

## **FOREWORD**

*By the Coordinator*

**SEMINAR JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup> – 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2001**

**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

### **THE BOOK INDUSTRY OF UGANDA WHERE IS THE MISSING LINK?**

#### **BACKGROUND**

FEMRITE organised a week of literary activities under the **theme ‘The Book Industry in Uganda: Where is the missing link?’** The seminar, which was third in a series of capacity building workshops, took place January 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> at the Department of Forestry, Makerere University. The seminar was attended by 40 participants from all segments of the book industry. Professor Timothy Wangusa, Senior Lecturer, Makerere University, officiated at the opening of the seminar. Due to circumstances beyond his control, Prof Taban lo Liyong, a renowned poet, was unable to attend.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the seminar was to bring into dialogue the various stakeholders in the book industry in order to:

- Create a link between teachers and publishers
- Encourage professionalism among stakeholders
- Sensitize policy-makers and end users about the importance of written works
- Publicise books authored by Ugandans

The second objective of the seminar was to identify and address the problems and challenges faced in the book industry so as to:

- Create a better understanding and appreciation of the roles of the stakeholders
- Find ways of widening the market for books and the reader base

#### **PLANNED RESULTS**

The expected outcomes of the three-day seminar were as follows:

- A published report on the findings of the seminar to be distributed to all stakeholders
- A series of activities planned for the period 2001-2002
- To identify and address the problems and challenges affecting the stakeholders
- To strengthen/build a network of stakeholders
- To create a core of individuals to monitor the progress in the book industry.

## **OPENING REMARKS**

Laura Pramuck, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, the American Centre presented a background to the seminar. She stated that the American Centre was happy to fund a project, which aimed at finding the missing link in the book industry. She urged participants to make a personal commitment to promoting the reading culture in Uganda.

Mary Karoro Okurut, Chairperson FEMRITE thanked the American Centre for the support provided towards the seminar. She stated that the seminar addressed a timely issue for there was indeed an apathetic reading culture in the county. Mary regretted that the Chief Guest Taban Lo L'yong was unable to travel to Uganda but stated that Timothy Wangusa was as suited to lead the discussion.

Taban Lo l'yong' s poems were then read. These included:

- Beggars that ride wish horses
- My husband and all the Christian Chiefs

## **KEY- NOTE ADDRESS**

### **“IS UGANDA A LITERARY DESERT?”**

**PROF. TIMOTHY WANGUSA, SENIOR LECTURER, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

Timothy Wangusa attributed the origins of the phrase “East Africa is a literary desert” to remarks made by Chris Okigbo and Taban Lo L'iyong who were attending writers' conference at Makerere University in 1962. Chinua Achebe and James Ngugi were also present at the conference. In his presentation Timothy analysed the state of literature in East Africa, and highlighted prolific developments in the literary world.

Timothy contended that Taban might have used the phrase ‘East Africa is a literary desert’ to specifically refer to written literature. Uganda he said is rich in spokenature, folklore and oral literature. Timothy alluded to the publication ‘Origins in East Africa,’ to depict the unflattering reviews that were being written about literature in East Africa in the 1960s. Timothy stated that the title of the book ‘Origins of East Africa’ was rather apologetic and did not positively depict the state of literature in East Africa. The ‘Origins of Africa, a compilation of students writing was published in 1965 by David Cook, a lecturer at Makerere University.

Timothy identified 1966 as a critical year for East African literature. He stated that 1966 brought forth two literary phenomena. These were Okot Bitek's “Song of Lawino” and the Tabanic genre. Timothy stated that Okot Bitek's work gave inspiration to long poems. This uniquely Bitek style inspired Okello Ochuli's “Orphan,” and Joseph Bunga's “Abandoned Heart.”

Timothy described Taban's work as dramatic, narrative, lyrical, provocative, evocative, and sensual and difficult to imitate. Timothy stated that Taban was a prolific writer who was ahead of mainstream school of thought. He read Taban's poem "The Nest Poets." In this poem Taban immodestly names himself as being one of the world's best poets.

Timothy concluded his presentation by supporting the contention that the phrase East Africa is literary desert was misused. Taban in his remarks placed emphasis on written literature –not orature, commonly known as oral history or folklore. According to Taban contends that the folklore, proverbs are the raw materials, which need to be refined for the modern works. Timothy thanked the meeting for giving him the opportunity to officiate at the opening session and wished all participants the best.

