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A view from the independent publishing sector

ANFASA

ACADEMIC AND NON-FICTION AUTHORS ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEDICATED TO EMPOWERING AUTHORS

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A transcript of a presentation made at the ANFASA Annual General Meeting, 6 August 2025



Gail Robbins*

Gail Robbins, “The Equal Education Law Centre says that more than 16 500 schools (that’s 75% of the total) are operating without libraries.”

This presentation begins with an introduction by Gail Robbins, providing an outline of the history and context of the development publishing venture pioneered by David Robbins, namely Cross-Border Books:

David and I are the co-owners of Porcupine Press, a small but very active publishing company which I manage. Since 2022, David has been developing Cross-Border Books, which is now a registered not-

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*** Gail Robbins and her partner, David, are publishers and are the co-owners of Porcupine Books. David is a regular contributor to ANFASA magazine and has also developed a not-for-profit publishing venture, Cross-Border Books**

“... intellectuals and the proletariat are always the revolutionary trouble makers, and sometimes they become like dynamite when they team up.”

A view from the independent publishing sector

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for-profit Developmental Publisher. We'll talk about both these entities this morning. First, though, we need to say that it is a special honour to have been invited to talk at ANFASA's 2025 AGM.

ANFASA is an important organisation for us. David started writing for the ANFASA magazine in 2022, and he has already appeared in the first issue for 2025. Before his ANFASA connection, he wrote extensively for a number of publications about universities and the changing shape of academia after 1994. But of course that's only half the ANFASA story. The other half is made up of ordinary writers who write for ordinary readers. We call them 'grassroots writers' and there are thousands of them in South Africa, including David himself. Porcupine Press is in its 16th year of operation and we have personally worked with many hundreds of these grassroots writers who represent a groundswell of something of great national importance. That is why we have been using the word 'revolution' since 2015, and it reappears in the title of our talk today. We believe there is a 'reshaping' going on, a changing of the expectations in response to the changing cultural and literary landscapes in which we all live and work.

This is why we are so pleased to be speaking directly to ANFASA. Your deliberate mix of academic and ordinary writers will become the catalyst that drives the revolution forward. David says that intellectuals and the proletariat are always the revolutionary trouble makers, and sometimes they become like dynamite when they team up.

The changing landscape

South Africa is embroiled in two distinct yet closely related cultural and literary crises. The first is the high reading-for-meaning failure rates among grade 4 learners. Recent international research pegs our rate at 81%, by far the worst among the nearly 60 developed and developing countries involved. The second is access to books. The Equal Education Law Centre says that more than 16 500 schools (that's 75% of the total) are operating without libraries. We are

surrounded by these sorts of disturbing changes in education generally, higher education included. But the points we wish to make revolve around the grassroots response. This response is gathering momentum, but it is largely unseen and is largely ignored.

After nearly two years of working closely with book activists in urban settings, it has become obvious to Cross-Border Books (CBB) that great changes are afoot. DIY libraries are springing up in townships in greater Johannesburg, and elsewhere. These libraries are generating links with neighbourhood schools where literacy training by youth volunteers is frequently welcomed by hard-pressed teachers and school principals. People are beginning to talk about books, about reading them, and about writing them. Book clubs are emerging, township publishing is taking place, and regular events at DIY libraries attract growing audiences. In response, CBB has developed a quartet of these activities into fundraising proposals.

Listen to this advertising flyer:

For CBB and its grassroots partners, literature is like an energy drink that gives you wings. But books and publishing will die without readers. So, 'developmental publishing' means a composite approach across four key literary activities:

- DIY community libraries development
- literacy and reading for joy, knowledge, and power
- training for writers, publishers, readers, and books activists
- community-based publishing, distribution, and sales

All four activities are interdependent, and yet they fall naturally into two main groups: (i) and (ii) dealing with access to and use of books, and (iv) dealing with book production. Training activities (iii) serve access to and use of books, as well as to the making of books.

The publishing focus

This focus must now claim our undivided attention.

Mainstream commercial publishing is increasingly attracted by the lure of

"But of course that's only half the ANFASA story. The other half is made up of ordinary writers who write for ordinary readers. We call them 'grassroots writers' and there are thousands of them in South Africa, including David himself. Porcupine Press is in its 16th year of operation and we have personally worked with many hundreds of these grassroots writers who represent a groundswell of something of great national importance."

