

ANNUAL REPORT

2007



**Langaa Research and Publishing
Common Initiative Group**

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1. Langaa Mission

The mission of Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group (Langaa RPCIG), a not-for-profit organisation, is to contribute to the cultural development and renaissance of Africa. This is achieved by conducting and promoting research; training in research and writing; promoting fiction and scholarly writing by African authors.

2. 2007 Objectives

- Complete legalisation
- Negotiate printing and distribution possibilities and avenues
- Recruit volunteers
- Launch initiative through publication of 10 books
- Encourage and increase submission of manuscripts from local authors
- Set up office in Bamenda

3. Legalisation

Legalisation completed (see annex 1). Legal documents all acquired and draft structure of publishing house and research centre instituted. Centre is fully registered and recognised as a Common Initiative Group.

4. Funding

Funding continued to be provided by founders. Negotiations currently continue to acquire funding for various projects. The plan is for increasing book publication to create sustainability. Simultaneously, we made efforts to acquire financial support through grant applications, sponsoring agreements, contracts.

5. Cooperation and Collaboration

Negotiations completed for printing, marketing and distribution in the UK, US and worldwide. Collaborating institutions include African Books Collective (ABC), Michigan University Press (MSU). We are also discussing with the Universities of Buea, Yaoundé and the two universities in Bamenda to establish a more concrete MoU. Amongst collaborators, we have also made contacts with the local council, Ministry of Culture and also local NGOs, CBOs and associations for the cultural production project. Contacts with schools, needs assessment and readership survey has also began to be instituted. We hope to be able to acquire funding to commence full research and consultation in 2008. In terms of research we have also began to prepare the application for two projects on environmental sanitation and also on mobility in collaboration with the ASC Leiden, University of Buea and Djamena.

6. Buildings

The year began without any infrastructure. A property has been acquired for renovation. We plan to begin work by January 2008.

7. Staffing

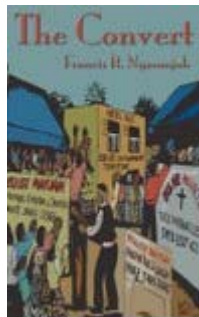
Volunteers were recruited, especially the managing editor and copy editors. Many persons have responded to our appeal for volunteer reviewers.

8. Published Books

The Convert

Francis B. Nyamnjoh

ISBN 9789956558032 | 76 pages | 203 x 127 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback



'This play tackles the theatrically attractive but ethically complex issue of Christian fundamentalism. Nyamnjoh, as a sociologist is well qualified to explore the social problems and psychological pressures which give rise to the born-again phenomenon, and the strong appeal of fundamentalist religion. *The Convert*, however is no schematic sociological tract. It deals with the conflicting imperatives in 21st century West Africa, which push ordinary people into extraordinary situations, and provides no easy solutions to the issues raised. Although the play revolves around the Ultimate Church of Christ and the

four main characters affected by it, the audience is given a deftly sketched picture of a corrupt world beyond it, lacking in spiritual or community values. [...] The characterization. is remarkable for its avoidance of any obvious protagonist; the audience is allowed no clear character with whom to identify. The four main characters. have both virtues and flaws, each providing insights into ways the consumer-oriented materialism of modern life impacts upon African spirituality and community values.'

David Kerr, Professor in Literature and Drama, University of Botswana

Fragmented Melodies

Kangsen Feka Wakai

ISBN 9789956558100 | 84 pages | 216 x 140 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback

Fragmented Melodies is a seminal, introspective work of exceptional freshness and contemplative diction transmitted in an enriched style that immediately grasps the reader's attention. Between Part I (Medusa's Spell) and Part IV (Homebound) the reader is instantly immersed into a multifaceted poetic universe that is both

enigmatic and mystifying, reminiscent of Jared Angira's *Silent Voices*. Wakai's personae are inimitable and diverse, oftentimes imbued with passionate sensuality, despondent lives, and brutal nostalgia-the nostalgia of prison walls, defeated idealism, and incarcerated voices yearning for release behind blood-smeared prison walls. From Ethiopia to Brazil, Kigali to Bamenda, from the smoked-stained vocal cords in Soweto to the clanging steel doors of the Kondengui maximum-security prison in Yaoundé, Wakai's poetic voices resonate the sound of traditional drums, the cacophony of jazz, the isolated acoustic notes of guitar strings, and the suffocating stench of the dictator's funeral pyre. The diverse voices in the poems are unified into a single poetic journey of desolation, hope, idealism, lamentation, exile, and freedom.'



Babila Mutia, Professor of Literature, ENS, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

The Disillusioned African

Francis B. Nyamnjoh

ISBN 9789956558025 | 264 pages | 203 x 127 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback



This humorous tale of the naïve and curious African student-cum-philosopher wandering between North and South, the rural and the urban, has been in gestation for a period of nearly two decades. With allusion to traditions of the philosophical novel and the picaresque, Nyamnjoh's protagonist travels from his African village to the sharply divided and socially cruel world of 1980s Britain. By casting aside his disillusion and the traps of servitude and victimhood, *The Disillusioned African* reveals his creative potential for curiosity and adventure. He brings a bird's eye view, always affectionate, gently mocking, to the cultural idiosyncrasies of the new world he encounters, which throws his own African culture, politics and socio-economic realities into light relief.

