

The **Lagos Book** *Charter*

Suggestions for Improving the
Reading Culture in Lagos

Presented to
Mr. Governor,
HE Babajide Sanwo-Olu,
Governor, Lagos State

And
Hon Idowu Obasa,
Speaker, Lagos State
House of Assembly

At the World Book Day 2023 and Lagos Book Walk and Book Year flag off, April 27, 2023

By the Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria, NBRP



PREAMBLE

This charter is the outcome of decades of work in the reading promotions field in Lagos and Nigeria, several months of deep reflection, and two specific stakeholder engagements.

It is designed to get the entire Lagos society to queue behind the cause of The Book – its promotion, patronage and use – reading for its varied pleasures and purposes.

This ‘Charter of Demands’ relates to improving the lot of books in the state through the provision of well-equipped libraries and accompanying reading infrastructure - complete with books and a conducive atmosphere for reading them - and creating and encouraging reading and other support activities around libraries and readers.

METHODOLOGY

Putting this charter together involved discussions, inputs, consultation and collaboration NBRP has had with a wide variety of partners and stakeholders, including but not limited to:

1. National Library of Nigeria
2. Nigerian Book Fair Trust
3. Association of Nigerian Authors, Lagos
4. Nigerian Publishers Association
5. Nigerian Booksellers Association
6. Nigerian Library Association
7. Nigerian Copyright Commission
8. Committee for Relevant Art
9. Accessible Publishing
10. Buybooks.com
11. Laterna Ventures
12. CSS Bookshops Limited

And of course, all the constituent members of the Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria, NBRP that are listed in the appendix.



THE PROPOSAL

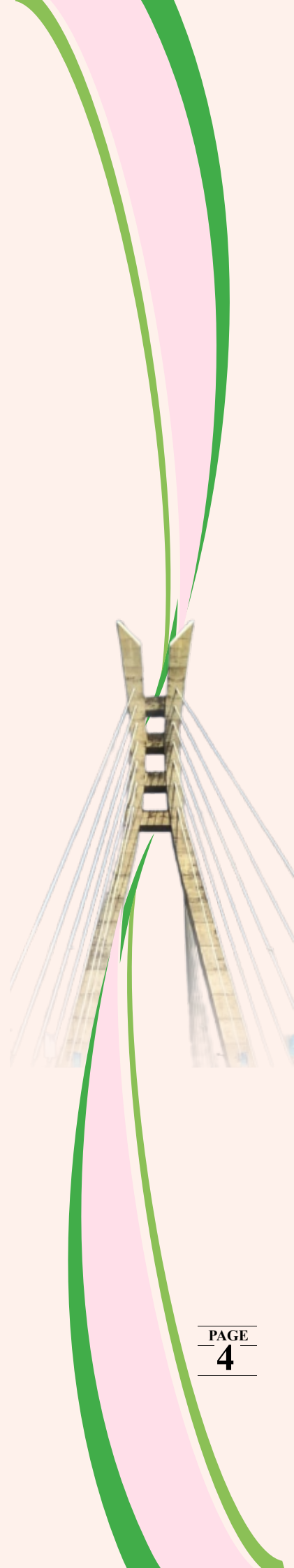
1. Signalling: We propose the Commencement of The Governor Reads, an annual reading promotions event where the Governor personally participates in a much-advertised and well-attended reading session, and bringing along other society influencers to make reading look cool and most prized.
2. Revival and Outreach activities: We propose the launch and introduction of a highly intensive Calling Readers Back Re-Awakening Initiative to be driven by His Excellency, The Governor and the Local Government and LCDA Chairpersons, working in concert with the relevant MDAs, the Library Board, Book Clubs and other stakeholders in the book ecosystem. This programme should be complemented by Extensive Year-long Outreach Activities in which libraries and book clubs are supported with resources to carry out readership promotion activities and competitions within communities and schools.
3. Cradling: Introducing very visible Mini-libraries/Book shelves in all Lagos State Government-run health facilities that provide maternity care where pre and ante natal care patients would be constantly encouraged to read to their babies from the womb to the cradle.
4. School time reading sessions and personnel: Enforcing a reading hour in all Lagos public schools complete with Read-Aloud (RA) and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) sessions. This should be complemented by the establishment, furnishing and digitizing of more public schools' libraries in the state. There should also be the recruitment of professional literacy teachers and school librarians

for public schools in the state, beginning with the Model Schools as well as very deliberate curriculum activity to boost early child literacy development.

