



Attack Your Lack

Be aggressive in looking for funds to support your publishing efforts.

by Isaac Phiri

Money—the lack of it—is a big challenge for publishers in emerging nations. However, lamenting the lack is not productive. Instead, use your time and talents to attack your lack.

There are many possible sources of funds you can explore. Here are some possibilities.

Churches. Congregations or denominations can be a source of funds. In Korea, for instance, a number of publishing houses are linked to large churches and were first funded as ministry arms of these congregations.

Authors. Some authors can provide funds for cash-starved publishing ventures. I know at least one publishing house that, for a while, published good books by a good author who could pay for the production costs. There are dangers in such arrangements, so rely on God's guidance.

Private foundations. It is not easy to get funds from national and international foundations but it is possible. A publisher in Nigeria received foreign funds to develop a publishing plan. A company in Hungary received a grant to translate a book into English from a foundation in Hungary.

Government sources. In some countries, governments have grant and low-interest loan programs to support small enterprises. It can be frustrating to work through bureaucracies and red tape but the results can be well worth the effort. One publisher survived on small grants that allowed her to publish materials for handicapped children.

Special sales. Inject funds into your enterprise through sales to government agencies or large organizations. One publishing house received an order from the Ministry of Education for 73,000 copies of its books. Some relief organizations purchase large quantities of literature for free distribution.

Printers. Printers desperate for business could advance you money indirectly. A publisher in the Philippines has an arrangement with some printers in which they

print the books but expect no payment until after 120 days.

Advance sales. Let your lack motivate you to garner advance sales. A publisher in Kenya pre-sold about half the print-run of his first book. In Venezuela another publisher pre-sold nearly the whole print run of her latest title. Such opportunities are major boosters to cash-starved businesses.

Facilities and services. A publisher in Hong Kong rents out office space for extra revenue. Other assets can also provide cash in lean times. A publisher in Kenya survives economic downturns by offering graphic design services. Some publishers in Latin America translate for cash. One of the largest publishers in Germany produces materials for embassies in Frankfurt.

Distribution. Distributing other publishers' products can be profitable. In the Czech Republic, one publisher has released 30 titles and distributes 300 additional titles from other publishers. A publisher in the Ukraine distributes Christian music products. Even Cook distributes the products of other organizations.

International sales. One publisher in the Philippines has arranged for an American publisher to sell its titles to Filipinos in the United States. A publisher in Egypt sells its Arabic language titles to Arabic speaking communities in the United Kingdom.

International rights. A publisher in South Africa sells rights to a publisher in New York. A publisher in India sells rights to a publisher in the United Kingdom. A royalty check can be a pleasant surprise.

Ultimately, a publishing house must meet its financial needs by selling its products. That is the business of publishing. In the short-term, however, there are many possibilities for Christian publishers who lack money. Attack your lack—explore all opportunities. Increase your luck—work toward self-sufficiency. ❖