Mind Searching
Francis B. Nyamnjoh

ISBN 9789956558049 | 232 pages | 203 x 127 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback

In *Mind Searching* Nyamnjoh has attempted to do something rather clever - to expose, through the attitudes, feelings and thoughts of one man and a very simple story, the hypocrisy and corruption of Cameroon society and humanity in general, often using understatement and irony in good effect. The commentary is unrelentingly cynical and returns again and again to corruption, callous squandering, exploitation, prostitution, and other fairly worn butts. The book depicts a society where basic freedoms are shackled, and thinking aloud treasonable. Hence the mental ramblings of the narrator and central character Judascious Fanda Yanda, in the form of an extended monologue full of observations, anecdotes and asides written from the point of view of an apparently insouciant naive. The basic method is to foreground the opinions and conversational elegance of the narrator, while having events going on as a background to his thoughts. We trace the narrator's progress from a disenchanted 'Damné de la Terre' to a comfortably well off Private Secretary to a Vice Minister over a number of years. It is a clear illustration of how the system perpetuates its mediocrity and buys off any spark of initiative. Nyamnjoh has a good command of ironic tone and sound control over form and structure. He employs a very fluent style, and often has very urbane and neat turns of phrase. He captures the bored, superior, cynical and ultimately predatory tone of voice of his narrator extremely well.



Namondo. Child of the Water Spirits
Ntemfac A.N. Ofegbe

ISBN 9789956558063 | 360 pages | 216 x 140 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback

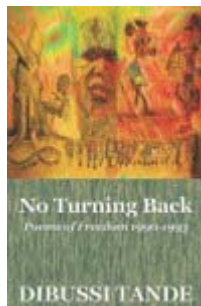
Chaos reigned in the firmament, until the ageless spirit *Orase Lora* breathed and created dawn. Stars from his fingertips jeweled the heavens and newborn planets radiated throughout the vast universe. The river gods now dispatch Namondo, a *liengu-la-nwanja* or water spirit, to the land. The child of the water spirits, alongside

her twin brother, has come to purge the land of an evil cult. Namondo uses her magic ring to accomplish her task, but disaster strikes. The fearsome ring of the water spirits must return to her son. Ntemfac Ofege weaves a tale combining yesterday and today, the living dead and the living, tradition and modernity, scoundrel and righteous deities. This mythological narrative is rooted in that uproarious extravaganza called Africa – land of vicious serpents and elephant-doubles. Ripe with transfigurations and transformations, this novel promises to be a spirited and lingering read for all those who navigate multiple cultures, languages, times and geographies.



No Turning Back
Poems of Freedom 1990-1993
Dibussi Tande

ISBN 9789956558056 | 72 pages | 216 x 140 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback



No Turning Back relives the tumultuous beginnings of Africa's democratization experiment in the early 1990s. The main theme of the collection is an investment in hope and in the resilience of Africans. The poems are loud and clear in their castigation of dictatorship and its miseries. They celebrate the mass resolve and thirst for democracy by Africans for whom there is 'No turning back!'

Tale of an African Woman
Thomas Jing

ISBN 9789956558094 | 332 pages | 216 x 140 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback



The village of Yakiri has been cursed by ancestral wrath because of the treatment of Yaa, the first girl who wrestled her male goatherd peers to earn the right to be initiated into the society of manhood. Her struggle is taken up generations later by Yaya, the granddaughter of Tafa and Wirba. Orphaned like her forebear, Yaya becomes a star student in the village's primary school and promises to go far. But, ask the villagers, is it right to invest in an education for an African girl who may become the property of another village? An educated woman will abandon the farm where she is needed, wear high heels and try to order men around! In the midst of it all, one Irish missionary, living in Africa and for the most time with Africans, literally wiggles his way into hearts and minds. With his intervention, Yaya leaves the village to school in the city, but her troubles as a woman have not really begun. Yarns of cultural borrowing, indigestion and transcendence reveal the simple and complex ways in which community matters are confronted and decided. This happens in shrines where seers are consulted and cowry shells thrown, in palm wine houses, but also around the school and presbytery. The untold stories and perspectives of girls and women burst through in illuminating and uplifting ways. Quarrels, squabbles, near collisions and mutual conversions give way to innovative traditions.

Stories from Abakwa
Francis B. Nyamnjoh

ISBN 9789956558001 | 148 pages | 203 x 127 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback

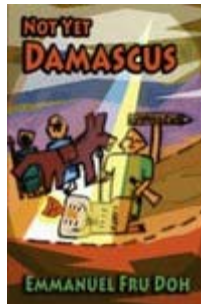
Childhood and growing up in Mimboland, Cameroon are infused with fascinating stories and adventures. Discover life in Abakwa with Tom and his friend, as they are chased through an orchard for secretly harvesting avocados and mangoes. Smile as Mathias Chi's overloaded canoe almost loses balance. Shiver as Roland runs through the dark streets and bleeding corridors of Mvog Mvog. And cry

when Big Brother discovers how his siblings suffered when he was away at school. What happens to Esther when she finds the courage to make an announcement at the Abakwa Mountain Foot Radio Station about her husband's disappearance? Will Prudencia and Collette kill or give life? How does Prisca Lum deal with her dwarf husband? Some characters will remind you of people you know - or even of yourself. Drum beats and church bells, thunder and lightning, princes and princesses, visions and deceptions fill the pages. Discover your favorite stories waiting to be told and retold, again and again.



