.com/ElectreHome.aspx>).

There are also structures that diffuse and distribute African books in the North: Afrilivres association ([www.afrilivres.net](http://www.afrilivres.net) and a list published in April 2014: <http://fr.calameo.com/read/001045068bcfffd041c69>), the L'Oiseau Indigo association ([www.loiseauindigo.fr/](http://www.loiseauindigo.fr/)), the International Alliance of independent publishers (fonds « Lectures d'Afrique(s) » : <http://www.alliance-editeurs.org/les-nouveautes-du-fonds-lectures-d?lang=fr>), the African Books Collective association in England ([www.africanbookscollective.com/](http://www.africanbookscollective.com/)), etc.

The International Alliance of independent publishers, in collaboration with professional collectives, offered to develop this toolkit, that will be available on the Alliance's website.

- **The development of donation monetisation:** instead of sending books following “weeding” operations, some libraries in the North hold “library clearance sales”, allowing them to collect funds. These funds can be used to replenish a local library's acquisition budget, that will enable the purchase of books through a local bookseller, or to develop publishing projects in Africa, led by local publishers. A donation structure can therefore create a partnership between a library from the North and a publisher from the South: the publisher in the South publishes a book through the library clearance sale or with a given income generating activity organised by the library in the North. This book will be sold at a reduced price in several schools in the country, for example, and could be purchased by libraries in the North.
- **Need to consider national languages in book donation schemes:** the integration of local outputs in book donations aims at answering the needs for books in national languages and bilingual books. In order to do this, a close collaboration with local publishers and booksellers is essential. A portion of purchases made by the donor organisation will stock the library or will constitute a mobile library that could circulate from one library to another in the country, to reach remote populations, often speakers of an African language.

- **The importance of lobbying public authorities in the countries of the South:** professional collectives (publishers, booksellers, librarians) have a role to play to raise awareness among Ministries of Education and Culture in the various countries, for acquisition budgets to be voted, enabling the libraries to stock books from the North and the South (orders directly made to local libraries). For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, some local publishers receive orders from the Ministry of Culture to stock the country's libraries. The Minister himself raises awareness of publishers to ensure that they put aside a sufficient commission to pay their authors.
- **The need to mainstream a reflection on digital book donations:** digital donations practices must also be guided by a Charter, avoiding loopholes identified in traditional book donations practices – in particular the issue of inappropriate contents for readers. Moreover, and for the valuable investments made in educative projects not to be in vain, it is necessary for local actors from the book chain to be mainstreamed in this device, with a fairer remuneration of authors, publishers, and booksellers. The development of these digital projects must therefore be complemented by local actors' ownership, enabling them to create their own digital ecosystem.
- **The need for professional associations (International Association of Francophones Booksellers, Afrilivres, APNET, International Alliance of independent publishers, Libraries without Borders, ScoLibris, etc.) to continue working in collaboration** to promote new ways of addressing book donations and propose practical and realistic “alternatives” to “traditional” book donations.

#### **b/ Conclusion: implement warning and observation mechanisms for book donation practices**

Convince donors that local “consumption” is a long-term activity. Priorities are not always the same and donors must feel comfortable. The first essential step is to approach local booksellers and publishers to observe what is available. Beyond the act of donation, the book carries knowledge: it is therefore necessary to assess activities that need to be carried out to support readers in the development of their knowledge and critical mind. These past twenty years, African publishing was developed independently from libraries, which is however one of the only place where books are accessible in most countries, given the low purchasing power of populations. These libraries are often remote and are not up-to-date with existing outputs, as they do not have an acquisition budget. It is therefore essential to first strengthen relations between the book chain links to facilitate circulation of information, by organising inter professional meetings between librarians, publishers and booksellers of a given country or region.

Moreover, for book donation schemes to take into account the book environment of the country in which they operate, book donation entities should sign the Book Donation Charter with local book actors.

It is also important to support the association of librarians at national level, as is the case for other professions, to better share experiences and empower the profession. This grouping should be a reference for donors, facilitating awareness activities.

Finally, and institutionally speaking, it would be necessary to implement a systematic awareness activity for new comers to donation mechanisms, to avoid misunderstanding and financial loss.

These recommendations promoting “another” book donation supporting bibliodiversity will be complemented before the end of 2014 with a proposal for the amendment of the Book Donation Charter, reviewed by professionals from the South.