The Great Journey
Contents

Mission Statement
To publish and print quality educational and knowledge materials at affordable prices, whilst promoting excellent authorship and creating customer and shareholder value.

Our Core Values
- Superior Customer Service
- Transparency and Accountability
- Competency
- Integrity
- Innovation

Our Quality Policy
Kenya Literature Bureau is committed to and shall always endeavour to reach the highest level of quality in publishing and printing educational and knowledge materials as stipulated by the ISO 9001:2008.

We Will
- Comply with regulatory and statutory requirements.
- Continually improve the effectiveness of our Management Systems.
- Achieve and ensure that our customers receive the highest quality service.
- As a team, be guided by strict adherence to laid down procedures and strive to be competitive and independent; and will protect and uphold our customers’ interest without compromising the quality standards set.

Our quality objectives shall be established and reviewed at the regular management review meetings.

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Published by:
Kenya Literature Bureau
P.O. Box 30022-00100, Nairobi
Popo Road, Off Mombasa Road,
Tel: +254 20 3541196/7, 0711 318 188
Fax: +254 20 6001474
Email: info@klb.co.ke
Website: www.klb.co.ke

Published for YOU
All correspondence to the Corporate Services Manager,
P.O. Box 30022 - 00100, Nairobi.
Tel: 254 20 3541196/7, 0711 318 188
Email: info@klb.co.ke
Website: www.klb.co.ke

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Kenya Literature Bureau is a home of firsts. It is the first indigenous publisher to attain ISO 9001 certification, the foremost in digital publishing having launched eBooks with local content in 2010 and ranks high in performance contracting, where it was recently feted as the third-best most consistent State Corporation in performance. At 67, KLB is also the oldest publishing house in East Africa.

In this issue of The Publisher, we trace the journey the Bureau has covered since its establishment as East African Literature Bureau (EALB) in 1947. Over the period, the book publisher has made significant contribution in education of Africans under the British colonial government and later nurtured generations of skilled individuals in independent Kenya. Indeed, the story of Kenya cannot be complete without a chapter on KLB.

The debate over the use of mother tongue as a language of instruction in pre-primary education has refused to go since the release of 1976 Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (The Gachathi Report). Leaders, policy makers, teachers, and educationists are raising their voices, asking where to get mother tongue books. The books are available at KLB.

KLB is planting trees under the national goals to achieve the recommended tree cover. Involving schools in the endeavour achieves the numbers, but, more importantly, recruits the young people as environmental ambassadors.

We have more on book launches, especially Taban Lo Liyong’s Christmas in Lodwar, trade fairs and exhibitions, visits and sponsorships. Welcome.

Joseph Ndegwa

We’ve built a firm foundation for sustainable growth

A careful assessment of our past as a publishing firm reveals that we have achieved a lot and engaged new gears for growth and profitability. We have embraced change, successfully transformed and are now reaping the rewards of taking bold steps.

At KLB, we have matched our structure with strategy and meaningfully partnered with forward-looking entities to take advantage of “white space” opportunities in the market.

Since our establishment in 1947, the Bureau has navigated many challenges that have shaped the way we operate.

Most consistent
Our turnaround strategy has paid dividends. We attained ISO 9001: 2008 certification for quality systems of management, modernised the printing press, automated our work processes and received recognition as one of the most consistent State corporations in performance. We are now competing head-to-head with the world’s best in the publishing industry.

Digital content
In readiness for the roll-out of laptops for schools, we have specifically developed eBooks for Standard One, which have since been approved by the curriculum regulator, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). We also have a stock of other high quality digital content, which are widely available in local bookstores and can be accessed online through WorldReader, Amazon.com and eKitabu.

The debate on the use of mother tongue as a language of instruction is a healthy one. We have published several titles under the Tusime Lugha Yetu brand for our children in schools.

KLB has made available tender and procurement opportunities to the youth, women and persons with disability under the Government initiative to empower these special constituencies in nation building. We also support college graduates and have made available internship opportunities at KLB.

KLB has signed partnerships with County governments in the provision of ECDE books, technical books for TIVETs and printing services. Thanks to our quality printing, KLB is now the sole distributor of KNEC mathematical tables.

Sponsor events
We support environmental campaigns across the country through tree planting in schools, sponsor charity events and equip libraries with books, programmes that we know, will give us a better tomorrow.

We thank our parent Ministry, the Board of Management, and staff for their continued support and dedication.