Not Yet Damascus
Emmanuel Fru Doh

ISBN 9789956558070 | 76 pages | 216 x 140 mm | 2007 |
Langaa RPCIG, Cameroon | Paperback



Not Yet Damascus celebrates a tumultuous era without patriotic leaders willing to transform their national wastelands into thriving bastions. The collection salutes and queries: a panoramic collection intended for the sensitization of all, hence the simple yet evocative approach.

9. Conclusion

- The year 2007 meant setting up, institutionalization of the organization and launching of the first books in order to inaugurate and start off the initiative. The process of legalisation was completed and negotiations finalised with the African Books Collective for printing and distribution. Nine (9) of the targeted 10 books were published.
- The publishing centre also witnessed an increase in submissions and requests for publications from mainly Cameroonian authors and several other African and Western authors which attest to the international recognition of the centre.
- A major success was the Langaa-ASC Leiden MoU for both research and publishing. The plan is to transform this into a bigger research and partnership agreement for training, conferencing, training, exchange, research and publication. Discussions continue on the establishment of a book series partnership with ASC Leiden.
- 2007 is also the fyear the organization acquired official office space and recruited volunteer to run activities. The year ended with commencement of repair work and renovation in the newly acquired property for the centre.
- In 2007, the centre witnessed an increase of requests for information, cooperation, and visits to the centre from diversified persons, organisations and institutions. These are all under review and negotiation. In August 2007 Langaa organised a workshop for the preparation of a research programme: 'Mobile Africa revisited: *A comparative study of the relationship between new communication technologies and social spaces (Chad, Mali, Cameroon, Angola)*' in which Langaa is also a research partner. The workshop was held on 29-30 August in Bamenda (Cameroon) at the Langaa Research and Publishing Centre. The selection of this location, instead of the usual option for a location in Europe, had many advantages. Firstly, the challenges in terms of travelling, infrastructure and organization of a workshop in one of the research areas immediately established 'marginality' in this programme as an experience and not only as a theoretical concept. The organization of the workshop served to provide a model for discussions between stakeholders (from academia, NGOs, development associations, cultural-religious organizations, and ICT companies) and the research team. This workshop resulted in a research project that was submitted to WOTRO (Dutch Funding agency) to consider for funding, with Langaa as coordinator institute for Africa.

- For the near future Langaa would like mainly to maintain and develop the centre especially to make use of local research and resources available, increase and improve upon publications and widen the scope beyond Cameroonian authors.
- To continue projects, the centre will try to identify varied sources of national and international support, as well as continue with self support possibilities. Langaa will try to develop cooperation activities with experts and institutions (governmental and non-governmental) through which it will contribute to reducing the information deficit and raising the issues in the area of research, creative writing and publishing in Africa.
- In the year 2008 we aim to improve upon output and increase publications to at least thirty, tripling the achievement for this year. At the same time we hope to review over sixty books for publication. There is a plan to begin publishing in indigenous languages and also to include French language books. We also plan to acquire funding and technical support to set up the resource centre.

Annex 1

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN Paix-Travail-Patrie	REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON Peace-Work-Fatherland
MINISTERE DE L'AGRICULTURE	MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
REGISTRE PROVINCIAL DES COOP/GIC	PROVINCIAL REGISTRY COOP/CIG

CERTIFICAT D'INSCRIPTION
REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

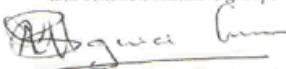
N° NW/GP/30/05/8938

Le présent certificat est délivré à LANGAA RESEARCH AND
The present certificate is issued to PUBLISHING COMMON INITIATIVE GROUP
ayant son siège social à Bamenda, au titre de Common
with head office at Initiative Group *as a*
et inscrite au registre provincial des sociétés coopératives et des
and registered at the provincial register of cooperative societies and
groupes d'initiative commune en date du 4th January 2005
common initiative groups on the

Conformément à la Loi N° 92/006 du 14 août 1992 relative aux sociétés coopératives et aux groupes
d'initiative commune et à son Décret d'application N° 92/455/PM du 23 Novembre 1992.
In compliance with Law N° 92/006 of 14 August 1992 relating to cooperative societies and common
initiative groups and its Decree of application N° 92/455/PM of 23rd November 1992

à Bamenda, le 04/01/2004
at *on the*

Le Chef du Registre Provincial
Le Chef du Registre provincial des sociétés coopératives
et des groupes d'initiative commune
The Provincial Registrar for cooperative societies
and common initiative groups



AKOUYU BRUNO NGWALUM
AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER

