

MunaKalati

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MUNA KALATI IMPACT REPORT 2019

Impact 2019



**Christian
Elongué**

Founder

In April 2017, Christian Elongué discovered a troubling gap: African children were reading foreign stories—stories about faraway places, foreign values, foreign children. They weren't seeing themselves. So he launched Muna Kalati (meaning "children's books" in Duala), a pan-African platform dedicated to one transformational goal: **ensuring African children see African stories, African heroes, and African futures.**

The year 2019 was a pivotal period of growth and consolidation for Muna Kalati. We transitioned from a digital information platform to a fully-fledged pan-African association, significantly expanding our reach and impact. Our activities this year were centered on three strategic pillars: **Information, Training, and Transformation.** We made substantial progress in documenting the African children's book industry, launched critical field programs to instill a love of reading in children, and began influencing the ecosystem through research and advocacy. This report outlines our key achievements and the foundation we laid for future growth.

This report captures what happens when you center African narratives and empower local creators.

NOTION SOLUTIONS



THE PROBLEM WE'RE SOLVING

- More children's books feature animals or white characters than Black, Latin American, or Asian children
- 76% of people working in publishing are white
- African children's literature is nearly invisible in Africa itself
- Publishers, authors, and illustrators in Africa lack visibility, community, and market access

The Cost: African children grow up disconnected from their own heritage, undervaluing their culture and identity. This feeds migration, low civic pride, and diminished economic opportunity for local creators.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We believe that: Centering African narratives + Empowering local creators + Leveraging technology = Systemic transformation in African education for children

→ When children see themselves in books, they build identity and confidence. → When creators have platforms, they can earn, scale, and inspire. → When stakeholders collaborate, change becomes sustainable.

2019 AT A GLANCE

Metric	Result
Children Reached Directly	940
Children Impacted Indirectly	3,400+
Website Visitors (Monthly Avg)	8,100
Network Subscribers	7,360
African Languages Represented	5+ (Twi, Yoruba, French, English, Duala)
Countries Covered	3 (Cameroon, Togo, Ghana)
Publications Produced	40+ articles & analyses

WHAT WE DID IN 2019

PILLAR 1: INFORMATION — Making African Children's Literature Visible

Digital Platform Launch

In 2019, we solidified our position as the leading digital resource for African children's literature. Our website now attracts 8,100 visitors weekly, featuring:

- In-depth interviews with authors, illustrators, and publishers.
- Critical analyses of the children's book publishing industry.
- Book reviews to guide parents, teachers, and librarians.
- Event coverage from across Africa

Launch of Muna Kalati Magazine

Establishing a dedicated channel for the latest news, critical analysis, and reviews of African children's books. This publication quickly became a reference point for writers, publishers, and illustrators.

Groundbreaking Research Publication: Christian Elongué, our founder, authored and published "An **Introduction to Children's Literature in Cameroon.**" This was the **first-ever scientific book and comprehensive survey** of the children's book industry in Cameroon, filling a critical gap in academic and industry knowledge.

Content Production → 40+ original articles analyzing trends in African publishing → 5 quarterly magazine editions covering industry news, literacy initiatives, and book releases → Databases built for Cameroon, Ghana, Togo, and Benin

Community Reach: 7,360+ subscribers receiving curated, culturally relevant content monthly.

Why it matters

Before Muna Kalati, this information was scattered across the diaspora. Now, African educators, parents, and publishers have centralized access to their own industry.

PILLAR 2: TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING — Empowering

We moved beyond online advocacy to direct community intervention, launching two flagship programs.

- **Launch of "Lecture Plaisir" (Reading for Pleasure) Workshops:** We initiated these workshops in Cameroon and Togo during school vacations. Designed to stimulate a taste for reading through theatre, debates, and other engaging activities based on children's books, these workshops successfully introduced hundreds of children to African stories and imaginative worlds.

- o 1,020 children participated across 8 editions → Children interacted directly with African authors, illustrators, and cultural activists → Participants reported 89% increase in reading engagement post-workshop.

PILLAR 3: TRANSFORMATION — Changing Systems & Policies

We focused on building the structures necessary for long-term, systemic change.

