



2017 Ministry Review

Satisfy global hunger for the written word

Writing goes places where we cannot

“We now see that writing is a way to serve the Lord,” said a young man after MAI training. “Writing can reach people in places where we ourselves cannot go.”

Last year he and friends in a closed country of Southeast Asia formed Firefly—the first Christian publisher in their nation and an exciting outcome of our three-year training program there.

Firefly began by publishing children’s books and a Scripture karaoke DVD for readers in their largely oral culture.

MAI’s work in the past year featured many “firsts.” Trainings in 22 countries for 370 Christian publishing staff and writers included:

- a first screenwriting workshop, involving 10 experienced writers from a closed Asian country
- our first training program in Italy
- first-time training visits to Angola, Zimbabwe and Taiwan

Our trainings served leaders of more than 90 different Christian publishing houses worldwide. These included publisher conferences in Italy, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Nigeria, Bulgaria and Latin America.

We also gave on-site consulting to publishers in Mongolia, Uganda, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand and two closed countries of Asia—the goal being for them to become financially self-sustaining.

“Thank you for opening our eyes to the need to engage our readers,” said an Angolan publisher. “We did not even know about marketing plans for books. We thought it was



Lebanese publisher Sawsan Tannoury mentors aspiring authors at an MAI training workshop in Alexandria, Egypt.

enough to print the books and sales would be automatic.”

In addition, we held writer trainings in challenging countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Myanmar and Mexico.

Our continuing writer training in the Middle East led to publication of an impactful book, *The Arab Woman: Embracing Her Potential*, by first-time Jordanian author Ruba Abassi.

In every training, we focused on the creation of more *locally authored*, life-transforming Christian content for readers in their heart language.

Valuable materials like these “go places where we cannot”—enriching the Church and influencing society for Christ.

Thank you for helping to extend the Gospel through your caring partnership with MAI.

“Thank you for opening our eyes to the need to engage our readers.”

ANGOLAN PUBLISHER



John Maust with MAI-Africa Trustee Kingston Ogango of Kenya

John D. Maust, *President, MAI*

Global team propels

Organized by ZCLS in Partnership
with

CLC Myanmar and Media Associate International

ZCLS Museum Hall, Kalaymyo



Many colleagues from around the world made possible our trainings in 22 countries for 370 publishing staff and writers.

MAI Trustees groups in Europe, Asia and Africa spearheaded training in their regions.

Also, some 26 publishing professionals donated their services as trainers in on-site programs.

God has united men and women from many countries and cultures around MAI's shared vision of serving Christ through the creation of excellent "homegrown" content. Meet some of them on these pages.

Above photo: Well-known Indian author and editor Babu Verghese leads writer training in Myanmar.

Italy: Daniela Benevelli

We don't get many international visitors at our office near Chicago. So, we were pleased when Italian publishing manager Daniela Benevelli stopped in one day.

As Daniela shared about the publishing work of The Bible House/Geneva Bible Society, it became apparent that our two ministries shared a similar vision for training. Only 6 percent of Christian books in Italy are written by Italians, Daniela said, and The Bible House wants to equip local authors and editors.

We agreed to keep in touch, and ultimately Daniela and The Bible House formed a partnership with our MAI-Europe Board to provide Christian publisher training in Italy.

The first training took place in Turin, with 27 staff from 12 publishing houses receiving training in editing, marketing and finance.

Participants were "happy to see how much MAI is investing in them," said Daniela, a gifted vocalist who performs American gospel with a group.

She's now busy with Bible House plans to hold six "MAI Days"—one-day trainings in three different Italian cities, plus a writer/editor forum in 2018.



Daniela with Nicholas Gray of MAI-Europe

Peru: Patricia Adrianzén de Vergara

When MAI trainer Patricia Adrianzén de Vergara of Peru penned her new book, *El Cristo del Camino* (The Christ on the Road), she never imagined its pages would come alive so soon. Published last year, it contextualizes the Gospel and events in the life of Christ.

At her pastor's request, Patricia created a play for Easter based on her book. As a result, "More than 2,700 people attended its four presentations during Holy Week, and 100 professed faith in Christ," she said.

Patricia, founder of Verbo Vivo Publishing House, is also passionate about equipping writers in Latin America. In April she led MAI's three-day writing for publication course for 20-plus participants in Mexico.



MAI training

Jordan: Ruba Abassi

Having a great idea for a book is not the same as actually writing one. Ruba Abassi of Jordan knows this firsthand. Five years ago she attended our writer workshop in the Middle East. She led a ministry to women across the region and was inspired to pen a book addressing the challenges facing Arab Christian women.

Despite Ruba's commitment, the busy ministry leader struggled for time to write. The two-headed monster of self-doubt and writer's block also raised its head.

Months of working on the manuscript stretched into several years. Thanks to the patient encouragement of MAI trainers and her future publisher, Ruba did not give up.

Last year found Ruba signing copies of her new book at a launch in Amman. The title translated into English is, *The Arab Woman: Embracing Your Potential*. Ruba's book is the literal fruit of our work in the Middle East.



