

The leading voice of African children's books



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MUNA KALATI ASSOCIATION

2021

www.munakalati.org



OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES



VISION

Bringing children's books to life and making reading a lifestyle for children.

MISSION

- Contribute to making video games and books (content and containers) more accessible to young people.
- Promote African video games and reading for pleasure.
- Increase the visibility of the actors of the video game industry in Africa as well as those of the Cameroonian and African youth publishing.
- Contribute, through research, towards the legitimisation of children's books and the structuring of the video game ecosystem in Africa.



- Passion We are passionately committed to promoting the African children's book industry.
- **Equity** We are open to all stakeholders in children's publishing and to all age groups of readers.
- Integrity We provide access to quality and reliable information from organisations and individuals in the children's literature field.
- **Support** We run competitions to encourage writers, respond to comments and requests from subscribers.
- Diversity We believe that children's literature should reflect the reality in Africa and encourage the imagination of all children.







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SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF THE ASSOCIATION (Christian Elongué)



The year 2021 was full of emotions, experiences and endurance. Especially with the presence of COVID, which has profoundly changed the ways of working in all sectors, including the book sector. But the advantage of change is that they very often lead to innovations and the adoption of new practices. Book professionals in Africa and around the world have therefore adapted very quickly to the new situation by moving the majority of their activities online and the use of applications and technological solutions has been considerably boosted.

As far as our team at Muna Kalati is concerned, COVID has not really affected our activities because from the outset, nearly 80% of all our operations have been digital. With the exception of the Lectures Plaisirs workshops and the cultural animation projects we carry out with our partners in Africa (such as 1 Orphanage 1 Library), the rest of our activities (book reviews, blogging, research and documentation, etc.) were already taking place entirely online. The team, already accustomed to teleworking, is divided between Europe (France, Italy) and Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo) and we have adapted to the COVID standard with ease.

We have continued to invest in quality instead of quantity in terms of activities.

The most important thing for us is to have interventions that have a long-term impact on the lives of children, on the work of authors, illustrators, publishers and booksellers. In overview, we have organised:

08 Muna Kalati Talks with children's book professionals in Africa on topical issues ranging from children's philosophy to storytelling; - 7 Field Workshops in Cameroon with partners such as l'Alliance Franco-Camerounaise, Reading Classroom, Lire Pour Guérir where more than 60 children who were victims of the Anglophone crisis were provided with books and recreational resources as well as visits to **orphanages**.

Twenty (20) interviews with illustrious personalities of African children's literature such as the writer Murielle Diallo, the bookseller Nadine Mekoungoum, the Moroccan publisher Nadia Essalmi, and the publication of textbooks in national languages via Dia Awa Ka, the director of programmes of d'ARED-Editions in Senegal, youth novelist Venessa Yatch, the Guinean Betty Soumah with her

innovative Café Littéraire as well as the Malian critic Ousmane Diarra for whom "Youth literature cannot live on projects financed by NGOs".

03 invitations and participation in international children's book events, including the 37th IBBY Congress in Russia where our advocacy for more diversity and inclusion in children's literature was widely acclaimed, the St. Petersburg Book Lighthouse Festival where we shared on the role of books in the moral education of children; - 15 publications in English on topics such as translation of children's books into African languages, Afrocentric book recommendations, etc. - 36 publications and practical guides (in French) generating over 100,000 views, from readers and professionals in Africa, USA, China, UK, Russia and Portugal to name a few of the leading nations 1 Agora MK, research summary note with recommendations on the role of the Librarian in management of libraries and reading spaces for young people in Africa; – The publication in English of 04 databases: a list of publishers outside Africa publishing books for African children;

At least 8 media interventions in platforms and newspapers such as Le Monde Afrique, Cameroon Web, International Literacy Association, Askan (on the origins of Muna Kalati), World Kid Literature, IBBY, etc.

1 Award for our leader as one of the 30 pioneers and innovators who have significantly promoted literacy in 2021, by the American organisation International Literacy Association (ILA); events covered and rebroadcast by some twenty national newspapers in Cameroon and Africa.