5. Infrastructure enhancement and provision: Current efforts at renovating, refurbishing and enhancing libraries capacity in Lagos State are commendable. However, given the scope of the challenge, a lot more needs to be done.

Every facility requiring an upgrade at the state and local government level should be expeditiously fixed, alongside the building and kitting of new libraries. Given the demands of population size vis a vis current installed user capacity, the goal should be to have at least two functional state-run libraries per LGA/LCDA with the individual LGAs/LCDAs themselves also being mandated to operate at least another two libraries/reading centres each. With 57 LGAs/LCDAs in the state, this would bring the new tally of libraries in the state to 228 libraries that are managed by the two tiers of government. At the same time, measures should also be put in place to guarantee an annual replenishment of reading materials stock in the libraries as well as the availability of functional e-reading infrastructure for a complement of the paper and digital reading modes.

6. ‘Foot soldiers’: Book Clubs are important in sustaining grassroots reading enhancement activities and to critically guarantee life-long learning in our SMART city-state setting. It is therefore most important that the state supports and helps facilitate the Emergence of More and More Book Clubs in Neighbourhoods, and in particular, Book Clubs operating in, and alongside each public library in the state.





NBRP has already commenced a scheme in this regard with the principal national agency driving readership promotion in Nigeria, the National Library of Nigeria (through which we are establishing book clubs in all National Library centres across Nigeria, including one in Mushin, Lagos). We also have a related MOU with the Nigerian Library Association, and the Abak Divisional Library in Akwa Ibom State. Indeed, the experience has been quite enriching and confirms the fact that more book clubs are needed to drive and sustain the reading culture.

7. Outside Assistance: We canvass a Stronger Role for Corporates, Communities, Philanthropists and the Donor Community in the readership promotion space. In this regard, the example of GTBank in giving renewed life to the Herbert Macaulay Library is already notable.

8. Longer term thrust: We canvass a broader commitment to driving the proposals contained here and others that would subsequently emanate, within a 10-Year Strategic Plan period. This would give ample room for deepening the sustainability structures and optimizing peak performance and achievement.

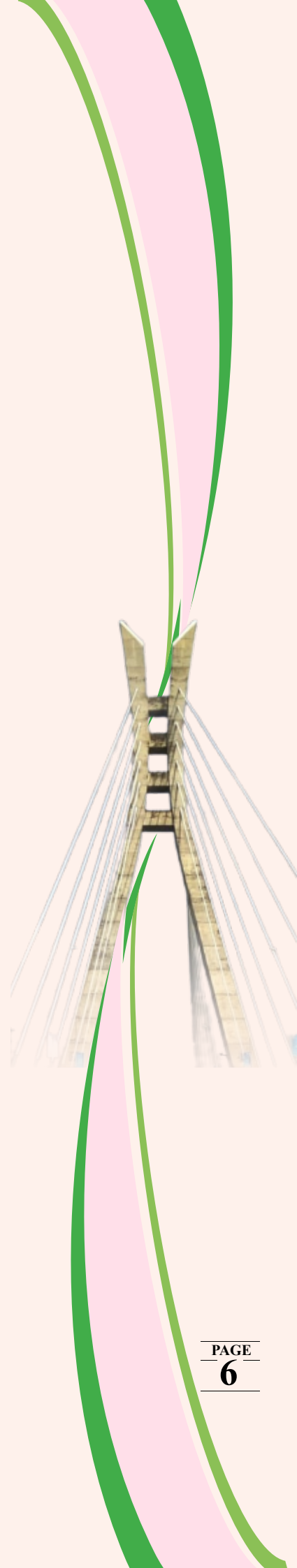
9. Global Expression: After two to three years of driving these Enhanced Readership Promotion Initiatives in Lagos, the city should formally bid to become UNESCO World Book Capital.

10. New Orientation: ‘Those the book has helped to get to the peak of their ambition or career should Look Around and Give Back.’

SUMMARY

The Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria (NBRP) is calling on the Lagos State Government to improve the reading culture in Lagos by launching initiatives such as annual reading promotions events, intensive outreach activities, mini-libraries in health facilities, reading sessions in schools, infrastructure enhancement and provision, support for book clubs, and securing more outside assistance for promoting the reading culture from corporations and philanthropists.

We also suggest a 10-year strategic plan to deepen sustainability structures and optimize peak performance, with the ultimate goal of Lagos becoming a UNESCO World Book Capital.





TESTIMONIALS: What Book Stakeholders Say

As an established stakeholder in the continued growth of the book ecosystem in Lagos, and one that we have demonstrated through, among others, our hosting our flagship, Nigerian International Book Fair in this city in the past two decades, we are always excited when steps are being taken to promote readership in Lagos. We find the proposals contained in this Lagos Book Charter document to be very timely and realistic and pledge our continued willingness to support their actualisation.

Mr. Dare Oluwatuyi

Chairman, Nigerian Book Fair Trust, NBFT

And President, Booksellers Association of Nigeria

As advocacy for literacy and the development of a reading culture, the Lagos Book Walk slated for April 27th 2023, under the auspices of the Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria, is a tremendous initiative.

If African nations are going to grow democracies worthy of the name, we are going to have to get behind the book. The more of good literature we read, the higher our literacy levels and the better honed our thinking skills and ultimately our ability to organize and present our thoughts.

We commend the Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria for developing a totally viable 'Charter of Demands' which addresses the current state of reading in Lagos State and crucially, the way forward.

Olatoun Gabi-Williams

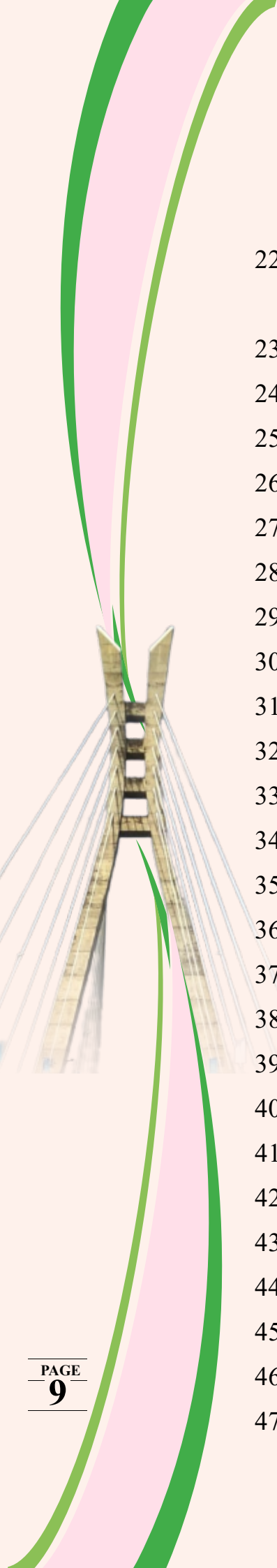
Borders Literature for all Nations

UN SDG Book Club Africa

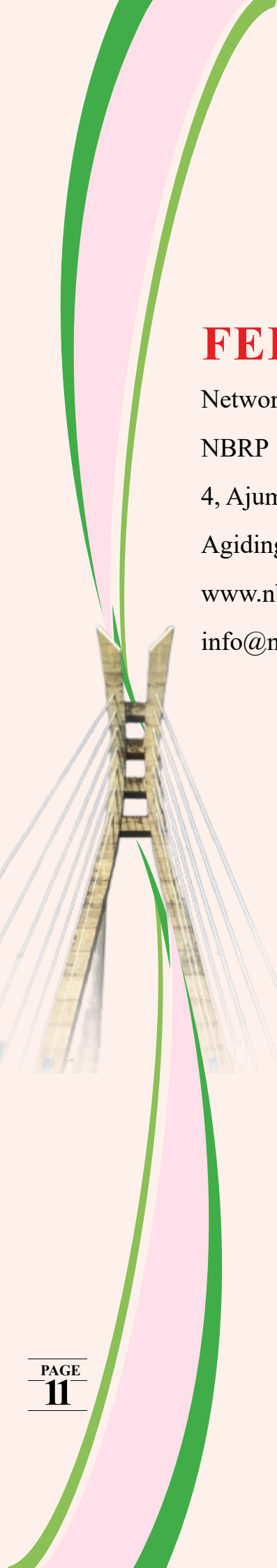
APPENDIX

Members of the Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria, NBRP

1. Aba Book Club, Aba, Abia State
2. Abak Book Club, Akwa Ibom State
3. African Centre for Media and Information Literacy, FCT
4. African Writers Tribe, Lagos
5. Aimee's Library, Lagos
6. Alrange Book Club, Lagos
7. Arepo Book Club, Ogun State
8. Asaba Reading Club, Delta State
9. Atiba Book Club, Oyo State
10. Awka Literary Society, Anambra State
11. Bibliotheque Nigeria, Lagos
12. Blueprint Book Club
13. Bookause Nigeria, Lagos
14. Bookaddict, Lagos
15. Books and Our Imagination, Lagos
16. Bookworm Café, Lagos
17. CRIMMD Free Public Library Readers Club, Lagos
18. CSS Bookshops Book Club, Lagos
19. Eagle Nest Book Club
20. Eket Book Club, Akwa Ibom
21. Eriata Centre for Literary, Educational and Entrepreneurial Development, Lagos

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22. FOURTEEN ZERO TWO BOOKLOUNGE
INITIATIVE, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State
 23. Heal the World and Care for People Initiative
 24. Ibadan Book Club, Oyo State
 25. Ignite Africa Leadership Foundation, Lagos
 26. iRead Afrika Foundation, Lagos
 27. iRead Mobile Library Network, Lagos
 28. Jegglo Foundation, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
 29. JustDebbies BookMobile, Lagos
 30. Kaynosh Book Club, Lagos
 31. KidTeen Book Club, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
 32. Kids Literary Circle, Lagos
 33. Kings Place Kiddies Book Club
 34. Lafest Readers Club, Lagos
 35. Lami's Memoirs Book Club, Lagos
 36. Laterna Bookshop Book Club, Lagos
 37. Lead-out Education Foundation, Lagos
 38. Lekki Book Club, Lagos
 39. LightRays Books and Reading Society, Delta State
 40. Literary Authors Cooperative Multi-Purpose Society, Lagos
 41. MUNA Book Club
 42. Naija Book Club
 43. NCI Book Club, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State
 44. Nigerian Literary Society, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
 45. Oakhill Book Club
 46. Oleh Book Club, Delta State
 47. Olive Book Club

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48. OpenWay Reading Awareness Initiative, Lagos
 49. Osogbo Book Club, Osun State
 50. Pens and Voices Book Club, Enugu
 51. Pyramid Educational Advancement Foundation, Lagos
 52. Radiant Impact Book Club
 53. Raffia City Book Club, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom
 54. Readland Global, Lagos
 55. Read2Lead4Africa Book Club
 56. Read2Me Mobile Library
 57. Redila Book Club, Uyo, Akwa Ibom
 58. Seed of Greatness Resources, Lagos
 59. Sheffa Book Club, Lagos
 60. Smart Book Club, Lagos
 61. Sunshine Literary Club, Yola, Adamawa State
 62. Too Ventures Book Club, Gwagwalada, FCT
 63. Tolulope Book Club, Ibadan, Oyo State
 64. Uyo Book Club, Akwa Ibom
 65. Warri Book Club, Delta State
 66. Writers-in-Motion, Lagos
 67. Yerwa Book Club, Maiduguri, Borno State



FEEDBACK AND INQUIRIES:

Network of Book Clubs and Reading Culture Promoters in Nigeria,

NBRP

4, Ajumobi Olorunoje St,

Agidingbi, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

www.nbrp.org.ng

info@nbrp.org.ng

The Lagos Book Charter



ENDORSED BY



(On behalf of all other book ecosystem players)