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A view from the independent publishing sector

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‘global’ markets, with the result that ‘local’ opportunities have diminished. This means that self-publishing has become the main funding source for the production of ‘local’ writing. But self-publishing can be expensive and not infrequently leads to under-edited text and sloppy book design.

Should we be troubled by these trends? We think the answer needs to be a resounding YES, because ‘local’ writing remains the most fertile seedbed of literature. This home-brewed literature then becomes a dynamo for community and national consciousness, as well as for the broadening view of humanity that literacy and literature tends to encourage.

For these reasons, CBB has designed a financial publishing model that couples book production costs to author royalties, and rests on a publishing fund to ensure that talented writers with limited resources can also be considered for publication.

Now we are getting to the nitty-gritty of CBB’s plan regarding ‘Publishing for South Africa’s Literary Revolution’. As long ago as mid-2022, the basic ingredients of the plan had been assembled. Here is an updated summary of the tools required.

- ❑ **Basic Training.** Writer training has already been developed, and a publishing training module has been tested. More publishing-related training programmes are in the pipeline.
- ❑ **Publishing Fund.** This needs to be launched as soon as possible so that publishing services can be offered to writers of ability and originality, regardless of whether they be academic or grassroots writers.
- ❑ **Book Distribution & Sales.** Community-based networks are being established as part of the very necessary monetising of DIY libraries. The libraries will offer for sale a regular supply of newly published books, as well as operating a book exchange, but leaving intact the library’s core collection.
- ❑ **Book News Update.** A regular bi-monthly magazine, launched in February 2025 to give ‘a voice for southern Africa’s grassroots literary

revolution’. Issue 4 August 2025 is landing in readers’ inboxes as we speak. Plans are now in place to offer printed copies of the magazine at all DIY Libraries

- ❑ **Interaction: Academia and the Grassroots.** The potential here is enormous. We mention only two current opportunities:

Grassroots books activists are already developing group ‘reading aloud’ sessions that introduce adults both young and old to books, to reading, and to the power of literature to bring excitement, knowledge, and to change lives. Now one of the DIY libraries wants to produce a manual to spread the idea. Could academic and/or student input into this endeavour be designed to be helpful both to the activists and the students?

Grassroots children’s book designers are preparing to tackle the rapidly worsening climate crisis. Their approach will be to stimulate awareness with a what-to-do-about-the-crisis series of books custom designed for various age groups. Student and/or academic support could be an invaluable motivating force for these township artists and writers. At the same time people from the universities would benefit from closer contact with ordinary working people who tend to be first in the firing line when our planet runs amok.

Launching the publishing plan

Early in 2020, as we all remember, COVID 19 swooped in, leaving too many South Africans dead and an economy in tatters. From a purely book-industry point of view, over 20 bookshops that were closed in the lockdowns never reopened – and a bleaker ‘new normal’ entrenched itself.

But the arrival of our 21st century’s third decade wasn’t all bad news. By 2022, David had begun to write for the ANFASA magazine. His interest in ANFASA was kindled when he discovered he could apply for funding as a non-fiction author. But his interest soon expanded far beyond ANFASA’s willingness to assist in two of his personal writing projects.

When it came to publishing, we found

“Mainstream commercial publishing is increasingly attracted by the lure of ‘global’ markets, with the result that ‘local’ opportunities have diminished. This means that self-publishing has become the main funding source for the production of ‘local’ writing. But self-publishing can be expensive and not infrequently leads to under-edited text and sloppy book design.”

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A view from the independent publishing sector

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that CBB and ANFASA were speaking the same language. ANFASA talked about some sort of partnership. We listened intently. A more formal meeting was arranged between CBB and ANFASA's Professor Keyan Tomaselli and UNISA publisher Hetta Pieterse. We discussed the possibilities, even suggesting how a partnership might work.

So, here we are. CBB is addressing the full ANFASA Board. This audience represents an important opportunity. To conclude, therefore, I give way to David, who, as CBB's project manager, wishes to make a formal announcement.

David's Announcement:

Before my announcement, I wish to offer one short paragraph on the difference between 'provision' and 'support' in the fields of social and cultural development. The first is 'top down', the second is 'bottom up'. We live in a democracy which is obviously a 'bottom up' political system. In terms of our literary revolution, the 'bottom up' energy at the grassroots must be respected and heeded by the providers, whether state or corporate. Otherwise, 'top down' provision will fail, or at best be partially wasted.

Now for my big announcement.