The launch of the Muna Kalati Podcasts on SoundCloud where we exchange with specialists in African children's books and publishing such as the African comic book specialist Christophe Cassiau Haurie, the illustrator Boudjeka Kamto, the school librarian Christophe Tadja, the pan-African cartoonist Djehuty Biyong, the Director of the Akoma Mba publishing house Ulrich Talla Wamba and many others;

The creation and expansion of two communities (Francophone and Anglophone) of contributors/writers/bloggers to increase the systematic documentation of practices and trends in the children's book industry in Africa; The contribution to the organisation of the 5th edition of the International Youth Book Fair of Conakry (SLJC) from 3–6 November 2021 – The realisation of a dozen reviews of children's books to help parents in African and the Diaspora searching for particular books.

At the end of the year, we can only thank the Lord who has made all things possible by His Grace and His Mighty Hand. Our wish is to see reading become more integrated into family practices, and to experience greater recognition and acknowledgement of the exceptional work of authors, illustrators, cartoonists, booksellers, librarians and researchers who are working to make the entire children's book industry in Africa more dynamic.

I INTERNAL ACTIONS



- I-1 Muna Kalati Talks
- I-2 Muna Kalati Website Statistics (from 01-01-2021 to 31-12-2022)
 I-3 Human Resource Management
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Introduction

In 2021, the non-profit organisation Muna Kalati has been involved in a huge number of activities. Obviously, it cannot be said that it has achieved all its objectives for the year. However, there are reasons for satisfaction inasmuch as it has been a major player in the promotion of children's books in Africa. Our areas of implementation can be classified into two levels: internal actions and external actions.

1. Muna Kalati Talks

In 2021, Muna Kalati organised 8 Muna Kalati Talks. The first event was organised on 12 February 2021 during the Cameroon Youth Day (11 February 2021) and focused on the theme: The importance of reading as a family. It included Hector Flandrin Fomba, the Treasurer of Muna Kalati (moderator) and 3 guest speakers namely, Wafo Kengne Joël, Lontsi Songong Soreo Dorval and Bemsii William. The Youth Day, a day dedicated to engaging the youth of the Cameroonian nation in constructive activities, provided the right context to discuss with young people interested in reading.

This MK Talk was also the ideal moment to instil in them the spirit of leadership and to encourage them to participate in the reading culture.

Some important points:

- There should be a family reading time to make it a culture.
- Lots of families do not have a reading culture in the family.
- Many young people are no longer interested in reading.
- Some young people only read books recommended by their teachers at school.
- Learning to discuss books in the family is recommended.
- Many parents themselves do not read.

The 2nd MK Talk (<u>video here</u>) which dealt with the role of the librarian in the promotion of children's books was with Matiyem Kadjio (Vice President and founding member of the Association of Documentary Information Professionals of Cameroon for Africa) as guest speakers and Christian Elongué (Team Leader Muna Kalati) as moderator.

Some key points retained:

• The library assistant is the "link" between the books and the users.

He or she is an educational facilitator ready to identify and organise attractive activities adapted to children and young people.

- He or she is an educational facilitator ready to identify and organise attractive activities adapted to children and young people.
- Current library managers should subscribe to training sessions from time to time and request experts to strengthen their capacities;
- The library manager needs to be conscious of and adapt to the technological advances concerning the promotion of literature for children and young people.
- Only those libraries with children's collections managed by trained and qualified staff are regularly in demand.
- Readers' primary concerns are practical and transactional, rarely for leisure or pleasure.
- Children who access books in a library are usually unable to read and understand what is presented to them satisfactorily without the help of the librarian.

