

The African Book World and Press

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In the past two decades African Studies has become very popular and increasingly important. This has resulted in a spate of publications and materials on Africa issuing out of the world's pressess, particularly the Western World. However, materials published in Africa itself pose major acquisition problems for the African librarian and even for the Western Librarian. The most serious of the problems is the general lack of information about what has been published in Africa. In comparison, the well established publishers in Europe and America publicise their publications by means of notices,

brochures and annual cumulative catalogues of books. In addition review copies are sent to learned journals, book review magazines, book selection tools and even to the press. In Africa such facilities may be non-existent, and even if they are, may be very poor.

Other problems faced are that trade books published by Commercial presses in Africa and non-trade books published by government printers, research institutes and Universities in Africa are poorly handled and distributed. The same is true of periodicals and serial publications including newspapers.

It is for the above reasons that the appearance of THE AFRICAN BOOK WORLD & PRESS on the market is to be greeted with relief.

Although it is not new in the field, nevertheless the approach adopted by the publishers is novel. In the words of Hans M. Zell the publication "aims to provide comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date information - both in English and French, on libraries, publishers and the retail book trade, research institutions with publishing programmes, book industry and literary associations, and the major periodicals and newspapers published throughout the African continent."

This means that for the acquisitions librarians in Africa, the problem of lack of information about what is being published in Africa should now be considerably relieved. One is now assured at least of a definite source of supply.

The directory covers a total of 48 African countries. It is arranged in alphabetical order by country, thus facilitating easy reference. Within countries the information is presented in the following order:

University, College and Public Libraries

Special libraries

Booksellers

Publishers

Institutional Publishers

Periodicals and magazines

Major newspapers

Book Industry associations and literary societies

Entries under these headings give name and address of institution, telephone number, name of Chief Librarian, director, chief executive or head. In addition there are appendixes containing useful information.

These include:

- a) the subject indexes to special libraries and to periodicals and magazines.

- b) information about book clubs, literary prizes and awards, and book fairs.
- c) a directory of government printers and publication agencies, as well as major commercial printers in Africa.
- d) a list of principal dealers in African books in Europe and the United States.

The last section of the book contains a bibliography of books, articles, and reports on publishing and book development in Africa.

Also, to facilitate exchange, there is a guide to currencies of the various countries of Africa.

The Publishers hope to provide a supplementary and up-dating service to the directory in the "AFRICAN BOOK PUBLISHING RECORD".

The mine of information contained in this publication should prove useful not only to librarians attempting to build special collection of Africana materials but also to booksellers and African Scholars.