CBB will prepare and submit to the ANFASA Board for comment before the end of August 2025 the following documents:

1. ADRAFT AGREEMENT committing CBB and ANFASA to a publishing partnership, including joint fundraising, aimed at blending the unique potential of ANFASA's town-and-gown membership with CBB's on-the-ground experience of South Africa's grassroots literary revolution.
2. A DRAFT PROPOSAL showing the plan of action and fully budgeted, to launch the publishing partnership between ANFASA and CBB as outlined in Part 3 of this document.

That's all from me. Thanks to Gail for reading CBB's paper. Thanks to the ANFASA Board, and to our real and virtual audiences, for listening.

Are there any questions?

GAIL ROBBINS: A SHORT CV

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Cell: 083\25721682

1: Dgr Writing & Research Cc And Clients

DGR are specialists in research, writing, editing, proofreading and project/print production.

DGR Writing & ResearchCC was established in November 1993 in partnership with David Robbins.

It should be noted that much of DGR's work is in the developmental field i.e. education, health, local economic development, local government, housing, tourism etc. Therefore, this work relates closely to the theme of my working life and the relationship between film, books and development.

DGR Writing & Research has been commissioned by 40 clients since its inception in November 1993.

2: Apollo Development Association

Together with David Robbins, I created the Apollo Development Association (ADA). This was one of the most successful development projects in South Africa.

I was the creator and official organiser of the Apollo Film Festival from 1999 to 2003.

The ADA was established in February 1998 and was committed to economic development through 'culture, tourism and youth training'.

The ADA board consisted of members from the Victoria West community, including representatives of the local authority, the farming and business communities, and was

fully representative of all races and both genders.

The ADA was based at the Apollo Theatre, South Africa's last remaining intact Art-Deco cinema, in Victoria West. With a phased withdrawal we left in November 2003.

3: The Development Hub Concept

Both DGR Writing & Research and The Development Connection have jointly created the following concept that we have developed from our Apollo experiences:

The Development Hub concept is a catalyst – but only if it is carefully defined to take into account existing state inputs and our more holistic definition of LED. Such a definition would read:

The Development Hub concept is designed to build viable local economies by maximising the impact of state interventions for local economic development and enriching the influence of these interventions with a bouquet of sustainable grassroots services.

4: The Porcupine Press: A Quality Publishing Partnership

Established in the 1980s. David Robbins and I relaunched Porcupine Press in November 2009.

It has grown substantially and is now in excess of 360 authors on our books, including over 158 African authors, whom we have nurtured and published or whose books we have distributed. We publish all genres from science fiction novels, children's books, self-help books in all genres, novels, memoirs, travel writing and poetry.

5: African Narratives, a Sec.21 Company:

Now closed. established to create a platform

to publish South African authors; and to implement training; workshops in writing and publishing; and the creation of indigenous language books for children; assist in the establishment of school libraries; and smme bookshops.

I was the elected chhairperson.

6. Further Details of Experience in Film

- Fund raising
- Apollo Film Festival
- The Gariep Short Film Festival in Kimberley
- South African Films @ the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg
- WHAGFILM in Kimberley
- Architect Africa Film Festival

Early Life

I am married with two grown-up sons and have one grandson.

I studied dance forms at the University of Cape Town Ballet School and established a non-racial classical dance school in Pietermaritzburg where I lived at the time, from 1975 to 1989.

This was a particularly racially-charged period in South African history. In my school of dance I taught boys and girls in schools and in my own studio. My pupils came from all walks of life and from all the racial divides of the time and all political parties both recognised and not. And I had to apply to Pretoria for permits for all my pupils to perform together on the local theatre stages.