### **PROFESSOR AUSTIN BUKENYA'S CONTRIBUTION**

Austin thanked Timothy for the tribute paid to Taban. Austin recalled the first time he met Taban. This was when they were reviewing a literary journal entitled "First Word." Austin agreed with Timothy's presentation by stating that Taban at the time of making the remark was making reference to written English. He stated that there is substantive evidence to show that oral literature is a recognised area of study. He reminded the participants that when the remarks were made in the 1960s, there were several publications written in local languages. This he informed the gathering was more than was cited in the publication, "Origins of Africa."

Austin stated that there was a need to integrate the different strands of literature. These include orature, home language, and acquired English. During his concluding remarks, he urged the participants to translate their publications into home languages to access them to those who cannot read the acquired languages.

### **INCENTIVES AND LIMITATIONS**

#### **MODERATOR: DR. ROBINAH KYEYUNUE**

The panel shared experiences about factors, which compel different segments of the population to read, and factors that discourage and hinder them from reading. The aim of the session was to solicit views on reading and writing.

### **PANELISTS**

- Richard Alituhia – Masters Degree Student and Secondary School teacher
- James Amatre- Secondary School Teacher
- Helen Ellen Obbo – Student at Namagunga
- Mary Nabukenya- Lecturer, Department of English

Dr. Kyeyune administered a questionnaire with the aim of gauging the participants' reading habits. The results of the questionnaire are found in Appendix A.

## **RURAL PERSPECTIVE**

Richard Alituhia presented an overview of the reading habits in the rural areas. Richard stated that there was a poor-reading culture in rural areas. In spite of the fact that every home has a Bible it is rarely read. He attributed this to several factors such as the language barrier, high costs of publications and lastly the stigma attached to reading. He stated that reading is perceived as an elite activity, which takes one away from performing regular chores. Richard stated that pressing productive activities coupled by low literacy rates make it even more difficult for women to read.

## **SECONDARY STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**

Ellen Obbo presented an overview of the reading challenges from a secondary school student's perspective. Ellen stated that when a child first starts to read it is not encouraged to read in its local languages. This she states affects its' ability to read in the English language. When enrolled in Secondary School there is pressure exerted by parents, teachers and society for children to study textbooks. This limits the time spent reading other materials. She identified other factors such as poor standard of books read by students, lack of incentives to read, and limited time to read creative works. Ellen proposed that reading classes be included in the primary and secondary school curriculum. She concluded her presentation by urging parents, teachers, and society to work together in order to improve the reading culture in Uganda.

## **CHILDREN' BOOKS PERSPECTIVES**

Prof. Mary Nabukenya presented an over-view of children's reading habits. She stated that it is difficult to inculcate a reading culture in a population where daily survival and obtaining daily needs are a struggle. She stated that reading should be an intimate activity shared by parent and child. In cases where parents can afford to buy their children books they lack the time to read them with their children. Mary stated that when bought the books are not appropriate for the child's age group. She also noted that there is no incentive given by the parents for a child to read.

Mary rated a random sample of children's' books. She stated that most of the books contain foreign ideas and their settings do not encourage children to read. Mary shared a positive case study where a child who was keen on reading was encouraged to do so by his parents who continually bought him books. The child set up a journal and wrote his own books, some of which summarised some of the stories he read. He priced his books and friends, teachers and parents purchased them. This, Mary stated was an incentive for the child. She concluded her presentation by stressing the importance of economic empowerment in the promotion of the reading culture.

## **SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND LIBRARIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Joseph Mugasa in his presentation identified the factors, which encouraged him to value reading and books. He also shared strategies that have been effective in promoting the reading culture at his institution. Joseph alluded to his experience as a teacher and librarian to illustrate the fact that there was a high level of ignorance about reading and about literature as a subject, amongst students. He observed that while few students read classics a majority preferred to read thrillers and romance novels. Joseph stated that children are not keen to embrace fiction for the following reasons:

- Their limited language levels
- The fact those different reading speeds are required for textbooks and novels.
- Limited amount of time left for leisure reading.

Joseph proposed the adoption of a simplified series of classical works as a way of encouraging students to read. He concluded his presentation by highlighting some of his schools' achievements. These included the establishment of literacy out-reach program which has encouraged teachers to share new and innovative methods of teaching with each other.

## **PERSPECTIVE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER**

James Amatre based his presentation on the premise that the negative attitude towards reading has had an adverse impact on Uganda's reading culture. He stated that reading is perceived as a "foreign," non-rewarding, costly, non-interactive, mentally taxing, and an anti-social activity. James contends that Ugandans have not always perceived reading negatively. He stated that reading was a more popular activity in the 1960s. He noted that the publication of newspapers into local languages has encouraged a considerable number of people to read. James concluded his presentation by recommending that there is need to establish reading clubs and libraries, and the need for people to write books, which address the needs and interests of the public.

Dr. Kyeyunue concluded the session by stating that there were more limitations than incentives identified in the panel discussion.

## **SESSION II AFTERNOON**

### **WHOM DO YOU WRITE FOR? THE AUTHOR'S VIEW**

**MODERATOR: PATRICK MANGENI, LECTURER, MUSICAL DANCE AND DRAMA DEPARTMENT, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

Patrick Mangeni started the session by highlighting the role writer's play in molding society's values and addressing the public's reading needs. The participants were divided into 4 groups and each group assigned an author to interview. The aim of the session was to identify factors, which encourage writers to write. The highlights of the sessions are captured below.

## **GROUP 1**

Jane Kaberuka author of “silent Patience” stated that she derives the material that she writes about from her personal experiences. Jane said that her senses play a major role in guiding her writing. She stated that reading widely has helped expose her to different literary styles and given her insight into the development of a novel. Jane briefed the group members on the sequence of events that are preliminary to the final result of the writing process. These included writing, editing, and the marketing her work.

## **GROUP 2**

Rose Rwakasisi author of two children’s books including ‘ The Old Man.’ stated that she generates her own ideas for the books that she writes. Rose stated that she is keen on preserving African culture and on bridging the inter-generational gap between her and her children. This she achieves by sharing these stories and her experiences with them. Rose believes that her work is accessible to her readers. The author’s books are used as supplementary readers in schools. Rose believes in the pre-testing of written works as a crucial activity in writing. She engages her family in critiquing her drafts. She highlighted language and ignorance about getting published as being one of her most pressing challenges. Rose stated that limited publicity and distribution hinder wide marketing of her novels.

## **GROUP 3**

Ayeta Wangusa author of “Memoirs of a Mother,” shared that her demanding work schedule as an editor at The New Vision made it difficult for her to be a very disciplined writer. She stated that her work as an editor has strengthened her writing skills, and has enabled her to set standards as a writer. Ayeta stated that writing is her passion. She attributes the successful marketing of her books to FEMRITE and to having a renowned father (Timothy Wangusa) in the world of literature. She however lamented over the poor state of affairs in local bookshops which she said are inadequate mediums for marketing books, while publishers are not keen on marketing.

## **DAY 2**

### **IS THERE A BOOK IN EVERY MANUSCRIPT?**

#### **MODERATOR: ALEX BANGIRANA, FOUNTAIN PUBLISHERS**

Alex started the session by highlighting the role publisher’s play in facilitating communication. He stated that each manuscript should contain a plot, credible content, theme, language and imagery. It is only after the above have been fulfilled that a publisher can start to examine variations in style and language. He identified the following as guidelines publishers’ use when reviewing manuscripts.

- Who are the books for?
- Where do these people live?
- What is the content of the book?
- Why is the book saying what it is saying?

In a brief discussion participants remarked that standards publishers set crippled creativity. Alex stated that the standards set are important in the evaluation of manuscripts in order to produce standard works.

The participants then addressed different aspects of the publishing industry in groups.

## **GROUP 1**

### **QUESTION: DO PUBLISHER HAVE SKILLED EDITORS?**

The members of the group had mixed reactions to the questions. They expressed ignorance about the qualities of a good editor and raised questions about the staffing and levels of expertise of the editors. They also highlighted the relationship between author and publisher as key in the promotion of books.

### **RESPONSE**

The participants discussed the role of the editor and his influence on the final publication of a novel. Alex highlighted the problems encountered when manuscripts are submitted by renowned personalities who expect preferential treatment.

### **QUESTION: DO EDITORS CHAMPION BOOK REVIEWS?**

The members of the group agreed that editors often do not champion book reviews. The inability to review books was attributed to deadline pressure, some level of ignorance about the role of reviews, and lack of capacity within publishing houses.