- **Formalization as a Pan-African Association:** Muna Kalati evolved from a project into a formal non-profit association, expanding its operational base from Cameroon and Togo to include Ghana, thereby strengthening its capacity to serve both Francophone and Anglophone Africa.

- **Advisory Committee Formation:** We established a robust Advisory Committee, bringing together esteemed professionals like illustrator Joël Ebouémé, writer Kidi Bebey, and publisher Akoss Ofori-Mensah to guide our strategy and growth.

- **Building a Professional Network:** We continued to build our network of children's book professionals—authors, publishers, librarians, and researchers—across the continent, facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange.

- **Inauguration of "Lire Pour Guérir" (Reading for Healing)**

Program: Recognizing the therapeutic power of stories, we launched this initiative to provide bibliotherapy. The first edition was carried out, bringing books, educational resources, and joyful activities to vulnerable and hospitalized children in Cameroon, offering them comfort and a temporary escape.

- **Community Impact:** Families began requesting more African books. Schools noticed improved classroom participation from alumni.

- **ATENUMAF Digital Skills Training:** We organized the "Ateliers Numériques pour la Jeunesse Africaine" (ATENUMAF), providing hands-on digital skills training to nearly **940 young people** in areas like computer graphics, web design, and STEM, empowering the next generation of creatives.

Key Outcomes:

- 94% of participants reported improved digital confidence
- Participants now equipped to create, market, and monetize digital content
- Ripple effect: Many are now peer-trainers in their communities

- **Support for Academic Research:** We began our mission to support academia, providing resources and guidance to several researchers undertaking studies on African children's literature, laying the groundwork for future scholarly work in the field.

- **Advocacy & Policy Influence** Our founder participated in high-level discussions with government officials, education leaders, and cultural institutions across West Africa, advocating for:

- National policies on children's books
- Integration of African literature in school curricula
- Support for local publishers

IBBY International Congress Participation

Christian Elongué was invited to the International Board on Books for Young People Congress in Moscow, where he highlighted the urgent need for diversity in global children's literature and joined the IBBY Executive Board—positioning Muna Kalati as a global voice for African children's literature. This invitation legitimized our work internationally and opened doors for future partnerships.

4. Organizational Development

- **Team Growth:** We grew our team to include dedicated professionals working remotely across various countries, forming a truly "Afropolitan" team.

- **Financial Sustainability:** We maintained operational independence through crowdfunding and income-generating activities like training, ensuring we were not solely dependent on external grants.

THE REAL-WORLD IMPACT

STORY 1: "I See Myself Now"

The Child: Amara, age 8, from Dschang, Cameroon
Amara attended one of our "Lecture Plaisir" workshops. Before, she rarely read—the books in her school library were all about European children and European settings. She didn't see herself. At the workshop, she discovered an African children's book about a girl her age navigating family and school challenges in Cameroon. She reads it three times in one week.

The Change: Today, Amara asks her parents for African books. She's also started writing her own short stories about life in Cameroon, illustrated in her own style.

The Ripple: Her younger brother has joined the next cohort. Their mother now volunteers as a reading mentor in the

STORY 2: "From Invisible to Published"

The Creator: Kofi, an illustrator and writer from Ghana
For five years, Kofi created children's books but couldn't find a publisher interested in his Afrocentric stories. His work remained in a drawer.

Kofi discovered Muna Kalati through our online directory. He submitted his portfolio for inclusion on our platform.

The Change: Within months, Kofi's work gained visibility through our website and magazine features. He connected with three regional publishers through our network. His first book is now in production.

The Impact: Kofi now earns income from his art. More importantly, African children will soon read stories created by an African creator, set in Africa, reflecting African values.

STORY 3: "A Parent's Awakening"

The Community: Togo's reading network
Through our "Un Dimanche, Une Famille" (One Sunday, One Family) program, we reached 230+ children and their families with culturally relevant books and educational activities. Parents who'd never prioritized reading suddenly saw its value. One mother said: "I realized I was giving my children toys but not tools to build their minds."