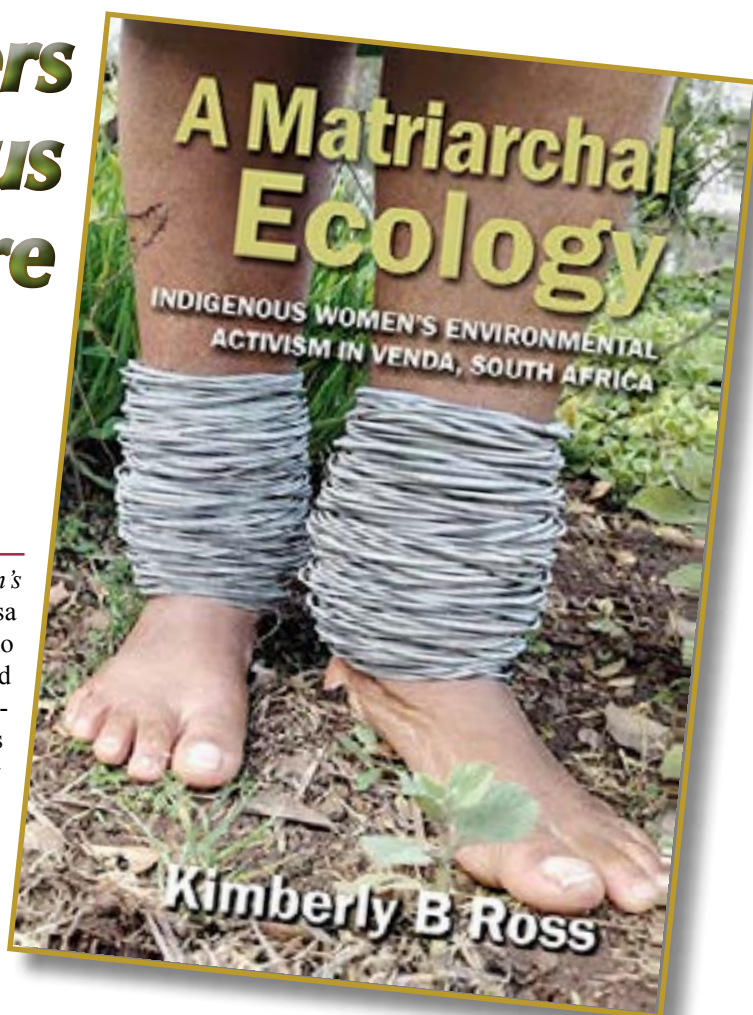
I did a substantial amount of choreography for university theatre productions at the Hexagon Theatre at the University of Natal, so named, in the 1970s and 1980s.

An Interview with author Kimberly B. Ross

Close encounters with indigenous Venda culture

By Onkgopotse Modise*

In her book *A Matriarchal Ecology: Indigenous Women's Environmental Activism in Venda, South Africa*, (Unisa Press, 2025) Kimberly Ross shares the story of Dzomo La Mupo, a local group working to protect nature and culture in Venda, South Africa. The group is led by Vho-Mphatheleni Makaulule, an indigenous activist who has spent years helping her community stay connected to their land, traditions, and environment. Kimberly's research brings their efforts to life, showing how people are making a difference by respecting both nature and their heritage. I interviewed the author to find out more about the making of and the research behind this remarkable book.



Onkgopotse: *What initially drew you to the environmental activism and biocultural preservation efforts of Dzomo La Mupo? Was there a particular moment that made you say, "I have to write this"?*

Kim: In 2011 as a newly matriculated doctoral student in the African American and African Studies Department at Michigan State University, for two years I was the Program Leader for my department's study abroad program, "Research and Action in The New South Africa." One of my responsibilities was to stay in communication with faculty and staff from the University of South Africa's Centre for Pan African Languages and Cultural Development to organize on-campus workshops and study abroad internships and activities. I had always had a deep interest in South Africa and my study abroad responsibilities and conversations with staff at UNISA profoundly shifted my area of focus for my studies and I therefore began to

"While researching, I came across an article in *The Ecologist* about the activism of Vho-Mphatheleni Makaulule and her work with her community-based organization, Dzomo La Mupo in the former apartheid homeland of Venda."

research women's and environmental issues there. While researching, I came across an article in *The Ecologist* about the activism of Vho-Mphatheleni Makaulule and her work with her community-based organization, Dzomo La Mupo in the former apartheid homeland of Venda. I read various articles after that and watched documentaries on the subject. What really caught my attention were the eco-cultural maps that the elder Makhadzi women of Makaulule's community created. I began researching these brightly coloured maps and their role in essentially decolonizing their land by using their memory of land before it was developed. These maps made by the Makhadzi women captivated me and I knew I had to write about their activism.

Onkgopotse: *What was it like stepping into the world of Vho-Mphatheleni Makaulule and the Makhadzi? Were there any moments that left a lasting impact on you?*

Kim: Travelling to one chief's kraal or what they called his palace, in the Soutpansberg mountains was a key memory

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*Onkgopotse H Modise is an intern at Unisa Press: Commissioning Office.

An Interview with author Kimberly B. Ross

A group photo with makhadzi including Vho-Mphatheleni Makaulule seated on the right



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for me. The father of Makaulule's children drove a group of Makhadzi and I to the compound on rough terrain into the mountains. Once there we assembled in one of the gathering places and I talked for hours with the Makhadzi who lived there. We ate and they sang and danced. I distinctly remember I could have talked to them all evening but one Makhadzi said, "We have talked enough for today, we must now sing." They were wearing their traditional attire called *Nwenda* and they beat a traditional drum. One of the chief's wives was a young woman and she asked if we could be friends. I didn't want the day to end.

Onkgopotse: *Throughout your research, did you find yourself personally connecting with the stories of Vhomakhadzi? Was there a moment where their stories changed how you viewed the topic?*

Kim: Living with Makaulule who herself is a Makhadzi and traditional healer was a deeply moving experience. Living

in Makaulule's house with her family and cooking with her, talking on the back porch in the evenings at sunset, being a part of family gatherings, grocery shopping and taking care of her sons and baby-sitting them, and even serving food to guests and watching her and her husband as natural healers in the community was a spiritual experience that a book or research alone cannot teach you. They became my family. In the evenings especially as we heated up water on the outdoor stove for bathing, making tea with milk and biscuits for Makaulule's partner "Dr. Dima" who called me his daughter, was a cherished memory. On the back porch we often discussed a lot of ancestral stories about Vhongwaniwapo people and indigenous oral history. This

experience taught me that my research was not about just activism but their culture and their lives. I learned that they are their land.

Onkgopotse: *Fieldwork, interviews, and archival research often lead to surprises. What was the most unexpected*

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An Interview with author Kimberly B. Ross



Left: A makhadzi pointing to the ecological calendar.



Above: An ecocultural map indicating development changes

of my lodge in the dining hall who was interested in marrying me. This was so funny to me, in addition to the multitude of questions by Makhadzi who assumed I was keeping a secret romance back home that they wanted to know about.

Onkgopotse: *Dzomo La Mupo plays a crucial role in preserving eco-cultural knowledge. What stood out to you about their activism? What about their approach struck you as important?*

Kim: What surprised me the most during my research was how Makhadzi were perceived by upper executives of one mining company who had intentions for mining projects in Venda. These European-descendant men referred to Makhadzi activism and their singing and dancing as a “circus”, and tried numerous times to circumvent their roles in the community to talk to chief’s instead. It was so clear to me how this global system of patriarchy was at play. And despite these inner workings Makhadzi activism is rooted in intergenerational and male and female community participation and maintaining these communal roles while promoting women’s empowerment.

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discovery during your time in Venda?

Kim: Controversially, I learned about the contestations of land within cultures. The cultures and tribes in Venda are expansive and extremely complex and varied, and because of this, claims to land create polemic debates among people and about whose ancestors are the original people especially of Mapungubwe which is now a UNESCO world heritage site.

Onkgopotse: *Spending time with Vhomakhadzi and hearing their experiences and their stories must have been an unforgettable experience. Was there a particular conversation that stuck with you?*

Kim: As an unmarried woman, and younger at the time of my research, I was moderately prepared for unusual encounters. I had a Gender and Environment Research Methods class at MSU that prepared me for fieldwork as a woman, and the many observations and ponderings about my marital status that I would encounter. Being unmarried created many humorous conversations and scenarios about potential romantic partners. Before I lived with Makaulule, unbeknownst to me I was set up with a surprise dinner arranged by the manager

“These European-descendant men referred to Makhadzi activism and their singing and dancing as a “circus”, and tried numerous times to circumvent their roles in the community to talk to chief’s instead.”

Onkgopotse: *Vho-Mphatheleni’s leadership is an important element throughout the book. What have you learned from her that has stayed with you?*

Kim: Vho-Mphatheleni taught me that “Makhadzi” is not just a title but a role. And this role is integral to the chief’s leadership. This goes back to African gender researchers who emphasize that pre-colonial Africa was not patriarchal or matriarchal. That male and female roles complimented each other and that women contributed

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An Interview with author Kimberly B. Ross

An ecocultural map of the Nzhelele River and its numerous tributaries



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to state-making in various ways — this is a key element in preserving these roles within their culture today. This global patriarchy that we see today is imposed on African peoples by a continued system of colonialism and corporate entities that grab land and water and a system that degrades local cultures in the process.

Onkgopotse: *Researching, writing, and bringing a book to life is quite the journey. What part of the process was the hardest—or perhaps the most rewarding?*

Kim: The most rewarding and challenging part of writing this book was to articulate not just Makaulule’s journey as a “Phangami” or leader in her community—but also writing about issues that are both topical and deeply personal to the community I researched in ways that honors their work but also conveys the urgency behind these issues. Additionally, working my dissertation research into a cogent book and updating the research in ways that is engaging for a broad readership was challenging.