### **RESPONSE**

Alex stated that the members of the group had deliberated the issues well. He contributed to the discussion by highlighting the different types of editors present in publishing houses.

### **GROUP: HOW DO YOU REGARD THE PUBLISHER?**

The members of the group agreed that the publisher is a businessperson, but they also acknowledged the fact that some publishers such as FEMRITE are facilitators of communication.

## **DO THEY HAVE ADEQUATE CAPITAL?**

The members of the group agreed that publishing houses have limited capital. It was also agreed that donor funding, government subsidies, co-publishing play a large role in offsetting publishing costs.

## **GROUP 2**

### **QUESTION: DO YOU THINK IT'S THE PUBLISHERS' ROLE TO MARKET BOOKS?**

The members of the group agreed that the author and publisher have a role to play in the marketing of their books. However it was noted that publishers should play a leading role in the marketing of books.

### **QUESTION: DO THEY MARKET THE BOOKS ADEQUATELY?**

The members of the group agreed that although efforts are made to market books through book-fairs, seminars and bazaars; there was a need to invite members of non-literary population to participate in literary gatherings.

### **INEFFECTIVE BOOK-SELLING: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?**

#### **MODERATOR: LUSIBA AUGUSTINE, CHAIRMAN, THE UGANDA BOOK SELLERS ASSOCIATION**

Augustine identified the current trends in the Ugandan book-industry. He stated that the market is dominated by educational materials, which account for 90% of the holdings. Out of these approximately 90% of the educational books are directly bought by the Ugandan government from the book publishers. This he said limits and marginalises the role the bookseller plays in book distribution.

Factors which affect effective book selling. These include:

- A non-conducive policy, which encourages the Ministry of Education and Sports to purchase books directly from the publisher.
- Publishers and agents selling books directly to readers
- High transportation costs
- Poor management of book shops
- Lack of a Code of Conduct amongst book-sellers
- Unprofessionalism amongst book-sellers
- Unsuitable premises

The participants then deliberated various aspects of the book industry in groups.

### **GROUP 1**

#### **QUESTION: ARE BOOK-SHOPS USER FRIENDLY?**

The members of the group agreed that most bookshops are not user-friendly. They identified poor displays, poor lighting and inadequate stock as areas of improvement.

#### **QUESTION: DO BOOK-SHOPS HAVE PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS-PEOPLE?**

The members of the group agreed that most bookshops lack professional sales people. It was stated that members of staff have limited knowledge of publications, are not conversant with the issues affecting the book industry, and possess limited marketing skills.

### **GROUP 2**

#### **QUESTION: SHOULD BOOKSELLERS GIVE FEEDBACK FROM CLIENTS TO OTHER STAKEHOLDERS?**

The members of the group agreed that booksellers should give feedback. The relationship between sharing information and increased sales was noted as being crucial in the running of transparent businesses.

#### **QUESTION: SUGGEST WAYS IN WHICH THIS CAN BE DONE**

The members of the group suggested that booksellers could gross higher returns by charting sales trends and sharing this information with the publisher. It was however observed that this has budgetary implications.

### **GROUP 3**

#### **QUESTION: DO BOOKSELLERS HAVE OTHER AVENUES TO SELL THEIR BOOKS APART FROM BOOKSHOPS?**

The members of the group stated that there are other avenues. These included book-fairs and direct orders to the publishers.

#### **QUESTION; ARE THERE OTHER AVENUES THAT COULD BE USED TO ADVERTISE BOOKS?**

The members of the group agreed that there were other avenues that could be exploited. These included increased use of the inter-net, flyers, mail order services, and mobile bookshops and through the sponsoring of events. The participants proposed that publishers should champion book promotion activities.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

### **THE CRITIC: A FRIEND OR AN ENEMY OF THE BOOK?**

#### **MODERATOR: PROF. AUSTIN BUKENYA**

The panel shared experiences and views about the role of the critic in the book industry. The aim of the session was to solicit views on the role of the book critic in the book industry.

#### **PANELISTS**

- Isaac Setuuba, a critic and interpreter
- Ssimwogere Kyazze, Critic with The New Vision.

Austin Bukenya a critic himself stated that most critics vent their frustration by tearing apart artistic works. He identified different types of critics. These included the editorial critic, the promotional critic, the philosophical critic and the sensor. Austin contended that the critic is a necessary partner in the production and consumption of literature.

#### **CRITIC/INTERPRETERS PERSPECTIVE**

Isaac Setuuba contended that critics are a necessary link in the book industry. He stated that the critic goes beyond enjoyment and ventures into analysis. Isaac referred to criticism as a branch of knowledge and literature. The critic, he stated links the writer to the general reader. Isaac defined the critic as the teacher who shares their literary experiences with others. He stated that writers should learn to take criticism for the critic is more descriptive than prescriptive. He concluded by stating that the critic is part of the missing link in the literary world.

#### **NEWSPAPER CRITIC'S PERSPECTIVE**

Kyazze drew upon his personal experience to illustrate the role critic's play in the literary world. He stated that critics have a right and responsibility to air their views only as long as they can support it. Kyazze stated that critics draw upon their knowledge, experiences, class backgrounds, and prejudices when critiquing work. He summed up his response by urging the participants to value the role critic's play in the book industry.

#### **QUESTION: DO CRITICS HAVE GUIDELINES FOR CRITIQUING?**

Kyazze stated that critics should have a set standard when critiquing work. He also stressed the point that critics need to be avid readers. Austin in agreement with Kyazze stated that critics' critique should be systematic, precise and objective. Critics should be able to identify, describe and assess the work.

It was agreed that the critiquing industry in Uganda is still in its' infancy. Participants stressed the need to sensitize editors about the importance of critiques in promoting a reading culture. It was agreed that publishers should take a more proactive role in submitting books to newspapers for review. However, participants observed that in the Ugandan context critics are still perceived as an enemy. This is due to the fact that few people are willing to buy poorly rated books. It was agreed that Ugandan critics should adapt a more positive critiquing style that builds writers other than .

## **UGANDA'S CURRENT EDUCATION SYSTEM HINDERS WIDER READING**

### **MODERATOR: PAT HOWARD, FOUNTAIN PUBLISHERS'**

Pat analysed the impact Uganda's past turbulent political atmosphere has had in retarding the reading culture in Uganda. Effects of this included, teachers fleeing the country, premature retirement of teachers to other fields, limited reading materials in school coupled by minimal remuneration for teachers.

Pat stated that Universal Primary School Education (UPE) program has increased enrolment in primary schools. This along with other conducive policies has led to an increase in demand for books and trained teachers. As a result there are more adults enrolled in adult education courses. Conducive privatisation policies have also encouraged more institutions of higher learning to be established which under normal circumstances should lead to more people needing more reading materials.

Pat stated that the current education system places emphasis on passing exams rather than digesting material learnt and applying it. She stated that this practice does not nurture leisure reading but fosters factual reading. Pat also stated that limited budgets allocated to departments of education, especially the arts, limits the purchase of quality publications.

Pat said that there is a relationship between limited teacher training and a stagnant syllabus in the promotion of a reading culture. She stated that this reason why the same books are set year in year out is due to lack of information. The teachers are not aware of the new books that are written. It was observed that when new books are introduced on the syllabus the teachers are reluctant to teach them. They want the old books they are used to.

Pat concluded the session by recommending that literature be integrated into all levels of the curriculum since it is the basis for interpretation and understanding.

## **ARE LITERARY BODIES NECESSARY IN THE GROWTH OF THE BOOK INDUSTRY IN UGANDA**

## **MODERATOR: JOSEPH MUGASA, CHAIR, THE UGANDA WRITERS' FRATERNITY**

The panel featured individuals representing various associations in the book industry. The aim of the session was to debate on issues concerning the efficiency of existing associations, strategies to strengthen them, their present challenges and achievements.

## **PANELISTS**

- Frank Anywar, Chair- The Uganda Writers' Association
- James Amatre, Member, The Reading Association of Uganda
- Steven Okiria, Uganda Publishers' Association
- Phemmy Birungi, Executive Director, The Uganda public Libraries Board
- Martin Okia, Secretary, NOBUTU

## **THE UGANDA WRITERS' ASSOCIATION**

Frank Anywar, Chairman of the Uganda Writers' Association gave a background to the organisation, which was established in 1995 with the aim of reviving writing in Uganda. He applauded the formation of FEMRITE and stated that its' establishment addressed a need which was not being handled under the Uganda Writers' Association. Frank highlighted some of the achievements of the association as being the celebration of Okot B'itek's work, organising various poetry competitions and participation in UNESCO seminars. He observed that the strength of FEMRITE in a way stifles the performance of Uganda writers Association.

Frank proposed that existing associations be strengthened instead of establishing new ones.

## **THE READING ASSOCIATION OF UGANDA [RAU]**

James Amatre, member of RAU gave a background of the association and stated that there is a need to develop a reading culture in Uganda. Some of the achievements of the reading Association include the establishment of reading clubs. The Association he stated hopes to set up district chapters all over the country and to establish reading resource centres up-country.

## **UGANDA PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION**

Steven Okiria, Coordinator of the Uganda Publishers Association stated the association's objective as primarily being that of promoting local authors at all levels. He stated that the association's activities involve liaising with the government on behalf of stakeholders. The Publishers' Association also builds the capacity of publishers with publishing skills through workshops and training.

## **THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES BOARD**

Phemmy Birungi, Executive Director of the Public Libraries Board stated that the Libraries Board has not been effective in giving people access to books. He identified the reasons as being limited access of people to town centres, limited book supply and out-dated books, which do not address the reality of most Ugandans.

Phemmy hoped for a change in government policy and attitude towards the purchase of books for Public Libraries Board. He informed the participants that as a result of lobbying efforts there have been strides made in influencing the public on the importance of libraries in the development and promotion of a reading culture. He identified the increase in the number of requests by Parliamentarians for libraries in their constituencies, and the increased demand from people in rural areas for more books as being indicators of the change in attitude.

Phemmy concluded his presentation by making a plea to the government to stock the existing libraries as well establish more.

## **NABOTU**

Martin Okia, Secretary of NABOTU described the functions of the association and stated that the association was making great achievements in the promotion of books. He stated that as a result of fundraising efforts, the association has been able to secure funding for most of its' activities. Martin urged participants to support them in their work, for without them NABOTU's work cannot succeed. He concluded his presentation by stating that there is a need for trust between the different stakeholders in the book industry.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **READING CULTURE**

#### *POLICY-MAKERS*

- Include reading classes in primary school curriculum
- Include literature as a core subject up to Senior Four
- Integrate literature throughout the education system
- Incorporate simplified / abridged texts into the curriculum
- Avail simplified and abridged books for young readers
- Encourage teachers and other stakeholders to be involved in the selecting of books to be put on the syllabus
- Establish teacher - exchange programs

#### *WRITERS*

- Form pressure groups
- Sensitize policy-makers and other stakeholders about the importance of literature.
- Strengthen reading clubs/associations and libraries
- Encourage mentoring between emerging and established writers
- Promote drama and recitation in schools.
- Document spokeature and orature
- Sensitize the National Curriculum Development Centre about their role in promoting Ugandan writers
- Involve members of the public in literary activities

#### *PUBLISHERS*

- Strengthen marketing strategies

- Develop critical writings on recent Ugandan literature.

### ***BOOKSELLERS***

- Revive mobile book-shops
- Promote Ugandan authored titles.

### ***CRITICS***

- Put together critiques of Ugandan-authored works to form an anthology
- Share Ugandan authored works with the general public
- Revive literary journals
- Lobby local newspapers to review Ugandan authored titles

## **ACTION PLAN**

The participants agreed that the following activities be carried out in the period between 2001- 2002

### **PUBLIC READINGS**

- To involve writers and publishers at district level

### **TEACHERS' SEMINARS**

- To enhance their knowledge on methods that stimulate wider reading and teaching new texts.
- To stress the importance of regular syllabus reviews.

### **PUBLISHERS AND MEDIA PARTNERSHIP**

- Spearhead lobbying activities, which sensitize members of the media about the importance of supporting writers.

### **WRITERS' PROMOTION**

- Convene writers' retreat with the aim of upgrading ideas and manuscripts
- Convene capacity building workshops

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- Convene writers, editors and critics conventions
- Convene public readings
- Award annual writers awards
- Promote classical plays
- Promote younger writers in schools by giving them activities and following them up
- Award writers awards
- Award a critics award

### **POLICY-MAKERS SENSITIZATION**

- Collaborate with the Ministry of Education, the National Curriculum Development Centre
- Share information with the Ministry of Education
- Collaborate with book-sellers

## **THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY**

The official opening ceremony of the literary week of activities was held at the British Council, Rwenzori Courts on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> Jan. 2001.

### **WELCOME REMARKS**

In her welcome remarks, Joanita Wandira, Cultural officer British Council welcomed all guests to the ceremony. She commended the good relationship between femrite and British Council.

### **REMARKS BY CHAIRPERSON FEMRITE**

Mrs. Mary K Okurut also welcomed guests and emphasized that FEMRITE activities have always been a success because of the support from the rest of the literary community. She on behalf of FEMRITE pledged more commitment to writing to provide more reading materials. She introduced FEMRITE “girls” and commended their togetherness and cooperation. She ended her remarks by regretting the absence of Prof. Taban Loliong but encouraged participants to go about their business, as they would have, with or without him.

### **SKIT, POETRY RECITATIONS AND READINGS**

FEMRITE members, Mildred Kiconco, Beverly Nambozo, Jameo Nanyonjo, Harriet Naboro, Hilda Twongyeirwe. R and one guest artist Mr. Kaira performed a skit titled “The missing link” the message of the skit emphasized that all stakeholders in the book industry form a chain and must therefore co-operate and work together to strengthen it. There were poetry readings and recitations by Okaka, Ntakalimaze, Mangeni, & Nshekanabo. Mr. Sepuya also read some poems selected from Taban’s works. Mary K Okrut read from a new novel she is currently working on.

### **SPEECH BY GUEST OF HONOUR**

In her speech, the guest of honour Sue Beaumont, Director of the British Council thanked FEMRITE for the existing relationship between FEMRITE and British Council. She emphasised that in order for the book industry to develop, there must not be any weak or missing link in the chain. All links must be strengthened, she said. Sue called on all stakeholders to promote Uganda’s book industry whenever there is chance. She saluted all writers for the effort they are all putting into writing against all odds. Sue informed the guests that in a bid to promote writing and reading McMillan has launched the “McMillan Writers’ Prize for Africa” which offers prizes for writers throughout Africa and an opportunity to be published. She distributed papers for more information and encouraged all writers to participate.

Sue wished everybody the best and hoped that all the objectives of the week of activities would be realized. She concluded her speech by recommending that key writers and their works should be advertised.

## **REFRESHMENTS**

The ceremony was crowned with plenty of snacks and drinks.

## **WRITERS' NIGHT**

To bring together all writers, FEMRITE organized a writers' Night as one of the activities of the week. This took place on the night of 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2001 at the National Theatre Kaloli Gardens. The night started with the chairperson FEMRITE, MRS. M. K. Okrut welcoming the writers. She thanked everybody for coming and wished all a wonderful night.

The night's activities, which started at around 7 PM, saw poets, playwrights, novelists, traditional storytellers, musicians and many other people interested in the literary world come together. There were poetry readings and recitations, short story readings, play readings, songs, traditional chants and story telling. The night was kept warm by a blazing bon-fire around which the participants sat. In-between different activities the cheerful masters of ceremonies kept reminding people of the fatty goat meat that was being roasted a few metres from where the group was seated. Participants looked forward to the feasting and indeed after that some people went away. A member recommended that next time round feasting should be the last item on the agenda. Many more writers still wanted to make presentations but midnight fell at the blink of an eye.

When the chief master of ceremonies declared the occasion closed, the writers did not want to go away. In her concluding remarks the master of ceremonies recommended that the next writers night should be trans-night, facilities permitting.

## **THE DINNER DANCE**

FEMRITE, in a bid to have a social time where books and pens were not part of, organised a dinner dance. The occasion took place on 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2001 at the Pan-African Movement secretariat.

David Mafabi from the Pan-African Movement welcomed FEMRITE members to the occasion. He appreciated the support that FEMRITE had accorded them by holding the function from there. Mr. Mafabi invited Gorette Kyomuhendo the co-coordinator of FEMRITE, to say a word.

Kyomuhendo also welcomed members and thanked the Pan-African Movement for allowing FEMRITE to hold the function from there at a subsidized rate. She invited M.K.Okrut to bless the occasion with a few words.

M.K.Okrut thanked everybody for blessing the occasion with their presence. She also thanked the Pan-African Movement secretariat for the reception they had accorded FEMRITE. She wished people a good evening and invited them to the table for dinner.

FEMRITE provided snacks and the guests bought themselves drinks. It was a very successful social event, which went on to slightly past midnight.