Mrs. Eve A. Obara, MBS
Managing Director

We welcome articles or any feedback from readers on education and publishing. Please include your name, address and telephone number. Letters/articles may be edited for clarity and space.

E-mail: publisher@klb.co.ke

Joseph Ndegwa
Kenya Literature Bureau’s record in innovation and a culture of good governance got a thumbs up from the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, when he met the board and management in April.

After touring the firm’s printing press, he had good news for the top leadership of the parastatal, which is a market leader in publishing and printing of secondary school books. “I congratulate you for the great contribution you make towards development of education in Kenya,” Prof Kaimenyi said, adding that “every child in Kenyan schools has read a KLB book.”

KLB specialises in publishing and printing of educational materials, where it controls 69 per cent of the secondary school segment and 39 per cent of the primary school segment.

Saying that forward-looking organisations and market leaders are known for confronting old ways of doing things, the CS said KLB was on the right track.

“Sometimes, the old ways of doing things just won’t work anymore. You must take the decision that will help you to meet the challenges of the future, and I am proud that KLB is setting the pace,” he said on April 8 at the KLB headquarters.

He anchored his address in innovation and good governance, outlining the importance and relevance of these pillars in driving the growth and development of an institution.

The Cabinet Secretary highlighted the changing role of publishing in Kenya, urging the publisher to be keen on vernacular language publications and noted KLB’s wide array of mother tongue books under the brand Tusome Lughu Yenu.

On digital publishing, Prof Kaimenyi said: “You have done well to have ventured into digital publishing, and I am happy to note that your materials are selling online.”

KLB books can be bought from WorldReader, Amazon.com and eKitabu, a local online bookstore.

KLB board chair Mrs Serah Ndege, thanked the Cabinet Secretary for the visit, pointing out that the parastatal will continue to be “a shining example of good governance and innovation” by consistently working hard.

Prof Jesse Mugambi, a Board Member, said KLB was committed to its growth path, having turned a corner in 2007 to become a market leader. “In 2007, KLB was on its knees, and even considered staff layoff, but thanks to hard work and persistence, we are where we are today,” he said.

The managing director, Mrs Eve Obara, said KLB was working on modernisation of the printing press, staff development, market expansion and performance contracting where the publisher was feted as the third most-consistent State Corporation in performance during the 2012 awards. She asked for support from the Ministry to fight book piracy, which has become a great challenge to publishers in Kenya.

Mrs Obara thanked the Cabinet Secretary for the invaluable support received from the Ministry, which has enabled KLB to stand out as a leading State Firm.
As Kenya marked 50 years of independence last year, Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB), like many organisations, got a chance to look back and take stock of its contribution to national development. As a publisher, “KLB’s books have been read by every child in Kenyan schools,” says Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, the Education Cabinet Secretary.

KLB has “retained its position as one of the largest publishing houses in Eastern Africa,” says Mrs Eve Obara, the Managing Director. “Out of the thousands of titles in our stable, several are in vernacular, digitized form and available in the local and international markets through WorldReader, Amazon, com, and eKitabu, an online local bookstore.”

These achievements are fruit of hard work that placed KLB on the road to continuous improvement and growth. “We support schools and communities through the ‘Imarisha Kimasomo’ (Step up in learning) campaign, which stocks and upgrades libraries through donations of textbooks and other educational materials,” says Mrs Obara.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
The history of KLB is tied to that of Kenya, starting from humble beginnings to a powerhouse in printing and publishing. It traces its roots to 1887 when Christian missionaries established printing presses to supplement evangelistic reading materials sourced from their home countries. The education offered during the colonial period of religious materials in English and other languages.

In the mid-1940s, missionaries joined hands to form the Ndia Kuu Press, the first local educational publishing house, which produced materials to cater for the increasing educational demand by Africans. Among others, it produced Christian literature, adult literacy materials, school text books and fiction books. East African Literature Bureau (EALB), an offshoot of Ndia Kuu Press, was established in 1947 to provide literary education for Africans, to prepare them for leadership positions in government and to compete favourably with the rest for economic, political and social stakes in the colony. EALB had administrative offices in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Kampala, producing educational and literacy packages, developing them in vernacular for Africans. The printing press was stationed in Kenya.

The establishment of the Bureau resulted from pressure on the colonial government by Africans to give them education to equip them for opportunities in government and other sectors, to look back and to take stock of its contribution to national development.

Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC), which was a forerunner of the East African Protectorate, handed over the management of EALB to the East African Common Services Organisation in 1961. EACSO served the contiguous territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, which were respectively a Crown Colony (with occasionally the Sultanate of Zanzibar).

The East African Community, which was founded in 1967, took over the operations of EALB from the EACSO. Upon the collapse of the EAC in 1977, the Bureau's Kenyan Commission was temporarily domiciled under Kenya's Ministry of Education.

When the EAC collapsed, Kenyan staff of the EALB were housed at the Ministry of Higher Education, “recalls Michael Ondigo Mwalo, who has worked at the Bureau for 42 years. The education sector had two ministries at the time: the Ministry of Education headed by Hon Joseph Kamotho, Higher Education, the docket held by Hon Joseph Kamotho.

According to Mr Mwalo, who joined the Bureau on September 1, 1972, EALB then headed by N.G. Ngulukulu (a Tanzanian national) had thriving businesses in Uganda and Tanzania. EALB had plans to relocate its headquarters to neighbouring Tanzania at the time of collapse of the EAC. “We had constructed our headquarters, complete with workers’ quarters in Arusha, and had planned to move our printing press to the new premises in June 1977. KLB lost out when members of the community
shared assets.” The inventory is documented in the Thornton Report on KLB and its Assets.

During the subdivision of assets, Kenya had an upper hand since it hosted the printing press. Mr. Ngulukulu went back to Tanzania, leaving Rose Mwangi, a chief editor at the time, to manage the business. EALB had leased houses for its staff in Nairobi West, Eastleigh, and Westlands. EALB was at Parklands Section 1, Parklands 1st Avenue, Shauri Moyo and Jamaa estates, “recalls Benard Oloo Oketch, who worked at KLB since 1975. This included when EAC folded up.

STATE CORPORATION

On July 4, 1980, Parliament passed the Kenya Literature Bureau Act, Cap. 209, which transformed the Bureau into a State Corporation under the Ministry of Education. Its mandate, according to the law, was to publish, print, and distribute literary material including books, periodicals, journals, newspapers and magazines. This Act came into effect in 1984, with the appointment of Samuel Cheruiyot Lang’at as the first Managing Director of KLB. The first employees of the KLB Board were hired on November 1, 1983, while those who had served EALB were asked to choose between remaining at the Ministry or joining KLB. “Those who remained behind were redeployed to other Ministries,” recounts Clive Bojo Kalama, who has worked at KLB for 31 years.

According to Mr. Kalama, who joined the Bureau on April 6, 1983, those who had served EALB were asked to choose between remaining at the Ministry or joining KLB. “Those who remained behind were redeployed to other Ministries,” recounts Clive Bojo Kalama, who has worked at KLB for 31 years.

At the time, KLB had less than 150 staff and was headed by directors, including Rose Mwangi (1977-1980), Francis Muka (1980-1981), Zablon Kanyiaya (1981-1983), Duncan Mwangi (January to August 1983 and October 1984), and Agnes Ojany (September 1984).

“Starting as a commission staff in the bindery section of the printing press and then being moved to the cutting unit, which was a section in Accounts Department,” says Mr. Kalama, adding that all Bureau staff were civil servants.

It was Mr. Lang’at, who steered KLB to reclaim the glory it had lost when the EAC collapsed. He embarked on modernisation of the central printing section (CPS), which was small, congested and had dilapidated machines. KLB, Mr. Kalama recalls, used “monotype system” that operated on coding spools. “We had keyboard and casting machines used in production, where the operator would key in text on the keyboard just as is done on a conventional typewriter, resulting in codes punched on to the paper tape. This was then transferred to the monotype caster, which reads and produces a column of justified type texts that are then printed. This was done by Paste-Up staff cutting and pasting to make pages on bromide copies,” he narrates the production journey.

“They then would be taken for camera shots to produce negatives, which would then be used to assemble individual page films and prepare plates for printing.”

Mr. Lang’at had a dream of housing KLB units at a central point, those who worked with him say, adding he often remarked, “I’ll be happy one day if we are all in one building.” By June 1, 1983, KLB had acquired land in Nairobi for construction of its headquarters. In 1985, the government allocated funds for building the Publisher’s head offices. By December 1988, the building in South C was almost complete, paving the way for relocation of Production, Stores and Warehouse operations to the present headquarters. The Administration followed in June 1990.

THE BIG BREAK

KLB struck it big when the government introduced the 8.4.4 curriculum and got the sole right to produce books for primary and secondary schools. Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, the other lead agency, got tenders to supply Primary English and Mathematics and Secondary English. This was a shot in the arm, having laboured marketing slow-moving EALB non-course books.