Onkgopotse: *What do you hope readers who are unfamiliar with the issues explored in the book take away from it?*

Kim: In this book I invite readers to think about how colonialism, patriarchy, and environmental destruction aren’t just separate problems—they’re deeply connected. These systems of power have worked together to dominate not just people, especially Indigenous communities, and women, but also the Earth itself. What was once seen as a living, interconnected

world has been reduced to “resources” to be extracted and communities to be exploited.

I hope readers come away seeing that colonialism wasn’t only about land grabs or economic control — it was also about reshaping our entire relationship with nature. It created hierarchies: men over women, humans over nature, settlers over Indigenous people, and logic over relational ways of knowing. Patriarchy reinforced all of this by dismissing the value of women’s knowledge, labor, and leadership — especially when it came to caring for the land, not controlling it.

More than anything, I hope through Vho-Mphatheleni’s life and leadership, and the role of Makhadzi, people come to appreciate how much we can learn from Indigenous ways of being—how they relate to the environment, how they organize, and how they resist these harmful systems.

“I hope readers will come away knowing that at the heart of Makaulule’s leadership is a deep respect for ancestral wisdom and the belief that true sustainability cannot exist without cultural continuity.”

Onkgopotse: *When someone picks up A Matriarchal Ecology for the first time, what important message or feeling do you hope they remember long after they have finished the book?*

Kim: I hope readers will come away knowing that at the heart of Makaulule’s leadership is a deep respect for ancestral wisdom and the belief that true sustainability cannot exist without cultural continuity. She works tirelessly to protect **sacred forests, rivers, and land**, not just as ecological spaces, but as living archives of her people’s history, identity, and spirituality. These sites are often dismissed or threatened by development and extraction projects, but Makaulule sees them as central to both environmental health and community resilience.

Optimising Opportunities For Non-Fiction Writers



CBN Workshop Stanford December 2024

Why Join ANFASA?

ANFASA is an authors' advocacy organisation. We work on behalf of authors' rights. These rights are determined by copyright legislation, national policy, publishing policy and educational policy.

We speak for authors because we *are* authors.

Participation in authorship-related activities is a prime benefit of being a member. Specifically, ANFASA delivers:

- ❑ Advice on copyright law and publishing contracts
- ❑ Training workshops on topics such as self-publishing, copyright and contracts, biography writing, and various aspects of skills development
- ❑ Public seminars on topics including

the publishing value chain, the status and role of authors in society, writing in the indigenous languages of South Africa, open access, peer review and academic publishing

- ❑ Links to collaborating publishers, book distributors and related services, and promotion of members' published works at book launches and book fairs and festivals
- ❑ A forum for debate on aspects of writing and of publishing, including national legislation affecting authors
- ❑ A voice to influence government policy
- ❑ Links to issues of writing and

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“ANFASA is an authors' advocacy organisation. We work on behalf of authors' rights. These rights are determined by copyright legislation, national policy, publishing policy and educational policy.”

Optimising Opportunities For Non-Fiction Writers



Jozi Book Fair

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publishing internationally,
through the International
Authors' Forum.

Who should join?

- Authors working on academic and non-fiction topics including academics from any discipline
- Authors interested in copyright, publishing and research
- Authors who want to help develop a reading culture and a market for books written and published locally
- Anyone interested in the writing and dissemination of knowledge, of information and of the power and value of the written word
- Anyone with an urge to write and who seeks encouragement.



Predatory Publishing: Comes at a Reputational and Financial Cost

Illustration by Cuan Miles



Caught in the predator's trap

Rudi de Lange*

Retirement from an academic career brings a welcome reprieve from meetings and emails cluttering one's inbox. Living at the coast allows one to indulge in fishing and binge-watching short reels on catching that big one. During one of these moments, a social media [advertisement](#) for the [African Journal of Biomedical Research](#) popped up on my screen. The advertisement offers thesis and article writing services, fast publication services and claims to accept all subject areas. The advertisement even includes the Clarivate Web of Science and the Scopus logos

“The journal published 63 papers in 2022, 79 papers in 2023, and suddenly saw an increase to more than 3600 papers from January 2024 to July 2025. The APCs are US\$ 1000.”

to mislead naïve researchers. I scanned the journal's [archives](#) and discovered 32 papers (January 2024 – July 2025) authored by researchers affiliated with South African institutions.