The Shift: Parents began requesting library cards, attending author events, and buying books for their homes—rebuilding a culture of reading in communities.

DIRECT IMPACT

Children: 940 youth trained in digital skills; 1,020 children in reading workshops; 230+ in family programs **Total Direct Reach: 3,400+ children**

Creators: Increased visibility for authors, illustrators, and publishers through our platform and magazine

Communities: 3 countries activated; 7,360+ subscribers in growing network

INDIRECT IMPACT

Through our publications, training, and advocacy work, we've influenced educational practices, publisher decisions, and family choices affecting tens of thousands more.

LONG-TERM INDICATORS

→ Parents now actively seeking African children's books → Schools beginning to integrate African literature discussions → New collaborations forming between African publishers and education institutions → Young people equipped with digital skills to create and monetize content

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

2019 Budget Breakdown

- Program Development & Content: 45%
- Training & Workshop Delivery: 30%
- Platform Maintenance & Marketing: 15%
- Administrative & Operations: 10%

Revenue Sources

- Individual donations & memberships
- Grants from cultural organizations
- Workshop fees (subsidized for low-income communities)
- In-kind donations from partners

Sustainability Model: We prioritize earned income and crowdfunding over donor dependency. This ensures long-term independence and alignment with community needs.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Challenge 1: Limited Reach in Rural Areas

Reality: Most of our programming is concentrated in urban centers due to infrastructure constraints.

Our Response: We're expanding digital-first programs (online workshops, downloadable resources) to reach remote communities in 2020.

Challenge 2: Language Access

Reality: Most African children's books are published in colonial languages (French, English).

Our Action: We're actively documenting and promoting African language publications and advocating for bilingual editions.

Challenge 3: Funding Volatility

Reality: Reliance on grants creates uncertainty in planning and scaling.

Our Strategy: Diversifying revenue streams through training services, magazine subscriptions, and merchandise sales.

WHAT'S NEXT: 2020 & BEYOND

The foundational work of 2019—from publishing seminal research to launching life-changing reading programs—has positioned Muna Kalati as an indispensable actor in the African literary landscape. We ended the year with a clear vision, a growing community, and a proven model for creating impact. In 2020 and beyond, we are committed to deepening this impact, expanding our programs, and continuing our advocacy for a world where every African child can see themselves in the books they read.

Immediate Goals (2020)

- Expand to 5+ African countries
- Launch online training platform for accessibility
- Establish formal partnerships with 10+ schools and NGOs
- Publish first comprehensive study on African children's book industry

Long-Term Vision (3–5 Years)

- Support 50+ African publishers to monetize content
- Influence national education policies in 10+ countries
- Become the leading reference for African children's literature
- Build a research center dedicated to African children's literature
- Create a sustainable marketplace connecting creators to consumers

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

"In 2019, we proved something powerful: when African children see themselves in books, they transform. When African creators have platforms, they thrive. And when communities invest in cultural literacy, entire societies begin to heal.

But we can't do this alone. We need educators, publishers, parents, and policymakers who believe that African stories matter. Every contribution—financial, intellectual, or creative—brings us closer to a continent where reading is a lifestyle and African narratives are celebrated globally.

Thank you for believing in this vision. Together, we're writing Africa's future."

— **Christian Elongué, Founder & Team Leader**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Funders & Donors

a. Support our expansion into new countries, scaled training programs, and policy advocacy.

2. Educators & Schools

a. Integrate Muna Kalati resources into curricula. Host our workshops. Share feedback.

3. Authors & Publishers

a. Submit your work. Collaborate with our network. Mentor emerging creators.

4. Communities

a. Attend our events. Recommend us to families and schools. Share your stories.

5. Volunteers

a. Contribute your skills—writing, design, marketing, facilitation—to our mission.

CONTACT & CONNECT



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CLOSING REFLECTION

This is not the end of a story—it's the beginning of a movement.

In 2019, we planted seeds. In 2020 and beyond, we'll nurture them into a forest of African voices, African stories, and African futures.

Because when children read their own reflection in a book, they don't just see a character—they see possibility.

Let's keep building.

Muna Kalati: Transforming foundational literacy and cultural representation in African education.

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