The theme of the third Muna Kalati Talks was: How can mothers develop love of reading in their children? (Video here) The main speakers for this MK Talk held on the International Women's Rights Day 2021 were Johanna McCalmont (Promoter World Kid Literature) and Francine Ngo Iboum (Author of the novel Fleur brisée). The session was moderated by Christian Elongué on 13 March 2021. Here are 7 tips developed at the end of the session to help a mother instil a love of reading in her children:

- For your children to read, start by reading yourself! You only give what you have. An example is better than 1000 sermons.
- Organise reading time with your child to develop a habit.
- Replace the reward system (treats, dolls, guns) with another; books.
- Make books available throughout the house or in the family library. Their books should answer the questions they have as they grow up.
- Encourage each other with other parent readers or encourage your child to join a book club.
- Use digital children's books available on apps like Book Dash, Epic, Vooks, Minno Kids all available on Android and iPhone.
- Be patient. Persevere. Check that point 1 is respected if there is a problem.

The theme of the fourth Muna Kalati Talk was: Can children do philosophy? The keynote speakers for this MK Talk on 5 April 2021 were Isabel Baradiàran (Professor of Philosophy and Social Workers) and Christian Elongué. The moderator was Narcisse Fomekong. Here are some basic rules and ideas that will promote better discussion and introduce children to philosophy:

- Raise your hand before speaking.
- Don't be afraid or shy to ask questions.
- Never speak when someone else is speaking.
- Justify your opinions by giving reasons for them.
- Learn to listen carefully to what is said.
- Respect the opinion of others by not judging them!
- Disagreement is a good thing, as long as it is done respectfully. Don't expect everyone to share your point of view.
- Avoid having side conversations! You will not appreciate others talking or being distracted when you are also talking.
- Ask questions about the story in a book they have read to start a conversation.

- Allow your child to ask questions too. Many children's books deal with issues of racism, the environment, equality, injustice, etc.
- At home, you can do something as simple as answering a question with a clarifying question. If a child asks you: "Do aliens exist?" you can answer: "What do you think it means for something to be real?" and continue.

The theme of the fifth Muna Kalati Talk was: The impact of COVID-19 on Youth publishing in Africa: resilience strategies and prospects. Invited main speakers for this MK Talk on 27 May 2021 were Ulrich Talla Wamba GM of Editions Akoma Mba and Paulin Assem GM of Editions Ago Média. Some key points:

- Several publishing houses in West Africa are increasingly specialising in children's books.
- Digital publishing represents an additional level of technical complexity for several publishing houses.
- Authors and publishers are sometimes concerned about the issue of rights and collaboration with large online book selling platforms.
- There are no book industry support measures in place to help publishers. Sometimes there are interventions in the form of occasional financial aid to publishers, but there is no real structural supervision of youth publishing in Africa.
- COVID has enabled a good number of authors to boost their activities and find other strategies to distribute their books.
- E-commerce/online sales were explored much more with loyal customers who did not hesitate to pay by mobile money.
- COVID also created opportunities for online networking between professionals and lovers of children's literature.
- COVID has pushed publishers to step back and innovate, to take into consideration the demands of the local market.
- African publishers and authors of children's books should learn to collaborate and be flexible. They need to integrate digital channels into their activities to enhance the production and distribution of their works.

The theme of the sixth Muna Kalati Talk was: The Access to Children's Books and Reading in Africa: Obstacles and Opportunities in 2021. This MK talk welcomed Augustino Agbemavo, CEO of Bookconekt Benin, Bessi Kama-Saba Hidi Tona, CEO of Hidi Culture Togo and the partnership of Ibby Cameroon. Christian Elongué, GM of Muna Kalati, moderated this session which was held on 30 June 2021. Some noted points:

- Difficulties exist in getting books from one African country to another. Where it is possible, the cost is quite high and very few parents are willing to pay for it.
- There is a lack of authors and publishers specialised in children's literature.
- Innovation and passion are the two key elements for success in any children's book industry in Africa.
- Collaboration between libraries, cultural associations, reading centres and promotional organisations.
- Strong public policies on books and reading should be developed to create the legal and structural environment for the development of the industry.

Financial support measures are needed to cushion or subsidise the costs of transporting books to young people.

The 7th edition of the MK Talks, which took place on 25 September 2021, focused on "Economic models for literary enterprises: How to sustain a literary initiative over time? The MK Talk involved Dr Wale Okediran, Secretary General of the Pan-African Writers Association, Deborah Ahenkorah, co-founder of Golden Baobab (Ghana), Seera Carol, CEO of Literature Beyond Borders and Christian Elongué.

The 8th MK Talk of 05 November 2021 was on the theme "Gossip (Storytelling): when Kongossa is involved in literature". Narcisse Fomekong hosted the writer Kemadjou Njanké. Some points to note:

- Gossip is not just a 'literary genre', but an art of living, a lifestyle.
- Gossip is not unique to Cameroon and is practised informally under different appellations in every African country.
- Gossip is a bridge between orality and writing.
- In storytelling, the reader tries to penetrate the culture and the universe of the author in order to deeply understand the author and reach a state of fusion.

Muna Kalati organised a total of 8 dialogues. 17 panellists or guest speakers participated in these MK Talks which have been attended by over 1388 people worldwide.



2. Muna Kalati Website Statistics (from 01-01-2021 to 31-12-2022)

NUMBER OF VISITORS	MOST VISITED PAGES AND ARTICLES	
6,1 K (6100 VISITORS)	1. <u>HOME PAGE</u> 1. UNITED \$	STATES OF AMERICA
	2. HTTPS://WWW.	2. CAMEROUN
	MUNAKALATI.ORG/ARED-	
	EDITIONS-JEUNES-AFRICAINS	S-
	LIRE-DANS-LES-LANGUES-	
	NATIONALES/	
	3. HTTPS://WWW.	3. FRANCE
	MUNAKALATI.ORG/LA-	
	GUERRE-DES-FANTOMES-	
	MON-PREMIER-VOYAGE-	
	DANS-LIMAGINAIRE-DE-LA-	
	LITTERATURE-AFRICAINE/	

6100 Visitors

In 2022, we will continue to ensure the maintenance of the website and provide solutions to make the website much lighter, faster and more attractive in visual terms.



3. Human Resource Management

Muna Kalati now has 13 members, each of whom has invested in his or her own way in the development of the association and the implementation of activities. We were able to organise the second and third phases of Read to Heal.

This was possible thanks to the whole team on the ground with Hermann LABOU, Hector Flandrin FOMBA, Guinaelle KENGNE,

Suzie MOMO, Promise Mappe and several volunteers. Special thanks go to the web actors such as Narcisse FOMEKONG, Christian ELONGUE, Daniel DESSOUASSI, Hermann DJEAFOUA, Jerry DESSOUASSI who worked massively in the management of the Muna Kalati talks, the management of the website and the computer graphics design.

Thanks to their activities, there was an increase in the visibility of the association on social networks.

Our role was also to assist the employees in times of joy and in times of hardship either by our physical presence or moral support.

Following this logic, we took it upon ourselves to celebrate the birthdays in a symbolic way of all members of the Association.

In terms of direct assistance, we have made babysitting available for Guinaelle KENGNE and Adrienne NGUEMELA's children. We also provided medical assistance to Promise MAPPE.



4. The Publication of Articles in the Website

The year 2021 was a particularly intense year in terms of publications on the Muna Kalati website. More than forty (40) texts including the analyses made by the members of the team, the interviews, the reading notes and the sharing of texts published by other authors on other sites dealing with youth literature. Twenty-four (24) articles on thematic analyses and activities written in both

English and French took the first place. These analyses by Christian Elongué, Labou Herman or Guinaelle Kengné deal with various themes related to children's literature. They include the role of libraries in the promotion of children's literature, the fight against racism in children's books, and applications to promote access to children's books or reading techniques for young readers.

Since knowledge management in the field of children's literature is part of Muna Kalati's mission, it was necessary to develop the collection of information from the actors of children's books in Africa. Through interviews, we conducted about twelve interviews with publishers, illustrators and authors of children's literature. Muriel Diallo, Nadia Essalmi and Diouf Yaya Sow, to name but a few of them, shared their experiences of children's literature with us.

In order to increase the production of content and to diversify the points of view and types of content, Muna Kalati had to issue a call for texts. Together with financial motivations for contributors, this call for texts, enabled us to welcome new writers to the team. Among these editors, Stella Attiogbe and Laurence Marianne-Melgard stand out for their consistency and regularity of publication.

This year has witnessed an increase in the production of content. We have gone from about thirty texts to more than forty. This increase is also due to the fact that we have adopted the practice of sharing content published on other sites on our platforms in order to avoid breaking opportunities. For example, when content has to do with video games, comics or simply children's literature, we share it on our site.



5. Internal Communication

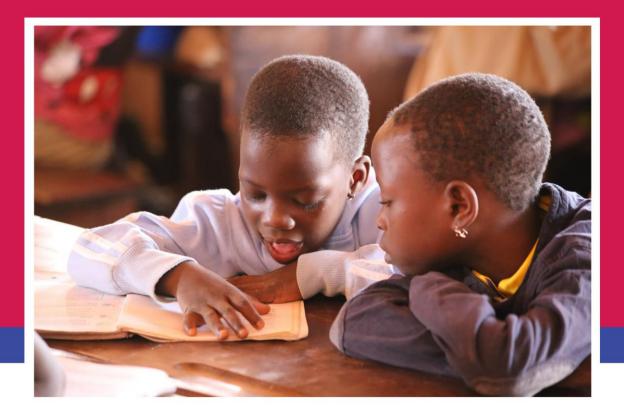
Muna Kalati regularly held its meetings virtually. Given the disparity of the residence of various members, these meetings were moments of exchange on all the other activities which are detailed in the annual report. They were crucial for the implementation of the different actions and especially for the follow-up of the various interventions of the members on the national and even international level. However, it could be noted that the disruptions in the internet connection did not facilitate the exchanges. In terms of internal communication on a numerical level, we can also talk about the lack of promptness in virtual exchanges on WhatsApp or on Slack where important contents were published.

As far as physical meetings are concerned, we can first recall that they only took place when a field activity was being prepared. For example, we can mention the meetings for the preparation of the second edition of Read to Heal with the volunteers or the activity Reading for Pleasure at the AFC of Dschang, as well as the physical meeting of 26 December 2021 for the general evaluation of the activities carried out during the year.

EXTERNAL ACTIONS



- II-1. The One Orphanage, One Library Project
 II-2 Read to Heal; Phases 2 and 3
 II-3 Reading for Pleasure Workshops
 II-4 The Muna Kalati Management Board
 II-5 Participation In International Conferences and Meetings
 II-6 External Communication



1. The One Orphanage, One Library Project

Muna Kalati took part in the fourth edition of the one orphanage, one library project at the MANDRAPP orphanage in Edéa this year. Muna Kalati participated through practical activities, such as reading a children's book and playing an educational game. The main objective was to plant in children, the seed of reading. The founder of the said project and other contributors particularly saluted this action and dedication of the Muna Kalati team.

2. Read to Heal; Phases 2 and 3

Phase 2 of the Read to Heal activity took place on January 30, 2021, at the IDP camp in the city of Dschang. There were more than 60 children present and they benefited from various readings, storytelling, poetry and game workshops. Most importantly, they received free children's books from the Akoma Mba publishing house.

As for phase 3, it should be noted that it was held in the town of Bafoussam at the MAEPE (House of Reception, Education and Protection of Children) on Monday, December 20, 2021. About thirty children were present and the supervisors of the centre were very satisfied with the various activities that were carried out. For future editions, apart from the purchase of children's books, more funds should be mobilised to support the centres visited in other areas.

It should be noted that we received 10 illustrated books from Akoma Mba. Three (3) of these books were used as a support for the creation of poems by Suzy MOMO. For the year 2022, these books will be used for the realisation of reading notes and reading sessions with the children.



3. Reading for Pleasure Workshops

The Muna Kalati association was present at the Alliance Franco-Camerounaise in Dschang from 2 to 28 August, 2021 for the reading pleasure workshops. The number of workshops (reading, writing, games, drawing and colouring, dance, decoration, gastronomy) and the number of children (41) increased as compared to last year when the Muna Kalati team registered only 8 children. We carried out 12 sessions. These different sessions did not run smoothly because the organisers had to face certain difficulties: the delay in the start of the activities, the non-respect of the timing allocated to each workshop, the delay of the parents in picking up the children, and the varied whims of the children. Nevertheless, it was a very enriching experience.