The *African Journal of Biomedical Research* appears in the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) 2025/2026 [list](#) of accredited journals, the Scopus tab, line 974. [Scimago](#) indicates it is a quartile 4 journal and lists Biomedical Communications Group as the publisher. In contrast to the DHET list and Scimago, Scopus discontinued the journal in 2024. Similarly, the African Journals Online (AJOL) platform [stopped](#) updating this journal, as

it no longer complies with their basic inclusion criteria. These opposing issues motivated a bit of sleuthing. The results are as follows:

The *African Journal of Biomedical Research*, founded in 1989,

continues on page 12

* Rudi de Lange, formerly lectured at the Tshwane University of Technology and is now retired

Predatory Publishing: Comes at a Reputational and Financial Cost

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is an academic and professional journal covering fields within the Biomedical Sciences, including allied health. A [note](#) on the journal's website confirms the journal is no longer published by Ibadan Biomedical Communications Group but by ARC Publication (from 1 Sept 2024), an entity located in Dubai, UAE. The journal published 63 papers in 2022, 79 papers in 2023, and suddenly saw an increase to more than 3600 papers from January 2024 to July 2025. The [APCs](#) are US\$ 1000. The journal's [website](#) indicates Dr [Ranju Rajput](#) (Jayoti Vidyapeeth Women's University) as the new editor-in-chief from 1 September 2024. Still, a link to the [editorial team](#) lists another person, *Ayeni Adebunji Adejuwon William, as the editor-in-chief*. I [emailed](#) Dr Ranju Rajput seeking clarity, but am still awaiting a reply.

The reason for Scopus's delisting is apparent. Some papers after 1 September 2024 are outside the journal's scope. Examples are: academic [dishonesty](#), [information technology](#), [consumer behaviour](#), and [architecture](#). Papers published with the original publisher have several months between submission and acceptance. Papers after September 2024, with the new publisher, sometimes have less than a week between the date received and acceptance. Twenty-two of the 32 South African-authored papers were published after 1 September 2024.

An [email](#) address from the journal's [announcement page](#) and their [Facebook](#) page led me to the publisher's [website](#). It is on this website that one encounters additional predatory characteristics, for example authorship [positions](#), "Multiple authors can thus be added to a single research publication, which can then be published online following mutual discussion and agreement", and promises of [rapid publication](#) "We can publish the author's article in as little as one week or as much as three weeks." In addition, the publisher's website misleads viewers by [listing journals](#) that Scopus discontinued as Scopus-indexed journals.

Rapid publication, papers outside the journal's scope, and the publisher's promise of gift authorship confirmed that the once-reputable journal morphed into a predatory journal. I emailed South African researchers who recently published in the journal and informed them of its predatory nature and Scopus's discontinuation. Email responses from the South African authors were appreciative and indicated additional questionable practices. One author, for example, reported that communication took place via WhatsApp. An invoice shared with me shows that APCs are payable to [Riset Publication](#), leading me to believe that [ARC Publication](#) and Riset Publication act cooperatively or at least act as the same intermediaries for the same journals. One of the authors also shared an attempt to have the paper retracted from the journal. The journal responded by requesting an additional retraction fee.

Riset Publication and ARC Publishing LLC provide journal

names grouped under SCOPUS, WoS, DOAJ and the PubMed database. I extracted these names from their websites and found that the seventeen journal names on both websites are identical. The Scopus source title [list](#) indicates that 16 of the 17 journals are either inactive (8) or discontinued due to publication concerns (6) or [RADAR](#) (2). One journal, the *Journal of Applied Bioanalysis*, published by Green Publication, is still covered by Scopus. However, some papers in this journal are out of scope, such as [urban planning](#), [tourism](#), and [urban development](#). An [earlier version](#) of the *Journal of Applied Bioanalysis*, published by ScienceOpen, hosts archives up to 2019. This journal is on my watchlist for a Scopus delisting.

There are three clones in place of three inactive journals. The three clones are the *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*, *Computational Analysis and Applications*, and the *Journal of Electrical Systems*. Only the *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation* is listed on the [Retraction Watch Hijacked Journal Checker](#).

Five of the 17 journals are still listed on the DHET's 2025/2026 list of accredited journals (*African Journal of Biomedical Research, Communications on Applied Nonlinear Analysis, Journal of Applied Bioanalysis, Journal of Electrical Systems* and the *South Eastern European Journal of Public Health*). Scopus discontinued two of these journals in 2024 and three in 2025.