Vans were used to ferry books to bookshops and schools in rural villages. According to Caleb Kadasia, who has served KLB for 21 years, workers were also “close and friendly, thanks to the leadership and welfare buses that ferried staff to and from housing estates.”

“We had a staff canteen, where all ate at subsidized rates,” Mr Kadasia reminisces. He adds that “majority had no bank accounts and, therefore, preferred cash payments” every end month.

KLB had a well kitted and funded sports team that participated in national football, netball, table tennis, and darts competitions. “Besides enabling us nurture and grow our talents, sporting activities enhanced teamwork among staff,” said Mr Kadasia.

Mr. Lang’at, who retired in January 2003, “knew everyone by name, personal file number and had a heart for KLB,” said Joel Koskei, another veteran, who has been at the State firm for 21 years.

Mathew Adams Karauri took over as the new managing director. He had a short stint that ended in 2007. During his time, KLB opened the Customer Service Centre on Kijabe Street within the City Centre.

Mrs Obara, a human resources management professional, succeeded him. Under her leadership, the company experienced a complete revamp. The closure of the old buildings paved the way for relocating the headquarters to a new state-of-the-art facility.

The new headquarters houses the departmental offices, production, marketing, sales, research, and development. The new building provides a conducive working environment for staff and visitors.

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leadership, KLB, among other achievements, became the first indigenous publisher to be awarded ISO 9001 certification in Kenya and to produce e-books with local content. Recently, it was ranked the third best run and most consistent State Corporation. “We identified and corrected critical challenges, reduced overhead expenses, strengthened gross margins, resolved quality and improved operating systems and procedures,” says Mrs Obara.

She describes her team: “I lead a team of staff that understands our mission, vision and is firmly focused on what we do.” KLB has gone big on innovation, research and development, and nurtured creativity. In an interview with The Publisher, Mrs Obara says she wants to be remembered together with her team for having transformed KLB into a market leader and championing financial turn-around.

To ensure that these gains are not destroyed, Mrs Obara and her team have heavily invested in human resources and created sound systems of management. However, she is concerned that piracy is impacting negatively on the industry. KLB’s e-books have in-built multi-media functionality, which make learning fun. KLB has modern tools like iMac computers, software applications, scanning technology, printing technology, web-conferencing tools and e-marketing platform. “I am driven by the desire to change lives and leave a legacy of commitment to duty,” says the MD. KLB has made great strides thanks to a board, now chaired by Serah Ndege, a lecturer in Communication Studies at Technical University of Kenya. Past chairs of the board were Prof K. Ole Karei who was at the helm for 18 years (1995-2013), Leonard Mathew Kabetu for nine years (1983-1992), Dr Taaitta arap Toweet for three years (1980-1983), and Jane Mumbi Kiano who served for three years (1992-1995).

KLB is home to some of Africa’s best authors, novelists, poets, literary critics and chroniclers of rural African religion and village life. They include Arthur Kemoli, Okello Occuli (Uganda), Prof Taban Io Liyong (South Sudan), Okot p’bitek (Uganda), Grace Obot, Prof John Mbati, and Dr Taaitta Toweet. Others are Muthoni Likimani, Prof William Ochieng, Prof Jesie Mugambi, Prof Henry Mwanzia, Prof Francis Imbuga, and Prof Micere Mugo, Prof Chris Wanjala, Prof Ngugi wa Thiongo, and Prof Henry Indangasi, among others.

It has published known Kiswahili language authors like Prof Abdulghafur El-Bussaidy, Prof Euphrase Kezilahabi (Tanzania), Hassan Mwalimu Mbeja, Mathias Mnyampala (Tanzania), Prof Geoffrey Kitula King’ei, Ilmmedis Ajemy and Prof Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha.

Many who have served for more than 30 years recognised the growth KLB has witnessed. “We have seen it all and thank the Managing Director for championing the turnaround,” says Mr Kadasia. Same sentiments were echoed by Pheobe Nyambura Chira (32 years) and Teresa Arochi Mayabi (34 years of service), who pointed out that the recent “acquisition of State-of-the-art printing machine has increased productivity.”

Mrs Eve Obara: She has transformed KLB into a market leader and championed its financial turn-around.
KLB hosts its first African author

By Joseph Ndegwa

“One person cannot embrace the Baobab tree," these words have been associated with Prof John Samuel Mbiti, a renowned theologian, author, teacher and pastor, when he called on the world to embrace African heritage in theology while maintaining the Bible as the guide.