For future improvement, special emphasis should be laid on the planning process by holding discussion sessions with parents before the start of activities. In order to be more effective, the facilitators should submit to training in their respective fields, either online or in person. The parents were impressed by the various activities they attended and indicated that they would definitely register their children for future events.

4. The Muna Kalati Management Board

We hosted our first Board of Directors to guide the Association and increase our institutional impact. They are:

Kidi Bebey (Cameroon – France), Author – Journalist

Acele Nadale (Cameroon – Germany), Founder & CEO

Akoss Ofori-Mensah (Ghana), Editor Sub-Saharan Publishers

Ulrich Talla Wamba (Cameroon), Poet, Writer, Editor

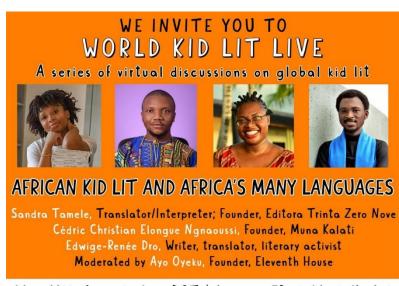


5. Participation in International Conferences and Meetings

The main activity at the international level was the participation of Muna Kalati through its founder in the 37th International Congress of the Bureau International pour la Promotion du Livre Jeunesse (IBBY) in Moscow. During this event, Christian Elongué presented a paper on youth literature in Cameroon between 1956 and 2016.

This beautiful performance gave birth to partnership tracks between Muna Kalati and the Russian institutions for the promotion of youth books.

This was the case for Nadezhda Filimonova and Evgeniia Trofimova from the Kronshtadt Children's Library in Russia who invited us to a panel to explore the following: "How can children's books help raise confident children? "during the St. Petersburg Lighthouse Book Festival.



Wed 11th August, 4pm BST | Live on FB @ WorldKidLit

Christian Elongué was a panellist at an online conference on August 11, 2021, under the theme: African children's literature in the face of African plurilingualism. Sandra

Tamele (Translator/Interpreter, founder of Editora Trinta Zero Nove), Edwige-Renée Dro (Writer, translator, literary activist), Ayo Oyeku (Founder of Eleventh House) were also invited. Some key points:

- Authors must, among other things, understand the elements of a successful children's book and have the sensitivity to meet the linguistic challenges associated with a genre that is new to African languages.
- Financial support, in the form of competitions and workshops, relies on external funding and expertise and offers only temporary solutions.

6. External Communication

a) Social Networks

In November 2020, Muna Kalati welcomed a new communication officer named Dessouassi Jean-Daniel (Benin) and a new infographer named Jerry-Benedict D. In June and October 2021, the team in charge of social networks welcomed Dianie Rosy (Cameroon) and Polina Khoroshevskaya (Russia) respectively.

Thanks to the collaboration of the whole team, the number of subscribers on all social networks increased slowly but gradually.

- The association's Facebook page had 1,090 followers in November 2020. Today
 it has 1,668 followers (December 2021), making it the Facebook page with the
 most followers. The publications that have generated the most views and reactions
 are the presentations of the team members and activities such as Reading for
 Healing, Muna Kalati Talks.
- The Twitter page had a total of 1020 followers in November 2020 and currently has 1062 followers. On Twitter, the MK Talks, publications on libraries, and actors in African children's literature generated the most reactions.
- On LinkedIn, MK has increased from 74 followers in November 2020 to 199 followers in December 2021.
- In November 2021, Muna Kalati's Instagram page was created. It now has 20 followers.

b) The Context of the Creation of the Instagram and YouTube Accounts

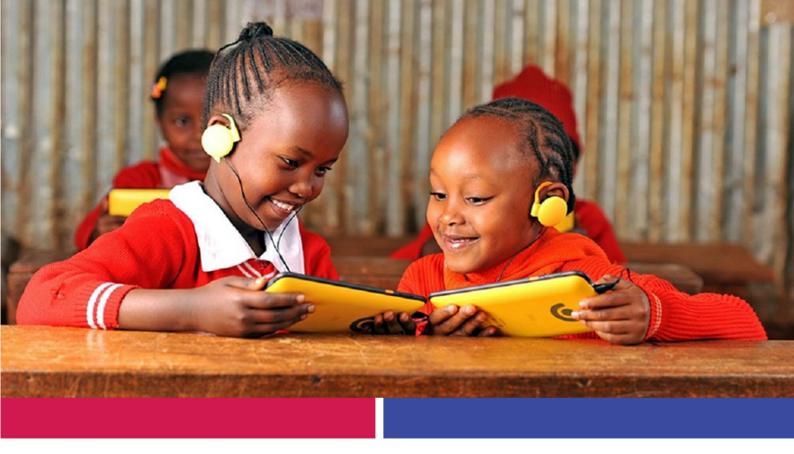
It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. But a video can help convey even more. With excellent quality and resolution content, Muna Kalati can tell stories (videos), display images of books, authors and actors in the children's book industry while asking subscribers to discover more on our website. YouTube allows children and people interested in viewing and listening to videos published on YouTube in all possible languages. Another reason why our high quality Instagram and YouTube content is important is due to the opportunity it gives to monetise our account.

The communication team has already started projects for videos and visuals that are suitable for the Instagram and YouTube pages. The aim is to develop consistency and discipline in this area in order to become a reference that encourages users to spontaneously turn to Muna Kalati to listen, view, read, download and find African children's books.



THE FINANCIAL REVIEW AND TREASURY ACCOUNT

III-1. Operating Budget of the Organisation for the Year 2021 January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021



1 Departing Budget of the Organisation for the Year 2021 (January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021)

Expenditures	
Salaries and benefits	7,000
Professional fees – fundraising consultants	3,700
 Printing and reproduction (MK Magazines, etc.) 	1,500
	3,900
 Travel and mileage reimbursement Insurance (liability, directors and officers) 	1,200
 Supplies (office and field) 	1,500
Advertisement and marketing	1,700
Equipment and software	2,500
Internet access and web design	2,000
Professional development opportunities	2,800
Dues, fees and membership	1,800
Food and accommodation	1,000
Total expenditures	\$30,600

Income	
 Individual contributions (memberships, annual appeal, memorial donations) 	12,000
Enterprise contribution	4,000
Fundraising grant	3,600
Government grant	1,900
Contractual service	3,300
Events	6,000
Selling of Goods	2,000
Total income	\$32,800

PARTNERS



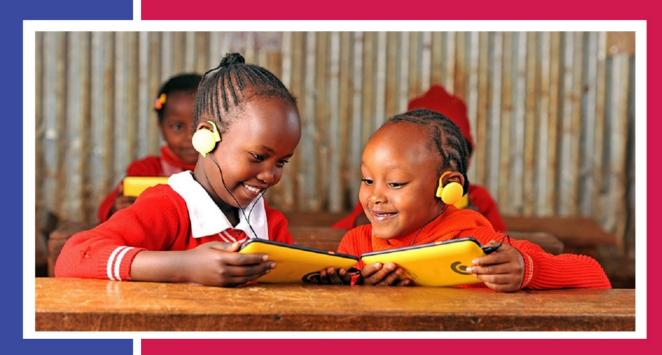












CONCLUSION

Finally, it can be seen from the above points that the Muna Kalati Association has devoted every effort to carrying out its various tasks, both internally and externally.

However, the difficulties encountered and the various failures cannot be ignored. New strategies are needed,including greater involvement of the members of the network and efficient and consistent work by all. It is only in this way that the association will progress towards a new dimension and meet with greater challenges.

Having achieved this, Muna Kalati will be a worldwide reference as a platform for documentation, training and influencing the dynamics of the children's book industry in Africa.

Facebook / LinkedIn / Twitter / Youtube