I wanted to know how many South African authors published in these 17 predatory and cloned journals. I used the term 'South Africa' and searched for papers authored and co-authored by researchers from South African institutions. I was able to locate 99 papers with a South African affiliation. Seventy-one papers appeared in the *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice* after Scopus [discontinued](#) its coverage.

The financial implications for the DHET would be significant if, for example, papers in the *African Journal of Biomedical Research* and *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice* were to be subsidised. The subsidy value would exceed 10 million rand if this were to be paid to South African universities. I have informed the DHET of the events around the *African Journal of Biomedical Research*. Hopefully, the DHET subsidy for the South African-authored papers in this journal should be withheld. Fortunately, the DHET and [CREST](#) identified *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice* as predatory, and the DHET ceased paying subsidies for papers in this journal. The APC cost to South African universities for lost papers in these two journals is about 1.5 million rand.

The income for the new owner of the *African Journal of Biomedical Research* is immense. The income for 2024 up to July 2025 would exceed 61 million Rand. This is on the assumption that all authors of the 3,600-plus papers paid their USD 1000

"The income for the new owner of the African Journal of Biomedical Research is immense. The income for 2024 up to July 2025 would exceed 61 million Rand."

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Predatory Publishing: Comes at a Reputational and Financial Cost

continued from page 12:

article processing charges.

South African-authored papers in the *African Journal of Biomedical Research* and the *Journal of Computational Analysis and Applications* are within the journal's scope. In contrast, South African-authored papers in the *Journal of Advanced Zoology*, the *Journal of Electrical Systems*, and some papers in *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice* are out of scope. This raises research integrity questions. Were authors aware that these journals offer a fast publication route and would accept papers outside the journal's scope? Was there a deliberate attempt to avoid rigorous peer review? "If such is the intention, it would be a questionable research practice and could be considered an, albeit covert, form of [scientific misconduct](#)" (Yeo-Teh & Tang 2021).

The unfortunate outcome is the reputational damage and the loss of work to a predator. An article requires retraction before it can be published in another journal. Predatory publishers usually ignore requests to retract a paper, as this is not in their interest. Predators may even request an added fee to withdraw an article. Another journal may consider republishing such an article with an explanatory note if there was no copyright transfer, "otherwise, the author might wish to learn from the experience" (COPE Council 2024).

Predatory operators are interested in journals listed with a reputable index such as Scopus. Recent Scopus-inactive journals are ideal as they can be revived and pretend to be the original journal.

In addition, a Scopus or WoS-indexed journal's move from a reputable publisher to an unprincipled publisher opens a door for editorial and publication misconduct. Predators [prioritise their own interests](#) at the expense of scholarship. Accepting and

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publishing out-of-scope papers, rapid publication, and skipping peer review are part of the predator's business model.

The DHETs [Research Output Policy](#) (item 3.1) cautions institutions from incentivising individual authors, as this practice promotes perverse behaviour. Researchers who receive financial incentives would be drawn to predatory journals, as these journals make it easy for researchers to increase their output. Wilful predatory-publishing researchers and financially incentivising

universities function as captured partners in the predatory cycle.

The journals associated with ARC and Riset:

- African Journal of Biomedical Research
- American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation
- Communications on Applied Nonlinear Analysis
- Educational Administration: Theory and Practice
- European Chemical Bulletin
- European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine
- International Journal of Intelligent Systems and Applications in Engineering
- Journal for Reattach Therapy and Developmental Diversities
- Journal of Advanced Zoology
- Journal of Applied Bioanalysis
- Journal of Computational Analysis and Applications
- Journal of Electrical Systems
- Journal of Population Therapeutics and Clinical Pharmacology
- Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences (Sfs)
- Library Progress International
- Revista Electronica De Veterinaria
- South Eastern European Journal of Public Health

Further Reading:

COPE Council. Withdrawing an article from a predatory journal to resubmit elsewhere. <https://doi.org/10.24318/sJZRU4uM>

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Waruru, M, 2025, 17 April. African researchers warned to watch out for predatory journals University World News. <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20250409105607327>

Yeo-Teh, NSL, & Tang, BL. 2021. Wilfully Submitting to and Publishing in Predatory Journals - a Covert Form of Research Misconduct? *Biochemia Medica* 31 (3): 395–402. <https://doi.org/10.11613/BM.2021.030201>.