In his writings on African consciousness, he argues that many communities have attached divine authority on their leaders, whom they worship as representatives of the Supreme Being.

“African religions have neither founders nor reformers. They have incorporated national heroes, leaders, rulers and other famous men and women into their body of beliefs and mythology. Some of these figures are elevated to high national positions and may even be regarded as divinities responsible for natural objects of phenomena," says Prof Mbiti.

As Kenya turned 50, Kenya Literature Bureau hosted its first African author, Prof Mbiti, mid last year, accompanied by his friend and intellectual colleague, and KLB Board Member, Prof Jesse Mugambi. This visit was his second in less than a year.

Born in Kitui on November 30, 1931, Prof Mbiti was the first African to publish with the East African Literature Bureau (EALB) in 1954. Its sequel, the English-Kamba Dictionary was published in 1958.

He joined Makerere University College, then a constituent of the University of London, and graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in English and Geography in 1953. He returned to Kenya to teach at his home school, during which time he developed an interest in African oral traditions. Thereafter, he secured a scholarship to study theology at Barrington College in the US and later for a doctorate in 1963 at the University of Cambridge, UK. Afterwards, he spent a decade, teaching theology and religion in Makerere University and soon after, assumed directorship of the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute in Bogis-Bossey, Switzerland.


His seminal book, African Religions and Philosophy (1969), which challenged the long held view that traditional African religious ideas were ‘demonic’, has remained a masterpiece in Christian studies. Prof Mbiti’s interest in theology spans Africa and Asia, remaining consistent in his extrapolation of attitudes and beliefs in many societies and groups.

He has been a visiting professor at universities and seminaries in Africa, USA, Britain, Canada, Australia and Germany. Prof Mbiti has received many honours and recognitions including a publication, Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John S. Mbiti, edited by Jacob K. Olupona and Sulayman S. Nyan and published in Berlin and New York by Mouton de Gruyter (1993).

Prof Mbiti recently worked on a translation of the Bible from Original Greek to his native Akamba language, soon to be published by KLB. He is currently an Emeritus professor at the University of Bern and Parish minister to the town of Burgdorf, Switzerland.

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“Wisdom

“To bear with patience wrongs done to oneself is a mark of perfection, but to bear with patience wrongs done to someone else is a mark of imperfection and even of actual sin.”

- Thomas Aquinas -
(1225 - 1274)

He was an Italian Dominican Friar and Priest, an immensely influential Philosopher and Theologian in the tradition of Scholasticism.
Book that ‘predicted’ Turkana oil
Taban wrote about a treasure in northern Kenya 33 years ago

By Joseph Idegwa

Kenya Literature Bureau gave Turkana County a fitting Christmas gift in the launch of Taban Lo Liyong’s book, Christmas in Lodwar. In the book written in 1979 but published in 2013, the author and critic hinted that Turkana County was a land of oil. Today, explorers are scrambling for a piece of the county whose people have endured the pangs of drought and poverty for many years. Oil finds in the county so far, are said to be of commercial proportions.

At Nadirkonyen Children’s Home on December 9, 2013, this was the first book launch by a Kenyan-based publishing house in a rural town.

The book captures the mystery of life, hope and aspiration of the Ateker – the Nilohamitic people of Turkana. Just like a biblical prophet, Prof Lo Liyong foretold the presence of billions of litres of oil beneath the desert county, which were to be discovered 33 years later by a British firm, Tullow Oil.

Prof Taban Mokotiyang Rekenet Lo Liyong, is a renowned writer, poet and literary critic, who has straddled the East African literary scene, marshalling a huge following, but his critics have also not lacked what to say against him. His unconventional writing style and flashy character comes out in the book, which he contends to be a treatise on Christianity as seen in Lodwar.

The inspiration to write Christmas in Lodwar came when Taban found himself stuck in the wilderness, while on a road trip to Juba, South Sudan. His vehicle broke down, forcing him to stay in Lodwar for two weeks, from December 22, 1979 to January 2, 1980.

Prof Lo Liyong looked around and saw that the land had a vast canopy of acacia trees, whose stem colouration resembled those he had seen in South Sudan, whose oil is traced to the boundary with Kenya. He then knew that the artery of Sudan’s oil wealth extended well beyond the Kenyan border and is buried inside the bosom of Turkana land.

Acacia and palm trees are found in areas that previously had water, he said during the launch. “These tree species are found in swampy areas,” he said of Turkana.

He says of the trees in the book: “Where you find the two, there was a lake before, there is a swamp, seasonal water flows there. Or underneath. If the acacia bole is brown, there is petroleum underground. The roots have carried it up by capillarity. Otherwise acacia boles are sandy white.”

His prediction came to pass with the discovery of oil at Ngamia I and II in Turkana South and later huge amounts of water, which is estimated, can feed Kenyans for more than 70 years. This has got the international community talking about the land that has for decades borne the brunt of drought and famine.

Speaking at the ceremony, KLB board member, Prof Jesse Mugambi said that the launch in Lodwar was a gift to the Turkana people, who have long supported the Bureau, through various partnerships with the Church and NGOs. “We are proud and appreciate the role played by the Church and NGOs towards education of the locals,” said Prof Mugambi.

KLB managing director, Mrs Eve Obara says the venue was most suitable as the book is dedicated to the people of Turkana, and highlights core issues that touch their lives.

Prof Lo Liyong expressed joy at re-uniting with the people of Turkana. “I come from the Kuku tribe of South Sudan, and as one of your sons, I chose to do something for our Ateker group,” he said, jokingly asking the Governor of Turkana to grant him “honorary citizenship.”

“Shun retrogressive cultural practices like cattle rustling,” he told Turkana people and asked them to embrace education and sports. “That energy expended in driving cattle can be used in sports.”

Governor Josphat Nanok, welcomed the team, thanking KLB for publishing the book and choosing Lodwar for the launch. He recognised Prof. Lo Liyong for his “prediction” of oil treasure in Turkana.

“I was excited to learn that Prof Taban Lo Liyong, who we only read in newspapers, has written a book about our people and thrilled to know that KLB would launch it in our land,” said the Governor.

Others at the launch were Deputy Governor, Peter Lokoe, KLB Assistant Production Manager, Joseph Emojong, and county officials and workers from local and international organisations.
Meanwhile, as part of activities to mark the Kenya@50 fete, KLB team, led by Prof Mugambi visited the site where Kenya’s founding President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, was detained.

Built in 1959 by the colonial government, Kenyatta House in Lodwar has the distinction of being the second last holding place, where Kenyatta was detained for two years under house arrest before being moved to Maralal on April 11, 1961. Prior to Lodwar, Kenyatta was held at Kapenguria detention camp upon conviction and sentencing on April 8, 1953.

The Lodwar site served as a detention camp for four others of the Kapenguria Six – Kung’u Karumba, Ramogi Achieng’ Oneko, Paul Ngei and Fred Kubai, serving their sentence at Lokitaung Prison. The House is a standing symbol of the suffering freedom fighters endured to secure Kenya’s Independence.

During the launch, KLB threw an early Christmas party to orphans and vulnerable children in Lodwar town.

E xcellent customer care, great businesses and entrepreneurs know, is what powers enterprise growth. It turns baby steps into a sprint; it turns failure into profitability and builds a culture of excellence.

Kenya Literature Bureau has taken this path, rolling out a series of activities to enhance customer satisfaction. In April this year, KLB held three regional training workshops themed Elements of Effective Customer Service for bookshop attendants in Kisii (South Nyanza region), Kisumu (North Nyanza region) and Eldoret (North Rift region).

The event saw 93 bookshop workers trained in customer management, negotiation, crisis management and language use. According Bernard Obura, the KLB sales and marketing manager, the training was aimed at “equipping sales staff with knowledge and skills that will foster the capacity of bookshops to meet customer needs.”

Lisa Paper Works Marketing Manager, Stephen Limo, hailed the training as a first in publishing history in Kenya.

“No other publisher has taken such an initiative to impact skills that will make us better customer care attendees,” he said.

He lauded KLB for the initiative. It was facilitated by Peter Wameyo of Adaptive Management Consultants.

Market dynamics of the 21st century place customer service at the centre of achievement of organisational goals and objectives.
KLB scaling heights in performance management

By Roselyn Mogavana

“’What gets measured gets done’ is a favourite mantra in corporate management. It means regular measurement and reporting keeps you focused, because you use that information to make decisions to meet specific targets. At Kenya Literature Bureau, we pay attention to detail and measure what matters. We have adopted the use of key performance indicators to measure and report on the performance this year and retain for the good of the whole organization.