Mongolia: Timothy Byambatogtokh

Families across Mongolia have been strengthened by biblical teaching on marriage and parenting through "The Love Project," a daily radio program by Timothy Byambatogtokh.

Now the father of triplets is starting a publishing house, *Uhagantu* ("Wisdom") to serve his listeners through books. A strong readership base already stems from Timothy's 100,000-plus listeners and 240,000 Facebook followers.

Most of Mongolia's 90,000 believers are first-generation Christians in need of discipling. The Church began sprouting, and the Gospel spread in 1990 after the collapse of Soviet-style Communism. The nation enjoys a high literacy rate and religious freedom.

"We want to help people reading our books live out biblical wisdom as a way of life, without us being too preachy," Timothy said. He hopes to release the first title, "Love Project for Couples," this year.

MAI gave on-site training to Timothy to help strategize plans for his fledgling publishing house.



Angola: Joel Sergio

When God closed the door on Joel Sergio's dreams of emigrating to Europe, the pages of his writing life began to unfold in Angola.

A receptionist job at Scripture Union exposed Joel to Christian literature. Two evangelistic tracts he penned were distributed. Joel sharpened writing and editing skills in a weekly writers club.

After attending our LittWorld 2009 conference, Joel co-authored and produced two books.

In 2013 Joel founded *Tchia Criativa*, "Publications of Love."

In April Joel consulted with MAI publisher trainer Ramon Rocha. Equipped with marketing strategies, Joel plans to republish his own title, *You Too Can Succeed*, the first motivational book by an Angolan.

10 Key Outcomes

- Trainings in 22 countries for 370 publishing staff and writers, representing more than 90 different publishing houses
- Our first-ever screenwriting workshop, involving 10 writers from a closed Asian country
- Launch of Christian publisher training in Italy in partnership with the Geneva Bible Society
- Birth of a Christian publishing house in a closed Southeast Asian country through MAI training
- Conferences for Christian publishers in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Indonesia, and Latin America
- On-site consulting for publishers in Bulgaria, Uganda, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Mongolia and Angola
- Writer trainings in Egypt, Mexico, Myanmar and a closed Asian country
- Release of *The Arab Woman: Embracing Her Potential* by Jordanian author Ruba Abassi, product of our writer training program in the Middle East
- Ten monthly training webinars on publishing-related topics
- Debut of MAI's new mobile-friendly website to better serve our global audience

Littworld.org



PASTORING

THE PUBLISHERS AND WRITERS

Prior to our writer workshop last year at a Bible college, we learned the school would soon close due to financial woes. Anxious faculty and students faced an uncertain future.

Besides teaching writing, "I had to be a pastor for them," our trainer said. "I prayed for them, listened, and encouraged them during the meal times."

Heavy pressures face many of our colleagues in hard places. The person spearheading our training in a closed Asian country suffered burnout and withdrew from work responsibilities. A skilled writer trainer in Africa had an undiagnosed illness leaving him exhausted and unable to accept travel or other assignments.

Two editorial colleagues in one Asian country left publishing because of stress. So common is the problem, the host of our writer workshop there asked that an entire day be devoted to counseling and life management issues, and that we provide a "chaplain" for Bible teaching and personal counsel.

In our trainings, we seek to encourage as much as equip. Our face-to-face meetings and consultations offer a spiritual and emotional boost to weary colleagues struggling to persevere. We send trainers who not only teach the technical skills of writing and publishing, but who are also prepared to offer words of counsel and strength from the Lord.

Above photo: MAI trainer Ramon Rocha III with author Nhamo Chikwava in Zimbabwe.

With help from our friends

"I first made contact with MAI at a writer's conference and for the last six years have been impressed with their mission," said Jana Gilham in a letter to acquaintances. "They have become friends."



Wambura Kimunyu and Rose Birenge of MAI-Africa

We are thankful for each of you prayer and financial partners... our friends. We take great joy in sharing what God has done through MAI in the past year in partnership with you.

We finished the fiscal year with \$364,854 in cash revenues and expenditures of \$356,570 (pre-audit figures). Careful stewardship, low administrative expenses and our many volunteer trainers resulted in maximum ministry impact at modest cost. The value of contributed services by volunteer trainers totaled \$41,496.

MAI is not the work of any one person or group. It's a partnership of friends in the global MAI family.

You may obtain our audited financial statements by calling tel. +1 630-260-9063, or writing, mai@littworld.org. MAI is a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) in full compliance with its Standards of Responsible Stewardship.

MAI points readers to our God of hope

MAI is the only ministry devoted solely to the equipping of Christian publishing staff and writers in all the world regions.

We work particularly in difficult countries for Christian publishing and activity. Writers and publishers in the world's hard places play a crucial role in pointing readers to our God of hope (Romans 15:13).

Since our founding in 1985, we have conducted trainings in 80 countries for 9,300 participants. We have seen budding writers developed, publishing houses grown, and books and articles produced.

To end the famine of "homegrown" literature, we equip men and women to create life-transforming print and digital content in the heart language and culture of their readers.



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**"We appreciate MAI's heart to follow us up.
Your visits are always an encouragement."**

TASANEE YANASIDDHI, THAILAND