The individual is evaluated through a Performance Appraisal System, where KLB performance is linked to that of individual employees. The organization encourages staff to be innovative in their areas of service.

With innovation in digital publishing and automation of services such as eHorizon human resource management system (HRMS), Q-Pulse software for record maintenance, coupled with the growing concern for staff welfare and development, KLB will continue working towards achieving its vision of being the leading publisher and printer of quality knowledge materials.

Thanks to the support of the Board, all indications are that KLB will aim for nothing but the best in performance this year and retain our position as market leaders in the industry.

The agreed targets are also signed by the heads of department and line managers who are made to account for their work performance. This practice integrates all cadres of employees, ensuring the general good of the organization.

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The Bureau has also led in innovation, becoming the first publisher to produce e-books with local content, and now enjoys dominance in the book market.

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T

he world has more than 7,000 languages, half of them are threatened and will disappear if urgent mitigation is not made a priority. One vanishes every two weeks, on average, according to The Linguistics, which has documented the state of languages.

Jack Gilbert, an American motivational author, once said, “I dream of lost vocabularies that might express some of what we no longer can.” This statement ties with the latest drive by our Government to revive the use of local languages by ensuring that they are used in teaching.

The use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in Kenyan schools was introduced as a result of the need to preserve Kenyan cultures and ensure that local languages do not disappear. The first instance of this notion was stipulated in the National Education Goals (Session Paper No. 10, R.o.K., 1965), shortly after Independence.

Although the use of mother tongue has been encouraged since the colonial period, English as a medium of instruction has rarely been challenged or reviewed until recently when various stakeholders, including teachers and Members of Parliament complained, it has dominated instruction in schools.

Session Paper No. 14, 2012 states that, “The Language of the catchment area (Mother Tongue) shall be used for child care, pre-primary education and in the Lower Primary Section in Schools (Children aged 0-8 years).”

Kenya Literature Bureau is now beefing up its catalogue with publications done in vernacular languages in line with the official position to protect languages and dialects in Kenya. Books in Kikuyu, Kiembu, Dholuo, Kikamba, Kiluhuya, Maasai, Kimeru and Kalenjin among others are found under the KLB Tusome Lugha Yetu series. Novels, story books and collections of sayings and proverbs are also available in other languages such as Pokot, Girrama, Bukusu, Ekegusii, Sabawoot and Lulogooli.

Restricting the use of local languages, scholars said at the recent International Mother Language Celebrations at Kenyatta University, stifle development of young learners, more so in the rural areas. They can communicate, at the tender age, only effectively in their mother tongue as it is the only language, giving them the much needed confidence to face the bigger socialisation.
Farming threatens wetlands

By Joseph Ndegwa

More than 400 students in Tharaka Nithi County planted trees during a campaign by the Kenya Literature Bureau.

Held on April 9, 2014 at Kanjuki Secondary School, more than 2,500 trees were planted in Igamba-Ngómbé Division, at an event attended by regional education officials.

KLB Quality Assurance manager, Jackson Musau, reiterated the publisher’s commitment to conserve the environment: “By planting trees today, we are doing the right thing. These trees will contribute to the health and beauty of mother nature in years to come.”

KLB has planted trees in Taita-Taveta, Machakos, Homabay and Nairobi counties under the campaign that aims at doubling the school tree canopy from 10 per cent to 20 per cent by 2020. A tree canopy adds beauty and helps remove carbon dioxide. Therefore, engaging students and schools in tree planting broaden their scope of education.

KLB staff who attended were the Administration Manager, Loice Muteti and Ag. Senior Communications Officer, Joseph Ndegwa, and Regional Marketing Manager, David Kimita. Area Education Officers thanked KLB for the ‘green’ step.

After planting trees, the KLB team took the learners through selected areas of life skills, including purposeful living, hard work and commitment to education.

Wetlands and agriculture

During the 2014 World Wetlands Day celebrations in February at Busidende Primary School in Busia County, under the theme, Wetlands & Agriculture: Partners for Growth, participants, including KLB, were trained in the two areas, raising awareness on the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi River Basin, a transboundary river shared by Kenya and Uganda.

Wetlands provide food, fibre, flood protection, water purification and supply. However, the growing demand for water and land is threatening the future of wetlands.

Dr. Alice Kaudia, the Environment Secretary who was the chief guest, decried the increased destruction of wetlands in Kenya, warning that “the drainage and conversion of wetlands for cultivation and aquaculture is unacceptable.”

Apart from inappropriate human activities within the catchments and in the wetlands, there is lack of clear co-ordinated policy guidelines and climate change, which threaten wetlands.

NEMA officials, led by the Director-General, Prof. Geoffrey Wahungu, Board Chairman, Maluki Mwendwa led, local organisations and lobbies to Sio-Siteko wetland. Others were Busia Deputy Governor, Kizito Wangalwa, county executives in charge of environment and water from Busia, Bungoma, Kakamega and Vihiga, and representatives of NGOs, envoys, and officials from Uganda and Tanzania.
KLB supports State House Girls Mathematics Contest

By Diana Olenja

Kenya Literature Bureau sponsored the State House Girls High School Math Contest held at the school grounds on 1st March, 2014. The event organised to enhance the students’ ability in the Mathematics subject saw schools from within Nairobi County participate.

The event that graced by the Senator for West Pokot County, Hon. John Lonyangapuo. He told the students on the importance of excelling in all subjects, especially mathematics, saying “good grades play an important role in modern day life.”

In her speech, KLB Public Relations Manager, Diana Olenja, stressed the importance of education. Quoting Malcolm X, she said “Education is our passport to the fortune, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”

The Bureau was also represented by Olivia Opere, Regional Sales Manager-Nairobi, Marjoriey Mukui, a Senior Customer Care Officer and Mwaniki Kibui an Administrative Assistant.

The function saw KLB award winners in various categories. While receiving the book donation, the Head teacher of State House Girls, Mrs Joan Muoti, thanked KLB Chairman Mrs. Serah Ndege, management and staff for supporting education programs. She hoped that the trend would continue to inculcate values in the country’s youth.


‘People don’t buy what you do, they buy why you do it.’
-Simon Sinek, TED Talk

E-Learning Forum held to discuss ICT in education

By Bernard Kibui

Education stakeholders in Kenya recently gathered at a forum in Nairobi to discuss and share experiences in digital learning in schools. The meeting in February, was organised by the Kenya Private Schools Association (KPSA), and held at Pride Centre in the up market Westlands neighbourhood.

It brought together booksellers, publishers, teachers, and ICT developers and service providers to showcase e-learning materials, interact with suppliers and exchange ideas on how best to provide digital content to schools. Kenya Literature Bureau stand was particularly thronged by visitors who took interest in its e-books, which ranked high for their quality and animations.

Speaking at the workshop, KLB Marketing Manager, Bernard Obura showcased the Bureau’s capability to produce and meet demand for e-content in schools.

“We have approved digital content for schools,” he said.

“We are ready and have the capacity to deliver this content to all schools in Kenya once the free laptop project for Standard One takes off,” added Mr Obura.

He was making reference to the planned roll-out of the free Laptop-Per-Child Project set for implementation by the government.

The KPSA chief executive, who visited the KLB stand, lauded the publisher for its quality e-content. He was particularly impressed by Nyama za Wachawi and High Adventure e-books, which have in-built multi-media functionality making them ideal for learning. Other items on display were gizmos, e-readers and software for use in e-learning.

KLB team at the workshop was led by Mr Obura. Others were ICT Manager, Robert Manaka, Public Relations Manager, Diana Olenja and Senior Customer Service Officer, Marjoriey Mukui. Four other exhibitors were present including curriculum watchdog, KICD, Microsoft, Intel Inside, Levono and mobile giant Safaricom Ltd.

KLB is the first publishing house to have developed e-books with local content in the region.
PICTURE SPEAK

1. KLB Publishing Manager Mary Khasiani (centre) and Sales & Marketing Manager Bernard Obura with students at a Book Fair in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
2. KLB Designer Joyce Koech explains a point to visiting students from Buru Buru Institute of Fine Arts.
3. KLB staff at an ISO 9001 information security management training.
4. KLB eBooks Chief Editor Kulamo Bulo (left) joins other delegates at the 2014 Africa e-Learning Conference in Kampala, Uganda.
6. KLB staff participating at the 2014 Labour Day celebrations at Uhuru Park, Nairobi.
7. KLB team at the 2014 Africa e-Learning Conference held in Kampala, Uganda.
8. KLB MD Eve Obura joins Education stakeholders and donors during the launch of Education Sector Policy on HIV and AIDS at Hilton Hotel, Nairobi.
9. Buru Buru Institute of Fine Arts students at an academic visit to KLB headquarters.
10. Nyansa North Regional Sales manager, Job Munialo at the Bungoma Regional Bookfair.

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